

Hazrat Shahzada Qasim Ibn e Hassan^{asws}

Imam Hassan^{asws} and Syeda Umm-e-Farwa^{asws} were blessed with Shahzada Hazrat Qasim^{asws} on the Seventh of Sha'aban in 47 A.H., only three years after little-one^{asws}'s father were to be martyred. When Imam Hassan^{asws} was poisoned by his wife Jouda^{la}, he gave a letter to Bibi Umm-e-Farwa^{asws} to tie around Qasim^{asws}'s neck and to ask him to open it under exceptionally unbearable circumstances.

Hazrat Qasim^{asws}, though only 13 years old, had like his cousins Hazrat Aun^{asws} and Hazrat Muhammad^{asws}, learnt skills of fighting from his uncle, Hazrat Abbas^{asws} and cousin Hazrat Ali Akbar^{asws}, Hazrat Qasim^{asws} had so much resemblance to his father Imam Hassan^{asws} and Prophet Mohammed that Imam Hussain^{asws} used to look at him for the purpose of performing 'Ziarat' of his ancestors^{asws}. It was not only in looks but also in Qasim^{asws}'s gentle personality and noble character.

Travel to Karbala

When Imam Hussain^{asws} prepared to leave Madina in the month of Rajab 60 A.H. Hazrat Qasim^{asws}'s mother Bibi Umme-e-Farwa^{asws} asked Imam Hussain^{asws} to take her and Qasim^{asws} with him^{asws}. Imam Hussain^{asws} agreed to their request, in accordance with the will of his elder brother, Imam Hassan^{asws}.

Wedding of Shahzada Qasim^{asws}

Imam Hassan^{asws} left in his will that Syed Qasim^{asws} was to be taken as son in law by Imam Hussain^{asws}. Unfortunately, at the time of the journey to Kufa, Shahzada Qasim^{asws} was too young and Imam Hussain^{asws} deferred this wedding for a later day. On the night of seventh of Moharrum, Imam Hussain^{asws} reminded Umme-e-Farwa^{asws} of the will of Imam Hassan^{asws} and asked Ahlul Bait^{asws} to make arrangements for the wedding of Qasim^{asws} with his daughter Syeda Fatima Kubra^{asws}.

Imam Hussain^{asws} selected this day and place as it was in Imam^{asws}'s knowledge that there are only three days left to the day of 10th of Moharram, when shahzada Qasim^{asws} will be martyred, his daughter will be made widow, so when the army of Yazeed^{la} would come to plunder the tents of Ahlul Bait^{asws}, there will only be children, widows, ill and elderly among the survivors, so they would refrain from harming them any further.

Commemoration of 'Mehndi'¹ of shahzada Qasim^{asws}

Some historians do not agree with the occurrence of this ceremony, as being brought in by the influence of Hindu culture when Shias migrated to Indian sub-continent, without any reference from the Arabic rituals. However, an answer to this argument is that in order to commemorate any occasion, one needs to recreate the environment of the past, putting up important features in symbolically, e.g., Zuljinnah, Alam, Taboot etc, these are not the actual horse, Alam or taboot of Mola^{asws} but replica of the originals, basically to visualize the actual historical occurrence of the grief and pain of the events of Karbala. Thus creating things to remember the Mehndi of shahzada Qasim^{asws} is also one of 'Shair-Allah' (Holy Symbols), as per Verses of Quran, and needs to be respected, even if someone is not prepared to participate in the rituals.

It is narrated from Imam Jafar-e-Sadiq^{asws} that Rasool Allah^{saww} saw a portrait of Imam Ali bin Abi Talib^{asws} upon visiting the 5th skies on the night of 'Miraj'. Angel Gabriel responded to Rasool Allah^{saww} with the following narration. "Once angels prayed to Allah^{azwj} that they would

¹ Henna

like to be able to perform the 'Ziarat' of Amir-ul-Momaneen, in a similar way the inhabitants of earth do i.e. to see Amir-ul-Momaneen^{asws} in person. Thus Allah^{azwj} created a portrait of Amir-ul-Momaneen^{asws} through His own sacred 'Noor'. Therefore, this portrait is always in front of us, we regularly perform 'Ziarat' of Mola Ali^{asws} all day long, from morning till dusk."²

Ashura Night

On Ashura night, all mothers were preparing their sacrifices for the day. Syeda Umm-e-Farwa^{asws} was telling Shahzada Qasim^{asws}: 'you are the son of the eldest son of Imam Ali^{asws}. So my brave son, Listen! you should offer your life for the 'Just Cause' of Allah^{azwj} as led by your uncle, before any of your cousins offer their lives. This was the will of your father^{asws}. However, your uncle would never let you go to the battlefield and will try to protect you until the very last moment. For this reason, your father^{asws} left a will for you, which is wrapped in a tablet and I made you wear it since the departure of your father^{asws}. Son, never think of your young age, you are the descendant of the Lion of Lord (Shar-e-Khuda)³. Your father^{asws} belongs to Aya-e-Tatheer, so please do not embarrass me by showing any sign of weakness. I am sure your sacrifice will be as your father had wished for. If you stumble, I shall not forgive you and will disassociate myself from you, when I meet you in the presence of your grandmother^{asws}.'

Shahzada Qasim^{asws} replied, 'Do not worry mother, just wait until sun rises, I will bow down to Uncle's feet and plead him by showing the will of my father. I am sure my uncle, for the sake of his enormous love for my father, will permit me to fight against the army of infidels. O my kind and honourable mother! Consider me as an 'elm' (Sadaqa) for brother Ali Akbar^{asws}. I shall fight bravely to make you and my father proud and there will nothing near our tents but the dust and noise of 'Alaman al hafiz' from running army of Yazeed^{la}. If I do not finish all of them then you will not see me in 'One piece'!

Ashura day

On the day of Ashura, all companions and relatives of Imam Hussain^{asws} were eager to meet Shahadat. They had spent the Ashura night in prayers and were fully explained about all that were to take place during the day, the places of their martyrdom, and their places in the Paradise. But Shahzada Qasim^{asws}'s desire for Martyrdom was unique with fervour that if his father were here he would too sacrifice his life to save the true Islamic virtue which was suffocating under the tyrannical grips of infidels. When Imam Hussain^{asws} asked him, 'How do you feel about tasting the death as a saviour of Islam?' 'I find Martyrdom sweeter than honey', was the reply of Shahzada Qasim^{asws}.

Before everyone else, Shahzada Hazrat Qasim^{asws} pledged his uncle to grant him permission for fighting, But Imam Hussain^{asws} was not prepared to lose him so early in the day, and asked him to wait, 'How can I allow the Mirror image of my brother to embrace death'?

Hazrat Qasim^{asws} was becoming eager and emotional when he observed that his uncle was bringing back the bodies of the martyrs from the battlefield. After remaining patient for a while, Shahzada Qasim^{asws} went to see his mother and asked for an advice for getting permission to fight against the infidels. Syeda Umm-e-Farwa^{asws} noticed signs of extreme emotions and zest in the eyes of her son and immediately reminded him the letter which his father gave to her^{asws} with instructions: "If ever you find Qasim^{asws} in severe difficulty, open this letter." Syeda^{asws} asked Shahzada Qasim^{asws} 'there would not be any compelling time than this, so take it out of your necklace and present it to your uncle^{asws}.'

² Bihar ul Anwar, vol 18, pg. 304.

³ Amir-ul-momaneen^{asws}, Hazrat Ali bin Abi Talib^{asws}

Shahzada Qasim^{asws} opened the letter and it was written as,
"My brother Hussain^{asws}, when my son Qasim^{asws} seeks your permission in Karbala, please accept him as a sacrifice on my behalf."

Hazrat Qasim^{asws}'s face started to glow with the hope as if he was brought back to life. He, without wasting any time, ran out of his mother's tent to see his uncle^{asws} and gave him the letter. After reading the letter of his late brother, Imam Hussain^{asws} could not help but to cry and uttered, 'O my brother's son, how can I stop you from undertaking what your father had wised for you'. He was also my Imam^{asws} : Bismillah, go forward and perform your duty. Surely, Allah^{azwj} is with you. Your grandfather^{asws} is eager to offer you a drink of Paradise when you greet him after meeting martyrdom".

Fight of , Shahzada Hazrat Qasim^{asws}

Imam Hussain^{asws} torn the turban in two pieces and tied one on the head of Hazrat Qasim^{asws} and wrapped the other part on his face like a veil and said good bye . Imam^{asws} helped him mount his horse. Hazrat Qasim^{asws} came to the battlefield. The army of Yazeed^{la} was stunned after seeing the 'reincarnation' of Imam Hassan^{asws} and Prophet Mohammed^{saww}, such a young and radiant face took their breath away and they started whispering 'is he not an angel in the outfit of a beautiful and handsome boy?' Some of them started murmuring, "How can we kill someone whose face is shining like the full-moon?"

In a loud and a clear voice Hazrat Qasim^{asws} introduced himself and asked for a rival warrior to settle the battle of the 'just' against the 'unjust'. When Umar-e-saad^{la} saw pure image of Imam Hassan^{asws}, he asked Arzaq^{la} (a famous warrior, who could fight against one thousand soldiers and could lift a baby camel as a shield) to advance and fight. He felt insulted fighting against a three-day starved young boy, undermining the strength and valour of the grandson of Amir-ul-Momaneen^{asws}. Instead, he signalled his sons to take on the young Bani Hashim. Shahzada Qasim^{asws} pointed four of his sons, one after the other, to the hell fire. This made Arzaq^{la} extremely furious and he came out to fight and was also sent to Hell by Shahzada Qasim^{asws}.

On seeing the bravery and skills of Shahzada Qasim^{asws}, no one could dare to come forward and challenge, so Umar-e-saad^{la} asked his whole army to attack together and surround Qasim^{asws} from all directions.

Shahzada Qasim^{asws} was fighting very heroically, like his grandfather^{asws}, and made a pile of dead bodies of several famous warriors. Yazid's army started to throw stones and arrows on Shahzada Qasim^{asws} from every direction. A Maloon^{la}, who was hiding and waiting for Shahzada Qasim^{asws} to pass near a dune, attacked Hazrat Qasim^{asws} from behind with a spear. He could not stay on horse and fell on the ground calling to his uncle^{asws}, "YA AMMAHO, ACCEPT MY LAST SALAM."

Imam Hussain^{asws} and Mola Ghazi^{asws} along with Ali Akbar^{asws} ran towards Shahzada Qasim^{asws}. Upon seeing them come towards them, the army of Yazid^{la} started running away out of fear. This unorganised flee from the battlefield led to the stampede of Shahzada Qasim^{asws}'s injured body, cutting it into several pieces. Upon reaching there, Imam Hussain^{asws} looked up in the skies, as was telling Qasim^{asws}'s father, how could I take his body back to my camp? How will his mother react after seeing the mutilated Qasim^{asws}? Will not his widow pass away after looking at her groom in unrecognisable shape?

⁴ General of Yazeed^{la}'s army

Asalamoalaka ya Qaim bin Hassan^{asws}

Imam Hussain^{asws} took off his 'Abaa'⁵, spread it on to the ground and started gathering the remains of Qasim^{asws} as if one would collect the disintegrated verses of Quran and brought in the recovered pieces of Qasim back to the camp.

Imam Hussain^{asws} opened the sag of Qasim^{asws} inside Syed Umm-e-Farwa^{asws}'s tent and told his sister-in-law: 'Allah^{azwj} has accepted every single piece of your sacrifice'.

Sitting in a corner, Syed Kubra^{asws} pleaded her aunt, Syeda Zainab^{asws}, to give her a black outfit, which a widower would wear, on hearing this request, all present could not help crying and doing matam therein.



Shrine of Hazrat Qasim^{asws} in Karbala.

⁵ Outfit