

In the Name of God

Allameh Hafezian's Life in Accordance with the Sermon No.193 in Nahj-al-Balaaq. (The Pious Men)

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Abstract

In the Indian Sub-Continent, there were some great mystic Iranian figures who have contributed to the promotion of public awareness about the holy religion of Islam. AllamehSayedAbolhasanHafezian helped Kashmirians purely in several aspects, and converted some of Indians to Islam. His good works for them were such as building a mosque in Srinagar of Kashmir, building a platform in Sofipoora to show the people the direction of keblah (Kaaba), encouraging them to learn by bringing paper, note book, pen and pencil, as gifts for their children besides teaching them. In a visit to Kashmir and Delhi I realized his high status and popularity among those people; I think this was due to comprehensiveness of the principles of his thought including good behavior, commitment and specially his virtue. In this article, I want to show some of his distinctions which have been said in Nahj-al-Balaaq by Imam Ali^(a.s).

As supported by the existing works and his poems, AllamehHafezian was a pious man and God-fearing. He spoke truthfully and rightly. His way of living was based upon moderation, and his way of dealing with other people was founded on goodwill and modesty.

(مَنْطِقُهُمُ الصَّوَابُ، مَلْبَسُهُمُ الْإِقْتِصَادُ، مَشِيئُهُمُ النَّوَاضِعُ...)

This issue points out his good attention to Nahj-al-Balaaq by thinking deeply and trying to do well according to what Imam Ali^(a.s) had described about God-fearing people.

Having read The Preserved Tablet (Lohe Mahfouz), I got to know his great personality and felt enthusiastic towards learning more about his knowledge.

Jonnat-ol-Asma is his other book which he has written on the character and speeches of Imam Ali^(a.s).

Key Words: AllamehHafezian, The pious men, Comparing with Nahj-al-Balaaq.

□ Introduction:

Surveying the extant works and legacy of late Allameh Sayed Abolhasan Hafezian and studying his life, sayings and poetry reveal that attaining to high spiritual eminence depends on one's efforts and merits. The following verse of the holy Qur'an corroborates this important point: "and that man shall have nothing but what he strives for." This mystic-scholar devoted his whole life to learning, praying and helping people in the best way possible. "I should mention that Mr. Hafezian had attained to high spiritual levels in religious knowledge, truths related to mankind's origin and resurrection as well as noble spiritual revelations, which resulted from his strong spiritual essence and outstanding talent" (Hakimi, 1384, p.275).

The fact that the late Mr. Hafezian grew up in a religious family, well versed in the Qur'an and familiar with mysticism, turned him into a man who, both in his personal and social life, trod the path of human perfection in an exemplary manner, and sincerely sought to please God in everything he did. His sincere devotion to Hazrat Ali ibnMousa Al-Reza (the 8th Shiite Imam) and his efforts in building the *Zarih* (outer sarcophagus enclosure) of his Holy Shrine¹; learning mathematics, medicine, astronomy, spherical astronomy (هيئت), morphology and syntax, ethics and *Fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) from great Masters; learning esoteric sciences with such eminent Masters as Aqa Sheikh Hasan-Ali Isfahani (Nokhodaki), SayedMousaZarabadi andHaj SayedMazharHussein Hindi; companionship with the late Haj Sheikh MojtabaQazvini; immigration to Kashmir and helping the kind people of that region as well as contributing to the spread of Islam in the

¹In the middle of the 1330s SH (the years 1337 and 1338), God granted the late Aqa Haj SayedAbolhasanHafezian the grace and chance to refurbish the holy *Zarih* (outer sarcophagus enclosure) of the 8th Shiite Imam (Hafezian, 1390, Professor MahdaviDamqani's article, p.178).

Subcontinent are among the factors which were significantly effective in promoting the status of Allameh Hafezian.

□ **The Book “*The Preserved Tablet, Commentary and Interpretation*”**

The suprememasterpiece of this great man is called “*The Preserved Tablet*,” in which he arranges collections of Prophet Muhammad’s names and titles, together with their *Abjad* equivalents, in such a way that they surprisingly correspond with some Qur’anic verses related to Prophet Muhammad and some lines from the Persian poet, Sa’di, about the Prophet in terms of their total *Abjad* numbers. In the book “*The Preserved Tablet, Commentary and Interpretation*,” after arranging the contents of the tablet together with their *Abjad* numbers and mentioning all the names and titles, the late Mr. Hafezian writes one of his own odes (*Qasideh*), which contains notions from some Qur’anic verses and a reference to the mysteries of letters and numbers. He then invites his readers to the Realm of Love and then states that belief in the *Wilayat* of Imam Ali is the precondition for entering the sanctum of *Nabuwwah* (prophethood):

Exit the abyss of Nature; enter the Realm of Love,
Behold there are myriads of caravans in the path of truth;
If there is anybody in the house, a single word would suffice,
Because it is the pith of the matter and the secret within our speech;
Enter the “city of knowledge” through the “gate of knowledge,”
As the main path of wayfarers is the path of God.

(Hafezian, 1386, p.125)

Given that this subtle warning is in that wonderful masterpiece about Prophet Muhammad, it indicates that Prophet Muhammad’s *hadith* is realized in his heart, which is as follows: “I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its gate.” Here is another example of the manifestation of his devotion to *Wilayat* in the poems of this mystic-

scholar, who considers Prophet Muhammad and Imam Ali's *Shifa't* (intercession) a kind of letter of security in the Day of Judgment:

If I am considered worthy enough, I would pride myself
In wearing the crown of the selected one;
With the hope that in the Day of Judgment
The praise (i.e. *the Preserved Tablet*) of Mostafa would be in my hand;
If the praise of Mostafa (i.e. The Prophet) is in my hand,
My life Records would be in Ali's hand;
If my life Records are in Ali's hand,
Why should I be terrified and afraid?
Muhammad and Ali would intercede on my part,
And God would accept my repentance,
My sins would turn into good deeds;
This is expressly said in our book.

(Hafezian, 1386, p.128)

This firm belief in *Nabuwwat* (Prophethood) and deep love of *Wilayat* have put him among God's pious men, whose qualities in the noble words of Imam Ali lead us more than before to come to know them. At the beginning of the *Khutbah* (sermon), Imam Ali talks about their merits to achieve virtues, which he then enumerates one by one: "the pious men have distinctive virtues in the world." Allameh Hafezian was a pious scholar and a religious ascetic as well as a mystic with human virtues such as faith in monotheism, having divine moral principles, helping the poor and indifference to the transient world. Observing the zest and enthusiasm of the kind people of the Sofipoora, their nice memories about him and descriptions of his kindness and his services in that region encouraged us to research more about him.

As his remaining legacy shows, the manifestations of real faith and sincere piety are evident in every aspect of his life.

□ **Paying Attention to the Hereafter and Indifference to the Transient World**

Affluent life and prosperous business never interested SayedAbolhasanHafezian. His heartfelt certainty and faith encouraged him to show his indifference to this world both in word and deed. His religious and mystical poems which originate from his heart and are well received in the hearts of his devotees, reveal his belief in the mortality of the world and immortality of mankind.

I am from the world of Immortality, He is beyond expression;
Not from the world of Mortality, He is beyond expression;
Do not look at my head and foot, He is beyond expression;
Behold my praise and honor, He is beyond expression;
Listen to my song and voice, He is beyond expression;
I am the manifestation of God's names, He is beyond expression.

(MousaviMotlaq, 1388, p.140)

Attention to the eternal world and hoping to enter the realm of the ever-lasting God are among the characteristics of the pious and Imam Ali has talked about this in the Sermon of Hammam: “the pious set their eyes on things eternal but transient things interest them not.”

□ **Patience and Politeness, God-given Virtues:**

Hafezian who was granted a chance to live a new life after years of suffering a disease, leaves for India with the permission of his parents, where he was rewarded by Prophet Muhammad for his patience with the disease and politeness with his parents, i.e. he succeeded in designing, arranging and writing the *Preserved Tablet*:

After a long and chronic disease,
I was granted a second life by God again;
All the three physicians treating me said unanimously
That it was necessary for me to travel;
I desired to travel to India
With permission from my parents.

(Page 4 of a 13-page handwritten poem)

□ **The Modesty of Allameh Sayed Abolhasan Hafezian before his Master**

His verse travelogue contains truths about faith, ethics and human wisdom, pondering which reveals the fact that God graces his diligent, pious and sincere servants. In this verse travelogue, after praising God and His Messenger, he takes it upon himself to mention the names of great men and prays to God to bless them. As he himself has experienced that this way of conduct is rewarding, he encourages others to do the same and enjoy God's grace:

O, youth, be at the service of great men,
And subdue the inciting ego (*An-Nafs al-Ammarah*);
Be always prepared to help,
And be thankful if you are accepted.

(Page 1 of the 13-page handwritten poem)

Praising and extoling one of his Masters, who had found out the secret of wisdom and taught the truths of the Qur'an and had progressed beyond mystical teachings and Greek knowledge, demonstrates Allameh Hafezian's gratitude. He sincerely and politely prides himself in having the opportunity to be among Sheikh Isfahani's students for five years, and before moving to another Master reminds himself that he must be thankful for this divine boon. His attitude to the characteristics of these

great men reveals the orientation of his enterprise as well as his intention to achieve divine moral principles and to reach the apex of *Yaqin* (certainty). After describing his Master's comprehensive knowledge of sciences, familiarity with secrets and mysteries and kindness, he states that with the intention of going to meet him, he also eagerly accepted to be his student:

Come and behold one of the great men of God,
A great teacher and a guiding Master;
First come with the intention of meeting him as a pilgrim,
And then stay with him as his student.

(Page 2 of the 13-page handwritten poem)

He is exhilarated by the light he observes in the visage of his Master, Allameh Sayed Mousa Zarabadi, and is surprised to see an angel in human form; sometimes he talks about his *Sojoud* (Prostration in prayer), *Ruku* (bowing down in prayer), and *Qiam* (standing up in prayer), sometimes about his sympathy with ordinary people. He is of the opinion that, although his great master—who had received his teachings from the all-knowing God—prided himself in being a Muslim, he nevertheless regarded the religions of Christianity and Judaism with reverence. Allameh Hafezian likens what he learns from his Master to a divine blessing and says: I not only benefited from his vast knowledge but also took away with me much from his ample generosity. The more he describes him, the more he comes to the conclusion that he cannot express in words the true nature of that great man; he simply contents himself with learning a few of his numerous virtues and parts of his boundless wisdom. He then links *Towhid* (belief in monotheism) with the refrain of this long poem:

I say day and night from the bottom of my heart:

O, God, keep us safe from the punishment of fire;
My Master taught me to say:
He is one, there is no God but Him;
May God grace him and keep his essence unstained,
And may He place him in paradise.
(Page 13 of the 13-page handwritten poem)

Repeating the same words AllmehHafezian said in praying for his Master, AllamehSayedMousaZarabadi, we pray to God to bless him and grant him an exalted status.

□ **Sincere and Godly Speech and Deeds**

Whatever the late SayedAbolhasanHafezian said and wrote was based on honesty and truth, and with the intention of pleasing the God and helping His people. And with the grace of God, whatever he did was in some way helpful in diminishing people's problems, without expecting the least gratitude or reward. Professor Sayed Ali MousaviGarmaroudi, who with the help of his father had frequently been present in the company of AllamehHafezian, writes:

“He had a tall stature and wore a long shirt which was always shining white, and over it a robe (الرداء) often without a cloak (*Aba*), which made him look taller. When somebody said something surprising, he raised his eyebrows while smiling and three times repeated quickly: “there is no God but Allah”; he never laughed out loud (Hafezian 1390, p147).

Professor Garmaroudi mentions some of the characteristics indicative of his piety, all of which can be corroborated by reference to the sermon of Hammam in Nahj-al-Balaaq. In this sermon, Imam Ali says: “they [i.e. the pious] speak truthfully, their way of living is based upon moderation, they walk meekly and with modesty, and

their laughter is not loud and boisterous.” When reporting his travel to Sofipoora jungle on the skirt of the Tral mountain in Kashmir, which is located 60 miles away from Srinagar, AllameHafezian writes about the poverty of the kind people in that region, their lack of knowledge about city life and his fascination with living among them despite being a wealthy man: “If modern civilized men saw me in that state in that region, they would certainly call me a mad man; but I, the mad man, was very happy in that land of the mad.” It is this fascination and infatuation that, free from all restraints and customs, gave rise to such eminent works as The Preserved Tablet:

The wise sage one day told me:
Come and wear the belt of effort,
Tread in this path like an insane man,
Heed nobody and fear nothing,
Because God has wanted you to do this;
If you take the first step, God will do the rest.

There is a subtle secret in the state and high position of pious mystics and devoted lovers that Imam Ali says not everybody deserves to discern this state in the pious men of God, let alone to understand this virtue and embody it:

“When somebody beholds them, believes them to be sick, but they are not sick; some say that they are confused, but their confusion is indicative of a great matter.” This great matter is nothing but the love for the Everlasting Beloved. This zest and fascination which were both inherent in Hafezian and he learned in the school of wisdom, show his strong faith in and reliance on the Everlasting Beloved. This sincere reliance on God and faith in His greatness encouraged him to tread in a dangerous yet well-destined path, without fearing anything or heeding the world, in order to seek God’s pleasure; as Imam Ali says: “they believe in their heart that God is great and others are of little significance.”

□ **Determined Will for Accomplishing Goals and Tolerating Problems:**

Imam Ali says about the pious men: “they bear hardships and sufferings as happily as they enjoy comfort and pleasure.” And Allameh Hafezian bore various sufferings in order to realize his wish in arranging and writing the *Preserved Tablet* with features that he enumerated, and achieved his goal with the grace of God: “I spent almost five months, day and night, in that desert without thinking about sleeping and eating; my only thought was to accomplish this work (Hafezian, 1386, p.72).

□ **Multidimensionality of Pious Men in Science and Faith:**

Among the qualities of a pious man are the following: “he is resolute in his religion; he is tender-hearted and discerning; he is certain in his faith; he is thirsty for knowledge; though knowledgeable, he is patient; even when wealthy, his life is based on moderation; in prayer he is modest; even when in poverty, he is neat; he bears sufferings patiently.” Being resolute in religion meant avoiding *Haram* (forbidden things), observing rules of religion, and inviting others to the right path. Allameh Hafezian’s resoluteness in religion is not only evident from his words and deeds, other people’s sayings about him also confirm this point. The late Mr. Hafezian was among the great ascetics who observed religious rules. He was one of the great men of God and a true master of esoteric sciences ... He became very dear to his Master, Aqa Sheikh Hasan-Ali Nokhodaki, in a short time because of his outstanding talent, and became distinguished among others. His Master observed the light of sincerity as well as indifference to the world in Sayed Abolhasan’s visage and confirmed his genius and intelligence. Sayed Abolhasan’s genius reached high peaks in his youth and the sparkle of mysticism was manifested in him. Morphology and syntax, mathematics, medicine, astronomy, spherical astronomy, *Fiqh* (Islamic

jurisprudence) and ethics are among sciences which this great man of science, mysticism and ethics learnt from his Masters, and in each of these fields achieved great prominence (Hafezian, 1390, p.15).

□ **Conclusion:**

Allameh Hafezian was adorned with human virtues, such as belief in *Towhid* (monotheism), having divine moral principles, and helping God's servants, for which there is ample evidence. Observing the rules of religion, inviting others to the right path, thinking about the Hereafter, and indifference to the transient world, resoluteness in religion, thirst for learning, determined will to accomplish goals and bearing sufferings are among the characteristics which Imam Ali mentions about pious men in the Sermon of the Pious, the sermon No. 193 of *Nahj-al-Balaghe*, on the insistence of Hammam, one of his faithful companions. In this article, some of the characteristics of the pious were mentioned and the late Mr. Hafezian's way of life was compared to them. Imam Ali's intention in expressing the characteristics of the pious was, without doubt, inviting the meritorious people of the Islamic *Ummah* (nation) to follow them in daily life, so that everybody could pray and help others sincerely, through purification of the self.

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