

The Role of "Zuljanah" in The Battle of Karbala

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Overview

Zuljanah was pure bred, striking arabian horse whose ancestry can be traced back to many generations. He had delicately chiseled small head, narrow muzzle, deep Jowls, wide-set large prominent eyes, long arching neck and high tail carriage. His entire appearance exuded elegance, nerve, live liness and nobility. he was strong-boned, sophisticated and bright and is mostly said to be white in color and had high power of endurance. His persona exuded that he was raised with love, care and affection. He was trained to have excellent manners. "Zuljanah" means a horse which rides with his two wings and because of his speed he was given this name. His major traits were his loyalty and earnestness towards his 'Agha' or master

Hussain Ibn Ali (a.s.). This paper aim to stop ortray the faithfulness and sincerity of Zuljanah towards his Master.

Keywords: Conveyance, duty, faithfulness, devotion, sincerity

Preface

The Holy Quran States in Surah Nahl:

And He made horsesand mules and asses that ye might ride up on them and as an adornment; and createth He what ye know not (16:8)

The above Ayat (16:8) refers to the means of Communication, it is asserted that (God) will add something besides what is already known, (i.e., what is unknown) and the purpose of it is to straighten or shorten the way and facilitate the conveyance towards reaching its destination. Asserting that providing this facility is His duty, it indicates that along with the straight ways there are crooked ways also, and God does not force anything on any one. 2

In simple words the above Ayat (16:8) means we have to choose our own path, right or wrong is our own discretion. God only facilitates us the way and means of transport. Imam Hussain Ibn Ali's means of Conveyance that Allah (s.w.t) facilitated towards his straight path was his dearly loved horse Zuljanah, this horse was gifted to him by his maternal grand father Prophet Mohammad (p.b.u.h). Zuljanah was previously known as Murtajiz. Murtajiz means the thunder of cloud.

Murtajiz was bestowed with melodious neighing voice by Allah (s.w.t).

Scrutiny of Poetry

There are eight names of horses given in the Holy Quran. Among these eight names one is 'Jiyad' which means Jawad. Jawad is a horse whose chief quality is swiftness, a fast runner horse of high breed who serves his entire speed in running fast. The famous 18th century Urdu poet of Awadh; India, Mir Baber Ali Anis used the word 'Jawad' in his verses of poetry to describe Zuljanah.

خوش خودتھا، خانہ زاد تھا، دلدل نژاد تھا
شبیر بھی تھی تھے، فرس بھی جواد تھا

Transliteration

Khush kun tha khanazad tha, Duldul nishat tha

Shabbir bhi sakhi thay, Faras bhi Jawad tha (Akhtar 34) 3

He (Zuljanah) was not only pleasurable and serf but also, He was energetic like DuldulShabbir was generous and his horse was also generous . (Translated by Fatima, Farhat)

In the above line's poet compares Zuljanah with Duldul, Duldul was the horse of Prophet Mohammad (p.b.u.h) which Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib rode in the battle of Jung e Khyber and Jung e Nahrwan. Therefore, Imam Ali (a.s.) is also known as Shah e Duldul. Imam Ali has named him Duldul due to his

great speed. Zuljanah was also very generous as his Master.

According to the great 18th century poet of Lucknow, India Mirza Salamat Ali Dabir who states in his poetry lines of Marsia or Elegy that, Zuljanah was in the line of succession of Duldul and Barq (both were horses of Prophet Mohammad)

سرعت میں بسکہ تیز رووں سے وہ پیش تھا
سونا نام ذوالجنابہ بھی پہلے پیش تھا
ذلیل نسب، براق حسب، برق کیش تھا
قدرت میں دور چرق تھا کم اور وہ پیش تھا

Transliteration

Surat mein baska tez roo'oh se woh pesh tha

Soa name' Zuljanah pe bhi pahle pesh tha

Duldul Nasab, Barq Hasab, Barq Kesh tha

Quadrat mein duur charq tha kum aur woh pesh tha. (*Dabir Shayar e Dabeer Pg. 145*) 4

In face he was bright, swift and always stood first compared to all other souls.

Though his name was Zuljanah, but he was swifter than his name.

He was from Duldul's lineage, Barq's pedigree and had hair which shined as Barq (lightening).

He was far more powerful, light weight, and was readily accessible (Translated by Fatima, Farhat)

If Zuljanah could speak in human language than he would describe his master as 'Hussain Ibn Ali' is the name of that radiant glow which has saved the cruiser of humanity from tumbling into deep waters. He (a.s) has not only helped the boat of humanity to land on the safe shore but also by his colossal sacrifice has given life to humanity. He is the savior of all the innocents from tyranny. There are no two opinions about this; any human being from any walk of life if he/she is a righteous person and has a pure heart will be attracted towards Hussain Ibn Ali (a.s.) and his sacrifices in the Battle of Karbala.

On second Moharram while riding Imam Hussain (a.s.) on his back suddenly Zuljanah stopped. Imam Hussain cajoled him to move forward but he did not move an inch, then Imam tried to ride six other horses and all of them refused to move an inch forward. Imam Hussain knew that it was his place of final destination i. e., his Qatalgah.⁵ It is said that there were twenty horses along with Imam Hussain in Karbala all were the horses of Prophet Mohammad (p.b.u.h) and on different occasions he has ridden them. At various occasions and in wars Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Imam Hasan and Imam Hussain also rode them. (Zameer Akhtar Zuljanah pg.43)⁶

In the battle of Karbala when Hussain ibn Ali's relative kith

and kin helped him by portraying a great face of humanity by sacrificing their lives, in the same way the animal kingdom can be proud of Zuljanah as he has presented an example of sincerity, honesty, devotion towards his Master. Zuljanah has helped Hussain Ibn Ali till his last hour of life in the Battle of Karbala.

The Battle of Karbala started with arrows coming from the army of Umar Ibn Saad (The Commander of ibn Ziad, under the reign of Yazid Ibn Muawiya). The arrows were shot as if they were raining them. Many horses of Hussain ibn Ali's army were wounded and some of the soldiers became horseless. Can anyone say that at the moment Zuljanah was not wounded? Whenever a Mujahid was martyred from the small band of soldiers of Hussain Ibn Ali, Maula himself used to go and bring him in the Qaimagah riding on Zuljanah along with Hazrat Abbas and Ali Akber on their horses. And a time came when no one was left even Hussain ibn Ali's infant son Ali Asghar has attained Shahadat. Imam came into the tents for his last farewell.

After bidding farewell to fourth Imam Zain ul Abedien (a. s.) and his family, Imam Hussain came out. He was about to go to the battlefield but there was no one to mount him. He remembered Abbas, Akbar, Qasim and Aoun o Mohammad

and was sad and was standing silently in thoughts. His sister Zainab Bint Ali brought the horse and helped him to mount. Zuljanah took a step and stopped, Maula Hussain said to him, oh my honest, faithful horse, you have been with me since morning, helping me to bring the corpses of my loved ones. I know you are hungry, thirsty, tired, but you have been with me in all the steps of battle, you are wounded, but we have been together since our childhood. This is my last ride. Why will be Hussain alive after this? I have shown you the place of my martyrdom. Take me to the Maqatal, to my last destination. But the horse did not move forward. He by the shake of his neck gestured towards his hoofs. His (Zuljanah's) eyes were shedding warm tears. Maula Hussain Ibn Ali (a.s.) saw his little beautiful daughter Sakina, embracing the hooves of Zuljanah and was pleading, 'Oh! Zuljanah do not take my father to Maqatal.⁷ Since morning whoever went to Maqatal did not return. Hussain Ibn Ali got down from the horse and picked her in his lap; kissed her and said, my darling daughter let me go to the battlefield. Sakina cried 'Baba' Uncle Abbas went into the battle field and did not return. Brother Akbar went and did not return and now you are going. Please don't go. This was the hardest time for our Imam Hussain Ibn Ali (a. s.) He handed Sakina to his sister Zainab Bint Ali and went

towards the battlefield.

He gave Rajaz i.e., his introduction and said, Do you know this horse on which I am mounted. They said yes, we know it is the horse of Prophet Mohammad. Whose 'Amama' is this which I am wearing? (Amama is an outer garment consisting of a large piece of white cloth.). They said it is of your grandfather Prophet Mohammad (p.b.u.h). But still after saying everything they showered Hussain Ibn Ali with arrows. Hussain Ibn Ali started the war in response to their arrows. He fought with the Yazid's lashkar (army) in seven rounds. Sketch a picture of Zuljanah in your mind's eye. In the Qatalgah, where he was besieged in the encounters of war with his master toppled by the thirst, the acidity of his chest, his pain by seeing his master in pain. Every ounce of him was devoted in helping his master. Mir Baber Ali Anis describes this very beautifully in his poetic verses:

غصے میں وہ تن تن کے دہانوں کو چباتا
 اور جوش شجاعت میں وہ کف منہ سے گراتا
 ہر صف میں کبھی جھوم کے آتا کبھی جاتا
 تلوار کی زد سے کبھی آقا کو بچاتا
 ٹاپوں سے تہلکتی تھی زمیں حشر پاتا
 اس صف میں جو بجلی تھا تو اس صف میں ہوا تھا

Transliteration

Gusse mein woh tan-tan ke dahano ko chabhata

Aur Josh e Shujaat mein woh kaf mauh se giraata

Har saf mein kabhi jhum ke aata kabhi jaata

Talwar ki zad se kabhi aaqa ko bachata

Tapo se thalakti thi zameen, hashr bapa tha

Iss saf mein jo bijli tha toh uss saf mein hawa tha

(Anis Anees ke Marsiye pg 115)8

In pent-up anger he (Zuljanah) was grinding his teeth And in spirit of bravery he was expelling sputum from his mouth

In every row he now and then swung and came and then went back Sometimes He saved his master from the blow of sword From his hooves mud was falling as if apocalypse has come If he was a thunderbolt in this row than he was air in that row (translated by Fatima, Farhat)

Zuljanah was swift; no one would say he was a parched, hungry, weary horse. He was one with his master's wishes and commands. He moved like thunder among the regiments and tried to save his master. Thousands of enemies of Hussain Ibn Ali surrounded him from all sides and were throwing arrows, spears at him. At that moment, Maula Hussain Ibn Ali was fighting with them with his powerful strokes. From all-around arrows, spears, swords and saddle axe were falling on Hussain Ibn Ali. Was Zuljanah Safe? At this crucial moment Hussain

Ibn Ali's Horse Zuljanah was performing the role of a brave, tough, selfless, unafraid votary. He was in the role of a faithful helper saving his master from the attacks of the opponents. He was also helping Hussain Ibn Ali by stamping and wounding his enemies.

And that time came when Hussain Ibn Ali (a. s.) was badly wounded and said to Zuljanah, Oh my dear Horse, can you hear my mother's voice. Zuljanah can you take me near my son Ali Akber, I want to see him one last time. Zuljanah took Hussain Ibn Ali (a. s.) to the place where Ali Akber was lying, badly wounded, tresses submerged in his own blood and the sand of the desert. Hussain said to Ali Akber dear son you haven't seen the fight of your father, the thirsty, and the hungry, traumatized father. Then he commanded Zuljanah to take him to the 'Nashaib' where his mother (Prophet Mohammad's [p.b.u.h] daughter, Fatima Az Zehra) was waiting for him, which was the place of his martyrdom.

Imam Hussain Ibn Ali was badly wounded and asked Zuljanah to sit down, so he could get down. The horse was reluctant as he knew the tyrants were around to behead his Agha. Imam Hussain told him, 'There are no words to praise you dear, Zuljanah. You have helped me till my last hour and now it is time of Asr (evening Prayer) and it is also the time of my

Shahadat. I need to do Sajdah on the land of Karbala. He kept his head on the yaal (mane) of the horse and said to his beloved Zuljanah. Go to the Dewdi, 'Oh! My grandfather's rehwar (horse); now any moment these tyrants will behead me. Go and convey to Zainab that be careful with Sakina. Be with the womenfolk till my head is beheaded and then take Banu to whichever place God orders you.

After Zuljanah's constant efforts to save his master, the war was over and his master came down from his saddle placed on his back. His master was surrounded under the circle of tyrants from all sides. Zuljanah saw his master soaked in his own blood and with grief he started hitting his head on the ground. And then he remembered his master's words and he went to convey his master's message to Bibi Zainab. When Bibi Zainab saw Zuljanah, she said to him, go back to the Maqal, Oh! My grandfather's rehwar and protect my brother? Zuljanah went back to Maqal and tried to protect his master. It is recorded that he killed forty soldiers of Yazid's army to protect his master (Akhtar pg.57)⁹. Yazid's army was furious and wanted to kill Zuljanah but Umar Ibn Saad, Commander of Ubayd Allah Ibn Ziad's Army (Umayyad Governor of Basra, Kufa and Khurasan under the reign of Yazid Ibn Muawiyah) commanded the army, I want Hussain's (a.s) horse alive as I

want to take him as war booty. This horse is very precious as it is the horse of Prophet Mohammad (s.a.w.a) Catch him alive. Ironical, isn't it? They were killing the beloved grandson of Prophet Mohammad and wanted to save his horse.

Yazid's soldiers ran after Zuljanah to catch hold of him. He ran to get away from them after taking a circle when he came back to his master. He saw his master's head on a lance, beheaded from his body. His master's neck was oozing blood. Zuljanah soaked his forehead in his master's blood and went towards his master's Qaimagah. It was Zuljanah who took the message of the Martyrdom of his master, Hussain Ibn Ali (a.s) to the women folk of his master. Till today he (Zuljanah) is remembered for this last task or service he did.

When he understood that, now I cannot help my master in anyway and his master has come to his pre-destined destiny. Then he took the task on himself and went to the tents of womenfolk of Hussain Ibn Ali and neighed loudly. When the Bibi's saw him rider less and his wounded body with all arrows pierced in it. His head soaked in the blood of his master. His bloodshed eyes due to the trauma he just faced and the loss of his dearly loved master. Zuljanah was the first who gave Pursa or condolences to the household of Hussain Ibn Ali. (a.s.) Mir Baber Ali Anis describes the condition of Zuljanah beautifully

in the following verses.

دیکھایہ ذوالجناح کا سیدائنیوں نے حال
خالی ہے زین، اور ہے ماتھا لہو سے لال
گردن پہ اس طرح سے ہے بکھری ہو ایاں
جس طرح کھلتی ہے زین سو گوار بال
روتا ہے یوں وہ غم میں شہ نامدار کے
جیسے پس کورتی ہے ماں داڑھیں مار کے

Transliteration

Dekha ye Zuljanah ka Syedniyon ne haal

Khali hain zeen aur hai matha laho mein lal

Gardan pe iss tarah se hai bikhri huwi ayal

Jis tarah kholti hai zane soghwar baal

Rota hai yun woh ghame Shahe naamdar ke

Jaise pisar ko roati hai maa dhade mar ke (Anis Anees ke

Marsiye pg 249)10

The Women folk of Ahl e Bayt saw the condition of Zuljanah

His rider's seat is vacant and his forehead is red in blood

His mane on the neck are scattered in the similar way

As if a beloved affected with grief unlocks her hair.

He is crying in sorrow of the celebrated King (Hussain Ibn Ali a.s.)

Like a mother weeps and yells in distress for her deceased

son. (Translated by Fatima, Farhat)

Conclusion

Zuljanah will be remembered in the hearts of righteous people till the name of Hussain Ibn Ali will be present. Both are eternal. Zuljanah has shown us the true meaning of faithfulness and devotion and essence of honesty and earnestness. He showed us the importance of commitment and genuineness in relationships. In many Asian Countries the Shabih or replica of Zuljanah is taken out as a respect and remembrance of his sincerity and commitment towards his master Hussain Ibn Ali (a.s.). Shia's and followers of Hussain Ibn Ali (a. s.) give reverence to the Shabih of Zuljanah for his unconditional devotion towards his master but they do not worship him.



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