

Titles of Janabe Zainab (s.a.)

The titles attributed to any person are often a reflection of his/her personality. By observing these titles, one gets a sense of his/her way of living, behavioural traits and lifestyle. However, it is equally important to pay attention as to who is bestowing the title upon the individual. History is replete with instances of those who were hailed or themselves claimed to be the Chief of the Faithful (other than our master Hazrat Ali Ibn Abi Taalib (a.s.)). Obviously, those who conferred these titles were themselves of dubious character and ill-repute.

Having said that, in the case of Janabe Zainab (s.a.), her titles were conferred on her by the chosen ones of Allah. In this article, we will offer an insight into the titles of Janabe Zainab (s.a.) the Second Zahra (s.a.) and offer a comprehensive view of their meanings.

The Infallible (Ma'soomah)

Ma'soomah means infallible (feminine). Infallibility signifies protection from sin and error. The word "infallible" itself is reserved for divine Prophets (a.s.) and their successors. Although Janabe Zainab (s.a.) is not from this illustrious group, yet to even imagine a state of sin and error from her personality would be a grave sin. Her life is a splendid example of piety, struggle and accomplishments. Indeed, she was related to the family which personified purity and infallibility. Her association was with those holy personalities whose purity from all types of uncleanness was testified to by none other than Allah the Almighty – the Verse of Purification (Surah Ahzaab (33): Verse 33) being sufficient to establish this truth. She was brought up and nourished in the lap of infallibility and played an instrumental role herself in raising some of our Imams (a.s.). And this was not all – even those who were raised by her like Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) and Hazrat Ali Akbar (a.s.) imbibed the lessons of infallibility from her and reached the heights of minor infallibility.

Pay attention to the following words from the Ziyarat of Janabe Zainab (s.a.) which is recited at her tomb and are reportedly from the Imams (a.s.). These words offer a fair insight about her status,

“Peace be upon you, O minor infallible! I bear witness that in every condition, misfortune, grief, difficulty and examination, you were patient, majestic, honourable, dignified and thankful.”

The Proximate One to Allah (Waliyatullah)

“The Proximate One to Allah (Waliyatullah) is a title conferred upon those servants loved by Allah and those who are very close to Him. Janabe Zainab (s.a.) is worthy of this title for many reasons, some of which are mentioned below:

Firstly, her worship was outstanding. Even at the heights of misfortune and grief, she remained devoted to the performance of not only the obligatory prayers, but even the recommended ones. Indeed, her worship exemplified that of Allah's friends and those with a high level of divine recognition.

Secondly, she played an outstanding role in ensuring the continued existence of the religion of Allah, enduring innumerable difficulties and offering a supreme sacrifice for its sake. She bore the brunt of atrocities only for the sake of Allah. Leaving her home, she suffered a long imprisonment and sacrificed her adorable sons for the protection of Islam.

Thirdly, the tradition of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) itself establishes this aspect of the personality of Hazrat Zainab (s.a.). If we consider this tradition of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) -“Allah befriends the one who befriends Husain”, which clearly indicates that Allah loves the one who loves Husain (a.s.) and consequently, such a person is close to Allah.

When Imam Husain (a.s.) met Hurr Ibn Riyahi and was prevented from proceeding ahead, the Imam (a.s.) admonished him. Janabe Sakinah (s.a.), observing this incident rushed to her aunt, Janabe Zainab (s.a.), and tearfully narrated this entire episode to her. At that moment, Janabe Zainab (s.a.) lamented with the following words,

Alas, O grandfather! Alas, O my father Ali! Alas O Hasan! Alas O Husain! I grieve for the small number of our friends. What will save us from the evils of our enemies! I desire that Husain (a.s.) be released by the enemies and we be sacrificed in his place!

These words of Hazrat Zainab (s.a.) are an expression of her intense adoration for Imam Husain (a.s.). Her affection for him was incessant and Imam Husain (a.s.) too reciprocated the love and affection of his sister.

Scholar sans Teacher (Aalematun Ghairo Mualemah)

This title means that she was extremely knowledgeable, yet she did not acquire knowledge in the form of a formal education from any ordinary worldly teacher. This title was conferred upon her by none other than the fourth Imam, Hazrat Zainul Abideen (a.s.). He used these words for her to clearly establish her elevated status. Janabe Zainab (s.a.) delivered an eloquent speech amongst the people to the extent that the colour of her face changed. Imam Sajjad (a.s.), fearing that she may lose her life in this condition, whispered to her,

“O Aunt! Silence is better for you (at this stage). What will pass in the future is more reliable than what has already occurred. Praise be to Allah! Indeed you are a scholar without a teacher, and a person of understanding without being made to understand (by any ordinary mortal)”

The above observation of the holy Imam (a.s.) draws our attention to the fact that Janabe Zainab (s.a.) was extremely knowledgeable, yet without being under the tutelage of any ordinary mortal. Her knowledge was divine, which cannot be acquired by any fallible. Clearly, it was a knowledge granted directly by Allah; it was not acquired in any worldly school.

Devout (Zahedah)

One of the titles of Janabe Zainab (s.a.) was Zahedah which was conferred upon her for her excessive worship. Regarding her peity, Maulana Raaziq Khayri writes in his book “Sayyadah Ki Beti”, “Only a few women were granted the standard of the worship and piety of Janabe Zainab (s.a.)”. She was neither attached to this world and its comforts nor affected by its attractions and temptations. She always preferred the happiness, comforts and effects of the hereafter over those of this world.

Allah (s.w.t) observes,

“Wealth and children are an ornament for this world.”

The Arabic term ‘Zohad’ is to sacrifice this ornament of the world. Following the footsteps of her mother, Janabe Zahra (s.a.), she never even attempted to accumulate worldly wealth. On the contrary, she considered it lowly and inconsequential. In addition, she sacrificed her beloved sons in the way of Allah. In this way, the title of Zahedah is a title befitting her lofty personality.

The One Satisfied with Divine Decree and Destiny (Ar-Raaziqato bil Qadre wal Qaza)

This title is well understood when one reflects upon the personality of Janabe Zainab (s.a.). She remained patient and thankful in the face of insurmountable difficulties. If she chose to use the power and will granted to her by Allah, she could have reduced mountains to dust. Yet, she adopted patience, submitted to the will of Allah and welcomed difficulties in tough times. Her submission to Allah was such that when she saw the holy head of her brother, dripping blood and raised on a spear, she raised her hands and said,

'O Lord! Accept this sacrifice of Aale Mohammed (a.s.)!'

The Wailing One (Baaqiyyah)

This means the one who cries excessively. She got this title because she cried due to the fear of Allah and lamented excessively at the difficulties faced by Imam Husain (a.s.). Both these are the best of deeds. It is found in traditions:

"All eyes will cry in Qiyamat except that which cried in the world due to the fear of Allah."

About weeping over Imam Husain (a.s.)

it is found:

"One who cries over Husain (a.s.), or makes others cry or makes the face of a crying one, Paradise is obligatory upon him."

A look at the life of Janabe Zainab (s.a.) speaks for itself how she cried for fear of God. While her lamentations for Imam Husain (a.s.) were such that she cried only for him, so much so that she did not cry for her children as much as she cried at the difficulties faced by Imam Husain (a.s.).

She also laid the foundation of Majaalis (congregational mourning) for Imam Husain (a.s.), because of which the whole world mourns Imam Husain (a.s.) and remembers the difficulties faced by him. She arranged the first Majlis in the house of the accursed Yazid himself, and thus established Azadari till the day of Qiyamat.

Worshipper (Aabedah)

The will of Imam Husain (a.s.) is sufficient to talk about her worship. At the time of the last farewell, on the day of Ashura, Imam Husain (a.s.) told Janabe Zainab (s.a.).

"O Sister! Do not forget me in the Nafela of midnight prayers (Namaz-e-Shab)."

This statement highlights many aspects:

1. This statement reflects the regularity of Janabe Zainab (s.a.) in midnight prayers. The learned scholar Haji Shaikh Abdul Baqir in his book Qurbat-e-Ahmed under authentic Maqaatil quotes from Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.):
In the journey of Syria, inspite of the troubles and difficulties faced by her, she never missed the night vigil prayers. On account of her abundant worship and her elevated status in the presence of Allah, she is famous as the worshipper.
1. Imam Husain (a.s.) recognized the fact that after his martyrdom, the ladies will be taken captive and would be put to untold difficulties in the prison. This will of his demonstrates that inspite of all these difficulties, Imam Husain (a.s.) was certain that Janabe Zainab (s.a.) will maintain the regularity of her night-vigil prayers.
2. Our thoughts also reach out to the distinction and importance of the night-vigil prayers of the person, in which the Imam of the time wishes to be remembered.

Courageous (Shajivaah)

Bravery is the strength of the heart. It is reported in traditions:

"The bravest person is the one who overcomes his desires."

The bravery of Janabe Zainab (s.a.) is established in this tradition. She inherited courage and bravery from her illustrious father, Ameerul Momineen Ali Ibn Abi Taalib (a.s.). Be it before Ashura or the circumstances after the martyrdom of Imam Husain (a.s.) or the difficulties in the prisons of Damascus or at the time of captivity in the streets of Kufa and Damascus or in the court of Yazid or on the return journey to Madinah, on all occasions she displayed indomitable courage. She played a pivotal role in communicating the messages of her brother to the people. This all was achieved because of the courage of this fearless lady.

Fazil-e-Darbandi (a.r.) says that the words of Janabe Zainab (s.a.) in the court of Ibne Ziyad and Yazid reveal her courage and awe. She declared Yazid an unbeliever and an apostate in a packed court. Her sermons too reflect her valour. Through these sermons she announced the defeat of Yazid and the victory and truth of Imam Husain (a.s.).

The Representative of Janab-e-Zehra (s.a.) (Naaeb-e-Zahra (s.a.))

Janabe Zainab (s.a.) is called Naeb-e-Zehra(s.a.) because she resembled her mother in characteristics and excellences. She inherited purity, truthfulness, and other remarkable qualities from her mother. There are many reasons for her being given this title.

1. The wives of the companions called her, ‘Her mother’s heir’ on account of her way of life, habits, manners and conduct.
2. She treated Imam Husain (a.s.) like a mother. Had Janabe Zehra (s.a.) been alive she would have treated her beloved son in a like manner.
3. People usurped the right of Hazrat Ameerul Momineen Ali Ibn Abi Taalib (a.s.) after the demise of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and came together to kill him. Janabe Zehra (s.a.) protected him. Similarly, Janabe Zainab shielded Imam Sajjad (a.s.) from the evils of the enemies and protected him.

Articulate and Eloquent (Al Fassehah wal Baleegah)

Al Fassehah wal Baleegah means the one who is articulate and eloquent. Her eloquence is evident in her sermons. Janabe Raziq writes in his compilation “Sayyadah ki Beti”:

“Bibi Zainab was perfect in the art of oratory. Her words were filled with pain and were so effective that they would make the audience cry. That’s why she is called articulate and eloquent. The fact is that the gift of eloquence has been bestowed only on a few ladies. Her sermons in the court of Yazid and those challenging the governor of Kufa and in the streets of Kufa demonstrated her skilled oration.”

Hazrat Ali (a.s.) had no match in knowledge and eloquence. He (a.s.) enjoyed a high position in prose and poetry. His speeches were at the peak of eloquence and equally heart-rending and effective. His daughter Janabe Zainab (s.a.) inherited his qualities of eloquence, patience, steadfastness and fortitude at the times of difficulties. In fact, it can be said that Janabe Zainab (s.a.) possessed most of the qualities of Ali -the Lion of God.

That is why the name Zain-ab, meaning the ‘adornment of her father’, was given to her.

A’AMAAL OF BIBI ZAYNAB (S.A.)

Remembering Bibi Zaynab (s.a.) the following A’AMAAL is very effective for curing sickness, abundance in Rizq, and dispersing calamities and problems:

Recite 11 times Salawaat.

Pray 2 rak’at Namaaz for Haajat.

Recite: Allaahumma Swalli Alaa Muhammadin Wa Aali Muhammad - Bismillaahir-Rahmaanir-Raheem. Yaa Zaynab Ishfi’alee Fil Jannati Fa Inna Laki Indallaahish-Shafaa’atil Maqboolati Wal Manzilatil Adhweemah. - Allaahumma Swalli Alaa Muhammadin Wa Aali Muhammad.

[Ref of A’amaal - POWER OF PRAYERS- by Mustafa Hajji Ahmed Khaki, pg 145]

O Almighty Allah, we come to your presence with Your Special Names on our tongues and for the sake of Janabe Zainab (s.a.) ask you to hasten of the reappearance of our Imam, Hujjat Ibn al-Hasan (a.s.)! Aameen!..

Itemase dua.