

Chapter 13: Life of Imām Ḥasan al `Askarī (a.s.) – The Thirteenth Infallible

1. Relating to the felicitous birth, name and agnomen of Imām Ḥasan al `Askarī (a.s.)

Imām Ḥasan al `Askarī (a.s.) was born in Madīnah in the year two hundred and thirty two Hijrah in the month of Rabī`ul Thānī. However, there is difference of opinion regarding the day of his birth. `Allāmah (Muḥammad Bāqir) al Majlisī is of the opinion that the most renowned report is that he (a.s.) was born on Friday, the eighth of the month of Rabī`ul Thānī or it is even said that the tenth of this month. While some even opine that he was born on the night of the fourth in the same month. Our Master Shaikh (Muḥammad bin Ḥasan) Ḥurr al `Amelī points out to this difference of opinion in his poetical composition, saying, **“His birth took place in the month of Rabī`ul Ākhar, and it took place on the honourable day of tenth; on Monday and it is said that it took place on the fourth, and it is also stated that it took place on the eighth and this is more prevalent”**.

His (a.s.)’s sacred name is Ḥasan, his agnomen (Kunīyyah) Abū Muḥammad, while his renowned titles are Al Zakī (the virtuous) and Al `Askarī (belonging to Al `Askar, Sāmarrā’). He (a.s.), his father (Imām al Hādī) and his grandfather (Imām al Jawād), each one of them were referred to as Ibnul Ridhā (the son of Imām `Alī al Ridhā). His ring was engraved with, “Sub-ḥana Man Lahū Maqālīdul Samāwāti wal Ardh (Glory be to Him for Whom are the keys of the heavens and the earth)”, or it is even said, “Annallāha Shahīd (I am Allāh, the Witness)”. While his (a.s.)’s Glorification (Tasbīḥ) on the sixteenth and seventeenth of every month is, “Sub-ḥana Man Huwa fī `Ulūwwihī Dān, wa fī Dunūwwihī `Āl, wa fī Ishrāqihī Munīr, wa fī Sulṭānihī Qawī, Sub-ḥanAllāhi wa bi Ḥamdih (Glory be to the One Who is Near in His Exaltedness, and is Exalted in His Nearness, and is Radiant in His Appearance, and is Mighty in His Sovereignty, Glory be to Allāh and his Praise)”.

The name of his (a.s.)’s glorious mother was Ḥadīth (or Ḥudayth), and according to a statement Salīl (or Sulayl) or even Jaddah¹. She was an epitome of uprightness, devotedness and piety. It is written in Jannātul Khulūd (of Mīrzā Muḥammad Ridhā al Khātūnābādī) that she was among the notables in her town and upon the ranks of kings. It is sufficient proof of her excellence that she was a

¹ She was called Jaddah, which means grandmother, since she was the grandmother of Imām al Mahdī (a.t.f.s.) and was therefore attributed to him. Her other title is also mentioned as Sawsan. (translator)

shelter and refuge for the Shī`ah after the death (of her son) Imām Ḥasan al `Askarī (a.s.).

Al Mas`ūdī writes in his Ithbātul Waṣīyyah that it is related from Imām (a.s.) that when Salīl, the mother of Abū Muḥammad (al `Askarī) entered the presence of Abul Ḥasan (al Hādī), he said, "Salīl, the one drawn (Maslūl) from afflictions, disabilities, uncleanliness and filth". Then he (a.s.) said, "Allāh (s.w.t.) shall bestow you (through your son) His Evidence (Ḥujjah) upon His creatures. He shall fill the earth with justice as it will be filled with inequity". His (a.s.)'s mother bore him in Madīnah and gave birth to him therein. While his (a.s.)'s birth and his homeland was similar to the birth of his forefathers (a.s.) and their hometown. He (a.s.) was born in the year two hundred and thirty one Hijrah, while the age of Imām Abul Ḥasan al Hādī (a.s.) at that time was sixteen years and he (Imām al `Askarī) accompanied him (Imām al Hādī) to `Irāq in the year two hundred and thirty six Hijrah when he was four years of age and some months.

We (the Author) say that we have quoted the text upon the Imāmah of Imām Ḥasan al `Askarī (a.s.) in the biography of Imām al Hādī (a.s.) in the section dealing with his son Sayyid Muḥammad.

2. The noble character of Imām al `Askarī (a.s.)

First, Shaikh al Mufīd and others relate that some men from Banī `Abbās went to Ṣāleḥ bin Waṣīf when Abū Muḥammad (al `Askarī) was imprisoned with him and told him, "Constrain him and do not be liberal towards him". He replied saying that, what should I do to him. I appointed two most evil among men upon him, one of them `Alī bin Yārmash and another Iqtāmash. However, they transformed into people of worship, prayers and fasting to a greater extent. I then summoned them and asked them, "Woe be upon you! What is your position with the man"? They replied, "What can we say about the man (a.s.) who fasts during the days and stands up (in Prayers) for the entire night. He neither speaks, nor engrosses himself in anything else except worship. Then when he (a.s.) casts his glance at us, our limbs and internal body tremble (due to his awe and admiration), while we do not have control upon ourselves". When the men from Banī `Abbās heard this, they returned back unsuccessful.

We (the Author) say that it is evidenced from reports that Imām (a.s.) was constantly in prison and not permitted to interact with people. He (a.s.) would always remain engrossed in worship, and we shall relate this in the consequent reports.

Al Mas`ūdī writes that Abul Ḥasan (Imām al Hādī) remained concealed from majority of the Shī`ah except a few among his distinguished ones. And when the matter (of Imāmah) reached Abū Muḥammad (al `Askarī), he would speak to his distinguished Shī`ah and others from behind the curtain, except during the time when he (a.s.) rode for going to visit the ruler. This act from him (a.s.) and his father (Imām al Hādī) was in fact a prelude to the concealment (Gaybah) of Imām al Mahdī (a.t.f.s.) to familiarize the Shī`ah with it and they in turn would not deny the concealment (Gaybah), while they would also be accustomed to occultation and concealment.

Second, it is related that Mu`tamad had imprisoned Abū Muḥammad (al `Askarī) with `Alī bin Ḥazīn (or Jarīn) as well as his (a.s.)'s brother Ja`far. He would keep inquiring regarding him (a.s.) from `Alī and he would reply, "He fasts during the days and stands up (in worship) during the nights". Once as usual he inquired from `Alī and he replied using the same words. Hearing this, Mu`tamad told him, "Then go to him (a.s.) at this very moment, convey my salutations to him and tell him: Return back to your house in peace".

`Alī says that when I reached the door of the prison, I found a saddled donkey standing there. When I entered the prison, I found him sitting wearing his shoes, his cloak and his muslin cloth (ready to go). As soon as his (a.s.)'s sight fell upon me, he arose and I conveyed the message to him. Hearing this, he (a.s.) mounted the donkey and when he settled upon it, he waited. I asked him (a.s.), "O my Master! Why do you wait"? He (a.s.) replied, "Until Ja`far comes". I replied, "I have been commanded to release you without him". Imām (a.s.) told me, "Then return to him (Mu`tamad) and tell him that we left the house together. You know very well what may happen if I return back while he is not along with me".

`Alī went and returned back with a message (from Mu`tamad), saying, "We have released Ja`far for your sake, since we imprisoned him for his crime against himself and you, and for what he spoke to you". Thus he was released and he returned back to his house with Imām (a.s.).

Third, `Īsā bin Şubayḥ relates that Imām Ḥasan al `Askarī (a.s.) was once imprisoned along with us, while I recognized him. He (a.s.) told me, "Your age is sixty five years, one month and two days". I possessed a book of supplications (Du`ā') with me on which the date of my birth was written. I opened it and found it to be accurate as he (a.s.) said. Then he (a.s.) asked me, "Do you have a son"? I replied in the negative and he (a.s.) prayed, saying, "O Allāh (s.w.t.)! Grant him a son who would be a support for him, while a son is the best support". Then he (a.s.) recited these verses as comparison, "One who possesses support can avenge the oppression done upon him, verily abased is the one who has none to support him". Then I asked him (a.s.) whether he had a son and he replied, "Yes, by Allāh (s.w.t.)! I shall be granted a son, who shall fill the earth with equity and justice. However presently, I do not have (a son)". Again he (a.s.) recited these verses as comparison, "Perhaps you shall see me one day, my sons similar to lions having surrounded me; for verily before Al Ḥaşā (pebbles) were born to him, Tamīm¹ would be alone among the people for quite some time".

Fourth, it is related that Abu Muḥammad (al `Askarī) was imprisoned near Naḥrīr and his wife told him, "Fear Allāh (s.w.t.)! Don't you know who is in your house"?

¹ Tamīm refers to Tamīm bin Murr bin `Udd bin Ṭābikhah bin Ilyās bin Mudhar bin Nizār bin Ma`add bin `Adnān to whom one of the largest tribes of `Arabs called Banī Tamīm are attributed. While Al Ḥaşā, that means pebbles, is used as resemblance; since initially Tamīm was alone among the people, until a large progeny, similar to pebbles, emerged from his descendants. (translator)

Saying this, she started to describe his (a.s.)'s worship, righteousness and said, "I fear for you regarding (your mistreatment towards) him". Hearing this, he said, "I shall throw him (a.s.) in the midst of Lions". He sought permission from the ruler to do so and then threw him therein. The wife of Naḥrīr had the least doubt that the Lions would eat him (a.s.). When they looked for him (a.s.) the next day to find out his state, they saw him standing in Prayers in their midst, thus he ordered Imām (a.s.) to be taken out.

We (the Author) say that the following supplication (Du`ā') to be recited at the eleventh hour, points out to this miracle, "Wa bil Imāmil Thiqaṭil Ḥasan ibn `Alī allaḍī ṭuriḥa lil Sibā`i fa Khallaṣtahu min Marābidhihā, wa Umtuḥina bil Dawābbil Ṣi`ābi fa Ḍallalta lahū Marākibahā (By the Right of the Trustworthy Imām Ḥasan bin `Alī who was thrown to the Lions and You rescued him from their fold; and he was tried by means of a burdensome creature and You made it subservient to him to mount it)". The last words of the supplication (Du`ā') points out to the incident where Musta`in Billāh had a mule that did not allow anyone to mount it or place a bridle upon it. Trainers were gathered however none could mount it. Musta`in commanded that Imām al `Askarī (a.s.) should be summoned to mount it, perhaps it could succeed in killing him (a.s.). Imām (a.s.) arrived and placed his blessed hand upon the shoulder of the mule and it started to sweat. Musta`in told him (a.s.), "I request you to bridle it". Hearing this, Imām (a.s.) bridled it, placed a saddle upon it and mounted it without it refusing anything. Then it started to walk, a best walking. Seeing this, Musta`in was astonished and gifted it to the Imām (a.s.).

Fifth, Ibn Shahr Āshub relates from the book Kitāb al Tabdīl wal Taḥrīf of Abul Qāsim al Kūfī, that Ishāq al Kindī was a philosopher from `Irāq in his age. He started to author a book regarding contradictions in the Qur`ān. He engrossed himself in this task and secluded himself in his house to do so. One of his students once entered the presence of Imām Ḥasan al `Askarī (a.s.) who asked him, "Isn't there an intelligent person among you who could prevent your teacher al Kindī from what he has engrossed himself regarding the Qur`ān"? The student replied, "We are his students. Then how can it be lawful for us to object to him in this case or anything else"? Then Imām (a.s.) asked him, "Will you convey to him what I tell you"? He replied in the affirmative and Imām (a.s.) continued, "Then go to him and be courteous in his friendship and his support in task. Then when affability takes place among yourselves, tell him that you need to question him in some

issue. When he permits you to do so, ask him, 'If the speaker of the Qur'ān (Allāh) comes to you, is it legitimate that the meaning of what He intends to say might be different from what you presume and take from it'? He shall reply to you that it is legitimate, since he shall understand when he hears your words. Then when he replies to you, tell him, 'Then how do you know, perhaps He intends something different from what you understood, as a result this compilation would be meaningless'".

The student came to al Kindī and gained affability with him and put forward this question to him. Hearing this, he told him to repeat it and then thought to himself and opined that it was possible with regards to the language and acceptable in opinion. Then he asked the student, "I swear to you to tell me from where you acquired this"? The student replied, "This was inspired into my heart and I related it to you". The man said, "Never. A person similar to you can neither acquire it nor reach such an understanding. Then inform me from where you gained it"? Hearing this, the student replied, "Abū Muḥammad (al `Askarī) commanded it to me". He said, "Now you have said. Nothing can come similar to this except from that house (Ahlal-bait)". Saying this, he ordered fire to be kindled and burnt all that he had compiled.

Sixth, `Allāmah (Muḥammad Bāqir) al Majlisī relates from the books of some of our masters (traditionists), from `Alī bin `Āṣim al Kūfī al A`amā (the blind) that I entered the presence of my master Ḥasan al `Askarī (a.s.) and saluted him. He (a.s.) replied to my salutation and said, "Welcome to you O son of `Āṣim! Sit, and congratulations to you O son of `Āṣim! Do you know what lies beneath your feet"? I replied, "O my Master! I find a carpet beneath my feet. May Allāh (s.w.t.) have Mercy upon the face of its owner (he meant Imām)". Then he (a.s.) said, "O son of `Āṣim! You are presently seated upon a carpet upon which numerous Prophets (a.s.) and Messengers (a.s.) have sat". Hearing this, I said, "O my Master! I wish I do not depart from you until I am alive in this world".¹ Then I fell upon the

¹ The Ḥadīth further states that `Alī bin `Āṣim says that then I said to myself, "I wish I could see the carpet with my eyes". Imām al `Askarī (a.s.) perceived what was in my mind and told me to near him. I neared him and he caressed his blessed hand upon my face and I gained my sight by the Permission of Allāh (s.w.t.). Then Imām (a.s.) said, "(Look) This is the footprint of our father Ādam (a.s.) and this is the mark of Hābil (a.s.). And this is the mark of Shīth (a.s.), and this is the mark of Idrīs (a.s.), and this is the mark of Hūd (a.s.), and this is the mark of Ṣāleḥ (a.s.), and this is the mark of Luqmān (a.s.), and this is the mark of Ibrahim

carpet, started kissing it and then kissed his hand and said, "I am incapable to assist you with my hands and do not own anything except your love, disassociating myself from your enemies and invoking (Allāh's) curse upon them in my privacy. Then what is my position O my Master"?

Hearing this, Imām (a.s.) replied, "My father (Imām al Hādī) related to me from my grandfather the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), who said that, 'One who is powerless is assisting us, the Ahlulbait, then he invokes (Allāh's) curse upon our enemies in his privacy, Allāh (s.w.t.) reaches his voice to all the Angels. Then whenever anyone among you invokes (Allāh's) curse upon our enemies, the Angels raise it up and curse those who do not invoke (Allāh's) curse upon them. Then when his voice reaches the Angels, they seek forgiveness for him and praise him. They say: O Allāh (s.w.t.)! Send salutations upon the soul of this slave of Yours' who made utmost effort and struggle in the defence of his Friends (a.s.). And if he was capable of doing something more, he would certainly do'. Then a voice from Allāh (s.w.t.) would be sounded, 'O My Angels! I love your prayers regarding this slave of Mine, I heard your voice and sent salutations upon his soul along with the souls of the righteous ones, moreover I included him among the chosen ones, the good ones".¹

Seventh, it is related in Biḥārul Anwār (of Muḥammad Bāqir al Majlisī) as narrated from Tārikhe Qum (of Ḥasan bin Muḥammad al Qummī) that some of the masters (traditionists) of Qum relate that Ḥusain bin Ḥasan bin Ja`far bin Muḥammad bin Ismā`il bin (Imām) Ja`far al Ṣādiq (a.s.) would consume intoxicants at Qum publicly. One day he went to the door of the house of Aḥmad bin Ishāq al Ash`arī (al Qummī) for a need. Aḥmad bin Ishāq was the agent of Imām al `Askarī (a.s.) in endowments at Qum. Aḥmad did not permit him to enter his house and he

(a.s.), and this is the mark of Lūṭ (a.s.), and this is the mark of Shu`ayb (a.s.), and this is the mark of Mūsā (a.s.), and this is the mark of Dāwūd (a.s.), and this is the mark of Sulaymān (a.s.), and this is the mark of Khidhr (a.s.), and this is the mark of Dāniyāl (a.s.), and this is the mark of Ḍul Qarnayn (s.a.), and this is the mark of `Adnān (s.a.), and this is the mark of `Abdul Muṭṭalib (s.a.), and this is the mark of `Abdullāh (s.a.), and this is the mark of `Abd Manāf (probably Abū Ṭālib [s.a.]), and this is the mark of my grandfather the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and this is the mark of my grandfather `Alī bin Abī Ṭālib (a.s.)". (Muḥammad Bāqir al Majlisī, "Biḥārul Anwār") Then the Ḥadīth continues as above. (translator)

¹ Refer to the Qur'ānic Verse, **"Verily they are with Us, of the chosen ones, the good ones"**. (Sūrat Ṣād: 47) (translator)

returned back to his home in a depressed state. After some time Aḥmad bin Ishāq proceeded for the Ḥajj Pilgrimage and when he reached Surr Man Ra'ā (Sāmarrā'), he sought permission from Abū Muḥammad Ḥasan al `Askarī (a.s.) to meet him. Imām (a.s.) did not grant him permission to meet and therefore he wept for a lengthy period of time and pleaded until he was granted permission. When Aḥmad entered the presence of Imām (a.s.), he asked him, "O son of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.)! Why did you stop me from entering your presence when I am among your adherents (Shi`ah) and your lovers"? Imām (a.s.) replied, "Since you returned back our cousin from your door". Hearing this, Aḥmad wept and swore that he did not prevent him from entering his presence except with an intention that he may repent upon his consuming intoxicants. Imām (a.s.) said, "You speak the truth. However, you should respect and honour them in all respects. You should not disgrace them or flout them due to their relationship with us; in that case you would be among the losers".

When Aḥmad bin Ishāq returned back to Qum, the notables came to visit him and Ḥusain was also along with them. As soon as Aḥmad saw him, he leapt towards him, welcomed him, honoured him and sat him in the centre of the gathering. Seeing this, Ḥusain found this unusual from him and asked him the reason. Aḥmad related to him what transpired between him and Imām al `Askarī (a.s.). When Ḥusain heard this, he regretted upon his ugly act (of consuming intoxicants) and repented from it. When he returned back to his house, he burnt all the intoxicants and broke its containers. Ultimately he entered the ranks of the abstemious pious ones and the virtuous devout ones. He remained attached to the Masjid and resided therein until his death. Then he was buried near the tomb of Sayyidah Fāṭemah (al Ma`ṣūmah).

We (the Author) say that it is written in Tārīkhe Qum (of Ḥasan bin Muḥammad al Qummī) that the above Abul Ḥasan Ḥusain was the first one among the progeny of Imām al Ḥusain (a.s.) to enter Qum. When he passed away, he was buried at the cemetery of Bābilān, while his dome connects to the dome of Fāṭemah bint Mūsā (al Ma`ṣūmah) from the front part of the town.

It should be noted that a similar incident has been quoted from the vizier `Alī bin `Īsā.¹ He relates that I was favourable towards the `Alawīyyīn and bestowed

¹ He is Abul Ḥasan `Alī bin `Īsā bin Jarrāḥ (d.335), the vizier of Al Muqtadir al `Abbāsī and Al Qāhir al `Abbāsī. (translator)

upon each one of them every year at Madīnah that would suffice each one of them with regards to food and clothing and suffice their children. I would do so at the onset of the month of Ramadhān until its conclusion. There was an old man among the children of Mūsā bin Ja`far bin Muḥammad al Bāqir (a.s.) whom I bestowed five thousand dirham every year.

One day during winter, by chance I passed down and found him totally inebriate, while he was vomiting and smeared in earth. I found him in a worst state in the middle of the street and said to myself, "Every year I bestow five thousand dirham to this profligate to spend in the disobedience of Allāh (s.w.t.)? Certainly I shall stop his bestowals from this year". Then when the month of Ramadhān commenced, the old man arrived and stood at my door. When I turned to him, he saluted me and requested me for his bestowal. Hearing this, I said, "No, there is neither respect, nor shall I bestow you my wealth so that you could spend it on disobedience of Allāh (s.w.t.). Didn't I see you during the winter while you were in an inebriate state? Then return back to your house and do not come back to me from now on".

When I slept that night, I saw the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) in a dream, while the people had gathered around him (s.a.w.a.). I proceeded towards him (s.a.w.a.) and he avoided me. This was severe upon me and it hurt me. I told him (s.a.w.a.), "O Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.)! All this in spite of my numerous favours upon your children, my goodness towards them and my abundant salutations upon you? Then you reward me by avoiding me"? He (s.a.w.a.) replied, "Did you not expel my such and such son from your door, an ugly expelling; did you not disappoint him and stopped his yearly bestowal"? I said, "I did so since I witnessed a disgraceful act from him". Saying this, I narrated the matter to him (s.a.w.a.) and then said, "I withheld his bestowal to stop him from the disobedience of Allāh (s.w.t.)". The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said, "Did you bestow upon him for his sake or my sake"? I replied that I did so for his (s.a.w.a.)'s sake, to which he (s.a.w.a.) asked, "Then will you conceal what he did for my sake and due to his being from among my progeny"? I replied, "(Yes) With love, honour and respect". Then I awoke from my sleep.

When it dawned, I sent someone to fetch the old man. When I returned back from the office and entered my house, I ordered that he should also be entered. Then I ordered my slave to give him ten thousand dirham in two bags. I forwarded it to

him, honoured him and said, "If you need anything else, let me know". Saying this, I sent him in a joyous state. When he reached the house, he returned back to me and asked, "O Vizier! What is the reason that you expelled me yesterday and neared me today, while you increased my bestowal"? I replied, "There is nothing except goodness. Then return back with discretion". He said, "By Allāh (s.w.t.)! I shall not return back until you tell me what happened". I informed to him all that I had dreamt. Hearing this, his eyes got filled with tears and he said, "I vow to Allāh (s.w.t.) that I shall not repeat what you saw me. I shall never commit disobedience of Allāh (s.w.t.) to make my grandfather (s.a.w.a.) needy in asking you because of me". Saying this, he sought forgiveness, a good forgiveness".

We (the Author) say that consuming intoxicants is among the major sins, rather it is related that, "Allāh (s.w.t.) has placed locks upon evil and has made intoxicants the keys for those locks".¹

Imām Ja`far al Şādiq (a.s.) says regarding consuming intoxicants that, "It is made unlawful since it the mother of vile and the root of all evil. A time comes upon its consumer when his intellect parts away. He neither recognizes his Allāh (s.w.t.) nor does he leave any disobedience except that he performs it, any sanctity except that he violates it, any relation except that he severs it and any indecency except that he performs it. The reign of an inebriate is in the hands of shayṭān, if he orders him to prostrate to idols, he shall do so and he (shayṭān) leads him wherever he wants".

It is related from Imām Muḥammad al Bāqir (a.s.) that, "Consuming intoxicants enters its consumer into committing adultery, theft, killing a soul whom Allāh has forbidden but for a just cause, and polytheism (Shirk). By Allāh (s.w.t.)! The act of consuming intoxicant is higher than all sins similar to its tree that is higher than all trees".

It is also related that, "The one addicted to intoxicants is similar to an idol worshipper".²

It is stated that an intoxicant cannot be a trusty;³ it is not lawful to befriend an

¹ As related by Imām Muḥammad al Bāqir (a.s.) (translator)

² As related by the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) (translator)

³ Imām Ja`far al Şādiq (a.s.) says, "A consumer of intoxicants is not competent to marry and should not be given trusts due to the words of Allāh, **And give not away to the foolish**

intoxicant or sit in his company. One should not marry him,¹ or visit him when he is sick. One should neither accompany his bier nor acknowledge his word.²

The prayers of an intoxicant are not accepted for forty days.³ The intercession (Shafā`ah) of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) shall not reach him, he shall not reach the fountain (of Kawthar)⁴ and will be made to drink from the clay of ruination (Ṭinat Khabāl), that is pus that oozes out from the private parts of an adulteress.⁵

ones your property which Allāh has made for you (a means of your) sustenance”. (Sūratul Nisā’: 5) (Mīrzā Ḥusain al Nūrī, “Mustadrakul Wasā’el”) (translator)

- ¹ There are numerous Aḥādīth forbidding marriage with a consumer of intoxicants, to state a few. The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) says, “The one who consumes intoxicants after Allāh (s.w.t.) has made it unlawful, he is not competent to marry even though he be engaged”. (Ḥasan bin Fadhl al Ṭabarsī, “Makārimul Akhlāq”) It is related from Imām Ja`far al Ṣādiq (a.s.) that, “The one who marries his daughter to a consumer of intoxicant, severs the bond of relationship with her”. (Muḥammad bin Ḥasan al Ḥurr al `Amelī, “Wasā`eul Shī`ah”) Imām `Alī al Ridhā (a.s.) says, “Do not marry (your women to) a consumer of intoxicants, for the one who does so, it is as if he has led her towards adultery”. (Mīrzā Ḥusain al Nūrī, “Mustadrakul Wasā’el”) (translator)
- ² It is related from Imām Ja`far al Ṣādiq (a.s.) that, “The consumer of intoxicants, if he falls ill, do not visit him; and if he dies, do not attend his funeral; and if he bears witness, do not accept it; and if he enters into engagement with your daughter, do not marry her to him. For the one who marries his daughter to the consumer of intoxicant, it is as if he has led her towards adultery. And the one who marries his daughter in opposition to his religion; it is as if he has severed the bond of relationship with her. And one who trusts a consumer of intoxicant, there shall be no guarantee for him from Allāh (s.w.t.)”. (Shaikh al Ṣadūq, “Man lā Yaḥdhurūhul Faqīh”) (translator)
- ³ The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said in his testimony to Amīrul Mu`minīn Imām `Alī (a.s.), “O `Alī! Allāh (s.w.t.) does not accept the prayers of a consumer of intoxicants for forty days. And if he dies in these forty (days), he dies a (death of a) disbeliever”. (Shaikh al Ṣadūq, “Jāme`ul Akhbār”) (translator)
- ⁴ It is related that the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said, “My intercession (Shafā`ah) shall not reach the one who belittles his prayers and he shall not reach me at the (fountain of) Kawthar. No, by Allāh (s.w.t.)! My intercession (Shafā`ah) shall not reach the one who consumes intoxicants and he shall not reach me at the (fountain of) Kawthar”. (Shaikh al Kulaynī, “Al Kāfī”) (translator)
- ⁵ Ḥusain bin Sadīr relates from his father that Imām Muḥammad al Bāqir (a.s.) said, “A consumer of intoxicants shall be risen on the day of Qiyāmah with his face blacked, his tongue hanging out of his mouth, his spit shall be flowing upon his chest. It is rightful for Allāh (s.w.t.) to make him drink from the clay of ruination (Ṭinat Khabāl)”, or he (a.s.) said, “the well of ruination

We (the Author) say that there are numerous reports that cannot be computed, while the corruptions and damages resulting in consuming intoxicants do not require to be stated. Moreover it is related that numerous European towns have prohibited its use, while some of their magazines and newspapers even quote the defects and harms of consuming intoxicants. Among them this statement, "The best drink is pure fresh water. And if doctors in some countries allow to mix a small quantity of intoxicant with water due to non-availability of fresh and pure water, or taking into consideration the climatic requirements, however we believe that fresh water is most preferable and the best. There is no advantage in consuming intoxicants except in cases of some diseases that require using it. Moreover all intoxicants are harmful for the human body. The scholars have elaborated in their statements regarding the harmful effects of intoxicants. As one cannot expect medicine from the sting of a scorpion, similarly benefit cannot be imagined from intoxicants. And wherever poison has become a medicine, consuming intoxicants has also become beneficial. And if a sane person realizes the hidden harms, he shall withhold its consumption even though there is life in its each drop. The consumer of intoxicants delays today's task to tomorrow and spends his future savings today itself, apart from other disadvantages attached to consuming it such as soiling the name of his respectable family and ruination of numerous families and other similarities. Then if we behold with the sight of good-judgement and fairness, we will conclude that public use of intoxicants is the reason for giving birth to deadly diseases, while we do not find these diseases in those countries where it is unavailable or its use is prohibited by the religion prevalent in that country, rather we find health and vigour in its inhabitants".

Summarily, there is much more to discuss in this matter, however this place is not suitable to quote anything more. We desire to end this conversation with the verses by Al Awḥadī al Marāgehī al Iṣfahānī¹

Eighth, Abul Sahl al Balkhī relates that a person sent a letter to Abū Muḥammad (al `Askarī) in which he requested him to pray for his parents. His mother was an extremist and his father was a believer. Imām (a.s.) wrote in reply, "May Allāh

(Bī'ir Khabāl)". I asked him, "And what is the well of ruination"? He (a.s.) replied, "A well in which flows the pus that oozes from the private parts of an adulteress". (Shaikh al Kulaynī, "Al Kāfī") (translator)

¹ Ruknuddīn al Awḥadī, a Persian poet and gnostic in eighteenth century Hijrah. The Esteemed Author thereafter quotes his verses in Fārsī that we forgo. (translator)

(s.w.t.) have mercy upon your father". Another person wrote a letter to Imām (a.s.) also requesting him to pray for his parents, when his mother was a believer and his father was a dualistic (believer in two gods). Imām (a.s.) wrote back to him, "May Allāh (s.w.t.) have mercy upon your mother".

3. Miracles of Imām al `Askarī (a.s.)

First, Quṭubuddīn al Rāwandī relates from Ja`far bin Sharīf al Jurjānī that one year I decided to go for the Ḥajj Pilgrimage and therefore went to Surr Man Ra`ā (Sāmarrā') to meet Abū Muḥammad (al `Askarī). My companions had sent some amount with me and I desired to ask Imām (a.s.) whom should I hand it over to. Before I could say anything, Imām (a.s.) said, "Hand it over to my slave Al Mubārak". I did as directed, came out and told Imām (a.s.), "Verily your Shī`ah at Jurjān (in Īrān) sent you salutations". He (a.s.) asked me, "Will you not return back (to Jurjān) after completion of your Ḥajj Pilgrimage"? I replied in the affirmative and he (a.s.) continued, "You shall reach Jurjān one hundred and seventy days from now. You shall enter it at dawn on Friday, when three nights of the month of Rabī`ul Thānī will pass away. Then inform them that I shall come to meet them at the end of that day. Then leave in discretion, for Allāh (s.w.t.) shall protect you and those along with you. Return back to your family and your son. A son shall be born to your son Sharīf, then name him Al Ṣalt bin Sharīf bin Ja`far bin Sharīf. Allāh (s.w.t.) shall elevate him and he shall be among our friends".

Then I continued, "O son of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.)! Verily Ibrāhīm bin Ismā`īl al Jurjānī is among your Shī`ah and very favourable towards your friends. He distributes more than a hundred thousand dirham every year from his own wealth, while he is among those who are affluent in the blessings of Allāh (s.w.t.) at Jurjān". Hearing this, Imām (a.s.) said, "May Allāh (s.w.t.) thank the favours of Abī Ishāq Ibrāhīm bin Ismā`īl towards our Shī`ah, forgive his sins and bestow him a sound male child who would be a speaker of truth. Then tell him that Ḥasan bin `Alī (al `Askarī) tells you to name him Aḥmad".

Thereafter I left his presence and performed the Ḥajj Pilgrimage, while Allāh (s.w.t.) protected me and I entered Jurjān at dawn on Friday in the month of Rabī`ul Thānī as informed by Imām (a.s.). Our companions came to greet me and I informed them that Imām (a.s.) had promised me that he would meet them at the end of that day. I told them, "Then prepare all that you require from him (a.s.) and gather all your questions and needs". After they recited the Ḥuḥr and `Aṣr Prayers, all of them gathered at my house. By Allāh (s.w.t.) we were not aware when Abū Muḥammad (al `Askarī) arrived and entered, while we had all gathered therein. He (a.s.) was the first to salute us and we in turn welcomed him and kissed his hands. Then Imām (a.s.) said, "I had promised Ja`far bin Sharīf that I

would come to you at the end of this day. I recited the Ḥuḥr and `Āṣr Prayers at Surr Man Ra`ā (Sāmarrā') and came to you to renew the pledge. Now here I am, then gather all your questions and needs".

The first one to question Imām (a.s.) was Al Nadhr bin Jābir. He said, "O son of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.)! My son Jābir suffers with a problem in his sight since months. Then pray to Allāh (s.w.t.) requesting Him to return back his eyesight". Imām (a.s.) told him to bring him and when he was brought, he (a.s.) caressed his hand upon his eye and he started to see. Then person after person proceeded to Imām (a.s.), questioned him for their needs and he replied to all that they asked. He (a.s.) fulfilled all their needs, prayed for them and left that very day.

Second, Abū Hāshim al Ja`farī says that I heard Imām al `Askarī (a.s.) say, "Among those sins that are not forgiven (by Allāh) is the statement of a man who says that, I wish I am not censured except for this (sin)". Hearing this, I said to myself, "Verily this is precise, while a man should examine everything from his self". Suddenly Imām (a.s.) told me, "You are right O Abā Hāshim! Then commit yourself to what you told yourself. For verily polytheism (shirk) is more concealed in people than the crawling of an ant upon a black stone on a pitch-dark night".

We (the Author) say that what is meant by this is belittling of sins.¹ To this effect Imām Ja`far al Ṣādiq (a.s.) says, "Beware of belittling sins, for it shall not be forgiven". While the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said, "Verily Iblīs is pleased with you due to belittling (of sins)". He (s.a.w.a.) also advised `Abdullāh ibn Mas`ūd in his testimony to him, saying, "O son of Mas`ūd! Do not belittle sins or consider them to be minute, and distance yourself from major ones (sins) since when a slave beholds his sins on the day of Qiyāmah, he shall weep tears of pus. And Allāh (s.w.t.) says in the Qur`ān: **(Remember) The day (of Qiyāmah) when every soul shall find present whatever it has wrought of good; and whatever it has wrought of evil, it will wish that wide were the interval between it and himself**".²

The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) told Abū Ḍarr, "Verily a believer considers his sins as if he is under a boulder (large) and fears that it shall fall down upon him;

¹ To consider one's sins to be little or trivial and not being serious regarding them. (translator)

² Holy Qur`ān, Sūrat Āl `Imrān:30

while a disbeliever considers his sins similar to a fly (minute) that passes from over his nose". Among the words of Amīrul Mu'minīn (a.s.) is that, "The severest of sins is that its performer considers it to be little".

`Alī bin Ibrāhīm al Qummī relates from Imām Ja`far al Ṣādiq (a.s.) that he said, "Allāh (s.w.t.) has created a snake that has engulfed the heavens and earth and has gathered his head and tail below the `Arsh. Then when it beholds the sins of the slaves, its regrets and seeks permission from Allāh (s.w.t) to swallow the heavens and earth". And there are numerous reports in this respect.

Imām Ja`far al Ṣādiq (a.s.) says that once the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) alighted at a barren land and commanded his companions to gather wood. They said, "O Messenger of Allāh (s.w.t.)! We are at a barren land and there is no trace of wood here". He (s.a.w.a.) said, "Every person should get whatever he can". They returned back to him (s.a.w.a.) and gathered it (a pile) one after the other and the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said, "The sins gather in this manner". Then he (s.a.w.a.) continued, "Beware of belittling sins for everything shall be claimed. Beware, the Claimant (Allāh) has written: **We have not neglected in the book (Qur'ān) anything**".¹

Third, Abū Hāshim al Ja`farī relates that once Abū Muḥammad (al `Askarī) rode towards the desert, while I too followed him. While we were riding, he (a.s.) in front of me and I behind him, a thought passed by my mind regarding my debt that the time to repay it was due. I started to think how I would pay it back, when Imām (a.s.) turned to me and said, "O Abā Hāshim! Allāh (s.w.t.) shall repay it". Saying this, he (s.w.t.) bent from his saddlebow and drew a line with his whip upon the earth. Then he (a.s.) said, "Alight, then take it and hide it". I dismounted and found a golden coin. I took it and hid it in my pocket and we proceeded further. Again a thought passed by my mind that, "If it suffices my debt, well and good; or else I shall please my debtor with it (the golden coin). And I should even think regarding a way to find our provision for the winter season and what we require in it such as clothes, etc.". Again he (a.s.) turned towards me, bent, drew a line upon the earth with his whip, similar as earlier and said, "Alight, then take it and hide it". I dismounted and found a silver coin and placed it in another pocket.

We proceeded further and Imām (a.s.) returned back to his house, while I too returned back to mine. When I entered my house, I calculated my debt and

¹ Holy Qur'ān, Sūrat Yāsīn: 12

computed the amount. Then I weighed the golden coin and found its cost to be equal to the debt, nothing more or less (but exact). Then I calculated all that I required in winter and realized its cost economically, without miserliness or extravagance. Then I weighed the silver coin and I found it to be exact, not more or less (but accurate).

Ibn Shahr Āshub relates in his *Manāqib Āl Abī Ṭālib* from Abū Hāshim al Ja`farī that once I was in strained circumstance and decided to request Imām (a.s.), however I felt ashamed to do so. When I returned back to my house, he (a.s.) sent me a hundred dinar with a letter, saying, "Then if you face a need, do not be ashamed and ask (from us), for you shall obtain what you like, Allāh (s.w.t.) willing".

Fourth, Abū Hāshim al Ja`farī also relates that once I entered the presence of Abū Muḥammad al `Askarī (a.s.) when he was writing a book. Just then, the initial time for Prayers arrived. He (a.s.) kept the book and arose for Prayers. I saw the pen moving on its own upon the remaining page of the book until it reached its end. Seeing this, I fell into prostration (Sajdah). Then when he (a.s.) concluded his Prayers, he took the pen and gave permission to people to enter his presence.

We (the Author) say that whatever Abū Hāshim witnessed from the miracles and wondrous acts from Imām al `Askarī (a.s.) are far more to be quoted here. He says, "I never entered the presence of Abul Ḥasan (al Hādī) and Abū Muḥammad (al `Askarī), except that I witnessed indications and evidences from them (a.s.)". While we have also quoted some of the miracles of Imām al Hādī (a.s.) related by him in the section dealing with his wondrous acts.

Fifth, Quṭubuddīn al Rāwandī relates from Fiṭrus al Biṭrīq, who was a scholar in medicine and had reached more than a hundred years in age. He says that I was among the students of Bukhtishū`, the doctor of Mutawakkil, while he had chosen me among his pupils. Once Ḥasan bin `Alī bin Muḥammad bin al Ridhā (al `Askarī) sent him message to dispatch one of his distinguished students to perform phlebotomize (Faṣd) for him. He selected me for the job and said, "The son of (Imām) al Ridhā has asked me for a person to perform phlebotomize (Faṣd) to him. Then go to him, while he is the most learned than everyone below the heavens in our age. Then beware not to oppose him in what he commands you". I went to him (a.s.), he commanded me to wait in a room and said, "Wait here until I summon you", when it was the best time to perform phlebotomize (Faṣd)

in my opinion. After some time he (a.s.) summoned me, while it was not the recommended time to perform phlebotomize (Faṣḍ). A large basin was brought and I performed phlebotomize (Faṣḍ) in his Median cubital vein. Blood started to flow out until the basin become full of it. Then he (a.s.) told me to stop. I stopped and he washed his hands and fastened the vein. I was returned back to the room and was given abundant hot and cold food to eat and I stayed there until `Aṣr.

Then Imām (a.s.) called me again and told me to perform phlebotomize (Faṣḍ). I did so until blood flowed out and filled the basin. He then commanded me to stop and he fastened in. I was again sent to the room and spent the night therein. When it dawned and the sun arose, he (a.s.) once again summoned me and ordered the basin to be brought. He (a.s.) told me to perform phlebotomize (Faṣḍ), while something similar to milk flowed from his (vein of the) hands and filled the basin. Then he (a.s.) told me to stop. I stopped and he fastened it and handed me a chest containing clothes and fifty dīnār and said, "Take it, excuse us and leave". I took those things and told him (a.s.), "Do you command me for any service Master"? He (a.s.) replied, "Yes, treat with fairness the one who accompanies you from the Monastery of Al `Āqūl".

I returned back to Bukhtīshū` and related to him the entire episode. Hearing this, he said, "The scholars unanimously agree that a human body contains maximum seven maund of blood. And if the amount that you speak (that flowed from Imām), flowed out from a spring of water, it would be astonishing. And most astonishing is the flow of something similar to milk". Saying this, he remained engrossed in thought for some time. Then he sat for three days and nights reading books to find a similar incident of phlebotomize (Faṣḍ) in the world, however, we found nothing. Then Bukhtīshū` told me, "Presently there is none among the Christians more learned in medicine than a hermit at the Monastery of Al `Āqūl". Then he wrote down to him all that had occurred and dispatched me to him.

I went to him and called out. He asked who I was and I replied that I was a companion of Bukhtīshū'. He asked me whether I carried a letter from him and I replied in the affirmative. He lowered a basket for me and I placed the letter in it. He pulled it up, read it and immediately came down. Then he asked me, "Did you perform phlebotomize (Faṣḍ) upon the man"? I replied in the affirmative and he said, "Glad tidings to your mother". Saying this, he mounted a mule and we proceeded until we reached Surr Man Ra'ā (Sāmarrā') when a third of the night was left. I asked him, "Where do you wish to go? To the house of our teacher or

that man"? He said that he desired to go to meet the man (Imām al `Askarī).

We reached Imām (a.s.)'s door before the first Call for Prayers (Aḍān). The door opened, a black slave stepped out and asked, "Who among you two is the hermit from the Monastery of Al `Āqūl"? The hermit said that he was the one. The slave told him to dismount and then told me, "You take care of the mules". Saying this, he took his hand and entered him in, while I stood there until it dawned and the day advanced further. Suddenly the hermit stepped out, while he had shunned his hermit clothes and had worn white dress and had accepted Islām. Then he addressed me, saying, "Now take me to the house of your teacher". I took him to the house of Bukhtīshū' and when his sight fell upon the hermit, he advanced towards him and asked, "Who made you abandon your religion"? The hermit replied, "I found the Messiah and accepted Islām at his hands". He asked in astonishment, "You found the Messiah"? He replied, "Rather his resemblance, for none performed this type of phlebotomize (Faṣḍ) in the world except Al Masīḥ (Nabī `Īsā). While he (a.s.) is his resemblance in his signs and his evidences". Saying this, he returned back to Imām (a.s.)'s presence and served him until his death.

Sixth, Shaikh al Kulaynī relates from Ibnul Kurdī who relates from Muḥammad bin `Alī bin Ibrāhīm bin Mūsā (al Kāẓim) bin Ja`far (al Ṣādiq) that we became engulfed in strained circumstances and my father told me, "Come let us go to that man", and he meant Abū Muḥammad (al `Askarī), "for he is described for magnanimity". I asked him whether he knew him and he replied, "I neither know him nor have I ever seen him". Therefore we proceeded to meet him (a.s.) and my father told me on the way, "Our requirement is that he (a.s.) should command to bestow us five hundred dirham, two hundred for dresses and clothes, two hundred to repay debts and one hundred for other expenses". I too thought to myself, "I wish he (a.s.) bestows me three hundred dirham, out of which I would buy a donkey for a hundred dirham, spend one hundred for expenses and a hundred against clothes, while I would go to the mountainous region".

When we reached his (a.s.)'s door, his slave stepped out and said, "'Alī bin Ibrāhīm and his son should enter". When we entered his (a.s.)'s presence and saluted him, he (a.s.) addressed my father, saying, "O `Alī! What stopped you from coming to us until this time"? He replied, "O my Master! I felt ashamed to meet you in this state". Then when we left his (a.s.)'s presence, his slave stepped

out and handed over a purse to my father saying, "These are five hundred dirham, two hundred for dresses, two hundred against debt and a hundred for expenses". Then he handed me a purse, saying, "These are three hundred dirham, then buy a donkey for one hundred, spend one hundred for buying dresses and one hundred for expenses, however do not go to the mountainous region, rather go to Sawrā". Therefore he went to Sawrā, married a woman there, while his income today is a thousand dīnār. In spite of all this, he was a believer in Wāqifiyyah. Ibnul Kurdī says that I told Muḥammad bin Ibrāhīm, "Woe be upon you! Do you desire any proof more evident than this"? He replied, "We remain upon this belief (Wāqifiyyah)".

Seventh, it is related from Ismā`il bin Muḥammad bin `Alī bin Ismā`il bin `Alī bin `Abdullāh bin `Abbās bin `Abdul Muṭṭalib who says that one day I stood waiting for Abu Muḥammad (al `Askarī) on the way. When he (a.s.) passed me, I complained to him regarding my need and swore that I neither possessed a dirham or more than it, nor lunch or dinner. Hearing this, Imām (a.s.) said, "You swear falsely in the Name of Allāh (s.w.t.) while you have buried two hundred dīnār (and concealed it)? However, this statement of mine does not mean that I shall keep you away from the bestowal". Saying this, he ordered his slave to hand me over a hundred dīnār and then said, "You shall be deprived of it (the buried dīnār) when you are in most need of it". He (a.s.) had spoken the truth. I had buried two hundred dīnār with an intention that it shall be a means of my support (in future). After some time I turned severely indigent, while sustenance became narrow for me. I dug up to find it, however, my son had become aware of the spot and had taken it and ran away, while I could not lay my hands upon it (the dīnār).

Eighth, the Author of Tārīkhe Qum (Ḥasan bin Muḥammad al Qummī) writes in context to the Sādāt who migrated to Qum and its vicinities, that Muḥammad al Khizrī bin `Alī bin `Alī bin al Ḥasan al Aftās bin `Alī bin `Alī (Zainul `Ābidīn) bin (Imām) al Ḥusain came to Ḥasan bin Zaid (bin Muḥammad bin Ismā`il bin Ḥasan bin Zayd bin [Imām] Ḥasan, renowned as Dā`ī al Kabīr) at Ṭabaristān. He resided near him for some time until he (Ḥasan bin Zaid) poisoned him. He passed away and his children migrated to the town of Ābeh. Then he says that Abul Qāsim bin Ibrāhīm bin `Alī relates that Ibrāhīm bin Muḥammad al Khizrī said that the whereabouts of my father (Muḥammad al Khizrī) was unknown to me and my brother `Alī. We set off from Madīnah to search him and I told myself, "I shall not find a way to search my father unless I meet my Master Ḥasan bin `Alī al `Askarī

(a.s.) and question him regarding him”.

Therefore I entered Surr Man Ra`ā (Sāmarrā’) and went to his (a.s.)’s door. I did not find anyone there, while the weather was quite hot. I sat at the door waiting for someone to come out. Just then I heard the voice of a maid, who stepped out from the house, and said, “Ibrāhīm bin Muḥammad al Khizrī”! Hearing this, I said, “Here I am, I am Ibrāhīm bin Muḥammad al Khizrī”. Then she said, “My Master sends you salutations and says that, ‘this shall reach you to your father’”. Saying this, she handed a purse to me containing ten dīnār. I took them and left, when a thought passed my mind that I had not questioned my Master regarding my father and his whereabouts. I decided to return back when I remembered the words of the maid that, “This shall reach you to your father”. Therefore I left to search him until I reached Ṭabaristān and found him there near Ḥasan bin Zayd, while one dīnār was left with me (from the ten that Imām had given). I related the incident to my father and remained with him, until Ḥasan bin Zayd poisoned him and he passed away. Thereafter I migrated to Ābeh.

4. Part of his (a.s.)'s wise sayings

First, Imām Ḥasan al `Askarī (a.s.) said, "Do you argue (unnecessarily), lest your grace may depart; and do not indulge in (excessive) humour, lest audacity may be shown to you (by others)".

We (the Author) say that we have quoted regarding unnecessary arguing in the section dealing with the wise sayings of Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) and also regarding excessive humour in the section dealing with the wise sayings of Imām Mūsā al Kāẓim (a.s.).

Second, he (a.s.) said, "Among humility is saluting everyone who passes by him and sitting at a place in the gathering that is below his honour".

We (the Author) say that we have quoted a similar Ḥadīth in the section dealing with the counsels and wise sayings of Imām Muḥammad al Bāqir (a.s.).

Third, Imām (a.s.) said, "The most devout among men is the one who halts at suspicions, the greatest worshipper among men is the one who fulfils obligations, the most abstentious among men is the one who forsakes unlawful and the most striving one among men is the one who abandons sins".

Fourth, Imām Ḥasan al `Askarī (a.s.) says, "The heart of a fool lies in his mouth, while the mouth of a wise man is in his heart".

It means that a foolish person first speaks then ponders about what he spoke, whether it was right or no; opposite to a wise person who ponders and then speaks what he considers righteous.

Fifth, he (a.s.) said, "Your engrossment in (seeking) guaranteed sustenance (by Allāh) should not keep you away from (performing) obligatory acts".

Sixth, Imām (a.s.) says, "It is not among good manners to display happiness in the presence of an aggrieved one".

Perhaps Shaikh al Sa `adī has obtained his verses from the above auspicious Ḥadīth of Imām (a.s.).¹

Seventh, Imām al `Askarī (a.s.) said, "Grooming an ignorant person and turning back a habitual person from his habit is similar to a miracle".

¹ Here the Esteemed Author quotes some verses in Fārsī that we forgo. (translator)

We (the Author) say that a similar Ḥadīth has been quoted from Nabī `Īsā (a.s.), who said, "I treated the ailing ones and healed them through the permission of Allāh (s.w.t.); and I enlivened the dead by the permission of Allāh (s.w.t.); and I treated the fool, however I could not reform him".

Eighth, Imām (a.s.) said, "Do not bestow upon a man with matter that is difficult for him".¹

Ninth, he (a.s.) said, "One who counsels his brother privately, embellishes him; while the one who counsels him publicly, disgraces him".

Tenth, Imām al `Askarī (a.s.) says, "One who gains affability with Allāh (s.w.t.) becomes averse with people".

This counsel has been framed into verses by Shaikh al Sa`adī.²

Allāh (s.w.t.) says in the Qur`ān, "**Say you: Allāh, then leave them sporting in their vain discourses**".³ While Amīrul Mu`minīn (a.s.) says, "Sublimity of the Creator near you, belittles the (worth) of creatures in your eyes".⁴

Eleventh, Imām (a.s.) says, "If the worldly people turn rational, it (the world) would be ruined".⁵

¹ Sometime it happens that we insist upon someone to accept our invitation or anything that he may not be inclined towards, perhaps it might be difficult for him or land him in trouble. Therefore Imām (a.s.) means to say that one should not force someone with his bestowals, lest it be difficult for him. Abū Wā'il relates that once I and my companion entered the presence of Salmān and he said, "If the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) had not stopped us from pretense, I would have taken pains to serve you". Saying this, he brought bread and salt for us. My friend said, "If our salt was combined with thyme". Hearing this, Salmān arose, took his ewer, kept it as mortgage and bought thyme. When we completed eating, my companion said, "Praise be to Allāh (s.w.t.) Who contented in our sustenance". Hearing this, Salmān said, "If you (truly) were contented, my ewer would not be mortgaged". (Muḥammad Bāqir al Majlisī, "Biḥārul Anwār"). (translator)

² Here the Esteemed Author again quotes some verses in Fārsī that we forgo. (translator)

³ Holy Qur`ān, Sūratul An`ām: 91

⁴ Imām (a.s.) means to say that when a believer recognizes the sublimity of Allāh (s.w.r.), people are no longer important in his eyes. He is no longer worried in pleasing people; rather his sole goal lies in the pleasure of Allāh (s.w.t.). (translator)

⁵ Imām (a.s.) means to say that if the worldly inclined people turn rational and recognize its worth and flaw, they would turn away from its temptations and vanities, resulting in its

Twelfth, Imām Ḥasan al `Askarī (a.s.) said, “There is a limit for magnanimity, and if it exceeds, it is extravagance. And there is a limit for prudence, and if it exceeds, it is cowardice. And there is a limit for economization, and if it exceeds, it is miserliness. And there is a limit for valour, and if it exceeds, it is impetuosity. It is enough civility (for yourself) that you restrain from that what you detest in others”.



5. Martyrdom of Imām al `Askarī (a.s.)

`Allāmah (Muḥammad Bāqir) al Majlisī writes in his Jilā'ul `Uyūn that Ibn Bābawayh (al Qummī) and others relate from an inhabitant of Qum that once I went to meet Aḥmad bin `Ubaydullāh bin Khāqān, who was appointed in charge of the endowments (Awqāf) and charities by the caliphs at Qum, while he bore intense animosity towards Ahl al-bait (a.s.). A discussion arose in the gathering regarding the `Alawī Sādāt residing at Surr Man Ra'ā (Sāmarrā'), their religion, their righteousness and corruptions, and their proximity and position near the rulers in their age. Aḥmad bin `Ubaydullāh said that I did not find anyone in Surr Man Ra'ā (Sāmarrā') among the `Alawī Sādāt better than Ḥasan bin `Alī al `Askarī (a.s.) with regards to knowledge, abstinence, righteousness, abstemiousness, sobriety, awe, chastity, modesty, honor and worth and status near the rulers. The princes, Sādāt and all Banī Hāshim considered him superior upon all their elders, while their elders and youngsters respected him. Similarly the viziers, princes, the military personnel and the masses did not spare any bit of honor and respect towards him.

He continues to say that one day I was standing at the head of my father on the day of his council. Suddenly the guards and slaves came rushing towards him and said, "The son of Al Ridhā (Imām al `Askarī) waits at the door". Hearing this, my father shouted, "Permit him (a.s.) and enter him here". Suddenly I saw a man enter who possessed wheatish complexion, wide eyes, good stature, handsome countenance and well-formed body, while he was in his youth. Seeing him I was struck with his awe and admiration. As soon as my father's sight fell upon him, he jumped from his place and rushed to welcome him. I never saw him displaying such honor to anyone among the Banī Hāshim or the princes and sons of the ruler. When he neared him (a.s.), he embraced him, kissed his hands, took his hand and sat him in his place. Then he sat in his presence with due respect and talked to him. He addressed him (a.s.) with his agnomen (Kunīyyah) and ransomed himself and his parents upon him.

I was astonished at seeing this, when the guards entered and informed that Muwaffaq, the ruler of the age, was arriving there. It was a practice that when the ruler would arrive to meet my father, initially numerous people among his porters, his officers and his distinguished slaves would enter and stand in rows from near my father till the seat of the ruler, while they would remain in this position until

he arrived and returned back. This time, in spite of hearing regarding arrival of the ruler, my father turned to him (a.s.) and continued to speak to him until the distinguished slaves of the ruler arrived. Then he told him (a.s.), "Now you may return back if you desire". Saying this, he commanded his slaves to take him (a.s.) from behind the rows so that the sight of the officers may not fall upon him. Again my father arose in his honor, kissed him in between his forehead and bade him farewell, only then he went to welcome the ruler. Seeing this, I asked the porters and slaves of my father, "Who was this person for whose honor and respect my father took such pains"? They replied, "He is a notable personality among the `Arab named Ḥasan bin `Alī (a.s.) and is renowned as `the son of Al Ridhā (a.s.)"". My astonishment turned two-fold while I spent the entire day in thinking and a state of confusion.

It was a daily practice of my father that after completing the evening Prayers, he would sit down to read the letters and requests of people addressed to the ruler during the day. At that time, I went and stood near him and he asked me if I needed anything. I replied, "Yes, and if you permit I should question you". When he permitted me, I asked, "O father! Who was that person in whose honor and respect you took such pains and even ransomed yourself and your parents upon him"? He replied, "O son! He is the Imām of the Rāfidhah"! Then he remained silent for some time, then said, "O son! If the kingdom goes away from the hands of Banī `Abbās, none among the Banī Hāshim is entitled of it, except him. He is most worthy of rule due to possession of abstinence, worship, knowledge, perfection, chastity of self, honorable lineage, lofty ancestry and all perfect attributes. If you had seen his father (Imām al Hādī), he was a personality possessing high level of honor, dignity, merit, knowledge, grace and perfection". When I heard similar words from my father, my rage increased two-fold, while my ponderance and confusion increased.

From that day onwards, I constantly investigated from people regarding him (a.s.), and never heard from the viziers, scribes, princes, Sādāt, `Alawīs and other people, except his praise, extolment, grace, honor, knowledge and eminence. Moreover everyone considered him superior-most and the greatest among the Banī Hāshim. They said that he was the Imām of the Rāfidhah. His status and position increased in my eyes and I recognized his lofty position, since I did not hear anything from his friends and foes, except goodness and greatness.

Thereafter someone from among the people asked him (Aḥmad bin `Ubaydullāh

bin Khāqān), "What was the status of his (Imām's) brother Ja`far"? He replied, "Who is Ja`far that someone should ask regarding his matter, or his name should be taken with the (sacred) name of Imām Ḥasan (al `Askarī)? Ja`far was a lewd and profligate person, he consumed intoxicants and was vicious". Saying this, he reproached Ja`far abundantly.

Thereafter he continued to talk regarding Imām (a.s.) saying that during the death of Ḥasan bin `Alī (al `Askarī) such state was witnessed in the ruler and others, that I do not presume a similar state would be seen in any other person's death. The incident is that one my father was informed that Ibnul Ridhā (Imām al `Askarī) was ill. My father in turn rushed to the ruler and informed him. The ruler dispatched five persons among his trustworthy and distinguished ones along with my father, among them was his slave Naḥrīr, who was among the distinguished confidants of the ruler. He ordered them to constantly remain in the presence of Imām (a.s.), take care of him and keep him updated on his (a.s.)'s condition. He also appointed a doctor to go to Imām (a.s.) every morning and evening and take care of him. After two days my father was informed that Imām (a.s.)'s condition had deteriorated and weakness had prevailed upon him. At dawn he went to Imām (a.s.)'s presence and ordered the doctors not to leave his presence. Then he called for the chief justice and told him, "Summon ten people among the renowned scholars and tell them to constantly remain with him (a.s.)". He did this so that people may not be aware that Imām (a.s.) had been poisoned and they would understand that he (a.s.) died a natural death.

They constantly remained in Imām (a.s.)'s presence until he (a.s.) passed away after a passage of some days of the month of Rabī` ul Ūlā and obtained relief from the persecution of the oppressors and enemies. When the news of Imām (a.s.)'s death circulated in Sāmarrā, Qiyāmah arose therein, while voices of people's weeping, wailing and lamenting arose. The ruler became engrossed in investigating regarding the son of Imām (a.s.) and dispatched a group to go and surround his (a.s.)'s house and search every room therein, perhaps they might find trace of him (a.t.f.s.). He also dispatched midwives to the slave-girls of Imām (a.s.) to investigate whether anyone among them was pregnant with his (a.s.)'s child. One of them informed him that perhaps one among the slave-girls might be expecting a child. The ruler appointed his slave Naḥrīr to keep an eye on her so that truth or falsehood (regarding her pregnancy) may evident. Then he turned to prepare for the last rites of Imām (a.s.).

Everyone in the market became aware of Imām (a.s.)'s death, whether young or small, notable or common man, while a large crowd gathered in his funeral. My father, who was a vizier of the ruler, arose to administer the last rites of Imām (a.s.) along with all the viziers, scribes, followers of the ruler, Banī Hashim and the `Alawīs. On that day Sāmarrā' looked similar to the field of Qiyāmah due to abundant voices of weeping, wailing and lamenting of the people. When the dead-body bath and shrouding of Imām (a.s.) was completed, the ruler dispatched Abū `Īsā to lead Prayers upon him (a.s.). When the bier of Imām (a.s.) was placed upon the earth for Prayers, Abū `Īsā proceeded further and lifted off the shroud from Imām (a.s.)'s face. Then he called the `Alawīs, Banī Hāshim, princes, viziers, scribes, judges, scholars and all the notables near in order to ward off defamation against the ruler (that he had poisoned Imām), and said, "Come and see that this is Ḥasan bin `Alī (a.s.), the grandson of Al Ridhā (a.s.), who has died (a natural death) upon his bed, while none has harmed him. During the period of his (a.s.)' ailment, the doctors, judges, the trustworthy and just ones were present, were aware of his condition and bear witness to this". Then he proceeded further and led Prayers upon Imām (a.s.). After completing the Prayers, Imām (a.s.) was buried beside his eminent father (Imām al Hādī).

After completing the final rites of Imām (a.s.), the ruler became engrossed in searching and spying for his (a.s.)'s son, since he had heard that his son (a.t.f.s.) would gain control upon the world and oppose the false ones. No matter how hard they searched, however they failed to find him (a.t.f.s.). The slave-girl for whom they had doubted that she might be pregnant, they kept an eye upon her for two years, however nothing evidenced from her. Ultimately Imām (a.s.)'s inheritance was divided on the basis of the Ahlul Sunnah belief, among his mother and his brother Ja`far al Kaḍḍāb. Imām (a.s.)'s mother (Ḥadīth) claimed that she was his vicegerent and dispatched evidence to the chief justice. Once again the ruler started to search for Imām (a.s.)'s son (a.t.f.s.) and did not withhold from doing so.

Thereafter Ja`far al Kaḍḍāb came to the presence of my father and told him, "I wish that you delegate to me the position of my father (Imām al `Askarī). I promise to give you two hundred thousand dīnār every year". Hearing this, my father was enraged and said, "O fool! The position of your brother (a.s.) cannot be bought by wealth or promises. It is years since the rulers have unsheathed their swords and killed people to return them back from their belief of Imāmah

towards your father (Imām al Hādī) and your brother (Imām al `Askarī), however they failed to do so. Then if you occupy the post of Imāmah near the Shī`ah, they shall all come to you, while you shall not be in need of the ruler or anyone else. However, if you do not hold this position near them, neither the ruler nor anyone else can bestow this position upon you". Ultimately my father perceived his ignorance, his stupidity and lack of religiosity in him by these words. He commanded that he should not be allowed to enter his gathering. Thus he could not enter the gathering of my father until he passed away. Until today the ruler is in search for his (a.s.)'s son (a.t.f.s.), however he has found no trace of him or laid his hands upon him.

Ibn Bābawayh al Qummī relates though his reliable chain of authorities from Abil Adyān that I served Ḥasan (al `Askarī) bin `Alī (al Hādī) bin Muḥammad (al Jawād) bin `Alī (al Ridhā) bin Mūsā (al Kāzīm) bin Ja`far (al Ṣādiq) bin Muḥammad (al Bāqir) bin `Alī (Zainul `Ābidīn) bin (Imām) Ḥusain bin `Alī (Amīrul Mu`minīn) bin Abī Ṭālib (a.s.) and would deliver his letters to places. Once I entered his (a.s.)'s presence during the days of his illness by which he later passed away. He (a.s.) wrote letters and then told me, "Take them to Madā'in. You shall remain away for fifteen days and then shall return to Surr Man Ra`ā (Sāmarrā') on the fifteenth. On that day you shall hear lamentations from my house and find me upon the bathing platform".

Abil Adyān says that hearing this, I asked, "O my Master! If this occurs, then who (shall succeed you)"? He (a.s.) replied, "The one who demands the replies to my letters from you shall be the Qā'im (a.t.f.s.) after me". I requested him (a.s.) to tell me more and he (a.s.) continued, "The one who performs Prayers upon me shall be the Qā'im (a.t.f.s.) after me". Again I told me to tell me something more. He (a.s.) said, "The one who informs of what the belt-purse contains shall be the Qā'im (a.t.f.s.) after me". Such awe entered my heart from him (a.s.) that I could not question him what the belt-purse contained.

I left with the letters to Madā'en, obtained their replies and entered Surr Man Ra`ā (Sāmarrā') on the fifteenth, as predicted by him (a.s.). I heard voices of lamenting from his (a.s.)'s house, while he (a.s.) was laid upon the bathing platform. Just then I saw Imām (a.s.)'s brother Ja`far at the door of the house, while the Shī`ah were around him, condoling him and congratulating him (upon Imāmah). I said to myself, "If he is the Imām, then the Imāmah is nullified". Since I knew that he

drank wine, gambled in the villa and played the tambourine. However, I proceeded further, offered condolences to him and congratulated him, however he did not ask anything from me. Just then `Aqīd, the slave of Imām (a.s.) stepped out and told him, "O my Master! Your brother (a.s.) has been shrouded. Then arise and pray upon him". Hearing this, Ja`far bin `Alī entered the house surrounded by the Shī`ah, while Al Sammān¹ and Ḥasan bin `Alī, renowned as Salamah, the one killed by Mu`taṣim, were in the forefront. When we entered the house, we found Ḥasan bin `Alī (a.s.) shrouded and lying upon the bier.

Then Ja`far bin `Alī proceeded further to perform Prayers upon his brother (a.s.) and when he hummed the Takbīr (Allāhu Akbar, Allāh is the Greatest), a child came out, who possessed a wheatish complexion, curly hair and split teeth. He (a.t.f.s.) pulled the cloak of Ja`far bin `Alī and said, "Wait O uncle! Since I am the most entitled to pray upon my father (a.s.)". Hearing this, Ja`far waited, while the color of his face changed and turned pale. Then the child proceeded further, offered Prayers upon him (a.s.) and buried him beside his father (a.s.). Then he (a.t.f.s.) turned to me and said, "O man from Baṣrah! Hand me over the replies to the letters that are with you". Hearing this, I said to myself, "These are two evidences, now one more remains and that is the belt-purse". Then I came out to Ja`far bin `Alī, while he was breathing heavily. Then Ḥājiz al Washshā' asked him, "O my master! Who is the child"? Ja`far replied, "By Allāh (s.w.t.)! I have never seen him and do not know him".

Suddenly a group arrived from Qum while we were sitting and questioned regarding Ḥasan bin `Alī (a.s.) and were informed of his death. They asked, "Whom should we offer condolences to"? People pointed out to Ja`far bin `Alī and they proceeded further, saluted him, offered condolences to him and congratulated him. Then they said, "We carry letters and some amount with us. Then tell us whose letters and how much wealth"? Hearing this, Ja`far arose, dusting off his clothes and said, "They desire from us that we should know the unseen"? Just then a slave stepped out and said, "You carry letters from such and such person, a belt-purse containing a thousand dīnār, ten out of which are gold plated". Hearing this, they handed over the letters and wealth to him and then asked, "The one who sent you to take these is actually the Imām (a.t.f.s.)". Now

¹ Al Sammān or a trader in ghee was the title of Shaikh `Uthmān bin Sa`īd al `Amrī, the first emissary of Imām al Mahdī (a.t.f.s.). (translator)

I understood that Imām al `Askarī (a.s.) had meant this belt-purse.

Then Ja`far bin `Alī (al Kaḍḍāb) went to Mu`tamad and informed him. He dispatched his slaves, who arrested Ṣaqīl (Narjis), the slave-girl, and questioned her regarding the child (a.t.f.s.). She refused and then said that she was pregnant with Imām (a.s.)'s child just to conceal his (a.t.f.s.)'s whereabouts. Then they handed her over to Ibn Abil Shawārin, the judge and ordered him to kill the child when he was born. Just then they received news of the sudden death of `Ubaydullāh bin Yaḥyā bin Khāqān and the revolt of Ṣāḥib al Zanj at Baṣrah. They became engrossed in these matters, while the slave-girl (Narjis) was released from their hands, and all Praise be to Allāh (s.w.t.)!

Ibn Bābawayh also relates with his reliable chain of transmitters from Muḥammad bin al Ḥusain, who says that Abū Muḥammad Ḥasan bin `Alī (al `Askarī) passed away on Friday after the dawn Prayers. On that night he (a.s.) had written numerous letters to Madīnah and that was in the month of Rabī`ul Ūlā, when eight days had passed, in the year two hundred and sixty Hijrah. And none was present near him at that time, except Ṣaqīl (Narjis) the slave-girl, his slave `Aqīd and someone (Imām al Mahdī) apart from them who Allāh (s.w.t.) knows.

`Aqīd says that Imām (a.s.) called for water to drink that was boiled at the fire-place. When we brought it for him (a.s.), he said, "First prepare me for the Prayers". We brought it (the water) for him (a.s.) and spread a kerchief in his room. He (a.s.) took the water from Ṣaqīl and washed his face and his arms, one after the other. Then he rubbed his head and feet and recited the dawn Prayers upon his bed. Then he (a.s.) took the (boiled) water to drink, however the cup struck at his teeth since his hands were trembling. Seeing this, Ṣaqīl took the cup from him (a.s.) and fed him. He passed away after sometime and was buried beside his father (a.s.) at Surr Man Ra`ā (Sāmarrā').

Most of the historians and traditionists unanimously state that his (a.s.)'s Martyrdom took place on the eighth of the month Rabī`ul Ūlā in the year two hundred and sixty Hijrah. Shaikh al Ṭūsī writes in his Miṣbāḥul Mutahajjid that it took place on the first of that month, while most of them say that it was Friday. Some even say that it was Wednesday or even Sunday. His (a.s.)'s blessed age was twenty nine years, or even twenty eight years, while the period of his Imāmah lasted for six years.

Ibn Bābawayh (al Qummī) and others state that Mu`tamad poisoned Imām (a.s.). It is related in the book `Uyūn al Mu`jizāt (of Shaikh Ḥusain bin `Abdul Wahhāb) from Aḥmad bin Ishāq (al Qummī) that once I entered the presence of Abū Muḥammad (al `Askarī) and he asked me, "O Aḥmad! How was your condition when the people (of Qum) were in the state of doubt and uncertainty (regarding the Imām after me)"? I replied, "When the letter arrived informing the birth of our Master (Imām al Mahdī), there was none among us, male or female, mature or youth, except that he said the truth (accepted the Imāmah)". Then Imām (a.s.) continued, "Then do you not know that the earth does not remain vacant of the 'Evidence of Allāh (Ḥujjatullāh)'"! Thereafter Abū Muḥammad (al `Askarī) commanded his mother (Ḥadīth) to leave for the Ḥajj Pilgrimage in the year two hundred and fifty nine Hijrah. He (a.s.) informed her what would befall him in the year two hundred and sixty Hijrah. Then he (a.s.) handed over the Ismul A`aẓam (the Most Glorious Name of Allāh), inheritances and weapons to Al Qā'em (a.t.f.s.). Imām (a.s.)'s mother left for the Ḥajj Pilgrimage and he (a.s.) passed away in the month of Rabī`ul Thānī (Ūlā) in the year two hundred and sixty Hijrah, and was buried at Surr Man Ra`ā (Sāmarrā') beside his father (a.s.). His (a.s.) blessed age was twenty nine years.

Here ends what was quoted from the book Jilā'ul `Uyūn (of `Allāmah Muḥammad Bāqir al Majlisī).

Shaikh al Ṭūsī relates through his chain of transmitters from Abī Sulaymān Dāwūd bin Gassān al Baḥrānī, who had studied under Abū Sahl Ismā`īl bin `Alī al Nawbakhtī, who was a master of scholastics among our traditionists in Bagdād and was a possessor of an eminent status in religion and the world. He authored books, among them Kitāb al Anwār fī Tāriḫ al A`immah al Aṭ-ḥār (a.s.). He (Abū Sahl) said that the birth of Al Ḥujjah bin al Ḥasan (a.t.f.s.) took place in Sāmarrā' in the year two hundred and fifty six Hijrah. His (a.t.f.s.)'s mother was Ṣaqīl, while his agnomen (Kunīyyah) was Abul Qāsim, the same that was foretold by the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) saying, "His name shall be my name and his agnomen (Kunīyyah) shall be my agnomen". His title is Al Mahdī, Imām al Muntazar and Ṣāḥib al Zamān (a.t.f.s.).

Abū Sahl continues to say that I entered the presence of Abī Muḥammad Ḥasan bin `Alī (al `Askarī) during his illness through which he passed away. Imām (a.s.) told his slave `Aqīd, who was a black Nubian slave and had served `Alī bin

Muḥammad (al Hādī) and had brought up Ḥasan (al `Askarī). Imām (a.s.) told him, "O `Aqīd! Boil the water for me at the fire-place". He did so, and just then Ṣaqīl, the mother of Imām al Khalaf (a.t.f.s.) arrived. When the cup was placed in his (a.s.)'s hands and he tried to drink it, his hands trembled to such an extent that the cup struck at his teeth. He (a.s.) kept it and told `Aqīd, "Enter the house and you shall find a child prostrating, then bring him to me".

`Aqīd says that I entered the house to investigate and saw a child (a.t.f.s.) prostrating, while his fingers were raised towards the heavens. I saluted him (a.t.f.s.) and he completed his Prayers. Then I told him (a.t.f.s.), "Verily my Master calls you out". Just then, his (a.t.f.s.)'s mother Ṣaqīl arrived, held his hand and took him out to his father Ḥasan (al `Askarī). Abū Sahl says that when the child (a.t.f.s.) stood near him, I saw that he possessed a glittering countenance; the hair upon his head was curly, while his teeth were split. As soon as Imām al `Askarī (a.s.) saw him, he wept and said, "O the Master of his family! Feed me the water since I am going to my Lord (s.w.t.)". Hearing this, the child (a.t.f.s.) lifted up the cup containing boiled water, while his lips were moving and he fed him (a.s.). When Imām (a.s.) drank, he said, "Prepare me for Prayers". A kerchief was spread for him (a.s.) in his room and the child helped him in performing the ablution (Wudhū'), one after the other, and rubbed his head and feet. Then Abū Muḥammad (al `Askarī) told him, "Have glad tidings O my son, that you are the Master of the age (Ṣāḥib al Zamān), and you are Al Mahdī (a.t.f.s.) and you are the Evidence of Allāh (Ḥujjatullāh) upon His earth. And you are my son and my vicegerent, while I am your father. And you are Muḥammad (al Mahdī) bin Ḥasan (al `Askarī) bin `Alī (al Hādī) bin Muḥammad (al Jawād) bin `Alī (al Ridhā) bin Mūsā (al Kāẓim) bin Ja`far (al Ṣādiq) bin Muḥammad (al Bāqir) bin `Alī (Zainul `Ābidīn) bin (Imām) Ḥusain bin `Alī (Amīrul Mu`minīn) bin Abī Ṭālib (a.s.). The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) has given birth to you (you are his son), while you are the Seal of the Chaste A`immah (a.s.). The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) had given glad tidings regarding you and has named you and bestowed you agnomen (Kunīyyah). My father (a.s.) pledged me with this from your Chaste fathers (a.s.), may Allāh (s.w.t.)'s blessings be upon the Ahlalbait (a.s.). And our Lord is Praiseworthy, the All-Glorious". Saying this, Ḥasan bin `Alī (al `Askarī) passed away at that very moment.

Shaikh al Ṭūsī relates from Imām Ḥasan al `Askarī (a.s.) that he said, "Verily my grave at Sāmarrā' is a protection against trials and sorrows for the people of the

two directions". `Allāmah Majlisi al Awwal (Muḥammad Taqī) says that "the people of the two directions" refers to the Shī`ah and Ahlul Sunnah. While his (a.s.)'s blessings engulf the friends and foes, similar to the blessed grave of Imām al Kāzīm (a.s.) that is a protection for the people of Bagdād.

The honorable Sheikh `Alī bin `Īsā al Irbilī writes in his book Kashful Gummah, that he authored in the year six hundred and seventy seven Hijrah, that some of my companions related to me that once Mustanşir al `Abbāsī went to Surr Man Ra`ā (Sāmarrā') and visited Imāmayn al `Askariyayn (a.s.). Thereafter he left to visit the site where the rulers among his forefathers and family were buried. They were buried below a ruined dome that was damaged by rains, while birds had given birth upon them. I too had witnessed the state of their graves. He (Mustanşir) was told, "You are the caliphs upon the earth, kings of the earth and you hold power in the world. Then the graves of your forefathers lie in such dilapidated condition, neither any one visits them, nor considers them, while there is none who could repair them. While the graves of these `Alawīs, as you see, are decorated with curtains, lanterns, carpets, extensiveness, wealth, candles, incense, etc.". Hearing this, Mustanşir replied, "This is a Heavenly ordained matter that cannot be achieved through our endeavor. Then if we pressurize people to do so, they shall neither accept it nor do so". He spoke the truth, since beliefs can neither be established through compulsion, nor can one consolidate it through means of violence.

6. Some of his (a.s.)'s eminent companions

First, Abū `Alī Aḥmad bin Ishāq bin `Abdullāh bin Sa`ad bin Mālik al Aḥwaṣ al Ash`arī. He was a trustworthy personality, eminent, among the notables of Qum, while his relatives were companions of A`immah (a.s.) and the eminent traditionists. We have quoted regarding some of them in the sections dealing with the companions of Imām Ja`far al Ṣādiq (a.s.) and Imām `Alī al Ridhā (a.s.), such as `Imrān bin `Abdullāh, `Isā bin `Abdullāh, Zakariyyā bin Ādam and Zakariyyā bin Idrīs, Allāh (s.w.t.)'s Paradise upon them all. Aḥmad bin Ishāq related from Imām Muḥammad al Jawād (a.s.) and Imām `Alī al Hādī (a.s.), while he was among the distinguished companions of Imām Ḥasan al `Askarī (a.s.). He had the good fortune to behold the blessed countenance of Imām al Mahdī (a.t.f.s.) and we shall quote it in the next volume, Allāh (s.w.t.) willing. He was the Sheikh among the people of Qum and their immigrants, and was included among the praised emissaries in whose praises written pronouncements (Tawqī) were received (from A`immah). It is related from the group of Shī`ah that he is included among the renowned agents and emissaries (of A`immah).

Shaikh al Ṣadūq quotes a Ḥadīth in his Kamāluddīn wa Tamāmul Ni`mah, at the end of which he (Aḥmad bin Ishāq) told Imām al `Askarī (a.s.), "I request you by the Right of Allāh (s.w.t.) and the sanctity of your Grandfather (s.a.w.a.) to honour me with a cloth that I can use as my shroud (Kafan)". The narrator says that Imām (a.s.) put his hand under the mat and removed thirteen dirham and said, "Take it and do not spend upon yourself from anything except this. Then you shall not regret regarding what you requested. And Allāh does not waste the recompense of him who does good deeds".¹

Sa`ad bin `Abdullāh, the narrator, says that then we left the presence of our Master (Imām al `Askarī) and reached a distance of three farsakh to Ḥalawān, that is today renowned as Sare Pule Ḍahāb, Aḥmad bin Ishāq developed fever and his condition became serious, while we lost hope of his survival. We entered Ḥalawān and took residence in one of its caravansaries. Aḥmad bin Ishāq called for one of his native persons (of Qum) who was residing there and then said, "Disperse from me tonight and leave me alone". We dispersed from him and each

¹ Refer to the Qur'ānic Verse, "**Verily those who believe and do good deeds, verily We waste not the recompense of him who does good deeds**". (Holy Qur'ān, Sūratul Kahf: 30) (translator)

one returned back to his bed. When the morning drew near, a thought passed my mind and I opened my eyes. Suddenly my sight fell upon Kāfūr, the servant of Abū Muḥammad (al `Askarī), who told me, "May Allāh (s.w.t.) offer goodness in lieu of your grief and compensate your calamity with beloved (compensation). We have completed bathing and shrouding your companion (Aḥmad bin Ishāq), then arise to bury him since he holds the greatest position among you in the eyes of your Master (a.s.)". Saying this, he disappeared from our sight. We gathered at his head, weeping and wailing until we fulfilled his rights (upon us) and completed his matter (last rites). May Allāh (s.w.t.)'s Mercy be upon him!

Ḥalawān, which is renowned today as Sare Pule Ḍahāb is situated on the way to Kirmānshāh from Bagdād. While the tomb of Aḥmad bin Ishāq is beside a stream that flows in that village at a distance of around a thousand feet from south side. Due to this reason, the tomb contains a simple structure and is in a pitiful condition due to the uncaring attitude of the wealthy people of that place and also the uncaring attitude of the inhabitants of Kirmānshāh and the hesitant people to repair it. His tomb remains unvisited today even in the presence of thousands of pilgrims. In this regard, great care should be taken towards the one for whom Imām (a.s.) dispatched his slave in a wink of an eye with a shroud to complete his final rites. It is he (Aḥmad bin Ishāq) who constructed the renowned Masjid at Qum at the orders of Imām (a.s.)¹ and was his agent for years in that locality more than others. Then his tomb should be renovated and a Mausoleum should be constructed for the people to visit it.²

Second, Aḥmad bin Muḥammad bin Muṭahhar. Shaikh al Ṣadūq describes him as a "Ṣāḥib (companion)" of Imām Ḥasan al `Askarī (a.s.). Moreover our Sheikh

¹ It is built by the orders of Imām Ḥasan al `Askarī (a.s.) in the third century Hijrah at the hands of Shaikh Aḥmad bin Ishāq al Ash`arī al Qummī. This Masjid is today renowned as Masjid Imām Ḥasan al `Askarī (a.s.), one of the grand Masājid at Qum al Muqaddasah and is opposite to the Sacred Mausoleum of Sayyidah Fāṭimah al Ma`sumah (s.a.). The Masjid has gone through several renovations, latest under the auspices of the present Marja` of the Shī`ah world Āyatullāh al `Uzmā Shaikh Luṭfullāh Ṣāfi al Gulpāygānī. Numerous eminent scholars have led Prayers therein and today it is also used for imparting religious knowledge. (translator)

² This was during the time of the Esteemed Author Shaikh `Abbās al Qummī. However, in our age, a Grand and Magnificent Mausoleum is constructed upon his blessed tomb with a sepulcher (Dharih) around it. While thousands of pilgrim visit his tomb to seek blessings from this eminent companion of A`immah (a.s.) and the emissary of Imām al Mahdī (a.t.f.s.). (translator)

(Mīrzā Ḥusain al Nūrī) comments in his Mustadrakul Wasā'el that the word "Ṣāḥib" does not denote physical companionship that includes a person among his (a.s.)'s companions, however, what is evident to us is that he was a promoter of his affairs, while this is an indicator above justice. The trustworthy `Alī bin Ḥusain al Mas`ūdī relates in his Ithbātul Waṣīyyah from (`Abdullāh bin Ja`far) al Ḥimyarī from Aḥmad bin Ishāq that once I entered the presence of Abū Muḥammad (al `Askarī) and he asked me, "O Aḥmad! O Aḥmad! How was your condition when people (of Qum) were in the state of doubt and uncertainty (regarding the Imām after me)"? I replied, "When the letter arrived informing the birth of our Master (Imām al Mahdī), there was none among us, male or female, mature or youth, except that he said the truth (accepted the Imāmah)". Then Imām (a.s.) continued, "Then do you not know that the earth does not remain vacant of the 'Evidence of Allāh (Ḥujjatullāh)'"! Thereafter Abū Muḥammad (al `Askarī) commanded his mother (Ḥadīth) to leave for the Ḥajj Pilgrimage in the year two hundred and fifty nine Hijrah. He (a.s.) informed her what would befall him in the year two hundred and sixty Hijrah. Then he (a.s.) handed over the Ismul A`āzam (the Most Glorious Name of Allāh), inheritances and weapons to Al Qā'em (a.t.f.s.). Imām (a.s.)'s mother left for the Ḥajj Pilgrimage Imām (a.s.)'s mother left for the Ḥajj Pilgrimage along with Imām al Mahdī (a.t.f.s.) and a group.

Abū `Alī Aḥmad bin Muḥammad bin Muṭahhar was appointed in charge of them and this is requisite for an agent (of Imām). When they passed by some stations to Makkah, they met a caravan of Bedouins, who informed them of extreme fear and lack of water (on the way). Hearing this, most of the people returned back except those who were in his side (Nāḥīyyah)¹, while they proceeded further and remained safe. It is also related that an order had arrived for them (from Imām al `Askarī) to proceed.

Therefore it is evident that when Imām (a.s.) appoints someone in charge of the affairs of his family in this great and lengthy journey, that include his mother and someone (Imām al Mahdī) similar to him, should certainly occupy an eminent position (near the Imām) with regards to reliability, trustworthiness and discernment. And this report ascertains the summation of what is quoted in Al Kāfi

¹ Shaikh (Ibrāhīm) al Kaf`amī states that Al Nāḥīyyah refers to every place where Imām al Mahdī (a.t.f.s.) remained during the days of his lesser concealment (Gaybah al Ṣugrā), while his agents frequented that place to meet him (a.t.f.s.). (Author)

(of Shaikh al Kulaynī) in the section dealing with the birth of Abū Muḥammad (al `Askarī). It is related from Abū `Alī al Muṭahhar that he wrote to Imām (al `Askarī) from Qādsīyyah informing him of people's departure and that he feared thirst (on the way). Imām al `Askarī (a.s.) wrote back, saying, "Proceed, and there is no fear for you, Allāh (s.w.t.) willing". Therefore they proceeded safely and all Praise be to Allāh (s.w.t.), the Lord of the worlds.

Third, Abū Sahl Ismā`īl bin `Alī bin Ishāq bin Abī Sahl bin Nawbakht. He was among the Shī`ah Master Scholastics at Bagdād and an eminent personality belonging to the Nawbakht family in his age. He gained prominence in the religion and the world and was upon the level of agents (of A`immah). He authored numerous books, among them Kitāb al Anwār fī Tārīkh al A`immah al Aṭ-ḥār (a.s.).

Ibn Nadīm writes in his Al Fihrist that he was a scholastic and philosopher, while the narrators from philosophical books would gather near him, such as Abī `Uthmān al Dimashqī, Ishāq, Thābit, etc. He gathered books and copied numerous books in his own handwriting. He authored books in scholasticism (Kalām), philosophy (Falsafā), etc. Among his servants is Al Sūsanjirdī whose name was Muḥammad bin Bishr, renowned as Al Ḥamdūnī and who authored books, among them Al Infād fil Imāmah.

We (the Author) say that Muḥammad bin Bishr was among the virtuous ones, eminent companions and the scholastics. He performed the Ḥajj Pilgrimage on foot fifty times.

Abū Sahl was the maternal uncle of Abī Muḥammad Ḥasan bin Mūsā al Nawbakhtī, the philosopher and author of book Firaqul Shī`ah. Among the felicities of Abū Sahl is that he had the good fortune to enter the presence of Imām al Mahdī (a.t.f.s.), as is quoted in the section dealing with the Martyrdom of Imām Ḥasan al `Askarī (a.s.).

Abū Sahl was the one who revealed the lie of Al Ḥallāj.¹ It is said that Al Ḥallāj presumed Abū Sahl to be similar to others among those of weak faith due to his (own) excessive ignorance, and he thought that he would be able to attract him.

¹ Abū `Abdullāh Ḥusain bin Manṣūr al Ḥallāj, a Ṣūfī scholar and poet. Among his fallacies was that he claimed to be an agent of Imām al Mahdī (a.t.f.s.) to deceive people and attract them to his corrupt faith. He was accused of heresy due to his misleading and corrupt views. Al Muqtadir al `Abbāsī ordered his execution in the year three hundred and nine Hijrah, he was beheaded, while his body was burnt and ashes scattered in the air. (translator)

He thought that if he would be able to deceive him; ultimately he would also be able to mislead the people of weak-faith through his medium, due to his position and also his status in knowledge and etiquettes near them. Therefore he wrote to him, saying, "I am the agent of the Master of the age (a.t.f.s.) and have been ordered to write to you and manifest what you intend from us with regards to assisting you to strengthen yourself. Then do not doubt in this matter".

When Abū Sahl read the letter, he replied to him, saying, "I ask you for a minute thing that is quite easy for you beside the evidences and proofs manifesting at your hands.¹ I am a man who loves slave-girls. Then when I come to them, I pretend (to be young); however my white hair keeps me away from them. Therefore I need to dye my hair every Friday, while I have to bear extreme hardship in this matter to conceal it from them. Then if this matter is revealed to them, closeness would result in remoteness and communion would result in alienation. I desire from you that you relieve me from using dye and its hardship, then make my beard turn black. Ultimately I am ready to obey at your hands, come to you, repeat your words and invite to your faith along with my wealth and insight". When this letter reached Al Ḥallāj, he realized that he had committed a mistake by writing to him and his ignorance in believing that he would enter his faith and get hold of him. After this, he neither replied to him, nor sent him any further messages. Abū Sahl revealed his foolishness and he became a laughingstock, while he scoffed at him near everyone, and his matter gained renowned near everyone, elder or younger.

The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said, "If you find people of scepticism and innovation after me, then manifest your disassociation towards them, then increase reviling them and speaking regarding them (their fallacies) and slandering and confounding them, lest they prevail corruption in Islām. Then warn people against them so that they not learn from their innovation. (If you do so) Allāh (s.w.t.) shall write down good deeds for you and raise your position in the hereafter due to it".

It is said, "Confound them, a confounding; or assail them suddenly". Allāh (s.w.t.)

¹ He meant to say that since he claimed to be an agent of Imām al Mahdī (a.t.f.s.), he would have the power to manifest evidences in form of miracles. Therefore he would ask for a very small and easy request from him. (translator)

says in the Qur`ān, **“And make them confounded”**.¹ Or perplex them. And the man was confounded and plunged into anonymity, while his evidence departed. And perhaps what are meant by “people of scepticism” are those who doubt in religion and make people fall in doubt regarding it by giving rise to suspicions in their hearts.

Fourth, Muḥammad bin Ṣāleḥ bin Muḥammad al Hamdānī al Dihqān. He was among the companions of Imām Ḥasan al `Askarī (a.s.) and the agents of Imām al Mahdī (a.t.f.s.).

Shaikh al Mufid relates from him, that when my father passed away, the office of charge passed on to me. My father had promissory notes from people from the wealth of Al Garīm.² Shaikh al Mufid further says that the Shi`ah in ancient times recognized him (a.t.f.s.) with it and referred to him as Al Garīm in dissimulation (Taqīyyah).

He further says that I wrote to Imām (a.t.f.s.) informing him of the loan and he (a.t.f.s.) replied back, saying, “Claim from them and investigate from them”. The people returned back the amounts to me except one man who had a promissory note of four hundred dīnār in his account. I went to him, however he struck at me and his son scorned at me and flung abuses at me. When I complained regarding him to his father, he said, “So what”? Hearing this, I caught his beard and dragged him till the middle of the house. When his son saw this, he ran out, seeking help from the inhabitants of Bagdād, while saying, “A Rāfidhī from Qum kills my father”. Hearing this, a large crowd among them gathered around me. Seeing this, I mounted my mule and told them, “Bravo O inhabitants of Bagdād! You incline towards the oppressor against an oppressed stranger? I am from among the people of Hamdān from the Ahlul Sunnah, while this man attributes me to be from Qum. He accuses me of Rafadh (Shī`ahism) to snatch away my right and my wealth”. Hearing this, they pounced at him and desired to enter his shop, however I stopped them. Seeing this, the man agreed to return the amount and swore with

¹ The entire verse (Āyah) being, **“No, but it shall come on them suddenly, and make them confounded, so they shall neither be able to repel it, nor will they (then) be respited”**. (Holy Qur`ān, Sūratul Anbiyā': 40) (translator)

² Al Garīm or the creditor, is among the titles of Imām al Mahdī (a.t.f.s.), while the Shi`ah used this title in dissimulation (Taqīyyah) while referring to him (a.t.f.s.) during the initial period. This title was given to Imām (a.s.) since he was the rightful owner of religious dues, sanctioned and authorized by Allāh (s.w.t.). (translator)

divorce that he would pay back the amount to me at that very moment. Consequently I obtained the amount from him.



