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BIOGRAPHIES OF
IMAM ALI BIN MUHAMMAD
AL NAQI

عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام



IMAM HASAN BIN ALI
AL ASKARI

عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام

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BIOGRAPHY OF
IMAM ALI
BIN MUHAMMAD
AL NAQI عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



SAY:

صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ

S'ALLALLAAHU A'LAYHI WA
AALIHEE WA SALLAM

Whenever you read or say the name or any epithet or appellation of the Holy Prophet.

SAY:

عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام

A'LAYHIS SALAAM

Whenever you read or say the name or any epithet or appellation of any Imam of the Ahl ul Bayt, any prophet or messenger of Allah, and any distinguished member of the family of the Holy Prophet.

SAY:

صَلَوَاتُ اللهِ عَلَيْهَا

S'ALAWAATULLAAHI A'LAYHAA

Whenever you read or say the name of Fatimah Zahra, Khadija Kubra, Zaynab Binti Ali, Maryam or Asiya.

ZIYARAT MUTLAQA

IMAM ALI BIN MUHAMMAD AL NAQI

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا أَبَا الْحَسَنِ عَلِيَّ بْنَ مُحَمَّدٍ
الزَّكِيَّ الرَّاشِدَ النُّورَ الثَّاقِبَ وَرَحْمَةَ اللَّهِ
وَبَرَكَاتُهُ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا صَفِيَّ اللَّهِ
السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا سِرَّ اللَّهِ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ
يَا حَبْلَ اللَّهِ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا آلَ اللَّهِ السَّلَامُ
عَلَيْكَ يَا خَيْرَةَ اللَّهِ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا صِفْوَةَ
اللَّهِ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا أَمِينَ اللَّهِ السَّلَامُ
عَلَيْكَ يَا حَقَّ اللَّهِ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا حَبِيبَ
اللَّهِ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا نُورَ الْأَنْوَارِ السَّلَامُ
عَلَيْكَ يَا زَيْنَ الْأَبْرَارِ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا سَبِيلَ
الْأَخْيَارِ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا عُنْصَرَ الْأَطْهَارِ

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا حُجَّةَ الرَّحْمَنِ السَّلَامُ
 عَلَيْكَ يَا رُكْنَ الْإِيمَانِ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا
 مَوْلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا وَرَثَةَ
 الصَّالِحِينَ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا عِلْمَ الْهُدَى
 السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا حَلِيفَ التَّقَى السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ
 يَا عَمُودَ الدِّينِ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا بَنَ خَاتِمِ
 النَّبِيِّينَ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا بَنَ سَيِّدِ الْوَصِيِّينَ
 السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا بَنَ فَاطِمَةَ الزَّهْرَاءِ سَيِّدَةَ
 نِسَاءِ الْعَالَمِينَ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ أَيُّهَا
 الْأَمِينُ الْوَفِيُّ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ أَيُّهَا الْعَلَمُ
 الرَّضِيُّ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ أَيُّهَا الرَّاهِدُ التَّقَى
 السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ أَيُّهَا الْحُجَّةُ عَلَى الْخَلْقِ أَجْمَعِينَ
 السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ أَيُّهَا التَّالِيُ لِلْقُرْآنِ السَّلَامُ

عَلَيْكَ أَيُّهَا الْمُبَيِّنُ لِلْحَلَالِ مِنَ الْحَرَامِ
 السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ أَيُّهَا الْوَلِيُّ النَّاصِحُ السَّلَامُ
 عَلَيْكَ أَيُّهَا الطَّرِيقُ الْوَاضِحُ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ
 أَيُّهَا النَّجْمُ اللَّائِحُ أَشْهَدُ يَا مَوْلَايَ يَا
 أَبَا الْحَسَنِ أَنَّكَ حُجَّةُ اللَّهِ عَلَى خَلْقِهِ
 وَخَلِيفَتُهُ فِي بَرِّيَّتِهِ وَأَمِينُهُ فِي بِلَادِهِ
 وَشَاهِدُهُ عَلَى عِبَادِهِ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّكَ
 كَلِمَةُ التَّقْوَى وَبَابُ الْهُدَى وَالْعُرْوَةُ
 الْوُثْقَى وَالْحُجَّةُ عَلَى مَنْ فَوْقِ الْأَرْضِ وَ
 مَنْ تَحْتَ الثَّرَى وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّكَ الْمُطَهَّرُ
 مِنَ الذُّنُوبِ الْمُبْرَأُ مِنَ الْعُيُوبِ وَالْمُخْتَصُّ
 بِكَرَامَةِ اللَّهِ وَالْمَحْبُوبُ بِحُجَّةِ اللَّهِ وَ

الْمَوْهُوبُ لَهُ كَلِمَةُ اللَّهِ وَالرُّكْنُ الَّذِي
 إِلَيْهِ الْعِبَادُ وَتُحْيِي بِهِ الْبِلَادَ وَأَشْهَدُ
 يَا مَوْلَايَ أَنِّي بِكَ وَبِأَبَائِكَ وَأَبْنَائِكَ
 مُوقِنٌ مُقَرَّرٌ وَلكُمْ تَابِعٌ فِي ذَاتِ نَفْسِي
 وَشَرَائِعِ دِينِي وَخَاتِمَةَ عَمَلِي وَمُنْقَلَبِي
 وَمَشْوَايَ وَأَنِّي وَلِيٌّ لِمَنْ وَالَاكُمْ وَعَدُوٌّ
 لِمَنْ عَادَاكُمْ مُؤْمِنٌ بِسِرِّكُمْ وَعَلَانِيَتِكُمْ
 وَأَوْلِيكُمْ وَأَخْرِكُمْ بِأَبِي أَنْتَ وَأُمِّي وَالسَّلَامُ
 عَلَيْكَ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ اللَّهُمَّ
 صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَصَلِّ عَلَى
 حُجَّتِكَ الْوَافِيِّ وَوَلِيِّكَ الزَّكِيِّ وَأَمِينِكَ
 الْمُرْتَضَى وَصَفِيِّكَ الْهَادِيَّ وَصِرَاطِكَ

الْمُسْتَقِيمِ وَالْجَادَّةِ الْعُظْمَى وَالطَّرِيقَةَ
 الْوَسْطَى نُورِ قُلُوبِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَوَلِيَّ
 الْمُتَّقِينَ وَصَاحِبِ الْمُخْلِصِينَ اللَّهُمَّ
 صَلِّ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَآهْلِ بَيْتِهِ اللَّهُمَّ

صَلِّ عَلَى عَلِيِّ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ الرَّاشِدِ الْمَعْصُومِ
 مِنَ الزَّلِيلِ وَالطَّاهِرِ مِنَ الْخَلَلِ وَالْمُنْقَطِعِ
 إِلَيْكَ بِالْأَمَلِ الْمَبْلُوءِ بِالْفِتَنِ وَالْمُخْتَبَرِ
 بِالْمِحَنِ وَالْمُتَّحِنِ بِحُسْنِ الْبُلُوءِ وَصَبْرِ
 الشُّكُوعِ مُرْشِدِ عِبَادِكَ وَبَرَكَتِ بِلَادِكَ
 وَمَحَلِّ رَحْمَتِكَ وَمُسْتَوْدَعِ حِكْمَتِكَ وَ
 الْقَائِدِ إِلَى جَنَّتِكَ الْعَالِمِ فِي بَرِّيَّتِكَ وَ
 الْمَهَادِي فِي خَلِيقَتِكَ الَّذِي ارْتَضَيْتَهُ

وَأَنْتَجِبْتَهُ

وَاحْتَرَّتْهُ لِمَقَامِ رَسُولِكَ فِي أُمَّتِهِ وَ
 الزَّمْتَهُ حِفْظَ شَرِيعَتِهِ فَاسْتَقَلَّ بِأَعْبَاءِ
 الوَصِيَّةِ نَاهِضًا بِهَا وَمُضْطَلِعًا بِحِمْلِهَا
 لَمْ يَعْثُرْ فِي مُشْكِلي وَلا هَفَا فِي مُعْضِلِ بَلْ
 كَشَفَ الغُمَّةَ وَسَدَّ الفُرْجَةَ وَأَدَّى
 المُفْتَرَضَ اللَّهُمَّ فَكَمَا أَقْرَدْتَ نَاطِرَ
 نَبِيِّكَ بِهِ فَرَقِهِ دَرَجَتَهُ وَأَجْرِلْ لَدَيْكَ
 مَثُوبَتَهُ وَصَلِّ عَلَيْهِ وَبَلِّغْهُ مَنَاتِحِيَّةً وَ
 سَلَامًا وَاتِنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ فِي مَوَالِيهِمْ فَضْلًا
 وَإِحْسَانًا وَمَغْفِرَةً وَرِضْوَانًا إِنَّكَ
 ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ *

ZIYARAT MUTLAQA

IMAM ALI BIN MUHAMMAD AL NAQI

- Peace be on you, O Abal Hasan, Ali bin Muhammad,
the pious guide, the bright light, and also mercy and
blessings of Allah!
- Peace be on you, O the sincerely attached friend of
Allah!
- Peace be on you, O the confidant of Allah!
- Peace be on you, O the rope of Allah!
- Peace be on you, O he who belongs to the family
chosen by Allah exclusively for Himself!
- Peace be on you, O the good of Allah!
- Peace be on you, O the intimate friend of Allah!
- Peace be on you, O the trustee of Allah!
- Peace be on you, O the proof of Allah!
- Peace be on you, O the pride of the virtuous!
- Peace be on you, O the son of the upright!
- Peace be on you, O the essence of the purified!
- Peace be on you, O the argument of the beneficent!
- Peace be on you, O the essential of the faith!
- Peace be on you, O the master of the faithfuls!
- Peace be on you, O the guardian of the pious!
- Peace be on you, O the symbol of guidance!
- Peace be on you, O the ally of the God-fearing!
- Peace be on you, O the mainstay of the religion!
- Peace be on you, O the son of the last Prophet!
- Peace be on you, O the son of the first successor!
- Peace be on you, O the son of Fatimah Zahra the
prime leader of the women of the worlds!
- Peace be on you, O the faithful trustee!
- Peace be on you, O the favourite symbol!
- Peace be on you, O the innocent God-fearing!
- Peace be on you, O the decisive argument over all

people of every age and clime!

Peace be on you, O he who studied and interpreted the holy Quran!

Peace be on you, O he who taught to distinguish between lawful and unlawful!

Peace be on you, O the guardian who always gave sincere advice!

Peace be on you, O the evident example!

Peace be on you, O the bright star!

I bear witness, O my *mawla*, O Abal Hasan, that, verily you are the decisive argument of Allah over the mankind, His representative among the people, His trusted administrator in His lands, His witness over His servants; I bear witness that, verily, you are the words of piety, door of guidance and the safe handle, you are the evident proof for those who are on the earth and for those who are deep down the layers of the soil; I bear witness that, verily you are infallible, free from defects, the identity of Allah's grace, the preferred choice of Allah to demonstrate His proofs, the spokesman of Allah, the essential principle who protects the people, and on account of whom the social life sustains itself and grows; I say under oath, O my *mawla*, that I have faith in you, your forefathers and your children, I follow all of you in my personal affairs, in my religious performance, in my day-to-day conduct; my return and my destination also are the same as yours, I make friends with those who befriend you, I strive against those who oppose you; I believe in all of you, whether invisible or visible, in those of you who came first, in those of you who came last, My father and mother are at your disposal.

Peace be on you, and also mercy and blessings of Allah, O Allah send blessing on Muhammad and on the children of Muhammad, and send blessings on

Your faithful demonstrator, Your sagacious representative, Your chosen trustee, Your sincerely attached guide, Your right path, the most important approach, the just and equitable course, the light of the faithfuls' hearts, the friend of the God-fearing, the comrade of the sincere, O Allah send blessings on our master, Muhammad and his Ahl ul Bayt, and send blessing on Ali bin Muhammad, the infallible guide, free from errors and faults; he kept himself aloof from temptations and served You, tumult and discord seized him, troubles and sorrows surrounded him, thoroughly tried and tested, (but) he endured without complaint; the spiritual guide of Your servants, the blessing for the human civilization, the destination of Your mercy, You entrusted him with Your wisdom, he led unto Your paradise, gave knowledge and wisdom to Your created beings, and showed them the right path, whom You chose, preferred and elected to take the place of Your Prophet among his *ummah*, and gave him the responsibility of keeping intact the prescript of his religion. So, he confidently accomplished the onerous task of his succession, let it grow and spread, strengthened its hold, difficulties did not confuse him, complications did not obscure his judgement, he examined and exposed intricate issues, sealed the loopholes, carried out that which has been made obligatory, O Allah just as You made him a source of delight for Your Prophet, raise him to the highest height, give him the most fitting reward that suits him, bless him, convey our greetings and salutations to him, and give us, on account of our love for him, Your bounties, favours, amnesty and approval, verily, You are the owner of superabundant benefits and bounties.

BISMILLAAHIR RAH'MAANIR RAH'EEM

Imam Ali al Naqi is the tenth successor of the Holy Prophet and the twelfth link in the chain of the fourteen infallibles. His father was Imam Muhammad al Taqi and his mother, Sumana, was a slave. Like his father and grand father, he was the most meritorious person of his time as well as the greatest erudite and a divinely ordained charismatic leader. He was unique in knowledge, piety, generosity and all other noble characteristics

BIRTH AND APPELLATIONS

Imam Ali al Naqi was born in the month of Dhul Hajja in 212 *hijra* (828 A.D.), during the rule of Mamun at Surya in Madina. His father named him Ali as predicted by the Holy Prophet. On the authority of Tabrasi it is quoted that the names of the vicegerents are inscribed on the preserved tablet (*lawh mahfuz*) and the Holy Prophet had dictated the names of all his successors.

Abul Hasan is his filial appellation while some of his titles are Naqi, the pure; Nasih, the counselor; Hadi, the guide; Faqih, the jurist.

ATTAINMENT OF IMAMATE

Like his revered father Imam Muhammad al Taqi Imam Ali al Naqi also succeeded to the exalted office of *imamat* in early childhood. At the death of his father Imam Ali al Naqi's age was barely six or seven years. Although he did not have the opportunity to spend much time under the patronage of his father, he excelled in the various

branches of religious knowledge and doctrines of Islam.

The unique and unparalleled speeches and verdicts delivered by Imam Ali al Naqi in his childhood, bear testimony to the fact that the knowledge, wisdom and intellectual prowess of the infallible Imams is the bounty of Allah bestowed on the selected few. This type of divine knowledge is not dependent upon the conventional modes of acquisition of knowledge but stems from such spiritual and divine sources far beyond the scope of human intellect.

The fortunate people who attended the magnificent debates and dialectical dialogues conducted by Imam Ali al Naqi in his childhood to educate renowned erudites, scholars and jurists of Arabia bear witness to the supremacy of this fountainhead of knowledge and peerless wisdom.

Now we mention an incident about the prodigious erudition of the Imam when he was a child.

At the age of six or seven when Imam Ali al Naqi inherited the vicegerency he became the centre of attraction in Madina. People thronged to his house to seek guidance and this bred jealousy in the hearts of the enemies.

When Umar bin Faraj came to Madina after performing *haji*, the envious people went to him and requested him to do something about Imam Ali al Naqi. It was decided that under state supervision, a tutor would be appointed for the Imam. For this post Ubaydullah al Junaydi, one of the greatest literary savants of Iraq was chosen.

Junaydi was an enemy of the Ahl ul Bayt and he was instructed by the authorities to confine the holy Imam in such a way that no *shi-ah* could see him. The young Imam was thus put under virtual solitary confinement in an isolated place in Surya. One day a friend asked Junaydi "What is the condition of the Hashimite boy?"

With an extremely wry countenance, Junaydi grunted: "Call him not an Hashimite boy, he is an Hashimite chief. Even in his childhood, he is more knowledgeable than I. Whenever I prepare a lesson for him, he reveals such unknown dimensions that I am dumbfounded. People presume that I am his teacher but in reality I am his pupil. It is beyond my ability to teach him anything. He has complete mastery over the holy Quran and its exoteric and esoteric meanings. In short he is the best person among those who live on earth and in the skies." [Ithbat ul Wasiyat and Dama Sakibih.]

THE CONTEMPORARY MUSLIM JURISTS AND IMAM ALI AL NAQI

Islam is a practical religion and therefore it guides its followers in all walks of life. A Muslim's life is governed by Islamic laws called *shari-ah*. The essence of the *shari-ah* is contained in the holy Quran but the correct interpretation of the Quranic verses can only be done by the people of the holy house (Ahl ul Bayt) of the Holy Prophet upon whom the Quran was revealed. There is none who understands and interprets the holy Quran as the Ahl ul Bayt.

Here we relate a few incidents where legal

problems were solved by Imam Ali al Naqi in the light of the Quranic verses.

Mutawakkil, a cruel and headstrong Abbaside caliph once fell seriously ill. He avowed: "If I make a complete recovery I shall give much wealth in charity." Eventually he recovered and thereafter he assembled the court savants and jurists. After explaining his covenant with Allah he sought their opinion on the equivalent of 'much wealth'.

There was great confusion and difference of opinion among the erudites regarding the amount of money and Mutawakkil was confused. He was deeply absorbed in thought when one of his servants called Hasan said: "My Lord, I could bring you the solution if you so permit."

Mutawakkil mused, "Well If you bring me the correct solution, you will be rewarded ten thousand *dinars*. If not you will receive a hundred lashes."

"Yes, I agree", replied the servant and ran right away to Imam Ali, who was under house arrest. As the divine leader saw Hasan he said: "Well, you have come to ask the equivalent of much wealth? Go and tell Mutawakkil that it means eighty *dinars*." The servant rushed to Mutawakkil and told him the amount but Mutawakkil wanted a solid argument in support of the verdict. The servant went once again to the Imam who replied: "There is a verse in the holy Quran addressed to the Holy Prophet: "Most certainly Allah did help you in many (battle) fields"; and when such occasions are counted their number comes to eighty."

Mutawakkil was very happy and immediately gave away eighty *dinars* in charity and presented ten thousand dinars to Hasan. [Manaqib Ibn Sahr Ashub]

AN ASTUTE ADULTERER

Once a Christian was produced in the court of Mutawakkil. He was caught red handed committing adultery with a Muslim woman. He pleaded: "Please do not punish me because I am accepting Islam."

Judge, Yahya bin Akhtam, a renowned jurist opined: "This man should now be freed." Some jurists raised an objection and said: "He must be punished for his crime." There was thus a difference of opinions among the jurists. Finding no legal solution the caliph wrote to Imam Ali al Naqi and sought his counsel. The holy Imam replied: "This man should be stoned to death." When this verdict was read out in court, some jurists alongwith Yahya bin Aktham questioned its authenticity and sought a Quranic verse-as proof.

As required by the jurists, Imam Ali sent the proof in Quranic verses which say: "When they saw Our punishment, they said: 'We believe in the one and only Allah and reject those we used to associate with Him.' But their professing the faith did not profit them after they had seen our punishment. (Such has been) Allah's way of dealing with His servants. Thus were the disbelievers destroyed."

[40: 84, 85]

ENIGMA OF A BYZANTINE EMPEROR

On the authority of Allama Muhamamd Baqar Najafi

it is quoted that once a Byzantine emperor sent a letter to an Abbaside caliph in which he wrote: "I read in the Bible that if a person reads a chapter which does not contain the following seven letters, he will go to paradise. The seven letters are: (i) Tha (ii) Jim (iii) Ha (iv) Za (V) Shin (vi) Zwa (vii) Fa. To find this verse I consulted the Torah, the Evangel and the Psalms but I was not successful. Perhaps this verse is in the holy book of yours, the holy Quran.

The caliph assembled all the Muslim scholars, and erudites and sought their assistance. They pondered over the matter to no avail. Very disappointed from the savants, he summoned Imam Ali al Naqi, the fountainhead of the knowledge and wisdom, to the court and presented the enigma to him. Instantly without a moment's hesitation the holy Imam calmly replied: "It is surah al Fatihah".

The caliph read the surah very carefully to verify the answer of Imam Ali al Naqi and acknowledged the excellence of his erudition by asking: "O progeny of the Holy Prophet perhaps you can tell us why these letters are absent in this chapter of the holy Quran."

The heir to the knowledge of the Holy Prophet replied: "It will be my pleasure. This is the surah of divine mercy and auspiciousness and these letters are not included in it because *thubur* (destruction) begins with the letter "tha"; *jahim* (hell) begins with the letter *jim*; *khabat* (loss) begins with the letter *kha*; *zaqqum* (thorny tree) begins with the letter *za*; *shin* refers to *shaqawat* which means malice; *zwa* indicates *zulmat* which

means darkness and *fa* refers to *furqat* which means separation or disunion of beloved persons. All these words are negatives, antonyms to mercy or auspiciousness and therefore they are not included in sura al Fatihah.

The caliph was overjoyed and sent a full explanation to the Byzantine emperor, who in turn was so impressed by this display of supreme intellectual prowess and the perfection of the holy Quran that he at once embraced Islam and remained a Muslim till his death.

DIVINE KNOWLEDGE AND INSPIRATION

Imam Ali al Naqi belonged to that illustrious and highly respectable family that enjoys unparalleled honour and dignity and whose virtuous distinction is testified by the Quranic verse: "Indeed you possess a superb character."

The holy Imam was a progeny of the Holy Prophet Muhammad who had been conferred special distinction by the almighty Allah and was sent to this material world with the qualities which exclusively belong to divinity.

History bears witness to the fact that since the early days of Islam, temporal rulers were envious of the merits of the infallible Imams and tried unsuccessfully to humiliate them and lower their prestige before others.

Although caliph Mutawakkil acknowledged the righteousness of Imam Ali al Naqi he once called a great savant named Ibn Sukit and promised him a

grand reward if he could humiliate the holy Imam in the court.

An opulent feast was arranged and the gathering was attended by a large number of court dignitaries, scholars and savants.

Ibn Sukit asked: "Prophet Musa was given the miracle of the illuminating hand; prophet Isa was given the power to infuse life into the dead and the Holy Prophet was given a miracle in the form of the Quran. Why did almighty Allah do so and why did he give different miracles to different prophets?"

Imam Ali al Naqi said: "The miracles given to the different prophets were according to the necessity of their time. During the time of Musa, magic was considered an art of the masters and magicians were a powerful group; hence prophet Musa was given the miracle of the staff and illuminating hand that no master magicians could ever surpass. In the days of prophet Isa the science of medicine was advanced and therefore prophet Isa was given the power to heal incurable patients and also infuse life into the dead bodies. During the time of prophet Muhammad the art of rhetorics was reigning supreme, hence he was given an everlasting miracle of language in the form of the holy Quran.

Ibn Sukit said: "What is the proof of truth when there is no miracle to manifest?"

The Imam said: "People can differentiate between truth and untruth by their intellect and knowledge gained through experience."

Ibn Sukit said: "Intellect existed before so what was the need for the miracles?"

The Imam said: Though intellect was given to mankind, the faculty remained dormant. Their actions were motivated by the blind belief that what their forefathers did was good and they made the deeds of their forefathers their ideal. The prophets taught mankind to use the faculties that were lying idle.

Ibn Sukit said: "Prophet Sulayman knew that his executor Asif Ibn Barkhiya had the power to bring the throne of Queen Bilqis. Why then did he ask the people present if they knew who would bring the throne?"

The holy Imam said: "This action was motivated by the desire to manifest the superiority of Asif bin Barkhiya over others - the jinn as well as men."

Soon Ibn Sukit discerned that he was way out of his league. He felt humbled by his own ignorance. As an acknowledgment of his defeat he apologised to Imam Ali al Naqi for his audacity to even contemplate this wild notion of questioning the holy Imam. The Imam graciously forgave him.

HADITH TALL AL MIKHLAH

Qutub Rawandi reports an interesting incident. Caliph Mutawakkil in a display of his power and military grandeur ordered his army of over 90 thousand soldiers to assemble in the vast plains of Samarra. He instructed them to gather in full battle gear and fill the *mikhlah* (a provender - bag hung

around a horse's mouth) with red roses. They presented a splendid spectacle as they assembled near a hill which was named as *tall al mikhlah*. The caliph ascended to the top of this hill along with Imam Ali al Naqi who was the chief guest invited to see this display of Mutawakkil's might and grandeur so that he may not revolt against the caliph.

The holy Imam slowly cast his glance over the entire assembly then turning towards Mutawakkil asked: "Would you like to see my army?" The caliph jestingly replied: "Yes". Then the holy Imam invoked Allah and asked the caliph to look at his army. Lo and behold! the whole space between the earth and sky was full with soldiers in full battle attire. The caliph swooned and fell to the ground unconscious. When he regained consciousness the holy Imam informed him calmly, "We have nothing to do with your worldly matters. Our mission is only for the hereafter. Do not be afraid. Your fears are unfounded. Rest assured we shall never revolt against you."

YUNUS NAQQASH (THE ENGRAVER)

On the authority of Kafur Khadim it is reported that Yunus (*naqqash*), a neighbour of Imam Ali al Naqi in Samarra, was an ardent admirer of the Imam and spent many long hours in the Imam's service.

One day he came to the Imam in a distraught condition. He wailed: "O my master, after I am taken away, show kindness to my people." The holy Imam soothed him and inquired smilingly "But what is the matter with you?" He said "Musa bin Bagha gave me a precious stone for carving. While I was working

on it, it split into two. Tomorrow when Musa comes to collect it I am doomed." The Imam replied: "Is that all? Go home and wait till tomorrow. By the grace of God you will not see anything but good." Early next morning he came trembling and moaned: "Musa has come to take back the gem. What should I tell him?" The Imam reassuringly said: "Just go and hear what Musa bin Bagha has to say. Verily there will be nothing but good for you." With a heavy heart the engraver departed but after a short time he came back laughing and chanting praise of Allah almighty. He said: "O my master, when I went back Musa told me that his maidens had been quarreling with each other over the gem. He asked me if it was possible to make it into two halves, to resolve this dispute." When the Imam heard this he raised his hands and praised Allah and said: "What did you reply?" Yunus said: "I asked him to give me some time to think over the matter." The holy Imam smiled and said: "It was a good answer."

THE BLESSINGS OF FAITH AND CONTENTMENT

Abu Hisham Jafari narrates in Shaykh Saduq's book *Imali*, the following event:

Once I suffered extreme poverty and was on the brink of starvation. I went to Imam Ali al Naqi. After we settled down the holy Imam said: "O Abu Hisham, what are the blessings of Allah bestowed on you for which you should express gratitude to Him?" I was lost for an answer, the Imam continued: "Allah bestowed upon you faith, in doing so He made you immune from (hell) fire; then He gave you health, thus gave you strength to worship

Him. He gave you the spirit of contentment and in doing so He saved you from parting with your honour. O Abu Hisham, I began with these words knowing that you would complain to me about your misfortunes, although you have been endowed with all these blessings. Now I give you one hundred gold coins, please take them.*

From this noble tradition we find that faith is superior to all divine blessings. In fact the acceptance by Allah of all our good deeds depends upon it. One, whose faith is perfect is free from all evils. After faith comes the stage of the blessings of health and welfare.

It is said that somebody asked the Holy Prophet: "What should I ask for on *laylatul qadr* (the night of grandeur) from Allah almighty?" The Holy Prophet said: "Welfare. After welfare comes the phase of contentment."

It is reported that once the holy Imam was asked regarding the verse of the Quran which means - if one performs good actions, provided that he is a believer (since good deeds without belief do not bring reward) Allah gives him a life of peace in this world. What is meant by this life of peace (*hayat al taysyiba*). The Imam said: "It is contentment."

IMAMAT

Imam Ali al Naqi took charge of the office of vicegerency in 320 *hijra*, during the rule of Mutasim Billah. This Abbaside caliph showed no interest in the affairs of Imam Ali al Naqi and left

him quite undisturbed.

A particular reason for this was the insurgence and revolt of Babak, whose Byzantine soldiers were inflicting defeat on the royal forces of Mutasim Billah.

Mutasim was compelled to devote his total attention to Babak and after great endeavour he managed to completely subdue Babak. Mutasim's favourite Byzantine slave Aqshin cut Babak's head and sent it to him. This was a great victory for Mutasim and he generously rewarded Aqshin for his valour and loyalty.

At the time of Mutasim's ascension to the throne the Abbaside family had tried to instigate Abbas bin Mamun but Mutasim had come to know about their intentions. Before his Abbaside opponents could succeed in their designs, he enticed Abbas bin Mamun to his side by promising him big gifts and favours. Ever since then Abbas had shown loyalty to Mutasim and never did anything against his will or disposition, but during these long four years when Mutasim was totally engrossed in his campaign against the Byzantine empire, the Abbasides got the opportunity to provoke Abbas bin Mamun and incite him against Mutasim giving him the bait that he would be proclaimed the next caliph.

Anyhow Mutasim arrived and crushed the rebellion with a firm hand. After putting his state affairs on an even keel, he put Abbas bin Mamun in detention, sent him to Samarra and finally put him to death in a treacherous way.

The above mentioned events illustrate that the feuds, rivalries and intrigues among the Abbasides in league with the Byzantine slaves, appointed on key posts, had kept Mutasim busy and Imam Ali al Naqi lived in peace.

After the death of Mutasim Billah, the people swore allegiance to his son Wasiq Billah and he took charge of the caliphate in 228 *hijra*.

Whatever his virtues and vices, it is an accepted fact that throughout his reign of about six years Imam Ali al Naqi performed his duties as vicegerent of the Holy Prophet in perfect peace and tranquillity. Wasiq never showed any inquisitiveness about the Imam's affairs nor did he object to any of his actions.

His kindness was not only extended to the holy Imam but also to all *sayyids* and Hashimites. No book of history contains any instance of harsh action against any *sayyid*.

In this aspect of his nature, Wasiq was rather different to his ancestors. His successor Mutawakkil proved himself a staunch antagonist of the holy Imam and an arch enemy of the *sayyids*. He surpassed the hostility of his ancestors. It would not be improper to call him Yazid of the Abbasides taking into account the inhumane acts of tyranny, villainy and cruelty committed by him.

He tried to desecrate and obliterate the graves and tombs not only of the *sayyids* but also of the progeny of the Holy Prophet, the holy Imams, whose sublime and resplendent tombs were the

source of blessings and beneficence to thousands of people.

As a person Mutawakkil was a sadist, prone to erratic behaviour, oppression and tyranny. Most of the time he was deadly drunk and used to issue such oppressive orders that made the people shudder in fear. His oppression and persecution was not confined to any particular caste or creed but afflicted everybody without discrimination.

Since the time Imam Ali al Naqi succeeded to the vicegerency of the Holy Prophet during the rule of Mutasim Billah he had lived in Madina.

All through the years till the end of Wasiq's rule and also during the first four years of Mutawakkil's rule that is for nearly 16 years the holy Imam continued to perform his duties as vicegerent of the Holy Prophet in order to preach and impart guidance to the people. The fame of his supreme spiritual exaltation spread far and wide and the Muslims of Iraq, Hijaz, Yemen, Egypt and Algeria flocked to him to seek guidance from the fountainhead of knowledge.

The mischief mongers could not tolerate this and Abdullah bin Hakim the governor of Madina started teasing the Imam and then he wrote a lengthy letter to Mutawakkil alleging that Imam Ali al Naqi was accumulating fabulous riches. His coffers were full of gold and silver and preparations for an armed insurrection against the caliph were underway. He also hinted a large number of *shi-ahs* were ready to offer supreme sacrifice for their Imam and warned Mutawakkil to take necessary action.

Imam Ali al Naqi learnt of this antagonistic move of Abdullah bin Hakim and wrote a letter to Mutawakkil, clarifying his own position and the falsehood of Abdullah.

The two letters reached Mutawakkil in Samarra simultaneously. As per his erratic and devious temperament he exploited the situation to suit his own ends.

First he ordered the dismissal of Abdullah bin Hakim as governor of Madina, replacing him by Abul Fazal. He informed Imam Ali al Naqi about this decision in a letter which he sent through Abul Fazl, saying: "I have learnt from my own sources as well as your letter that Abdullah bin Hakim was not scrupulous enough to show regard for your dignity to the desired extent. For this insolence and audacity I have terminated him from the governorship of Madina and I have appointed the bearer of this letter Abul Fazal in his place. I have strongly impressed upon Abul Fazal the importance of showing due respect and consideration for your dignity and status, and hope that he will earn the blessings of both worlds by extending due respect and courtesy to you. In this way he will not only invoke divine blessings but will also enhance his position in my eyes."

At the same time, under the facade of fake love and devotion he sent an invitation to Imam Ali al Naqi expressing his passionate desire to meet the Imam and professing that the honour of meeting the Imam personally would be more wonderful than all the riches of the world. He wrote: "I have been anxiously awaiting the honour and pleasure of

meeting you personally after having heard a lot about your renowned spiritual exaltation and deep and profound knowledge. I would feel highly honoured if you bring along your relatives and friends. If you do so desire you shall be accorded a royal welcome with the usual pomp and grandeur and this will increase my pleasure.

With these loving sentiments I am sending Yahya bin Harsama with his military contingent in your gracious presence with my humble invitation. Let me tell you with a sense of great joy and justified pride that Yahya and his companions who belong to the corps of distinguished royal officers will escort you and provide you all amenities and comforts during your journey from Madina to Samarra. They will be completely under your command because neither do I feel more love and affection for anybody other than you, nor do I find any person in my family and tribe to be more gracious and dignified than you. Nobody among the Abbasides will treat you with greater benevolence and honour than myself. May Allah bless you with pleasure, compassion and auspiciousness."

On receiving this letter, Imam Ali al Naqi did not think it advisable to decline the invitation. He displayed foresight and prudence as shown by his ancestors on similar occasions. He fully comprehended the hypocrisy of Mutawakkil and realised if he showed any resistance, the military detachment of Yahya bin Harsama would let loose a reign of terror and ransack not only the Imam's sacred house but also the homes of the *sayyids* and would ultimately arrest the Imam and take him to Samarra by force. To avoid such eventualities the

Imam accepted the invitation and asked for some time to make necessary preparations for the journey.

Departing from Madina after so many years was not an easy task for the holy Imam as well his devout followers. When the holy Imam went for his farewell visit to the tomb of his grandfather, it was next to impossible for the holy Imam and the followers to have control on their poignant emotions of grief and sorrow. It was indeed a heart-rending experience.

Yahya bin Harsama says: "On the day of our departure for Madina, I went early in the morning to Imam Ali al Naqi and saw the preparation in progress. There were several large baggages of cotton quilts, coats and warm cloaks."

Harsama continues: "At that time I professed *hashmia* faith. Thoughts of contempt came to my mind over the fact that the *shi-ahs* considered a man of such limited intellect (God forbid) as their spiritual leader, who in mid summer was taking provisions necessary for severe winter conditions and did not consider these heavy burdens cumbersome to himself. Still I did not dare to inquire about it from the holy Imam."

Yahya goes on to say: "Well, we set off from Madina. In the course of the journey, one day, we encamped at a very desolate place in the desert, where for miles together there was no tree or sign of human habitation. However since we had our supplies, we felt no danger.

Among my companions I had a secretary who was a devout *shi-ah* and my bodyguard was a *sunni*. They usually had heated arguments about the righteousness of their respective faiths. I never got involved in their discussions, just listened to their arguments from a distance.

That evening in the desert my two companions revived the same topic to while away the time. My bodyguard asked my secretary: "Your *khalifa bila fasi*, Imam Ali ibn abi Talib, is quoted as saying that there is no place on earth where there are no graves or the dead have not been buried. Tell me, is that true?" The *shi-ah* replied that it was true and enquired from the *sunni* the real purpose of that question. It was very evident to all of us present there and I smiled because I was convinced that my *shi-ah* secretary would not give a satisfactory answer. Any how I kept silent but my *sunni* bodyguard insisted: "If your faith in this saying is right, tell me where do you find graves in this wilderness where even the birds and animals are untraceable let alone human beings. How then can the truth of your righteous Imam's saying be established?" All those present started laughing and sniggering, much to the embarrassment of the *shi-ah* who remained silent. In a flash, small specks of clouds started appearing on the sky and there was a stir in the air. By evening dark and thick clouds gathered and strong winds started blowing. As night fell there was torrential rain accompanied by heavy snowfall. The blizzard rapped through out the night sending cold shudders down our spines.

I sat huddled in the corner of my tent shivering since I had no warm clothes. After midnight in the

midst of the blizzard somebody called out at the door of my tent. I opened the flap and found a servant of Imam Ali al Naqi standing with two bundles. He told me his master had sent these warm clothes for myself and my secretary. I expressed my sincere gratitude for this act of kindness. When I opened the bundle I found therein one quilt, one cloak and a warm coat. Then I was convinced of the *imamate* of Imam Ali al Naqi from the depth of my heart and proclaimed instantly: O descendant of the Holy Prophet, you are the true vicegerent. Truly at the time of departure I had considered the warm clothes cumbersome and unnecessary, but I did not know what you in your eternal wisdom knew. No doubt your knowledge and wisdom stand unparalleled in the whole world.

I gave one bundle to my secretary and we spent the night with sufficient protection from the caprice of the storm.

When morning came I ventured out and found to my astonishment that half of my contingent had perished, and among the dead was my *sunni* bodyguard who used to be engaged in religious discussions with my secretary. Having witnessed this massive toll of mortality I rushed to Imam Ali al Naqi who was reciting the holy Quran. After he finished his recitation he addressed me and said: "Yahya go forth and arrange the burial of your dead companions and be convinced that Allah almighty will fill the face of the earth in this way. Nothing can happen contrary to the words uttered by my illustrious ancestor, Imam Ali, the commander of the faithfuls."

These occurrences made clear to Yahya bin Harsma and his remaining companions that the supreme wisdom and nobility of the infallible Imams were unquestionable. Yahya was so impressed that he forthwith renounced all the mistaken beliefs and became a follower of the true path shown by the real descendants of the Holy Prophet.

When Yahya informed caliph Mutawakkil of the arrival of the Imam at Samarra, his response was very cold and insipid, quite in contrast to the great enthusiasm earlier shown by him in his letters. It was quite obvious that Mutawakkil had resorted to this whole ostensible show, and expressed full recognition of the Imam's knowledge, wisdom and virtues merely to lure him to Samarra. Now that the Imam had arrived, he threw away the garb of fake devotion and spurious sincerity and coldly instructed Yahya to lodge the Imam at Khawan al Salik, a desolate place far from the city which was specifically reserved for the very poor, destitute and vagrant people.

There is no limit to the sublimity of a contented man. The Imam, without the slightest hesitation or complaint, cheerfully entered the desolate building reciting the holy Quran: "We abide by the decree decided for us by Allah and submit to His command."

The author of Rawzat us-Safa quotes Salih bin Sa'id who said that he happened to be in Samarra in those days. When he heard of the arrival of the holy Imam and where he was lodged, he was highly perturbed and went to meet the Imam. After the exchange of greetings Salih said: "O son of the Holy Prophet why have you come here in response to Mutawakkil's

letters? Look at this wretched place he has lodged you where nobody except the destitutes and vagrants live." On hearing these words the Imam smiled and asked Salih to turn his head.

As he did so Salih could not believe his eyes, the whole place was vibrant with flowers of myriad hues, lush green foliage and gurgling blue streams and springs. The whole section of Khawan al Salik where the Imam was residing looked like a segment of paradise. The holy Imam told Salih bin Sa'id that all that he has just witnessed was always provided for the Imam wherever he went.

Be it as it may, Imam Ali al Naqi stayed at Khawan al Salik for 3 days, after which Mutawakkil revealed his nefarious intentions towards his distinguished guest and put him under the surveillance of Zarraqi, his strictest army officer.

History reveals that Zarraqi was a slave of Byzantine descent who had spent his entire life in the military service of the Abbaside caliphs. In status and honour he was considered to be next to the prime minister and was totally in the confidence of Mutawakkil. He was specially chosen by Mutawakkil because he was convinced Zarraqi would not show a specter of leniency or concession to the Imam but would rather subject him to persistent persecution and oppression to enhance his own position in Mutawakkil's esteem.

However as the Quran says: "Allah does what He wills and He has control over all things." Destiny foiled Mutawakkil's plans and asserted its own strength and majesty in such a way that after a few

days Zarraqi also became a sympathetic devotee and well wisher of the Imam. He came to this conclusion after closely watching the Imam's noble conduct and virtuous habits.

Zarraqi became convinced from the depth of his heart that Mutawakkil had unjustly subjected such a pious and saintly person to affliction and hardship. He realised that Mutawakkil on the instigation of jealous backbiters and sycophants had relegated the Imam to imprisonment to undermine his dignity and exaltation.

"And it is Allah who keeps whom He wills and obliterates what He wills."

In a few days the feelings of this obedient and most loyal servant Zarraqi towards his master Mutawakkil underwent a great change. His eyes glittered with the light of truth and his heart became radiant with the light of faith. But it was not advisable in the days of Mutawakkil to proclaim allegiance to the right faith. Therefore Zarraqi kept this divine blessing bestowed on him as a guarded secret. From that time onwards he showed leniency and benevolence towards Imam Ali al Naqi, providing him all amenities for his comfort and convenience.

This reaction of Zarraqi was exactly the same as those of the guards and custodians of Imam Musa al Kazim during the days of Harun. By virtue of his supreme moral excellence the holy Imam had succeeded in converting an arch enemy of the progeny of the Holy Prophet like Zarraqi into an ardent and devout *shi-ah*.

Mutawakkil soon came to know about Zarraqi's concession but did not consider it proper at that time to reprimand a high ranking royal official like Zarraqi. He therefore intentionally overlooked his actions but soon removed the holy Imam from his custody and put him under the surveillance of Sa-id.

The attitude of Sa-id towards Imam Ali al Naqi was very harsh. The holy Imam remained under his surveillance for eight long years suffering various types of persecutions but this sacred group of people are endowed with exceptional powers of endurance and forbearance and endure torture with complete fortitude reciting these words :We abide by the will of Allah and submit to His commands.

During this woeful period of detention the holy Imam carried on the routine of his worship without the slightest deviation. The true worshipper of Allah maintained the dignity and piety of the time of his freedom even during his imprisonment. There was the same fear of Allah, same pious worship and wakeful nights. The people of Samarra were highly impressed by his daily routine of piety and prayer but kept quiet saying: "Verily he is indeed a distinguished angel."

THE HOLY IMAM AND GUIDANCE OF THE PEOPLE

The vicegerent of the holy Prophet is always conscious of the duties entrusted to this divine office. However, sometimes his guidance of the people does not take a vocal form. His pious ways of worship and supreme moral attributes win the

hearts of the people and attracts them. The change of heart experienced by Zarraqi took place without any arguments cited by the Imam regarding the right path or his own spiritual exaltation. The people of Samarra, likewise were impressed by the Imam's marvelous spiritual qualities, virtuous manners, piety and sincerity and were drawn towards him. He had never spoken to them about his own rights or status directly or indirectly because the mere mention of these things in those days was considered the worst crime punishable by death.

Thus we see that the holy Imam performed all his duties in regard to public guidance only tacitly, through practical demonstration of his moral virtues. Consequently in spite of the strict arrangements made by Mutawakkil and contrary to his wishes and desires a large number of people of Samarra became devotees of the Imam and considered obedience to him as the right path and a blessing for themselves.

The hand of providence forced a callous and despotic ruler like Mutawwakil to put his complete confidence in Fatah bin Khaqam who was a devotee of the progeny of the Holy Prophet.

At the time of his ascension Mutawakkil had appointed a favourite slave as his first prime minister. Soon he became suspicious of the slave and appointed his private secretary in his place. In due course Mutawakkil developed discord with him too and dismissed him. Now he appointed Fatah bin Khaqam his new prime minister in a permanent capacity. Although Fatah was a *shi-ah* he was given complete authority over the affairs of the royal

court, revenue, judiciary, army and treasury departments. Mutawakkil was fully aware of the faith of Fatah bin Khaqan but could not dispense with him because of his unique ability, great wisdom and statesmanship.

Providence discerned that staunch enemies of the *shi-ahs* confer high honour and status on the devoted followers of the progeny of the Holy Prophet. Although Mutawakkil harboured great hostility towards the progeny of the Holy Prophet, yet he was compelled to give patronage and honour to the devoted follower.

When Fatah bin khaqan gained the confidence of the caliph he gave special attention to the affairs of Imam Ali al Naqi who had been under detention for about twelve to fourteen years at that time.

He was very cautious because he was fully aware of the periodical antagonism of Mutawakkil towards the sacred progeny of the Holy Prophet. Although the caliph had apparently overlooked his religious beliefs in appointing him prime minister this was not a guarantee that his life would not be in danger if he took any initiative in favour of the Imam. So he kept quiet and waited for an opportune moment to put forward any recommendation regarding the holy Imam, before the caliph.

However, when the plan for the expansion of the capital city of Samarra came up for approval, Fatah bin Khaqan suggested to Mutawakkil that all desolate and uninhabited areas of the city be allotted to the dignitaries of the court and the rich people to construct buildings thereon according to their own

choice at their own expenses. In this way the state would not incur any expenditure on these settlements. Mutawakkil found this suggestion very advantageous, gave his consent and ordered its early implementation.

After getting these orders, Fatah prepared a list of uninhabited areas and allotted them to the court officers. Under this settlement scheme he also allotted a plot of land to Imam Ali al Naqi but to be on the safe side he received the cost of the land from the Imam and kept the receipt with himself. Fatah bin Khaqan thought it was probable that Mutawakkil would cancel the allotment to the Imam if it was a royal gift, but it would be easier to get the caliph's approval by producing the receipt of the amount paid by the Imam towards the cost of the plot.

Things happened just as anticipated by Fatah. Mutawakkil did make an enquiry on finding the name of the Imam on the list of allottees of the state land but when Fatah produced the receipt of payment, did not pursue the matter any further. Fatah made a legal sale deed in the name of Imam Ali al Naqi and handed it over to the holy Imam.

Imam Ali al Naqi had lost all hopes of returning to Madina ever since he had arrived in Samarra. He was also unable to make any arrangement for his permanent residence. Now he had been granted permission to live independently. Due to his callous nature Mutawakkil still insisted that although the Imam would be living independently with his family his activities would still be monitored by Sa-id.

The holy Imam accepted these conditions with patience and fortitude. He was not disappointed that the independence given to him after fourteen years of captivity was still not complete.

According to research this was the second house built by the progeny of the Holy Prophet outside Madina. The first house was constructed at Kufa and the second one was now built in Samarra. Just as Imam Ali ibn abi Talib did not have any opportunity to return to Madina after shifting to Kufa, Imam Ali al Naqi also could never return to Madina.

Just a few days after Imam Ali al Naqi moved into his new house, his neighbour, a rich and influential court official, started pestering the Imam to renounce his title to the plot. Imam Ali al Naqi paid no heed to the unjust demands of his neighbour, Umar bin al Khuzayb. Then Umar tried to use pressure tactics. One day accompanied by his ruffians he came to the door of the Imam's house with the specific intention of insulting the holy Imam. He created a commotion at the door and when the Imam came out and politely inquired the cause of the mayhem Umar spoke very harshly and asked the Imam in a threatening tone to vacate the plot and go away in the interest of his own safety.

The holy Imam tried to pacify his neighbour but he refused to see reason and became more insolent and rude. At last the holy Imam said: "Umar bin al Khuzayb, I have full knowledge of where you are destined to go within the next few days. Why are you creating this uproar and harassing a neighbour and disturbing his peace in the last few days of your life."

The power drunk, arrogant court official kept on his barrage of insults, but soon some people gathered around and on their intervention he went away hurling grave threats of dire consequences.

There is a persian saying: "Whoso tries to harm the progeny of the Holy Prophet harms himself."

Within three or four days Mutawakkil received reports about the serious embezzlements made by Umar bin Al Khuzayb in the taxes collected from the Syrian territory. These reports enraged him. On the verification of these charges through his agents, the guilt of Umar was established, so Mutawwakil sentenced him to execution on the stocks. Showing complete disregard for Umar's wealth and power of which he was so proud, the men of the royal constabulary affixed his hands and feet on the stocks and threw him out in the sizzling heat of the desert sun where he died a death of disgrace and humiliation.

Mutawakkil observed that even under adverse conditions of detention and persecution the glorious dignity of the holy Imam remained unaffected, his courage and contentment reigned supreme. This frustrated Mutawakkil and prone as he was to volatile eruptions of rage, one day he summoned Fatah bin Khaqan and shouted: "You have always been pleading before me that only false allegations are made against Imam Ali al Naqi and he has never opposed the caliph in any way. Well, now I have received reports contrary to these. The Imam has been indulging in subversive activities." Fatah bin Khaqan tried to pacify him but he was not prepared to listen to reason. "I want to end this state of

tension and apprehension right away by getting rid of the Imam immediately." He then called one guard and ordered him to produce Imam Ali al Naqi before him right away.

After the messenger was dispatched, Mutawakkil summoned four of his ruthless Turkish slaves. He gave each of them a sword and ordered them to murder the holy Imam as soon as he arrived on the scene. Then he swore that after the Imam was murdered he would burn his body to ashes.

Soon afterwards, Imam Ali al Naqi arrived there and the four slaves with unsheathed swords in their hands followed him up to Mutawakkil's throne. The sacred lips of the Imam were moving as though he was reciting a prayer.

The holy Imam appeared perfectly calm and relaxed. When he approached Mutawakkil, still in a rage, he stood up, bade the Imam a formal welcome, seated him next to himself and after kissing his hand said to the Imam in a very humble tone: "O son of the Holy Prophet, O the most distinguished person on earth. O my master, my cousin, why have you taken the trouble of coming here?" Imam Ali al Naqi replied: " This is indeed strange. Your messenger has brought me here on your command and yet you do not know it. It is strange, very strange indeed." Hurling a filthy abuse at his messenger he said that he had lied and he had not at all given him the trouble of coming there. Then ordered his courtiers including Fatah bin Khaqan to escort the Imam back to his house with great honour.

When the Imam was at the door of the palace the four Turkish slaves threw down their swords and fell at his feet to invoke his blessings.

As the Imam left, Mutawakkil called in his four slaves and enquired why they had not executed his orders. They answered in one voice that when the Imam entered the palace, they saw a super human person brandishing a sword, guarding the holy Imam, they were overawed and could not harm the Imam. Mutawakkil acknowledged that he too had beheld this strange spectacle.

Such spiritual incidents were also observed during the days of Imam Musa al Kazim in the courts of Harun and Mahdi but due to lack of wisdom these haughty caliphs misconstrued these evidences of righteousness, as mere display of magic and jugglery (May Allah protect us from such sinister beliefs) and persisted in their hostility towards the progeny of the Holy Prophet.

Mutawakkil had constructed an arena in front of his palace at Samarra where he kept numerous wild and ferocious animals like lions, tigers and leopards in special cages. Special royal enclosures were also built from where the reigning caliph and his courtiers enjoyed the sadistic spectacle of 'man fights beast'. This arena was called "*birkat-us-saba*" (The abode of the beasts).

The usual practice was, whenever awarded capital punishment to any criminal, the condemned person was forcibly pushed into the arena and the wild beasts were released who instantly devoured the victim. This spectacle was thoroughly enjoyed by

the cheering crowds seated in the royal enclosures.

The callous Mutawakkil also prescribed the same punishment for Imam Ali al Naqi. He ordered the officials of *birkat us saba* to thrust him into the arena as soon as he arrived there. Mutawakkil meanwhile with some of his close associates retired to the special enclosure to watch the spectacle.

As soon as Imam Ali al Naqi arrived, the officials of *birkat us saba* pushed him into the arena. The holy Imam started walking calmly towards the centre of the arena. He was immediately surrounded by the hungry savage beasts, but instead of pouncing on their prey, they started kneeling at his feet, moving around him with bent heads to demonstrate reverence and fealty. Then the holy Imam spread his prayer mat on the ground and prayed there, and the beasts watched his glorious worship standing in a circle around him. Mutawakkil was shocked out of his wits at this spectacle and felt ruefully repentant at the spiritual grandeur and exaltation of the Imam.

Ibn Hajar has narrated the following episode in his book *Sawaiq Muhriqa*.

Once a woman claimed she was a *sayyidah*. Mutawakkil asked his advisers how this claim could be verified. They mentioned Imam Ali al Naqi. The Imam was summoned and Mutawakkil presented the problem to him. The holy Imam replied: "Allah almighty has made the blood of the descendants of Imam Husayn sacrosanct for the savage beasts. You throw her before the beasts." The woman started trembling and confessed that her claim was false.

Then a few courtiers urged Mutawakkil to verify the statement of the Imam. The court was vacated by his order and three beasts were released in the hall and Imam Ali al Naqi was forced to enter in it. He himself went to the roof to witness the scene. The Imam entered, and when the beasts heard the sound of the door opening they charged towards the Imam then suddenly stopped in the path. They began to sniff the robes of the Imam, moved around him caressing his sleeves and finally all the beasts dropped to their knees.

When Mutawakkil came down and the Imam came out of the hall, the courtiers asked Mutawakkil to show the sanctity of his own progeny as had been shown by his cousin, Imam Ali al Naqi. Mutawakkil retorted: "God! Do you all want me to be killed."

The hostile tactics of Mutawakkil could not diminish the grandeur and glory of the Imam nor could he be physically harmed. This was a cause of great pain and shame to Mutawakkil. But one has to reap as one sows. A while after the *birkat us saba* incident, he fell ill. A big abscess appeared on his rear, which caused him great pain and discomfort. The royal physicians tried numerous ointments to extract the pus but to no avail. The agony of Mutawakkil continued to worsen. The court physicians advised surgery but he refused to undergo the torture of the knife.

Compelled by deep affection for her son, Mutawakkil's mother sent a message to Imam Ali, apprising him of the condition of her son. The holy Imam prescribed the remedy. Goat's dung to be mixed with rose water and applied to the abscess.

When this prescription was communicated to Mutawakkil, the people seated near him began to laugh. However Fatah bin Khaqan was absolutely sure that the formula of the holy Imam could never be ineffective. At last on the persistence of Fatah the ointment was applied and gradually the infection subsided and that night after many sleepless nights he slept peacefully.

Mutawakkil's mother who was immensely gratified over her son's recovery sent a sealed purse containing ten thousand *dinars* to the holy Imam.

A few days later at the instigation of some sycophants, Mutawakkil sent a search party to the Imam's house to look for the hidden wealth, arms and ammunition he was supposed to have hoarded for an armed insurrection.

In the middle of the night when Sa-id and his men stealthily climbed on to the roof, the holy Imam called out. "Sa-id, it is too dark, just wait till I light a candle for you." The holy Imam lit the candle and Sa-id and his men came down the ladder provided by the Imam. The holy Imam returned to his seat and continued with the recitation of the Quran. On searching the whole house Sa-id and his soldiers found nothing except the bag of money with the seal of Mutawakkil sent by his mother. Sa-id, with remorse written all over his face, stood before the Imam who inquired calmly: "O Sa-id, do tell me how much wealth and weapons have you found in my house?" Sa-id shamefacedly replied that he had found nothing except the purse with the seal. The holy Imam then insisted that Sa-id take whatever he had found in the house back

to Mutawakkil .

Once Mutawakkil summoned Imam Ali al Naqi to the court when it was in full attendance. The royal dignitaries and military officers were seated on one side and the scholars and the civilians were on the other side. The legal and judiciary officials were in a separate enclosure and the Byzantine slaves in their regalia flanked the sides of the throne. There was a cluster of dancing girls, jesters and handsome youth serving sparkling wine in crystal glasses.

As soon as the Imam entered, the entire atmosphere underwent an electrifying change at the impact of the spiritual grandeur of the Imam. The whole audience stood up and bowed their heads in obeisance towards him. With perfect composure the holy Imam walked towards the throne where Mutawakkil arose, welcomed him and seated him next to himself. Then a glass full of wine was presented to the Imam and Mutawakkil personally requested the Imam to drink it. The holy Imam politely refused :I seek refuge with Allah who is my sustainer and turn repentant to Him. Please excuse me. How can I drink something which has not so far spoiled the sanctity of my blood and flesh nor those of my illustrious ancestors." Then the caliph asked the Imam to sing something.

The Imam replied "I do not sing". Mutawakkil felt snubbed but kept quiet. He then asked the Imam to recite some poetry composed by himself. The Imam again rebuffed the caliph: "By Allah I do not compose verses of any kind." With a view of saving his pride the caliph requested the Imam to just recite some verses composed by any one.

At this juncture the Imam did not consider any further refusal advisable, so he recited the scintillating verses of Imam Ali ibn abi Talib in his melodious voice. The translation of these verses in English is:

"Where are the precious dresses and robes of the dead kings?

Where are their bejewelled and golden crowns?

Where is the beauty and glamour of the faces which had always remained behind veils?

One day they had to leave their thrones, and were laid beneath the earth.

Their luxurious lives and temporal wealth were all turned to dust and woeful grief.

Although the grand palaces and castles still stand;

They have absolutely no permission to visit them."

The whole audience was spellbound and moved to tears. They were gripped with the stark realization regarding the worthlessness of the worldly wealth and riches which are perishable and mortal.

Thus we see that the manoeuvre planned by Mutawakkil to humiliate the Imam, rebounded and struck a blow to his own power and pelf.

Mutawakkil not only perpetrated atrocities on the holy Imam but also ordered desecration of the tombs of Ahl ul Bayt in Iraq.

In 237 *hijra* he enforced a public order banning visits to the holy shrines of Najaf Ashraf and Karbala Mu-alla. The order proclaimed that any person found committing a breach of this royal order would be liable to punishment by death.

First of all he gave orders to Qasim bin Ahmad Asadi to raze the holy shrines to the ground. They should not only destroy the shrines but also dig out the graves, all land attached to the shrines should be ploughed with implements and brought under cultivation, obliterating all their remnants on the earth. These were the orders of the Yazid of the Abbaside dynasty.

These orders accentuated the hardships and the woeful conditions of the *shi-ahs*. They could not disclose even their names, let alone their faith. They could not get jobs in the government departments, nor were they allowed to practice agriculture or trade in any part of the country. All respectable ways of livelihood were closed to them. In short the *shi-ah* community was living under very adverse and miserable conditions, so most of the young and the old were forced into exile leaving their womenfolk and children in remote parts of various Muslim countries far from the repression of the Abbaside kingdom. During the rule of Mutawakkil the *shi-ahs* were treated like non-Muslims and grouped with the unbelievers and polytheists.

He plundered their homes, confiscated their lands and slaughtered thousands of them ruthlessly.

To ensure strict enforcement of his orders Mutawakkil sent a large contingent of 10,000 soldiers to expel all *shi-ah* pilgrims from Karbala immediately and make such permanent arrangements that no member of the *shi-ah* community or tribe would dare to venture near the shrines. He also ordered his royal troops to patrol

the surrounding territory and block all routes of access to the holy shrines.

Upto that time in history, the shrine at Karbala was just the mausoleum with a rough boundary wall and some rooms for the lodging of the visitors who came to the shrine. When these soldiers entered the shrine at Karbala and tried to expel the visitors they met with strong resistance. The faithful devotees refused to leave. The soldiers tried to intimidate them by a display of their military might but these firm believers stood resolute and sacrificed their lives. This barbaric incident created a strong wave of uncontrolled agitation. All *shi-ah* tribes living around Karbala united and confronted the royal army with great zest and fervour. They chanted "Allahu Akbar." They said: "If Mutawakkil kills every one of us, then our descendants and their descendants will continue to perform *ziyarat* and you will never be able to deprive us of this supreme blessing and wealth for the hereafter. We and our ancestors have been witnessing innumerable miracles at this holy shrine since its beginning. You can cut us into pieces but mind well you can never stop us from performing the *ziyarat*."

The royal officers never anticipated such strong resistance. They were awe stricken by the zest and devotion of the believers and beat a hasty retreat.

In those days Mutawakkil was totally absorbed or rather obsessed by the construction of Samarra. By building Samarra as a magnificent capital city, he wanted to be Mansur the second. Just as Mansur did not pay much heed to the affairs of Imam Jafar al

Sadiq for full ten years because of his preoccupation with the construction of Baghdad, similarly Mutawakkil also remained oblivious to the matter concerning the banning of the visits to Karbala and Najaf for ten long years.

During this period innumerable groups of *shi-ahs* of Imam Ali ibn abi Talib flocked to the holy shrines of Najaf and Karbala, night and day to earn unlimited blessings.

After the passage of ten years the hostility of Mutawakkil revived with a vengeance. In 247 *hijra*, he deputed Musa bin Harun, the governor of Kufa, who was known to be unrivaled in his hostility towards the progeny of the Holy Prophet to enforce once again the previous ban on visits to the sacred shrine of Karbala al Mu-alla.

Musa took harsh measures and annihilated a large numbers of *shi-ahs*. They were killed in thousands in connection with the ban on the visits to the holy shrines. For some time there was decline in the number of visitors. All routes leading to Karbala and Najaf were blocked and the military put on constant vigil, but in spite of these preventive measures, the staunch and devoted followers defied these perils and in the dead of night, under cover of darkness they performed the *ziyarat* and returned to their tribes.

Then in 250 *hijra* Mutawakkil made a move to desecrate the sacred tomb of Imam Husayn. His intention was to completely eliminate all traces of that gracious monument. Mutawakkil's well wishers tried to dissuade him from this mad action.

The people of Basra, Kufa and the whole of Iraq were shocked at this outrage. They sent petitions to restrain the evil royal designs but he paid no heed whatsoever and ordered Musa bin Harun to implement his orders immediately. The wise and elderly dignitaries like Abu Bakr Ayyash who was held in high esteem for his high moral conduct, hospitality and monetary assistance to the poor, tried to reason with Musa by relating a dream he had in which he had seen prophet Ibrahim, prophet Muhamamd and favourite angels of Allah, Jibrail and Mikail, descend from the heavens to perform *ziyarat* of Imam Husayn. Abu Bakr made an impassioned appeal to Musa bin Harun to refrain from this sacrilege.

Musa was enraged and ordered his soldiers to drag Abu Bakr by his beard and throw him in the dungeon. A few days later Abu Bakr was released with a stern warning not to interfere in the matters of the Hashimites, and Musa bin Harun went ahead with the evil plan.

Musa deputed a large contingent of his best officers to carry out the devastation of the holy shrine of Karbala. However, when they embarked upon this nefarious venture, they witnessed such spiritual miracles and supernatural occurrences, one after another, that they lost courage and could not go ahead with their audacious and insolent manoeuvres. Musa bin Harun felt very ashamed at the failure of his officers and tried to shelve the matter. Mutawakkil was waiting anxiously to hear from Musa and was upset by his silence.

Soon he got impatient and gave this vicious

assignment to another of his favourite officer Ibrahim Diraj. He sent Ibrahim with a detachment of soldiers from Samarra to Kufa with orders to report to Jafar bin Muhamamd the *qazi* of Kufa. In a royal decree to Jafar he urged him to oversee this heinous mission and to keep him informed at every stage.

Ibrahim Diraj states: "From Samarra we reached Kufa and then arrived in Karbala al Mu-alla to start our work. However we did not find any trace of the sacred grave of Imam Husayn. All our efforts proved fruitless. Finally feeling utterly dejected we returned to Samarra and I narrated the failure of my mission to Mutawakkil."

Ibrahim reports that he lost his temper and ordered him (Ibrahim) to return to Karbala immediately. He said: "Even if you do not find anything just keep digging and crushing the ground with the aid of the agricultural implements then divert the water of the Euphrates to that land. When the land is irrigated start sowing the seeds, so that in future no tribe or community could ever find any evidence of any grave in the vicinity."

In compliance with the orders of Mutawakkil Ibrahim Diraj reached Karbala and proceeded to make the land cultivable.

His soldiers harnessed the bullocks to the plough and began to till the ground but when they reached a particular spot the bullocks just stopped in their tracks. No amount of gentle persuasion, prodding or even harsh whipping could get the animals to move forward.

Feeling frustrated Ibrahim Diraj entrusted the task to another team and lay down to rest. Soon he was awakened by the pandemonium all around. The workers were all running hither and thither. Some came running up to Diraj and breathlessly exclaimed that they had witnessed a very strange spectacle. They had all seen a luminous glow a little ahead of where they were prodding their bullocks and a group of people appeared who stopped them from advancing any further by an array of arrows. They were all overwhelmed and urged Ibrahim to abandon the project right there and then. Diraj too was deeply afflicted, he ordered his men to pack up and the whole entourage headed back to Samarra. Diraj reported the failure of his mission and incurred the wrath of Mutawakkil who withdrew all concessions granted to him and expelled him from the court.

Thus we see that despite his best efforts, he could not stop the *ziyarat* of these sacred shrines, nor could he desecrate the holy shrines of Karbala al Mualla and Najaf al Ashraf, nor did any decline occur in the dignity, grace or honour attached to them. All the formal ceremonies related to the *ziyarat* of these sacred shrines continued as before. There was also no decrease in the sincere devotion of the faithfuls. Their sentiments did not diminish because of Mutawakkil's harsh punitive measures, rather Mutawakkil himself suffered for his vile and vindictive intentions and deeds.

Mutawakkil's relentless hostility and his insatiable desire to persecute the Imam became an obsession and bordered on lunacy.

Mutawakkil issued a royal decree that on a certain day, all scholars, intellectuals and dignitaries of Samarra would walk on foot behind his royal carriage and that of his prime minister Fatah bin Khaqan. As was quite obvious his sole aim was to ridicule the dignity of none other than the holy Imam by making him go on foot behind the royal coach. But as the Persian saying goes "Whenever the shadow of grief fell, it was right above us; wherever the hand of persecution extended, it came right upon us."

Imam Ali al Naqi complied with the orders because of his inherent patience and fortitude. On the appointed day at noon the ludicrous procession got underway, the mobile throne of the lunatic caliph and his obedient prime minister leading the procession of scholars and dignitaries who due to gruelling heat of the sun were all perspiring profusely within a few minutes.

Mutawakkil's chief attendant Zaraqqa happened to be walking next to the holy Imam. Addressing the Imam he said: "Why are you undergoing so much strain?" The holy Imam replied in a low voice: "There is no escape. This tyrant does not want to humiliate anybody else except me, but Zaraqqa do remember, my prestige before Allah almighty is in no way less than that of prophet Salih's she-camel."

Zaraqqa went home and narrated the remarks of the holy Imam to the tutor of his sons who was a devout *shi-ah*. The tutor said that the words of Imam were a prediction of the death of Mutawakkil. He explained that the people who had slain the she-camel of prophet Salih had died only 3 days after

the incident. Since the holy Imam had compared Mutawakkil to the slayers of the she - camel, he would meet the same fate.

Thereafter Zaraqqa took necessary steps to protect his wealth and assets as a precautionary measure. Then he went to the holy Imam to verify the prediction of the tutor. The Imam replied: " It is true; on that day I cursed and Allah in all His mercy, granted my request."

That was the last incident of the hostility of Mutawakkil towards the progeny of the Holy Prophet.

At the time of his ascension to the caliphate, Mutawakkil had designated his sons al Muntasir and al Mutazz as heir apparents. In course of time, due to Mutawakkil's fickle and erratic temperament, he turned against his own son, crown prince al Muntasir. Gradually he withdrew all administrative powers granted to al Muntasir and transferred them to the other heir apparent, al Mutazz.

One night, accompanied by Fatah^t bin Khaqan Mutawakkil retired to his bed chamber. As he straightened himself on the bed while Fatah was talking to him, Baghir Rumi struck the sword with such force and speed that, slashing the right side of the ribs, it appeared on the left side.

Meanwhile Muntasir arrived, and along with his companions, killed the prime minister. The corpses of the two were wrapped in dirty mat till the ascension of Muntasir to the caliphate was publicly proclaimed. Then the dead bodies of Mutawakkil and

his prime minister were buried unceremoniously.

Muntasir Billah's nature and conduct was just in contrast to that of his father. His attitude towards his people was that of benevolence and kindness. He immediately lifted all restrictions on *ziyarat* of the holy shrines of Imam Ali ibn abin Talib and Imam Husayn. These steps were hailed by the public in general. Muntasir also did not show any kind of confrontation and never tried to interfere in the affairs of the holy Imam.

After Muntasir, Mustayin Billah became the caliph. During his rule of nearly four years he did not interfere in the affairs of Imam Ali al Naqi. He was too deeply engrossed in his own problems.

After Mustayin, Mutazz became the caliph. He followed in the footsteps of his Abbaside ancestors. The worst and the most heinous crime committed by Mutazz was the murder of Imam Ali al Naqi which was planned on his orders. He gave a deadly poison to the holy Imam.

Imam Ali al Naqi died on Monday, 3rd Rajab, 254 *hijra* at Samarra.

Nobody except Imam Hasan al Askari was present at his death. Imam Hasan al Askari performed his pre-burial rites and then buried him at that particular sacred spot in the special chamber where his tomb is now situated.

While accompanying the coffin of his venerated father Imam Hasan al Askari was weeping bitterly. Some critics objected to his tearing of his

garments. They said it did not befit a person who enjoyed the distinction of being the vicegerent of the Holy Prophet. His reply to the critics was that the ignorant and stupid people did not understand the divine precepts. He elucidated his remarks by quoting that Musa who was a prophet had torn his clothes while mourning the death of his brother Harun. Imam Ali al Naqi was martyred at the age of 41 years. He functioned as the vicegerent of the Holy Prophet for about 35 years.

CHILDREN OF IMAM ALI AL NAQI

Imam Ali al Naqi had five children. The names of these children are: (1) Abu Muhamamd al Hasan al Askari, (2) Husayn, (3) Muhamamd, (4) Jafar and (5) Aliyah.

COMPANIONS OF IMAM ALI AL NAQI

Although Imam Ali al Naqi had very little respite in life as he was constantly harassed by the reigning caliphs, Mutawakkil in particular, and who kept him under strict surveillance, while those devoted to him were not allowed free access to him yet his gracious life and exemplary piety had their impact on the minds of the *shi-ahs* who sought guidance for their own benefit, as well as to convey his teachings to posterity. There were several such prominent companions of the Imam who enjoyed his confidence. They were Husayn bin Sa-id Ahwai-iz, Khayran Khadim, Abu Hashim Jaffary, Abdul Azim, Ali bin Jafar and Ibn Sukayt.

**BIOGRAPHY OF
IMAM HASAN
BIN ALI**

AL ASKARI عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام



زیارت (مطلقہ)

حضرت امام حسن ابن علی العکریؑ

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا مَوْلَايَ يَا أَبَا مُحَمَّدٍ الْحَسَنَ

بْنَ عَلِيِّ الْهَادِي الْمُهْتَدِي وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا وَلِيَّ اللَّهِ وَابْنَ أَوْلِيَاءِهِ

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا حُجَّةَ اللَّهِ وَابْنَ حُجَجِهِ

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا صَفِيَّ اللَّهِ وَابْنَ أَصْفِيَائِهِ

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا خَلِيفَةَ اللَّهِ وَابْنَ خُلَفَائِهِ وَ

أَبَا خَلِيفَتِهِ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا بْنَ خَاتِمِ النَّبِيِّينَ

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا بْنَ سَيِّدِ الْوَصِيِّينَ السَّلَامُ

عَلَيْكَ يَا بَنَ أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ
 يَا بَنَ سَيِّدَةِ نِسَاءِ الْعَالَمِينَ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ
 يَا بَنَ الْأُئِمَّةِ الْهَادِيْنَ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا بَنَ
 الْأَوْصِيَاءِ الرَّاشِدِينَ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا عِصْمَةَ
 الْمُتَّقِينَ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا إِمَامَ الْفَائِزِينَ
 السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا رُكْنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ السَّلَامُ
 عَلَيْكَ يَا فَرْجَ الْمَلْهُوفِينَ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ
 يَا وَارِثَ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ الْمُتَّجِبِينَ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ
 يَا خَازِنَ عِلْمٍ وَوَصِيَّ رُسُولِ اللَّهِ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ
 أَيُّهَا الدَّاعِي بِحُكْمِ اللَّهِ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ أَيُّهَا
 النَّاطِقُ بِكِتَابِ اللَّهِ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا حُجَّةَ
 الْحُجَجِ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا هَادِيَ الْأُمَمِ السَّلَامُ

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عَلَيْكَ يَا وَلِيَّ التَّعَمُّمِ السَّلَامُ

عَلَيْكَ يَا عَيْبَةَ الْعِلْمِ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا سَفِينَةَ
الْحِلْمِ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا أَبَا الْإِمَامِ السُّنْظَرِ الظَّاهِرَةِ
لِلْعَاقِلِ حُجَّتُهُ وَالشَّابِتَةِ فِي الْيَقِينِ مَعْرِفَتُهُ
الْمُحْتَجِبِ عَنْ أَعْيُنِ النَّظَالِمِينَ وَالْمُغَيَّبِ عَنْ
دَوْلَةِ الْفَاسِقِينَ وَالْمُعِيدِ رَبَّنَا بِهِ الْإِسْلَامُ
جَدِيدٌ أَبَدًا الْإِنْطِمَاسِ وَالْقُرْآنَ غَضًّا بَعْدَ
الْإِنْدِرَاسِ أَشْهَدُ يَا مَوْلَايَ أَنَّكَ أَقَمْتَ الصَّلَاةَ
وَأَتَيْتَ الزَّكَاةَ وَأَمَرْتَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَنَهَيْتَ
عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَدَعَوْتَ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحِكْمَةِ
وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَعَبَدْتَ اللَّهَ مُخْلِصًا
حَتَّى آتَاكَ الْيَقِينَ أَسْأَلُ اللَّهَ بِالشَّانِ الَّذِي
لَكُمْ عِنْدَهُ أَنْ يَتَقَبَّلَ زِيَارَتِي لَكُمْ وَيَشْكُرَ

سَعِيَّ إِلَيْكُمْ وَيَسْتَجِيبَ دُعَائِي بِكُمْ وَيَجْعَلَنِي
مِنْ أَنْصَارِ الْحَقِّ وَاتِّبَاعِهِ وَأَشْيَاعِهِ وَمَوَالِيهِ
وَمُحِبِّيهِ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ
اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَاهْلِ بَيْتِهِ وَ
صَلِّ عَلَى الْحَسَنِ بْنِ عَلِيٍّ الْهَادِي إِلَى دِينِكَ وَ
الدَّاعِي إِلَى سَبِيلِكَ عِلْمِ الْهُدَى وَمَنَارِ التُّقَى
وَمَعْدِنِ الْحُجَى وَمَأْوَى النَّهْيِ وَغَيْثِ الْوَرَى
وَسَحَابِ الْحِكْمَةِ وَبَحْرِ الْمَوْعِظَةِ وَوَارِثِ الْاِيْمَةِ
وَالشَّهِيدِ عَلَى الْأُمَّةِ الْمُعْصُومِ الْمُهْتَدِي وَ
الْفَاضِلِ الْمُقَرَّبِ وَالْمُطَهَّرِ مِنَ الرَّجْسِ الَّذِي
وَرَّثَتْهُ عِلْمَ الْكِتَابِ وَالْهَيْمَةَ فَصَلَ الْخِطَابِ
وَنَصَبَتْهُ عِلْمًا لِأَهْلِ قِبْلَتِكَ وَقَرْنَتْ طَاعَتَهُ

بِطَاعَتِكَ وَفَرَضْتَ مَوَدَّتَهُ عَلَى جَمِيعِ خَلْقِكَ
 اللَّهُمَّ فَكَمَا أَنَابَ بِحُسْنِ الْإِخْلَاصِ فِي تَوْجِيدِكَ
 وَأَزْدَى مَنْ خَاضَ فِي تَشْبِيهِكَ وَحَاطَى عَنْ
 أَهْلِ الْإِيمَانِ بِكَ فَصَلِّ يَا رَبِّ عَلَيْهِ صَلَوةً
 يَلْحَقُ بِهَا مَحَلَّ الْخَاشِعِينَ وَيَعْلُو فِي الْجَنَّةِ
 بِدَرَجَةِ جَدِّهِ خَاتِمِ النَّبِيِّينَ وَبَلَّغْهُ مَنَاتِجِيَّةً
 وَسَلَامًا وَاتِنَامِنَ لَدُنْكَ فِي مُوَالَاتِهِ فَضْلًا
 وَإِحْسَانًا وَمَغْفِرَةً وَرِضْوَانًا إِنَّكَ ذُو فَضْلِ
 عَظِيمٍ وَمَنْ جَسِيمٍ *

**ZIYARAT MUTLAQAH
IMAM HASAN BIN ALI AL ASKARI**

Peace be on you,
 O my *mawla*,
 O Aba Muhammad,
 Hasan bin Ali,
 the rightly guided guide,
 also mercy and blessings of Allah.
 Peace be on you,
 O the representatives of Allah, and the son of His
 representatives,
 Peace be on you,
 O the decisive proof of Allah, and the son of His
 decisive proofs,
 Peace be on you,
 O the sincerely attached friend of Allah,
 and the son of His sincerely attached friends.
 Peace be on you,
 O the vicegerent of Allah, and the son of His
 vicegerents,
 and the father of his vicegerent.
 Peace be on you,
 O the son of the last prophet.
 Peace be on you,
 O the son of the first successor,
 Peace be on you,
 O the son of the *amir al muminin*.
 Peace be on you,
 O the son of the prime woman leader of the
 worlds.
 Peace be on you,
 O the son of the guides who showed the right
 path.
 Peace be on you,
 O the son of the rightly guided successors.

inheritance, educated him in its brilliant style which distinguishes between truth and falsehood, established him as Your evident sign for the Muslims, obedience unto him has been joined with obedience unto You, and it has been made obligatory upon all people to love and follow him. O Allah just as he sincerely attached himself to Your *tawhid*, repudiated those who hastily rushed into the danger of imitating Your image, patronized those who believed in You, so bless him, O Lord, with blessings, that persue him to the place where those who have resigned themselves to You are found, raise him to the status of his grandfather, the last prophet, in paradise, convey to him our greetings and salutations, and give us on account of our love for him, Your bounties, favours, pardon, and approval.

Verily You own unlimited bounties, and Your gifts are precious.

FOR ISAL-E-SAWAB
HAJI HASANALLY P. MOHAMMED EDRAHIM

untraceable in the countries governed by impudent scoundrels, through him our Lord shall usher in the renaissance of Islam, in the wake of persecution and oppression, and give currency to the application of the holy Quran, shelved and forgotten for a long time.

I bear witness, O my *mawla*, that, verily you established the prayers, gave the prescribed share to the needy, commanded to do that which is lawful, not to do that which is unlawful, invited unto the path of your Lord, with wisdom and fair arguments, and sincerely served Allah, till the inevitable came unto you.

I beseech Allah in the name of your privileges both of you enjoy before Him, to accept my *ziyarat*, and appreciate my efforts, to give favourable answer to my supplications for your sake, to let me be among the supporters of the truth, (among) his followers, companions, friends and lovers.

Peace be on you,
and also mercy and blessings of Allah.

O Allah send blessings on our masters, Muhammad and his Ahl ul Bayt; send blessings on Hasan bin Ali, who guided people unto Your religion, invited them unto Your path, the sign of guidance, the torch of piety, the mine of reason, the stronghold of intelligence, the rain of mercy for the human race, the wisdom bearing clouds, the ocean of wisdom, the inheritor of the Imams, the witness over the *ummah*, the infallible refinement, the leader companion (of Allah), You thoroughly purified him from uncleanness, gave him the knowledge of the book in his

XI

Peace be on you,
O the guardian of the God-fearing.
Peace be on you,
O the son of the bountiful Imam.
Peace be on you,
O the support of the believers.
Peace be on you,
O the comforter of the downcast.
Peace be on you,
O the inheritor of the distinguished Prophets.
Peace be on you,
O the custodian of the wisdom of the successor of
Allah's messenger.
Peace be on you,
O he who, by the command of Allah, invited (the
mankind) unto Allah.
Peace be on you,
O he whose speech was a true reproduction of
the book of Allah.
Peace be on you,
O the true demonstration of (Allah's)
arguments.
Peace be on you,
O the guide of the mankind.
Peace be on you,
O the distributor of (Allah's) bounties.
Peace be on you,
O the source of knowledge.
Peace be on you,
O the means through which (Allah's)
compassion reaches the mankind.
Peace be on you,
O father of the "awaited saviour" for; the
intelligent (your son is) a clear proof,
insight in his matters builds up true faith,
invisible to the searching eyes of the tyrants,

Imam Hasan al Askari is the eleventh vicegerent of the Holy Prophet. He was born on the 8th of Rabi ul Awwal 230 A.H. at Madina. His patronymic appellation is Abu Muhammad and his renowned titles are al Askari and al Zaki. He was the son of Imam Ali al Naqi. His mother's name was Sawsan who was famous in her time for her piety, charity, fear of God, kindness and devoted worship.

CHILDHOOD OF IMAM HASAN AL ASKARI

Imam Hasan al Askari was hardly five or six years when he came to Samarra (a town near Baghdad adopted as the new capital by the later Abbaside caliphs) with his revered father Imam Ali al Naqi and he spent the rest of his life there. According to Sabbagh Maliki, the author of the famous book "Fusul ul Muhimma" the inscription on his ring was "Glory be to Him to whom belong the treasures of the skies and the earth."

These infallible Imams, these sacred personalities who enjoy special distinctions before almighty Allah are blessed with divine knowledge which knows no bond of age and time. Age is irrelevant in terms of their spiritual excellence and intellect. Since birth they possess exuberant wisdom and intellectual prowess as they do in youth and old age.

Imam Hasan al Askari remained a protégé of his father Imam Ali al Naqi and enhanced his wealth of knowledge and guidance under the patronage of his revered father till he himself formally succeeded to the exalted office of vicegerency.

It is written in Bihar al Anwar that when Imam Ali al Naqi was brought under duress from Madina to Samarra he was lodged in a house situated in the area where Mutasim Billah was also temporarily staying with a very large army of ninety thousand soldiers. One day Mutasim invited Imam Ali al Naqi to the camp to see the mighty parade of his army. The Imam asked him to see through his slightly separated two fingers. Mutasim saw an unending lines and rows of soldiers in all directions. The Imam told Mutasim: "This is Allah's army at my disposal." From then on the neighbourhood was known as *askar* (army), and as Imam Hasan bin Ali lived in the same house people began to address him as al Askari.

Here we quote an interesting incident that took place in the childhood of Imam Hasan al Askari related to Bahlul Dana.

Almighty Allah had endowed Bahlul Dana with longevity of life coupled with the wealth of wisdom and intellect. Bahlul lived from the time of Imam Jafar al Sadiq till the days of Imam Hasan al Askari. He saw the period of Abbaside caliphs from Mansur to Mutawakkil. He was fortunate enough to have the honour of the company of six vicegerents of the Holy Prophet.

During one of his visits to Samarra, Bahlul met Imam Hasan al Askari. He saw the Imam standing aloof and weeping while the other children were busy playing. Bahlul addressed him and asked if he was crying for the toy with which the other children were playing. If so he could buy it for him. Imam Hasan al Askari replied: "You are an ignorant

man. We are not born for playing.* Surprised by this answer Bahlul asked the Imam to enlighten him on the purpose of his birth. The reply was: "For the acquisition of knowledge and worship of Allah." Bahlul Dana inquired about the source of this reason. The Imam replied: "From the holy Quran. Almighty Allah has said in that holy book: "Do you think We created you in vain and that you shall not return to us?" He quoted a few more verses in support of his argument. Bahlul said: "But, my boy, you are a child. There is no connection between childhood and sinning." The Imam replied: "Yes. There is. I have seen my mother lighting big logs from the small burning pieces of wood. I, therefore, fear lest children may be used as tiny sticks in heli to burn the grown ups." [See Sawa-iq al Muhriqah page 124; Nurul Absar page 150.]

Some of us who have studied the lives of the prophets know very well that prophet Yahya had also given a similar answer to his playmates during his childhood, but Imam Hasan al Askari was not addressing children, he was speaking to Bahlul Dana, a distinguished man of Allah and acclaimed intellectual of his time, who was asked by Harun al Rashid to be his minister. Only an Imam from the Ahl ul Bayt of the Holy Prophet, be he a child or a grown up man could have the knowledge and the wisdom, which Allah gives only to His chosen representatives. "We gave to Ibrahim's descendants the book and wisdom," says Allah in His book.

Such fear of Allah and inclination towards Him specially during childhood is not an ordinary trait. It is only bestowed on the chosen few who hold a special distinction before almighty Allah.

MUSTAYIN BILLAH AND IMAM HASAN AL ASKARI

The reign of Mustayin was abounding with disorder and chaos like the reigns of other Abbaside caliphs. It was interlaced with conspiracies, intrigues and treason. These caliphs were constantly under the threat of being murdered, imprisoned or dethroned. Therefore they did not trust anyone. They had no faith in their courtiers, nor any control over their power drunk Roman slaves. Despite these haunting dangers and imminent calamities, their inherent hostility towards the progeny of the Holy Prophet remained unabated and they never missed an opportunity to humiliate or conveniently eliminate them.

Once Mustayin Billah bought a very expensive horse which could not be broken in. The steed would not allow anyone to ride on its back. Many famous and gallant cavaliers tried, got trampled and finally accepted their defeat. One of Mustayin's sycophant suggested that since the caliph wanted to get rid of the holy Imam and was always thinking of ways and means of achieving this objective, there could be no easier way than to summon the Imam and ask him to ride on the unruly beast. The animal would undoubtedly kill the Imam, fulfilling the long cherished dream of the caliph, who at the same time would not be held responsible for his death.

Mustayin jumped at this suggestion and immediately despatched a special messenger to deliver his royal invitation to the Imam. Imam Hasan al Askari accepted the invitation and the next day he presented himself to the caliph. Mustayin

welcomed him very cordially and seated him next to himself with great honour and respect. Then Mustayin ordered the attendants to bring forth the steed and asked the holy Imam to step outside. The wild horse was brought out of the stable by four struggling stable-boys who could hardly restrain it. Mustansir presented the saddle to the Imam and requested him to put it on the horse. The holy Imam advanced slowly towards the notorious thoroughbred and gently stroked its back. At the touch of the Imam's hand the animal calmed down and stood quietly while the Imam placed the saddle on its back. Then the Imam retreated. Mustayin then sarcastically asked the Imam if he had the strength and courage to mount the horse. It was a challenge which the Imam accepted with great confidence and serenity. He put one foot in the stirrup and gracefully mounted the steed, much to the consternation of the large crowd of courtiers, dignitaries, attendants and stable boys who had all assembled and stood gazing with their mouths wide open. Imam Hasan al Askari gently nudged the steed and it cantered off. After some time the Imam gave it loose rein and the steed increased its speed and galloped away with the Imam looking totally relaxed and evidently enjoying the thrilling and exhilarating ride. When the Imam brought the horse back and alighted Mustayin asked the Imam his opinion about the horse. The Imam complacently replied with a smile on his lips that he had never come across a more beautiful and fleet footed horse than this one.

Mustayin then presented the horse as a gift to Imam Hasan al Askari and the Imam graciously accepted the royal gift.

This event clearly shows that every opportunity taken by the caliph to kill the Imam or put him to humiliation always backfired and the caliph himself suffered humiliation and disgrace. Verily "Allah does whatever He desires. He is omnipotent."

IMAM HASAN AL ASKARI AND MUTAZZ BILLAH

The tenure of the *imamat* of Imam Hasan al Askari began during the reign of Mutazz Billah. This callous person did not show any leniency towards the Imam although right from his succession till his dethronement, he did not have even a moment's respite from his continuous anxiety and efforts to save his throne. In spite of all this tensions and pre-occupations he could not forget his traditional hostility towards the Imam and his intention to put him to death. He placed him under the surveillance of Ibn Yarish who was a great tyrant, notorious for his avowed antagonism towards the descendants of the Holy Prophet.

The whole callousness and cruelty of Ibn Yarish underwent a radical change only in a few days by observing the laudable behaviour and virtuous conduct of the Imam. He was so impressed by his fear of Allah, piety and worship that he developed sincere devotion towards the Imam. He went to the Imam forthwith in an obeisant manner and in penitence he begged to be forgiven for his insolent and degrading behaviour. Then he immediately sent the Imam to his (Imam's) own residence in complete safety.

Ultimately Ibn Yarish became so perfect in his faith

that he began to believe in the divine wisdom in making a correct evaluation of the behaviour and circumstances of any individual right from the beginning to the end. An erstwhile strong opponent of the progeny of the Holy Prophet became a firm believer and a faithful follower of the vicegerent of the Holy Prophet to such an extent that henceforth he never uttered any remark, other than those of high praise and eulogy towards the sacred personalities of this illustrious family.

Human devices cannot succeed in the face of providential will. The glory and grandeur of the Abbaside kingdom could not succeed in countering the impact of the providential help.

ATTRIBUTES OF IMAM HASAN AL ASKARI

The virtuous attitudes of the Imam were not only recognised by the various Islamic sects but all the other communities too. The qualities of excellence which are required of a perfect human being are found wholly in the conduct and personality of each of the infallible Imams. They are incomparable in their trait of secret charity and overt benevolence. They are unparalleled in their qualities of human sympathy, high morality, honesty, trustworthiness, truthfulness, humility and moderation. They also have no match in their wisdom, prudence and foresightedness.

Here we quote a few incidences from the life of Imam Hasan al Askari on the authority of authentic historical accounts which throw light on his virtuous attributes.

Ali bin Ibrahim bin Imam Jafar al Sadiq is quoted as saying: "Once I became so poor that my poverty reached the lowest limits of destitution which cannot be put in words. My father advised me that we should go to Imam Hasan al Askari and narrate our woeful condition to him because the reputation of his generosity and benevolence had spread far and wide. Since we had not met the Imam personally we were a little hesitant. At last mustering up some courage, my father and I went before the Imam. On the way my father expressed hope that if the Imam would give us 500 dirhams, we would spend 200 dirhams on preparing our clothes, set apart 200 dirhams for our daily necessities of life and subsistence and keep the remaining 100 dirham as a reserve for emergencies. With these thoughts in mind we went to the Imam. We sent in words through the gate keeper. Shortly afterwards a servant came out and enquired about us and took us inside. We presented ourselves before the Imam and offered the customary respectful greetings. He answered our greetings and bade us take our seats. Addressing my father he then asked him the reason that had prevented him from bringing his condition to the notice of him. My father said: "My master and leader, I was prevented by feelings of shame and humility from coming to you and taking advantage of your generosity and benevolence. Moreover I had become very poor and felt hesitant to come before you in this pitiful condition." The Imam kept quiet on hearing my father's reply. Then after some time he bade farewell to us without giving us anything and sent us out along with the same servant who had brought us inside. When we arrived at the gate the servant handed over to us a purse and said that it contained 500 dirhams. Two hundred of them were

meant for clothes, two hundred for domestic needs and one hundred for miscellaneous expenses. Then he took out another purse and handed it over to us. He told us that it contained 300 dirhams. Out of that amount we could spend one hundred on clothes, one hundred on domestic needs and the remaining hundred for buying a riding animal. He also delivered a message from the Imam that he would advise us not to travel in the hilly terrain. Instead he advised us to go to a particular village where almighty Allah, the supreme benefactor, would soon transform our adversity into prosperity and affluence. Ali bin Ibrahim goes on to say: " In accordance with the order of Imam Hasan al Askari we went to that particular village where I met a chaste and noble lady whom I married and succeeded in establishing a steady annual income according to the prediction of the revered Imam and began to lead a life of peace and prosperity.

We now relate an event concerning another person from the famous book "Laway ul Ahzan".

Ismail bin Ahmed says: "One day I decided to meet the Imam. I went and sat at a place from where he usually passed. As soon as I saw him, I stepped forward and told him that I could say on religious oath that I had become completely penniless and had got absolutely no means of subsistence. He heard me out and then gently rebuked me for taking a false oath. He asked me if I had not buried 200 *ashrafis* (gold coins) under ground and why was I telling him that I had become penniless. He then asked his servant to give me whatever money he had with himself. Accordingly the servant gave me 100 gold coins. I took the money eagerly and began to cover it

safely in a cloth. Imam Hasan al Askari casually told me that I would not be able to make use of the money which I had buried underground after saving it in a miserly way by cutting down my necessary and legitimate expenses.

Ismail goes on to say "I was so overjoyed at receiving the money, I did not pay heed to the Imam's words and returned home. I began to spend the money slowly and wisely until I consumed the whole amount. I became penniless again and in a state of utter helplessness I was compelled to dig out the site where I had buried my money but found nothing. Just then it struck me like a bolt from the blues that the Imam's prediction about my not being able to utilise the money came true. I frantically searched again and again but to no avail. After making enquiry I found that the secret of the buried money was known to my daughter who decamped with it and had spent all of it, and not a single coin was left out of that money.

Abu Hamza Nasir al Khadim said: "I heard Imam Hasan al Askari speaking on more than one occasion to his servants in their own languages. Among them were Turks, men from Byzantine and from Saqaliba in Caucasus. I was amazed at that and was saying to myself that the Imam was born in Madina. People seldom saw him until Imam Ali al Naqi, his father, died. How he could know so many languages? He came up to me and said: "Allah has distinguished His *hujjat* (proof to the mankind) from the rest of His creatures and has given him knowledge of everything, so I know languages, genealogies and events, otherwise there would be no difference between the proof and those who are given the

It is written in Kafi, Shawahid al Nabuwwah and Alam al Wara that once a handsome young man, Majma bin Salat, came to visit Imam Hasan al Askari. As soon as he came into view Abu Hashim (the narrator) wanted to know who he was. The Imam read his mind and told him: "He has a stone on which my forefathers had stamped their seals. He will submit that stone to me for obtaining my seal also." Majma bin Salat presented the stone and the Imam put his seal on it. He recited "Offspring, one from the other," and went away. In fact he was a descendant of Ummi Ghanam who used to present this stone to every claimant of *imamat*. Whoever could stamp his seal on the stone was accepted as the true Imam. As she had obtained seals of many Imams on the stone, she was known as *sahibah al hasat*.

A short time after Imam Hasan al Askari was returned to the safety of his own home by Ali bin Yarmish, caliph Mutazz Billah reaped the harvest of his misdeeds. The end of Mutazz Billah came when the all powerful Roman slaves turned dignitaries enthroned Muhammad bin Wasiq giving him the title of Muhtadi Billah and Mutazz Billah was thrown in the royal dungeon in Baghdad where he languished and ultimately died.

THE REIGN OF MUHTADI BILLAH

Soon after his ascension Muhtadi made a great demonstration of his ostensible adherence to religion, fear of God and piety and thus succeeded in fooling the general public, but his attitude towards the progeny of the Holy Prophet was exactly the

same as his forefathers. During the eleven months that he ruled he harboured great animosity towards Imam Hasan al Askari and put him in detention under the supervision of his Roman slave turned prime minister Salih bin Wasif. Hence the second internment of Imam Hasan al Askari took place under orders of Muhtadi Billah.

At first Salih bin Wasif personally supervised the Imam's detention and spared no pains in tormenting the holy Imam. He was denied even the bare necessities of life like food and water. He often had to offer his prayers by carrying out ablution by clean earth (*tayammum*). Despite all these suffering and tribulations the Imam showed complete patience and fortitude. He always remained busy in the worship of Allah and recitation of the holy Quran.

In course of time Salih entrusted the duties of supervision to his most loyal slaves. The noble conduct of the Imam during this period of incarceration and utter helplessness had such an effective impact on the slaves carrying out the surveillance duties that instead of showing opposition and hostility they soon began to express complete fidelity and devotion to him. Completely ignoring the risk of incurring the wrath of their master Salih, they provided every comfort to the Imam.

After several months Salih bin Wasif paid a secret visit to the house where he had interned the Imam under the custody of his slaves. He was shocked out of his wits at the scene he witnessed. He found every slave solemnly serving the Imam
or waiting on his

toes to render any sort of service to the holy Imam.

Salih bin Wasif quietly retreated and went home. Swallowing his rage he prudently assessed the situation. He realised that his slaves were violating his orders, right under his nose without any fear of him, so if he took any drastic action, it was quite possible that in view of their new developed faith and devotion they might assault him.

Furthermore he came to the conclusion that if his slaves continued to nourish feelings of sincere faith and devotion towards Imam Hasan al Askari there was a possibility that in due course the whole Roman community of slaves would gradually convert to *shia* faith.

Thus to avoid any such dire eventuality Salih bin Wasif released Imam Hasan al Askari from his detention.

Soon after Salih bin Wasif released Imam Hasan al Askari from his custody, the trusted prime minister was cleverly ousted by Musa bin Buqa. Not only did he lose his wealth and power but he also lost his life along with status of eminence he had achieved. Caliph Muhtadi Billah did not have the power or courage to question Musa bin Buqa about the gruesome and unjust murder of Salih bin Wasif or to try to check the malpractices and atrocities committed by Musa due to his increasing power and authority.

Ahmad bin Muhammad said: "I wrote to Imam Hasan al Askari at the time Muhtadi began to kill the slaves: "My master, praise be to Allah, who has

diverted Muhtadi's attention from us, he is now threatening you and saying: I will drive him and his followers from the face of the earth." The Imam wrote me: There is only a short time for him to live. Count from the day, you receive this letter, five days and he will be killed on the sixth day after humiliation and degradation of his rank.

It happened as the Imam said."

Muhtadi Billah had just become a pawn in the hands of the Roman slaves who were wielding authority over the administrative set up. Finally as predicted by the Imam, Muhtadi was dragged down ruthlessly from his throne and put to sword. This was the harvest he reaped for his ill conceived and vicious activities.

Muhtadi Billah may be regarded by some historians as a great worshipper, pious and God fearing man but all these qualities hold no value because of his ancestral hostility towards the progeny of the Holy Prophet.

Every caliph from the time of Mutawakkil to Muhtadi could not escape betrayal by his confident dignitaries and in the end was either imprisoned or assassinated by them.

IMAM HASAN AL ASKARI AND MUTAMAD

After Muhtadi the all powerful kingmakers decided to enthrone Mutamad as their caliph. His reign was also beset with tumultuous political upheavals. In spite of it he did not leave the holy Imam in peace. He placed Imam Hasan al Askari under the custody

of his ruthless Roman slave Nahrir who subjected him to acute persecution and torture. The incessant oppression and round the clock persecution aroused the sympathy of Nahrir's wife. She was deeply moved by the pathetic and helpless condition of the holy Imam and reminded her husband to fear Allah and refrain from this deplorable conduct towards a descendant of the Holy Prophet. This rebuke from his wife enraged Nahrir. He took it as an affront to his personal ego. In a fit of anger he struck his wife for her impudence and immediately rushed to the caliph and persuaded him to issue orders for putting the holy Imam to death by throwing him to the wild beasts in *birkat-us-saba* (the abode of the beasts) which had been especially built for such occasions.

Mutamad issued immediate orders to this effect. As per his decree the slave released Imam Hasan al Askari from his detention and took him to *birkat-us-saba*. Opening the gate of the arena he unceremoniously shoved the Imam inside and stood outside the gate with his companions to watch the spectacle. The holy Imam started advancing slowly while from the other side the wild beasts upon release charged ferociously towards their pray. Then suddenly they halted in their attack and started moving in a circle around the Imam with their heads bowed at his feet in a gesture of submission. The Roman slaves watching the scene were overawed, they were trembling and weeping. One rushed to get Mutamad who also came and stood helpless and watched the Imam offer prayers with perfect peace and calmness amongst those deadly wild beasts.

Exactly the same incident had occurred in the case of Imam Ali al Naqi during the days of Mutawakkil which had deeply impressed and emotionally affected the slaves and spectators and turned them into ardent admirers of the holy Imam but the Abbaside caliphs were so blinded by hatred and their hearts were so heavily sealed with ingrained animosity that they did not relent in their callous pursuits.

The Imam was subjected to very strict and difficult conditions during the three internments he had to endure up to this stage of his life. He was never given even the little freedom which was allowed to his revered father. He never got the opportunity to live in his own house. His internment was in the nature of life imprisonment and solitary confinement under Ibn Yarish, Salih bin Wasif and Nahrir Rumi.

The real cause of this intensification of hostility by the later Abbaside caliphs towards Imam Hasan al Askari was related to the anticipated birth of the 12th and final surviving member of the holy line of the vicegerents of the Holy Prophet who would be a glaring proof of the sublime honour and distinction of this venerable family in the eyes of the almighty Allah was yet to come into existence. They were haunted by the impending fateful arrival of the 12th Imam.

Imam Hasan al Askari or his illustrious predecessors never voiced their claim for the caliphate during the rule of the Abbaside monarchs. They never uttered a single word in connection with that claim intentionally or unintentionally.

However in their limited circle, they did inform their close followers about the expected birth of a very distinguished member of their sacred line in their revered family and the glorious and magnificent realm which would be founded by him. They used to tell their followers that there were many elements in the whole world which were just waiting for the appearance of the signs of the most scintillating personality. The emergence of the last Imam was destined to prove the truth of the authentic tradition of the Holy Prophet saying "There shall be 12 caliphs after me". The truth of this tradition was going to be vindicated in the shape of the son of Imam Hasan al Askari during the rule of these very Abbaside caliphs. The Abbaside rulers had strived relentlessly to prevent the consummation of the divine will. Caliph Mutawakkil took the lead and initiative in this connection. Mutawakkil wanted to prevent the anticipated birth of Imam Mahdi al Qa'im because he was told by many a scholar that in view of several sayings of the Holy Prophet and Quranic verses the grandson of Imam Ali al Naqi, Muhammad bin Hasan bin Ali, would be the awaited saviour of mankind. Therefore he brought Imam Ali al Naqi from Madina to Samarra and kept him under strictest detention for the rest of his life in order to make it physically impossible for him to have a male child; but it was of no avail. Imam Hasan al Askari had already been born in Madina before Imam Ali al Naqi was brought to Samarra. Later Mustansir, Mutazz and Muhtadi toed his line.

Following in the footsteps of his forefathers, Mutamad also kept Imam Hasan al Askari in detention under very strict conditions. He had the

wild notion that he could interfere with the inevitable will of the Lord of the worlds. As Imam Hasan al Askari had no offspring by that time, he put the Imam in solitary confinement completely isolated from the world. He was not allowed to stay with his wife, nor was anyone permitted to visit his cell. These measures were taken to eliminate all possibilities of the coming into existence of the 12th vicegerent of the Holy Prophet.

These devilish misconceptions harboured in the minds of these tyrant Abbaside caliphs and the measures taken by them were identical to those adopted by the Fir-awn of Egypt to forestall the birth of prophet Musa and in earlier times the same procedure had been adopted by Namrud in case of prophet Ibrahim.

History proves that all these sinister designs and manipulations proved quite fruitless and infructuous. The omnipotent providential will did take a material form in the face of all these obstructions.

Almighty Allah has established an immutable system for the execution of His divine will. Only those wretched and misguided persons could think of defying these divine principles who did not believe in His omniscience and omnipotence and were ignorant of His unique and all powerful attributes.

Thus we see that these arrogant pseudo - Muslim caliphs of the Abbaside dynasty indulged in the same misguided and heathenistic acts practised by the heathen kings and left no stone unturned in their designs to achieve their sinister objectives.

Time and time again Imam Hasan al Askari was exposed to perils with the intention of killing him. He was mounted on the notorious horse and left alone in the herd of man-eating beasts. All these devices were aimed at killing the Imam just to prevent the appearance of the divine will in the form of a blessed personality in his progeny. But it was due to the protection given by the divine omnipotence that even the deadly beasts caused no harm to the true representatives of Allah. Quite contrary to their inherent nature they demonstrated surprising devotion and affection which served as a great source of bewilderment to those who witnessed the spectacle. These beasts demonstrated their warmth and sincerity in such a manner that it surpassed the conduct of the human beings and proved a disgrace for those people who lacked these noble sentiments.

However, having failed in all his vicious plans Mutamad now interned Imam Hasan al Askari in his own palace prison cell under his own surveillance so that he could keep watch over the Imam round the clock. Here the condition of imprisonment and solitary confinement were more stringent and terrible than ever before. The cell was a dark, gloomy dungeon with no outlet except one door. The Imam was supplied only 2 loaves and 2 bowls of hot water per day. Not a single grain of food or a drop of water more was given to him. The entry of all persons was banned. The key of the cell remained in the custody of Mutamad himself.

For two complete years Imam Hasan al Askari languished in this miserable and suffocating dungeon with virtually no chance of deliverance in

sight. He became lean and weak, so much so that at the age of twenty four he looked pale and thin. Frequently Mutamad would visit the cell with his sycophants to let them derive pleasure at the helpless and pathetic condition of the Imam. The jesters too in order to please their master would deride and taunt the holy Imam. They sometimes indulged in rude and humiliating acts which were quite repugnant to the dignity and status of the divine representative on earth and a descendant of the Holy Prophet. Imam Hasan al Askari always maintained a graceful and dignified silence displaying sublime self restraint, patience and submission to the will of Allah in the face of all these insults and provocations.

The trials and tribulations of Imam Hasan al Askari were continuing unabated and so were the hostility and enmity of Mutamad, when the providential will of the omnipotent provided a chance to Mutamad to awaken from his slumber of utter negligence.

It so happened that the city of Baghdad had been facing severe drought for three years causing acute hardship and trouble to people of all classes. During this difficult period, a Christian monk greatly upset the faith of the Muslims by showing the miracle of making the rain fall by special invocation. A large number of people renouncing Islam had become his followers after witnessing his spiritual demonstration, and had began to consider devotion and submission towards him as the source of their ultimate and eternal deliverance. This caused havoc and confusion in the entire city.

The news of this miracle gradually reached the

dignitaries who passed it on to Mutamad who was seriously bewildered. He called a group of renowned Muslim scholars and asked them to solve the riddle behind the performance of that Christian scholar but their combined wisdom produced no result.

Having met failure and disappointment in his attempts, Mutamad was forced to take the matter to the genuine representative of Allah on earth, whom he had been subjecting to various kinds of oppression and torture during solitary confinement in very humiliating and miserable conditions.

Mutamad went to the Imam and requested him to come to the rescue of the followers of his grand ancestor, the Holy Prophet, as they were facing a great peril.

The Imam readily came forward, without any hesitation. He advised Mutamad to ask the people to assemble outside the city the next day and he expressed hope that by the grace of Allah he would dispel their doubts and confusion. The caliph issued orders for the release of all the companions of Imam Hasan al Askari. All of them were accordingly released and they went out of the city to offer special *istisqa* prayer (invocation for rain).

As they were assembling, the Christian monk who was also there raised his hands towards the sky. A cloud instantly appeared on the sky. Imam Hasan al Askari calmly gave orders to catch hold of the hands of the monk. When this was done, a bone of the human body was discovered from his hands. The Imam took away the bone from him and asked the monk to pray for the rain. When he raised his

hands, the cloud disappeared and the sun began to shine again. The whole gathering was wonder struck. The caliph asked the Imam: "Aba Muhamamd, what is this?" The Imam replied "This bone belongs to the body of some prophet. This monk might have found it from some grave. One of the unique qualities of the bone of a prophet is that when it is raised before the sky, it produces clouds on the sky immediately." An experiment was done with that bone once again and the result was exactly the same as clarified by the holy Imam. This removed all the doubts from the minds of the people.

Later the holy Imam offered prayers and raised his hands towards the sky. Soon clouds started gathering and then the clouds burst causing torrential rains that continued for several hours eliminating the shortage of water and bringing relief to the masses.

Thus we find that in time of peril, Mutamad appealed to Imam Hasan al Askari in the name of the Holy Prophet to come to the rescue of his followers most of whom were on the verge of renouncing their faith. The holy Imam readily came forward to discharge his duties of the vicegerent of the Holy Prophet and unfurled the divine secrets. Without hesitation he proceeded to protect and help the followers of the Holy Prophet.

The irony of fate was that the Abbaside caliph who was recognised as the leader and guide of the entire Muslim community, and due to his temporal magnificent status considered himself to be designated for the exalted office by the divine

authority, failed hopelessly in preventing the Muslims from falling into abyss of suspicions and misgivings. The hollowness of his spurious claims was thus exposed.

This same event illustrates that an arch enemy and opponent like Mutamad openly and explicitly acknowledged the exalted qualities of knowledge and nobility of the Imam and accepted him as the true heir and real successor to the Holy Prophet.

This miraculous demonstration of Imam Hasan al Askari impressed Mutamad so much that he released him from his palace prison cell and allowed him to go to his house.

Strange are the ways of almighty Allah. In spite of all his sinister intentions, Mutamad with his own hands made the arrangement for the consummation of the divine will about the appearance of the exalted personality of the last Imam.

Imam Hasan al Askari was released in early 255 A.H. and came back to his own house. From this time onwards he began to spend his blessed life in relative comfort.

His sincere and faithful followers who had eagerly prayed for his release thronged around him.

However restrictions on his movements and other conditions of surveillance were not completely lifted. The intelligence staff deputed for this purpose collected information through their secret sources and verified them, but their suspicions always proved to be baseless.

The activities of the holy Imam and his followers were always imbued with noble qualities of peace, reconciliation and good will and never betrayed any sign of mischief or trouble mongering.

Anyhow the aim of the providential will in bringing about the release from detention of Imam Hasan al Askari was fulfilled. By the grace of Allah this event did take place and the whole world was illuminated by the resplendent divine light of this magnificent spiritual personality, sometime after the morning prayers on the 15th of Shaban 255 A.H.

Imam Hasan al Askari kept the birth of the blessed Imam a closely guarded secret. So much so that many family members who used to be present in the house all the time, did not come to know of this blessed event. Even Jafar, the brother of Imam Hasan al Askari had no knowledge of this event.

As a precautionary measure even the sincere and faithful followers were not intimated about the birth of the twelfth Imam. In this particular issue Imam Hasan al Askari acted in accordance with the providential will.

Time went by, eventually Mutamad took another antagonistic step against the Imam. He banned the donation of *khums* which is a kind of levy on certain properties, half of which is payable to the Imam of the period. The holy Imam stopped receiving the *khums* donations. Then Mutamad intensified his atrocities to such an extent that the Imam felt a constant peril to his life.

Ultimately Mutamad resorted to the method of killing of the Imam by administering poison. A poisoned drink was sent to the holy Imam by Mutamad as a royal offering through a special messenger. It was accepted by the Imam who drank it reciting the words denoting submission to and acceptance of the divine will. Soon the Imam started experiencing agonising pain as the deadly poison took effect.

Mutamad tried to put a smoke screen on his crime by sending Abdullah bin Bhaqar, governor of Qum to set up a facade of the caliph's ostensible sympathy and concern for the Imam's health. The royal physicians were sent to attend to the holy Imam.

Aqid, a favourite servant of the Imam is quoted as saying: "I was in attendance of the Imam from the beginning of his illness. On the last night, the Imam regained consciousness just before dawn, he sat up in bed, performed ablution and offered the *fajr* prayers with profound humility. Then he asked for some water which he barely gulped and within a few second his sacred soul departed for heavenly abode."

This sad event took place on 8th Rabi ul Awwal 260 A.H.

As soon as the news spread Mutamad came immediately to residence of Imam Hasan al Askari and offered condolence to Jafar, the Imam's brother, who had become a well wisher of the state and felt very proud of his position because of his greedy nature. Mutamad then busied himself with the arrangements of the last rites.

However, these people were unaware of the mysterious divine arrangements. The present and the last Imam performed the funeral services of his revered father in the company of his respected mother and trusted attendants. When the coffin was ready Aqid informed Jafar that they could now go inside to offer the prayers. Jafar and all the *shias* who had gathered there to offer condolence went and stood behind the cortege and Jafar got ready to lead the prayers. Abdul Dayyan is quoted as saying that as soon as Jafar recited *takbir*, a child of about five years emerged from a nearby chamber. He caught hold of the apparel of Jafar and said in a very clear, loud voice that nobody other than himself, could lead the prayers over this sacred coffin. Jafar was so overawed by his spiritual grace and splendour that he quietly moved aside and the little boy with radiance emanating from his being led the faithfuls in that special prayers and then calmly retreated to his chamber.

The magnificence and grandeur of the funeral procession of Imam Hasan al Askari in the city of Samarra was just unprecedented. Scenes of sorrowful wailing were witnessed in every street, quarter and bazaar and the royal court. All shops in the city were closed. No business was transacted.

Mutamad was overawed by the thoughts of his own treachery and his guilty conscious, so he did not object to any action of the *shias* and allowed them to express their sorrow and grief. Thus in the presence of his greatest enemy, Mutamad, in his very capital of Samarra right before his own eyes the mourning for the sublime spiritual leader took place on such a grand and massive scale.

Imam Hasan al Askari was buried alongside the tomb of his father Imam Ali al Naqi where his mausoleum has ever since been a source of enlightenment and solace to the people possessing the requisite intellect and insight.

The virtuous attributes of Imam Hasan al Askari were not only recognised by the various Islamic sects but all other communities too. The qualities of excellence which are required of a perfect human being are found wholly in the conduct and personality of each of the infallible Imams. They are unparalleled in their qualities of wisdom, prudence, farsightedness, honesty, trustworthiness, sympathy and humility.

Here we quote a few incidents to highlight these excellent traits on the authority of authentic historical accounts.

These sublime virtues are quoted from the famous book Kafi.

Ahmad bin Ubaydullah bin Khaqan, the governor of Qum, was according to the tendency prevailing at that time an adversary of the Imam and an enemy of the progeny of the Holy Prophet.

Once at one of the meetings a discussion arose regarding the *sayyids* of the *alawi* dynasty who had settled in Qum. At this juncture he clearly and categorically stated that he personally had not seen any divine personality more glorious and dignified among the community of *sayyids* than Imam Hasan al Askari. He was unparalleled in the qualities of knowledge, piety, worship, chastity, nobility and

honour. All dignitaries, *sayyids*, *hashimite* family, ministers, civil and revenue officials ranked him higher than all other contemporary exalted personalities and paid him due respect. All people, big or small, friend or foe, held him in highest esteem.

Ahmad bin Ubaydullah bin Khaqan states that one day when he was with his father, the servants came running and informed Ubaydullah that Imam Hasan al Askari had come to meet him. As the guest was ushered in Ahmad saw a youth with wheatish complexion, beautiful big eyes, good stature, graceful and awe inspiring quality walk in. As soon as he entered, Ubaydullah bin Khaqan stood up and received him with great respect and honour. In the conversation that followed, Ahmad was really astonished at the respect and courtesy his father was showering on this young guest of his. He was perplexed to see his father, who usually conducted himself with stiff formality and decorum, show such devotion and reverence. While he was still in a state of bewilderment, the attendants brought the news of the arrival of the reigning caliph. Despite receiving this information, Abdullah kept on talking to the youth without interruption. He then bade farewell by kissing his forehead and hair and ordered his servant to escort the handsome youth out of the house unnoticed by the members of the royal entourage.

After the departure of the youth, Ubaydullah went to receive the caliph while his son Ahmad asked the servants about the identity of the handsome youth. They told him he was one of the great men of Arabia and his name was Hasan bin al Askari.

This added to the consternation of Ahmad, son of Ubaydullah Khaqan. When night fell and Ubaydullah retired to his study to wind up his routine paper work, his son followed him and asked: "Who was that young man whom you accorded such a rousing and cordial reception." Ubaydullah replied that he was the Imam of the *shias* and then he lowered his head. After some time he raised his head and said: "My son, if the caliphate goes out of the hands of the Abbasides, no one other than that young man would be more eligible to hold the office of the caliph by virtue of his piety, erudition, family background. He is the great son of an exalted father who was also matchless in his qualities."

Ahmad, on hearing this eulogising speech of his father, was not impressed. He felt rather indignant and angry, in line with the general tendency prevailing at that time. He considered the praise and commendations of his father rather improper and unjustified.

Thereafter, he started enquiring about the personal attributes of the Imam from various sources. However, right from the high circles of ministers and dignitaries down to the people of the middle and lower classes, he heard nothing by words of praise from one and all. Consequently by the time he completed his enquiry he developed a perfect belief about the personal glory and dignity of the holy Imam and gained a comprehensive impression of his dignified status and calibre. He acknowledged that Imam Hasan al Askari was a source of pride and glory and a leader and guide for the whole world. It was quite impossible to produce any comparable personality amongst the whole mankind.

In an other incident Hasan bin Zarif is quoted as saying: "One day I thought that I would ask Imam Hasan al Askari about the method by which the last and serving Imam would deliver judgments in the cases which would come before him after his re-appearance and I also wanted to ask him the cure for a fever known as *huma-i-rabi* (quotidian fever). I wrote the petition addressed to the revered Imam but forgot to mention the fever. The holy Imam replied that the last and serving Imam would deliver his judgments according to the method used by prophet Dawud. His *shariah* (code of religious law) would be of intuitive or spiritual nature and he would require no evidence or witnesses. He further wrote that I had forgotten to mention the other query I had in mind. However its reply was that if any body developed *huma-i-rabi* the verses meaning "O Fire, be cool and (a means of) safety for Ibrahim" [21 : 69] should be written on a piece of paper and placed around the person's neck. He would be cured, Allah willing.

Muhamamd bin Ayyaz has narrated: "Once at a gathering we were talking about the miracles and supernatural acts of Imam Hasan al Askari, a fanatical opponent of the Imam also happened to be present. He said that in order to expose the falsehood of the Imam of the *shias* (God forbid) he would write some problem on a piece of paper without using any ink. If the Imam was able to reply to those questions, he would recognise him as a true representative, otherwise not. He then wrote something without ink on a piece of paper which we included in our petitions and sent all of them to the Imam.

hundreds of years in Arabia, Iran, Syria, Egypt.

Those people who are conversant with the background of the sacred *tafsir* know that its preparation and compilation was not done under any pre-conceived plan. It comprises only those lectures which were given by the Imam to elucidate verses of the holy Quran and the divine injunctions about which questions were asked by his two *sayyid* pupils during the teachings of the holy Quran. These two pupils had come from Qum to acquire knowledge from the holy Imam.

Whatever clarifications of the verses of the holy Quran were furnished by the Imam during the course of his lessons were compiled by these noble and blessed pupils in the form of a short *tafsir*. However due to its unique and highly rich contents, simple but impressive style and sweet and exquisite language, this concise anthology has surpassed even many big volumes.

WORDS OF WISDOM BY IMAM HASAN AL ASKARI

- (1) Believe in Allah and help people.
- (2) It is rewarding to befriend those who do good.
- (3) To greet (say *slam* to) whoever meets you, and to sit at an ordinary place in an assembly or gathering of people, is a sign of good-breeding.
- (4) To laugh without reason is vulgarity.
- (5) To conceal deliberately the good deeds of neighbours and to blow up their shortcomings render the whole neighbourhood helpless and draw it into

- beyond control disaster.
- (6) It is not enough to pray *salat* and fast, but it is very essential to contemplate about Allah.
- (7) The worst among men is the double-dealer who pleases his friend with sweet talk when he is present and as soon as he departs makes plans to destroy him; when good fortune brings happiness to his friend he feels envy, and when misfortune seizes, he abandons him.
- (8) Anger is the root-cause of every evil.
- (9) Those who feel envy towards others and thirst for vengeance never ever can have peace of mind.
- (10) He who safeguards himself against evil always thinks twice, takes precaution and deliberate while dealing with every affair.
- (11) The best worshipper is he who discharges the duties made obligatory upon him.
- (12) A true God-fearing devotee abstains from making mistakes (sinning) altogether.
- (13) As you sow in this world, so shall you reap in the hereafter.
- (14) Death is after you. If you sow good you will harvest good; but if you sow evil, there will be nothing for you except remorse and grief.
- (15) Greed and avarice do not add more to the return you get (for you physical or mental labour).
- (16) One believer is a (source of) prosperity for another believer.
- (17) The heart of a stupid person is in his tongue, whereas the tongue of an intelligent person is in his heart.
- (18) In pursuit of worldly gains do not miss

- (19) However great a man may be, contemptible disgrace is his fate if he forsakes truth.
- (20) An ordinary man is important if he is with truth.
- (21) The friendship of an ignorant man is trouble.
- (22) Do not display happiness before an unhappy person.
- (23) That which appears better than death is in fact worse than death.
- (24) That because of which you think that life is not worth living is in fact better than life.
- (25) To make a man get rid of his indelible habit is a phenomenal achievement.
- (26) Good manners is a blessing towards which no one can feel envy.
- (27) Do not give respect to any one in such a manner that he may feel uncomfortable.
- (28) Give good advice to your brother to remove his faults when he is alone with you, because this procedure serves as a trimming for him.
- (29) Giving good advice to remove faults in public, before others, creates bad blood, therefore it is wrong.
- (30) In the track of every misfortune there always comes a blessing.

PUPILS OF IMAM HASAN AL ASKARI

Though many persons derived benefits from his erudition, some of his pupils became famous. Their names are:

1. Abu Hashim Dawud bin Qasim Jafary who was Imam's representative also.
2. Dawud bin Ali bin Zayd Nishapuri.
3. Abu Tahir Muhammad Ali bin Bilal.
4. Abul Abbas Abdullah bin Jafar Hamiri.
5. Muhamamd bin Ahmed bin Jafar Rumi.
6. Muhammad bin Hasan bin Jafar Ummi.

Due date

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When his Lord tried Ibrahim with certain words, and he fulfilled them, He (Allah) said: "Verily, I make you an Imam for the mankind." He (Ibrahim) said: "And of my offspring?" He (Allah) said: "My covenant will not include the unjust." [Al Baqarah : 124]

Indeed We (Allah) gave to the descendants of Ibrahim the book and the wisdom. [An Nlsa : 54]

According to Genesis 17 : 2, 3, 4, and 7 the angel of the Lord said to Hajira, mother of prophet Ismail: "The Lord will multiply his (Ismail's) descendants; he shall be father of twelve princes."

So Imam Ali al Naqi and Imam Hasan al Askari were the tenth and the eleventh link in the chain of twelve Imams of the Ahl ul Bayt of the Holy Prophet, the true descendants of prophet Ibrahim through his son prophet Ismail.

