

A monthly magazine for a better knowledge about
Imam al-Mahdi, the Twelfth Imam.

May 2016

Issue no. 17

* The Birth of Hope

* The Rituals of Mid-Sha'bān

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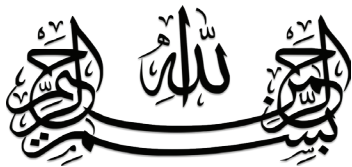


It is reported from the Prophet to have said,

«الْقَائِمُ مِنْ وُلْدِي ... إِلَى اللَّهِ أَشْكُو الْمُكَذِّبِينَ لِي فِي أَمْرِهِ
وَالْجَاهِدِينَ لِقَوْلِي فِي شَأْنِهِ وَالْمُضِلِّينَ لِأُمَّتِي عَنْ طَرِيقَتِهِ
وَسَيَعْلَمُ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا أَيَّ مُنْقَلَبٍ يَنْقَلِبُونَ»¹.

*“The Qā'im will be among my descendants...
I complain to Allah against those who are
engaged in falsifying what I have said about
him and reject my words about him and
thereby mislead my community from his
path. ‘And they who act unjustly shall know
to what final place of turning they shall turn
back.’”*

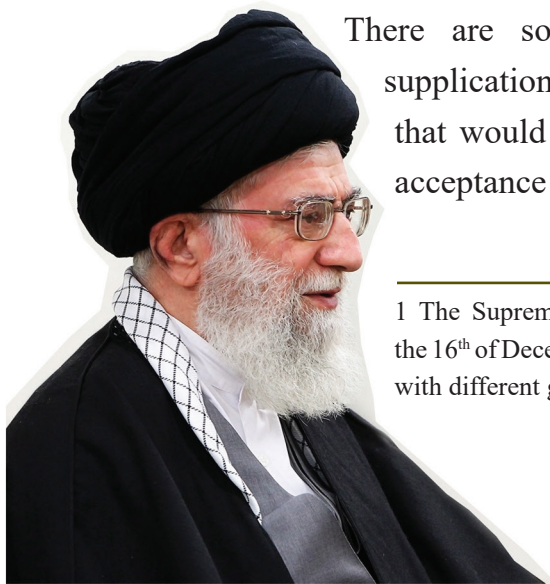
¹ Bihār al- Anwār, by Allāma Majlisī, vol. 51, p. 73.



The Supreme Leader of Islamic Republic:

One of the most important days of the year is the day of Mid-Sha'ban. This day not only coincides with the auspicious birthday of Imam al-Mahdi, but also is titled as being a blessed day. The night before this day is supremely important in Islam to the degree that would be equal to Nights of Qadr (in the month of Ramadan). This night is the night of attention, remembrance, seeking recourse to Allah the Glorified, and asking His mercy.

There are some prayers and supplications for this night that would be the subject of acceptance by Allah.²



1 The Supreme Leader's speech, on the 16th of December 1997 in a meeting with different groups of people.

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The Rituals of Mid-Sha'bān

Editorial

Having hope and being hopeful is one of the most important factors that protects and strengthens man in dealing with different personal and social problems in his life.

In Islamic teachings and especially in Shia school of thought, having hope in Allah the Almighty and waiting for gaining success in material and spiritual aspects of life are repeatedly advised in the Quran and in the words of the Prophet and his household. In addition, this important factor is reiterated in most Abrahamic religions.

Paying attention to the indispensable role of hope in one's life, scientists have had a deep research and analyzed some new scientific approaches in most branches of psychology and psychotherapy to attain a better knowledge of the function and the position of hope. They have declared that enjoying hope in individual and social parts of life assists man to be more tolerant against

harsh situations, to have a better program for lining up his life, and to be able to set a more productive life plan for himself. It also helps man to possess a better spirit when facing the problems and to be more able to keep himself cool in encountering the difficult situations.

Moreover, hope can push us beyond limits and can be our strength and our source of power. Without hope, we would never do anything positive in our life since every good thing we do is for the hope of achieving something in the future. The bottom line is that if we do not have enough hope, we slowly start to shut down and if we try to move forward it is no quick enough. People without hope will probably not achieve any success in the parts of their life in which they hold no hope. The Quran is full of verses persuading people to have hope and admonishing those who run out of hope. For instance, in one of the verses of the Quran, we read from Abraham to have said,

﴿وَمَنْ يَفْنَأْ مِنْ رَحْمَةِ رَبِّهِ إِلَّا الضَّالُّونَ﴾¹

“Who despairs of the grace of His Creator and Nurturer save those who go astray?”

¹ The Quran, 15:56.

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Or Jacob says to his sons,

﴿يَا بَنِيَّ اذْهَبُوا فَتَحَسَّسُوا مِنْ يُوسُفَ وَأَخِيهِ وَلَا تَيْأَسُوا مِنْ رَوْحِ اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ لَا يَيْئَسُ مِنْ رَوْحِ اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْقَوْمُ الْكَافِرُونَ﴾¹

“O, my sons! Go and search out for Josef and his brother; and do not despair of Allah's grace. Verily, no one despairs from Allah's grace, save the disbelieving people.”

Also, Allah in many other verses persuades us to pray and be hopeful that it would be answered, to repent and be hopeful that it would be accepted, and to do good actions and be hopeful to gain the blessing in the Heaven.

Because of this, in Shia's religious belief system, one of the greatest examples of hope is defined as the hope of the appearance of the final Imam – Imam al-Mahdi. The hope for the Imam's coming is integrated with the hope of dissemination of Islamic religion in the world and annihilation of oppression and injustice.

Imam al-Mahdi from his childhood has turned away from the public views and will appear when Allah wills. To hope for his coming, considerably, consolidates the belief of people, helps them to stay firm and more

¹ The Quran, 12:87.

patient, and to do more positively in their personal and social affairs of life. Without this hope, people would lead a terrible life since it seems that the superpowers of the world usually try to suppress others, exploit them, and defeat them. If we had no hope of a savior that will save the world, the world would not be a place to live.

Mid-Sha'ban, the birthday anniversary of the last Savior, whom we believe to be the twelfth Imam of the Shia, is a turning point to enliven our hope. This is why we try to hold on a vast and glittering ceremony for this occasion to promulgate this message in the world that for sure, the Imam will come.

God willing, in this issue of the magazine, we attempt to talk more about the topics related to the birthday of the Imam and our duties with regard to him.

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The Birth of Hope

The Roman Princess

Samarra is a city of Iraq located in a relatively good climate region along the Tigris River. In the third century after Hijrah, the members of Abbasid army used to select Bagdad, where was a city near Samarra, as their place of residence and it caused life to be difficult there. It was around 221 A. H. that, al-Mu'tasim, the Abbasid caliph, paid attention to Samarra and since the city was destructed due to some wars that had taken place there, gave an order that the city should be reconstructed. Then, he chose the city as his government center. As a result, the great officers of the government moved there and the city transformed into a military zone. Al-Mutawakkil, another Abbasid caliph, expanded this zone and built a splendid and great palace for himself there.



A strict control

Al-Mutawakkil ordained that the Shia's tenth

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and eleventh Imams should move to this city to live within the military zone so they could be easily under control. This is why the eleventh Imam is named, Imam al-Hassan al-‘Askarī since in Arabic word, ‘*Askar* means army.

Here is a question that why Abbasid rulers were so afraid of Imam al-Hassan al-‘Askarī while he was still a child. Why did they bring him with his father, Imam al-Hādī to Samarra to live within a military zone to be under a strict control?

The answer is that Abbasid rulers heard through some authentic narrators from the Prophet to have said something about the birth of a boy that was contrary to what Abbasid wished to do in their government. They heard that the Prophet said several times:

1. I will have twelve successors;
2. They are all my descendants and are from the Quraysh tribe;
3. My first successor is Ali bin Abī Tālib and the last one of them is al-Mahdi;
4. The twelfth successor of mine is the son of Imam al-Hassan al-‘Askarī whose name is the same as mine.

(The real name of Imam al-Mahdi is Muhammad and al-Mahdi is his cognomen.);

5. My twelfth successor is the ninth generation of Imam al-Hussain whose another name (or cognomen) is al-Mahdi;
6. When al-Mahdi will be born, he will, later on, put an end to the oppressive rulers and to their governments, will establish a global government, will implement justice and monotheism in the world, and will uproot the base of tyranny and unfairness.

The bloodthirsty and oppressive rulers of Abbasid were sure that Imam al-Mahdi was not yet born since his father Imam al-Hassan al-‘Askarī was still too young, therefore, they mobilized all of their forces, employed many overt and covert officers to closely keep an eye on the life of the eleventh Imam so if they were informed that his son was born, kill him immediately.

The rulers of that era applied all of their ability to prevent the birth of Imam al-Mahdi and to not let him be born.

In the year of 232 A. H., al-Mutawakkil who was fully

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aware of what was supposed to take place, brought the tenth Imam and his son to Samarra with the intention to kill the eleventh Imam who was fully young and was about to get married, to block the passage of the birth of the twelfth Imam.

Years passed and al-Mutawakkil passed away. It was 247 A. H. when his son al-Muntasir mounted the throne. Ten years later, his cousin al-Mu'tasim took the royal throne. He in 252 A. H. abdicated in favor of his uncle's son, al-Mu'tazz and he became the king of the government. During these years, Imam al-Hādī and Imam al-Hassan al-'Askarī were under the close control of the tyrant rulers and were living in Samarra in a difficult situation and in a suffocating and unbearable climate.



The eleventh Imam in prison

Years passed and the oppressive government of Abbasid tried to precisely control the life of the two

Imams and especially, Imam al-Hassan al-‘Askarī. They sometimes put the Imams into prison and after that, closely monitored the movement of men and women to and from their houses. They were totally alert to that if the eleventh Imam got married, identify his wife that if she gave birth to a boy kill him quickly so, there would be no one as Imam al-Mahdi who was supposed to be the twelfth successor of the Prophet and the destroyer of the oppressive regimes.

What is interesting is to know if the powerful oppressors of Abbasid regime, with all their forces and the efforts they suffered, were successful to prevent the birth of Imam al-Mahdi or not.



The courier of Imam al-Hādī

Bishr bin Sulaymān says, “My house was in Samarra near the house of Imam al-Hādī. It was late at night that I heard someone was knocking the door of my house. I got up and rushed to the door.”

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“Who is he?” I asked.

“Open the door.” He answered.

I opened the door and surprisingly, I saw that he was the servant of Imam al-Hādī whose name was kāfūr.

“O kāfūr! What is the matter?” I asked.

“Soon be prepared since the Imam wants to see you.” He said.

“I will be ready in a minute.” I said.

I returned back to my room. Changed my clothes, got ready, and along with kāfūr walked to the house of the Imam. When I was in the presence of the Imam he told me,

“O Bishr! You are from the group of Ansār who are famous for being the friends and the lovers of us the Household of the Prophet. For this reason, I have trusted you.”

“Now I want to honor you with a special virtue that it will make you to spiritually surpass other Shia’s of ours and to be ahead of them in loving us and in accepting our leadership. Now I totally confidentially, make you aware of it.”

“By telling it, the Imam started to write a letter in

Roman language and I could not read nor understand the contents of it. Then, the Imam signed the letter with the stone of his ring and sealed the letter. The Imam gave it to me with a small yellow bag that contained two hundred and twenty dinars.” Bishr said.

“Take these and move toward Bagdad. When you arrived there, on that certain day, go, in the morning, to the bridge of the Euphrates River. Stay there till the boats that carry the prisoners of war reach the shore. When the women prisoners got off the boats, you will see that some of the representatives of military leaders and some Iraqi youth are around them to buy them as slaves. At this moment, you will see that people call a man namely ‘Amr bin Yazīd-e bin Nakhkhās. He is in charge of selling the slaves. You should be totally alert and watch them from a distance till they offer a captured maiden for selling. She is wearing a two set of silk and severely avoids the strangers. Even she does not let the buyers of the slaves get close to her nor watch her face.” Imam al-Hādī said.

“The maiden will say to the man who is in charge of selling her not to be in a hurry till she chooses a faithful,

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trustworthy, and reliable who makes her heart at ease.”
The Imam continued.

“By hearing it from her, go to Nakhkhās and tell him, that you have a letter from one of the Arab dignitaries that is written in the Roman language. Tell him that in this letter, the writer has described himself as being loyal and generous, and a man who possesses a flexible spirit. Then tell Nakhkhās to give the letter to the maiden to read and get acquainted with the ethics and moral traits of the man who has written it. Then if her heart has an inclination towards him, you as a proxy for the writer are ready to buy the maiden from him.” Imam al-Hādī ended his words.

“By this order, I took the bag of dinars and the letter from the Imam and started to set off for Bagdad as soon as possible.” Bishr said.



The Roman princess among the prisoners

Bishr continues, “At sunrise of a day, in the morning

of the day that the Imam told me, I went to the bridge of the Euphrates River and started waiting till the boats of the prisoners of war arrive.”

“Some of the Arab youth and a group of the representatives of military commanders were there to buy some slave-girls for themselves or for their masters.”

“It did not take long till the boats arrived by the shore. The captured people got off the boats and came to the beach. A loud noise and bustle of people looking at maidens and the captives talking to Nakhkhās filled the seaside atmosphere.”

“At this time, the man who was in charge of selling the slaves, presented a slave-girl who was wearing a two set of silky fabric, but she, with an extreme degree of purity and greatness, was trying to keep herself out of the sight of the strangers and it was deeply unpleasant to her to see the slave-seller was persuading others to look at her.”

“So far, all the events that my master, Imam al-Hadī, foretold were materialized.” Bishr said.

“One of the customers who was amazed how chaste this maiden was, went to Nakhkhās and said, “I am going

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to buy her with three hundred dinars since her chastity and her hijab made her honorable on my vision.”

The maiden hearing it from him, with a reluctant tone told him in Arabic, “Even if you possess the glory and splendor of Solomon the son of David, and acquire a power and kingdom like his, you should know that I am totally unwilling to be with you. You had better not waste your money.”

The slaver who could not restrain himself from not buying the maiden turned his face toward the girl and told, “Look! What should I do? I have no choice but to sell you. There is no other way and you should accept it.”

“Do not hurry. I have to choose someone who would set my heart at ease and I also trust him in being loyal and honest.” The slave-girl said.

“I went ahead and told Nakhkhās,” Bishr said.

“I have a letter from one of the noblemen of my city which is written in the Roman language. The writer clearly described himself in being noble, generous, gentle, and lenient. Take this letter and give it to the maiden to read and become aware of the attitudes and traits of the writer. If she felt a tendency towards him,

and you also were content, then I have a power of attorney from the writer to buy this girl for him.” Bishr continued.

The slaver accepted the offer, took the letter and handed it to the maiden to read and to present her opinion.

As soon as the girl’s look cast on the letter, she recognized the writer and started to burst into tears. She sobbed so uncontrollably that was totally unexpected.

“You have to entrust me to the writer of this letter.” She told Nakhkhās.

After that, she swore some strong oaths that if the slaver did not let her go with the man, she would die and the slaver had to be responsible for that.

Nakhkhās, as if was entirely convinced, talked with Bishr about how much he was going to sell her. Bishr offered a lower price till both of them agreed exactly on the amount of what the Imam had given to Bishr.

“The man took the money and entrusted her, who was extremely happy, to me.” Bishr said.

“I, along with her, headed to a house in Bagdad I had rented.” Bishr continued.

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“During the way, she could not remain silent and out of her great happiness, every now and then, she took the letter out of her collar, kissed it and put it on her cheeks and eyes.”

“I who thought that she did not know the writer of the letter became totally perplexed and asked her surprisingly, ‘How do you kiss a letter while you have not yet known its writer?’” Bishr asked.

“You are unaware of the spiritual level of the descendants of the prophets.” She responded.

“Listen to my story well to know the truth.” She continued.



My strange story

“My name is Malīkah, the daughter of Yashū‘ā who is the son of Caesar the ruler of the great country of Rome. My mother is a descendant of Simon who was one of the apostles of Jesus and his followers. I have a strange and wonderful story. Now, pay attention to describe it for you.” The girl said to Bishr.

“No more than thirteen Springs passed from my life till my grandfather, the Caesar of Rome decided to marry me with the son of his brother and asked me to comply with his decision.”

“By the order of the great ruler of Rome, they hold a great feast;

The ceremonial hall of the palace was made ready for my marriage ceremony;

The great jewelry-studded bed that was decorated with precious pieces of jewelry and valuable stones was set up over forty pillars;

The civil and military dignitaries, who were invited to participate in this ceremony, attended in the great hall of the palace;

Three hundred monks and priests who were the descendants of the followers and the disciples of Jesus and were of the religious dignitaries took part in the ceremony as well;

Moreover, seven hundreds of highly prestigious figures, who were famous to be descended from the apostles of Jesus, also participated.

In addition, four thousands of the military commanders,

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men of his high ranking officers, generals, knights, noblemen, and tribal chiefs, all with formal dress, were attended.

With the arrival of the mighty Roman Empire, who was my grandfather, the celebration was formalized and the ceremony of my wedding was initiated.”



My wedding ceremony

“With certain formalities, the groom was seated over the jewelry-studded bed which was placed on the forty pillars.”

“They raised the crosses and set them up in high places, the bishops stood up and gathered around the bed of the groom, took the holy books in their hands and opened the Gospel to conclude the marriage contract based on the laws of Christianity and to marry me with the son of my grandfather’s brother, the king of the Rome.”

“But at the same moment, a strange incident occurred.”

“As soon as my grandfather went up the throne and the

highly-ranked figures of the church started to perform the formalities and to recite the marriage contract, suddenly the palace started to shake, the crosses which were mounted on high places overturned and fell down to the ground, the legs of the groom's bed shattered, and the bed turned over and crushed. A frightening sound filled the inner space of the palace and in a second, everything was changed.”

“The miserable groom fell down, rolled over the ground, and laid unconscious. The bishops' face turned white and their bodies started trembling. There was a strange and unprecedented situation and panic rose within everyone.”

“The archbishop, who interpreted our marriage contract as being ominous and rendered these incidences as a sign of unluckiness of this marriage, went close to my grandfather and said, ‘O the king of the Rome! Please exempt us from performing the formalities of this unholy marriage contract since it will bring about nothing but the destruction of Christianity or the annihilation of your kingdom.’”

“My grandfather also regarded those events as

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being unfavorable and was not unwilling to say that our marriage was inauspicious. However, he ordered the bishops to once more restart the marriage ceremonies.”

“With the order of my grandfather, they fixed and set up the bases of the bed, raised up the crosses, brought the misfortunate groom, seated him on the bed, and were ready to restart the ceremony from the beginning.”

“My grandfather who was sure that I could not bring unluckiness said to his brother that he was hopeful that my auspiciousness would prevent the incidence to reoccur.”



The reoccurrence of the same event

“With the order of my grandfather, they redecorated the hall of the palace, put the crosses on their places, mounted the jewelry-studded bed over its legs, helped the groom to seat, and everyone became ready to hold on the royal wedding ceremony again.”

“Astonishingly, as soon as the clergymen opened the Gospel to perform the required formalities of the wedding contract, all the events were repeated and the miserable groom faced with the same tragedy.”

“Once again a tremor hit the palace causing great fear among the guests, the crosses fell down, the legs of the bed crushed and the groom who fell down from that high place, fainted once more, the palace faced an unmanageable situation, the guests dispersed frightened and everything got out of control.”

“My grandfather, who was almost shocked, stood up with a great sadness and left the place. They dropped the curtains and with this stupendous event, the wedding ceremony came to an end.”



A dream during the night

“I returned back to my room and laid down on my bed, totally mindful of what took place in the palace. It was night and I gradually fell asleep. At that night, I

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dreamed about something that was a turning point in my life; something that opened another new world for me; a dream that entirely changed the fate of my life.”

“At that night, I dreamed that I along with my grandfather were in the palace. I clearly can remember that Jesus, Simon and a group of the Disciples were also present. Everything was just like when I was awake except for the jewelry-studded bed that there was a pulpit instead. As if the pulpit was made of light whose brilliance made everything shiny. The light of the pulpit was mounted up so high that one would think it had reached the heaven.”

“At this moment, Prophet Muhammad with Imam Ali bin Abī Tālib who is the Prophet’s successor and his son in law, along with some of his children came in.”

“Jesus went to the Prophet, hugged him warmly and welcomed him. The Prophet told him, ‘O the Spirit of Allah! I have come to ask you to marry Malīkah, the daughter of your vicegerent and successor, Simon, with my son.’”

“By telling that, the Prophet pointed at his son, Imam al-Hassan al-‘Askarī, who is the son of the writer of this letter, and made an offer to marry me with him.”

“Jesus looked at Simon and said, ‘Honor and glory have come to you. You should link your ancestry with the progeny of Prophet Muhammad.’”

“Simon, who was perfectly willing to accept this auspicious offer, presented his approval and said, ‘I eagerly agree with this marriage.’”

“The Prophet then mounted the light-made pulpit, offered a sermon, and concluded the marriage contract between me and his son, Imam al-Hassan al-‘Askarī. Jesus, the disciples, and the progeny of the Prophet were all witnesses to this marriage contract.”

“Suddenly, I woke up. It was indeed a strange dream. I could not believe what I saw. The Prophet really asked Simon to marry me with his honorable grandson, Imam al-Hassan al-‘Askarī. It was unbelievable.”

“However, I was scared to tell my grandfather about my dream because it was probable that if he and his companions became aware of the reality of my dream, they would issue an order to have me killed. Therefore, I did not tell anybody about my dream and kept it as a secret with myself. Nonetheless, day by day I felt an increasing love to Abū Muhammad, Imam al-Hassan

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al-‘Askarī. My heart would pulsate when I remembered him and his love captured the whole of my existence.”



The release of the prisoners

“The days passed and I was so lovesick for Imam al-Hassan that due to the intensity of his love and the difficulty of separation, I was unable to eat nor drink and completely lost my appetite. My unwillingness to eat and the abstention of eating caused me to become weak and unhealthy. Gradually, my illness became worse and worse till my body was completely feeble and worn.”

“My grandfather found no way but to give order that some qualified physicians come to my bedside to diagnose the disease, but their close inspection and treatment were of no avail for me. There was left no doctor nor specialist in the cities of Rome but my grandfather asked him to visit me and to present some medical treatments for me. To my grandfather’s astonishment, all of the efforts failed and there was no way but to abandon the attempts

of further treatment. Not only was no one able to heal me, my illness became acuter and my disease seemed to become very serious.”

“Eventually, in one day, my grandfather who was totally disappointed came to my bedside, sat next to me and looked at my pale face very affectionately. He rubbed gently his hand on my face and told me, ‘O the light of my eyes! Deep in your heart, do you have a wish then I would be able to fulfill it for you?’”

“O, my dear grandfather! As if all doors of rescue are closed to me. But if you stop persecuting the Muslim captives, do not put them in hand and leg shackles, treat them with kindness, open the doors of the jails to them to release them, then I am hopeful that Jesus and his mother Mary grant me my wellness and help me regain my health once more.” Malīkah uttered.

“My grandfather, the Caesar of Rome, accepted my request and commanded that Muslim captives who were in the prisons of Rome and were fastened and bound with chains all should be set free and go back to where they wish.” Malīkah continued.

“With this order, I pretended to be a little better,

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ate a little food as if with this good behavior of my grandfather, I was exposed to the mercy of Jesus and his mother.”

“My grandfather, who by seeing this little recovery, could not conceal his gratification, issued an order that the rest of the Muslims, with a total honor and respect, should be freed as well.”



My second dream and the promise of meeting

“Since this event, it was no longer than forty nights that I saw my second dream. It was so impressive that changed the train of my thought, my belief, and my faith.”

“At that night, I saw that Lady Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet and the master of the ladies of the worlds, with thousands of nymphs from Heaven came to visit me. The daughter of ‘Imrān was also with them. Virgin Mary showed Lady Fatima to me and said, ‘She is the master of the ladies of the worlds and the mother of your husband.’”

“I, by hearing it from her, went close to Fatima and grabbed the edge of her clothes, dropped myself on her holy feet, and cried uncontrollably. With tears dropping off my eyes, I complained that how long I should be separated from her son, Imam al-Hassan al-‘Askarī. I also offered to her my annoyance that why, during these days, the Imam did not come to see me and why he deprived me of seeing him.”

“Lady Fatima who realized my fondness towards his son, told me lovingly, ‘As far as you are a Christian, my son, Abū Muhammad, al-Hassan al-‘Askarī, will not come to see you. This is my religious sister Mary, the daughter of ‘Imrān, who detests your religion.¹ Now, if you are willing to satisfy Allah, Jesus, and Mary; and if you are eager to see my son, Abū Muhammad, you have to bear testimony to the oneness of Allah and to the prophethood of my father, Muhammad.’”

“Then, Lady Fatima told me the Arabic version of the two testimonies and I repeated them after her. By uttering those words, Lady Fatima cuddled me tightly

¹ Of course, there is no doubt that the religion of Jesus is a holy religion. But after the emergence of Islam, no one is allowed to remain in that religion and should convert to Islam.

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and warmly and I deeply felt that my soul was purified and my illness was completely removed.”

“Now you should expect my son, Abū Muhammad, come to see you and I will send him to you.” Lady Fatima said.

“At this moment, I woke up and told myself, ‘I wait till I see Abū Muhammad and wish to be honored by seeing him as soon as possible.’”



The third dream

“The day ended and I, who was impatiently waiting to see Imam al-Hassan al-‘Askarī, was just hopeful for the night to come to at least see my dear husband in my dream.”

“Fortunately, in my dream, as Lady Fatima had promised, I was privileged to see the Imam. It was unbelievable, the Imam came to see me in my dream. Everything was so clear and tangible as if it was ever more evident than when I was awake.”

“When I saw the Imam in my dream. I remember that I,

with an extreme degree of grief that was due to me separated from him, told the Imam, ‘O my dearest! Was it fair that I was near to die because of my love for you, was burning in the fire of your love, and have become this much wretched, but you have postponed coming to me so late?’”

“Due to your religion that was Christianity, this long delay was expected. Before your conversion to Islam, you were one of the polytheists¹. But now that you are a Muslim and have accepted Islam as your religion, I will come to see you every night.” The Imam said.

“I woke up from my dream.” Malīkāh said.

“But from that night on, every night, the Imam comes to my dream and I continuously, am blessed with his kindness and fondness.”

“When Malīkāh described her strange and odd story and I realized that she was the granddaughter of Rome Caesar, the descendant of Simon who was the successor of Jesus, was from a respected family, and possessed a sublime level of spiritual perfection, I become eager to know more about her.” Bishr said.

“So I asked her an important question.” Bishr continued.

¹ Since the Christians believe in three Gods.

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“What did come to you that you have got captured? How did you get out of the palace and join the group of the captives and slaves?” Bishr asked.

“One of the nights Abū Muhammad, Imam al-Hassan al-‘Askarī came to my dream.” Malīkāh responded.

“He told me in my dream, ‘Soon your grandfather’s dispatches an army to fight the Muslims and a battle will take place between the two countries of them. You should take advantage of this event and put on the clothes of the workers. Totally unknown, you have to go to the battlefield with other women and nurses.’”



The war and captivity

“Exactly, as the Imam anticipated, it was declared in Rome that my grandfather issued an order to fight with the army of the Muslims. Roman militants decided to fight against the Muslims and soon the war began. I, as was supposed, changed my attire and became like the servants who participated in the battle. I, between the female nurses, went on till I was close to the front line.

Muslims soldiers, in an abrupt attack, succeeded to kill some of the Christians and to arrest a number of them. I was among those who were captured and along with others was brought to Bagdad by boats and, as you probably witnessed, we landed on the shore.”

“However, keep it in your mind that no one knows that I am the granddaughter of the Rome Caesar. This was the whole of my story.”

“When I heard Malīkāh’s story,” Bishr said.

“I asked him, ‘How do you speak in Arabic while you are from the land of Rome?’”

“My grandfather was very ambitious in my education and in training me.” Malīkāh responded.

“Because of this, he employed a woman who fully knew the Arabic and Roman languages to teach me. She used to come to me twice in a day and taught me Arabic. This is why I can easily speak in Arabic.” Malīkāh said.



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A gift from the Imam

“We slowly passed Bagdad and entered Samarra and directly went to the house of Imam al-Hādī.” Bishr said.

“When we were in the presence of the Imam, they said Salam to him and sat down.”

“The Imam addressed Malīkāh and told, ‘Tell me how Allah showed you the almightiness of Islam and the contempt of Christianity and how He introduced the honor and gentility of Prophet Muhammad and his Household to you?’”

“O the son of the Prophet!” Malīkāh answered totally politely.

“What can I tell you about what you asked while you are more aware and more knowledgeable than me?”

“I want to grant you a gift to honor your presence.” Imam al-Hādī said.

“Do you wish to be given ten thousand dinars or I give you glad tidings and very interesting news that will lead to your eternal honor and dignity? Which one do you prefer?”



A great promise

Malīkāh who possessed a high degree of spirituality, could not select the first choice and without a doubt told the Imam, “Of course I prefer the second offer.”

The Imam who expected Malīkāh to choose the second suggestion, told him gladly, “I promise that you will have a child who will conquer the East and the West of the earth, will be the leader of the whole world, and will make the world replete with justice and virtue after it is full of oppression and injustice.”

“Who is the father of this son?” Malīkāh asked.

“His father is the one whom the Prophet of Islam proposed to you. Can you remember your dream that to whom Jesus and his successor married you?” The Imam responded.

“Is he your venerable son Imam, al-Hassan al-‘Askarī?” Malīkāh questioned.

“Do you know him?” The Imam asked.

“How shouldn’t I know him while since the time I converted to Islam with the help of Lady Fatima, I have constantly seen him in my dream?” Malīkāh responded.

At this moment, Imam al-Hādī told his servant

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Kāfūr, “Go to my sister, Hakīmah, and tell her to come here soon.”

Kāfūr obeyed and it took no longer than a few minutes till the honorable sister of Imam al-Hādī got into the room and said Salam to the Imam.

The Imam, while pointing at the newly arrived guest told Hakīmah, “O my sister! This lady is the one about whom I already talked and you expected her coming.”

When Hakīmah heard it from the Imam, got close to Malīkāh, respected her and held her in her arms and became greatly full of joy.

“O Hakīmah!” Imam al-Hādī said.

“Now take this lady to your house. Teach her the obligatory and recommended rituals of Islam, and make her more familiar with our religion. She is supposed to be the spouse of my son, al-Hassan and the mother of al-Mahdi.”¹



¹ Refer to Kamāl al-Dīn wa Tamām al-Ni‘mah, by Shaykh al-Sadūq, vol. 2, chapter. 9, pp. 445-452.

In the house of Hakīmah

Hakīmah, the sister of Imam al-Hādī, eagerly accepted the newly arrived lady into her house, treated her warmly and heartily, helped her learn Islamic rulings and how to worship Allah, and offered a new name for her – Narjis.

Everyone who was aware of the situation attempted not to inform others about the newcomer girl lest the secret agents of the government became aware and the murderous Abbasid rulers kill the innocent girl.

One day, Imam al-Hassan al-‘Askarī, who was young, went to the house of his aunt, Hakīmah. When he saw Narjis, went into a deep thought. Hakīmah, who noticed the reaction of the Imam, turned toward the Imam and asked, “What happened? What do you think about?”

“Soon, this lady will give birth to a son who will enjoy an exalted level of spirituality with Allah. Allah, by the help of him, will make the earth a place full of justice and excellence, when it is full of oppression and crime.” Imam al-Hassan answered.

“I think it is proper to choose her as your wife.” Hakīmah suggested.

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“I, firstly, have to acquire the permission of my father.”
Imam al-Hassan said.

“By hearing it, I changed my clothes and went to the house of my brother, Imam al-Hādī.” Hakīmah said,

“I entered the room of the Imam, saluted him and sat down. But prior to saying anything to him, the Imam told me, ‘O Hakīmah! Please provide the required facilities for the marriage of Narjis with my son.’”

“I, soon, got up, said goodbye, returned to my home, and told Narjis about the matter. Narjis, who realized that after those bitter events, her wishes were about to come true, became exceedingly joyful and shamefully smiled.”¹



An auspicious marriage

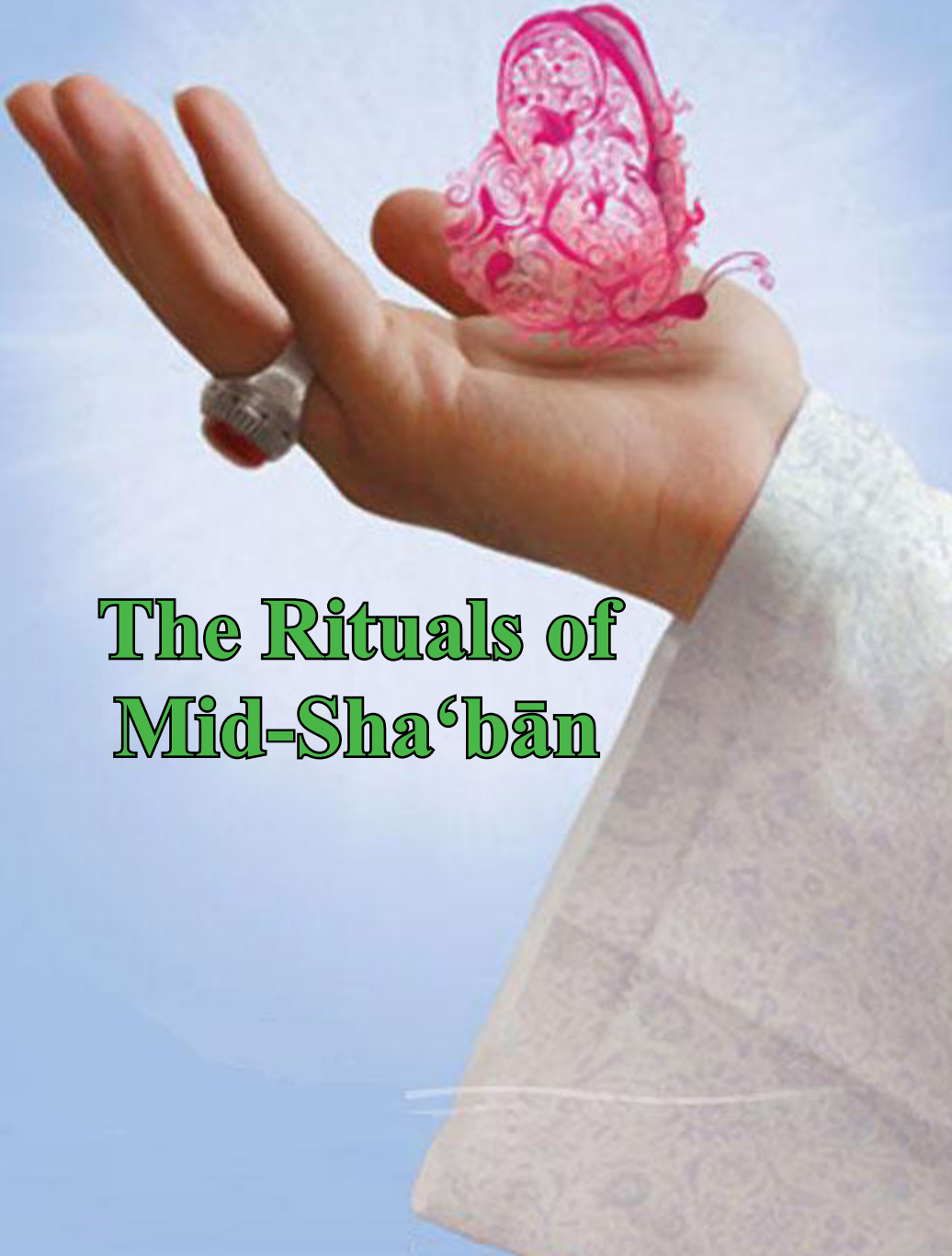
The wedding ceremonies of Imam al-Hassan al-‘Askarī and Narjis was held successfully. After some days, the Imam with his Newlywed wife, went to the house of Imam al-Hādī to thank him.

¹ Kamāl al-Dīn wa Tamām al-Ni‘mah, vol. 2, chapter. 10, p. 455.

It was the time when Imam al-Hassan al-‘Askarī and Narjis started their common life. This marriage, despite the close observation and the total surveillance of Abbasid agents, took place and just a few of the bosom friends of Imam al-Hādī and some of their relatives were aware. They kept this event secret and did not let anyone become aware of this important event.

This was the reason that they called the wife of Imam al-Hassan al-‘Askarī with different names like: Malīkāh, Narjis, Sūsan, and Sayqal. They, by this way, were trying to let no one recognize the real personality of her and the government investigators had no clue about what was going on. If the household of the Imam fell short of the responsibility of keeping this event secret, the cruel executioners of Abbasid government would waste no time in killing her to prevent the birth of Imam al-Mahdi.

So far, we just talked about the marriage of Imam al-Hassan al-‘Askarī with Narjis. God willing, we will talk, on another occasion, about the rest of this story and that how Imam al-Mahdi was born.



**The Rituals of
Mid-Sha‘bān**

The Rites of the Eve and the Day of 15th of Sha‘bān (22nd of May 2016)

Sha‘bān is the only month of the Islamic calendar which does not have a single day of mourning. It is truly a blessed month, especially for the auspicious occasion of Imam al-Mahdi’s birthday on the 15th of this month.

The eve of Mid-Sha‘bān is extraordinarily honorable. Imam al-Sādiq (the Sixth Imam) narrated from his father when Imam al-Bāqir was asked about the merits of the night before the fifteenth day of Sha‘bān as saying,

«هِيَ أَفْضَلُ لَيْلَةٍ بَعْدَ لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ فِيهَا يَمْنَحُ اللهُ تَعَالَى الْعِبَادَ فَضْلَهُ وَ يَغْفِرُ لَهُمْ بِمَنِّهِ فَاجْتَهِدُوا فِي الْقُرْبَةِ إِلَيَّ اللهُ فِيهَا فَإِنَّهَا لَيْلَةٌ آتَى اللهُ تَعَالَى عَلَيَّ نَفْسَهُ أَنْ لَا يَرُدَّ سَائِلًا لَهُ فِيهَا مَا لَمْ يَسْأَلْ مَعْصِيَةً وَ إِنَّهَا اللَّيْلَةُ الَّتِي جَعَلَهَا اللهُ لَنَا أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ بِإِزَاءِ مَا جَعَلَ لَيْلَةَ الْقَدْرِ لِنَبِيِّنَا ﷺ فَاجْتَهِدُوا فِي الدُّعَاءِ وَ الثَّنَاءِ عَلَيَّ اللهُ تَعَالَى عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ...»

“It is the most favorable night after the Qadr

1 Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 94, p. 85; Misbāh al-Mutahajjid, p.831.

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Night. At this night, Almighty Allah bestows upon His servants with His favors and grants them His pardon out of His conferral of benefits to them. Therefore, you should exert all efforts to seek nearness to Him at this night, because He has decided not to reject any asker as long as he does not ask for an act of disobedience to Him. Almighty Allah has chosen this night for us (the Ahl al-Bayt) just as He has chosen the Qadr Night for our Prophet. You should thus pray and praise Him the Exalted, the Glorified diligently...”

However, some of the recommended rites to be carried out at this night are as follows:

1. To make a major ablution (Ghusl) at the time of sunset;

According to Imam al-Sādiq, the Ghusl decreases the punishment for one’s sins.¹

2. To stay awake at night to pray;

Imam Ali quotes from the Prophet to have said, "*When the night of the middle of Sha’ban comes, Allah says, ‘Is*

¹ Misbāh al-Mutahajjid, p.853.

there anyone begging for forgiveness that I might forgive him? Is there anyone begging for sustenance that I may feed him?”¹

3. To visit the tomb of Imam al-Hussain or recite his Ziyārah from distance;

To visit the tomb of Imam al-Hussain is the most favorable act at this night in which brings about forgiveness of one’s sins. There is a narration from Imam al-Sādiq to have said, “If one desires that 124,000 Prophets shake hands with him, he or she may visit the holy shrine of Imam al-Hussain at this night that is because, by the permission of Allah, the soul of all Prophets visit the Imam’s tomb then.”² The least act of this Ziyārah is to go up an elevated place, look to the right and the left, raise the head towards the heavens and say these statements:

«السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ، السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا بْنَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ، السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ»³

“Peace be upon you, O Abā-‘Abdillah! Peace be upon

1 Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 95, p. 415.

2 Iqbāl al-A’māl, p. 710.

3 Zād al-Ma’ād, p. 60.

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you, O the son of Allah's Messenger! Peace be upon you and Allah's mercy and blessing be upon you!"

4. To recite Kumayl supplication;

Kumayl bin Ziyād, one of the sincere companions of Imam Ali, was quoted as saying that he had seen the Imam reciting this supplication in his prostration.¹

5. To recite: a) (سبحان الله) Subhānallāh 100 times; b) (الحمد لله) Alhamdulillāh 100 times; c) (الله اكبر) Allāhu Akbar 100 times, and d) (لا اله الا الله) Lā Ilāha illallah 100 times.

6. To offer some supplications written in Mafātīh al-Jinān like:

«اللَّهُمَّ بِحَقِّ لَيْلَتِنَا هَذِهِ وَمَوْلُودِهَا وَحُجَّتِكَ وَمَوْعُودِهَا الَّتِي قَرَنْتَ
إِلَيْهَا فَضْلَهَا فَضْلاً فَتَمَّتْ كَلِمَتُكَ صِدْقاً وَعَدَلاً لَا مُبَدَّلَ لِكَلِمَاتِكَ وَ
لَا مُعَقَّبَ لِآيَاتِكَ نُورِكَ الْمُتَالِقُ وَضِيَاؤُكَ الْمُشْرِقُ وَالْعِلْمُ النُّورُ
فِي طَخِيَاءِ الدِّيَجُورِ الْغَائِبِ الْمَسْتُورِ جَلَّ مَوْلِدُهُ وَكَرَّمَ مَحْتَدُهُ وَ
الْمَلَائِكَةُ شُهَدَاؤُهُ وَاللَّهُ نَاصِرُهُ وَمُؤَيِّدُهُ إِذَا أَنْ مِيعَادُهُ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ
أَمْدَادُهُ سَيْفُ اللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا يَنْبُو وَنُورُهُ الَّذِي لَا يَخْبُو وَذُو الْحِلْمِ الَّذِي
لَا يَضْبُو مَدَارُ الدَّهْرِ وَنَوَامِيسُ الْعَصْرِ وَوَلَاةُ الْأَمْرِ وَالْمُنَزَّلُ عَلَيْهِمْ

¹ Al-Misbāh, by Kaf'amī, p. 555.

مَا يَنْزَلُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ ، وَ أَصْحَابُ الْحَشْرِ وَ النَّشْرِ تَرَاجِمُهُ وَ حِيهِ
وَ وُلاةُ أَمْرِهِ وَ نَهْيِهِ اللَّهُمَّ فَصَلِّ عَلَي خَاتِمِهِمْ وَ قَائِمِهِمُ الْمَسْتُورِ
عَنْ عَوَالِمِهِمُ اللَّهُمَّ وَ أَدْرِكْ بِنَا أَيَّامَهُ وَ ظُهُورَهُ وَ قِيَامَهُ وَ اجْعَلْنَا
مِنْ أَنْصَارِهِ وَ اقْرِنْ تَارَنَا بِشَارِهِ وَ اكْتُبْنَا فِي أَعْوَانِهِ وَ خُلَصَائِهِ وَ
أَحِينَا فِي دَوْلَتِهِ نَاعِمِينَ وَ بِصُحْبَتِهِ غَانِمِينَ وَ بِحَقِّهِ قَائِمِينَ وَ مِنْ
السُّوءِ سَالِمِينَ يَا أَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِينَ وَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَ صَلَّى
اللَّهُ عَلَي سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ خَاتَمِ النَّبِيِّينَ وَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ وَ عَلَي أَهْلِ بَيْتِهِ
الصَّادِقِينَ وَ عَتْرَتِهِ النَّاطِقِينَ وَ الْعَنْ جَمِيعَ الظَّالِمِينَ وَ أَحْكَمْ بَيْنَنَا وَ
بَيْنَهُمْ يَا أَحْكَمَ الْحَاكِمِينَ.»¹

“O Allah! For the sake of this night, and he who was born tonight, Your decisive proof, Your “promise”, which You joined with him a favor upon favor. So You fulfilled Your words truly and justly. No one can change Your words nor obscure Your signs. He is your light that is shiny and Your luminance that is glowing. He is the Bright sign that was previously hidden and covered in the gloominess of darkness. Dignified

¹ Iqbāl al-A'māl, p. 705.

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was his birth, honored was his association, and the angels stood witness to him. Allah is his helper and supporter when the promised event (of his return) approaches. The angels will aid him. He (the Imam) is the sword of Allah which does not miss (its target). The light of Allah which cannot be concealed. The possessor of forbearance who does not act improperly. The pivot of ages, the aware of the secrets of each set of time. He is one of the authority of the affair; and descends on him whatever descends on the night of Qadr. He is one of those who (matter) in the Day of Gathering and resurrection, (those who) interpret His revelation, guide towards His commands, and forbidden laws. O Allah! Bless their seal, the one who will rise among them, who is hidden from the cosmos. O Allah! Make us reach his days, his appearance and his rising. Cause us to be among his helpers, join our struggle (to achieve truth) with his struggle, include us

among his supporters and sincere friends. Give us life in his reign, gentle so that we receive the bounties, benefit from his company, rise for his rightful (struggle), and are safe from evil. O the Most Merciful of the Merciful! (All) praise is for Allah, the Lord of the worlds! May His blessings be on Muhammad, the seal of the Prophets and the Messenger, and upon his family, the truthful, and the articulate progeny. Curse all the oppressors and judge between us and them, O the best of all the Judges!”

«الهِى تَعَرَّضْ لَكَ فِي هَذَا اللَّيْلِ الْمُتَعَرِّضُونَ وَ قَصَدَكَ الْقَاصِدُونَ وَ أَمَلْ فَضْلَكَ وَ مَعْرُوفَكَ الطَّالِبُونَ وَ لَكَ فِي هَذَا اللَّيْلِ نَفَحَاتٌ وَ جَوَائِزٌ وَ عَطَايَا وَ مَوَاهِبٌ تَمُنُّ بِهَا عَلَيَّ مِنْ تَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِكَ وَ تَمْنَعُهَا مَنْ لَمْ تَسْبِقْ لَهُ الْعِنَايَةَ مِنْكَ وَ هَا أَنَا ذَا عُبَيْدِكَ الْفَقِيرِ إِلَيْكَ الْمُؤَمِّلُ فَضْلَكَ وَ مَعْرُوفَكَ فَإِنْ كُنْتَ يَا مَوْلَايَ تَفَضَّلْتَ فِي هَذِهِ اللَّيْلَةِ عَلَيَّ أَحَدٍ مِنْ خَلْقِكَ وَ عُدْتَ عَلَيْهِ بِعَائِدَةٍ مِنْ عَطْفِكَ فَصَلِّ عَلَيَّ مُحَمَّدٍ وَ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ الطَّيِّبِينَ الطَّاهِرِينَ الْخَيْرِينَ الْفَاضِلِينَ وَ جُدْ عَلَيَّ بِطَوْلِكَ وَ مَعْرُوفِكَ يَا رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَ صَلِّ اللَّهُ عَلَيَّ مُحَمَّدٍ خَاتَمِ النَّبِيِّينَ وَ آلِهِ الطَّاهِرِينَ وَ سَلِّمْ تَسْلِيمًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ

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حَمِيدٌ مَجِيدٌ اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَدْعُوكَ كَمَا أَمَرْتَ فَاسْتَجِبْ لِي كَمَا وَعَدْتَ إِنَّكَ
لَا تُخْلِفُ الْمِيعَادَ.»¹

“O Allah! On this night, the seekers have sought You, the aspirers have aspired for You, the searchers have hoped for Your blessings and grace. For You have, on this night, hidden bounties, rewards, presents and gifts which You bestow upon whom You please from Your servants and You deny them to one who has not reached Your regard. Here I am, Your abject servant, in need of You, hopeful of Your blessings and grace. So O my Master! If You bestow blessings on this night, on anyone of Your creatures and turn to him with affection, then bless Muhammad and his family, the pure, the purified, the virtuous, the excellent; and favor me with Your bounty, O the Lord of the worlds! O Allah! Bless Muhammad, the seal of the Prophets, and his family, the purified ones, (and send) a perfect salutation. Surely Allah is Praiseworthy, Glorious. O Allah! I

¹ Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 95, p. 411.

have supplicated to You as You have commanded, so answer me, as You have promised. Surely You do not break Your promises.”

7. To offer some prayers like:

At this night, Imam al-Bāqir and Imam al-Sādiq used to pray a four Rak‘at (two two-unit prayers) as below:

In each Raka‘at, recite Surah al-Fātiha one time and Surah al-Ikhlās hundred times. After ending the second prayer recite the following du‘ā:

«اللَّهُمَّ اِنِّى اِلَيْكَ فَقِيرٌ وَ مِنْ عَذَابِكَ خَائِفٌ مُسْتَجِيرٌ اللَّهُمَّ لَا تُبَدِّلْ اِسْمِى وَلَا تُغَيِّرْ جِسْمِى وَلَا تَجْهَدْ بِلَايِى وَلَا تُشْمِتْ بى اَعْدَائِى اَعُوذُ بِعَفْوِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَ اَعُوذُ بِرَحْمَتِكَ مِنْ عَذَابِكَ وَ اَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَ اَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ جَلَّ تَنَاوُكَ اَنْتَ كَمَا اَثْبَيْتَ عَلِى نَفْسِكَ وَفَوْقَ مَا يَقُولُ الْقَائِلُونَ.»¹

“O Allah! I stand in need of You, and from Your punishment am fearful. Seeking refuge O Allah! Do not change my name nor alter my body, nor try me with a severe trial, and do not make my enemies rejoice (at my failure). I seek refuge in

¹ Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 94, p. 88.

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Your forgiveness from Your punishment and I seek refuge in Your mercy from Your chastisement, and in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in You from You. Great is Your praise. You are the way You have praised Yourself and even above what is said by the speakers.”

عجل الله فرجه

عذرة الرباط
عذرة الرباط

