

The Final

A quarterly magazine for a better knowledge
about Imam Mahdi, the Twelfth Imam

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Imam Mahdi

عن أُمِّ سَلَمَةَ، قَالَتْ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم)
قال: «الْمَهْدِي مِنْ عَشْرَتِي مِنْ وُلْدِ فَاطِمَةَ»

'Umm-e Salamah has related from the Messenger of Allah to have said, "Mahdi is among my progeny, from the descendants of Fātima."

(Sahih, by Abū Dāwūd, vol. 2, p. 207; Sahih, by Ibn-e Mājah, vol. 2, p. 519.)

Imam Mahdi in the Quran

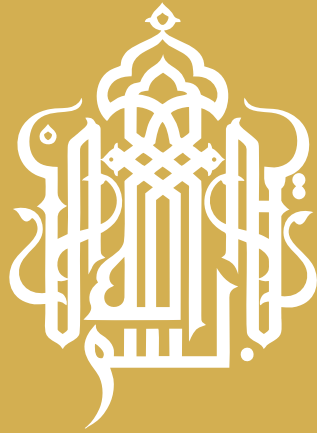
The Story of Imam Mahdi's Honorable Mother

The Auspicious Birthday of Imam Mahdi

The Birth of Imam Mahdi from the Viewpoint
of Sunni Scholars

Muslim's Duties at the Time of Imam Mahdi's
Disappearance

Teenagers Corner







The Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran:

The 15th of Sha'ban is the embodiment of our hopeful outlook towards the future. All the hope that we invest in something may or may not have the outcome that we hoped for; however, the hope towards the final salvation by the absolute Walī of the Almighty Allah [a person given an authority or guardianship from Allah] - the Imam of the Age (may Allah hasten his appearance, and may our souls be sacrificed for his sake) - is an inviolable hope... It is not only Shi'as that have made this claim; it is not only Muslims that have made this claim: all religions of the world are waiting for such a day to come. Our privilege is that we know him; we feel his existence; we believe in his existence; we speak to him; we address him; we make requests to him and he grants us our requests. This is the difference between us and others. Others (non- Shi'a Muslims and non-Muslim believers) believe in something vague; however, this is not the case with us the Shi'as. It is clear what we want and whom we speak to The 15th of Sha'ban is a day of hope.



The Final



Chief Director
Mujtabā Kalbāsī

Editor in Chief
Sayyed 'Abd-al-Mahdi Tavakol

Editorial Board
The experts in the Specialized
Center of Mahdism

Translators
Hamid Sa'ādat
Y. Rafī'ee
N. Bahrānī
F. Bahrānī
Z. Karīmzādeh

Graphic Design
Mohammad Hussein Hamedānīan



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Editorial

From the viewpoint of the Quran and Islamic traditions, and based on what even political leaders and the western and eastern theorists believe, the world is waiting for the emergence of a just, revolutionary and conscious leader.

The prophecies of the uprising of such a universal peacemaker and a global savior are too much in religious books, as well as political and social ones. They say that in the future, a full-fledged human being who has an immensely long life and experience, will take over the domination and will bring about a kind of universal government that is based on justice and righteousness. The concept of this thinking is totally in line with Islamic beliefs.

Western theorists have not defined a particular person for the administration of the world who will establish a universal justice system, but they describe the characteristics of a future savior that are completely suited to the characteristics of Imam Mahdi.

Most Islamic societies and, in particular, the Twelver Shias, - based on rational and historical reasons, - believe that the promised leader and the savior of the human community is a special person and he is the son of Imam Hassan al-'Askari. Furthermore, the Shia believe that the Imam is now alive and is conscious of all of the needs and requirements of people and is aware of their ups and downs. He waits for a day when the divine command for him to rise be announced and he starts his mission to make the world full justice after it has been replete with oppression and injustice.

Editor in Chief: Sayyed 'Abd-al-Mahdi Tavakol
Smtavakol@gmail.com



Imam Mahdi in the Quran

Surah Luqmān, verse 20

Allah in the 20th verse of Surah Luqmān expresses,

«أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ سَخَّرَ لَكُمْ مِمَّا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَاسْتَبْعَثَ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَهُ ظَاهِرَةً وَبَاطِنَةً وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يُجَادِلُ فِي اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَلَا هُدًى وَلَا كِتَابٍ مُّبِينٍ»
 “Do you not see that Allah has subjugated to you whatever there is in the heavens and whatever there is in the earth and He has showered upon you His blessings, the outward and the inward? Yet among people are those who dispute concerning Allah without any knowledge or guidance or an illuminating scripture.”



When the invisible Imam is a divine bounty, of course, it should be possible for us to be benefitted from him. This is why we believe that although the Imam is hidden from our eyes, he is present in the hearts of those who are believers.

An explanatory narration:

«مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ زِيَادِ الْأَزْدِيِّ قَالَ سَأَلْتُ سَيِّدِي مُوسَى بْنَ جَعْفَرٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ عَنْ قَوْلِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَاسْتَبْعَثَ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَهُ ظَاهِرَةً وَبَاطِنَةً فَقَالَ: «النَّعْمَةُ الظَّاهِرَةُ الْإِمَامُ الظَّاهِرُ وَ الْبَاطِنَةُ الْإِمَامُ الْغَائِبُ» فَقُلْتُ لَهُ وَ يَكُونُ فِي الْأَيْمَةِ مَن يَعِيبُ قَالَ: «نَعَمْ يَعِيبُ عَنْ أَبْصَارِ النَّاسِ شَخْصَهُ وَلَا يَعِيبُ عَنْ قُلُوبِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ذِكْرُهُ وَهُوَ الثَّانِي عَشَرَ مِنْهَا»¹

Muhammad bin Ziyād al-Azdī says that he asked Imam al-Kāzim (the seventh Imam of Shia) about the meaning of “and He has showered upon you His blessings, the outward and the inward” and the Imam replied, the “outward blessing” points to the manifest Imam and the “Inward blessing” refers to the hidden Imam.” Then the man asked, “Will there be an Imam who would go into hiding?” Imam answered, “Yes, his body will hide from people’s vision, but people’s hearts will not forget him and he is the twelfth Imam of us (the Household of the Prophet).”

1. Kamāl al-Dīn wa Tamām al-Ni’mah, vol. 2, chapter 34, hadith 6.

Points:

1. Man has a great value in divine school: Allah has subjugated everything to humankind. It shows that Allah honors man so much. Man is so important that Allah created everything in the world for him to meet his physical needs as He says,

﴿هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا...﴾¹

“He is the One Who created for you whatever is in the earth...”

As a result, more certainly, man’s spirituality should be taken care of as well. This is why Allah chose some people as Imams to help man reach salvation.

2. We should not forget the blessings of Allah: There are many bounties from Allah in the whole of man’s life. These bounties are inward and outward which means that we can notice some of these blessings, but are not aware of many others. We must be careful not to let the outward and manifest blessings make us negligent about other possible forms of blessings. Hidden Imam is one of those blessings that could be neglected by some people. We must be careful not to forget him as we do not forget our apparent blessings like our wealth and property. The reason why we do not forget our apparent blessings is that we are physically connected to them. The same exactly, if we were spiritually connected to our Imam, we would not forget him as well.

3. Hidden Imam is a blessing: Whatsoever helps humankind towards perfection is a blessing from Allah. The invisible Imam is a bounty because he helps people reach their perfection. Of course,

1. The Quran, 2: 29.

when the Imam is hidden it causes some problems in the way of reaching perfection since, when Imam is hidden, it is impossible or difficult for people to make direct contact with him, obey him and maintain faith however, it has its particular benefit that makes the rewards of those who remain steadfast doubled since for man to stay firm while his Imam is hidden is more difficult and as a result, the man’s reward should be more. The time of Occultation is a hard time and is like a divine trial that those who survive are not like those who remained steadfast in the past when their Imam was present – they are in a higher position and are more rewarded.

4. Man can be beneficiary from the hidden Imam:

Imam, whether is present or hidden, is a blessing that the Compassionate Allah has bestowed upon man. When the invisible Imam is a divine bounty, of course, it should be possible for us to be benefitted from him. This is why we believe that although the Imam is hidden from our eyes, he is present in the hearts of those who are believers. The believers always remember the hidden Imam and it is the cause of their spiritual mobility. It also is not hidden that to be a beneficiary from the Imam requires deciding to be benefitted from him. This purpose can be achieved by remembering him, knowing him and trying to adapt our actions with his conduct. Yes, the Imam has two kinds of blessings: the general one and the specific one. Most of us are benefitted from the general blessing of the Imam even if we do not remember him. But those who want to be specially benefitted from him have to be like those who are special – to always remember him and to try to practice what the Imam desires.



The Story of Imam Mahdi's Honorable Mother

The mother of Imam Mahdi, as the one giving birth to the last divine savior, must have a highly exalted status of spiritual perfection. Unfortunately, for some reason, especially her being in a suffocating and unbearable climate, our understanding of that noble lady is very limited.

Following some Islamic narrations and historical reports, there are some general possibilities of her identity:

1. She was a Roman princess captured in a battle by Muslims;
2. She was a slave girl trained in the house of lady Hakīmah (the aunt of Imam 'Askarī).

However, according to a well-known saying that is derived from



If the household of the Imam fell short of the responsibility of keeping this event secret, the cruel executioners of Abbasid agents would waste no time in killing her to prevent the birth of Imam Mahdi.

some narrations, she was a slave captured subsequently joined the family of Imam Hassan 'Askarī. As will be mentioned in the following story, there is no contradiction between these two narrations.

The courier of Imam al-Hādī

Bishr Ibn-e Sulaymān relates, "One night, Kāfūr, the slave of Imam Ali al-Naqī al-Hādī (the tenth Imam of Shia), came to me and summoned me to his master. I immediately got ready. When I went to the Imam, he was talking to his son, Imam 'Askarī and his sister Hakīmah who was sitting behind a curtain. When I sat down Imam Hādī said, "O Bishr! You are from the descendants of the Ansār (the Helpers of the Prophet). This devotion to us (the Ahl al-Bayt) is your legacy which each coming generation of yours inherits from the preceding generation. You are trustworthy men of us. I am elevating you and ennobling you by excellence, through which

you will surpass all Shia in devotion, by sharing a secret with you and sending you to purchase a certain slave girl.”

The Imam then wrote a very fine letter in Roman script and imprinted his seal on it. He took out a yellow cloth in which were two hundred and twenty dinars.

Then the Imam said, “Take this and go with it to Baghdad.” He told me to go to the crossing of the Euphrates on the noon of such and such day. And when you reach the boats of the captives, you will see slave girls in them. You will find buyers working for the procurers of the Abbasids and a small group from the Arab youths. When you see that, keep an eye on a man called ‘Amr bin Yazīd, the slave trader, from a distance all day long, until a slave girl who has such-and-such quality is brought to the buyers. Her dress is two thick silks; she refuses to be seen or touched by the examiners; she does not submit to anyone who would want to touch her. And you will hear a cry in Roman from behind the veil. You should know she is saying, “Alas for the violation of my hijab”.

One of the buyers of ‘Amr says, ‘She is mine for three hundred dinars; her modesty has ever increased my desire for her’. She replies to him in Arabic, ‘Even if you come in the form of Solomon the son of David and with a kingdom like his, I will not be interested in you. So, save your money’.

“The slave-dealer says, ‘What is the solution? I have to sell you’. The slave girl replies, ‘Why the haste? There must be a buyer that my heart finds rest in him and his fidelity and honesty’.

Then the Imam continued, “At that moment, go to ‘Amr bin Yazīd and tell him you have a sealed letter from a certain man of nobility, which is written in Roman language describing therein his benevolence, his fidelity, his excellence, and his generosity. So she may

discern from it the character of its author. Should she be interested in him and choose him, then I am his representative in buying her from you.”

The Roman princess among the prisoners

Bishr, going further, maintains, “I performed all that which my master, Imam Ali al-Naqī had ordered me to do concerning to the slave girl. When she saw the epistle, she cried very profusely and said to ‘Amr bin Yazīd, ‘Sell me to the author of this letter’. She took the most solemn of oaths that should he refuse to sell her to him, she will take her life’. I negotiated the price with the dealer until it settled exactly on the amount my master had given me.”

The money being sufficient so, I took the slave girl who was so very happy and in laughter. I returned with her to the quarters I was residing in Baghdād. She was very restless until she took out from her pocket the letter of the Imam. She would kiss it and put it on her eyes and place it on her cheeks and touch it to her body.

Astonished by this, I said, “You are kissing a letter, you do not know who wrote it!”

The strange story of wedding ceremony

Bishr says, she told me, “O incapable and feeble from knowing the position of the progeny of prophets, lend me your ears and empty your heart for my words. I am Malīkah the daughter of Yeshua, son of the Caesar of Rome. My mother is from the descendants of the Disciples of Jesus (*Hawārīyūn*), and her lineage goes back to the successor of the prophet Jesus, Simon. I will narrate to you the wondrous story.”

“My grandfather, Caesar, wanted to marry me to his nephew when

I was a girl of thirteen. So he gathered in his palace, three hundred priests and monks from the descendants of *Hawārīyūn*, and their men of stature seven hundred men. He gathered four thousand commanders of the army and officers of the military and leaders of the armed forces and chiefs of the tribes. He erected a throne from the dearest of his riches, which was adorned with varieties of jewels and raised over forty steps. When his nephew climbed, the crosses were fixed about, the bishops took their stands in great reverence, and the pages of the Gospel were opened. Suddenly the crosses collapsed from the top and hit the ground. The pillars of the throne crumbled and crashed onto the floor.”

“My grandfather’s nephew, who had risen over the throne, fell unconscious. The colors of the bishops changed and their chests trembled.”

“Their leader said to my grandfather, ‘Please excuse me from facing this evil which forebodes the demise of this Christian religion and the royal creed.’ My grandfather took this as an evil omen and said to the bishops, ‘Erect these scaffolds and raise the crosses and bring the brother of this unconscious man whose dreams have been ruined, so I may marry him this young girl; so the evil of his brother may go away through his fortune.’”

“When they did that, the same thing happened to the second as had happened to the first nephew. People scattered away. My grandfather, Caesar stood in great distress and left the place. They dropped the curtains and with this stupendous event, the wedding ceremony came to an end.”

“I, on the same night, saw in my dream that Jesus, Simon, and a number of the Disciples (*Hawārīyūn*) had gathered at my grandfather’s palace. They had installed there a pulpit of light that was

defying heavens in height and elevation. It was in the same spot where my grandfather had installed his throne.”

“At this moment, the prophet Muhammad, his son-in-law and his successor Ali bin Abī Tālib, and a number of his sons entered. The prophet Jesus went forward and embraced the Prophet. Prophet Muhammad said to him, ‘O the Spirit of Allah! I have come to you to propose to your successor, Simon for his daughter, Malīkah for this son of mine, pointing to Imam Hassan ‘Askarī, the son of the writer of the epistle.’”

“Jesus looked at Simon and said, ‘The greatest honor has come to you. Let your relation be bonded with the relation of the progeny of Muhammad.’ Simon said, ‘It will be my honor to do so.’”

“Prophet Muhammad then climbed over that pulpit, said the marriage contract and married me to his son, Imam Hassan ‘Askarī. Prophet Jesus bore witness and the sons of Muhammad and the *Disciples (Hawārīyūn)* bore witness. When I woke up, I was scared to report this to my father or grandfather, fearing they would kill me. I was keeping this a secret and not revealing it to them.”

“Meanwhile, my heart throbbed with love for Imam Hassan so much that I forsook eating and drinking. I became weak and my body grew lean and I became very sick.”

“There was no physician left in the cities of Rome that my grandfather did not bring and ask him to heal me. When despair overwhelmed him, he said to me, ‘O the light of my eyes! Does any wish occur to your heart in this world, so I may fulfill it?’ I said, ‘O Grandfather! I see the doors of relief shut on me. However, if you save the Muslim captives in your prison from torture, and remove their chains, and do them favors, and kindly release them, I am hopeful that Jesus and his mother will give me health.’”

“When he did that, I made an effort to display health and ate a little food. This made him very happy and he became ever intense to confer kindness and respect upon the captives. ”

“Since this event, it was no longer than forty nights that I saw that Lady Fatima, the daughter of the prophet Muhammad and the mistress of the ladies of the worlds. She visited me along with Mary, the daughter of ‘Imrān, and one thousand nymphs from Heaven. Mary says to me, ‘This is the Mistress of the Ladies, the mother of your husband.’ So, I hold her and cry and complain about why Imam Hassan does not come to visit me. Lady Fatima said, ‘My son, Imam Hassan will not visit you as long as you believe in a partner with Allah in the religion of the Christians. This is my religious sister Mary, the daughter of ‘Imrān, and she turns to Allah with disdain from your religion.’¹

If you want the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, and the pleasure of prophet Jesus and his mother, and to have Imam Hassan visit you, say, ‘I testify that there is no god except Allah and Muhammad is the Last Messenger of Allah.’

“When I spoke these words, she pulled me to her chest and my soul was blessed. She said, ‘Now expect the visitation of Imam Hassan. I am sending him to you.’”

“I woke up in great excitement and expectation of meeting the Imam. When it was the next night, I saw the Imam and as if I was saying to him, ‘You abandoned me, my beloved, after you made me fall in love with you.’ He said, ‘My delay was not but for your polytheistic belief.’² Now you have embraced Islam, I am going to

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

2. Since the Christians believe in three Gods.

visit you every night until Allah brings us together.’ Until now, his visitations to me have not ceased.”

The war and captivity

Bishr says, “I asked her, ‘How did you fall amongst the captives?’ She said, “The Imam told me on one of the nights, ‘Your grandfather will shortly be dispatching an army to fight the Muslims on such and such day, and he will follow them. You have to join them in the train of servants along with some servants from such and such route.’”

“I did that and the vanguards of Muslims encountered us, which led to my situation that you see. And no one knew that I am the granddaughter of the Roman Caesar until now, except you and that is because I told you. The gentleman in whose share of booty I fell, asked me of my name. I hid my identity from him and said, ‘Narjis.’ He said, ‘This is the name of the servants.’”

Bishr says, “I said to her, ‘It is amazing that you are Roman and your language is Arabic.’”

She said, “Due to my grandfather’s persistence and encouragement that I should increase my learning, he appointed a woman to me, who was his interpreter to visit me. She would come to me day and night and teach me Arabic until I became fluent.”

In the house of Imam al-Hādī

Bishr says, “When I brought her back to Samarra, I came to my Master, Imam Ali al-Naqī (al-Hādī). He asked her, ‘How did Allah show you the glory of Islam and the disgrace of Christianity and the nobility of Muhammad and his Household?’”

She said, “How would I describe, O the son of Allah’s Messenger!

Something, which you know better than me?’ I would like to confer kindness on you,”

The Imam said. “Which one is dearer to you, ten thousand dinars or a happy tidings of eternal grandeur?”

“Happy tidings.” She said. Then the Imam stated, “Rejoice the tidings of having a son who would rule the world from the east to the west, and will fill it with equity and justice as it is filled with oppression and injustice.”

“From whom?” she asked. The Imam answered, “From the one for whom the Messenger of Allah proposed for you on such and such night, in such and such year. To whom the prophet Jesus and his successor married you?”

“Then The Imam continued, “Do you know him?” She replied, “Has there been a night he has not visited me since I have embraced Islam on the hands of Mistress of the Ladies.”

Imam Hādī said, “O Kafur! Call my sister Hakimah.” And when she entered, he said to her, “Here she is.”

Lady Hakimah embraced her long and was very much happy to see her. Imam Hādī said to her, “O the daughter of the Messenger of Allah, take her to your house and teach her the duties and traditions, for she is the wife of my son and the mother the Qāim (Imam Mahdi).”¹

In the house of lady Hakīmah

Hakīmah eagerly accepted the newly arrived lady into her house, treated her warmly and heartily, helped her learn Islamic rulings and how to worship Allah”

Everyone aware of the situation attempted not to inform others about the newcomer girl lest the secret agents of the government be-

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

came aware and the murderous Abbasid rulers kill the innocent girl. One day, Imam ‘Askarī, who was young, went to the house of his aunt, Hakīmah. When he saw Narjis, he went into deep thought. Hakīmah asked him, “What happened? What do you think about?” Imam Hassan answered, “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.”

Hakīmah suggested, “I think it is proper to choose her as your wife.” Imam Hassan said, “I firstly, have to acquire the permission of my father.”

Hakīmah said, “By hearing it, I changed my clothes and went to the house of my brother, Imam al-Hādī. I entered the room of the Imam, saluted him and sat down. But before saying anything to him, the Imam told me, ‘O Hakīmah! Please provide the required facilities for the marriage of Narjis with my son.’

Hakīmah said “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 ‘Askarī and Narjis, despite the close observation and the total surveillance of Abbasid agents, took place and just a few of the bosom friends of Imam 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 the Imam with dif-

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



ferent names like Malīkah, Narjis, Sūsan, and Sayqal. They, in 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 agents would waste no time in killing her to prevent the birth of Imam Mahdi.

Her demise

There are two narrations regarding the demise of lady Narjis:

1- She requested Imam ‘Askarī to beseech Allah for her early demise during his lifetime. Consequently, she died during the life of Imam Hassan ‘Askarī and it is engraved on her grave, “This grave

is of the mother of Muhammad (the real name of Imam Mahdi).”¹
2- According to another narration, she was alive after the martyrdom of Imam ‘Askarī. When the Imam murdered, the agent of Abbasids rushed to the house of Imam ‘Askarī and after inspecting the house found nothing but arrested Narjis and took her to Mu‘tamid (the Abbasid Caliph) and asked her to unveil where her newborn son was. Narjis pretended to be pregnant. Mu‘tamid gave her to Ibn Abi Shawārib al-Qāzī. After a while Abbasids involved in various forms of inner turmoil and neglected to keep her. Narjis took this opportunity and escaped. She lived a while after that and passed away in a normal way.²

1. Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 51, p. 5.

2. Kamāl al-Dīn wa Tamām al-Ni‘mah, vol. 2, p. 476.





The Auspicious Birthday of Imam Mahdi

The Birthday of the twelfth Imam (Imam Mahdi) occurred on Friday daybreak, on the 15th of Sha'bān in 255 A.H. (August 2nd 869 A.D.) in Samarra (a town in Iraq). According to a narration quoted by Sheikh al-Sadūq (d.381 A.H./ 991 A.D.) in *Kamāl al-Dīn*, vol. 2, p. 424-426, Lady Hakīmah, the honorable aunt of the eleventh Imam (Hassan al-'Askarī) says,

“Imam Hassan al-'Askarī sent for me and said, ‘O aunt, have your *Iftar* (dinner) tonight with us. This is the night of mid-Sha'bān and Allah, the High, will bring forth the Hujjah (Imam Mahdi) on this night. He will be Allah’s Hujjah (a proof from Allah) on His earth.’”



Surprisingly, the newborn baby said, “I bear witness that there is no deity other than Allah, the One without a partner; and I bear witness that Muhammad is Allah’s Messenger.” He then beseeched blessings for the Commander of the Faithful (Imam Ali) and the Imams until he reached his father and then respectfully stopped.

Lady Hakīmah says, “I said to him, ‘And who is his mother?’ and he replied, ‘Narjis’. I again uttered, “There is no sign of pregnancy in her.” He responded, “It is as I will tell you.” Lady Hakīmah said, “I came and when I greeted and sat, Lady Narjis came to take off my shoes and said, ‘O my lady! How are you this evening?’ I responded, ‘Instead, *you* are my lady and the lady of my household.’ She said, ‘How did you come here, dear aunt?’ I told, ‘My dear daughter! Allah, the Exalted, will grant you in this night of yours a boy, a master in this world and in the hereafter.’ She sat and felt shy and embarrassed.”

When I finished the '*Ishā*' prayer and had my dinner, I went to bed and slept. When it was in the middle of the night, I got up to perform midnight prayers. I finished my prayers and she was sleeping and miraculously, there was no sign of any kind of pregnancy in her. I sat saying some supplication, then I went to bed, and then I

woke up suddenly and somehow, I was horrified. Lady Narjīs was still asleep. She then woke up and rose and performed prayers and then slept.

Lady Hakīmah says, “As doubts came to me, Abu Muhammad (Imam Hassan al-‘Askarī who became aware of my thought) called out, ‘Do not haste, aunt, the affair has come near.’” I recited Sūrahs *Sajdah* and *Yāsīn* and as I was doing that, Lady Narjīs woke up suddenly; I rushed towards her and read the name of Allah on her and then I asked, “Do you feel anything?” and she said, “Yes, aunt.” I told her “Be prepared and do not be scared. It will be as I told you.”

Lady Hakīmah says, “Then faintness overwhelmed me and her. When I recovered, I sensed my Maṣṭer (Imam Mahdi). I removed the sheet from him, and there he was, prostrating touching the earth with his forehead and palms and knees and toes; I pulled him to myself and there he was pure and clean.”

At the same time, Abū Muhammad (the eleventh Imam) called on me, “Bring my son to me, Aunt.” I took his son to him. He put his hands under his thighs and back and put the infant’s feet on his chest. He then put his tongue in his mouth and touched his eyes, ears, and joints with his hands and said to him “My son, talk.” Surprisingly, the newborn baby said, “I bear witness that there is no deity other than Allah, the One without a partner; and I bear witness that Muhammad is Allah’s Messenger.” He then beseeched blessings for the Commander of the Faithful (Imam Ali) and the Imams until he reached his father and then respectfully stopped. Abu Muhammad said, “O Aunt! Take him to his mother so he may give her greetings and then bring him to me.” I took her to his mother and he greeted her. Then I brought him back to the sitting

room. And Abu Muhammad said, “O Aunt! When it is the seventh day, come to us.”

Lady Hakīmah says, “In the next day, I came to offer my greetings to Abu Muhammad. I removed the curtain looking for my Maṣṭer (Imam Mahdi). Not seeing him, I asked his father, ‘May I be your ransom, where is my Maṣṭer?’ He said, ‘We entrusted him to the one who the mother of Moses had entrusted Moses to.’ When it was the seventh day, I came and greeted and sat. Abu Muhammad said, ‘Bring to me my son.’ I brought my Maṣṭer in a wrap. He acted towards his son in the same way he had acted the first time. Then he put his tongue into his mouth; it seemed as if he was feeding him milk or honey. Then he said, ‘Talk O’ my son!’ The blessed infant repeated the same words as before and send a blessing to all Imams until his father. Then he said, ‘*In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate*’ and recited this verse,

﴿وَنُرِيدُ أَنْ نَمُنَّ عَلَى الَّذِينَ اسْتُضِعُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَنَجْعَلَهُمْ أَئِمَّةً وَنَجْعَلَهُمُ الْوَارِثِينَ
* وَنُكَفِّرَنَّ لَهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَنُرِي فِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامَانَ وَجُنُودَهُمَا مِنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا
يَحْذَرُونَ﴾

*And we desire to confer kindness upon those who have been en-
feebled on earth and make them Imams and make them heirs and
give them power on earth and show Pharaoh and Hāmān and their
armies from them what they feared to happen to them.”(Quran,
28:5-6*



The Birth of Imam Mahdi from the Viewpoint of Sunni Scholars

Due to the widely related and authentic traditions narrated from the Prophet, all Islamic scholars, whether Shiite or Sunni, are unanimous in believing that Imam Mahdi will indeed appear, reform the world and destroy all forms of oppression. Hence, all Muslims have faith in it and consider it to be an inseparable part of their religion. Yet, All Shiite scholars, without any exception, believe that Imam Mahdi has already been born and is living in the present time. But, many Sunni scholars say that he shall be born in the future. However, some of them have related the event of the birth of Imam Mahdi in their books. For instance:



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(1) Muhammad bin Talhah Shāfē'ī writes, “Abu al-Qāsim Muhammad bin al-Hassan (Imam Mahdi) was born in the year 258 A.H. (873 A.D.) in Samarra. His father’s name was Hassan. Among the titles [of this last Imam] are al-Hujjah (a proof from Allah), al-Khalaf al-Sālih (the righteous offspring) and al-Muntazhar (the awaited one).” Following this statement, he has related several traditions on the subject of Mahdi, and concluded his statement by saying, “These hadith-reports confirm the existence of Imam Hassan al-‘Askarī’s son, who is in concealment and will appear later.” (*Matālib al-Su’ūl (1287 A.H. edition), p. 89*).

(2) Muhammad bin Yūsuf, following his entry on the death of Imam Hassan al-‘Askarī, says, “He did not have any child except Muhammad. It is said that he is the same as the Awaited Imam (whose title is Mahdi).” (*Kifāyat al-Tālib, p. 312*).

(3) **Ibn Sabbāgh Mālikī** writes, “Section Twelve, on the life of Abū al-Qāsim Muhammad, al-Hujjah, al-Khalaf al-Sālih, the son of Abū Muhammad al-Hassan (the eleventh Imam). He is the twelfth Imam of the Shia.” Then he records the history of the Imam and relates some traditions about him.

(*Al-Fusūl al-Muhimmah (Second edition)*, p. 273 and 286).

(4) **Sibt bin Jūzī**, after writing his account about the life of Imam Hassan al-‘Askarī, says, “His son’s name is Muhammad, and his patronymic is Abu ‘Abdullah and Abū al-Qāsim. He is the Proof of Allah’s existence, the Master of the Age, the Qāim, and the Muntazhar. The Imamate has come to an end with him.”

(*Tadhkirah Khawās al-Ummah*, p. 363).

(5) **Shablanjī** in the book entitled *Nūr al-Absār*, writes, “Muhammad is the son of Hassan al-‘Askarī. His mother was a slave-girl by the name of Narjis. His cognomen is Abū al-Qāsim. The Twelver Shia knows him as al-Hujjah, al-Mahdi, al-Khalaf al-Sālih, al-Qāim, al-Muntazar, and the Master of the Age...”

(*Nūr al-Absār (Cairo edition)*, p. 342).

(6) **Ibn Hajar**, following the biography of Imam Hassan al-‘Askarī, writes, “He has not left a son except Abū al-Qāsim, who is known as Muhammad and al-Hujjah. That boy was five years old when his father passed away.”

(*Al-Sawāiq al-Muhriqah*, p. 206).

(7) **Muhammad Amin al-Baghdādī** writes, “Muhammad, who is also known as Mahdi, was five years old at the time of his father’s demise.”

(*Sabāik al-Dhahab*, p. 78).

(8) **Mīr Khawand** writes, “Muhammad was the son of Hassan. His cognomen is Abū al-Qāsim. The Imamiyyah acknowledge that he is the Hujjah, the Qāim, and the Mahdi.”

(*Rawdāt al-Safā*, vol. 3, p. 143).

(9) **Sha’rānī** says, “Mahdi is the son of Imam Hassan al-‘Askarī. He was born on the fifteenth night of Sha’bān, 255 A.H. He is alive and will remain so until he will emerge with Jesus. Now it is 957 A.H. He is, thus, 703 years old.”

(*Al-Yawāqīt wa al-Jawāhir (1351 A.H. edition)*, vol. 2, p. 143).

(10) **Sha’rānī**, quoting Ibn ‘Arabī’s *Futūhāt Makkīyyah*, section 366, writes, “When the earth will be filled with tyranny and injustice, Mahdi will rise and will fill the earth with justice and equity. He is one of the descendants of the Prophet and from the line of Fatima. He is from the descendants of Imam Hussain, and his father is Imam Hassan al-‘Askarī,...”

(*Al-Yawāqīt wa al-Jawāhir (1351 A.H. edition)*, vol. 2, p. 143).

(11) **Khājah Parsā** in his book *Fasl al-Khitāb* writes: “Muhammad, the son of Hassan al-‘Askarī, was born on the fifteenth night of Sha’bān, 255 A.H. (870 A.D.) His mother’s name was Narjis. His father passed away when he was five years of age. From that time until now he is in occultation. He is the awaited Imam of the Shia. His existence is well accepted among his companions, trusted associates, and family...”

(*As cited in Yanābī’ al-Mawaddah*, vol. 2, p. 126).

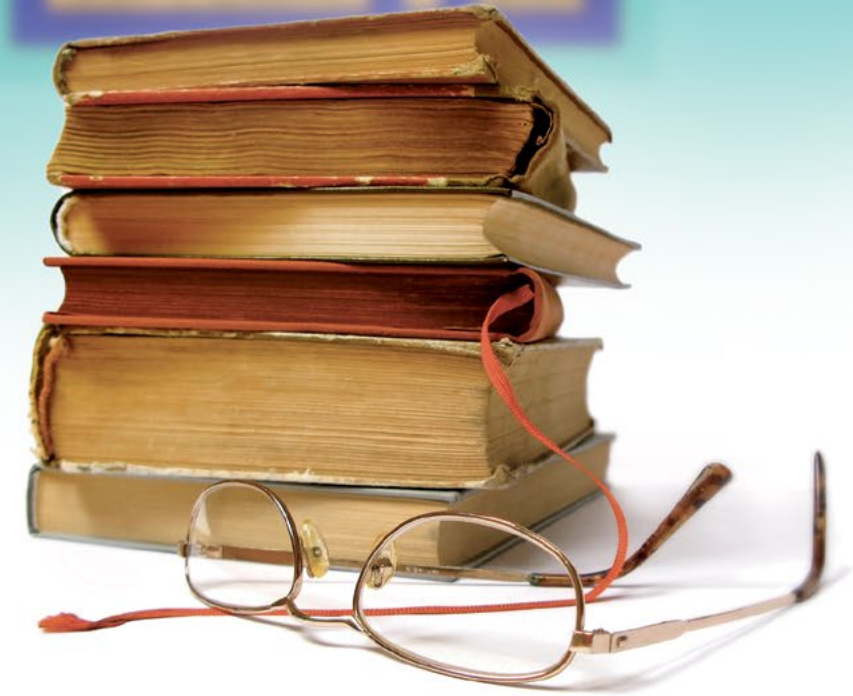
(12) **Abū al-Fallāh al-Hanbalī** says, “Muhammad is the son of Hassan al-‘Askarī... His cognomen is Abū al-Qāsim and the Shia knows him as al-Khalaf al-Sālih, al-Hujjah, al-Mahdi, al-Muntazhar, and Sāhib al-Zamān (the Master of the Age.)”
(*Shazarāt al-Zahab (Beirut edition) vol. 2, p. 141*).

(13) **Muhammad bin ‘Ali al-Hamaw** says, “Abū al-Qāsim Muhammad al-Muntazhar was born in the year 259 A.H. (874 A.D) in Samarra.”
(*Tā’rikh mansūrī, a microfilm copy of the Moscow manuscript folio number 114*).

In short, besides all these above mentioned Sunni scholars numerous others have recorded the birth of Imam Hassan al-‘Askari’s son. What is important is that many of them confess that the cognomen or the title of the mentioned son is Mahdi. Add to it that many of them confess that he is the Promised Savior who will emerge in a day.

(See the references compiled in *Kashf al-Astār* by Hussain bin Muhammad Taqī al-Nūrī and *Kifāyat al-muwahhidīn* by Tabarsī, especially volume 2).

Source: “*Imam al-Mahdi, The Just Leader of Humanity*”





Muslim's Duties at the Time of Imam Mahdi's Disappearance

One of the issues that the believers in Imam Mahdi would like to understand during the time of his Major Occultation, is to take cognizance of the tasks that are assigned to them during this period. It is totally clear that a loyal expectant awaiting the Imam and looking forward to the great universal peacemaker must also show his or her expectation and readiness in beliefs, thoughts, and actions. It is not enough to make just an assertion of being a real expectant without acting in accordance with it. When one awaits someone, all his behavior indicates that he is waiting. For instance, if a person is waiting for a dear guest, he cleans the house, makes the living room tidy, and wears his formal clothes. Such a person



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can claim to be waiting for a respected guest truly. But someone who has neither arranged the house nor prepared the living room, does not dressed neatly, no one believes him at all if he claims to be awaiting a guest. Hence, for the first step of being a good *Muntazir*, it seems to be required to briefly enumerate a few of the duties of those who await Imam Mahdi and prepared for his advent:

1-Obtaining a proper cognizance of the Imam of the Age

According to the Hadith of "the Death of Ignorance"¹ the prophet Muhammad warned people of any time saying,

1. A period of time before the advent of Islam is called "the Age of Ignorance" since people in that era were deprived of moralities and ethical values and used to behave inhumanely.



«مَنْ مَاتَ وَلَمْ يَعْرِفْ إِمَامَ زَمَانِهِ مَاتَ مِيتَةً جَاهِلِيَّةً»¹؛

“Whoever dies while he does not recognize the Imam of his time, his death is like the death of those who had died at the Age of Ignorance”.

Based on this narration and some other similar Hadiths², we have to realize who this Imam is. People have to know him since it is so important that if people do not recognize him, they would die like an ignorant man who died before the advent of Islam.

Confirming this vital factor, it is quoted from Imam Husayn (the third Imam of Shia) to have said,

«...أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ جَلَّ ذِكْرُهُ مَا خَلَقَ الْعِبَادَ إِلَّا لِيَعْرِفُوهُ فَإِذَا عَرَفُوهُ عَبَدُوهُ فَإِذَا عَبَدُوهُ اسْتَعْنُوا بِعِبَادَتِهِ عَنِ عِبَادَةِ مَنْ سِوَاهُ. فَقَالَ لَهُ رَجُلٌ يَا بَنَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ يَا أَبِي أَنْتَ وَ أُمِّي فَمَا مَعْرِفَةُ اللَّهِ؟ قَالَ: مَعْرِفَةُ أَهْلِ كُلِّ زَمَانٍ إِمَامُهُمُ الَّذِي يَجِبُ عَلَيْهِمْ طَاعَتُهُ»³

“...O people! Allah the Exalted did not create servants unless they know Him and if they know Him, they worship Him, and then through worshiping Him, they become needless of worshiping others. A man asked the Imam, ‘O the Son of the Prophet! May my parents be at your ransom, what is the knowledge about Allah?’ The Imam replied: ‘It is the knowledge of the people of any time about their Imam, the Imam whose obedience is obligatory on them.’”

Paying attention to the contents of several supplications recom-

1. Kamāl al-Dīn wa Tamām al-Ni`mah, vol. 2, p. 409.

2. See Sahīh, by Muslim, vol. 6, p. 22, the book of al-Emārah; Sahīh, by Bukhārī, vol. 8, p. 87, the book of al-Fitan; Musnad, by Ahmad, vol. 1, p. 416; Al-Muṣṭadrak ‘Ala al-Sahīhayn, vol. 1, p. 77; Rabī’ al-Abrār, vol. 4, p. 221; Musnad, by Ahmad, vol. 3, p. 446; Al-Masāil al-Khamsūn, p. 374, issue no. 47; Kanz al-‘Ummāl, vol. 6, p. 65.

3. Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 5, p. 312.

mended to be read in the time of Imam Mahdi’s disappearance, we can find the importance of gaining knowledge about Imam Mahdi. It is said in one of these famous supplicatory prayers,

«اللَّهُمَّ عَرِّفْنِي نَفْسَكَ فَإِنَّكَ إِنْ لَمْ تُعَرِّفْنِي نَفْسَكَ لَمْ أَعْرِفْ نَبِيَّكَ اللَّهُمَّ عَرِّفْنِي رَسُولَكَ فَإِنَّكَ إِنْ لَمْ تُعَرِّفْنِي رَسُولَكَ لَمْ أَعْرِفْ حُجَّتَكَ اللَّهُمَّ عَرِّفْنِي حُجَّتَكَ فَإِنَّكَ إِنْ لَمْ تُعَرِّفْنِي حُجَّتَكَ ضَلَلْتُ عَنْ دِينِي»⁴

‘O Allah! Endow Your recognition to me because if I do not recognize You then I will never be able to recognize Your Apostle (the prophet Muhammad).

O Allah! Endow the recognition of Your Apostle on me because if You do not confer the recognition of Your Apostle then I will never be able to recognize Your (Divine) Proof (Imam Mahdi).

O Allah! Endow the recognition of Your (Divine) Proof upon me because if You do not bestow the recognition of Your (Divine) Proof I may deviate from my religion.”

2- Taking Recourse to the Guardianship of Ahl al-Bayt

There are two kinds of guardianship for Ahl al-Bayt: Creational and Legislative.

Creational guardianship means that by the permission and the will of Allah, the Infallible Imams have discretionary power and have an influence on the world and its items. The prophets’ miracles and the extraordinary acts of some spiritually great people are some kinds of that.

Legislative guardianship means to guard and superintend the community and the believers. Each of the Infallible Imams, in his era,

4. Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 8, p. 368 & vol. 32, p. 321.

is a guardian and custodian of the society and guides people legislatively.

One of the important duties of the expectant people (those who wait for the Imam to come) during the time of occultation is to hold firmly to the rope of the guardianship of Ahl al-Bayt. It means that they should act in accordance to the Sunnah (the tradition) of the Prophet which was bestowed to his Household after the demise of the Prophet.

It is narrated from Imam Kāzhim (the seventh Imam of the Shia) to have said,

«طُوبَى لَشِيعَتِنَا الْمُتَمَسِّكِينَ بِحَبْلِنا فِي غَيْبَةِ قائِمِنَا»¹

“Blessed are our Shias who resort to the rope of our guardianship during the occultation of our Upriser.”

In addition, Imam Sādiq (the sixth Imam) states,

«يَأْتِي عَلَى النَّاسِ زَمَانٌ يَغِيبُ عَنْهُمْ إِمَامُهُمْ...»²

“There will come a time wherein the Imam absents from his followers.”

Then Zurārah asked, “What will people do in that time?” The Imam replied:

«يَتَمَسَّكُونَ بِالْأَمْرِ الَّذِي هُمْ عَلَيْهِ حَتَّى يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ»³

“Resort to the thing [the guardianship] which they believe in, until [the matter] becomes clarified for them.”

1. Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 51, p. 151.

2. Kamāl al-Dīn, vol. 2, p. 351.

3. Kamāl al-Dīn, vol. 2, p. 350.

3- Waiting for the Faraj (the appearance of Imam Mahdi) uninterruptedly

In the occultation era, one of the important duties of people is to wait for a relief that will be received by the appearance of the Imam.

The prophet Muhammad says,

«أَفْضَلُ أَعْمَالِ أُمَّتِي إِنتِظَارُ الْفَرَجِ»¹

“The most perfect deed of my nation is to wait for the Faraj (appearance of the twelfth Imam).”

Hadiths about waiting for the Faraj of Imam of the Age deal extensively with these matters: Being patient in this waiting period and hoping to receive the rewards of the patients. Here we point to some of these examples:

A: Imam Sādiq quotes from the prophet Muhammad to have said to his companions,

«سَيَأْتِي قَوْمٌ مِنْ بَعْدِكُمْ الرَّجُلُ الْوَاحِدُ مِنْهُمْ لَهُ أَجْرُ خَمْسِينَ مِنْكُمْ. قَالُوا: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ نَحْنُ كُنَّا مَعَكَ بِبَدْرٍ وَأُحُدٍ وَحُنَيْنٍ وَنَزَلْنَا الْقُرْآنَ! فَقَالَ: إِنَّكُمْ لَوْ تَحَمَّلُوا لِمَا حُمِّلُوا لَمْ تَضْبِرُوا وَصَبَرْتُمْ»²

“After you, a nation will come in which one person of them will be rewarded as much as 50 people of you. They [the Prophet’s companions] said: O the prophet of Allah! We accompanied you in wars of Badr, Uhud, and Hunayn. Also, some verses of the Quran have been revealed about us! The Prophet answered: ‘If you face the painful events that they will face, verily you do not tolerate them.’”

1. Kamāl al-Dīn, vol. 2, p. 644; Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 75, p. 208.

2. Al-Kāfī, vol. 8, p. 37; Mikyāl al-Makārim, vol. 2, p. 290.

B: Imam Ridā (the eighth Imam) said,

«ما أَحْسَنَ الصَّبْرَ وَانْتِظَارَ الْفَرَجِ»¹

“How good are patience and waiting for the Faraj.”

C: Imam Husayn says,

«...لَهُ غَيْبَةٌ يَرْتَدُّ فِيهَا أَقْوَامٌ وَيَنْبُتُ فِيهَا عَلَى الدِّينِ آخَرُونَ فَيُؤَدُّونَ وَيُقَالُ لَهُمْ مَتَى هَذَا الْوَعْدُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ أَمَا إِنَّ الصَّابِرَ فِي غَيْبَتِهِ عَلَى الْأَذَى وَالتَّكْذِيبِ بِمَنْزِلَةِ الْمُجَاهِدِ بِالسَّيْفِ بَيْنَ يَدَيِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ»²

“...He [Imam Mahdi] will absent for a while. In that time, some groups of people abandon their religion and some others persevere with it and they will be offended. They will be questioned: ‘When will this promise (the appearance of the Imam) be fulfilled if you are truthful?’ Undoubtedly, in the time of occultation, the one who tolerates the nuisance and whose belief is denied (by the opponents) is like a Muslim who fights with a sword in the presence of the prophet Mohammad.”

4. Doing self-refinement; individual and social reform

One of the important duties of the one who waits for the right government to be established is to be righteous and have a fine and praiseworthy manner. Imam Sādiq says accordingly,

«مَنْ سَرَّهُ أَنْ يَكُونَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ الْقَائِمِ فَلْيَنْتَظِرْ وَلْيَعْمَلْ بِالْوَرَعِ وَمَحَاسِنِ الْأَخْلَاقِ وَهُوَ مُنْتَظِرٌ»³

“The one who desires to be among Imam Mahdi’s companions has to wait [for the Imam’s appearance]; and behave piously and mor-

1. Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 52, p. 129.

2. Kamāl al-Dīn wa Tamām al-Niḥmah, vol. 1, p. 437.

3. Kamāl al-Dīn, vol. 1, p. 437.

ally while he waits.”

Furthermore, Imam Sādiq states,

«إِنَّ لِصَاحِبِ هَذَا الْأَمْرِ غَيْبَةً فَلْيَتَّقِ اللَّهَ عَبْدٌ وَ لِيَتَمَسَّكَ بِدِينِهِ»¹

“Surely, the Possessor of this Matter (Imam Mahdi) has an absence. So, a servant of Allah has to be pious and hold on to his religion firmly.”

On the other hand, another significant duty of people in the occultation era is to have the spirit of rectifying society. Every person must feel responsible for every member of his community and try to reform and rectify people in order to make the community and people ready to accept the universal government of Imam Mahdi. Reforming the society can be fulfilled through enjoining the right and prohibiting the wrong, and this deed is emphasized greatly in Islam.

About the duties of the Shias in the occultation era, Imam Bāqir (the fifth Imam) says,

«لِيُعِنَ قَوِيكُمْ ضَعِيفُكُمْ، وَ لِيُعْطِفَ غَنِيكُمْ عَلَى فَقِيرِكُمْ، وَ لِيُنْصَحَ الرَّجُلُ أَخَاهُ كَنَصِيحَتِهِ لِنَفْسِهِ»²

“Mighty people among you ought to help the weak; rich ones must show kindness to the poor. Everyone ought to be benevolent to his religious brother just as he is benevolent to himself.”

Allah, the Almighty, also states in the Qur’an,

﴿كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ...﴾³

1. Al-Kāfi, vol. 2, p. 132.

2. Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 52, p. 123.

3. The Quran, 3:110.

“You are the best nation ever brought forth to men; you enjoy what is right and prohibit the wrong.”

Clarifying this issue, Imam Sādiq says,

«...إِنَّ الْأَمْرَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَالنَّهْيَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ سَبِيلُ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَمِنْهَا جُ الصُّلْحَاءِ فَرِيضَةٌ عَظِيمَةٌ بِهَا تُقَامُ الْفَرَائِضُ وَتَأْمَنُ الْمَذَاهِبُ وَتَحُلُ الْمَكَاسِبُ وَتُرَدُّ الْمَظَالِمُ وَتُعْمَرُ الْأَرْضُ وَيُنْتَصَفُ مِنَ الْأَعْدَاءِ وَيَسْتَقِيمُ الْأَمْرُ»¹

“...Undoubtedly, enjoining the right and prohibiting the wrong, are the path of the prophets and the method of the righteous, and among the momentous and obligatory duties. Through this duty, other obligatory duties are done, paths are made immune, incomes became legal and permissible, the right of the oppressed is taken from the oppressors, the earth is reclaimed, vengeance is taken from the enemies, and the affairs (of people) are organized.”

Yes. If all Muslims consider themselves responsible for enjoining the right and prohibiting the wrong in Islamic society, preliminary steps to attain an ideal and desirable Mahdist society are taken.

5- Remembering Imam Mahdi

One of the important duties of the Shias and those who love the Imam is to always remember him and try not to forget him. The Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali states,

«مَنْ أَحَبَّ شَيْئًا لَهَجَ بِذِكْرِهِ»²

“Whoever loves something is engaged in remembering it.”

Imam Kāzhim states about Shias’ heart to heart connection with Imam of the Age during his occultation,

1. Al-Kāfī, vol. 5, p. 56; Al-Tahdhīb, vol. 6, p. 180; Tuḥaf al-’Uqūl, p. 227.

2. Ghurar al-Hikam, vol. 1, p. 231.

«... يَغِيبُ عَنِ أَبْصَارِ النَّاسِ شَخْصُهُ وَلَا يَغِيبُ عَنِ قُلُوبِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ذِكْرُهُ»¹

“...He is concealed out of sight, but the memory of him does not hide from the heart of the believers.”

Also, we say to Imam Mahdi in the supplication of Nudbah,

«عَزِيزٌ عَلَيَّ أَنْ أَرَى الْخَلْقَ وَلَا تُرَى وَلَا أَسْمَعُ لَكَ حَسِيْسًا وَلَا نَجْوَى ... هَلْ مِنْ مُعِينٍ فَأُطِيلَ مَعَهُ الْغَوِيلَ وَالْبُكَاءَ، هَلْ مِنْ جَزُوعٍ فَأَسَاعِدَ جَزَعَهُ إِذَا خَلَا، هَلْ قَدِيتُ عَيْنٌ فَسَاعِدْتَهَا عَيْنِي عَلَى الْقَدَى، هَلْ إِلَيْكَ يَا بَنَ أَحْمَدَ سَبِيلٌ فَتُلْقَى، هَلْ يَتَّصِلُ يَوْمَنَا مِنْكَ بَعْدَ فَنَحْطِي؟»²

“It is very hard for me that I can see all the creatures (and people) but I can neither see you nor can I hear any whisper from you... Is there any helper to accompany me on protracting lament and bewail? Is there a wailer and I assist him in wailing when he is alone? Are there any thorn in one’s eyes then I help those eyes to have a long weep? O’ the Ahmad’s son! Is there any way to meet you? Does our time attach to your time in future then we can meet you and get pleasure from this visiting?”

In the same way, the Imam of the Age also does not neglect his Shias. It means that if we connect ourselves with the Imam and remember him, we will surely receive the Imam’s favor and kindness as this issue is referred to in the letter written by the Imam to Sheikh al-Mufīd,

«إِنَّا غَيْرُ مُهْمَلِينَ لِمُرَاعَاتِكُمْ، وَلَا نَاسِينَ لِذِكْرِكُمْ، وَ لَوْلَا ذَلِكَ لَنَزَلَ بِكُمْ اللَّأْوَاءُ وَأَصْطَلَمَكُمُ الْأَعْدَاءُ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ جَلَّ جَلَالُهُ.»³

“Surely, we do not neglect your conditions nor are we forgetful of

1. Kamāl al-Dīn, vol. 2, p. 368.

2. Refer to Mafātīh al-Jinān.

3. Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 53, p. 175.

your remembrance. If it was not the case, troubles would descend on you and enemies would exterminate you. Thus, be wary of God the Exalted the Glorified.”

6. Expressing affection to Imam Mahdi

When people love someone, their beloved one’s memory is always present in their minds. This causes their life to have similarities with their beloved ones. If their beloved one is a transcendent person, this relation between the lover and the beloved would set the ground for their spiritual progress and growth, and if their beloved one is a mean and wicked one, this relationship would lead to their degradation and falling.

Because of this, we are highly recommended to love the Prophet and his Household. Due to the importance of this affection, Allah regards the affection towards the descendants of the Prophet as the reward for the mission of the Prophet and states,

﴿قُلْ لَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا إِلَّا الْمَوَدَّةَ فِي الْقُرْبَىٰ﴾¹

“Say, ‘I do not ask you any reward for it (my mission) except the love of [my] relatives.’”

Moreover, the holy Prophet states,

﴿لَا يُؤْمِنُ عَبْدٌ حَتَّىٰ أَحَبَّ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ نَفْسِهِ وَتَكُونَ عَثْرَتِي إِلَيْهِ أَعَزَّ مِنْ عَثْرَتِهِ وَيَكُونَ أَهْلِي أَحَبَّ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ أَهْلِهِ وَتَكُونَ ذَاتِي أَحَبَّ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ ذَاتِهِ﴾²
 “A servant [of Allah] does not have [a real] faith unless he loves me better than himself and loves my family and household better than his, and loves me more than himself.”

1. The Quran, 42:23.

2. Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 27, p. 75; Al-Amālī, p. 86.

Imam Hassan Askarī (the 11th Imam) stated addressing Imam Mahdi,

﴿وَاعْلَمَ أَنَّ قُلُوبَ أَهْلِ الطَّاعَةِ وَالْإِخْلَاصِ نَزَعَتْ إِلَيْكَ مِثْلَ الطَّيْرِ إِذَا أَمَّتْ أَوْكَارَهَا﴾¹

“And know that the hearts of the people of servitude and devotion are flying towards you, as a bird is flying towards its nest.”

This does not mean that this love and affection are one-sided, rather the infallible Imams have expressed love and affection towards the real Shias and share in their happiness and grief.

Imam Ridā (the eighth Imam) described an Imam by saying,

﴿الْإِمَامُ الْأَمِينُ الرَّفِيقُ وَالْوَلَدُ الشَّفِيقُ وَالْأَخُ الشَّقِيقُ وَكَالْأُمُّ الْبُرَّةَ بِالْوَلَدِ الصَّغِيرِ﴾²

“An Imam is (like) a trustworthy friend and a compassionate child (to his parents) and a sympathetic brother and is like a mother in relation to her young child.”

Moreover, in another narration, Imam Mahdi has expressed his affection to the Shias and has declared that he would be very sad and sorry for their slips,

﴿...إِنَّهُ أَنْهَىٰ إِلَيَّ ارْتِيَابَ جَمَاعَةٍ مِنْكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَمَا دَخَلَهُمْ مِنَ الشَّكِّ وَالْحَيْرَةِ فِي وِلَاةِ أُمُورِهِمْ فَعَمَّنَا ذَلِكَ لَكُمْ لَا لَنَا وَسَاءَ مَا فِيكُمْ لَا فِينَا...﴾³

“...I became aware of a hesitation that a group of you [the Shias] have in religion and doubts and uncertainty with respect to their Religious Guardian of Affairs, so we became sad for you, not for ourselves and we felt sorry for you not for ourselves...”

1. Kamāl al-Dīn vol. 2, p. 348.

2. Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 25, p. 123.

3. Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 53, p. 178; Al-Ihtijāj, p. 466.

7. Considering Imam Mahdi's sublime state and keeping his dignity

One of the important duties of the Shias is to consider the Imam's eminent state and respect him. Imam Mahdi is the last one in the rank of the infallible Imams. The Imams possess the highest spiritual level after the rank of the prophethood. Their level is much higher than ordinary people.

Imam Ali states,

«لَا يُقَاسُ بِآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ) مِنْ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ أَحَدٌ وَلَا يُسَوَّى بِهِمْ مَنْ جَرَتْ نِعْمَتُهُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَبَدًا، هُمْ أَسَاسُ الدِّينِ وَعِمَادُ الْبَقِيَّةِ»¹

“Nobody of this community (the Ummah of the Prophet) can be compared with the descendants of Muhammad. Someone to whom the blessings of Muhammad's descendants have been given, should not be considered equal to them. They are the basis of the religion and pillars of certainty.”

Also, there are numerous narrations mentioning the magnitude of Imam Mahdi's state. The Holy Prophet, explaining Imam Mahdi's spiritual level in Heaven, says,

«الْمَهْدِيُّ طَاوُوسٌ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ عَلَيْهِ جَلَابِيبُ التُّورِ»²

“Mahdi is the peacock among the people of Heaven and is surrounded by halos of light.”

Moreover, the Prophet states,

«نَحْنُ وَوَلَدُ عَبْدِ الْمُطَّلِبِ سَادَةُ الْجَنَّةِ أَنَا وَحَمْرَةَ وَجَعْفَرٌ وَعَلِيٌّ وَالْحَسَنُ وَالْحُسَيْنُ وَالْمَهْدِيُّ»³

1. Nahj al-Balāgha, Ceremony 2.

2. Muntakhab al-Athar, p. 147; Yanābīa' al-Mawaddah, vol. 3, p. 164.

3. Kitāb al-Ghaybah, by Sheikh al-Tūsī, p. 113; Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 51, p. 65.



“We – the seven descendants of Abd al-Muttalib- are the masters of people of the Heaven; I and Hamzah and Ali and Ja'far and Hassan and Husayn and Mahdi.”

8. Praying for the advent of the Imam of the Age

When a believer prays, he cuts off his hope from everyone other than Allah and stretches his or her needy arms toward the Needless Allah, and just asks Him to untangle his difficulties. Thus, one of the duties of those who wait for the appearance of the Imam is to pray and to sincerely ask Allah to hasten the advent of him. Even the Imam of the Age, himself, has recommended the Shias to pray for his advent. For instance, he has expressed at the end of his letter to Ishāq b. Ya'qūb,

«أَكْتَرُوا الدُّعَاءَ بِتَعْجِيلِ الْفَرَجِ فَإِنَّ ذَلِكَ فَرْجُكُمْ»¹

“Pray for the hastening of the advent too much, indeed, therein lies your relief.”

According to the Infallible Imams' narrations, these prayers are

1. Kamāl al-Dīn, vol. 2, P. 361.

one of the factors for reaching salvation in the period of the Major Occultation.

Imam Hassan al-'Askarī says in this regard,

«وَاللَّهِ لَيَغِيْبَنَّ غَيْبَةً لَا يَنْجُو فِيهَا مِنْ الْهَلَكَةِ إِلَّا مَنْ تَبَتَّهُ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ عَلَى الْقَوْلِ بِإِمَامَتِهِ وَوَقَّعَهُ فِيهَا لِلدُّعَاءِ بِتَعْجِيلِ فَرَجِهِ»¹

“By Allah, he [Imam Mahdi] has a [prolonged] occultation in which no one will be saved from falling astray, but the one who, by the help of Allah the Exalted the Glorified, has stayed steady on his belief in the Imamate of his and is made successful by Allah in praying for hastening to the appearance of the Imam.”

Moreover, there are lots of recommendations about the time and the way of praying expressed by the religious leaders; for example, it is mentioned in *Minhāj al-'Ārifīn*: “It is recommended that individual says after performing the Morning Prayer, one hundred times,

«اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَجِّلْ فَرَجَهُمْ»²

“O Allah! Send peace to Muhammad and his descendants, and hasten their relief.”

Also, there are some prayers dedicated specifically to the Imam of the Age; the most famous of which are: Nudbah³ and 'Ahd⁴ supplications.

Prayer is a beautiful portrayal of the way we devote ourselves to the Imam of our time during the period of his occultation. Though the Imam is not in our physical company, we have an opportunity to

1. Kamāl al-Dīn, vol. 2, P. 384.

2. Minhāj al-'Ārifīn, P. 108.

3. Al-Mazār al-kabīr, P. 573; Misbāh al-Zāyir, P. 446.

4. Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 53, p. 95.

connect with him on a spiritual level and demonstrating our commitment to him by reciting the powerful words of the supplications. Of course, it is clear that a real prayer is not done by just reciting the words by tongue, but rather the purpose of a prayer is to attain a deep attention by the heart to the meaning and the concept of a supplication, and notice that the matter of religion, piety, and true belief in the Imam and his occultation is a difficult task in this period which is undertaken by people of certainty and steadfastness.

9. Being in the state of permanent readiness

True permanent readiness is the most important duty in the period of Occultation. There are lots of Hadiths about it in Islamic narrative books.

Imam Bāqir states under the last verse of chapter Āli 'Imrān,

«اصْبِرُوا عَلَى أَدَاءِ الْفَرَائِضِ وَصَابِرُوا عَدُوَّكُمْ وَرَابِطُوا إِمَامَكُمْ الْمُنتَظَرَ»¹

“Have patience in performing the [religious] obligations, help each other against enemies, and always maintain your readiness to help the expected Imam”.

Unlike the concept of some people who think that the Arabic word “*Rābitū*” means trying to making relationship and to meet the Imam, this word means maintaining readiness for the appearance of the Imam.

Now, in the end, it should be reminded that according to Islamic narrations, many subject matters have been expressed about the duties of the Shias in the period of occultation; even in some books, like *Mikyāl al-Makārim*, eighty duties have been enumerated for those who wait for Imam Mahdi's advent.²

1. Al-Ghaybah, by Nu'mānī, P. 199.

2. Mikyāl al-Makārim, vol. 2, P. 104.



The Merits and the Rituals of Mid-Sha‘bān

One of the most important religious occasions among Muslims is the 15th of the month of Sh‘abān. Mid-Sh‘abān has a special significance for Muslims throughout the world and is honored and celebrated in many Islamic countries. On this day, a number of rallies and conferences are held across Muslim countries by both Shia and Sunni scholars to commemorate this auspicious occasion. All Muslims believe that one of the significant features of this night is that it is the most honorable night after Laylat al-Qadr in the month of Ramadān (The Night of Destiny). The fifteenth night of Sh‘abān is also known as:



“Undoubtedly, in the time of occultation, the one who tolerates the nuisance and whose belief is denied (by the opponents) is like a Muslim who fights with a sword in the presence of the prophet Mohammad.”

1. Laylat al-Mubārah (The blessed night which is full of unseen benefits);
2. Laylat al-Rahmah (The night of mercy and grace);
3. Laylat al-Ssakk (The night on which matters are determined for the year);
4. Laylat al-Barāt (The night of freedom from Fire in which the penitence of people is more accepted).

There are some certain Hadiths proving that it is a meritorious night in which the people of the earth are attended by special Divine mercy, therefore this night should be spent in total submission to Allah Almighty, and one should refrain from all those activities, which may displease Allah. Although it is always incumbent upon every Muslim to abstain from sins, yet this abstinence becomes more necessary in such nights because committing sins in this





night means to deal the divine blessings with disobedience and defiance. However, many Muslims, respect the night and stay vigilant whispering to Allah and performing religious practices. Imam Ali relates from the Prophet to have said,

«إِذَا كَانَتْ لَيْلَةُ النُّصْفِ مِنْ شَعْبَانَ فَقُومُوا لَيْلَهَا وَصُومُوا نَهَارَهَا...»¹

“When it is the fifteenth night of Sh‘abān then remain busy in act of worship during the night and fast for the day...”

In another Hadith, Imam Sādiq (the sixth Imam of Shia) narrates from his father Imam Bāqir who was asked about the merits of the night of the fifteenth day of Sha‘bān and he said,

1. Al-Sunan, by Ibn-e Mājih, vol. 2, p. 421.

«هِيَ أَفْضَلُ لَيْلَةٍ بَعْدَ لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ فِيهَا يَمْنَحُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى الْعِبَادَ فَضْلَهُ وَيَغْفِرُ لَهُمْ بِمَنْنِهِ فَاجْتَهِدُوا فِي الْقُرْبَةِ إِلَى اللَّهِ فِيهَا فَإِنَّهَا لَيْلَةٌ إِلَى اللَّهِ تَعَالَى عَلَيَّ نَفْسِهِ أَنْ لَا يَرُدَّ سَائِلًا لَهُ فِيهَا مَا لَمْ يَسْأَلْ مَعْصِيَةً وَإِنَّهَا اللَّيْلَةُ الَّتِي جَعَلَهَا اللَّهُ لَنَا أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ بِإِزَاءِ مَا جَعَلَ لَيْلَةَ الْقَدْرِ لِنَبِيِّنَا ص فَاجْتَهِدُوا فِي الدُّعَاءِ وَالتَّنَائِي عَلَى اللَّهِ تَعَالَى عَزَّ وَجَلَّ...»¹

“It is the most favorable night after the Qadr 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

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

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...

In addition, the occasion of Mid-Sha‘bān is marked by devotion especially by the Shia for the auspicious birthday of Imam Mahdi on this night. According to several historical reports, Imam Mahdi (the twelfth Imam of Shia) was born on the daybreak of Sha‘bān 15th, 255 A.H. (August 2nd, 869 CE), in Samarra, a city of Iraq.

In fact, celebration of Mid-Sha‘bān with illumination and decoration of streets is the biggest celebration held by the Shias. In Iran, the birthday ceremony of Imam Mahdi is the biggest festival of lights and happiness across the country. Keeping up with the tradition, people distribute cookies, sweets, and juice on the streets greeting the passer-by by congratulations. Also, many people go to the city of Qum and take part in Jamkarān Mosque, where, according to Shia narratives, built upon Imam Mahdi’s order; and in Iraq, people go to Karbalā and visit the holy shrine of Imam Husayn (the third Imam of Shia). Sha‘bān 15th is an official holiday in Iran and is called the “World Day of the downtrodden people” referring to the divine promise in the Quran where Allah the Omnipotence says,

﴿وَنُرِيدُ أَنْ نَمُنَّ عَلَى الَّذِينَ اسْتُضِعُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَنَجْعَلَهُمْ الْأَوْرَثِينَ﴾¹

*And We wanted to bestow a favor upon those who were oppressed”
“in the land and make them leaders and make them the inheritors*

1. The Quran, 28:5.

As a matter of fact, there are two outstanding points in this Shiite commemoration of Mid-Sha‘bān: One is the issue of raising hope on this day since humanity is waiting for a Savior who was born on this day. This is a source of hope. Another is that in the world which will be created after the appearance of that great Imam, the most prominent characteristic is justice. The believers in Imam Mahdi and his adherents celebrate his birthday to show their anticipation and preparation for coming the last savior who will bring the east and west of the world to justice and by his powerful hand annihilate demons, infidelity, and irreligiosity. Also, to show their desire for the universal peace and widespread prosperity that will be achieved by a divine great man who will put an end to the long struggle between the truth and the falsehood.





Teenager's Corner

A Sparrow and the Fire

Once upon a time, someone saw a sparrow who approached the fire hastily and returned frequently! It was asked, "Why are you doing so?"

The sparrow replied, "There is a fountain nearby and I fill my tip with water and pour it over the fire."

The sparrow was answered sarcastically; "The volume of the fire is too high compared to the water you get! And this amount of water is useless for sure."

The sparrow said, "I may not be able to put out the fire, but if Allah asks me, 'What did you do when your friend was burning in the fire?' I will answer, 'I employed my utmost capability!'"

The point of this story:

Do we also do everything we can to help our Imam?

During the time of Imam Mahdi's disappearance, we must do our utmost effort to satisfy him and to help him come sooner. Let me describe it more. As you know, Imam Mahdi who is hidden from our vision will come in a day. He will appear when he has enough followers and when the society can accept him. Therefore, those who truly wait for him should correct themselves and try to purify the society they live in. They should recommend others to goodness and forbid them from doing evil actions.

We should not think how a young boy or girl like us can help such a great man come sooner. Because if we do our best, when Allah asks us, "What did you do for your Imam?" we can proudly say, "We did everything we could."





The Villagers and the Well

In the distant past, there was a village with only one well of drinking water. One day a dog fell into the well and died. As a result, the water of the well was no longer usable.

The villagers became worried and went to a wise man to find out the solution. The wise man told them to remove one hundred buckets of water from the well and throw it away then the water will be clean. The villagers took a hundred buckets of water, but there was not any change; the water was dirty and stinky as before. Again, they went to the wise man. He suggested that another one hundred buckets should be drawn.

The villagers did exactly, but the water remained dirty. According to the wise man, for the third time, the villagers took a hundred buckets of water, but the problem was not resolved at all.

“How is it possible that so much water is drawn from the well, but the water is still contaminated?!” the wise man said. But, suddenly as if the wise man realized the point, asked them in surprise, “Did you remove the dog’s carcass from the well before drawing the three hundred buckets of water?” They answered, “No, you told us just to draw the water, not the dog’s carcass”.

The point of this story:

Concerning this story, we realize that for solving the problems, we must first discover the main cause and the root of the problem and then try to eliminate it. Otherwise our efforts will not be effective. Likewise, Imam Mahdi loves the one who has a heart free of sins; because his pure love does not enter into the sinful and defiled hearts. So, if we want the Imam of the Age to pay attention to us, we must first abandon the bad deeds that lead us away from him. These bad actions are just like the carcass of the dog mentioned in the story which does not allow the love and devotion of the Imam which is like the pure water to flow into our hearts and souls.

On this matter, it is quoted from Imam Mahdi to have said,

«فَانَا يُحِيطُ عَلْمُنَا بِأَنْبَاءِكُمْ وَلَا يَعْرُبُ عَنَّا شَيْءٌ مِنْ أَخْبَارِكُمْ»¹

“Indeed, our knowledge encompasses your news (actions, incidents, affairs of life, and even intentions). And nothing out of your news remains hidden from us.”

Also, it is reported from Imam Mahdi to have said,

«... فَمَا يَحْبِسُنَا عَنْهُمْ إِلَّا مَا يَتَّصِلُ بِنَا مِمَّا نَكْرَهُهُ وَلَا نُؤْتِرُهُ مِنْهُمْ...»²

“... So, there is nothing keeps us hidden from them (the Muslims) except the matters that reach us about them that do not please us and which we don’t expect from them...”

1. Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 53, p. 175.

2. Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 53, p. 177.

