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Imam al-Hadi in Samarra’

Imam ‘Ali al-Hadi (a.s.) lived most of his life in Surra Man Ra’a (Samarra’). The Abbasid government imposed on him house arrest. He was like a prisoner. The policemen and investigators of the Abbasids surrounded his house watching all his movements and everyone associating with him or carrying money to him.

He suffered the severest political pressure during the reign of al-Mutawakkil, the Abbasid tyrant, who saved no effort in oppressing the Alawids. During his dark rule, the Alawids faced different kinds of misfortunes and disasters. We shall talk about that in details through the book.

Anyhow, we talk in brief about the Imam (a.s.) when he was in Yathrib (Medina) and the reasons that forced him to leave it to Surra Man Ra’a and what happened to him with al-Mutawakkil.

In Yathrib

Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) lived in Yathrib, his birthplace and the country of his fathers. He spent his time in spreading knowledge and morals and in educating people the Islamic principles. He took the Prophet’s Mosque as school for that. Ulama’, jurisprudents, and narrators surrounded him taking from the springs of his knowledge that he acquired from his fathers who had illuminated the life of man with the light of knowledge and faith.

As he was a fertile source for the intellectual, scientific life in Yathrib, he was the only source that provided students with money and material means besides providing the poor and needy with what they needed. Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) did not only help or pay charity to the people of Yathrib, but his kindness included all sides of their lives. He comforted them in sorrow and in joy. He visited the sick, participated in funerals, showed kindness to the young and old, and cared for widows and orphans. He spared no good and favor unless he did to them. In return, they were very loyal to him. They surrounded him with their hearts and feelings and made him dwell in the deep of their souls.

Betraying the Imam

Some irreligious persons, who envied people of noble birth, bore grudge against Imam Abul Hasan (a.s.). The virtues and high position Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) had among people displeased those persons. From the bitterest enemies of Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) was Abdullah bin Muhammad who had been appointed by al-Mutawakkil as the wali over Yathrib. This man often intended to harm and trouble Imam al-Hadi (a.s.). He informed al-Mutawakkil against the Imam.

He told the caliph that the gathering of the public around Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) caused the state dangers, and that great monies came to him from the different countries of the Islamic nation that weapons might be bought with those monies to stand against the Abbasid state, and there was a possibility of a revolt to overthrow the Abbasid government.

He asked al-Mutawakkil to arrest Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) lest he would be powerful enough that the government would not be able to resist him. Al-Mutawakkil was upset and worried and he informed his viziers of the matter.

Frustrating the plot

When Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) knew about the plot of this villain, he feared that al-Mutawakkil might face him with severe procedures for he knew that al-Mutawakkil was one of the bitterest enemies to the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.).

Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) wrote a letter to al-Mutawakkil complaining at the grudge and the bad treatment of his wali against him (Imam al-Hadi) and informed him of the falseness of his talebearing. Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) assured al-Mutawakkil that he did not intend any harm against him and did never think of revolting against his rule.

Al-Mutawakkil was certain of the truthfulness of Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) and his innocence of all that which was imputed to him.

The letter of al-Mutawakkil to Imam al-Hadi

Al-Mutawakkil sent a letter to Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) replying to his letter and he deposed his official the villain wali of Yathrib. He invited the Imam to come to Surra Man Ra'a to be under house arrest so that he would be under his watch. Here is the text of the letter:

“Amir’ul- Mu’minin (al-Mutawakkil) knows your position, regards your kinship, considers what you and your family need to manage your affairs, fix your glory and their glory, and assure safety for you and for them. He just wants, out of that, the contentment of Allah and to carry out his duty towards you and towards them.

Therefore, Amir'ul- Mu'minin thought to depose Abdullah bin Muhammad from his post in the city of the messenger of Allah (SwT) for what you have mentioned that he ignored your right, slighted your high position, and ascribed to you that which Amir'ul- Mu'minin is certain you are innocent of and he believes your good will. Amir'ul- Mu'minin appointed Muhammad bin al-FadhI and ordered him to respect and glorify you, and to follow your orders and opinions, to be close to Allah and to Amir'ul- Mu'minin through that. Amir'ul- Mu'minin longs to you, and likes to meet and look at you. Would you please hurry to visit and reside with him as you like?

You are free to bring from your family, followers, and servants whom you like. You travel when you want, come when you want, and move however you want. And if you like that Yahya bin Harthama the mawla of Amir'ul- Mu'minin and the soldiers with him to accompany you in your travel, and it is up to you.

We have ordered him to obey you. Ask Allah to choose what is best for you until you will come to Amir'ul- Mu'minin. None of his (Amir'ul- Mu'minin al-Mutawakkil's) brothers, his children, family, and close companions is more preferred to you near him, or of closer position to him than you, and he is not kinder, more loyal, or more faithful towards any of them than towards you. The peace, mercy, and blessings of Allah be on you.'¹

The worry of the people of Medina

Al-Mutawakkil ordered Yahya bin Harthama to travel to Yathrib to bring Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) to Surra Man Ra'a and to investigate the accusation claiming that Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) had intended to resist the rule and revolt against the government. Al-Mutawakkil gave the letter, which he had written to Imam al-Hadi (a.s.), to Yahya.

Yahya traveled to Yathrib. When the people of Yathrib knew about his task, they worried and feared too much for Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) from the violence of the tyrant against him. They loved Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) so much, for he kept to the mosque of the Prophet (S) feeding their ulama' with his knowledge, giving charities to their poor, and he had no any tendency towards the worldly life.² Yahya began calming down people's worry and fear and swore to them that he had not been ordered to do the Imam any wrong. They believed him and calmed down.

Searching the Imam's house

Yahya and his men searched the house of Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) thoroughly but did not find anything save copies of the Holy Qur'an and books of du'a. it appeared that what was imputed to the Imam (that his house was full of weapons and money) was false.³

Sending the Imam to Surra Man Ra'a

Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) was forced to leave Yathrib to Samarra'. His family accompanied him in the travel. Yahya, who admired the guidance and piety of Imam al-Hadi (a.s.), himself served the Imam during the travel. The caravan covered the desert until it arrived in Baghdad.

Al-Ya'qubi said that when Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) arrived in al-Yasiriyya, Isaaq bin Ibrahim received him and saw how people were eager to meet and sit with the Imam. So he was taken to Baghdad in the night.⁴

Yahya went to visit the governor of Baghdad Isaaq bin Ibrahim adh-Dhahiri and informed him of the matter. Isaaq said to him, 'This man (Imam al-Hadi) is the son of the messenger of Allah (SwT) and you know that al-Mutawakkil is deviant. If you inform al-Mutawakkil of a word against the Imam, he will kill him, and then the Prophet (S) will be your opponent on the Day of Resurrection.'

Yahya said, 'By Allah, I did not know from him (Imam al-Hadi) what I deny, and did not see from him except good.'

They left Baghdad towards Samarra'. When they arrived in Samarra', Yahya visited Waseef at-Turki who was from the prominent statesmen. He informed him of the arrival of the Imam. Waseef warned him from saying to al-Mutawakkil anything that might harm the Imam. He said to him, 'O Yahya, by Allah, if one hair falls from him (Imam al-Hadi), no one will be responsible for it except you.'

Yahya was astonished at the agreement of Isaaq and Waseef on recommending him of keeping the Imam safe.⁵

In Khan as-Sa'alik

Al-Mutawakkil ordered his men to put Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) up in Khan as-Sa'alik⁶ to dishonor and degrade him before the public. Salih bin Sa'eed visited him in the khan and became uneasy for seeing him in that place. He said to the Imam, 'May I die for you! They wanted to put out your light and to degrade you, so they put you up in this worst khan (caravansary); Khan as-Sa'alik.'

Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) looked at him with kindness and sympathy. He thanked him for his feelings, comforted his pain and uneasiness, and showed him from the miracles that Allah had provided His prophets and guardians with,⁷ and so Salih calmed down and became satisfied.

The meeting between the Imam and al-Mutawakkil

Yahya told al-Mutawakkil about the good conducts, asceticism, and piety of Imam al-Hadi (a.s.). He told him that he searched his house but did not find in it save copies of the Qur'an and books of du'a and that

he was innocent of all that which was imputed to him. These words removed the rage and anger of al-Mutawakkil against the Imam.

Al-Mutawakkil ordered his men to allow Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) to come in to him. When Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) came in, al-Mutawakkil welcomed him with much respect and gave him good presents.^{[8](#)}

He obliged him to remain in Surra Man Ra'a to be under watch. When al-Mutawakkil house-arrested Imam al-Hadi (a.s.), the Imam bought a house from Dalil bin Ya'qub an-Nasrani and lived with his family in it. He lived in this house until he died and was buried in it.^{[9](#)}

Al-Mutawakkil refers to the Imam's fatwas

Al-Mutawakkil found it inevitable to refer to Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) in the questions he faced. He preferred his fatwas to the fatwas of all the jurisprudents of his age. Here are some of the questions that al-Mutawakkil referred to Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) for their answers:

1. Al-Mutawakkil had a Christian clerk who was preferable by him. Because he loved him too much he surnamed him as Abu Noah. Some other clerks denied that and said that it was not permissible to surname an unbeliever. Al-Mutawakkil asked the jurisprudents to give him a fatwa on that but they did not agree on one fatwa. Some of them said it was permissible and others said it was not. He sent the question to Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) who wrote to him with this answer,

Perdition overtake both hands of Abu Lahab, and he will perish.^{[10](#)}

This answer was the most wonderful answer in the field of fatwas. Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) quoted this Qur'anic verse that declared the permissibility of surnaming the unbelievers. Al-Mutawakkil followed this fatwa of Imam al-Hadi (a.s.).^{[11](#)}

2. Once, al-Mutawakkil became ill and he vowed that if Allah healed him, he would pay many dinars as charity. When he restored to health, he gathered the jurisprudents and asked them about the amount of the money he should pay as charity to fulfill his vow, but they disagreed on that.

Then, he asked Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) about that. Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) said that al-Mutawakkil had to pay eighty-three dinars. The jurisprudents were astonished at that and asked al-Mutawakkil, 'Where from did he get this answer?' Al-Mutawakkil wrote to Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) asking him about the source of his answer, and Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) replied, 'Allah the Almighty says,

Allah has given you victory in many battlefields.^{[12](#)}

All our ancestors narrated that the battlefields were eighty-three.'^{[13](#)} He said in the end of the answer, 'Whatever more good Amir'ul- Mu'minin does shall be more useful and rewardable to him in this life and in the afterlife.'^{[14](#)}

3. One day, a Christian man, who had committed adultery with a Muslim woman, was brought before al-Mutawakkil. When al-Mutawakkil wanted to execute the legal penalty on the Christian, he turned Muslim. Yahya bin Aktham said, 'His faith (in Islam) cancelled his polytheism and sin.' Another jurisprudent said, 'He is subjected to three punishments (by the whip).' Other jurisprudents said different things. Al-Mutawakkil asked his men to take a fatwa from Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) about this matter.

Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) replied, 'He should be whipped until he dies.' Yahya and the other jurisprudents denied this fatwa of Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) and said that he took this fatwa neither from the Book nor from the Sunna. Al-Mutawakkil wrote to Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) saying, 'The jurisprudents of Muslims denied this fatwa and said that neither the Book nor the Sunna had said so. Would you please show us why you have imposed on him the whipping until he would die?'

Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) replied by quoting this Qur'anic verse,

But when they saw Our punishment, they said: We believe in Allah alone and we deny what we used to associate with Him. But their belief was not going to profit them when they had seen Our punishment. [15](#)

Al-Mutawakkil took the fatwa of Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) and ordered the man to be whipped until he died.' [16](#)

Al-Mutawakkil and poets

Once, al-Mutawakkil asked 'Ali bin al-Jahm (the poet) about the best of poets and he mentioned to him some poets of the pre-Islamic and the Islamic ages, but al-Mutawakkil paid no attention and turned to Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) asking him about the best of poets. Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) said, 'Al-Humani where he says:

"A group from Quraysh vied in glory with us.

When we disputed,

the call of cells judged to us against them with what we liked.

You find us silent while the witness of our preference to them

is of orotund voice in every mosque.

Ahmad, the messenger of Allah is our grandfather,

And we are his sons like shining stars."

Al-Mutawakkil turned to Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) and asked him, 'O Abul Hasan, what is the call of cells?'

Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) said, 'It is: "I witness that there is no god but Allah, and witness that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah". [17](#) Is Muhammad *my* grandfather or yours?'

Al-Mutawakkil became angry and he said with a trembling tone, 'He is your grandfather and we do not deny that.' [18](#)

Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) left and left sorrow eroding the heart of the tyrant who found no way to answer the

Imam.

Al-Mutawakkil invites ibn as-Sikkit to try the Imam

Al-Mutawakkil asked the prominent scholar Ya'qub bin Isaaq known as ibn as-Sikkit to ask Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) about a complicated, ambiguous question that he (the Imam) might not find an answer and then al-Mutawakkil would have an excuse to defame and degrade him. Ibn as-Sikkit prepared a question to try Imam al-Hadi (a.s.).

A scientific conference was held in the Abbasid Palace where prominent ulama', jurisprudents, and theologians attended. At the head of the conference was al-Mutawakkil. Ibn as-Sikkit advanced and asked Imam al-Hadi (a.s.), "Why Allah sent Moses with the rod and white hand, sent Jesus with the healing of the blind and leprous and giving life to the dead, and sent Muhammad with the Qur'an and sword?"

Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) showed the percept behind all that by saying, 'Allah sent Moses with the rod and white hand in a time where the predominant thing among people was magic. Therefore, Moses came to them with that and defeated their magic, dazed them, and proved authority over them. And Allah sent Jesus Christ with the healing of the blind and leprous and the giving of life to the dead by the will of Allah in a time where the predominant thing among people was medicine.

Therefore, Jesus Christ came to them with that and defeated and dazed them. And Allah sent Muhammad with the Qur'an and sword in a time where the predominant things among people were sword and poetry. Therefore, Muhammad came to them with the Qur'an and sword and dazed their poetry, defeated their sword, and proved authority over them.'

Allah the Almighty has assisted his prophets with clear signs and dazing miracles that human beings were unable to make like them. Those signs and miracles fitted the ages when the prophets were deputed. Allah had given His messenger Moses the rod that changed into a huge adder eating the ropes and rods which the magicians of the Pharaoh changed to snakes.

The magicians of that age, who had reached the top of magic, could not invalidate the miracle of Moses or do even a little like it. Allah had also given him the white hand that was like the sun in its light and brightness. The magicians were unable to do something like this miracle which was the evidence on the truthfulness of Moses.

Allah had given His messenger Jesus the son of Mary the miracle of healing the blind and leprous and giving life to the dead in the time where medicine had reached the top of progress and development; nevertheless, people could not do anything like this miracle which dazed minds. Allah had given Jesus this miracle to be a sign on his truthfulness.

Allah had deputed Muhammad to be the last of His prophets and assisted him by the Qur'an which

falsehood would not come to it from before it nor from behind it and which was the supreme miracle in its eloquence, rhetoric, excellent style, and wonderful expression in the time when the Arabs had reached the top of eloquence and rhetoric; but nevertheless, they were unable to keep pace with it or compose something like it or like a little of it. Therefore, the Qur'an was the sign that proved the prophethood of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and upon his progeny).

Allah the Almighty had assisted the Prophet (S) with the defeating sword that was the sword of Amir'ul-Mu'minin 'Ali (a.s.) which harvested the heads of polytheists and unbelievers. The brave of Arabs were coward before this sword and they said that fleeing from battle is shame except from the sword of 'Ali. The sword of 'Ali (a.s.) was like a thunderbolt that annihilated the masses of polytheists, separated the parties of unbelievers, gave the victory to Islam, and made Muslims mighty.

After this answer of Imam al-Hadi (a.s.), ibn as-Sikkit said to him, 'What is the argument then?'

Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) said, 'Reason! By it one, who fabricates lies against Allah, is known and denied.'

Reason is the judge that distinguishes the truthful from liars, and its judgment is the final decision.

When ibn as-Sikkit failed to go on with the Imam, he said, 'What does ibn as-Sikkit have in arguing with him (with the Imam)? He (ibn as-Sikkit) is but a man of grammar, poetry, and linguistics!'

The questions of Yahya bin Aktham

Yahya bin Aktham offered some questions, which he had prepared and written down before, to Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) in order to try him. Here are the questions with their answers not literally mentioned:

1. Allah says in His Book:

One who had the knowledge of the Book said: I will bring it to you in the twinkling of an eye. [19](#)

The asker was Prophet Solomon and the asked one was Asif. Was Solomon, who was a prophet, in need of the knowledge of Asif?

The answer: Prophet Solomon (a.s.) was not unable to know what Asif knew, but he wanted to make his nation of the jinn and mankind know that the authority after him would be Asif. It was from the knowledge of Solomon (a.s.) that he had taught to Asif lest his nation would disagree on his Imamate and guardianship after him, and to confirm the proof before people.

2. Allah says:

And he raised his parents upon the throne and they fell down in prostration before him. [20](#)

How did Ya'qub (Prophet Jacob) and his sons prostrate themselves before Yusuf (Prophet Joseph) while they were prophets?

The answer: the prostration of Ya'qub before his son Yusuf was not for Yusuf, but all that from Ya'qub and his sons was obedience to Allah the Almighty and as greeting to Yusuf, as the prostration of the angels before Adam was not for Adam. Ya'qub and his sons, and Yusuf with them, prostrated themselves to thank Allah the Almighty for their reuniting. Do you not see that he said when thanking Allah at that time,

My Lord! Thou hast given me of the kingdom...[21](#)

3. Allah says:

But if you are in doubt as to what We have revealed to you, ask those who read the Book.[22](#)

If the addressee was the Prophet (S), then he was in doubt, but if the addressee was other than the Prophet (S), then to whom the Book had been revealed?

The answer: the addressee was the Prophet (S) and he was not in doubt about what Allah had revealed but the ignorant said: why did Allah not deputed a prophet from the angels? Why did He not differentiate between him (the Prophet) and the rest of people in eating, drinking, and walking in markets? So Allah revealed to his Prophet,

And We have not sent before you any messengers but they most surely ate food and went about in the markets.[23](#)

He said to the Prophet (S): ask, in the presence of the ignorant, those who recite the Book: has Allah sent a prophet before you that he did not eat food and walk in the markets? O Muhammad, they are examples for you. Allah said, (***if you are in doubt...***) though there was no doubt but just for showing the truth as He said,

But whoever disputes with you in this matter after what has come to you of knowledge, then say: Come let us call our sons and your sons and our women and your women and ourselves and yourselves, then let us be earnest in prayer, and pray for the curse of Allah on the liars.[24](#)

If he said: "Come so that we make the curse of Allah on you", they would not respond. Allah knew that His Prophet would carry out His mission and knew that he was truthful and not a liar but He wanted to confirm the situation when saying

if you are in doubt...

4. Allah says:

And if all the trees in the earth were pens, and the sea, with seven more seas to help it, (were ink), the words of Allah could not be exhausted.[25](#)

What are these seas and where are they?

The answer: Yes, it is so. If all the trees of the world were pens and the seas were ink supplied with other seven seas until the earth would explode into springs as it exploded in the flood, the words of Allah would not come to an end. The seas are: Ayn al-Kibrit, Ayn al-Yemen, Ayn Barhut, Ayn Tabariya, geyser of Masidan called Lisan, an African geyser called Saylan, and Ayn Bahuran. And we (the Ahlul Bayt) are the words that our virtues cannot be perceived or counted.

5. Allah says:

And therein is all that souls desire and eyes find sweet.[26](#)

The soul of Adam desired to eat from the wheat and he ate. Then, why was he punished?

The answer: in the Paradise there are all kinds of foods, drinks, and entertainments that souls desire and eyes delight in and Allah has permitted all that for Adam. But the tree that Allah has forbidden Adam and his wife from eating from its fruit was the tree of envy. Allah asked them both not to look at those whom Allah has preferred to them and at His creatures with the eye of envy, but Adam forgot and could not help himself before that tree.

6. How is the witness of one woman permitted whereas Allah says:

And call to witness two just men among you [27](#)

The answer: the woman whose witness is permitted though alone is a midwife but with satisfaction; otherwise no less than two women who stand instead of one man. If the woman was alone, her witness is accepted with her taking an oath.

7. ‘Ali (a.s.) judged that a hermaphrodite was to be looked at its organ of urination to see if its urination was like that of man, then a hermaphrodite was to be considered as a man and if the urination was like that of woman then the hermaphrodite was to be considered as a woman.

Who can look at the hermaphrodite? For if the looker was a man, the hermaphrodite might be a woman, and if the looker was a woman, the hermaphrodite might be a man which would be not permissible. And what about the inheritance of a hermaphrodite?

The answer: The case of a hermaphrodite is as ‘Ali said. A hermaphrodite inherits due to its organ of urination. Some fair and just men hold mirrors in their hands and a hermaphrodite stands naked behind them. The men look in the mirrors and judge whether the hermaphrodite is a man or a woman.

8. The owner of a herd of sheep saw the shepherd copulate with a ewe. When the shepherd saw the owner, he released the ewe to go in the middle of the herd. How can that ewe be known to be slaughtered? Is it permissible to eat its meat or not?

The answer: if the owner, who saw the shepherd commit that sin, knew that ewe, he should slaughter

and burn it, and if not, he should divide the sheep into two divisions and cast lots between the two divisions. If the lots fell on one division, the other division should be excluded, and so on until two sheep would remain. The lots would be cast between the two sheep and the one, which the lots fell on, should be slaughtered (and burned) and the rest of sheep would be preserved.[28](#)

10. Why, in the Fajr (dawn) Prayer, the suras are recited loudly though it is from the prayers of day whereas it is the prayers of night that are recited loudly?

The answer: as for the Fajr Prayer, it is recited loudly because the Prophet (S) offered it in the darkness of (the end of) night, and so it is recited in the night.

11. (Imam) 'Ali said to ibn Jarmuz, 'Tell the killer of the son of Safiyyah that he shall be in the Fire.'[29](#) Why did he (Imam 'Ali) not kill him (ibn Jarmuz) though he was the Imam?

The answer: 'Ali said that after the saying of the messenger of Allah. Amir'ul- Mu'minin did not kill him in Basra (on the day of the Camel) because he knew that he would be killed in the battle of an-Nahrawan.

12. Tell me why 'Ali killed the people of (the battle of) Siffin and ordered his men to kill them whether they were attacking or fleeing and he finished off the wounded, but on the day of al-Jamal (the camel) he did not kill a flier or a wounded one and did not order his men to do that. Rather, he said, 'Whoever keeps to his house will be safe.' Why did he do that? If the first decision was right, so the second would be wrong.

The answer: The Imam (leader) of the people of the Camel was killed and they had no leader to refer to. They went back to their homes without fighting, deceiving, or spying. They were satisfied (after the defeat) not to be fought. But the people of Siffin belonged to a prepared company with a leader supplying them with spears, armors, and swords, caring for them, giving them good gifts, preparing great monies for them, visiting their sick, curing their wounded, giving sumpters to their footers, helping their needy, and returning them to the fight.

The matter with the people of Basra (who fought in the battle of al-Jamal) was to stop fighting them when they laid down their arms, but the matter with the people of Siffin was to follow after their fleers and finish off their wounded. Without Amir'ul- Mu'minin and his judgments towards the people of Siffin and the people of al-Jamal, the judgment towards the disobedient of monotheists would not be known. Whoever denied that would be subjected to the sword.

13. If a man confesses, against himself, that he has committed sodomy, shall he be punished or pardoned?

The answer: if a man confesses against himself by himself with no evidence discovered by others against him, the Imam, who has been appointed by Allah, has the right to punish in behalf of Allah, and

he also has the right to pardon in behalf of Allah. Have you not heard the saying of Allah,

This is Our free gift, therefore give freely or withhold, without reckoning.[30](#)

Allah began with the giving first and then the withholding.

We answered all what you asked us about. Know that!’

Yahya was astonished at the answers of Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) to these ambiguous questions and he turned to al-Mutawakkil and advised him saying, ‘We do not like you to ask this man about anything after my questions to him...In showing his knowledge there will be strengthening to ar-Rafidha (the Shi’a).’[31](#)

Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) was one of the great men of knowledge in Islam. He was the heir of the knowledge and sciences of his fathers who were the leaders of the intellectual life in Islam.

Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) replied to the ambiguous questions of ibn as-Sikkit immediately and as soon as he looked at them. This showed the great scientific ability which was one of the eminent aspects of the great personality of the Imam (a.s.).

His visiting to the tomb of Amir’ul- Mu’minin

In the first year when Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) came to Surra Man Ra’a, he visited the tomb of his grandfather Amir’ul- Mu’minin ‘Ali (a.s.). His visit fell on the day of Eid al-Ghadir. Two ziyaras to his grandfather Amir’ul- Mu’minin were transmitted from him. Here are they:

1. “Peace be on you, the guardian of Allah. I witness that you are the first who were wronged and your right was extorted, but you were patient and you expected until certainty came to you. I witness that you met Allah and you were a martyr.

May Allah torture your killers with all kinds of torment and repeat punishment for them. I came to you acknowledging your right, knowing your position, and opposing your enemies and opposing whoever wronged you. I shall meet my Lord on that insha’Allah... O guardian of Allah, I have many faults; please intercede for me with your Lord, O my master for you have a high position near Allah, great rank, and intercession. Allah has said,

They do not intercede except for him whom He approves.[32](#)” [33](#)

2. There is another ziyara that was narrated from Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) to his grandfather Amir’ul- Mu’minin ‘Ali (a.s.). It is one of the most wonderful ziyaras of the infallible Imams (a.s.) in its high meanings and in mentioning some events that took place in the First Islamic Age. Here we mention a little part of this ziyara:

“I witness that there is no god but Allah the Only with no partner, as He has witnessed for Himself, and

the angels, and people of understanding from His creation have witnessed. There is no god but He, the Mighty, the Wise. And I witness that Muhammad is His slave and pleased messenger whom He sent with guidance and the religion of truth, that He might cause it to prevail over all religions, though the polytheists may be averse.

O Allah, make the best and most perfect of Your blessings, the most growing and prevailing of Your favors, and the purest of Your compliments be on our master Muhammad Your slave, messenger, confidant, guardian, pleased, best friend, the choice of Your creation, Your pure, trustee, the witness to You, the guide to You, the revealer of Your mission, the loyal to You, the struggler in Your way, the defender of Your religion, the declarer of Your proofs, the guided to Your obedience, the guider to Your pleasedness, the container of Your revelation, the keeper of Your covenant, the achiever of Your charge, the assisted with the illuminating light, the directed by the pleased errand, the infallible against every error and slip, the exalted above every error, the sent with the best of religions and beliefs...

O Allah, bless Your guardian, the guard of Your religion, the executor of justice after Your Prophet, 'Ali bin Abu Talib the commander of the believers, the Imam of the pious, the master of guardians...the successor of Your Prophet over the whole people, his guardian in life and religion, the great truthful, the distinguisher between the halal and the haram, the supporter of Islam, the destroyer of idles, the assistant and defender of religion, the protector and satisfier of the Prophet...

O Allah, show us the right path so that we follow it, and the way of guidance so that we walk in it, and change our faults into right, and make not our hearts to deviate after You have guided us aright, and grant us from You mercy O You Who are called out of Your generosity al-Wahhab (the Giver), and grant us good in this world and good in the hereafter, and save us from the chastisement of the Fire if we deserve it, O You the Most Merciful of the Merciful!³⁴

Invoking the shrine of Imam Husayn

Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) became ill and he saw that the best cure for him was to invoke the tomb of the master of the youth of Paradise and one of the two grandsons of mercy (the Prophet); Imam Husayn (a.s.) whom no one resorted to his tomb unless Allah relieved him from the pains and misfortunes of this world.

Abu Hashim al-Ja'fari narrated the resorting of Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) in many narrations. Here we mention them:

1. Abu Hashim al-Ja'fari said, 'Muhammad bin Abu Hamza and I visited Abul Hasan (al-Hadi) when he was ill. He said to us, 'Send some men to al-Ha'ir (Kerbala; where Imam al-Husayn (a.s.) was buried) at my expense!' When we left him, Muhammad bin Hamza said to me, 'Does he send us to al-Ha'ir while he himself has the same position of the one (Imam Husayn) who is in a-Ha'ir?!'

Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) had the same position his grandfather Imam Husayn (a.s.) had. He was an infallible Imam like him that Allah had kept away the uncleanness from him and purified him a thorough purifying. Abu Hashim was affected by the saying of Muhammad bin Hamza and so he went to Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) and told him that. Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) said to him, 'It is not so. Allah has some places that He likes to be worshipped in, and al-Ha'ir of al-Husayn is one of those places.'[35](#)

2. Abu Hashim Said, "I visited Abul Hasan 'Ali bin Muhammad when he was ill. He said to me, 'O Abu Hashim, send a man from our mawali to al-Ha'ir to pray Allah for me!'

When Abu Hashim left, he met 'Ali bin Bilal in the street. He told him about the Imam and asked him to travel to Kerbala to pray for the Imam. 'Ali was astonished and he said, 'I hear and obey! But I say: he is better than al-Ha'ir.'[36](#) He has the same position of that one (Imam al-Husayn) in al-Ha'ir, and his praying for himself is better than my praying for him.'

Abu Hashim went and told Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) what 'Ali bin Bilal said. Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) said, 'The messenger of Allah (SwT) was better than the House (the Kaaba) and the (black) Rock, but he circumambulated the House and kissed the Rock. Allah the Almighty has places that He likes to be worshipped in, and He responds to whoever prays Him there. Al-Ha'ir is one of those places...'[37](#)

In another tradition Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) said, 'Allah the Almighty has assigned from His earth some places called al-Marhumat (mercified). He likes to be invoked in them and He responds.'[38](#)

3. Abu Hashim said, 'Abul Hasan (a.s.), when he was ill, sent for me and for Muhammad bin Hamza, who preceded me to him. He told me that Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) still said, 'Send (someone) to al-Ha'ir!' I said to Muhammad, 'Did you not say to him that I would go to al-Ha'ir?' I said to the Imam, 'May I die for you, I go to al-Ha'ir.' He said, 'Think of that!' Then he said, 'Muhammad has no secret from Zayd bin 'Ali (he does not believe in the doctrine of Zayd) and I do not want him to hear that.'

I mentioned that to 'Ali bin Bilal and he said, 'What shall he do with al-Ha'ir whereas he himself is al-Ha'ir?' I went to al-Askar (Samarra') and visited him (Imam al-Hadi). When I wanted to leave, he asked me to sit down. When I saw him feel at ease with me, I remembered the saying of 'Ali bin Bilal and mentioned it to him.

He said to me, 'You might say to him that the messenger of Allah (SwT) circumambulated the House and kissed the Rock, and the sanctity of the Prophet (S) and the believers is greater than the sanctity of the House. Allah ordered him (the Prophet) to stop at Arafa which is but a place that Allah likes to be mentioned in. So I like to be prayed for me where Allah likes to be called on. And al-Ha'ir is one of those places.'[39](#)

Imam al-Husayn (a.s.) is dear and beloved to Allah. He defended the religion of Allah by his life and blood and offered his children, family, and companions as pure sacrifices for the sake of Allah. He faced misfortunes and disasters that no reformer in the earth had ever faced.

Allah had endowed Imam Husayn (a.s.) with charismata that He had not endowed anyone of His guardians with except his grandfather (the Prophet) and father (Imam 'Ali). In this world Allah has given him dignity and honor that no man has ever been given. Allah has made his holy shrine as a resort for the yearning, and a shelter for the distressed, and honored the shrine by responding to the prayer under its dome, and in the afterworld he shall be an obeyed intercessor and Allah will endowed him with dignity and honor that no eye has ever seen and no ear has ever heard like it.

Breaking into the Imam's house

Some villains went to al-Mutawakkil and informed him against Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) claiming that he had books, arms, and monies and that he might revolt against the government of al-Mutawakkil, who became worried and terrified when hearing that. Al-Mutawakkil ordered some of his Turk policemen to attack the house of Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) in the night and arrest him. They attacked Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) unexpectedly and found him in a simple house wearing a garment of wool and there was nothing between him and the ground save a carpet of sand and pebbles while facing the qibla and reciting this saying of Allah,

Nay! do those who have wrought evil deeds think that We will make them like those who believe and do good that their life and their death shall be equal? Bad it is that they judge.[40](#)

They took him to al-Mutawakkil while he was in that state [41](#) that represented the asceticism of prophets and spirituality of apostles. Al-Mutawakkil was drunk at the table of wine. When he saw Imam al-Hadi (a.s.), he offered him a glass of wine, but Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) shouted at him, 'By Allah, it has never mixed with my blood and flesh at all.'

Al-Mutawakkil asked the Imam, 'Recite me some poetry!'

Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) said, 'I seldom recite poetry.'

Al-Mutawakkil insisted on him saying, 'You must recite me some poetry!'

Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) found himself obliged to recite some poetry, and so he recited the following verses that changed the ecstasy of al-Mutawakkil into sorrow and weeping,

"They were on the tops of mountains,

Guarded by strong, brave men, but those tops sufficed them not.

After glory, they were taken down from their positions,

and put into holes. How bad abode they dwelt in!

A crier called them after been buried:

Where are the thrones, crowns, and treasures?

Where are the faces that were at ease and luxury,

that curtains and screens were put before them?

The grave showed those faces where worms were fighting on them.

How long they ate and drank!

But after that long eating, they were eaten!”

Al-Mutawakkil was shaken and intoxication flew from his head. He began terribly crying. The attendants in the meeting feared for Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) that al-Mutawakkil might assault him and they thought that al-Mutawakkil would revenge on him.

Al-Mutawakkil ordered his men to take the glasses of wine away from the meeting. He turned to the pure Imam (a.s.) and said to him reverently, ‘O Abul Hasan, are you in debt?’

Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) said, ‘Yes, four thousand dinars.’

Al-Mutawakkil ordered four thousand dinars to be given to Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) and returned him back to his house with respect and honor. This event showed the jihad of Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) and his fixed situation towards that tyrant. He did not care for his rule and power. He preached him and warned him from the punishment of Allah and said to him (through poetry) that he would die and neither his armies nor his authority would save him from death, and that his delicate body would be food for worms in the grave. Certainly al-Mutawakkil had never heard such preaches before. Instead, he filled his ears with the voices of songsters and songstresses. And finally death came to him while he was between musicians and cups of wine, and the mention of Allah did not come to his mind throughout his life.

Al-Bathawi informs against the Imam

Historians said that one day al-Mutawakkil was afflicted with abscesses and he was about to die from that. Al-Fath bin Khaqan counseled him to send a messenger to Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) to tell him about his case that he might have some remedy. Al-Mutawakkil sent a messenger to Imam al-Hadi (a.s.), who prescribed a remedy for him. After using the remedy al-Mutawakkil was restored to health. When his mother was informed that he recovered, she sent Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) a pouch of ten thousand dinars and she sealed it with her seal. Muhammad bin al-Qassim al-Bathawi went to al-Mutawakkil and told him that money and arms were carried to the Imam.

Al-Mutawakkil was terrified and ordered Sa’eed the custodian to break into the house of Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) in the night and fetch all weapons and monies he might find there. Sa’eed went to the house of Imam al-Hadi (a.s.). He put a ladder and went up to the roof. It got too dark and Sa’eed did not know how to get to the yard of the house. While he was confused, he heard Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) saying to him, ‘O Sa’eed, stay as you are until we bring you a candle!’

He was given a candle and then he came down to the yard. He found Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) wearing a wool-garment and a wool cap, and saw a prayer-carpet on a mat. He searched the house but found nothing except that pouch and ten thousand dinars. He lifted the prayer-carpet of the Imam and found a sword. He took all that to al-Mutawakkil. When al-Mutawakkil saw the seal of his mother on the pouch, he sent for her and asked her about matter. She said to him that she had vowed to give a gift to Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) when al-Mutawakkil would recover from his illness, and said that when al-Mutawakkil

recovered, she carried out her vow.

Al-Mutawakkil felt shy and added another pouch of money to that pouch of his mother and ordered Sa'eed to take them to the Imam. He took them to the Imam and apologized to him. Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) replied to him by reciting this Qur'anic verse,

Those who do wrong will come to know by what a (great) reverse they will be overturned.[42](#)

The blockade against the Imam

Al-Mutawakkil imposed a serious economical blockade on Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) and imposed severe penalties on whoever sent legal dues or gifts to him. During the reign of al-Mutawakkil Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) was in serious hardship and difficulties. The believers refrained from giving him the legal dues as they refrained from visiting and having the honor of serving him for fear of the oppressive government.

Imprisoning the Imam

The tyrant ordered to arrest Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) and put him in prison. After some days in prison, Saqr bin Abu Dulaf came to visit him. The chamberlain, who knew him and knew that he was a Shi'a, received and asked him, 'What do you want and what for you have come?'

He said, 'I have come for good.'

The chamberlain said, 'You might have come to ask about your master!'

He said, 'My master is Amir'ul- Mu'minin (he meant al-Mutawakkil).'

The chamberlain smiled and said, 'Be silent! Your master is the truth (he meant Imam al-Hadi). Do not fear me! I am on your belief.'

Saqr said, 'Praise be to Allah!'

The chamberlain said, 'Do you want to see him?'

Saqr said, 'Yes, I do.'

The chamberlain said, 'Sit down here until the mailman comes out.'

When the mailman went out, the chamberlain said to his attendant, 'Take Saqr to the room where the Alawid is imprisoned and leave them alone!' When Saqr went into the cell, he saw Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) sit on a mat and before him there was a dug grave. Al-Mutawakkil had ordered this grave to be dug in order to frighten the Imam. Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) said to Saqr kindly and friendly, 'O Saqr, what made you come?'

Saqr said, 'I came to know your news.' Saqr began crying feeling pity and fear for the Imam. The Imam said to him, 'O Saqr, do not worry. They cannot harm us.'

Saqr calmed down and thanked Allah for that. Then he asked the Imam about some religious questions and the Imam answered his questions. Then he said farewell to the Imam and left.[43](#) It was no long after that when the Imam was set free.

A vain attempt to assassinate the Imam

Al-Mutawakkil was unable to bear Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) any more. It bothered him that people talked about the virtues, vast knowledge, piety, and asceticism of Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) and that the Shi'a believed in his Imamate and believed that he was worthier of the caliphate than him (al-Mutawakkil). Therefore, he tried to assassinate the Imam and get rid of him but however he failed to achieve his aim.

Al-Fadhl bin Ahmad al-Katib (the clerk) narrated that his father, who was the clerk of al-Mu'tazz, said, 'We were with al-Mu'tazz when one day we went to al-Mutawakkil who was sitting on his throne but very angry looking askance at his vizier al-Fath bin Khaqan and shouting, 'This is whom you said about what you said!'

Al-Fath tried to calm him down. He said to him, 'O Amir'ul- Mu'minin,⁴⁴ it was fabricated against him.' Al-Mutawakkil paid him no attention and said, 'By Allah, I will kill this...who fabricates and defame my rule.' He brought four men from the Khazar, who understood nothing, gave them arms and ordered them to kill Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) when he would come to him. He said angrily, 'By Allah, I will burn his body in fire after killing him.'

Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) came surrounded by the guards of the palace who glorified him by saying loudly "la ilaha illallah; there is no god but Allah" and "Allahu akbar; Allah is great". They said, 'This is the son of ar-Ridha.'

When al-Mutawakkil caught sight of him, he was affected by his solemnity and Allah cast terror into his heart. He jumped from his throne, received the Imam warmly, kissed him on the forehead, and said to him reverently, 'O my master, son of the messenger of Allah, the best of whom Allah has created, my cousin, my lord Abul Hasan...'

Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) advised and warned him of the punishment of Allah.

Al-Mutawakkil asked him, 'My master, why did you come at such a time?'

Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) said, 'Your messenger came to me saying; al-Mutawakkil sends for you.'

Al-Mutawakkil said, 'The son of...lied. My master, go back to where you have come from!'

Al-Mutawakkil turned towards his viziers and sons and said, 'Fath, Abdullah, Mu'tazz, escort your master!'

Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) left surrounded by a halo of reverence and glorification and the Khazars refrained from killing him when they saw his solemnity, the honoring of the guards, and the glorification of al-Mutawakkil towards him.⁴⁵ And thus the attempt of al-Mutawakkil failed.

Al-Mutawakkil despises the Imam

Envy filled the heart of al-Mutawakkil who followed all ways to degrade Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) and belittle his position that was exalted among the public. He wanted to belittle the Imam by making him go on foot before him so that people might disregard him, but his vizier counseled him to give up because that

would make the public blame and criticize him.

Al-Mutawakkil paid no attention to his vizier who counseled him again that he could order the officials and notables including the Imam to go on foot so that no one would think that the Imam alone was intended. Al-Mutawakkil responded to his vizier and ordered people to go on foot before him and they did. It was a very hot summer day. Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) oozed sweat. Zuraqa the chamberlain of al-Mutawakkil saw the Imam in that state. He came to him, seated him in a vestibule there, took out a handkerchief and began wiping the sweat of the Imam. He said to the Imam trying to comfort his pains,

‘Your cousin (al-Mutawakkil) did not intend you particularly.’

Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) looked at him and said, ‘Stop that!’ And then he recited this Qur’anic verse,

Enjoy yourselves in your abode for three days, that is a promise not to be belied.[46](#)

Zuraqa said, ‘I had a teacher who was a Shi’a. I often joked with him. When I went home, I sent for him. When he came to me, I told him about what I heard from the Imam (a.s.). He changed color and said to me, ‘Be careful and store all what you have! Al-Mutawakkil shall die or be killed after three days.’ He understood that from the Qur’anic verse that Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) recited.

I was affected by his speech and asked him to leave. Then I thought with myself and said that it would not harm me to take precautions. If something like that happened, I would have taken my precaution, and if not, I would lose nothing. I went to the house of al-Mutawakkil and took all my money. I deposited them with one of my acquaintances. After three days al-Mutawakkil died. This sign was the cause of my guidance and believing in Imamate.’[47](#)

The Imam’s prayer against al-Mutawakkil

Imam Abul Hasan al-Hadi (a.s.) resorted to Allah and prayed Him with this holy du’a (known as the du’a of the wronged against the unjust) which was one of the treasures of the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.);

“O Allah, I and so-and-so (he meant al-Mutawakkil) are two slaves from your slaves. Our forelocks (heads) are in your hand. You know our residence and depository, and know our resort and abode, and our inwards and outwards, and know our intentions, and encompass our consciences. Your knowing of what we show is as your knowing of what we conceal, and your knowing of what we hide is as your knowing of what we announce.

Nothing of our concerns is hidden from you, and no state of ours is kept secret before you. We have no shelter protecting us from you, and no refuge keeping us away from you. No escaper from us can escape from you, and no oppressor can protect himself by his power from you, nor his soldiers can defend him against you.

No defeater can defeat You by his might, and no mighty one can stand against You by his abundance.

You overcome him wherever he goes, and subject him to wherever he resorts. The wronged come to your door, and the oppressed from us rely on you and turn to you.

They ask you for help when helpers fail them, and cry for Your support when supporters turn backs to them. They resort to You when shelters disappoint them, and knock Your door when doors are closed before them, and get to You when inadvertent kings hide from them. You are aware of them before they complain to You, and know what benefits them before they ask You for it. Praise be to You, the Hearing, the Seeing, the Kind, the mighty.

O Allah, it has been in Your eternal knowledge, clear judgment, running fate, irrefutable decision, and inevitable will in all Your creations; the happy one of them and the wretched, the good one and the bad, that if You have given to so-and-so (he meant al-Mutawakkil) a power over me and he wronged me by it, oppressed me, overcame me by the power You have given to him, and became haughty towards me by the position You have made to him, and Your gifts to him seduced him, Your patience with him made him be tyrannical, and so he did me a distress that I could not bear, and intended me with evil that I failed to tolerate.

I could not defend myself against him for my weakness, and could not take my right from him for my humbleness. So I left him to You and relied on You concerning him. I threatened him with Your punishment, warned him of Your domination, and frightened him of Your revenge, but he thought that Your patience with him was out of weakness, and Your giving him time was out inability.

Nothing prevented him and so he went far in his oppression, and exaggerated in his enmity, and exceeded in his tyranny daring before You my Lord, and exposing himself to Your wrath which You do not repel from the unjust, and ignoring Your punishment which You do not withhold from the oppressive.

O my Lord, here I am disabled before him, subjected under his rule, subjugated by his reins, defeated, oppressed, distressed, afraid, terrified, suppressed. I lost my patience, and remained helpless. Doors were closed before me except Yours, and directions were blocked before me except Yours. My affairs were confused to resist his hardships to me. My thoughts failed to remove his oppression. Whoever of Your people I asked for help disappointed me, and whoever of Your creation I relied on betrayed me.

I counseled with my advice and it told me to resort to You, and inquired my guide and it did not guide me save to You, so I turned to You my Lord humbly, servilely, submissively, knowing that there was no deliverance except near You, and no rescue except by You. Carry out Your promise of supporting me and responding to my supplication for You have said and Your saying is the truth that is not annulled or changed,

(and he who retaliates with the like of that with which he has been afflicted and he has been oppressed, Allah will most certainly aid him),⁴⁸ and, glory be to You and sanctified are Your names, You said, ***(call upon Me, I will answer you),⁴⁹***

and so I do as You have ordered me not as a favor from me on You; how is that while it is You Who have guided me to that? My Lord, bless Muhammad and the progeny of Muhammad and respond to me as You have promised me, O You Who do not fail the promise.

My Lord, I do know that You have a day on which you avenge on the unjust for the wronged, and I am certain that You have a time at which You take from the oppressor to the oppressed because none of resisters can resist You, and none of opponents can run off Your hold, and You fear none that may escape You, but my fear and intolerance fail me before Your patience, and the expectance of Your insight.

Your power over me, my Lord, is over all powers, and Your authority defeats all authorities. The return of everyone is to You even if You give him time, and the coming back of every oppressor is to You even if You respite him.

Your patience with so-and-so (he meant al-Mutawakkil) and Your respiting him harmed me, and despair was about to overcome me except for the trust I had in You and the certainty in Your promise. If it is in Your fate and eternal power that he will repent of oppressing me or refrain from harming me or change from what he has committed against me...

O Allah, bless Muhammad and the progeny of Muhammad and put that in his heart at this very moment before removing Your blessings that You have endowed me with...and if it is in Your knowledge other than this that he will keep on oppressing me, then I ask You O the Helper of the wronged and oppressed to respond to my call.

Bless Muhammad and the progeny of Muhammad and snatch him (al-Mutawakkil) from his shelter with the snatch of the Mighty, the Powerful, and surprise him in his inadvertence with the surprise of the Overcoming King! Deprive him of his ease and authority! Scatter his gathers and assistants from around him!

Tear his kingdom thoroughly, and separate his supporters with every separation! Divest him of Your blessing which he does not thank, and take the dress of Your glory off him which he does not reward with goodness! Crush him O You the Crusher of tyrants, and perish him O You Who had perished the ancient nations!

Trounce him O You the Trouncer of the unjust nations, and disappoint him O You the Disappointer of the transgressive parties! Overwhelm his old, destroy his kingdom, omit his trace, remove his mention, put out his fire, darken his day, cover his sun, destroy his life, increase his distress, degrade him, suppress him, hasten his death.

Do not let a rank to him unless You disgrace it, and no pillar unless You tear it down, and no unity unless You separate it, and no highness unless You demean it!...and show us his supporters, soldiers, beloveds, and relatives scattered everywhere, and separated after their unity, and masked after their

power over the nation! Relieve the fearful and eager hearts with the disappearance of his rule and delight the confused nation and the lost people!

Remove by his disappearance the annulled laws, ignored verdicts, forgotten heritage, distorted traditions, deserted schools, averted mihrabs, and destroyed mosques!...Afflict him with a night that has no like, and an hour that there is no remedy from, and a disaster that there is relief from!...Expose his honor, and disturb his ease! Show him Your great assault, utmost revenge, Your power that is over all powers, and Your sovereignty that is mightier than his sovereignty!

Defeat him for me by Your strong power, abort his cunning by Your cunning, rout his will by Your will, sicken his body, orphan his children, decrease his life, disappoint his hope, remove his kingdom, increase his misfortunes, make him busy with his body, do not relieve him from his sorrow, take him into deviation, make his end into vain, make his blessing disappear, and his good luck to lowness, and his sovereignty to declination, and his end to the miserable end!

Make him die with his rage when You want to make him die, and let him live with his sorrow if You want to let him live! Keep me safe from his evil, slandering, backbiting, domination, and enmity! Look at him with a glance that destroys him, for You are stronger in might and stronger in inflicting punishment! And praise be to Allah the Lord of the worlds.”

This du’a is from the treasures of the Ahlul Bayt (a.s) which they resorted to whenever an oppressor poured his spite on them, and Allah responded to them and brought down His wrath on their enemies.

This du’a shows the extent of the distresses and disasters Imam al-Hadi (a.s) suffered during the reign of al-Mutawakkil the Abbasid tyrant who spared no effort in oppressing the Alawids and their followers.

The death of al-Mutawakkil

Allah responded to the prayer of Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) and revenged on his enemy severely. After this prayer al-Mutawakkil lived no more than three days.

A plot was arranged to assassinate al-Mutawakkil and to do away with him. The terms of the plot were made perfect and kept very secret and finally it succeeded and the plotters lost no one of them. The plotters were al-Muntasir, Waseef at-Turki (the Turk), and Bugha at-Turki.

Al-Muntasir

Al-Muntasir (son of al-Mutawakkil) had spite and malice towards his father and the reason, as we think, belonged to two points;

The first, al-Mutawakkil despised his son al-Muntasir and exaggerated in that until he swelled his nose. Al-Muntasir was full of spite against his father. A day before his death, al-Mutawakkil brought al-Muntasir to his meeting and abused him one time and made him drink over his capacity another. He said to his vizier al-Fath bin Khaqan, ‘I shall be free from Allah and from my kinship to the messenger of

Allah if you do not slap him (al-Muntasir).’

Al-Fath got up and slapped al-Muntasir twice. Al-Mutawakkil said to the attendants of his meeting, ‘Witness on me you all that I have deposed al-Muntasir (from the position of heir apparent).’ He said to al-Muntasir, ‘I have named you al-Muntasir and people named you al-Muntadhir for your foolishness, and now you are al-Musta’jil (reckless).’

Al-Muntasir said to his father, ‘If you ordered to behead me, it would be better for me than what you did to me.’ Then he left while being full of spite against his father and thinking of revenge. After that he carried out the plot of assassination.

The second, al-Mutawakkil was full of spite and hatred towards Imam ‘Ali (a.s.) whereas al-Muntasir was contrary to him. He had a great love to Imam ‘Ali (a.s.) and his progeny of the Alawids and this was the reason, as historians said, behind the killing of his father.

These three persons were the most important members in this plot. They held secret meetings and discussed the best ways to carry out their plan. They agreed on the following points:

1. To carry out the plot under the darkness of night
2. Closing the gates of the palace except the gate that led to the Tigris for fear of that supplies might come to al-Mutawakkil from the guards of the palace or from a unit of the army
3. Killing the prime minister al-Fath bin Khaqan
4. Rumoring among the public that al-Fath led a failed military coup and killed the caliph al-Mutawakkil but al-Muntasir suppressed the coup and killed al-Fath as revenge for the killing of his father. These were some steps of the plan that the leaders of the coup (the plotters) agreed on.

Executing the Plot

The Turks, holding unsheathed swords and headed by Baghir at-Turki, attacked al-Mutawakkil on the night of Wednesday the fourth of Shawwal⁵⁰ in 247AH.⁵¹ Al-Mutawakkil was drunk. Al-Fath bin Khaqan became astonished and cried out, ‘Woe unto you! He is Amir’ul- Mu’minin!’ They paid him no attention.

He threw himself on al-Mutawakkil to be the scapegoat but he saved neither his master nor himself. The Turks tore them both to pieces that the flesh of each of them could not be distinguished from the others. They were buried together. Thus the days of al-Mutawakkil, who was the bitterest enemy to the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.), came to an end.

The Turks left the palace and went to al-Muntasir who was waiting for them. They saluted him with the title of the caliphate. Al-Muntasir rumored among people that al-Fath bin Khaqan killed his father and he revenged and killed him. Then he took allegiance for himself from the Abbasid family and all units of the army.

The Alawids and their followers the Shi'a received the news of al-Mutawakkil's death with delight and joy, because the tyrant, who turned their lives to unbearable distresses, perished. He was killed between the cups of wine and musicals.

His body did not suffer illnesses or pains except a little when the swords harvested his life. Anyhow, that terrible nightmare disappeared from the life of the Alawids and their followers. Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) was delighted because Allah responded to his prayer and perished the bitterest of his enemies and opponents.

The rule of al-Muntasir

Al-Muntasir assumed the rule after the coup against the government of his father. All classes of people felt delight and joy because the oppression and tyranny of al-Mutawakkil disappeared.

With The Alawids

Al-Muntasir followed a rightly, fair policy towards the Alawids and the Shi'a. From the good achievements he did to the Alawids were that he returned Fadak⁵² to the Alawids, cancelled the interdict on the entails of the Alawids and gave them back to them, deposed the wali of Yathrib Salih bin 'Ali, who treated the Alawids badly, and appointed 'Ali bin al-Hasan instead of him and ordered him to treat the Alawids kindly and do them good.⁵³

Poets praised al-Muntasir in their poems too much for the many favors he did to the Alawids. He repaired what his father and grandfathers spoiled towards the Alawids who were their kin. He comforted and treated them very kindly after they suffered distresses, hardships, and deprivation from the previous governments.

The Permission of Visiting the Tomb of Imam 'Ali

Al-Mutawakkil had officially forbidden the visit to the tomb of Amir'ul- Mu'minin 'Ali (a.s.), but when al-Muntasir became the caliph, he permitted people to visit the tomb.

Annuling the Interdict of Visiting the Tomb of Imam Husayn

Al-Muntasir permitted Muslims to visit the tomb of Imam al-Husayn (a.s.) after al-Mutawakkil had forbidden that and decreed severe penalties against whoever visited that holy tomb.

These favors of al-Muntasir were and will be mentioned throughout history with high praise and gratefulness. He proved his nobility, honesty, and high personality and proved that he did not slip in the abyss which his father al-Mutawakkil had slipped in and brought himself disgrace in this life and eternal punishment in the afterlife.

His Death

This noble man, who refreshed the hearts of the Alawids, did not live long. Death came over him in the beginning of his rule. Most of historians said he did not die a natural death but he was poisoned. The Turks assassinated him fearing that he might kill them and do away with their influence and domination over the Islamic nation.

The Turks bribed his physician ibn Tayfur by giving him thirty thousand dinars to assassinate him. Al-Muntasir was ill and the physician advised to bleed him. He bled him with a poisoned blade and he died soon.⁵⁴ He died on Saturday, the fourth of Rabee' ath-Thani,⁵⁵ 248 AH and was buried in al-Jawsaq.⁵⁶ By his death people lost much. It was he who destroyed his father's throne which was based on oppression and tyranny.

Anyhow, the books of history at hand did not mention any meeting or event that took place between Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) and al-Muntasir. The certain thing is that Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) was delighted for al-Muntasir's procedures towards the Alawids that returned to them safety and settlement which they missed during the reign of al-Mutawakkil.

The reign of al-Musta'een

After the death of al-Muntasir al-Musta'een assumed the rule on Sunday, the fifth of Rabee' ath-Thani in the year 248 AH. He was as a tool run by the Turks. He had no political influence over the body of his government. One of the poets said on that,

“A caliph in a cage between Waseef and Bugha,
he repeated what they both said to him as a parrot does.”⁵⁷

The caliph was like a parrot in a cage repeating unconsciously and unwittingly what his viziers said to him. The rule was run by Waseef, Bugha, and other Turks. Neither al-Musta'een nor his family had influence or authority.

His Wasting and Lavishness

Al-Musta'een wasted and spent money lavishly. He spent all what the previous caliphs had spared in their treasuries of monies, jewels, furniture, weapons, war equipments, and other things. Bugha at-Turki denied that and said to him, ‘O Amir’ul- Mu’minin, these treasuries are the capital of Muslims. The caliphs before you have gathered for a day when Islam and Muslims may face an unexpected misfortune or disaster.’ But the caliph paid no attention and went on wasting the monies of the state.

An example on his wasting was that he had a gallery in which he had put precious jewelries, and splendid tools and utensils besides gold sculptures of animals, beasts, birds and humans. These

sculptures were inlaid with most precious stones. He ordered to made vessels of gold to be filled with musk and ambergris. Villages of gold were made for him in which he put statues of cows, buffaloes, sheep, dogs, plants, and fruits. And all that were made of gold.

This is an example on the absurdities of the Abbasid governments which overcame the wealth of Muslims and spent it on their lusts and wishes.

The Deposition of Al-Musta'een

The Turks snubbed al-Musta'een and feared him. One day, he set out towards Baghdad. The Turks sent for him asking him to return to Samarra'. He refused and went on to Baghdad. They deposed him and took al-Mu'tazz out of prison and paid him homage as the caliph. They prepared a great army to occupy Baghdad. The two armies met and both sides suffered great losses but the war continued. At last, they agreed on that al-Musta'een should announce the deposition of himself and give the caliphate to al-Mu'tazz on some conditions that they agreed on.

Al-Musta'een gave the caliphate to al-Mu'tazz who did not observe the conditions required from him and he put al-Musta'een in the prison of Wasit. He remained for nine months in that prison. The Turks felt fear of al-Musta'een although he was in prison. They took him out of prison and brought him to Samarra'. Al-Mu'tazz asked his chamberlain Sa'eed to kill him and he did.[58](#)

The author of al-Fakhri said he was weak in mind, reason, and administration, and that many seditions happened during his reign and his state was full of troubles and confusion.[59](#) We shall talk about the rule of al-Mu'tazz in a coming chapter because Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) was martyred in that period.

- [1.](#) Al-Irshad, p.375-376
- [2.](#) Mir'at az-Zaman, vol.9 p.553
- [3.](#) Muruj ath-Thahab, vol.4 p.113
- [4.](#) Tareekh al-Ya'qubi, vol.3 p.209
- [5.](#) Mir'at az-Zaman, vol.9 p.553, Tathkirat al-Khawas, p.359, Muruj ath-Thahab, vol.4 p.114
- [6.](#) It was a caravansary of paupers
- [7.](#) Al-Irshad, p.376
- [8.](#) Mir'at az-Zaman, vol.9 p.553
- [9.](#) Tareekh Baghdad, vol.12 p.57
- [10.](#) Qur'an, 111:1
- [11.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol.4
- [12.](#) Qur'an, 9:25
- [13.](#) Tareekh al-Islam by ath-Thahabi chap. The men of the twenty-sixth class, Tathkirat al-Khawas, p.360.
- [14.](#) Al-Muntadham, vol.12 p.26-27
- [15.](#) Qur'an, 40:84-85
- [16.](#) Sharh Shafiyat Abu Firas, vol.2 p.167.
- [17.](#) The call of cells is the azan in the mosques
- [18.](#) Al-Manaqib
- [19.](#) Qur'an, 27:40
- [20.](#) Qur'an, 12:100

- [21. Qur'an, 12:101](#)
- [22. Qur'an, 10:94](#)
- [23. Qur'an, 25:20](#)
- [24. Qur'an, 3:61](#)
- [25. Qur'an, 31:27](#)
- [26. Qur'an, 43:71](#)
- [27. Qur'an, 65:2](#)
- [28. Tuhaf al-Uqul, al-Manaqib](#)
- [29. The son of Safiyyah was az-Zubayr bin al-Awwam who was killed by ibn Jarmuz on the day of al-Jamal.](#)
- [30. Qur'an, 38:39](#)
- [31. Al-Manaqib by ibn Shahrashub, vol.4 p.403-406, Tuhaf al-Uqul, p.477-481](#)
- [32. Qur'an, 21:28](#)
- [33. Kamil az-Ziyarat, Mazar al-Bihar](#)
- [34. Mazar al-Bihar.](#)
- [35. Kamil az-Ziyarat, p.273, Mazar al-Bihar, p. 141.](#)
- [36. He meant the holy place where Imam al-Husayn \(a.s\) was buried](#)
- [37. Kamil az-Ziyarat, p.274, Mazar al-Bihar p. 141](#)
- [38. Wassa'il ash-Shi'a, vol.3 p.570.](#)
- [39. Kamil az-Ziyarat, Furu' \(branches of\) al-Kafi, vol.4 p.567](#)
- [40. Qur'an, 45:21](#)
- [41. Rawdhat al-A'yan, manuscript](#)
- [42. Qur'an, 26:227](#)
- [43. Bihar al-Anwar](#)
- [44. It refers to al-Mutawakkil](#)
- [45. Al-Kharayij by ar-Rawandi](#)
- [46. Qur'an, 11:65](#)
- [47. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 12 p. 134, al-Kharayij](#)
- [48. Qur'an, 22:60](#)
- [49. Qur'an, 40:60](#)
- [50. The tenth month of the Muslim lunar year](#)
- [51. Tareekh ibn Kathir, vol. 10 p.349, Rawdhat al-A'yan, p. 108](#)
- [52. Fadak was a very vast, fertile village that the Prophet \(s\) had donated to his daughter Fatima \(s\). It was rich of date-palms and other fruitful trees.](#)
- [53. Tareekh ibn al-Athir, vol.5 p.311](#)
- [54. Tareekh al-Khulafa' by as-Sayooti, p.357](#)
- [55. It is the fourth month in the Islamic lunar calendar](#)
- [56. Al-Anba' fee Tareekh al-Khulafa'](#)
- [57. Al-Anba' fee Tareekh al-Khulafa'](#)
- [58. Tareekh al-Khulafa', p.358-359](#)
- [59. Al-Fakhri, p.222](#)

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