Explanation of the Reports in *The Virtues of the Pure Imams*

By Qadi Abu Hanifa al-Nu'man ibn Muhammad al-Tamimi al-Maghribi, who died in 363 AH

Part Thirteen

In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful

Those Who Were Killed with al-Husayn from His Family

The Sons of al-Husayn

Among those killed with al-Husayn ibn Ali on the day he was killed was his son **Ali ibn al-Husayn**. We have already mentioned his account earlier. He was killed by **Murrah ibn Munqadh ibn al-Nu'man al-Abdi**.

Also killed were **Abd Allah ibn al-Husayn**, whose mother was **al-Rabab**, daughter of Imru' al-Qays ibn Jabir ibn Ka'b ibn Alim of Kalb. She was also the mother of **Sukayna**, daughter of al-Husayn. Al-Husayn loved her and used to say about her:

By your life, I truly love a house
Where Sukayna and al-Rabab dwell.

Abd Allah was very young at the time and was in his father al-Husayn's arms. An arrow came and slaughtered him. It was shot by **Hani ibn Thabit al-Hadrami**.

Also killed with him that day was **Abu Bakr ibn al-Husayn**. He too was struck by an arrow and died from it. The one who shot him was **Harmala al-Kahili**. His mother was a slave woman.

al-Qasim ibn al-Hasan

Hamid ibn Muslim said:

"Also killed with him that day was **al-Qasim ibn al-Hasan ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib**. He was killed by **Amr ibn Sa'id ibn Amr ibn Nufayl al-Azdi**. His mother was a slave woman.

"On the day of al-Taff, I saw al-Qasim ibn al-Hasan ibn Ali come out toward us. He was a young boy whose face was like a fragment of the moon. He was wearing a shirt and sandals, and the strap of his left sandal had broken.

"**Amr ibn Sa'id ibn Amr ibn Nufayl al-Azdi**, who was beside me, said to me:

'By God, I will kill him.'

"I said, 'What do you want with killing this boy?'

"He paid no attention to me and charged at him, striking him and knocking him down. Al-Qasim called out:

'Uncle!'

"Al-Husayn went toward him and struck Amr with his sword. Amr warded off the blow with his hand, and al-Husayn severed it at the elbow.

"Amr turned away, and the cavalry of Kufa charged toward him to carry him away. Al-Husayn charged at them, causing them to retreat. They then trampled the boy and killed him.

"Al-Husayn stood over the boy, who had already died, and said:

'It grieves your uncle that you called him and he could not answer you—or that he answered you but could not benefit you. Woe to the people who killed you. Your grandfather and your father will be their adversaries concerning you on the Day of Resurrection.'

"Then he ordered that the boy be carried away. It is as though I can still see him, with the boy's legs dragging along the ground, until he was placed beside Ali ibn al-Husayn.

"I heard them saying:

'This is al-Qasim ibn al-Hasan ibn Ali.'"

Abd Allah ibn al-Hasan

Also killed with him that day was **Abd Allah ibn al-Hasan**. His mother was a slave woman. Al-Husayn had married him to his daughter **Sukayna**, but he was killed that day before the marriage was consummated.

al-Abbas and His Brothers

Also killed with him that day were the brothers of **al-Abbas ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib**.

[1125]

Isma'il ibn Aws, from Abu Abd Allah Ja'far ibn Muhammad, reported that he said:

"Al-Husayn ibn Ali arranged his companions on the day of al-Taff and gave the banner to his brother **al-Abbas ibn Ali**.

"Al-Abbas was called **al-Saqqa'** ('the water-carrier') because al-Husayn became thirsty after they had prevented them from accessing the water. Al-Abbas took a waterskin and went toward the water. His brothers, the sons of Ali, followed him: **Uthman, Ja'far, and Abd Allah**.

"They drove away the men of Ubayd Allah from the water. Al-Abbas filled the waterskin and carried it on his back to al-Husayn alone. His brothers—Uthman, Ja'far, and Abd Allah—were killed in the battle over the water, and none of them left descendants.

"Al-Abbas inherited from them and was himself killed afterward that day. He left behind his son **Ubayd Allah ibn al-Abbas**. **Muhammad and Umar**, the sons of Ali, remained.

"As for Muhammad, he surrendered to Abd Allah ibn al-Abbas his share of the inheritance of Uthman, Ja'far, and Abd Allah, the sons of Ali.

"As for Amr ibn Ali, he was the youngest of Ali's children. He subsequently pursued his share of the inheritance of his brothers Uthman, Ja'far, and Abd Allah, until a settlement was reached and he was satisfied with it.

"Al-Abbas, Uthman, Abd Allah, and Ja'far, the sons of Ali, had the same mother: Umm al-Banin, daughter of Hizām ibn Khalid ibn Rabi'a ibn al-Walid.

"Amr ibn Ali had no full brother except his full sister Ruqayya al-Kubra. Their mother was al-Sahba', by which name she was known, and her name was Umm Habib, daughter of Rabi'a.

"I do not know on what basis Amr ibn Ali sought the inheritance of his full brothers along with their full brother al-Abbas, since the latter had a greater right to it. It is unanimously established that brothers and sisters who share only the father do not inherit alongside brothers and sisters who share both the father and mother, according to the saying of the Messenger of God, which he conveyed to his appointed successor Ali ibn Abi Talib and which was transmitted by both the particular and the general traditions:

'The full siblings inherit from one another, to the exclusion of the paternal half-siblings.'

"This is what the jurists unanimously agreed upon.

"Unless he claimed that al-Abbas had been killed before them—and there was no evidence establishing this—he was nevertheless claiming and seeking something that did not belong to him. He wanted to become responsible for the administration of Ali's charitable endowments. Yet Ali had stipulated that responsibility for what he had designated as charitable property should belong only to his descendants through Fatima and their descendants, generation after generation."

[1126]

Al-Zubayr reported from his uncle Mus'ab ibn Abd Allah that he said:

"Amr was the last of the children of Ali ibn Abi Talib. He came with Aban ibn Uthman to al-Walid ibn Abd al-Malik, asking him to appoint him administrator of the charity of his father, Ali ibn Abi Talib. At that time it was administered by his nephew al-Hasan ibn al-Hasan ibn Ali.

"Al-Walid offered him financial assistance and to pay his debts.

"Amr said:

'I have no need of that. I asked for my father's charitable endowment so that I might administer it. I have a greater right to it than my nephew, so write an appointment for me to administer it.'

"Al-Walid wrote on a sheet of paper these verses by Rabi' ibn Abi al-Huqayq:

When the impulses of passion incline us,
And the listener pays attention to the speaker,
And the people contend with their minds,
We render a just and decisive judgment.

We do not make falsehood into truth,
Nor conceal the truth behind falsehood.
We fear that our minds may be deemed foolish,
And that we may remain throughout time among the obscure.

"Then he handed the sheet to Aban and said:

'Give it to him and tell him that I will not place anyone other than the descendants of Fatima, the daughter of the Messenger of God, in charge of it.'

"Amr left him angry and did not accept his financial offer.

"If al-Walid had applied this principle to matters over which he had seized control, it would have been more appropriate for him to do so."

Explanation of an Unfamiliar Expression

Regarding the phrase:

"And the people contend with their minds"

Al-sar' means throwing a person to the ground.

One says: *sara'tuhu sar'an*—"I threw him to the ground."

Al-musar'ah means the contest between two people to determine which will throw the other down.

Al-albab, here, is the plural of *talbib*. One says *talbib* and *talabib*.

Talbib refers to the gathering of the clothing around the area of a man's throat.

The *labba* is the place where the central part of a necklace rests when it lies against the neck.

Dhu al-Rumma said:

Radiant-cheeked, with a bright throat and chest,
Like a gazelle driven into the furthest part of the valley.

The word is pluralized even though it refers to a single *labba*. Arabs sometimes pluralize things that occur singly or doubly on the human body, saying, for example, "the woman's necks, chests, and forearms."

The central part of a necklace is called a *labba* because it rests against the *labba*.

Arabs sometimes name a thing after something associated or connected with it.

One says: "So-and-so seized so-and-so by the *talbib* or *talbib*," meaning that he seized the gathered clothing at the person's throat, or placed a garment or rope around his neck, or grasped him at the place where the clothing was gathered.

A person may do this when he intends to throw another person to the ground.

Regarding the phrase:

"Nor conceal the truth behind falsehood"

Al-ilzaz means persistent insistence upon something. One says *alazza 'ala al-shay'* and *alazza minhu*.

The term *mulazah* was used for persistent engagement in battle. A man who persists in something is called *milzaz* or *milza'*—that is, persistent.

The poet al-Zajir said:

"I marvel, while time is persistent."

A man may be described as *lazz* or *lazz fazz*, meaning difficult and severe.

A snake is said to *talazzaz* when it moves its head because of the intensity of its anger.

It is also said that fire is called *laza* because it clings to the skin, the word being derived from *ilzaz*.

Fire is said to *talazza* or *tatalazza* when its burning becomes intense.

The original form is *talazzaz*, but one of the two *z* sounds was changed into a *y*.

In the hadith:

"Persist in supplication with: O Possessor of Majesty and Honor"

the meaning is: ask God in supplication using these words and continue asking.

Regarding the word al-dahr ('time/age'):

He means that if we did this, we would remain obscure throughout all time.

Al-makhmul means hidden or obscure.

Al-khamil means obscure or unknown.

One says of a man, *khamil al-dhikr*: his name is scarcely known or mentioned.

Al-khamil may also refer to a quiet or subdued statement.

In the hadith:

"Remember God with a subdued remembrance"

the meaning is: remember Him quietly—that is, secretly.

The Charitable Endowments

[1127]

Harun ibn Musa reported that **Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan** appointed **Ali ibn al-Husayn** over the charitable endowments of the Prophet and those of Ali. They were both guaranteed properties.

Amr ibn Ali came to Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan to complain about this, saying:

"I have a greater right to them than he does."

Abd al-Malik said to him:

"I will say what Ibn Abi al-Huqayq said:

When the impulses of passion incline us..."

and he recited the four previously mentioned verses.

Later Amr went to his son, al-Walid, hoping that he would appoint him to the position. Al-Walid gave him the same answer that his father had given him.

Returning to the Account of al-Abbas

The man who led the killing of **al-Abbas ibn Ali** that day was **Yazid ibn Ziyad al-Hanafi**. **Hakim ibn Tufayl al-Ta'i** took his belongings, although it is also said that Yazid participated in killing him.

After al-Abbas's brothers Abd Allah, Uthman, and Ja'far had been killed while heading toward the water, al-Abbas returned alone carrying the waterskin. He attacked the men of Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad who were blocking access to the water, killing some of them and striking among them until they withdrew from the water.

He reached the Euphrates, filled the waterskin, carried it back to al-Husayn and his companions, and gave them water.

Eventually they surrounded him. His wounds from arrows weakened him, and they killed him in this condition between the Euphrates and the tents while he was carrying the water.

Then they buried him, may God have mercy upon him. They cut off his hands and feet out of their hatred for him, after the devastation he had inflicted upon them and the number of them he had killed. For this reason he was called **al-Saqqa'**, the water-carrier.

Al-Fadl ibn Muhammad ibn al-Hasan ibn Ubayd Allah ibn al-Abbas ibn Ali said about him:

The person most deserving of being mourned,
When al-Husayn is mourned at Karbala,
Is his brother, the son of his father, Ali—
Abu al-Fadl, stained crimson with blood.

He who supported him was deterred by nothing,
And came to him with water despite his own thirst.

Explanation of an Unfamiliar Expression

Regarding the phrase:

"Stained crimson with blood"

Anything covered with blood or something similar is said to have become *mudarrij*—stained or soaked—and is described as *mudarrij*.

A poet described wine by saying:

"In a vessel, with the sun's saliva, stained crimson."

Al-Abbas ibn Ali was killed that day at the age of **thirty-four**.

Abd Allah ibn Ali was killed that day at the age of **twenty-five**.

Uthman ibn Ali was killed at the age of **twenty-one**.

Ja'far ibn Ali was killed at the age of **seventeen**.

The Children of Aqil

Among the descendants of **Aqil ibn Abi Talib** who were killed with al-Husayn that day was **Abd al-Rahman ibn Aqil**, whose mother was a slave woman.

He was killed by **Uthman ibn Khalid al-Juhani**.

Also killed was **Abd Allah ibn Aqil**, whose mother was a slave woman. He was killed by **Amr ibn al-Sabih**. [He struck him with an arrow] shot by **Bashir ibn Hawt al-Hamdani**.

Also killed was **Abd Allah ibn Muslim ibn Aqil**, whose mother was **Ruqayya**, daughter of Ali ibn Abi Talib. He was killed by **Amr ibn al-Sabih al-Sadani**; it is also said that **Asad ibn Malik** killed him.

The Prisoners

Those from his family who were taken prisoner after those who were killed that day included:

Ali ibn al-Husayn, who was seriously ill and whose account we have already mentioned. He was twenty-three years old at the time;

his son **Muhammad ibn Ali**, who was a small child;

al-Hasan ibn al-Hasan;

Abd Allah ibn al-Hasan;

al-Qasim ibn Abd Allah ibn Ja'far;

Amr ibn al-Husayn;

Muhammad ibn al-Husayn;

Muhammad ibn Aqil;

al-Qasim ibn Muhammad ibn Ja'far ibn Abi Talib;

and Abd Allah ibn al-Abbas ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib.

Among the women were:

Umm Kulthum, daughter of Ali ibn Abi Talib;

Umm al-Hasan, daughter of Ali ibn Abi Talib;

and Fatima and Sukayna, daughters of al-Husayn ibn Ali.

[1128]

It is said that Zaynab, daughter of Aqil ibn Abi Talib, went out among the people at al-Baqi', weeping for those who had been killed, and said:

What will you say when the Prophet asks you:
"What did you do, though you were the final community,
To my family, when some of them became prisoners
In your presence and others lay slain, drenched in blood?
Was this my reward, when I advised you,
That you would treat my relatives with evil?"

Abu al-Aswad al-Du'ali said:

"I heard her say:

'Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves. If You do not forgive us and have mercy upon us, we shall surely be among the losers.'"

[Qur'an 7:23]

This is the statement of one who did not believe in hostility toward the family of Muhammad.

As for those who believed in hostility toward them and deliberately pursued what they pursued against them, they persisted in their unbelief and in what they perpetrated against them.

After this, they killed many more members of the household of the Messenger of God. Few can count their number, because of the injustice they inflicted upon them and their contempt for their rights, by those who undertook what did not belong to them.

Whoever takes something that belongs to another and seeks something without having a right to it—because of this we have refrained from mentioning those whose conduct was of this kind and have turned away from recounting their calamity.

God will judge the matter according to His judgment and decide whatever He wills among His servants.

The Household of the Commander of the Believers

We have already mentioned the virtues of **Ali, Fatima, al-Hasan, and al-Husayn**, and we have previously mentioned many of the virtues of **Ja'far ibn Abi Talib**, the brother of Ali.

In this section, we shall mention some of what has reached us concerning these matters, as well as some of the virtues of other members of his family, God willing.

[1129]

Muhammad ibn Abbad ibn Ya'qub, through his chain of transmission, reported from **Ja'far ibn Muhammad** that he said:

"Ali's mother was one of eleven women who had been present at Badr.

"When she died, the Messenger of God removed his shirt and gave it to them, saying:

'Shroud her in it, so that it may protect her from the pressure of the grave.'

"He descended into her grave and lay down in her burial niche, saying:

'I wanted to make it spacious for her, for after Abu Talib, no one benefited me as she did.'"

[1130]

Muhammad ibn Ali ibn al-Arabi, through his chain of transmission, reported from **Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ali** that he said:

"The Messenger of God arrived at the time of Hudaybiyya and made an agreement with them that he would come the following year, that he would not enter Mecca on horseback or carrying weapons, and that no one would be taken out of Mecca.

"He camped at Batn Mar.

"Ali remained in Mecca and brought out **the daughter of Hamza** on a camel.

"A man from among the polytheists encountered him. When he learned that it was Ali, he did not dare confront him. The most he was able to do was insult the girl and insult her father.

"Ali brought her to the Messenger of God at Batn Mar. **Ja'far and Zayd ibn Haritha** disputed with him over her.

"Ja'far said:

'She is my cousin, and her maternal aunt is with me. Women are vulnerable.'

"Zayd said:

'She is my ward. The Messenger of God established brotherhood between me and her father, and I have more right to her than any of you.'

"Ali said:

'She is my cousin. You left her in Mecca where she was being beaten, while her father and brothers were being insulted. I have more right to her than any of you.'

"The Prophet heard their words and said:

'I will decide between you concerning her and concerning other matters.

"As for you, Ja'far, you resemble me in appearance and character.

"As for you, Ali, you are to me as Aaron was to Moses, except that there is no prophet after me.

"As for you, Zayd, you are the ally of God and the ally of His Messenger.

"Give her to her maternal aunt, for women are vulnerable.'"

Ja'far ibn Abi Talib

Charity at Night

[1131]

Sa'd ibn Tarif, through his chain of transmission, reported from Ja'far ibn Abi Talib that when the Messenger of God sent him to the Negus, he travelled by sea.

"While they were sailing at night, they heard someone saying:

'Listen to what I am telling you, people of the ship, and I will inform you of something from your Lord.'

"Ja'far went to the front of the ship and said:

'Where is the one informing us about our Lord?'

"The speaker replied:

'Charity during the day extinguishes the anger of the Lord, and charity at night extinguishes sins just as water extinguishes fire.'"

Ja'far's Fighting

[1132]

Abd al-Malik ibn Hisham, through his chain of transmission, reported that Ja'far ibn Abi Talib took the banner at Mu'ta in his right hand.

"He continued fighting until his right hand was cut off. He took it in his left hand and continued fighting until his left hand was cut off.

"He then embraced the banner with his arms and continued fighting until he was killed, may God have mercy upon him."

[1133]

Muhammad ibn Humayd, through his chain of transmission, reported that Ja'far ibn Abi Talib continued fighting on the day of Mu'ta with his right hand until he suffered seventy wounds, between blows and spear thrusts.

"The wounds overcame him, and he was killed, may God have mercy upon him."

Ja'far's Rank

[1134]

Khalid ibn Yazid, through his chain of transmission, reported from the Messenger of God that he said:

"I saw Ja'far ibn Abi Talib in Paradise as an angel flying through it with two wings whose foremost feathers were stained with blood. He settles wherever he wishes in it and flies there among the angels."

Which of the Two Delighted Him More?

[1135]

Al-Ajlaha, through his chain of transmission, reported that Ja'far ibn Abi Talib came to the Messenger of God from Abyssinia on the day Khaybar was conquered.

The Messenger of God said:

"I do not know which delights me more: the conquest of Khaybar or the arrival of Ja'far."

He embraced him and kissed him between the eyes.

The Messenger and Ja'far

[1136]

Salama ibn Shayash, through his chain of transmission, reported from Ja'far ibn Muhammad that he said:

"I heard my father say:

'The Messenger of God said:

"People were created from different trees, but I and Ja'far were created from the same clay. I and the family of Abd al-Muttalib are from one tree, and Ja'far and I are from one of its branches.

"My physical appearance resembles his, and his physical appearance resembles mine."""

[1137]

Muhammad ibn al-Hasan, through his chain of transmission, reported:

"Abu Talib passed by the Messenger of God while Ali was with him and the two of them were praying. Ja'far was with Abu Talib.

"Abu Talib said to him:

'Go and join your cousin's side in prayer.'

"Ja'far went to the Messenger of God, accepted Islam, and prayed with them.

"This was the first congregational prayer performed by the Messenger of God."

Ja'far Made Two Migrations

[1138]

Another report from Ja'far ibn Muhammad states:

"The Messenger of God allotted Ja'far ibn Abi Talib a share from the spoils of Badr while Ja'far was in Abyssinia.

"He made two migrations: he migrated to the land of Abyssinia, and he migrated to Medina."

The Announcement of Ja'far's Death

[1139]

Ahmad ibn Yahya, through his chain of transmission from Anas ibn Malik, said:

"The Messenger of God addressed us while his eyes were shedding tears and said:

'Ja'far took the banner and was killed. Then Zayd ibn Haritha took it and was killed. Then Abd Allah ibn Rawaha took it and was killed. Then Khalid ibn al-Walid took it.'

"Then he turned toward Mu'ta and said to them:

'If Ja'far is killed, your commander is Zayd ibn Haritha; if Zayd is killed, your commander is Abd Allah ibn Rawaha.'

"He did not mention anyone else after him except on one occasion.

"When all three of them were killed, may God be pleased with them, Khalid ibn al-Walid took the banner on his own initiative, and God granted the Muslims victory."

The Established Custom

[1140]

Ibrahim ibn Ali, through his chain of transmission from A'isha, said:

"When the news of Ja'far's death arrived, we recognized grief on the face of the Messenger of God.

"The Messenger of God said:

'Prepare food for the family of Ja'far, for something has come upon them that occupies them from preparing food for themselves.'

"Thus a practice became established afterward: food should be prepared for the families of those who have suffered a death among their close relatives."

Asma' bint Umays mourned Ja'far ibn Abi Talib with these verses:

O Ja'far, the winged one, the finest of riders,
On the day horses clash and spears are thrust.
You had been a mountain whose shade sheltered me,
But you left me walking across bare, exposed ground.
As long as you lived, I possessed protection;
I walked into danger while you were my wing.
But today I humble myself before the weak,
And fear him, while warding off my oppressor with my hand.

Explanation of an Unfamiliar Expression

Regarding her word tashahh:

One says *shaja fulanun fahu*: "So-and-so opened his mouth."

And *shaha al-lijam fam al-faras*: "The bridle opened the horse's mouth."

Footnotes

[1] Qur'an 7:23

"Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves. If You do not forgive us and have mercy upon us, we shall surely be among the losers."

[i]

Al-Rabab, daughter of Imru' al-Qays, was among the finest women, distinguished for her manners, beauty, and intelligence.

Her father became Muslim during the caliphate of Umar. He had previously been a Christian from the Arab Christians of Syria. He had not yet performed a prayer when Umar appointed him over those of Quda'a who had accepted Islam. Before the day ended, the Commander of the Believers had asked him for the hand of his daughter al-Rabab for his son al-Husayn, and he married her to him.

Al-Husayn brought her, along with his family, to al-Taff. Her son was killed while she watched him.

(*Ibn al-Athir, al-Kamil*, 4/45.)

She mourned al-Husayn in Syria after his head had been taken. She kissed it and placed it in her lap, saying:

Alas for Husayn! I shall never forget Husayn.
The enemies' spears struck him down.
They left him fallen at Karbala.
May God never give drink to those beside Karbala.

(*Tarikh al-Farmani*, p. 4.)

When she returned to Medina, she remained there, never ceasing to weep for al-Husayn by night or day. She did not sit beneath a roof until she died of grief after his death, in the year 62 AH.

In *Tadhkirat al-Khawass*, p. 148, it is reported that a man from among the nobles proposed marriage to her, but she refused, saying:

"I would never take another husband after the Messenger of God."

[ii]

Charitable endowments: These consisted collectively of lands, springs, and orchards, including:

A. Fatima's endowments: the seven orchards that the Jewish man Mukhayriq had bequeathed to the Prophet. He died as a Muslim. They were:

- al-Dalal
- Barqa
- al-Safiya
- al-Muthayyib
- Mashrabat Umm Ibrahim

- al-A'raf
- Husna

The Prophet established these as an endowment in the seventh year after the Hijra specifically for Fatima. During his lifetime, he took from them for his guests and personal needs.

When Fatima died, she bequeathed these orchards, along with all the property she possessed, to Ali, then to al-Hasan, then to al-Husayn, and thereafter to the eldest descendant of the Messenger of God.

She had al-Miqdad ibn al-Aswad and al-Zubayr ibn al-Awwam witness the bequest.

(*Al-Kamil* of al-Mubarrad, 3/115; *Tarikh al-Madina*, 2/263.)

B. Ali's endowments: Among the charitable properties were those he possessed in Khaybar, Wadi al-Qura, Suwayqa al-Ghufran, Bir Qays, and al-Shajara.

They also included springs that he excavated at Yanbu, among them:

- Yuhayyir
- Ayn Nula
- Ayn Abi Nizar
- Ayn Abi Mirz

These were the properties that Mu'awiya wanted to purchase from al-Husayn when al-Husayn had incurred a very large debt.

Al-Husayn said:

"My father established these as an endowment seeking the pleasure of God, so I will not [sell them]."

(*Mu'jam al-Buldan*, 5/180; *Tarikh al-Madina*, 2/249; *Al-Kamil* of al-Mubarrad, 3/114.)

They were also mentioned in Ali's will in the tenth part of this book.

The income from the charitable endowments reached forty thousand dinars.

(*Al-Sira al-Halabiyya*, 2/219.)

Ali stipulated in his endowment that his son al-Hasan, followed by al-Husayn, and thereafter whoever al-Husayn considered suitable, should administer the charitable properties.

Al-Umda, p. 85, states:

"The Commander of the Believers stipulated that his charitable endowments should be administered by his children through Fatima and no others among his children."

[iii]

Her name was Umama.

[iv]

This was Ashama ibn Abjar, king of Abyssinia. His name in Arabic was Atiyya, while al-Najashi ("the Negus") was his title.

He accepted Islam during the lifetime of the Messenger of God and died in his own country before the conquest of Mecca.

(*Usd al-Ghaba*, 1/120.)

[v]

This was Zayd ibn Haritha ibn Sharahil al-Kalbi.

He was kidnapped as a small child during the pre-Islamic period. Khadija bint Khuwaylid purchased him and gave him to the Prophet when she married him.

Before Islam, the Prophet adopted him and freed him, and married him to his paternal aunt's daughter.

People continued calling him Zayd ibn Muhammad until the Qur'anic verse was revealed:

"Call them by their fathers' names."

The Prophet appointed him as one of the commanders during the expedition of Mu'ta.

(*Khizanat al-Adab* by al-Baghdadi, 1/363; *al-Rawd al-Unuf*, 1/164.)

[vi]

This was Abd Allah ibn Rawaha ibn Tha'laba al-Ansari, whose kunyah was Abu Muhammad.

He participated at Badr, Uhud, the Trench, and Hudaybiyya. The Messenger of God appointed him as his deputy in Medina during one of his expeditions.

He accompanied him during the Compensatory Umrah and composed rajaz poetry concerning it.

He was one of the commanders at the battle of Mu'ta.

(*Imta' al-Asma'*, 1/270; *Khizanat al-Adab*, 1/362.)

[vii]

Mu'ta was an event that took place in the eighth year after the Hijra.

The reason for the expedition was that the Messenger of God sent al-Harith ibn Umayr al-Azdi to the ruler of Busra with a letter.

When he reached Mu'ta, Shurahbil ibn Amr al-Ghassani encountered him and killed him. No other envoy of the Messenger of God had previously been killed in this way.

This greatly grieved the Prophet, so he called the people to arms and assembled the army at al-Jurf. They numbered three thousand.

The Messenger of God accompanied them as far as Thaniyyat al-Wada'. They continued until they reached the land of Mu'ta.

Heraclius met them with an army of four hundred thousand, forty thousand of whom were heavily armed.

The two forces met. The Muslims stood firm, and Zayd ibn Haritha, Abd Allah ibn Rawaha, and Ja'far ibn Abi Talib were martyred.

(*Tadhkirat al-Khawass*, p. 189.)

Mu'ta is a village among the villages of al-Balqa on the borders of Syria.

The grave of Ja'far is in a village. As al-Muhallabi said:

"Ma'ab, Adhruh—two towns of al-Sharah—are twelve miles from Adhruh, in a village known as Mu'ta, where Ja'far's grave is located."

His body was reportedly found there intact, still wearing his clothes, with fresh blood upon him and his sword around his neck. Nothing about his body had changed.

This was when they had resolved to rebuild the blessed shrine.

(*Marāqid al-Ma'arif*, 1/225.)

The poet said:

As though her mouth, with the bridle open,
Were beside a smooth, polished saddle-cloth, its sides even.

From this comes the expression: "The horses came *shawāhi* and *shawāhiyāt*", meaning that they approached with their mouths open.

Regarding her words:

"You left me walking upon bare, exposed ground"

Al-ajrad means a place among mountains or lands where there is no vegetation.

Al-dāhi means something that has no shade. One says: *dahā al-rajul dahwan*—"the man was exposed to the heat of the sun."

In the Qur'an:

"And you will not be thirsty therein, nor exposed to the sun."

That is, the heat of the sun will not afflict you—in Paradise.

Regarding her word:

"I seek shelter"

Al-liyādh is the verbal noun of *lādh, yalūd, liyādhan* and *lawādhan*. Al-mulāwadha means to conceal oneself behind something out of fear of someone one sees and fears.

Regarding her words:

"And I ward off my oppressor with the palm of my hand"

Al-rāh is the plural of *rāha*, meaning the inner surface of the hand. This is what the weak and humiliated person uses to defend himself, protecting himself with the palm of his hand.

Hassan Mourns Him

Hassan ibn Thabit mourned Ja'far and those who were killed with him in the following poetry:

I saw the finest of the Muslims follow one another,
Going away, while generations after them remained behind.

May God not distance those slain who followed one another,
All together, while the causes of death hovered over them.

Zayd and Abd Allah, when they followed one another,
At Mu'ta, and among them was Ja'far, the possessor of two wings.

On the morning when he went forth leading the believers,
Blessed in character, pure and radiant.

A man of strength, like the light of the full moon, from the family of Hashim,
Unyielding whenever oppression was proposed to him.

He fought with his spear until he fell, propped upon it,
In a battlefield where the spears were breaking.

His reward became that of the martyrs:
Gardens, green with trees and flourishing orchards.

In Ja'far we used to see, from Muhammad,
Dignity and firm resolve whenever he commanded.

The family of Hashim have never ceased in Islam
To be pillars of honor, whose glory cannot be reached.

They are the mountain of Islam, while the people around them
Stand before a lofty peak that delights and overwhelms.

Among them are Ja'far and his brother Ali,
And among them is Ahmad, the chosen one.

And Hamza and al-Abbas are among them, and among them
Are Aqil and the one whose water is extracted from the wood.

Ka'b Also Mourns Him

Ka'b ibn Malik also mourned Ja'far and his companions in poetry:

The eyes sleep, but the tears of your eye pour forth,
Streaming like the dripping of a rain cloud heavy with moisture.

It is as though between the ribs and the entrails
There were a penetrating flame causing me pain.

Out of grief for those men who followed one another,
Hastening at Mu'ta, departing and never returning.

May God bless them, young men,
And may the rain cloud pour upon their bones.

There they patiently gave their souls to God,
Out of fear of Him and zeal to ensure that they would not retreat.

They went ahead of the believers as though they were
The finest stallions among them, armored in iron.

They followed Ja'far and his banner,
Before them all—how excellent a leader he was.

Until the ranks were scattered, and Ja'far, among the ranks,
Lay fallen amid the deaths.

Then the radiant moon changed because of his loss,
And the sun was eclipsed and nearly set.

A noble man whose foundation was built upon Hashim,
A lofty branch, distinguished and of unshakable nobility.

A people through whom God protected His servants,
And upon whom the revealed Book descended.

Their faces are bright; you see their palms
Become generous and moist when drought and hardship come.

God guides them as a favor to His creation,
And through their sharp swords the Prophet, the Messenger, was given victory.

Explanation of Hassan ibn Thabit's Poetry

As for Hassan ibn Thabit's words:

"I saw the finest of the Muslims follow one another, going away"

Tajāba'u means that they followed one another.

Shu'ūb means that they departed and separated from the world and its people.

The word **sha'b** can mean either separation or gathering.

An example of its meaning as gathering appears in the poetry of **al-Tirmāh**:

He scattered the community of the tribe after its union,
While the young ones of today are the springtime of their dwelling.

One may also say: **"He scattered their gathering after its union."**

One says: **"He divided the people"** when he separated them from one another.

One says: **"The road became divided"** when it split apart.

One says: **"The branches of the tree became divided"** when they spread apart.

A staff may have **two branches** at its top.

The **sha'b of a mountain** refers to what branches apart from its peaks.

Regarding his words:

"And generations after them remained behind"

Al-khalf, with the *lām* carrying a sukun, refers to generations of people.

The poet said:

How wretched a creation your father was among us,
And how wretched was the generation that followed your father.

Al-khalf can also refer to the righteous successors.

God, Blessed and Exalted, says:

"Then there came after them successors who neglected prayer and followed desires."

Regarding:

"Blessed in character, pure and radiant"

Al-naqība refers to one's conduct and character. Thus he says that he was *maymūn al-naqība*—blessed in character, noble in his deeds.

Al-azhar means radiant or luminous.

Regarding:

"Unyielding whenever oppression was proposed to him"

Al-ābī is one who refuses either to commit injustice or to have injustice committed against him.

Al-mujassir means courageous. One says *rajul jasūr*, *jasir*, or *mujassir*—a courageous man.

Regarding:

"In a battlefield"

Al-mu'tarak is the place where people engage one another in combat.

I'tirāk means struggling or wrestling with one another. The word derives from *arak al-adīm*—to rub leather in order to soften it.

Al-tawd means a great mountain.

Regarding:

"That delights"

Al-rawq means admiration. One says: *rāqanī hādhā al-amr*—"this matter pleased me," meaning that it impressed or delighted me.

Regarding:

"And overwhelms"

He means that its sight renders one incapable of responding.

A thing that overwhelms someone is said to have abharahu—it overwhelmed or incapacitated him.

Something that *yabhar* is something that overwhelms or incapacitates.

Explanation of Ka'b's Poetry

As for Ka'b's words:

"And among them is a lion"

Bahālil is the plural of *bahlūl*.

A *bahlūl* is a lively, spirited man—that is, a generous man.

Regarding:

"The tears of your eye pour forth"

One says *hamala al-dam'*—"the tears flowed."

Anything that has been abandoned and is no longer used is described as muhmal, neglected.

Regarding:

"Streaming"

One says this of rain and tears.

It is *sahh*, *sahhan*, when it pours down intensely.

Imru' al-Qays said:

Then the water began streaming from every vessel,
While the branches of the kanbahal tree bent toward the chins.

Regarding:

"Like the dripping of the rain cloud"

Wakafa means "to drip."

One says: *wakafa al-dār*—"the house dripped."

Tears are said to *yakiffu*, *wakfan*, or *wakīfan*—to drip or pour.

A tear that is dripping is called *wākif*.

Al-dibāb is the plural of *dabbah*, meaning a long, elongated strip of leather from a large water-skin or water bag.

Regarding:

"Heavy with moisture"

Al-khadal means a wet body.

Akhdalātna al-samā' means "the sky drenched us heavily."

Regarding:

"Causing me pain"

He means: it returned to me and afflicted me again.

Al-shihāb means a flame of fire.

Al-ghamām means a cloud.

Al-musbil means complete, long, and abundant.

Al-hafīza derives from guarding sacred things and noble principles. In the context of war, it means courage and zeal in defense.

One says of a man: *dhū hafīza*—a man who possesses protective zeal.

One may also say: "men of honor and protective zeal."

Regarding:

"So that they would not retreat"

That is, so that they would not retreat or turn back.

One says: *nakala al-rajul 'an al-shay'* when a man hesitates and retreats from something.

In the language of the tribe of Tamim, one says *nakala yankulu*.

In the language of the people of the Hijaz, one says *nakila yankalu*.

Regarding:

"Like the finest stallions"

He compares them to powerful male camels.

Al-fanīq is the male camel that is not ridden or used because of its honored status among its people.

Regarding:

"Armored in iron"

He means the foremost and complete ones, who drag their tails as they walk.

Al-tafarrul means dragging one's train or garment.

Regarding the sun:

"And nearly set"

This means "nearly disappeared."

Everything that disappears is called **āfil**.

Al-qarm means a male camel.

Regarding:

"When drought and hardship come"

Al-māhil means having little rain.

Al-mumhil means the cessation of rain and the drying of the land.

The Family of Abu Talib

The male children of **Abu Talib** were four:

Talib, after whom he was given his kunyah;

Aqil, whose birth was ten years after Talib's;

Ja'far, who was born ten years after Aqil;

and **Ali**, the youngest of them, born ten years after Ja'far.

All of them had descendants except Talib, who left no descendants.

There were also **Umm Hani**, whose name was **Fakhita**, and **Jumana**.

Their mother was **Fatima bint Asad ibn Hashim**. She accepted Islam and became one who raised and cared for the Prophet.

We have already mentioned what the Prophet said about her at the time of her death.

She was the first Hashimite woman to give birth to a Hashimite.

[1141]

Al-Sari ibn Suhayl, through his chain of transmission from **al-Zubayr ibn al-Awwam**, reported:

"I heard the Messenger of God calling the women to pledge allegiance when God revealed:

'O Prophet, when believing women come to you pledging allegiance to you...'

Fatima bint Asad ibn Hashim was the first woman to pledge allegiance to the Messenger of God."

[1142]

Bakr ibn Abd al-Wahhab, through his chain of transmission, reported:

"The Messenger of God buried **Fatima bint Asad ibn Hashim**, the mother of Ali, at al-Rawha'.

"He shrouded her in his shirt, descended into her grave, and rolled around in her burial niche.

"He was asked about this, and he said:

'My father died when I was young, and my mother died. She and Abu Talib took me into their care. They made things easy for me and preferred me over their own children.

"I therefore wished that God would make her grave spacious for her.'"

She was a woman who had pledged allegiance and migrated, and was among the finest of the believing women.

The Messenger of God prayed for her and rewarded her with goodness.

[1143]

Ibn Abi Umayr, from Abd Allah ibn Sinan, through his chain of transmission from Abu Abd Allah Ja'far ibn Muhammad, reported that he said:

"Fatima bint Asad ibn Hashim, the mother of Ali ibn Abi Talib, entrusted her will to the Messenger of God, and he accepted her bequest.

"She said to him:

'O Messenger of God, I want to free this slave girl of mine.'

"The Messenger of God said to her:

'Whatever good you put forward, you will find it.'

"When she died, the Messenger of God removed his shirt and said:

'Shroud her in it.'

"He lay down in her burial niche and said:

'As for my shirt, it is a protection for her on the Day of Resurrection. As for my lying in her grave, it is so that God may make it spacious for her.'"

Umm Hani and Her Sister

Umm Hani and Jumana, the two daughters of Abu Talib and sisters of Ali, were among those who pledged allegiance.

When the Messenger of God conquered Mecca, he declared the blood of certain people lawful and said:

"Kill them wherever you find them."

The Messenger of God had previously proposed marriage to Umm Hani bint Abi Talib, but she excused herself to him, saying that she was a jealous woman who could not control herself, and he accepted her excuse.

[1144]

She married Hubayra ibn Abi Wahb al-Makhzumi.

Among those whose blood the Messenger of God had declared lawful were two men from her husband's relatives, from Banu Makhzum.

They sought protection from her.

Ali entered and saw them. He took his sword and stood intending to kill them.

She intervened between him and them. She was strong and twisted his hand, taking the sword from him and overpowering him.

She then closed the door of her house upon the two men.

Ali insisted, so she said:

"Between you and me is the Messenger of God."

The report reached the Messenger of God before Ali reached him.

When he saw the two men, he laughed and said to Ali:

"Well, Abu al-Hasan! Umm Hani has defeated you?"

Ali replied:

"O Messenger of God, by God, I had no control over my hand before she pulled the sword from it."

The Messenger of God said:

"If Abu Talib had fathered all people, they would have been strong."

Then he said to Umm Hani, smiling:

"We had declared their blood lawful, Umm Hani."

She replied:

"O Messenger of God, I have granted them protection, so give them to me."

He said:

"We grant protection to whomever you have protected, Umm Hani."

Then he said to Ali:

"Leave them and let them remain under her protection."

Jumana

Jumana was married to her cousin Abu Sufyan ibn al-Harith ibn Abd al-Muttalib.

This Abu Sufyan was the foster-brother of the Messenger of God. Halima nursed them both.

He was close to the Messenger of God, accepted Islam at the conquest of Mecca, and participated in Hunayn.

The Messenger of God said:

"I hope that Abu Sufyan will be a successor to his uncle Hamza."

The Messenger of God also said concerning him:

"Abu Sufyan is among the young men of Paradise."

He died in Medina.

The cause of his death was a wart on his head. A barber shaved it at Mina and cut it.

When he was dying, he said to his family:

"Do not weep for me, for since I accepted Islam I have not committed a deliberate sin."

He died in the year 20 AH and was buried at al-Baqi'.

He left no descendants.

He was the cousin of the Messenger of God.

His father was al-Harith, the eldest son of Abd al-Muttalib. Al-Harith was the one after whom Abd al-Muttalib was given his kunyah.

He participated with him in digging the well of Zamzam and was the uncle of the Messenger of God.

The Children of Abd al-Muttalib

Abd al-Muttalib ibn Hashim, the grandfather of the Messenger of God, had ten sons and six daughters.

His youngest son was Abd Allah, the father of the Messenger of God, who died during Abd al-Muttalib's lifetime.

His other sons were:

- al-Harith, his eldest son;
- al-Zubayr;
- Abu Talib, whose name was Abd Manaf;
- al-Abbas;
- Dirar;
- Hamza;
- al-Muqawwam;
- Abu Lahab, whose name was Abd al-Uzza;
- and al-Abd, whose name was Hajl, although it is also said that his name was Nawfal.

These were the paternal uncles of the Prophet.

Abd Allah, Abu Talib, al-Zubayr, Atika, Umayma, al-Bayda, and Barra were seven full siblings. Their mother was Fatima bint Amr ibn Imran ibn Makhzum.

Al-Abbas and Dirar were full brothers. Their mother was Nubayla, from the descendants of al-Nimr ibn Qasit.

Hamza, al-Muqawwam, and Safiyya were full siblings. Their mother was Hala bint Wahb ibn Abd Manaf ibn Zuhra.

Al-Harith and Arwa were full siblings. Their mother was Safiyya, a woman from Banu Amir ibn Sa'sa'a.

Al-Abd had a different mother from the others. His mother was Mumtani'a bint Amr, from Khuzā'a.

Abu Talib

When the Messenger of God was born, his grandfather Abd al-Muttalib took care of him.

When Abd al-Muttalib died, his uncle Abu Talib, the full brother of his father, took care of him.

When God chose him for prophethood and sent him with the message, Abu Talib protected him, supported him, and prevented those who wished to harm him from doing so.

He believed the Messenger of God regarding the message and prophethood he brought and harshly rebuked those who rejected and denied it.

However, he did not publicly declare Islam.

This was more beneficial to the Messenger of God, because Abu Talib was a leader who was obeyed among his people. Had he accepted Islam openly, he would merely have been one of

the Muslims, and he would not have been able to defend the Messenger of God to the extent that he did while remaining in his position.

The polytheists would not have shown him the same deference and restraint that they showed him.

This was among the means by which God aided His Messenger.

His efforts in supporting the Messenger of God, defending him, and protecting him from harm are so extensive that recounting them in full would exceed the scope of this book.

He also composed many famous poems in which he called upon the Arab tribes to support the Messenger of God, affirmed his virtue and truthfulness, commanded his two sons Ali and Ja'far to follow him, encouraged them to do so, and acknowledged the prophethood of Muhammad.

He mentioned this in several places in his poetry.

Among his verses are the following:

Tell this on my behalf to Lu'ayy and those between us,
And specifically to the sons of Ka'b from Lu'ayy:

Do you not know that we have found Muhammad
To be a prophet like Moses, as it was written in the earliest books?

And that among mankind there is love for him,
And there is no good in one whom God has singled out for love.

And in another place he said:

Thus the son of Abd Allah became among us confirmed,
Though disliked and reproached by some of our people.

And in a long poem he said:

No people—may your father perish—have abandoned a leader
Who protects what must be protected, a resolute defender.

A radiant man whose face is prayed to for rain,
A refuge for orphans and protection for widows.

To him the afflicted of the family of Hashim turn for refuge;
With him they find blessing and abundant favor.

And in the same poem:

You have lied, by the House of God! We shall never abandon Ahmad
While we fight and struggle around him.

Nor shall we surrender him until we fall around him,
Forgetting our sons and our wives.

By my life, I have become passionately devoted to Ahmad
And to his brothers, like a lover who continually remains devoted.

May he never cease, throughout this world, to be
A beauty for its people and an adornment for those whom the Lord of difficulties befriends.

There is no one among mankind like him, nor any man more deserving of hope,
When rulers stand to judge between people.

Patient, rightly guided, just, never heedless,
He follows a God concerning whom he is never negligent.

Thus the Lord of mankind strengthened him with His aid
And made manifest a religion whose truth had been rejected.

By God, were it not that I feared that I would be reviled
And that our elders would be attacked in gatherings,

We would follow him in every circumstance of time,
Whether seriously or in jest.

They know that our son is not a liar in our eyes,
Nor does he concern himself with anything but what is true.

Explanation of Unfamiliar Expressions

Regarding his words:

"Who protects what must be protected"

Dhimmār means everything that a man is obligated to protect and defend. If he neglects it, the people blame him for doing so.

Al-dhamr means blame and encouragement to action.

Al-dharib means one who is serious and forceful in everything.

The poet said:

"I encountered a forceful woman among the forceful."

He means a sharp-tongued or assertive woman.

Al-muwakkal of a man means one who entrusts his affairs to another person, who then takes care of them for him.

Likewise, a man who entrusts his affairs to someone else is called *mukallī*.

Regarding:

"A radiant man whose face is prayed to for rain"

Al-ghamām means clouds.

Al-thimāl means milk.

The Messenger Cites Abu Talib's Poetry

[1145]

When the Messenger of God prayed against Mudar, saying:

"O God, make it upon them like the years of Joseph,"

the rain was withheld from them.

They suffered drought until most of them perished.

The Messenger of God then felt compassion for them and prayed for rain.

He asked God for rain, and before he had even departed, the people were nearly overwhelmed by the intensity of the rain.

The Prophet said:

"If Abu Talib had witnessed this scene, it would have pleased him."

He then recited part of Abu Talib's poetry:

"A radiant man whose face is prayed to for rain..."

His Citation of Abu Talib's Poetry at Badr

When Ubayda ibn al-Harith ibn Abd al-Muttalib was wounded at Badr, the Messenger of God departed and proceeded along part of the road.

The marrow of Ubayda's leg began to flow because he had been struck there. His condition became severe and he was near death.

The Messenger of God came to him, prayed for him, praised him, and gave him the good news of Paradise.

He was an elderly man.

It is said that he fought his opponent while leaning upon a staff.

He said to the Messenger of God:

"We are as Abu Talib said."

He then recited these verses:

"Nor shall we surrender him until we fall around him,
Forgetting our sons and our wives."

Returning to the Account of Abu Talib

Abu Talib's outward adherence to the religion of the Arabs and his apparent devotion to it, despite his belief in the Messenger of God and his acknowledgment of his prophethood, was among the ways by which God strengthened Muhammad's cause.

For had Abu Talib publicly declared Islam, the Arabs would have rejected him and those among them who supported the Messenger of God would no longer have been able to rely upon him in the same way.

There are numerous reports concerning Abu Talib's raising of the Messenger of God, preferring him over his own children, taking responsibility for him, and sacrificing himself for his sake.

Hamza ibn Abd al-Muttalib

As for **Hamza ibn Abd al-Muttalib**, the uncle of the Messenger of God and the uncle of Ali, he possessed the same protective zeal toward the Messenger of God and defended him just as Abu Talib did.

He did not accept Islam until one day when he went out hunting.

The Messenger of God was passing through the Sacred Mosque calling upon Quraysh, and they insulted him.

The one who spoke most against him was **Abu Jahl**.

Hamza returned from hunting and was informed of what had happened.

He came in anger, wearing the bow he had been carrying while hunting.

Whenever he entered the mosque, his custom was to begin by circumambulating the Kaaba, then go to the gathering place of Banu Abd al-Muttalib and sit there.

But on this occasion he did not stop for anything.

He went directly to Abu Jahl, struck him a terrible blow that split his head, and said:

"Do you insult my nephew? I follow his religion and say what he says. Answer me if you can."

Men from Banu Makhzum rose to defend Abu Jahl.

Abu Jahl stopped them and said:

"Leave Abu Umara alone. By God, I did indeed insult his nephew with a terrible insult."

He had done this because he hoped to win Hamza over and prevent him from accepting Islam.

But Hamza persisted in Islam.

He went to the Messenger of God and publicly declared his Islam.

The Banu Abd Shams realized that Hamza would now protect the Messenger of God because he had become Muslim.

Hamza was a man whom Quraysh could not easily challenge. He was formidable, strong in argument, and proud.

Thus Banu Abd Shams ceased harming the Prophet and stopped insulting him.

Hamza openly declared his Islam and joined the Prophet's household.

Hamza's Descendants

Hamza's kunyah was **Abu Umara**.

He left no surviving descendants.

He had a son whom he named **Umara**, from a woman of Banu al-Najjar, but the boy died.

He also had a daughter known as **Umm Abiha**.

She was the girl concerning whom the previously mentioned report states that Ali brought her out of Mecca during the Messenger of God's Umrah after Hudaybiyya, and that those mentioned in that report disputed over taking responsibility for her care.

Ali offered her to the Messenger of God in marriage.

The Prophet said:

"She is my niece through nursing."

Hamza had been nursed together with the Messenger of God. A woman from Mecca, known as **Thuwayba**, had nursed them both.

Footnotes

[1] Qur'an 20:119

"And you will not be thirsty therein, nor exposed to the sun."

[2] Qur'an 19:59

"Then there came after them successors who neglected prayer and followed desires."

[3] Qur'an 60:12

"O Prophet, when believing women come to you pledging allegiance to you..."

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[i]

Hassan ibn Thabit ibn al-Mundhir was one of the poets who lived across the pre-Islamic and Islamic periods and was known as the poet of the Messenger of God.

His kunyah was Abu al-Walid.

He was born eight years before the birth of the Messenger of God and lived for 120 years.

[ii]

He was one of the poets of the Messenger of God who defended him against attacks.

He accepted Islam and witnessed the Pledge of al-Aqaba.

He died during the reign of Mu'awiya in 50 AH at the age of seventy-seven.

[iii]

They were Abd Allah ibn Abi Rabi'a and al-Harith ibn Hisham.

(*Al-Maghazi*, 2/829; *Sirat Ibn Hisham*, 4/53.)

[iv]

It is reported that he was one of five men who resembled the Messenger of God.

He was Abu Sufyan ibn al-Harith ibn Abd al-Muttalib ibn Hashim, the cousin of the Messenger of God and his foster-brother.

He had been close to the Messenger of God before the beginning of his prophethood. Afterward, however, he opposed and satirized him.

He was a poet, and Hassan ibn Thabit responded to him by saying:

"You insulted Muhammad, so I answered you,
And with God is the recompense for that."

Abu Hashim said that Abu Sufyan ibn al-Harith recited poetry concerning his acceptance of Islam and apologized for what had preceded it.

Among his verses were:

By your life, on the day I carried a banner
To make the horses of al-Lat overcome Muhammad's horses,

I was like one wandering through darkness,
But now is my time to be guided and to find the right path.

He died in 16 AH.

He was the one who dug his own grave three days before his death.

(*Sirat Ibn Hisham*, 4/401; *al-Darajat al-Rafi'a*, p. 167.)

[v]

She was Umm Hakim.

[vi]

She was Umm al-Zubayr.

She accepted Islam and witnessed the Battle of the Trench.

She killed a Jewish man when Hassan ibn Thabit remained behind in Medina and she asked him to go and kill the man.

He excused himself.

When she killed the man herself, she did so out of fear that he might return to his people and guide them to the vulnerable areas of the Muslims.

The Prophet assigned her a share of the spoils and she transmitted hadith.

Before Islam, she had been married to al-Harith ibn Harb ibn Umayya, who died.

Afterward she married al-Awwam ibn Khuwaylid, the brother of Khadija bint Khuwaylid.

She bore him al-Zubayr, al-Sa'ib, and Abd al-Ka'ba.

She died in Medina in 20 AH at the age of seventy-three and was buried in al-Baqi'.

(*Al-Madkhal* by Ibn al-Hajj, 1/265; *Wafa al-Wafa*, 2/105; *al-Manaqib*.)

[vii]

He recited these verses concerning the document and the eating of the document by the termites.

[viii]

He was Amr ibn Hisham ibn al-Mughira al-Makhzumi.

His kunyah was Abu al-Hakam.

The Muslims gave him the kunyah Abu Jahl.

He was the most vehemently hostile of the people toward the Messenger of God.

He participated at Badr and was among the polytheists who were killed there.

(*Imta' al-Asma'*, 1/18; *al-Sira al-Halabiyya*, 2/33.)

His Struggle

Hamza migrated with the Messenger of God (may God bless him and his family) to Medina and took part in the Battle of Badr. When the two sides drew up for battle that day, three men from among the polytheists—Utba [1], Shayba, the two sons of Rabi'a, and al-Walid ibn Utba—came forward and called for single combat.

Ali (peace be upon him), Hamza, the uncle of the Messenger of God (may God bless him and his family), and Ubayda ibn al-Harith ibn Abd al-Muttalib came out to meet them. Ubayda was an elderly man at that time; he went out to single combat leaning upon his staff.

When they engaged in combat that day, God, Mighty and Glorious, revealed concerning them:

"These are two adversaries who have disputed concerning their Lord." [2]

Ali (peace be upon him) fought al-Walid ibn Utba and killed him. Hamza fought Shayba and killed him. Ubayda ibn al-Harith fought Utba, and each of them struck the other a blow that incapacitated his opponent. Hamza and Ali then turned upon Utba and killed him. They rescued Ubayda ibn al-Harith, whose leg had been severed by Utba. Ubayda died from that wound after they returned to Medina, at al-Safra'. [3]

That day Hamza also killed Tu'ayma ibn Adi, Saba' al-Khuza'i, and a number of other polytheists.

His Bravery

Hamza was called the Lion of God and the Lion of His Messenger, because of his courage, bravery, and boldness. He took part in the Battle of Uhud and dealt the polytheists a severe blow, killing many of them. On that day he killed Uthman ibn Abi Talha, the standard-bearer of the polytheists.

Whenever Hamza attacked that day, they would scatter, and none of them would stand against him. He attacked a group of them and they broke apart. Among them was Wahshi ibn al-Harith, who was one of the black slaves of Mecca and belonged to Jubayr ibn Mut'im. Wahshi concealed himself behind a tree while Hamza did not turn toward him, continuing to advance in pursuit of the polytheists.

Wahshi threw a spear that he carried and struck Hamza in a fatal place. Hamza fell, and the polytheists surrounded him and mutilated his body because of the severity of the destruction he had inflicted upon them and the great number of them whom he had killed.

Hind, the mother of Mu'awiya, had been with the polytheists that day, urging them to fight. When Hamza was killed, she came to him, opened his abdomen, took a piece of his liver, put it in her mouth, and chewed it. She tried to swallow it but could not, so she spat it out.

The Prophet (may God bless him and his family) said:

"Had she swallowed it until Hamza's blood became mixed with her blood, the Fire would not have consumed her; but God refused that."

The Messenger of God (may God bless him and his family) stood over him, deeply grieved. He said:

"If God gives me power over them, I shall mutilate seventy of them."

Then God, Mighty and Glorious, revealed:

"If you punish, then punish with the like of that with which you were punished. But if you are patient, that is better for those who are patient. And be patient, and your patience is only through God." [4]

The Messenger of God (may God bless him and his family) remained patient, and he buried him together with the martyrs at the places where they had fallen.

When the Prophet returned to Medina, he heard the women of the Ansar weeping over those among them who had been killed. He said:

"But Hamza has no one to weep over him."

The Ansar heard this. Their women gathered and came to the house of the Messenger of God (may God bless him and his family), where they began weeping for Hamza. The Prophet came out, thanked them, praised them for what they had done, and ordered them to return home.

The Killer of Hamza

Wahshi later became Muslim. The Messenger of God (may God bless him and his family) said to him:

"Keep your face hidden from me."

Whenever Wahshi saw him afterward, he would conceal himself from him.

Wahshi later went to Syria. He used to drink wine and wear saffron-dyed garments. He was flogged for drinking wine and was the first person in Syria to receive the prescribed punishment for drinking wine.

Al-Abbas ibn Abd al-Muttalib

As for al-Abbas ibn Abd al-Muttalib [5], the uncle of the Messenger of God, he was three years older than the Messenger of God (may God bless him and his family). He did not become Muslim until after he had participated in Badr with the polytheists of Mecca.

The Messenger of God (may God bless him and his family) had said to the Muslims on the day of Badr:

“Whomever among the Banu Hashim you are able to take prisoner, do not kill him, for they were forced to come out.”

Thus al-Abbas was among those taken prisoner, and he was bound tightly. He groaned because of the severity of the bonds. Whenever the Messenger of God (may God bless him and his family) heard him groaning, he would say:

“Be considerate toward al-Abbas, for he is my uncle, and a man’s paternal uncle is like his father.”

When the Messenger of God (may God bless him and his family) granted freedom to the polytheists captured at Badr in return for their ransoms, he said to al-Abbas:

“Ransom yourself and your nephew Aqil, for he has no money.”

Aqil had also been captured with him.

Al-Abbas said:

“I have no money.”

The Messenger of God (may God bless him and his family) replied:

“Then where is the money that you gave to Umm al-Fadl when you left Mecca, saying to her: ‘If I am killed, so-and-so is for Abdullah, so-and-so for al-Fadl, so-and-so for you, and so-and-so for such-and-such a person’?”

He reminded him of what he had said.

Al-Abbas replied:

“By God, no one heard that from me except her. No one informed you of it except God.”

He then became Muslim and paid the ransom for himself and for Aqil ibn Abi Talib.

He was with the Prophet on the Night of al-Aqaba, and the Prophet entrusted him with the covenant made with the Ansar. When Mecca was conquered, the Messenger of God gave him responsibility for providing drinking water.

Al-Abbas lived after the Messenger of God until the time of Uthman ibn Affan. He died during Uthman’s reign in Medina, having become blind.

Throughout the years following the Messenger of God, al-Abbas recognized Ali's right and urged him to undertake his rightful position, offering himself in support of him.

When the Messenger of God died, al-Abbas entrusted his affairs to Ali and did not oppose him in anything concerning his assumption of authority. He said to him:

"Where will you bury him, Abu al-Hasan?"

Ali replied:

"In the place where he died."

And this was done.

There was no disagreement between them except for what is outwardly reported: that al-Abbas claimed the inheritance of the Messenger of God and disputed over it with Ali before Abu Bakr, who ruled in favor of Ali.

It has been said that their dispute was intended to make Abu Bakr aware of the right of Ali that he had appropriated.

One of the theologians once said to a Shi'i during the Abbasid period:

"Did Ali not dispute with al-Abbas before Abu Bakr?"

He then said:

"Which of the two was in the right?"

He intended that if the man said al-Abbas had wronged Ali, he would be insulting the Abbasids; and if he said Ali was in the right, he would also offend the Abbasids.

The man replied:

"Both of them were in the right, just as the two men who climbed over the wall of the sanctuary to David (peace be upon him) were both in the right when they disputed before him. They only intended to establish the truth concerning the error in which he had fallen."

Likewise, he said, Ali and al-Abbas intended the same thing.

Do you not see that when Abu Bakr said what he said concerning the Messenger of God—something that established Ali's right—and then dismissed the matter without discussion, al-Abbas did no more than smile, take Ali by the hand, and leave with him?

Al-Abbas was fond of receiving financial gifts. He once came to the Messenger of God, who had received some money and ordered it to be poured out in one part of the mosque. The Prophet then went out to prayer and passed by it without turning toward it.

When he finished the prayer, al-Abbas approached him and said:

“O Messenger of God, this money has arrived while I have dependents and debts. Give me from it whatever you think appropriate.”

The Prophet said:

“Take enough from it to suffice you.”

Al-Abbas went to the money, spread out his cloak, and took a large amount. He tried to lift it but was unable to do so. He repeatedly reduced the amount until he was able to carry what he had taken, and then departed.

The Messenger of God followed him with his eyes but said nothing.

Umar later established stipends for various people. He assigned four thousand to every man who had participated in Badr, but assigned twelve thousand to al-Abbas.

During the Year of the Ashes, when the drought became severe, he went out with the people to seek rain for them. When he stood to pray for rain, he took al-Abbas by the hand and said:

“O God, this is our elder, our master, and the uncle of our Prophet. Through him we turn toward You, so give us rain.”

And they were given rain.

Al-Abbas died at the age of eighty-nine. Uthman ibn Affan led the funeral prayer over him, and his son Abdullah lowered him into the grave.

Returning to the Mention of the Sons of Abu Talib

Talib ibn Abi Talib

As for Talib ibn Abi Talib, he is the one who said these verses about the Messenger of God (may God bless him and his family):

The glory of the Banu Hashim has now arisen,
And he became the noble one and the radiant star.

And the purest of the Banu Hashim is Ahmad,
The Messenger of the King, after an interval [between prophets].

Great in noble qualities, a light for the lands,
Pure of heart, free of all shame.

Noble in his conduct, generous of hand,
When the possessor of generosity and power withholds.

Chaste, God-fearing, pure of garment,
Clean in his trousers and his waist-wrap.

Generous, exalted among the freedmen,
An adornment to relatives and family.

Fierce like a lion, whom the rebuke
Of one who rebukes cannot restrain in war.

How many a slain man lies fallen because of him,
Long in his groaning and sighing.

Explanation of Unusual Vocabulary

As for his words **"the glory of the Banu Hashim"**: *majd* means nobility and excellence of honor. One says *majjada al-rijal* and *majuda*, meaning that a man's deeds were noble. God, Mighty and Glorious, is *al-Majid*, because of the majesty of His deeds, and His creation glorifies Him because of His greatness.

Al-mahd means something pure, unmixed with anything else. A person described as *mamhud al-dariba* is one who is pure in character. Silver is *mahd* when nothing has been mixed with it.

Al-fatrah originally means stillness. The period between two messengers is therefore called a *fatrah*.

Al-dunn means stinginess. God says:

"And he is not grudging concerning the unseen." [6]

His phrase **"pure of garment"** means pure in what he wears. The garment referred to is the broad sewn garment.

Sarwal refers to trousers, while *izar* is what a person wraps around himself.

By describing these things as pure and clean, he intends freedom from defects and impurities. The Arabs used this as a metaphor for being free of faults. God, Mighty and Glorious, says:

"And purify your garments." [7]

Al-mu'taq means those who seek or pursue.

Al-ashwas is a person whose anger can be recognized from his gaze. One says of a man *ashwas* and of a woman *shawsa'*.

Al-zajr: one says, "I drove the camel onward until it went," and, "I rebuked an evil worker concerning his work and he desisted," meaning that I prohibited him and he stopped. With camels and similar animals, it means urging them onward; with people, it means prohibition and restraint.

Groaning and sighing: when a person in pain says "ah," he has groaned.

Al-zafrah comes from *al-zafr* and *al-zafir*. It is the act of filling one's chest with grief and then expelling it with a groan. God, Mighty and Glorious, says, describing the people of Hell:

“And for them therein is sighing and inhalation.” [8]

The *zafir* is what we have described; the *shahiq* is drawing the breath out with it. A person expels his breath forcefully until it leaves his chest.

Returning to the Mention of Talib

When the people of Mecca went out toward Badr, the Banu Hashim stayed behind. The Meccans forced them to go out, and this is why the Messenger of God (may God bless him and his family) said to the Muslims at Badr:

“Whomever among the Banu Hashim you are able to capture, do not kill, for they were only forced to come out.”

Regarding this, Talib ibn Abi Talib said these verses:

O Lord, since they went out with Talib
In a great company toward these places of battle,

Make them the defeated who prevail,
And return them robbed as those who rob.

Al-miqnab means approximately three hundred horsemen.

Aqil ibn Abi Talib

As for Aqil ibn Abi Talib, he was the son most beloved to Abu Talib. Abu Talib entrusted Ali to the Messenger of God and Ja‘far to al-Abbas so that they might raise them, as the noble families of the Arabs used to do with their children. He kept Aqil with himself and said:

“So long as Aqil remains for me, I do not care.”

This was part of what God, Mighty and Glorious, arranged for Ali (peace be upon him), for when Ali was with the Messenger of God, God favored him with precedence in accepting Islam.

1146

The Messenger of God (may God bless him and his family) used to say to Aqil:

“I love you, Aqil, with two loves: a love for you, and a love because Abu Talib loved you.”

On the Night of Badr

1147

It is related from the Commander of the Faithful (peace be upon him) that he said:

When it was the night of Badr, we were afflicted by a feverish illness and some rain. The people scattered, taking shelter beneath the trees. During the night I looked toward them, but I could not see the Messenger of God. He remained standing in prayer while the people slept, until dawn broke.

Then he called:

“Prayer, servants of God!”

The people came toward him from beneath the trees, and he led them in prayer.

Afterward, when he had moved on, he addressed them. He spoke about the virtue of jihad and encouraged them toward it. Then he said:

“The Banu al-Muttalib are people who were forced to come out and did not intend to fight you. Therefore, if any of you encounters one of them, do not kill him if you are able; instead take him prisoner and bring him to me as a captive.”

He said:

When the people were defeated, some were killed and others captured, I looked and saw Aqil among the prisoners, his hand bound to his neck with a leather strap. I turned away from him.

He called out to me:

“O Ali, O son of my mother! By God, you saw my position, yet deliberately turned away from me.”

Ali (peace be upon him) said:

I did not answer him. I went to the Prophet (may God bless him and his family) and said:

“O Messenger of God, would you like to see Abu Yazid, with his hand bound to his neck by a leather strap?”

The Prophet said:

“Let us go to him.”

We walked toward him. When Aqil saw us, he said:

“O Messenger of God, if you have killed Abu Jahl, then you have triumphed. Otherwise, catch up with him while the people are still causing wounds to one another.”

The Messenger of God said:

“Rather, God killed him, Aqil.”

Aqil went to his wife, Fatima bint al-Walid ibn Utba ibn Rabi'a, after returning from fighting the polytheists at Hunayn. His sword was stained with blood.

She said to him:

"I know that you fought, but what spoils have you brought us?"

He took out a needle and said:

"This is what I acquired. Here, take it and use it to sew your clothes."

She took it.

Then she heard the caller of the Messenger of God (may God bless him and his family) announce:

"Whoever has taken anything from the spoils must bring it, even if it is a needle. Return the needle and the thread, for misappropriation is in the Fire."

Aqil returned to her and said:

"I do not think your needle has escaped you."

He took it and went with it, together with everything else he had brought, and placed it among the spoils.

Among what he brought was a red gemstone and a slave girl.

The Messenger of God looked at the gemstone and admired it. He said:

"Were it not for the issue of ownership"—meaning that we would protect it—

and he transferred the gemstone and the slave girl to Aqil.

Explanation of Unusual Vocabulary

Al-khayyat means what is used for sewing.

Al-mikhyat means that with which something is sewn, and also the clothing and other things that have been sewn.

After this, Aqil became inclined toward wealth and earning money, seeing that people had become inclined toward such things.

He came to Ali (peace be upon him) while Ali was in Kufa and said:

"Give me enough money to live as comfortably as other people do."

Ali showed him what he had, but Aqil did not accept it. He said:

"Give me what is in your possession of the Muslims' money."

Ali said:

“As for that, I have no authority over it. But I can write to you concerning my property at Yanbu‘, and we can take something from it.”

Aqil replied:

“That will not satisfy me at all. I shall go to a man who will give me what I want.”

He went to Mu‘awiya. Mu‘awiya was pleased at his arrival, gathered the leading men of Syria, brought Aqil before them, and said:

“This is Abu Yazid, Aqil ibn Abi Talib. He has chosen us over his brother Ali and has considered us better for him than Ali.”

Aqil said:

“That is so, Mu‘awiya. Among us there is gentleness in weakness and dignity in arrogance, while you, the Banu Umayya, have gentleness in treachery and dignity in pride.”

Then he looked at Mu‘awiya, surveyed the faces of those around him, and laughed.

Mu‘awiya said:

“Why are you laughing, Abu Yazid? Are you laughing at us or at Ali?”

He replied:

“By God, I laughed at what God has allotted to Ali. I was once in his assembly and looked at those present, but I saw neither the Emigrants nor the Helpers. Then I looked at those in your assembly and did not see the freedmen of Mecca or the remnants of the confederates.”

Mu‘awiya then said to the people of Syria:

“Are you not amazed at a man who says this while you recite the words of God, Mighty and Glorious:

‘Perished the hands of Abu Lahab, and he has perished. His wealth has not availed him, nor what he earned. He will enter a Fire of blazing flame.’ [9]

And Abu Lahab was Ali's uncle.”

He then turned to Aqil and said:

“Abu Yazid, where do you think your uncle Abu Lahab is now, in the Fire? And what is he doing there?”

Aqil turned toward the people of Syria and said:

“Are you not amazed that Mu‘awiya says such a thing while you recite:

‘And his wife, the carrier of firewood, around her neck is a rope of twisted fiber.’ [10]

And she is Mu‘awiya’s aunt.”

Then he turned to Mu‘awiya and said:

“If you wish to know where Abu Lahab is in the Fire, you will see him there when you enter it, lying upon your aunt, the carrier of firewood. Then you will know that the rider is superior to the mount.”

Mu‘awiya regretted having provoked him and said:

“We did not intend all this, Abu Yazid. We merely wanted to joke with you and put you at ease.”

Aqil said:

“That is likewise what I intended: to put you at ease and joke with you.”

Mu‘awiya said:

“As for us, Abu Yazid, after this we shall do for you what Ali did not do. It has reached me that you asked him and he refused you, whereas we will give you without your having to ask us.”

He intended by this to placate Aqil so that he would speak more gently toward him.

Aqil replied:

“Yes. I asked Ali, and he offered me his own property, but that did not satisfy me. I asked him for his religion, and he refused to give me that. You grant what Ali withholds, while you are stingy with what he offered.”

Mu‘awiya fell silent.

When the people of Syria had dispersed, Mu‘awiya called for a large sum of money and gave it to Aqil. He said:

“Abu Yazid, we had wished for you to remain with us. But after what has passed between us, return to wherever you came from.”

Aqil replied:

“By God, I myself desire that from you. Whether you give me much or little is the same to me, and the difference between us is of little consequence to me. I was not among those who would permit you to parade your generosity and diminish it out of greed for what you might give me.”

And he departed.

Aqil Gives Water to the Pilgrims

1150

Ata ibn Abi Rabah related that he said:

I saw Aqil ibn Abi Talib drawing water from a well of Zamzam with a large leather water-bucket. He drew many buckets, giving water to the pilgrims. With him were men from his family, and none of their clients or freedmen were with them.

The lower parts of their shirts were wet with water. They would draw water before the pilgrimage during the days of Mina and after the pilgrimage, seeking reward through this. They did not leave the task to a slave or a client of theirs.

Regarding Ali and Aqil, Ja'da ibn Hubayra al-Makhzumi [11] said this verse:

I am from the Banu Makhzum, if you ask,
And my mother is from Hashim, the finest of tribes.

Who can rise against me boasting of his maternal uncle,
When my maternal uncle is Ali, the generous, and Aqil?

Explanation of Unusual Vocabulary

Yanu'u means "to rise," that is, to rise boasting of one's maternal uncle.

One says *na'a* when someone rises with difficulty, and *na'a* can also mean to lean toward falling.

Abu Ishaq said:

"Aqil ibn Abi Talib was among the people most knowledgeable in genealogy."

He also said that Aqil used to say:

"Ma'add is called Abu Fada'a."

Abdullah ibn Abbas

As for Abdullah ibn Abbas, he was among the special supporters of the Commander of the Faithful, Ali (peace be upon him), and among those who loved him. He was especially close to him, inclined toward him, supported him, and disassociated himself from his enemies.

He participated with him in his wars and remained loyal to his authority until he died at Ta'if. He became blind in the year 68 AH, at the age of seventy-two.

Earlier we have mentioned his loyalty to Ali (peace be upon him), and there are many accounts of his statements concerning Ali's virtues.

The Abbas family as a whole—al-Abbas and all his descendants—were likewise loyal to Ali and, after him, to his descendants. They recognized their Imamate on that basis.

When some of them later rose up, displayed black clothing, or wore it in mourning—claiming that it was out of grief for al-Husayn (peace be upon him)—and proclaimed that they were seeking vengeance for his blood and calling people toward the Imams among his descendants, once they gained power they turned against them with hostility, persecution, and attacks many times greater than what the Umayyads had previously done to them.

Thus their loyalty to him became hostility, their affection became hatred, after they had appropriated their rights and distanced themselves from what they had sought through them, despite their former loyalty, affection, and closeness of kinship.

Mention of the Virtues of the Imams from the Descendants of al-Husayn ibn Ali (Peace Be Upon Him)

Mention of the Virtue of Ali ibn al-Husayn (Peace Be Upon Him)

Ali ibn al-Husayn (peace be upon him) was the most devout and virtuous person of his age. Both the elite and the general public bore witness to this, and he was known as **the Master of the Worshippers**.

Al-Sajjad and the Battle of al-Taff

He was with his father al-Husayn (peace be upon him) on the day of al-Taff and was his designated successor.

He had a son, Muhammad ibn Ali, who at that time was among the dependents and children accompanying the family.

Ali ibn al-Husayn was then gravely ill and was unable to fight. He remained among the women, who cared for him.

His brother Ali al-Asghar was killed.

After they had all been killed, Ali ibn al-Husayn was carried away together with the women and children. A man from Syria saw him in the condition he was in and felt pity for him. He took him under his protection.

Ali ibn al-Husayn said:

“He cared for me, treated me gently, and wept whenever he saw the weakness and illness I was suffering from. The women entrusted me to him out of fear for me, believing well of him and thinking that he would conceal me.”

When we reached Kufa, the man reported my situation to Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad. He searched for me but did not find me.

Then I heard an announcement:

“Whoever finds Ali ibn al-Husayn and brings him here will receive three hundred dirhams.”

The man entered the place where I was staying and said:

“O son of the daughter of the Messenger of God, you can hear the announcement. I fear for myself if I conceal your whereabouts.”

He took my hand, bound it to my neck, and brought me to Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad. He took the three hundred dirhams from him, while I watched them.

When the accursed Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad [12] saw him, he said:

“Are you Ali ibn al-Husayn?”

Ali (peace be upon him) replied:

“Yes.”

He said:

“Did God not kill Ali ibn al-Husayn?”

Ali ibn al-Husayn (peace be upon him) replied:

“I had a brother named Ali, and the people killed him.”

Ubayd Allah said:

“God killed him.”

Ali (peace be upon him) replied:

“God takes souls at the time of their death.” [13]

Qur'anic References

[1] Qur’an 22:19.

[2] Qur’an 16:126.

[3] Qur’an 81:24.

[4] Qur’an 74:4.

[5] Qur’an 11:106.

[6] Qur’an, Surat al-Masad (111).

[7] Qur’an, Surat al-Masad (111).

[8] Qur’an 39:42.

Editorial Notes

[i] He was Utba ibn Rabi‘a ibn Abd Qays, whose kunya was Abu al-Walid. He was one of the prominent figures of Quraysh and harbored intense hostility toward the Messenger of God. He was raised in the household of Harb ibn Umayya because he was an orphan. He took part in Badr. He was large-bodied and had a large head. On the day of Badr he asked for a helmet to wear but could not find one large enough for his head. He was killed by Ali ibn Abi Talib. (*Al-Rawd al-Unuf*, 1/121; *Nasab Quraysh*, p. 153.)

[ii] *Al-Safra’*, in the feminine form, is the Wadi al-Safra’, a valley in the vicinity of Medina. It contains many palm trees and crops and lies along the pilgrims’ route. It is one stage from Badr, and its water comes from springs.
(*Marasid al-Ittila‘*, entry “al-Safra’”.)

[iii] His mother was the first Arab woman to clothe the Ka‘ba in silk, fulfilling a vow she had made.

[iv] His mother was Umm Hani, the daughter of Abu Talib. He took part with Ali (peace be upon him) in the Battle of Siffin and fought there with distinction. His maternal uncle, the Commander of the Faithful (peace be upon him), appointed him over Khurasan. They said that he was a jurist. He died during the rule of Mu‘awiya.
(*Al-Darajat al-Rafi‘a*, p. 412; *Al-Isti‘ab*, 1/240.)

[v] He was born in 39 AH. His father was Ziyad ibn Sumayya. He was the son of Ubayd the Roman, but Mu‘awiya attributed him to his father, and he became known as “Ziyad ibn his father.” Ziyad’s mother was Marjana, who was a Zoroastrian. She became known for prostitution. Ziyad separated from her, and she married Shirawayh, who was an unbeliever. Ziyad was raised from childhood in his mother's husband's household. When he grew older, his father took him.

In one of his sermons, Ubayd Allah said:

“I am the son of Ziyad. Of all those who tread upon the earth, I most resemble him; no maternal uncle or cousin has laid claim to that resemblance.”

He was killed by Ibrahim ibn al-Ashtar, commander of al-Mukhtar’s army, in the year 67 AH at Khazir in the land of Mosul.
(*Al-Bidaya wa al-Nihaya*, 8/284; *Uyun al-Akhbar*, 1/299.)

The Command to Kill Him

Ubayd Allah, the accursed, ordered that he be killed. Zaynab, the daughter of Ali, cried out:

“Enough of our blood! I implore you by God: if you have resolved to kill him, then kill me before him.”

One of those present said to him:

“He is in the condition you see him in, suffering from illness. I do not think he will live much longer.”

So he left him alone.

Ali ibn al-Husayn then went with the rest of the women of the Prophet’s household to the accursed Yazid. When they were brought before him, a man from Syria stood up and said:

“O Commander of the Faithful, their women are lawful for us.”

Ali ibn al-Husayn (peace be upon him) said:

“You lie. They would only be lawful for you if you left the religion of Islam and made them lawful through another religion.”

Yazid lowered his head and said nothing about the matter.

When the public announcement over the head of al-Husayn (peace be upon him), the humiliation of his sacred family, and the women of those from his household who had been killed with him had reached what God had decreed—and Ali ibn al-Husayn remained in his condition of illness, while God Most High had decreed his safety so that the Imamate would not be severed with his death—Yazid, the accursed, released them, and they returned to Medina.

His Worship

He was the Imam of the Imams and the father of the Imams. Through him all the descendants of al-Husayn (peace be upon him) continued, and al-Husayn had no surviving lineage except through him.

He deliberately remained obscure out of precaution and devoted himself to worship.

1151

He was called **Dhu al-Thafanat**—“the Possessor of the Calluses”—because the places on his body where he prostrated developed calluses like those on a camel. These are the places upon which a camel kneels when it rests, from its forelegs and hind legs.

Ali ibn al-Husayn developed similar marks on the places of prostration because of his constant prostration.

He used to pray one thousand units of prayer every day and night. Sometimes some of the calluses would fall away, and he would collect them. When he died and his body was washed, they placed them with him in his shroud.

When they stripped him in order to wash his body, they found on his shoulder the mark of a rope. They asked his son Muhammad (peace be upon him) about it.

He said:

“By God, no one knew about this except me. He did not tell me about it, but I learned of it in a way of which he was unaware.”

He said:

“When night came and the eyes of the people became quiet, he would rise and go to his house. He would gather whatever food remained from what his family had been given, place it in a sack, put it over his shoulder, and go out.

“I would follow him because I was afraid for him. I would see him go to the homes of poor people and distribute it among them while he covered his face so that they would not recognize him.

“Many times I found them standing at their doors waiting for him. When he approached, while I remained behind him and concealed from him, they would rejoice and say:

‘The bearer of the sack has come!’

“He continued going from house to house in this manner until there was nothing left in his home beyond the food required by his family.

“That is the mark left by that sack.”

1153

It is also said that there were several houses in Medina whose provisions came from Ali ibn al-Husayn, although their inhabitants did not know where those provisions came from.

They did not discover the source until he died. The provisions then ceased, and they realized that they had been coming from him.

He did this because of the great merit attributed to giving charity secretly.

It is said that these houses were counted and found to number one hundred, with groups of people living in each house.

From His Supplications

1154

Ali ibn al-Husayn (peace be upon him) would fast during the day and spend the night in worship. When every eye had gone to sleep, he would recite a supplication. He recited it every night, saying:

“My God, the stars of Your heavens have disappeared, the eyes of Your creation have fallen asleep, and the voices of Your servants have become still.

“The kings of the Umayyads have closed their doors and stationed their guards around them, concealing themselves from anyone who asks them for a need or seeks some benefit from them.

“But You, my God, are Living and Self-Sustaining. Neither slumber nor sleep overtakes You, and nothing distracts You from anything else.

“The doors of Your heavens are open to whoever calls upon You. Your treasuries are closed, Your mercy is concealed, and Your benefits are forbidden to those who seek them by other than Your way.

“You are my generous God, who does not turn away any believer who asks You, nor conceal Yourself from any of them who seeks You.

“No, by Your might! Their needs are not withheld from You, and no one other than You can fulfill them.

“O God, You see my standing here, the humility of my position, and my standing before You. You know my inner self and are aware of what is in my heart and what will benefit me in my Hereafter and my worldly life.

“My God, the anticipation of death, the terror of the moment of encounter, and standing before You have diminished my food and drink. They have made my saliva catch in my throat, disturbed me in my resting place, deprived me of sleep, and prevented me from repose.

“My God, how can one sleep who fears the persistence of the Angel of Death through the assaults of night and the assaults of day?”

He would then weep until, at times, his family were awakened by his crying. They would rush to him and find him with his cheeks pressed against the ground, saying:

“My Lord, I ask You for relief, repose, security, and safety.”

1155

It is related from Tawus al-Yamani that he said:

I performed the pilgrimage and, at night, the Hijr was empty. I saw Ali ibn al-Husayn (peace be upon him) standing there in prayer.

I approached him and thought:

“He is one of the righteous. Perhaps I can hear a supplication from him and benefit from it.”

I heard him saying in his supplication while prostrating:

“Your servant is at Your threshold.
Your poor one is at Your threshold.
Your needy one is at Your threshold.
Your petitioner is at Your threshold.”

Then he supplicated for whatever he wished.

Tawus said:

“I learned these words from him. Whenever I have subsequently called upon God with them during a hardship, God has relieved me of it.”

It is also said that a man once called out in one of the streets of Medina in the middle of the night:

“Where are those who renounce this world and desire the Hereafter?”

A voice came from the direction of al-Baqi‘, although no one knew who had called out. It was Ali ibn al-Husayn.

His Forbearance

1157

It is said that al-Hasan ibn al-Hasan ibn Ali once stood before Ali ibn al-Husayn and insulted him in the presence of a group of people.

Ali ibn al-Husayn remained silent and did not answer him.

When al-Hasan had left, Ali ibn al-Husayn said to those with him:

“Did you hear what this man said?”

They replied:

“Yes. We heard it, and what we heard distressed us. We wished that you had answered him.”

Ali ibn al-Husayn recited:

“Those who restrain anger and pardon people—and God loves those who do good.” [1]

Then he said:

“I would like you to come with me to my house so that you may hear my response to him, for it was not appropriate for me to answer him in my own assembly.”

The people went with him, thinking that he intended to demand justice from al-Hasan.

When he reached his house, he sought permission to enter. Al-Hasan came out, thinking that Ali ibn al-Husayn had come to demand his due.

Al-Hasan began speaking against him again.

Ali ibn al-Husayn said:

“Take it easy, my brother. I heard what you said in my assembly, and now we are in your assembly, so listen to what I have to say to you.

“If what you said about me is true, then I ask God to forgive me. And if what you said is not true, then I ask God to forgive you.”

Al-Hasan became ashamed. He approached him, kissed his head and the space between his eyes, and said:

“Rather, by God, I said things about you that are not in you.”

He then asked his forgiveness and apologized to him.

It is also related that whenever Ali ibn al-Husayn (peace be upon him) stood for prayer, his complexion would change, he would begin trembling, and his condition would alter.

Someone unfamiliar with this would sometimes ask him about it, and he would say:

“I am about to stand before a mighty King.”

Al-Sajjad and al-Zuhri

1159

It is said that al-Zuhri [2] committed a sin and became afraid for himself because of it. He withdrew from people and wandered aimlessly.

Ali ibn al-Husayn (peace be upon him) encountered him and said:

“O Zuhri, your despair of the mercy of God, which encompasses everything, is a greater matter than the sin that you feared for yourself.”

Al-Zuhri was reassured by his words and said:

“God knows best where He places His message.”

Ali ibn al-Husayn then admonished him with counsel and recited to him verses from the Qur’an concerning repentance and seeking forgiveness for what had happened.

Al-Zuhri repented, sought forgiveness, returned to his family, and remained with Ali ibn al-Husayn. He was counted among his companions, transmitted reports from him, and related his virtues.

One of the Banu Marwan once said to al-Zuhri:

“What has happened to your prophet?”

meaning Ali ibn al-Husayn, because al-Zuhri held him in high regard and frequently mentioned his virtues.

1160

Ali ibn al-Husayn (peace be upon him) used to say:

“Forbearance is humiliation.”

1161

It is said that one of his female servants was standing over him helping him perform ablution when the pitcher slipped from her hand and struck his face, splitting the skin.

He looked at her.

She said:

“My master, God, Mighty and Glorious, says: ‘Those who restrain anger.’”

Ali ibn al-Husayn said:

“I have restrained my anger.”

She said:

“And He says: ‘Those who pardon people.’”

He said:

“I have pardoned you.”

She said:

“He says: ‘And God loves those who do good.’” [3]

He said:

“Then you are free for the sake of God.”

“God Knows Best Where He Places His Message”

1162

Hisham ibn Isma'il al-Makhzumi [4] was appointed governor of Medina. He inflicted severe harm and suffering upon Ali ibn al-Husayn (peace be upon him).

Al-Walid later removed him from office and ordered him to be made to stand before the people.

No one did Hisham fear more than Ali ibn al-Husayn, because of what he had done to him and his fear that Ali might report it or speak against him.

But Ali said nothing against him. He forbade his close companions, his household, and everyone who heard him from speaking badly of Hisham.

Then Ali sent to him while he was standing near the house of Marwan:

"Look at whatever wealth you owe or are liable for. We have enough here to cover you. Be at ease with us and with everyone who obeys us."

Hisham, while still standing, called out at the top of his voice:

"God knows best where He places His message."

1163

One day Ali ibn al-Husayn (peace be upon him) called one of his slaves. The slave heard him but did not answer.

Ali said:

"My son, I am calling you, and you do not answer me. Are you not afraid that I will punish you?"

The slave replied:

"No, by God, I am not afraid of you. And there is a reason why I did not answer you."

Ali ibn al-Husayn said:

"Praise be to God who has made my slave feel safe from me."

During the Sedition of Ibn al-Zubayr

1164

It is related that Ali ibn al-Husayn (peace be upon him) said:

I went out of my house one day during the sedition of Ibn al-Zubayr. My heart was distressed by what was reaching me concerning it.

I came to a wall of mine, leaned against it, and remained there for some time.

While I was in that state, a man wearing white garments came and stood before me. I did not know him.

He looked at my face and said:

“O Ali ibn al-Husayn, why do I see you troubled and sorrowful? Is your grief because of this world? Provision is present for both the righteous and the wicked to eat. Or is it because of the Hereafter? It is a true promise, and a Powerful King will judge concerning it.”

I replied:

“By God, I am not grieving over this world, nor was what you see of me caused by concern for the Hereafter.”

He said:

“Then why are you grieving?”

I said:

“I fear the sedition of Ibn al-Zubayr.”

He laughed and said:

“O Ali ibn al-Husayn, have you ever seen anyone rely upon God and He fail to suffice him?”

I replied:

“No.”

I remained thinking about his words. Then I raised my head, but I could not find anyone there.

The Debt of Zayd ibn Usama

1165

Zayd ibn Usama ibn Zayd became ill with the illness from which he died.

When he was near death, Ali ibn al-Husayn (peace be upon him) came to him. Zayd began to weep.

Ali ibn al-Husayn asked him:

“Why are you crying?”

He replied:

“I am crying because I have left behind fifteen thousand dinars in debt, and what I leave behind is not enough to pay it.”

Ali ibn al-Husayn said:

“Then be at ease. I will pay it for you.”

And he paid the debt on his behalf.

It is also said that one of Ali ibn al-Husayn's clients was responsible for managing one of his estates.

He came to inspect it and found that considerable damage and neglect had occurred. What he saw angered and distressed him, so he struck the client with a whip he had in his hand.

This was something he had never done to anyone before.

He deeply regretted what he had done.

When he returned home, he sent for the man. The man came and found Ali ibn al-Husayn seated, with the whip before him.

He thought Ali intended to punish him and became extremely afraid.

Ali ibn al-Husayn took the whip, extended it toward him, and said:

“My man, what I did to you was something I had never done before. It was a lapse and a mistake. Here is the whip. Take your retaliation against me.”

The man said:

“My master, by God, I thought you intended to punish me, and I deserve punishment. How could I take retaliation against you?”

Ali said:

“Woe to you! Take your retaliation.”

The man replied:

“God forbid! You are absolved and have complete freedom from any claim.”

Ali repeated this to him several times, but the man considered his words too great and honored him too much to retaliate.

When Ali saw that he would not retaliate, he said:

“Since you refuse, then the estate is charity for you.”

And he gave it to him.

When winter ended, he would give away the clothing he had worn during winter as charity. When summer ended, he would give away the clothing he had worn during summer.

He used to wear the finest clothing.

Someone said to him:

“You give these clothes to people who do not know their value and for whom such clothing is not suitable. Why do you not sell them and give their price in charity?”

He replied:

“I dislike selling a garment in which I have prayed.”

Whenever he stood in prayer, he devoted himself entirely to it and did not occupy himself with anything else. He would hear nothing because of his concentration upon the prayer.

One night, one of his children fell and broke his hand. The people of the house cried out, and the neighbors came. A bonesetter was brought and set the child's broken bone while the child cried out in pain.

Ali ibn al-Husayn heard none of this.

When morning came, he saw that the child's hand was tied to his neck.

He said:

“What is this?”

They informed him of what had happened.

Ali ibn al-Husayn (peace be upon him) was devout, forbearing, dignified, and handsome.

One year he performed the pilgrimage, and people began looking at his beauty and perfection.

Those who did not know him would ask someone who might know:

“Who is this?”

A man asked the poet al-Farazdaq [5]:

“Who is this?”

So he composed the following poem:

This is the one whose footsteps the valley of Mecca knows,
And whom the House, the sanctuary, and the lawful precinct know.

This is the son of the best of all God's servants;
This is the God-fearing, pure, and distinguished man.

The perfume of his generosity almost causes the corner of al-Hatim
To grasp him whenever he comes to touch it.

He lowers his gaze out of modesty,
And others lower theirs out of awe of him;
No one speaks to him unless he smiles.

When Quraysh sees him, its spokesman says:
“To the noble qualities of this man all generosity ultimately leads.”

What tribe is there whose necks do not bear
The honor of this man's forefather?

Ali al-Akbar

Al-Husayn (peace be upon him) had two sons, each of whom was named Ali.

The common people claim that the one who was killed alongside him was the elder Ali.

However, scholars among their supporters and Shi‘i followers, as well as other scholars among the general body of scholars who are knowledgeable in genealogy and history, say that the one killed with al-Husayn (peace be upon him) was the younger Ali, while the surviving one was the elder.

They also say that the surviving Ali was, on the day al-Husayn was killed, suffering from severe illness, and that this was the reason he survived.

This has already been mentioned above.

Muhammad ibn Umar al-Waqidi stated that Ali ibn al-Husayn was born in the year 33 AH and that al-Husayn (peace be upon him) was killed on Ashura in the year 61 AH.

According to this, Ali ibn al-Husayn was twenty-eight years old on the day his father was killed.

Al-Waqidi also stated that he was born during the time of Uthman. According to al-Waqidi and others, Uthman was killed in Dhu al-Hijja of the year 35 AH. This is close in meaning to what was mentioned earlier.

Ordinary people claim that he was a child when his father was killed, and that his father entrusted him to someone else so that they would divert the Imamate away from him.

But the scholars among them who are knowledgeable in reports, genealogies, and histories have said, as we have mentioned, that he was an adult, although they claim that he was the younger of the two Alis.

Al-Zubayr al-Bakkari related from Mus‘ab ibn Abdullah that he saw Ali ibn al-Husayn al-Asghar with his father at Karbala when he was twenty-three years old, and that he was ill. He was the son of an *umm walad*.

His Mother

There is disagreement concerning his mother.

Some said she was Sindhi.

Others said that she was called Jayda.

Some said that she was called Salama.

Ibn al-Kalbi said:

Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him) appointed al-Harith ibn Jabir al-Hanafi over a region in the east. Al-Harith sent him the daughter of Yazdegerd Shahriyar, son of Kisra.

Ali gave her to his son al-Husayn (peace be upon him), and she bore him Ali.

Another author said:

Al-Harith ibn Jabir sent the Commander of the Faithful two daughters of Yazdegerd ibn Shahriyar, son of Kisra. He gave one of them to his son al-Husayn (peace be upon him), and she bore him Ali ibn al-Husayn.

He gave the other to Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr, and she bore him al-Qasim ibn Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr.

Thus the two were maternal cousins.

This contradicts the earlier report that Ali ibn al-Husayn (peace be upon him) was born in the year 33 AH, during the reign of Uthman, before authority had openly passed to Ali (peace be upon him). The earlier report is more firmly established.

This is also supported by the fact that Ali ibn al-Husayn (peace be upon him) transmitted reports from Ali ibn Abi Talib.

Among those reports is:

What Follows a Man After His Death

Sa'id ibn Tarif related that he said:

Ali ibn al-Husayn (peace be upon him) told me:

"I heard Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him) say:

'O people, do you know what follows a man after his death?'"

They remained silent.

Ali said:

“His child follows him: the child he leaves behind prays for him after his death and asks God to forgive him.

“And charity follows him: if he established it as an endowment during his lifetime, its reward follows him after his death.

“And a righteous practice follows him: if he established a good practice and people act according to it after his death, its reward follows him, as well as the reward of everyone who acts according to it, without diminishing anything from their rewards.”

It is also related from Muhammad ibn Ali ibn al-Husayn ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib that he said:

After al-Husayn (peace be upon him) had been killed, we were brought before Yazid ibn Mu‘awiya, may God curse him.

There were twelve boys among us, and every one of us had his hands bound together at the neck. Ali ibn al-Husayn was among us.

Yazid said to us:

“You have made yourselves slaves to the people of Iraq. I did not know that Abu Abd Allah had gone out until news reached me of his death.”

[The author adds:] This is a lie from the enemy of God. He was the one who sent the armies against him. I have already mentioned his account earlier.

Ali ibn al-Husayn recited:

“No calamity strikes upon the earth or yourselves except that it is in a Book before We bring it into being. Indeed, that is easy for God, so that you may not grieve over what has escaped you nor exult over what He has given you. And God does not love every self-conceited boaster.” [6]

Yazid remained silent for a long while and began to play with his beard in anger.

Then he recited:

“Whatever affliction befalls you is because of what your hands have earned, and He pardons much.” [7]

Then he said:

“People of Syria, what do you think about these people?”

One of them replied:

“They have been killed. Do not take any further action against a wicked dog.”

Nu‘man ibn Bashir said:

“Consider what you think the Messenger of God (may God bless him and his family) would have done to them had he been alive, and do that.”

Yazid wept.

Fatima, the daughter of al-Husayn (peace be upon him), said:

“Yazid, what do you say concerning the daughters of the Messenger of God, who are captives in your possession?”

His weeping became so intense that his women heard him, and they wept until their crying could be heard by those in his assembly.

It is said that this occurred after he had placed them in a house that did not protect them from cold or heat.

They remained there for a month and a half, until their faces were peeled by the heat of the sun.

Then he released them.

The Debt of al-Husayn (Peace Be Upon Him)

1173

It is related from Ja‘far ibn Muhammad that he said:

Al-Husayn (peace be upon him) was killed while owing a debt of some seventy thousand dinars.

He said:

“Yazid refrained from taking possession of the property of al-Husayn (peace be upon him).”

However, Sa‘id ibn al-As demolished the house of Ali ibn Abi Talib, the house of Aqil, and the house of al-Rabab, the daughter of Imru’ al-Qays, who had been married to al-Husayn and was the mother of Sukayna.

He said:

My father, Ali ibn al-Husayn (peace be upon him), became extremely concerned about his father's debt. He refrained from food, drink, and sleep on most of his days and nights.

A man came to him in a dream and said:

“Do not concern yourself with your father's debt. God has paid it with wealth from a place called Jaysh.”

Ali replied:

“By God, I know of no property belonging to my father that is called Jaysh.”

The following night he saw the same thing and asked his family about it.

One of the women of his family said:

“Your father had a Roman slave named Jaysh. He dug a spring for him at Dhu Khushab.”

He investigated this and was informed of the matter.

Al-Husayn had given al-Rabab, the daughter of Imru’ al-Qays, a share of the water from it on Saturday and Saturday night as a gift. She inherited this from him, and her daughter Sukayna inherited it from her.

Not long afterward, al-Walid ibn Utba ibn Abi Sufyan sent word to Ali ibn al-Husayn (peace be upon him), saying:

“I have been told about your father's spring at Dhu Khushab, known as Jaysh. If you would like to sell it, I will purchase it from you.”

Ali ibn al-Husayn replied:

“Take it in payment for the debt of al-Husayn.”

He explained the matter to him.

Al-Walid said:

“I will take it.”

He excluded from it what belonged to Sukayna and paid al-Husayn's debt.

His Supplication Against His Father's Killer

Ali ibn al-Husayn (peace be upon him) used to pray every day and night that God would allow him to see his father's killer killed.

When al-Mukhtar [8] killed those responsible for killing al-Husayn, he sent the head of Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad and the head of Umar ibn Sa‘d with a messenger to Ali ibn al-Husayn.

He told the messenger:

“He prays during the night. When morning comes and he has performed the dawn prayer, he sleeps for a while and then rises. He then uses a tooth-stick, and his breakfast is brought to him.

“When you reach his door, ask about him. If you are told that the meal has been placed before him, ask permission to enter, place the two heads on his table, and say:

‘Al-Mukhtar sends you greetings and says: O son of the Messenger of God, may God have granted you vengeance for your blood.’”

The messenger did this.

When Ali ibn al-Husayn saw the two heads upon his table, he fell down in prostration before God and said:

“Praise be to God who answered my supplication and granted me vengeance against the killers of my father.”

He prayed for al-Mukhtar and thanked him.

1174

It is related from Abdullah ibn Musa, from his father, from his grandfather, that he said:

My mother, Fatima, the daughter of al-Husayn (peace be upon him), used to instruct me:

“Sit with your maternal uncle Ali ibn al-Husayn (peace be upon him).”

I never sat with him even once without gaining some knowledge from him.

His Asceticism

1175

Sa‘id ibn Kulthum said:

I was with Abu Abd Allah Ja‘far ibn Muhammad (peace be upon him), and Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him) was mentioned.

He said:

“By God, he never ate anything unlawful from this world until he departed from it.

“Whenever two matters were presented to him, both of which were pleasing to God, he chose the more difficult of the two for himself in matters of religion.

“Whenever a calamity descended upon the Messenger of God (may God bless him and his family), he would call upon Ali and put him forward to face it, trusting him.

“No one in this community could endure the work of the Messenger of God except him.

“He used to act like a man whose position was between Paradise and Hell: hoping for the reward of the former and fearing the punishment of the latter.

“He freed one thousand slaves from his own wealth, seeking the face of God and salvation from the Fire, from wealth he had earned with his own hands and through labor that had caused sweat to run down his forehead.

“He sustained himself on vinegar, raisins, and dates.

“His clothing was made only of coarse cotton. If part of the sleeve came away from his hand, he would cut it off with scissors or something similar.

“No one among his household resembled him in this respect, although the closest of them in resemblance to him in his circumstances and actions was Ali ibn al-Husayn (peace be upon him).”

His Worship

1176

It is related from Abu Ja‘far Muhammad ibn Ali (peace be upon him):

He entered upon his father, Ali ibn al-Husayn (peace be upon him), and saw him in such a state that he felt compassion for him because of the extent of his worship.

His complexion had become yellow from sleeplessness and fasting. His eyes were worn from weeping. His forehead had become worn away, and his nose had developed a mark from prostration. His hands and feet were swollen from standing in prayer.

He could not restrain himself and began to weep out of compassion for him.

Ali ibn al-Husayn realized that his son was crying because of what he had seen.

He said:

“My son, bring me some of the books in which the worship of Ali is recorded.”

His son gave him one of the books.

He looked through some of it, then placed it before him and said:

“Who could endure the worship of Ali?”

He did not die until he had followed Ali's example in his actions.

1177

Abu Ja‘far (peace be upon him) said:

“Ali ibn al-Husayn used to pray one thousand units every day and night. When he stood in prayer, the wind could cause him to sway just as it causes a blade of grass to sway.”

1178

Sufyan ibn Uyayna said:

“Ali ibn al-Husayn was never seen carrying anything in his hand without telling him about it and then walking away to visit him.”

1179

Zurara ibn A‘yan said:

“Ali ibn al-Husayn had a she-camel upon which he performed twenty-four pilgrimages. He never struck it even once.”

1180

Ibrahim ibn Ali al-Waqifi [9], from his father, said:

I performed the pilgrimage one day with Ali ibn al-Husayn (peace be upon him), who was riding one of his she-camels.

The animal stumbled.

He raised his riding crop and merely gestured toward it with it, saying:

“Were it not for fear of retaliation, I would have done it.”

1181

Ali ibn al-Husayn (peace be upon him) once passed by Sa‘id ibn al-Musayyab, who had a Qurashi man with him.

The man asked:

“Who is this?”

Ibn al-Musayyab replied:

“This is the Master of the Worshippers, Ali ibn al-Husayn.”

1182

Abu Hamza al-Yamani said:

I heard Ali ibn al-Husayn say:

“I would not want the red camels of the world in exchange for my share of it.

“I have never swallowed a draught that I preferred more than a draught of anger which I did not retaliate against the person who caused it.”

Spending in the Way of God

1183

It is related from Ja'far ibn Muhammad that he said:

Ali ibn al-Husayn (peace be upon him) liked grapes.

A fine quantity of grapes arrived in Medina. The mother of his child purchased some and brought them to him at the time of his breaking the fast.

He liked them.

Before he could reach out his hand to them, a beggar stood at the door.

He said to her:

"Take them to him."

She said:

"My master, part of them would be enough for him."

He replied:

"No. Send all of them to him."

She sent them all to the beggar.

The following day she bought grapes for him and brought them to him. A beggar appeared again.

He did the same thing and sent all of them to the beggar.

On the third night she bought grapes for him, but no beggar came.

He ate them and said:

"Nothing has escaped us from him, and praise be to God."

It reached Ali ibn al-Husayn (peace be upon him) that Musrif had been appointed over Medina and that Musrif was threatening him with harm.

Ali used to say:

"I have never seen anything like anticipating him through supplication."

A servant is not always granted the opportunity for his supplication to be answered, so he increased his supplication when news of Musrif reached him.

Among his supplications was:

“My Lord, how many blessings You have bestowed upon me for which my gratitude to You has been little.

“How many afflictions You have tested me with for which my patience before You has been little.

“How many sins I have committed that You concealed from me and did not expose me.

“O You for whom my gratitude is little in response to Your blessings, yet You have not deprived me;

“O You for whom my patience is little in response to Your afflictions, yet You have not abandoned me;

“O You who saw me committing sins and did not expose me;

“O Possessor of kindness that never ceases;

“O Possessor of blessings that cannot be counted;

“Bless Muhammad and the family of Muhammad, and through You I repel his attack and through You I seek refuge from his evil.”

When Musrif arrived in Medina, he sent for Ali ibn al-Husayn. Marwan ibn al-Hakam was with him, and he knew about the threats Musrif had made against him and was inciting Musrif against him.

When Ali entered, Musrif stood up, embraced him, kissed his head, seated him beside himself, and turned toward him, asking about his condition and the condition of his family.

When Marwan saw this, he began praising Ali ibn al-Husayn (peace be upon him) and mentioning his virtues.

Qur'anic References

[1] Qur’an 3:134.

[2] Qur’an 3:134.

[3] Qur’an 57:22–23.

[4] Qur’an 42:30.

Editorial Notes

[i] *Al-Zuhri*, with the *damma* on the z and a silent h, refers to Muhammad ibn Ubayd Allah ibn Shihab al-Zuhri. He was born in 58 AH. He was one of the jurists of Medina and among the Followers (*tabi'un*). He was associated with Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan and his son Hisham. Yazid ibn Abd al-Malik employed him extensively. He disliked Ali and spoke against him. Sayyid Ibn Tawus said that he was an enemy of them.

Al-Zuhri related from Aisha that she said:

"I was with the Prophet when al-Abbas and Ali approached. He said: 'Aisha, if you would be pleased not to look upon two men from the people of Hell, then look at these two who have just appeared.'"

She said:

"I looked, and they were al-Abbas and Ali ibn Abi Talib."

(*Sharh Nahj al-Balagha*, 1/355.)

Al-Zuhri died in 135 AH and was buried at an estate behind Wadi al-Qura called Saghb. (*Mu'jam al-Buldan*, 5/277.)

[ii] He used to harm Ali ibn al-Husayn, insult Ali from the pulpit, and speak against him. (*Tadhkirat al-Khawass*.)

[iii] He was Hammam ibn Ghalib ibn Sa'sa'a. His mother was Layla bint Abis. It is said that he was born in 10 AH.

His father entered upon the Commander of the Faithful in Basra with his son al-Farazdaq and informed him that the boy composed poetry.

He had a brother named Humaym ibn Ghalib and a sister named Jath'an, who was a virtuous woman.

He died in 110 AH at an age approaching one hundred years and was buried in the cemeteries of Basra.

[iv] He was al-Mukhtar ibn Abi Ubayd Mas'ud al-Thaqafi, whose kunya was Abu Ishaq. He was born in the first year after the Hijra and was from Ta'if.

He moved from there to Medina with his father during the time of Umar. His father then went to Iraq and was killed at the Battle of the Bridge.

Al-Mukhtar remained in Medina, attached to the Banu Hashim. His uncle, Sa'd ibn Mas'ud al-Thaqafi, was governor of al-Mada'in, and al-Mukhtar lived in Basra.

When al-Husayn (peace be upon him) was killed, Ibn Ziyad, the governor of Basra, arrested al-Mukhtar and exiled him to Ta'if through the intercession of Abdullah ibn Umar, who was the husband of al-Mukhtar's sister.

When Yazid ibn Mu‘awiya died, al-Mukhtar returned to Iraq and entered Kufa. He killed those responsible for killing al-Husayn.

Mus‘ab ibn al-Zubayr fought him and killed him.

(*Tarikh al-Tabari*, 7/146; *Al-Hur al-‘Ayn*, p. 182; *Al-Kamil*, 3/404.)

Then Misraf said: “Spare me your words. I only did what I did in showing him kindness, honoring him, and fulfilling his needs because the Commander of the Faithful had ordered me to do so.”

Then he said to Ali ibn al-Husayn, peace be upon him: “I arranged this meeting with you because of what had previously reached you about me, so that you would not feel uneasy toward me. I love meeting with you, being at ease in your company, seeking blessing through being near you, and looking after whatever you desire in terms of maintaining ties with you and showing you kindness. This is still my position. But I fear that your family may become uneasy if your stay with me is prolonged. So return to them, so that they may be reassured and know—and so that the people may know—what esteem you hold with the Commander of the Faithful and with me.”

Then he said: “Bring his mount.”

They said: “He has no mount.”

Misraf said: “Bring him my own mount.”

So they brought it before him, and Misraf insisted that he ride it. He mounted it and departed to his family, while they and the people watched to see what would become of him.

His Death

Ali ibn al-Husayn, peace be upon him, died in Medina at the beginning of the year 94 AH. He was known by the kunya Abu al-Husayn.

[1185] Abu Ja‘far, his son Muhammad ibn Ali, washed him. When he wished to wash his private parts, he said:

“I used to hold you in too much esteem to look at your private parts while you were alive, and now that you are dead, just as you were while alive. I would not touch your nakedness.”

He therefore called for an umm walad of his, and she undertook the washing of his private parts.

He was buried in al-Baqi‘.

His wife struck a tent over his grave. When evening came, one of his she-camels came and placed its neck upon the tent and began moaning. Abu Ja‘far, peace be upon him, said to one of his clients:

“Move it away, lest people see it.”

He took hold of its lower lip and moved it away from the tent.

Ali ibn al-Husayn died at the age of fifty-eight.

Explanation of Unusual Vocabulary

Al-jarrān (الجران): The front part of the camel's neck, from the place where its neck is cut to its breast. When a camel kneels and stretches its neck upon the ground, it is said: "It cast its jarrān upon the ground."

The camel's mishfar (مشفر): Its hanging lower lip.

Imam Muhammad al-Baqir, peace be upon him

As for Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ali ibn al-Husayn, peace be upon him, his mother was Umm 'Abd Allah, Fatima, daughter of al-Hasan ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib. It is said that he was the first person whose lineage united descent from both al-Hasan and al-Husayn.

[1186] Yahya ibn al-Hasan related from Abu Burra, who said: 'Abd Allah ibn Maymun al-Qaddah narrated to us from Ja'far ibn Muhammad, from his father Muhammad ibn Ali, peace be upon him:

"I entered upon Jabir ibn 'Abd Allah al-Ansari when he had become blind. I greeted him, and he returned my greeting and said:

'Who are you?'

"I said: 'Muhammad ibn Ali ibn al-Husayn, peace be upon him.'

"He said to me: 'May my father and mother be your ransom, come closer to me.'

"He kissed my hand and then bent down toward my feet to kiss them, but I pulled them away. Then he said:

'The Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family, sends you his greetings.'

"I said: 'And upon the Messenger of God be peace, mercy, and the blessings of God.'

"Then I said to him: 'And how is that, O Jabir?'

"He said:

'One day I was with him, and he said to me: "O Jabir, after me you will meet Muhammad ibn Ali ibn al-Husayn, one of my descendants. God will grant him light and wisdom, so convey my greetings to him."'"

This account of Jabir's meeting with Muhammad ibn Ali, peace be upon him, is famous and well known. It was transmitted by both the particular community and the general community. The jurists of Medina and Iraq among the general scholars transmitted it, and it was reported by their leading authorities, including Abu Hanifa, Malik, al-Shafi'i, and others.

It was from this account that they derived the description of the Messenger of God's pilgrimage, may God bless him and his family. For Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ali, peace be upon him, asked Jabir ibn 'Abd Allah al-Ansari about it during this meeting, because Jabir had witnessed it with the Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family. He informed him of it step by step, beginning from the time the Messenger of God left Medina to perform the pilgrimage. It is the most complete account transmitted concerning this subject from Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ali, peace be upon him.

He was the most learned jurist of his time. The scholars of jurisprudence among both the particular community and the general community acquired from him the outward knowledge of what is lawful and unlawful.

He was called Baqir al-'Ulum, "the one who opened up the knowledge," because he was the first of the Imams from the family of Muhammad, may God bless him and his family, from whom knowledge was publicly transmitted and made manifest. This was because the times had become somewhat favorable for the Banu Umayya, as their rule was approaching its end and those among them who remained were occupied with their amusements and sins.

[1187] It was narrated from 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Salih al-Azdi, from Abu Malik al-Hasani, from 'Abd Allah ibn 'Ata' al-Makki, who said:

"I never saw the scholars in the presence of anyone appearing lesser than they did in the presence of Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ali ibn al-Husayn, because of their humility toward him, their recognition of his right and his knowledge, and their learning from him.

"I saw al-Hakam ibn 'Uyayna, despite his standing among the people and his age, sitting before him, learning from him and receiving knowledge from him like a child before his teacher."

al-Khidr with Imam al-Baqir

[1188] It was narrated from Ja'far ibn Muhammad ibn Ali that he said:

"I performed the pilgrimage with my father, Muhammad ibn Ali. While he was praying at night in the Hijr during the nights of the ten days, and I was behind him, a man came whose head and beard were white. He was imposing in stature, broad between the shoulders, broad-chested, and wore two coarse white garments in the appearance of a pilgrim in ihram.

"He sat beside him. My father apparently thought that he wanted to ask him about some need, so he shortened his prayer. When he finished, he turned his face toward him.

"The man said to him:

'O Abu Ja'far, tell me how this House first came into existence.'

"Abu Ja'far, peace be upon him, said:

'Where are you from?'

"The man said:

‘From Syria.’

“He said:

‘When our traditions reach Syria, they come to us intact; but when they reach Iraq, they come to us with additions and omissions.’

“[That is, their adherents in Iraq were numerous, with some of them taking such reports from one another, and additions and omissions consequently occurring among the transmitters. They were few in Syria, so when a report reached whoever received it there, it remained in its original form.]

“Then he turned toward him and said:

‘As for the beginning of the creation of this House: when God, Most High, said to the angels, **“Indeed, I am placing upon the earth a vicegerent,”** [1] they responded to Him by saying:

“Will You place therein one who will cause corruption therein and shed blood, while we glorify You with Your praise and sanctify You?”

“And they said to themselves:

‘We are those surrounding His Throne and glorifying Him with His praise, yet He appoints another as His vicegerent while we are closer to Him.’

“God, Mighty and Glorious, said:

‘I know what you do not know, and I know what you reveal and what you were concealing.’

“They realized that they had fallen into error, so they sought refuge at the Throne and circumambulated it seven times, seeking the satisfaction of their Lord, Mighty and Glorious. He was pleased with them.

“He said to them:

‘Descend to the earth and build for Me a House to which whoever among My servants has sinned may turn for refuge, and around which he may circumambulate just as you circumambulated My Throne. Then I shall be pleased with them just as I was pleased with you.’

“So they built this House.

“Thus, O ‘Abd Allah, this is the beginning of this House.”

“The man said to him:

‘You have spoken truly, O Abu Ja‘far. And how did this Stone first come into existence?’

“He, peace be upon him, said:

‘When God, Mighty and Glorious, took the covenant of the children of Adam, He caused a river to flow, sweeter than honey and softer than foam. Then He commanded the Pen to draw from that river and write their acknowledgment and everything that would occur until the Day of Resurrection. Then He placed the written record into this Stone.

“‘Thus, the touching of it that you see is only a pledge upon their acknowledgment.’

“Ja‘far ibn Muhammad, peace be upon him, said:

“Whenever my father touched the Corner, he would say:

‘O God, I have delivered my trust, and I have upheld my covenant, so let it testify before You that I have fulfilled it.’”

“The man said to him:

‘You have spoken truly, O Abu Ja‘far.’

“Then he rose. When he turned away, my father said to me:

‘Bring him back to me.’

“I went out after him and followed him until the crowd came between me and him, all the way to al-Safa. I returned to al-Safa, but I did not see him. I went to al-Marwa, but I did not see him there either. I returned to my father and told him what had happened.

“My father said:

‘Indeed, I believe him to have been al-Khidr, peace be upon him.’”

This account is transmitted from Abu Ja‘far Muhammad ibn Ali, peace be upon him, according to its outward meaning. Beneath that outward meaning, however, there lies a secret of wisdom whose essence and core contain the hidden secret of the wisdom within it.

With Hisham ibn ‘Abd al-Malik

[1189] It is narrated from al-Zuhri that he said:

“Hisham ibn ‘Abd al-Malik performed the pilgrimage. He entered the Sacred Mosque leaning upon the hand of Salim, his client. He saw Muhammad ibn Ali sitting in the mosque with people gathered around him, asking him questions.

“Salim said to him:

‘O Commander of the Faithful, this is Muhammad ibn Ali ibn al-Husayn, peace be upon him.’

“Hisham said:

‘The one about whom the people of Iraq are bewitched?’

“He said:

‘Yes.’

“Hisham said:

‘Go to him and tell him that the Commander of the Faithful asks him: What will people eat and drink on the Day of Resurrection until judgment between them has been completed?’

“Salim went to him and conveyed this to him.

“Abu Ja‘far said:

‘God, Mighty and Glorious, says: **“On the Day when the earth is changed to another earth,”** [2] and people will be gathered on that earth on the Day of Resurrection. They will have pure bread from which they will eat and flowing rivers from which they will drink until their reckoning is completed.’

“Salim returned to Hisham and informed him of the answer.

“Hisham thought that he had defeated him, and said:

‘God is greatest! Go back to him and tell him: What will distract them from eating and drinking on that day, considering the terror of the Day of Resurrection that they will be experiencing?’

“Salim returned to him and conveyed this.

“Abu Ja‘far, peace be upon him, said:

‘They are in a Fire more terrible than that, yet what they are experiencing there will never distract them from saying to the people of Paradise:

“Pour upon us some water or some of what God has provided for you.” [3]

“And they will eat the thorny food of al-Dari‘ and al-Zaqqum, and drink pus and scalding water.’

“Salim returned to Hisham and informed him. Hisham was silenced and could find no answer.”

[1190] Qays ibn al-Rabi‘ said:

“I asked Abu Ishaq al-Sabi‘i about wiping [that is, wiping over the leather socks].

“He said:

‘I found the people practicing wiping until I met Muhammad ibn Ali ibn al-Husayn. I never saw anyone like him. I asked him about wiping, and he forbade me from doing it. He said: “Ali, peace be upon him, did not wipe over them.”’

“And he used to say:

‘The Book has preceded the leather socks at the ankles.’

“[That is, the saying of God, Mighty and Glorious:

‘And wipe your heads and your feet up to the ankles.’ [4]]

“Abu Ishaq said:

‘From the time he forbade me, I have never wiped [over them].’

“Qays said:

‘And from the time I heard this from Abu Ishaq, I have never wiped [over them].’”

[1191] al-Zubayr ibn Abi Bakr said:

“Muhammad ibn Ali ibn al-Husayn was called Baqir al-‘Ilm, ‘the one who opened up knowledge,’ by the people of piety.

“Al-Quradhi composed the following verse concerning him:

O Baqir of knowledge for the people of piety,
And the best of those who have gone before to the generations.

“Al-Zubayr said:

“Malik ibn A‘yan al-Juhani also composed poetry concerning Muhammad ibn Ali ibn al-Husayn:

When people seek the knowledge of the Qur’an,
Quraysh are dependent upon him.

And when it is said, ‘This is the son of the Prophet’s daughter,’
I see therein a lofty branch extending far upward.

Stars shining for those who seek guidance,
Mountains that bequeath knowledge upon mountains.”

Muhammad ibn al-Munkadir used to say:

“I never thought that I would see anyone like Ali ibn al-Husayn, peace be upon him, until I saw his son Muhammad ibn Ali, peace be upon him.

“Once I intended to admonish him, but he admonished me instead.”

He was asked:

“How was that?”

He said:

“I went out toward one of the outskirts of Medina during an extremely hot hour. Abu Ja‘far, peace be upon him, met me. He was a heavy-set, large-bodied man, leaning upon two of his black servants.

“I said to myself:

‘An elder of Quraysh, at this hour and in this condition, seeking worldly gain—I should admonish him.’

“I approached him, greeted him, and saw that he was drenched in sweat.

“I said:

‘May God set you right. An elder of Quraysh, at this hour and in this condition, seeking worldly gain! What would you say if death came to you while you were in this condition, seeking the world?’

“He released the two servants from his hands and then leaned against the wall.

“He said:

‘If death came to me—and, by God, it came to me while I was in this condition—it would come to me while I was engaged in an act of obedience to God, Mighty and Glorious, by which I was supporting myself and my family so that we would not depend upon people.

“I would only fear death if it came to me while I was engaged in one of the acts of disobedience toward God.’

“I said:

‘May God have mercy upon you. I intended to admonish you, but you admonished me.’”

[1193] It was said that Abu Ja‘far Muhammad ibn Ali ibn al-Husayn, peace be upon him, used to give certain people who attended his gathering between five hundred and one thousand dirhams each. He loved sitting with them and never became weary of them. Among them were ‘Amr ibn Dinar and ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Ubayda ibn ‘Umayra.

Sufyan said:

“He would carry the gift and clothing to them and say:

‘May it be wholesome for you from the beginning of the year.’”

[1194] al-Hasan ibn Kathir said:

“I sat with Ja‘far ibn Muhammad ibn Ali ibn al-Husayn, peace be upon him. He asked me about my condition, and I complained to him about a shortage of money and the estrangement of my brothers.

“He said:

‘A brother is not a brother if he watches over you while you are wealthy and abandons you when you are poor.’

“Then he gave an order to a servant who was before him. The servant brought out a purse and handed it to me.

“He said:

‘Use this for assistance, and when it is exhausted, inform me.’

“I found seven hundred dirhams in it.”

[1195] al-Hasan ibn Salih said:

“I heard Abu Ja‘far say:

‘Nothing is combined with anything more beautifully than forbearance with knowledge.’”

‘Abd Allah ibn al-Husayn said:

“Abu Hashim ‘Abd Allah ibn Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyya stopped before Abu Ja‘far Muhammad ibn Ali ibn al-Husayn, peace be upon him, while he was in the mosque. A group of people were around him, differing among themselves, transmitting from him and asking him for legal opinions.

“Abu Hashim became jealous of him. He insulted him and insulted his father, saying:

‘You attribute falsehoods to the Messenger of God’s designation of succession, may God bless him and his family. That designation belongs to us, not to you.’

“Abu Ja‘far turned toward him without concern and said:

‘Say whatever comes to you. I am the son of Fatima, while you are the son of al-Hanafiyya.’

“The people then rose against Abu Hashim, throwing pebbles at him and striking him with their sandals until they drove him from the mosque.”

With Zayd ibn Ali

When Zayd ibn Ali ibn al-Husayn saw the people turning toward his brother Muhammad ibn Ali and his reputation rising among them, he became jealous of him and said:

“Why do you not rise and call the people to rise with you?”

He turned away from him and said to him, peace be upon him:

“There is a time appointed for this, and we will not go beyond it.”

Zayd then called people to himself and said:

“The Imam from among us is only one who unsheathes his sword and rises, seeking the right of the family of Muhammad—not one who draws a curtain over himself and sits in his house.”

He led the Shi‘a to believe that he had only risen at the command of his brother. A group of them answered his call, and he made himself publicly known.

Abu Ja‘far said:

“O Zayd, the example of one who rises from among the people of this Household before the rising of their Mahdi is like that of a fledgling that rises from its nest before its wings have become fully developed. When it does so, it falls, and children seize it and play with it.

“So fear God for yourself, lest tomorrow you be the one crucified at al-Kunasa.”

He paid no attention to his words and publicly disavowed him. When the Shi‘a perceived this, many of those who had volunteered to rise with Zayd held back.

[1197] Some of them came to him and said:

“Is what you are calling us toward something for which you have a covenant from your father, or a testament that he made to you?”

Zayd said:

“No.”

The man said:

“Your brother Abu Ja‘far says that his father made a covenant with him concerning this matter and entrusted it to him. We know those whom he had as witnesses over us among his trustworthy adherents.”

Zayd said:

“God forbid! Had such a thing existed, he would have informed me of it.

“By God, he would sometimes remove the marrow from a bone in order to feed it to me, but he would not put it into my mouth until he had cooled it, taking care to protect me from the heat of the marrow. Yet he would not protect me from the heat of the Fire while informing someone else of this and concealing it from me!”

The man said:

“Yes, that may be so. And the Book of God bears witness to this.”

Zayd said:

“Where does the Book of God say this?”

He said:

“In what God, Most High, related about Jacob, concerning what he said to Joseph when Joseph told him what he had seen and informed him that the matter would ultimately come to him. Jacob said:

‘O my son, do not relate your vision to your brothers, lest they plot against you with a plot. Indeed, Satan is to man a manifest enemy.’ [5]

“He ordered him to conceal it from them, while informing him of what the matter would become:

‘And thus your Lord will choose you, teach you the interpretation of narratives, and complete His favor upon you and upon the family of Jacob, just as He completed it before upon your fathers, Abraham and Isaac.’ [6]

“Yet he did not inform his brothers of that.”

Zayd was silenced and could find no answer.

Those who had remained with him and had answered his call heard this and separated from him.

Hisham ibn ‘Abd al-Malik then overcame him, killed him, crucified him at the al-Kunasa of Kufa, and burned him with fire.

Thus he became exactly as Abu Ja‘far Muhammad ibn Ali ibn al-Husayn, peace be upon him, had warned him: like a fledgling that rose from its nest before its wings had become fully developed, whereupon children seized it and played with it.

His Death

There is disagreement concerning the year of his death.

Al-Waqidi said:

“Abu Ja‘far Muhammad ibn Ali died in Medina in the year 119 AH, at the age of seventy-three.”

Sufyan ibn ‘Uyayna said:

“I heard Ja‘far ibn Muhammad, peace be upon him, say:

‘I heard my father, peace be upon him, say to my aunt Fatima, daughter of al-Husayn, peace be upon him, when she spoke to him about something:

“I am fifty-eight years old,”

and he died that same year.”

Mus‘ab ibn ‘Abd Allah said:

“Abu Ja‘far Muhammad ibn Ali died in Medina in the year 114 AH.”

Al-Zubayr said:

“Muhammad ibn al-Husayn ibn Zawala said to me:

‘Muhammad ibn Ali ibn al-Husayn, peace be upon him, died toward the end of the days of Hisham, in the year 124 AH.’”

Hisham died in the year 125 AH, and his reign lasted one month and one year. And God knows best.

The thirteenth part of the book *Sharh al-Akhbar fi Fada’il al-A’immah al-Athar*, peace be upon them, has thus been completed.

Sufficient for us is God, and He is the best of those upon whom reliance is placed.

By the composition of our most eminent master, the Judge al-Nu‘man ibn Muhammad ibn Mansur—may God sanctify his spirit—through our master Muhammad and all his family.

Qur’anic References

[1] al-Baqara 2:30.

[2] Ibrahim 14:48.

[3] al-A‘raf 7:50.

[4] al-Ma’ida 5:6.

[5] Yusuf 12:5.

[6] Yusuf 12:6.