

**I M A M**  
**AL-HASSAN**  
**BIN ALI**  
**AL-ASKARI**<sub>(AS)</sub>  
The **Father** of AL-Mahdi



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**AL-ASKARI**<sup>(AS)</sup>  
The **Father** of Al-Mahdi

**By:** Fawzi al-saif

**Translated by:** Ali Salah





بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



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# preface

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1. The book in your hands, dear reader, is an abridgement of the biography of one of the fourteen infallibles in Shia Islam. Its pages constitute about 25% of the original book, which also bears the same title. With Allah's Grace and Will, the original book will be translated at a later date.
2. This book, and the other books in the same series, are aimed at the young generation of Shia Muslims who do not have a good command of the Arabic language, in which the original book was written. It therefore assumes a basic knowledge of the concepts related to the Infallible and their life, and seeks to analyze and expand on them.

We note that there are very few translated books in English on the lives of the Imams, especially for young English speakers. This is despite the importance of the topic, and it is one of the reasons that prompted this translation project.

**3.** Since this book and the rest of the series have been translated by multiple individuals and in different ways, it is natural that they will not all be in a consistent style. We would therefore be grateful if the reader would help us by pointing out any errors or observations they may have, so that they can be corrected in future editions.

I ask Allah Almighty to reward the reader, the author of these pages, and the translators with His recompense and blessings, and the intercession of the Infallibles, may peace and blessing be upon them.

**Fawzi Muhammad Taqi Al Saif**

**Tarut - Qatif**

**20/09/1445 H**

# preface 2

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I present this book to the dear readers as part of the series of biographies of AhlulBayt (as). It covers a brief history of the life of the eleventh Imam, Imam Hassan bin Ali Al-Askari (as), the father of Imam Mahdi (atfs). I hope to have had the success of covering some aspects of his blessed life in it, and wish to restate just as I did in the previous publications of this series that the intended audience of this series is mostly those with a medium religious comprehension. And this has influenced the size of this book, in addition to its language, which has been made to be as easy to understand as possible, and perhaps even influenced the selection of some of its topics.

**If what I wish to have achieved** in this book has in fact been achieved, then the praise is entirely and exclusively to Allah Almighty. And if not, then I hope to at least be deserving of the reward of my intention and effort.

I ask Allah Almighty to bless me, my father, my family, and the readers of these pages with the blessing of the Holy Prophet and his exalted Household, He truly is powerful over all things.

**Fawzi, son of Muhammad Taqi Aal Saif**  
**London, 13th of Ramadan, 1444 AH**

# Overview

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- **Name:** Al-Hassan bin Ali bin Muhammad bin Ali bin Musa bin Jafar bin Muhammad bin Ali bin Al-Hussain bin Ali bin Abi Talib (as).
- **Description:** The 11th Imam of AhlulBayt (as).
- **Mother:** Saleel.
- **Teknonym:** Abu Muhammad.
- **Birth:** Madinah, 232 AH.
- **Martyrdom:** 260 AH, poisoned under the order of Al-Mu'tamid Al-Abbasi.
- **Burial:** Samarra, Iraq.



# Imam Askari: From Birth to Martyrdom

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## 1. His mother and blessed birth:

We mentioned previously in the biography of his father, Imam Hadi (as), a brief overview of the mother of Imam Askari (as), and there<sup>[1]</sup> we said that historians<sup>[2]</sup> mentioned that Imam Hadi (as) had a single concubine, or surriyah<sup>[3]</sup>, who was the mother of all his children. And we pointed out that her different names mentioned in literature may be because she had a name before she was bought by the Imam and moved into his house, at which point the Imam changed her name, or perhaps it was after an important event like giving birth to the next Imam, or to protect her from the surveillance of the authorities, just like what has been narrated about the mother of Imam Mahdi (atfs),

or for any other reason. And as a result, all of those names have been conveyed in different narrations. Hence, her name has been narrated to be Hudayth, Sawsan, and Saleel. And that last name is the one used in the narrations praising her, such as what Al-Masoudi narrated in his book, *Ithbat Al-Wasiyyah*: “When Saleel, the mother of Abu Muhammad (Al-Askari), was brought before Abul-Hassan (Al-Hadi) (as), he said: Saleel is protected from flaws and ailments, evil and impurities. He then told her: Allah Almighty will bestow on his creation somebody with Divine authority, who fills this earth with justice just as it has been filled with oppression.”<sup>[4]</sup>

Additionally, her high status is displayed in what Hakeemah, the daughter of Imam Jawad (as) and the sister of Imam Hadi (as), said at the beginning of Imam Mahdi (atfs)’s occultation, when Ahmad bin Ibrahim asked her: “Who should the Shia seek refuge with?,” and she replied: “With the grandmother, the mother of Abu Muhammad (meaning Saleel, the wife of Imam Hadi (as), the mother of Imam Askari (as), and the grandmother of Imam Mahdi (atfs)).”<sup>[5]</sup>

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This blessed mother gave birth to Imam Askari (as) in Madinah, year 231 AH<sup>[6]</sup> or 232 AH, and his father was nineteen years and a few months old at the time<sup>[7]</sup>. Unfortunately, there is no way to determine either one of those two dates for sure.

## 2. From Madinah to Samarra:

Years after his birth, in the year 243 AH<sup>[8]</sup>, he emigrated with his father when the Abbasid caliph Al-Mutawakil summoned him in an account we mentioned in the biography of Imam Hadi



(as), the result of which was their forced residence in Samarra, where Imam Askari (as) was to live in for the rest of his blessed life, until his martyrdom caused by poisoning in the year 260 AH in this city at the age of 28. And perhaps it is for this reason that he obtained the name 'Al-Askari' <sup>[9]</sup>, due to his long residence in Samarra which was called Al-Askar at the time, and was the capital of the Abbasid Caliphate in its second era.

We also stated in our book *The Pure Advisor: Imam Ali bin Muhammad Al-Hadi* that some scholars <sup>[10]</sup> determined that Imam Hadi (as)'s migration to Samarra was in the year 233 AH, according to Al-Tabari, and based on what has been said about him residing in Samarra for twenty years, in addition to the fact that he was martyred in 254 AH, meaning that he must have moved there in 233 AH. But we have not found this convincing. This is because the Imam (as) was constantly harassed by the mayor of Madinah, who provoked Al-Mutawakkil to take action against him, claiming he was threatening his rule <sup>[11]</sup>. And so the Imam (as) wrote to Al-Mutawakkil at that same time, denying these rumours and allegations that he is after his throne, and telling him of his vision in which the Holy Prophet (saw) tells him of all of this. Several things happened as a result of these rumours and the Imam's letter, such as the dismissal of the mayor of Madinah a short while later <sup>[12]</sup>, and the Imam's forced migration to Samarra. And we believe that he took Imam Askari (as) with him.

It was predictable that Imam Hadi (as) would be forced to leave the city of his grandfather (saw), considering that the Imams (as) were not advocates of a loud and boisterous resistance, and that they tried as much as possible to resort to pas-

sive methods in order to not aggravate the oppressors against them and their followers.

And we believe that what Sheikh Mufid decided, which is that the Imam's summoning and the letter narrated to us by Sheikh Kulayni were in 243 AH, is correct for several reasons we mentioned in our aforementioned book, including:

- That it is unlikely that Al-Mutawakkil, who only became caliph on the 24th of Dhul-Hijjah 232 AH (ie at the end of the year), would commence his tenure with the arrest of the Imam (as) within only a few months!
- The fact that Abdullah bin Muhammad bin Dawud Al-Abasi Al-Hashimi, the mayor of Madinah who started the allegations about the Imam (as), is not mentioned among the mayors of Mecca or Madinah until the year 238 AH, and is not mentioned after 243 AH. We have found the names of several mayors<sup>[13]</sup> of Madinah and Mecca<sup>[14]</sup> in the tenure of Al-Mutawakkil, but as for Ibn Atrujah<sup>[15]</sup>, the source of the allegations, we do not even find a mention of him among the mayors for him to have done what he did! Rather, his name is mentioned starting from year 238 AH for about four years until his dismissal in the year 242 or 243 AH<sup>[16]</sup>, which we assume is a direct result of his bad treatment of the Imam (as). In this period of time, he noticed the people's gathering around the Imam (as) and their companionship of him, and so he sent a letter of aggravation to Al-Mutawakkil, after which the Imam sent his own letter of vindication in return, resulting in Al-Mutawakkil expelling the mayor and summoning the Imam (as).

It appears that the inaccuracy in the dates originated from Al-Tabari, who directly stated that "In this year (233 AH), Yahya bin Harthamah came to Mecca from Medina, along with Ali bin Muhammad bin Ali Al-Rida bin Musa bin Jafar. Yahya was in charge of the Mecca Road"<sup>[17]</sup>. Historians then successively copied it directly from him, such as Ibn Al-Jawzi in Al-Muntathim, volume 11, page 195, as did his grandson in his book: The Mirror of Time, and others, some of whom stated explicitly that they narrated it from him!

It seems that Al-Khateeb Al-Baghdadi copied Al-Tabari's words in The History of Baghdad (as did Ibn Khallakan in The Obituaries)<sup>[18]</sup>, and added that Ali Al-Hadi (as) resided in Samarra for twenty years and a few months. And so, this phrase was passed down all the way to later historical sources!

We decided to include this study here because of its direct connection to the life of Imam Askari (as). Going by what some scholars determined, which is that Imam Hadi (as)'s migration from Madinah was in 232 or 234 AH, that means that Imam Askari (as) was either one or three years of age, whereas he would be around eleven years of age if we settle on the other possibility, 243 AH, which we find to be more likely, and is what both Sheikh Mufid and Sheikh Kulayni's narration verify.

### **3. Imam Askari (as) during the Imamate of his father:**

It is likely we may not find any major events in the life of Imam Askari (as) during the Imamate of his father apart from the mandate on his own Imamate, and his introduction to the

Shia so that they may pay allegiance to him and testify to his Imamate after the martyrdom of his father (as). Because Imam Hadi (as) had multiple sons, some of whom were expecting to succeed their father due to their (supposed) superiority in knowledge, worship, and age, Imam Hadi (as) made sure to appoint his son Al-Hassan as the next Imam as soon as possible, acquainting him to his followers, and denying the Imamate from the rest of his sons. Ali bin Ahmad Al-Nawfali has narrated that: "We were with our master Abul-Hassan (as) when his son Abu Jafar (Sayyed Muhammad)<sup>[19]</sup> passed by us. So we said to him (the Imam): 'This is our superior after you?' He (as) replied: 'No,' so we asked: 'Who then?'; and he said: 'My son Abu Muhammad Al-Hassan, not Muhammad, nor Jafar...'<sup>[20]</sup>

Upon contemplating the narrations in appointing him as the next Imam, we notice the following:

First: They contain denial of Imamate from all the other sons of Imam Hadi (as), including the righteous and knowledgeable sons, like Sayyed Muhammad (Abu Jafar), or the corrupt, like Jafar (known as 'the liar,' for reasons that will become apparent in the near future...). And this firmness eliminated any possibility of the Imamate going to anybody else. We find that the previous narration emphasises on this point.

Second: These narrations also emphasise the idea of bada' (alteration of the Divine will) ... and it is important for us to touch upon this topic. Originally, it means the revelation<sup>[21]</sup> of something to the people after it was hidden for one reason or another, meaning that the people may expect something to be in a certain way based on their own assessments, and the reality of the matter is not revealed to them for the lack of necessity to do

so, until a new situation arises at which point the Imam reveals to the people the real Divine will for its importance at that point.

Bada' has been attributed to Allah Almighty in several instances, such as the narrations that say that: "Allah has not been worshipped with something better than bada" [22]. Some people, however, have incorrectly attributed bada' to Allah Almighty in the sense that He understands the matter in a way after understanding it in a different way, but this is undoubtedly incorrect as it associates ignorance to Allah Almighty, who is exalted of such attributes.

Rather, the truth is in what we mentioned previously. Imam Hadi (as) compared what happened with his son Imam Askari (as) to what happened with Imam Musa bin Jafar Al-Kadhim (as) and his brother Ismail, where a fraction of the Shia at the time expected Ismail to be the next Imam due to his closeness to his father Imam Sadiq (as), and there was no reason for the Imam (as) to deny this and cause an internal conflict between the followers of Imam Sadiq (as). But when Ismail passed away during his father's lifetime, the stage was set for the Imamate of Imam Kadhim (as) and his acceptance by society, which obliged great appreciation to Allah Almighty.

Similarly, Sayyed Muhammad was older than his brother Imam Askari (as), and many of the Shia believed he was the next Imam. So when he passed away, society became acceptant of the Imamate of Al-Askari (as), which was also a cause for great appreciation to Allah Almighty [23]. The close followers of Imam Hadi (as) acknowledged this reality. It is narrated that Abu Hashim Al-Jafari said: "I was in the presence of Abul-Hasan (as) after the death of his son, Abu Jafar. I thought to myself

wanting to say, "Abu Jafar and Abu Muhammad at this time are like Abu al-Hassan Musa and Ismail, the sons of Jafar bin Muhammad (as), and their stories are similar, since Abu Muhammad was the appointee after Abu Jafar (as)."

At that moment, Abul-Hassan (as) turned to me before I could say anything and said, "Yes, Abu Hashim, Allah applied bada' in the case of Abu Muhammad after Abu Jafar (as), a fact that was not known for him (Abu Muhammad). In the same way He applied bada' in the case of Musa after the death of Ismail through which his case came to light. That is just like what you thought to yourself. Even if people of falsehood may dislike it, Abu Muhammad, my son, will be the successor after me. With him is the knowledge that he will need and with him are the means of Imamate."<sup>[24]</sup>

**Third:** We must direct the attention of the dear reader to something that may answer many questions, like how did some people know about the Imamate of this Imam despite others not knowing? Or how did some people who were close to the Imam not hear the mandate of his Imamate, or didn't narrate it?

**The answer:** A number of those asking these questions try to judge those times on with the standards of our times, which is a big mistake. In contemporary times, if a scholar dies and another takes his place, every country and every city would know about it as a result of the ease of communication these days. But this was not the case at the time, not just because it was difficult to spread the word, but because it was also unsafe to do so!

These conditions caused the mandates on Imamate take different forms, varying based on the current situation, in terms of politics and security. Therefore, a person may hear the mandate when alone with the Imam (as), and he may hear it while in a group of people. Perhaps it was in a particular incident, such as Al-Hassan (as) passing by alongside his father Imam Hadi (as), who indicates that he is the next Imam <sup>[25]</sup>, in which case those not present would not know about it. We do believe that these mandates and indications started since the beginning of Imam Hadi's Imamate, even just after the martyrdom of Imam Jawad (as), and all the way till Imam Hadi (as)'s martyrdom <sup>[26]</sup>.

Imam Hadi (as) gave a great deal of attention to this matter, and (perhaps) that is why we didn't see any serious challengers for Imam Askari (as)'s Imamate, for Imam Hadi (as) preached to those in Samarra, and wrote to those outside of it. We have narrations about the mandates of Imam Askari (as)'s Imamate by his father reaching us from: Yahya bin Bashir Al-Qanbari, Ali bin Amr Al-Nawfali, Abdullah bin Muhammad Al-Isfahani, Ali bin Jafar, Marwan Al-Anbari, Ali bin Mahzayar, Ali bin Amr Al-Attar, Muhammad bin Yahya, Abu Bakar Al-Fahfaki, Shaha-wayh bin Abdullah <sup>[27]</sup>, and Dawud bin Qasem Al-Jafari.

A group of those were told of the Imamate of Imam Askari (as) through writing <sup>[28]</sup>, so that they may tell the Shia of their respective areas.

**Fourth:** We observe in some of these mandates on the Imamate of Imam Askari (as) a mention not just of Imam Askari (as), but also of Imam Mahdi (atfs). By doing so, Imam Hadi (as) hits two birds with one stone. The narrations that explicitly mention Imam Mahdi (atfs) include:

The narration of Dawud bin Qasem, who said: "I heard Abul-Hassan (as) saying, 'The succeeding Imam after me will be Al-Hassan. How will your dealing be with the succeeding Imam after the succeeding Imam?' I then said, "Why will that be so, my master?" He said, "You will not see him in person, and it will not be lawful for you to pronounce his name." I then asked, "How then will we speak of him?" He said, "Say, 'The Hujjah from the family of Muhammad (saw)'" [29]. This means that Imam Hadi (as) drew a precise map for the Shia on how to deal with the matter of Imam Mahdi (as) at the time in the manner that suits the contemporary circumstances.

#### 4. Imam Askari (as)'s arrest

Imam Askari (as) lived through the rule of four different Abbasid caliphs just before and during his Imamate:

The first was Ahmad Al-Musta'een bin Al-Mu'tasim, who took over after Al-Muntasir, and ruled from 248 until 252 AH, before he abdicated and, ultimately, was killed. This all happened as a result of an internal conflict between his Turkic generals, and even between him and his brothers, which caused him to move from Samarra back to Baghdad, making it easier for his Turkic generals to rise in Samarra and replace him with his nephew, Al-Zubair bin Al-Mutawakkil, also known as Al-Mu'tazz. Al-Mu'tazz, with the assistance of his Turkic generals, gathered an army and deployed it to Baghdad. After the people of Baghdad overthrew him too, Al-Musta'een abdicated to save his life. He pledged allegiance to his nephew, and even testified on his own incompetence for rule! This was in 252 AH, and it was still not enough to save him from execution.



It appears, from some narrations, that Imam Askari (as) was imprisoned by Otamish, a Turkic military commander who served under Al-Musta'een and then Al-Mu'tazz, finding himself in his close circle<sup>[30]</sup>, and his superior was the minister Saleh bin Waseef<sup>[31]</sup>. Sheikh Mufid states in his book Al-Irshad<sup>[32]</sup> that Imam Askari (as) was imprisoned at Saleh bin Waseef's place, and that the Abbasids approached him when he imprisoned the Imam (as), and told him to be very harsh and unforgiving with him. So Saleh said "What do I do with him?! I assigned to him two of the cruellest men I could find<sup>[33]</sup>, but now they have become people who perform a great deal of worship, prayer, and fasting!"

Historically, Saleh bin Waseef was killed in Safar, 256 AH, in the time of Al-Muhtadi, meaning that he must have arrested the Imam prior to that year, most likely in the time of Al-Mu'tazz, who himself was killed in 255 AH after he was overthrown.

Therefore, he would be the first person to have imprisoned the Imam (as) after the death of his father Imam Hadi (as).

It appears that during these times, a series of arrests occurred targeting some of the Imam's prominent followers, and ultimately the Imam himself. We learn this from the narration of Abu Hashem, Dawud bin Qasem Al-Jafari, who narrates to us the events that transpired during the Imam's imprisonment. According to Tabrasi, "Abu Hashim was imprisoned with Abu Muhammad (as) along with several other Talibis in 258 AH"<sup>[34]</sup>.

In another narration, Ahmad bin Ziyad Al-Hamdani narrates through Ali bin Ibrahim bin Hisham that Dawud bin Qasem

said: "I was in confinement in the prison known as the prison of Saleh bin Waseef Al-Ahmar, and with me was Al-Hassan bin Muhammad Al-Aqeeqi, Muhammad bin Ibrahim Al-'Amri, and others, when Abu Muhammad (as) entered upon us along with his brother Jafar. So we gathered around him. The person responsible for his capture was Saleh bin Waseef. There was also a Jamhi man in the prison with us who claimed he was Alawi.

Abu Muhammad (as) turned to us and said: 'If it were not for the fact that there are some amongst you who are not one of us, I would tell you when you are to be released.' He gestured for the Jamhi to leave the room, which he did. When he left, Abu Muhammad (as) said to us: 'This man (ie the Jamhi) is not one of you, so beware of him, for he is hiding in his clothes a note he wrote to the Sultan, mentioning all that you have said.'

So some of them stood up and searched his clothes and found the note disclosing very severe information"<sup>[35]</sup>.

During these times of Islamic history, "God's deputy, and the position of the Holy Prophet" (which is what the caliph's would call themselves) became more akin to a game of football, or even a game of slots. The winner of yesterday is the loser of today, the prisoner of yesterday the imprisoner today. And so it was not surprising that the reigns of these "caliphs" were sometimes nine months, like a woman's pregnancy, or two or three years, and so on. The conflict was openly said to be about money, even though in the past it was not this explicitly disclosed. The Turks rose against Al-Mu'tazz because they wanted assets. And he himself was blatantly begging his mother, the wife of Al-Mutawakkil, for the money she gained from the Muslims through their farms and ranches, and from non-Mus-

lims through conquests, all of which was equal the budget of an entire nation. And yet she would reject him. Eventually the Turks turned against her son, overthrowing and killing him. The table then turned on her, and she was stripped of all she possessed from the treasury<sup>[36]</sup> by that same army.

Al-Zubair Al-Mu'tazz bin Al-Mutawakkil was killed with the same sword with which he killed his uncle Al-Musta'een bin Al-Mu'tasim, the army with which he allied against his uncle being the same army that killed him! They then pledged allegiance to Muhammad Al-Muhtadi bin Al-Wathiq, although he did not last very long either, ruling for just over nine months before he too was overthrown and killed!

Yet again, this militia picked another caliph to pledge allegiance to, this time to Ahmad Al-Mu'tamid bin Al-Mutawakkil, but he lasted for a longer time than his predecessors, ruling for 23 years from 256 to 279 AH. In this time, the Imam (as) was imprisoned twice, and was eventually poisoned by this caliph.

Imam Askari (as) was detained during the time of Al-Mu'tamid by Ali bin Jareen<sup>[37]</sup> in Safar 260 AH, so about a month before his martyrdom in Rabee' Al-Awal of the same year. This incarceration did not last long though, as he was soon released according to another narration<sup>[38]</sup>, and also according to what is narrated to have been said by the Imam (as) himself<sup>[39]</sup>: "Al-Mahmoudy said: I saw the handwriting of Abu Muhammad (as) when he was released from the prison of Al-Mu'tamid, saying: "They desire to put out the light of Allah with their mouths, but Allah shall perfect His light, even if the faithless should be averse."<sup>[40]</sup><sup>[41]</sup>

The context to this narration is that "Al-Mu'tamid incarcerated the Imam (as) in the hands of Ali bin Jareen, and imprisoned his brother Jafar with him. Al-Mu'tamid would ask Ali bin Jareen about their news and conditions, every day and everywhere, and he would be told that he fasts the days and prays the nights. One day he asked about his news, and he was told the same thing. Al-Mu'tamid told Ali bin Jareen: 'Go to him tonight and give him my regards, and tell him to leave to his house, escorted.' Ali bin Jareen says: 'So I went to the prison, and at the door I found a saddled mule. When I went in, I found him sitting, having worn his sandals and scarf, and when he saw me, he stood up. I gave him the letter, and he rode his mule, but did not leave. I asked him: 'What are you waiting for, master?' He said: 'For Jafar to come out.' I said: 'I was told to release you, not him.'

He said, 'You will go back to him (Al-Mu'tamid) and say that we left together from one house, and if I go back and he is not with me, there will be consequences that you are very aware of.'

Ali bin Jareen left, and when he came back he said: 'He tells you, 'I have released Jafar for you, because I imprisoned him for his crimes against himself and against you, and for what he would speak of.'<sup>[42]</sup>

Sheikh Mufid indicates in his book *Al-Irshad* that the Imam (as) was imprisoned in the house of Nahreer the servant, so was this the same prison that the Imam was imprisoned in Sa-far of 260 AH? In which case this narration talks about a different part of it. Or was it an entirely different prison than Ali bin Jareen's prison?

In his book, Sheikh Korani finds it possible that the Imam (as) had been imprisoned several times before that in the time of Al-Mu'tamid.<sup>[43]</sup>

## 5. Other narrations of his incarceration

### The first narration, date undetermined:

There are two other narrations about the Imam (as)'s imprisonment containing events which are mentioned among his miracles. We were unable to determine the exact date of the first one: Hussain bin Abdul-Wahhab narrates in his book Uyun Al-Mu'jizat, with a chain of narrators extending to Abu Ayub Ishaq bin Aban, who said: "Abu Muhammad (as) would send for his followers, telling them to come to a certain place, in a certain house belonging to a certain person, on a certain night, and they would find him there. His delegates were constantly at the door of the place he was imprisoned in, day and night. Every five days, he would dismiss his delegates and choose others, reminding them of their duties, and making sure they can be available at the door of his prison when needed. And so his companions would go to the place he had assigned, and he would have gotten there before them, and they would raise their concerns and affairs to him. He would resolve their matters, regardless of position and class, and they would all go to their places with various miracles, all while the Imam (as) was in the prison known as Al-Adhdad<sup>[44]'</sup>

We have no doubt that Allah Almighty has given the power to his sincere servants for them to perform their duties of safeguarding religion and spreading its rulings, granting them

abnormal means from the unseen world. However, the details in the narration show that the Imam (as) actually directed his followers to do these duties, and through them spread knowledge to the rest of the Shia.

And although it is possible to interpret this event in a normal way, such as suggesting he would persuade his guards to allow him to leave and come back, swaying them with his profound influence he has on others, we do not need to interpret it in such a way after knowing that Allah Almighty empowers His servants in various ways., This is especially considering how unlikely the first possibility is, considering the fact that security was heightened on the Imam (as) to prevent this exact possibility. The guards were changed every five days, and there was a severe punishment for any guard caught being negligent or collaborating with the prisoner.

It is even more unlikely when we consider how he used to tell his companions exactly when and where to find him a few nights in advance, something that was very recurrent from him as observed in the phrase 'Would send for his followers..'

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This narration does not contain any indication to when exactly these events happened. Was this in the first days of his Imamate, or during the rule of Al-Mu'tamid? When did it happen? And how long did this particular incarceration last?

**The second one, raises questions:**

## **6. The Catholic priest and the rain:**

This story is narrated by Al-Qudb Al-Rawandi in Al-Khara'ij

Wal-Jara'ih, and by Ibn Al-Sabbagh Al-Maliki. It recounts the Imam (as)'s imprisonment with his followers in the time of Al-Mu'tamid, his release after a short while, and his resolution of the conundrum of the Catholic who had almost caused turmoil in the faith of the people.

After recounting the story of Abu Hisham Al-Jafari that we mentioned previously: "I was in the prison in Al-Jawshaq along with Al-Hassan bin Muhammad Al-Aqeeqi, Muhammad bin Ibrahim Al-Amri, and about 5 or 6 others of our Shia, when Abu Muhammad (as) walked in on us with his brother Jafar...," where the Imam (as) tells them about the spy in their midst who falsely claimed to be a Hashimite, but was actually providing the authorities with information of what the prisoners were discussing. This was during the time of Al-Mu'tamid, in the prison of Saleh bin Waseef. The continuation of the story, as retold by Abu Hashim, is as follows: "A short while after Abu Muhammad (as)'s imprisonment, a terrible drought hit Samarra. Al-Mu'tamid ordered Ibn Al-Mutawakkil to lead the people in Istisqaa' prayer (praying for rain), and for three days they prayed and pleaded, but to no avail. On the fourth day, the Catholic church went out, with all the priests and Christians, and between them was a priest who, whenever he raised his hands, rain would pour plentifully.

The next day, they did the same thing, and received heavy rains until they were satisfied. The people were amazed with this, and doubt was sown into the hearts of many of them, causing some of them to even convert to Christianity. This bothered Al-Mu'tamid, who sent for Saleh bin Waseef and told him to release Abu Muhammad (as) and escort him to his palace.

When Al-Hassan bin Ali (as) was brought before Al-Mu'tamid, the caliph said: 'Rescue the nation of Muhammad (saw) from what has become of them.' Abu Muhammad (as) said: 'Let the Christians come out for a third day,' to which the caliph replied: 'They have had the rain that they wish, so what do you want them to go out for?' The Imam (as) said: 'So that I can eliminate doubt from people's minds, and respond to that which has corrupted weak people's minds.'

And so Al-Mu'tamid ordered the church and its priests to go out for a third day and to take the people with them. So the Christians went out, and so did Abu Muhammad (as), bringing with him a vast number of people. The Christians stood in supplication and prayer, whereas the priest simply raised his hands. The rest of the Christians and priests raised their hands too, and the sky began clouding up and raining.

Abu Muhammad (as) ordered somebody to seize the priest's hands and take whatever is in them. They found between his fingers a human bone. Abu Muhammad (as) took the bone, wrapped it in a cloth, and said: 'Quench.' Immediately, the clouds dispersed, and the sun came out again. The people were astonished, and the caliph asked: 'What is that, Abu Muhammad?' He said: 'This is the bone of one of the prophets of Allah Almighty, and these people got stole it from the prophet's tomb. Whenever a prophet bone is exposed under the sky, it will rain.' Indeed, they tried that, and they found it as he said.

Abu Muhammad (as) went back to his house in Samarra, having eliminated any doubts from the people's minds, which pleased the caliph and the Muslims. He also negotiated with the caliph the release of his companions from prison, which



he did. Abu Muhammad (as) resided in his house in Samarra, venerated and respected, with the caliph's gifts and tributes reaching him in his house, until his death, may Allah have mercy on him."<sup>[45]</sup>

**We have several notes on this narration:**

- We believe that when after Allah Almighty assigned Imams as leaders for the people, he provided them with what proves their Imamate. And so many miracles occurred at their request, signifying their special connection with Allah Almighty, who gave them powers beyond the power of any other human. So naturally, they knew many things that people were ignorant about, and if the previous narration is true, then it comes within this context.
- We also believe that, despite being distanced from the positions assigned to them by Allah Almighty and isolated from the people they are supposed to lead, the Imams (as) would intervene whenever a threat to the society appeared, whether it be a theological predicament, like this narration, or an economical dilemma like in the time of Imam Sajjad (as), or even an internal conflict between commanders like what happened with Imam Ali (as).

In fact, the caliphs of the time knew very well that the only way to solve these problems that baffled even the greatest rulers and commanders was to consult the Imams (as). Hence they would be forced to come back to the Imams (as) after being humbled by these problems. The Imams (as), in return, would deal with these troubles with due responsibility. As Imam Ali (as) says, "You have certainly known that I am the

most rightful of all others for the Caliphate. By Allah, so long as the affairs of Muslims remain intact and there is no oppression in it, other than that which is on myself, I shall keep quiet, therefore seeking reward for it from Allah and keeping aloof from its attractions and allurements for which you aspire."<sup>[46]</sup>

**1. Seeking intercession by mentioning prophets, messengers, and faithful believers is something that has great value, not just in our theology, but to all Muslims, save the rare few who disagreed, but they have been refuted with clear evidence. Hence, if somebody were to interpret what happened as a form of seeking intercession from one of the prophets, few would disagree. Even those who do not believe in the Imams of AhlulBayt (as) believe that the second caliph sought intercession through the uncle of the Holy Prophet (saw), Al-Abbas, the result of which was a plentiful rainfall. As for our Imams, the anecdotes are more than can be counted.**

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With all this in mind, discussing the previous narration can be laid out as follows:

**First:** It appears that the first to bring up this narration was Al-Qudb Al-Rawandi (d. 573 AH). From the Shia, Ibn Shahr Ashoob (d. 588 AH) mentioned its summary, while from other sects, Ibn Al-Sabbagh Al-Maliki (d. 855 AH) narrated it in his book Al-Fusool Al-Muhimmah, and from these two it spread to many other Shia and Sunni sources as the later scholars obtained it from the earlier scholars.

**Second:** Other than this narration, we have not found in any other narration anything that alludes to the fact that a prophet's

bones being exposed causes rainfall. This is not in any other narration from AhlulBayt, even though we know that some prophets' bodies stayed exposed without burial for a long while, not to mention the story of Imam Hussain (as)!

We even have some narrations about the transport of prophets' bodies from one place to another, for it is narrated that Allah Almighty ordered Prophet Musa (as) to take the body of Prophet Yusuf (as) out of Egypt, so he transported his body in an alabaster coffin to the Levant<sup>[47]</sup>.

Additionally, there is a big debate between the scholars on the actual topic of the bones of prophets in graves, as there are several narrations on the matter. How did this priest find that bone and take it out of the grave? How did he know it had this ability?

Sheikh Korani points out this exact issue, saying: "There is an issue with this narration, which is that the bones of the prophets do not deteriorate nor separate from their bodies, as we understand from the narration by Al-Hakim, V4, page 560: 'Allah Almighty has prohibited the ground to consume the bodies of prophets.' Al-Hakim determined it was a correct narration, based on the conditions set by Muslim and Bukhari (as Al-Hakim was Sunni), and several others have narrated this narration too<sup>[48]</sup>.

Third: What is mentioned in Al-Qudb Al-Rawandi's book Al-Khara'ij is that this event took place in the time of Al-Mutawakkil, who was killed in 247 AH during the Imamate of Imam Hadi (as), and around seven years before the Imamate of Imam Askari (as). Therefore it is impossible for this to have taken

place in the time of both Al-Mutawakkil and Imam Askari (as) simultaneously. As such, some found it necessary to solve the issue by mentioning his son Al-Mu'tamid at the beginning of the narration as the incumbent caliph of the time.

As for Ibn Al-Sabbagh Al-Maliki in his book Al-Fusool Al-Muhimmah, although he managed to evade the problem by saying it was in the time of Al-Mu'tamid, he fell into another problem most Sunnis find themselves in by adding statements contradictory to historical fact. He stated at the end that: "Abu Muhammad (as) resided in his house in Samarra, venerated and respected, with the caliph's gifts and tributes reaching him in his house, until his death, may Allah have mercy on him"! What veneration and respect from the caliph is he referring to, while it is the caliph himself who poisoned him?! When did his gifts and tributes ever reach the Imam (as)? And did he "die", or was he poisoned and killed?!

We have previously mentioned the various forms of cruel treatment the Imam (as) used to receive by the order of Al-Mu'tamid himself, and it was him who ordered the poisoning of the Imam (as), as we will discuss shortly.

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And while Ibn Al-Sabbagh narrated this story without a chain of narrators, Al-Qudb Al-Rawandi and Ibn Shahr Ashoob narrated it through Ali bin Hassan bin Saboor. According to Al-Ataridi, "We have not found mention of such a name in any of our biographies"<sup>[49]</sup>.

Moreover, even if we did find such a name in our books, it would be of little use; the time difference between the two scholars, this narrator, and the actual event is almost 300 years!

## 7. The martyrdom of Imam Askari (as):

Not only do historical events expose the murderers of Imam Askari (as), but his murder in itself also reveals who killed him, and even how they did it! We say “murder”, contrary to what some described as his “death”! This is for the following reasons:

- The “death” of a young man at the ripe age of 28, having had no prior complaints of any sickness or ailment, reveals that perhaps this wasn’t actually just a “death” caused by natural causes!
- If we add to that the fact that he had been incarcerated by his enemy – on no charge, and with no trial –, and that a spy had been planted between his followers to report on their every move, and that his prisoner would ask his jailers every day for information about him <sup>[50]</sup>, and that he was ultimately released in the same way he was captured, that adds to the probability that he was assassinated, and he did not just “die”!
- Especially considering that his enemy was the authority and government itself, run by the caliph who was notorious for his deception and treachery, with which he has infamously eliminated anybody who stood up to him (or at least those he thought did), to the point where it was his primary weapon to keep his position. He was not a person to be cautious of Allah Almighty, nor did he fear any law! All of this reinforces the likeliness that that was not just some natural “death”!

- Furthermore, the way Al-Mu'tamid and the authorities tried their best to disguise the Imam's "death" as natural is almost identical to what their predecessors did with their victims! Sheikh Korani describes this never-ending cycle as recounted in Ma'a'ilim Al-Khilafah: "When Al-Mu'tazz came to power, he gathered the people and brought out the body of his brother Al-Mu'ayyad, causing rumours that, 'He was invited and he answered, and there was nothing wrong with him!' A few months later, he gathered the people again, and brought out the body of Al-Musta'een and said: "His death came upon him, and here he is without any injuries, so bear witness to this!' A while later, Al-Muhtadi came to power, and when Al-Mu'tazz's body was shown to the people, he told them to "bear witness that he had died naturally and there are no injuries on him!' Less than a year after that, Al-Mu'tamid seized power, and when he revealed Al-Muhtadi's body, he said: 'Look at him. He died in his sleep from sorrow!'"<sup>[51]</sup>

This same tactic was used by Harun Al-Rasheed after he ordered the poisoning of Imam Kadhim (as), when called at his funeral: "This is Musa bin Jafar! He died in his sleep!" In fact, he even brought several witnesses to his prison cell so they can see this and give their false testimony. And the exact same thing even happened to Imam Hadi (as) too!

This pattern is the embodiment of the phrase "A guilty conscience needs no accuser".

Additionally, the events immediately after Imam Askari (as)'s martyrdom, including the attack on his funeral by the authorities, the attempted detainment of his son Al-Mahdi (atfs), the

meticulous search of his house, and even the arrest of the women present in his house, all exposed the truth and shattered the façade the caliphate was trying to put on. The lie that they had brought doctors for him, taken care for him <sup>[52]</sup>, and raised his concerns to the caliph himself was revealed to be just a trick.

And although other sects cite that the Imam (as) passed away at this date, without providing any explanation for his "death" at such an early age, the truth is what Sheikh Saduq said: "Al-Hassan bin Ali Al-Askari (as) was killed by Al-Mu'tamid by poison."<sup>[53]</sup>

## **8. The activities of Imam Askari (as) during his Imamate:**

Imam Askari (as)'s Imamate was relatively brief. In fact, it might have been the shortest between all the Imams, starting with the martyrdom of his father Imam Hadi (as) in 254 AH until his own martyrdom in 260 AH, therefore not exceeding six years. And yet, his work and endeavours regarding his followers and companions not only effect those of his time, but all Shias until today, aiding all those seeking guidance among the Islamic nation!

## **9. Preparing the Shia for the absence of the Mahdi (atfs):**

Among his most important endeavours was preparing a nation to follow an Imam partially or completely absent from them, while maintaining their principles and beliefs that were

instilled in them. And this is not an easy task. We see the story of Prophet Musa (as) when he left for his Lord's meeting, and Samiri was able to execute his plan to mislead the Israelites, something he very nearly accomplished<sup>[54]</sup>. We also saw a similar occurrence after the passing of the Holy Prophet (saw), and we saw how the Muslim nation turned on its heels immediately, just like Fatimah Al-Zahra (as) described<sup>[55]</sup>. And so Imam Askari (as) had to condition his followers by reducing his direct contact with them, communicating with them indirectly in his absence.

Even when present, the Imam (as) would prohibit people from speaking to him in public, sometimes even from greeting him<sup>[56]</sup>. And although this started in the time his father Imam Hadi (as) was alive, it increased after his father's martyrdom to acclimatise the people to it, so that the absence of the Imam would not be the point where the nation turns from the true path. Al-Mas'oudi (d. 346 AH) emphasises this in his book *Ithbat Al-Wasiyyah*, which is considered one of our oldest sources, and one of the closest to the time of the Imam (as)'s occultation. In it, he says: "It is narrated that Abul-Hassan Al-Hadi (as) of Al-Askar (Samarra) stayed in hiding from most of his Shia, with the exception of a small number of his closest companions. When the Imamate was passed down to his son, Abu Muhammad (as) would communicate with his followers indirectly, except for the times he would go to the sultan's court. This action from him and his father was a prelude to the occultation of Imam Mahdi (atfs), so as to condition them to such concealment and shrouding, and so they do not deny the Imam's occultation."<sup>[57]</sup>



## 10. Introducing his successor, Al-Mahdi (as):

Imam Askari (as) introduced the next Imam to his followers in order to emphasise two points. First, his birth, which refutes what other sects said about Al-Mahdi not being born, and that he will be born just before his appearance at the end of times! So Imam Askari (as) showed the people that the Mahdi, about whom so many narrations talked about, was in fact his son, and that he was born in his father's lifetime, even showing him to some of his companions that he trusted. We will discuss this introduction to his followers somewhere else...

The other point he wanted to call attention to was that Al-Mahdi (atfs) was his successor, and that his followers must pay allegiance and show their loyalty to him. Here we shall recount a narration that contains several beneficial details in this matter.

Ahmad bin Ishaq bin Sa'd Al-Ash'ari<sup>[58]</sup> says: "I entered upon Abu Muhammad (as) wanting to ask him about his heir and successor. Before I said anything, he said: 'Ahmad bin Ishaq, Allah Almighty has not left the Earth without a divine sovereign since the creation of Adam (as), and He will not leave it without one until the Day of Judgement. Through that divine sovereign, He repels misfortunes from Earth's inhabitants, causes rain to fall, and brings out the harvests of the Earth.'

I said: 'Then who is your heir and the Imam after you, dear son of the Holy Prophet?' He abruptly stood up and hurriedly entered the house. When he came out, on his back was a child of about three years old whose face was like a shining full moon. He said: 'Ahmad bin Ishaq, if it were not for your status

to Allah Almighty and His emissaries, I would not have shown you this son of mine. He has the same name and teknonymic as the Holy Prophet (saw), and he will fill the land with justice and righteousness, just as it has been filled with injustice and oppression.

Ahmad bin Ishaq... In this nation, he is like Khidhr (as), and he is like Dhul-Qarnain. By Allah, he will go into a long occultation, during which nobody will stay guided except those given the privilege by Allah Almighty to acknowledge his Imamate and pray for the hastening of his return.

I said: 'My master, is there a sign for this for my heart to be reassured?'

The boy replied to me in a fluent and pure Arabic tongue: 'I am Allah's remainder on Earth, His punisher of the oppressors. Do not ask for a sign of something after having seen it itself, Ahmad bin Ishaq.'

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I left the Imam jovial and happy, and when the next day came, I returned to him and said: 'O grandson of the Holy Prophet (saw), I have become overwhelmingly happy with what you have blessed me with! But what is the similarity between him and Khidhr and Dhul-Qarnian?' The Imam (as) said: 'The long disappearance, Ahmad.' I asked: 'His disappearance will be extensive, O son of the Messenger of Allah (saw)?' He said: 'Yes, by God, until most of those on this path turn away, and the only people who remain are those from whom Allah Almighty has taken an oath of loyalty to us, and written faith into their hearts, and aided them with His Spirit.

'This is a mandate from Allah Almighty, Ahmad bin Ishaq,

and is one of His secrets and enigmas. So take what I have told you, keep it secret, and be among the thankful in order to be with us tomorrow in the loftiest of statuses.”<sup>[59]</sup>

- There are several points of interest in this narration. First of all, we see how the Imam (as) answered what was in Ahmad bin Ishaq’s mind without Ahmad saying a word. This is one of the signs of Imamate, and shows their special connection to Allah Almighty.
- We also observe that the Imam’s answer was something that has been proven in theology, and is supported by many verses and narrations, in addition to sound intellectual arguments, and it is that the Earth can never be without somebody with divine authority, or a Hujjah.

The Imam (as) pointed out to Ahmad that the role of somebody with divine authority (ie. a prophet or imam) is not just jurisprudential, but also existential, where he says: “Allah Almighty has not left the Earth without a divine sovereign since the creation of Adam (as), and He will not leave it without one until the Day of Judgement. Through that divine sovereign, He repels misfortunes from Earth’s inhabitants, causes rain to fall, and brings out the harvests of the earth.” We have brought up several narrations about this and analysed them in our book Imam Mahdi (as).

And although the Imam (as)’s companions never hesitated to accept what their Imam (as) would tell them, that never prevented them from discussing what the Imam (as) said, and probing further into the topic. And so after the Imam (as) gave him the general rule, Ahmad asks him: “Who is your successor?”

The Imam (as) replied to him with a definite, unambiguous answer that clears any doubt on the identity of the next Imam by saying: "My son, who has the same name as the Holy Prophet (saw) and the same teknonymic, will fill the land with justice and rightfulness."

And due to his prolonged absence, the Imam (as) compared him to two other personalities <sup>[60]</sup> who were in a lengthy occultation, one of whom is still alive, and they are Khidhr and Dhul-Qarnain (as).

And just to certify the matter with definitive proof, the Imam (as) showed Ahmad bin Ishaq his son Imam Mahdi (saw), who was only a child at the time, to show him another sign, his fluent tongue. A normal three-year-old child would be able to speak, but what this special child said describes the essence of belief in Imamate: "I am Allah's remainder on Earth, and His punisher of the oppressors. Do not ask for a sign of something after having seen it itself!"

## 11. Long-term planning for the Occultation era:

This is the era that will take place in the time of his son Al-Mahdi (atfs). Imam Askari (as) gave a number of instructions and guidelines that act as a map for his followers to follow. And although they were not directly related to his era, its purpose was akin to that of his recurrent absence, in the sense that it was to prepare the people for both occultations of his son (both minor and major).

For example, we have the famous letter from the Imam (as):  
“Thus, it is incumbent on people to follow any scholar who is weary of his self, guards his religion, is against his self, and obeys his Master.”<sup>[61]</sup>

A specific research into this matter could be made, discussing how the Imam (as) built a Shia community based on the Imams (as)s’ ideology, coexisting with the public society, though not sharing its choices and lifestyle.



# References

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- [1] Aal Saif, Fawzi; The Pure Advisor: Imam Ali bin Muhammad Al-Hadi.
- [2] Revise: Scientific Committee; Imam Hadi Encyclopaedia, V1, page 50.
- [3] Al-Azhari, Muhammad bin Ahmad; Tahdheeb al-Lughah, V2, page 203: "There has been a debate on the reason a surriyyah is named so. Some say it is from the word 'sirr', meaning secret, which would be the intimacy. And the difference between surriyyah and sirriyyah here would be the distinction between a wife and a concubine, where a free woman would be called sirriyyah if she marries in secret, while a concubine would be called surriyyah if her master approaches her in secret. And I have been told by Al-Munthiri that Abul-Haytham said: surr means joy, and so a concubine has been called surriyyah because she is the joy of a man, and this (in my opinion) is the sounder of the two possibilities.
- [4] Al-Masoudi, Ali bin Al-Hussain; Ithbat Al-Wasiyyah lil-Imam Ali bin Abi Talib, page 244.
- [5] Al-Masoudi, Ali bin Al-Hussain; Ithbat Al-Wasiyyah lil-Imam Ali

bin Abi Talib, page 272.

- [6] Al-Tabari, Muhammad bin Jareer bin Rastum; *Dala'il Al-Imamah*, page 157, it is narrated (albeit with an unclear chain of narrators) that Imam Askari (as) said: "My birth was in Rabee' Al-Akhar, year 232 AH". And in *The History of Baghdad* (Edited by Bashar); V8, page 353: "Abu Muhammad, Al-Hassan bin Ali bin Muhammad bin Ali bin Musa was born in the year 231 AH, and passed away on Friday".
- [7] Sheikh Azizullah Utaridi mentioned in the *Musnad of Imam Askari*, page 13, that he was sixteen years of age when his son, Imam Askari, was born. But this contradicts the dates of birth of both Imams. Imam Hadi (as) was born in the year 212 AH, and his son (as) was born in 231 AH. Utaridi himself cited these dates in his book without mentioning the debate in them. This is in addition to the fact that it is known that Imam Askari (as) was not the eldest of his father's sons, as Sayyed Muhammad was born before him, and possibly so was Al-Hussain, so does this mean that Imam Hadi (as) had his first son at the age of fourteen, and his second at the age of fifteen? Especially considering he only had a single wife...
- [8] We had mentioned in some lectures that Imam Askari (as) migrated with his father at the age of four depending on some historians. But according to what we state here, he was in fact much older than that, considering he was born in 231 AH, and his father, Imam Hadi (as), and himself were not summoned by Al-Mutawakkil until 243 AH!
- [9] His father Imam Hadi (as) was also referred to as Al-Askari, as observed in the many narrations in which the narrators refer to him as such.
- [10] Jafariyan, Rasoul; *The Intellectual and Political Life of the Imam's of AhlulBayt (as)*, V2, page 136: "In 233 AH, Al-Mutawakkil decided to bring the Imam (as) from Madinah to Samarra. Sheikh Mufid stated that that was in 243 AH, but that is untrue, because that is in fact the the year that one of the Shia made a copy of Al-Mutawakkil's letter to the Imam (as), but Sheikh Mufid incorrectly assumed it was the year the Imam was taken to Samarra".

I would argue that: It seems that what Sheikh Mufid is more



accurate than what Sheikh Jafariyan did. This is backed by the narration in Al-Kafi V1 page 549, which states: Muhammad ibn Yahya has narrated from a number of our people the following. "I took a copy of the letter of Al-Mutawakkil to Abu al-Hassan (a.s), the third from Yahya ibn Harthama in the year 243 AH that reads as follows. "In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. Thereafter, Amir al-Mu'minin acknowledges your positions..." etc" We do not see in this any clear indication or explanation for a companion of the Imam (as) to make a copy of Al-Mutawakkil's letter, and bring it to the Imam (as) 14 years after it was originally sent! So it makes no sense to assume that the date mentioned is the date of the copy, and not the date of the actual letter!

- [11] Al-Masoudi, Ali bin Al-Hussain; Ithbat Al-Wasiyyah lil-Imam Ali bin Abi Talib, page 233: "Abdullah bin Muhammad bin Dawud Al-Abbasi wrote a letter to Al-Mutawakkil saying: "If you have any use of the two Harams (Mecca and Madinah), then take Ali bin Muhammad (Imam Hadi (as)) out of it, for he has gathered people to him, and many have followed him". After this, Al-Mutawakkil sent Yahya bin Harthamah to bring Imam Hadi (as) to Samarra.
- [12] This is observed in Al-Mutawakkil's response to Imam Hadi (as)'s letter, narrated to us by Al-Kulayni in Al-Kafi, V1, page 549, where he says: "And the leader of the faithful (Al-Mutawakkil referring to himself) has seen it fit to dismiss Abdullah bin Muhammad from his role of administering worship and war in Madinah if he is as you say, ignorant of your worth and negligent of your authority, and after what he associated and tainted you with..."
- [13] AbdulGhani, Aarif Ahmad; The emirs of Madinah, pages 178 – 182.
- [14] The dates of his appointment and dismissal are mentioned in history books, such as Ibn Khaldun's History, V3, page 348: "And in 239 AH, Ibn Abi Du'ad was dismissed from his position in the judiciary, and Yahya bin Aktham was appointed in his place. Muhammad bin Abdullah bin Taher arrived from Khurasan and was given charge of the police, taxes, and the surrounding villages. As for Mecca, Ali bin Isa bin Jafar bin Mansur was mayor of Mecca, and he led Hajj that year, and was replaced the next year with Abdullah bin Muhammad bin Dawud bin Isa bin Musa..."

As for Ibn Al-Athir, he mentioned in Al-Kamil, V6, page 148: "Ibn Atrujah, Abdullah bin Muhammad bin Dawud went on Hajj, and was mayor of Mecca in 239, 240, and 241 AH".

- [15] It is also mentioned in some narrations that he is Burayhah Al-Abbasi.
- [16] Al-Qalqashandi states this explicitly in Subhul-A'sha fi Sina'at Al-Insha' V4, page 272: "Ali bin Isa bin Jafar bin Mansur took charge of Madinah, and was dismissed by Al-Mutawakkil in 237 AH, who replaced him with Abdullah bin Muhammad bin Dawud bin Isa bin Musa, who he then dismissed in 242 AH".
- [17] Al-Tabari, Muhammad bin Jareer; The History of the Prophets and Kings and Silat Tareekh Al-Tabari, V9, page 163.
- [18] Al-Baghdadi, Ahmad bin Ali Al-Khatib; The History of Baghdad, V13, page 518 (and Ibn Khallakan in The Obituaries, V2, page 95): "And he resided in it for twenty years and nine months"!
- [19] We briefly mentioned his biography and his status in our book The Pure Advisor Ali bin Muhammad Al-Hadi.
- [20] Al-Khusaibi, Al-Hussain bin Muhammad, Al-Hidayah Al-Kubra, page 386.
- [21] For a more in-depth analysis of the matter, Sheikh Subhani provides a good assessment in his book Al-Ilahiyat, page 574, the summary of which is the following: "The "revealing" of something to Allah Almighty after being obscure to Him is something that only people with no knowledge of Quran and Hadith believe in, for our narrations state clearly that nothing in the earth nor in heaven is unknown to Allah Almighty, and that anybody who believes that some unknown things are revealed to Allah is not to be regarded at all. At the same time, however, it is clearly stated that Allah is best worshipped with belief in bada'. While the Jews believed that "Allah's hand is tied", and that fate is sealed and unchangeable, AhlulBayt (as) stated clearly that the change of jurisprudential laws and even physical creation is not just possible, but has happened. We also believe that Allah Almighty reveals to the people what is already in His knowledge, and that that is an integral part of belief in Him and His divine control on the world. And bada' in the material world is like the rewriting of jurisprudential laws. It does not mean Allah is unaware of the true state

of things, rather He chooses not to reveal His knowledge and bidding to His creation, either for a benefit in the original verdict, or in keeping the real judgement obscure. And one should not be bound by the literal meaning of a word. How many instances are there in the Holy Quran in which a word is used metaphorically, and if we were to take them literally would cause ignorance in Allah Almighty. Are we to take the verse "They have forgotten Allah, so He has forgotten them" literally, attributing memory loss to Allah Almighty?! What about the verse "So when they roused Our wrath, We took vengeance on them", where we would attribute annoyance and frustration to Allah Almighty?!

- [22] Al-Kulayni, Muhammad bin Yaqoub; Al-Kafi (Dar Al-Hadith), V1, page 357: One of the two Imams has said: "Allah is best worshipped with belief in bada'

In another Hadith, Ibn Abi 'Umayr narrates from Hisham bin Salim that Abu Abdullah has said, "Allah's Greatness is not understood as well as it is understood with bada'."

- [23] Al-Kulayni, Muhammad bin Yaqoub; Al-Kafi (Dar Al-Hadith), V2, page 114: Ali bin Jafar said: "I was present with Abul-Hasan when his son Muhammad died. The Imam said to Al-Hassan, "Son, renew your thanks to Allah, for He has just granted you the matter"

Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Abdullah bin Marwan Al-Anbari also said: "I was present when Abu Jafar, Muhammad bin Ali, passed away. Abul-Hassan came, and a chair was set for him. He sat on it with his family all around him. When he was done with the matter of Abu Jafar, he turned to Abu Muhammad and said: My son, renew thanks to Allah, the Most Holy, the Most High, because He has just granted you a task."

- [24] Al-Kulayni, Muhammad bin Yaqoub; Al-Kafi (Dar Al-Hadith), V2, page 119.

- [25] Al-Kulayni, Muhammad bin Yaqoub; Al-Kafi (Dar Al-Hadith), V2, page 113: Ali bin Omar Al-Nawfali said: "I was with Abul-Hasan (as) in the courtyard of his house, when his son Muhammad passed by us, so I asked the Imam (as): "My master, is this our leader after you?" He said: "No, your leader after me is Al-Hasan."

- [26] Al-Kulayni, Muhammad bin Yaqoub; Al-Kafi (Dar Al-Hadith), V2, page 113: Yahya bin Yasar Al-Qanbari has narrated that: "Four months before his passing, Abul-Hassan (as) appointed his son Al-Hassan, making sure I and a group of followers were witness to it."
- [27] Ataridi, Sheikh Azizullah; Musnad Al-Imam Al-Askari, page 18: Shahawayh bin Abdullah Al-Jallab said: Abul-Hassan (as) wrote to me a letter saying: "You wanted to ask me about the successor after Abu Jafar (as), and you were worried about it. Do not worry, for Allah Almighty 'does not lead any people astray after He has guided them until He has made clear to them what they should beware of'. My successor will be my son Abu Muhammad (as), and he has what you need. He advances as Allah wishes, and delays as Allah wishes. 'For any verse that We abrogate or remove from memories, We bring another which is better than it, or similar to it.' What I have written here contains that which is informing and convincing to anybody with a conscious mind."
- [28] In his book Musnad Al-Imam Al-Hassan (as), page 18, Sheikh Ataridi included a number of Imam Hadi (as)'s letter to his followers, telling them about the Imamate of his son Imam Askari (as). Review his letters to Al-Fahfaki and Shahawayh Al-Jallab. One can also read the section about his letters in The Encyclopaedia of Imam Hadi (as), by Sheikh Abul-Qasem Al-Khaz'ali, V3, page 102.
- [29] Al-Kulayni, Muhammad bin Yaqoub; Al-Kafi (Dar Al-Hadith), V2, page 121
- [30] This was before he turned on his liege and attempted to assassinate him! Indeed, these palaces and positions understanding nothing but the language of personal profit...
- [31] Al-Safadi, Salahuddin: Al-Wafi Bil-Wafiyat, V16, page 159: Saleh bin Waseef Al-Turki, one of the Al-Mutawakkil's commanders who accompanied him to Damascus in 243 AH. His hand had encroached greatly on the caliphs, as he had killed Al-Mu'tazz and taken his wealth and the wealth of his mother Qabiha, before presenting the rule to Al-Muhtadi and serving under him. Qabiha wrote to Musa bin Bagha, who was in Ray at the time, telling him what Saleh had done. Musa went to Samarra and entered it, causing Saleh to go into hiding. Musa announced that whoever

brings Saleh to him will get ten thousand dinars. Initially, nobody was able to find him, but when they eventually did, Saleh begged his capturer to release him, but his capturer refused to release him. He did, however, tell him that they will pass by the houses of his brothers, friends, commanders, and subordinates, and if two people vouch for him, he will release him. But when they passed by the houses of the city, not a single person vouched for him, so they killed him and beheaded him.

[32] Al-Mufid, Muhammad bin Muhammad bin Al-Nu'man, Al-Irshad, V2, page 334.

[33] In *Manaqib Aal Abi Talib*, V3, page 530, these two men were mentioned by name. One of them was Otamish, also known in some accounts as Ali bin Otamish, and in some others Narmish. Muhammad bin Isma'il Al-Alawai said: "When Abu Muhammad was imprisoned, the Abbasids entered upon Saleh bin Waseef and told him to be harsh with him. He said: I assigned to him two of the cruellest men I could find: Ali bin Barmish, and Octamish. But now they have become people who perform a great deal of worship and prayer!"

[34] This is undoubtedly a mistake, as Al-Mu'tazz was overthrown and killed in 255 AH.

[35] Sheikh Tabrasi, *I'lam Al-Wara Bi-A'lam Al-Huda*, V2, page 140

[36] When talking about the year 249 AH, Ibn Al-Atheer says in his book *Al-Kamil Fi Al-Tareekh*, V6, page 259 that: "Al-Musta'een allowed his mother, Otamish, and his servant Shahik's free access to the treasury, giving them complete freedom to do what they want with it. And so most of the wealth that would arrive from all over the world would end up in the hands of those three... and Otamish would take whatever is left and spend it on the needs of Al-Abbas, Al-Musta'een's son.

It is also mentioned that, in 252 AH when Al-Musta'een left Samarra, and Al-Mu'tazz took power, there were around 500 thousand dinars in his treasury, 1 million dinars in his mother's treasury, and 600 thousand dinars in Al-Abbas's treasury.

Historians also mention in the events of 255 AH that after Al-Mu'tazz's execution, a hidden, buried treasury was found belonging to Qabiha, his mother and the wife of Al-Mutawakki. This

treasury contained vast amounts of wealth, including an underground dwelling, in which they found 1 million, 300 thousand dinars, a pot of emerald, another pot of large pearls, and a third pot of ruby, the like of which nobody had ever seen. The three pots were evaluated to be worth around two million dinars.

[37] Unfortunately, I have not been able to identify this person, as I did not find this particular name in any Sunni sources, nor in any Shia sources other than this narration. And even then, each reference book carried the name slightly different than the other. In addition to the name mentioned here, we also have Ali bin Jareer, and Ali bin Jazeer.

[38] Al-Kishi narrates in his book, page 817, through Muhammad bin Ibrahim Al-Warraq Al-Samarqandi, that a man called Bouraq passed by Samarra on his way to Hajj in 260 AD. He said: "I found them sad and dejected, so I asked them what is wrong? They said that Abu Muhammad (as) has been captured. So I went to Hajj, and when I came back I went to Muhammad bin Isa and found him happy, with no trace of the sadness I'd previously seen in him. I asked him what is going on, and he answered that Abu Muhammad (as) had been released."

In my opinion, what is peculiar in this narration is that the narrator passed by Samarra when the Imam had just been imprisoned, meaning he must have been there just before or during Safar. He then went to Hajj and came back to find the Imam (as) had been released. Did they used to go to Hajj 10 whole months early? Then, when he came back after Hajj, as in, the next year in 261 AH, he found them all cheerful and happy!

[39] Al-Mas'oudi, *Ithbat Al-Wasiyyah*, page 255

[40] *Surat Al-Saff*, verse 8

[41] Al-Mas'oudi, *Ithbat Al-Wasiyyah*, page 255

[42] Al-Mas'oudi, *Ithbat Al-Wasiyyah*, page 254

[43] Al-Korani, Sheikh Ali, Imam Hassan Al-Askari, page 430

[44] Hussain bin AbdulWahab, *Uyun Al-Mu'jizat*, page 131. I did not find an exact reason for the prison's name, Al-Adhdad (literally 'The Opposites'). Perhaps it was because this prison contained prisoners of both opposites, good and evil. And this is one of the

most difficult situations for those of pure faith, to be trapped and surrounded by malicious and evil people.

- [45] Ataridi, Musnad Al-Imam Al-Askari, page 32, and Al-Khaz'ali, The Encyclopaedia of Imam Askari, V2, page 142, his source being Ibn Hamza's (d. 560 AH) Al-Thaqib Fil-Manaqib, Al-Qudb Al-Rawandi's (d. 573 AH) Al-Khara'ij, Ibn Shahr Ashoob's (d. 588 AH) Al-Manaqib, Ibn Sabbagh Al-Maliki's (d. 855 AH) Al-Fusool Al-Muhimmah, Ibn Hajar Al-Maliki's (d. 973 AH) Al-Sawa'iq Al-Muhriqah, and several others.
- [46] Imam Ali (as), Nahj Al-Balaghah, edited by Subhi Al-Saleh, page 102
- [47] Sayyed Khoei, Sirat Al-Najat, V5, page 286: "We have found evidence that the bones of some prophets who weren't Ulul-Azm have been transported, while some others have been said to have been transported. This means that, at the time of transportation, there was nothing left of their blessed bodies but their bones. As for Ulul-Azm prophets, I cannot recall anything to suggest the transport of their bones. But we do have proof that when it comes to Imam, it is narrated that their bodies do not stay in their graves, but ascend to the sky within a few days. This means that the case must be true of the Holy Prophet (saw), as well as the rest of Ulul-Azm."
- [48] Al-Korani, Sheikh Ali, Imam Hassan Al-Askari, page 83
- [49] Ataridi, Musnad Al-Imam Al-Askari, page 323
- [50] Revise the aforementioned narration about the Jamhi man, who claimed he was Alawi, that wrote a note to Al-Mu'tamid, leaking very severe things about the Imam (as) and his companions, and how Al-Mu'tamid used to ask Ali bin Jareen about him every day!
- [51] Al-Korani, Sheikh Ali, Imam Hassan Al-Askari, page 418, citing from Ma'alim Al-Khilafah, V3, page 371
- [52] Al-Kulaini, Al-Kafi (Dar Al-Hadith), V2, page 614: In an excerpt from a narration, Ahmad bin Ubaydullah (the first minister) bin Khaqan says: "When Imam Askari (as) became ill, the caliph sent for my father, telling him that Ibn Al-Ridha had become ill. My father immediately rode to the caliph's palace and returned with 5 of the caliph's trusted retainers, one of them being Nahreer. He

ordered them to stay in the vicinity of Al-Hassan's house, and provide intelligence and updates on him. He also ordered several physicians to take shifts going to his house, attending to him day and night. Two or three days after that, he was told that Al-Hassan had become weak, so he told the physicians to stay with him constantly. He also sent for the head judge, and told him to choose ten of his most trustworthy and pious companion, who he then told to also stay in the house the entire time. There they stayed until he passed away..."

[53] Al-Saduq, Muhammad bin Ali bin Babawayh, *Al-I'tiqadat*, page 99. Ibn Hajar also brought this up in *Al-Sawa'iq Al-Muhriqah*, page 208, saying: "It is said he was also poisoned".

[54] Surat Taha, verses 83 – 87: "(83) 'What has hurried you from your people, O Moses?' (84) He said, 'They are close upon my heels, and I hurried on to You, my Lord, that You may be pleased.' (85) He said, 'Indeed We tried your people in your absence, and Samiri has led them astray.' (86) Thereupon Moses returned to his people, indignant and grieved. He said, 'O my people! Did not your Lord give you a true promise? Did the period [of my absence] seem too long to you? Or did you desire that your Lord's wrath should descend on you and so you failed your schedule with me?' (87) They said, 'We did not fail our schedule with you of our own accord, but we were laden with the weight of the people's ornaments, and we cast them [into the fire] and so did Samiri throw.'"

[55] Al-Tabrasi, Ahmad bin Ali, *Al-Ihtijaj*, V1, page 136: "Yet, When Allah chose His Prophet from the dwell of His prophets, and the abode of His sincere servants; the thorns of hypocrisy appeared on you, the garment of faith became worn out, the misguided ignorant spoke out, the sluggish ignorant came to the front and brayed. Then the camel of the vain wiggled his tail in your Court-yards and the Devil stuck his head from its place of hiding and called upon you he found you responsive to his invitation, and observing his deceits..."

[56] Al-Rawandi, Qudb Al-Deen, *Al-Khara'ij Wal-Jara'ih*, V1, page 439: It is narrated that Ali bin Jafar Al-Halabi said: "We all gathered in Samarra, waiting for Abu Muhammad (as) on the day that he rides out. But we received a letter from him saying: 'Nobody is to



extend their greetings to me, nor are you to extend your hand to me, nor gesture to me, for you are not protected! At some point, when somebody wanted to approach him to ask him for a favour, he called to him: 'Do not approach me, Abu Muhammad, for there are spies watching me!' This is also mentioned by Sheikh Azizulah Al-Ataridi in Musnad Al-Imam Al-Askari, page 107.

[57] Al-Mas'oudi, Ithbat Al-Wasiyyah, page 272

[58] The Imam Hadi (as) Institute: Ahmad bin Ishaq: The Trustworthy Confidante, page 14: "Ahmad bin Ishaq was of great status, a good man, a trusty companion. He was well-known, the leader of the Qummi people and their ambassador. And as the Qummi scholars and preachers were well known to be of a high status and deep knowledge of the Household of the Holy Prophet (saw), the person they choose as their emissary to the caliph or the Imam can only be the most knowledgeable, pious, lofty, noble, and intelligent of them all. And so, when they sent Ahmad bin Ishaq as their emissary to the Imam of their time, it was revealed that he was their leader, and the most trustworthy in terms of his attributes, actions, and qualities. He lived through the Imamate of four Imams (as): Al-Jawad (as), Al-Hadi (as), Al-Askari (as), and Al-Mahdi (atfs).

[59] Al-Saduq, Muhammad bin Ali bin Babawayh: Kamal Al-Deem Wa Tamam Al-Ni'mah, page 375

[60] We notice in many narrations the comparing of Imam Mahdi (atfs)'s qualities to those of previous prophets and believers in order to avoid confusion. And this started very early, as we find in the narration of Imam Zain Al-Abideen (as): "In His Eminence, Qaim (atfs) similarities to seven prophets are present. The attribute of our father, Adam, the attribute of Ibrahim, the attribute of Musa, the attribute of Isa, the attribute of Ayyub and the attribute of Muhammad (saw.). As for the practice of Adam and Nuh (as) it is a long life. As for the similarity with Prophet Ibrahim (as) it is a concealed birth and being away from the people. And from Musa it is the fear and occultation. And from Isa is that he will have discord regarding him. With Ayyub (as) he shares the occurrence of triumph after difficulties. And from Muhammad (saw) he will share the aspect of advent and armed uprising." Kamal Al-Deen Wa Tamam Al-Ni'mah.

- [61] Al-Hurr Al-'Amili, Muhammad bin Al-Hassan, Wasa'il Al-Shia, V27, page 131