An Account Of The Intellectual Accomplishments Of the 11th Great Imam

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During the time Imam Hasan Askari (a.s) was in imprisonment at Baghdad, for three years at a stretch there was a severe famine. A Christian scholar arrived there and showing a miracle of causing rain he created a great turmoil in the beliefs of Muslims. Everyone began to extol his spiritual feats and the truth of Christian faith. The news reached Motamid. He summoned him and requested him to cause rain. Immediately he raised his hands to the sky and uttered a few words. Within no time a black cloud spread on the sky and it began to rain. Motamid also began to have faith in his miracle and the beliefs of all his courtiers became shaky. Motamid realized that the best course of action was to somehow send this Christian away from his court. When he departed a debate began on this matter. No one could explain it away. A courtier said that except for Imam Hasan Askari (a.s) no one could solve this puzzle. It was ordered to bring him to the court at once. It is mentioned in Sawaiqul Mohreqa that when Imam (a.s) arrived, Motamid related to him the whole incident. He said, “What is so great about it? People should accompany me outside the town and if Allah wills, I will clarify the whole matter. But the condition is that all prisoners must be released.” Thus it happened in this way. The Christian monk was also summoned. Imam said, “Now you invoke and show your miracle.” He raised his hands and began to recite something inaudibly. At once, a cloud appeared. Imam (a.s) told a man next to him, “Catch hold both the hands of the monk and snatch whatever he is holding.” The man did as commanded and came to the Imam holding a bone. The Imam buried this bone in the soil and told the Christian, “Now lets see if it rains or not.” Again he raised his hands, but leave alone rain, the cloud that had appeared also dispersed. Imam (a.s) told Motamid, “There was no miracle in this man; it is in the bone that he was holding. It is a bone of some prophet that he somehow got. It is the specialty of this bone that when it is shown to the open sky, at once a cloud will appear and rain.” Hearing this, the doubts of the people were dispelled and the misplaced faiths again returned to their original position. The fame of the knowledgeable level of Imam Hasan Askari (a.s) had spread to all the countries. People from far off places used to come to the Imam to inquire about difficult matters. According to Abu Hashim Jafari once he was in the presence of Imam Hasan Askari (a.s) when a person well known for his knowledge and virtues came to the Imam (a.s) and said, “Women are naturally weaker than men. Then why is it that they are given one share in

inheritance? And men, despite their strength are given two shares? While justice demands that it should be on the contrary.

Imam (a.s) said, “You have seen the apparent weakness of women but have not reflected on the duties of men and women. The difficulties of men are much more than those of women. Jihad is incumbent on men and not on women. The responsibility of earning livelihood rests on man and not on women. The maintenance of women is on men. Then in such circumstances if the share of men is double, is it against justice and equity?”

The level of the knowledge of Imam Hasan Askari can be estimated from the Exegesis of Quran that is famous as Tafsir Imam Hasan Askari. The compilation and the writing of this commentary is not done in a pre-arranged way. Rather they constitute his saying regarding the verses of Quran that he told to his two disciples while teaching them the Quran. The two of them had come to him from Qom to obtain knowledge from him. These two fortunate gentlemen collected the sayings of Imam (a.s) in the form of Quranic Exegesis (Tafsir). From the aspects of exegetical points, quality of matter and language flow it is such a commentary that even voluminous ones cannot be compared to it. Its translation is also available in Urdu and Persian.[1]

Once someone asked: Whom does the verse:

Nay! These are clear communications in the breasts of those who are granted knowledge (Surah Ankabut 29:49)

denotes? Imam (a.s) replied, “We Ahl ul-Bayt.” In the same way someone asked, “What does “good” in

Whoever brings good, he shall have better than it; (Surah Naml 27:89)

and “evil” in

And whoever brings evil, these shall be thrown down on their faces into the fire; (Surah Naml 27:90)

mean?” Imam replied ”'Good' denotes recognition (Marefat) of Imam and his obedience and “evil” stands for the denial of Imamate.”

Ishaq Kindi was a great philosopher of Iraq. He collected such verses of Quran whose meanings were apparently contradictory. He wanted to prove thereby that it was not the word of Almighty Allah. One day his disciples came to Imam Hasan Askari (a.s) who told them, “Refrain your teacher from such tactics.” They said, “We are students, how can we dare to do such a thing?” Imam (a.s) said, “All right, you ask him as I instruct you.” “Yes, that is possible,” they said. Imam said, “When he mentions to you such verses that apparently carry contradictory meanings you tell him: What would you say if the speaker of these words (Allah)

comes to you and says: What you have understood is not what I meant to say. The words are Mine and you ascribe their meanings, what type of logic is it? Did you ever ask Me what I meant to say through these words? If you never had the opportunity to ask Me, why do you needlessly ascribe meanings to My words? You only have the right to invent meanings for your own words and not for My words. Only that can explain the meanings of My words whom I have informed."

The students heard these statements of the Imam and returned to their teacher and repeated the same to him. He was absolutely shocked and he said, "Except for Ahl ul-Bayt no one can think of such a thing, I am sure Imam Hasan Askari (a.s) has told you all this." After this he destroyed all the material he had collected on this subject.

Note

[1]. The English Translation is also underway and would soon be published by Ansariyan Publications, Qom