(The Imamate of Imam Hassan al-Askari (A.S

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Imamate is the firm base of political and social development in Islam. It is one of the most important pillars on which the civilization, safety, and ease of man, and the equality in opportunities among the members of society are built. It provides the noble life that people can live at ease under its shade. Under Imamate, there are no racial or natural differences, but the criterion in Islam is as much as the services man offers to the nation the closer it takes him to Allah.

Imamate is a kindness from Allah and a gift from His mercy. The Shi'a have believed in the imams of the Ahlul Bayt (a.s) and considered that as a part of their doctrinal life depending on many reasons such as: First, the Prophetic traditions in which the Prophet (a.s) made it obligatory on Muslims to follow the Ahlul Bayt (a.s) whom the Prophet (a.s) had made as the equal to the Holy Book. He said, "I leave to you what if you keep to, you shall not go astray after me. One of them is greater than the other; the Book of Allah which is a rope extended from the heaven to the earth, and my household. They shall not separate until they shall come to me at the pond (in Paradise). See how you will obey me through them."[1]

This tradition shows clearly that Imamate would be limited to the Ahlul Bayt (a.s) and shows that they were infallible because the Prophet (a.s) compared them with the Book of Allah, and of course, every error from them would take them away from the Book whereas the Prophet (a.s) announced that they would not separate from the Qur'an until they would come to him at the pond in Paradise.

The Prophet (a.s) also said, 'The example of my household for you is like the example of the Noah's Ark which whoever rode on was rescued, and whoever lagged behind drowned. And the example of my household for you is like the example of the gate of Hittah (repentance) for the Israelites that whoever entered through it would be forgiven.'[2]

Imam Sharafuddeen al-Aamily said when talking about this tradition, 'You know that the purpose behind comparing them (the Ahlul Bayt) to the "Ark of Noah" is that whoever resorts to them in religion and takes its bases and branches from them shall be safe from the torment of Fire, and whoever turns his back to them is like one who betook himself (on the day of the great flood) to some mountain which might save him from the command of Allah, but he drowned in water and would be in the Hell. The purpose behind comparing them to the "gate of Hittah" is that Allah the Almighty has made that gate as a matter of humbleness to Allah and submission to His commands, and therefore it was a cause for forgiveness. This is the point of

comparison. Ibn Hajar said, after he mentioned these traditions and others like them, about the cause of comparing them (the Ahlul Bayt) to the "Ark of Noah" that whoever loved and glorified them out of gratefulness to the blessing of their honor, and followed the guidance of their 'Ulama' would be safe from the darkness of disagreements, and whoever lagged behind that would drown in the sea of ungratefulness to blessings and would perish in the wilderness of oppression…until he said, 'and comparing them to the "gate of Hittah" is that Allah has made the entrance through this gate, which was the Gate of Ariha or Jerusalem, with humbleness, and with asking for forgiveness, as a cause for forgiveness, and He has made the love to the Ahlul Bayt (a.s) as a cause for this nation to be forgiven…'[3]

Second, the Shi'a believed and followed the imams of the Ahlul Bayt (a.s) because they represented honor and dignity, and there will be none like them throughout the history of humanity. No one in the whole Muslim world was like them in their guidance, conducts, devotedness, and adherence to Islam.

The faith of the Shi'a in the Ahlul Bayt (a.s) was not out of emotion or fancy, but it was due to the reality and situations of the Ahlul Bayt (a.s).

Third, the Shi'a did not believe in the Imamate of the Umayyad and the Abbasid kings because they were naked of moral and humane values. During their reigns, the nation suffered terrible kinds of oppression and cruelty. They extorted the wealth of the nation and spent it on their pleasures and amusement. They encouraged debauchery and corruption among Muslims. Therefore, the Shi'a and others rose in armed revolts against those rulers in order to establish justice among people.

Traditions on His Imamate

The following are some of the traditions that were transmitted from Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) concerning the appointing of his son Abu Muhammad al-Hasan as the imam after him.

1. Yahya bin Yasar al-Anbari said, 'Abul Hasan Ali bin Muhammad (al-Hadi) entrusted his son Abu Muhammad al-Hasan with the matter (Imamate) four months before his death and made me and some of his mawali (adherents) bear witness to that.'[4]

2. Ali bin Umar an-Nawfali said, "Once, I was with Abul Hasan (al-Hadi) (a.s.) in the yard of his house when his son Muhammad (Abu Ja'far) passed by us. I said to him, 'May I die for you! Is this our man (the imam) after you?' He said to me, 'Your man after me is al-Hasan."[5]

3. Shahwayh bin Abdullah al-Jallab said, "Abul Hasan wrote a letter to me saying in it: 'You wanted to ask about the successor after Abu Ja'far and you were worried about that. Do not worry because (Allah will not mislead a people after He has guided them).[6] Your man (the

imam) after me will be my son Abu Muhammad. He has all what you shall need. Allah advances what He wills and delays what He wills; (Whatever verse We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, We bring one better than it or like it).[7] I have written what has a clear proof for one of an awake mind."[8]

4. Dawud bin al-Qassim said, "I heard Abul Hasan (a.s.) saying, 'The successor after me will be al-Hasan. How will you deal with the successor after this successor?' I said, 'Why? May I die for you!' He said, 'You shall not see him and it will be not permissible for you to mention him by his name.' I said, 'How shall we mention him then?' He said, 'You say: al-Hujjah (the authority) from the progeny of Muhammad (peace be on them).'[9]

5. Abu Bakr al-Fahfaki said, "Abul Hasan (peace be upon him) wrote to me saying, 'My son Abu Muhammad is the best of the progeny of Muhammad in nature and the most trustworthy in authority. He is the eldest of my children, and he is my successor and the recipient of the handholds of imamate and its governance. Whatever you asked me about, you can ask him about for he has all that which people need.'[10]

6. As-Saqr bin Dulaf said, "I heard Ali bin Muhammad bin Ali ar-Ridha (Imam al-Hadi) saying, 'The imam after me will be al-Hasan and after al-Hasan will be his son al-Qa'im (Imam al-Mahdi) who will fill the earth with justice and fairness as it has been filled with injustice and oppression.'[11]

7. Abdul Adheem al-Hasani narrated that Imam Ali bin Muhammad al-Hadi (a.s.) said, 'The imam after me will be my son al-Hasan, but how will people deal with the successor after him?!'[12]

8. Ali bin Mahziyar said, 'One day, I said to Abul Hasan, 'If something happens[13]-God forbid! - then to whom will the imamate pass?' He said, 'To the eldest of my sons. (He meant al-Hasan).'[14]

9. Abdullah bin Muhammad al-Isfahani said, "Abul Hasan said, 'Your man after me is the one who will offer the prayer on me (after death).' We did not know Abu Muhammad before that, and when Abul Hasan (a.s.) died, Abu Muhammad came out and offered the (funeral) prayer on him.'[15]

These are some traditions narrated by reliable narrators from Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) about the appointing of his son Abu Muhammad al-Hasan (a.s.) as the next imam, besides other traditions transmitted from Imam al-Jawad (a.s.). As-Saqr bin Dulaf said, "I heard Abu Ja'far Muhammad bin Ali ar-Ridha (Imam al-Jawad) saying, 'The imam after me is my son Ali. His command is my command, his saying is my saying, and obedience to him is obedience to me. And the imam after him will be his son al-Hasan.'[16]

There are other traditions that were narrated from the Prophet (a.s) concerning the appointing of the guardians and caliphs after him among whom was Imam Abu Muhammad al-Askari (a.s.). These traditions were mentioned in the famous reference books of Hadith and history.

From The Signs of His Imamate

Allah had provided the prophets and their guardians with miracles that ordinary people were unable to do in order to serve as proofs for the missions of these prophets and guardians, otherwise they would fail in achieving their missions, and none of people would believe them. Allah had made known to them what was inside the hearts of people, and the knowledge of the events that would take place. Allah had granted that to the infallible imams of the Ahlul Bayt (a.s) and one of them was Imam al-Hasan al-Askari (a.s.). Here we mention some narrations concerning this matter:

1. Al-Hasan an-Naseebi said, 'It came to my mind that whether the sweat of a junub[17] was pure or not. I went to the house of Abu Muhammad al-Hasan to ask him about that. It was night and so I slept. At dawn, he came out and found me sleeping. He woke me and said, 'If it is lawful, it is pure, and if it is from unlawful thing, it is not.'[18]

2. Isma'yl bin Muhammad al-Abbasi said, 'One day, I complained to Abu Muhammad about my neediness and I swore to him that I did not have even one dirham.' He said to me, 'Do you swear by Allah falsely while you have buried two hundred dinars? My saying to you does not mean that I do not gift you. O servant, give him what there is with you!' The servant gave me one hundred dinars. Then he (the imam) said to me, 'You make the dinars that you have buried unlawful while you are in utmost need to them.' I searched for the money but I could not find it. I found that one of my children knew about this money, and so he stole it and ran away.'

3. Muhammad bin Hujr complained to the imam at the oppression he received from Abdul Aziz and from Yazid bin Eesa. The imam (a.s.) said to him, 'As for Abdul Aziz, I have relieved you from him, but as for Yazid, you and he shall have a situation before Allah the Almighty.' After a few days, Abdul Aziz died, but Yazid killed Muhammad bin Hujr and he shall have a situation (be punished) before Allah (on the Day of Resurrection).'[19]

4. Abu Hashim said, 'Once, I complained to Abu Muhammad of the distress of imprisonment and the pains of ties. He wrote to me, 'You shall offer the Dhuhr (noon) Prayer in your house today.' I was set free (from prison) at noon and I offered the prayer in my house as the imam had said.'[20]

5. Abu Hashim said, 'I was in need and I wanted to ask Imam Abu Muhammad (a.s.) but I felt shy to do that. When I arrived in my house, he sent one hundred dinars to me and a letter

saying, ‘If you need something, do not feel shy or refrain from asking. Ask and you shall get what you like, insha’Allah.’[21]

6. Abu Hashim said, “I heard Abu Muhammad (a.s.) saying, ‘In paradise there is a gate called al-Ma’ruf (good deed). No one will come through it except the people of good deeds.’ I thanked Allah with myself and felt delighted for I often satisfied the needs of people. Abu Muhammad looked at me and said, ‘Yes, I knew what you were thinking of. The people of good deeds in this life will be the people of good deeds in the afterlife. May Allah make you from them, O Abu Hashim, and have mercy on you.’”[22]

7. Muhammad bin Hamza ad-Duri said, ‘I wrote to Imam Abu Muhammad (a.s.) asking him to pray to Allah for me to make me rich after I had become poor and I feared to be exposed. His reply came to me saying: “Be delighted! Wealth has come to you from Allah the Almighty. Your cousin Yahya bin Hamza died and left for you one hundred thousand dirhams. He had no inheritor except you. The money shall come to you soon. Thank Allah, be economical, and beware of wasting!” The money and the news of the death of my cousin came to me a few days later. My poverty disappeared. I paid the rights of Allah, helped my brothers, and became economical after I had been wasteful.’[23]

8. Muhammad bin al-Hasan bin Maymun said, ‘I wrote to my master al-Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) complaining of poverty, and then I said to myself: has Abu Abdullah (Imam as-Sadiq) (a.s.) not said, ‘Poverty with us (the Ahlul Bayt) is better than wealth with our enemy, and being killed with us is better than living with our enemy.’? The reply to my letter came saying, ‘Allah the Almighty tries our followers, when their sins increase, by poverty, and He may forgive many (of sins). It is as your self said to you: poverty with us is better than wealth with our enemy. We are a shelter for whoever resorts to us; a light for whoever seeks light; and a refuge for whoever turns to us. Whoever loves us will be with us in the highest position, and whoever deviates from us will be in Fire.’[24]

9. Abu Ja’far al-Hashimi said, ‘I was with some men in prison when Abu Muhammad and his brother Ja’far were brought to prison. We hurried to him. I kissed him on the face, and seated him on a mat that was under me. Ja’far sat near to him. The guard of the prison was Salih bin Waseef. There was a man with us in the prison claiming that he was Alawid. Abu Muhammad turned to us and said, ‘If some one, who is not from you, was not with you, I would tell you when Allah will deliver you…’ Imam Abu Muhammad (a.s.) beckoned to that man and said, ‘This man is not from you. Beware of him! There is a book in his clothes in which he writes to the ruler all what you say.’ One of the prisoners searched him and found with him a book in which he accused us of great accusations and claimed that we wanted to pierce the prison and

escape from it.'[25]

10. Ahmad bin Muhammad said, "I wrote a letter to Abu Muhammad (a.s.) when al-Muhtadi, the Abbasid caliph, began killing the Shi'a and said to him, 'O my master, praise be to Allah Who has made him (the caliph) busy away from you for I have heard that he threatened you and said, 'By Allah, I will dispel them again.' Abu Muhammad wrote with his handwriting: 'This makes his life shorter. You count from this day five days and he shall be killed on the sixth day, after meeting meanness and disgrace.' And it was as the imam said.'[26]

11. Abu Hashim narrated, 'Once, al-Fahfaki asked Imam Abu Muhammad (a.s.) about the reason that makes man take two shares while woman takes one share in the inheritance. The imam (a.s.) answered: 'For neither jihad, nor expenditure, nor guarding (in castles) are required from woman.' It came to my mind that this question was the same question that ibn Abul Awja' had asked Imam as-Sadiq (a.s.) and Imam as-Sadiq (a.s.) answered with the same answer. Imam Abu Muhammad turned towards me and said, 'Yes, this is the question of ibn Abul Awja' and the answer is the same from us. If the meaning of the question is the same, the answer of the last one of us will be like the answer of the first one of us. The first and the last of us are the same in knowledge and imamate, and the messenger of Allah and Ameerul Mo'mineen (the blessings of Allah be on them) have the preference over them.'[27]

12. Abu Hashim narrated, 'One of the Shi'a wrote to Abu Muhammad (a.s.) asking him for some supplication. The imam replied, 'Pray Allah with this du'a: "O You the best Listener of listeners, the most Perceptive of seers, the best of lookers, the promptest of accounters, the Most Merciful of the merciful, the Wisest of judges, send blessings on Muhammad and on the progeny of Muhammad, and increase my livelihood, prolong my age, favor me with Your mercy, make me from those who defend Your religion, and do not replace me by other than me…!" I (Abu Hashim) said with myself: 'O Allah, make me from Your party and Your group!' Abu Muhammad turned to me and said, 'you are in His party and in His group if you have faith in Allah and believe His messenger.'[28]

13. Shahwayh bin Abd Rabbih said, 'My brother Salih was in prison. I wrote to my master Abu Muhammad (a.s.) asking him about some things and he answered by writing to me: 'Your brother Salih shall be set free from prison on the day when this letter of mine shall reach you. You wanted to ask me about him but you had forgotten.' While I was reading his letter, some one came and told me that my brother was set free. I received him and read this letter to him.'[29]

14. Abu Hashim narrated, 'It came to my mind whether the Qur'an was created or not. Imam Abu Muhammad (a.s.) looked at me and said, 'O Abu Hashim, Allah is the Creator of

everything, and everything other than Him is created.'[30]

15. Abu Hashim said, 'Once, I went to Abu Muhammad (a.s.) and wanted to ask him for a stone that I wanted to make a ring from to bless myself with it. When I sat with him, I forgot what I had come for. When I said farewell and wanted to leave, he gave me a ring, smiled, and said, 'You wanted a stone and we gave you a ring, and so you won the stone. May Allah delight you by it!' I was astonished at that and said, 'O my master, you are the guardian of Allah and my imam by whose favor and obedience I serve Allah.' He said to me, 'May Allah pardon you, Abu Hashim!'[31]

16. Abu Hashim said, "Once, I heard Abu Muhammad saying, 'On the Day of Resurrection, Allah will forgive with forgiveness that cannot be even imagined by people, until polytheists shall say: by Allah, we were not polytheists.' I recalled a tradition narrated to me by a man from our companions from the people of Mecca that the messenger of Allah (a.s.) recited: (Despair not of the Mercy of Allah, for Allah forgives all sins),[32] and some man said, 'even polytheists.' I denied that and hid it into my heart. While I was thinking of that with myself, Abu Muhammad turned to me and recited, (Surely Allah does not forgive that anything is associated with Him, and He forgives all save that to whom He pleases).[33] How bad what that man said was and how bad what he narrated was!'[34]

Historians mentioned many examples on the imam's knowledge of what people concealed inside themselves, and on his predicting of different events and occurrences. All those were signs of his imamate, for other than the imams no one had any knowledge about such things. Abu Hashim, who was one of the best, reliable scholars, and who was a close companion to Imam Abul Hasan al-Hadi (a.s.) and Imam Abu Muhammad al-Askari (a.s.), narrated most of the traditions that talked about the signs of these two imams (a.s.). He said, 'Whenever I went to Abul Hasan and Abu Muhammad (peace be upon them), I saw a proof and evidence (on their imamate).'[35]

References

[1] Sahih of at-Tarmithi, vol.2 p.308.

[2] Majma' az-Zawa'id, vol.9 p.168, Mustadrak al-Hakim, vol.2 p.43, Tareekh Baghdad, vol.2 p.19.

[3] Al-Hashimiyyat, p.22-23.

[4] Al-Fusool al-Muhimmah by ibn as-Sabbagh, p.66, Usool al-Kafi, vol.1 p.325.

[5] Usool al-Kafi, vol.1 p.324.

[6] Qur'an, 9:115.

[7] Qur'an, 2:106.

[8] Usool al-Kafi, vol.1 p.328.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid., p.327.

[11] Ikmal ad-Deen, vol.2 p.55.

[12] Ikmal ad-Deen, vol.2 p.55.

[13] He meant that if the imam died.

[14] A'lam al-Wara, p.368.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ikmal ad-Deen, vol.2 p.50.

[17] A ritually impure person: janaba is the major (or minor) ritual impurity caused by sexual intercourse, wet dreams…

[18] Mir'at az-Zaman, vol.6 p.192.

[19] Manaqib Aal Abi Talib, vol.4 p.433.

[20] A'lam al-Wara, p.372.

[21] Ath-Thaqib fil-Manaqib by Muhammad bin Ali al-Jirjani, p.241.

[22] Noor al-Absar, p.152.

[23] Noor al-Absar, p.152, ad-Durr an-Nadheem.

[24] Manaqib Aal Abi Talib, vol.4 p.435.

[25] Ad-Durr an-Nadheem fee Manaqib al-A'immah, 2897.

[26] A'lam al-Wara, p.375.

[27] Al-Manaqib, vol.4 p.437, A'lam al-Wara, p.374.

[28] A'lam al-Wara, p.374.

[29 Al-Manaqib, vol4 p.438.

[30] Al-Manaqib, vol4, p.436.

[31] A'lam al-Wara, vol375, al-Manaqib, vol.4 p.437.

[32] Qur'an, 39:53.

[33] Qur'an, 4:116.

[34] Ad-Durr an-Nadheem.

.[35] A'lam al-Wara, p.375