Al-Abbas Ibn Ali:
Supporter of al-Hussain (Peace Be Upon Them)

By Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed Taqi al-Modarresi



العباس بن علي نصير الحسين (عليهما السلام)

لآية الله العظمى السيد محمد تقي المدرّسي



Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed Taqi al-Husayni al-Modarresi born in 1945, is an Iraqi Shia marja'.

He is the author of over 400 books on matters of theology, historiography, jurisprudence, philosophy, logic and social science.

When we were younger, we would stand near the shrine of Abul-Fadhl al-Abbas, and our hearts would head to the camp of al-Hussain, as Karbala holds to this day the memories of it, and the memories of the thirst of those children and women. Then, the image of that great warrior standing on the riverbank asking for water for those innocent people would be completed in our minds. That image had a great effect on our minds, which made it seem as if the battle of al-Taff (Karbala) was placed before us with all its moving touches. We could see al-Abbas standing on the riverbank after he had brought his horse into the water, he spreads out his hands to reach the water, takes a handful of water and brings it to his parched mouth. Then he remembers the thirst of his brother and throws the water back into the river.

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آية الله السيد محمد تقي المدرسي

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Biography of Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed Taqi al-Modarresi

Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed-Taqi al-Husayni al-Modarresi (Arabic: محمد تقي الحسيني المدرسي) born in 1945 is an Iraqi Shia *marja'* and political theorist.

Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed-Taqi al-Husayni al-Modarresi is the author of over 400 books on matters of theology, historiography, jurisprudence, philosophy, logic and social science.

The Anglican Centre in Rome has stated that *"Grand Ayatollah al-Modarresi is probably the second most senior Shia cleric after al-Sistani. His call for peace & human dignity is very significant."*

Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed-Taqi al-Husayni al-Modarresi was born into a distinguished Shia religious family in Karbala, Iraq. His father is Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed-Kadhim al-Modarresi. His mother is the daughter of grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mahdi al-Shirazi. He is from the descendants of the Prophet Mohammed (sawa).

Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed-Taqi al-Husayni al-Modarresi began his religious education in the religious seminaries of Karbala, at the young age of 8. He studied under some of Karbala's most senior scholars such as Shaykh Mohammed al-Karbassi, Shaykh Jafar al-Rushti, Shaykh Yusuf al-Khurasani and his uncle, Sayyid Mohammed al-Shirazi.

Due to the rising pressures of the Bathists anti-Shia sentiment Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed-Taqi al-Husayni al-Modarresi emigrated to Kuwait in 1971. He

settled there until 1979, after which he moved to Iran. With the overthrow of Saddam Hussein by American-led forces in 2003, Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed-Taqi al-Husayni al-Modarresi along with other Iran-based clerics returned to Iraq.

Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed-Taqi al-Husayni al-Modarresi was the first Shia religious leader to issue a call to popular resistance against ISIS, after its swift capture of large swathes of land in Iraq in June 2014. In his statement, Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed-Taqi al-Husayni al-Modarresi warned against the destruction of churches and temples belonging to all religions.

Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed-Taqi al-Husayni al-Modarresi made an official statement regarding the COVID-19 strain, saying that the people of Iraq should self-isolate, and utilize the month of Rajab, by performing the recommended prayers and supplications at home. He also stated that Muslim community needs to increase its faith in God, so that He may protect us from all evil. Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed-Taqi al-Husayni al-Modarresi also called for the Iraqi government to take up all measures to face this new viral strain, which threatens the lives of many today. He added, the Iraqi people are always willing to stand by its government and provide aid, as is seen in the Arbaeen pilgrimage.

Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed-Taqi al-Husayni al-Modaressi traveled to Bahrain in 2002 on an official visit, at the invitation of the Minister of Justice and Islamic Affairs, Abdullah bin Khalid Al Khalifa.

In December 2014, Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed-Taqi al-Husayni al-Modarresi was invited by the Pope to attend a summit of world religious leaders at the

Introduction

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds, and may his blessings be upon Mohammed (s) and his Pure Household.

I have been awaiting the opportunity to complete the vow I have made to Allah to write about our master al-Abbas ('a). Who despite the minimal amount of sources about his life, portrayed himself to the believers and followers of Ahlul-bayt in a few hours in the best most virtuous form. Allowing every follower to have a unique relationship with al-Abbas through prayer and intercession to Allah Almighty. I finally had this opportunity during a family travel, which I took and recorded the book on a cassette which I sent to my wife, who in turn wrote and edited it. Today, as the book is being sent to publishing, I ask Allah Almighty to accept it from me, and from everyone who helped prepare and publish it. Surely, he is the best Answerer.

7th of the Blessed Safar / 1416 AH
Mohammed Taqi al-Modarresi

The High Rank

In those early days of our lives, when we viewed life with wide, innocent eyes, and smelt the fragrance of grace with a sensitive sensation and a poetic soul. In those days, on Friday nights, we would head to the sanctuary of Abul-Fadhl al-Abbas Ibn Ali ('a) in our wounded homeland, the Holy city of Karbala. We would saunter to the Holy sanctuary filled with longing. Then we would enter it while filled with awe. As we approach his Holy shrine, the image of this great hero is manifested in our minds. Riding his beautiful horse with his feet touching the ground, and his face is like a full moon. ([2]) Holding a sword, carrying a water-skin, and attacking the river which was protected by four thousand troops under the command of Amr Ibn al-Hajjaj since the ninth of Muharram, 61 A.H.

Shimr Ibn Thil-Jawshan came to the valley of Karbala holding a letter from Ubaydullah Ibn Ziyad (Yazeed Ibn Muawiyah's tyrant of Kufa). In the letter, Ibn Ziyad ordered the commander of his army, Umar Ibn Saad to prevent al-Hussain ('a), his family and companions from reaching the water of the Euphrates. Then, on the noon of the tenth (of Muharram), after several companions and family members of al-Hussain ('a), specifically children, died due to thirst, the cries of thirst rose, and nearly broke the heart of the water-supplier of Karbala, Abul-Fadhl al-Abbas, the standard-bearer of the Hussaini camp. He was given that title (the water-supplier of Karbala) after leading a successful raid of the Euphrates, and bringing back water to the camp before the Day of Ashura (the tenth), according to some historians.

([2]) Historians say: al-Abbas was very beautiful and handsome, and he rode a beautiful horse with his feet touching the ground. He was also named "the Moon of Bani (clan of) Hashim." | Al-Abbas by Abdul-Razzaq al-Muqram / pg140 / [from Maqatil al-Talebieen / pg33]

Al-Abbas was a great warrior, which is seen in the military clashes between the Commander of Faithful Imam Ali ('a) and the people of Apostasy. Perhaps he fought alongside his brother al-Hussain ('a) to control the riverbank when Muawiyah's army took over the Euphrates and prevented the companions of the Commander of Faithful from accessing it. After Muawiyah persisted in his immorality, and refused the advice of the Imam ('a), Imam Ali ('a) gave an epic speech to his companions in which he said: "Quench the thirst of swords with blood, quench your thirst with the water." Then his companions, headed by the Martyred grandson (al-Hussain) and his brother al-Abbas (according to this narration) attacked the riverbank. After taking control of it, the Imam allowed his enemies to access it like it had been narrated in many narrations. However, the people of Kufa who had fought Muawiyah under the banner of Imam Ali, are fighting the Master of the Youth of Paradise and his companions and family under the banner of Yazeed Ibn Muawiyah, and are preventing them from accessing the Euphrates.

Here he is, our master al-Abbas finding himself surrounded by more than four thousand vicious enemies. Will this prevent him from raiding the riverbank?

No, the cries of help that had risen from the throats of the family of the Prophet crying from thirst urged the great warrior. So, he approached Imam al-Hussain ('a) and asked for permission to attack. However, Imam al-Hussain did not allow him at first, saying: "You are my standard-bearer, and the distinction of my army."

Abul-Fadhl said: "My chest is tightened."

Imam al-Hussain ('a) then allowed him and said: "Ask for some water for these children."

When we were younger, we would stand near the shrine of Abul-Fadhl al-Abbas, and our hearts would head to the camp of al-Hussain, as Karbala holds to this day the memories of it, and the memories of the thirst of those children and women. Then, the image of that great warrior standing on the riverbank asking for water for those innocent people would be completed in our minds. That image had a great effect on our minds, which made it seem as if the battle of al-Taff (Karbala) was placed before us with all its moving touches. We could see al-Abbas standing on the riverbank after he had brought his horse into the water, he spreads out his hands to reach the water, takes a handful of water and brings it to his parched mouth. Then he remembers the thirst of his brother and throws the water back into the river. Then he says to himself words that are still repeated to this very day:

يا نفس من بعد الحسين هوني
Oh my soul, belittle your pain (in comparison) to al-Hussain's.
وبعده لا كنت ان تكوني
As after him you should not have been or will be.

هذا الحسين وارد المنون
al-Hussain is experiencing hardships,
وتشربين بارد المعين
And you're drinking cold spring water.

هيهات ما هذا فعال ديني
Never! These are not the actions of my religion,

ولا فعال صادق اليقين
Nor those of a person with complete certainty.

Like this, the image of al-Abbas is drawn before us upon visiting his shrine where we would recite his visitation which is filled with guidance and great vision, then pray to our Lord with a few raka'ats and supplications. Then we would return (to our lives) after quenching our thirst with his cup of loyalty, and filling our hands with a handful from his sea of vision, and taking guidance from his light of faith.

This was how the visits of the lovers of Ahlul-bayt ('a) to the shrine of Abul-Fadhl al-Abbas ('a) in the Holy city of Karbala were thousands would rush to him (like a stream of water) from all over the world. Some would come asking Allah (swt) through al-Abbas for their needs. People of conflicts would come swearing in his shrine, and wouldn't dare to lie, as everyone believed that Allah would hasten their punishment if they were to lie (there). Fighters would come to supply themselves with courage and determination in the shrine of al-Abbas.

Dear reader, I drew this image for you within my speech about Abul-Fadhl al-Abbas ('a) in order for us to find the hidden secret behind the great love and respect of millions of Muslims towards our master Abul-Fadhl al-Abbas ('a). As we can assure you that there is no one else in the household of prophethood, other than the infallible Imams ('a), who has such importance in the minds of the believers like Abul-Fadhl al-Abbas ('a). He has such a high standard in the hearts of the believers to the extent that the mere mention of this great warrior's name brings to their minds the virtues of loyalty, sympathy, heroism, rejection (of wrong), strong faith, and great vision.

What is this secret?

I have asked this question to multiple brothers here and there, saying: "There are many luminous peaks in our

history, meaning the followers of Ahlul-bayt, starting from the companions of the Messenger (s) to the companions of Imam Ali ('a) and the apostles of Imam al-Hassan ('a) all the way to the companions of all the other infallible Imams ('a), some of whom are jurists, leaders, and heroes. But why are the lights of those dimmed in the presence of the light of Abul-Fadhl al-Abbas ('a)?"

The answer of these nobles was similar: "The secret for this is that al-Abbas ('a) is the Gate of Needs." There is no one who knocks the doors of this gate without having their needs answered. There is an infamous supplication recited by the believers when faced with calamities, in which they say: "Oh Allah, I ask you by he who removed the calamities away from his brother al-Hussain ('a), remove my calamity."

Personally, I have tried this many times, and a day does not pass on me without witnessing this reality. Every time a problem strikes me, I ask Allah (swt) through Abul-Fadhl al-Abbas ('a), the Gate of Needs, and vow to recite Salawat one-hundred times and give its rewards to his great soul. Then, the calamity is uncovered, and the problem is solved.

However, the real question becomes: "Why did Allah (swt) give Abul-Fadhl al-Abbas ('a) this great gift?" As there is no one in the earth's east or west who asks Allah by Abul-Fadhl, without Allah resolving his calamity and solving his problem. Why? What is the secret behind this?

The answer was as follows: "Perhaps none of the companions or household members of Imam al-Hussain ('a) had such a difficult moment like our master al-Abbas amidst the battle. His only wish was to deliver water to the camp, where children were dying of thirst. The waterskin which he

held with what was left of his bleeding hands was more important to him than his life. Tens of hundreds of archers were bombarding him with arrows. Hoping to survive with the waterskin from the enemies, al-Abbas chose a path to the camp surrounded with palm trees. His worst disappointment then came when an arrow penetrated the waterskin, and leaked its water. His life leaked away along with the water. He stood amidst the battle with no hands to defend the Imam of his time, al-Hussain ('a), and no hope in life. He stood in complete despair of life, and determination for death. Perhaps this moment Abul-Fadhl lived with patience and certainty was very great to Allah, so Allah rewarded him for it by making him a Gate of Needs.

Yes, Abul-Fadhl was like that, and like that Allah (swt) gives His righteous servants who work solely for Him a great reward and merit, as He (swt) says:

إِنَّهُۥ مَن يَتَّقِ وَيَصْبِرْ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ ٱلْمُحْسِنِينَ

(Surely whoever is pious and (endures) patiently, then surely Allah does not waste the reward of those who do good) ([3])

He (swt) also says:

سَلَٰمٌ عَلَىٰٓ إِبْرَٰهِيمَ كَذَٰلِكَ نَجْزِى ٱلْمُحْسِنِينَ

(Peace be upon Abraham. This is how We reward those who do good) ([4])

If Allah eternized the remembrance of the prophets and brought peace upon them forever because they did good and because he does not waste the reward of those who do

([3]) Yusuf: 90
([4]) As-Safat: 110

good, then why would you find it strange that Allah honored Abul-Fadhl al-Abbas for his great stance when he made his greatest wish the delivering of water to the Household of the Message without paying attention for his hands being cut in the cause of Allah, rather he said very clearly:

والله ان قطعتم يميني

By Allah, if you cut my right (hand),

اني احامي أبدا عن ديني

I will continue to defend my religion,

وعن امام صادق اليقين

and an Imam with complete certainty:

نجل النبي الطاهر الأمين

Son of the virtuous, trusted prophet.

After they cut his left hand, he did not pay attention, rather he poetically said:

يا نفس لا تخشي من الكفار

Oh, my soul do not fear the infidels,

وابشري برحمة الجبار

Rather, rejoice in the Almighty's mercy

مع النبي السيد المختار

Alongside the chosen master, the prophet.

قد قطعوا ببغيهم يساري

They have cut with their injustice my left (hand),

فأصلهم يا رب حر النار

Thus, punish them oh Lord with the heat of fire.

This event summarized the life of Abul-Fadhl, and displayed his great personality which was a result of many perfected, great factors. What were these factors, and how did they forge the character of Abul-Fadhl al-Abbas ('a), and how can we learn from it (to be used) for our lives in order to go beyond our limited selves and soar in the ideal horizons of greatness? God-willing, we will answer these questions in the next chapter.

The Purposeful Beginning

The pious servants of Allah differ from others by not performing any activity except to seek the approval of their Lord. Allah (swt) said:

قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

(Say: "Surely my prayer, my worship, my life, and my death are all for Allah, Lord of the worlds.) ([5])

The movements of these Godly servants of Allah head to one direction, the approval of the Lord. For this reason, you would find that even if they marry or seek to have a progeny, it is for a Godly cause. For example, the wife of Imran dedicated what was in her womb entirely for Allah (swt). So, Allah (swt) accepted Mariam (Mary) graciously and blessed her with a pleasant beginning, as he entrusted her to the care of Zakariyya (Zechariah). That prayer (meaning the wife of Imran's vow) had a great affect on the embryo's future. As she would give birth to Mariam, who

([5]) Al-Anaam: 162

along with her son the Messiah ('a) was made a sign for the worlds.

The greatest goal of the marriage of Imam Ali ('a) to Fatema Bint Huzam al-Kilabiyyah (the Mother of al-Abbas) was to be blessed with a child that would support his son al-Hussain ('a) in Karbala. The historical narration says: The Commander of Faithful Imam Ali ('a) asked his brother Aqil (who was an expert in genealogy): "Find me a woman born to the bravest of the Arabs, so that I marry her, so that she gives birth to a courageous and brave child."

He (Aqil) said to him: "Marry Um al-Banin al-Kilabiyyah, as there is no one in the Arabs braver than her fathers." ([6])

Another narration adds (following his saying "so that she gives birth to a courageous and brave child"): "... to support al-Hussain in the land of Karbala." ([7])

The Imam drew a clear image for his goal in this marriage even before choosing a wife. For this reason, Allah (swt) blessed him with that courageous, loyal hero who was compassionate to his brother and a consultative to the Imam of his time.

Fatema al-Kilabiyyah was a great example in virtue. When Imam Ali ('a) married her, he asked her for her wish, as it was accustomed in marriages at that time. Her only wish, according to a historical narration, was for him not to call her by her name, "Fatima!"

([6]) Al-Abbas by Abdul-Razzaq al-Muqram [from Umdat al-Taleb w Sir al-Silsilah by Abul-Nasr / pg357]
([7]) ibid. / pg194 [from al-Kibrit al-Ahmar / v3 / pg144] and [Asrar al-Shahadah / pg387]

Why is that, despite your name being Fatima? She said: "Yes, but I am afraid that every time you call me by that name (Fatima), the children of Fatima al-Zahra ('a) will remember their mother, which will revive their sadness."

Then, after tens of years and after the battle of Karbala, the historical narration says that when Imam Zainul-Abideen ('a) and the other prisoners returned to the Holy city of Medina, he (the Imam) commanded Bishr (who was a poet) to lead the caravan and announce the martyrdom of al-Hussain ('a) to the people of Medina. Umm al-Banin received him and began asking him about Imam al-Hussain ('a).

Bishr said to her: "O' Umm al-Banin, may Allah increase your reward (for the martyrdom of) your son Abdullah."

She said: "Tell me about Hussain!"

Bishr replied: "May Allah increase your reward (for the martyrdom of) your son Jafar."

She said: "O' Bishr, tell me about Hussain!"

Bishr said: "May Allah increase your reward (for the martyrdom of) your son Uthman."

Umm al-Banin once again asked Bishr: "O' Bishr, tell me about Hussain!"

Bishr replied: "May Allah increase your reward (for the martyrdom of) your son Abbas."

Despite the great love Umm al-Banin had for her eldest son Abul-Fadhl al-Abbas, when Bishr told her of the death of al-Abbas, she once again asked him about al-

Hussain, saying: "O' Bishr tell me about my Master al-Hussain." Then when Bishr told her: "O' Fatima, may Allah increase your reward (for the martyrdom of) Hussain," she collapsed, and beat her face while crying: "O' Hussain! O' Hussain!"

This woman loved her children greatly, like any believing woman, but she had greater love for Allah and her Imam al-Hussain ('a), and for this reason she sacrificed her children for him. Al-Abbas grew up with this mother and that father (Imam Ali), which built this responsibility within him. The responsibility of defending al-Hussain ('a).

Knowing that the events of Karbala were well-known to the Household of the Message, there is no doubt that Umm al-Banin was of those who knew something about it as well. For example, she might of known that al-Abbas would be the first supporter of al-Hussain, as signs of that definitely rose within the horizons, which indicated his role. With that in mind, and knowing that she was a courageous and wise woman, we know for sure that she prepared her children for their roles.

For example, some historians mention that Umm al-Banin came to the Commander of Faithful ('a) and found that he had seated Abul-Fadhl ('a) on his lap, and kissed his arms while crying. She was worried, so she asked her husband the Imam for the reason of his grief. He told her that those two hands (meaning Abul-Fadhl's) will be cut for the cause of al-Hussain ('a). Upon hearing that, she cried. So, he reassured her and told her of her son's place near Allah, and that Allah will replace his hands with two wings to fly with in heaven (like his uncle Jafar al-Tayyar). ([8])

([8]) ibid. / pg138 [from Qamar Bani Hashim / pg21]

Many have given examples of the attachment of al-Abbas to al-Hussain ('a), and that since his childhood, he would answer the requests of his brother. For example, if al-Hussain ('a) expressed his thirst, al-Abbas would hurry to offer him a cup of water. Why is it that throughout his whole life he never spoke to his brother in brotherhood, despite him being the courageous al-Abbas, the son of the Commander of Faithful?

Al-Abbas knew that al-Hussain is the son of the daughter of the Messenger of Allah, the son of Fatima, that he is the proof of Allah on him and the worlds, the grandson of the message, and the Master of the youth of paradise. For this reason, he only spoke to him with complete respect, by calling him (for example): "O' son of the Messenger of Allah" or "O' Master."

But yes, he did call his brother in brotherhood once, and that was when the cursed man struck him on his head, so he fell off his horse onto the ground and cried: "O' brother help your brother!"

Why is it that he called him with that title in that moment? Maybe it was a hidden wish, to call his brother for at least one time in his life, "brother," as it is a great honor for al-Abbas to have a brother like al-Hussain ('a). His modesty or respect may have prevented him from that before, but now their farewell is near and there is no problem in calling him that.

Similar to how al-Abbas respected Imam Hussain, Imam Hussain ('a) shared strong love and respect for his brother. On the ninth of Muharram, 61 A.H, when the army of Bani Ummayyah advanced towards the camp of Ahul-Bayt ('a), the Master of the Martyrs (Imam Hussain) said to his brother al-Abbas: "Ride (on your horse), you are in my

mind O' brother, until you meet them and ask about what brought them." Read the words "you are in my mind" closely, it is a very great phrase coming from an infallible Imam. Al-Abbas then received them (the army) with twenty fighters (including Habib and Zuhair) and asked them about what brought them. They said: "Our commander says that you either pledge allegiance to his government or fight." Al-Abbas told al-Hussain, then returned telling them to postpone (the decision) till tomorrow. ([9])

Piercing Vision

Abul-Fadhl al-Abbas ('a) was very knowledgeable to the point that it has been mentioned in a noble narration: "He has been fed knowledge (like a young bird is fed food)." ([10]) His knowledge had originated from vision and certainty.

His vision caused him to firmly cling to the bonds of the divine Wilayah (allegiance), and the firmness of his faith and truth of his certainty caused him to not care about life. This is seen when Shimr Ibn Thil-Jawshan came to him on the ninth of Muharram with an offer of protection signed by Ibn Ziyad to try to separate him and his brother. The relationship between Abul-Fadhl al-Abbas and Shimr was that of maternal unclehood, as Umm al-Banin was from the same tribe as Shimr Ibn Thil-Jawshan. So Shimr came offering protection by saying to Abul-Fadhl and his brothers: "Where are our nephews?" The brothers of al-Abbas did not respond as a form of respect for their elder brother, and al-Abbas did not respond as a form of respect for his Imam and Allah's proof upon them, al-Hussain ('a). Shimr then repeated his call, but Abul-Fadhl once again did not respond.

([9]) ibid. [from Tarikh al-Tabari / v6 / pg237]
([10]) ibid. / pg 193 [from Tathkirat al-Khawas / pg142] and [Aalam al-Wara / pg120]

Then al-Hussain ('a) said to them: "Answer him, even though he's a wrongdoer." They said to Shimr: "What is the matter, what do you want?" He said: "O' children of my sister, you are safe, do not kill yourselves with al-Hussain, comply with the commands of the Commander of Faithful Yazeed." Al-Abbas said to him: "May Allah curse you and your protection! (How dare you) give us protection while of the son of the Messenger of Allah is unsafe! (How dare you) command us to comply with the commands of the cursed people and the children of the cursed people!" ([11]) Shimr returned furious.

Look at the certainty of al-Abbas, this certainty which was described by Imam al-Sadiq ('a) when he said: "Our uncle al-Abbas Ibn Ali was of piercing vision and strong faith. He fought alongside Abu Abdullah (al-Hussain) and proved himself brave (until) he passed away as a martyr." ([12])

Al-Abbas ('a) knew that time passed quickly, that life never lasted for anyone, and that bodies were created to die. So, he did not try to save himself when facing martyrdom, which is the best honor. Al-Hussain ('a) said in regards to that:

وإن تكن الأبدان للموت أنشأت

If bodies were created for death,

فقتل أمرء بالسيف في الله أفضل

Then being killed with a sword (weapon) for the sake of Allah is best.

([11]) ibid. / pg193 [from Tathkirat al-Khawas / pg142] and [Aalam al-Wara / pg120]
([12]) ibid. / pg208

Like that, when he reached the riverside and took a handful of water, he ('a) said these great words:

والله ما هذا فعال ديني

By Allah these are not the actions of my religion,

ولا فعال صادق اليقين

Nor those of a person with complete certainty.

The greatest characteristic of al-Abbas ('a) was his certainty (in Allah) as we will read in his Ziyarah (visitation) in a later chapter, God-willing. Al-Abbas' vision of Tawhid (Monotheism) opened at a very young age. For this reason, we find that when the Master of the Wise, the Commander of Faithful ('a) sat him in his holy lap (when he was a child) telling him to say "One" he would say "One." Then, when he would ask him to say "Two," he would refrain by saying: "I am ashamed of saying two with a tongue I said one with." ([13]) Yes, his heart which understand the oneness of Allah at its peak would not allow him to say "Two."

Like the certainty of Abul-Fadhl, his submission to Allah was at its peak, as this characteristic of submission (to Allah) originated from true certainty (in Him). We will return to the scripts of his Ziyarah (visitation) to see how it confirms this characteristic of submission. What form of submission is greater than his complete obedience to the Imam of his time and endurance with him until his martyrdom.

Another rare characteristic he possessed was extraordinary heroism. For that reason (his extraordinary

([13]) ibid. / pg168 [from Mustadrak al-Wasail / v3 / pg815]

heroism and bravery) he was the standard-bearer of al-Hussain ('a).

Some narrators said that al-Abbas ('a) participated greatly in the battle of Siffin. They said: "A young, masked man came out of the army of the Commander of Faithful ('a) asking to fight. The young mans (whose age is estimated to have been 17 years old) courage was visible to everyone, so they feared him.

Muawiyah called Abul-Shathaa' saying: "The people of the Levant have given me more than one-thousand horsemen, however send him one of your children (who were seven) to fight." After killing them all, Abul-Shathaa' was enraged, so he came out to fight him, only to follow his predecessors. Everyone feared him and did not dare to battle him. The companions of the Commander of Faithful were amazed by the young warrior's performance which must have come from a Hashemite, but they were unsure of his identity due to his mask. Then when he returned to the camp, the Commander of Faithful ('a) called upon him and uncovered his mask, revealing that he was al-Abbas ('a). ([14])

True bravery is not only bravery in battle against the enemies, rather it is all characteristics of humanity, such as courtesy, loyalty, sacrifice and sympathy. All of which were characteristics that al-Abbas ('a) possessed. Simply, look at what he fought and was martyred for. Al-Abbas was martyred while bringing water for the thirsty. He prioritized the water over his own life. So, his primary objective was not to defend himself from the enemy, but rather to protect the water-skin at all costs to deliver it to the thirsty of the Household of the Message.

([14]) ibid. / pg275

This is what causes us to stand in respect of his rare heroism, whereas his enemies fought him with deceit, as they bombarded him with arrows and ambushed him from behind a palm tree resulting in the severing of his hand. Despite this, he continued seeking to deliver the water to the camp. This is rare bravery that history stands in respect for.

His loyalty, as well, was at its peak. As he continued to defend Allah's proof to the very last second. It is said that when Imam al-Hussain ('a) came to him in his final moments, al-Abbas ('a) noticed (someone's presence), so he said: "O' you, if you have come to behead me, wait till my brother comes, so that I see him one last time." Al-Hussain ('a) said: "It is me, your brother," and placed his head on his lap. The narration says that Abul-Fadhl raised his head (from his brother's lap) and placed it on the ground. Abu Abdullah al-Hussain ('a) said: "Why are you doing this, O' brother?" So, he said while taking his last breaths: "O' brother, you are placing my head on your lap now, but who will place your head on his lap in an hour?" Whether this narration is true or not, the general behavior of al-Abbas ('a) towards his brother indicates such an interaction. Like that, he expressed his loyalty in his moments of death like he had done when he threw the water (that was in his hands) back into the water (river) while dying of thirst as an expression of sympathy towards his brother and his pure household.

Scripts Praising al-Abbas

Imam Ali Ibn al-Hussain al-Sajjad ('a) said in regards to his uncle al-Abbas: "May the mercy of Allah be upon my uncle al-Abbas Ibn Ali, as he fought heroically and sacrificed himself for his brother. He lost his hands for that cause, so Allah replaced them with wings to fly with alongside the angels in heaven, like Jafar Ibn Abi Talib. In addition to that, al-Abbas has such a well-esteemed rank

with Allah that on the day of judgement all the martyrs will envy him for it." ([15])

The noble narration displayed the characteristics of loyalty and sympathy that Abul-Fadhl ('a) possessed, as well as the characteristics of bravery and sacrifice. It also displayed how Allah (s) rewarded him with such a well-esteemed rank that all the other martyrs (including Hamza, Jafar, etc.) will envy him for it.

This great script alone is enough proof for the virtues of al-Abbas ('a), but the most important scripts that have been mentioned in his regards are the visitations which have been inherited by the followers of Ahlul-bayt ('a) throughout history, which express the extent of respect the infallible Imams ('a) have for al-Abbas ('a).

We will contemplate sections of these visitations in hope of learning something about the personality of al-Abbas ('a) to follow. We read in the visitation of Abul-Fadhl al-Abbas ('a) which had been narrated by Abu Hamza al-Thumali from al-Sadiq ('a):

سلام الله وسلام ملائكته المقربين

May Allah's peace, the peace of His close angels,

وأنبيائه المرسلين وعباده الصالحين وجميع الشهداء والصديقين

sent messengers, righteous servants, martyrs,

والزاكيات الطيبات فيما تغدي وتروح يا ابن أمير المؤمنين

and pure blessings be upon you O' son of the Commander

([15]) ibid. / pg223 [from al-Khisal / v1 / pg68]

The goal of al-Abbas ('a) was that of the prophets, righteous, and pious throughout history. In fact, al-Abbas ('a) came for the same purpose as the epic of martyrdom in Karbala: to strengthen the roots of this divine path. Thus, he deserved the peace and blessings of all prophets and Godly people.

Through martyrdom and honorable blood Allah preserved the legacy of the prophets from being lost between the legends of the tyrants. For this reason, Imam al-Hussain ('a) is considered the heir of all prophets.

For this reason, we must understand the reality that faith cannot be divided, meaning we cannot believe in one prophet or successor without the other, or separate between them. Surely, it is one path that does not change or deviate. For this reason, the peace and blessings that are upon al-Abbas are like those that are upon the prophets, angels, and righteous.

Following this noble peace, the visitation says:

أشهد لك بالتسليم والتصديق والوفاء

I bear witness that you possess (the characteristics of) submission, faith and loyalty

These words describe the optimal characteristics Abul-Fadhl possessed. Submission, for example, is the greatest rank of faith a human can attain, as we read in the Holy Quran that the Prophet Abraham ('a) asked his Lord in his final days to make him and his son Ishmael Muslims (Submitters), as he said:

رَبَّنَا وَٱجْعَلْنَا مُسْلِمَيْنِ لَكَ وَمِن ذُرِّيَّتِنَآ أُمَّةً مُّسْلِمَةً لَّكَ وَأَرِنَا مَنَاسِكَنَا وَتُبْ عَلَيْنَآ إِنَّكَ أَنتَ ٱلتَّوَّابُ ٱلرَّحِيمُ

(Our Lord, make us both submitted to You and from our descendants a nation submitted to You. Show us our rituals and accept our repentance, for You are the Ever Relenting, the Most Merciful) ([16])

Al-Abbas ('a) has attained this rank of submission, and we bear witness of that. In reality, the other characteristics like faith and loyalty are only examples of submission within his life, as whoever submits to Allah (swt) must have faith in his vicegerent, defend and be loyal to him.

Surely, the faith of our master al-Abbas ('a) in his brother as an Imam and proof (of Allah), his martyrdom and his loyalty are proof of the submission of his heart, his true belief, and certainty (in his faith). This is the rare quality that many who claim to be faithful lack. They do not believe in the viceregency (of Ahlul-bayt) or do not fight for it during hardships.

The visitation adds:

والنصيحة لخلف النبي (ص) المرسل

and sincerity to the heir of the sent Prophet (s)

والسبط المنتجب والدليل العالم

the chosen grandson, knowledgeable guide

والوصي المبلغ والمظلوم المهتضم

conveying successor, and the unjustly oppressed one.

([16]) Al-Baqarah: 128

Abul-Fadhl was sincere to the Imam of his time and loyal to him. He acted with complete loyalty, love, and sacrifice, and did not worry about the effort it took to follow the orders of his infallible Imam. Then, the visitation describes the Imam which our master al-Abbas followed with the following attributes:

A. He is an heir of the Messenger of Allah (s), and a grandson chosen for the Imamate. This only applies to an infallible Imam.

B. He is a knowledgeable, true guide, which is an attribute given to all infallible Imams. Perhaps, every just Imam appointed by an infallible Imam, like the just jurists.

C. He is a truthful successor who speaks the truth and conveys it, which is an attribute that all infallible Imams ('a) possess.

D. He is wrongfully oppressed.

Therefore, al-Abbas did not follow Imam al-Hussain ('a) because he rose in warfare, as power is not a measure of Imamate, rather the divine standards of succession and knowledge are the measure, and they had always been the measure.

The visitation then adds:

فجزاك الله عن رسوله

May Allah reward you on behalf of His Messenger (s),

وعن أمير المؤمنين والحسن والحسين (ع)

the Commander of Faithful, al-Hassan, and al-Hussain ('a)

أفضل الجزاء بما صبرت وأحتسبت وأعنت

with the best reward for your patience, dedication, and support.

He was patient for the cause of Allah and seeking nearness to Him, and that is the required patience. He also endured pain in obedience to Allah.

It is a great lesson for us all: how to struggle for the cause of Allah and endure all pain. Such as a hurtful word from the hateful mouths of the enemies, a continuous pursuit by an oppressive government, bloody wounds and eventually martyrdom. All of it is easy for the cause of Allah and for His pleasure.

The visitation adds:

لعن الله من قتلك

May Allah curse he who killed you.

ولعن الله من جهل حقك

May Allah curse he who ignored your rank,

وأستخف بحرمتك

And disparaged your sanctity.

Surely, al-Abbas ('a) had such a great rank that they who ignored and denied it deserved to be cursed. His sanctity was so great, that they who violated it, such as when they prevented him from the water of the Euphrates, as the visitation continues by saying:

ولعن الله من حال بينك وبين ماء الفرات

May Allah curse he who prevented you from reaching the water of the Euphrates.

أشهد أنك قتلت مظلوماً

I bear witness that you were killed unjustly,

وأن الله منجز لكم ما وعدكم

And that Allah will fulfill what He promised you.

This testimony that Abul-Fadhl was killed unjustly indicates that the cause of Abul-Fadhl was a righteous cause, and that whoever is killed while defending the cause of truth, Allah will fulfill His promise in this world by showing history the oppression he faced and in the hereafter by giving him eternal life in heaven.

The visitation then continues to show the rank of our master al-Abbas ('a) and his divine path. It showed the position a believer must be in while standing before his shrine, before his master al-Abbas ('a). It says:

جئتك يا ابن أمير المؤمنين وافداً إليكم

I have come to present myself before you, O' son of the Commander of Faithful

وقلبي مسلم لكم وتابع

And my *heart is submissive to you and following you*

وأنا لكم تابع

And I am your follower.

ونصرتي لكم معدة

I am ready to support you

حتى يحكم الله وهو خير الحاكمين

Until Allah choses and He is surely the best of those who choose.

فمعكم معكم لا مع عدوكم

I am verily with you

إني بكم وبإيابكم من المؤمنين

I am of those who believe in you and your return

وبمن خالفكم وقتلكم من الكافرين

and deny your enemies and killers.

قتل الله أمة قتلتكم بالأيدي والألسن

May Allah kill a nation who killed you with their hands and tongues (commands or words).

This is how we, the loyal followers (of Ahlul-bayt), should renew our allegiance and loyalty to the cause of Ahlul-bayt ('a) and their path of life, and declare honestly that we are ready to sacrifice ourselves at any moment for the cause of the religion.

In summary, the obligations obliged to us, which form the treaty of allegiance (to the Ahlul-bayt) and the promise of loyalty, are as follows:

A. Loyalty and submission, meaning complete obedience without hesitation to the Ahlul-bayt ('a) and their divine path.

B. Preparation to defend the sanctities of Islam with our lives, money and any possible form of aid.
C. Righteousness on their path and rejection of their enemies' path.

D. Faith in the victory of the Truth, which represented by the Imams, sooner or later.

These are the key points we find in this visitation and all other visitations read in the shrines of Ahlul-bayt ('a).

The visitation then continues by saying:

السلام عليك أيها العبد الصالح

Peace be upon you, O' righteous servant

المطيع لله ولرسوله ولأمير المؤمنين

Who is obedient to Allah, His Messenger, the Commander of Faithful

والحسن والحسين (ع)

al-Hassan, and al-Hussain ('a)

السلام عليك ورحمة الله وبركاته

Peace be upon you, Allah's mercy, blessings.

ومغفرته ورضوانه وعلى روحك وبدنك

Forgiveness, and satisfaction be upon you, your soul and body.

أشهد وأشهد الله أنك مضيت على مضى به البدريون

I bear witness and call Allah to witness that you followed the path of the warriors of Badr

والمجاهدون في سبيل الله

And the fighters for the cause of Allah

المناصحون في جهاد أعدائه

Who sincerely fought for Him against His enemies,

المبالغون في نصرة أوليائه

and did their best in supporting His vicegerent,

الذابون عن أحبائه

And defending His beloved.

This truthful testimony is coming from an infallible Imam, Imam al-Sadiq ('a), stating that the path of al-Abbas ('a) is that of the people of Badr.

So, who were the people of Badr? They are the ones who contributed in strengthening the pillars of the divine message, and showed courage in defending the Messenger of Allah (s). They were a very few who fought an enemy exceeding them with fighters and weaponry. So was al-Abbas ('a) and the supporters of al-Hussain ('a). They contributed to strengthening the pillars of truth against the distorted apostasy of Bani Ummayah. They fought vicious enemies, and fought until they were killed. Allah chose for their martyrdom to become a victory to their message, and for their blood to become a testimony proving their truth.

This confrontation required the highest levels of sincerity, patience, and endurance in defending the truth and the beloved of Allah. With these factors, the greatest battle,

most magnificent epic, and the highest levels of martyrdom were reached.

After this great testimony, Imam al-Sadiq ('a) continues in the visitation of his uncle al-Abbas ('a) by saying:

أشهد أنك بالغت في النصيحة

I bear witness that you acted very sincerely,

وأعطيت غاية المجهود

And exerted all your efforts (for it).

Once again, this is a great indication to the high rank of Abul-Fadhl al-Abbas, as he exerted all his efforts and acted sincerely to the end. So, the visitation says:

فبعثك الله في الشهداء

So, Allah placed you with the martyrs,

وجعل روحك مع أرواح السعداء

And placed your soul with souls of the happy ones,

وأعطاك من جناته أفسحها منزلا

And gave you the largest place in His heavens,

وأفضلها غرفا

And the best rooms,

ورفع ذكرك في عليين

And exalted your mention in the most elevated ranks.

وحشرك من النبيين والصديقين

And placed you with the prophets, veracious ones,

والشهداء والصالحين وحسن أولئك رفيقا

Martyrs, righteous and those of great companionship.

Thus, the visitation draws the path of the fighters, and that their goal is not to reach power or gain a high rank, rather their greatest goal is to gain heaven. They compete with each other to reach the greatest ranks in heaven. The visitation continues:

أشهد أنك لم تهن ولم تنكل

I bear witness that you did not lag behind or turn away,

وأنك مضيت على بصيرة من أمرك

And that you passed away with full awareness and vision.

Here, it emphasizes on the quality of vision which Abul-Fadhl al-Abbas possessed, and it is a quality linked to certainty (in Allah). Hence, the virtuous martyrdom of al-Abbas ('a) teaches us to follow in that, like he had followed those before him, as the visitation says:

مقتدياً بالصالحين ومتبعاً للنبيين

Following the examples of the righteous and prophets.

فجمع الله بيننا وبينك وبين رسوله وأوليائه

May Allah gather us with you, His messenger, and vicegerents

في منازل المخبتين

In the Houses of the humble (in Heaven)

فإنه أرحم الراحمين

As *He is certainly the most Merciful*

We know that the "humble" have high ranks. When Imam al-Sadiq ('a) prays for his uncle in his visitation to be blessed in the places of the "humble," it is a prayer appropriate for the high rank of Abul-Fadhl al-Abbas ('a), the rank of the "humble." It appears that humbleness is a high rank of faith and submission, as the Almighty said:

وَلِيَعْلَمَ ٱلَّذِينَ أُوتُوا۟ ٱلْعِلْمَ أَنَّهُ ٱلْحَقُّ مِن رَّبِّكَ فَيُؤْمِنُوا۟ بِهِۦ فَتُخْبِتَ لَهُۥ قُلُوبُهُمْ

(So that those who were given knowledge may know that this is the truth from your Lord, so they may believe in it and their hearts may become humbled to it) ([17])

And He (swt) said:

فَإِلَٰهُكُمْ إِلَٰهٌ وَٰحِدٌ فَلَهُۥٓ أَسْلِمُوا۟ ۗ وَبَشِّرِ ٱلْمُخْبِتِينَ

(For your God is only One God, so submit yourselves to Him. And give good news to the humble) ([18])

Hence, the characteristic of humbleness came after the characteristics of faith and submission. On the other side of the visitation, we read:

السلام عليك يا أبا الفضل العباس أبن أمير المؤمنين

([17]) Al-Hajj: 54
([18]) Al-Hajj: 34

Peace be upon you, O' Abul-Fadhl al-Abbas son of the Commander of Faithful

السلام عليك يابن سيد الوصيين

Peace be upon you, O' son of the master of successors

السلام عليك يابن أول القوم إسلاما

Peace be upon you, O' son of the first of the people in Islam,

وأقدمهم إيمانا وأقومهم بدين الله

The first to believe, the best to serve the religion of Allah

Here he mentioned the rank of Abul-Fadhl genetically which he acquired through his father. It's no surprise that Abul-Fadhl rose to the peak of submission, sincerity, struggle, and defense for his brother al-Hussain ('a) and Islam as he is the son of the first of the people in Islam, the first to believe, the best to serve the religion of Allah, and the most careful for Islam. This cub is from that lion (like father, like son), surely that father would have such a great son. The Imam continues his visitation of Abul-Fadhl al-Abbas by saying:

أشهد لقد نصحت لله ولرسوله

I bear witness that you served Allah, His messenger,

ولأخيك فنعم الأخ المواسي

And your brother sincerely. You were the most compassionate brother.

فلعن الله أمة قتلتك

May Allah curse a nation which killed you,

ولعن الله أمة ظلمتك

May Allah curse a nation which oppressed you,

ولعن الله أمة استحلت منك المحارم

May Allah curse a nation which violated your sanctities,

وأنتهكت في قتلك حرمة الإسلام

And violated with your killing the sanctity of Islam.

What a high status and rank did Abul-Fadhl reach that the violation of his sanctity is a violation of the sanctity of Islam?

فنعم الصابر المجاهد والمحامي الناصر

You were the best patient fighter and supportive protector,

والأخ الدافع عن أخيه

And brother who defended his brother

المجيب إلى طاعة ربه

In obedience to his Lord,

الراغب فيما زهد فيه غيره

And worked to gain that which others renounced

من الثواب الجزيل والثناء الجميل

Of abundant reward and marvelous tribute

Abul-Fadhl was a patient fighter, supportive protector, and brother who defended his brother. But his defense was not due to his (family-related) temper and

protection, rather an obedience to the commands of his Lord and to gain His rewards. All of these characteristics mentioned in the visitation are the optimal characteristics which all believers in the path of Ahlul-bayt ('a) should follow al-Abbas in. The visitation continues:

والحقك الله في درجة آبائك في جنات النعيم

May Allah place you in the rank of your fathers in the heavens of joy

The believer then asks his Lord with the following words:

اللهم إني تعرضت لزيارة أوليائك

O' Allah, I have visited your vicegerents

رغبة في ثوابك

Out of desire for (gaining) your reward,

ورجاء لمغفرتك

Your forgiveness,

وجزيل إحسانك

And your abundant benevolence.

فأسألك أن تصلي على محمد وآله الطاهرين

So, I ask You to send Your blessings upon Mohammed and his pure Household,

وأن تجعل رزقي بهم دارا

And to make my sustenance by them flow,

وعيشي بهم قارا

My living by them delightful,

وزيارتي بهم مقبولة

My pilgrimage by them rewardable,

وحياتي بهم طيبة

My life by them pleasant,

وأدرجني إدراج المكرمين

And place me in the rank of the honored ones,

وأجعلني ممن ينقلب من زيارة مشاهد أحبائك

And make me of those who return from the pilgrimage of your Beloved ones:

مفلحاً منجحاً قد أستوجب

With success and prosperity,

غفران الذنوب

And deserve forgiveness of sins

وستر العيوب

Covering of flaws,

وكشف الكروب

And *Relief of sorrows.*

إنك أهل التقوى وأهل المغفرة

Surely, You are worthy of devotion and forgiving.

The Message of the Imam and the Supporter

The role of the second person in defending a message is a very important and serious role. Do you see that the great role of the Commander of Faithful ('a) in defending Islam, the Quran and the Messenger of Allah (s) not a primary role? That was the role of Abul-Fadhl al-Abbas ('a) to his brother Imam al-Hussain ('a), so was the role of Malik al-Ashtar in defending the Commander of Faithful ('a). As for the lives of prophets, this was the role of Aaron to his brother Moses son of Imran ('a).

When the second person in such a path dissolves into the character of the first leader, defends him, respects him and supports him sincerely, he gives a great example to others and how they should be towards their leader. Imam Ali ('a) gave the most beautiful example of how Muslims should follow the Messenger of Allah (s), and that was very important because people could follow the Messenger of Allah (s) in everything expect one, and that is how to respect, defend and interact with the Great Messenger (s). For that, the nation required a practical example and Imam Ali ('a) was that example. This taught the people how they should interact with the Messenger of Allah (s), respect his rank, and sacrifice themselves for him like when the Imam sacrificed himself by sleeping in his bed on the night of the migration and how he defended him in the battles, and protected him with his body. If it wasn't for Imam Ali ('a) and this path, Muslims wouldn't know how to interact with the Messenger of Allah (s), and may raise their voices over his voice, walk before him, or speak loudly to him as they speak to one another. Even decades after the passing of the Messenger of Allah (s), Imam Ali ('a) was asked why he does not dye (his hair), he ('a) answered: "We are mourning the Messenger of Allah."

Even in his final hours, Asbagh Ibn Nabatah asked him: "Are you better or Mohammed?" Imam Ali ('a) said: "I am one of the servants of Mohammed." Imam Ali was surely an image of the character, knowledge, and morals of the Messenger of Allah (s), a proof to the truth of his message and a great defender of it.

So was our master al-Abbas ('a) in relation to his brother, Imam, and Allah's proof upon him, the chosen grandson al-Hussain ('a).

Al-Abbas ('a) was also a jurist of the jurists of Ahlul-bayt ('a), a brave commander, a noble custodian and a pious worshipper. Therefore, he was a complete character in all aspects. Furthermore, he dissolved into the character of his brother al-Hussain ('a) and acted in extreme obedience and sincerity to him, giving people an example of how they should interact with the Imam ('a).

He practically showed them the rank of Aba Abdillah al-Hussain ('a), as most people do not reach the high level of vision required to know the rank of the infallible Imams or their viceregency. For this reason, we find that prophet Moses ('a) asked his Lord to give him a helper from his family, the Quran mentions this to us by saying:

قَالَ رَبِّ ٱشْرَحْ لِى صَدْرِي وَيَسِّرْ لِىٓ أَمْرِي وَٱحْلُلْ عُقْدَةً مِّن لِّسَانِي
يَفْقَهُوا قَوْلِي وَٱجْعَل لِّى وَزِيرًا مِّنْ أَهْلِي هَٰرُونَ أَخِي ٱشْدُدْ بِهِۦٓ أَزْرِي
وَأَشْرِكْهُ فِىٓ أَمْرِي

(He said: My Lord! lift up my heart, ease my task for me, untie my tongue, so people may understand my speech.

And grant me a helper from my family, Aaron, my brother. Strengthen me through him, and let him share my task.) ([19])

For this, we must stand before the infallible Imams ('a) and those Godly (pious) scholars which they appointed with complete understanding of their rank and how we must interact with them through the biography of Abul-Fadhl al-Abbas ('a) and what we know about him from his visitation which we recited above. This is because not all people reach the level of leadership, but everyone interacts with the leadership, and Abul-Fadhl al-Abbas ('a) gives the optimal example in defending the religion, the Household of the Message (Ahlul-bayt), and the religious leadership which we are obliged to obey, defend and follow. This is a great lesson which we learn from Abul-Fadhl, and it is the most important lesson as it contributes to the building of a great society capable of resisting the storms of distress and desire.

So, peace be upon you O' Abul-Fadhl al-Abbas the day you were born to defend al-Hussain, the day you died for the sake of Islam under the banner of al-Hussain, and the day you will be raised back to life with al-Hussain. May Allah's peace, blessings and mercy be upon you both.

The Farewell

When al-Abbas ('a) took off like an arrow to the river, holding his water-skin, sword and banner, al-Hussain ('a) stood near the camp looking towards the battlefield. Some women of the Ahlul-bayt may have been looking in the face of al-Hussain ('a) as his face showed the image of that important battle.

([19]) Taha: 25-32

Al-Abbas attacks the water-bank and the defenders flee like goats from a hungry lion. He fills the waterskin with water and returns. This hopeful image may have shown in the face of the Master of Martyrs ('a), increasing in hope and relief.

Then, al-Abbas ('a) chooses a closer path to the camp, the path of the palm trees. The enemies ambush him in it, and Omar Ibn Saad commands his troops (who are about 30,000): "Do not allow al-Abbas to reach the companions of al-Hussain, as if they drink the water none of you would survive." This mobilized all the forces against the brave warrior. Four thousand archers aim their arrows towards al-Abbas, and the rest scatter between the palm trees attempting to prevent al-Abbas from reaching the camp. Then they ambush him behind some palm trees and cut his right then his left (hands). Yet, al-Abbas continues like an arrow to the camp, hoping to succeed in the mission which Imam al-Hussain ('a) had sent him to. It was decisive moments and arrows bombarded him like rain, while al-Abbas ('a) was poetically saying:

لا أرهب الموت إذ الموت رقا

I do not fear death, as death is elevation.

حتى أواري في المصاليت لقى

Until I pass by the swords.

نفسي لنفس المصطفى الطهر وقا

My life for the life of the pure chosen one is a shield

إني أنا العباس أغدوا بالسقا

I am al-Abbas, carrying the waterskin,

ولا أخاف الشر يوم الملتقى

And I do not fear pain on the day of the meeting. ([20])

An arrow struck the waterskin and its water leaked. Then, an arrow struck his chest causing him to fall off his horse and cry to his brother al-Hussain: "Help!" Upon seeing him, he cried and said: "My back is now broken, and my aid is diminished."

Another narration says: A cursed man struck him with an iron pole. Upon seeing this al-Hussain ('a) poetically said:

تعديتم يا شر قوم ببغيكم

You have exceeded your tyranny O' worst people,

وخالفتم دين النبي محمد

And fought the religion of the Prophet Mohammed.

اما كان خير الرسل أوصاكم بنا

Did the best of Messengers not entrust you with us?

اما نحن من نجل النبي المسدد

Are we not the progeny of the Aided Prophet?

اما كانت الزهراء أمي دونكم

Was al-Zahra not my mother?

اما كان من خير البرية أحمد

Was Ahmad (Mohammed) not the best of creation?

لعنتم وأخزيتم بما قد جنيتم

May you be cursed and humiliated for what you have done.

([20]) Bihar al-Anwar: v45 / pg40 (Beirut ed.)

فسوف تلاقوا حر نار توقد

Surely, you will face the heat of the burning hellfire. ([21])

Imam al-Hussain ('a) returned to the camp with grief filling his face. He had lost his first supporter, his standard-bearer, and the sign of his army. The narration says that he did not tell the women of the death of his brother al-Abbas. Instead, he approached his tent and removed its pillar. With this sign, the women knew that the owner of the tent had been martyred. This is best described by the poet who said:

عمد الحديد بكربلاء خسف القمر

The iron pole in Karbala eclipsed the moon.

من هاشم فلتبكه عليا مضر

From (the clan of) Hashim, the best of (the tribe of)

Mudhar should mourn him

فمشى اليه السبط ينعاه كسرت

The grandson walked to him mourning: "you have broken

الآن ظهري يا أخي ومعيني

My back now O' brother and supporter."

فسلام عليك يا أبا عبد الله

So, peace be upon you O' Aba Abdillah,

وسلام الله على أخيك وناصرك العباس

Peace be upon your brother and supporter al-Abbas,

([21]) ibid. / pg42

وعلى الدماء السائلات بين يديك

And upon the blood spilled under your banner (martyrs),

ورحمة الله وبركاته

And His mercy and blessings.

Abul-Fadhl in Elegiac Poetry

The epics of the heroism of Abul-Fadhl al-Abbas ('a) evoked the hidden love the poets had (for him), causing an overflow of poetic masterpieces which are still repeated on Hussaini pulpits, quenching the thirst of faithful hearts with the love of Ahlul-bayt and their fragrant remembrance. We have chosen in the end of our book a few poems to light the way for people of vision.

While al-Abbas is optimistic and cheerful ([22])

والعباس ضاحك مستبشر

عبست وجوه القوم

The people's faces frowned,

والعباس فيهم ضاحك متبسم

While al-Abbas amidst them is cheerful and smiling.

قلب اليمين على الشمال وغاص في

He folded the right over the left and dove in...

الأوساط يحصد في الرؤوس ويحطم

([22]) By Poet Sayyid Jafar al-Hilli (ra)

their midst while harvesting the heads and crushing.

وثنا أبو الفضل الفوارس نكصا

Abul-Fadhl diverted the knights into retreat,

فرأوا أشد ثباتهم أن يهزموا

Resulting in their strongest perseverance being defeat.

ما كر ذو بأس له متقدماً

No brave man dares to attack him,

إلا وفر ورأسه المتقدم

Without retreating headless.

صبغ الخيول برمحه حتى غدا

He dyed the horses with his spear to the extent that

سيان اشقر لونها والأدهم

both the black and blonde (horses) looked alike.

بطل تورث عن ابيه شجاعة

A hero who inherited bravery from his father,

فيها انوف بني الضلالة ترغم

Which he used to humiliate the people of deviation.

عرف المواعظ لا تفيد بمعشر

He knew that sermons were useless with people

صموا عن النبأ العظيم كما عموا

Deaf to the great news like they had been blind.

فانصاع يخطب بالجماجم والكلا

So, he gave sermons to their skulls and corpses,

فالسيف ينثر والمثقف ينظم

His sword delivered sermons, and his spear read poems.

أوتشتكي العطش الفواطم عنده

How can the daughters of the Messenger complain of thirst

وبصدر صعدته الفرات المفعم

When the flowing Euphrates is (under the control of) his spear.

في كفه اليسرى السقاء يقله

In his left hand he held the waterskin,

وبكفه اليمنى الحسام المخذم

And in his right hand is the piercing sword.

قسما بصارمه الصقيل وانني

I swear by his shining sword, and I

في غير صاعقة السما لا اقسم

Do not swear expect by the lightning of the sky,

لولا القضا لمحى الوجود بسيفه

If it wasn't for destiny, he would've erased their existence with his sword,

والله يقضي ما يشاء ويحكم

But Allah does as he wills, and chooses.

حسمت يديه المرهفات وانه

He intended with his strong hands,

وحسامه من حدهن لأحسم

and his stronger sword

فغدا يهم بان يصول فلم يطق

To conquer the river as he couldn't bear (to leave it)

كالليث إذ اضفاره تتقلم

Like a captured lion.

وهوى بجنب العلقمي فليته

Then he fell near the Alqama (a stream of the Euphrates).

للشاربين به يداف العلقم

If only the Alqama could be blended (with his courage) for those who drink

فمشى لمصرعه الحسين وطرفه

So, al-Hussain walked to his place of martyrdom, with his

بين الخيام وبينه متقسم

Eyes looking back between him and the tents (for defense)

ألفاه محجوب الجمال كأنه

He found his beauty covered (with blood) like

بدر بمنحطم الوشيج ملثم

A moon covered with entangled spears.

فأكب منحنيا عليه ودمعه

So, he fell on his body with his tears

صبغ البسيط كأنما هو عندم

Painting the ground with the color of blood.

قد رام يلثمه فلم ير موضعا

He wanted to kiss him but he didn't find a place (on his body)

لم يدمه عض السلاح فيلثم

not covered with the blood of the stabs of weapons.

اليوم بان عن اليمين حسامها

Today, the hand was separated from its sword.

اليوم آل الى التفرق جمعنا

Today, our gathering has come to an end,

اليوم نامت أعين بك لم تنم

Today, your eyes which never slept slept

وسهرت اخرى فعز منامها

While others stayed awake for your loss.

O' protector of the daughters of the Prophet ([23])

أحمى الضائعات

يا ابا الفضل قم ألست الذي قد

O' Abul-Fadhl rise! Weren't you he who

كنت لي مسعدا إذا الدهر نابا

Cheered me when then time was unpleasant.

([23]) By Poet Shaykh Abdul-Hussain Shukur (ra)

أولست الذي إذا ما مهيب

Weren't you he who when people feared (war),

هب للحرب لم تكن هيابا

He rose to war with no fear.

كسر اليوم بافتقادك ظهري

Today, my back has been broken for your loss,

وقناتي فلت وظني خابا

My strength is weakened, and I have been disappointed.

يا بني هاشم وآل نزار

O' clan of Hashim and family of Nezar!

بدركم قد هوى فقوموا غضابا

Your moon has fallen, so rise in fear.

فل حدي وثل مجدي فقوموا

My strength is weakened and my glory is destroyed, so rise

وأزيلوا عن الرؤوس الترابا

And remove the dust from your heads

وانثنى الخبا محدودب الظهر

He walked to the tents with a bent back,

تردى من الأسى جلبابا

While wearing the dress of grief.

فراته مخدرات بني الوحي

The women of the house of revelation saw him,

نادبات بالندب اين حمانا

And cried with sadness: "Where is our guardian?

أين ما كان في الخطوب المآبا

Where is he who was a shelter to us in hardships?"

فدعا يا بنات احمد صبرا

So, he said: "O' daughters of Ahmad, be patient,

عظم الله أجركم والثوابا

May Allah increase your rewards!

ان دهري علي فوق سهما

My time has aimed an arrow at me,

ورمى كف عزيمتي فأصابا

And struck my hand of determination successfully."

فدعت والعيون تذرف دمعا

So, they cried with tearful eyes,

يخجل السيل صوبه والسحابا

which shamed the clouds and rain in his direction (of prayer):

أحمى الضائعات من لو دعاه

"O' protector of the daughters (of the Prophet),

فوق هام السهى مروع أهابا

Who when called (for aid) in the peaks is feared and respected.

اوحش الحرب فقده في نهار

Your loss has saddened the battle during the day,

وبليل قد اوحش المحرابا

And in the night, it saddens the Mihrab (place of prayer)."

Guidance seeked protection in him ([24])

إستجار به الهدى

يا للرجال لحادث متفاقم

O' men rise to this worsening event,

لو حل هابطة لدن شمامها

If it fell on a strong (mountain), it would weaken it.

فانهض الى الذكر الجميل مشمرا

Rise to the beautiful remembrance,

فالذكر أبقى ما اقتنته كرامها

As remembrance is the longest-lasting (gift) a noble can receive.

أو ما اتاك حديث وقعة كربلا

Has the story of Karbala not come to you?

انى وقد بلغ السماء قتامها

When the skies reached the peak of their darkness.

([21]) By Poet Shaykh Mohammed Redha al-Azeri (ra) [we have only taken some parts of the poem]

يوم أبو الفضل استجار به الهدى

The day guidance seeked protection in Abul-Fadhl,

والشمس من كدر العجاج لثامها

And the sun was covered by the thickness of the smoke.

فحمى عرينته ودمدم دونها

He protected his den and fought vigorously to defend it.

ويذب من دون الشرى ضرغامها

Fighting the brave and courageous.

والبيض فوق البيض تحسب وقعها

Swords were clashing with swords like

زجل الرعود اذا اكفهر غمامها

the sounds of thunder in extreme storms.

من باسل يلقى الكتيبة باسما

Then the brave man meets the (enemy) army with a smile,

والشوس يرشح بالمنية هامها

While the foreheads of the brave are seeping with death.

واشم لا يحتل دار هضيمة

A brave man that doesn't except places of humiliation,

او يستقل على النجوم رغامها

Rather, he rides the stars as horses.

أولم تكن تدري قريش انه

Did Quraysh not know that

طلاع كل ثلية مقدامها

The bravest of every army is its vanguard?

بطل أطل على العراق مجليا

A clear hero who appeared in Iraq,

فاعصوصبت فرقا تمور شئامها

Causing forces to be mobilized in prejudice.

وشى الكرام فلا ترى من أمة

The nobles betrayed, so no one is to

للفخر الا ابن الوصي أمامها

Be proud of except the son of the successor and Imam.

هو ذاك مونل رايها وزعيمها

He is the shelter of the nation and its chief.

لو جل حادثها ولد خصامها

When its hardships increase and its enemies strengthen.

وأشدها باسا وارجحها حجا

He is the strongest in it and the most likely to support it,

لو ناص موكبها وزاغ قوامها

When its path is avoided and its people stray.

من مقدم ضرب الجبال بمثلها

He is a brave man who strikes mountains (of soldiers) with their equal

من عزمه فتزلزلت أعلامها

of determination, causing their banners to tremble.

ولكم له من ضربة مضرية

How many damaging strikes has he hit them with?

قد كاد يلحق بالصحاب ضرامها

Burning their roots (with their branches)

أغرت به عصب ابن حرب فانثنت

When the forces of the son of Harb (Yazeed) attacked him,

كامي الجباه مطاشة احلامها

braves returned with bleeding foreheads

ثم انثنى نحو الفرات ودونه

Then he headed towards the Euphrates

حلبات عارية يصل لجامها

Emptying the battlefield by forcing the horses (of the enemies) to escape

فكأنه صقر باعلى جوها

Like a falcon controlling its skies,

جلا فحلق ما هناك حمامها

Upon showing all of its birds escaped.

فهنا لكم ملك الشريعة واتكى

Taking control of the river while leaning on

من فوق قائم سيفه قمقامها

His sword like a great master.

فأبت نقيبته الزكية ريها

His pious soul refused to quench its thirst,

وحشا ابن فاطمة يشب ضرامها

While the insides of the son of Fatima are burning.

حصمت يديه يد القضاء بمبرم

Then the hands of fate took his hands.

ويد القضا لم ينتقض أبرامها

The hand of fate did not hesitate to change the destiny.

واعتاقه شرك الردى دون الورى

The trap of death took him rather than allow him to return,

ان المنايا لا تطيش سهامها

Surely death does not aim reckless arrows.

الله اكبر أي بدر خر عن

Allah is great! (Used to show astonishment) A moon has

أفق الهداية واستشاط ظلامها

Fallen from the horizon of guidance, causing its darkness.

فمن المعزى السبط سبط محمد

The grandson of Mohammed was condoled

بفتى له الاشراف طأطأ هامها

For a young man who nobles respected,

واخ كريم لم يخنه بمشهد

And a noble brother who did not betray him when

حيث السرات كبابها اقدامها

The very high seemed low to him.

تالله لا انس ابن فاطم اذ جلا

By Allah, I do not forget the son of Fatima when

عنه العجاجة يكفهر قتامها

He pushed away the enemies while filled with grief.

ولقي به نحو المخيم حاملا

He came to him from the camp while carrying

من شاهقي علياء عز مرامها

The wishes of towering strength.

وهوى عليه ما هنالك قائلا

He fell onto him, saying:

اليوم بان عن اليمين حسامها

"Today, the hand was separated from its sword.

اليوم سار عن الكتائب كبشها

Today, the army lost its head.

اليوم بان عن الهداة امامها

Today, the Imam left his guides.

اليوم آل الى التفرق جمعنا

Today, our gathering has come to an end.

اليوم حل عن البنود نظامها

Today, the rulings left the system.

اليوم نامت أعين بك لم تنم

Today, your eyes which never slept slept,

وتسهدت أخرى فعز منامها

While others stayed awake for your loss.

أشقيق روحي هل تراك علمت اذا

O' brother of my soul,

غودرت وانثالت عليك لئامها

You left, and the vile ones swarmed on your body

ان خلت اطبقت السماء على الثرى

would bring the sky onto the If it were left (to you) you ground,

أودكدكت فوق الربى أعلامها

And destroyed their strongest heroes.

لكن أهان الخطب عندي انني

But what eased the matter of your loss on me,

بك لاحق أمرا قضى علامها

Is that I will be following you soon."

You have now broken my back ([25])

كسرت الآن ظهري

هيهات ان تجفو السهاد جفوني

Surely, sleeplessness will not leave my eyes,

او ان داعية الأسى تجفوني

Nor will sorrow leave me.

أنى ويوم الطف أضرم في الحشا

For the day of Taf, I burn in my insides

جذوات وجد من لضى سجين

Firewood of love from blaze of a prisoner.

يوم أبو الفضل استفزت بأسه

The day the strength of Abul-Fadhl was provoked

فتيات فاطم من بني ياسين

By (the thirst of) the daughters of Fatima, the progeny of Yasin (the Prophet).

في خير انصار براهم ربهم

In the best companions chosen by their Lord

للدين أول عالم التكوين

For the sake of the religion, since the beginning of creation.

([25]) By Poet Shaykh Hussain Qaftan (ra)

متقلدا عضبا كأن فرنده

Holding a sword whose

نقش الأراقم في خطوط بطون

Like the scales of poisonous black snakes

حتى إذا قطعوا عليه طريقه

Even when they blocked his way

بسداد جيش بارز وكمين

With a large army and an ambush,

فثنى مكردسها نواكص وانثنى

He forced their knights into retreat and swerved (between them),

بنفوسها سلبا قرير عيون

Taking their lives easily with joy

ودعته أسرار القضا لشهادة

The secrets of destiny called him to a martyrdom

رسمت له في لوحها المكنون

Drawn to him in the protected Record.

حسموا يديه و هامه ضربوه في

They struck his hands with swords and his head

عمد الحديد فخر خير طعين

With an iron pole, so he, the righteous martyr, fell.

ومشى اليه السبط ينعاه

The grandson walked to him, mourning him:

كسرت الآن ظهري يا أخي ومعيني

"You have broken my back O' my brother and supporter,

عباس كبش كتيبتي وكنانتي

Abbas is the leader of my army and quiver (of my troops),

وسري قومي بل أعز حصوني

And the high-ranking one of my people, rather my strongest stronghold.

يا ساعدي في كل معترك به

O' my arm (that I fight with) in all my battles,

أسطو وسيف حمايتي بيميني

I attack and (you are) my sword of protection in my hand.

لمن اللوا أعطي ومن هو جامع

To whom shall I give the banner,

شملي وفي ضنك الزحام يقيني

And in the extreme distress, can be my certainty.

أمنازل الأقران حامل رايتي

Are you fighting your equals O' my standard-bearer,

ورواق أخبيتي وباب شؤوني

Shelter of my tents, and gate of my matters?

لك موقف بالطف أنسى أهله

Your bravery in Taff (Karbala) made its people forget

حرب العراق بملتقى صفين

The bravery witnessed in the war of Iraq, Siffin.

أولست تسمع زينبا تدعوك من لي

Do you not hear Zainab calling: "Who

يا حماي إذا العدى نهروني

Is my guardian when the enemies rage against me."

أولست تسمع ما تقول سكينة

Do you not hear Sukaina saying:

عماه يوم الأسر من يحميني

"O' uncle, on the day of captivity who will protect me?"

كان الرجا بك ان تحل وثاقهم

The hope was in you to untie

لي بالحبال المؤلمات متوني

the painful ropes from my back.

وتجيرني في اليتم من ضيم العدى

And to save me from the oppression of the enemies,

واليوم خابت من رجاك ظنوني

but today I have been disappointed.

عماه إن أدنو لجسمك أبتغي

Uncle, when I approach your body wishing to

تقبيله بسياطهم ضربوني

Kiss it, they lash me with their whips.

عماه ما صبري وأنت مجدل

Uncle, why should I be patient when you're laying

عار بلا غسل ولا تكفين

Naked, with no ghusl (ablution) or Kafan (shrouds).

من مبلغ أم البنين رسالة

Who will deliver the message to Um al-Banin

عن واله بشجائه مرهون

From a lover imprisoned to his sorrows.

لا تسأل الركبان عن أبنائها

As she does not ask those coming (from battle) about her children,

في كربلاء وهم أعز بنين

In Karbala, despite them being the most loved sons:

تأتي لأرض الطف تنظر ولدها

"She should come to the Land of Taff (Karbala) to see her children

ثاوين بين مبضع وطعين

Dead between stabs and strikes."

2nd Chance Books for Prisoners

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Our mission is to deliver knowledge to those individuals who are less fortunate in life through the dissemination of various books. We strive to teach and inform those who are looking for a second chance and desire to walk the straight path, but are unable to access the necessary information passed down to us by the beloved family of the Prophet (peace be upon them all).

About Us

2nd Chance Books is a 501c3 non-profit organization that was founded in order to assist incarcerated Muslims by providing them with educational materials, a support system, and tools for rehabilitation. The organization is comprised of a team of dedicated, devoted individuals, including the founders of this organization, who came together to provide services for those in need and those seeking guidance. The partnered organizations 2nd Chance Books, SABA Prison Project, al-Kisa Prison Project, and IEC Houston. 2nd Chance is under the guidance of several scholars, Such as Moulana Nabi Raza Abidi, Shaykh Mateen Charbonneau, Shaykh Saed Ali Kulayni, Moulana Qamar Hasani.

Facts & Statistics

The USA has the highest incarceration rate in the entire world. While Americans only represent 5% of the entire world's population, it comprises nearly 25% of the entire world's incarcerated population, with 2.3 million inmates.

Most of these prisoners will fall victim to the cycle of the revolving door and become repeat offenders if they do not have the proper resources to educate themselves properly while serving their sentences.

Goals

2nd Chance seeks to provide the proper tools for change: free Islamic books on topics such as beliefs, ethics, morality, and family structure in Islam. The aim is for these books to be used as a tool for self-development and reform.

Some goals of this program are molding leaders, transforming prisoners' bad habits into good ones, achieving social reform, producing better citizens who will actively help their communities, and promoting awareness of the true teachings of Islam by teaching the morals and ethics of the Noble Prophet (sawa) and his blessed household (as).

Our Program

We send an initial package of books and upon completion of reading the books we ask for a brief written summary about what was learned from at least one of the books, how it was beneficial and if any questions arose. After we receive this, we will send the next book and begin an interactive study course as the person serves the remaining time on their sentence. We have a team of scholars who are working on this project and answer the questions of readers as well.

We are sending a quarterly and eventually monthly magazine entitled Sirat Link. We provide prayer rugs, kufi's, hijab for sisters, tasbih (rosary), turbah (clay prostration tablet) and Islamic calendars to active participants in the program. For prisoners who are reading this we want you to know that we are honored to be at your service. Please write us and let others who are interested in seeking knowledge about Islam to contact us at the address below.

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