

# **The Gardener of the Gardens of Tawheed**

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A wonderful story underlying the asceticism and good nature of Imam Ali (pbuh) and Imam Hasan ibn Ali (pbuh) and how generous and humble their behaviour used to be.

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## In The Name Of God

The desert was burning in the scorching sun. Dryness and barren land had engulfed wherever vision could see. No shade of any tree could welcome a passer-by for a relaxation.

The thirsty land in that hot weather was burning in the effervescence of the Sun.

The flame of the scorching land was rising: a mirage was being formed in the mind of every thirsty wayfarer who dreamed of enjoyment and pleasure. The dream of lake, with its lucid water and casting a shadow on many palm groves and living being seeking refuge under the assault of a hot and shelter less desert...

The thorn bushes of no advantage to the twigs, ash-like and silent, exiled in the wilderness were mourning and weeping along with the hot weather. Occasionally, the assault of wind would scatter a

wave of sands from the earth and throw it in the form of a wayfarer.

A hungry and a thirsty man was coming from a far place. He wore tattered and shabby dress. He had his hands wrapped between his head and face and except for his two dust-covered eyelashes which were protecting his worried eyes, all his face till his headband was hidden.

There was an hour to reach Medina. From the depth of the mirage in his right side, something, the high story and dark mountains could be seen in his eyes; and at other times, it would vanish in the mirage.

His dried tongue was sticking to his mouth.

He was a poor Bedouin who was traveling towards Madina with the intention of leading a peaceful and comfortable life. The wind was playing a game with his long clothes.

From his right hand, he jerked his clothes to remove the dust of the desert. He kept his parades, which was beneath his arms **and** above his head and with his other hand supported their balance on his head. He had all of his belongings of this earth on his head and started to walk briskly.

The waves of the hot wind were hurting his hands. The scattered sand in the air, occasionally, would force him to make use of his hands as a shield in front of his eyes.

Only the howling of the wind could be heard amidst the thorn bushes in the loneliness of the wilderness. He came up to the last remaining dusty hill and stood in its open short summit. He looked at the mountains in front of him and then the vision became difficult and he looked below.

Beneath his legs, in the course of his tired vision, the chain of green palm groves of Madina could be seen around the city and relaxing in the warmth of the sun. All those emerald like gardens bore the glad tidings of a murmuring blowing river which was caressing his tired soul and giving hope to his lonely heart.

He walked swiftly and briskly, being deeply immersed in thoughts and ideas:

“Perhaps, I can find an easy bread in Medina.

Maybe, I can find a work for myself. Possibly...”

He had become tired from his small birthplace.

All those barren lands and looking everyday to the red-standing sunset of the desert; and at every dawn gazing at the bright and big stars; and looking at the morning had become monotonous and inconvenience for him. His affectionate heart was burning from the lordship of poverty and injustice; and his soul which was as clean as the ask ail of his village was flying with the hope leading a comforted life.

An oasis could be seen in the heart of the desert which was now traveling towards the land of the Holy prophet (S.A) and Imam Ali (A.S).

His heart like an army of pigeons, which bring the glad tiding was flapping and fluttering towards this holy city.

How much he liked to see the children's of Fatima (A.S) the daughter of the Holy Prophet (S.A) of Islam. How much he liked to sit in the assembly and gathering of Hassan bin Ali (A.S).

How much he liked to hear the saying of Hassan Bin Ali (A.S), the sweet basil of the Holy Prophet (S.A).

And above all, how much he liked to see Masjid Ar-Rasool, the greatest personality of Islam, the inheritor of the Divine knowledge, Ali (A.S), to gaze at his eyes and with the spiritual fragrance of this divine gift, the heart to be eau de collogued with his fragrance.

He passed from a plantation. His eyes were searching for a river so as to relieve his roasted liver, but he found no water. It looked as if the gardens were without water for a long time and there was no news of any water in the rivulets.

He pulled himself besides their shadows and walked slowly taking himself in the garden from besides the rivulets, perchance, a rivulet of water could be found before entering the city...

A cool breeze passed his face and silken-like caressed him. He sat beneath the shadow of a thick palm grove so as to rest for a while.

Except for the chirping of the sparrows which were singing on the trees of the palm groves, a sound like the contact of the edge of an axe with a tree or the stroke of a spade on ears. He carefully searched for the sound.

May be, gardener was busy in irrigating the palm groves land or was cutting the branches and wasteful grasses. He said to himself:

“Surely, he must be having a little water and food so as to make wet the thirsty tongue and satisfy the hungry stomach with a piece of bread.”

He stood up and trailed towards the sound. As much as he was going forward, the sound was becoming clearer and audible. He walked towards the center of the garden and meandered towards the voice.

Finally, he saw a man from behind many palm groves who was busy working and his back towards him. He went forward and greeted him with a Salam. The gardener turned back and answered his Salam affectionately and smilingly. He was average tall, with an attractive and grasping eye like a garden full of Narcissus (primrose). There **was a** sign of prostration on his forehead with patched clothes. A belt made from the leaves of date tree around his waist. The clothes were short and could not cover his legs. The perspiration had filled his wheaten like face. A multitude of gracious virtue bestowed a spiritual majesty on his face. He had an extended eyebrow.

The poor man paused at this magnificent scenery; a spiritual condition engulfed him and said slowly;

“I am coming from a far place. I am thirsty and hungry. Are you having a little food or water so as to relieve me from my tiredness?”

The man” said smilingly:

“Beneath that tree, you will find a pot of water and a tablecloth (*sifra*) of food.”

He pointed towards an old date tree where lay the foods.

The wayfarer went towards the tree.

He found the pot of water and the tablecloth of food in which a little loaf of barley were present. He rested and drunk water from the pot. He paused for a while and again started to drink water till he opened the tablecloth and took a loaf of bread from it.

He said to himself:

“This man is poorer than I am. What hard and dry bread he has brought for his lunch. How can he eat from such dry and old bread?”

His heart saddened and grieved at the condition of the gardener with great endurance and realizing that he cannot eat the breads, he got up and returned towards the gardener and said:

“Kind brother, I am thankful of your courtesy and favor, but...”

The gardener smiled and wiped perspiration from the back of his hand and said:

“I was thinking that perhaps you can eat the loaf of barely breads, but it has become dried. They should be soaked in water or at least one should have the habit for eating them. Now that you have not been able to eat food, I shall guide you towards a place where you will find food to eat without any obligation and with ease. And if you tell your need and wants, certainly they shall fulfill it.”

The wayfarer replied:

“Who is this generous and magnanimous man? Where can I find him?”

The gardener said:

“You will enter the city and inquire from the people about the house of Hasan Ibn Ali (A.S.) when you will reach his house, you will find it open and a table cloth of food has been laid. Eat your lunch and tell your difficulties to him.”

The wayfarer said: “Is it possible to see him so easily?”

The gardener replied: “Why is it possible? He is sitting in the same place where from the guests are being served. He is waiting in anticipation for people like you. Now go and you will see for yourself and be certain that your difficulties and hardships will be removed by him over there.”

The wayfarer replied: “Did you say Hasan Ibn Ali (A.S.)?”

The gardener replied: “Yes.... Hasan Ibn Ali (A.S.).”

The wayfarer said: For years, I desire to visit this household. Surely, I will go. But from which place should I go”.

The gardener who was sitting on his spade and was wiping the perspiration from his face replied: “From this side...”

He pointed towards a place. The wayfarer said: “I feel embarrassed from the kindness and affection that you have showed upon me. God willing, I shall compensate if death does not overtake me.”

A smile sat on the lips of the gardener and he said: “There is no need for any compensation. Go soon; be in the refuge of God, Brother...”

The wayfarer bid farewell and went in the direction from where the gardener had pointed towards the city. He was deep in thought of the old gardener and his barely bread.

The city was in its mid afternoon; the call of the Muazzin from the prophets Mosque would be heard. The sound of a caravan party entering the city could be heard. A man was busy performing Wuzoo. The children were playing besides the shadow of the palm tree. The sound of the Muazzin had engulfed every quarter of the land **of** the city and the call of Azan had filled the air with its attractiveness and impressiveness.

“I bear witness that Muhammad (A.S.) is the Messenger of God”. The poor wayfarer whispered salawat silently, He asked from a passerby about the house<sup>1</sup> of Hassan Ibn Ali (A.S.). The passerby pointed towards a street. His thirst had been quenched, but hungriness had broken his strength. Humbly, he searched for the house. A long time had passed from the mid-day when he stopped in front of a gate. Yes, it was the same place... the guest House, of Hasan Ibn Ali (A.S.). He entered the house. In a big room, a gathering of people were sitting. A tablecloth of simple food was spread. He greeted and heard an affectionate answer.

He turned his head. A man about 35 years old and with a permanent smile on his face greeted his Salam. He asked him about his health and welcomed him. He invited him to sit in front of the tablecloth. When he sat near the tablecloth, the person who invited him towards food, with a dignity which can be only found in divine things asked him about his house and his place of departure. The poor wayfarer replied him briefly. He began to eat.

When he become relieved of his hunger, he started to search for Hassan Ibn Ali (A.S.) for sake of confirmation, he asked him and was busy in eating:

“From among these men, which one of them is Hasan Ibn Ali (A.S.)?”

The man replied: “The one who answered your Salam and asked you for your health.”

His guess was right, carefully, he looked at the face of the infallible Imam. A splendor and glory could be seen in his heavenly face which would attract any viewer. The wayfarer, as he was busy in eating and looking at Hassan Ibn Ali (A.S.) remembered the gardener and his dried loaves which could not be even broken so as to be eaten.

He said to himself: "The condition of generosity and magnanimity is not that I should satisfy myself here and not take from this food for him."

With this thinking, he looked around himself and seeing that nobody is paying any attention towards him, he took a little loaf of bread and poured some food in it and silently placed it in a wrapper inside his own table cloth.

This act was not hidden from the eyes of Hassan Ibn Ali (A.S.); He saw that the poor wayfarer is eating a piece of food and at the same time hiding a morsel full of food in his tablecloth.

When the food was over the tablecloth, **he** called him and made him sit beside him. He told him slowly: "Brother, why did you put yourself in difficulty during the time of lunch? You should have eaten your lunch with comfort. Then, whatever you wanted, you should have taken or you should say so that they would keep it in a vessel and then you could have taken it with yourself. Other than this, you can stay with us long as you wish."

The poor wayfarer, being ashamed from his work said: "By God, I was not taking for myself, but I wish to take it for someone else."

The Holy Imam said: "You should have also brought him along with yourself."

The man replies: "He is outside the city. I was tired, hungry and thirsty. I met him at the initial gardens around the city in a palm grove. With the intense heat, he was so much immersed in work that perspiration's was flowing from his head. I asked him for water and food. He gave me whatever he had. In his tablecloth, there were some loaves of barley bread. It was so hard and dry that I could not break it. While I was busy eating food in your house, I remembered him and his poor food. My heart became saddened at his condition. I was keeping food aside for him. He did goodness and kindness towards me. I wished not to forget him.

The Holy Imam said: "These signs which you speak of are familiar to me. Was his beard white?"

The wayfarer replied in astonishment: "Yes, the hairs of his beards were white. His face shone like a Sun. His forehead was big and his eyes were large. He wore patched clothes. He gave me the signs by know him?"

The Holy Imam said: "Yes, brother. I know him, Always; he used to eat the types of foods, which you described. He led his life in such a manner."

The wayfarer asked in astonishment: “Who is he who knows you and has guided me to this place, and you also know him. But he does not come to your house so as to have a better food?” A smile sat on the lips of Hasan Ibn Ali (A.S.) and his eyes were filled with tears. He said: “He is my father, Ali (A.S.)”

The poor wayfarer, dumbfounded and perplexed looked at the lips of Imam Mujtaba (A.S.) His two eyes were stunned; all his conscience and sentiments had changed to tears. He felt that the whispering of the rivulet is Oneness and unity, which was leading him towards the gardens of Tawheed.

1. Guesthouse: The elders of Arabs had guesthouses where poor people, wayfarers and those who had lost their ways would be treated benevolently.

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