

THE UNCLE





One day, Asbagh ibn Nubātah says: I entered the Mosque of Kufa and came into the presence of Amīr al-Mu'minīn (peace be upon him). A large crowd had gathered there, and among them was a servant.

They said,
“O Amīr al-Mu’minīn, this servant is a thief.”
Imam (PBUH) turned to him and said,
“O servant, are you a thief?”
He replied, “Yes.”
Imam asked again, “O servant, are you a thief?”
He said, “Yes, my master.”
Imam (PBUH) said,
“If you confess a third time, I will cut off your hand.”
Then Imam asked for the third time,
“O servant, are you a thief?”
The servant, in a calm and unwavering voice, said,
“Yes, my master.”





Imam (PBUH) issued the command for the legal punishment to be carried out, and the servant's hand was severed in accordance with the divine ordinance.



The servant held his severed right hand with his left; drops of blood trickled from between his fingers.

At that moment, Ibn Kawwā' saw him—a man known for constantly speaking ill of Amīr al-Mu'minīn (PBUH). With a tone of sarcasm, Ibn Kawwā' said, "Who cut off your right hand?"

Without hesitation, the servant replied, “The one who cut my hand is the gateway to certainty, the firm rope of God, and the intercessor on the Day of Judgment. Yes, it was he who severed my right hand—he who is the leader of the righteous, the cousin of Mustafa, the foster-brother of God’s chosen Prophet, the lion of the battlefield, the rain of mercy upon all, the death of oppressors, the key to forgiveness and grace, and the light in the darkness of nights.”



He is the one who severed my right hand—an Imam of great stature, who stood firm at Badr and Uhud, both a man of Mecca and Medina, of the Hāshimite and Qurayshite lineage, known for his noble character, generosity, and descent from Ṭālib.

He is the brave and powerful Imam, sharp in mind,
the Wali (guardian) of God's command, and the
successor of the Prophet.

Yes, it was he who cut off my right hand—the one who
uprooted the gate of Khaybar, the slayer of Marhab,
and the one who stood against every disbeliever.
He is the best of those who have performed Hajj and
'Umrah, who proclaimed the oneness of God and
raised the takbīr, who fasted and broke the fast, and
offered sacrifice.



And the servant continued to speak of the virtues and
merits of Amīr al-Mu'minīn (PBUH), praising him
again and again...

And when his words of praise came to an end, he
quietly went on his way.

At that moment, ‘Abdullāh ibn Kawwā’ approached the Imam and said,
“Peace be upon you, O Amīr al-Mu’minīn.”
Imam (PBUH) replied,
“Peace be upon whoever follows guidance and fears the consequences of misguidance.”



Ibn Kawwā’ said, “O father of Ḥassan and Hussain, you cut off the right hand of a servant, and yet I heard him speak so beautifully in your praise.”
Imam asked, “And what did he say?”
Ibn Kawwā’ replied, “This is what I heard...”
And then he recounted to Imam, one by one, all that the servant had said.



Imam (PBUH) turned to his two sons, Hassan and Hussain (PBUTh), and said, “Go and bring your uncle to me”—a merciful and honoring expression, for he referred to the servant as the uncle of the two leaders of the youth of Paradise.

The two went after the servant and said to him, “O servant, rise and come to Amīr al-Mu’minīn (PBUH).” Asbagh ibn Nubātah narrates: When the servant stood before Amīr al-Mu’minīn (PBUH),

Imam said to him,
“I cut off your right hand—and even so, you praise me?”

The servant calmly and with conviction replied,
“O Amīr al-Mu’minīn, you did so only in accordance with the right that God and His Messenger made obligatory.”

The gathering fell into a profound silence, filled with awe at the simplicity—and depth—of that reply.





Imam (PBUH) said, “Give me your hand.”
The servant, with respect, extended his severed hand.
Imam took it, wrapped it in his cloak, and proclaimed
the takbīr. Then he stood, performed two units of
prayer, and uttered words that we could only
hear as a soft murmur.

At the end of his supplication,
his firm and confident voice rose:
“O Lord of all the worlds, answer [this prayer]!”

Then Imam (PBUH) placed the palm upon the wrist and calmly said to his companions, “Lift the cloak.” They obeyed and drew the cloak aside—and to their amazement, by the permission of God Almighty, the palm had been joined to the wrist, as if it had never been severed at all.





Then Amīr al-Mu'minīn (PBUH) said:

“O Ibn Kawwā', did I not tell you?

We have supporters who, even if their bodies were torn limb from limb, their love for us would only increase. And we have enemies who, even if sweet honey were poured into their mouths, their hatred and enmity toward us would only grow.

Such is the truth—that whoever loves us, our intercession will be granted to them on the Day of Judgment.”