

The Birth of Hasan and Husain

On the 15th of Ramadan of 3 A.H. (March 625), God was pleased to bless the daughter of His Messenger, Muhammad, with the birth of her first child. Muhammad Mustafa came radiating happiness; he took the infant in his arms, kissed him, read *adhan* in his right ear, and *iqama* in his left; and called him Hasan.

One year later, i.e., on the 3rd of Sha'aban of 4 A.H. (February 626), God was pleased to give the daughter of His Apostle, her second child. The Apostle came, all smiles and cheers, took the infant in his arms, kissed him, read *adhan* in his right ear, and *iqama* in his left, and called him Husain.

The birth of each of these two princes was the occasion of immense rejoicing for Muhammad. He considered them among the greatest of God's blessings, and thanked Him for them. At the birth of each of them, the Muslims poured into the Great Mosque to congratulate him. He greeted them with smiles and thanks, and shared his happiness with them.

There was never a day when the Prophet did not visit the house of his daughter to see her children. He loved to see them smile, so he tickled them and bounced them; he cuddled them and coddled them, and he regarded their every step and every word as wondrous.

When these two princes grew up a little, and were able to toddle around, they very frequently wandered out of their house into the Mosque. If their grandfather was in the midst of a sermon, he immediately stopped, descended from the pulpit, took them in his arms, carried them back, seated them beside himself on the pulpit, and then resumed his speech. If he was leading the public prayers, and was in *sajdah* (resting his forehead on the ground), both children, very often, climbed onto his neck and back.

He preferred to prolong the *sajdah* rather than to disturb them, and rose from *sajdah* only when they dismounted from his neck or back voluntarily. If he went out of his home or the Mosque, they rode his shoulders. The people of Medina called them "the Riders of the Shoulders of the Messenger of God." They were much more attached to him than they were to their own parents.

Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam, was never happier than when he was with Hasan and Husain. They

were the apples of his eyes, and the joy of his heart, and in their company alone he found true and perfect relaxation. He played hide and seek with them, and if they were playing with other children, he lingered near them just to hear the lilt of their laughter.

For their sake, he could put off even important affairs of state. When they smiled, he forgot all the burdens and anxieties of state and government. He loved to read every message that they wrote for him in their angelic smiles.

Earlier, the Messenger of God had brought up his own daughter, Fatima Zahra, whom he called the Lady of Heaven. Now he took charge of bringing up her two children – Hasan and Husain – whom he called the Princes of the Youth of Heaven. For him, their education was a matter of paramount importance, and he personally attended to every detail in it. His aim was clear: he wanted them to be the finest products of Islam, and they were. He built his own character into their character, and made them a model for his *umma* (community, people) which it (the *umma*) had to imitate to the end of time itself.

Ali and Fatima Zahra also had two daughters – Zaynab and Umm Kulthoom. When they grew up, they were married to their cousins – the sons of Jaafer ibn Abi Talib, the Winged Martyr of Islam. Zaynab was married to Abdullah ibn Jaafer, and Umm Kulthoom was married to Muhammad ibn Jaafer.

Hasan, Husain, Zaynab and Umm Kulthoom, all four children were pampered by their grandfather, Muhammad Mustafa, the Apostle of God; and the happiest days in the lives of all five of them were those which they spent

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