

The Eleventh Imam: Hasan Askari

Birth and Martyrdom

Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) was born on eighth of Rabi'ul Thani in the year 232 A.H. in Medina. His father was Imam Ali Ibn Muhammad (a.s.) and his mother was called Hadith or Susan. His nickname was Abu Muhammad and his titles were Samit, Hadi, Rafiq, Zaki, Naqi, Khalis, and 'Askari. He was martyred on the eighth of Rabi'ul Awwal in the year 260 A.H. in Samirra' and was buried beside his father's gravesite. He lived for twenty eight years and his Imamate lasted six years. [1](#)

Texts Proving His Imamate

It was mentioned before that there are two kinds of reason for proving Imamate; the general reasons for proving the Imamate of all infallible Imams (a.s.) and specific reasons for proving Imamate of each of the Imams. The first type of reasons was discussed in previous chapters of this book. The second type of reasons includes the traditions narrated from each Imam about the Imamate of the next Imam, which are cited here.

Abdul Azim Ibn Abdullah Hasani has said, "One day I went to meet Imam Ali Ibn Muhammad (a.s.). He told me, 'O Abul Qasim! Bravo! You are a real lover of us.' I told Imam (a.s.), 'I want to present my religious beliefs to you. If they were true, I will maintain them until my death.' So Imam (a.s.) told me, 'Go on!' I said, 'I believe that Allah is One and nothing is like Him...', until I said, 'Muhammad (S) is Allah's servant and messenger and the last Prophet. There will be no prophet after him until the Resurrection. The Imam, caliph, and guardian of the ummah after Prophet Muhammad (S) will be Ali Ibn Abi Talib (a.s.)...

Then the Imam will be Ja'far Ibn Muhammad (a.s.), then Musa Ib Ja'far (a.s.), then Ali Ibn Musa (a.s.), then Muhammad Ibn Ali (a.s.), and then you.' Ali Ibn Muhammad (a.s.) said, 'And after me my son, Hasan, will be the Imam of the Muslims. So how will the people be about his successor?' I asked, 'How will they be?' Imam (a.s.) answered, 'He will not be seen and saying his name will be haram, until he

rises to establish justice in the earth after being filled with oppression.’ Then Imam Ali Ibn Muhammad (a.s.) stated, ‘O Abul Qasim! This is the religion Allah has selected for His servants. Maintain your belief in what you said. May the Exalted Allah keep you in the same belief!’”[2](#)

Abu Hashim Dawud Ibn Qasim Ja’fari has said, “I heard Imam Abul Hasan Sahib Askari (a.s.), ‘My successor will be my son, Hasan. How will you behave about his successor?’ I asked, ‘May I sacrifice for you! Why do you ask it?’ Imam (a.s.) answered, ‘Because you will not see him and mentioning his name will be banned for you.’ I asked, ‘So how should we name him?’ Imam Abul Hasan (a.s.) answered, ‘Say, *Hujjat*, the son of *Hujjat*.’”[3](#)

Saqar Ibn Abi Dilf has said, “After Mutawakkil summoned my master, Imam Abul Hasan (a.s.), to Baghdad, I went to get some news from Imam (a.s.). Mutawakkil looked at me and asked, ‘Why have you come here?’ I answered, ‘I have come with a good intention.’ He said, ‘Sit down!’ Different thoughts came to my mind and I regretted going there. Mutawakkil sent others out and asked me again the reason of my going there. I said again, ‘My intention is good.’ He said, ‘Perhaps you have come to see your master.’ I said, ‘O Amiral Mu’minin! Who is my master?’ He said, ‘Be quiet! Your master is the true master! Do not fear! I have the same belief as you have.’ I said, ‘Praise be to Allah!’ He said, ‘Do you want to meet your master?’ I answered positively. So he told me, ‘Wait until the messenger gets out.’”

When the messenger went out, Mutawakkil told his servant, ‘Take Saqar to the prison of that Alawite man and leave these two alone!’ The servant took me to a room and left. I saw Imam Abul Hasan (a.s.) on a piece of matting, while a grave was dug before him. I greeted him and sat. He told me, ‘Saqar! Why did you come here?’ I answered, ‘I came to ask about you.’ Then I looked at the grave and wept. Imam (a.s.) looked at me and said, ‘O Saqar! Do not be upset! I will get no harm.’ I said, ‘Praise be to Allah! O my master! There is a tradition from Prophet Muhammad (S) whose meaning I do not know.’ Imam (a.s.) asked, ‘What is it?’ I said, ‘What is the meaning of do not be the enemy of the days, so they will be your enemies?’”

Imam Abul Hasan (a.s.) answered, ‘The heavens and the earth are created because of the blessing of us, the Ahlul Bayt. Sibt (Saturday) is the name of Messenger of Allah (S). Ahad (Sunday) is Amiral Mu’minin (a.s.). Ithniyn (Monday) implies Hasan and Husayn (a.s.). Thulatha’ (Tuesday) refers to Ali Ibn Husayn (a.s.), Muhammad Ibn Ali (a.s.), and Ja’far Ibn Muhammad (a.s.). Arba’a’ (Wednesday) is Musa Ibn Ja’far (a.s.), Ali Ibn Musa (a.s.), Muhammad Ibn Ali (a.s.), and I. Khamis (Thursday) is my son, Hasan, and Jumuh’ah (Friday) is his son. He will gather the advocates of the truth around himself and will fill the earth with justice after being filled with oppression. This is the meaning of the days. So do not be the enemy of these days, or else they will be your enemies in the Day of Judgment.’ Then Imam (a.s.) said, ‘O Saqar! Bid me and leave, because you will not be safe.’”[4](#)

Saqar Ibn Abi Dilf has also said, “I heard from Ali Ibn Muhammad (a.s.), ‘After me my son, Hasan, will be the Imam and after Hasan his son will be the Imam and a Qa’im, who will fill the earth with justice after being filled with oppression.’”[5](#)

Yahya Ibn Yasar has said, "Four months before his demise, Imam Abul Hasan Ali Ibn Muhammad (a.s.) willed to his son, Hasan, and selected him as the Imam. A group of his relatives were witness to this."[6](#)

Ali Ibn 'Umar Nufili has said, "I was with Imam Abul Hasan (a.s.) in his house, when his son, Muhammad, passed us. I told Imam (a.s.), 'May I sacrifice for you! Will he be the Imam after you?' Imam Abul Hasan (a.s.) answered, 'No, your Imam after me will be my son, Hasan.'"[7](#)

Abdullah Ibn Muhammad 'Isfahani has said, "Imam Abul Hasan (a.s.) told me, 'Your Imam after me is the one who will perform prayer for my corpse.' At that time, Abu Muhammad (a.s.) was not known yet. When Imam Abul Hasan (a.s.) passed away, his son, Abu Muhammad (a.s.), performed prayer for his body."[8](#)

Ali Ibn Ja'far has said, "I was with Imam Abul Hasan (a.s.) when his son, Muhammad, passed away. Imam (a.s.) told his son, Hasan (a.s.), 'My son! Thank Allah, because the Almighty Allah has appointed you as the Imam.'"[9](#)

Ahmad Ibn Muhamamd Ibn Abdullah Ibn Marwan has said, "When Abu Ja'far Muhammad Ibn Ali (a.s.) passed away, I was present. Imam Abul Hasan (a.s.) came in and sat on a chair. His household was around him. His son, Abu Muhammad, was present too. When Imam (a.s.) completed shrouding and burying Abu Ja'far (a.s.), he looked at his son, Abu Muhammad (a.s.), and said, 'My son! Thank the Almighty Allah, because He has placed the Imamate in you.'"[10](#)

Ali Ibn Mahziyar has said, "I told Imam Abul Hasan (a.s.), 'If a bad happening occurred for you, who should we refer to?' Imam (a.s.) answered, 'My promise will be devolved to my eldest son, Hasan.'"[11](#)

Ali Ibn 'Umar Attar has said, "I went to see Imam Abul Hasan (a.s.), while his son, Abu Ja'far, was alive and we thought that he will be the successor to Imam (a.s.). I told Imam Abul Hasan (a.s.), 'May I sacrifice for you! Which of your sons do you prefer?' Imam (a.s.) answered, 'None of my sons are selected before my verdict is issued.' Later on, I wrote a letter to Imam Abul Hasan (a.s.) and asked, 'Who will be the Imam after you?' Imam (a.s.) wrote in answer, 'My eldest son.' And Abu Muhammad (a.s.) was elder than Abu Ja'far."[12](#)

Sa'd Ibn Abdullah has narrated from some of the Hashemite, including Hasan Ibn Husayn 'Aftas, "After the demise of Muhammad Ibn Ali Ibn Muhamamd (a.s.), we gathered in the house of Imam Abul Hasan (a.s.). A carpet was spread in the yard and people came to see Imam Abul Hasan (a.s.). We estimated the crowd to be one hundred and fifty people of Bani Abbas and 'ali Abu Talib, excluding the servants and other people.

Then Hasan Ibn Ali (a.s.), who had tore his cloth collar out of sorrow, came and stood on the right side of his father. Imam Abul Hasan (a.s.) told him, 'O my son! Praise Allah, because he has devolved the Imamate to you.' So Hasan (a.s.) wept and said, 'Praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds. I only ask Him all the blessings for us. We are Allah's and we will return to Him.' We asked who he was. It was

answered that he was Hasan, the son of Imam Abul Hasan (a.s.), who was twenty then. So we knew him and found out that Imam Abul Hasan (a.s.) selected him as the next Imam.”[13](#)

Muhammad Ibn Yahya has said, “After the demise of Abu Ja’far, I went to see Imam Abul Hasan (a.s.) and consoled him for the death of his son. Abu Muhammad was also there and was weeping. Imam Abul Hasan (a.s.) attended to him and said, ‘The Exalted Allah has selected you in his place. So praise Allah!’”[14](#)

Shahwiyah Ibn Abdullah has said, “Imam Abul Hasan (a.s.) wrote in a letter to me, ‘After the demise of Abu Ja’far, you were worried and wanted to ask about my successor. Do not be worried, because the Almighty Allah does not let the guided people go astray. Your Imam will be Abu Muhammad. All the knowledge needed by the people is with him. Allah will make junior or prior anyone He likes. ***None of Our revelations do We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, but We substitute something better or similar.***’[15](#)”[16](#)

Virtues

Shiykh Mufid has written, “After Abul Hasan Ali Ibn Muhamamd (a.s.), his son, Abu Muhammad Hasan Ibn Ali (a.s.), reached the Imamate position, because he possessed all the virtues. He was superior to all the people of his age in terms of knowledge, piety, wisdom, infallibility, brevity, generosity, and intense worship. Moreover, he was appointed to Imamate by his honorable father.”[17](#)

Husayn Ibn Muhammad ‘Ash’ari and Muhamamd Ibn Yahya and other people have said that ‘Ahmad Ibn Abdullah Ibn Khaqan was the official in charge of tax and state property in Qum and an enemy of the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.). One day, the people talked about the Alawite and their beliefs in his presence. ‘Ahmad Ibn Abdullah said, “I have seen no one among the Alawite better than Hasan Ibn Ali Ibn Muhammad in terms of conduct, speech, chastity, generosity, and greatness. Even the elderly, elites, ministers, and army commanders preferred him to themselves.”

‘Ahmad Ibn Abdullah has also said, “One day, my father had a general meeting and I was standing there. Suddenly, the doormen came in and said, ‘Abu Muhammad Ibn Al-Ridha’ (a.s.) is here.’ My father told them, ‘Let him in!’ I was wondering how the doormen dared name someone using his nickname in my father’s presence, because they could only name the caliph and the vice regent this way. Then a young handsome man came in formally. Seeing him, my father stood up and approached him. I had not seen my father welcome someone so warmly. My father hugged him, kissed his face, and placed him in his own place. Then my father sat before Abu Muhammad (a.s.) and began talking to him.

When talking, my father frequently told Abu Muhammad, ‘May I sacrifice for you!’ I was very astonished of my father’s behavior. Then a doorman came and said, ‘Muvaffaq (‘Ahmad Ibn Mutawakkil Abbasi) wants to see you.’ Usually when Muvaffaq wanted to come to my father, the doormen and army commanders stood in two lines until he came in and went out. So my father told some of the audience,

‘Keep Abu Muhammad behind you so that Muvaffaq cannot see him.’ Then Muvaffaq came in, hugged my father, and went out after a while. I asked the doormen, ‘Who was this person with whom my father behaved so warmly and respectfully?’ They answered, ‘He is an Alawite man called Hasan Ibn Ali and his nickname is Ibn Al-Ridha.’ I was even more astonished of hearing this.”

When my father performed the Night Prayer and went into his private room for doing administrative jobs, I went to him and asked, ‘Who was the man you respected very much in your morning meeting?’ My father answered, ‘He was the Imam of the Rafizi, Hasan Ibn Ali, Ibn Al-Ridha.’ Then he continued, ‘My son! If the caliphate is removed from the Abbasside, no one is more deserved for caliphate than him among the Hashemite. No one is like him in knowledge, chastity, conduct, piety, worship, and good morality. If you saw his father you found him a wise generous man.”

I got angry of my father and decided to investigate about Ibn Al-Ridha’. I talked about him with the Hashemite, army commanders, secretaries, judges, jurists, and other people. Everyone talked respectfully of him and preferred him to others. This way I understood his greatness.”[18](#)

Muhammad Ibn ‘Isma’il Alawi has said, “Abu Muhammad (a.s.) was in the prison of Ali Ibn ‘Utamish, a foe of the Ahlul Bayt, who ordered to treat Abu Muhammad harshly. After a few days, he became an advocate of Imam Abu Muhammad (a.s.), honoring him and recalling him as a virtuous person.”[19](#)

Muhammad Ibn ‘Isma’il Ibn Ibrahim Ibn Musa Ibn Ja’far has said, “A group of Bani Abbas went to see Salih Ibn Wasif, head of Abu Muhammad’s (a.s.) prison and told him, ‘Treat Abu Muhammad harshly in the prison.’ He answered, ‘What should I do? I hired two of the rabbles to guard him, but after some days they reached a high position in worship, prayer, and fasting.”

Then he called the two guards and told them, ‘Woe to you! Why don’t you treat this prisoner severely?’ They answered, ‘What can we say about someone who is fasting everyday and worshipping every night? He does not talk to anyone and is not engaged in anything but worship. When he looks at us we tremble and we cannot control our awe.’ When those people from Bani Abbas heard this, they became disappointed and went away.”[20](#)

Abu Hashim Ja’fari has said, “I wrote a letter to Imam Abu Muhammad (a.s.) and complained about my tight prison and harsh anklet. He wrote in answer, ‘You will perform the Noon Prayer at your house today.’ I was freed from the prison on the same day and performed my Noon Prayer at home. I could hardly make a living. I wanted to mention this in my letter to Imam (a.s.), but I couldn’t. When I reached my house, Imam Abu Muhammad (a.s.) sent me one hundred dinars and wrote to me, ‘Do not be ashamed of asking your requests. Ask me and I will fulfill your request insha’allah.”[21](#)

Muhammad Ibn Abi Za’faran has quoted from the mother of Imam Abu Muhammad (a.s.), “One day Abu Muhammad (a.s.) told me, ‘In the year 260, there will happen a severe problem for me. I fear that a calamity will happen for me.’ I became very upset and wept. So he told me, ‘There is no way. This will happen. Do not be impatient!”

In Safar of the year 260, the mother of Imam (a.s.) got very anxious. He exited Medina often to get some news. She was then informed that Mu'tamid has imprisoned Abu Muhammad (a.s.) and his brother, Ja'far. Mu'tamid frequently asked about Imam (a.s.) from Ali Ibn Jarir, the prison guard. He answered that Abu Muhammad (a.s.) was engaged in worship; fasting in the days and performing prayer at nights. One day, Mu'tamid asked about Imam Abu Muhammad (a.s.) again and heard the same news. He told the guard, 'Go and free him. Say my hello to him and tell him to return to his house.'"

The prison guard said, 'When I reached the prison gate, I saw a donkey prepared for mounting of Imam Abu Muhammad (a.s.). I went in and saw Imam (a.s.) in his clothes and shoes ready to go out. Seeing me, he rose and I gave him his freedom verdict. He went out, mounted the donkey, but he did not go. I asked the reason and he answered, 'I will not go without my brother, Ja'far. Go and tell Mu'tamid that Ja'far and I came out of one house; if we don't return together, problems will arise. I conveyed Imam Abu Muhammad's (a.s.) message to Mu'tamid and he replied, 'I free Ja'far for your sake, though I had imprisoned him because of his crimes against himself and you.' So Mu'tamid freed Ja'far too and they returned home together.'"[22](#)

It is narrated that Buhlul saw Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) as a child, who looked at the children's playing and cried. Buhlul thought that he cries because he does not have playthings. So he went to Imam (a.s.) and said, "Do not cry! I will buy playthings for you." Imam (a.s.) answered, "O stupid! We are not created for playing." Buhlul asked, "So why are we created?" Imam (a.s.) answered, "For knowledge and worship." Buhlul asked again, "What is the reason?" Imam (a.s.) answered, "The Almighty Allah has stated in the Holy Quran, ***'Did ye then think that We had created you in jest, and that ye would not be brought back to Us (for account?)'***[23](#)"

Then Buhlul asked Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) to preach him. Imam (a.s.) recited a poem in answer and then he fainted. When he was sober again, Buhlul told him, "You are a child and have no duty. Why are you scared?" Imam (a.s.) answered, "I saw my mother firing large woods with small ones. I fear that I may be the small woods of the Hell."[24](#)

Muhammad Ibn Ali Ibn Ibrahim Ibn Musa Ibn Ja'far has said, "Once our living became harsh. My father said, 'Let us go to Abu Muhammad (a.s.). I have heard much about his generosity.' I told my father, 'Do you know him?' He answered, 'No, I have not seen him nor do I know him.'"

We went to Imam Abu Muhammad (a.s.). While going, my father said, 'I need five hundred dirhams. Two hundred for clothing, two hundred for paying debts, and one hundred for life expenses.' I thought to myself, 'I wish he can give me three hundred dirhams; one hundred for buying a donkey, one hundred for life expenses, and one hundred for buying clothes. Then I am going toward Jabal.'"

When my father and I reached the house of Imam Abu Muhammad (a.s.), a servant came out and said, 'Ali Ibn Ibrahim and his son, Muhammad, you can come in!'"

We went to see Imam Abu Muhammad (a.s.) and greeted him. He told my father, 'O Ali! Why did you

come to me so late?’ My father said, ‘I was ashamed to come to you in such a state.’”

When coming out, the servant of Imam (a.s.) gave a bag of money to my father and told him, ‘There is five hundred dirhams in this bag; two hundred for clothing, two hundred for paying debts, and one hundred for life expenses.’ Then he gave me a bag too and told me, ‘Three hundred dirhams is inside this bag; one hundred for buying a donkey, and two hundred for life expenses. You should not go to Jabal, but to Sura’.”

I regretted from going to Jaabal, went to Sura’ instead, and married there. After some time, one thousand dinars was sent to me by Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.).”[25](#)

Imam’s Knowledge

Like his honorable father and grandfathers, Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) knew all religious sciences, rules, and teachings. He possessed the sources of Imamate sciences and Divine infallibility. He considered his duty to publish and maintain religious sciences and did his best in fulfilling this duty.

Of course, the Imams (a.s.) did not live in similar conditions. Each of the Imams (a.s.) fulfilled his duty according to his chances. Unfortunately, the sciences and teachings narrated from Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) are not as much as what is narrated from his grandparents, especially Imam Baqir (a.s.) and Imam Sadiq (a.s.). The reason for this is twofold:

Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) spent his lifetime in Samirra’, a military district, and the caliphs agents watched him openly or hidden. In fact, his speech, conduct, and his guests were completely limited. Therefore, Imam Askari (a.s.) could not publish as much traditions as his father and grandfathers. Nevertheless, many traditions are narrated from him and recorded in tradition books about monotheism, prophet hood, Resurrection, Imamate, ethics, preaching, and various fields of jurisprudence.

It is probable that many traditions of Imam Askari (a.s.) and other infallible Imams (a.s.) are missed throughout the ages and have not reached us. Despite his limitations during his short six-year term of Imamate, Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) trained many students and tradition narrators, whose names are recorded in related books.[26](#)

[1.](#) Al-‘Irshad, Vol 2, p. 313; Biharul Anwar, Vol 50, pp. 235–238.

[2.](#) Kifayatul Athar, p. 282.

[3.](#) Kifayatul Athar, p. 284.

[4.](#) Kifayatul Athar, p. 285.

[5.](#) Kifayatul Athar, p. 288.

[6.](#) Al-‘Irshad, Vol 2, p. 314.

[7.](#) Al-‘Irshad, Vol 2, p. 314.

[8.](#) Al-‘Irshad, Vol 2, p. 315.

[9.](#) Al-‘Irshad, Vol 2, p. 315.

[10.](#) Al-‘Irshad, Vol 2, P. 316.

- [11.](#) Al-‘Irshad, Vol 2, P. 316.
- [12.](#) Al-‘Irshad, Vol 2, P. 316.
- [13.](#) Al-‘Irshad, Vol 2, p. 317.
- [14.](#) Al-‘Irshad, Vol 2, p. 318.
- [15.](#) Surah Al-Baqarah 2: 106.
- [16.](#) Al-‘Irshad, Vol 2, p. 319.
- [17.](#) Al-‘Irshad, Vol 2, p. 313.
- [18.](#) Al-‘Irshad, Vol 2, p. 321.
- [19.](#) Al-‘Irshad, Vol 2, p. 329.
- [20.](#) Al-‘Irshad, Vol 2, p. 334.
- [21.](#) Al-‘Irshad, Vol 2, p. 330.
- [22.](#) Biharul Anwar, Vol 50, p. 313.
- [23.](#) Surah Al-Mu‘minun 23: 115.
- [24.](#) Nurul Absar, p. 183, Al-Sawa’iqul Muharriqah, p. 207.
- [25.](#) Al-Kafi, Vol 1, p. 506.
- [26.](#) A researcher has collected the traditions narrated from Imam Hassan Askari (a.s.) in various fields in a book called Musnad Al-Imam Al-Askari (a.s.). The narrators of his traditions as recorded in this book exceed 149 people.

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