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The Fourth Infallible, Hadhrat Imam al-Hasan al-Mujtaba, The Second Imam

The Second Imam Imam al-Hasan (as) is the son of Amir al-Mu'minin 'Ali b. Abi Talib (as) and Fatimah Zahra (as), the best of women, and daughter of the Holy Prophet (S).

Imam al-Hasan (as) was born in Medina on the eve of Ramadan 15, in the year 3 A.H. He was the first son born to 'Ali (as) and Fatimah (as).

The Holy Prophet (S) took hold of him right after his birth and recited *adhan* in his right ear, and *iqama* in the left one. Then, he sacrificed a sheep for him, cut short his hair and gave its equivalent weight in silver – a bit more than a *dirham* – to the poor.

The Prophet (S) had his head perfumed; and since then the rituals of sacrificing a sheep (*'aqiqa*) and giving alms equal to the weight of the head hair of the newly born babies became a tradition. He named this baby Hasan, a name which had been unprecedented in *Jahiliyya* (during pagan period). He was also given his only patronymic, Abu Muhammad.

His nicknames include: Sibt, Sayyid, Zaki, Mujtaba, the last being his most well-known one. [1](#)

The Holy prophet (S) was especially interested in al-Hasan (as) and his brother, al-Husayn (a.s.), frequently saying that al-Hasan and al-Husayn are my children, in respect to which 'Ali (as) would say to his other children: "You are my children and al-Hasan and al-Husayn are the Prophet (S)'s.

Imam al-Hasan (as) lived on for some seven years close to his honorable grandfather, enjoying his warm embrace until the latter's demise followed by his mother's passing away after two or three months, when he was taken care of solely by his noble father. [2](#)

Upon the martyrdom of his esteemed father, and by God's ordain and his father's will, Imam al-Hasan (as) attained Imamate and took over the apparent caliphate as well, managing the Muslim's affairs for about six months. In the meantime, Mu'awiya who was an obstinate enemy of 'Ali (as) and his family,

and had for years fought with him (first under the pretext of revenging 'Uthman's blood and in the end seeking explicitly for the caliphate), led an army to Iraq which was the seat of Imam al-Hasan (as)'s caliphate and started a war. Later on, we will talk more about this issue.

Imam al-Hasan (as) was very similar to the Holy Prophet (S) in countenance, morality, physical figure and nobility. He has been characterized as follows:

Having whitish countenance mixed with a light shade of red, black eyes, flat cheeks, a bushy beard, dense curly hair, silvery neck, a proportionate stature, broad shoulders, large bones, a narrow waist, a medium height – neither too tall, nor too short – a handsome face regarded as among the most good looking and charming.

Ibn Sa'd is quoted as saying that al-Hasan and al-Husayn (as) used to dye their hair black.

Human Perfections

In his human perfections, Imam al-Hasan (as) was a reminder of his father and a replica of his honorable grandfather. During the lifetime of the Prophet (S), al-Hasan (as) and his brother were close to him. Sometimes, he would let them ride on his back, and he would kiss and caress them.^{[3](#)}

The Holy Prophet is quoted as saying about Imam al-Hasan (as) and Imam al-Husayn (as): “These two sons of mine are Imams whether they are sitting or standing (referring to the fact that in any case and condition they are Imams).

Imam al-Hasan (as) performed Hajj pilgrimage as many as twenty five times on foot, while fine horses were being led behind. Whenever he remembered death and grave, he would weep and as he recalled that he would stand trial on the Judgment Day he would let out such a loud cry that he would fall unconscious; when he was reminded of Paradise and Hell, he would writhe like a snake-bitten one.

He would ask for Paradise from God and seek His protection from the Fire. When he performed ablution and stood up for saying prayers, his body would start trembling and his face would turn pale. Three times he shared his property with God [i.e. gave part of it away for the cause of Allah] and two times gave up all his wealth in the way of Allah. It is said that, Imam al-Hasan (as) was the most pious and the most heedless of his time toward the worldly ornaments.

In his inner disposition and nature lay the topmost indications of humanity. Whoever saw him would regard him as great, whoever associated with him was treated with kindness and whoever, whether friend and foe, heard his talk or sermons, would simply become all ears until he ended his speech. Muhammad b. Ishaq said: “No one, except the Messenger (S), was superior to Hasan b. 'Ali (as) in status, nobility, and eminence.

When he would come out of his house to sit in front of the house, where a rug had already been spread

for this purpose, the way would be blocked and nobody would pass there out of respect for him, and when he would find this out he would return into the house, easing people's passage.” On the way to Mecca, he dismounted his horse and walked on the way. All people in the caravan, even Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas, followed him and started walking along with him.

Ibn 'Abbas, who was older than Imam al-Hasan and Imam al-Husayn (as), would take hold of the stirrups of their horses and was proud of this, stating: “These are the sons of the Messenger of Allah.” With such status and dignity, Imam al-Hasan (as) was so humble and modest that once he was passing by a number of the poor and needy who were eating pieces of bread before them on the ground. As they saw Imam al-Hasan (as), they said:

“O son of the Messenger of Allah come and share food with us”. Imam al-Hasan (as) dismounted the horse immediately, saying: “God doesn't like the haughty”, and started eating with them. Then invited them to his house, and gave them both a meal and clothes.

There have been many stories about his generosity and liberality, including one narrated by Mada'ini:

“Al-Hasan, al-Husayn and 'Abd Allah b. Ja'far were on the way to Hajj, when their provisions got lost. Thirsty and hungry, they arrived at a tent in which an old woman was living. They asked her for water. She told them to milk the sheep and mix the milk with water and drink it. They did so, and then asked for food. She said, 'I have only got this sheep, you can slaughter and eat it.' One of them slaughtered the sheep and roasted some of its meat and all ate it, after which they fell asleep.

When departing, they told the old woman: 'We are from Quraysh and are going on Hajj; when we return, come to visit us; we will treat you benevolently'. And they left. When the woman's husband arrived and found out what had happened, said, 'Woe to you! You killed my sheep for strangers and you say they were from Quraysh?'

After a while, when the situation became difficult for the old woman, she migrated from that place and happened to pass through Medina. Hasan b. 'Ali (as) saw her and recognized her. He went near and told her 'Do you know me? 'No,' she said. 'I am the one who was your guest on such and such a day.' He said, and then had a thousand heads of sheep and a thousand gold *dinars* given to her. After that he sent her to his brother Husayn b. 'Ali (as), and he also treated her same. When she was sent to 'Abd Allah b. Ja'far, she was also granted the same gifts.”^{[4](#)}

Imam al-Hasan (as)'s forbearance and forgiveness was such that, according to Marvan, it was comparable to mountains.

People's Allegiance to Imam al-Hasan (as)

When the abominable and horrible assassination of Imam 'Ali (a.s.) occurred in the mosque of Kufa and 'Ali (as) fell in his sick bed, he ordered al-Hasan (as) to lead people in congregation prayers. At the last

moments of his life, he chose him as executor of his will (*wasi*) by these words: "My son! After me, you are the successor to my position and the claimant of my blood."

He had al-Husayn (as), Muhammad and his other children as well as the chiefs of his followers and the elders of his kin witness this last will, and then handed over his Book and arms to him and said: "My son!

The Messenger of Allah has ordered me to make you my executor and give my Book and arms to you, as His Holiness has made me his executor and given me his Book and arms and has commissioned me to order you to hand them over to your brother al-Husayn in the last moments of your life".

Imam al-Hasan (as) joined the gathering of the Muslims and stood upon his father's pulpit to talk about the great tragedy of his father's martyrdom to people. After praising God the Almighty and the Holy Prophet (S), he said: "At this night, a man was martyred that nobody in the past had emulated him nor in the future will anybody catch up with him."

He, then, talked about Imam 'Ali (a.s.)'s bravery, *jihad*, and his endeavors for Islam as well as the victories achieved by him in wars, pointing out that when he passed away all he possessed was seven hundred dirhams, that was his share of the public treasury, by which he intended to provide his household with a servant.

At this moment in the Friday Mosque which was crowded with people, 'Ubayd Allah b. 'Abbas rose to his feet and encouraged people to swear allegiance to Hasan b. 'Ali (as). People enthusiastically swore allegiance to him. This happened the same day as his father's martyrdom, i.e. twenty first of Ramadan, 40 A.H.

People of Kufa, Mada'in, Iraq, Hijaz, and Yemen, all swore allegiance to Hasan b. 'Ali, except Mu'awiya who wished to go another way and treat him the same way as he had treated his father.

After people's allegiance, he delivered a sermon and enjoined people to obey the Ahl al-Bayt of the Prophet (S) who are the lesser of the two weights (*thaqalayn*) – the greater being the Qur'an – and warned them against the Satan and the satanic ones.

Anyhow, Imam al-Hasan (as)'s lifestyle during his residence in Kufa made him focus of attention, popular with the hearts, and a source of hope for people. Requirements of leadership were all met in him since he was, first of all, from among the household of the Prophet (S) and loving him was a requisite of faithfulness; and besides that, swearing allegiance to him necessitated their obedience to him.

Imam al-Hasan (as) put everything in proper order and appointed governors in different cities, taking over the rule of the state. Very soon, however, when people found Imam al-Hasan (as) as decisive in implementation of justice, ordinances, and Islamic penal laws as his father, a great number of influential individuals appealed to secret conspiracies and even wrote secretly to Mu'awiya and promoted him to move toward Kufa. They even assured him that as his army approaches Hasan b. 'Ali (as)'s camp, they

will either surrender him handcuffed to Mu'awiya, or kill him at once.[5](#)

The Khawarij, too, due to their enmity with the rule of the Hashemite, conspired with them in this intrigue.

Against this gang of hypocrites, were the Shi'ites of 'Ali (as) and a number of Emigrants and Helpers who had come to Kufa and had settled there. These noble figures proved their sincerity and intimacy in all stages – both right after allegiance or during the time the Imam (as) ordered *jihad*.

When Imam al-Hasan (as) saw Mu'awiya's rebellion against himself, he sent him letters enjoining obedience to him to give up conspiracy and bloodshed. Mu'awiya, however, in reply to Imam (as) merely argued: "I am more experienced in ruling than you are and have been involved in this affair for a longer time and I am your senior in age, that is all!"

Sometimes admitting Imam al-Hasan (as)'s competence, Mu'awiyah would write in his letters: "After me, caliphate will be yours since you are the most deserved of all". The last response that he gave to an envoy from Imam al-Hasan (as) was: "Go back, between you and us lies but a sword."

Thus it was Mu'awiya who started animosity and mutiny and rebelled against his Imam of the time. Mu'awiya, through morbid conspiracies and choosing appropriate occasions and creating a climate of violations and hypocrisy, succeeded in his ominous plans. He paved the road for himself through buying off the mean consciences and scattering various kinds of lies and slanders around and weakening the morale of the unfaithful. On the other hand, he had all his troops mobilized.

Imam al-Hasan (as), in return, made his decision to respond to the belligerency of Mu'awiya and formally declared *jihad*. Contrary to the army of Mu'awiya, in which some had gathered coveting position and gold, the army of Imam al-Hasan (as) consisted of outstanding Shi'ites such as Hujr b. 'Adi, Abu Ayyub Ansari, 'Adi b. Hatam... who as described by the Imam (as), "Each was stronger than an army".

However, against these noble figures were also weaklings who responded to battles by fleeing and were capable only in hypocrisy, and who were enamored by the worldly gains. Imam al-Hasan (as) was, from the beginning, worried about this incongruity.

The total number of Iraqi military troops is reported to have been 350 thousands.

Imam al-Hasan (as) spoke in the mosque of Kufa, urging the troops to move on towards "Nakhila." 'Adi b. Hatam was the first one who accompanied the Imam (as) and made obeisance to him. Many others also followed him.

Imam al-Hasan (as) dispatched 'Ubayd Allah b. 'Abbass who was one of his relatives and the first persons who encouraged people to swear allegiance to Imam, along with twelve thousand troops to Maskan, located in the northernmost part of the Hashemite Iraq.

But temptations from Mu'awiya deluded him as the most trusted of the Imam's commanders, and

attracted him to Mu'awiya's camp in return for a million dirhams, half of which was paid immediately. Consequently, following him, eight thousand out of twelve thousand troops rushed into Mu'awiya's camp and thus sold their faith for the worldly gains.

After 'Ubayd Allah b. 'Abbas, commandership was handed over to Qays b. Sa'd, who was later on rumored by troops of Mu'awiya and hypocrites to have been killed, degrading the morale of Imam al-Hasan (as)'s troops. A group of Mu'awiya's functionaries who arrived in Mada'in to hold a meeting with Imam al-Hasan (as), also spread the rumor of the Imam's acceptance of peace among the people.

In the meantime, it happened that one of the Khawarij assassins pierced Imam's thigh by throwing a lance at him, injuring his thigh very seriously. Imam al-Hasan (as) got into such a dire situation, however, that left him with no choice but "making peace" with Mu'awiya.

Finding the circumstances favorable, anyhow, Mu'awiya brought up the issue of making peace with Imam al-Hasan (as). In order to consult his troops, the Imam (as) delivered a sermon and prompted them to choose either of the ways – sacrificing their lives or yielding to peace. A large number of them demanded peace.

Some also persecuted the Infallible Imam with their tongue-lashings. At last, Mu'awiya's peace proposal was accepted by Imam al-Hasan (as), but it was only intended to bind the former in conditions and commitments which would obviously not be abided by him and in near future he would disregard all of them one after another; and as a result, Mu'awiya's vicious nature and non-commitment to faith and treaties would become manifest to all people.

By accepting the peace proposal, Imam al-Hasan (as) also prevented the fratricide and bloodshed which was Mu'awiya's main target, by which he planned to uproot, by any possible means, the Shi'ism and the Shi'ites of 'Ali (as)'s household. In this way, the brightly shining feature of Imam al-Hasan (as) – as predicted by his noble grandfather the Apostle of Allah (S.A.W) – emerged in the horizon of Islam as the "Great peacemaker."

In offering peace, Mu'awiya had no other goal than material gains as well as clutching at the *hukuma* (rule over the Muslims). But Imam al-Hasan (as) agreed to this peace only to safeguard his school and principles of thought against extinction and protect his followers (Shi'ites) against being wiped out.

Among the terms included in the peace agreement were:

Mu'awiya was required to act according to the Book of God, the tradition of the Prophet (S) and the conducts of the competent caliphs; not to appoint anybody as his successor after his death; not to devise any tricks and treachery against Imam al-Hasan (as), the progeny of 'Ali (as), and their followers all over the Islamic lands. He was also obliged to abandon cursing 'Ali (as) and not to inflict any loss on any Muslim.

They called God, the Apostle of God, and a great number of people as witness to this agreement. Mu'awiya came to Kufa to have the peace agreement carried out in the presence of Imam al-Hasan (a.s.) and let the people be informed about the event. Throngs of people headed towards Kufa.

First, Mu'awiya mounted the pulpit and said a few words, some of which are as follows. "O people of Kufa! Do you suppose I fought with you for the sake of prayers, fasting, alms tax, and Hajj pilgrimage? Actually, I knew you would observe all these. I waged the war upon you only to rule over you and to take over your affairs. God has now granted me this wish, though you are not pleased with it. Now I tell you, any blood that is shed in this revolt would be wasted and any treaty I have signed with anybody is trampled under my feet."

Thus, he disregarded the treaty that he himself had concluded, proposed, and signed. How fast he disgraced himself!

Then, Hasan b. 'Ali (as), in full splendor and dignity of Imamate – being gazed at respectfully by those present – climbed up the pulpit to deliver his critical and historic sermon.

After glorifying and praising the Lord of the worlds and lauding the Apostle of Allah (S), he said:

"... By God I swear I hope to be the most benevolent to people and thanks and praise God that I have no hatred in my heart of any Muslim and wish them no malice..." Then he continued: "Mu'awiya suspects that I regard him as befitting caliphate and do not regard myself as such. He is telling a lie.

According to the Book of God the Almighty and as judged by His Apostle (S.A.W), we have priority over everyone else in rulership, and have, since the demise of the Prophet (S.A.W), constantly suffered tyranny and oppression". Then he proceeded to point out the event of Ghadir Khum and the usurpation of his father's caliphate, and deviation of caliphate from the right path, saying: "This deviation prompted some freed slaves and their children, i.e. Mu'awiya and his cronies, to covet the caliphate."

And as in his talk Mu'awiya insulted 'Ali (a.s.), so did Imam al-Hasan (as) after introducing himself and the superiority of his ancestry and status, cursed Mu'awiya and a large number of people said amen. And we say so, too!

A few days later, Imam al-Hasan (as) set out for Medina.

In this way, Mu'awiya took over the Islamic caliphate and entered Iraq, violating the peace terms by a public formal address. He used every possible way to inflict the most adverse pressures and tortures on Imam's household and the Shi'ites.

During the entire period of his ten years of Imamate, Imam al-Hasan (as) lived in intense distress and political strangulation, having no security and peace of mind. Finally, in the year 50/670, he was poisoned and martyred by his wife, Ja'da, who was instigated by Mu'awiya and was laid to rest in Baqi'.

Wives and Children of Imam al-Hasan (as)

Enemies and mercenary historians have fabricated stories about the number of Imam al-Hasan (as)'s wives; even simple-minded friends have made up words in this regard. According to what the genuine histories have recorded, however, the Imam's wives are as follows:

Umm al-Haqq, daughter of Talha b. 'Ubayd Allah.

Hafs, daughter of 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Abi Bakr.

Hind, daughter of Suhayl b. Amr.

Ja'da, daughter of Ash'ath b. Qays.

It is not recalled that the number of the Imam's wives has ever in his life exceeded eight or ten, according to two traditions, and concerning that his slave-wives (*umm walad*) are also included in this enumeration.

Umm walad is a woman retainer who gives birth to a baby from her master and this would result in her freedom after her master's death.[6](#)

Imam al-Hasan (as) had 15 children, both daughters and sons, by the following names:

Zayd, Hasan, 'Amr, Qasim, 'Abd Allah, 'Abd al-Rahman, Hasan Athram, Talha, Umm al-Hasan, Umm al-Husayn, Fatimah, Umm Salama, Ruqayya, Umm 'Abd Allah, and Fatimah [from a different mother].

From among his children, only his two sons, Hasan and Zayd, had progeny; so except through these, relating others to Imam al-Hasan (as) is invalid.[7](#)

Some Sayings of Imam al-Hasan (as):

1. Avoid evils by doing benevolence.
2. Get over hardships and problems through forbearance.
3. Preserve your religion and attract people's affection to yourselves.
4. Remove the plights of the distressed before they express them.
5. Do not refrain from consultation in affairs.
6. A relative is one who is kind to you, even though he or she is a stranger.
7. Put up with people in life, so that they become tender to you.

8. Beware of idle talk.
9. Avaricious people are poor (since they are never satisfied and should always be striving).
10. It is base and ignoble not to be thankful for blessings.
11. That which doesn't contain evil is thankfulness for blessings and forbearance in the face of the mishaps.
12. Any time you meet your brother in faith you should kiss him on the forehead, where there is the trace of light (i.e., the place of prostration on the forehead).
13. No people will be guided aright unless they counsel each other.
14. Practicing avarice (in earning one's livings) is like committing sins. (*Tuhaf al-'Uqul*)

- [1.](#) Sulh-i Imam Husayn, p. 37.
- [2.](#) Shi'a dar Islam, p. 130.
- [3.](#) Shi'a dar Islam, p. 131.
- [4.](#) Sulh-i Imam Husayn, p. 43.
- [5.](#) Sulh-i Imam Husayn, p. 100.
- [6.](#) Sulh-i Imam Husayn, p. 38.
- [7.](#) Sulh-i Imam Husayn, p. 39.

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