

The Second Imam, al-Hasan (as)

Born in Madina 15th Ramadan 3rd year of Hijri. Elder son of 'Ali and Fatima, grandson of the Prophet of Islam. When he was born and the news of the birth of a grandson was conveyed to the Holy Prophet he came to the house of Fatima, took hold of the baby in his arms, said Azan and Iqamah in his ears and said, this is a beautiful child, I name him Hasan.

He will keep Islam and Muslims safe from the hands of its destroyers. Historians note that this child looked like his grandfather the Holy Prophet in looks and in manners.

Under the blessed shadow of the Holy Prophet Hasan was receiving his training from the most blessed parents on earth. Coming to the mosque of the Prophet, listening to the Sermons of his grandfather and seeing Islam prosper was the lesson one can never forget.

Whenever he came to the mosque, the Holy Prophet would pick him up, would let him sit beside him and let the attentive companions see and behold who this boy was. They all loved his presence in the mosque and cared for him.

Time soon passed and Hasan (as) was hardly 8 years old when his grandfather died and soon after his mother also died. The next 25 years of his life in Madina was with his father 'Ali (as) and with his younger brother Husayn (as).

This was the period in which conquests of many lands took place and the city of Madina and its people prospered. His father or any member of the family of the Prophet did not take any hand in these conquests. They remained aloof but not from the growing Muslim society. Their main aim was to teach and prepare this fledgling into a mature Muslim society for harder times ahead.

Wealth was pouring in from the conquests of Egypt and Persia and many companions of the Prophet did not know what to do with it or how to spend it properly. Many companions built large houses for themselves with stables and servants. What 'Ali (as) and his family did was to form a Trust and whatever share of prosperity came to them they put all into this Trust.

It is through this Trust those who did not have much to gain from this prosperity were given to have a

decent life. Both children of 'Ali (as) were the Trustees of this holy trust and with the help of many senior companions of the Holy Prophet the workings of this trust prospered and many new converts were helped to settle themselves in this new society.

Every evening food was served to many of those who were not in a position to provide for themselves. While the family of 'Ali (as) lived in small house and without any pomp or luxury for themselves. This was the example they were setting for all to see and follow that even when you have become rich you share your bounties with other Muslim brothers and sisters to make the society equally prosperous and happy.

In these 25 years Hasan (as) has seen the Islamic State grow into a much larger and more powerful Muslim nation. After the death of the 3rd Caliph Osman his father 'Ali (as) was elected caliph by a popular vote of the companions of the Holy Prophet. But soon there emerged those who wanted a lot of favor from 'Ali (as) and when they did not get it they stood against him.

The battle of Jamal was fought and won by 'Ali (as) and the capital of the Muslim state was removed from Madinah to Kufa. Kufa was established during the reign of the 2nd caliph as a garrison town and was much more central to the vastly growing Muslim Empire than Madinah. This was a very prudent move to give a better control over all corners of this growing Muslim state which stretched from North Africa in the West, to Persia and Azerbaijan in the East.

'Ali (as) has appointed his own trustworthy Governors of the provinces but none of them from his own family. All his children stayed with him at the center or in Madinah to control the Trust he had formed earlier or to join in the battles of Jamal, Siffin and Nahrwan fought during the life of the Khilafat of 'Ali (as) Hasan (as) took part with his father in all these battles and shown the customary Hashemite bravery and skill in defeating the enemy.

In these battles the real adversary of 'Ali (as) and his family was Moawiya ibne Abu Sofian who challenged 'Ali's authority and fought with him to remain the governor and later the ruler of the province of Syria.

His atrocities against the rule of 'Ali (as) continued even after the near defeat at Siffin. After the martyrdom of 'Ali (as) in the mosque of Kufa in 41 Hijri and the election of Hasan (as) as the next caliph was a thorn in the heart of Moawiya.

His propaganda machine against the House of 'Ali (as) , in fact against Islam, began its work in earnest. Large sums of money and fraudulent promises of vast properties and governorships of provinces were given to many commanders of Hasan's (as) army who deserted and left Hasan (as) without much power.

One salient feature one must remember when reading about the lives of these Ma'sumeen that they never waged war for acquisition of worldly power. It was therefore the hallmark of Imam Hasan 's (as) life that making peace was his share in the same manner as the Prophet of Islam did in Hodaibiya. Some unfortunate companions of the Prophet doubted even him of his wisdom to make peace to which

the Prophet replied," he was the messenger of God and his instructions always come from God."

When people in Madinah disagreed with Imam Hasan's attitude and questioned his wisdom he replied that his actions were similar to that of Prophet Khidhr who acted to save on three occasions the lives and property of Orphans and many believers of God. Even Prophet Musa was unable to comprehend the wisdom of those actions until this was explained to him.

As the tradition tells us that "in the blood of martyrs lays the ink of history "and often bedazzled by the heroic splendor of their sacrifices, we forget the many occasions when the greater Jihad has lain along the path of peace than war.

His confrontation with Moawiya demanded a treaty rather than blood and Imam's victory lay in that treaty and in the preservation of those faithful Muslims whose premature death in battle at that time would have extinguished the light of Islam original.

It was the life of Imam Hasan (as) that paved the way for his younger brother's glorious stand. They were two sides of the same coin, one on living the Jihad of peace and the other the Jihad of martyrdom.

Both acted out their paths fully, bearing the banner of their blessed grandfather, in uncompromising defense of Right and in denial of evil. They joyfully praised their creator in happiness and in adversity, submitting to His Divine laws and leaving for us an example of correct behavior both in peace and in war.

Here were two brothers who from their cradle breathed the air of pure spirit of Islam, nurtured by the love of the Prophet in whose close company they spent their early years. It was the Holy Prophet who said that both "Hasan and Husayn are the chiefs of the youth of paradise".

Several traditions from his mother and from Umme Salemah, the wife of the Prophet, clearly indicate that Imam Hasan (as) was one of those five who were included in the Verse of purification (33-33)" Certainly Allah wants to keep away all abomination from you, members of the house, to keep you pure and spotless."

The Prophet then covered them with a garment and said," these are the members of my house. Allah, keep away abomination from them and keep them pure and spotless." It was also during the occasion of Mubahela that the Prophet took these five with him to show the world who were the members of his household (Ahlul Bayt).

It is reported on the authority of Anas bin Malik that no one was more like the Prophet of God than Al-Hasan bin 'Ali. (as)

The Treaty agreed upon between Moawiya and Imam Hasan (as) tells us the following salient points:

1. That Moawiya should rule strictly according to the Holy Qur'an and the Sunna of the Prophet.

2. That Moawiya should not appoint or nominate anyone to the Khilafat after him but that the choice should be left to the Muslims.
3. That the people should be left in peace, wherever they are in the land of God.
4. That the persecution of the companions of Imam 'Ali (as) should immediately be stopped; their lives and properties and families guaranteed safe conduct and peace.
5. That the cursing of Imam 'Ali (as) from the pulpit should stop immediately.
6. That no harm should be done secretly or openly against Imam Hasan and his brother Imam Husayn or any of the Ahlul Bayt. (as)

This agreement concluded, Imam Hasan (as) went to Kufa, shortly followed by Moawiya who came there to take the allegiance of the people. In a speech delivered in front of Moawaiya, Imam Hasan (as) explained the situation clearly:

"O'People, Allah has guided you through our elders (Muhammad and 'Ali) and spared you from bloodshed through those who followed (referring to himself). Indeed this (the Khilafat) is nothing but a passing phase, these worldly possessions keep shifting and changing hands."

For inasmuch as Moawiya desired the sovereignty in this world, so Imam Hasan's concern was not with worldly leadership for its own sake, but as a tool whereby he might guide the people towards God and His true commandments.

After his abdication he retired to Madinah where he spent the remaining ten years of his life teaching the Qur'an and knowledge of true Deen to all seekers of truth that came to him. Imam Hasan (as) had never relinquished the position of an Imam and guide as appointed by God.

History tells us that from day one Moawiya did not comply with any one of the terms of the treaty agreed upon between him and Imam Hasan (as) He trampled the treaty under his feet saying to the people of Kufa, "do you think I have taken power to teach you about Islam.

No, I have taken power for the sake of it and if any one of you tries to disagree with me shall pay a costly price of losing his head.(Tarikul Kholafa, Jalaluddin Soyuti)

Moawiya carried out his ambition of keeping the power in his family by nominating his son Yazid after him as the ruler of the Kingdom. This demanded that Imam Hasan (as) should predecease him, an unlikely event considering their discrepancy in their ages.

Hence Moawiya bribed Ju'da bint Ash'ath, to poison him in 50 Hijri. Imam died with the effect of poisoning on 28th of the month of Safar. He was 47 years old.

In his last will and testament Imam asked his brother Imam Husayn (as) to take his body to the grave of

their grand father the Prophet of Islam and then bury him by the side of the grave of his mother Fatima (sa) in Jannatul Baqii, for he knew that people who are against the family of the Prophet would not let him bury by the side of his grandfather.

Imam knew of the animosity of the Banu Umayya with the Prophet and his family. He did not desire to have any dispute or fight over his burial. But unfortunately when the body of the Imam was taken towards the grave of the Holy Prophet in the mosque, the same enemy about whom Imam had warned, came out and prevented the mourners to reach the grave of the Prophet.

When Imam Husayn (as) realized that if he insists on taking the body of his brother nearer the grave of the Prophet there will be bloodshed, he refrained from it and took him away and buried him in Jannatul Baqii next to the grave of his mother.

Imam Hasan's (as) 3 sons, Qasim, Abdullah and Hasan-e-Muthanna, were in Karbala' and took part in the Jihad with their uncle Imam Husayn (as). Qasim and Abdullah died of their wounds but Hasan-e-Muthanna survived. He was among the wounded and was taken out alive by the Banu Asad Tribesmen. They treated his wounds and once he was better he returned back to Madinah.

It appears that he stayed with the Banu Asad for over a year and when the family of the Prophet were released from captivity and returned to Karbala' he joined the caravan and returned with them to Madinah after the Arabeen in the year 62 Hijri. He was about 17 years old at that time. Later, he married Imam Husayn 's (as) daughter Fatima Sughra. It is from this marriage that the descendants of Imam Hasan (as) take their line in the family tree.

Hasan-e-Muthanna's son Abdullah had four sons, Muhammad Nafse Zakiyya, Ibrahim, Sulaiman and Idris. Nafse Zakiyya rose against Mansur the 2nd Abbasid Caliph and received martyrdom, in the year 142 Hijri, 762 AD. Ibrahim fought Mansur in Baghdad and was martyred. This was in 143 Hijri 763 AD (See Hitti, History of the Arabs) Two other great grandsons of Imam Hasan, Sulaiman and Idris migrated to Iran and Tunisia respectively.

Descendents of Imam Hasan from Idris flourished in North Africa and brought Islam in the Maghrib. From Sulaiman, who settled in Kirman, many of his descendents spread Islam in Persia and some of them later migrated to India. The writer of this book is also one of the descendents of Imam Hasan (as) from the line through Sulaiman.

Imam Hasan's (as) life was one of hardship and trial. like the lives of his grandfather the Prophet of Islam, his father 'Ali (as), his mother Fatima (sa) and many members of the Ahlul Bayt after him. Life is a test as Qur'an tells us. For some, the difficulties of life make him arrogant or agnostic but not the people of the household of the Prophet.

They endured all sorts of hardships with thanks to God all the time. He saw his mother brutally injured and died at an early age. He saw his father martyred in the mosque of Kufa. He saw the people who had

been given the clear signs from his grandfather, abandon the "Deen" for wealth and power. He saw his own supporters turn against him.

Yet his dying request to his brother was not to have any quarrel over his burial. His life is a sign and a reminder that for the people of the Household of the Prophet there will be adversity but they take all in complete submission to God and His commandments.

A famous saying of Imam Hasan is "In regard to the world be as if you were going to live forever. With respect to the Hereafter, be as if you were going to die tomorrow."

This is an invitation to action, care and attention and avoidance of negligence and indifference, whether it is in respect of the work of this world or the Hereafter. This further confirms the saying of the Holy Prophet who said, "The Momin is a person who attends the affairs of this world as well as of the Hereafter in the most perfect way,"

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