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Lesson 47: The Tenth Imām (‘Alī ibn Muhammad)

Name: ‘Ali bin Muhammad.
Agnomen: Abul Hasan ath-Thālith.
Title: An-Naqi; al-Hādi.
Father: Muhammad at-Taqi.
Mother: Samana.
Birth: 15th Dhil Hijja, 212 AH in Sarya, near Medina.
Death: 3rd Rajab 254 AH in Samarra, Iraq.

1. Birth & Early Years

Imam ‘Ali an-Naqi (also known as al-Hādi), was the son of the ninth Imam. He was born on 15th Dhil Hijja in 212/827 in Sarya, outside Medina. At the age of eight in 220, he became the Imam. After having seen his father’s example, the Shi‘a community had no more problems in accepting such a young Imam.

2. Rulers of the Time

The thirtythree years of imamate of Imam ‘Ali an-Naqi coincided with the caliphate of the following six caliphs Mu‘tasim bin Hārun, Wāthiq bin Mu‘tasim, Mutawakkil bin Mu‘tasim, Muntasir bin Mutawakkil, Musta‘in, and Mu‘tazz bin Mutawakkil.

Wāthiq bin Mu‘tasim had a very promiscuous lifestyle, and had no time to harass the Shi‘as and the Imams of the Ahlul Bayt. During his caliphate, a large number of the descendants of Imam ‘Ali (a.s.) had settled in Samarra, the ‘Abbasid capital. But the peaceful days for the ‘Alids and the Imam did not last long. After Wāthiq, his brother **Mutawakkil**, came to power. Mutawakkil was the most cruel of all the ‘Abbasid caliphs; he is comparable to Yazīd bin Mu‘āwiyah of the Umayyads.

Mutawakkil, on the one hand, started promoting the Shāfi‘i madhhab in order to distract the masses away from the Ahlul Bayt. And, on the other hand, he intensified harassment of the Shi‘as. He had such hatred for the Ahlul Bayt that in 236 A.H. he ordered the grave of Imam Husayn (a.s.) be leveled to the ground, and that the surrounding area be transformed into farmlands so that no trace of the grave be left. This all was done to stop the Shi‘as from visiting (ziyārat) the graves of Imam Husayn (a.s.) and the other martyrs of Karbala. But when Allāh wishes to protect His "light" no human can do anything about it!

The attempt to erase all traces of Imam Husayn's grave angered many Muslims; people starting writing anti-‘Abbāsid slogans on the walls. Opposition poets also expressed their feelings on this issue. A famous poem against Mutawakkil is given below:

By Allāh, if the Umayyids unjustly killed
Husayn, son of the Prophet's daughter,
his cousins[1] *have committed a similar crime*
for I swear that Husayn's grave has been erased.
It seems that they regret for not participating
in the massacre, so they now go after the grave!

Mutawakkil enjoyed torturing the followers of the Ahlul Bayt; even the persons appointed by him as governor in Medina and Mecca were instructed to prevent people from being kind and courteous towards the Ahlul Bayt. In 234 A.H., Mutawakkil ordered Imam ‘Ali an-Naqi (a.s.) to be brought from Medina to Samarra where he was placed in a house next to the caliph's garrison. The Imam lived under constant surveillance until Mutawakkil was murdered by his own troops at the instigation of his own son, Muntasir.

Muntasir bin Mutawakkil reversed the policies of his father towards the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.); he was kind and generous to them; he returned the property of Fadak to the descendants of Imams Hasan and Husayn (a.s.). Unfortunately his caliphate did not last for more than six months when he died in 248 A.H.

Musta‘in came to power after Muntasir and continued the oppressive policies of his ancestors. But soon his own Turkish troops rebelled against him and pledged allegiance to Mu‘tazz bin Mutawakkil whom they rescued from prison. Finally, Musta‘in was killed and **Mu‘tazz** become the caliph.

It was during the reign of Mu‘tazz bin Mutawakkil that Imam ‘Ali an-Naqi was martyred by poisoning.

3. Two Companions of the Imam

One of the most distinguished of all the companions of Imam ‘Ali an-Naqi was **‘Abdul ‘Azim al-Hasani** (a descendant of Imam Hasan) whose grave outside the city of Tehran has become a famous place for visitation (*ziyārat*). ‘Abdul ‘Azim had met and heard ahādith from the companions of the sixth, seventh and eight Imams; and he himself has narrated many ahādith from the ninth and tenth Imams.

Abu Hammad Razi narrates that once Imam ‘Ali an-Naqi (a.s.) told him that “whenever you have religious problems, go to ‘Abdul ‘Azim and also convey my salaams to him.”

Once ‘Abdul ‘Azim al-Hasani came to Imam ‘Ali an-Naqi (a.s.) and said, “O son of the Prophet! I would like to describe my faith to you so that if you agree with it then I will stay firm upon it till the last moment of my life.” When the Imam gave his approval, ‘Abdul ‘Azim described his faith as follows:

“I believe that God is One; there is nothing like Him; He is free from *ibtal* (i.e., saying that He is ‘nothing’) and *tashbah* (i.e., comparing Him to a created thing). Allah has no body or figure; neither is He substance nor form; intead, He is the creator of body and figure, and of substance and form. He is the creator and sustainer of everything.

“I believe that Muhammad (s.a.w.) is a servant and prophet of God, and His last Messenger. There will be no prophet, shari‘ah or religion after him till the day of judgement.

“I believe that the Imam and successor of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) was ‘Ali bin Abi Talib (a.s.), and after him Hasan, then Husayn, ‘Ali ibn al-Husayn, Muhammad bin ‘Ali, Ja‘far bin Muhammad, Musa bin Ja‘far, ‘Ali bin Musa, Muhammad bin ‘Ali, and then you are my master.”

Imam ‘Ali an-Naqi (a.s.) then said, “After me, my son Hasan, will be the Imam. How do you think the people will react in regard to Hasan’s son [i.e., the Mahdi]?”
‘Abdul ‘Azim: “O my master! How will he [i.e., Hasan’s son] be?”

Imam an-Naqi (a.s.): “He will not be seen; and mentioning his name is not permissible until he rises and fills the earth with justice just as it would be filled with injustice and tyranny.”

‘Abdul ‘Azim then continued: “I testify that their [i.e., Imams’] friend is God’s friend; and their enemy is God’s enemy; obeying them is obedience to God; and disobeying them is disobeying God.

“I believe in the mi‘raj, the questioning in the grave, paradise, hell, the path (*sirat*), the scale—all these are truth. I believe that the day of judgement is sure to come without any doubt, and that God will resurrect the dead people.

“I believe that my religious obligations after *wilayah* (love and obedience to the Imams) are prayers, alms-giving, fasting, pilgrimage to Mecca, jihad, bidding good and forbidding evil.”

Imam ‘Ali an-Naqi (a.s.) said, “O Abul Qasim! By Allah, this is the same religion that Allah has chosen for His servants! So remain firm on it; and may Allah keep you steadfast on this truth.”

Musa bin ‘Abdullah an-Nakha‘a was another learned companion of the Imam. Once he went to the Imam and requested him for a comprehensive ziyarat he could use to recite whenever he visits the graves of any of the Imams of Ahlul Bayt. This ziyarat became famous as Ziyarat-e Jami‘a whose selected parts are presented below:

"...May peace be upon you O the People of the house of prophethood, the source of messengership, the people on whom angels descend and where revelation used to come down; the family which is the source of mercy, custodians of knowledge, peaks of forbearance, foundations of generosity, leaders of nations, masters of blessings, the cream of pious people, pillars of kindness, leaders of people...doors of im□n, trustees of the Merciful God, family of prophets and messengers, and descendants of the best of those chosen by the Lord of the Universe...

"May peace be upon the Imams of guidance, lamps in the darkness, signs of piety, those who possess wisdom and intelligence, the refuge for people, the heirs of prophets, the best of examples...the proofs of God upon the people of this world and the hereafter...

"I bear witness that there is no god but All□h, He has no partner just as All□h has declared it Himself and so have the angels and the knowledgeable among His servants. There is no god but He, the Powerful, the Wise. I bear witness that Muhammad is His chosen servant and a messenger with whom He is pleased, and whom He has sent with guidance and the religion of truth so that He may give victory to it over all religions even if the polytheists dislike it.

"I bear witness that you are the rightly-guided leaders, the infallibles, the respected ones, those who are closest to All□h, the pious, the truthful, the chosen ones; those who are obedient to All□h, who are firm in His command, who act according to His wish, who have attained His respect. All□h has chosen you by His knowledge, and He has chosen you for His [knowledge of the] unseen and His secret...

"One who turns away from you has gone out of religion; one who stays with you reaches the religion; and one who lowers you from your status is lost. The truth is with you, in you, from you, towards you—you are its owners and custodians...One who loves you, loves All□h; one who hates you, hates All□h; one who seeks refuge with you has sought refuge with All□h...

"O All□h! If I could find any intercessors closer to You than Muhammad and his good progeny, the pious Imams, I would have made them my intercessors. [But there is no one closer to you than Muhammad and his family.] So by the right that You have given to them over Yourself, I pray to You to include me among those who truly know them and their rights, among those on whom You have showered mercy through their intercession. You are indeed the most merciful of all. And may All□h send His blessings upon Muhammad and his pure progeny. Indeed All□h is sufficient for us and He is the best of agents."

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This lesson has been written and compiled by Sayyid M. Rizvi by using the following sources.
1. *Shi'a Islam'* of Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn at-Tabataba'i.
2. *Pishway-e Dahum: Hazrat Imam 'Ali bin Muhammad al-Hadi* (*a.s.*)
by Dar Rah-e Haq, Qum.

The main sources have been extensively edited in order to fit the requirements of our course. Also, for

the sake of brevity, we have not included the references quoted by our sources. Those who are interested to know the sources may refer to the sources mentioned above.

Question Paper on Lesson 47

Question 1: [10 points]
True or False:
(a) Imam ‘Ali an-Naqi was born in 212 A.H.

(b) Imam an-Naqi’s imamate coincided with the reign of six Umayyid caliphs.

(c) Mutawakkil was the “Yazid” of the ‘Abbasids.

(d) Mutawakkil attempted to level the grave of Imam Husayn (a.s.) to the ground in 236 A.H.

(e) Muntasir’s peaceful reign lasted for six years.

(f) The later ‘Abbasid caliphs were at the mercy of their Turkish troops.

(g) ‘Abdul ‘Azim al-Hasani was not a reliable narrator of hadith.

(h) Imam ‘Ali an-Naqi taught the ziyarat-e jami‘a to Musa bin ‘Abdullah an-Nakha‘i.

(i) The Imam was poisoned during the reign of Mu‘tazz bin Mutawakkil.

(j) Imam an-Naqi is buried in Kazimayn.

Question 2: [20 points]
In his conversation with ‘Abdul ‘Azim, Imam ‘Ali an-Naqi (a.s.) talked about the ghaybat of Imam al-Mahdi (a.s.). Explain in your own words the significance of this talk on the issue of Mahdism in Islam.

Question 3: [20 points]
List at least five qualities of the Imams of Ahlul Bayt mentioned in the Ziyarat-e Jami‘a.

1. That is, the ‘Abbasids who desend from ‘Abbas, the Prophet’s uncle.

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