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The Second Imam: Hasan ibn 'Ali

Birth and Martyrdom

Imam Hasan (a.s.) was born on fifteenth of Ramadan in the third year after Hijrah in Medina. His father was Ali Ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) and his mother was Fatimah (s.a.), Prophet Muhammad (S)'s daughter. His nickname was Abu Muhammad and his most famous titles were Taqi, Tayyib, Zaki, Sayyid, Sibt, and Wali.

At the time of Imam Hasan's (a.s.) birth, the Messenger of Allah (S) told 'Asma' Binti Umays and Umm Salamah, "When the child of Fatimah (s.a.) was born, recite 'adhan in his right ear and 'iqamah in his left ear and stay there until I come."

When Prophet Muhammad (S) went to Fatimah's (s.a.) house, he cut the infant's navel cord and poured his saliva into the infant's mouth. Then he said, 'Allahumma 'inni 'a'udhu bika minash Shaytanir rajim, "O Lord! I take refuge in You from the ousted Satan." Then Prophet Muhammad (S) stated, "Name him Hasan!" He then ordered to sacrifice a sheep for him as 'aqiqah and divide the meat among the poor.

This auspicious birth gladdened not only Prophet Muhammad (S), Imam Ali (a.s.), and Hadrat Fatimah (s.a.), but also the prophet's household. Imam Hasan (a.s.) lived for seven years with his grandfather, the Messenger of Allah (S). He was appointed to Imamate after his father, Ali Ibn Abi Talib (a.s.), at the age thirty seven. His caliphate –after Imam Ali's (a.s.) martyrdom until his peace with Mu'awiyah– lasted six months and three days.

In the year forty one after Hijrah, Imam Hasan (a.s.) inevitably signed a peace contract with Mu'awiyah. Then he returned from Kufah to Medina. On twenty eighth of Safar in the year fifty A.H., he was martyred and his gravesite is in Baqi' cemetery in Medina.

It is recorded that Mu'awiyah sent one hundred thousand dirhams for Ju'dah, Imam Hasan's (a.s.) wife, to poison Imam (a.s.). Mu'awiyah had promised Ju'dah to marry her with his son, Yazid, and she poisoned Imam Hasan (a.s.).[1]

Texts Proving His Imamate

In many traditions, the honorable Messenger of Allah (S) has stipulated the Imamate of Hasan (a.s.) and Husayn (a.s.). Ali Ibn Abi Talib (a.s.), too, chose his son, Hasan (a.s.) as the Imam and successor after himself, before his martyrdom.

The Messenger of Allah (S) stated about Hasan (a.s.) and Husayn (a.s.), "My two sons will be Imams, whether they rise for occupying Imamate position or not."[2]

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) stated, "Prophet Muhammad (S) willed to Imam Ali (a.s.), and Imam Ali (a.s.) willed to Hasan (a.s.) and Husayn (a.s.). Therefore, Imam Hasan (a.s.) had guardianship over Imam Husayn (a.s.), too."[3]

Salim Ibn Qiys says, "I witnessed the will of Ali Ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) about succession of Imam Hasan (a.s.). Imam Ali (a.s.) took as witness Husayn (a.s.), Prophet Muhammad (S), his entire Household, and the Shi'ah chiefs. Then he gave Imam Hasan (a.s.) his books and weapon and said, 'O my son! The Messenger of Allah (S) ordered me to appoint you as my successor and give you the books and weapon, just as he appointed me as his successor and gave me his books and weapon.'"[4]

Shahr Ibn Huwshab says, "When Ali Ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) wanted to go toward Kufah, he gave his books and weapon to Umm Salamah. When Imam Hasan (a.s.) returned from Kufah to Medina, Umm Salamah gave them to him."[5]

Muhammad Ibn Hanafiyah told Ali Ibn Husayn (a.s.), "I know that Prophet Muhammad (S) appointed Ali Ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) as his successor and caliph and then Imam Hasan (a.s.) and then Imam Husayn (a.s.)."[6]

Tariq Ibn Shahab says, "Amiral Mu'minin (a.s.) told Hasan (a.s.) and Husayn (a.s.), 'You will be the Imams after me and the masters of youth of Paradise. You are infallible. May Allah guard you! May Allah curse your enemies!'"[7]

Fazl Ibn Hasan Tabarsi has written in his book 'A'lamul Wura, "The Shi'ah have frequently narrated that Imam Ali (a.s.) had emphasized the Imamate of his son, Hasan (a.s.), among the Shi'ah, introducing him as the successor to himself."[8]

In the morning of his martyrdom day, Imam Hasan (a.s.) performed a sermon. Then Abdullah Ibn Abbas stood up and said, "O people! This is the son of your prophet (S) and will be your successor and Imam. Take oath of allegiance with him." The people hurried to take allegiance with him.[9]

Abu 'Abdullah Jadali said, "I was present when Amiral Mu'minin (a.s.) willed to his son Hasan (a.s.)." Then he quoted Imam Ali's (a.s.) will.[10]

When Amiral Mu'minin (a.s.) was hit by the sword of Ibn Muljam and the people had gathered around his bed, he told them, "Go out, because I want to will." So everyone went out except some of the close Shi'ahs. Then Imam Ali (a.s.) praised the Exalted Allah and said, "I set Hasan and Husayn (a.s.) as my successors. Obey them, because Prophet Muhammad (S) has stressed their Imamate."[11]

'Asbagh Ibn Nabatah says, "When Amiral Mu'minin (a.s.) was hit by Ibn Muljam, he called Hasan and Husayn (a.s.) and said, 'I pass away tonight. Listen to me! O Hasan! You are my successor and the Imam after me. O Husayn! You will be my successor too. Obey Hasan until he is alive. You will be the teller of truth and establisher of government after your brother.'"[12]

Worshipping

It is narrated from Kamalid Din Talhah, "Worshipping is of three kinds; physical, financial, and a combination of the two. Physical worship includes prayer, fasting, reciting the Quran, and various zikrs. Financial worship includes alms-giving, charity giving, and other forms of granting. Physical-financial worship includes *Hajj*, *Jihad*, and *'umurah*."

Imam Hasan's worship was perfect in all the three forms. His endeavor in prayer, fasting, and the like is famous.

Regarding his alms-giving, it is narrated in *Hilyatul 'Awliya'* that Imam Hasan (a.s.) granted his whole wealth twice in his lifetime in Allah's path. He also divided his property with the poor three times, granting half his wealth to the poor altogether, including his own shoes.

Regarding the physical-financial worship, the author of Hilyatul 'Awliya' has narrated from Imam Hasan (a.s.), "I am ashamed of the Almighty Allah that I ride a horse in *Hajj* pilgrimage, rather than walking toward Mecca." Therefore, he traveled from Medina to Mecca for *Hajj* on foot twenty times, while he had quadruped.[13]

It is written, "Hasan Ibn Ali (a.s.) was the most similar one to the Messenger of Allah (S) regarding ethics, conduct, and nobility."[14]

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) has quoted from his father from Imam Sajjad (a.s.), "Hasan Ibn Ali (a.s.) was the best most pious of the people in his own age. In *Hajj* pilgrimage, he traveled on foot and sometimes barefooted. He cried when he remembered death. When he remembered the grave, the Resurrection, the Hereafter, or passing sirat (the path to Paradise), he wept.

When he remembered statement of human deeds before the Almighty Allah, he cried and fainted. When he stood for prayer, his body shook from Allah's fear. When he remembered the Hell and the Paradise he agonized like a snake-bitten. He requested the Paradise from the Exalted Allah and took refuge in Him from the Hell."[15]

When he reached the verse ‘O You who believe!’, he said, “Here I am! O Allah! Here I am!” He always remembered Allah. He was the most righteous and the most eloquent of the people.[16]

Imam Ridha’ (a.s.) has narrated from his father and grandfathers (a.s.) that Imam Hasan (a.s.) cried before his demise. He was asked, “O son of Messenger of Allah! Do you cry out of Allah’s fear while you had a lofty position before the Messenger of Allah (S), went to *Hajj* barefooted twenty times, and divided your wealth with the poor three times?!” Imam Hasan (a.s.) stated, “My crying is for two things; for fear of the Resurrection and for distance of the friends.”[17]

When Imam Hasan (a.s.) reached the mosque door, he raised his head and stated, “’Ilahi! Zayfuka bi babik! Ya Muhsin! Qad ‘atakal musi’, fatajawaz ‘an qabihi ma ’indi bi jamili ma ‘indaka, ya Karim!” (O Allah! Your guest has come to Your door! O Beneficent! Surely Your sinner servant has come to You, so forgive me my wrongdoing because of Your Righteousness, O generous!)[18]

When Imam Hasan (a.s.) ended his Morning Prayer, he did not talk to anyone until dawn.[19]

Generosity

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) stated, “A man came to ‘Uthman Ibn ‘Affan in the mosque and had a request. ‘Uthman gave him five dirhams. That man said, ‘Introduce me to the people who can help me more.’ ‘Uthman showed him a corner of the mosque in which Hasan (a.s.), Husayn (a.s.), and Abdullah Ibn Ja’far had sat. The man went there, said hello, and asked for help.”

Imam Hasan (a.s.) stated, ‘Asking request from the people is unlawful, except in case of blood money of a murdered person, a debt that is due to be paid, and extreme poorness. What is your request?’ That man answered, ‘It is one of these three cases.’ Imam Hasan (a.s.) gave him fifty dirhams, Imam Husayn (a.s.) gave him forty nine dirhams, and Abdulla"h Ibn Ja’far gave him forty eight dirhams."

‘Uthman said, ‘Who can be as generous as these youth? They have learned knowledge from their father and received wisdom and generosity.’”[20]

Sa’id Ibn Abdul ‘Aziz says, “Hasan Ibn Ali (a.s.) saw a man who prayed and asked ten thousand dirhams from the Almighty Allah. So he went home and sent the praying man ten thousand dirhams.”[21]

A man came to Imam Hasan (a.s.) and said, “By Allah, Who has granted you so many blessings without a mediator, save me from this oppressor enemy who does not respect the elderly nor does he have mercy on the children!” Imam Hasan (a.s.), who had leaned, sat up and asked, “Who is your enemy?” That man answered, “Poorness!”

Imam Hasan (a.s.) told his servant, “Bring me whatever money we have at home!” The servant brought five thousand dirhams. Imam Hasan (a.s.) said, “Give all the money to this man!” Then he added, “By Allah that whenever this enemy forced you, come to me for help!”

Ibn ‘Ayishah has narrated that a Shami22 man saw Imam Hasan (a.s.) riding a horse. He began insulting, but Imam Hasan (a.s.) did not talk until the man stopped swearing. Imam Hasan (a.s.) said hello to him and said, “O old gentleman! I think you are a stranger and have made a mistake about me. If you seek my forgiveness, I forgive you. If you ask something, I will give it to you. If you want to be guided, I will guide you. If you do not have an animal to ride, I will give you one. If you are hungry, I will give you food. If you do not have clothes, I will give you. If you are poor I will make you needless. If you are ousted, I will shelter you. If you bring your luggage to my house, I will be very glad to host you; my house is large and equipped.”

The Shami man heard Imam’s (a.s.) speech, and then he cried and said, “I testify that you are Allah’s caliph on the earth. ***‘God knoweth best where (and how) to carry out His mission.’***23 You and your father were the most hated people for me before. But now you are my most beloved ones.”

Then that man took his luggage to Imam Hasan’s (a.s.) house, stayed there, and became one of Imam’s (a.s.) fans and companions.24

1. ‘A’lamul Wura, Vol 1, p. 402-403; Manaqib ‘ªli Abi Talib, Vol 4, p. 33; Kashful Ghumma, Vol 2, pp. 140-144.
2. ‘Ithbatul Hudat, Vol 5, p. 134.
3. ‘Ithbatul Hudat, Vol 5, p. 126.
4. ‘Ithbatul Hudat, Vol 5, p. 126.
5. ‘Ithbatul Hudat, Vol 5, p. 122.
6. ‘Ithbatul Hudat, Vol 5, p. 123.
7. ‘Ithbatul Hudat, Vol 5, p. 133.
8. Tadhkiratul Khawas, Vol 5, p. 133.
9. ‘Ithbatul Hudat, Vol 5, p. 134.
10. ‘Ithbatul Hudat, Vol 5, p. 137.
11. ‘Ithbatul Hudat, Vol 5, p. 138.
12. ‘Ithbatul Hudat, Vol 5, p. 140.
13. Kashful Ghummah, Vol 2, p. 181.
14. Kashful Ghummah, Vol 2, p. 142.
15. Biharul Anwar, Vol 43, p. 331.
16. Biharul Anwar, Vol 43, p. 331.
17. Biharul Anwar, Vol 43, p. 332.
18. Biharul Anwar, Vol 43, p. 339.
19. Biharul Anwar, Vol 43, p. 339.
20. Biharul Anwar, Vol 43, p. 332.
21. Biharul Anwar, Vol 43, p. 341.
22. From Sham, now Syria.
23. Surah Al-‘An’am 61:124.
24. Biharul Anwar, Vol 43, p. 344.

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