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Hazrat Abbas AS- Biography

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Al-'Abbās ibn 'Alī (Arabic: العباس بن علي, Persian: عباس فرزند علی) also Qamar Banī Hāshim[6] (the moon of Banu Hashim), (born 4th Sha'bān 26 AH – 10 Muharram 61 AH; approximately May 15, 647 – October 10, 680) was the son of Imam Ali, the first Imam of Shiite Muslims and Fatima bint Hizam, commonly known as Mother of the Sons (Persian: 'أم البنين').

Hazrat Abbas was son of Hazrat Ali and Ummul Banin bint Hizam. He was younger step brother of Imam Hussain who loved and followed his brother whole heartedly and considered himself his slave. He was a renowned warrior, a strong man who had fought

alongside Hazrat Ali even when he was only 12 years old. Abbas A.S fought as the standard-bearer of his half-brother Husayn ibn Ali in the Battle of Karbala on 10 Muharram 61 AH (10 October 680 CE). He was killed in a desperate attempt to bring water from the Euphrates to quench the unbearable thirst of the besieged family of Prophet Muhammad saw. Hazrat Abbas was born at Medina on 7th Rajab/4th Shabaan 26 A.H.(645 A.D.). When the news of his birth reached Hazrat Ali, he prostrated himself on the ground as a token of his humble thanks to God. Imam Hussain took the baby in his arms and recited the Azan and Eqamat (Calls for Prayers) in his right and left ears respectively. Then the new born baby opened his eyes to see the beloved face of Imam Hussain. On the seventh day of his birth the ceremony of Aqeeqa (which is one of the emphasised Sunnats) was performed and Hazrat Ali named the child 'Abbas'. A similar incident took place at the time of the birth of Hazrat Ali. He only opened his eyes when the Holy Prophet took him in his arms. Abbas up-bringing It was the desire of Hazrat Ali that this son whom he named 'Abbas' (Meaning a Dauntless Lion) would accomplish the same deeds of valour and who would follow his teachings without fear of life and death. It was also his wish that Abbas would be a constant companion of Imam Hussain and be his Standard Bearer at Kerbala. Hazrat Ali who himself was known as 'The Lion of God' and the 'Gateway of Knowledge' brought up Hazrat Abbas and ably guided him till he was fourteen years old. The next ten years were spent under the careful eye of Imam Hasan and the last ten years with Imam Hussain. Thus it was not surprising that Hazrat Abbas acquired near perfection in so many spheres of life. His gallantry, boldness, courageous outlook, and the art of combat and soldiery were inherited from Hazrat Ali, and this he proved very well in the battles of Jamal, Siffin and Nahrwan. Imam Hasan taught him patience and tolerance. His Lion-hearted loyalty and self-sacrificing nature were the result of his association with Imam Hussain and Janab-e-Zainab. Physically, mentally, morally and spiritually he was fully developed, besides, being an accomplished scholar. He helped the poor and needy, and discharged his duties towards his fellow-beings according to the precepts of Islam. He was pure in his thoughts, words and deeds, lest any of these should displease God. He lived strictly in accordance with the teachings of the Holy Quran and the sayings of the Holy Prophet. Just as Ali was taught and trained by the Holy Prophet, so was Abbas taught and trained by Hazrat Ali. Ali fully knew the mysteries of life and death, and Abbas had fully imbibed the true spirit of Islam. A man who was brought up, educated and trained by Hazrat Ali could on no account be attached to this worldly life nor fear death, and Abbas fully justified this by his actions. Hazrat Abbas married Lubaba, daughter of Obaidullah Ibne Abbas Ibne Abdul Muttalib, and had two sons, Fazl and Muhammad. Some sources say that Lubaba was present at Kerbala and their son Muhammad was martyred there. At the death bed of Hazrat Ali (AS) When Hazrat Ali was mortally wounded and lying on his deathbed, he sent for his entire family. Save Hazrat Abbas, he entrusted all to the care of his eldest son Imam Hasan. Then he heard Hazrat Abbas, hardly 12 years old, sobbing. Hazrat Ali asked him to come near him and gave his hand to his second

son, Imam Hussain, saying “Hussain, this child I am entrusting to you. He will represent me on the Day of your supreme sacrifice and will lay down his life in defending you and your dear ones”. And turning to Hazrat Abbas, he had said: “Abbas, my child, I know your unbounded love for Hussain. Though you are too young to be told about it, when that day dawns, consider no sacrifice too great for Hussain and his children”. This was in 657 A.D. The occasion for the supreme sacrifice came on the battlefield of Kerbala in 680 A.D. when Hussain was poised against Yezid’s forces. It was a battle of good against evil and right against wrong. And in the history of Islam, the battle of Kerbala has become an important landmark of supreme sacrifice, great courage and dedication to a just cause. In the battle of Kerbala, Hazrat Abbas was Imam Hussain’s commander-in-chief. He fought the evil forces of Yezid gallantly, remembering his father’s last words. The story of the sacrifice of his life in trying to procure water for Imam Hussain’s children on the battlefield is the most touching and significant in Islamic history. The Life of Hazrat Abbas is an example of unflinching loyalty and love for a brother. It is also the story of a warrior who sacrificed his life for the cause of Islam, which, according to Hazrat Abbas, was a just cause. The warrior at Siffin Hazrat Ali’s desire was to ensure that Hazrat Abbas preached the religion of Islam and served the Prophet’s family. Hazrat Abbas saw his first battle when only eleven. This was the battle of Siffin. One day he appeared fully disguised, masked and armoured, on the battlefield. When Ibn-e-Shasa, a brave and famous Syrian fighter saw this masked person, he asked one of his seven sons to slay him. Instead, the son was quickly put down. Similarly, the other six sons tried to fight this masked warrior, but they all met the same fate. Finally Ibn-e-Shasa himself came forward and the manner in which he was also beaten, made all the other people stare in disbelief. They then thought this masked fighter to be Hazrat Ali, and no one dared to come forward to fight. But, when Hazrat Abbas removed the mask, people were surprised to note that he was not Hazrat Ali, but instead, Abbas, the inheritor of Hazrat Ali’s gallantry. Hazrat Abbas devotion, respect and affection for Imam Hussain was so deep, that he used to worship the very ground he walked on. In fact, it is said that he used to apply to his eyes, the dust from Imam Hussain’s feet. He resented anyone taking precedence in serving Imam Hussain. It is said that once Imam Hussain, while present with his Holy father Hazrat Ali in the mosque of Kufa, felt thirsty and asked for water from his servant Qumber. The child Abbas leapt to his feet, and brushing aside the faithful servant, rushed to bring the water for his master himself. In the hurry to carry the water as quickly as possible, he spilt it on his own clothes. His illustrious father stopped in his speech and tears rolled down his cheeks. When asked by his faithful followers the reason for his tears, Hazrat Ali uttered those prophetic words which came true some twenty years later: “Abbas who has today wetted his clothes with water in his zeal to quench the thirst of his brother Hussain, will one day soak his very body in his own blood in attempting to quench the thirst of Imam Hussain’s children”. His devotion to Imam Hussain (AS) at Kerbala He stayed beside Imam Hussain ever since they left Medina and was loved by all the

members of the Imam's family. He was so devoted to Imam Hussain, that when Shimr Ibne Ziljoshan, the second-in-command of Yezid's army came towards Imam Hussain's camp and called out: "Where are my nephews, Abbas, Abdullah Jafar and Usman?" Hazrat Abbas refused to reply. It was only after Imam Hussain told him "Answer him, because, despite the fact that he is corrupt he is also one of your relatives" that Hazrat Abbas asked Shimr what he wanted. Shimr replied: "O, my nephews, I have specially asked Obaidullah Ibne Ziad for the safety of you all. So why do you wish to kill yourselves with Hussain? Why do you not join the forces of the mighty Yezid?" Hazrat Abbas looked at him with contempt and retorted, "May God's wrath fall upon you and upon your proposition, O, enemy of God! How dare you counsel us to desert our master, Imam Hussain and tie ourselves up with the corrupt and misguided Yezid?" Shimr turned round and went away angrily. Another attempt was also made to get Hazrat Abbas away to the camp of Yezid, for in their heart of hearts, they were mortally afraid of his valour and bravery. Jareer bin Abdullah was a courtier of Ibne-Ziad, the Governor of Kufa, and had much influence on him. Ummul Baneen, the mother of Abbas, was a cousin of Jareer, who was fully convinced that Hussain and his companions would be slaughtered in cold blood. He also did not like the idea of his four nephews (Abbas, Abdulla, Ja'far and Usman) being massacred along with Hussain. He appealed to Ibne-Ziad, to spare the lives of his nephews. Ibne-Ziad granted this request and Jareer immediately wrote to Abbas asking him and his brothers to give up the company of Hussain and come over to Ibne-Ziad and to save their lives as the time was very critical. He sent this letter through a person named Irfan. The messenger handed over this confidential letter to Abbas, who having read it was hardly able to control his fury. He tore the letter to shreds, and informed Irfan, "Go away at once and tell my uncle, Jareer bin Abdullah, that we will never desert Hussain and we will never seek protection from Ibne-Ziad. We seek help from God Almighty, and we are ready to sacrifice our lives for our beloved Hussain and Islam." When Irfan gave this message to Jareer, he was very much disappointed and sad. He had been over-confident that Abbas would accept his invitation; apparently he had forgotten that Abbas was the son of the 'Lion of God' who cared more for Islam and Hussain than his own life. On the eve of Ashoora as Hazrat Abbas sat sharpening his sword in his tent, his sister, Umme Kulsum came to him and with tears in her eyes said to him: "I cannot make any sacrifice for my dear brother Imam Hussain. who is surrounded by enemies. Zainab has two sons whom she will sacrifice for Hussain; Qasim will represent his father Imam Hasan; Umme Lailah will send her son Ali Akber into the battle-field; even Rabab is going to sacrifice her infant son, Ali Ashgar; but I have no children, and being a woman I am not permitted to fight. People will remember all these brave ladies, and sing their praises. But I have no one whom I can offer on my behalf." At this Hazrat Abbas consoled her and said, "Do not worry, dear sister. You have brought me up since childhood and you have loved me as a mother. I will sacrifice myself on your behalf. In the morning Umme Kulsum took her brother Abbas to Imam Hussain and said, "Let my brother Abbas fight for you

on my behalf and he is my sacrifice for you and Islam.” When at last after great persuasion, Imam Hussain gave him permission to fetch water for the thirsty children, Hazrat Abbas set out with a leather bag and the Standard. The fight to reach the river. The towering form of Abbas and his fame as a warrior throughout Arabia, had created much tenor amongst the enemy. When this ‘Dauntless Lion’ made his appearance on the field, the enemy tried its best to prevent him from reaching the river. He stood in front of them boldly and bravely and addressed them as follows: “We are ourselves the swords of the Hashimite tribe and are sharper than the sharpest edges to shed your blood. O, sons of the opposers of right I Alas, if our grandfather, the Holy Prophet had survived and seen the calamities that his progeny has been made to suffer, he would truly be ashamed of you. Death under swords is glorifying when Paradise is the fruit. Cursed be this world and its transitory pleasures. You will all roast in the fires of Hell.” Hearing these words, the enemy attacked him from all sides. Abbas, the dauntless lion, fell upon them with a loud roar. He slaughtered every person that came within his reach. In the forces of Omar bin Saad, there was one person named Marid bin Sudaif. When he saw that Abbas was playing havoc and killing the best soldiers of Yezid, he got very wild, and angrily said, “It is an occasion of great shame and regret that one Hashimite has been causing so much destruction. He is alone. We are numberless. Look at our numerical strength. If each one of you takes up a handful of dust and throws it on his face, he shall die of suffocation. All of you are cowards. Retreat. Let me alone fight with Abbas. I shall kill him in no time.” So saying, he ran towards Abbas with a big lance in his hand. Abbas also moved from his place to try his strength and skill with Marid bin Sudaif who boasted of his chivalry, courage and manliness and who was over-confident of his victory. He said to Abbas contemptuously, “Abbas return and do not fight. If you fight with me, you shall perish. I take pity on you because you are so young and tender. Go away at once and live a peaceful and happy life. Remember that those persons who have fought with you till now and whom you have killed so easily did not possess the necessary dash. Know that you are no match for me. A word is enough for the wise. Retreat if you want to save your life.” Abbas, the dauntless lion and the Moon of the Bani Hashim, listened to Marid bin Sudaif patiently from the beginning to the end. When he had finished his oration Abbas said boldly, “O, enemy of God! It is quite impossible for me to agree to your terms. You cannot ruin me but you shall yourself be ruined. Those who die for God live forever; those who fight against God perish forever. Blessed are those who sacrifice their lives for the pleasure of God. Rest assured that you can never succeed in misleading and misguiding me. You are aware of my connection with the Prophet. A son of Ali, the Lion of God, can neither tremble nor retreat. He can never submit to evil forces. He can never be afraid of any enemy however strong and powerful he may be. Remember that the secret of a man’s greatness lies in his unshakeable faith in God. He should always be grateful to the Almighty God in whatever circumstances he may be; God’s ways are inscrutable. Whatever He does is always the best. I am not in the least displeased with my fate. I am

fully conscious of whatever lies in store for me. I can never weep over the loss of this world and try to escape death when it comes to me I will rather welcome Death if it comes to me in the way of God. I shall submit to Death cheerfully, joyfully and happily, for Paradise Is a much happier abode than this world. This world is not a place worth living. Fortunate is he who dies for Islam.” Marid bin Sudaif lost his balance of mind at this cutting reply. He never expected such a bold reply from a person who was surrounded by the mighty and strong forces of Yezid. He regretted that his appeal did not produce the desired effect. It fell on deaf ears. He was thunderstruck at the audacity and exceptional chivalry of Abbas at this moment of mortal danger, Abbas who was so cool, calm, unperturbed and dignified. He fully realised the gravity of the situation and within the twinkling of an eye, he charged Abbas and attacked him with his lance. Abbas did not lose his presence of mind. He stood his ground. He caught hold of the lance and pulled it so hard that Marid bin Sudaif who had boasted of his valour and over-confidence lost not only his grip on the lance but also his balance on the saddle. Abbas succeeded in snatching his lance. Marid fell, to the ground. Without losing a single moment, Abbas wounded the horse of Marid so severely that it was unfit for further action. Shimr had minutely and carefully observed the awkward position in which Marid had been placed. If he did not get immediate assistance, his condition would be perilous. So Shimr acted quickly, and cried out to Sariqa (a faithful and obedient servant of Marid) to take another horse to his master. Sariqa obeyed the orders of Shimr implicitly. No sooner did Marid see his slave with a horse than he asked him to come quickly lest death should overtake him. Abbas acted very wisely. He rode to the slave very swiftly and threw him down with a stroke of the lance, which he had taken from Marid. He then went to meet Marid once more. When Marid saw this strange sight, he was very much frightened. He cried in despair, ‘Alas, Abbas will kill me with my own lance Shimr observed this peculiar situation. He advanced on his own horse. Sinan-bin-Anas-Nakai, Khooli bin Yezidi Asbahi and Jamal bin Maliki-Hajazi accompanied him. Then Yezids full cavalry with drawn swords followed him. But Abbas wounded the hand of Marid with a blow of his lance before these persons could give him any help. Marid appealed to Abbas to spare his life and he promised to become his slave. But Abbas turned down his appeal and struck his lance so forcibly in one of his ears that it came out of the other. Marid died in that wretched condition. It was indeed a very miserable death. Abbas then fell upon the soldiers who had been posted to guard the banks of the Euphrates. He killed many of them. The rest fled for their lives, confounded and perplexed. Abbas reached the bank of the river and began to fill the leather bag. In spite of his thirst, he refused to drink water, and even his horse did likewise. He then lifted the leather bag and hung it on his shoulder. In the meantime, the archers and other soldiers who had fled away in utter confusion came back again and tried to check Abbas from taking water to Hussain’s camp. It was a bloody battle, but Abbas was not a man either to lose courage or accept defeat. His one thought was to reach this water to the thirsty children waiting anxiously for his return. Although he

was outnumbered and surrounded by the enemy, he decided not to submit. He fought bravely, but the odds were very much against him, and ultimately he was martyred. Blood on the sand The shifting sand-dunes of Kerbala were smeared with blood. Near one of those dunes, on the bank of the Euphrates, lay the prostrate figure of a youth with blood gushing out from innumerable wounds. The crimson life-tide was ebbing fast. Even so, it seemed as if he was anxiously expecting somebody to come to him, to be near him before he breathed his last. Through his parched throat he was feebly calling somebody Yes, Abbas was anxiously expecting his master to come to him before he parted with his life, as he had come to the side of all his devoted friends who had laid down their dear lives for him in this noble cause. It is said that before a man dies all the past events of his life pass before his mind's eye in a flashback. In his last moments, Abbas saw the events of his life. He saw himself as a child in Medina following Hussain with a devotion which was considered unique even for a brother. He saw the events of that hot and sultry day in Kufa when his illustrious father Ali was addressing a congregation in the mosque and he as a child with his characteristic devotion, was looking at the face of his beloved brother, watching him intently, so that he could attend to his wishes as if they were an instant command. Seeing from the parched lips of Hussain that he was feeling extremely thirsty, how he had darted out from the mosque and returned with a tumbler full of cool, refreshing water and in the hurry to carry the water as quickly as possible, how he had spilt it on his own clothes. He recalled now the prophetic words of his father and understood how true they were at this moment of his end. He was vividly seeing the scene on the 21st Ramazan, way back in 40A.H., when his father, mortally wounded, was lying on his death-bed and entrusting his children and dependants to the care of his eldest brother, Hasan all except him. Seeing that his father had commended all but him to the care of Hasan, how he, a child of twelve had burst out into uncontrollable tears. His father on hearing him sobbing had called him to his side and given his hand in Hussain's hand with the words, "Hussain, this child I am entrusting to you. He will represent me on the day of your supreme sacrifice and lay down his life in defending you and your dear ones." How his father had turned to him and affectionately told him; "Abbas, my child, I know your unbounded love for Hussain. Though you are too young to be told about it, when that day dawns, consider no sacrifice too great for Hussain and his children." He saw before his mind's eye the parting with his aged mother Fatima in Medina; how she had affectionately embraced him and reminded him of the dying desire of his father to lay down his life in the defence of Hussain and his dear ones. A faint smile of satisfaction flickered for a brief moment on his parched lips, a smile of satisfaction that he had fulfilled his father's wish; that he had performed his duty for which he was brought up. It just flitted for a moment and vanished as other scenes came before his mind's eye. He was re-living the events of the night before. He was seeing Shimr stealthily coming to him and talking to him about his ties of relationship; about the protection he had been promised for Abbas by the Commander of Yezid's forces only if he would leave

Hussain and go over to Yezid's camp; about the promises of riches and rewards that he would get; how he had spurned the suggestion of Shimr with the utmost disdain to the chagrin of that servile minion who had sold his soul for a mess of pottage. How he had scared away that coward by his scathing rage, saying "You worshipper of Mammon, do not think that Abbas will be lured by your tempting offers of power and pelf. If I die in defending my Master, Hussain, I shall consider myself the luckiest person. Oh coward, remember that valiant die but once. Nobody is born to live eternally. By betraying my master, you have betrayed the Prophet, whose religion you profess to follow. On the Day of Judgement you will be doomed to eternal perdition." (I am ashamed to own any relationship with you). Had it not been for the fact that you have come here unarmed, I would have given you the chastisement you deserve for your impudence in asking me to become a turncoat." How that wretch had scampered away seeing him roaring like an enlarged lion! The thought of that unpleasant interlude wrinkled his brows. Or was it the excruciating pain he was suffering on account of the deep gashes he had all over his body? Yet another scene passed before Abbas's eyes. The children were shouting as if in chorus "thirst, consuming thirst, is killing us." Sakina coming to him and putting her dry water-bag at his feet and saying to him "O uncle. I know you will do something to get water for us. Even if you can bring one bag full, we can wet our parched throats." He could see that thirst aggravated by the scorching heat of the desert, was squeezing their young lives out of them. The sight of these young children had moved him more than any other soul-stirring event of that fateful day. How he had picked up the water-bag with assurances to Sakina that he would go and bring water, God Willing. How he had taken Hussain's permission and marched out of the camp with a sword in one hand, the flag in the other and the water-bag on his shoulder, with the children following him in a group unto the outer-perimeter of the camp. How Hussain had repeatedly requested him to avoid lighting as much as possible and confine himself to the task of bringing water! His thoughts switched over to the events that had preceded his fall from the horse. With the thought of procuring water for his dear little Sakina, he had slain Marid bin Sudaif a champion from Yezid's army, and how he had charged on the enemy who held the river banks. He had run through the enemy ranks like a knife through butter. Against his surging onslaught the enemy could not stand and had run helter-skelter shouting for protection. For a moment it seemed as if Ali, the Lion of God, had descended from Heaven. In no time Abbas was near the water. (He had jumped down from the horse and bent to fill the water-bag). When it was filled to the brim, he had taken some water in his cupped hands to drink to satisfy his killing thirst. But on second thought, he had thrown the water away. How could he drink water when Sakina and the children were still withering without water? He had turned to his horse, which had been let loose so that it could satiate its thirst. The animal had been intently looking at its master as if to say "I too am aware that so long as our Master and his children remain without water, our thirst cannot be quenched." Fought Valiantly With the water-bag filled, he jumped on horseback with one thought uppermost in his mind, to get the water

for the anxiously waiting children as quickly as possible. Seeing him galloping towards the camp of Hussain, the enemy turned. Somebody shouted from the enemy ranks that if Hussain and his people got water, it would be difficult to fight them on the battlefield. Though it was an unequal fight, he fought them with valour, which was a characteristic of his father. Seeing that a frontal assault on a man so brave was not possible, they resorted to a barrage of arrows. Abbas had only one thought in his mind-how best to protect the water-bag? To him it seemed more important to protect the water-bag than to protect his life. Seeing Abbas thus preoccupied, one treacherous foe, hiding behind a sand-dune rushed out and dealt a blow on his right hand and cut it off. In a flash Abbas transferred his sword to his left hand and the standard he was bearing, he hugged to his chest. Now that the lion of All was crippled, the foes found courage to surround him. A blow from an enemy's sword severed his left arm. The odds were now mounting against him. He held the bag with his teeth and protected the flag with his chest bent on the horse. Now the paramount thought in his mind was to reach the camp somehow or the other. A silent prayer escaped his lips: "Merciful Allah, spare me long enough to fulfil my mission." But that was not to be. An arrow pierced the water-bag and water started gushing out of it. All his efforts had been in vain. The enemies who had made bold to surround him, now gathered thickly round him. One of them came near him and struck a mortal blow with an iron club. He reeled over and fell from the horse. Master come to me He tossed on the burning sand with excruciating pain. He felt that life was fast ebbing out but his wish to see his Master had remained unfulfilled. With one last effort, he shouted: "O my Master, do come to me before I die." As if in answer to his prayers, he felt footsteps near him. Yes, his instinct told him that it was his Master. He felt his Master kneeling down besides him, lifting his head and taking it into his lap. Not a word was said for a few seconds, because both were shaken with emotion. At last he heard Hussain's voice, a half-sob, half-muffled cry: "Abbas my brother, what have they done to you?" Abbas now felt the loving touch of his Master's hand. With great effort he muttered "You have come at last, my Master. I thought I was not destined to have a last look at you but, thank God, you are here." Hussain burst into a flood of tears. The sight of his brother, whose name was to become a byword for devotion and unflinching faithfulness, laying down his precious life in his arms, was heart-rending. Abbas was heard to whisper softly: "My Master, I have some last wishes to express. When I was born, I had first looked at your face and it is my last desire that when I die, my gaze may be on your face. My one eye is pierced by an arrow and the other is filled with blood. If you will clear the eye I will be able to see you and fulfil my last dying desire. My second wish is that when I die, you should not carry my body to the camp. I had promised to bring water to Sakina and since I have failed in my attempts to bring her water, I cannot face her even in death. Besides, I know that the blows that you have received since morning have all but crushed you and carrying my body to the camp will be back-breaking work for you. And my third wish is that Sakina may not be brought here to see my plight. I know with what love and affection she is devoted to me. The

sight of my dead body lying here will kill her.” My Brother! My Brother! Hussain sobbingly promised him that he would carry out his last wishes and added “Abbas, I too have a wish to be fulfilled. Since childhood you have always called me Master. For once at least call me brother with your dying breath.” The blood was cleared from the eye, one brother looked at the other with a long lingering look. Abbas was heard to whisper: “My brother, my brother!” and with these words he surrendered his soul to his Maker. Hussain fell unconscious on the dead body of Abbas with a cry. The flow of the Euphrates became dark as winter and a murmur arose from the flowing waters as if to protest against the killing of a thirsty water-bearer on its banks, the beloved “Moon of the Hashimites.” Alas, the beloved Hazrat Abbas (A.S.) was martyred in the prime of his youth at the age of 35, on the 10th Moharram, in the year 61 A.H. (680 A.D.).

Pilgrimage to his Mausoleum It is almost fourteen hundred years since this tragedy occurred at Kerbala, and still tens of thousands of pilgrims keep going there year after year, from all parts of the Muslim world to pay their respects to the gallant Abul Fazl Abbas (Moon of the Hashimites) at his magnificent Mausoleum. They offer salutations and pray to Allah for their needs, seeking his intercession, for this is a place where so many vows have been fulfilled and where so many miracles have taken place. Many a devotee has willed that he be buried in this holy place and so often one sees the sight of a coffin being carried a few times round the tomb of Hazrat Abbas (A.S.) and taken to the allotted place of burial in Kerbala at this wonderful shrine. Holy Qur’an Says: “And if you are slain in the way of Allah or you die, certainly forgiveness from Allah and mercy is better than what they amass.” (3:157)

The Alam and its Significance During the time of the Moharram Majlises, usually on the 8th, it has become a sort of custom to recite the events leading to the martyrdom of Hazrat Abbas. And when the Alams (replica of the Banner or Standard of the Holy Prophet and the Holy Imams) are taken out, accompanied to the beating of breasts and heads by the mourners, one will notice a Mashk (a leather water-bag), usually made of metal in remembrance of Hazrat Abbas, who sacrificed his life trying to get water for the children of Imam Hussain, who were dying of thirst. When Hazrat Abbas rolled down from his horse after a mortal blow on his head, the Alam and the Mashk stayed linked together and never got separated. Hence one sees an Alam with a Maslik attached to it, and sometimes one also sees an arrow alongside it.

A Towering personality Hazrat Abbas was a towering and handsome personality. His dauntless courage, supreme confidence and unflinching loyalty earned him many titles. He was called, “Qamar-e-Bani Hashim” (Moon of the Hashimites), because of his imposing appearance. His remarkable horsemanship made him “Syed-ul-Forosan” (the chief of horsemen). His ability to lead people resulted in his being called “Rais-ul-Shujan” (the leader of the valiant), and the manner in which he sacrificed his life earned him the title of Afzal-ul-Shohada” (the choicest of the martyrs) and “Saqqa” (water carrier), because he sacrificed his life in an effort to procure water for Imam Hussain’s children in the tragic battle at Kerbala. He fully lived up to his name Abbas, which in Arabic stands for Lion. Salutations As Salaamo alaika yub-ne Amir-

il-Momeneen, As Salanmo alaika aiyyo-hul Abdus-Saleh, Al-mootee-oo lillahey wa ley Rasooley-hee, Ash hadau anneka qad jaa-hadta Wa ne-sah-ta, Wa sabarta hatta a-taa kal yaqeen La a-nalla-hooz zaaleymeena lakoom minal, Awwaleena wal aakheyreen, Wal haqahoom bey dar kil jaheem. Salutations be unto thee, O son of Commander of the Faithful; Salutations be unto thee, O virtuous servant, obedient to God and His Messenger; I bear witness that thou didst truly fight the Holy War, And thou didst help the cause of Faith; And thou didst patiently endure Until the certainty (of death) came upon thee. May God deprive those who wronged thee of His Mercy. Whether they may have been of the first or the last (i.e., all of them); And may He consign them to the nethermost regions of Hell; Salutations and the Mercy and Blessings of God be upon thee, (O beloved Moon of the Hashimites). “As Salaamo ala ya Abul Fazl Abbas ibne Aliyin Amiril Momeneen wa Rahmatullahey wa Barakaatuh.” “Peace be upon thee O Abul Fazl Abbas, son of Hazrat Ali, Commander of the Faithful, and the Mercy of Allah and His Bounties.” Disclaimer: The information provided in this article and rights are reserved to the respected owner ezsoftech.com. The article is based on the knowledge and understanding available at the time of writing, and the opinions expressed are those of the author.

Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib(AS)- Biography

Name: Ali **Title:** Asadullah (Lion of God); Haydar (Brave-hearted), Abu Turab (Father of Dust), Amir al-Mu'minin (Commander of the Faithful) **Kunya:** Abu al-Hassan; Abu al-Hassanain **Father:** Abu Talib (Peace be upon him) **Mother:** Fatimah bint Asad **Born:** 13th Rajab, 23 BH/595 CE inside the Holy Kabah in Makkah, Hejaz region of the Arabian Peninsula **Died:** 21st Ramadan, 40 AH/661 CE, after being struck on the head with a sword by the Kharijite, Ibn Muljam **Age at Martyrdom:** 63 **Period of Imamate:** 29 years **Buried:** Najaf, Iraq

Imam Ali (p)

“...and I am leaving with you two weighty things. As long as you hold onto them both, you will never go astray,” said Muhammad, the Messenger of God.

Someone from the crowd then called out, “...O Messenger of God, what are the two weighty things?”

[Prophet Muhammad](#) then stated, “The Book of God (the Qur’an) – a connection between God and you – so hold onto it; and the other is my family (Ahl al-Bayt)... Indeed, (God,) the All-Attentive, the All-Aware, has told me that these two will not separate until they reach me at the pond (in heaven)...”

The Messenger of God then took the hand of ‘Ali, raised it for everyone to see, and declared three times, “...So for whomever I am the Leader, ‘Ali is the Leader.”

[Prophet Muhammad](#) continued to pray, “O God...love those who love him, detest those who detest him...and turn the Truth with him, whichever way he turns.”[i]

These were the words of [Prophet Muhammad](#) on the day of Ghadir. Following the announcement, people proceeded to congratulate their Divinely-appointed leader. Imam ‘Ali was the disciple who emanated wisdom, faith, and valor from every corner of his being. In the sphere of intellectual thought, Imam ‘Ali was an eye of piercing insight. As Commander of the Faithful, he was closest in resemblance to Prophet Muhammad. In the path of justice, Imam ‘Ali’s bravery was legendary. This was the personality of the Commander of the Faithful.

Unique Qualities

Imam ‘Ali was raised by the Prophet himself and was truly the Prophet’s shadow for most of his life. Even when the Prophet went out to the desert or nearby mountains, the young Imam was his companion. Imam ‘Ali recalled some of these moments later on in his life, when he said, “...Every year he (the Prophet) used to go in seclusion to the Cave of Hira’, where I saw him but no one else did.”[ii]

After the Prophet received revelation in the Cave of Hira’, the first man to outwardly accept the Prophet’s message was Imam ‘Ali. Indeed, Imam ‘Ali was among the very few who never believed in or bowed down to false idols – neither before nor after the advent of Islam. [Prophet Muhammad](#) once said to his companions, “The first among you to meet me at the pond (in heaven) is the first among you to embrace Islam – that is ‘Ali...”[iii]

Upon the Muslim migration (hijrah) to Madinah, the Prophet paired each one of the Muslim migrants (muhajirin) with a Muslim brother from the people of Madinah (anṣar). Once everyone had been paired, Imam ‘Ali came up to the Prophet with teary eyes saying, “You have not paired me with a brother...”

Prophet Muhammad then replied, “You are my brother, in this world and the Hereafter.”[iv]

Glimpses of the Legend

The virtues of Imam ‘Ali are too numerous to be encompassed by this short page. But mentioning some of the eternal images in Imam ‘Ali’s life may provide a glimpse into the life of a true legend. The Battle of the Trench (Khandaq) was a notable scene for displaying Imam ‘Ali’s valor. The hero of the enemies – Amro – had been taunting the Muslims, calling out for a challenger. Many Muslims were terrified of the infamous Amro. But not Imam ‘Ali. Each time the vicious Amro would call out for a challenger, Imam ‘Ali would ask the Prophet for permission to fight. Upon the third request, [Prophet Muhammad](#) told Imam ‘Ali, “He is Amro...”

To which Imam ‘Ali replied, “And I am ‘Ali.”

Prophet Muhammad then granted Imam ‘Ali permission to fight. After some words with Amro, it became clear that a fight was inevitable. The two fought until Imam ‘Ali was struck and injured on the head. However, Imam ‘Ali was able to strike back and gain victory.

The Muslims were relieved that the invaders had just lost their wicked icon. [Prophet Muhammad](#) commented on the incident by saying,

“The challenge that ‘Ali met Amro with on the Day of the Trench (Khandaq) is greater than the deeds of my entire nation until the Day of Judgment.”[v]

While Imam ‘Ali was a courageous defender of truth on the battlefield, he was also a profoundly wise and patient leader. Imam ‘Ali carefully picked his battles without ever sacrificing his principles. After Prophet Muhammad passed away, many of the prominent companions disobeyed God’s directives to follow Imam ‘Ali as their leader. Instead, different political leaders were chosen by some of the companions. In order to safeguard the Muslim nation from civil strife and self-destruction, Imam ‘Ali opted not to bear arms against the illegitimate rulers. Imam ‘Ali

continued to advise these rulers, insofar as the greater benefit of serving the truth was concerned.[vi]

Unfortunately, even when the majority of Muslims pledged allegiance to Imam ‘Ali years later, dissident groups forced Imam ‘Ali into battle, and internal conspiracies prevented him from executing all of his reformatory plans. Eventually, an assassin struck Imam ‘Ali with a poison-laden sword, while he was in prayer at the Mosque of Kufah. In the coming nights, many of the poor stopped receiving the charity they had awaited so anxiously. They realized that the mysterious angel who came to give them sadaqah at night had been none other than Imam ‘Ali.[vii][viii]

The Path of Eloquence

Some of Imam ‘Ali’s words of wisdom have been preserved and gathered in a collection known as the Path of Eloquence (Nahj al-Balaghah). Here is a taste of some of Imam ‘Ali’s words describing God, in the Sermon of Skeletons (Khutbah al-Ashbah):

“...He is Powerful, such that when imagination shoots its arrows to comprehend the extremity of His power, and mind, making itself free of the dangers of evil thoughts, tries to find Him in the depth of His realm, and hearts long to grasp the realities of His attributes and openings of intelligence penetrate beyond description in order to secure knowledge about His Being, crossing the dark pitfalls of the unknown and concentrating towards Him, He would turn them back. They would return defeated, admitting that the reality of His knowledge cannot be comprehended by such random efforts, nor can an iota of the sublimity of His Honor enter the understanding of thinkers...”[ix]

Another excerpt of Imam ‘Ali’s words teaches us a lifelong lesson on how to deal with others, especially if we find ourselves in a position of authority. In a letter to Malik al-Ashtar, the Governor of Egypt — Imam ‘Ali wrote the following:

“...Remember, Malik, that amongst your subjects there are two kinds of people: those who have the same religion as you have – they are brothers to you, and those who have religions other than yours – they are human beings like you. Men of either category suffer from the same weaknesses and disabilities that human beings are inclined to, they commit sins, indulge in vices either intentionally or foolishly and unintentionally, without realizing the enormity of their deeds. Let your mercy and compassion come to their rescue and help in the same way and to the same extent that you expect God to show mercy and forgiveness to you...”[x]

[i] Pg. 34-35 of al-A’immah al-Ithnay Ashar by Sh. Jafar Subhani [ii] Pg. 18-21 of al-A’immah al-Ithnay Ashar by Sh. Jafar Subhani [iii] Pg. 35 of Seerat al-A’immah by Sh. Jafar Subhani [iv] Pg. 42 of Seerat al-A’immah by Sh. Jafar Subhani [v] Pg. 52-54 of Seerat al- A’immah by Sh. Jafar Subhani [vi] Pg. 61-62 of Seerat al- A’immah by Sh. Jafar Subhani [vii] Pg. 82 of Seerat al-A’immah by Sh. Jafar Subhani [viii] Ch. 66 of A Restatement of the History of Islam and Muslims by S. Ali Razwy [ix] “Letter to Malik al-Ashtar,” Nahj al-Balaghah [x] “Khutbat al-Ashbah,” Nahj al-Balaghah

The history of mankind has witnessed many leaders over the ages. Many of these leaders achieved leadership through might or inheritance and some were chosen as leaders because of certain outstanding qualities that they possessed. Among the latter group there have also emerged some leaders whose works and contribution to humanity cannot be limited to any particular time or place; and their life-styles, their works and the sayings of such heroes continue to inspire and motivate people, generation after generation.

Amir al-Muminin, Ali ibn Abu Talib (peace be upon him) is a unique leader who stands out among all other leaders. Besides Shi'as who believe in his Imamate and Vilayat, many non-Muslims have praised his personality and unique qualities and made attempts to highlight certain aspects of the personality of this everlasting leader of ages and have written hundreds of books and research papers about him.

Imam Ali (peace be upon him) was brought up by the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) and under his guardianship and was elevated to such a stage that it would be no exaggeration to say that he is Islam's gift to the world of humanity.

Imam Ali's (peace be upon him) life was not the repetition of other people's lives, rather his life shed light on certain aspects of human life which had so far been undiscovered. He was born in Allah's House (Ka'ba) and was martyred in Allah's house (mosque) and his main principle throughout his life was winning Allah's Satisfaction. Hence, one would not be wrong to say that any research on Imam Ali's (peace be upon him) life and personality would highlight an aspect of his life that could be taken up as a role model for the people who seek truth; Muslim or otherwise.

Imam Ali (peace be upon him) from Birth to the Dawn of Islam:

Ali (peace be upon him) was the son of Abu Talib ibn-e Mutallib and Fatima bint Asad ibn-e Hashim. He was born on 13th Rajab, 30 years after Amal-Fil. His life began in the Holy Kaba, 1 which became the Qiblah of Muslims and ended in the Mosque of Kufa (Iraq).

It was Allah's Will that from the early days of his life, the Prophet of Allah be brought up on his lap. Mecca and Quraysh were struck by famine. Muhammad (peace be upon him and his holy progeny) met his other paternal uncle Abbas who was a wealthy man and made a suggestion to him to support Abu Talib (S.A.) by taking up the guardianship of some of his children.

Abbas welcomed the suggestion and they met Abu Talib (S.A.) and informed him of their intention. Abu Talib (S.A.) said: "Leave Aqil for me..." Muhammad (peace be upon him and his holy progeny) chose Ali (peace be upon him), and Abbas took Ja'far. Later on, the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) is known to have said: "I chose the one Allah had chosen for me."

Some writers are of the opinion that by accepting Imam Ali's (peace be upon him) guardianship, the Prophet (PBUH) meant to compensate for the favors he had received from Abu Talib and Fatima (Ali's parents), who looked after him like their own children during his childhood. However, from what the Prophet (PBUH) had said and from Ali's (A.S.) behavior - it is quite clear that it was Allah's Will that Ali (A.S.) should grow up with the Prophet (PBUH) and under his guardianship.

The young Ali's (A.S.) personality was being shaped by Muhammad (PBUH), when the latter declared his prophethood. According to most historians, Ali (A.S.) was the first among the men to embrace Islam. Ali (A.S.) was the only disciple of the Prophet (PBUH) who had never bowed before or worshipped idols.

He had no other ideal but to seek Allah and His prophet's (PBUH) satisfaction, and his sincerity, steadfastness, sacrifice, and bravery in supporting "Tawhid" were some of his outstanding qualities no one can ever deny.

From the Dawn of Islam to the prophet's (PBUH) Demise:

The Dawn of Islam in Arabia, which was stricken with ignorance (Jahiliyah) and superstitions, not only changed the course of history in that land but also influenced other nations and peoples of the world. Savage customs that were considered as values in those times - communal rivalries, burying baby-girls alive, etc. were rendered as disgraceful and inhuman by the new religion of Islam.

This change in the social and individual beliefs and customs was the fruit of the years of struggle and endeavor by the Prophet (PBUH) and his close and sincere companions among which Ali (A.S.) played the greatest role. His contribution to the spread of Islam was exemplary and he was the greatest gift of Islam and its Prophet (PBUH) to humanity. A voluminous book is required to write about Imam Ali's (A.S.) contribution towards the establishment of Islam but in this discussion, we shall confine ourselves to reviewing only a few of them.

1. Important Incidents that took place in Mecca:

a) Yom al-Anzar

After the verse "... and warn your nearest relations ...," was revealed, the Prophet (PBUH) was commissioned by Allah to make public, the invitation to accept Islam. Thus, he asked Ali (A.S.) to prepare a meal and invited his close relatives over. After the meal, he publicly announced his Prophethood and asked: "Which one of you will support me in my mission to be my brother, successor and caliph?" Only Ali (A.S.) stood up to swear allegiance, and the Prophet (PBUH) introduced him as his successor and caliph.

b) Laylatul-Mabit

Despite all the efforts by Quraysh to prevent Islam from spreading, the people of "Yathreb" embraced Islam and swore allegiance to protect it with their swords. This news outraged the Quraysh who in an emergency meeting decided to assassinate the Prophet (S.A.W.) collectively.

On uncovering this devious plot, the Prophet (PBUH) requested Ali (A.S.) to wear his mantle and to sleep in his place, in order to foil the evil plans of the enemies of Islam and to facilitate his "Hejira" (Migration) from Mecca to Medina.

It was after this incident that reflected the deep devotion, courage and commitment of Imam Ali (A.S.) towards the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) and his divine mission, that Jibrail (A.S.) conveyed the news:

"O son of Abu Talib, there is none like you; Allah boasts to the angels of the seven heavens about you!"

2- Important Events in Medina:

The prophet's (PBUH) migration to Medina is a turning point in the history of Islam after which it went through a lot of ups and downs. Ali (A.S.) had an outstanding role in the events that followed the prophet's (PBUH) migration, a few of which are mentioned hereunder:

a) Ali's (A.S.) Marriage with Fatima (S.A.)

After prophet's (PBUH) migration, Imam Ali (A.S.) was given the responsibility of bringing Hazrat Fatima (S.A.), the beloved and devoted daughter of the Prophet (S.A.W.), to Medina. A few months later Ali (A.S.) married Fatima (S.A.). Ya`qubi, the Muslim historian writes:

"A group of "Muhajers" (those who had migrated from Mecca to Medina) had proposed for Fatima's (S.A.) hand in marriage. On hearing about her marriage with Ali (A.S.), some of them raised objections. In reply to their objections, the Prophet of Allah (PBUH) said: "I did not marry Fatima to Ali, rather it was Allah Who married her to Ali." 9 Interestingly, the prophet's (PBUH) lineage has been through Fatima (S.A.) and Ali (A.S.).

b) Brotherhood with the Prophet (PBUH)

To bring the Muhajers and Ansars closer to each other, the Prophet (PBUH) decreed that the Muhajers and Ansars should make brotherhood pacts among themselves; in pairs. However, he chose Imam Ali (A.S.) as his brother and said to him: "You are my brother, successor and inheritor and I inherit from you."

c) The prophet's (PBUH) Description of the Manner of Ali's Martyrdom

During the Battle of Zat ol-Ashira, that took place in the second year of Hejira, the Prophet (PBUH) sent Ali (A.S.) and Ammar on a mission. After some time the Prophet (PBUH) joined them and found them asleep. After waking them up, he said: "Should I inform you about the two most wretched men of all people?" On receiving their positive response, he then added: "The man who slew Saleh's camel and the man who will hit you (Ali) on the head and will make your blood flow to your beard."

d) Ali's Unique Bravery in the Battles

Except for the Battle of Tabuk in which Ali (A.S.) remained in Medina on the prophet's (PBUH) order, he had participated actively in all the battles and played a decisive role in all of them. Although it is not possible to discuss Ali's (A.S.) role in all these battles, we shall attempt to highlight a few of them.

i) Ali's role in the battle of Badr cannot be comparable to any of the other companions. As written by some historians, he killed 32 enemy soldiers single-handedly.

Interestingly, 33 years later when Ali (A.S.) was forced to accept the caliphate, a group of Quraysh like Sa'id ibn-e Aas and Walid ibn-e Aqrabeh, who later on participated in the battles of Jamal and Siffin against Imam Ali (A.S.), were hesitant to swear allegiance because he had killed their fathers in the Battle of Badr.

ii) Imam Ali (A.S.) was the only companion of the Prophet of Allah (PBUH) who never fled from the battlefield. History has recorded that many of the close companions of the Prophet (S.A.W.) fled during the battles of Uhud, Kheybar and Hunayn.

e) Imam Ali (A.S.) was appointed to communicate `Surat al-Bara"at"

After the revelation of `Surat al-Bara"at", the Prophet (PBUH) appointed one of his companions to communicate the messages to the unbelievers.

However, before this companion reached Mecca, the Prophet (PBUH) sent Imam Ali (A.S.) to take the newly-revealed verse from him and to personally communicate it to the unbelievers. On their return to Medina this companion asked the Prophet (PBUH) for the reason of this change of decree, to which the Prophet (PBUH) replied: "It was Allah's will that it should be communicated by a member of my Household."

f) Ali was a Judge in Yemen during the last few years of the Prophet's (S.A.W.) Life.

After the prophet's (PBUH) migration to Medina from Mecca, Islam spread rapidly in the Arabian Peninsula as a result of which Imam Ali (A.S.) was often sent by the Prophet (PBUH) to propagate Islam in different regions.

However, what is of great importance is the mission that was not given to any other companion. Towards the end of his life, the Prophet of Allah (PBUH), asked Imam Ali (A.S.) to go to Yemen which was a rather civilized society in those days, to discharge the duties of a judge (qazi). It has been narrated that Imam Ali (A.S.) told the Prophet (S.A.W.): "I am young and do not know about judgment."

The Prophet of Allah (S.A.W.) put his hand on the young Ali's (A.S.) chest and prayed: "O Allah! Guide his heart and make him articulate in judgment." Here Belazari has quoted Imam Ali (A.S.) as saying: "I swear by Allah that I have never been in doubt while passing a judgment between the disputing parties."

After the prophet's (PBUH) demise, the caliphs and particularly the second caliph frequently asked for Ali's (A.S.) opinion on various issues and in their judgments.

g) Ghadir-e-Khom

Both the Sunni and Shi"sources have narrated a number of incidents that highlight the status and position of Imam Ali (A.S.). However, undoubtedly one of the most important incidents is the `Ghadir-e-Khom". On his return from Hajjatul-Vida at a location famous as `Ghadir-e-Khom, the Prophet (PBUH) delivered a very important sermon and while holding and lifting the hand of Imam Ali (A.S.), clearly asked the people gathered there:

"O people! Is it not true that my `Vilayat" over you (believers) is of more importance than your `Vilayat" over yourselves?" To this question, the people answered in the affirmative.

Then the Prophet (PBUH) announced: "The one whose Mawla (Master) I am, Ali is his Master. O Allah! Love him who loves Ali, and be the enemy of the enemy of Ali...."

In that gathering at Ghadir-e-Khom, the Prophet (PBUH) also spoke regarding other important matters that stress on the importance of Imamate and Vilayat in the Islamic context. One of his important announcements was as follows:

"O people! I shall soon be departing from your midst. And you will meet me at the Pond of `Kawthar". Then I will ask you about two precious things (Thaqalayn). So be careful as to how you treat these two, after my demise."

Then the people inquired from the Prophet (PBUH) regarding the "two precious things" which he had referred to.

The Prophet (PBUH) explained: "One of them is the Qur'an- one end of which is in Allah's Hand and the other is in yours. So stick on tightly to it, so that you protect yourself from being misled. And the second one is my Pure Household."

At the end of the prophet's (PBUH) sermon, many of the people came forward to congratulate Ali (A.S.) and to extend their hands in allegiance to him. While yet others, were confounded with doubt and ambiguity. However, as for reliable Islamic sources, this incident has strong recorded evidence and it has been narrated through many chains of transmission of both Shi'a and Sunni schools of thought.

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Imam Ali Zayn al-Abidin-Biography

Updated: 14 hours ago

Imam Ali Zayn al-Abidin Name: Ali Title: Zainul Abedin, Sayidus Sajidin Designation: 4th Imam Kunyat: Abul Muhammad Father: 3rd Imam Hussain (A.S.) Mother: Shahr Banu Binte-Yazdjard Born: 15th Jumada 1 38AH (659AD) Died: 25th Muharram 95AH (713AD) Martyred: Poisoned by Waleed Buried: Cemetery of Jannatul Baqi

The Fourth Imam He was the only adult male to have survived the onslaught of 'Ashura'. His role would reach beyond the plains of Karbala'. Imam 'Ali, the son of Hussain, lived on as the voice of the revolution, even in the tyrant's very own palace. Imam 'Ali Zayn al-Abidin was the fourth immaculate Imam. Imam Hussain did not allow Zayn al-Abidin to fight during the battle of 'Ashura', due to his illness and because he needed to survive as the Divine representative on earth. For indeed, when Imam Hussain was asked about who the authority would go to if he passed, he said, "To 'Ali, this son of mine. He is the Imam, and the forefather of the (following) Imams."^[ii] Imam Zayn al-Abidin had a long journey ahead of him. A journey of spreading awareness and sparking an awakening. The fourth infallible Imam struggled, but not on the battlefield as Imam Hussain did. The struggle was the same struggle – the struggle of Awareness, Truth, and Love. But the methods and tools varied. Imam Zayn al-Abidin pursued his struggle by speaking out, teaching, and praying...Yes, by praying. Not the prayer of one who has given up and surrendered to injustice or ignorance. Rather, the prayer of one who encoded the secrets of awakening into the words of his prayer. The Imam taught of rights and detailed the prescription required for true balance. He educated, inspired and invigorated the people. He revived true life by preparing the hearts of the people to ignite with the fire of purpose. **The Aftermath of 'Ashura'** After 'Ashura', Imam Zayn al-Abidin led the caravan of women and children who were taken as prisoners of war. In shackles, along with the noble Lady Zaynab, Imam Zayn al-Abidin challenged injustice. When threatened with execution, the Imam stated: "Is it through killing that you threaten me...?! Don't you know that getting killed has become a habit for us (the Imams), and that our honor is in martyrdom?!" In the court of the tyrant Yazid, Imam Zayn al-Abidin spoke out in front of the

crowd. He announced who he was and what had happened to his family, the protectors of faith. As the Imam eloquently spoke, the people present were spontaneously awakened to the tragedies that had come to pass. The entire court was shaken in an outburst of tears and emotional cries. Yazid feared that the crowd would turn against him so he ordered that the call to prayer be made. When the call to prayer reached the phrase, "I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of God," Imam Zayn al-Abidin turned to Yazid and said: "This Muhammad, is he my grandfather or your grandfather, O Yazid? If you say that he is your grandfather, you have lied and rejected the truth. And if you say that he is my grandfather, then why did you kill his family?" As people heard these words, they saw through Yazid's deception. The court was overtaken by commotion and division. With Imam Zayn al-'Abidin's words, people saw the ugly face of evil that Yazid represented.

Prayers from al-Sahifah al-Sajjadiyyah A famous compilation of Imam Zayn al-'Abidin's prayers is called al-Sahifah al-Sajjadiyyah (The Book of the One in Frequent Prostration). The title refers to Imam Zayn al-'Abidin's devotional worship in which he constantly humbled himself before God. This compilation of prayers can be regarded as fuel for spiritual development. Reflecting on the words of Imam Zayn al-Abidin in relation to God creates a healing, motivational, and uplifting effect, to say the very least. Consider, for instance, the following excerpt from the Supplication in Asking for Release from Sins: "...so here I am, O Lord, thrown down before You! I am the one whose back is weighed down by mistakes! I am the one whose lifetime has been consumed by sins! I am the one who – with his ignorance – disobeyed You, while You did not deserve that from him!" "O God, would You have mercy on the one who prays to You, such that I should exert myself in prayer? Or would You forgive the one who cries to You, such that I should hurry to cry? Or would You pardon the one who smears his face (in the dirt) out of humility before You? Or would You free from need the one who complains to You of his poverty, with confidence (in You)?" "O God, do not disappoint the one who finds no Giver other than You... Do not let down the one who cannot be freed from his need for You through anyone but You...O God, bless Muhammad and his family, and do not turn away from me – for I have turned to You...Do not deprive me, for I have sought after You...and do not confront me with rejection, for I have stood before You..."

Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (AS)-Biography

Name: Muhammad

Title: al-Baqir (Splitter of Knowledge)

Kunya: Abu Ja'far

Father: Ali ibn Hussain, Zayn al-Abidin (Peace be upon him)

Mother: Fatimah bint al-Hasan

Born: 1st Rajab, 57 AH/676 CE in the Holy City of Madinah

Died: 7th Dhul-Hijjah, 114 AH/733 CE, after being poisoned by the Abbasid Caliph Hisham

Age at Martyrdom: 57

Period of Imamate: 19 years

Buried: Al-Baqi' cemetery, Madinah

The Splitter of Knowledge

“O Jabir, you will live to see my descendant Muhammad, son of ‘Ali, son of Husayn, son of ‘Ali... The one who is known in the (original) Torah as ‘al-Baqir’ (the Revealer of Knowledge). When you see him, deliver to him my greetings of Peace...”

These were the words of Prophet Muhammad to the righteous companion Jabir al-Ansari. Many years later, Jabir was an old man going on a visit to see the fourth Imam, Zayn al-Abidin. As he entered the Imam’s home, he saw an intriguing young boy. Jabir began to examine the young boy... After which, he said, “By the Lord of the Ka’bah, (I see in him) the qualities of God’s Messenger (Prophet Muhammad)...”

Jabir then asked Imam Zayn al-Abidin about who the boy was. Imam Zayn al-Abidin responded, “This is my son and the commander of affairs after me – Muhammad al-Baqir.”

Upon hearing these words, Jabir humbled himself before the young boy, kissed him and said, “...O Descendant of God’s Messenger, accept the greetings of peace from your forefather. Indeed, the Messenger of God sends greetings of peace to you!”

Tears started to run down the young boy’s face, as he responded, “O Jabir, may peace be upon my forefather – the Messenger of God – for as long as the heavens and earth last – and upon you as well, O Jabir, for delivering this greeting of peace...”^[i]

The Seal of All Prophets had prophesized that this young boy, Imam Muhammad al-Baqir, would unlock the chests of knowledge. He would extract priceless treasures for the generations and further the spiritual advancement of humanity.

The Fifth Imam

During Imam Zayn al-Abidin’s lifetime, he was asked, “Who will be the Imam after you?” Imam Zayn al-Abidin replied, “Muhammad, my son – he will reveal and expand knowledge.”^[ii]

Imam Muhammad al-Baqir, the fifth immaculate Imam, was a young child during the tragedy of ‘Ashura’. The memories of his grandfather, Imam Husayn, stuck with him throughout his life. He grew up in the spiritually enlightening care of his father, Imam Zayn al-Abidin.^[iii]

The fifth Imam became known – by friend and foe, alike – for his knowledge, piety and virtue. Imam al-Baqir revealed more insight about the Islamic sciences than any other counterpart since the time of Imam Hasan and Imam Husayn. He paved the way for the establishment of a massive Islamic university, which would reach its peak of development during the following Imam’s time.^[iv]

Many of Imam al-Baqir’s contemporaries had written about his scholarly status. These prominent scholars were from different schools of thought. For instance, a notable contemporary by the name of ‘Abdullah ibn Ata’ stated, “I have never seen scholars, in the presence of anyone, (seem) lesser (in knowledge) than they did in the presence of Abu Ja’far (Imam al-Baqir) – Muhammad, son of ‘Ali, son of Husayn... Indeed, I saw Hakam ibn ‘Utaybah, with all of his (scholarly) splendor among the people, (look) like a boy in the presence of his teacher – when he was in the presence of (Imam al-Baqir).”^[v]

In the Capital of Tyranny

Under the reign of Hisham, Imam al-Baqir was summoned to Damascus. The tyrant Hisham had been plotting to curtail the positive influence and prestige of Imam al-Baqir. Hisham knew that his corrupt supporters could not challenge the Imam’s knowledge or piety, so he planned another type

of challenge. Hisham attempted to surprise Imam al-Baqir with an archery match. The match would surely portray the elderly Imam in a humiliating position – or so the tyrant thought.

“O Muhammad, hit the target, along with the chiefs of your people,” ordered Hisham. “I am too old for archery, perhaps you can excuse me,” replied Imam al-Baqir. Hisham insisted and would not take ‘no’ for an answer. Imam al-Baqir was handed a bow and arrow. He then aimed at the target...The Imam hit the target on the bullseye. He took another arrow, released it...and split the arrow! As the Imam continued to amaze the spectators, Hisham was extremely frustrated – this was happening in Hisham’s very own court.

After exchanging some words, Imam al-Baqir responded to Hisham’s questions about the ability of the Imams to perform such matters, saying, “Indeed, we inherit the perfection and completion which God descended upon His Prophet, in His words (from the Holy Qur’an), ‘Today I have perfected your religion for you, I have completed My blessing upon you, and I have approved Islam as your religion.’ [vi] And the earth is never empty of those who perfect these matters – which others fall short of (perfecting).” [vii]

The Value of Hard Work

Often times, there are those who may think of “religion” and “being religious” as something restricted to houses of worship – prayers, fasting, sermons, etc. But Imam al-Baqir reminds us of a very different aspect of religion...

On a hot, scorching day, there was a man who saw Imam Muhammad al-Baqir working. The burden of hard work was apparent on the Imam, as he leaned on a couple of servant helpers. The man started to think to himself, “Praise be to God! A chief among the chiefs of Quraysh (a major tribe) – at this hour, in this condition – seeking after the worldly (life)?! Indeed, I shall admonish him...”

The man approached Imam al-Baqir and greeted him. Dripping with sweat, the Imam responded to the greeting. The man then started to admonish, saying, “May God improve you... A chief among the chiefs of Quraysh – at this hour, in this condition – seeking after the worldly (life)?! What if your time (of death) comes while you are in this state? What would you do?”

The Holy Imam responded, “If death comes to me while I am in this state, it would come to me while I am in (a form of) obedience to God – the Exalted, the Glorious. Through this (state of work), I provide for myself and my family to be free from needing you and other people. Indeed, I would be afraid, rather, if death comes to me while I am in (a form of) disobedience to God.” The man then conceded, “You have spoken truthfully, may God grant you Mercy... I had wanted to admonish you, but you admonished me!” [viii]

The True Shia

Imam Muhammad al-Baqir’s words of wisdom can spark the light of deep reflection within us. While these short lines can only relate a few words, a brief excerpt might renew our desire to seek further insight. In discussing the true meaning of being a Shia Muslim, Imam al-Baqir said the following, “...Does the one who claims to be of the Shia think it is enough to (simply) speak of loving us, Ahl al-Bayt (the Prophet’s family)? By God, our Shia are only those who are mindful of God and obey Him. They were known...only (in light of their) modesty, humility, trustworthiness, abundant remembrance of God, fasting, prayer, honoring parents, caring for neighbors, the poor, people in need, those in debt, and orphans... (they were known for their) truthful words, the recitation of Qur’an, and holding their tongues back unless it was to speak good of people. They were the trustees (entrusted) by their peoples in (the various) affairs...” [ix]

After the attempts of Hisham to undermine the Imam's position utterly failed, Hisham was infuriated. He continued to receive news about the people's high regard for Imam al-Baqir's knowledge and virtue... Hisham thus resorted to assassination and had the Holy Imam poisoned. Imam Muhammad al-Baqir was buried in the Baqi' cemetery of Madinah.[\[x\]](#)

[\[i\]](#) Pg. 223-224, Vol. 46 of *Bihar Alanwar* by Allamah Majlisi [\[ii\]](#) Pg. 230, Vol. 46 of *Bihar Alanwar* by Allamah Majlisi [\[iii\]](#) Pg. 223, Vol. 4 of *al-Kafi* by Sh. al-Kulayni [\[iv\]](#) Pg. 270 of *Seeratul A'immah* by Sh. Ja'far Subhani [\[v\]](#) Pg. 271 of *Seeratul A'immah* by Sh. Ja'far Subhani [\[vi\]](#) Quran 4:3 [\[vii\]](#) Pg. 306-307, Vol. 46 of *Bihar Alanwar* by Allamah Majlisi [\[viii\]](#) Pg. 351, Vol. 46 of *Bihar Alanwar* by Allamah Majlisi [\[ix\]](#) Pg. 74, Vol. 2 of *al-Kafi* by Sh. al-Kulayni [\[x\]](#) Pg. 217, Vol. 46 of *Bihar Alanwar* by Allamah Majlisi

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Name: Hasan

Title: al-Askari

Kunya: Abu Muhammad, Ibn al-Ridha

Father: Ali ibn Muhammad al-Hadi al-Naqi (p)

Mother: Hodayth / Sousan / Sulayl

Born: 8th Rabi' al-Thani, 232 AH/846 CE

Martyrdom: 8th, Rabi' al-Awwal, 260 AH/874 CE, after being poisoned by the Abbasid Caliph al-Mu'tamad

Age at Martyrdom: 28

Period of Imamate: 6 years

Buried: Samarra, Iraq

The Eleventh Imam

The young boys were playing with their toys, just as most young boys do – except for one boy, who stood amongst his peers with tears streaming down his cheeks.

“Would you like me to buy you a toy to play with?” asked a concerned onlooker.

“... We have not been created for (such) play...” responded the crying boy.

The stunned man inquired, “...and what have we been created for?”

The boy replied, “For knowledge and worship.”

The man then asked, “Where did you get that from?”

“From the words of (God), the Exalted, ‘Did you suppose that We created you aimlessly and that you will not be brought back to Us?’[\[i\]](#)” said the boy...

“What's wrong with you? You are a small innocent child!” exclaimed the man.

The boy dismissed the man's words saying, "Leave me be... Indeed, I have seen my mother try to start a fire with big logs but the fire does not start without using the small ones first... I fear that I would be among the small logs of hellfire!"[\[ii\]](#)

The young boy from this story is reported to have been the eleventh immaculate Imam – *Hasan*, son of [Imam Ali al-Hadi](#). Imam *Hasan*'s deeply pensive reflection calls heedlessness of all degrees into question. This awakening image of Imam Hasan offers a peek into the grand character and intense insight of a Divine representative. In his life, the eleventh Imam plowed through fields of tribulation, while raising the banner of Divine guidance.

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The tenth Imam expressed the following will on a number of occasions,

"The Imam after me is *Hasan*, my son..."[\[iii\]](#)

Samarra, the area in which Imam Hasan and his father [Imam al-Hadi](#) were forced to live in, was also known as the *Askar* (Military) because the ruler had his military stationed there. Based on the Imam's association with that particular spot, he was referred to as *al-Askari* (the one in the *Askar* area). As a celebrated saint, Imam Hasan al-Askari was also referred to as *az-Zaki* (the one of spiritual purity and growth).[\[iv\]](#)

The *Abbasid* ruler *Mutaz*, who had poisoned [Imam Ali al-Hadi](#), was soon killed by competing political figures. *Muhtadi*, who became the next *Abbasid* to take control of the government, attempted to put on the façade of a pious man. But he did not hesitate to imprison Imam Hasan al-Askari and intended to murder him, before having been killed himself. An *Abbasid* by the name of *Mutamid* rose to power next. This ruler was distinctly excessive in his corruption and oppression against Imam al-Askari.[\[v\]](#)

The eleventh Imam's era was characterized by a notable growth in the *Shia* presence throughout the Muslim world. A secret network of representatives which was maintained during [Imam al-Hadi's](#) time was expanded widely under Imam al-Askari's direction. The holy Imam's messages and commands helped to ready the *Shia* for situations in which they would not have much, if any, direct contact with their Imam. In fact, it was quite rare for Imam al-Askari to have direct contact with any of his followers, even those who lived in the same city, due to his imprisonment.[\[vi\]](#),[\[vii\]](#)

Rainwater and Guidance

When drought befell *Samarra*, the ruler *Mutamid* ordered people to perform a special prayer to ask God for rain. For three days, the Muslims prayed, but no rain came down. On the fourth day, a group of monks – devoted to a different religious tradition – stood outside with the people, raised their hands to the sky, and rainwater came pouring down!

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Following this incident, Imam al-Askari was released from prison and became more popular. [\[viii\]](#)

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One day, Imam Hasan al-Askari spoke to his close companion with these words,

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The eleventh Imam was confirming a concept which was explained by every Divine representative. But this time, the words had special weight because the next ‘proof’ would be the twelfth and final Imam prophesied by Prophet Muhammad. The close companion of Imam al-Askari asked,

“Oh son of God’s Messenger, who then is the Imam and successor after you?”

The holy eleventh Imam rose to his feet quickly and went inside his home... Soon enough, Imam al-Askari came back out with a three year old boy in his arms. The child’s face glowed like a full moon. Imam al-Askari turned to his companion and said,

“... If it were not for your honor before God and the proofs of God (the Imams) I would not have shown you this son of mine. Indeed, his name is that of God’s Messenger, as is his title; (he is the one) who will fill the earth with fairness and justice just as it had been filled with tyranny and injustice...”

Imam al-Askari continued to describe the era of the twelfth Imam, which was to come,

“... By God, he will disappear (from physical sight), such an occultation that no one will be saved from peril in it except those whom God has fortified on (reasoning and faith in) saying that he is the Imam; and (whom God) has helped succeed in praying for hastening his advent.” [\[ix\]](#)

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The corrupt ruler’s fears of Imam al-Askari’s growing popularity drove him deeper into his pit of darkness. *Mutamid*, thus, resorted to the wicked decision of poisoning Imam al-Askari. The crime was carried out secretly and the cover-up involved *Mutamid* and his entourage attending the funeral... Imam Hasan al-Askari was buried near his father, Imam Ali al-Hadi, in present-day *Samarra, Iraq*. [\[x\]](#)

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“...and know that the Director of your (affairs) is more knowledgeable concerning the time in which (He is) to remedy your condition. So be confident of His choices in all of your affairs and remedy your condition (He will). Do not be hasty in (wanting the fulfillment of) your needs before their time is due because then your heart and chest will tighten up (out of worry) and you will be overcome with despair...” [\[xi\]](#)

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Imam Hasan ibn Ali (AS)-Biography

Name: Hasan

Title: al-Mujtaba

Kunya: Abu Muhammad

Father: Ali ibn Abu Talib (Peace be upon him)

Mother: Fatimah bint Muhammad (Peace be upon them)

Born: 15th Ramadan, 3 AH/624 CE in Madinah, Hejaz region of the Arabian Peninsula

Died: 7th Safar, 50 AH/670 CE, after being poisoned by his wife, Ja'da.

Age at Martyrdom: 48

Period of Imamate: 9 years

Buried: Baqi', Madinah, Hejaz region of the Arabian Peninsula

Meet Imam Hasan (p)

“... ‘That is Hasan, son of ‘Ali...’ they told me. My heart became filled with hatred. I envied ‘Ali for having a son like that. I headed toward him and said, ‘Are you the son of ‘Ali...?’ He responded, ‘I am his son.’ I then started to curse him and his father...”

These were the words of a traveler to the City of the Prophet – Madinah – upon seeing the saintly, handsome, and well-dressed Imam Hasan. Propaganda and blatant lies in the traveler’s country of origin had led him to view Imam ‘Ali and his family in a terribly negative light.

The traveler continued.

“When I finished, he asked me, ‘It seems you are a stranger here...?’

I replied, ‘Yes.’

Then he said, ‘Come on over to our place! If you need a house, we will host you...or money, we will give it to you...or if you have another need, we will assist you...’

After hearing this, there was no one on the face of the earth more beloved to me than him. Every time I think back to what he did and what I did, I am grateful to him and feel embarrassed about how I acted.”[i]

The traveler’s encounter with Imam Hasan gives us a snapshot of this Imam’s forbearance, clemency, and charity. The life of this second, Divinely-selected Imam is fragrant with profound wisdom, valor and, foresight. In Imam Hasan’s every decision, the advancement of principle was paramount.

The Second Imam

Imam Hasan was the older son of Imam ‘Ali and Lady Fatima Zahra’ – the younger son being [Imam Hussain](#). While Imam Hasan was only a boy of about seven years when [Prophet Muhammad](#) passed away, the Messenger of God had made a point to recognize Imam Hasan with distinction. In several traditions, [Prophet Muhammad](#) is narrated to have said:

“Hasan and Hussain are the Masters of the Youths in Paradise.”[ii]

The Prophet also said:

“All the people of paradise are youths.”[iii]

In other words, Imam Hasan is a leader among the inhabitants of paradise. Through such narrations, Prophet Muhammad was hinting at – or rather heralding – the grand qualities which Imam Hasan would manifest. Imam Hasan would be the most qualified individual for the Divinely-appointed post of Imam after his father Imam ‘Ali.

Imam Hasan lived with his father for about thirty years after the Prophet’s passing. During Imam ‘Ali’s political leadership, Imam Hasan supported the establishment of justice with sacrifice and relentless effort. Before Imam ‘Ali was martyred, he said:

“My son, the Messenger of God had commanded me to have you carry out my will (as successor), and turn my books and weapon over to you – just as he had me carry out his will (as successor) and turned his books and weapon over to me...”ⁱ

And so Imam Hasan carried on as both the spiritual and political leader, in the midst of threats and conspiracies far and wide. Mu’awiyah, the leader of the misinformation, hate, and, not to mention, military campaigns against Imam ‘Ali was now focused on Imam Hasan.[iv]

Ceasefire with Mu’awiyah

Imam Hasan’s army was not in the state to fight another war. Different groups within the military were divided on their loyalties. Some fought alongside Imam Hasan simply because he opposed Mu’awiyah – they felt little devotion to Imam Hasan in any case. Others were Imam Hasan’s supporters out of blind loyalty to their tribal chiefs which had pledged allegiance to the Imam. Then there were the few who followed Imam Hasan with the awareness that he was the true successor to [Prophet Muhammad](#).^[v]

But the vast majority of Imam Hasan’s military did not have the will and determination to mend the wrongs enacted by Mu’awiyah. Indeed, at one point, one of the officers appointed by Imam Hasan led a division of 12,000 troops. Soon after, Imam Hassan received news that this officer had been bribed and turned over – along with 8,000 troops – to Mu’awiyah’s camp.^[vi]

Imam Hasan was left with a military of shaken morale, subsequent betrayals within his own camp, and a ruthless enemy waiting to take advantage of the situation. Imam Hasan knew that the best way to preserve the message of Prophet Muhammad and minimize the loss of life was by agreeing to a treaty with Mu’awiyah. When Imam Hasan was questioned about his decision, he said, “By God, I have not submitted the authority to him (Mu’awiyah). However, I have not found supporters. If I had supporters, I would have fought him day and night until God judges between us. But I knew the people of Kufah (the governing city at the time) and their predicament. The corrupt among them would not reform – they had no loyalty or responsibility in words or actions... They say that their hearts are with us, but, indeed, their swords are turned against us!”^[vii]

Some key terms of the treaty were as follows:

1. Mu’awiyah would hold political authority, on the condition that he acts in accordance with the Book of God and the Prophetic Tradition.
2. Imam Hasan would resume political authority after Mu’awiyah. If anything happened to Imam Hasan, Imam Hussain would assume political authority, and Mu’awiyah had no right to appoint anyone.
3. Cursing Imam ‘Ali and supplication against him in prayers would have to stop. Only good would be mentioned regarding Imam ‘Ali.
4. Money in the treasury would be distributed among the children of those men who were martyred while fighting alongside Imam ‘Ali in different battles against Mu’awiyah and other enemies.
5. People were to be safe, no matter where they were in Syria, Iraq, Hejaz, or Yemen. Mu’awiyah would not persecute others – including the followers of Imam ‘Ali – based on past conflicts.

Mu’awiyah wrote down these terms himself and sealed the document. He swore to abide by it in front of all the chiefs in his region. But he did not abide by it. Mu’awiyah said in front of a crowd in Kufah:

“Indeed, every condition and thing that I yielded to Hasan, the son of ‘Ali, is beneath these two feet of mine!”[viii]

Groundwork for a Revival

Mu’awiyah proceeded with a policy of terrorism and persecution against anyone who outwardly affiliated with Imam ‘Ali’s family. Ironically, it was only after seeing the ugliness of Mu’awiyah’s rule that many citizens awakened to the righteous demands for justice which Imam Hasan had called for. Imam Hasan’s wise decisions were giving way for a mass revival, which would culminate years later.[ix]

It was not long, however, before the worry over Imam Hasan became unbearable to Mu’awiyah. Mu’awiyah was able to bribe Imam Hasan’s wife to poison him. At the age of 48, the noble Imam Hasan was buried in the Baqi’ cemetery of Madinah.[x]

As the second immaculate Imam, Imam Hasan’s character and decisions demand our deep contemplation. Let us consider these thoughts in the spirit through which Imam Hasan encouraged reflection upon the Book of God:

“...and be mindful of it, if you hear it – a mindfulness of comprehension...and do not be mindful of it with the mindfulness of pure narration. Indeed, those who narrate the Book are many, those who comprehend the Book are few, and God is the Helper.”[xi]

[i] Pg. 43-44 of *al-A’immah al-Ithnay Ashar* by Sh. Jafar Subhani [ii] Pg. 265, Vol. 43 of *Bihar al-Anwar* by Allamah Majlisi [iii] Pg. 292, Vol. 43 of *Bihar al-Anwar* by Allamah Majlisi [iv] Pg. 46 of *al-A’immah al-Ithnay Ashar* by Sh. Jafar Subhani [v] Pg. 97-99 of *Seerat al-A’immah* by Sh. Jafar Subhani [vi] Pg. 101 of *Seerat al-A’immah* by Sh. Jafar Subhani [vii] Pg. 103 of *Seerat al-A’immah* by Sh. Jafar Subhani [viii] Pg. 105-108 of *Seerat al-A’immah* by Sh. Jafar Subhani [ix] Pg. 111-113 of *Seerat al-A’immah* by Sh. Ja’ar Subhani [x] Pg. 47 of *al-A’immah al-Ithnay Ashar* by Sh. Ja’far Subhani [xi] Pg. 228 of *Tuhaf al-Uqool* by Ibn Shu’ba al-Hurani

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Imam Hussain ibn Ali (AS)-Biography

Name: Hussain **Title:** Sayyid al-Shuhada (the Master of Martyrs) **Kunya:** Aba Abd Allah **Father:** Ali ibn Abi Talib (Peace be upon them) **Mother:** Fatimah bint Muhammad (Peace be upon them) **Born:** 3rd Shaban, 3 AH/626 CE in Madinah, Hejaz region of the Arabian Peninsula **Died:** 10th Muharram, 61 AH/680 CE, after being martyred during the Battle of Karbala **Age at Martyrdom:** 57 **Period of Imamate:** 10 years **Buried:** Karbala, Iraq

“Hussain is from me, and I am from Hussain – God loves those who love Hussain...”[i]

These were the words of Prophet Muhammad (pbut&hp, Messenger of God, concerning his young grandson. Prophet Muhammad distinctly linked those loved by God to those who love Hussain. On another occasion, when Imam Hussain came toward Prophet Muhammad, the Messenger of God said,

“Welcome O Aba ‘Abdillah (Hussain), O you who is the adornment of the heavens and earth!” Another person present was taken aback and asked, “How can anyone be the adornment of the heavens and earth other than you, O Messenger of God?” Prophet Muhammad replied:

“... (I swear) by the One who sent me as a Prophet with Truth that the remembrance of Hussain, the son of ‘Ali, is greater in heaven than it is on earth. On the right of God’s throne, he (Imam Hussain) is written as ‘the lamp of guidance and the ship of salvation’...”[ii]

This unique individual was to become the third immaculate Imam...

Imam Hussain felt the warmth of Prophet Muhammad’s love from the time of his early childhood. He grew up witnessing and enduring the hardships of Imam ‘Ali and Lady Fatimah. With unwavering loyalty and great patience, Imam Hussain stood by his leader and brother, Imam Hassan, even in the darkest moments.

Before departing this world, Imam Hassan reminded some of his close followers, “... Don’t you know that after my death and the separation of my soul from my body – Hussain, the son of ‘Ali, is the next Imam...?”[iii]

As with all the Holy Infallibles, Imam Hussain’s virtues span a multitude of dimensions which cannot be encompassed by this short pamphlet. However, in the mind of many sincere devotees, Imam Hussain is most remembered for his knowledge, piety, and revolution against tyranny.

Imam Hussain after Imam Hassan

Mu’awiyah had long been planting the seeds of mischief and lies in his region of governance. Imam Hassan’s treaty with Mu’awiyah was short-lived as Mu’awiyah blatantly broke his vow to abide by it. Mu’awiyah and his gang persecuted the followers of Imam ‘Ali wherever they were to be found.

The lies continued and terrorizing attacks became a common tool in the hands of Mu’awiyah’s governors. Mu’awiyah and his goons desensitized the general public by spreading fabricated sayings attributed to Prophet Muhammad and popularizing perverted interpretations of the Holy Quran – all in an attempt to justify tyrannical rule. [iv]

Mu’awiyah arranged for his corrupt son, Yazid, to take over after him. Mu’awiyah demanded that all Muslims pledge allegiance to the publically blasphemous Yazid. After Imam Hassan’s martyrdom, Imam Hussain maintained a strong political opposition to Mu’awiyah. The third immaculate Imam sent several letters condemning Mu’awiyah’s immoral actions and rejecting any demand for allegiance to the corrupt Yazid. Before Mu’awiyah died, he had serious fears that Imam Hussain would lead a revolution against him.

Imam Hussain on Knowing God

Through Imam Hussain’s profound wisdom and unmatched devotion, he taught, and continues to teach, generation after generation about the way to know God. Let us take a moment to contemplate the following words from a prayer by Imam Hussain:

“...My Lord! Going back and forth between the effects (which lead to You) entails a distanced visit; So gather me unto You through a service which will lead me to You! How can You be proven through that which is in need of You in its very existence? Does something besides You have a manifestation that is not Yours such that it would be the one to manifest You?”

“ When have You ever been hidden, such that You need a proof to show You? When have You ever been distant, such that the effects are what lead to You? Blind is the eye which does not see You, Ever-Watchful over it! It has lost the deal – that of a servant for whom You did not set a share in Your Love...”[vii]

This excerpt represents a peek into the beauty which motivated Imam Hussain at the level of principles. It was with this certainty in knowing God that Imam Hussain made his every move.

This deep connection to God enabled the third infallible Imam to lead and strive in defense of the principles which represent humanity.

The Reform: ‘Ashura’

With Mu’awiyah’s death, Yazid quickly assumed the political throne and attempted to force his will upon Imam Hussain. Imam Hussain again rejected the sacrilegious Yazid as a ruler and the system of monarchical despotism established by Mu’awiyah. As the Imam prepared for a stand against tyranny, Imam Hussain also received letters from the people of Kufah, who wrote, “Furthermore; the gardens have greened and the fruits have ripened; So if you wish, then come toward (us) – troops are assembled for you (to lead).”[viii]

Regardless what support Imam Hussain was to receive, he knew that an eternal stand against the camp of dehumanization was inevitable. The betrayal of Prophet Muhammad, the injustice suffered by Imam ‘Ali and Lady Fatimah, the treachery directed toward Imam Hassan, and the murder of innocent life, culminated in Imam Hussain’s movement. Before departing toward Iraq, Imam Hussain wrote the following in his will:

“Indeed, I did not leave out of self-conceit or vanity; neither to cause corruption, nor oppression. Rather, I left in order to seek reform in the nation of my grandfather (Prophet Muhammad) and father (Imam ‘Ali). I wish to promote virtue and prevent vice. So as for those who accept me in accepting the Truth, indeed God is of greater right over the Truth. As for those who reject, I will be patient until God judges between me and the people (who reject), with Truth, and He is the Best of Judges.”[ix]

Imam Hussain led a group of his close family members and companions toward Iraq. Even women and young ones passionately chose to join the third Imam in his epic struggle. On the way, Imam Hussain was informed that his emissary to Kufah had been executed and that the people of Kufah had deserted him. Upon hearing the news, Imam Hussain said, “Our Shia (supporters) have deserted us. Those of you who would like to leave may do so freely, without fault.”[x]

Those who remained committed to Imam Hussain’s mission were of the highest caliber in intellect, faith, and love. The tragic and heroic events that followed cannot be described adequately in these limited lines. However, every year, across the globe, the principled struggle of the noble 72 defenders – led by Imam Hussain – has been commemorated. The elegies, the reflections, the tears, and the principled actions of sincere devotees pronounce a glimpse of Imam Hussain’s universal message of Truth, Justice, and Love for humanity.

The holy month of Muharram was a month in which bloodshed was considered forbidden among the Arabs, even before the advent of Islam. However, on the tenth day of that month, on the day of ‘Ashura’, in the land of Karbala’, sacred blood was shed. Imam Hussain was martyred at the hands of heartless terrorists – criminals who falsely claimed to follow Prophet Muhammad. Little did they know that Imam Hussain’s revolution had only just begun.[xi][xii]

[i] Pg. 261, Vol. 43 of *Bihar al-Anwar* by ‘Allamah Majlisi

[ii] Pg. 204-205, Vol. 36 of *Bihar al-Anwar* by ‘Allamah Majlisi

[iii] Pg. 175, Vol. 44 of *Bihar al-Anwar* by ‘Allamah Majlisi

[iv] Pg. 133-134 of *Siratul A’immah* by Sh. Ja’far Subhani

[v] Pg. 137, 139 of *Siratul A’immah* by Sh. Ja’far Subhani

[vi] Pg. 54 of *al-A’immah al-Ithnay ‘Ashar* by Sh. Ja’far Subhani

[vii] Pg. 50, Vol. 2 of *Iqbal al-A’mal* by Sayyid Ibn Tawus

[viii] Pg. 55 of *al-A’immah al-Ithnay ‘Ashar* by Sh. Ja’far Subhani

[ix] Pg. 152 of *Siratul A’immah* by Sh. Ja’far Subhani

[x] Pg. 56, 61 of *al-A’immah al-Ithnay ‘Ashar* by Sh. Ja’far Subhani

[xi] Pg. 283-285, Vol. 44, *Bihar al-Anwar* by ‘Allamah Majlisi

[xii] Pg. 63 of *al-A’immah al-Ithnay ‘Ashar* by Sh. Ja’far Subhani

Birth

Hazrat Imam Hussain (A.S.) was born on the 3rd of Shaban 4th Hijrah in Medinah Munawarra. His father was Ali (A.S.) and mother was Fatimah (S.A.). When the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) heard the news of Imam Hussain's birth he (P.B.U.H.) became very happy and came to the house of Fatimah (S.A.). Asma, the maidservant of Hazrat Zahra covered the child in a white cloth and brought him to the Prophet (P.B.U.H.). The Prophet (P.B.U.H.), picked the child up in his lap and recited the Azaan in his right ear and Aqamat in the left one. As if, apparently, he (P.B.U.H.) made the ears of his son familiar and acquainted with the name of God for the first time. On the seventh day of the birth, an angel came from the God and he said, "Just as Haroon was the brother, sympathizer, and helper in each and every difficulty of Moosa (A.S.) similarly Ali (A.S.) is your sympathizer helper and brother in each and every matter of yours. Therefore, keep the name of this child upon the name of Haroon's son "Shabeer," which translated into Arabic becomes 'Hussain'. Thus the name of the second child of Fatimah (S.A.) was also selected by God.

On the 7th day of the birth Hazrat Fatimah (S.A.) got a sheep slaughtered as the Aqeeqa and distributed it's meat among the needy and poor.

The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) quite often hugged Hussain (A.S.) taking him into his lap and used to weep bitterly, saying, "A very big tragedy will be met by my son Hussain". The brutals and bloody men of Bani Omyaide will slay my dear son. I will not interces and mediate for them on the dooms day.

The Love of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.)

The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) loved Imam Hussain (A.S.) very much. His companion Salman Farsi describes, "I saw that the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) had picked up Imam Hussain (A.S.) upon his knee and was kissing him saying, "Oh son, you are the Imam son of Imams and father of nine Imams, who would be from your generation and the last one of them is Mehdi. "One can estimate and guess the amount of love the Prophet had with Imam Hussain (A.S.) from this sentence of his "Hussain is from me and I am from Hussain." The one who is the friend of Hassan and Hussain is my friend and the one who is their enemy, is my enemy.

Hussain (A.S.) the Best Helper of his Father and Brother

Imam Hussain (A.S.) spent six years of his life with his grandfather the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) and thirty years along with his honorable father Ali (A.S.). He shared each and every problem and grief of his father. He always defended his father. Once he went to the mosque and saw Hazrat Omer delivering a speech on the tribune of his grandfather. He immediately said, "get down from the tribune of my grandfather and father. What have you got to do over there?"

During the reign of his father, Imam Hussain (A.S.) playing upon his life used to be busy defending Islam and fighting against the tyrants and brutal.

He fought against the enemies by the side of his father like his brother Imam Hassan Mujtaba (A.S.) in the battles of Jamal, safeen, and Neherwan.

He, after the martyrdom of his father, legally took the oath of allegiance for his brother and accepted him his leader and Imam. And whenever someone asked him a question he used to send him towards Imam Hassan (A.S.). And wherever he deemed suitable he himself would give the answer. Briefly speaking, he considered the defense of his brother something necessary for himself.

The Rule of Muawiyah

When Imam Hassan Mujtaba (A.S.) was martyred due to the conspiracies of Muawiyah, Imam Hussain (A.S.) got the post of Imamate and caliphate at the age of forty-six.

Imam Hussain (A.S.) knew that all the miseries and sorrows of Muslims were due to Muawiyah who wanted to uproot Islam by his frauds, cunningness and craftiness. Therefore, Imam (A.S.) did not think it was suitable to fight him openly, as Muawiyah was apparently Muslim and showed himself to be the supporter of Islam and Muslims. Therefore, Imam Hussain (A.S.) knew that if I declare a war upon him I would meet the same fate as my brother did. So he started the movement of awakening the people from the dream and slumbers of ignorance, and unawareness. So that they may turn towards him slowly and gradually, by getting aware and informed. Ultimately, Imam (A.S.) may make them work for the welfare of Islam. Along with the training of the Momins (faithful), with which Imam was busy, he occasionally opposed Muawiyah. And always gave teeth breaking and strong answer to his scurrilous language particularly when he started making people take the oath and allegiance of faithfulness for his ignorant, silly, impure, and bad character, degenerate, and undutiful son Yazeed. The Imam (A.S.) too started openly and publicly opposing him and wrote many such letters to Muawiyah by which he disgraced him very much. One of his letters reads:

i) Oh Muawiyah! You are the claimant of the caliphate and to be the successor of my grandfather? Did you not slay Hajar bin Addi and his companions in the land of Azra. You are a criminal, a killer. Then how do you claim to be the leader and caliph of my Ummah?

ii) Oh Muawiyah! Did you not declare Ziad publicly your brother and the illegitimate son of Abu Sufian about whose father the Muslims are unaware? (That who is his father and who is not?) As such, by declaring him to be your brother, you have yourself admitted the dirtiness and uncleanness of your family. Then how can the caliphate be your right?

iii) Oh Muawiyah! The most shameful act of yours is that you have made such a silly, stupid unable and unworthy person a ruler of the Muslims whose characterless ness, excesses and aggressions are not hidden and concealed from anyone. As such, you want to destroy the religion of God and make the Muslim ummah a toy by forcibly making them take the oath of allegiance for him (Yazeed).

Hussain (A.S.) and Yazeed

Although Imam Hussain (A.S.) did not leave any stone unturned in disgracing and belittling Muawiyah even then he did not fight or clashed with him.

Nonetheless, after the death of Muawiyah his incapable son Yazeed being a proud and thickheaded person posed himself as the leader of the Muslims. And started making the Islamic personalities takes the oath of allegiance for the sake of establishing and strengthening his government.

He wrote to the governors of the cities and as such wrote a letter to Waleed who was governor of Medinah that “Immediately take the oath of allegiance from Hussain (A.S.) And if he refuses to do that then cut down his head and send it to me”.

Muawiyah had several times insistedly warned him that you might dash against anybody except Hussain (A.S.), in which case you would get destroyed. The ruler of Medinah summoned Imam Hussain (A.S.) and informed him about the letter of Yazeed. He said “I am ready for the martyrdom because only Yazeed’s becoming the caliph of Muslims is the death and disintegration of Islam”.

When Imam (A.S.) observed the worsened condition and atmosphere of Medinah he along with his companions migrated to Makka under the dark cover of the night. His mere act of migration from Medinah was a great objection upon the people’s taking oath of allegiance for Yazeed.

Imam’s (A.S.) migration not only created a hue and cry in Medinah, but it also set up an atmosphere of discussion and objections against Yazeed in Makka. And the hue and cry raised to the climax when Imam (A.S.) addressing a gathering of the pilgrims raised his voice against the obnoxious, dirty, and impure government of Yazeed.

This stand and pledge of Imam Hussain (A.S.) made the people of the whole area completely aware and understand that the caliphate of Yazeed is not correct and taking oath of allegiance for him is dishonesty to Islam and Muslims.

The Invitation of Kufis

When the news of the migration and objection of Imam Hussain (A.S.) upon the Yazeed's regime reached Kufa. All of them (Kufis) got themselves prepared to invite him to Kufa and elect him for the caliphate and the leadership of Islam. They sent messengers along with letters, rolls and scrolls, and formally invited Imam Hussain (A.S.) to visit Kufa.

But, because of the fact that Imam (A.S.) knew about the unfaithfulness of the Kufis and he himself had witnessed their untruthfulness towards his father and brother so he sent his cousin 'Muslim bin Aqeel' to Kufa so that he might observe the whole affair closely and invite Imam (A.S.) if he deemed fit and suitable. Muslim bin Aqeel moved towards Kufa as desired and ordered by Imam (A.S.) and when he reached there he met a warm, noisy, grand welcome. Thousands of people took oath of allegiance and offered prayers behind him.

Muslim bin Aqeel wrote a letter to Imam (A.S.) asking him to immediately move. Imam stayed back at Makka uptill the 8th of Zil Hijj and spoke to the people and instigated and provoked them against Yazeed. Then he moved towards Iraq.

Termination of the Imam's Representative's Affair

When Yazeed got informed about the movement of Muslim bin Aqeel and oath of allegiance being taken by the Kufis, he at once sent Ibn-e-Ziad, who was the most dirty of his companions, to Kufa with full fledged powers.

Ibn-e-Ziad, who completely knew about the spirit and the character of the people of Kufa, took advantage and made the most of the weakness and debility and feebleness of their faiths and double-facedness, hypocrisy and cowardice. And by terrifying and harassing scattered and dispersed them from around Muslim bin Aqeel. And turned the events to such an extent that even those who had written invitation letters to Imam (A.S.) put on the war dress and got ready to fight the representative of the Imam (A.S.).

"Muslim bin Aqeel" was forced to fight the agents of Ibn-e-Ziad all alone. After showing surprising and astonishing bravery he was arrested and martyred. From the very night Imam Hussain (A.S.) had departed from Madinah he had been giving the news of martyrdom and said, "Whosoever is ready to lay his life on our way and make haste to meet God may join us."

He again spoke to his friends and companions about Jihad, holy war, and martyrdom at Makka. To the extent that even when the poet Farzad met him on the way and gave him the news of "Muslim bin Aqeel's" being martyred. He said, "Muslim bin Aqeel" has met the blessings of God and ended his mission and has laid the burden of the mission upon our shoulders. We hope to be able to carry this burden and weight up to its destination.

Hussain's (A.S.) Mission

Hussain (A.S.) described his aim about this mission was to disgrace Yazid's regime and to uphold and put into practice (Amer bil Maroof and Nahi anil munkir), to order the correct and right and to stop and refrain from the evils and to stand up against the brutality and cruelty. This was the mission God had entrusted him. His grandfather the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) and his father Ali (A.S.) had several times described their son's as being martyred.

Imam Hussain (A.S.) himself, by virtue of the knowledge of Imamate, knew that this journey would end with his martyrdom. But Hussain (A.S.) was not the one to be afraid of martyrdom and death, and overlook the command of God. He was the Imam who considered calamity as magnanimity and nobility and martyrdom as bliss and blessedness.

Ultimately, he moved toward “Karbala” and he himself and his companions were all martyred. His family members were taken prisoners. But they gave the message of those martyred to the people in the streets, and bazars of the cities and thus put the agents and paid servants of the Bani Omayaid to disgrace and shame.

The face of Hussain and his Companions on the Ashoora Day

Hussain’s (A.S.) face glittered and shone like light He gave hope and courage to his companions. The same Imam (A.S.) whose grandfather the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said, “Hussain (A.S.) is the lamp of guidance and the escape boat of the ummah”. Hussain (A.S.) spoke loudly, “Oh people of the world! You must know that I have not taken steps for the battle and did not draw my sword.

An unclean, dirty character man from the criminal family of Omayde named “Yazeed” made me choose one of the two either I draw my sword and defend my honor and religion or surrender to shame and humility. But do know, beware! That surrendering with shame and humility is far away from our family. I am obliged to choose the first way.

Then he stood by the soldiers of Yazeed forces and said, “It is not expedient and wise both for your world and religion (the justice day) to kill me and fight against me. So, if you have taken the decision to fight me. It is better to compose and form a committee and take views from everyone. Then see who says fight against the son of the Prophet (P.B.U.H) who is the one gone astray and ill fated, miserable that accompanies and sides with you for killing me?

The governor of Iraq, son of Marjana, is an unclean and power seeking person. He wants to make you helpless. I know you will repent after my being martyred and will rebuke each other. Therefore, before taking steps for the battle, think and ponder about the result of your action. Be aware, God is my supporter and I am not harassed and bewildered by any coming event. I have heard from my grandfather that “World is the paradise of the infidel and the prison for the faithful.” Death is the beginning of our joy but it is the start of your misery. There is only one bridge between this world and the other world and that is death.

If you initiate and take steps towards battle, we would also stand up along with our friends and worthy sons for defense. If we are victorious it will not be anything new for us and if we are killed world knows that we are not defeated.

“Oh helpless people! The informed and knowledge full people try and endeavor to provide themselves with a lamp, so that they do not loose their way, and I am the lamp of this ummah. But you want to put your lamp off. Do you know against whom do you fight? You are not fighting against me but you fight against God! Against your Prophet (P.B.U.H.)”

After the speech of Imam Hussain (A.S.) an enthusiasm, humming, and murmuring movements took place in the army of the enemy. The war provokers saw that if they would not start the battle, Hussain (A.S.) will shatter the army by his speech and will finish all their planning. Therefore, the order for the battle to be started was issued.

Hussain (A.S.) called out, “Oh my worthy and great friends rise up, this is the time for the combat. His friends like Habib and Zuhair were happy that Imam issued the order. Each one of them requested the other to be allowed to go for battle first, hence take the lead.

The family members of Imam (A.S.) such as the Qamer-e-Bani Hashim (Abbas [A.S.]), Ali Akbar, Qasim and all the rest got prepared for the battle. They attacked the flanks of the enemy like tigers. Whosoever came their way would be killed. Imam Hussain (A.S.) himself showed such a bravery, courage and manhood that as Ibn Sheher Ashob wrote; he slew two thousand men of the enemy. Whenever and whichever of the friends and relatives was martyred, Hussain (A.S.) would become stronger, and more resolved and determined. One of the soldiers of the enemy said about the astonishments and wonders of Ashoora, “on the day of Ashoora instead of becoming broken and

sorrowful whenever Hussain (A.S.) lost a person by martyrdom his face would glow and shine more than before and he became more determined and stronger in the battle and combat.

The thirsty and hungry, but selfless and dedicated, holy warriors showed such bravery and ferocious fight that son of Saad the Commander of the enemy shouted, "If you want to fight like this, all of you will be killed by the swords of Hussain (A.S.) and his companions". Therefore, he ordered all the arrow men, who were nearly four thousand in number, to throw arrows simultaneously and harmoniously. The battle got flared up and reached a climax whosoever out of the Imam's companions would fall down he would utter these words, "Oh God do accept our sacrifice."

"The blessings of God be upon thou souls, oh movers and travelers of the way of God and Hussain (A.S.). Oh the venture some defender of the Quran's path. Hussain (A.S.), wherever blood flew out of his body, he would raise his hands towards the sky and say, Oh God, who is the source and stock of my hope and aspiration, I depend upon you. My hopes are focused upon you. Oh God! Accept these sacrifices from us."

Finally, as per the tradition of Shiekh Mufid, Hussain (A.S.) and his great honorable companions were martyred on Saturday the 10th of Moharram, of 61 Hijrah, and laid to rest side by side, to each other. They gave the lesson of honor, dignity, manhood and bravery to the future generations.

Why Hussain (A.S.) is not forgotten?

The one whose martyrdom, grief, pain, sorrows and children's captivity were all only for God will never fade out of the memories. Instead, by the pace of time and age his love, fascination, and charm will grow in the hearts of people. And each year the love and fascination of the people with respect to that "pure and chaste revolutionary" increases. Hussain (A.S.) spent 57 years of his prolific life for the sake of God's love and God's search. Many times he traveled, to the God's house for pilgrimage, on foot.

He was very fond of prayers confessions and supplication talking intimately. So far so, that on the last night of his life, he asked for respite only that he might sit all alone and make confessions and supplications, to his God.

One of his companions said about Arafat prayers and supplications of Imam Hussain (A.S.), On the 10th day of the month of Zil Hijj Imam Hussain stood in the burning and scorching desert of Arafat facing Holy Kaabah and prayed with painful and aching heart, "Oh God! I turn my face towards you (focus my attention) and give evidence about your being God. O God! You created me and continuously remained along with me and provided me with sustenance and livelihood with several kinds of blessings and bounties. Praise is for the God; nothing can change whose desire and stop His munificence and generosity."

"Oh God adjudge and fix in my soul the independence and freedom from desires and faith and confidence in my heart, and sincerity in my practice and light in my vision and awareness in my religion."

Hussain (A.S.) in the Hearts of Friends

The respect and regard which people had and still have in their hearts for Hussain (A.S.) is due to this that he lived with the people and did not consider himself aloof and segregated from them. As such, one day, he was passing through a way, a group of poor, oppressed and afflicted people was sitting with a food cloth, spread with a certain quantity of dry bread upon it before them and they were eating it. They invited him to sit along with them and eat that food with them. Imam (A.S.) accepted their invitation and sat down besides the food cloth and took the bread with them. Saying, "God does not like the proud ones."

Imam Hussain (A.S.) has hundreds of such examples and specimens of character, which keeps his memory and martyrdom alive in the memories of the people. With every passing year, people strengthen and deepen their relations with Hussain (A.S.).

Otherwise Hussain (A.S.) did neither possess magnificent palaces nor had soldiers or many types of servants. He never closed and blocked the ways and roads to stop the movement of people like the tyrants and imperialists, and Shrine of Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) was never vacated for him.

One of his friends said about him "Hussain (A.S.) had the signs of scars of callosity and hard flesh on his back" When his son Imam Zain ul Abidin was questioned about it he said, "These are the callosities and signs of hardened flesh which is due to my father's carrying sacks of food at night time, to the houses of widows and orphan children and poor families."

One of the scholars says about Hussain (A.S.), "In the history of humanity we come across men who were prominent and distinguished in one human quality, a few in bravery, a group in piety and another one in generosity, but Hussain (A.S.) was not distinguished and eminent in one quality and few qualities instead he was distinguished in all the qualities and ethics and possessed all the human perfections and accomplishments included in his personality.

Yes, such is the person who is the heir of Mohammad's (P.B.U.H.) Prophetic mission. Who is the heir of Ali's (A.S.) justice and bravery? Who is the heir of his mother Fatima's (S.A.) modesty and chastity?

He was the reflection of all the merits, accomplishments. Self sacrifices, piety and God's love.

What day is the Ashoora?

Ashoora was a formal Arab Eid day in the days and era of ignorance. People used to keep fast and make merry, and hold ceremonies of joy in the same manner as Nauroze was considered to be the Eid day in Iran.

In the Arab history, Ashoora day (10th of Moharram) was the historical and customary Eid, when the various tribes of Arab put on new clothes and decorate the cities. Still, a group of Arabs, who is known as the "Yazeedi" group celebrates this day as a joyous festival.

When the incident and anguish of Karbala took place in the year 61 Hijrah, the mode and line of tendencies, and views of Arab and the Muslims was changed. Moharram, which was taken to be as one of the (Haram) prohibited months. War and killing was prohibited in it because the martyrdom day of the best of the sons of Adam i.e. Hussain Ibn-e-Ali (A.S.) and for the Shias it became a day of sorrow and grief, the day of honoring and celebrating the memories of the martyrs. In the very first year of the martyrdom of Imam Hussain (A.S.) his friends nearly thousands in number gathered around his grave and recited alleges. From the ushering of the era of Bani Ommayide and Yazeed unto this day, hundreds of thousands of the friends of Ahl al-bayth (A.S.) celebrate the mourning meetings and caravans move towards Karbala.

Those whose cities are away and at long distance from Karbala shape their cities as Karbala and hold mourning gatherings.

The Fatimydes of the Egypt announced the Ashoora as the day of mourning of Imam Hussain (A.S.). As such, men and women gathered around the grave of Ome Kulsum (S.A.) and mourned and recited the alleges. All along the Fatimyde Era in Egypt Ashoora remained the official and formal day of mourning and grief.

Moez ud duala Delmi ordered that Ashoora be celebrated officially in Iran and entire population and government officials must refrain from work and celebrate the mourning rituals.

This is the very reason why the mourning rituals in Iran, Egypt, Iraq and India have brought about a spiritual movement and ideological change among the Muslim masses so that today's movement of Muslims is the sequence of the same. With every passing year, it is becoming more fruit full.

Hoping that a day will come when people will mend their perverse nesses and misbehaviors and make up their deficiencies and faults and enhance their strength and values.

One of the scholars says about it “Mosques are the relics and vestiges of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) but the monasteries of mourning and Hussainias (centers of mourning) are the relics of the Ahl al-bayth (A.S.).

The Shias prattle and tell their secrets to God in the mosques and in the mourning centers they prattle to the lovers of God and those who were martyred for Him and on His way.

All along the passage of history no power could stop the movement of the Caravan of Hussain (A.S.) and history has shown that during the entire length of thirteen centuries this enthusiastic movement could not be hushed up and cooled down. For the same reason, because the martyrdom of Hussain (A.S.) and his friends took place on such a day then Joyous ceremonies and decorative measures, joyous and happy celebrations, and lightings and keeping of fast became prohibited and haram on that day.

Ibn-e-Kaseer writes, “Ashoora was announced as the public and national mourning day in Baghdad in the approximates of 400 Hijrah. People used to keep cold water and cold drinks on the highways and through fares for the thirsty ones to drink and to commemorate the thirst of Hussain (A.S.) and people of Iraq used to become mournful on the Ashoora day just like the death day of the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.).

Who was the Winner of the Karbala Movement?

Although a group of simple people think that Yazeed won the Ashoora battle and Hussain (A.S.) was defeated. But by studying the history deeply and thoroughly they would appreciate that the situation was reverse and opposite of it. For, winning and succeeding does not mean that a person must remain unharmed and intact and the enemy be killed. But it means success in achieving one's objects and goals and aspirations and ideology although one is killed. Defeat does not mean being killed and losing life in the battlefield. But it means the death and annihilation of objective, aspiration and belief.

Hussain (A.S.) himself and his friends were martyred in the Ashoora's tragic event, his family was taken prisoner, their properties were plundered and looted but the aim and objective of Hussain (A.S.) remained alive, because, his aim was the spreading and expansion of Islam and stopping the cruelty, tyranny and aggression, which has been carried forward during the entire length of history and millions of men are the holders and carriers of the flag of this belief and aspiration. Hut the aim of Yazeed was annihilated and perished; because his sole aim was not killing Hussain (A.S.) and his friends instead it was finishing Islam and the end and termination of the teachings of the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) of Islam. Since Hussain (A.S.) was on that track and way, Yazeed thought by killing Hussain (A.S.) and taking his family as prisoner the story will finish and his ends will be achieved.

Not knowing and unaware of this fact that God himself is the guard and custodian of Islam and Quran and the teachings of the Prophets. The tyrants, arrogant, and powerful of the history who always stood up against the Prophets and fought them, killed them or banished them, had the same obnoxious aim but none of them succeeded neither Nomrod and Pharos nor anyone else of them. What success can be better and clearer than this that many centuries have passed and there is no name and signs of those tyrants of the history among the people. But the Prophets of God and the, religious leaders still have their places in the depth of the hearts of the informed, aware, and human loving people. People praise them regarding their greatness and they do not cherish the memories of the kings. Today we observe that the graves of religious leaders and the real movement makers of history have got devoted lovers who travel long distances after bearing the inconveniences and

discomforts, to bow down to their graves and tell their secrets to them. But the graves of the tyrants of history do not have any visitors because they do not have anything to give it to anyone.

After, the catastrophe and calamity of Karbala the signs of the triumph of Hussain (A.S.) and defeat of Yazeed became evident and clear, because where ever the remaining family members of Hussain (A.S.) would set their feet people would exhibit their emotions, of love and attachment with them and curse their enemies, to such extent, that even the family members of Yazeed did not give him any respect. Instead, a few of his near relatives raised objection and rebuked, reproached and blamed him.

Brief Sayings of the Imam Hussain (A.S.)

1. Imam Hussain (A.S.) said on the day of Ashoora: “People are the servants of the World and touch the religion by their tongues. Till such time that they know that religion does not carry any harm for them, they would move and spin around it. But when the test comes then the real religious ones are (to be seen) actually very few in number.”
2. Imam Hussain (A.S.) told his son Imam Zain ul Abidin: “Avoid being cruel to anybody who does not have any helper except God.”
3. During fare well to his son on Ashoora day he said: “Oh my son do not weep, do not shed tears on my leaving, your distress and calamity does not come to an end. But that will be the beginning of your discomforts, agonies and grief’s. Be strong, because God is your supporter. Beware, after I pass away, do not say a word before the enemy so that your worth comes down.”
4. Worst of the people is the one who gives (surrenders) his dooms day for his world (material gains).
5. Do not perform any good work for the sake of people’s praise and do not abandon it for fear of shame.
6. Those who worship and adore God do not worship others.
7. Whatever my brother Hassan (A.S.) did during his life was upon the command and order of God. And that which I do is also upon the order of God.
8. Do not say a word, which may make you repent and force you to make excuse.

Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (AS)-Biography

Name: Jafar

Title: al-Sadiq

Kunya: Abu Abdullah; Abu Musa

Father: Muhammad ibn Ali (Peace be upon him)

Mother: Umm al-Farwa

Born: 17th Rabi’ al-Awwal, 83 AH/702 CE in Madinah, Hejaz region of the Arabian Peninsula

Died: 25th Shawwal, 148 AH/765 CE, after being poisoned by the Abbasid Caliph al-Mansur

Age at Martyrdom: 63

Period of Imamate: 32 years

Buried: al-Baqi’ Cemetary, Madinah, Hejaz region of the Arabian Peninsula

The Truthful One

[Imam al-Baqir](#), the fifth Imam, once said:

“...This is your Imam after me, so follow his example and benefit from his knowledge. By God, he is al-Sadiq (the Truthful One) – the one whom the [Messenger of God](#) (Prophet Muhammad) described to us (in prophecy). Indeed, his followers are aided (by God) in this world and in the Hereafter...”[i]

Imam al-Baqir was referring to the sixth immaculate Imam – Ja’far al-Sadiq. Under this Imam’s guidance, the Shia school became widely-known. Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq also taught the teachers of various schools of thought which developed in later generations.

Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq lived in the transition period between the corrupt ‘Umayyad and the tyrannical Abbasid governments. The unique political circumstances at that time helped limit the extent of persecution which the Imam and his followers were subjected to. Thus, Imam al-Sadiq instructed the Shia to take advantage of the situation by increasing their educational and academic activities throughout the Muslim world.[ii]

It was in recognition of this infallible Imam that the term *Ja’fari* refers to the Shia school of thought. Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq used to tell his companions, “When the man among you is conscious in regard to his faith, is honest in his words, delivers the trusts (to their rightful owners), perfects his manners with people, it will be said, ‘He is Ja’fari (a follower of Ja’far),’ and that would bring joy to me. But if (the man among you) is (in a condition) other than this, his ordeal and disgrace would (falsely) become attributed to me, when it is said that, ‘these are the manners of Ja’far...’”[iii]

The Sixth Imam

During the sixth Imam’s time, various ideologies emerged. While some of these schools remained within the folds of Islam, others were blatantly at odds with core principles of the Islamic faith. But each school had the freedom to make its case and defend its ideas.

The Islamic university that had been developing during the fifth Imam’s days was now coming to complete fruition with Imam al-Sadiq’s guidance. This great school quickly became the hub of academic discourse for over four thousand students whose thirst for knowledge was quenched by none other than Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq. The sixth Imam’s lessons ranged from the sciences of Qur’an and Prophetic tradition to chemistry, as witnessed by his student and renowned chemist Jabir ibn Hayyan. [iv], [v]

The famous Abu Hanifah, head of the Hanafi School in jurisprudence, used to say, “I have not seen (anyone) more knowledgeable than Ja’far, son of Muhammad.”[vi]

As another example, Malik, head of the Maliki School in jurisprudence once said:

“I used to frequent Ja’far, son of Muhammad, for a while – indeed, I did not see him except in one of (these) three conditions: either praying, fasting, or reciting Qur’an. I never saw him narrating on behalf of God’s Messenger (Prophet Muhammad) except in a state of (ritual) purity. He did not speak of that which did not concern him...No eye had seen, nor ear had heard, and no heart of mankind had thought of (someone) more virtuous than Ja’far, son of Muhammad, in knowledge, worship, and piety.”[vii]

Proof of the Creator

At one point, a man asked Imam al-Sadiq, “What is the proof that you have a Creator?” Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq responded with the following:

“I found myself subject to one of two options: either I created myself or something other than myself created me. If I created myself, I am also subject to one of two options: either I created my

self while my self already existed – but then I would not need to create it since it already existed – or I created my self while I was nonexistent, but you already know that the nonexistent cannot bring about anything. Therefore, the third meaning is proven – that I have a Creator, Who is Lord of the Worlds.”[viii]

This argument leaves no other possible option if one assumes that being created is a given. Another man challenged that thought, however, and told the Imam, “I am not a created (being).”

Imam al-Sadiq said, “Then describe for me – if you were a created (being) – how would you be (what qualities describe a created being)?” The man thought for a while, and then paid attention to a piece of wood that was near him. “Long, wide, deep, short, moving, stationary...all of these are qualities of being created.”

Imam al-Sadiq then said:

“If you do not know (how to differentiate) qualities of the created (being) as opposed to the not (created being), then consider yourself created due to these things which you see coming about in your own self.”[ix]

In other words, the descriptions of length after being short, of changing width and depth, of motion after stillness, all point to different states of being. Humans are subject to these changes all the time. The next state exists only after the previous one. Since change is taking place at every moment, all changing things are essentially being created continuously. Every instant, there is a new proof of us being created. iv

With the Corrupt Ruler

Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq had a number of bold confrontations with the corrupt rulers of his day. The Imam stood up and spoke the words of truth without fear or hesitation. One day, the Abbasid ruler Mansur was in the presence of Imam al-Sadiq. Mansur had been shooing away a fly which kept bothering him. As the corrupt ruler became annoyed he asked the Imam, “...Why did God create the fly?” Imam al-Sadiq replied, “To humiliate the arrogant ones.”

Mansur remained silent because he knew that, had he spoken, Imam al-Sadiq would have responded with an even more critical statement. But this same ruler chose to write to Imam al-Sadiq one day asking, “Why don’t you approach us as the people approach us?” The Holy Imam answered:

“There is nothing for which we fear you, nor do you have anything of the Hereafter that we would seek you for. Neither are you in a blessing such that we should congratulate you, nor do you see it as a burden such that we should send you our condolences. So what would we do at your place?”

Mansur wrote back, “You would accompany us to advise us.” Imam al-Sadiq’s response was decisive, “The one who wants this world would not advise you, and the one who wants the hereafter would not accompany you.”[x]

Mansur soon sought to relieve his worrisome thoughts about Imam al-Sadiq once and for all. The tyrant had the immaculate Imam poisoned in Madinah. On his deathbed, Imam al-Sadiq reminded his followers of an essential duty. The sixth Imam opened his eyes and looked into the faces of those around him saying,

“Indeed, our intercession does not extend to one who takes the prayers lightly.” With these words, Imam al-Sadiq emphasized the significance of prayer and its relation to the intercession of Divine Mercy. The sixth holy Imam was buried in the Baqi’ cemetery of Madinah.[xi]

[i] Pg. 15, Vol. 47 of *Bihar al-Anwar* by ‘Allamah Majlisi [ii] Pg. 311 of *Sirat al-A’immah* by Sh. Ja’far Subhani [iii] Pg. 187, Vol. 1 of *Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq* by Sh. Muthaffar [iv] Pg. 313 of *Sirat al-A’immah* by Sh. Ja’far Subhani [v] Pg. 180, Vol. 1 of *Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq* by Sh. Muthaffar [vi] Pg. 308 of *Sirat al-A’immah* by Sh. Ja’far Subhani [vii] Pg. 309 of *Sirat al-A’immah* by Sh.

Ja'far Subhani [viii] Pg. 169, Vol. 1 of *Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq* by Sh. Muthaffar [ix] Pg. 170, Vol. 1 of *Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq* by Sh. Muthaffar [x] Pg. 115, Vol. 1 of *Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq* by Sh. Muthaffar [xi] Pg. 102, Vol. 1 of *Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq* by Sh. Muthaffar

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A Short Biography Of Imam Al-Mahdi (‘A)

Hazrat Imam Al-Mahdi (‘a) is the twelfth and last of the chain of the Purified Imams (‘a) and the divine successors. He was born at the time of dawn, on Friday the 15th of Shaban 255 A.H. in the city of Samarra¹.

His respected father is Imam Hasan al-Askari (‘a). His beloved mother is Janab al-Nargis Khatoon (ra). She was the descendant of the Caesar of Rome from her father's side and from her mother's side she had descended from shamoon the vicegerant of Hazrat Isa (‘a).²

This exalted personality has the same name and kunyah (agnomen) as the Holy Prophet (S). His titles are Al-Mahdi, Hujjat, Qa'im, Muntadhar, Sahibuzzaman and Khalaf al-Saleh. His most famous honourific however is Al-Al-Mahdi (‘a).³

Ibn Khallikaan writes; "His well-known title is Hujjat. The Shi'as know him by the titles, Muntadhar, Qa'im and Al-Mahdi"⁴

The great scholar Mohaddith al-Noori has collected 182 titles of Imam Al-Mahdi (‘a) from the Islamic texts. Each of these titles signify each of his virtuous qualities.⁵

The tyrant Abbasid rulers were aware of the prophecies of the Holy Prophet (S). That the son of Imam Hasan al-Askari (‘a) by the name of Al-Mahdi will appear to remove all kinds of corruption and tyranny; hence they planned to eliminate the child when he is born. Due to this the birth of Imam Al-Mahdi (‘a) was kept a secret like that of Hazrat Ibrahim (‘a). So much so that except for the most trusted of the Shi'as and his own family, no one knew of the existence of Hazrat (‘a). In spite of this whenever there was an opportunity, Imam Hasan al-Askari (‘a) showed his son to his trustworthy followers; that in future they may follow him. This was in order that the Shi'as may remain firm upon the right path, and not be led astray. A servant Abu Ghanim says:

"Abu Muhammad (‘a) has a son whose name is Muhammad." On the third day of his birth he brought him before his companions and said:

"After me he is your Master of the affair, he is my successor, he is the same 'Qa'im', who is awaited by all. When the earth will be fraught with injustice and oppression then he will reappear and fill the earth with justice and righteousness."⁶

The early years of his life were spent in the usual way. When he was in his fifth year, he lost his respected father.⁷

After this tragic event the responsibility of guiding the Shi'as was transferred upon him. At this time, Hazrat ('a) possessed all the qualities and the divine knowledge that was bestowed upon the previous Imams ('a), by the Almighty. In the same way as Hazrat Yahya ('a) in his childhood and Hazrat Isa ('a) in his infancy was favoured with the divine office of Prophethood by Allah.⁸

Although all the Imams ('a) were holding the divine office of wilayat, the efforts of the enemies to eliminate the twelfth Imam ('a) were maximum. Hence Imam az-Zaman ('a) was entrusted to Ghaybah and being away from the sight of people, he had to fulfill all the duties of an Imam.

It is said that the concealed life of Hazrat Al-Mahdi ('a) is not something extraordinary. Rather, in the life of so many Prophets ('a) and even Imams ('a) it is seen, that they were at some time, in concealment from the people. The Holy Qur'an records the concealment of various prophets ('a) like Hazrat Ibrahim ('a)⁹, Hazrat Musa ('a)¹⁰ and Hazrat Isa ('a)¹¹.

The Holy Prophet (S) and the Imams ('a) had pointed out to the people the imminent occultation of their last proof (Imam Al-Mahdi-aj), so that no doubt or misunderstanding should remain, regarding this problem.

The occultation (Ghaybah) of the twelfth Imam consists of two phases: one is Ghaybah al-Sughra (The lesser occultation) and the second is Ghaybah al-Kubra (The greater occultation). Imam Ja'far Al-Sadiq ('a) said:

"There are two occultations for Qa'im. One is short and the other prolonged. In the short occultation only the special Shi'as will know of his whereabouts. And in the longer occultation only his trustworthy servants will know where he is"¹²

According to the well-known reports, the lesser occultation (Ghaybah al-sugra) commenced from the year of his Imamate in 260 A.H and continued for 69 years. Some of the scholars like Shaykh Mufeed and Syed Mohsin Amin Amili maintain that Ghaybah al-sugra began right from the time of his birth.¹³

Because, even in those early years, Hazrat ('a) was concealed from the common people. According to this method, the period of Ghaybah al-sugra comes to seventy four years.

During the period of Ghaybah al-sugra. Imam Al-Mahdi ('a) himself appointed his deputies from among the righteous Shi'as. Four of them succeeded each other and continued to fulfill the duty of intermediaries. These four personalities conveyed the questions and problems to Imam ('a) and brought back the Imam's ('a) answers for the people. The first of these deputies was Janab Abu Amroo Uthman Ibn Saeed Amri. Before this he was a representative of Imam Hasan Al-Askari ('a)¹⁴

Shaykh Tusi writes: "On the fortieth day the Shi'as were sitting in the company of Imam Hasan al-Askari ('a), when Imam Askari ('a) wished that they recognise his Hujyat after him..... Suddenly a handsome child was brought before them. He resembled Abu Muhammad ('a).

Then Imam al-Askari ('a) said: "He is your Imam after me. And my successor upon you. Obey him, and do not go astray after me (after my death), otherwise your religion shall be destroyed and you will be annihilated. Know that, after today you shall not see him, even if you spend your whole life for it. Hence, accept what Uthman tells you, obey his commands and listen to what he says. Because he is the representative of your Imam and holds the responsibility."¹⁵

After the death of Uthman Ibn Saeed, his pious son, Muhammad Ibn Uthman succeeded his father upon the post of the deputyship of Imam az-Zaman ('a).16

Shaikh Tusi has recorded the letters sent by Imam Hasan Al-Askari ('a) and Imam Al-Mahdi ('a) to Uthman Ibn Saeed and his son Abu Ja'far Muhammad Ibn Uthman for the Shi'as. These letters consists of commands, prohibitions and replies to the questions of the Shi'as.17

Muhammad Ibn Uthman passed away from this world at the end of Jamadi-ul-Awwal in the year 304 or 305 A.H.18

During the time of his illness, as he laid on the sick-bed, the Shi'as and their children came and surrounded him. They asked: "If something happens, whom should we consult instead of you?" He answered, "This Abul Qasim Husayn ibn Ruh Ibn Bahr Nawbakhti is successor. And he is the intermediary between you and the Master affair (Imam Al-Mahdi- aj), and his agent. He is trustworthy and reliable. Consult him, and in case of important matters, rely upon him. I have been ordered to announce this, and I have announced it"19

Husain Ibn Ruh Nawbakhti was. one of the agents of Muhammad ibn Uthman in Baghdad. He had been working closely with him for a long time. These agents used to be in contact with the people and when ordered they handed over the goods to them20. Husayn ibn Ruh died in Shaban 326 A.H21

The last safir was Abul Hasan Ali Ibn Muhammad Seymoori. He became the deputy of Imam Al-Mahdi ('a) according to the will of Husain ibn Ruh. He died after three years on the 15th of Shaban 329 A.H.22

The graves (tombs) of these four respected deputies (Nawwab al-Arba', as they are commonly known) are situated in Baghdad.23

The most sensitive and crucial period of Ghaybah al-sugra was when Ali Ibn Mohammad died. Because till his death the people were in contact with Imam az-Zaman ('a) through him. After his death, it was the commencement of Ghaybah al-Kubra.

Six days before his death, Ali ibn Muhammad Seymoori received a communication from Imam az-Zaman ('a):

"...so be prepared, but appoint no one in your place, because from the day of your death, the period of my major occupation (Gaybah al-Kubra) will begin. Henceforth, no one will see me, unless and until Allah makes me appear. My reappearance will take place after a very long time, when the world will be full of injustice and violence".24

Ultimately, the shining sun of the divine proof went behind the curtain of Ghaybah, completely. And the period of communication with Hazrat (through Nawab al-Arba) came to an end. In spite of this (his Ghaybah) Hazrat Al-Mahdi ('a) is the Imam of the time and Imam of the world. He is the Divine Proof. Even though his person may be hidden from our eyes but his commands are clear.

Amir Al-Mu'minin Ali ('a) announced from his pulpit at Kufa: "Even if the person of the Divine Proof is hidden while he guides the people, his knowledge and manners will be clear for them to follow"25

It is clear that the knowledge and practice of Imam Al-'Asr ('a) is impeccable like the Qur'an, as was the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (S). It is obligatory for the people of faith (Muslims) to act upon the Qur'an and Sunnah, and to refrain from what they prohibit. The Holy Prophet (S) said:

"I leave behind two weighty things among you: The Book of Allah and my Progeny, my Ahl Al-Bayt If you adhere to those two you shall not go astray. And know that these two shall not separate till they meet me at Hauz (Kauthar)"26

During the period of Ghaybah al-Kubra, when it is not possible to establish communication with Imam az-Zaman ('a) at will, the people have been ordered to follow the true teachings of the Qur'an and Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) through the pious and religious scholars and the just jurists. The people must follow them to know what obligations they are supposed to fulfill.

Imam Al-Sadiq ('a): "And among jurists (Fuqaha) are those who protect their selves (from sins) guard their religion, defy their carnal desires and are obedient to their master. It is incumbent upon the people to follow them. Such characteristics are found only in a few of them (Shi'as) and not all"27.

The jurists issue decrees for the people and explain to them truth about faith. They endeavour to fulfill the exalted duty of preparing the grounds for the reappearance of their master, Hazrat Al-Mahdi ('a). So that by the coming of Hazrat ('a) the Islamic faith may strengthen and that he may fill the earth with justice and equity.

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- 1.Kamaaluddin vol. 2, Pg. 428, 433 424,430.
 - 2.Kamaaluddin vol.2 Pg. 420,424.
 - 3.Al Fusoolul Muhimma Pg.292, Nurul Absaar Pg. 168.
 - 4.Wafayatui Ayaan vol.4 Pg 176.
 - 5.Najm-us-saaqib Pg. 41-98.
 - 6.Kamaaluddin Vol. 2 Pg. 431.
 - 7.Al Kafi, Vol. 1 pg. 503.
 - 8. See Qur'an, Sura Maryam, Ayat 12 and 30:
يَا يَحْيَىٰ خُذِ الْكِتَابَ بِقُوَّةٍ وَآتَيْنَاهُ الْحُكْمَ صَبِيًّا
"O Yahya! Take hold of the Book with strength, and We granted him wisdom while yet a child" (19:12).
قَالَ إِنِّي عَبْدُ اللَّهِ آتَانِيَ الْكِتَابَ وَجَعَلَنِي نَبِيًّا
"He [Isa – Jesus] said: Surely I am a servant of Allah; He has given me the Book and made me a prophet" (19:30).
 - 9. See Qur'an, Sura Maryam, Ayat 48-49:
وَأَعْتَزَلَكُمُ وَمَا تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَأَدْعُوا رَبِّي عَسَىٰ أَلَّا أَكُونَ بِدُعَاءِ رَبِّي تَشْعِبًا
"And I will withdraw from you and what you call on besides Allah, and I will call upon my Lord; may be I shall not remain unblest in calling upon my Lord." (19:48).
فَلَمَّا اعْتَزَلَهُمْ وَمَا يَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَهَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ كُلًّا جَعَلْنَا نَبِيًّا
"So when he withdrew from them and what they worshipped besides Allah, We gave to him Ishaq and Yaquob, and each one of them We made a prophet." (19:49).
 - 10. See Qur'an, Sura Qasas, Ayat 21-22.
فَخَرَجَ مِنْهَا خَائِفًا يَتَرَقَّبُ قَالَ رَبِّ نَجِّنِي مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ
"So he [Musa – Moses] went forth therefrom, fearing, awaiting, (and) he said: My Lord! deliver me from the unjust people." (28:21).
وَلَمَّا تَوَجَّهَ تَلْقَاءَ مَدْيَنَ قَالَ عَسَىٰ رَبِّي أَن يَهْدِيَنِي سَوَاءَ السَّبِيلِ
"And when he [Musa – Moses] turned his face towards Madyan, he said: Maybe my Lord will guide me in the right path." (28:22).
 - 11. See Qur'an, Sura Nisa, Ayat 157:
وَقَوْلِهِمْ إِنَّا قَتَلْنَا الْمَسِيحَ عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَمَا قَتَلُوهُ وَمَا صَلَبُوهُ وَلَٰكِنْ شُبِّهَ لَهُمْ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ لَفِي شَكٍّ مِنْهُ ۗ مَا لَهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِلَّا اتِّبَاعَ الظَّنِّ ۗ وَمَا قَتَلُوهُ يَقِينًا
"And their saying: Surely we have killed the Messiah, Isa son of Marium, the messenger of Allah; and they did not kill him nor did they crucify him, but it appeared to them so (like Isa) and most surely those who differ therein are

only in a doubt about it; they have no knowledge respecting it, but only follow a conjecture, and they killed him not for sure.” (4:157).

- 12.Al Kafi Vol. 1 Pg.340; Ghaybah, Nomani Pg. 180.
- 13.Al Kafi Vol. 1 Pg. 340. Ayan ush Shi'a Vol. 2 Pg. 46.
- 14.Ghaybah, al-Tusi Pg. 353
- 15.Ghaybah, al-Tusi Pg. 357.
- 16.Ghaybah, al-Tusi Pg. 362.
- 17.Ghaybah, al-Tusi Pg. 356.
- 18.Ghaybah, al-Tusi Pg.366.
- 19.Ghaybah, al-Tusi Pg. 371-372.
- 20.Gaibat al-Tusi Pg. 369/372.
- 21.Ghaybah, al-Tusi Pg. 387.
- 22.Ghaybah, al-Tusi Pg. 394.
- 23.Ghaybah, al-Tusi Pgs. 358, 366. 376, 396.
- 24.Kamaaluddin Vol.2 Pg.516; Ghaybah, al-Tusi Pg.395.
- 25.Kamaaluddin vol. I Pg.302.
- 26.Yanabiul Mawaddah Pg. 35.
- 27.Tafsir Al Imam Pg. 300.

Imam Musa al-Kadhim (AS)-Biography

Name: Musa

Title: al-Kadhim (The Calm or Restrained); Bab al-Hawa'ij (The Door to Fulfilling One's Needs)

Kunya: Abu al-Hassan

Father: Ja'far al-Sadiq, peace be upon him

Mother: Hamidah al-Barbariyyah

Born: 7th Safar, 128 AH/745 CE in Madinah, Hejaz region of the Arabian Peninsula

Died: 25th Rajab, 183 AH/791 CE, after being poisoned by Harun al-Rashid

Age at Martyrdom: 55

Period of Imamate: 33 years

Buried: Kadhimayn, Baghdad, Iraq

Imam Musa al-Kadhim (p)

The Best of the Best

God does not haphazardly choose His representatives. God does not simply choose the oldest son of a prior Imam to be his successor. That would be tantamount to monarchical inheritance, which may or may not elect the most qualified individuals. Rather, God chooses and promotes the best of the best of His creation, in accordance with His comprehensive knowledge of all His creatures. Granted, it may be that the most righteous humans descended from one family tree, and that may be explained by Divine wisdom. However, the Almighty would only choose His representatives based on the qualities of perfection which He knew of and which manifested through His creation. It has been narrated that the sixth Imam, [Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq](#), advised his close companions with the following:

“Treat Musa, this son of mine, well. For indeed, he is the best of my offspring, and the one I leave behind as my successor. After me, he is the one who holds my position and (he is) the proof in support of God – the Glorious and Exalted – (as a witness) upon the entirety of His creation.”[i] The sixth Imam distinctly noted that his son, Musa, was the most excellent among his children and the rest of creation. This distinguished feature made Musa, the son of Ja’far, the Divine representative on earth after his father. Musa, the son of Ja’far, was the seventh immaculate Imam. Imam Musa continued the noble mission of safeguarding the Truth, in word and action, as did the preceding Imams. However, the oppression of the Abbasid rulers curtailed the Imam’s mobility, placing him in prison for years. For his exceptional endurance, Imam Musa became known as al-Kadhim (the one who holds back his anger and grief).[ii]

Al-Kadhim: The Seventh Imam

After [Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq’s](#) passing, the Ja’fari university continued to prosper under the leadership of the seventh Imam, Imam Musa al-Kadhim. Imam Musa was respected for the light of his brilliance as well as the profundity of his character. Scholars of Islam, across the board, have been humbled before Imam Musa’s moral and spiritual standing.

The well-known Sunni scholar, Ibn Hajar al-Haytami, has written the following in describing the Imam:

“Musa al-Kadhim is the inheritor of his father’s knowledge, awareness, perfection, and virtue. He was called al-Kadhim for the multitude of his (granted) pardons and his forbearance. He was known amongst the people of Iraq as the ‘*door at which God fulfills needs.*’ He was the most devout amongst the people of his time; the most knowledgeable and the most generous amongst them.”[iii]

The Holy Imam used to pray at night until sunrise. He would then prostrate, placing his forehead on the ground out of humility before God – sometimes not lifting his head off the ground until just before noon. This Divine representative used to tremble and cry due to his intense awareness of God, such that his beard would become drenched with his tears.

Imam al-Kadhim was unique in the extent to which he maintained positive relations with his family and relatives. The Imam’s kindness also extended to his neighbors, both near and far. The poor of Madinah used to enjoy the fruits of Imam al-Kadhim’s generosity, not knowing that the Imam had been their secret benefactor. But even in light of these incredible traits, Imam Musa al-Kadhim used to pray, “Immense is the fault of your servant, so beautiful let the pardon be from You.”[iv]

Participation for Preservation

The Abbasid rule of Harun al-Rashid was tainted by the persecution and bloodshed of the innocent. Although Harun used to display the outward appearance of a pious Muslim, he often contradicted that guise when he lavishly spent money from the Muslim treasury to satisfy his personal desires and whims. While he would cry and faint after hearing a religious sermon, he also kept one thousand servant girls, three hundred of whom specialized in singing and dancing for him.[v]

Imam Musa al-Kadhim knew that an important way to help curtail the injustice of Harun’s regime was to have some of his loyal supporters play important roles in the administration. The seventh Imam urged some of his key students to participate in Harun’s government, as long as the participant worked to preserve the lives and protect the rights of the innocent – especially the oppressed Shia. For instance, the Imam’s devout companion, ‘Ali ibn Yaq’in, sought permission from the Imam to undertake a high-profile position in Harun’s government. Imam al-Kadhim permitted him and explained:

“Indeed, with you we find joy and your brothers gain pride; perhaps through you God will mend that which is broken and through you He will break the hostile (will) of those opposing His allies.”[vi]

When ‘Ali ibn Yaqtin complained to Imam al-Kadhimi about the difficult conditions surrounding his work in Harun’s ministry, the Imam said:

“O ‘Ali, indeed God has allies who are in the company of the allies of the oppressors, in order to push (harm) away from His allies – and you are among them, O ‘Ali.”[vii]

Returning Fadak

One day, Harun tried to gauge Imam al-Kadhimi’s thoughts regarding the Abbasid political rule. In his attempt, Harun expressed his willingness to return the land of Fadak – which was usurped from Lady Zahra’, along with the political leadership, after the Prophet’s passing – to its rightful owners. The Holy Imam responded with the following:

“I would not take it unless (it is returned) with its (true) boundaries.”

Harun then inquired, “And what are its boundaries?”

Imam al-Kadhimi answered, “If I specify the boundaries, you will not return it.”

When Harun insisted adamantly, Imam Musa al-Kadhimi declared the boundaries which expressed the true meaning behind the idea of Fadak:

“As for the first boundary, it is Aden (the southern edge of the nation). The second boundary is Samarqand (the eastern edge of the nation). The third boundary is Africa (the western edge of the nation). As for the fourth boundary, it is at the coast beyond (the land of) the Khazars and Armenia (the northern edge of the nation).”

Harun became more furious as the Imam listed each successive boundary, until he finally exclaimed with a mixture of sadness and anger, “So nothing is left for us!”[viii]

Seizing Fadak meant turning one’s back on God’s commands. Returning Fadak would mean an end to corrupt rule and accepting the political leadership prescribed by Allah (swt). But Harun could not bring himself to give up the usurped throne.

Imprisonment and Martyrdom

Historians are in agreement that Harun imprisoned Imam al-Kadhimi for several years because he feared that the Imam would incite people against him. The seventh Imam was transferred from the darkness of one prison to another and subjected to very harsh conditions. Still, the Imam always viewed the situation positively and prayed frequently:

“O God, I always used to ask You to free me (from other duties) in order to worship You; and You have answered me, so thanks be unto You for doing so.”[ix]

Harun ultimately decided to murder the seventh Imam. The corrupt ruler ordered the prison warden to poison Imam al-Kadhimi. In order to cover up his heinous act, Harun called upon the scholars of his court, as well as the distinguished personalities of Baghdad, to witness that the Imam was apparently healthy. But Imam al-Kadhimi realized this, turned to those present, and said:

“Witness that I have been killed by poison. For three days, witness that I have appeared healthy on the outside, but I have been poisoned...”

The Holy Imam predicted that he would be martyred after three days, and so he was. Imam al-Kadhimi was buried in the Quraysh cemetery of Baghdad, which is now known as Kadhimiyyah.^{iv}, [x]

Writing by Shaykh Ali Moughania

[i] Pg. 20, Vol. 48 of *Bihar al-Anwar* by Allamah Majlisi [ii] Pg. 11, Vol. 48 of *Bihar al-Anwar* by Allamah Majlisi [iii] Pg. 376 of *Sirat al-A’immah* by Sh. Ja’far SubHani [iv] Pg. 88-91 of *al-*

A'immah al-Ithnay 'Ashar by Sh. Ja'far SubHani [v] Pg. 393-394 of *Sirat al-A'immah* by Sh. Ja'far SubHani [vi] Pg. 408 of *Sirat al-A'immah* by Sh. Ja'far SubHani [vii] Pg. 411 of *Sirat al-A'immah* by Sh. Ja'far SubHani [viii] Pg. 415 of *Sirat al-A'immah* by Sh. Ja'far SubHani [ix] Pg. 240 Vol. 2, *Kitab al-Irshad* by Sh. Mufid [x] Pg. 248, Vol. 48 of *Bihar al-Anwar* by Allamah Majlisi

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Imam Ali al-Hadi (AS)-Biography

Name: Ali

Title: al-Hadi; al-Naqi (the Guide; the Pure)

Kunya: Abu al-Hasan (al-Thalith/the 3rd)

Father: Muhammad ibn Ali al-Jawad (Peace be upon him)

Mother: Summana

Born: 15th Dhu al-Hijjah; 2nd Rajab according to a different narration, 212 AH/827 CE in the Holy City of Madinah

Died: 3rd Rajab, 254 AH/868 CE, after being poisoned by the Abbasid Caliph al-Mu'tazz

Age at Martyrdom: 42

Period of Imamate: 34 years

Buried: Samarra, Iraq

The Tenth Imam

“...The imaginations of those who imagine are lost; the sight of those who see is short; the descriptions of those who describe disintegrate; and the words of the falsifiers vanish – before understanding the wonder of His state; or being able to reach the height of His station; For He is in the position which is unlimited; and in the place upon which (the gazes of) eyes have never fallen – neither through a signal, nor an expression; far (be it), far (it is)!”[i]

These were the words of Ali, son of [Imam Muhammad al-Jawad](#) while answering a question about the Originator of Existence, the Almighty God. The beauty of the awareness of God exudes from the words of such an individual, as if calling out, “This must be an immaculate Imam!”

[Imam Muhammad al-Jawad](#), the ninth Imam, stated, “The Imam after me is my son Ali. His command is my command, his words are my words, and obedience to him is obedience to me...”[ii]

The tenth Imam was known by many titles which designated his virtuous qualities. Two of the most famous of these titles were al-Hadi (the guide) and al-Naqi (the pure).[iii]

Throughout his life, Imam Ali al-Hadi proactively worked to nourish the hearts and minds of the believers with Divine wisdom. The Imam’s words and actions called for an elevation of awareness toward realizing the purpose of life. By helping others reflect on the changing, impermanent nature

of the world, Imam al-Hadi reminded people of the Hereafter. As the Imam said, “The world is a market; some people gained in it, while others lost.”[iv]

Imam Ali al-Hadi

After [Imam Muhammad al-Jawad](#) was poisoned, Imam Ali al-Hadi lived in Madinah, where he remained for several years. Although the Abbasid rule had been cruel under Mu'tasim, the levels of oppression increased drastically under the Abbasid ruler Mutawakkil. A companion of Imam al-Hadi by the name of Ibn Sharaf narrates the following, “I was walking with Imam al-Hadi in Madinah and he said to me, ‘Aren't you Ibn Sharaf?’ So I said, ‘Yes.’ Then I wanted to ask him about a (religious) question, but before I asked him, he said, ‘We are in the middle of the road (in public), and this is not the situation for a (religious) question.’”[v]

This encounter hints at the terror exercised under Mutawakkil's rule, such that it led Imam al-Hadi to keep Shia religious matters confidential. Indeed, it was Mutawakkil who persecuted and arrested several prominent Shia. Mutawakkil forcibly took Imam al-Hadi to Samarra' (an Abbasid city north of Baghdad) and imprisoned him. Then this wicked caliph demolished the burial site of the Master of Martyrs, [Imam Hussain](#), setting up police stations to prevent devotees from visiting...[vi]

The tenth Imam thus maintained secret communications with the Shia living in various areas. Through an intricate network of representatives, Imam al-Hadi would receive the religious dues from observant believers, as well as answer questions of faith, Islamic law, and politics.[vii]

In the face of political and intellectual challenges, Imam al-Hadi stood with wisdom and fortitude. From the foolish ones of Mutawakkil's court to the twisted extremists making false claims, Imam Ali al-Hadi uprooted the trees of distortion with his sound proofs and powerful reminders.[viii]

A Reminder through Poetry

On a dark night, Mutawakkil's guards stormed Imam al-Hadi's residence. Word had reached the Abbasid ruler that weapons and letters from loyal supporters were hidden in the Holy Imam's home. The guards barged in and searched the premises for any sign of dissidence. They initially found nothing of the sort...

But then the guards opened the door of a closed off room, only to find the Holy Imam... Their gazes rested upon the devout master – who was dressed in wool, sitting on the sand and gravel, and directing himself toward the Almighty while reciting verses from the Holy Scripture. Reminded of their orders, the guards carried Imam al-Hadi off to Mutawakkil.

“We did not find anything in his house; and we found him facing the *qiblah* (direction of prayer), reading the Quran.” explained the guards. Mutawakkil had been drinking alcohol when the Holy Imam was brought before him. The corrupt ruler offered the Holy Imam his drink (which is forbidden by Islam). Imam al-Hadi refused, saying, “By God, never has it mixed with my flesh and blood at all, so excuse me.”

The corrupt ruler accepted. Then he demanded, “Recite poetry for me.” Imam al-Hadi replied, “I narrate little (when it comes to) poetry.” But Mutawakkil insisted. Therefore, the Holy Imam recited the following lines of poetry, as a reminder for those who would wish to be reminded:

*“They stayed on the beds of mountains, while guarded –
– by the overpowering (ones) among men. Yet these beds did not save them
And they were brought down – after glory – from their fortresses...
Then they were deposited into holes. What terrible (places to) stay!
A screaming caller yelled out to them after they were buried:
‘Where are the beds, the crowns, and the wardrobes?’*

*'Where are those faces that used to be pampered –
– before them, veils and wreaths were drawn down?'*
The grave then spoke out on their behalf as (the screaming caller) asked them:
'Those faces...are what worms fight over (now)'
So long did they eat – for a time – and (for) so (long) they did drink...
But – after having eaten for so long – they are now being eaten
And for so long, they built houses to guard them...
But they departed the houses, the families, and moved on
And for so long, they treasured wealth and saved it...
But they left it behind for their enemies, and traveled on
Their homes have become neglected wasteland...
As the (original) inhabitants have gone to the graves”

Historians note that Mutawakkil was touched by this poem and started to cry, as did those present. But even so, the corrupt ruler failed to mend his ways.[ix]

Martyrdom and Words of Wisdom

Eventually, Mutawakkil was killed by his own son, Muntasir. While Muntasir was not as tyrannical as his father, his rule only lasted for about six months. Muntasir was succeeded by two tyrants, Musta'in and Mu'tazz, who followed suit with the traditional Abbasid oppression.[x]

Imam Ali al-Hadi remained under close surveillance and political pressure, but he continued to reject injustice with steadfast resistance and never submitted to corruption. During Mu'tazz's reign, Imam al-Hadi was poisoned... The holy tenth Imam was buried at his residence in Samarra', Iraq.[xi]

Imam al-Hadi's following words call for insightful contemplation on the topic of death. They specifically discuss the way to think of this world and the next. "Indeed, God has made this world an abode of trials, and the Hereafter an abode of outcome. He made the trials of this world to be a cause for the reward of the Hereafter, and the reward of the Hereafter to be a compensation for the trials in this world..."iv

"...Think of your death, in the arms of your family (members), while no doctor can stop you (from dying), and no loved one can do you any good..."[xii]

[i] Pg. 250 of al-Ihtijaj by Sh. Tabrasi [ii] Pg. 118, Vol. 50 of Bihar al-Anwar by Allamah Majlisi [iii] Pg. 113, Vol. 50 of Bihar al-Anwar by Allamah Majlisi [iv] Pg. 483 of Tuhaf al-'Uqul by Sh. Hurani [v] Pg. 509 of Sirat al-A'immah by Sh. Ja'far Subhani [vi] Pg. 521-525 of Seeratul A'immah by Sh. Ja'far Subhani [vii] Pg. 510-511 of Seeratul A'immah by Sh. Ja'far Subhani [viii] Pg. 535-539 of Seeratul A'immah by Sh. Ja'far Subhani [ix] Pg. 519-520 of Seeratul A'immah by Sh. Ja'far Subhani [x] Pg. 506, 532 of Seeratul A'immah by Sh. Ja'far Subhani [xi] Pg. 544 of Seeratul A'immah by Sh. Ja'far Subhani [xii] Pg. 311 of Aalamu Deen by Sh. Daylami

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Imam Raza AS-Biography

Updated: 14 hours ago

His name was Ali, appellative Reza and kunniyat Abul Hasan. Imam Musa Kazim was his father and, therefore, his full name was Imam Abul Hasan Ali bin Musa Al-Reza A. S. His mother was known by her kunniyat, Ummul Baneen and appellative Tahira. She was a pious lady very much devoted to the worship of God.

He was born in Madinah on 11th of Dhil Qadah 148 A.H. The demise of his esteemed grandfather Imam Jafar Sadiq (AS) had taken place about a month earlier on 15th of Shawwal. The arrival of this pious baby soon after that great calamity must have given some solace to the entire household.

Upbringing

He was reared and brought up under the benign shadow of his esteemed father Hazrat Imam Musa Kazim AS. Successive stages of childhood and youth passed in this very pious environment and thus he completed thirty-five years of his age. Although the last few years of this period were those when Imam Musa Kazim (AS) was undergoing the hardships of captivity and persecution in Iraq yet prior to this Imam Reza (AS) had the privilege of passing twenty-eight or twenty-nine years of his life in the company of his father.

Succession

Imam Musa Kazim AS was aware that the government of the day will not allow him to breath freely and that during the later part of his life when he would be about to leave the world, such conditions might come to prevail that would not even let the devotees of Ahle Bait (AS) see him and find out from him the identity of their future guide. He therefore had deemed it necessary to acquaint the followers of Ahle Bait (AS) of their would be Imam after him during that very period of respite when he was still in Madinah.

With this end in view, he had called an assembly of seventeen distinguished personalities from amongst the progeny of Ali (AS) and Fatima (AS) and made a formal announcement of the name of his son Hazrat Ali Reza (AS) as his vicegerent and successor. He also arranged for a will executed in writing on which sixty notable personalities of Madinah affixed their signatures as witnesses. Such arrangements do not seem to have been made in respect of other Imams (AS) simply because they were not confronted with such conditions in the last moments of their lives.

Tenure of Imamate

Hazrat Imam Ali Reza (AS) was thirty-five years of age when his esteemed father Hazrat Imam Musa Kazim (AS) left this world and the responsibilities pertaining to Imamate devolved upon him. This was the time when Haroon Rasheed was reigning, as caliph in Baghdad and the conditions were extremely unfavourable for the progeny of Fatima (AS) It was in such a hostile environment that the Imam AS began discharging silently his obligations towards the genuine Islamic Shariat.

Scholastic Perfection

Amongst the pious progeny of Muhammad (AS), every single individual was blessed by God with the highest degree of knowledge which friends and foes alike had perforce to acknowledge. It is another matter that the circumstances favoured some with lesser and others with greater degree of opportunity to disseminate the bounties of knowledge.

Amongst these pious personages it was Imam Reza (AS) who got the utmost opportunity in this respect after Imam Jafar Sadiq (AS) even prior to his formal assumption of the Imamate, his father Hazrat Imam Musa Kazim (AS) used to advise all his sons and members of the household to seek his guidance saying: “Ali Reza (AS) is the most knowledgeable person amongst the present progeny of most knowledgeable person amongst the present progeny of Muhammad (AS) Get all your problems relating to religious matters solved by him and commit to memory whatever he says.”

After the demise of Hazrat Imam Musa Al-Kazim, while Imam Reza was in Madinah and used to sit at the shrine of the Prophet, Islamic scholars came to him for the solution of their difficult problems pertaining to the faith. Muhammad bin Yaqtin says that when he collected together the written replies given by Imam Reza to questions put to him in writing, their total went up to eighteen thousand. (Author's note: at the very time of the death of his father, Imam Reza was recognized by scholars as the depository of the Divine Knowledge)

Vicissitudes of Life

After the death of Hazrat Imam Musa Kazim (AS), Haroon's tenure of caliphate lasted for ten years. Surely, he could hardly bear the existence of Imam Ali Reza (AS) in this world just as he did not tolerate that of his esteemed father, but no aggressive steps were taken openly against Imam Reza (AS) It could be either because the government had been publicly discredited as a result of the continued torture and persecution of Imam Musa Kazim (AS) for a long duration that culminated in his death while still in captivity, or because of the realization by the tyrant himself of his own cruel conduct that led his own conscience to reprimand him.

Whatever might have been the reasons, the fact is that no open action was taken against the Imam (AS) It is even reported that with a view to strengthening his position and influence Yahya bin Khalid Barmaki once said to Haroon Rashid that after his father Ali ibne Musa (AS) was also laying claim to Imamate like his father. To this Haroon replied: “Was there left anything wanting in the treatment that we meted out to his father that you now want me to exterminate the entire lineage?”

Even then in view of the intense antipathy that Haroon had been showing towards the descendants of the Prophet and the treatment that he had hitherto meted out to the Sadaat in keeping the ruler pleased at all costs, could not be expected to have an amicable disposition towards the Ahle Bait (AS) Moreover, neither the people could visit the Imam (AS) freely for seeking knowledge nor he himself had the opportunity to freely propagate the genuine Islamic tenets.

The last days of Haroon passed most unpleasantly due to the internecine wrangling between his two sons, Ameen and Mamun. Ameen was from his first wife, who belonged to the royal family, being the granddaughter of Mansoor Diwaniqi. Therefore he enjoyed the favour of all the nobles of Arab descent. Mamun was born of a Persian maid slave and hence the Persian section of the court entertained affection for him.

The mutual tug of war between the two was a continuous source of mental agony for Haroon. Thinking that the division of the territory between the two sons would finally settle the dispute, he partitioned the country in such a manner that the capital of Baghdad and Arab territories around it viz., Syria, Egypt, Hijaz and Yemen were allotted to Muhammad Ameen and the Eastern regions viz., Iran, Khurasan and Turkestan etc, were assigned to Mamun. But this settlement could have worked only if both the parties had any inclination to follow the maxim 'live and let live'.

But if the lust for power could lead the Bani Abbas to commit all sorts of atrocities and oppression on Bani Fatima, there was no reason as to why the two warring brothers of the same clan Bani Abbas should not gear themselves up for aggressive action against each other. A clash between any two forces is inevitable when none of them possesses that spirit of compassion selflessness and concern for the welfare of the people in general that Bani Fatima always had before them as their main objective and for which they used to forsake even their rightful claims.

The result was that soon after the death of Haroon, fierce fighting broke out between the two brothers. Ultimately after four years of continuous struggle and carnage, success embraced Mamun and Ameen was put to death in Muharram 198 A.H. Thus Mamun finally established his sway over the entire Abbasid Kingdom.

As Heir Apparent

Ultimately, after Ameen was killed, the Islamic domain in a way did come under the control of Mamun. It has already been stated that from the mother's side Ameen was of Arab descent and Mamun of Persian. The assassination of Ameen further alienated the Arabs of Iraq, the Arab nobles in general from Mamun. There was anger and resentment in their hearts against him, at the same time Mamun was also apprehensive of a sizable section of Bani Abbas that was favouring Ameen, besides there was also another class of people which in its heart of hearts felt disgusted with the Abbaside regime although it was not in a position to do any harm to it, these were the supporters of the progeny of Fatima (SA), a large number of whom had confronted Bani Abbas from time to time and some of whom were massacred some exiled from their hearths and homes and some confined to prison.

It was by recalling to their memory the atrocities perpetrated by the Umayyads on Imam Husain (AS) and others from the progeny of Fatima (AS) that Abu Muslim Khurasani had incited the

people of Iran against them. It was but natural that a feeling of compassion should have been generated in Iran towards this household. However, the Abbasids exploited this feeling to their advantage. This must have opened the eyes of the Iranians to some extent.

They must have felt defrauded by the fact that against all that was said to them the power had been grabbed by other people. It is quite possible that these reports regarding the leanings of the Iranians might have also reached the ears of Mamun. After the assassination of Ameen he could no longer repose his trust in the Arabs and more particularly in the tribe Bani Abbas. Thus every moment he apprehended an uprising among them against him. He, therefore, thought it politically expedient to win the favour the Iranians against the Arabs and that of Bani Fatima against Bani Abbas.

If the intention behind one's conduct appears to be based on political expediency it is not deemed as sincere and therefore, has no positive impact on the people in general. It was thus considered necessary by Mamun to adopt a religious posture and publicly propagate his Shiite leanings and his love for the Ahle Bait and also to demonstrate to the world that he genuinely intended to follow the maxim: "Restore to one what rightfully belongs to one", and entrust the Caliphate to the progeny of the Prophet (AS) .

As recorded by Sheikh Saduq, Mamun gave wide publicity to the story relation to the pledge, which he had allegedly made to the Almighty whole facing Ameen, and was in a very critical situation. Just then there was an uprising against him in Seestan and Kitrman as well and a deep unrest was also prevailing in Khurasan. According to him his financial condition too was in a bad shape. Moreover, he was not sure if he could trust his army.

In this most difficult and trying situation he had made a supplication to God with a solemn pledge that if all these troubles came to an end and he got hold of the caliphate, he would restore it to its rightful claimant i.e. to the person most deserving from amongst the progeny of Fatima (AS) Immediately after he had made this pledge all his affairs got smoothly sorted out and eventually he attained success against his enemies.

Surely, this event was widely publicized by Mamun to create an impression that whatever he did was based on sincerity of purpose and good intentions. Although even the most virulent and open enemies of Ahle Bait were fully aware of their real worth and their virtues and superiority but only knowing this much does not mean Shiism. It also involves love and obedience.

It is evident from the actions of Mamun that, in spite of all his propaganda about his claim regarding Shiism and his love for Ahle Bait he did not have the least intention to obey the Imam (AS) Instead, he wanted to make the Imam (AS) act according to his wishes. With regard to his installation as the heir apparent the Imam (AS) was denied the right to have any say, he was forced

to accept the assignment. It is clear from this that his appointment as the heir apparent was an act of despotic aggression against the Imam (AS) under the deceptive guise of Shiism.

The acceptance of heirship by the Imam (AS) was in no way different from the imprisonment of Imam Musa Kazim (AS) at the behest of Haroon. That is why when Imam Reza (AS) was leaving Madinah for Khurasan his grief pain and distraction knew no bounds. At the time of bidding adieu to the Prophet's shrine his state of mind was similar to that of Hazrat Imam Husain (AS), when he was leaving Madinah.

Eye witnessed saw him going inside the shrine in an agitated state moaning and sighing and complaining against the Ummah, and then coming out with the intention of going to his house. But then again, forced by his restless heart, he would enter the shrine and embraced the Prophet's grave. This happened several times. Mahawal a narrator says that the Imam (AS) told him that he was being forcibly banished from his forefather's shrine and that he would never come back to that place again.

Imam Raza departed from Madinah for Khurasan in the year 200AH. He left his family and other dependents in Madinah itself. At that time (his son) Imam Muhammad Taqi was just five years old. He (Imam Taqi) remained in Madinah. When Imam Reza arrived at Merve, the then Capital of the government, Mamun, after showing respect and honour to him for a few days, proposed to him to accept the Caliphate.

The Imam (AS) declined to accept it just as Ameerul Momineen Ali (AS) had done when the office of the caliphate was offered to him in the fourth round (after the demise of the third Caliph). As a matter of fact Mamun had no intention of giving up the caliphate, otherwise he should have persisted in pressurizing the Imam (AS) to accept it.

But he did nothing like that. After the Imam (AS) had refused the office of caliphate, Mamun next placed before him the offer to be the heir apparent. Imam (AS) knew what was going to happen to it. Moreover, to accept willingly any office offered by a despotic regime was against the tenets of his faith. The Imam (AS), therefore declined this offer also. But Mamun's insistence reached the stage of coercion and he plainly told him that his non acceptance of the office shall cost him his life.

Danger to life can be acceptable only when preservation of the interests of the faith depends on the giving away of one's life. Otherwise protection of life is the basic tenet of the Islamic Shariat. Hence the Imam (AS) said: "In that case I accept the offer under compulsion but on the condition that I will have nothing to do with the affairs of the state. Of course if my opinion is sought in a particular case, I shall be always ready to give my advice."

After this the Imam (AS) heir ship amounted to nothing more than a gimmick of the government of day. It is possible that this might have helped achieve certain amount of success in respect of some political objective for some space of time. But the position of Imam (AS) with regard to the discharge of his responsibilities was similar to the one adopted by his forefather Hazrat Ali (AS) in respect of the people in power in his time.

Just as mere tendering of advice now and then by him did not put the seal of validity on those regimes, similarly the acceptance of heir ship by Imam Reza (AS) in the way it was done in no way validated the rule of Mamun. It was nothing mere than the satisfaction of the pertinacity of a despot. The Imam (AS) as he had determined kept himself strictly aloof from the activities and the administrative steps of the tyrannical regime.

Still the Bani Abbas were not at all agreeable to this decision of Mamun. They tried to disrupt the process but Mamun explicitly challenged them to name anyone better than Ali Reza (AS) There was no answer to this. In this connection several momentous sessions of disputations were also held but obviously there was no one who could establish his scholastic supremacy over the Imam (AS) The decision of Mamun was inflexible and he was not prepared to deviate from his stand. Nor there was any one who could convince him through reasoning to change mind.

On the first of Ramazan 201 A. the ceremony of the installation of the Imam (AS) as heir apparent was held. The event was celebrated with great pomp and show grandeur and glory. First of all Mamun beckoned his son Abbas who took the oath of allegiance. Others followed him. Gold and silver coins were thrown over the head of Imam (AS) as mark of offering and awards were given to all the nobles and employees of the State Mamun issue the order that the coins be minted in the mane of the Imam (AS) Accordingly his name was engraved on Dinars and Dirhams and these coins were put in circulation throughout the realm. His name was included in orations of the Friday prayers.

Morals and Attributes

“The lady is virtuous for want of veil” is a well known saying and it is applicable to those worldly –minded people who euphemistically call their life of constraint and helplessness as one of contentment and renunciation. But to live like a destitute when endowed with power and wealth and resources is the prerogative of God’s chosen ones only.

The noble personalities from amongst the infallible progeny of the prophet (AS) who did not ostensibly enjoy a status of authority and (and most of them belong to that category) used to put on decent clothes and lived in a dignified manner. This was because if they had lived like indigent

people their adversaries would have attribute it to their helplessness and also would have invited taunts and insults.

That would have hurt the honour that goes with righteousness. But such of those noble souls who by chance found themselves apparently in the seats of power the manifestation of their simple mode of living and their self denial increased proportionately so that their life may be a source of consolation for the poor Muslims and serves as a model.

It was just in accordance with the life pattern of Ameerul Momineen Hazarat Ali (AS) As he was acknowledgement as the ruler of the Islamic domain both his clothing and his diet were the simplest like those of an anchorite. A parallel of his life style cannot be found even among the other infallible personalities of own line. This was exactly the case with Hazrat Ali Reza (AS) He was appointed heir apparent of that great Muslim empire whose vastness had obliterated the memory of the grandeur of the Roman and Persian empires.

There whenever a cloud passed by the caliph would loudly address it saying it could go and rain wherever it chose to in any case the tax proceeds of the harvest of that place would ultimately come to his coffers.

The ascension of Hazrat Ali Reza (AS) to the office of the heir apparent of the regime provides an example of how religious men conduct them selves when they gain worldly power. In this case realizing his religious obligations, it was necessary for the Imam (AS) to demonstrate much more prominently his innate qualities of renunciation and self-denial in proportion to the imperatives of his august opposition and grandeur of status.

Accordingly, the history repeated itself and the world witnessed again the life style of Ali Murtaza (AS) in the person of Ali Reza (AS) .He disapproved of having expensive carpets laid out in his house. Instead the floor was covered with coarse rugs in the winter and ordinary mats in summer. He used to have his food along with his doorkeeper the groom and the slaves. One day, a man from Balkh accustomed to the imperial etiquette and manners said: “Sire, what is the harm if food is served to these people separately?” The Imam (AS) replied: “Allah is the creator of everyone will get recompense or punishment in accordance with his deeds. Why then should there be discrimination amongst them in this world?”

The Imam (AS) had become a component of that regime of the Abbasids who on the basis of a single source of relationship with the Prophet (AS) had laid claim to rule over the creations of God without looking into their own character to fine out what actually they were and how they should conduct themselves.

Matters went so far that it came to be generally asserted that the Abbasids is not lag behind the Umayyads either in their tyranny and atrocious behaviour or in their vicious and immoral mode of living. In fact in some respects they had even surpassed them. Still they were proud of their relationship in comparison to the deeds.

This was apparently a demonstration of modesty and civility by an individual, which in itself is a noble attribute. But far beyond that it was in fact a proclamation of the true Islamic tenets against almost a century old Abbasid mentality. It assumed greater significance as it was being made by a very important member of the state. Accordingly we find various significant examples of the behaviour of Imam Reza (AS) Once a man said to Imam (AS) : "by God no one can surpass you with respect to your ancestry."

The Imam (AS) replied: "the eminence attained by my ancestors was also by virtue of their fear of God, their piety and their devotion to God only."

On another occasion a man said to the Imam (AS) : "I swear by God that you are the best of his creations."

The Imam (AS) told him: "Do not affirm so on oath because whosoever has greater fear of God and is much more pious he is superior to me."

Ibrahim bin Abbas has narrated that the Imam (AS) used to assert: "I would set free all my slaves both male and female if it is otherwise then that only on the basis of my relationship with the Prophet (AS) I do not consider my self superior to this black slave (at this he pointed some noble deed) then I shall be superior to him in the estimation of God."

Short sighted persons might have attributed these things to the Imam (AS) personal humility but the despotic ruler of the Abbasid regime would not have been so stupid as not to have felt the floggings that were being inflicted on his dynastic system of autocratic governance by the mute action and such utterances of Imam Ali Reza (AS) In his own conceit he had appointed the Imam (AS) as his heir apparent to serve a temporary political purpose that is the strengthening of his rule.

But very soon the realization dawned upon him that if the Imam (AS) continued to live for long that would bring about a revolution in the thinking of the people in general and cause the overthrow of the Abbasid regime.

Martyrdom

The unfulfilment of his expectations obliged Mamun to be after the life of the Imam (A) .The same secret weapon, which had been used several times in the past against these infallible personages, was again put to use. The grapes that were offered to the Imam (A) as a present were poisoned and because of them, the Imam (A) embraced martyrdom on 17 of Safar 203 A.H. Mamun, outwardly, exhibited much sorrow and grief and got the body of the Imam buried ceremoniously by the side of his father Haroon Rasheed.

The sacred city of Mashad, where the crowned potentates of the world prostrate themselves in reverence before the shrine of Imam Reza (A) is also the burial place of the greatest emperor of his time, Haroon Rasheed , but the visitors to the holy shrine do not even know where his grave is.

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Imam Muhammad al-Jawad (AS)-Biography

Name: Muhammad

Title: al-Taqi [the Pious]; al-Jawad [the Generous], al-Qani' [the Content]

Kunya: Abu Ja'far, al-Thani (the Second); Ibn al-Ridha

Father: Ali ibn Musa al-Ridha (Peace be upon him)

Mother: Khaizoran

Born: 10th Rajab, 195 AH/811 CE in Madinah, Hejaz region of the Arabian Peninsula

Died:End of Dhu al-Qidah (which may fall on the 29th or the 30th, depending on moon-sighting), 220 AH/835 CE, after being poisoned by al-Mu'tasim

Age at Martyrdom: 25

Period of Imamate: 17 years

Buried: Kadhimayn, Baghdad, Iraq

Words of Wisdom from Imam al-Jawad (p)

“The best worship is sincerity.”¹

“A bounty that is not thanked is like a sin that is not forgiven.”²

”There are three qualities which allow the servant to attain God’s grace: oft-repentance, humbleness in front of others, and abundant offering of charity.”³

Salient Features of Imam al-Jawad’s Life

One of the biggest challenges that faced the early Shia community was identifying the next Imam, particularly for those who are not close confidantes with the preceding Imam. This was evident during the time immediately after the martyrdom of Imam al-Rida (p). When his father passed away, Imam al-Jawad (p) was quite young, and the dilemma was the first of its kind for the Shia, as they had to confirm through his knowledge and piety whether he was truly the representative of God on earth. Though we have reports from Imam al-Rida, for instance, which state, “Abu Jafar (Muhammad al-Jawad) is the successor after me,”⁴ these statements were not accessible far and wide to the broader community.

1. Evidence of the Imam’s Knowledge as a Child

After Imam al-Rida’s martyrdom, the Abbasid ruler Ma’mun relocated his headquarters to Baghdad. One day, Ma’mun went hunting on the outskirts of town. After he passed the city limits, he saw a group of young boys playing, while another boy was standing near them.

As Ma’mun approached, all the boys ran away except for the nine-year-old boy who had been standing there. Ma’mun then came closer and asked the boy, “Young man! What stopped you from running away as your friends did?!”

The boy replied promptly, “My friends ran away out of fear; while the thoughts of you should be positive (in the sense) that the one who is not at fault should not run away from you; and the road was not (too) narrow such that I should move to the side.”

Ma’mun was impressed by the young man’s words and radiant features. “What is your name, young man?” asked Ma’mun. The boy responded, with the memory of his poisoned father still fresh in his mind, “Muhammad, son of ‘Ali al-Rida.”⁵

The ninth Imam, Muhammad, son of ‘Ali, was the first among the twelve immaculate Imams to actively begin his role as divine representative while still a child. How was this possible? Even when Imam al-Jawad was only three, Imam al-Rida (p) defended the future Imam, saying, “What is wrong with that? Indeed, Jesus fulfilled the proof (as a witness upon creation) when he was less than three years old.”⁶

2. Under the Abbasid Authorities

After Ma’mun secretly poisoned Imam al-Rida (p), he tried to cover up his crime by showing signs of mourning and sadness in public. However, these acts did not fool the close companions of Imam al-Rida (p) and it quickly became clear to the Shia that Imam al-Rida (p) was murdered by none other than Ma’mun.

Ma’mun, fearing Shia reprisal, thought up another one of his devious plots. He had Imam Muhammad al-Jawad (p) forcibly taken from Madinah to Baghdad and kept under close surveillance. For purposes of gaining legitimacy and appearing to be on Imam al-Jawad’s side and keeping tabs on the Imam, Ma’mun made arrangements for his daughter to marry the Imam.^{7,8}

Many Abbasids objected to the marriage arrangement. They complained that the young man could not possibly have sufficient knowledge and understanding to be an appropriate suitor. But Imam Muhammad al-Jawad was bound to refute this assumption soon enough.

3. Hunting in the State of *Ihram*

Mamun agreed to allow the Abbasids to test Imam al-Jawad’s knowledge. Hence, the Abbasids chose one of the most notable scholars of their day to ask Imam al-Jawad an intricate question in Islamic law. The area of law which was chosen was hajj (pilgrimage), which is distinctly complex when compared to other areas of fiqh. The question dealt with a *muhrim* (someone in the ritual state of *ihram*), who is prohibited from several actions which are normally allowed. The Abbasid scholar asked, “What do you say...about a *muhrim* who hunted (some type of) prey?”

The young Imam al-Jawad responded eloquently with a detailed breakdown of the different branches which the question could apply to. “Did (the *muhrim*) hunt beyond or within the sanctuary? Was the *muhrim* knowledgeable or ignorant? Did (the *muhrim*) hunt intentionally or mistakenly? Was the *muhrim* free or a servant? Was (the *muhrim*) young or elderly?”

After Imam al-Jawad divided the question into eleven distinct subsections, the Abbasid scholar was baffled and began stumbling over his words. At that point, the audience realized the gravity of their false assumption about the young Imam.

When Imam al-Jawad explained the answer to each branch of the original question, it was his turn to ask the Abbasid scholar a question...After hearing the question, the Abbasid scholar was dumbfounded once again. He asked Imam al-Jawad to explain the answer to him and the Imam did so. Repeated exchanges, such as this one, eliminated the doubts some may have had regarding the superior intellectual merit of Imam al-Jawad. 10

4. The Unexcused Thief

An Abbasid named Mu'tasim came to power after Ma'mun's death. He made sure to have Imam al-Jawad brought to Baghdad once again since the Holy Imam had since returned to Madinah. Mu'tasim had become aware of Imam al-Jawad's growing influence throughout the Muslim world. Fearing that Imam al-Jawad's noble qualities and spiritual eminence may threaten his rule, Mu'tasim monitored the Imam's activities very carefully. While this limited Imam al-Jawad's mobility, it also gave the ninth Imam opportunities to propagate knowledge in Mu'tasim's court.¹¹ One such opportunity took place when Mu'tasim sought Imam al-Jawad's view on the penalty of an unexcused thief. Based on God's directives to humanity, Mu'tasim and the scholars of his court knew that the thief's 'hand' was to be severed. But the definition and limits of the word 'hand' were the topic of discussion.

Mu'tasim first asked the scholars of his court for their opinions, along with supporting evidence. Some scholars said that the hand, up until the wrist, was to be severed. Others said that the hand, up until the elbow, was to be severed. Each jurist presented his supporting evidence, but Mu'tasim was not satisfied.

After Mu'tasim insisted that Imam al-Jawad present his opinion, the ninth holy Imam said that all Mu'tasim's scholars were mistaken. Not even the palm of a thief's hand was to be severed. As the Imam explained, his proof was based on “the words of the Messenger of God, ‘Prostration is (performed) on seven (body) parts: the face, the (two) hands (meaning: palms), the (two) knees, and the (two) feet.’ If the (person's) hand is severed from the wrist, or the elbow, (the person) would no longer have a hand (meaning a palm) to prostrate upon; and God – the Blessed, the Exalted – has said, ‘The places of worship (prostration) belong to God,’ meaning these seven (body) parts that one prostrates on, ‘so do not invoke anyone along with God.’¹² That which belongs to God is not severed.”

Mu'tasim was pleased by Imam al-Jawad's discussion and the sentence was carried out in accordance with it.¹³

5. The Imam's Martyrdom

The scholars of Mu'tasim's court felt humiliated by the episode of the unexcused thief. Some of these scholars approached Mu'tasim and attempted to convince him that the way he had sided with Imam al-Jawad may compromise his grip on power. Mu'tasim, realizing the danger to his rule, and following in the footsteps of Abbasid rulers before him, decided to murder the Imam.¹⁴

The corrupt Mu'tasim eventually executed his evil will and had Imam Muhammad al-Jawad (p) poisoned. The Imam was just over twenty-five years old. Imam al-Jawad was buried near his grandfather, Imam Musa al-Kadhim (p), in present-day Kadhimiyya.¹⁵

1. Allamah Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 67, p. 245.
2. A'lam al-Din, al-Daylami, 309.
3. Allamah Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 75, p. 81.
4. Shaykh Saduq, *Uyun Akhbar al-Rida*, vol. 2, p. 266.
5. Sh. Ja'far Subhani, *al-A'immah al-Ithnay 'Ashar*, p. 103.
6. Allamah Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 50, p. 21.
7. Sh. Mahdi Beshwai, *Siret al-A'immah*, 474.
8. Sh. Mahdi Beshwai, *Sirat al-A'immah*, 496-498.
9. Sh. Mahdi Beshwai, *Sirat al-A'immah*, 486.
10. Sh. Mahdi Beshwai, *Sirat al-A'immah*, 487-489.
11. Sh. Mahdi Beshwai, *Sirat al-A'immah*, 502.
12. The Holy Quran, 72:18.
13. Sh. Mahdi Beshwai, *Sirat al-A'immah*, 490-491.
14. Sh. Mahdi Beshwai, *Sirat al-A'immah*, 502.
15. Sh. Ja'far Subhani, *al-A'immah al-Ithnay 'Ashar*, 106.

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Prophet Muhammad al-Mustafa (pbuh)

Name: Muhammad

Title: al-Mustafa; Rasul Allah

Kunya: Abu al-Qasim

Father: Abdullah ibn Abdul Mutallib

Mother: Amina bint Wahhab

Born: 17th Rabi' al-Awwal, Year of the Elephant/570 CE in Makkah, Hejaz region of the Arabian Peninsula

Died: 28th Safar, 11 AH/632 CE

Age at Death: 63

Buried: Madinah, Hejaz region of the Arabian Peninsula

Meet Prophet Muhammad

“A man from our people has risen claiming that he is a messenger sent by God... He insults our gods and considers our ancestors to have been fools! He's corrupted our young ones and created a divide in our community!”

These were the words of *Utbah*, a resident of Mecca, to a visiting tribal chief named *As'ad*.

“Who is he?” *As'ad* asked.

“He's the son of *Abdullah*...someone ordinary in social status, but from a well-known family.”

“Where is he?” *As'ad* continued to inquire.

“There... But don't listen to what he has to say, don't even speak to him – for indeed, he is a sorcerer who will bewitch you with his words!”

After some contemplation, *As'ad* decided that he couldn't go back to his people before finding the truth about this man.

As'ad proceeded toward the mysterious man and said, "Good morning".

Muhammad, son of *Abdullah*, then raised his head and replied,

"God has replaced this greeting with an even better one – a greeting for the people of heaven: 'May the Peace be upon you'..."

As'ad responded,

"Indeed, this is something new. What is it that you call for, oh Muhammad?"

Muhammad then said,

"To witness that there is no god except God, and that I am the Messenger of God."[i]

The Call

Sixth century Arabian culture held the concepts of trust and valor in high regard. As a people, the Arabs were known for their eloquence and exceptional poetry. But the light of these shining qualities could not pierce through the layers of rust on many Arabian hearts. Incessant tribal warfare impeded civilized development... Widespread superstition curtailed intellectual growth... That age of ignorance even popularized the heinous act of burying baby girls alive![ii]

Muhammad was an orphan for most of his life, as his father passed away before he was born, and his mother died when he was five. Muhammad spent the remainder of his youth under the care of his grandfather and then his uncle.

Muhammad's upright character distinguished him, even at an early age. He participated in tribal agreements which aimed at ensuring the welfare of the oppressed and defended such agreements throughout his life. Muhammad worked as a forbearing shepherd and then later as a successful merchant. He quickly became known as, "The Honest One" and "The Trustworthy One".

Muhammad was also a man of deep reflection. If Muhammad could not be found at the workplace or at home, then he was likely busy in contemplation and worship on the mountain of *Hira*. He climbed up to a nearby cave and would spend hours, days, and even months at a time, pondering the Truth of existence. Muhammad witnessed the reality that God is the radiating Sun of Existence... Without the Light of God, everything in the heavens and the earth would simply be in darkness – utterly nonexistent.[iii]

One day, an angel appeared to Muhammad and said,

"Oh Muhammad, read..."

The unschooled Muhammad replied,

"And what should I read?"

The angel then revealed the first verses of what would become known as the *Quran*,

"Read in the Name of your Lord who created; created man from a clinging mass. Read, and your Lord is the Most Generous, who taught by the pen; taught man what he did not know."[iv]

Muhammad realized the grave responsibility that was on his shoulders. Under God's command, he was to deliver the most complete prescription for success – the Divine Law by which God perfects the body, spirit and mind of humanity. This was the remedy to his society's ailments and the good tidings of Mercy to the worlds.

Muhammad's spiritual station as a prophet and messenger of God was aided by the rationality of his principles, his sublime character, and the miraculous nature of the newly revealed *Qur'an*. The eloquence, depth, and grandeur of the Qur'an baffled the Arabian poets. The Arabs could not fathom how any man could produce such perfection – let alone a man with no formal education. As an interconnected reality of principles, the *Qur'an* would also remain a miracle available to every nation, for ages to come.[v]

The Struggle

For thirteen years, Prophet Muhammad called the people of Mecca to the principles which God had revealed: Oneness, Divine Guidance, and Judgment Day. He invited the world to Islam: the path of submitting oneself to the Truth. Prophet Muhammad prayed that people would follow God's directives because they were founded in God's Absolute Knowledge of what was best. But in an idolatry-based economy, Oneness was bad for business. Moreover, blind loyalty to ancestors caused many Meccans to fight the changes Prophet Muhammad called for. Prophet Muhammad and his fellow Muslims were persecuted and attacked until God commanded that they migrate. They sought refuge in the city of Yathrib (which later became known as Medina, City of the Prophet).

In Medina, Prophet Muhammad was able to establish a society founded on the principles of Islam. It was a society based on kindness and justice, with every peaceful individual.[vi] Unfortunately, the peace was short-lived, as many groups forced the Muslims into defensive battles for several years. One benefit of these struggles, however, was that they eventually led the Muslims back to Mecca. The Prophet and his followers entered the city without any combat.[vii]

When the Muslim army entered Mecca, Prophet Muhammad told his former enemies,

“I say to you as my brother (Prophet) Joseph said (to his brothers):

‘There shall be no reproach on you today. God will forgive you, and He is the Most Merciful of the merciful.’[viii] ”[ix]

The Legacy

Before Prophet Muhammad left this world, he reminded people of the principle of Divine Leadership. He emphasized that the message of Islam would not be complete without the Divine appointment of a leader to preserve that message. Muhammad was the Seal of All Prophets, but the gateway of *Imamah* (Divinely appointed leadership) would remain open. Prophet Muhammad declared on numerous occasions that Ali, son of *Abu Taleb*, and eleven of his descendants were the Divinely selected Imams. These twelve Imams would live to preserve the Message, channel Divine Mercy to the worlds and guide seekers of Truth along the path.[x],[xi]

The legacy of Prophet Muhammad is one of Universal principle. Let us recall the account of *Utbah* and *As'ad*. If it were not for the insistence of *As'ad* to seek the truth, he may have been left in the dark about the guiding light of Muhammad. There may be many like *Utbah* in our day. Our challenge is to revive this legacy of principle in our daily lives. Prophet Muhammad continues to remind humanity with the eternal Word of God,

“So where are you going? It is just a reminder for all the nations; for those of you who wish to walk straight. But you do not wish unless it is wished by God, the Lord of all the Worlds.”[xii]

[i] Pg. 51 of *Sayyid al-Mursaleen* by Sh. Ja'far Subhani [ii] Pg. 38, 46, 68 of *Sayyid al-Mursaleen* by Sh. Ja'far Subhani [iii] Pg. 319-320 of *Sayyid al-Mursaleen* by Sh. Ja'far Subhani [iv] Quran 96:1-5 [v] Pg. 428-431 of *Sayyid al-Mursaleen* by Sh. Ja'far Subhani [vi] Quran 60:8-9 [vii] Pg. 200 of *As-Seerah Al-Muhammadiyah* by Sh. Ja'far Subhani [viii] Quran 12:92 [ix] Pg. 202 of *As-Seerah Al-Muhammadiyah* by Sh. Ja'far Subhani [x] Pg. 238-240 of *As-Seerah Al-Muhammadiyah* by Sh. Ja'far Subhani [xi] Pg. 4-6 of *Al-A'immah Al-Ithna Ashar* by Sh. Ja'far Subhani [xii] Quran 81:26-29

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Sayyeda Zainab (sa) - Biography

Updated: 14 hours ago

Name: Zainab

Kunyat: Umm-ul-Massaib

Title: Siddiqa-e-Sughra

Father: Imam Ali (A.S.)

Mother: Bibi Fatema (A.S.)

Birth: 5 Jamaada Al Ula (5 AH)

Death: 15th Rajab

Buried: Damascus

Sayyeda Zainab (sa), the daughter of Imam Ali (as) and Sayyeda Fatima Zahra (sa), was an exemplary woman of great ability, intelligence, knowledge, insight, courage and perseverance; she performed her divine duties to the best of her ability. She was born to a family formed by Prophet Muhammad (saw), the most outstanding figure in history. The Prophet's wife Sayyeda Khadija (sa) a devoted woman, was her maternal grandmother, and her paternal grandmother was Fatima daughter of Assad, who mothered and nursed Prophet Muhammad (saw). The members of the family, in trio hierarchical order, were all great.

Sayyeda Zainab (sa) was a brilliant star in the mandate sky that received rays of holiness from the five suns. It was through her holy origins and pious edification that she manifested so great a fortitude in Karbala (Iraq).

The life of the daughter of Sayyeda Fatima Zahra (sa) was always laden with hardships, but she never feared coping with difficulties, this enhanced her endurance and elevated her soul.

She had barely attained the tender age of seven when her beloved mother passed away. Her mother's death had closely followed her cherished grand father's passing away. Some time later Imam Ali (as) married Ummul Banin (sa), whose devotion and piety encouraged Sayyeda Zainab (sa) in her learning.

Whilst still a young girl she was fully able to care for and be responsible for the running of her father's household. As much as she cared for the comforts and ease of her brothers and sisters, in her own wants she was frugal and unstintingly generous to the poor, homeless and parentless. After her marriage her husband is reported as having said, "Zainab is the best housewife."

From very early on she developed an unbreakable bond of attachment to her brother Imam Hussein (as). At times when as a baby in her mother's arms she could not be pacified and made to stop crying, she would quieter down upon being held by her brother, and there she would sit quietly gazing at his face. Before she would pray she used to first cast a glance at the face of her beloved brother, Imam Hussein (as).

One day Sayyeda Fatima Zahra (sa) mentioned the intensity of her daughter's love for Imam Hussein (as) to Prophet Muhammad (saw). He breathed a deep sigh and said with moistened eyes, "My dear child, this child of mine Zainab would be confronted with a thousand and one calamities and face serious hardships in Karbala."

Sayyeda Zainab (sa), the sage of Bani Hashim

Ibn Abbas quoted Sayyeda Fatima Zahra (sa) as having said that her daughter Zainab, like her father, was unparalleled in literary eloquence and courage. The speech she delivered in the

assembly in presence of Yazid was at the zenith of eloquence and impressiveness. (Refer Famous Women, Dr. Ahmed Beheshti, and p.51)

After the demise of Prophet Muhammad (saw), there came the period of distress and hardship in the life of Sayyeda Zainab (sa). She stood by her mother as far as the question of supreme mandate of her father was concerned. When her mother delivered the Fadak sermon, she was only 4 years old, but narrated the sermon so lucidly and expressively that the people from Bani Hashim remembered it by heart. Later the Shiite scholars recorded it that is why she is called Zainab the narrator of traditions.

Sayyeda Zainab's (sa) Marriage

Sayyeda Zainab (sa) grew into a fine stature young woman. When the time came for marriage, she was married in a simple ceremony to her first cousin, Abdullah Ibn Ja'far Tayyar. Her marriage settlement was equal to that of her mother's. Imam Ali (as) told Abdullah Ibn Ja'far Tayyar not to prevent Sayyeda Zainab (sa) from going on a journey with Imam Hussein (as), her brother.

Abdullah Ibn Ja'far Tayyar had been brought up under the direct care of Prophet Muhammad (saw). After his death, Imam Ali (as) became his supporter and guardian until he came of age. He grew up to be a handsome youth with pleasing manners and was known for his sincere hospitality to guests and selfless generosity to the poor and needy.

Although Sayyeda Zainab's (sa) husband was a man of means, she lived a modest life, not a life of luxury. She and her husband were charitable to the needy people. The Arab tribes called Abdullah Ibn Ja'far Tayyar "the sea or the cloud of munificence".

The marriage of Sayyeda Zainab (sa) did not diminish her strong attachment to her family. Together this young couple had five children, of whom four were sons, Ali, Aun, Muhammad, and Abbas, and one daughter, Umm Kulthum.

Sayyeda Zainab (sa) and Imamate

In her life Sayyeda Zainab (sa) always saw the evildoers, oppressors, insurgents and breakers of covenants defy the truth and Imam Ali (as), the supporter of the truth and justice had to quell their revolts. Finally, an evil hand gave Imam Ali (as) a stroke from a poisoned sword on his head in the mosque of Kufa. After Imam Ali (as), his son Imam Hassan (as) became the Caliph. Imam Hassan (as) was also greatly oppressed until at last he signed a peace treaty with the ruler of that time, Muawiyah ibn Abu Sufyan and moved to Kufa in the company of Zainab, her husband, and his own companions. Imam Hassan (as) was poisoned by his treacherous wife Ja'da bint al-Ash'ath ibn Qays, by the order of the ruler of that time. After Imam Hassan (as), Imam Hussein (as) became the Imam, but the ruler of Syria Muawiyah ibn Abu Sufyan violated the peace treaty and appointed his son Yazid as his successor and insisted that Imam Hussein (as) should pledge allegiance to him. Imam Hussein (as) refused to pledge allegiance and made up his mind to move to Makkah. Sayyeda Zainab (sa) said farewell to her husband, Abdullah Ibn Ja'far Tayyar and went with her brother accompanied by her sons Muhammad and Aun. They reached Makkah in 61 Hijrah year. Imam Hussein (as) was informed that some agents of the ruler of that time had come to Makkah to assassinate him while circumambulating the Holy Ka'bah. Imam Hussein (as) deemed it advisable to move to Kufa and let people know of his secret mission. They arrived at Karbala on the 2nd Muharram. Sayyeda Zainab (sa) had heard from her grandfather and father that Karbala would be the place where Imam Hussein (as) would be martyred.

Sayyeda Zainab (sa) in Karbala

Sayyeda Zainab (sa) is the shining sun in the history of Islam and of humanity. Her brother's name and Karbala associate the idea of freedom, justice, humanity, virtue, fighting against despotism, with the realization of the sovereignty of Allah (SWT). The history of Karbala is based on two pillars: the rising of Imam Hussein (as) and the rising of Sayyeda Zainab (sa). She was an outstanding figure in the history of Karbala endowed with divine steadfastness and fortitude. She sacrificed her two sons and one should not say anything if one devoted his life for the cause of Allah (SWT). After the martyrdom of her brother and her two sons, she said: "O my Lord! Accept our humble sacrifice to You."

When Zainab reached Kufa, she addressed people with fury words: "Praise to Allah, and may the blessing of Allah be upon Muhammad and his progeny. O people of Kufa, you are hypocrites and deceitful. You feign to be sorry for the death of my brother and his companions. May you always shed tears. I find nothing in you but flattery, evil acts and thoughts, pride and spite and ill will. By Allah (SWT)! You deserve lasting sorrow instead of joy. Shames on you, your hands are imbrued with the blood of the son of Prophet Muhammad (saw), the one who was your sole refuge in case of adversity. By your evil act and disloyalty, you incurred the wrath of Allah (SWT) against you. Woe betides you! No one will intercede with Allah (SWT) for you." Her furious words provoked people of Kufa to avenge Imam Hussein's martyrdom. This frightened Ubaidullah ibn Ziyad and his cruel agents. She also delivered a furious sermon in the court of the caliph that made his authority and despotic rule feel undermined. She said: "I fear no one but Allah (SWT). Make whatever evil plot you can. Blazes are waiting for you in the hereafter. You'll be accountable to Allah (SWT) for your atrocities."

The Foundation of Mourning (Majalis-E-Aza) of Imam Hussein (as)

Another unique feature of Sayyeda Zainab's (sa) character was her establishment of mourning ceremonies. This tradition which has lived in the memories and hearts of millions of Muslims to this day, has kept the sacrifices of Imam Hussein (as) alive, and brought dynamism to every movement that aimed at removing injustices on earth.

After every Majlis, the women would offer their condolences to Sayyeda Zainab (sa) and the men to Imam Zainul Abedeen (as). These majales made quite a stir in the cities, and the sound of crying and beating of chests and heads affected the minds of the inhabitants, and made them sadder and wiser to the events of Karbala.

In the end...

As it is said, "the word is mightier than the sword", this should stay in the minds of all Muslims, particularly the women. They should realize that they could always make a difference. They can always reach for the better. Also, they can make their Ummah (Community) look better.

The Muslim women should read more about the hardships which faced the great women of Islam understand and practice the patience that characterized the life of Sayyeda Zainab (sa), and teach their children the value of these acts.

The men alone cannot win independence and prosperity, neither can the women. Together, and under the banner of Islam, they can achieve success.

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Sayyida Fatimah bint Muhammad (SA)

Name: Fatimah

Title: al-Zahra; al-Batul (The Pure One) **Kunya:** Umm Abiha; Umm al-A'immah (Mother of her father; Mother of the Imams) **Father:** Muhammad ibn Abdullah (Peace be upon him and his holy progeny) **Mother:** Khadijah bint Khuwaylid **Born:** 20 Jumada al-Thani, 5BH or 8BH **Died:** 13 Jumada al-Awwal, 11AH or 3 Jumada al-Thani, 11AH **Age of Death:** 18 (Martyred after being inflicted with injuries) **Buried:** Unknown location in Madinah al-Munawarah

Lady Fatimah vs. Injustice

“...‘Then where do you stray?’ [\[i\]](#) The Book of God is in your midst! Its affairs are apparent. Its rulings are manifest. Its signs are dazzling. Its prohibitions are highlighted and its commands are clear... Yet, indeed you have cast it behind your backs! Do you wish to abandon it? Or is there something else you wish to rule by? ‘How evil a substitute for the wrongdoers!’ [\[ii\]](#) ‘Should anyone follow a religion other than Submission to God, it shall never be accepted from him, and he will be among the losers in the Hereafter.’ [\[iii\]](#)... ” [\[iv\]](#) With these intense words, a noble woman shook the very foundations of injustice. Those who appointed themselves to leadership were present. Those who – out of fear or greed – stood by and let the conspiracy unfold were also in attendance. But one righteous lady refused to be silenced by the oppression of power-mongers. Lady Fatimah’s call was ignored by many rusted hearts on that day... The echo of her message, however, has continued to resonate with sound minds throughout the ages. After the death of [Prophet Muhammad](#), and the dark betrayal that ensued, those who appointed themselves to political leadership usurped the land of *Fadak*. Not only did the illegitimate rulers deny that the Prophet had granted his daughter, Lady Fatimah, the land during his lifetime, but they also denied that she had the right of inheritance from her father. This move by the ruling party effectively prevented the divinely appointed leader, Imam Ali, and his supporters from the influential benefits of such a profitable property. The usurpation of *Fadak* had become a symbol for the usurpation of political leadership. Lady Fatimah, thus, took a stand of principle in defense of justice. History would forever record her profound wisdom and integrity. Lady Fatimah’s position was exceptionally distinct. Yes, she was the daughter of [Prophet Muhammad](#). She was also the wife of [Imam Ali](#), true successor to Prophet Muhammad. But beyond that, Lady Fatimah was who she was – the radiant pearl of knowledge, of piety, of virtue...and the Muslims knew it. **The Lady of the Worlds** [Prophet Muhammad](#), the Messenger of God, emphasized the exalted spiritual station of Lady Fatimah on numerous occasions. In one of the most evident indications of Lady Fatima’s immaculate nature, [Prophet Muhammad](#) stated, “Oh Fatimah! Indeed God is angered for your anger, and is pleased for your pleasure.” [\[v\]](#) Since God is Just and Wise, He would only be angered or pleased righteously. The Prophet’s infallible words describe Lady Fatima’s anger and pleasure as indicators of God’s anger and pleasure. Therefore, Lady Fatimah must not be mistaken in her anger or pleasure, under any circumstance. In light of this pure quality, [Prophet Muhammad](#) also said, “Oh Fatimah, aren’t you pleased to be the Lady of the Worlds, the Lady of this Nation, and the Lady of the Faithful...?”^v Lady Fatimah is also known by another beautiful name: *Az-Zahra*. This name refers to the blooming glow of Lady Fatimah’s countenance. Her sincerity and devotion to

God was manifest for all to see.[\[vi\]](#) **Glimpses of the Pearl** The magnificence of Lady Fatimah Az-Zahra cannot be encompassed by the stories of her generosity and character alone. But mentioning some of these accounts may help us gain insight into her gracious nature. One day, a poor man came to Lady Fatimah's door, asking for help. At that point, Lady Fatimah, her husband, and two sons had not eaten for three days. Not having any food to offer, she gave the man the necklace she was wearing and said, "Take this and sell it... Perhaps God will give you something better in exchange for it." A companion of the Prophet ended up buying the necklace off of the poor man, in exchange for clothing, a horse, some food and extra money. After having satisfied the poor man, this companion told his servant, *Sahm*, "Take this necklace to the Messenger of God...and you are now his servant." When *Sahm* presented the necklace to [Prophet Muhammad](#), the Prophet said, "Proceed toward Fatimah, present the necklace to her...and you are now her servant." *Sahm* soon relayed the Prophet's words to Lady Fatimah. The noble Lady Fatimah Zahra took the necklace and freed *Sahm* from service. *Sahm* then began to laugh. When Lady Fatimah asked him what made him laugh, *Sahm* replied, "What made me laugh was the immense blessing of this necklace! It fed a hungry man, dressed an unclothed man, satisfied a poor man, freed a slave, and then returned to its original owner!"[\[vii\]](#) On another occasion, Lady Fatimah's older son - [Imam Hassan](#) - narrated the following, "On Friday's eve, I saw my mother, Fatimah, bowing and prostrating in worship until the break of dawn... I heard her continue to pray for the faithful men and women - naming each one of them. But she did not ask anything for herself in prayer. So I asked, 'Oh mother, why is it that you don't pray for yourself as you pray for others?' She answered, 'My son! The neighbor, then the home.'[\[viii\]](#) With these words, Lady Zahra illuminates our minds with the appropriate manner to think of fellow human beings - let alone the way to act with them. **Oppression at Her Door** After [Prophet Muhammad](#) passed away, Lady Fatimah Zahra cried and grieved for him continuously. The pain of losing her beloved father and mentor was only augmented by the devious plots which defied the commands of God's Messenger. Lady Fatimah rebuked the mischievous planners in a segment of her famous speech, when she said, "...the thorns of hypocrisy have appeared on you! The garb of faith has worn out, those of silent perversion have spoken, those of the least merit have come to the forefront and the camel of the falsifiers has growled..."^{iv} The oppressors in power did not accept [Imam Ali's](#) refusal to pledge allegiance to them - they wanted the credibility of [Imam Ali](#) on their side. They sought to force a pledge of allegiance from him. According to several historical accounts, the same group that was busy conspiring against [Imam Ali](#), while he prepared the Prophet's dead body, attacked the house of Lady Fatimah Zahra. When Lady Fatimah refused to open the door for such men, they threatened to burn the door down. A simple statement made by the leader of the gang gives a glimpse of the terror that followed. Someone called out, "But Fatimah is in there..." Then came the dreadful shout of disregard, "So what!" Next, the intruders barged in by force, squeezing the blessed Lady Zahra between the door and the wall... As a result of this event, her child, *Muhsin*, was aborted, and her rib was broken. Ultimately, the tragic episode led to Lady Fatimah's martyrdom.[\[ix\]](#) In accordance with Lady Fatimah's wishes, [Imam Ali](#) buried her secretly, in the darkness of night. The Lady of Light did not want the oppressors to walk in her funeral. To this day, the exact location of Lady Fatimah's grave is unknown.[\[x\]](#) [\[i\]](#) Quran 10:34 [\[ii\]](#) Quran 18:50 [\[iii\]](#) Quran 3:85 [\[iv\]](#) Pg. 85-86 of *Alhujjatul Gharra' Fee Thulamat Azzahraa* by Sh. Ja'far Subhani [\[v\]](#) Pg.17 of *Alhujjatul Gharra' Fee Thulamat Azzahraa* by Sh. Ja'far Subhani [\[vi\]](#) Pg. 11, Vol. 43 of *Bihar Alanwar* by Allamah Majlisi [\[vii\]](#) Pg. 57-58, Vol. 43

of *Bihar Alanwar*, by Allamah Majlisi [\[viii\]](#) Pg. 81-82, Vol. 43 of *Bihar Alanwar*, by Allamah Majlisi [\[ix\]](#) Pg. 53, 56, 62, 65, 66 of of *Alhujjatul Gharra' Fee Thulamat Azzahraa* by Sh. Ja'far Subhani [\[x\]](#) Pg. 74, 75 of of *Alhujjatul Gharra' Fee Thulamat Azzahraa* by Sh. Ja'far Subhani

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