

The Fourth Infallible: The Second Imam Al-Hasan Ibn Ali Al-(Mujtaba (Peace be on him

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Name: al-Hasan.

Title: al-Mujtaba.

Agnomen: Abu Muhammad.

Father's name: Ali Amir al-Mu'minin.

Mother's name: Fatimah (daughter of the Holy Prophet).

Birth: In Medina on Tuesday, 15th Ramadan 3 AH.

Death: Died at the age of 46, in Medina on Thursday, 28th Safar 50 AH; buried in Jannatu 'l-Baqi', in Medina.

Imam Hasan was the eldest son of Imam `Ali and Hadrat Fatimah. When the Holy Prophet received the happy news of the birth of his grandson, he came to the house of his beloved daughter, took the newly born child in his arms, recited adhan and iqamah in his right and left ears respectively, and in compliance with Allah's command named him al-Hasan.

Childhood:

The first phase of seven years of his infancy was blessed with the gracious patronage of the Holy Prophet, who gifted him all his great qualities and adorned him with Divine knowledge, tolerance, intelligence, bounty and valour. Being infallible by birth and decorated with heavenly knowledge by Allah, his insight had an access to al-lawhul-mahfuz (the Guarded Tablet on which the transactions of mankind have been written by Allah for all eternity).

The Holy Imam immediately became conversant with all the contents of any wahy (Qur'anic verses) revealed when the Holy Prophet would disclose it to his associates. To the great surprise of the Holy Prophet, Hadrat Fatimah would often recite the exact text of a newly revealed way before he disclosed it personally to her. When he inquired, she would inform him that it was Hasan through whom she had learned the Revelation.

Remembrance of Allah:

The Holy Imam devoted himself to prayers in such abundance, that all the limbs employed in prostration bore scars and impressions of his sajdah (prostration). Most of the nights were spent on the prayer-carpet. The sense of his absorption and humiliation in prayers to Allah were in such earnest that he would shed tears profusely out of fear of Allah. While performing

ablution, he trembled with the fear of Allah and his face grew pale at the time of prayers. His earnest meditation in the offering of prayers and his extreme absorption in communion with Allah would render him entirely unconscious of his environments.

His Piousness and Contentment:

Imam Hasan had the worldly possessions at his disposal and could have well enjoyed a luxurious life, but he utilized all of it in the betterment of the condition of the poor. He was so courteous and humble that he never hesitated to sit along with the beggars in the lanes and on the thoroughfares of Medina to reply to some of their religious queries. Through his cordial attitude and hospitality he never let the poor and the humble feel inferior to him when they visited his abode.

Imamate:

The demise of the Holy Prophet was followed by an eventful era when the Islamic world (under the false ruling bodies) came in the grip of the fever of expansionism and conquest. But even under such a revolutionary phase, Imam Hasan kept devoting himself to the sacred mission of peacefully propagating Islam and the teachings of the Holy Prophet along with his great father Imam 'Ali.

The martyrdom of Imam Ali on the 21st Ramadan marked the inception of Imam Hasan's Imamate. The majority of Muslims pledged their allegiance to him and finalized the formality of bay'ah (oath of allegiance). No sooner had he taken the reins of leadership into his hands than he had to meet the challenge of Mu'awiyah, the Governor of Syria, who declared a war against him. In compliance with the Will of Allah and with a view to refrain from causing the massacre of Muslims however, he entered into a piece treaty with Mu'awiyah on terms (though not totally respected and carried out by Mu'awiyah), yet saved Islam and stopped a civil war. But this peace treaty was never meant as surrender by him of the permanent leadership to Mu'awiyah. It was meant only as an interim transfer of the administration of the Islamic kingdom, subject to the condition that the administration would be surrendered back to Imam Hasan after Mu'awiyah's death and then it would in turn be inherited by Imam Husayn. Having relieved himself of the administrative responsibilities, Imam Hasan kept the religious leadership with himself and devoted his life to the propagation of Islam and the teachings of the Holy Prophet in Medina.

Mu'awiyah's malice against Imam Hasan led him to conspire with the Imam's wife Ja'dah, the daughter of Ash'ath. She was made to give the Imam some poison which affected his liver. Imam Hasan thus succumbed to Mu'awiyah's fatal mischief and attained his martyrdom on 28th Safar 50 AH. His funeral was attended by Imam Husayn and the members of the

Hashimite family. His bier while being taken for burial to the Holy Prophet's tomb was shot at with arrows by his enemies, (under direct supervision and consent of A'ishah), and it had to be diverted for burial to the Jannatu'l-Baqi` at Medina. His tomb was demolished along with others on 8th Shawwal 1344 (21st April 1926) by the Saudi rulers when they came to power in Hijaz.

The terms of the peace treaty were soon violated, but earned only a short-lived glory for Mu'awiyah. Its aftermath proved disastrous and doomed the fate of his son Yazid and dealt a fatal blow to the entire family of Umayyads. After the death of Mu'awiyah, Imam Husayn emerged as the insurmountable mountain of truth and determination. In the gruesome tragedy of Karbala', by sheer force of numbers, and by isolating the seventy-two members of Imam Husayn's party and stopping them from even getting water to drink for three days, Yazid succeeded in annihilating the seventy-two persons including members of the Imam's family who were with him.

This dastardly success of Yazid was, however, short-lived. The Muslims turned against him on learning of the heinous act he had committed and this resulted in the downfall of Yazid and the extinction of the Umayyad power from the face of the earth.

al-`Allamah at-Tabataba'i writes:

Imam Hasan Mujtaba, upon whom be peace, was the second Imam. He and his brother Imam Husayn were the two sons of Amir al-Mu'minin `Ali and Hadrat Fatimah, the daughter of the Prophet. Many times the Prophet had said, "Hasan and Husayn are my children." Because of these same words `Ali would say to his other children, "You are my children and Hasan and Husayn are the children of the Prophet."

Imam Hasan was born in the year 3 AH, in Medina and shared in the life of the Prophet for somewhat over seven years, growing up during that time under his loving care. After the death of the Prophet which was no more than three, or according to some, six months earlier than the death of Hadrat Fatimah, Hasan was placed directly under the care of his noble father. After the death of his father, through Divine Command and according to the will of his father, Imam Hasan became Imam; he also occupied the outward function of caliph for about six months, during which time he administered the affairs of the Muslims. During that time Mu'awiyah, who was a bitter enemy of `Ali and his family and had fought for years with the ambition of capturing the caliphate, first on the pretext of avenging the death of the third caliph and finally with an open claim to the caliphate, marched his army to Iraq, the seat of Imam Hasan's caliphate. War ensued during which Mu'awiyah

gradually subverted the generals and commanders of Imam Hasan's army with large sums of money and deceiving promises until the army rebelled against Imam Hasan. Finally, the Imam was forced to make peace and to yield the caliphate to Mu'awiyah, provided it would again return to Imam Hasan after Mu'awiyah's death and the Imam's Household and partisans would be protected in every way.

In this way Mu'awiyah captured the Islamic caliphate and entered Iraq. In a public speech he officially made null and void all the peace conditions and in every way possible placed the severest pressure upon the members of the Household of the Prophet and the Shi'ah. During all the ten years of his Imamate, Imam Hasan lived in conditions of extreme hardship and under persecution, with no security even in his own house. In the year 50 AH, he was poisoned and martyred by one of his own Household who, as has been accounted by historians, had been motivated by Mu'awiyah.

In human perfection Imam Hasan was reminiscent of his father and a perfect example of his noble grandfather. In fact, as long as the Prophet was alive, he and his brother were always in the company of the Prophet who even sometimes would carry them on his shoulders. Both Sunni and Shi'ite sources have transmitted this saying of the Holy Prophet concerning Hasan and Husayn: "These two children of mine are Imams (leaders) whether they stand up or sit down" (allusion to whether they occupy the external function of caliphate or not). Also, there are many traditions of the Holy Prophet and `Ali concerning the fact that Imam Hasan would gain the function of Imamate after his noble father. (Shi'ite Islam)

al-Imam al-Hasan ibn Ali, peace be on him, said:

- * If you fail to obtain something of worldly benefit, take it as if the thought of it had never crossed your mind at all.
- * Never did a nation resort to mutual counsel except that they were guided by it towards maturity.
- * It is love which brings closer those who are remote by ancestry, and it is (the absence of) love which causes dissociation between those who are related by ancestry.
- * Opportunity is something which is quick to vanish and late to return