

THE BIOGRAPHY OF IMAM HASAN (A.S)

By: Dr. M. M. Dungersi



A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF IMAM HASAN (A.S.)

BY:

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INTRODUCTION

This has been a wish of Allama Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi, for a number of years now, to include biographies of 14 Masoomin in our International Correspondence Course but his multifarious activities around the world prevented him from undertaking the work.

Mission is grateful to Dr. Mohamed Raza M. Dungersi, of New York who volunteered to undertake this arduous work. No historian or writer, however dexterous he may be, can draw a true picture of the life of Masoomin (a.s.). However we congratulate Dr. Dungersi for this gallant endeavour and pray to Almighty Allah to reward him in this world and in the hereafter.

Lives of great men remind us how to make our lives sublime. History of great men is a fountain of knowledge, faith and aspiration which will never dry up. Lives of these great men are like light houses, which keep darkness away and show right path to the wayfarers in search of knowledge, better living and service to mankind.

Had these great souls not left their footprints on the sands of time, the world would have been groping in darkness and would have fallen pray to despair while combating with unseen and intelligible forces.

This is the second publication of a monumental project under which these discernible series are going to be published. Dr. Dungersi has already completed the biographies of our first four Imams.

Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania

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PREFACE

In the late 50's and early 60's, when I was a madressa student in School Faize in Zanzibar-Africa, there was no such a subject as Islamic History on the madressa curriculum. Naturally, therefore, when I joined the teaching staff of the Huseini Madressa in Dar-es-Salaam Tanzania in early 80's and when I was subsequently assigned to teach Islamic History, I was at a loss, not knowing exactly what to teach.

Not that there was no syllabus for this subject. Rather, my main concern was the scope of the syllabus. For at the core of Islamic History syllabus was the study of the life of the Prophet (may peace be upon him and his progeny) and those of the other thirteen MASOOMIN from his progeny.

In my view, besides Yusuf Laljee's excellent book, *KNOW YOUR ISLAM*, there was no other simple but informative text that could be used comfortably by both the teachers and the students alike. Even then, the section on the life-history of MASOOMIN was rather sketchy in *KNOW YOUR ISLAM*.

Since those days, I have felt the need to compile brief teaching notes on the lives of our Twelve Imams (may peace be upon them all) with two objectives in mind: First, to focus on all those areas of information, not exclusively historic, that would enable the learner to appreciate the complex situations in which our Imams lived and performed their duties as divinely appointed guides for the universe. Secondly, to present this information in a style which has at its core the interest as well as the aptitude of the teachers and students alike. I found this task easy to conceive in mind, but very difficult to implement. Needless to say, I could accomplish little in this field until when I migrated to the USA.

As luck would have it, at Huseini Madressa in New York, I was

once more assigned to teach Islamic History. For reasons I need not disclose them here, I found this task even more daunting than it was in Africa.

Fortunately, at this critical time when I was groping in darkness in search of suitable teaching text for my class, I was commissioned by Maulana Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi, the Chief Missionary of Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania, to write teaching units encompassing the lives of our Twelve Imams (may peace be upon them) for the Correspondence Course of the Mission. To me this was Allah – sent bounty in two ways.

Firstly, this commission gave me courage and confidence that I hitherto lacked. Now I had the support of one of the most renowned Shia scholars of our times – Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi.

Secondly, I would not have to worry about searching for sponsors to finance the printing, the publishing and the circulation of my writings; the Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania would do that.

This unit and others to follow are therefore the result of the initiative and complete support of Maulana Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi, the administration of Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania and its ex-chairman Al-haj Fidahusein Abdullah Hameer.

Both the substance as well as the style of this unit (and the ones to follow) have been overly simplified, to comply with Maulana Sayyid Saeed Akhtar’s advice that “We have to keep in mind that these units are meant for youths and not for scholars.”

All said and done, despite the maximum precautions that were taken to keep this unit free of factual or any other errors, if, however, some have remained uncorrected, the responsibility is mine.

May Allah forgive me for these unintentional errors and may He reward here and in the hereafter all those who have in one way or another, assisted me in the writing, the production and the circulation of this unit.

WASSALAMU ALAYKUM WA RAHMATULLAHI WA BARAKATUH.

Mohamed Raza Mohamed Husein Dungersi, Ph.D.

New York, USA

October 17, 1994

Jamadi-ul-Thani 10, 1415

CHAPTER 1 : CHILDHOOD

HIS BIRTH

Imam Hasan (a.s.) is our second Imam. He is the first-born of the family of Imam Ali (a.s.) and Bibi Fatima (s.a.). He is also known by such other names as “MUJTABA” and “SHABBAR.”

He was born on 15th Ramadhan 3 AH (March 1st 625 AD) in Medina. What happiness his birth must he have brought not only to his parents but also to the Prophet himself. When the Prophet’s last living son, Tahir, died, two polytheists (“KUFFAR”) of MECCA Amr B. Aas and Hakam B. Aas started to bug the Prophet, calling him “ABTAR.” This was because the Prophet did not have any son and the “Kuffar” thought that with the Prophet’s death his name and work would end. The behavior of “Kuffar” made the Prophet sad. Therefore Allah revealed “Surat-ul-Kawthar” (Chapter 107) promising the Prophet that he will not remain “Abtar” (or without issues or children) but will have Abundance (“Kawthar”). The birth of Imam Hasan (a.s.) from the Prophet’s daughter Bibi Fatima (s.a.) was the first step towards Allah’s fulfillment of His promise.

When Imam Hasan (a.s.) was born, the Prophet was away and his parents decided not to name him till the Prophet was back. When the Prophet came back, the newly born child was wrapped in a yellow cloth and presented to the Prophet. The Prophet gave the instructions that the child be wrapped in a white cloth. He then named him Hasan.

On the seventh day of his birth, his head was clean-shaved and a sheep was slaughtered for distribution to the needy and deserving. This was the first “Aqiqah” to be performed and since then it has become a highly recommended act in Islam.

HIS CHILDHOOD IN COMPANY OF THE PROPHET

Imam Hasan (a.s.) spent the first seven years of his life in company

of the Prophet. The Prophet showed great love for Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Imam Husayn (a.s.), who was one year younger to Imam Hasan (a.s.). The Prophet used to kiss and hug Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Imam Husayn (a.s.) so many times that this action came to be seen and reported by many companions of the Prophet.

The love that the Prophet had towards Imam Hasan (a.s.) (and for Imam Husayn (a.s.)) was such that he wanted to do anything to please them. Once, it was Eid Day. Muslim children were being entertained by being made to ride on camels. Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Imam Husayn (a.s.) told their grandfather, the Prophet (s.a.w.w.), to make a similar arrangement for them. The Prophet offered his own back. He made Imam Hasan (a.s.) and his younger brother Imam Husayn (a.s.) to sit on his back. The Prophet then began to move the way a camel does.

The children asked their grandfather: How come other children were holding the bridle of their camels whereas they (Hasan and Husayn) did not have bridles to hold? The Prophet asked Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Imam Husayn (a.s.) to hold his hair in place of a bridle.

Noticing the camels of other children making noises, Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Imam Husayn (a.s.) inquired as to why their steed was quiet. To please them the Prophet started saying “AFW AFW”

One companion, seeing this, said “How lucky you are Oh! Hasanain (Hasan and Husayn) for having such an excellent camel.” The Prophet immediately replied, “Say how lucky the steed is for having such excellent riders!”

We shall look at some more such incidents and then explain the reason why the Prophet showed so much love to his grandsons Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Imam Husayn (a.s.).

Anas B. Malik was a companion of the Prophet (s.a.w.w.). He reports that one day the Prophet, Hazrat Muhammad (s.a.w.w.) brought with him to the mosque Imam Hasan (a.s.) who was very young. The Prophet then started the congregational prayers (“Namaz-e-Jamat”). Imam Hasan (a.s.) was sitting next him. When the Prophet went into “SAJDA” he stayed in that position for a long time. Anas wanted to find out what was making the Prophet have such a long “SAJDA.” So Anas lifted his head from “SAJDA” and saw Imam Hasan (a.s.) sitting on the back of Prophet.

After the prayers were over people asked the Prophet if the reason for the long “SAJDA” was that the Prophet at that time was receiving revelations (“WAHI”) from Allah. The Prophet replied that he was not receiving any revelation. The only reason that made him stay in “SAJDA” for long time was that his grandson Hasan was sitting on his back. He did not wish to come out of the “SAJDA” when Imam Hasan (a.s.) was on his back. He therefore waited till the child came down on his own.

It has been reported that one day the Prophet was sitting on the pulpit (‘MIMBAR’) in the mosque of Medina when Imam Hasan (a.s.) walked into the mosque. The Imam was very young. He was wearing a long shirt the edge of which came in his legs. He therefore fell down. The Prophet stopped giving sermon (“KHUTBA”). He came down, took his grandson to the mimbar and told his companions how much he loved his grandson. He said, “Whoever loves me, must love this boy. Those who are present here must let those who are not present know what I have told you today about this boy.”

Anas B. Malik reports that one day he saw Imam Hasan (a.s.) playing on the Prophet’s chest. Anas wanted to remove him. The Prophet stopped him from doing so saying, “O Anas, this boy is the peace of my mind; let him be with me. Whoever huts him hurts me.”

WHY DID THE PROPHET LOVE HIS GRANDSON SO MUCH?

It is hard to believe that the Prophet showed so much love and respect to Imam Hasan (a.s.) just because Imam (a.s.) was his grandson.

In actions of prayers like performing of ‘Salat’, the Prophet would not allow simple love to interfere with the love of Allah. In an ordinary case, the Prophet would slowly come out of the “SAJDA” without hurting the child. There is therefore another reason why the Prophet himself and all Muslims praying behind him had to stay in “SAJDA” for a long time for the sake of Imam Hasan (a.s.).

The Prophet always did what Allah wanted him to do. Imam Hasan (a.s.) also, being an Imam since his birth, and a ‘Masoom’ (does not make mistakes) did only what Allah wished. Allah wanted Muslims to know the great position that Imam Hasan (a.s.) had to Him (Allah). Allah chose this method to let Muslims understand how important Imam Hasan’s personality was in front of Allah, even when the Imam was only a child.

Muslims were being prepared to learn that Imam Hasan (a.s.) was the beloved of Allah and therefore their rightful leader. Muslims were being taught how to know who to turn to for proper guidance after the Prophet had left this world.

IMAM HASAN’S HIGH POSITION TO ALLAH PROVED BY THE QURAN

There are three very importance events which concern Imam Hasan (a.s.) and which resulted in the revelation of verses of the Quran. These events are described below.

REVELATION OF “SURAT-UD-DAHR” (CHAPTER 76)

All the famous commentators of the Quran in explaining the event that led to the revelation of “Surat-ud-Dahr” say that: One day, Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Imam Husayn (a.s.) when they were

in their childhood fell sick. On being advised by the Prophet, they promised Allah (through “Nadhr”) that they would keep three fasts when they became well again.

When the children had recovered from sickness, they started fasting. Their parents and the maid, Fiddha, also decided to join the boys by fasting. At the time of breaking their fast, a beggar came asking for food. There were only five loaves for break-fast (Iftar). All the loaves were given to the beggar. The family and their maid broke their fast with water only.

On the second day, at the time of breaking the fast, an orphan came asking for food. As had been done on the previous night, all the five loaves were given away, this time to the orphan. Imam Hasan (a.s.), Imam Husayn (a.s.) and the others broke their fast with water only.

On the third and last day, a prisoner came asking for food and as had happened in the previous two nights, all the five loaves were given away in charity.

The action of Imam Hasan (a.s.) Imam Husayn (a.s.), their parents and Fiddha pleased Allah to much that the entire chapter of “Surat-ud-Dahr” was revealed by Allah to praise them.

The special part of this chapter which describes the above quoted event is verses number 8 and 9 which read like this:

“And they give away food, out of love for Him (Allah), to the poor and the orphan and the prisoner, (saying) we feed you only for Allah’s sake, we do not want anything in return, or thanks.”

REVELATION OF VERSES OF PURITY (“TATHIR”)

It is report from Jabir, the Prophet’s companion, who quotes Bibi Fatima (s.a.), saying that one day the Prophet retired in his room. He covered himself with a mantle (blanket) from Yemen, saying that he wished to be left alone.

Soon, Imam Hasan (a.s.) came. He told his mother that he could

smell the sweet smell of his grandfather, the Prophet. She told him that, indeed, the Prophet was home, under the mantle. On hearing this, Imam Hasan (a.s.) did ‘Salam’ to the Prophet. Having accepted Imam Hasan’s Salam, the Prophet allowed Imam Hasan (a.s.) to join him under the cover.

Imam Hasan (a.s.) was followed by Imam Husayn (a.s.) and then by Imam Ali (a.s.) and lastly by Bibi Fatima (s.a.). All of them, in the order shown above, saluted the Prophet and after having been given permission by the Prophet joined him under the mantle of Yemen.

Bibi Umme Salama, the wife of the Prophet was watching the whole event. She also wished to join the Prophet. The Prophet told her that although she was a good person, she could not join him. This was because at that time only his ‘Ahlul-Bayt’ could join him.

The Angel Gabriel brought to the Prophet the following revelation from Allah:

“Allah wishes to keep away from you every kind of uncleanness, O you people of the house, and to purify you with a complete purification.” (Ch.33, v.33, Later Part)

Muslim authorities, such as Sahih Bukhari and Sahih Muslim, all agree that this part of the verse was revealed in honour of the Prophet (s.a.w.w.), Bibi Fatima (s.a.), Imam Ali (a.s.), Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Imam Husayn (a.s.). They base their authority on Umme Salama, Aisha (The Prophet’s wives) and Abu Saeed Khudri (the Prophet’s companion).

REVELATION OF VERSES OF “MUBAHILA”

In the year 10 AH, a group of Christian scholars and priests from Najran came to Medina. Their aim was to debate with the Prophet on the question of who Nabi Isa (Jesus) was. Their greatest argument was that Muslims accepted the fact that Prophet Isa (Jesus) was born without a father. Who could be born without a father? Therefore Nabi Isa’s father was God. Prophet Isa therefore

was the son of God.

To reply them, Allah revealed the following verse:

“Truly, the case of Isa to Allah is the same as the case of Adam. He created him from dust then said He to him be, and he (Adam) was there.” (Ch.3, v.59)

But the Christians of Najran refused to accept this as a good reply. As there was no other way of proving that Islam was the only right religion accepted by Allah, the following verse were revealed:

“Say to them we bring our sons, you bring your sons, we bring our women, you bring your women, we bring ourselves, you bring yourselves and then let us ask for Allah to send his curses on the liars.” (Ch.3, v.61 in parts)

The Prophet, therefore, asked the Christians of Najran either to accept Islam as the only religion of Allah or else both parties should go for “MUBAHILA.”

The agreement was: The Prophet would bring with him his women, his children and those like him. In the same way, the Christians should come themselves, their women, their children and those like themselves. Each party would then ask Allah to send His curse on the party that was in the wrong.

The proposal was accepted.

Allah had given permission to his Prophet, Hazrat Muhammad (s.a.w.w.) to bring as many people as he wished provided they had one qualification: They had never committed any mistakes in their lives knowingly or unknowingly. Otherwise, when the curse came it would affect them, too.

The Prophet therefore decided to take with him only Imam Hasan (a.s.), Imam Husayn (a.s.), Bibi Fatima (s.a.) and Imam Ali (a.s.) because only they were pure from all sins. You will remember, their

purity was described earlier in the verses of purity.

Seeing the Prophet's group, made up of Imam Hasan (a.s.), Imam Husayn (a.s.), Bibi Fatima (s.a.) and Imam Ali (a.s.), the leader of the Christians said to his followers: "When I see the holiness of Muhammad and his family, I am afraid that God would move even strong mountains if that is what they wish. If they curse us, we shall all be destroyed. Let us therefore make peace with the Muslims."

The Christians of Najran accepted their defeat. They did not accept Islam but agreed to pay the necessary dues to Islam.

From above incidents, there remained no doubt about the fact that Imam Hasan (a.s.) was a great person. He was a "Masoom" (Never commits any sins; never makes any mistakes) as was the Prophet himself, Imam Husayn (a.s.), Bibi Fatima (s.a.) and Imam Ali (a.s.).

The love and respect that the Prophet showed for these four people was not just because they were his close relatives. He loved and respected them. Also he asked all Muslims to do the same to them because they were the most beloved to Allah.

To remind Muslim of all ages of their duties towards these four persons, the Prophet showed his love for them in public. He also left behind him his words of praise for each of them.

HIS CHILDHOOD IN COMPANY OF HIS MOTHER AND FATHER

The time that Imam Hasan (a.s.) spent with his grandfather is almost the same as that he spent with his mother. And that was seven years.

Several incidents have been recorded which are reproduced here to give you an idea about Imam Hasan's childhood and the way Bibi Fatima (s.a.) brought him up.

Imam Hasan (a.s.) was a very bright child. He would go to the mosque daily. He would listen carefully to what his grandfather was saying from the “Mimbar.” He would then come home and tell his mother everything that he heard from the Prophet. When Imam Ali (a.s.) came home, Bibi Fatima (s.a.) would repeat to him the Prophet’s sermons, that he gave in the mosque. When Imam Ali (a.s.) asked her as to how Bibi Fatima (s.a.) came to know all this, she would say that she heard it all from her son Hasan (a.s.).

One day, Imam Ali (a.s.) wanted to hear and enjoy his son’s beautiful style of reporting his grandfather’s sermons. Just before the young boy had returned home, Imam Ali (a.s.) went home and stayed at a place where he could see and hear Imam Hasan (a.s.) without himself been seen or heard.

The young Imam came back and, as usual, started narrating his grandfather’s sermon. But today Imam Hasan (a.s.) was not feeling comfortable. He said to his mother, “Oh mother! I cannot speak as well as I do every day. I’m sure an elderly person is watching and listening to what I’m saying.”

Such was the intelligence of Imam Hasan (a.s.)!

Imam Ali came from the hiding place to hug and kiss his son.

Commenting on the exceptionally high intelligence level of Imam Hasan (a.s.), Ibne Hajare Makki says in his famous book called SAWAIKA MUHRIQA that Imam Hasan (a.s.) used to see what was written in “Lawhe Mahfuz” (The records about every human being kept by Allah) when he was still a baby playing on the lap of his mother.

In the few years just before Mecca was taken by Muslims, Abu Sufyan came to Medina. He was one of the main leaders of the polytheists of Mecca and an enemy number one of Islam and the Prophet. He knew, after the battle of Khaiber, that within a short time Mecca too would fall to the Muslims. Before that happened,

he wanted to get some guarantees from the Prophet. He went to Imam Ali (a.s.) and Bibi Fatima's house asking them to speak to the Prophet on his behalf and get the guarantees.

Bibi Fatima and Imam Ali (a.s.) said they could not ask the Prophet to go against things that he said he would do or do not do.

In the mean time, Abu Sufyan's eyes fell on Imam Hasan (a.s.) who at that time was very young. Knowing how much the Prophet loved this boy, Abu Sufyan told Imam Ali (a.s.) and Bibi Fatima that the Prophet would do anything for the sake of the boy; they should therefore use the name of this boy.

Though Imam Hasan (a.s.) was very young he replied Abu Sufyan saying, "I shall speak to my grandfather to grant you what you want but you must first say 'There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his Messenger.'"

The boy's reply made Abu Sufyan quiet. For in a very simple way the boy explained to Abu Sufyan why his parents were not ready to do what Abu Sufyan wanted them to do.

WHAT DID THE PROPHET SAY ABOUT IMAM HASAN (A.S.)

"Hasan and Husayn are the leaders of the youths of paradise."

"Hasan and Husayn are the decoration of heaven."

"Hasan and Husayn are my two flowers."

"Oh Allah! Hasan and Husayn are dear to me, so hold them dear too."

"Allah defines every person's children as those of that person himself. But in my case, he has defined Ali's sons as my own."

"Hasan and Husayn are Imams whether they sit (make peace) or rise (go for a fight)."

CHAPTER 2 : HIS YOUTH AND EARLY MANHOOD

LIFE WITH HIS FATHER

Imam Hasan (a.s.) was only seven or eight years when he lost both his grandfather, Hazrat Muhammad (s.a.w.w.) and his mother Bibi Fatima (s.a.). In her last parting words before her death, Bibi Fatima (s.a.) had made a special request to Imam Ali (a.s.) telling him to take extra care of her children, as they had lost two greatest loves at such a young age.

Imam Ali (a.s.) was a verily loving father to his children. As these children were very intelligent, they knew all the difficulties that were facing their father. The father and the children shared all these difficulties together.

Having lived a life of great respect and love with his grandfather, Imam Hasan (a.s.) must have found it very hard to see some Muslims showing disrespect to his parents. The young boy must have been shocked to see the door of their house being set on fire by Muslims after the death of the Prophet. It is hard to say how sad Imam Hasan (a.s.) must have become to see his mother hurt by the burning door, and his father tied in ropes and taken like a prisoner to the presence of the new caliph, Abu Bakr B. Abu Kahafa.

Like his father, Imam Hasan (a.s.) was totally left out from being given any official post or position for over twenty years after the passing away of the Prophet. Again, like his father he continued serving the Muslim ‘Ummah’ in matters of religion, and giving true guidance to Muslims.

He offered his service to those Muslims, who had for one reason or another, become victims of the rulers of the time. For example, when the famous companion of the Prophet, Hazrat Abu Dhar al-Ghaffari was unjustly told to leave Medina, Imam Hasan (a.s.)

(and Imam Husayn (a.s.)) went to say goodbye to him. By doing this they were putting their own lives in danger. This is because the government had ordered that no one should go to see Abu Dhar and if anybody broke this order he too would be punished severely. By paying his last respect to Abu Dhar, Imam Hasan (a.s.) showed his strong character and proved to the world that an Imam from the house of the Prophet would always support what is right even if this could put him in danger.

Another incidence which shows how Imam Hasan (a.s.) served the Muslim community although he did not have any special position is when Uthman B. Affan, the third Caliph, fell into problems. When this unpopular Caliph was under house arrest and surrounded by his enemies, Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Imam Husayn (a.s.) stood on his door to offer him protection. Although like his father Imam Ali (a.s.) knew of the bad things Uthman had done to the Muslims, he did not support the idea of killing Uthman.

HIS WORK AS HIS FATHER'S AMBASSADOR TO KUFA

When there was nothing else left for Imam Ali (a.s.) but to raise an army to fight those who wanted to fight him, he sent Abdullah B. Jafar and Muhammad B. Abu Bakr to Kufa to get soldiers to come to the side of Imam Ali (a.s.).

Unfortunately, the governor of Kufa, Abu Musa Ash'ary was against Imam Ali (a.s.). He had a great influence in Kufa and he told people not to help Imam Ali (a.s.).

It became clear that either Imam Ali (a.s.) had to go to Kufa himself or send somebody like himself to be able to make the people of Kufa be ready to join his army. Imam Ali (a.s.) decided to send Imam Hasan (a.s.) to Kufa for this very important job.

When in Kufa, Imam Hasan (a.s.) went on the mimbar and after praising Allah and his Prophet, he explained to the people why it

was important for them to join the army of Imam Ali (a.s.). Imam Hasan's speech and explanations were so good that in a very short time he raised an army of 9000 soldiers.

HIS WORK AS AN ARMY GENERAL

Although he had never taken part in any battles in the rulership of the first three caliphs, Imam Hasan (a.s.) showed great skills as an army general in the battles of Jamal, Siffin and Neherwan.

Not only was he in-charge of organizing the day-to-day requirements of the army in these three battles, but he also took active part in the actual fighting.

He also was a special representative of his father in dealing with such persons as Aisha, the Prophet's wife who had started the battle of Jamal against Imam Ali (a.s.). When Aisha was defeated, Imam Ali (a.s.) showed great kindness to her and wanted her to go home with full respect to Medina. But she refused. Again, Imam Hasan (a.s.) was sent to her to remind her why she had to do what was good for her. He succeeded in making her agree to do what she had earlier totally refused to do.

HIS WORK AS A SPIRITUAL GUIDE

When Imam Ali (a.s.) became officially the ruler of the Muslims, he began to refer some of the questions being brought to him to Imam Hasan (a.s.). This was because Imam Ali (a.s.) wanted the Muslim community to know the position of Imam Hasan (a.s.), especially because Imam Hasan (a.s.) had not been given any chance in the rulership of the three Caliphs to show his skills.

The Byzantine Christians, thinking that Muawiya, the governor of Damascus, was the rightful successor of the Prophet, sent him some questions so as to test his knowledge. Muawiya could not answer these questions. He therefore sent one of his agents to Kufa to find out the answer to his questions.

The agent went to Imam Ali (a.s.) and presented himself as a friend. Imam recognized him and told him who he was. Then he told him to take his questions to Imam Hasan (a.s.). The man did as he was told. Imam Hasan (a.s.) answered all his questions. One of these questions was: Name ten things all of which are strong but each has something above it in strength. Imam Hasan (a.s.) replied, "Stone is strong but iron is stronger than stone, because stone is broken by iron (hammer). Iron is stronger than stone but fire is stronger than iron as iron melts in fire. Fire is stronger than iron but weaker than water since water extinguishes fire. Though water is stronger than fire, it is turned into vapour and stored in clouds. Clouds, however, are moved around by wind so winds are stronger than clouds. But clouds are controlled by angels so angels are stronger than winds. Though angels are strong compared to winds, they are not as strong as the angel Israel who will one day cause their death. But then Israel too will die. Therefore death is stronger than Israel. The strongest of the all is Allah because death is in command of Allah."

As a matter of fact, during the reign of Imam Ali (a.s.), Imam Hasan (a.s.) was the chief justice in the entire kingdom.

HIS FATHER'S TRUSTEE AND IMMEDIATE SUCCESSOR

In the early hours of the 19th of Ramadhan 40 AH, Imam Ali (a.s.) received a deadly wound on his head. He therefore asked Imam Hasan (a.s.) to lead the prayers. Soon after that, on the evening of the 20th of Ramadhan, Imam Ali (a.s.) called all his children and his wives to his bed. He appointed Imam Hasan (a.s.) as his successor, and the guardian of his family.

Imam Ali (a.s.) handed over the entire thing that the dying Imam gives to his successor, Imam Hasan (a.s.).

Under the guidance and supervision of Imam Hasan (a.s.) the death-bath and burial ceremonies of Imam Ali (a.s.) were carried out.

CHAPTER 3 :

IMAM HASAN (A.S.): THE CALIPH OF MUSLIMS

HIS NOMINATION AS CALIPH

The death of Imam Ali (a.s.) brought happiness to Muawiya. This gave him courage to put into action his plan to remove Imam Hasan (a.s.) from Caliphate and to make himself the ruler of all Muslims.

Having buried his father, Imam Hasan (a.s.) immediately went to the mosque to prepare the Muslims to be ready for Muawiya.

Forty thousand people in Kufa alone accepted Imam Hasan (a.s.) as the successor of his father. Muslims throughout the Islamic empire which was previously under Imam Ali's rulership accepted Imam Hasan (a.s.) as the next Caliph. However, Muawiya and his followers refused to accept Imam Hasan (a.s.).

MUAWIYA WORKS AGAINST IMAM HASAN (A.S.)

Muawiya was growing stronger and stronger after the battle of Siffin. When Imam Ali (a.s.) was busy dealing with problems created by the "Khawarij", Muawiya got the best time to prepare for war. Then again, Imam Ali (a.s.) had to fight the battle of Neherwan against the "Khawarij." This again weakened his army and made more enemies for him. The position of Imam Ali (a.s.) was such that after the battle of Neherwan he was left alone with only a few faithful soldiers. Imam Ali (a.s.) therefore could not continue with his march towards Damascus.

When Imam Hasan (a.s.) became the caliph of the Muslims, this problem was still there. Although 40,000 people had accepted him as their ruler, few of them were ready to go with him to war against Muawiya. Muawiya knew about this, and he took advantage of this also.

Muawiya's first action was to send his spies to various parts of the

Muslim empire to turn people against Imam Hasan (a.s.). Two such spies were caught: One in Kufa and another in Basra. Many more remained at large.

These spies were given three jobs to do:

- First, they were to give Muawiya information about Imam Hasan (a.s.) and his people.
- Second, they were to spread false information against Imam Hasan (a.s.) and turn people against him.
- Third, they were to act as agents for Muawiya and bribe the chiefs of tribes and the army officer in Imam Hasan's camp.

Imam Hasan (a.s.) wrote several letters to Muawiya letting him know of the wrong things he Muawiya was doing. The famous Muslim scholar, Ibne Abil Hadid has reproduced in his *SHARH* (his book) one of these letters, parts of which read as under:

“...It is shocking and surprising to see that you, O Muawiya, are trying to take a thing which you do not deserve to have. You do not have any good quality in religion nor have you done any good work for Islam, which has been praised. On the other hand, you are the son of the leader of the party opposing Islam. You are the son of the Prophet's greatest enemy (meaning Abu Sufyan) from the Quraysh. Accept me therefore as others have done because you know that I am far more qualified than you are to become Caliph in the presence of Allah and good people. Fear Allah and keep yourself away from shedding the blood of Muslims.”

Instead of agreeing to Imam's advice, Muawiya continued to defy the Imam. He could not deny that Imam Hasan (a.s.) was the best person of the time. But his arguments were that he was older and therefore more experienced than Imam Hasan (a.s.). He argued that he would therefore make a better politician and a better ruler.

Muawiya then took a second step. He took an army of 60,000 strong soldiers and marched towards Iraq. Imam Hasan (a.s.) had no other choice but to send his army, too, to meet Muawiya's.

When the Imam called his people to join him to go to fight against Muawiya, most of them were not ready. He had to send his father's and his own trusted friend Hajar Badi B. Hatim to go to the neighbouring countries to raise an army.

Because Muawiya's army was already in Iraq at a place near Mosul called Maskin, the Imam had to send immediately his army to stop them from moving further into Iraq. He sent an army of 12,000 soldiers under the command of Ubaydullah B. Abbas, assisted by Qays B. Saad B. Ubada. This army went to Maskin to wait for the Imam himself to join them.

IMAM HASAN (A.S.) AND HIS ARMY AT MADAIN

On his way to Maskin, Imam Hasan (a.s.) camped together with his army at Sabat near Madain because there was already trouble in his army. This trouble was started by the agents of Muawiya. Some of these agents had joined the army as soldiers. They started false rumours that the Imam had made a secret agreement with Muawiya and he was not going to fight.

The other trouble was that there were some soldiers who joined the army only because their chiefs had forced them. They were there only to make trouble.

Then there were the "Khawarij" who had joined the army just to take their revenge on Imam Hasan (a.s.) when the right time came. They themselves did not want to fight but wanted others to do so, so that they could get the war booty.

It was therefore necessary for the Imam to talk to them and get their full commitment, before he could go to war with Muawiya. He told them:

"Know that I do not have any enmity for Muslims. I seek your welfare. I have found out something about you that you will not be able to deny. I see that many of you have lost courage to fight the enemy. I do not think it wise anymore to push you into a war."

Instead of assuring the Imam that they were ready to go for war with Muawiya, as the Imam had wanted them to do, these soldiers blamed the Imam saying “This man has become unbeliever.”

They rose against the Imam. They pulled away from under him his prayer-carpet. They pulled his mantle from his back. They wanted to kill him.

The Imam was forced to call his loyal soldiers from the tribes of Hamdan and Rabia to assist him to go to Madain.

On his way to Madain, a “Khawarij” called Jarrah B. Qubaisa Asadi wounded him on his thigh with a dagger. The Imam had to retire in the house of his governor in Madain to take care of his wounds.

CONFUSION IN THE IMAM’S ARMY AT MASKIN

At the same time when there was trouble at Madain, there was also trouble at Maskin. Muawiya bribed Ubaydullah the commander of the Imam’s army. Ubaydullah was given half a million dinars cash and was promised another half million dinars after he had left Imam’s army.

In the morning Ubaydullah was already gone. Quays started on a small way a battle with Muawiya’s army. But this had to stop. Firstly, because the bad news from Sabat had already reached the ears of both armies. Muawiya’s agents added salt to this news, saying that Imam Hasan (a.s.) had already decided to make peace with Muawiya. They said, “Why fight when your leader has decided not to fight?” As a result many soldiers from the side of Quays left to join hands with Muawiya. The Imam’s army became weak and lost heart.

Quays inquired from the Imam what he was supposed to do. The Imam knew that except for a few, the majority of his army would not support him. With great pain, he asked Quays to return to Kufa without carrying out any further war with Muawiya.

IMAM HASAN (A.S.) SIGNS PEACE AGREEMENT WITH MUAWIYA

Muawiya by way of bribes and tricks destroyed the army of Imam Hasan (a.s.) both at Madain and at Maskin. Imam Hasan's position became similar to that of Imam Ali (a.s.) at Siffin. Like Imam Ali (a.s.), if Imam Hasan (a.s.) had continued the fight, he himself and those few companions left on his side would all be killed. Islam would lose its guidance for ever. The only solution which was left for Imam Hasan (a.s.) was therefore to end the war.

The Imam therefore signed an agreement with Muawiya. By this agreement, Muawiya would become the ruler or Caliph of the Muslims.

CONDITIONS OF THE AGREEMENT

Imam Hasan (a.s.) agreed to sign the cease-fire agreement with Muawiya with the following conditions:

1. Muawiya should rule according to the Quran and "Sunnah" of the Prophet.
2. Muawiya should have no right to appoint any successor after him. On his death Imam Hasan (a.s.) would become Caliph; if he was not alive then Imam Husayn (a.s.) would become Caliph.
3. People would be left in peace wherever they were on the land of Allah.
4. The friends and the followers of Imam Ali (a.s.) would have their lives, properties, women and children guaranteed for peace.
5. No harm or danger, openly or in secret, would be on any one from the family of the Prophet.
6. Imam Ali (a.s.) would not be abused and cursed in daily prayers and in Friday sermons.

This agreement was signed in the month of Rabi-ul-Awwal 41 AH. (661 AD). This year came to be known as "Aam-al-Jamaat."

EVENTS AFTER SIGNING OF THE AGREEMENT

Imam Hasan (a.s.) returned to Kufa.

Muawiya also went to Kufa. But before entering Kufa, he got down at Nukheila outside Kufa. He addressed the Muslims by saying, “I fought and won this battle not to make you offer daily prayers or to make you fast or make you pay Zakat. All these you are already doing. My aim is to rule you. Agreement with Imam Hasan (a.s.) has brought me what I wanted. Although you did not like it, Allah has made me successful.

“As for the conditions of the agreement, they are all under my feet.”
(Meaning he would not follow any of them.)

This shows what kind of person Muawiya was.

Those present were shocked to hear him speak like this but no one had any courage to say anything to him.

He then entered Kufa. In his talk in the Mosque he started to say bad things about Imam Ali (a.s.). He was sure that Imam Hasan (a.s.), fearing Muawiya’s army would keep quiet; but Muawiya was making a mistake. He did not know how brave Imam Hasan (a.s.) was and that the Imam would stand to reply him. This is what the Imam did.

Although Imam Husayn (a.s.) too, was present and he wanted to reply Muawiya, Imam Hasan (a.s.) stopped him and stood up himself. Having praised Allah and his Prophet, he explained his own position saying, “I swear to the almighty Allah that if you search the east and the west of the world you will not find any one whose grandfather is the Prophet except for my brother Husayn and me.... Muawiya has taken away what was mine and he fought with me to stop me carry out duties which Allah wished me to do. He has therefore done a great injustice to me..... I made a treaty with

him to save you and Islam. I know that shedding your blood now will not bring any good.... We should now work to save Islam from the hands of polytheism and injustice.... Muawiya has told you that I consider him fit to be Caliph and I myself am not. He has only said lies. We, the family of the Prophet, in the words of Allah and his Prophet, are the most fit people to rule over people as Allah has confirmed about our purity in the Quranic verses of ‘Tatheer’... I swear by Allah if on the day the Holy Prophet had passed away, if people had gone to the doors of the house of my father and had agreed with the order of Allah and the Prophet regarding my father’s rights and rulership, heavens would have sent their blessings... Since people did not do so things got to a point that freed slaves (meaning Muawiya’s father) and sons of freed slaves (meaning Muawiya) desire to rule over Muslims..”

This is only part of what he said. But from it we learn of the reasons which made him give away Caliphate to Muawiya.

THE EFFECTS OF THE AGREEMENT

1. Muawiya became the Caliphate of the whole Muslim empire. Hijaz, Persia and Iraq which were under the direct rule of Imam Hasan (a.s.) now went in the hands of Muawiya. Muawiya became the first King in Islam.
2. Imam Hasan (a.s.) left Kufa forever and went to live in Medina. He continued to serve the Muslims as he was the Imam appointed by Allah.
3. Many of his followers did not understand why their Imam had signed an agreement with a man like Muawiya. Those who were firm in their beliefs continued to live under his guidance. Others lost faith and became the Imam’s enemy.

THE GOOD THINGS THAT CAME FROM THIS AGREEMENT

Muawiya was a Muslim by name only. His main wish was to become a great King. He wanted to end Islam and bring back the way of life that the polytheists of Mecca used to live before Islam was brought by the Prophet. To do this he played a dirty trick.

He became a very powerful King in Syria. He would have killed Imam Hasan (a.s.) and those few friends and supporters who were true believer of Islam. After their death who would be left to guide the Muslim community? Islam would gradually be destroyed. Imam Hasan (a.s.) very wisely saved his own life and that of his supporters. Though Imam Hasan (a.s.) was no more a caliph, he was an Imam and his presence stopped Muawiya from carrying out his evil acts against Islam.

After this treaty, Imam Hasan (a.s.) lived for another nine years. Muawiya tried his best to destroy Islam but the Imam's teachings and guidance stopped him from doing so. Very quietly, Imam Hasan (a.s.) continued to prepare Muslims to live in the way Allah wished them to live.

Muawiya was an enemy of Islam at heart. But outside he behaved like he was a Muslim. In fact, there were many Muslims who did not know who was on the right: Imam Ali (a.s.) or Muawiya or for that reason Imam Hasan (a.s.) or Muawiya. The agreement which Imam Hasan (a.s.) made with Muawiya made it clear that Imam Hasan (a.s.) was on the right and Muawiya was on the wrong. For example, the first condition that Imam Hasan (a.s.) made with Muawiya proves that for all the years that Muawiya ruled in Syria he was not following the Quran or the Sunna of the Prophet. Otherwise, Muawiya would have said so and would therefore disagree to put it in the agreement. Not only that, but at Nukheila, as has already been explained before, Muawiya said that he would not practice any of these conditions. This proves the fact that Muawiya was wrong from the beginning. Those Muslims who still thought that Muawiya was a God-fearing Muslim were shocked to see his behavior. Their eyes were opened by Imam Hasan's wise move to make this agreement.

Syria was a large and important part of the Islamic empire. Before it came in the hands of Muslims, it was an important part of

the Byzantine Roman Empire and the people of Syria were all Christians. Syria came into the Muslim hands during the last days of the rule of Caliph Abu Bakr in 13 AH. The first governor of Syria was Yazid B. Abu Sufyan (Muawiya's elder brother). After his death in 18 AH, Muawiya became the governor and remained in that position up to 41 AH when he became the Caliph, as we have already seen. For over 25 years he poisoned the Syrians' minds by telling them lies about the Prophet and his family. For example, people of Syria thought that Imam Ali (a.s.) neither prayed nor fasted. It was very important that these peoples' eyes be opened and they should be made to see the truth. If Imam Hasan (a.s.) continued the fight with Muawiya and got killed, the Syrians would never know true Islam. By making agreement with Muawiya, Imam Hasan (a.s.) succeeded in sending the true message of Islam to the Syrians in two different ways. First, he proved to them that he, Imam Hasan (a.s.), was a true Muslim and wanted the ruler to run his country on the Principles of Quran and the Sunna of the Prophet.

Second, he got a chance to talk to the Syrians face to face. In his speech in Kufa where sixty thousand Syrians were present, Imam Hasan (a.s.) told them exactly who Muawiya was and why he fought Imam Ali (a.s.) and him (Imam Hasan). The Imam ended his speech saying:

“Know that I am Hasan, the son of Ali, and you Muawiya, the son of Sakhar. My mother was Fatima, your mother Hind. My grandfather was the Prophet, yours Otbah. My grandmother was Khadija, yours Fatileh. May Allah's curse be upon your line or mine whichever one which was in the past was bad, wicked and unbelievers.”

Thus, eyes of everybody were open. Everybody now knew who was on the right and who was on the wrong. Only Imam Hasan's wisdom in making an agreement with Muawiya could have brought about this position.

It is wrong therefore to think that Imam Hasan (a.s.) should not have made an agreement with Muawiya. At that time, it must have been difficult to understand the Imam's decision. Even his very close friends found it hard to understand. The Imam explained his decision in the following words:

“I made agreement with him (Muawiya) for your welfare and to keep greatness of Islam alive. I saw that war would not bring good results and your blood would be wasted. I thought it better to save your blood would be wasted. I thought it better to save your blood and with it save our religion from the hands of the evil people and clear this world with polytheism ('Kufr') and injustice ('Dhulm'). So be alive, and teach the people of the world lessons in truth and religion.

“I did what Allah wished. It is a test and trouble for you now but you will benefit from it in the future.”

CHAPTER 4 : **YEARS OF SILENCE: 41 AH - 50 AH**

IMAM HASAN (A.S.) RETURNS TO MEDINA

After giving away the Caliphate to Muawiya, Imam Hasan (a.s.) returned to Medina. He lived another nine years before he was martyred by Muawiya's poison.

Muawiya thought that as Imam Hasan (a.s.) was no more a Caliph, people would forget him. People would turn to Muawiya and Muawiya would carry out his evil plan to destroy Islam without any difficulty. But he was wrong.

Imam Hasan (a.s.) led a quiet but very active life in Medina. He spent his time preaching the true message of Islam. Instead of running away from him, people started coming to him in larger numbers than before. It is said that sometimes there were so many people around him that there was no way for others to pass by. The Imam would have to go back to his house to avoid causing traffic problems.

Muawiya soon realized that although he won the battle, he lost the war. This was because through the work of Imam Hasan (a.s.), Islam was becoming stronger and stronger every day. He realized that something must be done fast to weaken the position of Imam Hasan (a.s.), otherwise Islam would become so strong that it could never be destroyed.

MUAWIYA'S ACTS TO DESTROY THE INFLUENCE OF IMAM HASAN (A.S.)

Muawiya knew that Imam Hasan's greatest strength was in his pure character. To destroy his power therefore it was necessary to destroy his character.

Remember that Muawiya was very rich. He was the king of the whole Muslim empire. His rulership was being expanded to North

Africa. He used his wealth to destroy the good name of Imam. He started paying large sums of money to those people who were ready to come out with wrong “Hadith” which said bad things about Imam Ali (a.s.) and his family, and good things about the enemies of Imam Ali (a.s.).

Also false rumours were spread around about Imam Hasan (a.s.). One such rumour was that Imam Hasan (a.s.) was lazy and a lover of worldly pleasures. Rumours were also circulated that Imam Hasan (a.s.) married many wives and then divorced them.

Not satisfied with these rumours, Muawiya spent a lot of money on the enemies of Imam Hasan (a.s.); Their work was to go around saying bad thing about Imam Hasan (a.s.) and poisoning the minds of those people who did not like the Imam because the Imam had signed an agreement with Muawiya.

But none of these tricks worked. The Imam’s piety and pure character was like the bright, shining sun, Muawiya’s rumours were like mist! Imam’s fame and popularity was increasing day by day. The following incident should show you how Muawiya’s tricks were proving useless.

A man from Syria came to Medina. When he saw Imam Hasan (a.s.) he started abusing him as much as he could. The Imam listened to him as long as it took. When the Syrian was tired the Imam addressed him with full respect:

“O Shaykh! It appears that you do not know the greatness of the members of the Prophet’s family and my position. People must have explained it all wrong. Come along with me so that I can fulfill all your requirements and desires. If you need a horse I can give one to you. If you are hungry I can feed you. If you are without a home, shelter can be provided. If you need clothes to wear I can get that for you. If you need religious guidance I can provide that, too. Come with me and be my guest for as long as you wish. I shall serve you. This is better for you than what you are doing now.”

The man from Syria was shocked to see the Imam showing kindness and respect to him even though he was so rude to him. The Syrian now understood that what he was told about the Imam was not true. He was ashamed of himself. He said to Imam Hasan (a.s.), “When I came here, there were no two persons in the world that I hated as much as I did, you and your father. Now there is no one whom I love as much as your father and you.”

The Syrian was totally changed. For the rest of his life he remained a friend of the Imam.

When such reports reached to Damascus - Syria, Muawiya became very angry. He was worried that time was running out on him and his mission to destroy Islam still remained incomplete. He therefore planned to get Imam Hasan (a.s.) killed.

THE MARTYRDOM OF IMAM HASAN (A.S.)

Muawiya was not a fool. He knew that Imam Hasan (a.s.) was such a pure person that any one who killed him would be hated by Muslims for ever. He therefore had to get the Imam out of his way in such a way that no one could blame him for that. Through his agents he got the Imam poisoned.

Imam Hasan (a.s.) was poisoned seven times. Every time he fell sick from poison, he went to the Prophet's grave to pray for his health and he became well.

The Imam was finally martyred when he was given poison the seventh time.

Muawiya had got a very deadly poison made from diamonds from the emperor of the Roman Empire. He passed it on to his trusted relative, Marwan B. Hakam who was also the governor of Medina. Marwan used the service of Imam Hasan's wife Jo'da, the daughter of Ash'ath B. Quays. (This was the same Ash'ath who caused Imam

Ali (a.s.) to stop the battle of Siffin.) She was promised one hundred thousand dirhams and Yazid, Muawiyah's son in marriage, if she poisoned her husband. She put the poison in a pot of water, sealed it and left it near the Imam. When the Imam got up from his sleep, he drank the water.

The poison took effect immediately. The Imam started vomiting blood. After sometime, he passed away on 28th Safar 50 AH. His age was 46 years.

“From Allah do we come, and to Him shall we all return.”

HIS LAST WISHES AND BURIAL

Before his martyrdom, the Imam had told his brother and trustee, Imam Husayn (a.s.) that he wished to be buried near the Prophet's grave. But he had expected trouble. He had therefore told Imam Husayn (a.s.) to bury him in the graveyard of Baqi, next to his grandmother's grave (that of Fatima B. Asad) if his enemies would not let him be buried in the Prophet's neighbourhood.

As per his wishes, Imam Hasan (a.s.) was given his death-bath by Imam Husayn (a.s.) who wanted to bury Imam Hasan (a.s.) near the Prophet's grave. Aisha, the wife of the Prophet, came on a mule to stop the Imam being buried there. She was helped by the relatives of Muawiyah. Marwan B. Hakam ordered his people to throw arrows at Imam Husayn (a.s.) and those who came to bury Imam Hasan (a.s.). Seventy arrows hit the Imam's bier (JANAZA). Seven arrows hit the Imam's body.

Imam Hasan (a.s.) had told Imam Husayn (a.s.) not to fight. So Imam Husayn (a.s.) buried Imam Hasan (a.s.) in the graveyard of Baqi, next to his grandmother, Fatima Binti Assad.

CHAPTER 5 : HIS CHARACTER

HIS PERSONALITY

It is reported from Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) that Imam Hasan (a.s.) looked like the Prophet. Also, his manners and his pure character were very much like the Prophet's.

It is said that when the Prophet, Hazrat Muhammad (s.a.w.w.), was about to leave this world, Bibi Fatima went to him and said, "Messenger of Allah! These are your grandsons. Give them something as an inheritance."

He replied: "As for Hasan he has my looks and my pure character. As for Husayn he has my generosity and my bravery."

HIS PIETY

Imam Hasan (a.s.) used to spend a lot of his time performing prayers. He would spend most of his time performing prayers. He would spend most of his nights in prayers and in supplications. In remembrance of Allah, he would weep so much that his clothes would become wet with his tears. Because he spent a lot of his time in 'SAJDA' there was a mark on his forehead.

At the time of performing "WUDHU", his face would become white with fear of Allah. When he went on the "MUSALLA" to say his prayers, his body would tremble in remembrance of Allah. When he was in prayers he would be totally lost in the remembrance of Allah.

He would spend most of his days fasting, although his house was always open for visitors who would come to have their meals.

He performed pilgrimage to Mecca (Hajj) 25 times walking. He always had with him means of transport but he would walk. Sometimes it happened that when Muslims saw him walking,

out of respect, they, too, would walk with him. To avoid this, the Imam would take a different way in the mountains. One day while walking to Hajj, his legs became sore. One of his followers asked him. “O son of the Prophet, why do you walk when you have a means of transport along with you all the way?”

The Imam replied. “I do not bring the means of transport for myself. I bring it so that in case I come across someone on the way who does not have transport then I could give it to him. As for myself I feel ashamed of going to meet my creator in any other way than other than by walking.”

HIS CHARITY

He spent all his wealth in the way of Allah.

Two times in his life, he gave in charity every thing that he had in his ownership. And two times he divided his wealth into two equal shares; one he kept it for himself and another one he gave to the needy and the poor.

HIS GENEROSITY

He was famous for spending his money on others. It was not uncommon for people who ran short of money or who were in debt to come to him for assistance, and he would always help them.

One day, a needy person came to the Imam and asked for help. The Imam told his treasurer to give the person four hundred dirhams. The treasurer by mistake gave the same number of dinars. The Imam said, “This is what my treasurer gave you, you still must get what I wished to give you.” And he gave him the four hundred dirhams also.

HIS MODESTY

Generally both his food and clothes were simple like the Prophet’s. He also sometimes would wear an expensive dress so that people should not get an idea that wearing expensive dress is not good.

On one occasion when Imam Hasan (a.s.) was wearing a good dress, a man saw it and he liked it. This man was a poet. He made a small poem in praise of the Imam. The poem read like this:
“I saw a dream in which the Imam gave me his dress.”

The Imam understood the poet’s wishes. He gave him the dress there and then. And he got another dress.

Another person came forward. He told the Imam. “Oh! The son of the Prophet, please give me also a chance by coming to my dreams and giving me your dress in my dream.” He, too, then made a poem praising the Imam.

The Imam was amused. He gave him his expensive dress and some money also.

HE HAD A VERY GOOD TEMPER

The “KHAWARIJ” used to say many bad things about Imam Ali (a.s.) and used to abuse Imam Hasan (a.s.) but he never became angry. He would listen patiently and when necessary he would give them a reply that would quieten them.

One day, a Jew saw him and started criticizing him. “O! Hasan, your way of life is exactly opposite to your grandfather’s teaching. Your grandfather used to say that for believers this world is Hell, and for the non-believer this world is Paradise. I see exactly the opposite. You are the believer and I am the non-believer. You are wearing a good dress and riding a beautiful horse. My clothes are old and torn and I have no horse to ride. You are in Paradise and I am in Hell.”

At that time the Imam was still the Caliph. He could have punished the Jew, for his criticism. Or the Imam could reply him angrily. But the Imam listened to the Jew patiently. When the Jew had finished what he wanted to say, the Imam replied very politely.

“O Shaykh!..... There is nothing wrong in what my grandfather

said and the way I live. Only that you did not understand him. My grandfather was comparing the life of a believer and non-believer in this world and in the next world. However well my life may appear in this world, it is like Hell if you compare it with the life I shall lead after my death in the next world. Similarly, however bad your life appears in this world, it is like Paradise if you compare it with things that will happen to you in the next world.”

The Jew went away quietly.

The Imam’s mild manners and his patience in front of insults and abuses softened even the hearts of those who hated him and who were responsible for his death. After his death, Imam Husayn (a.s.) saw Marwan B. Hakam was weeping for Imam Hasan (a.s.). Imam Husayn (a.s.) asked Marwan why he was weeping for him whom he made drink from a bitter cup of grief and sorrow? Marwan replied that all the bad things that he did to Imam Hasan (a.s.) the Imam accepted them quietly. Though if such thing were done to a mountain the mountain could not bear it.

HIS COURAGE

Some people make a mistake thinking that he did not continue a fight with Muawiya because he was a coward. Why he did not fight, we have already found out. We shall here examine moments in his life which show his bravery and great courage.

In the battles of Jamal, Siffin and Nehrwan he showed his bravery fighting most dangerous enemies. His bravery comes out even more clearly after he had given caliphate to Muawiya.

Muawiya came to Kufa and he saw the Imam left alone. Most of his soldiers had left him. Taking this opportunity he gave a long speech saying bad words about Imam Ali (a.s.) and saying lies about Imam Hasan (a.s.). In his mind he thought that Imam Hasan (a.s.) was now weak and could do nothing but accept insults quietly. Muawiya would have been correct to think like this for any other person than

Imam Hasan (a.s.). The Imam proved him wrong.

As we saw in chapter 3, without fear he stood up and answered Muawiya, proving to the people that Muawiya was the oppressor, and the enemy of Allah and Islam. A coward person would never speak the way Imam Hasan (a.s.) did in front of a powerful and cruel King like Muawiya.

One day, after Muawiya had become Caliph, he invited important people to his court. Everyone who came there was given a gift. The last person to come was Imam Hasan (a.s.). In order to blame the Imam, Muawiya said, “Oh the grandson of the Prophet! You came last hoping that nothing would be left with me to give to you so that you could then go around telling people that Muawiya is a miser.” Having said this, Muawiya called his treasurer and told him to find out the total value of the gifts given out to all people who had paid him a visit so far, and then Muawiya gave that amount to Imam Hasan (a.s.). He then said, “This is the gift from me, the son of Hind.”

Muawiya’s main idea was to show-off his power and richness to the Imam. The Imam understood it but kept quiet.

After sometime the Imam decided to go away. One of the servants of Muawiya brought the shoes of the Imam, out of respect. The Imam, as a way of thanking the servant, gave the entire gift that Muawiya had given him to the servant! Then he turned to Muawiya and without any fear told him, “This is the gift from me, the son of Fatima.”

An ordinary person would not dare to do this to a cruel king like Muawiya. But Imam Hasan (a.s.) was very brave and he replied to Muawiya, letting him know that to the Imam worldly wealth meant nothing and there was no way by which the son of Hind could be compared with the son of Fatima.

CHAPTER 6 : HIS ACHIEVEMENTS

Except for a few brief periods, Imam Hasan (a.s.) was denied the opportunity of openly and directly giving the world the benefits of his knowledge. Of course, since he was an Imam appointed by Allah, the world benefited from his presence without knowing. But in open many people do not see what contributions he made to Islam. The main aim of this chapter will be to talk about the great works that Imam Hasan (a.s.) did for Islam and to show how valuable these works are.

THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF IMAM HASAN (A.S.)

When you know who your enemies are, it become easier to protect yourself than when you do not know who your enemies are. The job of protecting yourself becomes even more difficult when your enemies pretend to be your friends.

It was easy for the Prophet to fight with the “MUSHRIKIN” and the “KUFFAR”. It was very difficult for him to deal with the “MUNAFIQIN” (hypocrites) because they were Muslims and lived with him all time. On the outside they were his followers and friends; in their hearts they hated him and were planning against him all the time.

It was very easy for Imam Ali (a.s.) to fight the battles of “BADR”, “OHUD”, “KHANDAQ”, and “HUNAIN”; because there the fight was against open enemies of Islam. It was very difficult for him to fight for his rights after the death of the Prophet because he would be fighting Muslims. Can you imagine how difficult it must have been for an ordinary Muslim who did not have a complete background of Imam Ali (a.s.) to decide who was right and who was wrong in the battles of “JAMAL” and “SIFFIN”? In JAMAL against Imam Ali (a.s.) came Aisha, the mother of the believers and in SIFFIN Muawiya was presenting himself as the Prophet’s

brother-in-law, his sister Umme Habiba being one of the Prophet's wives.

Imam Hasan (a.s.) did a very good job in providing Muslims with an opportunity to see as clear as day light who was right and who was wrong. The steps that he took to deal with Muawiya were the best actions that no one else could have taken if faced with the same problems as Imam Hasan (a.s.) was.

The Imam (a.s.) knew how unreliable his soldiers were. These were the same ones who had made his father lose the battle of SIFFIN. They were ones who made his father fight in Nehrwan. Were not they the same people who had given so many excuses to Imam Ali (a.s.) not to go to war with Muawiya till Imam Ali (a.s.) met his martyrdom? Why did the Imam then go to war with Muawiya using the very soldiers again? Would not it have been better if he had agreed with Muawiya from the beginning and therefore saved himself the insults and injuries that he got from marching to Madain?

True, if he had given away the caliphate before first marching to fight Muawiya, he would have got honour and respect but then Muslims would regard Muawiya as being on the right. Truth would die a natural death. Imam Hasan (a.s.) therefore decided to go to fight though knowing that his soldiers would let him down. He wanted the world to know that he would fight Muawiya because Muawiya was wrong and would do so up to the point when he could put up a decent fight.

When it became clear to everybody that Imam Hasan (a.s.) had no support, he decided not to go for martyrdom. If he did, he would leave the Muslims in doubt as to who was right: he or Muawiya. Infact, chances are people would blame him, when considering the fact that Muawiya was ready to sign a peaceful agreement with him - if only he gave away the caliphate.

Accepting the agreement was the wisest thing for the Imam to do, though people thought otherwise at that time.

Muslims saw the truth immediately after the agreement had been signed. At Nukheila, Muawiya showed himself and his true colours. He told the people that the only thing he wanted was kingship – he had no time for Islam. He also told them that all those terms in the agreement were made only to trick Imam Hasan (a.s.).

Imam Hasan (a.s.) did a wonderful job. He proved forever who was on the right and who was on the wrong: Then and today. The greatest problem facing the Muslims was solved. He who wants to know where the truth is can see it for himself. On the Day of Judgment no one will have reason to complain to Allah that he did not know how to find out where the truth was. This was made possible by Imam Hasan (a.s.).

If Imam Hasan (a.s.) had not been martyred by Muawiya's poison, he would have fought the battle that Imam Husayn (a.s.) did in Karbala. When we therefore consider the great services that Imam Husayn (a.s.) gave to Islam in Karbala, we must not forget to see Imam Hasan's share also.

CHAPTER 7 : HIS FAMILY LIFE

FALSE PROPAGANDA ABOUT HIS FAMILY LIFE

The enemies of Imam Hasan (a.s.) have tried many ways to hurt his great character. One of these dirty ways is to spread false propaganda that Imam Hasan (a.s.) made many marriages and then divorced those women whom he married.

In actual fact, he did not marry more than four women at one time because this is not allowed in Islam. He was the Imam and he could and not have broken 'SHERIA'. May Allah forgive us but only for the sake of argument let us assume that the Imam did break the law. Then would people be quite? His followers would definitely have asked him as they did when he signed agreement with Muawiya. Nowhere in history is it mentioned that Imam was asked by his followers as to why he married more than four wives at a time. This is a proof that he did not marry more than four wives at a time.

The best quality of the true followers of 'Ahlul-Bayt' (family of the Prophet) is: they never oppose their Imams but they always ask for explanation on things which they do not understand. For example, as has been said before, the followers of Imam Hasan (a.s.) wanted to continue fighting with Muawiya even if this meant that they would all be killed. They found it very hard to understand why Imam Hasan (a.s.) would want to make peace with Muawiya. They did not leave him or just keep quite. They supported him but they also asked him to explain to them. If the Imam was giving divorces everyday, his followers would definitely have asked him for his reasons. No historian names any companion of the Imam to have ever asked this question. This again proves that the Imam never divorced so many times.

Muawiya and the 'KHAWARIJ' were all the time looking for small excuses to attack the character of Imam Hasan (a.s.). If it was

true that Imam was breaking the law by marrying more than four women at one time as allowed in Islam, they would have said so immediately and would give all details.

Muawiya had many opportunities of showing these details. For example, he would have told the Imam of these mistakes in the letters that he wrote to the Imam, or he would have said so in his lectures at Nukhiala and later in Kufa. These would have been very good reasons to use against Imam Hasan (a.s.). In fact, in his letters and in his lectures Muawiya accepts the greatness of Imam Hasan (a.s.) as far as his character and his piety were concerned. Muawiya argues that Imam Hasan (a.s.) does not have political experience and is still young. For these reasons he is not qualified. This proved therefore that Imam Hasan (a.s.) did not have the habit of marrying too many women or divorcing them. Otherwise, Muawiya would have told him so as this would be an easiest way to make him look bad in front of the people.

The false stories about Imam Hasan (a.s.) were started later on by Bani Umayyah and more strongly by Bani Abbas for reasons that we shall see in the later lessons in these series.

HIS WIVES AND CHILDREN

Shaykh Mufid names the following as the wives of the Imam:

- Umm Bashir daughter of Abu Masud Uqba.
She was the mother of Zayd, Umm Al-Hasan and Umm Al-Husayn (she was not present when the Imam came to Kufa).
- Khawla daughter of Manzur Al-Fazari.
She was the mother of Hasan Bin Al-Hasan (more popularly known as Hasan Muthanna.)
Not only was she in Kufa with the Imam but was still alive when the Imam was martyred.
- Umm Walad.
She was the mother of Omar, Qasim and Abdullah.

- Umm Ishaq daughter of Talha B. Ubaydullah Taymi.
She came with the Imam to Kufa.
She was the mother of Husayn Athram, Talha and Fatima (She was alive when the Imam was martyred and she later married Imam Husayn (a.s.)).

BRIEF NOTES ABOUT HIS CHILDREN

FATIMA.

She was married to Imam Husayn's son, Ali (Imam Zainul Abideen – see unit no. 4) and was the mother of Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.).

ZAID.

He was the oldest son. He was very pious and knowledgeable. He died when he was ninety years of age.

HASAN MUTHANNA.

He was present in Karbala but was wounded only. His relative from his mother's side, called Asma B. Kharija, took him and cared for him till when he was cured.

He had married Imam Husayn's daughter Fatima Kubra. He died when he was thirty five years.

QASIM AND ABDULLAH.

They were only youths and were martyred in Karbala.

CHAPTER 8 : HIS MIRACLES

Prophets and Imams who have been appointed by Allah to guide mankind have two very special qualities which ordinary human beings do not have. First, they are “MASOOM” that is they do not commit and sins knowingly or by mistake. Second, by permission of Allah, they can perform a miracle powerful and clever they may be. For example, Prophet Isa (JESUS) could make dead people be alive, he could cure those suffering from a disease called leprosy and he could turn birds made of clay into living ones. Again, Prophet Musa (MOSES) could turn his wooden stick into a big snake. Many such miracles are described in the Quran. Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.w.) also showed many miracles. The twelve Imams from the house of the Prophet also had this power of showing miracles. In this chapter we shall see two famous miracles which Imam Hasan (a.s.) performed, by the wish and will of Allah.

1st MIRACLE

The followers of Imam Hasan (a.s.) once asked him. “O the grandson of the Prophet, why do you keep quite when Muawiya is doing so much harm to you?”

The Imam replied. “I am keeping quite because right now this is the best way to deal with him. Otherwise, I have so much power from Allah that with His (Allah’s) permission I can turn day into night and night into day. I can change a man into a woman and a woman into a man.”

With the follower, there were also some enemies of the Imam. One of these enemies started making joke of the Imam, and laughingly he asked, “O is it really so that you are so powerful that you can change a man into a woman?”

The Imam thought it was necessary at that time to prove to his enemies that he could really do what he said. The Imam therefore

said to this person who was making fun of the Imam “O woman, what to you want here in the presence of men?”

The person could not believe what he saw in himself. He had changed from a bearded man into a woman! His wife too changed: She became a man. Together they had an effeminate (“KHUNSA”) child – that is a child that had the qualities of a male and female.

After some time, this person was very sorry and apologized to the Imam. The Imam prayed to Allah who changed him to man once again. And his wife to become as she was before.

2nd MIRACLE

The famous Shia scholar Ibn Shehre Ashoob writes in his book *MANAQIB* on the authority of Ibne Abbas who says that:

One day while I was in the presence of Imam Hasan (a.s.) an old woman came to him. She was weeping and she said to the Imam: “O the grandson of the Prophet I am of those who love you. Very bad time have come to me. Please help me.”

The Imam asked her to say what was the cause of her sorrow. She said, “O Maula, I had only one son on whom I totally depended. Twelve days ago he died. I can not live without him. Please, pray to Allah to return my son to me or to take my life so that I could meet my son.”

The old woman was in such a pitiful condition that the Imam was very much affected. He asked her to take him (the Imam) to her son’s grave. At the grave, the Imam prayed for sometime. When he finished praying, he stood up, said something which no one could understand and then said loudly. “By the order of Allah, stand up”.

The grave opened. The young man came out and did salams to the Imam. He then said, “I heard a voice saying ‘put the soul of the man back in his body and let him be alive because the Imam of the time wishes that this be so.’”

The Imam said, “Your mother was extremely sad without you. Allah has heard my prayers and accepted my request. So join your mother.”

The old woman was very happy and went away with her son praying for the Imam.

CHAPTER 9 : SAYINGS OF IMAM HASAN (A.S.)

1. He who has complete faith in Allah (TAWAKKAL) will accept anything that Allah has decreed for him.
2. You will not attain honour, distinction and high hope unless you show sacrifice and forbearance in the face of difficulties and disappointments.
3. The Prophet (s.a.w.w.) has said that any group (of people) or nation that puts its trust and leadership in the hands of a person who is not the most knowledgeable, than that society will fall prey to corruption and humiliation.
4. Describing the qualities of a person who is truly his friend, Imam Hasan (a.s.) singled out the following characteristics.
 - This life and its existence are small things in his eyes.
 - He does not eat whatever he desires nor hoard whatever he acquires.
 - He has freed himself from ignorance and does not act on any matter until he has weighed it and is sure of its merits to him.
 - He does not complain of an adverse situation nor gloat over his opportunities.
 - He does not brag over what he has accomplished nor engage in a show-off; whatever he was supposed to do, he does not talk about it.
 - When he has to perform several tasks he studies them; those which he prefers to do first he discards in favour of the others.
 - Until when an issue materializes, he does not talk about it.
5. Teach others what you know so that the foundation of your knowledge may become strong, and seek knowledge from others so that the level of your knowledge may be elevated.

6. The results of charity and goodness are sweeter than the efforts to bring these results.
7. Ibne Abbas reports that Imam Hasan (a.s.) was once under ITIKAF, meaning he could not go out of the mosque for a specified period. At that time he was performing the TAWAF of the house of Allah (Kaaba). A person approached the Imam (a.s.) for a help that would make the Imam (a.s.) cut short his TAWAF and go out of the mosque. Imam (a.s.) decided to go with the man. Ibne Abbas reminded the Imam (a.s.) that he was under ITIKAF. The Imam (a.s.) replied, "I have not forgotten that I'm under ITIKAF but still I want to help this man because I've heard my grandfather, the Prophet say, 'Whoever meets the needs of a brother (believer) is considered to have remained awake for many nights in worship of Allah'".
8. One day Imam Hasan (a.s.) called his sons, nephews and members of his household and gave them the following advice, "Today you are the children of the society but tomorrow you will be the distinguished elders of the same society. You should therefore acquire knowledge and wisdom. Those of you who cannot commit them to memory must write it down for future use".
9. If you fail to get a thing of this world, regard it as if you had never thought of it.
10. Opportunities are lost easily, and gained with difficulty.

QUESTIONS

CHAPTER 1

1. Why did the Prophet love Imam Hasan (a.s.) very much?
2. Giving examples, explain briefly what was the position of Imam Hasan (a.s.) to Allah?

CHAPTER 2

1. Some of the statements below are true some are false. Say which one is true and which one is false. For false statement explain why they are false or untrue.
 - (a) As Imam Hasan (a.s.) was given no position in the governments of the first three caliphs, he could not serve Muslim Ummah.
 - (b) Imam Hasan (a.s.) was made governor of Kufa when Imam ali (a.s.) became caliph.
 - (c) Imam Hasan (a.s.) fought in the battles of Jamal, Siffin and Neherwan.
 - (d) Imam Ali (a.s.) gave several jobs to Imam Hasan (a.s.) because Imam Hasan (a.s.) was his son.
 - (e) Imam Ali (a.s.) appointed Imam Hasan (a.s.) as the caliph when he was about to die.

CHAPTER 3

1. Complete the following statements by filling-in the blanks:-
 - (a) The death of Imam Ali (a.s.) pleased Muawiya because
 - (b) Imam Hasan (a.s.) was accepted as caliph by all people except
 - (c) Muawiya's first step against Imam Hasan (a.s.) was
 - (d) The spies of Muawiya had three jobs to do, these were:-
 - 1
 - 2
 - 3

(e) Muawiya's second step was

2. Why did Imam Hasan (a.s.) send his army to fight Muawiya?
Why did he stay behind?

For question 3 to 7, choose the best correct answer provided

3. Imam Hasan (a.s.) camped at Sabat because:
- (a) He was tired.
 - (b) He wanted to pray.
 - (c) There was trouble.
 - (d) He wanted to talk with his soldiers.
4. The "KHAWARIJ" has joined the army because:-
- (a) They were forced by their chiefs.
 - (b) They wanted to help Imam Hasan (a.s.).
 - (c) They wanted to fight Muawiya.
 - (d) They wanted to take revenge on Imam Hasan (a.s.).
5. Imam Hasan (a.s.) went to the house of the governor of Madain.
- (a) To rest.
 - (b) To be treated for the wounds.
 - (c) To pray.
 - (d) To look for safety.
6. Imam Hasan (a.s.) did not continue the fight because:-
- (a) He had very little support.
 - (b) He did not like to fight.
 - (c) Muawiya told him not to fight.
 - (d) He was afraid to fight.
7. When Imam Hasan (a.s.) made agreement with Muawiya.
- (a) Muawiya became Imam.
 - (b) Muawiya became Caliph.
 - (c) Nothing happened.
 - (d) Imam Hasan (a.s.) was martyred.

8. Briefly explain what good came from the signing of the agreement between Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Muawiya.
9. What kind of person was Muawiya?

CHAPTER 4

1. Why was Muawiya afraid of Imam Hasan (a.s.)?
2. What did Muawiya do to make people dislike the Imam?
3. How did Muawiya get Imam Hasan (a.s.) martyred?

CHAPTER 5 and CHAPTER 6

1. Briefly explain what type of person was Imam Hasan (a.s.)?

CHAPTER 7

1. To spoil the name of Imam Hasan (a.s.) what did his enemies do?
2. Explain how the rumours about Imam Hasan's many marriages and divorces are untrue.



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