

# TARIKH (History)



# Lesson 1

## Hijjat al-Widā & Ghadīr Khúm

In Book 9, we studied the events of 8 AH and 9 AH and how, after the Treaty of Hdaybiyya, the Quraysh violated the treaty and the Muslims came to Makkah in large numbers and took it over without bloodshed or fighting, freeing Makkah of idol worship forever. This event came to be known in history as Fath Makkah.

In the month of Dhul Qa'adah 10 AH, Rasulullāh (s) announced he would be going to Makkah again to perform a final pilgrimage (Hajj). This is known in Islamic history as Hijjat al-Widā (The Farewell Hajj). Rasulullāh (s) passed away just two and half months after this last Hajj.

As Rasulullāh (s) got ready to leave Madina for Makkah, thousands of Muslims from all over Arabia joined him, many waiting outside Madina to join him halfway. This was also going to be an opportunity for Rasulullāh (s) to demonstrate the wājibāt (mandatory) and mustahabāt (recommended) practices of Hajj and to do away with any undesirable practices from the days of ignorance (jāhiliyya) when people came to Makkah for pilgrimage, trade and idol worship.

Rasulullāh (s) left for Makkah on 28<sup>th</sup> Dhul Qa'adah 10 AH, taking with him 60 animals for sacrifice. Just outside Madina, at the place now called Masjid ash-Shajarah, Rasulullāh (s) put on him ihrām and recited the talbiyya. All the Muslims with him did the same and then continued their journey to Makkah. The distance between Madina and Makkah is about 340 kms.

Imām Ali ('a) had been sent on a mission to Yemen by Rasulullāh (s). So he left Yemen and came directly to Makkah where he joined Rasulullāh (s) and performed the Hajj with him as well.

When Rasulullāh (s) got to Makkah, he entered Masjid al-Harām from the Gate (Bāb) Banu Shaybah, glorifying Allāh and seeking blessings for his ancestor Nabi Ibrāhim ('a), who had first established the Hajj practices after building the Ka'bah.

Rasulullāh (s) then performed the tawāf, Salāt al-Tawāf and Sa'i. He permitted those who had not brought a sacrificial animal to clip some of their hair or trim their nails and remove their ihrām, treating their previous actions as Umra at-Tamattu. Thereafter they would wait until the 9<sup>th</sup> of Dhul Hijjah to put on their ihrām again for the main part of Hajj. And those who had already brought a sacrificial animal with them had the option to remain in ihrām until the start of the main part of Hajj on 9<sup>th</sup> Dhul Hijjah.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> of Dhul Hijjah, Rasulullāh (s) left for Mina where he stayed until the sunrise of 9<sup>th</sup> Dhul Hijjah when he mounted his camel and came to Arafāt. Over

100,000 Muslims accompanied Rasulullāh (s) as he performed all the ceremonies of Hajj at Arafāt, Muzdalifa (Mash'ar al-Harām), Mina and Makkah.

## Ghadir Khumm

When the ceremonies of the Hajj were over, Rasulullāh (s) departed from Makkah for the last time, heading back to Madina. When he reached Rabigh, a place 3 miles from Ju'fah, the angel Jibrāil ('a) revealed the following verse to him:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ وَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلْ فَمَا بَلَّغْتَ رِسَالَتَهُ وَاللَّهُ يَعْصِمُكَ مِنَ النَّاسِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ﴾

*O Messenger! Communicate that which has been sent down to you from your Lord, and if you do not, you will not have communicated His message, and Allāh shall protect you from the people. Indeed Allāh does not guide the faithless lot.*

- Surah al-Mā'idah, 5:67

Rasulullāh (s) therefore gave instructions for a pulpit to be made from the saddles of horses and camels. He asked Bilāl, who had a loud voice, to call back the people who had gone further ahead and to attract the attention of those who were behind.

According to some narrators, 120,000 Muslims gathered at the place that was known as Ghadeer Khum (The pond of Khum). It was noon time and very hot. Rasulullāh (s) led the Dhuhr salāh and then stood on the pulpit of saddles so that all the people could see him.

He then gave a sermon in which he praised and glorified Allāh. He declared the tenets of Islam once again and then told people that he would be returning to Allāh very soon.

Many of the Muslims wept in sorrow when they heard this and undoubtedly many began thinking what would happen to the Muslims after Rasulullāh (s).

To ensure they would never be left alone and to give them hope to continue on the path of Islam, Rasulullāh (s) told the people that he was leaving behind the Qur'ān and his family, the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), and that if they held on to these two, they would never go astray.

Rasulullāh (s) then asked the people, 'do you bear witness that I have delivered the message of Allāh to you and all the teachings of Islam?' and they all shouted, 'yes, O Messenger of Allāh!'

Then he asked them, 'O people! Do I not have a greater right over you than even you have over your own selves?' and they replied together, 'yes indeed, O Messenger of Allāh!'

Then Rasulullāh (s) brought Imām Ali (‘a) (who was standing beside him) in front of him until people could see the face of Imām Ali (‘a) instead of Rasulullāh (s) and then he lift the arm of Imām Ali (‘a) high up and declared, ‘O People! Allāh is my Mawla (Master) and I am the master (mawla) of the faithful. Whoever considers me to be his master, then this Ali is his master (now)!’

Thereafter, Rasulullāh (s) told all the Muslims present, ‘let those of you who are present here today take this message back to those who are absent!’ (i.e. even those who will be born later).

Rasulullāh (s) then prayed to Allāh, ‘O Allāh, love those who will love Ali and oppose those who will oppose him. Help those who help him and defeat those who will seek to defeat him.’

When the sermon of Rasulullāh (s) came to an end, the angel Jibrāil (‘a) descended once more and revealed the following verse:

﴿...الْيَوْمَ يَيْسَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ دِينِكُمْ فَلَا تَخْشَوْهُمْ وَاخْشَوْنِي الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتَمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيْتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا...﴾

*...Today the faithless have despaired of your religion. So do not fear them, but fear Me. Today I have perfected your religion for you, and I have completed My blessing upon you, and I have approved Islam as your religion....*

- Surah al-Mā'idah, 5:3

A tent was then set up at Ghadir Khum and people lined up to congratulate Imām Ali (‘a) for his appointment as the successor of Rasulullāh (s).

One of the first people to congratulate Imām Ali (‘a) were Abu Bakr and Umar who soon after the passing of Rasulullāh (s) denied this right and took the successorship (khilāfah) of Rasulullāh (s) for themselves.

Umar in particular is reported in Hadith as saying to Imām Ali (‘a), ‘congratulations! Congratulations to you, O son of Abu Tālib! This day you have become my master and the master of all the faithful (mu’mineen).’

Thereafter the people began leaving for their individual hometowns and different caravans headed back towards Madina, Syria, Egypt, Yemen and so forth. Some 10,000 Muslims accompanied Rasulullāh (s) back to Madina, where they arrived just before the start of Muharram 11 AH.

The day of Ghadir is one of the most important events in Islamic history and to this day, the Shi’ah of Amir al-Mu’mineen Imām Ali b. Abi Tālib (‘a) throughout the world joyfully celebrate this event on the 18<sup>th</sup> of Dhul Hijjah as 'Id al-Ghadir.

## Lesson 2

# The Last Days of Rasūlullāh (s)

### Illness of the Prophet (s)

After Rasūlullāh (s) announced at Ghadir Khumm that he would leave the world soon and that Imām Ali (‘a) would be his successor, several groups - jealousy of Imām Ali (‘a) and greedy for power - were watching events in Madina very closely.

Some simply disliked Imām Ali (‘a) because of his closeness to Rasūlullāh (s) and could not tolerate having someone from the Banu Hāshim lead the Muslims after Rasūlullāh (s). Others had personal ambitions. Also, by 10 AH, Islam was firmly established in Arabia and there was a lot to be gained by taking power and authority. The Quraysh of Makkah (led by Abu Sufyān) who had fought against Rasūlullāh (s) all their lives had lost Makkah just 2 years before and they now saw an opportunity to regain power through Islam.

Rasūlullāh (s) himself also realized that there would be a struggle for power after him. At the beginning of the month of Safar 11 AH, Rasūlullāh (s) fell ill. Just then he also received news of a potential attack on Madina by the Romans to the North-West of Arabia. Rasūlullāh (s) therefore asked a young man named Usāma b. Zayd to lead an army of Muslims against the Romans. He specifically asked all the Muhājirun, except for Imām Ali (‘a), to leave Madina and join Usāma’s army. Usāma set out and camped at a place called Jurf, 3 miles outside Madina and everyone was asked to gather there before departing for battle against the enemy.

Some of the leading figures from the Muhājirun refused to go and disobeyed the orders of Rasūlullāh (s) making up excuses such as Usāma being too young to lead them. In reality they knew Rasūlullāh (s) would not recover from his illness and they did not want to be absent when the leadership of the Muslims passed on to someone else after Rasūlullāh (s).

Rasūlullāh (s) was disappointed when he found out that people were not setting out of Madina to join Usāma. He said, ‘may Allāh curse one who turns away from the army of Usāma.’ But it still did not make a difference for some of the people.

As time passed, the health of Rasūlullāh (s) worsened and the expedition of Usāma never took place. It is interesting to note that later on, when Imām Ali (‘a) was denied his right, the same reason was given – that he was too young to lead the Muslims.

On some occasions Rasūlullāh (s) was too ill to even walk on his own or go to the masjid to lead the salāh. His two wives – A’isha and Hafsa – would argue for their own fathers to lead the salāh. A’isha would say, ‘tell Abu Bakr to lead the salāh’ (meaning her father) and Hafsa would argue, ‘tell Umar to lead the salāh’. Rasūlullāh

(s) would get up, leaning on a stick, with a bandage around his head, and would go to the masjid and lead the salāh himself.

There came a time however when Rasulullāh (s) could not even get up from bed. On the Thursday before he passed away, a large number of his companions came to see him. Rasulullāh (s) said to the people, 'bring me a pen and paper that I may dictate something to you so that you will never go astray after me.'

Umar b. al-Khattāb, who was present, knew that Rasulullāh (s) wanted to put in writing that his successor is Imām Ali ('a). So he began shouting, 'the man is talking nonsense! The Book of Allāh is enough for us!' Others in the room were shocked to hear this and began shouting that the Messenger of Allāh (s) must be given a chance to write his will. Before long, everyone in the room was shouting at each other. Rasulullāh (s) knew that even if he insisted writing a will now, Umar will argue that Rasulullāh (s) was not himself when he wrote it. So he told all the people, 'get out and leave me alone!' This was a very sad event. People used to remember this event even much later and they would weep bitterly. It is known as *Raziyat Yaum al-Khamees* (The Calamity of the Thursday).

Rasulullāh (s) passed away on Monday, 28<sup>th</sup> Safar 11 AH at the time of Dhuhr. In his last moments, he was surrounded by the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) only. Imām Hasan ('a) and Imām Husayn ('a) were hugging Rasulullāh (s) as he lay on the bed with his head on the lap of Imām Ali ('a). Sayyida Fātima az-Zahra ('a) sat beside her father crying. At one point Rasulullāh (s) opened his eyes and whispered something to his daughter Sayyida Fātima az-Zahra ('a) and she smiled. When she was asked later why she smiled she said her father had told her that she would be the first one from his family to come to him in Jannah. Sayyida Fātima ('a) passed away within two and half to three months after Rasulullāh (s).

## Demise and Burial

The Angel of Death (Malak al-Mawt) asked permission before entering the house of Sayyida Fātima ('a) and even asked Rasulullāh (s) if he wanted to remain longer in the world. Rasulullāh (s) knew the Will of Allāh and chose to return to Allāh. When he took his last breathe, Imām Ali ('a) placed his palm near the mouth of Rasulullāh (s) and wiped his face with this last breathe.

Imām Ali ('a) personally carried out the funeral rites for Rasulullāh (s) and also went down in the grave of Rasulullāh (s) and received the body of Rasulullāh (s) and lowered it into the grave. Imām Ali ('a) wept a lot over the loss of Rasulullāh (s) saying, 'we have suffered because of your loss, O beloved of our hearts! In losing you, revelation from Allāh has been cut off from us! From Allāh we come and to Him is our return!'

Before the burial of Rasulullāh (s), the Muslims came in small numbers to pray over the body of Rasulullāh (s). Imām Ali (‘a) told them no one would lead the salāh in the presence of Rasulullāh (s) and everyone prayed without a leader.

The grave of Rasulullāh (s) was dug in the exact same spot where he passed away.

There were less than 10 people for the washing and burial of Rasulullāh (s). The most prominent members like Abu Bakr and Umar were completely absent, busying themselves with fighting over who should be the next leader. Thus they did not even pray over the body of Rasulullāh (s).

Rasulullāh (s) had lived all his life in perfect submission to Allāh. His life was blameless and his character was unmatched. Allāh praised him in the Qur’ān saying:

﴿وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ﴾

*And indeed you possess a mighty character.*

- Surah al-Qalam, 68:4

Allāh has also referred to Rasulullāh (s) in the Qur’ān as the Bearer of Good News (*Bashir*), the Warner (*Nadhīr*), a Brilliant Lamp (of Guidance) (*Sirāj al-Munīr*) and a Mercy for the Worlds (*Rahmatun lil ‘Alāmin*).

Rasulullāh (s) had surrendered himself to Allāh so completely that Allāh would even take credit for his actions. When Rasulullāh (s) fought the enemy or even threw a handful of dust at them, Allāh said:

﴿فَلَمْ تَقْتُلُوهُمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ قَتَلَهُمْ وَمَا رَمَيْتَ إِذْ رَمَيْتَ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ رَمَىٰ...﴾

*You did not kill them; rather, it was Allāh who killed them; and you did not throw when you threw, rather, it was Allāh who threw...*

- Surah al-Anfāl, 8:17

When people pledged allegiance to Rasulullāh (s), Allāh said:

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُبَايِعُونَكَ إِنَّمَا يُبَايِعُونَ اللَّهَ يَدُ اللَّهِ فَوْقَ أَيْدِيهِمْ...﴾

*Indeed those who swear allegiance to you, they swear allegiance only to Allāh: the hand of Allāh is above their hands....*

- Surah al-Fath, 48:10

Allāh also guaranteed that everything Rasulullāh (s) said was from Him:

﴿وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ﴾



*Nor does he speak out of [his own] desire: it is just a revelation that is revealed [to him],*

- Surah an-Najm, 53:3-4

And one who obeyed Rasulullāh (s) had in fact obeyed Allāh (s.w.t.), the Creator Himself:

﴿مَنْ يُطِيعِ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللَّهَ...﴾

*Whoever obeys the Apostle certainly obeys Allāh...*

- Surah an-Nisā, 4:80

Thus passed away, and was buried in isolation, the greatest man to have ever lived.

Peace and blessings of Allāh be on the Messenger of Allāh, Muhammad al-Mustafa (s) and his Household, the Ahl al-Bayt ('a).



*Masjid an-Nabawi, Madina. The original masjid where Rasulullāh (s) is buried is at the far end in this picture, under the Green Dome (Qubbat al-Khadra).*

## Events Immediately After Rasulullāh (s)

As soon as Rasulullāh (s) passed away and the voices of the Banu Hāshim weeping were heard, some of the people came in to verify that indeed Rasulullāh (s) had passed away. This was despite the fact that Imām Ali (‘a) had already said so.

Umar b. al-Khattāb in particular behaved very strangely. He came in, looked at the face of Rasulullāh (s) and then began shouting that Rasulullāh (s) had not passed away but had gone to meet his Lord and would return. He then pulled out his sword and shouted, ‘if anyone says Rasulullāh is dead, I will behead him with my sword!’

It is not clear why he behaved like this but it was as if he was buying some time. As soon as Abu Bakr was called and he arrived, Umar calmed down. Someone came to tell them that people had gathered at a place called Saqifa to discuss the leadership after Rasulullāh (s) and the two men left hurriedly to go to Saqifa, leaving Imām Ali (‘a) and others to attend to the body of Rasulullāh (s).

We shall study more about Saqifa in Book 11. But after a lot of dispute and having ignored the declaration of Rasulullāh (s) at Ghadir Khumm that Imām Ali (‘a) was his successor, the people chose Abu Bakr as their Caliph and everyone was asked to pledge allegiance to him. Imām Ali (‘a) refused to do so because it was his right and duty to lead the Muslims. Umar tried to force Imām Ali (‘a) by burning the door of his house. As a result, within barely days of Rasulullāh (s) passing away, Sayyida Fātima (‘a) was injured and she lost her baby – Muhsin; a rope was tied around Imām Ali (‘a)’s neck to force him to come to the masjid to pledge allegiance to Abu Bakr but he refused; the estate of Fadak that Rasulullāh (s) had given to his daughter Sayyida Fātima (‘a) was taken away by force from her; and other such atrocities were committed against the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a).

Overnight, the Family (Ahl al-Bayt) (‘a) of Rasulullāh (s) were isolated, alone and oppressed. For the short period that she lived after Rasulullāh (s), Sayyida Fātima (‘a) cried day and night and called out to her father, Rasulullāh (s):

*Such afflictions have befallen me (after you),  
If they were to befall on a day, it would change to a dark night!*

Imām Ali (‘a), who was once the most active individual in service of Islam, now stayed at home. And for the next 25 years, he simply ‘disappeared’ from public. He remained oppressed and was denied his right continuously. We shall study the events related to the early Caliphs in the next book as well.

## Lesson 3

# Imām ‘Alí Zayn al-‘Abídín (‘a)

Imām Ali b. al-Husayn (‘a) is the 4<sup>th</sup> Imām from the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) and he is one of the divinely appointed successors to Rasulullāh (s). His father was Imām Husayn (‘a) and his mother Sayyida Shahzanān, the daughter of the Persian king Yazdajurd.

Imām Ali b. al-Husayn (‘a) was born in Madina on the 5<sup>th</sup> of Sha‘bān 38 AH. He was poisoned by the Umayyad Caliph Walid b. Abd al-Malik and he passed away on 25<sup>th</sup> Muharram 95 AH at the age of 57. He is buried in Jannat al-Baqi in Madina next to his uncle Imām Hasan (‘a) (our 2<sup>nd</sup> Imām).

Imām Ali b. al-Husayn (‘a) was known by many titles, the most famous being ‘Zayn al-Abidin’ (The Adornment of the Worshipers), as-Sajjād (One who prostrates to Allāh a lot) and Sayyid as-Sājideen (The Master of those who prostrate before Allāh). This is because he was unmatched in his worship and prayers and he loved to supplicate to Allāh. His most famous supplications are all compiled in one book that is called Sahifa as-Sajjādiyah. It is such a beautiful collection that the book has been called Zabur Aali Muhammad. This is because Zabur was revealed to Nabi Dāwud (‘a), who is famous in history for his supplications to Allāh. So the du‘a collection of Imām Ali b. al-Husayn has also been called the Zabur of the family of Rasulullāh (s).

Imām Ali Zayn al-Abidin (‘a) was also very knowledgeable and pious. Many people benefited from his knowledge. And he loved to help the poor. He would come out in the darkness of the night carrying bags of money, food and even firewood and distribute it to the needy. When he reached the houses of the poor, he would knock their door and distribute everything he had to them. But he would hide his face so that no one could recognize him. It was only after he passed away that some people realized who had been helping them all the time.

Imām as-Sajjād (‘a) loved to sit with the poor, the orphans and the crippled and he often shared meals with them. His generosity and character was admired by all. He would eat with all his servants at the same table and every month he would tell them, ‘if anyone wants to get married, I will get them married. If anyone wants to be free, I will let him/her go free.’

Whenever someone came to him with a need and asked him for help, he would say, ‘Welcome to you who are helping me take my savings to the Hereafter!’

Like the Imāms before him, he would pray 1000 rak‘ahs every day. When it was time for salāh, Imām Ali Zayn al-Abidin (‘a) would start shaking like a tree branch being blown with strong winds and his face would turn yellow out of fear of Allāh.

Because of excessive praying and worship, the skin on his forehead, knees and toes would become very hard and every six months or so, a doctor would have to cut off this excess hard skin on his body.

Whenever Imām Ali b. al-Husayn (‘a) remembered any favour of Allāh, he would immediately fall into sajdah and thank Allāh. Whenever he finished his wājib salāh, he would do sajdah for a long time to thank Allāh. Even when he was able to make peace between two people, he would fall into sajdah and thank Allāh. That is why he came to be known by these beautiful titles like as-Sajjād and Sayyid as-Sājideen.

All the people of his time would praise him and say, ‘We have never seen a man like him.’

### An Example of His Kindness & Generosity

One day a maid was bringing a jug of water to Imām Ali Zayn al-Abidin (‘a) when it slipped from her hand and hit the Imām on the face. He raised his head to look at her. She got very scared and recited from the Qur’ān: ‘Those who control their anger...’ (Surah Al-Imrān, 3:134). And the Imām said, ‘I have controlled my anger’. Then she continued reciting the verse and said, ‘...and forgive others...’ and Imām Zayn al-Abidin (‘a) was very pleased with her knowledge of the Qur’ān and replied, ‘May Allāh forgive you’. And the maid completed the verse and said, ‘...Allāh befriends those who do good.’ And the Imām said to her, ‘Go, I have freed you for the sake of Allāh!’

This incident not only shows how much the Imām could control his anger and how he loved to forgive others, but also how generous he was. It also shows that even the servants in the house of our Imāms were learned in the Qur’ān, knew it by heart and could recite and apply it when necessary! Imagine how proud our Imāms would be of us if we memorized the whole Qur’ān!

### His Imāmah

Imām Ali Zayn al-Abidin (‘a) spent the first two years of his life under the care of his grandfather Imām Ali (‘a), and the next twelve years under the Imāmah of his uncle Imām Hasan (‘a). In 61 AH, Imām Ali Zayn al-Abidin (‘a) was 23 years old when he accompanied his father to Karbala. Our fourth Imām fell severely ill and was unable to sacrifice his life with the family members and companions of Imām Husayn (‘a) but through him, Allāh preserved the Imāmah. Imām Ali Zayn al-Abidin (‘a) nonetheless saw the ruthless manner in which his father and family members and companions were killed by Yazid’s men and he was taken prisoner along with the women and children of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a), from Karbala to Kufa and from Kufa to Sham (Damascus).

When Imām Ali Zayn al-Abidin (‘a) was first taken prisoner in Karbala, the cruel army of Yazid chained and shackled his hands and feet and made him wear a very heavy iron collar with spikes facing inwards. The chains used to heat up in the hot desert and burn his flesh to the bone. These wounds continued to give him discomfort for the rest of his life.

On the way to Kufa and Sham, whenever the women or children from the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) would cry or move slowly, the cruel soldiers of Yazid would whip Imām Ali Zayn al-Abidin (‘a) and the marks of these whips remained on his back even when he passed away much later.

In Sham, Imām Ali Zayn al-Abidin (‘a) was kept with the women and children of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) in very harsh conditions and in a prison that exposed them to extreme heat during the day and extreme cold during the night. But whenever Imām Ali Zayn al-Abidin (‘a) got a chance to speak to people, he exposed the crimes of Yazid and informed people of what was done to the grandson of Rasulullāh (s) in Karbala. In the Umayyad courts of Kufa and Sham, for example, Imām Ali Zayn al-Abidin (‘a) delivered sermons with such force and eloquence that people wept and began turning away from Yazid in hatred.

After keeping them prisoners for one year, the caliph Yazid was under a lot of pressure to release the family of Rasulullāh (s). Out of fear of an uprising and losing his power over the Syrians, he finally released Imām Ali Zayn al-Abidin (‘a) from prison and allowed him to return to Madina with the women and children.

After the tragedy of Karbala, Imām Ali Zayn al-Abidin (‘a) lived for 34 years in Madina as the Imām of the Time and the Proof (Hujjah) of Allāh on the earth. He spent his time in prayers and worship and teaching Islam to others, as well as mourning for his father and keeping the message of Karbala alive.

After Yazid died, another branch of the Umayyads - the Banu Marwān - came to power. On one occasion, when the Caliph Walid b. Abd al-Malik b. Marwān came for Hajj to Makkah, he kept trying to touch the Black Stone (Hajar al-Aswad) that is lodged in a corner of the Ka’bah but he could not reach it because of the throngs of people present. He finally gave up and sat behind waiting for the crowd to reduce. In the meantime, he saw a man enter Masjid al-Harām and approach the Hajar al-Aswad. The sea of people began parting and giving way to the man until he came and kissed the Hajar al-Aswad. This was none other than Imām Ali Zayn al-Abidin (‘a).

Walid was extremely jealous and humiliated by this event. He was the ‘Caliph’, yet no one cared for him or made way for him. He pretended not to recognize the Imām and began asking, ‘who is this man?’, ‘I wonder who he is?’

Farazdaq, a poet who loved the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a), was standing nearby and was annoyed to hear the Caliph’s remarks. He began reciting a poem in praise of Imām Ali Zayn al-Abidin (‘a) that humiliated the Caliph even further. A part of the poem was:

*This is he whose ability the valley of Makkah recognizes;  
And whom the Sacred House (Ka'bah) knows.*

*This is the son of the best of all of Allāh's servants;  
This the pure pious man, the pure eminent man.*

*When he comes to touch the corner of the wall of the Ka'bah,  
It almost grasps the palm of his hand.*

## Lesson 4

# Imām al-Bāqir (‘a) & Imām as-Sādīq (‘a)

Imām Muhammad b. Ali al-Bāqir (‘a)

Imām Muhammad al-Bāqir (‘a) is the son of Imām Ali Zayn al-Abidin (‘a). He is the fifth Imām of the twelve successors of Rasulullāh (s). His mother is Sayyida Fātima, the daughter of Imām Hasan (‘a). This means both his grandparents were Imāms (i.e. Imām Hasan (‘a) and Imām Husayn (‘a)).

Imām Muhammad al-Bāqir (‘a) was born on the 1<sup>st</sup> of Rajab 57 AH in Madina and he was famously known as “al-Bāqir” because of his tremendous knowledge. Al-Bāqir means ‘One who splits open’ and he famous by this title because he ‘split open’ the knowledge of Rasulullāh (s) and taught many difference sciences to numerous people who went on to become great scholars themselves.

Imām Muhammad al-Bāqir (‘a) was poisoned by the Umayyad caliph Hishām b. Abd al-Malik and passed away on the 7<sup>th</sup> of Dhul Hijjah 114 AH at the age of 57. He is buried in Jannat al-Baqi (Madina) next to his maternal grandfather Imām Hasan (‘a) and his father Imām Ali Zayn al-Abidin (‘a).

Besides being very knowledgeable, Imām Muhammad al-Bāqir (‘a) was very kind-hearted, patient and humble. A Christian man once insulted him and called him a bull (‘baqar’ in Arabic) and he politely replied the man, ‘actually I am al-Bāqir’ (one who splits open knowledge). The man got even angrier and said, ‘your mother was a cook!’ and the Imām replied politely again, ‘that may have been her job.’ So the man now began insulting his mother and said, ‘you are the son of a barbarian mother!’ and Imām al-Bāqir (‘a) again said to him politely, ‘If what you say is true, may Allāh forgive her. And if what you say is a lie, may Allāh forgive you.’ Seeing how much in control of his anger the Imām was and how kind-hearted he was, the Christian apologized and became a Muslim. This is a great lesson for us on how to behave when others insult us out of ignorance.

Rasulullāh (s) had many companions but most of them had passed away by the time of Imām Muhammad al-Bāqir (‘a). One of the only ones still alive was Jābir b. Abdullah al-Ansāri. Jābir says that one day when he was with Rasulullāh (s) and Imām Husayn (‘a) was still a little boy sitting on Rasulullāh’s lap, Rasulullāh (s) said to him, ‘O Jābir, this (grand)son of mine will one day have a son by the name of Ali (meaning Imām Zayn al-Abidin). On the Day of Judgement, someone will announce, ‘where is the beauty of the worshippers?’ and it is as if I can see Ali b. al-Husayn breaking through the ranks and coming forward. This Ali son of Husayn will have a son named Muhammad. O Jābir, you will live long enough to see him. When you see him, convey my salām to him!’

And so Jābir lived in anticipation until he grew very old and one day he saw Imām Muhammad al-Bāqir (‘a) while he was still a little boy and he gave him the salām of Rasullāh (s).

So knowledgeable was Imām Muhammad al-Bāqir (‘a) that some people described him as an ‘Ocean of Knowledge’. He would answer every question without hesitation. A famous scholar Ibn Ata al-Makki once said, ‘I never saw great scholars feeling so inferior in front of anyone as I saw them before Imām Muhammad al-Bāqir. Indeed I have seen (the famous scholar) Hakim b. ‘Utayba sitting in the presence of the Imām like a child in front of his teacher.’

Muhammad b. Muslim relates, ‘Whenever any question flashed across my mind, I would ask Imām Muhammad al-Bāqir and he would reply me, until I had asked him thousands of questions.’

Imām Muhammad al-Bāqir (‘a) loved remembering Allāh with constant tasbih and dhikr of Allāh’s Names. His son Imām Ja’far as-Sādiq (‘a) related, ‘my father would glorify Allāh at all times. Whenever I accompanied him I saw him glorifying Allāh... he would pray *tahajjud* (i.e. salāt al-layl) at length and he loved to worship Allāh. He would weep out of the love of Allāh.’

Imām Muhammad al-Bāqir (‘a) was also present in Karbala but he was only three and a half years old. He therefore suffered along with the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) and was also in the prison of Sham with his father Imām Ali Zayn al-Abidin (‘a).

By the time Imām Ali Zayn al-Abidin (‘a) was martyred, the Umayyad dynasty had weakened significantly and they were fighting for survival against the Banu Abbās. And as the two tyrant groups fought one another, they left the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) alone in peace for some time. This gave Imām Muhammad al-Bāqir (‘a) and thereafter his son Imām Ja’far as-Sādiq (‘a) a chance to teach Islam and spread the knowledge of Rasullāh (s) widely.

People came from far and wide to Madina to learn from Imām al-Bāqir (‘a) and Imām as-Sādiq (‘a) and the Imāms even began teaching different branches of science and arts such as mathematics, chemistry, language grammar, and so forth.

Imām Muhammad al-Bāqir (‘a) also continued the practice of holding gatherings (majālis) to mourn for his grandfather Imām Husayn (‘a) and to remember the tragedy of Karbala. And this practice was continued by all the Imāms from the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) after him.

Imām Muhammad al-Bāqir (‘a) also helped the Caliph of his time with issues that would help promote Islam, such as the minting of Islamic coins and starting the use of an Islamic currency instead of depending on the Roman currency that was prevalent at the time.



Just before his martyrdom, Imām Muhammad al-Bāqir (‘a) called the leaders in Madina and made his will, declaring his son Ja’far as his successor and the next Imām of his Shi’ah.

### Imām Ja’far b. Muhammad as-Sādiq (‘a)

Imām Ja’far b. Muhammad as-Sādiq (‘a) is our sixth Imām. He is the son of Imām Muhammad al-Bāqir (‘a) and his mother’s name is Sayyida Fātima (and according to other historians it is Sayyida Farwa).

Imām Ja’far as-Sādiq (‘a) was born on 17<sup>th</sup> Rabi ul-Awwal (the same day as Rasulullāh (s) was born) in the year 83 AH. He was therefore 31 years old when his father Imām al-Bāqir (‘a) was martyred and he became the Imām of the Time.

Imām Ja’far b. Muhammad (‘a) possessed vast amounts of knowledge. No one ever doubted what he said. Even when he quoted a Hadith and said, “Rasulullāh (s) said....”, no one questioned him for proof. So he came to be known as ‘as-Sādiq’ (‘The most Truthful’). He was extremely pious, wise and knowledgeable of the shari’ah (Islamic law) and he possessed a great personality. Like his forefathers, he was generous, brave and a master of many qualities.

Imām as-Sādiq (‘a) led such a simple life that even the Sufis who are not Shi’ahs regard him as a saint, an ascetic and a mystic to this day. Other non-Shi’ah Muslims also revere him for his piety and knowledge.

As mentioned earlier, during the time of Imām Ja’far as-Sādiq (‘a) the Banu Umayyah Caliphs were busy fighting with the Banu Abbās so they ignored Imām Ja’far as-Sādiq (‘a) and he was therefore able to preach Islam and the teachings of Rasulullāh (s) easily. In fact, the times that Imām as-Sādiq (‘a) lived in were even more favourable than the era of Imām al-Bāqir (‘a) and at one point, Imām Ja’far as-Sādiq (‘a) ran a university in Madina and had 4000 students.

It is for this reason that very many ahādith (plural of Hadith) in our books are from Imām Ja’far as-Sādiq (‘a) and some people refer to the Shi’ah of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) as ‘Ja’fari’.

Many of the students of Imām as-Sādiq (‘a) later on went to become famous themselves. For example, Jabir b. al-Hayyān was a polymath (gifted in many sciences). He was a chemist, alchemist, astronomer, engineer, philosopher, physicist, pharmacist, geologist and physician. Much later, when Europe came out of its ‘dark ages’ and began learning sciences from the Muslims, Jābir became famously known as “the Father of Chemistry”. He was known as Geber in the West. All historians agree that Jābir was a student of Imām Ja’far as-Sādiq (‘a) and his knowledge came from Imām Ja’far as-Sādiq (‘a).

Another example is Abu Hanifa, who at first learnt Qur'ān tafsir, Hadith and Islamic sciences from Imām as-Sādiq ('a) but later on formed his own opinions and became the founder of the Hanafi Sunni sect. Imām as-Sādiq ('a) also taught medicine to his students and many physicians prescribed cures for illnesses based on his advice.

Shaykh Mufid wrote, 'Scholars of religion obtained from Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) much more than they did from any another member of the Prophet's progeny. There is no one who was more prolific in propagating religion among the scholars of history and traditions (Hadith) than Imām as-Sādiq ('a).'

Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a)'s diet was very simple. He also wore simple, coarse garments. At times his clothes were full of patches and he would toil in his garden his own self. Many at times he would be seen digging the earth and planting crops under the hot sun while sweating and working to provide for his family.

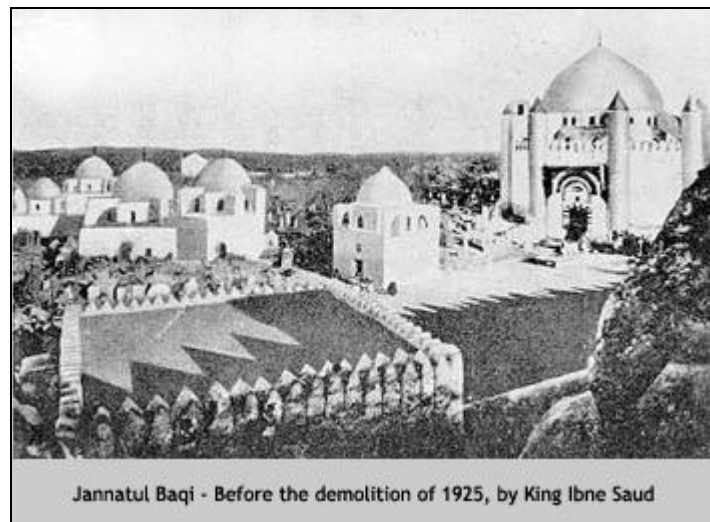
When Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) would worship Allāh, he would do it so intensely that often he would become unconscious out of the remembrance of Allāh and in awe and love for the Almighty Creator.

Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) loved giving money in charity. He was gentle in nature, soft-spoken, cooperative and pleasant to work with.

One night, the Abbāsīd Caliph Hārūn ar-Rashīd sent a messenger to go and summon Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) from his home. The messenger reports, 'I went to the Imām's place and I found him in his private room. His cheeks were covered with dust and with utmost humility he was praying to Allāh with his hands raised towards the heavens; his face and hands were covered with dust.'

Towards the end of Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) life, the Banu Abbās had gained full control of the Muslims. The Abbāsī Caliph Mansoor could not tolerate to see how popular Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) was amongst the Muslims. He therefore arranged for the Imām to be poisoned. Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) passed away on 25<sup>th</sup> Shawwal 148 AH at the age of 65. He is buried in Jannat al-Baqi in Madina, next to his great-grandfather Imām Hasan ('a), his grandfather Imām Ali Zayn al-Abidin ('a) and his father Imām Muhammad al-Bāqir ('a).

When the Saudi rulers ransacked and looted Madina in 1925, they destroyed all the shrines in Jannat al-Baqi and so the graves of the Imāms today stand without any shade or cover on them. We should always pray to Allāh to hasten the appearance of Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs) and to destroy the enemies of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) and make us one day see the shrines rebuilt over the graves of our Imāms. Amen.



*The Jannat al-Baqi Cemetery in Madina today. The single grave is of Hadrat Abbās b. Abd al-Muttalib, the uncle of Rasullullāh (s). The four graves below it are of the four Imāms: Imām Hasan al-Mujtaba ('a), Imām Ali Zayn al-Abidin ('a), Imām Muhammad al-Bāqir ('a) and Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a).*

## Anecdotes from the Life of Imām as-Sādiq ('a)

### A True Shi'ah

Once a man from Irān by the name of Sahl b. al-Hasan came to Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) and asked him why he did not fight for his right when there were hundreds of thousands of Shi'ah in Khorāsān (Irān) ready to fight with him. In reply Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) took Sahl to the kitchen where there was a large furnace burning and he asked Sahl to jump into the fire. Sahl began trembling with fear and begged to be excused. The Imām told him to sit down.

In the meantime, another close Shi'ah of the Imām entered to see the Imām. His name was Hārun al-Makki. The Imām asked him to enter the furnace and without asking any questions, Hārun jumped into the blazing furnace.

After a little while, as the Imām was talking to Sahl, he could see that Sahl was clearly worried. So the Imām smiled and took him to see the furnace. Sahl found that Hārun was unharmed by the fire or heat and was sitting in the furnace worshipping Allāh. Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) then asked Sahl, 'how many of such Shi'ahs do I have in Khorāsān?' and Sahl admitted, 'none, my master!'

### **The Prayer of the Imām**

A man jealous of Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) once falsely accused the Imām of plotting against the Banu Abbās Caliph Mansoor. The Caliph summoned the Imām to his court and when he arrived, Imām as-Sādiq ('a) denied the allegation.

When the Caliph asked for proof, Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) asked the man accusing him to take an oath. The man first swore in the name of Allāh that he was saying the truth. Imām as-Sādiq ('a) told him to say that if he was lying then Allāh should not protect him anymore. The man swore again and said if he was lying then he was out of Allāh's protection. As soon as he said that, his leg was paralyzed and he fell. The Caliph Mansoor was amazed to see this miracle and how quickly Allāh had protected Imām as-Sādiq ('a). He had the accuser thrown out of his court and allowed the Imām to return home.

### **Justice and Love for Humanity**

There was one a drought in Arabia and a shortage of wheat flour in Madina. Prices of the flour were very high. Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) asked his servant what their condition was. The servant replied that they had plenty of wheat flour and their family should have no problem for a long time.

Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) said to the servant, 'Take the wheat flour to the market. Sell it at the regular (not inflated) price. Then purchase some of it like everyone else.'

In this way, Imām as-Sādiq ('a) taught us not to hoard things and not to wrongfully take advantage of people, especially when they are desperate and in need.

### **Project Idea**

Search for **Jābir ibn Hayyān** on Wikipedia and write down five interesting facts about him that you can find. Here is one fact from the site:

"In response to (Imām) Ja'far as-Sādiq's wishes, [Jabir ibn Hayyān] invented a kind of paper that resisted fire, and an ink that could be read at night. He invented an additive which, when applied to an iron surface, inhibited rust and when applied to a textile, would make it water repellent."

## Lesson 5

# Imām Musa al-Kādhīm (‘a)

Our seventh Imām is Imām Musa b. Ja’far (‘a). His father is Imām Ja’far as-Sādiq (‘a) and his mother is Sayyida Hamida (‘a). He was born in Abwa (a place between Makkah and Madina) on Sunday the 7<sup>th</sup> of Safar 128 AH.

Imām Musa b. Ja’far (‘a) was poisoned whilst in prison in Baghdād (Irāq) by the ruthless Caliph Hārūn ar-Rashid. This was after he was kept imprisoned for 14 years bearing untold hardships and oppression. He was martyred on 25<sup>th</sup> Rajab 183 AH. The Caliph Hārūn had ordered the cruel prison guard Sindi b. Shāhik to oversee the torture of the Imām (‘a) and after the Imām’s martyrdom, the Caliph ordered Sindi to abandon the Imām’s body on a bridge in the city of Baghdād. A pious and wealthy Shi’ah man then took the Imām’s body from the bridge and all the Shi’ah gathered to give Imām Musa b. Ja’far (‘a) an honourable funeral and burial. He is buried in Kadhmayn (an area of Baghdād) where his shrine stands today.

Even though the Caliph Hārūn tried to show people that he was superior to Imām al-Kādhīm (‘a) and deserving of more respect, he always failed. In one incident, when Imām Musa al-Kādhīm (‘a) was still in Madina, the Caliph Hārūn came for a State Pilgrimage to Madina. Then he came before the grave of Rasulullāh (s) and loudly spoke with pride, ‘Greetings (salām) be to you, Rasulullāh (s), greetings be to you, my cousin!’

He referred to Rasulullāh (s) as his ‘cousin’ because the Banu Abbās Caliphs were all descendants of Abbās b. Abd al-Muttalib the uncle of Rasulullāh (s). (Which is why they were called ‘Banu Abbās’.) And Hārūn wanted people to see how close he was to Rasulullāh (s).

However, shortly after, Imām Musa al-Kādhīm (‘a) entered and stood before the grave of Rasulullāh (s) saying, ‘Peace be on you, O Rasulullāh! Peace be on you, O my grandfather!’ This humiliated the Caliph Hārūn before the people’s eyes and to whom he was showing off just a little while ago. In the days to come, Hārūn realized he could never become more popular than Imām Musa al-Kādhīm (‘a) and he had the Imām arrested and brought to Irāq as a prisoner.

Imām Musa b. Ja’far (‘a) was extremely patient and never got angry without reason. For this reason he was called ‘al-Kādhīm’, which means ‘one who controls his anger’. He was also the most learned man of his time. There was no person more generous, gentle, brave or pious than him in his lifetime.

An example of his generosity was that he would go around with small bags of money and quietly give it to the poor without drawing attention to himself. Because of this, he became a symbol of generosity and whenever any person was very generous,

people would say, 'he has the pockets of Musa' meaning he is as generous as Imām Musa al-Kādhim ('a)!

His love for worship had no match either. When Imām Musa al-Kādhim ('a) was imprisoned, he thanked Allāh for giving him the chance to worship Him day and night without interruption! By the time he passed away, Imām Musa al-Kādhim ('a) was so thin that a person looking at him in sajdah would think there was only a sheet of cloth on the ground!



Because of his piety and righteousness, Imām Musa ('a) was also called al-Abd as-Sālih (The Righteous Slave of Allāh). And the people of Madina used to call him, 'Zayn al-Mutahajjidin' ('The Adornment of those who spend the night in worship'). Just like Hadrat Abul Fadl al-Abbās ('a) who is buried in Karbala, Imām Musa al-Kādhim ('a) is also well known today as Bāb al-Hawāij (The Door of Wishes) because a lot of people pray to Allāh (s.w.t.) for their need at the shrine (haram) of Imām al-Kādhim ('a) and their prayers are accepted.

Once a man came to Imām Musa al-Kādhim ('a) and begged him for 100 dinārs. The Imām asked him some questions to test his religious knowledge and then gave him 2000 dinārs. And on one occasion Imām Musa al-Kādhim ('a) had a debate with a Christian priest called Burayha and at the end of it, the priest became a Muslim. Our Imāms always wanted their Shi'ah to be learned in religion and loved for them to be knowledgeable and practicing of the laws of Islam.

Imām Musa b. Ja'far al-Kādhim ('a) had a beautiful voice and when he recited the Qur'ān, anyone who heard him would weep with joy. He would worship Allāh for hours on end and would recite the Qur'ān and prostrate himself before Allāh for long periods of time. He would often weep out of love for Allāh (s.w.t.). In fact, after

being poisoned, when Imām al-Kādhim (‘a) passed away from this world he was in sajdah (just like Imām Husayn (‘a)).

Abu Hamza, a companion of Imām al-Kādhim (‘a), once saw the Imām toiling in his farm while sweat was pouring from his body. Abu Hamza asked the Imām where his servants were and in reply the Imām said to him that there were others who were even better than him who toiled in their own farms. When Abu Hamza asked who they were, he said, Rasulullāh (s) and Imām Ali (‘a). Then Imām al-Kādhim (‘a) said that all his forefathers and ancestors used to work with their own hands. This was the sunnah (practice) of the anbiyā (prophets), their successors (awsiyā) and all of Allāh’s righteous servants.

### An Imām Speaks to All in Their Language

Abu Basir once asked Imām Musa al-Kādhim (‘a), ‘how is an Imām recognized?’

‘By special characteristics,’ replied the Imām, ‘His father (i.e. the previous Imām) gives a sign to show who his successor is. Whenever he is asked any question, he can answer it. He can tell a person what will happen tomorrow (with knowledge given by Allāh) and he can speak to each person in his own language.’

Shortly after, a man from Khorāsān (Irān) arrived and tried speaking to Imām al-Kādhim (‘a) in Arabic. The Imām answered him in Farsi. ‘By Allāh,’ said the Khorāsāni, ‘what stopped me from speaking to you in Farsi was that I thought you were not fluent in it.’

‘Subhān Allāh,’ said the Imām, ‘If I was not fluent enough to reply you, I would have no merit over you by which I am entitled to being the Imām.’ Then Imām al-Kādhim (‘a) said to Abu Basir, ‘No speech of people is hidden from the Imām. Not even the language of the birds nor anything that has a soul.’

### The Imām Saves Ali b. Yaqtin

Imām al-Kādhim (‘a) had a Shi’ah called Ali b. Yaqtin who worked in the court of the Caliph Hārūn ar-Rashid but he hid his faith from the Caliph to protect his life. One day, Hārūn ar-Rashid gave an expensive robe to Ali b. Yaqtin as a gift. Ali b. Yaqtin sent the expensive robe along with some khums money to Imām Musa b. Ja’far al-Kādhim (‘a). The Imām kept the khums money but sent the robe back with the message, ‘Keep this robe with you and do not give it away. An incident will happen because of which you will need it.’

Ali b. Yaqtin did not understand why the Imām returned it but he kept it nonetheless. After sometime, one of his servants was dismissed from service. The servant knew about the robe being sent to Imām al-Kādhim (‘a) and that Ali b. Yaqtin was actually a Shi’ah. So he went to the Caliph to betray his ex-master. He told Hārūn

ar-Rashid that Ali b. Yaqtin was actually a Shi'ah who gave khums money to Imām al-Kādhim ('a) and if he didn't believe him, Ali b. Yaqtin had give the expensive robe of the Caliph to Imām al-Kādhim ('a).

Hārūn ar-Rashid was furious. 'I will expose this,' he said, 'and if it is as you say, then I will destroy the life of Ali b. Yaqtin.' The servant was overjoyed for he would now take his revenge. The Caliph summoned Ali b. Yaqtin and when he came before him, he said, 'what have you done with the robe I gifted you?'

'O Caliph,' replied Ali b. Yaqtin, 'I still have it in a sealed chest where I keep it with perfume. In the mornings I open it and look at it to gain blessings from it. I kiss it and then put it back in its place. In the night I do the same.'

'Bring it immediately,' the Caliph ordered. 'Yes Caliph,' Ali b. Yaqtin replied. Then while he waited with the Caliph, he called one of his servants and told him, 'Go to such-and-such room in my house. Take the key for it from my family and open it. Open such-and-such a box and bring me the sealed chest that is in it.'

It was not long before the chest was brought and place before the Caliph. The seal was broken and there was the robe, neatly folded and laid out with perfume.

Hārūn ar-Rashid calmed down and said to Ali b. Yaqtin, 'Take it back. I will never doubt you again or believe anyone who says things about you.' Then he ordered a magnificent gift to be sent to him and ordered the man who spied (Ali b. Yaqtin's previous servant) to be flogged with a 1000 lashes. After about 100 lashes the man died.

In another incident, Imām al-Kādhim ('a) wrote to Ali b. Yaqtin with instructions to start doing wudu differently, following the Sunni method of washing the feet and the ears, etc. Ali b. Yaqtin was very surprised but he obeyed the orders of the Imām. In the meantime, someone came to complain about Ali b. Yaqtin to the Caliph and said, 'he is actually a Shi'ah and should not be trusted.'

The Caliph thought to himself that he hears a lot of rumours about Ali b. Yaqtin yet he seems very loyal and he has tested him several times. So he decided he would observe him without Ali b. Yaqtin knowing he was being watched. Hārūn ar-Rashid was told, 'O Caliph, watch him secretly when he does wudu. If he is a Shi'ah he will do it differently.'

So one day, the Caliph arranged to spy on Ali b. Yaqtin during wudu while Ali b. Yaqtin was not even aware. Hārūn ar-Rashid himself watched him and when he saw he was washing his ears and his feet and washing his hands in reverse from the fingers to the elbow, he could no longer contain himself. He came out of his hiding place and said to him, 'Ali b. Yaqtin, those who claim you are a Shi'ah, are liars. I will never believe them again!'



Shortly after, Ali b. Yaqtin received another letter from Imām Musa al-Kādhim (‘a) informing him to now do the wudu correctly as taught by Rasullullāh (s) and the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a).

### An Imām Over All of Allāh’s Creatures

Ali b. Abi Hamza reports that one day he went riding out with Imām al-Kādhim (‘a) on mules. As they got out of the city of Madina they came across a lion blocking their path. ‘I stared at it in terror,’ said Ali b. Abi Hamza, ‘but Imām Musa al-Kādhim (‘a) kept moving forward without any worry. Then I saw the lion become subdued as if it was muttering something and Imām al-Kādhim (‘a) was listening to him. The lion put its paw on the saddle of the Imām’s mule. My soul trembled and I was absolutely terrified. Then the lion moved to the side of the road. Imām al-Kādhim (‘a) turned towards the qibla and moved his lips saying a prayer that I could not understand. Then he indicated with his hand to the lion that it should go and the lion muttered for a long time and Imām Musa b. Ja’far (‘a) said, ‘Amen. Amen.’

The lion went away until it disappeared from our sight. The Imām kept moving forward and I followed him. When we are far off, I caught up with him and said, ‘What was that business with the lion? By Allāh I was frightened for you and surprised at how you dealt with it.’

‘He came out to complain of the difficulty his lioness was having in giving birth,’ replied the Imām. ‘And he asked me to ask Allāh to make it easier for her and I did that for him. He asked him if I knew in my heart if she would bear a male and I told him that. Then he told me, ‘Go in the protection of Allāh. Allāh will never impose on you, or your offspring, or any of your Shi’ah, any trouble from wild beasts,’ and I said, ‘Amen. Amen.’



*The Shrine (Haram) of Imām Musa al-Kādhim (‘a) and his grandson Imām Muhammad al-Jawād (‘a) in Kadhmayn, Irāq.*

## Lesson 6

# Imām ar-Ridā ('a) & Imām al-Jawād ('a)

Imām Ali b. Musa ar-Ridā ('a)

Imām Ali b. Musa ('a) is the eighth divinely-appointed successor of Rasulullāh (s). His father is Imām Musa al-Kādhim ('a) and his mother is Sayyida Najma. His most famous title is 'ar-Ridā' which means 'One who is content' i.e. pleased with Allāh's Decree. Imām Ali b. Musa ar-Ridā ('a) was born on 11<sup>th</sup> Dhul Qa'adah 148 AH in Madina. He was poisoned and martyred on 29<sup>th</sup> Safar 203 AH by the Caliph Ma'mun (the son of the Caliph Hārun who poisoned Imām al-Kādhim ('a)).

Imām Ali ar-Ridā ('a) lived in Madina most of his life until the Caliph Ma'mun forced him to move to Tus in the district of Khorāsān (North-East Iran near the Russian border) where he poisoned him only 3 years later. The place where Imām Ali b. Musa ar-Ridā ('a) was buried is now called the city of Mashhad and a splendid shrine (haram) stands over his grave.

The Caliph Ma'mun forced Imām ar-Ridā ('a) to move to his capital city of Tus because he wanted to fool the Muslims into believing that Imām ar-Ridā ('a) was supporting him. He even declared Imām ar-Ridā ('a) as his successor even though Imām Ali ar-Ridā ('a) was much older than Ma'mun. This was to win the support of the Shi'ah. And later when Ma'mun saw that Imām ar-Ridā ('a) was becoming too popular, he felt threatened and had him poisoned.

Imām Ali b. Musa ar-Ridā ('a)'s knowledge, generosity, humility, worship and pleasant disposition are widely known. Even the Sufi mystics hold him in high regard.

During the time that the Imām ar-Ridā ('a) was in Tus, Ma'mun arranged for various debates between Imām ar-Ridā ('a) and the scholars of different religions. Imām ar-Ridā ('a) overcame everyone who debated him, quoting each individual's own religious scriptures. No one was able to match his knowledge regardless of the subject. Every traveller who came to the capital city would go back to his town and talk about the knowledge of Imām Ali ar-Ridā ('a).

Imām Ali ar-Ridā ('a) would often stay up all night in worship and he would finish reciting the entire Qur'ān in three days. He would worship for hours on end like his father and he would pray 1000 rak'ahs in a day like all the Imāms from his ancestors. Often he was seen prostrating himself before Allāh for long periods of time.

Imām ar-Ridā ('a) would also fast frequently, round the year. He would never interrupt anyone who was talking nor would he abuse anyone. When he was with others he always sat upright and never reclined his back on anything. He never

laughed loudly but would smile instead. When it was time to have a meal, he would sit with his whole family including the servants and maids and they would all share their food together.

### Imām Ali b. Musa ar-Ridā ('a)'s Overwhelming Personality

When the Caliph Ma'mun forced Imām Ali ar-Ridā ('a) to move from Madina to Tus, he asked his men to escort the Imām through cities where there were no Shi'ah so that the Imām would not become more popular than he already was. But this made no difference. As soon as people found out that the grandson of Rasulullāh (s) was passing through their town or village, they came out in large numbers to greet him.

When Imām Ali ar-Ridā ('a) stopped at a place called Nisābur, some 20,000 (or according to others 24,000) scribes came to visit him and asked him to relate a Hadith to them before he leaves. The Imām was already on his mount, leaving Nisābur. So he turned to them and said, 'I heard my father Imām Musa al-Kādhim ('a) say that he heard his father Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) say, that he heard his father Imām al-Bāqir ('a)... (and so on until)... Imām Ali b. Abi Tālib ('a) say, that he heard Rasulullāh (s) say that he heard the angel Jibrāil ('a) say that Allāh (the Mighty and Glorious) has said, **"The testimony 'lā ilāha ilallāh' is My fortress. So whoever enters My fortress will be safe from My wrath."**

Then as the mount of Imām ar-Ridā ('a) was about to move, the Imām ('a) turned again to the scribes and said, 'But with certain conditions (*shuroot*)! And I am one of those conditions.'

In other words the Imām was telling them that true Tawhid is not just to surrender to Allāh in His worship but also to surrender to Allāh in obedience. And Allāh has commanded us to obey those whom He has given authority. For Allāh has said, '*Obey Allāh and obey the Messenger and those vested with authority (Ulil Amr) among you...*' (Surah an-Nisā, 4:59) and Allāh has also said, '*Whoever obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allāh...*' (Surah an-Nisā, 4:80).

So whoever obeys the Imāms, has obeyed Allāh and his or her claim of *lā ilāha ilallāh* is true and whoever disobeys the rightful Imāms has disobeyed Allāh and is therefore removed from the fortress of Tawhid.

This beautiful hadith is known as the **Hadith of the Golden Chain** (*Hadith Silsilat adh-Dhahabiya*) because everyone in the chain of narrators, from Imām ar-Ridā ('a) all the way to Jibrāil ('a) is infallible and pure.

When Imām Ali ar-Ridā ('a) finally arrived in Tus, the Caliph Ma'mun began insisting that the Imām should agree to being his heir and successor. Imām ar-Ridā ('a) knew that Ma'mun simply wanted to use him to win the Shi'ah so he tried hard to refuse but Ma'mun began threatening him. Finally, Imām ar-Ridā ('a) accepted the position but then made the whole arrangement meaningless by insisting that Ma'mun agrees

that the Imām would not be involved in any of the government affairs. Ma'mun agreed to this because he only wanted to show the people that the Imām was his heir.

When the first 'Id came, the Caliph Ma'mun decided that Imām ar-Ridā ('a) would lead the Salāt al-'Id. Imām ar-Ridā ('a) reminded Ma'mun that they had an agreement and that he would not be required to hold any official position. Ma'mun however insisted and when there was no way out of it, Imām ar-Ridā ('a) finally sent him a message saying, 'If you would have excused me it would have been better. But since you have not, I will go out the way Rasulullāh (s) used to go out and Amir al-Muminin Ali b. Abi Tālib ('a) used to go out for 'Id prayers.'

'Go as you wish,' replied the Caliph and then he ordered all the military commanders and leaders in his court to go to the door of Imām ar-Ridā ('a) the next morning and escort him to the place of 'Id prayers.

The people of Tus found out that the grandson of Rasulullāh (s) was going to go out and lead the 'Id prayers escorted by the Caliph's men. So from early in the morning, they sat on their rooftops and by the roadsides waiting for him to come out so they could see him. Even the women and children lined up, waiting eagerly to see the Imām.

When the sun rose, the military leaders and soldiers arrived at the door of Imām ar-Ridā ('a). The Imām took a bath and put on his 'Id clothes. He put on a white, cotton turban. One end he left hanging on his chest and the other end he put between his shoulders. Then he rubbed himself with a little perfume. He took his stick in his hand and said to his servants who were going to walk with him, 'Do as I do.'

Imām Ali ar-Ridā ('a) then came out barefoot (as is mustahab for 'Id salāh) and he began walking towards the place for 'Id salāh. He would walk a little bit and then raise his head towards the heavens and say, 'Allāhu Akbar!' and all the servants and people with him would echo 'Allāhu Akbar!'

When the military commanders and soldiers saw him doing this, they all dismounted from their horses and did the same. Those with a knife quickly cut off the straps of their sandals and went barefoot as well.

The books of history report that as Imām Ali ar-Ridā ('a) would call out 'Allāhu Akbar!' and everyone would repeat it, it felt as if the sky and the walls of all the buildings were calling out with him. The city shook with weeping and clamour when the people heard Imām ar-Ridā ('a) glorifying Allāh in this manner. The military commanders sent Ma'mun a message immediately and warned him: 'If ar-Ridā reaches the place of 'Id salāh in this way, the people will overthrow you. There is so much commotion, even we are afraid for our lives. Please send me him a message to return home.'

Ma'mun sent a message to Imām ar-Ridā ('a) saying, 'We have put excessive burden on you and caused you hardship. We request that you go back and let someone else lead the 'Id prayers in the usual manner.'

Imām ar-Ridā ('a) therefore called for his shoes. He put them on. Then he mounted a horse and went back home.

This incident shows the power an Imām can hold over the hearts of people and how everything around him responds to him by the will of Allāh!



*The Shrine (Haram) of Imām Ali ar-Ridā ('a) in Mashhad, Irān*

### Imām Muhammad b. Ali al-Jawād ('a)

The ninth Imām from the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) of Rasullāh (s) is Imām Muhammad b. Ali ('a). He is well known by two titles: al-Jawād (The generous one) and at-Taqi (The pious one). His father is the eighth Imām, Imām Ali b. Musa ar-Ridā ('a) and his mother is Sayyida Sabika. He was born on 10<sup>th</sup> Rajab 195 AH in Madina and he was martyred after being poisoned by the Abbāsīd Caliph Mu'tasim Billāh on 29<sup>th</sup> Dhul Qa'adah 220 AH.

Imām Muhammad al-Jawād ('a) was only four years old when his father Imām Ali ar-Ridā ('a) was forced to go to Tus and he was therefore left alone in Madina. He is also the youngest Imām to be martyred, at the age of 25 years only.

Imām Muhammad al-Jawād (‘a) was 8 years old when his father was martyred and he became the Imām of the time. Yet he was the most learned individual of his time. Several people doubted that such a young boy could be the Imām but they were spellbound when they tried asking Imām al-Jawād (‘a) for answers to their questions.

After the Caliph Ma’mun poisoned Imām ar-Ridā (‘a), he pretended to mourn for him and shortly after, he gave his daughter Umm Fadl in marriage to Imām Muhammad al-Jawād (‘a). Ma’mun was hoping that the children of Imām al-Jawād (‘a) from his daughter would become the next Imāms and therefore his grandchildren. But Allāh so willed that while Imām al-Jawād (‘a) had other children from other wives, he had no children from the daughter of Ma’mun.

When Ma’mun first wanted to get his daughter married to Imām al-Jawād (‘a), the other elders of the Banu Abbās opposed him. So Ma’mun arranged for a widely-publicized debate in his court between the young Imām and the person whom everyone considered to be the most learned scholar of the time - an old man named Yahya b. Akhtam.

At this debate, Yahya tried asking Imām al-Jawād (‘a) various questions that he thought would be difficult for the Imām to answer. Not only did the Imām reply them all but he asked Yahya some questions that Yahya was unable to reply. Soon, the proud Yahya was sitting before the young Imām very humbly, like a student sitting before a grand master, and asking him to enlighten him.

Imām Muhammad al-Jawād (‘a) was very eloquent in his speech and very generous, gentle and humble. He would often go around distributing food and money to the needy.

When Ma’mun died, he was succeeded by Mu’tasim Billāh who ruled from Baghdād. He had Imām al-Jawād (‘a) arrested in Madina and brought to Baghdād where he kept him under house arrest before having him poisoned. Imām Muhammad al-Jawād (‘a) is therefore buried next to his grandfather Imām Musa al-Kādhim (‘a) in Kadhmayn (a suburb of Baghdād).

# Lesson 7

## Imām al-Hādī (‘a) & Imām al-Askarī (‘a)

Imām Ali b. Muhammad al-Hādī (‘a)

Imām Ali b. Muhammad (‘a) is the tenth divinely-appointed successor of Rasullāh (s). He is well known by two titles: al-Hādī (The guide) and an-Naqi (The pure one). His father is the ninth Imām, Imām Muhammad b. Ali al-Jawād (‘a) and his mother is Sayyida Samāna.

Imām Ali al-Hādī (‘a) was born in Madina on 15<sup>th</sup> Dhul Hijjah 212 AH. Towards the latter part of his life, the Abbāsīd Caliph Mu’tazz Billāh forced him to move to the city of Samarra in the north of Irāq where he was kept under house arrest. The Imām was finally poisoned on 3<sup>rd</sup> Rajab 254 AH. He is buried in Samarra where his shrine stands today.

Imām Ali b. Muhammad al-Hādī (‘a) was unmatched in his character and knowledge. No one was more learned or generous than him. He was always soft-spoken, pious and gentle with others.

One day the Caliph sent 30,000 dirhams to the Imām to see what he would do with the money. The Imām simply gave it away to a poor Arab from Kufa who was visiting him and asking for help. The Imām told him to use it to pay off his debts and to support his family.

Like his father Imām al-Jawād (‘a), Imām Ali al-Hādī (‘a) was also only 8 years old when he took over as the Imām of the Time. After the Caliph Mu’tasim Billāh (who poisoned Imām al-Jawād (‘a)) died, Wathiq Billāh became the Caliph and ruled for 5 years. The Imām and the Shi’ah were allowed to live somewhat peacefully during the time of Wathiq. But when Wathiq died, Mutawakkil became the Caliph. He was the cruelest Abbāsīd Caliph and his favourite pastime was to shed the blood of the Sādāt (descendants) of Rasullāh (s) and the Shi’ah.

The Caliph Mutawakkil was a sinful and cruel man like the Umayyad Caliph Yazid. He loved living a life of immodesty and intoxication and was always surrounded by singing girls and wine. Often he would order for Sādāt and the Shi’ah to be arrested and tortured or killed. Many Sādāt were buried alive between walls or their blood was used to mix the cement for Mutawakkil’s palaces.

Imām Ali al-Hādī (‘a) was therefore kept under very close watch by the Caliph. At first Imām al-Hādī (‘a) was living in Madina and Mutawakkil would have his spies watching the Imām. But later, Mutawakkil ordered that the Imām be arrested and

brought to his capital Samarra. Here Mutawakkil had the Imām kept in a poor and run-down home.

One day someone rumoured to the tyrannical Caliph Mutawakkil that Imām al-Hādi ('a) had weapons and money in his house. Mutawakkil sent a man called Sa'id to enter Imām Ali al-Hādi ('a)'s house unexpectedly and seize whatever he found there. Sa'id says he went in the middle of the night with a ladder and climbed up the roof and then tried coming down into the house courtyard. But it was dark and he didn't know where he was. Suddenly he heard Imām Ali al-Hādi ('a) saying to him, 'Sa'id, stay where you are until a candle is brought to you.' Then he came down and he found the Imām dressed in a humble woolen garment. His prayer mat was open on the floor facing the qibla. He said to Sa'id, 'In front of you are the rooms.'

Sa'id says he went in and searched but could not find anything. The story continues a bit but finally Sa'id says 'I felt ashamed before the Imām and I apologized to him and said, "master, it grieves me to have entered your house without your permission but I was ordered to do so."'

And the Imām replied by reciting a verse of Qur'ān:

﴿... وَسَيَعْلَمُ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا أَيَّ مُنْقَلَبٍ يَنْقَلِبُونَ﴾

*And soon shall those who have been oppressive know what kind of an overturning they will be turned to!*

Surah ash-Shu'arā, 26:227

Out of his hatred for the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), Mutawakkil tried flooding the grave of Imām Husayn ('a) in Karbala but failed. Then he ordered that anyone going to Karbala for ziyārah would have his hand or leg amputated, but people still went for the ziyārah of Imām Husayn ('a).

Finally, when Mutawakkil was once drunk, his son Muntasir revolted against his father and had him killed. Shortly after, Muntasir himself was killed and he was succeeded by Mustain Billāh. After him the caliph was Mu'tazz Billāh. It was Mu'tazz Billāh who arranged for Imām Ali al-Hādi ('a) to be poisoned. The Imām was martyred within a few hours of being poisoned and he was buried by his son Imām Hasan al-Askari ('a) in Samarra.

### Imām Hasan b. Ali az-Zaki al-Askari ('a)

Imām Hasan b. Ali ('a) is the eleventh divinely-appointed successor of Rasulullāh (s). His father is our tenth Imām Ali b. Muhammad al-Hādi ('a) and his mother is Sayyida Haditha. He was born on 10<sup>th</sup> Rabi al-Akhar 232 AH and he was poisoned and martyred by the Abbāsīd Caliph Mu'tamad on 8<sup>th</sup> Rabi al-Awwal 260 AH. He was only 28 years old and was the second youngest Imām to be martyred after his



grandfather Imām Muhammad al-Jawād ('a) (who was martyred at the age of 25). Imām Hasan al-Askari ('a)'s funeral was conducted by his son, Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs) and he is buried next to his father Imām Ali al-Hādi ('a) in Samarra.

His most famous title is az-Zaki (The pure one) but he is also known as al-Askari because he lived in Samarra and it was a city where the Caliph's army lived and was therefore also known as al-Askar ("The army camp").

Imām Hasan az-Zaki al-Askari ('a) was well known for his generosity, worship, knowledge and humility. He was well built in physique and had handsome features. He is said to have resembled Rasullāh (s).

One day a man hid 100 dinars in the ground and then went to beg for money from Imām Hasan al-Askari ('a). He waited for the Imām on the roadside and as soon as the Imām passed by, he asked him for help. The Imām told him, 'I know you are lying that you have no money. You have hidden 100 dinars in the ground. I am not saying this because I don't want to help you. But you will never enjoy the 100 dinars you have hidden.' Then the Imām gave him 100 dinars. And later on when the man went to dig up the money he had hidden, it was missing. His son had stolen the money and run away.

Whenever a person would ask the Imām for a specific amount of money, the Imām would give him a little more.

On one occasion, there was a drought in Samarra but a Christian priest was able to raise his hands to the sky and it would rain miraculously. Many people became confused and were in doubt about their faith. The Caliph Mu'tamad was in a terrible dilemma so he was forced to bring Imām Hasan b. Ali az-Zaki ('a) out of prison and ask him for help. The Imām went to the place where the Christian was praying and took away a little bone that the Christian was hiding in his hands. This was from a prophet of the past and that is why it would rain every time he raised his hand, explained the Imām. Then the Imām told him to pray again and it didn't rain. Then Imām Hasan az-Zaki ('a) prayed with his hands raised in the air and it began raining. This showed the special status of the Imām with Allāh and his ability to perform miracles by the permission of Allāh.

Imām Hasan b. Ali az-Zaki al-Askari ('a) loved worshipping Allāh and would pray salāt al-layl (tahajjud) for the most part of the night.

When the Caliph Mu'tazz Billāh (who poisoned Imām al-Hādi ('a)) died, he was succeeded by Mu'tad and thereafter by Mu'tamad. All these Caliphs continued to harass Imām Hasan al-Askari ('a) and either kept him in prison or under house arrest. Imām Hasan al-Askari ('a) lived in such extreme poverty that according to some narrations, the women in his home had only one dress that was not torn and they would wear it in turns to pray their salāh.

On one occasion the Caliph Mu'tamad even tried putting Imām Hasan al-Askari ('a) in a cage of hungry lions. But the lions, despite being very hungry, came and put their heads at the feet of the Imām, rubbing their heads against him like kittens, while the Imām stood in prayer.

The Abbāsīd Caliphs were particularly harsh on Imām Hasan al-Askari ('a) because they had heard that the Shi'ah believed that his son would be the Mahdi ('atfs). It was under these difficult circumstances that Imām Hasan al-Askari ('a) had to both, hide his son as well as inform the close Shi'ah of his birth.

Imām Hasan al-Askari ('a)'s son, Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs) was born on 255 AH, just five years before Imām Hasan al-Askari ('a) was martyred. Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs) was therefore only 5 years old when he lost his father and became the Imām of the Time. We shall learn more about the twelfth Imām in the next book but a brief summary is given at the end of this lesson.

## The Miracles of Imām Hasan b. Ali al-Askari al-Zaki ('a)

### **An Ingot of Gold**

A man called Abu Hāshim complained to Imām Hasan al-Askari ('a) about his poverty. The Imām rubbed his whip on the ground and took out from it an ingot of gold that was worth at least 500 dinars. Then he gave it and said, 'Take it Abu Hāshim, and forgive us (for not giving you more).'

### **An Imām speaks all languages**

A man called Abu Hamza Nāsir once heard Imām Hasan al-Askari ('a) speaking to each of his servants in their own languages. Abu Hamza Nāsir was amazed. He began thinking, 'This man (Imām al-Askari) was born in Madina. No one saw him that much until after his father Imām al-Hādi passed away. How is this possible?'

As he was thinking this, Imām Hasan az-Zaki al-Askari ('a) came up to him and said, 'Allāh has separated his proof (hujjah) from the rest of His creatures and has given him knowledge of everything. He (the Imām) knows languages, genealogies and events. If it wasn't for that, there would be no difference between the Hujjah (proof) and those who follow them.'

### **Reading the Minds of Others**

Husayn b. Zarif reports that two questions were constantly on his mind and he wanted to write to Imām Hasan al-Askari ('a) to ask him. So he wrote to ask him about the first question and forgot to ask the second question which was about how to cure a fever.

Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) wrote back to reply his question then he added, ‘You also wanted to ask about fever but you forgot to write. Take a piece of paper and on it write the verse of Qur’ān, ‘O fire, be cold and a safe for Ibrāhim’ (Surah 21:69). Then hang it over the person who has fever.’

Husayn b. Zarif was amazed at this. And he wrote what the Imām instructed him and the person who was ill with fever recovered.

### The Askariya Mosque and Shrines

On February 22, 2006, at 6:55 a.m. a group of terrorists and enemies of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) stormed the Askariya Mosque that contains the shrine of Imām Ali al-Hādi (‘a) and Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) and they tied up the guards. Then they rigged the place with bombs all night and in the morning they detonated the bombs and severely damaged the mosque and destroyed its golden dome. The whole dome crumbled on top of the graves of the Imāms.



*The Haram of Imām Ali al-Hādi (‘a) and Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) after the first bombing, when the minarets were still standing.*

On June 13, 2007 around 9 a.m. local time, terrorists bombed the mosque again and the two ten-story golden minarets that were still standing were destroyed.

This shows that the hatred and jealousy for the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) continues to this day. It is only with the return of Imām al-Mahdi (‘atfs) that the enemies of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) will truly be vanquished. Allāh (s.w.t.) has however promised that the remembrance of Rasullāh (s) and his Household will never be lost because they are the ‘Light’ (Nur) of Allāh and the Qur’ān promises:

﴿يُرِيدُونَ لِيُطْفِئُوا نُورَ اللَّهِ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ مُتِمُّ نُورِهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُونَ﴾

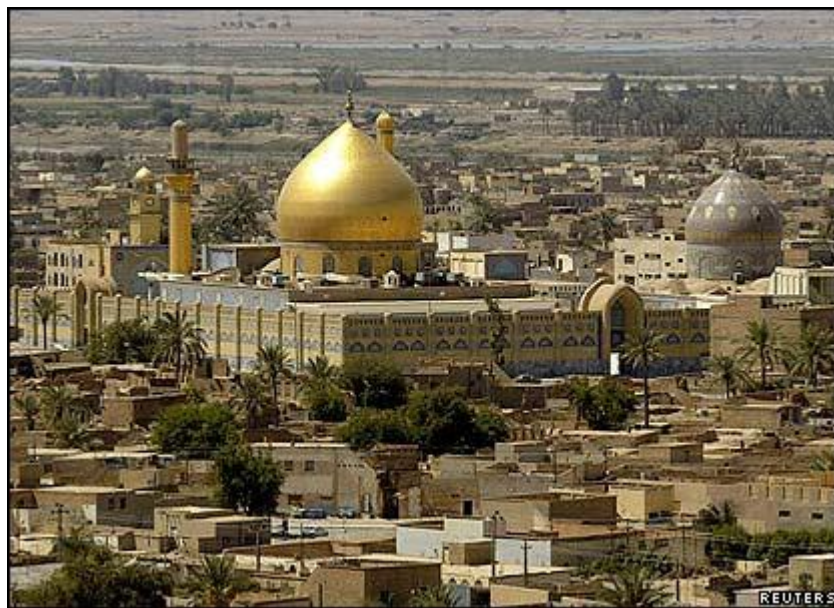
*They desire to put out the light of Allāh with their mouths, but Allāh shall perfect His light though the faithless should be averse.*

- Surah as-Saff, 61:8

The Askariya mosque is now kept under close security and its dome and minarets are being rebuilt.



*Old pictures of the haram of Imām Ali al-Hādi (‘a) and Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) before the bombings of 2006 and 2007. The blue dome on the side is the ‘sardāb’ (cellar) where Imām al-Mahdi (‘atfs) was last seen when he was 5 years old.*



## Imām al-Hujjah al-Mahdi ('atfs)

The last Imām and final successor of Rasulullāh (s), appointed by Allāh, is our twelfth Imām. His name is Muhammad - the same as the name of Rasulullāh (s) but he is known by his many titles including al-Hujjah (the Proof of Allāh), al-Mahdi (the one guided by Allāh), Sahib az-Zamān (the master of this age) and Baqiyatullah (the remainder of Allāh).

After our eleventh Imām, Imām Hasan b. Ali az-Zaki al-Askari ('a) was martyred, Allāh decreed that the last Imām would be hidden from people's knowledge. He would live amongst them but they would never recognize who he is. This was to protect him while allowing him to help the true and sincere Muslims without them realizing. And towards the end of the world, Allāh will allow the Imām to reveal his identity and to establish a true Islamic world nation that is full of peace and justice.

Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs) was born on 15<sup>th</sup> Sha'ban 255 AH and is alive to this day. When we say his name, we should also say "*ajallāhu ta'āla farajahush shareef*", which means 'may Allāh hasten his return'. To wait for the Imām's return is one of the greatest forms of jihād and worship ('ibādah).

The Imām's hidden identity is known as the ghaybah in Arabic (Occultation in English). Many great scholars have met the Imām during his ghaybah but they didn't realize it was him until after he left and they couldn't find him anymore.

In the next book we will learn more about the Imām of our time and the signs before his reappearance. All Muslims, Shi'ah and Sunni, have related ahādith that Rasulullāh (s) said the world will not end until Allāh sends the Mahdi ('atfs) to fill the earth with justice and peace.

The Qur'ān also says:

﴿هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا﴾

*It is He who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the true religion **that He may make it prevail over all religions**, and Allāh suffices as witness.*

- Surah al-Fath, 48:28

﴿وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كَمَا اسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ وَلَيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِينَهُمُ الَّذِي ارْتَضَىٰ لَهُمْ وَلَيُبَدِّلَنَّهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ خَوْفِهِمْ أَمْنًا يَعْبُدُونَنِي لَا يُشْرِكُونَ بِي شَيْئًا...﴾

*Allāh has promised those of you who have faith and do righteous deeds **that He will surely make them successors in the earth**, just as He made those who were before them successors, **and He will surely establish for them their religion which He has approved for them**, and that He will surely change their state to security after their fear, while they worship Me, not ascribing any partners to Me.*

- Surah an-Nur, 24:55

These are prophecies in the Qur'ān that have not come true as yet and will never happen until Imām al-Hujjah ('atfs) returns.

Make a habit of remembering Imām al-Hujjah ('atfs) every day and saying salām to him after every salāh and praying to Allāh to hasten his return and to make us amongst his sincere followers. Amen!

### Project Ideas:

1. Draw a map of the Middle East showing all the cities where the 14 Ma'sumeen ('a) are buried.
2. In Arab custom, a man or woman is referred respectfully by an epithet (kunya) rather than their own name. For example, if a person's name is Muhammad and his eldest son is called Ja'far, then people would address him as 'Abu Ja'far' (Father of Ja'far) instead of 'Muhammad'. Similarly, the mother of Ja'far would be called 'Umm Ja'far' instead of being addressed by her own first name. At times, a person may even be called by his daughter's name e.g. Abu Zahra. Create a table showing the kunya of each of the twelve Imāms and some basic facts about them. An example is given below:

No.	Name	Kunya	Age Martyred	Place Buried
3	Imām Husayn ('a)	Abu Abd Allāh	57 yrs	Karbala, Irāq