

# TARIKH (History)



# Lesson 1

## Nabí Dáwud (‘a) & Nabí Sulaymán (‘a)

In Book 4 we studied how Nabi Musa (‘a) freed the Banu Isrāil from slavery and brought them out of Egypt to the land of Palestine. However, they were constantly engaged in war against the Philistines who finally managed to banish them from their homes.

In the last battle, which was many years after Nabi Musa (‘a) had died, the Sacred Casket containing the original Tablets of the Tawrāt that Allāh gave Nabi Musa (‘a) was lost, and this really disappointed the Banu Isrāil. They spent many gloomy years in exile before they came to their leader Nabi Samuel (‘a) and asked him to appoint a strong king for them so that they could regain their land.

On the command of Allāh, Nabi Samuel (‘a) appointed Nabi Tālut as their king. The Banu Isrāil protested and said that Tālut was a poor and unknown man. However, Nabi Samuel (‘a) informed them that Allāh had chosen Nabi Tālut (‘a) because of his knowledge, wisdom and strength, and he would undoubtedly lead them to victory.

It took Nabi Tālut (‘a) 20 years to find the Sacred Casket again and after that they marched to Palestine. The Philistines were led by a fearsome commander who a giant named Jālut (Goliath). The sight of Jālut filled the Banu Isrāil with terror and no one dared to fight him.

Nabi Dāwud (‘a) was present in the army of Nabi Tālut (‘a). He was only a young man at the time, and had not come to fight. His job was to attend to his three older brothers who were soldiers, and to bring news of the war back to their father. When Nabi Tālut (‘a) saw that Jālut had terrified his army, he tried to encourage his men by promising them great rewards if they faced Jālut. He promised that he would marry his daughter to the man who killed Jālut.

When Nabi Dāwud (‘a) heard so much noise in the battlefield, he came forward to find out what was going on. He had never fought a battle before, but when he saw Jālut, he approached Nabi Tālut (‘a) and said,

'Let me fight this devil because I have killed a tiger and a bear who attacked my father's sheep.'

The brave words of Nabi Dāwud ('a) impressed Nabi Tālut ('a), who dressed him in a coat of armour and warned him to be careful.

Before Nabi Dāwud ('a) approached Jālut, he removed the heavy armour that was restricting his movement. He stood before the enemy, armed only with a catapult and the staff with which he used to guide his sheep.

Before Jālut could react, Nabi Dāwud ('a) shot a stone from his catapult and struck the giant Jālut's forehead with terrible force and brought him to the ground in a daze. Nabi Dāwud ('a) then drew Jālut's heavy sword and cut off his head. The sight of their leader and champion dead scared the Philistines, who fled the battlefield in panic. Because of his extraordinary courage, Nabi Tālut ('a) married his daughter to Nabi Dāwud ('a).

Allāh says in the Qur'ān:

﴿فَهَزَمُوهُمْ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَقَتَلَ دَاوُودُ جَالُوتَ وَآتَاهُ اللَّهُ الْمُلْكَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَعَلَّمَهُ مِمَّا يَشَاءُ...﴾

*Through Allāh's Will, they defeated their enemy. Dāwud killed Jālut and Allāh gave him the kingdom and wisdom and taught him whatever He wished.*

- Surah al-Baqarah, 2:251

Nabi Dāwud ('a) was made commander-in-chief of Nabi Tālut ('a)'s army and after Nabi Tālut ('a) passed away, Nabi Dāwud ('a) became the king. Allāh gave him wisdom and the Divine Book, Zabur, which he used to recite in a beautiful voice to attract the people to the words of Allāh.

Allāh gave Nabi Dāwud ('a) many blessings. When he used to praise Allāh, the mountains and the birds would also join him and sing the praise of Allāh with him. Nabi Dāwud ('a) could also touch iron and melt it in his hands like wax and he used this gift to design special, lightweight battle armour. Even though he was the king, Nabi Dāwud ('a) made different things out of iron and sold it to people to earn his living.

Allāh says in the Qur'ān:

﴿وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا دَاوُودَ مِنَّا فَضْلًا يَا جِبَالُ أُوِّبِي مَعَهُ وَالطَّيْرَ وَأَلْنَا لَهُ الْحَدِيدَ﴾

*Indeed We gave Dāwud blessings from us, saying, 'O Mountains! Sing (the praise of Allāh) along with him, and O Birds!, you too.' And We made iron soft for him.*

- Surah Sabā, 34:10

Nabi Dāwud ('a) ruled wisely for many years and was succeeded by his youngest son, Nabi Sulaymān ('a) who became King of the Banu Isrāil and also a great prophet of Allāh.

### **Nabi Sulaymān ('a)**

Nabi Sulaymān ('a) was the youngest son of Nabi Dāwud ('a) and inherited him as the king and prophet of Allāh. Allāh granted Nabi Sulaymān ('a) the greatest kingdom that any king has ever ruled over in the world. Nabi Sulaymān ('a) could control the wind and even fly in the air while sitting on his throne. Nabi Sulaymān ('a) was also given control over both men and jinn and they served him faithfully and did whatever he ordered them to do. Nabi Sulaymān ('a) could speak to all the animals and birds in their own language and they obeyed him as well.

Because of these special blessings, Nabi Sulaymān's ('a) kingdom was very powerful and many countries were under his control. Whenever the army of Nabi Sulaymān ('a) marched on a mission, it was an amazing sight to see. The whole army could be seen flying in the air with great power.

One day, Nabi Sulaymān ('a) was travelling with his army of jinn and men when they came to a valley that was full of ants. One of the ants that was very wise saw the army coming towards them and told all the other ants to go into their homes so that they would not accidentally be crushed by the army of Nabi Sulaymān ('a).

Nabi Sulaymān ('a) could hear the words of the ant so he asked the ant, 'I am a prophet (nabi) of Allāh. Do you think I would crush anyone?'

And the wise ant said, 'No, I knew you would not crush them but I did not want them to see your great army and forget the greatness of Allāh and His blessings!'

This was a great lesson for all of us that even when we see something great and powerful, we should always remember that Allāh is ever greater and more powerful. Nabi Sulaymān ('a) smiled and thanked Allāh for all His favours.

One day, when Nabi Sulaymān ('a) was inspecting his army, he noticed one of his messenger birds called Hudhud (a Hoopoe) was missing. He got angry and said, 'where is Hudhud? He better have a good excuse for being absent!'

And soon after that, Hudhud appeared. He told Nabi Sulaymān ('a) that he was late because he had stopped in a faraway land called Sabā, where he saw some people worshipping the Sun and their ruler was a woman called Queen Bilqis.

Nabi Sulaymān ('a) sent Hudhud back to Bilqis with a letter and in it he told her to stop worshipping the Sun and to believe in Allāh and accept Nabi Sulaymān ('a) as the prophet of Allāh.

Queen Bilqis tried to send some gifts to Nabi Sulaymān ('a) but Nabi Sulaymān ('a) sent them back and told her that Allāh had given him even a greater kingdom and much more than what she had.



So Queen Bilqis decided to go and visit Nabi Sulaymān ('a) with her people. Nabi Sulaymān ('a) wanted to show Bilqis how much power Allāh had given him so he asked, 'who can bring me the throne of Queen Bilqis even before she gets here.' One jinn said, 'I can bring it even before you stand from your throne.' But there was a wise man in the court of Nabi Sulaymān ('a) called Asif bin Barkhiya. He told Nabi Sulaymān ('a), 'I can bring it with the knowledge and power that Allāh has given me, even before you blink.' And as Nabi Sulaymān ('a) blinked, he found the

throne of Bilqis, which was thousands of miles away in the land of Sabā, all of sudden in front of him.

When Queen Bilqis arrived, she was very surprised to see her throne had reached the palace of Nabi Sulaymān ('a) even before her.

As she entered the palace of Nabi Sulaymān ('a) and saw in amazement and wonder how beautiful it looked, she thought the whole palace floor was covered in water. So she lifted her dress a little to step over the 'water' but it was actually a crystal floor and there was no water. Nabi Sulaymān ('a) wanted her to realize that not everything we see is what it appears to be. And therefore the Sun cannot be god just because it looks so bright and big.

Queen Bilqis realized her mistake and changed her faith. She now believed in Allāh and that Nabi Sulaymān ('a) was the prophet of Allāh. And she returned to her people and they all stopped worshipping the Sun.

Nabi Sulaymān ('a) ruled over his people with justice for a long time. His kingdom covered most of the known world. No before or after has had such a great kingdom as Nabi Sulaymān ('a). This is because he had prayed to Allāh and said:

﴿قَالَ رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي وَهَبْ لِي مُلْكًا لَا يَنْبَغِي لِأَحَدٍ مِنْ بَعْدِي إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْوَهَّابُ﴾

*He (Sulaymān) said, 'my Lord! Forgive me and give me a kingdom like no one will deserve after me; indeed You are the Giver of bounties (without measure).'*

- Surah Sād, 38:35

#### Homework:

At home, read the translation of Surah an-Naml (surah 27) from āyah (verse) 15 to āyah 44 and see if you can find:

- The story of the ants.
- The story of hudhud.
- The story of Bilqis and her throne.
- The story of Bilqis and the palace with a crystal floor.

## Lesson 2

# Nabí Khidr (‘a) & Nabí Musa (‘a)

We studied about the life of Nabí Musa (‘a) in Book 4 (Tārikh). Nabí Musa (‘a) was the greatest prophet (nabi) of Allāh in his time. Once, Allāh wanted Nabí Musa (‘a) to meet another man who had special hidden knowledge from Allāh. This man is called Khidr (‘a) and he is still alive even today. Some scholars believe that he too is a prophet and they call him Nabí Khidr (‘a). Allāh does not mention the name of Khidr (‘a) in the Qur’ān but He calls him ‘one of Our servants’ and someone whom Allāh taught Himself.

Nabí Musa (‘a) was very keen to meet Khidr (‘a) and asked Allāh where he would find him. Allāh told Nabí Musa (‘a) to set out on a journey and take a salted fish with him and when he reaches the ‘Spring of Life’ where there is a fountain that can bring the dead back to life and make a person live very long (like Khidr is still alive) then the fish would also come back to life and that is where Nabí Musa (‘a) would meet Khidr (‘a).

And so Nabí Musa (‘a) set out with a servant of his called Yusha bin Nun until they reached a spring of water where some drops fell on the fish and it came back to life and swam away.

There Nabí Musa (‘a) met Khidr (‘a) and he asked him to teach him some knowledge and wisdom. Nabí Musa (‘a) wanted to follow Khidr (‘a) and learn from him but Khidr (‘a) told him it would be difficult for Nabí Musa (‘a) because everything that Khidr (‘a) did was with special hidden knowledge from Allāh.

We can now read the whole story of Nabí Musa (‘a) and Khidr (‘a) in the Qur’ān and what Nabí Musa (‘a) saw when he was travelling with Khidr (‘a).

### **Surah al-Kahf, 18:66-82:**

*Musa said to him (Khidr), ‘May I follow you so that you teach me some of the guidance that you have been taught?’*



*He (Khidr) said, 'you cannot have patience with me! And how can you have patience about something that you don't know of?'*

*He (Musa) said, 'You will find me, inshā Allāh, to be patient, and I will not disobey you in any matter.' He (Khidr) said, 'If you follow me, do not question me about anything until I [myself] mention it to you.'*

*So they went on until they boarded a boat. [When they got off the boat] he (Khidr) made a hole in it. He (Musa) said, 'did you make a hole in it to drown its people? You have certainly done a monstrous thing!'*

*He (Khidr) said, 'Did I not say, you cannot have patience with me?' He (Musa) said, 'Do not hold me for what I forgot and do not be hard on me.'*

*So they went on. When they met a boy, he (Khidr) killed him. He (Musa) said, 'Did you slay an innocent soul without reason? You have done a terrible thing!'*

*He (Khidr) said, 'Did I not tell you, you cannot have patience with me?'*

*So he (Musa) said, 'If I question you about anything after this, do not keep me in your company. You have already got sufficient excuse from me.'*

*So they went on until they came to a town where they asked its people for food but the people refused to keep them as guests. There they found a wall that was about to collapse, so he (Khidr) built it up again.*

*So he (Musa) said, 'If you wished, you could have taken a wage for it (from the people of the town since they refused to help us).'*

*He (Khidr) said, 'This is where you and I shall part. I will now inform you about the meaning of all that over which you could not be patient.'*

*As for the boat, it belonged to some poor people who worked on the sea. I wanted to sink it because behind them was an (evil) king who was seizing every ship by force (and would come after them).*

*As for the boy, his parents were faithful believers and we feared he (the boy) would (grow up one day) and harm them with rebellion and unfaith (i.e. the boy was going to grow up and become an evil person). So we desired that their Lord should give them in exchange (of this boy another) one better than him in purity and closer in mercy.*

*As for the wall, it belonged to two boys, orphans in the city. Under it there was a treasure belonging to them. Their father was a good man (and he died but left them the treasure and the wall was the only sign for it). So your Lord desired that they should grow up and take out their treasure, as a mercy from your Lord.*

*I did not do (the actions) out of my own wish (but was guided by Allāh). This is the meaning of that over which you could not keep patience.*

**- End of Surah Kahf (Surah 18), āyāt 66 to 82 -**

There are many lessons we can learn from the story of Nabi Musa ('a) and Khidr ('a). The most important lesson is that we should never judge any action of Allāh when we don't know the real reason behind it. We know Allāh is Wise in all His actions and everything happens for a reason. And on the Day of Judgement Allāh will tell us all the reasons. Having faith in Allāh means trusting Him that He only does what is good for us. If we hear that a young child died in an accident or because of an illness, or if something bad happens to us, we should pray to Allāh to help us but we should not ask, 'why did Allāh do it?'

Similarly, some people ask, 'why is Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs) in ghayba?' or 'how can we benefit from an Imām if we cannot see him?' People ask these questions because they are only making judgements from what they know but they don't realize that only Allāh knows the hidden reasons. One day, when Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs) returns, all the reasons will be known and there will be no need to ask all these questions.

**Homework:**

When you go home, find Surah Kahf (surah 18) āyāt 66 to 82 in your copy of the Qur'ān and read the story in Arabic and then tell it to your parents and ask them what lessons they think we can learn from this story.

## Lesson 3

### al-Isra wa al-Mi'rāj

Rasulullāh (s) preached Islām for 23 years during which time the entire Qur'ān was revealed to him. Out of these 23 years, he preached in Makkah for the first 12 years and then he migrated to Madina and preached Islām from Madina for the remaining 11 years.

In the 11<sup>th</sup> year of his mission, just one year before the hijrah to Madina, Allāh decided to take Rasulullāh (s) on a special journey to the heavens to show him all the wonders of the universe. Allāh has mentioned this Night Journey (which is called *al-Isrā wa al-Mi'rāj* or in short "Mi'rāj") in the Qur'ān as follows:

﴿سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَى بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلًا مِّنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَى الَّذِي  
بَارَكْنَا حَوْلَهُ لِنُرِيَهُ مِنْ آيَاتِنَا إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ﴾

*Glory be to Him (Allāh) who carried His servant (Rasulullāh) on a journey by night from the Sacred Mosque (of Makkah) to the Farthest Mosque (Masjid al-Aqsa in Jerusalem) whose area We have blessed, that We might show him (Rasulullāh) some of Our signs. Indeed He (Allāh) is the All-hearing, the All-seeing.*

- Surah al-Isrā, 17:1

This happened on the 27<sup>th</sup> night of Rajab. Rasulullāh (s) was resting when the angel Jibrāil ('a) came to him with a special horse with wings called *Burāq*. First Rasulullāh (s) went to the Ka'bah in Makkah to pray and then from there he flew on *Burāq* to Jerusalem where he prayed at Masjid al-Aqsa, the 3<sup>rd</sup> holiest masjid in Islām (after Masjid al-Harām in Makkah and Masjid an-Nabawi in Madina).

After Masjid al-Aqsa, Jibrāil ('a) flew besides Rasulullāh (s) and took him up to all the seven heavens one by one. There, Rasulullāh (s) saw many angels and he met all the other previous prophets of Allāh. Allāh then showed Rasulullāh (s) paradise (Jannah) where all the faithful will live forever and he showed him hellfire (Jahannam) where all the evil will be sent on the Day of Judgement.

Then Rasulullāh (s) went even higher up to the highest-level in the heavens called *as-Sidrat al-Muntaha*. There, Rasulullāh (s) saw something like the Ka'bah and the angels were going around it in tawāf and praising Allāh. This Ka'bah of the angels is above the one on the earth.

Finally Rasulullāh (s) reached a place where he saw a 'Curtain of Light'. Just like Allāh had talked to Nabi Musa ('a) from a burning bush on the mountain, Allāh talked to Rasulullāh (s) directly from the Curtain of Light.

Allāh describes a part of the Mi'rāj of Rasulullāh (s) as follows:

﴿فَاسْتَوَىٰ وَهُوَ بِالْأُفُقِ الْأَعْلَىٰ ثُمَّ دَنَا فَتَدَلَّىٰ فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَىٰ فَأَوْحَىٰ إِلَىٰ عَبْدِهِ مَا أَوْحَىٰ مَا كَذَبَ الْفُؤَادُ مَا رَأَىٰ أَفَتِمَارُونَهُ عَلَىٰ مَا يَرَىٰ وَلَقَدْ رَآهُ نَزْلَةً أُخْرَىٰ عِنْدَ سِدْرَةِ الْمُنْتَهَىٰ عِنْدَهَا جَنَّةُ الْمَأْوَىٰ إِذْ يَغْشَى السُّدْرَةَ مَا يَغْشَىٰ مَا زَاغَ الْبَصَرُ وَمَا طَغَىٰ لَقَدْ رَأَىٰ مِنْ آيَاتِ رَبِّهِ الْكُبْرَىٰ﴾

*Then he (Rasulullāh (s)) settled while he was on the highest horizon. Then he came nearer and nearer until he was within (the distance of) two bows' length or even nearer (to the Curtain of Light). Then He (Allāh) revealed to His servant whatever He (wished) revealed. The heart (of Rasulullāh) did not deny what it saw. Will you (people) then argue with him about what he saw?! Certainly he saw it yet another time, at Sidrat al-Muntaha (the Tree of Ultimate Boundary) near which is the Garden of the Abode (Jannat al-Ma'wa), when the Tree covered whatever it covered. The gaze (of Rasulullāh) did not swerve, nor did it overstep the bounds. Certainly he saw some of the greatest signs of his Lord.*

- Surah an-Najm, 53:7-18

Rasulullāh (s) did sajdah and praised and glorified Allāh and Allāh taught Rasulullāh (s) the salāh that we now pray five times a day. If we pray our salāh properly we can come very close to Allāh. That is why Rasulullāh (s) said, 'salāh is the mi'rāj of a *mu'min*.'

When Rasulullāh (s) entered Jannah, he saw some angels building palaces for the faithful made of gold and silver and rubies and other beautiful gemstones. Sometimes they would stop working. Rasulullāh (s) asked the angels why they stopped working and the angels said, 'when a

believer on the earth says, “*subhān Allāh, wal hamdu lillāh wa lā ilāha illal lāhu wallāhu akbar*”, we build his or her palace. But when they stop the tasbih of Allāh, we stop building their palace and gardens.

In Jahannam, Rasulullāh (s) saw the raging fire of hell and some terrible punishments that was waiting for people who kill others, who commit sins without tawbah, who lie and backbite, who hurt other people and steal from other people, and so on.

Rasulullāh (s) saw a huge and tall angel in the heavens who was even able to count all the drops of rain. Rasulullāh (s) asked him if there was anything he could not count and the angel said, ‘only when a *mu’min* recites salawāt on Muhammad and Aali Muhammad, their reward (*thawāb*) is so much that I cannot count it!’

Rasulullāh (s) also saw Isrāil, the Angel of Death and Isrāfil, the Angel who will blow the Trumpet to end the world and then blow it again to bring everyone back to life. There are many books that narrate about all the prophets that Rasulullāh (s) met and talked with and everything he saw that he told the Muslims about when he came back from *mi’rāj*.

By the miracle of Allāh, Rasulullāh (s) went and came back in the same night. The next day when Rasulullāh (s) told people where he had gone and what he had seen, some people did not believe him. So he told them exactly what Masjid al-Aqsa looked like in Jerusalem and some people who had been to Jerusalem confirmed his words were true.

Rasulullāh (s) also told the Quraysh in Makkah that while he was flying, he saw a caravan that was coming towards Makkah that had lost their camel and were looking for it. Shortly after, the caravan came to Makkah and they confirmed that the previous night they had lost their camel and were looking for it!

The leader of the caravan was none other than Abu Sufyān, one of the leaders of Makkah and he confirmed all the details that Rasulullāh (s) had provided. After this the people had no doubt that Rasulullāh (s) had indeed gone to the heavens. The news about the miraculous journey spread like wildfire around Makkah. The leaders of the Quraysh were very upset, especially because a lot of people became Muslims when they were convinced about it.

Some Muslims today believe that the journey of Rasulullāh (s) was not an actual physical journey but it was only a dream in which his soul and spirit went on a journey. But the Shi'ah Muslims do not believe this. It is wājib to believe that the journey of Rasulullāh (s) was physical.

There are many reasons why we know the journey of Rasulullāh (s) was physical. Firstly the Qur'ān says that Allāh took "His servant" and not "His servant's soul" (in Surah al-Isra, 17:1). Secondly, the non-Shi'ah Muslims who say that Rasulullāh (s) only went in his dream also say that it is because Aisha, the wife of Rasulullāh (s) said that she saw Rasulullāh (s) was sleeping in his bed the whole time. But we know this report is not true because when Rasulullāh (s) went for Mi'rāj, he was in Makkah and Aisha was not married to him until after hijrah when Rasulullāh (s) had moved to Madina.

Another person who said that Mi'rāj was a dream was Mu'āwiya the son of Abu Sufyān and the father of Yazid. But Mu'āwiya did not become a Muslim until 9 years after hijrah when the Muslims took over Makkah and Mu'āwiya with his father Abu Sufyān were forced to surrender and they recited the Kalima only to save their lives. So Mu'āwiya only made up the story that Mi'rāj was a dream out of his hatred and jealousy for Rasulullāh (s).

By taking Rasulullāh (s) first to the Ka'bah and then Bayt al-Muqaddas in Jerusalem and then meeting all the prophets in the heavens including Nabi Adam ('a), Nabi Nuh ('a), Nabi Ibrahim ('a), Nabi Musa ('a) and Nabi Isa ('a), Allāh wanted to show that the message of Rasulullāh (s) and Islām was a continuation of the message of all previous prophets; and that to Allāh, there is only one religion from the time of Adam. This religion is the religion of Islām, which means to surrender to Allāh, to believe there is no other god but Allāh and to worship no one and nothing besides Allāh.

The event of Mi'rāj proved that Islām was not only for Arabs and not confined to Makkah and Madina only but is for the whole world and even the universe. It also revealed how close and special Rasulullāh (s) is to Allāh as the best of His creation and the master of all prophets, messengers and guides over Allāh's creation.

# Lesson 4

## The Pledges of 'Aqaba & Híjra to Madína

### The Pledges of Aqaba

Even before Islām, during the month of Dhul Hijjah, tribes from all over Arabia came to Makkah to perform their pilgrimage. Many of them came to worship idols around the Ka'bah and to bring goods to buy and sell for business. Although their worship was not like the Hajj in Islām, the Arabs still knew that the Ka'bah was an important structure. And therefore during the month of Dhul Hijjah, in the first 12 years of his preaching Islām in Makkah, Rasulullāh (s) used to take advantage of this time of the year by meeting the visitors who came from faraway lands and he would introduce the teachings of Islām to them.

In those days, Madina was called *Yathrib* and the people of Yathrib also came to Makkah for pilgrimage and trade. The two main tribes in Yathrib were the tribes of Aws and Khazraj. They were enemies of each other and were always fighting and killing each other.

In the eleventh year after *bi'thah* (the beginning of Rasulullāh's (s) mission), Rasulullāh (s) met six people from the tribe of Khazraj in Makkah during the Hajj season. When he spoke to them about Islām, they were very interested because they had heard from the Jews of Madina (Yathrib), that one day there would be a Prophet who would come from Arabia. The Jews knew this because it was written in their Holy Book, the Tawrāt, which had been revealed to Prophet Musa ('a). The people of Khazraj believed that this was the very same Prophet and so they became Muslims. When the six people returned to Madina they started teaching other people about Islām and soon many people in Yathrib wanted to know more about this new religion.

The next year, twelve people came from Yathrib to Makkah to meet Rasulullāh (s). The meeting took place in a valley outside Makkah called 'Aqaba. These twelve people made a special promise (pledge) to Rasulullāh (s): they accepted Islām and promised not to make anyone a partner with Allāh, not to steal and not to bury their daughters alive.

They promised not to backbite and speak badly of one another and to perform good deeds. In exchange Rasulullāh (s) promised them that if they act according to their pledge, they would go to paradise (Jannah) in the hereafter. This promise or pledge is known in Islām as “The First Pledge of ‘Aqaba”.

The twelve people returned to Madina (Yathrib), their hearts filled with faith. They wrote back to Rasulullāh (s) asking him to send someone to Madina who could teach them more about Islām. Rasulullāh (s) sent Mus'ab bin Umayr and Ibn Umm Maqtum as missionaries to teach them Islām.

The two missionaries did their work so well that there was a great change in thinking in Madina. The people of Madina eagerly waited for the next Dhul Hijjah so that they could meet Rasulullāh (s) again and promise him to help Islām.

The next year a caravan of 500 people, mostly from the tribe of Khazraj, left Madina for Makkah. It included 73 Muslims, two of whom were women. The rest of the people were those who wanted to find out more about the religion before becoming Muslims. They met Rasulullāh (s) on the 13th of Dhul Hijjah at the same place of 'Aqaba.

During the meeting, Rasulullāh (s) addressed them and recited āyāt from the Qur’ān. The words of Rasulullāh (s) made a great impression on all the listeners and they all were ready to accept Islām. Everyone swore to be loyal to Islām and pledged allegiance (*bay'ah*) at the hands of Rasulullāh (s). This event is known as “The Second Pledge of 'Aqaba”.

Rasulullāh (s) then promised the people of Yathrib (Madina) that he would soon come to Madina himself. Once the ceremony was over, the people left for their homes.

An interesting point to note is that so many people from Madina accepted Islām after being introduced to it for only 2-3 years and meeting Rasulullāh (s) only briefly. While in Makkah, Rasulullāh (s) preached to the Quraysh for 12 years but only a few people became Muslims in comparison.



What do you think are the reasons for this? Some of reasons can be as follows:

- A prophet or someone who preaches Islām is usually not appreciated in his own land and by his own people until he goes elsewhere and then returns. Nabi Ibrahim (‘a) was thrown in the fire by his people and had to leave his land. Nabi Musa (‘a) had to flee Egypt for 10 years before returning as a prophet, Nabi Yunus also had to leave his people before returning to them, and the Qur’ān mentions many prophets who were rejected by their own people, such as Nabi Nuh (‘a), Nabi Hud (‘a) and Nabi Sālih (‘a).
- The people of Madina had heard about a messenger who would come to Arabia from the neighbouring Jewish tribes. The Jews themselves rejected Rasulullāh (s) but the tribes of Aws and Khazraj who were idol-worshippers accepted him. We have to be careful so that when Imām al-Mahdi (‘atfs) returns, we should not reject him while other non-Muslims accept him. This will happen for some people as mentioned in hadith.
- The people of Aws and Khazraj were tired of the endless fights between their tribes. They had been at war with each other for over 120 years. They looked forward to the arrival of a leader who would bring peace to their region.

Most of the people living in Madina were either Jews or the idol-worshipping tribes of Aws and Khazraj who then became Muslims. The time was now ripe for Rasulullāh (s) to leave his home in Makkah and move to Madina. Life in Makkah was becoming increasingly difficult for the Muslims, who faced endless persecution at the hands of the Quraysh, especially after the passing away of Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) who used to protect them as a leader of Makkah.

### **Hijrah to Madina**

When the Quraysh realised that the Muslims now had the support of the people of Madina, they were very disturbed. In order to crush the spirit of the Muslims, they increased their efforts at persecuting and harassing them.

The companions of Rasulullāh (s) complained to him about the harsh treatment they were receiving at the hands of the Quraysh leaders. Rasulullāh (s) advised all the Muslims to migrate to Madina secretly, and await his arrival there.

One by one the Muslims slipped out of Makkah, making excuses for their departure. Because they were afraid of the reaction of the Quraysh, they kept their destination secret and most of them had to leave their homes, possessions and wealth behind.

The Quraysh suddenly realised that the Muslims were all leaving Makkah. They managed to arrest a few but by that time the majority had already escaped and were on their way to Madina. In Makkah only Rasulullāh (s), his family, Imām Ali (‘a) and a few old and ill Muslims remained. Final arrangements were being made for these last few Muslims to also leave.

The Quraysh were enraged at this mass escape. They knew that the Muslims would now become a danger to them. They called a special meeting and decided there that the only way to stop the spread of Islām was to kill Rasulullāh (s). They decided that a group of men from different tribes would ambush and kill Rasulullāh (s) all at once so that no one person or tribe could be blamed.

On the night that the Quraysh planned to kill Rasulullāh (s), Allāh sent the angel Jibrāil (‘a) with a command to Rasulullāh (s) to immediately leave Makkah for Madina. Rasulullāh (s) asked Imām Ali (‘a) to sleep in his place so that the Quraysh would not realize that he had left.

When Rasulullāh (s) began his journey out of Makkah, he met Abu Bakr on the way, who joined him. Rasulullāh (s) knew that the Quraysh would waste no time in pursuing him once they learnt of his departure, so later in the day, he took refuge in the Cave of Thawr, which was on the way to Madina.

The sacrifice of Imām Ali (‘a), when he took the place of Rasulullāh (s) on the night of migration, pleased Allāh so much that Allāh revealed the following āyah:

﴿وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَشْرِي نَفْسَهُ ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاةِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ رَءُوفٌ بِالْعِبَادِ﴾

*And among men there is one who sells his soul to seek the pleasure of Allāh; and truly Allāh is affectionate to His (such) servants.*

- Surah al-Baqarah, 2:207

When the Quraysh found out that Rasulullāh (s) had left Makkah, they sent men to block all routes leading to Madina. They also hired some expert guides to trace the footprints of Rasulullāh (s) in the desert. The Quraysh declared that whoever finds the hiding-place of Rasulullāh (s) would be rewarded with 100 camels. Soon everyone in Makkah was out trying to find Rasulullāh (s).

One of the best trackers and guides of the Quraysh traced the footprints of Rasulullāh (s) to the Cave of Thawr. However, when the Quraysh came near the entrance of the cave, they saw that its entrance was blocked by a spider's web and some wild pigeons had laid eggs in a nest at the entrance.

The men thought it was impossible for anyone to enter the cave without breaking the spider's web and the eggs. So they returned to Makkah to look elsewhere. Allāh had miraculously caused the spider to make the web and the pigeons to lay the eggs in order to protect His beloved Messenger.

Rasulullāh (s) remained in the cave for three days and nights. On one of these nights Imām Ali ('a) came to visit him. Rasulullāh (s) told him to arrange for camels for them.

On the fourth day Imām Ali ('a) sent three camels to the cave along with a reliable guide. Rasulullāh (s) and Abu Bakr then left with the guide for Madina, travelling along the coastal route so as to avoid the Quraysh riders.

It is from this night that Muslims mark the beginning of the Islāmic Era or the Hijri calendar. This is because the migration marked the beginning of a Muslim government in Madina and the setting up of the first Muslim state.

The journey to Madina was a distance of some 400 kilometres and they travelled mostly at night and rested during the day. On the 12<sup>th</sup> of Rabi ul-Awwal Rasulullāh (s) arrived at Quba, just outside Madina.

The village of Quba was the centre of the tribe of Banu Awf. A large number of Muslims were waiting to escort him into Madina, which was not very far away.

Rasulullāh (s) stayed there for a few days while he waited for the arrival of Imām Ali (‘a). During this time, he laid the foundation of a masjid for the Banu Awf. This was the first masjid of Islām. Masjid Quba still exists in Madina today.



**Masjid Quba – the First Masjid**

Meanwhile in Makkah, Imām Ali (‘a) returned all the belongings of people that were with Rasulullāh (s) and after three days, he gathered the women of the household of Rasulullāh (s) and any Muslims who still remained in Makkah and prepared to leave. The group left for Madina at night. Imām Ali (‘a) managed to guide his group to Quba three days after the arrival of Rasulullāh (s).

The spies of the Quraysh came to know about the migration of this last group of Muslims and pursued them. They caught up with Imām Ali (‘a) and threatened them, trying to force them to return to Makkah. As the women got nervous, there was no alternative and Imām Ali (‘a) pulled out his sword in defence and warned the Quraysh that anyone who comes closer to the Muslims would die. Seeing the determination of Imām Ali (‘a) the Quraysh changed their attitude and let them go.

When Imām Ali (‘a) reached Quba with his group his feet were swollen and bleeding. This sight brought tears to the eyes of Rasulullāh (s). One day after the arrival of Imām Ali (‘a), Rasulullāh (s) proceeded to Madina.

Both the Muhājirun (the Muslims who had migrated from Makkah) and the Ansār (the Muslims of Madina) lined the streets of Madina eagerly awaiting the appearance of Rasullāh (s).

When his camel came down at a place called ‘the Valley of Wadā’ (*Thaniyat al-Wadā*) and set its foot on the land of Madina, he came into view of the waiting people. They greeted him warmly and began singing in joy:

طَلَعَ الْبَدْرُ عَلَيْنَا

*Tala' al-badru 'alaynā*

**The full moon has risen over us.**

مِنْ ثَنِيَّاتِ الْوَدَاعِ

*Min thaniyātil-wadā'*

**From the valley of al-Wadā'.**

وَجَبَ الشُّكْرُ عَلَيْنَا

*Wajab ash-shukru 'alaynā*

**It is now obligatory (wājib) on us to show gratefulness.**

مَا دَعَى لِلَّهِ دَاعٍ

*Mā da'ā lillāhi dā'*

**For what the Caller has called us to for Allāh.**

أَيُّهَا الْمَبْعُوثُ فِينَا

*Ayyuhal mab'ūthu fīnā*

**O' you who were sent amongst us!**

جِئْتَ بِالْأَمْرِ الْمَطَاعِ

*Ji'ta bil-amri 'l-mutā'*

**You have come with a matter to be obeyed.**

## جِئْتَ شَرَّفْتَ الْمَدِينَةَ

*Ji'ta sharraft al-madīnah*

**You have brought honour to the city.**

## مَرْحَبًا يَا خَيْرَ دَاعٍ

*Marhaban yā khayra dā'*

**Welcome! O best of callers (to Allāh's way).**

This traditional *nasheed* (Islāmic poem) that the Ansār sung to Rasulullāh (s) as he arrived and entered Madina after completing the Hijrah in 622 CE is currently over 1400 years old and one of the oldest nasheeds in Islāmic culture. In many masājid, children sing this on the 17<sup>th</sup> of Rabi ul Awwal, the birthday of Rasulullāh (s).

Class Activity: Listen to the nasheed *Tala' al-Badru 'Alayna* on the Teacher's DVD.

As Rasulullāh (s) entered the city, everyone wanted him to go and stay with them until a house was built for him. Rasulullāh (s) did not want to disappoint anyone so he handled this delicate matter by saying, "Let my camel walk. I shall stay wherever it kneels down."

Everybody followed the camel of Rasulullāh (s) eagerly to see where the camel would finally stop. The camel stopped and bent its knees in a large piece of land that belonged to two orphan boys, Sahl and Suhayl. The land was used for drying dates and agriculture. The nearest house was that of Abu Ayyub al-Ansāri. Abu Ayyub was delighted to have the honour of being the host of Rasulullāh (s), who stayed with him for about seven months, until his house next to the masjid was ready.

Rasulullāh (s) wished to build a masjid over the plot where his camel had stopped. The orphans who owned the property wanted to give the land as a gift to him but he refused the offer and paid the price of the plot, which was 10 dinars in gold.

After the purchase, the ground was cleared of the trees and a masjid was built over it with clay and mud. The roof was made with palm wood and covered with palm branches and leaves. To one side, apartments were built for Rasulullāh (s) and his family and on the other side rooms

were provided for about 70 of the poorer people of Madina who had no house of their own.

The construction work was shared equally between the Muhājirun and Ansār. Rasulullāh (s) also shared in the work although Ammār bin Yāsir, an early convert and faithful companion, seldom allowed him to do anything and used to do Rasulullāh [s]'s share himself.

Ammār was the first person to begin work on the foundation of the masjid. One day Rasulullāh (s) affectionately dusted his body clear of mud and told him, "O Ammār you will be killed by a group of oppressors while you will be inviting them to truth." This prophecy was well known, and 38 years later, Ammār was killed fighting on the side of Imām Ali ('a) against Mu'āwiya in the Battle of Siffin. At that time many of Mu'āwiya's men realised that they were on the wrong side.

Although the masjid was very simple in structure, it was the best in the whole history of Islām. It became the centre of Muslim activity in Madina. The daily prayers and Friday prayers were held there. From this masjid Rasulullāh (s) taught people about the religion of Allāh and thousands became Muslims.

The city of Yathrib was renamed to *Madinat an-Nabi*, which means "The City of the Prophet" and in short it is called *Madina*. And the Masjid was called *Masjid al-Nabawi* (The Prophet's Mosque) and it still stands in Madina today, although it is now much larger. Masjid an-Nabawi is the 2<sup>nd</sup> holiest masjid in Islām after Masjid al-Harām in Makkah where the Ka'bah stands. Rasulullāh (s) is also buried in a corner of Masjid an-Nabawi (under the green dome) and when people go to Makkah for Hajj they also go to Madina to visit and greet Rasulullāh (s) at his grave, along with the other Imāms from the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) buried in Jannat al-Baqi nearby.

When we say, for example, this year is 1431 AH we mean this year is 1431 after hijrah or since the year that Rasulullāh (s) migrated to Madina. But the Islāmic calendar starts with Muharram even though Rasulullāh (s) had migrated in Rabi ul-Awwal because the months in the Arabic calendar were always from Muharram to Dhul Hijjah from before.

The hijrah to Madina marked a new, 2<sup>nd</sup> phase in the mission of Rasulullāh (s) and from Book 8 inshā Allāh, we will begin studying the events in the life (*sirah*) of Rasulullāh (s) in Madina.



**Masjid an-Nabawi - Madina**

Class Activity: Masājid in Islām

The Teacher's DVD has images of the most beautiful masājid all over the world. When time permits, the teacher can show these to the students and the students can then be asked to design their own masjid and include the main components of a masjid's architecture such as the mihrāb, minarets and dome(s).

Another activity can be to show the students the images of the historical masājid such as Masjid al-Harām, Masjid an-Nabawi, Masjid Quba, Masjid al-Qiblatayn and Masjid Ghamāmah and then ask the students to research the history and significance of any of these masājid.



# Lesson 5

## Imām Hasan az-Zakí al-‘Askarí (‘a)

### His Birth

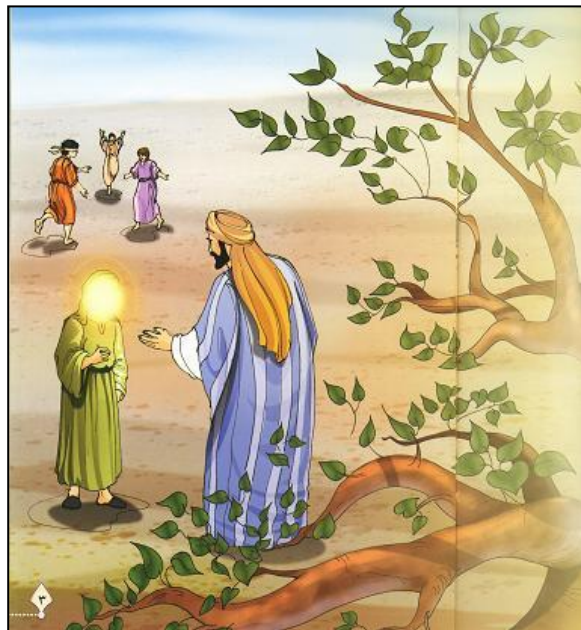
Imām Hasan bin Ali (‘a), our eleventh Imām, was born on 8<sup>th</sup> Rabi ath-Thāni 232 AH in Madina. His father is the tenth Imām, Imām Ali al-Hādi (‘a) and his mother was a very knowledgeable and righteous woman known for her pure and noble character and her name is *Sawsan* or (according to some books) her name is *Hadith*.

Imām Hasan bin Ali (‘a) was known as Abu Muhammad and the titles he was given by others included az-Zaki, al-Hādi, an-Naqi and al-Khālis. Most of these titles mean ‘the pure one’, which shows how people regarded him. He was also well known as ‘al-Askari’ and ‘Ibn ar-Rida’ (the son of ar-Rida).

In fact, because the Caliph Ma’mun had declared the eighth Imām, Imām Ali ar-Rida (‘a) as his successor and he had minted coins in his name, Imām ar-Rida (‘a) was very popular in the Muslim world and all the Imāms after him – Imām al-Jawād (‘a), Imām al-Hādi (‘a) and Imām al-Askari (‘a) – were all known as ‘Son of ar-Rida’ (Ibn ar-Rida).

Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) led an ascetic life and even from the time of his childhood, he taught people not to waste time. One day, when he was a young boy and he was walking past a group of other boys who were playing, a man asked him, ‘do you want to play with the other boys your age?’

And Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) replied the man, ‘we were not created to play.’ Then the Imām recited the following āyah of Qur’ān:



﴿وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاءَ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا لَاعِبِينَ﴾

*We did not create the sky and the earth and whatever is between them for play.*

- Surah al-Anbiya, 21:16

Imām Hasan az-Zaki al-Askari ('a) then said, 'Know that this world is set to depart. It will not remain for anyone and no one will remain in it.'

### **His Wisdom**

The first phase of the life of Imām Hasan al-Askari ('a) was the days he spent with his father Imām Ali al-Hādi ('a) that lasted almost 22 years.

When Imām Hasan al-Askari ('a) was only 2 years old, the Caliph Mutawakkil had forced Imām Ali al-Hādi ('a) to move to Samarra where he could keep a close watch on him and constantly have spies watching him, while denying the Shi'ah and the scholars ('*ulama*) access to the Imām.

Imām Hasan al-Askari ('a) had moved to Samarra with his father. Despite all the restrictions, he was soon known for his brilliance in character and in knowledge.

The vizier of Mutawakkil, al-Fath bin Khāqān, used to say, 'I never saw or knew in Samarra from all the Alawis (descendants of Imām Ali bin Abi Tālib ('a)) anyone like Hasan bin Ali



bin Muhammad bin ar-Rida ('a). And I never heard of anyone like him in his calmness, personality, chastity, generosity and nobility.

Another person said concerning the Imām, 'if the Banu Abbās were to lose the khilāfah, no one from the Banu Hāshim would be more deserving besides him (Imām Hasan al-Askari ('a)) because of his

excellence and chastity and how much in control he is of himself, and his asceticism and worship and the beauty of his character.'

It is also reported that because of the knowledge of Imām Hasan al-Askari ('a) and the intellectual arguments he raised, the famous Muslim philosopher, mathematician and scientist Ya'qub al-Kindi burnt one of his own books when he realized he was wrong.

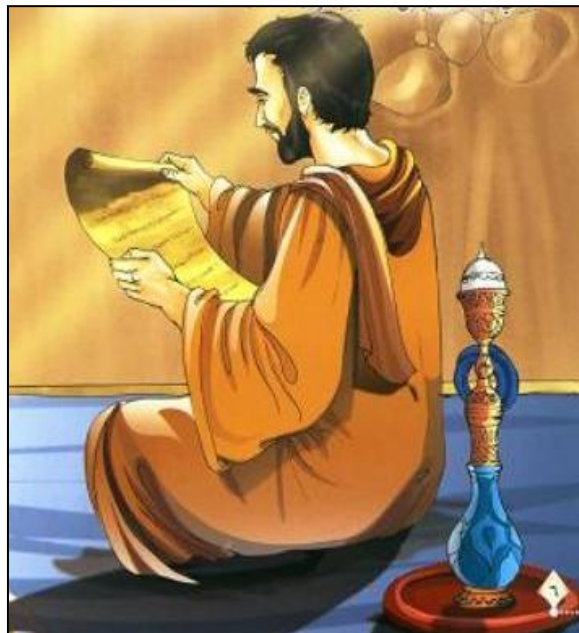
Al-Kindi was from Kufa but lived in Baghdad. The Banu Abbās and the local people of his time regarded him as the greatest philosopher ever. Al-Kindi had begun writing a book to oppose the Qur'ān and prove 'mistakes' in it. One day, one of his students came to Samarra and met Imām Hasan al-Askari ('a).

Imām al-Askari ('a) said to the student, 'is there no one amongst you who is able to show your teacher the error of ways and his misjudgements about the Qur'ān?'

'I cannot debate with him,' said the student.

So the Imām gave him some questions to take back and ask his teacher. He also told him to tell his teacher, 'is it not possible that when you read a book, what you have understood is not necessarily what the author had intended to say?'

When the student brought all these questions to his teacher, al-Kindi began thinking about them and was amazed. He asked his student, 'where do you get these questions from?'



At first the student said, 'I thought of them myself.' But al-Kindi refused to accept that and said to him, 'you are incapable of thinking of such questions.'

And when the student confessed they were from Imām Abu Muhammad Hasan bin Ali al-Askari (‘a), then al-Kindi said, ‘Now you have spoken the truth... only someone from that house could have come up with this.’

And al-Kindi then burnt the book he was writing against the Qur’ān because he saw he had no real arguments to prove any more.

### **In Prison**

Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) was imprisoned time and again and he was kept under the watch of a harsh guard called Sālih bin Wasf. Mutawakkil was still not happy and asked Sālih bin Wasf why he was not making life more difficult for the Imām. Sālih told the Caliph that he had appointed the two worst human beings he could find and put them in charge of torturing the Imām but they have changed and become the best of people and are now worshipping Allāh and praying a great deal. Mutawakkil was surprised to hear this and called the two guards and asked them why they had changed. They said about Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a), ‘what can we say about a man who fasts all day and prays all night. He never talks or does anything but worship Allāh!’



During the time of the Caliph Muhtadi, an Alawi named Abu Hāshim al-Ja’fari complained to Imām Hasan al-Askari in prison that the Caliph Muhtadi is really torturing the Shi’ah and his aim is to eliminate the Shi’ah completely and wipe them all out.

Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) said, ‘that will shorten his life... count from today five days and on the sixth day he will be killed... after being humiliated and disgraced.’

And as the Imām had predicted, five days passed and on the sixth day the Turks overthrew the Caliph Muhtadi. He escaped from their hands and began running in the streets screaming, ‘I am the Caliph, O people! Save your Caliph and protect him!’ but not one person came out of their house to help him. He was captured again and killed in a terrible manner.

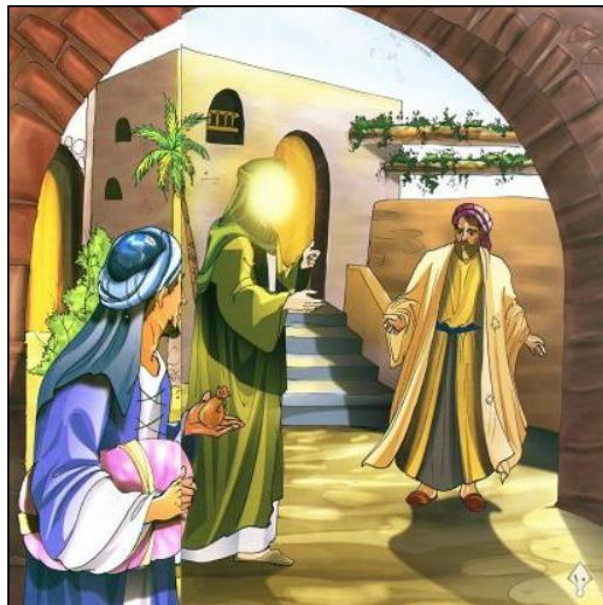
The Turks then appointed another Caliph named al-Mu’tamid and during his time, there was some ease and Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) was freed from prison and allowed to return home.

### **His Hidden Knowledge & Generosity**

A man called Ismāil bin Muhammad said that one day he sat down on the road waiting for Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) to pass by so that he could ask him for some money. Even though, Ismāil bin Muhammad had buried some 200 dinars and kept that for future.

When the Imām passed by, Ismāil bin Muhammad began complaining of his condition and he said to the Imām, ‘I swear by Allāh, I don’t have anything, not even one dirham and nothing to eat for lunch or dinner.’

Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) told him, ‘you are swearing falsely in the name of Allāh, when you have buried away 200 dinars?! Yet I am not saying this to you because I don’t want to give you anything.’



And the Imām then told a servant to give the man whatever he had with him and it was 100 dinars! This was the rule of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a). They

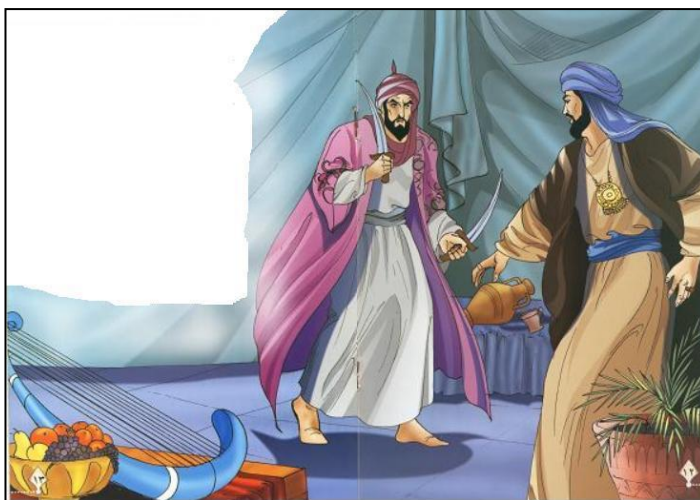
would never turn anyone back empty-handed and no one could say they came to their door and were refused, whether they were deserving or not.

Then Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) came close to Ismāil bin Muhammad, after giving him the money, and said to him: ‘you will never get to enjoy the 200 dinars that you have buried and you will lose it when you need it most.’

Ismāil bin Muhammad said that what the Imām told him is exactly what happened. There came a time when he was really poor and in need but when he went to remove the money he had secretly buried, he found that it was gone. One of his sons had seen him burying it and he stole the money and ran away.

### **Political Turmoil**

After the death of Mutawakkil the Turks in the government became very influential and powerful. They controlled the entire army and they would remove and appoint the Caliphs as they pleased. The Caliphs were only puppets who lived in fear of the Turkish viziers and commanders. The Caliph Mu’tazz, for example, who was the son of Mutawakkil and ruled after his brother Muntasir, was attacked



by a group of Turks. They tied his leg to the door of his room and whipped him and then sent him to a prison guard to be tortured. Then they kept him without food and water for 3 days and then they locked him up in a cellar and left him there until he died.

In Samarra therefore, there was always tension between those in power and the caliphs were constantly being overthrown and killed. And it was during this period that Imām al-Mahdi (‘a) was born on 15<sup>th</sup> Sha’ban 256

AH. His birth was kept a secret and only a few very close companions of Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) were informed.

Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) tried to prepare the Shi’ah for the final Imām and the ghaybah when people would not know of his whereabouts.

For example, Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) wrote many letters to different people and in a letter to Ali bin al-Husayn bin Babwayh al-Qummi, he wrote:

‘..be patient and wait for the time when the Imām will return because Rasulullāh (s) said, “*the best action is to wait for relief from suffering (intidhār al-faraj)*”... our Shi’ah will continue suffering until the *dhuhur* (appearance) of my son whose coming was told by Rasulullāh (s) that he will fill the earth with justice and equity after it is filled with injustice and tyranny. Therefore be patient, the earth will finally belong to the righteous servants of Allāh... and salām on you and on all our Shi’ah and the mercy and blessings of Allāh, and blessings of Muhammad (s) and his family (‘a).’



### **The Miracle of Praying for Rain**

In one incident when Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) was imprisoned, there was a drought in Samarra. People suffered immensely as all the water dried up and their crops died. The Muslims organized many prayers for rain but no rain came.

Then the Christians organized prayers and whenever their priest would raise his hand and pray, it would rain. Many Muslims began to doubt Islām and the Caliph did not know what to do. Finally he came to the prison and asked Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) for help and said to him,

‘Save the nation (*ummah*) of your grandfather, because people are in doubt of Islām!’

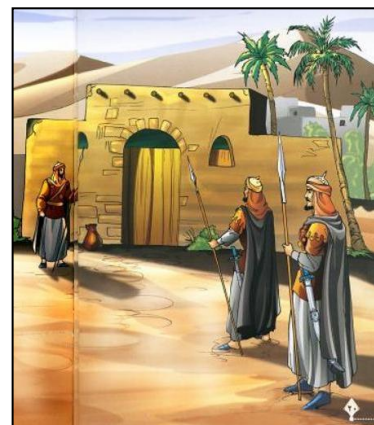
Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) was taken to see the Christian priest as he prayed and he noticed the priest was raising one hand with a closed fist. He asked the Caliph’s men to take away what was in the priest’s fist and they found a small bone in it. The Imām then told the priest to pray again without it and even though the clouds had started to gather earlier, they all cleared away and the sun shone brightly and there was no rain.

Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) then revealed the priest’s secret. The tiny piece of bone was taken from the grave of a nabi (prophet) and whenever a nabi’s hands (or a part of his body!) are raised to the heavens, it brings rain as a mercy from Allāh. And now Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) raised his hands in prayer. Even though he was not a nabi, he of course was the flesh and blood of Rasulullāh (s) and the direct descendant of Nabi Ibrahim (‘a) through all the prophets. He was the inheritor of all the prophets and messengers and the Imām of the Time. And as he prayed, it began raining heavily and the people rejoiced. The Caliph now could not imprison the Imām right away so he allowed him to return home.

### **The Martyrdom of Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a)**

Reports began coming to the Caliph that a child may have been born to Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) and that he was the *Mahdi* and the final Imām.

The Caliph increased his spying on the Imām’s house and finally decided to poison Imām al-Askari (‘a). When Imām Ali al-Hādī (‘a) was martyred in 254 AH, Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) was only 22 years old. The following year Imām al-Mahdi (‘a) was born. And when Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) was poisoned, it was 8<sup>th</sup> Rabi al-Awwal 260 AH. This means Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) was 28 years old and his Imāmah lasted for 6 years only. Imām al-Mahdi (‘a) was just 5 years old at the time.

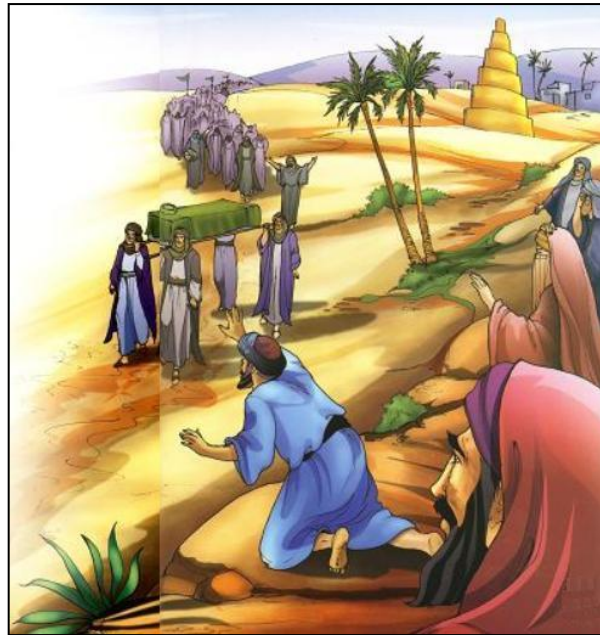




The last time that Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) was freed from prison, he had suffered so much that his hair had turned white even though he was in his 20s. Imām al-Mahdi (‘a) oversaw his father’s funeral. When Imam Hasan al-Askari (‘a)’s brother Ja’far bin Ali tried to lead the funeral prayers (salāt al-mayyit), a young boy came into the room and told his uncle to move away. This was Imām al-Mahdi (‘a) who led the funeral prayers for his father.

The market places in Samarra were closed on that day for mourning and Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) was buried next to his father Imām Ali al-Hādi (‘a).

Muslims visit Samarra even today to pay their respects to the Imām, to seek Allāh’s blessings through the Imāms, to recite duas to Allāh at the holy place and as a sign of loyalty to Rasulullāh (s) and his household (Ahl al-Bayt (‘a)).

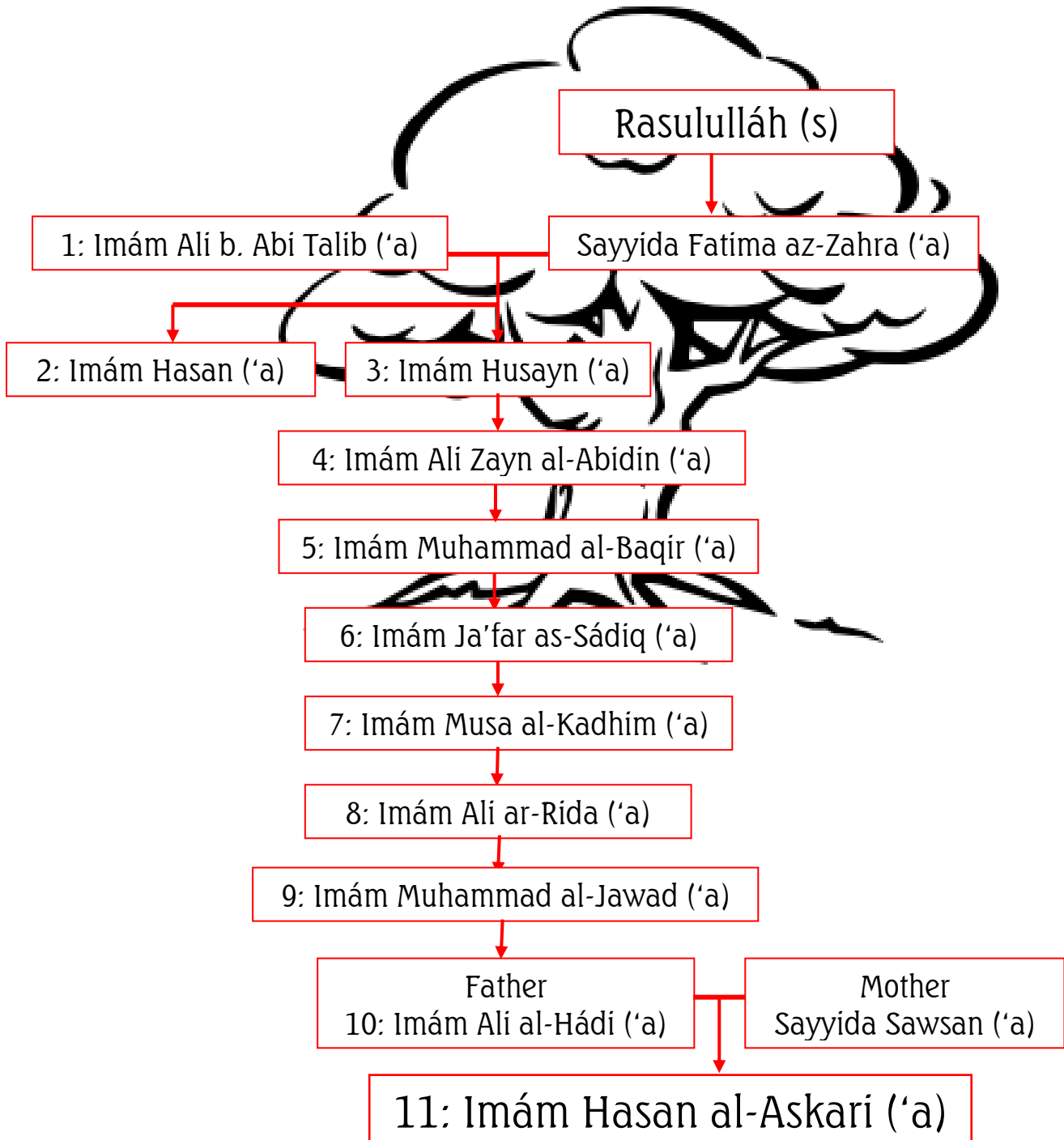


Some of the ahādith of Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) are:

- All of filth and sin are placed in one house and its key is lying.
- It is bad manners to show happiness in the presence of someone who is grieving.
- When a child shows disrespect and disobedience to his father it is a sign that (if ignored) it will lead to the child cutting relations with the father when he grows up.
- There is nothing better than two qualities: faith in Allāh and helping your fellow (Muslim) brothers and sisters.
- How bad it is for a faithful (*mu’min*) to have a desire that will humiliate him.

- Good looks is outer beauty and intelligence is inner beauty.
- One who sows evil will reap regret.
- The heart of a fool is in his mouth and the mouth of a wise person is in his heart.
- Humbleness is to say salām to everyone you meet and to sit anywhere in a gathering without expecting special treatment.

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



**Wilādah :** Madina, 8<sup>th</sup> Rabi ath-Thāni, 232 AH  
**Shahādah:** Samarra, 8<sup>th</sup> Rabi al-Awwal 260 AH

## Lesson 6

# Imām al-Hujjah b. al-Hasan al-Mahdí ('atfs)

### His Birth

On Friday 15<sup>th</sup> Sha'bān 255 AH, the twelfth and last Imām of Islām from the Ahl al-Bayt of Rasulullāh (s) was born. His is our living Imām whom Allāh has blessed with a very long life without aging until such time as when Allāh wishes for him to establish peace and Islām in the whole world.

His name is Muhammad – the same as the name of Rasulullāh (s) – but he is never referred to by his own name. Instead he is referred to with titles like 'al-Mahdí' (the one guided by Allāh), al-Qāim (the one who will rise to establish justice), al-Hujjah (the proof of Allāh), and so on. And after his name, instead of saying 'alayhis salām' (peace be on him) we say "*ajjalalāhu ta'āla farajahu sharif*" or even just "*ajjalalāhu farajahu*", which means 'may Allāh hasten his return').

On the night before he was born, Imām Hasan al-Askari ('a) called his aunt, Sayyida Hakima the daughter of Imām Muhammad al-Jawād ('a) to come and spend the night at his home. This was a Thursday night. And so she came over to his home for dinner and to spend the night there.

Imām Hasan al-Askari ('a) said to his aunt, 'Tonight is the eve of the 15<sup>th</sup> of Sha'bān. Allāh will reveal in this night His proof (*hujjah*) over the earth and the child born tonight is very special to Allāh. Through him Allāh will give life to the earth again after it is dead.'

Sayyida Hakima asked her nephew Imām Hasan al-Askari ('a), 'who is the mother?'

'Narjis,' replied Imām al-Askari.

'Nargis?' asked Sayyida Hakima with amazement. 'But she shows no sign of being pregnant?'

'It is as I tell you,' replied Imām Hasan al-Askari ('a). Allāh had hidden the pregnancy as well because the spies of the Caliph even had maids in the house spying to see if the wife of Imām al-Askari ('a) was pregnant.

Sayyida Hakima sat besides Sayyida Nargis the whole night waiting for the miracle to happen. Just before the start of dawn when the sky was still filled with stars, Sayyida Nargis showed signs of childbirth and Sayyida Hakima narrates that Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs), the child predicted by Rasulullāh (s) was born.



Imām Hasan ('a) took his son, who was born pure and purified and said to him, 'speak my son, by the power of Allāh. Speak O proof (*hujjah*) of Allāh! O successor of prophets and the last of the Imāms! Speak O Khalifa of the Godconscious (*mutaqin*)!'

And a miracle occurred. The child began speaking and recited:

### Bismillāhir Rahmānir Rahim

﴿وَتُرِيدُ أَنْ نَمُنَّ عَلَى الَّذِينَ اسْتُضِعُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَنَجْعَلَهُمْ أَئِمَّةً وَنَجْعَلَهُمُ الْوَارِثِينَ وَتُؤَيِّدُ بِنُحُوتِهِمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَتُرِي فِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامَانَ وَجُنُودَهُمَا مِنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَحْذَرُونَ﴾

*And We desired to show favour to those who were considered weak in the land, and to make them Imāms, and to make them the inheritors, and to establish them in the land, and to show Fir'aun and Hāmān and their armies from them that of which they were afraid.*

- Surah al-Qasas, 28:5-6

As Imām al-Mahdi (‘atfs) recited these āyāt, tears fell from the eyes of Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) out of awe for the words of Allāh and His promise.

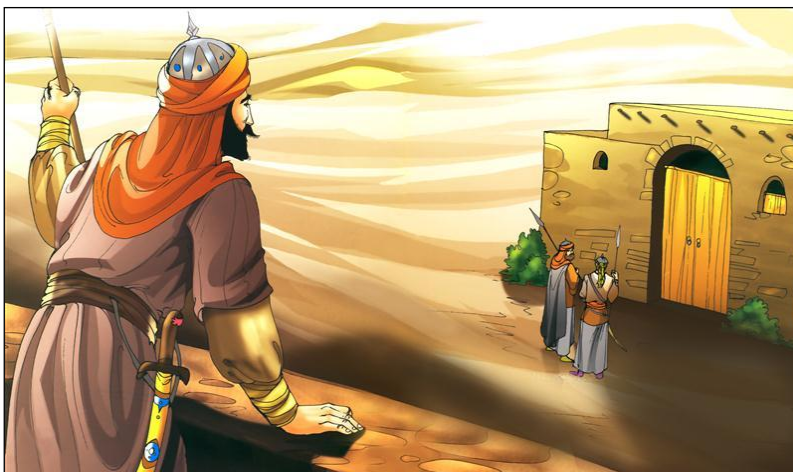
### **The Hiding and the Showing of the Birth**

On one hand Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) had to hide his son because of the close watch of the Caliph and his men, who were already on the lookout for any child who may succeed him.

On the other hand, the Imām had to make sure that some prominent Shi’ah leaders meet the child and see him with their own eyes so that there is no doubt in the existence of Imām al-Mahdi (‘atfs) even after the martyrdom of Imām al-Askari (‘a).

And so Imām al-Mahdi (‘atfs) was kept hidden from public eyes most of

the time but on special occasions Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) would introduce his son to a trusted person and say to him, ‘I have a son now but this must remain a secret with you and you must not reveal it to people for now.’



A third task for Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) was to train the Shi’ah to communicate with Imām al-Hujjah al-Mahdi (‘atfs) without seeing him directly and in person. In order to do this, many at times when the Shi’ah would come to Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) with questions, he would speak to them from behind a curtain or he would pass them answers in writing through a messenger.

On one occasion Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) showed his young son to the very close Shi’ah and said to them, ‘this is your Imām after me, and my successor over you. Obey him and do not become divided after me

otherwise you will be lost. You will never see him again after this day so if you have any questions, then direct it to Sa'id bin Uthmān and accept what he tells you for he will be the representative of your Imām to you.'

And so after the martyrdom of Imām Hasan al-Askari ('a) in 260 AH, the Imāmah and the Ghaybat as-Sughra of Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs) began. And Sa'id bin Uthmān, a close and trusted companion of Imām Hasan al-Askari ('a) became the 1<sup>st</sup> safir (ambassador) of Imām al-Hujjah ('atfs). Sa'id b. Uthmān passed away in 267 AH and by the orders of the Imām, the next safir was Sa'id's son Muhammad bin Sa'id. After him, the 3<sup>rd</sup> safir was Husayn bin Rawh and after him, the 4<sup>th</sup> and last safir was Ali bin Muhammad as-Summāri. He remained as the safir for several years until 329 AH when he passed away. In this way the Ghaybat as-Sughra lasted 69 years.

### **Al-Ghaybat as-Sughra**

Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs) was to have two ghaybas. The first one was a short one that last 69 years and is referred to as al-Ghaybat as-Sughra (The Minor Occultation). During this time Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs) communicated with the Shi'ah through his ambassadors.



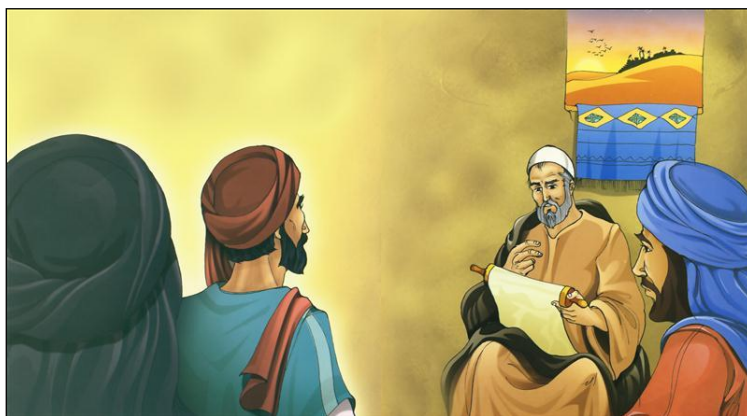
After 69 years had passed, then the Ghaybat al-Kubra (The Major Occultation) began. From then onwards there was no ambassador (safir) and the general scholars ('ulama) would guide the people. But when they were in trouble or needed an answer, the Imām would help them indirectly or even directly without them recognizing him. The Ghaybat al-Kubra continues to this day. All Muslims believe that before the world

ends, Allāh will send Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs) to fill the earth with peace and justice. All Muslims also believe that the Mahdi ('atfs) is a descendant of Rasulullāh (s) and his name is Muhammad - the same name as Rasulullāh (s). But the Sunni Muslims believe the Mahdi ('atfs) will be born in the future whereas we, the Shi'ah believe the earth can never be without someone who is the proof (hujjah) of Allāh. This proof (hujjah) is the protector of the Qur'ān and of Islām even if his work is not seen directly.

### **Announcing the End of Ghaybat as-Sughra**

6 days before the passing away of the last safir, Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs) sent out a message to him to let all the Shi'ah know that there will be no direct representative or contact after him and that the Ghaybat al-Kubra had begun. The message said:

*'Bismillāhir Rahmānir Rahim. O Ali bin Muhammad as-Summāri. May Allāh reward your brothers in faith over your loss; for you will die between now and the next six days. Therefore set your affairs and do not appoint anyone in your place after you. For the complete ghayba has now occurred. There will be no appearance (dhuhur) now except by the permission of Allāh, the most High. And that will occur after a long time when people's hearts have become hard and the earth is filled with injustice. There will come people to my Shi'ah who will claim to have seen me. Let it be known: anyone who claims to see me before the coming of Sufyāni and 'the Shout', will be a liar. And there is no power except with Allāh, the Highest and the Mighty.'*



The 'Sufyāni' that the message of Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs) mentions is an evil man from the descendants of Abu Sufyān (i.e. an Umayyad) who will rise just before Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs) to create mischief on the earth and he will try and fight Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs). And 'the Shout' is a loud



cry that will be heard in the whole world just before the coming of Imām al-Mahdi (‘atfs). Everyone will understand it in his or her own language and it will announce that the Mahdi (‘atfs) has now returned.

### **The Reappearance (*Dhuhur*) of Imām al-Mahdi (‘atfs)**

When Imām al-Mahdi (‘atfs) returns, he will first come to Makkah. He will pray 2 rak’ahs near the Ka’bah and Maqām Ibrāhim (‘a) and then he will address the people. In his speech he will address the whole world and the people of all religions based on the teachings of all the prophets whose heir he is. Then he will remind people of the hadith of Thaḳalayn from Rasūlullāh (s) and the right of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) and the injustices done to them.

Thereafter Imām al-Mahdi (‘atfs) will outline his goal. It will be to establish Islām as the universal religion for all humankind and Tawhid as the central message that all prophets came to preach and what all divinely-revealed Books taught. He will invite people to the obedience of the One God – Allāh – and the obedience to Rasūlullāh (s), the message of the Qur’ān and to him, the Imām of the Time. Imām al-Mahdi (‘atfs) will call for reviving whatever the Qur’ān upholds and ending whatever the Qur’ān condemns, such as falsehood, idol worship, atheism, polytheism and the innovations and practices that are unIslāmic.

### **The 313**

The first people to pledge allegiance (i.e. give *bay’ah*) will number 313. They will be the most pious, learned and courageous people on the earth at that time and will come from different parts of the world. Through a miracle, Allāh will bring them all together to Makkah for this greatest event in the history of humankind. This number – 313 – is the same as the number of Muslims who fought on the side of Rasūlullāh (s) in the first battle of Islām, the Battle of Badr in 2 AH.



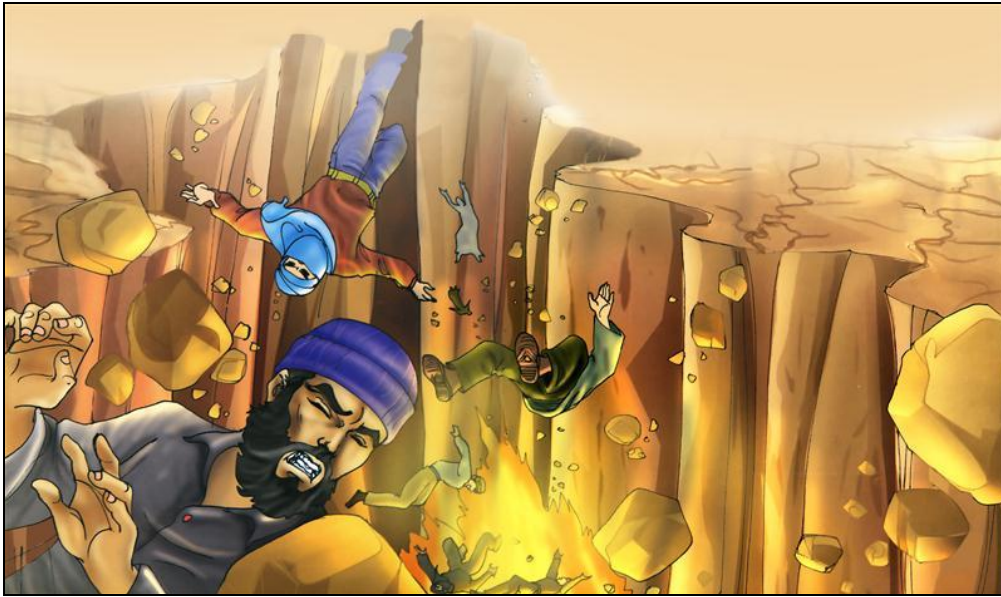
These 313 will give their pledge of allegiance to Imām al-Mahdi (‘atfs) while he stands between Rukn and Maqām. Rukn is the corner of the Ka’bah where the Hajar al-Aswad is lodged and Maqām is the Maqām of Ibrāhim. In other words, near the door of the Ka’bah.

Thereafter Imām al-Mahdi (‘atfs) will assign these 313 as his representatives in different parts of the world.

### **The Coming of Sufyāni**

As mentioned before, Sufyāni will be an Umayyad and a descendant of the children of Abu Sufyān, like Mu’āwiya and Yazid. And according to the hadith of Rasulullāh (s), he will kill many innocent people in Iraq, Egypt, Palestine and other parts of the Middle East. Sufyāni will also kill many women, children and elderly and he will finally set his capital in Shām (Damascus) just like his forefathers had done.

When Sufyāni finds out that Imām al-Mahdi (‘atfs) has appeared in Makkah, he will send an army to fight the Imām but when they army of Sufyāni will be between Madina and Makkah, the earth will open up and most of them will be destroyed.



Imām al-Mahdi (‘atfs) will then move to Iraq and make Kufa his capital. And from there Imām al-Mahdi (‘atfs) will go towards Shām with a huge army and fight Sufyāni until all of evil is destroyed and there is peace and justice on the earth.

### **The Return of Nabi Isa (‘a)**

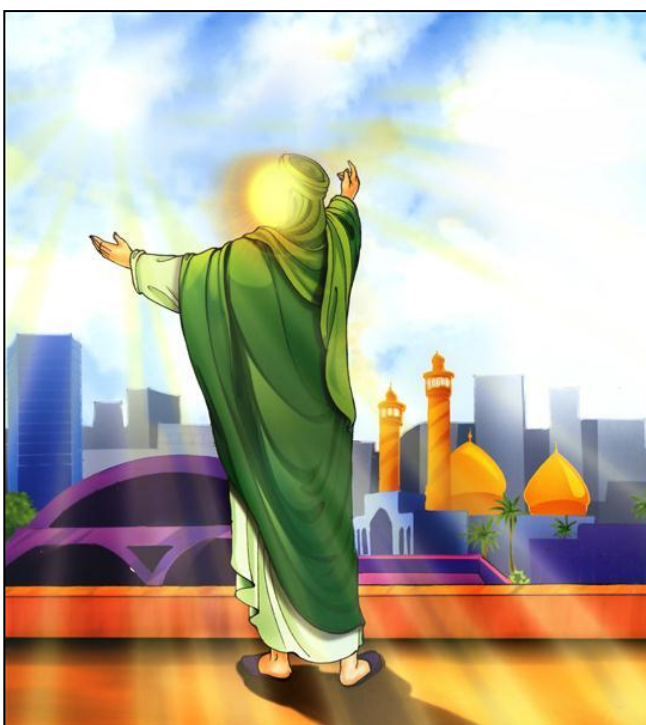
When Imām al-Hujjah al-Mahdi (‘atfs) enters Jerusalem, a very important miracle will take place. And that is the descent of Nabi Isa (‘a) from the heavens. This is a prophecy that even the Christians believe in (i.e. the return of Jesus) and it is recorded in many ahādith.



Nabi Isa ('a) will refuse to lead the prayers and will insist that Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs) should lead the salāh and he will pray behind Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs). This will show and prove to the Christians and the whole world that the message of Rasulullāh (s) was the final message and is to prevail over all other religions.

Since the majority in the world are Christians, when Nabi Isa ('a) shows his support for Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs) and he denies being the son of God (or God), a large number of Christians will change their understanding of religion and will join Islām as a universal message of monotheism and belief in one God only, without any partners.

Then with the majority of the world following Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs), the spread of justice and peace will increase. And a final evil will be Dajjāl – a person who will try and cheat people into believing that he is god. The Christians call Dajjāl 'the Antichrist' and with Nabi Isa ('a)'s help, he too will be killed.



After many battles and wars, justice and peace will prevail. The whole planet will worship Allāh and human beings will learn to live on the earth without greed and fear, with love and devotion for Allāh and with selfless service to other creatures of Allāh.

Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs) will unveil a tremendous amount of knowledge to human beings because of which all forms of illnesses will be removed, the heavens and earth will give out all its blessings, and human beings will learn to travel to far regions of outer space.

After his *dhuhur*, Imām al-Mahdi (‘atfs) will be known as and addressed by everyone as ‘Baqiyatullah’ (The remainder of Allāh) meaning the last proof of Allāh on the earth.

### The Waiting (*al-Intidhār*)

Waiting for Imām al-Mahdi (‘atfs) to return is called *Intidhār*. It is not only the Shi’ah or the Muslims who are waiting for someone to come and establish peace and justice on the earth. Every group of people has some record in their books of history and religion of a saviour that they are waiting for.

We should never doubt in the presence of Imām al-Mahdi (‘atfs). If Allāh could raise Rasulullāh (s) physically all the way to the heavens for *mi’rāj*, and to raise Nabi Isa (‘a) and keep him alive in the heavens until he returns, it is very easy for Allāh to keep someone alive on the earth for a long time. We have many examples of others, good and bad that have lived a long time on the earth or are still alive from even long before Imām al-Mahdi (‘a).



Nabi Nuh (‘a), for example, lived for 950 years according to the Qur’ān and according to some narrations that was only before the flood but he actually lived for 2500 years. Besides Nabi Isa (‘a), Nabi Khidr (‘a), Nabi Idris (‘a) and Nabi Ilyās (‘a) are also alive. We also know that Shaytān (Iblis) has been alive even from before Nabi Adam (‘a) was created. So if Allāh can allow so many others from His creation, good and evil, to remain alive for as long as He pleases, it is very easy for Him to keep Imām al-Mahdi (‘a) alive as His proof and representative on the earth for so long.

## During Intidhār

During the time of Intidhār, it is the duty of all the followers of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) to work for the good of humanity and to be role models for others on how human beings will live after the establishment of peace and justice when the Imām returns.

Naturally, those whose values, habits and character are most similar to the values that Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs) will strive to establish are those who will 'fit' into the new world most easily.

Obeying Allāh and keeping away from *harām* are the first duties we have towards showing our loyalty to Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs). Thereafter serving humanity and praying for the return of the Imām ('atfs) are also part of our duties to the Imām.

Just as we are doing 'intidhār' (waiting) for the Imām, so is the Imām doing our 'intidhār'. We are waiting for him to return because we want to see justice and peace established on the earth and the removal of all our suffering. The Imām ('atfs) is waiting for us to show we are ready for his return and that we are pious and sincere and not greedy for the world and selfish. The Imām will only return when Allāh wills it and that will happen when we are ready to follow the Imām ('atfs) sincerely.



## Some Ayāt of the Qur'ān Concerning Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs)

﴿هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُشْرِكُونَ﴾

*It is He who has sent His Apostle with the guidance and the religion of truth, that He may make it prevail over all religions, though the polytheists should be averse.*

- Surah at-Tawbah, 9:33

﴿وَلَقَدْ كَتَبْنَا فِي الزَّبُورِ مِنْ بَعْدِ الذِّكْرِ أَنَّ الْأَرْضَ يَرِثُهَا عِبَادِيَ الصَّالِحُونَ﴾

*Certainly We wrote in the Zabūr, after the Reminder (Tawrāt) that:  
'Indeed My righteous servants shall inherit the earth.'*

- Surah al-Anbiya, 21:105

﴿الَّذِينَ إِنْ مَكَّنَّاهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَمَرُوا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَنَهَوْا  
عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَاللَّهُ عَاقِبَةُ الْأُمُورِ﴾

*Those who, if We granted them power in the land, will establish the  
salāh, give the zakāh, and bid what is right and forbid what is wrong.  
And with Allāh rests the outcome of all matters.*

- Surah Hajj, 22:41

﴿وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كَمَا  
اسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ وَلَيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِينَهُمُ الَّذِي ارْتَضَى 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

﴿وَتُرِيدُ أَنْ نَمُنَّ عَلَى الَّذِينَ اسْتُضِعُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَنَجْعَلَهُمْ أَئِمَّةً وَنَجْعَلَهُمُ  
الْوَارِثِينَ﴾

*And We desired to show favour to those who were considered weak in  
the land, and to make them Imāms, and to make them the inheritors.*

- Surah al-Qasas, 28:5

﴿...وَيَوْمَئِذٍ يَفْرَحُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ بِنَصْرِ اللَّهِ يَنْصُرُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ وَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَا يُخْلِفُ اللَّهُ وَعْدَهُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ﴾

and on that day the faithful will rejoice at Allāh's help. He helps whomever He wishes, and He is the All-mighty, the All-merciful. [This is] a promise of Allāh: Allāh does not break His promise, but most people do not know.

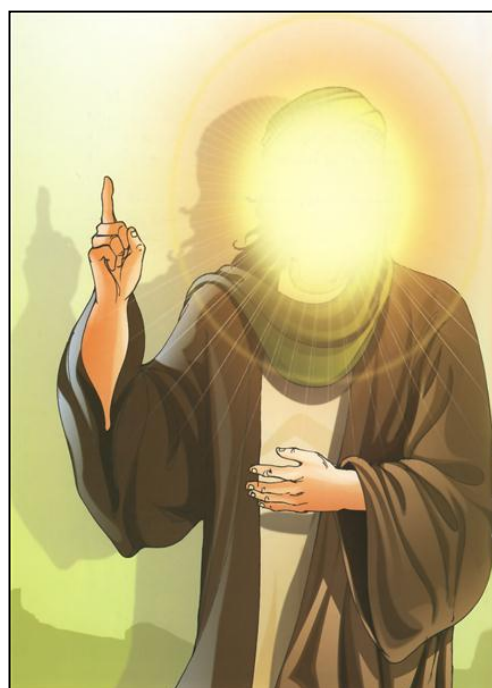
- Surah ar-Rūm, 30:4-6

### Ahādith from the Ma'sumeen ('a)

There are numerous *ahādith* (traditions) and *riwāyāt* (reports) from the Ma'sumeen ('a) concerning Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs) and the *ghayba*.

From Rasullāh (s) is reported that he said, 'The Mahdi is from my descendants. He will have a *ghayba* (disappearance) during which time there will be a lot of confusion in the world. When he comes forth, he will bring the treasures of the prophets and he will fill the earth with justice and equity after it is filled with injustice and tyranny.'

From Imām Husayn ('a) who said, 'The master of this matter (*sāhib al-amr*) will have two *ghaybas*. One of them will be so long that some people will say, "he must have died" ...'



From Imām Ali Zayn al-Abidin ('a), who said, 'The Qāim will be like (Nabi) Nuh ('a), that is having a very long life.'

From Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) that he said, 'If you hear your Imām has gone into *ghayba* then do not deny it.'

From Imām Musa al-Kādhim ('a), he said, 'I am an Upholder of Truth (*Qāim bi al-Haqq*) but the Qāim who will purify the earth of the enemies



of Allāh and fill it with justice as it will be filled with injustice, is the fifth descendant from my children. He will have a *ghayba* that will last a very long time...'

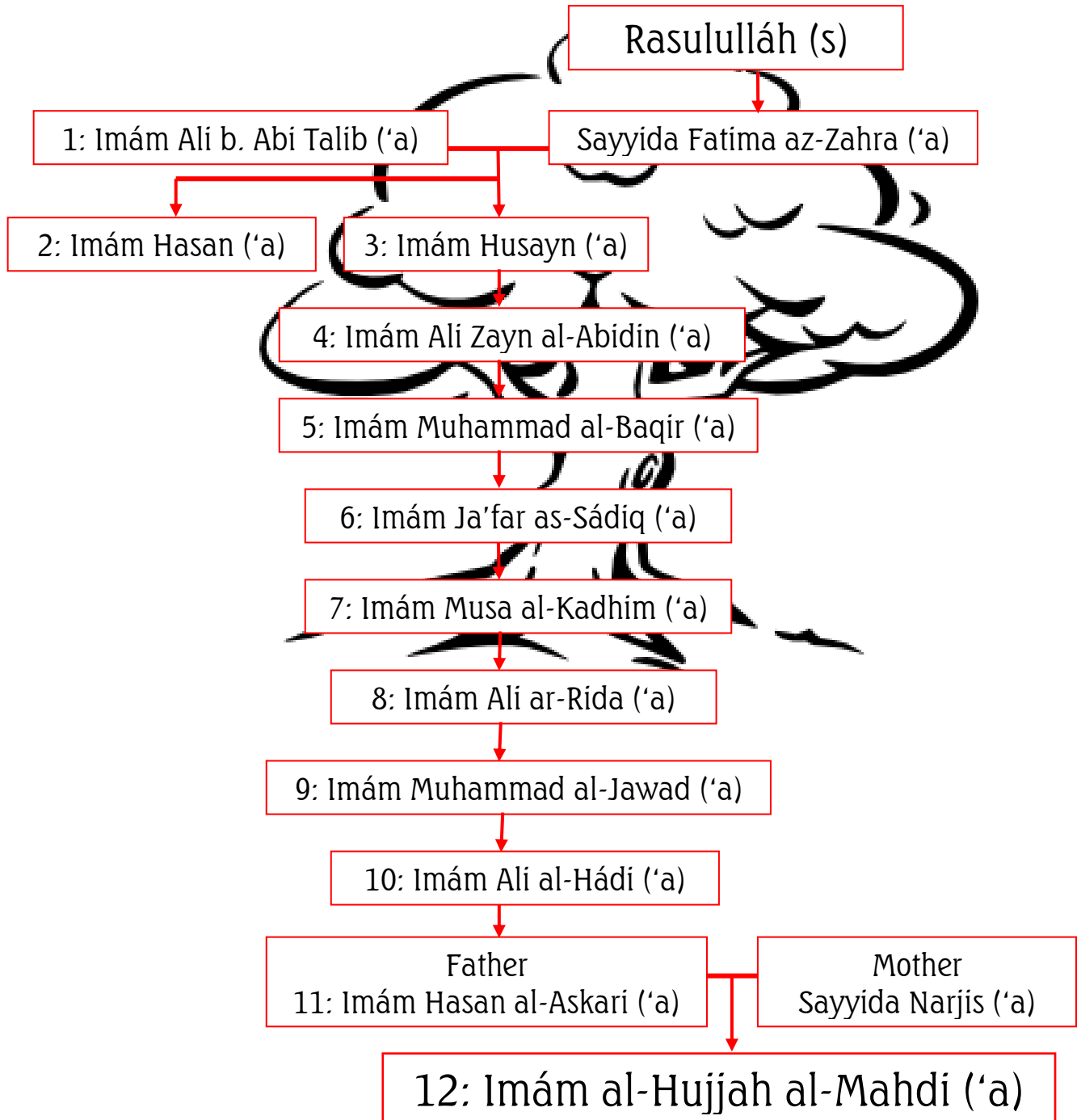
From Imām Hasan al-Askari ('a), 'My son Muhammad is the Imām and the proof (*hujjah*) after me. Anyone who dies without knowing him will die a death of ignorance (*jāhiliya*). He will have a *ghayba* during which the ignorant will be confused.'

And similarly there are lots of ahādith from all the other Imāms as well.

Some of the ahādith of Imām al-Hujjah, al-Mahdi, Sāhib az-Zamān ('atfs) are:

- Allāh is with us... and the truth is with us. So it does not scare us who opposes us.
- Allāh has decided that the truth will prevail and that falsehood will vanish.
- I am the one who will come forth and fill the earth with justice as it will be filled with injustice.
- Whoever wants to ask Allāh for something, let him or her do *ghusl* on a Thursday night after midnight and then sit on his or her prayer mat (and pray for his or her wish).
- Nothing humiliates Shaytān like *salāh*.
- The way you will benefit from me during my *ghaybah* is the way you benefit from the sun when it is hidden from you behind clouds (but you still enjoy its light and warmth).

## Imām al-Hujjah b. al-Hasan al-Mahdi ('a)'s Family Tree



**Wilādah :** Samarra, 15<sup>th</sup> Sha'ban 255 AH

The current Islāmic year is \_\_\_\_\_ AH so the age of our Imām is \_\_\_\_\_.

## Lesson 7

# Karbala and Ashura

Every Muharram we remember Imām Husayn (‘a) and his sacrifices in Karbala. Imām Husayn (‘a) left Madina in the month of Rajab 60 AH and went to Makkah where he stayed until Dhul Hijjah 60 AH before leaving towards Kufa and finally turning to Karbala and arriving there on 2<sup>nd</sup> Muharram 61 AH. The food and water in the camp of Imām Husayn (‘a) ran out on 7<sup>th</sup> Muharram and they all stayed hungry and thirsty for three days. On the 10<sup>th</sup> of Muharram, the day of Ashura, Imām Husayn (‘a) along with 72 men from his family and his companions and friends, fought bravely against 30,000 men from Yazid’s army.

The army of Yazid was only trying to kill Imām Husayn (‘a) because he refused to accept Yazid as the ruler of the Muslims. Yazid was a drunk and sinful person who did not respect Allāh or Rasulullāh (s) or the religion of Islām.

If you are not familiar with the events of Ashura, your teacher will tell you about some of the brave men in the camp of Imām Husayn (a’) including:

Habib bin Madhāhir and Muslim bin Awsaja, the tribal leaders and companions of Imām Husayn (‘a). Hadrat Ali al-Akbar, the 18 yr old son of Imām Husayn (‘a). Hadrat Abbās, the brother and commander of Imām Husayn (‘a). Hadrat Qāsim b. al-Hasan, the 13 yr old son of Imām Hasan (‘a), Awn and Muhammad, the two teenage sons of Sayyida Zaynab (‘a), the sister of Imām Husayn (‘a), and even Hadrat Ali al-Asghar, the 6 month old baby of Imām Husayn (‘a).

Your teacher will also tell you briefly of how, after the battle, the heads of Imām Husayn (‘a) and all the brave men in his camp were cut off and put on spears and how the tents of the women were burnt and all the women and children along with Imām Ali Zayn al-Abidin (‘a) were taken as prisoners to Kufa and then to Yazid’s palace in Sham.

The tragedy of Karbala is the greatest disaster in human history. No religion has mistreated the family of their own prophet like the so-called

'Muslims' of Sham and Kufa mistreated the family (Ahl al-Bayt) of Rasulullāh (s).

Imām Husayn ('a) taught us to be brave and never to give in to a tyrant even if we have to give our lives. We should always remember Karbala even when it is not Muharram because it gives us courage and increases our love for Imām Husayn (a') and all the members of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) of Rasulullāh (s).

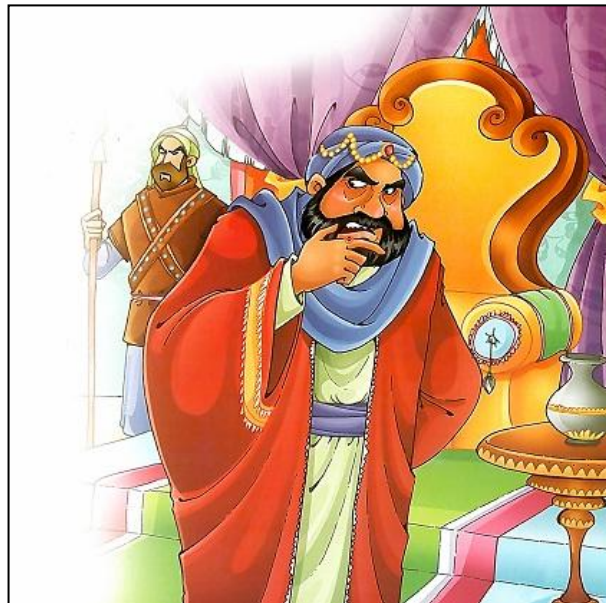
## Always Remember Karbala

During the time of Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a), the Muslim ruler was called Mansur al-Dawāniqi. He was from the Banu Abbās and was a cruel and heartless man who really hated the family of Rasulullāh (s).

Mansur was very jealous that the Muslims loved Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) and that so many of them were studying under him and learning religion and other sciences from the Imām.

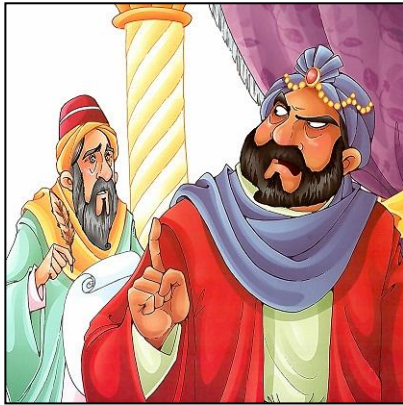
Mansur was also afraid that if Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) becomes very famous, then people would overthrow him and follow Imām as-Sādiq ('a) who was the rightful successor (*khalifah*) of Rasulullāh (s).

And so Mansur began frightening the Muslims who followed Imām as-Sādiq ('a). He would imprison and torture the Shi'ahs of Imām as-Sādiq ('a) and try and kill anyone who was close to the Imām.



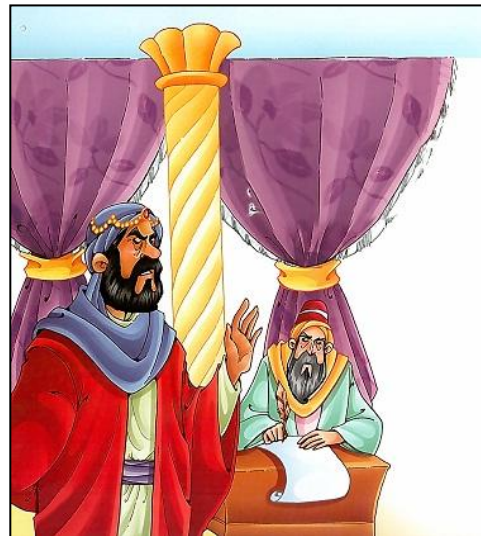
One day, Mansur al-Dawāniqi kept pacing up and down in his palace, thinking of how to get rid of Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a). Then he shouted, 'Where is the scribe?!'

A scribe was a man who wrote all the orders of the caliph. So he came in quivering with fear, holding his paper and pen. Then he said with a trembling voice, 'I am here, master. What do you command me to write?!'



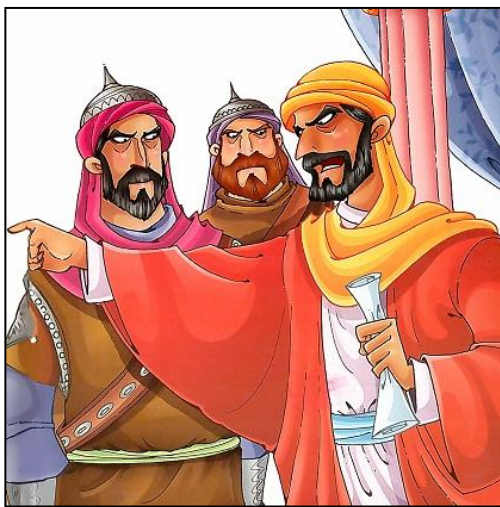
Mansur raised his head with pride and said to the scribe, 'Write exactly what I tell you, word for word, do you understand?!' 'Yes, master. I understand', replied the scribe.

Then Mansur began dictating to the scribe who began writing his words. 'Write,' he commanded, 'From the Abbāsi Caliph, Mansur al-Dawāniqi to the governor of Madina, Hasan bin Zayd. I command you to gather your soldiers immediately and to burn down the house of the Ahl al-Bayt, Rasullullāh's family and whoever is in it so that their name is forgotten forever!'



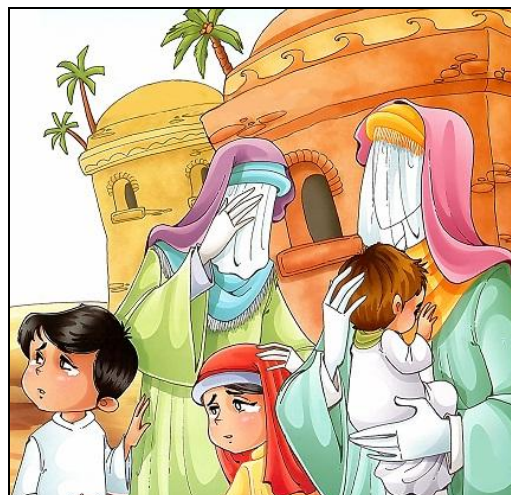
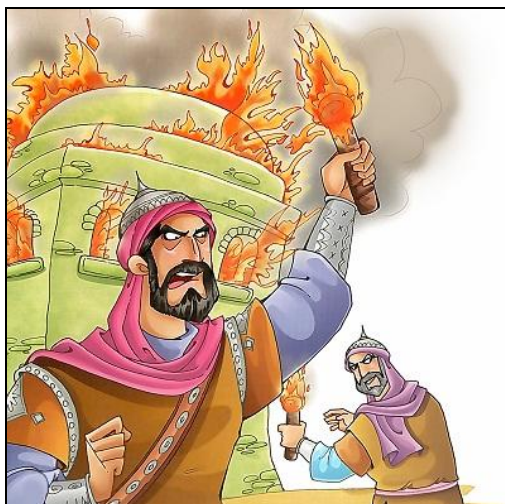
When the letter of Mansur al-Dawāniqi reached his governor Hasan bin Zayd in Madina, he read it and understood the orders of the Caliph. So he gathered the most hard-hearted and cruelest soldiers in his army, those who hated

Rasullullāh (s)'s family the most, and said to them, 'The Caliph Mansur in Baghdad has sent orders to burn down the house of Ja'far as-Sādiq so that anyone who is in the house will burn and die as well.'



The soldiers of the Banu Abbās took their fire torches and went to the house of Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) and began to set it on fire. They went in and set all the furniture on fire as well

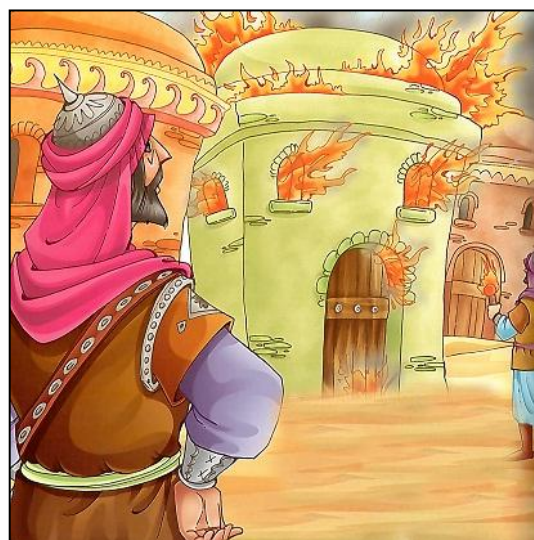
so that everything and everyone inside the house would burn as well.



All the women and children from the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) that were in the house ran out. They were frightened and the children began to cry. But Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) was still inside the house and had not yet come out.

The cruel soldiers were very happy to see the house of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) on fire and all the women and children frightened, running all over the place.

They were even more delighted when they realized that Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) had not come out and that the women and children were screaming and calling out his name and asking someone to save him because he was still inside the burning house.



Just then, the people saw Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) coming out of the flames and walking out calmly and slowly and the fire was not harming him at all.

Then he went back into the burning house and calmly came back out again. All the people standing by including those cruel soldiers saw Imām as-Sādiq ('a) coming out unharmed.

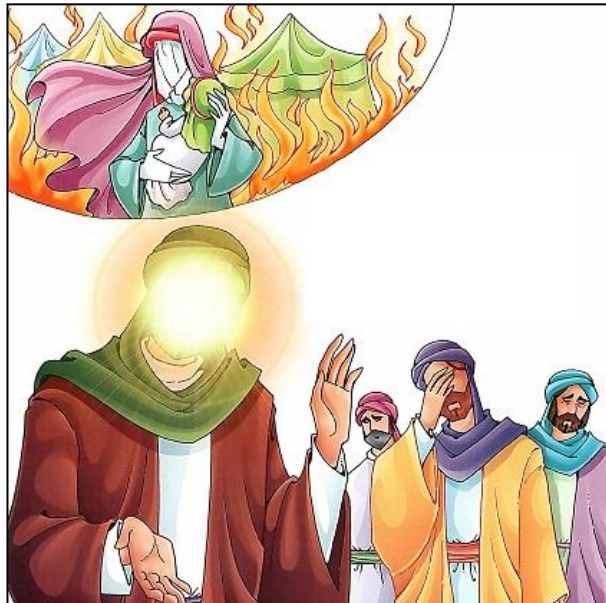
The women and children from Rasulullāh (s)'s family were overjoyed that he was safe. The soldiers were shocked and could not believe their eyes.



Then Imām as-Sādiq (‘a) said to the people around him, ‘I am the son of Nabi Ibrahim (‘a), the friend of Allāh.’ Imām as-Sādiq (‘a)

said this because Nabi Ibrahim (‘a) was the ancestor of Rasulullāh (s) and Imām as-Sādiq (‘a). When Nabi Ibrahim (‘a) had broken the idols in the time of the tyrant King Namrud, he was thrown into a fire and it did not harm him either.

The Muslims in Madina were happy and rejoiced that Imām Ja’far as-Sādiq (‘a) had been saved from the fire. But they saw that Imām as-Sādiq (‘a) was very sad and he was crying. So they asked him why he was crying so much until tears were flowing down his beard!!



Imām as-Sādiq (‘a) said very sadly, ‘When I saw the women and children in my family running from the fire and screaming, I remembered the women and children of my grandfather Imām Husayn (‘a) on the day of Ashura in Karbala. But when the army of Yazid was burning the tents after the martyrdom of Imām Husayn (‘a) and the women and children ran out into the wilderness there was no one to help or protect them!’

