

# 2.4 Imām Ḥasan’s Courageousness

## OBJECTIVES

### WE WILL:

- Explain the difficulties of the first 37 years of Imām Ḥasan’s life.
- Analyze the position that Imām Ḥasan had in the eyes of the Prophet ﷺ, and how that informs us about his status as an inerrant guide.
- Outline the various ways in which Imām Ḥasan showed courage during his *Imāmah* by acting with wisdom when he was faced with very difficult decisions.
- Answer some of the accusations that were made against Imām Ḥasan, and prove how they were false.

## AN OVERVIEW OF IMĀM ḤASAN

<b>Name</b>	Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib
<b>Kunyah</b>	Abū Muḥammad
<b>Title</b>	Al-Mujtabā (The Chosen One)
<b>Parents</b>	Imām ‘Alī and Sayyidah Fāṭimah
<b>Date of Birth</b>	15th of the month of Ramaḍān, 3 AH
<b>Birthplace</b>	Medina, Arabia
<b>Duration of Imāmah</b>	10 years
<b>Date of Martyrdom</b>	7th or 28th Ṣafar, 50 AH
<b>Place of Martyrdom</b>	Medina, Arabia
<b>Cause of Martyrdom</b>	Poisoned by his wife Ja’dah (upon the order of Mu’āwiyah)
<b>Lifespan</b>	47 Years
<b>Location of Grave</b>	Jannatul Baqī in Medina, Arabia

## TIMELINE OF IMĀM AL-ḤASAN

3 AH  
625 AD

• Birth of Imām al-Ḥasan

11 AH  
633 AD

• During Imāmah of Imām ‘Alī

Imām Ḥasan ؑ was the first grandson of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, and the first child born to Sayyidah Fāṭimah ؑ and Imām 'Alī ؑ. He lived at the same time as his grandfather and mother for about seven years before they both passed away. When he was 37 years of age, his father Imām 'Alī ؑ was killed. By the command of Allah ﷻ, Imām Ḥasan ؑ became the next Imām, and he was poisoned at the age of 47.

## IMĀM ḤASAN'S BIRTH IN THE YEAR 3 AH

Imām Ḥasan al-Mujtabā ؑ was born on the 15th of the month of Ramaḍān in the year 3 AH. At his birth, Sayyidah Fāṭimah ؑ asked Imām 'Alī ؑ to name the baby. He said: "I will not precede the Messenger of Allah (*Rasūlullāh*) in naming him."

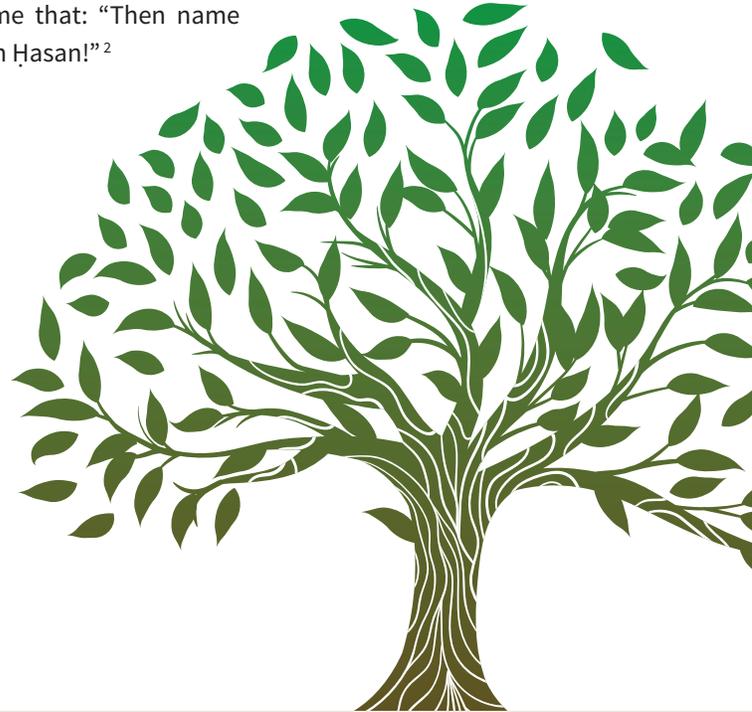
When the Prophet ﷺ came to see the newborn baby, he asked Imām 'Alī ؑ: "Have you named him?" Imām 'Alī ؑ responded: "I will not precede you in naming him!"<sup>1</sup>

The Prophet ﷺ replied: "And I will not precede my Nurturer, the Powerful and Sublime, in naming him."

Then Allah ﷻ revealed to Angel Jibrā'īl that a son has been born to Muḥammad ﷺ, so go down and give him My greetings (*salām*) and congratulations; and say to him: "Surely 'Alī is to you in the same way that Hārūn was to Mūsā. So name him with the name of the son of Hārūn."

The Prophet ﷺ asked Angel Jibrā'īl: "What was his name?" when he conveyed this message.

"Shabbar," Angel Jibrā'īl replied. However, this name was not an Arabic name, so the Prophet ﷺ said to the angel that: "My language is Arabic!" So the reply came that: "Then name him Ḥasan!"<sup>2</sup>



1 Amīn, Sayyid Muḥsin, *A'yān ash-Shī'ah*, Vol. 1, P. 562.

2 'Allāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 43, P. 238.

40 AH  
661 AD

Start of his own leadership (khilāfah)

Peace Treaty with Mu'āwiyah



50 AH  
670 AD

Martyrdom of Imām al-Ḥasan ؑ



## IMĀM ḤASAN ؑ DURING THE IMĀMAH OF IMĀM ‘ALĪ ؑ (30 YEARS)

After the Messenger of Allah (*Rasūlullāh*) ﷺ passed away, Imām ‘Alī ؑ became the Divinely-appointed leader of the Muslim nation. As we learned in the previous chapter, Imām ‘Alī ؑ was the rightful successor of the Prophet ﷺ, but was denied his position of political leadership. During these difficult years, Imām Ḥasan ؑ stood by his father and supported him in every way.



After the Prophet ﷺ passed away, Imām ‘Alī ؑ had to observe silence as per the Noble Prophet’s instructions. As a result, Sayyidah Fāṭimah ؑ, took upon the responsibility of defending *Imāmah* during this time. She went door-to-door with her children, Imām Ḥasan ؑ and Imām Ḥusayn ؑ, reminding people about the promise they had made to the final Prophet ﷺ at Ghadīr Khumm to follow Imām ‘Alī ؑ as his successor.

During this time, and over the next several days, Imām Ḥasan ؑ witnessed the tyrants oppressing his mother, the daughter of the final Messenger ﷺ, and treating her disrespectfully, but he remained a firm pillar of courage and steadfastness.

As a child, the young Imām ؑ learned not only from his grandfather, but also from his father and mother. Imām Ḥasan ؑ used this knowledge to debate with others and teach them about Islam.

The following narration (*ḥadīth*) is narrated about Imām Ḥasan’s role in spreading Islam. Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ said:

*He (Ḥasan) will be the guide of the Muslims after me, and is the guided one. He (Ḥasan) is the gift of Allah to me; and he will talk about me. He will introduce my religion and lifestyle to the people. He will revive my sunnah (traditions). He will manage my affairs by his actions, and Allah has mercy upon him. May Allah have mercy upon those who acknowledge this status and do good to him for my sake.*<sup>3</sup>

Oftentimes, when the first and second caliphs would turn to Imām ‘Alī ؑ for answers to difficult questions, he would direct them to Imām Ḥasan ؑ who was only a child, but possessed deep knowledge of Islam. For example, there is a story of a man who was in *iḥrām* (the specific clothing a person has to wear when one goes for pilgrimage) who ate some ostrich eggs, then realized his mistake and wanted to find out what the penalty (*kaffārah*) was in this situation. He first asked Abū Bakr who sent him to ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb who sent him to ‘Abdur Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf, who sent him to Imām ‘Alī ؑ. Imām ‘Alī ؑ then told him: “Ask any of my sons (Imām Ḥasan or Imām Ḥusayn).” The man then asked Imām Ḥasan ؑ who gave him the complete answer, despite his young age.<sup>4</sup>

3 *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 43, P. 333.

4 *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 43, P. 355.

## THE BRAVERY OF IMĀM ḤASAN ﷺ

Although Imām ‘Alī ﷺ prevented Imām Ḥasan ﷺ from going into the battlefield in order to protect the Progeny of the Prophet ﷺ, Imām Ḥasan ﷺ still played a very important role in the battles of Jamal and Şifḫīn. Furthermore, history clearly shows that this Imām ﷺ was a fearless warrior.

In the battle of Şifḫīn, the right wing of the army was under the command of Imām Ḥasan ﷺ and Imām Husayn ﷺ. This was due to the tremendous courage that they both displayed by leading the army with their intellect as opposed to their anger which served a greater purpose. In regards to courage, Imām ‘Alī ﷺ narrates that: “There is no one more courageous than the wise.”<sup>5</sup>

During the battle of Şifḫīn, Mu‘āwiyah sent ‘Ubaydullāh ibn ‘Umar to try and incite the second Imām by saying to him: “Stop supporting your father, and we will make you the caliph. The Quraysh do not like your father because he is responsible for killing many of their elders, but they are prepared to accept you as their leader.”<sup>6</sup>

Imām Ḥasan ﷺ refused their request by replying: “The Quraysh wanted to destroy Islam, whereas my father killed their elders for the sake of Allah and to save Islam. This is the basis of why they hate my father!”

When Imām ‘Alī ﷺ wanted to prepare an army for the battle of Jamal, he sent Imām Ḥasan ﷺ to Kūfah to establish an army. When Imām Ḥasan ﷺ went there, he delivered a powerful and eloquent speech, after which 12,000 men<sup>7</sup> joined Imām ‘Alī ﷺ for the battle.

During this battle, Imām ‘Alī ﷺ ordered Imām Ḥasan ﷺ to attack the actual camel (*jamal*) after Muḥammad ibn Ḥanafīyyah was unsuccessful, and the second Imām ﷺ returned promptly with a bloody spear and the camel being brought down to the ground. Then Imām ‘Alī ﷺ told Muḥammad ibn Ḥanafīyyah: “Do not be embarrassed because he (Ḥasan) is the son of the Prophet ﷺ, and you are my son.”<sup>8</sup>

Imām Ḥasan ﷺ was 37 years old when his father was martyred. During the 30 years which he spent under the *Imāmah* of his father, Imām Ḥasan ﷺ observed key leadership skills, such as remaining patient in very difficult times, and ruling justly, and these were vital when he himself became the leader. He had been given the necessary skills to govern and lead from a Divine source.



**STOP AND REFLECT:** A leader cannot rule properly without having wisdom in decision-making and without justice. What do you think happens when leaders who govern do not have these two traits?



5 Āmidī, *Ghurar al-Ḥikam*, Vol. 1, P. 773.

6 *Bihār al-Anwār*, Vol. 43, P. 345.

7 Amīn ‘Āmilī, Sayyid Muḥsin, *Sīrah Ma’sūmīn*, Vol. 5, P. 24.

8 *Bihār al-Anwār*, Vol. 32 P. 187.

## THE IMĀMAH OF IMĀM ḤASAN ؑ: A DIVINE DECREE

The *Imāmah* of Imām Ḥasan ؑ [as is the case with all of the 12 Imāms ؑ] was a Divine decree of Allah ﷻ that the Prophet ﷺ emphasised in his life on a number of occasions. On one occasion, the Prophet ﷺ said:

*I am worthier of the believers than themselves, then my brother 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib will be worthier of the believers than themselves. When he is martyred, then his son Ḥasan will be worthier of the believers than themselves; then after him Ḥusayn will be worthier of the believers than themselves...*<sup>9</sup>

## ACCUSATIONS AGAINST IMĀM ḤASAN ؑ

Imām Ḥasan ؑ lived at a time of great problems within the Muslim community. Mu'āwiyah, a staunch enemy of the Ahlul Bayt ؑ, was trying to take full control of the Muslim world. His main strategy was to discredit the Ahlul Bayt ؑ by trying to hurt the reputation of the Imāms ؑ through false accusations and rumors. Some of these were widely spread and even persist until today.



**STOP AND REFLECT:** How did spreading rumors about the Imāms ؑ make Mu'āwiyah's position as a caliph stronger? Why were people so quick to believe these rumors?

After the death of the Prophet ﷺ, the nation became very divided. Anyone who had power or wealth could easily convince people to follow them, especially if they 'claimed' to be more righteous than others. Our Imāms' ؑ excellent character and good morals made people naturally inclined to follow them, so their enemies started to create doubts about their character.

Another factor that affected Mu'āwiyah being able to spread these rumors so quickly was the way news was communicated at that time. People relied on word of mouth, and those living in Syria were far from both Medina and Kūfah, where Imām 'Alī ؑ and his family lived.

Mu'āwiyah used to pay people to pretend and lie that they had met the Ahlul Bayt ؑ and tell others that they ؑ were mean individuals, had bad conduct, and even committed sins publicly. Since most people had not met the Ahlul Bayt ؑ, when they heard so many of these false reports from those who claimed to have met them, they naturally believed them and then even spread these false reports themselves. For example, it is reported that Mu'āwiyah offered 100,000 *dirhams* (gold coins) to Samūrah ibn Jundab so that he would deliver a sermon to the Syrian people in which he fabricated a tradition saying that the following verses of Qur'ān were revealed regarding Imām 'Alī ؑ:

*And among the people is he whose talk about worldly life impresses you, and he holds Allah witness to what is in his heart, although he is the staunchest of enemies. And if he were to wield authority, he would try to cause corruption in the land and ruin the crop and the stock; and Allah does not like corruption.*<sup>10</sup>

At first, Samūrah refused, but then Mu'āwiyah offered him 200,000 *dirhams*, and later 300,000 *dirhams*, but he still did not accept. Finally, when Mu'āwiyah offered him 400,000 *dirhams*, he accepted.<sup>11</sup>



**STOP AND REFLECT:** To this day, 'fake news' spreads easily and quickly. What are some ways that a person can discern the difference between true and false reports?

9 *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 36 P. 231.

10 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verses 204-205.

11 Ibn Abil Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*, Vol. 4, P. 73.

## ANOTHER ACCUSATION: IMĀM ḤASAN ؑ WAS NOT A COURAGEOUS IMĀM

It is clear from history that Imām Ḥasan ؑ was ready to fight against Mu'āwiyah; in fact he had even prepared an army to do so. Imām Ḥasan's intention to fight was to uproot evil, and establish the true teachings of the Qur'an and the Prophet ﷺ. Imām Ḥasan ؑ had a lot of experience in fighting, and he had fought many battles alongside his father Imām 'Alī ؑ.

Courage is required to perform the most righteous actions, regardless of what people say or do to oppose you. Imām Ḥasan ؑ knew that a war at that particular time was not the best thing for the Muslims under those circumstances, even though many of the people who remained in his army wanted to fight. Imām Ḥasan ؑ was courageous enough to insist on peace, although he knew that people would accuse him of weakness and even disbelief!

After his truce with Imām Ḥasan ؑ, Mu'āwiyah was worried about the Khawārij. Under the leadership of someone called Ḥawtharah al-Asadī, the Khawārij of Kūfah were preparing an army to fight against Mu'āwiyah. In order to try to show the people that Imām Ḥasan ؑ was his obedient follower, Mu'āwiyah sent him a message asking him to be in charge of defeating the uprising.

Imām Ḥasan ؑ responded back in a harsh message: “By Allah, I barely held back from fighting you in order to spare the blood of the Muslims. Should I fight people on your behalf when, by Allah, you deserve to be fought more than them?”<sup>12</sup>

These examples show us that true courage goes beyond battles or events that require warfare.

 **STOP AND REFLECT:** Why does it require courage to act with wisdom? How did our Imāms ؑ embody this?

Imām Ḥasan ؑ made it clear to Mu'āwiyah that entering into a truce does not mean that he accepted Mu'āwiyah as a leader. In fact, the Imām ؑ continued to do whatever was right in every situation—despite Mu'āwiyah's wishes.



<sup>12</sup> Irbilī, 'Alī ibn 'Īsā, *Kashf al-Ghummah fi Ma'rifat al-A'imma*, Vol. 2, P. 199.

## Activity 2.4a: Review Questions

1. Imām Ḥasan ؑ signed a peace treaty because:
  - a. He wanted to prevent any further bloodshed of the true believers
  - b. He wanted to expose Mu'āwiyah's true intentions
  - c. Both of the above
2. Why did the Prophet ﷺ emphasize his love for Imām Ḥasan ؑ so much?

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3. Imām Ḥasan ؑ was how old when the Prophet ﷺ and his mother ؑ passed away?
  - a. About 4 years old
  - b. About 8 years old
  - c. About 11 years old
  - d. None of the above

4. How did Imām Ḥasan ؑ support his father, Imām 'Alī ؑ, during his *Imāmah*?

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5. What are some important skills which Imām Ḥasan ؑ learned from his father that prepared him to become the next Imām?

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## Activity 2.4b: Wisdom in Speech

Imām Ḥasan ؑ was known for his wisdom, courage, and patience. One example of this is when visitors from Syria or surrounding areas—often victims of the lies and rumors spread by Mu‘āwiyah—would curse and insult the Imām ؑ to his face. Imām Ḥasan ؑ would not let his followers punish these people, instead, he would respond by asking these travellers if they needed anything.<sup>14</sup> This happened multiple times in his life.

Mu‘āwiyah paid people to pretend that they had met the Ahlul Bayt ؑ, then tell others that they ؑ were mean, had bad conduct,

or even committed sins publicly, so people visiting Medina would come with a very negative view of the Ahlul Bayt ؑ.

Below, find a list of scenarios that can happen in our lives where we need to act courageously by either raising our voices against injustice, swallowing our anger, or making peace with others.

Which response is most appropriate in each situation? Are there multiple ways to respond?

Discuss your answers with a partner or a group.

1. Your friend tells you that one of your Muslim classmates is saying unkind things about everyone in your family. What do you tell your friend? How should you act toward that classmate?

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2. Your city recently passed a law which states that men and women wearing any sort of religious clothing, including *ḥijāb* for women, cannot go to public buildings or gatherings without facing hefty fines. What is your responsibility? What should you do?

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<sup>14</sup> *Bihār al-Anwār*, Vol. 43, P. 344.

3. Someone graffitied a local Islamic school which is managed by Muslims of a different school of thought. What should you do?

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4. A Muslim friend, who has had a very tough home life due to their mother passing away when they were just a baby, asks if they can come to your house to study. At your house, they break one of your valuable things, and eat an entire box of your favorite snack. When they leave, they do not really thank you for your hospitality. What would you do?

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5. Saminah and Tahirah, two Muslims from your mosque, post some nasty comments aimed at each other online. You know that adults from your community can see their posts, and their behavior reflects badly on them and your community. What should you do in this situation?

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