

YOUNG READERS 9

(AS)
12 IMAMS
SAKINA HASAN ASKARI



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The 12 Imams

Sakina Hasan Askari - XKP

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Chapter 1

Who are the Imams

Imams are appointed by Allah, in the same manner as Prophets are, to guide people. Guidance from Allah continued through the 12 Imams, after the last of the Prophets, as the world cannot remain without Allah's Proof. To be a true follower of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW) we must believe in Imamah. The holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said that there would be 12 Imams after him.

He gave their names: "The first of them is Ali ibne Abi Talib. He will be followed by his sons Hasan and Hussain, then by Ali ibn Hussain; then by Muhammad Baqir. He will be followed by Jafar Sadiq, Moosa Kazim, Ali Reza, Muhammad Jawad, Ali Naqui, Hasan Askari and finally the Expected one, the Promised Mahdi. These will be the leaders (Imams) after me." He said "The likeness of my Ahlul-Bayt is that of the Ark of Noah, whoever got into it got saved, and whoever turned away from it got drowned and lost"

The 12 Imams are perfect human beings, kept pure by Allah Himself. All the features of the holy Prophet were seen in them. The holy Prophet (SAW) said:

The first of us is Muhammad

The last of us is Muhammad

They have deep knowledge and their speeches contain nothing but Truth. Their knowledge came from Allah. They were kind and generous. They showed the true teachings of Islam. They understood the real message of Allah and obeyed Him in every way. So they are the pillars to support Islam.

All our 12 Imams stood for Justice. They were brave and courageous. They followed the path of Truth and did not give up, even when they had to face great hardship. Eleven of the 12 Imams were martyred but Allah has kept the 12th Imam alive. He is present though we cannot see him.

The 12 Imams are the guardians of the holy Quran. Their words and actions show what the Quran teaches. The holy Quran describes them as Ulil Amr, who we must obey. They guide us towards the Truth and are the best example of virtue for us to follow.

This book gives a brief account of a lesson from the life of each of the 12 Imams.

Chapter 2

Imam Ali (AS)

Our first Imam
is Hadhrat Ali Murtuza (AS).

Father: Hadhrat Abu Talib (AS)

Mother: Hadhrat Fatima bint Asad

Birth: 13 Rajab 23 before A.H.

Place of birth: Kaaba, Makkah

Imamat: 11 A.H. to 40 A.H.

Martyrdom: 21 Ramadan 40 A.H. Place of burial: Najaf

Imam Ali (AS) was created from the same light as the holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW). He was the brother of the Prophet and so close to him that he was called the nafs, the self of the Prophet in the ayat of Mubahala in the Quran. Islam was made perfect and the message complete, when Imam Ali (AS) was declared the Maula on the day of Ghadeer as well.

He was the practical example of the Quran and practised the teachings of Allah's message so closely that the Prophet said "Ali is with the Quran and the Quran is with Ali." Like the Quran he was like a pure light, full of knowledge, and a guide for the people. Like the Quran he and the Imams will plead for us on the Day of Judgement. Their guidance on the straight path will lead us to heaven.

Imam Ali (AS) had all the virtues of piety. He was brave in battle, deep in knowledge, just in his judgement. He is a model for us to follow, an excellent example.

Even when he ruled over the vast Islamic areas he lived a simple life eating only dry bread and yoghurt. People saw him breaking the hard bread with his hands and knees. If there were two options for Imam Ali (AS) to do something for the sake of Allah he would choose the harder.

His clothes were coarse and old. He took his servant Qambar to the drapers and asked "Do you have two shirts for five coins?" "Yes" came the reply "But one is better than the other. One is for two coins and the other for three"

"Bring them both." Imam Ali (AS) said and then gave the better shirt to Qambar, who said "O Ameer ul momineen, you are the ruler in Kufa. You have this shirt. Imam Ali (AS) said kindly, "Qambar you are young and have the desires of a young man." Then Imam Ali (AS) put on the other shirt. Even when giving, the Imam was kind and generous not only by giving the better item to others but also taking care of their feelings.

Many, many times during his life, Imam Ali (AS) helped people. He gave much more than what he was asked for. When once a man came asking for bread, Imam Ali (AS) called Qambar and asked him to get some bread.

Qambar replied "O my master, the bread is piled high on the back of the camel." Imam Ali (AS) said "Give him the camel!" Qambar then said "The camel is the leading camel, at the head of a caravan of camels." Imam Ali (AS) told him, "Give him the caravan."

The man was amazed at Imam Ali's (AS) generosity. Imagine getting a caravan filled with goods

when asking for some bread!

Chapter 3

Imam Hasan (AS)

Our second Imam is
Hadhrat Hasan Mujtaba (AS).

Father: Imam Ali (AS)
Mother: Fatima Zahra (AS)
Birth: 15 Ramadan 3 A.H.
Place of birth: Madina.
Imamat: 40A.H. to 50 A.H.
Martyrdom: 28 Safar 50 A.H.
Place of burial: Madina.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad SAW said, "Hasan and Husain are the leaders of the Youth of Paradise Whoever loves them has loved me, and whoever is their enemy is my enemy." He called them his fragrant flowers from Heaven.

Imam Hasan (AS) had a special method of teaching and preaching Islam. Even during the life of his father Imam Ali (AS), the Dastarqan (Food Spread) of Hasan (AS) was well known.

Imam Hasan (AS) was very hospitable. The poor, the deprived, travellers and orphans dined on his food spread. He had the best possible food cooked for the guests, but he himself never ate anything from it. His diet consisted of that same barley bread and salt. Many people came to enjoy his hospitality. He used to offer delicious food for all his guests.

With plenty of food in front of them, the people sat down in peace and comfort to eat and listen. They were able to benefit from his teachings, and he was able to answer their questions.

Once while Imam Hasan (AS) was sitting with his guests at dinner, a slave servant dropped a hot bowl of soup on him. The slave was very scared because he thought that Imam Hasan (AS) would be angry. He immediately recited the Ayat: **يُنْفِئُكَ مِنَ الْغَمِّ كَاطُوا ظِيغَالًا**... "Those who suppress (their) anger... " Imam Hasan (AS) smiled and said he was not angry. Then the servant recited the next part of the **نِعْمَ الْوَعْدُ لِلَّذِينَ عَقَلُوا عَفْوَكَمْ...** And are forgiving towards people... " Imam Hasan ((AS)) said he had forgiven him. The man then finished reciting the ayat:

...بِاللَّهِ
وَنُحِبُّ
يُرَادُ
وَنُحِبُّ
"Allah loves those who do good... " Imam Hasan (AS) gave him his freedom and 400 silver coins.

Imam Hasan (AS) showed us that the Holy Qur'an is not just there to read, but to learn from and act upon. Imam Hasan (AS) showed his patience and goodwill even to his enemies. A man from Syria visited Madina and when he saw Imam Hasan (AS), he started insulting him.

Imam Hasan (AS) did not reply to the man.

When the Syrian stopped, Imam Hasan (AS) went towards him and after cheerfully greeting

him, said: "Old man, I believe you are a stranger. Maybe you have confused me with another person.

If you ask forgiveness, it is granted to you. If you need a means of transport, we shall provide it for you. If you are hungry, we shall feed you."

When the man heard Imam Hasan (AS) he felt ashamed. He saw how kind the Imam was, even though he had been so rude to the Imam. He apologised and said: "I used to hate you and your father Imam Ali (AS) but now you both are the most beloved of Allah's creatures to me."

Chapter 4

Imam Husain (AS)

Our third Imam is
Hadhrat Husain Shaheed (AS).

Father: Imam Ali (AS)

Mother: Fatima Zahra (AS)

Birth: 3 Shabaan 4 A.H.

Place of birth: Madina.

Imamat: 50A.H. to 61A.H.

Martyrdom: 10 Muharram 61 A.H.

Place of burial: Karbala.

When Imam Husain (AS) was born, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW) took his grandson in his arms and recited the azaan and iqama for him, just as he had done for Imam Hasan (AS).

Allah sent the angel Jibraeel to convey His greetings to the Noble Messenger (SAW). This was a very special baby.

Jibraeel was asked to go to the house of Bibi Fatima (AS) with thousands of angels. As Jibraeel came down, he heard a cry and then a question: "Where are you all going?" Jibraeel replied "I am going to Madina on Allah's command to give His greetings to the Holy Prophet on the birth of his grandson, Husain (AS).

The angel replied "O Jibraeel don't you recognize me, my name is Futrus. I am the angel who was the Leader of 70,000 angels and due to my mistake, my hair and wings were burnt and I have been left on this island to suffer this dreadful grief for the last 700 years. Please, O Jibraeel I beg you to help me. Take me with you." Jibraeel took Futrus with him. When they reached Madina, they approached the Noble Messenger. The Holy Prophet (SAW) commanded Jibraeel to take Futrus to stroke his body against the cradle of Imam Husain (AS). As soon as this was done, Futrus got back his wings.

He began to fly again. He soared back into the sky saying Man mithli! Ana ateequl Husain!" Who is like me! I'm special, for I have been freed by Husain (AS)"

Throughout his life, many, many times the holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW) showed his love for his grandsons Hasan and Husain (AS). Sometimes he would carry them on his shoulders. Sometimes when they entered the masjid, he would stop his sermon and go and pick them up. He would hug them close and tell the people "Hasan and Husain are my sons They are my fragrant flowers from this world."

One day in the city of Madina, the holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was leading the prayers in the masjid. He went into sajda. All the people behind him went into sajda too. Imam Husain (AS) came into the masjid and went to the front and climbed on the Prophet's back. The holy Prophet said,

Subhana Rabiul aala wa bihamdihi Imam Husain (AS) stayed on the Prophet's back. The holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW) repeated

Subhana Rabiul aala wa bihamdihi

He kept repeating it 70 times. After the namaz finished, his companions asked him “Ya Rasoolallah!

Were you receiving a wahi, an order from Allah, during your sajda that it was so long?” The

Prophet replied “Husain was on my back. I prolonged the sajda till Husain wished to come down

himself.” Every action of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is by Allah’s command so we know that

Imam Husain (AS) is very special.

The holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW), as we know, loved his grandson very much. He said Husain

un Minni wa Ana min Husain “Husain is from me and I am from Husain. May Allah love him who

loves Husain.”

He also said “Your eternal salvation is through Husain. Be aware that Husain is a door from the

doors of heaven. Whoever has enmity towards him can never enter heaven.”

Imam Husain Shaheed (AS)

Chapter 5

Imam Ali Zainulabideen (AS)

Our fourth Imam is
Hadhrat Ali Zainulabideen (AS).

Father: Imam Husain (AS)

Mother: Shehr Banu

Birth: 5 Shaban 38 A.H.

Place of birth: Madina

Imamat: 61A.H. to 95A.H.

Martyrdom 25 Muharram 95 A. H.

Place of burial: Madinai

After the tragedy of Karbala, our fourth Imam Zainulabideen (AS) lived in Madina, spending most of his time weeping for his father Imam Husain (AS) and all those who had been killed with him. He was the Imam of his time but only a few came openly to follow him. Some even began to believe that his uncle, Muhammad Hanafiya was the Imam.

It was necessary to clear this confusion. So Imam Zainulabideen (AS) and Hazrat Muhammad Hanafiya travelled to Makkah. They went to the Kaaba and prayed by the Black stone. When Muhammad Hanafiya asked the Black Stone, there was no reply. Then Imam Zainulabideen (AS) raised his hands and prayed to Allah, a voice came from the Hajre Aswad saluting the Imam by his full name. On hearing this, everyone was amazed and the news spread that the son of Husain (AS) Ali Zainulabideen (AS) was indeed the fourth Imam, the proof of Allah over His creation.

One day Hisham, who was the rich son of the rich Umayyad ruler, came to Makkah but found it impossible to touch the Black Stone such was the rush of people there. In despair he sat in a corner with his men from Syria. Then a frail young man dressed in simple clothes came to touch the Hajr e Aswad. The pilgrims started to chant “La ilaha illallah” and “Allah o Akbar.” The crowd just seemed to move for him. He went easily to the Black Stone and kissed it. The Syrians did not know who it was and so asked Hisham, “Who is this?” “Who is this?” Though Hisham knew that this was Ali Zainulabideen, yet he pretended that he did not recognise the Imam.

Farazdaq, who was the court poet, was near Hisham and immediately said “Yes you know him!” and recited a long poem in the Imam’s honour: “This is the son of Husain, the son of Fatima This is the one who the valley of Makkah knows and the stones of the Sacred House recognise... .. When he comes to touch the wall of the Kaaba, it almost grasps the palm of his hand Your words “Who is this” do not harm him... .. The Arabs and non Arabs know him who you deny... ..

The people realised that this was the Imam of the time, the grandson of the Holy Prophet (SAW).

Chapter 6

Imam Muhammad Baqir (AS)

Our fifth Imam is
Hadhrat Muhammad Baqir (AS).

Father: Imam Ali Zainulabideen

Mother: Fatima bint Hasan

Birth: 1 Rajab 57 A.H.

Place of birth: Madina.

Imamat: 95A.H. to 114A.H.

Martyrdom: 7 Dhillhaj 114 A.H.

Place of burial: Madina.

Imam Muhammad Baqir (AS) was famous for his knowledge. His title Baqir means one who splits open Knowledge. The Holy Prophet Muhammad SAW himself told his companion: "O Jabir you will live a long life and will see my son. His name will be Muhammad al Baqir. Convey my salams to him."

Jabir ibn Abdullah Ansari lived for a long time. He would call out, "Where is Baqir?" One day he heard footsteps that sounded like the footsteps of the Prophet. He called out "

What is your name?"

The Imam replied "Muhammad ibn Ali."

Jabir came near, kissed his hands and feet and said, "My life be sacrificed upon you, accept my salam and the salam of your grandfather Rasoolallah."

The Imam's eyes filled up with tears as he returned the salams on Jabir and on his grandfather Prophet Muhammad SAW. Imam Muhammad Baqir (AS) lived in Madina, spending his time in worship, prayer and teaching people the rules of Islam. The wonderful knowledge of the Imam attracted people towards him.

During the time of Abdul Malik, it was Imam Muhammad Baqir (AS) who saved the Islamic state from the domination of the Roman currency. The Romans had the symbol of the Trinity on their coins and notes. Roman currency was common all over the world including Egypt, although it was ruled by the Muslims.

Abdul Malik changed the symbol which made the Roman Emperor very angry. He threatened that he would defame the holy prophet on his coinage if Abdul Malik did not withdraw it. He did not know what to do, so he sought help from the Imam.

Imam Muhammad Baqir (AS) advised him to mint his own coins and have the words La ilaha illallah on one side and the name of the holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW) on the other. Then he gave details of the weight and size of the coins. Then he said, "Engrave the name of the city where the

coin is made and the year upon it. In this way we will not need the Roman coins any longer.”

When this was done, orders were sent to all the Islamic cities that from now on, only the new Islamic coins should be used and the Roman coins were invalid. The Imam by this amazing action was able to check the influence of the enemies of Islam.

When Hisham became ruler, he forced Imam Muhammad Baqir (AS) and his son to travel to Damascus. When they arrived in Damascus, Hisham and his courtiers were busy in shooting arrows at a target. Hisham insisted that the Imam take part, The Imam said, "I have grown old, excuse me." Hisham thought that Imam Muhammad Baqir (AS) was hesitating because he cannot do it. He insisted and forced the Imam, hoping to show that the Imam would be unable to shoot accurately.

Imam Muhammad Baqir (AS) held the bow and took aim. The arrow struck in the centre of the point. Again, the Imam aimed another arrow at it. The arrow struck into the first arrow and split it into two and then struck the aim. He took a third arrow and took aim. The arrow struck the second arrow split it into two, and sat firm on the second place. The Imam continued to hit the target accurately till the ninth arrow. Hisham could not believe his eyes and feeling embarrassed, said, "Stop! You are the best shot!"

Chapter 7

Imam Jafar Sadiq (AS)

Our sixth Imam is
Hadhrat Jafar Sadiq (AS).

Father: Imam Muhammad Baqir

Mother: Umme Farwa.

Birth: 17 Rabiulaval 83 A.H.

Place of birth: Madina.

Imamat: 114 A.H. to 148 A.H.

Martyrdom: Poisoned 148 A.H.

Place of burial: Madina.

Imam Jafar Sadiq (AS) lived at a time when he was able to share his wonderful knowledge with his students. The school, established by his father Imam Muhammad Baqir (AS) in Madina, had thousands of students. Subjects ranged from Astronomy, Physics, Medicine, History, Literature, Morals and the Rules of Religion.

The Imam would reply to questions put to him by his students and teach them about the wonders of the Universe.

When one of his students asked, “What is the shape and form of stars in space?” Imam Jafar Sadiq (AS) replied, “Some stars are solid, some liquid and some in gaseous state.” The student was amazed and said, “How can we believe that stars may be in a gaseous state? Is it possible for gases to shine as the stars do at night?” The Imam replied, “Not all the stars, but only those which are very hot, are in the form of gas. Excessive heat turns them into gas and makes them shine, just as the very high temperature of our Sun makes it shine. It is also in a gaseous state.”

He also said that among the clusters of stars which we see at night, some stars are so big that our Sun is small in comparison. The people of his time could not understand; but today we know that Quasars are much, much, brighter than the Sun.

When someone asked why we become ill, Imam Jafar Sadiq (AS) said: “Many diseases are caused by the enemies of the human body. These enemies are very small. They are so small that we cannot see them with our eyes. To protect us and to fight against these enemies, Allah has provided us with a large number of guards. Our guards are inside our bodies. They are so small that they cannot be seen with the naked eye. When the enemies enter the human body and attack it, the guards put up a fight against them and try to destroy them. When they are successful in their fight we recover from sickness.”

We need a microscope to see germs yet the Imam nearly a thousand years ago described them so clearly and explained how germs attack our bodies and how antibodies help us.

Imam Hasan (AS)

Imam Zainulabideen (AS)

Imam Muhammad Baqir (AS)
Imam Jafar Sadiq (AS)

Chapter 8

Imam Moosa Kadhim (AS)

Our seventh Imam is
Hadhrat Moosa Kadhim (AS).

Father: Imam Jafar Sadiq

Mother: Hameeda

Birth: 7 Safar 129 A.H.

Place of birth: Abwa, near Madina.

Imamat: 148A.H. to 183A.H.

Martyrdom: 25 Rajab 183 A.H..

Place of burial: Kadhmain.

The seventh Imam Moosa Kadhim (AS) guided people towards the Right Path through his words of wisdom and his gentle attitude. One day he was passing through a street in Baghdad. A man called Bushr al Haafi lived there. There was loud music and sound of merry making. A servant girl stepped out to throw away rubbish, as Imam Moosa Kadhim (AS) came down the street. He asked her "Is the owner of this house an abd, (a slave) or a free man?" She replied "He is free".

Imam Moosa Kadhim (AS) said "You are right. For if he was an abd, he would fear his Lord and Master. When the servant returned to the house, Bushr asked her, "Why did you take so long outside?" She told him what the Imam had asked and what she had said. Bushr was so affected by the Imam's words; he ran outside without even stopping to wear his shoes and met the Imam. He wept and sought forgiveness for his sins. He gave up drinking wine and listening to music. He completely changed his lifestyle and became a true follower of the Ahlebait. He adopted piety and gave up all his bad habits. Imam Moosa Kadhim (AS) had guided him to the way of faith and good deeds.

Haroon the Abbasid Khalif was cruel and wicked. He was jealous of the Imam and put him in prison and kept him there for 14 long years. The prison was dark and its door was opened only two times during the day, when a little food was brought to him. Even in prison Imam Moosa Kadhim (AS) never complained. Rather he thanked Allah for giving him the chance to fast and pray. He spent his time in rukoo and sajdah. The Imam was the most wonderful model of piety and faith in Allah.

Imam Moosa Kadhim (AS)

Imam Muhammad Taqui (AS)

Chapter 9

Imam Ali Reza (AS)

Our eighth Imam is
Hadhrat Ali Reza (AS).

Father: Imam Moosa Kazim

Mother: Khaizran

Birth: 11 Zeeqad 148 A.H.

Place of birth: Madina.

Imamat: 183A.H. to 203A.H.

Martyrdom: 17 Safar 203 A.H.

Place of burial: Mashad.

Imam Ali Reza (AS) is known as Imam Zamin, (means assurer) because it relates to the Imam as the one who is a protector and guarantor of a safe journey. There are two reasons why this title was given to our eighth Imam.

When Imam Reza (AS) was on his way from Madina to Khurasan, he was passing through some woods. A frightened female deer, followed by its hunter came up to him. The deer approached the Imam and said something to him. The Imam understood the animal's plea. He turned to the hunter and said, "Let this deer go for it wants to feed its young. It has promised to return and I will stand guarantee for it." The hunter let the deer go in respect for the Imam and the deer went away. The hunter did not expect the deer to return. After a while, he saw that the deer was coming back with her fawn. The hunter could not believe his eyes and decided to set the deer free.

Another reason why Imam Reza (AS) was known as Imam Zamin was that he would stand guarantee for all those who went for ziarat to Karbala. The Abbasid ruler, Haroon Rasheed had banned the Shia from visiting the shrine of Imam Husain (AS) and his son Mamoon the ruler in the time of Imam Reza (AS) put a condition that anyone who went to Karbala must get Imam Reza's personal guarantee. The Imam gave this guarantee to everyone who wished to travel to Karbala, so became known as Imam Zamin.

When coins were minted with the name of Imam Reza (AS) on it, the travellers tied the coins on their arms. When a person traveled with the Imam's name, he would be protected by the Imam's blessings on his journey. When they arrived safely at their destination they would take the coin and give it away as sadaqa (charity), in the name of Imam Reza (AS). Even today as we go on a journey we tie a coin wrapped up in a cloth (zamini) on our arms in the name of Imam Reza (AS) and pray for a safe journey.

Imam Muhammad Taqui (AS)

Our ninth Imam is
Hadhrat Muhammad Taqui (AS).

Father: Imam Ali Reza (AS)

Mother: Sabeeka

Birth: 10 Rajab 195 A.H.

Place of birth: Madina.

Imamat: 203A.H. to 220A.H.

Martyrdom: 29th Ziqad 220 A.H.

Place of burial: Kadhmain.

Imam Muhammad Taqui (AS) is known for his knowledge and piety. He was only nine years old when he became the Imam but he was the most learned person of his time.

Mamoon the ruler in Baghdad first saw the young Imam when he was going on a hunting trip. As he rode through the street, boys playing there all ran away except for one. Mamoon stopped and asked "Why didn't you run away like the rest?" Imam Muhammad Taqui (AS) boldly replied "The street is wide enough, and I have not committed any crime for which I need to be afraid; and I don't believe that you would harm me for no reason." Mamoon impressed by the reply asked, "Who are you?" "I am Muhammad ibn Ali Reza" said the Imam.

On his way back, Mamoon stopped again and this time he asked, with his fist closed "Can you tell me what I have in my hand?" The Imam said "Allah has created the seas and creatures in it. Rulers go hunting and let their hawks fly which hunt for prey and bring them back. They then hide it to test the knowledge of the Ahlebait." Mamoon stood in shock as not only was this young boy telling him what he held in his hand but how he had got it. He had let his hawk fly to return with a little fish that he held in his hand.

He opened his palm to show what the Imam had said was true.

Mamoon, jealous of Imam Muhammad Taqui's merits, wanted to keep him under close watch. He also thought that he would be able to divert the Imam by wealth and riches from an early age. He gave his daughter in marriage to the Imam.

The wedding was celebrated on a grand scale. Two hundred beautiful maids were given pearls and jewels to hold in their hands and a famous singer was brought to play music. Mamoon instructed him to play. The Imam neither looked at the right nor at the left. He then said to the singer, "Fear Allah! O you man of the beard". When the man heard this, he dropped The instruments from his hands and they became numb until his death.

Soon after his marriage, Imam Muhammad Taqui (AS) did not stay in Baghdad. He took his wife and left for Hajj on his way to Madina. There, he distributed his salary among the needy people and led a very simple and humble life.

Mamoon failed in his attempt and Imam Muhammad Taqui (AS) led a life of piety spreading the message of Islam.

Chapter

Imam Ali Naqui (AS)

Our tenth Imam is
Hadhrat Ali Naqui (AS).

Father: Imam Muhammad Taqui
Mother: Sammanah
Birth: 15 Zilhij 212 A.H.
Place of birth: Surba, Madina.
Imamat: 220A.H. to 254 A.H.
Martyrdom: 3 Rajab 254 A.H.
Place of burial: Samarrahi

Imam Ali Naqui (AS) had to face many difficulties from the rulers of his time especially from Mutawakkil. He was forced to leave Madinah and go to live in Samarra, under house arrest.

In his court, Mutawakkil had an Indian magician who amazed people with his tricks. Mutawakkil invited Imam Ali Naqui (AS) for dinner so that the magician could play tricks on the Imam. When it was time for dinner, the magician sat next to Imam Ali Naqui (AS).

When the meal was served, the Imam was about to take some bread to eat, but the magician made it disappear. Everyone laughed.

Imam Ali Naqui (AS) kept silent. A second time, he was about to take the bread. The magician made the food disappear once more. Everyone laughed again. A third time the Imam wanted to take the bread. The magician played his trick and the bread vanished. Everyone laughed louder. Imam Ali Naqui (AS) then looked up at the picture of a tiger that hung on the wall. He made a sign to the tiger, which suddenly appeared in real before them all and in one moment, made a meal of the magician.

Mutawakkil and his courtiers laughed no more. They pleaded to the Imam to get the magician back. Imam Ali Naqui (AS) replied "If the staff of Moses had thrown out the snakes in the court of the Pharaoh, this tiger would throw up the magician." Then he left the court.

Another well known incident was when Mutawakkil called Imam Ali Naqui (AS) to sort out a claim made by a woman called Zainab. She said that she was the daughter of Imam Ali (AS) and Bibi Fatima (AS). When asked how she still looked young after 200 years, she claimed that every forty years she turned back young.

Mutawakkil called upon all the wise men for advice but they could not solve the problem. He finally asked Imam Ali Naqui (AS), who said "Send her to the cage of the lions. If she is telling the truth, the beasts do not molest the children of Fatimah (AS) and do not eat their flesh." On hearing this, Zainab began to tremble and confessed that she was a fake. Mutawakkil then ordered Imam Ali Naqui (AS) to be thrown to the beasts to test the claim. The Imam (AS) replied, "There is no hurdle to it" He went to the lions in the cage and sat among them. Everyone was amazed to see that the lions sat

very respectfully before Imam Ali Naqui (AS). When the Imam wanted them to move to a corner, all of them crept to a nook. Then Imam Ali Naqui (AS) came out of the cage.

Imam Hasan Askari (AS)

Our eleventh Imam is
Hadhrat Hasan Askari (AS).

Father: Imam Ali Naqui

Mother: Saleel

Birth: 10th Rabi-usani 232 A.H.

Place of birth: Madina

Imamat: 254 A.H. to 260A.H.

Martyrdom: 8 Rabi-ulavval 260 A.H.

Place of burial: Samarrah.

Imam Hasan Askari (AS), our 11th Imam was kept in prison for a long time by the wicked ruler. While he was a prisoner in Baghdad there was a severe drought. There was no rain. The ground was hard and no crops grew. People were facing a famine.

They did not know what to do. A Christian priest came to the rescue. He lifted his hands in prayer and rain fell. The ruler got worried that people would leave Islam and become Christians. His power over them will then become less. He did not know what to do. One of his advisors told him to seek the help of Imam Hasan Askari (AS). So the Imam was let out of the prison and brought to Samarrah, which was the capital city.

Imam Hasan Askari (AS) was allowed to leave the prison to go where the crowd assembled to see the miracle performed by the priest. The Imam stood there with the crowd and when the priest raised his hands for pray and rain began to fall, Imam Hasan Askari (AS) told one of his companions to seize the hands of the priest and bring the piece of bone hidden in his hands. When this bone was brought before the Imam, he said that it was the bone of a Prophet of Allah. It was the effect of this holy bone that brought rain to the land. The priest was asked to pray for rain but when he did not have the bone in his hand, nothing happened. No rain fell.

After this, Imam Hasan Askari (AS) himself spread his prayer mat and performed two rak'ats of prayers, then lifted his bare hands to Allah for rain. The Imam's prayers were heard by the Almighty and rain clouds appeared. He told the people where each of the clouds would fall as rain. The land became fertile again and crops began to grow. The Imam was allowed to leave the prison in Baghdad and live in Samarrah.

The eleventh Imam spent his time in Allah's worship and prayer. He had the deepest knowledge in all fields. He was patient in suffering and treated even his enemies with kindness and forgiveness. He was very generous and helped those in need. His good qualities impressed not only his friends, but even his enemies, some of whom turned to become his loyal Shias.

Chapter

Imam Muhammad Mahdi (AS)

Our twelfth Imam is
Hadhrat Muhammad Mahdi (AS).

Father: Imam Hasan Askari (AS)

Mother: Narjis Khatoon

Birth: 15 Shaban 255 A.H.

Place of birth: Samarra

Ghaibat sughra : 260 A.H.

Ghaibat kubra 340 A.H.

Imamat: 260A.H. to Qiyamat Still living.

Imam Muhammad Mahdi (AS) our twelfth Imam is living and continues to guide us in our lives. When we call for help, he comes to our aid.

Sheikh Mufeed was a great scholar and had been given this title by the Imam himself. He had defended through his writings the faith of Islam and shown people the teachings of the Ahlulbait.

One day a person from Baghdad came to Sheikh Mufeed and said, "A pregnant woman has died. Should the baby in her womb be removed or be buried along with the woman?" Sheikh Mufeed replied, "Bury the mother along with the foetus." On getting the reply, the man left for his village. On the way, a horse rider crossed his path.

He asked the man to halt and said, "Sheikh Mufeed has said that the foetus should be removed from the womb and then the woman be buried." The person accepted it and acted on it. The baby's life was saved. A little later the man took the baby to Sheik Mufeed to thank him for his changed fatwa that had saved the life of the baby.

Sheik Mufeed was amazed for he had not himself sent anyone with the second fatwa. After this, he thought, "I am not capable." He closed the doors of his house and told the people to no longer seek solutions of their problems from him But it was not long before the Sheik received a letter from Imam Mahdi (AS) in which he wrote:

"You continue to give edicts. We will save you from mistakes and errors. We will not desert you." Sheikh Mufeed by the order of the twelfth Imam continued to solve the problems of the people.

A man of knowledge longed to meet Imam Mahdi (AS). He spent every Tuesday night in Masjid Sahla for forty weeks, anxiously seeking to meet the Hidden Imam but in vain. Finally he was told: "You must make a trip to this city and pray for forty days."

On the 37th day, he was told: "Right now Imam al-Asr is in the blacksmiths' bazaar, in a shop belonging to an old locksmith; so, be quick to go now and see him." So straight away he rushed to the old man's shop where he saw the holy Imam sitting and talking amiably with the locksmith. When he greeted the Imam, he responded and asked him to keep silent, watching a wonderful scene.

At this moment a bent, fragile, old woman came into the shop. She showed us a lock with her

shaking hand and said:” Will you, for the sake of Allah, buy this lock from me for three coins?” The old locksmith took a look at the lock and found it intact, and then explained it was worth more and that he could make her a key.

The old woman answered: "No, I do not need that, I only need the money; if you buy this lock from me, I will pray for you". The old man said: "My sister! You are a Muslim, and I too claim to be a Muslim. So why should I buy a Muslim's property for a low price and deny someone's right? This lock already costs eight; if I want to benefit from it, I'll buy it for seven, for it is unfair to make more than this profit in a deal like this." The old man paid seven coins to the old woman and purchased it from her.

When the woman turned back to leave, Imam Mahdi (AS) said: "My dear! Did you watch the wonderful scene? You do likewise too, and become like that, then I will come to see you. Show good action and be a Muslim so that I can interact with you. I picked out this old man, since this man is religious and knows Allah. You saw the trial he went through: This old woman had requested all to fulfil her need and since they found her desperate and needy, they were all seeking to buy her lock cheap. This old man, however, bought it for its real price. Thus, every week I pay a visit to him.”

What We Learned

Our twelve holy Imams have taught us through example the best of behaviour towards others.

1. Imam Ali (AS) was kind and generous. He helped others and gave much more than what was asked.
2. Imam Hasan (AS) was very hospitable and shared all he had with people.
3. Imam Husain (AS) sacrificed everything he had to uphold the message of Islam in Karbala. He healed even angels.
4. Imam Ali Zainulabideen (AS) spent his life in the worship of Allah. His piety was known to all.
5. Imam Muhammad Baqir (AS) spread knowledge and saved the Islamic state from being forced to use Roman currency.
6. Imam Jafar Sadiq (AS) continued his father's example and taught many new Sciences to the Muslims.
7. Imam Moosa Kadhim (AS) guided people to keep away from haraam (what is not allowed) in religion.
8. Imam Ali Reza (AS) protected those who called him for help (even hunted animals). He stood as guarantor for those who wished to go for ziarat to Karbala.
9. Imam Muhammad Taqui (AS) showed by example how to stay away from worldly pomp and pleasure.
10. Imam Ali Naqui (AS) used the power that Allah had given him to show that the Ahlulbait, like the Prophets, can perform miracles.
11. Imam Hasan Askari (AS) helped the Muslims using his knowledge and saved them from being misled by a pretender.
12. Imam Muhammad Mahdi (AS) shows us that when we are sincere in our efforts and follow Islam strictly, then he will come to us. ف ر ج هُم ل هم صل على محمد
وآل محمد وعجل ا

How many names and titles of our twelve Imams can you find in the word search?

1. Ali Murtuza
2. Hasan
3. Husain
4. Zainulabidin
5. Muhammad Baqir
6. Jafar Sadiq
7. Musa Kadhim
8. Ali Reza
9. Muhammad Taqui
10. Ali Naqui
11. Hasan Askari

Salam on you
 O my Maula!
 O Ali son of Abu Talib!
 Salam on you,
 O my Maula!
 O Hasan son of Ali,
 Salam on you,
 O my Maula!
 O Husain son of Ali,
 Salam on you,
 O my Maula!
 O Ali son of Husain!
 Salam on you,
 O my Maula!
 O Muhammad son of Ali
 Salam on you,
 O my Maula!
 O Jafar son of Muhammad
 Salam on you,
 O my Maula!
 O Moosa son of Jafar
 Salam on you,
 O my Maula!
 O Ali son of Musa
 Salam on you,
 O my Maula!
 O Muhammad son of Ali S
 alam on you,
 O my Maula!
 O Ali son of Muhammad
 Salam on you,
 O my Maula!
 O Hasan son of Ali
 Salam on you,
 O my Maula!

O Muhammad son of Hasan O my Masters!
 May the Blessings of Allah be on all of you

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"Wisdom is the lost property of the Believer, let him claim it wherever he finds it" - Imam Ali (as)"