



Imam Al-‘Askari [A.S]

امام العسكري (ع)

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Biographical detail of Imam al-‘Askari (as)
- The reason for the titles of al-‘Askari and al-Zaki
- That the Imam (as) was kept under constant surveillance all the time
- Why we should fear none other than Allah (SWT)
- The importance and benefits of fearing God

Imam al-‘Askari (as)

Our 11th Imam is Imam Ḥasan al-‘Askari (as). He was born in Medina. He is the son of Imam ‘Ali al-Ḥadi, who we learnt about in our last lesson.

THE TITLES OF THE IMAM (AS)

AL- ‘ASKARI:

In Arabic, an army camp is called ‘Askar. Our eleventh Imam (as) was given the title al-‘Askari because for most of his life, he was forced to live in a military camp, so that the ruler of the time could supervise him closely.

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 2

From the time the Imam (as) was very young, he was put under house arrest away from his father. Soon after his father’s death, he was imprisoned. This was in the city of Samarra’, in Iraq.

Another reason why the eleventh Imam was called al-‘Askari is said to be that once the king of the time lined up all his soldiers and took the Imam (as) to see them. He was trying to show him that he had control over this huge army- he was trying to scare the Imam (as). When this happened, the Imam (as) separated his two middle fingers and ask the king to look through them. The king looked and saw an army of angels, greater and more numerous than his army of men. The Imam (as) said that this army of angels was under his control. He showed the king that he did not fear him or his army.

AL-ZAKI

The Imam (as) was so pious and pure that he was called al-Zaki. From a young age, the Imam was conscious about pleasing Allah (SWT). He did not want to do anything that would displease Allah (SWT).The Caliph (king) sent musicians and women in the prison to distract the Imam (as). Instead, when they saw Imam praying, fasting and remaining so patient, they also became God-fearing and good Muslims.

FEARING ALLAH

Once, our 11th Imam (as), who was still a child, was standing amongst children who were playing and having some fun by side of a road. Bohlool, (a companion of the Ahlul Bayt) happened to pass by. He noticed that a beautiful child was standing alone and crying. He

approached this child. He asked:” My dear, are you crying because you have no toys to play with? If you like I can bring some toys for you.”

Imam Ḥasan al-‘Askari replied:

”Do you think I’m crying for these toys? We are not created to play with toys and have fun; but to worship Allah (SWT).”

Bohloul asked the Imam (as) where he had learnt that from. The Imam said he had understood this from the Qur’an. The Imam also spoke to Bohlool about death and the Hereafter.

Bohloul was very impressed with the answers and wisdom of the young Imam (as). Bohlool then asked the Imam (as) why he was so fearful and crying?

The Imam (as) replied:

"...I watch my mother every day when she sets a fire to the large twigs she uses the small ones first. I would not like the young children of this world to be used to light the fire of Hell."

Fearing Allah (SWT) is one of the best ways of avoiding sins and wrong things. Whenever we are tempted to do something wrong, we should remember the Power of Allah (SWT) and the punishments of the Hell Fire. Even though we love Allah (SWT) and have hope in Him, we should also fear Him, and this should help us stay away from doing the wrong thing and committing sins.

FEARING ONLY ALLAH

God always takes care of his creation. We only have to trust Him fully.

Do you remember when Prophet Abraham (as) was being thrown into the fire? Was he afraid of the fire? Did he accept help from all the angels? When he said that he feared only God and wanted help from him, the fire became a cool garden for Prophet Abraham (as). Allah will protect us and help us no matter where we are. So we should fear no one other than God.

For this reason, we should never disobey God because we are scared of someone else. If we broke a vase while mum was out, we should not lie about it when she asks us. Even though we might be scared of getting into trouble, we should be more scared of Allah (SWT), who does not want us to lie. If we fear Allah and avoid lying,

He will solve our problem for us and get us out of trouble.

Allah (SWT) has promised people who fear only Him that everything and everyone on Earth will fear those people. He has also promised those people who disobey Allah (SWT) and do not fear Him, that they will be hated by the creatures of Allah (SWT).

THE IMAM’S FEARLESSNESS

Here is an event from the life of the Imam (as) that shows that he did not fear anyone but God. The king of the time wanted to embarrass the Imam and hurt him. One time, he ordered the Imam (as) to enter a cage of wild animals. He wanted to see how the Imam (as) would react.

Was the Imam (As) afraid to do this? Not at all. He knew that God would protect him. He went into the cage. People gathered around to see what would happen. Without any fear, the Imam (as) walked in, and started praying. Wow! The wild animals surrounded him; then they all prostrated before him. The people were astonished to see this, and the king was amazed and embarrassed.

The Imam (as) had shown no fear, and in return Allah (SWT) had made the creatures fear the Imam (as).

To conclude, let’s summarise:

1. Two titles of our 11th Imam (as) are:
 - a.
 - b.
2. Complete these sentences:

We shouldAllah (SWT)

Fear no one but

Review Questions

Q1. Our 11th Imam was given the title al-Zaki because:

- a. He was fearful
- b. He was pious throughout his life
- c. He was generous

Q2. We should:

- a. Only fear Allah
- b. Fear Allah and powerful people
- c. Not fear Allah