

Imam MEHDI [as]

امام المهدي (ع)

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Introduce Imam al-Mahdi (atfs) as the 12th holy Imam
- Understand that the Imam is living, on Earth and that he is in hiding
- Understand that the Imam can see us, but we cannot see or recognise him
- Discuss the secret of the birth of the Imam (as) and that it was kept secret for fear for the Imam's life
- Discuss the fact that Imam al-Mahdi is the saviour for whom we are waiting
- Introduce the concept of al-Intiḍār
- Discuss that the best way to practice al-Intiḍār is to good deeds, which make our Imam happy, and to avoid sins, which are like arrows which hurt the Imam's heart
- Introduce the fact that the Imam looks over our actions at least once a week
- Discuss that part of al-Intiḍār is to build a relationship with our Imam, and to pray for his return and for his well-being
- Memorise du'ā' al-Faraj

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 2

Lesson 1: Imam al-Mahdi (atfs)

Imam Muḥammad Al-Mahdi (atfs) is our 12th and last Imam. Here is his profile:

Name	Muḥammad
Title	al- Mahdi (The Guided One)
Father's name	Imam Ḥasan al-'Askari (as) – our 11 th Imam
Mother's Name	Narjis
Birthdate	15 th Sha'bān 255 AH in Samarrā'
Imamat	260 AH –the present time

THE SECRET OF THE IMAM'S BIRTH

Imam al- Mahdi's birth had to be kept a secret because of fear of his life. The tyrant of that time, al-Mu'tamid was trying to prevent the birth of the Imam; however he was unsuccessful. Imam al-Mahdi was born in his father's home and Imam Al-'Askari (as) would make sure that his existence was not revealed to any of the tyrants. Imam al-'Askari (as) only told a few trusted and very close companions of the birth of the Imam (as) and advised them that Imam al-Mahdi (atfs) would be the next Imam after him.

THE BEGINNING OF THE IMAMAT

When Imam al-'Askari (as) passed away, Imam al-Mahdi (atfs), who was only five years old at that time, came out to the people who were gathered. There were a small group of the followers of the Imam (as) who had gathered in his house to perform the funeral prayer. As

the young Imam walked in, everyone turned to him and all were mesmerised by the light emanating from his face. He went forward to lead the funeral prayer, and everyone stood up to pray behind him. The people were amazed as most of them had never ever seen the Imam (as).

News reached al-Mu'tamid, the unjust ruler of that time, that prayers were led by a young boy whose face lit up the whole mosque. al-Mu'tamid knew straight away that this was the Imam (atfs) and realised that his plans to prevent the birth of the last Imam had failed. He sent his soldiers directly to the house of the Imam (as), but by then the Imam (atfs) had already gone into hiding, and he could not be found.

From that day onward, for the next 69 years, the Imam (atfs) communicated to his followers through certain messengers. These messengers were the only ones who knew how to get in touch with Imam or knew his whereabouts.

During this time, the Imam (atfs) was handling the affairs of Muslims and carrying out his duties at secret locations while he was in hiding. He would not be seen by his followers but he was still helping them through his special representatives.

After those first 69 years, the Imam (atfs) went into what is called the Major Occultation. During this time, the Imam (atfs) was in hiding and no longer had specific messengers to bring messages from him. Even though we cannot see the Imam (atfs) among us, this does not mean that he can't help us with our affairs or that he cannot see us. He can see us and knows of our actions; in fact, he lives amongst us but we just do not recognise him.

So, what's the point of having an Imam who is hiding and we can't see or talk to him?

Our Imam is like the sun behind the clouds. Just because the sun sometimes hides behind the clouds, it doesn't mean that there is no light during the day! And just like the sun behind the clouds still gives life and energy to everything on Earth, similarly the Imam helps and looks after all of us, even though he is in hiding. If we need to communicate with our Imam, we can talk to him from our hearts and he will be able to hear us and pray for us.

Class Activity

Fill in the blanks:

- 1) Imam Mahdi's father's name is
- 2) The occultation only lasted 69 years
- 3) Our Imam (atfs) is still in the occultation
- 4) Imam Mahdi's mother's name is
- 5) Imam Mahdi was born on (Birthdate) in (Place of birth).

Class Activity

Now that we have learnt about the life of all of the Imams, it is time to make sure that everyone knows the names of all the twelve Imams (as) in order. We will spend some time today revising the names of all of our twelve Imams (as).

THE TWELVE IMAMS

1st Imam	Imam 'Ali (as)
2 nd Imam	Imam Ḥasan (as)
3 rd Imam	Imam Ḥusayn (as)
4 th Imam	Imam 'Ali Zainul 'Abidīn
5 th Imam	Imam Muḥammad al Bāqir
6 th Imam	Imam Ja'far al Ṣādiq
7 th Imam	Imam Musa al Kāḍim
8 th Imam	Imam 'Ali al Riḍa
9 th Imam	Imam Muḥammad al Jawād
10 th Imam	Imam 'Ali al Hādī
11 th Imam	Imam Ḥasan al 'Askari
12 th Imam	Imam Muḥammad al Mahdi

Review Questions

Q1. How old was Imam al-Mahdi (atfs) when his father passed away?

- 23 years old
- 5 years old
- 40 years old

Q2. What is the date of Imam al-Mahdi (atfs)?

- 260 AH
- 328 AH
- He is still alive

Q3. 'AL-MAHDI' means:

- The one in occultation
- The awaited one
- The guided one

Lesson 2: Awaiting the Imam (atfs)

As discussed in the previous lesson, Imam al-Mahdi (atfs) is in major occultation – this means he is in hiding. We do not know when exactly he will reappear but we do know that when he comes he will bring peace and justice to the world.

What does this mean?

This means that whatever wrong doings are happening in the world today; Imam al-Mahdi (atfs) will put a stop to it. For example, in Gaza innocent young children are being killed every single day; when Imam Mahdi (atfs) comes and establishes his government there will be no injustice and no killing of innocent people.

WAITING FOR OUR IMAM (ATFS)?

As Shi'ah and followers of Imam al-Mahdi (atfs) we need to 'actively wait' for our Imam (atfs) – this is known as al-Intidār. Below is an example of when we 'actively wait' for someone:

If your parents went on a month-long trip and they were coming back home tomorrow; what would you do?

Yes that's right! You would prepare accordingly; you would make sure the house is clean, you would make food is ready for them; you would make sure you are free to go to the airport to receive them. You certainly wouldn't be just waiting around idly and not do anything.

Similarly, while we are waiting for our Imam (atfs) to reappear, we must prepare for his arrival and reappearance such that when he comes, he is happy with us.

We also have to remember that the only thing stopping our Imam from reappearing is that we, his followers, are not ready for him. Once we are sufficiently ready, he will return and guide us to victory.

Some ways we can actively wait for the Imam (atfs) are:

- Do good deeds which make our Imam (atfs) happy. Can you think of any deeds which may make our Imam (atfs) happy?
- Stay away from those sins which would make Imam Mahdi (atfs) unhappy and break his heart. When we commit a sin, it breaks the Imam's heart. In fact, we have a narration that when we sin, it is like we are shooting an arrow at the heart of the Imam (atfs). When he comes, we don't him to be sad with us, do we?

IMAM AL-MAHDI (ATFS) KNOWS US!

Just because we cannot see our Imam (atfs) or because he is in hiding, it does not mean he cannot see us. Our Imam (atfs) knows who we are and can see us; and if we ask him for help he will help us. He also prays for us and we should always pray for his safety too.

Every Friday night our Imam (atfs) looks over our book of deeds to see how we have been acting. When he opens your book next Friday night – what will he see? Will he be sad with you or happy that you have done lots and lots of good deeds?

IMAM AL-MAHDI (ATFS) HELPS US!

Once, a scholar by the name of Ayatollah Najafi decided to go and visit a friend in another city. In order to get there, he had to cross a desert. On his way, he became lost and was wandering in the desert hopelessly. He became so tired and thirsty that he fainted.

Later, he woke up to find himself at his destination. He remembered a man with a bright face had come to save him. This bright-faced man gave him water that quenched his thirst, but this waster was so quenching and sweet that he had never tasted anything like it

before. This man also guided him to the city he wanted to go.

Before leaving him, this man gave him eight pieces of advice. Two of these pieces of advice were:

- Recite the Qur'an regularly
- Respect your parents

Ayatollah Najafi realised later that this was Imam al-Mahdi (atfs) who had come to his rescue.

This story shows us that the Imam (as) is always watching what is happening to his followers, and will help them when they are in desperate situations. He also cares so much for them, that he would not leave them before advising them.

Class Activity

Make a poster to remind you of deeds we should avoid and good deeds that we should carry out that would make Imam al-Mahdi (atfs) happy. Make sure to make it colourful and stick it up in your room after you are done; that way it will always remind you of the things you have to do while you wait for the Imam!

Review Questions

Q1. While waiting for Imam al-Mahdi (atfs) we should:

- Make sure a feast is ready for his arrival
- Iron our clothes
- Do good deeds and avoid sin

Q2. Al-Intiḍār means:

- To actively wait for the Imam (atfs)
- The time when Imam al-Mahdi (atfs) will come
- Minor occultation

Lesson 3: Knowing Imam al-Mahdi (atfs)

The Holy Prophet (saw) has said that if someone dies without knowing the Imam of his time, he dies the death of an unbeliever.

The saying from our Prophet (saw) shows us how important it is that we get to know our Imam (atfs). If we don't learn about our Imam (atfs) then we may as well be a non-believer!

During the major occultation, while we are waiting for our Imam (atfs), it is important that we learn about him and build a relationship with him.

How can we do this?

Well, to be able to build a relationship with our Imam (atfs) we have to first be sure and believe that he is around. Once we believe that he is with us today, we can communicate with him and ask him for help. We can talk to our Imam (atfs) anytime we want and he can hear us and he will pray and look after us.

IMAM AL-MAHDI (ATFS) LOOKS OUT FOR HIS FOLLOWERS

There have been many stories where Imam al-Mahdi (atfs) has helped people because either they called for him in time of need; or because they had built such a relationship with our holy Imam (atfs) that he looked out for them.

Below is a story which is an example of how our Imam (atfs) looks out for his followers.

There was a young man who was travelling on a coach to another town. He was sitting to a sheikh. When it reached prayer time, the boy went to the driver and insisted the driver stop so that everyone could pray right on time. The driver said that they were about to reach a rest stop in an hour or so and they could pray there. The boy continued to insist, but the driver refused to stop. In the end, the boy asked to be let off the bus, in the middle of nowhere, so he could pray on time.

The driver eventually gave up and let the boy pray on the side of the road. When the boy entered the bus again, the sheikh asked him why he had insisted so much on praying on time. The boy told the following story.

One day, he was on another bus travelling to a very important examination. Suddenly, the bus broke down in the middle of the road, and they were stuck. He was desperate to reach this exam. So he prayed, from all his heart, for Imam al-Mahdi (atfs) to help him. He promised that if he made it to his exam, he would never delay his prayer again.

Suddenly, a stranger appeared and helped repair the bus, and the boy resumed his journey and made it to his exam. He explained that since that day, he had never delayed his prayer, as this was a promise he had made to his present Imam (atfs).

PRAYING FOR THE SAFETY OF OUR IMAM (ATFS)

Another very important duty we have as followers of Imam al-Mahdi (atfs) is to pray for the safety of Imam (atfs) and pray for him to reappear soon. The best prayer is to pray for the safety of the Imam (atfs); if we pray for the safety of our holy Imam (atfs), the Imam (atfs) will pray for us.

There is a special du'a', known as du'a', al-Faraj, which is recited for the safety of our holy Imam (atfs). For today's class activity, we will read and memorise this du'a'. For those of you who already know it, you can help your friends memorise it.

Class Activity- Memorisation

اَللّٰهُمَّ كُنْ لَوْلِيِّكَ الْحُجَّةِ بْنِ الْحَسَنِ صَلَواتِكَ
عَلَيْهِ وَ عَلَى آبائِهِ فِي هَذِهِ السَّاعَةِ وَ فِي كُلِّ سَاعَةٍ
وَلِيًّا وَ حَافِظًا وَ قَائِدًا وَ نَاصِرًا وَ دَلِيلاً وَ عِيْنًا حَتَّى
تُسَكِّنَهُ اَرْضَكَ طَوْعًا وَ تُمَتِّعَهُ فِيْهَا طَوِيْلًا۔

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O Allah, be, for Your representative, the Hujjah (proof), son of Al Hasan, Your

blessings be on him and his forefathers, in this hour and in every hour, a guardian, a

protector, a leader, a helper, a proof, and an assistor until You make him settle on the land

in obedience (to You), and cause him to live in it for a long time

Review Questions

Q1. When we are in need:

- We shouldn't ask the Imam – he is in hiding and won't be able to do anything
- We should ask the Imam because he is always there for us if we call upon him
- None of the above

Q2. It is our duty during major occultation to:

- Make sure our Imam (atfs) eats well
- Make sure our Imam (atfs) has a nice home to stay in
- Pray for the safety of our Imam (atfs) and his quick reappearance