

السلام عليك يا حسن المجتبي

IMAM AL-HASAN [A.S]

امام الحسن (ع)

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Understand the difficult circumstances that Imam Ḥasan (as) dealt with as an Imam
- appreciate Imam Hasan's (as) forbearance throughout his life in dealing with Muslims
- be able to rebut the accusations that have been made against Imam Hasan (as)
- Be introduced to Imam Ḥasan's (as) excellent character

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 4

Lesson 1: Imam Ḥasan: The Forbearing Imam



Imam Ḥasan (as) is the first grandson of the Prophet (saw) and the first child born to Sayyedah Fāṭimah and Imam 'Ali (as). He lived with his grandfather and mother for 7 years before they both passed away. When he was 37 years of age, his father Imam 'Ali (as) was murdered and by the command of Allah (SWT), Imam Ḥasan (as) became the next Imam. Imam Ḥasan (as) was poisoned to death at the age of 47 years.

This lesson will focus on two main aspects of the Imam's life:

- His forbearance with his community despite how badly they treated him. Forbearance means to remain patient and repeatedly forgive.
- Answering some of the accusations made against Imam Ḥasan (as) and showing them to be false

THE IMĀMAH OF IMAM ḤASAN (AS): A DIVINE DECREE

The Imāmah of Imam Ḥasan (as) is the case with all the twelve Imams, was a Divine decree of Allah that the Prophet (saw) emphasised in his life on a number of occasions. On one occasion the Prophet (saw) said:

“I am worthier of the believers than themselves, then my brother ‘Ali bin Abi Talib will be worthier of the believers than themselves. If he is martyred then his son al-Ḥasan will be worthier of the believers than themselves then after him al-Ḥusayn will be worthier of the believers than themselves...”ⁱⁱ

THOSE OPPOSING THE DIVINE DECREE

Mu’āwiyah was always an enemy of Islam and particularly the Ahlul Bayt. His malice was that of his father’s (Abu Sufyān) and grandfather (Umayyah). They were always jealous of the high status that their cousins Banu Hāshim (the Prophet and his forefathers and progeny) held in the eyes of people. Hence when the Prophet and Ahlul Bayt were given the power of authority by Allah (SWT) their enmity grew towards them.ⁱⁱⁱ

Abu Sufyān had always advised the Umayyads to treat the Caliphate like a ball and pass it from one to another of their clan and to never let it out of their possession. He said, *“I swear that there is neither punishment nor judgement, neither Heaven nor the Hell, and neither Resurrection nor a day of Reckoning.”* His son Mu’āwiyah accepted these teachings and made them his doctrine and hence always opposed the Prophet, Imam ‘Ali and Imam Ḥasan (as).

It is through the difficult situations imposed on Imam Ḥasan (as) that we can understand Imam Ḥasan’s (as) sublime character.

MU’ĀWIYAH WAGES WAR AGAINST IMAM ḤASAN (AS)

In order to extend his empire and seize control over the Islamic world and surrounding countries, Mu’āwiyah waged a war against Imam Ḥasan (as). Imam Ḥasan (as) had to respond to the call for war and so encouraged the Muslims to begin preparing for the battle. The majority of the men who joined his army were not completely sincere in their intention to defend Islam; each group having their

own aims and ambitions. Some had hatred towards Mu’āwiyah (so they sided with Imam Ḥasan (as)), others were eager to fight in battles, others simply followed the leaders of their tribes or the rest of the community. There was of course a small group who were truly loyal followers of Ahlul Bayt (as).

THE SILENT BUT DEADLY WAR

Mu’āwiyah began sending spies to spread rumours among the Imam’s army. He also bribed many of them with money to leave the Imam. Many of the soldiers in Imam Ḥasan’s (as) army who were weak in their faith blindly believed the rumours and accepted the bribes.

Such people deserted their Imam and went to join Mu’āwiyah, or caused trouble within the Imam’s camp. This impacted negatively on Imam Ḥasan’s army and hence rendered it too weak to fight against Mu’āwiyah’s army. Others tried to kill the Imam and managed to stab him brutally in his thigh.

Throughout all this, Imam Ḥasan (as) patiently persevered and did not show any anger towards any of the men nor did he retaliate. The disloyalty of the Muslims towards the Imam proved to him that fighting the battle against Mu’āwiyah was not the best option as it would lead to great bloodshed without any benefits towards safeguarding the true Islamic teachings.

PEACE – THE WISE SOLUTION

Imam Ḥasan (as) was left with two choices:

- Fight against the enemies to the end, which would mean the Imam’s true followers would be killed and Mu’āwiyah would try his best to pervert Islam
- Make peace with Mu’āwiyah. With this option, Imam Ḥasan (as) would save the lives of the Muslims and over time it would expose Mu’āwiyah’s evil intentions to the people.

Imam Ḥasan also remembered what his grandfather, the Messenger of Allah (saw) used to say:

“Indeed, this son of mine (al- Ḥasan) is a leader. Through him Allah will make peace between two groups of the Muslims.”^{iv}

By considering the weak faith of the Muslims in his army, safeguarding the lives of his true followers, and preventing great bloodshed amongst the Muslims, Imam Ḥasan (as) knew that the best solution was to make peace with Mu'āwiyah. In the peace treaty, Imam Ḥasan (as) put conditions to uphold Islamic teachings. However, Mu'āwiyah violated all the conditions of the peace treaty publicly. We will learn about this in later lessons.

By studying these events, we can see the forbearance, wisdom and bravery of Imam Ḥasan (as).

ACCUSATIONS AGAINST IMAM ḤASAN

As we have seen from the above discussion, the time in which Imam Ḥasan (as) lived was a time of great problems within the Muslim community. Mu'āwiyah was trying his utmost to take full control of the Muslim world. Besides having a large and wealthy army, his other strategy was to try to hurt the reputation of the Imam (as), through various false accusations. In this lesson, we will look at some of these and answer them.

THE FIRST ACCUSATION: IMAM ḤASAN WAS NOT A COURAGEOUS IMAM

It is clear from history that Imam Ḥasan was ready to fight Mu'āwiyah and in fact prepared an army. Imam Ḥasan's (as) intention to fight (in fact in every aspect of his life) was to uproot evil and establish the true teachings of the Qur'an and the Prophet. Furthermore, Imam Ḥasan (as) fought in many battles alongside his father Imam 'Ali (as) such as the Battle of the Jamal and the Battle of Siffin.

We also have to remember that Imam Ḥasan's courage was not limited to the battlefield. When Imam 'Ali (as) wanted to prepare an army for the Battle of Jamal, he sent his son Imam Ḥasan (as) to Kufa to raise an army. When Imam Ḥasan (as) went to Kufa he delivered a powerful and eloquent speech^v after which twelve thousand men rose and joined Imam 'Ali (as) for the battle. Imam 'Ali (as) knew that his son Imam Ḥasan (as) had the courage and intelligence to raise a large force and that is why he sent him.

It is also important to consider that courage is not only shown in battles or events that require warfare. Courage is required to perform what is most righteous regardless of what people say or do to oppose you. Imam Ḥasan (as)

knew that a war 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). Imam Ḥasan (as) was courageous enough to insist on peace even though he knew that many people would accuse him of weakness or disbelief – this is a true test of courage!

THE SECOND ACCUSATION: IMAM ḤUSAYN WAS MORE COURAGEOUS THAN IMAM ḤASAN

To prove this statement wrong, we need to look at what the Prophet (saw) said about Imams Ḥasan and Imam Ḥusayn (as):

الحسن والحسين امامان ان قاما او قعدا

“Al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn are two Imams whether they are standing up (fighting against the enemy) or are seated (making peace with the enemy).”

We can derive many meanings from this saying; the main two being that both Imams Ḥasan and Ḥusayn are Divinely chosen as Imams and hence all that they do is according to the commands of Allah (SWT) and hence should be obeyed. The second is that the Prophet (saw) was in a way giving a prophecy that Imam Ḥasan will make peace with the enemy and Imam Ḥusayn will fight against the enemy. If we were to swap the two Imams and put them in the other's situation, they both would have responded in the same way as the other did.

IMAM ḤASAN'S (AS) FORBEARING CHARACTER

We can understand from all the difficulties that Imam Ḥasan (as) managed in his life that he was a forbearing person. He splendidly demonstrated his patience when dealing with his army, being wounded by his own army, making peace with Mu'āwiyah and putting up with Mu'āwiyah and his blind followers defaming him^{vi}.

Once a man who had lived in Syria (brainwashed by Mu'āwiyah) came to Medina where Imam Ḥasan (as) was residing. He encountered Imam Ḥasan (as) in the streets of Medina and as soon as he was told by the people that he was the Imam he began swearing at the Imam and cursed him and his father. Imam Ḥasan (as) did not say anything nor did he frown; he waited for the man to finish. Then the Imam said to him:

“From your accent I gather that you are new in this city. Are you tired, are you hungry? When did you arrive?” The man replied, “I just arrived.” The Imam said, “You must be tired then! Why don’t you come down, we’ll have lunch together and then we can discuss things. Then if what you are saying is correct may God forgive me and if what you are saying is incorrect may God forgive you.”

The man was speechless upon hearing the Imam’s answer. They went and had lunch together and spoke. A short time later after realising the pure character of the Imam, the man hated Mu’awiyah and praised the Imam.^{vii}

This story exemplified how the Imam (as) treated people, whether they were his followers or not. His forbearance, as well his general kindness and compassion were amazing.

BRIEF SAYINGS OF THE IMAM

“A good deed is the one before which there is no evading and delaying and after which there is no boasting or holding favour”

(BIHAR UL ANWAR VOL 78, P 113)

“Arrogance is the cause of destruction and annihilation of religion and Satan was cursed due to it. And greed is the enemy of the soul and Adam was expelled by it from

paradise and jealousy is the guide to wickedness- for the same reason Qabil (Cain) killed Abel.”

(BIHAR UL ANWAR VOL 78, P 111)

“The one who does not have wits and intelligence does not have decorum and decency and the one who lacks fortitude, does not have generosity and magnanimity and that one who does not possess shame and modesty, does not have religion.”

(KASHFUL GHUMMA VOL 2, P 197)

Review Questions

Q1. Imam Ḥasan (as) was appointed an Imam by:

- His father
- The Prophet (saw)
- Allah (SWT)

Q2. Imam Ḥasan signed a peace treaty because:

- He wanted to prevent further bloodshed of true believers
- He wanted to expose Mu’awiyah
- Both of the above

Q3. Mu’awiyah was from which family?

- Umayyad
- Abbasid
- Banu Tamim

Himself, we call you to someone whom the Messenger of Allah has called him closer to himself as the closeness in two things: closeness in religion and closeness in kinship (blood relation). We call you towards a person whom was always there in moments of sacrifice and whom Allah extended as a help for the Prophet while others were withholding their help from him. He is the one who was close to the Prophet while the others moved away from him. He is the one who prayed with the Prophet while others were pagans. And fought and stood by him in the battlefield while others were running away from the battlefield. And the one whom defended the Prophet while others turned their backs to him. Who believed in the Prophet while others rejected him. And he is now calling you to him for help and asking you to come to the truth and commands you to come to him and help him against a people who have broken their allegiance with him and who have killed righteous people and taken over the treasury in Basrah. May Allah have mercy on you therefore move towards him.”

^{vi} Mu’awiyah, in order to brainwash the people, made it a common practice to curse Imam Ali (as) during every speech and prayer. Once the orator of the mosque of Harran delivered a sermon and then ended it without cursing Imam Ali (as) which had become the usual practice (sunna) established by Mu’awiyah. So the people shouted out from all sides “Woe unto you! Woe unto you! The sunna, the sunna! You have left the sunna!”

^{vii} eHawza, semester 1, course 2, lect 6

ⁱ References

- Sulh al-Hasan, by Shaykh RĀdi Āl-YĀsin
- eHawza, semester 1, course 2, lect 6
- Imam Hasan ‘The Myths of his Divorces’, by Sayed Saeed Akhtar Rizvi (<http://www.al-islam.org/al-serat/default.asp?url=imamhasan.htm>)
- Lectures by Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi delivered 15th Ramadhan 1418 and 1420 on al-Islam.org

ⁱⁱ Bihar vol 36 p 231

ⁱⁱⁱ Once Abu Sufyan (in his old age) was in the mosque and the AdhĀn was being called. When the caller of AdhĀn reached the line “I testify that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah” Abu SufyĀn remarked, “Look at where my cousin (i.e. the Prophet) has placed his name”. Imam Ali heard this and became annoyed and told him that it was the command of Allah.

^{iv} (sulhul Hasan – attitude towards confusion, from Hulyat al-Auliya by Abu Na’iim).

^v Imam Hasan’s speech includes the following: “O people we have come to you calling you to the Book of Allah (SWT) and the Sunna of the Prophet and the best in religious knowledge amongst all the muslims and the most just amongst all the Muslims (i.e. Imam Ali (as)). We are calling you to the most superior to all the Muslims and the one who will stay faithful to the allegiance you pledged to him and the person who is known by the Quran and the Sunna. And there is nothing in which good virtues and good deeds are concerned in which he is not most forward. We call you to someone who Allah has called him closer to