

Part 1: Imam Al-Hasan (Peace Be On Him)

His father was the Commander of the faithful (Amir al-mu'minin), 'Ali b. Abu Talib. His mother was the mistress of the women of the worlds, Fatima the daughter of the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family.

His Birth

He was born in Medina on the night of the middle day of the month of Ramadan, in the year 3 A.H. He was the eldest son.

When al-Hasan was born, the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, took him. Then the Prophet said the adhan (call to prayer) in al-Hasan's right ear, and said the iqama (words similar to the adhan) in his left ear. Then he sacrificed a ram for him (in the ceremony of `aqiqa). Then he shaved his hair. He (i.e., the Prophet) gave silver equal to his hair. So the weight of al-Hasan's hair was a dirham and some of silver. Then he ordered his hair to perfume. So the `aqiqa and giving alms as equal as the weight of hair have become Sunna (an act of the Prophet).

The Prophet named him Hasan. People did not know such a name in the pre-Islamic period. Also he gave him Kunya (i.e., the name by which an Arab is usually referred to and which refers to him as the father of someone, usually his eldest son) as Abu Muhammad. Al-Hasan had no Kunya other than this (Abu Muhammad).

His Nick-Names

al-Sibt, al-Sayyid, al-Zaki, al-Mujtaba, al-Taqi.

His Wives

Al-Hasan married Umm Ishaq bint (the daughter of) Talha b. `Ubayd Allah, Hafsa bint (the daughter of) 'Abd al-Rahman b. Abu Bakr, Hind bint (the daughter of) Suhayl b. `Amru, and Ju'da bint (the daughter of) al-Ash'ath b. Qays, whom Mu'awiya tempted to kill al-Hasan. So she killed him with poison.

His Children

Al-Hasan had fifteen children, both male and female: Zayd, al-Hasan, `Amru, al-Qasim, `Abd Allah, `Abd al-Rahman, al-Hasan al-Athram, and Talha, Umm al-Hasan, Umm al-Husayn, Fatima, Umm Salama, Ruqayya, Umm `Abd Allah, and Fatima.

His Characteristics

No one was more like the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family, than al-Hasan b. 'Ali, peace be on him, in form, manner, and nobility.

In this manner the describers have described al-Hasan and said: "He (al-Hasan) had a white, reddish face. He had black eyes, smooth cheeks, thick beard, and curly, plentiful hair. His neck was as white as a jug of silver. His body was good. He had large shoulders, and big fleshy bones. He was of medium height; neither long nor short. He was handsome; the best of all people in face.

Al-Hasan, peace be on him, was as the poet said:

When some handsomeness creeps into the insights of imaginations,

He (al-Hasan) has the special share.

His forehead from under his forelock is like

The full moon that illuminates the dark night.

His ambergris and musk is far above the perfume of

The people of the earth, so he is the heavenly perfume.

Ibn Sa'd said: "Al-Hasan and al-Husayn used to dye black."

Wasil b. `Ata' said: "Al-Hasan b. 'Ali, peace be on them, had the visage of prophets and the glory of kings."

His Worship

Al-Hasan, peace be on him, performed the hajj on foot twenty-five times. When he mentioned death, he wept.

When he mentioned the grave, he wept. When he mentioned the resurrection, he wept. When he mentioned crossing the sirat (a kind of bridge which only the righteous can cross on the road to Paradise), he wept. When he mentioned the standing before Allah, the Great and Almighty, he fainted.

When he mentioned Paradise and Fire, he shock as the sick person did. So he asked Allah to make him enter Paradise and to protect him from Fire.

When al-Hasan performed an ablution for prayers, he shock all over and his face became pale.

Al-Hasan, peace be on him, shared his property with Allah three times. He gave people from his property twice in the way of Allah, the Exalted. He mentioned Allah, the Great and Almighty, in all conditions whether pleasant or otherwise.

They (the historians) said: "He (al-Hasan, peace be on him) was the best of all people in worshipping Allah and refraining from the life in this world."

His Ethics

Al-Hasan's ethics were excellent examples for people. So everyone respected him. Everyone loved him when he associated with him. When his friend or his enemy heard him talking or delivering a speech, he was sorry that he (al-Hasan) would end his talking or his speech.

In his book, vo1.8, p. 37, b. Kathir has reported on the authority of b. al-Zubayr, who said: "By Allah, no woman has born (a baby) like al-Hasan b. 'Ali."

Muhammad b. Ishaq said: "After Allah's Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family; no one had a high social position as al-Hasan b. 'Ali had. (Mats) were spread out at the door of his house. When he came out and sat, the street was over crowded. So no one of Allah's creatures could pass to show respect for him. When he knew that, he stood up and entered his house. So the people could pass."

Al-Hasan dismounted his camel on the road to Mecca, so all those who saw him dismounted their camels. Also Sa'ad b. Abu Waqqas dismounted his camel and walked beside him.

Ibn `Abbas caught the stirrup for al-Hasan and al-Husayn, peace be on them, and arranged their clothes. So Mudrik b. Ziyad said to him: "You are older than them, so why do you catch the stirrup for them?" Ibn `Abbas said: "Woe unto you! Do you know who they are? They are the grandsons of the Apostle of Allah. What a great blessing is that Allah has made me catch the stirrup for them and arrange their clothes!"

Although al-Hasan, peace be on him, had a high social rank, he was kind to people. One day he passed by poor persons. The poor persons were sitting on the ground. There were pieces of bread before them. They were picking up the pieces of bread and eating them. When they saw al-Hasan, peace be on him, they said to him: "Son of the Apostle of Allah, come to lunch!" So he dismounted his camel and said: "Indeed, Allah does not love the proud." He began eating with them. Then he invited them, so he gave them food and clothes.

The following are some examples about al-Hasan's generosity: A man came to him and asked him for a need. He (al-Hasan) said to the man: "Write your need on a piece of paper and submit it to me." The man submitted his need to him. He (al-Hasan) doubled the man's need. So some of those who were sitting with al-Hasan said to him: "Son of the Apostle of Allah, the blessing of the piece of paper was great for the man."

So al-Hasan said: "Its blessing for us is greater, for Allah has made us appropriate for doing good. Do you not know that doing good should be optional, namely without request. As for him whom you give after the request, you give him after he has lost face. He may spend his night restless and sleepless. He rocks between despair and hope. He does not know whether he will face a sad answer or a glad success. He comes to you while he shakes all over and his heart is afraid (of you). Then if you met his need through losing face, that (losing face) would be greater than what he has obtained from your favor."

Al-Hasan, peace be on him, gave a poet (some money). So one of those who were sitting with him said to him: "Glory be to Allah! Do you give the poet who disobeys the Merciful (Allah) and tells lies?" Al-Hasan, peace be on him, said: "Servant of Allah, the best of your money is what you spend to protect your dignity. It is an act of kindness to avoid the evil."

A man asked al-Hasan, peace be on him, for a need. So al-Hasan gave the man one thousand dirhams and five hundred dinars and said to him: "Fetch a carrier to help you." The man fetched a carrier. So al-Hasan gave the carrier his cloak and said: "This is the wage of the carrier."

A Bedouin came to al-Hasan, peace be on him, and asked him for a need. So al-Hasan said: "Give him all the money in the safe." There were twenty thousand dirhams in the safe. All the money was given to the Bedouin, so he said: "My master, do you not let me tell you about my need and praise you?" Al-Hasan, peace be on him, began saying:

Our gifts are many

The hopeful enjoy them.

Our selves give generously before the request

For fear of losing face.

Al-Mada'ini said: "Al-Hasan, al-Husayn, and `Abd Allah b. Ja'far went out. However, their luggage went before them. So they became hungry and thirsty. They saw an old woman sitting in a tent. They asked the old woman for water. She said to them: `Milk this ewe.' They did. Then they asked her for food. She did: `I have nothing but this ewe. Let one of you slaughter it. So one of them slaughtered and skinned it. Then she grilled some meat of the ewe for them. They ate the meat and took a nap at the old woman's tent. When they got up, they said to her: `We are a group of people from Quraysh. We want to go through this direction. When we come back, visit us. For we will do good for you.' Then they went away."

When the old woman's husband came, she told him about her entertainment. Her husband said: 'Woe unto you! You have sacrificed my ewe for people whom you do not know, then you say that they are from Quraysh.' Days passed. The old woman's condition became worse. So she departed till she passed through Medina. Al-Hasan, peace be on him, saw her and recognized her. He said to her: 'Do you know me?' 'No,' she answered. He said: 'I was your guest on the day so- and- so.' Then he gave her one thousand ewes and one thousand dinars, and he sent her to al-Husayn, peace be on him. Al-Husayn gave her like that (number) and sent her to `Abd Allah b. Ja'far. The latter gave her like that (number)."

A Hashimite man and an Umayyad quarreled with one another (about generosity). The Hashimite man said: "My people are more generous (than yours)." The Umayyad one said: "My people are more generous (than yours)." The Hashimite man said to the Umayyad one: "Go and ask ten of your people (for money)" The Umayyad man went and asked ten of his people (for money). Each one of the ten people gave him ten thousand dirhams. In the meantime the Hashimite man went to al-Hasan b. 'Ali. So al-Hasan gave him one hundred and fifty thousand dirhams.

Then the Hashimite man went to al-Husayn. So al-Husayn asked him: "Had you asked anyone for money before me?" "I had asked al-Hasan," answered the Hashimite man. Al-Husayn said: "I cannot give more than what my master (al-Hasan) has given you." Then al-Husayn gave the Hashimite man one hundred and fifty thousand dirhams. Then the Umayyad man came back with one hundred thousand dirhams from ten people, while the Hashimite man came back with three hundred thousand dirhams from two people. So the Umayyad man became angry and returned the money to its owners who received it. Meanwhile the Hashimite man went to al-Hasan and al-Husayn to return the money, but they refused to accept it. Then they said: "We do not mind whether you take the money or throw it away on the road."

One day al-Hasan, peace be on him, saw a black boy. The black boy was eating a piece of bread and giving a piece of bread to his dog. So al-Hasan said to him: "What has made you do this?" "I feel shame of my dog when I eat and do not feed him," answered the black boy. Then al-Hasan said to him: "Do not leave your place till I come to you." At that moment al-Hasan went to the black boy's master. He bought the black boy and the wall (the garden) where he lived. He (al-Hasan) freed the black boy and made him possess the wall.

The traditions about al-Hasan's generosity are numerous, but we do not intend to mention them all.

As for al-Hasan's clemency, it was as heavy as the mountains, as Marwan said concerning al-Hasan.

Al-Hasan, peace be on him, renounced worldly pleasures very much. So Muhammad b. 'Ali b. al-Husayn b. Babawayh, who died in the year 381 A.H., wrote a book. He called the book 'Zuhd al-Hasan.' How an outstanding merit was that al-Hasan renounced all life in this world for the sake of the religion!

His Outstanding Merits

Al-Hasan, peace be on him, is the Lord of the youth of Heaven. He was one of the two persons in whom the progeny of the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family, was limited. He was one of the four persons through whom the Prophet made the contest of prayer with the Christians of Najran. He was one of the five persons whom the Prophet covered with his cloak. He was one of the twelve Imams whose obedience Allah made incumbent on people.

He was among those who were purified from sins as the Qur'an says. He was among those whose love Allah made reward for the message. He was among those whom the Apostle of Allah made one of the two valuable things (thaqalayn). Thus whoever cleaves to them does not go astray. He was the plant of the sweet basil of the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family. The Prophet loved him and asked Allah to love those who love him.

Al-Hasan had other outstanding merits. These merits are in need of a long explanation. Still the explanation does not encompass them even if it is long.

The people pledged allegiance to him after the death of his father, peace be on them. So he assumed the succession in the best manner though the time of his succession was short. Also he made a Peace Treaty with Mu'awiya on the fifteenth of the month of Jamadi al`Ula' in the year 41 A.H., according to the most correct reports. So he was able to protect the religion and to spare the blood of the believers. In the Peace Treaty, he followed the teachings, which he reported on the authority of his father on the authority of his grandfather, may Allah bless him and his family. Apparently, his succession was seven months and twenty days.

After the Peace Treaty had been concluded, al-Hasan, peace be on him, came back to Medina to stay there. So his house became as a second haram (a sacred sanctuary) for people to visit.

Through these two sacred places (al-Hasan's house and Medina), al-Hasan, peace be on him, became the rise of guidance. He was the stronghold of knowledge and shelter of Muslims. Meanwhile there were many knowledgeable people all around him. Anyhow such knowledgeable people were the students of al-Husayn. So they learned knowledge from him and reported it on his authority. Allah granted al-Hasan plentiful knowledge and a high social position in the hearts of Muslims. Thus he (al-Hasan) was able to guide the community, to lead Muslims spiritually, to correct the Islamic beliefs, and to unify the people of monotheism.

Al-Hasan, peace be on him, performed the early morning prayer in the mosque of the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family. He sat there praising Allah till the sun rose. In the meantime he answered the questions of the great Muslim figures. In his book `al Fusul al-Muhimma', p. 159, b. al-Sabbagh said: "The people gathered around him (al-Hasan). He (al-Hasan) answered the questioners perfectly and refuted the proofs of the disputers."

When al-Hasan, peace be on him, performed the hajj or went around the Kaaba, the people were about to destroy him. For they overcrowded to welcome him.

His Death

Al-Hasan, peace be on him, was given poison several times. We will detail this matter when we discuss the fulfillment of the conditions of the Peace Treaty. When al-Hasan, peace be on him, felt the danger in the last attempt, he said to his brother al-Husayn, peace be on him: "My brother, I am leaving you and meeting my Lord. I have been given poison to drink, and have spewed my liver into the basin. I am aware of the person who poisoned me and from where I have been made a subject to this deceitful action. I will oppose him before Allah, the Great and Almighty."

Then he said: "Bury me with the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family.¹ For I am worthier of him and his family' (than others). If they prevent you from doing that, then I make you swear by the relation which Allah has made close to you and by the blood relation to the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless him family, not to shed even your blood into the cupping-glass in (carrying out) my command, till we meet the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family, to oppose the people before him and to tell him about what we have suffered from them."

Then al-Hasan, peace be on him, made his testamentary bequests to his family and his children. (He gave al-Husayn) his heirlooms and the things which the Commander of the faithful (Imam 'Ali), peace be on him, had bequeathed to him when he had made him his successor, had declared him worthy to occupy his position, and had indicated to his Shi'a that he (al-Hasan) was his successor.

Then al-Hasan, peace be on him, died on the seventh of the month of Sufar, in the year 49 A.H.

Abu al-Faraj al-Isfahani said: "Mu'awiya wanted the people to pledge allegiance to his son Yazid. However, the existence of al-Hasan b. 'Ali and of Sa'd b. Abu Waqqas troubled him very much. So he gave them poison to drink, and they died of it."

The abominable disasters of this kind shook the conscience of the Muslim countries. So there were various revolutions throughout history. In this connection Allah, the Exalted, says: "And they who act unjustly shall know to what final place of turning they shall turn back."

His Burial

Sibt b. al-Jawzi reported on the authority of b. Sa'd on the authority of al-Waqidi, who said: "When al-Hasan was about to die, he said: 'Bury me beside my father.'¹ He meant the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family. However, banu (the sons of) Umayya and Marwan b. al-Hakam and Said b. al-'As, who was the governor over Medina, prevented him." Ibn Sa'd said: "Among them was 'A'isha, who said: 'No one is buried beside the Apostle of Allah.'"

Abu al-Faraj al-Amawi al-Isfahani reported on the authority of Yahya b. al-Hasan, who said: "I heard 'Ali b. Tahir b. Zayd say: `When they wanted to bury al-Hasan, she (`A'isha) mounted a mule and asked the help of banu (the sons of) Umayya, Marwan, those who were there from them (banu Umayya) and from their servants. So someone said: `One day (she was) on a mule, and one day (she was) on a camel.'"

Al-Mas'udi has mentioned that `A'isha mounted a gray mule and led the Umayyads to declare a second battle against the members of the House (Ahl al-Bayt. He (al-Mas'udi) said: "So al-Qasim b. Muhammad b. Abu Bakr came to her (`A'isha) and said: `Aunt, we,, have not washed our heads since the Battle of the Camel.² Do you' want people to call this day the Battle of the Gray Mule?' So she came back."

Many people gathered together with al-Husayn b. 'Ali and said to him: "Leave us with the children of Marwan. By Allah, they are, with us, nothing but an itching of the head." Al-Husayn said: `By Allah, if there had been no injunction to me from al-Hasan, peace be on him, to prevent bloodshed and that I should not even pour blood into a cupping-glass in (carrying out) his command, you would have known how the swords of Allah would have taken their toll from you. You have broken the agreement which was made between you and us. You have ignored the conditions which we made with you for ourselves." Here al-Husayn, peace be on him, reminded them of the conditions of the Peace Treaty.

Then they went on with (the body of) al-Hasan, peace be on him, and they buried him in (the cemetery of) al-Baqi` beside his grandmother, Fatima daughter of Asad b. Hashim b. `Abd Manaf, May Allah be pleased with her.

In his book `al-Isaba', he (Ahmad Shahab al-Din al-`Asqalani) said: Dawud b. Sinan informed us: Tha'laba b. Abu Malik told us: "I (Tha'laba b. Abu Malik) saw al-Hasan on the day when he died and was buried in (the cemetery of) al-Baqi`. I saw that if a needle had been thrown away in (the cemetery of) al-Baqi`, it (the needle) would have not fallen but on the head of a person."

1. Al-Hasan, peace be on him, was worthier of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, than others, because he was his grandson and a piece of him. Rather al-Hasan was the piece of the Prophet. No one is worthier of the grandfather than the grandson. In other words the piece is worthier of the entirety than others.

Al-Hasan, peace be on him, was worthier of the Prophet's family, because he was his legitimate inheritor through his mother the truthful and chaste one, peace be on her. She was the only inheritor of her father, may Allah bless him and his family. So she (Fatima, the Prophet's daughter) had the right to inherit her father as Solomon inherited David. For there is nothing that can specialize the general inheritance.

Here the comparative degree `worthier' concerns the mafduulin (less excellent), namely Abu Bakr and `Umar. For they regarded themselves as worthier of burying in the room of the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family, than others. However, his grandson (al-Hasan) was worthier of that than them. That is because they (Abu Bakr and `Umar) thought that the wife had the right to inherit her husband. Muslim jurists have disagreed on this matter since then. `A'isha, the daughter of Abu Bakr, and Hafsa, the daughter of `Umar, had, according to the correctness of their inheritance as two

wives, a share of seventy-two shares in the room where the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family, was buried. For they were two of nine wives. And all the nine wives had one-eighth which they divided among themselves according to this rate. As for the holy room whose wideness we do not know exactly should be wide enough to hold seventy two graves; otherwise the inheritors of the truthful, chaste one (Fatima did not permit Abu Bakr and `Umar to be buried in it. So what is other than this (explanation)? Accordingly, we must admit that al-Hasan, peace be on him, was worthier of the Apostle of Allah and of his house than the others.

2. In his book 'Al-Mahasin wa al-Masawi', vol. 1, p.35, al-Bayhaqi has reported similar words. He (al-Bayhaqi) said: "On the authority of al-Hasan al-Basri that al-Ahnaf b. Qays said to `A'isha at the Battle of the Camel: `Mother of the believers, has the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family, authorized you this movement?' She said: `O Allah, no.' He said: `Have you found it (this movement) in the Book of Allah, the Exalted?' She said: `We do not read but what you read.' He said: `Have you seen that the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family, asked the help of his wives when he was few in number and the polytheists were many?' She said: `O Allah, no.' Al-Ahnaf said: `Therefore, what is our guilt?"

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