

2- IMAM HASAN (AS): THE PROPHET'S GRAND SON

This chapter reviews the major historical events of the life of Imam Hasan (AS) and gives an overview of the complicated political environment in which he lived, which led him to accept the treaty with Muawiyah.

2-1-With his Grandfather, the Prophet

2-1-1-Birth

Imam Hasan (AS) was born on the 15th of the month of Ramazan in the 3rd year of Hijri in Medina. He was the first born of Imam Ali (AS) and Lady Fatimah (SA) and the first grandchild of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). After his birth, the angel Gabriel revealed to the Prophet, "O' Prophet, Ali to you is like Haroon was to Musa, thus, name this child the name of Haroon's son Shubbar, which in Arabic is translated to Hasan." The Holy Prophet performed some rituals for the newborn, such as whispering the Azan in the baby's ear, sacrificing two sheep, shaving the baby's head, and paying silver equivalent to the weight of the baby's hair to charity.

2-1-2-With his Grandfather

The Holy Prophet had a special place in his heart for both of his grandsons, Imam Hasan and Imam Hossein, who are, according to the verse of Tat-heer (Purification) [33:33], a part of his household, and are purified. The Prophet encouraged all of the believers to love and respect his household, as the verse [42:23] from the Holy Quran states, "I do not ask you for any reward except love for (my) kin."

The Prophet had said, "Hasan and Hossein are the leaders of the youth of paradise" and are Imams whether they are sitting or standing, implying that they are leaders over people whether they are at peace, or at war against injustice.

On several occasions, the Prophet treated Imam Hasan and Imam Hossein as adults and honored them with a special social status despite their very young ages. For example, the Prophet accepted them as witnesses for the treaty with the tribe of Thaqif and accepted their allegiances in the allegiance of Rizwan. This was a privilege that no child had ever had in the Prophet's life.

2-1-3-Mubahilah (Cursing of the Untruthful)¹⁹

The Christians of Najran refused to accept Islam after discussing Christian beliefs with the Holy Prophet, but were willing to do Mubahilah (or cursing of the untruthful). To the surprise of the Christians, the Holy Prophet did not bring an army or his companions, instead, he brought his family, Imam Ali, Lady Fatimah, Imam Hasan, and Imam Hossein. After seeing them, the Christians felt discouraged from doing Mubahilah. It was then the verse of Mubahilah [3:61] was revealed, calling Imam Hasan and Imam Hossein the sons of the Holy Prophet.

2-1-4-Demise of the Prophet²⁰

Imam Hasan was seven years old when the Prophet passed away, and was present at his bedside during his last moments.

2-2-During the Three Caliphs

2-2-1-Martyrdom of Lady Fatimah²¹

Lady Fatimah, the only daughter of the Holy Prophet, was martyred within a few months after the demise of the Holy Prophet. In an attempt to forcefully gain allegiance for the first caliph from Imam Ali, her house was attacked and Lady Fatimah was fatally injured, which caused the miscarriage of her baby and her eventual passing. Imam Hasan and Imam Hossein witnessed this injustice and were present in the hidden, nighttime burial of their mother.

2-2-2-During the First Caliph

After the Prophet's demise, the first caliph was once speaking from the Prophet's pulpit. The young Imam entered the mosque and strongly demanded the Caliph "Come down from my father's pulpit!" The

¹⁹ 24 Zu al-Hijjah, 9 AH (Imam's age: 6)

²⁰ 28 Safar, 11 AH (Imam's age: 7)

²¹ 13 Jumada al-Awwal/3 Jumada al-Thani, 11 AH (Imam's age: 7)

Caliph replied, "Truly this pulpit belongs to your father as opposed to my father."

2-2-3-During the Second Caliph

When the second caliph was on his deathbed, he appointed a council of six people to select the next caliph. He chose Imam Hasan as one of the witnesses to the council. This shows Imam Hasan's social status and respect in the society and among politicians as the progeny of the Prophet.

2-2-4-During the Third Caliph

Abu-Zar, a companion of the Prophet, objected to the unjust and corrupt government of the third caliph, so the Caliph exiled Abu-Zar and ordered that no one accompany him. However, Imam Ali, his brother Aqeel, Imam Hasan, Imam Hossein, and Ammar went to bid Abu-Zar farewell. Imam Hasan expressed his sympathy and gave him comforting words of patience and perseverance, saying that in Paradise, he would meet the Prophet well-pleased with him.

When the Caliph's house was surrounded by people objecting to his unjust government, Imam Ali sent a group from Banu Hashem, including his sons, Imam Hasan and Imam Hossein, to protect the Caliph.

2-3-During the Caliphate of Imam Ali (AS)

2-3-1-Battle of Jamal (Camel)²²

During his father's caliphate, Imam Hasan always accompanied him and was his right hand. Imam Hasan was a brave and courageous warrior in the battles of Jamal, Siffin, and Nahrawan. He also advised people and delivered wise speeches during several occasions. The people witnessed his wisdom and great leadership skills.

Before the Battle of Jamal, Abu Musa al-Ash'ari was an obstacle against

²² 10 Jumada al-Awwal, 36 AH (Imam's age: 32)

the Kufans recognizing the truth and joining the Imam's army. Imam Hasan delivered a message from his father in Kufa and gave a powerful speech to destroy Abu Musa's propaganda. He succeeded in recruiting around 10,000 soldiers who formed a large portion of the Imam's army.

During the battle, Aisha's camel was the symbol for continuation of the war. Imam Ali sent Imam Hasan to bring down Aisha's camel from the midst of the enemy's army. Imam Hasan brought down the camel and ended the war. Imam Ali won the battle and respectfully returned Aisha to her home.

2-3-2-Battle of Siffin²³

Muawiyah refused to submit the governorship of Shaam, which he ruled from the time of the second caliph, to Imam Ali as the Muslims' caliph. He falsely accused Imam Ali of the murder of the third caliph and prepared an army to avenge his death. He then came to the Battle of Siffin against Imam Ali. The battle lasted for more than three months and resulted in around 70,000 casualties. During the battle, Imam Hasan and Imam Hossein were fighting so courageously that Imam Ali called them back from the battle so that the progeny of the Prophet would be saved. On the other side, seeing Imam Hasan's courage, Muawiyah tried to influence the Imam and offered him governorship, which was clearly rejected by the Imam.

At the last stage of the battle, close to the Imam's victory, Muawiyah ordered his troops to hoist Qurans on their spears, saying that the Quran should settle the battle. Imam Ali's troops were fooled and refused to continue fighting. They threatened Imam Ali to make him accept the negotiations and forcefully selected Abu Musa al-Ash'ari as their representative. After Muawiyah's representative, Amr ibn al-As, deceived Abu Musa al-Ash'ari during the negotiations, Imam Ali asked Imam Hasan to deliver a sermon for the unity of his army.

2-3-3-Imam Ali's Governorship after Siffin

²³ 1 Safar, 37 AH (Imam's age: 33)

2- Imam Hasan (AS): The Prophet's Grand Son

After the long and harsh Battle of Siffin was left inconclusive, Imam Ali constantly urged the Kufans to rise against the injustice of Muawiyah. The Kufans, however, were reluctant to respond to the Imam's call. The Imam's recruiting for his army against Muawiyah coincided with the Khawarij's uprising. The Imam had no choice but to suppress the Khawarij, who were based close to Kufa. After the Battle of Nahrawan, the Imam wanted to take the army directly towards Muawiyah, but the troops did not support the Imam and urged him to return to Kufa.

During the upcoming months, Muawiyah and his army benefited from this situation and invaded Egypt, killed the Imam's governor and troops, and appointed Amr ibn al-As as the governor. They also caused unrest in the Imam's territories in Iraq, Mecca, Medina, and Yemen. Imam Ali was very disappointed with the people of Kufa and complained about them in many instances. According to one of the Imam's sermons in Nahj al-Balagha, the Imam wished to have just 1,000 courageous and loyal men on horses ready for battle instead of his entire army.

2-3-4-Martyrdom of Imam Ali²⁴

Three of the Khawarij took an oath near the Holy Ka'ba's wall to kill Amr ibn al-As, Muawiyah, and Imam Ali. Only one of them completed the heinous crime of striking Imam Ali with a poisonous sword while the Imam was leading the morning prayer in the Mosque of Kufa. Before the Imam's martyrdom, he appointed Imam Hasan to take care of his personal affairs and introduced him as the next Imam to the Shias. Imam Hasan, Imam Hussein, and a few others buried Imam Ali secretly at night in fear of revenge and insults from his enemies. The progeny of the Prophet had to face many atrocities, causing Imam Hasan to witness both his mother and father being buried secretly at night. After Imam Ali's martyrdom, Imam Hasan performed the Qisas (retaliation) against his father's killer.

²⁴ 21 Ramazan, 40 AH (Imam's age: 37)

2-4-Caliphate

2-4-1-Allegiance²⁵

After Imam Ali's hidden burial, Imam Hasan delivered a sermon in the Mosque of Kufa to announce the martyrdom of his father from the strike of a poisonous sword. In this sermon, Imam Hasan remembered and mourned for Imam Ali. He then introduced himself as the progeny of the Prophet and described the greatness of the Prophet's household for God. The people, who were already grieved by the loss of their leader, Imam Ali, and feared Muawiyah's revenge for the Battle of Siffin, readily pledged allegiance to Imam Hasan. The Khawarij also pledged allegiance on the condition of war against Muawiyah, but the Imam only accepted unconditional allegiance. The Khawarij had no choice but to agree. After Imam Hasan was selected democratically, messengers were sent out to other parts of the government, and they all paid allegiance to the Imam.

2-4-2-Beginning of Caliphate

When Imam Hasan became the leader, he needed some time to settle the matters of the new government. Similar to the customs of the Prophet and Imam Ali, Imam Hasan advised his opponent, Muawiyah, by sending him a letter and inviting him to pledge allegiance. Muawiyah saw himself as closer to becoming the caliph after the martyrdom of Imam Ali, so he responded by saying, "Our example is like that of Abu Bakr (first caliph) and your father Ali for the caliphate. I am older than you and have more experience in politics."

Muawiyah continued his conspiracy and propaganda against Imam Hasan. He ordered his agents in Kufa to kill the Imam and blamed the Khawarij for causing turmoil in Kufa. An archer attempted to kill the Imam while he was leading the prayer in the Mosque of Kufa, but failed, causing only a minor injury to the Imam's neck.

Muawiyah sent his troops wearing the uniforms of the Imam's army to

²⁵ 21 Ramazan, 40 AH (Imam's age: 37)

attack villages and cause unrest so that the people would doubt the Imam. Muawiyah also tried to deceive and bribe tribal leaders who had pledged allegiance to the Imam by offering them wealth so they would change sides, or at least remain isolated during any war. Finally, Muawiyah gathered an army of around 60,000 men by joining the Egyptian forces under the leadership of Amr ibn al-As.

2-4-3-Preparation for War

After a short period, Muawiyah sent a message to the Imam and promised him governorship and wealth if he were to surrender. The Imam refused, and Muawiyah, who was well prepared for war, advanced his army towards Kufa.

The Imam called the people of Kufa to the mosque and gave a sermon to notify them of Muawiyah's invasion. He asked for immediate recruitments for the army. After the Imam's sermon, no one from the audience responded. A few of the Imam's companions, such as Qays ibn Sa'd and Adi ibn Haatem, could not tolerate everyone's silence and delivered a roaring speech. They encouraged the people to accept the call of the Imam. It was then that the people started joining the army and the Imam was able to gather around 40,000 men.

The Imam first sent 4,000 troops under the command of Hakam Kendi to stop the progression of Muawiyah's army. Muawiyah, however, bribed Hakam with gold and a promise of leadership, which convinced him to join Muawiyah with 200 of his men.

The Imam then sent 12,000 warriors under the command of Ibn Abbas towards the war's frontier. He appointed Qays ibn Sa'd and Saeed ibn Qays as the successors of Ibn Abbas, and ordered Ibn Abbas to consult with them prior to making any decision. Shortly after, the Imam followed the troops and went to Madain with his army to recruit more troops.

2-4-4-Preparing Grounds for Peace

Muawiyah wanted to overcome the Imam at the least expense. To

deceive the people, he introduced himself as a peaceful leader and spoke about Muslim unity. He accused the Imam of advocating for war. His spies simultaneously propagated unrest within the army of the Imam. They spread rumors that the Imam's army in the other location had accepted peace with Muawiyah. These rumors were effective, and at night, Ibn Abbas, the army's leader, joined Muawiyah. This caused a great division within the army, and 8,000 of the Imam's troops subsequently joined Muawiyah's forces.

Muawiyah sent negotiators to the Imam's base, and when they returned, they spoke positively about the Imam's character, pretending that the Imam is looking to make peace with Muawiyah. This caused great confusion among the people who wanted war with Muawiyah, including the Khawarij, who then invaded the Imam's tent and stole everything.

In another incident, one of the Khawarij attacked the Imam with a dagger and cut his thigh so deeply that it reached his bone.

2-4-5-Accepting the Treaty²⁶

This chain of events led to turmoil within the army of the Imam and the people were no longer united. They started leaving the Imam's army and joining Muawiyah group by group.

Muawiyah did not want to carry the shame of killing Imam Hasan, as Imam Hassan was the closest blood relative of the Prophet at the time, and he was democratically elected to be the caliph by the people. He sent a negotiator to the Imam, who carried betrayal letters from the commanders of the Imam's army and of tribal leaders who had promised Muawiyah that if he would come to them, they would surrender the Imam to him. The negotiator brought an offer for a peace treaty which would have any conditions requested by the Imam.

Despite being deeply injured, the Imam delivered a speech to his army to fulfill his responsibility, telling them that Muawiyah had offered a peace treaty. He said, "If you want God to be pleased with you, you

²⁶ 26 Rabi' al-Awwal, 41 AH (Imam's age: 37)

must fight Muawiyah. But if you want the life of this world, then accept Muawiyah's treaty." The troops responded by saying, they wanted this world so the Imam accepted the peace treaty with specific conditions.

2-4-6-Treaty Conditions

Although the conditions of the peace treaty vary in historical resources, the main conditions put forth by the Imam are as follows: 1. Muawiyah must follow the Holy Quran, the customs of the Prophet and the righteous caliphs, 2. Muawiyah should not appoint any successor after him, 3. Muawiyah must provide security for all of the people, including the lovers and followers of Imam Ali and Imam Hasan. He must provide safety and protection for the lives, wealth, and family of the followers of Imam Ali and Imam Hasan, 4. Muawiyah must stop cursing Imam Ali from the pulpit.

2-5-During the Government of Muawiyah

2-5-1-After the Treaty

With the acceptance of the treaty, the Imam's caliphate ended in less than seven months. After the treaty was agreed upon, the Imam sent a letter to Qays ibn Sa'd to return back. Qays ibn Sa'd had been courageously resisting against Muawiyah with around 4,000 of his troops. The troops of the Imam and Muawiyah came to Kufa, and the treaty was officially announced. Muawiyah gave a victory speech, in which he said that the peace treaty lays under his foot, and he threatened the people to pay allegiance to him within three days.

Muawiyah then returned to Shaam and had to pay a large bribe to the Eastern Roman empire, which had been opportunistically preparing to invade Shaam and benefit from the civil war between the Muslims.

2-5-2-Migration to Medina

After the treaty, the Imam migrated back to Medina. During his return, he received a letter from Muawiyah seeking his support against a group of the Khawarij who had revolted against him. The Imam declined any

support and responded by saying, “If I rise for war, you are my first opponent.” Although the Imam was forced by the circumstances to accept the treaty with Muawiyah, the cold war between them continued. On several occasions, the Imam confronted Muawiyah for insulting Imam Ali and Imam Hasan in his speeches.

Many times, the Imam was confronted and blamed, even by his own Shia followers, for accepting the treaty with Muawiyah. The Imam told them about the lack of loyal followers to support him against Muawiyah, which left him with no choice but to accept the treaty. He told some that he did what Prophet Khizr had done to the ship by making a hole in it [18:71], and Prophet Moses had not understood the wisdom behind it until later. On another occasion, he said that the treaty had saved the lives of the Shias from vanishing.

During his life in Medina, the Imam led the Shias and used all opportunities to guide and lead the people. The Imam was a symbol of piety in the society and he performed Hajj 25 times barefoot. He was so generous that on multiple occasions, he donated all or half of his entire wealth in the way of God.

2-5-3-Martyrdom²⁷

After years of being in power, Muawiyah decided to take allegiance for his son, Yazid, as his successor. However, he saw the Imam as a barrier due to the conditions of the treaty. He did not want to directly kill the Imam, so he deceived one of the Imam’s wives, Ju’da, with the promise of wealth and marriage to Yazid. Ju’da, encouraged by her father who was in support of Muawiyah, poisoned the Imam. When the Imam was poisoned, he told Imam Hossein that they had given him poison on past occasions, but that it was fatal this time. In his will, the Imam requested to be buried near the Prophet, his grandfather. If the burial near the Prophet was not possible, he wanted to be buried by his grandmother, Fatimah bint Asad, in the Baqi’ cemetery as he did not want even a single drop of blood to be spilled during his burial.

²⁷ 28 Safar, 50 AH (Imam’s age: 46)

2-5-4-Burial

Crowds of Muslims came for Imam Hasan's burial. They took his holy body towards the tomb of the Prophet, but were stopped by the troops of Marwan ibn al-Hakam, a prominent Umayyad. Aisha, one of the Prophet's wives, also joined in the opposition. There was a conflict between the crowd and the troops, which led to the Imam's body being hit by many arrows. Imam Hossein then directed the crowd towards the Baqi' cemetery by reminding them of Imam Hasan's will to not have any blood spilled during his burial. Later, Muawiyah became delighted when he found out about Marwan ibn al-Hakam's action and reappointed him as the governor of Medina.

2-6-Conclusion

Imam Hasan lived during a very complicated political environment that forced him to give up the caliphate and accept the treaty with Muawiyah. It is very surprising to see that even historical records differ in the content of the treaty to degrade its significance. There was wisdom behind the treaty. The treaty saved the Muslim nation as a whole against the threats of the Eastern Roman empire by avoiding a civil war. It also saved the few thousands of loyal Shias from being annihilated, and helped their population to survive and grow. The treaty revealed Muawiyah's true face, who just wanted to reach power by portraying an Islamic facade. Historical evidence proves that Muawiyah did not follow any of the treaty's conditions during his 20 years of power after the treaty. He also appointed his son, Yazid, as his successor. For the first time after the Prophet, Muawiyah changed the system of the Islamic government from a caliphate to a monarchy, which still exists until today.

Indeed, if the Imam had been killed by Muawiyah in war; people would have said that it was for the desire for power and usurping the caliphate. However, the Imam's treaty provided grounds for Imam Hossein's rise against Yazid, and justified the Imam's cause. The people of Kufa realized their mistakes and sent thousands of letters of support to Imam

Hossein right after Muawiyah's death.

When one studies the life of Imam Hasan, the Prophet's grandson, he is overwhelmed by the oppression the Imam had to face, such as the secret burials of his mother and father, the lack of loyalty from his troops, the multiple attacks and injuries he suffered from his own army and Muawiyah's army, the accusations from his own Shias for accepting the treaty, the poisoning and the betrayal by his wife, and even a burial in which the people launched arrows at his body. This oppression continued after his martyrdom through the many rumors spread to degrade the Imam, and continues to this day with his barren shrine.

IMAM HASAN (AS):

**“Your deeds for this world should be
as if you will live forever,
and your deeds for hereafter should be
as if you will die tomorrow.”**