



IMAM HUSAYN (A.S.)

Imam Husayn (a.s.) is our third imam among the twelve imams of Ahlul Bayt.

It was Thursday the 3rd of Shaban, in the 4th year of *hijra*, when our beloved Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.w.) Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.) and Ali al-Murtaza (a.s.) were blessed with a second son who was named Husayn. His *kuniyat* (title) is Abu Abdullah. When the time of delivery drew close the Holy Prophet had to go on a journey, so he told Sayyida Fatimah that if the child was born in his absence, she should not nurse him, but wait for his return. He returned the day after the birth of Imam Husayn (a.s.). He visited the house of Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.) who brought her son to him. The Holy Prophet took the child in his arms and put his tongue in the mouth of the child. That was the first feed of Imam Husayn (a.s.). The Holy Prophet said: HUSAYN MINNI WA ANA MINAL HUSAYN (Husayn is from me and I am from Husayn). He (the Holy Prophet)

recited the *azan* (call to prayers) in the child's right ear and *iqamah* (caution to start the *salat*) in his left ear; and sacrificed a ram as a part of the rites of *aqiqa*.

Imam Husayn (a.s.) was the image of the Holy Prophet. He was as handsome as the Holy Prophet. From far and wide people came to see him. The divine will of Allah was to make him like the Holy Prophet as he was going to represent him in Karbala to protect Islam.

Almighty Allah awarded Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Imam Husayn (a.s.) with the title of *sardaran jawanan-i-jannat* (the chiefs of the youths of paradise). The Holy Prophet had strongly advised his sincere and true believers to love, respect and obey both his grandsons in this world saying that the inhabitants of paradise will do so in the next world.

When Imam Husayn (a.s.) was born, there was great celebration in the heavens and Allah sent all the angels to congratulate the Holy

Prophet, Imam Ali (a.s.) and Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.). Rows and rows of angels from the heaven started their journey to the earth carrying Allah's blessings. On the way they met Fitras, an angel who had lost his wings because Almighty Allah had punished him for some wrong acts. When he saw the angels in their journey, he asked the leading angel, Jibrail: "Where are you all going?" Jibrail replied: "We are going to Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.) to congratulate her, the Holy Prophet and Imam Ali as they have been blessed with another son, Husayn." Fitras asked Jibrail if he could take him along. With the permission of Almighty Allah, Jibrail carried Fitras on his wings to the house of Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.). As they reached the house, they congratulated the Ahlul Bayt. Taking the opportunity of the happy occasion, Fitras explained to the Holy Prophet why he had lost his wings and requested the Holy Prophet to pray for his forgiveness. The *rahmatullil alamin* (mercy unto the worlds) prayed for Fitras and told him to fly over the cradle of Imam Husayn (a.s.). While Fitras was

testifying love, respect and obedience to Imam Husayn (a.s.) the roots of his wings touched the cradle of the grandson of the *rahmatulil alamin* and immediately he got his wings again. Saluting the *panjatan pak* (the pure and pious five), he returned to the heaven flying with his restored wings. This event shows that Allah can give *shifa* (cure) to those who visit, touch or kiss the *zarih* or *rawzah* of Imam Husayn (a.s.) and other Imams.

After the celebration, all the angels went back to heaven with the blessings of Imam Husayn (a.s.). Only Jibrail remained with the Holy Prophet. The Holy Prophet asked Jibrail why he looked sad. He said that Allah had asked him to tell the Holy Prophet that Husayn (a.s.) would be the saviour of Islam, and would represent him in 61 hijra on the plains of Karbala. He was told that Husayn (a.s.), his family and friends would be deprived of food and water for 3 days and then brutally killed and his holy body trampled by horses. His family would be looted and the veils of ladies

taken away, and they would be held captive. The Holy Prophet and Jibrail were both crying. Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.) was listening to the conversation. She asked Jibrail why her son Husayn would be treated so and would the disbelievers kill him? Jibrail said: “No, they will be your father’s *ummah*.” At this she again asked the Holy Prophet: “Will you be there?” He said: “No.” She asked. “Will Ali and myself be there?” “No,” replied the Holy Prophet. “Father, then who will cry for my beloved Husayn?” she inquired.

“My beloved daughter, do not mourn for your Husayn, in every age Allah will send a group of people who will mourn for your dear son and will relate his tragedy till the day of judgement. They will be known as shias , the lovers of the Ahlul Bayt.”

Hearing this Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.) was consoled and said that in this world and in the next she would see that the said group would go to paradise and she would always be with them

and gather their tears in her handkerchief, and bless them.

CHILDHOOD

The childhood of both, Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Imam Husayn (a.s.) was very different from the other children. They were brought up by the Holy Prophet, Imam Ali (a.s.) and Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.). Hearing the revelations of the Holy Quran direct from Jibrail they grew up in the light of the Holy Quran and the sermons of the Holy Prophet.

Once when Imam Husayn as was young he entered the mosque where the Holy Prophet was delivering a sermon. His clothes got tangled in his foot and he would have tripped, but the Holy Prophet came down from the pulpit in the midst of his sermon, picked him up and seated him in his lap. People wondered why the Holy Prophet had interrupted his sermon. The Holy Prophet noticed that the people were restless. He explained: "This child will save Islam when Islam will be in danger."

Once on the night of an *id* (festival), both Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Imam Husayn came to their mother, Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.) and said; “Dear mother, tomorrow is the *id* day. Where are our new clothes?”

Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.) kissed them and said: “Inshallah, the tailor will bring your clothes tomorrow.” After the children went to sleep, Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.) stood up for prayer and offered two *rak-at salat* and raised her hands in supplication, saying: “O Lord of the world I am your slave, and You are my master, I am the daughter of Your beloved prophet. You well know what I have told my dear Hasan and Husayn. My Lord, if they will get the new clothes they will be happy. You will also be pleased for them. O Allah, let not the words of your Fatimah fail, I depend on You, *amin*.”

Early in the morning the two beloved sons of Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.) woke up and after offering their *fajr salat* went to their mother and asked: “Have our new clothes come?”

Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.) was about to answer, but a voice was heard at the door: ‘O, Ahlul Bayt! Here are the clothes for Hasan and Husayn.’

Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.) received them and then offered two *rak-at salat* as thanksgiving to Almighty Allah for granting her supplication and making her children happy. Ummi Salma, the righteous wife of the Holy Prophet said: “I had never seen such beautiful clothes before.” The Holy Prophet told her that they were heavenly dresses from Allah. The children went to the mosque with their grandfather. On their return they asked the Holy Prophet why like other children they did not have horses? The Holy Prophet took both of them on his shoulders and asked them to hold his hair as reins. The children asked him to give them a ride. The Holy Prophet started saying “*al uf al uf*.” People commented “What a nice ride the children have.”

Holy Prophet said:
“Look what lovely riders I have.”

On another occasion, when Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.) was sleeping, Imam Husayn (a.s.) started crying in his cradle. The cradle automatically began swinging and someone was talking to the child. When she told her father what had happened, the Holy Prophet said that it was angel Jibrail who was serving the baby.

Once the Holy Prophet was offering prayers in the mosque. Imam Husayn (a.s.) 4 or 5 years old, came and sat on his back. Jibrail came and told the Holy Prophet that Allah had asked him to prolong his prostration till Husayn (a.s.) came down of his own will. Holy Prophet continued his prostration and repeated *subhana rabil ala wa bi hamdih* 70 times till Imam Husayn (a.s.) got down. Then the Holy Prophet raised his head. People praying behind the Holy Prophet asked him the reason for such a long prostration. The Holy Prophet replied: "It was Almighty Allah's command. I prolonged the prostration till Husayn got down of his own accord."

Your companion does not err, nor does he go astray, nor does he speak out of his own desires.
[Al-Najm 2, 3]

This incident illustrates the status of Imam Husayn (a.s.).

Once the Holy Prophet was sitting with his grandson, Husayn (a.s.) on one side and Ibrahim (a.s.), his own son on the other side. The messenger Jibrail appeared and said: “O prophet of Allah, it is the will of Allah to take one of these children.” The Holy Prophet said: “Let Ibrahim be taken away and Husayn be spared as I need him for preservation of Islam.”

Once Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Imam Husayn (a.s.) went to Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.) with their fine penmanship and asked her to judge whose writing was better. Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.) told them to ask their father, Ali (a.s.). When they went to their father, he told them to ask their grandfather, the Holy Prophet. When the Holy Prophet saw the work, he said: “Only your

mother should decide.” Thus once again they returned to their mother. Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.) said: “Both are very good”, but Hasnayn insisted that she should select only the best. So, took her necklace which contained seven pearls and breaking it scattered the pearls on the ground. She asked Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Imam Husayn (a.s.) to gather the pearls and whoever gathered more would be considered the best.

Both Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Imam Husayn (a.s.) collected three pearls each while the seventh pearl broke into two equal parts. Each Imam found half part of the seventh pearl. So they were declared equal as calligraphers.

It was a miracle of Almighty Allah proving that Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Imam Husayn (a.s.) were equal in all merits.

Not only the Imams but all the 14 *masumin* (infallibles) are equal in merits.

The Holy Prophet said:

“Our first is Muhammad, Our middle is Muhammad, Our last is Muhammad, and all of us are Muhammad, in creation and deeds.”

Panjatan are from one *nur* (light).

One morning Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.) found that both of her sons were ill. When the Holy Prophet came to see them, he advised Ali (a.s.) and Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.) to make a promise to Allah that they would observe fast for three consecutive days if their sons recovered. Soon they returned to normal health. So Imam Ali (a.s.), Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.), Imam Hasan (a.s.), Imam Husayn (a.s.) and Fizza fasted for three days. Each day a different person came to their house at the time of breaking the fast, and knocked at their door.

The man who came on the first day said:

“O Ahlul Bayt of the Messenger of Allah, I am a poor man. I am hungry. Give me something to eat.” They gave to him all that they had. They

broke their fasts with water and went to bed hungry.

The man on the second day said:

“O Ahlul Bayt of the Messenger of Allah, my parents are dead. I am a destitute. Will you satisfy my hunger?” Again, all the food that they had prepared was given away. They broke their fast with water and went to sleep without food.

The man who came on the third day said:

“O Ahlul Bayt of the Messenger of Allah, I was a slave and have just been granted my freedom. Give me some food.” Yet again all the food was given away to him. They drank water to break their fast and slept without food.

After completion of the three fasts, Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.) offered prayers of gratitude to Allah. The Holy Prophet then informed her that Jibrail had brought verses in their praise (*Surah al-Dahr* - verses 7 to 11).

Imam Husayn (a.s.) was 4 years old when the

event of Mubahila took place. The Holy Prophet took Imam Ali (a.s.), Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.), Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Imam Husayn (a.s.) to the meeting place to show the world that the five would always come to save Islam, may it be in Mubahila or the desert of Karbala.

In the event of the blanket (*kisa*) also the five were present and at that moment Allah revealed *ayah tathir*:

Verily, verily Allah intends but to keep off from you (every kind of) uncleanness, O you the people of the house, and purify you (with) a thorough purification. (Surah 33 : verse 33)

and sent his messenger Jibrail to say that the whole of the universe was created in love of these five.

Imam Husayn (a.s.) was with the Holy Prophet when the following verse of the Holy Quran was revealed at Ghadir Khum, while returning from the last hajj:

(O Muhammad) deliver what has been sent

down to you from your Lord; and if you do not do it, then, (it will be as if) you have not delivered His message (at all); and surely Allah will protect you from (the mischief) of men; verily Allah does not guide a disbelieving people. [Ma-idah : 67]

After receiving this *wahi* he declared Ali (a.s.) as his successor.

In the 11th year of *hijra* when he was seven years old his beloved grandfather, the Holy Prophet, left the world. Before dying he embraced Hasan (a.s.) and Husayn (a.s.) and told them to always pray *salat* especially *tahajjud* (an optional after midnight *salat*) and to bear with patience whatever troubles befall them and save Islam.

After the death of the Holy Prophet, Imam Husayn (a.s.), as a child, accompanied his mother to seek justice from the ruling party on the matter of *Fidak*, but they were refused and *Fidak* was taken away.

During those days he saw his father Ali (a.s.)

being dragged with a rope round his neck by the ruling party. Then he witnessed people breaking and setting the door of their house on Fire, which fractured his mother's ribs. This injury was the cause of the death of Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.).

It was 3 months after the death of his grandfather, that Husayn (a.s.) lost his mother. He had loved his mother Very much. After some time his father, Imam Ali (a.s.), married Fatimah Kalbiya, who is known as Ummul Banin (mother of sons). Hasnayn respected her as a mother but she always called herself their slave. Abbas (a.s.) was her eldest son, and when he was born, Ummul Banin told Imam Husayn (a.s.) that the baby had not opened his eyes. As soon as Imam Husayn (a.s.) took the baby in his lap, the child opened his eyes and looked at Imam Husayn's face. The birth of Abbas was the answer of Imam Ali's prayers as he wanted a brave son who would represent him and help Imam Husayn (a.s.) in Karbala. These two brothers loved each other deeply.

This was the time when Imam Husayn's father who had always helped the Holy Prophet in times of peace and war was now leading a secluded life. His right of *khilafat* was taken away by the ruling party. Hasnain had joined his father in the wars of Jamal, Siffin and Nahrwan. The Ahlul Bayt were so suppressed by the ruling party that we hardly know about their activities during a period of 24 years.

During the days of the *khilafat* of Umar the Muslims were victorious in the battle of Qadsia and the two daughters of Yazdgard, Shahrbanu and Kanan Banu, were taken prisoner and brought to Madina. Caliph Umar planned to sell them but fortunately the matter was discussed with Imam Ali (a.s.) who reminded him that members of noble families could not be sold, according to Islamic teachings. So these girls be set free and let to choose Muslim husbands. Because of this wise advise both the ladies were set free and Shahrbanu chose Imam Husayn (a.s.) to be her husband.

During the *khilafat* of Uthman, the third caliph, there was a time when rebels carried out a blockade and surrounded his palace. The supply of water was cut off. Uthman sent for Imam Ali (a.s.) and appealed to him for relief. Imam Ali (a.s.) sent his sons, Hasan (a.s.) and Husayn (a.s.), with some water to the palace of Uthman. The rebels in respect of the memory of the Holy Prophet, who loved Hasan (a.s.) and Husayn (a.s.) and always carried them in his lap when they were little children, let them go in unchecked.

During the time of his father's *khilafat* he saw how his father had changed the morals of the people and brought justice and true Islam back.

Once during those days when Husayn (a.s.) was passing through a prison, Shimr called out and begged him to ask his father for his release and said that he would never forget this act of kindness. Husayn (a.s.) went to his father and pleaded his case. Imam Ali (a.s.) told his son that Shimr was a very cruel man who would

one day kill him mercilessly and also harass and beat up his family. Husayn (a.s.) in return said: "Father, I want to do him this favour so that he will remember this act of mine and not do what you have said, and in this way he will also be saved from committing a great sin." So Imam Ali (a.s.) released him. But Alas we all know that he was the killer of Imam Husayn (a.s.) and he tortured the women and children of his family after the martyrdom of Imam Husayn (a.s.).

Imam Ali (a.s.) was injured in a *masjid* by a poisoned sword. Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Imam Husayn (a.s.) accompanied him home from the masjid and were by his side. Ibn Muljim, the murderer was brought to Imam Ali (a.s.). He was tied very tightly by a rope. Imam Ali (a.s.) asked the guards to loosen the rope. He said that if he lives he would punish him as he thought fit, and in case he died they should kill him by a single stroke of a sword and not to mutilate his body. Imam Ali (a.s.) let his son, Abbas (a.s.) under the care of Imam Husayn

(a.s.) and told him to help and look after Husayn (a.s.) and his family in Karbala as he was to represent him there.

After the death of Imam Ali (a.s.), Muawiya came in power. It was during the time of Imam Hasan's imamat. But Imam Hasan (a.s.) led a very quiet life. Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Imam Husayn (a.s.) were always together in difficult times and always tried to spread Islam. Alas his brother was poisoned. Imam Husayn (a.s.) was at his bedside and Imam Hasan (a.s.) told his brother to bury him near his grandfather, the Holy Prophet, but the ruling party did not allow him to bury his brother there and they started shooting arrows on his corpse. Imam Husayn (a.s.) had to bring his corpse back home. He took out the arrows from his brother's dead body and then he buried him in Jannatul Baqi, next to his mother.

Now Imam Husayn as was the last of the *panjatan pak* and his imamat lasted for 10 years. He carried out his duties but at last

he had to face a very difficult time when Muawiya died and his son, Yazid, took over. Yazid was advised by his father in his will to never ask Imam Husayn (a.s.) for an oath of loyalty as that would destroy him for ever. Yazid did not obey his father's advice, and instead soon he sent a letter to the governor of Madina asking him to call Imam Husayn (a.s.) and ask for *bayat* (oath of loyalty). As soon as the letter reached him he called Imam Husayn (a.s.). Imam Husayn (a.s.) knew that there would be trouble. His family wanted to accompany him, but Imam Husayn (a.s.) said: "No, he has called me. I should go alone." But when Imam Husayn (a.s.) went he was accompanied by his brothers and sons. He asked them to wait outside, but told them that if they heard his voice raised, they should come in. When he went to Malik he was seated next to him and told that Muawiya had died and his son Yazid had succeeded him. Malik said that Yazid had asked him to take *bayat* (oath of loyalty) from him. Imam Husayn (a.s.) said he needed time to think and would return in

a few days. Marwan, the arch enemy of the Ahlul Bayt who was there told Malik not to let Imam Husayn (a.s.) go as he would never again get such an opportunity. Imam Husayn (a.s.) raised his voice and said: “Marwan you cannot stop me.” Hearing his raised voice his brothers and sons came in with unsheathed swords and Imam Husayn (a.s.) came out. When he reached home he told his sister, Sayyida Zaynab (s.a.) what had happened and said that the time had come for them to leave Madina and the graves of their beloved grandfather, mother and brother. He went to *masjid nabawi*, sat there and prayed to Allah to help him. He bade farewell to his grandfather, his beloved mother and brother; then made plans to leave Madina the next day during the darkness of the night. It was 28th Rajab. All arrangements were made. His whole family left with him except his one daughter, Fatimah Sughra, who was ill.

His last journey from his homeland started and he planned to go for *hajj*. When he reached

Makka and did his *tawaf* he got the news that Yazid had sent some people dressed as hajis to kill him. As Almighty Allah has forbidden the killing of even insects during hajj, on the 8th of Zilhijjah just one day before the *hajj* the Imam performed *umra*, and left Makka. Near masjid A-isha Sayyida Zaynab's husband, Abdullah ibn Jafar al-Tayyar. met him with his two sons, Awn and Muhammad. He said that due to his old age he could not accompany Husyan (a.s.), so he was sending his two sons to represent him in Karbala. He bade farewell to Sayyida Zaynab (s.a.) and his sons. The party proceeded to Kufa where they received the news of the martyrdom of Muslim bin Aqil and his two sons, Muhammad and Ibrahim. He learnt that the Kufis had become his enemies so he proceeded towards Karbala where in the battle of truth against falsehood he was mercilessly killed by Shimr and his body was trampled on by horses.

For details of *shahadat* of Imam Husayn (a.s.), please read the book of Ashura in Bed Time Stories.

THE HOLY QURAN SAYS

Verily, verily Allah intends but to keep off from you (every kind of) uncleanness, O you Ahlul Bayt (the people of the house), and purify you (with) a thorough purification.

THE HOLY PROPHET SAID

My Ahlul Bayt are like the ark of Nuh.
Whoever comes on it is saved, whoever stays back is drowned.

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