



BED TIME STORIES

Imam Hasan Bin Ali Al Askari
Imam Muhammad Bin Hasan Al Qa-im

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IMAM HASAN BIN ALI AL-ASKARI (A.S.)

Imam Hasan bin al-Askari (a.s.) is our eleventh Imam in the line of twelve Imams. His name is al-Hasan, Abu Muhammad is his appellation. Being a resident of Askar, a suburb of Samarra, he is titled *al-askari*. He was the son of Imam Ali al-Naqi (a.s.) and the father of Imam Muhammad al-Mahdi (a.s.) (The Awaited). Imam Hasan al-Askari's mother was Sawsan Khatun. an ideal woman in piety, worship, chastity, and generosity.

Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) was born in Madina on the 10th of Rabi al Sani, 232 *hijri*. At the time of his birth, Wasaq Billah bin Mutasim was the ruler of Madina. Then Mutawakkil took the throne from Wasaq in 233 *hijra*.

Mutawakkil had a very strong hatred towards Ali (a.s.) and his family. It was he who declared in 236 *hijra* that visiting the shrine of Imam Husayn (a.s.) is against the law and took steps to destroy it.

Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) was barely 4 years, when he was nominated as the next Imam by his father, witnessed by many people.

At the age of 4 years and few months, Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) left for Iraq with his father, Imam Ali al-Naqi (a.s.) who was forcibly called by Mutawakkil.

Once, it so happened that Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) accidentally fell in his home's well. The ladies in the house started crying and mourning at this terrible scene. However Imam Ali al-Naqi (a.s.) who was praying *salat* at that time continued his worship. After offering the prayers he said confidently: "Do not panic. The divine leader will not be injured." During this time they saw the water level rising and the Imam safely swimming in it. Imam Hasan al-Askari wore a ring. The inscription on the ring was "Glory be to Him to whom belong the treasures of the skies and the earth."

Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) was married

to Nargis Khatun. She was the paternal granddaughter of the king of Rome.

Imam Ali al-Naqi (a.s.) was martyred on the 3rd of Rajab 254 A.H. At this time Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) was 22.

Mustayin Billah, the ruler of Madina had a horse which could not be tamed. It would not allow anyone to ride on its back. Many famous and courageous cavaliers tried, got trampled and finally accepted their defeat. One of the Mustayin's followers suggested that since the caliph wanted to get rid of the holy Imam and was always thinking of ways and means of achieving this objective, there would be no easier way than to call upon the Imam and ask him to ride the beast. The animal would undoubtedly kill the Imam, fulfilling the long awaited dream of the caliph, who at the same time would not be held responsible for his death.

Mustayin jumped at this suggestion and immediately dispatched a special messenger to

deliver his royal invitation to the Imam. Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) accepted the invitation and the next day he presented himself to the caliph. Mustayin welcomed him and seated him next to himself with great honour and respect. Then Mustayin ordered the attendants to bring forth the horse and asked the holy Imam to step outside. The wild horse was brought out of the stable by four straggling stable-boys who could hardly restrain it. Mustayin presented the saddle to the Imam and requested him to put it on the horse. The holy Imam advanced slowly towards the beast and gently stroked its back. At the touch of the Imam's hand the animal calmed down and stood quietly while the Imam placed the saddle on its back. Then the Imam retreated.

Mustayin then sarcastically asked the Imam if he had the strength and courage to mount the horse. It was a challenge that the Imam accepted with great confidence and serenity. He put one foot in the stirrup and gracefully mounted the horse. The large crowd of courtiers, dignitaries, attendants, and the

stable boys looked at the Imam with their mouths wide open. Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) gently nudged the horse and it started off. After some time the Imam gave rein and the horse increased its speed and galloped away with the Imam looking totally relaxed and evidently enjoying the thrilling and exciting ride. When the Imam brought the horse back, Mustayin asked his opinion about the horse. The Imam replied pleasantly with a smile that he had never come across a more beautiful and fleet footed horse than this one.

Mustayin then presented the horse as a gift to the Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) who graciously accepted the royal gift.

Once the city of Baghdad had been facing severe drought for three years causing hardship and trouble to people of all classes. During this difficult period, a Christian monk greatly upset the faith of the Muslims by showing the miracle of making rain fall by special invocation. A large number of people had become his followers after witnessing his

spiritual demonstration, and had began to consider devotion and submission towards him as the source of their ultimate and eternal deliverance. This caused havoc and confusion in the entire city.

The news of this miracle gradually reached the dignitaries who passed it on to Mutamad who was greatly perturbed. He called a group of renowned Muslim scholars and asked them to solve the riddle behind the performance of that Christian scholar but their wisdom produced no results.

Having met failure and disappointment in his attempts, Mutamad was forced to take the matter to the genuine representative of Allah on earth - Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) whom he had been subjecting to various kinds of oppression and torture during solitary confinement in very humiliating and miserable conditions.

Mutamad went to the Imam and requested him to come to the rescue of the followers of his

grand ancestor, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) as they were facing a great peril.

The Imam readily came forward, without any hesitation. He advised Mutamad to ask the people to assemble outside the city the next day and he expressed hope that by the grace of Allah he would dispel their doubts and confusion. The caliph issued orders for the release of all the companions of Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.). All of them were accordingly released and then went out of the city to offer special *istisqa* prayers (invocation for rain).

As they were assembling, the Christian monk who was also there raised his hands towards the sky. A cloud instantly appeared on the sky. The Imam calmly gave orders to catch hold of the hands of the monk. When this was done, a bone of the human body was discovered from his hands. The Imam took away the bone from him and asked the monk to pray for the rain. When he raised his hands, the clouds disappeared and the sun began to shine again. The whole gathering was wonder struck. The caliph asked

the Imam: “O Muhammad, what is this?” The Imam replied: “This bone belongs to the body of some prophet. This monk might have found it from some grave. One of the unique qualities of the bone of a prophet is that when it is raised before the sky, it produces clouds on the sky immediately.” An experiment was done with that bone once again and the result was exactly the same as said by the holy Imam. This removed all the doubts from the minds of the people.

Later the holy Imam offered prayers and raised his hands towards the sky. Soon clouds started gathering and then the clouds burst in torrential rains that continued for several hours eliminating the shortage of water and bringing relief to the masses.

Ahmad bin Muhammad said: “I wrote to Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) when Muhtadi began to kill the slaves: ‘My master, praise be to Allah, who has diverted Muhtadi’s attention from us, he is now threatening you and saying: I will erase him and his followers from the face of the

earth.’ The Imam replied: ‘There is only a short time for him to live. Count from the day you receive this letter, five days and he will be killed on the sixth day humiliated and degraded.’ It happened as the Irnam had predicted.”

When Imam Ali al-Naqi (a.s.) died, his family was busy arranging the burial. During these arrangements, some servants stole certain items, thinking that none would notice it. When the burial was over, Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) called the servants and said: “I ask you about some items; if you tell me the truth, I shall pardon you; but if you speak falsely, I shall get all those items from your possession and punish you fully.” Then the Imam asked each servant about the items that he had stolen. When they confessed their guilt, the Imam took the items back from them and spared them the penalty.

Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) was martyred on the 8th of Rabi al Awwal 260 *hijra* on Friday at the time of morning prayers. He was given a deadly poison on the orders of Mutamad Abbasi. It is confirmed by religious authorities

that before his death he had already declared the *imamate* of Imam Mahdi (a.s.). He was 28 at the time of *shahadat* and is buried in Samarra, Iraq.

SAYINGS OF IMAM HASAN AL-ASKARI (A.S.)

1. Anger is the root cause of every evil.
2. As you sow in this world, so shall you reap in the hereafter.
3. Death is after you. If you sow good you will harvest good; but if you sow evil, there will be nothing for you except remorse and grief.
4. In pursuit of worldly gains do not miss (religious) duties.
5. Do not display happiness before an unhappy person.
6. Give good advice to your brother to remove his faults when he is alone with you, because this procedure serves as a trimming for him.
7. Among the best habits two are these.
 - i) To have complete faith in Allah, and
 - ii) To benefit others by kind deeds.
8. To hide the good deeds of neighbours and

expose their evil deeds and vices is a great curse.

9. He who is jealous and malicious shall never be happy and peaceful.
10. He who completely abstains from evil deeds is the most God-tearing person.
11. A foolish person has his heart in his mouth, whereas a wise man has his mouth in his heart. (i.e. a foolish person speaks without thinking, whereas a wise man thinks before he speaks).
12. There is a blessing in every calamity and misfortune.
13. Speak truth, prolong your prostrations in prayers, reply in pleasant tone to the questions, read the holy Quran and do not forget death and Allah at any time.

IMAM MUHAMMAD BIN HASAN AL-MAHDI (A.S.)

Imam Muhammad bin Hasan al-Mahdi (a.s.) is our twelfth, last and living Imam from among the Imams of Ahlul Bayt. His father was Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) and his mother was Lady Narjis, who was a Roman princess. The way the lady met Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) to become his wife and then the mother of Imam al-Mahdi (a.s.) is a miracle.

Imam Ali al-Naqi (a.s.) the grandfather of Imam al-Mahdi (a.s.) sent his friend Bashir ibn Sulayman to Baghdad, with a bag of 220 gold coins and a note written in Roman. The Imam asked him to wait for a ferry by the river on a particular day, where ships from Syria would be unloading. He said, "When you reach there you will see a number of female captives in the ships. Look out for a slave-trader named .Amr bin Yazid. With him you will see a slave-girl with good breeding and courteous behaviour. She will refuse to be bought by any purchaser.

Approach the slave-trader and hand him the note, requesting him to pass it to that particular slave-girl.”

Bashir carried out the instructions and delivered the letter to the girl. Upon reading the Imam’s letter, the girl asked Amr bin Yazid to sell her to the writer of that letter. The amount agreed upon for the sale was 220 gold coins, the exact figure that the Imam had put in the bag.

When the girl was brought in the presence of Imam al-Naqi (a.s.), she introduced herself as Narjis. She was shown the Islamic way, which she willingly accepted, recited *kalima* and became a Muslim. The Imam informed her that she would be married to his son Hasan al-Askari, just as she had seen in a dream. Imam al-Naqi’s sister, Lady Hakima, then looked after her and taught her the principles of Islam and its ways of life.

It was very early in the morning. The day was Friday, the 15th of Shaban, 255 *hijra* (July,

869 A.D.), when Lady Narjis gave birth to a beautiful child. On the right arm of the infant were the words of verse 81 of Surah Bani Israel: “Truth has come and falsehood has vanished; verily falsehood is bound to vanish.”

He was our twelfth Imam. His name is Muhammad al-Mahdi and titles are:

Qaim (The one who will stand for Islam),
Mahdi (The Guide),
Muntazir (The Awaited),
Sahib-uz-Zamaan (The King of the Age),
Baqiyyatullah (Hidden Treasure of Allah),
Hujjat-ul-Khatam (The Last Proof),
Sahib-ud-Daar (Lord of the Earth).

At first the birth of the child was kept a secret because the Abbaside caliphs were cruel rulers. They were enemies of the Imams and their families. They had heard the Holy Prophet’s hadith that the Twelfth Imam would establish a just government and rule all over the world. They were afraid that their kingdom would come to an end. Therefore, they started

torturing and killing as many Shiites as they could. In the year 235 *hijra* the Abbaside caliph Mutawakkil ordered the tenth Imam Muhammad al-Taqi (a.s.) to shift, along with his family, from Madina to the capital Samarra, so that he could keep a close watch on them.

Similarly, Mutamid, another Abbaside caliph, closely guarded the activities of the family of the eleventh Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.). He hired detectives to inform him of the birth of a son to the Imam so that he could have him killed immediately. Only Lady Hakimah, Imam Hasan Askari's aunt, knew about it as she had been asked to stay in the house by the Imam. She took the child to Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) who kissed him and said, "Speak, my son." The new-born child said: "I testify that there is no god but Allah." Then he listed the names of the Imams and when he came to his own name he said, "O Allah, fulfil my covenant, perfect my service, vindicate my authority, and fill the earth with goodness and justice."

Lady Hakimah relates that when she visited the baby the next day, she heard him reciting verse 5 of Surah Al-Qasas:

We wished to favour those who were weak in the land and make them Imams (leaders), and make them heirs.

From the very beginning, Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) took great care to keep his son hidden from strangers. The Imam informed only a few sincere Shiites about the event and asked them to keep the news a secret. When the companions would visit the Imam, he would introduce his beloved son to them only if he was sure he could trust them.

Three days after the birth, the eleventh Imam took the Holy child to a few of his chosen companions and announced: “After me he will be your master and the support (al-Qaim); everyone will wait for his reappearance. When the earth will be full of injustice and tyranny, he will fill it with peace and justice.”

At another occasion, the Imam told some companions. “Oppressors were plotting to kill me so that my son would not be born, but now see how great is the power of the almighty Allah.”

The Twelfth Imam remained under the care of his father till the 8 of Rabi ul awwal, 260 *hijra* when Imam al-Hasan Askari (a.s.) was poisoned by the tyrant Mutamid Billah. Imam Mahdi (a.s.) was five years old at that time. He led the funeral prayer of Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) (Only an Imam can lead the funeral prayer of another Imam).

When Mutamid found out that a five year old child had led the prayer, he became suspicious that the boy might have been the Twelfth Imam. In order to confirm that the Twelfth Imam did, in fact, exist, he ordered the arrest of Lady Nargis. The Lady was brought before the ruler and was questioned about delivering a son. In order to safeguard her own life as well as to protect her son, she replied that she had never

had a child. He kept her in prison for about six months to make sure she did not deliver any child.

Just as Allah saved Prophet Isa's life by hiding him from his enemies when they wanted to kill him, He planned for the Twelfth Imam to go into hiding as well. Soon after the death of his father, Imam al-Mahdi (a.s.) disappeared from the presence of the people. Only a few chosen companions were allowed to meet him. This period of about seventy three or seventy five years is known as the MINOR OCCULTATION, or the *GHAYBAT AL-SUGHRA*.

THE GHAYBAT AL-SUGHRA

The *Gaybat al-Sughra*, or the minor occultation, was seventy three or seventy five years long. During this period, very few people could visit the Imam, and that too with his permission. These companions brought questions from the people to the Imam, and carried back replies, solutions to problems and

messages from the Imam to the people. In this way the Imam was able to guide the people and convey to them Allah's commands.

Among the companions of the Holy Imam, four became his most trusted and reliable agents. They are known as the *Nawab al-Arba*, or the four deputies. Their names are:

1. Uthman bin Sa'id
2. Muhammad bin Uthman
3. Husayn bin Ruh
4. Ali bin Muhammad Samarri

Ali bin Muhammad Samarri was the last deputy. A few days before he died, he received the following letter from the Imam al-Mahdi (a.s.):

'To Abul Hasan Ali ibn Muhammad al-Samarri: You are going to die in six days. May Allah grant patience to your brothers-in-faith on your departure. So, be prepared, but appoint no one in your place because, from the day of your death, the period of my *Ghaybat al-Kubra* will begin. From now on, no

one will see me until Allah makes me reappear. My reappearance shall take place after a very long time when people will grow tired of waiting, and those who are weak in their faith will say, ‘What? Is he still alive?’; when men will become cruel and inconsiderate, and the world will be full of injustice and violence. Very soon some men will claim to have seen me. Beware! Anyone who makes such a claim before the sound is heard from heaven, announcing my reappearance, is a liar and an impostor. There is no might nor strength except in Allah, the Magnificent.”

Ali bin Muhammad Samarri died within six days of receiving the letter. With his death, the period of the *Ghaybat al-Sughra* ended, and the major occultation or the *GHAYBAT AL-KUBRA* began.

THE GHAYBAT AL-KUBRA

The period of the major occultation began in the year 329 *hijra*, and will continue until the Twelfth Imam returns. Although we cannot see

the Imam, he is present among us. It is because of him that the earth and the heavens exist, and it is because of his holy presence that Allah bestows His special favours on His creation. The Imam guides and helps his sincere friends and all those who make a true effort to purify and develop their souls, through prayer and obedience to Allah. How is this possible, since we have no direct contact with him?

This can be explained, as mentioned earlier, in the words of the Holy Prophet himself. He said that during the Twelfth Imam's absence, people would benefit from him "just as they benefit from the sun when it is hidden behind the clouds."

A number of questions come to mind regarding the unusual Imamate of our Twelfth Imam.

- What kind of relation do we have with our Imam, in his capacity as our leader?
- What kind of relation should we have with our Imam?
- Why is our Imam not with us yet?

- What are our responsibilities, as followers of the Imam, during his absence?
- What must we do and pray in order to hasten his arrival?
- When will he finally arrive?
- What will be our responsibilities then!

Let us examine each of these issues separately.

OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH OUR IMAM

Ever since the beginning of creation, man has had a divine guide in the form of prophet. The prophets were sent by Allah to convey His message to the people, and give them guidelines to a perfect plan, following which they could be successful in this world and the hereafter. When the mission of the last Prophet was complete and prophethood came to an end, there was still a need for a kind of leadership that would guide mankind in understanding, establishing and following the teachings of Allah. This leadership came in the form of the twelve holy Imams. The Imams taught the people how to adopt the laws of

Allah in their lives, and showed them how to form a society based on these laws.

The reasons for the Twelfth Imam to go into hiding have already been discussed earlier. We know that a day will come, when Allah wills, the Imam will return and establish a government on earth and will fill the earth with justice and truth. Every believer has to be aware of the fact that we have a leader and a guide, though we cannot see him.

Recognising the Twelfth Imam is so important that the Holy Prophet once said:

“He who dies without recognising the Imam of his age is like one who has died during the *jahiliyah* (infidelity).”

To die during the *jahiliyah* means dying as a non-believer and a non-Muslim. The person who dies without knowing, or knowing about, his Imam will be counted as one of the non-believers.

OUR RESPONSIBILITIES DURING THE *GHAYBAT AL-KUBRA*

Although we have no direct contact with the Imam during the *Ghaybat al-Kubra*, there are many ways by which we can, and should, maintain contact with Imam al-Mahdi (a.s.) or Imam-i-Zaman (the Imam of the age), as he is popularly referred to. It is extremely important to keep in constant touch with the Imam.

- a. It gives us hope in times of despair. We are constantly reminded that there is a guide and leader, appointed by Allah, watching over us.
- b. It gives us a direction and purpose in life. We hope that one day, Insha-Allah. we will meet our Imam, and look forward to help him with his mission.
- c. If we remember our Imam and pray for him, he too will remember and pray for us.

Our relationship with our leader is not like that of other followers with their leaders. Therefore, our responsibilities to our Imam will also be

of a unique nature. In fact, the duties that we have to perform are more important. We must remember that the mission that our Imam will come to fulfil will be the last, final stage in Allah's experiment on mankind. As such, each one of us has to perform our duties very carefully.

1. We must remember at all times that the actual ruler in this world is only Imam-i-Zaman, and that all other rulers and kings have taken his place.
2. Our next duty is to recognise the Imam and the importance of his mission upon reappearance. For this we have to acquire knowledge from the right sources.
3. We should pray for the Imam's safety, and his early arrival. The Imams have taught us special prayers for this purpose. These will be mentioned later.
4. We must give *sadaqah* (alms) for the safety of the Imam.
5. Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (a.s.) says, "Spend your money for Imam al-Mahdi (a.s.) this deed is

most loved by Allah. Whoever spends even one coin for the sake of the Imam, Allah will reward him (the size of a mountain) in heaven.” So we should spend our money for the sake of his mission.

6. We must not only wait for the Imam to arrive but be ready for him as well. Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (a.s.) says: “If one takes pleasure in being among the companions of al-Qaim, then he must wait for him and must act with good behaviour and modesty. If he dies before the Imam’s return, he will be rewarded like one who has followed him. Then act diligently and wait; this effort and waiting will give you happiness.”
7. According to one reporter, Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (a.s.) said: “Prepare yourselves for the revolution of Imam al-Mahdi (a.s.), even if it means to gather an arrow [for fighting God’s enemies.]” This shows the eagerness with which the person waits for the Imam.
8. Perhaps one of the foremost things that we must all do is to acquire knowledge in any field that we think will help the

Imam in setting up a new government. It could be knowledge of the various sciences, economics or politics. Keeping updated with the most recent and current developments is also important, for the Imam will want to work with the most advanced technology available. Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) says: “Knowledge is divided into twenty-seven parts. No more than two parts have been acquired by human beings so far. When our Qaim arises he will expose the rest of the twenty-five parts and distribute it among the people.”

A highly important issue that needs to be understood is the concept of *taqleed*. We can solve most of our problems and get answers to our various questions by consulting the Quran and the teachings of the Holy Prophet and the Imams. However, there are many ‘new’ problems and situations that one comes across that are not easily understood simply by referring to the original sources. In this case, the Twelfth Imam provides us with a solution:

As for the problems happening in the future, refer to the narrators of our hadith (for their verdicts), as they are my proofs upon you, and I am a proof of Allah.

This hadith is a very well-known narration of the Imam. During the period of the *Ghaybat Sughra*, a follower of the Imam sent him a letter stating a problem. The Imam replied back with a solution to his problem. At the end of the reply, the Imam wrote the hadith mentioned above. The hadith shows that if we are to face a problem in the absence of the Imam, we must ask those people who have knowledge of the Quran and the hadith. These learned scholars are known as the *fuqaha*. The act of referring to the learned scholars for their opinions regarding various matters of religion is known as *TAQLEED*.

Although Imam-i-Zaman as is not visibly present, there are many people who have actually seen him and spoken to him. This has occurred through special miracles, and sometimes through special prayers.

SUPPLICATIONS FOR THE IMAM DURING THE *GHAYBAT AL-KUBRA*

There are a number of *duas* that we may pray to Allah during the *Ghaybat al-Kubra*. These have been taught to us by the Twelfth Imam himself, or by the other Imams before him who predicted his birth. These prayers are for the Imam's early reappearance, his safety, and success. Not that he depends on our prayers; his protection is promised by Allah Himself. The prayers make our ties, our loyalty and our relation with him even stronger. It is also an act of gratitude, for we are told that the Imam also continuously prays for us.

I. One of the most important *duas* is:

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَجِّلْ فَرَجَهُمْ

*Allahumma salli ala Muhammadin wa ali
Muhammadin wa ajjil farajahum.*

Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (a.s.) said that a person who recites this prayer after the *fajr* and *zuhr salats* may see the Twelfth Imam during his

lifetime. The Imam also said that he who recites this *dua* 100 times after the *asr salat* will have all hardships removed from him by Allah. The angels surround the place where the *dua* is being recited, and pray for the one reciting it.

- II. Other important supplications include *Dua Nudbah*, *Ziyarat Jamiah*, and *tahajjud*.
- III. Whenever the Imam's name is mentioned in any discussion or at any time, we should stand up and place our right hand on our head. There is a hadith from the eighth Imam that we should do so as a mark of our respect for him.
- IV. We must remember that whenever we are in trouble and we call out to the Imam for help, with all sincerity, he does help and guide us in some way or the other.
- V. Two very important *duas*, which we must recite often, follow.

1. This is a prayer for the safety of the holy Imam:

اللَّهُمَّ كُنْ لَوْلِيِّكَ الْحُجَّةِ بْنِ الْحَسَنِ صَلَواتِكَ عَلَيْهِ وَ عَلَى آبائِهِ فِي هَذِهِ السَّاعَةِ وَ فِي كُلِّ سَاعَةٍ وَلِيًّا وَ حَافِظاً وَ قَائِداً وَ ناصِراً وَ دَلِيلاً وَ عَينا حَتَّى تُسْكِنَهُ أَرْضَكَ طَوْعاً وَ تُمَتِّعَهُ فِيهَا طويلاً

“O Allah, protect Your vicegerent (Imam-i-Zaman (a.s.)), and send salutations upon him and his ancestors, now and at all times, (as our) Imam, Guardian, Supporter and Guide, until the time when You grant him the honour of heading the (divine) government, and let the people be delighted in his reign, by granting success, and by extending his reign (to the maximum).”

2. When you need help or fulfilment of your wish recite:

[This *dua* is a direct appeal to our 12th Imam and we get immediate help, so remember this *dua* and pray every day, especially during difficult time pray 3 times and you will see the help extended to you, if Allah wills so.]

إِلَهِي عَظُمَ الْبَلَاءُ وَبَرِحَ الْخَفَاءُ وَانْكَشَفَ الْغِطَاءُ وَانْقَطَعَ الرَّجَاءُ
 وَصَاقَتِ الْأَرْضُ وَمُنِعَتِ السَّمَاءُ وَأَنْتَ الْمُسْتَعَانُ وَإِلَيْكَ الْمُسْتَكِي
 وَعَلَيْكَ الْمَعْوَلُ فِي الشَّدَّةِ وَالرَّخَاءِ. اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلٰى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ
 اَوْلِي الْاَمْرِ الَّذِيْنَ فَرَضْتَ عَلَيْنَا طَاعَتَهُمْ وَعَرَفْتَنَا بِذَلِكَ مَنْزِلَتَهُمْ
 فَفَرِّجْ عَنَّا بِحَقِّهِمْ فَرَجًا عَاجِلًا قَرِيْبًا كَلْمَحِ الْبَصْرِ اَوْ هُوَ اَقْرَبُ. يَا
 مُحَمَّدُ يَا عَلِيُّ يَا عَلِيُّ يَا مُحَمَّدُ اِكْفِيَانِيْ فَانْكُمَا كَافِيَانِ وَانْصِرَانِيْ
 فَانْكُمَا نَاصِرَانِ. يَا مَوْلَانَا يَا صَاحِبَ الرَّمَانِ، اَلْعَوْتُ اَلْعَوْتُ اَلْعَوْتُ
 اَلْعَوْتُ، اَدْرِكْنِيْ اَدْرِكْنِيْ اَدْرِكْنِيْ، اَلْسَاعَةَ اَلْسَاعَةَ اَلْسَاعَةَ، اَلْعَجَلَ
 اَلْعَجَلَ اَلْعَجَلَ. يَا اَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِيْنَ بِحَقِّ مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ الطَّاهِرِيْنَ

Allah, terrible was the calamity, and its evil consequences are visible, the covering has been removed, (all) hopes have been cut off, the (plentiful) earth has shrunk (with very little to spare), the heavenly blessings have been withheld. You alone can help, we refer our grief and sorrow to You, we have full faith in You, in the time of distress, as well as in good fortune. O Allah, send blessings on Muhammad and on the children of Muhammad, whom we must obey as per Your command, through which

we become aware of their rank and status, and let there be joy after sorrow for us, for their sake, right away, in the twinkle of an eye, more rapidly than that. O Muhammad, O Ali, O Ali, O Muhammad. Give me enough, because both of you provide sufficiently. Help me, because both of you help and protect. O our master, O the living Imam. I repeatedly cry for help, come to my help, come to my help, come to my help. Be quick, be quick, be quick. O the most merciful for the sake of Muhammad and the children of Muhammad.

VI. One should recite the following ‘oath of allegiance’ to the Twelfth Imam everyday.

To my Twelfth Imam

“I pledge my loyalty to my 12th Imam al-Mahdi (a.s.) who is still alive by the order of Almighty Allah.

O my Imam, I remember you everyday and pray to Almighty Allah to keep me alive till I meet you and help you fight the enemies of Islam, the only religion of Allah.

O my Imam, I very well know that you are aware of each and every action that I do. So I promise you that I shall try my best to keep you happy,

- by praying in time,
- by praying with patience and understanding,
- by being kind and obedient to my parents,
- by helping my neighbours and every human being,
- and by being obedient to my kind and great Lord, Allah.

So help me, O my Imam.

THE REAPPEARANCE

The Imams have predicted many events that will take place close to the time of the reappearance, or *zuhur*, of the Twelfth Imam (a.s.). No one can predict exactly when the *zuhur* will actually take place; only Allah knows the exact time. However, we do know that certain events will take place which will be a clear sign that the arrival of the Imam is very close.

After completing the last *hajj*, the Holy Prophet stood near the Kabah and told the people to listen to him. It seemed like he had something important to say. First, he informed them to listen carefully so that they could pass on his words to future generations. The Prophet then started to weep. After a while, he began. “My people, a time will come when the kings and rulers will be very cruel. Wealthy people will become miserly. The *ulama* will be greedy of worldly possessions. There will be fake beggars, and children will lack modesty. Old people will be wicked.”

After saying this, the Prophet wept again. Salman, a companion of the Holy Prophet rose and asked, “O Master, when will these things take place?”

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) replied, “O Salman, it will happen when there is a shortage of religious scholars.” The Prophet then continued, “People will stop paying *zakat*. Things forbidden will be openly practised. There will be prayer calls from the mosque but people

will be too busy with worldly matters to go for prayers. People will lie to each other, backbiting will be a source of pleasure.” The Prophet then warned, “When such a time comes, the curse of God will be upon them.”

There are many other events that will take place such as famine, earthquakes and landslides. Two-thirds of the world’s population will be wiped out due to disease and fierce wars.

Many traditions say that a man from the descendants of Abu Sufyan will rise. He will seem to be a pious person but will actually be the most wicked person on earth. He will mislead a large number of people, and kill many Shias. When he hears of the arrival of the Imam, he will gather an army to fight him. But Sufyani’s army will be destroyed before it reaches the Imam.

Another sign is the rise of Dajjal, the antichrist. He will be an unbeliever who will try to attract as many people as he can over to his side and

against the Imam. He and his army will be defeated by the Imam (a.s.).

The hadiths say that the *zuhur* will take place on the 10th of Muharram, ashura, and the day will be Friday. Only Allah is aware of exactly which year it will be. He will appear in Makkah near the holy Kabah, and will make an announcement: “O men, chosen to help me, now is the time to come to my aid straight away.” In reply to this call, the angel Jibrail will come down from the heavens, followed by Mikail and four Prophets: Isa, Khizr, Ilyas and Idris. Each of them will declare their support for the Imam. All this will happen unnoticed but, immediately after sunrise, Jibrail will proceed to the Bayt-ul-Muqaddas in Jerusalem and announce the arrival of Imam al-Mahdi (a.s.) to the whole world, starting with the verse from the Quran: *Truth has arrived and falsehood has vanished; verily falsehood is bound to vanish* (17:81). He will call upon all believers to go to Makkah at once to help the Imam (a.s.).

As soon as this call will be heard 313 companions of the Imam will arrive in Makkah. These will be the Imam's chosen companions, very pious, knowledgeable and loyal. Apart from the 313, a few others (1000, according; to some traditions) will join the Imam's army. The first battle the Imam will fight will be in Makkah. He will then proceed to Madina. In turn, many battles will be fought until Imam's encounter with Dajjal. It will be a time of severe famine and drought, and a very difficult trial for the believers. Dajjal will offer food and water to the believers if they join his army. Finally, after a heavy battle in Syria, the Imam will kill Dajjal and put an end to all violence.

From then onwards, there will be peace. Imam Mahdi (a.s.) will establish a just government on earth. There will be truth, happiness and safety. It will be a beautiful era; a time of great progress in knowledge, and in material and spiritual development. The promise of Allah will finally be fulfilled.

Verily we did write in the Zubur (the book of the Psalms of Dawud) after the reminder (Tawrat): My righteous servants shall inherit the earth. [21 : 105]

Allah has promised to appoint those of you who believe and do good deeds, successors in the earth, as He had appointed those before them, and He shall certainly establish their religion (Islam) which He has chosen for them, and He will give them in exchange security after their fear. They shall worship Me and not associate any one with Me; and whosoever disbelieves after this, then they are the wicked transgressors. [24 : 55]

We wished to favour those who were weak in the land, and make them Imams (leaders in faith) and make them heirs. [28:5]

We pray to Allah to include us in the army of Imam-i-Zamana and to give us a chance to fight evil. And, finally, to let us have the honour of living in the days when the Imam will rule over the planet earth.

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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