

# Imam Hasan al-Askari (AS)

## Imam Hasan al-Askari (peace be upon him)

**Name:** Hasan

**Title:** al-Askari

**Kunya:** Abu Muhammad, Ibn al-Ridha

**Father:** Ali ibn Muhammad al-Hadi al-Naqi (p)

**Mother:** Hodayth / Sousan / Sulayl

**Born:** 1<sup>th</sup> Rabi' al-Thani, 232 AH/846 CE

**Martyrdom:** 1<sup>th</sup> Rabi' al-Awwal, 260 AH/874 CE, after being poisoned by the Abbasid Caliph al-Mu'tamad

**Age at Martyrdom:** 28

**Period of Imamate:** 28 years

**Buried:** Samarra, Iraq

## The Eleventh Imam

The young boys were playing with their toys, just as most young boys do – except for one boy, who stood amongst his peers with tears streaming down his cheeks.

“Would you like me to buy you a toy to play with?” asked a concerned onlooker.

“... We have not been created for (such) play...” responded the crying boy.

The stunned man inquired, “...and what have we been created for?”

The boy replied, “For knowledge and worship.”

The man then asked, “Where did you get that from?”

“From the words of (God), the Exalted, ‘Did you suppose that We created you aimlessly and that you will not be brought back to Us?’ [\[i\]](#)” said the boy...

“What’s wrong with you? You are a small innocent child!” exclaimed the man.

The boy dismissed the man’s words saying, “Leave me be... Indeed, I have seen my mother try to start a fire with big logs but the fire does not start without using the small ones first... I fear that I would be among the small logs of hellfire!” [\[ii\]](#)

The young boy from this story is reported to have been the eleventh immaculate Imam – *Hasan*, son of [Imam Ali al-Hadi](#). Imam *Hasan*’s deeply pensive reflection calls heedlessness of all degrees into question. This awakening image of Imam Hasan offers a peek into the grand character and intense insight of a Divine representative. In his life, the eleventh Imam plowed through fields of tribulation, while raising the banner of Divine guidance.

## Imam Hasan al-Askari

The tenth Imam expressed the following will on a number of occasions,

“The Imam after me is *Hasan*, my son...” [\[iii\]](#)

*Samarra*, the area in which Imam Hasan and his father [Imam al-Hadi](#) were forced to live in, was also known as the *Askar* (Military) because the ruler had his military stationed there. Based on the Imam's association with that particular spot, he was referred to as *al-Askari* (the one in the *Askar* area). As a celebrated saint, Imam Hasan al-Askari was also referred to as *az-Zaki* (the one of spiritual purity and growth).[\[iv\]](#)

The *Abbasid* ruler *Mutaz*, who had poisoned [Imam Ali al-Hadi](#), was soon killed by competing political figures. *Muhtadi*, who became the next *Abbasid* to take control of the government, attempted to put on the façade of a pious man. But he did not hesitate to imprison Imam Hasan al-Askari and intended to murder him, before having been killed himself. An *Abbasid* by the name of *Mutamid* rose to power next. This ruler was distinctly excessive in his corruption and oppression against Imam al-Askari.[\[v\]](#)

The eleventh Imam's era was characterized by a notable growth in the *Shia* presence throughout the Muslim world. A secret network of representatives which was maintained during [Imam al-Hadi's](#) time was expanded widely under Imam al-Askari's direction. The holy Imam's messages and commands helped to ready the *Shia* for situations in which they would not have much, if any, direct contact with their Imam. In fact, it was quite rare for Imam al-Askari to have direct contact with any of his followers, even those who lived in the same city, due to his imprisonment.[\[vi\]](#)<sup>[\[viii\]](#)</sup>

## Rainwater and Guidance

When drought befell *Samarra*, the ruler *Mutamid* ordered people to perform a special prayer to ask God for rain. For three days, the Muslims prayed, but no rain came down. On the fourth day, a group of monks – devoted to a different religious tradition – stood outside with the people, raised their hands to the sky, and rainwater came pouring down!

After seeing this amazing feat, some Muslims started to have doubts about their faith. Fearing a rift amongst his subjects, *Mutamid* sought refuge in Imam Hasan al-Askari's guidance. When Imam al-Askari was brought from prison, *Mutamid* said, “(Come) save the nation of your grandfather (Prophet Muhammad).”

The monks appeared the following day and raised their hands – the sky immediately became cloudy and it started to rain. Imam al-Askari then told some of those present to grab onto the hand of a particular monk and to remove what that monk was holding. It became clear that the monk had been holding onto a black bone. The holy Imam took the bone, wrapped it in a cloth and said, “Ask for rainwater now.”

When the monks attempted to do so the sky cleared up and the sun came out. The onlookers were astounded by the spectacle. *Mutamid* then asked Imam al-Askari to explain the phenomenon.

“(It was) a bone from one of the prophets of God – the Glorious, the Exalted. One of those (monks) was able to obtain it from some of their graves. Never is the bone of a prophet revealed underneath the sky without it pouring with rain.” explained the Imam.

Following this incident, Imam al-Askari was released from prison and became more popular.[\[viii\]](#)

## Glad Tidings

One day, Imam Hasan al-Askari spoke to his close companion with these words,

“...Indeed, God has never left the earth empty of a proof (in favor of God, as a witness) upon His creation, since He created Adam, and will not leave it empty (of the proof) until the hour (of reckoning) emerges; Through him (the proof), He (God) pushes calamity (away) from the people of earth; through him, He brings down the rain; and through him, He extracts the blessings of the earth.”

The eleventh Imam was confirming a concept which was explained by every Divine representative. But this time, the words had special weight because the next ‘proof’ would be the twelfth and final Imam prophesied by Prophet Muhammad. The close companion of Imam al-Askari asked,

“Oh son of God’s Messenger, who then is the Imam and successor after you?”

The holy eleventh Imam rose to his feet quickly and went inside his home... Soon enough, Imam al-Askari came back out with a three year old boy in his arms. The child’s face glowed like a full moon. Imam al-Askari turned to his companion and said,

“... If it were not for your honor before God and the proofs of God (the Imams) I would not have shown you this son of mine. Indeed, his name is that of God’s Messenger, as is his title; (he is the one) who will fill the earth with fairness and justice just as it had been filled with tyranny and injustice...”

Imam al-Askari continued to describe the era of the twelfth Imam, which was to come,

“... By God, he will disappear (from physical sight), such an occultation that no one will be saved from peril in it except those whom God has fortified on (reasoning and faith in) saying that he is the Imam; and (whom God) has helped succeed in praying for hastening his advent.”[\[ix\]](#)

## **Martyrdom and Pearls of Advice**

The corrupt ruler’s fears of Imam al-Askari’s growing popularity drove him deeper into his pit of darkness. *Mutamid*, thus, resorted to the wicked decision of poisoning Imam al-Askari. The crime was carried out secretly and the cover-up involved *Mutamid* and his entourage attending the funeral... Imam Hasan al-Askari was buried near his father, Imam Ali al-Hadi, in present-day *Samarra, Iraq*.[\[x\]](#)

The eleventh Imam left behind several pearls of advice for contemplation, such as this short excerpt,

“...and know that the Director of your (affairs) is more knowledgeable concerning the time in which (He is) to remedy your condition. So be confident of His choices in all of your affairs and remedy your condition (He will). Do not be hasty in (wanting the fulfillment of) your needs before their time is due because then your heart and chest will tighten up (out of worry) and you will be overcome with despair...”[\[xi\]](#)

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[\[i\]](#) Quran ٢٣:١١٥

[\[ii\]](#) Pg. ٢٩٣ of *Manaqib Ahlulbayt* by Sh. Shirawani

[\[iii\]](#) Pg. ٢٣٩, Vol. ٥٠ of *Bihar Alanwar* by Allamah Majlisi

[\[iv\]](#) Pg. ٥٤٧ of *Seeratul A’immah* by Sh. Ja’far Subhani

[\[v\]](#) Pg. ٥٤٩-٥٥١ of *Seeratul A’immah* by Sh. Ja’far Subhani

[\[vi\]](#) Pg. ٥٦١ of *Seeratul A’immah* by Sh. Ja’far Subhani

[vii] Pg. ٥٧٧-٥٧٨ of *Seeratul A'immah* by Sh. Ja'far Subhani

[viii] Pg. ٥٦٠-٥٦١ of *Seeratul A'immah* by Sh. Ja'far Subhani

[ix] Pg. ٥٧٨-٥٧٩ of *Seeratul A'immah* by Sh. Ja'far Subhani

[x] Pg. ٥٨٢ of *Seeratul A'immah* by Sh. Ja'far Subhani

[xi] Pg. ٣١٣ of *Aalamu Deen* by Sh. Daylami