



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

History and Development of the Shia

Teacher: Sayed Saleh al-Qazwini

Lesson: 25

Topic: The Birth of Imam al-Mahdi عليه السلام to Martyrdom of Imam al-Askari عليه السلام

- Imam al-Mahdi عليه السلام was born in 255 A.H.; Kulayni narrated 256 as well.
- Sunnis believe Imam al-Mahdi عليه السلام is not born yet. That's because his birth was secret, and the government said that Imam al-Askari عليه السلام died without having any babies.
- At the same time that our Imams عليهم السلام spoke about al-Mahdi عليه السلام and his arrival, Sunni scholars such as Bukhari (d.256), Muslim (261), Ibn Maja (273), Abu Davud Sajistani (275), al-Tirmidhi (279), etc. narrated hadith from Rasulullah صلى الله عليه وسلم in their books regarding him.
- This amount of information about al-Mahdi عليه السلام made Abbasid caliphs very alert and afraid.
- Imam al-Mahdi عليه السلام was born one month after al-Muhtadi, the Abbasid ruler, came to power. The Turks removed him from power in one year and replaced him with al-Mutamid, who ruled for 23 years.
- To announce the birthday of Imam al-Mahdi عليه السلام in a safe mode, Imam al-Askari عليه السلام called for his representatives Uthman ibn Sa'id and Abu Amr and asked them to do *aqiqa* (more than one) and provide bread and distribute them among the poor of Bani Hashim.
- The news of the birth of Imam al-Mahdi عليه السلام was spread among the very close Shias.

Imam al-Askari عليه السلام had two major obligations:

1. *Iblagh* (to let people know the birth of the next hujja)
2. Protect Imam al-Mahdi's life

Imam al-Askari's tactics and the things that protected the life of Imam al-Mahdi عليه السلام:

1. Imam عليه السلام had Nuwwab (deputies)
2. Not having a social circle (asked people not to look at him when he's out and the like)



3. The internal conflict between Abbasids distracted their attention from the Imam.
4. Zanj (the black) rebellion (happened around Basra because of harsh work)
 - Imam al-Askari عليه السلام wrote to Ahmad ibn Ishaq Qomi (a close companion) that his son was born and Ahmad should keep it private. He told them not to reveal the matter except for the close ones and their followers.
 - Once later, when Ahmad ibn Ishaq visited Imam al-Askari عليه السلام and asked him who is the next Imam, he showed him Imam al-Mahdi عجل الله تعال فرجه الشريف.
 - Despite knowing he was the Imam, Ahmad ibn Ishaq asked for a sign. The three-year-old Imam al-Mahdi عجل الله تعال فرجه الشريف answered him that he is the remaining proof of Allah on the earth and the one who will seek vengeance from His enemies.
 - Imam al-Askari عليه السلام informed Ahmad ibn Ishaq that Imam al-Mahdi عجل الله تعال فرجه الشريف will go into occultation so long that most believers won't believe in him anymore.
5. A Hadith says it's haram to say the name of Imam al-Mahdi عجل الله تعال فرجه الشريف, which is the same as Rasulullah صلى الله عليه وسلم's. We mention him by his titles: al-Hujja, Baqiyyatullah, Sahibukum, Sahib al-Zaman, etc.

Reports about the Imam's birth:

1. Report of *Tarif Abu Nasr al-Khadim* (Imam al-Askari's servant) about Imam al-Mahdi عجل الله تعال فرجه الشريف when he was three and introduced himself as the seal of *Awsiya* by whom Allah will lift calamities from the Shia.
2. For the last time, forty days before being martyred, Imam al-Askari عليه السلام invited forty of his Shias to show them the five-year-old Imam al-Mahdi عجل الله تعال فرجه الشريف.

Imam al-Askari's death: 8th of Rabi' al-Awwal, 260 A.H.

He was poisoned on the 1st of the month.

Age: 29

- In Imam al-Askari عليه السلام's last moments, the caliph and his grand minister (who already knew because they had poisoned him) brought 50 men (guards and doctors) to the Imam's house, who were pretending that they cared for him, but they were sent to look for the promised child.
- Imam al-Askari عليه السلام left the caliph and went to another room where his wife Sayqal (Lady Narjis عليها السلام) and al-Mahdi عجل الله تعال فرجه الشريف were. He passed away there.



The caliph held a funeral for Imam al-Askari عليه السلام.

Two salats were offered on his body:

1. Private: By Imam al-Mahdi عليه السلام
2. Public: By the caliph's brother who showed people the Imam's face.

The private one: after ghusl and enshrouding were done, Ja'far al-Kadhab, Imam al-Askari's brother, tried to take the position of Imamate by leading this prayer.

Ja'far al-Kadhab used to drink, do inappropriate things, etc.

- Imam al-Hadi عليه السلام called him astray.
- It is said that Imam al-Mahdi عليه السلام forgave him.

The wrongs committed by Ja'far:

1. He tried to lead the funeral prayer over Imam al-Askari عليه السلام. The five-year-old Imam al-Mahdi عليه السلام moved him aside and led the prayer for the close companions.

- Imam al-Mahdi عليه السلام led the prayer in front of others to stop people from going astray by Ja'far al-Kadhab while close companions of Imam عليه السلام let

Ja'far stand to say prayers.

2. He claimed the Imamate several times as he wrote to Ahmad ibn Isa that he was the imam.

- After the Imam's funeral procession, a group of Shias from Qom arrived with trusts such as *khums* and looked for Imam al-Askari's successor. Ja'far claimed the Imamate, but they asked for proof and for telling them what was in their bag, but he couldn't.
- Ja'far insisted and complained to the caliph before that to his minister. They rejected him.
- Imam al-Mahdi عليه السلام sent to the Qomis a servant who called them by their names and took them to the young Imam. Imam said what they had in their bags and told them not to take the *khums* to Samarra anymore but to Uthman ibn Sa'id in Baghdad.
- Ja'far al-Kadhab went to the authorities and informed them of a child in the house of Imam al-Askari عليه السلام. The soldiers rushed to the house, but Imam disappeared.
- Only Lady Narjis عليها السلام remained in the house; she was arrested and interrogated. She was imprisoned for two years.