



Imam Mohammad Al_Mahdi Al_Muntadar (as)

“And we desired to bestow a favor upon those who were deemed weak in the land, and to make them the Imams (Leaders of mankind), and to make them the heirs.” (Holy Quran, 28:5)

The Prophet once said, *“A person from my progeny would be born whose name would be my name, whose father would have the name of my father, and who would fill the world with justice, as it would be full of atrocities.”*

Name - Muhammad

Title - Al-Mahdi, Sahib-ul-Asr, Al-Hujjah, Al-Qa'im

Kuneyah - Abul Qasim

Born - Friday 15th of Shaban 255 A.H., at Samarrah

Father's Name - Imam Hassan-al-Askari (as)

Mother's Name - Nargis (as)

He is the last Imam (as) and he is alive and in occultation.

According to Islamic theology "Mahdi" means 'the divinely guided one' or 'the directed one'. The promised Mahdi, who is usually mentioned by his title of Imam *al- 'Asr* (the Imam of the Period) and Sahib al-Zaman (the Lord of the Age), is the son of the eleventh Imam.

On the 15th Sha'ban 255 A.H., a child that would become the source of existence for the universe was born. Imam Muhammad al-Mahdi (as) was born in the city of Samarrah. There existed a good deal of harmony and uniformity between the aspects pertaining to the births of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh&hf), the last Apostle of Allah (swt) and Imam Mahdi (as), the last Apostolic Imam. Just as the coming of the Holy Prophet was prophesized well in advance by the preceding prophets similarly the Holy Prophet foretold the impending news of the gracious birth of Imam al-Mahdi.

Also, the momentous and miraculous aspects of Imam Mahdi's birth greatly resembled those under which Prophet Musa (Moses) was born. The birth of Prophet Musa had signaled the downfall and extinction of the empire of Pharaoh. Therefore, the Abbasid kings were similarly apprehensive of the continuous traditions of the Holy Prophet about the birth of Imam Mahdi, who was to bring about a curse to their (Abbasid) very empire. The Imam's birth had coincided with the reign of al-Mutamad, the well-known Abbasid king. He, being aware of the prophecy of the twelfth Imam's birth occurring in his reign, was extremely worried and anxious to trace him out. Thus, the Imam's birth was enveloped and shielded by the same Divine protection and miraculous phenomena, just as the historical birth of Prophet Musa (see Holy Quran 28:7-13). Therefore, his birth remained strictly confidential and his nursery shrouded in secrecy except to a few devotees.

Childhood

The Holy Imam was brought up in secrecy by his father Imam Hassan Askari (as).

While Imam Hassan Askari kept the birth of the young Imam-to-be and the affairs of his infancy a well-guarded secret, he did put him within the access of some exclusive devotees and sincere friends.

Muawiyah Ibn Hakeem, Muah Muhammad Ibn Ayyub and Muhammad Ibn Usman mentioned that they called upon Imam Hassan Askari with a deputation of forty persons. The Holy Imam showed them his newly born child and said, *"This is your Imam after me! All of you should unanimously submit your allegiance to him and should not allow any controversy on the subject, which will lead you in peril! Mind that he will no more be visible to you."*

Imamate

Imam Hassan Askari was martyred on the 8th Rabi al-Awwal 260 A.H. That day marked the inception of his son's imamate and his elevation to the apostolic office being the source of spiritual guidance for the whole universe. After the martyrdom of his father, Imam Mahdi went into *ghaybay al-sughra* (minor occultation) by divine command.

As, according to Allah's will, all the affairs pertaining to the Holy Imam were to remain strictly behind the curtain, he commissioned some of his deputies and ambassadors, who had been looking after the religious affairs from the time of his father to act as mediators between the people and the concealed Imam. They conveyed the problems and religious queries of the people to the Holy Imam and brought back the verdicts and the answers of the Holy Imam to the people.

The occultation of the twelfth Imam is divided into two parts: the first, the minor occultation (*ghaybah al-sughra*) which began in 260/872 and ended in 329/939, lasting about seventy years; the second, the major occultation which commenced in 329/939 and will continue until Allah decrees.

On the Appearance of the Mahdi

There are numerous hadiths cited in Sunni and Shia sources from the Holy Prophet and the Imams concerning the appearance of the Mahdi. Such as, that he is of the progeny of the Prophet and that his appearance will enable human society to reach true perfection and the full realization of spiritual life.

In addition, there are numerous other traditions concerning the fact that the Mahdi is the son of the eleventh Imam, Hassan al-Askari. They agree that after being born and undergoing a long occultation the Mahdi will appear again, filling the world that has been corrupted by injustice and iniquity with justice.

As an example, Ali Ibn Musa al-Rida, the eighth Imam (as) has said, in the course of a hadith, *"The imam after me is my son, Muhammad and after him his son Ali, and after Ali his son, Hassan, and after Hassan his son Hujjat al-Qa'im, who is awaited during his occultation and obeyed during his manifestation. If there remain from the life of the world but a single day, Allah will extend that day until he becomes manifest, and fill the world with justice in the same way that it had been filled with iniquity. But when? As for news of the 'hour,' verily my father told me, having heard it from his father who heard it from his father who heard it from his ancestors who heard it from Ali, that it was asked of the Holy Prophet, 'Oh Prophet of Allah when will the 'support' (qa'im) who is from thy family appear?' He said. 'His case is like that of the Hour (of the Resurrection). 'He alone will manifest it at its proper time. It is heavy in the heavens and the earth. It cometh not to you save unawares'."* (Holy Quran, 7:187)

Some would argue that the hidden Imam should by now be nearly twelve centuries old, whereas this is impossible for any human being. In answer it must be said that the dispute is based only on the unlikelihood of such an occurrence not its impossibility. Of course such a long lifetime or a life of a longer period is unlikely. But those who study the hadiths of the Holy Prophet and the Imams will see that they refer to this life as one possessing miraculous qualities.

Miracles are certainly not impossible nor can they be negated through scientific arguments. It can never be proved that the causes and agents that are functioning in the world are solely those that we see and know and that other causes which we do not know or whose effects and actions we have not seen nor understood do not exist. It is in this way possible that in one or several members of mankind there can be operating certain causes and agents, which bestow upon them a very long life of a thousand or several thousand years. Medicine has not even lost hope of discovering a way to achieve very long life spans.