

Al-Hakim

From Book one of the Tawheed Faith
By the American Druze Society

Al-Hakim was the sixth Fatimid Caliph who ruled the Fatimid state from 996 to 1021 A.D. The city of Cairo in Egypt was the capital of this state which extended to the Arabian Peninsula and to Aleppo in northern Syria and included most of North Africa. He was 11 years old when he became Caliph. According to A.A. Najjar, “Al-Hakim was a study in contrasts. He was rough and was gentle, forbidding and prepossessing, cruel and humble. He roamed freely the streets of Cairo unattended – no guards or companions. ... He issued orders to conserve and strengthen morality; to stop idleness, banter, and foolish distraction. ... He kept close watch over public administration and dealt severely with those who violated his orders. He stopped people from addressing him as ‘our lord or master’...”

The contrasts in al-Hakim’s behavior caused confusion among historians and resulted in conflicting reports about him, depending on the religious, political and personal motivations of these historians.

He built Dar al-Hikma (Wisdom Institute) in Cairo, staffed it with the best scholars he could find and encouraged a new cultural movement by various means of moral and material support.

Three months after the beginning of his rule, he started preaching the coming of the divine Call to Tawheed. From 996 to 1016 A.D., he enlisted the help of exceptionally able preachers like Salama as-Samiri, Muhammad al-Qurashi, Ismail at-Tamimi, and Hamza ibn Ali. The preachers used the Raydan Mosque, outside the Wall of Cairo, as their center of operation and used al-Azhar Mosque and Dar al-Hikma as two cultural centers to support the divine Call.

On May 30, 1017 A.D., al-Hakim issued an order declaring the beginning of the divine Call and declaring Hamza ibn Ali, “Imam of al-Muwahidoon”. The preachers immediately started inviting people to accept the Call and collecting written contracts (Mithaqs) from those who accepted it. These Mithaqs were collected only from free people with sound mind and body. In the mean time, al-Hakim issued another decree abolishing slavery and freeing slaves. This revolutionary measure was taken about eight centuries and a half before a similar action was officially taken by a president of the United States of America and became the law of the land.

Thus al-Hakim’s most important contribution to the society was to bring about a spiritual and a social revolution. He declared a new religious faith (Tawheed) and proclaimed slaves as free human beings with all rights and responsibilities of free

citizens. The new faith was anchored in Islam, but it represented a revolution against the dullness and superficiality of the religious devotion and rituals. It called for exploration of the mysteries of the spiritual world and the real and universal meanings of the religious texts.

During the night of February 12-13, 1021, A.D., al-Hakim went on one of his usual journeys to a nearby mountain called al-Muqattam. Since that night, no one has ever seen him.

Many historians have written conflicting stories about his disappearance. But the believers in the Tawheed faith regarded his disappearance as a test for them. In such a test, they proved the genuine belief, endurance and strong will for survival throughout the past ten centuries.