

Extract from book Nuqoosh Islam by
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Life Sketch of Imam Ali Ibne Musa Reza (a.s.)

It was 11th of Zilqad of 148 A.H. when the eighth successor of Prophet and the eighth of the Imams was born in Medina. Although in some traditional reports it is mentioned as 11th Zilhajj 153 A.H.¹

- His respected father was Imam Musa Kazim (a.s.) and honorable mother was Lady Najma Khatun about whom Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) had advised Lady Hamida Khatun in dream that Najma be betrothed to my son, Musa Kazim (a.s.) and she herself says that she used to hear voices of divine glorification and praise in her womb and she did not feel any type of heaviness in her pregnancy. ‘And after delivery, my son looked at the sky and uttered some words under his breath, which I could not understand and when I mentioned this to Imam Musa Kazim (a.s.), he said: My son is divine proof.’²
- Imam Musa Kazim (a.s.) recited Azaan and Iqamat in his ears and made arrangements for Aqiqah as an Imam is born circumcised.³
- Names of Lady Najma are recorded differently according to the difference of circumstances and languages. Tuktam,

¹ *Al-Kafi*, Vol. 1, Pg. 486; *Elamul Wara*, Pg. 182; *Jilaul Uyun*, Pg. 280; *Rauzatus Safa*, Vol. 3, Pg. 13; *Wasilatun Najaat*, Pg. 375; *Anwar Nomaniya*, Pg. 127; *Kifayatut Talib*, *Kitabud Durus*, *Irshad*, *Shaykh Saduq*.

² *Elamul Wara*, Pg. 182; *Jilaul Uyun*, Pg. 279; *Jannatul Khulud*, Pg. 131; *Faslul Khitab*

³ *Faslul Khitab*; *Jilaul Uyun*, Pg. 279

Arda, Sakan, Samana, Ummul Baneen, Khizran, Saqr, Shaqra and after Imam Ali Reza (a.s.) was born, she was called as Tahira.¹

- The name of Imam Reza (a.s.) was Ali and Kunniyat was Abu Hasan and titles were: Sabir, Fazil, Razi, Wafi, Qurratu Ainil Momineen, Ghaizul Mulhideen, but the most famous was Reza, which his holy grandfather, Muhammad Mustafa (s.a.w.s.) had given him. It is another thing that when the world liked his rule, this title became more famous and in this it became clear that the world would inevitably select the chosen servant of God, whether he is in the form of Ali Murtada or Ali Reza.²
- Approximately fifteen days his birth, his respected grandfather, Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) passed away, whose desire was to see this grandson as he said to his son, Imam Musa Kazim (a.s.) that very soon a son was going to be born to him who would be the scholar of Aale Muhammad (a.s.); "If only I had been able to live till that his time."
- Among the rulers of his time, at the time of his birth it was the reign of Mansur Dawaniqi. From 158 A.H., it was the period of Mahdi Abbasi; in 169 A.H. Hadi came to the throne; from 170 A.H. began the reign of Harun; in 194 A.H., Amin came to the throne and from 198 A.H. began the reign of Mamun. It was this tyrant who had the Imam assassinated through poison in 203 A.H.³

Mansur, Mahdi, Hadi and Harun have already been introduced. Amin and Mamun were two sons of Harun. Amin was from an Arab lady and Mamun from a Persian slave girl.

¹ *Kashful Ghumma, Uyun Ahbar Reza*, Pg. 16; *Biharul Anwar*, Vol. 5, Chap. 1 Pg. 8

² *Tadkirah Khawasul Ummah*, Pg. 98; *Nurul Absar*, Pg. 128; *Elamul Wara*, Pg. 225; *Matalibus So-ool*, Pg. 228; *Jilaul Uyun*, Pg. 279

³ *Tarikh Khamis*, Ibnul Wardi; *Habibus Sayr*, Abul Fida

Amin was extremely profligate and wanton man and Mamun was considerably intelligent and skillful, but since his mother was Persian, the Arabs were not prepared to accept him as heir apparent. Harun did not want to appoint Amin as his successor as it posed a great risk to the kingdom; but due to the pressure of tribes, he divided his kingdom into two: Arab territories of Syria, Hijaz and Yemen were given to Amin and Iran, Khorasan and Turkey were given to Mamun. In this way at least one problem was solved, but another arose when both sons took over their kingdoms and the father was abandoned and in spite of being caliph of Muslims he lived at the mercy of his sons and they wanted him to live on simple food and clothes so that power hunger may not overtake him a second time and the kingdom may not be taken away from them. There was nothing surprising in this as this is the end of usurped kingdom and irreligious style of power and Almighty Allah punishes the tyrant rulers in this world itself so that they may get an idea of the chastisement of the hereafter and also that they may gain lessons from their circumstances.¹

- The tug of war that had begun during the lifetime of the father became public as soon as he passed away and the two brothers wanted complete authority on Islamic dominions without any partnership. So a power struggle between Arabs and Persians began and at last armed confrontations began between the two parties. It resulted in the victory of Persians and the Arab prince was killed. Once again it became clear that there is neither brotherhood in un-Islamic system nor sympathy; there is neither rule nor law.

How much difference is there between the worldly system and the system devised by religion of God? Two brothers could not remain united in a small kingdom and matters reached to bloodshed and murder and in religious system two brothers

¹ *Tarikh Khulafa, Lamatus Saba*

were appointed as chiefs of the great kingdom (Paradise) and no sort of dispute arose. The fact is that the character of those who occupy the seat of power is different from those who control the hair locks of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.).¹

Till 183 A.H., he spent the first thirty or thirty-five years of his life under the care of his respected father and continued to survey the circumstances, which included a long period of imprisonment also and severe pressure from the regime. So much so that poison was administered to him while he was bound in chains and the corpse was taken out of the prison in this manner. The bier was placed at Baghdad Bridge and it was announced that he was the Imam of Shia and the ultimate insult was heaped when coolies were employed to carry the bier.²

It is obvious that during that period, Imam Reza (a.s.) along with the calamities, observed the style of his father and continued to see what style was being adopted in propagation of Islam and which divine wisdom is being employed. To become ignorant of the acts of regime is against dignity of leadership and to confront the regime head on is an invitation to useless death. To silently allow the regime to do what it likes also makes one culpable. Imam Musa Kazim (a.s.) adopted the middle path and got some of his companions appointed as ministers in the court so that an eye may be kept on the plans of regime and lives and properties of followers may be protected. Some companions were given lessons of aloofness in such a way that after hiring out camels to the king you develop the desire that he should remain alive and your rent is paid, such a desire makes you among the helpers of tyrants; which in other words implied that Ali Ibne Yaqtin, in spite of being Vizier could not wish for the life of the King and he was so capable that he could work without caring for the post; so he was even entrusted with the job of vizierate and he got the permission of

¹ *Tarikh Islam*, Vol. 1, Pg. 320; *Nurul Absar, Tarikhul Khulafa*

² *Manaqib; Elamul Wara; Kashful Ghumma*

becoming so proximate to the court and Safwan Jammal did not have as much capability, so the best thing for him was to keep away from governance lest he should have desire for life of tyrants for the sake of receiving rentals and the hereafter is completely destroyed.¹

In addition to this, he warned Harun through a brief letter that every passing day is decreasing the days of your comfort and reducing the days of my hardships. After that both of us would be standing in the court of Almighty to see the consequences of our deeds. Which clearly meant that in spite of being aloof we are not careless of our duty of guidance and till our last breath we wish to keep the oppressors informed of their consequences, just as Imam Ali (a.s.) had woken up Ibne Muljim and called him to prayers although he knew well that prayers of people like him had no value.²

In such circumstances, at the age of thirty or thirty-five years he took over the responsibility of leading the Ummah and desired to keep alive this character whose example was presented by the respected father so that no one should fall into doubts that seeing the calamities of his father he has changed his style and in some way or the other made peace with the regime. Thus from 183 A.H. for approximately 17 years, he continued this practice as was the life of Imam Musa Kazim (a.s.). It is another thing that the Imam's poisoning in the prison and affront to his corpse had created such a situation for Harun that now he had no more strength left to oppress further and internal factors had also compelled him to divide his kingdom and retire from active role in the regime. As a result, this period was to some extent peaceful for Imam Reza (a.s.) and he did not have to face the hardships that his respected father had to. It is a strange phenomenon of history of Aale

¹ *Ahsanul Maqal*, Vol. 1, Pg. 760; *Manaqib; Nurul Absar; Sawaiqul Mohriqa*

² *Tabari, Irshad Mufeed*, Pg. 7

Muhammad (a.s.) that each of the Imams had to face different, on the contrary, opposite situations and its main reason was that the regime used to try each tactic and when it did not succeed, it used to change it and the next Imam had to face completely different situations. For example, Muawiyah Ibne Abi Sufyan fought a bloody war against the Imam and after his martyrdom became ready to make peace with Imam Hasan (a.s.). Muawiyah made peace with Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Yazid was ready to fight Imam Husain (a.s.).

Yazid asked allegiance from Imam Husain (a.s.) although he was amidst his people and the tragedy of Kerbala occurred; on the contrary he did not ask for allegiance from Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) although he was a chained prisoner.

Life of Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) was spent in isolation, silence and worship and Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) and Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) had to come into the open and work freely. Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) worked so openly that the school of Shiaism became famous as Ja'fari school and Imam Musa Kazim (a.s.) had to live in prison for 14 years.

The martyrdom of Imam Musa Kazim (a.s.) also occurred in prison while he was tied up in chains and Imam Ali Reza (a.s.) was appointed as heir apparent. Imam Ali Reza (a.s.) remained the heir apparent and Imam Muhammad Taqi (a.s.) did not get any post and he had to leave the capital and go to Medina. Imam Muhammad Taqi (a.s.) became son-in-law of Mamun and Imam Ali Naqi (a.s.) remained in prisons.¹

Thus this contradictory series of history is a clear sign that the regime of the time was continuously aware of its defeat and as a result of this the ruler or his successor used to immediately change his tactics and Aale Muhammad (a.s.) had to face a new political trick, which also shows that Aale Muhammad (a.s.) had not inherited means or dynastic type of styles of life and

¹ *Tarikh Aaimma; Sawaneh Umri Chaharda Masoomeen*

neither they acted according to past training; on the contrary they were the focus of divine inspiration and through it they used to easily face new plots and machinations without any hardship.

The first problem that Imam Ali Reza (a.s.) had to face was that Harun under the pretext of uprising of Muhammad Ibne Ja'far ordered destruction of all the houses of Saadaat and Isa Jaludi refreshed the memory of Yazid's army. During the plunder of Medina, when they came to the house of Imam Ali Reza (a.s.), he declared: Neither can strangers enter the house nor touch the ladies; I will myself hand over all the goods and jewellery. It happened in this way only and he brought all the things leaving only clothes on ones body and the oppressors were pleased with this plunder and considered it to be their victory.¹

With regard to his lifestyle Shaykh Saduq has narrated from Ibrahim Ibne Ayyash that the Imam was neither harsh in speaking nor was ever found to cut off his statement. He considered as his duty the fulfillment of needs of others. He did not sit with his legs stretched to anyone. He never sat reclining in the presence of anyone. He did not speak harshly even with slaves. He never laughed out aloud. He made all servants and slaves sit with him for dinner. He slept very less and often remained awake all night in prayers. He fasted the first and last Thursday and middle Wednesday of every month. He gave charity in darkness of the night. He wore ordinary clothes inside and sometimes put on a good dress depending on needs and circumstances.²

- In the public bath, a man asked him to rub the body; he accepted as once and someone happened to notice this and informed him; that man fell at his feet asking for

¹ *Tarikh Islam*

² *Nurul Absar*, Pg. 38

forgiveness, but the Imam said: No problem, there is no harm in one person helping another.¹

- If during mealtimes, someone wanted to stand up in respect, he used to prohibit it saying: It is necessary to respect God's sustenance and one must not stand up during mealtimes.
- His servant, Yasir says: At the time of eating fruits we used to eat one part and throw away the other; the Imam scolded us for wasting God's sustenance; and said that we should give in charity whatever we have in excess.
- The Imam was very fond of perfumes and his favorite occupation was to remain in prostration to the Almighty.
- He used to warn his followers that all their deeds are presented to their Imam every night and they seek forgiveness on their behalf. (So you must not hurt their feelings through your sins and become as their followers should be.).
- Once, on the day of Arafah he donated all his belongings to charity and Fazl Ibne Sahal seeing that such a thing was not possible from them, said: This is a kind of loss. Imam (a.s.) said: This is not loss, it is a profit as the Merciful Lord is going to bestow ten instead of one.²

Medical Wisdom of Imam Reza (a.s.)

In addition to other sciences and miracles, his knowledge of the human body is the best prescription for health in all times and on the basis of this some of his medical advices are mentioned below.

- There is no better food for the child than breast milk.

¹ *Nurul Absar*, Pg. 39

² *Elamul Wara; Tofah Rizvia; Kashful Ghumma*

- Vinegar is the best of the foods. A house where vinegar is present the inmates of this house will never become needy.
- There is one seed of Paradise in a pomegranate.
- Dried resin cures yellow bile and phlegm; strengthens the muscles and purifies the self.
- There is cure in honey and the gift of honey must never be returned.
- Rose is the chief of the flowers of Paradise.
- If violet oil is applied to the hair it gives coolness during summer and warmth in winter.
- One who uses olive oil remains safe from mischief of Satan for forty days.
- Reading Quran, consuming honey and milk strengthens memory.
- Mutton cures diseases. One who does not have meat for forty days would become bad mannered.
- One should begin eating with salt; it cures seventy illnesses, including leprosy.
- Masur was a part of the diet of seventy prophets; it softens the heart and creates tears.
- Food should be eaten after cooling and from the edge of the bowl.
- Eating well, wearing good shoes, keeping away from debts and refraining from excessive sex is beneficial for man.
- Seek your sustenance by giving Sadaqah.
- Whiteness of hair from the front is sign of success; if it begins from the cheeks, it is a sign of generosity and if they

begin from the hair it implies bravery; if they begin from the back of the head it is a bad omen.¹

Confessions

- He was very much respected among the people.²
- His statements were wise, his act was correct and his character was safe from mistakes. He was perfect in knowledge and wisdom and was the owner of an incomparable personality.³
- According to Ibrahim Ibne Abbas, a scholar greater than him was never seen.⁴
- He was the most excellent human being of his time.⁵
- He had received in inheritance, knowledge of the past and future.⁶
- He was most proficient in every tongue and spoke to every person in his mother tongue.⁷
- He was the third Ali among the twelve Imams; he was perfect in faith, majestic, noble and owner of excellence; his evidence of nobility and Imamate were very much obvious.⁸
- It is sufficient for his excellence that Mamun Rashid who was considered to be a patron of knowledge and whose

¹ *Nurul Absar*, Pg.140

² Ibne Hajar, *Sawaiqul Mohriqa*, Pg. 122

³ Abdur Rahman Jami, *Shawahidun Nubuwwah*, Pg. 106, Lucknow, 1904

⁴ Allamah Ubaidullah Amritsari, *Arjahul Matalib*, Pg. 255

⁵ *Habibus Sayr*

⁶ *Wasilatun Najaat*, Pg. 377

⁷ *Rauzatul Ahabab*

⁸ *Matalibus So-ool*, Pg, 252

court was a center of intellectuals and excellence; he not only gave him heir apparenacy; on the contrary he proposed giving him the whole kingdom although he did not accept it.¹

- All the debates that took place in the court of Mamun, Christian and Jew scholars, apostates and atheists, all have confessed to his knowledge and excellence.
- Muhammad Ibne Isa says: I collected his written replies and their number came to eighteen thousand.
- Jasliq was a Christian scholar and he used to say that the personality of Isa was consensual and the personality of your Prophet is controversial so the consensual should be adopted and the controversial should be abandoned. Muslims were helpless, but when this argument came before him, he said: The consensus is on Isa who had come to give glad tidings of our Prophet and he used to serve the Almighty. If he is considered to be the last prophet or god, his personality is not acceptable to us Muslims.²

Miracles

- Harun was heading towards another gate when he saw the Imam during Hajj; Imam said: No matter how much he may flee, our graves shall be in the same place and this proved true at last.³
- A person set out to go to Khorasan; his daughter gave him a robe to sell it and buy a turquoise. A follower of the Imam

¹ *Wasilatun Najaat*, Pg. 381; *Irshad Mufeed*, Pg. 312; *Fusulul Muhimma fee Marifati Ahwlul Aaimma*, Pg. 255; *Uyun Akhbar Reza*, Vol. 2, Pg. 139 ; *Amali Saduq*, Pg. 72; *Maqatilut Talibiyyin*, Pg. 564

² *Uyun Akhbar Reza*, *Ahsanul Maqal*, Vol. 2, Pg. 150

³ *Nurul Absar*, Pg. 144; *Manaqib Aale Abi Talib*, Pg. 340; *Kafi*, Vol. 1, Pg. 491

passed away on way to Merv and Imam (a.s.) asked for a cloth for shrouding the body and he refused. He said: Your daughter gave you a robe. He agreed and gave the robe. Then the man thought that he was a saintly personality and hence he should be asked to solve some religious problems. When he came near, he was surrounded by a crowd and he waited to get a chance to speak to him. The Imam gave him an envelope saying: Replies to your queries are in this envelope.¹

- Rayyan Ibne Sult came to the Imam and asked him for a garment and some coins inscribed with the name of the Imam. He gave two garments and thirty coins before he asked.²
- Abu Ismail complained that he did not know Arabic; Imam Ali Reza (a.s.) passed his hand over his lips and made him a speaker of Arabic.³
- He told Ja'far Ibne Salih: Twins would be born to you; name the son as Ali and the daughter as Umme Umar. When twins were born to him he told his mother that although the Imam has chosen these names the name of Umme Umar is strange. She said: It is the name of your paternal grandmother and the Imam has named in accordance to that.⁴
- After seeing Amin and Mamun, the Imam said: Very soon Mamun would have Amin killed and this proved true.⁵

¹ *Manaqib Aale Abi Talib*, Vol. 4, Pg. 336; *Uyunul Mojizat*

² *Uyun Akhbar Reza*, Vol. 2, Pg. 207; *Manaqib*, Vol. 4, Pg. 340; *Qurbul Asnad*. Pg. 198; *Kashful Ghumma*, Vol. 3, Pg. 132; *Rijal Kishi*, Pg. 457, No. 421; *Biharul Anwar*, Vol. 5, Chap. 3, Pg. 27

³ *Manaqib*

⁴ *Nurul Absar*

⁵ *Nurul Absar; Tarikh Islam*, Vol. 1, Pg. 20

- A man posed many questions to him about Hajj; after replying to all of them, he said: Ihram is allowed in the clothes that you forgot to ask me about.
- When a covey of birds created a din, he ordered a companion to kill the snake, which was troubling them and he went and did that.¹
- He ordered some companions going on a journey to take things needed in rains; people said it was summer. Imam said: Do what I say. Thus people acted on it and as soon as they reached there, it started to rain.²
- Muhammad Ibne Isa saw in dream that Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) is seated in the mosque of his locality and he attended him. A tray of dates was placed before him; when he asked for dates he gave me a handful; which numbered eighteen. I understood that eighteen years remained in my life. After some days I heard that Imam Reza (a.s.) has arrived. I went to meet in the mosque and found him in the same manner; I asked from dates and he gave me a handful and they were eighteen in all. I was extremely astonished. I said: O son of Messenger, give me some more. He said: If the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) had given you more I would have also given you. Ibne Isa was further amazed and the integration of prophethood and Imamate became clear to all.³

Inscription on the ring

He owned two rings: one was his personal, which had the inscription: As Allah willed; there is no strength or power

¹ *Shawahidun Nubuwwah*, Pg. 199

² *Elamul Wara*, Pg. 189; *Uyun Akhbar Reza*, Vol. 2, Pg. 221

³ *Sawaiqul Mohriqa*, Pg. 122; *Nurul Absar*, Pg. 144; *Arjahul Matalib*, Pg. 456; *Biharul Anwar*, Vol. 5, Chap. 10

except for Allah. And another ring, which he had received in inheritance and its inscription said: Allah is sufficient for me.¹

Mourning for Kerbala Tragedy (*Azadari*)

It is a historical fact that the Holy Imams (a.s.) keeping in mind the circumstances, kept their method of propagation compatible with demands of the times as anything contrary to this would be useless. On the contrary sometimes it would be harmful as is obvious from his statement that dissimulation is the religion of him and his ancestors. These circumstances demanded that sometimes he adopted the language of sermons and sometimes of supplications. After the tragedy of Kerbala another language of religious propagation came into being and it was *Azadari*.

Azadari was in fact a very precautionous element of propagation of Holy Imams (a.s.) which comprised of mourning the calamities that befell ones ancestors, which usually made ordinary persons sympathetic and no one opposes it. But under its effect this great message of religion is publicized as a result of which those circumstances had occurred. That is before martyrdom and after that the system of propagation remains same; only its title and language changes. Thus from Imam Sajjad (a.s.) till the last Imam as much opportunity was allowed by the circumstances the Holy Imams (a.s.) stressed on this element of propagation of faith and by organizing morning assemblies created an emotion among people to find causes which led to this tragedy and in this way gave them an opportunity to reach to the faith for which these calamities were borne. On the other hand, through the narration of calamities those propagations were also mentioned, which was the main aim of the Holy Imams (a.s.). Its effect is seen when under the pretext of *Azadari* all other subjects of religion

¹ *Al-Kafi*, Vol. 6, Pg. 473; *Amali Saduq*, Pg. 473

are mentioned in it although its actual aim is only mourning.

The period of Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) and Imam Ali Reza (a.s.) was a comparatively free period. Both Imams used this method of propagation to call the attention of people to faith and to find out the causes behind the carnage.

Abu Ali Dibil Ibne Razin Khuzai comes to the court of Imam Ali Reza (a.s.) in Merv when the Imam was heir apparent. Dibil had come to present his poetic compositions and the Imam ordered that proper arrangement should be made for the same; the ladies sat behind the curtains. When Dibil concluded, the Imam added one couplet to it and spoke of his grave. Dibil asked what his implication was and the Imam said: It denotes my martyrdom and grave.¹

As soon as the moon of Mohurram was seen, he began his mourning and he also advised his companions that whenever they felt like crying, they should first weep on Imam Husain (a.s.) as this tragedy had given perpetuity to religion.

We should know that after this incident, the Imam gave a hundred gold coins to Dibil on which the Imam's name was inscribed and showed that service to Ahle Bayt (a.s.) does not mean that you have to serve in free and Ahle Bayt (a.s.) are duty bound to give proper recompense. Dibil said that he had not composed the elegy for money; on the contrary he had written it out of sincerity. The Imam said: Its recompense is separate. Dibil asked for a robe, which the Imam gave to him and when he was attacked by robbers on the way, the whole caravan was saved by the grace of that robe; on the contrary they purchased that robe in a thousand gold coins as it was a present from Imam Reza (a.s.).²

¹ *Shawahidun Nubuwwah*, Pg. 199

² *Nurul Absar*, Pg. 138; *Majalisul Momineen*, Pg. 466; *Safinatul Bihar*, Vol. 1, Pg. 241; *Wafayatul Ayan*, Vol. 1, Pg. 322

Martyrdom

On 23rd Zilqad 203 A.H., Mamun had the Imam martyred through poison about which he often used to say that he would be killed by this man only,¹ and then mentioned its details also. Also on the day when Mamun had summoned him, he had told Abu Sult: Don't ask me any questions, if there is a sheet over my head and you should understand that my last moments have arrived. The Imam went to the court and Mamun offered him poisoned grapes. The Imam declined, which was a basic duty of personal protection. He tried to persuade him that he would not get grapes better than this. He said: There are better grapes in Paradise. He asked: Do you doubt my intentions? Imam (a.s.) saw that his killing was imminent and even if he refused, he would be blamed for bad expectations; so he ate some grapes and stood up to go. Mamun again asked: Where are you going? He replied: I am going where you have sent me. Saying this, he came to his residence. Abu Sult understood the circumstances and sat down at the entrance. Just then someone was heard moving inside the house. He asked: How did you come here? The door is closed. And who are you? He replied: I am his son, Muhammad Ibne Ali; Allah has brought me from Medina also conveyed me inside. Distances, doors and walls do not stop us. When someone from us Ahle Bayt (a.s.) passes away, his successor is with him and takes over all the trusts from him. After sometime when the Imam passed away and that young boy performed the last rites and prepared the bier, he said: Now make an announcement. In order to conceal the oppressions the regime declared official mourning and after another bath and shrouding, buried the Imam next to Harun.²

¹ *Damatus Sakiba*

² *Shawahidun Nubuwwah*, Pg. 212; *Jilaul Uyun*, Pg. 280; *Anwar Nomaniya*, Pg. 127; *Jannatul Khulud*, Pg. 31; *Damatus Sakiba*, Vol. 3, Pg. 71; *Nurul Absar*, Pg. 144; *Matalibus So-ool*, Pg. 288; *Tarikh*

Allamah Shibli has expressed doubt that Mamun was responsible for poisoning him as it was opposed to his nature and his love of knowledge, although one who could not forgive his brother, what can be expected from him regarding the Imam? That Mamun poisoned the Imam is mentioned in the following books: *Shawahidun Nubuwwah*, Pg. 202; *Nurul Absar*, Pg. 144; *Matalibus So-ool*, Pg. 288; *Rauzatus Safa*, Vol. 3, Pg. 16; *Kamil*, Vol. 6, Pg. 119; *Murujuz Zahab*, Vol. 9, Pg. 33; *Al-Fakhri*, Pg. 163; *Habibus Sayr*, Vol. 2, Part I, Pg. 51; *Al-Ansab Samani*, *Tadhheeb*, *Tahzibul Kamal*; *Mukhtasar Akhbarul Kholafa* etc. after which it is injustice to say Mamun's culpability is not mentioned in books of Ahle Sunnat scholars and it is only a fabricated report of Shia in enmity to Mamun.

Even if we agree that Mamun had no hand in this crime, can we not ask what steps he took to find out the real killers of his heir apparent and son-in-law? Why they have not been exposed? Bani Umayyah can blame Amirul Momineen (a.s.) for killing Uthman and fight battles with him and the just caliph of Bani Abbas should not do anything to bring killers of the Imam to book and allow the matter to rest after declaring official funeral etc? Can anyone other than Maulana Shibli accept such a thing and can we forgive this serious crime of Mamun? Can he still be called Rashid (guided)?

We should know that in some traditional reports the date of the martyrdom is mentioned as 17th Safar and in some reports, it is mentioned as end of Safar; but all have mentioned the year of martyrdom as 203 A.H.

Wives and Children

There is difference of opinion about his children in view of

Aaimma, Pg. 476; *Rauzatus Safa*, Vol. 3, Pg. 16; *Elamul Wara*, Pg. 198; *Kanzul Ansab*, Pg. 95; *Muntahiul Aamaal*, Vol. 2, Pg. 312

scholars as some have mentioned two sons: Imam Muhammad Taqi (a.s.) and Musa. Others have added another son. *Nurul Absar* (Pg. 145) has mentioned five sons and one daughter whose names are as follows: Imam Muhammad Taqi (a.s.), Hasan, Ja'far, Ibrahim, Husain and Ayesha, but all have consensus that his generations continued only through Imam Muhammad Taqi (a.s.), on the basis of which Shaykh Mufeed (r.a.) has explained that he had only one son, Imam Muhammad Taqi (a.s.) and that's all.¹ The same point is mentioned by Shaykh Tabarsi in *Elamul Wara* (Pg. 199) and author of *Umdatud Talib* has also mentioned it; after which it is easy to say that Rizvi Saadaat are actually descendants of Imam Muhammad Taqi (a.s.); but since Imam Ali Reza (a.s.) gained common popularity, because of his heir apparency, and his descendants who were born after two generations, were also called as Ibnur Reza; therefore the Taqvi Saadaat also began to call themselves Rizvi and this continues to this day; although Rizvi, Taqvi and Jawadi all belong to same generation whose genealogy begins directly from Imam Muhammad Taqi (a.s.) and through him reaches to Imam Ali Reza (a.s.) and this relationship can also be taken to Imam Ali Reza (a.s.), because the Imam who had both fallible and infallible children, his fallible children were attributed to him and his infallible children were attributed to sons of Imam. In case of Imam Ali Reza (a.s.), he did not have two types of children, therefore his complete generation can be attributed to him and otherwise also, all the Imams belong to the same family tree, hence anyone's children can be attributed to another and there is no sort of detestability in this; all are descendants of Prophet and Zahra; and all comprise the fulfilled divine promise of Kauthar, through which Almighty Allah assured His Prophet and which is to continue till Judgment Day.

¹ *Kitabul Irshad*, Pg. 271-345; *Safinatul Biharul*, Vol. 2, Pg. 239; *Muntahiul Aamaal*, Vol. 2, Pg. 312; *Manaqib Ibne Shahr Ashob*, Vol. 3, Pg. 209

Only one respected lady is mentioned as his wife, who was named Khizran, and she was also called as Sabika. Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) had also mentioned about her in his traditions, when he said: My life be sacrificed on her son. In addition to personal excellence, this lady also possesses the distinction of being a descendant of Mariya Qibtia, wife of Prophet,¹ who had the honor of being mother of Ibrahim and whose son was ransom of Imam Husain (a.s.), so that he should remain alive whose survival is connected to survival of Islam and whose martyrdom is connected to life of belief of monotheism.

An excellence

Among the merits of Imam Reza (a.s.) is the fact that at the time of departure, Imam Musa (a.s.) had gathered seventeen persons and in their presence, drawn up a document, which was witnessed by sixty persons, whose subject matter was: My successor is my son, Ali Reza, because the Imam knew that he would never return to Medina again and at the time of his passing away also, apparently his son would not be with him that he could declare his successorship. This was unprecedented in the life of Imams.²

Companions and Students

1- Dibil Ibne Ali al-Khuzai

He was the greatest poet and litterateur of his time. His panegyric is considered to be a masterpiece of literature. After composing the Qasida about Imam Ali Reza (a.s.) he set out to Khorasan to recite it in the presence of the Imam. The Imam

¹ *Shawahidun Nubuwwah*, Pg. 204; *Rauzatus Safa*, Vol. 3, Pg. 16

² *Biharul Anwar* Vol. 5, Chap. 15, Pg. 248

praised it highly, but told him not to recite it before everyone. But when it became popular, Mamun summoned Dibil and asked him to compose a Qasida for him as well but Dibil ignored the request. Mamun then called Imam Reza (a.s.) and asked him to recommend to Dibil and upon the orders of the Imam, he composed and recited Qasida for Mamun. Mamun gave him 50000 dirhams as reward and Imam (a.s.) also presented a similar amount. Dibil said: Maula, I don't vie for material wealth; just give me a robe, which would be useful for me in the hereafter. He was given a robe and asked to keep it safe as it would prove useful sometimes. Thus during the journey, when they were attacked by robbers, the same robe helped in saving the belongings of the whole caravan.¹

It is mentioned in some traditional reports that when Dibil in his composition, mentioned a tomb in Baghdad, the Imam said: Add two more couplets to this Qasida so that it may become complete and saying this he recited two couplets about a tomb in Tus. Dibil asked: Maula whose tomb does it imply? Imam (a.s.) said: Whoever visits me in my alienity would be raised with me on Judgment Day. Saying this he gave him a hundred Rizvi Dinars on which the name of Imam was inscribed and Dibil preserved them as a blessing.²

2- Hasan Ibne Ali Ibne Ziyad al-Washa Bajali Kufi

He was among special companions of Imam Reza (a.s.) and his maternal grandfather, Ilyas Sairafi was considered a prominent companion of Imam Sadiq (a.s.) and he has narrated the following report of Imam Sadiq (a.s.) in his final moments: One who is truly devoted to us, Ahle Bayt (a.s.), cannot be

¹ *Uyun Akhbar Reza*, Vol. 2, Pg. 265; *Kashful Ghumma*, Vol. 3, Pg. 74; *Rijal Kishi*, Pg. 42; *Shawahidun Nubuwwah*, Pg. 199

² *Nurul Absar*, Pg. 138; *Safinatul Biharul*, Vol. 1, Pg. 241; *Ahsanul Maqal*, Vol. 2, Pg. 177; *Majalisul Momineen*, Pg. 466; *Wafayatul Ayan*, Vol. 1, Pg. 322

touched by Hellfire.

Shaykh Tusi has narrated from Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Isa Qummi that he went from Qom to Kufa in search of traditions and met Hasan Ibne Ali Ibne Washa and sought his permission to narrating from books of Alaa Ibne Razin and Aban Ibne Uthman. He said: First you may copy the books and then I would hear them. He said you may recite them now, because no one knows when he would have to harken to the call of Lord. Hasan Ibne Ali Ibne Washa said: If I had known that there was so much interest among people for traditions, I would have gathered a treasure trove of traditions, because I saw nine hundred senior teachers in this same Masjid Kufa narrating traditions from Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.).

Ibne Shahr Ashob says that Hasan Ibne Ali Ibne Washa had a little doubt in the Imamate of Imam Reza (a.s.). So once he collected some questions and came to the Imam to test him. He was yet at the door when a servant came and asked: Which of you is Hasan Ibne Ali Ibne Washa? He said: I am. The servant gave him an envelope and said: The Imam says that it contains replies to your queries. This created a revolution in his life and he became certain of his Imamate.¹

3- Hasan Ibne Ali Ibne Faddal Yatumul Kufi

He was a special companion of Imam Reza (a.s.) and a reporter of his traditions. Fazl Ibne Shazan says: I was in the class of Quranic recitation in Masjid when I saw that some people talking about a person who lives in mountains and who is continuously engrossed in worship. Even beasts of wilderness had become so accustomed with him that they graze near him and he prolongs his prostrations so much, as if he has died. I was amazed how a person can be like this. Meanwhile a man entered and my father stepped forward to welcome him

¹ *Manaqib Ibne Shahr Ashob; Ahsanul Maqal*, Vol. 2, Pg. 182

and accorded him great respect. After he went away, I asked: Who was this gentleman. He said: It was Hasan Ibne Ali Ibne Faddal. “He is the same famous man? I thought he lived in mountains.” “Yes, he is the same; he came down today and visits me frequently. I have developed such respect for him that I used to visit him frequently and listen to the books of Ibne Bukair and often he came and read them out to me and it was only his sentiment of religion; because when commander in chief of Mamun, Tahir Ibne Husain Khuzai on his return from Hajj, expressed his wish to meet Hasan, the latter declined. Hasan passed away in 224 A.H.¹

4- Hasan Ibne Mahbub Sarrad Bajali Kufi

He was considered a key personality of his time and included among people of consensus. He was generally referred to as Jarrad, but Imam Reza (a.s.) suggested that he should be addressed as Sarrad as the word of SRD is used in Holy Quran in the meaning of making coat of mail and importance should be given to words of Quran.

His father was so particular about his training that he gave one dirham as prize for learning each tradition of Ali Ibne Ruab. Hasan Ibne Mahbub passed away at the end of 224 A.H. at the age of approximately 65 years.²

5- Zakariya Ibne Adam Ibne Abdullah Ibne Saad Ashari Qummi

He was among the close confidants of Imam Ali Reza (a.s.). Once he said to the Imam that he wanted to separate from his family members as many fools have appeared among them. The Imam said: Almighty Allah dispels calamities from

¹ *Ahsanul Maqal*, Vol. 2, Pg. 183

² *Ahsanul Maqal*, Vol. 2, Pg. 184; *Rijal Kishi*

them through you just as He wards off the calamities of people of Baghdad for the sake of the tomb of Imam Musa Kazim (a.s.).

Ali Ibne Musayyib Hamadani said to Imam Reza (a.s.): My house is very far away and I cannot be present with you all the time; so from whom should I learn the laws of religion? He replied: Zakariya Ibne Adam Qummi, who is trustworthy in my view from the aspect of religion as well as the world.

Some historians have stated that he also had the honor of attending Hajj with Imam Reza (a.s.) and on the return journey shared the litter with the Imam. Allamah Majlisi has narrated in connection with history of Qom that Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) had prayed for Ashari clan that may Allah forgive their young and old.

The grave of Zakariya Ibne Adam is well known in Shaikhan Kabir cemetery. Zakariya Ibne Idris Ibne Abdullah Ibne Saad Ashari, his cousin is buried near him.¹

6- Safwan Ibne Yahya Abu Muhammad Bajali Kufi

He was considered among the most reliable reporters of his time and was a companion of Imam Reza (a.s.) and Imam Jawad (a.s.); on the contrary, he was also an official representative of the Imam.

Allamah Kishi has included him also among people of consensus and some historians have narrated that Safwan was a partner in business with Abdullah Ibne Judub and Ali Ibne Noman. And three of them used to pray 51 units of prayers every day without fail. They had entered into an agreement that the survivor among them would perform worship and good deeds on behalf of others also. Thus after the passing away of

¹ *Ahsanul Maqal*, Vol. 2, Pg. 185

his friends, he used to pray 51 units of prayers three times daily and fasted for three months in a year and paid Zakat of wealth three times. Such was his precaution that once he had rented a camel and was heading to Kufa when someone gave him two Dinars to be conveyed till Kufa. He did not mount the camel till he could get the approval from the owner of the camel for increase in load; and such was his sense of duty to believers that he could not refuse the owner of Dinar also.

Safwan has narrated traditions from forty companions of Imam Sadiq (a.s.) and he passed away in Medina in 210 A.H. Imam Jawad (a.s.) arranged for his shroud and *Hunut* and ordered Ismail Ibne Musa to pray his funeral prayers.¹

7- Muhammad Ibne Ismail Ibne Bazi

He was a trustworthy narrator of traditions and a special companion of Imam Reza (a.s.). He was also present during the times of Imam Jawad (a.s.). He was also a minister in the government. Ali Ibne Noman had bequeathed all his books to Muhammad Ibne Ismail Ibne Bazi. He had requested Imam Jawad (a.s.) for a cloth for his shroud; the Imam fulfilled it and said that its hooks should be removed. He died at Fayd on way to Mecca about which it is mentioned by Muhammad Ibne Ahmad Ibne Yahya Ashari that he visited his grave in the company of Ali Ibne Bilal and narrated the following tradition of Imam Reza (a.s.) on his authority: If a person places his hand on the grave and recites Surah Qadr seven times; both the reciter as well as the departed one would be secure from terror of Judgment Day.

Such was the excellence and nobility of Muhammad Ibne Ismail that Sayyid Murtada, father of Allamah Tabatabai Bahrul Uloom dreamt on the eve of birth of Allamah that Imam Reza (a.s.) has given a candle to Muhammad Ibne Ismail and

¹ *Ahsanul Maqal*, Vol. 2, Pg. 187

sent him to his house and when he lighted it, there was light all around.

Indeed, the being of Allamah Bahrul Uloom was a like a lighted candle, which had illuminated the world of piety and knowledge, but it was the greatness of Muhammad Ibne Ismail that Imam Reza (a.s.) chose his medium to give this glad tiding, as if this candle of knowledge would be lighted through his traditional reports and their blessings and this is sufficient an honor of both persons.¹

8- Nasr Ibne Qabus

He has narrated from Imam Sadiq (a.s.), Imam Kazim (a.s.) and Imam Ali Reza (a.s.) and served as a representative of Imam Sadiq (a.s.) for twenty years. He was among the close confidants of Imam Kazim (a.s.) and has narrated from him the tradition of appointment of Imam Reza (a.s.) to Imamate.

- Shaykh Kishi has narrated from him that Imam Musa Kazim (a.s.) took him to a room where Imam Reza (a.s.) was engrossed in reading a book and asked: Nasr, do you know who this boy is? He replied: It is Ali Ibne Musa ar-Reza (a.s.). Then he asked: And this book? He replied: You know better. Imam (a.s.) said: This is Jafr, which only the prophets and their successors can read. After which he became more certain about the Imamate of Imam Reza (a.s.).
- On another occasion, Nasr told Imam Musa Kazim (a.s.): I asked your father about his successor and he told me your name. Now who would your successor be? He replied: My son, Ali Ibne Musa.²

¹ *Ahsanul Maqal*, Vol. 2, Pg. 188

² *Ahsanul Maqal*, Vol. 2, Pg. 190

Wise sayings

1- The friend of any individual is his mind and his enemy is his ignorance.

Indeed it is only intelligence, which cannot be said to be an ignorant friend and ignorance is the enemy, which cannot be called as a wise enemy.¹

2- God does not like three things: Useless debates, wasting money and asking too many questions.²

The Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) has also said that four things cause the heart to die: continuously committing sins, talking too much with women, arguing with fools and cultivating the company of senseless rich.

3- We Ahle Bayt (a.s.) consider promise as debt and its repayment as a duty.³

The fact is that all the well being of our world and hereafter is concerned with the promise of help and intercession and we are certain that they never go back on their words.

4- A time is to come when nine parts of prosperity will be in remaining in isolation and one part in silence.⁴

Indeed, every person can face such circumstances, but it is our duty that we must not ignore our duties in all cases as it is more important than seeking prosperity. Otherwise Adam (a.s.) would have remained in Paradise and Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) would have stayed in the heavens.

5- A person asked: Son of Messenger how did you begin your day. He replied: In four calamities: Life is on decline, deeds are being recorded, death is in pursuit and Hell is waiting for an

¹ *Muntahiul Aamaal*

² *Muntahiul Aamaal*

³ *Muntahiul Aamaal*

⁴ *Muntahiul Aamaal*

opportunity.¹

Alas, if we sinners had senses, those are realities, which the Holy Imams (a.s.) has mentioned.

6- No man in Bani Israel was considered pious till he did not observe silence for ten years.²

Indeed, maintaining silence is necessary to become a worshipper, but speaking is required for one to become a scholar and rank of scholar is higher than that of the worshippers according to Infallibles.

7- One who is content with a little sustenance of God; God is content with his little deeds.³

Alas, if man had paid attention to this that just as he asks sustenance from God in the same way He has asked for deeds; thus if he is not content with a little sustenance, how he can ask God to be content with his few deeds?

8- The great calamity is death of scholar.

9- On day of Arafah when Imam (a.s.) donated all his property in charity, Fazl Ibne Sahal remarked that it was a great loss. Imam (a.s.) said: It is a great profit; it is not loss in exchange of which you earn divine rewards and nobility.

10- If man is in a good condition, he should not become proud. On the contrary he should continuously pray to Almighty Allah that He may preserve this well being and that He should take it to perfection.⁴

In fact every charitable deed has to encounter these two dangers. Sometimes the emotion of show off and sycophancy is included and the deed does not remain valid and instead

¹ *Muntahiul Aamaal*

² *Muntahiul Aamaal*

³ *Muntahiul Aamaal*

⁴ *Tohafful Uqul; Ahsanul Maqal*, Pg. 131

earning rewards, makes one eligible for divine punishment; and sometimes it remains valid in this aspect, but it does not reach to perfection and some or the other hurdle appears in between. Imam Ali Reza (a.s.) has mentioned this point that instead of becoming proud on ones deeds, man should think about these two points on which divine rewards depend and without which no good deed is worth being called as good deed. May Almighty Allah give Taufeeq of good deeds to all believers and keeping him safe from all defects, give him the honor of reaching to the rank of perfection.

Issue of heir apparency

Among all the matters connected to the life of Imam Ali Reza (a.s.) the most important issue is that of heir apparency; that is why senior scholars have generally considered it worth discussion and have discussed it in brief or in detail.

Here it is worth mention that there are some occasions and stages in the lives of Masoomeen (a.s.), which are still being debated and on the other hand there are some aspects, which have never been discussed although their importance is not any less that it should not be discussed. For example, the treaty of Hudaibiyah, peace treaty of Imam Hasan (a.s.), arbitration of Battle of Siffeen, polygamy of Imam Hasan (a.s.); lack of uprising of Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) and heir apparency of Imam Reza (a.s.) are regularly topic of discussion. While the battles of the Prophet, rising of Imam Husain (a.s.) and struggles of Imam Ali (a.s.) are not accorded so much importance and perhaps it is because there is a common belief about the infallibles in the world of Islam; on the contrary in the whole world they can take a stand against falsehood, but they can never concur with them. That is why whenever disputes are mentioned, the discussion stops as it is done according to the rule and whenever there seems to be consensus, the debate begins as how Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.)

signed treaty with the infidels? And on what point did Imam Hasan (a.s.) concur with the ruler of Syria? Or how Imam Ali (a.s.) accepted the decision of arbitration or how a pious person like Imam Hasan (a.s.) married so many women (supposing the authenticity of report). Or why Imam Sadiq (a.s.) did not announce his rights in spite of the favorable circumstances? Or how Imam Reza (a.s.) accepted a post in a tyrant and irreligious regime? And in fact it is sign of greatness of character of the Holy Imams (a.s.) that it is commonly famous about them that they can take a stand against falsehood, but they can never support it and Imam Reza (a.s.) has kept this in mind at the time of being offered heir apparenacy that it would be harmful to the common belief about the Holy Imams (a.s.) and which in fact is the secret of their infallibility. So as soon as he got heir apparenacy, instead of expressing joy and thankfulness to God, he sought excuse from Almighty Allah: O Lord, just as Yusuf accepted the post from Aziz of Egypt, in the same way I accepted this heir apparenacy.¹

We should know that two views are found in discussion about heir apparenacy: some are in support of Mamun, so they are bound to justify his acts and some are devoted to Imam Reza (a.s.), so they have to prove the correctness of the Imam's step.

Among the former, people like Ahmad Amin in the recent times have explained some causes of this incident in the following way:

1- Mamun wanted to bring Imam Reza (a.s.) in public and expose his real merits as when Imams of Ahle Bayt (a.s.) live in isolation, their followers get a chance to make a propaganda about their greatness, infallibility and piety and they present their personality as incomparable. Mamun wanted to bring him into public view so that people may come to know about their

¹ *Uyun Akhbar Reza*, Vol. 2, Pg. 139; *Amali Saduq*, Pg. 72; *Ilalush Sharai*, Vol. 2, Pg. 228; *Wasilatun Najaat*, Pg. 379

reality and he should also realize that man after getting control of government cannot spend a life of piety.¹

2- Fazl Ibne Sahal, because of being Khorasani was especially devoted to Imam Reza and Ahle Bayt (a.s.) and Mamun was afraid that they can revolt anytime; so in order to please them, he made Imam Reza (a.s.) as heir apparent.²

3- Mamun had Mutazali beliefs and this school of thought is very close to Shiaism; so Shiaism entered his beliefs and he appointed Imam Reza (a.s.) as heir apparent of his kingdom.

After that the following arguments are presented to prove the Shiaism of Mamun:

A) Mamun believed in superiority of Imam Ali (a.s.), and he also discussed this point with others.³

B) Mamun used to organize debates of Imam Reza (a.s.) with people of other sects so that his excellence and superiority may become apparent and people may become convinced of superiority of Imams of Ahle Bayt (a.s.) and that is why, in spite of a tender age, he held a debate of Imam Muhammad Taqi (a.s.) with a famous scholar and jurist like Yahya Ibne Aksam.

C) Mamun believed in the creatibility of Quran and this was the same belief of the Imams of Ahle Bayt (a.s.).

D) Mamun considered Mutah as lawful and it is a special feature of Shia faith.

E) Mamun had declared restoration of Fadak, which was opposed to acceptance of Fadak to be a right of Lady Fatima (s.a.) and usurpation of the first caliph.⁴

¹ *Uyun Akhbar Reza*

² *Irshad Mufeed; Uyun Akhbar Reza*

³ *Biharul Anwar, Uyun Akhbar Reza*

⁴ *Futuhul Buldan*

F) Mamun married one of his daughters to Imam Reza (a.s.) and another one to Imam Jawad (a.s.), which shows that he had special devotion to the Imams of Ahle Bayt (a.s.).¹

Detailed study of these arguments requires a separate book. In brief it could be said that the proposal of heir apparenacy from Mamun is itself against the basis of Shiaism as it is in fact acceptance of mastership of the Holy Imams (a.s.). There is no scope in it for someone else to become a ruler and the Imam be his deputy and the same point was reiterated by Imam Reza (a.s.) when he said: God has given you this post, you don't have the right to give it to others, if it is received from people, my taking it cannot be justified, because I don't consider people as eligible to give this permission. And after that he did not accept it till Mamun did not threaten him with death.²

As far as debates are concerned, through them Mamun wanted to show off his greatness that: I have such people in my court and it was not related to the nobility or excellence of Imam Reza (a.s.) or the real conclusion of this acceptance of superiority should have been such that he should have surrendered the right to the rightful owners.

The issues of creatibility of Quran and Mutah have no concern with the origin of Shiaism and it is possible for people of two different sects to have consensus on such secondary matters as becomes clear from history that Mutah was considered legal by those who had no connection with Shia faith and even today people like Russell consider it be a necessary solution of contemporary problems, it does not meant that he has accepted Shia faith. Shiaism is a complete faith and not concerned with one or two laws and people like Mamun had created these issues only to divert public attention

¹ *Uyun Akhbar Reza*

² *Ialush Sharai*, Vol. 1, Pg. 226; *Uyun Akhbar Reza*, Vol. 2, Pg. 139; *Amali Saduq*, Pg. 68; *Wasilatun Najaat*

from political issues; otherwise what concern the public has for these issues and how capable they were to feel the difference between creatibility of Quran or the contrary. Every learned person can judge this.

The issue of marriage is also not related to belief and its circumstances are absolutely political whose examples can be found in the life of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) as well; that Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) married the daughter of Abu Sufyan at a time when he was clearly in ranks of infidelity and he had not even started resorting to hypocrisy.¹

As for giving in marriage of two daughters to the father and son and that too with so much difference of age itself shows that this was a political step and had no relation with religious beliefs.

Raising the issue of Fadak was also a political step; otherwise if he had any consideration of the rightfulness of Imam, after his martyrdom, he should have declared the heir apparenacy of Imam Jawad (a.s.). Circumstances took such a turn that he could not bear the existence of Imam Reza (a.s.); what can be said about Imam Jawad (a.s.)? Yes, as far as the concealment of crime is concerned, he definitely made his son as his son-in-law, which had continued in history since ancient times when tyrants used to make great personalities as their sons-in-law to conceal their oppression and evil and in this way defraud the public.

With regard to Fazl Ibne Sahl it is sufficient to state that as far as it was possible for him he had restrained from those steps and there can be no question of his being the motivation of heir apparenacy.²

¹ *Biharul Anwar*

² *Uyun Akhbar Reza*

True causes of heir apparency

The fact is that such circumstances had developed that it became necessary for Mamun to assuage Bani Hashim and it was difficult for him to survive without assistance of Imam Reza (a.s.). Therefore he took such a political step and the following factors became his motivations:

1- Imam Reza (a.s.) should be kept under close surveillance so that he may not get close to the people and in this way security can be obtained that his public personality could have proved dangerous to the regime anytime; although this dream also could not be realized and Imam (a.s.) took advantage of heir apparency and increased his public contacts whose details will be mentioned under the topic of consequences of heir apparency.¹

2- Access to Imam should be made most difficult so that his sciences and laws may not gain publicity, which has always been the style of tyrant kings of all times; that apparently on the pretext of respect and honor, his public connection should be severed and the common people should not be allowed to know about his teachings and views. And in this way, the regime would get a chance to present its own interpretation of their teachings.²

3- The sentiments that arose among the public due to the martyrdom of Imam Musa Kazim (a.s.) should be cured and it should be shown that the regime is not inimical to Ahle Bayt (a.s.) and neither had any role in the martyrdom of Imam Musa Kazim (a.s.).³

4- The ministership of Imam Reza (a.s.) should be used to exalt the status of regime; that what would be the excellence of the

¹ *Uyun Akhbar Reza*, Vol. 2, Pg. 151

² *Uyun Akhbar Reza*, Vol. 2, Pg. 151

³ *Biharul Anwar*

ruler in whose court were present people like Imam Reza (a.s.) and how that regime can be called irreligious?

5- A new diversion can be given to public opinion and a new discussion can be invented in every house, which the people had never even imagined. In this way, the attention of people can be diverted from many basic issues, which posed serious political dangers to the regime.

6- A feeling should be created among the people that the regime was so concerned about the well being of Ummah that it had its brother killed and was prepared to make an outsider as heir apparent, which is a clear evidence of the fact that Mamun does not want to keep rulership in his house and wanted the Ummah to benefit whether from people of the family or outsiders.¹

7- Suppression of uprisings and political movements demanded that their leaders should be included among the regime and they should be convinced that the regime has altered its style of conduct and now it was prepared to give them their full rights; therefore there was no need to take any step; after that all their steps would be made dependent on their egotism and power hunger.

8- Mamun also knew that no matter how much power he had and how large his kingdom became, the lawfulness of the regime is in any case dependant on the fact that the greatest personality from the family of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) should support this regime and he should join the system of governance, otherwise no one would be prepared to call it as true Islamic rule and same was the heartfelt feeling of Mamun that his regime should be called as lawful Islamic regime. He was no such wanton and licentious ruler who in any way wanted to cling to power no matter how un-Islamic his position was as such type of regime can become the target of Islamic

¹ *Tarikh Khamis*

sentiments anytime and it was the same sentiment, which in fact had always remained in the mind of caliphs since the beginning and due to which allegiance was demanded from Imam Ali (a.s.) and Imam Husain (a.s.). As without that the regime cannot become eligible to be called Islamic. It is another thing that those before had demanded allegiance and seen its consequences. Therefore Mamun gave a nice form to this demand; that instead of making him a slave, he should be made a ruler or a partner in rulership as in this way the aim would be fulfilled and no blame would come of enslaving the progeny of the Messenger.¹

That is why Imam Ali Reza (a.s.) had specified a condition in heir apparency that he would not interfere in rulership in any way and nothing would be done in his name; although if his advice is sought in any matter, he would indeed give the right advice as it is the mode of conduct of every Ali in the history of Imamate and no honest person can be deviated from this principle of life. Dispute with a personality is different and defense of Islamic aims is something else; support in the first instance can be against religious law; but support on the second front is actual Islam and actual religion.²

9- By including Bani Fatima, Mamun on one side wanted to save his regime from Alawite uprisings and on the other hand wanted to defend the life of Bani Abbas as protests were intensifying all over the country and Alawite uprisings were increasing day by day. If this opposition continued, the Bani Abbas would be compelled to help the regime and as a result of that they would be targeted by Alawites, because every man cannot be enrolled in official capacity and security guards cannot be provided to everyone.³

10- Mamun wanted Bani Abbas also to become aware that if

¹ *Uyun Akhbar Reza*

² *Uyun Akhbar Reza*

³ *Uyun Akhbar Reza*

anyone raises any voice in support of Amin and mutual dispute is created, I will take the Alawites on my side and subdue it and in the end, I can surrender the rule to Alawites, after which Bani Abbas would just dream of power till Judgment Day.¹

With all this in view, Mamun decided that Imam Ali Reza (a.s.) should be included in the regime and all advantages should be gained together and that is why he summoned the Imam from Medina to Merv. Imam (a.s.) was also aware of all these official exigencies and he never wanted any of his steps to gain the slightest benefit as it would imply helping oppressors. And it would be very difficult to justify it on Judgment Day. Thus he also decided to adopt a policy, which would absolve him of all blames and also to turn back the trick on the oppressors. Thus he decided to travel, but he used this journey to propagate his teachings and religious beliefs to exhaust the arguments on the people as well as to continue propagation of faith. It is obvious that such a feature would not have been there if his journey had been personal, because people are never devoted to perfection and they only submit to power and always keep an eye on the style of the people in power. Even if an undeserving man joins the government, people throng the streets just to see him and if an eligible person enters an assembly no one is prepared to even look at him. Imam Reza (a.s.) was well aware of all this. So he considered the journey of heir apparenacy as a good opportunity to popularize the facts of religion and to inform the Ummah of his excellence. Thus during his journey he displayed the following miracles and excellence, which perhaps would not have been in a personal journey. But during this official journey it was necessary to expose those facts so he didn't commit any sort of shortcoming or humility. Humility is replaced by good ethics and in religious laws and propagation, humility cannot be resorted to.

¹ *Al-Mamun*

A) When he reached Nishapur, a large number of people gathered to meet him and twenty-four thousand tradition scholars arrived to record traditions from him. First they asked to see him; so the Imam moved aside the curtain of the litter and a wail arose as if the people had seen the elegance of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.). After that Imam (a.s.) was requested to mention a tradition; so he quoted the following statement of Almighty Allah through his holy ancestors: The statement of 'there is no god, except Allah, is my fort, whoever entered this fort, became safe from My chastisement.

Thus on one hand he reiterated the basic principle of faith and Islam implying that there is no salvation in polytheism, whether it is worship of idols, personalities or pelf. After that he announced that fact that this statement alone is not sufficient for salvation and there are conditions to it and I am one of those conditions. In this way, the complete announcement was made of the principles of Islam. At the first stage is monotheism, then prophethood and then Imamate; I am one of its conditions. Obviously an announcement like this from a person who was being made an heir apparent is having much importance from the official point of view and on the way Imam Reza (a.s.) declared that no Islam was complete without faith in his Imamate.

On the other hand the Imam also declared that the information that he had was not through the courtesy of narrators whom the community had relied upon and through whom people have learnt Islamic laws, because all these narrators are fallible and there is in any case possibility of mistakes from them, whereas my chain of narrators is the chain of infallible narrators who are my ancestors and it connects us to Jibraeel to the Tablet and the Pen and finally reaches upto the Lord of the worlds; and in spite of availability of such a chain, it is a matter of regret that it should be ignored by the people and to prefer chain of

narrators who are fallible.¹

B) On reaching Khorasan he asked for water to perform ablution, but the people did not have the water, so he caused a spring to flow and it continued to provide water for a long time and this was also a warning to the people that in presence of such a miraculous personality, another person cannot be eligible for rulership.²

C) Finally he arrived in Tus and found that the main occupation of the people was sculpture and they had to face many hardships in breaking the stones; so he beseeched the Almighty and the stone became soft and the occupation became easy for the people and his miracle became an inscription on the stone.³

D) He reached the grave of Harun in Sanabad and drew a line near it and said: This is the location of my grave. He also prayed there making it clear to the people that the Lord of the worlds has bestowed him with knowledge of unseen and that he was also cognizant of future events; nothing is hidden from me and I cannot be compared to people like Mamun.⁴

E) When he reached Merv, Mamun offered the seat of power to him, but he refused it as no Ali is desirous of rulership and he is needless of all worldly power. After that he presented heir apparency to him and asked: One, who does not want rulership, what would he do with heir apparency? But he said that the Imam would have to accept it in any case; so the Imam accepted it under tremendous pressure and on this occasion also reiterated a few realities.

¹ *Musnad Imam Reza*, Pg. 7, Egypt, 1341 A.H.; Ibne Hajar, *Sawaiqul Mohriqa*, Pg. 122; *Nurul Absar*; *Uyun Akhbar Reza*; *Amali*; *Biharul Anwar*

² *Uyun Akhbar Reza*, Vol. 2, Pg. 136

³ *Uyun Akhbar Reza*, Vol. 2, Pg. 136

⁴ *Biharul Anwar*; *Uyun Akhbar Reza*

His first condition was that he would not interfere in matters of governance and the whole responsibility of appointment and dismissal would be with Mamun.¹

Another point is that if my advice is sought, I would definitely offer my advice so that the regime may not consider me to be aloof and become needless of advices.²

The third point is that there should be a document of heir apparenacy, which would include the stipulation that since Mamun has accepted the conditions that his ancestors had not, so I accept heir apparenacy, although the science of Jafr and Jamia demands that this matter cannot reach to completion. He also had the document witnessed by people like Fazl Ibne Sahal, Yahya Ibne Aksam, Abdullah Ibne Tahir, Sumama, Bishr Ibne Motamid and Hammad Ibne Noman etc.³

F) The investiture ceremony was held on 6th Ramadhan 201 A.H. Twenty-three thousand persons paid allegiance to Imam (a.s.) and the official uniform of the government was changed to green as a mark of respect for Bani Hashim. The name of Imam Ali Reza (a.s.) was inscribed on the coins. Mamun married Umme Habib to Imam Reza (a.s.) and in this way made heir apparenacy stable from every aspect and Imam Reza (a.s.) was also confident that in this way the people are becoming aware of his greatness and people can easily

¹ *Al-Kafi*, Vol. 8, Pg. 151; *Uyun Akhbar Reza*, Pg. 166

² *Uyun Akhbar Reza*, Pg. 166

³ *Nurul Absar*; Pg. 142; *Sawaiqul Mohriqa*, Pg. 122; *Matalibus Soool*, Pg. 282; *Elamul Wara*, Pg. 193; *Kashful Ghumma*, Pg. 112; *Jannaatul Khulud*, Pg. 31; *Al-Mamun*, Pg. 82; *Wasilatun Najaat*, Pg. 379; *Arjahul Matalib*, Pg. 454; *Musnad Imam Reza*, Pg. 7; *Tarikh Aaimma*, Pg. 472; *Tarikh Ahmadi*, Pg. 354; *Tarikh Tabari*; *Sharh Mawaqif*, *Shawahidun Nubuwwah*; *Yanabiul Mawaddah*; *Faslul Khitab*; *Hilyatul Awliya*; *Rauzatus Safa*; *Uyun Akhbar Reza*; *Damatus Sakiba*; *Sawaneh Musa Kazim*

discriminate between truth and falsehood.¹

G) Another benefit of heir apparency was that Imam began to frequent the court and whenever he came, the sentries accorded him great honor and they escorted the Imam inside. But one day Bani Abbas decided not to accord him respect lest all the people took the side of Bani Hashim. So now when the Imam arrived, no one dared to lift the curtain. Providence arranged it in such a way there was a gust of strong wind and the curtain arose automatically and while leaving the palace the same thing was repeated, which once again exhausted proof for the people and all decided to serve the Imam as before.²

H) After some days, it was the occasion of Eid. In order to further advertise heir apparency, Mamun requested the Imam to lead the Eid prayers. He dressed up and came out of his house in the manners of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.); absolute simple style; determination to worship Almighty Allah clear in his demeanor; the call of 'God is the greatest' on his lips and walls and doors answering him with the same call; the result was that there was complete chaos and Fazl Ibne Sahal immediately informed Mamun that if that day prayer and sermon were completed; 'you would be sure to lose the kingdom.' Mamun immediately sent a communication to the Imam: Son of Messenger, this is very inconvenient for you; please come back, I would lead the prayers. The Imam returned, but the advantage of heir apparency was really gained, as through this people gathered at the Imam's place and witnessed through their own eyes the style of servitude of the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.), after which comparison became

¹ Allamah Shibli Nomani has mentioned this in his book. *Al-Mamun*, Pg. 82

² *Shawahidun Nubuwwah*, Pg. 197; *Nurul Absar*, Pg. 143; *Matalibus So-ool*, Pg. 282

easy between style of people in power and people of religion.¹

I) Another advantage of heir apparency was that Mamun began to hold debates with scholars of different faiths who visited his court and on every occasion he used to call the Imam (a.s.) too to take part in those discussions. So sometimes Imam (a.s.) had debate with Jasiliq, the Christian scholar and sometimes with Rasul Jalut, the Jew scholar; sometimes with Majus scholar. And he defeated all of them and defended the teachings and beliefs of Islam. Also made it clear to the people that it is easy to take over the throne, but not an easy matter to sit in the seat of knowledge as this share belonged only to Ali (a.s.) which Providence has related to his being from the first day and his job was to solve the problems of community and preserve dignity of Islam²

J) Another benefit of frequenting the royal court was that once there was a famine in the country and the ruler was compelled to request the Imam to pray for rain, which the Imam did and there was rain. Bani Abbas were infuriated by such display of excellence and thought that if this continued what merit the Bani Abbas would be left with? Thus a person named Hamid Ibne Mahran decided to embarrass the Imam. Thus when he came to the court, he remarked in an insulting manner: These people are referring to you as a man of miracles and different merits are being propagated about us; some even go the extent of claiming that you can cause rain to fall. Thus what would be the end of these merits?

Imam (a.s.) said: I have not told anyone to publicize these things and neither do I intend to make my personality like this and this rain also came because of divine grace. I only prayed for rain, which is the job of man; but if Almighty Allah has

¹ *Wasilatun Najaat*, Pg. 382; *Uyun Akhbar Reza*, Vol. 2, Pg. 149; *Irshad Mufeed*, Pg, 292

² *Biharul Anwar*, Vol. 5, Chap. 13, Pg. 182; *Ahsanul Maqal*, Vol. 2, Pg. 148

accepted it, it is His grace and I cannot prevent His grace. He said: If you think that you are owner of miracles, order the lion on this carpet to take the form of a real lion and devour me. Imam (a.s.) said: It is not my job; but if you want, I will do this also; saying this he gestured to the carpet and both the lions became alive and finished that man. Mamun fell down unconscious with shock; when he regained consciousness; he said: Son of Messenger, ask the lions to return. The Imam did that and the lions returned to the carpet.¹

This incident proved that Imam (a.s.) had used heir apparency as a means of expression of facts and did not waste any opportunity. By enlivening the lion of the carpet and by having Hamid killed he made it clear to Mamun that he had not yet recognized the Imam. I am a son of a Musa and the attack of any Firon is not going to be effective before any Musa. Do you not know that when Firon gathered the magicians of the country and through them tried to confront Musa, Musa finished off all the snakes through one staff and exposed the reality of Firon's power? Now I am the successor of a Musa; why father is Musa Ibne Ja'far and my grandfather, Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) also considered himself to be a Musa; therefore power of any Firon and magic of any Samari cannot be effective before me.

The fact of the matter is that if Imam (a.s.) had not accepted heir apparency, it would have been impossible to gain those benefits and if any of the events had occurred, the regime and its agents would have concealed them. Neither would have anyone realized those miracle nor known about those teachings. The greatest benefit of heir apparency was that the same people who would have concealed the matter began to advertise it, because now it was not a declaration of the miracle of Ali Reza (a.s.) it was an expression of the merit of selection of the caliph of Muslims, and its publicity was the

¹ *Sharh Uyun Akhbar Reza; Uyun Akhbar Reza, Vol. 2, Pg. 167*

responsibility of the regime.

In other words it can be said that the job, which Imam Hasan (a.s.) accomplished after abdicating the throne to Muawiyah, that the thief was made a sentry; the same was accomplished by Imam Ali Reza (a.s.) by accepting heir apparenacy; that the strength of the opponent should be made as a means of spreading excellence and teachings of Ahle Bayt (a.s.). It is the special divine policy of Imamate to study which, to contemplate on it and to find out its secrets, is the duty of every person of insight so that the correct Islamic steps and movement can be realized.

Imam Muhammad Taqi Jawad (a.s.)

Birth: 10th Rajab Awwal, 195 A.H.

Martyrdom: 29th Zilqad 220 A.H.

