

## **Chapter 10: Life of Imām `Alī al Ridhā (a.s.) – The Tenth Infallible**

## 1. Relating to the felicitous birth, name and agnomen of Imām `Alī al Ridhā (a.s.)

There is difference of opinion in the date of birth of Imām `Alī al Ridhā (a.s.), however, the most renowned is that he (a.s.) was born on the eleventh of the month of Dīlqa`dah, in the year one hundred and forty eight Hijrah in Madīnah. It is also said that Imām was born on the eleventh of the month of Dīlḥijjah in the year one hundred and fifty three Hijrah, five years after the death of Imām Ja`far al Ṣādiq (a.s.). However, as per the former renowned report, his (a.s.)'s birth took place some days after the death of Imām al Ṣādiq (a.s.). Imām al Ṣādiq (a.s.) desired to look at him, as related by Imām Mūsā al Kāẓim (a.s.) that, "I heard my father Ja`far bin Muḥammad (al Ṣādiq) say several times: The Scholar (`Ālim) of Āl Muḥammad (a.s.) shall emerge from your loins, I wish I could meet him, he shall be named `Alī upon the name of Amīrul Mu`minīn (a.s.)".

Shaikh al Ṣadūq relates from Yazīd bin Salīṭ, who says that we met Abī `Abdillāh al Ṣādiq (a.s.) on the way to Makkah, while we were a group of people. I told him (a.s.), "May my parents be ransom upon you! You are the Chaste A`immah (a.s.), while death is inevitable for all. Then tell me something (regarding the Imam after you) that I may relate to those who I later meet". Imām (a.s.) replied, "Yes, they are my children, while he is their chief", saying this, he pointed to Imām al Kāẓim (a.s.). Then he (a.s.) continued, "In him lies the knowledge of wisdom, comprehension, magnanimity and recognition that people require in their differences regarding matters of their Religion. In him (a.s.) lies good attitude and good neighbourliness. While he is a Gate (Medium) among the Gates of Allāh (s.w.t.). In him (a.s.) also lies another thing that is best than all of this". I asked, "And what is that, may my parents be ransom upon you?" Imām (a.s.) replied, "Allāh (s.w.t.) shall emerge from him the `Relief' of this nation and its succour, its knowledge, its light, its comprehension and its wisdom; the best one born and the best origin. Allāh (s.w.t.) shall withhold blood-shed through his medium, reconcile (the Muslims) through his person, gather the disordered through him, heal the crevices through him, clothe the bare ones through him, satiate the hungry ones through him, secure the fearful through him, downpour the rains through him and make the slaves obedient to him. (He shall be) The best among the middle-aged ones and the best origin. His clan shall be given glad tidings before the time of his birth. His (a.s.)'s statement shall be wisdom and his silence knowledge, he shall

be an evident for the people in what they differ”.

`Allāmah (Muḥammad Bāqir) al Majlisī writes in his Jilā'ul `Uyūn, while relating regarding him (a.s.), that his honourable name is `Alī, his agnomen (Kunīyyah) Abul Ḥasan, while his most renown title is Al Ridhā (the contented one). While his (a.s.)'s other titles are mentioned as Al Ṣābir (the patient), Al Fādhil (the learned), Al Radhī, Al Wafī (sincere in fulfilling promises), Qurrata `Aynil Mu'minīn (the coolness of the believer's eyes) and Gayzul Mulḥidīn (the rage upon the apostates).

Ibn Bābawayh (al Qummī) relates through his good chain of transmitters from (Aḥmad bin Abī Naṣr) Al Bazanṭī that once I asked Abī Ja`far Muḥammad bin `Alī bin Mūsā (al Jawād), “A group among your opponents presume that Ma'mūn named your father Al Ridhā, when he contented him for his heir apparenacy”. Hearing this, Imām (a.s.) replied, “By Allāh (s.w.t.)! They lie and commit profligacy. Rather Allāh (s.w.t.) named him al Al Ridhā, since he was a contented one of Allāh (s.w.t.) in His heavens, and a contented one of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and the A'immah (a.s.) after him in His earth”. I asked him (a.s.), “Weren't every one among your past forefathers (a.s.) contented ones of Allāh (s.w.t.), His Messenger (s.a.w.a.) and the A'immah (a.s.)?” He (a.s.) replied in the affirmative. Again I asked him, “Then why was your father (a.s.) named Al Ridhā among them?” Imām al Jawād (a.s.) replied, “Since his opponents among his enemies were (also) contented with him, similar to his approvers among his friends. And this was not the case with anyone among his forefathers (a.s.) and therefore he was named Al Ridhā among them”.

It is also related from Sulaymān bin Ḥafṣ, with reliable chain of transmitters that Imām Mūsā bin Ja`far (a.s.) named his son `Alī as Al Ridhā and would say, “My son Al Ridhā called me”, and “I told my son Al Ridhā”, and “My son Al Ridhā told me”. When he (Imām al Kāẓim) addressed him, he would say, “O Abal Ḥasan”!

His father was Imām Mūsā bin Ja`far (al Kāẓim), while his mother was a slave-girl. She possessed several names, such as Tuktam, Najmah, Arwā, Sakan, Samānah and Ummul Banīn. It is also stated that her names were Khayzarān, Ṣaqr and Shaqrā'.

Ibn Bābawayh (al Qummī) relates through his reliable chain of transmitters from `Alī bin Maytham that Ḥamīdah, the sanctified one, the mother of Abul Ḥasan Mūsā (al Kāẓim), who was from among the notable non-`Arabs, bought a maid,

who was a midwife named Tuktam. She was among the most excellent among women with regards to her intelligence, her Religion and her devotedness towards her mistress Ḥamīdah. She honoured her mistress to such an extent that she never sat in her presence from the time she bought her.

Ḥamīdah once told her son Mūsā (al Kāẓim), "O my son! Verily Tuktam is a maid, while I have never seen a maid excellent than her. I have no doubt that Allāh (s.w.t.) shall purify her progeny, if she ever possesses it. I gift her to you and recommend you to be fair to her". When she bore him (Imām al Kāẓim) Al Ridhā (a.s.), she was named Al Ṭāhirah (the pure).

It is said that Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) consumed more milk and was a perfect creation. She (Tuktam) said, "Let a wet nurse assist me in feeding him". She was questioned whether her milk had lessened, to which she replied, "I shall not speak a lie. By Allāh (s.w.t.), it has not lessened, however, I am accustomed to supplications and prayers and from the day the child is born, they have become less (due to time in feeding him)".

It is also related through reliable chain of transmitters that when Ḥamīdah, the mother of Mūsā (al Kāẓim), bought Najmah, the mother of Al Ridhā (a.s.), she saw the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) in a dream, telling her, "O Ḥamīdah! Gift Najmah to your son Mūsā (al Kāẓim), for a best among the inhabitants of the earth shall be born to him through her". Therefore she gifted her to him, while Najmah was a virgin when Ḥamīdah bought her.

It is also related through reliable chain of transmitters from Hishām, that once Abul Ḥasan al Awwal (Imām al Kāẓim) asked me, "Do you know if someone from Morocco (al Magrib) has arrived?" I replied in the negative and he (a.s.) said, "Yes, rather a man has arrived. Then come along with me to him". Saying this, he (a.s.) mounted and I too mounted until we reached a Moroccan man who had brought slaves along with him. Imām (a.s.) told him to show the slaves and he showed us nine slave-girls, while Imām (a.s.) said for each one of them, "I do not need her". Imām (a.s.) again told him to show her more and he said that he did not possess anyone else. When Imām (a.s.) told him to show them more, he said, "No, by Allāh (s.w.t.), I do not have anyone more except an ill slave-girl". Imām (a.s.) told him, "Why do you not show her to us?" He refused and Imām (a.s.) returned back.

The next day Imām (a.s.) told me to go to the man and ask him for what price he

desired to sell her. And if he told me such and such amount, I should tell him that I had bought her. The next day I came to the man and he asked me, "What do you want? I shall not lessen the price from such and such amount". I replied, "I have taken her, while the amount is yours". Then man said, "Then she is yours. However, tell me who the man was along with you yesterday?" I replied that he belonged to the Banī Hāshim. He again asked me who among the Banī Hāshim and I replied, "Among their notables". Hearing this, the man said, "In that case I desire more from him". I replied that I did not have more than that, to which the man said that I shall inform you regarding this slave-girl. I bought her from a remote part of Morocco. I met a woman from among the 'people of the Book' and she asked me, "Why is this slave-girl with you?" I replied that I had bought her for myself. Hearing this, she said, "It is not possible that this maid be with someone similar to you. Rather this slave-girl should be for a best one among the inhabitants of the earth. She shall not be with him, except that she shall bear him a son, to whom the east of the earth and its west shall obey". The narrator says that I bought her from him and not much time passed, until she bore him `Alī (al Ridhā).

It is quoted in Al Durrul Naẓīm (of Jamāluddīn Yūsuf bin Ḥātim al Shāmī) from Ithbātul Waṣīyyah (of Al Mas`ūdī) from Abī Hārūn that when Imām al Kāzim (a.s.) bought her, i.e. Tuktam, he (a.s.) said, "By Allāh (s.w.t.)! I did not buy this slave-girl, except by the command of Allāh (s.w.t.) and His Revelation". When he (a.s.) was questioned regarding it, he (a.s.) replied, "When I was asleep, my father (a.s.) and grandfather (a.s.) came up to me with a silken cloth and showed it to me. It was a shirt containing the picture of this slave-girl. They said, 'O Mūsā! There shall emerge from this maid a best one among the inhabitants of the earth after you'. Then they (a.s.) commanded me that I should name him `Alī (a.s.) upon his (a.s.)'s birth. Then they (a.s.) said, 'Verily Allāh (s.w.t.) shall manifest justice and clemency through his medium. Then glad tidings to the one who acknowledges him and woe upon him who bears enmity towards him, denies him and opposes him'".

Shaikh al Ṣadūq relates through his reliable chain of transmitters from Najmah, the mother of Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) that when I bore my son `Alī (al Ridhā), I did not feel the heaviness of pregnancy. I would hear the voice of glorification, praise and Tahlīl (Lā Ilāha illallāh) from my womb while asleep, due to which I was frightened and alarmed. However, when I woke up, I would not hear anything. When he (a.s.) arrived into this world, he placed his hands upon the earth, raised

his head towards the heavens and moved his lips as if pronouncing anything. Just then, Mūsā bin Ja`far (a.s.) entered therein and told me, "Congratulations to you due to the honor from your Allāh (s.w.t.), O Najmah"! Then I handed him (a.s.) over to him (a.s.) wrapped in a white cloth and he recited the Aḍān in his right ear and Iqāmah in his left ear. He (a.s.) called for the water of Euphrates (Furāt), gave some to the child and returned him back to me, saying, "Take him, for he is Allāh (s.w.t.)'s remaining one upon His earth".

Ibn Bābawayh (al Qummī) relates through his reliable chain of transmitters from Muḥammad bin Ziyād that when Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) was born, I heard Abul Ḥasan Mūsā bin Ja`far (a.s.) say, "Verily this son of mine was born circumcised, in a pure and purified state. There is none among the A`immah (a.s.) except that they are born circumcised, in a pure and purified state. However, we shall place the mousse upon him to follow the customs (Sunnah) and in imitation of Ibrāhīm al Ḥanīf (a.s.)".

Imām al Ridhā (a.s.)'s ring was engraved with the words, "Mā Shā` Allāh, wa lā Quwwata illā Billāh (What Allāh wills, there is no power except with Allāh)". According to another report, these words were engraved upon it, "Ḥasbiyallāh (Allāh is Sufficient for me)".

We (the Author) say that there is no contradiction between the above two reports, since Imām (a.s.) possessed two rings, one his own and second of his father (a.s.), passed on to him. When Mūsā bin `Abdul Raḥmān questioned Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) regarding the engrave upon his (a.s.)'s ring and that of his father (a.s.), he (a.s.) replied, "My ring is engraved with the words Mā Shā` Allāh, wa lā Quwwata illā Billāh (What Allāh wills, there is no power except with Allāh) and my father's ring with Ḥasbiyallāh (Allāh is Sufficient for me). And this is the one that I am wearing".

## **2. Some of the virtues, glories and noble character of Imām al Ridhā (a.s.)**

It is not concealed that the excellences and virtues of Imām Abul Ḥasan `Alī bin Mūsā al Ridhā (a.s.) are beyond computation due to their abundance and diversity. In reality it is impossible to compute his (a.s.)'s excellences similar to the stars. Abū Nawās rightly said in his verses in the presence of Hārūn, as quoted in Al Manāqib (of Ibn Shahr Āshūb; or in the presence of Ma'mūn, as quoted in other books, "It was told to me that you are a unique one among all people, in the knowledge of others and in reciting poetry in an extempore manner; you give such an order to the beauty of words, that it turns into a pearl in the hands of the one who reaps it; then why did you abandon praising the son of Mūsā, and the characteristics that gathered in him; I told him that I am incapable to praise such an Imām, whose father's servant was Jibra'īl".

However, we quote some of them here for the sake of gaining abundance and prosperity, while these, as compared to his other excellences, are similar to a drop in comparison to the vast ocean.

First, Shaikh al Ṭabarsī relates from Abul Ṣalt al Harawī who says that I did not find a greater Scholar than `Alī bin Mūsā al Ridhā (a.s.), and I did not find a scholar except that he bore witness upon him (a.s.) (his knowledge), similar to my own witness. Ma'mūn gathered the scholars of religions, jurists of the Sharī`ah and scholastics in his court numerous times, while he (a.s.) prevailed upon them all, until none was left among them except that he confessed his erudition and acknowledged his own deficiency. I heard `Alī bin Mūsā al Ridhā (a.s.) say, "I would sit in the Mausoleum (of the Messenger of Allāh), while there were numerous scholars in Madīnah. And whenever anyone among them faced any difficulty in any issue, they would unanimously direct to me and send me their obscure issues and I would reply to them".

Abul Ṣalt relates that Muḥammad bin Ishāq bin Mūsā (al Kāzīm) bin Ja`far (al Ṣādiq) related to me from his father (Ishāq) that my father Mūsā bin Ja`far (al Kāzīm) (a.s.) would tell his children, "This is your brother `Alī bin Mūsā al Ridhā (a.s.), the Scholar of Āl Muḥammad (a.s.). Then question him regarding your Religion and memorize what he tells you, since I heard my father Ja`far bin Muḥammad (al Ṣādiq) tell me several times: The Scholar (`Ālim) of Āl Muḥammad

(a.s.) shall emerge from your loins, I wish I could meet him, he shall be named `Alī upon the name Amīrul Mu`minīn (a.s.)”.

Second, Shaikh al Ṣadūq relates from Ibrāhīm bin al `Abbās that I neither saw Abul Ḥasan al Ridhā (a.s.) hurting anyone through his speech, nor did I see him interrupting anyone’s speech until he completed it. He never rejected anyone’s wish, if he was capable of fulfilling it. He neither ever extended his legs towards anyone seated in his presence, nor reclined against a pillow. I never heard him abusing anyone among his attendants and slaves. Never did I see him spitting or guffawing, however his smile was his laughter. When he was alone and food was served for him, he would invite all his attendants to sit at his napery, even his guards and stablemen, and eat along with them. It was his (a.s.)’s practice to sleep less at night and would remain awake from the first part until dawn (in worship). He (a.s.) fasted abundantly, while he (a.s.) never abandoned fasting on three days every month, first Thursday, last Thursday and middle Wednesday. He (a.s.) would say, “Fasts on these days are (equal to) an era”. It is said that he (a.s.) was renowned for his abundant goodness and alms in secrecy, most of them in the darkness of the night. Then if someone claims to have seen his (a.s.)’s similarity in excellences, do not believe him.

Muḥammad bin Abī `Ibād relates that during the summers Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) would sit on a mat and during winters he (a.s.) would sit upon a sackcloth. His (a.s.)’s dress would be of thick cloth, however when he would come out among people, he would adorn himself for them.

Third, the honourable Shaikh Aḥmad bin Muḥammad al Barqī relates from his father, who relates from Mu`ammar bin Khallād that whenever Abul Ḥasan al Ridhā (a.s.) would sit to eat, a plate would be placed near his napery. He (a.s.) would take the best of dishes given to him, place them in the plate and send it for the destitute. Then he (a.s.) would recite this verse, **“But he strove not unto (crossing over) the ascent steep”**.<sup>1</sup> The summary of this blessed verse and those following it, is that the ‘people of the right hand (Aṣḥāb al Maymanah)’ and the inhabitants of Paradise enter into an ascent steep, that is opposition to one’s passionate self. While that ascent steep **is the freeing a slave or a captive, or feeding in the day of hunger, to an orphan, being near of kin, or to the**

<sup>1</sup> Holy Qur’ān, Sūratul Balad: 11



**poor one lying in the dust.**<sup>1</sup> Then Imām (a.s.) would say, “Allāh (s.w.t.) knew that every person was not capable of manumitting slaves, therefore He (s.w.t.) offered them a path to enter Paradise through feeding (the above ones)”.

Fourth, Shaikh al Ṣadūq relates in his `Uyūn Akhbār al Ridhā (a.s.) from Al Ḥākim Abī `Alī al Bayhaqī from Muḥammad bin Yaḥyā (bin `Abdullāh bin `Abbās) al Ṣūlī that my grandmother (father’s mother) Gadar related to me that I was bought along with some slave-girls from Kūfah, while I was born therein. We were taken to Ma’mūn, where we spent a luxurious life of food, drink, perfumes and numerous dīnār. Then Ma’mūn gifted me to Al Ridhā (a.s.), and when I moved there, I lost all those blessings. A woman was appointed to wake us at night for Prayers and this was the severest thing upon us. I would always wish to leave his (a.s.)’s house until I was gifted to your grandfather `Abdullāh bin `Abbās. When I resided in his house, it was as if I entered Paradise.

Al Ṣūlī further says that I did not see a woman more perfect in intelligence and more generous than my grandmother (Gadar). She passed away in the year two hundred and seventy Hijrah at an age of around hundred years. She was questioned several times regarding Al Ridhā (a.s.) and she replied, “I do not remember anything regarding him (a.s.) except that he burnt Indian `ūd sticks and then used rose water and musk. Whenever he (a.s.) recited the dawn Prayers, he would do so at its initial time. Then he (a.s.) would fall into prostration (Sajdah) and not lift his head until the sun ascended. He (a.s.) would then arise and meet people or go for a ride. No one could raise their voice in his (a.s.)’s house, no matter who he was. While he (a.s.) spoke to people slowly and gently”. He further says that my grandfather `Abdullāh would seek abundance through my grandmother and had promised her on the same day when she was gifted to him, that she would stand manumitted when he died. One day his maternal uncle Al `Abbās bin al Aḥnaf al Ḥanafī, who was a poet, came to meet him and liked her. He told my grandfather, “Give me this slave-girl”. He replied that she was set to be manumitted after his death. Hearing this, `Abbās bin al Aḥnaf recited these verses, “O deceit, how nicely have they named you as deceit, the passage of time has wronged you and not done good to you (by naming you deceit)”.

It should be noted that it was often the practice of the `Arabs to name their slave-

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<sup>1</sup> Holy Qur’ān, Sūratul Balad: 13-16

girls Gadar or Gādirah, which means deceit or a deceitful one. This is the meaning of the verse, "O the one named as deceit and lack of fidelity, infidelity and deceit have been adorned; and certainly the passage of time has wronged you when it named you as deceit".

Fifth, it is related through the previous chain of transmitters from Abī Ḍakwān from Ibrāhīm bin al `Abbās that I did not find Al Ridhā (a.s.) being questioned regarding anything, except that he knew its answer. And I did not find anyone more knowledgeable than him from the initial days until his time and age. Ma'mūn would try him (a.s.) with all sorts of questions and he would reply to all of them. He cited all his words, replies and similitude from the Qur'ān. He would complete (reciting) it every three days and would say, "If I desire to complete reciting it in less than three days, I could do so. However, I do not pass by a verse (Āyah) from it, except that I ponder upon it, its purpose and its time of descent. Therefore I complete it in three days".

Sixth, it is related in the above book (`Uyūn Akhbār al Ridhā of Shaikh al Ṣadūq) from Ibrāhīm al Ḥasanī that once Ma'mūn sent a slave-girl for Abul Ḥasan al Ridhā (a.s.). When she saw his white hair, she shuddered. When Imām (a.s.) perceived her abhorrence, he returned her back to Ma'mūn with verses, "Certainly the greying of hair and the onset of old age has given me the news of my impending death, the wise one gains advice from old age; then surely youth has turned its back as it has reached its limit, I do not think it will ever come back to me; it is near that I cry upon my lost youth and wail upon it for a long time, and beckon it to come back to me; maybe it will respond to me saying that the youth that is lost once never returns, and it is just my false self that is giving me hopes; the greyness of my hair has startled the young and beautiful maidens, and one who stays for long shall surely become old; I can see fair skinned ladies distancing themselves from me, and I know that my old age has a role to play in their distancing away from me; even if my youth has passed away still it was dear to me, I also love my being old; I will accompany the old age with piety of Allāh, until soon death parts us away".

We (the Author) say that Shaikh al Niẓāmī has composed some verses in the same context, while is not out of place to quote here.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Thereafter the Esteemed Author quotes some verses in Fārsī of Shaikh Niẓāmī, which we forgo.

Seventh, Shaikh al Kulaynī relates from Al Yasa` bin Ḥamzah al Qummī that once I was seated in the presence of Abul Ḥasan al Ridhā (a.s.) and speaking to him, while a large crowd of people were gathered near him and questioning him regarding lawful and unlawful. Just then a tall man (from Khurāsān) entered his (a.s.)'s presence and said, "Peace be upon you O son of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.)! I am a man among your lovers, and that of your grandfathers (a.s.) and your ancestors (a.s.). I have returned from the Ḥajj, lost all my money and have nothing left to reach me to my hometown. Then if you wish, reach me to my town. Allāh (s.w.t.) has granted me blessings and when I reach my town, I shall give alms on your behalf for the amount that you give me, while I am in no need of alms".

Hearing this, Imām (a.s.) told him, "Sit down, may Allāh (s.w.t.) have Mercy upon you". Then he (a.s.) turned to the people and became engrossed in speaking to them until they dispersed away and none remained with him except the (Khurāsānī) man, Sulaymān al Ja`farī, Khaythamah and myself. Imām (a.s.) asked us, "Do you permit me to enter (into my room)?" Hearing this, Sulaymān replied, "May Allāh (s.w.t.) advance your affair"! He (a.s.) entered the room and remained therein for some time. Then he returned, shut the door, removed his hand from the upper part of the door and said, "Where is the Khurāsānī man?" The person replied that he was present there. Imām (a.s.) said, "Take these two hundred dīnār, help your provisions and expenses through it and gain abundance. There is no need to give alms on my behalf. Then leave now, that I may not see you and you may not see me". The man took the amount and left. Seeing this, Sulaymān questioned him (a.s.), "May I be ransom upon you! You bestowed him amply and had mercy upon him. Then why did you conceal your face from him?" Imām (a.s.) replied, "In fear of beholding the shame (upon his face) for asking me to fulfil his need. Did you not hear the Ḥadīth of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), that the one who conceals his favour is equal to seventy Ḥajj pilgrimages, while the one who announces evil (of others) is forsaken and who conceals it shall be forgiven. Did you not hear the statement of the former: Whenever I go to him for the fulfilment of any need, I return to my family in a way that my honour is maintained and I get a hundred things done from him".

We (the Author) say that Ibn Shahr Āshūb relates this incident in his Al Manāqib

and then says that once Imām (a.s.) donated all his wealth at Khurāsān on the day of `Arafah. Seeing this, Fadhl bin Sahl said, "Verily this is a loss". Imām (a.s.) said, "Rather it is a gain. Do not consider it a loss if you wish reward and kindness through it".

Then know that seeking intercession (Tawassul) through Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) is beneficial for safety from the dangers of land and sea journey, while it is a means of gaining relief from grief, distress and loneliness. It corresponds to the statement of Imām al Ṣādiq (a.s.) referring to him (a.s.) as a relief of this nation and its succour. While we read in his (a.s.)'s salutations, "Peace be upon the aide of the aggrieved and due to whom the earth of Khurāsān became Khurāsān". In context of the meaning of Khurāsān, Al Ḥamawī writes in his Mu`jamul Buldān that Kharāsīm in the Fārsī language means a sun, while Asān means an original place for something. Therefore it means that, "Peace be upon the aide of the aggrieved and due to whom the earth of Khurāsān became an original place for the sun".

Eighth, Ibn Shahr Āshūb relates from Mūsā bin Sayyār that I was with Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) when we reached the walls of Ṭūs. Suddenly I heard sounds of wailing, proceeded towards it and saw a funeral. I saw my master (Imām al Ridhā) alight from his horse, proceed towards the bier and lift it up. Imām (a.s.) then attached himself to it, similar to a lamb that attaches itself to its mother. Then he (a.s.) turned to me and said, "O Mūsā bin Sayyār! The one who attends the funeral of a friend among our friends, he shall come out of his sins, similar to the day when his mother gave birth to him, without any sin". Then when the person was placed near his grave, I saw my master (a.s.) proceed further. He (a.s.) reached the body, placed his blessed hand upon his chest and said, "O so and so, son of so and so! Have glad tidings of Paradise. There is no fear for you from this moment". Hearing this, I asked, "May I be ransom upon you! Do you know the man? Since, by Allāh (s.w.t.), you never came to this place before". He (a.s.) told me, "O Mūsā bin Sayyār! Do you not know that every morning and evening we, the A`immah (a.s.), receive the deeds of our Shī`ah? Then if there is a deficit in their deeds, we ask Allāh (s.w.t.) to pardon them. And if we find goodness in them, we request reward from Allāh (for them)".

Ninth, Shaikh al Kulaynī relates from Sulaymān al Ja`farī that I accompanied Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) for a task. When I sought his permission to return back to my house, he (a.s.) told me, "Accompany me and stay with me tonight". I accompanied him

until he (a.s.) entered his house. He (a.s.) saw his attendants mixing earth for making stable, etc. and there was a black man with them who was not one of them. Seeing him, Imām (a.s.) asked them what the man was doing with them. They replied, "He assists us and we give him some amount". Imām (a.s.) again asked, "Then did you fix his wage with him?" They replied, "No, he is contented with whatever amount we give him". Hearing this, Imām (a.s.) was severely enraged and whipped them with his lash. Seeing this, I said, "May I be ransom upon you! Why do you trouble yourself?" Imām (a.s.) replied, "I have told them several times not to do this, i.e. not to employ anyone to work with them without fixing his wage. Then know, there is none who works for you without fixing any wage, and when you give him three times more than his wage, he shall presume that you have given him less. However, if you fix his wage and give it to him, he shall praise you in fulfilling your promise. Then if you increase even one grain for him, he shall know and opine that you have given him more".

Tenth, it is related from Yāsir al Khādim that when Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) would be unoccupied, he would gather all his attendants, big or small, speak to them, be affable towards them and gain affability from them. And whenever he (a.s.) sat to eat, he (a.s.) would not forsake any big or small, even the stable-man and barber, to sit with him and eat. Abul Ḥasan (al Ridhā) had ordered, saying, "If I come to you while you are eating, do not arise until you complete". And if he (a.s.) called someone among us and would be informed that he is eating, he (a.s.) would say, "Leave him until he completes eating".

Eleventh, Shaikh al Kulaynī relates from an inhabitant of Balkh, that I accompanied Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) during his journey to Khurāsān. One day he (a.s.) called food to be served and gathered all his slaves, blacks etc. to eat with him. Seeing this, I said, "May I be ransom upon you! It would be better if you arranged a separate napery for them". Hearing this, Imām (a.s.) said, "Be silent! Verily the Lord (s.w.t.) is one, mother is one, and father is one; while there is reward against deeds".

We (the Author) say he (a.s.) dealt with the destitute and the subjects similarly. However, once Fadhl bin Sahl entered Imām (a.s.)'s presence while he was eating. He (a.s.) turned to him after some time and asked him what he desired. Fadhl replied, "My master! This is the statement from the commander (Ma'mūn) written down for me", saying this he showed him a statement of gift bestowed upon him by Ma'mūn in which he was gifted amount, estates, powers, etc. that he had

desired. Then he said, "You are more worthy to bestow us similar to what the commander has bestowed, since you are an heir apparent upon the Muslims". Imām (a.s.) told him to read it for him, while it was a statement written upon a large animal skin. Fadhl stood reading it and when he completed, Imām (a.s.) told him, "O Fadhl! You shall receive the same from us until you fear Allāh (s.w.t.)". By this statement, Imām (a.s.) unravelled whatever Fadhl had thought for himself (that he was endeared by Imām). What is intended is that Imām (a.s.) did not invite him sit down (to eat with him) until he left.

Twelfth, Shaikh al Ṣadūq relates from Rajā' bin Abil Dhaḥḥāk that Ma'mūn dispatched me to accompany `Alī bin Mūsā al Ridhā (a.s.) from Madīnah (to Marw). He commanded me to take him from the route of Baṣrah, Ahwāz and Fars and not from the route of Qum. Ma'mūn ordered me to personally take care of him (a.s.) day and night until I brought him to his presence. I accompanied him (a.s.) from Madīnah to Marw, and by Allāh (s.w.t.), I did not see any person more pious towards Allāh (s.w.t.) than him. I neither found any other person remembering Allāh (s.w.t.) more at all times than him, nor any person more fearful of Allāh (s.w.t.) than him. It was his daily practice that he (a.s.) would offer the dawn Prayers and after completing the Salām, he would sit upon his Prayer-mat, reciting Tasbīḥ (Sub-ḥān Allāh), Taḥmīd (Al Ḥamdu lillāh), Takbīr (Allāhu Akbar), Tahlīl (Lā Ilāha illallāh) and sending salutations upon Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.) and his progeny (a.s.), until the sun arose. Then he (a.s.) would fall into a lengthy prostration (a.s.) until the day advanced further. He (a.s.) would then raise his head and speak to the people and guide them until Zawāl. Then he (a.s.) would renew his ablutions (Wudhū`) and sit upon his Prayer-mat.

When the time of Zawāl would come, he (a.s.) would recite six units (Rak`ah) of (Nawāfil, supererogatory) Prayers. In the first unit, after Sūratul Ḥamd, he would recite Sūratul Kāfirūn, and in the second unit Sūratul Ḥamd followed by Sūratul Tawḥīd. Then he (a.s.) would recite (the remaining) four units and in each unit he would recite Sūratul Tawḥīd after Sūratul Ḥamd. After each two units he (a.s.) would recite the Salām (at its end) and Qunūt in each second unit after the Sūrah and before the bowing (Rukū`). Thereafter Imām (a.s.) would give the Azān (call for Ḍuhr Prayers), followed by (remaining) two units (of Nawāfil, supererogatory) Prayers.<sup>1</sup> On its completion, he (a.s.) would arise and recite the Ḍuhr Prayers. After

<sup>1</sup> The Nawāfil (supererogatory) recommended Prayers for Ḍuhr consists of total eight units

reciting the Salām, he would recite Tasbīḥ (Sub-ḥān Allāh), Taḥmīd (Al Ḥamdu lillāh), Takbīr (Allāhu Akbar) and Tahlīl (Lā Ilāha illallāh) until Allāh (s.w.t.) desired. He (a.s.) would then fall into prostration of thanksgiving (Sajdah al Shukr) and repeat Shukran Lillāh (Thanks is due to Allāh) a hundred times. After raising his blessed head from prostration, Imām (a.s.) would recite six units (Rak`ah) of (Nawāfil, supererogatory) `Aṣr Prayers, in each unit Sūratul Ḥamd followed by Sūratul Tawḥīd. After each two units he (a.s.) would recite the Salām (at its end) and Qunūt in each second unit after the Sūrah and before the bowing (Rukū` ). Again he (a.s.) would give the Aẓān (call for Ṣuḥr Prayers), followed by (remaining) two units (of Nawāfil, supererogatory) Prayers, followed by Qunūt in the second unit.<sup>1</sup> After reciting the Salām, he (a.s.) would arise and recite the `Aṣr Prayers. After reciting the Salām, he would sit upon his Prayer-mat and recite Tasbīḥ (Sub-ḥān Allāh), Taḥmīd (Al Ḥamdu lillāh), Takbīr (Allāhu Akbar) and Tahlīl (Lā Ilāha illallāh) until Allāh (s.w.t.) desired. Then He (a.s.) would fall into prostration of thanksgiving (Sajdah al Shukr) and repeat Ḥamdan Lillāh (Praise is due to Allāh) a hundred times.

After sunset, Imām (a.s.) would perform ablutions (Wudhū` ) and recite the Magrib Prayers after Aḍān and Iqāmah. He would recite the Qunūt after the Sūrah and before the bowing (Rukū` ). Then he (a.s.) would sit upon his Prayer-mat recite Tasbīḥ (Sub-ḥān Allāh), Taḥmīd (Al Ḥamdu lillāh), Takbīr (Allāhu Akbar) and Tahlīl (Lā Ilāha illallāh) until Allāh (s.w.t.) desired. He (a.s.) would then fall into prostration of thanksgiving (Sajdah al Shukr). Then he (a.s.) would raise his head from prostration and without talking to anyone, he (a.s.) would stand and recite four units (Rak`ah) (of Nawāfil Magrib Prayers) with Salām and Qunūt in each second unit. In the first unit, he (a.s.) would recite Sūratul Ḥamd, followed by Sūratul Kāfirūn; and in the second Rak`at, Sūratul Ḥamd, followed by Sūratul Tawḥīd. In the remaining two units (Rak`ah), he (a.s.) would recite Sūratul Ḥamd, followed by Sūratul Tawḥīd.<sup>2</sup> After completing the Prayers, he would sit to recite the supplications after it and thereafter break his fast. Imām (a.s.) would then wait until two-thirds of the night passed away. Then he (a.s.) would arise and

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(Rak`ah) to be recited before the Ṣuḥr Prayers. (translator)

<sup>1</sup> The total number of units of recommended Nawāfil (supererogatory prayers) of `Aṣr consists of eight units (Rak`ah) to be recited before the `Aṣr Prayers. (translator)

<sup>2</sup> Totalling four units (Rak`ah) of recommended Nawāfil (supererogatory prayers) of Magrib, to be recited after it. (translator)

recite the `Ishā Prayers, reciting Qunūt in each second unit after the Sūrah and before the bowing (Rukū` ). After completing, he (a.s.) would sit upon his Prayer-mat and remember Allāh (s.w.t.) and recite Tasbīḥ (Sub-ḥān Allāh), Taḥmīd (Al Ḥamdu lillāh), Takbīr (Allāhu Akbar) and Tahlīl (Lā Ilāha illallāh) until Allāh (s.w.t.) desired. After completing the supplications following the Prayers, he (a.s.) would fall into prostration and then go to his bed (to relax).<sup>1</sup>

When two thirds of the night would end, Imām (a.s.) would alight from his bed and recite Tasbīḥ (Sub-ḥān Allāh), Taḥmīd (Al Ḥamdu lillāh), Takbīr (Allāhu Akbar), Tahlīl (Lā Ilāha illallāh) and Istigfār (Astagfirullāh). Then he (a.s.) would do Miswāk, perform ablutions (Wudhū` ) and stand up to recite eight units (Rak` ah) of nightly Prayers (Ṣalātul Layl), reciting Salām after every two units (Rak` ah). In the first two units (Rak` ah) of these eight units (Rak` ah), he would recite Sūratul Ḥamd, followed by Sūratul Tawḥīd thirty times. Thereafter he (a.s.) would recite four units (Rak` ah) of Ja` far al Ṭayyār Prayers (Ṣalāh Ja` far al Ṭayyār), reciting Salām at the end of each two and Qunūt in each second unit (Rak` ah). He (a.s.) would include this (Ṣalāh Ja` far al Ṭayyār) with the nightly Prayers. Then he (a.s.) would recite the remaining two units (Rak` ah) of nightly Prayers.<sup>2</sup> In the first unit (Rak` ah), he (a.s.) would recite Sūratul Ḥamd followed by Sūratul Mulk, and in the second Sūratul Ḥamd followed by Sūratul Dahr. After this, he (a.s.) would arise and recite two units (Rak` ah) Ṣalātul Shaf` a, in each Sūratul Ḥamd followed by Sūratul Tawḥīd three times and thereafter Qunūt in the second unit after the Sūrah and before the bowing (Rukū` ). After completing the Salām, he (a.s.) would stand to recite one unit (Rak` ah) of Witr Prayers in which he would recite Sūratul Ḥamd, followed by Sūratul Tawḥīd three times, Sūratul Falak once and Sūratul Nās once. He (a.s.) would then recite the Qunūt after the Sūrah and before bowing (Rukū` ).

Imām (a.s.) would recite the following supplication (Du` ā) in the Qunūt (of Witr Prayers), "Allāhumma Ṣalli `Alā Muḥammadin wa `Āli Muḥammad. Allāhumma Ihdinā fī man Hadayt, wa `Āfinā fī man `Āfayt, wa Tawallanā fī man Tawallayt, wa Barik lanā fī mā A` aṭayt, wa Qinā Sharra mā Qadhayt, fa Innaka Taqdhī wa lā Yaqdhā `Alayk, Innahū lā Yaḍillu man Wālayt, wa lā Ya` izzu man `Ādayt,

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the narrator has forgotten to say that after completing the `Ishā' Prayers, Imām (a.s.) would recite the recommended Nawāfil (supererogatory prayers) of `Ishā', one unit (Rak` ah) standing or two units sitting. (translator)

<sup>2</sup> Totally eight units, including four units of Ṣalāh Ja` far al Ṭayyār. (translator)



Tabārakta Rabbanā wa Ta`ālayt (O Allāh! Send Your Blessings upon Muḥammad and the Progeny of Muḥammad. O Allāh! Guide us among those whom You guide, grant us health among those whom You grant health, and consider us among those whom You consider, grant us abundance in what You have bestowed us, and protect us from the evil of what You have ordained; for You decree and none decrees upon You, none is abased whom You befriend. O our Lord, Who is above all things Sacred and Exalted)". Thereafter he (a.s.) would repeat seventy times, "Astagfirullāh wa As'aluhul Tawbah (I seek forgiveness of Allāh and request His pardon)". After completing the Prayers, he (a.s.) would sit to recite supplications until Allāh (s.w.t.) desired.

When it neared dawn, he (a.s.) would arise and recite two units (of Nawāfil Fajr) Prayers, in the first unit (Rak`ah) Sūratul Ḥamd followed by Sūratul Kāfirūn, and second Sūratul Ḥamd followed by Sūratul Tawḥīd. Thereafter he (a.s.) would say the Aḍān and recite two units (Rak`ah) Fajr Prayers. After completing the Prayers, he (a.s.) would recite supplications until sunrise. Then he (a.s.) would perform two prostrations (Sajdah) of thanksgiving until the day advanced.

In all his obligatory (Wājib) Prayers, Imām (a.s.) would recite Sūratul Ḥamd in the first unit (Rak`ah) followed by Sūratul Qadr, and in the second unit, Sūratul Ḥamd followed by Sūratul Tawḥīd, except on Fridays. In Fajr, Ṣuḥr and `Aṣr Prayers (on that day), he would recite in the first unit (Rak`ah) Sūratul Ḥamd followed by Sūratul Jum`ah, and in the second unit, Sūratul Ḥamd followed by Sūratul Munāfiqūn. In the `Ishā' Prayers on Fridays, he (a.s.) would recite Sūratul Ḥamd in the first unit (Rak`ah) followed by Sūratul Jum`ah, and in the second unit (Rak`ah) Sūratul Ḥamd followed by Sūratul A`alā.

In his Fajr Prayers on Mondays and Thursdays, he would recite Sūratul Ḥamd in the first unit (Rak`ah) followed by Sūratul Dahr, and in the second unit (Rak`ah) Sūratul Ḥamd followed by Sūratul Gāshiyah. He (a.s.) would recite of Magrib, `Ishā', Ṣalātul Layl, Shaf`a, Witr and Fajr Prayers in a loud voice. While he (a.s.) would recite the Ṣuḥr and `Aṣr Prayers silently.

In the last two units (Rak`ah) of a four unit (Rak`ah) Prayers, he would say thrice, "Sub-ḥānallāhi wal Ḥamdu lillāhi wa Lā Ilāha illallāhu wallāhu Akbar (Glory be to Allāh, and all Praise be to Allāh, and there is no Deity except Allāh, and Allāh is the greatest)".

His (a.s.)'s Qunūt in all his Prayers would be, "Rabbigfir Warḥam wa Tajāwaz `ammā Ta`lam, Innaka Antal A`azzul Ajallul Akram [O Allāh forgive (me), and have Mercy (upon me), and overlook (my faults) that You know. Verily You are the Most Honorable, the Most Exalted, the Most Magnanimous]".

Whenever he (a.s.) stayed for ten (or more) days in a town, he would fast and when night advanced he would start his Prayers before breaking his fast. While on a journey, he (a.s.) would recite his obligatory (Qaṣr) Prayers two-two units (Rak`ah) each, except Magrib that would be three Rak`ah. He (a.s.) would not forsake the (Magrib) Nāfilah, Ṣalātul Layl, Shaf`a, Witr and Fajr Prayers during journey or at home. While during journey, he (a.s.) would not recite the day Nawāfil. After every shortened (Qaṣr) Prayers,<sup>1</sup> he (a.s.) would repeat thirty times, "Sub-ḥānallāhi wal Ḥamdu lillāhi wa Lā Ilāha illallāhu wallāhu Akbar (Glory be to Allāh, and all Praise be to Allāh, and there is no Deity except Allāh, and Allāh is the greatest)". He (a.s.) would say, "This is for completing the (shortened) Prayers".

I never saw Imām (a.s.) reciting Ṣalātul Dhuḥā,<sup>2</sup> whether during journey or at home, while he (a.s.) never fasted during journey.

Imām (a.s.) always sent salutations upon Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.) and his progeny (a.s.) before commencing a supplication (Du`ā'), and recited it abundantly during Prayers or otherwise. He (a.s.) would recite the Qur`ān abundantly while lying on his bed at night, and whenever he reached a verse (Āyah) referring to Paradise or hell, he (a.s.) would weep and request Allāh (s.w.t.) for Paradise and seek His

<sup>1</sup> Two units (Rak`ah) shortened Prayers each of Ṣuḥr, `Aṣr and `Ishā' (translator)

<sup>2</sup> Ṣalātul Dhuḥā or Ṣalātul Awwābīn, one of the recommended (Sunnah) daily Prayers of the Ahlul Sunnah. Its time starts from after sunrise until Zawāl and consists of minimum two units (Rak`ah) and maximum twelve units (Rak`ah). These Prayers are one of the several innovations (Bid`ah) by the Ahlul Sunnah and has no place in Islām, neither the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) nor any of the Chaste A`immah (a.s.) have recommended its recitation. Several Ahlul Sunnah books also point out that it is among the later innovations. Muwarriq relates that I asked (`Abdullāh) Ibn `Umar, "Do you recite al Dhuḥā?" He replied, "No". Then I asked, "What about `Umar?" He replied in the negative. Then I asked him about Abū Bakr and he replied in the negative. Lastly I asked him, "And what about the Prophet (s.a.w.a.)?" He replied, "I do not presume he did so". (Al Bukhārī, "Al Ṣaḥīḥ") Being a True Vicegerent and Successor of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) refused to follow this innovation that crept up after his (s.a.w.a.) death. (translator)

refuge from hell.

Imām (a.s.) would recite “Bismillāh” in a loud voice in all Prayers during day and night. When reciting Sūratul Tawhīd, he (a.s.) would silently say, “Allāhu Aḥad (Allāh is Only One)”, and on its completion he (a.s.) would say, “Kaḍālikallāhu Rabbunā (Likewise is our Lord)” three times. When reciting Sūratul Kāfirūn, he would silently recite to himself, “Yā Ayyuhal Kāfirūn (O those who disbelieve)” and upon its completion, he (a.s.) would say, “Rabbīyallāh wa Dīnī al Islām (Allāh is my Sustainer and Islām is my Religion)” thrice. Whenever he recited Sūratul Tīn, he (a.s.) would say upon its completion, “Balā. Wa Anā Ḍālika minal Shāhidīn (Indeed. And I am among those who bear witness)”. Upon completing reciting Sūratul Qiyāmah, he (a.s.) would say, “Sub-ḥānakallāhumma balā (Glory be to You, indeed)”.

While reciting Sūratul Jum`ah, when he reached the words, **“Qul mā `Indallāhi Khayrun minal Lawhi wa minal Tijārah (Say You [O Our Prophet]! What is with Allāh is better than sport and [better] than merchandise)”**,<sup>1</sup> he (a.s.) would say “Lillaḍīnal Taqaw (For those who fear [Allāh]), and then say, **“Wallāhu Khayrun Rāziqīn (And Allāh is the Best of Sustainers)”**.<sup>2</sup> After completing Sūratul Fātiḥah, he (a.s.) would say, “Alḥamdulillāhi Rabbil `Ālamīn (All Praise be to the Lord of the worlds)”. When reciting Sūratul A`alā, he (a.s.) would silently say, “Sub-ḥān Rabbiyal A`alā (Glory be to my Lord, the Most High)”. Whenever he (a.s.) recited the words in the Qur`ān, **“Yā Ayyuhal Laḍīna Āmanū (O those who believe)”**, he (a.s.) would say, “Labbayka Allāhumma Labbayka (Here I am O Allāh [in response to Your call])” silently.

Imām (a.s.) would not enter a town, except that people would flock to him and seek his verdict in guidelines of their Religion. He (a.s.) would reply to them and relate abundant Aḥādīth to them from his father (a.s.), from this forefathers (a.s.), from `Alī (a.s.), from the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.).

The narrator (Rajā' bin Abil Dhaḥḥāk) says that when I entered the presence of Ma'mūn, he questioned me regarding Imām (a.s.)'s habits on the way and I related to him what I witnessed from him during his night and day, during his settling and departing. Hearing this, Ma'mūn said, “Certainly of son of Abil Dhaḥḥāk! He is the

<sup>1</sup> Holy Qur`ān, Sūratul Jum`ah: 11

<sup>2</sup> Holy Qur`ān, Sūratul Jum`ah: 11

best among the inhabitants of the earth, their most learned ones and the most devout ones. However, do not reveal to anyone what you witnessed from him, lest his excellence may manifest, except through my tongue. And we seek aid from Allāh (s.w.t.) that I intend to elevate him and extol him”.

`Allāmah (Muḥammad Bāqir) al Majlisī in his Biḥārul Anwār quotes a supplication (Du`ā) that Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) recited when Ma`mūn was enraged with him, while his rage cooled down. The supplication being, “Billāhi Astaftiḥu wa Billāhi Astanjiḥu, wa bi Muḥammad Ṣallallāhu `Alayhi wa `Alihi Atawajjahu. Allāhumma Sahhil lī Ḥuzūnata Amrī kullahū, wa Yassir lī Ṣu`ūbatuhū, Innaka Tamḥū Mā Tashā`u wa Tuthbit, wa `Indaka Ummul Kitāb. [I commence (my task) through Allāh, and I desire success through Allāh, and I turn to Him through (the intercession of) Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.). O Allāh! Make easier for me the grief of all my matter, and simplify for me its difficulty. You efface not whatever You please and You confirm and with You is the mother (basic source) of the Book]”. Amīrul Mu`minīn (a.s.) said that, “I never cared about anything, my sustenance never straitened upon me and I did not face any adversary, except that I recited it (the above supplication) and Allāh (s.w.t.) relieved my sorrow and my agony and I gained victory upon my enemy”.

Know that the glorification (Tasbīḥ) that Imām (a.s.) recited on the tenth and eleventh day of every month is, “Sub-ḥāna Khāliqil Nūri, Sub-ḥāna Khāliqil Ḍulmati, Sub-ḥāna Khāliqil Miyāhi, Sub-ḥāna Khāliqil Samāwāti, Sub-ḥāna Khāliqil Aradhīna, Sub-ḥāna Khāliqil Riyāhi wal Nabāti, Sub-ḥāna Khāliqil Ḥayāti wal Mawti, Sub-ḥāna Khāliqil Tharā wal Falawāti, Sub-ḥānallāhi wa bi Ḥamdihi (Glory be to the Creator of Light, Glory be to the Creator of darkness, Glory be to the Creator of waters, Glory be to the Creator of the heavens, Glory be to the Creator of the earth, Glory be to the Creator of the winds and vegetation, Glory be to the Creator of life and death, Glory be to the Creator of the surface of the earth and the barren lands. Glory be to Allāh and by His Praise.)”.

### 3. Miracles of Imām al Ridhā (a.s.)

We content ourselves to quote here some miracles of Imām `Alī al Ridhā (a.s.), first ten of them from the book `Uyūn `Akhhbār al Ridhā (a.s.) (of Shaikh al Ṣadūq).

First, Muḥammad bin Dāwūd relates that once I and my brother were in the presence of Imām `Alī al Ridhā (a.s.) when he was informed that (his paternal uncle) Muḥammad bin Ja`far (al Ṣādiq) was in his last moments. Hearing this, Abul Ḥasan (al Ridhā) proceeded and we too accompanied him and saw him dying. Ishāq bin Ja`far (al Ṣādiq), his son and a group from the family of Abī Ṭālib were weeping around him. Imām (a.s.) sat at his head, glanced at his face and then smiled. Seeing this, those present disliked this. Some of them said to one another, "Indeed he smiled gloatingly at his uncle". Thereafter Imām (a.s.) left to pray at the Masjid and we told him, "May we be ransom upon you! We heard things regarding you from them that they disliked it when you smiled". Hearing this, Imām (a.s.) said, "Certainly I was astonished upon the weeping of Ishāq, since by Allāh (s.w.t.), he will pass away before Muḥammad, and Muḥammad will weep upon him". The narrator says that after some time Muḥammad arose from his illness and Ishāq passed away.

It is also related from Yaḥyā bin Muḥammad bin Ja`far (al Ṣādiq) that once my father fell severely ill and Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) came to visit him. My uncle Ishāq (bin Ja`far al Ṣādiq) was seated there weeping and wailing abundantly upon him. Yaḥyā says that when Abul Ḥasan (al Ridhā) saw this, he turned to me and asked, "Why does your uncle weep?" I replied, "He fears upon his condition, as you see". Imām (a.s.) told me, "Do not aggrieve, very soon Ishāq shall pass away before your father". Yaḥyā says that after some time my father gained health and Ishāq passed away.

Second, Abul Qāsim `Alī bin Aḥmad bin `Abdullāh bin Aḥmad bin Abī `Abdullāh al Barqī relates from his father and `Alī bin Muḥammad Ibn Mājiluyā, from Aḥmad bin Abī `Abdullāh al Barqī, from his father, from Ḥusain bin Mūsā (al Kāẓim) bin Ja`far (al Ṣādiq) al `Alawī, that we, the youth of Banī Hāshim, were seated around Abul Ḥasan al Ridhā (a.s.), when Ja`far bin `Umar al `Alawī passed by us, while he had worn shabby clothes. We looked at one another and laughed upon his appearance. Seeing this, Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) told us, "Very soon you shall see him possessing abundant wealth and a great number of followers". About one month later, he was appointed the governor of Madīnah and his condition

improved. He would pass by us surrounded by attendants and slaves. While he was Ja`far bin `Umar bin Ḥasan bin `Alī bin `Umar bin `Alī (Zainul `Ābidīn) bin (Imām) al Ḥusain bin (Amīrul Mu`minīn) `Alī bin Abī Ṭālib.

Third, it is related from Abī Ḥabīb al Bannājī (or Nabbājī) that once I saw the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) in a dream. I saw him (s.a.w.a.) go to Bannāj (or Nabbāj) and enter the Masjid in which the pilgrims of Ḥajj enter every year. It is as if I went to him (s.a.w.a.), saluted him and stood near him. I saw a tray of palm-leaves of Madīnah in front of him (s.a.w.a.) containing Ṣayḥānī dates. It is as if he (s.a.w.a.) took a bunch of dates and handed them over to me, while I counted them and they numbered eighteen. When I arose from the sleep, I interpreted that I would remain alive for a year upon each date (i.e. eighteen years).

After a passage of twenty days, when I was on a land while the farmers were cultivating it, a person arrived and informed me of the arrival of Abul Ḥasan al Ridhā (a.s.) to Madīnah and his entering that (very) Masjid. I saw people hastening to him (a.s.), while I too proceeded towards him. I saw him (a.s.) seated at the same spot where I had seen the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) seated, while a mat was spread below him, similar to him (s.a.w.a.). Similarly, I saw a tray of palm-leaves, containing Ṣayḥānī dates, placed in front of him (a.s.). I saluted him (a.s.) and he replied to me and told me to step forward. When I did so, he (a.s.) handed me a bunch of those dates. I counted them and found them to be the same as given to me by the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.). Then I told him (a.s.), "Give me more from it O son of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.)". Imām (a.s.) replied, "If the Messenger of Allāh (s.w.t.) had increased them for you, I too would have done so".

Fourth, Abū Ḥāmid Aḥmad bin `Alī bin al Ḥusain al Tha`ālābī relates from Abī `Abdullāh bin `Abdul Raḥmān, renowned as Al Ṣafwānī that a caravan left from Khurāsān to Kirmān. Bandits blocked their path and caught a man from among them who was thought to possess abundant wealth. He remained with them for some time and they tortured him so that he could give them something as ransom. They made him stand in ice and filled his mouth with it. A woman from among them pitied him and released him until he fled away. His mouth and tongue were severely affected and he could not speak. He then went to Khurāsān and heard that `Alī bin Mūsā al Ridhā (a.s.) was at Naysābūr. He saw someone telling him in

a dream, "Verily the son of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) has come to Khurāsān. Then question him (a.s.) regarding your remedy, perhaps he might suggest a medicine that could cure you".

He says that I saw (in the dream) as if I went to him (a.s.) and complained to him all that had befallen me and questioned him regarding my cure. Hearing this, he (a.s.) said, "Take cumin, thyme and salt and grind them. Then place it in your mouth twice or thrice, and you shall gain cure". The man awoke; however, he did not pay attention to what he saw in a dream. He did not think about it until he reached the gate of Naysābūr. He was informed that `Alī bin Mūsā al Ridhā (a.s.) had left Naysābūr and was at Ribāṭ Sa`ad. He thought to himself that he should go to him (a.s.) and relate his problem so that Imām (a.s.) may suggest a cure. He proceeded to Ribāṭ Sa`ad and entered Imām (a.s.)'s presence. He addressed him (a.s.) saying (with difficulty), "O son of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.)! I went to such and such, while my mouth and tongue got affected to such an extent that I cannot speak except through much difficulty. Then suggest me a medicine that could benefit me". Hearing this, Imām (a.s.) said, "Didn't I (already) teach you? Then go and do what I suggested to you in your dream". The man said, "O son of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.)! Please repeat it to me if you deem it proper". Imām (a.s.) replied, "Take cumin, thyme and salt and grind them. Then place in your mouth twice or thrice, and you shall gain cure". The man says that I did what Imām (a.s.) told me and gained cure. Abū Ḥāmid Aḥmad bin `Alī bin al Ḥusain al Tha`ālābī says that I heard Abī `Abdullāh bin `Abdul Raḥmān, renowned as Al Ṣafwānī, say that, "I met the man and heard this incident from him".

Fifth, Rayyān bin al Ṣalt relates that when I decided to go to `Irāq, I went to bid farewell to Imām al Ridhā (a.s.). I told myself, "When I bid him (a.s.) farewell, I shall ask him to give me his own shirt for shrouding myself and some dirham from his wealth to make rings for my daughters". When I bade him farewell, tears choked me due to the grief of his (a.s.)'s separation and I forgot to ask him what I had desired. When I left his (a.s.)'s presence, he called out to me, saying, "O Rayyān! Return back". When I returned back, he (a.s.) told me, "Do you not like that I should give you a shirt of my body to be used as a shroud for you whenever your end draws near? And don't you like that I should give you some dirham so that you may make rings for your daughters?" Hearing this, I said, "O my master! It was in my mind to ask you, however the grief of departing from you made me forget it". Imām (a.s.) raised a pillow, removed a shirt and handed it over to me.

Then he raised a part of his Prayer-mat, removed some dirham and gave it to me. When I counted them, they were thirty dirham.

Sixth, Harthamah bin A`ayun relates that I entered the presence of my master Al Ridhā (a.s.) at the house of Ma`mūn. Word had spread in the house that Al Ridhā (a.s.) had passed away, while this was not true. Therefore I entered and sought permission to meet him (a.s.). Among the reliable servants of Ma`mūn was a young lad called Ṣabīḥ al Daylamī, who loved my master (Imām al Ridhā) that was due to him. When Ṣabīḥ came out and his sight fell upon me, he told me, "O Harthamah! Do you not know that I am a trusted one of Ma`mūn in his secret and public matters?" I replied in the affirmative and he continued saying, know O Harthamah that once Ma`mūn summoned me and thirty slaves, among his trusted ones in his secret and public matters, in the first third part of the night. When we entered his presence, we saw that night had turned day due to several candles burning near him. There were unsheathed, sharpened and poisoned swords kept in front of him. He called us one by one and took an oath from each one of us, while there was none among the creations of Allāh (s.w.t.) there except us.

Then he told us, "This pledge is binding upon you that you should do what I command you and not oppose anything from it". When we swore to follow his command, he said, "Each one of you should take a sword in his hand and proceed until you enter the room of `Alī bin Mūsā al Ridhā (a.s.). Then do not speak to him, whether you find him standing, sitting or sleeping. Then strike your swords upon him and mix up his flesh, blood, hair, bones and his brain (by cutting them to pieces). Then wrap him in a mat, wipe your swords upon it and bring him to me. I have pledged to myself that the one among you who undertakes this task and keeps it a secret, I shall give him ten bags of dirham and ten pieces of selected land, while it shall be your fortune until I am alive".

Hearing this, we took the swords in our hands and entered his room. We found him (a.s.) lying down, moving his fingers and saying something that we could not understand. The slaves pounced upon him (a.s.) with their swords, while I dropped my sword and stood staring at him. It was as if he (a.s.) knew regarding our intention, while he had not worn anything that could repel the attack of swords. They wrapped him in mat and left until they entered the presence of Ma`mūn. He asked them what they did and they replied, "We did what you had commanded us O commander". Hearing this, he said, "Then do not say anything about this



anywhere”.

When it neared dawn, Ma’mūn stepped out and sat in his court, bare-headed, with unbuttoned shirt and announced Imām (a.s.)’s death. He sat to mourn his (a.s.)’s death and then arose and walked bare-feet towards him (a.s.) to see, while I was along with him. When he entered Imām (a.s.)’s room, he heard a sound of murmuring and he shivered (with fright). He asked, “Who is there with him?” He was replied, “We do not know O commander”. Hearing this, he shouted, “Then hasten and look”.

Ṣabīḥ says that we rushed towards the room and I saw that my Master (a.s.) was seated in his Prayer-niche, praying and glorifying (Allāh). Seeing this, I told Ma’mūn, “O commander! We saw a man seated in his Prayer-niche, praying and glorifying (Allāh)”. Hearing this Ma’mūn flounced, shivered and said, “You cheated me, may Allāh (s.w.t.) curse you”. Then he turned to me among the group and said, “O Ṣabīḥ! You recognize him. Then go and see who is upon the Prayer-niche near him (a.s.)”.

Ṣabīḥ says that I entered Imām (a.s.)’s room, while Ma’mūn returned back. When I reached the threshold of his (a.s.)’s door, he said, “O Ṣabīḥ!” I replied, “At your service O my Master!” Saying this, I fell upon my face (with shame). Imām (a.s.) said, “Arise, May Allāh (s.w.t.) have Mercy upon you. **Intend they to put out the Light of Allāh with their mouths! But Allāh will perfect His Light, though averse may be the disbelievers.**<sup>1</sup> Hearing this, I returned back to Ma’mūn and found that his face had turned similar to a black night. He asked me what happened and I replied, “O commander! By Allāh (s.w.t.)! He (a.s.) is seated in his room. He called me and told me such and such”. Hearing this, he buttoned his shirt and called for his clothes. Then he told me, “Then tell (others) that he had turned unconscious and has now gained consciousness”.

Harthamah says that when I heard this, I praised and offered abundant thanks to Allāh (s.w.t.). Then I entered the presence of my Master al Ridhā (a.s.) and when his sight fell upon me, he said, “O Harthamah! Do not reveal to anyone what Ṣabīḥ told you, except those whose hearts have been tested for faith in our love and authority”. I replied in the affirmative and he (a.s.) continued, “O Harthamah! By Allāh (s.w.t.)! Nothing from their guile shall harm us until His time (of my destined

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<sup>1</sup> Holy Qur’ān, Sūratul Ṣaf: 8

death) arrives”.

Seventh, Muḥammad bin Ḥafṣ relates that I was informed by an attendant of the Righteous Slave (of Allāh) Abil Ḥasan Mūsā bin Ja`far (al Kāẓim), that I and a group were along with Al Ridhā (a.s.) in the wilderness, when we and our animals were inflicted with severe thirst and we feared for our lives. Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) told us, “Go there and you shall find water”, saying this pointed towards a spot. When we reached that place, we found water. We made our animals drink, and we all drank. After some time we mounted and he (a.s.) told us to look for that stream again. We searched for the stream; however we could not find anything except dung of Camels and there was no trace of it.

The narrator says that I related this incident to a person from the progeny of Qanbar, who presumed that he was one hundred and twenty years old. The man narrated a similar incident to me from him (a.s.) and said, “I too was in his (a.s.)’s presence, while he was travelling towards Khurāsān”.

We (the Author) say that this evident miracle resembles the miracle of his (a.s.)’s grandfather Amīrul Mu`minīn (a.s.), that is quoted by the biographers and is renowned in Ahlul Sunnah and Shī`ah reports. The poets even composed verses upon it, the eloquent ones sermonized it, while the intelligentsias and scholars related the incident of the hermit at Karbalā’ and the rock. It is said that when Amīrul Mu`minīn (a.s.) was going to Ṣiffīn, he stopped by Karbalā and told his companions, “Do you know what place is this? However, by Allāh (s.w.t.), here is the spot of the Martyrdom of Ḥusain (a.s.) and his companions”. Then he (a.s.) walked away from them, while severe thirst overtook his companions. The water with them exhausted and they hastened to the right and left in search of it, but could not find anything.

Amīrul Mu`minīn (a.s.) took them on the side and walked until they reached a monastery in the midst of the desert. They proceeded towards it and when they reached its courtyard, Imām (a.s.) ordered them to call the one residing therein. They did so and a hermit peeped out. Amīrul Mu`minīn (a.s.) asked him, “Is there any water near to your place so that this group may partake it?” The hermit replied, “Far be it! There is a distance of more than two farsakh between me and the water, while there is no water near to me. If not, I would not have to bring water for myself that would last for a month and spend it miserly. Then I too would have perished due to thirst”. Imām (a.s.) asked his companions, “Did you

hear what the hermit said?" They replied in the affirmative and asked, "Do you command us to go to the stream as suggested by him while we (still) possess the strength?" Imām (a.s.) replied, "There is no need for you to do that". Saying this, he (a.s.) turned the neck of his mule towards the Qiblah, pointed towards a spot near the monastery and said, "Move the earth from this place".

A group among them proceeded to the spot and dug the earth with their spades. Suddenly they found a large shining rock. Seeing this, they said, "O Amīr al Mu'minīn (a.s.)! Here is a rock; however the spade cannot move it". Imām (a.s.) replied, "Verily this rock rests upon the water. Then if it is moved, you shall find water". They strove hard to remove it, while the people gathered and tried to move it but failed and they turned weary. When Imām (a.s.) saw that they had gathered and tried to move the rock, but were exhausted, he (a.s.) alighted from his mule. He (a.s.) folded his sleeves, placed his fingers below the rock and shook it. Then he (a.s.) removed it with his hands and threw it many cubits away. When the rock was removed, the whiteness of water appeared. Seeing this, they rushed to it and drank from it; while it was the most pleasant they had drunk in their journey, most cold and more pure. Imām (a.s.) told them, "Drink aplenty and carry along with you", and they did so. Then Imām (a.s.) came to the rock, lifted it with his hands and placed it at its original spot. He (a.s.) then commanded them to put earth upon it and conceal its spot.

The hermit was watching all this from top of his monastery and when he realized what happened, he shouted, "O people! Bring me down! Bring me down"! When he was brought down, he stood facing Amīrul Mu'minīn (a.s.) and asked, "O you! Are you a Messenger?" Imām (a.s.) replied in the negative. He again asked, "Then are you a Near Angel (to Allāh)?" Again Imām (a.s.) replied in the negative and he asked, "Then who are you?" Amīrul Mu'minīn (a.s.) replied, "I am the Vicegerent of the Messenger of Allāh Muḥammad bin `Abdullāh (s.a.w.a.), the Seal of the Prophets (a.s.)".

Thereafter the hermit recited the "two witnesses" and accepted Islām. Then he said, "Verily this monastery was built to witness the one who would extract this rock and remove water from underneath it. Scholars passed away before me; however, they did not know it, while Allāh (s.w.t.) blessed me with it. Verily we found in our books and heard from our scholars that there is stream here at the mouth of which is a rock. No one knows its spot except a Prophet (a.s.) or a

Vicegerent of a Prophet (a.s.), and he must certainly be among the friends of Allāh (s.w.t.), inviting towards the truth. His sign is that he would know the spot of the rock and possess the strength to remove it from its place. When I saw you do so, I realized that you are the one for whom we were waiting and had pinned our hopes upon it. From today I am a Muslim at your hands, a believer upon your right and your slave”.

Then they left from there, while the hermit accompanied them among his (a.s.)’s companions until they confronted the army of Shām. The hermit was one of them who attained Martyrdom in his (a.s.) side. Imām (a.s.) recited Prayers upon him, buried him and sought abundant pardon (from Allāh) for him.

Sayyid al Ḥimyarī composed this incident in his verses named Qaṣīdatul Muḍahhabah, “Certainly one night he passed by, in a procession to Karbala after `Ishā’ Prayers; until he reached the one who had devoted himself to Allāh, on a piece of raised ground; he made his camp on a dry and arid land, in a wilderness where no living soul can come to him other than the beasts and the balding old man (i.e. Imām `Alī); he came closer to him and cried out, while he was looking down as a defender looks down on his bow from a watchtower; is there clear water to drink anywhere close to where you have made your abode, he replied there is no watery place; except at a distance of two farsakh (six miles), and the water which I have here with me between the sandy hill and the vast desert; he then turns the reins towards the ground, and uncovers a smooth rock shining like a golden leaf paste for camels; he said turn it around, for if you turn it you will see and if you do not turn it you will not see; they get together to remove it, but it was a very difficult task for them to do which they could not do it; when they were unable to move it, he stretched his hand towards it and conquered it like a conquerer; as if it was a ball of cotton, which he pushed it in a playground; he gave them delicious water to drink under it, which was better than the most delicious most sweet water that they had tasted before; after they had all drunk from it he put the stone back and went away, its position is left alone and cannot be approached”.

Eighth, Haytham bin Abī Masrūq al Nahdī relates from Muḥammad bin al Fudhayl that I came to Baṭn Murr (in Makkah) when I was afflicted with the disease of Al

`Irq al Madīnī<sup>1</sup> in my flank and my leg. When I went to Madīnah, I entered the presence of Imām `Alī al Ridhā (a.s.) and he asked me, "Why do I see you in pain?" I replied, "When I reached Baṭn Murr, I got afflicted with the disease of Al `Irq al Madīnī in my flank and my leg. Hearing this, he (a.s.) signalled towards the side of my flank, below the armpit, recited something and applied his saliva upon it. Then he (a.s.) said, "You have no problem with this". Then he (a.s.) looked at my leg and said, "If anyone among our Shī`ah falls prey to tribulations and forbears (upon it), Allāh (s.w.t.) writes for him reward equal to a thousand Martyrs". Hearing this, I told myself, "By Allāh (s.w.t.)! I shall not be cured of the pain in my leg ever after". Haytham says that he started to limp until his death.

Ninth, it is related from `Abdullāh bin Muḥammad al Hāshemī that once I went to meet Ma'mūn. He made me sit and told others to leave. He ordered food, we ate and then applied perfume. Then he ordered curtains to be drawn and I did so. He then turned to a person behind the curtain and said, "I call you in the Name of Allāh (s.w.t.) to recite what you recited for us at Ṭūs". A woman started to recite, saying, "May there be rains on Ṭūs and the one who resides therein, from the progeny of Muṣṭafā (s.a.w.a.) for surely he has departed from us and has left for us only grief".

Hearing this, Ma'mūn wept and then said that O `Abdallāh! Will my family and your family reproach me if I position Abul Ḥasan al Ridhā (a.s.) as a standard (sign) for the people? For, by Allāh (s.w.t.), I shall relate to you a Ḥadīth, hearing which, you shall fall into astonishment regarding him (a.s.). I went to him one day and said, "May I be ransom upon you! Certainly your forefathers Mūsā (al Kāẓim), Ja`far (al Ṣādiq), Muḥammad (al Baqir) and `Alī ibnul Ḥusain (Zainul `Ābidīn) possessed knowledge of the past and what shall happen until the day of Qiyāmah. While you are their vicegerent and inheritor, and you possess their (a.s.)'s knowledge. I desire something from you". He (a.s.) asked me what it was and I said, "This is my slave girl Zāhirīyyah, my good fortune, while I do not give preference to any of my other slave-girls upon her. She has conceived several times and miscarried. Now she is pregnant again, then suggest me some treatment that the child may be safe".

Hearing this, Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) said, "Do not worry for her miscarriage and she

<sup>1</sup> A disease of blisters also called *Filaria Medinensis* or *Dracunculus* caused by female Guinea worm. (translator)

shall be fine. She shall deliver a boy, who shall resemble her mother more than anyone else. He shall possess an extra finger in his right hand, which shall not have any joints. Also there shall be an extra finger in his left foot, which also shall not have any joints". I said to myself, "I bear witness that Allah (s.w.t.) is Omnipotent upon all things". After sometime Zāhirīyyah gave birth to a boy who resembled his mother most among all. He possessed an extra finger in his right hand, which did not have any joints. Also there was an extra finger in his left foot, which also did not have any joints, as predicted by Al Ridhā (a.s.). Then who shall reproach me if I position him (a.s.) as a standard (sign) for the people?"

The narrator says that the Ḥadīth contains more, however we have omitted it. And **there is no might and no power except with Allah, the Most High, the Most Great.**

Thereafter Shaikh al Ṣadūq (the author of `Uyūn Akhbār al Ridhā) says that, however, the knowledge possessed by Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) was passed down to him from his forefathers (a.s.) from the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.). Jibra'īl would ascend to him (s.a.w.a.) with information regarding the rulers and their children, among the Banī Umayyah and the sons of `Abbās (Banī `Abbās), occurrences that shall take place in their time and what shall take place at their hands. And there is no power except with Allah.

We (the Author) say that whatever the narrator omitted from the Ḥadīth is another verse, "I mean Abul Ḥasan the one who is hoped for, surely he has a right on everyone who became distressed on account of his demise".

Tenth, Muḥammad bin Fudhayl relates that in the year when Hārūn decided to annihilate the family of Barāmikah, he killed Ja`far bin Yaḥyā and imprisoned Yaḥyā bin Khālīd and what befell them. At that time Abul Ḥasan (al Ridhā) was standing praying at `Arafah and thereafter lowered his head. When he (a.s.) was questioned, he replied, "Certainly I was praying (imprecating) to Allāh (s.w.t.) regarding the Barāmikah against what they did to my father (Imām al Kāzim), and Allāh fulfilled my desire today". Saying this, he (a.s.) left and within no time Ja`far and Yaḥyā were annihilated and their situation changed.

Musāfir says that once I was with Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) at Minā when Yaḥyā bin Khālīd passed us along with some people from the family of Barāmikah. Seeing them, Imām (a.s.) said, "These wretched people do not know what shall befall

them this year". Then he (a.s.) said, "Hey! And more astonishing than this is that Hārūn and I are similar to this", saying this, he (a.s.) joined his fingers. Musāfir says that, "By Allāh (s.w.t.)! I could not under the interpretation of this Ḥadīth, until he (a.s.) was buried near him (Hārūn)".

Eleventh, Shaikh al Mufīd writes in his Al Irshād with his chain of transmitters from Al Gifārī that a man from the progeny of Abū Rāfe`, the retainer of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), called so and so, had a debt upon me. He asked from me and insisted me to repay him. When I saw this, I performed my Fajr (dawn) Prayers in Masjid al Nabī (s.a.w.a.) and then left to meet Imām al Ridhā (a.s.), while he was at `Uraydh. When I neared his (a.s.)'s door, he came out, seated upon his donkey and wearing a shirt and cloak. When my sight fell upon him (a.s.), I was ashamed to ask him. When he (a.s.) reached me, he stood and glanced at me. I saluted him (a.s.), while it was the month of Ramadhān. Then I told him (a.s.), "May I be ransom upon you! Verily your such and such retainer has a debt upon me and he has spread word regarding me". By Allāh (s.w.t.)! I thought to myself that perhaps he (a.s.) would order the man to leave me alone. By Allāh (s.w.t.)! I neither informed him (a.s.) how much he owed me, nor anything else. Hearing this, he (a.s.) commanded me to sit until his return.

I waited until I recited the Magrib Prayers, while I was fasting. My heart straitened (due to worry) and I decided to leave. Suddenly Imām (a.s.) arrived, while people had surrounded him. They asked from him (a.s.) and he gave them alms. He (a.s.) proceeded, entered his house, then came out and called me. I arose and entered his presence. He (a.s.) sat and I sat with him. I started talking to him regarding Ibnul Musayyab, who was the governor of Madīnah, while I would often speak to him (a.s.) more regarding him. When I completed, he (a.s.) asked, "I do not presume you have yet broken your fast?" I replied in the negative and he called for food to be brought for me. Then he (a.s.) ordered a boy to eat along with me and we ate our full.

When we completed, he (a.s.) told me, "Raise the cushion and take whatever is beneath it". I raised it and found some dīnār. I took them and placed them in my sleeve. Then he (a.s.) commanded four of his retainers to accompany me to my house. I said "May I be ransom upon you! The companions of Ibnul Musayyab shall be sitting there. And I abhor meeting them when your retainers are along with me". Hearing this, he (a.s.) said, "You have spoken the truth. May Allāh

(s.w.t.) direct you towards guidance"! Then he (a.s.) ordered his retainers to return back whenever I told them to do so. When I neared my house and saw them, I told them to return back. Then I entered my house and ordered a lamp to be brought. I counted the dīnār and found them to be forty eight, while the man owed me twenty eight dīnār. There was a dīnār that glowed more among them and its beauty fascinated me. I picked it up and neared it to the lamp. I saw that the following was inscribed upon it clearly, "The man owes you twenty eight dīnār, while the rest is for you". No, by Allāh (s.w.t.)! I had not informed him (a.s.) the precise amount what the man owned me.

Twelfth, Quṭubuddīn al Rāwandī relates from Rayyān bin al Ṣalt that once I entered the presence of Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) at Khurāsān and told myself, "I shall ask him (a.s.) to give me some dīnār upon which his blessed named is inscribed". When I entered his (a.s.)'s presence, he immediately told his retainer, "Certainly Abā Muḥammad desires dīnār upon which my name is inscribed. Then give him thirty dirham out of them". The retainer brought them and I took it from him. Again I thought to myself, "I wish he (a.s.) presents me some of his clothes". Again he (a.s.) turned to his retainer and said, "Tell them not to wash my clothes and bring it to me as they are". The retainer brought a shirt, a trouser and boot. Imām (a.s.) gave me all these.

Thirteenth, Ibn Shahr Āshūb relates from Ḥasan bin `Alī al Washshā' that once my Master Al Ridhā (a.s.) called me while he was at Marw. When I went to him (a.s.), he said, 'O Ḥasan! `Alī bin Abī Ḥamzah al Batā'īnī has died today and has entered his grave at this hour. Two Angels entered his grave and questioned him, "Who is your Lord?" And he replied, "Allāh (s.w.t.)". Then they questioned him who his Prophet was and he replied, "Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.)". They again questioned him, "Who is your Master", and he replied, "`Alī bin Abī Ṭālib (a.s.)". "Then after him?" they asked and he replied, "Al Ḥasan (a.s.)". They questioned him after him (a.s.), and he said, "Al Ḥusain (a.s.)". When they questioned him regarding the Imām after Al Ḥusain (a.s.), he replied, "`Alī ibnul Ḥusain (Zainul `Ābidīn)". They asked him, "After him?" And he replied, "Muḥammad bin `Alī (al Bāqir)". Upon their questioning him regarding the Imām after him (a.s.), he replied, "Ja`far bin Muḥammad (al Ṣādiq)". When they asked him, "Who after him?" He replied, "Mūsā bin Ja`far (al Kāzim)". Lastly, they asked him regarding the Imām after him and he stammered. They rebuked him and repeated their question, however, he remained silent. Then they asked, "Did Mūsā bin Ja`far command you to do so (to



stop at him)?” Then they struck at him with hooked rods of fire and filled his grave with flames until the day of Qiyāmah’.<sup>1</sup>

He (Al Washshā’) narrates that I left the presence of my Master and noted down the date with me. Days did not pass when letters of the inhabitants of Kūfah arrived informing the death of Al Batā’inī on the same day and his burial at the same hour (as informed by Imām).

Fourteenth, Quṭubuddīn al Rāwandī relates from Ibrāhīm bin Mūsā al Qazzāz, who led Prayers at Masjīd al Ridhā (a.s.) at Khurāsān, that I urged Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) to bestow me something when once he (a.s.) came to welcome some Ṭalibīyīn. Time for the Prayers came up and he proceeded towards a palace that was there. He sat beneath a tree, which was near to the palace, while I was along with him and no third person was there.

Then he (a.s.) told me to give the Aḍān (call for Prayers) and I told him, “We should wait until our companions join us”. Hearing this, he (a.s.) said, “May Allāh (s.w.t.) forgive you! Do not delay Prayers from its initial time to its last time without any valid reason. Commence it at its initial time”. Therefore I gave the Aḍān and we offered Prayers. After completing it, I told him, “O son of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.)! A lengthy period of time has passed for the promise that you made to me, while I am in dire need. You are very busy and I cannot find opportunity to ask you every time”. Hearing this, Imām (a.s.) scrapped the earth with his whip severely. Then he (a.s.) struck his hand upon the spot where he had scrapped the earth and took out golden coins. Then he (a.s.) said, “Take them, may Allāh (s.w.t.) grant prosperity for you in it. Then gain benefit from them and conceal (from others) what you have witnessed”.

The narrator says that I gained abundance from them and bought a property at Khurāsān for seventy thousand dīnār. Ultimately I became most wealthy among people therein.

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<sup>1</sup> In spite of being a companion and an agent of Imām Mūsā al Kāẓim (a.s.) and having heard from him (a.s.) at several occasions that the Imām after him would be Imām al Ridhā (a.s.), he stopped at him and refused to believe in the Imāmah of Imām al Ridhā (a.s.). The above report therefore evidences that a person’s belief and faith is not completed until he believes in the Imāmah of all the twelve A’immah (a.s.), duly appointed and authorized by Allāh (s.w.t.). (translator)

Fifteenth, Aḥmad bin `Umar relates that I went to meet Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) when my wife was pregnant. When I met him (a.s.), I told him, "I left behind me my wife who is pregnant. Then pray to Allāh (s.w.t.) that it should be a boy". Imām (a.s.) replied, "It is a boy. Then name him `Umar". I said, "I desired to name him `Alī and even instructed my family to do so". Imām (a.s.) again said, "Name him `Umar".

When I returned back to Kūfah, I found that a boy was born to me and they named him `Alī, however I named him `Umar (as advised by the Imām). When my neighbours were informed of this, they told me, "Hereafter we shall not believe in whatever is said regarding you. That is, we shall not believe those who attribute that you are a Shī`ah, while we have known that you are upon our school of thought". My neighbours were followers of the faith of the Shaykḥayn (Abū Bakr and `Umar). Thus I realized that Imām (a.s.) knew my situation more than me.

Sixteenth, it is quoted in Baṣā'erul Darajāt (of Muḥammad bin Ḥasan al Ṣaffār al Qummī) from Aḥmad bin `Umar al Ḥallāl that I heard Al Akhras mention Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) at Makkah and defame him. Therefore I went to Makkah and bought a knife. When I saw him, I told myself, "By Allāh (s.w.t.)! I shall kill him once he steps out of the Masjid". I stood there, when suddenly a note arrived to me from Al Ridhā (a.s.) in which was written, "In the Name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Merciful. By my right upon you! Lift your hands off Al Akhras. Thus Allāh (s.w.t.) is my Reliance and He is sufficient for me".

Seventeenth, Shaikh al Muḥid relates through his reliable chain of transmitters from `Alī bin Ibrāhīm (al Qummī), from his father (Ibrāhīm bin Hāshim) from some of his companions from Abul Ḥasan al Ridhā (a.s.). He (a.s.) left Madīnah to perform the Ḥajj Pilgrimage in the same year Hārūn intended to do so. They reached a mountain on the left side of the path called Fāre`. When Imām (a.s.)'s sight fell upon it, he said, "The erector of Fāre` and its demolisher shall be cut limb to limb". We could not understand what he (a.s.) meant. When Hārūn reached there (Fāre`), he alighted there. Ja`far bin Yaḥyā (al Barmakī) climbed the mountain and ordered a resting place to be erected for him (Hārūn). Upon their return from Makkah, again he climbed it and ordered it to be demolished. When he (Hārūn) reached `Irāq, Ja`far bin Yaḥyā was cut limb to limb (at his orders).

Eighteenth, Ibn Shahr Āshūb relates from Musāfir that I was along with Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) at Minā when Yaḥyā bin Khālīd (al Barmakī) passed by, while he had

covered his nose from the sand-storm. Seeing him, Imām (a.s.) said, "These wretched people do not know what shall befall them this year". Then he (a.s.) said, "Hey! And more astonishing than this is that Hārūn and I are similar to this", saying this, he (a.s.) joined his fingers. A similar incident has been quoted above (in the tenth miracle) as related by Shaikh al Ṣadūq.

Nineteenth, Ibn Shahr Āshūb relates from Sulaymān al Ja`farī that I was in the presence of Al Ridhā (a.s.) in his estate. Suddenly a sparrow came up to him and started to chirp, while its chirping and restlessness increased. Imām (a.s.) turned to me and asked, "O Sulaymān! Do you know what this sparrow says?" I replied in the negative and Imām (a.s.) continued, "It says that a snake wants to eat her children in the house. Then arise, carry a staff, enter the house and kill the snake". I took a staff and entered the house. I saw a snake wandering in the house and killed it.

Twentieth, Ibn Shahr Āshūb relates from Al Ḥusain bin Bashshār that once Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) told me, "Verily `Abdullāh shall kill Muḥammad". I asked, "Will `Abdullāh bin Hārūn kill Muḥammad bin Hārūn?" He (a.s.) replied, "Yes. `Abdullāh (al Ma'mūn) who is in Khurāsān shall kill Muḥammad (al Amīn) bin Zubaydah who is in Bagdād". What Imām (a.s.) said took place. He (a.s.) would recite these verses as resemblance, "Surely one malice after another begins to spread around you, and the hidden diseases also begin to manifest". Perhaps Imām (a.s.) meant to point out to his own Martyrdom at the hands of Ma'mūn in these verses.

We (the Author) say that we have quoted a report among the evident miracles of Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) in the section dealing with the companions of Imām Mūsā al Kāẓim (a.s.) while discussing regarding `Abdullāh bin Mugīrah (al Bajalī). And we shall also quote some more in the fifth section of this chapter.

#### 4. Part of his (a.s.)'s wise sayings and verses (Ash`ār)

First, Imām `Alī al Ridhā (a.s.) said, "The friend of every man is his intellect and his enemy is his ignorance".

Second, he (a.s.) said, "Allāh (s.w.t.) detests excessive talks (chatter), squandering of wealth and excessive questioning".

We (the Author) say that perhaps what is meant by chattering is condemned disputing and arguing, while there are reports in refraining from them. Imām Ja`far al Ṣādiq (a.s.) says that the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said, "The first things that Allāh (s.w.t.) stopped me is worshipping idols, consuming intoxicants and disputing and arguing with people".

It is also related that he (s.a.w.a.) said, "Four things deaden the hearts, sin after sin; excessive arguing with women and chatting with them; arguing with fools, you say something and they say something, while no good is achieved through it; and company of the dead". Someone asked him, "O Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.)! Who are the dead?" He (s.a.w.a.) replied, "Every sumptuous rich man".

Shaikh al Ṣadūq relates that once Imām Ja`far al Ṣādiq (a.s.) was questioned, "Do you consider all these creatures as human?" Imām (a.s.) replied, "Separate from them (human) the one who does not do Miswāk, who sits with folded legs in a limited place, who intrudes into something that does not concern him, who argues regarding something of which he has no knowledge, who (pretends to) falls sick without any ailment, who dishevels his hair without any calamity, who disputes with his companions regarding a right upon which they unanimously agree, and the arrogant who boasts upon the excellences of his forefathers while he (himself) lacks their good deeds. He is similar to an arrow, whose bark is scraped until essential substance is achieved".<sup>1</sup>

How well has someone said, "An intelligent one takes pride in towering vigour, not in worn out junk".

Verses: "Be a son of whosoever you wish and acquire good manners, that will make you needless of your lineage; the youth is the one who mentions that I am

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<sup>1</sup> Imām (a.s.) means to say that the one who boasts upon the good deeds for his forefathers, while he himself lacks them, is useless, similar to the bark of a tree whose skin is scraped off and thrown away, and its interior is used for making an arrow. (translator)

so and so, and he is not a youth who says my father was so and so”.

Third, Imām (a.s.) said, “We, the Ahl al-bait (a.s.) consider our promises alike debt, similar to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.)”.<sup>1</sup>

Fourth, Imām al-Ridhā (a.s.) said, “An age shall come for the people when welfare shall lie in ten parts, nine among them in distancing from (evil) people and one part in silence”.

We (the Author) say that we have already quoted whatever was appropriate regarding isolation and distancing oneself from the (evil) people in the section dealing with the wise sayings and counsels of Imām Ja`far al-Ṣādiq (a.s.) (in this book), one should refer to them. However, since we do not wish to leave this place devoid of them, we quote some verses.<sup>2</sup>

Fifth, once Imām (a.s.) was questioned, “How did you dawn?” He (a.s.) replied, “I dawned with lessened lifespan, protected (good) deeds (near Allāh), death upon our necks, the fire (of hell) behind us, and we do not know what shall happen to us (in the hereafter)”.

Sixth, Imām (a.s.) said, “Verily a worshipper was not recognized a worshipper among the Banī Isrā’īl until he remained silent for a period of ten years. When he did so, he was recognized as a worshipper”.

We (the Author) say that numerous Aḥādīth are related in praise of silence,<sup>3</sup> while

<sup>1</sup> Imām (a.s.) means to say that whenever we, the Ahl al-bait (a.s.) promise something, we consider it a debt upon ourselves, i.e. we are not contented until we fulfill it. Certainly Allāh (s.w.t.) refers to them in the Qur’ān, **“Of them is he who has fulfilled his vow and of them is he who awaits (its fulfilment), and they have changed not in the least”**. (Sūratul Aḥzāb: 23) (translator)

<sup>2</sup> Thereafter the Esteemed Author quotes some verses in Fārsī of Shaikh al-Niẓāmī al-Ganjawī that we forgo. (translator)

<sup>3</sup> We state here some Aḥādīth in excellence of silence. The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) says “Hold your tongue, for it is alms that you give yourself. And the slave (of Allāh) does not recognize the reality of belief until he preserves his tongue”. (Shaikh al-Kulaynī, “Al-Kāfī”) He (s.a.w.a.) even says, “Preserve your tongue except with goodness, since through it you will be able to subdue Shayṭān”. (Shaikh Muḥammad Maḥdī al-Narāqī, “Jāme’ ul Sa’ādāt”) Amīrul Mu’minīn (a.s.) says, “Silence is the sign of nobility and the fruit of the intellect”. (‘Abdul Wāḥid al-Āmudī, “Gurarul Ḥikam”) Imām Ja`far al-Ṣādiq (a.s.) says, “The perfection of intellect lies in three things, humility before Allāh (s.w.t.), strong conviction and silence except when

we content ourselves to quote some verses by Amīr Khusrū.<sup>1</sup>

Seventh, he (a.s.) said, "The one who is contented with scarcity of sustenance from Allāh (s.w.t.), He (s.w.t.) is contented with scarcity of (good) deeds from him".

It is related from Aḥmad bin `Umar bin Abī Sha`bāh al Ḥalabī and Ḥusain bin Yazīd al Nawfalī that once we entered the presence of Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) and told him, "Certainly we had abundance of sustenance and affluence of life, however circumstances changed our lives.<sup>2</sup> Then pray to Allāh (s.w.t.) to return it back to us". Imām (a.s.) asked, "What do you want? Do you wish to be kings? Will it please you to become similar to Ṭāhir and Harthamah<sup>3</sup> and be in a state (of faithlessness) opposite to what you are now?" I replied, "No, by Allāh (s.w.t.)! It shall not please me that I should possess the world and whatever it contains among gold and silver, and I be in a state opposite to what I am now". Then Imām (a.s.) said, "Verily Allāh (s.w.t.) says: **Act you gratefully O family of Dāwūd! And very few of My servants are grateful.**<sup>4</sup> Then improve your opinion for Allāh (s.w.t.). For the one who improves his opinion towards Allāh (s.w.t.), Allāh (s.w.t.) shall have (good) opinion for him. And the one who is contented upon scarcity in sustenance, scarcity of (good) deeds are accepted from him (by Allāh). And one who is pleased with scarcity in lawful (sustenance), his burden shall be less, his family shall be in blessings, Allāh (s.w.t.) shall make him discerning in the ailment of this world and its cure, and discharge him from it (world) in safety towards the Abode of Safety (Paradise)".

Eighth, Shaikh al Ṣadūq relates through his reliable chains of transmitters from Rayyān bin Ṣalt that once Imām al Ridhā recited the verses of `Abdul Muṭṭalib for me, "The people all find fault with time, but we ourselves are the fault of the time; we blame the time, but the fault is in us, if time could talk, it would make fun of us; in fact, wolves tear down their enemies (wolves), but do not eat their meat,

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speaking good". (Shaikh al Mufīd, "Al Ikhtisāṣ") (translator)

<sup>1</sup> While we forgo the translation of these verses in Fārsī. (translator)

<sup>2</sup> They meant to say that they lived in poverty as opposed to their previous state of affluence. (translator)

<sup>3</sup> Viz. Abū Ṭalḥah Ṭāhir bin Ḥusain bin Muṣ`ab was the governor of Ma`mūn at Khurāsān. Harthamah bin A`ayun was among the procurers of Ma`mūn. (translator)

<sup>4</sup> Holy Qur`ān, Sūrat Sabā': 12

but some of us (human) clearly eat other people's meat (by gossiping and backbiting)".

Some have even added this line to the above, "We dress nice to fool the people well, Woe be to those who are strange and know us not well".

Ninth, it is stated that once Ma'mūn wrote to Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) to counsel him. Imām (a.s.) replied, "Now you live in a world short-lived, in which deeds of the doer are accepted indeed; you not how death encompasses us all, and destroys aspirations of all aspiring ones; there you rush towards sin and crave for it, and procrastinate your repentance; but death will overcome you by surprise, but what will the intelligent learn from this?"

Shaikh al Ṣadūq relates from Ibrāhīm bin al `Abbās that Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) often recited this verse, "When you are blessed by goodness do not get dazzled by that, but keep on asking Allāh to keep you healthy and perfect the blessings".

Tenth, Muḥammad bin Yaḥyā bin Abī `Ibād relates from his paternal uncle that one day I heard Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) recite these verses, while he recited verses quite rarely, "We all hope death to grant us more time, while death itself destroys all hopes; let not false hopes fool you, be moderate and abandon falsehood; this world is like a vanishing shade, a temporary resting place for riders, who shall depart it shortly later".

The narrator says that I asked him, "Who has recited these verses? May Allāh (s.w.t.) endear the commander"! He (a.s.) replied, "An `Irāqī recited it for you people". I said, "Rather Abul `Atāhiyah composed them for himself". Hearing this, he (a.s.) said, "Take his name and abandon this (calling nick names), for Allāh (s.w.t.) says: **Nor call you one another by nick names.**<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the man detests this".

We (the Author) say that Abul `Atāhiyah is Abū Ishāq Ismā`īl bin Qāsim, a poet. He was unique in his age and unparalleled in his time with regards to fluency in composition and agility in poetry, especially in asceticism and vilification of the world. He was counted in the same level of Bashshār bin Burd and Abū Nawās.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Holy Qur'ān, Sūratul Ḥujurāt: 11

<sup>2</sup> Bashshār bin Burd al `Uqaylī (d.168) was an `Arab poet who lived during the period of the end of the Banī Umayyah rule and beginning of the Banī `Abbās rule. He was born in Baṣrah and died in Bagdād. As regards Abū Nawās, he was Ḥasan bin Hānī al Ḥakamī al Dimashqī,

He was born around one hundred and thirty Hijrah at `Ayn al Tamr near Madīnah and resided in Bagdād. It is said that composing poems was easy for him to such an extent, that he would say, "If I wished to compose all my speech into poetry, I can do so".

Among his verses are, "We shall all perish, and who among the progeny of Ādam is eternal; their origin is from their Lord, and each one of them will return unto his Lord; it is indeed strange as to how does he disobey Allāh, and how can any negater negate Him; while in every thing there is His sign, which indicates that He is One".

He also said, "When man does not make himself free from the wealth, then the wealth owned by him becomes his owner; remember, my wealth is only what I spent, and not the wealth left behind by me; then if you have any wealth spend it quickly, in the right way otherwise the perilous ones shall consume it".

He passed away in Bagdād in the year two hundred and eleventh Hijrah and had bequeathed that the following be engraved upon his grave, "Surely the life whose termination is death, is a life which is quickly spoilt". While Al `Atāhīyah means a lunatic or an astray one. Due to this reason, Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) advised the person to take his real name and abandon the nick name, perhaps he detested it.

It should be noted that an Ahlul Sunnah Literati has quoted verses of Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) in his book replete with abundant wisdom and counsels, while we have quoted these verses in our book Nafthatul Maşḍūr and we quote some lines from it hereunder for seeking prosperity.

Imām `Alī al Ridhā (a.s.) said, "Have a longing for your Master and be righteous, and know that honour lies in serving Him; read the Book of Allāh and be guided by it, and follow the rules of religion in His footsteps; do not be greedy for surely greed reviles the youth, and removes the glamour from his splendour; protect your tongue and guard your speech, and beware your self against stumbling; then silence is a beauty and a dignity, and certainly man faces things because of his words; one who takes wine as his remedy for a disease, then Allāh never grants him cure from his disease; so do not accompany any mean man for surely you will perish on his account, there is no goodness in a mean man and his company; do

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another renowned `Arab poet during the Banī `Abbās reign. He died in 199 Hijrah at Bagdād.  
(translator)



not seek any favour from a treacherous person, for he will trick you like the fox in a sly manner; and if you marry then be skillful, and seek information about the branch and the origin; O the one who digs a pit (for others), surely many a men have fallen in the same pit which they dug for others; O perpetrator of injustice, surely his oppression has deceived him, while the honoured one always carries his honour with him”.

Muḥaqqiq (Muḥsin Faydh) al Kāshānī quotes a Ḥadīth from Imām `Alī al Ridhā (a.s.) in his Al Wāfī from Al Kāfī (of Shaikh al Kulaynī) and Al Tahḍīb (of Shaikh al Tūsī) that the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said, “If you hear someone reciting verses in a Masjid, tell him: May Allāh (s.w.t.) break your mouth! However, Masājid are built for (reciting) the Qur’ān”. Then he (Muḥsin Faydh) continues to say that what is meant by verses (in the above Ḥadīth) are those that comprise of fantasy, fiction, flirting and romance, and does not mean the verses based upon sober discourse. Since these sober verses comprise of wisdom, counsels and supplications of Allāh (s.w.t.). Once Imām Ja`far al Ṣādiq (a.s.) was questioned regarding reciting verses during circumambulation (Tawāf) of the Ka`bah. He (a.s.) replied, “If there is no harm in reciting them (due to their sobriety) at other times, there is no harm in reciting them (during circumambulation)”.

We (the Author) say that as for the verses comprising of wisdom and counsels, we have already quoted them previously. And as for the verses comprising of supplications, they are abundant. Among them as quoted from Imām Zainul `Ābidīn (a.s.). Ṭāwūs al Yamānī says that I saw a man in the darkness of the night who had grasped the mantle of Ka`bah, saying, “O the One with Whom I have my hopes for each of my need, I complain to You of my misfortune so please listen to my complaint; O You Who are my hope You are the Reliever of my anguish, then pardon me all my sins and fulfil my desires; then my provisions are less and I do not find them to be sufficient, should I weep upon the (less) provisions or the remoteness of my distance; I have come to You with actions that are evil and ruined, then there is none in the creation who have committed crimes similar to mine; will You then burn me with fire O the Ultimate of my desires, then where is my hope which I have placed in You and where is my fear that I possess of You”.

## **5. Imām al Ridhā (a.s.)'s journey from Madīnah to Marw at the instance of Ma'mūn and his (a.s.)'s heir-apparency**

It should be noted that as per the narratives, when the caliphate of Ma'mūn settled, and when his ordinances and prohibitions were enforced in the regions of the Islāmic world, he appointed Ḥasan bin Sahl as the governor of `Irāq and himself took residence at Marw. At that time, sedition arose in Ḥijāz and Yaman (Yemen) and some of the Sādāt raised standards of rebellion against Ma'mūn in greed of acquiring the caliphate. When Ma'mūn was informed of this, he consulted with Fadhl bin Sahl, who was his vizier and counsellor. After extensive contemplation and contriving, his opinion settled that he should call Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) from Madīnah to Marw and hand him over the position of his heir-apparency. In this way he would be successful in extinguishing the flames of war of the Sādāt among the `Alawīyīn and placing a hoop of obedience in their necks, consequently they would stop thinking about the caliphate and their greed for it. Ultimately Ma'mūn dispatched Rajā' bin Abil Dhaḥḥāk, along with some of his distinguished companions to Imām (a.s.) to persuade him (a.s.) to travel to Khurāsān. When they reached him (a.s.) and informed him, he (a.s.) refused. However, when they pressurized him, Imām (a.s.) accepted it with repulsion and coercion.

Shaikh al Ṣadūq relates from Mukhawwal al Sijistānī that when the messenger (of Ma'mūn) arrived to take Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) to Khurāsān, I was present in Madīnah. Imām (a.s.) entered Masjid al Nabī (s.a.w.a.) to bid farewell to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.). He (a.s.) bade him (s.a.w.a.) farewell several times, going towards his grave and retreating back, while sound of his weeping and wailing arose. I proceeded towards him (a.s.), saluted him and congratulated him upon his journey. Hearing this, he (a.s.) said, "Visit me, for I shall leave the neighbourhood of my grandfather (s.a.w.a.), die in alienation and be buried besides Hārūn".

Yūsuf bin Ḥātim al Shāmī, the student of Muḥaqqiq al Ḥillī, writes in his book Al Durrul Naẓīm, relating from a group of companions of Imām al Ridhā (a.s.). They relate that he (a.s.) said that when I decided to depart from Madīnah for Khurāsān, I gathered my family and told them to weep upon me so that I could hear their voice of weeping. Then I left for them twelve thousand dīnār and told them, "I shall never return back to my family". Then I took Abū Ja`far (Imām al Jawād)

and entered him into Masjid al Nabī (s.a.w.a.). I placed his hand upon the edge of the grave, pressed him to it and offered him in the protection of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.). Seeing this, Abū Ja`far (Imām al Jawād) turned to me and said, "May my father be ransom upon you! By Allāh (s.w.t.)! You are proceeding towards Allāh (s.w.t.)". Then I instructed all my agents and attendants to obey him and abandon his disobedience, and even informed them that he was my vicegerent.

`Allāmah (Muḥammad Bāqir) al Majlisī writes that it is stated in Kashful Gummah (of `Alī bin `Isā al Irbilī) and other books from Umayyah bin `Alī, that I was along with Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) when he performed the Ḥajj Pilgrimage and thereafter left for Khurāsān, while Abu Ja`far (Imām al Jawād) was along with him. Imām al Ridhā bade farewell to the House (Ka`bah) and when he completed circumambulating it, he (a.s.) turned to Maqām Ibrāhīm (a.s.) and recited Prayers near it, while Abū Ja`far (al Jawād) was seated upon the shoulders of Muwaffaq and circumambulating the Ka`bah. Then Imām al Jawād (a.s.) sat near the Ḥijr Ismā`īl for a lengthy period of time. Muwaffaq proceeded further and told him (Imām al Jawād), "Arise, may I be ransom upon you"! He (a.s.) replied, "I do not desire to leave this place until Allāh (s.w.t.) wills". Sorrow was evident upon his blessed face. Muwaffaq came to Abul Ḥasan (al Ridhā) and informed him, saying, "May I be your ransom! Abū Ja`far (al Jawād) is seated at Ḥijr Ismā`īl and refuses to arise from there". Hearing this, Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) arose, came to him (a.s.) and said, "Arise O my dear"! Imām al Jawād (a.s.) replied, "I do not desire to leave this place". Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) said, "Yes, my dear". Imām al Jawād (a.s.) then continued, "How should I arise from here when you bid final farewell to the House (Ka`bah) and shall not return back to it". Again Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) said, "Arise O my dear"! Then Imām al Jawād (a.s.) arose with him (a.s.).

Imām al Ridhā (a.s.)'s journey to Khurāsān took place in the year two hundred Hijrah, while the age of Imām al Jawād (a.s.), as renowned, was seven years. On the journey numerous splendid miracles manifested from him (a.s.) at each station, moreover several places (of his miracles) are present even until today.

Sayyid `Abdul Karīm Ibn Ṭāwūs (d.693) writes in his Farḥatūl Garīyy that when Ma'mūn summoned Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) to Khurāsān, he (a.s.) left Madīnah for Baṣrah, however he did not enter Kūfah. Rather from Baṣrah he (a.s.) took the road of Kūfah and reached Bagdād. From there he (a.s.) reached Qum and entered therein, while its inhabitants came to visit him and disputed among themselves as

to who would host him. Seeing this, Imām (a.s.) replied that his camel was already commanded (by Allāh). It proceeded until it stopped at the door of a man who had dreamt someone telling him that, "Verily Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) shall be your guest tomorrow". Not much time passed, when this spot was turned into a grand shrine, while in our age it is converted into Madrasah al Radhawīyyah.

The author of Kashful Gummah (`Alī bin `Īsā al Irbilī) and others relate that when Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) reached Naysābūr in his journey, at the end of which he attained the eminent status of Martyrdom, he was seated in a cradle of a mule whose stirrups were of pure silver. In the market he (a.s.) was met by the two masters and memorizers of the Aḥādīth of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), viz., Abū Zar`ah al Rāzī and Muḥammad bin Aslam al Ṭūsī. They told him (a.s.), "O Master, son of Masters! O Imām, son of A`immah! O Chaste and Gratified Progeny! O Epitome of Pure Prophet hood! By the right of your Most Chaste Forefathers (a.s.) and your Magnanimous Ancestors (a.s.), reveal to us your auspicious and blessed countenance and relate to us a Ḥadīth from your Forefathers (a.s.), from your Grandfather (s.a.w.a.), so we may remember you through it".

Hearing this, Imām (a.s.) stopped his mule, lifted off the parasol and cooled the eyes of the Muslims by means of his auspicious and blessed countenance, while his (a.s.) forelocks resembled those of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.). All the people were standing upon their storey, weeping and wailing, tearing off their clothes, rolling themselves in mud (due to grief), kissing the stirrup of his mule and stretching their necks towards the parasol. This continued until mid-day, while tears flowed similar to rivers and voices settled down. Then the chiefs and notables shouted, "O people! Listen and remember, then do not hurt the Messenger of Allāh (s.w.t.) by (hurting) his progeny (a.s.). Keep silent so that he (a.s.) may dictate us this Ḥadīth". Ultimately the inhabitants of Naysābūr lend their ears to hear the Ḥadīth of Imām al Ridhā (a.s.). Imām (a.s.) related this Ḥadīth, word by word, while Abū Zar`ah al Rāzī and Muḥammad bin Aslam al Ṭūsī reached this Ḥadīth to the people. Scribes numbered twenty four thousand gathered to note down this Ḥadīth, apart from both of them (Abū Zar`ah al Rāzī and Muḥammad bin Aslam).

Then Imām (a.s.) said, "My father Mūsā bin Ja`far al Kāzīm (a.s.) related to me, who said that my father Ja`far bin Muḥammad al Ṣādiq (a.s.) related to me; who said that my father Muḥammad bin `Alī al Bāqir (a.s.) related to me; who said that my father `Alī bin al Ḥusain Zainul `Ābidīn (a.s.) related to me; who said that my

father Ḥusain bin `Alī (a.s.), the Martyr of Karbalā, related to me; who said that my father `Alī bin Abī Ṭālib (a.s.), the Martyr of Kūfah, related to me; who said that my brother and paternal cousin Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.), the Messenger of Allāh (s.w.t.), related to me; who said that Jibraʾīl related to me, that I heard Allāh (s.w.t.) say: 'The statement Lā Ilāha illallāh (There is no other Deity except Allāh) is My stronghold. Then the one who utters it, enters into My stronghold. Then the one who enters into My stronghold, is safe from my punishment'" <sup>1,2</sup>

We (the Author) say that at this point we remembered the incident of Imām al Ḥusain (a.s.) on the day of the tenth of Muḥarram (`Āshūrā) when he stood facing the army of Kūfah and desired to counsel and advise them. However, the deprived ones of felicity and misguided ones raised their voices and refused to listen to his

<sup>1</sup> This honourable and renowned Ḥadīth is referred to as Ḥadīth Silsilatul Ḍahab (the Ḥadīth of the golden chain [of transmitters]) since it reaches the Prophet of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) through the Infallible A'immah (a.s.) without any other (fallible) transmitter. The report further says that after Imām (a.s.) uttered these words, his caravan proceeded further. Then he (a.s.) stopped and called out to us, "There are conditions (for it), and I am one of those conditions". (Shaikh al Ṣadūq, "`Uyūn Akhbār al Ridhā [a.s.]"). This Ḥadīth is quite important, since on one hand it implies that Monotheism (Tawḥīd) enters the believer into Allāh (s.w.t.)'s fortress, which is a safe haven, and from another hand it indicates that Imāmāh is a fundamental precondition of entering this haven. This Ḥadīth is not only found in the Shī'ah sources, however several Ahlul Sunnah sources also contain it, to name a few, Al Fuṣūlul Muhimmah of Ibn Ṣabbāg al Mālikī, Al Tadwīn fī Akhbār Qazwīn of `Abdul Karīm al Rāfi'ī al Qazwīnī, Ḥulyatul Awliyā' of Abū Nu`aym al Aṣbahānī, Yanābī'ul Mawaddah of Sulaymān al Qandūzī, Sharḥ al Jāme' al Ṣagīr of `Abdul Ra'ūf al Manāwī, Taḍkirah Khawāṣṣul Ummah of Sibṭ Ibnul Jawzī, Akhbārul Duwal wa Āthārul Uwal fil Tārīkh of Aḥmad bin Sinān al Dimashqī al Qirmānī, Miftāḥul Najāh of Ḥāfiḍ al Badakhshī, Ittiḥāful Sādatul Muttaqīn of Murtadhā al Zabīdī al Ḥanafī, Rabī' ul Abrār of Al Zamakhsharī, etc. Ḥāfiḍ Abū Nu`aym writes in his Ḥulyatul Awliyā' that, "This established and renowned Ḥadīth, supported by this chain (of transmitters), is related by the Chaste Ones (a.s.) from their Pure Forefathers (a.s.). Whenever some of our ancient traditionists witnessed this chain of transmitters, they would say that if this chain (of transmitters) is recited upon an insane one, he would be revived". (translator)

<sup>2</sup> Abul Qāsim al Qushayrī says that this Ḥadīth reached some of the Sāmāniyyah (Samanides) rulers, through this chain of transmitters. One of them ordered it to be written down in gold and bequeathed to place it in his grave along with him. After he died, someone saw him in a dream and the person asked him how Allāh (s.w.t.) faired with him. He replied, "Allāh (s.w.t.) forgave me since I pronounced the words Lā Ilāha illallāh (There is no other Deity except Allāh) and acknowledged Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.), the Messenger of Allāh with devotion and I wrote down this honorable Ḥadīth in gold due to its veneration. (Author)

counsels. He (a.s.) told them, "Woe be upon you! What has happened to you that you do not remain silent and listen to my words, while I invite you towards the path of guidance?" There was no devout one of Allāh (s.w.t.) present there, who would tell them, "O people! He is the son of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.). Why do you hurt him and do not remain silent so that he may counsel and conclude his speech?"

And this was one of the facts that Kumayt bin Zayd composed them in his verses, recited in the presence of Imām al Bāqir (a.s.) and he wept. He said, "The one killed at Ṭaff (Karbālā') was cheated, in the midst of the mob of the nation and the riff-raff". It is related that when Kumayt reached these lines of verses, Imām (a.s.) wept and said, "O Kumayt! We would have bestowed you wealth if we possessed it. However, we repeat the words for you what the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said to Ḥassān bin Thābit: You shall be assisted by the Holy Spirit (Rūḥul Qudus),<sup>1</sup> until you aid us by your tongue!"

Shaikh al Ṣadūq relates from Abū Wāse` Muḥammad bin Aḥmad al Naysābūrī, that I heard from my grandmother Khadījah, the daughter of Ḥamdān bin Pasandeh, that when Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) entered Naysābūr, he came to Maḥallat Fawzā in the region renowned as Lāshābād. He (a.s.) took residence at the house of my grandfather Pasandeh, while he was given this name since Imām (a.s.) chose him among people.<sup>2</sup> When Imām (a.s.) entered our house, he planted an almond-tree in its corner. The plant grew and turned into a huge tree in one year and bore fruits. When people were informed of it, they would take almond from it to gain cure. Whoever was afflicted with any disease, they would take the almond, eat it and get cured. And whoever was inflicted with pain in the eye, he would take the almond and place it upon his eye and would be cured. If a woman suffering from labor pains ate it, she would be relieved and give birth immediately. If any of the cattle had colic, a branch from the tree was tied upon its belly; the colic would vanish away, all these by the blessings of Imām al Ridhā (a.s.).

Some days passed and the tree dried up. My grandfather Ḥamdān came and

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<sup>1</sup> Holy Spirit is a spiritual entity of a very high order, whose function is to guide, inspire and infuse Prophetic spirit and confer any miraculous powers on the Holy individual, the Apostle and an Imām. Some say that it refers to Jibra'īl (Shaikh Mahdī Pūyā al Yazdī and S.V. Mīr Aḥmad `Alī, "The Holy Qur'ān: Text, Translation and Commentary") (translator)

<sup>2</sup> While Pasandeh in Fārsī means a selected, chosen or approved one. (translator)

removed some of his branches and lost his eye-sight. His son, who was called Abū `Amrū, came and uprooted the tree. All his property got wasted at the gate of Fars, which was worth seventy thousand to eighty thousand dirham, and he got nothing. Abū `Amrū had two sons, Abul Qāsim and Abū Ṣādiq, both of them were scribes for Abul Ḥasan Muḥammad bin Ibrāhīm Samjūr. They decided to rebuild the house and spent twenty thousand dirham for it. They pulled out the left-over roots of the tree without knowing what would be its consequence. Later one of them went to look after the property of the governor of Khurāsān and was returned to Khurāsān in a litter in a state that his right foot had turned black. Flesh fell off his foot and he passed away after a month due to this.

As for the elder brother, he was appointed an accountant in the office of the ruler of Khurāsān. One day a group of scribes were standing at his head while he was writing down. One of them said, "May Allāh (s.w.t.) ward off evil eye from the scribe". Immediately his hand started to tremble, the pen fell off his, beads appeared upon his hand and he returned home. Abul `Abbās, the scribe came to visit him, along with a group, and said, "This is due to heat. It is better you perform phlebotomize (Faṣḍ) today". He performed it, however, the next day it remained same. He was told to again perform it that day. He again got it done, however, his hand turned black, the flesh fell off from it and he passed away due to it; while both brothers died in less than a year.

Shaikh al Ṣadūq also relates that when Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) entered Naysābūr, he alighted at Maḥallat Fawzā and built a bathhouse there that is today renowned as the bathhouse of Imām al Ridhā (a.s.). There was a spring beside it whose water had lessened. Imām (a.s.) ordered someone to go in and remove the water until it increased. A pond was built near the door that had some steps leading to the spring. Imām (a.s.) entered the stream, took a bath, came out and then offered Prayers behind it. People would come to the stream, take a bath in it and drink from it to gain affluence. They would offer Prayers behind it, recite supplications and ask their requests from Allāh (s.w.t.) that would be fulfilled. The stream is today named `Ayne Kahlān', while even today people visit it.<sup>1</sup>

We (the Author) say that Ibn Shahr Āshūb has quoted this report in his Al Manāqib

<sup>1</sup> Even today this stream exists at the village of Al Ḥamrā' and besides it is the Qadam Gāh (shrine of the foot print) that contains the foot print of Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) upon a rock. And people flock there from far and wide to seek blessings. (translator)

and mentions the reason of its name and then says that a Gazelle came to visit Imām (a.s.) at that spot and requested refuge from him (a.s.). While Ibn Ḥammād points out to this in his verses, "The one whose protection was taken by the deer while the people were sitting, the one whose father is Al Murtadhā the one who is pure and lofty and walks with dignity".

Shaikh al Ṣadūq and Ibn Shahr Āshūb relate from Abul Ṣalt that when Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) left Naysābūr to go to Ma'mūn, he reached near the village of Al Ḥamrā'. He (a.s.) was told, "O son of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.)! It is the time of Zawāl, then won't you offer prayers?" Imām (a.s.) alighted and asked for water. They replied that they did not have water. Hearing this, he (a.s.) turned the earth with his blessed hands and water gushed forth from it, until he (a.s.) and all those along with him performed the ablutions (Wudhū`), while it is present until today.

When Imām (a.s.) entered Sanābād, he sat supporting his back against a mountain from which pots were carved out.<sup>1</sup> Then Imām (a.s.) said, "O Allāh (s.w.t.)! Grant benefit to it, grant affluence to what is taken from it and carved out of it". Then Imām (a.s.) ordered pots to be carved from its rocks and said, "Do not cook anything that I eat, except from it". While Imām (a.s.) ate less. From that day, people came to the mountain and made pots, while affluence through Imām (a.s.)'s prayers became evident.

Thereafter Imām (a.s.) entered the house of Ḥamīd bin Qaḥṭabah al Ṭā'ī and entered the canopy that contained the grave of Hārūn al Rashīd. Then he (a.s.) drew a line besides it and said, "This is my grave and I shall be buried herein. Allāh (s.w.t.) shall make this spot a place of descent for my Shi`ah and my lovers. By Allāh (s.w.t.)! No pilgrim among them who visits me, or salutes me among them, except that the pardon of Allāh (s.w.t.) shall be incumbent for him and His Mercy due to our, the Ahl al Bait (a.s.)'s intercession (Shafā`ah)". Saying this, Imām (a.s.) turned to the Qiblah and offered units (Rak`ah) of Prayers. Thereafter he (a.s.) recited supplications (Du`ā') and then fell into a lengthy prostration (Sajdah), I counted his Glorification (Tasbīḥ) in it to be five hundred, then he left.

Sayyid Ibn Ṭāwūs relates from Yāsir, the servant of Ma'mūn, that when Abul Ḥasan

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<sup>1</sup> Today it is known as Kūhi Sang (the mountain of the rock), while pots and utensils for cooking food are made out of it for blessings. (translator)



‘Alī bin Mūsā al Ridhā (a.s.) settled in the palace of Ḥamīd bin Qaḥṭabah, he (a.s.) removed his clothes and handed them over to Ḥamīd. Ḥamīd in turn handed them over to his maid to wash them. After some time the maid returned with a paper in her hand and handed it over to Ḥamīd, saying, “I found this in the pocket of Abul Ḥasan (al Ridhā)”. Ḥamīd told Imām (a.s.), “May I be ransom upon you! The maid has found a paper in the pocket of your shirt and here it is”. Imām (a.s.) said, “O Ḥamīd! It is an amulet (Ḥīrz) that I never separate from me”. Ḥamīd requested Imām (a.s.)’s permission to bless him with it and he (a.s.) replied, “It is an amulet that if one preserves it in his pocket, tribulations shall be warded off him. While it is also a protection against Shayṭān, the accursed. Then Imām (a.s.) dictated the amulet to Ḥamīd, “Bismillāhil Raḥmānil Raḥīm. Bismillāhi innī A`ūdū bil Raḥmāni Minka in Kunta Taqīyyan aw Gayr Taqīyy, Akhaḍtu billāhil Samī il Baṣīri `alā Sam`ika wa Baṣarika, Lā Sulṭana lakā `Alayya wa lā `alā Sam`i wa lā Baṣarī wa lā `alā Sha`rī wa lā `alā Basharī wa lā `alā Lahmī wa lā `alā Damī wa lā `alā Mukkhī wa lā `alā `Aṣabī wa lā `alā Iḏāmi wa lā `alā Ahlī wa lā `alā Mālī wa lā `alā mā Razaqanī Rabbī, Satartu Baynī wa Baynaka bi Sitratil Nubūwwati allaḍī Istatara biḥī Anbiyā`ullāhi min Sulṭānil Farā`inah. Jabra`ilu `an Yamīnī wa Mīkā`ilu `an Yasārī Wa Isrāfīlu min Warā`ī wa Muḥammadun Ṣallallāhu `Alayhi wa Ālihi Amāmī. Wallāhu Muttali`un `alā mā Yamna`uka wa Yamna`ul Shayṭāna minnī. Allāhumma lā Yaglibu Jahluḥū Anātaka an Yastafizzanī wa Yastakhiffanī. Allāhumma `Ilayka Iltaja`tu, Allāhumma `Ilayka Iltaja`tu, Allāhumma `Ilayka Iltaja`tu [In the Name of Allāh, verily I fly for refuge in the Beneficent (Allāh) from you, if you are pious or not pious. I take Allāh, the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing, upon your hear and your sight; you have neither authority upon me, nor my hearing, nor my sight, nor my hair, nor my skin, nor my flesh, nor my brain (thinking), nor my nerves, nor my bones, nor my family, nor my wealth, nor upon that what my Lord has bestowed me; I draw a veil between me and you by the veil of Prophet hood, by which the Prophets (a.s.) of Allāh veiled themselves from the authority of the Pharaohs. Jabra`il in on my right, Mikā`il is on my left, Isrāfīl is behind me, and Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.) in front of me; and Allāh is well-aware of how to deter you (from me) and how to deter Shayṭān from me; O Allāh! Your clemency cannot be overpowered by his ignorance so as to provoke me or belittle me; O Allāh! I seek refuge in You! O Allāh! I seek refuge in You! O Allāh! I seek refuge in You!].”

There is an interesting narrative and an astonishing tale has been narrated for this

amulet (Ḥirz) as related by Abul Ṣalt al Harawī. He says that once my Master `Alī bin Mūsā al Ridhā (a.s.) was seated in his house when a messenger of Ma'mūn arrived, saying, "Reply to the call of the commander". `Alī bin Mūsā al Ridhā (a.s.) arose and told me, "O Abal Ṣalt! He had not called me at this hour except for something grievous. By Allāh (s.w.t.)! He cannot fair me in a manner that I detest due the words of my grandfather, the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), which has reached me". Abul Ṣalt says that saying this, Imām (a.s.) left, while I was along with him. When we entered Ma'mūn's presence and Imām (a.s.)'s sight fell upon him, he (a.s.) recited this amulet until the end in front of Ma'mūn. When Ma'mūn looked at him (a.s.), he said, "O Abal Ḥasan! We have ordered you to be bestowed a hundred thousand dirham and also write down for us needs of your family". And when `Alī bin Mūsā bin Ja'far (a.s.) left his presence, Ma'mūn looked behind him and said, "I desired (evil for him) and Allāh (s.w.t.) too desired (fairness). And Allāh (s.w.t.) does not desire except the best".

When Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) entered Marw, Ma'mūn honored and welcomed him warmly. He gathered his distinguished ones and companions and announced, saying, "O people! Certainly I looked at the family of `Abbās (i.e. Banī `Abbās) and the family of `Alī (bin Abī Ṭālib), and found no one most excellent, most devout and most rightful for the caliphate than `Alī bin Mūsā (a.s.)". Then he turned to Imām (a.s.) and said, "I have opined to relieve myself from the caliphate, allot it to you and pledge allegiance (Bay`ah) at your hands". Hearing this, Imām (a.s.) said, "Verily if the caliphate belongs to you and Allāh (s.w.t.) had allotted it for you, it is not lawful for you to take off what Allāh (s.w.t.) has apportioned to you and give it to someone else. And if it does not belong to you, it is not lawful to bestow me what does not belong to you". Hearing this, Ma'mūn said, "O son of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.)! There is no way except that you should accept it". Imām (a.s.) replied, "I shall never accept it willingly".

This conversation continued among them for two months, thus Ma'mūn kept on insisting each day and since Imām (a.s.) knew his motive, he kept on refusing. When Ma'mūn lost all hope of Imām (a.s.) accepting it, he told him (a.s.), "Then if you do not accept the caliphate and do not like my allegiance (Bay`ah) to you, then be my heir-apparent, so that the caliphate may be passed on to you after me". Hearing this, Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) said, "By Allāh (s.w.t.)! My father (Imām al Kāẓim) informed to me from his forefathers (a.s.), from Amīrul Mu'minīn (a.s.), from the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) that I would leave this world before you,

martyred by poison as an oppressed one. While the Angels of the heavens and the Angels of the earth shall weep upon me. I shall be buried at an alien land besides Hārūn al Rashīd". When Ma'mūn heard this, he wept and said, "O son of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.)! Who shall kill you and be able to harm you when I am alive?" Imām (a.s.) replied, "However, if I wish to say who will kill me, I will say".

Then Ma'mūn said, "O son of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.)! By uttering these words you desire to relieve yourself (from the heir-apparency) and shun it off from you, so that people may say that you are abstinent of this world". Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) replied, "By Allāh (s.w.t.)! I have not spoken a lie from the day my Lord (s.w.t.) created me. I have not abstained from the world (with an intention) to acquire it. And I very well know what you desire". And Ma'mūn asked him (a.s.) what he desired. Imām (a.s.) replied, "You desire that people may say that `Alī bin Mūsā (a.s.) did not abstain from the world, rather the world abstained from him. Did you not see how he accepted the heir-apparency in greed of the caliphate?" Hearing this, Ma'mūn was enraged and said, "You always treat me with what I detest and you think you are immune from my authority? I swear by Allāh (s.w.t.) that you should accept the heir-apparency, or else I shall force you to do so. If you accept, it is fine, but if you refuse, I shall strike off your head".

When Imām (a.s.) heard this, he (a.s.) said, "Allāh (s.w.t.) has stopped me from getting myself destroyed. Then if this is the case, do as you wish. I shall accept it on the condition that I shall neither appoint anyone (upon a post) nor depose anyone, I shall neither nullify any practice or custom; while I shall be a distant adviser". Saying this, Imām (a.s.) raised his hands towards the heavens and said, "O Allāh (s.w.t.)! You have stopped me from getting myself destroyed, while I hate and am compelled, similar to Yūsuf (a.s.) and Dāniyāl (a.s.), both of whom were compelled to accept the authority from the tyrant of their age.<sup>1</sup> There is no covenant except Your covenant! And there is no Authority for me except that from You. Then offer me a good fortune to establish Your Religion and enlivening the customs (Sunnah) of Your Prophet (s.a.w.a.). For verily You are a Master and an

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<sup>1</sup> Nabī Yūsuf (a.s.) chose to accept charge of the storehouses from the ruler (Pharaoh) of his age with an intention to guide him and others to the Right Path of Monotheism (Tawḥīd). Similarly Darius, the King of the Achaemenid Empire appointed Nabī Dāniyāl (a.s.) one among his three viziers and handed them the affairs of his entire kingdom to them. (translator)

Aide, the Most Excellent Master and the Most Excellent Aide". Thus, he (a.s.) accepted the heir-apparency from Ma'mūn, while he was weeping and aggrieved.<sup>1</sup>

The next day, i.e. the sixth of the month of Ramadhān, as evident from the book Tārīkhul Shar`īyyah of Shaikh al Mufīd, Ma'mūn organized a grand gathering. He sat Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) upon a chair beside him and spread a carpet for him. He gathered the eminent personalities, notables, chiefs and scholars and ordered his son `Abbās to precede the people in swearing allegiance (Bay`ah) at his hands. He proceeded further, followed by the other people, in swearing allegiance (Bay`ah) to `Alī al Ridhā (a.s.). Then golden crescents were placed, while the orators and poets stood to praise Imām (a.s.) and obtain gifts. His (a.s.)'s name was pronounced from the pulpits, while coins were engraved with it. In the same year the orators delivered sermons upon the pulpits in Madīnah, prayed for him (a.s.) and said, "The heir-apparent of the Muslims, `Alī bin Mūsā bin Ja`far bin Muḥammad bin `Alī bin al Ḥusain bin `Alī bin Abī Ṭālib (a.s.)".

Verses, "These are six grandfathers, who are the best among those who drink the water of the clouds".

Then Ma'mūn issued orders to forsake the black color, that was a symbol of Banī `Abbās and wear green color dresses (symbol of Banī Hāshim). He married his daughter Umm Ḥabīb to Imām (a.s.) and married his other daughter Ummul Fadhl to his son Muḥammad al Tāqī (a.s.). He also contracted the marriage of Ishāq bin Mūsā (al Kāẓim) to the daughter of his paternal uncle Ishāq bin Ja`far (al Ṣādiq). While the same year, Imām (a.s.)'s brother Ibrāhīm bin Mūsā (al Kāẓim) was sent to perform the Ḥajj Pilgrimage, along with the people, at the orders of Ma'mūn.

It is related that when the day of `Īd came forth, Ma'mūn sent a messenger to Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) to mount and go to lead `Īd Prayers. Then he (a.s.) should deliver the sermon so that the hearts of the people may be assured (of his heir-apparency), recognize his excellence and their hearts may be comforted through the auspicious sovereignty. Imām (a.s.) sent him a reply, saying, "You very well know the conditions that I laid out between you and me in accepting this matter

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<sup>1</sup> Muḥammad bin `Arafah relates that I asked Imām al Ridhā (a.s.), "O son of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.)! What forced you to accept the heir-apparency?" He (a.s.) replied, "The same thing that forced my grandfather Amīrul Mu'mīnīn (a.s.) to be included in the council (appointed by `Umar to elect a caliph after him)". (Shaikh al Ṣadūq, "'Uyūn Akhbār al Ridhā [a.s.]") (translator)

(heir-apparency)”. Again Ma’mūn sent him (a.s.) message, that, “I desire that the public, the army and the officers may feel sure of this matter and assure their hearts, while I may comfort them through the excellence bestowed upon you by Allāh (s.w.t.)”. Discussion continued among them and when Imām (a.s.) saw that Ma’mūn kept on insisting, he said, “O commander! If you excuse me, it would be most pleasing to me, however, if you do not excuse (and keep insisting), I shall leave for it (the `Īd Prayers), similar to how the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) left as well as similar to how Amīrul Mu’minīn `Alī bin Abī Ṭālib (a.s.) left”. Hearing this, Ma’mūn sent him message that he should leave in a manner he desired.

Ma’mūn ordered his officers and the general public to arise early morning and wait at the door of Abul Ḥasan al Ridhā (a.s.). People stood for Imām (a.s.) upon the streets and the terraces, men, women and children, while the officers gathered at his (a.s.)’s door. When the sun rose, Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) arose, took a bath and tied a white cotton turban upon his blessed head, leaving one of its end upon his chest and the other between his shoulders. Then he (a.s.) told all his attendants to do as he did. Then he (a.s.) took a cane in his hand and left, while we (the narrator) too followed him. He walked bare-feet, rolled his trousers half way to the knees and even rolled his dress. When we walked along with him (a.s.), he raised his head towards the heavens and recited four Takbīr (Allāhu Akbar, Allāh is the Greatest). We felt as if the atmosphere and walls followed him (in reciting Takbīr). The officers and the people stood at his door in full adornment. They carried their weapons and were prepared with their best adornment. We reached them in this form, bare-feet and rolled up dresses, and Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) appeared among the people, stopped at the door and said, “Allāhu Akbar, Allāhu Akbar, Allāhu Akbaru `alā mā Hadānā, Allāhu Akbaru `alā mā Razaqanā min Bahīmatil An`āmi, wal Ḥamdulillāhi `alā mā Ablānā [Allāh is the Greatest, Allāh is the Greatest, Allāh is the Greatest upon what He guided us, Allāh is Greatest upon what He bestowed us sustenance from the (flesh of) cattle. And all Praise be to Allāh upon what He has tried us]”.

Imām (a.s.) raised his voice (in Takbīr) and we too did so, while entire Marw trembled with the sound of weeping and shrieking. He (a.s.) repeated this thrice. When the army saw Abul Ḥasan (a.s.) (in this form), they jumped off their mounts and threw away their shoes, while he (a.s.) was in the best form than all of them. Whoever had knives, cut off the tassels of their anklets. The entire Marw clamored in one voice, while people could not control themselves from weeping and

shrieking. Imām Abul Ḥasan (a.s.) walked, then stopped at each ten steps and recited four Takbīr at each stop. We felt as if the heavens, earth and the walls followed him (in reciting it). When this news reached Ma'mūn, his vizier Fadhl bin Sahl, told him, "O commander! If Al Ridhā (a.s.) reaches the spot of Prayer in this manner, it will give rise to sedition. You should consider telling him to return back". Hearing this, Ma'mūn sent Imām (a.s.) message to return back. Imām (a.s.) asked for his slippers, wore them and returned back. That day the matter of people fell into differences, while the matter of their Prayers became confused.

Although Ma'mūn outwardly favored Imām al Ridhā (a.s.), respected and honored him, however, deep in his heart he was hypocritical and bore enmity and hatred towards him (a.s.), similar to the words of Allāh (s.w.t.), **"They are the enemy (of yours), so beware of them"**.<sup>1</sup> Ma'mūn was his (a.s.) enemy, rather one of his severest enemies, while in open he pretended to be his close friend. However, from inside he was similar to a snake, who troubled Imām (a.s.) by his venomous stings. While the heir-apparency of Imām (a.s.) was the starting of calamities and trials by Ma'mūn.

One of the companions and distinguished ones of Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) says that I was along with him (a.s.) on the day when Imām (a.s.) sat after obtaining the heir-apparency. He (a.s.) glanced at me, while I was pleased at what had occurred. He (a.s.) signaled me to near him. I went near and he told me, when none could hear him except me, "Do not let your heart be pleased by this, for it is a matter that shall not be accomplished".

`Alī bin Muḥammad bin al Jahm says that once Ma'mūn organized a gathering in which `Alī bin Mūsā al Ridhā (a.s.) was present. He gathered the jurists and the scholastics, who were questioning Ma'mūn, while he was questioning Imām (a.s.) and replying to them. Until the report says that when Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) arose, I too followed him to his house and told him, "O son of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.)! Praise be to Allāh (s.w.t.) Who bestowed you a best opinion of the commander (Ma'mūn), among his respect towards you and acknowledging your word". Hearing this, Imām (a.s.) said, "O son of Al Jahm! Let not allure you what you witnessed from him regarding respecting me and listening to my words. For he shall kill me by poison and shall be my oppressor. I know this by the promise

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<sup>1</sup> Holy Qur'ān, Sūratul Munāfiqūn: 4

of my forefathers (a.s.) to me, from the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.). Then conceal this statement (of mine) until I am alive”.

Summarily, Imām (a.s.) was hurt and pained by the misdeeds of Ma’mūn and his bad attitude, however, he (a.s.) could not reveal it to anyone. Ultimately his heart constrained and he (a.s.) desired from Allāh (s.w.t.) to hasten his death. Yāsir al Khādim says that when Imām (a.s.) would return from the Masjid on Fridays, smeared in sweat and earth, he (a.s.) would raise his hands and say, “O my Allāh (s.w.t.)! If my relief, from what I am presently entangled, lies in my death, then hasten it for me”. He (a.s.) constantly remained grievous until he passed away.

And if an intelligent person ponders upon the behavior of Ma’mūn and his dealings with Imām (a.s.), he shall acknowledge our statement and believe in it. Can an intelligent person imagine that Ma’mūn, the lover of this world, who ordered the killing of his own brother Muḥammad al Amīn in the severest manner; and when his head was sent to him, he ordered it to be hung upon a wood at the door of his house; and even ordered his army officers who cursed him to take their rewards. Is it logically possible that such a person, who was greedy of caliphate and the kingdom, submerged in the love of this world and materialistic position, invite Imām (a.s.) from Madīnah to Marw to depose himself from the caliphate and present it to him, and force him to do so for two months? This is nothing but clear deceit and fiendish. How could this be when the caliphate was the coolness of the eyes of Ma’mūn, while it is said that verily the kingdom is sterile. Muḥammad al Amīn clearly recognized the personality of his brother when he asked Aḥmad bin Salām, who had come to arrest him and he asked him, “Shall Ma’mūn kill me?” Aḥmad replied, “Certainly he shall not kill you, while the bond of relation (among yourselves) shall vouchsafe you”. Hearing this Al Amīn said, “Far be it! Verily the kingdom is sterile and has no mercy”.

Moreover, Ma’mūn was never pleased to declare any excellence of Imām al Ridhā (a.s.), as is evident from the above stated reports. While this can be known from the report that when Imām (a.s.) left to perform the `Īd Prayers, Ma’mūn later refrained him from it, etc. Also this can be verified from the report of Rajā’ bin Abil Dhahḥāk when he informed Ma’mūn regarding the excellence, traits and worship of Imām (a.s.), he told him, “However, do not reveal to anyone what you witnessed from him”. Then he uttered these words, just for his own convenience and his fiendishness, “I do not wish that his excellence may manifest, except

through my tongue". However, when he witnessed that even after so much constraint on his part, the knowledge of Imām (a.s.) spread far and wide, and his excellence and perfection manifested among people, while they were drawn to him and loved him, the fire of hatred kindled in his heart. Ultimately he started to draft conspiracies to finish him (a.s.), while he concluded that he should be poisoned. Thus he poisoned and ultimately killed him (a.s.).

Shaikh al Ṣadūq relates from Aḥmad bin `Alī who says that I asked Abul Ṣalt al Harawī, "How could the heart of Ma'mūn be delighted upon killing Al Ridhā (a.s.) when he honored and loved him, and even bestowed him the heir-apparency after him?" He replied, "Verily Ma'mūn honored and loved him (a.s.) since he recognized his excellence. However, he bestowed him the heir-apparency after him, so that people may understand that he (a.s.) was inclined towards the world. However his plan back-fired. And when this too did not prove fruitful, while his (a.s.)' excellences increased in people's eyes and his status among them, he summoned the scholastics from far towns, in greed that anyone among them might defeat him (a.s.) and his status may lessen in the eyes of the scholars. Consequently his (a.s.) defect may manifest among the masses. However, he (a.s.) did not speak to his opponents among the Jews, Christians, Magi, Sabians, Brahmans, infidels and atheists, or among his opponents among the other Muslim sects, except that he vanquished them and refuted them with arguments. The people said, By Allāh (s.w.t.)! He is most worthy for the caliphate than Ma'mūn. The reporters conveyed to Ma'mūn and he became furious and his envy for him (a.s.) increased. Moreover, Imām (a.s.) did not fear Ma'mūn in revealing the truth and replied to him in a (straightforward) manner that he did not like. Ma'mūn bore malice towards Imām (a.s.), however, he did not reveal it. And when all his plots failed, he assassinated him (a.s.) by poison".

We (the Author) say that we consider it appropriate at this point to relate a debate of Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) and bestow embellishment to our book by it.

Shaikh al Ṣadūq relates from Ḥasan bin Muḥammad al Nawfalī al Hāshemī that when `Alī bin Mūsā al Ridhā (a.s.) went to Ma'mūn (at Khurāsān), he ordered Fadhl bin Sahl to gather a group of rhetoricians such as Jāthālīq (Catholicos, the Christian Archbishop), Ra'as al Jālūt (Exilarch, the Jewish Rabbī), chiefs of the Sabians (Al Ṣābi'īn), Al Hirbiḍ (the Magi priest), followers of Zorādasht (Zoroaster), Niṣṭās (Nestus, the Roman Scientist) and other scholastics to hear his (a.s.)'s



words and their words. Fadhl bin Sahl called them and informed Ma'mūn regarding their arrival. He commanded them to be brought to him. When they entered, he honored them greatly and then told them, "Verily I have gathered you for goodness. I love that you debate with my cousin from Madīnah, who shall come to me. Tomorrow come to me and none among you should be absent". They replied, "We listen and obey you O commander! We shall be here first thing in the morning, Allāh (s.w.t.) willing".

Ḥasan bin Muḥammad al Nawfalī says that when we were speaking to Abul Ḥasan al Ridhā (a.s.), Yāsir al Khādīm, who was appointed to serve Abul Ḥasan (a.s.), came and said, "O my Master! The commander sends salutations to you and says that: May your brother be ransom upon you! The rhetoricians, people of other Religions and scholastics from all nations have gathered near me. Then if you wish to speak to them, come to us tomorrow; if not then do not burden yourself. And if you desire, we shall come to you and that is easy for us". Hearing this, Abul Ḥasan (a.s.) replied, "Convey salutations to him and tell him that I understood what you desire, and I shall come to you tomorrow, Allāh (s.w.t.) willing".

Ḥasan bin Muḥammad al Nawfalī continues that when Yāsir left, Imām (a.s.) turned to us and asked me, "O Nawfalī! You are from `Irāq, while an `Irāqī's heart is not harsh. Then what do you think regarding your cousin why he gathered the people of polytheism (Shirk) and rhetoricians for us?" I replied, "May I be ransom upon you! He desires to test you and wants to know what knowledge you possess. He has set up a structure upon flaccid bases, and whatever he has set up is evil, by Allāh (s.w.t.)"! Imām (a.s.) said, "And what has he set up in this regard?" I replied, "Verily the people of scholasticism and innovation are opposite to the scholars. Since, a scholar does not deny the undeniable; whereas rhetoricians, scholastics and the polytheists are people of denial and vanity. Then if you debate with them and say that Allāh (s.w.t.) is One, they shall say: Demonstrate His Oneness. And if you say that Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.) is the Messenger of Allāh, they shall say: Prove his Messenger ship. They confuse the person and when he refutes them with his evidences, they disapprove him until he abandons his word. Then beware of them, may I be ransom upon you"!

Hearing this, Imām (a.s.) smiled and said, "O Nawfalī! Are you afraid that they might refute my argument?" I replied, "No, by Allāh (s.w.t.)! I never thought so. And certainly I desire that Allāh (s.w.t.) may grant you victory upon them, Allāh

(s.w.t.) willing”. Then Imām (a.s.) said, “O Nawfalī! Do you wish to know when Ma’mūn shall regret holding this gathering?” I replied in the affirmative and Imām (a.s.) continued, “When he shall hear me debate with the people of Torah (Tawrāt) through their Torah, the people of the Bible (Injīl) through their Bible, the people of Psalms (Zabūr) through their psalms, the Sabians in their Hebrew language, the Magi in their Persian language, the Romans in their Latin (or Greek) language and the rhetoricians in their own languages. When I refute each one among their categories and obliterate their arguments, until they forsake their statement and acknowledge my word, at that moment Ma’mūn shall realize that he did not achieve what he had intended. At that time he shall regret it. **There is no might and no power except with Allāh, the Most High, the Most Great**”.

The next morning, Fadhl bin Sahl came to us and said, “May I be ransom upon you! Your cousin is waiting for you. The people have gathered, then when shall you arrive?” Imām (a.s.) replied, “You proceed further and I shall come to you, Allāh (s.w.t.) willing”.

Thereafter Imām (a.s.) performed his ablutions (Wudhū`), drank some Sawīq and gave it to us also. Then he (a.s.) left and we followed him until we entered the presence of Ma’mūn. We found his gathering replete with people, while Muḥammad bin Ja`far (al Ṣādiq) was also sitting in the midst of the Ṭālibīyīn and Banī Hāshim, as well as the officers were also present. When Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) entered therein, Ma’mūn arose to greet him, and also Muḥammad bin Ja`far and the Banī Hāshim. They remained standing until Imām (a.s.) sat along with Ma’mūn and the latter signaled them to sit. When they sat, Ma’mūn turned to him (a.s.) and spoke to him for some time.

Then Ma’mūn turned to Jāthālīq (Catholicos) and said, “O Catholicos! This is my paternal cousin, `Alī bin Mūsā bin Ja`far (a.s.), among the children of Fāṭemah (s.a.), the daughter of our Prophet (a.s.) and the son of `Alī bin Abī Ṭālib (a.s.). I prefer that you speak to him, debate with him and treat him with fairness”. Catholicos replied, “O commander! How can I argue with a person who would debate with me with a book (Qur`ān) that I refuse and a Prophet (s.a.w.a.) in whom I do not believe?” Hearing this, Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) said, “O Christian! If I debate with you from your Bible (Injīl), will you acknowledge through it?” Catholicos replied, “Can I refute what the Bible says? By Allāh (s.w.t.)! I shall agree to it even if I dislike”.

Then Imām (a.s.) said, "Then ask whatever you wish and take your reply". Catholicos asked, "What do you say about the Prophet hood of `Īsā (a.s.) and his book? Do you refuse any one of them?" Imām (a.s.) replied, "I acknowledge the Prophet hood of `Īsā (a.s.), his book and the glad tidings that he gave to his nation, while his disciples (Ḥawārīyīn) acknowledged it. However, I refuse the `Īsā, who did not accept the Prophet hood of Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.) and his book (Qur'ān), and who did not give glad tidings to his nation". Then Catholicos asked, "Isn't it that the ordinances are accepted by two just witnesses?" Imām (a.s.) replied in the affirmative and he asked, "Then show me two witnesses, not belonging to your nation, who acknowledge the Prophet hood of Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.) and who are not rejected by the Christians. And also ask us similarly from people other than our nation".

Hearing this, Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) said, "Now you speak fairly. O Christian! What do you say about Yuḥannā al Daylamī (John, the Daylamite)?" He replied, "Well done! You have mentioned a man who was most lovable near Al Masīḥ (a.s.)". Then Imām (a.s.) continued, "Then I ask you to swear that is it not quoted in the Bible (Injīl) that Yuḥannā said: The Masīḥ (Messiah) informed me regarding the Religion of Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.), the `Arab, and gave me glad tidings that he (s.a.w.a.) would arrive after him. I in turn informed the disciples (Ḥawārīyīn) and they believed in him?" Catholicos replied, "Yuḥannā certainly quoted it from Al Masīḥ (Messiah) and gave glad tidings of the Prophet hood of a man, and his progeny (a.s.) and his Vicegerent (a.s.). However he did not specify when it would take place, while he did not name him and the nation so we may recognize him".

Imām (a.s.) continued, "Then if we get you a person who could read you the Bible (Injīl) and read out to you the name of Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.), his progeny (a.s.) and his nation, will you believe in him?" Catholicos replied, "Very true". Then Imām (a.s.) turned to Nestus, the Roman, and asked, "How have you memorized the third book of the Bible (Injīl)?" He replied, "I have memorized it". Then he (a.s.) turned towards the Exilarch (Jewish Rabbī) and asked, "Can you not read the Bible (Injīl)?" He replied in the affirmative. Then Imām (a.s.) said, "Now take the third book of the Bible (Injīl). Then if the name of Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.), his progeny (a.s.) and his nation is mentioned in it, bear witness to my words. However, if there is no mention of them in it, do not bear witness to my words". Then Imām (a.s.) started to read the third book of the Bible (Injīl) when he reached the mention of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.). He (a.s.) stopped and asked, "O Christian! I ask

you in the name of Masīḥ (a.s.) and his mother (Maryam)! Do you realize that I am a scholar in the Bible (Injīl)?” He replied in the affirmative and Imām (a.s.) read out the mention of Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.), his progeny (a.s.) and his nation. Then he (a.s.) asked, “What do you say O Christian? This is the statement of `Isā bin Maryam (a.s.). Then if you belie what the Bible (Injīl) says, you actually belie `Isā (a.s.) and Mūsā (a.s.). Then if you deny this statement, you are worthy of being killed (by your own people), since you have committed disbelief towards your Lord, your Prophet and your book?” Catholicos replied, “I do not deny what has been revealed to me from the Bible (Injīl) and I acknowledge it”. Hearing this, Imām (a.s.) said, “Bear witness upon his acknowledgment”.

Again Imām (a.s.) told him, “O Catholicos! Ask whatever you wish”. He asked, “Tell me regarding the disciples (Ḥawārīyīn) of `Isā bin Maryam, how many were they? As also the scholars of the Bible (Injīl), how many were they?” Imām (a.s.) replied, “You have reached the expert. As for the disciples, they were twelve men, while the most superior and most knowledgeable among them was Alūkā (Luke). As for the Christian scholars, they were three, Yūḥannā (John), the elder, of Ajj (in Baṣrah); Yuḥannā (John) of Qarqīsiyā and Yuḥannā al Daylamī (John al Dailamite) of Rajjāz. It was the last one who possessed information regarding the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), his progeny (a.s.) and his nation; and it was he who gave glad tidings to the nation of `Isā (a.s.) and Banī Isrāʾīl regarding him”.

Then Imām (a.s.) said, “O Christian! Verily we believe in the `Isā (a.s.) who believed in Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.) and we do not find in your `Isā anything except his frailty and his scarcity in fasting and prayers”. Hearing this, Catholicos replied, “By Allāh (s.w.t.)! Your knowledge has corrupted and your matter has weakened. I had not considered you except the most learned among the Muslims”. Imām (a.s.) asked him why he said so and he replied, “Since your statement that your `Isā is frail, with less fasting and less prayers. However `Isā (a.s.) never ate during the day and never slept at night. He always fasted during the day and remained awake at night (in worship”. Immediately Imām (a.s.) asked, “Then for whom did he fast and pray?”<sup>1</sup> Hearing this Catholicos became silent and stopped.

Imām (a.s.) then asked, “O Christian! I shall ask you an issue”. He replied, “Ask, I shall reply to you if I possess knowledge of it”. Imām (a.s.) asked, “Why do you

<sup>1</sup> Imām (a.s.) meant to say that since he was included in the trinity (the three persons of the Christian Godhead; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), whom did he pray to? (translator)

refuse to accept that `Īsā (a.s.) enlivened the dead by the permission of Allāh (s.w.t.)?" Catholicos replied, "I refused that earlier since the one who enlivened the dead and cured the innate blind and leper is the Lord who is worthy of worship". He (a.s.) replied, "In that case Al Yasa`a (a.s.) (Elisha) even did what `Īsā (a.s.) did. He walked upon the river, enlivened the dead and cured the innate blind and leper. However, his nation neither accepted him as the Lord nor any one among them worshipped him apart from Allāh (s.w.t.). While also Nabī Hizqīl (a.s.) (Ezekiel) did what `Īsā bin Maryam (a.s.) did, while he enlivened thirty five thousand men sixty years after their death".

Thereafter Imām (a.s.) turned to Exilarch (Jewish Rabbī) and asked, "O Exilarch! Have you found regarding these youth among the Banī Isrā'īl in the Torah (Tawrah)? When Nebuchadnezzar (Bukhtul Naṣṣar) attacked Baytul Muqaddas, he chose them as prisoners from the Banī Isrā'īl and sent them to Bābil. Then Allāh (s.w.t.) dispatched Al Yasa`a (a.s.) (Elisha) and he enlivened them. This is the Torah (Tawrah). None except a disbeliever among you can deny this". Exilarch replied, "We have heard about this and know it". Imām (a.s.) said, "You have spoken the truth". Then he (a.s.) said, "O Jew! Take this book from the Torah (Tawrah)". Then he (a.s.) read out to us some verses from the Torah (Tawrah) and the Jew listened with interest, while he tottered by his (a.s.)'s reading and was bewildered. Then Imām (a.s.) turned to Catholicos and asked, "O Christian! Then tell me were these people (Al Yasa`a and Hizqīl) before `Īsā (a.s.) or `Īsā (a.s.) was before them?" He replied, "Rather they were before him".

Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) then continued, "The Quraysh gathered near the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and told him to enliven their dead ones. He (s.a.w.a.) dispatched `Alī bin Abī Ṭālib (a.s.) among them and told him, 'Go to Al Jabbānah and call out the names of those individuals regarding whom they say. Then call out to them saying: O so and so! O so and so! O so and so! Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.), the Messenger of Allāh, tells you to arise by the permission of Allāh (s.w.t.)'. Amīrul Mu'minīn (a.s.) did as commanded and they arose dusting the earth off their heads. The Quraysh proceeded further and questioned them regarding their state and they informed them that Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.) was sent as a Prophet. Then they told the Quraysh, 'We wish we had met him, then we would have believed in him'. And he (s.a.w.a.) cured the innate lepers, blind ones and the insane; while he (s.a.w.a.) spoke to the beasts, birds, genie and the devils, however, we do not accept him as our Lord, apart from Allāh (s.w.t.). We do not deny the excellences

of anyone among them (the Prophets). Then when you have taken `Īsā (a.s.) as the Lord, is it also permissible for you to accept Al Yasa`a (a.s.) and Hizqīl (a.s.) as Lords too? Since, they did what `Īsā (a.s.) did, such as enlivening the dead, etc.?"

Imām (a.s.) continued, "Certainly a group from the Banī Isrā'īl fled their towns in fear of famine, while they were thousands in number. Death came to them and Allāh (s.w.t.) made them die at the same time. The people of that town built a fence around them, while they remained there until their bones decayed and turned into dust. When one of the Prophets (a.s.) of Banī Isrā'īl passed from there, he fell into astonishment by them and the numerous decayed bones.<sup>1</sup> Then Allāh (s.w.t.) revealed to him, saying, 'Do you wish that I enliven them so that you may counsel them'? He replied in the affirmative and Allāh (s.w.t.) again revealed to him to call out to them, saying, 'O decayed bones! Arise by the permission of Allāh (s.w.t.)'. Thus they all arose, dusting the earth off their heads. Thereafter Ibrāhīm (a.s.), the Friend of the Beneficent (Khalīlul Raḥmān), when he took the birds, cut them into pieces and placed some of them upon each mountain. Then he called out to them and they came towards him.<sup>2</sup> Thereafter Mūsā bin `Imrān (a.s.), his followers and seventy men that he chose, came with him to the mountain and told

<sup>1</sup> The Prophet referred to is Nabī `Uzayr (a.s.). Refer to the Qur'ānic Verse, **"Or (did you not see) like him (`Uzayr) who passed by a town and it had fallen on its roofs, he exclaimed: (Oh) How can Allāh (ever) bring it to life (again) after its death. Whereupon Allāh caused him to die a hundred years and thereafter raised him (again) to life. He (Allāh) asked him, 'How long did you tarry'? Said he, 'Perhaps I tarried a day or part of a day'. He said, 'No. You have tarried a hundred years; but look at your food and your drink they indicate not (in the least) passing of any time (upon them) changing (its original state), and look at your donkey and verily We make you a sign (of Our Powers) unto mankind and look you further on the bones, how We assemble them together and thereafter (how We) clothe them with flesh; and when it became clear to him, said he, 'Now I know that Allāh has power over all things'."** (Sūratul Baqarah: 259) (translator)

<sup>2</sup> Refer to the Holy Qur'ān, **"And (recollect O Our Prophet) when Ibrāhīm said, 'My Lord! Let me see how You enliven the dead'. He said, 'What! Do you not (then) believe (in it)? He said, 'Yes, but (I ask You for) only that my heart rests convinced'. He said, 'Take you four of the birds and make them to incline unto you, and (cutting them into parts) place you on each mountain a part of them and thereafter call them and they will come to you rushing. And know that Allāh is All-Mighty, All-Wise".** (Sūratul Baqarah: 260) (translator)

him, 'You have seen Allāh (s.w.t.), then show Him to us as you have seen Him'. Mūsā (a.s.) replied, 'I have not seen Him'. They said, 'We shall not believe in you until we see Allāh (s.w.t.) openly'. They were struck by lightning and they were burnt until their last one, while Mūsā (a.s.) remained alone. Then he (Mūsā) said, 'O Lord (s.w.t.)! I selected seventy men from the Banī Isrā'īl and brought them. Then should I return back alone? Then how shall my nation believe me when I inform them regarding them? **Are You pleased You have destroyed them and me (too) before; would You destroy us for what have done the fools among us?**<sup>1</sup> Then Allāh (s.w.t.) brought them back to life after their death. You cannot refuse all that I told to you, since the Torah (Tawrah), Bible (Injīl), Psalms (Zabūr) and Furqān (Qur'ān) speak regarding this. Then if all those who enliven the dead and cure the innate lepers, blind and insane, can be taken as Lords apart from Allāh (s.w.t.); then you should take all these (mentioned above) as Lords. Then what do you say O Christian?" Hearing this, Catholicos said, "Your word is right. And there is no other Deity except Allāh (s.w.t.)".

Then Imām (a.s.) turned to Exilarch and said, "O Jew! Turn to me. I ask you by the 'Ten Commandments' that were revealed upon Mūsā bin `Imrān (a.s.), haven't you found written the Torah (Tawrah) information regarding Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.) and his nation that 'when the last nation shall arrive, who shall be the followers of a Camel-rider, glorifying Allāh (s.w.t.) abundantly, a new glorification in new places of worship (Masjid). The Banī Isrā'īl should turn to them and their dominion so that their hearts may find tranquility. And they shall be brandishing swords in their hands, seeking revenge through it from the nation of disbelief around the globe'. Isn't this written the Torah (Tawrah)?" Exilarch replied, "Yes, we have found it written similarly".

Thereafter Imām (a.s.) turned to Catholicos and asked, "O Christian! How is your knowledge of the book of Sha`yā (a.s.)?" He replied, "I know it word by word". Then Imām (a.s.) said to both of them, "Do you both not know that this is his

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<sup>1</sup> Refer to the entire verse (Āyah) in the Holy Qur'ān, **"And chose Mūsā of his people seventy men for Our appointment, then when seized them a shocking, prayed he: O my Lord! Are You pleased You have destroyed them and me (too) before; would You destroy us for what have done the fools among us? It is not but Your trial; You cause whosoever You will to stray and guide whomsoever You please; You are our Guardian, so forgive us and bestow Your mercy upon us, and You are the Best of the forgivers"**. (Sūratul A`arāf: 155) (translator)

statement, 'O nation! Verily I have seen a picture of a Donkey-rider wearing robes of light and I have seen a Camel-rider, whose light is similar to the light of the moon'?" Both of them replied, "Sha`yā said so". Then Imām (a.s.) continued, "O Christian! Do you know the statement of `Īsā in the Bible (Injīl), 'I am leaving to my Lord and yours, while Al Fārqaḷiṭ (Paraclete) is arriving who shall testify for me as I testified for him. He shall interpret for you everything and he shall be the one to reveal the ignominies of the nations and he shall smash the pillars of disbelief'". Catholicos replied, "You have not quoted anything written in the Bible (Injīl) except that we have acknowledged it".

Again Imām (a.s.) questioned him, "O Catholicos! Have you found this established in the Bible (Injīl)?" He replied in the affirmative and Imām (a.s.) continued, "O Catholicos! Will you inform me that when you lost the first Bible (Injīl), with whom did you find it and who gave you this Bible (Injīl)?" He replied, "We did not lose it except for a day until we found it fresh, while John (Yuḥannā) and Matthew (Mattā) brought it for us". Imām (a.s.) replied, "How scant is your knowledge of the mysteries of the Bible (Injīl) and its scholars? If what you presume is true, then you would not differ in the Bible (Injīl). Indeed! Difference arose among you regarding the Bible (Injīl) that you now possess, however if it had been the same (original) one of the initial period, you would not differ upon it. However, I shall inform you further".

Imām (a.s.) continued, "Then know! When the original Bible (Injīl) was lost, the Christians gathered near their scholars and told them, 'Now that `Īsā bin Maryam (a.s.) has been killed and we have lost the Bible (Injīl). You are scholars, then what do you possess?' They replied, 'We shall reveal it (Injīl) to you, word by word, every Sunday. Then do not aggrieve upon it and do not forsake the churches. Certainly we shall read it out to you every Sunday, word by word, until we gather it completely for you'. Then Luke (Alūqā), Mark (Marqābūs), John (Yuḥannā) and Matthew (Mattā) gathered and brought out for them this (present) Bible (Injīl) after you lost the original one. When certainly these four were students of the first students (disciples of `Īsā), did you know that?" Catholicos replied, "As for this, I did not know it, while I have learnt it now. While your noble knowledge of the Bible (Injīl) has become evident to me. I heard things as you know and my heart bears witness that it is the truth. Then my understanding has increased much".

Again Imām (a.s.) asked him, "Then how do you consider their (Luke, Mark, John



and Matthew) witnesses?" He replied, "It is acceptable. They were scholars in the Bible (Injīl) and whatever they bore witness to is the truth". Then Imām (a.s.) told Ma'mūn, those present among his family (Banī Hāshim) and others, "Bear witness to this". They replied that they did so. Then Imām (a.s.) told Catholicos, "By the right of the son (ʿĪsā) and his mother (Maryam)! Do you know that Matthew (Mattā) said, 'Certainly the Messiah (Masīḥ) is the son of David (Dawūd), the son of Abraham (Ibrāhīm), the son of Isaac (Ishāq), the son of Jacob (Ya'qūb), the son of Yehuda (Yahūdā), the son of Khadrūn'. While Mark (Marqābūs) said regarding the lineage of ʿĪsā (a.s.), 'He is the Word of Allāh (s.w.t.) placed into human body and therefore he turned into human'. While Luke (Alūqā) said, 'Verily ʿĪsā bin Maryam (a.s.) and his mother were human-beings made of flesh and blood. Then the Holy Spirit (Rūḥul Quds) entered into them'. You also say that ʿĪsā (a.s.) said regarding himself, 'I shall truly inform you O group of disciples (Ḥawārīyīn)! No one ascends to the heavens, except the one who descends from it, except for the Camel-rider, the Seal of the Prophets (a.s.); for he shall ascend the heavens and then descend from it'. Then what do you say about this statement?"

Catholicos replied, "These are the words of ʿĪsā (a.s.) and we do not deny them". Then Imām (a.s.) asked, "Then what do you have to say regarding the witnesses of Luke (Alūqā), Mark (Marqābūs) and Matthew (Mattā) upon ʿĪsā (a.s.) and the lineage they attributed to him?" Catholicos, "They ascribed lies to ʿĪsā (a.s.)". Hearing this, Imām (a.s.) said, "O people! Didn't you say that they were pure and you witnessed that they were scholars of the Bible (Injīl) and their statement was truth?" Catholicos replied, "O scholar among the Muslims! I prefer you excuse me regarding these (four) people". Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) said, "Fine, we shall do so. Then O Christian! Ask whatever you desire". Catholicos replied, "Let someone else question you. For no, by the right of the Messiah (Masīḥ), I had not presumed that there was a scholar of your caliber among the Muslims".

Therefore Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) turned to Exilarch and said, "You shall question me or should I do so?" He replied, "Rather I shall question you and I shall not accept any evidence except from the Torah (Tawrah), or the Bible (Injīl), or the Psalms (Zabūr) of David (Dāwūd), or that which is found in the Scriptures of Abraham (Ibrāhīm) and Moses (Mūsā)". Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) replied, "Do not accept any evidences from me except what the Torah (Tawrah) speaks from the tongue of Mūsā bin ʿImrān (a.s.), and the Bible (Injīl) that speaks from the tongue

of `Īsā bin Maryam (a.s.), and the Psalms (Zabūr) that speaks from the tongue of Dāwūd (a.s.)”.

Exilarch asked, “From where can you prove the Prophet hood of Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.)?” Imām (a.s.) replied, “Mūsā bin `Imrān (a.s.), `Īsā bin Maryam (a.s.) and Dāwūd, the Vicegerent of Allāh (s.w.t.) upon the earth bore witness to his (s.a.w.a.)’s Prophet hood”. He said, “Then prove from the words of Mūsā bin `Imrān”. Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) said, “Do you know O Jew, Mūsā (a.s.) counseled the Banī Isrā’īl, telling them, ‘A Prophet shall come to you from among your brothers. Then acknowledge him and obey him’. Then do you know of any other brothers for the Banī Isrā’īl except from the progeny of Ismā`īl (a.s.)? Do you know the relation of Isrā’īl (Ya`qūb bin Ishāq bin Ibrāhīm) with Ismā`īl (a.s.) and the lineage between them through Ibrāhīm (a.s.)?” Exilarch replied, “This is the statement of Mūsā and we do not deny it”. Then Imām (a.s.) asked, “Has any Prophet come to you from the brothers of Banī Isrā’īl apart from Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.)?” He replied in the negative and Imām (a.s.) continued, “Then isn’t this true in your eyes?” He replied, “Yes, however I wish that you prove to me from the Torah (Tawrah)”.

Imām (a.s.) replied, “Do you deny that the Torah (Tawrah) tells you, ‘A light came from the mountain of Sinai (Saynā’), it shone upon us from the mountain of Sā`īr and became evident upon us from the mountain of Fārān’?” Exilarch replied, “I know these words, however, I do not understand its interpretation”. Imām (a.s.) said, “I shall inform you. As for his words ‘A light came from the mountain of Sinai (Saynā’), it was a revelation (Waḥī) of Allāh (s.w.t.) upon Mūsā (a.s.) at the mountain of Sinai (Saynā’). And as for the words, ‘it shone upon us from the mountain of Sā`īr’, it is a mountain upon which Allāh (s.w.t.) revealed to `Īsā bin Maryam (a.s.), when he was upon it. And as for the words, ‘it became evident upon us from the mountain of Fārān’, it is a mountain among the mountains of Makkah at a distance of one day away from it. As you and your friends said (before) that Nabī Sha`yā (a.s.) said, ‘I have seen two riders, while the earth shone for them, one seated upon a Donkey and the other upon a Camel’. Then who is the rider of a Donkey and who is the Rider of a Camel?” Exilarch replied, “I do not know them, then inform me”. Imām (a.s.) replied, “As for the rider of the Donkey, he is `Īsā bin Maryam (a.s.) and the rider of Camel is Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.). Do you deny this from the Torah (Tawrah)?” He replied, “No, I do not deny it”.

Again Imām (a.s.) asked, "Then do you know Ḥayqūq, the Prophet (a.s.)?" Exilarch replied in the affirmative. Imām (a.s.) said, "As your book speaks that he said, 'Allāh sent forth the statement (Bayān) from the mountain of Fārān. And the heavens are replete with the glorification by Aḥmad (s.a.w.a.) and his nation. He shall drive his horse in the ocean as he drives it upon the land. He shall come to us with a new book (Qur'ān) after the ruination of Baytul Muqaddas'. Do you know this and believe in it?" Exilarch replied, "Ḥayqūq said so and we do not deny it". Then Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) said, "Dāwūd (a.s.) said in the Torah (Tawrāh), as you read it, 'O Allāh! Appoint the establisher of the customs (Sunnah) after an interval (Fatrah)'".<sup>1</sup> Then do you know a Prophet who established customs (Sunnah) after the interval, apart from Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.)?" Exilarch replied, "This is certainly the statement of Dāwūd (a.s.) and we do not deny it. However the period of interval refers to 'Īsā (a.s.) and his age". Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) said, "You have spoken ignorantly. Verily 'Īsā (a.s.) did not oppose the customs (Sunnah), rather he accepted the customs (Sunnah) of the Torah (Tawrāh) until Allāh (s.w.t.) raised him to Him (s.w.t.). While it is written in the Bible (Injīl), 'Verily the son of a righteous woman ('Īsā bin Maryam) shall go and the Fārqaḷīṭ (Paraclete) shall come after him. He shall relieve the burdens and interpret to you everything. He shall testify for me as I testified for him. I came to you with examples and he shall come to you with the interpretation'. Do you believe this to be in the Bible (Injīl)?"

<sup>1</sup> Fatrah or a period of interval between two Ulul 'Azm Prophets (a.s.), who were bearers of the Sharī'ah and Sacred Books, while they numbered five, viz. Nūḥ (a.s.), Ibrāhīm (a.s.), Mūsā (a.s.), 'Īsā (a.s.) and Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.). To this effect, Samā'ah bin Mahrān relates that I asked Abū 'Abdullāh al Ṣādiq (a.s.), "How did they become Ulul 'Azm?" He (a.s.) replied, "Since Nūḥ (a.s.) was sent with the Book and Sharī'ah, and whoever (among Prophets who) came after him, followed the Book of Nūḥ, his Sharī'ah and his course. Then came Ibrāhīm (a.s.) with the Books and determination and cast aside the Book of Nūḥ, not refusing it. Then whoever Prophet came after Ibrāhīm (a.s.), followed the Sharī'ah of Ibrāhīm (a.s.) and his course until Mūsā (a.s.) arrived with his Torah (Tawrāt), his Sharī'ah and his course and through his determination he cast aside the Book of Ibrāhīm (a.s.). Then whoever Prophet came after Mūsā (a.s.), followed the Torah (Tawrāh), his Sharī'ah and his course until the arrival of Masīḥ ('Īsā [a.s.]) with the Injīl. He cast aside the Sharī'ah of Mūsā (a.s.) with his determination and whoever Prophet came after 'Īsā, he followed his Sharī'ah and his course. Then Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.) arrived with the Qur'ān, his Sharī'ah and his course. Then his lawful is lawful until the day of Qiyāmah and his unlawful is unlawful until the day of Qiyāmah. Then these are the Ulul 'Azm among the Messengers (a.s.)". (Shaikh al Kulaynī, "Al Kāfi") (translator)

He replied, "Yes, and I do not deny it".

Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) said, "O Exilarch! I wish to question you regarding your Prophet Mūsā bin `Imrān". He agreed and Imām (a.s.) asked, "What is the evidence to establish the Prophet hood of Mūsā (a.s.)?" He replied, "He arrived (with miracles) which the Prophets before him did not arrive". Imām (a.s.) told him to give some examples and he replied, "Such as splitting the ocean,<sup>1</sup> turning the staff into a running serpent,<sup>2</sup> his striking the stone and streams flowing out through it,<sup>3</sup> removing the light from his hand for the onlookers<sup>4</sup> and other indications which none other creature before him could bring". Hearing this, Imām (a.s.) said, "You speak the truth. Then if his evidence upon his Prophet hood is that he arrived (with miracles) which none other creature before him could bring its similarity, then is it not obligatory upon you to acknowledge all those who claimed Prophet hood and arrived (with miracles) which none other creature before them could bring its similarity?" He replied, "No, since there is no one like Mūsā with regards to his status near his Lord and his nearness to Him. And it is not obligatory upon us to acknowledge the Prophet hood of the one who claims it, unless he brings us indications similar to what he (Mūsā) brought". Imām (a.s.) asked, "Then how do you acknowledge the Prophets (a.s.) preceding Mūsā (a.s.), while they did not split the ocean, did not flow out twelve streams from the stone, they did not remove the light from their hands similar to Mūsā (a.s.) and did not

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<sup>1</sup> Refer to the Holy Qur`ān, **"Then revealed We unto Mūsā saying, 'Strike you the sea with your staff'; then it clave asunder and each part (of the water) stood like a huge mountain. Then We drew near the others. And saved We Mūsā and those with him, all of them. Then We drowned the others. Verily in this is a sure sign; but most of them believe not".** (Sūratul Shu`arā': 63-67) (translator)

<sup>2</sup> Refer to the Holy Qur`ān, **"And what is this in your hand O Mūsā? Said he, 'This is my staff; I recline on it, and beat down leaves with it for my sheep, and for me therein are other uses'. He said, 'Cast it down O Mūsā!' Then he cast it down, and lo! it was a serpent running".** (Sūrat Ṭāhā: 17-20) (translator)

<sup>3</sup> Refer to the Holy Qur`ān, **"And remember when Mūsā sought water for his people; said We, 'Strike you the rock with your staff!' Then gushed out from there twelve springs; each people knew their (respective) drinking place; Eat you and drink you of Allāh's provision, and commit you not evil in the earth acting mischievously".** (Sūratul Baqarah: 60) (translator)

<sup>4</sup> Refer to Holy Qur`ān, **"Then drew he (Mūsā) forth his hand (out of his bosom) and lo! it was white (shining bright) to (all) beholders".** (Sūratul A`arāf: 108) (translator)

turn their staff into a running serpent?" The Jew (Exilarch) replied, "As I told you before that if they performed miracles as evidence for their Prophet hood, which all other creatures were unable to perform, and if they brought something the like of which Mūsā had brought or they followed what Mūsā had brought, then it is incumbent upon us to believe in them". Imām (a.s.) continued, "O Exilarch! Then what prevented you from acknowledging `Isā bin Maryam (a.s.), when he enlivened the dead, cured the innate leper and blind and made the figure of a bird, breathed into it and it became a flying bird by Allāh's permission?"<sup>1</sup> Exilarch replied, "It is said that he did so, however, we did not witness it (with our eyes)". Immediately Imām (a.s.) asked, "Then did you see those indications that Mūsā (a.s.) brought and witnessed them? Is this not quoted in reports regarding him by the reliable companions of Mūsā (a.s.) that he did so? Have you not received this news by way of Mūsā (a.s.)'s trustworthy companions who said he (a.s.) performed them?" He replied in the affirmative and Imām (a.s.) again asked, "Similarly successive reports have reached you that `Isā bin Maryam too did so, then how do you acknowledge Mūsā (a.s.) and not acknowledge `Isā (a.s.)?" Hearing this, Exilarch could not find any reply.

Then Imām (a.s.) said, "Then similar is the case of Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.) and what he brought (among the miracles) and every Prophet (a.s.) appointed by Allāh (s.w.t.). Among his (s.a.w.a.)'s signs was that he was an orphan, poor and a hired shepherd. He neither studied any book nor went to any teacher. Then he (s.a.w.a.) brought the Qur'ān containing the narratives of the Prophets (a.s.) and their reports, word by word. And also the past reports and what remains until the day of Qiyāmah. He (s.a.w.a.) would inform them of their secrets and what they did (in hiding) in their homes, moreover he (s.a.w.a.) brought signs that cannot be counted". Exilarch replied, "Neither the account of `Isā (a.s.) nor of Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.) is correct near us and it is not lawful for us to acknowledge them through what is not correct". Imām (a.s.) asked, "Then was the witness who witnessed

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<sup>1</sup> Refer to the Holy Qur'ān, **"And (appoint him) (`Isā) a Messenger to the Banī Isrā'īl (and who will declare) that now I have come unto you with a sign from your Lord; out of clay will I make for you like the figure of a bird, and I will breathe into it, and it shall become a flying bird by Allāh's permission; and I shall heal the blind and leper and will raise the dead to life by Allāh's permission; and I will declare to you what you eat and what you store up in your houses; verily, in this will be a sign for you, if you (indeed) be believers"**. (Sūrat Āl `Imrān: 49) (translator)

regarding `Īsā (a.s.) and Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.) a untruthful witness?" Hearing this, Exilarch could not find any reply.

Thereafter Imām (a.s.) called the chief of the Sabians and asked him, "Tell me regarding Zurādasht (Zoroaster) whom you presume to be a Prophet, what evidence you possess upon his Prophet hood?" He replied, "He brought (miracles) that none before him brought for us. Although we did not see him, however, the reports from our ancestors reached us that he made legitimate for us those things which none before him had made, therefore we followed him". Imām (a.s.) asked, "Then is it not true that when you received reports, you followed him?" He replied in the affirmative and Imām (a.s.) replied, "Similar is the case with the past nations, they received reports of what the Prophets (a.s.) brought, and what Mūsā (a.s.), `Īsā (a.s.) and Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.) brought. Then what is your excuse in abandoning to acknowledge them, when you acknowledged Zurādasht (Zoroaster) on the basis of the successive reports that he brought (miracles) that none before him brought?" Hearing this, the chief of Sabians froze in his place.

Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) then said, "O people! If any of you is opposed to Islām and would like to question, do so without any abashment". Hearing this, `Imrān al Sābi'ī (the Sabian), who was among the scholastics, arose and said, "O scholar among the people! Had you not invited to question you, I would not have risen to ask. I entered Kūfah, Baṣrah, Shām and Jazā'ir (Algeria) and met scholastics, however none could prove to me that there is One (Allāh), none other than Him, and that He remains upon His Unity. Then do you permit me to question you?" Imām (a.s.) replied, "If there is `Imrān al Sābi'ī among the group, it is you". He replied in the affirmative and Imām (a.s.) said, "Ask O `Imrān. However be fair and beware of vain talk and bias". He replied, "By Allāh (s.w.t.) O my Master! I do not desire anything except that you prove to me something that I can adhere to, and I do not seek anything else". Imām (a.s.) told him, "Then ask whatever you wish".

People gathered around him and came closer. `Imrān asked, "Then inform me regarding the First Entity and what He created". Imām (a.s.) replied, "You have asked, then know...."

We (the Author) say that Imām (a.s.) replied to him in detail. Again he questioned and he (a.s.) replied. Similarly there was a lengthy conversation between them, which is beyond the scope of this book. This continued until the time of Prayers

arrived and Imām (a.s.) decided to pray. Seeing this, `Imrān said, "O my Master! Do not interrupt my questions since my heart has softened". Imām (a.s.) replied, "We shall pray and return back". Saying this, Imām (a.s.) arose and Ma'mūn too arose. Then Imām (a.s.) offered his Prayers inside, while the people offered Prayers outside behind Muḥammad bin Ja`far (al Ṣādiq).

Then both of them (Imām and Ma'mūn) came out, Imām (a.s.) returned to his place and called out to `Imrān, saying, "Ask O `Imrān". He asked and Imām (a.s.) replied to him. He kept on asking and Imām (a.s.) continued replying to him (in detail), until he (a.s.) asked, "Did you understand O `Imrān?" He replied, "Yes O Master! I understood and I bear witness that Allāh (s.w.t.) is as you described to me and He is One. And I bear witness that Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.) is His slave, chosen with guidance and the true Religion". Saying this, he fell into prostration (Sajdah) towards the Qiblah and accepted Islām.

Ḥasan bin Muḥammad al Nawfalī (the narrator) says that when the scholastics heard the words of `Imrān al Sābi'ī, who was a great debater, while none could ever refute his arguments, none among them neared Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) nor did anyone question him (a.s.) regarding anything else. Evening set forth and Ma'mūn and Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) arose and went inside, while the people scattered away. I was along with a group of our companions when I received message from Muḥammad bin Ja`far (al Ṣādiq) to meet him and I did so.

When I went to him, he said, "O Nawfalī! Did you see what your friend (Imām al Ridhā) did? By Allāh (s.w.t.), I had never presumed that `Alī bin Mūsā (a.s.) would plunge such deep. We did not know that he spoke similarly in Madīnah or that the scholastics gathered around him". I said, "The pilgrims (of Ḥajj) would come to him and question him regarding the lawful and unlawful issues and he would reply to them. He (a.s.) would even speak to the one who came to debate with him". Hearing this, Muḥammad bin Ja`far (al Ṣādiq) said, "O Abā Muḥammad! I fear for him (a.s.) that this man (Ma'mūn) would envy him, then he would poison him or put him into difficulty. Then point out to him (a.s.) to refrain from similar things". I replied, "He (a.s.) shall not accept this from me. The man (Ma'mūn) did not desire anything except to test him (a.s.) to know whether he possessed something from among the knowledge of his forefathers (a.s.)". He then said, "Then tell him that your uncle dislikes such things and refrain from similar things due to various reasons".

When I went to the house of Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) and informed him what his uncle Muḥammad bin Ja`far said, he (a.s.) smiled and said, "May Allāh (s.w.t.) protect my uncle! I know why he dislikes it. O slave! Go to `Imrān al Sābi`ī and bring him to me". I told him, "May I be ransom upon you! I know his whereabouts. He is along with some of our Shi`ah brothers". Imām (a.s.) said, "No problem. Take a ride for him". I went to `Imrān and when I brought him, Imām (a.s.) honored him. He (a.s.) presented him with a robe, a ride and ordered ten thousand dirham to be bestowed to him. Seeing this, I said, "May I be ransom upon you! You followed the example of your grandfather Amīrul Mu`minīn (a.s.)". Imām (a.s.) said, "We like this". Then Imām (a.s.) ordered dinner to be served and sat me on his right side and `Imrān on his left. When we finished, he (a.s.) told `Imrān, "Leave now and come to us tomorrow early morning and we shall make to eat the food of Madīnah".

After this, whenever the scholastics among the rhetoric gathered near `Imran, he would refute them until they distanced themselves from him. Later Ma'mūn bestowed him ten thousand dirham, Fadhl (bin Sahl) gave him some amount and a ride, while Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) appointed him in charge of the alms of Balkh, and he also received numerous bounties.



## 6. Imām (a.s.)'s prediction upon his own Martyrdom

We suffice ourselves to quote here what is written by `Allāmah (Muḥammad Bāqir) al Majlisī in his Jilā'ul `Uyūn. Ibn Bābawayh (al Qummī) relates through his reliable chain of transmitters, that a man from Khurāsān told Abul Ḥasan (al Ridhā), "O son of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.)! I saw the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) in a dream as if telling me: What will be your state when my part shall be buried in your land, you shall protect (bury) my deposit and my star shall be concealed in your earth?" Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) told him, "I shall be buried in your land, while I am a part of your Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and I am the deposit and the star. Beware! The one who visits me while knowing what Allāh (s.w.t.) has made incumbent regarding my right and obedience; I, as well as my ancestors (a.s.), shall intercede for him on the day of Qiyāmah. And the one for whom we intercede on the day of Qiyāmah, shall succeed; although he has sins equal to the sins of all the genie and men. My father (Imām al Kāẓim) related to me from my grandfather (Imām al Ṣādiq), from his father (Imām al Bāqir) that the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said that the one who sees me in a dream, in actual fact see me (only). Since Shayṭān does not take my form, nor the form of any one of my Vicegerents (a.s.) or the form of any of their Shī`ah. Verily a true dream is a part of seventy parts of Prophet hood".

It is also related through reliable chain of transmitters that Imām (a.s.) said, "There is none among us except (they shall be) killed, martyred". He (a.s.) was questioned, "Then who shall kill you O son of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.)?" He (a.s.) replied, "The most evil man among the creatures of Allāh (s.w.y.) in his age. He shall kill me through poison and bury me in a worn-out house and a strange land. Beware! The one who visits me in my alienation, Allāh (s.w.t.) shall write for him the reward of a hundred thousand Martyrs, a hundred thousand truthful ones, a hundred thousand pilgrims of Ḥajj and `Umrah and a hundred thousand strugglers (in the path of Allāh). He (s.w.t.) shall raise him in our company and position him upon the elevated status in paradise among our friends".

It is narrated through reliable chain of transmitters from Imām Ja`far al Ṣādiq (a.s.) that, "The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: A part of me shall be buried at the land of Khurāsān. No believer shall visit him except that Allāh (s.w.t.) shall make Paradise obligatory for him and forbid his body upon the fire (of hell)".

It is also related through reliable chain of transmitters from Imām Ja`far al Ṣādiq (a.s.) that, "A man shall emerge from among the children of my son Mūsā (al Kāzim) whose name shall be the name of Amīrul Mu`minīn (a.s.). He shall be buried at the land of Ṭūs, i.e. Khurāsān. He shall be killed therein by poisoning and shall be buried therein in alienation. One who visits him, recognizing his right, Allāh (s.w.t.) shall bestow him the reward of the one who spent in the way of Allāh (s.w.t.) and strove in His path before the victory (Fath) of Makkah".

It is related through reliable chain of transmitters from Amīrul Mu`minīn (a.s.) that, "A man from my children shall be killed by poison at the land of Khurāsān. His name shall be my name and his father's name shall be the name of the son of `Imrān, Mūsā (a.s.). Beware! The one who visits him in his alienation, Allāh (s.w.t.) shall forgive his sins, whether in past or future, even if they are equal to the number of stars, drops of rain and leaves of the trees".

`Allāmah (Muḥammad Bāqir) al Majlisī relates in his book through his reliable chain of transmitters that Imām `Alī al Ridhā (a.s.) said, "I shall be killed through poison and oppressed and be buried beside Hārūn (al Rashīd). Allāh (s.w.t.) shall assign my grave as a haven for my Shī`ah and my family. Then the one who visits me in my alienation, my meeting him on the day of Qiyāmah shall be incumbent. And by the One Who blessed Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.) with Prophet hood and chose him (s.a.w.a.) upon all the creatures! None among you who offers two units (Rak`ah) of Prayers near my tomb, except that he shall be worthy of forgiveness from Allāh (s.w.t.) on the day of meeting Him (in Qiyāmah). And by the One Who favoured us (the Ahl al bait) after Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.) with Imāmah and distinguished us with Vicegerency! Verily the pilgrims of my tomb shall be the most favoured ones arriving to Allāh (s.w.t.) on the day of Qiyāmah. And there is no believer who visits me and drop (of rain) falls upon his face from the heavens, except that Allāh (s.w.t.) shall forbid his body upon the fire (of hell)".

As regards the circumstances of the Martyrdom of the part of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) is as related by Abul Ṣalt. He says that once when I was standing in the presence of Abul Ḥasan `Alī bin Mūsā al Ridhā (a.s.), he told me, "O Abā Ṣalt! Enter into this dome that contains the grave of Hārūn (al Rashīd) and get me the earth from its four sides". I went and brought it for him (a.s.). When I stood facing him (a.s.), he told me to hand him over the earth, while he was standing near the door. I handed it over to him (a.s.). He

took it, smelt it, threw it away and then said, "A grave shall be dug for me here. A rock shall appear and if all the pickaxes of Khurāsān shall be brought together, they shall not be able to move it". Then he (a.s.) told similar things regarding the earth from near his head and his feet. He (a.s.) then said, "Bring me that earth, since it is from my tomb". He (a.s.) continued, "A grave shall be dug for me at this spot. Then instruct them to dig it seven steps deep and construct a grave for me. If they refuse to do so except in the usual grave, then tell them to expand the tomb two arms and an inch (wide). Then Allāh (s.w.t) shall expand it for me as He wills".

Then Imām (a.s.) continued, "When they do so, you shall find some moisture at its head, then you recite something that I shall teach you. It shall spring forth water until the grave shall become full of it. You shall observe small fishes therein, then give them some bread that I shall give it you and they shall eat it until nothing remains. Thereafter a large whale shall appear that shall devour the small fish until nothing remains in it, then it shall disappear. When it disappears, place your hand in the water and recite what I shall teach you and the water shall drain away until nothing remains from it. Then do not do all this except in the presence of Ma'mūn". He (a.s.) then said, "O Abā Ṣalt! Tomorrow I shall go to this debauchee (Ma'mūn). If I return with my head bare, then speak to me and I shall also speak to you. However, if I return with my head covered, do not speak to me".

Abul Ṣalt says that when it dawned, Imām (a.s.) wore his dress and sat in his Prayer-niche waiting. Just then, a slave of Ma'mūn arrived with a message that Ma'mūn had summoned him (a.s.). Imām (a.s.) wore his slippers and cloak and arose to leave, while I too followed him. When we entered the presence of Ma'mūn, we saw a tray of grapes kept in front of him and trays of other fruits. He held a bunch of grapes in his hand, from which he had eaten some and left some. As soon as his sight fell upon Imām al Ridhā (a.s.), he hastened to him, embraced him, kissed him in between his eyes and sat him beside him. Then he presented the bunch of grapes to Imām (a.s.) and said, "O son of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.)! Did you ever see better grapes than these?" Imām (a.s.) replied, "Perhaps good grapes are from Paradise". Ma'mūn offered him (a.s.) to eat and Imām (a.s.) told him to excuse him from eating them. Ma'mūn replied, "However you should eat them. What stops you from eating them; perhaps you accuse us of something?" Saying this, he picked up a bunch of grapes and ate from it. Then he presented it to Imām (a.s.), who ate three grapes from it, then kept them back

and arose. Seeing this, Ma'mūn asked him, "Where to?" Imām (a.s.) replied, "To where you sent me". Saying this, Imām (a.s.) left with his head covered and I did not speak to him until he entered the house.

Then Imām (a.s.) ordered me to bolt the door from inside, I did so and he laid down upon his bed. I stood in the courtyard of the house in a grievous and disturbed state. Just then a youth, with a handsome countenance and abundance hair (on scalp) and resembling Al Ridhā (a.s.) most among men, appeared. I went to him and asked, "From where did you enter when the door is bolted?" He (a.s.) replied, "The One (Allāh) Who brought me from Madīnah at this hour, (He) entered me into this house while the door is bolted". When I asked him who he was, he (a.s.) replied, "I am the Evidence of Allāh (Ḥujjatullāh) upon you O Abā Ṣalt. I am Muḥammad bin `Alī (al Jawād)". Saying this, he (a.s.) proceeded towards his father (a.s.), entered therein and told me to enter with him. When Imām al Ridhā (a.s.)'s sight fell upon him, he (a.s.) hastened towards him, embraced him, pressed him to his chest and kissed him in between his eyes. Then he dragged himself to his bed and Muḥammad bin `Alī (a.s.) went over to him, kissed him and spoke to him in a tone that I could not understand. I saw foam upon the lips of Al Ridhā (a.s.) that was whiter than ice, and I saw Abū Ja`far (Imam al Jawād) lick it with his tongue. Then he (Imām al Ridhā) entered his hand in between his dress and chest and removed something, resembling a sparrow, while Abū Ja`far (al Jawād) swallowed it and Al Ridhā (a.s.) passed away.

Then Abū Ja`far (al Jawād) turned to me and said, "Arise O Abā Ṣalt and get me a tub and water from the store-room". I replied that there was no tub and water in the store-room to which he (a.s.) said, "Do as I say to you". When I entered the store-room, I found a tub and water. I brought them out and folded my clothes to bathe Imām (a.s.) along with him. When he (a.s.) saw this, he said, "Stay back O Abā Ṣalt! There is someone else, apart from you, to assist me".<sup>1</sup> Then he bathed him and told me, "Enter the store-room and get me a basket containing his shroud (Kafan) and his camphor (for embalmment)". I entered the store-room and found a basket, which I had never seen before in it. I took it to him and he (a.s.) shrouded him (a.s.) and prayed upon him. Again he told me, "Bring me the coffin". I replied, "I shall go to the carpenter and tell him to make a coffin", to which he

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<sup>1</sup> Imām al Jawād (a.s.) meant to inform Abū Ṣalt that the Heavenly Angels and other A'immah (a.s.) were present to assist him in administering the bath. (translator)

(a.s.) said, "Arise, that the coffin is in the store-room". I entered the store-room and found a coffin therein, whose similarity I had never seen before and brought it for him. After offering prayers upon him (a.s.), he (a.s.) lifted Al Ridhā (a.s.) and placed him in the coffin. Then he (a.s.) stood and offered two units (Rak`ah) of Prayers. He (a.s.) had not yet concluded his Prayers, when the coffin arose and the roof ripped open. The coffin flew out and left.

Seeing this, I said, "O son of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.)! Ma'mūn would be arriving and shall question regarding Al Ridhā (a.s.), then what will happen?" Imām (a.s.) replied, "Remain silent, since he (a.s.) shall remain back. O Abā Ṣalt! There is no Prophet who dies in the east and his Vicegerent dies in the west, except that Allāh (s.w.t.) unites their spirits and bodies with one another". His word had not yet concluded when the roof ripped open again and the coffin descended. Imām (a.s.) arose, lifted Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) from the coffin and laid him upon the bed, it seemed as if he (a.s.) was not yet shrouded or bathed. Then he (a.s.) told me, "O Abā Ṣalt! Arise and open the door for Ma'mūn". As soon as I opened the door, I found Ma'mūn and his slaves upon the door. He entered the room weeping and lamenting, while he was ripping his collar and beating his head. He was calling out, "O Master! I am afflicted by you O Master"! He entered, sat at Imām (a.s.)'s head and said, "Prepare him for his final rites". Then Ma'mūn ordered a grave to be dug.

I was present at the spot and all that Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) had said, took place. Some of those present told Ma'mūn, "Don't you presume that he is an Imām?" Ma'mūn replied in the affirmative and the man said, "An Imām should be in the fore-front". Then Ma'mūn ordered to dig for him towards the Qiblah. Then I said, "He (a.s.) had ordered me to dig seven steps deep and construct a tomb for him". Hearing this, Ma'mūn said, "Do as Abū Ṣalt tells you except a tomb, make it a usual grave". When Ma'mūn saw the moisture and fishes, etc. he said, "Al Ridhā (a.s.) constantly showed us his wonders in his lifetime and even shows us after his death". A vizier accompanying him, told him, "Do you know what Al Ridhā (a.s.) intends to inform you?" Ma'mūn replied in the negative and he said, "He informs you that your (the Banī `Abbās) kingdom, in spite of its vastness and lengthiness, is similar to these fishes, until your time is over. Ultimately your effects shall conclude and your kingdom shall vanish. Allāh (s.w.t.) shall appoint a man among us (Ahlal-bait) upon you, who shall destroy you until your last ones". Hearing this, Ma'mūn said, "You speak the truth".

Then he turned to me and said, "O Abā Ṣalt! Teach me the words that you recited (upon the water)". I replied, "By Allāh (s.w.t.)! I forgot them an hour before", while I said the truth. He ordered me to be imprisoned and buried Imām al Ridhā (a.s.). I was imprisoned for a year and it straightened for me. One night I remained awake and supplicated to Allāh (s.w.t.) with a supplication in which I mentioned Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.) and his progeny (a.s.) and requested Allāh (s.w.t.) to grant me relief by their right. My supplication did not conclude when Muḥammad bin `Alī (al Jawād) appeared to me and said, "O Abā Ṣalt! Has your heart straightened?" I replied in the affirmative and he (a.s.) said, "Arise and leave". Then he (a.s.) struck his hand upon the fetters that was fastened upon me, and broke them. Then he (a.s.) held my hand, brought me out, while the guards and slaves were watching me, however they could not say anything to me and I left. Then he (a.s.) told me, "Leave in the protection of Allāh (s.w.t.), for you shall never encounter him and he shall never encounter you". I have not yet encountered Ma'mūn.

Ibn Bābawayh (al Qummī) and Shaikh al Muḥid relate through their different chain of transmitters from `Alī bin Ḥusain al Kātib, that once Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) developed fever and decided to have a Phlebotomize (Faṣḍ) done. Ma'mūn had ordered one of his slaves to grow his nails, while according to Shaikh al Muḥid, he commanded `Abdullāh bin Bashīr to do so. He told him, "Grow your nails and do not inform anyone". Ma'mūn then removed something that resembled (poisoned) tamarind and ordered his slave to knead it with his hands and then said, "Stay with me and do not wash your hands". Then he rode towards Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) until he completed Phlebotomizing. According to another report, he delayed it. Then Ma'mūn turned to that slave and said, "Bring me that Pomegranate". While there was a Pomegranate tree in the garden of the house of Imām (a.s.). The slave plucked it and brought it for him. Then Ma'mūn told him to sit down and break it. He broke it in a bowl and Ma'mūn ordered him to wash them. Then he turned to Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) and told him to eat. Imām (a.s.) replied that he would do so when Ma'mūn left. However, Ma'mūn said, "No, by Allāh (s.w.t.), you should eat in my presence. Had I not feared humidity in my stomach, I too would have eaten with you". Imām (a.s.) therefore took some spoons from it, then Ma'mūn left from there

Imām (a.s.) did not pray the `Aṣr Prayers, when he became unconscious fifty times, while his intestines came down due to the severe effect of the poison. When

Ma'mūn was informed of this, he sent him (a.s.) message, saying, "I have learnt that this awakening and languor is better for what is in your body". His (a.s.)'s condition worsened at night and he passed away at dawn. Imām (a.s.)'s last words were, **"Say (O Our Prophet): Had you remained in your homes they who were decreed to be slain would have gone forth to the places where they (now) lie".<sup>1</sup>** And, **"And the behest of Allāh is a decree irrevocable".<sup>2</sup>** Ma'mūn arose early in the morning and ordered to bath Imām (a.s.) and shroud him. Then he walked behind his (a.s.)'s bier, bare-headed and bare-feet, while he was saying, "O my brother! A crevice has developed in Islām due to your death. While (Allāh's) destiny overcame my efforts for you".

Abul Ṣalt al Harawī says that I entered the presence of Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) after Ma'mūn left. When Imām (a.s.)'s sight fell upon me, he said, "O Abā Ṣalt! They did what they had desired". Saying this, he (a.s.) became engrossed in mentioning Allāh (s.w.t.), praising and glorifying Him and did not speak at all.

It is mentioned in Baṣā'erul Darajāt (of Muḥammad bin Ḥasan al Ṣaffār al Qummī) with true chain of transmitters from Imām `Alī al Ridhā (a.s.) that he said, "Verily yesterday I saw the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) telling me, O `Alī! There is better for you near us".

Ibn Bābawayh (al Qummī) relates with his good chain of transmitters from Yāsir al Khādim that when we were at a distance of seven stations from Ṭūs, Abul Ḥasan (al Ridhā) mounted and we entered Ṭūs, while his ailment had increased. We stayed in Ṭūs for some days, while Ma'mūn would visit us twice daily. On his (a.s.)'s last day, the day of his death, he had turned weak. After reciting the Ṣuḥr Prayers, Imām (a.s.) asked me, "O Yāsir! Have the people eaten something?" I replied, "O my Master! Who would eat here when you are in this state?" Hearing this, he (a.s.) sat up and said, "Spread the napery". He (a.s.) did not leave any of his servants, except that he called them to sit with him upon the napery and asked their welfare one after the other. When they finished eating, he (a.s.) said, "Send food for the women". Food was sent for the women and when they finished eating, Imām (a.s.) lost consciousness and turned feeble. Wailing arose and the maids and women-folk of Ma'mūn rushed in bare-headed and bare-feet, while Ṭūs was filled with the

<sup>1</sup> Holy Qur'ān, Sūrat Āl `Imrān: 154

<sup>2</sup> Holy Qur'ān, Sūratul Aḥzāb: 38

sound of lamenting.

Ma'mūn arrived bare-headed and bare-feet, beating his head, holding his beard in his hands, regretting and weeping, while tears were flowing upon his cheeks. He stood at the head of Imām al Ridhā (a.s.), while he had gained consciousness, and said, "O my Master! By Allāh (s.w.t.), I do not know which of the two calamities are severer upon me; losing you and your separation, or people's accusation upon me that I murdered and killed you". Hearing this, Imām (a.s.) lifted his eyes towards Ma'mūn and said, "Treat Abū Ja`far (Imām al Jawād) with fairness. Since your life and his life is similar to this", saying this he joined his two fingers.<sup>1</sup> When the night came and some part of it passed away, he (a.s.) departed from this world. When it dawned, people gathered and started to say, "He has killed him (a.s.). He has murdered him (a.s.)". And they meant Ma'mūn. They even said, "The son of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) has been killed". They repeated this time and again, while words and turmoil increased.

During that period, Muḥammad bin Ja`far (al Ṣādiq) bin Muḥammad (al Bāqir) had taken refuge with Ma'mūn at Khurāsān, while he was the paternal uncle of Abul Ḥasan al Ridhā (a.s.). Ma'mūn called him and said, "O Abā Ja`far! Go out and inform people that Abul Ḥasan (al Ridhā)'s bier shall not come out today". He despised to remove Imām (a.s.)'s body in fear of commotion. Therefore Muḥammad bin Ja`far (al Ṣādiq) came out to the people and said, "O people! Return back, for Abul Ḥasan's bier shall not be taken out today". Hearing this, people scattered away, while Abul Ḥasan (al Ridhā) was bathed at night and buried (in secret).

Shaikh al Mufīd states (in his Al Irshād) that when Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) passed away, Ma'mūn concealed his death from the people for a day and night. Then he called Muḥammad bin Ja`far (al Ṣādiq) and a group from among the family of Abū Ṭālib who were with him. When they arrived, he announced Imām (a.s.)'s death to them, wept and displayed severe grief and pain. He showed them his (a.s.)'s safe and sound body. Then he said, "It is hard upon me O brother to see you in

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<sup>1</sup> Imām meant to inform him that his death and the Martyrdom of his son Imām al Jawād (a.s.) would be quite near to one another and therefore Ma'mūn should not intend any evil towards the Imām (a.s.). Subsequently, Ma'mūn passed away in the year two hundred and eighteen Hijrah, while Imām al Jawād (a.s.) attained Martyrdom in two hundred and twenty Hijrah. (translator)



this state. I had wished to die before you, however Allāh (s.w.t.) refused except what He wished”.

Ibn Bābawayh relates through his reliable chain of transmitters from Harthamah bin A`ayun that one night I was with Ma`mūn until four hours passed by and then he permitted me to leave. I returned home, and when half night passed away someone knocked at the door. Some of my slaves answered the door and the person said, “Tell Harthamah: reply to the call of your Master”. Hearing this, I arose in haste, put on my clothes and immediately hastened to my Master Al Ridhā (a.s.). The youth entered the house and I followed him. I saw my Master (a.s.) seated in the courtyard of his house and he called me. I replied, “At your service”. He told me to sit down and I did so. Then he (a.s.) told me, “O Harthamah! Listen carefully to what I say. It is the time of my departing towards Allāh (s.w.t.) and my uniting with my grandfather (s.a.w.a.) and my forefathers (a.s.). The message of (my) death has come forth, while this rebellious one (Ma`mūn) has decided to poison me with grapes and kneaded pomegranate. As for the grapes, he has dipped a thread into poison and passed it through them. And as for the pomegranate, he has applied poison on the hands of one of his slaves and ordered him to remove its seeds so that they may be covered in poison. He shall call me tomorrow, present me the grapes and pomegranate and offer me (forcibly) to eat them. I shall eat them and consequently the command (of Allāh) shall arrive and His Decree shall come forth. Then when I pass away, he (Ma`mūn) will tell you that he would wash me with his own hands. When he says so, then tell him in secret that I have said, ‘Do not administer my bath, neither shroud me nor bury me. Then if you do not do so, the punishment (of Allāh), that has been delayed, shall hasten to you. And the calamity that shall befall you (in Qiyāmah) shall come forth upon you (in this very world)’. Hearing this, he shall desist”.

Hearing this, I replied in the affirmative and Imām (a.s.) continued, “When he leaves my bathing for you, he shall sit at a height upon his house to look at the spot of my bathing. O Harthamah! Then do not take any steps for bathing me until you see a white tent erected beside the house. When you see this, carry me with the clothes that I am wearing, and enter me from behind the tent. Then wait behind it, along with the others. Then do not lift the tent to see me, lest you be destroyed. Later he (Ma`mūn) shall ask you, ‘O Harthamah! Don’t you presume that an Imām (a.s.) cannot be bathed except by an Imām (a.s.) similar to him. Then who bathed Abul Ḥasan `Alī bin Mūsā (al Ridhā), while his son Muḥammad

(al Jawād) is in Madīnah in Hijāz, while we are in Tūs’?”.

“When he asks this question, tell him, ‘Verily we say that an Imām (a.s.) cannot be bathed except by an Imām (a.s.) similar to him. However, if someone violates this and administers bath to an Imām (a.s.), it shall not nullify his Imāmah due to this. Nor will the Imāmah of the Imām (a.s.) following him be nullified, since the person forcefully bathed his father. And if Abul Ḥasan `Alī bin Mūsā (al Ridhā) would be in Madīnah, his son Muḥammad (al Jawād) would have administered his bath apparently; moreover no one baths him (a.s.) presently except him (Imām al Jawād), however, in secret’. Then when the tent is lifted off, you shall find me covered in my shroud (Kafan). Then place me upon my bier and carry me. When they will decide to dig my grave, they shall place the tomb of his father Hārūn al Rashīd at the direction of the Qiblah from my grave; however, this shall not be possible. No matter how hard they struck the shovels upon the ground, they shall not be able to dig it, not even equal to a nail of the claw. When they try hard and it will be difficult for them, tell him (Ma’mūn) that I have ordered you to strike a shovel upon the ground once at the direction of the Qiblah of the grave of his father Hārūn al Rashīd. When you do so, you shall find a readymade grave and prepared tomb. When the tomb appears, do not enter me into it until white water emerges from the grave and fills it and reaches the level of the ground. A whale, equal to the size of the grave, shall be swimming in it. Do not place me into the grave until it swims, only do so when the whale disappears and the water drains away. Then enter me into the grave and entomb me. However, do not allow them to sprinkle earth upon me, since the grave shall do so by itself and get covered up”.

When I heard this, I replied that I shall certainly do so. Then Imām (a.s.) said, “Remember what I ordered you, do so and do not act in opposition to it”. I replied, “I seek Refuge of Allāh (s.w.t.) if I disobey your orders O my Master”! Then I left his (a.s.)’s presence, weeping and in a grievous state. They (tears) fell similar to seeds in a frying pan, and none knew my state except Allāh (s.w.t.). Then Ma’mūn summoned me and I went to him. I stood near him until daytime. Ma’mūn turned to me and said, “O Harthamah! Go to Abul Ḥasan (al Ridhā) and convey my salutations to him and tell him, ‘Come to us or else we shall come to you’. Then if he (a.s.) agrees to come, tell him to do so early”. I went to Imām (a.s.) and when I informed him, he said, “O Harthamah! Did you memorize what I bequeathed to you?” I replied in the affirmative and he (a.s.) ordered his slippers to be brought

and said, "I know for what reason he has sent you". Slippers were given to Imām (a.s.) and he left towards him.

When Imām (a.s.) entered the gathering, Ma'mūn arose for him, embraced him, kissed him in between his eyes and sat him beside him upon his couch. He spoke to him (a.s.) for a lengthy period of time until day-break and then told some of his slaves, "Bring me grapes and pomegranates".

Harthamah says that when I heard this, I could not control myself, while I felt a chill running through me. I despised that he (Ma'mūn) should see me in this state and therefore retreated, came out and threw myself at a place in the house. When the time of Zawāl neared, I sensed that my Master (al Ridhā) had left from there and entered his house. Suddenly I heard Ma'mūn ordering doctors and nurses to be called. Upon inquiry I was told, "Abul Ḥasan `Alī bin Mūsā al Ridhā (a.s.) is ill". People were in doubt (of his being poisoned); however, I was certain regarding him (a.s.). When the second trimester of the night passed, wailing arose and I heard sound of lamenting from the house. I hastened to it along with others who hastened and found Ma'mūn standing upon his feet, bare-headed, with collar torn apart, weeping and wailing.

Then I stood along with others and wept with sighs until it dawned and then Ma'mūn sat in mourning. Then he left to the spot where our Master (a.s.) was laid and said, "Prepare place for us, for I wish to bath him". Hearing this, I neared him and informed him what my Master (a.s.) had ordered me regarding his bath, shrouding and burial. Hearing this, he said, "I shall not oppose you in it. Do as you please O Harthamah"!

I stood there when I saw a tent come up. I stood outside along with the others and could hear the sounds of Takbīr (Allāhu Akbar), Tahlīl (Lā Ilāha illallāh), Tasbīḥ (Sub-ḥān Allāh) and frequent sounds of pots and pouring of water. I smelt a fragrance whose similarity I had never smelt before. I was in that state, when Ma'mūn came up to his balcony and called out to me, saying, "O Harthamah! Don't you presume that an Imām (a.s.) cannot be bathed except by an Imām (a.s.) similar to him? Then where is his son Muḥammad bin `Alī (al Jawād), when he is in Madīnah of Rasūlullāh (s.a.w.a.) and he (Al Ridhā) is in Ṭūs?" I replied, "O commander! Verily we say that an Imām (a.s.) cannot be bathed except by an Imām (a.s.) similar to him. However, if someone violates this and administers bath to an Imām (a.s.), it shall not nullify his Imāmah due to this. Nor will the Imāmah

of the Imām (a.s.) following him be nullified, since the person forcefully bathed his father. And if Abul Ḥasan `Alī bin Mūsā (al Ridhā) would be in Madīnah, his son Muḥammad (al Jawād) would have administered his bath apparently; moreover no one bathes him (a.s.) presently except him (Imām al Jawād), however, in secret". Hearing this, he became silent.

Just then the tent opened up and I found my Master (a.s.) covered in his shroud. I placed him upon the bier and we carried him. Then Ma'mūn offered Prayers upon him along with those present. Then we came to the spot of the grave and I saw people striking the shovels near Hārūn's grave to position his (Hārūn's) grave to be in the direction of Qiblah from his (Imām's) grave. The shovels were striking it, however not a particle from the earth dug up. Seeing this, Ma'mūn told me, "Woe be upon you O Harthamah! How the earth refrains from digging his grave?" I replied, "O commander! He (a.s.) had commanded me to strike the shovel once at the direction of the Qiblah of the grave of the commander, your father Al Rashīd, and not strike more than that". Hearing this, he asked, "Then if you strike, what shall happen, O Harthamah?" I replied, "He (a.s.) informed me that it is not lawful that the grave of your father be positioned toward the Qiblah from his grave. And if I struck this shovel once, I shall find a readymade grave without anyone digging it and a tomb shall be in the centre". Hearing this, Ma'mūn said, "Glory be to Allāh, what amazing is this statement. While there is nothing more amazing than the matter of Abil Ḥasan (a.s.). Then strike O Harthamah and we shall see".

Hearing this, I took a shovel and struck it once at the Qiblah of the grave of Hārūn, I found a readymade grave without anyone digging it and a tomb in the centre, while the people were staring (in amazement) at it. Then Ma'mūn told me, "Lay him into it O Harthamah". I replied, "O commander! My Master commanded me not to enter him into the grave until white water emerges from the grave, fills it and reaches the level of the ground. A whale, equal to the size of the grave, shall be swimming in it. I should lay him (a.s.) near the grave at some distance until the whale disappears and the water drains away". Ma'mūn said, "O Harthamah! Then do as he instructed you". I waited for the water and whale to appear. They appeared and then disappeared, while the people stood watching (in amazement).

Then I placed him (a.s.) beside the grave and a white sheet covered it, while I did not spread it. Then his body was placed in the grave, without my hands or anyone else. Then Ma'mūn signalled to the people, saying, "Take earth in your hands and

sprinkle upon it". Hearing this, I said, "Do not do so O commander". He shouted, "Woe be to you! Then who shall do so?" I replied, "He (a.s.) has instructed me not to sprinkle earth upon him, since the grave shall get covered up by itself and transform into a square on the ground". Hearing this, Ma'mūn ordered the people not to do so. People threw away the earth from their hands, while the grave covered up by itself and transformed into a square on the ground. Then Ma'mūn left and I too left.

Then Ma'mūn called me and asked in private, "I ask you by Allāh (s.w.t.) O Harthamah! Tell me the truth what you heard from Abul Ḥasan (a.s.)". I replied, "I already informed you what I heard from him, O commander". He again asked, "I ask you by Allāh (s.w.t.), to tell me the truth if he told you anything else apart from what you told me". I replied, "O commander! Whatever you ask me". He asked, "O Harthamah! Did he (a.s.) confide to you something in private apart from this?" I replied in the affirmative and he asked what it was. I replied, "Regarding the grapes and pomegranates". Hearing this, Ma'mūn's colour changed, sometimes yellow, sometimes red and sometimes black. Then he fell unconscious and I heard him say in that state, "Woe be upon Ma'mūn from Allāh (s.w.t.)! Woe be upon him from the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.)! And woe be upon him from `Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (a.s.)! And woe be upon Ma'mūn from Fāṭimah al Zahrā' (s.a.)! Woe be upon Ma'mūn from Al Ḥasan (a.s.) and Al Ḥusain (a.s.)! Woe be upon Ma'mūn from `Alī ibn al Ḥusain (a.s.)! Woe be upon Ma'mūn from Muḥammad bin `Alī (a.s.)! Woe be upon Ma'mūn from Ja`far bin Muḥammad (a.s.)! Woe be upon Ma'mūn from Mūsā bin Ja`far (a.s.)! Woe be upon Ma'mūn from `Alī bin Mūsā al Ridhā! And this, by Allāh (s.w.t.), is an apparent loss". He repeated these words again and again. When I saw that this state persisted in him for the lengthy period of time, I left him and sat in one of the corners of the house.

After sometime, he sat up and called me. I entered and saw him sitting, similar to an inebriate. Seeing me, he said, "By Allāh (s.w.t.)! Neither are you dearer to me than him (a.s.), nor everyone in the earth and the heavens. By Allāh (s.w.t.)! If I come to know that you disclosed to anyone what you just saw and I hear something, it shall result in your perdition". I said, "O commander! If anything is revealed from me, my blood shall be lawful upon you". He said, "No, by Allāh (s.w.t.)! Rather you should give me promise and take an oath that you shall keep it a secret and not disclose it". Then he took promise and oath from me and confirmation from me. When I left his presence, he struck his hand upon the other

and said, **“They hide from people but they hide not from Allāh and He is with them when they hold nightly discourses which He is not pleased with; and Allāh does compass round what all they do”.**<sup>1</sup>

Quṭubuddīn al Rāwandī relates from Ḥasan bin `Abbad, who was the scribe of Al Ridhā (a.s.). He says that once I entered his (a.s.)’s presence when Ma’mūn had decided to go to Bagdād. When he (a.s.) saw me, he said, “O son of `Abbād! We shall not enter `Irāq, nor see it”. Hearing this, I wept and said, “You have made me lose hope of meeting my family and children”. Imām (a.s.) replied, “As for you, you shall enter it. However, I mean myself”. Thus he fell ill and passed away in a village of Ṭūs. He (a.s.) had bequeathed to dig a grave for him near the wall, while the distance between his grave and that of Hārūn should be three arms. They tried to dig the grave near that of Hārūn, however, the shovels and spades broke. Thus they left and dug where it was possible. Imām (a.s.) had also said, “Dig at the place (at a distance of three arms from Hārūn’s grave), for it will be possible for you to do so. Then you shall find a copper fish with something written upon it in the Hebrew language. Then when you dig my grave, make it deep and keep it (the fish) near my feet”. We dug at that place and found soft mud. We found a copper fish upon which was engraved in the Hebrew language, “This is the Mausoleum of `Alī bin Mūsā al Ridhā (a.s.). And that is the pit of Hārūn, the arrogant”.

Here ends what we have quoted from the book Jilā’ul `Uyūn of `Allāmah al Majlisī.

We (the Author) say that it is appropriate at this stage to mention three points. First, it is mentioned regarding the date of the Martyrdom of Imām `Alī al Ridhā (a.s.) that it took place in the month of Ṣafar, two hundred and three Hijrah at an age of fifty five years, however, there is difference regarding the day. Ibn Athīr (al Jazarī), Al Ṭabarsī and others mention the date of his (a.s.)’s Martyrdom to be on the last day of the month of Ṣafar and some say fourteenth of the month. Shaikh (Ibrāhīm) al Kaf`amī opines that it took place on the seventeenth, while the author of the book Al `Adad and the Author of Masārul Shī`ah (Shaikh al Mufīd) mention it on twenty third of the month of Ḍilqa`dah, while reciting his (a.s.)’s salutations on that day is recommended, from far or near, as mentioned by Sayyid Ibn Ṭāwūs in his Iqbālul A`amāl.

(`Abdullāh bin Ja`far) Al Ḥimyārī reports from the eminent trustworthy personality

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<sup>1</sup> Holy Qur’ān, Sūratul Nisā’: 108

Mu`ammar bin Khallād that once Abū Ja`far (Imām al Jawād) told me, "O Mu`ammar! Mount". I asked him where we would go, to which he said, "Mount as I told you". I mounted until we reached a valley or a ravine. Then he (a.s.) told me, "Stop here". I waited, while he (a.s.) left and returned back. When he (a.s.) returned back I asked him, "May I be ransom upon you! Where did you go?" He (a.s.) replied, "I just buried my father (a.s.), while he was in Khurāsān".

Shaikh al Ṭabarsī writes in his A`alām al Warā from Umayyah bin `Alī that I was in Madīnah and frequently went to the presence of Abū Ja`far (al Jawād), while Abul Ḥasan (al Ridhā) was at Khurāsān. His (a.s.)'s family members and his father's uncles would visit him and greet him. One day he (a.s.) called his maid and said, "Tell them to prepare for mourning". They left from there, saying, "We did not ask him that we should to mourn for whom?" The next day Imām (a.s.) repeated his words and they asked him, "We should mourn whom?" He (a.s.) replied, "To mourn the best one upon the earth". After some days news reached us regarding the Martyrdom of Abul Ḥasan (al Ridhā) that he passed away on that very day.

Second, the scholars do not mention any other children of Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) except Imām Muḥammad al Taqī (a.s.), while some even say that his progeny confined in him (a.s.). Shaikh al Mufīd says that Imām `Alī bin Mūsā al Ridhā (a.s.) passed away and we do not know of any other son that he left behind him except his son, the Imām after him, Abū Ja`far Muḥammad bin `Alī (al Taqī al Jawād), whose age during the death of his father (a.s.) was seven years and some months.

Ibn Shahr Āshūb states that his son was Imām Muḥammad al Taqī (a.s.). However, `Allāmah (Muḥammad Bāqir) al Majlisī relates in his Biḥārul Anwār from the book Qurbal Isnād (of `Abdullāh bin Ja`far al Ḥimyarī) from Al Bazantī (Aḥmad bin Abī Naṣr) that once I asked Imām al Ridhā (a.s.), "May I be ransom upon you! I asked you some years back regarding the Imāmah, while you did not have a son. Then in whom shall it (the Imāmah) rest after you. You replied, 'My son', while Allāh (s.w.t.) (now) bestowed two sons to you".

Ibn Shahr Āshūb writes in his Manāqib that the origin of the Masjid Zard Kaneh in Marw is where Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) recited Prayers. A Masjid was constructed there and a son of Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) was buried therein, while wondrous acts are known to occur from it.

`Allāmah (Muḥammad Bāqir) al Majlisī relates in his Biḥārul Anwār in the chapter

dealing with praise-worthy character, from the book `Uyūn Akhbar al Ridhā (a.s.), (of Shaikh al Ṣadūq) some reports that evident that Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) had a daughter named Fāṭemah, who narrated Aḥādīth from her father (a.s.). The text of the Ḥadīth being, "From Fāṭemah bintul Ridhā (a.s.), from her father (a.s.), from his father (Imām al Kāzim), from Ja`far bin Muḥammad (al Ṣādiq), from his father (Muḥammad al Bāqir) and his uncle Zayd bin `Alī, from their father `Alī bin al Ḥusain (Zainul `Ābidīn), from his father (Imām al Ḥusain) and his uncle (Imām al Ḥasan), from their father `Alī bin Abī Ṭālib (a.s.), from the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) that he said, "One who restrains his anger, Allāh (s.w.t.) restrains His punishment from him. And the one who improves his character, Allāh (s.w.t.) bestows him the status of a fasting one and a standing one (in Prayers)".

Shaikh al Ṣadūq also relates through his chain of transmitters from Fāṭemah bint `Alī bin Mūsā al Ridhā, from her father (a.s.), from his forefathers (a.s.), from `Alī (Amīrul Mu`minīn), that he said, "It is not lawful for a Muslim to terrify another Muslim".

It is mentioned in some genealogical works that Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) had a daughter named Fāṭemah, who was the wife of Muḥammad bin Ja`far bin Qāsim bin Ishāq bin `Abdullāh bin Ja`far (al Ṭayyār) bin Abī Ṭālib, the nephew (brother's son) of Abī Ḥāshim al Ja`farī. While she was the mother of Ḥasan bin Muḥammad bin Ja`far bin Qāsim (bin Ishāq bin `Abdullāh bin Ja`far al Ṭayyār bin Abī Ṭālib). Al Shablanjī in his Nūrul Abṣār quotes regarding her nobility and virtue, one should refer to it.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> We state this incident for the benefit of our esteemed readers. It is written in the book Al Kawākibul Sayyārah (of Shamsuddīn Muḥammad Ibnul Zayyāt) that beside the grave of Yūsuf bin Yahyā al Buwayṭī (a Shāfi`ī scholar) is the grave of Sayyidah Fāṭemah bint al Sayyid `Alī al Ridhā bin Mūsā al Kāzim bin Ja`far al Ṣādiq bin Muḥammad al Bāqir bin `Alī Zainul `Ābidīn bin Ḥusain bin `Alī bin Abī Ṭālib, may Allāh (s.w.t.) be pleased with them. An incident is related regarding her with Bashīr bin Sa`īd al Jawharī. One year when people were afflicted with a severe drought her husband passed away leaving behind a bedchamber, while it was not known what it contained. One day she told her maid with a constricted heart, "I wish I knew what was inside it". When they opened it, they found something cast on one side. They took it and found that it was a bag containing a rusted necklace. Seeing this, she told her maid, "Take it to the market, perhaps it might suffice us for today's meal". The maid left and stood at the gate of Al Ṣāghah. She found a man standing who seemed a righteous man. When she looked at him, he asked her what she wanted and she related the entire incident to him.



Third, it should be noted that the poets have composed numerous words in elegies of Imām al Ridhā (a.s.), while `Allāmah (Muḥammad Bāqir) al Majlisī has dedicated an entire chapter in his Biḥārul Anwār dealing with elegies for him (a.s.). However, since these elegies are in `Arabic, while our book is in Farsī, it cannot be quoted here. However, we content ourselves to quote some of them herein below for the sake of gaining abundance and prosperity.

Di` bil says, "Beware he is not accursed who begins to shed tears, and even if the water of the nature would have been depleted (in weeping) it would certainly be less; this weeping is for the one on whom the earth has wept, and the lofty mountains have expressed for it and have become subdued in front of him; the sky wails for missing him, and the stars also mourn for him and become dim; then today it behoves us that we weep upon the calamity, that is very heavy and exalted for us; and our calamity is that the one with whom Allāh was satisfied and he was the grandson of our Prophet (s.a.w.a.), the world opposed him and turned away from him; the calamities of the world are exalted, but I did not see our calamities more exalted than those of Allāh's chosen ones".

While Di` bil has composed numerous verses in elegies of Imām (a.s.).

Also Muḥammad bin Ḥabīb al Ḥabbī says, "In Ṭūs there is a tomb in which there lies an Imām, whom we are enjoined to go visit; the tomb where Paradise is set

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Hearing this, he took the necklace from her and went for some time. Then he returned back and said, "Will you sell it for a hundred dīnār?" The maid did not reply and presumed that he was mocking her. Again he left her and returned back and said, "I increase its price to be two hundred and fifty dīnār". Hearing this, she said, "O may Master! I am but a maid and an honourable woman. Do you mock me due to it?" The man replied, "No, by Allāh (s.w.t.)! I do not mock you and I speak the truth". The maid said, "In that case take the amount and come with me to my mistress". He took the amount and accompanied her to the house. She entered therein and informed Sayyidah Fāṭemah regarding it. She herself came out, stood behind the door and said, "Is it true what this maid says?" He replied in the affirmative and handed it over to the maid. Sayyidah Fāṭemah said, "Distribute this amount into two parts, one for us and another for you". He replied, "No, by Allāh (s.w.t.)! I do not require anything from it, however I request you to pray that my progeny remains until the day of Qiyāmah". Hearing this, she said, "May Allāh (s.w.t.) cause righteous ones to emerge from your progeny". Therefore personalities such as Abū `Abdullāh al Ḥusainī and Abul Fadhl bin `Abdullāh bin Ḥusain bin Bashīr al Jawharī emerged from his progeny. May Allāh (s.w.t.) be pleased with them and her. (Mu'min al Shablanjī al Shāfi`ī, "Nūrul Abṣār fī Manāqib Āl Baytil Nabīyyil Mukhtār") (translator)

up from early in the morning, and is constantly granted greetings and peace; a tomb whose radiating rays illuminate the blind, and its earth treats ailments; a tomb in which those who reach at its region, their sins are unloaded from them when they depart; they take with themselves an increased security from the chastisement, and are secured from ever suffering from poverty; the tomb that holds `Alī bin Mūsā, is prouder than the land of Makkah and Al Ḥarām; one who visits it for Allāh recognizing his right, it is forbidden for the fire (of hell) to touch him”.

It should be noted that the reward of visiting Imām (a.s.) are such abundant that cannot be calculated, while we have quoted some reports regarding it in our *Mafātīḥul Jinan* and in the first section of this book. And if not for brevity's sake, we would have quoted some incidents and miracles that manifested through his Blessed Mausoleum.

## 7. Some of his (a.s.)'s eminent companions

First, Di`bil bin `Alī al Khuzā`ī. His eminence in virtue, oratory, poetry and literature is such renown that cannot be quoted. Qādhī Sayyid Nūrullāh al Shushtarī writes in his Majālisul Mu`minīn that his biography has been mentioned in detail in the books Kashful Gummah (of Shaikh `Alī bin `Īsā al Irbilī), `Uyūn Akhbār al Ridhā (a.s.) (of Shaikh al Ṣadūq) and other Shī`ah Imāmīyyah books.

It is written in Kashful Gummah from Di`bil al Khuzā`ī that when I composed the verses Madārise Āyāt, I decided to read it in the presence of Abul Ḥasan `Alī bin Mūsā al Ridhā (a.s.), while he was the heir-apparent of Ma`mūn at Khurāsān. I reached the town, entered his presence and recited the verses to him. Hearing them, he (a.s.) praised them and then said, "Do not read it to anyone else until I tell you". When news reached Ma`mūn, he summoned me and asked my welfare. Then he said, "O Di`bil! Recite to me the verses of Madārise Āyāt". I replied that I did not know regarding it, when he turned to his slave and said, "O slave! Call Abul Ḥasan `Alī bin Mūsā al Ridhā (a.s.)". Not much time passed, when he (a.s.) arrived. Ma`mūn told Imām (a.s.), "O Abal Ḥasan! I told Di`bil to recite Madārise Āyāt, however he says he does not know it". Hearing this, Abul Ḥasan (a.s.) turned to me and said, "O Di`bil! Recite it for the commander". I read out to him, he praised it and ordered fifty thousand dirham to be gifted to me. While `Alī bin Mūsā al Ridhā (a.s.) too presented some amount similar to it. I said, "O my Master! If you deem it right, please present me something from your clothes that could be used as my shroud (Kafan)". He (a.s.) agreed and handed me a dress that he had used, along with an elegant napkin and said, "Take care of this, since you shall be protected by it". Thereafter Abul `Abbās Fadhl bin Sahl, the vizier of Ma`mūn, handed me some gifts and a yellow Khurāsānī horse.

Then I decided to go to `Irāq, and when I passed by a road, some Turkish bandits appeared and plundered us, while it was a rainy day. I was left with a worn-out shirt and a new grief. I regretted upon losing what I had possessed among Imām (a.s.)'s shirt and towel. I was engrossed in thoughts regarding words of my Master al Ridhā (a.s.), when one of the Turkish bandits passed by me, seated upon the yellow horse gifted to me by the vizier. He stopped close to me, his companions gathered around him and he started to recite the verses of Madārise Āyāt. When I heard them, I was astonished at the Shī`ah faith of the Turkish bandit. Seeing this, I asked him, in greed of getting back the shirt and towel, "O my Master!

Whose verses are these?" He replied, "Woe be upon you! What have you got to do with it?" I replied that there was a reason for it that I would later inform him. He replied, "These verses are more famous to be concealed than its composer". I again asked him who he was and he replied, "It is of Di`bil bin `Alī al Khuzā`ī, the poet of Āl Muḥammad (a.s.). May Allāh (s.w.t.) reward him fairly".

Hearing this, I said, "O my Master! I am Di`bil and these are my verses". He replied, "Woe be to you! What do you say?" I replied, "The matter is more renowned than this. Then send someone to the people of the caravan, summon them here and ask them regarding me". He did so and all of them said, "He is Di`bil bin `Alī al Khuzā`ī". When he became assured, he said, "I return back all that I plundered from the caravan due to your honour". Then he called out to his companions, saying, "Those who have taken anything, return it back". People were returned back all that was plundered from them, while I too was returned all my things. Ultimately I and my companions were protected due to blessings of the shirt and the towel.

As per the book `Uyūn Akhbār al Ridhā (a.s.), Di`bil then entered Qum and its inhabitants requested him to recite the verses for them and he told them to gather at the Congregational (Jāme`) Masjid. When they gathered, he mounted the pulpit (Minbar) and recited it for them. The people were pleased and presented him with numerous wealth and robes. When they were informed regarding the shirt (of Imām al Ridhā), they requested him to sell them for a thousand dīnār, however he refused. Then they told him to sell them a piece from it for a thousand dīnār, yet he refused to do so. He left Qum and when he left the town, a group of `Arab youth (from Qum) took away the shirt from him. Di`bil returned back to Qum and asked them to return back the shirt to him. However, the youth refused to do so and even turned down the request of their elders. They told him, "There is no way for you to take the shirt except that you take a thousand dīnār as its cost". Initially he refused, however when he lost hope of getting it back, he requested them to give him a piece from it. They agreed, handed him over a piece from it and paid him a thousand dīnār for the remaining part.

Di`bil returned to his hometown and when he reached there, he found that the thieves had robbed everything from his house. Therefore he sold the hundred dīnār given to him by Imām al Ridhā (a.s.), each at a cost of hundred dirham, to the Shī`ah. Thus he obtained ten thousand dirham and he remembered the words

of Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) when he told him, “You shall need the Dīnār”.

He had a slave-girl, whom he loved much. Once she was inflicted with severe conjunctivitis. Physicians arrived and when they examined her, they said, “As for the right eye, we cannot treat it and it has gone blind. However, the left eye, we shall treat it and strive hard to restore it”. Hearing this, Di`bil was severely aggrieved and wept upon her. Then he remembered that he had a piece of the shirt of Imām (a.s.) with him. He rubbed it upon the eyes of his slave-girl and tied it upon it at night. When it dawned, her eyes became alright and better than before due to the blessings of Abul Ḥasan al Ridhā (a.s.).

We (the Author) say that the purse which Imām (a.s.) presented to Di`bil, contained dīnār upon which Imām al Ridhā (a.s.)’s name was engraved. The Shī`ah bought these dīnār each at a cost of a hundred dirham. However, Qādhī Sayyid Nūrullāh al Shushtarī does not quote the report of `Uyūn Akhbār al Ridhā (a.s.) (of Shaikh al Ṣadūq) completely, however, he quotes its first part from the book Kashful Gummāh (of `Alī bin `Īsā al Irbilī), therefore the report of the shirt and the dīnār has become abridged. However, we shall quote the first part of the report from `Uyūn Akhbār al Ridhā of Shaikh al Ṣadūq. He relates through his reliable chain of transmitters, that Di`bil bin `Alī al Khuzā`ī once entered the presence of Abul Ḥasan `Alī bin Mūsā al Ridhā (a.s.) at Marw and told him, “O son of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.)! I have composed a poem (Madārise Āyāt) for you and I desire that I should not recite it to anyone before you”. Imām (a.s.) told him to recite and he said, “The schools of the Qur`ānic verses (Madārise Āyāt) are void of reciting now, and the landing place of Revelation have become empty”. When he reached these verses, “I see their (the Ahl al-bait’s) share divided among others, while their own hands are empty of their share”, Abul Ḥasan al Ridhā (a.s.) wept and said, “You speak the truth O Khuzā`ī”.

Then he continued to recite, and when he reached these words, “When they (the Ahl al-bait) were oppressed they stretched, their oppressed closed fists”. Hearing this Imām (a.s.) kept turning his hands and saying, “Yes by Allāh (s.w.t.), (closed) fists”. Then Di`bil continued, “I have been frightened in the world and the days of its effort, and I desire safety after my death”. Hearing this, Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) said, “May Allāh (s.w.t.) safeguard you on the day of the great terror (Qiyāmah)”. Di`bil concluded his poem, saying, “The tomb in Bagdād (Kāẓmīyyah) is for a purified soul, to whom the Merciful has guaranteed one of the chambers (in

Paradise)". When he reached here, Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) said, "Should not I add two lines for you at this stage to complete your poetry?" He replied, "Certainly O son of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.)". He (a.s.) said, "As for the tomb in Ṭūs what a great calamity, by which the giblets burn; until the resurrection when Allāh (s.w.t.) shall appoint the Qā'im (a.t.f.s.), who shall grant us relief from grief and sorrows".

When Di`bil heard this, he asked, "O son of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.)! Whose tomb is there in Ṭūs?" Imām (a.s.) replied, "My tomb. Days and nights shall not pass, except that Ṭūs shall become a place of refuge for my Shī`ah and my pilgrims. Verily the one who visits me in my alienation at Ṭūs, shall be along with me in my status in Qiyāmah duly forgiven". When Di`bil completed reciting, Imām (a.s.) arose, told him not to move from his place and entered his house. After some time a servant arrived with a hundred dīnār, upon which his blessed name was engraved and told him, "My Master tells you to include them in your expenses". Di`bil replied, "By Allāh (s.w.t.)! I neither came here for this, nor did I compose these verses in greed for something". Saying this, he returned it back and instead requested for a dress among Imām (a.s.)'s dresses to gain blessings and abundance through it. Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) sent him a linen shirt with the purse and told his servant, "Tell him to take this purse, since he shall need it, and tell him not to return it back".

Hearing this, Di`bil took the purse and shirt and left Marw with a caravan. When he reached Miyān Qūhān (a township in between Hirāt and Naysābūr), they encountered bandits. They captivated the people in the caravan and tied their hands, while Di`bil was among those whose hands were tied. The thieves robbed the caravan and sat to divide it among themselves. One of the men started to recite the verses of Di`bil as comparison, "I see their share divided among others, while their own hands are empty of their share". When Di`bil heard this, he asked them, "Whose verses are these?" They replied, "A man from Khuzā`ah called Di`bil bin `Alī". He replied, "I am Di`bil, the composer of this poem to which these verses belong". The man went to their chief, who was praying behind a hillock and was among the Shī`ah, and informed him. He personally came and stood facing Di`bil. He asked him whether he was Di`bil and he replied in the affirmative. The man told him to recite the complete poetry and Di`bil did so. Hearing this, he unfastened his hands and that of others in the caravan. They returned back all that they had plundered from them due to the honour of Di`bil and he proceeded

further until he reached Qum.

Di`bil was born in the year of the Martyrdom of Imām Ja`far al Ṣādiq (a.s.) and passed away at Shūsh (in Khūzistān, Īrān) in the year two hundred and forty six Hijrah.

Abul Faraj al Iṣfahānī writes in his Al Agāni that Di`bil was among the Shī`ah renowned for his inclination towards `Alī (a.s.). His poetry Madārise Āyāt is among the best of poems and splendid praises composed for the Ahlalibait (a.s.). He wrote this poem upon a dress and used it as Iḥrām (pilgrim's garb) and bequeathed that it be added in his shroud. He always remained in fear from his tongue (verses) and in frights of the rulers. While his entire age was spent in flight and concealment.

It is related from Di`bil that when I fled from the ruler, I thought of spending the night at Naysābūr alone. I decided to compose poetry for `Abdullāh bin Tāhir that night. While I was engrossed in it, I heard a voice addressing me, while the door was locked from inside, "Peace be upon you and the Mercy of Allāh! Come to yourself, may Allāh (s.w.t.) have Mercy upon you"! Hearing this, my body started to tremble and I was inflicted with a great fright. The voice told me, "Do not fear, may Allāh (s.w.t.) grant you welfare! I am among your brothers from the genie (Jinn), residing in Yemen. A person from `Irāq came to us and recited your poem Madārise Āyāt for us. I love to hear it from your tongue". Hearing this, I recited it for him and he wept until he fell upon the earth. Then he said, "May Allāh (s.w.t.) have mercy upon you! Should not I relate a Ḥadīth to you that would increase your intention and help you adhere to your faith?" I replied in the affirmative and he continued, "Since some time I had heard regarding Ja`far bin Muḥammad (al Ṣādiq), therefore I went to Madīnah. I heard him (a.s.) say, 'My father (Imām al Bāqir) related to me from his father (Imām al Sajjād), from his grandfather (Amīrul Mu'minīn) that the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: `Alī and his Shī`ah, they are the successful ones'"<sup>1</sup>. Saying this, he bade me farewell to leave. I asked him,

<sup>1</sup> This Ḥadīth is quoted in most of the Ahlul Sunnah books with textual variations in interpretation of the Qur'ānic Verse, **"Verily those who believe and do good deeds, it is they who are the best of creatures"**. (Sūratul Bayyinah: 7) Al Balāḍurī, "Ansābul Ashrāf"; Muwaffaq al Khwārizmī, "Kitāb al Manāqib"; Ibn `Asākir, "Tārīkh Dimashq"; Jalāluddīn al Suyūṭī, "Tafsīr Al Durr al Manthūr; Hāfiḍ al Ḥaskānī "Shawāhidul Tanzīl"; Sibṭ Ibnul Jawzī, "Taḍkiratul Khawāṣul Ummah"; etc.) (translator)

"May Allāh (s.w.t.) have Mercy upon you! If you deem fit inform me your name". He replied, "I am Ḍubyān bin `Āmir".

Second, Ḥasan bin `Alī bin Ziyād al Washshā' al Bajalī al Kūfī. He was among the eminent personalities of the Shī`ah sect and the companions of Imām `Alī al Ridhā (a.s.). He was the grandson (daughter's son) of Ilyās al Ṣayrafī, the companion of Imām Ja`far al Ṣādiq (a.s.). He relates from his grandfather Ilyās that he said, while he was in his last moment, "Be witness upon me, while this is not a time for speaking a lie, I heard Abī `Abdillāh (al Ṣādiq) say, By Allāh (s.w.t.)! No slave dies who loves Allāh (s.w.t.) and His Messenger (s.a.w.a.) and the A`immah (a.s.) and the fire (of hell) touches him".<sup>1</sup> He repeated this statement twice and thrice without anyone asking him to do so.

Shaikh al Ṭūsī relates from Aḥmad bin Muḥammad bin Īsā al Qummī that I left for Kūfah in search of Aḥādīth. There I met Ḥasan bin `Alī al Washshā' and told him to bring me the books of Al `Alā' bin Razīn al Qallā' and Abān bin `Uthmān al Aḥmar. He brought them for me and I said, "I befriend that you give me permission to relate from them". He replied, "O you! May Allāh (s.w.t.) have mercy upon you! What is the haste? Go, copy them and then hear them (from me)". I replied, "There is no security from occurrences". He replied, "If I knew that there was such demand for this Ḥadīth, I would have sought (seeking them) more, since I met nine hundred Sheikhs in this Masjid, each one of them saying: Ja`far bin Muḥammad (al Ṣādiq) related to me".

We (the Author) say that this report evidences the extreme concern of the inhabitants of Qum in gaining Aḥādīth to such an extent that they travelled from Qum to Kūfah and believed in the principles (of Ḥadīth). Then they did not relate it except after obtaining permission (to relate it) or listening (directly) from its Masters.

Summarily, Ḥasan bin `Alī was among the Masters of permissions (of Aḥādīth), eminent companions of the A`immah (a.s.) and those who related from them. He rectified his error after he stopped at (the Imāmah of) Imām Mūsā bin Ja`far (a.s.) by returning back to Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) and his statement acknowledging his Imāmah and declaring that he was the Evidence (Ḥujjah of Allāh) after his father

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<sup>1</sup> Imām al Ṣādiq (a.s.) meant to say that the one who loves Allāh (s.w.t.), the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and the A`immah (a.s.), the fire of hell does not even touch him. (translator)



(a.s.).

Ibn Shahr Āshūb writes in his *Al Manāqib* that he said that I wrote down some (Religious) issues in a scroll to test `Alī bin Mūsā (a.s.). I went to his door; however, I could not reach him due to immense crowd. Suddenly I saw a servant asking people regarding me, saying, "Who is Ḥasan bin `Alī al Washshā', the grandson of Ilyās al Bagdādī?" I introduced myself to him and he handed me a book, saying, "These are replies to the queries that you carry". Hearing this, I acknowledged his (a.s.)'s Imāmah and abandoned my belief of stopping (at the Imāmah of Imām al Kāẓim).

Third, Ḥasan bin `Alī bin Fadhdhāl al Taymulī al Kūfī, possessing the agnomen (Kunīyyah) of Abū Muḥammad.

Qādhī Sayyid Nūrullāh al Shushtarī writes in his *Majālisul Mu'minīn* that he met Imām Mūsā al Kāẓim (a.s.) and was among those who related from Imām al Ridhā (a.s.). He was among his (a.s.)'s distinguished and eminent ones, possessing lofty status, was abstinent, abstemious and reliable with regards to Aḥādīth.

Shaikh al Najjāshī writes in his book from Fadhl bin Shāḍān that I was in the clan of Al Rabī' in Masjid al Rabī', studying under a person named Ismā'īl bin `Abbād. I saw a group of people resting, when one of them said, "There is a man in the mountains called Ibn Fadhdhāl, who is a greatest worshipper we have seen or heard of. It is said that he goes to the desert and falls into prostration (Sajdah), while birds come and sit upon his back presuming him to be a cloth or a sack. The beasts eat around him and not run away from him for they feel secured from him".

Abū Muḥammad (Fadhl bin Shāḍān) says that when I heard this, I presumed they were speaking regarding a man who lived in the initial days. After some days, when I was seated with my father in the tribe of Al Rabī', a Sheikh with a handsome countenance and praiseworthy features arrived there. He was wearing a cotton shirt and a cotton cloak, while he had worn tight slippers in his legs. He saluted my father, who arose to welcome him, and treated him with utmost respect and veneration. When he left to search for Ibn Abī `Umayr, I asked my father who he was and he replied, "He is Ḥasan bin `Alī bin Fadhdhāl". I asked whether he was the same learned scholar and my father replied in the affirmative. I said, "It cannot be, since he lives in the mountains". My father replied, "He is the same one, while he was staying in the mountains". Then he said, "What reckless is your intellect,

similar to a young lad". I narrated to him what I heard from the people and he again said, "He is the same one".

After this, he frequently came to visit my father. Then I went to meet him at Kūfah and studied the books of Ḥadīth of Ibn Bukayr and others. He would carry his book, enter the room and read out to me. When the son in law of Ṭāhir bin Ḥusain went for the Ḥajj Pilgrimage, he came to Kūfah and people honored him due to his status, wealth and position near the ruler. They related the excellences of Ḥasan to him; however, Ḥasan did not go to meet him. He sent a message to Ḥasan, saying, "I endear that you come to me since I cannot come to you". However, he refused. And when our companions spoke to him in this matter, he replied, "What have I got to do with Ṭahīr, no relation with them. And there is no work between us". Later I learnt that he would come to my house (to teach me) due to his Religion (to impart knowledge).

His Prayer-mat was at Masjid al Kūfah, near a pillar, called the seventh pillar and also the pillar of Nabī Ibrāhīm (a.s.). In his entire life he was an adherer of Fathīyyah belief and was renowned for it before his death. However, he turned to the true faith and died upon it and acknowledged it with his tongue. May Allāh (s.w.t.) be pleased with him.

He authored books such as, Al Ziyārāt, Al Bashārāt, Al Nawādir, Al Radd `alal Gāliyyah, Al Shawāhid min KitābAllāh, Al Mut`ah, Al Nāsikh wal Mansūkh, Al Malāhim, Al Ṣalawāt and Al Rijāl. He passed away in the year two hundred and twenty four Hijrah.

Fourth, Ḥasan bin Maḥbūb al Sarrād or al Zarrād, Abū `Alī al Bajalī al Kūfi. He was reliable, possessed an eminent status. He is counted among the four pillars (Arkān al Arba`ah) of the Shī`ah faith<sup>1</sup> in his age and the masters of consensus (Ijmā` ). He authored numerous books, viz. Kitāb al Mashaykhah, Al Ḥudūd, Al Diyāt, Al Farā'idh, Al Nikāḥ, al Ṭalāq, Kitāb al Nawādir numbering two thousand pages, Kitāb al Tafsīr, etc. He related from Imām `Alī al Ridhā (a.s.) and also from sixty companions of Imām Ja`far al Ṣādiq (a.s.).

It is reported that his father took extreme care in his upbringing and education.

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<sup>1</sup> The other three being, Ṣafwān bin Yahyā al Bajalī, Muḥammad bin Abī`Umayr al Azdī and Yūnus bin `Abdul Raḥmān. (Mīrzā Gulām Ridhā al `Irfāniyān, "Māshāyikhul Thiqa't") (translator)

He promised him that he would gift him one dirham in lieu of each Ḥadīth that he heard from `Alī bin Ri`āb and wrote it down. While `Alī bin Ri`āb was among the trustworthy (traditionists) and the eminent Shī`ah scholars of Kūfah. He related from Imām Ja`far al Ṣādiq (a.s.) and Imām Mūsā al Kāẓim (a.s.). His brother Yamān bin Ri`āb was among the chiefs of the Khawārij. Both of them would gather for three days each year to debate. Then they would part from one another and not speak to each other even to the extent of salutation.

Shaikh al Kashshī relates from `Alī bin Muḥammad al Qutaybī from Ja`far bin Muḥammad bin Ḥasan bin Maḥbūb, that he says with regards to the genealogy of his grandfather Ḥasan bin Maḥbūb, that he is Ḥasan bin Maḥbūb bin Wahab bin Ja`far bin Wahab. While Wahab was a Sindī (from Sindh in India) slave of Jarīr bin `Abdullāh al Bajalī. He was a manufacturer of armours (Zarrād) and once came to Amīrul Mu`minīn (a.s.) and requested him to buy him from Jarīr. Jarīr detested to let him go and therefore said, "The slave is free, I have emancipated him". When his emancipation was confirmed, he went and joined Amīrul Mu`minīn (a.s.).

Ḥasan bin Maḥbūb died at the end of the year two hundred and twenty four Hijrah at an age of sixty five years.

We (the Author) say that the reason for naming Ḥasan as Al Zarrād is since his grandfather Wahab was a manufacturer of armours (Zarrād). This name continued until once Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) told Al Bazantī (Aḥmad bin Abī Naṣr), "Do not say Ḥasan bin Maḥbūb al Zarrād, rather say Al Sarrād. Since Allāh (s.w.t.) says: **Make you coats of mail (Sard)**".<sup>1</sup> Imām (a.s.) refrained from naming in Al Zarrād was not due to contempt or fault in the name, since Al Zarrād and Al Sarrād, both mean the same (manufacturer of armours). However he (a.s.) did for the sake of exhorting and considering the Qur`ān, so that the statements and citations of a person are drawn from the Qur`ān and taken from the Words of Allāh (s.w.t.). It is related that all the statements of Imām (al Ridhā), his replies and his examples were obtained from the Qur`ān.

Fifth, Zakarīyyā bin Ādam bin `Abdullāh bin Sa`ad al Ash`arī al Qummī, a trustworthy personality, eminent and occupier of status in the eyes of Imām al Ridhā (a.s.).

Shaikh al Kashshī relates from Zakarīyyā bin Ādam that once I told Al Ridhā (a.s.),

<sup>1</sup> Holy Qur`ān, Sūratul Sabā': 11

“Verily I desire to go away from the midst of my relatives due to the presence of numerous foolish ones among them”. Imām (a.s.) replied, “Do not do so. Since your Ahl al Bait (a.s.) shall be defended (from calamities) due to you similar to the defence of the inhabitants of Bagdād (from calamities) due to (the tomb of) Abul Ḥasan al Kāẓim (a.s.) among them”.

It is related from `Alī bin Musayyab al Hamdānī, who was among the trustworthy companions of Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) that once I asked Al Ridhā (a.s.), “My house is quite far and I cannot come to you every time. Then from whom should I acquire perception of my Religion?” He (a.s.) replied, “From Zakariyyā bin Ādam al Qummī, the dependable with regards to the Religion and the world”.

Among the honors of Zakariyyā is that once he accompanied Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) for the Ḥajj Pilgrimage from Madīnah. It is evident that he sat in the same litter along with Imām (a.s.).

`Allāmah (Muḥammad Bāqir) al Majlisī relates from Tārikhe Qum (of Ḥasan bin Muḥammad al Qummī), dealing with the praises of the inhabitants of Qum, that most of the people of Qum were from the (family of) Ash`arī, while the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) prayed for them and said, “O Allāh (s.w.t.)! Forgive the Ash`arīs, their youngsters and their elders”. He (s.a.w.a.) also said, “The Ash`arīs are from me and I from them”. Among their privileges is that the first one to declare his Shī`ah faith in Qum was Mūsā bin `Abdullāh bin Sa`ad al Ash`arī. And also that Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) told Zakariyyā bin Ādam bin `Abdullāh bin Sa`ad al Ash`arī, “Allāh (s.w.t.) shall ward off calamity from the inhabitants of Qum due to you, as He (s.w.t.) wards off calamity from the inhabitants of Bagdād due to the tomb of Mūsā bin Ja`far (a.s.)”. The Ash`arīs endowed numerous fields and properties for the A`immah (a.s.). Among their other honors is that they were the first ones to dispatch Khums amount for them (a.s.) and they (a.s.) in turn honored numerous personalities among them with gifts, presents and shrouds (Kafan), such as Abī Jarīr Zakariyyā bin Idrīs, Zakariyyā bin Ādam, `Īsā bin `Abdullāh bin Sa`ad, etc.

Shaikh al Kashshī relates through his trustworthy chain of transmitters from Zakariyyā bin Ādam, that I entered the presence of Al Ridhā (a.s.) in the beginning of night, when Abī Jarīr Zakariyyā bin Idrīs had just passed away. Imām (a.s.) inquired regarding him and sought Allāh (s.w.t.)’s Mercy upon him. He spoke to me and I spoke to him until the dawn, then he (a.s.) arose and performed Fajr Prayers.

We (the Author) say that the apparent meaning of the Ḥadīth evidences that Imām (a.s.) remained awake that night speaking to Zakarīyyā bin Ādam and did not sleep. And certainly their discussion would have evolved around an important issue and there is nothing more important than deliberation upon knowledge. A similar report has been related regarding the conversation of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) with Salmān (al Fārsī). Ibn Abil Ḥadīd relates from Al Istī`āb (of Ibn `Abdul Birr) that we relate from `Ā'ishah that Salmān would have personal sittings with the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) at night such that he would almost overwhelm us". As is apparent from the report that Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) did not engross himself in the Nawāfil Prayers that night. And this cannot be except due to his engagement in something more important than it, which is deliberation upon knowledge.

Shaikh al Ṣadūq said in his assembly, in which he would dictate to the Imāmīyyah Masters, that the one who remains awake on the night of twenty first and twenty third (Layālīyal Qadr of Ramadhān) in deliberation upon knowledge, it is the best.

The tomb of Zakarīyyā bin Ādam is situated in the middle of a cemetery of Qum, renowned as Shaykhāne Qum. His paternal cousin Zakarīyyā bin Idrīs bin `Abdullāh bin Sa`ad al Ash`arī al Qummī, renowned as Abī Jarīr, lies buried beside him. The latter is included among the companions of Imām al Ṣādiq (a.s.), Imām al Kāzim (a.s.) and Imām al Ridhā (a.s.), while he obtained an eminent position in the latter (a.s.)'s eyes. Also lies buried beside him Ādam bin Ishāq bin Ādam bin `Abdullāh bin Sa`ad al Ash`arī, the nephew (brother's son) of Zakarīyyā bin Ādam, the honourable trustworthy companion of Imām Muḥammad al Jawād (a.s.). While Zakarīyyā bin Ādam is included among the companions of Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) and Imām al Jawād (a.s.).

Sixth, Abū Muḥammad Ṣafwān bin Yaḥyā al Bajalī al Kūfī, Bayyā` al Sābirī.<sup>1</sup> He was a trustworthy, eminent, worshipper, abstinent, abstemious, noble, jurist, proficient personality and occupied an eminent position near Imām `Alī al Ridhā (a.s.). His virtues cannot be mentioned and his lofty position cannot be described.

The author of Majālisul Mu'minīn (Qādhī Sayyid Nūrullāh al Shushtarī) writes that it is written in Khulāṣatul Aqwāl (of `Allāmah al Ḥillī) and the book of Ibn Dāwūd al Ḥillī (Kitāb al Rijāl) that Ṣafwān was trustworthy and quintessence of

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<sup>1</sup> He was called Bayyā` al Sābirī since he was a dealer in delicate and fine clothes, while Bayyā` means a seller. (translator)

trustworthiness. His father was one of those who related from Imām al Ṣādiq (a.s.) and occupied an honorable position near him (a.s.).

Shaikh al Najjāshī writes in his Al Fihrist that he was trustworthy and quintessence of trustworthiness.

Abū `Amrū al Kashshī relates that our Masters (of Aḥādīth) unanimously confirm to that what is considered true by Ṣafwān bin Yaḥyā, Bayyā` al Sābirī, and acknowledge his expertise in Fiqh (jurisprudence). He was a companion of `Abdullāh bin Jundab and `Alī bin al Nu`mān, while all of them daily recited fifty one units (Rak`ah) of Prayers. They had made an oath among themselves that whoever remained alive among them, would pray on behalf of those who passed away, give their Zakāh and keep their fasts. Among them, Ṣafwān remained alive till the end. Ultimately he would daily offer one hundred and fifty three units (Rak`ah) of Prayers, fast for three months every year, pay the Zakāh three folds and whenever he bestowed alms, he would do so three folds more. His abstinence was to such an extent that in one of his journeys he took some Camels on rent. Some of his companions gave him two dīnār as trust to be handed over to someone in Kūfah, however, since he had not obtained permission from the Cameleer, he did not place them in the luggage.

We (the Author) say that the honourable Sheikh, Divine scholar and the devout researcher Mullā Aḥmad al Ardebīlī al Najafī imitated the example of Ṣafwān bin Yaḥyā in this matter. While he had reached an extreme degree of virtue, piety, abstinence, Divinity and grace. `Allāmah al Majlisī says regarding him that I did not find his similarity in the former ones or the latter ones. May Allāh (s.w.t.) gather us with him and the Chaste A`immah (a.s.).

It is related that once he (Aḥmad al Ardebīlī) rented a mule to go to Najaful Ashraf from Kāzmīyyah. A man from Bagdād handed him a letter to be delivered to a person at Najaf. He took the letter and walked on foot to Najaf, without riding the mule, since the renter of the Mule was not along with him and he had not obtained permission from him to carry this letter with him (upon the Mule).

We (the Author) say that this incident evidences the extreme precaution and abstinence of the above Muḥaqqiq (al Ardebīlī) on one hand, while on the other hand it also points out to his extreme concern in fulfilling the needs of the believers and brothers in Religion. He could have refused to carry the letter;

however, he did not wish to forsake this excellence (of serving his believer brother). It is related that Imām Ja`far al Ṣādiq (a.s.) said, "Fulfilling the needs of believers is superior-most than circumambulation (Tawāf of the Ka`bah), circumambulation ....", until he (a.s.) counted ten.

It is related that if a worshipper in Banī Isrā'īl reached the climax in worship, he would choose to fulfil the needs of people among all forms of worship.

Mu`ammar bin Khallād relates from Abul Ḥasan (al Kāẓim) that, "The damage in the Religion of a Muslim who loves dominion, is more harmful than two wolves that enter a flock of sheep (to devour them) in the absence of their care-taker". Then he (a.s.) continued, "However, Ṣafwān does not love dominion".

Shaikh al Ṭūsī says that Ṣafwān relates from forty personalities among the companions of Abū `Abdullāh (al Ṣādiq) and authored books (in number) similar to Ḥusain bin Sa`īd (al Ahwāzī). While he even possessed (Religious) issues from Abul Ḥasan Mūsā (a.s.) and narratives (from him).

Shaikh al Kashshī says that Ṣafwān bin Yaḥyā passed away at Madīnah in the year two hundred and ten Hijrah, while Abū Ja`far al Jawād (a.s.) sent camphor and shroud (Kafan) for him and instructed Ismā`īl bin Mūsā to pray upon him.

Seventh, Muḥammad bin Ismā`īl bin Bazī`, Abū Ja`far. He was the retainer of Manṣūr al `Abbāsī. He was trustworthy and sound, among the virtuous ones of the Imāmiyyah creed and their reliable ones and possessed abundant honours. He is included among the companions of Abul Ḥasan Mūsā al Kāẓim (a.s.) and Imām `Alī al Ridhā (a.s.), while he even met Imām Muḥammad al Jawād (a.s.).

It is related that Muḥammad bin Ismā`īl bin Bazī` and Aḥmad bin Ḥamzah bin Bazī` were among the agents (of the Bani `Abbās rulers). `Alī bin al Nu`mān, who was among the companions of Imām al Ridhā (a.s.), bequeathed that his books be handed over to Muḥammad bin Ismā`īl.

Shaikh al Kashshī relates from him that Imām `Alī al Ridhā (a.s.) said, "Verily Allāh (s.w.t.) possesses near the doors of the oppressors, one through whose medium Allāh (s.w.t.) enlightens the evidences. He (s.w.t.) grants him authority in the towns so as to defend His (s.w.t.)'s friends (through their medium) from them (the oppressors). Allāh (s.w.t.) reforms through their medium the matters of the Muslims, since they are the refuge of the Muslims from harm, while the needy among our Shī`ah approach them during their fear. Through them Allāh (s.w.t.)

secures the fright of the believers in the house of oppression. **These, (and) they (only) are the believers in truth**".<sup>1</sup> Then he (a.s.) continued, "Then what if one of you attains all this". Muḥammad says that hearing this, I asked him, "Through what, may Allāh (s.w.t.) ransom me upon you?" He (a.s.) replied, "To be among them and facilitate us to enter pleasure into the hearts of the believers among our Shī`ah. Then be among them O Muḥammad".

This Muḥammad had requested a shirt from Imām al Jawād (a.s.) to be used as his shroud (Kafan). Imām (a.s.) sent him his shirt and commanded him to remove its buttons. Muḥammad passed away at Fayd, a station in Makkah.

The honourable and trustworthy Sheikh Ibn Qawlawayh (al Qummī) relates through his sound chain of transmitters from Muḥammad bin Aḥmad bin Yaḥyā al Ash`arī that I was along with `Alī bin Bilāl at Fayd. We visited the grave of Muḥammad bin Ismā`īl al Bazī` and he (`Alī bin Bilāl) said, "The occupant of this tomb related me from Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) that, One who comes at the grave of his believer brother, places his hand upon his grave and recites seven times Sūratul Qadr, shall be safe from the great terror (Qiyāmah)".

It is also related from him (Muḥammad bin Aḥmad bin Yaḥyā al Ash`arī) that I was at Fayd when Muḥammad bin `Alī bin Bilāl said, "Let us go to the grave of Muḥammad bin Ismā`īl bin Bazī`". We went to his grave and Muḥammad bin `Alī bin Bilāl said, "The occupant of this grave related to me from one of them (Imām al Kāẓim or Imām al Ridhā), that one who visits the grave of his believer brother, stands facing the Qiblah, places his hand upon his grave and recites seven times Sūratul Qadr, shall be safe from the great terror (Qiyāmah)".

We (the Author) say that it is likely that safety from the great terror (Qiyāmah) is for the reciter, as is the apparent meaning of the report. While it is probable that it is for the occupant of the grave, which is also evidenced from some reports. I have found in some books that Shaikh al Shahīd (al Awwal) went to visit the grave of his teacher Fakhrul Muḥaqqiqīn, the son of `Allāmah al Ḥillī and said that I relate from the occupant of this grave, who relates from his father (Allāmah al Ḥillī) through his chain of transmitters from Imām `Alī al Ridhā (a.s.) that, "Verily the one who visits the grave of his believer brother and recites Sūratul Qadr, followed by this supplication (Du`ā'), both the reciter and the dead person shall be

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<sup>1</sup> Holy Qur`ān, Sūratul Anfāl: 4 and 74



safe from the great terror (Qiyāmah): Allāhumma Jāfil Ardha `an Junūbihim, wa Ṣā`id Ilayka Arwāḥahum, wa Laqqihim Minka Ridhwānā, wa Askin Ilayhim min Raḥmatika mā Taṣilu bihī Waḥdatahum, wa Tūnisu bihī Waḥshatahum. Innaka `alā kullī shay`in Qadīr. (O Allāh! Leave the earth besides them vacant [save them from squeeze in their graves], and raise their spirits to You, and let them obtain pleasure from You, and reside them in Your Mercy that can compensate for their loneliness, and replace their fright with Your affability. Verily You have power upon all things”).

The honour of Muḥammad bin Ismā`īl and his distinguished position near Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) is evidenced from the incident when Sayyid Murtadhā, the father of `Allāmah al Ṭabāṭabā`ī (Sayyid Muḥammad Mahdī) Baḥrul `Ulūm saw in a dream that Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) sent a candle to his house through Muḥammad bin Ismā`īl bin Bazī'. It was lit upon his roof and its light spread around whose limit could not be perceived.

We (the Author) say that there is no doubt that the candle was `Allāmah (Sayyid Muḥammad Mahdī) Baḥrul `Ulūm, by whose light the entire world sparkled. It is enough for his grace and honour that the eminent Sheikh Ja`far Kāshifil Giṭā' would wipe the dust off his slippers with the end of his turban, in spite of his own jurisprudence, authority and honour. Moreover he had several meetings with Imām al Mahdī (a.t.f.s.) and his numerous other wondrous acts as related. The greatest Sheikh, the author of Al Jawāhir (Shaikh Muḥammad Ḥasan al Najafī) describes him as, "The possessor of the brilliant wonders and mighty miracles". He was born in Karbalā' al Mu`allā in the year one thousand one hundred and fifty five Hijrah, enlightening the path for fifty eight years, and passed away in the year one thousand two hundred and twelve Hijrah.

Eighth, Naṣr bin Qābūs. He related from Imām al Ṣādiq (a.s.), Imām al Kāzim (a.s.) and Imām al Ridhā (a.s.), and occupied an eminent status near them (a.s.).

Shaikh al Ṭūsī says that he was the agent of Imām al Ṣādiq (a.s.) for twenty years. It was not known that he was his (a.s.)'s agent; while he was benevolent and learned.

Shaikh al Mufid in his Kitāb al Irshād includes him among the distinguished companions of Imām Mūsā al Kāzim (a.s.) and their trustworthy ones. And he was among the possessors of knowledge, jurisprudence (Fiqh) and abstinence, while

also among the Shī`ah of Imām al Kāẓim (a.s.). A text upon (the Imāmah of) Imām al Ridhā (a.s.) is related through his medium.

Shaikh al Kashshī relates from him that once I was near Abul Ḥasan (al Kāẓim) in his house. He (a.s.) took my hand and stopped me near a room in the house. He opened the door and I saw his son `Alī (al Ridhā) who held a book in his hand and was glancing at it. Imām (a.s.) asked me, "O Naṣr! Do you recognize him?" I replied, "Yes, he is your son `Alī (a.s.)". Again Imām (a.s.), "O Naṣr! Do you know what book is he glancing at?" I replied in the negative and he (a.s.) said, "It is the Jafr which cannot be seen except by a Prophet (a.s.) or a Vicegerent (a.s.)".

Ḥasan bin Mūsā says that, "By my life! Naṣr did not doubt or suspect (in the Imāmah) until the news of the death of Abul Ḥasan (al Kāẓim) reached him".

Naṣr relates that once I told Abul Ḥasan (al Kāẓim), "I asked Abū `Abdullāh al Ṣādiq (a.s.) regarding the Imām after him and he informed me that you were the Imām. Then when he (a.s.) passed away, people diverted to the right and left (went astray) from you, while I and my companions declared (the Imāmah) regarding you. Then inform me of the Imām among your children". He (a.s.) replied, "My son `Alī (al Ridhā)".

