

## Chapter 2: His Genius and Superiority

Before we talk about the immoderate cleverness by which Imam Musa, peace be on him, was distinguished in his early childhood, we have to talk about the educational factors that form a unique personality; Imam Musa attained the most wonderful means and results of such education. The educationists and others have mentioned the factors leading to an educational entity and behavioral results of a person; they are as follows:

### **1. Heredity**

The scientists of heredity and psycho think that heredity is among the effective reasons for the psychological formation and mental growth. They say that cleverness and all kinds of intellectual maturity of a person directly depend on heredity. The branch not only resembles its origin in its formal aspects but also it resembles it in its qualities.

Concerning its smallest attributes, Heksely says: "All signs and characteristics of an organic being belong to heredity or environment. The hereditary formation puts the limits of that which is possible; environment decides that this possibility will be a fact; therefore, hereditary formation is the ability to react with any environment through a special way."

This means that all signs and qualities in man's living systems belong to heredity or environment or society where man lives. Mendil has confirmed this hereditary aspect called conjugation heredity. He says: "Surly many hereditary attributes pass without division or change from one of the origins or from both of them to the branch." Janjaz has established that in his statement: "Surely every man has hidden hereditary abilities, but the appearance of each ability depends on the conditions encompassing these abilities when they grow."

Islam had discovered this phenomenon before it had been discovered by the scientists of heredity and psycho. It has been reported from the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, that a man belonged to the Ansars came to him and said to him: "O Allah's Apostle, this is my cousin. I am so-and-so, son of so-and-so (counting ten forefathers). She is the daughter of so-and-so (counting ten forefathers); there

is no Abyssinian in her lineage nor in mine, but she has given birth to this Abyssinian."

Allah's Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family, bowed his head and then he raise it and said: "Surely you have ninety-nine races, and she has ninety-nine races. When the races come together, they move, and each race of them asks Allah, the Great and Almighty, to let it's like to go to it. Stand up! He is your son; he has not come to you except through a race of yours or of hers."

The man left taking his wife and his son by the hand. In another tradition, (the Prophet) said: "Choose (good women) for your sperms, for ethics pass from fathers to children (al-'iriq dassas)."

The Holy Qur'an refers to the smallest attributes carried by heredity. Narrating from His Prophet Noah, Allah the most High, says:

***"And Noah said: My Lord, leave not upon the land any dweller from among the unbelievers, for surely if you leave them, they will lead astray your servants and will not beget any but immoral, ungrateful (children)." (Qur'an, 71:26)***

The verse clearly indicates that the beliefs of unbelievers and atheists pass through heredity from fathers to children.

The encyclopedias of hadith are full of hadiths reported on the authority of Ahl al-Bayt, peace be on them. The hadiths indicate the reality of heredity, its laws, and its great importance in man's life.<sup>1</sup> In the light of the hereditary rule, we decide that Imam Musa, peace be on him, inherited from his forefathers, peace be on them, all the attributes that distinguished them from all people, such as generosity, clemency, love for good, kindness to men, and full dedication to general, good deeds.

## **2. The Family**

Surely the family is one of the basic factors in building the educational entity and finding the social acquirement of someone's manners. It has a perfect effect on forming the child's character and on making him acquire habits staying constantly with him throughout his lifetime. For the child imitates the others in habits and behavior.

Mander says: "Surely, the child—in the smallest habits staying constantly with him, in the most important qualities, in the general attitude toward people, in the general viewpoint through which he thinks of life or work, in all these things—is an imitator to a great extent. Perhaps imitation is sometimes conscious and intentional, but in most cases it is unconscious."

If the child imitates well-mannered people, he will be impressed by their morals and their sentiments. In the first place this impression is regarded as an imitation, but quickly it becomes a habit, and the habit is a second nature; imitation is one of the two ways through which the individual attributes are acquired and personal ethics are formed."<sup>2</sup>

According to this viewpoint, Imam Musa was unique in his attributes and essentials. For he grew up among a family who was the origin of piety, guardian of wisdom and knowledge, visited frequently by the angels, place of descent of inspiration and revelation, and to whom belonged all noble qualities and virtues in Islam.

Imam Musa was brought under the care of his father, Imam al-Sadiq, and the like of whom human history has ever known in faith, piety, and all tendencies except his forefathers, the pure Imams. Concerning him, his student Malik b. Anas said: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and (none) come to someone's mind more meritorious than Ja'far b. Muhammad al-Sadiq in knowledge, worship and piety."

'Amru b. al-Muqdam said: "When I looked at Ja'far b. Muhammad (al-Sadiq), I came to know that he belonged to the descendants of the prophets."<sup>3</sup> The martyr, Zayd b. 'Ali, peace be on him, said: "In every time there is a man from among us, Ahl al-Bayt, whom Allah advances as a proof over His creatures.

The proof of our time is my nephew, Ja'far; he who follows him does not go astray; he who opposes him is not rightly guided."<sup>4</sup> This great Imam planted in the soul of his son Musa all his ideals and tendencies to the extent that he became, according to his early life and education, one of the unique Muslim thinkers and of the most prominent Muslim Imams.

### **3. The Environment**

Those who are concerned in educational researches have unanimously agreed that environment is one of the most important factors on which education depends. It is it that forms instincts and habits in the child's self; so if it was good, its effects would also be good; if it was polluted with mal factions and deviation, the young would certainly suffer from the defects and blights wherein.

Surely man, in his behavior, is not subject to his inward formation only, but also he is subject to outward factors that react with him and affect him. In this manner, environment imprints its effects in the inward thoughts and the depth of soul; through it a high degree of social perfection is achieved when it is good.

Surely if the social environment is stable and the family is not disordered, they will make the behavior of the young righteous, gentle, and void of deviation. The UNESCO has made a research on the non-natural effects on the child's self. After the specialists had made an elaborate research (in this respect), they stated the following:

"Without doubt, the environment that is psychologically stable and the united family whose members live in an atmosphere of mutual sympathy is the first foundation on which the adoption of the child from sentimental viewpoint is based. The child later depends on this foundation in fixing his social relationship hypothetically; if the child's personality is distorted by the parent's bad treatment, he is unable to associate with society."<sup>5</sup>

As for the environment where the Imam lived, it was religious and prevailed by human values and ideals. As for the house in which he lived, it was one of the institutes of virtue, and of the schools of faith and piety; it was flooded by love, avoiding formality, leaving bitter, and obscene language; in this manner all the elements of high education were secured for the Imam.

## **Cleverness and Genius**

The psychologists have divided cleverness into two kinds: social cleverness, and abstract one. Concerning the difference between them, they have said: "Surely social cleverness means understanding people in a right manner and associating with them with wisdom and reflection. As for the abstract cleverness, it means understanding concepts and symbols of which is understanding scientific schools and making distinction between the correct and the incorrect from among them."<sup>6</sup>

In his early age Imam Musa attained both kinds of cleverness; that was through his understanding the people, his behavior toward them with wisdom and reflection, his understanding the facts of affairs, his knowledge of hidden things the great religious scholars had not understood.

Yet another aspect that fills hearts with admiration and astonishment is that Imam Musa, peace be on him, in his early age, was able to encompass different kinds of sciences and knowledge, though the early age does not help man do that. This matter cannot be justified except in what the Shi'ites believe and are unanimous on it.

That is that the Imam should throughout the stages of his lifetime be the most knowledgeable of the people of his time. He should be the greatest of them in reflection, and encompassing all the things the community needs in all fields. Moreover, his knowledge should be divine and not acquisitive just as that of the prophets.

Not only the Imam had such an aspect, but also all the Imams of Ahl al-Bayt, peace be on them, shared him with it. For example, his grandson al-Jewad was the youngest of all the Imams; nevertheless, the Shi'a resorted to him and believed in his Imamate after the death of his father Imam al-Ridha', peace be on him.

He was then about seven years old, but al-Ma'mun held a meeting and summoned the greatest religious scholars in order to examine him in the most important, ambiguous, and difficult questions. They asked him about them and about various kinds of sciences and knowledge, and he answered them successfully. They admired him, and some of them believed in his Imamate. The biographers of Imam al-Jewad have unanimously agreed on writing that on his authority.

We will mention some of Imam Musa's attitudes during his early age to indicate his great scientific abilities.

## With Abu Hanifa

Abu Hanifa was among those who believed in the (doctrine) of compulsion and summoned (the people) to believe in it. This belief maintains that the act that issues from man is not created by him and does not issue from him through his choice. Rather it is created by Allah and issues through Allah's will, and that man's will and power has no relationship in finding any deed whether it issues from him through his choice or he is forced to perform it.

The Shi'ites have unanimously agreed that such a belief is invalid and incorrect. Besides the jurists have established that it is false; they have conscientiously decided that any optional act should be preceded by some voluntary prerequisites which are as follows:

1. One must imagine the thing in mind.
2. His soul must incline to it.
3. He should perfectly be sure of its advantage.

When these prerequisites are perfect in the horizon of soul, the will clings to deed, and man strives to find it or orders it to be performed, whether it is good or ugly, and there is no coercion or compulsion on man to perform it.<sup>7</sup>

Anyway, Abu Hanifa was on top of those who believed in compulsion; he traveled to Yethrib (Medina) to debate with Imam al-Sadiq, peace be on him, on this belief, while he was famous for his being the opponent of it. When he arrived in it, he headed for the Imam's house. He sat in the corridor waiting for a permission to enter. While he was sitting there, a boy came out walking slowly. He asked the boy: "Where does the stranger relieve nature?"

The boy turned to him and said to him: "Slowly!" Then he sat down politely, leaned against the wall, and began to give him an answer to his question, saying: "Avoid the banks of rivers, the places where fruit fall, the courtyards of mosques, and the middle of a road.

Hide yourself behind a wall; you should not face the qibla (direction to the Kaaba) nor have your back towards it; and relieve nature where you wish." He explained to him the places where it is detested or forbidden to relieve nature, so Abu Hanifa was dazzled and astonished because he had not thought that there was a boy who had such a scientific ability.

"What is your name?" asked Abu Hanifa.

"Musa b. Ja'far b. Muhammad b. 'Ali b. al-Husayn b. 'Ali b. Abi Talib," was the answer.

When Abu Hanifa came to know that the boy was a branch of the Tree of the Prophecy and the Imamate, he became tranquil, and then he asked him about the question he had prepared for Imam al-

Sadiq, saying: " Boy, from whom does disobedience (issue)? Does it issue from Allah or from the servant?"

The Imam answered him, saying: "Either it issues from Allah and not from the servant at all, so Allah does not punish the servant for what he does not do; or it issues from the servant and Allah, and Allah is a stronger partner. Therefore, the stronger partner has no right to punish the weak for a sin in which they are equal; or it issues from the servant and not from Allah.

So If He wills to pardon (him), (He will pardon him), and If He wills to punish (him), (He will punish him); and Allah is He whose help is sought." According to the rational restriction, this conclusion is full of all the elements of the firm scientific proofs man cannot invalidate or refute.

Abu Hanifa became dazzled and astonished, so he raised his voice, saying: "I am satisfied with what I have heard!" He went out defeated; inability appeared on his face. He did not meet with Imam al-Sadiq; the Imam's answer to him and his inability to reply him became famous among the scientific circles; accordingly, a poet composed a poem on the answer of the Imam, peace be on him, to Abu Hanifa, saying:

Our deeds through which we are dispraised have three meanings when we perform them: either our Lord creates them by Himself, so we are not blameworthy when we perform them, Or He shares them with us, so the sin that befalls us will befall Him, Or my Lord has no sin in performing them, so the sin belongs to him who performs them.<sup>8</sup>

This attitude indicates that Imam Musa had abundant sciences and knowledge during his early age. For he understood what the intellects of the great religious scholars did not understand. For example, Abu Hanifa was unable to stand before his flowing thinking.

He found no way to save and preserve his position except withdrawing from him and avoiding discussing with him any subject matter; this attitude shows that the Imam had abundant knowledge and cleverness none had in such an age except his forefathers, who were singled out with the Imamate.

## **His Decision against Abu al-Khattab**

Muhammad b. Maqlas al-Asadi, better known as Abu al-Khattab, was among the Imams of the atheists in the Arab and Islamic world. He spoiled the religion of the young Muslims. That was through his originating a belief through which he launched a war against all the Islamic regulations; the principles of his thought has been mentioned by al-Qadi, Abu Hanifa al-Maghribi, who said:

"He (Abu al-Khattab) claimed that Ja'far b. Muhammad was Allah, be He raised far above his statement. When his companions were overburdened by performing the religious duties, they came to him and said: 'Abu al-Khattab, make light for us (the religious duties).' So he ordered them to leave them to the extent that they left all the religious duties and performed the prohibited. He permitted them to bear witness to

each other through falseness. He said: "He who recognizes the Imam is permitted to perform all the forbidden things."<sup>9</sup>

Abu al-Khattab's destructive beliefs appeared in Kufa at the time when the political disorders reached the zenith and the summons to the 'Abbasids was opening its way firmly and successfully. The conditions helped him gather around him some Kufan men to teach them his beliefs and to show them the plans of the summons, meeting, and appearance.<sup>10</sup>

When Imam al-Sadiq, peace be on him, heard of his heresy and disbelief, he disavowed him and openly cursed him, for he was among his companions and followers, then he renounced (his doctrine) after that. 'Isa al-Shalqani hurried to Imam al-Sadiq, peace be on him, to ask him about his opinion of this dangerous atheist, and he, peace be on him, answered:

"Isa, what has prevented you from meeting with my son (Imam Musa) to ask him about all what you desire? Thus, 'Isa went to Imam Musa, who was then a young boy studying in his room. When the Imam, peace be on him, saw 'Isa, he had answered him before he asked him.

He said to him: "Isa, surely Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, made a covenant through the prophets for the prophethood and they never turned away from it. He made a covenant through the testamentary trustees for religious obligations and they never turned away from it; He gave faith to a people for a time and then He deprived them of it; as for Abu al-Khattab, he is among those who were given faith and deprived of it."

'Isa admired the Imam's answer, so he rose for him embraced him and kissed his forehead and said: "May my father and mother be your ransom, offspring, one of the other; and Allah is Hearing, Knowing."

Then he turned to Imam Abu 'Abd Allah (al-Sadiq) and told him about the wonderful talents of his son Imam Musa, peace be on him. So Abu 'Abd Allah (al-Sadiq) said to him: "Isa, If you ask this son of mine about what is between the two covers of the Qur'an, he will give you an answer to it with knowledge."

Then he ordered his son to be brought out of the study. At that time 'Isa believed that Musa, peace be on him, was an Imam, that he was the heir apparent and successor of his father over all the people.<sup>11</sup> Yet another example of Imam Musa's immoderate cleverness is that he came to his father carrying a tablet (lawh) with him.

His father made him sit in his lap and said to him: "My little son, write: Abandon ugly things and do not perform them!" When he wrote that, his father said to him: "My little son, complete it." He completed it saying: "If you perform good deeds to someone, then increase them."

Then the Imam gave another statement to his son and ordered him to complete it, saying: "You will meet from your enemy all tricks." He completed it saying: "If the enemy schemes against you, do not scheme against him." The Imam became happy with his son's talents and genius; he embraced him, showed his

admiration toward him, and said: "Offspring, one of the other!"<sup>12</sup>

Another example of the signs of his genius in his childhood is that which has been reported by Saffwan al-Jammal, who said: "I (Saffwan al-Jammal) asked Abu 'Abd Allah (al-Sadiq), peace be on him, about the leader of this affair (after him). He said: 'The leader of this affair is one who does not fool and play.'"

Saffwan said: "While he was relating to me about that, Abu al-Hasan Musa, who was then a young boy, came towards us along with a young sheep. He addressed the young sheep, saying: 'Prostrate to your Lord!' So Abu 'Abd Allah, peace be on him, took and embraced him, and then he said to him: 'May my father and mother be ransom to you, O you who do not fool and play!'"

We have mentioned these attitudes that show a great part of his cleverness and genius as if he, through this wonderful cleverness, did not pass any of the stages of childhood.

1. Al-Nizam al-Terbawi fi al-Islam.

2. 'Ilm al-Nefs fi al-Heyat.

3. Tehdhib al-Tehdhib, vol. 2, p. 104.

4. Al-Menaqib, vol. 2, p. 147.

5. UNESCO, the Effects of Family and Society on the Young under 13, p. 35.

6. Mejelet Heyatek, vol. 6, p. 157, an Essay by Professor Thorindik.

7. Professor Ayat Allah al-'Uzma al-Sayyid Abu al-Qasim al-Khu'l has explained these affairs and given more proofs of them. That is in his researches in Science of Islamic Fundamentals ('Ilm al-Usool). He has given decisive proofs of that compulsion and authorization are invalid. He has established the affair between two affairs in which the Imams of Ahl al-Bayt believed. I (the author) have mentioned that in my book Teqrirat Ayat Allah al-Khu'l in Science of Islamic Fundamentals ('Ilm al-Usool).

8. Al-Murtadha, Amali, vol. 1, pp. 105–106. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 4, p. 1049.

9. De'a'im al-Islam, p. 64.

10. Herekat al-Shi'a, p. 73.

11. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 11, p. 237.

12. Al-Menaqib, vol. 2, p. 380.

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