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Chapter 4: Under The Care Of His Father

Imam al-Ridha', peace be on him, lived under the wing of his father, Imam Musa' al-Ka'zim, peace be on him, for twenty five years and some months. He witnessed various kinds of ordeal and misfortune which befell his father, who worried and frightened the 'Abba'sid government, for he was the focus of the attention of the Muslims and the place of their hope for saving them from the ruling 'Abba'sid band, who went too far in wronging the people and forcing them (to do) what they disliked.

In addition to this is that great part of the Muslims adopted the Imamate of Imam al-Ka'zim, for they regarded him as the lawful successor after the Messenger, may Allah bless him and his Household, and worthier of his office and position than Ha'ru'n (al-Rashid) and the rest of the 'Abba'sid kings, with whom the Imam coincided. The high rank of Imam al-Ka'zim made the 'Abba'sid kings sleepless, so they harbored malice against him, took all measures to persecute and torture him.

Anyhow, I (the author) will mention a brief outline about the personality of Imam al-Ka'zim and its good effects on that of Imam al-Ridha', peace be on him.

Imam al-Ka'zim, peace be on him, is famous in the world for his outstanding qualities, through the fact that there were gathered in his noble character all the elements of virtue, fundamentals of wisdom and morals, of which are the following:

A. His Scientific Talents

Without doubt Imam Musa' al-Ka'zim, peace be on him, was the most learned of the people of his time and most knowledgeable of them in all sciences. He was the highest authority in the science of Islamic jurisprudence and tradition. So the religious scholars and the narrators surrounded him in order to record his religious edicts, his wonderful wise sayings and morals. Imam al-Sa'diq, the most eminent figure of this community and pioneer of its renaissance, bore witness to the abundant knowledge of his son when he said to 'Isa': "If you ask this son of mine (Imam Musa') about what is between the two sides of the Qur'an, he will answer you about it with knowledge.¹"

He has also said concerning his son's outstanding merit: "He (Imam al-Ka'zim) has knowledge of wisdom, understanding, munificence, and knowledge of what the people need regarding their religious affairs over which they differ."

The religious scholars have reported from Imam al-Ka'zim all kinds of science and written many books about them, so they have named him 'the Scholar'. Al-Shaykh al-Mufid has said: "The people have reported on the authority of Abu' al-Hasan (Musa'), and they have become very numerous; he was the most knowledgeable in the law during his time.[2](#)"

Imam Musa', peace be on him, improved and developed scientific life; he was the most brilliant of the Muslims in spreading Islamic culture.

B. His Acts of Worship and his reverential Fear

The narrators have unanimously agreed that Imam al-Ka'zim was the greatest of the people in obeying Allah and was the most worshipful of them, that he had calluses like those of the camel because of his abundant prostration for Allah, just as his grandfather Imam Zayn al-'Aabidin, peace be on him, had. So he was given the nick-name of *Dhi al-Thafana't* (the Possessor of the calluses). An example of his acts of worship is that he would weep when he stood for prayer before the Almighty Creator, whispered to Him or supplicated Him.[3](#)

The narrators have said: "He (Imam al-Ka'zim) used to pray supererogatory prayers throughout the night so that he would make them extend until the morning prayer, then continue them until the sun rose. He would remain prostrating himself before Allah without raising his head from prayer and praising Allah until the sun came near to descending (from its midday zenith).[4](#)"

Another example of his acts of worship is that at the beginning of the night, he entered the mosque of his grandfather, Allah's Messenger, may Allah bless him and his Household, prostrated himself before Allah, and said with fear of Him: "How great sin is with me! Therefore let forgiveness seem good to You, O Worthy of reverential fear, O Worthy to forgive!"

He continued this supplication with turning to Allah in repentance, sincerity, and weeping until the morning.[5](#)

When the unjust 'Abba'sid tyrant, Ha'ru'n al-Rashid, put him in a dark prison, he devoted himself to worshipping Allah and thanking him for this trial, saying: "O Allah, You know that I used to ask You to give me free time to worship You. O Allah, You have done that. To You be praise.[6](#)"

The tyrant, Ha'ru'n, towered over the prison from the top of his palace and saw a garment thrown in a certain place and did not change its place. The garment amazed him, and he asked al-Rabi': "What is that garment which I see in that place every day?"

Al-Rabi' answered him, saying: "That is not a garment. That is Musa' b. Ja'far. He prostrates himself (before Allah) every day from the sunrise until the sun came near to descending (from its midday zenith)."

Al-Rabi' answer amazed Ha'ru'n, the tyrant, and he said: "He is indeed among the monks of the Ha'shimites."

Al-Rabi' asked Ha'ru'n to release the Imam and not to oppress him in prison, saying: "O Commander of the faithful, why have you imprisoned him?"

"How far! That is necessary,⁷" retorted Ha'ru'n.

In my book entitled the *Life of Imam Musa' Bin Ja'far*, I (the author) have in detail mentioned Imam al-Ka'zim's acts of worship and his obedience to Allah. Generally speaking Imam al-Ka'zim's acts of worship indicate that he was the Imam of the Allah-fearing, master of the worshippers and monotheists of his time.

C. His Asceticism

Imam al-Ka'zim renounced the world, turned away from its pleasures and embellishment. He preferred obeying Allah to all things, and his house was void of all the pleasures of life. Ibra'him b. 'Abd al-Hamid spoke about him, saying: "I visited him in his house where he used to pray. Suddenly, there was nothing in it except a coarse clothe, a sword fixed (to the wall), and a copy of the Qur'an.⁸" Imam al-Ka'zim always mentioned to his companions the life of the great, revolutionary companion, Abu' Dharr al-Ghifa'ri, who divorced the world and paid no attention to any of its pleasures. He has said: "May Allah have mercy on Abu' Dharr, for he would say: 'May Allah dispraise the world on my behalf, for I always have two loaves of barely bread: I eat one in lunch and the other in supper; and I have two woolen cloaks: I use one as a loincloth and the other as a garment.'⁹"

Imam Musa', peace be on him, took care of the lives of the immortal, great figures from among the companions of his grandfather, the master of the messengers. He praised their behavior and mentioned their laudable deeds before his companions and his students, that they might follow their example.

D. His Clemency

As for clemency, it was among the most prominent qualities of our master al-Ka'zim, peace be on him. Proverbs were coined about his clemency and his restraining anger. The narrators have said: "He pardoned him who mistreated him and forgave him who aggressed against him." The narrators have mentioned numerous examples of his clemency of which are the following:

1. A man from the family of 'Umar b. al-Khatta'b was in Medina trying to harm Abu' al-Hasan Musa', peace be on him. Whenever he saw (Abu' al-Hasan) he would curse him and curse 'Ali, peace be on

him. One day some of those who used to attend his gatherings said to him: “Let us kill this sinner.”

He forbade them from (doing) that most firmly and rebuked them severely.

He asked about the descendant of ‘Umar and was told that he had a farm on the outskirts of Medina. He rode out to him and found him at his farm. As he entered the farm with his donkey, the descendant of ‘Umar cried out: “Do not tread on my sown land.”

Yet Abu’ al-Hasan, peace be on him, continued to tread on it with his donkey until he reached him. He dismounted and sat with him. He greeted him with a smile and laughed at him.

“How much have you paid to sow your land?” he asked.

“One hundred dinars,” (the other man) answered.

“How much do you hope to acquire from it?” Imam al-Ka’zim asked.

“I do not know the unknown,” was the reply.

“I only asked you about what you hope it would bring you,” reported (Abu’ al-Hasan).

“I hope that it will bring me two hundreds dinars,” he answered.

Abu’ al-Hasan took out a purse in which was three hundred dinars and said: “This is (the price) of what you have sown in its present condition (i.e. what you have spent to sow it and what you hope to gain from it). May Allah provide you with what you hope for from it.”

The descendant of ‘Umar kissed his hand and asked him to forgive him his (former) hasty words about him. Abu’ al-Hasan, peace be on him, smiled at him and went away.

In the evening Abu’ al-Hasan went to the mosque and found that descendant of ‘Umar sitting there. When the latter saw him, he called out: “Allah knows best where to put His (prophetic) mission.”

His companions jumped (in surprise) towards him and said to him: “What is the story (behind what you say), for you used to speak quite differently from this.”

“You have heard what I have said now,” he replied and began to speak on behalf of Abu’ al-Hasan, peace be on him. They opposed him and he opposed them.

When Abu’ al-Hasan returned to his house, he said to those who attended his gatherings and who had asked about killing the descendant of ‘Umar: “Which was better—what you wanted or what I wanted? I put right his attitude to the extent which you have now become acquainted with. I was sufficient to the evil that was in him. [10](#)”

The Imam Abu’ al-Hasan (Musa’ al-Ka’zim) treated with kindness those who hated him and show

enmity toward him, so he was able to uproot evil inclinations from their souls, washed their brains which was full of ignorance and defect, and put before them the worlds of Him, the Exalted: “Repel (evil) with what is best, when lo! he between whom and you was enmity would be as if he were a warm friend.”

Another sign of his clemency is that he passed by a group of his enemies among whom was Ibn Hayya'jj, who ordered one of his followers to cling to the bridle of the Imam's mule, and he did. The Imam understood his purpose, so he dismounted the mule and gave it to him.¹¹ In this manner the Imam gave the people an ideal example of clemency and tolerance. He, peace be on him, advised his son to cling to this noble quality. He said to him: “O My little son, I advise you to follow this commandment, which whoever memorizes takes advantage of it: When a comer comes to you and makes you hear a detested thing in the right ear and then moves to the left ear and apologizes to you and says, ‘I have said nothing,’ then accept his apology.¹²” Through this commandment, we can clearly understand Imam al-Ka'zim's abundant forbearance and tolerance. This is one of the information means leading to unity.

E. His Munificence

Imam Musa' al-Ka'zim, peace be on him, was the most generous of all the people and the most abundant of them in giving to the miserable and the deprived. It is worth mentioning that he asked them to conceal his gifts and not announce them, for he sought reward from Allah, the Exalted. The narrators have said: “He went out in the darkness of night carrying gifts to the miserable and the weak, and they did not know the person who gave these gifts to them. His gifts to them were ranging from two hundred dinars to four hundred dinars.¹³ His family would say: ‘We are amazed by those who complain of paucity and poverty while the gifts of Musa' reach them!’¹⁴”

The history books are full of examples of his kindness to the poor. He lavishly spent on them, so he freed them from need to begging. The biographers have unanimously agreed on that he thought that the best way for spending money was to meet the hunger of the hungry and to clothe the naked. I (the author) have mentioned numerous example of his generosity in my book the *Life of Imam Musa' al-Ka'zim*, peace be on him.

F. His Helping the Distressed

One of the most prominent qualities of Imam Musa' al-Ka'zim, peace be on him, was that he helped the distressed and saved them from the ordeals and misfortunes which befell them. This was one of the most beloved things to him. He gave a religious decision to his Shi'ites in order that they might join the government of Ha'run al-Rashid, provided that they should be kind to people. He is well-known for this religious edict, which says: “The explanation of the work with the ruler is (showing) kindness to people.”

The narrators have said: “A person from among the people of al-Ray was in enormous debt to the government of al-Ray. He was unable to repay them and was afraid that the government would confiscate his properties and punish him severely, so he asked the people about the governor, and they

told him that he was one of the Shi'ites of Imam al-Ka'zim, peace be on him. He traveled to Medina (Yathrib). When he arrived in it, he met the Imam and complained to him of his state. Soon the Imam responded to him and wrote a letter to the governor of al-Ray, saying: 'In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. Know that Allah has shade under His Throne. None resides in it except him who shows kindness to his brother, relieves his sorrow, and delights him. This is your brother. Greetings.'"

The man took the letter and went to Mecca in order to perform the hajj. After he had finished performing the hajj, he headed for his homeland. When he reached it, he went to the governor. He knocked at the door of his house. The governor's retainer came out and asked him: "Who are you?"

"The messenger of the patient one, Musa' b. Ja'far," was the answer.

The retainer hurried to his master and told him about that. The governor came out bare-footed. He received the man, embraced him, kissed him on the forehead, and eagerly asked him about the Imam. The man answered him and then handed him the Imam's letter. The governor took it with admiration and kissed it. When he read it, he ordered all his money and clothes to be brought. Then he gave most of them to the man and asked him: "Brother, have I delighted you?"

"Yes, by Allah, you have increased me in pleasure," retorted the man.

Then the governor ordered the record to be brought, his debts to be canceled, and him to be discharged from them. The man went out while waves of happiness and delight covered him. He decided to show kindness to the governor through going to the Sacred House of Allah, praying for him, and telling the Imam about his kindness toward him. When the time of the hajj came, he traveled to the Sacred House of Allah. When he arrived at it, he sincerely supplicated for the governor of al-Ray, and told the Imam about his kindness toward him. The Imam was very pleased with this attitude of the governor. Then the man turned to the Imam and asked him: "My master, has this (deed) delighted you?"

"Yes," replied the Imam, "it has also delighted Allah, the Exalted, my grandfather Allah's Messenger, may Allah bless him and his Family, the Commander of the faithful, and me. [15](#)"

This initiative represents the Imam's care of helping the distressed, and with it we will end our speech about some of his qualities.

[The Imam with Ha'ru'n](#)

Imam al-Ka'zim suffered from different kinds of painful ordeals and misfortunes in the time of the tyrant, Ha'ru'n, who spared no effort to wrong and punish him. He spent his bloom of youth in the shadows of Ha'ru'n's prisons and was prevented from seeing his family and Shi'ites. We will mention a brief outline about the Imam's sufferings in the time of Ha'ru'n

The Imam is arrested

The Imam had a personality greater than that of Ha'ru'n in Islamic world, for the Muslims loved and respected him. Ha'ru'n was indignant with the Imam, for he had not enjoyed such love and respect.

The narrators have said: "One of the reasons which moved Ha'ru'n to imprison the Imam is that he (Ha'ru'n) surrounded by the nobles, eminent figures, ministers, and high-ranking officials of his state went to pay a visitation to the tomb of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, saying: 'Peace be on you, Apostle of Allah! Peace be on you, cousin.'"

He was seeking to show his proud position over the others by his blood relation with the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, for he undertook the office of the caliphate through this means. As for Imam Musa' al-Ka'zim, he was standing beside him. He greeted the great Prophet, saying: "Peace be on you, Apostle of Allah! Peace be on you, father!" Ha'ru'n al-Rashid lost his mind. The expression on his face changed and the anger in it became transparently obvious. That is because the Imam was closer than him to the Prophet and more adjacent to him than others. So the tyrant, Ha'ru'n, became angry and asked the Imam: "Why did you say that you were closer to Allah's Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family, than me?"

The Imam gave to him a definite, undeniable proof, saying: "If Allah's Messenger, may Allah bless him and his Household, was resurrected and asked you for your daughter's hand, would you respond to him?"

"Glory belongs to Allah," retorted Ha'ru'n, "I seek to show my proud position over the Arabs and non-Arabs through this (deed)."

The Imam, peace be on him, continued to establish proofs against him regarding his being closer to the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, than him, saying: "However, Allah's Messenger does not ask me for my daughter's hand; nor do I marry (her) to him, for he is our father, not your father; therefore, I am nearer to him than you."

Then the Imam established another proof against Ha'ru'n's words, saying: "Is it permitted for Allah's Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family, to visit your womenfolk while they are unveiled?"

"No," Ha'ru'n replied.

The Imam explained: "However, he has the right to visit my womenfolk, and it is permitted for him to do that; therefore, I am nearer to him than you. [16](#)"

Ha'ru'n al-Rashid became angry and found no way to refute the Imam's argument. Accordingly, he harbored malice against the Imam, went to the tomb of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, and said to him: "May my father and mother be your ransom, O Apostle of Allah, I apologize to you for

something I want to do. I want to imprison Musa' b. Ja'far because he is intending to bring division into your community and to cause the shedding of its blood."

Ha'ru'n thought that his apologizing to the Prophet for committing a crime would profit him and release him from this responsibility on the day when the wrongdoers would be losers.

On the following day he ordered the police to arrest the Imam, and they arrested him while he was standing and praying by the head of his grandfather, the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family. They interrupted his prayer and did not give him any respite to complete it. They shackled him and took him out of that holy place while he was weeping bitter tears, complaining to his grandfather, and saying: "I complain to you, O Allah's Messenger!"

The Imam was shackled and brought before the tyrant, Ha'ru'n al-Rashid, and he turned away from him rudely and spoke to him. [17](#)

His Imprisonment in Basrah

The Imam was shackled and taken to Basrah. Hasan al-Sari was entrusted with guarding and safeguarding him. On his way to Basrah, the Imam met 'Abd Allah, son of the late al-Azdi. He gave him a letter and ordered him to hand it over to his successor Imam al-Ridha', peace be on him, and told him that he (Imam al-Ridha') was the Imam after him. [18](#)

The caravan walked. It covered the desert until it arrived in Basrah. That was on the seventh day of Dhu al-Hijja. Hasan handed the Imam over to 'Isa' b. Ja'far, who imprisoned him in one of the houses of the prison, locked the doors of the prison, and did not open them except twice a day: one time when the Imam wanted to perform the ritual ablution, and the other when the food was brought to him.

The Imam devoted his time to the acts of worship and obedience to Allah. He fasted by day and prayed by night. He spent most his time in praying, prostrating, supplicating, and reciting the Qur'an. He regarded his being free for the acts of worship as one of Allah's favors toward him. He would say: "O Allah, You know that I used to ask You to give me free time to worship You. O Allah, You have done that. To You be praise. [19](#)"

Ha'ru'n orders the Imam to be killed

Ha'ru'n ordered 'Isa', governor of Basrah, to kill the Imam, peace be on him. However, this matter troubled 'Isa, and he sought the advice of his close associates. They prevented him and made him fear the consequence of the affair. He responded to them and wrote a letter to Ha'ru'n saying: "The affair of Musa' b. Ja'far and his stay under my detention has been going on for along time. I have become well-acquainted with his situation. I have set spies on him throughout this period and I have not found him (do anything except) open his mouth in worship. I set someone to listen to what he said in his prayer. He

has never prayed against you or against me. He has never mentioned us with malice. He does not pray for himself except for forgiveness and mercy. Either you send someone whom I can hand him over to or I will let him free. I am troubled at detaining him.[20](#)”

This letter displays that ‘Isa was afraid of killing the Imam, and he (the Imam) stayed under his detention for one year.[21](#)

His Imprisonment in Baghdad

(Ha’ru’n) al-Rashid responded to the request of his governor, ‘Isa. He ordered the Imam to be taken to Baghdad. The Imam was taken to it and was accompanied by the police and the guards. When he reached it, al-Rashid ordered him to be detained under al-Fadl b. al-Rabi’. Al-Fadl took him and imprisoned him in his house. He did not detain him in the public prisons because he feared that a discord would occur and the public opinion would run in disorder because of the Imam’s exalted position and his great personality.

The Imam, peace be on him, devoted himself to the acts of worship and obedience to Allah. So al-Fadl admired his acts of worship. ‘Abd Allah al-Qazwini has narrated: “I (i.e. ‘Abd Allah al-Qazwini) visited al-Fadl b. al-Rabi’. While he was sitting on the top of his house, he said to me: ‘Come nearer to me.’ I went nearer to him to the extent that I (stood) beside him. Then he said to me: ‘Overlook the house.’”

‘Abd Allah towered over the house, and al-Fadl asked him:

-What can you see in the house?

-I can see a garment thrown (on the ground)

-Look well!

‘Abd Allah considered, looked carefully, and said:

-A man prostrating himself in prayer.

-Can you recognize him?

-No, I can’t.

-That is your master.

-Which master?

-Are you pretending not to know of ‘Ali?

-I’m not pretending, but I don’t know that I have a master.

-That is Abu' al-Hasan, Musa' b. Ja'far.

'Abd Allah was one of those who adopted Imam al-Ka'zim's Imamate. Then al-Fadl told him about his acts of worship, saying:

"I (i.e. al-Fadl) visit him day and night. I did not find him at any time but in the state about which I am telling you. He prays the dawn prayer, then he says his personal prayers at the end of his prayer for an hour until the sun rose. He remains prostrating himself until the sun comes near to descending (from its midday zenith). He has ordered a retainer to tell him about the sun's coming near to descending. I do not know when the retainer says: 'The sun has come near to descending.'

"Suddenly, he stands and begins praying without renewing his ritual ablution, so I come to know that he does not sleep during his prostration; nor does he slumber. He continues praying until he performs the afternoon prayer. When he has performed the afternoon prayer, he performs one prostration. Then he continues praying and his personal prayer until he performs the evening and night prayers. When he has performed the evening and night prayers, he breaks the fast by eating roasted meat which is brought to him. Then he renews the ritual ablution and prostrates himself in prayer. Then he raises his head and slumbers. Then he stands and renews the ritual ablution and continues praying until day dawns. I do not know when the retainer says: 'Day has dawned!' Suddenly, he jumps and performs the dawn prayer. This is his behavior since he has been handed over to me."

These are the acts of worship of Imam al-Ka'zim, the master of the Allah-fearing and Imam of those who turn to Allah in repentance. He showed love for Allah, served and obeyed Him.

When 'Abd Allah came to know that al-Fadl admired the Imam's acts of worship, he warned him against carrying out Ha'ru'n's order regarding killing the Imam, saying: "Fear Allah! Do not bring about an event removing blessing. You know that when someone does evil for someone, his blessing perishes."

Al-Fadl confirmed 'Abd Allah's statement, saying: "They sent for me more than one time and ordered me to kill him, but I did not respond to them.[22](#)"

Al-Fadl did not kill the Imam; nor did he expose him to a detested thing because he was afraid of Allah's wrath and punishment in this world and the next.

His Textual Nomination for the Imamate of al-Ridha'

Imam Musa', peace be on him, appointed his son Imam al-Ridha', peace be on him, as an Imam and high authority after him, that he might lead his Shi'ites and the community. Many ordinances (*alwa'h*) were brought out of the prison. In them it was written: "My testament (*'ahd*) is to my eldest son.[23](#)"

Imam Mu'sa took great care of appointing his son as an Imam after him. He entrusted this affair to a large group of his eminent Shi'ites, of whom are the following:

1. Muhammad Bin Islma'īl

Muhammad Bin Islma'īl al-Ha'shmi has narrated: "I (i.e., Muhammad b. Islma'īl) visited Abu' al-Hasan Musa' b. Ja'far. He complained of a severe (pain), so I asked him: 'I ask Allah not to let us see it (i.e. missing you). To whom shall (we refer)?'"

He, peace be on him, replied: "To my son 'Ali. His writing is my writing. He is my testamentary trustee and my successor after me.[24](#)"

2. 'Ali Bin Yaqtin

'Ali Bin Yaqtin has reported: "I (i.e. 'Ali Bin Yaqtin) was with Abu' al-Hasan Musa' b. Ja'far, peace be on him, and was with him his son 'Ali. He said: 'O 'Ali, this son of mine is the master of my children and I have given him my *kunya* (i.e. both were called Abu' al-Hasan).' Hisha'm b. Sa'lim was in the assembly. He struck his face with the palm of his hand and said: 'We belong to Allah, by Allah, he has announced his death for you.'[25](#)"

3. Na'im Bin Qa'bu's

Na'im Bin Qa'bu's has reported, saying: [Abu' al-Hasan (Musa'), peace be on him, said:] "My son 'Ali is the eldest of my children, the most attentive of them to my words, and the most obedient of them to my order. He examined the leather case (*Jafr*) and the scroll (*Al-ja'mi'a*). Only a prophet or the testamentary trustee of a prophet may examine them.[26](#)"

4. Da'wud Bin Kuthayr

Da'wud b. Kuthayr al-Raqi has narrated, saying: [I (i.e. Da'wud b. Kuthayr) said to Musa' al-Ka'zim:] "May I be your ransom, I have grown old. So take my hand and save me from hell-fire. Who is our leader (*sa'hib*) after you?"

"This is your leader after me," he said and pointed to his son Abu' al-Hasan al-Ridha'.[27](#)

5. Sulayma'n Bin Hafs

Sulayma'n b. Hafs al-Marwazi has reported: [I (i.e. Sulayma'n b. Hafs) visited Abu' al-Hasan Musa' b. Ja'far. I wanted to ask him about the proof over the people after him. When he looked at me, he began saying:] "O Sulayma'n, my son 'Ali is my testamentary trustee. He is the proof over the people after me. He is the most meritorious of my children. If it happen that you remain alive after me, bear witness to him for this matter before my Shiites and the people of my authority, who ask you about my successor after me.[28](#)"

6. ‘Abd Allah al-Ha’shimi

‘Abd Allah al-Ha’shimi has said: [We were beside the grave (i.e. the grave of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family). Suddenly, Abu’ Ibra’him Musa’ b. Ja’far came toward us hand in hand with his son ‘Ali. Then he said:] “Do you know who I am?” “You are our master and our eldest one,” we said. “Name and ascribe me,” he demanded. “You are Musa’ b. Ja’far,” we said. “Who is this?” he asked and pointed to his son. “He is ‘Ali b. Musa’ b. Ja’far,” we replied. “Witness that he is my agent in this world during my lifetime and my testamentary trustee after my death.[29](#)”

7. ‘Abd Allah Bin Marhu’m

‘Abd Allah b. Marhu’m has reported: [I went out of Basrah and wanted to go to Medina. When I covered part of the road, I met Abu’ Ibra’him (i.e. Musa’ b. Ja’far), who wanted to go to Basrah. He sent for me and I went to him. He gave me a letter and ordered me to carry it to Medina. I asked him: ‘May I be your ransom, to whom shall I hand it over?’ He replied:] “(Hand it) over to my son ‘Ali, for he is my testamentary trustee, the one who will undertake my affair, and the most meritorious of my children.[30](#)”

8. ‘Abd Allah Bin al-Harth

‘Abd Allah b. al-Harth has narrated: [Abu’ Ibra’him summoned us and we gathered. Then he said:] “Do you know why I have summoned you?”

“No,” we answered.

“Witness that this son of mine is my testamentary trustee (*wasi*) and the one who will superintend my affair, my successor after me. Who has a debt (to be collected) from me, let him collect it from this son of mine. Whoever I have made a promise to, let him get its fulfillment from him. Whoever has to meet me, will only do so through his correspondence.[31](#)”

9. Haydar Bin Ayyu’b

Haydar b. Ayyu’b has reported: [We were at a place called al-Qaba’ in Medina. Muhammad b. Zayd b. ‘Ali was at the place. He came after the time in which he used to come to us. We asked him: ‘May Allah make us your ransom what delayed you from coming?’ He answered:] “Abu’ Ibra’him summoned us today. We were seventeen men from among the children of ‘Ali and Fa’tima, peace be on them. He made us witness that his son ‘Ali was his testamentary trustee and his deputy during his lifetime and after his death, and that his order valid against him and for him.” Then Muhammad said: “O Hayder, by Allah, he entrusted the Imamate to him today, and the Shi’ites will profess him after his death.” I (i.e. Hayder) said: “However, may Allah protect him, what is this?” He (i.e. Muhammad b. Zayd b. ‘Ali) answered: “O Hayder, he made him as (his) testamentary trustee. This means that he entrusted the Imamate to him.[32](#)”

10. Al-Husayn Bin Bashir

Al-Husayn b. Bashir has said: [Abu' al-Hasan Musa' b. Ja'far appointed for us his son 'Ali just as Allah's Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family, appointed 'Ali on the Day of Ghadir Khum. He said:] "O People of Medina or he said O People of the Mosque, this is my testamentary trustee after me."³³

11. Ja'far Bin Khalaf

Ja'far b. Khalaf has narrated: [I (i.e. Ja'far b. Khalaf) heard Abu' al-Hasan Musa' b. Ja'far say:] "Happy is the person who does not die until he sees a successor belongs to him. Allah has made me see my successor, who is this son of mine. He pointed to him (i.e. al-Ridha')."³⁴

12. Nasr Bin Qa'bu's

Nasr Bin Qa'bu's said: [I (i.e. Nasr b. Qa'bu's) said to Abu' Ibra'him Musa' b. Ja'far: 'I have asked your father who would be after you and he told me that you would be. Therefore when Abu' 'Abd Allah (Ja'far al-Sa'diq), peace be on him, died, the people went to right and left while I and my companions declared (our support) for you. Therefore tell me which of your children will be (the Imam) after you.' He said:] "My son 'Ali."³⁵

13. Muhammad Bin Sina'n

Muhammad b. Sina'n has narrated: [I (i.e. Muhammad b. Sina'n) visited Abu' al-Hasan (Musa') the year before he went to Iraq. 'Ali, his son, was sitting in front of him. He looked at me and said:] "Muhammad, this year there will be some disturbance but do not be worried by that."

"My Allah make me your ransom, what will that be?" I asked, for he had filled me with anxiety.

"I will go to this despot," he answered, "but he will not receive any evil from me nor from the son who will be after me."

"May Allah make me your ransom, what will happen?" I asked.

"Allah leads astray the oppressors," he told me, "and Allah does what He wishes."

"Whoever wrongs the right of this son of mine and denies his Imamate after me is like those who wronged 'Ali b. Abu' Ta'lib, peace be on him, and denied his right after the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family," he replied.

"If Allah supports me in my life, may I submit to his right and declare (your belief in) his Imamate," I said.

"True, Muhammad," he said, "Allah will support you during your life and you will submit to his right and declare (your belief) in his Imamate, and the Imamate of the one who will be (Imam) after him."

“Who will that be?” I asked.

“His son Muhammad,” he answered.

I said: “(I give) consent (*Ridha*’) and submission to him.[36](#)”

These are some texts narrated on the authority of Imam Musa’, peace be on him, concerning the Imamate of his son Imam al-Ridha’, peace be on him. Imam Musa’ took great care of the Imamate of his son, for he wanted to refute those who believed in his Imamate only, to abolish their vague errors, and to warn the Muslims against them.

The Imam’s Commandments

Imam Musa’, peace be on him, appointed his son al-Ridha’ as a testamentary trustee after him. He entrusted him with two commandments which included his authority over his endowments, his deputyship on his behalf over his private and general affairs, his binding his children to yield to his commands. He also entrusted Imam al-Ridha’ with marrying the ladies from among his daughters, for he was the most knowledgeable of others in (choosing) qualified (husbands for them). He ordered him not to marry them to anyone except a believing, pious person who would respect their place and position.

As for the second commandment, we have mentioned it in our book the *Life of Imam Musa*’, peace be on him, so there is no need to mention it, for I (i.e. the author) do not want to mention anything which I have already written.

The Prison of al-Sindi

(Ha’ru’n) al-Rashid ordered the Imam to be detained in the prison of al-Sindi b. Sha’hik. It is worth mentioning that al-Sindi b. Sha’hik merciless and wicked. He turned away from all moral values. He did not believe in the hereafter; nor did he respect Allah. He treated the Imam rudely, turned away from him, troubled him during his eating and drinking, and shackled him. The narrators have said: “He (i.e. al-Sindi b. Sha’hik) fettered him (Imam Musa’) with thirty pounds of iron.”

As usual, the Imam devoted himself to performing the acts of worship. He performed prayers, recited the Qur’an, glorified and praised Allah for giving him free time to worship Him.

Imam Musa’ sends a Letter to Ha’ru’n

The Imam sent Ha’ru’n (al-Rashid) a letter in which he expressed his displeasure with him, saying: “No day of tribulation passes me until a day of ease passes you, so that we will all perish and (be resurrected) on the endless day when those who say false things shall be losers.[37](#)”

This letter gives an account of the Imam’s pain and sorrow in prison and, in addition, it shows that the

Imam will judge the tyrant (i.e. Ha'ru'n) on the day when those who say false things shall be losers.

Ha'ru'n al-Rashid orders the Imam to be assassinated

The tyrant (i.e. Ha'ru'n al-Rashid) entrusted al-Sindi or other than him from among his statesmen with assassinating the Imam, and he put fatal poison in dates and forced the Imam to eat them. The Imam (Musa') ate some of them, and al-Sindi said to: "Eat more!"

The Imam look at him and said to him: "It is sufficient for you that you have accomplished your need.³⁸"

The poison circulated through the Imam's body, and he suffered from severe pain. Then the cruel police surrounded him. Al-Sindi accompanied him, said rude words to him, and prevented him from having first aids, that he might hasten his decreed end.

During that terrible period, the Imam led a life of tribulation and misfortune, for the poison destroyed his limbs, al-Sindi and his police violated his sacredness and dignity.

The Imam joins the Most High Comrade

The poison circulated through all parts of the body of the Imam, peace be on him, and he suffered from severe pain and ache, so he summoned al-Sindi and asked him to bring him his retainer (*mawla'*), who was staying at the house of al-'Abba's b. Muhammad at the cane-market (*mashra'* at *al-Qasab*), and who had to wash and shroud the Imam's body. Al-Sindi asked the Imam to permit him in order to shroud his body, but he refused and said: "I am a member of the House (of the Prophet). The giving of dowries for our women, the performing of pilgrimages on behalf of those of us who have not made the pilgrimage, and the shrouding of our dead can only be performed by one of our retainers (*mawa'li*) who is pure. I already have my shroud.³⁹" Al-Sindi brought him his retainer and entrusted him with washing and shrouding him.

When the Imam was in a critical condition and was about to meet the decreed end, he summoned al-Musayyab b. Zahra and said to him: "I have told you about (my) departure to Allah, the Great and Almighty. When I ask you to give a drink of water and you see that I relax, and that my face turns yellow, red, green, and changes colors, tell the tyrant (Ha'ru'n al-Rashid) about my death."

Al-Musayyab said: "I went on watching him until he, peace be on him, asked me to give him a drink of water and he drank it. Then he summoned me and said: 'O Musayyab, this dirty one (i.e. al-Sindi b. Sha'hik) will claim that he will undertaking washing and burying me. Far be it from him! Far be it from him! When I am carried to the cemetery known as the cemetery of Quraysh, bury me in it, do not raise my grave higher than four separated fingers, and do not take anything of my earth to get the blessing of it, for each earth of us is forbidden except that of my grandfather al-Husayn b. 'Ali, for Allah, the Great and Almighty, has made it cure for our Shi'ites and friends."

Al-Musayyab said: “Then I saw a person like him sitting beside him. I recognized my master al-Ridha’, peace be on him, when he was a boy, so I wanted to ask the person, but my master Musa’ shouted at me and said: ‘Didn’t I prevent you (from doing such a deed)?’ Then the person disappeared. I came to the Imam and found him a motionless body. He passed away, so I told (Ha’ru’n) al-Rashid about (his death).[40](#)”

The Imam’s soul departed to its Almighty Creator. The angels of the Most Merciful (Allah) escorted it carrying bouquet of flowers from the Garden. The souls of the prophets, the testamentary trustees, the chosen ones, and the good received it.

My master Abu’ al-Ridha’, you went to the Abode of Immortality after you had delivered your message, raised the word of Allah high on earth, defended the rights of the persecuted, and opposed tyranny. So how great your achievements toward Islam are!

My master Abu’ al-Ridha’, you suffered from various kinds of hardships created by the tyrant of your time. He detained you in his prisons, prevented you from having anything, and prohibited you from seeing your Shi’ites, your children, and your family. That is because you did not follow him; nor did you justify his evil acts. You led the anti-oppression and tyranny front. You condemned his reckless policy standing on looting the Muslims’ properties and spending them on his pleasures and his red nights. Therefore, peace be on you! Peace be on you on the day when you were born, on the day when you died, and on the day when you will be raised from the dead!

The Police investigate the Event

The police held an investigation into the cause of the death of the Imam. They spared no effort to prove that the Imam had died normally, that they might clear the tyrant (Ha’ru’n) of the charge of murder. Al-Sindi b. Sha’hik himself investigated. This matter has been mentioned by many narrators of whom is ‘Amru’ b. Wa’qid, who said: [Al-Sindi b. Sha’hik summoned me at the night. I was in Baghdad. I feared that he would do evil for me, so I asked my family (to prepare) my needs. I said: ‘We belong to Allah and to Him is our return.’ Then I rode to him. When he saw me, he said:]

“O Abu” Hafs, have we terrified and annoyed you?”

“Yes,” I replied.

“There is nothing here except good,” he explained.

“Will you send a messenger to my family to tell them about me?” I asked.

“Yes,” was the answer.

When my fear became calm and terror went away from me, al-Sindi asked me: “O Abu” Hafs, do you

know why I summoned you?”

“No,” I answered.

“Do you recognize Musa’ b. Ja’far?” he asked.

“Yes, by Allah, I recognize him,” I replied, “and there was a friendship between us for a long time.”

“Do you think that there is in Baghdad anyone who recognizes him?” he asked.

“Yes,” was the answer.

Then he (Abu’ Hafis) nominated for him persons from among those who recognized the Imam. Al-Sindi b. Sha’hik summoned them and asked them: “Do you know people who recognize Musa’ b. Ja’far?” They nominated some people for him and he summoned them. He went on summoning people throughout the night until day dawned.

When over fifty witnesses were present before him, he summoned his notary and ordered him to write their names, their houses, their works, and their characteristics. When the notary had finished writing that, he told al-Sindi about it. The latter went out of his place, turned to ‘Amru’ and said to him: “Abu’ Hafis, stand up and remove the shroud from the face of Musa’ b. Ja’far.” ‘Amru’ removed the shroud from the face of the Imam. Then al-Sindi b. Sha’hik turned to the people and said to them: “Look at him!” The people began to come and look into his face. Then he (i.e. al-Sindi b. Sha’hik) asked them: “Do you witness that this is Musa’ b. Ja’far?”

“Yes,” they replied.

Then he ordered his boy to remove the shrouds from the Imam, and he did. Then he turned to the people and asked them: “Do you see on him any mark which you regard as abominable?”

“No,” they answered.

Then he ordered their testimonies to be written, and they went away.⁴¹ Then he brought the jurists and notable men of Baghdad in (to see him). Among them was al-Haytham b. ‘Adi. (Al-Sindi) made them give testimony that he had died normally. Ha’ru’n al-Rashid took measures similar to these, that he might clear himself of committing the crime or, at least, he was not responsible for it.

The Imam is put on the Bridge

Imam Musa’ al-Ka’zim, the Prophet’s descendant, was put on the bridge. The police surround him and uncovered his face, so the close, the far, and passers-by looked into his face while he was dead. In this manner the tyrant (i.e. Ha’ru’n al-Rashid) tried to abase the Shi’ites, to disdain their sacred beliefs, and to hurt their feelings. This procedure was one of the severe persecutions from which the Shi’ites

suffered. Shaykh Muhammad Mulla has said:

Who informs Islam that his leader has died out of poison in the Prison of al-Rashid?

Error has become delighted at his death; and
right has hold a funeral ceremony for him!

His coffin has been placed on the Bridge of al-Rasa'fa; the
angels have surrounded him in magnifying!

Shaykh Muhammad 'Ali al-Ya'qu'bi, an excellent orator, has said:

Why was Musa' placed on the bridge dead and no
monotheist escorted him to the grave-yard?

They carried him while the iron round his legs rang and
the hills sighed for him!

The Horrible Announcement

What terrible the disaster was! What awful the misfortune was! Al-Sindi violated all sacred beliefs of Islam. He had to order his headsmen to say to the people: "Attend the funeral of the good one, son of the good one!" However, he ordered them to announce: "This is Musa' b. Ja'far whom the Ra'fidites (Shi'ites) claim is last Imam (*al-qa'im*) who will not die. So (come and) look at him!" The headsmen, who were slaves and rouges, set out and roamed through the streets of Baghdad making this painful announcement at the top of their voices.⁴²

Sulayma'n prepares the Imam for Burial

Sulayma'n was on the top of his palace towering over the Tigris. He saw the police and some military units walking through the streets while the people were worried and frightened. This view terrified him, so he turned to his sons and their boys and asked them: "What is the news?"

"This is al-Sindi b. Sha'hik announcing (the death of) Musa' b. Ja'far," they replied.

They told him about al-Sindi's horrible announcement, and he feared that a discord would occur, and that the situation would lead to illaudable results, so he shouted at his sons, saying: "You and your boys go down and take Musa' from their hands. If they prevent you (from taking him), then hit them and tear up their black uniforms!⁴³"

Sulayma'n's sons along with their boys and their guards set out towards the police and took the holy

corpse from their hands. The police did not resist them, for Sulayma'n was the uncle of the Caliph and the most notable figure in the 'Abba'sid family.

They brought the Imam's body before Sulayma'n, and he ordered them to walk through the streets of Baghdad and to make an announcement opposite to that of al-Sindi b. Sha'hik. As a result they shouted at the top of their voices: "Come and attend the funeral of the good one, son of the good one!"

The people came from everywhere and escorted Musa' al-Ka'zim, the Imam of the Muslims, master of the Allah-fearing and the worshippers. The Shi'ites went out striking their chests and shedding tears. The ladies from among their womenfolk went out weeping and wailing for the Imam.

The funeral processions walked through the streets of Baghdad, sang the songs of sorrow and sadness, and asked some people to carry censers in front of the coffin of the Imam. They took him to a place at the market, so the place was afterwards called perfume seller market (*suq al-rayya'hin*). Honoring the Imam, they built the place lest the people should tread on it with their feet.⁴⁴ Then an inspired poet praised the Imam with these marvelous lines:

I already said to the man who undertook washing him: Why didn't you obey him and weren't among those loyal to him?

Put aside your water from him, and then wash him with

what the eyes of glory shed when they wept for him!

Remove and set aside from him the scent for embalming

and perfume him with his praise!

Order the noble angels to carry him in honor! Don't you

see that they are beside him?

Do not weaken the necks of the men through carrying

him; those (the angels) carried him because of his abundant favor!⁴⁵

The silent, sad people walked and headed for the Tibn Gate. They entered the cemeteries of Quraysh and dug a grave for the great Imam. Sulayma'n b. Abu' Ja'far, though bewildered, laid him in the grave. He buried him and his good qualities such as clemency, generosity, knowledge, and honor.

The escorters left numbering the Imam's outstanding merits and began talking about their painful loss which resulted from his death. Allah's peace and blessings be upon the Imam's soul, which has filled the world with excellences, traditions, and laudable deeds.

Imam al-Ridha' undertakes the Great Leadership

After the death of his father, Imam al-Ridha', peace be on him, undertook the great religious leadership and the general authority over the Muslims. The scholars and the jurists surrounded him and recorded his opinions in the fields of morals, religion, learning and knowledge.

His Travel to Basrah

After the death of Imam Musa' al-Ka'zim, peace be on him, Imam al-Ridha', peace be on him, traveled to Basrah in order to produce evidence in support of his Imamate and in order to disprove the vague errors of those who deviated from the truth. He stopped at the house of al-Hasan b. Muhammad al-'Alawi and held in it a session for a group of the Muslims among whom was 'Amru' b. Hadda'b, who deviated from the members of the House (*Ahl al-Bayt*), peace be on him, and showed stubbornness toward them. He also summoned to session the Catholic and the Rabbi. Then he turned and said to them: "I have summoned you in order that you may question me about the Prophet's traditions and the Imam's signs which you may not find with anyone except with us, the members of the House, so come and question me!"

'Amru' b. Hadda'b hastened and asked him: "Muhammad b. al-Fade al-Ha'shimi told us that you knew all that which Allah sent down, and that you knew all languages?"

The Imam, peace be on him, confirmed the statement of Muhammad b. al-Fadl concerning him, saying: "Muhammad b. al-Fadl is right; I told him about that."

'Amru' hastened to say: "First of all I want test you through languages. This is a Roman; this is an Indian; this is a Persian; and this is a Turkish. We have brought them before you."

The Imam, peace be on him, said: "Let them say whatever they desire. I will answer each of them in their own language, Allah willing."

The non-Arabs stood before the Imam and questioned him, and he, peace be on him, answered them in their own languages. So they admired him. Then the Imam turned to 'Amru' and asked him: "Do you believe me when I tell you that you will be tried in these days by murdering one of your blood relations?"

"No," was the answer, "for none knows the unseen except Allah, the Most High."

The Imam disproved 'Amru's statement, saying: "Doesn't Allah, the Most High, say: *The Knower of the unseen, so He does not reveal His secrets to any except to him whom He chooses as an apostle.* Allah is pleased with His Messenger, may Allah bless him and his Household, and we are the inheritors of the Messenger whom Allah informed of whatever He willed of His secrets, and he (the Messenger) informed us of what was and what will be to the Day of Resurrection.

“What I have told you about, son of Hadda’b, will occur five days later on. When that has occurred, you will come to know that you oppose Allah and His Apostle.”

The Imam added, saying: “As for you, you will lose your sight and become blind. So you will see neither a plain nor a mountain, and this will happen a few days later on. You will perjure and be infected with leprosy.”

Muhammad b. al-Fadl swore by Allah that the matter was just as the Imam had predicted.

Then ‘Amru’ b. Hadda’b was asked: “Was al-Ridha’ truthful in what he had foretold?”

“By Allah I knew that he was truthful at the time when he told me,” answered b. Hadda’b, “but I showed myself patient.”

Then the Imam turned to the Catholic and asked him: “Has the Bible produced evidence in support of the prophecy of Muhammad, may Allah bless him and his family?”

“If the Bible has given proof of him, we would not deny him,” retorted the Catholic.

“Could you tell me about the *sakana* which you have in the third Book?” asked the Imam.

“It is one of Allah’s attributes,” replied the Catholic, “it is not permitted for us to reveal it.”

“If your Lord acknowledges that it is the name of Muhammad, Jesus acknowledges him and gives good news to the children of Isra’i’l of him, then you should acknowledge him and do not deny him.”

The Catholic accepted that, saying: “If you do, I will acknowledge, for I do not oppose the Bible; nor do I deny it.

The Imam continued establishing proof against him, saying: “Take (an example) from the third part in which Muhammad, may Allah bless him and his family, has been mentioned and Jesus given good news of him.”

“Give me (an example of) what you have said,” retorted the Catholic.

The Imam began reciting him the part of the Gospel in which the Messenger Muhammad, may Allah bless him and his family, has been mentioned. Then he asked the Catholic: “Who is this described one?”

“Describe him!” the Catholic demanded.

The Imam, peace be on him, began describing him, saying: “I will not describe him but through what Allah has described him. He is the owner of the she-camel, rod, and the cloak; the illiterate Prophet whom they find written down with them in the Torah and the Bible; (who) enjoins them (to do) good and

forbids them (from doing) evil; makes lawful to them the good things and makes unlawful to them impure things; removes from them their burden and the shackles which were upon them; and guides (them) to the best path leading to (Allah), the most just way, and the most straight road.

“I ask you, O Catholic, by the right of Jesus, the Spirit of Allah and His Word, have you found this description of this Prophet (may Allah bless him and his family) (written) in the Gospel?”

The Catholic bowed his head, thought deeply and felt that the earth was narrow though it was wide. He could not deny the Bible, so he answered the Imam, saying: “Yes, this description is in the Bible. Jesus has mentioned this Prophet in the Bible, but the Christians have not proved true that he is your Prophet (*sa’hip*).”

Then the Imam went on establishing arguments against him and disproving his imaginations, saying: “As you have not denied the Gospel and acknowledged the description in it concerning Muhammad, may Allah bless him and his family, then take the second Book, for it has mentioned him, his testamentary trustee (i.e. Imam ‘Ali), his daughter Fa’tima, al-Hasan, and al-Husayn.”

The Catholic and the Rabbi came to know that the Imam was learned in the Torah and the Bible, and that he had knowledge of all that which was mentioned in both of them. They thought of a way to get rid of the Imam’s arguments. They doubted the Prophet Muhammad, peace be on him, of whom Moses and Jesus gave good news. They said: “Moses and Jesus gave good news of him, but we have not decided that he is this Muhammad. It is not permitted for us to acknowledge his prophecy because of his name Muhammad. We doubt whether he is your Muhammad or other than him!”

The Imam continued disproving their vague errors, saying: “You have regarded doubt as an argument. Has Allah appointed from among the children of Adam a prophet whose name is Muhammad other than (this) Muhammad? Have you found him (written) in one of the Books which Allah sent down upon all the prophets?”

They refrained from answering and found no vague error to cling to it. They insisted on obstinacy and denial, saying: “It is not permitted for us to confess before you that Muhammad is your Muhammad. If we acknowledged Muhammad, his testamentary trustee, his daughter and her two sons according to what you had mentioned, then you made us adopt Islam unwillingly!”

The Imam added, saying: “As for you, O Catholic, you are safe, in the protection of Allah and of His Apostle. Nothing which you hate will issue from us toward you.”

The Catholic retorted: “As you have given my security, this Prophet whose name is Muhammad, the testamentary trustee whose name is ‘Ali, this daughter whose name is Fa’tima, these two grandsons whose names are al-Hasan and al-Husayn are in the Torah, the Bible, and the Zabur (David’s Psalms).”

“Is this truthfulness and justice?” asked the Imam.

“Yes, it is truthfulness and justice,” replied the Catholic.

The Catholic kept silent and acknowledged the truth, so the Imam turned to the Rabbi and said to him: “Listen, O Rabbi, to the Book so-and-so of David’s Psalms.”

The Rabbi said: “May Allah bless you and your father, give me (an example of) what you have.”

The Imam began reciting to him the first Book of David’s Psalms until he reached the names of Muhammad, ‘Ali, Fa’tima, al-Hasan, and al-Husayn. Then he asked him the following questions: “I ask you, O Rabbi, by the right of Allah, is this in the Zabur of Da’wud (David’s Psalms)?”

“Yes, this is itself and their names are in the Zabur,” answered the Rabbi.

“By the right of the ten verses which Allah sent down upon Musa’ (Moses), have you found the description of Muhammad, ‘Ali, Fa’tima, al-Hasan, and al-Husayn (written) in the Torah, and that they are ascribed to justice and excellence?”

The Rabbi acknowledged that. Then the Imam continued reciting another Book of the Torah. The Rabbi admired the Imam’s abundant knowledge, eloquence, and his interpreting what was mentioned concerning the Prophet, ‘Ali, Fa’tima, al-Hasan, and al-Husayn. Then he said: “By Allah, O (grand)son of Muhammad, were it not for the presidency which I attained over all the Jews, I would have believed in Ahmed (i.e. Prophet Muhammad) and follow your order. By Allah Who sent down Torah upon Musa’ and Zabur upon Da’wud, I have never seen anyone better than you in reciting the Torah, the Bible, and the Zabur; nor have I seen anyone better than you in interpreting these Books.”

The Imam’s debate with them lasted for a long time until the timing of the noon prayer came, so the Imam, peace be on him, stood and led the people in the noon prayer, and then he went to carry out his personal affairs. On the following day he returned to his assembly, and they brought a Roman slave-girl before the Imam, peace be on him, that they might test the Imam. The Imam spoke to her in her own language in the presence of the Catholic. He had knowledge of her own language, so he asked her: “Whom do you love more—Muhammad or Jesus?”

“In the past I loved Jesus more,” replied the slave-girl, “for I did not recognize Muhammad. After I had come to know of Muhammad, I loved him more than Jesus.”

The Catholic turned to her and asked her: “You have adopted the religion of Muhammad, then do you detest Jesus?”

The slave-girl opposed his statement and said: “I seek refuge in Allah; rather I love Jesus and believe in him, but I love Muhammad more than him.”

The Imam turned to the Catholic and asked him to translate her words to the people, and he translated them to them. Then the Catholic asked the Imam to debate with a Christian from the Sind, for he had knowledge of Christianity and debates. The Imam debated with him in his own language. Al-Sindi adopted Islam and acknowledged the Imamate of the Imam, peace be on him. Then the Imam, peace be on him, asked Muhammad b. al-Fadl to take the Christian to the bath-house, that he might bathe and purify his body from the dirt of polytheism. Muhammad took him to the bath-house and clothed him in clean clothes. Then the Imam ordered the Christian to be taken to Medina (Yathrib) to learn some of his sciences. Then the Imam said farewell to his friend (the Catholic) and went to Medina al-Munawara.[46](#)

The Imam travels to Ku'fa

The Imam, peace be on him, left Medina (Yathrib) and headed for Ku'fa. When he arrived in it, he was received warmly. He stopped at the house of Hafs b. 'Umayr al-Yashkuri. The scholars and the theologians surrounded him. They asked him about various questions and he answered them. Then he held a session and summoned to it Christian and Jewish scholars. Debates occurred between him and them and led to his victory over them and their inability to debate with him. Then the Imam turned to those who attended the meeting and asked them: "People, isn't the fairest of all people he who argues with his opponent through his religion, his Book, and his law?"

"Yes," all of them replied.

"Know that there is no Imam after Muhammad, may Allah bless him and his family, except him who does what Muhammad, peace be on him, had done when the Command came to him," the Imam, peace be on him, replied, "none is appropriate for the Imamate except him who argues with the communities through the proofs of the Imamate."

"What is the evidence for the Imamate?" a Jewish scholar asked the Imam, peace be on him.

He, peace be on him, answered: "He must be learned in the Torah, the Gospel, the Zabur (David's Psalms), and the Holy Qur'an, that he may be able to argue with the people of the Torah through their Torah, the People of the Bible through their Bible, and the people of the Qur'an through their Qur'an. He must be learned in all languages, that each language may be obvious to him, and that he may be able to debate with each people in their own language. In addition to these qualities, he must be Allah-fearing, clear from every aspect of uncleanness, pure from any defect, just, fair, wise, affectionate, merciful, forgiving, sympathetic, truthful, pitiful, kind, honest, and trustworthy.[47](#)"

Then the Imam debated with some anti-Imamate attendants and forces; he disproved their vague errors and rendered them incapable of debating with him. Accordingly, the Shi'ites clung to him, peace be on him, and increased their faith in his abundant, scientific abilities. With this matter we will end our speech about the role of the Imam before and after the death of his father.

1. Haya't al-Imam Musa' Bin Ja'far, vol. 1, p. 138.
2. Al-Mufid, al-Irsha'd, p. 272.
3. Haya't al-Imam Musa' Bin Ja'far, vol. 1, p. 139.
4. Kashf al-Ghumma.
5. Wafaya't al-A'ya'n, vol. 4, p. 293. Kanz al-Lugha, p. 766.
6. Wafaya't al-A'ya'n, vol. 4, p. 293.
7. Haya't al-Imam Musa' Bin Ja'far, vol. 1, p. 142.
8. Al-Biha'r, vol. 11, p. 265.
9. Usu'l al-Ka'fi, vol. 2, p. 134.
10. Ta'rikh Baghda'd, vol. 13, p. 28-29.
11. Al-Biha'r, vol. 11, p. 28-29.
12. Al-Fusu'l al-Muhimma, p. 22.
13. Ta'rikh Baghda'd, vol. 13, p. 28.
14. 'Umdat al-Ta'lib, p. 185.
15. Haya't al-Imam Musa' Bin Ja'far, vol. 1, pp. 161-162.
16. Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 456-457.
17. Ibid., p. 465.
18. Tanqih al-Maqa'l.
19. Haya't al-Imam Musa' Bin Ja'far, vol. 2, p. 466.
20. Al-Fusu'l al-Muhimma.
21. Haya't al-Imam Musa' Bin Ja'far, vol. 2, p. 468.
22. Ibid., pp. 469-471.
23. Ibid.
24. Kashf al-Ghumma, vol. 3, p. 88.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid.
27. Al-Fusu'l al-Muhimma, p. 225.
28. 'Uyu'n Akhba'r al-Ridha', vol. 1, p. 26.
29. Ibid., pp. 26-27.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid., p. 30.
35. Ibid., p. 31.
36. Ibid., pp. 32-33.
37. Al-Bida'ya wa al-Niha'ya, vol. 10, p. 183.
38. Haya't al-Imam Musa' Bin Ja'far, vol. 1, pp. 499-500.
39. Maqa'til al-Ta'libyyin, p. 504.
40. Haya't al-Imam Musa' Bin Ja'far, vol. 2, pp. 514-515.
41. Ibid., p. 519.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid.
44. Al-Anwa'r al-Bahiyya, p. 99.
45. Al-Ittha'f bi Hub al-Ashra'f, p. 57.
46. Al-Biha'r, vol. 12, pp. 21-23. I (i.e. the author) have reported the account freely.
47. Ibid., p. 23. I (i.e. the author) have reported the account freely.

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