

Imam al- Ridha's (a.s.) Cultural Measures

A sound analysis of various measures taken by the dignitaries in different eras requires an accurate knowledge of the prevailing conditions of the time and their goals. Without this knowledge, no theory and conjecture will ever enjoy the necessary precision and soundness, especially in relation to the purified Imams (a.s.), who, besides the hidden issues and Divine inspirations, enjoy profound intelligence and insight and are among the most knowledgeable human beings.

For one thing, the extant historical reports of the circumstances prevailing in those eras are insufficient and incomplete in various aspects so that a researcher cannot depend on them for a reliable and accurate analysis.

However, fortunately there is no need for historical reports concerning the Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.), since we believe that, as it is expedient to the status of Imamate which connects them to Divine science and wisdom, they enjoy inspirations and even codified programs and always make the best and most appropriate decisions in various circumstances.

But all this should not prevent us from touching upon some instances mentioned in his era in order to familiarize ourselves in more details with them. Among those we can point out the circumstances prevailing Imam al-Ridha's (a.s.) era which led to the widespread promulgation of the Islamic teachings and truths.

With reference to the works left behind by Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.), we would find out that after Imam 'Ali (a.s.), Imam al-Baqir (a.s.), and Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) most of these teachings and truths have been left behind by Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) because of the special circumstances and a good chance that appeared in his time.

Although the enemy tried to falsify the Imam's vast knowledge and cut down his popularity, his period of Imamate, in particular his heir apparency, provided a great chance for his holiness to proceed with the dissemination of Islamic sciences and the truths of the Ahl al-Bayt's (a.s.) school of thought. Some of these endeavors are as follows:

1. Confrontation with Zealotry and the Zealots

Of the great evils among the followers of Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.) have been and are those who regard them much higher in rank than their true status and hyperbolize them, believing in their lordship, Prophethood, or some other divine features.

This group of people have always been rejected from among the Shi'as and the Imams (a.s.). Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) said, "Take heed of your youths lest the zealots should corrupt them, as the zealots are the worst of God's creatures; they belittle God's majesty and claim Lordship for God's servants. By God, the zealots are worse than the Jews, the Christians, the Magi, and the polytheists."¹

Therefore, Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) proceeded to battle against this group, who were active in the time of his holiness.

In a *hadith*, Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) relates a tradition with its chain of transmission from his father and forefathers from the Apostle of Allah who said, "Do not raise me above what I deserve; verily, the Almighty Allah made me His servant before appointing me as a Prophet."

Then his holiness recited *ayas* 79 and 80 of Surat Al-i Imran.² He went on to quote Imam 'Ali (a.s.) as saying: "Two (persons) will perish because of me while I am not to be blamed: an extreme lover and an extreme hater."

Then, Imam al-Ridha said, "By God, we are averse to the one who hyperbolizes us and raises us above what we really are, just as Jesus, son of Mary, was averse to the Christians." After reciting some verses of the Qur'an, his holiness said, "Whoever claims Lordship for the Prophets, Prophethood for the Imams and Imamate for the non-Imams, we are averse to him both in this world and Hereafter."³

That is to say, the followers of Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.) are to be careful neither belittles the status of the Imams as impressed by the adversaries, nor raise them to the level of Lordship or Prophethood out of undue love and prejudice; rather, they should follow intellect and religious law and what they themselves have stated.

In another tradition, Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) said, "Allah's curse be upon the zealots (*ghalis*)! Why did they not become Jew?! Why did they not become Magus?! Why did they not become Christian?! Why did they not become *Qadari*?! Why did they not become *Murj'ite*?! Why did they not become *Kharijite*?" (Meaning, why have they attributed themselves to us?) Then, the Imam (a.s.) said, "Do not associate with them do not confirm them, be averse to them; may God be averse to them."⁴

And when Abu Hashim Ja'fari asked Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) concerning the zealots and the people believing in free-will (*Ahl al-tafwidh*), his holiness said, "Zealots are unbelievers and *Ahl al-tafwidh* are polytheists; whoever associates with them, eats and drinks with them, helps them, gets married to them, transacts with them, believes in them, regards them trustworthy, confirms their sayings, or helps them

even with the fewest words, will be estranged from friendship with the Almighty and Glorious Allah, friendship with the Apostle of Allah (S), and the friendship with us the Ahl al-Bayt.”[5](#)

When we refer to the narrations regarding the condemnation of the zealots, we find out that many of those narrations have been quoted from Imam al-Ridha (a.s.)[6](#), which imply that the zealots were widely active in that era.

One of the zealots told Imam al-Ridha (a.s.): “Yunus b. ʿAbyan – from among those accused of zealotry – has said, ‘One night I was circumambulating [around Kaʿba] when I heard a voice from above telling me O Yunus, I am Allah and there is no god but me; worship me and perform prayers to remember me.

When I raised my head, all of a sudden Abu al-Hasan appeared to me.’ Upon hearing such words, Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) got so disturbed that he said to that man: ‘get away from me! May God curse you and everyone who has told you this and Yunus b. ʿAbyan with a thousand curses followed by a thousand more curses and may every curse take you deep down into Hell. I bear witness that it was no one but the Satan who called him.”[7](#)

When they told Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) that some of those who regard themselves as his followers suppose that these – Divine – attributes belong to ‘Ali (a.s.) and that he is Allah, the Lord of the two worlds, the Imam began to shake in utter agitation and sweat profusely and said, “*Subhan Allah!* Exalted is Allah from what the tyrants and wrong-doers say! Was it not that ‘Ali who ate like other eaters, who drank like among other drinkers, who got married like other ones who got married, etc.? Was he not the one who stood humbly and subserviently in prayer before his Lord and whispered supplications to Him? Is the person who has such features God?”[8](#)

Nowadays that the adversaries are harder than ever seeking pretexts to assault on the school of Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.), it is incumbent upon any Shi‘a, in particular, the notable scholars – may the Exalted Allah be pleased with them – to stand up against the extremist and exaggerating proclaims, especially the unrighteous poems, and defend the Ahl al-Bayt’s (a.s.) sanctuary.

Similarly, the committed poets and eulogists are to stay away from the zealots and the deviants, and the people should watchfully warn such individuals.

2. Imam al-Ridha’s (a.s.) Struggles against Sufis

One of the sects created by a man named Abu Hashim Kufi in Islamic community in the first/seventh century was Sufism, which, under the cover of asceticism and renouncing the world, created innovations in religion and had specific beliefs and practices.

From the very beginning they deviated from the school of the Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.); and the Imams (a.s.) strongly fought against them and warned their followers of approaching them.

Similarly, Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) cautioned the Shi'as against the dangers of this group and said, "No one will believe in Sufism except for deceiving or misleading or out of foolishness; and it is likely that some may have all three."⁹

He also said, "Those to whom Sufis are mentioned and do not deny them by their tongues or in their hearts, are not from us; and those who deny them are like the ones who fought against the infidels in the company of the Apostle of Allah (S)."¹⁰

There are plenty of traditions from the Holy Prophet (S) and the purified Imams (a.s.) condemning this deviated group. Since the time of the Infallible Imams (a.s.), the Imami Shi'as have always been unanimous¹¹ about the invalidity of Sufism and have written many refutations against them.

Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) called Sufis as enemies of Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.) and regarded those inclined toward them as to be resurrected with them and said, "Soon a group of people who claim to love us will incline toward the Sufis, assimilate to them, name themselves after them, and justify their sayings; whoever is inclined towards them is not from us and I am averse to them."¹²

Unfortunately, misusing the spiritual circumstances of the society and due to the negligence of some of the cultural officials and the silence of some scholars after the magnificent Islamic revolution of Iran, this misguided sect has expanded its activities.

It is the duty of people from all walks of life, especially the leaders of the society and the notable scholars, to prevent this great deviation and innovation and fulfill their responsibilities in protecting the spiritual boundaries of religion and people's beliefs and beware of propagation of their leaders, books, and words, because in the country which belongs to the Lord of Time (may Allah *subhanahu wa ta'ala* hasten his noble reappearance) and using his holiness' assets and properties to propagate for his adversaries would lead to deprivation from Divine bounties and the Imam's favors.

3. Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) and the Importance of Imam from the Viewpoint of Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.)

Among Imam al-Ridha's (a.s.) significant cultural measures is the promulgation of Shi'i beliefs in relation to Imam and Imamate, since many of adversaries have such superficial opinions about Imamate that they reduce the status of the Imam to a level even lower than the ordinary people and consider no sin to be an obstacle to Imamate or obeying the Imam.

Thus, his holiness, Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) made an endeavor to promote the Ahl al-Bayt's (a.s.) opinion in this respect. Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) was occasionally asked about the necessity of the presence of an Imam on earth, to which he would answer: "The earth would not be devoid of an Imam; otherwise it would devour its inhabitants." He would also say: "If the earth is devoid of a *Hujja* (Allah's authority) for even a blink of an eye, it will devour its inhabitants."¹³

As for the signs of the Imam, his holiness said, “The Imam has signs; that he is the wisest of people, the best judge, and the most pious, the most patient, the bravest, the most generous, and the most devoted of people; he is born circumcised.

He is pure and clean; he sees his back as he sees in front of him. He is more deserving to people than themselves. He is more compassionate to people than their parents are. He is the humblest of all people to the Almighty and Glorious God and the most industrious of all in Divine command (*amr*) and prohibition (*nahy*); his prayers are answered so much as if he prays that a rock be cleft in two, it would.” [14](#)

In another *hadith*, he said, “The Imam is certified by the Holy Spirit; there is a column of light between him and Allah through which he sees people’s actions. He is informed about what he wishes by it; sometimes that light shines on and he knows (what he must know); and sometimes it is taken away and thus he does not know... [15](#)

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) said, “We are Divine Proof on earth and His vicegerent among His servants and trustees of His Mystery; we are words of piety and the strongest and most dependable; we are Allah’s witnesses and His standards among His creatures. It is because of us that Allah prevents the heaven and earth from falling apart; it is because of us (or by us) that He sends down rain and spreads out His Mercy. The earth shall never be devoid of one of us, either to be apparent or concealed; if it is devoid of Divine Proof even for one day, it will shake and agitate its inhabitants in such a way that the sea shakes its content.” [16](#)

Most important of all is the detailed statements that Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) expressed in Marv Grand Mosque on the early days he arrived there – when he heard about the people’s disagreement about Imamate. His holiness smiled and said,

“O ‘Abd al-‘Aziz! These people are ignorant and have been deceived regarding their religion.” Then, stating that the Religion [of Islam] is perfect, since the Prophet (S) appointed ‘Ali as the standard-bearer of guidance and the Religion was perfected, he went on to say: “Do they know the value and status of Imamate among the *umma* so that their choosing an Imam be acceptable? The status of Imamate is too superior, its dignity too great, its position too sublime, its access too difficult, and its depth too profound for the people to perceive it with their intellects and views or fathom it with their opinions or elect an Imam.”

“Verily, Imamate is the rank of the Prophets and legacy of the spiritual heirs; Imamate is the position of vicegerency of God and vicegerency of the Prophet (S).

It is the position of Commander of the Faithful and inheritance of al-Hasan (a.s.) and al-Husayn (a.s.); it is the organizer of the Muslims’ affairs, the good of this world, and honor of the believers.

Imamate is the firm foundation for the dynamic Islam... Imam is like a radiant sun with whose light the

world is illumined, while he is in the horizon out of the reach of the hands and the eyes...”

“Imam is like a trustworthy companion, fostering brother, caring father, and a shelter for people in their hardship. Imam is the trustee of God among people, His proof for His servants and His vicegerent in His lands. He is the caller to God and the protector of Divine Sanctuary.”

“Imam is purified from sins and free from defects; he is given exclusive knowledge and is characterized with forbearance; he is the order of the faith, stronghold for the Muslims, cause of wrath to the hypocrites, and the perdition of the infidels.”

“Imam is the unsurpassed one in his own time; no learned one is equal to him, and he has no substitute or match or similar... How is it possible then for anybody to know the Imam and elect him? Far from it! Far from it! Intellects are too feeble, thoughts are too astray, wits are too puzzled, the eyes are too blurry, the great are too small, the wise are too dazed, the speakers are too mute, the thinkers are too ignorant, poets are too desperate, the authors are too weak, and the eloquent one are too wordless to describe a single feature of the Imam’s dignity or a single excellence of his excellences.”^{[17](#)}

4. Imam al-Ridha and Commander of the Faithful (a.s.)

The plethora of Imam al-Ridha’s (a.s.) traditions indicate that in many instances his holiness has tried to introduce Commander of the Faithful (a.s.) and his excellences to people; some of these traditions are mentioned in the following:

Forty Traditions Related from Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) on the Virtues of Commander of the Faithful (a.s.)

1. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: “O ‘Ali! Indeed you are the one who divides the Heaven and Hell; and indeed you are the one who will knock at the Gates of Paradise and enter it without any reckoning.”^{[18](#)}

2. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: “The similitude of the members of my Ahl al-Bayt among you is like that of Noah’s Ark; whoever boarded it, was saved, and whoever strayed away from it, was thrown into the Fire.”^{[19](#)}

3. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: “God’s wrath and that of His Prophet (S) encompasses whoever sheds my (offspring’s) blood and bothers the members of my Household.”^{[20](#)}

4. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: “It seems that I have been called in and I have accepted the call; I will depart this life, but I will leave two weighty things with you, one of which is greater than the other one; God’s Book that is a rope extended down from the heavens onto the earth. The other is my *‘itrat* that is the members of my household. Therefore, watch and see how you treat these two after me.”^{[21](#)}

5. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: "Al-Hasan and Al-Husayn are the two lords of the youth of the inmates of Paradise, and their father is even better than they are."[22](#)
6. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: "Woe be to those who oppress my Ahl-al-Bayt! It is as if I see their rank to be the same as the hypocrites in the lowest depths of the Fire."[23](#)
7. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: "Whoever I am the master of, 'Ali is the master of. O God! Like whoever likes 'Ali and be the enemy of whoever is 'Ali's enemy. Help whoever helps him and belittle whoever belittles him."[24](#)
8. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: "O 'Ali! Indeed the Exalted Allah has forgiven you, your household, your followers and those who like your followers."[25](#)
9. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: "O 'Ali! If you were not there, the believers after me would not be recognized."[26](#)
10. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: "O 'Ali! You have been granted three things, which no one has ever been granted before." 'Ali (a.s.) said, "May my father and mother be your ransom! What have I been granted?" the Prophet (S) said, "You have been granted a father-in-law like me, a wife like your wife, and sons like al-Hasan and al-Husayn."[27](#)
11. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: "The followers of 'Ali are the triumphant on the Resurrection Day."[28](#)
12. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: "Whoever wishes to be delighted by looking at and grab the stem of the red hyacinth ruby that God has planted Himself, should wholeheartedly love (seek as guardians) 'Ali and the Imams from among his progeny, as they are the ones chosen by the Almighty and Glorious Allah; they are purified of all sins and faults."[29](#)
13. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: "Whoever dies without following an Imam from among my progeny is regarded as one of those who died during the Age of Ignorance (*jahiliyya*); his deeds are not accepted whether he has performed them during the *jahiliyya* or after the advent of Islam."[30](#)
14. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: "Whoever likes to grab the strongest and the most dependable support should resort to loving 'Ali (a.s.) and the members of my household."[31](#)
15. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: "On the Resurrection Day, this man – namely 'Ali – and I will be like these two fingers (he brought together his two fingers) and our followers will be with us; and anyone who helps any oppressed one from our family will be there with us."[32](#)
16. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: "The Imams are from among the progeny of Husayn (a.s.). Whoever obeys them it is as if they have obeyed the Almighty and Exalted Allah. They are the strongest and the most dependable support and they are the means towards Allah."[33](#)

17. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: "I and 'Ali are made from the same light."[34](#)
18. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: "O 'Ali! You are the best of men; no one but the disbeliever would have doubt about it."[35](#)
19. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: "The Almighty Allah will resurrect among the secure ones anyone who loves us (the Ahl al-bayt)."[36](#)
20. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: "You ('Ali) are from me and I am from you."[37](#)
21. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: "O 'Ali! You will relieve me of my obligations; and you are my successor over my nation [after me]."[38](#)
22. He related that the Apostle of Allah (S), while holding 'Ali's (a.s.) hand in his, said, "Whoever claims to love me but does not love 'Ali, is a liar."[39](#)
23. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: "Only those from among the Helpers (*Ansar*) with a Jewish descent will despise you."[40](#)
24. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: "The first thing that a servant will be questioned about is the love of us, the Ahl al-Bayt."[41](#)
25. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: "Only believers love 'Ali and only disbelievers despise him."[42](#)
26. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: "Those who love you love me, and those who despise you despise me."[43](#)
27. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: "I am the city of knowledge and 'Ali is its gate."[44](#)
28. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: "Shut all the doors from the mosque to the homes (leading people from their houses to the mosque) except for the one to 'Ali's (a.s.) home."[45](#)
29. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying to 'Ali (a.s.): "When I die, the enmities hidden in the hearts of some people will show up and they will unite against you and prevent you from getting what is rightfully yours."[46](#)
30. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: "'Ali's (a.s.) hand is (like) my hand."[47](#) (i.e. whoever pledges allegiance to ﷺ Ali is the same as one who pledges allegiance to me.)
31. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: "Soon my *umma* will treat you with treachery and the good and the bad will all follow this (treachery)."[48](#)
32. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: "Whoever swears allegiance to 'Ali has indeed sworn

allegiance to me, and whoever swears allegiance to me has indeed sworn allegiance to Allah.[49](#)

33. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: “The center of Paradise is for me and my Ahl al-Bayt.”[50](#)

34. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: “I am the treasure of knowledge and ‘Ali is the Key; whoever wants the treasure should go to its key.”[51](#)

35. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: “O ‘Ali! I asked Allah for you whatever I asked Him for myself, except for Prophet hood, since there will be no Prophet after me; I am the seal of the Prophets and you are the seal of the trustees.”[52](#)

36. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: “O ‘Ali! People have been created from different trees; I am the root and you are the trunk; al-Hasan and al-Husayn are its branches; the Shi‘as are the leaves; Allah will take to Paradise whoever holds onto any of the branches.”[53](#)

37. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as addressing ‘Ali: “Paradise is eager to see you, and eager to see ‘Ammar, Salman, Abu Dharr, and Miqdad.”[54](#)

38. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying to ‘Ali (a.s.): “Your similitude is like that of Jesus (a.s.); the Christians loved him so much as they became disbelievers and the Jews disliked him so much as they became disbelievers.”[55](#)

39. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: “Al-Hasan and al-Husayn are the best people on the earth after me and their father; their mother is the best of the women on the earth.”[56](#)

40. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: “O ‘Ali! You and your two sons are the best of the chosen creatures of Allah.”[57](#)

5. Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) and Her Holiness Fatima (a.s.)

It is understood from various traditions that Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) has taken upon himself to recount the virtues and excellences of his grandmother to people. Some of the related traditions are as follows.

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: “On the Day of Resurrection, my daughter, Fatima, shall be raised in such a way that she will carry clothes smeared in blood and she will be clinging onto one of the pillars of the Throne and say: “O Allah Dispenser of Justice! Judge between me and the murderer of my son.”

The Apostle of Allah added: “By the Lord of Ka‘ba, Allah will judge in favor of my daughter. The Almighty and Glorious God gets angry whenever Fatima gets angry and is pleased whenever Fatima is pleased.”[58](#)

In another tradition, Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) quoted the Apostle of Allah as saying: "An angel came to me and said, O Muhammad! God sends you greetings and tells you, 'I have married off Fatima to 'Ali and ordered the *Tuba* tree to bear pearls, rubies and corals. Indeed, all the residents of the Heaven are happy on this occasion; soon, they will have two sons who will be masters of the youth of Paradise and the people of Paradise will be adorned by them. O Muhammad! You are the best of the first and the last."[59](#)

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: "When the Resurrection Day comes, the harbinger will call out: O groups of people! Close your eyes so that Fatima, the daughter of Muhammad (S) may pass by."[60](#)

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: "I did not marry off my daughter Fatima (to 'Ali) except by Allah's commanding me to marry her off."[61](#)

Also, he quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: "Verily Fatima was chaste; therefore, Allah spared her progeny from Fire."[62](#)

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) quoted Imam 'Ali (a.s.) as saying: "The Prophet (S) told me: O 'Ali! Some of the men from Quraysh blamed me regarding Fatima and said that they asked me to marry her off to them, but I refused them and married her off to 'Ali.

I told them: By God, I was not the one who refused you; it was the Exalted Allah who refused you and married her off to 'Ali. Gabriel descended upon me and said, O Muhammad! The Exalted and Almighty Allah says: Had I not created 'Ali, there would have been no equal to your daughter Fatima on the face of the earth from the time Adam onwards."[63](#)

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: "I named my daughter Fatima because the Almighty and glorious Allah has weaned (separated) her and those who love her from the Fire."[64](#)

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: "The Exalted Allah is angered when Fatima is angered and pleased when Fatima is pleased."[65](#)

6. Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) and Imam al-Husayn (a.s.)

Many traditions have been related from Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) concerning Sayyid al-Shuhada, Imam al-Husayn (a.s.) denoting his holiness' special favor with his ancestor, especially regarding visitation of his shrine (*ziyara*) and weeping for him."

Sometimes he quoted the Apostle of Allah as saying: "The murderer of al-Husayn b. 'Ali is in a coffin of fire and on him is half of the torment of the people of the world."[66](#) He also quoted the Prophet (S) as saying: "The most evil one of the *umma* will kill al-Husayn..."[67](#)

Imam al-Ridha said, "When they took the decapitated head of al-Husayn b. 'Ali to Sham, Yazid (God's curse on him) ordered that a tablecloth be laid down. Then, he and his companions started to eat and drink beer; when they finished eating and drinking, he ordered the head to be put in a tub in front of his throne and the chess board to be placed over the tub.

Yazid (God's curse on him) started to play chess with his companions while swearing at al-Husayn, his father (a.s.), his grandfather (S) and making fun of them. Whenever he won the game, he would drink three gulps of beer, and poured the leftover on the ground next to the tub.

Whoever is our Shi'a is to abstain from drinking beer and playing chess; and the Almighty and Glorious Allah will wipe out the sins of whoever sees beer and a chess board and remembers al-Husayn (a.s.) and curses Yazid and Al Ziyad, even if his sins be as many as the number of the stars.⁶⁸

In another *hadith*, 'Abd al-Salam b. Salih asked Imam al-Ridha (a.s.): "What is your opinion about the tradition related on the authority of Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) saying: 'When the Qa'im (a.s.) rises up, he will kill the offspring of the murderers of Imam al-Husayn (a.s.).'"

The Imam (a.s.) answered: 'That is right.' Then he asked: 'Then what is the meaning of the following words of God Almighty?

No bearer shall bear another's burden. Qur'an: 35/18.

His holiness said, 'God is true in all that He says. However, the offspring of the murderers of Imam al-Husayn (a.s.) will be pleased with the deeds of their forefathers, and will even be proud of it.

Whoever is pleased with something is like the one who has actually performed it. If someone gets killed in the East and someone else in the West is pleased that he was killed, then he will be considered to be a partner in that crime in the sight of the Almighty and Glorious God'.⁶⁹

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) and the Visitation (Ziyara) of Imam al-Husayn (a.s.)

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) had specially favored calling people to visit [the tomb of] *Sayyid al-Shuhada* (a.s.) and to weep over his martyrdom. Following are some examples in this respect.

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) quoted Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) as saying: "The time that al-Husayn's (a.s.) pilgrims spend on *ziyara* is not reckoned as part of their life."⁷⁰

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) said, "Whoever visits (makes a pilgrimage to) Husayn b. 'Ali (a.s.) while recognizing his rightfulness, is among those in companionship with Allah over His Throne." Then he recited the following verse:

Indeed the God wary will be amid gardens and streams, in the abode of truthfulness with an omnipotent King. (Q. 54: 54, 55)"⁷¹

Sometimes he would say: “Whoever visits (makes a pilgrimage to) Abi ‘Abd Allah’s tomb near Euphrates is like the one who has visited God on His Throne.”⁷²

He would also sometimes say: “Whoever visits (goes on pilgrimage to) Abi ‘Abd Allah’s tomb [is as] they have performed Hajj and ‘Umra.” The narrator asked him: “Will they be exempt from the obligatory Hajj?”

The Imam (a.s.) said, “No. *Ziyara* of Imam al-Husayn is the Hajj of the weak until they can afford to go on the Hajj pilgrimage to the Holy House of God. Don’t you know that everyday seven thousand angels circumambulate the House of God and when the night falls they go away and another group comes down to circumambulate the House until morning?

Verily the tomb of al-Husayn (a.s.) is more honorable in the sight of Allah than the House of God; at any prayer time seven thousand angels, with disheveled and dusty hair, descend on him so much as they have no other turn (to come down again) until the Day of Resurrection!”⁷³

He also said, “Whoever is by the tomb of al-Husayn (a.s.) on the day of ‘*Arafa*, Allah would return him with a delighted heart.”⁷⁴

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) and the Soil of Sayyid al-Shuhada’s (a.s.) Grave

A man said, “Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) sent me a bundle of clothes from Khurasan; there was some soil in it. I asked the holy Imam’s emissary: What is this? He said, It is the soil of al-Husayn’s (a.s.) grave. Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) never sends clothes or things [to someone] unless he puts in it some of this soil and says: This soil is for safety, with the consent of Allah.”⁷⁵

In another tradition, when someone got some red-colored soil from the upper part of the Sayyid al-Shuhada’s (a.s.) grave and took it to Imam al-Ridha (a.s.), his holiness placed it on the palm of his hand, smelled it, and then cried so much as his tears rolled down his cheeks and said, “This is the soil of my forefather.”⁷⁶

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) and the Importance of Mourning for Sayyid al-Shuhada (a.s.)

Hasan b. Fadhdhal said, His holiness Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) said, “Whoever remembers our woes and afflictions and weeps over what has befallen us, will be in the same rank with us on the Day of Resurrection. And whoever reminds others of our afflictions and weeps and make them weep, will not be tearful on the day [when other] eyes pour tears; and whoever sits in a session in which our instructions are revived, their hearts will not die on the day when hearts die.”⁷⁷

Pouring Tears for Sayyid al-Shuhada’s (a.s.) Afflictions

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) said, “Muharram is a month in which the people of *jahiliyya* regarded warfare as

unlawful, (but) our blood was considered lawful in it, we were desecrated, our children and women were taken captive, our tents were set on fire, our properties were plundered, and our relation to the Apostle of Allah was disrespected.

Verily al-Husayn's day (of affliction and murder) made our eyelids sore (through bitterly weeping), let our tears pour, degraded our dear one in the land of sorrow and tribulation, bequeathing pain and suffering to us until the Resurrection Day.

The weepers ought to weep over such a one as al-Husayn (a.s.); verily weeping for him removes great sins."

When Muharram would start, no one would see the Imam laugh as he was overwhelmed with sorrow so long as ten days passed. On the tenth day, it was his day of wailing and weeping. He would say: "Today is the day al-Husayn, peace and blessing of Allah upon him, was murdered."[78](#)

Weeping for Imam al-Husayn (a.s.)

Rayyan b. Shabib said, "I went to see Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) on the first day of Muharram; he said, 'O son of Shabib! Are you fasting?' I said I was not. He said, 'Today is the day on which Zechariah prayed.'

Then, he said, 'O son of Shabib! Muharram is the month in which the people of *Jahilliya* would regard warfare and oppression as unlawful out of respect for this month; but this *umma* had neither respect for this month nor any reverence for their Prophet.

In this time, they killed the Prophet's grandson, took women captive, and plundered properties; may Allah not forgive them!"

"O son of Shabib! If you ever cry for any reason, cry for al-Husayn b. 'Ali b. Abi Talib, whom they beheaded like a ram; with him eighteen men from his household were killed who were matchless on the face of the earth.

Heavens and the earth cried for his being killed; four thousand angels descended for helping him and since they found him dead, they would remain beside his grave, disheveled and soiled, until Resurrection as his companions and their motto would be: "O Avengers of al-Husayn!"

"O son of Shabib! If it makes you happy to meet Allah without (having committed any) sins, make a visitation (*ziyara*) to al-Husayn (a.s.). O son of Shabib! If it makes you happy to settle in lofty abodes with the Prophet (S) in Paradise, curse the murderers of al-Husayn."

"O son of Shabib! If it makes you happy to have the reward of the one who was killed along with al-Husayn, whenever you remember him say: 'I wish I were with him and attained great salvation.'"

"O son of Shabib! If it makes you happy to be with us in the high ranks of Paradise, be sad in our

sadness and happy in our happiness and take it upon yourself our *wilaya* (friendship), since if someone loves a stone (or takes it as their friend), Allah would muster them along with that stone on the Resurrection Day.”⁷⁹

- ¹. Tusi, Amali, see Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 25, p. 265.
- ². ﴿It does not behoove any human that Allah should give him the Book, judgment and prophethood, and then he should say to the people, "Be my servants instead of Allah." Rather [he would say], "Be a godly people, because of your teaching the Book and because of your studying it. And he would not command you to take the angels and the prophets for lords. Would he call you to unfaith after you have been Muslims?﴾ Qurʾān 3/79–80
- ³. ‘Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (a.s.), vol. 2, p. 201; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 25, p. 134.
- ⁴. ‘Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (a.s.), vol. 2, p. 203.
- ⁵. Ibid.
- ⁶. See the above narrations in: Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 25, chapter on rejection of zealotry.
- ⁷. Kashshi, Rijal, p. 233 – see: Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 25, p. 264. This hadith is also a warning to those who claim intuition and their followers, because even if they truly hear a voice, it is not clear whether it is Divine voice or the Satan’s, since Satan is in ambush for such people and such states.
- ⁸. Kashshi, Rijal, p. 193; Tabarsi, Ihtijaj, p. 242; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 25, p. 275.
- ⁹. Al-Shaykh al-Mufid, with sound sanad in Al-Radd ‘Ala Ashab al-Hallaj – see: Al-Ithna ‘Ashariyya, p. 31.
- ¹⁰. Al-Ithna ‘Ashariyya, p. 32.
- ¹¹. Al-Ithna ‘Ashariyya, p. 44.
- ¹². Ibid, p. 32
- ¹³. ‘Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (a.s.), vol. 1, p. 212.
- ¹⁴. Ibid, vol. p. 169.
- ¹⁵. Ibid. This hadith and others like this imply that, unlike some people’s illusion, the Imam’s (a.s.) knowledge is neither innate nor unlimited; rather, it is subject to Divine providence.
- ¹⁶. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 23, p. 35 from Kamal al-Din. What is related in this noble hadith and various other ahadith in this content indicates the deep influence of Imam in the formation of the universe and that the benefits of the Imam’s presence are not limited to legislative guidance; for this same reason we can figure out the great benefit of the existence of his holiness Hadhrat Hujjat, Imam Mahdi (May Almighty Allah Hasten His Reappearance) during the Occultation.
- ¹⁷. ‘Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (a.s.), vol. 1, p. 171.
- ¹⁸. ‘Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (a.s.), vol. 2, p. 26, h. 9.
- ¹⁹. Ibid, h. 10.
- ²⁰. Ibid, h. 11.
- ²¹. Ibid, p. 30, h. 40.
- ²². Ibid, p. 32, h. 56.
- ²³. Ibid, p. 46, h. 177.
- ²⁴. Ibid, p. 47, h. 183.
- ²⁵. Ibid, p. 47, h. 182.
- ²⁶. Ibid, p 48, h. 187.
- ²⁷. Ibid, p. 48, h. 188.
- ²⁸. Ibid, p. 52, h. 201.
- ²⁹. Ibid, p. 57, h. 211.
- ³⁰. Ibid, p. 58, h. 214.
- ³¹. Ibid, p. 58, h. 216.
- ³². Ibid, p. 58, h. 215.
- ³³. Ibid, p. 58, h. 217.
- ³⁴. Ibid, p. 58, h. 219.
- ³⁵. Ibid, h. 225.

- [36.](#) Ibid, h. 220.
- [37.](#) Ibid, h. 231.
- [38.](#) Ibid, p. 60 h. 229.
- [39.](#) Ibid, p. 60 h. 231.
- [40.](#) Ibid, h. 234.
- [41.](#) Ibid, p. 62 h. 258.
- [42.](#) Ibid, p. 63 h. 266.
- [43.](#) Ibid, p. 63 h. 265.
- [44.](#) Ibid, p. 66 h. 298.
- [45.](#) Ibid, h. 302.
- [46.](#) Ibid, h. 303.
- [47.](#) Ibid, h. 304.
- [48.](#) Ibid, h. 307.
- [49.](#) Ibid, h. 308.
- [50.](#) Ibid, h. 314.
- [51.](#) Ibid, p. 73, h. 341.
- [52.](#) Ibid, p. 72, h. 337.
- [53.](#) Ibid, p. 72, h. 340.
- [54.](#) Ibid, p. 66, h. 306.
- [55.](#) Ibid, p. 63, h. 263.
- [56.](#) Ibid, p. 62, h. 252.
- [57.](#) Ibid, p. 59, h. 218.
- [58.](#) 'Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (a.s.), vol. 2, p. 25.
- [59.](#) Ibid, p. 26.
- [60.](#) Ibid, p. 31, h. 55.
- [61.](#) Ibid, p. 59, h. 264.
- [62.](#) Ibid, p. 59, h. 264.
- [63.](#) Ibid, vol. 1, p. 177, h. 3.
- [64.](#) Ibid, vol. 2, p. 46, h. 178.
- [65.](#) Ibid, h. 176.
- [66.](#) Ibid, p. 21, h. 50.
- [67.](#) Ibid, p. 64, h. 277.
- [68.](#) Ibid, p. 21, h. 50.
- [69.](#) 'Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (a.s.), vol. 1, p. 212, h. 5.
- [70.](#) Kamil al-Ziyarat.
- [71.](#) Ibid, Chapter 54, h. 6.
- [72.](#) Ibid, Chapter 59, h. 2.
- [73.](#) Ibid, Chapter 65, h. 6.
- [74.](#) Ibid, Chapter 70, h. 2.
- [75.](#) Ibid, Chapter 92, h. 1.
- [76.](#) Ibid, Chapter 93, h. 11.
- [77.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 44, p. 278 (from Saduq's Amali and 'Uyun al-Akhbar).
- [78.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 44, p. 283 from Saduq's Amali, session 27.
- [79.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 44, p. 286 from Saduq's Amali and 'Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (a.s.).

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