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Kind of lifestyle and characteristics expected from an Imam

Suppose one might say that I do not believe in the traditions found in the books of Ithna Ashari Shias nor the books of Ahle Sunna. Then in this scenario, what should be the criteria for a good role model as a leader? What characteristics should a good leader have? We follow the Imams so that they lead us towards the right path, the path of the Holy Prophet (sawa). Therefore, these Imams should have some impeccable qualities in order to be the successors of the Holy Prophet (sawa).

We have already discussed the lifestyles of some of the Ismaili/Fatimid Imams. Now I would like to shed some light on two of the Ithna Ashari Imams after Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (as) after which the split of sects took place, so the reader could compare on the huge difference between the personalities which each of the sects took as their leaders.

[Imam Musa al-Kadhim ibn Jafar \(as\) Martyred 183 AH/799 AD.](#)

Imam Musa al-Kadhim was the son of Imam al-Sadiq (as) and was born in Abwaa on the 7th of Safar 128 AH/745 AD. Imam al-Sadiq (as) and his honorable wife were returning from Hajj and on their way back Imam Musa al-Kadhim was born in Abwaa, a city located in between Mecca and Medina. He was named Musa and al-Kadhim is the title given to him that means the one who swallows anger, his other titles include: Abd-e-Salih, Ameen, and Babul Hawaij. The title Babul Hawaij was given to him because of all the miraculous healings and extraordinary events that have been witnessed in his shrine in Baghdad for centuries. There are books written on this subject that narrate the eyewitness accounts of the miraculous healings that took place in his shrine. One of the Imams of Ahle Sunna, Imam al-Shafi' said, 'the tomb of Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as) is proven effective for fulfilling wishes.'¹ Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as) is also known by Kunyas (nicknames) like: Abul Hasan Awwal, Abul Hasan Madhi, and Abu Ibrahim.

His life in a nutshell

Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as) was born in 128 AH during the reign of Marwan Himar. After three years, his dynastic rule came to an end and the first ruler of Bani Abbas ascended to the throne. He ruled from 132 to 136 AH, when Mansur Dawaniqi succeeded him, who got Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (as) assassinated through poison in 148 AH and the Imamate of Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as) began from the age of twenty years. In the year 158 AH Mansur was succeeded by Mahdi Abbasi, who ruled for ten years and in 169 AH he was succeeded by Hadi, who could not remain in power for more than a year. In 170 AH Harun came to the throne who had Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as) assassinated through poison in 183 AH. At that time, the age of the Imam was fifty-five years, of which twenty years passed under the care of his father and then he held the position of Imamate for a period of thirty-five years.

The childhood of Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as)

Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as) since his childhood had all the traits of being the successor of Imam al-Sadiq (as) as he had many extraordinary traits, to list a few:

When Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as) was only 5 years old, Abu Hanifa came to visit Imam al-Sadiq (as), and he saw Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as), so he narrates:

I, Abu Hanifa, asked him (Imam al-Kadhim), about the source of the acts of disobedience to Allah, he (as) answered: the source of any sin is unquestionably one of the three: either Allah makes man do them, or Allah and the servant are both responsible, or the servant alone is responsible. If Allah is the source of sins (which certainly He is not) then it is improper for Him to punish the servants for that which they did not commit. If Allah and the servants are together responsible for the sins (this cannot be true either) then it is improper for the stronger partner to wrong the weak partner. And if the servant is responsible for his sins (and this is true), then the Lord may pardon him or punish him for the commitment of such a sin. After I had heard so, I left before I could meet Abu-Abdillah (Imam al-Sadiq) since those words were sufficient for me.²

It is interesting to note that the fact that this belief in predestination is something the tyrant rulers made up, they wanted to justify their crimes by means of this belief; their goal was that the people should consider them as being given power through destiny and that people should not question their authority.

In another incident, Abu Hanifa once came to see Imam al-Sadiq (as) and when he saw the young boy (Imam al-Kadhim), he asked a question to him (as). He asked: If a person visits your town then where should he go to answer the call of nature? Imam al-Kadhim (as) replied: He should take the support of the rear walls, keep away from the view of neighbors, remain aloof from river banks, avoid the shade of the fruit bearing trees, stay away from the courtyards and streets, leave the mosques, refrain from facing Ka'aba or keeping his back to it, he should take care of his garments, and sit down wherever he likes. Abu Hanifa asked the boy, 'What is your name?' The little boy replied, 'I am Musa Ibn Jafar ibn

Muhammad.’ Abu Hanifa was astounded by this reply coming from a young boy, so his companion Abdullah Ibn Muslim said, ‘Did I not tell you that even the children from the family of prophet are different from ordinary children?’ [3](#)

The designation (Nass)

There are many ahadith in the books of Ithna Ashari Shias where Imam al-Sadiq (as) had specifically announced the Imamate of Imam Musa al-Kadhim after him, in front of his companions. I would like to list a few:

☞ Mufaddal Ibn Umar Jofi (known for his reliability) narrates: He asked Imam al-Sadiq (as) about the Imam after him, Imam (as) replied: My son Musa.[4](#)

☞ Yazid Ibn Sulait (known for his piety) narrates: He met Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (as) on the way to Mecca and said: May my parents be sacrificed on you; you are an Imam, but no one is exempt from death; thus if something happens to you, who will be the Imam? Imam (as) gestured to his son, Musa, and said: He is having all the good qualities like knowledge, wisdom, understanding, generosity, cognition of Islamic law, good nature, good behavior to relatives. He is a door of mercy and is having another excellence in addition to these. The narrator asked: What is it? He replied: Allah will create from his progeny one who will be the helper and refuge of this Ummah; who would be the standard of its guidance and effulgence personified. Through him, Almighty Allah would protect lives, solve disputes and remove disunity; He would provide garments to the unclothed and feed the hungry. The fearful would get reassurance; the rain of mercy will descend. He would be the best of the sons and the most excellent elder; his statement would be the deciding statement and his silence would be the silence of wisdom.[5](#)

☞ Dawood Ibn Kathir narrates, he said to Imam al-Sadiq (as): O’ son of the messenger, before you all have passed away, and if something happens to you, to whom should we refer? He (as) replied, ‘My son Musa’. [6](#)

☞ Faidh Ibn Mukhtar Narrates: He came to Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (as) and began to talk about Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as), who meanwhile returned from home and Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (as) said: Faidh, he is the one about whom you were asking me. Get up and accept his rightfulness for Imamate. Faidh kissed the hand and forehead of the Imam and then asked: Moula, can this information be given to others? He replied: Indeed, inform your family members and friends; but this information should not become public as times are very dangerous and the contemporary regime is always in pursuit of divine proof.[7](#)

☞ Isa Alawi narrates: He went to meet Imam al-Sadiq (as) and said: If, God forbid something happens to you who would be the Imam after you? Imam (as) replied: My son, Musa...[8](#)

☞ Maad Ibn Kathir narrates: He came to Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (as) and said: I pray to the Almighty that like He has given you this position in place of your father, He should create such a worthy person in your

progeny as well. Imam (as) replied: Allah has already created him and saying this he gestured to his son, Musa, who was asleep at that moment.[9](#)

☞ Mansur Ibne Hazim narrates: He came to the Imam and said: No one can be said to live forever; in case something happens to you, who would be the Imam after you? Imam (as) replied: This son of mine, Musa. (He was aged only 5 years at that time).[10](#)

☞ Sulaiman Ibne Khalid narrates: He was seated in the gathering with Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (as) along with others when Imam Musa (as) arrived. Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (as) said: He would be your Imam and Wali after me.[11](#)

☞ Ishaq Ibne Jafar narrates: He says: I was there with my father when Imran Ibne Ali asked Imam al-Sadiq (as): Who would be the Imam after you? He said: The first to enter this room. Just then Imam Musa (as) entered the gathering and he was only a few years old.[12](#)

☞ Ali Ibn Jafar narrates: He says: My father (Imam al-Sadiq) said to a group of his companions: Behave nicely with my son, Musa as he is the best in the world and after me, he would be my successor.[13](#)

☞ Zurarah Ibne Ayyin narrates: He says: I was present with Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (as) and Imam Musa Ibne Jafar (as) was also present. Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (as) said: Call Humran, Abu Basir and Dawood Raqqi from my companions. I brought all of them and by chance Mufaddal Ibne Umar and other companions also arrived. Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (as) removed the sheet from the face of Ismail and asked: Dawood, is he dead or alive? He said: He has passed away. The Imam made everyone witness this and after that began the funeral rites. After that, Imam (as) again showed his face to all those who were present; that he is Ismail who has already passed away. After that, he ordered him to be buried; when the body was lowered into the grave, the Imam displayed his face to everyone again and asked: Who is the one that is being buried? All said: It is Ismail. Imam (as) held the hand of his son, Musa and said: This is the rightful Imam and truth is with him and would continue in his generations.[14](#)

☞ [Musa al-Sayqal reported on the authority of al-Mufaddal b. Umar al-Jufi, may God have mercy on him, who said:] I (i.e. al-Mufaddal b. Umar al-Jufi) was with Abu Abd Allah (Imam Sadiq), peace be on him. Abu Ibrahim (Imam al-Kadhim), peace be on him, came in. He was still a boy. Abu Abd Allah, peace be on him, said to him: "Indicate to those of your Companions whom you trust that the position of authority belongs to him, Musa."[15](#)

☞ [Abu Ali al-Arrajani reported on the authority of Abd al-Rahman b. al-Hajjaj, who said:] I (i.e. Abd al-Rahman b. al-Hajjaj) visited Jafar b. Muhammad, peace be on them, in his house. He was in such-and-such a room in his house which he used as a prayer-room. He was praying there. On his right hand was Musa b. Jafar, peace be on them, following his prayer."May God make me your ransom," I said, "you know how I have dedicated my life to you and (you know of) my service to you. Who is the master of the affair (wali al-amr) after you?" He said: "Abd al-Rahman, Musa has put on the armor and it fitted him." "After that, I have no further need of anything," I replied.[16](#)

☞ [Ibn Miskan reported on the authority of Sulayman b. Khalid, who said:] One day Abu Abd Allah Jafar, peace be on him, called for Abu al-Hasan Musa (Imam al-Kadhim) while we were with him. He told us: “It is your duty (to follow) this man after me. By God, he is your leader after me.”[17](#)

☞ [Muhammad b. al-Walid reported: I heard Ali b. Jafar b. Muhammad al-Sadiq, peace be on them, say:] I (i.e. ‘Ali b. Jafar) heard my father, Jafar b. Muhammad, peace be on them, say to a group of his close associates and followers: “Treat my son, Musa, peace be on him, with kindness. He is the most meritorious (afdal) of my children and the one who will succeed after me. He is the one who will undertake (qa’im) my position. He is God’s proof (hujja) to all His creatures after me.” Ali b. Jafar remained firmly loyal to his brother Musa, peace be on him, devoted to him, and enthusiastic in taking the outlines of religion from him. He has a famous (book) Masa’il (questions) in which he relates the answers he heard from (Musa ibn Jafar, peace be upon him).[18](#)

Points to ponder about

☞ There are so many authentic narrators who confirm the fact that Imam al-Sadiq (as) did announce Imam al-Kadhim (as) as his successor.

☞ How come there are no such narrations regarding Ismail or Muhammad ibn Ismail?

What has been said about Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as)

☞ He was the successor and inheritor of Imam Jafar (as) in knowledge and divine cognition and was the greatest worshipper and charitable personality of the world.[19](#)

☞ He was the owner of extreme dignity and majesty and was a respectable personality. He possessed every kind of excellence and was a renowned personality of his time. He spent his nights in prayers and fasts and gave charity during the days.[20](#)

☞ He was a very respected and honorable Imam and a majestic divine proof. He spent the nights awake in prayers and fasted during days.[21](#)

☞ He was the greatest scholar, worshipper and the most charitable person of his time and he possessed a lofty soul.[22](#)

☞ He was the most sincere worshipper and pious man of his time. His excellences and perfections are innumerable.[23](#)

☞ He was the greatest personality of the world from the aspect of knowledge and cognition and became the guardian of the Ummah according to the nomination of his father.[24](#)

Points to ponder about

- ☞ Not only Shias but also scholars of Ahle Sunna had praises for Imam al-Kadhim (as).
- ☞ Are there any such comments found regarding the Ismaili Imams?

Worship of Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as)

- ☞ Like the rest of the infallibles, Imam Musa al-Kadhim also was known for his worship. The total time Imam (as) spent in the prison was about 14 years. He used to thank Allah (swt) for giving him the opportunity to worship in peace in the prison. The regime of that time was bewildered by this attitude of the Imam (as), that even in such hard times he was thankful to Allah (swt), and was engrossed in worship. Such was the state of his worship that after morning prayers, he used to place his head in prostration and he would raise his head only when it was time for noon prayers. So much so that he was called as 'one who performed long prostrations'.[25](#)
- ☞ Harun al-Rashid tried different tactics to get rid of Imam Musa al-Kadhim, but they failed, so he sent a beautiful lady into the cell of the Holy Imam (as) to frame him for unlawful sex. But when the prison wardens surveyed the prison, they found the woman in prostration. She was asked that she had a task to perform, what happened? And she explained, 'when I came here I saw that the Imam was busy in supplicating to the Almighty and the voices of Labbaik (here I am) were coming from the other side; so I realized that there could be no better opportunity of worship; thus now I get pleasure only in prostration'.[26](#)
- ☞ Harun al-Rashid ordered that Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as) be imprisoned in Basra, the governor of Basra at that time was Isa' ibn Jafar ibn al-Mansur then after a year Harun al-Rashid wrote to Isa' ibn Jafar to kill the Imam (as). Isa' ibn Jafar wrote to Harun: 'The affair of Musa ibn Jafar and his stay under my detention has been going on for a long time. I have become well acquainted with his situation. I have set spies on him throughout this period and I have found him doing nothing but worship. I set someone to listen to what he said in his supplications. He has never prayed against you or 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 set him free. I am troubled at detaining him.' It is reported that one of the spies of Isa' ibn Jafar reported to him that frequently he used to hear him (Imam Musa) say in his prayers while he was detained: O' God, You know that I used to ask You to give me free time to worship You. O' God you have done that. To You be praise.' After receiving the message from Isa' ibn Jafar, Harun al-Rashid directed that Imam al-Kadhim (as) should be sent to Baghdad, there he (as) was handed over to al-Fadl ibn al-Rabi'. [27](#)

Points to ponder about

- ☞ The amount of worship the Holy Imam did, even while in prison!

☞ Why were the rulers after the Imams? What were they afraid of?

☞ Altogether 14 years of Imam al-Kadhim's life was spent in prison.

☞ Are any of the Ismaili Imams known for such worship?

Earning the daily bread

The Imams of Ahlul Bayt (as) used to work for a living. For example, Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (as), worked on one of his farms. Abu 'Umar al-Shaybani has related, saying: "I saw Abi 'Abd Allah (Jafar al-Sadiq), peace be on him, carrying a spade in his hand, wearing thick loin cloth and oozing sweat. Thus, I said to him: 'May I be your ransom, let me help you!' He, peace be on him, said: 'I like to see man toiling in the heat of the sun for seeking his livelihood.'" [28](#)

Imam al-Kadhim (as) worked for earning a living too. Al-Hasan b. 'Ali b. Hamza has narrates, saying: "I saw Abi al-Hasan Musa (Imam al-Kadhim, peace be upon him) working on a land of his. His feet were soaked with sweat, so I asked him: 'May I be your ransom, where are the men?' Imam al-Kadhim (as) replied: 'Ali, the one who is better than I and my father worked with his hand? Al-Hasan was dazzled and asked him: Who is he? He (as) replied: Allah's Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family, the Commander of the faithful (Imam Ali), and all my forefathers worked with their hands; work is of the behaviors of the prophets, the apostles, and the righteous." [29](#)

Points to ponder about

☞ The true Imams used to work hard to make their living. They used to even take pride in doing so. Are there any such anecdotes regarding the Ismaili/Fatimid Imams?

Some interesting anecdotes from his life

Anecdote # 1

All of the infallible Imams (as) displayed excellent manners and had impeccable character. Allama Hilli narrates in his book 'Minhajul Karama' that when Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as) was in Baghdad, he passed by a decorated house and the sound of singing and music was heard from within. Just then, a maid came out to throw garbage. Imam al-Kadhim (as) asked the maid: Who is the owner of his house, a slave or a free man? She said: A free man. Imam (as) said: Indeed, if it had been a slave, he would have obeyed his master. Saying this, the Imam moved on. When the slave girl returned inside the house, Bushr the master of the house asked why she took such a long time and she narrated the incident. Bushr was so much affected by these words that he ran out of the house barefooted to meet the Imam, and when he caught up to the Imam, he asked for divine forgiveness for his actions and in memory of this incident he walked barefoot all his life. [30](#) Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as) changed this man with a short statement; these words of the Imam were so effective that this man totally changed. Bushr

Hafi repented after this incident and started practicing piety and became a great saint.

Points to ponder about

- ☞ The goal of the truly divinely appointed Imams was guidance. They were not after the worldly pleasures.
- ☞ The truly divinely appointed Imams used different approaches to guide the people. Imam (as) used such a nice approach to guide Bushr Hafi.
- ☞ Are there any such anecdotes regarding the Ismaili/Fatimid Imams?

Anecdote # 2

Once Harun al-Rashid was visiting the Holy city of Medina and he came to the grave of the Holy Prophet (sawa) and he said, ‘peace be upon you O’ son of my uncle’. The people around Harun were very impressed that Harun was related to the Holy Prophet (sawa). Just then Imam al-Kadhim came to visit the grave of the Holy Prophet (sawa) and he said, ‘peace be on you O’ my father’. Hearing this Harun was annoyed and said, ‘how can you be the son of the Prophet, you are the son of Ali and of Fatima and she was the daughter of the Prophet (sawa)? Imam al-Kadhim (as) recited the ayahs of Suratul An’am 83–85:

وَتِلْكَ حُجَّتُنَا آتَيْنَهَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَلِي قَوْمِهِ ۚ نَرْفَعُ دَرَجَاتٍ مِّنْ نَّشَأِهِ ۚ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ حَكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ ۘ۸۳

That was Our argument which We gave to Abraham (to use) against his people: We raise whom We will, degree after degree: for thy Lord is full of wisdom and knowledge. 31

وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ ۚ كُلًّا بَدِينًا ۚ وَنُوحًا هَدَيْنَا مِن قَبْلُ وَمِن ذُرِّيَّتِهِ دَاوُدَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ وَأَيُّوبَ وَيُوسُفَ وَمُوسَىٰ وَهَارُونَ ۚ وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ ۘ۸۴

We gave him Isaac and Jacob: all (three) We guided: and before him, We guided Noah, and among his progeny, David, Solomon, Job, Joseph, Moses, and Aaron: thus do We reward those who do good. 32

وَزَكَرِيَّا وَيَحْيَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ وَإِيلَىٰ ۚ كُلٌّ مِّنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ۘ۸۵

And Zakariya and John, and Jesus and Elias: all in the ranks of the Righteous: 33

After reciting the ayahs, Imam Kadhim (as) asked Harun, “Who is the father of Jesus (as)?” Imam continued, “Jesus is considered among the Prophet’s offspring through his mother Maryam; likewise, we

are the offspring of the Holy Prophet (sawa) through our mother, Fatima (sa)...” [Here as per these ayahs Jesus (as) is the son of Noah (as), but Jesus (as) was the son of Mary (sa) and he was miraculously born without a father and as per Quran, Jesus (as) is from the progeny of Noah (as)].

Then Imam al-Kadhim (as) quoted the ayah 61 of Suratul Aal e Imran:

فَمَنْ حَا جَاكَ فَبِمِ مِ بَعْدِ مَا جَاكَ مِنْ الْعِلْمِ فَقُلْ تَعَالَوْا نَدْعُ أَبْنَاءَنَا وَأَبْنَاءَكُمْ وَنِسَاءَنَا وَنِسَاءَكُمْ وَأَنْفُسَنَا وَأَنْفُسَكُمْ ۗ ثُمَّ نَبْتَهِلْ فَنَجْعَلْ لَعْنَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْكٰذِبِينَ ۝٦١

Should anyone argue with you concerning him, after the knowledge that has come to you, say, “Come! Let us call our sons and your sons, our women and your women, our souls and your souls, then let us pray earnestly and call down Allah’s curse upon the liars.”[34](#)

(Here the Holy Prophet (sawa) took Imam Hasan and Imam Husayn (as) as his sons when he confronted the Christians)

After quoting the ayahs to Harun, Imam al-Kadhim (as) asked him, “If the Prophet (sawa) would come back and ask you O’ Harun, for your daughter, then would you give your daughter’s hand in marriage to the Prophet (sawa)?” Harun replied, “Glory be to Allah! Why wouldn’t I fulfill his wish? Indeed I would be honored among the Arabs, non-Arabs, and Quraish to do so.” The Imam then said: “But he would not ask to marry my daughter, nor could I give her to him in marriage.” Harun exclaimed: “Why not?” The Imam said: “For he has begotten me and has not begotten you, my daughter will be Mahram to him (sawa) as she is from his progeny.”[35](#)

Points to ponder about

- ☐ The truly divinely appointed Imams in a lot of cases used to answer the questions using the verses of Quran. Are any such answers found in the lives of the Ismaili/Fatimid Imams?
- ☐ The divinely appointed Imams were not afraid of telling the truth even in front of the oppressor caliph.
- ☐ The answers of the divinely appointed Imams were logical. Can one find any such logical answers given by the Ismaili/Fatimid Imams?

Sayings of Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as)

- ☐ Kindness and love to people is half of wisdom.[36](#)
- ☐ Whoever wants to be the strongest among the people should depend upon Allah.[37](#)
- ☐ He is not of us (the one) who does not reckon himself every day, so if he did a good deed he asks Allah for increasing it, and if he did a bad deed, he asks Allah’s forgiveness and repents to Him.[38](#)

- ☞ Anger is the key to every evil.[39](#)
- ☞ Whoever made supplication before (thanking and) praising Allah and before sending blessing upon the Prophet (sawa) is as the one who throws an arrow without a bowstring.[40](#)
- ☞ Whoever made his parents sad has been ungrateful to them.[41](#)
- ☞ Whenever people commit new sins which they didn't use to do, Allah gives them new afflictions which they didn't expect.[42](#)
- ☞ Your aid to the weak is of the best of charities.[43](#)
- ☞ Reliance on Allah has grades. One of them is that you rely on Him in every matter and be pleased with whatever He decides for you and know that He never hesitates in providing you any good and grace and that every decision is from Him so leave every affair to His Will and rely and put trust only in Him.[44](#)
- ☞ Every person who strives to obtain Halal (permissible) sustenance or provision is like a fighter in the path of God.[45](#)
- ☞ If there is a walnut in your hand and people say that it is a pearl, their saying will not benefit you in any way when you know that it is actually a walnut. And if there is a pearl in your hand and people say that it is a walnut, their saying will not harm you in any way when you know that it is actually a pearl.[46](#)
- ☞ Indeed cultivation and growth takes shape in a soft, even land and not in a rocky (barren) land. Likewise, wisdom grows and develops in a humble heart and not in a proud, vain and arrogant heart.[47](#)

Points to ponder about

- ☞ The sayings of the divinely appointed Imams are full of wisdom. Do the Ismaili/Fatimid Imams have such sayings at all?

Imam Ali Ibn Musa al-Ridha (as) Martyred 818 AD

Imam al-Ridha (as) [48](#) was the son of the seventh Holy Imam al-Kadhim (as). He was born in 148 Hijri. He is believed by Ithna Asharis to be the eighth Holy Imam.

His nicknames

Al-Ridha: He is popularly known as al-Ridha because he was the pleasure of Allah (swt). Al-Bizanti asked Imam al-Jawad (as), 'weren't your forefathers (as) the pleasure of Allah (swt) and of His Messenger (sawa) too?' "Yes," replied Imam al-Jawad. "Then why has only your father been named al-Ridha?" al-Bizanti asked. "Because both his opposing enemies and obedient supporters were pleased with him, while this did not happen to any of his fathers, so only he was called al-Ridha." [49](#)

Some of his (as) other nicknames are: Al-Sabir (the patient), al-Zaki (pure, noble), al-Wafi (Loyal), Siraj Allah (the lamp of Allah), Qurat ‘Ayn al- Mumineen (delight of the eye of the believers), al-Siddiq (the very truthful one), and al-Fadhil (the most meritorious one of all the people of his time).[50](#)

One of the famous *kunya* of Imam al-Ridha (as) is Abu al-Hasan; His father Imam Musa al-Kadhim, peace be on him, gave him this *kunya*. He, peace be on him, said to ‘Ali b. Yaqtin: “O ‘Ali, this son of mine—and he pointed to Imam al-Ridha is the master of my children, and I have given him my *kunya*. “ Imam al-Ridha was given the *kunya* of Abu al-Hasan. As this *kunya* was common between them, Imam al-Kadhim was called: Abu al-Hasan the first, and Imam al-Ridha was called Abu al-Hasan the second, so that the people might distinguish between the two *kunyas*.[51](#)

What has been said about Imam al-Ridha (as)

Ibrahīm Bin al-‘Abbas al-Sawli

(Ibrahīm b. al-‘Abbas al-Sawli), a creative writer and famous poet, has said: “I have never seen nor have I heard that anyone is more meritorious than Abul Hasan al-Ridha. Do not believe him who claims that he has seen the like of him in his excellence.

The Imam was the model of outstanding merits and talents. There was none like him in his time, for he was among the pillars of thought and virtue in the world of Islam.[52](#)

Abu al-Salt al-Harawi

Abu al-Salt, ‘Abd al-Salam al-Harawi, who was among the great figures of his time, has said: “I have never seen anyone more learned than ‘Ali b. Musa al-Ridha. When a (religious) scholar sees him, he bears witness for him just as I do. Al-Ma’mun gathered for him a number of the scholars of religions, the jurists of Islamic law, and the theologians. However, he (al-Ridha) overcame them, to the extent that they acknowledged his excellence over them.

These words give an account of the great scientific abilities of the Imam, peace be on him, for he was the most knowledgeable and meritorious of the people of his time. This can clearly be seen in the debates which al-Ma’mun held in his palace in order to test the Imam. Al-Ma’mun had gathered the scholars of the countries and cities, and they tested the Imam with the most difficult questions; yet he (as) answered them skilfully. So the scholars admired him, confessed their feebleness before him, and acknowledged his excellence over them.[53](#)

Al-Raja’ Bin Abu al-Dhhak

Al-Raja’ Bin Abu al-Dhhak, a military commander, has said: “By Allah, I have never seen anyone more devout to Allah than him, praised Allah throughout his times more than he did, and feared Allah, the Great and Almighty, more than he did.

These words show the spiritual side in the Imam's character, for he was the most religious of all the people; he praised Allah and feared Him more than they did.[54](#)

[Al-Shaykh al-Mufid](#)

Shaykh al-Mufid, said: "The Imam who undertook (the office) (*qa'im*) after Abu al-Hasan Musa b. Ja'far, peace be on them, was his son Abu al-Hasan 'Ali b. Musa al-Ridha, peace be on them, because of his merit over all his brothers and the members of his House (*ahl bayt*), because of the knowledge, forbearance and piety which he showed, and which the Shīa (*khasa*) and the non-Shīa (*'amma*) agreed on with regard to him and recognized him for. [55](#)

Al-Shaykh al-Mufid has mentioned some qualities which distinguished Imam al-Ridha, peace be on him, from the rest of his brothers and the members of his House. These noble qualities and peculiarities are as follows:

1. Knowledge.
2. Forbearance.
3. Piety

[Al-Waqidi](#)

Al-Waqidi has said: Ali (al-Ridha) heard the *hadith* from his father, his uncles, and others. He was trustworthy and gave religious precepts in the Mosque of Allah's Messenger, may Allah bless him and his family, at the age of more than twenty. He belonged to the eighth class of the next generation from among the members of the House (*ahl al-Bayt*). [56](#)

Al-Waqidi has mentioned two of the Imam's qualities which are as follows:

1. Trustworthiness.
2. His giving religious decisions at the age of over twenty.

[Jamal al-Din](#)

Jamal al-Din Ahmed b. 'Ali, a genealogist, popularly known as ibn 'Anba, has said: "Imam al-Ridha was given the *kunya* of Abu al-Hasan. None of the Ta'libiyyin of his time was like him. Al-Ma'mun pledged allegiance to him, minted dirhams and dinars in his name, and ordered his name to be mentioned on the pulpits."[57](#)

Al-Sayyid Jamal al-Din has mentioned that none was like the Imam in his time; he was unique in his time due to his talents and geniuses.

[Yousif b. Taghri Bardi](#)

Jamal al-Din Abu al-Mahasin Yousif b. Taghri has said: "Imam Abu al-Hasan al-Hashimi, al-'Alawi, al-Husayni was a learned Imam. He was the chief of the Hashimites of his time and was the greatest of them. Al-Ma'mun magnified him, honored him, yielded to him and extremely mentioned him, to the extent that he made him his successor."⁵⁸

These words shed light on some qualities of the personality of the Imam (as), which are: He was learned. He was the chief of the Hashimites and was the greatest of them. As he had a great character, al-Ma'mun appointed him as his successor.

[Ibn Maja](#)

Ibn Maja has said: He (Imam al-Ridha) was the chief of the Hashimites. Al-Ma'mun magnified and honoured him. He designated him as his successor and took the Pledge of allegiance to him (from the people).⁵⁹

Ibn Maja took care of one of the Imam's qualities, which is that he was the chief of the Hashimites. Of course, the Imam was the master of the people of his time, for the Hashimites were the master of the people because of their good manners, their exalted ethics, and their excellent behaviour. Ibn Maja took care of one of the Imam's qualities, which is that he was the chief of the Hashimites. Of course, the Imam was the master of the people of his time, for the Hashimites were the master of the people because of their good manners, their exalted ethics, and their excellent behaviour.

[Ibn Hajar](#)

Ibn Hajar has said: Al-Ridha was among the men of knowledge and merits; he had noble lineage.⁶⁰ Even the known scholars of Ahle Sunna had great things to say about Imam al-Ridha (as)

[Al-Yafi'i](#)

Al-Ya'fi'i has said: "The great, magnified Imam, the descendant of the noble Sayyids, 'Ali b. Musa al-Ridha', was one of the twelve Imams, the possessors of the laudable deeds; the Imami Shīa have followed them and adopted their doctrine."⁶¹

['Amir al-Ta'i](#)

'Amir al-Ta'i has commented on the book entitled *Sahifat Ahl al-Bayt*, peace be on them, which is one of Imam al-Ridha's works, saying: "Ali b. Musa al-Ridha, the Imam of the Allah-fearing and model of the grandsons of the Master of messengers related to us..."⁶²

Imam al-Ridha was the chief of the Allah-fearing and Imam of worshippers.

Hashim Ma'ruf

'Allama, late al-Sayyid Hashim Ma'ruf al-Husayni has said: "Imam al-Ridha, peace be on him, was distinguished by wonderful noble moral traits which helped him attract both Shīa (*khaassah*) and non-Shīa (*aammah*). He took these ethics from the essence of the Message with which he was entrusted, and which he safeguarded and inherited."⁶³

This statement reports one of the qualities of the Imam, peace be on him, which is his exalted morals. It is worth mentioning that his morals were similar to those of his grandfather, the greatest Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, who was the master of all prophets.

Al-Dhahabi

Al-Dhahabi has said: "He (al-Ridha) is Imam Abu al-Hasan b. Musa al-Kadhim b. Jafar al-Sadiq b. Mohammed al-Baqir b. 'Ali Zayn al-'Abidin b. al-Husayn b. 'Ali b. Abu Talib al-Hashimi al-'Alawi. He was the master of the Hashimites of his time; he was the most clement and noblest of them. Al-Ma'mun honoured him, yielded to him, and magnified him to the extent that he appointed him as his successor."⁶⁴

Al-Dhahabi, known for showing enmity toward the *ahl al-Bayt* (peace be on them), has acknowledged the outstanding merits of Imam al-Ridha, peace be on him.⁶⁵

Mahmud Bin Wihayb

Mahmud Bin Wihayb al-Baghdadi has said: "He (al-Ridha), may Allah be pleased with him, had numerous miracles, so he was the unique of his time."⁶⁶

Imam al-Ridha was the unique of his time because of his abundant knowledge, his reverential fear, his piety, his clemency, and his munificence. None was like him in excellence and talents.

'Arif Thamir

'Arif Thamir has said: "He (Imam al-Ridha) is regarded as one of the Imams who played a great role on the arena of the Islamic events in his time."⁶⁷

During the short period of his undertaking the office of regency, Imam al-Ridha could manifest the origin values of Islamic policy, for he ordered al-Ma'mun to establish justice and fairness among the people, prevented him from wasting the properties of the state and from other matters.

Mohammed Bin Shakir al-Kutubi

Mohammed Bin Shakir al-Kutubi has said: "He (Imam al-Ridha, peace be on him) is one of the twelve Imams. He was the master of the Hashimites of his time."⁶⁸

Yousif al-Nabahani

Yousif al-Nabahani has said: “Ali b. Musa al-Kadhim b. Jafar al-Sadiq, peace be on them, was one of the great Imams, the lamps of the community from among the Household of the Prophet, the origin of knowledge, and generosity. He had a great position and famous reputation. He had many miracles of which are that he foretold that he would die of eating (poisoned) grapes and pomegranates. The matter happened just as he had predicted.”⁶⁹

The Imam, peace be on him, was a brilliant branch of the Prophetic family through whom Allah exalted the Arabs and the Muslims, in addition to his clear lineage.

Points to ponder about

☞ Not only the Shias, rather even some famous Sunni scholars had nothing but praises for Imam Ali Ibn Musa al-Ridha (as). The scholars of Ahle Sunna, like Ibn Maja, Ibn Hajar and even Dhahabi had praises for Imam al-Ridha (as). This shows that the divinely appointed Imams were impeccable in character this is why even the opposition had nothing but praises.

☞ Do we find any such praises regarding the Ismaili/Fatimid Imams?

His Nomination

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 were brought out of the prison. In them it was written: “My testament (*'ahd*) is to my eldest son.”⁷⁰

Imam Musa 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:

'Ali Bin Yaqtin

'Ali Bin Yaqtin has reported: “I (i.e. 'Ali Bin Yaqtin) was with Abu al-Hasan Musa b. Jafar, 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).’ Hisham b. Salim was in the assembly. He struck his face with the palm of his hand and said: ‘We belong to Allah, by Allah; he (Imam al-Kadhim) has announced his death for you.’”⁷¹

Na'eem Bin Qabus

Na'eem 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...”[72](#)

[Dawud Bin Kuthayr](#)

Dawud b. Kuthayr al-Raqqi has narrated, saying: [I (i.e. Dawud b. Kuthayr) said to Musa al-Kadhim:] “May I be your ransom, I have grown old. So take my hand and save me from hell-fire. Who is our leader (*sahib*) after you?”

“This is your leader after me,” he said and pointed to his son Abu al-Hasan al-Ridha.[73](#)

[Sulayman Bin Hafs](#)

Sulayman b. Hafs al-Marwazi has reported: [I (i.e. Sulayman b. Hafs) visited Abu al-Hasan Musa b. Jafar. I wanted to ask him about the proof over the people after him. When he looked at me, he began saying:] “O Sulayman, 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 happens that you remain alive after me, bear witness to him about this matter before my Shi’ites and the people of my authority who ask you about my successor after me.”[74](#)

[‘Abd Allah al-Hashimi](#)

‘Abd Allah al-Hashimi has said: [We were beside the grave (i.e. the grave of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family). Suddenly, Abu Ibrahim 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.”[75](#)

[Points to ponder about](#)

☞ There are many more references that talk about the nomination of Imam al-Ridha. The narrators are authentic. Are there any authentic traditions regarding the nomination of Ismail ibn Jafar or Muhammad ibn Ismail?

☞ On the contrary when we look into the Fatimid history we see that their Imam appointed someone but they follow someone else: Al-Hakim had already appointed Abd al-Rahman as his successor and it is recorded in history, even though Abd al-Rahman was not his son! But after the death of al-Hakim, al-Zahir was placed on the throne! If al-Hakim, the Fatimid Imam, wanted Abd al-Rahman to succeed him, then why was al-Zahir placed on the throne and called an Imam? The Ismailis follow al-Zahir as an Imam, even though al-Hakim, their own Imam, appointed Abd al-Rahman as his successor?

[His Debates](#)

The time of the Imam, peace be on him, is famous for the debates and arguments which spread among the great figures of religions, of Islamic schools, and of other ideologies.

Al-Ma'mun, the Abbasid Caliph appointed Imam al-Ridha, (as), as his heir apparent. However, he was not sincere in this purpose nor did he believe that the Imam was more appropriate than him for the caliphate. He (al-Ma'mun) ordered all his governors in Islamic world to summon the great (religious) scholars, who were experienced in different kinds of science, to go to Khurasan in order to question the Imam about the most difficult scientific matters. When they came to him (al-Ma'mun), he mentioned the matter before them and promised to enrich those who would question the Imam and render him incapable of answering them. Generally speaking, he appointed him as his heir apparent for the following political reasons:

1. Al-Ma'mun intended to destroy the beliefs of the Shi'ites and to efface their traces. He wanted the religious scholars to render Imam al-Ridha, peace be on him, incapable of answering them, that he might use his incapability as means to cancel the beliefs of the Shi'ites, who maintained that the Imam should be the most learned of the people of his time and most knowledgeable of them in all kinds of science. Of course, if the Imam had been incapable of disproving the scholars' beliefs, he would have shaken the entity of the Shi'ites and abrogated their beliefs in the Imams of the members of the House, Ahl al-Bayt, peace be on them.
2. If the Imam had been unable to answer the questions of the religious scholars, al-Ma'mun would have been able to remove him from regency. In other words al-Ma'mun would have been able to achieve his political aims through the Imam, for he had told the people that he nominated him for that important office because he was the most learned of the community.

Meanwhile, his mass media would have announced that the Imam had fallen short of answering the scholars' questions so that it might respond to the Abbasid family's feelings. Anyhow, the leading scholars had prepared the most difficult questions and asked the Imam about them, and he skilfully answered them. The narrators have mentioned: "He (Imam al-Ridha) was asked about more than twenty thousand questions in different times to the extent that al-Ma'mun's palace became a scientific centre, that the leading scholars admired the Imam's talents and abilities, that they announced to the people the Imam's great abilities in knowledge and excellence, and that most of them believed in his Imamate. [76](#)

The following are some extracts of some of the debates:

[Debate with Abu Qurra](#)

"Where is Allah?" asked Abu Qurra.

Imam al-Ridha (as) answered, "The 'where' is a place. This is the question of one who is present about one who is absent. As for Allah, the Most High is not absent; nor was there an eternal thing before Him. He is everywhere. He is Director, Creator, Keeper, the Holder of the heavens and the earth."⁷⁷

Debate with the catholic

Among others, al-Ma'mun also invited Zoroastrian Priests, Rabbi's, Catholic Archbishop to debate with Imam al-Ridha. When they all arrived in the palace, al-Fadl b. Sahl went in a hurry to the Imam (as) and said to him: "May I be your ransom, your cousin (i.e. al-Ma'mun) is waiting for you. The people have gathered. What is your view of going to him?"

The Imam answered him that he was ready to attend (the session) and that he was going to al-Ma'mun. The session was attended by the Ta'libiyyin, the Ha'shimites, the military commanders, Muslim and non-Muslim scholars. When the Imam came, al-Ma'mun and all those who were in the session stood up for him and welcomed him with honour. The Imam sat while the people were still standing in order to show respect for him. Al-Ma'mun ordered them to sit and they sat down. All the people in the session kept silent as a sign of respect for the Imam, and then al-Ma'mun turned to the Catholic Archbishop and said to him: "Catholic, this is my cousin Ali b. Musa b. Jafar. He is one of the children of Fatemah, daughter of our Prophet (sawa) and of Ali b. Abu Talib (as). I would like you to debate with him on theology, argue with him, and show justice toward him."

"Commander of the faithful, how can I argue with a man who argues with me through a Book which we have denied and a Prophet whom I do not believe in?" asked the Catholic.

The Catholic thought that the Imam, peace be on him, would produce evidence in support of his beliefs through some verses of the Holy Qur'an or through some words of the Messenger (sawa). As he had no faith in the Qur'anic verses and the Prophetic traditions, he asked the Imam to give proof of his beliefs from their own Books, and the Imam answered him saying: "Christian, if I give proof from your Gospel, will you admit it?"

"Yes," retorted the Catholic, "By Allah, I will admit it. Can I repel what the Bible speaks about?"

Imam al-Ridha (as) proved to the Catholic from the Bible that Prophet Muhammad and his family has been mentioned in the Bible. He also named the disciples of Nabi Isa (as).

Later the Holy Imam al-Ridha (as) added, saying: *"By Allah, we believe in 'Isa who believed in Muhammad (sawa). We have nothing against 'Isa except his weakness and the paucity of his fasting and prayer."*

When the Catholic heard the last words of the Imam's statement, he shouted: "By Allah, you have corrupted your knowledge! Your affair has become weak! I thought that you were the most learned of the Muslims!"

The Imam faced him calmly, asking: “Why?”

The Catholic lost his mind, so he began saying: “Because of your statement (which is) that ‘Isa was weak with little fasting and praying, (while) ‘Isa never broke fasting by day and never slept by night. He always fasted by day and prayed by night.”

The Imam got ready to disprove the Christian belief which said that Nabi Isa (as) was a god other than Allah and was served! He asked the Catholic: “For whom did he (Nabi Isa) fast and pray?” (In other words Imam al-Ridha (as) asked the Catholic, ‘if you claim that Nabi Isa worshipped, then who did he worship? If you claim that he was a god?’)

The Catholic did not answer, not knowing what to say. So the Imam turned to him, saying: “I want to ask you a question.”

“Ask,” Said the Catholic, “I will answer you if I have knowledge of it.”

Imam al-Ridha (as) asked, “*Did you not deny that ‘Isa gave life to the dead with Allah’s permission?*”

“I had denied that before,” the Catholic answered, “he who gives life to the dead, heals the blind and the leprous is a lord worthy of being served.”

The Imam (as) disproved his statement, saying: “*Indeed al-Yasa’ did just as ‘Isa, peace be on him, did: he walked on the water, gave life to the dead, and healed the blind and the leprous. Why did his community not adopt him as a lord? Why did not anyone serve him (as a god) other than Allah? He gave life to thirty-five men sixty years after their death. This (statement) is in the Torah. None denies it except an unbeliever.*”

The Catholic admired the Imam’s knowledge of their Books, and then he said: “We have heard of it and recognized it.”

Imam al-Ridha (as) continued, “If you have adopted ‘Isa as a lord, then it is permissible for you to adopt al-Yasa’ and Hizqal as two lords, for they did just as ‘Isa b. Maryam did such as giving life to the dead. You cannot deny all these things which I have mentioned to you, for the Torah, the Bible, the Zabur (David’s Psalms) the Furqa`n (Qur’a`n) have mentioned them”.

The Imam criticized the Christians for their adopting Jesus (as) as a lord other than Allah, for he gave life to the dead, healed the blind and the leprous, while such miracles happened through the master of the prophets, the Messenger (sawa) and through some great prophets, but they were not adopted and served as lords other than Allah, the Most High.

After the Catholic Archbishop had heard these brilliant words of the Imam, he addressed him, saying: “My view agrees with yours, and there is no god but Allah.”[78](#)

Imam al-Ridha (as) continued and brought up a lot of points from the Bible. The Catholic admired the Imam and confessed to him that he had no knowledge of all that, saying: "This I did not know and now I have learned from you things with which I was familiar and to which my heart testifies to be the truth. I have, therefore, gained a better understanding."⁷⁹

Debate with Rabbi

Before starting the debate the Rabbi put forward a condition that Imam al-Ridha should base his arguments on the Torah, Bible and Zabur only. The Imam agreed to this condition, saying: "Do not accept any proof from me except what the Torah says by the tongue of Musa`, the Bible by the tongue of 'Isa b. Maryam, and the Zabur by the tongue of Dawud, peace be on them."

After proving that Prophet Muhammad is mentioned in the Torah and Zabur, Imam al-Ridha said to the Rabbi, "I want to question you about your prophet Musa`."

"Question," was the answer.

"What is the evidence for the Prophethood of Musa`?" asked the Imam.

The Rabbi began producing evidence in support of the Prophethood of Musa, saying: "He brought what the prophets before him had not brought."

"Could you give me an example of what he brought?" asked the Imam.

The Rabbi replied: "He split the sea, turned the cane into a running snake, cleaved the rocks so that springs gushed forth from them, took out his hand shining white for the onlookers, and other signs the like of which the creature are unable to bring."

The Imam confirmed his statement, saying: "You are right; they are proof of his Prophethood. He brought the like of which the creatures were unable to bring. Is it obligatory on you to believe him who claims Prophethood and performs something which all creatures are unable to perform?"

The Jew denied the Imam's statement, saying: "No, because there is none like Musa`, because of his position with his Lord and his nearness to Him. It is not incumbent on us to profess the Prophethood of him who claims it unless he brings us knowledge similar to that brought by Musa."

The Imam disproved the Jew's statement, saying: "Then how come you admit the prophethood of the other prophets who preceded Musa` who did not split the sea; nor did they cleave the stone so that twelve springs would gush forth from them; nor did they take their hands out shining white as Musa did; nor did they turn the rod into a snake running."

The Jew replied: "I told you that if they performed signs as evidence for their Prophethood all other creation were unable to perform, if they brought something the like of which Musa had brought or they

followed what Musa had brought, then it is incumbent on us to believe them.”

The Imam, peace be on him, disproved his argument, saying: “High Rabbi, what has prevented you from professing (the Prophethood of) ‘Isa b. Maryam who brought the dead to life, healed the blind and the leprous, determined out of dust like the form of a bird, then he breathed into it and it became bird with Allah’s permission?”

The Jew dodged and said: “It is said that he did that, but we did not see it.”

The Imam answered him with a conclusive argument, saying: “Did you see the signs which Musa performed? Weren’t Musa’s trustworthy companions who gave an account of that?”

“Yes,” came the answer.

The Imam forced him (to admit that) through a decisive argument, and then he said: “In this manner the successive accounts about what ‘Isa` b. Maryam had done also came to you. So why do you believe in Musa and do not believe in ‘Isa`?”

The High Rabbi kept silent, and feebleness appeared on his face, for the Imam had closed before him all avenues of argument and established a decisive proof against him. The Imam, peace be on him, added: “Such is the matter of Muhammed, may Allah bless him and his family, what he brought, and every prophet whom Allah sent. Among his (Muhammed’s) signs are: He was a poor orphan and wage shepherd. He did not learn (reading and writing); nor he studied under a teacher. Then he brought the Qur’an in which are the stories of the prophets, peace be on them, and their accounts letter for letter, and which reports about the bygone (communities) and those who will remain until the Day of Resurrection. Then it gives accounts of their secrets and what they did in their houses; therein are many verses (in this connection).”[80](#)

Some of them after the debate accepted Islam, for example al-Sabi’i.

Al-Sabi’i becomes Muslim

‘Umran al-Sabi’i acknowledged the many scientific abilities of the Imam, peace be on him, such as his definitive answers to the most difficult philosophical questions, which none were able to answer except the divine successors of the prophets whom Allah endowed with knowledge and sound judgment. Accordingly, he embraced Islam and began saying: “I witness that Allah, the Most High, is as you have described, and witness that Muhammed, may Allah bless him and his family, is His Servant sent with guidance and the religion of the truth.”

Then he prostrated himself in prayer before Allah and submitted to Him. The religious scholars and the theologians admired the Imam’s knowledge and talents, hence they told the people about his excellence and abundant knowledge. As for al-Ma’mun, he drowned in pain, harboured malice against the Imam, envied him, and then left the session.[81](#)

Some points to ponder about

- ☞ Are any such debates found in the history of the Ismaili/Fatimid Imams?
- ☞ The divinely appointed Imams had thorough knowledge of not only Quran but the other heavenly books too! Any such examples found among the Ismaili/Fatimid imams?
- ☞ The divinely appointed Imams could speak all languages. Any such examples found among the Ismaili/Fatimid Imams?

The divine Imams after Imam Ali al-Ridha (as) are as follows: Imam Mohammed Taqi (as), Imam Ali Naqi (as), Imam Hasan Al Askari (as) & the 12th Imam Mohammed Al Mahdi (atfs)

A simple study of the lives, sayings, and the worship of all these Imams is available easily now on the internet and in books and can suffice to prove that these are the divine leaders.

- [1.](#) Jawadi, Allamah Zeeshan Haider, Nuqoosh Ismat, p. 599 quotes from Matalibus So-ool, p. 278; Sawaiqul Mohriqa, p. 131; Manaqib, vol. 3, p. 125
- [2.](#) Nuqoosh Ismat, p. 600, quotes from Behaar al-Anwaar, vol. 11, p. 185; Amali, Sayyid Murtada, vol. 1, p. 151; Ihtijaj Tabarsi, p. 198; Manaqib, vol. 3, p. 429
- [3.](#) Tohaf ul Uqool, p. 411; Nuqoosh Ismat, p. 602
- [4.](#) Nuqoosh Ismat, p. 611 quotes from Behaar al-Anwaar, vol. 11, p. 234; Kamaluddin Tamamun Nima, p. 203, Kitabul Irshad, p. 308
- [5.](#) Nuqoosh Ismat, pp. 611, 612 quoted from Behaar al-Anwaar, vol. 11, p. 234; Uyun al-Akhbar al-Ridha, vol. 1, p. 23
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- [7.](#) Nuqoosh Ismat, p. 612 quoted from Behaar al-Anwaar, vol. 11, p. 234; Usul Kafi; Basairud Darajaat, Vol. 7, Chap. 11; p. 96; Kitabul Irshad, p. 307
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- [28.](#) Al-'Amal wa Huqooq al-'Amil fi al-Islam, p. 135
- [29.](#) Man La Yahdarahu al-Faqeeh, vol. 3, p. 53.
- [30.](#) Nuqqosh Ismat, p. 619 quoted from Al Kuna wal Alqaab, vol. 2, p. 168
- [31.](#) Surah An'am (6), Ayah 83
- [32.](#) Surah An'am (6), Ayah 84
- [33.](#) Surah An'am (6), Ayah 85
- [34.](#) Surah Aal-e-Imran (3), Ayah 61
- [35.](#) Uyun al-Akhbar al-Ridha: vol. 1, p. 81; Ehtejaj al-Tabarsi: vol. 2, p. 389; Behaar al-Anwaar, vol. 48, p. 125
- [36.](#) Tohaf al-Uqool, p. 425
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- [38.](#) Usool al-Kafi, vol. 4, p. 191
- [39.](#) Tohaf al-Uqool, p. 416
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- [43.](#) Tohaf al-Uqool , p. 437
- [44.](#) Al Kafi, vol. 2, p. 65
- [45.](#) Behaar al-Anwaar, vol. 103, p. 4
- [46.](#) Tohaf al-Uqool, p. 383
- [47.](#) Tohaf al-Uqool, p. 395
- [48.](#) 'Reza' as per the Persian and Urdu pronunciation.
- [49.](#) Al-Qarashi, Baqir Sharif, Life of Imam Ali Ibn Musa al-Ridha, p. 64
- [50.](#) Life of Imam Ali Ibn Musa al-Ridha, pp. 64-66
- [51.](#) Life of Imam Ali Ibn Musa al-Ridha, p. 67 quoted from al-Majlisi, Behaar al-Anwaar, vol. 12, pp. 3, 4
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- [76.](#) The Life of Imam Ali Ibn Musa al-Ridha, pp. 158-159
- [77.](#) The Life of Imam Ali Ibn Musa al-Ridha, p. 195
- [78.](#) The Life of Imam Ali Ibn Musa al-Ridha p 199 -204
- [79.](#) The Life of Imam Ali Ibn Musa al-Ridha p 206
- [80.](#) The Life of Imam Ali Ibn Musa al-Ridha, pp. 208-212
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