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Plot to Assassinate Imam al-Ridha (a.s.)

Muhammad b. Zayd said, "When Ma'mun elected Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) as his heir apparent, one of the Kharijite prepared a venomous knife and said to his companions: 'I swear by God that I am going to this man who claims to be the son of the Messenger of Allah but has entered the despot's court, to ask him about the fact of the matter.

If he does not have a convincing reason, I will get rid of him!' With this decision, he entered the holy Imam's house."

"Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) said, 'My answer to your question will be subject to a condition; do you agree?' He asked: 'What condition?' The Imam said, 'If my answer is convincing, break that knife hiding in your sleeve and put it away!'

"The Kharijite who was perplexed took out the knife on the spot and broke it. Then, he said, 'Why did you come to this despot's court, although they are disbelievers in your sight and you are the Apostle of Allah's son?!"

"The holy Imam answered: "To your opinion, are these more disbelieving or the Potiphar and the people of that country [Egypt]? Is it not true that these assume to be Monotheist, but those [Egyptians] were not Monotheist and did not know God?"

"Was not Joseph son of Jacob (a.s.) a prophet and son of a prophet?! He said to Potiphar who was a disbeliever (as mentioned in the Qur'an): 'Assign me to the treasures of the land (Egyptian assets), as I am a wise guard.'

He associated with the Pharaohs and I am a man from the household of the Apostle of Allah. They forced me to this and I accepted reluctantly; what objection or problem do you have with me?" Hearing this definite answer, the Kharijite said, 'There is no objection with you. I testify that you are the son of the Apostle of Allah and that you are truthful."[1]

1. Bihar al-Anwar, nol. 49, p. 55.

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