Al-Islam.org
Ahlul Bayt Digital Islamic Library Project
Published on *Al-Islam.org* (https://www.al-islam.org)

The Religious Life

The religious life at the time of Imam Abu Muhammad (a.s.) was not sound or straight. It was confused and roiled by some deviants who raised spurious arguments about the pure Islamic beliefs. Some non-Muslim jugglers tried to misguide Muslims and corrupt their beliefs. Imam Abu Muhammad (a.s.) resisted all those attempts and he refuted all those fabrications and illusions, and he brought out the pure face of Islam.

There was another phenomenon that appeared in the age of Imam Abu Muhammad (a.s.). Some charlatan fabricated lies against Imam Abu Muhammad and his father (a.s.) before him to corrupt the beliefs of the followers of the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.), but the imam cursed him and ordered his followers to curse and disavow him.

Refuting Al-Kindi

Isaaq al-Kindi was the philosopher of Iraq. His thoughts predisposed him to some suspicion about the Holy Qur'an, and he spread among scholars that he had written a book called “The Contradiction of the Qur'an”. He busied himself with this matter. This news came to Imam Abu Muhammad (a.s.) who met one of al-Kindi’s disciples and said to him, ‘Is there no wise man among you to prevent your teacher al-Kindi from that which he has busied himself with in the Qur'an?’

The disciple said, ‘We are his disciples. How is it possible for us to object to him whether in this matter or else?’

Imam Abu Muhammad said to him, ‘Do you tell him what I shall say to you?’

He said, ‘Yes.’

Imam Abu Muhammad (a.s.) said to him, ‘Go to him, be courteous with him, and show him that you will help him in what he is in. When he feels comfortable with you, you say to him, ‘If someone recites the Qur'an, is it possible that he means other meanings than what you think you understand?’ He shall say that it is possible because he is a man who understands when he listens. If he says that, you say to him,

“How do you know? He might mean other than the meanings that you think, and so he fabricates other than its (the Qur'an) meanings…’

The disciple went to his teacher al-Kindi and did as the imam told him. Al-Kindi said to his disciple, ‘I adjure you by Allah to tell where you have got this from!’

The disciple said, ‘It was something that came to my mind and I mentioned it to you.’

Al-Kindi said, ‘No, no one like you can get to this. Would you tell me where you have got this from?’

He said, ‘Imam Abu Muhammad asked me to say that…’

Al-Kindi said, ‘Now you say the truth. The like of this can not be expressed, except from that house (the Ahlul Bayt)…’

After that, al-Kindi burnt his book.[1]

Refuting A Monk

Once, people suffered from a terrible drought. Al-Mu’tamid, the Abbasid caliph, ordered people to go out in the open air for three days in order to offer the prayer for rain. They did, but no rain fell down. Christians as well went out with whom there was a monk who whenever stretched his hand towards the sky, it rained. He did that many times and some ignorant (Muslims) doubted their religion and some others apostatized. This was hard for al-Mu’tamid. He went to Imam Abu Muhammad (a.s.) who was in prison then and said to him, ‘Attain to the nation of your grandfather before they will perish!’

Imam Abu Muhammad (a.s.) said to him, ‘Let people go out tomorrow and I shall remove their doubts insha’Allah.’

Al-Mu’tamid set the imam free from prison, but the imam asked him to set free all his companions from prison too, and al-Mu’tamid agreed to his request. On the following day, people went out to offer the prayer for rain. The monk raised his hand towards the sky and it clouded and rained. Imam Abu Muhammad (a.s.) asked his men to catch the monks hand and take what there was in it. There was a bone of a human being. The imam took the bone from the monk and asked him to pray for rain again. The monk raised his hands towards the sky, but clouds disappeared and the sun shone. People were astonished.

Al-Mu’tamid asked Imam Abu Muhammad (a.s.) what that thing was and the imam said, ‘This is a bone of one of the prophets that this monk has got in some way or another from some grave. Whenever a prophet’s bone is exposed under the sky, it will rain…’

Al-Mu’tamid checked that and it was as the imam said. Then suspicions and doubts were refuted.[2]

Liars and Fabricators

Liars and fabricators were not few at that time, and this was another plague of that age. It was a result of weak faith. From the most famous fabricators was Urwah bin Yahya ad-Dihqan al-Baghdadi who fabricated lies against Imam Abul Hasan Ali bin Muhammad al-Hadi (a.s.) and Imam Abu Muhammad al-Hasan bin Ali (a.s.) after him. He embezzled the monies that came to Imam Abu Muhammad (a.s.) from his followers. The imam cursed him and ordered his followers to curse and disavow him lest he would destroy their beliefs.3

Amusement and Diversion

Amusement, singing, dancing, and all kinds of diversion were widespread in the age of Imam Abu Muhammad (a.s.). Baghdad and Samarra' were full of debauchery and vices. It was the Abbasid kings who led the society to this corruption. They submitted to their lusts and desires, and their red nights were full of all kinds of vices and sins.

Al-Mahdi, the Abbasid king, was the first who opened the door of music, singing, dancing, and drinking for the other Abbasid kings. He was fond of a songstress called Jawhar.4

As for Harun ar-Rashid, he was famous for his indulging in amusement and singing. His nights were full of all kinds of music, singing, dancing, and drinking. He was fond of a bondmaid called Thatul Khal. Once, he swore for her that he would carry out everything she asked him for. She asked him to appoint some man in charge of war and kharaj in Persia for seven years. He did that and wrote a covenant and made a condition for the heir apparent to carry that out after him if it could not be done in his life.5

Al-Ma'mun, who was said to be moderate in conduct, spent many of his nights in singing and playing. He was fond of a bondmaid called Urayb, and he often composed poetry about her.

Al-Mutawakkil, who was contemporary with Imam Abu Muhammad (a.s.), was immature, following after his lusts and desires. He was the most dissolute king among the Abbasids. We shall talk about this and other things when we shall talk about his life in a coming chapter.

---

1. Al-Manaqib, vol. 4 p.424.
2. Jawharat al-Kalam, p.154, Akhbar ad-Duwal, p.117.
3. Rijal al-Kashshi, p.353.
4. Al-Bayan wet-Tebyeen, vol.3 p.370-371.
5. Al-Aghani, vol.19 p.116.

Source URL:
https://www.al-islam.org/the-life-of-imam-hasan-al-askari-baqir-shareef-al-qurashi/religious-life