

Published on *Al-Islam.org* (https://www.al-islam.org)

Home > The life of Imam 'Ali Bin Musa al-Ridha' > Epilog > Poets lament for the Imam > 5. Al-Dabi

Epilog

Shortly after Imam al-Ridha', peace be on him, assumed the position of heir apparent, al-Ma'mu'n vigorously turned away from him, hid evil and treachery against him, sought evil deeds against him, schemed against him in the darkness of night and by the brightness of day, imposed intense watch over him, imprisoned him in his house, prevented the scholars and the jurists from communicating with him and taking his sciences, and prevented all the Shi'ites from having the honor of meeting him.

Al-Ma'mu'n burst with anger and rage because of the Imam's remarkable position in the hearts of the Muslims, which firmly established and increased when regency was entrusted to him, for the Muslims saw that he led a simple life, refrained from temptations of life, renounced the world, understood the people's sufferings, showed affection toward the weak, sympathized with the miserable, had abundant knowledge, encompassed what the community needed regarding all its affairs, strongly turned to Allah, the Exalted, in repentance, feared Allah, and other high moral traits before which reason is bewildered, and which he derived from those of his grandfather the Messenger, may Allah bless him and his family, who developed life, put an end to all kinds of backwardness and deviation (from the truth) in the world of the Arabs and Muslims.

The people saw those 'Alawide moral traits standing in Imam al–Ridha', peace be on him, so they adored him and believed in his Imamate, while al–Ma'mu'n and the rest of the 'Abba'sid kings were distinguished by qualities contrary to those of the Imam. For no laudable deed or an excellence has been ascribed to them throughout their assuming the caliphate. In other words they followed their desires and pleasures and spent millions of the money of the Muslims on their red nights. Abu' Fira's al–Hamada'ni, an inspired poet, may Allah have mercy on, revolted against oppression and tyranny. In his wonderful, immortal poem, he has made a comparison between the 'Alawides' exalted life and the 'Abba'sids' low life, which was full of sins and offenses. He says:

(The Qur'an) is recited in their houses in the evening and

in the early morning, while in your houses are the strings and the tones.

When they recite a verse, your Imam (leader) sings: "Stop by the house which no foot has effaced."

Does 'Ali belong to you or to them? Does the Shaykh of the singers belong to you or to them?

There is no winepress in their houses; nor is there in their houses a shelter for evil;

Nor is there a hermaphrodite who spends the night to drink with them; nor have they an ape which has servants.

Their houses are *al–Rukn* (the corner of the Ka'ba), the (Sacred) House, the curtains, *Zamzam*, *al–Safa*', (the Black) Stone, and *al–Harm* (the Sanctuary).

Surely the life of the 'Alawides is as bright as the sun due to the light of faith, whereas the life of their 'Abba'sid opponents is as dark as night; there is no glow of faith and of Islamic guidance in it. Any how, al-Ma'mu'n spared no effort to show Islamic society that Imam al-Ridha', peace be on him, did not renounce the world when he assumed regency, but all his attempts came to nothing, for Islamic world came to know that the Imam was the most brilliant personality in Allah-fearingness, piety, clinging to obedience to Allah and to acts of worship, and refraining from all political fields.

Anyhow, in this epilog, we want to mention the last affairs of the life of the Imam, peace be on him, and that is as follows:

The Imam gives Sincere Advice to al-Ma'mu'n

The Imam, peace be on him, gave sincere advice to al-Ma'mu'n. The advice was void of all political hardships. He advised him to exempt him from regency and to exempt al-Fadl from the ministry, and through that he would save himself from the scheme and oppression of the 'Abba'sids against him. 1 However al-Ma'mu'n did not exempt them both; he assassinated them, as we will display.

Al-Ma'mu'n decides to rerun to Baghdad

For a long time Al-Ma'mu'n reflected on returning to Baghdad, the capital of his fore-fathers and embellishment of the east, but two factors prevented him from achieving this valuable wish:

The first: The existence of Imam 'Ali b. Musa' al-Ridha', peace be on him, his heir apparent, against whom the 'Abba'sid family vigorously harbored malice. This family had already broken the pledge of allegiance to him, and pledged allegiance to Ibn Shakkla, the Shaykh of the singers, as a sign of taking vengeance upon him because of his entrusting the Imam with regency.

The second: The existence of his minister, al–Fadl b. SAhl, on the area of politics. The 'Abba'sids were indignant with al–Fadl, for they thought that it was he who urged al–Ma'mu'n to entrust regency to Imam al–Ridha', peace be on him.

Accordingly, al-Ma'mu'n had to get rid of both the Imam and al-Fadl through assassinating them, that

he might be free from worry, please the 'Abba'sids, and rid himself of their wrath and vengeance; this is what we will demonstrate.

The Public Bath-house of Sarkhas

Al-Ma'mu'n thought that he had to get rid of Imam al-Ridha', peace be on him, and al-Fadl b. Sahl at the same time, that the 'Abba'sid family might be loyal to him. So he ordered a criminal band of his hirelings to assassinate Imam al-Ridha' and al-Fadl in the public bath-house of Sarkhas. He had asked both the Imam and al-Fadl to enter the bath-house together. He also decided to go with them, that he might cover the matter and that none might come to know of it. The Imam was fully aware of this trickery, so he refused to respond to al-Ma'mu'n. Al-Ma'mu'n sent another letter and the Imam wrote him: "I will not go into the baths tomorrow. Last night, I had a vision of the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family. He told me: "Ali, do not go into the baths tomorrow.' Therefore, Commander of the faithful, I do not think that it would be wise for you and al-Fadl to go into the baths tomorrow."

Al-Ma'mu'n wrote back to him: "You are right, my master, and the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family, is right. I will not go into the baths tomorrow. However, al-Fadl will make up his own mind."

The deception of al-Ma'mu'n regarding al-Fadl has become clear. He let him make up his own mind, and he was killed by his band of hirelings.

Al-Fadl is struck down

Al-Fadl went in a hurry to the baths. When he went into it, he was struck down by the swords of that criminal band. Shortly after that he became a motionless body. In this manner al-Ma'mu'n was able to achieve part of his task.

When al–Fadl was killed, his companions went in a hurry to al–Ma'mu'n in order to take vengeance upon him, for they had come to know that it was he who ordered him to be killed. The guards of al–Ma'mu'n's palace hurried to close the gates lest the revolutionaries should attack al–Ma'mu'n. However, the revolutionists carried torches of fire that they might burn the gates of the palace. When al–Ma'mu'n came to know of that, he became frightened, so he sought refuge in the Imam and asked him to protect him. The Imam, peace be on him, went out to the revolutionaries. He ordered them to depart, and they responded to him, so al–Ma'mu'n was saved by the Imam's blessing. As for those who murdered al–Fadl, they were five persons from among the personal entourage of al–M'mu'n. Among them was Gha'lib, al–Ma'mu'n's uncle. The police captured them and brought them before al–Ma'mu'n, and they (the murderers) said to him: "You had ordered us to kill him." So he said to them: "I will kill you because of your confession. As for that which you have claimed that I had ordered you to kill him is a groundless claim." Then he ordered their heads to be struck off, ordered them to be sent to al–Hasan b. SAhl, and showed false sadness for him (al–Fadl).3

The Imam is assassinated

Al-Ma'mu'n assassinated Imam al-Ridha', the Imam of the Muslims and grandson of the Messenger, may Allah bless him and his family. He put poison into grapes or pomegranates, as we will mention. In this manner al-Ma'mu'n put an end to the most brilliant personality in Islamic world, namely Imam al-Ridha', who was the source of awareness and thought in the world of Islam.

Irregular Statements

Some historians have mentioned that al-Ma'mu'n was far above committing this abominable crime, and that he did not assassinate the Imam, peace be on him. The following are some of their statements:

1. His Natural Death

Ibn Khaldu'n has mentioned that the Imam, peace be on him, died a natural death suddenly after eating some grapes.4 Others than him have mentioned the same statement.5

2. The 'Abba'sids assassinate the Imam

Ibn al–Jawzi has said: "When the 'Abba'sids saw that the caliphate came out of their hands (and was handed over) to the sons of 'Ali b. Abu' Ta'lib, they poisoned 'Ali b. Musa' al–Ridha', and he died in a village called Sana'ba'd, in Tu's. A group of people has claimed that al–Ma'mu'n gave him poison to drink. And it is not as it has been mentioned, for al–Ma'mu'n showed sadness for him, to the extent that none like him showed sadness over him, and he wrote to the (people of) the regions in order to condole them.6"

3. His Death of Poison

Some historians have mentioned that the Imam, peace be on him, died of poison⁷, and they have mentioned nothing other than that.

These are some of the statements which have been mentioned; they are irregular and have no share of reality, for it is certain that it was al-Ma'mu'n who assassinated the Imam, and not the 'Abba'sid family, and that he did not die a natural death. Al-Ma'mu'n committed this crime in order to get rid of the Imam, for his reputation spread all over Islamic world, the proofs of his Imamate were clear, the Muslims loved him, had high moral traits and exalted manners, clung to Allah, renounced the world, and other qualities, whereas al-Ma'mu'n and the rest of the 'Abba'sid kings were void of any noble inclination and exalted quality.

Any how, most historians have unanimously agreed that it was al-Ma'mu'n who poisoned the Imam, for he had killed in this manner a group of the great figures of his time out of fear of them.8

To the Shelter Garden

The Imam was intensely tried during assuming the position of heir apparent, for al-Ma'mu'n vigorously straitened him, imposed intense watch over him, and encompassed him with huge security forces. The Imam was tired of life, so he supplicate Allah to move him form this world to the Abode of Everlastingness, saying: "O Allah, if my relief of that in which I am is through death, then hasten the hour for me (i.e. take me unto Yourself)."

Allah responded to the supplication of His great friend. He moved him from the world, which was surrounded by adversities and sufferings, to the Abode of the Truth. Now, we will show how he died. The Imam, peace be on him, summoned Harthema b. A'yun in the darkness of the night. When Herthama came, the Imam said to him:

"O Herthama, this is the time of my departure to Allah, the Exalted, and of my joining my grandfather and my fore–fathers, peace be on them; the fixed term has come; this tyrannical one (i.e. al–Ma'mu'n) has decided to kill me with squeezed grapes and pomegranates. He will have needles prodded into the grapes at the place of their storks; he will put some poison on the hand of one of his retainers and order him to knead pomegranates with it, that they may be stained with poison. He will summon me on the next day, bring the grapes and pomegranates near to me, and ask me to eat them. I will eat them, so the decision is valid and the decree is present.

"When I die, he (al-Ma'mu'n) will say: 'I will wash him with my hand.' When he says that, be alone with him and say to him on my behalf: 'He (al-Ridha') said to you: 'Do not wash, shroud, and bury me. For if you do that, He (Allah) will hasten for you the punishment which He has delayed from you, and the painful thing of which you are cautious will befall you.' So surely he will refrain (from doing that)."

The Imam added, saying: "When he (al-Ma'mu'n) let you wash me, he will sit on one of his lofty houses in order to tower over the place where I will be washed. So, O Herthama, do not wash me until you see that a white tent is installed beside the house. When you see that, then carry me (while I am wearing) my garments in which I am, place me from behind the tent, and stop behind it; someone other than you will be with you; do not remove the tent from me lest you should see me and be destroyed.

"He (al-Ma'mu'n) will tower over you and say to you: 'O Herthama, do you not claim that none washes the Imam except an Imam like him? So who will wash Abu' al-Hasan 'Ali b. Musa' (al-Ridha') while his son Muhammad is in Medina, in the country of al-Hija'z, and we are at Tu's?

"If he says that, say to him: 'We say: Surely none must wash the Imam except an Imam like him. If an aggressor transgresses and washes the Imam, the Imamate of the Imam will not be invalid because of the transgression of the one who washes him, nor will the Imamate of the Imam after him be invalid because he is prevented from washing his father. If Abu' al-Hasan 'Ali b. Musa' al-Ridha', peace be on him, had been allowed (to live) in Medina, his son Muhammad would have washed him apparent and

uncovered. None will now wash him except a hidden one.' When the tent is raised, you will see that I have been wrapped in my shrouds. Then put me into my coffin and carry me. When he (al-Ma'mu'n) wants to dig my grave, he will make the grave of his father Ha'ru'n al-Rashid as *qibla* for my grave, and that will never occur. When they strike the ground with the picks, they will dig nothing of it even the clipping of a finger-nail. When they do their best and it was difficult for them to do that, then say to them: 'He (al-Ridha') has ordered me to strike one pick in the *qibla* of the grave of his (al-Ma'mu'n's) father, Ha'ru'n al-Rashid.' When you strike (with the pick), you will make it reach a dug grave and a standing shrine. When the grave is open, then do not lay me in it until the white water gushes out of the shrine wherein and it becomes full of water. When the water sinks, then lay me in that grave and bury me in that shrine.9"

The Imam ordered Herthama to memorize his words, and he responded to what the Imam wanted. On the following day, al-Ma'mu'n sent for the Imam. When the Imam came, al-Ma'mu'n rose for him, embraced him, kissed him on the forehead, seated him beside him, conversed with him, ordered one of his retainers to bring him grapes and pomegranates.

Herthama said: "I became impatient and shook (with fear)."

Al-Ma'mu'n gave a bunch of grapes to the Imam and said to him: "O son of Allah's Messenger, I have never seen grapes better than these."

"Perhaps, there are grapes better than them in the Garden," retorted the Imam.

Al-Ma'mu'n asked the Imam to have some grapes, and he refrained from having them, so al-Ma'mu'n shouted at him: "Perhaps, you are accusing as of something."

The Imam ate three grapes, then he threw them away and rose, so al-Ma'mu'n asked him: "Where are you going?"

"To my house," replied the Imam. 10

The Imam went in a hurry to his house. The poison acted on all parts of his body, and he was sure of the coming down of the fatal misfortune. Al-Ma'mu'n sent for him and asked him for sincere advice, and he, peace be on him, said to his messenger: "Say to him (al-Ma'mu'n): He (al-Ridha') advises you not to give anyone anything for which you must repent 11"

The poison circulated through all parts of the Imam's body, and he suffered from severe aches. He came to know that he was about to meet his Lord. So he recited some verses of the Holy Qur'an, asked Allah's forgiveness, and supplicated for the believers, male and female. The narrators have said: "When he was in a critical condition, his household and his companions refrained from having food and drink."

So he, peace be on him, turned to Ya'sir and asked him: "Have the people eaten anything?"

He answered him with a faint voice with sad tones, saying: "Who can eat while you are in a critical condition?"

He, peace be on him, rose, and then he said: "Bring me the food; he seated all his servants around the food; and reviewed them one by one. When they had finished eating, he ordered them to carry him to his womenfolk. When they had finished eating, he fainted. 12"

In the darkness of the night, the Imam recited some verses of the Holy Qur'an, and the last verse which he recited was these words of Him, the Exalted: Say: Had we remained in your houses, those for whom slaughter was ordained would certainly have gone forth to the places where they would be slain. 13 And the command of Allah is a decree that is made absolute. 14

Then his pure soul set out for its Creator<u>15</u>; it was surrounded by the angels of the Merciful (Allah) and was received in the Gardens of Everlastingness by the souls of the prophets and the testamentary trustees.

The world became dark because of losing him and the hereafter became bright on account of his arrival. His death caused a misfortune to the scholars, the jurists, and the thinkers who took from his sciences; likewise, his death caused a misfortune to the populace, for they lost the one who took care of their interests and strove for their affairs.

The Imam moved to the Domain of Holiness after he had delivered the message of his Lord, for he did not take part in any positive work for the government of al-Ma'mu'n, and refused all kinds of cooperation with it, so he was able to prove that it was illegal, and that it was not standing on the law of Allah, the Most High; therefore, he subjected himself to all kinds of persecution, to the extent that al-Ma'mu'n put an end to him.

Al-Ma'mu'n's pretense

Al-Ma'mu'n showed false sadness and impatience for the death of the Imam. He went out bare-footed and headed. He struck his head, seized his beard, wept, and said at the top of his voice: "By Allah! I do not know which of the two calamities is greater: losing you and parting from you, or people's accusation that I assassinated and killed you. 16"

Al-Ma'mu'n displayed sorrow for the death of the Imam, peace be on him, in order to rid himself of the accusation of assassinating him, but, shortly after that, the people came to know of his pretense and became fully aware of that it was he who assassinated him.

Concealing the Death of the Imam

Al-Ma'mu'n hid the death of the Imam, peace be on him, for a day and a night. 17 I (i.e. the author) think that he prepared himself for emergencies and was afraid of a popular revolt against him. Accordingly, he

ordered his security forces and his military forces to prepare themselves for every emergency.

The Body of the Imam is escorted

The people escorted the body of the Imam in a manner of which Khurasa'n had never witnessed throughout its history. For all official departments and commercial shops were closed, and all classes of people went in a hurry to escort the Imam's holy body; they were either weeping or silent. Black flags were hoisted; tears flowed abundantly; and crying became aloud everywhere for the late Imam, who was like a shelter to them. Al–Ma'mu'n was in front of the coffin while he was bare–footed and headed, and behind him were the high ranking statesmen and the military commanders who mentioned the outstanding merits of the Imam and the heavy loss which befell the community out of his death.

At his Final Resting Place

The holy body was brought to its final resting place under a halo of exclaiming, 'Allah is great!' and magnification. His grave was dug beside the grave of Ha'ru'n, who killed the Imam's father. Then al-Ma'mu'n buried the Imam in the grave and buried along with him all excellent qualities and noble inclinations through which people become sublime.

Then the people came and condoled with al-Ma'mu'n, the rest of the 'Alawides and the 'Abba'sids on their painful misfortune. Sadness and sorrow melted all hearts of the people, for they lost the Imam of the Muslims, the master of the Allah-fearing and those who turned to Allah in repentance. It is worth mentioning that al-Ma'mu'n asked the people about the reason for burying the Imam beside the grave of his father, and they answered him: "Because Allah will forgive Ha'ru'n on account of his neighboring Imam al-Ridha', peace be on him." However, the inspired poet, Di'bil al-Khaza'i, has disproved this justification, saying:

If you have a need in religion, then stop at Tu's by the grave of the pure one wherein.

The nearness to the pure one does not benefit the unclean

one; nor does the nearness to the unclean one harm the

pure one.

How far! Everyone is hostage to that which his own hands

earn, so take or leave whatever you desire.

Two graves are at Tu's: (The grave) of the best of all

people and the grave of the wickedest of them; this is

Al-Ma'mu'n stays at the Grave of the Imam

Al-Ma'mu'n resided by the holy grave of the Imam for three days. He fasted by day, recited the Holy Qur'an, and asked Allah to have mercy on the Imam, peace be on him. That is because he wanted to show that he did not assassinate the Imam, that he was loyal to him and loved him. However the garment of pretense is transparent, for all the people came to know that al-Ma'mu'n showed false sadness for the Imam.

Al-Ma'mu'n and Herthama

Al-Ma'mu'n summoned Herthama and asked him to tell him about what he had heard of the Imam and what he had said to him regarding his being poisoned by the grapes and the pomegranates. Herthama began telling al-Ma'mu'n about that, and his face sometimes turned yellow and sometimes turned red, and he said with tones dripping regret and sorrow for what he had committed with regard to the Imam, saying:

"Woe upon al-Ma'mu'n from Allah! Woe upon him from Allah's Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family! Woe upon him from 'Ali b. Abu' Ta'lib! Woe upon al-Ma'mu'n from Fa'tima al-Zahra"! Woe upon al-Ma'mu'n from al-Hasan and al-Husayn! Woe upon al-Ma'mu'n from 'Ali b. al-Husayn! Woe upon al-Ma'mu'n from Muhammad b. 'Ali! Woe upon al-Ma'mu'n from Ja'far b. Muhammad! Woe upon him from Musa' b. Ja'far! Woe upon al-Ma'mu'n from 'Ali b. Musa' al-Ridha'! This is, by Allah, the clear loss!"

Al-Ma'mu'n ordered Herthama to conceal what the Imam had said to him, and not to announce it, and then he recited these words of Him, the Exalted: *They hide themselves from men and do not hide themselves from Allah, and He is with them when they mediate by night words which please Him not, and Allah encompasses what they do.* 18

Woe upon al-Ma'mu'n because of the great sin which he committed! For he assassinated the master of the Muslims, the Imam of the Allah-fearing, and the piece of the liver of Allah's Messenger, may Allah bless him and his family.

The Age of the Imam

The historians have differed over the age of the Imam, peace be on him, which was full of laudable deeds and excellences. The following are some of their statements regarding it:

- 1. 47 years. 19
- 2. 48 years.20

- 3. 49 years.21
- 4. 50 years.22
- 5. 51 years.23
- 6. 55 years.24
- 7. 57 years and 49 days or 79 days.25

This difference has resulted from the difference in the date of his birth. Al-Sayyid al-Amin thinks that this difference has resulted from regarding incomplete year as complete one.26

Poets lament for the Imam

The news of the death of the Imam astonished the Muslims, for they received the painful news with sorrow and deep sadness, and for they lost through his death what they hoped for and dreamed of such as returning the Islamic caliphate to its original source, getting rid of the wicked persons, the Imams (leaders) of oppression and tyranny, establishing in their quarters political and social justice. The death of the Imam disappointed the Muslims, made their tears flow abundantly, and melted their hearts. So a group of poets lamented for the Imam through its melted souls. The following are some of it:

1. Ashja' Bin 'Amru' al-Salami

Ashja' b. 'Amru' al-Salami lamented for the Imam through a poem called 'Asma", which gives an account of his deep sadness for losing the Imam of the Muslims and displays the heavy loss which befell Islamic world. The poem says:

O possessor of the camels, (O he who is seizing) their reins, urging them forward, and singing! Make (him) hear; listen, O possessor of the camels! Tomorrow recite (my) greetings to the grave at Tu's; recite neither greetings nor blessings to Tu's.

For therein a terror has befallen the hearts of the Muslims, and therein the terror of Iblis has disappeared.

And (for) it has abducted the unique one and master of the world, so what a man is he whom (the world) has abducted!

If death appeared when it circulated through (his body), it would face before it the faces of bold men.

May Tu's be miserable! For his houses were not among that through which the days terrify him with misery.

He is resident where no residence is vague. What long remoteness and residence these are!

Surly the claws of death could reach him while before him was an army with many phalanxes.

Death came to him in the place of his brave sons, and death meets the father of cubs (i.e. the lion) in his place.

He was still taking from the light of his father, who belonged to the family of the Prophet, light which was not taken (from others); in a nursery where their branches rose in high (trees) planted in the plains of the kingdom.

And the branch ascends on nothing except on firm bases and foundations in the world.

No days is worthier of tearing at clothes nor striking at cheeks nor cutting off nose than the day of Tu's through whose terror the mourners called out to us (as did) the mouths of the sheets (of paper).27

Indeed the time destroyed him; death seeks none except those precious.

During these two minutes and two days, he is lying down in a grave; he is similar to a (person) who was buried two days ago.

During sunrise death came to him; the day of death was not withheld from him.

O he who has dwelled in a grave (in a place) other than his house! O victim of the day and not being killed!

You have been blessed by Him whom you served during midday heat in those deserts.

Were it not for that the world contradicted its own beauties, men of measures would not measure it.

Allah has made you dwell in an everlasting abode; in an abode with which Allah's Messenger is familiar.28

Have you seen this painful grief which befell Islamic world out of losing the unique one and master of the world, the great Imam?

In his wonderful poem, Ashja' has pictured the heavy loss which befell the Muslims, and which is worthy of tearing garments and striking cheeks, for the time concealed the leader, master and Imam of the community.

This poem spread and the people memorized it. Ashja' was afraid of this spread, so he changed the words of the poem and composed them regarding Ha'ru'n al-Rashid.29

2. Di'bil al-Khaza"i

Di'bil al-Khaza"i the poet of *Ahl al-Bayt*, peace be on him wept bitter tears for Imam al-Ridha', peace be on him, and lamented for him, to the extent that his soul melted with sorrow and sadness. This is one

of the poems which he has composed regarding lamenting for him:

He (al-Ridha') is my own soul and, in addition, I hide in my heart love for the family of Muhammad.

The legacy of the Prophet has harmed them, so death has taken part in it.

(Men like) wolves from among the Umayyads have summoned them; successive crisis and years have lent on them.

The 'Abba'sids have caused mischief to the religion with a mischief; a wrongdoer and suspicious one have dominated it (the religion).

They have called (this) Rashid (wise) not because of his wisdom among them; and (they have called) that Ma'mu'n and that Amin.

So no care has been accepted from them through wisdom (*rushd*); nor has religion been accepted from a ruler (from among them) through the Imamate.

Their Rashid (wise) is errant, and his two sons after him (are errant too); misfortunes belong to this; apart from that is dissoluteness.

O grave whose place is strange at Tu's, the columns weep bitter tears for you.

I doubt, so I do not know whether you were given a drink (of poison), so I will weep for you, or the suspicion of death, so it is easy (for me).

Which of them have you said? If you say that it is a drink (of poison) or (natural) death, then it is worthy (of weeping).

Are you amazed at the rude when they hide the principal features of religion while they are very clear?

Certainly, you have preceded them through your excellence. I have a verse (regarding that), but there was no certainty.30

Another example of what he has composed concerning lamenting for the Imam is these poetry lines:

Why has my eye shed tears? If it looses the water of the veins, then it will be delighted with him for whom the earth weeps, and for whom the heads of the high mountains have been brought back and they have become lowly.

The sky has mourned over missing him; the stars have wailed for him and become tired.

Allah is pleased with our late one, the grandson of our Prophet. The world had opposed (him) and turned away from him.

So today we are worthier of weeping over him because of a misfortune we regard as difficult and great.

The world after the family of Muhammad is not good; we must not pay attention to it when it vanishes.

The misfortunes of the time have become manifest, but I do not see that our misfortune regarding the chosen ones has become clear.31

Another example of what he has composed concerning lamenting for the Imam is these poetry lines:

O regret which frequents and tear which does not come to an end,

(I weep) over 'Ali b. Musa' b. Ja'far b. Muhammad, who passed away strange at Tu's (and was) like the unsheathed sword.

O Tu's, you are blessed! Certainly, you have become the grave of the son of Ahmed.

Shed tears, O my eyes! And flame, O my heart!32

Another example of what he has composed concerning lamenting for the Imam is these poetry lines:

('Ali) b. Musa' and exaltedness have departed; noble knowledge and religion have followed him just as the intimate, bosom friend does.

O delegation of generosity, old and young, come back with light bags!

We hoped that the Imam of guidance, who had wise opinions, would subsist.

You see his conditions and say: (They are) excellent and under his calmness is exalted excellence.

He has generous ones (who carry) his gifts and go early in the morning every day, and (he has generous ones who) roam by night.

So the decreed death has given as a gift to his soul a remote shrine.

Say to those who gloat over him: Slowly, death will let none walk; you have become delighted with the death of the young man over whom Allah's Messenger and the True Religion weep.33

Yet another example of what he has composed concerning lamenting for the Imam is these poetry lines:

O calamity who has come from the east! You have not left nor retained (anything) of me.

The death of 'Ali b. Musa' al-Ridha' is of Allah's wrath upon the creation.

Islam has wept over a gap which cannot be closed easily.

Heavy rain has watered the strange one whose grave has been built at Tu's.

My eye has prevented (me) from sleeping, and my bowels have become fond of disorder.34

This elegiac poetry gives an account of Di'bil's deep sadness for the death of the Imam of the Muslims, master of the Allah-fearing, Imam al-Ridha', peace be on him, whose death has left a cut in Islam.

3. Ibn al-Mushayya' al-Medeni

Among those who were burnt by the fire of sadness for missing the Imam, peace be on him, is Ibn al-Mushayya' al-Medeni, who has composed on lamenting for the Imam:

O spot wherein is my master; there is no master like him among the people.

Guidance and generosity died after him, so death has gotten ready to deaden (all good manners).

O his grave, the rain of Allah still frequents you from Him.

He was for us (like) rain with which we quench (our thirst), and he was like the star through which we find the right way.

Surely 'Ali Bin Musa' al-Ridha' and righteousness have rested in one grave.

So O my eye, weep blood over the extinction of glory and righteousness after him!

4. Al-Khawa'fi

Among the poets who lamented for the Imam, peace be on him, is 'Ali b. 'Abd Allah al-Khawa'fi, who says:

May Allah water you with mercy, O land of Tu's!

What has you contained of the blessings, O Tu's!

Your spots have become good in the world, and they have been made good by a person buried at Sana'ba'd.

A person, whose demise is difficult for Islam, is immersed in and plunged into the mercy of Allah.

O his grave, you are a grave embraced by clemency, knowledge, purity, and sacredness.

You pride yourself (upon him), for surely you are delighted with his corpse, and you are guarded by the pious angels.

5. Al-Dabi

This is one of the good poems which have been composed concerning lamenting for the Imam. Shaykh

al-Sadu'q said: "I have found the poem in a book which belongs to Muhammad b. Habib al-Dabi." It is more likely that it belongs to him, for he has mentioned that in the last lines of the poem:

In the grave at Tu's has resided an Imam to whom visitation is obligatory and general.

The grave in which the Peace has resided, to which greetings and salam are given as a gift.

The grave whose flashing lights remove blindness and through whose earth maladies are repelled.

The grave which represents to eyes that Muhammad, his testamentary trustee, and al-Ma'mu'n are standing.

Eyes are lowly before this and that (i.e. Muhammad and his testamentary trustee) out of dignity; understandings are bewildered by their essences.

When visitors stop at the quarter of the grave and depart, their sins are forgiven, they supply themselves with security against punishment, and they are safe from that execution will not befall them.

Allah gives security to them (visitors) through it, and because of it the pens have become dried to them.

Had it not for it, no cloud would water the country, though it is in no need of the watering of rain.

'Ali b. Musa' has resided in the grave of whose earth boast the sanctuary and the area outside sanctuary (al-hill).

The running (al-sa'i) to it has been made obligatory just as the (Sacred) House, which has, apart from it, the right of magnification.

If one visits it recognizing its right, then it is forbidden for the Hellfire to touch his body, his rank, without doubt, is praiseworthy tomorrow, he will have a place in the Gardens of Everlastingness, and he has, regarding that, Allah the Most Faithful Guarantor; (this is) an oath which all oaths reach.

Allah blesses the Prophet Muhammad and 'Ali, who supported Islam.

Likewise, al-Zahra" is eternally blessed by the Lord, Who knows her obligatory right.

He blesses him ('Ali), and then He starts with al-Hasan, and (blesses) al-Husayn, may Allah honor him.

He blesses 'Ali al-Taqi, Muhammad, and every gallant Sayyid.

Even though the dwarfs may be averse (to blessing), He blesses with the best blessing the educated, pure one, Ja'far al-Sa'diq (the truthful one), from whom your knowledge is reported and to whom peoples cling.

Similarly, He blesses Musa', your father, and after him, He blesses you with a permanent blessing.

He has doubled blessing for Muhammad al-Zaki; He blesses 'Ali as long as a speech continues.

He blesses al-Ridha' b. al-Ridha' al-Hasan because of whose missing darkness has dominated the country.

And He blesses his (i.e. al-Ridha"s) successor through whom the system has become complete and perfect.

For it is he who is the hoped one through whom guidance will return fresh and the (religious) precepts become firm.

Had it not for the Imams, Islam would become effaced and submissive.

Each (Imam) takes the place of his predecessor until the days end in al-Qa"im.

O son of the Prophet and Allah's proof who stands for prayer and fasting, if an Imam from among you disappears, his place is taken by his successor through whom maladies are cured.

Surely the Imams are equal in excellence and knowledge when old-aged and young.

You are the means and mediation to Allah; you have taught guidance (to men), so you are the Emblems of it.

You are the guardians of the religion, the world, and those who are respected and protected for Allah.

The people (are nothing) except those who acknowledge your excellence; the diners are beasts and livestock.

Rather they are straying farther off from the path because of their unbelief, and those from among them who follow them are featherless arrows (used by ancient Arabs in divination).

They claim regarding your world as if they (did you) favor through denying your favors.

O Allah's Blessing whom He bestows upon whom He, the Munificent, chooses from among His creatures.

If your body is absent from us, your soul constantly presents.

Your souls themselves are present even if (your) bodies have been hidden from eyes.

The difference between you and the Prophet is prophecy, for after that feet are equal.

Two graves are at Tu's: The Guidance is in one, and the Error is in a grave which he sees as a flame.

Two graves are connected with each other: This (grave) is a lovable garden35 where the Imam is visited.

And likewise that (grave) is a pit of the Hellfire therein burning thirst renewed for the errant one (i.e. Ha'ru'n al-Rashid).

The nearness of the errant one to the pure one (i.e. Imam al-Ridha') doubles his chastisement in spite of him.

Though he is near to him, he is far, and on him is a pile of robes of chastisement.

And likewise, you are not harmed by the unclean one who has been brought night o you by rocks and marble.

No, rather they show you that they are greater in regret for you when you are honored and the cursed one is subjected to severe, doubled torment throughout hours, days, and years.

I wish I knew: Will your Qa"m be a sufficient sword for fighting tomorrow?

Through the sword, my hands will quench the thirst in the bowels (for revenging) you; I have not quenched my burning thirst yet.

Your graves excite me just as landmarks and tents excite those other than me.

If someone is very fond of praising the rich, then through praising you I have ardent love.

I have given to Abu' al-Hasan al-Ridha' the poem as a gift, which is pleasing and (which) understandings enjoy.

Take it from al-Dabi, your servant, who has found easy blames regarding you.

If I perform Allah's right regarding you, then I have the right of the entertainment of guest when he comes at night.

Therefore, accept my purpose, for I regard your accepting my purpose as a gain.

If one comes to know about love for you through teaching, then my love for you is an inspiration.36

I (i.e. the author) have never read poetry better than this poem, which flows with the soul of friendship and pure affection toward the members of the House (*Ahl al-Bayt*), peace be on them, the summoners to Allah and guides to His good pleasure. The poem also contains clear words and a beautiful style, for, in this poem, there is no foreign word which one's ear rejects or from which one's nature turns away; rather all the words therein are harmonious, sweet, and light to temper. Moreover, the poem has a group of high values in which the Shi'ites have believed in respect of their love for the members of the House (*Ahl al-Bayt*), peace be on them.

With this poem we will end our talk about what the poets have composed concerning lamenting for the

Imam. Generally speaking, the poems display the heavy loss which befell the Muslims when they lost their great Imam.

- 1. Ibid., p. 145.
- 2. Ibid., 164.
- 3. Ibn Khaldu'n, Ta'rikh, vol. 3, p. 249. Al-Ka'mil, vol. 5, p. 191. Al-Ada'b al-Sulta'niya wa al-Diwal al-Isla'miya, p. 218. Bahr al-Ansa'b, p. 28.
- 4. Ibn Khaldu'n, Ta'rikh, vol. 3, p. 250.
- 5. Ibn Khullaka'n, Wafaya't al-A'ya'n. Al-Dhahabi, Ta'rikh al-Isla'm, vol. 8, p. 35.
- 6. Tadhkirat al-Khawa's, p. 364. Al-Muntazam, vol. 10, p. 67.
- 7. Al-Biha'r.
- 8. We have mentioned their names in the previous chapters.
- 9. 'Uyu'n Akhba'r al-Ridha', vol. 2, p. 247. Nu'r al-Absa'r, p. 145.
- 10. 'Uyu'n Akhba'r al-Ridha', vol. 2, p. 243.
- 11. 'Uyu'n al-Tawa'rikh, vol. 3, p. 227.
- 12. 'Uyu'n Akhba'r al-Ridha', vol. 2, p. 241.
- 13. Qur'an, 3, 153.
- 14. Ibid., 33, 38.
- 15. 'Uyu'n Akhba'r al-Ridha', vol. 2, p. 241.
- 16. Ibid.
- 17. Maqa'til al-Ta'libyyin, p. 567. Al-Mufid, al-Irsha'd, p. 316.
- 18. Akhba'r al-Ridha', vol. 2, p. 249.
- 19. A'ya'n al-Shi'a, 4/Q 2/78.
- 20. Ibid.
- 21. 'Uyu'n al-Tawa'rikh, vol. 3, p. 226. Kashf al-Ghumma, vol. 3, p. 56.
- 22. A'ya'n al-Shi'a, 4/Q 2/78.
- 23. Ibid.
- 24. Usu'l al-Ka'fi, vol. 1, p. 486. Kifa'yat al-Ta'lib, p. 458. Nu'r al-Absa'r, p. 144. Bahr al-Ansa'b, p. 28.
- 25. A'ya'n al-Shi'a, 4/Q 2/78.
- 26. Ibid.
- 27. By the mouths of the sheets (of paper) the poet means those letter written regarding the death of Imam al-Ridha', peace be on him, and sent to all regions; he has likened them to men.
- 28. Maqa'til al-Ta'libiyyin, pp. 568-570.
- 29. Ibid., 568.
- 30. Maqa'til al-Ta'libiyyin.
- 31. Di'bil, Divan, p. 99.
- 32. Ibid., p. 101.
- 33. Ibid., p. 108.
- 34. Ibid., pp. 108-109.
- 35. In the tradition: "Surely, this pulpit of mine is on one of the gardens."
- 36. 'Uyu'n Akhba'r al-Ridha', vol. 2, pp. 252-254.

Source URL:

https://www.al-islam.org/life-imam-ali-bin-musa-al-ridha-bagir-sharif-al-gurashi/epilog#comment-0