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Home > The Life of Imam Musa Bin Ja'far Al-Kazim > Epilogue > 32. In his Final Resting Place

Epilogue

A terrible misfortune befell the grandson of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, his deposit in his community, the like of al-Mesih, 'Isa b. Maryam in fear of Allah and piety. The avenues of life were closed before him. All kinds of difficulties and detested things surrounded him. Harun, the tyrannical, wreaked his wrath upon him.

He made him taste all kinds of abasement and punishment. He shackled him and threw him into prisons. He set spies on him lest the people should have mercy on him and entertain him. He moved him from one prison to another. He severely punished all those who honored him and took care of him. He flogged al–Fadhl b. Yehya and openly cursed him, for he did not harass the Imam.

The affair of the Imam, peace be on him, tired al-Rashid. His name, his excellence, the talk of the people about his ordeal and persecution deprived him of sleep. So he commanded the high-ranking men of his state to assassinate him, but they did not respond to him. That is because he came to know the miracles of the Imam, peace be on him, his devoting himself to Allah and to worship Him.

They feared that their comfort would be removed if they subject him to detested things. At last Harun found none more wicked than al–Sindi b. Shahik to carry out his desires. Al–Sindi was a sinful rogue. He neither respected Allah nor believed in the hereafter. Harun commanded him to move the Imam to his prison and to harass him. Al–Sindi responded to him when he treated the Imam rudely and severely. As for the Imam, he was patient, restrained his rage, and entrusted his affair to Allah.

The Imam faced a horrible misfortune when he was moved to the prison of al-Sindi b. Shahik. For he spared no effort to exhaust him and to punish him severely. He went too far in harming him. He harassed him in his eating and drinking. He shackled him and made him hear nothing except cursing and abuse. He did all these things to seek nearness to Harun and to attain something of his world.

We will mention what happened to the Imam during this terrible time, which was the last part of his life. We will also mention his other affairs such as his commandments, his endowments, etc.

1. The Place of his Imprisonment

The Imam, peace be on him, was detained in the prison called Daar al-Musayyab situated by the gate of Kufa. He died in it. 1 A historian has said that he was detained in the house of al-Sindi, and that he was among his family. We do not know whether the house of al-Sindi was Daar al-Musayyab or not.

2. Al-Sindi harasses the Imam

Al-Rashid ordered al-Sindi to harass the Imam and to shackle him in thirty ratls of iron, to close the door at his face, and to prevent him from going out except for performing an ablution. Al-Sindi yielded to that. He exhausted the Imam. He spared no effort to harass him.

He set Bashshar, his servant, as a spy on him. Bashshar was the greatest of all the people in harboring malice against the family of Abu Talib. However, shortly after that his condition changed, and he returned to the way of the truth. That is because he saw the achievements and miracles of the Imam, peace be on him. Then he offered some services to him.3

Al-Sindi did not respect the sacredness of the Imam; he treated him badly. Abu al-Azher b. Nasih al-Berjehi has narrated, saying: "I met with Ibn al-Sikkit 4 in a mosque situated near to al-Sindi's house. I debated with him on Arabic philology. There was a man in the mosque. We did not know the man. He turned to us and said: 'Fellows, you are in need of setting right your religion more than setting right your languages.'

The man gave us many proofs of the necessity for the Imamate. Then he said: 'There is nothing between you and the Imam of that except this wall. He indicated with his hand to al-Sindi's wall. 'Perhaps, you mean this imprisoned one?' We asked him. 'Yes,' he replied."

Abu al-Azher said: "So we came to know that the man was a Shi'ite, and that he maintained the Imamate. So we said to him: 'We have kept your words as a secret.' Then we asked him to leave lest we should be punished because of him. Then the man opposed us, saying: 'By Allah, they will never do that. By Allah, I have said nothing to you except his affair. Surely he sees us and hears our speech. If he wished, he would be among us.'"

Abu al-Azher said: "In the meantime, a man came in to us through the door of the mosque. The intellects were about to go due to his dignity and veneration. So we came to know that he was Imam Musa b. Ja'far, peace be on him. He spoke first, saying: 'I am the man about whom my companion told you.'

Meanwhile al-Sindi along with a group of his policemen came and said to the Imam shamelessly: 'Woe unto you! How many a time you go out through the closed doors with your magic and trick? If you escaped, it would be more loveable to me than your standing in this place! Do you want the Caliph to kill

me, Musa?"

The Imam became displeased with his words, so he said to him: "How shall I escape while I will be martyred by you?" 5 Then al-Sindi took the Imam by the hand and threw him into the prison. In this manner al-Sindi, the tyrannical one, treated the Imam. He treated him with all the ways that displeased, hurt, and annoyed him. Yet the Imam, peace be on him, was patient. He restrained his fury and complained of his worries and sorrows to Allah.

3. The Imam devotes himself to Worship

The Imam, peace be on him, dedicated himself to the acts of worship to Allah. He fasted by day and performed prayers by night. He spent most his time in the acts of worship. He did not flag of remembering Allah. We have mentioned the tradition of al-Sindi's sister about his acts of worship in the previous chapters of the book.

When she saw that the Imam devoted himself to the acts of worship and obedience to Allah, she changed her mind and became righteous. She sympathized with the Imam and served him. When she looked at him, she wept and said: "The people who resist this man are unsuccessful!"6

4. Some Religious Scholars visit the Imam

Some religious scholars and narrators secretly visited the Imam. They studied under him. Among them was Musa b. Ibrahim al-Merwezi. Then al-Sindi permitted Ibrahim to visit the Imam, for he was the teacher of his children. Ibrahim wrote a book about what he heard from the Imam. We have mentioned that when we mentioned the Imam's companions and the narrators of his traditions.

Hind b. al-Hajjajj and other Muslim thinkers communicated with the Imam. Abu Yousif and Muhammad b. al-Hasan came in to him in the dark night. They wanted to test him in some important questions that they might come to know of his knowledge. When they sat down, an official came and said to the Imam: "My duty is over, and I am going to leave. If you have a need, then order me to bring it to you tomorrow." The Imam, peace be on him, said: "I have no need, leave."

When the official left, the Imam, peace be on him, turned to Abu Yousif and his friend and said to them: "I wonder at this man. He asked me to entrust him with a need to bring it to me tomorrow, while he will die tonight." So they refrained from questioning him and rose. They became astonished and said to each other:

"We wanted to ask him about the religious duties and the Prophet's traditions, but he talked with us about the unseen. By Allah, we will send someone to spend the night at the man's door that he may come to know of his affair. Immediately, they sent a person, and the person sat at the man's house to watch it.

When he sat there, he heard the people in the man's house crying and lamenting loudly. He asked them about what had happened, and they told him that the man had died. So he soon rose and told them about the affair. They became astonished at the Imam's knowledge. Many traditionists have narrated this story.8

The story indicates that the Imam had knowledge of the unseen, and that the veil was uncovered for him. The Shi'a have maintained that and given many proofs of it. Surely, the Imams from among the members of the house (Ahl al–Bayt), peace be on them, predicted many things, and they happened just as they said. Without doubt, the Imams were the inheritors of the knowledge of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family. Allah inspired them with all kinds of science and made them know hidden affairs.

5. Religious Questions sent to the Imam

The people in the Islamic countries maintaining the Imamate sent a messenger to the Imam, peace be on him, when he was in the prison of al–Sindi. They supplied the messenger with their questions and their letters. The Imam, peace be on him, answered them. Among those went to the Imam was 'Ali b. Swayyid. He went to the Imam and gave him the questions and the letters. The Imam, peace be on him, answered them. We will mention his tradition.

6. The Imam appoints Representatives

The Imam, peace be on him, appointed some of his students and of his companions as representatives in some Islamic areas. He ordered his Shi'ites (followers) to resort to them in religious precepts. He also entrusted to them receiving the lawful rights, that they might spend them on the poor, the miserable Shi'ites, and on good deeds. He appointed al-Mufeddel b. 'Amr as his representative to receive the legal rights.

He permitted him to spend them on those who deserve them. He also appointed other representatives such as Hayyan al-Sarrajj, Ziyad b. Merwan al-Qendi, and 'Ali b. Abi Hamza. A lot of money reached them from the Shi'a. However, they betrayed Allah and His Apostle. That is because they bought for it country estates and palaces. Moreover, they maintained the viewpoint of the Waqifites when they denied the Imamate of Imam al-Ridha', peace be on him.

7. The Imam appoints his Successor

Imam Musa, peace be on him, appointed after him his son Imam al-Ridha', peace be on him, as his successor. He made him as a signpost for his followers and as a religious authority for the community of his grandfather. Al-Husayn b. al-Mukhtar has narrated, saying: "When Imam Musa, peace be on him, was in prison, he sent us some letters in which he wrote: 'I entrust the succession after me to the eldest

He appointed his son Imam al-Ridha' as a successor after him. That was before Harun, the tyrannical, killed him. He entrusted him with the office of the Imamate. He ordered his special associates to follow him. Muhammad b. Zayd b. 'Ali b. al-Husayn narrated, saying: "Abu Ibrahim (Imam Musa) invited us.

We were seventeen persons from among the children of 'Ali and Fatima. He asked us to bear witness that 'Ali his son was his testamentary trustee and representative during his lifetime and after his death." 10 The Imam, peace be on him, appointed over them the Imam after him. He did not neglect the affair of the Imamate. So he guided his Shi'ites to the way of the truth and correctness.

8. His Commandments

Imam Musa, peace be on him, appointed his son Imam al-Ridha', peace be on him, as his testamentary trustee. He entrusted him with the succession after him. He wrote him two kinds of commandments. They included his authority over his endowments and his deputyship on his behalf over his personal and general affairs. He asked some believers to bear witness for it.

As for the first group of the commandments, I (the author) have not found it. As for the second group, it has been mentioned by a group of great figures. Before he stated and recorded it, he summoned the witnesses who are: Ibrahim b. Muhammad al–Je'feri, Ishaq b. Muhammad al–Je'feri, Ishaq b. Ja'far b. Muhammad, Ja'far b. Salih, Muhammad al–Je'feri, Yehya b. al–Husayn b. Zayd, Sa'd b. 'Umran al–Ansari, Muhammad b. al–Harith al–Ansari, Yazid b. Sulayt al–Ansari, Muhammad b. Ja'far b. Sa'd al–Aslemi, who wrote the first group of his commandments. When these people were present, the Imam, peace be on him, mentioned his commandments, which are as follows:

"Surely Musa bears witness that there is no god but Allah, the One without a partner, that Muhammad is His servant and His Apostle, that the Hour will come without doubt, that Allah will resurrect those in graves, that the resurrection after death is true, that the Promise is true, that the reckoning is true, that the decree is true, that the standing before Allah is true, that what Muhammad, may Allah bless him and his family, has brought is true, and that what the Trusted Spirit brought down is true.

In that I will live and die; and in it I will be raised from the dead, Allah willing. I have made them bear witness that this will is mine and that I have written it in my handwriting. I have copied the will of my grandfather–the Commander of the faithful, 'Ali b. Abi Talib, peace be on him. I had copied the will of Muhammad b. 'Ali before that; and the will of Ja'far b. Muhammad is similar to that. I have entrusted my will to 'Ali along with my children after him. If he willed, found rightness in them, and liked to recognize them, then that is up to him.

They have no command in his presence. I have entrusted him with endowments, my properties, my retainers, my boys whom I have left behind, and my sons to Ibrahim, al-'Abbas, Qasim, Isma'il, Ahmed,

and Um Ahmed. (I have entrusted) the affair of my womenfolk to 'Ali, one third of the endowment of my father, and two thirds he places where he sees, and places in it what the possessor of a property places in his wealth.

So if he likes to sell or to grant or to donate or to give as alms to those whom I have nominate to him and to those other than those whom I have nominated, then that is up to him. He is like me in respect with my will concerning my property, my family, and my children. If he sees that he has to recognize his brothers whom I have nominated to him in this letter of mine, he can recognize them.

If he dislikes (to do that), then he has the right to cancel them without being blamed or refused. If he finds in them (something) other than that when I left them and wants to return them to obedience to him, then that is up to him. If one of them wants to marry his sister (to a man), then he has no right to marry her (to him) except with his permission and his order, for he is the most knowledgeable (of them) in the men from among his people.

If a Sultan (supreme ruler) or any of the people prevents him or comes between him and a thing of what I have mentioned, then he is free from liability to Allah and His Apostle, Allah and His Apostle are free from liability to him, upon him is the curse and wrath of Allah, the curse of the cursers, the angels brought nigh, the prophets, the messengers, and the group of the believers.

None of the Sultans has the right to prevent him from doing anything. He has neither responsibility nor result with me. None of my children neither he has a property with me. So he is trustworthy in what he mentions.

If he decreases, then he is the most knowledgeable; and if he increases, then he is also truthful. As for my sons whom I have mentioned along with him, I want to mention their names and to honor them. As for the mothers of my children, they will take that which they take during my life time if they stay in their houses and their *hijab*, if he sees that. If one of them wants to get married, then she has no right to return to my property.

As for my daughters, they are treated in the same way. Neither their half-brothers nor a Sultan nor an uncle has the right to marry them except through his opinion and his advice. If they do something other than that, then they oppose Allah and His Apostle, and they struggle against Him in His kingdom. That is because he is the most knowledgeable (of them) in the men from among his people. If he wants to marry them, then he can marry them; and if he wants to leave, he can leave.

I have ordered them (my daughters) to conform to what I have mentioned in this letter of mine; and I have made Allah, the Great and Almighty, as a witness over them. He (Imam al-Ridha') and Um Ahmed are two witnesses. None has the right to uncover and spread my will, while he is in respect with it is other than those whom I have mentioned and nominated. *Whoever does good, it is for his own soul, and whoever does evil, it is against it; and your Lord is not in the least unjust to the servants.* (41:46)

May Allah bless Muhammad and the family of Muhammad. Neither a Sultan nor other than him has the right to open this my letter which I have sealed in the bottom. If someone does that, then upon him is the curse and wrath of Allah, the curse of the cursers, the angels brought nigh, the group of the messengers and of the believers; and (that is) upon him who opens this letter of mine."11

The Imam signed and sealed the will. The above–mentioned witnesses also signed it. The will clearly shows that his testamentary trustee and the Imam after him was his son Imam al–Ridha', peace be on him. He entrusted to him all his affairs. He required his children to follow and obey him. He also ordered Imam al–Ridha', peace be on him, to marry his daughters, for he was the most knowledgeable (of his brothers) in the men from among his people.

That is because they (his daughters) were the deposits and granddaughters of Allah's Apostle, May Allah bless him and his family. So they had not to marry anyone except an Allah-fearing believer who came to know of their position and respected their rank. None was able to know the equals to them except his son Imam al-Ridha'.

Most likely, the Imam ordered his will to be hidden and not to be spread, for he had fear for his son of the 'Abbasi government that spared no effort to war against the Imams and to exhaust them. So he, peace be on him, ordered it to be concealed, for he had fear for his son of their vengeance and their severe punishment.

Al-Ya'qui has mentioned that his daughters had not to get married after him; so none of them get married except Imam Selema, who got married in Egypt. Al-Qasim b. Muhammad b. Ja'far b. Muhammad married her. So, in this respect, an intense thing took place between him and his family, to the extent that he swore (by Allah) that he did not reveal for her a side, and that he did not want anything except that he wanted to perform the hajj through her. 12

This statement is unacceptable at all. That is because the Imam's will we have mentioned has not mentioned that the Imam prevented his daughters from getting married; rather he entrusted that to Imam al–Ridha', peace be on him. This statement is very strange; none has mentioned it except him; it is among the fabricated things. That is because one may ask: How did the Imam prevent his daughters from marriage to which Islam has urged people and of which it has made them desirous?

9. The Imam's Alms and Endowments

The Imam, peace be on him, gave some of his country estates as alms to his children. He recorded that in a document and required his children to carry out its orders and to work according to it. The following is the text of the document:

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

This is what Musa b. Ja'far has given as alms. He has given as alms his land in the place so-and so (he

specified the place). The whole of it, its date-palms, its ground, its water, its sides, its rights, its drinking of water, and every right belongs to it in a high land or a lift or many trees or a utility or a yard or a ravine or populated or unpopulated. He has given as alms all his right of that to his children from his back bone, male and female.

Its owner divides what Allah, the Great and Almighty, brings forth from it after that which is sufficient for cultivating it and its utilities, and after thirty palm trees loaded with fruit is divided among the needy from among the people in the village, among the children of Musa b. Ja'far; the male shall have the equal of the portion of two females.

If a female of the children of Musa b. Ja'far gets married, then she has no right in this alms until she returns to it without a husband (divorced). If she returns, then she shall have the portion of the one from among Musa's daughters who have not got married yet. If one of Musa's sons dies and has a child, then his children are according to the portion of their father; the male shall have the equal of the portion of two females; just as Musa has stipulated among his children from his backbone.

If one of Musa's sons dies and does not leave a child behind him, then his right should be returned to the men of alms. The children of my daughters have no right in this alms of mine except that when their fathers are from among my children. None has a right in my alms along with my sons and the children of my sons and their progeny as long as one of them remains alive.

If they die and none of them remains alive, then my alms should (be given) to the children of my father on the side of my mother just as I have stipulated in respect with my children and my progeny. If the children of my father on the side of my mother and their children die and none of them remains alive, then my alms (should be given) to my father's children and their progeny as long as one of them remains alive. If none of them remains alive, then my alms (should be given) to those nearest, nearer, near (in kinship) until Allah inherits him who inherits it, and He is the best Inheritor.

Musa b. Ja'far has given this alms of him when he is sound. (This) alms is endowed, definite; there is neither exception nor refusal in it at all. (I am) seeking the pleasure of Allah, the Most High, and the hereafter. It is not lawful for a believer believing in Allah and the Last Day to sell it or buy it or give it as a gift or change anything of that on which I have put it until Allah inherits the earth and those on it.

He (Imam Musa) has appointed this alms of his to 'Ali and Ibrahim. If one of them dies, the apportion is added to the rest in his place. If one of them dies, Isma'il is added to the rest of them. If one of them dies al-'Abbas is added to the rest of them. If one of them dies, then the eldest of my sons replaces him. If none of my children remains alive except one, then it is he who should undertake it (the alms). 13

This endowment is one of the Imam's good deeds. He singled out his children and his progeny for it, that they might depend on this country estate and be free from need to people.

10. His being far above demanding his Release

When the Imam, peace be on him, remained in the prison of Harun for a long time, some of his special Shi'ites talked to him and asked him to talk to some personalities brought night to al-Rashid, that they might intercede with him to release him. However, the Imam, peace be on him, refused that.

He was far above that, and said to them: "My father related to me on the authority of his forefathers that Allah, the Great and Almighty, revealed to Dawud: 'O Dawud, if a servant of Mine resorts to a creature of Mine and I come to know of that from him, I will cut off the means of the heaven from him and make the ground beneath him sink." 14

This attitude indicates that the Imam had great faith in Allah, devoted himself to Him, pleased with His decree, and was far above asking any creature (to release him).

11. The Imam's Letter to Harun

The Imam, peace be on him, sent a letter from prison to Harun. In the letter he expressed his strong displeasure with him. The following is the text of the letter: "A day of my tribulation does not goes by until a day of your welfare goes by! Then we all will die until the day that does not expire, *on that day shall they perish who says false things.*" 15

This letter displays that the Imam suffered from exhausting pain, that he was impatient of prison, and that he would bring suit against his tyrannical opponent (Harun) before Allah, the Most High, on the day when those who say false things and wrong others will perish.

12. Harun sends a Salve Girl to the Imam

Harun chose a very beautiful slave girl. He ordered one of his special associate to send the slave girl to the Imam, peace be on him. He thought that the Imam would be fascinated by her. When she reached him, he, peace be on him, said to the messenger of Harun: "Rather, you are happy with your gift! I am in no need of this (slave girl) and the likes of her!"

So the messenger took the slave girl and returned to Harun. He informed him of the words of the Imam, so he boiled with anger and said to him: "Go back to him and say to him: 'We have imprisoned you not according to your consent; and we have served you not according to your consent.' Leave the slave girl with him and go away."

That person informed the Imam of Harun's statement. He left the slave girl with him and returned to Harun. Harun sent a servant of his to the prison, that he might watch the slave girl. When he reached her, he found her prostrating herself in prayer for her Lord. She did not raise her head and said during her prostration: "Most Holy! Most Holy!"

So the servant went to Harun quickly and told him about her condition. Harun said: "By Allah, Musa b. Ja'far has bewitched her! Bring her to me!" She was brought to him. She was shaking all over and looking towards the heaven. She was remembering and glorifying Allah. So Harun asked her:

- -What is the matter with you?
- -My matter is wonderful! I was standing and he was standing and performing prayers by day and night. After he had finished his prayers, I asked him: "Have you any need to give it to you?"
- -So the Imam said: What is my need with you?
- -I have been brought to you to grant your needs.

The Imam said: "What are those?" He indicated with his hand to a direction. I turned. Suddenly I saw a garden full of flowers. I could not reached its end from its beginning with my eye, nor could I reached its beginning from its end. In it there were sitting places furnished with embroideries and silk.

There were male and female servants. I have never seen the like of their faces in beauty, nor have I seen the like of their clothes. They were wearing green silk, crowns, pearls, and corundum. In their hands were ewers, handkerchiefs, and all kinds of food. So I prostrated myself in prayer and continued so until this servant made me rise. I saw myself where I was.

Harun harbored malice against her, so he said to her:

- -O Wicked! Perhaps you had slept and dreamt of that!
- -No, by Allah, my master, I had seen that before I prostrated myself in prayer. So I prostrated myself in prayer for that. As a result al-Rashid turned to his servant and ordered him to arrest the slave girl and to conceal the event lest the people should hear of it. So the servant took her and detained her in his house.

However, she devoted herself to the acts of worship and prayer. When she was asked about that, she said: "In this manner I saw the righteous servant. She added: "When I saw what I saw, the servants called me: 'O so-and-so, go far away from the righteous servant that we may come in to him. That is because we want to serve him." She dedicated herself to the acts of worship until she died. 16

Certainly Harun saw the various miracles of the Imam, peace be on him. However, he did not believe in them, for his heart deviated, darkness encompassed his soul and made him forget Allah and sent him far from the Last Lady.

13. Harun fails in assassinating the Imam

The Imam's laudable deeds and merits spread among the people, and they talked about his knowledge,

his clemency, his patience, and his tribulation. So Harun was unable to stand that. He decided to kill him. He ordered fresh dates to be brought to him. He ate some of it. Then he took a container and put into it twenty fresh dates. He took a piece of tread and dipped it into poison. He entered the piece of thread into the eye of the needle. He took a fresh date and put the thread into it and took it out of it, to the extent that it was full of poison.

He put that fresh date among the fresh dates. He said to his servant: "Take them to Musa b. Ja'far and say to him: 'The Commander of the faithful has eaten of these fresh dates. He asks you by his right to eat them up. He has chosen them to you with his own hand.' Do not let him leave any of them or give any of them to any person."

The servant carried the fresh dates and brought them to the Imam. He informed him of Harun's message. The Imam, peace be on him, ordered the servant to bring him some picks. He brought them to him and sat in front of him. The Imam began eating some fresh dates. Al-Rashid had a bitch. The bitch was dear with him. It pulled itself and went out drawing its gold chains.

It stood by the Imam. The Imam, peace be on him, took the picks, picked up the poisoned fresh date and threw it to the bitch. It ate it and died. The Imam ate the rest of the fresh dates. The servant took the container to al-Rashid. When al-Rashid saw the container, he asked the servant:

- -Has he eaten the fresh dates up?
- -Yes, Commander of the faithful.
- -How did you see him?
- -I did not criticize him for a thing. Then the servant told Harun about the death of his bitch. So Harun became disordered. He himself went and watched it. He became sure that it died of the poison. He looked at it with astonishment, shook all over, and said: "We have attained nothing of Musa except that we offered him good fresh dates, lost our poison, and killed our bitch! There is no way to (get rid of) Musa!"17

Harun failed in assassinating the Imam, peace be on him. That is because Allah saved him from him and turned away his evil attempts from him.

14. Yehya intercedes with Harun for Releasing the Imam

When the Imam's miracles and laudable deeds spread, Harun became perplexed at his affair. That is because all the ways he used to put an end to him failed. So he summoned his minister Yehya b. Khalid and said to him: "O Abu 'Ali, do you not see the wonders in which we are? Do you not consider the affair of this man (Imam Musa) and relieve us from his worry?" So he advised correctly and guided him to a good deed, saying to him: "Commander of the faithful, I think that you have to be kind to him and to link

his womb relatives. For, by Allah, he has spoiled the hearts of our followers against us."

Al-Rashid responded to his advice, saying to him: "Go to him, remove the iron from him, give him my regards, and say to him: 'Your cousin says to you: I have sworn by Allah concerning you that I will not release you unless you admit that you have mistreated me. You must ask me to forgive you your bygone deeds. There is no disgrace in your admitting (that), nor is there any defect in your asking me for that. This is Yehya b. Khalid, my trustworthy one, minister, and head of my affairs. So ask him in as much as I get rid of my oath."

Through that Harun wanted the Imam to admit that he mistreated him and committed a sin, that he might issue a royal decree to release him, so he would use that as a means to slander him. In the meantime he would declare that as a justification for imprisoning him. However, the Imam, peace be on him, was fully aware of that.

When Yehya visited him and told him about Harun's statement, he firstly told him that his and his family's comfort would be removed by Harun and warned him against his violence; secondly he gave him an answer to Harun's statement, saying to him: "O Abu 'Ali, inform him (Harun) on my behalf: 'Musa says to you: My messenger will come to you on Friday and tell you about what you see (i.e., his death).

When I bring a suit against you before Allah, you will tomorrow come to know who wronged and aggressed against his opponent! What a farcical time that time was! The measures and the truth were lost in it! Imam Musa, peace be on him, was the unique person in his time in fear of Allah and piety; nevertheless, Harun intended to clothe him in the garment of mistreatment, that he might declare his innocence of imprisoning him.

Yehya went out while he could not see his way because of pain and impatience. His eyes turned red out of weeping when he saw the Imam, peace be on him, in that condition. He told Harun about the Imam's statement, and he sneeringly said: "If he leaves prophecy after some days, our state will be better!"

The Imam, peace be on him, passed away on Friday just as he foretold. 18

15. The Imam announces his Death

When Imam Musa, peace be on him, came to know that his death was close at hand, he announced his death to some of his Shi'ites (followers). He condoled them on his misfortune and ordered them to cling to the Imams from among the family of Muhammad. That was in his answers to the questions of 'Ali b. Suwayyid, who related that he sent some questions to the Imam when he was in prison. The answers were late for a month. Then he answered him with this answer. In it he has mentioned.

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

Praise belongs to Allah, the Most High, the Great, through whose greatness and His light He enlightens

the hearts of the believers, with whose greatness and light the ignorant show enmity toward Him, through whose greatness and light those in the heavens and in the earth seek the access of means to Him through different deeds and contradictory religions; so (they are) right and wrong, erring and rightly—guided, endowed with eyesight and blind and perplexed. So praise belongs to Allah whose religion has been made known and described by Muhammad, may Allah bless him and his family.

Now then, surely you are a man Allah has placed among the family of Muhammad through giving you a special rank, keeping the affection of that for which He has made you take care, inspiring you with correctness, making you see the affairs of your religion; (that is) due to your preferring them (to others) and your resorting the affairs to them. You have written to me to ask me about affairs concerning which you have practiced precautionary dissimulation and which you have hidden with capability.

So, when the supreme authority (sultan) of the tyrants has expired and the supreme authority of the Possessor of the supreme authority has come through leaving the dispraised world to its inhabitants who have disobeyed their Creator, I have decided to explain to you that about which you have questioned me lest perplexity should be imposed on our weak Shi'ites by their ignorant (leaders).

Therefore, fear Allah, may His name be exalted and resort that affair to its men; beware of that your are the reason for (bringing about) an affliction to the testamentary trustees or (that) you provoke (the people) through revealing that which I have deposited with you and showing that which I have asked you to hide; you should do (that), Allah willing.

The first thing of which I want to inform you is that I want to announce my death to you in these nights of mine without being impatient, remorseful, and doubtful about that which will be of what Allah, the Great and Almighty, has decreed and ended. Therefore, lay hold on the firmest handle of the religion, the family of Muhammad; the firmest handle is the testamentary trustee after the testamentary trustee, submission to them and satisfaction with what they say; do not seek a religion from those other than your Shi'ites and do not like their religion.

That is because they are the traitors who have betrayed Allah and His Apostle; they have betrayed their community. Did you know how they betrayed their trust? They were entrusted with the Book of Allah, but they distorted and changed it.

They were showed the way to those in authority from among them, but they turned away from them, so Allah made them taste the garment of hunger and fear because of what they had done. You asked me about the two men who took from a man money he spent on the poor, the needy, wayfarers, and in the way of Allah. When they took that from him, they were not satisfied when they took it until they made him unwillingly carry it on his head to their houses.

When they owned it, they undertook spending it. Do they reach unbelief because of that? So, by my life, they had dissimulated before that, returned to Allah, the Great and Almighty, His words, and mocked at His Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family. They were two unbelievers, may the curse of Allah, the

angels, and all people be on them.

By Allah, nothing of faith entered their hearts when they went out of their states, and increased themselves nothing except doubt. They were two deceivers, doubters, and hypocrites until the Angels of Chastisement made them die (and took them) to the place of disgrace in the Abode of Everlastingness.

You questioned me about him who was present when that man took his money and put it on the heads of those knowing and denying; so those were the men of the first apostasy from among this community; therefore, upon them is the curse of Allah, the angels, and all the people.

You questioned me about the extent of our knowledge, which is of three kinds: past, old, and new. As for the past, it is explained; as for the old, it is written; as for the new, it has been thrown into the hearts and inscribed in the ears; and it is the best of our knowledge; and there is no Prophet after our Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and his family.

And you questioned about the mothers of their children, about their marriage, and their divorce; they are prostitutes until the Day of Resurrection, marriage without a guardian, and divorce without a waiting period. And as for him who enters the summons to us, his faith demolishes his error, and his certitude (demolishes) his doubt. And you questioned about the zekat (alms) concerning them, so if there was (some) of zekat, then you are worthier of it, for we have made that lawful to you, who was from among you and where he was.

And you questioned about the weak, the weak is he to whom a proof is not given and who does not know the difference. If he knows the difference, then he is not weak. And you asked about the witness for them, then establish witness for Allah, the Great and Almighty, even if (it) is against you, the parents, and the relatives in respect with that between you and them.

However, if your fear that your brother will be wronged, then do not (do that). And summon to the conditions of Allah those whose response you hope; and do not fortify (yourself) with the fortress of hypocrisy.

Befriend the family of Muhammad. Do not say to that which reaches you from us and ascribed to us as invalid, even if you come to know the opposite of it from us.

For you do not know why we say it and in what meaning we put it. Believe in what I tell you. Do not reveal the news which we ask you to hide. Surely of your brother's obligatory right against you is that you should not conceal from him anything benefits him in the affairs in the world and the hereafter. Do not harbor malice against him even if he treats you badly. Accept his invitation when he invites you.

Do not leave him alone with his enemy from among the people even if he is nearer to him than you. Visit him during his illness. Neither cheat nor harm nor treason nor pride nor obscenity nor obscene language nor enjoining it is of the believer's morals. So if you see the deformed Bedouin in a large army, then wait

for a relief for you and your believing Shi'ites. If the sun is eclipsed, then raise your eyes towards the heaven and reflect on what Allah does toward the criminals. I have explained some brief sentences to you. May Allah bless Muhammad and his good family. 19

This letter contains important affairs which have in detail been mentioned in the book Mir'at al-'Uqul (the Mirror of Intellects).

16. His Assassination

Imam Musa suffered from the severest kinds of misfortunes and punishment. He was shackled, harassed, and harmed. After al-Rashid had poured upon him all kinds of painful disasters, he gave him a deadly poison and put an end to him. So the Imam went to his Lord as a happy martyr.

17. Statements on Giving him a Poison

Most historians have unanimously agreed on that the Imam did not die a natural death, that he died of poison, and that it was al-Rashid who ordered him to be poisoned and assassinated. However, they have differed over the person who undertook poisoning him. The following are some statements on that.

A. Yehya b. Khalid

Al-Qatt'iya maintained that it was Yehya b. Khalid who put poison into fresh dates and grapes and gave them to him to eat; so he killed him. 20 This is confirmed by 'Abd Allah b. Tawus, who narrated, saying: [I asked Imam al-Ridha', peace be on him, saying to him:]

- -Did Yehya b. Khalid poison your father Musa b. Ja'far?
- -The Imam answered: "Yes, he poisoned him with thirty poisoned fresh dates."21 Abu al-Farajj al-Asfahani has mentioned: "Al-Fadhl b. Yehya entertained the Imam when he was in his prison, al-Rashid was angry with him and ordered him to be flogged. Yehya left al-Rashid while the people were moving like waves and their affairs ran in disorder. He went to Baghdad and summoned al-Sindi b. Shahik and ordered him to kill the Imam.

Accordingly, al-Sindi summoned some Christian servants and ordered them to wrap up the Imam with a carpet. They wrapped him up while he was alive. They sat on him until he died."22 Ibn al-Muhammad has mentioned: "When al-Rashid traveled to al-Sham (Syria), Yehya b. Khalid ordered al-Sindi to kill the Imam, and he killed him."23

These reports have unanimously agreed on that it was Yehya b. Khalid who ordered the Imam, peace be on him, to be killed. However, they oppose the famous thing which is that it was al-Rashid who entrusted al-Sindi with killing him.

B. Al-Fadhl b. Yehya

Some sources have mentioned that it was al-Fadhl b. Yehya who poisoned the Imam. That was when he was transferred to his prison. Al-Fadhl b. al-Rabi'sent him food every day. On the fourth day, al-Fadhl b. Yehya offered food to the Imam, peace be on him, and he raised his hands towards the heaven, saying:

"O Lord, You know that if had eaten before this day, I would have helped against myself." Then the Imam ate some of that food, and he became ill. On the following day, he became critically ill. A doctor was brought to him that he might ask him about his condition, and he asked him:

-What is the problem?

However, the Imam did not answer him. The doctor insisted on asking him, so he showed him the palm of his hand, saying to him:

-This is my problem. His palm of the hand turned green in the middle. When the doctor saw it, he went away and said: "By Allah he is more knowledgeable than you of what you have done to him." 24 We cannot accept this narration because al-Fadhl was famous for his inclination to the 'Alawids. He had mercy on the Imam when he was in his prison, so al-Rashid punished him severely, flogged him, and slandered him. Therefore, how can man imagine that he assassinated and killed him?

C. Al-Sindi b. Shahik

Most historians and those who wrote the biography of the Imam maintained that al-Rashid ordered al-Sindi b. Shahik, the sinful rogue, to kill the Imam, and his wicked soul responded to that. He committed the most horrible crime in Islam. He killed the grandson of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, and the purest soul created in the world of existence after his good forefathers. So the curse of the cursers b. on al-Sindi; and he shall have disgrace and painful chastisement.

18. How was the Imam poisoned?

The famous thing is that al-Rashid brought fresh dates and put a deadly poison into them. He ordered al-Sindi to offer them to the Imam and to force him to eat some of them. It was said that al-Rashid ordered al-Sindi to undertake that. So he took fresh dates, put poison into them, and offered them to the Imam. The Imam ate ten fresh dates, and al-Sindi said to him:

- -Increase (dates) more than that! However, the Imam looked at him and said:
- -That is enough to you! You have reached what you need!25

When the Imam, peace be on him, ate those poisoned fresh dates, his body was poisoned. He suffered

from severe pain and painful aches. Sorrow and sadness surrounded him. The rude police encompassed him. Al–Sindi b. Shahik, the sinful rogue, stayed with him. He made him hear every time rude words. He prevented all kinds of aids from coming to him, that he might hasten his decreed end. The great Imam suffered during those terrible periods from that which no man suffered. The pain due to the poison melted his heart and cut his bowels into pieces. He was very sad because his sacredness was violated, he felt loneliness, and did not see his dear and beloved ones, while he was about to die.

19. Al-Sindi becomes confused

When al-Sindi committed that dangerous crime, he became so confused and afraid of the responsibility before the Shi'ites and the 'Alawids that he summoned the personalities and the notable men to the prison. They were eighty persons just as one of the Shaykhs of the non-Shi'ites ('amma) narrated, saying: "Al-Sindi summoned us.

When he summoned us, he said to us: 'Look at this man. Has anything happened to him? That is because the people claim that a detested thing has been done to him. They say that many times. This is his house; and this is his bed. We have entertained him; we have not harassed him. The Commander of the faithful (Harun) does not intend to do evil to him; he is waiting for him to debate with him. He is entertained in all his affairs. So ask him."

That Shaykh said: "We had no concern except that we intended to see and meet the Imam. When we approached him, we did not see the like of him in virtue and worship. He said to us: 'As for the entertainment and the like he mentioned, they are other than what he mentioned. However, people, I will tell you: I have been given poison in nine fresh dates. I will turn yellow tomorrow; and I will die after tomorrow.'"

When al-Sindi heard that, his strength collapsed, and he shook all over. 26 That is because the Imam refuted his claims of his being innocent of assassinating him. It was narrated that because of that he ordered the servants to wrap up the Imam with a carpet and to sit on him, and they did until the Imam died.

20. With al-Musayyab b. Zahra

Al-Musayyab b. Zahra was either entrusted with guarding the Imam, peace be on him, or that the Imam was moved from al-Sindi's house to his house, just as some sources have mentioned. Al-Musayyab was among the summoners to the 'Abbasid state. He was appointed as a commander over the police in Baghdad during the days of al-Mansur, al-Mehdi, and al-Rashid. He also was appointed as a governor over Khuresan during the days of al-Mehdi.27

He was very rude and stern. If Abu Ja'far al-Mansur wanted to do good to a person, he handed over the person to al-Rabi'; and if he wanted to do evil to him, he handed him over to al-Musayyab.28 However,

when the Imam was imprisoned in his house, he had an effect on him and dominated his feelings. So al-Musayyab was guided to the path of the truth and correctness. He was among the sincerest Shi'ites and among those who had the secrets of the Imams.29

The Imam summoned him three days before his death and said to him:

- -O Musayyab!
- -Here I am, my master!
- -I am going tonight to Medina, the City of my grandfather, Allah's Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family, that I may entrust to my son 'Ali what my forefathers had entrusted to me, appoint him as my testamentary trustee and successor, and order him to follow my orders.
- -My master, how do you order me to open to you the doors and their locks while the guards are (standing) with me at the doors.
- -O Musayyab, your faith in Allah, the Great and Almighty, and in us has become weak.
- -No, my master, supplicate Allah to make me firm.
- -O Allah, make him firm.

Then the Imam said: "I supplicate Allah, the Great and Almighty, through His great name through which Aasif had supplicated (Him) when he brought Belqis's throne and put it before Sulayman in the twinkling of an eye, that He may let me meet with my son 'Ali in Medina." Al–Musayyab said: "I heard him supplicating. Then I did not see him sitting in the place of prayer. I was still standing on my feet until I saw him returning and returning the iron to his legs. So I prostrated myself in prayer and thanked Allah for making me know him (the Imam)."

The Imam turned to al-Musayyab and said to him: "O al-Musayyab, raise your head. Know that I am going to Allah, the Great and Almighty, at the third part of this day." Al-Musayyab said: "So I wept. When the Imam, peace be on him, saw me weeping and looking sad, he said to me: 'O Musayyab, do not weep. For my son 'Ali will be your Imam and master after me. Therefore, cling to his Imamate. You will not go astray as long as you cling to him." "Praise belongs to Allah," said al-Musayyab.30

21. To the High Comrade

The poison circulated all over the body of the Imam, peace be on him. The Imam suffered from severe pain and aches. He, peace be on him, came to know that his meeting with Allah was close at hand. So he sent for al-Sindi. When al-Sindi was in his presence, he ordered him to bring him his retainer (mawla) from Medina who was staying at the house of al-'Abbas b. Muhammad at the cane-market (mashra'at al-qasab), that he might wash and shroud his body.

Al-Sindi asked the Imam to permit him to shroud him but he, peace be on him, refused. He said: "I am a member of the House (of the Prophet). The giving of dowries for our women, the performing of pilgrimages on behalf of those of us who have not made the pilgrimage, and the shrouding of our dead can only be performed by one of our retainers who is pure. I already have my shroud."31 Al-Sindi brought him his retainer.

The Imam became critically ill. He reached the decreed end. He suffered from the aches of death. So he sent for al-Musayyab b. Zahra and said to him: "I have told you about my demise to Allah, the Great and Almighty. When I ask for a drink of water and drink it, you see me swollen, my color turns red, green, and other colors, then tell the tyrannical (Harun) about my death."

Al-Musayyab said: "I was still watching him until he asked for a drink of water and drank it. Then he summoned me and said: 'O al-Musayyab, surely this dirty one, al-Sindi b. Shahik will claim that he will undertake washing and shrouding me. How far! How far! That will never happen! When I will be carried to the cemetery called the cemeteries of Quraysh, bury me in it. Do not let my grave be higher than four open fingers. Do not take any of my earth to get the blessing of it.

For all our earth is forbidden except that of my grandfather al-Husayn b. 'Ali, peace be on him. For Allah, the Great and Almighty, has made it as a cure for our Shi'ites and friends." Al-Musayyab said: "Then I saw a person looked like him sitting beside him. I knew my master al-Ridha', peace be on him, when he was young. I wanted to ask him, but my master Musa said to me: 'Did I not prohibit you?' Then that person disappeared from me. I approached the Imam and found him a motionless corpse. He left life, so I told al-Rashid about his death."32

The Imam joined the High Comrade (Allah). His pure soul went to its Creator. The world became dark because it lost him. The hereafter shone with his arrival. Islam and the Muslims lost the most brilliant person who defended the entity of Islam, stood up for the word of monotheism, demanded the rights of the Muslims, and condemned all treacherous aggressions against them.

The kindest of the people to the people, the most sympathetic of them to the weak and the poor, who gladdened them through his purses, his gifts, and his giving, removed from them the unhappiness of life and bitterness of livelihood, died. The most clement of the people and greatest of them in restraining rage and detested things died. Because of his death the most wonderful page of the pages of Islamic thought was rolled up, and one of the flags of jihad and struggle was wrapped up.

Therefore, you are in the protection of Allah, O Great Imam! You have gone to Allah as a happy martyr! You have worn the garment of martyrdom and dignity! You have joined Allah while you are wronged and forced! The sinful, tyrannical one (Harun) wreaked his wrath upon you and made you taste all kinds of harm and exhaustion, for you did not follow and flatter him!

Rather, you were the strongest of all his opponents! You criticized him for his oppression, censured him for wasting the properties of the Muslims, and condemned him for his dictatorship and tyranny!

You have gone to Allah as a happy martyr! You have won the good pleasure of Allah, for you did not deceive, nor did you cheat (anyone)! Rather you raised the standard of the truth, intended to establish justice, and wanted the Muslims to lead a life full of good and happiness! Your opponent is a loser, his effort is invalid, and his name has died away! He is not mentioned except as the mate of failure and loss!

So peace be on you, O Son of Allah's Apostle, on the day when you was born, on the day when you died, and on the day when you raise from the dead!

22. The Time of his Death

The famous (narration) is that the death of Imam, peace be on him, was on Rajab 25, in the year 173 A. H.33 It was said that his death was in the year 181 A. H.34 And it was said that it was in the year 186 A. H.35 His death was on Friday. His holy age on the day of his death was fifty-four or fifty-five years.36 He lived for twenty years with his father and thirty-five years after him.37

23. The Place of his Death

The famous (narration) is that his death was in the prison of al–Sindi b. Shahik. It was said that he died in the house of al–Musayyab b. Zahra, at the gate of Kufa where the nabk was. 38 It was said that his death was in the Mosque of Harun, better known as the Mosque of al–Musayyab, and was situated in the western part of Kufa, for he was moved from a house called the house of 'Umar.39

24. The police investigate the Event

The police played a role in investigating this dangerous event, that they might declare that Harun was innocent of the responsibility. As for the investigation, it was firstly made by al-Sindi and secondly by al-Rashid. As for that which al-Sindi made, it was in three places:

The first is that which 'Amru b. Waaqid narrated. He said: [Al-Sindi b. Shahik sent for me at part of the night. I was in Baghdad when he summoned me. I feared that he intended to do evil to me. So I asked my family to prepare my necessities. I said: "To Allah we belong and to Him is our return." Then I went to him. When he saw me coming towards him, he said to me:]

- -O Abu Hafs, perhaps, we have terrified and annoyed you?
- -Yes.
- -There is nothing here except good.
- -Shall you send someone to my family to tell them about me?
- -Yes. When he calmed down and fear went away from him, al-Sindi asked him:

- -O Abu Hafs, did you know why I sent for you?
- -No.
- -Do you know Musa b. Ja'far?
- -Yes, by Allah. There has been friendship between him and me for a long time.
- -Do you know anyone who accepts his statement in Baghdad?
- -Yes.

Then he gave him the names of those who knew the Imam. So he sent for them. He asked them: "Do you know anyone who knows Musa b. Ja'far?" They gave him some names, and he sent for them. He continued sending for people until daybreak. When he had fifty and some witnesses, he ordered his script to be brought.

He wrote down their names, their houses, their jobs, and their qualities. After he had finished that, he came in to al-Sindi and told him about that. He left his place, turned to 'Amru, and ordered him: "O Abu Hafs, rise and uncover the face of Musa b. Ja'far."

'Amru said: "So I uncovered the face of the Imam and I came to know that he had died." Then al-Sindi turned to some people and said to them: "Look at him." They approached him and looked at him one by one. Then he asked them:

- -Do you bear witness that he is Musa b. Ja'far?
- -Yes. Then he ordered his servant to take off the clothes of the Imam, and he did. Then he turned to the people and asked them:
- -Do you see any mark which you condemn?
- -No.

Then he ordered their testimonies to be written down, and they went away.40

The second place is that he summoned the jurists and the notable men of Baghdad. Among them were al-Haythem b. 'Adi and others. 41 They looked at the Imam and bore witness that there was no mark on him. 42

The third place is that when the Holy Body was put on the edge of the grave, the messenger of al-Sindi came and ordered the face of the Imam to be uncovered for the people, that they might see that he was sound and nothing happened to him. 43 Al-Sindi b. Shahik took these important measures to discharge the government from the responsibility and to declare it innocent of committing that crime.

However, Imam Musa, peace be on him, had already refuted his claims and told the people that it was Harun who assassinated him with poison, just as we have previously mentioned. As for the measure Harun took to remove the doubts about him is that he summoned the Shaykhs of the Talibiyyin and the 'Abbasids, the rest people of his kingdom, and the rulers. Then he said to them: "This is Musa b. Ja'far. He has died normally. There was between me and him nothing for which I have to ask Allah's forgiveness. So look at him."

Accordingly, seventy men from among the Shi'ites of the Imam came in to him. They looked at him. They saw that there was no mark of any wound on him, nor (any evidence) of strangulation. 44 However, that measure did not benefit Harun. For the truth would certainly appear.

Neither lying nor deception nor misguidance could conceal it. The special associates and the general populace came to know that it was Harun who assassinated the Imam, and that he was responsible for shedding his blood. Thus, all the measures and arrangements Harun took to justify his attitude failed.

25. The Imam is put on the Bridge

O Allah! O Muslims! Imam Musa-peace be on him, the Prophet's grandson, Imam of Muslims, master of those Allah-fearing and worshipful, and giant of Islamic though-was put on the Bridge of al-Rasafa while he was dead. Those near and far looked at him. The passers-by watched him. The police surrounded his Holy Body and uncovered his face for the people.

They intended to violate his sacredness, to degrade his dignity, and to slander him. Harun paid no attention to the womb kinship between him and the Imam, nor did he respect his sacredness while he was dead. In this respect it has been said: It is obligatory to respect the dead even if they are far, so how much more are those near?

Through this procedure of his, al-Rashid attempted to abase and insult the Shi'ites.

This measure had a bad effect on them, and they remembered it throughout their historical stages with sorrow and sadness. And their poets composed poems full of sorrow and sadness on it. The late Shaykh Muhammad Mulla says:

Who informs Islam that its leader has died out of poison in the Prison of al-Rashid?

Error has become delighted at his death; and right has hold

A funeral ceremony for him!

His coffin has been placed on the Bridge of al-Rasafa; the

Angels have surrounded him in magnifying!

The unique orator, late Shaykh Muhammad 'Ali al-Ya'qubi says:

Why was Musa placed on the bridge and no

Monotheist escorted him to the grave-yard?

They carried him while the iron round his legs rang and

The hills sighed for him!

Al-Rashid filled the hearts of the Shi'ites with malice and anger. He left them repeat that flagrant aggression against the dignity of their Imam throughout the stages of their history.

26. The Horrible Announcement

What terrible the disaster was! What awful the misfortune was! Al-Sindi violated the sacredness of Islam and the dignity of the members of the House (Ahl al-Bayt), peace be on him. He ordered his policemen to call the people to come and see the body of the Imam with that painful call that terrified the souls and filled them with sorrows and sadness. He did not order them to attend the funeral of the good one, son of the good one.

Rather he ordered them to say something opposite to that <u>45</u> So those salves walked through the streets and the lanes. They shouted at the top of their voices with that dirty, ugly call. He also ordered them to say: "This is Musa b. Ja'far whom the Rafidites (Shi'ites) say that he does not die! So look at him while he is dead!"46

Of course, al-Sindi did not take such a measure by himself. Rather the supreme authorities ordered him to do that, that they might annoy, abase the Shi'ites and disparage the members of the House (Ahl al-Bayt), peace be on him.

27. The Reasons for this Horrible Announcement

We have to mention some of the reasons that urged the authority to practice such abominable deeds. They are as follows:

A. To know the Shi'ites

Through putting the body of the Imam on the bridge and calling the people to attend his funeral with that ugly call, the authority intended to know the active Shi'ites, their activities and their enthusiasm through this fragrant aggression against the dignity of their Imam, that it might drive them to graves and prisons. I (the author) firmly believe that the Shi'ites came to know of this purpose, so they took no positive measure against it.

B. To slander them

The ruling authority used the Waqifites as a means to slander the Shi'ites. That is because the Waqifites maintained that the Imam was alive and that he was raised to the heaven just as 'Isa b. Maryam was raise to it. The government of Harun wanted to ascribe this corrupt belief to all Shi'ites to distort their beliefs before the public opinion.

C. To seek Nearness to Harun

Al-Sindi carried out the orders though he was fully of that they were horrible and dangerous. He did that to please Harun, to attain something of his world, and to seek nearness to him. However, he attained nothing except shame and disgrace.

28. The Imam remains on the Bridge for three Days

The Imam remained on the bridge for three days. His Holy Body was not buried. 47 It was put in prison, that the police might investigate the even. Then it was put on the bridge that the passers-by might look at it. These measures were taken to make little of the Imam and to undermine his social rank.

29. Sulayman prepares the Imam for Burial

Sulayman b. Abi Ja'far al-Mansur 48 undertook preparing the Imam for burial and escorting him to his final resting place. His palace towered over the Tigris. He heard crying any noise. He saw the people in Baghdad walking like waves and in disorder. He was afraid of that, so he turned to his sons and his servants and asked them: "What is the news?"

"This is al–Sindi b. Shahik announcing (the death of) Musa b. Ja'far," they replied. They told him about that severe, horrible announcement. So his sentiments exited; his condition changed; and a wave of rage controlled him. As a result he shouted at his sons, saying: "You and your servants, go down and take him (Musa) from their hands. If they prevent you (from taking him), then hit them and tear up their black uniforms (the uniform of the police and the army)."

Sulayman's sons and servants quickly went down and took the body of the Imam from them. The police did not oppose them. For Sulayman was the uncle of the Caliph. The most important and brilliant figure from among the 'Abbasid family. All the people obeyed his orders. The servants carried the coffin of the Imam and brought it to Sulayman, and he immediately ordered them to call out in the streets of Baghdad with a call opposite to that of al–Sindi. The servants walked through the streets and said at the top of their voices: "Whoever wants to attend the funeral of the good one, son of the good one, Musa b. Ja'far, then let him come!"49

The people from among different classes went out to escort the Imam of the Muslims and master of the

Allah-fearing. The Shi'ites went out weeping and striking their chests. They were sad and sorrowful. Sulayman relieved their sorrows and removed their sufferings. As for the reasons that urged Sulayman to escort the Imam with that great escort and to bury him in the manner the like of which Baghdad had never witnessed, they are as follows:

A. To remove the Shame from his Family

Sulayman was hardened by experience and had a well-balanced reason. So he thought that al-Rashid's deeds toward the Imam was a black stain on the forehead of the 'Abbasid family. That is because it was enough for Harun to assassinate and poison the Imam instead of these barbaric deeds that indicate that Harun had a soul void of honor and nobility, and that the 'Abbasids were also void of kindness and humanity.

For this reason Sulayman thought that it was incumbent on him (to take such an attitude), that he might keep his reputation and that of his family and remove the shame from them.

B. The close Womb Kinship

The close womb kinship between him and the Imam shook his feelings and exited his sentiments. So he was unable to hear those slaves call (the people) with that abominable call to come and see the body of the chief of the 'Alawids and leader of the Hashimites (Imam Musa). Besides there was no hatred between him and the Imam. So the womb kinship had an effect on him, and he hurried to save the body of his cousin from the hands of the police and to honor it.

C. His Fear of the Revolt of the Shi'ites

I (the author) firmly believe that Sulayman was afraid that the Shi'ites would revolt, the army would mutiny, disorders and local discords would happen. That is because that fragrant aggression against the dignity of the Imam was a wide stab in the core of the Shi'ite thought. Of course such an aggression would move their sentiments, urge them to revolt, and take vengeance upon their opponents.

The Shi'ites were not few in number at that time. For many people from among the statesmen, army commanders, high-ranking officials, and writers embraced their beliefs. Accordingly, Sulayman set right the situation, carried out the duty, and saved Harun's government from the discords and disorders. In the meantime he performed a good deed to all the Shi'ites who mention him with good and praise him.

30 The Imam is prepared for Burial

Sulayman prepared the Imam. He washed and shrouded him. Then he wrapped him up with a hibra on which all Qur'an was written and which he bought for two thousand and five hundred dinars. 50 Al–Musayyab b. Zahra narrated, saying: "By Allah, I saw the people with my own eye. They thought that they were washing him (Imam Musa), but their hands did not reach him.

They thought that they were washing, perfuming, and shrouding him. However, I saw that they did nothing. I saw that person who attended his death (Imam al-Ridha'). It was he who washed, perfumed, and shrouded him. He showed help to them, but they did not recognize him. After he had finished his affair, he turned to me and said:

"O Musayyab, whatever you doubts a thing, do not doubt me, for I am your Imam, your master, and Allah's proof over you after my father. O Musayyab, I am just like Yousif, the truthful, and they are like his brothers when they came in to him and denied him." 51 After the Imam had been washed, he had been carried to his final resting-place.

31. The Processions of the Funeral

The people of Baghdad hurried to escort the Imam to his final resting place. It was a well-attended day the like of which Baghdad had never seen. The pious, the sinful, the righteous, and the wicked went out to escort the grandson of the Prophet and to win a success through carrying his coffin. The processions walked and roamed through the streets and the lanes.

They repeated the words of sorrow and sadness. Al-Rashid was in front of those who escorted the Imam, as some historians have mentioned. He was silent and sad. He asked Allah to have mercy on the Imam and showed innocence of shedding his blood. Al-Beramika, the high-ranking statesmen were behind him and were headed by Sulayman, who was bare-footed.52

In front of the coffin were censers. The great coffin was carried on the tips of the fingers. It was surrounded by dignity and magnificence. It was brought and put in a market which was later called the Market of the Perfumes (suq al–Rayyahin). Besides a building was built around the place where the Holy Coffin was put lest the people should walk on it and was a sign of honoring it.53

A poet composed a poem in this respect, saying:

I already said to the man who undertook washing him: Why did you not obey him and were not among those loyal to him?

Put aside your water from him, and then wash him with what the eyes of glory shed when they wept for him!

Remove and set aside from him the scent for embalming and perfume him with his praise!

Order the noble angels to carry him in honor! Do you not see that they are beside him?

Do not weaken the necks of the men through carrying him; those (the angels) carried him because of his abundant favor!54

The processions walked and headed for Tibn Gate. 55 They were prevailed by silence, sadness, sorrow,

and misfortune.

32. In his Final Resting Place

The masses surrounded the Holy Coffin. They competed with each other for carrying it and getting the blessing of it. They brought it to the cemeteries of Quraysh. A grave had been dug there. Sulayman b. Ja'far took the body of the Imam and lowered it into his grave. He was astonished and weak. After he had finished burying the Imam, the people walked towards him and condoled him on his painful misfortune. He was standing and thanking them.

The people left while they were numbering the Imam's virtues and laudable deeds, mentioning the ordeals and misfortunes he met. The Imam's death was among the greatest disasters with which the Islamic world was afflicted at the time. That is because the Muslims lost one of the great figures of the Islamic though, a ripe branch of the Prophetic tree, and one of the Imams of those who fear Allah and turn to Him in repentance.

Throughout his lifetime, the Imam led the life of the Allah–fearing and the righteous. He preferred the obedience to Allah to all things. He spared no effort to raise the word of the truth and to destroy that of falsehood. He did not follow Harun, nor did he flatter him. Rather he was the strongest front in showing enmity to him.

For that he suffered all kinds of harm and pain until he passed away in a dark prison. So he won martyrdom. Allah has made his name immortal, his life a model, his shrine as a refuge for those afflicted with disaster and a shelter for those grieved. He was also kind to him when he placed him among the Imams from among the members of the House (Ahl al-Bayt), from whom He drove away the uncleanness and thoroughly purified them.

Now then, I (the author) have finished writing the book and the press has ended its last pages; yet I want to record something of good lest it should be lost. That is the book is nothing except a page on the history of this great Imam and a brief biography on his life. I do not claim that I have written all things about his life or written his biography in a manner showing all the dimensions of his life, for that is impossible. I firmly believe that tens of books like this book cannot narrate his reality or contain his life and all that which has been reported from him.

I do not say that in order to lessen the value of the arduous task I spent, nor do I affect humbleness, nor have I been moved by the factors of excessiveness or going too far in showing love (to the Imams). Rather, the reality has made it incumbent on me to say that.

That is because the traditions concerning the precepts of the religion and its branches such as acts of worship, contracts reported from him require writing books on them. For example, the hadith encyclopedias and those of the deductive jurisprudence are full of his traditions that are among the

sources of the Shi'ite jurisprudence.

Besides the traditionist have narrated from him many things such as short wise sayings, good manners, rules of conduct, morals, his viewpoints on policy, economy, philosophy, theology, and the like of which we have mentioned very few. Therefore, this book is not as I had thought that, I ask Allah forgiveness, it would include the Imam's life, behavior, and affairs. Rather it pictures a moment of his life and gives a brief example of it.

I firmly believe that this great Imam is one of the treasures of Islam that does not run out. He filled the world with his virtues, his laudable deeds and his achievements. His great personality that possessed the hearts of the Muslims, and they believed in it, made Harun harbored malice against him, terrify him, throw him into dark prisons, and kill him, thought he came to know that he did not provoke the people against him, nor did he made it incumbent on his Shi'ites to revolt against his supreme authority.

I return to apologize to my great master (Imam Musa) for fear that I have turned away from the reality or that I have gone far away from the purpose in what I have written about him. I hope that he will accept it, be kind to me through his pleasure, and intercede for me on the day when we come to Allah.

- 1. Al-Bihar, vol. 11, p. 300.
- 2. Al-Husayn b. Hamdan, al-Hidaya.
- 3. Al-Bihar, vol. 11, p. 305.
- 4. Al-Kuna wa al-Alqab, vol. 1, pp. 303-304.
- 5. Al-Bihar, vol. 11, p. 304. Al-Menaqib, vol. 2, pp. 362-363.
- 6. Tarikh Baghdad, vol. 13, p. 31.
- 7. Al-Nejashi, Rijal, p. 319.
- 8. Noor al-Abbsar, pp. 126-127. Al-Ithaf fi Hub al-Ashraf, pp. 57-58. Al-Bihar, vol. 11, p. 251.
- 9. Al-Bihar. Usool al-Kafi. 'Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha'.
- 10. Zayd al-Shaheed, p. 199.
- 11. Usool al-Kafi, vol. 1, pp. 316-317. 'Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha'. Al-Bihar.
- 12. Al-Ya'qubi, Tarikh, vol. 3, p. 146.
- 13. Al-Bihar, vol. 11, pp. 215-216.
- 14. Al-Ya'qubi, Tarikh, vol. 3, p. 125.
- 15. Al-Bidaya wa al-Nihaya, vol. 10, p. 183. Tarikh Baghdad.
- 16. Al-Menaqib, vol., pp. 263-264.
- 17. Al-Bihar, vol. 11, p. 299.
- 18. Al-Bihar, vol. 11, pp. 301-302.
- 19. Roudat al-Kafi, pp. 124-126.
- 20. Firaq al-Shi'a, p. 89.
- 21. Al-Keshi, Rijal, p. 371.
- 22. Maqatil al-Talibiyyin, p. 504.
- 23. 'Umdat al-Talib, p. 185 (al-Najaf Edition).
- 24. 'Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha'.
- 25. Al-Bihar.
- 26. Roudat al-Wa'ideen, pp. 185-186. 'Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha'.
- 27. Tarikh Baghdad, vol. 13, p. 137.
- 28. Al-Jahshyari, p. 97.

- 29. Tanqeeh al-Maqal, vol. 3, p. 217.
- 30. 'Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha'. Al-Bihar.
- 31. Maqatil al-Talibiyyin, p. 504. Al-Bihar, vol. 11, p. 303.
- 32. 'Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha'.
- 33. Ibn Khilikan, vol. 2, p. 173. Tarikh Baghdad, vol. 13, p. 32. Al-Tabari, Tarikh, vol. 10, p. 70. Ibn al-Athir, vol. 6, p. 54. Tarikh al-Khamees, vol. 2, p. 371. Abi al-Fida', Tarikh, vol. 2, p. 17. Tehdhib al-Tehdhib, vol. 10, p. 340. Mizan al-I'tidal, vol. 3, p. 209. 'Umdat al-Talib, p. 85.
- 34. Al-Durus.
- 35. Al-Mas'udi, Murujj al-Dheheb, vol. 3, p. 273.
- 36. Al-Menaqib, vol. 2, p. 383.
- 37. Al-Fusool al-Muhimma, p. 255.
- 38. Al-Bihar, vol. 11, p. 300.
- 39. Al-Menagib, vol. 2, p. 384.
- 40. Al-Bihar, vol. 11, p. 300.
- 41. Mizan al-I'tidal, vol. 3, pp. 265-266.
- 42. Maqatil al-Talibiyyin, p. 504.
- 43. Al-Bihar, vol. 11, p. 301.
- 44. Ibid. vol. 11, p. 303.
- 45. 'Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha'. Al-Bihar.
- 46. Al-Fusool al-Muhimma, p. 54.
- 47. 'Umdat al-Talib, p. 185.
- 48. Ibn Kuthayr, Tarikh, vol. 10, p. 28. Ibn 'Asakir, Tarikh, vol. 6, p. 279.
- 49. Al-Bihar. 'Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha'.
- 50. Al-Menaqib, vol. 2, p. 387.
- 51. 'Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha'.
- 52. Hidarat al-Islam fi Daar al-Salam, p. 126.
- 53. Al-Anwar al-Bahiya, p. 99.
- 54. Al-Ithaf bi Hub al-Ashraf, p. 57.
- 55. Mu'jam al-Buldan, vol. 2, p. 14. Daleel Kharitat Baghdad, p. 102.

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