

Familiarizing With The 8th Light of Wilāyah

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Abstract: *Imam Riza (p.b.u.h.) is the eighth infallible Imam of the progeny of holy prophets (p.b.u.h.). The present article explains a short biography of him including some points about the period of his Imamate, and moral behavior. Some of his holiness character is presented through the article of which are his generosity, not irritating others, not interrupting other's speeches and so on. The article ends with a quotation from the special Ziarat of Imam which is dedicated to his holiness.*

Keywords: *Imam Riza (p.b.u.h.), Imamate, Imam Riza moral behavior*

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**Imam Riza (p.b.u.h.),
The Real King,
King of Love And Generosity**

Monday, the 11th of Dhu al-Qi'dah (Nov 10, 2008) marks the birth anniversary of Imam Ali ibn Musa al-Riza (p.b.u.h.), the Real King of Iran, the King of Love, Glory, and Generosity.

Imam Riza, or Ali ibn Musa al-Riza (p.b.u.h.), the eighth Infallible Imam of the progeny of the holy prophets, was born on Thursday 11th Dhu al-Qi'dah 148 A.H., (769) A.D. in the city of Medina. He was famous as the "Exalted Scholar of Family of the holy Prophet".

His distinguished mother was a gentlewoman from the West, named Toktam (or Najmeh), and was often called Taherah (The chaste), by her husband and her attendants, too.

He was named Ali by his infallible father and was divinely entitled "Riza", which means Almighty Allah and His Prophet were deeply pleased with him, and he is pleased with the will of Allah.

Subsequent to the martyrdom of his father, he was divinely appointed to the position of Imamate (mastership), when he was a thirty-five year old man.

A glance at the authentic Islamic sources helps us to get acquainted with the rich words and discourses of Imam Riza (p.b.u.h.) uttered and delivered on subjects like the principles of Islam, the Islamic teachings, the juristic issues, and many other subjects of research.

Al-Ma'mun's policy and his judgment of Imam Riza's extented knowledge can be counted as proofs of the holy Imam's competence in this regard.

Historical records confirm that Al-Ma'mun, the caliph, was himself a celebrated erudite, and his views were sound

here. He used to say in several occasions that, “I know not any person superior to this man [Imam Riza] in the whole world.”

In other words, wise men adored him and great scholars were full of wonder and admiration for his immense, superior knowledge. Imam Riza’s discourses and open debates were a source of joy for the audience, intellectuals, and ordinary folk alike.

Imamate (Mastership) Period

His 20 year-mastership, which began when he was 35 witnessed the rule of three Abbasid caliphs: Haroun, Muhammad Amin, and Al-Ma’mun. He amended to a great extent the distorted Islamic view of the ruling clique.

In the year 200 A.H., Caliph Al-Ma’mun requested Imam Riza to visit Marv (present Khorasan- Mashhad), and then proposed Imam Riza being king.

Appointed by Almighty God, already had a much superior position as Imam, a leader appointed by God for the whole world, and did not need endorsement of his inferior, who wanted to confine him to a limited realm. Imam Riza declined to become caliph. Al-Ma’mun insisted but Imam again refused Al-Ma’mun's proposal.

In fact, by this apparently generous move, Al-Ma’mun wanted to kill two birds with one stone:

- 1) By the very act of offering the caliphate or succession to him, Al-Ma’mun desired to show himself as a supporter of the family of the holy Prophet, to ensure loyalty of the Shia community for his system, who then rebelled against the Sunni despotic state which misrepresented Islam.

- 2) Underestimating Imam, the caliph considered that Imam's inclusion into his oppressive and cruel government

supervised by Al-Ma'mun's stooges, in a manner that could easily and mercilessly accuse and humiliate anyone would discredit the Imam before his followers. The idea was to defame Imam Riza and the true followers of Islam, if they refused the Al-Ma'mun's hierarchy. He even married his daughter to Imam, to forge a close tie with him.

Infallible Imam Riza was fully aware of different motives behind Al-Ma'mun's proposal. Even the majority in the Islamic state knew that nobody could trust a man like Al-Ma'mun, who had usurped the throne by killing his own brother! When insisted upon by Al-Ma'mun, the Imam accepted successorship to the throne, on the condition that the Imam would not interfere in the government affairs.

The men in charge of the ruling body were taken back at the popularity of Imam- whom they wanted to cast in the role of ceremonial figurehead- shooting into skies.

Al-Ma'mun decided to do what his predecessors had done as a normal practice: when he saw his plan backfired, Al-Ma'mun simply decided to kill Imam Riza.

So the Imam Riza was poisoned during a visit to Iran in 203 A.H. (824 AD) at the age of 55. The shrine of Imam Riza in Mashhad, Iran, a ziarat spot for millions of Muslims year by year.

His Holiness Character And Moral Behavior

Followings are some of his holiness personal and social behaviors the narrator has reported:

- His holiness never irritated others by verbal or practical teasing.
- His holiness did not interrupt other's speeches.
- His holiness never refused the demands of others.

- His holiness never swore at his servants.

- He was very generous as it is respected: "Once a stranger went to him and demanded some money for his travel expenses. On hearing the man's request Imam Riza gracefully went out, and after a short while he called the stranger to take the money from his hand being solely seen from behind the curtain. His holiness did not like to be seen by the demandant, nor did his holiness want to witness bashfulness on the visage of that person.

- Being Al-Ma'mun's crown prince, the holy Imam once generously donated all his own possessions to the needy that lived in the Khorasan Province.

- One of the distinguished companions of Imam Riza says, "Once I was in the presence of the holy Imam, and his holiness invited me to have dinner with him. I accepted the invitation, and entered the abode of Imam Riza. There among the servants we saw a black who seemed to be an alien fellow." The holy Imam inquired about that man and asked whether his wage had been fixed in advance. "They stated that the black labor did not complain of the amount of the paid wage." On hearing that, his holiness reminded his attendants by observing the following instruction, "Fix, Fix the wage, then employ a worker."

Words of His Holiness

Following are a few words from thousands:

- 1) Man's wisdom is his friend, and ignorance is his foe.
- 2) Nothing is more worthy than good moral (temper).
- 3) Best wealth is that which provides a good name (prestige) for its owner.

4) True faith means the accomplishment of the religious obligation and avoiding the forbidden acts.

5) He who assesses himself' carefully will final benefit, the negligent will lose out.

6) He who blames time should spend a long time blaming.

7) The generous are the masters of people in this world, while the pious are masters of people on doomsday.

8) He who wishes to be the dearest to the people must be virtuous both in public and in private.

9) Human wisdom (intellect) is a divine blessing but politeness is acquired through endeavoring.

10) Gifts cast out hatred from the heart.

Let's end this article by a quotation from the special ziarat of Imam which is dedicated to his Holiness:

“ ... O, Allah, send blessing on Ali ibn Musa who pleased Thee most, the chosen, Thy servant, the defender of Thy religion , rightly and justly established by Thee as an authority who made earnest presentation of arguments to promote Thy religion which is the religion of his truthful ancestors, blessing which no one is able to measure other than Thee ...”

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Ziarat of Imam Ali bin Musa al-Riza (p.b.u.h.).