



Bedtime
Stories

الكhalifa
للمحرمين

IMAM JAFAR BIN MUHAMMAD AL-SADIQ (A.S.)

Our sixth Imam, Jafar al-Sadiq (a.s.) was the son of Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (a.s.). His mother was a noble lady, Fatimah, better known in his history as Umm Farwa. She was the daughter of Qasim bin Muhammad, who was the son of caliph Abu Bakr.

Her father was brought up in the care of Imam Ali (a.s.). He loved the Ahlul Bayt and was so devoted to them that Imam Ali (a.s.) called him his own son.

Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (a.s.) was born in Madina on 17th Rabi ul Awwal 83 *hijra*. He was guided by his grandfather, Imam Ali bin Husayn Zayn al-Abidin (a.s.), for 12 years till his death. Then he was guided by his father, Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (a.s.), till his death in 117 *hijra*. After that Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (a.s.) became our spiritual leader.

During those times the political situation was very unstable. The true followers of the Imam and the friends of Ahlul Bayt faced great hardships. They could not practice their faith freely. On the orders of Muawiyah, Imam Ali (a.s.) was publicly abused from all mosques. This came to an end after 60 years when Umar bin Abdul Aziz became king. He was a comparatively better ruler and had regard for Ahlul Bayt.

The next ruler was Hasham. On one occasion when he went to Makka to perform *hajj*, Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (a.s.) who was very young at that time, was also present with his father, who delivered a very forceful speech to the *hajjis*. He praised Allah, the creator of the universe. He focused on the greatness of the Holy Prophet and his family and emphasized that the enemies of Ahlul Bayt would not go to heaven. Hasham objected to the speech. He called Imam Baqir (a.s.) and Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (a.s.) to Damascus from Madina with the intention of punishing them. But in the end he had to bow down to the Imams.

The behaviour of these rulers towards our Imams was very painful for the Shias, who were in minority. Imam Zayn al-Abidin's son Zayd revolted against the government, fighting for the rights of the true Imam and his followers, but he was martyred.

People now openly rebelled against the government. They were angry at the behaviour of the rulers towards the Holy Prophet's family, and their followers. Taking advantage of this situation the Abbasides (who were the direct descendants of the Prophet's uncle Abbas ibn Abdul Muttalib) tried to divert the attention of the general public. They openly condemned the government. They asked the people to join them in overthrowing the rulers. They wanted the Holy Prophet's heir, Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (a.s.) to become their ruler. A fierce battle followed and the government was overthrown. But now Banu Abbas did not keep their word. Saffah Abbasi took the throne and became the first Abbaside ruler.

Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (a.s.) was not interested in government. He kept himself aloof from politics because he knew that all worldly empires are short-lived. Only Allah's kingdom is ever-lasting. While the rulers were busy setting up their government, Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (a.s.) revived interest in the Holy Prophet's teachings. He opened schools for imparting knowledge on all subjects and enrolled more than 4000 students. He taught different branches of religion i.e. *fiqh*, *hadis* and ethics. He also taught science including Chemistry, Biology, Physics, Maths and Astronomy. Many of his students later became famous scientists and scholars e.g. Abu Musa Jabir ibn Hayvan, father of Modern Chemistry, was Imam's student. The light of knowledge and religion attracted people from all walks of life to the Imam. When these people returned to their native lands, they continued spreading knowledge. The faithful followers of the Imam made up the Jafari sect. Till today the Shia sect is known as *fiqh jafaria*.

So, the knowledge imparted by the Holy Prophet was brought back to life by the efforts of Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (a.s.). Imam Ali (a.s.), his ancestor, had vast knowledge. Imam Hasan (a.s.), Imam Husayn (a.s.) and Imam Zayn al-Abidin (a.s.) taught several duas (supplications). Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (a.s.) and Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (a.s.) could openly preach and spread knowledge because the political situation was favourable at that time. Till today, no scientist has been able to refute any of the Imam's theories. Rather, many books on important subjects have been compiled on the basis of the teachings of the Imam. These books hold authentic value even today.

One day at a grand gathering of renowned scholars and historians. Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (a.s.) took the opportunity to announce the appointment of Imam Musa al-Kazim (a.s.) as his successor. Some of the famous personalities present on this occasion were Mufazzal bin Umar, Yazid bin Sabi, Abu

Basir and Safwan al-Jamil. All these scholars witnessed and confirmed the appointment of Imam Musa al-Kazim (a.s.).

Abu Nasir relates that once during a discussion about the succession to the divine leadership, Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (a.s.) clearly said: “Ismail is not my successor to the divine leadership. I have no authority over this matter. It is the will of Allah and He Himself appoints the divine leaders.”

Ismail died during Imam Jafar’s life time. He was beside his son during his illness. He loved Ismail dearly and suffered greatly as he watched him slipping away. With tears in his eyes, the Imam closed Ismail’s eyes, kissed his face and covered it with a cloth.

Ismail was the eldest son of Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (a.s.) and dearly loved by him. He was always seen in the company of the holy Imam, so people automatically began to presume that Ismail would succeed Imam Jafar al-Sadiq

(a.s.) as the divine leader. This opinion became so widespread that it was now obligatory on Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (a.s.) to confirm the death of Ismail and see that the news reached everyone.

Hence before giving the funeral bath to Ismail, Imam Jafar al-Sadiq summoned his thirty devoted followers including Dawud bin Kasir, Abu Basir, Mufazzal bin Umar etc. He asked Dawud to uncover Ismail's face and see whether Ismail was dead or alive. Dawud said: "Ismail is dead." All the people present there similarly witnessed and confirmed that Ismail was dead. Thereafter Imam said: "O Allah You are also witness to this."

After the funeral bath Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (a.s.) asked Mufazzal bin Umar to see if Ismail was dead or alive. Mufazzal declared: "Certainly Ismail is dead." Everyone confirmed this and the holy Imam said again: "O Allah You are also witness to this."

Thereafter they lifted the bier and started

towards Madina. On the way Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (a.s.) time and again put down the bier, uncovered Ismail face, then summoned the people and declared: "See Ismail is dead." His motive was to convince the people that Ismail had died during the life time of his father and therefore he could not inherit the divine leadership.

When the bier was brought to Madina and put into the grave, Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (a.s.) once again summoned Mufazzal to uncover Ismail's face. He then asked everyone present there: "Is Ismail dead or alive?" They said, "Certainly Ismail is dead." The holy Imam said, "O Lord You be witness to this." Then he continued, "In the near future misguided people will create doubts about this. They wish to blow out the light of Allah." Then pointing towards Musa al-Kazim (a.s.) he said: "And Allah will perfect His light even though the unbelievers dislike."

MARTYRDOM

The increasing popularity of Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (a.s.) became a threat to Mansur

Dawanaqi who wanted to get rid of him. At the king's orders, the governor of Madina, Muhammad bin Sulayman, gave the Imam poisoned grapes. He died on 25th Shawwal 148 *hijra* in Madina and is buried in Jannat ul Baqi near his father, Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (a.s.). Before his death he appointed his son Imam Musa al-Kazim (a.s.) as his successor. But some people produced a man named Ismail and proclaimed him the successor of Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (a.s.). Even today there are followers of Ismail, They are known as Ismailis. Although Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (a.s.) had firmly established the death of Ismail before many witnesses several times yet the mischief-makers did not accept Musa bin Jafar al-Kazim (a.s.) as the rightful Imam.

Like other members of the Holy Prophet's family Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (a.s.) had a very noble character. He said:

1. A person should know Allah.
2. He should know what Allah wants him to do.

3. He should know which things will damage his faith.

He always stressed upon the importance of working for a livelihood and also emphasized upon honesty in business and said that one should not earn profit at the cost of another.

The Imam always tried to patch up differences between Muslims so that they could be united. When he freed a slave he did not ask for any reward but said that he did it only for Allah's pleasure. He would however, take a promise from the freed slave that they would undertake to perform the rituals of Islam i.e. Namaz, Roza, Hajj and Zakat.

CHILDREN

Abu Abd Allah, Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (a.s.) had ten children. Ismail was the eldest.

1. Ismail
2. Abd Allah
3. Umm Farwa
4. Musa

5. Ishaq
6. Muhammad
7. Al-Abbas
8. Ali
9. Asma
10. Fatima

Who had different mothers.

IMAM MUSA BIN JAFAR AL-KAZIM (A.S.)

Imam Musa bin Jafar al-Kazim (a.s.) is our seventh Imam in the line of the twelve Imams of Ahlul Bayt. Imam Musa al-Kazim was born on 7th Safar in 128 *hijra*, during the reign of the last Umayyad caliph, Marwan al Himar.

Imam Musa al-Kazim's father was Imam Jafar bin Muhammad al-Sadiq (a.s.), the founder of the Jafari school of Islamic law, whose knowledge had attracted scores of students to him. Imam Musa al-Kazim's mother was lady Hamida. Lady Hamida was the Sa-i, a Barbari, and was believed to be of Spanish origin.

Imam Musa al-Kazim (a.s.) grew up in a home where philosophy, Islamic law and method of worship of Allah were established. Since early childhood, Imam Musa al-Kazim (a.s.) excelled in the recitation of the holy Quran. Because of the beauty of his recitation and his ethereal voice, he was known as Dawud (David) of the age.

Not only the Imam would weep himself during the recitation, but often also moved his audience to tears.

Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (a.s.) passed away in 148 *hijra*, ten years before the death of Mansur. So the first ten years of Imam Musa al-Kazim's imamat passed during Mansur's reign.

History shows that in the last decade of his reign Mansur did not interfere in the affairs of Imam Musa al-Kazim (a.s.). This was mainly because of two reasons. Firstly because he, Mansur, was busy building Baghdad and secondly because he was appointed as Trustee to supervise the affairs of Imam Musa al-Kazim (a.s.).

After Mansur's death his son Muhammad Mahdi ascended the throne. He was a pleasure-loving and permissive man.

His jealousy for the family of the Holy Prophet drove him to imprison the Imam when he had gone to *hajj* in 164 *hijra*. But he was soon

forced to free the Imam with honour. Mahdi had dreamt of Amir al-Muminin Ali ibn Abi Talib reciting a verse from the Holy Quran. The verse stated that on attaining power people become sinners, create disturbance in the world and ignore family connection. The dream worried him. He called for the Imam, spoke to him respectfully and promised that neither he nor his descendants would ever rebel against him. He then offered him 3000 dinars for travelling expenses for his return journey to Madina.

Mahdi passed away in 109 *hijra*, after ruling for 11 years. His son Hadi succeeded him and ruled for just over one year. Hadi, like his grandfather Mansur, was a very cruel man. Hadi also felt that the Imam was actively rebelling against him. He therefore, imprisoned the Imam. Hadi then also saw Imam Ali (a.s.) in his dream just as Mahdi had seen, and the Imam was reciting the same Quranic verse. Unnerved, he immediately ordered the release of Imam Musa al-Kazim (a.s.). That same night

Hadi died while plotting to kill his mother and brother.

In the month of Rabi ul Awwal in 170 *hijra*, Harun Rashid, the second son of caliph Mahdi, became the ruler of the Muslim empire. He was the first Muslim caliph who patronised music in the court. He also introduced chess to the Muslims. The game of chess is forbidden in Islam.

He was afraid of sacred personality of Imam Musa al-Kazim (a.s.) considered him a threat to his leadership. Imam Musa al-Kazim (a.s.) suffered great hardships and cruelties during his period which lasted for several long years during Harun Rashid's reign.

Harun had argued with Imam Musa al-Kazim (a.s.) saying that his relationship with the Holy Prophet was closer than the Imam's. Harun did not want to hear the truth and had imprisoned the Imam. Then Harun saw a terrible dream in which Imam Ali (a.s.), armed with an axe

threatened him saying: “Release my son from the prison or I will punish you for your sin.” Therefore he immediately ordered the release of the Imam.

IMAM’S MIRACLES

THE INCIDENT OF A BEAUTIFUL SLAVE GIRL

When Imam Musa al-Kazim (a.s.) was in jail, Harun engineered a plot to degrade the divine leader in the eyes of the public. He therefore sent a very beautiful slave girl to serve him in the jail. When the slave was presented to the Imam he said: “These things means nothing to us. They have value for Harun al-Rashid only.” When Harun heard this he was furious and retorted: “We have not imprisoned you with your consent and neither do we care to seek your permission about anything we do. You must let the slave girl live with you.” Harun then sent the slave girl back to the Imam in prison.

After a few days Harun sent a servant to spy on the slave girl in prison. The servant found

the girl in prostration reciting, “O Holy! O Exalted! Hallowed be Your name. Hallowed be Your name.”

The servant was taken aback by this. He rushed to his master and informed him about it. Harun laughed: “Musa has cast a spell on her.” Then he summoned the slave girl. She came in the presence of the monarch trembling and staring up at the sky. Harun asked “What has happened to you?” The slave girl replied: “I have had the most unique experience of my life. When I went to the Imam, he was engrossed in prayers. He did not pay any attention to me. After finishing his prayers he became absorbed in *zikr* and invocation. At this juncture I went close to him and urged: ‘Why don’t you order me to serve you?’ ‘I have no need of you,’ he replied. ‘But I am sent especially for you’ I repeated. At this point he raised his hand and said: ‘Then what are these for?’ I looked up, and behold! I saw huge gardens with innumerable fruit laden trees, flowers and greenery. There were extremely beautiful angels and handsome youth clad in choicest clothes of silk and

brocade bedecked with jewellery. Delicacies of all kinds were laid out and servants were standing before the holy Imam to execute his slightest command. I was spellbound at this sight and fell into prostration and remained in that position till your servant came to get me.” Harun threatened: “O mean girl, you might have fallen asleep in prostration and seen that vision in a dream.” “No, my master,” protested the slave girl, “I saw all this before falling into prostration.”

Harun did not know what to make of this. He ordered his servant to keep the salve girl in his safe custody so that she could not narrate her experience to others. The slave girl developed into a pious woman and remained engrossed in prayers and invocations all her life. She died a few days before the martyrdom of Imam Musa al-Kazim.

IMAM MUSA AL-KAZIM (A.S.) AND ALI BIN YAQTIN BAGHADADI

Ali bin Yaqtin was a worthy and pious man. He was an officer of high rank in the court of

Harun Rashid. He was an ardent follower of Imam Musa al-Kazim (a.s.) and occasionally sent precious gifts to the divine leader.

Once Harun presented Ali bin Yaqtin with a royal robe of black velvet embroidered with gold thread and studded with precious stones. Ali bin Yaqtin sent this robe and other gifts to the holy Imam. The Imam accepted all the gifts, but returned the robe to Ali with a message: “Preserve this robe with care because it will save your life one day.”

Some days later Ali bin Yaqtin grew angry with his servant and dismissed him. This disloyal servant ran to Harun Rashid and reported that his master Ali was a firm believer in the *imamat* and had also sent a regal robe to Imam Musa al-Kazim (a.s.).

Harun’s anger knew no bounds. He at once ordered his guards to arrest Ali bin Yaqtin and bring him to the court. When Yaqtin was brought before Harun, the king thundered: “Where is that royal robe I had gifted to you?”

“In my house” Ali bin Yaqtin replied calmly. Harun was enraged and shouted: “I will sentence you to death.” “O caliph I will present the robe to you right now.” Then he turned to his servant and told him to fetch the trunk.

The man went to the house of Ali and brought the sealed trunk. Ali broke the seal and taking the robe presented it to the angry king. Harun’s anger was soothed. He assured Ali bin Yaqtin: “From today I will not hear any complaint about you.”

Abu Hamza Batayni says:

“Once I was going for *hajj* with Imam Musa al-Kazim. As we were walking along a deserted road a lion appeared from the woodland and advanced towards us. I was scared out of my wits and stood rooted to the spot. The lion approached the Imam, who bent forward, gently stroked its mane and whispered something, hearing which the king of the beasts bent his head at the feet of Imam in a humble gesture of gratitude, then gently turned away

and disappeared in the bushes. I was amazed at this supernatural phenomenon and inquired from the divine leader who explained: ‘The lion came to request me to invoke Allah to relieve the suffering of his mate-the lioness. I supplicated the almighty to relieve her agony, and then he departed.’”

In 179 *hijra* Hamn visited Makka during the month of Ramazan. He performed *Umra* and then proceeded to Madina with his entourage. The very next day Harun sent Fazal bin Rabi to arrest the Holy Imam which he did while the holy Imam was offering prayers near the tomb of the Holy Prophet. Harun sent the Imam to Basra where he asked his cousin Isa bin Jafar bin Mansur to keep the holy prisoner in a dark cell in his palace. The Imam remained in this dungeon for 12 months; the door of the prison was opened only twice in the day, once to let the Imam perform ablution and the second time to give him 2 loaves of bread and a cup of water. After a year Isa felt that the Imam was undoubtedly a pious person and should be immediately released.

Harun was quite upset by this and sent a message to send back the Imam to Baghdad. When Imam arrived in Baghdad, Harun ordered Fazal to keep the divine leader in his custody. Fazal was a follower of the Imam but out of fear of Harun he kept his faith in secret. Then Fazal finally told Harun that he would not kill the Imam. Harun decided to transfer the Imam to the custody of Yahya Barmaki.

Yahya imprisoned the holy Imam in a desolate dreary house. Fazal, the eldest son of Yahya Barmaki, was taken in by the Imam's pleasant nature and spiritual stature, and invited him to his house. When Harun found this out he at once ordered to give severe punishment to Fazal and Yahya asked for forgiveness for his son.

Imam was transferred from Yahya's custody and put in the prison of Sanadi bin Shahak. Sanadi was ruthless and arrogant and was notorious for his foul temper. But gradually his behaviour too towards the Imam changed. Harun soon

got news of this, but was unable to do anything about it as he could find no one else as cruel as Sanadi. The Imam remained in his custody.

Harun's attempts to kill the Imam were unsuccessful. Though he knew that the Imam was a pious and virtuous man, he kept him imprisoned for political reasons.

It is said that Harun sent many men to kill the Imam, but just one glance at him made them the Imam's followers. Harun in desperation told the Imam that he would grant him freedom if the Imam pardoned him for detaining him which he said he did for political reasons. The Imam refused. He said that Harun had done all he had out of enmity for the children of the Holy Prophet which was the legacy of his forefathers. Harun was furious and ordered the Imam's imprisonment for rest of his life.

Harun Rashid summoned Sanadi bin Shahak and promised him a large reward if he would poison the holy Imam. Though Sanadi had

come to believe in the innocence of the Imam, his greed got the better of him. He had injected poison in the dates that were given to the Imam. Soon after eating the poisoned dates the Imam became seriously ill with high fever.

When Musayyab, the guard appointed by Harun to keep an eye on the Imam, went to check on him in the dungeon he saw that a young handsome man (Imam Ali al-Riza, Imam's son) was whispering something in the holy Imam's ears. Then the Imam's soul left his body. The handsome youth administered the funeral rites and offered funeral prayers. He then disappeared.

Harun's brother Sulayman buried the Imam with due respect and honour at Kazimayn (a suburb of Baghdad).

So, one brother went down in history as the oppressor and murderer of the Imam while the other brother buried the Imam with honour and dignity and mourned his martyrdom.

The date of Imam's martyrdom was Friday - 25th Rajab 183 *hijra*.

In our seventh Imam the trait to control over temper was so eminent that he acquired the title "al-Kazim" that is the one who controls his rage through patience. He was undoubtedly the most exalted and learned scholar of his time.

CHILDREN

Imam Musa al-Kazim (a.s.) had 19 sons and 18 daughters from different wives.

IMAM ALI BIN MUSA AL-RIZA (A.S.)

Imam Ali bin Musa al-Riza (a.s.) is our eighth Imam in the chain of twelve Imams. His father was Imam Musa al-Kazim (a.s.) and his mother Umm al-Banin was a slave. She was also known as Tahira. She was from a noble North African origin, and was pious and very beautiful. Imam Ali bin Musa al-Riza (a.s.) was born on Thursday 11th Dhilqad 148 *hijra* in Madina.

The cruel Harun Rashid was khalifa in those days. Imam Musa al-Kazim (a.s.) knew that he would create trouble, so he invited seventeen prominent people of the family of the Holy Prophet and declared his son, Ali al-Riza (a.s.), as his successor and Imam. He was chosen because of his knowledge, piety and forbearance. Soon Imam Musa al-Kazim (a.s.) was prisoned by Harun, and although spent most of his life in prison, Imam Riza (a.s.) received his guidance from him, and learnt from him for almost 25 years.

After the death of his father, Imam Ali al-Riza (a.s.) lived ten long years under Harun's harsh and oppressive rule. He lived in Madina and spent his time in prayers, fasting, teaching and helping the needy. He was very generous and humble, and often gave charity in the night. He dressed in simple coarse material and always wore perfume. He spoke softly, and never laughed loudly in company. When Harun sent Isa al-Jubidi to loot and plunder his house, the Imam brought out his money, clothes and ornaments and gave it to Isa, so that he could take all he wanted without entering his house.

During his time the Abbasids were in power and Harun al-Rashid was the caliph of a vast empire. His sons Amin and Mamun were always fighting for power so he divided his kingdom into two parts. He gave Baghdad and the surrounding Arab areas to Amin; and Iran, Turkey and the non-Arab areas to Mamun. They were not satisfied with this either, and fought after Harun's death. Finally Mamun killed Amin, as had been predicted by Imam Ali

al-Riza (a.s.). The *alawis* felt the time was right to unite and fight for the rights of the family of Ali (a.s.), and to try and secure the caliphate.

Mamun was a shrewd caliph. He thought it best to make amends with Imam Ali al-Riza (a.s.) and the *alawis*. He and his followers disregarded the leadership of the Imams, but they accepted that they were superior in knowledge and wisdom. Imam Ali al-Riza's fame regarding his knowledge had spread beyond Arabia. Mamun then sent some members of the family of Ahlul Bayt to Merve. Imam Ali al-Riza (a.s.) was among those who went. Before leaving, he went to the Holy Prophet's shrine to bade him farewell. When he wept at the grave, his companions asked him why he was weeping, and he replied that it was because he would never return to Madina again. When Imam Riza (a.s.) reached Merve, Mamun forced him to accept the post of crown prince. Mamun gave his daughter, Ummi Habib in marriage to Imam Ali al-Riza (a.s.). Then, according to the wishes of the Imam he

changed the colour of the flag of the caliphate, black robes were replaced by green ones as court dress. Mamun also issued coins with his name stamped on them. Imam Ali al-Riza (a.s.) settled in Tus and spent his time preaching and helping people.

The Imam performed many miracles. Once when Imam Ali al-Riza (a.s.) was sitting in the company of his friends a sparrow alighted and chirped loudly. The Imam told his friends that the sparrow feared that the snake that was climbing up the tree nearby would swallow her little ones, if they did not kill it. The Imam's friends killed the snake and saved the little birds.

On another occasion, Imam Ali al-Riza (a.s.) saw a hunter readying himself to kill a doe. The doe looked pleadingly at the Imam for help. The Imam appealed to the hunter to let the doe go and see its little ones, after which she would return. The hunter agreed, but told the Imam it was not possible for a wild animal to return.

The Imam assured him, she would. Soon after the doe returned with her little ones. The hunter was surprised and let the doe go free.

SAYINGS OF IMAM ALI AL-RIZA (A.S.)

1. Mother's milk is the best food for an infant.
2. Pomegranate is a fruit of paradise. There is one seed from paradise in every pomegranate growing on the earth.
3. Dried grapes regulate the bile, remove excess phlegm from the body, strengthen the sinews, take away melancholic tendencies from the mind, and purify the soul.
4. Honey is nature's best medicine. Whenever some one offers you honey as a present, accept it.
5. Rose is the pride of the flowers of paradise.
6. The oil of violet should be used as hair oil because it has a cooling effect in the summer and a warming effect in the winter.
7. A person who applies olive oil to his head or uses it in food, keeps Shaytan at bay for forty days.

8. Kindness to relatives and good behaviour towards neighbours brings about an increase in wealth.
9. A fast observed on Friday carries ten times more merits than fasts on other days.
10. Recitation of the Quran and taking honey with milk sharpens the memory.
11. Use of meat as food improves health and builds up resistance against diseases.
12. Starting meals with salt prevents seventy types of ailments, one of which is leprosy.
13. A gluttonous person will starve on the day of resurrection.
14. *Masur* (a kind of beans) was the favourite food of seventy thousand prophets. It moderates the temperament and augments the activity of tear glands.
15. A person who refrains from eating meat for forty days will become ill-tempered.
16. Food should be taken when it is at moderate temperature.
17. Start eating from the sides of your plate and not from the middle.
18. A good-natured person will be in the

company of the Holy Prophet on the day of judgement.

19. Seek your sustenance from Allah through alms giving.
20. The first people to go to paradise will be martyrs and the pious ones, while unjust rulers will be the first to enter the hell.
21. Every *mumin* (faithful) will have a mean neighbour who will harass him.
22. Three occasions are the most trying and dangerous for a man:
 - (i) the time of birth,
 - (ii) the time of death, and
 - (iii) the day of resurrection when man will see what he had never seen in his life.
23. Allah has stipulated an obligation in each of His (following) three commandments:
 - (i) He ordered us to offer prayers but with it He ordered us to pay *zakat* (the poor-rate): hence if a person offers prayers but does not pay the poor-rate his prayers are invalid.
 - (ii) Allah ordered us to offer thanks to Him but at the same time He enjoined on

us gratitude to parents. Therefore, if a person thanks Allah but does not thank his parents this is insufficient.

(iii) Allah ordered us to observe piety, but enjoined mercy on us at the same time, so observing piety without showing mercy to others makes piety unacceptable to Allah.

24. The symbol of wisdom is fortitude, while silence is the sign of sensibility.
25. Moderation in talking is beneficial to man because people love such a person.
26. Knowledge is a friend of man while ignorance is his enemy.
27. A man cannot get worldly luxuries unless he develops five bad traits in him:
 - (i) miserliness,
 - (ii) great expectations.
 - (iii) passionate temperament,
 - (iv) dislike towards blood relatives, and
 - (v) intense love of this world instead of the hereafter.
28. Minor sins lead a man towards major sins, hence a man who shuns minor sins will stay away from major ones.

29. We must fear Allah even if we have no fear of Hell or desire for paradise, because He is our creator. Never shall we attain the pleasure of Allah unless our actions of love and hatred conform to divine will.
30. Never be proud if some good reaches you but pray to Allah to make it perfect and lasting.
31. Days in this world are numbered so only a person of action will benefit if he does not forget that death keeps him in its folds and will wipe out all his great hopes. People are hasty at sinning, and reluctant to repent, but since death will come all of a sudden, sincere repentance should not be put off.
32. Forgive the mistakes of your companions and conceal their shortcomings. Exercise self-control if fools direct accusations against you. Endure the hardships of this world with infinite patience and never think of taking revenge. Depend upon Allah to deal with the cruel because He is able to deal with them most effectively.

MARTYRDOM

Imam Ali al-Riza (a.s.) became very popular and this made Mamun feel insecure. He invited the Imam to company him to Khorasan, where the Imam fell ill after a meal. He then gave the Imam poisoned pomegranate juice and poisoned grapes. The Imam knew what would happen so he had given instructions for washing, shrouding and perfuming of his body. He has also told his companions where his grave should be.

Imam Ali al-Riza (a.s.) died on 17th Safar 203 A.H. Mamun kept it a secret for a whole day before sending for his family. The Imam's only son, Imam Muhammad al-Taqi (a.s.) was just seven years old. He followed his father's instructions and took his father's body to the appointed place for burial. Imam Ali al-Riza (a.s.) was buried in a village in Sanabad (now Mashhad) in Tus. His tomb is in front of the Harun Rashid's tomb, facing Makka.

Imam Ali al-Riza (a.s.) had one sister, Masuma.

She was very devoted to him, like Sayyida Zaynab (s.a.) was to Imam Husayn (a.s.). As she had not seen her brother for a long time, she left Madina for Khorasan. There at Qum, she saw large crowds had come to receive her but they were in black clothes. She then learnt of her brother's martyrdom. The shock was so great that she lost consciousness and never recovered. She was buried in Qum.

THE HOLY QURAN SAYS

Verily, verily Allah intends but to keep off from you (every kind of) uncleanness, O you Ahlul Bayt (the people of the house), and purify you (with) a thorough purification.

THE HOLY PROPHET SAID

My Ahlul Bayt are like the ark of Nuh. Whoever comes on it is saved, whoever stays back is drowned.

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