

Alhassanain (p) Network for Islamic Heritage and Thought

Imam Musa Al-Kadhim (AS)

A booklet compiled by Alulbayt (AS) Foundation

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Birth and Childhood of Imam Al-Kadhim (AS)

Imam Mousa Al-Kadhim (AS) was born on Sunday 7th Safar 128 A.H. in a place between Mecca and Medina known as Al-Abwa, the very place where the mother of the Holy Prophet (SAW) , Aminah, the daughter of Wahab, had passed away and was buried. His father is the sixth Imam, Imam Jaffar Al-Sadiq (AS) and his mother is Hamida Khatoon, who was a freed slave girl that Imam Al-Sadiq (AS) married. Imam Al-Sadiq (AS) paid special attention to Hamidah's education, and thus she became a leading faqih who was assigned to educate women and preach Islamic teachings, beliefs and concepts.

The good news of the birth of Imam Mousa Al-Kadhim (AS) was given to his father, Imam Al-Sadiq (AS), while having lunch with a group of his companions. Happy and overflowing with paternal love, he rushed to see his newborn son. After a short period of time, Imam Al-Sadiq (AS) left Al-Abwa and resided in Madinah. He invited people to a great feast for three days, according to traditions of celebrating a child's birth. People rushed to the presence of the Imam (AS) to congratulate him. He had such profound love and affection for his son, that in public he welcomed him by saying 'I wish I had no son other than him, so that nobody would have a share of my love for him' (Baqir Sharif Al-Qurashi, Hayat Al-Imam Musa bin Jaffar (Life of Imam Musa bin Jaffar), Vol. 1, page 46, second edition)

Imam Al-Kadhim (AS) lived under the care of his father, and learned from the great school of his father, to which the scholars, jurists, philosophers and preachers flocked. He inherited from his father his knowledge, manners and high morals so that he epitomised generosity, asceticism, patience, bravery, perseverance and Jihad. With respect to his appearance, people described him as being fair-skinned, handsome and thin.

He lived for twenty years under the Imamate of his father, Imam Jaffar Al-Sadiq (AS), and was the Imam of the Ummah, for thirty-five years after his father.

Imammate of Imam Al-Kadhim (AS)

Imam Jaffar bin Muhammed Al-Sadiq (AS) appointed his son Mousa bin Jaffar (AS) as his successor and the Imam of the Ummah after him. Numerous traditions about this appointment exist, but the following are sufficient.

‘Mansoor bin Hazim went to see Imam Abu Abdullah Jaffar Al-Sadiq (AS), and asked him to specify the Imam who would succeed him. ‘May my father and mother be your ransom’, said he, ‘souls shall certainly taste death. If that is to be, then who will succeed you?’ ‘This is your man’, said the Imam, pointing to Abul-Hassan Mousa Al-Kadhim. Then he placed his hand on the shoulder of his son, as a gesture of emphasis. Mousa Al-Kadhim was, at the time, five years old.’ (Al-Kulayni, Usool Al-Kafi, Vol.1, page 309).

Abd al-Ala reported on the authority of al-Fayd b. al-Mukhtar, who said: I (i.e. al-Fayd b. al-Mukhtar) said to Abu 'Abd Allah Jaffar, peace be on him: "Take my hand away from the fire (of Hell). Who is (the Imam) for us after you?" Abu Ibrahim (Mousa Al- Kadhim) entered. Then Imam Jaffar Al-Sadiq (AS) said: "This is your leader. Keep close to him." (Kitab Al-Irshad)

Musa al-Sayqal reported on the authority of al-Mufaddal b. Umar al-Jufi, may God have mercy on him, who said:

I (i.e. al-Mufaddal b. Umar al-Jufi) was with Abu Abd Allah Imam Jaffar AL-Sadiq, peace be on him. Abu Ibrahim Mousa Al-Kadhim, peace be on him, came in. He was still a boy. Abu Abd Allah Jaffar, peace be on him, said to him: "Indicate to those of your Companions whom you trust that the position of authority belongs to him Mousa." (Kitab Al-Irshad).

Aspects of Character of Imam Musa Al-Kadhim (AS).

The period during which Imam Mousa Al-Kadhim (AS) assumed Imammate was the worst, the most brutal and troublesome for Ahlul-Bait (AS). However the Imam endured all the atrocities with his perseverance, patience, and courage. For his ability to contain his sorrow, pain and suffering, he won the nickname of Al-Kadhim.

All of Ahlul-Bait (AS) have honourable characteristics and such noble virtues that they embody perfection and personify the Book of Allah (SWT), the Holy Quran. In this section, we elaborate upon some of the exceptional characteristics of Imam Al-Kadhim (AS).

The Devoted Worshipper:

History portrays the relationship between Imam Al-Kadhim (AS) and Allah (SWT); his worship, asceticism and unique spiritual character. He was, as his father and grandfathers were, educated and brought up to love the Qur'an and live it, as it is the Book of Allah, the container of the revelation, and the source of every good and guidance.

Imam Mousa al-Kadhim (AS) was in the habit of reciting the Qur'an. He was at pains to learn it by heart, recite it, act in accordance with its teachings, and hold onto its message and methodology.

It was said that: "He was the best one among the memorizers of the Book of Allah, the Exalted. He had a mellifluous voice when he recited the Qur'an. When he recited the Qur'an, those present would be so moved that they would break into tears for merely listening to him. People in the city of Madinah called him 'The Ornament of the Toilers.'" (Al-Tabrasi. l'lam al-Wara bi A'lam al-Huda (Acquainting People with the Leaders of Guidance). p. 309. 3rd ed.)

His closeness to Allah (SWT), his longing to meet Him and his endeavours to please Him, made him journey to the Sacred House of Allah (SWT) on foot. It was reported that he had gone to Makkah, along with his brother, Ali bin Jaffar, four times on foot.

As for his prayer, he was unmatched. The devoted and pious ones followed his example. It is said that "When he stood in the presence of Allah (SWT), to perform his prayer, tears would roll down his face."

He used to ask Allah's forgiveness and thank Him for his graces. Ibrahim bin al-Bilad said, "Abul-Hassan Imam Mousa Al-Kadhim (AS) said to me; 'I ask Allah's forgiveness five thousand times a day.'"

Hisham bin Ahmar is reported to have said: "I was riding with Abul-Hassan (Musa bin Jaffar) on a street in Madinah when he dismounted and prostrated. He remained so, motionless, for a lengthy period of time. Then he raised his head and remounted. "May I be your ransom", asked I. "I saw you going down in a long prostration?" He replied; 'I remembered a grace which Allah favoured me with. I loved to thank my Lord for it.'" (Allamah al-Majlisi, Ibid, Vol. 48, p. 116)

Imam al-Kadhim (AS) was a pious, monotheistic saint. His heart was brimming with love for Allah. He (AS) wished that Allah would grant him an opportunity to serve Him. One of the spies placed in the prison with the Imam, to keep a watchful eye on him, reported to the governor Isa bin Jaffar, that he had heard the Imam (AS) saying,

"O my Lord, You know that I had been asking you to spare me time to devote myself to Your service. You have done that. Praise be to You"

The Imam (AS) would not think much of jails. Nor would he get bored by them. He simply didn't fear the rulers, his opponents. He was towering over this life, lofty and high; no jail would deter or intimidate him. He had given up the pleasures of life, for a more sublime goal, to defend the right, and serve his Lord.

He considered prison life a divine favour. It is reported that Al-Rasheed, the cruel Abbasid caliph would sit in a place overlooking the prison. He saw the Imam in prostration. "What is that garment?" Al-Rasheed asked Al-Rabi',

"which I see everyday on that spot?" Al-Rabi' replied; 'It is not a garment. That is Musa bin Jaffar. He prostrates every day from sunrise until noon'. (Ibid)

It was no secret that the Imam (AS) loved to serve Allah (SWT) devotedly and wholeheartedly. Historians and biographers wrote about his worship and prayer.

"It became widely known among people that Abul-Hassan Mousa bin Jaffar was the highest in status from among Al-Sadiq's sons, the most devoted in his faith, and the most fluent in expressing his mind. Not only was he the most devoted in his worship among the people, but he was also the most well-versed man in Islamic sciences and jurisprudence. It is reported that he would perform the optional prayers of the night until the Morning Prayer. He would perform it and remain awake reciting some supplications until sunrise. He then would go down in prostration during which he praised, thanked and glorified Allah, and would not lift his head until it was noon. He said, in his prostration: "The sin of your servant is shamefully ugly. Let your forgiveness and pardon be bountiful" (Al-Tabrasi, Ibid., p.305, 3rd ed)

My dear reader, such was the devout and wholehearted worship of Imam Al-Kadhim (AS). Perhaps it is incumbent upon us to think about our worship of Allah (SWT). Sometimes we become so entangled in this world that we lose sight of our real purpose in this life: to worship Allah (SWT).

Are we worshipping our Creator and Sustainer enough? Are we performing the obligatory acts? All of them? Are we then seeking greater proximity to our Lord by performing recommended acts? Salatul Lail (The Night Prayers), the Nawafil Prayers, the recommended fasts, the recommended supplications, perchance that we may then enjoy that unique relationship that Ahlul-Bait (AS) enjoyed with Allah (SWT). They were whole-heartedly devoted to Allah, fully grasping the monotheistic concepts which were reflected clearly in their conduct, attitudes, and deeds. Is it a surprise then that Imam Musa bin Jaffar won the nicknames of Zain al-Mujtahideen and al-Abd al-Salih. He who spends his days and nights in worship and deep thought, risking being thrown in the terrible prisons, overlooking the pleasures of life, giving out himself and his wealth so as to win Allah's pleasure, working hard to save humanity and guiding it on the right path.

Kindness and Generosity:

Imam Mousa al-Kadhim (AS) is widely known for his kindness, altruism, generosity and his tendency to help the poor secretly and publicly. He helped the people to solve their problems, set the slaves free, paid the debts of the indebted, and kept good relations with his relatives.

Sheikh al-Mufid, may Allah be pleased with him, explains, in his book "al-Irshad", Imam's attributes:

"Abul-Hassan (AS) was the most devoted worshipper among the people of his time, and the most versed in fiqh. He was the most generous, and the kindest of all people..." "He was very kind to his family and relatives, ready to help them when they needed him", added Sheikh al-Mufid. "In the dead of night, he used to call on the poor of Madinah, give them money and food secretly so that they did not know who he was."

Historians maintain that when someone reviled him or said something bad about him, the Imam (AS) would send a bag stuffed with 200-300 Dinars. Thus he returned the bad with good, lavishing his kindness on all people. Such bags were sent to the needy and indebted. The money-bags of Mousa bin Jaffar (AS) became proverbial."(Al-Tabrasi, Ibid., p. 307)

About the generosity of Imam Mousa bin Jaffar (AS), Muhammad bin Abdullah al-Bikri says:

"I came to Madinah seeking someone who would lend me some money. I found none. Why not go to Abul-Hassan (Imam Al-Kadhim) and complain to him about my trouble?" I said to myself. Accordingly, I went to see him at a place called Niqma where he had a farm. He came out with one of his servants carrying a sieve filled with veined, cured meat. I saw nothing else to be eaten. He set out eating and I followed suit. Then he asked me about my trouble, and I narrated my story. He went into the house, and returned shortly. He put out his hand with a bag of money. There were 300 Dinars in it. Then he rose to his feet and left me. I stood up, mounted my animal and left." (Allamah al-Majlisi, Ibid., p. 102.)

He used to forgive the wrongdoers, returning their bad behaviour with goodness. An excellent instance of his tolerance and forgiveness is detailed in the following story:

"There was a man who used to revile Imam Ali bin Abi-Talib (AS) when he met Imam Mousa bin Jaffar (AS). He missed no chance of annoying him whenever he saw him. Some of Imam's servants and followers asked him to permit them to kill the man, but the Imam rejected this. Then he mounted his donkey, and went across the farm of the man. Drawing near the man, he dismounted, sat down and began talking kindly and humorously to the man. 'How much did you spend on this farm?' asked the Imam (AS). 'One hundred Dirhams,' replied the man, 'And what profit do you hope to gain?' inquired the Imam. 'I do not know,' said the man. 'I have asked you: how much do you hope to get?' repeated the Imam. 'An extra one hundred Dirhams,' answered the man. "The Imam (AS) got out 300 Dinars from his pocket and handed them to him. The man, moved by Imam's gesture, rose to his feet and kissed the Imam (AS) on the head. When the Imam (AS), afterwards, entered the mosque, the man sprang up, greeted him, and said, Allah knows best whom

to entrust with His message' 'What is that?' the friends of the man rebuked him. The man reviled them.

From that time on, the man began to stand up as a sign of reverence and greet Imam Mousa Al-Kadhim (AS) whenever he entered the mosque. Imam Mousa Al-Kadhim (AS) said to those who wanted to get rid of the man 'what was better, what you wanted or what I did?'" (Ibid).

Such was Ahlul-Bait's (AS) manners, and their tolerance. This is one of numerous anecdotes which reflects Imam's forgiveness, and the curbing of his anger. He was not called al-Abd al-Salih, Zayn al-Mujtahideen and al-Kadhim for nothing.

"We feed you, for Allah's pleasure only- We desire from you neither reward nor thanks."

Holy Qur'an (76.9)

Such generosity, forgiveness, openhandedness and love of freedom are different when they issue from the Imam (AS). Other people spend liberally, give lavishly, and grant boundlessly, but they do this only in pursuit of fame, social status, and the buying of other people's conscience.

As for the Imam (AS.), his self is too serene and perfect to seek praise, social position and reputation. He did good, gave generously, helped the needy, and liberated the slaves for the sake of Allah, demanding nothing in return.

His Knowledge and Teachings

Imam Al-Kadhim (AS) received the heavy trust of guiding the Ummah from his father. The Imam (AS) raised a generation of 'ulama', preachers and narrators of Prophetic traditions. His mission lasted 35 years.

His era was abundant with ideological and philosophical currents. Divergent views on fiqh, Qur'anic exegesis and science of traditions emerged.

That era was the most critical in the life of Muslims. Atheism, polytheism, and hyperbole penetrated the Muslim society, and new ideological trends, with conflicting beliefs and doctrines surfaced. Schools of fiqh diversified and new sciences, including logic, philosophy, linguistics, in addition to comparison, appreciation and personal tastes, were adopted as the basis for deducing fiqh decrees. Some judges and fuqaha' distorted their judgements and decrees so as to suit the rulers. Distorted and fabricated traditions were spread.

Though extremely restricted and beleaguered, Imam Mousa bin Jaffar (AS) didn't give up his mission. It was his top priority to correct the Islamic march by showing to the Ummah what was original and what was non-Islamic. Aided by his disciples, he faced the new ideological trends, exactly as his father, Al-Sadiq (AS.), and his grandfather, Al-Baqir (AS), had done before, and displayed their flaws, and demonstrated that they were only distorted views of the original Islam. As for fiqh, he enriched it with his explanations, statements and deductions. By so doing, the Imam (AS) solidified the pillars of Islam, purified methodologies of fiqh and Islamic laws. He kept the school of Ahlul-Bait (AS) original, and enriched it.

Biographical books and those related to traditions maintain that upward to 300 men had reported from Imam Mousa bin Jaffar (AS). Proudly history cites a list of Imam's students who were distinguished as great scholars, and prominent ulama'. Most of them authored and compiled rich and great books on the different sciences of Islam.

As mentioned, at the time of Imam Al-Kadhim (AS) there were many ideological deviations from the true path of Islam. Imam Al-Kadhim (AS) stood against these deviations, and refuted them with proofs, logic, and reasoned answers. When some people claimed that Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, descended to the sky, he said,

"Allah never descends. He need not descend. He is the same, whether close or remote. No remote thing is far from Him, nor a close thing is near Him. He needs nobody and nothing, but everybody and everything are in need of Him. He is the Generous and Powerful. There is no god but He, the Mighty and Wise.

As for those describers who say that He descends, the Blessed and Exalted Allah is far above this description. Those who say so believe that Allah is vulnerable to decrease or increase. Any movable thing needs some outside force that moves it or serves as a medium for its movement. Doomed is he whose faith in Allah is shaken. Beware to attribute to Allah qualities that depict Him as decreasing or increasing, moving or being moved, changing or descending, standing or sitting. Allah, the Almighty and Powerful, is certainly beyond the words of the describers, the depiction of depictees, and the fancy of the fanciful"

In another statement Imam al-Kadhim (AS) explains the relationship between Allah's will and man's. He shows how man's behaviour has developed, whether it is good or bad. He emphasizes the fact that man is free, and he enjoys the full freedom of choice. He can do something and can refrain from doing it. Allah (SWT) never abolishes man's will. But this freedom to act on the part of man doesn't mean that Allah is unable to prevent His servants from doing evil, or that He can't force them to do good. Allah simply wants to test man in this life, Imam al-Kadhim (AS) says:

"When Allah created His creatures, He knew what their fates would be. He ordered them to do certain things and forbade them to do other things. If He ordered them to do certain things, He left them free to do them or not. They cannot do something or abstain from doing it without His will. Never did Allah force any of His servants to disobey Him. 'He simply tests His servants with tribulations'." (Ibid., p. 87.)

Following are educational guidelines and general teachings on social behaviour, ethics, worship, and mediation, quoted from the Imam of Muslims, the guide of people, the martyr Mousa bin Jaffar Al-Kadhim (AS).

Asked about certitude, he (AS) said,

"It is putting one's trust in Allah, submitting to Allah, being satisfied with Allah's ordinance, and commending oneself to Allah."

He also said,

"He who discusses the nature of Allah is doomed. He who seeks leadership is doomed. He who thinks very highly of himself is doomed"

"Beware of pride, for no one who nurtures an iota of pride in his heart is entitled to enter Paradise. Pride is Allah's mantle, and whoever tries to share it with Him, He throws him into hell face down, but who submits to Allah, Allah certainly raises him up."

"The best ways to gain closeness to Allah, after knowing Him, are prayer, kindness to one's parents, and giving up envy, vanity and pride."

"People were created to serve Allah. There is no salvation without obedience. Obedience is the fruit of knowledge. Knowledge is acquired by learning, and learning is spurred by the desire to know. There is no knowledge equal to that acquired from a spiritual scholar.

"Work hard to divide your day into four times: One for praying to Allah. One for breadwinning. One for sitting with the brothers and trustworthy people who know your faults and are faithful to you from the depths of their hearts. And one for your pleasures, without doing the forbidden. It is this time that helps you to manage the other three times properly."

We have quoted these statements and advice from the Imam (AS) without commenting on them. They are self expressive and clear. How great is our need today to study the lives of the Ahlul-Bait (AS), and examine their legacy. We need to make them our examples.

"These are they whom Allah guided, so follow their guidance..."

Holy Qur'an (6:91)

Social and Political Conditions at the Time of Imam Al-Kadhim (AS)

Imam Al-Kadhim (AS) lived in the most critical and crucial time in the life of Ahlul-Bait (AS).

The Abbassids hunted down the descendants of Imam Ali bin Abi-Talib (AS) and their followers, prosecuting them in every part of the Islamic state. Men recruited for this purpose were treated lavishly. Their job was uprooting the Alawites, getting rid of their leaders because of their fear of the hostile activities of the Alawites and the love the common people held for them.

In this eventful period of time revolutions erupted, followed by arrests and single and mass murders of the descendants of Imam Ali bin Abi-Talib (AS) and their followers. It was a dark age; men were caught and sentenced to death on the slightest suspicion. The Abbassids monopolized power and thought little of peoples' dignity. Eventually, imprisonment, beating and killing became common practices. The Islamic state was turned into an empire governed by a hereditary dictatorship in which the Islamic state was divided into fiefdoms. Governors ruled, abusing power, and acting according to their own wishes as long as they remained loyal to the central government and the Abbassid caliph.

The rulers sought men who would remain faithful to them. The Abbassids were not concerned with establishing justice, implementing Islamic laws and introducing reforms. They only thought of their thrones and lusts. The palaces of caliphs, princes, governors, ministers and their entourage were filled with maidens, musical instruments and dancers.

Historians say that Haroon Al-Rasheed, after his death, left 100 million Dinars, and quantities of jewels and possessions which were worth more than that. He had 2000 slave girls, the price of one of them amounted to one and a half million Dirhams. Not only was Al-Rasheed extravagant, but his wife, Zubaydah, was too. She misused the state funds and the people's wealth. She had pearl-studded pairs of sandals. She spent more than one million gold Dinars on making a pure silk mat, embroidered with gold thread, and having pictures of birds with ruby eyes.

They pilfered millions and squandered the wealth of the Ummah which they milked from the veins of the oppressed, the hunted, the prisoners or those sentenced to death.

Imam Mousa bin Jaffar (AS) followed in the footsteps of his father, Al-Sadiq (AS). He played a key role in standing against corruption in politics, morals and the Islamic way of life, brought about or helped by the Abbassid rule. Even in prison, Imam al-Kadhim (AS.) didn't give up his responsibility towards the faith and the faithful. Some scholars, and many of his followers and students, kept contact with him secretly, asking him about any aspect of Islamic thought and beliefs. He had his means of writing back to them answering to their questions.

Under the rule of the tyrannical Abbassid caliphs Abu-Jaffar al-Mansoor, Mohammed Al-Mahdi, Mousa Al-Hadi and Haroon Al-Rasheed, Alawites suffered beyond description. They were terrorized in the most heartbreaking way. The years of oppression dragged on, heavy and bitter, for Imam al-Kadhim (AS), and the sons of Abu-Talib in particular, and the broad sections

of the Ummah in general. The Abbasid caliphs confiscated the property of the Alawites, threw them behind bars, and hunted them down. They subjected the Shia to unspeakable torture, innovated new ways of killing them, and shed their blood ruthlessly. The Shias were put in half-built pillars and the building was completed on top of them leaving them there to die. Food and water were withheld from the Shia prisoners to let them die from starvation in the depths of dark horrible cells.

The Alawites, who could endure such savageness no more, revolted against the despotic Abbasid caliph Mousa Al-Hadi, under the leadership of Abu- Abdullah al-Hussein bin Ali bin al-Hassan bin al-Hassan bin Ali bin Abi-Talib (AS.) near a place called Fakh in 169 A.H. That was during the Imamate of Imam Mousa bin Jaffar (AS).

That revolt of Fakh reflected the spirit of the struggle between Ahlul-Bait (AS) and the corrupt Abbasid rulers. The great tragedy of Fakh is actually a repetition of Karbala', and an echo of the great martyr Imam Hussein (AS). In the sky of Islamic history, places, events and personalities shone. From the heart of the Ummah and its arteries too much pure blood flowed and irrigated the sapling of faith. No sooner did a star of Ahlul-Bait (AS) fade in the sky of jihad than a new star rose. They were the blood of Islam, its heart, and its guiding brain. They were the driving force, and the hand that pushed forward the jihad, opposition, reform and change. They were the articulate tongue of right, in the name of the downtrodden and victims, and the drawn sword over the necks of the tyrants and oppressors.

The land of Fakh is one of those never-forgotten places. So is the leader of the uprising, al-Hussein bin Ali bin al-Hassan bin al-Hassan bin Ali bin Abi-Talib, and his devoted followers. Al-Hussein, the revolutionary Alawite followed in the footsteps of Imam Hussein (AS), hoist the banner of jihad and martyrdom, shed his pure blood, to leave the Apostle of Allah (SAW) to grieve over him, as he had done over the martyrs of Karbala'. Both tragedies, Fakh and Karbala', moved the Apostle of Allah (SAW) and the members of his family to tears. He talked about them in advance and cried bitterly for the tribulations his family would face.

The Messenger of Allah (SAW) had told his companions about the battle of Fakh. Imam Abu-Jaffar Muhammad Al-Baqir (AS) is reported to have said through a chain of transmitters, that, "the Prophet (SAW.) once passed by Fakh. He dismounted and offered two ruk'ah prayer. In the second ruk'ah his eyes welled with tears. When people saw the Prophet (SAW) crying they cried. When they left that place he (SAW) asked them, what made you cry?' 'When we saw you crying, we also cried, O Apostle of Allah, , said the people. 'At the end of the first ruk'ah, Gabriel descended,' replied the Prophet (SAW.), 'and said: 'O Muhammad, a man from your descendents will be murdered in this place. The divine reward for every one who would be martyred with him shall be twofold.'" (Abul-Faraj al-Asfahani, Ibid., p. 436)

The day of Fakh was a terribly saddening memory in the history of Ahlul-Bait (AS). Imam Muhammad al-Jawad (AS), the grandson of Imam Al-Kadhim (AS), was quoted as saying,

"After Al- Taff (Karbala') we witnessed no massacre more horrible than that of Fakh." (Allamah al-Majlisi, Ibid., Vol. 48, p. 165)

Al-Hussein bin Ali bin al-Hassan bin al-Hassan bin al-Hassan bin Ali bin Abi-Talib declared war against the Abbassid ruler in Dul-Qi'dah, 169 A.H., from the holy city of Madinah near the tomb of the Apostle of Allah (SAW.).

Al-Hussein called the Hashimites, his followers and servants. twenty-six men from the family of Abu-Talib, ten from the pilgrims and a band of servants answered his call. Accompanied by about 200 people from his own family and followers, he set out on the journey hoping to meet as many pilgrims as he could. When they drew near Makkah and arrived at Fakh, near the Valley of Baldah, the Abbassid army attacked them, and a ferocious battle ensued between the two parties on the morning of the day of Tarwiyah (the ninth of Dil-Hijjah). Due to their small number, Al-Hussein and his pious followers were horrifically butchered.

This heroic uprising ended in a horrible tragedy and great sacrifice. More than one hundred men were martyred from these courageous revolutionaries. Historians stated that the Abbassids cut off the heads of the martyrs. The rest of the small army was taken captive, tortured and then slain. Not only did the murderers shed the blood unjustly, mutilate the bodies of the martyrs and kill the prisoners, but they razed the victims' houses to the ground, confiscated their property, and set their orchards on fire.

Ahlul-Bait (AS), their followers, and the descendants of Ali bin Abi-Talib (AS), offered, throughout the reigns of Abul-Abbas al-Saffah, al-Mansoor, al-Hadi, al-Mahdi, al-Rasheed, and the rest of the Abbassid dynasty, their blood for the sake of the faith. They filled up the cells and dungeons. On their bodies palaces were built, and in their pillars they were thrown alive. Their heads were carried from one city to another.

A tragic, heartrending story about the savagery and brutality of the Abbassids was recounted by Hamid bin Qurtubah, a senior assistant of Al-Rasheed, to one of his closest friends.

The story says that when Al-Rasheed was in Toos (Khurasan-Iran), he sent for Hamid bin Qurtubah. Al-Rasheed asked him about his loyalty to him, to which question Hamid answered that he was quite ready to carry out whatever task he might assign him. When Al-Rasheed felt Hamid was staunchly loyal to him and that he was capable of doing what he wanted him to do, he ordered his servant to give him a sword and take him to a closed house in whose centre there was a well. There were three big rooms in the house. When Hamid opened the door of the first room, he saw twenty men; young, middle-aged and old, from the descendants of Ali bin Abi-Talib (AS) and Fatimah (AS). They were all in shackles and chains. The servant ordered him to kill them and throw their bodies into the well, which he did.

In the second room there were also twenty men from the descendents of Imam Ali (AS) . Hamid killed them all with his sword. And he did the same thing to the Alawite men in the third room who were also twenty in number. (Uyoon Akhbar al-Ridha, Vol. 1, p. 88)

This is a brief historical view depicting the bitter political struggle that was raging between the leaders of guidance and faith, namely the household of the Prophet (SAW), and the Abbassid rulers, their henchmen, stooges, opportunists, power mongers, wealth seekers and fake reputation gainers.

The reader can see how Imam's character was great and impressive, and how boundless was the anxiety and concern of the rulers, along with their followers, about this great man. Despite their power, strength, state and financial resources, the Abbassids found no other way to deal with Ahlul-Bait (AS.), than prison, terrorism and repression to keep their state and protect their thrones. History presents a good picture of Imam Kadhim's imprisonment, suffering, patience and the brutality of his enemies.

It is reported that Al-Rasheed went to perform hajj, and started with the Prophet's tomb. Then he ordered Imam Al-Kadhim (AS) to be let in. He ordered him to be shackled. From his house two mules with dome-shaped litters were brought out, inside one of them he had put Imam Al-Kadhim. Both of the mules were escorted by horsemen. The mules were sent in two different directions; one to Basrah and the other to Kufah, so as to mislead the people. Imam Al-Kadhim (AS) was with the caravan that was sent to Basrah. Al-Rasheed had ordered his envoy to hand Imam Al-Kadhim (AS.) over to Isa bin Jaffar bin al-Mansoor who was the governor of Basrah. He kept him in jail for one year, then wrote to Al-Rasheed asking him to receive Imam Al-Kadhim (AS) and put him in the care of anyone he liked, otherwise, Isa said, he would set him free. He admitted that however hard he tried to find a way to incriminate him, he found none. In his letter, Isa said that he even listened secretly to Imam Al-Kadhim (AS), that he might hear him invoke evil upon him or Al-Rasheed in his prayers, but he only heard him asking the mercy and forgiveness of Allah (SWT).

Al-Rasheed sent a messenger who received Imam Mousa al-Kadhim (AS) and took him to Baghdad. In Baghdad, he ordered Al-Fadhl bin Al-Rabi' to put him in jail. There, Imam Mousa Al-Kadhim (AS) was left for a long time. Al-Rasheed tried to force Al-Fadhl bin Al-Rabi' to do Imam Mousa Al-Kadhim (AS) harm but he did not yield. Thus because Al-Fadhl bin Al-Rabi' refused to persecute the Imam, he was tortured and humiliated and the Imam was sent to the prison of Sindi bin Shahik.

The earth, as a whole, was created, in the eyes of the Imam to be a worshipping place, a concept first presented by the Apostle of Allah (SAW). Life was created so that people could serve and glorify Allah, the Most High. It is merely a trip towards Allah, and an attempt to know Him better. The Imam wouldn't feel a change in time or place. All the times and places for him were the same. On the contrary, the more he was persecuted, the closer he got to Allah by means of patience and prayer. He made his prison a mosque, and his loneliness and the dreariness of the jail a pleasant place filled with the remembrance of Allah, the Most High. He fasted during the day, and prayed and recited supplications in the night, staying up until daybreak.

What kind of man is this? What force could overcome him? The light of his heart swept away the darkness of the prison. The firmness of his patience shattered the shackles of the jailer and the will of the tyrant. The pleasantness of his prayers filled up the gloomy prison with happiness and brightness. What could the jailer ever do? What could the tyrant do? Imam Mousa Al-Kadhim (AS) was winning over those who were around him with his good manners, deep spirituality and unique wisdom.

Al-Amiri, in his book "Al-Anwar", reports that "Haroon Al-Rasheed sent a maid to Imam Mousa bin Jaffar (AS) to serve him in prison. She was beautiful, with a bright face and black eyes. Imam Mousa bin Jaffar (AS) commented on this saying, "Nay, you are exultant because of your gift". 'I have no need of this or to the likes of her.'

Hearing that, Haroon got furious. 'Go back to him,' he ordered his servant, 'and tell him that it was not with your consent that we have jailed you. Nor was it with your consent that we have captured you. Leave the maid there and come back.'

The servant did what he had been ordered to do. Haroon then left the room where he used to receive guests and visitors and sent the servant back to see the maid and what had become of her. He saw her prostrate saying, 'O Holy One. Glory to You. Glory to You.'

Maybe Haroon desired to lure Imam Mousa Al-Kadhim (AS) away from his sacred objectives with the beauty of women, and the pleasures of life, acting out of his own flawed convictions. He didn't know that Imam Al-Kadhim (AS) was totally absorbed in the beauty of right, and dissolved in the love of Allah. He had turned his face away from life and its cheap ornaments. Neither maids could occupy his attention, nor life's pleasures would fascinate him. He was a man with a mission, who dedicated his whole life to his principles, and submitted his whole soul to Allah, the Glorified. As a result, he became a man guiding with his words and actions, and a preacher who showed the right path with both his silence and speech. His action spoke instead of his tongue, and his words declared the path of right. That is why he overcame the maiden's mind and soul. She cried, "O Holy One. O Glorified One," enraptured in her prostration. After basking in the pleasures of entertainment, drinking from the cups of love, passing her time playing musical instruments, singing love poems, and enjoying wearing fine clothes and necklaces, she turned to worship. She went on with her prayers and praises of Allah (SWT) until she passed away. It is said that her death occurred a few days before the martyrdom of Imam Mousa bin Jaffar (AS).

Imam Al-Kadhim (AS) braved all difficulties and hardships on the thorny path of faith. He taught the men who came after him, who treaded the same path, how to be firm in their attitudes, and steadfast inside prisons, not frightened by their jailers, or the oppression they practised against them so as to silence them.

Al-Rasheed meant to hide Imam Mousa (AS), drive him out from the attention of the Ummah and kill its spirit of resistance. The result was quite the opposite. The Ummah was eager to follow the latest news about Imam Mousa Al-Kadhim (AS), especially when he was moved from one prison to another, with the authorities unable to take a decisive action against him. Being in prison was of great value for Imam Mousa al-Kadhim (AS). He nurtured the revolution, rejection and resistance, conferring legitimacy on them. He turned down all offers to intervene on his behalf with the rulers.

When al-Rasheed felt that the silent resistance of Imam Mousa Al-Kadhim (AS) in prison began to sneak into people's souls, and that his uncompromising attitude moved the Ummah's awareness and feelings, fear

took hold of him, for that awareness might grow into a violent revolution. Thus Al-Rasheed decided to murder Imam Al-Kadhim (AS).

Casting around him, Al-Rasheed found no one better than the chief of his police in Baghdad, Al-Sindi bin Shahik, a man known to be rough, stone-hearted and merciless, like other criminals, to murder the Imam.

Base people do such things. Controlled by meanness, opportunism and sycophancy, they seek the closeness of the rulers and blood-thirsty tyrants by shedding blood and persecuting innocent people who preached righteousness. They are dazzled by the fake social reputation and passing pleasures. They act out of the inferiority complex which overpowers them and prods them to win other's favour.

Poison was given to Imam Mousa Al-Kadhim (AS) in a plate of dates, or in some other food, according to another version. Imam Mousa Al-Kadhim (AS) partook from that food and felt the poison sneaking through his pure body. For three days, he struggled with death, before breathing his last. On the third day, he died at the prison of Al-Sindi bin Shahik. He won martyrdom on the 25th of Rajab in the year 183 A.H.

He answered the call of his Lord, contented and pleased. The earth hugged his pure body. There a shrine went up as a historic document, eternal and everlasting, relating to the Muslim generations the story of the prolonged struggle of Ahlul-Bait (AS) with their foes throughout the history of Islam. It warns the oppressors of every age that the prison, hangman's noose and executioner's sword cannot subdue the will of right, or hide the landmarks of guidance in the cells of prisons and on the pages of distorted history. It gives great lessons to the cowardly, the defeated, and those with weak faith, who avoid fighting the oppressors and find satisfaction in humiliation and servitude, that the faithful would always stand steadfast and determined in defending their beliefs.

All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the worlds. We ask Him (SWT) to accept this piece of writing for His sake from us and we ask Him to forgive us our sins and make us of the successful ones in this life and the hereafter.

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