

TARIKH (History)

Lesson 1

Nabí Zakariya (‘a) & Nabí Yahya (‘a)

Nabi Zakariya (‘a) was sent to the people of Banu Isrāil. He was a descendent of Nabi Ya'qub (‘a) the son of Nabi Ishāq (‘a) the son of Nabi Ibrāhim (‘a). Nabi Zakariya (‘a) was loved and respected by his people because of his humble and cheerful manner. He was in charge of the mosque of Bayt al-Muqaddas in Jerusalem, and he preached the religion of Allāh from there. He guided the people according to the rules laid down in the Tawrāt of Nabi Musa (‘a), who had been the last Rasul (a Nabi who has been given a Book) before him.

Nabi Zakariya (‘a) had also been entrusted to look after Sayyida Maryam (‘a), the mother of Nabi Isa (‘a) from the time Sayyida Maryam (‘a) was a young child. Sayyida Maryam (‘a) was the daughter of Hannah, the sister of Nabi Zakariya’s wife. So Sayyida Maryam (‘a) was Nabi Zakariya’s wife’s niece.

Sayyida Hannah had made a vow to dedicate her child to Bayt al-Muqaddas, the most sacred mosque in Jerusalem and Nabi Zakariya had been chosen to look after her. He built a special room in the holy place just for Sayyida Maryam (‘a) where she stayed all the time and worshipped Allāh. Whenever Nabi Zakariya (‘a) would go and check on Sayyida Maryam (‘a) in her room, he would find she had fresh fruit in her room that were out of season. He wondered where the food came from and when he asked her, she said, ‘It is from Allāh.’ Nabi Zakariya (‘a) realised that he was the guardian of a very special child whom Allāh had chosen for a great honour i.e. the birth of Nabi Isa(‘a).

Nabi Zakariya (‘a) was an old man then, at least 90 years old and had no children of his own. After seeing how Allāh had blessed Sayyida Maryam (‘a) and how Allāh was sending food to her miraculously, he felt very hopeful and he prayed to Allāh to bless him with a child who would succeed him.

And so Allāh blessed Nabi Zakariya (‘a) and his wife and gave them the good news of a son - Nabi Yahya (‘a) - who would be special too.

Let us read this story from the Qur’ān:

﴿إِذْ قَالَتْ امْرَأَةُ عِمْرَانَ رَبِّ إِنِّي نَذَرْتُ لَكَ مَا فِي بَطْنِي مُحَرَّرًا فَتَقَبَّلْ مِنِّي إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ. فَلَمَّا وَضَعَتْهَا قَالَتْ رَبِّ إِنِّي وَضَعْتُهَا أُنْثَىٰ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا وَضَعْتَ وَلَيْسَ الذَّكَرُ كَالْأُنْثَىٰ وَإِنِّي سَمَّيْتُهَا مَرْيَمَ وَإِنِّي أُعِيذُهَا بِكَ وَذُرِّيَّتَهَا مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ. فَتَقَبَّلَهَا رَبُّهَا بِقَبُولٍ حَسَنٍ وَأَنْبَتَهَا نَبَاتًا حَسَنًا وَكَفَّلَهَا زَكَرِيَّا كُلَّمَا دَخَلَ عَلَيْهَا زَكَرِيَّا الْمِحْرَابَ وَجَدَ عِنْدَهَا رِزْقًا قَالَ يَا مَرْيَمُ أَنَّىٰ لَكَ هَذَا قَالَتْ هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ. هُنَالِكَ دَعَا زَكَرِيَّا رَبَّهُ قَالَ رَبِّ هَبْ لِي مِنْ لَدُنْكَ ذُرِّيَّةً طَيِّبَةً إِنَّكَ سَمِيعُ الدُّعَاءِ. فَنَادَتْهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَهُوَ قَائِمٌ يُصَلِّي فِي الْمِحْرَابِ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُبَشِّرُكَ بِيحْيَىٰ مُصَدِّقًا بِكَلِمَةٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَسَيِّدًا وَحَصُورًا وَنَبِيًّا مِنْ

الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿﴾

When the wife of Imrān (Hannah) said, 'My Lord, I dedicate to You what is in my womb... accept it from me; indeed You are All-hearing, the All-knowing. And she gave birth to her, she said, '..... I have named her Maryam...'. And so her Lord accepted her.... And he made Zakariya in charge of her (Maryam's) care. Whenever Zakariya visited her in the chamber, he would find food with her. He said, 'O Maryam, from where does this come to you?'

She (Maryam) said, 'It comes from Allāh. Allāh provides whomever He wishes without any count.' At that point Zakariya prayed to his Lord. He said, 'My Lord! Grant me a good offspring from You! Indeed You hear all supplications.'

Then the angels called out to him as he stood praying in the mihrāb (sanctuary): 'Allāh gives you good news of Yahya.... (who will be) a leader and chaste, a prophet, among the righteous.'

- Surah Al-i Imrān, 3:35-39

Nabi Yahya ('a)

Nabi Yahya ('a) was special because he was named by Allāh Himself even before he was born, when the angels gave his father Nabi Zakariya ('a) the good news of his birth and said, 'Allāh gives you the good news of Yahya.'

From the time he was a child, Nabi Yahya ('a) was wise and knowledgeable. He worshipped Allāh a lot even as a child and he was always very kind to his parents and never spoke to them harshly.

Nabi Yahya ('a) was very soft-hearted. Whenever he heard any mention of Jahannam, he would start crying and ask Allāh to protect him from it. Nabi Yahya ('a) was also very brave. Not only did he teach people to follow Allāh's commands but when he saw people committing sins, he did not hesitate to speak out to try and stop them.

One day, Nabi Yahya ('a) found out that Herod, the King of Palestine, wanted to marry his own niece. Nabi Yahya ('a) was extremely annoyed, because this sort of marriage was harām and forbidden in the Tawrāt. He told people this was wrong and Allāh was displeased with this and soon everyone in the country began talking about it.

The King's niece wanted to marry the King as soon as possible because she wanted to become the Queen of Palestine. When she heard of Nabi Yahya's ('a) objection to the marriage, she became his enemy.

Once when the King was drunk she came to him and told him that if he wanted to marry her then Nabi Yahya ('a) must be killed as soon as possible. The King, to please his niece so that she would marry him, issued an order to have Nabi Yahya ('a) arrested and killed.

Soon, the King's men arrested Nabi Yahya ('a) and brutally murdered him by beheading him. Then his head was brought on a tray before the tyrant King. And because of this great sin, shortly after, Palestine was attacked and the King was killed and lost all his power and kingdom. In some hadith, Nabi Yahya ('a) and Imām Husayn ('a) are compared as being very similar. This is because both of them rose against the tyrant ruler of their time, both of them were killed unjustly and both of them were beheaded and their heads were brought on a tray before the tyrant ruler of their time.

Allāh has praised and blessed Nabi Yahya (‘a) in the Qur’ān for how kind he was, how much he remembered Allāh and obeyed his parents and Allāh has also blessed Nabi Yahya (‘a) from the day he was born until the Day of Judgement:

﴿...وَأَتَيْنَاهُ الْحُكْمَ صَبِيًّا وَحَنَانًا مِنْ لَدُنَّا وَزَكَاةً وَكَانَ تَقِيًّا. وَبَرًّا بِوَالِدَيْهِ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ جَبَّارًا عَصِيًّا وَسَلَامٌ عَلَيْهِ يَوْمَ وُلِدَ وَيَوْمَ يَمُوتُ وَيَوْمَ يُبْعَثُ حَيًّا﴾

...and We gave him (Yahya) wisdom while still a child, and kind-heartedness and purity from Us. He (Yahya) was Godwary, and good to his parents, and he was not harsh or sinful. Peace be on him the day he was born, and the day he dies and the day he is raised alive!

- Surah Maryam, 19:12-15

We should try and follow Nabi Zakariya (‘a) by never giving up hope in Allāh and always praying to Him even when we think it is impossible for something to happen. And we should follow Nabi Yahya (‘a) by always remembering Allāh and being good to our parents. And whoever does this, then they will be blessed by Allāh just as Nabi Zakariya (‘a) and Nabi Yahya (‘a) were blessed.

Lesson 2

Sayyida Maryam (‘a) & Nabí ‘Isa (‘a)

Sayyida Maryam (‘a) was the mother of Nabí ‘Isa (‘a) and she was a descendant of Nabí Dāwud (‘a) and Nabí Sulaymān (‘a). We learnt in the previous lesson that from the time Sayyida Maryam (‘a) was born, Nabí Zakariya (‘a) looked after her and he kept her in a closed room in the sacred mosque in Jerusalem (Bayt al-Muqaddas) where no one could see her except Nabí Zakariya (‘a).

We also saw that Sayyida Maryam (‘a) spent all her time in worship and Allāh used to send special food for her from Jannah. The reason why Allāh chose such a special life for Sayyida Maryam (‘a) is because she was going to give birth to a great prophet (nabí) and messenger (rasul) - Nabí ‘Isa (‘a) - and he would be born miraculously without a father.

When Sayyida Maryam (‘a) was old enough to leave the sacred mosque, the angel Jibrāil (‘a) came to her and told her that Allāh has chosen her over all the women in the world for a special miracle. She would give birth to a great prophet.

‘But how will I have a son when I am not married?’ she asked the angel Jibrāil (‘a) but Jibrāil (‘a) assured her and told her that nothing was impossible for Allāh. When Allāh wishes to do something, He just says ‘Be!’ and it is done.

And so Sayyida Maryam (‘a) became pregnant miraculously. When she had her child, all the priests in the temple who were jealous of her and her special son began spreading rumours that Sayyida Maryam (‘a) was not a good and chaste woman because she gave birth to a child even though she was not married.

Allāh told Sayyida Maryam (‘a) not to say anything. Instead, the baby, Nabí ‘Isa (‘a) spoke from the cradle miraculously. He said to the people, ‘I am a servant of Allāh. I have been given a Book and Allāh has made me a prophet.’

Allāh describes the whole incident in the Qur’ān:

﴿فَأَتَتْ بِهِ قَوْمَهَا تَحْمِلُهُ قَالُوا يَا مَرْيَمُ لَقَدْ جِئْتِ شَيْئًا فَرِيًّا. يَا أُخْتَ هَارُونَ مَا كَانَ أَبُوكِ امْرَأَ سَوْءٍ وَمَا كَانَتْ أُمُّكَ بَعْثًا. فَأَشَارَتْ إِلَيْهِ قَالُوا كَيْفَ نُكَلِّمُ مَنْ كَانَ فِي الْمَهْدِ صَبِيًّا. قَالَ إِنِّي عَبْدُ اللَّهِ آتَانِيَ الْكِتَابَ وَجَعَلَنِي نَبِيًّا. وَجَعَلَنِي مُبَارَكًا أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُ وَأَوْصَانِي بِالصَّلَاةِ وَالزَّكَاةِ مَا دُمْتُ حَيًّا. وَبَرًّا بِوَالِدَتِي وَلَمْ يَجْعَلْنِي جَبَّارًا شَقِيًّا وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَيَّ يَوْمَ وُلِدْتُ وَيَوْمَ أَمُوتُ وَيَوْمَ أُبْعَثُ حَيًّا. ذَلِكَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ قَوْلَ الْحَقِّ الَّذِي فِيهِ يَمْتَرُونَ. مَا كَانَ لِلَّهِ أَنْ يَتَّخِذَ مِنْ وُلْدٍ سُبْحَانَهُ إِذَا قَضَىٰ أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ﴾

Then carrying him (Isa), she (Maryam) brought him to her people. They said, 'O Maryam, you have certainly come with an odd thing! O sister of Hārun! Your father was not an evil man nor was your mother unchaste.' So she pointed to him (the baby). They said, 'how can we speak to one who is yet a baby in the cradle?'

He (Isa) said, 'Indeed I am a servant of Allāh! He has given me a Book and made me a prophet. He has made me blessed, wherever I may be, and He has commanded me to the prayer (salāh) and to [give] the alms as long as I live, and to be good to my mother, and He has not made me harsh and wretched. Peace is on me the day I was born, and the day I die, and the day I am raised alive.'

That is Isa, son of Maryam.... It is not for Allāh to take a son. Glory be to Him! When He decides a matter, He just says to it, 'Be!' and it is.

- Surah Maryam, 19:27-35

All the people were shocked to hear the baby speak. This was a miracle.

When Nabi Isa ('a) grew up and Allāh revealed the **Injil** to him, he began preaching to people and telling them to worship Allāh only and not to love the world. Allāh also gave Nabi Isa ('a) some very special miracles and abilities. For example, he could bring the dead back to life, he could cure those who were very sick (like the lepers and the blind), he could walk on water, he could create birds out of clay and breath life into them, and he could tell people what they had hidden in their homes and what food they had eaten or were going to eat the next day.

Nabi Isa ('a) was an ascetic. This means he lived a very, very simple life. His clothes were very simple and he ate very basic and little food. He would go from place to place telling people to prepare themselves for the hereafter, which is the permanent place of stay. He also gave people the good news that after him there would come a final prophet, who would be the best of Allāh's messenger and his name would be Ahmad (which is the other name of Rasulullāh (s) and means the same as Muhammad).

Some people began listening to the message of Nabi Isa ('a) and many of the priests from Banu Isrāil became very jealous of Nabi Isa ('a). A small group of people became very close followers of Nabi Isa ('a) and went with him wherever he went. In the Qur'ān, these followers are called the *hawāriyun* (disciples) of Nabi Isa ('a).

During those days, the Banu Isrāil were ruled by the Romans and so the priests of Banu Isrāil asked for help from the Roman rulers and soldiers to arrest Nabi Isa ('a) and to have him crucified. Allāh however told Nabi Isa ('a) that he was going to rescue him.

One of the people from the Banu Isrāil, took a group of Roman soldiers with him to the place where Nabi Isa ('a) was, so they could arrest him. Instead Allāh raised Nabi Isa ('a) to the heavens and saved him and the man who came into the room to confirm Nabi Isa ('a) was there, his face was changed and he was made to look like Nabi Isa ('a). When he came out of the room to call the soldiers, they thought he was Nabi Isa ('a) and so they arrested him and took him away and had him crucified. Allāh says in the Qur'ān:

﴿وَقَوْلِهِمْ إِنَّا قَتَلْنَا الْمَسِيحَ عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَمَا قَتَلُوهُ وَمَا صَلَبُوهُ وَلَكِنْ شُبِّهَ لَهُمْ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ لَفِي شَكٍّ مِنْهُ مَا لَهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِلَّا اتِّبَاعَ الظَّنِّ وَمَا قَتَلُوهُ يَقِينًا بَلْ رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَيْهِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا﴾

And their saying (boastfully), 'Indeed we killed the Messiah, Isa son of Maryam, the Messenger of Allāh.' But they did not kill him, and they did not crucify him. But it was made to appear to them (that they had)... and they most certainly did not kill him. Rather Allāh raised him up to Himself; and Allāh is All-mighty, All-wise.

- Surah an-Nisā, 4:157-158

We are told in hadith that towards the end of the world when Imām al-Hujjah b. al-Hasan al-Mahdi ('atfs) returns to establish peace and justice in the world, Nabi Isa ('a) will also come back from the heavens to the earth and he will help Imām al-Mahdi ('a).

After Nabi Isa ('a) was raised to the heavens, some people began believing that he was crucified, and that he came back to life after being dead for three days, and that because he was born without a father therefore he must be the son of God, and so on. These ideas spread throughout the Roman Empire until it became part of a new religion – the Christian religion. Most Christians today believe that Nabi Isa ('a) (whom they call Jesus) is the son of God. Allāh condemns this very strongly in the Qur'ān because Allāh is One, He has no partner or son. He can create a child without a father very easily just as He created Nabi Adam ('a) without a father or a mother.

During the time of Rasulullāh (s) a Christian group with their highest priests came from Najrān to Madina to debate with Rasulullāh (s) about Nabi Isa ('a).

Rasulullāh (s) was told to tell them:

﴿إِنَّ مَثَلَ عِيسَىٰ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ آدَمَ خَلَقَهُ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ قَالَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ﴾

The example of Isa to Allāh is like the example of Adam. He created him (Adam) from dust (without a father or mother) then He said to him, 'Be!' and he was!

- Surah Al-i Imrān, 3:59

But they refused to accept this and finally Rasulullāh (s) offered to engage in Mubāhala (asking Allāh under the open sky to curse the liars). At first the Christians agreed but when they saw Rasulullāh (s) coming with his Ahl al-Bayt ('a), they realized they will be destroyed by Allāh so they refused to engage in mubāhala and returned to Najrān.

When Nabi Isa ('a) returns, he will inform all the Christians that he was never crucified and that he is not the son of God. And thereafter most of the Christians will accept the message of Islam and the Qur'ān and the whole world will follow Islam and Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs) as their leader.

Lesson 3

Migration to Abyssinia & Sanctions against Muslims

The Persecution of Early Muslims

After inviting his close relatives to Islam, Rasulullāh (s) began to tell all the people of Makkah about his mission. He called all the tribes to the mountain of Safa, and then said to them, 'If I tell you that an enemy is hiding behind this mountain ready to attack you all, would you believe me?'

All of them replied, 'Yes, because you are as-Sādiq (the Truthful) and we have never heard you tell a lie.' Then Rasulullāh (s) said, 'Save yourselves from the punishment of Hellfire. Believe that there is no god but Allāh, and you will be successful.' When they heard this message, there was confusion amongst the people and Abu Lahab, the uncle and enemy of Rasulullāh (s) tried to stop people from paying attention to Rasulullāh (s). He said loudly, 'You have wasted our time with all this nonsense.'

Now the people of Makkah forgot that they themselves used to call Rasulullāh (s) 'as-Sādiq' (the Truthful) and 'al-Amin' (the Trustworthy). Instead they began to call him a liar and a madman. They began to make life difficult for him by spreading thorns on his



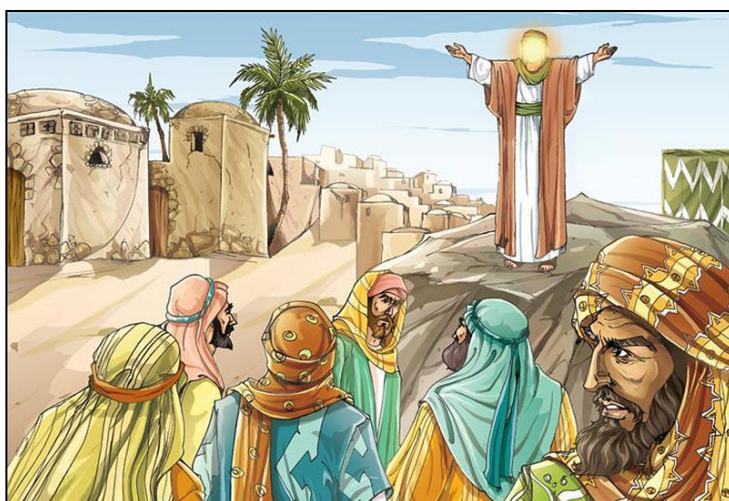
path and getting children to throw stones at him. Sometimes they would throw rubbish on him as he passed under their windows.

All these acts had no effect on Rasulullāh (s), and he did not give up preaching the worship of One God (Allāh) against the countless gods worshipped by the Makkans. When the number of Muslims began to slowly increase, the chiefs of some tribes became worried, and they came

to Hadrat Abu Tālib ('a), the uncle and guardian of Rasulullāh (s), and asked him to stop his nephew from preaching his religion.

They offered to give Rasulullāh (s) money, power or anything he wanted, as long as he would give up talking against their gods. When Hadrat Abu Tālib ('a) told Rasulullāh (s) about their message, he said, 'By Allāh, even if these people put the sun in my one hand and the moon in the other, I would not give up what Allāh has commanded me to do.'

The leaders of Makkah therefore began harassing Rasulullāh (s) all the



time. The main troublemakers included Abu Sufyān, Abu Jahl, and Utba bin Rabi'. Although they could not attack him openly because of the power and influence of Hadrat Abu Tālib ('a), they took every opportunity to create difficulties for him.

Once, when Rasulullāh (s) was offering prayers next to the Holy Ka'bah, Abu Jahl got some members of Quraysh to throw the intestines of a goat on his shoulders while he was in sajdah. After Rasulullāh (s) finished his prayers, he prayed to Allāh to curse each one of them. History tells us that all the people who had taken part in this act, including Abu Jahl and Utba bin Rabi', were killed in the battle of Badr, the very first battle of Islam.

When the Makkans saw that they could not stop Rasulullāh (s), they turned their attention to the new Muslims, especially those who were poor or weak and could not defend themselves. Many of the early Muslims were poor or did not come from powerful tribes who would protect them and so they began to face the most terrible cruelties at the hands of the Quraysh tribal leaders.

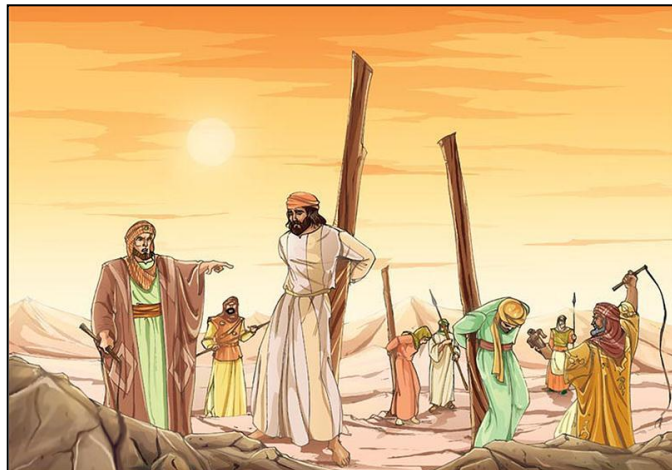
Abu Dhar al-Ghifāri, for example, was one of the early Muslim converts. When he declared that he had accepted Islam, the Quraysh beat him up so badly that he was half dead. When the uncle of Rasulullāh (s), Abbās bin

Abd al-Muttalib, passed by and saw what they were doing, he reminded the Quraysh that Abu Dhar was from the tribe of Banu Ghifār who used to live next to the route of the trade caravans. If they learnt that the Quraysh had tortured a member of their tribe, they would not let the Makkan trade caravans pass safely. On hearing this, the greedy Quraysh left Abu Dhar alone.

Bilāl al-Habashi (the Ethiopian) was the Muadhhdhin (prayer caller) of Rasulullāh (s). Before he became a Muslim, he was the slave of Umayya bin Khalaf. When Bilāl embraced Islam, his cruel master was very angry and began to torture him mercilessly. He would make Bilāl lie on the hot sands of the desert without a shirt and place a large stone on his chest so that he could not escape the burning sand. At other times he would tie a rope around his neck and have him dragged around the hills of Makkah. Despite these cruelties, Bilāl continued to say 'Ahad! Ahad!', meaning 'Only One (God)! Only One (God)!' Finally, Rasulullāh's (s) uncle Abbās convinced Umayya to free Bilāl in exchange for some gold coins.

Lubeena was the slave-maid of Umar bin al-Khattāb (who was later made the 2nd Caliph of the Muslims). When Lubeena first became a Muslim, Umar bin al-Khattāb was an enemy of Islam and he would beat her so much that he himself would get tired.

Ammār bin Yāsir and his parents - Yāsir and Sumayya - were also amongst the first Muslims. The Quraysh disbelievers tried to make them change their minds but they refused. So they took Ammār and his parents to the desert and started beating and torturing them. This was



repeated many times until Ammār's father, Yāsir died. When his pregnant wife Sumayya complained to Abu Jahl about this inhuman treatment Abu Jahl took his spear and thrust it into her heart. Yāsir and Sumayya are therefore the first martyrs of Islam. They died for the sake of their faith and because they refused to worship idols.

Then they turned to Ammār and beat him so terribly that he nearly died. They threatened to kill him unless he declared that he was no longer a Muslim. To save his life, Ammār agreed to give up Islam. Later on, Ammār came to Rasulullāh (s) and cried that he had rejected Islam under force and torture. Rasulullāh (s) said that Ammār was full of faith (*imān*) from head to toe and that he should not be afraid to hide his faith in order to save his life. Rasulullāh (s) then told Ammār that if he is tortured again, he should repeat his words of disbelieving in Allāh once again. As long as in his heart he remains convinced of Islam and that there is no god by Allāh.

Migration to Abyssinia

When the number of Muslims grew and life became very difficult for them in Makkah, Rasulullāh (s) advised a group of his followers to migrate to Abyssinia (Ethiopia), which was ruled by a kind and just Christian king named Najjāshi.

This was the first migration (hijrah) in Islam that included 10 Muslims only. It took place five years after the bi'thah (when Rasulullāh (s) began receiving revelation and preaching Islam). A second, larger group of Muslims also migrated soon afterwards, under the leadership of Ja'far bin Abu Tālib, the brother of Imām Ali (a). The Muslims were welcomed with much kindness in Abyssinia and found the life there very pleasant and comfortable.

When the chiefs of Makkah found out that a group of the Muslims had migrated and were living peacefully in Abyssinia, they were angry that the defenceless Muslims had actually managed to escape their torture. They also became worried that the Muslims might turn King Najjāshi of Abyssinia towards Islam and against them. They decided to send two men with gifts for the King and his ministers in order to convince him to send the Muslims back to Makkah.

When the two men reached Abyssinia, they first met the ministers and gave them expensive gifts. They convinced the greedy ministers to support them when they meet the King. The following day, they met King Najjāshi in his court. After presenting him with gifts, they said, 'a group of our young men have gone against the beliefs of our forefathers and have invented a

new religion. These people have now fled to your country. I request you to hand them over to us so that we can take them back to Arabia.'

As soon as this speech was over, the ministers loudly declared their support for this request. However, King Najjāshi was a wise man. He took no notice of them and asked whether the Muslim refugees had killed anyone, or stolen anybody's property or had committed any crimes in Makkah. And there was no reply.

The King then announced, 'if they are living under my protection, I cannot hand them over to you without a proper investigation.'

He sent a message to the Muslims that their leader should come to the court. Ja'far bin Abu Tālib came with a group of Muslims to present the case for the Muslims. The King turned to Ja'far and asked, 'why have you given up the beliefs of your forefathers and started a new religion?'

Ja'far replied, 'We used to be ignorant people who worshipped idols. We fought amongst ourselves over petty things. We buried our daughters alive and ill-treated our women. We had no respect for other people's property. The strong amongst us oppressed the weak. We lied and cheated all the time. Until Allāh sent amongst us a messenger to guide us to the truth and invite us to worship one God. He taught us to be truthful, honest and just.

He taught us to respect other people's property, to behave well with our relatives, to respect our neighbours and women and to avoid lying. He ordered us to offer prayers, to fast and to pay religious tax on our wealth. We have believed in him and worship Allāh. However, the Quraysh have behaved very cruelly towards us. We resisted them for some time, but now we have come to live here to save ourselves. The fame of your kindness has brought us to your country and we have perfect faith in your justice.'

The two men from Quraysh then tried to turn the King against Islam and said, 'these people don't believe Jesus is the son of God. They say he is only a slave of God!'

The King questioned Ja'far about what they believed about Jesus and his mother Mary. Ja'far then recited some āyāt from Surah Maryam and the King was so impressed, he began to weep. He was convinced that these

were the words of Allāh and that Muhammad (s) was the Messenger of Allāh.

King Najjāshi then told the two men from Quraysh to take their gifts back and to return to Makkah. He told them that he would never surrender the Muslims to them and he told Ja'far and the Muslims that they were free to live in Abyssinia for as long as they wished.

Ja'far and the Muslims with him lived in Abyssinia for a long time. After preaching for 12 years in Makkah, Rasulullāh (s) migrated to Madina. Ja'far bin Abu Tālib and the Muslims were still in Abyssinia. Thereafter in the year 7 AH (i.e. 7 years after Rasulullāh (s) migrated to Madina), when the Muslims had just won the Battle of Khaybar, Ja'far bin Abu Tālib arrived in Madina with the other Muslims.

When Rasulullāh (s) saw Ja'far after so many years, he wept with joy and said he didn't know whether to rejoice and thank Allāh for the victory at Khaybar by Imām Ali ('a) or to rejoice and thank Allāh for the return of Ja'far, the brother of Imām Ali ('a).

Hadrat Ja'far b. Abi Tālib was later martyred in a battle and his arms were cut off and he was killed. Rasulullāh (s) cried for Ja'far and said that Allāh had given Ja'far two wings in paradise where he was able to fly wherever he pleased.

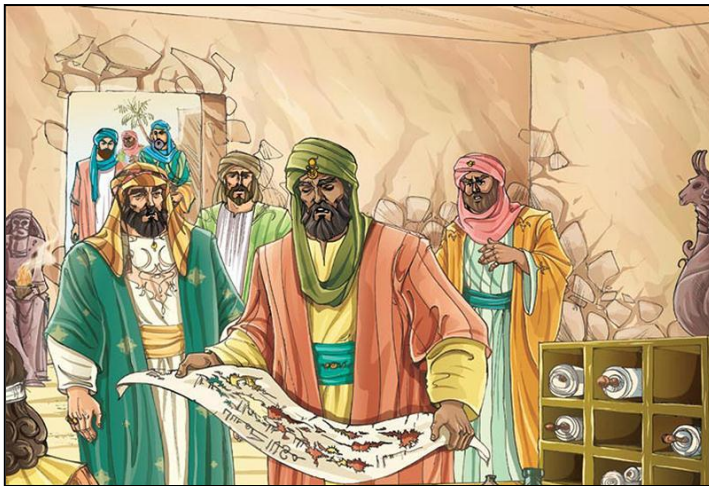
Class Activity: Watch the clip from the movie 'The Message' of Ja'far b. Abi Tālib (r) debating with the Makkan ambassadors in the court of King Najjāshi of Abyssinia and Ja'far reciting āyāt of Surah Maryam before the King and the King's response.

Sanctions Against Muslims

When the two men of Quraysh returned to Makkah from Abyssinia, humiliated and defeated, the chiefs of Quraysh were very disturbed and alarmed to see that the religion of Islam was gaining strength in spite of all their efforts. By now, well-respected people like Hamza bin Abd al-Muttalib, the uncle of Rasulullāh (s), and some powerful men of Quraysh had become Muslims. The chiefs could not bear to stand by and watch Islam spread in this manner and so they held a meeting to plan a way to stop it.

They decided to impose sanctions on all the Muslims and in this way stop their activities. An agreement was drafted and hung on the walls of the Ka'bah, and the community of Makkah was told to act according to it. The agreement stated that:

- All trade and business with the supporters of Muhammad shall be banned.
- Any association with them is strictly prohibited.
- No one is allowed to marry the daughters or sons of the Muslims.
- All those who oppose Muhammad should be supported in all circumstances.



This agreement was signed by all the chiefs of the Quraysh and was put into action straight away. Abu Tālib, the uncle of Rasullāh (s), however pledged to support the entire Banu Hāshim clan to his nephew. And Sayyida Khadija ('a), the wife of

Rasullāh (s) also promised to spend her wealth to help the Muslims. Abu Tālib advised all the Muslims to move out of Makkah into a valley in the mountains. Thus, the Muslims moved out of their homes into the place known as the 'Valley of Abu Tālib' (Shi'b Abu Tālib), and set up small houses and tents.

To protect themselves from a sudden attack from the Quraysh, some men were posted as guards. The Muslims were forced to remain in the valley for three years. During this time they suffered terrible hardships. Food was in very short supply, and many had to survive on a single date or less per day. The Banu Hāshim were only allowed out of the valley during the special months of Rajab and Dhul Hijjah when fighting was not allowed. But because no one was willing to do business with them, they depended on the wealth of Sayyida Khadija ('a) to purchase their necessities at very high costs.

Enemies like Abu Lahab, made things more difficult for them by encouraging the shopkeepers to raise the price of food so that the Banu Hāshim could not afford to buy very much. Throughout these difficult times, the Muslims did not lose heart and remained strongly attached to Islam and Rasulullāh (s). Finally some of the Makkans began to regret their shameful action against the Muslims, who were their relatives. They became ashamed for having signed the agreement and began to look for a solution to the problem. They called a meeting of the Quraysh proposing to end the sanctions and allow the Muslims to return home.

Although Abu Jahl was not in favour of allowing them back, when the chiefs decided to look at the agreement they had signed and hung in the Ka'bah, they found that termites had eaten up the entire agreement and only the words 'In the Name of our Lord' remained. The other leaders therefore pressured Abu Jahl to remove the sanctions and allow the Muslims back into society.

The patience and reliance on Allāh in the face of hardships by these early Muslims is a great lesson to us all.

Lesson 4

'Aam al-Huzn & Journey to Táif

Although the Muslims were relieved to return home from 'the Valley of Abu Tālib', the plotting against them did not stop. Soon thereafter, in that same year, both Hadrat Abu Tālib ('a) and Sayyida Khadija ('a) passed away.

In part this was due to the three years of hardships in *Shi'b Abu Tālib*. The wealth of Sayyida Khadija ('a) was all gone. And with Hadrat Abu Tālib ('a) gone too, the Quraysh thought Rasulullāh (s) was now without anyone to protect him so they could even



assassinate him. Soon Rasulullāh (s) would have to leave Makkah, his birthplace and hometown, for good and migrate to Madina.

Rasulullāh (s) was very sad to lose both his uncle and guardian Abu Tālib as well as his wife Sayyida Khadija ('a) just a month later. Because of his sorrow and grief, the Muslims named that year, '*Aam al-Huzn*', which means 'the Year of Sorrow'.

Hadrat Abu Tālib ('a)

Of all the sons of Abd al-Muttalib (who were the uncles of Rasulullāh (s)), Hadrat Abu Tālib ('a) had been the greatest supporter and defender of Rasulullāh (s).

When Rasulullāh (s) was still a young child, Hadrat Abu Tālib ('a) took him in as his own child despite his extreme poverty and he treated Rasulullāh (s) better than his own sons. When there was not enough food to eat in the house, Hadrat Abu Tālib ('a) would feed Rasulullāh (s) with his own hands and keep his own sons hungry. And when Rasulullāh

(s) began preaching Islam, in order to protect him from being attacked by his enemies, Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) would order one of his sons, usually Imām Ali (‘a), to sleep in the place of Rasulullāh (s) and he would move Rasulullāh (s) around to sleep elsewhere.

Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) believed so much in the excellence of Rasulullāh (s) that he used to request the blessings of Allāh by using his nephew's name. Once, when the Quraysh were faced with a terrible drought, they came to Abu Tālib begging him to pray for rain. Abu Tālib (‘a) held the hand of Rasulullāh (s), who was then only a young boy, and raised his head to the skies, saying, ‘O Lord, send down rain for the sake of this young boy, and favour us with your blessings.’ His prayer was hardly over when rain began to fall heavily.

As Rasulullāh (s) grew older, Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) involved him in trade caravans, giving him experience in dealing with people. When he was 25 years old, it was Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) who arranged for a proposal of marriage to be sent to Sayyida Khadija (‘a).

During the marriage ceremony, Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) declared the superiority of his nephew compared to all other youth and recited the marriage formula (nikāh) himself.

When Rasulullāh (s) declared his mission, Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) stood faithfully by his side and never stepped back from the defence of his nephew. Although Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) began to lose his position amongst the Quraysh as a leader of Makkah because of his support for his nephew, he did not for one moment stop defending Rasulullāh (s) and what he preached.

At the first meeting called Da’wat Dhul ‘Ashira where Rasulullāh (s) announced his mission to his family, Abu Lahab kept trying to stop Rasulullāh (s) from speaking and it was Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) who stood up and stopped Abu Lahab and then asked Rasulullāh (s) to stand and say whatever he pleased. Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) even encouraged his son Imām Ali (‘a) to always follow Rasulullāh (s) and to pray with him publicly.

The actions of Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) throughout his life confirm that he was a Muslim and believed in the religion of Allāh. The non-Shi’ah

Muslims believe that Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) was not a Muslim because he never recited the kalima and even refused to do so at his deathbed. But these are lies that were spread by the Banu Umayya later on out of their hatred for Imām Ali (‘a) (because Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) was the father of Imām Ali (‘a)). For example, the Umayyad Caliph Mu‘āwiya, the son of Abu Sufyān and father of Yazid ordered all the Muslim Imāms during his rule to curse Imām Ali (‘a) before every sermon and in every Friday prayer. This continued for 70 years. Mu‘āwiya also ordered a lot of lies to be forged as ‘hadith’ against Imām Ali (‘a) and his family, which included Imām Ali (‘a)’s father, Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a).

Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) of course could not openly say he was a Muslim because then he would not be able to defend and protect Rasulullāh (s) from the Quraysh leaders. As long as the Quraysh leaders did not know his faith, they had to respect Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) as a leader of Makkah and could not touch Rasulullāh (s). If Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) had not been a Muslim, he could not have recited the marriage formula (‘aqd) of Rasulullāh (s) and Sayyida Khadija (‘a). Rasulullāh (s) would also have refused to take his help in the Valley (Shi‘b) of Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) and on so many other occasions. The Qur‘ān clearly forbids Rasulullāh (s) from taking any help from the polytheists and disbelievers. Furthermore, the Qur‘ān praises an individual in the court of Fir‘aun who used to hide his faith in Allāh so that Fir‘aun would not harm him but he could protect Nabi Musa (‘a) from the plots of Fir‘aun:

﴿وَقَالَ رَجُلٌ مُؤْمِنٌ مِنْ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ يَكْتُمُ إِيمَانَهُ أَتَقْتُلُونَ رَجُلًا أَنْ يَقُولَ رَبِّيَ اللَّهُ
وَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ...﴾

*Said a man of faith from Pharaoh’s clan, **who concealed his faith**, ‘Will you kill a man for saying, “My Lord is Allāh,” while he has already brought you manifest proofs from your Lord? ...*

- Surah al-Ghāfir, 40:28

This man is called *Mu‘min Aal Fir‘aun* (the Faithful from the Family of Fir‘aun). Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) was like *Mu‘min Aal Fir‘aun* during the 12 years in Makkah that Rasulullāh (s) preached Islam.

Allāh has also commanded Rasulullāh (s) not to pray for the disbelievers and hypocrites after they die and not to stand at their grave and ask for

their forgiveness. But we know that Rasulullāh (s) always continued to remember Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) and to praise him; and because of his sorrow for his loss, the Muslims named the year that Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) died as ‘Aam al-Huzn’.

Every Muslim also believes that Sayyida Fatima bint Asad, the wife of Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) and mother of Imām Ali (‘a) was a Muslim. A Muslim woman cannot remain married to a man who is not a Muslim after she accepts Islam. So this is another proof that Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) could not have been a polytheist.

In his will, Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) instructed his children to always stand by Rasulullāh (s) and to never leave him. He also advised them to follow Islam, so that they would be successful.

Exercise

If someone tells you that Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) was not a Muslim, how would you try to convince him that he was? Write a few sentences on the arguments you would use.

Sayyida Khadija (‘a)

Sayyida Khadija (‘a) was the first and the most beloved wife of Rasulullāh (s). She is the mother of Sayyida Fatima al-Zahra (‘a), the only daughter of Rasulullāh (s) and whom Rasulullāh (s) loved the most and who is the leader of all the women of the world. Sayyida Khadija (‘a) had been the richest woman in Arabia when she married Rasulullāh (s). When Rasulullāh (s) declared his prophethood 15 years later, she was the first woman to believe in him and accept Islam.

Thereafter, she gave her entire wealth for the sake of Islam. Rasulullāh (s) used her wealth to spread Islam and to buy the freedom of many slaves who had become Muslims. Rasulullāh (s) always used to remember Sayyida Khadija (‘a) after her passing away, even when he had migrated to Madina and married other wives. He would always talk about how she believed in his message when everyone around him was calling him a liar and how she gave all her wealth and support to Islam when others were denying it.

Rasulullāh (s) said that the four most excellent women in this world and in paradise are:

1. Sayyida Fatima az-Zahra (‘a), the daughter of Rasulullāh (s).
2. Sayyida Khadija bint Khuwaylid (‘a), the wife of Rasulullāh (s).
3. Sayyida Aasiya bint Mazāhim (‘a) the wife of Fir’aun. She supported and believed in Nabi Musa (‘a) and was killed by her husband for that.
4. Sayyida Maryam bint Imrān (‘a), the mother of Nabi Isa (‘a).

The loss of Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) and Sayyida Khadija (‘a) was not only ‘The Year of Sorrow’ for Rasulullāh (s) but also a great loss of support in Makkah that resulted in Allāh commanding Rasulullāh (s) to migrate to Madina.

The Journey to Tāif

After the passing away of Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a), Rasulullāh (s) was faced with increasing difficulties and problems in Makkah. Without his uncle's protection, his life was in constant danger, and there wasn't much of an opportunity to spread Islam.

Rasulullāh (s) decided to try and preach Islam outside Makkah. In those days the town of Tāif was a busy and important centre of trade. Rasulullāh (s) went to Tāif alone and contacted the tribe of Banu Thaqif with a view to invite them to Islam.

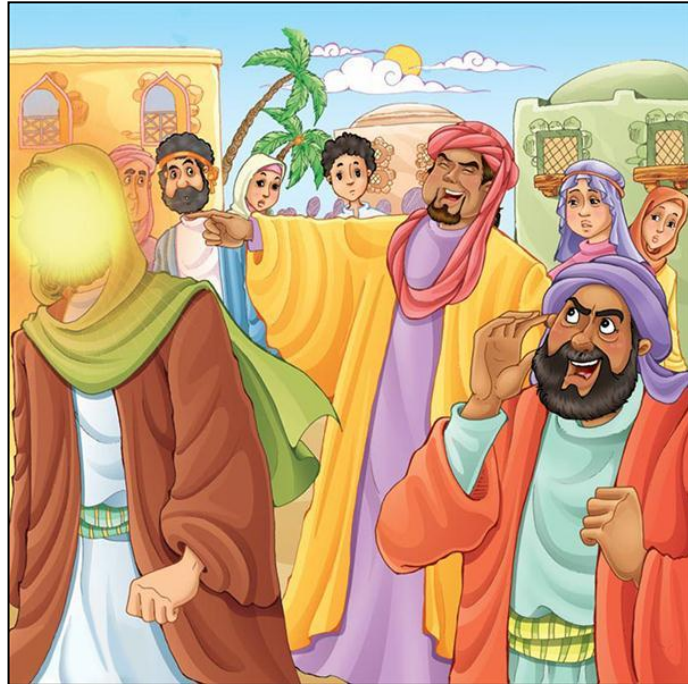
After arriving in Tāif, he met the chief and elders of that tribe and explained to them the belief in One God and asked them for their support. However, his words did not have any effect on them and they rejected his message. Rasulullāh (s) realised that the people of the town could become a threat to him because he was alone and away from his hometown. He therefore took a promise from the Banu Thaqif that they would not talk about his presence in Tāif.

The elders of Banu Thaqif did not keep their promise to Rasulullāh (s) and instead asked the hooligans of the town to harass him. Rasulullāh (s)

found himself suddenly surrounded by a mob that began to insult him. When they began to throw stones at him, he took refuge in a garden.

The garden belonged to two wealthy people of the Quraysh. Rasulullāh (s) had sweat on his face and parts of his body were hurt and bleeding from the cruel attack. He sank down under a tree for some rest, and prayed: 'O Lord! I present my weakness and lack of strength before You. You are the kind Nourisher and the Helper of the weak. To whom are You abandoning me?'

Although the owners of the garden were idol worshippers, they were moved by the condition of Rasulullāh (s) and felt sorry for him. They told a Christian slave to take a plate of grapes to him.



When the Christian presented the grapes to Rasulullāh (s), he took one and ate it, saying, 'In the Name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Most Merciful'. The Christian was very surprised to hear these words and remarked that he had not heard the Arabs pray to anyone but Laat and Uzza, the great idols.

Rasulullāh (s) asked him about his birthplace and his religion. He replied that he came from Nineveh and was a Christian.

On hearing his answer, Rasulullāh (s) said, 'That is the place where my brother Yunus (Jonah) son of Mata (Matthew) lived.' The Christian was very surprised to hear these names. He asked, 'How do you know Yunus son of Mata (the Nabi who was swallowed by a big fish)? Nobody in this country has heard of him.' Rasulullāh (s) then said, 'Yunus was a Prophet of Allāh like myself.'

The words of Rasulullāh (s) had a great effect on the slave and he immediately bowed and kissed the hands of Rasulullāh (s) and expressed his faith in him.

When he returned to his masters, they asked him what the conversation was all about. He replied, 'The person who is sitting in your garden is the chief of all humanity. He has told me things that only a Prophet can know.' This reply annoyed them very much but all they said to him was that his own religion was better than Islam.

Rasulullāh (s) left Tāif disappointed that he had not been successful in bringing its people to the right path. He decided to return to Makkah.

Soon afterwards, Rasulullāh (s) migrated to Madina. In the later years, the Muslims took over Tāif and defeated the Banu Thaḳif. However, Rasulullāh (s) forgave the people of Tāif and never took revenge.

The journey of Rasulullāh (s) to Tāif in difficult circumstances shows us how committed he was to his duty to spread the religion of Islam and how much he suffered for the sake of preaching the Truth.

Lesson 5

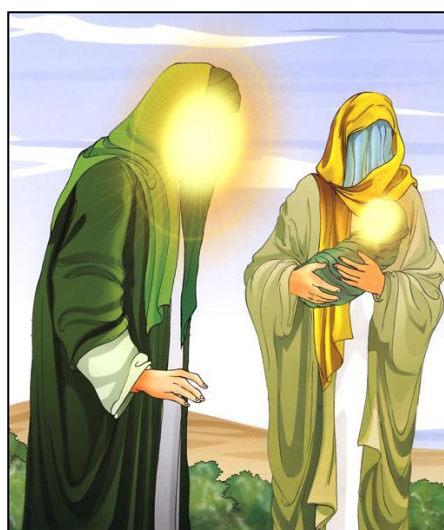
Imām 'Alí ar-Rída ('a)

His Birth

On 11th Dhul Qa'ada 148 AH, the eight Imām of Islam, Imām Ali b. Musa ar-Rida ('a) was born in the city of Madina al-Munawwara.

His father is Imām Musa b. Ja'far al-Kādhim ('a) and his mother was a very pious lady called Sayyida Najma who used pray and recite tasbih excessively.

As he grew up, Imām Ali ar-Rida ('a) came to be known for his magnificent character. He was unmatched in his noble akhlāq and everyone talked about it.



A famous man of the time called Ibrāhim b. al-Abbās said, 'I never heard ar-Rida ('a) say anything hurtful to anyone. He would never interrupt anyone who was speaking until the person finished. He would never turn away anyone who came to him for help. When he sat with others, he never stretched his legs or leaned back lazily. He never even scolded his servants or workers. I never saw him spit or laugh loudly. His laughter was only a smile. When he sat down to eat, all his family and servants would sit with him at the same dining table including the labourers. If anyone imagines he has seen anyone like Imām ar-Rida ('a) in excellence and character then don't believe him!'

One man accompanied the Imām on his journey to Khorāsān and when he saw the Imām was sitting to eat with his servants and labourers, he said to him, 'Son of Rasulullāh, why don't we keep a separate table for them?'

Imām ar-Rida ('a) refused and said to him, 'The Lord is one. Our father (Adam) is one and the same. Our mother (Hawwā) is one. We will be rewarded according to our actions only.'

Then someone said, 'By Allāh, there is no one on the earth whose ancestors were more honourable than you!'

But the Imām did not like to be flattered either. So he replied, 'It is because they were so conscious of not disobeying Allāh (i.e. their taqwa) that they were so honourable.'

The man swore in the name of Allāh and said, 'I swear by Allāh, you are the best of people.'



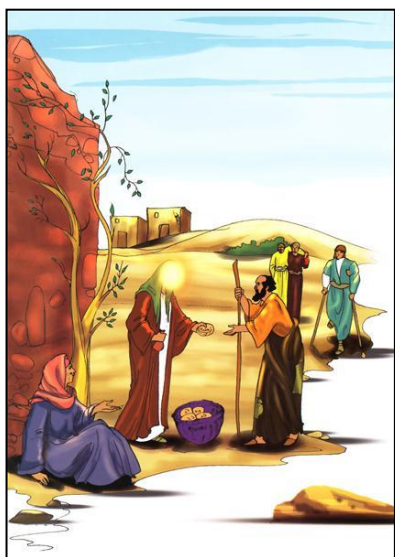
Imām Ali ar-Rida ('a) replied again and said, 'Do not swear! The best of people is the one who is most conscious of not disobeying Allāh because Allāh says in the Qur'ān:

﴿...إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ...﴾

...indeed the most honoured of you in the sight of Allāh is the most Godwary among you...

- Surah al-Hujurāt, 49:13

Imām Ali ar-Rida ('a) was always concerned about the poor and the needy. He would help remove their difficulties and give generously to those in need; so much so that he came to be known as *al-Imām ar-Raūf* ('the kind and merciful Imām').



His Imāmah

Imām Ali ar-Rida ('a) was 30 years old when his father Imām Musa al-Kādhim ('a) was taken away from Madina in the year 179 AH and imprisoned. But Imām al-Kādhim ('a) had

already informed some of his companions in Madina that the Imām after him would be his son Ali.

One of the Shi'ah named Ali b. Yaqtin who worked as a vizier in the court of Hārūn ar-Rashid reported that, 'One day I was with al-'Abd as-Sālih Imām al-Kādhim ('a) when his son Ali ar-Rida ('a) entered the room. Imām al-Kādhim ('a) said to me, "Ali b. Yaqtin, this boy is the master from my children."'



Another man asked Imām al-Kādhim ('a) who would be the Imām after him and he pointed to his son ar-Rida ('a) and said, 'he is your master after me.'

But because of the danger in those days from the caliphs, Imām al-Kādhim ('a) told his companions to keep this a secret.

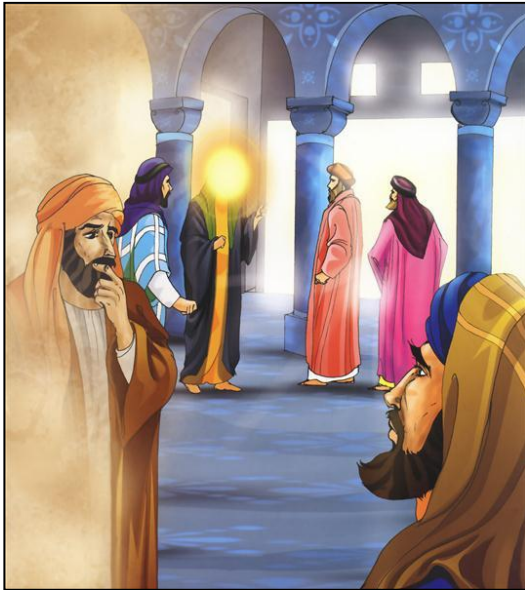
Giving in Secrecy

Imām Ali ar-Rida ('a) became famously known that he never turned anyone away who asked him for help. One day, when he was sitting with his companions in Madina and they were asking him about the laws of shari'ah and what was *halāl* and *harām*, a man from Khorāsān came in his presence and said:

"As-salām 'alaykum O son of Rasulullāh! I am a man who loves you and your fathers and ancestors. I have just returned from Hajj but I have run out of money and don't have the means to go back home. If you see it fit to help me, it will be a blessing from Allāh. When I return home, I will give in charity on your behalf the same amount that you give me because I am rich in my city and don't deserve to take *sadaqa* (alms).'

The Imām told him politely, 'Sit for a bit, may Allāh have mercy on you.' Then the Imām continued speaking to the people until they left. Then the Imām entered his room and then he stuck his hand out from behind the door and called out, 'where is the man from Khorāsān?'

The man came closer and the Imām gave him a bag without coming out and said, ‘This is 200 dinārs. Use it for your journey and you don’t have to give any charity on my behalf.’



The man from Khorāsān took it and thanked the Imām and bade him farewell. After that the Imām came out again and one of his companions asked him, ‘why did you hide your face from him, O son of Rasulullāh?’

And Imām ar-Rida (‘a) said, ‘I did not want to embarrass him or see his face while he is ashamed of taking the money from me.’

Then the Imām said, ‘Have you not heard the hadith of Rasulullāh (s) that “a person who hides his good deeds gets the reward of 70 Hajj. A person who publicizes his sin will be humiliated by Allāh and a person who hides his sin will be forgiven by Allāh”?’

During the Rule of Hārūn

When the Caliph Hārūn ar-Rashid had poisoned Imām Musa al-Kādhim (‘a), he ordered that anyone who was appointed by Imām al-Kādhim (‘a) as the successor should also be killed. His spies came to Madina and tried hard to find the successor of Imām al-Kādhim (‘a) but they couldn’t identify him and only a few close companions of the Imām knew that it was Imām Ali ar-Rida (‘a).

In the meantime in the year 192 AH Hārūn went with a military expedition from Baghdad (in Iraq) to Khorāsān (in North East of Iran) and when he was in Khorāsān, he fell sick and died and was buried there.



Hārūn had two sons. One was Muhammad al-Amin the son of his Arab wife Zubayda and he was in Baghdad. The other was his younger son Ma'mun, the son of a Persian wife and he was in Khorāsān. At first Muhammad al-Amin became the ruler. Then Ma'mun found out that Muhammad al-Amin was planning to make his own son his successor instead of letting him (Ma'mun) become the next Caliph. So Ma'mun took his own army from Khorāsān to Baghdād and attacked the city. He killed his own brother Muhammad al-Amin and had his body thrown into the river Dajla. And so Ma'mun became the new Banu Abbās Caliph.

The Khilāfah of Ma'mun

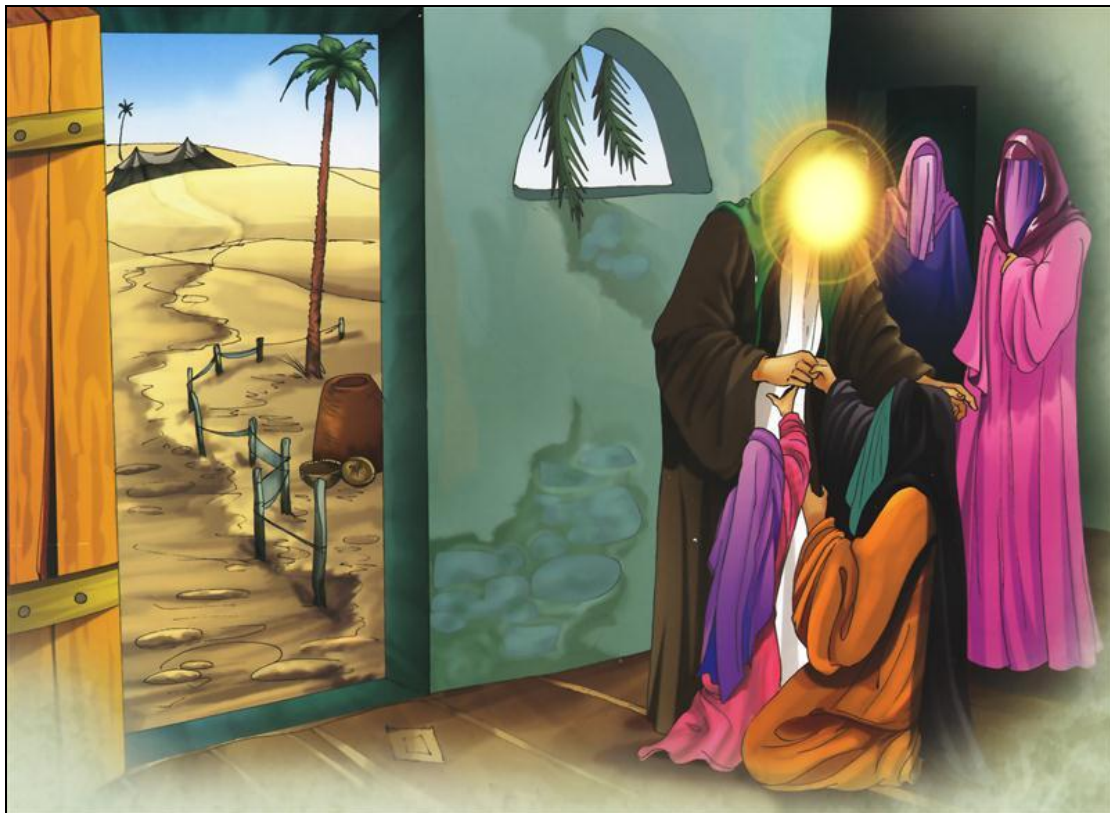
When Ma'mun returned to his capital city of Marw in Khorāsān, he realized that he was not popular and people really hated him because he had killed his own brother.

Ma'mun also knew that people all over the Muslim world loved Imām Ali ar-Rida ('a) because he was the descendant of Rasulullāh (s) and also because he was well-known for his knowledge and piety.

Ma'mun therefore decided to use Imām ar-Rida ('a) to make people like him. He sent orders to Madina to force Imām Ali ar-Rida ('a) to be brought to Marw in Khorāsān and then he declared that Imām Ali ar-Rida ('a) was going to be his successor. In this way Ma'mun succeeded in fooling the people and keeping them from fighting and opposing him.

Imām ar-Rida (‘a) tried hard to refuse but in the end he was threatened with his life if he refused and he decided it was the Will of Allāh that he goes to Marw. Imām Ali ar-Rida (‘a) was very sad to leave Madina, the city of Rasulullāh (s), and he also knew that he will never be allowed to come back to Madina.

So the Imām had a special gathering (*majlis*) with his family and a very sad farewell. Everyone was crying as Imām ar-Rida (‘a) left and he told them that he would be killed in Khorāsān when he is all alone and that they would never see him again.



Class Activity: See video clip in the movie ‘Gharib Tus’ of Imām ar-Rida (‘a) leaving Madina for the last time.

The Golden Chain Hadith

After Imām Ali ar-Rida (‘a) bade farewell to his family and to Madina for the last time, the long journey to Khorāsān began. First he was taken to Basra and then to Baghdad and thereafter to Qum and from there to Nisābur.



Map showing the final journey of Imām ar-Ridā (‘a) from Madina to Makkah, Basra, Baghdad, Qum, Nisābur and finally Marw (today Mashad).

When Imām ar-Rida (‘a) got to Nisābur, he was welcomed by a large number of scholar (‘*ulama*) and experts of hadith and they all insisted that he should address them and tell them some hadith from his ancestors that they can benefit from.

And so Imām ar-Rida (‘a) began saying: ‘I heard my father Musa b. Ja’far saying: I heard my father Ja’far b. Muhammad saying: I heard my father Muhammad b. Ali saying: I heard my father Ali b. al-Husayn saying: I heard my father Husayn b. Ali saying: I heard my father Amir al-Mu’minin Ali b. Abi Tālib saying: I heard Rasulullāh (s) saying: I heard (the angel) Jibrāil saying: I heard Allāh, the Mighty and Glorious, saying: **“*La ilāha ilallāh*⁶ is My fort. Whoever enters My fort will be saved from My punishment”**.’

Then the Imām (‘a) added, ‘**...but with certain conditions. And I am one of the conditions.**’ What he meant was that his Imāmah must be accepted in order to enter Allāh’s “fort of safety”.

Thousands of scholars wrote down this hadith and because it has been narrated from Imām ar-Rida (‘a) all the way to Allāh with a perfect chain of the most pure and perfect narrators, this hadith became famous as

⁶ ‘There is no god by Allāh’

'the Hadith with the Golden Chain of Narrators' (*Hadith Silsilat adh-Dhabi*).

Heir to the Throne

Imām ar-Rida ('a) finally arrived in Marw and the Caliph Ma'mun pretended to welcome the Imām very warmly and began offering him to take over the Khilāfah. Imām ar-Rida ('a) refused that outright. He knew Ma'mun was a man who had killed his own brother just to become the Caliph. There was no way he would actually let the Imām take over and become the Caliph.



Furthermore, Allāh appoints an Imām and it would be wrong for Imām ar-Rida ('a) to let history record that he got his khilāfah from a Banu Abbās Caliph like Ma'mun. Imām ar-Rida ('a) said to Ma'mun:

If Allāh has made you His khalifa, then it is wrong to give up what Allāh has given you.

And if this khilāfah is not yours and was never given to you by Allāh, then how can you give me what is not yours in the first place??

But Ma'mun still needed to show people that he loved the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) so that people would stop hating him and opposing him. So he began

insisting that Imām ar-Rida (‘a) should be his successor and heir. Of course that made no sense either because Imām ar-Rida (‘a) was much older than Ma’mun and a successor has to be someone younger who will live after the ruling caliph dies.

Again Imām ar-Rida (‘a) refused but this time Ma’mun forced him and said if he would not agree than he would have the Imām killed. That was, after all, the reason why he had brought the Imām all the way to Khorāsān.



Imām Ali ar-Rida (‘a) finally accepted the position but set conditions for it. He told Ma’mun that he would not get involved in any decisions of the government and he would not hire or remove anyone from any position. This of course meant that the Imām was not really going to take any position at all but Ma’mun agreed to all these conditions because he could still use the Imām’s name.

To show that the Imām was on his side, Ma’mun then got coins made with the name of Imām ar-Rida (‘a) and he ordered all his men in the court to stop wearing black clothes all the time, which was the colour of the Banu Abbās, and to start wearing green clothes, which was the colour of the Banu Hāshim.

Ma’mun of course succeeded in some ways to fool people that he was a good person who loved the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) but he was also hoping that

he could blame the Imām for some of his bad deeds. But because Imām ar-Rida (‘a) knew Ma’mun’s intentions and had refused to take part in government activities, therefore Ma’mun could not really use the Imām.

The Prayer for Rain

In the year 201 AH there was a drought in Khorāsān. No rain fell and people began suffering from thirst and hunger as they could not grow any crops. By then Imām ar-Rida (‘a) had become very popular in Khorāsān and Ma’mun was worried that people respected the Imām even more than him.

Ma’mun decided to ask Imām ar-Rida (‘a) to go out in public and pray for rain. Ma’mun was sure it would not rain because of the drought but he hoped when people saw Imām ar-Rida (‘a) praying and no rain falling it would damage the reputation of Imām ar-Rida (‘a) in the eyes of the people.

The next day, a Monday morning, all the people gathered under the open sky and Imām ar-Rida (‘a) came and led them in a special prayer for rain called *salāt al-istisqā*. Then Imām ar-Rida (‘a) called out and prayed to Allāh: ‘O Allāh! O Lord! It is You who has given greatness to us the Household (Ahl al-Bayt) of Your Prophet. Therefore for the sake of this Household, give us of Your Grace and Mercy and quench our thirst!’



Suddenly the clear skies began to change. First there was a gentle breeze and then white puffy clouds began appearing. Soon they increased in number and there were dark clouds all around. The people saw lightning and thunder and it began raining heavily and the earth was soaked once again after a drought.

Imām Ali ar-Rida (‘a) thanked Allāh and said to the people who had gathered, ‘Be wary of Allāh with regards to His blessings on you. Do not drive away the blessings of Allāh by disobeying Him and with sins. Instead keep the blessings of Allāh constantly with you by obeying Him and thanking Him for His blessings.

And as it continued to pour, the people returned to their homes for shelter and everyone began talking of the miracle and how special Imām Ali ar-Rida (‘a) was and how closely connected he was to Allāh.

All this of course made Ma’mun very angry. He was hoping to humiliate the Imām and instead the Imām had become even more popular and now the people loved the Imām and paid him even more attention than Ma’mun.

Interfaith Debates

Ma’mun was now very worried. Day by day, Imām ar-Rida (‘a) was becoming more popular than he was. He now thought of another ploy. He invited the priests and scholars of different faiths and asked them to debate with Imām ar-Rida (‘a) and to ask him the most difficult questions they could. By this Ma’mun hoped to lower the image of the Imām in the eyes of the people. And so a day was set and the court was filled with people.

Imām ar-Rida (‘a) said to his companion an-Nawfali, ‘Do you know why Ma’mun has gathered all the leaders of other faiths and of the polytheists?’

‘He wants to test you,’ replied Nawfali.

‘O Nawfali,’ said the Imām then, ‘do you want to know when Ma’mun will regret this the most?’

‘Yes,’ said Nawfali.

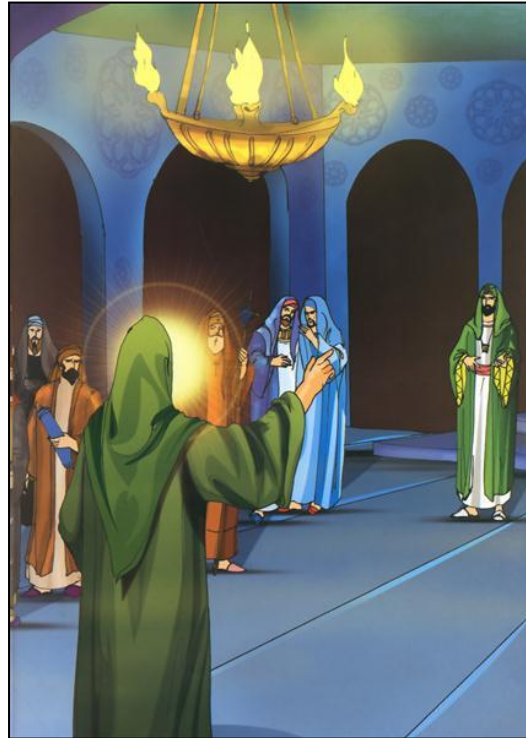
And Imām ar-Rida (‘a) said to him, ‘when he hears me debating with the Christians using the Injil and with the Jews using the Tawrāt and with everyone group using their own religious text.’

And so Imām ar-Rida (‘a) did wudu and set out to the palace of Ma’mun with his companions and the debate began.

The leaders of different faiths began saying, ‘we don’t want to argue using the Qur’ān or words of the Prophet Muhammad (s) because we don’t believe in them.’

‘Will you then accept,’ offered Imām ar-Rida (‘a), ‘if we debate using your own books?’

They agreed to this. And so Imām ar-Rida (‘a) began reciting passages from the Tawrāt, Injil and Zabur and the scholars of other faiths were amazed at the Imām’s knowledge of their own books.



Some of them converted to Islam and others were just spellbound and said, ‘we had no one idea that someone like you existed amongst the Muslim scholars!’

The Poisoning of the Imām

Ma’mun felt intense regret when the debates were over. He had planned to hurt the Imām’s image but the opposite had happened. The love of people for the Imām increased even further and became widespread.

Ma'mun now decided to remove the Imām as soon as possible. At first he kept guards to watch the Imām's every move and he forbade people from visiting Imām ar-Rida ('a) any more.

In the meantime, the Banu Abbās in Baghdad began revolting against Ma'mun and they started following Ibrāhim b. al-Mahdi, another member of the Banu Abbās. Imām ar-Rida ('a) advised Ma'mun to free him from the position of being his heir and to go back to Baghdad where the Banu Abbās always lived and had their capital.

Ma'mun refused to let the Imām go and instead decided he would go to Baghdad but he would take the Imām with him. But soon after they left and they came to Tus, where Hārūn ar-Rashid, the father of Ma'mun was buried, Ma'mun had Imām ar-Rida ('a) poisoned.

Some say Ma'mun had the poison filled in grapes and others say he put the poison in pomegranate juice that he forced the Imām to drink. As soon as the Imām drank a little, he stood up and left for his room. Imām ar-Rida ('a) remained in a lot of pain because of the poison and he finally took his last breath in the same place (Tus) where he was buried. His martyrdom was on the 29th of Safar 203 AH.

Ma'mun pretended he was shocked and grieved at the passing away of the Imām. He showed the people that he was mourning for the Imām and he arranged for him to be buried in the palace of his father's army commander Hamid b. Qahtiba right next to where his father Hārūn ar-Rashid was buried.

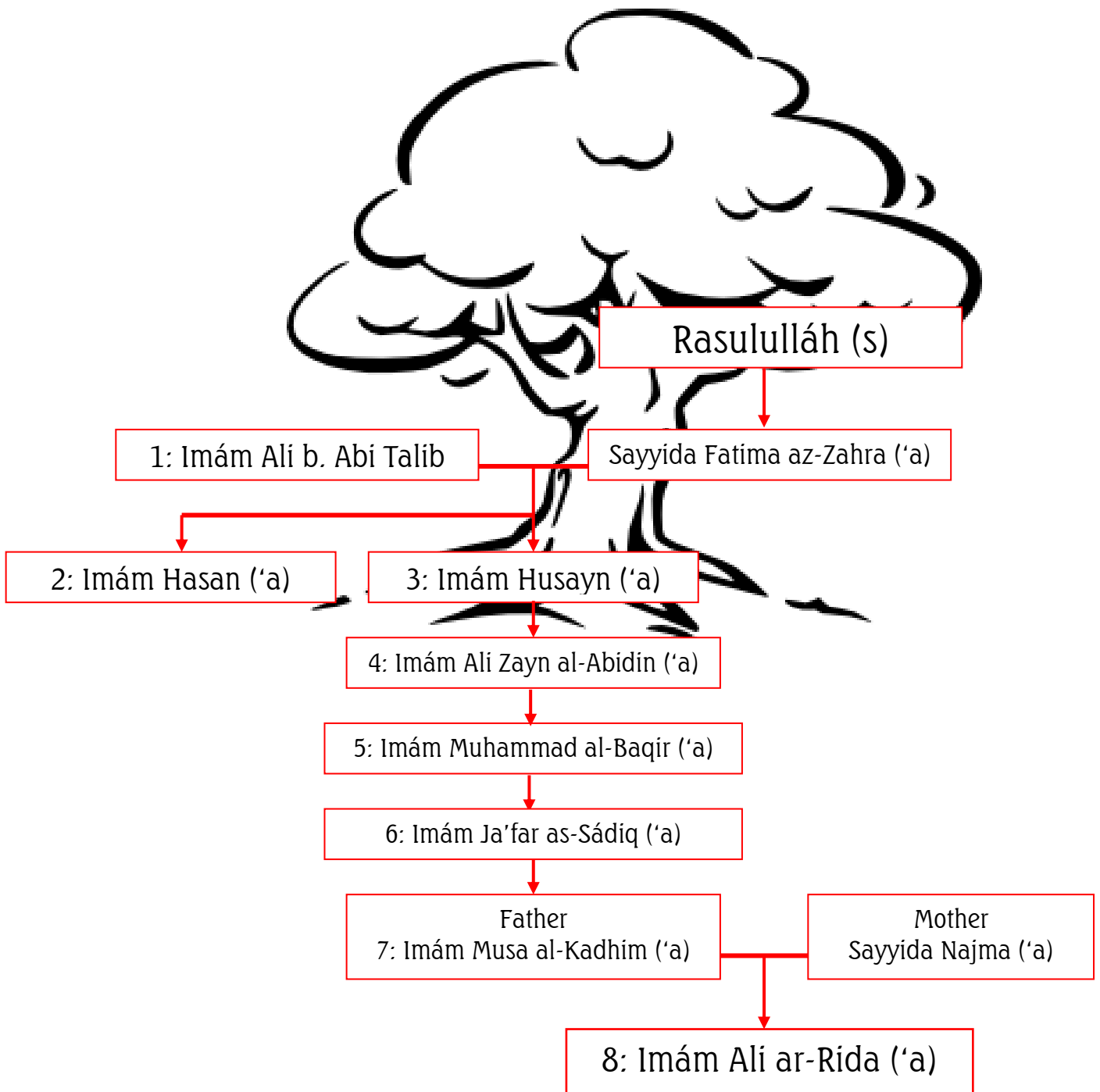
This place is today called Mashad. No one remembers Hārūn or knows the exact location of his grave. But a magnificent shrine and masjid stand over the grave of Imām Ali b. Musa ar-Rida, alayhi salām.



Some of the ahādith of Imām Ali ar-Rida (‘a) are:

- A person who does not thank his or her parents has not thanked Allāh.
- A person who accounts for his soul will succeed and a person who ignores his soul will lose.
- Allāh hates gossip, wasting money and asking too many questions just for the sake of asking.
- Always hold on to the weapon of the prophets: du’a!
- If a person opens a way out for a believer who is in trouble, Allāh will open his heart for him on the Day of Judgement.
- Your elder brother is like your father.

Imām Ali b. Musa al-Ridā ('a)'s Family Tree



Wilādah : Madina, 11th Dhul Qa'ada 148 AH
Shahādah: Mashad, 29th Safar 203 AH

Lesson 6

Imām Muhammad al-Jawād (‘a)

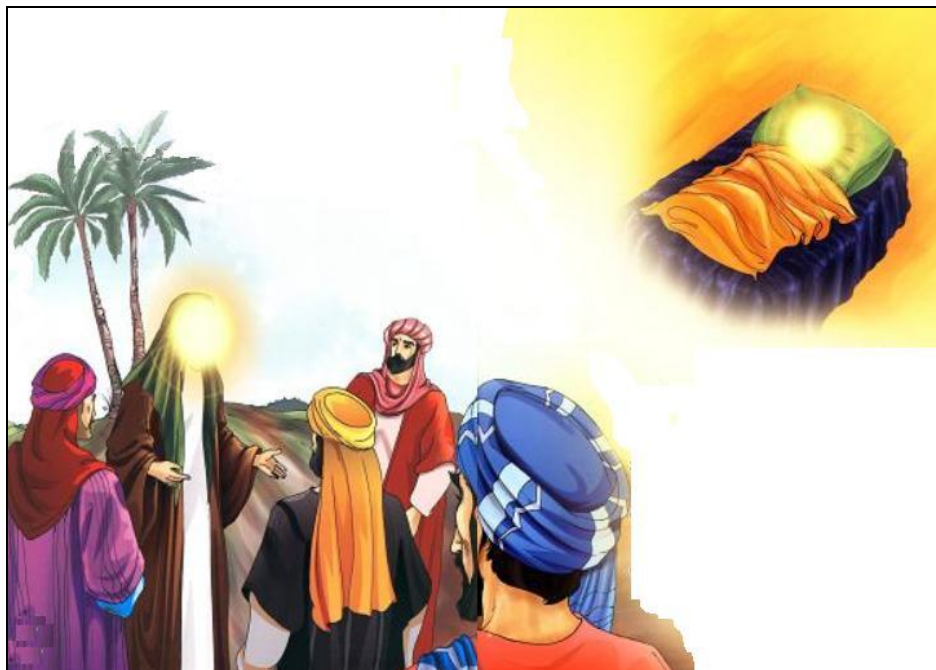
Birth

On the 10th of Rajab 195 AH, Imām Muhammad al-Jawād (‘a), the ninth Imām from the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) was born in a village called Surayya, just outside Madina.

His father is Imām Ali b. Musa ar-Rida (‘a) and his mother is Sayyida al-Khayzurān. She was a descendant of Umm al-Mu‘minin, Māriya al-Qibtiya, the wife of Rasulullāh (s).

The ninth Imām was addressed by many praiseworthy titles the most famous ones were at-Taqi (the Godconscious) and al-Jawād (the generous).

Imām Muhammad al-Jawād (‘a) was the only child of Imām Ali ar-Rida (‘a). For a long time Imām Ali ar-Rida (‘a) had no children and everyone wondered who the next Imām would be. Imām ar-Rida (‘a) used to say, ‘By Allāh, before the end of my life, Allāh will bless me with a son who will separate truth from falsehood.’ And people used to be amazed at this prophecy and wonder if it will come true.

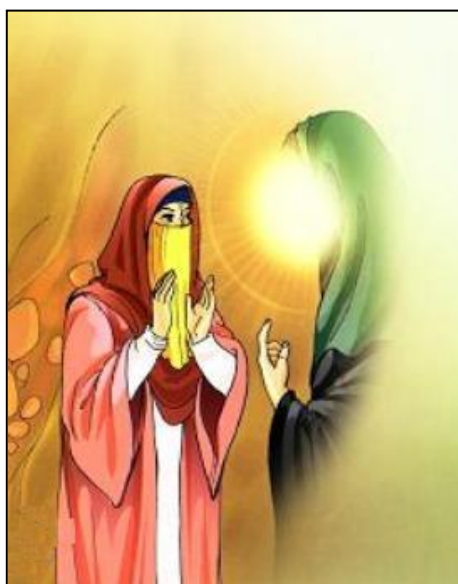


When Imām Muhammad al-Jawād (‘a) was born, Imām Ali ar-Rida (‘a) said, ‘Allāh has blessed me with a son who is like Nabi Musa (‘a) and Nabi Isa (‘a); blessed is the mother who gave birth to him.’

Miracle at Birth

Sayyida Hakima the daughter of Imām Musa al-Kādhim (‘a) and sister of Imām ar-Rida (‘a) says that when Imām al-Jawād (‘a) was born she saw him with a delicate cover over him that lit up the room even in the night. She took the baby in her lap and removed the cover and Imām Ali ar-Rida (‘a) came in. He took the baby and placed him in the cradle and said to her, ‘Hakima, keep him in his cradle.’

Sayyida Hakima says, on the third day after he was born, Imām



Muhammad al-Jawād (‘a) raised his eyes towards the heavens and said: ‘*ash-hadu an lā ilāha ilallāh wa ash-hadu anna Muhammadan Rasulullāh*’ (I bear witness that there is no god by Allāh and I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allāh).

Hearing this, Sayyida Hakima was frightened. She stood up and ran to her brother Imām ar-Rida (‘a) and told him what had happened. Imām ar-Rida (‘a) said to her, ‘Hakima, you will still see more wonders from him!’

His Father’s Love for Him

One of the companions of Imām Ali ar-Rida (‘a) says, ‘I was with ar-Rida (‘a) when his young son came and Imām ar-Rida (‘a) said: “No child has been born who is a greater blessing for our Shi’ah than this child.”’

Even when Imām al-Jawād (‘a) was a child, his father Imām ar-Rida (‘a) loved him and showed him so much respect that he would call him with

the title 'Abu Ja'far'. For example, he would point to the child and tell his Shi'ah, 'Abu Ja'far is my successor from my family after me.'

The Farewell

When Imām Muhammad al-Jawād ('a) was only six years old, Imām Ali ar-Rida ('a) was forced to leave Madina and go to Khorāsān on the orders of the Caliph Ma'mun. Before leaving for Khorāsān, Imām Ali ar-Rida ('a) took his son Imām al-Jawād ('a) and went to Makkah for Umra and to see the Ka'bah for the last time. He did a farewell tawāf of the Ka'bah with his son. Imām al-Jawād ('a) realized this was the time for farewell and felt very sad.

Imām Ali ar-Rida ('a) then asked his close companions to take his son Imām al-Jawād ('a) back to Madina and he left for Khorāsān with the men of Ma'mun.



His Imāmah

Imām Muhammad al-Jawād ('a) was only nine years old when he became the Imām after his father Imām ar-Rida ('a) was poisoned.

He had an uncle named Ali bin Ja'far who showed him a lot of respect even though he was much older. And whenever Imām Muhammad al-

Jawād (‘a) would enter the masjid, Ali bin Ja’far would stand up out of respect and wait until he sat down.

Some people doubted that Imām Muhammad al-Jawād (‘a) was the Imām because of his young age but as he answered questions from the Qur’ān and showed the knowledge he had inherited from Rasulullāh (s) through his fathers, they realized it did not matter that he was so young. On one occasion, Imām al-Jawād (‘a) himself said that the first person to follow Rasulullāh (s) was Imām Ali bin Abi Tālib (‘a) when he was a young boy. And Rasulullāh (s) declared Imām Ali (‘a) to be his successor even when he was a young boy. So why should age matter?

The Martyrdom of Imām Ali ar-Rida (‘a)

Abu as-Salt, a companion of Imām ar-Rida (‘a) narrates that after Imām ar-Rida (‘a) was poisoned, he was at his home when he heard the door knock and when he opened it, he saw a young boy who resembled Imām ar-Rida (‘a). He asked him, ‘how did you get here past all the guards?’ and the boy said, ‘the One who brought me from Madina to Khorāsān also brought me past the guards and the locked gates.’

‘Who are you?’ asked Abu as-Salt and boy replied, ‘I am the proof (*hujjah*) of Allāh over you, O Abā as-Salt! I am Muhammad b. Ali al-Jawād.’



Then the young Imām went close to his father who hugged him and kissed him between his eyes. Imām al-Jawād (‘a) sat besides his father at the last moments of his life until Imām ar-Rida (‘a) took his last breath.

The Caliph Ma’mun realized that Imām al-Jawād (‘a) was as special as his father Imām ar-Rida (‘a) so he decided he would marry his daughter Umm al-Fadl to Imām al-Jawād (‘a). Ma’mun was now hoping that if they have a child then the next Imām would also be his grandson and successor. Ma’mun also wanted to do this because everyone knew that he had poisoned Imām



ar-Rida (‘a) and even though Ma’mun had pretended to cry for Imām ar-Rida (‘a) and attended his funeral barefoot, he still wanted to convince the public that he loved Imām ar-Rida (‘a). So by marrying his daughter to Imām ar-Rida (‘a)’s son, he hoped people would believe his lies.

But the Banu Abbās were against this idea. To show how special Imām al-Jawād (‘a) was, Ma’mun arranged a debate between the young Imām and the most learned man in the court of the Banu Abbās who was called Yahya bin Aktham.

First Yahya tried asking a difficult question to Imām al-Jawād (‘a) but the Imām answered it in detail and very easily and then Imām al-Jawād (‘a) asked Yahya a question and he was unable to answer it.

The Banu Abbās were now still concerned that the khilāfah would pass from their hands to the children of Imām al-Jawād (‘a) if he marries the daughter of Ma’mun. But they could not argue after seeing how knowledgeable the Imām was.

Imām al-Jawād (‘a) agreed to marry Umm al-Fadl but she did not have any children and therefore Ma’mun’s plans for grandchildren who would succeed him failed. Imām Muhammad al-Jawād (‘a) married other wives and had many children from them.

Ma'mun had insisted that Imām al-Jawād ('a) should stay close to him in Baghdad but the Imām was not happy to live in palaces and in Baghdad. He longed to go back to Madina and be near the grave and masjid of Rasulullāh (s). In the year 218 AH, Ma'mun died after falling sick on his way back from a battle against the Romans. Imām al-Jawād ('a) then announced that he was returning to Madina. Many people came out to say farewell to him.



The Return to Baghdad

After Ma'mun, the next Caliph was Mu'tasim. He openly disliked Imām al-Jawād ('a) and did not want him living in Madina where he could not watch him closely. So he forced the Imām to come back to Baghdad where he could constantly spy on him and ensure he is not a threat.



Even in Baghdad, Imām Muhammad al-Jawād ('a) was loved by people more than Mu'tasim because of his *akhlāq* (character) and *'ilm* (knowledge) and this made Mu'tasim very jealous. Mu'tasim was the brother of Ma'mun and a son of Hārūn ar-Rashid but his mother was Turkish and he never liked studying, so he was ignorant and illiterate. This made him even more fearful of Imām al-Jawād ('a).

In due course, Mu'tasim brought many Turks to come and live in Baghdad and they became very powerful and he built a new city for the Turkish soldiers further north and called it Surra-man-ra-a (which is today called Sāmarra). Mu'tasim then decided to move his capital from Baghdad to Sāmarra but before moving, he wanted to remove Imām al-Jawād ('a) permanently. He plotted with Ja'far the son of Ma'mun and Ja'far came to his sister Umm al-Fadl, the wife of Imām al-Jawād ('a) and convinced her to poison her husband.



Martyrdom

One day, Umm al-Fadl poisoned some grapes and gave to Imām al-Jawād ('a). As soon as he ate some, the poison spread in his body and he felt extreme pain. Umm al-Fadl pretended to cry and Imām Muhammad al-Jawād ('a) said to her, 'what are you crying for? Allāh will curse you with poverty and suffering from which you will never recover!' And so she was cursed just like Ju'da bint al-Ash'ath who poisoned her husband Imām Hasan al-Mujtaba ('a) (the 2nd Imām). Umm al-Fadl later died of a very painful and difficult illness.

Of all the Imāms, Imām Muhammad al-Jawād ('a) was martyred the youngest. He was only 25 years old. This was the 29th of Dhul Qa'ada 220 AH. He was buried next to his grandfather Imām Musa al-Kādhim ('a) in Baghdad (in the area called Kādhimiyya today).

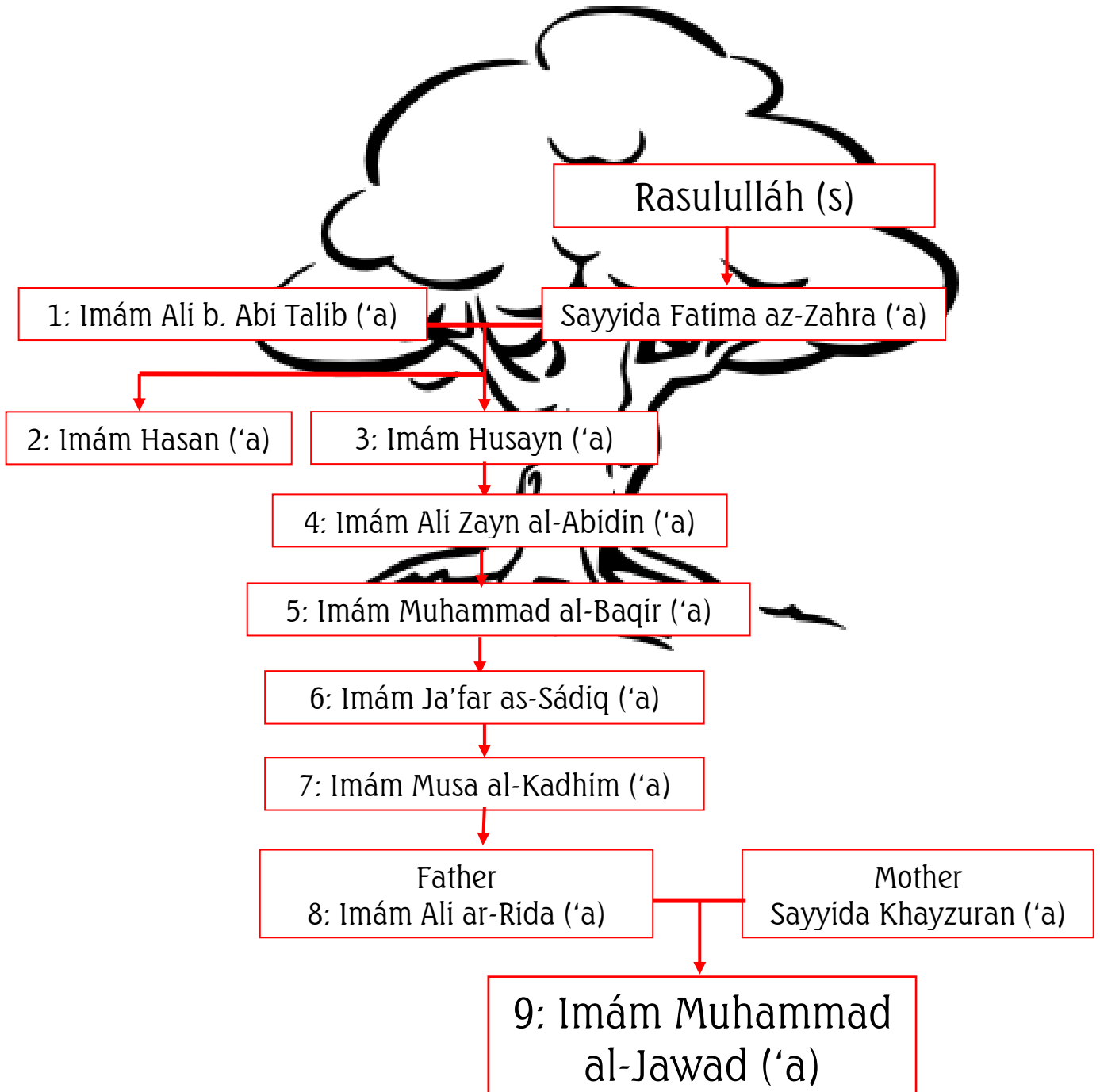
Imām Muhammad at-Taqi al-Jawād ('a) dedicated his life to Islam and to teaching people the true meaning of tawhid and the Qur'ān. Peace be on him the day he was born, peace be on him the day he was martyred and peace be on him on the day when all of mankind is raised again! Amen.



Some of the sayings (ahādith) of Imām Muhammad al-Jawād (‘a) are:

- The honour of a believer lies in not begging from others.
- The Day of Justice on the oppressor will be more severe than the day of injustice on the oppressed.
- A human being dies more with sins than with physical death. And he or she lives more with good deeds than with physical life.
- Beware of sinful and evil friends. They are like a poisoned sword. It may look shiny and beautiful but its effect when it touches you is harmful and evil.
- The best worship is sincerity (*ikhlas*).
- Not thanking Allāh for a blessing is like not asking forgiveness for a sin.
- The oppressor, the one who helps him, and the one who is ok with it, are all partners in the act of oppression.

Imām Muhammad b. Ali al-Jawād ('a)'s Family Tree



Wilādah : Madina, 19th Rajab 195 AH

Shahādah: Baghdad, 29th Dhul Qa'ada 220 AH

Lesson 7

Imām ‘Alí al-Hādí (‘a)

Our tenth Imām, Imām Ali al-Hādí an-Naqi (‘a) was born on 15th Dhul Hijjah 212 AH in Madina. His father is Imām Muhammad al-Jawād (‘a) and his mother was a pious and noble woman from Morocco called Samāna.

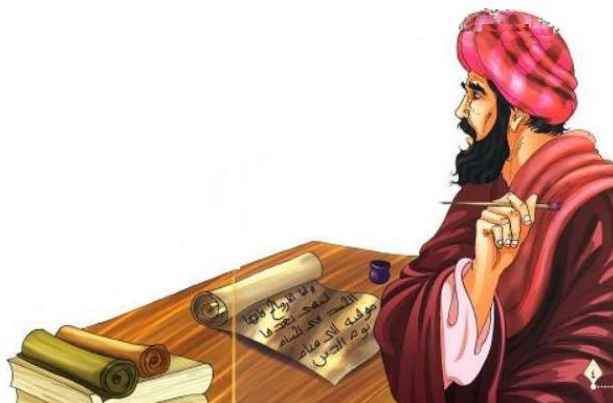
When his father Imām Muhammad al-Jawād (‘a) was poisoned in Baghdad in the year 220 AH, Imām Ali al-Hādí (‘a) was only 8 years old. Among the many titles he was known by are al-Murtada, al-Hādí, an-Naqi, al-‘Aalim, al-Faqih, al-Mu’tamin, and at-Tayyib. His most popular title was al-Hādí (the guide) and the titles like at-Tayyib (the good) and an-Naqi (the pure) all show that he was well known for his piety, his character (*akhlāq*) and his knowledge and guidance to others.

Wisdom as a Child



After the martyrdom of Imām al-Jawād (‘a), the caliph appointed a teacher called al-Jundi to educate Imām al-Hādí (‘a) and to supervise his education. Al-Jundi wanted to teach the Imām to recite 10 surahs of Qur’ān. Instead Imām al-Hādí (‘a) asked him, ‘tell me, what surah would you like me to recite for you?’

‘Surah Aal Imrān,’ said al-Jundi with doubt. But to his amazement, the young Imām began reciting the surah so beautifully that al-Jundi was moved and speechless. He began thinking to himself, ‘Imām al-Jawād was in Baghdad and passed away there; this boy has been alone in Madina – who taught him all this?’



Imām Ali al-Hādí (‘a) then said to al-Jundi, ‘would you like to hear some of what I have learnt from my

father and ancestors?’ And al-Jundi just nodded with surprise. And again the Imām began reciting ahādith that he heard from his father who heard from his father, all the way up to Amir al-Muminin (‘a) who heard from Rasulullāh (s). Al-Jundi felt the light of the Imām’s knowledge penetrate his heart and began saying to himself, ‘indeed, Allāh knows where to keep His message!’ i.e. in which household.

Imām Ali b. Muhammad al-Hādi (‘a) lived a very simple life. He used to quote a hadith from Amir al-Muminin Imām Ali (‘a) that, ‘one whose greatest concern is the hereafter (*ākhirah*), will be content with life even without wealth.’



The Caliph, as well, made sure that the Imām did not have a lot of wealth accessible and tried to keep the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) in poverty. He also kept the Imām under house arrest and watched every move he made through his spies.

Imām Ali al-Hādi (‘a) therefore lived the life of an ascetic worshipper. He had an empty room that had no furniture or worldly possessions except for a straw mat on which he prayed salāh. He used to spend most of his time in reciting the Qur’ān and reflecting on its meanings.

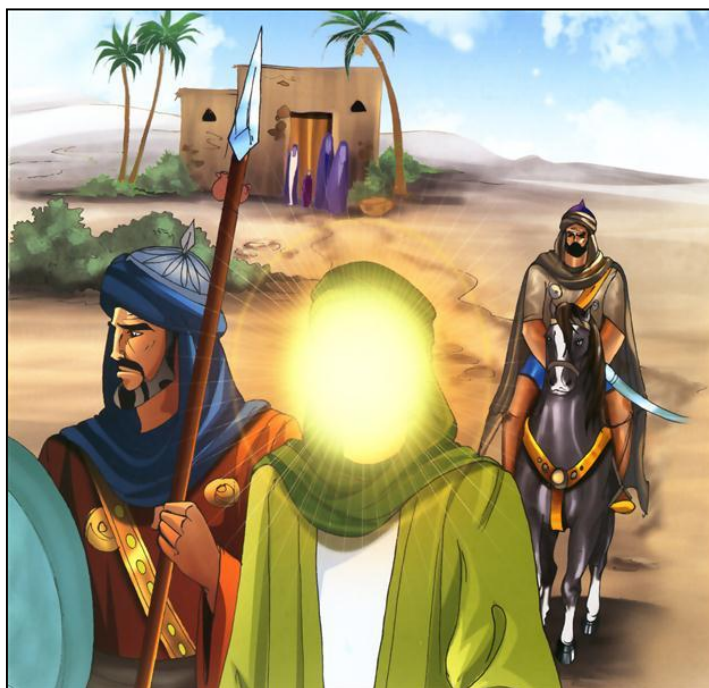
He would welcome people warmly and with a smile and he loved to help the poor. Sometimes the Caliph would send him money to see what he would do with it (as a bribe) but the Imām would distribute all of it to the poor and the needy.

The Transfer to Samarra

The Banu Abbās caliph Mu'tasim died in 227 AH and after him came his son Hārūn al-Wāthiq who ruled for 5 years before he died too. By then the Turks whom Mu'tasim had brought to Baghdad and Samarra became very powerful and influential. They made a lot of the decisions in the government and they supported Ja'far al-Mutawakkil as the new Caliph.

Mutawakkil was a cruel and brutal man who was well known for his hatred of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a). In particular he would kill anyone who went for the ziyārah of Imām al-Husayn ('a) in Karbala and he even tried to change the direction of the river Furāt so that it would flood and drown the grave of Imām al-Husayn ('a) but he failed to do so.

Mutawakkil knew that the Shi'ah loved and followed Imām al-Hādi ('a) so he set up spies in Madina to watch every move of the Imām and if anyone went to visit the Imām, the spies would note his name and report it back to Mutawakkil. In the end, Mutawakkil felt threatened by the presence of the Imām in Madina so he sent one of his men called Yahya bin Harthama to Madina and told him to bring Imām Ali al-Hādi ('a) to his capital in Samarra.



Imām Ali al-Hādi ('a) went to Samarra with his son Imām Hasan al-Askari ('a), his family members and some of his followers. Mutawakkil tried many ways to humiliate the Imām but failed. On one occasion when the Imām was being brought to Samarra, Mutawakkil ordered that the Imām should be kept in a very dirty and run-down inn. A Shi'ah came to visit the Imām and cried when he saw the condition of the place. But the Imām smiled and told him not to cry because no one can humiliate an Imām. Then he told the Shi'ah to look again and he saw the Imām was actually sitting in

a garden surrounded by beautiful maids and there was a river flowing besides him. 'This is where we are!' said the Imām.



No matter how hard Mutawakkil tried, the personality of the Imām always won people over and they felt weak and humble before him or they began loving and following him.

Finally the Imām was kept in a home in Samarra under strict watch and very poor conditions. But even then Mutawakkil harassed the Imām. One day one of his spies told Mutawakkil that Imām Ali al-Hādi ('a) was collecting weapons and money to fight against him. So Mutawakkil sent one of his men called Sa'id to attack the house of Imām Ali al-Hādi ('a) in the middle of the night and take any weapons and money he finds.

Sa'id came with a group of soldiers and entered the home of Imām al-Hādi ('a) without permission and began searching room by room. Imām al-Hādi ('a) was busy praying and he showed them he only had a personal sword and a bag of money that had 10,000 dinars.

Sa'id took all that and went to Mutawakkil. The Caliph saw that the bag of money still had a seal on it and it was the seal of his own mother. So Mutawakkil called his mother and asked her about it. His mother scolded him for taking the money back and said, 'when you were very sick and almost dying, I asked Ali bin Muhammad (Imām al-Hādi) for help and he gave me something to cure you. So I sent him this money as a gift.'



Mutawakkil therefore sent the money and sword back to the Imām. When Sa'id brought it back, he was very embarrassed. He said to the Imām, 'Forgive me, but I was ordered to carry out the home invasion and I hope you can excuse me.'

But Imām Ali al-Hādi ('a) was very sad because of how he was being treated. He recited the āyah of Qur'ān:

﴿... وَسَيَعْلَمُ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا أَيَّ مُنْقَلَبٍ يَنْقَلِبُونَ﴾

...and the wrongdoers will soon know how they will be overturned!

- Surah ash-Shu'arā, 26:227

Du'a is the Weapon of the Prophets

One day, Mutawakkil wanted to show off his power and strength to the Imām so he took Imām Ali al-Hādi ('a) to a hilltop from where tens of thousands of armed soldiers could be seen marching in formation.

Mutawakkil said to Imām Ali al-Hādi ('a), 'I called you to see my army and weapons.' What he meant was that he was afraid of the Imām rising against him so he wanted to frighten the Imām with this show of power.

Imām Ali al-Hādi ('a) said to Mutawakkil, 'Now look at my weapons' and he raised his eyes to the heavens and prayed to Allāh humbly and

suddenly, the sky was filled with angels all armed as warriors. Mutawakkil fell down and fainted out of fear of what he saw.



The Curse of an Imām

On the 1st of Shawwāl (the day of 'Id al-Fitr) 247 AH, Mutawakkil had now ruled for 15 years and it had been 13 years since Imām Ali al-Hādi ('a) had lived in Samarra since he was brought there in the year 234 AH. Mutawakkil decided that for this 'Id al-Fitr, the *Salāt al-'Id* will be held in a place that was 8 kms outside Samarra and he ordered that everyone should walk to the place and only he would ride on a horse.

The intention of Mutawakkil was to humiliate the Imām and make him walk while he was on a horse. All the Muslims hated Mutawakkil for this because it was tiring to walk for 8 kms on a hot day to go and pray *Salāt al-'Id*.

As Imām al-Hādi ('a) walked he sweated and one of the Caliph's men tried to make up an excuse for the Caliph and he said to the Imām, 'The Caliph does not wish to cause you trouble!'



Imām Ali al-Hādi ('a) said to him angrily, 'Go away from me!' Then he recited the āyah of Qur'ān:

﴿...تَمَتُّعُوا فِي دَارِكُمْ ثَلَاثَةَ أَيَّامٍ ذَلِكَ وَعَدُّ غَيْرِ مَكْذُوبٍ﴾

...enjoy yourselves in your homes for three days: that is a promise not to be belied!

- Surah Hud, 11:65

One of the Muslims who had also come out to pray and was a follower of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) heard the Imām recite this āyah. He knew immediately that the Imām was making a prediction and that something big was going to happen in 3 days. 'I wonder what will happen in three days?' he said to himself.

After 3 days, on the 3rd of Shawwāl, Mutawakkil had a feast in his palace. He ate a lot of roast meat and drank a lot of wine. In the meantime, his son Muntasir was outside with a group of soldiers planning to kill his father. This was because Muntasir found out that his father was planning to make his younger brother Mu'tazz the next Caliph.

Soon Muntasir and a group of Turkish soldiers attacked the palace and came in. They killed Mutawakkil and his vizier al-Fath bin Khāqān and people all around began running away.



That same night, Muntasir announced that his father had died a natural death and that he was now the Caliph! Muntasir was not harsh with the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a). He even gave them back the land of Fadak outside Madina that was once given to Sayyida Fātima az-Zahra (‘a) by her father Rasullullāh (s).

The whole Muslim world felt relieved when they found out that the evil Mutawakkil was dead and Muntasir was now the Caliph. But Muntasir ruled for 6 months only before he died.

Imām al-Hādi (‘a) and the Banu Abbās Caliphs

Imām Ali al-Hādi (‘a) lived to see the rule of six different caliphs. After Mutawakkil, all the caliphs ruled for short periods of times from 6 months to a maximum of 10 years.

After Mutawakkil and his son Muntasir, the next Banu Abbās Caliph to rule was Musta’in Billāh. He ruled for 5 years and he was very weak as a ruler. The Turks were running the government and were the power behind the scenes.

Mu’tazz, the second son of Mutawakkil ruled next for 4 years and after him Mutassil Billāh. He was followed by Mu’tamid, the third son of Mutawakkil.

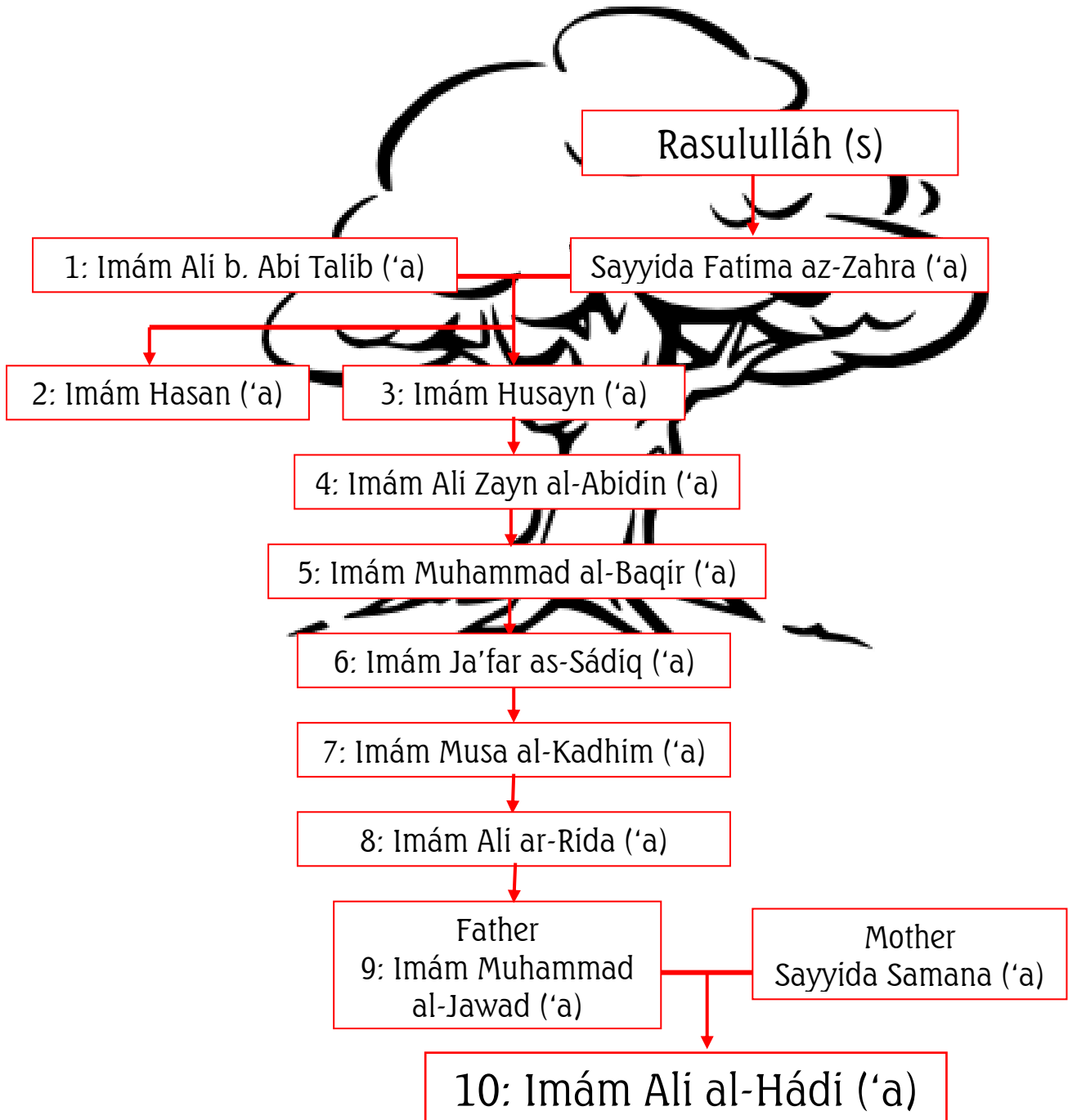
It was the Banu Abbās Caliph Mu'tamid who poisoned Imām Ali al-Hādi (‘a) on 3rd Rajab 254 AH. All the market places and shops were closed on that day and a large number of Muslims gathered at the main masjid in Samarra for the funeral prayers of Imām Ali al-Hādi (‘a). And thereafter he was buried in his house as he had requested in his will and that is where his grave stands today in Samarra.



Some ahādith of Imām Ali al-Hādi (‘a) are:

- Better than good is the doer of the good and worse than evil the doer of it.
- The world is a marketplace. Some people profit from it while others lose.
- A person who is patient suffers once during an affliction. An impatient person suffers twice (once due to the affliction and secondly due to his impatience).
- A greedy person is never at ease.
- People are ranked in this world by their wealth (*amwāl*) and in the hereafter by their deeds (*a'māl*).
- During a time when justice prevails over injustice, it is forbidden to suspect a person of wrong without any certain proof.

Imām Ali b. Muhammad al-Hādi ('a)'s Family Tree



Wilādah : Madina, 15th Dhul Hijjah 212 AH
Shahādah: Samarra, 3rd Rajab 254 AH

