

# UMAA

UNIVERSAL MUSLIM ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

## 16TH ANNUAL CONVENTION



**THE CONFERENCE OF IMAM REDHA<sup>AS</sup>**  
**ENGAGING WITH PURPOSE**  
**DEARBORN, MICHIGAN**  
**JULY 27<sup>TH</sup> – 29<sup>TH</sup>, 2018**



# We can end oppression as long as We are **Hand in Hand**



16TH ANNUAL CONVENTION



THE CONFERENCE OF  
**IMAM REDHA** (AS)  
ENGAGING WITH PURPOSE

DEARBORN, MI  
JULY 27-29



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The articles that have been contributed to the UMAA magazine are not necessarily the opinions of the UMAA organization or the office bearers and the ads do not necessarily carry the endorsements of UMAA.

# Note from The Editor



My dear brothers and sisters, welcome to the 16th annual UMAA Convention. We are proud to be back to host this year's convention in the Greater Detroit area. We've made many memorable memories here, and Inshallah hope to make more new ones.

As you know, each year we have selected a theme to host the convention, and this year is certainly no different. Themes that are selected, try to highlight the basic principles of justice, unity, equality, compassion, while also focusing on the needs and requirements that help to develop a community that can thrive and facilitate Shi'ism revival, while having the courage to stand up for these principles together as a people, not just for Shias, but for people of all religions or faiths. This year's convention gets its inspiration from our Eight Holy Imam (a) and so, the conference has been titled "The Conference of Redha: Engaging With Purpose."

Imam Redha's (a) inherited his knowledge from his ancestor, the Holy Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him and his progeny). He was the reliable source of knowledge and virtues who the people looked to during his time. People who were thirsty for knowledge quenched their thirst by learning from Imam Redha (a). History tells about the Imam's (a) scientific debates and intellectual challenges that he encountered.

Ma'mun, the ruler of the Abbasid caliphate often managed sessions of debates to be held in his own royal palace and celebrated scholars of various religions, who were invited there to exchange and discuss their different views on religious issues. Imam Redha (a) was always victorious in all those debates and soon his opponents recognized the scientific status of His Holiness. Imam Redha (a) directed Muslims to the right path and removed deviated views of the antagonists who endeavored to distort the religion. In this way the Holy Imam (a) safeguarded and propagated the principles of Islam.

Imam Redha (a) was well known for, but not limited to, his generosity, patience and clemency, among other traits, which he bestowed upon the people. A brief glance at Imam Redha's (a) life is indicative of the fact that the Imam (a) paid particularly close attention to helping the poor. Imam Redha (as) represented all virtues. All the noble qualities were gathered in him. Allah endowed him with all outstanding qualities just as He endowed all the previous Imams before his time. He endowed him with nobility and made him an eminent figure for the community of his grandfather (the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his progeny).

In such turbulent times, especially here in the United States, with the rise of racism, corruption, and where the government of the people, by the people and for the people that swore to uphold peace, equality and democracy, now separates children from their parents and to detain them, shows that indeed morality has taken a back seat. It is incumbent upon all of us to present the pure and unadulterated message of our Holy Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him and his progeny) and by protecting the teachings of our Holy Imams who were designated the responsibility to ensure the safety and survival of the religion. The teachings and life of Imam Redha (as) serve as an exemplary precedent for not just Shias or the Muslim world in general, but for all mankind.

As with every year, every effort has been made to keep the articles informative, interesting and useful for the reader. My sincere thanks to Br. Mustafa Karim, for his dedication and support in putting together and publishing the souvenir magazine over the last few years.

Finally, my sincere thanks to all the learned scholars for their contribution of their articles and to all the advertisers and well-wishers over the years for their continuing support. And now, we welcome you to the 16th Annual UMAA Convention.

*Dr. Zafar Jaffri*  
Editor

# Lady Fatimah Masuma Qum (sa)



*"(We ask from Allah) not to deprive us from understanding your status. Indeed, He is the Protector and has Power over everything."*

Some traditions that are indicative of Lady Fatimah Masuma Qum (SA) status are:

The authentic tradition from Imam al-Rida (A):  
*"Whoever visits Masuma in Qum is like the one who has visited me."*

*This tradition implies that the rewards and benefits awarded to a pilgrim are the same whether he does the pilgrimage of Lady Fatima Masuma (SA) or Imam al-Ridā (A). Also, from this tradition, as discussed previously, we get the title of Masuma (infallible) that was given to this noble lady by Imam (A) himself.*

Another authentic tradition from Imam al-Sadiq (A):  
*"A lady from my children whose name will be Fatima, daughter of Mūsā, will die in Qum. On the day of Judgement this lady will intercede for all my Shi`a to enter Heaven."*

*This narration indicates the honor and position of Lady Fatima Masuma (SA), who will be the means of intercession of the Shi`a of the Ahl al-Bayt (A) on the Day of Judgement.*

*Although there have been other traditions by the Imams (A) stating that, through the intercession of the scholars and the martyrs, people will enter Heaven, never has a non-Ma`sum been specifically named for this intercession, as in the case of Lady Fatima Masuma (SA).*

*Also, because we know that this Ziyārat has been narrated by the Imam (A) through a reliable tradition, the virtues of Lady Fatima Masuma (SA) within it must be considered true.*

Some extracts from her Ziyārat as an example:

*In this Ziyārat, she is called:  
the daughter of the Prophet of God,  
the daughter of Fatima and Khadijah,  
the daughter of Amir al-Mu'minin Ali,  
the daughter of Hasan and Husain,  
the daughter of the Vicegerent of God (al-Kādim),  
the sister of the Vicegerent of God (al-Ridā)  
and the aunt of the Vicegerent of God (al-Jawād)  
(may the blessings of Allah be on all of them)*

i Nāsikh al-Tawārikh, vol. 3, p. 68; Rayāhīn al-Sharī'a, vol. 5, p. 35.  
i Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 60, p. 228; Majālis al-Mu'minin, vol. 1, p. 83.

## UNIVERSAL MUSLIM ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

### Overview and History

The Universal Muslim Association of America (UMAA) is a non-governmental organization (NGO) that works on social, political, religious, and humanitarian issues. UMAA is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization as well. UMAA has obtained ECOSOC nonprofit status with the United Nations and regularly participates in related initiatives.

### Mission Statement

UMAA aims to provide a platform for American Shia Muslims to advance political, social, economic and religious goals important to their community. By providing a forum to American Shia Muslims to foster intra-faith unity, to participate in civic and political responsibilities, to dispel misgivings about Islam and Muslims, to help fellow Americans better understand Islam through the Qu'ran and the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and his Ahl al-Bayt (a).

### Goals

UMAA provides a forum to address socioeconomic and political issues that may not be addressed in centres of worship such as: - Fostering inter and intra faith unity - Dispelling misgivings about Islam and Muslims through civic engagement - Helping other American understand Islam through the Qu'ran and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and his Ahl al-Bayt (a). UMAA was formally established in September, 2002 as a joint effort between scholars, community organizers and community leaders. Since then, UMAA has grown to support the America Shia community through a variety of Community Development, Advocacy and Media efforts.

# Message from The President



In the name of Allah the Almighty

As salaam alaykum and welcome to the 16th Annual UMAA conference. I am honored to inaugurate this year's conference that is being held in Dearborn, Michigan, the home of the largest Shia Muslim community in the United States of America.

As with every year, we ascribe an auspicious personality our conference and design the conference with that theme in mind. This year, we chose to commemorate Imam Ali Redah (as) who was and continues to be a shining example of strategic engagement for the betterment of the larger community. We are confident that everyone from our exuberant youth to our respected elders will find something in our program (available on the UMAA app) to help them in their daily lives as they continue to engage with purpose on behalf of our community.

UMAA aims to be a platform for the wider community by gathering individuals, families and organizations from across the globe to convene in Dearborn, Michigan. This gathering allows us the vital opportunity to discuss how to engage with each other and other communities more effectively and to see that engagement in action here in Dearborn.

My sincere hope is that you enjoy this weekend as you hear from world renown scholars, speakers, poets, and activists and everything this location has to offer. Please keep this organization and all those who made this conference happen in your prayers.

With gratitude,

*Dr. Syed E. Abidi*

President, Universal Muslim Association of America



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# Message from The Convention Senior Vice President



In the name of God, the Beneficent the most Merciful

As this year's conference takes place in the month of Dhu'l-Qa'dah, the birth month of Imam Reda ('a), the theme of the gathering will be in his honor: Conference of Imam Reda ('a), Dearborn, Michigan A more than appropriate pertinent theme in response to the turbulent times of our country.

Imam Reda ('a) was the eighth infallible Imam from the progeny of The Holy Prophet. The caliph during his lifetime was al-Ma'mun, the son of Harun al-'Abbasi (al-Rashid), who was a brutal ruler. At the invitation (veiled threats) of the Caliph, the Holy Imam migrated from Madinah to Tus (Present day Mashhad, Iran).

Although the Imam did not support the policies of al-Ma'mun, but in order to maintain peace and harmony he did not voice his objections, choosing to remain silent. The period directly before this move, there were many insurrections against Banu 'Abbas led by the descendents of 'Ali b. Abi Talib, resulting in much bloodshed. Too many innocent people were getting caught in this violence such that the Imam was compelled to marry al-Ma'mun's daughter, becoming his son-in-law and heir, signalling an end to the wars.

The times we are living in now are not much different from that era, the election of 2016 has brought on the forefront an administration that is antithesis to all diplomatic norms of contemporary politics. Donald Trump has given rise to a course, crude and belligerent political discourse; we are living in a meaner and less empathetic political atmosphere. We are all witnessing the death of truth, wherein falsehood is repeated so many times that people have started to believe it as fact.

Never in the recent memory have we seen such blatant disregard for human values. In all aspects of life, from environment to refugees, to international diplomacy, to women's rights, the rules are being rewritten. We do not have to cater to these mean spirited instincts. We can be better than that.

Our children are facing discrimination in schools, workplaces and shopping malls. Police brutality is on the rise and being given political cover. In such a hostile landscape what are our duties? What are our obligations? Must we become subservient to those in authority? No, we do not have to cater to these mean spirited instincts, we can do better than that.

This is where we should drive inspiration and lessons from our eighth Imam. His tenure was far worse than what we are facing today. He did not resign and watch from the sidelines, instead he took the difficult route by trying to enact change from within the houses of power.

Imam Reda's ('a) involvement in politics was based on the divine commandments of enjoining good and forbidding evil, supporting truth against falsehood. He showed us how to react to an oppressive regime and continue to act on Islamic tenets, protect the boundaries of our faith, even in such disparate situations. As followers of the Holy Prophet and the 14 infallibles we are very fortunate to have before us examples to emulate under adverse circumstances.

It is incumbent upon us to stay engaged in the political scene and make positive changes possible, without compromising on our beliefs and values. Our involvement in the body politics is of utmost importance, especially in these turbulent times .

I encourage all to register and cast their vote, as this is our constitutional right. All of our maraji' have unequivocally encouraged us to vote and engage in the decision making process; for the best way to protest and ask for our rights is at the polling station.

*Dr. Asad Sadiq*  
Senior Vice President, Universal Muslim Association of America



Indeed Allah has commanded three things (in Quran) which are proximate with three others. He ordered the prayers and alms. So the one who offers prayer and does not pay alms, his service is not accepted from him.

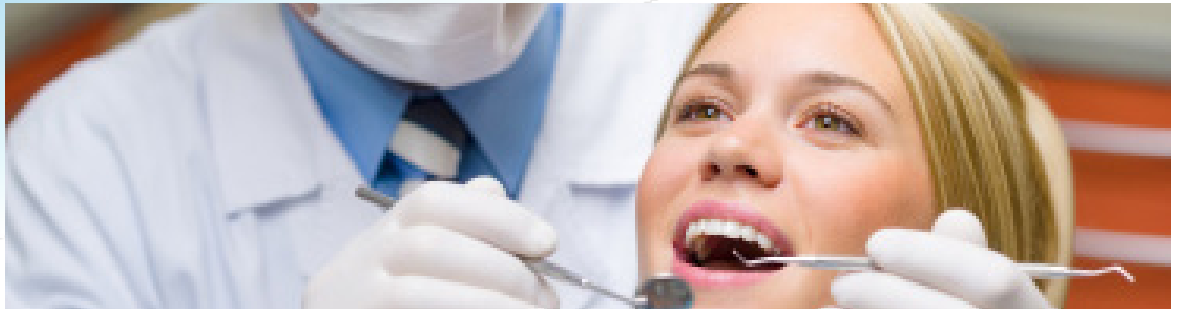
Best wishes on the  
16th Annual UMAA Conference  
Dearborn, Michigan

Parveen Kazmi and Sibte Irteza Kazmi  
Allentown, New Jersey



## BEST WISHES ON THE 16TH ANNUAL UMAA CONFERENCE

*The best revenge is to improve yourself.  
It is easier to win your enemy over by sincere measures and good deeds than declare war and dominate him after great bloodshed and destruction.  
The best revenge is forgiveness.  
Imam ar-Ridha (a)*



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## Imam ar-Ridha's Knowledge

Adapted from The life of Imam 'Ali Bin Musa al-Ridha'

Author: Baqir Shareef al-Qurashi

Publisher: Ansariyan Publications - Qum | Imam ar-Ridha's Knowledge

Imam al-Ridha', peace be on him, thoroughly encompassed all sciences and knowledge. The historians and the narrators have unanimously agreed that he was the most knowledge of the people of his time, the most meritorious of them, and the most learned of them in the precepts of religion and other sciences such as philosophy and medicine. Talking about the Imam's abundant knowledge, 'Abd al-Sala'm al-Harawi has said: "I have never seen a person more knowledgeable than 'Ali b. Musa' al-Ridha'. When a religious scholar sees him, he bears witness for him (as being the most knowledgeable) as I do.

Al-Ma'mu'n gathered for him in assemblies a number of the scholars of religions, the jurists of Islamic law, and theologians. However, he overcame them to the extent that they acknowledged his excellence (over them) and confessed their feebleness before him. I heard him say: 'I used to take my place at the theological center (rouda) and the number of the learned scholars in Medina was quite large. Yet when a question overtaxed the mind of one of those scholars, he and the rest would point at me, and they would sent me their queries, and I would answer them all."<sup>i</sup>

The Imam was the most learned of the people of his time and

<sup>i</sup> Kashf al-Ghumma, vol. 3, p. 107.

was the highest authority in Islamic world; religious scholars and jurists would send to him their questions about Islamic precepts.

Ibra'him b. al-'Abba's has said: "When al-Ridha' was questioned about a certain thing, he answered it. I have never seen that there is a person more knowledgeable than him. Al-Ma'mu'n examined him with questions about all things, and he answered them."<sup>ii</sup>

Imam al-Ridha', peace be on him, was the most eminent Muslim thinker, so he was able to develop the cultural and scientific life of the Muslims.

Al-Ma'mu'n has said: "I think that there is no person on the face of earth more learned than this man (i.e. Imam al-Ridha')."<sup>iii</sup>

His (i.e. Imam al-Ridha's) debates in Khurasa'n, Basrah, and Ku'fa give evidence for his being the most knowledgeable on the face of earth. During those debates he was questioned about the most difficult problems and he answered them, so all the religious scholars of his time yielded to him and acknowledged his excellence over them.

<sup>ii</sup> 'Uyyu'n Akhba'r al-Ridha', vol. 2, p. 180. Imam al-Jawa'd, p. 42. Al-Itha'f bi Hub al-Ashraf.  
<sup>iii</sup> A'ya'n al-Shi'a, 4/Q2.

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Best Wishes on the 1th Annual UMAA Convention

# Imam Ali Al-Reza(a) and the Manifestation of the Divine Will

Mohamedraza Dungersi, Ph.D, New York, New York



***“They plotted, and Allah also Devised, and Allah is the best Of devisers.”<sup>i</sup>***

<sup>i</sup> Quran 3:54

Islamic history, especially during the reign of Umayyad and Abbasid rulers, abounds with instances where the evil and oppressive rulers would try to legitimize their evil governance by trying to employ the services of the divinely guided personalities, the Imams of Ahlulbayt. For instance, the founders of the Abbaside dynasty, Suffah and Mansur, tried their level best to lure Imam Jaffer Sadiq (a) to be their supporter, offering him a position in their administration, but to no avail. Harun al-Rashid, too, tried but failed to “buy” the services of Imam Musa Kadhim (a). For refusal to cooperate with these tyrants and oppressors, these Imams had to suffer unimaginable suffering and ultimate martyrdom.

The case of Imam al al-Reza (a), however, was similar to that the previous two Imams, but it acquired new and complex dimensions, to be explained in the rest of this presentation.

## **Mamun’s plans to achieve his devilish goals**

Whereas his predecessors- Mansur and Harun – were openly and unashamedly hostile towards the progeny of the Prophet (pbuh), therefore, their fake friendliness towards the Imams make their hidden agenda obvious. However, Mamun’s approach was diametrically opposite from that of his predecessors; it was guised under the cloak of love and fairness towards Imam Reza (a).

To secure the most vital services of the Imam of the time, Ali, son of Musa Kadhim (a), Mamun presented his offer on basis of kindness and apparently, offered Caliphate to the Imam! His reasoning was: he recognized the status of the Imam and had made a promise with Allah that if he, Mamun, succeeded in securing Caliphate from his brother Amin by defeating him at fatal battles, he would give Caliphate to Imam Reza (a).<sup>i</sup>

On the surface, Mamun looked very genuine. But as a matter of fact, as we shall see in the course of our presentation, that move was an innovative plan, engineered by Mamun to achieve his hidden and sinister agenda.

The Imam would not bite the bait! Politely but firmly, he turned down this offer. When forced to justify his rejection, the Imam stated that if this position, as claimed by Mamun and his predecessors, was divinely endowed, then it could not be given away; and if it wasn’t, then Mamun had no right to offer it to anyone else.

<sup>i</sup> Sayyed Ali Naqwi: “Biographies of Leaders of Islam”, pg.159, English translation by Sayyed N.H. Zaidi.

With the threat of death penalty from Mamun, finally Imam Reza (a) accepted to be Mamun’s heir apparent, but with conditions that would keep him away from the politics of the state.<sup>ii</sup>

Mamun’s plan was evil. However, Allah’s plan was superior and intended to overcome Mamun’s scheme with virtuous results. This divine will was manifested through the actions of Imam Reza (a).

## **What was behind Mamun’s plan?**

In the year 200 A.H., Imam Reza was taken, against his wish, to Marv - Khorasan, the capital of Muslim empire under the Caliphate of Mamun. The Imam stayed there for 3 years. The events following his stay in Marv has led scholars to unfold at least six real reasons behind Mamun’s offer to the Imam, each of which was to enable Mamun to justify the legality of his claim to Caliphate, and to save it from being overthrown. These reasons are:

1. Mamun’s success against Amin was because of the support of the people of Khorasan (Iran). Indeed, many of his army officers and administrators were lovers of Ahlul Bayt, especially Imam Reza (a). To please these people and to continue getting their support, it was necessary to get the support of Imam Reza (a).
2. The war with Amin had made Mamun’s army weak. The followers of Ahlul Bayt took advantage of this and began to rise against Mamun’s government. For example, in Yemen, Ibrahim bin Musa bin Jaffer rose against the government and took over the governorship. Mecca fell in the hands of Al-Husain bin Al-Hasan; in Basra, Zaid bin Musa bin Jaffer rose against the government. To deal with these challenges, Mamun desperately needed the help of Imam Reza (a). The best way to get this help would be to make Imam Reza (a) as a key person in his administration.
3. Mamun was an intelligent person and knew that those days were approaching when Muslims would rise against the Abbasides, the way they did years ago against the Umayyades. He knew that if people looked deep into the past, they would find out that Mamun was not a legal Caliph. On the other hand, If Imam Reza (a) cooperated with Mamun in running the government, people would accept Mamun as a legal Muslim leader. Mamun therefore wanted to use the Imam to legalize his own position.
4. Mamun was worried by the fact that Imam Reza (a) was growing popular day by day. By offering Imam (a) the ruler

<sup>ii</sup> al-Mufid: “Kitab al-Irshad”, pg. 470, English translation by I. K. A. Howard, TTQ publication 1981 (ed.), New York-U.S.A.

Al-Quraishi: “The Life of Imam Muhammad Jawad”, pg.50, English translation by al-Shahin, Ansarian publication, Qum- Iran, 2005(ed.)

*The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) has said “One who recites ten verses (ayats) of Holy Qur’an every night will not be counted amongst the negligent ones (Ghafillin); and one who recites fifty verses (ayats) will be written as those who remember Allah (Dhakin); and one who recites one hundred verses (ayats) will be written as the obedient worshipper of Allah (Qanitin).”*

Thawabul A’mal

## *Welcome to the 16th Annual UMAA Conference Dearborn, Michigan*

Dr. Iqbal H Jafri, MD, FAPM&R  
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## **CONGRATULATIONS ON THE 16TH ANNUAL UMAA CONFERENCE**

*But the Prophet left among you the same which other Prophets left among their peoples, because Prophets do not leave them untended (in dark) without a clear path and a standing ensign, namely the Book of your Creator clarifying its permission and prohibitions, its obligations and discretion, its repealing injunctions and the repealed ones, its permissible matters and compulsory ones, its particulars and the general ones, its lessons and illustrations, its long and the short ones, its clear and obscure ones, detailing its abbreviations and clarifying its obscurities.*

**Nahjul Balagha**

**PARVEZ ILYAS SHAH, MD  
BILJEES SHAH**

ship, Mamun thought he would lower the Imam's position in the eyes of the Muslims. Mamun calculated that if the Imam accepted to become the Caliph, some of his supporters would be pleased but many would be displeased. They would think that Imam Reza (a) was after the worldly things. On the other hand, if the Imam (a) refused to become the ruler, although some of his supporters would be pleased with him for this, others would blame him for losing this golden opportunity of getting back what belonged to him. In either case, the followers of the Imam would be divided and their support for the Imam (a) would become weak.

5. In the thinking of Mamun, it was dangerous for his government if Imam Reza (a) was allowed to preach Islam freely in Medina. The only way to stop him without causing Muslims to rise against the government was to call Imam to Iran with honor. Once in Iran, the Imam could be watched daily and steps be taken against him when the proper time came.

As a matter of fact, once the Imam (a) was in Marv, Mamun employed special spies to keep their eyes on the Imam (a) and inform Mamun on Imam's every move. One such royal spy was Hisham bin Ibrahim. Before becoming the government's informer, he was Imam's special companion. After becoming the spy, he would inform Mamun on every event happening in the Imam's home.

6. The Abbaside clansmen had never wished Mamun to be their ruler. They preferred Amin to Mamun, since Amin was a "pure" Arab, his mother, Zubeida, being the granddaughter of Mansoor Dawanaki, whereas Mamun's mother was a Persian slave-girl. As a matter of fact, when Amin and Mamun were at war against each other, the Abbaside clansmen supported Amin. Therefore, to win their support, Mamun let them know that if they continued to oppose him, he would turn to the clan of Abu Talib. The best way to do this way to offer Imam Reza(a) , who was the elder of the house of Abu Talib, the Caliphate. <sup>iii</sup>

### **Manifestation of Mamun's real intentions:**

Once the Imam was in Marv, Mamun started stealthily to implement his hidden program. First, Mamun wanted to put the Imam in such a position that would gradually compromise the Imam's status as a divinely appointed successor of the Prophet. This he did by introducing the Imam as the crown prince in the context of a grand "succession" ceremony, sending a message that the Imam was part and parcel of the Abbasside grandeur and majesty , and that the Imams of Ahlul Bayt, after all were as pleasant – loving and hedonistic as others, given the opportunity to do so.

Secondly, at this point in time, the Imam's divinely given knowledge had been accepted universally and ubiquitously throughout the Muslim world. Mamun's effort was to put the Imam in a situation where it would become apparent that after all, there were areas of knowledge in which the Imam lacked competence. This would compromise Imam Reza's status as the divinely appointee, and like any others, he, too, needed guidance from others in some areas of competence.

### **Mamun's implementation of his plan to demean the Imam.**

<sup>iii</sup> Muhammad Jawad Fadlallah, "A Historical and Biographical Research", pgs. 57-66, English translation by al- Jabouri, publisher Ali Reza Islamic Center, Essex- UK, 1990(ed.).

Education and learning were at its peak, by the standard of those days, in the Muslim Empire. As stated by Syed Amir Ali, schools and colleges were opened in all directions, and readily endowed by Mamun. Mamun would invite scholars in all areas of learning from Islamic and non-Islamic countries to work in his institutions of learning. Works in Greek, Latin and Sanskrit were being translated into Arabic. Several Jewish and Christian scholars held important positions in government institutions and the court itself. <sup>iv</sup>

Mamun used this situation to put the Imam in a position, to embarrass him and send a message to tarnish the Imam's status as a unique and divinely gifted scholar. He implemented this evil scheme by organizing a debate session between the Imam and the most eminent Jewish, Christian, Zoroastrians and Sabeans scholars of the time.

### **Debate between Imam Reza (a) and scholars of the book, the Maqians and the Sabeans.**

Sheikh Sadooq narrates in great details the discourse that was arranged in the court of Mamun between Imam (a) and the Catholics, the Exilarch, the Maqian high priest, the Zoroastrians and the patriarch of the Byzantine church.

Prior to engaging in this debate, the Imam (a) had a conversation with one of his companions, Al- Hassan bin Muhammad Nawfali. Nawfali was concerned about the ill intention of Mamun whose strategy was to record an apparent defeat of the Imam. For Imam's basis of arguments would be based on the Qur'an and the participants of the debate would reject such arguments, since to them the Qur'an had no value. Hence, the Imam's apparent defeat. The Imam's reply was:

*"O Nawfali !Would you like to know when Al – Mamun will feel regretful?...When he hears me argue with the people of the Torah quoting their own Torah, with the people of the Gospel quoting their own Gospel, with the people of the Psalms quoting their own Psalms, with the Zoroastrians arguing in their Persian language, with the Romans in their own Latin and with the rhetoricians using their own rhetoric... then Al – Mamun will realize that he has not achieved what he aspired to achieve. It is then that he will feel regretful..."<sup>v</sup>*

As stated by the Imam, he based his arguments from the scriptures of each denomination: The Torah, the Bible and the Psalms. Accordingly, he debunked the arguments of the participants basing his arguments from the original scriptures of those faiths, and accordingly silenced all the scholars.

Not only did the Imam (a) dumb founded them but made them accept his superior knowledge. For example, in the course of the debate, the Catholic Archbishop complements the Imam, saying "I did not know this before (the original Ingeel was lost). Now I have learned it from you due to your noble knowledge of the Bible. I heard things which I know from you – things which my heart testified to be truth. Therefore, I have gained a much better understanding."<sup>vi</sup>

The Sabean scholar, Imran as-Sabee, who after a lengthy discourse with the Imam, not only accepted defeat but became a Muslim. As Imran was hardest to defeat and, as a matter of fact, he had never ever before accepted defeat in his prior debates but

<sup>iv</sup> Sayed Amir Ali: "Short History of Saracens", pgs.274-275; 278-279, published by Kitab Bhavan, New Delhi-India, 1981(ed.)

<sup>v</sup> Sheikh Sadooq: pg.284.

<sup>vi</sup> ibid., pg. 298

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had now turned toward Islam, the rest of the participants of the debate accepted defeat in silence.

Mamun, as the Imam had earlier said, regretted for engaging the Imam in a debate that, rather than demeaning him, it enhanced his status in the eyes of not only Muslim but even scholars of the dominant religions of that time.

As mentioned earlier, Mamun was a "free-thinker" and had allowed Hellenic, Greek and Hindu philosophical works translated into Arabic, and introduced into Islamic theology, a lot of those ideas, even though they were contrary to the teachings of Islam. The debates that Mamun had arranged to see the Imam's defeat, turned out to be effective tools to save Islam from these corrupted ideas.

### **Imam Reza (a) manifests the pristine Islamic teachings**

In his three years stay in Marv, the Imam (a) used this opportunity to teach the madhab of Ahlul Bayt openly. He opened the doors of different knowledges that included: Philosophy, theology and even medical science. For example, in his treatises AL RISALA AZ ZAHABIA, he shows his knowledge in anatomy, physiology, chemistry and pathology, and how these branches of knowledge could bring about both prevention and curative results in the field of healthcare.<sup>vii</sup>

vii Mamun put together a group of eminent physicians of that time, to discuss health care issues. Amongst these experts were two Christian physicians-Yohana Masaway and Jibrae IBakhtisoo- and an Indian Philosopher, Salih Salhame. Mamun "invited" Imam Reza (a) to make his contribution, if any, intending to embarrass him. The Imam's response was that he would do so in due course, as it would be intensive and profound. Possibly, being confident that he had at last managed to put the Imam in a sharp corner of defeat, he reminded the Imam of his promise to make his contribution, a short time after the event. In response, the Imam produced a detailed work on health care. To cover up his evil intention, he got this work printed in gold and came to be known as RISALA ZAHABIYA. For details of this work refer Peermuhammad

Above all, he demonstrated in practical terms the way of life that existed during the time of the Prophet (pbuh). It will be recalled that the Umayyad and the Abbasside rulers had totally demolished the pristine Islamic core of life, which had therefore become totally forgotten. Imam Reza (a) brought them back to light.

In short, Imam's name and fame became the household story not only in Marv, but throughout the Muslim Empire. Mamun began to worry that those days were not far away to come when his entire kingdom would forget about him and turn to the Imam.

The turning point came on the day Imam (a) was allowed to lead the Eid Prayers. The Imam dressed himself the way the Prophet used to do to lead the Eid Prayers and instructed those with him to do the same. And as he walked towards the place assigned for the Eid Prayers, calling out Allahu Akber, the entire congregant followed him, including the army. Mamun's spies warned Mamun that a revolution was in progress. The Imam therefore was stopped conducting the Eid Prayers.<sup>viii</sup>

### **Conclusion.**

It became as clear as daylight to Mamun, that his plan to use the Imam for his own evil intentions had backfired. He realized that bringing the Imam to his power base was a mistake. Imam had to be silenced. And soon after the Eid prayers incident, the Imam was martyred by Mamun. But by then Mamun's evil plan had already been exposed. The promise of Allah was fulfilled: **"They plotted and Allah devised, and Allah is the best of devisers."**

Ebrahim Trust publication, "Risala e Zahabiyah", Urdu version 1968(ed.)  
viii ) al-Mufid: pg.474-475.  
Muhammad jawad Fadlallah, pg. 83-84.



# BEST WISHES ON THE SIXTEENTH ANNUAL UMAA CONVENTION

Once a small village called Sanabad soon transformed into a great metropolis by the presence of the holy shrine of Imam Reza (A.S.) called as Mashhad al-Reza (tomb sanctuary of Imam Reza (A.S.)), also briefly called Mashhad which is also one of the most extensively visited pilgrimage centers in the world. Miracles regularly occur at the holy shrine of Imam Reza (A.S.) and hence the holy city of Mashhad is also famous as "The Land of Miracles "

HUSSAN KASSAMALI AND SHAMEEM KASSAMALI  
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## An order to Maalik al-Ashtar

NAHJUL BALAGHA

Remember, Maalik, that amongst your subjects there are two kinds of people: those who have the same religion as you have; they are brothers to you, and those who have religions other than that of yours, they are human beings like you. Men of either category suffer from the same weaknesses and disabilities that human beings are inclined to, they commit sins, indulge in vices either intentionally or foolishly and unintentionally without realizing the enormity of their deeds. Let your mercy and compassion come to their rescue and help in the same way and to the same extent that you expect Allah to show mercy and forgiveness to you.

Maalik! You must never forget that if you are a ruler over them than the caliph is the ruler over you and Allah is the Supreme Lord over the caliph. And the reality is that He has appointed you as the governor and tested you through the responsibility of this rulership over them.

Never think of raising yourself to such a false prestige that you can declare war against Allah because you cannot ward off His Wrath and you can never be free from the need of His Mercy and Compassion.

Do not feel ashamed to forgive and forget. Do not hurry over

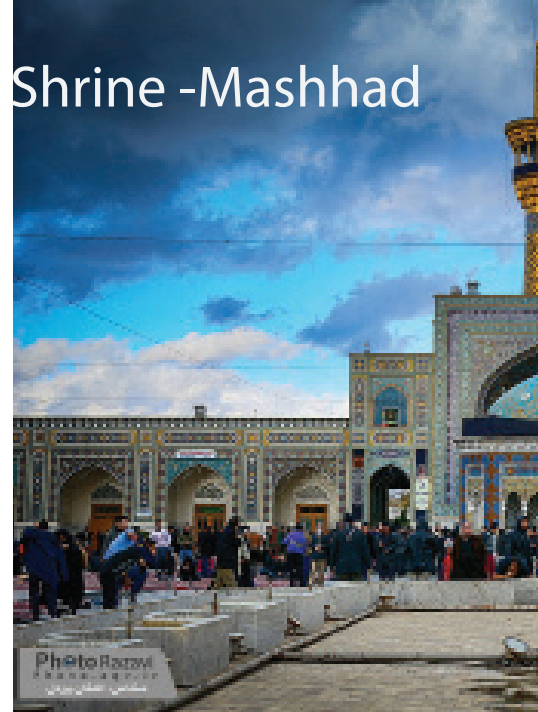
punishments and do not be pleased and do not be proud of your power to punish. Do not get angry and lose your temper quickly over the mistakes and failures of those over whom you rule. On the contrary, be patient and sympathetic with them. Anger and desire of vengeance are not going to be of much help to you in your administration.

Never say to yourself, "I am their Lord, their ruler and all in all over them and that I must be obeyed submissively and humbly" because such a thought will unbalance your mind, will make you vain and arrogant, will weaken your faith in religion and will make you seek support of any power other than that of Allah . If you ever feel any pride or vanity on account of your sway and rule over your subjects then think of the supreme sway and rule of the Lord over the Universe, the extent of His creations, the supremacy of His Might and Glory, His Power to do things which you cannot even dream of doing and His control over you which is more dominating than that which you can ever achieve over anything around you. Such thoughts will cure your mental weakness, will keep you away from vanity and rebellion (against Allah), will reduce your arrogance and haughtiness and will take you back to the sanity which you had foolishly deserted.

# Imam ar-Ridha Holy Shrine - Mashhad



Imam ar-Ridha Steel Window



The third Holy Zari - Burial Chamber





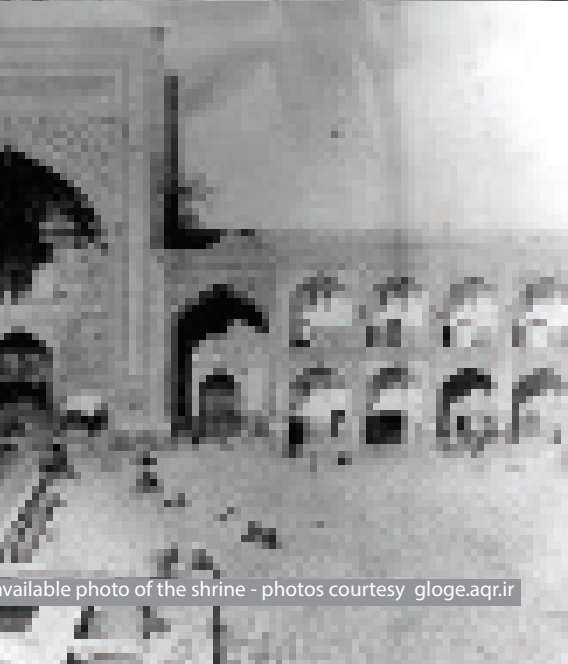


Jumburi Courtyard of the Razavi Shrine

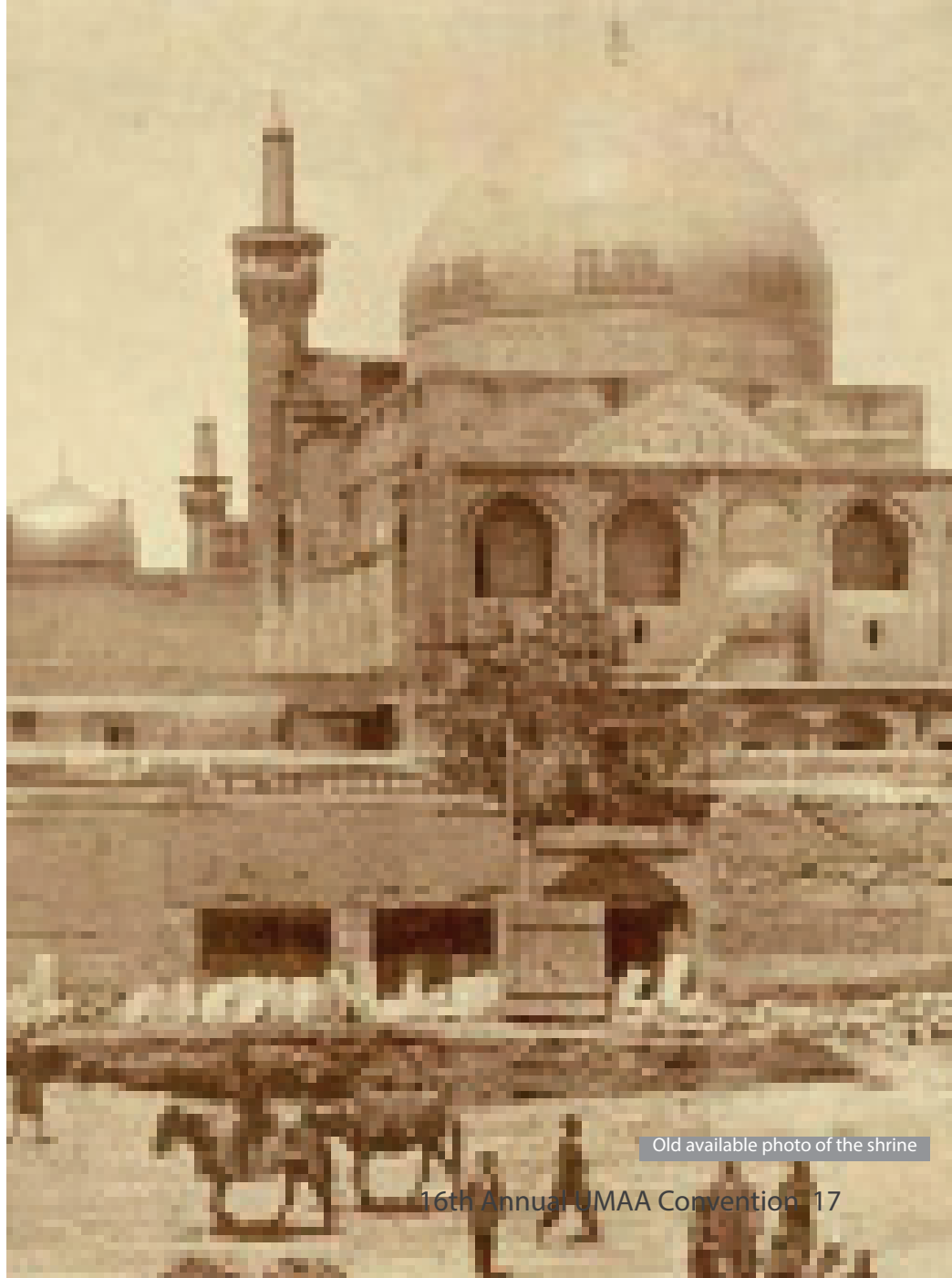


Photo Rasavi

Dar al-Marhamahs Mirror work



available photo of the shrine - photos courtesy gloge.aqr.ir



Old available photo of the shrine

# Imam Al-Ridha (a)'s Decision over Feigned Offer of Re-Instatement of Comprehensive Authority



**Bashir A Datto, Ph.D., Orlando Florida**

The overall authority of national leaders in almost all modern countries is based on the concept of separation of church and state, that is, the division between two groups of leaders who have either secular power or command religious authority. Sometimes, as in the case of the United Kingdom for example, the head of the state (King or Queen) is also the head of the (Anglican) church; however, they are only a titular or a figure head with no power or responsibility for the state's or the church's policy or action.

Islam, however, is an all-encompassing belief system that involves matters of human beings' relationship with Allah (ibadaat or religious practices) as well as their relationship with their fellow human beings (mu'amalaat or transactions). It follows, therefore, that there is integration between religious and civil matters in Islam so all divinely-appointed leaders have the responsibility to exercise what is referred to as "comprehensive authority."

## **Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)'s Comprehensive Authority**

The Prophet could not establish an ideal Islamic city-state in Mecca where his mission began. Two conditions are necessary for this to happen: (a) Territory, but Muslims in Mecca did not have any territory on account of the intense opposition of the Quraishites; (b) Authority, but to implement the Islamic Code of Laws political authority is necessary. It is only when the Prophet migrated to Medina that the requisite requirements for a state were met.

The Prophet proclaimed that sovereignty belongs to Allah (swt) alone. He is, therefore, the only law-giver so legislative authority resides with Him. The Prophet's duties in this regard were, first, to communicate and explain the laws and, next, exercise executive authority by administering them when breaches of the law were reported to him for adjudication. He also had juridical authority as he sat in judgment over the cases that were brought to him. Finally, he exercised military authority since the Quraish of Mecca were determined to undermine the Islamic city-state and launched a series of three battles to achieve their goal. However, while the Prophet retained the responsibility for making strategic military decisions, he consulted his companions on the tactics for the conduct of the battles. Prophet Muhammad thus wielded comprehensive authority in the city-state of Medina, 0-12 AH (622-632 CE), that in modern countries today is divided among three branches of government (legislative, executive and judiciary); strategic military initiatives is the prerogative of the political leader of the country as the Commander-in-Chief, while military tactics is the responsibility of the armed forces.

## **Bifurcation of Comprehensive Authority after the Prophet**

Shias maintain that the comprehensive authority of Prophet Muhammad was transmitted to the Imams as his rightful successors. Thus, unlike the case of the Sunnis where there was diffusion of the Prophet's authority over a period of time (political authority was held by the rulers, religious authority by the

'ulamah, juridical authority by the qadis and military authority by the amirs), in the case of the Shias there was continuation of that authority. However, immediately after the demise of the Prophet, political authority was seized by the self-appointed khulafah or caliphs. The Prophet's designated successor, Imam Ali (a), was thereafter able to exercise comprehensive authority for a short interval, 35-41 AH (656-661 CE), but he was constrained by three civil wars that he had to fight before he was assassinated. The secular authority was then assumed by the hereditary dynastic rulers.

During the early part of the first Umayyad dynasty, there were Alid revolts to overthrow the dynasty and if they had been successful, comprehensive authority would have been bestowed upon the rightful Imams. The failure coupled with the repressive measures adopted by the rulers against any opposition to their regime resulted in the Imams' emphasis on their religious role rather than their political function. This shift became evident with the imamah of Ja'far as-Sadiq (a), 114-148 AH (733—765 CE), and continued with the succeeding Imams.

Even as the Imams were obliged to accept the division of comprehensive authority into the two offices of political and religious authorities, they encouraged the dissemination of the Prophetic traditions to acquaint the people of the right of the Ahl-ul-Bayt (as) to lead the community and to show that their exclusion from political leadership did not mean that they were content with a purely religious role nor did it imply their tacit support of the government of the day. Indeed, they were totally committed to their struggle to regain control but only when the circumstances were favorable for their revolution to succeed and when they were sure of the support of a sufficient number of faithful followers to aid them in the revolution.

## **Background to a Feigned Offer of Heir Apparent**

During the reign of the second Abbasid dynasty, there was political rivalry between two sons of the well-known ruler, Harun

## Imam ar-Ridha's Supplication during the Prayer forgiving Thanks (Sala't al-Shukr)

Adapted from The life of Imam 'Ali Bin Musa al-Ridha'

Author: Baqir Shareef al-Qurashi

Publisher: Ansariyan Publications - Qum/Imam ar-Ridha's Knowledge

Sulayma'n b. Ja'far has narrated: "We visited Imam al-Ridha', peace be on him, while he was performing the prayer for giving thanks (sala't al-Shukr). He lengthened his prostration in prayer. Then he raised his head and we asked him about his long prostration. He told us that he prayed with the following supplication. He urged us to (supplicate) with it. Then he ordered us to write it, and we wrote it." The supplication is as follows:

"O Allah, curse those who altered Your religion, changed Your favor, accused Your Messenger (may Allah bless him and his Household), opposed Your religion, turned away from Your way, were ungrateful for Your boons, returned Your words to You, disdained Your Messenger, killed the (grand) son of Your Prophet, distorted Your Book, denied Your signs, sat in the assembly which was not appropriate for them, and which the people carried on the shoulders of the Household of Muhammad!

"O Allah, curse them with curses following each other, gather them and their followers blue-eyed in the Hell-fire!

"O Allah, we seek nearness to You through cursing them and renouncing them in this world and the next!

"O Allah, curse those who killed the Commander of the faithful and al-Husayn b. 'Ali and Fa'tima, daughter of Allah's Messenger, may Allah bless him and his Household.

"O Allah, increase them in chastisement to chastisement, humiliation to humiliation, abasement to abasement, and disgrace to disgrace!

"O Allah, drive them away to the Fire with violence and return them to Your painful chastisement with a return!

"O Allah, gather them and their followers in the Hell-fire in group! O Allah, divide their gathering; scatter their affair; make their words disagree with each other; disperse their unity; curse their Imams; kill their leaders, their masters, and their eldest ones; curse their heads; break their banners; spread terror among them; and leave not any dweller of them!

"O Allah, curse Abu' Jahl and al-Walid with curses following one another! O Allah curse them with a curse through which curse every angel brought nigh, every prophet sent out, and every believer whose heart You examine for faith! O Allah curse them with a curse from which the inhabitants of the Fire seek refuge, and which does not come into anyone's mind! O Allah, curse them in Your hidden secret and Your manifest openness, chastise them with a chastisement in the ordination, and let their partners be their followers and their lovers! Verily You hear supplication!"<sup>i</sup>

<sup>i</sup> Muhajj al-Da'awa't, p.320.

*A man's folly is demonstrated through three acts:  
Talking about matters that don't concern him  
Offering comments when not asked  
Interfering in other people's affairs without understanding  
He, who thinks he is the wisest, is the most foolish.  
A foolish man speaks without thinking; a wise man thinks before he speaks.  
Imam ar-Ridha (a)*

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al-Rashid. Al-Amin, the elder son, was born of an Arab wife and had the support of the Arab nobility. Al-Mamun, the younger son, was born of a Persian maid and had the backing of the Persian nobility. Harun decided to divide the kingdom between them. He gave al-Amin the khilafah and Iraq and the western provinces, and al-Mamun the governorship of Persia (Iran) and the eastern provinces and the right to succeed his brother.

When Harun died, al-Amin deposed his brother and nominated his son instead as his successor. Al-Mamun rose to defend his right and in the civil war that broke out, he emerged victorious and killed al-Amin. It is against this background – that is, in the division of the kingdom and the interest of the different parties in the conflict – that lay an explanation for the unusual insistence of al-Mamun that Imam Ali al-Ridha (a) become his heir apparent.

### **Motivation behind the Offer**

Al-Mamun had two short-term objectives in making the offer. One, he wished to please the Shia public opinion in Khurasan who had been tricked into helping him come to power and gain victory over al-Amin. Two, he sent a warning to the Abbasids who had gone back on their oath of allegiance to him (when he was deposed as a successor) that if they did not accept his authority, he could take the leadership out of their dynasty and hand it over back to the Prophet's family.

He had yet a third strategic objective. The principle of nass, explicit designation of a successor from the Prophet's family, had become established as the basis for political leadership. But the Abbasid had twisted the principle with their slogan of "al-Ridha min al-Muhammad (satisfaction from Muhammad)" as they sought to take advantage of its political potential (to gain support of the Shias) but escape from its political implication (to hand over authority to the Imams). After the Abbasid success, supporters of Ahl-ul-Bayt did not give up their political activity. Al-Mamun realized that he could not solve this ideological problem with a military solution and so opted for a political solution. As he saw it, the offer of heir apparent gave legitimacy to his leadership but postponed returning the right to the Imam of the Ahl-ul-Bayt. Further, he figured that it is unlikely that the transfer of leadership would ever occur since the Imam was 22 years older than himself.

Al-Mamun sent a police escort to Medina to bring Imam al-Ridha to Persia. The Imam left Medina without his family. Soon after he arrived, al-Mamun made the offer of heir apparent. The Imam understood his motives so he first refused the offer. But al-Mamun made a veiled threat and the Imam had to reluctantly accept. A meeting was held to declare Imam al-Ridha as heir apparent in 201 AH (817 CE). Al-Mamun's son was directed to take an oath of allegiance to the Imam, as did all the others who were present. During the celebrations, the Imam told one of his supporters, "Do not let this excite you ... for it would never come about." He knew that this was only a ruse.

### **Imam al-Ridha's Judicious Decision**

Imam al-Ridha's loyal supporters saw in the offer the potential

for the Aimmah to resume their exercise of comprehensive authority. The first question then is what would have happened if the Imam had refused. First, there was the threat of death but the Imam was not concerned about his own life, rather, he feared his supporters would be persecuted. Second, al-Mamun would have propagandized Imam's refusal to cause a division among his supporters, especially if al-Mamun then turned around and made the offer to a well-known Alid. The second question is what the Imam's objectives were when he did accept. One, it gave him the opportunity to interact with people of all religious faiths and, indeed, many learned discussions were held in which the Imam participated. Two, the Shia leadership was able to talk up the principle of nass and counter the misleading claims made by the rulers about their legitimacy to political power.

In accepting the offer, the Imam made it contingent upon a condition: "I shall not handle the administration, I shall, however, give counsel if I am consulted." Imam al-Ridha thus took the same position as had Imam Ali during the period of the khulafah. Had he participated in the administration, it would have been regarded as his recognition of that government and

*“... the Imams of the Ahl-ul-Bayt had for a long time maintained that the office of the Imamah was not contingent upon their investiture as a khalifah. ... rather, ... was simply held in abeyance ... until the rise of al-Qa'im al-Mahdi.”*

an endorsement of all its actions. But, as an advisor, he could distance himself from the government and yet protect the interests of Islam and of the Shias.

### **Vindication of Imam's Decision**

Imam al-Ridha's condition frustrated al-Mamun's plan whose success depended upon the Imam's involvement in political affairs so he could portray him as a political, worldly figure with whom deals could be made. The condition changed the Imam from being a partner of al-Mamun to being a witness against him. Having failed to achieve his strategic objective, the Imam's presence became a liability. Al-Mamun wished to win back the support of the Abbasids who had in the meantime chosen a rival leader. Moreover, al-Mamun had become jealous of the popularity that the Imam enjoyed. He therefore decided to poison him in just over a year following his appointment as heir apparent.

As previously mentioned, the Imams of the Ahl-ul-Bayt had for a long time maintained that the office of the imamah was not contingent upon their investiture as a khalifah. Rather, their right to exercise political authority was simply held in abeyance until conditions improved. This meant the postponement of the fusion of religious and political authority until the rise of al-Qa'im al-Mahdi mentioned in the Prophetic traditions, that is, the return from the occultation of the last Imam, Imam Muhammad al-Mahdi (a). He will establish a global community, under one God, one religion, one system of law and one ruler.

# WELCOME TO THE 16TH ANNUAL UMAA CONVENTION

Imam ar-Ridha' (a.s.) defines for us the Islamic theory as the rules which govern the actual dealings of man with his brother man from which we can achieve the inspiration that Islam abolishes the then class distinctions among individuals and groups in the areas of public rights and the safeguarding of man's dignity, and that the difference which we must recognize regarding these areas is the difference between one who obeys God and one who does not.

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He inherited the knowledge of his grandfather the Messenger of God (S), thus becoming its pioneering fountainhead that quenched the thirst of those who were thirsty for knowledge. History narrates a great deal of his scholarly stances and intellectual discourses in which he achieved victory over those who opposed the Divine Message, excelling in various branches of scholarship with which he provided the seekers of knowledge and the thinkers of the time.

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# Imam al-Ridā (a) and the Problem of the Exaggerators (*Ghulāt*)

Sheikh Abbas Jaffer, London, England

**M**uch has been written about Imam al-Ridā (a) and his statements about the disease of *ghuluww* (exaggeration, extremism) that plagued the Shi'a world from the earliest days. The term refers to the exaggeration of the status and merits and powers of the Imams (a) by some of their extremist followers. Although there was not a sect of the Shi'a explicitly known as *ghulāt*<sup>i</sup> at his time, most of the people who were later identified as *ghulāt* belonged to the *Khattābiyyah*<sup>ii</sup> sect, who were well known at the time of the Imam al-Ridā (a) for their extremist views. The *ghulāt* flourished in Iraq, mainly in Kufa, far from the Imam's (a) residence in Madina.

<sup>i</sup> Khoei, *Mu'jam Rijāl al-hadīth*, 17/319.

<sup>ii</sup> Khoei, *Mu'jam Rijāl al-hadīth*, 17/319.

Some of the more well-known *ghulāt* of the time were:

1. Muhammad b. Abī Zaynab al-Asadī, famously known as Abū al-Khattāb. He was a companion of Imam al-Sādiq (a) and was a link between the Shi'a and the Imam (a). However, with time, his beliefs deviated, and he began to make false claims. Initially, he told people that the Imam (a) had appointed him as his successor and had taught him the Greatest Name (ism al-azam) of God. After some time, he claimed to be a prophet and messenger of God who had been sent to guide mankind. On this basis, he altered the rulings of religion, making forbidden things permissible and announced that through him, God had lifted the burden of daily prayer, fasting, alms, etc. from the Muslims. He attributed divinity to Imam al-Sādiq (a), who disassociated from him and criticised him sharply, declaring him to be a disbeliever and a polytheist<sup>iii</sup>. In time, the corrupt beliefs of Abū al-Khattāb gave rise to a group of *ghulāt* known by his name, who persisted up to the time of Imam al-Askarī (a).
2. Yūnus b. Zaybān. He was a resident of Kufa. In the biographies of narrators (rijāl) he has been listed as a liar and a fabricator of narrations. It is said about him that when the daughter of Abū al-Khattāb died, he visited her grave and addressed her as, "O daughter of the messenger of God"<sup>iv</sup>, indicating that he considered Abū al-Khattāb to be a messenger of God. In addition, many heretical and pseudo-mystical narrations, falsely attributed to the Imams (a), have also been reported by him. When these reports reached Imam al-Ridā (a), he was angered by them and he cursed Yūnus and other exaggerators.
3. Muhammad b. Furāt. He was a dangerous and passionate fanatic, also a resident of Kufa. He was known to drink and used to attribute lies to the Imams (a). Imam al-Ridā (a) said about him, "no follower of the Khattābiyyah has spread as many outrageous lies about us as Muhammad b. Furāt."<sup>v</sup>
4. Muhammad b. Bashīr. He was a resident of Kufa and a companion of Imam al-Kāzīm (a), who disassociated himself from him because of his deviant beliefs and ideas, even saying, "O Allah! Grant me relief from this polluted and filthy man, Muhammad b. Bashīr!"<sup>vi</sup>
5. Muhammad Abū Jaffar al-Qarashī (known as Abū Samīnah). He was a companion of Imam al-Ridā (a). He had deviant beliefs and his reports are not considered to be reliable. He was branded a liar in Kufa and migrated to Qom, from where he was banished a short while later due to his heretical views by Ahmad b. Muhammad.<sup>vii</sup> He mainly transmitted reports that greatly exaggerated the merits and status of the Imams (a).

## The Main Ideas Circulated by the *Ghulāt* at the time of Imam al-Ridā (a)

Their deviation from mainstream Shi'ite ideology and belief centred on several unorthodox views:

1. Attributing Divinity of the Prophet (pbuh) and the Imams (a): After the martyrdom of Imam al-Kāzīm (a), Muhammad b. Bashīr claimed that the Imam (a) had been a Divine incarnation, whose light could be appreciated by people of illumination while those who were misguided would not see him, until gradually he disappeared from the sight of everyone, while he lived on amongst the people, unobserved.<sup>viii</sup>
2. Belief that the Imams (a), or other individuals were prophets: Muhammad b. Bashīr and Muhammad b. Furāt claimed that they were prophets at the time of Imam al-Ridā (a), while Yūnus b. Zaybān believed that Abū al-Khattāb was also a prophet.<sup>ix</sup>

<sup>v</sup> Māmākānī, *Tankīh al-Maqāl fī 'ilm al-rijāl*, 3/170.

<sup>vi</sup> Khoei, *Mu'jam Rijāl al-hadīth*, 17/319.

<sup>vii</sup> *Ibid*, 18/51.

<sup>viii</sup> Tūsī, *Ikhtiyār Ma'rifat al-rijāl*, 2/776.

<sup>ix</sup> *Shahrestānī, Al-Mīlāl wa al-Nihāl*, 1/156.

<sup>iii</sup> Kulaynī, *Furū' al-Kāfī*, 5/150.

<sup>iv</sup> Tūsī, *Ikhtiyār Ma'rifat al-rijāl*, 2/489.

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3. Belief in the in-dwelling or incarnation (*hulūl*) of the Divine in human beings: This was a core belief that all the *ghulāt* held in common. It referred to the existence of God in another being and united with him, in the sense that an action or word directed at one was the same as if it was directed at the other.

The exaggerator Yūnus b. 'Abd al-Rahmān was seeking validation of this baseless concept when he wrote to Imam al-Ridā (a), "Did something of the Divine essence detach and enter Adam (a) when He was created?" The Imam (a) replied, "anyone who holds that view is not on the religion of the Prophet (pbuh)."

4. Belief in reincarnation (*tanāsukh*): This was another view common to all the *ghulāt*, referring to the migration of a soul from one body to another after its death. For instance, the followers of Muhammad b. Bashīr believed the Imams (a) were a single soul that transferred from one Imam (a) to the next at his death.<sup>x</sup>
5. Belief in determinism (*jabr*) and anthropomorphism (*tashbīh*): *Jabr* is the belief that God compels humans to act in whatever way He chooses, while *tashbīh* is to attribute human characteristics and features, such as emo-

tions and physical limbs, etc., to God. From the content of various speeches of Imam al-Ridā (a) in rebuttal of this view, it becomes clear that this was the prevalent opinion amongst the *ghulāt*.<sup>xi</sup>

**“... Imam al-Riḍā (a) explained, “God, the Almighty, delegated the matter of religious guidance to the Prophet (pbuh), saying, “And whatever the Prophet gives you, take it, and whatever he forbids you, abstain from it.”**

**Quran 59:7**

6. Belief in complete free will (*tafwīd*): *Tafwīd* means complete delegation of a task to someone else and allowing them free rein to act as they see fit. In one sense the view of man's free will is correct, but the *ghulāt* extended its meaning to a point that drew the censure of the Imams (a). The word has been used in Islamic traditions in several meanings, some of which have been endorsed by the Imams (a), while others rejected. For example, in a response to a query about the scope of *tafwīd* by his attendant, Yāsir, the client of Hamza b. al-Yas', Imam al-Ridā (a) explained, "God, the Almighty, delegated the matter of religious guidance to the Prophet (pbuh), saying, "And whatever the Prophet gives you, take it, and

<sup>x</sup> *Ash'arī Qummī, Al-Rad 'ala al-Ghulāt, p. 92.*

<sup>xi</sup> *Majlisī, Biḥār al-Anwār, 25/266.*



whatever he forbids you, abstain from it.”<sup>xii</sup> However, He did not delegate the matter of creation and sustenance and death to him, and He has no partner in this. Then the Imam quoted, “God is the One who created you, then provided for you, then will cause you to die, and then will give you life. Is there any of your partners who do anything of that? Exalted is He above what they associate with Him.”<sup>xiii</sup> Here, the Imam (a) alludes to two meanings of *tafwid*, one acceptable, and the other not.

The meaning of *tafwid* that the *ghulāt* espoused was that God, after creating the Prophet (pbuh) and the Imams (a), delegated all the requirements of mankind to them. Such people were called the delegators (*mufawwida*), and their stance was decisively rejected by the Imam (a), who described it calling it nothing short of polytheism (*shirk*), in many conversations and letters.

The *mufawwida* were a group amongst the Shi’a who first made an appearance at the time of Imam al-Sādiq (a), believing that while the Prophet (pbuh) and the Imams (a) did not have a divine aspect, nonetheless they had been delegated to perform God’s tasks on His behalf during their lifetime. They believed that God’s power was absolute, while the Imam’s (a) power was dependant on Him. The heretic *ghulāt*, however, then expanded this idea to the extent that they claimed that the Prophet (pbuh) and the Imam (a) were divine also, and their powers were not dependent on God.

7. Belief that the tenets and commands of religion were not compulsory for those who were enlightened. The *ghulāt* considered most of the ordinances of religion to be permitted (*mubāh*) rather than obligatory; for example, the Bashīriyya considered only the daily prayers and fasting to be obligatory, and they did not perform the *Haj* or give *zakāt*. They also took liberties with forbidden acts.<sup>xiv</sup>

### The Legacy of the Ghulāt

With their confused and deviant ideas, the *ghulāt* engaged in many activities that left a lasting problem for the Shi’as. Some of them were:

1. Fabrication of reports. This was one of their most damaging legacies. They had no qualms about fabricating reports and ascribing them to the Imams (a) to justify their position. For example, Yūnus b. ‘Abd al-Rahmān reports that he presented a book of narrations to Imam al-Ridā (a) for review, and the Imam (a) rejected most of them as untrue and informed him that they had been fabricated by Abū al-Khattāb and his followers.<sup>xv</sup> There are many reports of the condemnation of Imam al-Ridā (a) of such narrations.
2. Sorcery and occult practices. To convince people of their claims, many of the *ghulāt* displayed powers that were rooted in occult practices and the gullible amongst their followers took these displays to be proof of the false claims.
3. Diluting the obligatory commands and prohibitions of religion. They would use their influence to trivialize the

religious ordinances and this attracted many people of weak faith to them. They used such people to serve them and spread their deviant ideas.

In the main, it appears that the activities of the *ghulāt* were directed at self-serving goals. They wanted fame, prestige and power for themselves, and did so by making grand claims to their gullible and isolated audiences. In effect, they were the forerunners of modern day cults.

In the process, they accumulated great personal wealth and lived comfortably, surrounded by sycophants who fervently believed that their leader was a great savant.

They took advantage of events to further their own agenda. For example, the Bashīriyya refused to acknowledge the authority of Imam al-Ridā (a), claiming that Imam al-Kāzim (a) had not died but was the promised Mahdi and was in occultation. In the meantime, Muhammad b. Bashīr declared himself as the representative and agent of Imam al-Kāzim (a).<sup>xvi</sup>

### The response of Imam al-Ridā (a) to the Ghulāt

The danger of the ideology and deviant ideas of the *ghulāt* to the foundation of Shi’ism was acknowledged by the Imams (a), who used every opportunity to try to guide their followers and warn others of their heresy.

Imam al-Ridā (a) answered the *ghulāt* extensively while he was in Madina and gave great attention to countering their efforts when he moved to Marv. Ma’mūn arranged sessions in his court where the Imam (a) debated with the *ghulāt* as well. His responses over the years can be summarized in the following actions:

1. Encouraging the Shi’a to engage in dialogue with the *ghulāt* and guiding them about the issues they should raise in debate. For example, he said, “They have minimized the greatness of God with their assertions.”<sup>xvii</sup>, raising the point that by ascribing the role of God to human beings they have committed *shirk*.
2. The Imam (a) would engage in debates about the correct nature of *tawhīd* and has left behind wonderful discourses separating the false notions about God from His true qualities.
3. The Imams (a) in general cautioned parents to stop impressionable youth from attending the sessions of the *ghulāt*, who weaved their deviant ideas in compelling ways that attracted young and inexperienced followers to them. Imam al-Sādiq (a) said, “Beware of the *ghulāt* who would inculcate deviant ideologies in your youth.”<sup>xviii</sup> Imam al-Ridā (a) also wanted people to stay away from the *ghulāt*. For instance, in his advice to Yūnus b. ‘Abd al-Rahmān mentioned earlier, the Imam (a) ended by saying, “O Yūnus, I have said all this to you only so that you can warn our followers to stay away from him (Muhammad b. Furāt) and curse him and openly disassociate themselves from him.”<sup>xix</sup>

Another reason for the Imam’s (a) concern was the poor

<sup>xii</sup> Q 59:7.

<sup>xiii</sup> Q 30:40.

<sup>xiv</sup> Ash’arī Qummī, *Al-Rad ‘ala al-Ghulāt*, p. 92.

<sup>xv</sup> Tūsī, *Ikhtiyār Ma’rifat al-rijāl*, 2/489-91.

<sup>xvi</sup> Nawbakhtī, *Firaq al-Shi’a*, p. 83.

<sup>xvii</sup> Majlisī, *Bihār al-Anwār*, 25/256.

<sup>xviii</sup> *Ibid*, p. 239.

<sup>xix</sup> Ṭabarsī, *al-Ihtijāj*, 2/199.

impression in the minds of the people about the Shi'a resulting from the extreme positions of the *ghulāt* about the Shi'a creed and about the status of the Imams (a). The general population of Muslims began to call the Shi'a heretics and disbelievers, due to the prevailing misunderstanding of the actual Shi'a creed. The Imam (a) commented, "Three groups have spoken ill of us: 1) the *ghulāt*, by exaggerating our status, 2) those who would ignore our legitimate authority to direct the affairs of the believers, and 3) our enemies, who lose no opportunity to cause discord...to an extent that whenever our Shi'as are mentioned they call them disbelievers (*kāfir*s)." In another report he said, "except that they liken them to the Jews or the Magians."<sup>xx</sup>

4. The Imam (a) made clear to the Shi'a where the boundaries of exaggeration (*ghuluww*) lay, so that they could recognise fact from extremism. This was invaluable advice for his followers at his time as well as later. In various discourses, he identified *ghuluww* as: 1) belief in determinism (*jabr*) and anthropomorphism (*tashbih*), which he asserted had been falsely attributed to the Imams (a)<sup>xxi</sup>; 2) attributing divinity to any of the Imams (a), saying that such a person was out of the pale of Islam, let alone Shi'ism<sup>xxii</sup>. When he heard what some people were saying about the divinity of Imam Ali (a), Imam al-Ridā's (a) began to tremble and perspiration broke out on his brow and he said, "Glory to be God Who is far above what the oppressors and disbelievers say about Him!"<sup>xxiii</sup>; 3) belief that the Imams (a) sustained creation. In one of his supplications, Imam al-Ridā (a) said, "O Allah! We disassociate ourselves from those who believe us to be their lords (*arbāb*) and those who believe that creation and sustenance has been delegated to us. O Allah! We have never called them to this, so do not take us to task for what they say..."<sup>xxiv</sup>
5. Presenting the correct belief ('*aqīda*) to the Shi'as. In rebutting the notion that Imam Ali (a) was divine, Imam al-Ridā (a) said, "Glory be to God, Who is far above what the oppressors and disbelievers claim. Did Ali (a) not eat and drink as others ate and drank, and marry as others married? Did he not pray and supplicate with great reverence and humility? Can someone who behaves in this way be called Almighty God? If that was the case, then each of you could also claim divinity, because you share in the actions of Ali (a)."<sup>xxv</sup>

In his supplications, the Imam (a) explained further the great position of God. He would say with great humility and servitude, "O Allah! All strength and power and authority belong to You and we can only act through Your permission. I seek refuge in You from those who would say about us which we have no right to claim... Indeed, all creation and sustenance is in Your hands, and befits only You... We are merely Your bondsmen, sons of Your bondsmen. You are the Owner of life and death and resurrection..."<sup>xxvi</sup>

When asked about the report attributed to Imam al-

Sādiq (a), "There is no determinism (*jabr*) and no absolute delegation (*tafwīd*), rather it is a position between the two (al-amr bayn al-amrayn)"; Imam al-Ridā (a) explained, "whoever believes that God compels mankind to act and then punishes them for it has accepted *jabr*, while whoever believes that God has delegated the matter of creation and sustenance to the Prophet (S) and the Imams (A) has fallen into the trap of *tafwīd*... And the one who believes in *jabr* is a disbeliever (*kāfir*) and the one who believes in *tafwīd* is a polytheist (*mushrik*)". When asked about the middle position, the Imam (a) replied, "it means that the way is open for a person to obey the commands of God through his own free will."<sup>xxvii</sup>

6. Declaring some reports attributed to the Imams (a) as false and concocted. Many times Imam al-Ridā would ask what the people were saying and then inform the person that it was no more than lies ascribed to him and illustrious forefathers (a). He advised him to compare all reports to the Qur'an in the first instance and reject those that were contrary to the word of God.<sup>xxviii</sup>

The efforts of the Imam (a) resulted in a great reduction of the influence of the *ghulāt* and identified clearly the correct from the distorted belief. The disease of the *ghulāt* has not vanished entirely from the Shi'a world, but the guidance of the Imam (a) stands as an invaluable resource to protect every objective person from deviation.

<sup>xxvii</sup> Ibid, p. 232.

<sup>xxviii</sup> Tūsī, *Ikhtiyār Ma'rīfat al-rijāl*, 2/489-91.

## The Sahifa of al-Ridha'

Among the works of Imam al-Ridha' (a), is this excellent dissertation called *Sahifat al-Ridha'*; a group of narrators has called it *Musnad al-Imam al-Ridha'*, and this name is closer to the composition of the dissertation, for it contains the traditions which Imam al-Ridha' has narrated on the authority of his grandfather, may Allah bless him and his family, and on the authority of his pure fathers, peace be on them. A group of researchers has stated that this dissertation is one of the works of Imam al-Ridha', peace be on him. <sup>i</sup>

Any how, this dissertation is among the treasures of Prophet and of the members of the House (Ahl al-Bayt), peace be on them, and of the Imams; it has reached the top of honor and glory in the chain of authorities, as Dr. Husayn 'Ali Mahfu'z said. <sup>ii</sup>

<sup>i</sup> Kashf al-Zinū'n, vol. 2, p. 1076. Hida'yat al-'Arifin, vol. 1, p. 668. Mu'jam al-Mu'allifin, vol. 7, p. 250. Al-Dhari'a, vol. 15, pp. 17-18. Kashf al-Hujub wa al-Asta'r, pp. 366-367. Al-Biha'r, vol. 1, p. 11. Mustadrak al-Wasa'ii, vol. 3, p. 344. Al-Naja'shi, p. 159. Al-'Ama'li, al-Tawhid, al-'Uyu'n, and others.

<sup>ii</sup> Sahifat al-Ridha', p. 2.

<sup>xx</sup> Saduq, 'Uyūn Akhbār al-Ridā (A), 1/218.

<sup>xxi</sup> Ibid, p. 219.

<sup>xxii</sup> Tabarsī, al-Ihtijāj, 2/244.

<sup>xxiii</sup> Saduq, al-'Itqādāt, 9. 100.

<sup>xxiv</sup> Tabarsī, al-Ihtijāj, 2/245.

<sup>xxv</sup> Majlisī, Bihār al-Anwār, 25/276-8.

<sup>xxvi</sup> Tabarsī, al-Ihtijāj, 2/245.

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# Kid's Corner - Imam Ar-Ridha (a)

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Imam Ar-Ridha (a), the eighth Imam was born on Thursday 11th Dhul Qa'adah 148 AH / 29 December 765 AD in Madinah. Imam was named Ali by his holy father, Imam Musa al-Kazim (a), the seventh Imam. He was divinely entitled "Ridha" and his nickname was Abul Hasan.

After to the martyrdom of his father in Baghdad, on the 25th of Rajab 183 AH / 1 September, 799 AD. in the prison of Abbasid caliph, Harun-al-Rashid, the Imam attained the position of Imam, at the age of thirty five years old.

## Imam-e- Zaamin(a) - Guarantor

Imam Ali ibne Musa ar-Ridha (a) is also called as Imam-e-Zaamin (a). When Muslims go on journeys they take with them something called "Imam-e-Zaamin" [another name for Imam ar-Ridha (a)] which is some money tied in a cloth. This tradition probably came from the time of Imam ar-Ridha (a) when people used to carry money with them especially because it had Holy Imam's (a) name on it. As Ma'mun, the Abbasid caliph the contemporary of Imam ar-Ridha (a), had coins minted with the name of Imam ar-Ridha (a) on them, it was very easy for the Muslims to carry the name of Holy Imam (a) with them, especially when they went on journeys.

**Zaamin** means "The Guarantor". One day when Imam Ridha (a) was on his journey from Madinah to Marw (Khurasan); and while in a jungle the Holy Imam (a) came across a hunter who was about to kill a deer. The deer was trying to get away and when she saw Holy Imam (a), and she said something to him.

The Imam (a) asked the hunter to free the deer so that she could go and feed her little ones who were very hungry. Imam ar-Ridha (a) also told the hunter that once the deer had fed her babies she would come back. The hunter allowed the deer to go because Holy Imam (a) had told him to, but he did not think the deer would come back. However, the Imam (a) waited with the hunter. The deer returned with her young ones. The hunter was amazed on witnessing this miraculous event and he set the deer free as a mark of respect for Imam ar-Ridha (a).

## The Holy Imam's (a) scholarly discourses

Ma'mun often managed sessions of debates to be held in his own royal palace and celebrated scholars of various religions were invited there to exchange and discuss their different views on religious issues, Imam ar-Ridha (a) was always victorious in all those debates and soon his opponents recognized the scientific status of His Holiness.

Imam ar-Ridha (a) directed Muslims to the right path and removed deviated views of the antagonists who endeavoured to distort Islam. In this way the Holy Imam (a) safeguarded and propagated the principles of Islam.

## The Golden Dissertation in Medicine

The Most Precious Islamic Legacy in the Science of Medicine: Among such books written by Imam ar-Ridha (a) is *Al-Risala al-Dahabiyya fil Tibb* (the Golden Dissertation in Medicine) for which sources are counted reaching sometimes to Muhammad ibn Jumhoor, and sometimes to al-Hassan ibn Muhammad al-Nawfali who was accepted as trustworthy by al-Najjashi who described him

as "highly esteemed and trustworthy; he narrated one text about Imam ar-Ridha (a)," which could be "the golden dissertation in medicine".

## The Holy Imam's (a.) Martyrdom

The vicious Caliph was scared of the ever-increasing Holy Imam's (a) popularity. Thus he decided to eliminate the Holy Imam (a). In 203 AH/ 818 AD, Ma'mun first imprisoned Imam ar-Ridha (a) in Sarakhs. Then the Imam (a) was taken to Sanabad and confined in the palace of Humaid bin Qahtabah. During the morning of the last day of the month of Safar 203 AH/ 818 AD, the Holy Imam (a) was poisoned by Ma'mun in that palace. The Holy Imam (a) was buried in the solitude of night at the same place of the palace which the Imam (a) had prophesied during his first visit to Humayd bin Qahtaba's palace in 201 AH / 817 AD

*On his historical Migration, Imam ar-Ridha (a) arrived in Tūs and stayed in the house of Humayd b. Qahtaba, which was a big garden where Hārūn's grave, was located. That was the place where the Imam had frequently talked about and informed about his being buried there. When the Imam (a) entered the house, he went by the grave of Hārūn, drew a line on one side of the grave, and said, "This is the place of my tomb; I will be buried here and soon Allāh will cause this place to be frequented by my followers (Shī'as) and friends. By God, if a Shī'a pays a pilgrimage to me and sends greeting upon me, they will certainly benefit from our – the Ahl al-Bayt's – intercession and the mercy and forgiveness by Allāh."*

## Mashhad :The Land of Miracles

Once a small village called Sanabad soon transformed into a great metropolis by the presence of the holy shrine of Imam ar-Ridha (a) called as Mashhad ar-Ridha (tomb sanctuary of Imam ar-Ridha (a)), also briefly called Mashhad which is also one of the most extensively visited pilgrimage centers in the world. Miracles regularly occur at the holy shrine of Imam ar-Ridha (a) and hence the holy city of Mashhad is also famous as "*The Land of Miracles*"

## Imam Al Ibn Musa Ar Reza(as) sayings

Doing six things without doing the other six things is selfmockery.

- Asking forgiveness from Allah verbally without repenting with the heart.
- Asking for Allah's help without undertaking any effort
- Making a firm resolution to do something without taking due precautions.
- Beseeking deliverance from hell fire without refraining from lusts.
- Asking Allah for paradise without enduring related hardships.
- Remembering Allah without anticipating to encounter him.

Imam Raza (AS) also said:

- Nothing will weigh more heavier in the mizan than the good morals.
- Listening to Music is one of the major sins
- Meet one another so that affection may increase

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## The Excellence

Many traditions ensured by many lines of transmission have been mentioned regarding the visitation to Imam`ar-Ridha (a). The following are some of them:

Ja`bir b. Yazid al-Ju`fi has narrated, saying: [I heard the testamentary trustee of the testamentary trustees and inheritor of the knowledge of the prophets, Abu` Ja`far Mohammed b. `Ali b. al-Husayn b. `Ali b. Abu` Ta`lib, (a), say: The master of the worshippers `Ali b. al-Husayn related to me on the authority of the master of martyrs al-Husayn b. `Ali on the authority of the master of the testamentary trustees, the Commander of the faithful `Ali b. Abu` Ta`lib, (a), who said: Allah's Messenger, may Allah bless him and his family, said:

"A piece of me will be buried in the land of Khurasan`. If a distressed person visits it, Allah will remove his distress; if a sinful one (visits it),

258).

Mohammed b. `Amma`ra has narrated on the authority of his father, on the authority of Imam`al-Sa`diq, (a), on the authority of his fore-fathers, on the authority of Ima`m (`Ali), the Commander of the faithful (a), who said: Allah's Messenger, (pbuh) and his family, said:]"

A piece of me will be buried in the land of Khurasan`. If a believer visits it, Allah, the Great and Almighty, will make the Paradise obligatory to him, and his body will be prevented from (touching) the Fire. (Uyun Akbar al-Reza, vol. 2, p.255).

*Other traditions have been transmitted from the Ima`ms of guidance; they urge men to visit the Shrine of Imam Ridha (a), and mention an increasing reward for those who visit it.*

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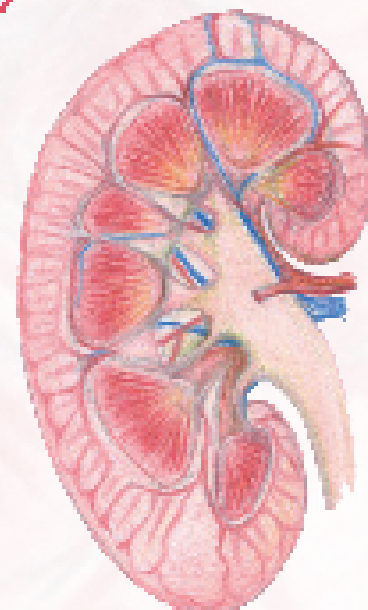
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And among His signs is this, that He created for you mates from among yourselves, that ye may dwell in tranquility with them, and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts): verily in that are signs for those who reflect.

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**2:00 pm - 4:00 pm**  
Open to candidates and parents

**Sunday, July 29th, 2018**  
**10:00 am - 1:00 pm**  
Candidate discussions  
and individual introductions  
Open to candidates only

*Matrimonial Contacts*  
*Sr. Parveen Kazmi*

UMAAMATRIMONIAL@GMAIL.COM

# Pii

Pharmaceuticals International, Inc.



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