



IMAM REDĀ [A.S.]

امام الرضا (ع)

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 3

Imam al-Reḍā (as)

Imam al-Reḍā (as) is the eighth divinely appointed Imam and successor of the Holy Prophet. In previous years, we have learnt about his great personality and his virtues, and now we will look deeper into his beautiful life.

THE EIGHTH IMAM

- Imam 'Ali ibn Mūsā al-Reḍā
- The son of Imam Mūsā al-Kāḍim (as) and Lady Najmah
- Born in the holy city of Medina on the 11th Dhul Qa'dah 148 AH
- He lived on this earth for 55 years, and became Imam during the 20th year of his life after his father was martyred



THE PRINCE OF MASHHAD

During the time of Imam al-Reḍā (as), a big change occurred in the Muslim world. Hārūn al-Rashid, the tyrant Caliph from the Abbasid family died and was eventually replaced by his son al-Ma'mūn.

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Be introduced to Imam al-Reḍā (as) and learn some biographical facts about him
- Discuss the name al-Reḍā, and its meaning
- Discuss some of the miracles of the Imam (as)

Al-Ma'mūn was a very cunning man who tried to confuse people by seeming religious and by making himself seem close to the Imam. In fact, he went so far as to make Imam al-Reḍā (as) the heir who would inherit the leadership after him. The Imam (as) of course refused, but al-Ma'mūn forced him into this, and the Imam (as) became the King's heir.

AL-REDĀ – THE PLEASURE

Our eighth Imam was given the title of al-Reḍā (as) by Allah through his father. This was due to him always being pleased by Allah, always pleasing Allah, and because everyone, even his enemies, were pleased with him.

The son of Imam Redha (as), Imam al-Jawād (as) later explained this title, saying:

"Verily Allah, the blessed and most high, named him al-Reḍā (as), for he was the pleasure of Allah, The Exalted, The Great, in His Heaven, of his Messenger, and of the Imams, the blessings of Allah be upon them, after him."

Al-Bazaṅṭi asked Imam al-Jawād (as): "Weren't all your past forefathers, peace be on them, the pleasure of Allah (Reḍā Allah), the Exalted, the Great, of His Messenger, and of the Imams after him?"

"Yes," replied Imam al-Jawād, before explaining that his father specifically received this title:

"Because both his opposing enemies and obedient supporters were pleased with him, while this did not happen to any of his fathers, so only he was called al-Reḍā."

THE MOST PIOUS

After taking power, al-Ma'mūn ordered that Imam al-Reḍā (as) leave Medinah and come to live in Iran, close to the king. He did this so that he could keep a close eye on the Imam (as). Al-Ma'mūn ordered a particular minister of his to escort the Imam (as) to Iran. This man, who spent time observing the Imam finally said:

"By God! I never saw anyone more pious than him nor more remembering of God at all times nor more fearful of God, the Exalted. People approached him whenever they knew he was present in their area, asking him questions regarding their faith and its aspects, and he would answer them and narrate a great deal of hadith

from his father who quoted his forefathers till 'Ali (as) who quoted the Messenger of God (saw). When I arrived at al-Ma'mūn's court, the latter asked me about his behaviour during the trip and I told him what I observed about him during the night and during the day, while riding and while halting; so, he said: 'Yes... This is the best man on the face of earth, the most learned, and the most pious."

HIS NOBLE MANNERS

One of the companions of the Imam (as) is quoted as saying:

"I never saw Imam al-Reḍā (as) angering anyone by something he said, nor did I ever see him interrupting anyone, nor refusing to do someone a favour he was able to do, nor did he ever stretch his legs before an audience, nor leaned upon something while his companion did not, nor did he ever call any of his servants or attendants a bad name, nor did I ever see him spit or burst into laughter; rather, his laughter was just a smile. When he was ready to eat and he sat to be served, he seated with him all his attendants, including the doorman..."

Class Activity

Discuss at least three of the above actions described about the Imam (as) by his companion. Discuss why these are good things that we should also try to do.

MIRACLES OF AL-REDĀ (AS)

One of the miracles of the Imam (as) was that he spoke all the languages of the world. Whenever anyone came to him from anywhere in the world the Imam (as) would speak to them and answer their questions in their own language.

The Imam (as) was also given knowledge of the future by Allah (SWT). For example, the Imam (as) knew that he was going to be forced to leave Medina and that he would live and die in Mash-had well before anything of the sort happened.

HIS MARTYRDOM

Imam al-Reḍā (as) was eventually poisoned by al-Ma'mūn, on the 30th of Ṣafar 20 (AH) in the city of Mashhad, Iran. His beautiful shrine stands there today and millions of Shi'ah from all over the world go there to visit the shrine every year.

BRIEF SAYINGS OF THE IMAM

“Cleanliness is from the morality and character of Prophets.”

(BIHAR UL ANWAR VOL 78, P 335)

“The weapon of the Prophets is essential for you. When asked “What is the weapon of the Prophets”, he said “supplication!”

(USOOL AL KAFI, VOL 1, P 468)

Review Questions

Q1. Imam al-Reḍā (as) was the son of:

- Imam Ali & Lady Fatima (as)
- Imam Mūsā al-Kāḍim (as) and Lady Najmah
- Imam Husayn (as) & Lady Shahrbanu

Q2. Imam al-Reḍā (as) is our:

- 4th Imam
- 6th Imam
- 8th Imam

Q3. His title al-Reḍā (as) was given to him because:

- He always pleased God and was always pleased with God.
- People, including his enemies, were pleased with him.
- Both (a) and (b)

Q4. Imam al-Reḍā (as) was martyred and is buried in:

- Mecca
- Medina
- Mashhad

References:

eHawza Ahlul Bayt course, Imam Redha
<http://www.al-islam.org/al-Redha/>
http://en.rafed.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&id=176:the-life-of-imam-ridha&Itemid=965&layout=default