

A SPECIAL BIRTH

Imam Ali al-Ridhā (a) was born on 11th of Dhulq'adah, 148 AH in Madinah. His father was Imam Mūsā al-Kāzim (a) and his mother was Bibi Najma.

When Imam Mūsā al-Kāzim saw his son, he said, "O Najma! Blessed are you for the miraculous gift Allah granted you." Then, he recited Adhan into his right ear and Iqama into his left ear; He asked for some Euphrates water and touched the baby's palate with it (for blessing). The new-born child was named **Ali** by his holy father and he was **divinely** entitled **Ridhā**. After the birth, Imam al-Kāzim gave Bibi Najma the title **Tāhira**, meaning pure.

Imam al-Ridhā was born **one month** after the death of his grandfather, Imam Ja'far al-Sādiq (a). He was brought up in Madinah under the care and direction of his father.

The Imam was known for his **excellent social conduct**. He would give **charity** in the dark of the night. He would never speak harshly, interrupt someone talking, or reject someone who had a request. He was respectful and not even stretch his feet or lean on a support when others were present. He never laughed loud, rather he smiled. Before eating he would take a bowl and pick out the best part of the meal to put it in the bowl. He would then give the bowl to the **poor**. His **social conduct** showed his **noble and gentle personality**.

Food for Thought:

Which of the Imam's characteristics would you like to follow?



AL-RIDHĀ

One of the Imam's most famous title is al-Ridhā. Al-Bizantī, a companion of the Imam once asked his son about his title.

Imam Muhammad al-Taqi: Verily Allah, ... named him al-Ridhā, for he was the pleasure of Allah, of His Messenger, and of the Imams, ... after him.

Al-Bizantī: "Were not all your past forefathers the pleasure of Allah, of His Messenger, and of the Imams after him?"

Imam Muhammad al-Taqi: Yes.

Al-Bizantī: Why has only your father been named al-Ridhā?

Imam Muhammad al-Taqi: Because both his enemies and supporters were pleased with him. This did not happen to any of his forefathers so only he was called al-Ridhā.

Imam al-Ridhā's moral, social, and intellectual qualities were such that besides his followers and companions, even his enemies were in awe of him.

HIS PRAYERS

Imam al-Ridhā gave **great importance** to **praying on time** as it is the **sign of a believer's love for Allah**.

One day, Imam al-Ridhā set out on a journey with his companion Ibrāhīm b. Mūsā to meet some other companions. Ibrāhīm narrates that on their way it was time for salah. The Imam told him to give the call to prayer (Adhan).

Ibrahim: Let us wait for the companions to join us.

Imam: It is not a good idea to postpone prayer for no valid reason. You should always try your best to pray right on time.

Love for Allah filled the Imam's heart. He was obedient to Allah and loved to worship Him. He would often stand up in worship at night when everyone else was sleeping. He spent a great amount of time in supplication during his personal prayer (Qunūt).

Although Qunūt is optional (mustahab) in prayer, the Imam emphasized its importance. He said:

Qunūt is an obligatory sunnah in all the daily prayers.

To prolong the Qunūt is recommended. Abu Dhar asked Prophet Muhammad: Which prayer is better? The Prophet replied:

The prayer whose Qunūt is longer. Anyone who lengthens his Qunūt will have comfort on the Day of Resurrection.

Food for thought:

What are some Du'ās you recite in Qunūt?



IN TRANSIT

Along the way, Imam al-Ridhā was received by people in every city with great honor and respect. People hurried to greet him, to get the blessing of kissing his hands, and to serve him. They asked the Imam questions they had about Islam and he answered everyone. This journey was an opportunity for the Muslims to see one of the Imams in person!

From Basra, the Imam crossed over the Shatt-al-Arab and reached the Persian soil heading towards the town of Qum. Imam spent the month of Muharram in Qum where he established the rituals of Majalis to commemorate the martyrdom of Imam al-Husayn.

After spending the Month of Muharram in Qum, the Imam proceeded towards the northern part of Persia crossing the Alburz mountains to the town of Marv.

Many stories are recorded of the Imam meeting people along the way and blessing them. He was so intimate with the **Qur'an** that all his sayings and replies to people's questions were of a Quranic nature. He would **prostrate** after his morning prayers and stay in prostration until sunrise. He would perform a 1,000 rak'as of prayers in his free time. He would **fast** a lot, never neglecting the 3-days-a-month fasting. He would recite **salawat** often in his prayers and at other times.

During his long journey, Imam reached an area close to Mashhad. An impression of his feet were left there and it is now called "Qadamgah". Pilgrims visiting his shrine in Mashhad also visit Qadamgah.