(The Birth of Imam Redha (A.S

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When Imam Reza, peace be on him, was born, the earth shined; waves of delight and happiness spread through the Household of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his Household. As for Imam al-Kazim, he received with more delight the news of the birth of his blessed baby, so he hurried to his wife and congratulated her on her baby, saying: "I congratulate you, Najma. It is a mark of nobility for you from your Lord!"

Imam al-Kazim took his blessed baby, folded it with a white piece of cloth, and performed the religious rites for it. He said the adhan in its right ear, said the iqama in its left ear, called for sweet water and rubbed its lower jaw with it, and then he returned it to its mother and said to her: "Take it, for it is the rest (baqiyat) of Allah on His earth.[1]"

The first picture which the Prophet's grandson (Imam Reza, peace be on him) saw in the world of existence was that of his father, the Imam of the Allah-fearing and leader of the monotheists; and the first voice which he heard was:

"Allah is Great!"

"There is no god but Allah!" These brilliant words are the secret of existence and song of the Allah-fearing.

Imam al-Kazim, peace be on him, named his blessed baby with the name of his grandfather Imam 'Ali, the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, that he might get blessing seek good omen in this name, which stood for the greatest personality created in the world of Islam and had all good qualities of the world.

His Nicknames

Imam Reza, peace be on him, was given a group of noble nicknames. Each nickname represented one of his noble qualities. The following are some of them:

1. Reza

The historians and narrators have differed over the person who gave this exalted nick-name to the Imam, peace be on him, to the extent that it has prevailed him and become a name through which he is recognized. The following are some of the statements:

A. Al-Ma'mun

A group of the historians has maintained that it was al-Ma'mun who gave him this nick-name to him[2], for he was satisfied with him and appointed him as his successor.[3]Imam al-Jawad, peace be on him,refuted this statement before a group of his companions, saying: "Verily Allah, the Blessed and Most High, named him Reza, 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-Bizanti asked him: "Weren't all your past forefathers, peace be on them, the pleasure of Allah (reza al-Allah), the Exalted, the Great, of His Messenger, and of the Imams after him?"

"Yes," replied Imam al-Jawad.

"Why has only your father been named Reza?" al-Bizanti asked. "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 Reza.[4] "

B. Imam Musa

Some narrators believe that it was Imam Musa al-Kazim, peace be on him, who gave this nick-name to his son. Sulayman b. Hafs reported: "Imam Musa b. Ja'far named his son 'Ali Reza. He would say: 'Summon to me my son Reza.' I asked him: 'To my son belongs pleasure (Reza).' He answered: 'My son is Reza.' When he addressed him, he said: 'O Abu al-Hasan.'[5]"

These are some statements about giving him this noble nick-name. Ahmed al-Bizanti gave the reason for giving this nick-name to him, saying: "He was given the nick-name of Reza because he is the good pleasure of Allah, the Most Exalted, in His heaven, the pleasure of His Messenger, and of the Imams after him on His earth.[6]"

2. Al-Sabir [7]

He was given the nick-name of al-Sabir (the patient) because he was patient toward the troubles and misfortunes caused to him by his opponents and enemies.

3. Al-Zaki [8]

Imam 'Ali b. Musa Reza, peace be on him, was pure, noble, and honorable.

4. Al-Wafi [9]

As for loyalty, it was one of the Imam's qualities, for he was loyal to his community and homeland.

5. Sirajj Allah [10]

The Imam was the Siraj of Allah (the Lamp of Allah). He guided the misled and the perplexed (to the right path).

6. Qurrat ‘Ayn al-Mu’minïn [11]

Among his noble nick-names is Qurrat ‘Ayn al-Mu’minïn (the delight of the eye of the believers), for he was their ornament, their pride, their cave, and their stronghold.

7. Makkyadat al-Mulhidïn [12]

He was given the nickname of Makkyadat al-Mulhidïn (the stratagem of the unbelievers), for nullified their vague errors and refuted their imaginations. This was through his debates which were held in the ‘Abbasid palace, and with which he established the originality of Islamic principles and values.

8. Al-Siddïq [13]

He was given the nick-name of Al-Siddïq (the very truthful one), for he was like Yusuf (Joseph), who ruled Egypt. He led Islamic world and had an absolute leadership over it.

9. Al-Fadil[14]

He was given the nickname of al-Fadil or the most meritorious one, for he was the most meritorious and perfect of all the people of his time. These are some of the noble nicknames which were given to him; they display his exalted character and great importance.

His Kunya

The Imams of the Household (of the Prophet), peace be on them, would give kunya to their children when young, and this is an example of Islamic education aiming at improving personality and making child feel that he or she has position with his family. Imam Reza, peace be on him, was given the following kunyas:

1. Abu al-Hasan

His father Imam Musa al-Kazim, peace be on him, gave him this kunya.[15]He, peace be on him, said to ‘Ali b. Yaqtïn: “O ‘Ali, this son of mine—and he pointed to Imam Reza—is the master of my children, and I have given him my kunya.[16]" Imam Reza was given the kunya of Abu al-Hasan. As this kunya was common between them, Imam al-Kazim was called: Abu al-

Hasan the past, and Imam Reza was called Abu al-Hasan the second, that the people might distinguish between the two kunyas.

2. Abu Bakr

This kunya was rare. He was not known for it, but rarely. Abu al-Salt al-Harawi narrated: “One day al-Ma’mun asked me a question, and I answered: ‘Concerning the question, Abu Bakr (i.e. Reza) said such-and-such. So al-Ma’mun asked me: ‘Which Abu Bakr - our Abu Bakr or Abu Bakr of the populace (‘amma)? ‘Our Abu Bakr,’ I replied."

‘Isa said: “I asked Ibn al-Salt: ‘Who is your Abu Bakr? ‘‘Ali b. Musa,’ he answered, ‘he was given this kunya.’[17]"

The Year of his Birth

The historians have differed over the year in which ImamReza, peace be on him, was born as well as they have differed over the month in which he was born. The following are some of their statements in this regard:

He was born in the year 148 A. H.[18]This year is famous with the narrators. These are some statements about the year of his birth. The historians have also differed over the month in which he was born. The following are some of their statements:

He was born on Thursday[19], the 11th of (the month of) Dhi al-Qi‘da.[20] These are some of the statements which the historians and the narrators have mentioned.

Sources:

[1]Kashf al-Ghumma, vol. 3, p. 88. ‘Iyun Akhbar Reza, vol. 1, p. 18.

[2]Abu al-Fida’, Tarikh, vol. 2, p. 24. Ibn al-Athïr, Tarikh, vol. 5, p. 183.

[3]Al-Majjlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 12, p. 4.

[4]‘Ilal al-Sharai‘. A‘lam al-Wara. Al-Majjlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 12, p. 2.

[5]Al-Majjlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 12, p. 3.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Jawharat al-Kalam fi Madh al-Sada al-A‘lam, p. 143.

[8]Al-Sirat al-Sawi, p. 199.

[9]Tadhkirat al-Khawas, p. 361. Al-Durr al-Nazim, p. 210.

[10]Al-Durr al-Nazim, p. 210.

[11]Ibid.

[12] Al-Majjlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 12, p. 4.

[13]Ibid.

[14]Ibid.

[15] Ibid., p. 3.

[16]Ibid.

[17]Ghaiyat al-Ikhtisar, p. 148. Bahr al-Ansab, p. 28. Usul al-Kafi, vol. 1, p. 486. Al-Mufïd, al-Irshad, p. 341. Al-Durr al-Masluk (photographed), p. 139. Akhbar al-Diwal, p. 114. Jawharat al-Kalam, p. 143. Al-Kafʻami, Musbah. Roudat al-Waʻizïn. Mirʼat al-Jinan, vol. 2, p. 11.

[19]Al-Durr al-Masluk, p. 139.

.[20]Aʻyan al-Shïʻa 4/Q2/77