

## The General Life–Style of the Ahl Al–Bayt (as)

The other members of the *Ahl al–Bayt* (as) are the perfect examples of the education and training of the Holy Prophet (S). Their characters and life–style resemble the character of the Holy Prophet (S).

Certainly, during 250 years, beginning from the 11th year of *Hijrah* (the year of Holy Prophet's [S] demise) until the year 260 AH (when al–'Imam Muhammad al–Mahdi's [as] *Ghaybat al–Kubra*, i.e., Great Occultation started), in their associations with people, the infallible guides, the Imams faced various situations showing their style of living in different forms.

They, however, never gave up the main objective of the Holy Prophet's (S) policy which consisted of safeguarding the *Usul al–Din* (the fundamental principles of Islam for believing in) and the *Furu' al–Din* (the secondary principles of Islam for action on) from undergoing changes and transformations, and the education of people, as far as possible.

Within 23 years since his call and invitation to Islam, the Holy Prophet (S) passed three phases of his life. He secretly called the people to Islam in the first three years of his *al–Bi'that al–Nabawiyyah*. He, then overtly invited the people to Islam in the next ten years. However, he and his followers lived under the severe tortures and persecution of the society and enjoyed no freedom of action that could make a tangible reform in the society.

The Holy Prophet (S) spent the remaining ten years (after the *Hijrah*) in an atmosphere in which the revival of truth and reality was the main goal and in which the holy Islam gained striking achievements day by day, thus opening up a new gate of knowledge and perfection to the people at every moment.

It is certainly obvious that these three different environments demanded different expediencies and would display the character and life–style of the Holy Prophet (S), who had no other objective but to revive the truth and reality, in various forms.

The different environments, in which the guiding Imams (as) lived, were not unlike the pre–*Hijrah* period of the Holy Prophet's (S) call. Sometimes, like the first three years of the prophetic mission, it was

impossible even to highlight the truth and thus the Imams (as) performed their duties with utmost care, as was the case at the time of the fourth Imam (as) and the latter part of the time of the sixth Imam (as) who had similar expediencies.

Sometimes, like the ten years prior to *Hijrah*, when the Holy Prophet (S) overtly called the people to Islam in Makkah and when he and his followers were unable to resist the pressure of the unbelievers, the Imams (as) also proceeded to educate the people with the teachings of religion and the propagation of religious precepts. The influential men of the time, however, left no stone unturned in torturing and persecuting them and created new problems everyday.

Indeed, an environment resembling the Holy Prophet's (S) post-Hijrah milieu to some extent was the one in which *Amir al-Mu'minin* (Commander of the Mu'minin), 'Ali (as), ruled as a caliph for five years, the one in which Hadrat Fatimah (as) and al-Imam al-Hasan (as) lived for a small period, and the one in which al-Imam al-Husayn (as) and his disciples lived for a short duration. In all these environments, the truth and reality were openly manifested, thus clearly reflecting the image of the general condition prevailing during the Holy Prophet's (S) time.

In short, except in what has been mentioned, the infallible Imams could not oppose the tyrant and usurper rulers and commanders of the time basically and openly. Therefore, they were obliged to have *taqiyyah* (concealing one's true beliefs when life is in danger) and to give no excuse to the rulers of the time to bother them. Nevertheless, their enemies left no stone unturned to put off the lights of their guidance and nullify their efforts.

## **The Root Cause of the Differences of The Imams (as) with Contemporary Governments**

Various governments, which came into being in the Islamic society after the Holy Prophet (S), under the name of Islam were all in serious disagreement with the *Ahl al-Bayt* (as). This irreconcilable antagonism served as a root which never dried.

Although the Holy Prophet (S) had mentioned about the virtues and excellent qualities of his *Ahl al-Bayt* (as), the most important of which were the honor of knowing the teachings of the Holy Qur'an and distinguishing between *halal* (Islamically permissible) and *haram* (Islamically prohibited) matters and even though it was incumbent upon the *Ummah* to respect and honor the *Ahl al-Bayt* (as), the *Ummah*, in spite of this recommendation and emphasis, did not discharge their obligations in this connection.

When the Holy Prophet (S) openly invited people to Islam, on the very first day he mentioned about his relatives, embracing Islam and nominated 'Ali (as) as his successor. He manifestly specified 'Ali's (as) succession in Ghadir Khumm and elsewhere during the last days of his life. In spite of this fact, the people designated others as successors of the Holy Prophet (S) after his death thus denying the *Ahl al-Bayt* (as) of their indisputable rights. As a result, the governments of the time always considered the *Ahl*

*al-Bayt*(as) as dangerous rivals and were frightened of them. These governments exploited various possibilities to annihilate the *Ahl al-Bayt* (as).

The governments of the time considered a deep discrepancy between the *Ahl al-Bayt* (as) and the so-called Islamic governments indispensable. The *Ahl al-Bayt* (as) believed that Islamic governments must observe, preserve, and enforce the divine precepts of Islam. As seen in their endeavours, however, the so-called Islamic governments that came to power after the Holy Prophet (S) did not completely observe the enforcement of the precepts of Islam and the adherence to the *sirah* (life-style) of the Holy Prophet (S).

On several occasions, the Almighty Allah enjoins the Holy Prophet (S) and the Islamic *Ummah* not to make any changes or transformations in the divine precepts and warns them of showing the slightest tendency against any one of the Islamic precepts and orders. On the basis of these unchangeable and immutable orders, the Holy Prophet (S) adopted a life-style through which he displayed no difference in the implementation of Islamic laws as far as time, place, and people were concerned.

Observing the divine precepts was incumbent upon everybody and even upon the Holy Prophet (S) and was obligatory on the part of everyone. The Islamic laws were steadfast and effective in all circumstances.

As a result of this equality and justice, all types of preferences among the people disappeared. The Holy Prophet (S), who by Allah's order was the ruler and commander and whose obedience was obligatory, did not have the slightest privilege over others in the internal and external affairs of his life. He did not avail himself of any luxury, maintained no protocol and formalities commensurate to his position as a ruler, and did not boast of his greatness and position. He showed no magnanimity or reverence. He could not be distinguished from the rest of the people through any outward appearance.

No group from the various strata of people sought superiority over others only by relying on their own discriminative preferences. Men and women, the rich and the poor, the strong and the weak, the urban and the rural, the slaves and the free men, and the black and the white all were equally ranked and no one was under obligation to perform actions beyond his religious duty. Everyone was immune against paying homage to the powerful people of the society or to be belittled by the influence and oppression of the oppressors.

With a little consideration, it will be clear (particularly after we have had long experiments after the death of the Holy Prophet [S]) that the sole objective of the Holy Prophet's immaculate character was the just and equitable implementation of the divine orders of Islam among the people and the immunity and preservation of these laws against changes and transformations. But the "Islamic governments" did not conform their conduct to that of the Holy Prophet (S) and entirely changed his course of action. As a result:

(1) Shortly, class distinctions appeared in the "Islamic society" in the worst form. The people were

divided into two groups, the strong and the weak. The life, property, and reputation of one group were subjected to destruction through the whims and desires of another group.

(2) The so-called "Islamic government" gradually changed Islamic laws. Sometimes, under the pretext of safeguarding an Islamic society and sometimes under the pretext of saving the government and its policy, these "Islamic governments" refrained from compliance with Islamic commandments and implementation of Islamic laws and provisions. This mode of working expanded day by day to such an extent that the so-called Islamic governments felt no responsibility towards the observance and implementation of Islamic laws. It is quite obvious to know as to what would be the status of Islamic laws and general provisions which have no proper executive power for implementation.

In Short, the "Islamic governments", during the lives of *Ahl al-Bayt* (as), brought about changes in the precepts and laws of Islam as per the "expediency of the time". It was due to these changes that their conducts were contrary to that of the Holy Prophet (S). But according to the Qur'anic directives, the *Ahl al-Bayt* (as) considered the precepts of the conduct of the Holy Prophet (S) indispensable.

Due to these differences and contradictions, the contemporary powerful governments did not refrain from crushing the *Ahl al-Bayt* (as). They embarked on using every possible means to extinguish the light of their guidance.

Although the *Ahl al-Bayt* (as) continuously faced many problems and encountered stubborn and sinister enemies, they continued their invitation of Islam to people and the work of Islamic *tabligh* (communication) in accordance with their divine duty, they did not leave any stone unturned for education of the righteous individuals.

To appreciate this matter, one must refer to history and notice the large population of Shi'ahs during the five-year *Khilafah* (caliphate) period of the *Amir al-Mu'minin*, 'Ali (as). Certainly, this population had come up during the 25 years of, Ali's (as) seclusion. Also, there was similar gathering of a large number of Shi'ahs at the house of Al-Imam al-Baqir (as). They were those who were quietly educated by Al-Imam al-Sajjad (as). Furthermore, hundreds of thousands of Shi'ahs following the *Ahl al-Bayt* (as) and faithful to Al-Imam al-Ridha' (as) were the truth seekers whom Al-Imam Musa ibn Ja'far (as) had guided even from the dark corners of the prisons.

Finally, because of the continuous training and education by the *Ahl al-Bayt*(as), the Shi'ahs, who were an insignificant number at the time of the death of the Holy Prophet (S), sharply increased to an amazing number during the last period of the infallible Imams (as).

## **An Exceptional Point in the Policy of the Ahl al-Bayt (as)**

As mentioned earlier, the *Ahl al-Bayt* (as) of the Holy Prophet (S) spent their lives under tyranny and accusation. They performed their assigned duties in the atmosphere of *taqiyyah* and under the most

difficult conditions. Only four members among the *Ahl al-Bayt* (as), for brief periods, could exceptionally have an opportunity to work independently without restraint and *taqiyyah*. We will briefly discuss the biographies of the members (other than the Prophet (S) whose life-sketch has been already given) of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (as) here.

## **Al-'Imam 'Ali (as)**

Amir al-Mu'minin Hadrat 'Ali (as) is the first perfect example of the education and training of the Holy Prophet (S).

'Ali (as) was educated by the Holy Prophet (S) from the period of his infancy. 'Ali (as) was always with the Holy Prophet (S) like a shadow until the last moment of the Prophet's life. Like a butterfly which sacrifices its life for the candle, 'Ali (as) also was with the Holy Prophet (S). 'Ali (as) parted with the Holy Prophet (S) when he took the sacred body of the Prophet (S) in his arms and buried him.

'Ali (as) was endowed with a worldwide personality. One may dare say that the discussions and deliberations about this important personality have not been made to such an extent about any other important personality of the world. Shi'ah, Sunni, Muslim, and non-Muslim scholars and writers have written more than one thousand books regarding his personality.

With all the innumerable discussions and inquisitiveness made by friends and foes about 'Ali (as), no one has been able to find any weaknesses in his faith. Nor has anyone been able to find any weak point in his bravery, piety, knowledge, justice, and other praiseworthy ethics, because he recognized and possessed nothing but virtue and perfection.

According to history, from among all rulers who have come to power since the demise of the Holy Prophet (S) until the present time, 'Ali (as) is the only person who fully complied with the *sirah* of the Holy Prophet (S) and who never deviated from the policies of the Prophet (S) in the period of his rule over the Islamic society. 'Ali (as) implemented the laws and religious precepts of Islam without any misinterpretation or distortion just as they were executed in the lifetime of the Holy Prophet (S).

In the case of "the 6-member council" for the selection of the *khalifah* (caliph) which had a meeting according to the order of the second *khalifah* after lengthy discussions the uncertainty regarding *khilafah* emerged between 'Ali (as) and 'Uthman. The "council" conditionally offered the position of *khilafah* to 'Ali (as) provided that he would deal with the people in the same manner as the first and second *khalifahs* did. Imam 'Ali (as) rejected the offer and said: "I will not transgress the limits of my knowledge." Then the "council" offered the *khilafah* with the same condition to 'Uthman. He accepted the offer and became the *khalifah*, although he adopted a different *sirah* afterwards.

No one from among the Companions of the Holy Prophet (S) could be a match to 'Ali (as) insofar as self-sacrifices, self-devotion, self-dedication, etc for the cause of the truth were concerned. It cannot be

denied that in the absence of this devoted harbinger of Islam, unbelievers and polytheists would have easily extinguished the light of the *Nubuwwah* in the night of *Hijrah* and afterwards in any one of the battles of Badr, 'Uhud, Khandaq, Khaybar, and Hunayn and would have resulted in the fall of the banner of the truth.

Upon first entrance into the social environment, 'Ali (as) had a very simple life. During the lifetime of the Holy Prophet (S), after the Prophet's demise, and even during his own glorious *khilafah* period, he lived like the poor and in the most humble condition. He had no superiority over the needy insofar as food, clothing, and housing were concerned and used to: "The ruler of a society should live in such a way so as to be the source of consolation for the needy and the distressed and not the cause of their regret and disappointment." Although the ruler of the entire Islamic State, he had only seven hundred dirhams on the day of his martyrdom with which he wanted to hire a servant for his house.

'Ali (as) used to work to meet the needs of life. Particularly he was interested in agriculture and spent his time in planting trees and digging water canals. Whatever he earned in this manner or through the war-booty, he distributed among the needy. He endowed the properties which he had cultivated for the needy or distributed among them the money received as sale proceeds of such properties. Once, during the period of his own *khilafah*, 'Ali (as) ordered to those concerned to bring the revenues of his endowments to him and then spend them. When these revenues were collected, the amount reached 24 000 gold dinars.

'Ali (as) always defeated his rivals in all the battles in which he took part. He never refrained from combating an enemy. 'Ali (as) said: "If the entire Arabia rises up in opposition and combat against me, I will not lose my courage and I will not fear anything."

With such bravery and valor, for which the history of the brave men of the world has not found any equal, 'Ali (as) was extremely compassionate, kind, generous, and magnanimous. In the battles, he never killed women, children, and the weak. 'Ali (as) did not take anyone as a captive and did not pursue those who ran away. In the Battle of Siffin, the army of Mu'awiyah took a lead, occupied the canal of Euphrates, and banned the water on 'Ali (as). Later, after a bloody battle, 'Ali (as) occupied the water canal. Then he issued orders allowing the enemy to take water.

In the period of his *khilafah*, 'Ali (as) welcomed everyone without having chamberlains and doorkeepers, walked on foot, all alone, and walked in the alleys and the bazaars. He ordered the people to fear Allah and guard against evil and protected them against injustice of one another. 'Ali (as) helped the poverty-stricken people and widows kindly and humbly and kept the shelterless orphans in his own house, personally providing their requirements and educating them.

'Ali (as) had a special regard for knowledge and learning and gave particular attention towards promotion of knowledge and education and used to say: "There is no suffering like ignorance." While 'Ali (as) was arraying his troops in the bloody Battle of Jamal, an Arab went forward and asked him the meaning of

*Tawhid*. The people rushed toward the Arab from every direction and confronted him by saying that such a moment is not an appropriate time for asking such questions and for discussion. 'Ali (as) asked them to disperse away from the Arab and said: "We are fighting the people in order to revive such truths." Then, while arraying the troops, 'Ali (as) called forth the Arab and clarified the matter for him with an eloquent statement.

Another similar case symbolizing the religious discipline and amazing divine power of 'Ali (as) has been narrated in the course of the Battle of Siffin. While the two armies, like two roaring seas, were intermingling and fighting and much blood was gushing out from every direction, 'Ali (as) came to one of his soldiers and demanded a glass of water for drinking.

The soldier filled a wooden bowl with water and offered it to 'Ali (as). 'Ali (as) noticed a crack in the bowl and said: "Drinking water in such a bowl is *makruh* (undesirable –though not unlawful but refraining from it is preferable in Islam)".

The soldier said: "This is not a time to be so meticulous about these things in such a situation when we are under the shower of arrows and the flashes of thousands of swords". In short, the answer he got from 'Ali (as) was: "We are fighting for the enforcement of such Islamic precepts and insofar as the rules are concerned there is nothing large or small".

After the Holy Prophet (S), 'Ali (as) was the first person who talked about scientific realities by the philosophical mode of thinking, that is, he talked with independent logic. He also coined many scientific terms. In order to safeguard the Holy Qur'an from error and mutilations, 'Ali (as) formulated and arranged the rules of Arabic grammar.

Scientific intricacies, divine knowledge, ethical, social, and political matters, and even mathematics that are made available to us by means of the lectures, letters, and other eloquent remarks of 'Ali (as) are amazing.

Lectures, letters, aphorisms, and the short remarks available as a memorial of 'Ali (as) all testify that from among Muslims, 'Ali (as) is most familiar with the sublime aims of the Qur'an and has duly perceived the principal and practical education of Islam. He has proved the authenticity of the *hadith* of the Holy Prophet (S): "I am the city of knowledge and 'Ali is the gate of the city". 'Ali (as) has combined this knowledge with practice.

In short, the prominent personality of 'Ali (as) is beyond description and his infinite virtues are countless. History has never witnessed a personality attracting as much the attention and the views of the scholars and philosophers of the world as he has.

## **Al-Siddiqah Al-Kubra Fatimah (as)**

*Al-Siddiqah al-Kubra* (the most strictly veracious) Fatimah (as) was the only beloved and honourable daughter of the Holy Prophet (S) who, as a result of her wisdom, faith, righteousness, decent attributes, and praiseworthy ethics, had filled the pure heart of her respectable father with her affections.

As a result of her wisdom, piety, and worship, Fatimah (as) obtained the title of "*Sayyidat Nisa' al-'Alamin*" (the head of all the women of the worlds) from her great father. The Holy Prophet (S) stated: "The happiness of Fatimah is my happiness and my happiness is the happiness of Allah. The anger of Fatimah is my anger and my anger is the anger of Allah."

The Lady of Islam Khadijah al-Kubra, gave birth to Hadrat Fatimah (as) in the sixth year after *Al-Bi'that al-Nabawiyyah*. Fatimah (as) married *Amir al-Mu'minin 'Ali* (as) in the second year after the *Hijrah*. Fatimah (as) passed away three months and odd days after the demise of her great father.

In her life, she always preferred the pleasure of Allah over her own happiness. In her family circle, she trained and educated her children. She divided the household chores between herself and her housemaid. One day, she engaged in the household chores herself and the other day, the housemaid was supposed to perform them. Fatimah (as) resolved the problems of Muslim ladies and worshipped Allah during her leisure time.

She spent her personal property, specially the overflowing income of Fadak (a few villages nearby Khaybar), for the cause of Allah and kept no more than what was necessary for herself. Sometimes, she gave her daily food to the needy and the poor, spending her day with hunger. The elaborate speech delivered by Fatimah (as) in the Mosque of the Holy Prophet (S) to the Companions and groups of Muslims, the arguments she raised with the "first *khalifah*" on the subject of the attachment of Fadak, and her other remarks which have remained as her memorial, are all obvious proofs for the magnanimity of her status, her courageous and brave spirit, and her perseverance.

Hadrat Fatimah (as) is the respectable daughter of the Holy Prophet (S), the wife of *Amir al-Mu'minin 'Ali* (as), and the mother of the eleven Imams and leaders of Islam. The offspring of the Holy Prophet (S) are all from her generation.

According to the explicit text of the Holy Qur'an, Fatimah (as) is endowed with the status of the *'Ismah*.

## **Al-'Imam Al-Hasan (as) And Al-'Imam Al-Husayn (as)**

These two honorable Imams (as) are brothers and the sons of 'Ali (as) and Fatimah (as). According to the *ahadith* the Holy Prophet (S) had deep affections towards these honorable grandsons whom he called his own sons. The Holy Prophet (S) was not able to endure their slightest pain and dissatisfaction and used to state: "These two sons of mine are Imams and leaders, be they rising or sitting". The terms



'rising' and 'sitting' are used ironically and signify taking charge of superficial *khilafah* and rising to fight with the enemies of Islam and non-acceptance of superficial *khilafah* and rising against it. He added. "Hasan and Husayn are the two leaders of the youth of the Heaven."

On the basis of his honorable father's will, al-Imam al-Hasan (as) was chosen for *khilafah*. The people also promised their allegiance to him. He ruled as a *khalifah* in Islamic countries, excluding Syria and Egypt, which were under the reign of Mu'awiyah, and conducted the affairs just as his great father did.

In the period of his ruling, al-Imam al-Hasan (as) mobilized an army to put an end to the trouble of Mu'awiyah, but he finally discovered that the hearts of the people were lured by Mu'awiyah and that the leaders of his own army had correspondence with Mu'awiyah and were waiting for him to issue an order to kill or arrest the Imam (as) and surrender him to the enemy. For this reason, the Imam (as) had to agree to the peace offer.

Al-Imam al-Hasan (as) entered into peace negotiations with Mu'awiyah under specific terms, but Mu'awiyah did not keep up his promise and, after the conclusion of the peace agreement, he went to Iraq and ascended a pulpit in the presence of the Muslims and said: "I was not fighting with you for the cause of religion, so that you would recite *salat* or observe *sawm*; rather I wanted to rule over you and now I have achieved my goal" Mu'awiyah added: "I disregard all the promises that I have made to al-Hasan."

After the peace treaty, for nine and a half years, al-Imam al-Hasan (as) lived under the domination of Mu'awiyah in a gloomy atmosphere and under the most bitter and unpleasant conditions. The Imam (as) had no life security even in his own house. Finally, at the instigation of Mu'awiyah, the Imam (as) was poisoned by his wife (Ja'dah) and became martyred.

After the martyrdom of al-Imam al-Hasan (as), his honourable brother, al-Imam al-Husayn (as), succeeded him by the order of Allah and according to the will of his brother al-Imam al-Hasan (as) He began to guide and lead the people, but the conditions and circumstances were similar to those existed at the time of al-Imam al-Hasan (as). With his full control over the situation, Mu'awiyah had seized all the work potentialities available to al-Imam al-Husayn (as).

Mu'awiyah died after about nine and a half years and the position of *khilafah*, which had turned into monarchy, was transferred to his son, Yazid.

Unlike his father, Yazid was a young man intoxicated with conceit and displayed interest in revelry, obscene acts, and lack of discipline. As soon as this proud young man took the rein of the affairs of the Muslims he ordered the governor of Madinah to ask al-Imam al-Husayn (as) to promise his allegiance to Yazid or else send the Imam's head to him.

When the governor proposed the subject of allegiance to al-Imam al-Husayn (as), the Imam (as) asked for some time and left Madinah overnight for Makkah along with his companions. He sought refuge in

the sanctuary of Allah which is an official haven in Islam. But after residing in Makkah for a few months, he realized that Yazid would by no means leave him alone and that he would definitely be killed if he did not promise his allegiance to Yazid.

On the other hand, during this period, the Imam (as) had received several thousand letters from Iraq promising their cooperation and assistance and inviting him to rise against the oppressors of Banu Umayyah.

By observing the prevailing general conditions and circumstances and the symptoms al-'Imam al-Husayn (as) realized that his movement would not have an outward progress. Nevertheless, having denied his allegiance, he decided to offer his sacrifice and get killed with a decision of his uprising, al-'Imam al-Husayn (as) left Makkah for Kufah with his companions in the course of his travel, he encountered the massive troops of the enemy in Karbala (nearly 70 km away from Kufah).

While travelling, the Imam (as) invited the people to assist him and informed his companions of his decision to be killed giving them the option to stay with him or to leave him. Therefore, from the day they encountered the troops of the enemy, no one had remained with the Imam (as) other than only a few people who were devoted to him and who were willing to give their lives for the cause. As a result, they were easily surrounded by the large number of enemy soldiers. They were even prevented from having water. In such a situation, al-'Imam al-Husayn (as) was compelled to choose between offering his allegiance to Yazid and his martyrdom.

Al-'Imam al-Husayn (as) did not resign himself to his allegiance to Yazid and became prepared to be killed. A day came when he fought the enemy from morning to evening along with his companions. In this battle, he himself, his children, his brothers, his nephews, his cousins, and his companions, who were totally about 70 people, were martyred. Only his honorable son, Al-'Imam 'Ali al-Sajjad (as), who was unable to fight due to serious illness, survived.

After the martyrdom of al-'Imam al-Husayn (as), the enemy troops plundered his properties, took his family as prisoners, and took them from Karbala to Kufah and from Kufah to Damascus along with the decapitated heads of the Martyrs.

In the process of this captivity, al-'Imam 'Ali al-Sajjad (as) in his sermon delivered at Damascus and also Zaynab al-Kubra, in her addresses delivered in public gatherings in Kufah, in the court of Ibn Ziyad, the Governor of Kufah, and in the court of Yazid in Damascus, unveiled the truth and revealed the oppression and cruelty of Umayyads to the people of the world.

In any case, this movement of al-'Imam al-Husayn (as) against the oppression, tyranny and indiscipline – which ended with the bloodshed of al-'Imam al-Husayn (as), his children, his relatives and his companions together with looting of his property and imprisonment of his women and children – is a special event with its important characteristics and details, which has no parallel in the pages of history of world movements. It can definitely be said that this event serves as the basis for the survival of Islam.

Had this event not taken place, Umayyads would have totally wiped off Islam.

## **Were the Policies of Al-'Imam Al-Hasan (as) and Al-'Imam Al-Husayn (as) Different?**

Although these two great leaders are, according to the explicit statement of the Holy Prophet (S), rightful Imams, their policies apparently seem different. Some have even said that the difference of opinions of these two brothers was so great that one of them, having 40 000 combatants, accepted the peace offer, while the other, with only 40 friends and companions (other than his relatives) fought the enemy and lost all of them including his suckling child for this cause.

However, close investigation proves the contrary, as we see that al-'Imam al-Hasan (as) lived for about nine and a half years during the reign of Mu'awiyah and did not oppose him overtly. After the martyrdom of his brother, al-'Imam al-Husayn (as) also lived for about nine and a half years during the reign of Mu'awiyah and never thought of rising in rebellion against him and did not challenge him.

Hence, the main cause of this superficial difference in the policies of the two Imams (as) lies in the difference of opinion between Mu'awiyah and Yazid, rather than the difference of opinion of these two great Imams (as). The policy of Mu'awiyah was not based on lack of discipline and restraint and he did not deride the religious precepts by its overt opposition.

Mu'awiyah called himself a "companion" of the Holy Prophet (S) and the "writer of Revelation". Through his sister (who was the wife of the Holy Prophet (S) and who was *Umm al-Mu'minin* (the mother of the believers), Mu'awiyah was called "*Khal al-Mu'minin*" (the maternal uncle of the believers) and was greatly favored by the Second Caliph in whom the common people had total confidence and special attachment.

Furthermore, Mu'awiyah, in a majority of cases, had appointed the Companions of the Holy Prophet (S) who were respected and honored by the people (such as Abu Hurayrah, Amr al-'As, Samrah, Yusr, Al-Mughirah ibn Shu'bah, and others) as governors of provinces and had put them in charge of the key positions of the country. These governors used to work for the favourable opinions of the people towards Mu'awiyah.

Many *ahadith* were fabricated and narrated among the people regarding the virtues and the religious immunity of the Companions of the Holy Prophet (S) and that they were not questionable for whatever they did. Thus whatever Mu'awiyah did, if corrigible and justifiable at all, it was rectified and justified by these authorities; otherwise, by giving a great deal of hush-money, he prevented his opponents from complaining.

Where these means and methods did not work, thousands of innocent people comprising of *Shi'ahs* (friends) of 'Ali (as), other Muslims, and even a great number of the Companions of the Holy Prophet (S) were killed by these collaborators, partisans, and "companions" of Mu'awiyah.

Mu'awiyah pretended to be right in whatever he did and accomplished everything with a special patience and forbearance. With a particular gentleness and flexibility, he attracted the kindness and obedience of people. Sometimes, he even heard the curse of people on him and sensed their enmity, but he responded with cheerfulness and forgiveness and thus pursued his policy in this way.

Apparently, he paid respect to al-'Imam al-Hasan (as) and al-'Imam al-Husayn (as) and sent them valuable gifts and souvenirs. On the other hand, he publicly announced that whoever narrates a *hadith* concerning the virtues of *the Ahl al-Bayt* (as), will have no security of life, reputation, and property; but whoever narrates a *hadith* concerning the virtues. Prophet (S) will receive a of the Companions of the Holy reward.

He gave orders to the orators and preachers to curse al-'Imam 'Ali (as) from pulpits used for addressing Muslims. By the order of Mu'awiyah, his hirelings killed the supporters of al-'Imam 'Ali (as) wherever they could find them. They went along in this matter to such an extent that they killed a large number of people who were the enemies of al-'Imam 'Ali (as), accusing them of having friendship with the Imam (as).

It becomes clear from the above description that the rise of al-'Imam al-Hasan (as) would only have ended to the detriment of Islam and would have had no effect other than the martyrdom of the Imam (as) and his supporters. And even it was not unlikely that, in this case, Mu'awiyah might have got killed al-'Imam al-Hasan (as) through the friends and relatives of the Imam (as) and then, in order to pacify public opinion, Mu'awiyah would have rent (torn) his shirt and mourned for the Imam (as) and, in seeking vengeance (for this bloodshed), he would have tried to take his revenge by killing the Shi'ahs, as he later did while dealing with the case of 'Uthman.

But the political trend of Yazid had no resemblance with that of his father. He was a self-admiring and undisciplined youth. He had no logic: other than force. He gave no importance to public opinion.

During his short-term rule, Yazid at once revealed the damages which were secretly inflicted on Islam. In the first year of his rule, Yazid put the family of the Holy Prophet (S) to the edge of the sword. In the second year of his rule, he ruined the city of Madinah and allowed his troops to transgress upon the honor, life, and property of the people for three days. In the third year of his rule, he destroyed Ka'bah.

Owing to the above reasons, the movement of al-'Imam al-Husayn (as) was imprinted on the minds of the people and its effect grew more profoundly and publicly day by day. In the beginning, this movement manifested itself in the form of bloody revolutions. Finally, it attracted a great number of Muslims as the supporters of truth and reality and as the supporters of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (as) of the Holy Prophet (S).

It was because of this reason that Mu'awiyah, in his will to Yazid, had strongly recommended that Yazid should leave al-'Imam al-Husayn (as) alone and not bother him; but would the drunkenness and self-admiration of Yazid permit him to differentiate between his benefit and his loss?

## **Al-'Imam 'Ali Al-Sajjad (as)**

The policy of al-'Imam 'Ali al-Sajjad (as), during his Imamate, is divided into two different parts which correspond as a whole to the general policies of other Imams (as), for the Imam (as) was in the company of his great father in the tragic event of Karbala and took part in the movement of al-'Imam al-Husayn (as). After the martyrdom of his father, when the Imam (as) was taken captive and was taken to Kufah from Karbala and from Kufah to Damascus, he never used *taqiyyah* and asserted the truth and reality without any fear. Whenever the occasions suited, he informed the individuals and the public of the rightfulness of the Members of the Household of the Holy Prophet (S) and their glories and virtues through his lectures and statements. He brought the innocence of his great father and the cruel and oppressive atrocities of the Umayyads to the surface and aroused the outburst of the feelings and sentiments of the people.

But Imam (as) returned to Madinah after he was released from captivity and the atmosphere of self-sacrifice turned itself into the atmosphere of tranquillity. He sat in the seclusion of his house, closed the door on strangers, and engaged in worshipping Allah. He began to train and educate the individuals who were the followers of truth and reality. During the 35 years of his residence there, the Imam (as), directly and indirectly, educated a great number of people and imprinted the Islamic culture on their hearts.

Only the prayers that the Imam (as) had indited in his divine tone and through which he silently prayed to Allah form a complete set of the sublime Islamic learnings and sciences. These prayers have been compiled in a form of book which is popularly known as "*Al-Sahifah al-Sajjadiyyah*" (meaning a book of al-'Imam al-Sajjad).

## **Al-'Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as)**

During the Imamate of al-'Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (as), the way was somewhat paved for the dissemination of Islamic sciences. Owing to the oppression of Umayyads, the *ahadith* regarding Islamic jurisprudence by the *Ahl al-Bayt* (as) were lost. Although thousands of *ahadith* are required for Islamic precepts, nevertheless, not even more than 500 *ahadith* of the Holy Prophet (S) had remained, that too, from among those which were narrated by the Companions of the Holy Prophet (S).

In short, during that period, because of the very tragic event of Karbala and as a result of the 35 years of efforts of al-'Imam al-Sajjad (as), a great number of Muslims [supporters of *Ahl al-Bayt* (as)] emerged but they had no Islamic jurisprudence based on the *ahadith* of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (AS).

Since the government of the Umayyads was weakened due to internal differences and the self-indulgence and inefficiency of government authorities and because the signs of weakness had grown in its governmental structure, the Fifth Imam (as) took advantage of this opportunity and began to disseminate the sciences of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (as) and the Islamic jurisprudence and provided the society with many scholars of his school of thought.

## Al-'Imam Ja'far Al-Sadiq (as)

During the time of the 6th Imam (as) the conditions were more apt and the circumstances were more favourable for the dissemination of Islamic sciences, because, on the one hand, as a result of the propagation of the *ahadith* of al-'Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (as) and owing to the *tablighat* by those who were educated in his school, the people had realized their need for Islamic sciences and the Islamic knowledge of the *Ahl al-Bayt*(as) and were more thirsty for obtaining the *ahadith*.

On the other hand, the government of the Umayyads was overthrown and the government, of the Abbasids had not yet been firmly established when, in order to fulfill their intentions and to undermine the government of the Umayyads, the Abbasids used the tyranny against the *Ahl al-Bayt* (as) and the blood of the martyrs of Karbala as a pretence and thus tried to be apparently good to the *Ahl al-Bayt* (as).

The Imam (as) embarked on teaching and disseminating different branches of knowledge. Scientists, '*ulama*' and scholars rushed to the Imam's (as) house from every direction and were welcomed by the Imam (as). They asked many questions concerning various branches of Islamic sciences, the Islamic ethics and life-history of the prophets, the history of *Ummahs*, the wisdom, the *tabligh*, etc and received the answers accordingly.

The Imam (as) held discussions with people from different strata and held debates with various peoples and sects. He educated students in different Islamic sciences. Hundreds of books were compiled which recorded the *ahadith* and scientific lectures of the Imam (as) which are known as "fundamentals".

By taking advantage of this brief period, which came handy in the suffocating atmosphere of those days, al-'Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (as) educated and trained thousands of learned scholars. As his memorial, the Imam (as) left many precious treasures of sciences and education in the field of Islamic culture. The number of scholars who had benefited from the Imam's (as) vast knowledge and wisdom exceeded 4 000.

Al-'Imam al-Sadiq (as) had ordered his students to write down his lessons and to preserve their books and writings. He stated: "A time will come when a chaos will prevail and many of these works will be destroyed. Then you will be in need of these books and writings and these books will serve as the only scientific and Islamic references of Muslims". For this reason, the students of the Imam (as) used to bring with them pen and inkpot and put down whatever they heard in his class.

Other than his necessary rest, the Imam (as) taught the people secretly and publicly round-the-clock and made the treasury of his infinite knowledge available to all.

In short, his sublime remarks and valuable guidances removed ignorance and illiteracy and re-established the true Islam of the Holy Prophet (S). Thus, he is known as the founder of "Shi'i Islamic

jurisprudence". Shi'ah religion was later called as the "Ja'fari Jurisprudence" after his name.

## **Al-'Imam Musa Al-Kazim (as)**

Having overthrown the Umayyads and having taken the position of *khilafah* in hand, the Abbasids turned to Sane Fatimah and tried to annihilate the Members of the Household of the Holy Prophet (S) with all their might. They beheaded a group, buried another alive, and placed yet another group of people under the foundations and in the walls of the buildings. They set the house of the 6th Imam (as) on fire and summoned the Imam (as) to Iraq several times. In this way, the *taqiyyah* was more intensely practiced during the last days of the life of the 6th Imam (as).

Since the Imam was under strict surveillance, he did not meet anyone except a few particular Shi'ahs. Finally, al-'Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (as) was poisoned and martyred by al-Mansur, the Second Caliph of the Abbasids. Thus, during the *'imamah* of the 7th Imam, al-'Imam Musa al-Kazim (as), the oppression of the antagonists became more severe and intensified day by day.

In spite of an environment of intense *taqiyyah*, the 7th Imam (as) began to disseminate the Islamic knowledge and made a large number of *ahadith* available to the Shi'ahs. It can be said that the *ahadith* pertaining to Islamic jurisprudence by al-'Imam Musa al-Kazim (as) stand third in number after those by the 5th and the 6th Imams (as). Owing to prevailing conditions of intense *taqiyyah*, in most of the *ahadith* related by the Imam (as), he has been referred to by the narrators as "an '*alim*" or as "a righteous worshipper of Allah", or the like without an explicit mention of his name.

The Imam (as) was the contemporary of four Abbasid *khulafa'* al-Mansur, al-Hadi, al-Mahdi, and Harun, and was always the target of their oppression. Finally, under the order of Harun, he was imprisoned and was transferred from one prison to another for years. At last, al-'Imam Musa al-Kazim (as) was poisoned as well as martyred in the prison.

## **Al-Imam 'Ali Al-Ridha' (as)**

A consideration on the circumstances during that time makes it clear for every clear-sighted person that no matter how much the contemporary *khulafa'* and opponents of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (as) tried to torture and tyrannize the Imams (as) of Guidance and made the life difficult for their Shi'ahs, the number of the followers of Islam increased day by day and their faith in Islam became stauncher. The Institution of *khilafah* was a wicked and filthy system in their views.

And this matter was an internal conviction which constantly kept the *khulafa'* contemporary with the Imams (as), in agony; and in fact rendered those *khulafa'* helpless and despicable.

After killing his brother al-Amin and becoming the *khalifah*, al-Ma'mun, the 7th 'Abbasid caliph, who was also the contemporary of al-'Imam al-Ridha' (as), decided to relieve himself of this internal distress and

constant anxiety and put an end to Shi'ah faith by some means other than coercion and oppression.

The policy which al-Ma'mun adopted in order to carry out this plan was to offer his succession to al-'Imam al-Ridha' (as) in order to defame the Imam (as) in the eyes of the Shi'ahs by accusing him of entering the corrupt system of *khilafah* and to wash away people's minds the faith in the eminence and the immaculateness of the Imam (as). In this way, he thought, no distinction would be left out for the position of *Imamah* which is the basis of Shi'i faith and the very foundation of this religion would be automatically collapsed.

The implementation of this policy would also bring another success, that is, it would stop the successive movements of *Banu Fatimah* which were pursued to overthrow the *khilafah* of the Abbasids; because when the *Banu Fatimah* would see the transfer of *khilafah* to themselves, they would naturally refrain from carrying out bloody uprisings. Certainly, after this plan was implemented, the killing of al-'Imam al-Ridha' (as) would not be a difficult task for al-Ma'mun.

Al-Ma'mun, primarily, invited the Imam (as) to take over the *khilafah* and after that he invited him to accept the succession. After al-Ma'mun's accentuation, insistence, and finally threat, the Imam (as) accepted the succession conditionally, provided that he would have nothing to do with dismissals, appointments, and interference in high positions and matters.

In such a situation, the Imam (as) embarked on guiding the people and held discussions with men of different faiths and religions as far as he could. He also gave valuable statements and explanations concerning the Islamic sciences and the facts of religion (al-Ma'mun was also excessively interested in religious discussions.)

The speeches delivered by al-'Imam al-Ridha' (as) on the principles of Islamic knowledge and sciences are equal in number to those delivered by *the Amir al-Mu'minin 'Ali* (as) and exceed the number of speeches delivered by all the other Imams (as) in these fields.

One of the blessings of the Imam (as) was that he was presented with a large number of *ahadith* by Shi'ahs, which had reached them through the Imam's reverend fathers (as), and among these under the direction of the Imam (as) some of the "*ahadith*" which were forged and fabricated by wicked people, were identified and eliminated.

When the Imam (as) travelled from Madinah to Marw as the "successor of the *khalifah*" he aroused an amazing enthusiasm among the people all through his journey, particularly in Iran. The people rushed from everywhere to meet him, eagerly surrounded him, and learned the teachings and precepts of Islam.

By the unprecedented and surprising attention that the people paid to the Imam (as), al-Ma'mun found out that his policy was erroneous. In order to make reparation for his political failure, al-Ma'mun poisoned and martyred al-'Imam al-Ridha' (as). Afterwards, the old policy of the *khulafa'* towards the *Ahl al-Bayt* (as) and their Shi'ah followers was again pursued.



## **Al-'Imam Muhammad Al-Taqi (as), Al-'Imam 'Ali Al-Naqi (as), and Al-'Imam Al-Hasan Al-'Askari (as)**

The environment in which these three honorable Imams (as) lived was identical. After the martyrdom of al-'Imam al-Ridha' (as), al-Ma'mun summoned al-'Imam Muhammad al-Taqi. (as), who was the only son of al-'Imam al-Ridha' (as) to Baghdah and treated him kindly and affectionately and allowed his daughter to marry the Imam (as) and kept the Imam (as) in his own house with full honour.

Although this conduct seemed friendly, but, through this policy, al-Ma'mun had actually placed the Imam (as) under his strict control in all respects.

Similar circumstances and living conditions continued for al-'Imam 'Ali al-Naqi (as) and al-'Imam al-Hasan al-'Askari (as) in Samarra', which was the capital of *khilafah* during their *Imamah*; they were in fact in prison.

The period of *Imamah* of these three reverend Imams (as) is fifty-seven years altogether. The number of Shi'ahs, who were residing in Iran, Iraq, and Syria at the time, was considerably large and had reached hundreds of thousands, among whom there were thousands of scholars of *Hadith*. In spite of this, the *ahadith* related from these three Imams (as) are very few. Also, the lifetime of these three Imams (as) was short.

The ninth Imam (as), the tenth Imam (as), and the eleventh Imam (as) were martyred when they were twenty-five, forty, and twenty-seven years, respectively. All these points serve as a clear evidence that the control, surveillance, and sabotage of the antagonists was very strict during their period and that these great Imams (as) were unable to perform their duties freely. Nevertheless, valuable *ahadith* have reached us from these three great Imams (as) on the *Usul al-Din* (the fundamental principles of Islam for believing in) and the *Furu' al-Din* (the secondary principles of Islam for actions).

## **Imam Al-'Asr, Muhammad Al-Mahdi Al-Maw'ud (as)**

During the time of al-'Imam al-Hasan al-'Askari (as), the institution of the *khilafah* had decided to kill the successor of the Imam (as) by all the ways and means possible in an effort to put an end to the subject of *Imamah* and consequently to Shi'ah faith. In addition to other aspects, al-'Imam al-Hasan al-'Askari (as) was also under surveillance from this point of view.

It was for this reason that the birth of al-'Imam al-Mahdi (as) was kept secret. Until he became six, till his honourable father was alive, al-'Imam al-Mahdi (as) was kept out of sight and no one could see him other than a few devoted and trustworthy Shi'ahs.

After the martyrdom of his father, al-'Imam al-Mahdi (as) had *al-Ghaybat al-Sughra* (the Short Occultation of al-'Imam Muhammad al-Ma'hdi [as]) by the order of Allah and answered the questions of

the Shi'ahs and resolved their problems through *Al-Nuwwab al-Arba'ah* (the Four Deputies of *Imam al-Asr* (as) who had successively attained the eminent position of being the Imam's (as) Deputy.

The Imam (as) then had *al-Ghaybat al-Kubra* (the Great Occultation of al-'Imam Muhammad al-Mahdi [as]) until the time when he will appear by the order of Allah to administer justice in the whole world after it gets overwhelmed with injustice and oppression.

A large number of *ahadith* of the Holy Prophet (S) and the Imams (as) have been related by both Sunnis and Shi'ahs regarding al-'Imam al-Mahdi (as) and the characteristics of his absence and appearance. Also, a great number of Shi'ah dignitaries had met the Imam (as) during the lifetime of his honorable father and had seen his unique personality and had received the good tidings of his *Imamah* from his honorable father.

Furthermore, in the sections on *Nubuwwah* and *Imamah* we have arrived at this conclusion that the human world could never exist without the religion of Allah and an Imam who is the supporter and guardian of the religion of Allah.

## **The Moral Conclusion Derived From the Policy of the Leaders of Religion**

In sum up, it becomes evident from the history of the prophets of Allah and the religious leaders that they were realists and followers of truth and used to invite the human world towards realism and adherence to truth. They did not refrain from any self-sacrifice and self-indulgence in this regard.

In other words, they tried that both individuals and human society be brought up and developed as ought to be. They also wanted to see the people adorned by a series of correct thoughts and beliefs without being governed by ignorance or a series of superstitious thoughts.

They wanted to see the people accustomed to the especial human disposition without blemishing human purity with an animalistic disposition and by thinking of nothing but devouring one another and filling their belly like beasts and grazing animals. They intended to make men apply the treasure of humanity to their lives in order to gain prosperity in favor of humanity.

Thus, they were the people who did not look for their own prosperity alone, rather they recognized no other duty for the cause of the prosperity of the society and for the world of humanity.

They saw their own welfare and prosperity (the man does not want anything other than this) in being benevolent to others and wanted other people to be so as well; that is, they wanted everybody to like for all whatever they liked for themselves and not to desire for others whatever they did not desire for themselves.

It was due to this realism and adherence to truth that these great men found out the significance of this

general human duty (benevolence) and other minor duties which are its ramifications and were endowed with the epithets of self-denial and self-sacrifice.

For this very reason, they did not hesitate to offer their lives and properties for the cause of truth. They cut the root of any attributes which resulted malevolence. They did not have stinginess for the lives and properties of others. They were disgusted with egotism and stinginess. They did not tell lies, nor did they slander other people. They did not transgress upon the honor and prestige of others.

The explanation of these epithets and their impact should be studied in more detail in the section on "Ethics".

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