



# **Story of the Sun**

**A Look at Imam al-Riḍā's (A.S.) Life**

**Sayyid Muhammad Najafi Yazdi**

**Translated by:  
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# Contents

<i>Preface</i>	7
<i>Introduction</i>	9
<i>Brief History of Imam al-Riḍā's (A.S.) Life</i>	10
Imam al-Riḍā's (A.S.) Date of Birth	11
Imam al-Riḍā's (A.S.) Noble Mother	11
Imam al-Riḍā's (A.S.) Children	11
The Auspicious Birth of Shams al-Shumūs (the Radiant Sun among all the suns), 'Alī b. Mūsā al-Riḍā (A.S.)	12
Imam al-Sādiq (A.S.), Wishing to See Imam al-Riḍā (A.S.)	13
Why was Imam al-Riḍā (A.S.) Named al-Riḍā?	13
The Childhood and Adolescence Period of Imam al-Riḍā (A.S.)	14
Imam al-Riḍā's (A.S.) Religious Authority in His Youth	15
Imam al-Riḍā's (A.S.) High Status in the Divine Presence	16
My Son in a Strange Land	17
Imam al-Riḍā's (A.S.) Devotional Schedule in his Journey to Khurāsān	18
Imam al-Riḍā's (A.S.) On-Time Prayers	21
<i>Imam al-Riḍā's (A.S.) Social Sira and his Good Conduct towards People</i>	22
Imam al-Riḍā's (A.S.) Generosity and Munificence	23
Imam al-Riḍā's (A.S.) Special Attention and Favor towards the Needy	23
Saving the Face of the Needy	24
Imam al-Riḍā's (A.S.) Treatment of his Subordinates	25
Imam al-Riḍā's (A.S.) Favor and Grace towards the Shī'a	26
<i>The Greatness of Imam al-Riḍā's (A.S.) Personality in the Words of Dignitaries</i>	27

<b>Imam al-Riḍā's (A.S.) Scholarly Status and Personality</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Some Examples of Imam al-Riḍā's (A.S.) Wise Answers</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Imam al-Riḍā's (A.S.) Knowledge of Various Languages</b>	<b>35</b>
1. Imam al-Riḍā's (A.S.) Familiarity with Various Current Languages of the Time	35
2. Imam al-Riḍā's (A.S.) Familiarity with the Language of the Birds and Animals	36
3. Imam al-Riḍā's (A.S.) Widespread Knowledge in Occult Sciences	37
Imam al-Riḍā's (A.S.) Predictions concerning the Barmakids.	37
Hārūn will do no Harm to me!	38
Various Predictions	38
Awareness of Imam al-Riḍā (A.S.) of Children in Mothers' Wombs	39
Imam al-Riḍā's (A.S.) Knowledge of How he would be Martyred and Where he would be Buried	41
<b>Imam al-Riḍā's (A.S.) Cultural Measures</b>	<b>42</b>
1. Confrontation with Zealotry and the Zealots	43
2. Imam al-Riḍā's (A.S.) Struggles against Sufis	46
4. Imam al-Riḍā and Commander of the Faithful (A.S.)	51
Forty Traditions Related from Imam al-Riḍā (A.S.) on the Virtues of Commander of the Faithful (A.S.)	51
5. Imam al-Riḍā (A.S.) and Her Holiness Fāṭima (A.S.)	57
6. Imam al-Riḍā (A.S.) and Imam al-Husayn (A.S.)	58
Imam al-Riḍā (A.S.) and the Visitation (Ziyāra) of Imam al-Husayn (A.S.)	60
Imam al-Riḍā (A.S.) and the Soil of Sayyid al-Shuhadā's (A.S.) Grave	61
Imam al-Riḍā (A.S.) and the Importance of Mourning for Sayyid al-Shuhadā (A.S.)	61
Pouring Tears for Sayyid al-Shuhadā's (A.S.) Afflictions	62
Weeping for Imam al-Husayn (A.S.)	62
<b>Major Problems of His Holiness Imam al-Riḍā (A.S.) in the Time of his Imamate</b>	<b>63</b>
The First Problem: Waqifites and Imam al-Riḍā's (A.S.) Struggle against them	64
Imam al-Riḍā's (A.S.) Measures against the Waqifites	66
Imam al-Riḍā's (A.S.) Negotiation with the Chiefs of the Waqifites	66
Commanding to Distance from the Waqifites	68

Some of the Miraculous Acts of Imam al-Riḍā (A.S.) for Guiding the Shi'as	68
The Fate of some Followers of the Waqifites in Imam al-Riḍā's (A.S.) Words	69
The Second Problem: Delay in Imam al-Jawād's (A.S.) Birth	70
The Third Problem: The Issue of Imam al-Riḍā's (A.S.) Heir Apparency	73
<i>Plot to Assassinate Imam al-Riḍā (A.S.)</i>	74
<i>Report about the Tablet and the Names of the Purified Imams (A.S.)</i>	75
<i>Imam al-Riḍā's (A.S.) Historical Emigration</i>	77
<i>Farewell to Medina</i>	77
Imam al-Riḍā's (A.S.) Itinerary	78
Nabāj Village	78
Ahvaz	79
Departure toward Fars	80
Moving toward Khurāsān	81
Nayshābūr	81
Hadīth of Silsilat al-Dhahab	82
Healing a Sick Person in Rubāṭ Sa'd	84
Dihsurkh (al-Ḥamrā')	84
Tūs	85
Sarakhs	86
Marv	87
<i>The Issue of Heir Apparency</i>	88
<i>Fulfillment of Pledge</i>	90
<i>The Abbasid Ma'mūn and his Ominous Objectives</i>	91
<i>Ma'mūn's Problems</i>	91
<i>The Story of Di'bīl al-Khuzā'i</i>	94
<i>Imam al-Riḍā's (A.S.) Gift to Di'bīl</i>	96
<i>The Healing Robe</i>	97
<i>Ma'mūn's Disappointment, Problems, and New Policy</i>	98
<i>The First Step, Killing Faḍl b. Sahl</i>	99

<i>Imam al-Riḍā's (A.S.) Murderer</i>	100
<i>Unsuccessful Assassination of Imam al-Riḍā (A.S.)</i>	102
<i>Imam al-Riḍā's (A.S.) Martyrdom</i>	102
<i>A Review of the most Important Events during the Imamate of Imam al-Riḍā (A.S.)</i>	106
<i>The High Excellence of Visitation (Ziyāra) to Imam al-Riḍā's (A.S.) Holy Shrine</i>	113
Imam al-Riḍā's (A.S.) Intercession	113
The Pilgrim of Paradise	114
The Pilgrim of the Prophet (S.A.W.)	114
Reward of the Martyrs	115
The Pilgrims of God	115
The Fulfiller of Needs and Remover of Sorrows	116
Better than Optional Hajj	116
Secure from the Fire	117
Best of Allāh's Guests	117
In the Same Rank as the Imam (A.S.)	118
The Pilgrim of Imam al-Riḍā (A.S.) and Imam al-Ḥusayn (A.S.)	118
The High Value of Enduring Hardship on the Way to Pilgrimage	119
<i>Some of Imam al-Riḍā's (A.S.) Words of Wisdom</i>	120
Punishment of the Impious and Unrestrained Women on the Day of Resurrection	122
Reward for Goodness	124

## Preface

Ahl al-Bayt (A.S.) are the treasure-keepers of knowledge. The rivers and streams of knowledge, which have inundated and refreshed the farms of human souls in the past fourteen centuries, have originated from the heavenly pinnacles of this mountain of light. 'Alī (A.S.), the Imam of the learned and the mystics said, "The flood water [of knowledge] flows down from me and no bird [flight of mind] can soar up to me." The prosperity and freshness of the land of knowledge and awareness is because of the glittering radiance of this Household's divine knowledge, as the Great Prophet (S.A.W.) said, "I am the city of knowledge and 'Alī is its gate."

The Ahl al-Bayt's (A.S.) knowledge is of perceptive rather than learnable type, and this is because they have perceived the truth of knowledge by their heavenly souls. Imam 'Alī (A.S.) describes mystics (of whom he is the master) as: "Knowledge has led them to real understanding, so they have associated themselves with spirit of conviction."

The Great Prophet (S.A.W.) was the original founder of this dynasty of light and luminescence, and although unschooled, his message was knowledge and his mission was recitation and reading, erudition, and awareness. His mission started with *iqra'* (recite!), and continued with knowledge and insight, which filled up souls with rapture and bliss. ﴿It is He who sent to the unlettered [people] an apostle from among themselves, to recite to them His signs, to purify them, and to teach them the Book and wisdom.﴾ Qur'ān: 6/60. With his prophetic mission, he led the dead souls out of their mundanity and misguidance into the heavenly gardens of life and livelihood, and called the mankind gone astray and lost in the crooked roads of corruption to the highways of guidance and straight path and breathed a new soul into mankind's dead body: ﴿...when he summons you to that which will give you life.﴾ Qur'ān: 8/28. He relieved them of the heavy

burdens of ignorance ﴿...and relieves them of their burdens and the shackles that were upon them﴾. Qur'ān: 7/157.

Having drunk their fill from his fountain of life, the household of his Holiness, like him, held up the torches of knowledge and awareness aflame and radiant to the seekers of knowledge and spiritual insight over the centuries; and with the aid of his Divine Lights, illuminated the way for seekers and made their souls radiant and replete with celestial splendor.

And today, in the age of modern paganism, what settles down the dust from the path before the perfection-seekers and can illuminate their way is the return to the fountainhead of that same knowledge and spiritual insight that the great Prophet (S.A.W.) and his holy and pure Household presented to mankind. Perhaps today, more than ever before, human beings are in dire need of what the Prophet of mercy presented to humanity.

There is no doubt that delving into the Ahl al-Bayt's (A.S.) fountainheads of light and re-reading the life-story (*sīra*) and teachings of those noble figures in our days – like in all eras – is a great service to humanity, which is incomparable to any other services. Therefore, it is incumbent on all those whose hearts throb for human beings that by mulling over and delving into the Ahl al-Bayt's (A.S.) Gnostic knowledge, to extract the pure pearls and liberating doctrines of this splendid Divine treasure and present them to the contemporary desperately sorrowful and thirsty mankind.

We are duty-bound, as neighbors to the Holy Shrine of the learned one of the Prophet's household [Imam 'Alī b. Mūsā al-Riḍā (A.S.)], to wish prosperity and best of health for all the followers of this path and all those who make endeavors in revitalizing directives of Ahl al-Bayt (A.S.) and their divine teachings and knowledge, particularly the noble and esteemed authors who have contributed to the writing and compilation of this precious collection, and pray for their success from the All-Knowing and Ever-Living Allāh.



Also, we ask the respected pilgrims to transform the unique opportunity of paying pilgrimage to the blessed body of the progeny of Rasūl Allāh (S.A.W.) into a chance for fulfilling their spiritual and intellectual requirements through enjoyment of the thoughts, words, and life history of that magnanimous Imam; and by studying valuable works such as the present collection, to store up provisions of bliss and perfection for their present world and Hereafter, remembering to pray for their servants in this Holy Sanctuary, as well.

Islamic Propagation and Relations Directorate  
Astan Quds Razavi

## Introduction

Islamic Iran is proud to host the blessed body of the Apostle of Allāh (S.A.W.)'s progeny, Imam al-Riḍā (A.S.), the learned of the Prophet's household, the source of blessings, and the eighth infallible Imam. Each year it receives millions of eager and enamored pilgrims who come here to pay homage to the affectionate and gracious Imam.

With the blessings of this benevolent Imam, divine graces are dispensed to all devotees of Ahl al-Bayt (A.S.), especially to the followers and Shī'as of his holiness; and this piece of land in Khurāsān is a piece of paradise which prides itself on the world of angels and is ever the focus of attention to the heavenly cherubim, just as it is a focus of attention and guidance for the people of the world. Divine angels frequent around the sacred mausoleum along with his earnest pilgrims.

And what great blessings and graceful effects has the Almighty God imparted on behalf of this magnanimous Imam and his pilgrimage to his pilgrims and enthusiasts.

Paying pilgrimage to Imam al-Riḍā (A.S.) and the torrential presence of

the pilgrims in his heavenly sanctuary does always strengthen religious spirit and spirituality, and the remembrance of the Hereafter, concentration on Almighty Allāh and His ordinances in the hearts of people and the Islamic society. In that pure atmosphere radiating with the light of Imamate and *wilāya*, the eager pilgrims feel peace and purity of the heart, express their needs, and enjoy plenty of divine blessings through the noble Imam.

Thus, in order to provide better and deeper enjoyment of this pilgrimage, we would draw the attention of the interested pilgrims to a brief account of that noble Imam's precious life and attributes so that they may go on pilgrimage with more knowledge and, thereby, receive more divine blessings and attention from the Eighth Holy Imam 'Alī b. Mūsā al-Riḍā upon whom be thousands of salutations and praises.

### **Brief History of Imam al-Riḍā's (A.S.) Life**

His blessed name: 'Alī

His father's name: Imam Mūsā b. Ja'far (A.S.)

His mother's name: Najma or Tuktam

His nickname: Abū al-Ḥasan

His cognomen: Riḍā

Date of birth: Dhū l-Qa'da 11, 148/Dec 29, 765

Place of birth: Holy city of Medina

Progeny: His holiness Imam Muḥammad Taqī (A.S.); of course, it is disagreed whether his holiness has had other children.

Rulers of his time: Maṣṣūr Dawāniqī, Maḥdī 'Abbāsī, Hādī 'Abbāsī, Hārūn al-Rashīd, Muḥammad Amīn, Ma'mun 'Abbāsī

Date of being appointed as heir apparent: Ramaḍān, 201/March, 817, as imposed by Ma'mun

Length of life: 55

Date of martyrdom: the end of Ṣafar, 203/September 5, 818