

Imam Reza (A.S.) Discourses

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Al-Mu'mu`n questions Ima`m al-Reza(A.S.)

Al-Ma'mu`n asked Ima`m al-Reza`, peace be on him, some questions. More likely, he wanted to test him. The Ima`m answered these questions which are as follows: Q1: "Son of Allah's

Apostle, do you not say that the prophets are infallible?" "Yes," replied the Imam.

"What is the meaning of these words of Him, the Exalted: And Adam disobeyed his Lord, so his life became evil (to him)?" asked al-Ma'mu`n. Ans. 1: "Surely Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, said to Adam: O Adam, dwell you and your wife in the Garden and eat from it a plenteous (food) wherever you wish and do not approach this tree.

And He pointed to the tree of wheat for then you will be of the unjust. He did not say to them: 'Do not eat from this tree or from its kind.' They did not approach the tree; nor did they eat from it; they ate from other than it. When Satan whispered (evil) to them and said: 'Your Lord has not forbidden you from this tree; rather He has forbidden you from approaching other than it. He has not forbidden you from eating from it except that you may not both become two angels or that you may (not) become of the immortal.'

And he swore to them both: 'Most surely I am a sincere adviser to you.' Adam and Hawua` (Eve) did not see before that anyone who swore by Allah in a false manner. Then he caused them to fall by his deceit and they ate from the tree because they trusted his swearing by Allah, and that was before Adam was considered as a Prophet, and that was not a big sin through which he deserved entering the Fire; rather it was one of the sins which could be forgiven and could be committed by Prophets before the revelation (wahy) came down to them.

When Allah chose him and made him a prophet, he became infallible, and was not permitted to commit a sin, minor or major. Allah, the Great and Almighty, said: Thus did Adam disobey his Lord and allow himself to be seduced. But his Lord chose (for His grace); He turned to him, and gave him guidance. 1 And He, the Great and Almighty, said: Allah did indeed choose Adam and Nu`h, the family of Ibra`hi~m, and the family of 'Umra`n above the people."

Q2: "What is the meaning of these words of Him, the Great and Almighty: But when He gives them a good one, they set up with Him associates in what He has given them?"

Ans. 2: "Hawua` born Adam five hundred males and females, so Adam and Hawua` promised Allah, the Great and Almighty, prayed to Him, and said: If You give us a good one, we shall certainly be of the grateful ones.

"When He gave them a good one of progeny, sound creature free from illness and defect He gave them two types: a type of males and of females the two types attributed partners to Allah, may His name be Exalted, in what He had given to them, and they did not thank Him as their parents thanked Him, the Great and Almighty. Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, said: But high is Allah above what they associate (with Him). "

Q3: "I witness that you are the son of Allah's Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family, tell me about the words of Him, the Great and Almighty, concerning Ibrahim: When the night covered him, he saw a star. He said: This is my Lord. "

Ans. 3: "Surely Ibrahim lived in a society where three types of worship dominated: the worship of Venus, the worship of the moon, and the worship of the sun. That was when he came out of the cave where he was concealed. When the night covered him, he saw Venus and said: This is my Lord. He wanted to deny (such a type of worship) and to ask (his fellows about it). When it (the star) set, he said: I do not love those that set. That this because setting is an attribute of the created not of the Eternal (Being). When he saw the moon rising in splendor, he said: This is my Lord. He wanted to deny (such a type of worship) and to ask (his fellows about it). But when it (the moon) set, he said: Unless my Lord guides me, I shall surely be among those who go astray. He said: 'Unless my Lord had guided me, I would have been among those who went astray.' When he entered upon morning and saw the sun rising in splendor, he said: This is my Lord; this is the greatest of Venus and the moon. He wanted to deny (such a type of worship) and to ask (his fellows about it), not to tell them about it and not to admit it (as a lord). When it (the sun) set, he said to the three types of men who worshipped Venus, the moon, and the sun:

O my people! I am indeed free from your (guilt) of ascribing partners to Allah. For me, I have set my face firmly and truly towards Him Who created the heavens and the earth, and never shall I attribute partners (to Allah). By the virtue of what he said, Ibrahim simply wanted to indicate to them the invalidity of their religion and to establish to them that worship did not belong to those things like Venus, the moon, and the sun; rather it belonged to their Creator and the Creator of the heavens and the earth.

The argument which he used against his people was among what Allah had inspired him and gave to him, just as Allah, the Great and Almighty, said: And this was Our argument which We gave to Ibrahim against his people." Q4: "How good you are, son of Allah's Apostle! Tell me about these words of Ibrahim: And when Ibrahim said: My Lord, show me how You give life to the dead, He said: What! and do you not believe. He said: Yes, but that my heart may be at ease."

Ans. 4: "Surely Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, had revealed to Ibrahīm that He would take one of His creatures for a bosom friend. If he asked Him to give life to the dead, He would respond to him. Ibrahīm thought that he would be the bosom friend, and hence he said: My Lord, show me how You give life to the dead, He said: What! and do you not believe.

He said: Yes, but that my heart may be at ease. He (Allah) said: Then take four of the birds, then train them to follow you, then place on every mountain a part of them, then call them, they will come to you flying; and know that Allah is Mighty, Wise.

As a result Ibrahīm took an eagle, a peacock, a duck and a rooster. He cut the birds into pieces and mixed them. They were ten pieces. Then he placed each piece of them on the mountains around him, and put the beaks between his fingers. He put seeds and water beside him. Then he called them by their names, so those pieces flew to each other until they became sound bodies. Then each body came and joined its neck and head. Then Ibra'hīm, peace be on him, released their beaks.

The birds flew and then they alighted. They drank from that water, ate from those seeds, and said: 'Allah's Prophet, you have given life to us, may Allah give life to you!' Ibra'hīm said: 'Rather it is Allah who gives life to (creatures) and make (them) die, and He is powerful over all things!'

Q5: "Allah bless you, Abu` al-Hasan! Tell me about these words of Him, the Great and Almighty: So Musa struck him with his fist and killed him. He said: This is on account of Satan's doing."

Ans. 4: "Musa entered one of Fir'awn's (Pharaoh's) cities when its inhabitants were heedless of him. That was between the sunset and the evening. So he found therein two men fighting, one being of his party and the other of his foes, and he who was of his party cried out to him for help against him who was of his enemies. Therefore Mu'sa` killed the enemy. Allah, the Exalted, mentioned: So Mu'sa` struck him with his fist and he died. He said: This is on account of Satan's doing. This means that the fighting which took place between the two men (was on account of Satan's doing), not the killing which Mu'sa` had committed. (The word) 'he' means Satan (who) is an enemy, openly leading astray."

Q6: "What is the meaning of these words of Mu'sa: My Lord, surely I have done harm to myself, so do You protect me."

Ans. 6: "This means that he put himself in other than its place when he entered this city. So do You protect me, meaning conceal me from Your enemies lest they should find me and kill me, so He protected him; surely He is the Forgiving, the Merciful. Musa said: My Lord, because You have bestowed a favor on me, through the strength so that I killed a man with striking him with

my fist; I shall never be a backer of the guilty; rather I shall fight on Your path with this strength
until You are content (with me).

As a result Mu`sa` was in the city fearing, awaiting, when lo! he who had asked his assistance
the day before was crying out to him for aid against another person, so Musa said to him: You
are most surely one erring manifestly.

You killed a man the day before and this day you want to kill (another man), hence I shall hurt
you. He wanted to strike him. So when he desired to seize him who was an enemy to them
both, he said: O Mu`a, do you want to kill me as you killed a person yesterday? You desire
nothing but that you should be a tyrant in the land, and you do not desire to be of those who act
aright."

Q7: "Abu al-Hasan, May Allah reward you well on behalf of His prophets! What this the
meaning of these words of Musa to Fir'awn (Pharaoh): I did it then while I was of those unable
to see the right course? 1"

Ans. 7: "Fir'awn said to Mu`sa` when he came to him: And you did (that) deed of yours which
you did, and you are one of the ungrateful for me. Mu`sa` said: I did it then while I was of those
unable to see the right course through my entering one of your cities. So I fled from you when I
feared you, then my Lord granted me wisdom and made me one of the apostles.

"Allah, the Great and Almighty, said to His Prophet Mohammed, may Allah bless him and his
family: Did He not find you an orphan and gave you shelter?2 He (Allah) says: 'Did He not find
you lonely and He made the people seek shelter in you?' And find you unable to see and show
the way to your people? So He guided, namely He guided them to knowing you. And find you in
want and make you be free from want? He (Allah) says: 'He has made you free from want when
He has made your supplication accepted."

Q8: "Allah bless you, son of Allah's Apostle! What is the meaning of these words of Allah, the
Great and Almighty: And when Musa came to our appointed time and his Lord spoke to him, he
said: My Lord, show me (Yourself), so that I may look upon You. He said: You cannot (bear to)
see me. How is it permissible that Mu`sa` b. 'Umra`n, the Interlocutor of Allah, peace be on
him, did not know that Allah, may His name be Blessed and Exalted, could not be perceived?
Why did he make such a request?"

Ans. 8: "Musa b. 'Umrān, the Interlocutor of Allah, knew that Allah, the Exalted, far above to be
perceived by eyes, but when Allah, the Great and Almighty, spoke to him and made him draw
nigh holding communion (with Him), he returned to his people and told them that Allah, the
Great and Almighty, spoke to him, made him draw nigh, and whispered to him, but they said:
'We will not believe in you until we hear His words as you heard them.' They were seven

hundred thousand men, so he chose seventy men from them to the appointed time of their Lord. He took them and went to Mount Sina'. He made them stay at the foot of the mountain. As for Mu'sa', he climbed the mountain, asked Him to speak to him and make them hear His words.

As a result Allah, may His name be Exalted, spoke to him, and they heard His words from top, bottom, left, right, behind, and before (them). That is because Allah, the Great and Almighty, created His words in the Tree and made them come out of it to the extent that they heard them from all directions; yet they said: 'We do not believe that what we have heard is (His) words until we see Allah manifestly.'

When they said this dangerous statement, became arrogant and tyrant, Allah sent down upon them thunderbolt, and it overtook them because of their transgression. They died, so Musa said: 'My Lord, what shall I say to the children of Israel when I return to them and they say: 'You took them and killed them, for you were not truthful when you claimed that Allah, the Great and Almighty,

would speak to you?' According, Allah gave life to them and sent them with him. They said: 'If you ask Allah to make you look upon him, He will respond to you; you will tell us how He is, then we will be fully aware of Him.' Musa said: 'People, the eyes cannot perceive Him, and He has no howness; rather He is recognized through His signs and is known through arguments.

' Yet they said to him: 'We will not believe in you until you ask Him.' Mu'sa' said: 'My Lord, You have indeed heard the statement of the children of Israel and You know better how to put them right.' So Allah, the Great and Almighty, revealed to Mu'sa': 'Request from Me what they requested from you, for I will not punish you because of their ignorance.'

Then Mu'sa' said: My Lord, show me (Yourself) so that I may look upon You. He said: You cannot (bear to) see Me, but look at the mountain, if it remains firm in its place -while falling down- then will you see me; but when his Lord manifested (His glory) to the mountain, He made it crumble and Mu'sa' fell down in a swoon; then when he recovered, he said: Glory be to You, I turn to You. He said: 'I have returned to my knowledge of You and (left) the ignorance of my people of You. I am the first of the believers in that none can see You.'

Al-Ma'mun admired the Imam's talents and abundant knowledge, saying: "How good you are, Abu al-Hasan!"

Q9: "Tell me about these words of Him, the Great and Almighty: And certainly she made for him, and he would have made for her, were it not that he had seen the manifest evidence of his Lord. "

Ans. 9: "She made for him, were it not that he had seen the manifest evidence of his Lord, he

would have made for her just as she made for him, but he was infallible, and the infallible did not think of sin; nor did he commit it. Indeed my father related to me on the authority of his father al-Sa`diq, who said: 'She intended to do, and he intended not to do.'" Q10: "How good you are, Abu` al-Hasan! Tell me about these words of Him, the Great and Almighty: And Dha al-Nun when he departed in wrath; he imagined that We had no power over him. 2"

Ans. 10: "That was Yunus b. Matti. He departed in wrath to his people. He imagined, meaning that he was sure that We would not straiten him, namely We will not going to sustain him, and of it is these words of Him, the Great and Almighty: But when He tries him (differently), then straitens to him his means of subsistence.¹ Or straitened and ordained.

So he called out among the shadows, namely the shadows of the sea and of the stomach of the whale. There is no god but You! Glory belongs to You; I was indeed wrong through my leaving this worship to which You have given me free time in the stomach of the whale, so Allah answered him, and He, the Great and Almighty, said: But had it not that he was of those who glorify (Us), he would certainly have tarried in its stomach to the day when they are raised.

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Q11: "How good you are, Abu` al-Hasan! Tell me about these words of Him, the Great and Almighty: Till the apostles gave up hope and thought that they were surely accused of lying, Our help then came to them. "

Ans. 11: "Allah, the Great and Almighty, said: Till the apostles gave up hope (of their people) and (their people came to) think that they proved them to be liars, Our help then came to them."

Q12: "How good you are, Abu al-Hasan! Tell me about these words of Him, the Great and Almighty: That Allah may forgive your community their past faults and those to follow. "

Ans. 12: "The Meccan polytheists thought that there was none greater in sin than Allah's Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family. That is because they worshipped three hundred and sixty idols other than Allah. When he (the Prophet), may Allah bless him and his family, came to them and summoned them to the Oneness of Allah, they regarded that as big and great, and then they said: What! makes he the gods a single God? A strange thing is this, to be sure! And the chief persons of them break forth, saying: Go and steadily adhere to your gods; this is most surely a thing sought after. We never heard of this in the former faith; this is nothing but a forgery.

"When Allah, the Great and Almighty, enabled His Prophet to conquer Mecca, He said to him: Mohammed, surely We have given to you a clear victory, that Allah may forgive your community their past faults and those to follow, (the faults) of the Meccan polytheists through your summoning (them) to the Oneness of Allah, their past faults and those to follow. That is

because some Meccan polytheists became Muslims; some of them went out of Mecca; as for those of them who remained were not able to deny the Oneness of Allah against him (the Prophet) when he summoned the people to it, so their faults were forgiven because of his mastery over them."

Q13: "How good you are, Abu` al-Hasan! Tell me about these words of Him, the Great and Almighty: Allah pardon you! Why did you give them leave ? 1" Ans. 13: "This is part of that which was revealed by the virtue of: I mean you and listen, O neighbor! Allah, the Great and Almighty, addressed His Prophet with that, but He meant by that his community. Similar to this (verse) is these words of Him, the Exalted: Surely if you associate (with Allah), your work would certainly come to naught and you would certainly be of the losers 2 , and these words of Him, the Great and Almighty: And had it not been that We had already established you, you would certainly have been near to incline to them a little."

Q14: "Allah's Messenger, may Allah bless him and his family, went to the house of Zayd b. Haritha b. Sharahīl al-Kalbi for a thing he wanted. He saw his wife washing and said to her: Glory belongs to Him who has created you!"

Ans. 14: "By that he meant to free the Creator, the Great and Almighty, from the statement of those who said: 'The angels are the daughters of Allah.' So Allah, the Great and Almighty, said: What! has then your Lord preferred to give you sons, and (for Himself) taken daughters from among the angels? Most surely you utter a grievous saying.

When Zayd returned to his house, his wife told him about the coming of Allah's Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family, and his saying to her: 'Glory belongs to Allah!' Zayd did not understand what the Prophet meant by that. He thought that the Prophet said that because he admired her beauty. So he came to the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, and said to him: 'My wife is in her creation, and I want to divorce her.'

'Keep your wife to yourself,' said the Prophet to him, 'fear Allah.' Allah had made the Prophet know the number of his wives. As for this woman, she was one of them, but he concealed that in his own soul and did not show it to Zayd. He feared that the people would say that Mohammed said to his retainer: 'Your wife will be my wife,' and that they would criticized him for that. As a result Allah, the Great and Almighty, revealed:

And when you said to him to whom Allah had shown favor and to whom you had shown favor: Keep your wife to yourself and be careful of (your duty to) Allah; and you concealed in yourself (what) Allah would bring to light, and you feared men, and Allah had a greater right that you should fear Him. "Then Zayd b. Ha`ritha divorced her, and she had completed her waiting period, so Allah, the Great and Almighty, married her to His Prophet Mohammed, may Allah

bless him and his family, and with this regard He revealed (a verse in) the Qur'an, and He, the Great and Almighty, said: But when Zayd had accomplished his want of her, We gave her to you as a wife, so that there should be no difficulty for the believers in respect of the wives of their adopted sons, when they have accomplished their want of them; and Allah's command shall be performed.

"Then Allah, the Great and Almighty, knew that the hypocrites would criticize the Prophet for being married to her, so He, the Exalted revealed: There is no harm in the Prophet doing that which Allah has ordained for him. "

With this (answer) the Ima`m concluded this debate, which is evidence for his great scientific abilities and his comprehensive knowledge of the Great Book of Allah. The Ima`m freed the magnified prophets of Allah from committing transgression and established their infallibility .through this explanation backed by undeniable proof and evidence

Al-Ma'mun lauds the Imam Reza(A.S.)'s Talents

Al-Ma'mu`n lauded Ima`m al-Reza`s talents and said: "You have quenched my thirst, son of Allah's Apostle, and explained what was hidden from me, may Allah reward you well on behalf of His prophets and of Islam."

Then al-Ma'mu`n left the session. He took Mohammed b. Ja'far, the Ima`m's uncle, by the hand and asked him: "How did you see your nephew?" Showing his admiration toward the Ima`m, Mohammed said: "He (Ima`m al-Rida`) is a scholar; we have never seen him frequent any of the men of knowledge."

Al-Ma'mu`n agreed with him on this reality and said: "Surely, your nephew is from among the Household concerning whom the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, said: 'Verily, the pious of my family and the good ones of my offspring are the most forbearing of the people when they are young and the most knowledgeable of the people when they are old; therefore, do not teach them, for they are most learned than you. They do not bring you out of guidance; nor do they make you enter a door to error."

Then 'Ali b. al-Jahm related to the Ima`m al-Ma'mu`n's laudation and praise and what Mohammed b. Ja'far said concerning him. So the Ima`m smiled and said: "Do not be deceived by what you heard from him (al-Ma'mu`n), for he will assassinate me; and Allah, the Exalted, will take vengeance on him out of his (evil) deed toward me. "

The matter was just as the Ima`m, peace be on him, had predicted. That is because al-Ma'mu`n's harbored malice against him and was jealous of excellence and abundant knowledge given by Allah to him. Accordingly, al-Ma'mu`n committed the most horrible crime in the history of Islam when he put poison into food and gave it to the Ima`m to eat. In this

manner he was able to assassinate the Imam, who was the Prophet's grandson, source of
.knowledge and wisdom on earth

Ibn al-Sikīṭ's Questions

Abu Yusuf Ya'qub b. Ishaq al-Dawraqi, better known as Ibn al-Sikīṭ, was a great scholar in the time of the Imam. He came to Imam al-Reza, peace be on him, and asked him the following questions:

"Why did Allah send Mu`sa` with a white hand, 'Isa` with miraculous medicine, and Mohammed with miraculous speech and oratory?" The Imam answered him about the reason for these things, saying: "Allah sent Mu`sa` (with the white hand) because sorcery dominated the (minds) of the people of his time, so he brought them from Allah something which they never had, nor could they bring about anything like it, thus rendering their sorcery void and proving his argument against them.

"Allah sent 'Isa` with medicine during a period of time when chronic diseases became widespread, and the people were in dire need of cure, so he ('Isa`) brought them from Allah something which they never had, bring the dead back to life, healing the blind and the leprous with Allah's permission, proving his argument against them.

"Allah sent Mohammed, may Allah bless him and his family, with speech and oratory during the time when speech and oratory dominated (the minds of) the people. 1 So he (Mohammed) brought them from Allah warnings and precepts through which he could disprove their statements and proved his argument against them." Ibn al-Sikīṭ admired the Ima`m's knowledge and said: "By Allah, I have never seen anyone like you! What is the argument against people these days, then?"

The Ima`m answered him: "Reason. Through it can you come to know who tells the truth about Allah, so you believe in him, and who tells lies about Allah, so you disbelieve in him." "This, by Allah, is the (right) answer," declared Ibn al-Sikīṭ.

Allah created reason and made it argument over man. Reason brings about mercy to man when he obeys it, and it brings about unhappiness to him when he disobeys it. Through reason .we can distinguish the truthful from the untruthful, the true from the untrue

The Imam Reza (A.S.) debates a Man

A man, whose name the historians have not mentioned, came in to Imam al-Reza, peace be on him. When the man sat down, he turned to the Imam and asked him: "Son of Allah's Apostle, what is the evidence for the creation of the world?" The Imam answered him with definite evidence: "You were not, then you have been. You know that you had not created yourself; nor

.had the like of you created you

The Imam's Debate Concerning the Prophet's Family

Yet this is another debate in which the Ima`m has provided evidence of that Allah chose the pure family (of the Prophet). The debate took place in the presence of al-Ma'mun and a group of scholars from Iraq and Khurasa`n. Al-Ma'mu`n asked the scholars about the meaning of this verse: "Then We gave the Book for an inheritance to those whom We chose from among Our servants. " "Surely those whom Allah chose were all Muslims," retorted the scholars.

Al-Ma'mun turned to the Ima`m and asked him: "What do you say, Abu` al-Hasan?" "I do not say as they said," replied the Ima`m, "but I say that Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, meant the pure family (of the Prophet), peace be on them."

The Imam's words moved al-Ma'mu`n, and he asked: "How did Allah mean the Prophet's family apart from the community?" "If Allah meant the community," replied the Ima`m, "then all of it would enter the Garden, while He, the Exalted, says: But of them is he who makes his soul to suffer a loss, and of them is he who takes a middle course, and of them is he who is foremost in deeds of goodness by Allah's permission; this is the great excellence. "

The Ima`m added, saying: "As a result the inheritance belongs to the Prophet's pure family, not to other than them. It is they whom Allah has described in His Book and said: Verily Allah intends to keep off from you every kind of uncleanness. And to purify you, people of the House, with a thorough purification. It is they concerning whom Allah's Messenger, may Allah bless him and his family, said: 'I leave behind me among you two things, if you cleave to them, you will never go astray that is the book of Allah and my offspring from my family (ahl al-Bayt). They will never scatter (from you) until they lead you to me at the (scared) waters (of Heaven). Take care how you will follow me with regard to them. People, do not try to teach them, for they are more knowledgeable than you. "

The scholars hurried to say at one time: "Abu` al-Hasan, tell us about the offspring ('itra): are they the family (a`l) or other than the family?" "They are the family (al)," answered the Ima`m. They opposed the Ima`m, saying: "It has been narrated on the authority of Allah's Apostle, who said: 'My community is my family(a`l).' And these are his companions who say with a diffused tradition which cannot be denied: 'The family (al) of Mohammed is his community.'"

The Imam indicated that the tradition was fabricated and incorrect, saying: "Tell me, is it forbidden for Mohammed's family to take alms or not?" "Yes," was the answer. "Is it forbidden for the community to take alms or not?" asked the Ima`m.

"No," came the answer. Having proved argument against them, the Ima`m retorted: "This is the difference between the family (a`l) and the community (umma). Woe unto you! Which creed do

you follow?

What! shall We then turn away the reminder from you altogether because you are an extravagant people? Did you not know that the tradition apparently concerned those who were chosen and rightly guided apart from the rest of the people?" "From where did you say, Abu` al-Hasan?" asked the scholars.

The Ima`m began reciting to them the excellence of the pure offspring, saying: "From these words of Allah:

And certainly We sent Nu`h and Ibrahīm and We gave to their offspring the (gift of) prophecy and the Book; so there are among them those who go aright, and most of them are transgressors.¹ So the legacy of prophecy and the Book was confined to those who went aright apart from the transgressors.

Did you not know that Nu`h ask his Lord, saying: My Lord, surely my son is of my family, and Your promise is surely true? That is because Allah had promised him to save him and his family, so Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, said: Surely he is not of your family; surely he is (the doer of) other than good deeds; therefore, ask not of Me that of which you have no knowledge; surely I admonish you lest you may be of the ignorant. "

Al-Ma'mu`n burst with anger and rage, saying: "Did Allah prefer the offspring to the rest of the people?" The Imam retorted: "Allah, the Great and Almighty, preferred the offspring to the rest of the people in the firm text of His Book." "Where is that in the Book of Allah?" asked al-Ma'mu`n.

The Imam recited to him a group of the verses which lauded the excellence of the Household, peace be on them, saying: "Surely Allah chose Adam and Nu`h and the descendants of Ibra`hīm and the descendants of 'Umra`n above the nations, offspring, one of the other; and Allah is Hearing, Knowing. And Allah said in another place: Or do they envy the people for what Allah has given them of His grace? But indeed We have given to Ibrahīm's family the Book and the wisdom, and We have given them a grand kingdom.

Then after this Allah addressed the rest of the Muslims, saying: O you who believe, obey Allah and obey the Apostle and those in authority from among you.

He meant those whom He made inherit the Book and wisdom, and they were envied for them, according to these words of Him: Or do they envy the people for what Allah has given them of His grace? But indeed We have given to Ibrahīm's family the Book and the wisdom, and We have given them a grand kingdom. He meant obedience to those chosen and pure, and 'kingdom' here means obedience to them." "Did Allah, the Most High, interpret 'choice' in the Book?" asked the scholars.

The Ima`m answered them: "He interpreted 'choice' in outward apart from the inward in twelve places:] "The first of that is the words of Allah: And warn your nearest relations⁴, and your loyal family in this manner it is in the recitation of Ubay b. Ka'b, and it has been established in the copy of the Qur'an of 'Abd Allah b. Mas'ud. However, when 'Uthman ordered Zayd b. Thabit to collect the Qur'an, he omitted this verse. And this is an exalted position, great excellence, and lofty honor when Allah, the Great and Almighty, meant the family (al) by that. This is one (verse).

"As for the second verse concerning choice, it is these words of Allah: Verily Allah intends to keep off from you every kind of uncleanness and to purify you, people of the House, with a thorough purification. None can deny this excellence except him who is obstinate, for this excellence is clear.

"The third verse: When Allah distinguished the pure from among His creatures, He ordered His Prophet in the Verse of Contest of Prayer (Ibtihal) and said: Say: Come let us call our sons and your sons and our women and your women and our souls and your souls, then let us be earnest in prayer, and pray for the curse of Allah on the liars¹. So the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, brought out 'Ali, al-Hasan, al-Husayn, and Fatima, peace be on them, thus he associated their souls with his own soul."

Then the Ima`m turned to the scholars and asked them: "Did you know the meaning of His words: and our souls and your souls?" "By that he (the Prophet) meant his own soul," they answered.

"You are mistaken," replied the Ima`m, "by that he meant 'Ali. The proof of that is the statement of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, when he said to 'Ali: 'Let the Banu` of Wulay'arefrain from (polytheism); otherwise, I will send to them a man who is like my own soul, namely 'Ali, peace be on him. This is a quality which none had before him, a merit over which no man differ, and honor to which no creature preceded him, for he (the Prophet) regarded 'Ali's soul as his own soul. This is the third (verse).

"As for the fourth (proof), it is that he (the Prophet) brought the people out of his mosque except the offspring. When the people spoke about that, al-'Abba`s spoke and said: 'Allah's Apostle, you have left 'Ali and brought us (out of the mosque).' 'It was not I who left him and brought you out,' replied Allah's Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family, 'but it was Allah who left him and brought you out.' This explains his statement to 'Ali, peace be on him: 'Your position to me is as Harun had with Musa.'"

"Where is this in the Qur'a`n?" asked the scholars.

"That is in the Qur'a`n," replied the Ima`m. "Recite it to us," they demanded.

So the Ima`m recited to them these words of Allah, the Exalted: "And We revealed to Musa and his brother, saying: Take for your people houses to abide in Egypt and make your houses places of worship. This verse demonstrates the position of Harun with Musa as well as it demonstrates the position of 'Ali, peace be on him, with Allah's Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family. Besides there is a clear indication in this statement of Allah's Apostle: 'It is not lawful for those who are in a state of major ritual impurity and the menstruating to enter this mosque except Mohammed and the family of Mohammed.'"

The scholars denied the knowledge of that and said to the Imam: "This explanation and this interpretation does not exist. Do you, members of the House of Allah's Messenger, may Allah bless him and his family, have (such an explanation and interpretation)?"

The Imam answered them: "Who denies that while Allah's Messenger, may Allah bless him and his family, says: 'I am the city of knowledge and 'Ali is its gate. Then, one who wishes (to enter) the city of knowledge, then he should enter from its gate.' We clarified and explained ('Ali's) merit, honor, precedence (in Islam), choice, and purity. Accordingly, none denies (these outstanding qualities) except him who is obstinate. To Allah, the Great and Almighty, belongs praise for that! This is the fourth (proof).

"As for the fifth (proof), it is these words of Allah, the Great and Almighty: And give to the near of kin his due. (This is) a quality for which Allah, the Great and Almighty, singled them out, and preferred them over the community. When this verse was revealed to Allah's Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family, he said: 'Summon Fa`tima to me.' They summoned her to him, and he said: 'Fa`tima!' 'Here I am, Allah's Apostle!' she answered. 'None passes (through) Fadak with horses or stirrups; it especially belongs to me apart from the Muslims; and I have granted it to you according to Allah's command, so take it for you and your sons. This is the fifth (proof). "As for the sixth (proof), it is these words of Allah, the Great and Almighty: Say: I

demand not, of you any reward for it (the toils of preaching) except the love of my relations. This is a special characteristic of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, apart from the prophets, and a special characteristic of the Family apart from other than them. That is because Allah gave an account of the prophets when He mentioned Nuh, peace be on him: And, O my people! I ask you not for wealth in return for it; my reward is only with Allah and I am not going to drive away those who believe; surely they shall meet their Lord, but I consider you a people who are ignorant.

He gave an account of Hud, saying: O my people! I ask you not for wealth in return for it; my reward is only with Him Who created me; do you then understand? 4And He said to His Prophet: Say: I demand not, of you any reward for it (the toils of preaching) except the love of

my relations. Allah has imposed showing love for them on people because He had known that they would never turn away from their own creed and never return to error. Another (proof): A man may love a man, but he may hate some of his own household, so he is his enemy and his heart is not sound. Allah loved that there would be nothing in the heart of Allah's Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family, toward the believers, for He imposed on them the love of his relations. Accordingly, he who loves Allah's Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family, and his Household, peace be on them, then Allah's Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family, cannot hate him. He who hates Allah's Apostle and his household, then it is incumbent on Allah's Apostle to hate him, for he has abandoned one of the obligations imposed by Allah.

Which excellence or honor is better than this (love toward Allah's Apostle and his household)? "When Allah sent down to His Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, (this verse): Say: I demand not, of you any reward for it (the toils of preaching) except the love of my relations, Allah's Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family, rose among his companions. He praised

Allah and lauded Him, and then he said: 'People, Allah has imposed an obligation on you, then will you perform it?' None answered him. On the following day he rose among them and said the like of that, but none answered him. One the following day he rose among them and said: 'People, Allah has imposed an obligation on you, then will you perform it?' Yet none answered him. So he said: 'People, the obligation is neither gold nor silver nor food nor drink.' 'Say it,' they demanded. He recited this verse to them. 'As for this (love), we accept it,' they answered. However, most of them did not perform it."

The Ima`m added, saying: [My father related to me on the authority of my grandfather on the authority of his grandfathers on the authority of al-Husayn b. 'Ali, peace be on them, who said:] "The Muha`jiru`n and the Ansar gathered around Allah's Messenger, may Allah bless him and his family, and said to him: 'Allah's Messenger, you have the right to spend on yourself and the delegations who come to you, then these are our properties along with our blood, so make decisions concerning them, may Allah be kind to you and reward you. Give whatever you desire and withhold whatever you desire without any objection.' So Allah sent down the Trusted Spirit

(Gabriel) to him, and he said: 'Mohammed, Say: I demand not, of you any reward for it (the toils of preaching) except the love of my relations. Do not hurt my relations after me. They went out and a group of them said: Allah's Apostle left what we presented before him because he wanted to urge us to show love toward his relations after him; and this is something which he fabricated at his session, so Allah revealed this verse: Nay! they say: He has forged it.

Say: If I have forged it, you do not control anything for me from Allah; He knows best what you

utter concerning it; He is enough as a witness between me and you, and He is the Forgiving,
the Merciful.

As a result, the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, sent for them and asked: 'Has anything happened?' 'Yes, by Allah, Allah's Apostle,' they replied, 'some of us say dreadful words and we hated them.' Allah's Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family, recited this verse to them. They wept and their weeping became intense, hence Allah, the Most High, revealed this verse: And He it is Who accepts repentance from His servants and pardons the
evil deeds and He knows what you do.

"As for the seventh (proof), it is that Allah says: Surely Allah and His angels bless the Prophet; O you who believe! call for (Divine) blessings on him and salute him with a (becoming) salutation.³ When this verse was revealed, the obstinate from among them asked: 'Allah's Messenger, we have come to know how to salute you, then how shall we bless you?' He (the Prophet) said: 'You say: O Allah, bless Mohammed and the family of Mohammed just as You
had blessed Ibra'hīm and the family of Ibrahīm, surely You are Praiseworthy, Glorious.'"

The Imam turned to the scholars and asked them: "Is there any opposition to these (proofs)?"
All of them said in one voice: "No!"

However, al-Ma'mu'n said: "There is no opposition to them, and there is an unanimous agreement on them. Have you anything clearer than them about the family in the Qur'an?" The Imam began giving more definite indications concerning the excellence of the Household (of the Prophet), peace be on them, saying: "Tell me about these words of Allah: Yasīn, and I swear by the Qur'an full of wisdom; most surely you are of the apostles, on a right way¹. Whom
did Allah mean by His words 'Yasīn'?"

The scholars said: "By that He meant Mohammed, may Allah bless him and his family, there is no doubt about that." The Imam turned to those who were present and said to them: "Allah gave Mohammed and the family of Mohammed excellence whose essence and quality none has reached. That is because Allah never saluted anyone except the prophets, the blessings of Allah be upon them. He, the Blessed and Exalted, said: Peace and salutations to Nuḥ among
the nations.

And He said: Peace be on Ibrahīm³. And He said: Peace be on Musa and Harun. He did not say: Peace be on the family of Nuh; nor did He say: Peace be on the family of Ibrahīm; nor did He say: Peace be on the family of Musa and Harun. And He, the Great and Almighty, said: Peace be on Al Yasīn (the family of Yasīn) ; He meant the family of Mohammed." Al-Ma'mu'n turned to Imam al-Rida` and said to him: "I have come to know that this explanation and
clarification is concerning the source of the Prophethood."

(Then the Ima`m continued giving proofs, saying:) "As for the eighth (proof), it is these words of Allah, the Great and Almighty: And know that whatever thing you acquire in war, a fifth of it is for Allah and for the Apostle and for the near of kin.

Allah associated His own portion with that of Allah's Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family, and of those near of kin. This is a difference between the family and the community, for Allah put them in one place and put all people in another place, accepted for them what He accepted for Himself, and singled them out for it. He started with Himself, then His Apostle, then the near of kin in every place of booty, and others which He, the Great and Almighty, accepted for Himself and accepted for them. He said, and His words are the truth:

And know that whatever thing you acquire in war, a fifth of it is for Allah and for the Apostle and for the near of kin. As a result this is a certain verification and permanent matter for them to the Day of Resurrection in Allah's Book, which speaks (of the truth), before and behind which falsehood does not come,

which is a revelation from the Wise, the Praiseworthy. As for these words of Him: and the orphans and the needy, surely the orphans are not included in booty when their orphanhood terminates; they have no share in booty, and it is not lawful for them to take it. As for the share of the near of kin, it subsists to the Day of Resurrection; it is for the rich and the poor, for there is none richer than Allah and His Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family.

He appointed a share of the booty for Himself and a share for His Apostle, so He accepted for them what He accepted for Himself and His Apostle, similar to this (booty) is the war booty gained without fighting (fayya'). He accepted for the near of kin what He accepted for Himself and His Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family. He also made it permissible for them (to take a share) of booty. He started with Himself, then His Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family, and then them. He associated their own share with His own share and the share of His Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family.

He also (associated) obedience (to them with obedience to Him and His Apostle), so He, the Great and Almighty, said: O you who believe! obey Allah and obey the Apostle and those in authority from among you¹. He started with Himself, then with His Apostle, then with his Household, similar to this (verse is the verse regarding) authority (wila`ya): Only Allah is your authority (Vali) and His Apostle and those who believe². Accordingly, He made their authority associated with obedience to Him and the Apostle and, in addition, He made their share (of booty) associated with that of Him and of His Apostle.

When the story of alms came, He, may His name be Exalted, deemed Himself far above it as well as He deemed His Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family and his household, far

above it. Thus He said: Alms are only for the poor and the needy, and the officials (appointed) over them, and those whose hearts are made to incline (to truth) and the (ransoming of) captives and those in debts and in the way of Allah and the wayfarer; an ordinance from Allah. Do you find that He has appointed a share in any of these (verses) for Himself or for His Apostle or the near of kin. That is because when He deemed Himself far above alms, He deemed His Apostle and his Household far above it; rather He made it unlawful (to take alms), for it is unlawful for Mohammed and his Household (to take) alms which are the dirt of men. It is unlawful (for them) to take alms, for they were pure from every uncleanness and dirt. When Allah purified them and chose them, He accepted for them what He accepted for Himself, and He hated for them what He hated for Himself.

"As for the ninth (proof), it is that we are the followers of the Reminder, for Allah has said in the firm text of His Book: So ask the followers of the Reminder." The scholars objected this statement, saying: "By that Allah meant the Jews and the Christians." The Ima`m disproved their viewpoints, saying: "Is it permissible for them to summon us (to follow) their own religion and to say that their religion is better than Islam?"

Al-Ma'mu`n turned to Ima`m al-Reza(A.S.) and asked him for more explanation of what he said, saying: "Have you any explanation of that which opposes their statement?"

"Yes," replied the Ima`m, "the Reminder is Allah's Messenger, may Allah bless him and his family, and we are the men of it, and that is clear in the Verse of Divorce: Therefore be careful of (your duty to) Allah, O men of understanding who believe! Allah has indeed revealed to you a reminder, an Apostle who recites to you clear communications. As a result, the Reminder is Allah's Apostle and we, his Household. This is the ninth (proof). "As for the tenth (proof), it is that Allah has said in the Verse of Prohibition: Forbidden to you are your mothers and your daughters and your sisters. "

The Ima`m addressed the scholars, saying: "Tell me: If Allah's Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family, was alive, was it permissible for him to marry my daughter or the daughter of my son or the offspring of my loins?" "No," the scholars answered.

The Ima`m asked them again: "Tell me: Was it permissible for him to marry one of your daughters?" "Yes," they replied.

"Accordingly, I am one of his family, while you do not belong to his family," said the Imam, "if you belonged to his family, then it would be forbidden for him to marry one of your daughters just as it is forbidden for him to marry one of my daughters. That is because we belong to his family while you belong to his community. This is another difference between the family (al) and the community, for the family belongs to him whereas the community if it is not the family

does not belong to him. This is the tenth (proof).

"As for the eleventh (proof), it is that His words in Su`rat al-Mu'min giving an account of the words of a man: And a believing man of Fir'oun's people who hid his faith said: What! will you slay a man because who says: My Lord is Allah, and indeed he has brought to you clear arguments from your Lord?

The man was the son of Fir'oun's uncle. He (Allah) ascribed the man to Fir'oun because of his lineage and He did not add him to him because of his faith. He (Allah) has also singled us out because we belong to the family of Allah's Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family, and our lineage belongs between the family (al) and the community. This is the eleventh (proof).

"As for the twelfth (proof), it is these words of Him: And enjoin prayer on your family, and steadily adhere to it.

So He (Allah) has singled us out for this special characteristic, for He ordered us through His ordering him (the Prophet), then He has singled us out apart from the community. Accordingly, after the revelation of this verse, Allah's Messenger would come to the door of 'Ali and Fa`tima, peace be on them, five times a day at the timing of the prayers and said: '(Perform) the prayer, may Allah have mercy upon you!' Allah did not honor any of the progeny of the prophets with this noble quality with which He has honored us and singled us out along with all the members of his Household, so this is another difference between the family (a`l) and the community.

Praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the worlds, and Allah bless His Prophet Mohammed. " With this proof we will end our talk about some of Ima`m al-Rida`s debates, which represent a .side of his scientific life and his struggle for defending Islam