

Raw Data Below

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In the name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful. O Allah, send your blessings upon Muhammad and the family of Muhammad and hasten their deliverance.

The life of Najma (peace be upon her), the revered mother of Imam Reza (peace be upon him):

Najma was a young, non-Arab slave woman from the noble families of Persia who, during the Marwanid dominance over Africa, was taken captive. Therefore, she was from the Maghreb region—that is, Africa. Some believe her birthplace was "Nuba," which was located in the south of Egypt at that time and is called Sudan in our day.

The story of how Najma joined the family of infallibility and purity goes as follows:

One day, Imam Musa al-Kazim (peace be upon him) asked me (Hishām) if any slave traders had arrived. I replied no. He said, "Yes, someone has come—let us go to see him." I accompanied the Imam to the location and, with great astonishment, saw a man from the merchants of the Maghreb who had brought many male and female slaves with him.

The Imam stepped forward and told him to show us his slave women. The man brought nine slave girls. The Imam said, "Bring another one." The man responded, "I have no others." The Imam said, "You do, bring her." The man replied, "By God, I have no others except for one sick slave girl." The Imam said, "Bring her." But the slave trader refused. So the Imam and I returned.

The next day, the Imam sent me to him and told me, "Whatever price he asks, buy that sick slave girl for me and bring her to me." I went to the man as before and told him I wanted the girl. He sold her to me at a high price, and then he asked, "Tell me the truth: who was that man with you yesterday?" I said, "He is a man from Bani Hashim."

The slave trader said, "O man, know that I bought this girl from the farthest lands of the Maghreb. One day, a woman from the People of the Book saw her and asked me where I had gotten her from. I replied that I had bought her for myself. The woman said, 'This slave girl does not belong with someone like you—she should be with the best people of the earth. After owning this girl for a short time, a son will be born from her who will be obeyed by all people in the East and the West.'"

About the purchase of Najma, Imam al-Kazim (peace be upon him) said: "By God, I did not purchase her except by the command and inspiration of God." He was asked, "How?" He replied: "In a dream, I saw my father and grandfather. They opened a silk cloth, and inside was a shirt with the image of this girl on it. They told me: 'O Musa, most certainly the best person on earth will be born from this slave girl.' Then they instructed me to name him Ali when he is born. They said that God will, through him, manifest justice, kindness, and mercy — blessed is the one who affirms and believes in him, and woe to the one who opposes and rejects him."

In another narration, Lady Hamida (the purified mother of Imam al-Kazim, peace be upon him) says: “In a dream, I saw the Prophet of God (peace be upon him and his family), and he said: ‘O Hamida, Najma is fit for your son Musa, for from this girl, Musa will have a child who will be the best of the people of the earth.’”

There is no contradiction between these two narrations because it’s possible that Imam al-Kazim (peace be upon him) bought Najma (peace be upon her) for his mother Hamida, even though through divine knowledge he knew she would eventually be his own wife.

Dialogue between Lady Hamida and Imam Musa al-Kazim (peace be upon him) regarding his marriage:

Hamida said:

“My son, Tukhtam (Najma) is a servant girl, but I have never seen a maid better than her. I am certain that Allah, the Exalted, will soon grant her a pure and blessed offspring.”

At last, the marriage ceremony of Imam Musa al-Kazim (peace be upon him) and Najma was held, and Najma had the honor of becoming the bride of the family of purity and infallibility.

This sacred union brought happiness and joy to the Imam’s household—because, finally, the woman most worthy of becoming the mother of Imam Reza (peace be upon him) had entered their family.

Although Najma had endured a difficult journey, she was no longer sick; instead, she was filled with excitement and joy at being part of a family that personified virtues and moral excellence.

Now, Lady Hamida, inspired by her truthful dream about Najma and heeding the advice of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family), showed great respect toward her daughter-in-law. She ensured Najma received proper guidance and instruction. Najma, possessing both purity and keen intelligence, absorbed these teachings from the noble family, preparing her pure soul for the light of Imamate.

Lady Hamida then offered Imam Musa al-Kazim heartfelt advice:

“My dear son, I recommend you treat her well and show her love and kindness.”

The Sacred and Splendid Pregnancy of Najma

Najma experienced a profoundly sacred and splendid, yet secret, pregnancy. Not long after her marriage, Najma became pregnant. This pregnancy needed to remain hidden because, under the oppression of the Abbasid caliphs, there was a risk that this pure lineage might be severed. It was essential that God’s proof and the Perfect Human always remain on earth.

Najma describes her pregnancy as follows:

“When I became pregnant, I did not feel any heaviness at all. In my sleep, I would hear my unborn child reciting the praises of God—words of glorification, declaring His oneness, and extolling Him. When Imam Reza (peace be upon him) was born, he placed his hands on the ground, lifted his blessed head toward the sky, and began to move his lips, speaking words that I could not understand.

At that moment, Imam Musa ibn Ja‘far (peace be upon him) came to me and said, 'Congratulations to you, Najma, for your Lord’s blessings and honor upon you.'

I wrapped the newborn in a white cloth and gave him to the Imam. He recited the call to prayer (adhan) in his right ear and the call to commence (iqamah) in his left ear. He then asked for some water from the Euphrates, touched the baby’s mouth with it, and handed him back to me, saying, 'Take him, for he is the remaining proof of God on earth and God’s representative after me.’”

After the birth of Imam Reza (peace be upon him), Najma was called “Tahira,” a name given to her by Imam Kazim (peace be upon him).

Here is the English translation of the fourth voicenote:

Worship and prayer were the cornerstone of Najma's (peace be upon her) life. After being freed from the period of slavery and settling in the home of the most sacred and generous family, and being honored with the desirable and dreamlike position of becoming the bride of the household of prophethood and Imamate, she made worship and prayer the main focus of her life. She knew well that the secret to closeness to God is sincere servitude and devotion.

Imam Reza (peace be upon him) was physically strong and robust at birth and drank a lot of milk. For this reason, Lady Najma sought out a virtuous wet nurse to help feed her child.

Someone asked Najma, “Does your own milk not suffice for him?” The Lady replied, “I swear by God, my milk has not decreased. However, since the birth of my child, the recitations from prayers, supplications, and acts of glorification I used to perform have lessened.”

Indeed, Lady Najma placed great importance on her acts of worship.

Lady Masoumeh (peace be upon her), a blossom from the garden of Najma's lap.

Imam Reza (peace be upon him) was his mother's only child for 25 years. After that, in the year 173 AH, a lovely, cherished daughter—the second and last child of Najma—was born on the first of Dhu al-Qi'dah. After holding her in his arms and whispering the call to prayer and the second call (iqamah) in her ears, Imam Kazim (peace be upon him) gave her the blessed name Fatima. Imam Reza (peace be upon him) gave her the title “Masoumeh” (the infallible).

This daughter, who learned virtues from her noble father Imam Kazim (peace be upon him) and was raised in the pure, loving embrace of her mother, the devout, worshipful, and faithful Najma Khatun, was endowed with knowledge and wisdom.

One day, a group of Imam Kazim's Shia followers came to his house in Medina seeking answers to their questions, but the Imam was traveling and not at home. They wrote their questions on a piece of paper and gave it to the family. The next day, when they came to bid farewell, they saw Lady Masoumeh, who was around five or six, had written answers to all their questions. On their way back, they met Imam Kazim (peace be upon him). When the Imam saw the replies, he repeated three times, "May her father be sacrificed for her."

After the martyrdom of Imam Kazim (peace be upon him) by Harun al-Abbasi, Lady Masoumeh lived under the care of Imam Reza (peace be upon him) for 21 years. Imam Kazim (peace be upon him) was martyred on the orders of Harun while Lady Masoumeh was six years old, and until Imam Reza's migration to Khorasan, she remained under his guardianship.

The noble Lady Masoumeh, the beloved daughter of Najma, is a person for whose visitation—with knowledge and recognition—paradise is promised according to some narrations, and she holds the rank of intercession. Yes, Imam Reza (peace be upon him) and Lady Masoumeh (peace be upon her) were the only children of Lady Najma Khatun (peace be upon her).

After Lady Fatima (peace be upon her), Lady Masoumeh is the only woman for whom a visitation prayer (ziyaratnama) from an infallible Imam exists.

Imam Reza (peace be upon him) said, “Whoever visits Masoumeh in Qom, it is as though he has visited me.”

6. Political and Social Conditions During Imam Kazim's Era and the Patience and Endurance of Lady Najma (peace be upon her):

The life of Imam Kazim (peace be upon him) was full of pressure and oppression. He lived through the reigns of four Abbasid caliphs: Mansur Dawaniqi, Mahdi Abbasi, Hadi, and Harun Abbasi. The Imam was closely monitored and severely restricted by the rulers of his time.

During Harun Abbasi's rule, Imam Kazim spent at least four or five years in prison. Certainly, this period was extremely difficult for Lady Najma, who endured many hardships. She suffered from seeing how the model of justice, piety, and kindness—chosen by God and at the pinnacle of knowledge, faith, and righteous action, the Imam on earth—was not only deprived from benefiting society but was also harassed and tormented.

Imam Kazim considered the Abbasid caliphate illegitimate and was frequently summoned to Baghdad. Mansur Abbasi, a stingy and ruthless individual, oppressed the descendants of Ali (Alawites), and 10 of Imam Kazim's 35 years of leadership coincided with Mansur's reign.

Hadi Abbasi even threatened the Imam with death after the Imam praised Husayn, a descendant of Imam Hasan and leader of the Fakh uprising, calling this event the second most important after Karbala. Despite such conditions, Lady Najma consoled her husband and also cared for her precious son, who would become the next Imam. Living in an atmosphere of intimidation, injustice, and threat was certainly very difficult for Lady Najma, but with strong faith and patience—and insight into the Imam's divine status—she endured all these hardships for God's sake.

Harun's rule was especially harsh on the Shia. The Alawites, as the main rivals of the Abbasids, were under intense oversight. Hadi Abbasi knew that Imam Kazim was the greatest figure of the Prophet's family, gaining the loyalty of the Prophet's descendants and followers. After the Fakh uprising—led by Husayn ibn Ali ibn Hassan, a descendant of Imam Hasan, against the injustice of the Abbasids—the leader and his companions were killed and beheaded near Mecca, their heads displayed before members of Imam Ali's family and Imam Kazim.

All remained silent except Imam Kazim, who recited, "Indeed we belong to God and to Him we will return," saying Husayn died as a righteous Muslim, deeply devout and a commander for good. Hadi Abbasi was furious, suspecting Imam Kazim of supporting the movement.

The purpose of explaining the Fakh uprising is to illustrate what political and social conditions Lady Najma faced. This explains why, for mothering the Imam, individuals with exceptional qualities—like courage, patience, secrecy, strong faith, and above all, recognition and belief in the Imam—were chosen. Lady Najma possessed these at the highest level. Her devotion empowered her to face all these obstacles for the sake of God, to remain by the Imam's side, comfort him in hardship, and protect Imam Reza.

7. The Oppressed Martyrdom of Imam Kazim and Lady Najma's Sorrow:

The martyrdom of Imam Kazim (peace be upon him) was a great sorrow for Najma. She saw how the Abbasid regime kept moving the Imam between prisons. Harun ordered Imam Kazim

chained and sent to Basra, instructing Isa ibn Ja'far ibn Mansur, governor of Basra, to keep him imprisoned for one year and then kill him. But Isa refused to carry out the murder. Harun then transferred the Imam to Baghdad and entrusted him to Fadl ibn Rabi', who also refused to kill him. The Imam was shuttled from one prison to another for years.

Finally, Harun handed the Imam over to a cruel man named Sindi ibn Shahak. At age 55, Sindi, on Harun's orders, poisoned the Imam. Three days later, the Imam died as a martyr. After his death, Sindi brought several jurists and elders of Baghdad before his body, asked if they saw any wounds or signs of violence, and told them to testify that he died a natural death—which they did under duress. The Imam's body was then left on a bridge in Baghdad, and a crier announced, "See, Musa ibn Ja'far died a natural death!" His blessed remains were ultimately buried in the Quraysh Cemetery.

Even if Lady Najma was not present in Baghdad or Basra, she surely knew of the oppression the Imam suffered and endured both his loss and the news of the tortures and eventual martyrdom. In Medina, she coped with this loss by turning to God—her lifelong companion in prayer—and by finding comfort in her son, Imam Reza, of whose motherhood she was proud.

Given that only an Imam may prepare another Imam's body for burial, it is likely Imam Reza performed the burial rituals, though it is unclear whether his mother was present.

Eventually, after fulfilling her divine duties, honored as wife to the seventh Imam and mother to Imam Reza, Lady Najma—who excelled in worship, faith, purity, intellect, patience, and deep understanding of the Imam's station—answered God's call: "O tranquil soul, return to your Lord, well-pleased and pleasing." According to reports, her grave is in the Baqi' Cemetery in Mashrabat Umm Ibrahim, beside the noble Lady Hamida.