

Imam Muhammad Taqi al-Jawad (A.S.)

The Ninth Immaculate Holy Imam

Name: Muhammad bin Ali.

Titles: At-Taqi, Al-Jawad.

Kuniyya: Abu Ja'fer.

Father: Imam Ali Reza(A.S.)

Mother: Sabika (also known as Khaizarun).

Birth: 10th Rajab 195 A.H. Madina.

Martyrdom: 29th Dhulqa'da 220 A.H. Baghdad. Buried in Kadhmain.

Imam al-Jawad (A.S.) was born on 10th day of the month of Rajab, in the year 195 A.H. in Madina - the city of his grandfather, the Messenger of Allah (S.A.W.), under the care of his father, Imam Ali bin Musa al-Reza (A.S.) who was qualified with the leadership (Imamate) and its qualifications, a lofty status, the position of leadership in the ummah and in the sciences of Islamic Shari'a and its laws.

The Imam (A.S.) was born in a period full of events and political situations, conflicts, and the tension of events of the Abbasid caliphate between Amin and Ma'moon, the two sons of Harun Rashid.

Those political events and the situations of the conflict which was going on between the two brothers, the Abbasid caliphs, never ended without reflecting their effects on the life of Imam al-Reza (A.S.) attracted the attention of the Muslims -in the city of his grandfather, the Messenger of Allah (S.A.W.) - including religious scholars, jurists, governors, and common people. Thus, the political view of the caliph, Ma'mun, was directed towards him and, therefore, summoned him to the capital of his rulership (Merv) in the year 200 A.H. and appointed him as heir so that the caliphate would be transferred to him after Ma'mun's death.

The Imam Reza (A.S.) was forced to leave Madina and move towards the city of 'Merv' (in Khurasan - Iran) to accept Ma'mun's invitation after many refusals and abstentions. Before moving to merv, he took with him, his son, Imam Muhammad al-Jawad (a.s.), then, he (a.s.) started out from Madina towards Mecca in order to pay a visit to the Sacred House (Ka'ba) and, also, to say farewell to it.

Imam al-Reza (A.S.) performed the hajj (pilgrimage) with his son, al-Jawad, who was only four years at that time.

Indeed, the young Imam expressed his adherence and love for his father by his insistence to stay under the care of the holy embrace. It was difficult for him to return home (Madinah), alone, and depart from his father, who wrote, in his farewell letter to the Sacred House, that he would not return.

The moments of farewell ended and the hour of departure approached; the young Imam al-Jawad(A.S.) returned home (to Madinah), bearing the yearnings of love, the adherence of a son for his father; his father moved towards the city of Merv while his heart departed to Madina, following the procession of the beloved al-Jawad.

Imam al-Reza's Letters to his Son, al-Jawad (A.S.)

Arriving at the city of Merv, the, then, capital of the Abbasid caliphate, Imam al-Reza (A.S.) rested there while his heart still inclined towards his son. From there, he (A.S.) began to correspond, address, advise, guide and take care of him. Historians state the fact that Imam al-Reza (A.S.) used to address his son al-Jawad (A.S.), with honour and glory in his correspondences and call him by his surname 'Abu Ja'far'.

The Divine Leadership of Imam al-Jawad (A.S.)

The period of transferring the leadership to Imam Muhammad Taqi al-Jawad (A.S.) faced a dangerous problem which caused debates and arguments concerning the personality of Imam Muhammad Taqi al-Jawad (A.S.) because of his youth.He (A.S.) was young, at the age of seven, when his father passed away. Books of history and biographies record some of these discussions about the personality of the young Imam (A.S.) and his capability for the leadership at that age.

When Imam Muhammad al-Jawad (a.s.) was born, the same questions were sent to Imam al-Rida in order for them to know who would be the Imam after al-Reza (A.S.). Was not Muhammad al-Jawad (A.S.) a child? And how could he bear the responsibility of the leadership and its affairs if he was at this age? Indeed, Imam al-Reza (A.S.) always confirmed that the Imam after him would be his son, Muhammad Taqi al-Jawad (a.s.), and the one who was most qualified.

Ibn Qulawaih, on the authority of Kulaini, on the authority of Hussein bin Muhammad, on the authority of Khariyani, on the authority of his father, said:

"I (i.e. Khayrani's father) was standing in front of Abul-Hassan al-Reza (A.S.), in Khurasan. Someone asked him: 'My master, if something happens, to whom will authority belong?'"

"To Abu Ja'far (al-Jawad), my son," he replied. The speaker indicated that the age of Abu Ja'far was too young. So, Abul-Hassan al-Reza (A.S.), replied: "Allah, may He be praised, sent Jesus, son of Mary, to be an apostle, a prophet, the bringer of a revealed law (Shari'a), to begin (his mission) when his age was younger than that of Abu Ja'far(al-Jawad), peace be upon him."

Narrated Mu'ammr bin Khallad that he heard Imam al-Reza (A.S.), saying: "When he mentioned something and, then, said: 'What need have you for that? Here is Abu Ja'far, whom I have brought into my meetings and whom I have made to be my successor.' Then, he added: 'We are the family of the House (Ahlul-Bayt). Our young inherit from our old, like one feather (on a wing) followed by the next.'"

Allamah Majlisi narrated, in his book 'Uyoon Mu'jizat', a description of certain events of that critical period from the age of leadership, and which included the following text:

"... it was pilgrimage season. Some jurisprudents (Fuqaha') of Baghdad and other nations and their religious scholars, numbering 80, went to Medina to perform Hajj ceremonies and, then, they intended to see Abu Ja'far Imam Jawad(A.S.). When they reached the house of Ja'far al-Sadiq (a.s.), because of its emptiness, entered it and sat on a big carpet.

"Then, Abdulla bin Musa (Imam al-Reza's brother) came and sat at the head of the meeting. A caller stood and said: "This is the son of the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.), therefore, whoever has any question, he may ask him." He (Abdulla bin Musa i.e. Imam al-Jawad's nephew) was questioned about things, to which he inappropriately answered. His answers caused the Shi'a to be bewildered and grieved, therefore, the jurisprudents were confused among themselves and started leaving the place and telling each other that if Abu Ja'far (the Imam) was present, he would have been able to answer all the questions addressed to Abdulla bin Musa.

"Then, a door was opened at the front of the meeting and Muwafaq, the Imam's servant, entered and said: "This is Abu Ja'far Imam Jawad (A.S.)." All those who were present stood up, welcomed and greeted him, then the Imam (A.S.) entered.

He (A.S.) sat while all people kept silent. Then, the questioner stood up and asked the Imam (A.S.) different questions, to which he (A.S.) answered perfectly and correctly. His answers caused those present to be happy, give thanks and praise the Imam.

They told him: "Indeed, your uncle, Abdulla, gave verdicts so and so." He (A.S.) said: "There is no god but Allah, o my uncle, Abdulla, gave verdicts so and so." He (A.S.) said: "There is no god but Allah, O my uncle! It is great to stand tomorrow (on the resurrection day) before His hands and He will say to you: 'Why did you give verdicts (issue religious decrees) to My servants about things you did not know, while there was someone among people who had more knowledge than you.'"

Even religious scholars and jurisprudents confirmed their declaration for the Imam Jawad's being qualified with the position of leadership. The vivid declaration of Imam al-Reza (A.S.), for his leadership, and the acknowledgement of the famous traditionist, Ali bin Ja'far, are, also, proofs for the Imam's qualification for the position of leadership.

He became an Imam at the age of nine. Mamun thought that as all the rulers before him had oppressed the Holy Imams and their schemes had backfired that he would try to bribe the Holy Imams. He tried to make the 8th Imam his heir apparent and give him power and wealth but that also backfired.

He now tried to use power and wealth with the 9th Imam again but from a much younger age thinking that he would be able to influence him.

His main purpose was also to make sure that the 12th Imam (whom he knew would bring justice to the world) would be from his progeny and therefore intended to give his daughter Ummul Fadl to the Imam for a wife. Mamun still continued oppressing the family and followers of the Ahlul-Bayt (A.S.).

Mamun called the young Imam (A.S.) to Baghdad from Madina and offered his daughter. This infuriated his family (Banu Abbas). To prove to them the excellence of Imam even at a young age he arranged a meeting between Imam and the most learned of men at that time - Yahya bin Athkam, the Chief Judge of his period .

Imam (A.S.) read his own Nika (the khutba of which is used today) with the Mehr of 500 dirhams. Imam wrote a letter to Mamun that he would also give Ummul Fadhl Mehr from the wealth of Aakhira. This was in the form of 10 duas which were for fulfilling any hajaat (desires) [Chain of narrators upto Prophet - Jibrail - Allah]* . Thus his title Al-Jawad (the generous one).

* These duas are found in Mafatihul Jinaan (pg 447 - In margin)

Hirze(Amulet) Jawad

Imam lived for a year in Baghdad with Ummul Fadhl. She was very disobedient to Imam.

When she found out that Imam had another wife (from the progeny of Ammar-e-Yasir) and that there was also children she was jealous and angry realizing that her father's plan had failed. She complained to her father who also realized that his plan, to keep the 12th Imam in his progeny, had failed.

He was enraged and in his rage he drank heavily and went to the 9th Imam's house and attacked Imam with a sword. Both Ummul Fadhl and a servant saw the attack and believed Imam was dead. Mamun on waking next morning realized the consequences of his attack and was thinking of arranging the disposal of Imam's body when he saw Imam well without a scratch on him.

He was confused and asked Imam who showed him an amulet which is called Hirze Jawad. The Holy Imam told him it was from his grand mother Bibi Fatima Zahra (A.S.) and kept the wearer safe from all except the angel of death.

We, also, observed how Ma'mun held meetings and councils in which he invited various scholars, thinkers and jurisprudents like the Qadi ul-Qudat(Chief Judge) of the Abbasid state, Yahya bin Aktham for scholarly discussions and debates which lasted hours and days. In such meetings, they introduced the Imam Jawad (A.S.) to critical legislative and theological questions to which he answered wisely and accurately.

The debate was attended by top officials of the state, military commanders and leaders. Then, the Qadi, Yahya bin Aktham approached Abu Ja'far al-Jawad (A.S.) and asked him some questions he had prepared before. The Imam Jawad (A.S.) answered them correctly and, in which, he showed the cause for correctness.

Therefore, the debate went on between Yahya and Imam al-Jawad (A.S.) in the following way: "Ask me whatever you wish," said the Imam in the typical tone of his ancestors.

Yahya, then, asked the Holy Imam, "What is your verdict about a man who indulges in hunting while he is in the state of Ihram'. (In the code of religious law hunting is forbidden for a pilgrim).

The Imam at once replied, "Your question is vague and misleading. You should have definitely mentioned whether he hunted within the jurisdiction of the Ka'ba or outside; whether he was literate or illiterate; whether he was a slave or a free citizen; whether he was a minor or a major; whether it was for the first time or he had done it previously; also, whether that victim was a bird or some other creature; whether the prey was small or big; whether he hunted in the day or at night; whether the hunter repented for his action or persisted in it; whether he hunted secretly or openly; whether the 'Ihram' was for Umra (the lesser pilgrimage) or for Hajj (the greater pilgrimage). Unless all these points are explained no specific answer can be given to this question."

Qadi Yahya was bewildered and staggered in listening to these words, of the Holy Imam, and the entire gathering was dumbfounded. Inability and indecision were clear on Qadi Yahya's face.

Thus, the historical period, and what it contains of religious scholars and jurisprudents, acknowledges the leadership of Imam al-Jawad (A.S.) in order to continue the right path of his forefathers and their footsteps and, also, bear the religious scholarly and political burdens of divine succession of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.).

His Knowledge

Indeed, Imam al-Jawad (A.S.) played his role and shared in enriching the scholarly school during the period of his leadership, which lasted nearly 17 years, and, also, safeguarded its patrimony. That period (of the Holy Imam) was distinguished by two things: Dependence on text and narration of the Messenger of Allah (S.A.W.) and, also, on an accurate understanding and deduction of both the Book (the Qur'an) and Prophet's traditions (Sunnah). In addition to this, the Holy Imam's concern for intellectual knowledge and science, in which, the Imams of Ahlul-Bait and their students participated greatly, in developing, enriching, and expanding its circles to the extent that it became a lofty declaration and a well-fortified fortress for the Islamic thought and Shari'a.

Imam al-Jawad (A.S.), like his forefathers (A.S.), used different means to carry out his scientific procedures, among them are:

1. The means of teaching and instructing those students and scholars and urging them to write and record and, also, sustain what comes from the Holy Imams of Ahlul-Bayt (A.S.) or by bidding them to the art of writing, publishing, and classifying.

Sheikh Tusi in his book 'Rijal', mentioned the number of the close companions of Imam al-Jawad (A.S.) and his narrators, who studied and were educated under his care to be about

one hundred, including two women.

Indeed, all these religious scholars quoted Imam al-Jawad (A.S.) and wrote many books in different fields of Islamic sciences and knowledge. They enriched Islamic schools with true, original researches and thoughts.

This fact is proved in the books of 'Rijal' which mentioned the close companions of Imam al-Jawad (A.S.) and, in which, they explained their conditions, their publications and writings.

2. The means of appointing deputies and commanding them to spread out in different parts of the Muslim lands in order to be true callers to Islam, follow it and convey its divine laws.

Books of history have recorded the correspondences of Imam al-Jawad (A.S.) with his deputies who were spread in different parts of the Muslim world in order to convey Islamic faith and what they learned from the jurisprudence of the Household of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) and their knowledge.

3. The means of scholarly debates and discussions. The books of traditions and narrations, have recorded for us, richly, discussions and debates in different kinds of sciences and knowledge and defending Islam and fixing its pillars in the fields of monotheism, jurisprudence, interpretation, and narrations and so on.

These discussions contained different researches. Among them were: Defending Islam and countering perverse ideas and deviated philosophies and ideologies which existed among the Muslims. And, also, repairing the ideological deviations which existed among certain Muslims, such as: Exaggeration and incarnations and others or discussions to explain Islam and clarify its diverse fields.

The Political course in the Holy Imam's Life

The Holy Imams of Ahlul-Bayt (A.S.), their followers, and those who supported them during the history of Islam, represented political oppositions against the Umayyad and Abbasid rulers, who usurped the caliphate and imposed their tyrannical rule on the Muslims and who stayed away from the political course, decreed by the Holy Messenger of Allah (S.A.W.) for his Ummah.

All the political slogans and plans, declared by Ma'mun, aimed to draw the attention of public opinion and those who were loyal to Holy Prophet's Household [Ahlul-Bayt (A.S.)] towards him, and calm down the Shi'ite uprisings. But, inspite of that, the caliph Ma'mun, faced different Shi'ite revolutions because of anti-Islamic deeds.

So, this policy did not last for a long time and, soon, the Abbasid rulers turned to hurting and harming the Holy Imams of Ahlul-Bayt (A.S.) and hampering them.

The Imam Jawad's Political Role

Studying the historical documents stated by Imam al-Jawad (A.S.), on one hand, and the attitudes held by the Abbasid authorities towards the Holy Imam, on the other, one can understand that Imam al-Jawad (A.S.) was at the top of secret political and ideological essence and who practised his activities in secret and had a leading status with a deep impact on awakening the feelings of the people.

Books of traditions, history and narrations recorded for us some of these letters dispatched by Imam Muhammad Taqi al-Jawad (A.S.), to his companions, followers and representatives and which portray vividly the secret political activity of the Holy Imam (A.S.) and his companions and cause us to be acquainted with the ideological and political situation of that age.

These letters reveal not only the existence of the deep relationship between the Holy Imam (A.S.) and his companions and how the financial assistance was presented to him, from different parts of the Muslim lands to cover his needs in performing his activities, but, also, the existence of the Holy Imam's followers, and his secret cultural and political activity at that time.

Indeed, the Abbasid authorities were watching the Holy Imam's activities and used different ways to hinder it and forbid it against spreading and affecting others. Hence, these letters reveal to us the continuation of this activity and the call in support of the holy family of the Prophet (A.S.), the deepness of their effect, the influence of their ideological and political tendencies, in the life of people, inspite of the terror and dangers which surrounded them.

The Attitude of Abbasid Caliphs towards Imam al-Jawad (A.S.)

Certainly, to study and analyze the attitude of the two Abbasid caliphs, Ma'mun and Mu'tasim, who succeeded the caliphate after him, toward Imam Muhammad Taqi al-Jawad (A.S.) indicates, clearly, the importance of the leading personality of the Holy Imam (A.S.) and his esteemed status in the hearts of the people and the inclinations of the Ummah towards him. They considered him (the Holy Imam) as a true representative of Ahlul-Bayt, in that period,

and as a successor of his guiding grandfathers (peace be upon them all).

Therefore, we find that Ma'mun summoned the Holy Imam (A.S.) from Madina in the year 211 A.H., and then married him, to his daughter, Ummul Fadl. Because of this marriage, Ma'mun involved himself in a conflict with his cousins, the Abbasid family. Ma'mun wanted to assimilate the situation of Imam al-Jawad (A.S.) towards his collaterals and to contain his public movements in both the ideological and political fields.

But, as we have seen, the Holy Imam (A.S.) was opposite of this. He (A.S.) practised his activity accurately and skillfully. The Holy Imam (A.S.) moved in every field in which the opportunity was supplied to him. He (A.S.) refused to stay in Baghdad in order to be far from the siege of the authorities and their control and, then, returned to Madina, his birth place and the residence of his fathers, a centre of knowledge, and faith and a shelter of hearts in order to achieve the related aims as being an Imam (leader) of the Ummah and a pioneer of the Shari'a.

Holy Imam's Martyrdom

When Ma'mun died, Mu'tasim ascended the throne. He (Mu'tasim), like his Abbasid ancestors, was worried about the leadership of Ahlul-Bayt (A.S.) and their political and scholarly status. Therefore, he exiled Imam al-Jawad (A.S.) from Madina to Baghdad in the year 219 A.H., for fear of his popularity and extending his effect. He did this, in order to draw the Holy Imam near the centre of power and scrutiny and isolate him from practising his popular, political and scholarly role.

Indeed, Imam al-Jawad (A.S.) was exiled to Baghdad from Madina and stayed in Baghdad until in the year 220 A.H. when he was martyred by poisoning by his wife Ummul Fadl at the instigation of the ruling Abbasid caliph Mu'tasim.

His short life lasted twenty five years and some months, and was full of historical, ideological and scholarly struggle and achievements. The Holy Imam (A.S.) was martyred in Baghdad in the year 220 A.H., on the 29th of Zee al-Qa'adah and was buried in the graveyard of Quraish behind his grandfather, Imam Musa bin Ja'far (A.S.) the seventh holy Imam which was since then became famous as Kazmain.

Short Maxims of Imam Muhammad Taqi al-Jawad(A.S.)

1 - As a man asked him for an advice, Imam al-Jawad(A.S.) said: Put your head on steadfastness, embrace poverty, reject the lusts, oppose your passions, and know that you cannot be out of Allah's sight. Consider how you should behave, then.

2 - Allah revealed to one of His prophets: Your asceticism will give you comfort. Your devotion to Me will endear you to Me. But, did you antagonize My enemies and cherish My disciples?

3 - It was related that highway robbers stole the large amounts of cloth that belonged to Imam al-Jawad(A.S.). The head of the caravan sent the Imam a message in which he informed him of that news. The Holy Imam (A.S.) answered him: Our souls and riches are within the pleasant gifts and the deposited loans of Allah Who makes us enjoy some of them pleasantly and delightedly and seizes whatever He wills with rewards and merits. He whose intolerance overcomes his steadfastness will waste his rewards. Allah protect us against so.

4 - He who detested a matter that he witnessed is as same as those who were absent from it, and he who was absent from a matter that he loved is as same as those who witnessed it.

5 - He whoever listens to a caller is serving him. If the caller was Allah's representative, he is then serving Allah. If the caller was the Shaitan's representative, he is then serving the Shaitan.

6- Dawud-bin-al-Qasim related: I asked Imam al-Jawad(A.S.) about the meaning of 'Samad'. He said: Everything that lacks navel is 'Samad'. I said that people claim that 'Samad' is everything that lacks interior. Imam al-Jawad(A.S.) commented: Everything that lacks interior lacks navel.

7 - Abu-Hashim al-Ja'fari related: On the wedding day of Imam al-Jawad(A.S.) and Ummul-Fadhli, daughter of Al-Ma'mun. I said: O master, the blessing of this day is clearly great for us. The Holy Imam (A.S.) replied: O Abu-Hashim, Allah's blessings in this day have been great for us. "Yes, master," I said, "What should I say about the day?" Imam al-Jawad(A.S.) answered: Say only good things about the day so that you will be given from these good things. "Master," I said, "I will follow this instruction completely." Imam al-Jawad(A.S.) said: You will be guided to the right and you will see only the good if you adhere to this instruction.

8 - Imam al-Jawad(A.S.) wrote to one of his disciples: We are only ladling from this world. He whose belief and religion are the same as his acquaintance will surely accompany the acquaintance everywhere. The life to come is surely the remaining abode.

9 - Delay of repentance is deception, excessive procrastination is perplexity, arrogance against Allah is perdition, and insistence on sins is security against Allah's unexpected retribution. No one can consider himself secure from the retribution of Allah except those who are lost. (Holy Qur'an 7:99).

10 - A cameleer who took Imam al-Jawad(A.S.) from Medina to Al-Kufa asked for more money after the Imam had given him four hundred dinars. The Holy Imam (A.S.) said: How strange this is! Do you not know that Allah's increasing gifts will be stopped when the servants stop showing Him gratitude?

11 - The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) accepted the pledge of allegiance of women by dripping his hand in a bowl of water, and when he took his hand out, women dripped their hands in that bowl and declared the shahada, faith in Allah, and believing in the Holy Prophet(S.A.W.) and the matters they had to acknowledge.

12 - To show a matter before preparing for it properly is spoiling it.

13 - A believer is in need of successfulness from Allah, a self-preaching, and accession to the advisers.

History of the Shrine of Imam Musa al-Kazim(A.S.) and Imam Muhammad Taqi(A.S.)

Anyone approaching Baghdad from the north or the west will be impressed by the sight of the four golden minarets at Kadhmayn, the Shrine of the Two Imams, Imam Musa al-Kadhim(A.S.) and Imam Muhammad Taqi al-Jawad(A.S.). They are respectively the Seventh and the Ninth of the Twelve Imams, at whose tombs we are accustomed to seek healing and to invoke their intercession for the forgiveness of our sins and the fulfilment of our needs.

The present building dates back only to the beginning of the sixteenth century and has been kept in excellent repair. This building represents the restoration of Shah Ismail I Safavi (1502 - 24), though when the Turkish Sultan, Suleman the Great, captured Baghdad and remained there for four months in 1534, he visited this sacred place, and is said to have contributed to the further ornamentation of the Shrine at Kadhmayn.

The tiles for the double cupola, however, were provided in 1796 by Shah Agha Muhammad Khan, who was the first of the Persian Qajar dynasty. In 1870, Nasr-al-Din Shah had these golden tiles repaired on one of the domes and on the minarets. It is interesting that the dates of all these alterations are clearly indicated by inscriptions.

If we bear in mind that the Two Imams who are buried here were martyred in the beginning of the eighth century, it will be evident that there are seven hundred years of the history of their tomb to account for, previous to the comparatively modern restoration of Shah Ismail I. The Imams lived in the early days of Baghdad, while the walls of Mansur's round city on the western side of the Tigris were still standing. There were cemeteries to the north-west that went by various names - that at the Syrian Gate, that of the Abbasids, and that of the Straw Gate.¹

The Two Imams were buried immediately to the west of this latter cemetery, but by the time Yakubi wrote, the whole northern district was designated in a general way as the cemetery of the Kuraish.² Both of these Imams were poisoned at the instigation of the reigning Caliphs, but it is significant that in the case of Imam Muhammad Taqi, the funeral service was read by a representative of the royal family,³ which undoubtedly distinguished the Imam as an important person, at whose grave some sort of a mausoleum would be built.

But as to the importance attached in the early times to the visit to this tomb, the only information available is on the authority of traditions that have been attributed to the Eighth and Tenth Imams. These traditions are answers they are said to have given when they were asked by their followers concerning the merit of pilgrimage to Kadhmayn.

It is related that the Imam Ali Reza(A.S.), whose life in Baghdad was during the caliphate of Haroon al-Rashid, told his Shia followers to say their prayers of salutation to his father, the Imam Musa al-Kadhim, "Outside the walls of the Shrine, or in the nearby mosques," if the Sunni authority and prejudice in Baghdad was too great for them to do so at the tomb itself. From this we infer that a building of some sort was recognised at that early date as marking the tomb of the Imam Musa and that it was surrounded by a wall.

Further statements are said to have been made a few years later by the Imam Ali Naqi(A.S.), whose period in the Imamate began during the later part of the Caliphate of Mu'tasim, and who enjoyed greater indulgence that was shown to the Shias until the period of reaction against them and the Mu'tazalites under the Caliph Mutawakkil. The following particular instructions for visiting this Shrine have been given by Majlisi.

When you wish to visit the tomb of Musa ibn Jafar(A.S.) and the tomb of Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Musa(A.S.), first you must bathe and make yourself clean, then anoint yourself with perfume and put on two clean garments, after which you are to say at the tomb of the Imam

Musa: -

Peace be upon thee, O Friend of God!
 Peace be upon thee, O Proof of God!
 Peace be upon thee, O Light of God!
 O Light in the dark place of the earth!
 Peace be upon him whom God advances in thy regard,
 Behold I come as a pilgrim, who acknowledges your right,
 Who hates your enemies and befriends your friends,
 So intercede for me therefore with your Lord.

"You are then free," said the Imam Ali Naqi(A.S.), "to ask for your personal needs, after which you should offer a prayer in salutation to the Imam Muhammad Taqi(A.S.), using these same words."

Majlisi, who has included these traditions in his instructions for modern pilgrims to this Shrine, makes the observation in explanation of the unusual - brevity of the prescribed prayer, "that it was necessary in those times to take great care in dissimulation (taqiyah) that the Shias should not suffer injury."⁴

Another tradition that dates from the same century in which these two Imams died is attributed to a certain Hasan ibn Jamhur, who said:

"In the year 296 A.H., when Ali ibn Ahmad al-Frat was Vizier, I saw Ahmad ibn Rabi", who was one of the Caliph's writers, when his hand had gotten infected so that it had bad odour and turned black.

Everyone who saw him had no doubt but that he would die. In a dream, however, he saw Hazrat Ali(A.S.), and said to him: "O Amiru'l Momineen, will you not ask God to give me my hand?" Hazrat Ali(A.S.) answered, 'go to Musa ibn Jafar(A.S.) and he will ask this for you from God.'

In the morning they got a litter and carpeted it, gave him a bath and anointed him with perfume. They had him lie down in the litter and covered him with a robe. Then they carried him to the tomb of Imam Musa ibn Jafar(A.S.), whose intercession he sought in prayer.

The afflicted man took some of the earth from the tomb and rubbed it on his arm upto the shoulder and then bound the arm up again. The next day, when he opened the bandage, he saw that all the skin and flesh of the arm had fallen off, and that only the bones and veins and ligaments remained, and the bad odour had also ceased, When the vizier heard of this he took the men to testify as what had happened. In a short time the healthy flesh and skin grew back again, and he was able to resume his work of writing."

Majlisi adds the comment that "in every period there have been so many miracles (mu'jizaat) and demonstrations of power (karamat) at the tomb of these two saints that there is no need to describe cases of the past. In our own times there are so many instances occurring and recurring that to recount them would be a lengthy process."⁵

After the Abbasid caliphs had fallen more under the authority of the commanders of their armies of Turkish mercenaries, there was a rising of the Buyids (or Buwaihids) in Persia; and in A.D. 946 the Caliph Mustakfi was blinded by the Buyid Prince, Mu'izzu'd Dawla, who set up the blinded Caliph's son, al-Muktaddir, as a nominal ruler while he exercised the actual authority himself. Ibn Athir has related that "the Buyids were fanatical adherents of Ali and firmly convinced that the Abbasids were usurpers of a throne that rightfully belonged to others."⁶

They did not take over the Caliphate, but in addition to retaining for themselves the authority and perquisites of the government of the provinces, they proclaimed the first ten days of the month of Muharram as a period of public mourning for Husain,⁷ and they frequently enriched the sanctuary at Kadhmayn with their gifts. The Caliph Tai' is reported to have led the Friday prayers in the Kadhmayn mosque,⁸ so that in the period of the revival of the Shia influence under the protection of the Buyids, we are certain that the Kadhmayn Shrine was regularly visited by pilgrims and served as "the rallying place of the Shia party."

It was during this period that the four great works of the Shia tradition were compiled. Kulaini died in Baghdad in A.D. 939, after completing his monumental work, the Compendium of the Science of Religion (al-Kafi fi Ilm ad-din), which is perhaps the most highly esteemed of all the Shia source books. Ibn Babuwaihi had come to Baghdad from Khorasan in 966 A.D., where he devoted himself to teaching and writing.

His 'Every Man His Own Lawyer' (Kitab man la yadhuruhu' l-Faqih), is also one of the four most authoritative books on Shia law and tradition. And sixteen years after the death of Ibn Babuwaihi, Al-Tusi also came from Khorasan to teach in Baghdad, where he wrote the remaining two of the four great books of traditions that lie at the basis of Shia theology and jurisprudence, 'The Correcting of judgments' (Tahzib al-Ahkam) and the 'Examination of Differences in Traditions' (Al-Istibsar).

At this time of greater boldness on the part of the Shias, riots with the Sunnis were not infrequent in Baghdad. In one of these disturbances in 1051 A.D. the Sunni leader was killed in a fight that had ensued when the Shias ventured to put an inscription laudatory of Ali above one of the city gates. The indignation of the Sunnis was so great that in the tension of the situation after their leader's funeral, they went as a mob into the Shrine of Kadhmayn and plundered the tombs of the two Imams.

After carrying off the gold and silver lamps and the curtains which adorned these sanctuaries, the rioters on the following day completed their work by setting fire to the buildings. The great teak-wood domes above the shrines of the Imam Musa ibn-Jafar(A.S.) and Imam Muhammad Taqi(A.S.)were entirely burnt.⁹ This fact that the domes were at first of teak-wood has something to do doubtless with the number of times they were burned.

It was shortly after the burning of the Shrine in 1051 A.D. that the Seljuk Sultans displaced the Buwaihids as military dictators in Persia and "Protectors" of the Caliphs in Baghdad. They learned what they knew of Islam in the distinctively Sunni atmosphere of Bukhara. Nevertheless, when they came to Baghdad, no injury was done to the Shrine at Kadhmayn. And when Sultan Malik Shah visited it in 1086, it had apparently been repaired from the damages of the fire of thirty-five years before.¹⁰

Ibn Jubayr, who gives a detailed description of Baghdad in 1184, A.D. in his Travels,¹¹ mentions the tomb of Imam Musa ibn Jafar(A.S.), but he does not speak of it as Kadhmayn, and he makes no reference to the tomb of the Imam Muhammad Taqi(A.S.), which would suggest that Shia influence was at that time at such low ebb that this shrine, so close to the city of Baghdad had, been abandoned as a place of regular pilgrimage.

Notwithstanding, before another hundred years had passed when the domes of the Shrines had again been destroyed by fire, we find that its repair was regarded as of sufficient importance to be the one and only enterprise that the shortlived Caliph Zahir had been able to undertake. And Ibn Tiktaka who mentions this repair of the domes in his Kitab al-Fakhri,¹² is known to have succeeded his father as supervisor of the sacred towns of the Shias in the vicinity of Baghdad, so that it is possible that the minority community, while by no means free, may have enjoyed certain prescribed and restricted rights.

Their headquarters however, were no longer in Baghdad but in Hilla, and greater importance was given to Najaf and Kerbala as places of pilgrimage.

When the Mongols came with their overwhelming force in 1258, they wrought almost complete devastation in and around Baghdad. There is said to have been an understanding, however, that the holy cities of the Shias should be spared, and in fact Kadhmayn was the only one of these shrines that suffered. This was perhaps to the destruction of the western part of the city first.

It may have been during the subsequent siege of the fortress on the eastern side of the Tigris that the deputation of Shias from Hilla arrived and arranged with Khulagu Khan for the special protection of Najaf and Kerbala. However that may be, we know that the city of Baghdad was utterly ruined by the Mongols, and that the tombs of Kadhmayn were burned. "Nearly all the inhabitants, to the number, according to Rashid ad-Din, of 800,000 (Makrizi says 2,000,000) perished, and thus passed away one of the noblest cities that had ever graced the East - the Cynocure of the Muhammadan world, where the luxury, wealth and culture of five centuries had been concentrated..."

The booty captured, we are told, was so great that Georgians and Tartars succumbed under the load of gold and silver, precious stones and pearls, rich stuffs, gold and silver vessels, etc., while as to the vases from China and Rshan (i.e., procelain), and those made in the country of iron and copper, they were deemed scarcely of any value, and were broken and thrown away. The soldiers were so rich that the saddles of their horses and mules and their most ordinary utensils were inlaid with stones, pearls and gold. Some of them broke off their swords at the hilt and filled up the scabbards with gold, while others emptied the body of a Baghdadian, refilled it with gold, precious stones and pearls, and carried it off from the city."¹³

The death of the last of the Abbasid Caliphs, Mustasim, has been so celebrated in literature that what actually happened is obscure.

There are numerous accounts of how Hulagu Khan was disgusted when he saw that in his avarice the Caliph had gathered gold which he had been unwilling to spend either in defence of the city or to effect favourable terms of capitulation.

Marco Polo relates the story that when Hulagu Khan entered Baghdad he found to his astonishment a town that was filled with gold and silver, and in his indignation he gave orders that the avaricious Caliph should be "shut up in this same town, without sustenance; and there, in the midst of his wealth, he soon finished a miserable existence."¹⁴

This story is based on the narrative of Mirkhond, of Joinville, and of Makakia, the Armenian

historian, and as Howarth remarks it has provided "one of those grim episodes which Longfellow delighted to put into verse":-

I said to the Caliph, "Thou art old,
Thou hast no need of so much gold;
Thou should'st not have heaped and hidden it here,
Till the breath of battle was hot and near,
But have sown through the land these useless hoards,
To spring into shining blades of swords,
And keep thine honour sweet and clear."
Then into his dungeon I locked the drone,
And left him there to feed all alone,
In the honey cells of his golden hive;
Never a prayer, nor a cry, nor a groan,
Was heard from those massive walls of stone,
Nor again was the Caliph seen alive.

One notable fact in this connection is that the life of the Caliph's vizier in Baghdad was spared. He was Muayid-ud-din Alkamiya who was known to have been favourable to the Shias, and who was also reported to have sent his submission to Khulagu, and had invited him to invade the country. However, this may be, the Caliph was put to death on the 21st February, 1258. Wassaf and Novairi say he was rolled up in carpets and, then trodden under by horses so that his blood should not be spilt. This was in accordance with the `yasa' of Jingis Khan, which forbade the shedding of the blood of royal persons.

But the Caliph's vizier, whose life was spared, "retained his post as vizier, the reward doubtless of his dubious loyalty." Various prominent Persians, as distinguished from Arabs or Turks were appointed to important positions in the new administration of affairs, and among the first buildings to be rebuilt was the Shrine of the two Imams, at Kadhmayn.¹⁵

After the fall of the last of the Abbasid Caliph, Baghdad was never rebuilt on its former scale of grandeur. The Il-Khans, Who were the descendants of Khulagu, held the city for 82 years, not as a capital, however, but merely as the chief town of the province of Iraq. It was near the close of their period of authority that the traveller Mustawfi visited Baghdad (1339) A.D., and at that time he mentioned seeing the Shrines of al-Kadhim(A.S.) and of his grandson, Taqi(A.S.), the seventh and ninth Imams. He observed that Kadhmayn was a suburb by itself, about six thousand paces in circumference.¹⁶

About that time the Mongol tribe of Julayr wrested the power from the Il-Khans, and their chief, Shaikh Hasan Buzurg, made his residence in Baghdad in 1340, as the town best suited for his tribal headquarters.

Fifty odd years later, in connection with his widespread conquests, Timur spent three months in Baghdad. It happened to be in the summer that he besieged and captured the city, and the Persian chronicler in the Zafar Nameh remarks that "the heat was so intense, that as for the fish in the water, the saliva boiled in their mounts: and as for the birds in the air, from the fever heat their livers were cooked and they fell senseless."

The horrors of the taking of the city are described in graphic detail. So thoroughly had all avenue of escape been closed that when the wind accelerated the flames that filled the air, there were many people who threw themselves into the water, to escape the fire or sword. It was a time when the slave market was such that an old man of eighty and a child of twelve sold for the same price and the fire of hate waxed to such a heat that the garment of the wealthy merchant and the rags of the sick beggar burned the same way. Individual soldiers in bands of the troops had been each commissioned to each get a head, but some who were not content with one head got all they could tie to their belts.

It is mentioned, however, that some of the men of learning and rank as were granted his protection and shared his bounty, but the general carnage was hideous. When the inhabitants had been thus almost annihilated, their habitations were dealt with. Only the mosques, the schools, and the dormitories were spared. Accordingly, we read that Timur left Baghdad on account of "vile odour of the carcasses of the dead."¹⁷

Nevertheless, when Timur took his departure, we are told that he ordered that the city should be rebuilt. The shrine at Kadhmayn, however, was not restored. After the death of Timur, there was a brief reoccupation of Baghdad by the Julayrs, who were displaced by the "Black Sheep" Turkomans, who held the city from 1411-1469. They in turn were driven out by their rivals, the "White Sheep" Turkomans.

It was therefore after a long period of neglect, when the city had been held by successive generations of half savage tribes, that Shah Ismail I, of the Safawi dynasty captured Baghdad in 1508, and it was in 1519 that he completed the rebuilding of the Shrine at Kadhmayn much as it stands today. With the rise of Shah Ismail there is an interesting and

significant story of the revival of Persian Shia Power, which belongs in the history of Ardebil in Azerbaijan rather than in a description of the Shrine of the "Two Kadhims" in Baghdad.

We are told that frequently from twenty-five, to thirty thousand pilgrims visit the Shrine in one day. If viewed from a point of vantage, this Shrine with its twin domes of gleaming gold is one of the most beautiful sights in Baghdad; and if studied in its historical associations throughout the last eleven hundred years, it affords a thrilling resume of the changing fortunes of the far-famed city of Arabian Nights.

Footnotes:

1. Ibn Sa'd, *Tabakat*, VII, ii, pp. 68, I. 18; 99, I. 21; & 80, I. II.
2. Yakubi, *Tarikh*, edit, Houtsma, Vol. 11, P. 499.
3. Kulaini, *Usul al-Kafi* P. 203.
4. Majlisi, *Toafatu's- Za'irin*, pp. 308 fi.
5. Majlisi, *op. cit.*, p. 309.
6. Ibn al-Athir, *Kamil*, viii, p. 177.
7. Browne, *Persian Literature in Modern Times*, p. 31.
8. Le Strange, *Baghdad during the Abbasid Caliphate*, p. 162.
9. Le Strange, *Op. cit.*, p. 164.
10. Le Strange, *Op. cit.*, p. 163.
11. Ibn Jubayr, *Travels*, Wright's text revised by de Goeje, P. 226.
12. Ibn Tiktaka, *Kitab al- Fakhri*, p. 163.
13. Howarth, *History of the Mongols*, iii, pp. 126, 127.
14. *Travels of Marco Polo the Venitian*, ch. viii.
15. Howarth, *Op. cit.* pp. 127-131.
16. Mustawfi, *Nuzhatu'l-Qulub*, Eng. trans. Gibb Mem. series, vol. XXIII, ii, p. 42.
17. Zafar Nameh, by Sharifu'd-din Ali Yazdi, ed. Calcutta 1887-8, vol. II pp. 363-369.

Other References:

Encyclopaedia of Islam, art. "Kadhmayn".