

Imam Muhammad Baqir (A.S.)

Father: Imam Ali al-Sajjad(A.S.)

Mother: Umme Abdullah, the daughter of Imam Hasan(A.S.)

Kunniyat(Patronymic): Abu Jafar.

Laqab(Title): Al-Baqir

Birth: The Holy Imam(A.S.) was born in the holy city of Madina on first day of the month of Rajab in the year 57 A.H.

Martyrdom: The Holy Imam(A.S.) was martyred in Madina by poisoning in the year 114 A.H. and was buried at Baqi cemetery beside his holy father.

Imam Muhammad Baqir(A.S.) was the successor of his father, Ali b. al-Husayn(A.S.) his testamentary trustee (wasi), and the one who undertook (qaim) the office of Imam after him. He surpassed all of them through his outstanding merit (fadl) in traditional knowledge (ilm), asceticism and leadership.

He was the most renowned of them, the one among them who was most esteemed by both non-Shia (amma) and Shia (khassa), and the most able of them. None of the sons of al-Hasan and al-Husayn, peace be on them, showed the same ability in knowledge of religion, traditions, the sunna, the knowledge of the Qur'an and the life of the Prophet (sira), and the techniques of literature, as Abu- Jafar (Muhammad al-Baqir) showed. The surviving Companions (of the Prophet), the leading members of the next generation (tabieun) and the leaders of the Muslim jurists reported the principal features (ma'alim) of religion on his authority. By virtue of his outstanding merit he became a signpost (of knowledge) to his family. Proverbs were coined about him and reports and verses were written to describe him.

Imam's Greatness

Concerning him al-Qurazi says:

O (you) who split open (baqir) knowledge (making it available) to the people of piety and the best of those who seek to answer the call of the Exalted.

Malik b. Ayan al-Juhni said in praise of him, peace be on him:

When the people seek for knowledge of the Qur'an, Quraysh rely upon him.

If someone asked where is the son of the daughter of the Prophet, you would gain through him the wide branches (of knowledge).

(You are like) stars which shine for night-travellers, (you are) like mountains which have inherited vast knowledge.

Birth:

He, peace be on him, was born in Medina, in 57 A.H. He was martyred in 114 A.H. (732) at the age of fifty-seven. He was a (leading) member of the Hashimite family within the Hashimites. He was a (leading) descendant of Imam Ali(A.S.). He was buried in (the cemetery of) al-Baqi'i in (Medina) the city of the Apostle, may God bless him and his family.

Received the Greetings Of the Holy Prophet of Islam(S.A.W.)

[Maymun al-Qaddah reported on the authority of Jafar b. Muhammad, on the authority of his father, peace be on them:]

I (i.e. al-Baqir) visited Jafar b. 'Abd Allah al-Ansari, may God be pleased with him. I greeted him and he returned my greeting. Then he said to me: "Who are you?" That was after he had lost his sight.

Muhammad b. Ali b. al-Husayn, peace be on them, I answered.

My young child, come close to me, he said. I went closer and he kissed my hand. Then he stooped down to my foot and kissed that. I turned away from him.

Then he said to me: "The Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, recites his greeting to you."

Peace and God's mercy and blessings be on the Apostle of God," I said. "How is that, Jabir?"

He told me: "One day I was with him when he said to me: "Jabir, perhaps you will live until you meet one of my descendants called Muhammad b. 'Ali b. al-Husayn, peace be on them, on whom God will bestow light and wisdom. Then recite to him my greetings."

The Initiator of Sciences

In the testamentary bequest (wasiyya) which the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, made to his children, mention was made of Muhammad b. Ali b. al-Husayn and of his trusteeship. The Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, named him and caused him to be known as the one who split open (religious) knowledge (ulum) as the narrators of

tradition (ashab al-athar)report.

Thus it is reported on the authority of Jabir b. Abd Allah in a direct (mujarrad) tradition: The Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, said to me:

It will happen that you will live until you meet one of my children descended from al-Husayn, peace be on him, called Muhammad, who will split wide open knowledge of religion. When you meet him, recite my greeting to him.

The Fifth Immaculate Imam

The Shia give an account of the tablet which Gabriel, peace be on him, brought down to the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, from heaven. (The Apostle) gave it to Fatima, peace be on her. In it are the names of the Imams after (the Apostle) and in it is Muhammad b. Ali, the Imam after his father.

The Shia also report that God, the Mighty and High, sent down to His Prophet, the blessings and peace of God be on him, a document sealed with twelve seals. He ordered him to give it to the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, and to tell him to break the first seal, and he should act according to what is in (that part of the document).

At the time of his death, he should pass it to his son, al-Hasan, peace be on him, and tell him to break the second seal and act according to what is in (that part of) the document. At the time of his death he should pass it to his brother al-Husayn, peace be on him. He should tell him to break the third seal and act according to what is below it. Then at his death, he should pass it to his son, Ali b. al-Husayn al-Akbar (the elder) and he should instruct him in a similar way. Then Muhammad should pass it to his son right down to the last of the Imams. They report also numerous designations (nusus) of him for the Imamate after his father on the authority of the Prophet, may God bless him and his family, on the authority of the Commander of the faithful and on the authority of al-Hasan, al-Husayn and Ali b. al-Husayn, peace be on them.

The people report (accounts) of his outstanding virtues and accomplishments which would be too numerous to include. We will mention what will be sufficient in meaning for our purposes, if God wills.

[Al-Sharif Abu Muhammad al-Hasan b. Muhammad informed me: My grandfather (Yahya b. al-Hasan) told me: Muhammad b. al-Qasim al-Shaybam told us: Abd al-Rahman b. Salih al-Azdi told us on the authority of Abu Malik al-Juhni on the authority of Abd Allah b. Ata' al-Makki who said:]

I have never seen the scholars with anyone so much younger than them as I saw them with Abu Jafar Muhammad b. Ali b. al-Husayn, peace be on them. I have seen al-Hakam b. Utayba, despite his eminence among the people, conduct himself before him as if he was a young boy conducting himself before his teacher.

Whenever Jabir b. Yazid al-Jufi reported anything on his authority, peace be on him, he used to say:

The trustee of the trustees (of the Apostle) and the heir of the knowledge of the prophets, Muhammad b. Ali b. al-Husayn, peace be on them, told me.

[Makhul b. Ibrahim reported on the authority of Qays b. al-Rabi, who said: I asked Abu Ishaq al-Sabi'i about rubbing the two shoes (in the ritual ablution), he said:]

I used to tell people to rub the two shoes (in the ritual ablution instead of rubbing the feet) until I met a man from the Banu Hashim, whose like I have never seen-Muhammad b. Ali b. al-Husayn, peace be on him. I asked about the rubbing and he forbade me to do it.

He said: "The Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, never used to rub (the shoes). He used to say: 'The Book (which does not mention the practice) comes before (the introduction of the practice of) rubbing the shoes.'

[Abu Ishaq added: I have never rubbed them since he forbade me to do it. And Qays b. al-Rabi'i said: I have never rubbed them since I heard Abu Ishaq.]

Imam's Virtues

[Al-Sharif Abu Muhammad al-Hasan b. Muhammad informed me: My grandfather (Yahya b. al-Hasan) told me on the authority of Yaqub b. Yazid, who said: Muhammad b. Abi 'Umayr told us on the authority of Abd al-Rahman b. al-Hajja;, on the authority of Abu 'Abd Allah (Ja'far al-Sadiq), peace be on him, who said:

Muhammad b. Munkadir used to say: "I did not use to think that the like of 'Ali b. al-Husayn, peace be on them, could leave a successor because of the outstanding merit of 'Ali b. al-Husayn, peace be on them, until I saw his son, Muhammad b. Ali. I wanted to advise him but he advised me."

My companions asked me: "What did he warn you of?" I told them: I went out to one of the suburbs of Medina at a time when it was hot. There I met Muhammad b. Ali, peace be on him. He was a well built man and he was leaning on two servant boys. Either they were black

slaves of his or they were retainers of his. I said to myself:

Here is a venerable leader (shaykh) of Quraysh out at this time and in these circumstances seeking worldly (advantage). I must warn him.

So I approached him and greeted him. He returned my greeting with anger. The sweat was pouring down him.

I said: "May God remove you, a venerable leader of Quraysh, out at this time in these circumstances seeking worldly (advantage). If death came upon you while you were in this condition (what would you do)?"

He made the two servant-boys let go of his hand and held himself up. Then he said: "By God, if death came upon me while I was in this condition, it would come upon me while I am fulfilling) an act of obedience to God, by which I make myself withdraw from you and from the (rest of the) people. I would only fear death if it came upon me while I was performing an act of disobedience against God."

Then I replied: "May God have mercy on you, I wanted to warn you and you have warned me."

Ahl Al-Dhikr

[Al-Sharif Abu Muhammad al-Hasan b. Muhammad informed me: My grandfather (Yahya al-Hasan) told me: A shaykh from the people of al-Rayy, who was very old, told me: Yahya b. 'Abd al-Hamid al-Himmani told me on the authority of Mu'awiya b. Ammar al-Duhni, on the authority of Muhammad b. Ali b. al-Husayn, peace be on them:]

(Muhammad b. Ali was asked) about God's words: Ask the people of remembrance (ahl al-dhikr) if you do not know [XVI 43]. He said:

"We are the people of remembrance (ahl al-dhikr)."

The shaykh from al-Rayy said: I asked Muhammad b. Muqatil about these (words). He spoke about them according to his opinion and he said: "The people of remembrance (ahl al-dhikr) are all the religious scholars (ulama')."

I mentioned that to Abu Zura. He was astounded at his words.

Then I put before him what Yahya b. Abd al-Hamid had told me. He said: "Muhammad b. Ali, peace be on them, speaks the truth. They are the people of remembrance (ahl al-dhikr). By my life, Abu Jafar, peace be on him, is one of the greatest scholars (ulama')."

Abu Jafar, peace be on him, recounted reports of the beginnings of history (mubtada') and reports of the prophets. Stories of the campaigns of the Prophet (maghazi) were written on his authority. (Men) followed the practices of the Prophet (sunan) on his authority and relied on him with regard to the rites of the pilgrimage which hereported on the authority of the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family.

They (also) wrote a commentary of the Qur'an on his authority. Both the Shia (khassa) and the non-Shia (amma) report traditions on his authority. He debated with the exponents of individual reasoning (ahl al-ara') and the people learnt a great deal of theology (ilm al-kalam) from him.

[Al-Sharif Abu Muhammad al-Hasan b. Muhammad informed me: My grandfather (Yahya b. al-Hasan) told me: Al-Zubayr b. Abi Bakr told me: Abd al-Rahman b. 'Abd Allah al-Zuhri told me:]

Hisham b. Abd al-Malik made the pilgrimage. He went into the Sacred Mosque leaning on the arm of Salim, his retainer. Muhammad b. Ali b. al-Husayn, peace be on them, was sitting in the mosque.

"Commander of the faithful," Salim said to (Hisham), "there is Muhammad b. Ali b. al-Husayn"

"The man for whom the people of Iraq are ready to revolt?" he asked .

"Yes," replied (Salim).

"Go to him," (Hisham) told him, "and say to him:

The Commander of the faithful (i.e. Hisham) asks you: What is it that the people eat and drink until God has finished judging them on the Day of Resurrection?

Abu Jafar Muhammad, peace be on him, replied:

The people will gather on (earth which will be) like a loaf of pure bread. There, there will be rivers branching out. They will eat and drink until the account (with God) is settled.

Hisham realised that (Abu Jafar Muhammad) had overcome him.

So he said: "God is greater. Go to him and say to him: (Hisham) says to you: What will keep men away from food and drink on that day?"

"Those in the fire of Hell will be too occupied," replied Abu Jafar, peace be on him, "but they will say to those who have not been distracted from it: Bestow upon us water and some of what God has provided for you [VII 50]. "

Hisham fell silent and did not reply.

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Reports have come down that Nafi b. al-Azraq came to Muhammad b. Ali, peace be on them, and sat before him to ask him questions about what was permitted and what forbidden. Abu Jafar, peace be on him, said in the course of his answer:

Say to these deviators (from the true course): How did you make separation from the Commander of the faithful (Ali), peace be on him, lawful when you had earlier shed your own blood on his behalf and in obedience to him and (you were then close) to God through helping him? Then they will answer you: He allowed arbitration with regard to the religion of God. Say to them: God, the Exalted, allowed arbitration in the law (sharia) of His Prophet, may God bless him and his family, between two of His creatures. For He said:

Send an arbitrator from his family and an arbitrator from her family if they want reconciliation (to take place) between them with the agreement of God [IV 35].

The Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, appointed Sad b. Muadh as an arbitrator over the tribe of Qurayza. He judged them according to what God had accomplished. Did you not know that the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, ordered the arbitrators only to judge according to the Qur'an and not to go beyond it? He stipulated the rejection of any of the laws of men which opposed the Qur'an. They said to him: 'You have appointed as arbitrator over yourself, men who will judge you.'

He replied: 'I have not appointed a creature as an arbitrator. I have only made the Book of God an arbitrator. Therefore where do the deviators find the wrong-doing in the matter of arbitration by the Qur'an, when he stipulated the rejection of whatever opposed it, unless they are persisting in a false accusation?

"By God", said Nafi b. al-Azraq, "these are words which I have never heard before and which have never occurred to my mind. It is the truth, God willing."

The scholars report that 'Amr b. Ubayd came to visit Muhammad b. Ali b. al-Husayn, peace be on them, to test him with questions. He said: "May I be your ransom, what is the meaning of the words of Him, the Exalted:

Do not those who disbelieve realise that the heavens and the earth were ratq and we made them fitq? [XXI 30] What is this ratq and this fitq?"

"The heaven was ratq (means) that no rain came down from it,"

answered Abu Jafar, peace be on him, "and the earth was ratq (means) that no plants came out of it."

Amr stopped. He could not find any opposition. He went away but then came back.

"May I be your ransom," he said, "tell me of the words of Him, the Mighty and High: On whomsoever My anger alights, he falls (to disaster) [XX 82]. What is the anger of God, the Mighty and High?"

"The anger of God, Amr, is His punishment," replied Abu Jafar, peace be on him. "Whoever thinks that anything changes God, is an unbeliever."

In addition to what we have described of his merit in knowledge (ilm), headship and leadership and the Imamate, there was the obvious excellence (of the man) to both the Shia (khassa) and the non-Shia (amma). He was recognised by all for his nobleness and well-known for generosity and kindness through the abundance of his help to the poor and his moderate temperament.

[Al-Sharif Abu Muhammad al-Hasan b. Muhammad told me: My grandfather (Yahya b. al-Hasan) told me: Abu-Nasr told us: Muhammad b. al-Husayn told me: Aswad b. 'Amir told us: Hayyan b. Ali told us on the authority of al-Hasan b. Kuthayyir, who said:]

I (i.e. al-Hasan b. Kuthayyir) complained to Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. Ali, peace be on them, of (my) need and the uselessness of brothers.

"Shame on the brother," he said, "(who is) a brother who looks after you when you are rich and separates from you when you are poor."

Then he ordered his servant-boy to take out a pouch in which were seven hundred dirhams.

"Spend this," he told me, "and when you have used it, tell me."

[Muhammad b. al-Husayn reported: Abd Allah b. al-Zubayr told us: They told us on the authority of Amr b. Dinar and Abd Allah b. Ubayd b. 'Umayr, who said:]

We (i.e. Amr b. Dinar and Abd Allah b. Ubayd) never met Abu-Jafar Muhammad b. Ali, peace be on them, without him giving us money, gifts and clothes. He used to say: "This is something which had been prepared for you before you met me."

[Abu Nuaym al-Nakhai reported on the authority of Mu'awiya b. Hisham on the authority of Sulayman b. Qarm, who said:]

Abu-Jafar Muhammad b. Ali, peace be on them, used to pay us five hundred dirhams to six hundred dirhams to a thousand dirhams as gifts. He never tired of bestowing generosity on the brethren, and on those who came to visit him, and on those who placed their hopes and

trust in him.

It is reported on his authority, on the authority of his fathers, peace be on them, that the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, used to say: "The best of works are three: Looking after brothers with money; giving the people justice on your own account; and mentioning God in every circumstance."

[Ishaq b. Mansur al-Saluli reported: I heard al-Hasan b. Salih say:]

I (al-Hasan b. Salih) heard Abu Jafar Muhammad b. Ali peace be on them, say: "There is not anything that can be mixed with anything better than clemency (mixed) with knowledge."

It is reported on his authority, peace be on him, that he was asked about traditions which he put forward and did not support with a chain of authorities. He said: If I report a tradition without giving it a chain of authorities, then my chain of authorities for it is in fact my father on the authority of my grandfather on the authority of his father, on the authority of his grandfather, the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, on the authority of Gabriel, peace be on him, on the authority of God, the Mighty and High.

He, peace be on him, (also) used to say: "The people cause us great trouble. We summon them but they do not answer us. If we abandoned them, they would be guided by no one."

He, peace be on him, used to say: "What is it that the people hate in us who are the family of the House of Mercy, the Tree of Prophethood, the Source of Wisdom, (the people) frequented by angels and (those upon whom) inspiration descended?"

The holy Imam (A.S.) was martyred and left behind seven sons. Each of his brothers had great merit, even though they did not attain his merit because of his position with regard to the Imamate, because of his rank with God with regard to closeness and love (wilaya), and because of his position with regard to succession (khilafa) of the Prophet, may God bless him and his family. The period of his Imamate and of his undertaking the position of his father in the succession (on behalf of) God, the Mighty and High, over His servants was nineteen years.