

## The Splitter of Knowledge

Once during his childhood, Imam al-Husayn (as) was sitting on the lap of his grandfather, the Messenger of Allah (saw) when Jabir bin Abdillah al-Ansari came by. The Holy Prophet (saw) looked at Jabir and then said, "O Jabir! A child will be born in the offspring of this son of mine who will be the most knowledgeable and wisest person of his time. O Jabir! Allah will keep you alive until his time and you will see him. O Jabir! When you meet him, convey my salaams to him".

Jabir listened to this attentively and thereafter always waited eagerly for the opportunity of meeting this young boy from the offspring of al-Hussayn (as). As long as Jabir had his eye-sight, he searched for this boy everywhere he went but when he lost his eye-sight due to old age, he began calling out the name of the young boy wherever he went. People found this behaviour odd and therefore used to say, "Jabir has become insane due to old age".

After a long wait, the day arrived when Jabir finally met with the young boy as predicted by the Holy Prophet (saww). It is related that Imam Ali ibn al-Hussayn (as) came to meet Jabir along with his son Muhammad al-Baqir (as). Jabir was very old and could not see anything. Imam (as) asked his son to kiss the forehead of Jabir. When he did so, Jabir embraced him and said, "O Son of the Prophet! Your grandfather, the Messenger of Allah (saww) has conveyed his salaams to you". The young boy replied, "O Jabir! Peace of Allah be upon him and upon you". Jabir then pleaded the young boy for his intercession in the hereafter to which he agreed and shortly after this encounter, Jabir passed away from this life.

This young boy was none other than the fifth true successor of the Holy Prophet (saww) and the Imam of the Muslim ummah, Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (as) (Ahsan al-Maqaal)

Imam al-Baqir (as) was born on 1st Rajab 57 AH in Madinah. His father was the fourth Imam, Ali ibn al-Hussayn (as) and his mother was Fatimah, daughter of Imam al-Hassan (as). Thus he is a descendant of Banu Hashim from both, paternal and maternal sides.

He (as) was known as Abu Ja'ffar and among his titles are: Al-Baqir (Splitter of Knowledge), Al-Shakir (The grateful one) and Al-Hadi (The Guide). The most popular of his titles is Al-Baqir which originates from Baqr meaning "to split open" or "to rip open" or "to cut open". This is because he (as) had the opportunity to split open the Knowledge which he had inherited from his grandfather (saww) to impart it to others.

Imam al-Baqir (as) used to say, "We were taught the language of the birds and we were bestowed with knowledge of everything". (Manaqib of Ibn Shahr Aashub)

An example of his profound knowledge is cited as hereunder.

Shaykh Mufeed (a.r) writes in his al-Irshaad:

When Hisham bin Abdul Malik became the caliph, he went for Hajj. There, he saw Imam al-Baqir (as) sitting in a corner of Masjid al-Haraam and preaching the people. Being jealous, Hisham decided to humiliate the Imam (as) and so he sent someone with a question: "On the day of Judgement, before their fate becomes known, what will people eat and drink?" Imam (as) replied, "On the day of Judgement where accounting will be held, there will be trees bearing fruits. People shall eat from those trees". When Hisham heard this, he said, "Wrong! Since people in the plain of Mahshar will be worried and in state of fear and torture, they shall neither feel hunger nor thirst". Imam (as) told the man, "He (i.e. Hisham) is not reading the Holy Quran carefully. Hasn't he read the verse in which it is mentioned: 'And the inmates of the fire shall call out to the dwellers of the garden, saying: Pour on us some water or of that which Allah has given to you..' (7:50)". Hisham fell silent and did not reply.

### SAYINGS OF IMAM AL-BAQIR (A.S.):

"Is it sufficient for one to become our Shia'h by merely claiming our love? By Allah! Our Shia'hs are not but one who is careful of his duties towards Allah and obeys Him". (Gunahane Kabeera)

"The completion, entire completion of a man lies in understanding & appreciating the religion (the necessary laws and principles of Islamic jurisprudence), the patience & forbearance upon the occurrence of incidents and the appraisalment & assessment of (his) economy". (Tuhaf al-'Uqool)

"Indeed Allah has hidden three things in three others: His pleasure in His obedience. So do not belittle anything from His obedience since His pleasure may be in the same one. And Allah has concealed His wrath and anger in sins. So do not belittle any sin and consider it to be small. May be the wrath of Allah is in it. And He has concealed His friends and saints among the people. So do not look down upon any one perhaps he may be the friend and saint of Allah". (Bihar al-Anwaar)