

Imam Ja'afar as-Sadiq (AS)

Wiladat Eve: 17th Rabi ul-Awal (Monday 24th March 2008)

Titles: Most well known as-Sadiq (truthful); Faazil (excellent), Tahir (pure), Qaim (steadfast), Saabir (patient), Musaddiq, Kaashiful Haqaeq (revealer of mysteries)

Kuniyya: Abu Abdulla

Birth: 17th Rabi ul-Awal 83 A.H.

Death: 15th Shawal / 25th Shawal 148 A.H.

Buried: Madina, Saudi Arabia



Abu Basir narrates: After the martyrdom of Imam Sadiq (AS) I went to his house to pay my condolences to his wife Hamidah. Upon seeing me, she began to weep and I wept as well.

Then she said Abu Basir! If you were here on the last moments of Imam Sadiq's (AS) life, you would have witnessed something extraordinary.

"What is that?" I asked.

She answered:

"It was in the last moments of the Imam's life when he opened his blessed eyes and said:

Gather all of my family and relatives now and bring them to me! Thus, we gathered every one of the relatives until no-one was left. He turned to them and said,

"We will not intercede¹ for those who belittle² Salat³."

(as quoted by www.imamreza.net: Bihal al-Anwar , vol. 6, p. 154 ,and vol. 4, p. 297)

(¹ Means Shafa'ah ² Do not give much importance to ³ Saying Prayer)

It is known from various history books and various sources of Hadith that when Imam Sadiq (AS) was a young boy, he used to come to the schools and Madrasas founded by his father the 5th Imam and instead of learning as many other youngsters and older pupil did, he used to discuss serious matters of Fiqh and Jurisprudence with much older students of the Madrasas.

In one such discourses when he was only 11 years old, when he entered a class room where pupils were discussing on the subject of astronomy, he pointed out to the surprise of everyone except his own father, that the earth cannot be flat, because of the way the sun rises in the East and sets in the west and day and night change in 24 hours, it cannot be possible. In his opinion the earth must be round; otherwise this would not have happened in such a precise manner. All the students were astonished but his father smiled and said nothing.

The above story was mentioned in a book compiled by Five French scholars at Strasbourg in France with the title, "The heart of the Sh'ia Scholarship." The book has been translated in Persian and Urdu and it is now being translated in English with possible references.

Up to the age of twelve years, Imam Sadiq (AS) was brought up under the guidance of his grand father Imam Zainul Abedeen whose main concern was to worship his maker and reflect on the tragic events of Kerbala and whose main avenue of teaching was through supplications.

Twenty two years had lapsed since then, yet the remembrance of the tragedy of Kerbala was still fresh in his memory. So, as soon as Imam Sadiq (AS) gained understanding, he was profoundly impressed by the continuous grief of his grandfather, so much so that he felt as if he himself was present during that tragedy. He also contemplated on the presence of his father Imam Baqir (AS), who was only three years old, at that tragic time. Imam Sadiq (AS) considered it his duty to convene the recitation gatherings (Majalis) about the sorrowful event of Kerbala.

He was twelve year old when his grandfather expired. Then up to the age of 31 he passed his time under the guidance of his father Imam Baqir (AS). It was the time when Ummayad politics was tottering and muslims were approaching Imam Baqir (AS) in thousands. Their need for knowledge was fulfilled by the Imams of the Ahlulbayt.

In 114 AH (732 AD) Imam Baqir (AS) died, and the responsibilities of Imamat devolved on the shoulders of Imam Ja'afar as-Sadiq (AS). Hisham Ibn Abdul Malik was still ruling in Damascus and political disturbances were afoot. The passion of taking revenge on Bani Ummaya was strong and several descendants of Imam Ali (AS) were preparing themselves to overthrow the regime. Most prominent among them was Zaid, the respected son of Imam Zainul Abedeen (AS). His religious zeal and piety were known throughout Arabia. He was Hafiz of the Qora'an and he had taken upon himself the stand of removing the tyranny of the Ummayyads.

This was a very precarious juncture for Imam Sadiq (AS). As regards the tyranny of the Ummayyads, he agreed with his uncle Zaid for whom he had a great deal of respect. But with his far sighted judgement, Imam could clearly see that Zaid's rising against the well organized Ummayad forces will be of no avail. He therefore advised him not to start this venture. But Zaid was too far out in his zeal and he would not stop. Many thousands of Iraqis had sworn their allegiance to Zaid and he was quite optimistic about his success. He took his forces to Kufa, gave a great battle but was killed in the end. The Ummayyads were as brutal as ever. They hung the body of Zaid on the gates of the city of Kufa which remained their as a reminder for several years. One year after Zaid's death, his son Yahya gained the same path and received the same fate. Imam Sadiq (AS) was aware of all this but realized that this was not the time to take any such active part. His main occupation was to spread the religious sciences of Ahlulbayt as much as possible while time was on their side.

Imam Sadiq (AS) was one of those infallible Nufus who were created by God to be models of moral excellence. The character and conduct of all those sages in different stages of their lives was the standard of excellence. The particular virtues of the Imam which were recorded by the historians included hospitality, charity, the helping of the needy in secrecy, the fair treatment of poor relatives, forgiveness, patience and fortitude.

Once a pilgrim visiting the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah, fell asleep. On waking up, he hurriedly searched his belongings and found his purse which contained One Thousand Dinars was missing. Looking around he saw the Imam was praying in one corner of the Mosque. He accused the Imam of having picked his purse. The Imam asked about its contents and was told that it contained one thousand Dinars. The Imam then asked the man to follow him to his house where he gave the man the same amount. When the stranger came back to the mosque satisfied, once more he checked his property and found that his purse was intact in another bundle. Greatly ashamed of his conduct, he came back to the Imam, apologised and asked him to take his money back. Imam replied with these words, "***We never take back what we once give away, but if you feel guilty about it, give it to the poor of the town.***" The traveller gave all the money in Charity to the poor of Madinah.

During the days of scarcity, when people tried to hoard food and other goods, Imam asked his household manager Trenchab, "The price of corn is rising day by day. How much corn is there in our warehouse," Trenchab replied that the Imam should not worry as there was a large quantity of corn in store. The Imam replied, "Give it away to the poor and let us face the situation along with others." Then he ordered that pure white wheat flour should not be used in his kitchen, and should be mixed with equal quantity's of oat flour. "We must share misfortune with the needy and the poor as long as it takes."

His profound knowledge of religion and other sciences was famed throughout the entire Islamic world. People came from distant regions to learn from him. The number of his students reached over Four Thousand. Among them were scholars of Jurisprudence, Tafsir, Haidth such as Imam Noman bin Thabit Abu Hanifa and Imam Malik Ibn Anas. Heads of other religions also came there to discuss with the Imams students many matters of dispute and on many occasions returned home embracing Islam. Sometimes he himself argued with the opponents especially atheists.

Apart from religious sciences, he used to teach to some students mathematics, chemistry, medicine and astronomy. Jabir Ibn Hayyan, the famous pioneer of physics, chemistry and mathematics, was his disciple who wrote about four hundred treatises based on his mentor's instructions. The jurists who learnt from him and wrote several volumes of books on jurisprudence can be counted by the hundreds.

Yakubi in his Tarikh remarks in regard to Imam Ja'afar Sadiq (AS) that, "it was customary for scholars who related anything from him to say 'the learned one informed us'." When we recall that Malik ibn Anas (94-179) the author of Mawatta was a contemporary of the Imam Ja'afar Sadiq (AS), at least a century before the time of Bukhari and Muslim, it is significant to find that it is the Imam Ja'afar Sadiq(AS) who is credited with stating what came to be regarded as the most significant and important principle to observe in judging traditions: "What is in agreement with the Book of God, accept it, and whatever is contrary, reject it".

Masudi, the famous historian, wrote one of the most important sayings of Imam Sadiq (AS) ascribed through Imam Ali (AS) who is said to have related that when God wished to establish the creation, the atoms of creatures and the beginning of all created things, He first made what he created in the form of small particles. This was before the earth and the heavens were created. God existed alone in His authority and power. So He cast forth a ray of light, a flame from His splendour and it was radiant. He scattered this light in the midst of invisible atoms, which He then united in the form of our Prophet. God most high then declared unto him, "***you are the first of those who shall speak, the one with power of choice and the one chosen. To you I have trusted my light and the treasure of my guidance. For your sake I will form spacious channels, give free course to the waters, and raise the heavens. For your sake I will give rewards and punishments, and assign men to Paradise or to the Fire. I will appoint the people of your household (Ahlulbayt) for guidance. I will bestow upon them the secrets of my knowledge. No truth will be hidden from them and no mystery concealed. I will designate them as my proof to mankind, as those who shall admonish men of my power and remind them of my Unity (Tawheed)***". The light descended, then Imam Ja'afar continued, "***upon our most noble men, and shown through our Imams, so that we are in fact the light of Heaven and of Earth. To us is salvation committed, and from us are the secrets of science derived, for we are the destination that all must strive to reach. Our Mehdi will be the final proof, the seal of the Imams, the Deliverer of the Imam, the Apex of the Light, and the Source of all good work. Those who follow us will have our support in the hereafter.***"

References:

Story of the Holy Ka'aba And its People By S.M.R. Shabbar Published by [Muhammadi Trust of Great Britain](http://www.muhammadi-trust.org)
www.al-islam.org
www.hujjat-workshop.org
<http://www.ezsoftech.com/stories/images>