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Chapter 11: To the Shelter Garden

Imam Abu' Ja'far (al-Baqir), peace be on him, had carried out his immortal message: he had spread knowledge and Islamic manners among people. Then Allah chose him to be His neighbor. He wanted him to enjoy the shade of His mercy and His gardens. He wanted him to be happy through meeting his grandfathers, who passed the methods of justice and fairness in the earth. Now, we will talk briefly about the bright end of the life of the Imam, which he devoted to obedience to Allah, proclaiming knowledge, kindness to people, and the like It is as follows:

The Imam announced his own Death

The Imam felt the approach of his certain death. So, he hurried to his aunt, Fa'tima daughter of Imam al–Husayn, peace be on him. He announced his death to her, saying: "I have completed fifty-eight years." 1

Fa'tima understood what the Imam meant. Her heart melted with sorrows for her nephew. For he was the rest of the members of his family, who were killed by the swords of aggression and error. The Imam completed fifty-eighty years full of misfortunes. Those years filled his heart with sorrow and sadness. His father, Imam Zayn al-'Abidin, and his grand father, Imam al-Hasan, peace be on them, departed life at the same age. Thus, the Imam felt that he was about to die.

The Murder of the Imam

Imam Abu' Ja'far (al-Baqir), peace be on him, did not die a natural death. Rather, some sinful persons, who did not believe in Allah and the hereafter, gave him poison to drink. The historians differed over which sinful person who committed such a crime. The following are some of the views:

1. Hisha'm b. al-Hakam gave the Imam poison to drink. This is the most acceptable view. For Hisha'm was the most spiteful person towards the family of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family. His soul was full of malice and hatred towards them. It was he who forced the great martyr, Zayd b. 'Ali, peace be on him, to revolt against him. That was when he scorned and abandoned Zayd. Surely, the

great Imam Abu' Ja'far (al-Baqir), peace be on him, shook the position of this tyrannical person (Hisha'm). That because the Imam's knowledge and outstanding merits were famous. So, the Muslims talked about his talents and abilities. Hence, Hisha'm killed the Imam to get rid of him.

2. Ibra'him b. al-Walid gave the Imam poison to drink. 3 Sayyid b. Tawu's thought that Ibra'him b. al-Walid took part in murdering the Imam, peace be on him. 4 This means that Ibra'him helped other persons to murder the Imam, peace be on him.

Some references have ignored the name of the person who assassinated the Imam, peace be on him. They have only mentioned that the Imam died of poisoning. 5 These are some of the views mentioned concerning murdering the Imam, peace be on him, with poison.

Reasons for the Murder of the Imam

The Umayyads murdered the Imam, peace be on him. The reasons for that are as follows:

1. The Imam's high Character

Imam Abu' Ja'far (al-Baqir), peace be on him, had the highest character in the Islamic world. Muslims have unanimously greed on his high character. They have admitted his outstanding merits. All Muslim religious scholars from all Muslim countries came to him to learn his sciences and his morals. For the Imam learned that from his grandfather, Allah's Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family.

The Imam, peace be on him, possessed the sentiments of the people. Thus, they admired and respected him. For the Imam was the most prominent figure in the family of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family. Hence, the Imam's high social rank displeased the Umayyads. Accordingly, they decided to murder him to get rid of him.

2. The Events of Damascus

Among the reasons that moved the Umayyads to kill the Imam, peace be on him, were the events the Imam faced in Damascus. These events are as follow:

A. The Imam exceeded the Umayyads and others in shooting. That was when Hisha'm summoned the Imam to compete with the Umayyds and others for shooting. Hisha'm thought the Imam would fail in hitting the target. Thus, he would be able to use the Imam's failure as means to degrade the importance of the Imam and to mock him before the Syrians. However, the Imam shot and hit the target several times. The people had never seen such skillfulness in the world of shooting. Hisha'm was full of anger. So, he decided to murder the Imam from that moment.

B. The Imam debated with Hisha'm on the affairs of the Imamate. The Imam defeated Hisha'm. So, the latter was full of malice towards the former.

C. The Imam debated with the scholar of the Christians on certain affairs. The Imam also defeated the scholar. So, the Syrians were busy talking about the Imam's victory over the Christian scholar. We have mentioned these matters in detail in the previous chapters.

Al-Baqir designated al-Sadiq

Imam Abu' Ja'far (al-Baqir), peace be on him, designated his son al-Sadiq, peace be on him, as an Imam. For al-Sadiq was the pride of the world. He was the pioneer of culture and science in Islam. His father designated him to be an Imam and successor and general authority for the community after him. He said to his followers that it was incumbent on them to follow and obey his son.

Imam Abu' Ja'far (al-Baqir), peace be on him, lauded his son, Imam al-Sadiq, peace be on him. He gave an explicit designation for his Imamte. Abu' al-Saba'h al-Kina'ni reported. He said: [Abu' Ja'far Muhammad looked towards his son Abu' 'Abd Allah (al-Sadiq), peace be on him, and said (to us): "Do you see that man? He is one of those of whom Allah, the Mighty and High, said: We wish to grant a favor to those who have been humiliated in the land and We will make them Imams and inheritors." 6

'Ali b. al-Hakam reported on the authority of Ta'hir, who said: [I was with Abu' Ja'far (al-Baqir), peace be on him). When Ja'far (al-Sadiq) approached, Abu' Ja'far (al-Baqir) said:] "Here is the best of creatures."

His Testamentary Enjoinments

Imam Muhammad al-Baqir, peace be on him, gave several enjoinments to his son, Imam al-Sadiq, peace be on him. Among them are the following:

- 1. He said: "Ja'far, I give testamentary enjoinments to you (to treat) my followers well." So, Imam al—Sadiq, peace be on him, replied: "May I be your ransom, I will make them (know their religion so well) that any man among them in the country will not (have to) ask any one (for advice)." He, peace be on him, enjoined his son to spend (money) on them and to take care of their affairs to make them devote themselves to seek knowledge, to record his traditions, and to spread his sciences and morals among the people.
- 2. He, peace be on him, enjoined his son al-Sadiq, peace be on him, to shroud him in the cloak in which he used to perform the prayer. 9 He wanted that to be a truthful witness with Allah for his great worship and his obedience to Him.
- 3. He endowed some of his money to some female weepers to weep for him for ten years at Mina. 10 The reason for that is that Mina was the greatest center where Muslims gathered, and that there were many female weepers at it. This would make the Muslims ask about the reason for weeping. They would be told that the Umayyads persecuted and killed Imam Abu' Ja'far (al-Baqir), peace be on him. So, the

Umayyad would be unable to hide the murder of the Imam.

As for the text of his testamentary enjoinments, it was reported by Imam Abu' 'Abd Allah al-Sadiq, peace be on him, who said: [When my father was near to death, he said (to me): "Call witnesses for me." I summoned four men from Quraysh, among them Na'fi', retainer of 'Abd Allah b. 'Umar. (My father said:) "Write this testimony which I bequeath (like) Jacob did to his sons: My sons, Allah has chosen the religion for you. So, do not die except as Muslims. Muhammad b. 'Ali makes this last testimony to Ja'far b. Muhammad. He orders him to shroud him in his cloak in which he used to perform the Friday prayer, to put his turban on him, to make his grave a square, to raise it the height of four fingers above the ground, and to take his shabby clothes away from him at his burial.

Then he said to the witnesses: "Depart, may Allah have mercy on you."

"Father," I said to him (after they had gone), "what was in this that there had to be witnesses for it?"

"My son," he answered, "I was unwilling for you to be overcome and for it to be said that no testimony had been mad for him. I wanted you to have proof."11

To the Highest Paradise

The poison acted quickly on the body of Imam Abu' Ja'far (al-Baqir), peace be on him. So, death approached fast. During his last hours, he gathered all his feelings and sentiments, and cleaved to Allah, the Most High. He began reciting the Holy Quran. He asked Allah's forgiveness. While his tongue busy praising Allah, death came to him. So, his great matchless soul ascended to its Creator after it had enlightened the cultural scientific life in Islam. When the Imam died, the most wonderful stage of the Islamic message, which provided the Islamic community with the elements of awareness, development, and prosper, ended.

His Preparation (for Burial)

Imam al-Sadiq, peace be on him, prepared the holy body for burial. He washed it and shrouded it. He was weeping bitter tears for the missing of his father, who was the best person under the sky in knowledge, outstanding merits, and devoutness.

His Burial

The people carried the great body from al-Hamima. 12 They gathered around it. They were shouting: "There is no god but Allah! Allah is Great!" They were happy to touch the coffin of the Imam. They were mentioning the laudable and favors of Imam Abu' Ja'far (al-Baqir), peace be on him. Then they reached at Baqi' al-Gharqad. They dug a grave alongside the grave of his father, Zayn al-'Abidin, the greatest Imam, peace be on him, and besides his great-uncle, Imam al-Hasan, the Lord of the Youth of Heaven,

peace be on him. Then Imam al-Sadiq buried his father in his final resting place. He buried with him knowledge, clemency, and kindness to people.

The death of Imam Abu' Ja'far (al-Baqir), peace be on him, was the greatest loss for the Muslims then. For they missed the leader, the pioneer, and the guide, who spared no effort to spread knowledge and cultural awareness among Muslims.

His Holy Age

The historians and narrators have differed over his holy age. The following are some of their views:

- 1. He died at the age of 73.13
- 2. He died at the age of 63.14
- 3. He died at the age of 61.15
- 4. He died at the age of 60.16
- 5. He died at the age of 58.17
- 6. He died at the age of 56.18
- 7. He died at the age of 55.19

The narrators fully know that the Imam, peace be on him, died at the age of 58. One of the above—mentioned narrations indicates that.

The Year of his Death

The historians differed over the year in which the Imam died. The following are some of their views:

- 1. He died in the year 127 A. H.20
- 2. He died in the year 118 A. H.21
- 3. He died in the year 117 A. H.22
- 4. He died in the year 116 A. H.23
- 5. He died in the year 114 A. H.24
- 6. He died in the year 113 A. H.25

These are some of the views the historians have mentioned. It is famous that Imam al-Bagir, peace be

The Muslims condoled Imam al-Sadiq

The Muslims were full of sadness. So, they hurried to Imam al–Sadiq, peace be on him, to condole with him on the death of his father. Among the condolers was Sa'lim b. Abi Hafsa, who said: "I said to my companions: 'Wait for me. For I want to go to Abu' 'Abd Allah (al–Sadiq) to condole with him on the death of his father.' I went to him and condoled with him and said to him: 'To Allah we belong and to Him is our return. By Allah, the one who used to say: 'Allah's Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family, said,' has passed away. He was not asked about what was between him and Allah's Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family. I have never seen the like of him." He Sa'lim added: "Imam Abu' 'Abd Allah (al–Sadiq), peace be on him, kept silent for an hour. Then he turned to his companions and said to them: Allah, the Great and Almighty said: 'Some of My servants give part of a date as alms. So, I will grow (the alms) for them, as they grow the foal.'"

Then Sa'lim went out. He admired Imam Abu' 'Abd Allah (al-Sadiq), peace be on him. Hence, he turned to his companions and said to them: "I have not seen (any person) more wonderful than this (Imam). We regarded as great Abu' Ja'far (al-Baqir), peace be on him, who used to say without any authority: 'Allah's Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family, said.' Abu' 'Abd Allah (al-Sadiq), peace be on him, said to me without an authority: 'Allah said.'"26

Imam al-Sadiq, peace be on him, took his traditions from his fathers, who took their sciences from their grandfather, Allah's Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family.

With this I will end my talk about the life of Imam Abu' Ja'far (al-Bagir), peace be on him.

Before I turn this last page, I would like to underline that this book, thought comprehensive, has not encompassed the life of Imam al-Baqir, peace be on him. Rather, it sheds light on some of the aspects of his character. As for encompassing his character and recording his sciences, his wonderful wise sayings, and his excellent literature, they surely require a large encyclopedia.

Before I see off gentle readers, I would like to thank my brother Shaykh Ha'di al-Qarashi for his valuable notes concerning the chapters of this book. In this connection, I would like to thank my son 'Abd al-Husayn, who encouraged me to serve the members of the House (ahl al-Bayt), peace be on them.

It is an act of kindness to end my book with the following commandments of Imam Abu' Ja'far (al-Baqir), peace be on him, to his student Muhammad b. Muslim: "Do not let the people deceive you (with vain hopes). For the affair will come to you without them. Do not let the day prevent so-and-so from you. For there is with you the one who counts against you. Consider not as small the good deed you do. For you will see it where it pleases you. Consider not as small the evil deed you do. For you will see it where it displeases you. Do good (to people). For the good deed erases the past sin. The fear of Allah is not in

long worship. Rather, the fear of Allah is in refraining from the suspicion."

- 1. Tadhkirat al-Khawa's, p.350. In Kashf al-Ghumma, vol. 2, p.322, it has been reported on the authority of Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq, peace be on him, who said: [My father Muhammad al-Baqir, peace be on him, said:] "'Ali was killed at the age of fifty-eight. 'Ali b. al-Husayn died at the age of fifty-eight. I am fifty-eighty years old."
- 2. Biha'r al-Anwa'r
- 3. Akhba'r al-Duwal, p.111
- 4. Biha'r al-Anwa'r
- 5. Nu'r al-Abbsa'r, vol. 131. Ibn Tolo'n, al-A'imma al-Ithna' 'Ashar, p.281
- 6. Usu'l al-Ka'fi, vol. 1, p.306
- 7. Ibid
- 8. Ibid
- 9. Safwat al-Safwa, vol.2, p.63. Ibn al-Wardi, Ta'rikh, vol.1, p.184. Abi al-Fida", Ta'rikh, vol.1, p.214. Ibn al-Jawzi, al-Muntazam, vol.7 (photographed)
- 10. Biha'r al-Anwa'r, vol. 11, p.62
- 11. Usu'l al-Ka'fi, vol. 1, p. 307
- 12. Al-Humayma was the name of a village outside Medina. 'Ali b. al-'Abba's and his sons owned the village during the time of the Umayyad government. Ibn Tolo'n has mentioned that in his book, "Ta'rikh al-A'imma al-Ithna' 'Ashar, p.281."
- 13. Safwat al-Safwa, vol.2, p.63. Ibn 'Asa'kir, Ta'rikh, vol. 51, p.39. Ibn al-Jawzi, al-Muntazam, vol.7. Abi al-Fida'', Ta'rikh, vol.1, p.214. Ibn al-Athir, Ta'rikh, vol.4, p.217. Ibn al-Wardi, Ta'rikh, vol.1, p.184
- 14. Abi Isha'q al-Shira'zi, Tabaqa't al-Fuqaha", p.36
- 15. Biha'r al-Anwa'r, vol. 11, p.63
- 16. Al-Fa'khu'ri, Mukhtasar Ta'rikh al-Isla'm, p.85
- 17. Al-Shaykha'ni, al-Sira't al-Sawi, p.94. Ta'rikh al-Khamis, vol. 2, p.319. Safwat al-Safwa, vol. 2, p.63
- 18. Ta'rikh al-A'imma, p.5
- 19. Al-Nafha al-'Anbariya
- 20. Al-Fa'khu'ri, Mukhtasar Ta'rikh al-Isla'm, p.85
- 21. Khalifa Khayya't, Ta'rikh, vol. 2, p.236
- 22. Safwat al-Safwa, vol.2, p.63
- 23. lbn al-Wardi, Ta'rikh, vol. 1, p. 184. Abi al-Fida", Ta'rikh, vol. 1, p. 214
- 24. 'Ima'd al-Din al-Asfaha'ni, al-Busta'n al-Ja'mi'. Al-Nafha al-'Anbariya. Shadhara't al-Dhahab, vol. 1, p. 149
- 25. Wajjdi, Da"irat al-Ma'a'rif, vol.3, p.563
- 26. Al-Shaykh al-Tu'si, al-Ama'li, p. 125

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