

Lesson 22: The Fifth Imam And The Seventh Infallible Figure, Imam Al-Baqir

He was called Muhammad and was distinguished with the epithet *Baqir al-'Ulum*, literally, explorer of sciences. His father was Imam Husayn and his mother was Fatimah, the daughter of Imam Hasan, therefore, he was directly related to Imam 'Ali ibn Abitalib through both of his parents.

He was born on Rajab 1, 47 in Medina and attained the position of leadership at thirty nine in 95. Since toward the end of his life, the Bani Umayyah regime had declined and was on the verge of disintegration, he managed to utilize the opportunity to explain Islamic laws and teachings to people and train innumerable students and scholars. The contemporary scholars and jurists honored him and drew benefits from him.

'Abdullah ibn 'Ata has said, "I never saw scholars and scientists honor and venerate anyone as much as they did Imam Muhammad. For example, whenever Hakam ibn Utaybah, who was one of most prominent scholars of the time, met Imam, he behaved so respectfully, as if an elementary pupil behaves toward his teacher."¹

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) has said, "My father, Imam Baqir, was always praying to God and on occasions when I walked with him, I noticed that he prayed as he walked. He was constantly worshipping God, during meals, at services with people, and he used to urge us to recite Qur'an."

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) has also observed, "Whenever my father, Imam Baqir instructed his servants to do something, he went to supervise them and if he saw they had difficulty performing that, he tried to help them."²

Imam Baqir ('a) passed away at fifty seven on Dhu'l-Hijjah 7, 114 and was buried at Baqi' cemetery in Medina.

Some Remarks by Imam Baqir

Imam Baqir told Jabir Ja'fari, who was one of his companions, "O Jabir! I swear by God that our follower (Shi'ah) is one who submits to the command of God and is pious and god-fearing. God is not biased toward anyone and the dearest servants before God are those who are the most righteous and comply with divine edicts better and more often than others. By God, the only way to please God and get closer to Him, is through obedience and submission. We cannot save you from the flames of hell. Anyone who obeys God is our companion and friend and anyone who commits sins and wrongdoings and disobeys God is our enemy. O Jabir! One cannot attain our affection but through piety and good deeds."³

^{1.} Al-Anwar al-Bahiyah, p. 62.

^{2.} Al-Anwar al-Bahiyah, p. 66.

^{3.} 'Usul al-Kafi, vol.2, p. 74.

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