

[Home](#) > [The Life of Imam Muhammad Al-Jawad](#) > [The End](#) > [With Imam Al-Jawad](#) > The Date Of His Death

The End

Before we talk about the end of the life of the great Imam Abu Ja'far al-Jawad (a.s), we talk in brief about the life of al-Mu'tasim the Abbasid caliph who had assassinated Imam al-Jawad (a.s) with poison for it has an objective relation with the study on the life of the imam (a.s).

The Characteristics Of Al-Mu'tasim

Foolishness

Al-Mu'tasim was foolish. Historians described him that when he became angry, he did not care whom he killed or what he did.¹

Dislike Of Knowledge

Al-Mu'tasim disliked knowledge and hated learned people. There was a servant with him who read with him in the book. The servant died and ar-Rasheed said to al-Mu'tasim, 'O Muhammad, your servant died.'

Al-Mu'tasim said, 'O yes, my master! He died and rested from the book.'

Ar-Rasheed said, 'The book will rest from you. (to his men) Leave him! Do not teach him!'²

Al-Mu'tasim remained illiterate. When he became the caliph, he did not know reading and writing and his vizier was unlearned. Ahmed bin Aamir described him by saying, 'An illiterate caliph and an unlearned vizier.'³

He was divested of knowledge, virtue, and any good quality, by which he was supposed to deserve the caliphate in Islam that was the highest and most important position on which justice and equity among people depended.

[His Hatred To The Arabs](#)

Al-Mu'tasim hated the Arabs too much. He exaggerated in subjugating and degrading them. He omitted their names from the divan and prevented them from their gifts and deposed them from main positions.[4](#)

[His Loyalty To The Turks](#)

Al-Mu'tasim had in the deep of his heart a great love and loyalty to the Turks. He depended on them in building his state. It was because that his mother Marida was a Turk. Therefore, he imitated the Turks in everything. He sent for them from Turkey[5](#) and their number was about seventy thousands at his reign.

In order to keep their race distinguished, he brought them women from their race and prevented them from getting married to women from other races.[6](#) He made them wear silk garments and gold belts.[7](#) He made them the leaders of his armies and entrusted them with the high positions of politics and war and deprived the Arabs of the positions they had in the army. He preferred the Turks to the Arabs and to the Persians in everything.

The Turks behaved wrongly towards people. They roved in the streets of Baghdad on their horses paying no attention to people. They trod on old people, women and children. The people of Baghdad clamored against their oppression and inadvertence.[8](#) Al-Mu'tasim was under the control of the Turks to a far extent.

[With Imam Al-Jawad](#)

Al-Mu'tasim's heart was full of spite and malice against Imam al-Jawad (a.s). He burst with rage whenever he heard the virtues and exploits of Imam al-Jawad (a.s) being mentioned. His envy towards him had led him to assassinate him as we shall explain later on.

[Bringing Imam Al-Jawad To Baghdad](#)

Al-Mu'tasim had ordered Imam al-Jawad (a.s) to come to Baghdad and he arrived in it in Muharram, 220 AH.[9](#)

When Imam al-Jawad (a.s) came to Baghdad, al-Mu'tasim house- arrested him to know all his affairs and activities. He ordered his men to watch him and he prevented him from connecting with his followers and those who believed in his imamate.

[Betraying The Imam](#)

Indeed, it was unfortunate that that betrayal had come from Abu Dawod as-Sajistani, who was one of the prominent jurisprudents of that time. That which led him to do that was his envy towards Imam al-Jawad (a.s). Envy is a malicious disease that always throws people in great evils.

Abu Dawod was so spiteful towards Imam al-Jawad (a.s) when al-Mu'tasim followed his (Imam al-Jawad's) opinion on a jurisprudential matter and left aside the opinions of all other jurists. Since then, Abu Dawod was filled with rage against Imam al-Jawad (a.s) and tried to betray him and manage to kill him.

Zarqan, the close friend of Abu Dawod, said, 'One day, he (Abu Dawod) came back from al-Mu'tasim distressedly. I asked him what the matter was and he said, 'A thief confessed that he had committed theft and the caliph wanted to purify him by punishing him. He gathered the jurists in his meeting and sent for Muhammad bin Ali (al-Jawad). He asked us how the thief's hand would be cut. I said, 'His hand should be cut from the wrist because Allah has said when talking on Tayammum, (...**and wipe your faces and your hands**).[10](#)

Some jurists agreed with me on that and others said, 'The hand must be cut from the elbow.' Al-Mu'tasim asked what their evidence was and they said, 'Allah has said, (...**wash your faces and your hands as far as the elbows...**).[11](#) Then, al-Mu'tasim turned to Muhammad bin Ali and asked him, 'O Abu Ja'far, what do you say on that?'

He said, 'O Ameerul Mo'mineen, the jurists have talked about that.'

Al-Mu'tasim said, 'Let what they have said aside. What do you have to say?'

Imam al-Jawad (a.s) said, 'O Ameerul Mo'mineen, would you exempt me from that?'

Al-Mu'tasim said, 'I adjure you by Allah that you tell what you have.'

Imam al-Jawad (a.s) said, 'Now, since you have put me on oath, I will say. They (jurists) are mistaken. Only the fingers should be cut from the joints of their origins and the palm should be left safe.'

Al-Mu'tasim asked about the evidence and Imam al-Jawad (a.s) said, 'The messenger of Allah said, 'Prostration is on seven organs; the face, the two hands, the two knees and the two feet.' Then, if his hand is cut from the wrist or the elbow, he shall not have a hand to prostrate on it and Allah has said, (**the places of worship (prostration) are for Allah**) meaning these seven organs that one prostrates on; (**so pray not unto anyone along with Allah**). What is for Allah is not cut.' Al-Mu'tasim approved this answer and ordered the hand of the thief to be cut from the joints of fingers without the palm.

Zarqan added that Abu Dawod said, 'After three days, I went to al-Mu'tasim and said to him, 'Being loyal to Ameerul Mo'mineen is obligatory on me. I tell you about something that I know I may go to Hell because of it (if I do not tell it).' Al-Mu'tasim said, 'What is it?' I said, 'Ameerul Mo'mineen had gathered in his meeting the jurists and ulama of his subjects for a serious matter of religion. He asked them about the verdict on it and they told him of the verdict they had. Your family, leaders, viziers and scribes had attended the meeting and the people outside had also heard of that. Then, all the sayings of these jurists and ulama were brushed aside just for a saying of a man, whom a group of the nation

believe in his imamate and claim that he is worthier of your position than you, and then his suggestion is followed and preferred to the verdicts of the jurists. Al-Mu'tasim changed color and noticed what drew his attention to. He said, 'May Allah reward you with good for your advice.'¹²

Abu Dawud had committed the ugliest crime in Islam. He had instigated al-Mu'tasim to assassinate an imam from the imams of Ahlul Bayt (a.s), whom Allah had imposed their love on this nation. Woe and wrath be unto whoever had participated in shedding their bloods.

Imam Al-Jawad Predicts His Death

Imam al-Jawad (a.s) perceived from beyond the unseen that the inevitable death would come to him while his old was like that of flowers yet. He had declared that to his followers on many occasions. Here are some of them:

1. Muhammad bin al-Faraj narrated, "Abu Ja'far wrote to me: 'Bring me the khums. I shall not take it from you except this year.' He lived no long after that until Allah took him near Him.'¹³
2. Abu Talib al-Qummi narrated, "One day, I wrote to Abu Ja'far bin ar-Ridha' (Imam al-Jawad) asking him to permit me to mourn for Abul Hasan (Imam al-Jawad's father). He wrote to me saying: 'Mourn for me and for my father!'"¹⁴
3. Imam al-Jawad (a.s) told about his death during the reign of al-Ma'moon when he said, 'Deliverance comes thirty months after al-Ma'moon.' Thirty months after the death of al-Ma'moon, Imam al-Jawad (a.s) died and left to the better world.¹⁵
4. Isma'eel bin Mihran narrated, "When al-Mu'tasim sent for Abu Ja'far to come to Baghdad, I said to him (to Imam al-Jawad), 'May I die for you! You are going. To whom will the matter (the imamate) be after you?' He cried until his beard became wet of his tears. Then he turned to me and said, 'At this (the going to Baghdad) it is feared for me. The matter after me is to my son Ali.'¹⁶

Imam al-Jawad (a.s) was aware of the spite of al-Mu'tasim towards him and he knew that al-Mu'tasim did not refrain from assassinating him; therefore, he told his companions and followers that he would die during the reign of al-Mu'tasim the tyrant.

Announcing The Imamate To His Son

Imam al-Jawad (a.s) announced to his followers that the imamate after him would be to his son Ali al-Hadi (a.s). He had appointed him as the authority for the umma after him.

As-Saqr narrated, 'I had heard Abu Ja'far Muhammad bin Ali ar-Ridha' (Imam al-Jawad) saying, 'The imam after me is my son Ali. His order is as my order, his saying is as my saying and obedience him is as obedience to me...'¹⁷

Al-Khayrani narrated from his father that once, Imam Abu Ja'far (a.s) had sent a messenger to him saying to him, 'Your master sends his greetings to you and says: 'I have gone and the matter will be to my son Ali. Your duty to him is as your duty that you had to me after my father.'¹⁸ There are many other traditions like these ones showing that Imam al-Jawad (a.s) had appointed his son Ali al-Hadi (a.s) as the imam after him and necessitated his followers to obey him.

The Assassination Of Imam Al-Jawad

Imam al-Jawad (a.s) had not died a natural death but al-Mu'tasim, the Abbasid caliph, had assassinated him.¹⁹

Historians had disagreed on the person whom al-Mu'tasim had instructed to poison Imam al-Jawad (a.s). Here are some of the historians' sayings:

1. Some narrators mentioned that al-Mu'tasim had instructed one of the scribes of his viziers to invite Imam al-Jawad (a.s) to his house and insert poison to him. The scribe invited Imam al-Jawad (a.s) but Imam al-Jawad (a.s) apologized that he could not respond to the invitation. The scribe insisted on Imam al-Jawad (a.s) to come to him to have the honor of his visit and told him that one of the viziers wanted to meet him. He could not but to accept the invitation. When he ate from the food, he felt the poison and then he asked for his sumpter to leave the house. The owner of the house asked him to stay with him but Imam al-Jawad (a.s) said to him, 'My leaving your house is better to you.'²⁰
2. Some narrations declared that al-Mu'tasim had incited his niece Ummul Fadhl, the wife of Imam al-Jawad (a.s), by giving her some monies and she put poison in the food of Imam al-Jawad (a.s).²¹

Anyhow, al-Mu'tasim, through poisoning Imam al-Jawad (a.s), had cut the ties of kinship and had not regarded the sanctity of the Prophet (a.s) through his progeny.

The Motives Of The Assassination

The motives of al-Mu'tasim in assassinating Imam al-Jawad (a.s) were, as we think, the betrayal of Abu Dawod that had encouraged him to assassinate Imam al-Jawad (a.s) and the envy al-Mu'tasim had at Imam al-Jawad (a.s) because of the high position, honor and reverence he had in the hearts of Muslims who unanimously had talked about the talents and genius he had since his early years as they talked about his high morals, patience, kindness and charity to the poor and deprived besides his other virtues which filled the meetings everywhere. All that had led al-Mu'tasim to put Imam al-Jawad (a.s) under house arrest and then to assassinate him.

To The Best World

The poison had affected Imam al-Jawad (a.s) strongly. It reacted with all parts of his body and he began suffering unbearable pains. His intestines had been cut out of pain. He had told those who were with him

in that night that he would die. He said to them, 'We are a group of people that if Allah does not please this world to anyone of us, He takes us near Him.'²²

Pains affected him severely. He was in the prime of youth. When he felt death near to him, he began reciting some suras from the Holy Qur'an. He breathed his last while his tongue was still mentioning Allah the Almighty. By his death a shining sun of the imamate and of the intellectual, thinking leadership in Islam had gone out.

Imam al-Jawad (a.s) had been martyred at the hand of the tyrant of his age, al-Mu'tasim, and by his martyrdom a bright page from the pages of the Islamic mission, which illuminated intellect and raised the banner of knowledge and virtue in the earth, had passed.

Funerals And Burial

The holy corpse of Imam al-Jawad (a.s) was prepared, washed and enshrouded. Al-Wathiq (the later-on Abbasid caliph) and al-Mu'tasim offered the prayer (for the dead) on the holy corpse.²³ The corpse of this great imam was carried to the graveyard of Quraysh escorted by the great crowds of people. It was a memorable day that Baghdad had not witnessed a day like it before. Tens of thousands had crowded in sad procession mentioning the virtues of this great imam and mourning for him and thinking of the great loss Muslims had been afflicted with.

A grave was dug beside the grave of his grandfather Imam Musa bin Ja'far al-Kadhim (a.s) (in Baghdad) and he was buried in it and human values and high ideals were buried with him.

His Age

Imam al-Jawad (a.s) had lived for twenty-five years.²⁴ He was the youngest of the infallible imams (peace be upon them). He had spent most of his life in spreading knowledge and virtue among people and his life had been a school of knowledge and intellect and an institute of faith and piety.

The Date Of His Death

Imam al-Jawad (a.s) died in 220 AH²⁵ on Tuesday, the fifth of Thul Qi'dah,²⁶ and it was said on the twenty-fifth of Thul Hijjah²⁷ or the sixth of Thul Hijjah.²⁸

Thus, the study of the life of this great imam of Ahlul Bayt (a.s), whom Allah has kept away the uncleanness from and purified a (thorough) purifying, comes to end.

Before ending the book, I would like to repeat what I have mentioned in the introduction that this book does not give but a brief account on the life of Imam Abu Ja'far al-Jawad (a.s). It has not dealt with all the affairs of his life or even some of them and this is not an exaggeration, but it is the reality we believe in.

Finally, I would like to offer my great thanks to His Eminence Hojattol Islam wel Muslimeen Sheikh Husayn al-Khalifah for his participation in spending on the printing of this book (the Arabic edition) praying Allah to reward him with the best of reward and I would like to offer my thanks to His Eminence Sheikh Hadi al-Qurashi for his great efforts in reviewing some encyclopedias and offering to us much information about the life of Imam al-Jawad (a.s) besides his technical notes on the book. I pray Allah to prolong his life and reward him with the best of reward as the best prayer from a brother to his brother.

- [1.](#) Islam and the Arabic Civilization, vol.2 p.237, Akhbar ad-Duwal (news of countries), p. 155.
- [2.](#) Akhbari ad-Duwal, p. 155.
- [3.](#) Wafiyat al-A'yan.
- [4.](#) Islam and the Arabic Civilization, vol.2 p.449.
- [5.](#) Muroj ath-Thahab, vol.4 p.9.
- [6.](#) Dhuhr al-Islam, vol. 1 p.4-5.
- [7.](#) Tareekh al-Khulafa', p.223.
- [8.](#) Tareekh al-Hadharah al-Islamiyya fil-Iraq (history of the Islamic civilization in Iraq), p.24.
- [9.](#) Sharh Mimiyyat Abu Firas, p.36, al-Fusul al-Muhimmah, p.262.
- [10.](#) Qur'an,4:43.
- [11.](#) Qur'an, 5:6.
- [12.](#) Tafsir al-Ayyashi, vol. 1 p.319, al-Burhan, vol. 1 p.471, Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 12 p.99, Wassa'il ash-Shia, vol. 18 p.490.
- [13.](#) Al-Mahajjah al-Baydha', vol.4 p.308.
- [14.](#) Rijal al-Kashshi, vol.2 p.838.
- [15.](#) Ithbat al-Hudat, vol.6 p. 190.
- [16.](#) Al-Irshad, p.369.
- [17.](#) Ikmal ad-Deen, vol.2 p.50.
- [18.](#) Al-Irshad, p.369.
- [19.](#) Bahr al-Ansab, p.28, Sabk ath-Thahab fee Sabk an-Nasab, Mir'at al-Jinan, vol.2 p.81, Nuzhat al-Jalees, vol.2 p. 111.
- [20.](#) Tafsir al-Ayyashi, vol. 1 p.320, Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 12 p.99, al-Burhan, vol. 1 p.471.
- [21.](#) Nuzhat al-Jalees, vol.2 p. 111, al-Manaqib, vol.4 p.391
- [22.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 12 p.99.
- [23.](#) Nuzhat al-Jalees, vol.2 p. 111. In Mir'at al-Jinan, vol.2 p.81, it has been mentioned that al-Wathiq the son of al-Mu'tasim had offered the prayer on the holy corpse of Imam al-Jawad (s).
- [24.](#) Tareekh al-Islam by ath-Thahabi, vol.8 p. 158, Rawdh al-Manadhir fee Tareekh al-Awa'il wel Awakhir by Muhammad bin Shuhna (manuscript), Muntakhab Mir'at al-Jinan wa Ibrat al-Yaqdhan by al-Yafi'iy (manuscript), Tareekh Qum, translated by al-Buraqi (manuscript).
- [25.](#) Tareekh al-Khamees, vol.2 p.375, Muntakhab Mir'at al-Jinan, Bahr al-Ansab, vol.2 p. 19, Tareekh Qum (manuscript), Shatharat ath-Thahab, vol.2 p.48, Rawdh al-Manadhir.
- [26.](#) Nuzhat al-Jalees, vol.2 p.61, Mir'at al-Jinan, vol.2 p.81. Thul Qi'dah is the eleventh month in the Islamic calendar and Thul Hijjah is the twelfth.
- [27.](#) An-Nujoom az-Zahira, vol.2 p.231.
- [28.](#) Al-Fusul al-Muhimmah by Ibn as-Sabbagh, p.262.

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