

The Fifth Imam: Muhammad Baqir

Birth and Martyrdom

Muhammad Ibn Ali (a.s.) was born on the third of Safar in the year fifty nine A.H. in Medina. His father was Ali Ibn Husayn (a.s.) and his mother was Fatimah, Umm Abdullah, the daughter of Imam Hasan (a.s.). His nickname was Abu Ja'far and his titles were Baqirul Ulum, Shakir, and Hadi.¹

He lived fifty seven years and was martyred on the seventh of Zi Hajjah in the year 114 A.H. in Medina and was buried in Baqi' cemetery.²

Texts Proving His Imamate

In addition to general reasons pointed out in previous chapters for proving the Imamate of the twelve Imams (a.s.), there are some explicit reasons for Imamate of Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) in the speech of his father, Ali Ibn Husayn (a.s.).

'Isma'il Ibn Muhammad Ibn Abdullah Ibn Ali Ibn Husayn has quoted from Imam Baqir (a.s.), "Imam Ali Ibn Husayn (a.s.) brought a chest to me before his demise and said, 'O Muhammad! Take this chest and keep it.' When Ali Ibn Husayn (a.s.) passed away, his brothers came to Imam Baqir (a.s.) and asked for their legacy from that chest. Imam Baqir (a.s.) told them, 'You have no share of this chest. If you had, it was not given to me. The chest contains the weapon and the books of Messenger of Allah (S).'"³

'Isa Ibn Abdullah has quoted from his father from his grandfather that Imam Ali Ibn Husayn (a.s.) attended to his children before his demise and told his son, Muhammad Ibn Ali, "O Muhammad! Take this chest to your home!" There was no money in that chest; rather, there were scientific books in it."⁴

The same tradition is narrated by Muhammad Ibn Abdul Jabbar.⁵

'Aban Ibn 'Uthman has narrated from Imam Sadiq (a.s.) that one day Jabir went to Imam Ali Ibn Husayn (a.s.), when his son Muhammad was there. Jabir asked Imam (a.s.), "Who is he?" Imam Sajjad (a.s.)

answered, “He is my son and the successor to me, Muhammad Baqir.”[6](#)

‘Uthman Ibn Uthman Ibn Khalid has quoted from his father, “When Ali Ibn Husayn (a.s.) got sick, he called his sons, Muhammad, Hasan, ‘Umar, Ziyad, and Husayn. He introduced his son, Muhammad Ibn Ali, as his successor among them, gave him the title Baqir, and entrusted the affairs of his other sons to him.”[7](#)

Malik Ibn ‘A’yun Jahni has said that Ali Ibn Husayn (a.s.) set his son, Muhammad Ibn Ali his successor and stated, “O my son! You will be my successor and caliph.”[8](#)

Zahri says, “I told Ali Ibn Husayn (a.s.), ‘O son of Messenger of Allah! If your death comes, who we should refer to?’ Imam Sajjad (a.s.) replied, ‘Refer to my son Muhammad; he will be my caliph, the heir of my knowledge, and Baqirul ‘Ulum. This is a covenant from the Messenger of Allah (S) to us.’”[9](#)

Abu Basir has narrated from Imam Baqir, Abu Ja’far (a.s.), “One of my father’s recommendations to me in his will was that when he passed away only I should wash his body, because only an Imam should wash an Imam after his death.”[10](#)

Sayyid Murtaza have said, “Before the demise of Ali Ibn Husayn (a.s.), he called his son, Muhammad Baqir, and introduced Muhammad Baqir as his successor in presence of a group of the noble Shi’ahs, emphasizing his Imamate and presenting Allah’s Great Name and the prophets’ (S) legacy to him.”[11](#)

Mas’udi has narrated the same tradition in his book ‘Ithbatul Wasiyyah.[12](#)

Virtues

Like other infallible Imams (a.s.), Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) was a perfect human and infallible from any vices or faults. This is not only the opinion of their friends, but also that of their enemies.

Shiykh Mufid has written about Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.): Imam Baqir, Abu Ja’far, Muhammad Ibn Ali Ibn Husayn (a.s.) was selected from among his brothers to be the successor and caliph of his father, Ali Ibn Husayn (a.s.). He was superior to his brothers in regard to knowledge, piety, and nobility.

He was more famous and honorable for the masses and the elites. None of the progeny of Hasan (a.s.) and Husayn (a.s.) was as knowledgeable as he was in religious sciences, Prophet (S)’s traditions, Quranic exegesis, and life conducts. The Prophet (S)’s companions, the companions’ friends, and great jurists have narrated traditions from Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.). He was famous for knowledge and understanding and was eulogized in poems.[13](#)

Abul Fida’ has written about Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.): Muhammad Ibn Ali Ibn Husayn Abu Ja’far Baqir has been an honorable follower of the Prophet (S) and a selected person in terms of knowledge, conduct, nobility, and honor. The Imamiyah Shi’ahs know him one of their twelve Imams...He has

narrated many traditions from the companions of Messenger of Allah (S) and many followers of the companions have narrated traditions from him. Some of the narrators from him include his son, Ja'far Sadiq, Hakam Ibn 'Atibah, Rabi'ahi, 'A'mash, Abu 'Is'haq Sabi'i, 'Awza'i, 'A'raj, Ibn Jurayh, 'Ata', 'Amr Ibn Dinar, and Zahri.

Sufyan Ibn 'Aynah has narrated from Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.), "My father narrated traditions for me, while he was the best one in Prophet Muhammad (S)'s nation." 'Ajali has said about him, "He was one of the most trustworthy followers of Prophet (S)'s companions in Medina." Muhammad Ibn Sa'd has said about Imam Baqir (a.s.), "He was trustworthy and narrated many traditions."[14](#)

Furthermore, Abul Fida' has written about Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.), Abu Ja'far Muhammad Ibn Ali Ibn Husayn Ibn Ali Ibn Abi Talib was son of Ziyunul 'abidin and grandson of Husayn, who was martyred in Karbala. He was called Baqir, because he split knowledge and deducted the rules. He was a humble patient person from the Prophet (S)'s family. He was lofty and famous. He was aware of the dangers. He wept a lot (from Allah's fear) and avoided enmity and controversy.[15](#)

Ahmad Ibn Hajar Hiythami has written about Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.): Abu Ja'far Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) was the heir of knowledge, worship, and piety of Ali Ibn Husayn (a.s.). He was called Baqir, because he discovered sciences. He gained treasures of teachings, commandments, and wisdom, which are only denied by blind-minded and deviant people. He was thus the splitter and distributor of knowledge. His heart was illuminated, his conduct was purified, his soul was clean, and his essence was good. He spent his lifetime in Allah's obedience. His mystical conduct and tradition cannot be described. He has many speeches about mystical conduct and teachings, which require a detailed discussion.[16](#)

Knowledge

Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) was one of the greatest jurists and scholars of his own age. The Messenger of Allah (S) had declared his scientific stance before.

Jabir Ibn Abdullah Ansari has narrated from Prophet Muhammad (S) who told him, "O Jabir! You will visit one of my progeny from the generation of Husayn, whose name is my name. He will discover sciences and explain facts. When you meet him, say my hello to him." Jabir was alive until he met Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) and said Prophet Muhammad (S)'s greetings to him.[17](#)

Many great scholars have praised his scientific stance, including the following: Ibn Barqi has called him a learned jurist among Medina jurists and one of the followers of Prophet Muhammad (S)'s companions.[18](#)

Abdullah Ibn 'Atayi Makki says, "The scholars showed a kind of humility before Muhammad Ibn Ali Ibn Husayn that showed for no one else. I saw Hakam Ibn 'Atibah, who was so learned and honorable, that behaved like a child before his teacher when facing Muhammad Ibn Ali."[19](#)

When Jabir Ibn Yazid Ju'fi narrated a tradition from Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.), he said, "The successor of the 'awliya' and the heir of sciences of the prophets (S), Muhammad Ibn Ali Ibn Husayn, told me..."²⁰

Ibn Abil Hadid writes, "Muhammad Ibn Ali Ibn Husayn was the greatest jurispudent in Hijaz. The people learned jurisprudence from him and his son, Ja'far. He was titled Baqirul 'Ulum. When he was not yet born, the Messenger of Allah (S) gave him this title, gave good tidings of visiting him to Jabir Ibn Abdullah Ansari, and told Jabir, 'Say my greetings to him.'"²¹

Shiykh Mufid writes, "Some traditions are narrated from Imam Abu Ja'far (a.s.) about the beginning of creation of world, the history of Prophets (S), wars, conducts, traditions, and *Haji* rituals from Prophet Muhammad (S), as well as Quran exegesis by general and specific narrators. He had debates with some of the dissidents and deviant opinion makers. People have narrated various sciences from him."²²

The best witness for proving scientific stance of Imam Baqir (a.s.) is the many traditions issued by him in belief, kalam, philosophy, jurisprudence, ethics, history, social issues, exegesis, etc. Narrators have narrated and recorded them in tradition books.

The traditions attributed to Imam Baqir (a.s.) are very numerous. After his son, Imam Sadiq (a.s.), he has the greatest number of traditions compared to other infallible Imams (a.s.).

Imam Baqir (a.s.) trained notable and knowledgeable students during his lifetime, who are narrators of his traditions, some of which are: Abu Hamzah Thumali, Thabit Ibn Dinar, Qasim Ibn Muhammad Ibn Abi Bakr, Ali Ibn Rafi', Zahhak Ibn Muzahim Khurasani, Hamid Ibn Musa Kufi, Abul Fazl Sadir Ibn Hakim Ibn Sahib Siyraf, Abdullah Barqi, Yahya Ibn Umm Tawil Mut'imi, Hakim Ibn Jubayr, Farazdaq, Furat Ibn Ahnaf, Ayyub Ibn Hasan, Abu Muhammad Qurayshi Sudi Kufi, Tawus Ibn Kisan Hamidani, Aban Ibn Taghlab Ibn Riyah, Qiys Ibn Ramanah, Abu Khalid Kabuli, Sa'id Ibn Musayyib Makhzumi, Umar Ibn Ali Ibn Husayn, and his brother, Abdullah, and Jabir Ibn Muhammad Ibn Abi Bakr.²³

'Asad Hiydar has introduced Imam Baqir's (a.s.) students and the narrators of his traditions as follows: 'Umar Ibn Dinar Hajami, Abdur Rahman Ibn Umar 'Awza'i, Abdul Malik Ibn Abdul 'Aziz, Qurat Ibn Khalid Sadusi, Muhammad Ibn Munkadir, Yahya Ibn Kathir, Abu Bakr Muhammad Ibn Muslim Ibn 'Ubayd Zahri, Abu Uthman Rabi'at Ibn Abdur Rahman, Abu Muhammad Suliyman Ibn Mihran 'Asadi, Abu Muhammad Abdullah Ibn Abi Bakr Ansari, Ziyad Ibn Ali Ibn Husayn, Musa Ibn Salim Abu Jahzam, Musa Ibn Abi 'isa Hanat, Abul Mughayrah Qasim Ibn Fazl, Qasim Ibn Muhammad Ibn Abi Bakr Tiymi, Muhammad Ibn Suwqah, Hajjaj Ibn 'Artah, entitled Kharbuz Kufi, Aban Ibn Taghlab, Barid ibn Mu'awiyah 'Ajali, Abu Hamzah Thumali, Thabit ibn Dinar, Jabir Ibn Yazid Ju'fi, Muhammad Ibn Muslim Ibn Riyah, Hamran Ibn 'A'yun Shiybani, Zararat Ibn 'A'yun Shiybani, Abdul Malik Ibn 'A'yun Shiybani.

Worship

Like his father, Imam Ziyunul ‘abidin (a.s.), Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) was the best person of his age in remembrance of Allah, supplication and prayer, and fearing the Almighty Allah.

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) stated, “My father frequently remembered Allah. While walking, eating, and even talking with the people, he did not forget Allah’s remembrance (zikr). He always uttered لا اله الا الله (There is no deity but Allah.) Sometimes he gathered us and ordered to be in Allah’s remembrance until the dawn and told the people who could recite the Quran to recite it.”[24](#)

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) also said, “My father wept when supplicating in the middle of night and called the Exalted Allah, ‘You ordered me, but I did not obey. You prohibited me, but I did not avoid. So I am Your servant before You and I have no excuse.’”[25](#)

‘Aflah, Imam Baqir’s (a.s.) servant says, “I had gone to *Hajj* with Imam Baqir (a.s.). When we entered Masjidul Haram, he looked at the Ka’bah and wept loudly. I told him, ‘May my parents be sacrificed for you! People are looking at you. I wish you wept more quietly!’ Imam (a.s.) said, ‘Woe be on you! Why should not I weep? Perhaps the Almighty Allah has Mercy on me and saves me in the Hereafter.’ Then he performed *Tawaf* (circumambulation) and then prayed before the standing place of Abraham. When he raised his head after sajdah, the earth was wet beneath his forehead.”[26](#)

Jabir Ju’fi says, “Imam Muhammad Ibn Ali (a.s.) told me, ‘O Jabir! I am worried and upset.’ I said, ‘Why are you upset and worried?’ Imam (a.s.) answered, ‘O Jabir! When the religion is deeply placed in one’s heart, it engages him with Allah and separates from anything other than the Almighty. O Jabir! This world is not as worthy as a horse you ride, a cloth you wear, or a wife you meet in privacy. O Jabir! The believers do not trust the world and do not consider themselves away from death and the Hereafter. What they hear in the world does not distract them from Allah’s remembrance.

The luxuries of the world do not distract them from seeing Allah’s light; they will be bestowed with the reward of the good-doers. The pious people have the least expenses and are the best helpers for you. If you forget, they remind you of Allah. If you remember Allah, they help you. Their tongues utter the truth about Allah. They establish Allah’s orders. Their affection is purely for Allah; their hearts are full of His love.

In obeying their real Owner, they fear the world. And they consider such conduct as their duty. The pious see the world like a transient house that should be left soon, or like a property that is earned in dream, but does not exist in reality. Attempt in maintaining Allah’s religion and wisdom!”[27](#)

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) stated, “Every night I prepared my father’s sleeping place and waited for him to come and sleep, so that I could go to sleep too. One night I waited for him long, but he did not come. I went to look for him and found him in the mosque, while everyone else was asleep. I saw him in sajdah and

heard him wailing, ‘O Allah! Glory be to You! You are my Lord really; I go to sajdah for You, while I am Your servant. O Allah! Surely my deeds are little; so You increase them. O Allah! Save me from Your Punishment the Day You resurrect Your servants. Forgive me; surely You are the Relenting, the Merciful.’”[28](#)

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) stated, “When my father was upset about something, he gathered the women and the children. He prayed and they said, ‘Amen!’”[29](#)

‘Aban Ibn Miymun Qaddah says, “Imam Abu Ja’far (a.s.) told me to recite the Quran. I asked him where I should recite. Imam (a.s.) told me to recite the ninth surah. When I wanted to find the ninth surah, Imam (a.s.) told me to recite surah Yunus. I recited until I reached the verse,

To those who do right is a goodly (reward)– Yea, more (than in measure)! No darkness nor shame shall cover their faces![30](#)

Imam Baqir (a.s.) said, ‘That is enough. The Messenger of Allah (S) said, ‘I wonder why I recite Quran and my hair does not become gray.’ ”[31](#)

Almsgiving

Although Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) was not wealthy and his life expense was great, he granted the poor alms as much as he could.

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) stated, “My father had less property than his relatives had and more expenses than they had, but he gave one dinar as charity every Friday. My father then said, ‘Alms–giving on Fridays is better than on other days.’”[32](#)

Hasan Ibn Kathir says, “I told Imam Baqir (a.s.) about my financial need and my friends’ indifference about it. Imam Baqir (a.s.) said, ‘How bad are the friends who attend to us when we are wealthy, but leave us in need.’ Then he ordered his servant to give me a bag of seven hundred dinars and said, ‘Spend this money and let me know whenever it finished.’”[33](#)

‘Umar Ibn Dinar and ‘Ubiydullah Ibn ‘Ubayd have said, “Whenever we went to Imam Baqir, he gave us clothes and money and told us, ‘I had prepared these for you before.’”[34](#)

Suliyman Ibn Qaram said, “Imam Abu Ja’far, Muhammad Ibn Ali, granted us five or six hundred and even sometimes one thousand dirhams and he never got tired of giving alms to the requesters and brothers.”[35](#)

Salma, the female slave of Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.), said, “Everyone who came to visit Imam Baqir (a.s.) was fed and received clothes and money. Once I asked Imam (a.s.) to help the requesters less, but Imam (a.s.) stated, ‘The best goodness in the world is charity to one’s Muslim brothers.’”[36](#)

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) stated, “I was with my father when he divided eighty thousand dinars among the poor in Medina.”[37](#)

All this happened while Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) worked hard in the hot weather of Medina to make a living for himself and his family.

Muhammad Ibn Munkadir said, “I did not think Ali Ibn Husayn (a.s.) would have a successor just like himself, until I saw his son, Muhammad Ibn Ali (a.s.). I was going to preach him, but he preached me instead.” He was asked, “How did he preach you?” Muhammad Ibn Munkadir answered, “I had gone to the outskirts of Medina on a hot time of the day when I saw Muhammad Ibn Ali (a.s.) –who was a corpulent man– leaning over his two servants. I thought, ‘It is a wonder that a nobleman from Quraysh has come out in hot weather for worldly desires. I am going to preach him.’ I went toward him and greeted him.

He greeted me sweating and panting. I told him, ‘A Quraysh nobleman has come out for worldly reasons in this hot hour? How would you answer Allah’s reckoning if your death comes in such state?’

Muhammad Ibn Ali (a.s.) left his servants’ shoulders and said, ‘By Allah that if my death comes in this state, I will die obedient to the Almighty. I am going to work so that I am not dependent upon you and others. I should fear that my death comes while committing sins.’”

Muhammad Ibn Munkadir said, “May Allah bless you! I was going to preach you, but you preached me instead!”[38](#)

- [1.](#) Biharul Anwar, Vol 46, pp. 216, 217 & 222.
- [2.](#) Biharul Anwar, Vol 46, p. 217.
- [3.](#) ‘Ithbatul Hudat, Vol 5, p. 261.
- [4.](#) ‘Ithbatul Hudat, Vol 5, p. 262.
- [5.](#) ‘Ithbatul Hudat, Vol 5, p. 262.
- [6.](#) ‘Ithbatul Hudat, Vol 5, p. 263.
- [7.](#) ‘Ithbatul Hudat, Vol 5, p. 264.
- [8.](#) ‘Ithbatul Hudat, Vol 5, p. 264.
- [9.](#) ‘Ithbatul Hudat, Vol 5, p. 264.
- [10.](#) ‘Ithbatul Hudat, Vol 5, p. 264.
- [11.](#) ‘Ithbatul Hudat, Vol 5, p. 265.
- [12.](#) ‘Ithbatul Hudat, Vol 5, p. 265.
- [13.](#) Al-‘Irshad, p. 157.
- [14.](#) Al-Bidayah wan Nahayah, Vol 9, p. 338.
- [15.](#) Al-Bidayah wan Nahayah, Vol 9, p. 339.
- [16.](#) Al-Sawa’iqul Muharraqah, p. 201.
- [17.](#) Al-Fusulul Muhimmah, p. 193.
- [18.](#) Tahdhibut Tahdhib, Vol 9, p. 350.
- [19.](#) Biharul Anwar, Vol 46, p. 286; Al-‘Irshad, p. 160.
- [20.](#) Biharul Anwar, Vol 46, p. 286; Al-‘Irshad, p. 160.
- [21.](#) Sharh Nahjul Balaghah, Ibn Abil hadid, Vol 15, p. 227.
- [22.](#) Al-‘Irshad, p. 163.

- [23.](#) Siriyi Rasulullah wa Ahli Baytih, Vol 2, p. 228.
- [24.](#) Biharul Anwar, Vol 46, p. 297.
- [25.](#) Kashful Ghummah, Vol 2, p. 330.
- [26.](#) Kashful Ghummah, Vol 2, p. 329.
- [27.](#) Kashful Ghummah, Vol 2, p. 333.
- [28.](#) Biharul Anwar, Vol 46, p. 301.
- [29.](#) Biharul Anwar, Vol 46, p. 297.
- [30.](#) Surah Yunus 10:26.
- [31.](#) Biharul Anwar, Vol 46, p. 302.
- [32.](#) Biharul Anwar, Vol 46, p. 294.
- [33.](#) Biharul Anwar, Vol 46, p. 287.
- [34.](#) Biharul Anwar, Vol 46, p. 288.
- [35.](#) Biharul Anwar, Vol 46, p. 288.
- [36.](#) Kashful Ghummah, Vol 2, p. 330.
- [37.](#) Biharul Anwar, Vol 46, p. 302.
- [38.](#) Biharul Anwar, Vol 46, p. 287.

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