

[Home](#) > [Imamate and The Imams](#) > [Chapter 4: Brief Biographies of the Infallible Imams](#) > [The Tenth Imam: 'Ali Hadi](#) > Knowledge

The Tenth Imam: 'Ali Hadi

Birth and Martyrdom

Imam Ali Al-Naqi (a.s.) was born on fifteenth of Zi Hajjah in the year 212 A.H. in Siriya near Medina. His father was Imam Muhammad Taqi (a.s.) and his mother was called Samanah. His nickname was Abul Hasan and his titles were Naqi, Hadi, 'alim, Faqih, 'Amin, Mu'tamin, Tayyib, Mutawakkil, 'Askari and Najib. Imam Hadi (a.s.) was also called Abul Hasan Thalith (the third). According to some narrations, he was martyred on the third of Rajab in the year 254 A.H. in Samira' and buried in the same city. He was 42 then. He lived about eight years with his father and his Imamate lasted 33 years. [1](#)

Texts Proving His Imamate

As mentioned in previous sections, various reasons can be used for proving the Imamate of each of infallible Imams (a.s.), one of which is the traditions by each Imam about the Imam after himself. Here we only point out this kind of traditions.

'Isma'il Ibn Mihran has said, "The first time Imam Abu Ja'far (a.s.) was summoned to Baghdad, I told him, 'May I sacrifice for you! I am afraid of this travel for you. Who will be the Imam after you?' Imam (a.s.) told me, 'What you are fearful of does not happen this year.'"

When Mu'tasim summoned Imam Abu Ja'far (a.s.), I went to see Imam (a.s.) and told him, 'They are taking you to Baghdad. Who will be the Imam after you?' Imam (a.s.) wept so much that his holy beard got wet and said, 'This time my travel is dangerous. The Imamate after me will be for my son, Ali.'"[2](#)

Khiyrani has narrated from his father, "I had a mission to guard the house door of Imam Abu Ja'far (a.s.). 'Ahmad Ibn 'isa Ash'ari came every dawn to ask about Imam's (a.s.) health. And then when the envoy of Imam (a.s.) came to see my father, 'Ahmad Ibn 'isa left so that they could talk in private."

One night, the envoy of Imam Abu Ja'far (a.s.) came to see my father. 'Ahmad Ibn 'isa and I left them alone. 'Ahmad walked outside and listened to their conversation. The envoy of Imam Abu Ja'far (a.s.)

told my father, 'Your master greeted you and said, 'My death is coming. The Imamate will be devolved to my son, Ali, after me. You will have to fulfill the same duties toward him as you did toward me.'"

The envoy of Imam Abu Ja'far (a.s.) went out after delivering the message. 'Ahmad Ibn 'isa returned to my father and asked, 'What did the envoy say?' My father said, 'It was good.' 'Ahmad said, 'I heard what he said completely.' My father told him, 'You did something unlawful! Don't you know that the Almighty Allah states in the Holy Quran, ***'And spy not on each other.'***³ Now that you have heard the message of Imam (a.s.), maintain it until the day we will need it. But do not reveal it before that.'"

The next morning, my father wrote the message of Imam Abu Ja'far (a.s.) in ten copies, leaving each of them with a trustworthy person. Then he said, 'If my death came, open the letters and follow the orders.' My father said, 'When Imam Abu Ja'far (a.s.) passed away, I did not leave my house until I heard that the nobles of the tribe have gathered in the house of Muhammad Ibn Faraj to discuss the Imamate issue. Muhammad Ibn Faraj informed me of this gathering and asked me to join them. I rode my horse and went to them. I saw the noble men in his house who were talking about relation with the Imam.

Most of them were doubtful of the Imamate issue. I told the trustworthy people who had a copy of Imam's message to bring them. I told the audience, 'This is a message Imam Abu Ja'far (a.s.) has sent me to convey to you.' Some of the audience said, 'We wish at least one other person testified to this.' I said, 'The Almighty Allah has destined that Abu Ja'far 'Ash'ari hear this message and can testify to it. You can ask him.' The audience asked 'Ahmad Ibn Muhammad about it, but he refused to testify to what he had heard. So I invited him to mubahilah (cursing). He got frightened of it and said, 'Yes, I heard the same issue, but it is an honor that I liked to be for an Arab man. Now, however, I cannot hide the truth after being invited to mubahilah.' After this testimony, all the audience surrendered to Imam Abul Hasan (a.s.)."

After narrating this story, Shiykh Mufid has added, "There are many traditions about this issue. The book will get so lengthy if I want to mention all these traditions. The consensus of the companions about the Imamate of Imam Abul Hasan (a.s.) and lack of any other one who claims to be the Imam are sufficient for us."⁴

Saqar Ibn Abi Dilf has said, "I heard from Imam Abu Ja'far Muhammad Ibn Ali (a.s.), 'The Imam after me will be my son, Ali. His order will be my order, his speech will be my speech, and obeying him is like obeying me. The Imamate after him will be devolved to his son, Hasan.'"⁵

Muhammad Ibn 'Uthman Kufi has said, "I told Imam Abu Ja'far (a.s.), 'If, Allah forbids, something happens to you, who should we refer to?' Imam (a.s.) answered, 'To my son, Abul Hasan.' Then Imam (a.s.) stated, 'Soon there will happen a break.' I said, 'Where should we go at that time?' Imam (a.s.) answered, 'To Medina.' I asked, 'Which Medina (city)?' Imam Abu Ja'far (a.s.) answered, 'Madinatur Rasul (the city of Prophet (S)).'"⁶

Umayyat Ibn Ali Qiysi has said, "I told Imam Abu Ja'far Thani (a.s.), 'Who will be your successor?' He

answered, 'My son, Ali.' Then he added, 'Soon the wondering time will arrive.'”[7](#)

Muhammad Ibn ‘Isma’il Ibn Bazi’ has said, “Imam Abu Ja’far (a.s.) stated, ‘The Imamate will reach my son, Abul Hasan, when he is seven.’ Then he added, ‘Yes, seven years and even younger, just as Prophet Jesus (a.s.).’”[8](#)

Harun Ibn Fazl has said, “I met Imam Abul Hasan (a.s.) on the day when his father, Imam Abu Ja’far (a.s.) had passed away. He said, ‘We are Allah’s and we will return to Him. My father Abu Ja’far has passed away.’ He was then asked, ‘How do you know that your father has passed away?’ He answered, ‘I experience a state of humility before the Almighty Allah that had never happened before.’”[9](#)

A group of people from Isfahan, including Abul Abbas Ahmad Ibn Nadhr and Abu Ja’far Muhammad Ibn ‘Alawiyyah said, “In Isfahan, there was a Shi’ah man called Abdur Rahman. He was asked, ‘Why did you accept the Imamate of Ali Naqi among all other people?’ He answered, ‘I observed something in him that caused my belief in his Imamate. I was a poor man who dared to speak openly. One year, the people of Isfahan sent me to Mutawakkil, the Abbasside caliph, for petition.

One day, when I was in the house of Mutawakkil, he summoned Ali Ibn Muhammad Ridha’ (a.s.). I asked someone about the summoned person, who I thought Mutawakkil wanted to kill. He answered, ‘He is an Alawi man. The Rafizah (the Shi’ah) believe in his Imamate.’ I thought to myself, ‘I stay here to know this man more.’ At this time, Ali Naqi (a.s.) entered on his horse. The crowd opened his way and looked at him. When I saw him, I felt affection for him and prayed that the Almighty Allah save him from the evilness of Mutawakkil.

When he reached me, he looked at me and said, ‘Your prayer was accepted; your life will be long and you will own many children and much property.’ I was shocked of the unseen tidings, but I said nothing to my companions about it. Then I returned to Isfahan. I gained much property. I have a million dirhams only in my house, not to mention what I possess outside. The Exalted Allah granted me ten children. Now I am more than seventy years old. I believe in the Imamate of the man who was aware of my thoughts and his prayer about me was accepted.”[10](#)

Virtues

Shiyykh Mufid has written, “After Imam Abu Ja’far (a.s.), his son, Abul Hasan Ali Ibn Muhammad (a.s.) reached the Imamate position, because he possessed all Imamate qualities. There was no other person as qualified as he was at that time for occupying this position. He was appointed to the Imamate by his father.”[11](#)

Ibn Shahr ‘ashub has described Imam Ali Al-Naqi (a.s.) this way, “His face was more attractive than that of others and his speech was truer than that of others. He was the most perfect and the nicest of all the people. When he was silent, his dignity increased and when he talked his illumination appeared. He was

from the family of prophet hood, Imamate, and caliphate of the Muslims. He was a branch from great prophet hood tree, but benefitting from him did not last long. He was the fruit of prophecy tree, which was selected a short time after getting ripe.”[12](#)

Abu Musa has said, “I told Imam Hadi (a.s.), ‘Teach me a special supplication for solving my problems.’ Imam (a.s.) said, ‘I recited this supplication most of the time and asked the Almighty Allah not to disappoint any prayer from His Mercy. (O my helper at the time of calamities, o my hope and my trustworthy friend and my supporter! O the One Being! I ask You o Allah by whoever of the servants You have created and You have not created anyone like any other o send greetings to them and do this and that[13](#) for me.)’”[14](#)

Sa’id Hajib has said, “A group of soldiers and I attacked the house of Abul Hasan (a.s.) at night by the order of Mutawakkil and we climbed over the wall to enter. He was performing prayer in a wool cloth and a head cover and was not afraid of our intrusion.”[15](#)

Ibn Hajar has said, “Abul Hasan (a.s.) was the holder of his father’s legacy regarding knowledge and generosity.”[16](#)

Ibn Sabbagh Maliki has narrated from some scholars, “The virtues of Abul Hasan Ali Ibn Muhammad Hadi (a.s.) are like a tent that stands on the land of honor and whose ropes are attached to the stars. Any virtue or excellence that is mentioned he possesses. He is worth any praise. Any gratitude or respect deserves him. His merits, virtues, and honor are rooted in his essence, keeping him away from vices, just as a cameleer maintains the little camels from dangers. His soul is pure, his ethics are good, and his conduct is excellent.”[17](#)

Suliyman Ibn ‘Ibrahim Qunduzi Hanafi has narrated from the book Fasul Khitab by Muhammad Khajah, “Abul Hasan Ali Hadi (a.s.) was a pious man, a jurisprudent, and an Imam. Mutawakkil was told, ‘There are weapons in his (Abul Hasan’s) house and he is going to obtain caliphate.’ So Mutawakkil ordered some people to attack his house at night and enter it. They found Abul Hasan (a.s.) in a wool garment and a wool hat on his head, while he was sitting on the ground in the direction of the qiblah. There was nothing but sand beneath him. He was reciting the Holy Quran. The agents took Imam (a.s.) to Mutawakkil in the same state. When Mutawakkil saw Imam Hadi (a.s.), he respected Imam (a.s.) and placed Imam (a.s.) beside himself. Imam Abul Hasan (a.s.) talked to him. Then Mutawakkil cried and asked Imam (a.s.), ‘O Abul Hasan! Do you have a debt?’ Imam (a.s.) answered, ‘Yes! I have a debt of four thousand dinars.’ Mutawakkil ordered to give that amount of money to Imam Hadi (a.s.) and sent him to his house respectfully.”[18](#)

Muhammad Ibn ‘Ahmad has quoted from his father’s uncle, “One day, I went to meet Imam Hadi (a.s.) and told him, ‘Mutawakkil has quitted my salary, because he has understood that I am your companion. Please recommend him about me.’ Imam (a.s.) answered, ‘Everything will be all right.’ At night, an agent came to my house from Mutawakkil and said that Mutawakkil has called me. When I went to Mutawakkil,

he told me, ‘O Abu Musa! I had completely forgotten you because of my engagements. How much money should I pay you?’

I told him what he always paid me. So he ordered to pay me twice as much as he regularly paid me. Then I asked Fat’h Ibn Khaqan (Mutawakkil’s agent), ‘Did Ali Ibn Muhammad come here or did he write a letter to Mutawakkil?’ ‘No,’ he answered. Later, I went to see Imam Ali Ibn Muhammad (a.s.). He asked me if the money I received was satisfactory. I said, ‘Yes, because of the blessings of your existence. But they said you did not go to Mutawakkil and did not ask him anything.’ So Imam Hadi (a.s.) stated, ‘The Almighty Allah knows well that we do not ask anyone to solve problems except Him. Allah has taught us that whenever we pray He will accept it. I fear that if we leave this conduct of us, Allah will abandon His Mercy too.’”¹⁹

Knowledge

As pointed out elsewhere in the present book, knowing all religious sciences and teachings is a prerequisite of the Imamate. The main philosophy of needing an Imam and the major duty of the Imam is maintaining and publishing religious teachings and sciences. There is no difference among the Imams in this regard. The sources of religious sciences have been present for all infallible Imams and they have attempted well to fulfill their duties. If there are fewer traditions from some of the Imams in tradition books, the reason is different time and place conditions and the hindrance made by oppressor rulers of the time and the enemies of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.).

Like his father and honorable grandfathers, Imam Hadi (a.s.) was a perfect human, possessing all human virtues. He attempted much in teaching religious sciences to the Muslims, but unfortunately he faced limitations that hindered his ideal performance.

Imam Hadi (a.s.) lived for nearly forty years. He reached Imamate position at age eight and his Imamate lasted about thirty three years. At the beginning, he lived twenty two years in Medina. According to the history, the rulers in Bagdad watched Imam Hadi (a.s.) by their agents in Medina. Naturally, the Shi’ah and advocates of Imam (a.s.) faced limitations for gaining knowledge from him. The Abbasside caliph, Mutawakkil, was not satisfied with watching from distance and invited Imam Hadi (a.s.) to Bagdad; apparently with respect, but actually with cruel agents. He lodged Imam Hadi (a.s.) in ‘Askar district –a military region– in Samira’.

From that time, Imam Hadi (a.s.) was formally under severe guarding of secret agents, thus his relationship with the Shi’ah was nearly cut. Who dared give him money or learn sciences from him in those conditions? That is why the traditions narrated from him are scarce. However, there are some traditions from Imam Hadi (a.s.) about religious principles, ethics, preaching, and various jurisprudential issues in tradition books. Studying these traditions reveals the scientific stance of Imam Ali Ibn Muhammad (a.s.).

Imam Hadi (a.s.) trained many students, whose names are recorded in history, tradition, and rijal books. The author of Manaqib has named scholar companions of Imam Hadi (a.s.) this way: Dawud Ibn Ziyad Abu Salim Zankan, Husayn Ibn Muhammad Mada'ini, Ahmad Ibn 'Isma'il Ibn Yaqtin, Bashar Ibn Bashari Niyshaburi Shadhani, Sulayman Ibn Ja'far Marwazi, Fat'h Ibn Yazid Jurjani, Muhammad Ibn Sa'id Ibn Kulthum (a speaker), Mu'awiyah Ibn Hakim Kufi, Ali Ibn Muhammad Ibn Muhammad Baghdadi, Abul Hasan Ibn Raja' Abarta'i.

- [1.](#) Al-Kafi, Vol 1, p. 497; Al-'Irshad, Vol 2, p. 297; Biharul Anwar, Vol 50, pp. 113–117; Al-Fusulul Muhimmah, p. 295; Matalibus Su'ul, Vol 2, p. 144.
- [2.](#) Al-'Irshad, Vol 2, p. 298.
- [3.](#) Surah Al-Hujurat 49:12.
- [4.](#) Al-Kafi, Vol 1, p. 324; Al-'Irshad, Vol 2, p. 300.
- [5.](#) Biharul Anwar, Vol 50, p. 118.
- [6.](#) 'Ithbatul Wasiyyah, p. 193.
- [7.](#) 'Ithbatul Hudat, Vol 6, p. 209.
- [8.](#) 'Ithbatul Hudat, Vol 6, p. 211.
- [9.](#) Biharul Anwar, Vol 50, p. 138.
- [10.](#) Biharul Anwar, Vol 50, p. 138.
- [11.](#) Al-'Irshad, Vol 2, p. 297.
- [12.](#) Manaqib 'Ali Abi Talib, Vol 4, p. 432.
- [13.](#) The prayer's wish should substitute this phrase.
- [14.](#) Biharul Anwar, Vol 50, p. 127.
- [15.](#) Al-Fusulul Muhimmah, p. 264.
- [16.](#) Al-Sawa'iq Al-Muharriqah, Vol 1, p. 207.
- [17.](#) Al-Fusulul Muhimmah, p. 264.
- [18.](#) Yanabi'ul Mawaddah, p. 463.
- [19.](#) Manaqib 'Ali Abi Talib, Vol 4, p. 442.

Source URL:

<https://www.al-islam.org/imamate-and-imams-ibrahim-amini/tenth-imam-ali-hadi#comment-0>