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A Brief Account of the Twelve Successors of the Holy Prophet (S)

The First Imam, Amirul Mu'mineen 'Ali (a.s.)

Father: Abu Talib bin Abdul Muttalib bin Hashim.

Mother: Fatimah bint Asad bin Hashim bin Abd Munaf.

Kunniyat (Patronymic): Abul Hasan and Husayn, Abu Turab

Laqab (Title): Al-Wasi, Amir al-Mu'minin

Birth: He was born in the Ka'ba[1] , in thirty 'Am al-Fil (the year of the elephant).

Martyrdom: He was martyred by the Khwariji named Abd al-Rahman ibn Muljam at Kufa during the month of Ramadhan in the fortieth year of Hijrah and is buried in Najaf on the outskirts of Kufa.

The Second Imam, Al-Hasan ibn 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.)

Mother: Fatimah az-Zahra (a.s.), the daughter of the Holy Prophet (S).

Kunniyat (Patronymic): Abu Muhammad

Laqab (Title): Al-Sibt al-Kabir (the elder grandson), Al-Mujtaba.

Birth: He was born in Madina in the middle of the month of Ramadhan in 3 A.H.

Martyrdom: He died on the 28th of Safar in the year 50 A.H. He was buried in the graveyard of Baqi in Madina.

The Third Imam, Al-Husayn ibn ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.)

Mother: Fatimah az-Zahra (a.s.), the daughter of the Holy Prophet (S).

Kunniyat (Patronymic): Abu 'Abdillah.

Laqab (Title): Al Sibt, Shahid ash-Suhada fi Karbala.

Birth: He was born in Madina in the month of Shaban in the year 4 A.H.

Martyrdom: He was martyred with his companions by the army of Yazid in the month of Muharram 61 A.H. His tomb is in Karbala, a town of Iraq.2

The Fourth Imam, ‘Ali ibn Al-Husayn (a.s.)

Mother: Ghazala, Shahzanaan

Kunniyat (Patronymic): Abu al-Hasan

Laqab (Title): Zayn al-'Abidin, Al Sajjad

Birth: He was born in 38 A.H. in Madina.

Martyrdom: He died of poison in the year 94 or 95 A.H. at Madina and is buried at Baqi near his uncle Hasan (a.s.).3

The Fifth Imam, Muhammad ibn ‘Ali (a.s.)

Mother: Umm Abdullah, the daughter of Imam Hasan (a.s.).

Kunniyat (Patronymic): Abu Ja'far.

Laqab (Title): Al Baqir.

Birth: He was born at Madina in the year 57 A.H.

Martyrdom: He died of poisoning in Madina in 114 A.H. and is also buried at Baqi near his father.4

The Sixth Imam, Ja'far ibn Muhammad (a.s.)

Mother: Umm Farwa, the daughter of Qasim bin Muhammad bin Abu Bakr.

Kunniyat (Patronymic): Abu 'Abdillah.

Laqab (Title): Al-Sadiq.

Birth: He was born at Madina in 83 A.H.

Martyrdom: He died of poison in 148 A.H. and is buried at Baqi near his father.[5]

The Seventh Imam, Musa bin Ja'far (a.s.)

Mother: Hamidah

Kunniyat (Patronymic): Abu al-Hasan

Laqab (Title): Al-Kazim

Birth: He was born at Madina in the year 129 A.H.

Martyrdom: He was poisoned in the prison of Harun al-Rashid at Baghdad in the year 183 A.H. He is buried in Kazimiyyah in Iraq.[6]

The Eighth Imam, 'Ali bin Musa (a.s.)

Mother: Al Khayzran

Kunniyat (Patronymic): Abu al-Hasan

Laqab (Title): Al-Ridha'

Birth: He was born at Madina in 148 A.H.

Martyrdom: He was poisoned in the year 203 A.H. and is buried in the Khurasan district of Iran.[7]

The Ninth Imam, Muhammad bin 'Ali (a.s.)

Mother: Sakina

Kunniyat (Patronymic): Abu 'Abdillah

Laqab (Title): Al Jawad

Birth: He was born at Madina in 195 A.H.

Martyrdom: He died of poison at Baghdad in the year 220 A.H. and is buried near his grandfather at Kazimiyyah in Iraq.[8]

The Tenth Imam, ‘Ali bin Muhammad (a.s.)

Mother: Samana al-Maghribiya

Kunniyat (Patronymic): Abu al-Hasan al Askari

Laqab (Title): Al Hadi

Birth: He was born at Madina in the year 212 A.H.

Martyrdom: He died of poison in 254 A.H. at Samarrah (Sarmanra) in Iraq and is buried there.[9]

The Eleventh Imam, Al Hasan bin ‘Ali (a.s.)

Mother: Ummul Walad – Susan.

Kunniyat (Patronymic): Abu Muhammad.

Laqab (Title): Al Askari.

Birth: He was born at Samarrah in the year 232 A.H.

Martyrdom: He was poisoned in 260 A.H. at Samarrah and is buried there.[10]

All the tombs of the eleven Imams (a.s.) are a place of Ziyarat (visitation) by Muslims. Four of the Imams are buried at Baqi in Madina al-Munawwara. However, their tombs were demolished by the authorities along with the tombs of the wives of the Prophet (S) and his companions.

The Twelfth Imam, Al Hujjat Muhammad ibn al-Hasan (a.s.)

Mother: Ummul Walad Narjis alias Saiqal

Kunniyat (Patronymic): Abu 'Abdullah, Abu al-Qasim

Laqab (Title): Al-Qa’im, Al-Muntazar, Al-Khalaf, Al-Mahdi, Sahib al-zamaan.

Birth: He was born at Samarrah in the year 255 A.H. He is the last Imam (a.s.) and he is alive and hidden.[11]

1. Fatimah bint Asad was circumbulating the Ka'ba when she was carrying “Ali (a.s.). The wall of Ka'ba cracked to create an opening and she entered it to give birth to “Ali (a.s.). Al-Mustadrak 3:483.
2. For biographical sketches of “Ali, Hasan and Husayn (a.s.) refer to Tarikh Tabari in the events of 40, 50 and 60 A.H. Also see Usd al-Ghaba.
3. Ibn Athir, Ta'rikh. Ibn Kathir, Ta'rikh.
4. Al-Dhahabi, Tadhkirat al-Huffaz. Ibn Khallikan, Wafayat al-A'yan. Abu Nu'aym al-Isbahani, Hilyat al-'Awliya. Al-Ya'qubi,

Tarikh , 2:230. Al-Dhahabi , Tarikh al-Islam Ibn Kathir, Ta'rikh.

5. Refer Abu Nu'aym al-Isbahani, Hilyat al-'Awliya, Ibn Khallikan, Wafayat al-A'yan. Al-Ya'qubi, Tarikh , 2:381. Al-Mas'udi 3:46.

6. Abu al-Faraj al-Isbahani, Maqatil al-Talibiyyin. Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, Tarikh Baghdad. Ibn Khallikan, Wafayat al-A'yan. Ibn Kathir, Ta'rikh. Al-Ya'qubi, Tarikh , 2:414.

7. Al-Tabari, Tarikh. Ibn Kathir, Ta'rikh. Al-Dhahabi , Tarikh al-Islam Ibn Khallikan, Wafayat al-A'yan. Al-Ya'qubi, Tarikh , 2:381. Al-Mas'udi 3:441.

8. Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, Tarikh Baghdad 3:54. Ibn Khallikan, Wafayat al-A'yan. Al-Mas'udi 3:464.

9. Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, Tarikh Baghdad 12:56. Ibn Khallikan, Wafayat al-A'yan. Al-Ya'qubi, Tarikh , 2:484. Al-Mas'udi 4:84.

10. Ibn Khallikan, Wafayat al-A'yan. Sibt Ibn al-Jawzi , Tadhkirat al-Khawas Al-Shaykh Muhammad bin Talha Shafi'i (died 654 A.H.), Matalib al-Su'ul fi Manaqib Aali Rasul Al-Ya'qubi, Tarikh , 2:503.

11. Sibt Ibn al-Jawzi , Tadhkirat al-Khawas Al-Shaykh Muhammad bin Talha Shafi'i , Matalib al-Su'ul. Ibn Khallikan, Wafayat al-A'yan.

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