

Introduction

Imam Muhammad al-Baqir, peace be on him, was unique. For he belonged to the unique members of the pure family (of the Prophet). He was among the leading Imams of the House (ahl al-Bayt) peace be on them. He was among the most prominent of the men of thought and knowledge in Islam. The historians have unanimously agreed on his importance. For he played an important role in proclaiming the Islamic culture and founding the scientific movement in Islam. He dedicated himself to spread knowledge among the Muslims. That was when the intellectual lull included all the Islamic world, and when there was no scientific or intellectual renaissance. The Muslims led successive revolutions and popular uprisings. They sometimes wanted to get rid of the oppressive Umayyad regime, and they sometimes wanted to take the reins of government. Accordingly, they thoroughly neglected the scientific life. Thus, it had no existence in the arena of life.

Indeed Imam al-Baqir, peace be on him, turned away completely from those political movements. He did not take part in any political act to oppose the standing regime then. He devoted himself to knowledge. So, he raised its standard, founded its bases, and fixed firmly its sources. Thus, he was the pioneer, teacher, and leader of this community during its cultural movement. He led it to wide steps in scientific studies. He played an important role in prospering the bright Islamic civilization throughout the generations that came after him. Imam Abu' Ja'far (al-Baqir), peace be on him, was famous for jurisprudence. That is because jurisprudence represents the spirit of Islam, its essence, and its reaction with life. So, he took care to enliven it. Then he established his religious school that was full of main jurists such as Aba'n b. Taghlab, Muhammad b. Muslim, Barid, Abu' Basir al-Asadi, al-Fadel b. Sayya'r, Ma'ru'f b. Khribudh, Zarara b. A'yun and the like.

These main figures were among those on whose truthfulness and jurisprudence the community has unanimously agreed. It was they who wrote down the traditions of the members of the House (ahl al-Bayt), peace be on them. Were it not for them, that large intellectual wealth would be useless. The Islamic world is proud of this wealth. Besides this wealth is among the basic sources from which the Shi'ite jurists conclude religious rules. The act that makes us boast of the life of the Imam is that he took care of these jurists. He praised them, strengthened their position, and summoned the community to resort to their religious opinions. He, peace be on him, said to Aba'n b. Taghlab: "Sit down in the

mosque. Give religious opinions to the people. Indeed, I am glad to see among my followers the likes of you.”^{[1](#)}

Indeed, he paid their expenses and what they needed during their life. He did that to make them dedicate themselves to gaining of knowledge, to achieve its rules exactly, and to write it down. Then, he asked his son, Imam al-Sadiq, peace be on him, to take care of the jurists. He asked him to spend on them to help them carry out their religious duties. Thus, they played a constructive role in writing the traditions which they heard from him. Besides they taught the religious deputations what they narrated from him. Indeed, his student, Ja'bir b. Yazid al-Ju'fi, reported seventy thousand traditions from him.^{[2](#)}

Aba'n b. Taghlab also reported a large group (of traditions) from him. The jurisprudential encyclopedias are full of their narrations from him. All the chapters of jurisprudence – such as the acts of worship, contracts, punishments, and the like – are confirmed with narrations from him. Therefore, he founded and published the jurisprudence of the members of the House (ahl al-Bayt), peace be on them. Worth mentioning, the jurisprudence of the members of the House is the best Islamic jurisprudence.

The lectures and researches of the Imam were not confined to jurisprudence. Rather they included all kinds of sciences such as philosophy, theology, and medicine. As for the explanation of the Quran, it engaged his care wholly. Indeed, he appointed time for it. Most commentators (of the Quran) have written what the Imam adopted and what he narrated from his grandfathers concerning the explanation of the holy verses. He (the Imam) wrote a book about the explanation (of the Quran). Zyya'd b. al-Mundher, the spiritual leader of the Jarudi group, reported the book from him.^{[3](#)}

This book denotes that and gives some examples of his explanations to some verses. Worth mentioning, the Imam, peace be on him, talked about the conditions of the prophets and the persecutions from which they suffered because of the oppressive rulers of their time. He also talked about their judgments and their morals. From him most researchers learned the situations of the prophets. Moreover, he, peace be on him, talked in an inclusive objective manner about the Prophet's life. He explained the circumstances of the great Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family, his campaigns, and his wars.

The historians of the Prophetic life—such as b. Hisha'm, al-Wa'qidi, al-Halabi, and the like—reported them on his authority, on the authority of his grandfathers, peace be on them, on the authority of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family. The Imam narrated a large group of traditions concerning behavior, good morals, and high qualities Muslims should follow to be an example to others. He reported in an inclusive way all the historic events that occurred during the early Islamic time. Al-Tabari has reported them from him in his book 'Ta'rikh.' He has also reported them from him in his book 'al-Ansab.'

The Imam, peace be on him, debated with some Christian scholars, the Azraqites, the atheists, and the extremists. He passed all those debates successfully. The opponent admitted the Imam's scientific abilities. Namely, the opponent was feeble to debate with him. This book will indicate that. The Imam left behind him an immense intellectual wealth. It is regarded as one of the sources and among the mines

the scientific wealth in the earth. It is difficult for me to write about all what has been narrated from him. For that needs writing several books. We have referred to only some of them. We have left the door open to him who wants to study inclusively his scientific wealth.

However, the historians have never seen an Imam like Muhammad al-Baqir. That is because he devoted all his life to the spread of knowledge among the people. He was as the narrators said: "He lived in Median (Yathrib). He was a trusty custodian. He was like the mountain or the sea.

The thinkers and prominent scholars learned from him jurisprudence and knowledge. So, he developed not only the life of this community but also of all people."

Imam Muhammad al-Baqir, peace be on him, was among the great men of thought and knowledge in Islam. He was also among the most prominent Imams of the Muslims. That is because he had great morals. He freed himself from selfish materialism.

Thus his behavior represents the essence of the Islamic thought that came to guide people and to educate their manners. The historians have unanimously agreed that the Imam was most times busy praising Allah and that he spent his nights praying to Him and whispering to Him in prayers. The Imam thoroughly renounced worldly desires. He inclined with his heart and his feelings towards Allah. He preferred His obedience to all things. He followed what caused him to be close to Allah. He did not yield to any desires. Rather he got rid of them completely. Thus, they had no power over him.

The Imam's life was similar to the life of his grandfather, the great Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family, in all qualities. Whoever reads about his life is full of admiration.

During his childhood, Imam al-Baqir, peace be on him, was liable to many tribulations. Indeed, he saw the tragedies of Karbala". He saw the pure family of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, when they were tortured and killed. He saw the Umayyad Army murdering the innocent children, the women, and the old men. He saw that sinful army maiming the body of the great Imam (al-Husayn). He saw other tragedies that filled the heart with terror. He was among the members of the House (ahl al-Bayt), peace be on them when they were taken prisoners to b. Marjana ('Ubayd Allah b. Zyya'd). The latter humiliated and disdained them very much. He showed his malice and he rejoiced at the murder of the progeny of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family. Then he sent them to the sinful oppressive ruler, Yazid b. Mu'a'wiya. The latter received them with much disdain and mistreatment.

Imam Muhammad al-Baqir, peace be on him, understood fully those painful events. Thus, they filled his heart with stormy sorrow. They impressed deeply agony and sadness in his heart. They accompanied him throughout his life. Thus, his heart was full of bitter sorrow. So he died while he did not enjoy his life. Among the disasters that hit the Imam during his childhood was the Battle of al-Hirra. At that battle Yazid's Army violated the Holiness of Medina, the city of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family. The army raped the women, seized properties, and killed people. It violated all the things which Allah had prohibited. No one was safe from the terrors of that painful disaster except Imam Zayn al-

‘Abidin, peace be on him. That was because Yazid ordered his sinful swordsman Muslim b. ‘Aqaba, not to kill him. These sad pictures left in the self of the Imam continual feelings full of sorrow and sadness.

The time of (the Imamate) of the Imam was among the most critical times in Islam. During this time life was very disorderly. Thus, the country was liable to many revolutions. Those revolutions from the bad Umayyad politicians. That is because they did not take care of the interests of the Muslim nations. Rather they imposed heavy taxes on the Muslim community. They plundered its wealth and spent it on their pleasures. Moreover, they took exclusive possession of its affairs.

We must mention the government with which the Imam was contemporary. We also must study the political events that occurred during that time. In other words we must consider them carefully. That is because they had a close relationship with the cultural and social time when the Imam lived. The researcher must not ignore those events. That is because he is unable to understand fully the character of the person whom he wants to study.

It is an act of honesty for knowledge and the truth to show those events, to guide people to their references, and to discuss the references which were not based on the truth. Rather they were based on the desires that were far away from reality.

Indeed, we think that the study of such events will avail the reader very much.

The Arab library has never contained a study about this great Imam who is among the elements of culture and civilizational formation of this community. Indeed, it is not an act of loyalty to neglect the lives of our great Imams. That is because the living nations have immortalized their great men, praised them, and showed their scientific works. That is because these nations want to enliven their own originality and their noble values. Al-‘Aqqa’d said: “The European scholars have praised their great figures and studied the sides of their glory. Rather fanaticism sometimes motivated them to increase the sides of this greatness. They have created imaginations to justify the defect and to repair the shortcoming. That is because of the enthusiasm for the self and the excitement for seeking perfection. As for us, there are dams and fences between us and our great men. They have prevented our young men from making use of them.”

No one is worthier of praise than Imam Muhammad al-Baqir, peace be on him. That is because he was among the most prominent leaders of this community, and among the geniuses of the world. Among his works was that he freed the Arab Islamic criticism from the foreign domination. He made it independent from the Roman Empire. We will mention that in detail in this book.

The old historians took care of studying the life of Imam Abu’ Ja’far (Muhammad al-Baqir). For example, al-Jaludi, ‘Abd al-‘Aziz b. Yahya’ (died 304 A. H.), wrote a book. He called the book ‘Akhba’r Abi Ja’far al-Baqir’.⁴ In the book he has mentioned his conditions and his affairs. However, we have not found the book among the manuscripts of which our library is full. Perhaps the book is in the other book cases in the world or it has become missing like the numerous manuscripts which the Arab Islamic world has lost.

Thank Allah! Success helped me. Thus, I studied the life of this great Imam. It is an act of truthfulness to say that I have not found a person more wonderful than him. That is because he represents all human values of which every person boasts. I devoted myself to reading a large group of manuscripts and books that have mentioned some of his works and his wise sayings. I firmly believe that the careful researcher will find more information than what I have written about his (the Imam's) life. That is because much information has remained secret for me. In other words I do not claim that I have thoroughly studied his life and that I have mentioned all his works. Rather I have shed light on his character. I have left the door open for other researchers to write about his life.

Before I end this introduction, I would particularly like to thank Sayyid 'Abd al-Rasu'l b. Sayyid Ridha' al-Husayni for financing the publication of this book. I ask Allah to grant him success in all his noble efforts. Indeed success is from Allah. He grants it to whomever He wills from His servants.

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Baqir Sharif al-Qarashi

- [1.](#) Al-Naja'shi, Ja'mi' al-Ruwa't, vol. 1, p.9
- [2.](#) Miza'n al-I'tida'l, vol. 1, p.383
- [3.](#) Shaykh al-Tu'si, Fihrast, p.98
- [4.](#) Al-Dhari'a, vol. 1, p.315. Al-A'la'm, vol.7, p. 153

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