



Devotion, Divine Knowledge, and Insight

A Brief Account of the Life of Ḥaḍrat
Imam Zayn al-‘Ābidīn (A.S.), Ḥaḍrat Imam
Muḥammad al-Bāqir (A.S.), and Ḥaḍrat
Imam Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq (A.S.)

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Translated by
Ahmad Rezwani

Islamic Research Foundation
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Publisher's Note

Studying the life and *sīra* of the Infallible ones (A.S.) is incumbent upon every Muslim, as their life is a full-length mirror reflecting the Islamic thought and they are considered as the symbols of the purified Prophetic Sunna. First of all, it is to be noted that both the Prophet Muḥammad (S.A.W.A.) and the Imams (A.S.) have all enjoyed Divine and human virtues and excellences. From this perspective, there is no difference between them; and if a virtue is more saliently symbolized in one of them, it is due to the circumstances and conditions that the Imam has been situated in.

In *Sūrat al-Shūrā*, (Q: 42/23), Allah

(S.W.T.) says to His Apostle, ﷺ Say, “I do not ask you any reward for it except love of [my] relatives.” Whoever performs a good deed, We shall enhance for him its goodness. Indeed Allah is All-forgiving, All-appreciative. ﴿﴾

The Islamic Research Foundation of Astan Quds Razavi is honored to undertake the promotion of the thoughts and words of the Infallible Imams (A.S.), which represent the pure Islamic intellectual thought. Accordingly, with the translation of *Chahārdah Akhtar-i Tābnāk* into English (*The Fourteen Luminaries of Islam*) and publishing it in a single volume as well as six separate volumes, this Foundation has tried to take a step, however small, toward the introduction of these luminary figures and the dissemination of Islamic and human values.

Chahārdah Akhtar-i Tābnāk, originally

written by the late eminent researcher Aḥmad Aḥmadī Bīrjandī (a member of the Islamic Research Foundation), is such a valuable and concise work that has managed to address a great number of seekers after perfection and has been published several times. Being decided to be published in English; however, the Persian version was assigned to the IRF Department of History of Islam to be revised and then handed over to the Translation Department to be rendered into English.

It is hoped that as a part of the above-mentioned translation, this volume may pave the way for further familiarization of the interested readers with the profound and prominent Islamic culture.

**Islamic Research
Foundation of
Astan Quds Razavi**

The Sixth Infallible
Ḥaḍrat Imam Zayn al-‘Ābidīn
(A.S.)
The Fourth Imam

The name of the sixth Infallible is ‘Alī (A.S.). He is the son of Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (A.S.), and is nicknamed as Sajjād and Zayn al-‘Ābidīn (ornament of the pious). Imam al-Sajjād (A.S.) was born in Medina in 38/659. He was present in the tragedy of Karblā but due to his illness his life was spared, because *jihād* is not incumbent on the ailing and his noble

father did not let him fight, even though he was very eager to participate in that tragic battle. It was the Divine expediency to hold on the link and preserve Imam al-Sajjād (A.S.) as the heir to the great mission, i.e., Imamate and *Wilāyat*. His sickness lasted no more than a few days. After that he lived 35 years, during which he spent his lifetime in battle, serving people, worshipping, and communing with Allah.

Imam al-Sajjād (A.S.), according to different narrations, was about twenty four years old on the day of ‘Āshūrā of Muharram 61 (A.H.), when following his father's last will and testament and the command of Allah and the Messenger of Allah (S.A.W.A.) he assumed the Imamate. His mother is known to be Shahr-bānū, the

daughter of Sassanid Yazdgird.¹

What was required in the event of Karbalā was the exploitation of this unique uprising and matchless epic as well as the dissemination of Imam al-Ḥusayn (A.S.)'s martyrdom message, which was spoken out loud enough with unrivaled valor, bravery, and strength by Imam al-Sajjād (A.S.) and by his aunt Zaynab (A.S.) in their captivity. It was a cry which is still resonating over the past centuries and will remain so for ever. The 'Āshūrā tragic event with all its great and matchless aspects filled with epical fervent and fidelity and pure faith apparently ended in the evening of 'Āshūrā; however, the mission of Imam al-Sajjād (A.S.) and Zaynab Kubrā (A.S.) began

1 Imam al-Sajjād (A.S.)'s mother, i.e., Shahrbanū daughter of Yazdgird the last Sassanid King of Iran, had died about 24 years before Karbalā tragedy. See: *Barrasī-yi Tārikh-i 'Āshūrā*, p. 122.

thenceforth. The captives of the Ahl al-Bayt were rendered apart from the site of “love-martyrs” and the travelers toward Allah and from beside the mutilated bodies lying in their blood. Imam al-Sajjad (A.S.), who was sick, was placed on a bare camel's back with his two feet fastened from under the belly of the animal with fetters. The other captives were also placed on camels and sent toward Kūfa. The Kūfans were quite perplexed under the heavy strangulation over the city, not daring to utter a single word, since Ibn Ziyād had ordered the chiefs of tribes to be thrown into jail and the people to leave their houses unarmed. Meanwhile, he ordered the sacred severed heads of the martyrs to be handed out among the chiefs of the tribes who were in Karbalā carrying the head of Imam al-Ḥusayn (A.S.) in front of the caravan. In this way, they led the caravan into the city of Kūfa. ‘Ubayd Allāh

Ziyād intended to create terror in people's minds and to show off this manifest conquest before their eyes. But with all these intense security measures, why couldn't they prevent the unwavering and fiery statements and impressive message of the irresistible lady of history, Ḥadrat Zaynab (A.S.)? As if waking from a deep slumber, people began to find out that the captives were children of 'Alī (A.S.) and the progeny of the Prophet (S.A.W.A.), whose men were killed in Karbalā with the sword of injustice. There appeared a great commotion among those people, which little by little turned into bursts of weeping. Fatigued and sick and in captivity, Imam al-Sajjād (A.S.) looked at those people and said, "Are they weeping for us? Who has killed our dear ones then?" Zaynab (A.S.) called people to silence and after praising the Almighty Allah, and greeting His Holy

Messenger, Ḥaḍrat Muḥammad (S.A.W.A.), said, “...O people of Kūfa! O impostors and plotters and traitors! May this weeping of yours be never soothed! You are like that woman who spins her cotton into thread from dawn till dusk and then starts unraveling it all along till dawn. Beware that you have founded your faith on fraudulence and trickery...!”

Ḥaḍrat Zaynab (A.S.), thereupon, severely reproached the Kūfans, asserting, “Verily, you have defiled yourselves with such a great disgrace and infamy that it could not be erased from you till the Resurrection. May baseness and abjection be upon you! Do you not know how you beheaded the beloved grandson of the Apostle of Allah (S.A.W.A.), broke off so many pledges, took captive the nobles of his household and the freeborn of his progeny, and shed his pure blood unjustly...?”

The Kūfans kept so silent and motionless as if birds had perched on their heads!

Zaynab's scathing words, as if uttered through 'Alī (A.S.)'s pure mouth astonished the unfaithful Kūfans. It surprisingly sounded like 'Alī (A.S.)'s voice reverberating in Kūfa...

Imam al-Sajjād (A.S.) called his aunt to silence.

Ibn Ziyād ordered Imam al-Sajjād (A.S.), Zaynab al-Kubrā (A.S.), and the other captives to be brought into his court, where he hurled the most contemptible insults at the sacred head of Imam al-Ḥusayn (A.S.) and the captives of Karbalā, and displayed his meanness and baseness to its highest degree, and exposed his nasty nature as vividly as it really was.

The Message of Blood and Martyrdom

Upon having conversed with the captives

of Karbalā in his court, Ibn Ziyād, or as he is famous with, son of Marjāna, ordered his men to transfer them to a jail next to the Grand Mosque of Kūfa, and ordered the sacred head of Imam al-Ḥusayn (A.S.) to be carried around in town in order to intimidate the people.

In reply to the letter from Ibn Ziyād who had written to him about the martyrdom of Imam al-Ḥusayn (A.S.) and his companions and capturing his household, Yazīd demanded that Imam al-Ḥusayn (A.S.)'s head and those of his companions together with captives be sent to Shām. Imam Sajjād (A.S.) was chained on the hands, feet, and neck and seated on a camel, and the household were placed on unsaddled camels like the captives of Byzantine and Zanzibar and dispatched to Shām. The Infallible Ahl al-Bayt (A.S.) arrived in Shām through Ba'albak. The first day of Safar, 61 A.H,

while Damascus was filled with rejoice and exultation because Yazīd had introduced captives of Karbalā, the pure progeny of the Prophet (S.A.W.A.), as alien rebels in his claws. Yazīd had the captives and heads of the martyrs passed by Jayrūn, which was his countryside amusement place and debauchery resort. With much pleasure and delight, he watched the captives led by “Jayrūn,” feeling like an indisputable conqueror.

Along the streets, people stood watching the captives. A Shāmī old man stepped forward and stood before the caravan of the captives and said:

“Thanks God your men were killed and the cities of Islam got rid of their evil and Yazīd the commander of the faithful became victorious over you.”

In reply to the old man who had at that age not been secure from the Umayyads'

poisonous propaganda, Imam Zayn al-‘Ābidīn (A.S.) said, “O Shaykh! Have you read the Qur’ān?” “Yes,” replied the old man. Imam (A.S.) asked him if he had read this verse, ﴿Say, “I do not ask you any reward for it except love of [my] near of the kin.﴾ (Al-Qur’ān, 42: 23). The man said, “Yes.”

The Imam (A.S.) said, “Those near of the kin, love of whom Allah Almighty has ordered and regarded as the reward for the Prophethood of the Messenger (S.A.W.A.), are we.” Then, he recited the verse of *tathīr* which had been revealed to the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) concerning his own household, ﴿And Allah only wishes to remove all abomination from you, ye members of the Family, and to make you pure and spotless.﴾ (Al-Qur’ān, 33: 33). Then the Imam said, “We are the ones referred to in this verse, and whom Allah has made pure

of any external and internal impurity.” The old man got astonished and wept, admitting how negligent he had been. Then he asked the Imam (A.S.) “Will I be forgiven if I repent? The Imam reassured him of this. Then he was killed as a martyr for this awareness.

In any case, the caravan of the Godly captives was halted in front of Damascus Grand Mosque. Then, being roped together, the captives were transferred to a prison. They spent several days in that prison which was like a ruin. However, Yazīd intended to invite the prominent of every school, ambassadors, dignitaries, and the court's flatterers to a ceremonial feast to display his ostentatious triumph. In this meeting, Yazīd did the same insults as his vile hireling, Ibn Ziyād, had done in Kūfa. That is, with his walking stick he hit on the lips and teeth of Imam al-Ḥusayn (A.S.)

which were frequently kissed by the Apostle of Allah (S.A.W.A.), ‘Alī Murtaḍā (A.S.), and Fāṭimat al-Zahrā (A.S.). When Zaynab (A.S.) noticed this impudence being done by Yazīd who at the same time said to Imam al-Sajjād (A.S.), “Thanks God that He finally disgraced you,” she rose to her feet at once. Extremely outraged, she started to chide and reproach Yazīd and his followers, stating eloquently the message of the Martyr's blood and exposing the wrongdoings and meanness of Yazīd and his gang. In this way, she degraded Yazīd even more notoriously than the Kūfans. Yazīd, however, cast his head down, tolerating the scathing and defaming words which ruined his false personality, and in reply he only recited a couplet as follows:

“Wailing and lamenting by the bereaved is permissible, and the death of the dead one sounds easy for the hired women

mourners.”

Imam al-Sajjād (A.S.) in Damascus

Besides the words Imam al-Sajjād (A.S.) uttered with reference to the Holy Qur’ān and exposed the truth, when he encountered Yazīd and as he was chained all the way down to Damascus, he said, “O Yazīd! By God what do you think the Messenger of Allah (S.A.W.A.) would do if he saw us in this poor condition? This statement had such a deep impact on Yazīd that he ordered the chain removed from him and then all the companions wept over that.

A better chance that the fourth Imam (A.S.) found was a day when the formal preacher got on the pulpit and started to speak ill of ‘Alī (A.S.) and his pure progeny and praise Mu‘āwiya and Yazīd. Imam al-Sajjād (A.S.) asked Yazīd, “Would you allow

me, too, to go upon this pile of wood to say words which would both please Allah and bring forth reward for the people?” Yazīd did not like to permit, since he was aware of the knowledge and eloquence of the Infallible household (A.S.) and was scared. The people insisted, so he had to agree, and the fourth Imam (A.S.) got upon the pulpit and spoke in such a way that rent their hearts and brought tears to the eyes of both men and women. Following is a brief summary of what the holy Imam (A.S.) said:

“O people! Allah has granted six privileges to us and our superiority over others is based on seven things. Knowledge is with us, so also are forbearance, generosity, eloquence, bravery, and heartfelt friendship of the believers. Allah has ordained that the faithful people love us, and this is what our enemies cannot

prevent.”

He went on to say, “The Apostle of Allah (S.A.W.A.) belongs to us, so are also his successor and legatee (*waṣī*), ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (A.S.), Hamza Sayyid al-Shuhadā, Ja‘far al-Ṭayyār, the two grandsons of the Prophet (S.A.W.A.), al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn (A.S.), and the Mahdī of this *umma* and the Lord of Time.”

Then the Imam introduced himself, causing such a commotion that forced the agents present around to interrupt and to silence the Imam (A.S.) by ordering the muezzin (man who calls to prayer) to recite the call to prayer (*adhān*). The Imam kept silence, but as soon as the muezzin said, “*Ashhadu anna Muḥamadan rasūl Allāh* (I bear witness that Muḥammad is the Apostle of Allah)”, he took the turban off his head and said, “O muezzin I swear you by this Muḥammad to get silent.” Then, facing

Yazīd, he said, “Is this noble Prophet your ancestor or ours? If you say he is your ancestor, everybody knows you are telling a lie; and if you admit he is ours, then why did you kill his son al-Ḥusayn (A.S.)? Why did you kill his children? Why did you plunder his property? Why did you take his women and children as captive?” Then the Imam (A.S.) took hold of his own collar and tore it down [as a sign of disgust and protest], and those present in the gathering burst into wailing and tears. A commotion rose up again. This was indeed an epic message of ‘Āshūrā being delivered to all ears; and the call of the truth addressed to the history.

Upon hearing these protests, Yazīd started cursing and damning Ibn Ziyād and even – apparently – reprimanded some of the troops that had accompanied the captives. At last, being apprehended, he

turned away from them and tried to contact less with people.

However, owing to the disclosures by the Imam (A.S.) and the distressing conditions, Yazīd decided to console the captives. He asked Imam al-Sajjād, “Would you like to stay with us in Shām or go to Medina?” Imam al-Sajjād (A.S.) and Zaynab Kubrā replied, “We like to be near our ancestor's grave in Medina.”

Leaving for Medina

In Şafar 61/October 680 the Infallible Ahl al-Bayt (A.S.) set out for Medina with dignity and honor. Nu‘mān b. Bashīr, along with five hundred men, accompanied the caravan. Imam al-Sajjād (A.S.) and the other members of Ahl al-Bayt (A.S.) were approaching Medina when the Imam (A.S.) selected a place in the outskirt and ordered the caravan settle there. He ordered some

tents be pitched there. Then, he told Bashīr b. Jadhlam to write an elegy and inform people of Medina of their arrival. Bashīr went straight to Medina and to the tomb of the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) and stood there before the Madinans, reciting his poems as follows:

“Behold! O people of Medina! There is no chance here for you to stay any longer, for Imam al-Ḥusayn (A.S.) has been killed, and now here are my tears rolling down. Alas! His pure body, smeared with blood and dust, was left behind in Karbalā, and his head on top of a spear was carried around cities.” The people at once burst into a frenzied wailing, among whom were the Hashemite women wailing and lamenting with the most heart rending cries. The people left their houses and raced outside the city. Bashīr said, “I abandoned the horse and hastened to the tents of the

Ahl al-Bayt. At this time Imam al-Sajjād (A.S.) came out of his tent and while wiping his flowing tears motioned people to silence. Then, after praising Almighty Allah, he started talking about the heart-rending tragedy of Karbalā. Here is part of what he said, ‘If our ancestor, the Apostle of Allah (S.A.W.A.) had ordered to murder and plunder and persecute us, there would have been no more cruelty than this on us; whereas there had been clear instructions for protecting and respecting us. We implore Allah to have mercy and blessing on us and revenge our enemies.’”

Thereafter, Imam al-Sajjād (A.S.), Zaynab Kubrā (A.S.) and their companions and the bereaved mourners of Imam al-Ḥusayn (A.S.) entered Medina. First, they went to the holy mausoleum of their ancestor, the Apostle of Allah (S.A.W.A.) and then to Baqī‘ cemetery, complaining with tearful

eyes of the disdainful people. For a long time there were mourning rituals held in Medina for Imam al-Ḥusayn (A.S.), during which Imam al-Sajjād (A.S.) and Zaynab Kubrā (A.S.) talked about the appalling tragedy of Karbalā and clarified to people the purposeful martyrdom of Imam al-Ḥusayn (A.S.) and his message to people, exposing the corruption of the Umayyads ruling system so that the people would know the extent of the tragedy and tyranny and learn how to take revenge of the oppressors of their time.

In that era, there were four extremely sensitive and important spots in the Muslim world: Damascus; Kūfa; Mecca; Medina, i.e. the Holy Shrine of the Apostle of Allah (S.A.W.A.) and the center for preserving the memories of the adorable Islam and the respected Prophet (S.A.W.A.). In all four spots, Imam al-Sajjād (A.S.) played an

influential role, following which people's awakening and different kinds of revolts and dissidence ensued. Thenceforth, the history of Islam witnessed uprisings which were inspired by Imam al-Ḥusayn (A.S.)'s great uprising in Karbalā, including the battle of Ḥarraḥ,¹ taking place a year later in which Yazīd'a agents committed a tragic massacre against the uprising of the people of Medina. 'Alī (A.S.)'s children, each in a corner of the Muslim world, were planning to revolt and take revenge, which finally led to the uprising of Abū Muslim Khurāsānī and the overthrow of the corrupt dynasty of the Umayyads.

Fighting with and criticizing the selfish and unjust conducts of the Umayyad and

1 See: Chenarani, Muhammad Ali, *The Battle of Ḥarraḥ*, translated into English by Ahmad Rezwani, Islamic Research Foundation, Mashhad, 2009.

Abbasid caliphs gradually mounted in various ways among Muslims, especially among the Shī'ites of Imam 'Alī (A.S.) throughout the history, whereby Shī'ism was introduced as a combating and resistance movement delivering the message of martyrdom. Although the Shī'ites have always suffered atrocities and tortures, they have retained this revolutionary spirit to the present after over fourteen centuries.

Although Imam al-Sajjād (A.S.) was apparently staying at home, he would always express the message of martyrdom and fight against tyrants through his supplications and sermons and keeping in touch with his close Shī'ite followers such as Abū Ḥamza Thumālī and Abū Khālid Kābulī. At the same time, he was also engaged in enjoining good and forbidding evil; his sincere followers received religious knowledge and Islamic decrees from his

holiness and spread them among others. Thus, Shī‘ism developed in many aspects. It was due to these overt and covert campaigns that Imam al-Sajjād (A.S.) was for the second time captured and sent to Shām in chains by order of ‘Abd al-Malik, the Umayyad ruler, and returned to Medina after a while.¹

During his 35 years of Imamate, Imam al-Sajjād (A.S.) would, wherever necessary, attempt in awakening the people and inciting them against tyranny and aberration and in many cases rendered plenty of social services in support of the poor and the unattended families, as well as dissemination of the Islamic knowledge, purification of people's souls and morality, and awakening them by means of supplications compiled in *Ṣaḥīfat al-*

¹ *Jalā’ al-‘Uyūn.*

Sajjādiyya.

Ṣaḥīfat al-Sajjādiyya

Ranking among the most valuable Islamic works, *Ṣaḥīfat al-Sajjādiyya* includes 57 supplications containing the most accurate theistic, devotional, social, and ethical issues, known as Psalms of the Household of the Prophet (S.A.W.A.).

One of the historical events that reflects a perspective of Imam al-Sajjād (A.S.)'s bright character is the elegy that Farazdaq, the poet, recited in praise of the Imam (A.S.) before the House of Ka'ba.

Historians have stated, "During the rule of Walīd b. 'Abd al-Malik, the heir apparent (*walī aḥd*) and his brother went to Mecca with the intention of performing Ḥajj pilgrimage and stepped into the Holy Mosque to perform circumambulation (*ṭawāf*). As they approached the Ka'ba to pay tribute to the Black Stone (by touching

and kissing), the pressing crowd obstructed their way to the Ḥaṭīm, forcing them to retreat and sit on the pulpit to wait for the crowd to recede. Around them also gathered the dignitaries of Shām who accompanied them and watched the circumambulation ritual. At this moment the majestic light of Imam ‘Alī b. Ḥusayn (A.S.), whose countenance was the most glorious and whose attire was the neatest and whose fragrance was the most pleasant of all those attending the circumambulation ritual, appeared from one corner of the Mosque and began to circumambulate the Ka‘ba. As he got near the Black Stone, the huge crowd stepped back at the sight of his grandeur and majesty to open the way to the Black Stone for the Imam (A.S.) and his retinue, so he could touch and kiss the Stone in convenience.

Watching this scene incited a wave of fury and jealousy in the heart and soul of

Hishām b. ‘Abd al-Malik, and while he was burning in disgust, one of the nobles of Shām faced him and asked with astonishment, “Who is this person to whom all the people turned in adoration and respect and cleared the way for him to go on with the circumambulation?” Although he knew the Imam (A.S.) and his status quite well, Hishām feigned ignorance and replied that he did not know him out of intense hatred and for the fear that his courtiers might be impressed and enchanted by the Imam (A.S.) and his position and words. At this moment, Abū Farās (Farazdaq) who witnessed this scene became very agitated by Hishām's feigning ignorance and although he was a court poet himself and without feeling endangered by the wrath and violence of that arrogant prince, he addressed the Shāmī man and said, “If you want to know who that person is, ask me as I know very well who he is.”

Then, Farazdaq, in a moment of great sublimation and manifestation of faith and ascension of soul, recited his everlasting ode revealed to him by his fully awake conscience with utmost fever. Here is a part of that ode:

“The one you know not is the one whose footsteps are known by the land of Baḥā’ and the one who is known by the Ka’ba and the sanctuary, inside and out.”

“He is the one whose grandfather is Aḥmad Mukhtār upon whom be peace and Mercy of Allah as long as destiny prevails... He is the son of Fāṭima (A.S.), the chief of the ladies of the world, and ‘Alī (A.S.), the legatee and successor of the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) from whose sword would brightly blaze Allah's wrath fire and revenge flames.”

When Farzdaq ended his recitation, Hishām, like someone awakened from a deep sleep, retorted to Farzdaq, “Why have

you not written such eulogies in praise of us?” He replied, “Bring an ancestor like his, a father the same in rank as his and a purely virtuous mother as his, then I will praise you, too.”

Hishām got outraged and ordered the name of the poet be eliminated from the award list, and himself be imprisoned in the land of ‘Asfān, somewhere between Mecca and Medina.

When the news reached Imam al-Sajjād (A.S.), he sent twelve thousand Dirhams to Farzdaq as an award and apologized for not being able to send more. Farzdaq did not accept the award and sent him the following message, “I wrote this ode to please Allah and his Apostle (S.A.W.A.), and to defend the Truth, not wanting an award.” The Imam (A.S.) sent back the award and swore him to accept it and reassured him that its real value would not be belittled before Allah.

Anyhow, it was these values that provoked the enemy's spite and vindictiveness.

It is written that finally Imam Zayn al-‘Ābidīn – Sayyid al-Sājidīn – (A.S.) was poisoned by Walīd b. ‘Abd al-Malik who was instigated by Hishām, the Umayyad ruler, and was buried in Baqī‘ cemetery.

Some Sayings of Imam al-Sajjād (A.S.)

Glory be to Thee, Outdazzling in signs, Creator of the heavens, Author of the spirits! To Thee belongs praise, a praise that will be permanent with Thy permanence! To Thee belongs all, the praise everlasting through Thy favor! To Thee belongs praise, a praise that will parallel Thy benefaction!

My Lord, bless Muḥammad and his Household, those whom Thou hast chosen for Thy command, the treasurers of Thy knowledge, the guardians of Thy religion,

Thy vicegerents in Thy earth, and Thy arguments against Thy servants, purified from uncleanness and defilement through a purification by Thy desire, and made the mediation to Thee and the road to Thy Garden!

My Lord, bless Muḥammad and his Household with a blessing which makes plentiful Thy gifts and generosity, perfects for them Thy bestowals and awards, and fills out their share of Thy kindly acts and benefits! My Lord, bless him and his Household with a blessing whose first has no term, whose term has no limit, and whose last has no utmost end! My Lord, bless them to the weight of Thy Throne and all below it, the amount that fills the heavens and all above them, the number of Thy earths and all below and between them, a blessing that will bring them near to Thee in proximity, please Thee and them, and be joined to its likes forever!

O God, surely Thou hast confirmed Thy religion in all times with an Imam whom Thou hast set up as a guidepost to Thy servants and a lighthouse in Thy lands, after his cord has been joined to Thy cord! Thou hast appointed him the means to Thy good pleasure, made obeying him obligatory, cautioned against disobeying him, and commanded following his commands, abandoning his prohibitions, and that no forward-goer go ahead of him or back-keeper keep back from him! So he is the preservation of the shelter-seekers, the cave of the faithful, the handhold of the adherents, and the radiance of the worlds!¹

1 William C. Chittick (tr.), *The Psalms of Islam, Al-Ṣaḥīfat al-Kāmilat al-Sajjādiyya*, (Supplication 47) Muhammadi Trust, London, 1988.

The Seventh Infallible
Ḥaḍrat Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir
(A.S.)
The Fifth Imam

The blessed name of the fifth Imam is Muḥammad. His nickname is Bāqir or Bāqir al-‘Ulūm, as he split knowledge and uncovered the mysteries of sciences. Certain other nicknames have also been mentioned for him, each one of which indicating an attribute of that noble Imam, such as Shākir (grateful), Ṣābir (the one who patiently endures), and Hādī (guiding to the right)

Abū Ja'far was his patronymic. His mother was Fāṭima daughter of Imam al-Ḥasan; therefore, his lineage from mother side traces back to Imam al-Ḥasan (A.S.) and from his father's side to Imam al-Ḥusayn (A.S.). His father was Sayyid al-Sājidīn, Imam Zayn al-Ābidīn (A.S.).

Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir (A.S.) was born on Friday, Ṣafar 3, 57/December 16, 676 in Medina. In the tragic event of Karbalā, he was in the company of his grandfather Imam al-Ḥusayn (A.S.), near the age of four.

His Imamate began in 95/714, upon the martyrdom of his father Imam Zayn al-Ābidīn (A.S.), and lasted until 114/733, that is, some months over nineteen years. During the Imamate of Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir (A.S.) and his son, Imam Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (A.S.), such events as the fall of Umayyad dynasty, seizure of power by the

Abbasids, disruption of political disputes, the appearance of imposters and commanders like Abū Salma Khallāl and Abū Muslim Khurāsānī, etc. took place; some books on philosophy were translated, and theological debates initiated; a number of Sufi Shaykhs, ascetics, and wandering dervishes affiliated to the ruling caliphate also came into being. Judges and theologians were installed arbitrarily by formal officials and authorities to expound and interpret jurisprudence, ideology, theology, and ethics to the expediencies of the caliphate and the ruling centers, and to deviate the teachings of the Qur'ān, especially the issue of Imamate and *Wilāyat* which had after the tragedy of 'Āshūra attracted the attention of many truth-seeking people toward the righteousness of the Household of 'Alī (A.S.) and revealed the ugly-featured Umayyad tyrants and

those who bartered their Hereafter with the worldly gains and also to throw the Prophet (S.A.W.A.)'s traditions into oblivion. Some had also forged traditions in favor of the ruling system or were busy forging some, or transforming them to the benefit of the tyrant usurpers of caliphate. These were really menacing factors which were to be withstood by the protectors and guardians of religion. To this end, Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir (A.S.) and after him, Imam Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq (A.S.) took advantage of the favorable political milieu to disseminate the true Islamic teachings and truthful knowledge and founded the Academy of Shī‘ism and Islamic Sciences. That was because these noble Imams and their disciples were in fact inheritors and the true guardians of the teachings of the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) and the Islamic laws and justice; they were to train knowledgeable and

practical disciples and competent and self-sacrificing companions, and to gather, compile, and teach the jurisprudence of Muḥammad (S.A.W.A.)'s progeny. That was why Imam al-Bāqir (A.S.) was always surrounded by scholars, scientists, and narrators of *ḥadīth*, and famous orators and poets. In his didactic school, knowledge and piety were taught to people. Abū Ja'far Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir (A.S.) was the “custodian of alms” of the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) and Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī (A.S.) and distributed those alms among Banī Hāshim and the poor and the needy, and managed them financially. Imam al-Bāqir (A.S.) possessed praiseworthy features and was characterized by Islamic courteous behavior. He was always well-dressed and would walk around with utmost dignity and grace. When he was asked why he put on costly garments while his ancestor would

wear inexpensive clothes, he replied, “My ancestor's piety and governance demanded so in the times when the poor and the deprived were in great number. If I wore those clothes, I would not be able to enhance the religious rites in such a revolution of thought.

The fifth Imam (A.S.) was very light-hearted and cheerful to the believers and friends. He would shake hands with all companions and encourage others to practice it, too. He would somehow mention in his talks that, “Shaking hands will eradicate internal indignations and will cause the sins of both sides to fall off as leafs of trees do in the fall. Imam al-Bāqir (A.S.) was quite observant of giving away alms and donations and Islamic manners such as helping the needy, performing the funeral processions of the believers, visiting the patients, and respecting the courtesy

and Islamic code of conducts and religious norms. He wanted to revive the traditions of his ancestor, the Apostle of Allah (S.A.W.A.), among the people and impart noble moral traits to them.

On hot days, he would go out to manage the farms and palm groves, and would help workers and farmers with plowing the land. Whatever he earned from the farm products – with his hardworking and labor – he would give away for Allah's sake.

Whenever he went to the mosque of his ancestor, the Apostle of Allah (S.A.W.A.), to say prayers, people would gather around him to benefit from the bright rays of his knowledge and virtue.

For twenty years Mu'āwiya (in Shām) and his functionaries (in other Islamic lands) did their best by means of force, money, trickery, and hiring mercenary scholars to misrepresent the Islamic truths.

Therefore, after the tragic event of Karbalā and the unprecedented oppressions by the children of Abū Sufyān, when people realized the righteousness of the Infallible Ahl al-Bayt (A.S.), Imam al-Sajjād (A.S.) and his noble son, Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir (A.S.), exerted great attempts in correcting people's beliefs, especially in Imamate and leadership, which only the Infallible Imams (A.S.) deserved, and taught the true knowledge in different aspects to people. As a result, the dissemination of the Islamic jurisprudence and ordinances became so widespread that Imam Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq (A.S.), the honorable son of Imam al-Bāqir (A.S.), established a university with four thousand students and spread the Islamic traditions (*ḥadīths*) and doctrines all over the Muslim world of that time. Imam al-Sajjād (A.S.) had paved the way for this significant endeavor through invocations,

supplications, and reminding the tyrannies of the Umayyad and by commanding good and forbidding evil. Similarly, Imam al-Bāqir (A.S.) further prepared the ground by holding teaching circles and clarifying the relevant religious problems for people.

Through his insight and in light of his divinely revealed intuition, the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.A.) had determined the duties his progeny and Ahl al-Bayt would be holding as well as the role they were to play in identifying and introducing the true knowledge in the years to come, as the following *ḥadīth* indicates:

One day, Jābir b. ‘Abd Allāh Anṣārī, who had lost his eyesight late in his life, had an audience with Imam al-Sajjād (A.S.). Hearing a child, he asked, “Who are you?” The child answered, “I am Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn.” Jābir called him near, took hold of his hand, kissed it, and said,

“One day I had an audience with your grandfather, the Apostle of Allah (S.A.W.A.). He told me, “You may live so long as to see Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn, one of my grandsons. Give my greetings to him and tell him: May Allah grant you the light of wisdom; disseminate the faith and knowledge!” Commanded by his grandfather, the fifth Imam embarked on a life-long dissemination of religious science and Islamic knowledge, as well as teaching the Qur’ānic truths and Prophetic traditions.

Jābir b. ‘Abd Allāh Anṣārī is the one who on the *arba‘īn* (the fortieth day of Imam al-Ḥusayn's martyrdom), the first year after the tragic event of Karbalā, went there together with ‘Aṭiyya, who was also one of the pious scholars and noble interpreters, made *ghusl* (major ablution) and while ‘Aṭiyya was holding his hand, he sat down

beside the holy grave of the master of martyrs, Sayyid al-Shuhadā (A.S.), and recited the *ziyāra* of that Holy Imam. Anyhow, Imam al-Bāqir (A.S.) was a source of radiant divine wisdom and a reservoir of divine ordinance. His celebrated name is on hundreds of traditions and wise sayings and exhortations which he had expressed to guide his talented and competent disciples and pupils, especially during his 13 years of Imamate. As it is related, in no other scholastic circles had the scholars been more humble and modest than the ones in the presence of Muḥammad b. ‘Alī (A.S.).¹

In the time of Imam ‘Alī (A.S.), it was as though the status of science and value of knowledge was not – as it had to be – clear for the people yet. It seemed that the

1 *Majmū‘a-yi Zindigī-yi Chahārdah Ma‘šūm ‘Alayhim al-Salām*, p. 175.

Muslims had not stepped out of the restricted material world; had not drunk from Imam ‘Alī (A.S.)’s transparent spring of knowledge; had remained thirsty at the infinite ocean of ‘Alī (A.S.)’s presence; and no one but a few had appreciated such precious jewel as him. That was why the Master of the Faithful (A.S.) had repeatedly said, “Ask me [questions] before you lose me!” And he would often say, “I am more familiar with the routes of the heaven than those of the earth.” Alas! Nobody would appreciate his precious presence. However, people gradually began to taste the pleasure and joy of the knowledge of Ahl al-Bayt (A.S.) and the Islamic teachings, particularly in the time of Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir (A.S.); and like thirsty ones who had been deprived of fresh water or who had not appreciated it, they began to quench their thirst with the splendid and palatable divine

knowledge of Imam al-Bāqir (A.S.) and gave in to his scholarly status. According to a historian, “At this point, the Muslims turned away from battle fields and warfare to conquering the doorways of knowledge and culture.”

Since there was no possibility at the time for armed uprising – due to intense stranglehold and a lack of chivalrous combatants – Imam al-Bāqir (A.S.) deemed as more appropriate the dissemination of the Islamic knowledge and scholarly activities as well as ideological and spiritual struggle against the Umayyad ruling system, and since a full course of Islamic law had not yet been instructed in details and comprehensively, he undertook the fruitful scholarly endeavors in this respect. However, as the personality of the Imam (A.S.) and the nature of his teachings – in different dimensions and directions – were

considered detrimental to the ruling authorities, he was often persecuted and offended by them. Nonetheless, Imam al-Bāqir (A.S.) never neglected the importance of his dutiful role in starting a rebellion against the oppressive ruling system, but encouraged it in another way, i.e., by admiring and confirming his rebellious brother Zayd b. ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn.

There are narrations denoting that Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir (A.S.), who was the greatest intellectual and cultural pioneer of his time, had a significant role in promulgation of ethics, genuine Islamic philosophy, specific worldview of the Qur’ān, training such disciples as Imam Shāfi‘ī, and formulation of the Islamic school of thought. He is also said to have confirmed his brother Zayd's revolutionary position; e.g., he is quoted as saying, “O Lord! Strengthen my back by [my brother]

Zayd.

It is also said that one day Zayd paid a visit to Imam al-Bāqir (A.S.). On visiting Zayd, the Imam (A.S.) recited the following verse, ﴿O you who have faith! Be maintainers of justice and witnesses for the sake of Allah﴾ (Al-Qur'ān, 4: 135). He then continued, “O Zayd! By God you are an example of the one who acts according to this verse.”

It is known that Zayd, who under the instruction of his brother, Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir (A.S.), had undertaken an uprising to establish justice and faith, was finally ruthlessly murdered by the despotic ruling system of the Umayyad Hishām b. ‘Abd al-Malik in 120 (or 122)/737 (or 739), when he revolted against the latter during the Imamate of Imam Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq (A.S.). Zayd's sacred body was held hanging from the gallows for years

and then set on fire. And as related in history, although Zayd's movement ostensibly did not lead to victory and neither did other uprisings and endeavors in this period, these revolts and movements in the history of Shī'ism prompted awakening an activism; initiated the culture of martyrdom targeted against tyrannical rules; kept the pure blood of the Shī'a seething; and carried on the red line of martyrdom through the history of the Shī'a up to the present time. Even though Imam al-Bāqir (A.S.) and Imam al-Ṣādiq (A.S.) apparently did not involve in the above uprising for they did not regard the situation as appropriate, they attempted, at any chance they found, to correct the outlook for the society on the statehood and to teach and disseminate the Islamic principles and to illuminate people's minds and thoughts, being in itself an alternative to battle and

warfare against the enemy. Since in this era the Umayyad rule was fading out and the ‘Abbasid rebellion was cracking down on them, the best circumstances had risen for promulgation of dynamic thoughts and training disciples and dignitaries as well as demarcating the right lines of statehood, which was indeed a political struggle laying the foundation for and formulation of the Islamic doctrine and principles.

However, as maintained above, wherever the caliphate system's benefits were concerned and the rulers felt that the Imam (A.S) was unveiling their cruel faces and teaching the right path to recognition of the “Infallible Imam” and Imamate which followed “Prophethood” and finally the “Rule of Allah”, they would proceed to persecute and even torture the Imam (A.S.), and sometimes would exile and incarcerate him.

To give an example of the above, a historical event is narrated as follows:

“One year when Hishām b. ‘Abd al-Malik, the Umayyad ruler, was going on a Ḥajj pilgrimage, Ja‘far b. Muḥammad, Imam al-Ṣādiq (A.S.) together with his father, Imam al-Bāqitr (A.S.) were also on the pilgrimage. One day, Imam al-Ṣādiq (A.S.) was giving a speech in an assembly in Mecca, emphasizing the issue of leadership and that the Imams, rather than others, are the true leaders and caliphs of Allah on earth, and that following their footsteps and swearing allegiance to them rather than to others would bring forth social happiness and salvation. These words, being uttered in the period of Hishām's full power and during the Ḥajj rituals in Mecca, began to echo widely around and reached Hishām. In Mecca, Hishām did not dare to interfere, nor was it advisable for him to do so. But

when he arrived in Damascus, he dispatched an envoy to Medina asking the governor there to send Imam al-Bāqir (A.S.) and his son to Damascus, which was done accordingly.

Imam al-Ṣādiq (A.S.) said in this regard, “When we arrived in Damascus, Hishām called us to his court. When we entered, we saw him sitting on his throne and having his men fully armed, arrayed in two rows by his sides. He also had a target board installed before him on the other end of the hall, and the dignitaries among his entourage were engaged in an archery match. As we entered the courtyard of Hishām's palace, my father was in front and I was following him. When we got near, Hishām asked my father, 'Why don't you take part in the match?' My father replied, 'I have become old and am not in a position to do this. It would be better if you exempt

me from this.' Hishām swore, 'By God who honored us by His Religion and Messenger, I won't exempt you.' He then commanded one of the Umayyad nobles to hand his bow and arrow over to my father [Imam al-Bāqir (A.S.)] so that he too could take part in the match. My father took the bow from the man, picked an arrow, put it in the bow, pulled the string powerfully, and shot it right to the center of the target. Then, he took another arrow and shot it at the notch of the previous one... numbering to nine successive shots. Infuriated by this event, Hishām said, 'You did a great job O Abū Ja'far! You are the most skilful among the Arab and non-Arab archers. Why did you say you were not able to do it? Tell me who taught you the archery?' My father replied, 'You know that this sport is common among Medinans. I used to practice it when I was young'."

Then, Imam al-Ṣādiq (A.S.) pointed out that, “Hishām got mad with the whole affair and made up his mind to murder my father. At the same gathering, Hishām talked to Imam al-Bāqir (A.S.) over leadership and caliphate. Imam al-Bāqir (A.S.) expressed his opinion on the leadership of the faithful leaders and how an Islamic community is run and what characteristics a leader of an Islamic society must have. All this further perplexed Hishām who lacked those requirements and who had usurped that position.” It is reported by some that Imam al-Bāqir (A.S.) was incarcerated in Damascus. When Hishām got informed that the prisoners of Damascus have turned into Imam al-Bāqir (A.S.)'s disciples and followers, he freed the Imam and hastened to have him sent to Medina. Before the Imam's departure, Hishām sent forth a courier to spread ill rumors against them (i.e., Imam al-Bāqir and Imam al-Ṣādiq – A.S.) in the villages and towns en route, so

that people would not get in touch with them and might not be influenced by their sermons and conducts. Nevertheless, on this journey the Imam did not spare any chance to contact people – even the Christians – and to make them aware of the whole situation.

It is interesting and instructive to know that in his last will, Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir (A.S.) enjoined his son Imam Ja‘far al-Šādiq (A.S.) to allocate after his demise a part of his property to be spent during Ḥajj pilgrimage at mourning ceremonies for him for ten years in Manā, where Ḥājīs gather for throwing stones at Satan and making sacrifices. Drawing attention to the issue and determining the location is considered very important. According to the author of *al-Ghadīr* – the well-known ‘Allāma Amīnī – the purpose of this testament is to make the great Islamic community acquainted with the true leader of the religion at that Holy Land and guide them to the right

path, so that they would break away from others and join these leaders; and this is the utmost eagerness for guiding people and rescuing them from the claws of tyranny and misguidance.¹

Martyrdom of Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir (A.S.)

Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir (A.S.) lived on for 19 years and ten months after the martyrdom of his father, Imam Zayn al-‘Ābidīn (A.S.). During this time he was engaged in doing his crucial duty of Imamate, spreading and propagating the Islamic culture, teaching disciples, leading companions and people, implementing traditions of his noble ancestor among the people, drawing the attention of the usurping ruling system toward the right line

¹ *Imām dar ‘Ayniyat-i Jāmi‘a*, from page 53 on (with slight changes).

of leadership and guiding people in realizing the real leader and the Infallible Imam who is the genuine vicegerent (caliph) of Allah and His Apostle (S.A.W.A.) on earth, and spared no moment in accomplishing his duties.

Finally, on Dhul Hijja 7, 114/January, 28, 733, when he was 57 years old, he was poisoned by the order of Hishām in Medina and departed to the Heavens. His sacred body was buried in Baqī' cemetery next to his honorable father.

His Wives and Children

The children of His Holiness are reported to be seven: Abū 'Abd Allāh Ja'far b. Muḥammad al-Ṣādiq (A.S.) and 'Abd Allāh who were born to Umm Farvah, daughter of Qāsim b. Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr. Ibrāhīm and 'Ubayd Allāh, who were born to Umm Ḥakīm and both died during

the lifetime of their noble father. ‘Alī, Zaynab, and Umm Salama, whose mother was an *umm walad* [a concubine].

Some Sayings of Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir (A.S.)

1. Islam is founded on five pillars: Prayers (*Ṣalāt*), alms tax (*zakāt*), Ḥajj pilgrimage, fasting, and *Wilāyat* (allegiance to the Imam). When asked about *Wilāyat*, the Imam answered, “By *Wilāyat* the Muslims' affairs will be put into order and discipline.

2. Nothing is better liked by Allah than requesting Him and begging requirements from Him.

3. Nothing is better for fending off calamities and dire accidents than supplication.

4. The worst defect is to stare at others' faults and ignore one's own faults; to enjoin people to do things which one is unable to

do oneself; and to persecute one's friend or companion who has no supporter and helper, and not to hasten to assist him.

5. When you are sitting in the presence of a scholar, be more eager to listen than to talk; learn to listen well as well as you learn to talk well, and do not interrupt the speaker.

6. The servants will not turn infidel if they do not state any ideas when having no knowledge, and do not deny what they have not understood.

7. A scholar whose knowledge is beneficent to people is superior to seventy thousand worshippers.

8. Whoever is not appointed as his own preacher by God, others' exhortation will not have any effect on him.

The Eighth Infallible
Ḥaḍrat Imam Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq (A.S.)
The Sixth Imam

Imam Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq (A.S.), the chief of Ja‘farī School of thought (Shī‘ism) was born on Rabī‘ al-Awwal 17, 83/April 20, 702 in Medina.

His father was Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir (A.S.) and his mother was Umm Farvah, daughter of Qāsim b. Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr. His patronymic was Abū ‘Abd Allāh and his nickname was al-Ṣādiq.

Up to the age of 12, Imam al-Ṣādiq (A.S.)

was contemporary to his noble grandfather Imam al-Sajjād (A.S.) and was primarily trained under his supervision and gleaned from the knowledge stack of his grandfather.

After the demise of the fourth Imam (A.S.), he lived in the service of his honorable father, Imam al-Bāqir (A.S.) for 19 years amounting to 31 years of spending his life serving his grandfather and father who were each at his own time a proof of Allah obtaining light directly from the Divine source.

Thus, in addition to the Divine aspects and Holy blessings that every Imam receives, enjoying the presence of his noble father and grandfather caused Imam al-Şādiq (A.S.) who possessed innate talent, scholarly sense and abundant brilliance, to achieve perfection in knowledge and ethics and to become the greatest figure on

knowledge and learning.

After his father's demise, his Imamate lasted 34 years, during which he founded Ja'farī School (*Madhhab* al-Ja'farī) and contributed to the reconstruction and revival of Muḥammad (S.A.W.A.)'s law (*sharī'a*).

The prolific and productive life of Imam Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (A.S.) coincided with the rule of five Umayyad caliphs (Hishām b. 'Abd al-Malik, Walīd b. Yazīd, Yazīd b. Walīd, Ibrāhīm b. Walīd, and Marwān Ḥimār), each one of whom inflicted much persecution and sorrow upon the lofty soul of the Infallible Imam (A.S.); two of the 'Abbasid caliphs (Saffāḥ and Manṣūr) also usurped the caliphate in the time of the Imam (A.S.) and proved to be more tyrannical and unjust than the Umayyads. Consequently, Imam al-Ṣādiq (A.S.) lived his last ten years of life in insecurity and

discomfort.

The Era of Imam al-Ṣādiq (A.S.)

Imam al-Ṣādiq (A.S.)'s era is characterized as one of the most turbulent periods in the history of Islam, during which, on one hand, frequent rebellions of different groups, particularly by revenges for Imam al-Ḥusayn (A.S.)'s blood, took place, including the uprising by Abū Salama in Kūfa and Abū Muslim in Khurāsān, which were the most important of all. It was this revolution that finally toppled down the ominous rule of the Umayyads and liberated the people from their injustice and tyranny. But finally, the Abbasids took over the rule and caliphate with fraudulence and conspiracy. The transference period of the Umayyad rule to Abbasids was the most violent and chaotic time in the life of Imam al-Ṣādiq (A.S.).

On the other hand, his era was a time of clashes among schools and ideologies and an age of contradiction of different philosophical and theological thoughts which were raised by the encounter of the Islamic nations and those of the conquered lands as well as through the relations between Islamic centers and the rest of the world, creating enthusiasm and eagerness in Muslims for understanding and researching.

It was an age in which the slightest negligence or unawareness and inactivity by the true guardian of Islam, i.e., Imam al-Şādiq (A.S.), would have ruined the faith and marred the life-giving teachings of Islam, both from inside and out.

It was then that the Imam (A.S.) was facing great troubles and bearing topmost responsibility. In such a critical situation, the sixth Imam (A.S.) had to be concerned with the salvage of the thoughts of Muslim

masses from atheism and infidelity as well as preventing the Islamic principles and knowledge from deviating from the right path and the religious decrees from being wrongly and reversely interpreted and articulated by the caliphs of his time.

In addition, he had to skillfully and with accurate planning liberate the Shī'a from being annihilated and wiped out, which was, amid the stranglehold and tortures by the previous rule, taking the last breaths and its great men and scholars were either hiding or absorbed by the pomposity and gaudiness of the tyrannical occupying regime and did not dare to reveal their faith. The new rule was no better in murder and injustice than the previous one and the situation was so adverse and dire that all of the Imam (A.S.)'s companions were in danger of being killed, with their elite being already on the blacklist.

Jābir Ju‘fī, one of the Imam (A.S.)’s special companions and envoys, was dispatched by his holiness to Kūfa on a certain mission. On the way, the swift-riding courier of the Imam (A.S.) caught up with him and said, “The Imam advises you to feign insanity.” Following this advice, his life was spared; that is, the governor of Kūfa who had secretly received a command from the caliph to assassinate him refrained from killing him on the ground of madness.

An intimate companion of Imam al-Bāqir (A.S.), Jābir Ju‘fī has said, “Imam al-Bāqir (A.S.) has taught me seventy thousand *ḥadīths*, which I have not narrated to anyone and will never do.

One day he humbly said to the holy Imam (A.S.), “You have told me some secrets, which neither I can endure, nor I have a confidant to entrust them to; and I am about to go insane.”

“Go to the desert,” the Imam (A.S.) said to him, “and dig a well, put your head onto it and say in the quiet of the well, “Muḥammad b. ‘Alī – i.e., Imam al-Bāqir (A.S.) – related such and such to me...”

Truly, the Shī‘a was about to be wiped out, i.e., the genuine Islam was going to take the color of the caliphs and turn into an Umayyad and Abbasid Islam.

In such a dire situation, the Holy Imam (A.S.) undertook the revivification and reconstruction of the Islamic knowledge, and set up a great scholarly school whose end-product and output was fourteen thousand expert disciples (such as Hishām, Muḥammad b. Muslim, etc.) in various disciplines, who spread over the extended Islamic lands of the time.

Each one of them were, on the one hand, the representative of Imam (A.S.)'s logic which denoted the logic of Islam, the

guardian of religious and scientific legacy, as well as the protectors of the true Shī'ism, and on the other hand, were defenders against infiltration of anti-Islamic and destructive thoughts among the Muslims.

The establishment of such a school of thought and such reconstruction and revival of the Islamic teachings, made Imam Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (A.S.) known as the head of Ja'farī school (i.e., Shī'ism).

Shortly afterwards, however, upon reinforcement of their influence and foundations, the Abbasids assumed the same tyrannical procedure as the Umayyads, and even surpassed them in their atrocities.

Having always been an untiring combatant and a radical revolutionary in the arena of thought and action, Imam al-Ṣādiq (A.S.) did what Imam al-Ḥusayn (A.S.) had done in his bloody uprising, albeit in the form of teaching and setting up a school of

thought, training people, and, putting up an all-out *jihād*.

Scientific Movement

Political discrepancies among the Umayyad and the Abbasids, division of Islam into different sects, and the appearance of materialistic ideas and the influence of Greek philosophy in the Islamic countries gave rise to a scientific movement, which was founded on indisputable facts. Such a movement was crucial both for purging the religious truths of superstitions and forged traditions and resisting against the heretics and materialists with the power of reasoning to condemn their shaky opinions. His Holiness' scholarly talks and debates with atheists and materialists such as Ibn Abī al-'Awjā' and Abū Shākir al-Dayṣānī, and even with Ibn Muqaffa', are well-known. Nobody was

capable of creating such a scientific movement in that chaotic and dark era; the only one deserving this great status was the one having Divine mission and being upheld by Allah, so that he would be able to relate to the unseen through revelation power, purity of soul, and God-fearing, and to obtain the truths of knowledge from the boundless ocean of Divine knowledge, and impart them to those who would appreciate their value.

It was only the Holy Imam al-Şādiq (A.S.) who was worthy of having such a position, and it was just he who by withdrawing from politics and political controversies since the beginning of his Imamate, made great efforts in spreading the Islamic knowledge, the genuine traditions of the true religion, and disseminating the ordinances and teachings as well as training the Muslims.

The era of Imam al-Şādiq (A.S.) was actually the golden age of knowledge and promulgation of divine ordinances and education of disciples who would each carry the brilliant torch of knowledge to the nooks and corners of the world and, like their honorable teacher and leader, make endeavors to guide people through self-knowledge and knowledge of their Lord.

It was in this splendid era that the Islamic theology and philosophy – in contrast to Greek philosophy – thrived and great philosophers and sages were trained in the world of Islam.

Simultaneous to the scientific movement and development of knowledge by Imam al-Şādiq (A.S.) in Medina, Maṣṣūr, the Abbasid caliph, out of hatred and envy thought of establishing another school which would be able both to be scientifically independent against the Ja'farī school and

keep the people busy and distracted from plucking flowers of knowledge from the rose-garden of the Imam (A.S.)'s school of knowledge. To this end, Manṣūr set up a school in Karkh neighborhood of Baghdad.

In this school, Manṣūr utilized Abū Ḥanīfa in legal issues and had scientific and philosophical books brought from India and Greece and had them translated. He also installed Mālik, the chief of the Mālikī sect, as the head of jurisprudence department. However, these schools were unable to carry out their guiding duties as expected.

Imam al-Ṣādiq (A.S.) compiled and formulated the dispersed juristic, scientific, and theological issues, and in every discipline trained numerous disciples who later on spread the Islamic knowledge throughout the world. That was the beginning of Imam (A.S.)'s worldwide spreading of different disciplines such as

jurisprudence, philosophy, theology, natural sciences, etc. Ja'farī jurisprudence is the same as Muḥammadan jurisprudence of religious rulings, which were revealed by Allah to the noble Prophet (S.A.W.A.) through the revelation of the Qur'ān. Contrary to other sects in which views and ideas were arbitrarily manipulated, the Ja'farī jurisprudence was indeed the elaboration and elucidation of the same principles and laws set forth from the beginning in Islam. Abū Ḥanīfa, the head of Ḥanafī sect, has stated about Imam al-Ṣādiq (A.S.), "I have neither seen nor known anyone more learned in jurisprudence than Ja'far al-Ṣādiq."

The legal judgment (*fatwā*) by the greatest contemporary jurist of the Sunnī world, Shaykh Muḥammad Shaltout, the dean of Al-Azhar university, who explicitly proclaimed as permissible the practice of

Ja'farī jurisprudence just like that of other schools, is in itself an acknowledgment of the rightfulness of Ja'farī jurisprudence. These are but the outcome of Imam al-Ṣādiq (A.S.)'s endeavors in those days.

Imam al-Ṣādiq (A.S.) frequently debated on philosophy and *ḥikma* with his companions and even with those who were away from religion and belief in Allah. An example of his statements, which proves the existence of the Almighty Allah is addressed to one of his disciples called Mufaḍḍal b. 'Umar. These statements are reported in a book called *Tawḥīd al-Mufaḍḍal*. The debates of Imam al-Ṣādiq (A.S.) with the Indian physician, which is the subject of a book called *Ihlīlaja*, also includes sagacious points which are a small portion of Imam al-Ṣādiq (A.S.)'s unfathomable ocean of knowledge. In order to know a master (*ustād*) there are normally two ways: first,

getting to know his works and words; second, getting to know his disciples and the ones educated in his school.

A great number of wise sayings, writings, and traditions are related from Imam al-Şādiq (A.S.), which cannot be represented except as a drop from an ocean.

As for the disciples and students of Imam al-Şādiq (A.S.), they number over four thousand, of whom one is Jābir b. Ḥayyān. He was from Khurāsān. His father was a druggist in Ṭūs and was murdered by the followers of the Umayyads. After his father's murder, Jābir b. Ḥayyān went to Medina. First, he studied with Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir (A.S.), then, he joined the students of Imam Ja'far al-Şādiq (A.S.). Jābir is actually one of the wonders of the time and a great genius of the Muslim world. Having written numerous books on sciences and arts, especially chemistry, he stated everywhere

in his treatises that Ja'far b. Muḥammad (A.S.) told him or taught him or related to him so and so. Among his discoveries are nitric acid, aqua regia, and alcohol. He has also discovered several metals and metalloids. In the Renaissance period in Europe, around 300 treatises of Jābir b. Ḥayyān have been translated into German and are preserved in Berlin and Paris libraries.¹

By the intrigues of Manṣūr 'Abbāsī, Imam al-Ṣādiq (A.S.) was fatally poisoned and buried in Baqī' cemetery in 148/765, when he was 65 years old. Because of his living a longer life than other Imams (A.S.), he is named as Shaykh al-A'imma.

Imam al-Ṣādiq (A.S.) had seven sons and three daughters.

Following Imam al-Ṣādiq (A.S.), the

¹ *Ṣādiq 'Alayh al-Salām.*

position of Imamate was ordained by Allah to be handed over to Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm (A.S.).

Ismā'īl was the eldest of Imam al-Şādiq (A.S.)'s sons, who died before the Imam (A.S.)'s martyrdom. The Ismā'īlīs believe that he is the next Imam after his father.

The Temperament of Imam al-Şādiq (A.S.)

Like his noble ancestors, Imam al-Şādiq (A.S.) was eminent amongst his contemporaries in all his dignified traits and moral qualities. He was endowed with a heart radiant with divine light and was like his ancestors in benevolence and *infāq* (helping out the poor) toward the needy. He also enjoyed great wisdom and knowledge and influential speech with powerful eloquence. He would quite humbly and at the same time with the highest magnanimity do his own work in

person, and do farming with a spade in his hand on his farm in the scorching sun of Ḥijāz, saying, “If in this state I meet my Lord, I will be very delighted, as I am earning my own living and that of my family through manual labor and hardworking.”

Ibn Khallakān wrote, “Imam al-Ṣādiq (A.S.) is one of the twelve Imams of the Imāmiyya School and one of the descendants of the Holy Apostle of Allah (S.A.W.A.). He was called al-Ṣādiq for whatever he said was true; his piety is beyond description.” Mālik said, “I was accompanying Imam al-Ṣādiq (A.S.) on a Ḥajj pilgrimage when we arrived at the *iḥrām* location (where pilgrimage garb is put on). The Imam, who was riding a camel, was so awe-stricken that he was about to fall off the camel and unable to utter *labbayk* (here I am) however he tried.

I told him, “O son of the Prophet! You have perforce to say *labbayk*.” He replied, “How would I dare to say *labbayk*, as I fear that my Lord would say in response, *Lā labbayk* and *la sa‘dayk* (you are not here for Me and you are not given blessedness)’.”

Some Sayings of Imam al-Ṣādiq (A.S.)

1. The most content people are those who are not trapped in avarice.
2. Apathy toward this world brings about comfort of soul and well-being of the body.
3. When Allah wishes well for a person, He would make them indifferent to the world, aware and knowledgeable on religion, and conscious of their flaws. Whoever is given these traits, they are given the good of this world and the next.
4. Our followers are those who initiate good deeds and avoid evil acts. They make goodness known and take the lead in doing

good for their love of the Almighty Allah's mercy. They are of us, and wherever we are they are with us.

5. How repulsive it is for the faithful when they have a request that ends in their humiliation.

6. A believer is harder than iron, for if iron is melted in fire its color will change, but if believers are killed and restored to life and are killed again, their hearts will not swerve from their faith.

7. In his deathbed, where his relatives were gathering around him, Imam al-Ṣādiq (A.S.) said, “Our intercession (*shifā‘a*) will not include those who take their prayer (*ṣalāt*) lightly.”

The Debate of Imam Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq (A.S.) with Abū Ḥanīfa

There are references to arguments or debates in the biographies of the noble

Imams (A.S.) that they have had with the atheists and people of different faiths and denominations. For example, we relate here one of Imam al-Şādiq (A.S.)'s scathing, decisive, and at the same time, brief arguments to display his vast power of speech and logic, as a little indicates much:

One day Abū Ḥanīfa went to Imam al-Şādiq (A.S.)'s house and asked for an audience with him, but the Imam (A.S.) denied him admittance. Abū Ḥanīfa said, "I lingered a while at the doorway until a number of the Kūfans turned up and sought an audience, which was granted. I went in with them too. When I was in his presence I said, 'It is worthwhile that you send an envoy to Kūfa and prohibit the people there from abusing the companions of Muḥammad (S.A.W.A.), as there are over ten thousand people in this town giving bad names to the Prophet (S.A.W.A.)'s

companions.”

The holy Imam replied, “People will not accept it from me.” Abū Ḥanīfa said, “How is it possible that the people will not accept it from you as you are the grandson of the Prophet (S.A.W.A.)? The Imam said, “You are yourself one of them who did not pay attention to me. Did you not enter the house without any permission? And did you not sit without my allowing you? And did you not start talking without asking for permission? I have heard that you give *fatwā* (legal ruling) by analogy.” To which Abū Ḥanīfa nodded.

The Imam (A.S.) went on to say, “Woe to you! The first one who judged this way was Satan. When Allah ordered him to prostrate before Adam, he said he would not do that, for he had been created of fire and Adam of earth (i.e., fire is more precious than earth).”

Then, (in order to falsify the analogical *fatwā*, he pointed out some instances of the Islamic laws contradicting this principle,) he said, “Which one do you think is more criminal, murdering or adultery?”

Abū Ḥanīfa replied, “Murdering.”

Imam, “So, if judging according to analogy is right, why then two witnesses are required to prove a murder case, but for proving adultery four witnesses are needed? Is this Islamic law compatible with analogy?”

Abū Ḥanīfa, “No.”

Imam, “Which one is filthier, urine or semen?”

Abū Ḥanīfa, “Urine.”

Imam, “Then why has Allah ordained *wuḍū* (minor ablution) in the former case and *ghusl* (major ablution) in the latter one? Is this ordinance compatible with analogy?”

Abū Ḥanīfa, “No.”

Imam, “Is prayer more important or

fasting?”

Abū Ḥanīfa, “Prayer.”

Imam, “Why then is it mandatory for menstruous women to make up fasting but not praying? Is this ordinance compatible with analogy?”

Abū Ḥanīfa, “No.”

Imam, “I heard that you have interpreted the verse, ﴿Then, that day, you will surely be questioned concerning the blessing﴾¹ as, “Allah will call the people to account for the delicious foods and cool water they had in summer.”

Abū Ḥanīfa said, “That is right; I interpreted the verse that way.”

The Imam said, “If someone invited you to his house and served you with tasty food and cool water and then held you indebted for his favor, what would be your judgment about such a person?”

Abū Ḥanīfa replied, “I would say he was

1 Al-Qur’ān, 102: 8.

a miserly one.”

The Imam said, “Is Allah so miserly so as to call us to account for the foods that he has given to us?”

Abū Ḥanīfa asked, “What is then meant by the blessings and favors that the Qur’ān says man will be questioned about?”

The Imam said, “It is the blessing of loving us, the household, and the Ahl al-Bayt of the Holy Apostle of Allah (S.A.W.A.).”¹

1 *Munāẓira dar Rābiṭa bā Masā’il-Īdeology.*