

THE 6TH IMAM
**JAFFAR
AL-SADIQ**

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PREFACE

Finally, with the Grace of Allah, I have completed this short biography of our Sixth Imam, Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) for those readers who need to have a brief overview of the life of this divinely appointed Imam.

There is so much information on the life of our Sixth Imam that in the initial stages I had no clue as to where to start and where to end this daunting endeavor that I had agreed to undertake on behalf of the Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania. The more I thought of this project, the more discouraged I felt, until when I learnt that there were quite a few people who had read the short biographies that I had written on the other Imams and who were inquiring from the Bilal Muslim Mission for explanations as to why I had not written on the life of our other Imams. This inquiry encouraged me once more, to pull myself together and apply my energies towards this unfinished task. The result of this effort is the short sketch, depicting the highlights of the life of our Sixth Imam, Hazrat Jafar Sadiq (a.s.).

Every time I went through this work when it was in the draft form, I felt that it was not worth printing as it did not encompass even the most basics about the life of this illustrious personality. I ended up making massive alterations. Finally, I came to the conclusion that if I were to follow my instincts, this work would never be completed. We therefore now have this brief work for my readers. My prayers to my Creator is that, may He forgive me for the deficiencies that may have remained unveiled in this book.

I take this opportunity to thank all those who have in one way or another helped me in my efforts to undertake and complete this task. My special sentiments are for Fidahusein Abdullah Hameer, the Publisher, who tolerated my tardiness and constantly reminded me of my obligations to complete this work.

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CHAPTER 1

IMAM JAFAR BIN MUHAMMAD AL-SADIQ (A.S.): CHILDHOOD AND EARLY MANHOOD

INTRODUCTION

Imam Jafar Bin Muhammad (a.s.) is the Sixth Imam from the progeny of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.w.). He is known more by his title (Lakab) AL-SADIQ. Several explanations have been given as to why he has been singled out for this title despite the fact that all the Imams from the progeny of the Prophet (s.a.w.w.) were truthful - AL SADIQ.

Muhammad Khazri in his *AT-TASHREE UL ISLAM* says: "Hazrat Abu Abdullah Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) came of the Sayyids of the Holy Household. He won the title of Sadiq because of his unchallengeable truthfulness." Batras Bustani in his *DAERATAK MAAREF* Vol. VI reaffirms this view.

Another explanation given by scholars is that there was a need to distinguish him from others who had a similar name and who had made false claims to be the Imam of the time. By calling him AL-SADIQ, people would differentiate him from the false ones.

A third explanation is that, Allah, the Almighty; Himself chose this title for him. The Prophet (s.a.w.w.) therefore foretold the birth of this Imam and gave him this title.

The most important thing to note is that like the Prophet (s.a.w.w.), who was acknowledged to be truthful (AL-SADIQ) even by his avowed enemies, the Quraish of Mecca, similarly Imam Jafar Sadiq's truthfulness has been accepted at all times even by his enemies.

As for the name Jafar, by Arabic lexicon, it simply means a stream. However, according to some traditions, Jafar is a unique stream in paradise. In view of the fact that Imam Jafar (a.s.) was to become

a fountain head of knowledge for all and sundry, he was given this name by his father, the Fifth Imam.

The Sixth Imam is also known by many other titles (ILQAB) that include FAADHIL (the excellent one), TAHIR (the pure one), SABIR (the patient one), QAEEM (the steadfast one) and MUSADDIQ (the ratifier).

Another unique thing about Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) is that the Shia sect of Islam is named after him. Thus when people talk of the ‘madhhab’ of Abu Hanifa, of Ahmed Ibn Hanbal, of Malik Ibn Anas, of Imam Shafi, they talk of the madh’hab of Ahlul-Bayt as madhhab Jafari.

HIS PARENTS AND GRANDPARENTS

His father was Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.).

His mother was Fatima (popular by the name of Umm Farwa). She was a woman of many merits. Imam Sadiq (a.s.) had high regards for her; so much so that he used to quote her as source of “hadith” from the Fifth Imam. One such hadith is recorded by Kulayni in *USUL AL-KAFI*:

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) reports that his father told Umm Farwa: “O Umm Farwa, I pray to Allah for the sinners among the Shias, day and night, a thousand times; for we, Imams, endure the misfortunes that happen in the light of what we know of the coming reward, whereas they suffer without such knowledge.”

This does not come, as a surprise, knowing the fact that Umm Farwa’s father was Qasim, the son of Muhammad Bin Abu Baqr. Qasim was a very pious person and a devout student of Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.). He was regarded amongst the seven top most jurists of Medina during his times.

Qasim’s father was Muhammad whose mother was Asma Binti

Umays and whose father was Abu Bakr, the first Caliph from Saqifah. Asma Binti Umays had been previously married to Jafar Bin Abu Talib, who was martyred at Mutah. She was then married to Abu Bakr after whose death she married Imam Ali (a.s.). Imam Ali loved Muhammad Bin Abu Bakr whom he addressed as his own son.

Qasim married his cousin, Asma, the daughter of Abdul Rahman Bin Abu Bakr. From this marriage was born Umm Farwa.

HIS BIRTH

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) was born on Friday, 17th of Rabi-ul-Ula 83 AH (702 AD) in Medina. Remember: this is also the birth anniversary of our Prophet (s.a.w.w.). Imam Ali Bin Husayn (a.s.), his paternal grandfather, was still alive at his birth. As a matter of fact, he lived with his grandfather for twelve years when the latter passed away on 25th Muharram 95 AH.

It is reported that when Imam Sadiq (a.s.) was still in his mother's womb, he used to communicate with her. According to Allama Majlisi, when Imam Sadiq (a.s.) was born, he bowed down and supported himself on the ground. Then he looked at the sky and read the "Kalima" and called out the names of all Imams before him. His father read "Adhan" in his right ear, and "Iqamah" in his left ear. Like the previous five Imams who came before him, he was born clean and circumcised. Between his shoulders, was the seal of "Imamat".

EARLY CHILDHOOD

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) had the opportunity of spending 35 years of his life with his father, Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.). He was an active participant of the school that his father was running both in the mosque of the Prophet (s.a.w.w.), and in his own house in Medina. Imam Baqir (a.s.) would, time and again, involve Imam Sadiq (a.s.) to conduct classes so that the students could appreciate the young

Imam's knowledge and skills as an educator, and their future Imam.

Instances are quoted by Shaykh Mufid in his *AL-IRSHAD* when Imam Baqir (a.s.) would introduce Imam Sadiq (a.s.) as his successor:

- A man by the name of Abu Al-Sabbah Al-Kinani reports that once when he and others were in the presence of Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.), the Imam looked at his son, Imam Sadiq (a.s.) and said, "Do you see that man? He is one of those of whom the All Mighty and High has said: 'We wish to grant a favor to those who have been humiliated in the land and we will make them Imams and inheritors. (Ch.28, v.5)'"
- Jabir Bin Yazid Al-Jufi, who was a famous companion of the Fifth and the Sixth Imams, reports that once Imam Baqir (a.s.) was asked about the one who would take over from him as the Imam of the time. He tapped Imam Sadiq (a.s.) with his hand and said, "By Allah, this man from the family of Muhammad (s.a.w.w.) will take charge."

LIFE WITH HIS FATHER

Not only was Imam Sadiq (a.s.) his father's right-hand person in conducting classes in his father's madressa, he was also his father's companion on his journey abroad. Imam Sadiq (a.s.) reports one such journey to Damascus.

Hisham, son of Abdul Malik, son of Marwan, the Umayyad Caliph, summoned Imam Baqir (a.s.) to Damascus with the sole aim of rebuking and then imprisoning him for no other reason than that Hisham was afraid that the Imam would overthrow him. Details about this journey and the Imam's miracles in the court of Hisham have been described in the Unit covering the life of Imam Baqir (a.s.). At this juncture, we need to note that Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.), too, was present and his father took this opportunity to introduce his son to the rest of the world. Imam Sadiq (a.s.) was

the main witness in the reporting of the miracles that his father showed, with the permission and help from Allah, the Almighty.

THE EFFECT OF IMAM BAQIR'S TEACHING ON IMAM SADIQ (A.S.)

Admittedly, the divinely appointed Imams get their knowledge from Allah, the Almighty and do not learn anything from any human being. Nonetheless, an Imam does learn from his father being an Imam preceding him. By this token, Imam Sadiq (a.s.) learnt a lot of things from his grandfather, Ali Bin Husayn (a.s.) and his father, Muhammad Bin Ali (a.s.).

First and foremost, the institution of learning in Medina that Imam Sadiq (a.s.) developed so successfully was initially started by Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) and Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.). These two Imams, not only did they lay the foundation of a unique center of learning, but also defined the educational course that this institute would take. Also, they produced a comprehensive and concrete course-work, which was so extensive, so diverse, and so challenging that it came to attract students from all walks of life from such distant places as Iraq, Egypt and Persia.

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.), as a young boy, grew-up in this institute as a scholar and teacher. On the passing away of his father, he took over and was in full command as dean and manager of this institute. He then developed this educational structure into an equivalent of a modern time university, with the curriculum including Science of the Quran, 'Tafseer' (Elegies), 'Fiqh' (Jurisprudence), 'Seerah' (Biography of the Prophet) Philosophy, 'Irfan' (Gnostics), Grammar, Literature, and Chemistry, to mention but a few branches of knowledge.

PASSING AWAY OF IMAM BAQIR (A.S.): IMAM SADIQ (A.S.) AS IMAM OF HIS TIMES

Kulayni writes in his *AL-KAFI* that Imam Sadiq (a.s.) is reported

to have said that when his father, Imam Baqir (a.s.), was about to pass away from this world, he said, “Jafar, I command you to treat my followers well.” Imam Sadiq replied, “May I be at your ransom. By Allah, I will teach them knowledge so well that they will become self-sufficient.”

Imam Baqir (a.s.) then asked for witnesses to be brought. Four witnesses from the clan of Quraish were brought in his presence. The Imam then dictated his testimony, naming Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.), as his trustee and successor. He then let the witnesses depart.

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) inquired from his father as to why he had called the witnesses. Imam Baqir (a.s.) replied that he did so, so as to silence those who could claim later on that Imam Baqir (a.s.) had left no successor.

CHAPTER 2

IMAM JAFAR SADIQ (A.S.): LIFE AFTER MARTYDOM OF HIS FATHER

INTRODUCTION

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) took over as the Imam of the time from his father in 114 AH when Hisham Bin Abdul Malik was the Caliph. Unlike most of his predecessors, who had ruled for short times and therefore did not have enough time to obstruct the progress of Islamic Education propagated by Imam Baqir and Imam Sadiq (a.s.), Hisham ruled for 22 years. He became a real threat to Islam, especially in the later years of his life. Imam Sadiq (a.s.) therefore had to do two things. First and foremost, he had to protect all the educational progress that his grandfather, his father and he himself had achieved up to this point in time. Second, he had to play down his role as the champion of Islamic learning and wait for another opportunity to arise, and then to continue his work from where he had left it. In this chapter, we shall see how he succeeded in accomplishing these two goals.

HIS RESPONSIBILITIES AS THE IMAM OF THE TIME

Remember that when Imam Baqir (a.s.) was about to depart from this world, he had asked Imam Sadiq (a.s.) to be fully responsible for the ‘ummah’. Imam Sadiq (a.s.) had promised to do just that, but to do so through the process of education and learning. This is the key to understand the Imam’s reaction to various situations that arose during twenty four years of his Imamat.

Imam (a.s.) had two options to choose from: Either involve himself in political activities and bring down the oppressive rulership of the Umayyad, or seek reform through the process of education. At that time, the political option appeared to be the better of the two choices. However, if we look at the events now, we can realize that the second option was, indeed, the best option, and we can

appreciate Imam Sadiq's wisdom and deep foresight in choosing this option to bring about necessary changes in the society.

Before we examine Imam Sadiq's approach, let us look at the reasons which made people at that time, think that the political choice was the only choice available.

The Umayyad rulers were cruel, carefree and completely incapable of ruling effectively. They did not care for Islam or the Muslims. To meet their own ever rising expenses, the rulers overburdened their subjects with taxation, and exhausted resources, with the result that there were dissatisfaction and uprising throughout the empire. By putting down these uprisings ruthlessly, the Umayyad rulers only made themselves more unpopular. Not only did they weaken themselves, but also paved way for further uprisings. Syed Ameer Ali described this situation thus: "The flower of the nation had perished either in the civil wars or under the suspicious policy of a jealous court. The blind confidence reposed by the last sovereign in his ministers had thrown the government in the hands of incomplete and self-seeking functionaries whose incapacity and misrule alienated the people. Hisham was little fitted by character or disposition to cope with difficulties, which now beset the empire. The frequent change of governors led to disastrous consequences." (*A SHORT HISTORY OF THE SARACENS*).

Then, it was clear that time was ripe for those with leadership abilities and some recognition in Muslim society to organize themselves to topple the Umayyad dynasty. Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.), in the eyes of his contemporaries, was the ideal person for this task. However, Imam (a.s.) had a different opinion. When proposals came to him to do so, he flatly refused to get himself involved politically. How right the Imam was, we shall see in the course of this Chapter.

Whereas Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) refused to seize this opportunity,

on the contrary, there were others who were tempted to run after it. They went after it and the result was disaster and destruction for them. This subject will be discussed elaborately in Chapter 3 and 4. At this juncture, we shall describe briefly the merits of Imam Jafar Sadiq's (a.s.) approach and its impact on the welfare of humanity in general and Muslims in particular.

THE STRATEGY OF REFORMING THE CORRUPT SOCIETY THROUGH THE PROCESS OF EDUCATION AND LEARNING

Zaid, Imam Muhammad Baqir's step-brother, and later on his son, Yahya, decided to take the political choice. Similarly, later on, Imam Hasan's grandson Abdullah Mahaz and his two sons Muhammad (popularly known as "Nafs-e-Zakiyya" - the pure soul) and Ibrahim, too, decided to get involved politically to counteract the Umayyad oppression. The outcome of their approach will be discussed in Chapters 3 and 4.

The grandchildren of Abbas, the Prophet's uncle, by the name of Abu Abbas (later on came to be known as Saffah "The blood-shedder") and Abu Jafar (later on came to be known as Mansoor—"the victorious"), too, chose to agitate against the Umayyad rulers. The outcome of their struggle will be assessed in Chapters 3 and 4. The activity of these agitators was mostly in Iraq, Persia and to some extent, in the Peninsular of Arabia.

Similar agitations were also brewing in Syria, Africa, Spain, and in those parts of Central Asia and Europe where the Umayyad rulership had extended.

Hisham Bin Abdul Malik Bin Marwan had considered these threats more serious than Imam Sadiq's education program in Medina. He therefore put to full use his energies and resources to suppress these agitators so as to save his throne. Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) took this opportunity to carry out his mission that previously had been put to a temporary halt by Hisham.

IMAM SADIQ'S "REVOLUTION" THROUGH EDUCATION

After a short interruption, Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) resumed his teaching program, knowing that it was now safe to do so. Whereas Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) and Imam Baqir (a.s.) had fully established the center of learning, Imam Sadiq (a.s.) went one step ahead; he helped it to attain a status similar to a modern university.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE CENTER OF LEARNING TO HAVE THE STATUS OF A MODERN-TYPE UNIVERSITY

The most outstanding characteristics of a university are:-

- It is a place of advanced learning.
- It is an institute that disseminates both pure and applied knowledge on a wide range of disciplines.
- The teachers of this institute are highly talented with proven experience in their respective fields of learning.
- It has a very rich source of information to facilitate independent research for those students wishing to specialize in a branch of knowledge that interests them most.
- The teaching method employed in this institute has basically two features: lectures given to a full class and tutorials (or seminars) where the classes are smaller in size and there is an informal interaction between the tutor and the students.

A university that develops on these principles builds its reputation, which is reflected through the high quality of students that it produces, and the volume of information that it generates.

The public, both national and international, then gives recognition to such an institution. The ultimate result is seekers of knowledge throughout the civilized world flock around such an institution.

Imam Jafar Sadiq's institution had all these qualities as revealed by the curriculum as well as the methodology that had been adopted by Imam (a.s.).

THE CURRICULUM OF THE INSTITUTE

The core of the curriculum was to teach correct Islamic knowledge as contained in the Holy Quran and explained by the Prophet (s.a.w.w.) and the divinely appointed Imams from the progeny of the Prophet - the AHLUL-BAYT. The focus was on *TAFSEER* or that science of the Quran that dealt, in detail, with such issues as the surface and the underlying meaning of the various verses, the circumstances under which each verse was revealed and the correct interpretation of the commands and lessons of the Quran.

FIQH (Islamic jurisprudence or law) was another subject that was given special attention. Theoretic as well as practical problems were addressed and their solutions worked out during the *FIQH* session.

The science of '*HADITH*' had also an important position in the classes of Imam Sadiq (a.s.). A very important concept was explained: the concept of the Golden Chain of Narration. The essence of this concept was any tradition that an Imam from Ahlul-Bayt mentions has a continuous chain of narrators (all being Imams) that links it to the Prophet (s.a.w.w.) whose source is the Angel Gabriel whose source is Allah, the Almighty Himself. In an age when false "hadith" were being fabricated and associated with the Prophet (s.a.w.w.), Imam (a.s.) taught his students a golden yardstick to use in differentiating a true hadith from a false one. He said any hadith that contradicts any verse of the Quran is a false one and has no merit. Moreover, to counter the false hadith, Imam (a.s.) taught the correct but hitherto unknown hadith in thousands on various subjects, pertaining to the basics of faith, ethics, and all other matters of life and death. He encouraged his students not only to memorize these hadiths, but record them in writing so as to avert the problem of misrepresentation in future. He left the task of classification of these hadith to his graduates.

The Imam also taught *ISLAMIC HISTORY* with the focus on the biography of the Prophet (s.a.w.w.) - the '*SEERAH*'. He provided

a complete and correct picture of the life of the Prophet (s.a.w.w.) to counteract the falsified versions that was the work of those false scholars paid to do so by the Umayyad rulers.

Apart from these broad 'core' subjects, students with special aptitudes and interests, were encouraged to develop skills at such specialized disciplines as the Arabic Language and Literature, Philosophy, Logic and Physical Science like Chemistry and Biology.

Capable students were encouraged to carry out their research under the tutelage of the Imam himself, and to write books for future usage. These students were also encouraged to become teachers who could then go out far and wide in the world to preach the true message of Islam. There were five students whom the Imam trusted most and singled them out to be the future teachers in the event that when the Imam was gone and the institute closed by the rulers; these students were Barid Bin Muawiyah, Abu Basir, Layth Bin Murad, Zararah Bin Ain, and Muhammad bin Muslim. Imam (a.s.) considered them as "trustees of Allah" for their administration of the permissible (halal) and the forbidden (haram) in religion.

As a result of this encouragement, several thousand books were written by the students of the Institute. Out of these, 400 books were on fundamentals of faith (FURUU). After the passing away of the Imam (a.s.) and when his university was closed down by the Abbasid ruler Mansoor, the Shia came to depend on these books heavily. Later on, scholars prepared digests and summaries of these books for the use of the followers of the "madhhab of Ahlul-Bayt." Four of these books became the 'core' books and continue to be so. These books are:

1. *AL-KAFI* - authored by Kulaini
2. *AL-TAHDHIB* - authored by Tusi
3. *AL-ISTIBSAR* - authored by Tusi
4. *MAN LA YAHDHARAH AL-FAQIH* authored by Shaykh Suddooq.

TEACHING METHODS OF THE INSTITUTE

The main 'auditorium' - if you thus want to call the classroom of Imam Sadiq (a.s.) - was the mosque of the Prophet (s.a.w.w.) in Medina. This is where the Imam (a.s.) would conduct his classes, in the morning, in the afternoon and at night. Breaks were provided only at the times of daily prayers. Formal lectures were given by the Imam (a.s.) followed by brief periods of question-answer sessions.

Special tutorials were given in the mosque at times of break, or in the house of the Imam (a.s.). Fazl Bin Omar, who learnt from the Imam (a.s.) Biology and several related disciplines as Zoology and Botany, did so at dawn after the Fajr prayers. In the later years of his life, the Imam (a.s.) was helped in running these classes by his son, Imam Musa Kadhim (a.s.). Imam also trained his wife, Hamida Barbaria, to deal with issues related with women. There came a time when Imam (a.s.) would refer women to Hamida to have her answer their questions.

Imam also encouraged some of his extraordinary students to work as his representatives both in Medina and elsewhere. The names of these students were mentioned before.

THE EFFECT OF IMAM'S 'REVOLUTION' THROUGH LEARNING

Diverse and very useful knowledge relating to this world and the hereafter became available to mankind in general and Muslims in particular. According to Al-Mufid and Tibrisi, as many as 4000 students graduated from Imam Sadiq's institute of learning in Medina. The diversity of the knowledge that Imam helped to generate is reflected by 4 main factors;

- (i) The volume of written information that was produced by the institute
- (ii) The variety of disciplines that were covered in these written documents
- (iii) The intellectual levels of the students who attended and graduated from the institute

- (iv) The geographical areas, which were represented in this endeavor to create and disseminate knowledge.

i) Volume of Information Produced by the Institute

Books were written in thousands by the graduates of the institute of which 400 were on USOOL alone. These books existed for many centuries and were used as sources of information and basis of authority by many later day Muslim scholars. Details on these documents will be provided when we examine the famous graduates of the institute. Suffice it to mention here that Jabbir Ibn Hayyan, who was a prominent student of Imam Sadiq (a.s.), collected 500 treatises of the teachings of Imam Sadiq (a.s.). Ibn Hajar Makki summarizes the effect of the flood of information flowing from the university of Imam Sadiq (a.s.) in these words: "...so many issues of learning have been transmitted from Hazrat Jafar Bin Muhammad, that they are known from city to city and hamlet to hamlet. Great leaders of learning like Yahya Bin Sadeed, Ibn Jareeh, Malik, Sufyan, Abu Hanifa... have given narration from him" (SAWAEQA AL MUHRIKA).

ii) Variety of Subjects Covered by the Curriculum

Professor of Literature in the University of Cairo, Muhammad Sadiq Nashaata, summarizes this aspect so well that his words are reproduced *verbatim*; the professor says: "The house of Hazrat Jafar Bin Muhammad (a.s.) has a status of a complete university where great scholars of traditions, exegesis, philosophy and polemics gathered together. Sometimes two thousand scholars and sometimes four thousand scholars at a time attended the lectures. His pupils have collected his teaching in the form of books which have acquired the status of an Encyclopedia." (quoted from *STATUS OF IMAM SADIQ (a.s.)*, Peermahomed Trust Publication).

ii) The Intellectual Level of Students who Attended the Institute

Four thousand graduates from this institute have been recorded

by their names in the annals of history. We shall reproduce here under a few of these students names and narrate briefly their contribution to learning since this will give an indication as to the quality of teaching they went through under the tutelage of Imam Sadiq (a.s.).

NUMAN BIN THABIT (Popularly known as Imam Abu Hanifa): He was a full time student of Imam (a.s.) at Medina for two years. Apart from that, he attended Imam's classes in Kufa for a short time and would seek the Imam's guidance from time to time. He states that he would have been ruined if he had not been the student of Imam Sadiq (a.s.) for those two years. This is confirmed by no other person than Muhadis Dehlavi in his *TAUFA ITHNA ASHARI*.

IMAM MALIK BIN ANAS:

He, too, was the student of Imam Sadiq (a.s.). The author of *TAHZEEB* quotes Imam Malik to have complemented Imam Sadiq (a.s.) in these words: "In point of learning, a better man has not been seen by eyes, or heard by ears or conceived by imagination."

SHOABA BIN HAJJAJ:

He is regarded as a prominent transmitter of traditions which appear in the *SEHAH*. Imam Shafi complements him saying that if it had not been for SHOABA, there would have been no knowledge of traditions in Iraq. Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal regards him as the embodiment of the Muslim Ummah.

HAFS BIN GHIYAS:

Because of his knowledge, he rose to the position of the Qazi (Chief Justice) in Baghdad and Kufa. He could quote three to four thousand traditions that he had heard and committed to memory from his student days in the institute of Imam Sadiq (a.s.).

IBRAHIM BIN MUHAMMAD MADANI:

He was an author of several books from which Imam Shafi copied several narrations since the latter was Ibrahim's student.

IBRAHIM BIN SAAD ZOHRI:

He later became a teacher of Ahmad Bin Hanbal, who started his own madhhab, the followers of which came to be known as Hanbalis.

SAEED BIN MUSLIMAH:

He became the teacher of Imam Shafi, the founder of the Shafi school of thought.

ABDUL MALEK BIN AAYUN:

He was an expert in astronomy.

ISHAQ BIN AMMAR:

He specialized in the Biography of the Prophet, and his work is regarded as highly reliable by the scholars of biography.

MUHAMMAD BIN MUSLIM:

He obtained sixteen thousand traditions from Imam Sadiq (a.s.). There were times when Imam Abu Hanifa would send his students to seek solutions of problems from Muhammad; such a great authority he was!

JABIR BIN HAYYAN AL-AZADI:

In the West he is known as GEBER. Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) taught him Chemistry - the discipline in which he is believed to have written at least 100 books of which 22 are still existing. His published works include: *KITAB AL-REHMAN* (Book of Mercy) *KITAB AL-TAJMI* (Book of concentration), *AL ZILAK AL-SHARKI* (Book of Eastern Mercury, Book of the Kingdom, Book of Balances).

His books on Chemistry have been translated into several European languages, and have influenced tremendously the development of modern Chemistry. The *Encyclopedia Speculum Naturale* describes Jabir in these words "The influence of GABER is very pronounced." Max Meyerhof has this to say about Jabir: "His influence may be

traced throughout the whole historic course of European alchemy and Chemistry.” Later chemical scientists such as Al-Tugharia and Abu Al-Qasim Al-Iraqi, who flourished during the 12th and 13th centuries respectively, regarded Jabir as “Master”.

Whereas the scholars of the world regard Jabir as their “Master”, he regards Imam Sadiq (a.s.) as the best teacher that he has ever had! He associated the cause of his success to Imam Sadiq (a.s.) referring to him as, “My spiritual guide and master, Jafar Ibn Muhammad.”

iv) The Geographic Areas from where the Students Came

The four thousand registered students and the unknown thousand of the non-registered students, did not all belong to Medina alone. The fame of the institute of Imam Sadiq (a.s.) had spread so far and wide that students of different inclinations, tastes and interests from all over the known world began to converge in Medina. Eager learners came from Kufa, Basra, Wasit (In Iraq); from Egypt, Persia, Berber Africa and Spain. All the major Arabian tribes sent their learners to Imam Sadiq (a.s.). It is reported that members from the tribes of Bani Asad, Makharah Tay, Saleem, Qhattan, Gaffar, Khazaah, Khashaam, Makhozoom, Bani Zabab and the Quraysh were all represented in the institute in Medina.

In his book *the History of Arabs*, Syed Ameer Ali described this aspect of the institute in these words: “...the chief leader of this movement of learning was Hazrat Imam Sadiq (a.s.). He had an extensive vision, deep insight and perfect mastery of every branch of knowledge... His assembly of learning and knowledge was not only attended by those who later became Imams of religious school but also by great personalities from all parts of the world, who graduated there to avail of his teachings.”

THE INFLUENCE OF THIS LEARNING WAS WIDE-SPREAD OWING TO THE EXTENSIVE SERVICES OF THE INSTITUTION

During his visit to KUFA, BAGHDAD and KARBALA, Imam

(a.s.) took upon himself to run educational courses at formal and informal levels at his place of abode. Eager learners from those towns and the surrounding areas, would attend the Imam's classes and acquire knowledge in those fields, which were of interest to them.

Over and above that, the Imam (a.s.) would encourage some of his students to act as his representatives in those places like Qum where the Imam did not have the opportunity to visit. Through this system of transmission of information through such students as MUHAMMAD BIN MUSLIM AND ABU BASIR AL ASADI, Imam's influence extended to such areas as Egypt, Iraq, Syria, and Persia.

Through this means, the process of learning was dispersed and its benefits reaped not only by Muslims and believers alone, but also by humanity at large. Through the process of dialogue and discussion, several non-believers were converted and became believers.

It is interesting to note that Caliph Saffah and then, Mansoor arranged for the Imam to undertake these foreign visits with the intention of harming him. However, the Imam (a.s.) turned these visits into teaching experiences and conveyed the true message of Islam to those distant places.

MARTYRDOM OF IMAM HUSAYN (A.S.)

AS PART OF THE CURRICULUM OF THE INSTITUTE

The importance of Martyrdom of Imam Husayn (a.s.) was explained and Muslims were trained to appreciate and uphold the principles and ideals for which Imam Husayn (a.s.) gave his life. In his *AZA-AL-HUSAYN PAR TARIKH TABSERA*, Maulana Syed Ali Naqi narrates several methods which the Imam used to achieve those goals. Some of the methods are as follows:

1. He encouraged formal and frequent gathering to remember the martyrdom of Imam Husayn (a.s.) and the other martyrs

of Karbala. This was particularly so in the month of Muharram when he would hold such gatherings in his own home and invite such famous poets as Abu Ammar Nashd to recite elegies and eulogies on the martyrs of Karbala. Abu Ammar himself reports that on one occasion the Imam (a.s.) asked him to recite a number of such elegies up to the time when the weeping and wailing would be heard from the house of the Imam (a.s.)

Zaid Shilam reports that once when he was in Kufa in presence of Imam Sadiq (a.s.), when a poet by the name of Jafar Bin Iffan came to see the Imam (a.s.). After a brief conversation, the Imam (a.s.) requested Bin Iffan to recite elegies on Imam Husayn (a.s.). Bin Iffan complied. The effect of these elegies was such that the Imam (a.s.) began to weep and then he thanked Bin Iffan saying, "Do not think that only this gathering here is listening to your elegies. As a matter of fact, Allah's angels are present here and are mourning with us. May Allah bless you for your elegies. Allah will reward you with Paradise for composing these verses".

The Imam once asked Abdullah Bin Fazl: "Do you ever organize gatherings and recall events that are based on the martyrdom of Imam Husayn (a.s.)?"

Bin Fazl replied that, indeed, he did.

Imam observed "I very much approve of such Majalis."

According to Maulana Ali Naqi, lexically 'MAJLIS' means any session but the Imam (a.s.) used it as proper noun to mean exclusively those gatherings for the remembrance of the martyrs of Karbala.

2. He stressed on the importance of visiting the grave-site of Imam Husayn in Karbala. He is the only Imam, after Imam

Zainul Abideen (a.s.), to have had an opportunity of visiting the grave-site of Imam Husayn (a.s.) in Karbala. As a matter of fact, he was able to visit Karbala on more than one occasion. His first chance came when Saffah, the first Caliph from the House of Abbas invited the Imam (a.s.) to Kufa. The Imam (a.s.) broke his journey at Quria Ghazaria where he took a bath in the River Euphrates (The “FURAT”) and then walked to the gravesite of Imam Husayn (a.s.), and recited the salutation which is famous by the name “ZIYARAT WARITH” which now the believers recite at least every week on Thursday night.

After this occasion, every time the Imam (a.s.) was called to Iraq, he would make a point to visit the grave site of Imam Husayn (a.s.).

He also encouraged people to visit the shrine of Imam Husayn (a.s.), by stressing the great importance of such visits. To give you an idea of this fact, we shall narrate one of the traditions from Imam Sadiq (a.s.) regarding the importance of visiting the shrines of the martyrs of Karbala.

Kulaini and Sayyid Bin Taoos quote Muawiya Bin Wahhab, one of the most famous companions of Imam Sadiq (a.s.), saying that once he visited the Imam (a.s.) and found him busy praying. When the Imam finished his prayers, he prostrated in a “sajdah” and requested Allah to reward handsomely, and forgives the sins of those who left their homes and visited the shrine of Imam Husayn (a.s.). When the Imam finished his prayers, Bin Wahhab expressed his surprise that there was so much reward here and hereafter for those who ventured to visit the shrine of Imam Husayn (a.s.). Elaborating on the importance of visiting the grave-site of Imam Husayn (a.s.), Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said, “Oh the son of Wahhab! Don’t you wish to be those considered by Allah as among the beneficiaries of the supplication of the Prophet (s.a.w.w.), of Ali Ibn Abi Talib, of Fatima

(s.a.) and we, the Imams from the progeny of the Prophet (s.a.w.w.)? Don't you wish to be amongst those who shake hands with angels? Don't you want to be considered as one of those who shall come on the Day of Judgment free from all sins? Don't you want to be one of those who shall be shaking hands with the Prophet (s.a.w.w.) on the Day of Judgment?"

By asking these questions, the Imam (a.s.) was stressing the importance of visiting the grave-site of the martyrs of Karbala generally, and that of Imam Husayn (a.s.) in particular.

CHAPTER 3

MAJOR HISTORIC EVENTS DURING THE TIMES OF IMAM JAFAR SADIQ (A.S.)

INTRODUCTION

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) was born in the reign of Abdul Malik Bin Marwan and was martyred in the times of Mansoor Dawanaqi. He therefore witnessed the reign of ten rulers from the Umayyads and two from the Abbasids. Imam Sadiq (a.s.) took over as the Imam of his times from his father during the reign of Hisham Bin Abdul Malik.

To fully comprehend the problems and the prospects that lay in the way of Imam (a.s.) in his obligations to serve mankind in general and the Muslims in particular, it is important to examine the political, economic and social climates during the kingship of these rulers, all of whom were usurpers and blood thirsty. The study of these monarchs is also important in tracing the causes of the decline and the fall of the House of Umayyads and rise of the House of Abbasids.

THE LAST FOUR CALIPHS FROM THE UMAYYADS

Hisham Bin Abdul Malik (104 AH - 123 AH)

We have briefly studied the rulership of Hisham when we were dealing with the biography of Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.). Suffice it to say that during the later years of his 19 years of reign, Hisham became extremely oppressive towards Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.), so much so that the Imam had to assume a lower profile in conducting his educational efforts.

Having ruled for 19 years, Hisham died at the age of 53 at his estate in Rusafa on the banks of River Euphrates. In his lifetime, Hisham had made an agreement with his brother that the latter's son, Walid II, would succeed Hisham. Therefore, Hisham could not change this

agreement, though he hated it, and was thus succeeded by Walid II in 123 AH.

Walid Bin Yazid Bin Abdul Malik Bin Marwan (123 AH - 126 AH)

Robert Payne, the author of *The History of Islam* recognizes Walid as the “corrupt emperor”. Syed Ameer Ali portrays him in these words: “...He waited impatiently to the death of his uncle. Immediately on receiving the news, he hurried to Damascus, and began his reign by driving out Hisham’s family from the palace. Even the funeral rites of the deceased monarch were not allowed to be performed without indecent interference”. Suyuti described him as “Libertine, a wine-drinker, and a breaker of divine commands.” Masoodi, in his *Muruju Zahab* relates an incident when Walid opened the Quran and read those verses where Allah reminds the faithful to submit to His will. Walid was enraged. He tore the Quran into pieces with his arrow shoots and composed these verses:

Do you dare to threaten me in my proud rebellion?

I am Walid - the most rebellious of Men!

O, Quran, when you appear at the Judgment Court,

Tell Allah who it was who tore you to shreds.

He organized drinking parties on the roof of the House of Allah - the KAABA. An illustration of his faithlessness is given by Syed Ameer Ali who says, “Walid II once indulged in a prank which greatly angered the religious people in the capital. He sent to the mosque, enveloped in his cloak, a beautiful lad of the harem with whom he had been entertaining himself, to preside at the Friday service in his stead.”

He continued his oppression against the household of the Prophet (s.a.w.w.). Yahya, Zaid’s son, was killed mercilessly by the orders of Walid II. Yahya’s head was cut from the body and sent to Walid II. Yahya’s death, according to Syed Ameer Ali, “...accelerated the downfall of the Umayyads.”

His immoral behavior and his cruelty towards his own kith and kin made his own people turn against him. In 126 AH, Yazid son of Walid I, son of Abdul Malik, rose against Walid II. Walid II was killed, ironically holding on to the Quran that he had insulted earlier on; his body was paraded in the city of Damascus, where hitherto he had ruled as the Caliph of the Believers! His sons were put in prison and later murdered by the orders of Ibrahim, Yazid's (III) brother.

Yazid (III) Bin Walid Bin Yazid Bin Abdul Malik Bin Marwan (126 AH - 127 AH)

Having overthrown and killed his cousin, Yazid III set to establish himself as the Caliph of the Muslims. But he ruled only for five months and died mysteriously in 127 AH. He was succeeded by his brother Ibrahim. None except the people of Damascus recognized him; and his rulership survived only for two months. Marwan Bin Muhammad, the grandson of Marwan Bin Hakam, the founder of the Marwani dynasty, rose against Ibrahim. Syed Ameer Ali describes the events of that time thus: "Damascus was now in a terrible state of anarchy and confusion, and the arrival of Marwan was welcomed by the respectable citizenry. He was immediately proclaimed Caliph..."

Marwan (II) Bin Muhammad (127 AH - 132 AH)

He was the grandson of the founder of the Hakamite dynasty, Marwan Bin Hakam. Before being Caliph, he was governor of Armenia and had shown remarkable skills at suppressing rebellions from the north. His enormous powers of endurance earned him the nickname of al-Himar, the ass, not as an insult but as an acknowledgement of his great physical strength. His life was simple and spent mostly with his soldiers. Though quite advanced in age - he was over sixty - he still possessed the physical powers found rarely in soldiers of his age. However, as Syed Ameer Ali rightly observes, much more than mere soldier's qualities were required to save the Umayyad power from destruction. His obstinacy, his

bad temper, and above all, his hatred for the Yemenites, paved his downfall.

No sooner had he taken over the Caliphate, than there were uprisings in Hems and Palestine. In Iraq, the Kharijis were rebelling against the government. Rather than focus on fixing the damages done by his predecessors, Marwan spent his time and energy putting down rebellions at Hems, Palestine, Iraq and Hijaz, thereby not only arousing more hatred in the hearts of people against the Umayyad regime, but also weakening his abilities to deal with “the enemies of the State”, in the garb of the Abbasids.

In the following Chapter, we shall look with some details those people or a group of people who constituted “the enemies of the state” and the steps that they took to benefit out of the state of anarchy that had descended upon the Umayyad rulership at the time when Marwan al-Himar had come to power.

It was at this time that in Khurasan, there was an open war declared in the name of “AHLUL-BAYT” to replace the Umayyad regime. This outcry was raised by a man by the name of Abu Muslim, who was none other than a military agent of Ibrahim Bin Muhammad Bin Ali Bin Ibn Abbas. We shall learn more about these personalities in Chapter 4.

The main motto of Abu Muslim was that the Umayyads were oppressors and usurpers. The right to rule belonged to “Ahlul-Bayt”, the immediate family of the Prophet (s.a.w.w.). Not only were the Umayyads usurpers, they were heinous as shown by the way they spilled the blood of the grandchildren of the Prophet (s.a.w.w.). They cited the examples of the martyrs of Karbala and more recent murders of Zaid Bin Ali and his son Yahya. People were urged to rise and march to overthrow the usurpers. To win the confidence of the people, the dress code used by Abu Muslim was that used to mourn the martyrs - black. The majority of the supporters of

Abu Muslim were those who were the sympathizers of the children and grandchildren of Imam Ali (a.s.); all along they were made to believe that these grandchildren of the Prophet (s.a.w.w.) would be made the rulers to replace the Umayyads. However, what many people did not realize at that time was that there was a hidden motive behind this revolution, namely that the name of Ahlul-Bayt was being used by the family of Abbas and their conspirators who were planning to take over the Caliphate for themselves when the opportune moment arrived. This selfish agenda was not known even to such a prominent member of this movement as Abu Salma about whom we shall learn in the next Chapter. As a matter of fact, it was during these crucial moments that the oath of allegiance was taken in the name of Muhammad Nafs-e-Zakiyya in Medina.

By 132 AH, Khorsan had fallen completely in the hands Abu Muslim, and his army under the command of Hasan bin Kahtaba, who, now marched into Iraq and captured Kufa.

In response to these losses, Marwan arrested Ibrahim, who was in constant touch with Abu Muslim, and got him killed. Ibrahim's brother, Abu Abbas (Saffah) and Abu Jafar (Mansoor) escaped to Kufa. They stayed there till 132 AH when Abu Abbas was declared the Caliph of the Muslims. This forced Marwan to march against the advancing force of the Abbasids, A fierce battle was fought at Zab where Marwan was defeated; he fled. Soon the entire Muslim Empire fell into the hands of the Abbasids. Marwan was caught and killed while he was still on the run. With Marwan ended the 90 years of the tyrannical rule of the House of Umayyads, and began the rulership of the tyrannical house of Abbas -the Abbasids.

THE FIRST TWO CALIPHS FROM THE HOUSE OF ABBAS

Abu Abbas (132 AH - 136 AH)

We have noted that Abu Abbas became the Caliph even before the end of the Umayyad dynasty under the last caliphate of Marwan Bin Muhammad. With the murder of Marwan, the Umayyad

Dynasty ended except in Spain where a grandson of Hisham, by the name of Abdul Rehman, continued to rule independently from the Abbasid Caliphs in Baghdad.

Abu Abbas was known for his wild temper and vengeance. He showed no mercy to his enemies. He spared the life of none who belonged to the House of Umayyads. He shed so much blood that he came to be known as the “Shedder of Blood” (Saffah). He showed no mercy even to the dead. Graves of the Umayyad Caliphs were desecrated; whatever that was left of the dead was dug out and burnt into ashes. It is said that he used to have an executioner standing next to him, ready to be ordered to execute an unsuspecting victim. Among his renowned poetry are these lines:

“Our sword are dripping with blood...

And the hands of our enemies are broken to fragments,

Like smashed ostrich eggs...

He shifted his capital from Damascus (Syria) to Hashimiya in Northern Iraq. He appointed his own relatives and close friends to the major government jobs and named his brother, Abu Jafar, as his successor. Having ruled for four years he died from small pox. Fearing that his dead body would meet the same fate as the one he meted out to his enemies, his last instructions were that his grave site be kept secret.

Abu Jafar (Al-Mansoor) (136 AH - 158 AH)

Abu Jafar succeeded his brother Abu Abbas (Saffah) as the Caliph in 136 AH. He ruled for 22 years, and was truly the founder of the House of Abbas (the Bani Abbas or the Abbasids).

He was shrewd and unscrupulous. He trusted none and would spare the life of no one whom he suspected to be a threat to his rulership. We noticed how he arranged the killing of his loyal supporters such as Abu Muslim. He got murdered his own uncle, Abdullah Bin Abbas, who was one of the persons who fought hard

against the Umayyads. Not trusting the people of Kufa, he shifted his capital from Hashimia, to a new capital that he built himself at what is now known as Baghdad. It is said that he modeled Baghdad on the description of the Paradise as described in the Quran. According to the historian Tabari, it cost the Treasury 4,800,033 Dirhams, a colossal sum of money in those days, to build Baghdad.

Though Abu Jafar named himself “Mansoor” - the victorious - historians know him as Mansoor “Dawanaqi” - Mansoor “the father of the farthings”! This is because he was very stingy when it came to spend money. Tabari described one such incident in his *Tarikh - Al Rasul wal Mulak*. The governor of Barasama had finished his tenure in office but Mansoor did not want to reward him anything so he used an excuse that the governor had misappropriated funds while in office. The governor, in his defense, argued and swore in the name of Allah that he had on him only one dirham which he had kept to pay his passage to his home. Mansoor responded: “I do not doubt that you are hiding the truth. Give us our dirham!” Tabari concludes, “Mansoor only treated him harshly in order not to give him anything.” However, when it came to his own relatives, Mansoor was very generous. According to Tabari, in one day Mansoor distributed to a group of his family ten million dirhams, and gave one of his uncles alone one million dinars. Tabari says: “We do not know of any Caliph after him who conferred that on a single person.” Some of his cousins such as Suleman, Isa, Saleh and Ismail (sons of Ali Bin Abdullah Bin Abbas) were each given a salary of a million dinar. By the same token, he treated himself with regal indulgence. Tabari again tell us that Mansoor had got into a written contract with his first wife, Umm Musa, that he would not have in his ‘haram’ any other women in her lifetime. When Umm Musa died, Mansoor spent that night in company of one hundred virgins!

Shamelessly, he praised those rulers from the Umayyad who had

committed acts of crime against Muslims. For example, he spoke highly of Hajjaj Bin Yusuf, who was responsible for spilling the blood of thousands of Muslims. Tabari tells us that when one of Mansoor's courtiers complained saying, "... I did not think that I would like to see the day when al-Hajjaj would be discussed in your house...", Monsoor replied, "Why do you disapprove of that? He was a man whom people trusted with power, and he served them well. I would be happy, by God, if I could find a man like Hajjaj so that I could hand over my responsibilities to him and settle him in one of the two Harems (Mecca and Medina)..."

You can now imagine how hard it must have been for Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) to have served the Muslim community during the reign of this tyrant. As a matter of fact, Mansoor was after Imam (a.s.) and had him called to Iraq several times with the main object of killing him. It was Allah's protection exclusively that protected the Imam (a.s.).

A man by the name of Muhammad Bin Abdullah Iskandari reports: "One day I went to meet Mansoor and found him worried and sad. I asked for the reason. Mansoor told me that whereas he had succeeded in killing hundreds of the members from the progeny of the Prophet, he still had not been able to kill the head of the house, meaning Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.)". Muhammad inquired as to why would Mansoor want to kill the Imam who was the best person of the times. Mansoor acknowledged Imam's greatness and innocence. Nevertheless, he regarded Imam (a.s.) as the main cause of his worries. Mansoor then sent for the Imam (a.s.) and instructed his executioner to wait for instructions to behead the Imam (a.s.). However, when the Imam (a.s.) came to Mansoor, the latter's entire attitude changed. He showed excessive respect towards the Imam (a.s.) and expressed apologies for disturbing the Imam (a.s.) at this tune of the night. He asked the Imam (a.s.) if he needed anything from him. The Imam (a.s.) replied that the best things that Mansoor could do for him was to leave him alone. This Mansoor promised to do and he let the Imam (a.s.) go home.

The narrator says that after the Imam's departure, he asked Mansoor as to why he had spared the Imam's life though he had called the Imam (a.s.) for no other reason than to kill him.

Mansoor explained that with the Imam (a.s.), appeared four huge serpents, which warned Mansoor that should he do any harm to the Imam (a.s.), the serpents would devour him. Fearing for his own life, Mansoor let the Imam (a.s.) go unharmed.

Mansoor made several such efforts to harm the Imam (a.s.) but he failed. Finally, he got the Imam (a.s.) poisoned in Medina through the governor of Medina. Imam (a.s.) passed away in 148 AH at the age of 65 years. As soon as the news of the martyrdom of Imam Sadiq (a.s.) reached Baghdad, Mansoor wrote to his governor in Medina to find out those whom the Imam (a.s.) had named as his trustees and behead them immediately. Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) had foreseen that a situation like this would arise; he therefore took a precautionary step to save his successor, Imam Musa Kadhim (a.s.) by naming Mansoor and the governor of Medina as two of his five trustees. The other three trustees being Hamida (Imam's wife), Abdullah Aftah and Imam Musa Kadhim (a.s.). Therefore, Mansoor's instructions could not be implemented.

After Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) Mansoor ruled yet for another ten years. He died a station or two from Mecca on 6th Zilhajj 158 AH, on his way to perform pilgrimage of the "House of Allah." He was succeeded by his son Mahdi about whom we shall learn when we discuss the Biography of Imam Musa Kadhim (a.s.).

CHAPTER 4

MAJOR HISTORIC EVENTS DURING THE LIFE-TIME OF IMAM JAFAR BIN MUHAMMAD AL-SADIQ (A.S.) AND HIS NON-POLITICAL STAND

INTRODUCTION

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) was that Imam from the progeny of the Prophet (s.a.w.w.) that saw the rulership of the Umayyads and the Abbasids at their peak and at the lowest point of their powers. Whereas he lived through the entire rulership of Hisham that stretched for nineteen long years, he also saw the rise of Mansoor Dawanaqi from being a fugitive to being one of the strongest rulers of the world of that time.

Several “opportunities” became available at this time to the Imam (a.s.). In this chapter we shall closely look at these opportunities and examine why the Imam (a.s.) chose some and rejected others.

OPPORTUNITIES

Despite the lengthy and somewhat “successful” rulership of Hisham, it was clear that the Umayyad rein was coming to an end. This is because the Umayyad rulers had proved to be totally ineffective, tyrannical and unfit to rule. People were rising against the cruel government through out the Empire. There were uprisings in Khurasan, Central Asia, Southern Arabia, Spain and North Africa. These revolts were crushed but at a high price. Not only did they drain the Treasury, but also made the suffering mass more determined to fight for their freedom against the tyrant Umayyads. On the other hand, the Umayyad rulers imposed heavy taxes on people so as to fill the state’s ever-empty treasury. A situation was being created for people to be more and more pushed towards a point of overthrowing the Government.

This constant “war” between the government and the people created an opportunity. A strong person who could organize the people and provide them with leadership stood a good chance of replacing the Umayyad rulership. Both Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) and Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) saw this opportunity but refused to go after it for reasons which we shall see in the course of this Chapter. Besides these two Imams, there were others, too, who saw this plump opportunity of going after the seat of power. At this juncture, we shall briefly relate about those others who went to exploit this opportunity and the fate which befell them in pursuit of this option.

1. Zaid, son of Ali bin Husayn (a.s.)

Zaid, the son of Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.), was one such a person who thought it was time for him to rise against the Umayyads and their repressive rule. Zaid was a pious person who spent his nights in prayers and his days fasting. He went to the court of Hisham to advise him to end cruelty toward Muslims. Hisham treated him with insults, abusing Imam Baqir (a.s.) and the members of the Prophet’s family in general. Zaid could not bear these insults. He went to Kufa and raised an army to overthrow Hisham.

Hisham sent his army under the commandership of Yusuf Bin Umar Saqafi. In 122 AH after fighting bravely, Zaid was martyred. His uprising failed. He was buried secretly but Hisham found his burial place and had the body of Zaid dug from the grave and placed on the cross. Later on, his body was burnt and ashes thrown in the River Euphrates.

Zaid’s son, Yahya, rose again in 125 AH; but he too, was defeated, killed and his body treated with humiliation by the orders of Walid II, the successor of Hisham.

2. Muhammad Bin Abdullah Bin Hasan Musannah Bin Hasan (a.s.)

On the death of Hisham in 125 AH, his brother Walid II, took

over as the ruler of the Muslim Empire. Syed Ameer Ali described him as “...utterly oblivious of the ordinary rules of morality and addicted to drinking...” People were convinced that it was time the rulership be returned to the members of the House of the Prophet, the Ahlul-Bayt. Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) refused to get involved in the underground movement that was getting ready to overthrow the Umayyad regime. Other members of the Bani Hashim decided to do otherwise; amongst them was Abdullah Mahaz and his children. They visited the secret meetings held in Medina where the Bani Abbasid leaders, Suffah and Mansoor, too, were present - all planning to overthrow the Umayyad. At one such meeting, Muhammad, the son of Abdullah Mahz was nominated to be the Caliph to replace the Umayyad ruler.

Muhammad was a very virtuous person, so much so that he was known as Nafs-e-Zakiyya the “pure soul”. As he was considered the head of the house of Iman Hasan (a.s.), people nominated him as their Caliph. Saffah and Mansoor were not happy about this but for the time being they kept quiet, waiting for the right time to come for them to act, and put forward their own claim to the throne.

3. Muhammad Bin Ali Bin Abdullah Bin Abbas (The Abbasids) and his sons

Muhammad was the grandson of the famous Ibn Abbas, the, companion and cousin of the Prophet (s.a.w.w.). He saw the opportunity of seizing the Caliphate for himself, using the name of the “Ahlul-Bayt” as away to gain support from the masses. The followers of Ahlul-Bayt were fooled into believing that Muhammad was fighting to return the rightful Imams to power. Little did they suspect that Muhammad had his own hidden agenda of reserving the Caliphate for himself and his children. He started his campaign against the Umayyad administration, gaining support day by day.

However, before he could succeed in his mission, he died in 125 AH. At his death bed, he appointed his sons Ibrahim, Abdullah

Abu Abbas (later on surnamed As-Saffah), and Abdullah Abu Jafar (latter surnamed Al-Mansoor) as his successors, one after the other. They continued with their mission with care and caution using the watch-word “the rights of the Ahlul-Bayt - People of the House.”

The effort of the Abbasid propaganda was helped by the unfit ruler who had succeeded Hisham: Walid II.

Walid II

Walid II, in the words of Syed Ameer Ali, was of “a fickle temperament and debased nature which often broke forth in cruel deeds.” The cruelty with which he got Yahya, the son of Zaid killed and his body hung on the cross, made him very unpopular. According to Syed Ameer Ali: “The fate of Yahya created a great sensation in Khorasan and accelerated the downfall of the Umayyads... and when Abu Muslim stood forth as the ‘Avenger of the House’ they (the people) flocked to his standard dressed in black, which here forth became the Abbasid color...”

Besides these three personalities from among Bani Hashim who had their eyes on the Caliphate, there were two other personalities who could not have a direct claim to the Caliphate but who could play the part of “King-Makers” because of their military strength and skills. These two personalities were Abu Muslim and Abu Salma.

Abu Muslim

He was native of Isphahan (Iran) and joined the services of Muhammad Bin Ali Bin Ibn Abbas. Because of his organizational skills, he was in-charge of raising the support for the Abbasid movement in Khorasan. He was very successful at his job which became easier at the death of Hisham and the coming to power of Walid II, as his already been noted.

The martyrdom of Zaid’s son, Yahya, offered Abu Muslim yet

another golden opportunity. Young Yahya's martyrdom aroused a lot of sympathy for him and anger for the Umayyads. Abu Muslim seized this opportunity and at that very moment came out in the open to oppose the Umayyad's floundering administration, capitalizing on the sympathy of the people.

Nasra, the governor of Khorasan was busy putting down other uprisings in the West, and in Yemen. His garrisons were therefore weak and defenseless. Soon he lost to Abu Muslim who was now in complete control of Merv (Iran).

Abu Salma Hafs Bin Suleiman al-Kahlal

Bakayr Bin Maham was a sympathizer of the Ahlul-Bayt and was part of the Abbasid propaganda machinery in Kufa. On his death, he appointed his son-in-law, Abu Salma Hafs, to take his place. According to Tabari, Abu Salma then traveled to Khorasan where he was welcomed and given a portion of 'Khums' collected from the Shias of Khorasan. He was in constant touch with Ibrahim Bin Al-Abbas who was in Syria. His designation was "the vizier of the descendants of the Prophet."

Although he was in service of Ibrahim, when the opportunity arose for the seizure of power from Umayyads, he turned to Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.). He sent a note inviting the Imam to present himself to be crowned "as the Caliph". Imam (a.s.) didn't even open the note; he burnt it and told the messenger to tell Abu Salma what he saw.

Abu Salma had no choice but to support Saffah's claim to the Caliphate.

WHY DID IMAM SADIQ (A.S.) TURN DOWN THE OPPORTUNITY TO ACCEPT THE CALIPHATE?

When others saw political opportunity as the only form of a ripe fruit ready to be plucked from a tree, Imam Sadiq (a.s.) saw yet another opportunity: the educational one which was better than

the political one in more than one way. He decided to go for the educational opportunity. To fully understand the Imam's choice, we have to consider the consequences of those who went for the political opportunity.

CONSEQUENCES

Zaid Bin Ali Bin Husayn

He was betrayed by the people of Iraq. Whereas over 15,000 people pledged to support him, when the actual time for support came, only a few came to help him. He was brutally killed and his body was exposed to untold humiliation. His son Yahya, was hunted down like a fugitive until when he, too, was callously killed. The fate of Zaid and his son Yahya made Imam Sadiq (a.s.) weep for several days. If only Zaid had heeded Imam Sadiq's advice of not seeking the end of the Umayyad oppression through uprising.

Muhammad Bin Abdullah Bin Hasan Mussanah Bin Hasan (a.s.)

Imam Sadiq's refusal to raise a claim on the caliphate, paved way for Muhammad Bin Hasan to do that instead. In the earlier stage of the revolution against the Umayyads, Saffah and Mansoor were amongst those who recognized his claim and paid their allegiance to him. However, they did so only out of convenience. They were interested in acquiring the caliphate for themselves but were waiting for the right opportunity to do so. This opportunity came in 132 AH when Saffah, with the help of Abu Muslim, declared himself the Caliph in Kufa. Mohammed Bin Abdullah was left out in the cold!

When Mansoor succeeded his brother as Caliph in 136 AH, he took one more step against the progeny of the Prophet (s.a.w.w.). Remembering the earlier days of the revolution and the commitment that he had made to Muhammad Bin Abdullah, he thought it unsafe to let Muhammad live. Before Mansoor could do anything to him, Muhammad and his younger brother, Ibrahim escaped to Medina and Basra respectively. Mansoor sent his army

first to Medina. Muhammad fought courageously but he was killed. Mansoor then sent his soldiers to fight Ibrahim. There, too, Monsoor ended up the uprising by getting Ibrahim killed. He then sent Ibrahim's head to his father who had been imprisoned in Kufa by Mansoor. This was in the year 145 AH.

Muhammad's son, Abdullah, had earlier gone to the governor of Sind, Omar Bin Hafs Al-Sufri, to seek his support for his father. When the news of the martyrdom of Muhammad reached the governor of Sind, he sent Abdullah to a nearby ruler who had agreed to take the young man under his protection. However, Mansoor sent his forces that finally killed Abdullah. This was in the year 152 AH.

Mansoor was not yet satisfied. In the words of Syed Ameer Ali: "Mansoor now vented his rage on Medina and Basra. Many notables in Basra who had joined Ibrahim were caught and executed. Their houses were razed to the ground; their date groves cut down. In Medina, the properties of Bani Hasan and Bani Husayn were confiscated... He even threatened with death the venerable Imam Jafar as Sadiq for asking for the release of his properties. He threw into prison Imam Abu Hanifa and had Imam Malik cruelly flogged..."

Sons of Muhammad Bin Ali Bin Abdullah Bin Abbas

Muhammad himself died before the revolution.

His eldest son, Ibrahim, was living in Palestine. Marwan Al-Hammar, the last Caliph from the Umayyads, had him killed on the grounds that the latter was in contact with Abu Muslim, the rebel of Khorasan.

Abu Abbas, who became the first Caliph from the House of Abbas, and his brother Mansoor, had to adopt some very cruel measures to retrain their rulership. Abu Abbas shed so much blood that he

became known as SAFFAH, meaning “the Shedder of Blood”. Abu Jafar exceeded even Saffah in his cruelties.

Despite the fact that Imam Sadiq (a.s.) had kept himself totally away from the movement to overthrow the Umayyads and therefore had no interest in the caliphate, nonetheless, Saffah had suspicions that the Imam (a.s.) could be a political rival. He therefore summoned the Imam (a.s.) to Kufa, but having no evidence at all to prove Imam’s involvement in matters of state craft, he let the Imam (a.s.) go free.

Abu Jafar

The younger brother of Saffah, Abu Jafar, who later assumed the name “Mansoor” (the victorious one), succeeded his brother in 136 AH. So as to keep the caliphate safe from his rivals, he went after them all.

As we have seen before, he had Muhammad Nafs-e-Zakiyya killed and his entire family destroyed. Fearing that other members from the progeny of Imam Hasan (a.s.) would raise their heads against his administration to avenge the murder of Nafs-e-Zakiyya, Mansoor declared a war on each member of Imam Hasan’s progeny. Thousand of innocent members from the progeny of the Prophet (s.a.w.w.) were thus killed mercilessly.

Tabari, the famous Sunni historian, describes one such incident that gives us an impression of the extent of cruelty Mansoor had to practice to remain the Caliph. Tabari reports that when Mansoor was about to leave for Mecca where he had expected to retire, he called his niece and sister-in-law (Mahdi’s wife) Rytha (who also was Saffah’s daughter), and gave her a key to the treasury. Then he sought a promise from her that she would open the treasury only in presence of her husband the new Caliph, after Mansoor’s death.

Accordingly, after Mansoor’s death, Rytha, accompanied by her

husband, Mahdi, the new Caliph, went into this room of secrecy. To their shock, the Caliph and the Queen witnessed “a chamber of horrors.” In the long chamber of treasury was a collection of the corpses of the great grandchildren of Hazrat Abu Talib, and in their ears were tags on which were written their genealogies. Mahdi ordered that the corpses be buried, and the treasury be pulled down.

Abu Salma

His position was “the Vizier of the Ahlul-Bayt”.

He invited Imam Sadiq (a.s.) to accept the caliphate. He might have been genuine in this offer and might have truly wished to see Imam Sadiq (a.s.) be the Caliph. However, he overestimated his strength and underestimated the treachery and evilness of Saffah and Mansoor. Hardly did he guess that Saffah, Mansoor and Abu Muslim, who outwardly treated him with honor and respect, were behind his back, planning to kill him. Tabari records vividly the plot that was being hatched to kill Abu Salma. Saffah wrote secretly to Abu Muslim of his fears pertaining to Abu Salma and instructed him to get rid of Abu Salma. Saffah invited Abu Salma to his palace and kept him occupied till late at night and then let him go. On his way home, Abu Salma was attacked by Abu Muslim’s hit-man and killed. The death of Abu Salma was then blamed on the Khwarjees.

Imagine what would have been the position of Imam Sadiq (a.s.) had he accepted caliphate on the strength of the word to Abu Salma.

Abu Muslim

Both Saffah and Mansoor knew that without the military help of Abu Salma and Abu Muslim, they could not end the Umayyad rulership. They also knew that so far as Abu Salma and Abu Muslim lived, there could not be complete freedom for the Abbasid Caliphs to rule as they wished. The Abbasid brothers therefore had their own hidden agenda: First to use both Abu Salma’s and Abu Muslim’s services to remove the Umayyad dynasty, then through

craft and treachery to remove from the scene both Abu Salma and Abu Muslim.

Abu Salma, as we have already seen, was the first one to go. Abu Muslim's life was spared up to the moment when he finally defeated Marwan al-Hammar at the Battle of the Zab in 132 AH. With the final collapse of the Umayyad rulership and the murder of Marwan, Saffah and Mansoor turned their eyes on Abu Muslim. Before Saffah could act against Abu Muslim, he died in 136 AH. Mansoor took over the caliphate and his first action was to prepare to kill Abu Muslim.

In 132 AH, Abu Muslim had just put down the rebellion at Nasibin, Syria, and was heading back to his station at Khorasan (Merv). Mansoor requested him to pay him a visit at his court in Baghdad to advise him on important matters of state. Flattered by such royal gesture, Abu Muslim visited Mansoor. Mansoor got Abu Muslim arrested and killed in his very presence. His body was then dumped into the River Euphrates.

Thus ended the life of one who was the key to the demise of the Umayyad dynasty and the rise of the Abbasid Kingship.

Abu Jafar (Mansoor) therefore came out to be the real beneficiary of the revolution whose successful initiation and completion was the work of many adventurous people, most important of whom were Zaid, Muhammad Nafs-e-Zakiyya, Abu Salma, Abu Muslim, all of whom benefited but little from their efforts.

However, even for Mansoor, the success was but limited. To come to power and remain at the helm of power, he had to commit so many atrocious acts and to spill the blood of so many innocent people. Admittedly, by his efforts the Abbasid dynasty was brought to power and continued to flourish through repression; it finally came to an end in 656 AH. As a matter of fact, the end

of the Abbasid dynasty, by the account of some historian, had ended earlier; in the words of Hamza Isfahani, the Abbasid rulership ended in 921 AD (636 AH) in the 13th year of the reign of Mustansir. Robert Payne comments: "...For more than two hundred years the pages of history were to be littered with the twitching fragments of its course."

In light of the negative consequences for all those who went for the political opportunity vis-a-vis seizing the caliphate, we can appreciate the wisdom behind Imam Sadiq's rejection of this option, and his determination to build his strategy for change on the shoulders of the education option that we have seen in Chapter 2.

CONCLUSION

During the times of Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.), the political situation was such that the Muslim masses were no longer ready to accept the cruel rulership of the Umayyads. They had seen the virtuous lives of the Imams from the household of the Prophet (s.a.w.w.) and were prepared to return them to power. Unfortunately, there were some people who looked at this situation differently. Their intention was to overthrow the Umayyads and seize power for themselves. The mastermind behind this movement was Muhammad Bin Ali Abbasid and his three sons: Ibrahim, Abu Abbas (Saffah) and Abu Jafar (Mansoor).

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) saw this plot clearly and therefore took a very different approach. Being the representative of Allah on this earth, he could not and did not want to engage himself in acts of treachery, cruelty and duplicity, which were the keys to obtain and keep the caliphate. If he truly wanted to stay in power he would be required to stoop as low as did Saffah and Mansoor. Even then the Imam (a.s.) knew that the benefits of such evil acts were short lived.

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) therefore chose another opportunity that was

hidden behind the fall and decline of the Umayyads on the one hand, and the rise of the Abbasids on the other hand.

During this period of political turmoil, the Imam (a.s.) invested his time and energy in the establishment of an educational institution of a magnitude that none had seen before and through it to propagate the true message of Islam that had hitherto remained in obscurity.

The best that the Abbasids got was a rulership of about 600 years; that was at its peak during the times of Mansoor, Haroon and Mamoon and ended pitifully in with the sacking of Baghdad by Hulagu in 1258 AD.

On the other hand, Imam Sadiq's approach strengthened the religion of Allah and opened up venues of knowledge and learning that continue to benefit humanity in general and Muslims in particular till this day.

Such was the wisdom of Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.).

CHAPTER 5

IMAM JAFAR BIN MUHAMMED AL-SADIQ (A.S.): CHARACTER AND PERSONALITY

INTRODUCTION

For reasons that have already been outlined in the preceding Chapters, like his father, Imam Sadiq (a.s.) had an opportunity of serving humanly in general and Muslims in particular for a long time without restrictions. Consequently, his great merits as a teacher, scholar and genius came to be appreciated wide and apart throughout the known world of the times in which he lived.

Accompanied with his versatile knowledge in humanities, physical and religious sciences, was his impeccable character. His personality was a fine mixture of piety, generosity, steadfastness, courage and above all, sensitivity towards the needs and expectations of his fellow humans. Whoever came in contact with him was left with awe for him. His charisma, care for others and concern to improve the life of the creatures of Allah was such that he impacted the lives of many. This can be seen by the tributes that Muslim scholars of all denomination in different ages came to make for him.

Shahrastani, the famous Sunni writer, praised Imam Sadiq (a.s.) in these words: “His knowledge was great in religion and culture; he was fully informed in philosophy; he attained great piety in the world and he abstained entirely from lusts. He lived in Medina long enough to greatly profit the sect that followed him, and to give his friends the advantage of the hidden sciences. For he who is drowned in the sea of knowledge does not covet anything...”

Ibn Hajar, the author of *SAWAEQA AL MUHRIKA* complements Imam Sadiq (a.s.) saying that he was the best person of his times and for that he was his father's successor.

Ibn Khalkan praised the Imam (a.s.), saying his greatness and his

accomplishments deserve description.

Imam Fakhruddin Radhi [In his *Tafsir Kabir*] and Shah Abdul Aziz Dehlavi (in his *Taufa Ithna Ashari*) consider Imam Sadiq as “MASOOM” (the infallible).

A brief analysis of the character traits of the Imam (a.s.) will give us an indication as to why scholars of Islam complemented him in the most praiseworthy terms.

PIETY

He spent his days fasting and his nights in prayers and recommended his followers to engage in such acts of piety. All along, he tried to explain to his followers that whereas rituals were an important part of piety, but they remained incomplete if not backed by practical demonstration in day to day activities. We shall see more of this when we consider the advice that he used to give to those who were with him.

GENEROSITY

He believed in sharing with others whatever he had in the form of knowledge and wealth. We have already seen how he shared his knowledge with others; here we shall give illustrations to show how he shared with others whatever wealth that he had.

His house was always open for the needy. He would never sit to have his meals alone; there had to be guests with him at the times of meals. The Imam (a.s.) used to say that in his view to sit and share meals with a believer was more virtuous than freeing a slave. Abu Hamza Thimali describes one such occasion when he was present. Delicious food was served, then fresh and sweet dates were distributed. One of the guests commented that for partaking such types of rich foods, the participants would have to answer on the Day of Judgment in accordance with verse of the Quran “...the day in which accounts will be required from those who benefited from bounties”. The Imam (a.s.) replied that it is beyond the Munificence

of Allah that He should question His creation on the food that He made available to them. Rather, on the Day of Judgment, people will be required to account for their behavior towards the “Ahlul-Bayt.”

- The Imam (a.s.) was with his guests having meals when one of them made a move to stand up to go get something for himself. The Imam (a.s.) stopped him and went to serve the guest, saying that it was his duty as a host to serve his guest and let him continue with his meals, undisturbed; for this was the advice from the Prophet (s.a.w.w.).
- It was the habit of the Imam (a.s.) that in the darkness of the night, he would cover his face so as not to be recognized, and would carry cooked food to serve the needy in their houses. The recipients of these benefits came to know who their beneficence was only after the martyrdom of the Imam (a.s.)
- Fazl Bin Marwan reports that once he saw Imam (a.s.) counting money. He separated the money into several small bags and gave his servant a list of people to whom the bags of money were to be delivered individually. The recipients were to be told that the money was from Iraq. When the servant came back he reported to the Imam (a.s.) that some of the recipients who received the money were blaming the Imam (a.s.) for not taking care of them. The Imam (a.s.) prostrated in “SAJDA” saying “Ya Allah give me the strength to remain undisturbed hearing such complaints from those whom I serve.”

BRAVERY

Mansoor was known for his cruelty and swings of moods. None dare challenge or contradict him in his presence. However, Imam Sadiq (a.s.) never bowed down to Mansoor’s threats, and never compromised. Imam’s Bravery can be illustrated by the following incident.

Mansoor was sitting in his court when the Imam (a.s.) was

summoned. The Imam (a.s.) was discussing with Mansoor when a housefly managed to sneak into the presence of Mansoor and to bother him by sitting on his nose! Mansoor was agitated by the constant disturbance caused by the fly, sitting on his nose! In his agitation, Mansoor screamed. “Why did Allah create at all such a useless insect?” Fearlessly, the Imam (a.s.) retorted, “So that it can knock in sense in arrogant kings that, after all, they are powerless in the presence of Allah.” Mansoor could do nothing but watch the Imam (a.s.) for his outspokenness.

SENSITIVITY TO THE NEEDS OF OTHERS

- Once there was draught in Medina. Consequently, people of Medina began to experience food shortage; wheat became a rare and expensive commodity. Imam (a.s.) inquired from his treasurer on the availability of wheat in Imam’s house. The treasurer re-assured the Imam (a.s.) not to worry about food shortage as the treasurer had hoarded enough wheat to last for as long as the drought continues. Imam (a.s.) instructed him to dispose all the wheat that was in stock at cost and then to buy again their daily requirement on day to day basis. The Imam (a.s.) also instructed him to mix wheat flour with oat flour so that the household of the Imam lived through this period of deprivation like everyone else in Medina.

The drought lasted for longer than expected. There came a time when there was no wheat available at all in the market. Imam’s treasurer complained that had they not sold their stock of wheat, they would not have to go through this inconvenience. The Imam replied, “Then how would we sympathize with those who have to go through this. Remember I am thankful under every moment of hardship and deprivation.”

- Besides working in agricultural fields to earn his living, Imam (a.s.) used to send out merchandise to foreign lands for resale; the profits would supplement his earnings. Once, his agent came back from such an expedition and gave Imam (a.s.) a

large sum of money as his share of profit. He therefore inquired from his agent as to how this time the profits were so high. The agent told the Imam (a.s.) that on this particular occasion the merchandise they used to sell in Egypt was in short supply in the market. As a result the agent sold them at a very high price. The Imam (a.s.) was upset to hear this. The Imam (a.s.) complained that this was kind of exploitation; that the agent had capitalized on the hopelessness of the people and made them pay super profits. The Imam (a.s.) therefore took his principal and refused to take the profits.

- Once the Imam (a.s.) saw one of his slaves in a state of discomfort. On inquiring, he learnt that the slave was suffering from a severe headache. The Imam (a.s.) sat next to him and began to massage his forehead, so as to comfort the sick slave, and help him reduce the pain. The slave protested, thinking that it was not proper that the Imam of the time should carry out such a service. Also those who were present asked the Imam (a.s.) to let them instead serve the slave. The Imam (a.s.), however, refused and continued serving the slave saying “Do not deprive me from doing an act of virtue.”
- A servant was serving the Imam and his guests when by accident he dropped the bowl of food on the Imam (a.s.). Naturally, the servant showed signs of fear. The Imam (a.s.), instead of punishing him set him free.
- Sufyane Thuri reports that once he paid Imam (a.s.) a visit in his house. He saw signs of worry on the face of the Imam (a.s.). Upon inquiring, he was told that the Imam (a.s.) had instructed all in his house not to go to the roof of the house on that day. Unfortunately, a slave girl carrying a baby in hand started to go to the roof. Suddenly, the child fell from her hands and died instantly. The maid was shivering with fear. The Imam set her free saying “The act of mine will perhaps compensate for the fear that this lady had to go through.”

CHAPTER 6

IMAM JAFAR BIN MUHAMMAD (A.S.): HIS FAMILY

HIS WIVES

Imam's first wife was Fatima, the daughter of Husayn Bin Ali Bin Husayn. Very little is known about her except that she was the mother of Ismail, the first born of the Imam (a.s.). Her other children were Abdullah and Umm Farwa.

Later on, the Imam married a slave girl known as Ume Hamida. She was either from North Africa or from Spain. She was a very pious and cultured person. His piety was of such high level that the Prophet (s.a.w.w.) visited her in her dreams. Her knowledge of jurisprudence was such that the Imam (a.s.) used to refer to her women who came to him, asking for clarification on matters of jurisprudence. He would say "In future when you have questions of this nature, you may as well refer them to Hamida." She had three children, the eldest one was our seventh Imam Musa Kadhim (a.s.).

CHILDREN

Ismail

He was the eldest son in the family. He was of good manners and was very learned; so much so that some of the friends and followers of Imam Sadiq (a.s.) thought that he would be the next Imam. The Imam (a.s.) loved him dearly. However Ismail died when his father was still alive. His death grieved the Imam (a.s.) very much. The Imam (a.s.) showed his grief by attending the burial ceremony without his cloak and bare-footed. One action of the Imam that looked peculiar at that time but which became clear later on was: he ordered the litter ("Janaza") of Ismail be lowered on the ground several times and he uncovered his face and looked at it. Later on, it became clear that the intention behind such an action was to establish the fact that, indeed, Ismail had died, and to counter against the mistaken belief of some people that Ismail was alive but in hiding.

Despite this precaution, after the Imam's martyrdom some people came to regard Ismail as their Imam who was in hiding. Others accepted his death but regarded his son as the rightful Imam. These are the Ismailis (and the present day Bohoras).

Abdullah (al-aftah, the "flat-footed")

He was the second born in the family. He did not have the merits of his elder brother Ismail. He was disabled, with a flat foot; hence he has come to be known as *al-aftah*. After his father's martyrdom, he claimed to be the Imam and had a few followers: The FATHIYYA.

Ishaq

He was pious and virtuous; he was a staunch believer in Imamate of Imam Musa Kadhim (a.s.) and related many traditions from him.

Muhammad

He was pious, generous and brave. He used to fast on every alternate days. He used to give away in charity his cloak and would return home without one. To entertain guests, he is known to have slaughtered rams every day.

In 199 AH, he rose against Mamoon in Mecca. Mamoon's general, Isa Bin Jalood suppressed the rebellion and brought Mohammed as a prisoner to Khorasan. He spent the rest of his life in Khorasan in the court of Mamoon.

Ali

He was pious and was close to his brother Imam Musa Kadhim (a.s.). He used to narrate traditions that he had heard from Imam Musa Kadhim (a.s.).

Abbas

He, too, was virtuous.

Imam Musa Kadhim (a.s.)

He is our seventh Imam. For more details about life refer to his biography already published.

CHAPTER 7

IMAM JAFAR BIN MUHAMMAD (A.S.): HIS SAYINGS

INTRODUCTION

Like his father, Imam Sadiq (a.s.) had a rare opportunity that none of the other Imams had in preaching the message of Allah. There is no area in the life of man on which this Imam (a.s.) did not advise his followers. In Chapter 2 we examined with some details the Imam's endeavors in the field of education and learning. Suffice it to say that in the life time of Imam Sadiq (a.s.), his students wrote 400 books on fundamentals of faith alone, their writing being based on the religious decrees learnt from the Imam (a.s.). The followers of the "Madh'hab of Ahlul-Bayt" depended upon those books for information on the theory and practice of their religion. Later on, scholars prepared summaries of these books. Today, 4 of such books are regarded as the core for the teaching of "Madh'hab of Ahlul-Bayt." These Books are:

1. *Al-Kafi*
2. *Al-Tahdhib*
3. *Al-Istibar*
4. *Man La Yahdharuh Al fiqih.*

1. *Al-Kafi*:- This was the earliest work. It was compiled by Muhammad Bin Yakub al-Kulaini. It contains 16,193 traditions of the Holy Prophet. *Al-Kafi* is made of 3 parts *Rawda Al-Kafi*; *Usulu Kafi* and *Furu ul Kafi*. It took Kulaini 20 years to compile this work which earned him the title of *Thiqat al-Islam* (the trustworthy authority of Islam).
2. *Al-Tahdhib Al-Ahkam*:- (Correcting of Judgements). This work was compiled by Muhammad Bin Hasan At-Tusi. According to Mahaddath al Bahrani there were 93 chapters in this book and has in all 12,590 ahadith.

3. *Istibsar* (Examination of the differences in traditions). Was also authored by al-Tusi. This book is divided into three parts: the first two parts are related to acts of Worship (Ibadat), the third part relates to dealings (Muamilat). In all there are 915 chapters made up of 5,521 ahadith.
4. *Man La Yahdaruhu al Fakiḥ*. (A jurist of those who have no Jurist). This work which was compiled by Muhammad Bin Ali Bin Husayn popularly known as As-Saduq or al-Kumi. There are 5,693 hadith in this book. Shaykh Saduq knew them all by heart and based on them he had given his verdicts. He regarded them all as authentic and as “proofs” between himself and Allah.

The following sayings have been extracted mostly from these books of tradition:

1. Imam advised Ibn Jundub saying: Oh! Son of Jundub.
 - Love for the pleasure of Allah, and despise for the pleasure of Allah.
 - Do not be arrogant in prosperity and do not despair in poverty.
 - Do not be rough and rude as to cause people to dislike you; and do not show weakness in your personality as to encourage people to look down upon you.
 - Do not despise those who are lower in status than yourself; do not fight to snatch people of their rights and don't obey fools.
 - Keep contact with those who wish to cut contact with you. Be gracious to those who despise you.
 - Treat well who ill-treats you.
 - Greet the one who insults you.
 - Forgive the one who wrongs you.
 - Do not give charity in public so as to be complimented, for if you do so this it means you have been rewarded fully (by the compliments). But if you give in charity

by your right hand and the left hand does not know about it for the sake of Allah, the Allah will make your charity public and reward you too.

2. The Imam (a.s.) said “Whosoever wishes that Allah may favor him with his blessings and accommodate him in Paradise, he shall refine his morals, behave justly with people, show pity on orphans, help the weak and helpless, and be humble before Allah who is his creator.”
3. A man asked Imam (a.s.) as to why Allah forbade usage of liquors when they are very relaxing the Imam (a.s.) replied, “Allah has forbidden use of the intoxicant because it is the mother of all evils. The drunkard loses his sense; he does not recognize Allah and commits every crime, violating the honors of others, severing relationship with others and getting involved in acts of uncleanness and even lewdness. A drunkard is in a complete control of Satan whom he obeys even if asks him to prostrate before an idol.”
4. A tradition of the Imam (a.s.) is quoted in *Wasail us-Shiah* by Hur Amili and it says: It is unlawful to sell implements of the game of chess and to use the proceeds of its sales. To have the game is an act of polytheism, to play with it is an act sin and to teach somebody to play chess is an act of greater sin.”
5. The Imam (a.s.) has said, “Earn the favor of Allah by giving financial support to your brother in faith.”
6. The Imam (a.s.) has said, “Do not befriend a traitor, a tyrant and a rumor monger. A traitor will deceive others for your sake, but he will also deceive you to please others. A tyrant who oppresses others for you will one day

oppress you for them. A rumor monger will vilify others to you but will vilify you behind your back.

7. The Imam (a.s.) has said, "Guide and preach by your action and good behavior, and not by speech alone."
8. The Imam (a.s.) is reported to have advised his followers in these words: "Make your children learn the Islamic traditions and religious instructions as early as possible before others fill the minds of your children with false teachings."
9. The Imam (a.s.) has said, "May Allah bless that person who builds his relationship with his wife on goodness and kindness."
10. The Imam (a.s.) said, "There are three acts which must be done under any circumstances: First, in the restoration of the trust whether the owner is a good person or not. Second, in the keeping of promise whether the concerned party is good or bad. Third, in the doing of good to parents, whether they are virtuous or not."
11. The Imam (a.s.) has described as a hypocrite a person who displays three characteristics:
 - i) He says lies in his conversations.
 - ii) He makes promise but does not fulfill them
 - iii) He misappropriates the trust given to him
12. The Imam (a.s.) said, "Nothing benefits a person after his death except three things:
 - i) The alms and charity that he may have given out when alive, by the grace of Allah.
 - ii) A virtuous tradition that he started and which is followed upon after his death.
 - iii) Pious children who pray for his benefit.

13. “The most beloved of my brother is he who makes me aware of my shortcoming” says the Imam (a.s.).
14. The Imam (a.s.) has warned: “Seventy sins of an ignorant person are forgiven before one of scholar is forgiven.”
15. “Toiling and exerting for one’s family is like becoming a warrior of a holy war fought for the pleasure of Allah,” says the Imam (a.s.).

CHAPTER 8

SOME MIRACLES OF IMAM JAFAR SADIQ (A.S.)

INTRODUCTION

While discussing the lives of the first five Imams from the progeny of the Prophet (s.a.w.w.), we briefly discussed the philosophy and meaning of miracles. In this chapter we shall therefore briefly narrate a few such miracles that are associated with Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.).

MIRACLE 1

A man by the name of Muhammad Bin Abdullah Iskandari reports: “I was Mansoor’s man and knew a lot of his secrets. Once, I visited him and saw him lost in his thoughts. On inquiring as to what made the Caliph so worried, he replied that he had managed to kill thousands of the members of the progeny of Ali Ibne Abi Talib, but had been unable to end the life of their leader, Jafar Bin Muhammad. I told him that Jafar Bin Muhammad was a man of God and had no worldly ambitions as to arouse the wrath of the Caliph. The caliph retorted that he was aware of the greatness and virtues of Jafar Bin Muhammad. Nonetheless, he had vowed to end his life by the end of the day.

“Having said so, the Caliph then called his executioner and instructed him to behead Jafar Bin Muhammad. The Caliph was to give the sign to the executioner to do so his job. The sign would be the Caliph would cover his head. The executioner would then behead the Imam.

“Having given these instructions, Mansoor sent a messenger to bring the Imam to the Royal Palace. The Imam (a.s.) came to the Palace. Instead of giving the instruction as planned, Mansoor went to receive the Imam (a.s.) with honor and respect. He asked the

Imam (a.s.) as to why he had taken the trouble of visiting him. When the Imam (a.s.) told him that he had come on being called by the Caliph, Mansoor apologized and sent the Imam (a.s.) back with dignity, promising never to bother him again.

“After the Imam’s departure, Mansoor went to bed. He woke up when I was still there, and he informed me that when Imam Sadiq (a.s.) had come there, there appeared a huge snake which warned the Caliph that should he cause any harm to the Imam (a.s.), it would devour him. The Caliph therefore could not carry his plan.”

“After a few days, with the permission of Mansoor I paid Imam (a.s.) a visit and requested him to teach the supplication (dua) which he had read when he came in the presence of Mansoor. The Imam (a.s.) taught me that dua.”

Several miracles of these nature have been recorded when Mansoor would call the Imam (a.s.) in his court or in his private chamber with the sole intention of killing him but would not be able to do.

MIRACLE 2

A loyal and trusted service man of Mansoor, Rabi, narrated that once an enemy of Imam Sadiq (a.s.) reported against the Imam to Mansoor, claiming that the Imam (a.s.) was secretly plotting to overthrow Mansoor. Mansoor was looking for such an excuse to harm the Imam (a.s.). Angrily, he summoned the Imam (a.s.) and threatened to kill him.

The Imam (a.s.) expressed his innocence and requested that the man who reported against him be brought to Imam’s presence. This was done. The man insisted the he was right and the Imam (a.s.) was wrong.

The Imam (a.s.) asked him if he was prepared to swear in the name of Allah to support his testimony; the man said he was.

The man then took an oath the way the Imam told him to do; the oath he took was like this: “May I be outside Allah’s power and strength and as I seek refuge in my own power and strength if I lie that Jafar spoke against Mansoor.”

No sooner had the man taken this oath then the punishment of Allah fell on him. He fell down and was removed from the court.

Mansoor let the Imam go without harm.

Rabi later went to the Imam (a.s.) and asked him two questions related to this incident. The first question was: “When you went to see Mansoor, he was very angry but I noticed you recited something that made Mansoor quiet down. What is it that you recited?”

The Imam (a.s.) replied. “I recited the supplication that my grandfather, Ali Ibne Husayn (a.s.) used to read.” The Imam (a.s.) then taught the supplication to Rabi. The supplication was as follows:

O My Provider in times of hardship
O My Help in the face of disaster
Guard me with your Eye
Which never sleeps
Surround me with your impenetrable fortress.

The second question Rabi asked was “Why did you make your accuser state his oath the way you did?”

The Imam (a.s.) replied that if the man had presented his oath praising and glorifying Allah, his punishment would be delayed. By removing himself from Allah’s protection, his punishment came instantly.

CHAPTER 9

IMAM JAFAR SADIQ (A.S.): HIS MARTYRDOM

INTRODUCTION

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) had the longest life amongst all our Imams. He lived for 63 years. As was noted in all preceding chapters, he saw the regimes of nine Umayyad and two Abbasid rulers. All these rulers were hostile to the Imam (a.s.) and if they had their ways, they would not have left the Imam (a.s.) to live even for a day. However, these rulers were engaged in their own problems and left no stone unturned to make life difficult for the Imam (a.s.) but failed to kill him. However, finally Mansoor, the second Abbasid Caliph, got the Imam (a.s.) martyred.

EVENTS LEADING TO THE MARTYRDOM OF IMAM (A.S.)

After the martyrdom of Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.), political environment for the Umayyad became so bad that the rulers had no time harassing Imam Sadiq (a.s.). Hisham was busy putting down rebellions in very nook and corner of his empire. With his death began the ending of the Umayyad dynasty. Rulers who came after him were young, hot headed, corrupt and completely incompetent. Their attention was diverted from the Imam (a.s.) and Imam's life remained safe. However, with the coming to power of the Abbasids, matters changed drastically. Mindful of the fact that their revolution had been carried out in the name of "Ahl-ul-Bayt", they feared for the security of their thrones so far as the grandchildren of the Prophet and Imam Ali (a.s.) were alive. Both Saffah and especially Mansoor left no stone unturned to eliminate the grandchildren of the Prophet (s.a.w.w.) and the members of the progeny of Imam Ali (a.s.). The history of Islam is dark with incidents describing mass killings of the members of the descendents of the Prophet (s.a.w.w.). He would imprison some of them in dark dungeons and let them die one after the other – not removing the decomposing bodies. Some of his victims were

imprisoned in houses build on foundations of solid salt. These foundations would be flushed with water and the entire building would collapse engraving the imprisoned victims. Indeed, the walls of Baghdad were stuffed with the living bodies of “sadat”. Mansoor is known to have whipped his victims on their eyes and turn them blind.

To safeguard the interest of the Muslims and to be able to teach the message of Allah, Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) had to keep himself away from any such political activity that could have given Mansoor a cause to harm him. Imam’s advice to his follower was: “Remain silent and obey because you are under the authority of the king due to whose deceit even mountains tumble down.” Nonetheless, Mansoor was all the time thinking of finding a way to kill the Imam (a.s.). He summoned Imam from Medina to his court in Baghdad not less than five times with the main objective of killing the Imam (a.s.). However, on all these occasions the divine protection saved the life of the Imam (a.s.). When he failed directly to end the life of Imam (a.s.), he finally decided to end the life of the Imam through an indirect means. Mansoor instructed his governor in Medina to set fire to Imam’ house. This was done but the Imam (a.s.) survived the attack. The Governor then got the Imam (a.s.) poisoned. It is from this poison that the Imam (a.s.) passed away from this world on 15th Shawwal 148 AH at the age of 63.

“From Allah do we come and to Him is the return”

Just before passing away, the Imam (a.s.) called his near of kin and warned them that he shall not be able to intercede on the day of judgment for any one of them who treated the daily prayers negligently.

So ended the life of this illustrious grandson of the Prophet (s.a.w.w.).

His funeral arrangements were done by his son, Imam Musa Kadhim (a.s.). The Imam (a.s.) was buried in the grave-yard of Baqi in Medina.

On hearing of the martyrdom of Imam Sadiq (a.s.) Mansoor instructed his governor in Medina to find out who was named as the trustee of the Imam (a.s.) in his will, and to behead him immediately. The Imam (a.s.) had foreseen such an act. He therefore named six people as his trustees: Abdullah Aftah, Hamida Khatoon, Imam Musa Kadhim, Mansoor and the governor of Medina. The Governor therefore could not fulfill the demands of Mansoor. When Abu Hamza Thimali, a prominent companion of the fourth, the fifth and the sixth Imam, came to hear the names of the trustees, he responded saying that Imam Sadiq (a.s.) had made it very easy for his followers to recognize the true successor. When asked to explain his reasoning Abu Hamza said, "We all know that Abdullah Aftah has a physical defect and does not enjoy the intelligence that is needed in a successor of the Imam. Hamida is a woman and as such cannot be the Imam. Mansoor and his governor are totally unfit as they are the murders of the Imam (a.s.). This leaves Imam Kadhim (a.s.) who, indeed, has all the virtues that a representative of Allah needs to have."

In this way, Imam Sadiq (a.s.) named his true successor and at the same time protected his life and paved way for the followers to recognize their next Imam.

QUESTIONS

CHAPTER 1

1. Why is the Sixth Imam known specifically as “AS-SADIQ” the truthful one when all other Imams also were all truthful?
2. Explain how and why did the Fifth Imam introduce young Hazrat Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) as the next Imam to his the followers?
3. Briefly describe what kind of life Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) lead with:
 - (a) His grandfather, Imam Ali Bin Husayn (a.s.);
 - (b) His Father, Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.)

CHAPTER 2

1. At the time of leaving this world, what promise did the Fifth Imam get from his son the Sixth Imam? How did the Sixth Imam fulfill that promise?
2. Briefly outline the “core subjects” that were taught in the classes conducted by Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.)?
3. What were the main characteristics of the teaching method used by Imam Jafar Sadiq? How effective was this method?
4. Choose any two students who “graduated” from the “University” of Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) and describe the contribution they made in the field of learning.
5. Each item in column (A) below has its equal in column (B) below. Match each item (I) to (x) from column (A) with its equivalent in column (B).

Item	Column (A)	Item	Column (B)
1.	NOMAN BIN THABIT	i.	Science of Quran
2.	MALIK BIN ANAS	ii.	One of the “Core Books”
3.	SAEED BIN MUSLIMAH	iii.	Imam Abu Hanifa
4.	JABIR BIN HAYYAN	iv.	Teacher of Imam Ahmed Bin Hambal

5.	TAFSEER	v.	Islamic Jurisprudence
6.	FIQH	vi.	Founder of Malik School of Thoughts
7.	MAN LA YAHDHARUH AL FAQIH	vii.	Geber
8.	KITAB AL REHMAN	viii.	Gathering to Mourn Martyrs
9.	MAJLIS	ix.	Book of Mercy
10.	ZIYARAT WARITH	x.	Salutation

CHAPTER 3

For each of 1 to 10 below there are 4 answers suggested from which only one is the best. Choose this best answer:

1. Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) was born:
 - i) In the reign of Abdul Malik Bin Marwan and was martyred in the reign of Marwan Bin Hakam
 - ii) In the reign of Marwan Bin Muhammad and martyred in the reign of Marwan Bin Hakam.
 - iii) In the reign of Marwan Bin Hakam and martyred in the reign of Marwan Bin Muhammad.
 - iv) None of the above.
2. During the later years of rulership of Hisham, Imam (a.s.).
 - i) Secretly engaged in politics
 - ii) Openly came out against the government
 - iii) Quietly carried out his educational activities
 - iv) None of the above.
3. Hisham
 - i) Willingly appointed Walid II as his successor
 - ii) Had made a prior agreement to appoint Walid II and could not break this agreement
 - iii) Died without appointing a successor.
 - iv) Had no choice of his own, so appointed Walid II to succeed him.

4. Muhammad Bin Marwan was called “the ass” because
 - i) He was as clumsy as an ass
 - ii) He was hardworking as an ass
 - iii) He had great endurance
 - iv) He was cruel and stubborn
5. The cause of downfall for Muhammad Bin Marwan was:
 - i) He was bad-tempered
 - ii) He was obstinate
 - iii) He was full of hatred for the Yemenites
 - iv) All three above
6. The Abbasids used the color black to:
 - i) Make people believe that they were rising to seek revenge for the martyrs of the house of the progeny of the Prophet (s.a.w.w.) – the AHLUL-BAYT
 - ii) Show that they were mourning for the martyrs of Kerbala and Zaid and his son Yahya.
 - iii) To win the public support
 - iv) To put fear in the hearts of the Umayyads
7. Which one of the following four statements is incorrect:
 - i) Abu Abbas-Saffah – was the first king from the house of Abbas but his brother Mansoor is regarded as founder of the Abbasid dynasty.
 - ii) Abu Abbas was as cruel and bloodthirsty as his brother Mansoor, and took an active part in the Martyrdom of Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.).
 - iii) Like his brother Mansoor, Saffah lead a life of a fugitive before becoming the ruler of the Muslims.
 - iv) Saffah and Mansoor together planned for the murder of Abu Salma.
8. Mansoor is best known as “DAWANAQI” because:
 - i) He was stingy

- ii) He was thrifty
 - iii) He was cruel
 - iv) None of the above.
9. Mansoor spent millions of dinars on his relatives; this shows his
- i) Generosity
 - ii) Thrift
 - iii) His nepotism
 - iv) His extravagance.
10. When the author mentions the fact that Mansoor having committed many grave sins, died in the vicinity of the House of Allah, he wishes to:
- i) Show that Mansoor, after all, was a pious Muslim
 - ii) That Mansoor was God-fearing king
 - iii) That Mansoor was a hypocrite
 - iv) None of the above.

CHAPTER 4

1. Briefly describe the causes that led to the down-fall of the Umayyad
2. Why did Zaid Bin Ali rise against the Umayyad? Why did his uprising fail?
3. Who was Nafs-e-Zakiyya? Why did he rise against the Abbasides? What was the outcome of his revolt?
4. Why did Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) turn down the invitation to accept the rulership?
5. Explain briefly the part played by the following people in the down-fall of the Umayyade dynasty:
 - a) Abu Salma
 - b) Abu Muslim Khorasani
 - c) Saffah and Mansoor.
6. Explain briefly the various options that were available to Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) at the demise of the Umayyad dynasty? Discuss the wisdom behind the Imam's choice.

CHAPTER 5

1. Giving examples, write briefly on the following character of the Sixth Imam:
 - a) His piety
 - b) His generosity
 - c) His bravery.
2. Giving illustrations, explain how the Sixth Imam dealt with:
 - a) Those who considered him as their Imam
 - b) Those who were out to harm him.

CHAPTER 7

1. Choose any one advice that the Sixth Imam (a.s.) gave to Ibn Jundub. Explain how you can follow that advice in your daily life. What problems may you encounter in following this advice and how will you overcome them?

CHAPTER 9

1. When, why and how was the sixth Imam (a.s.) martyred? What precaution did he take to name his true successor without endangering his life?



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