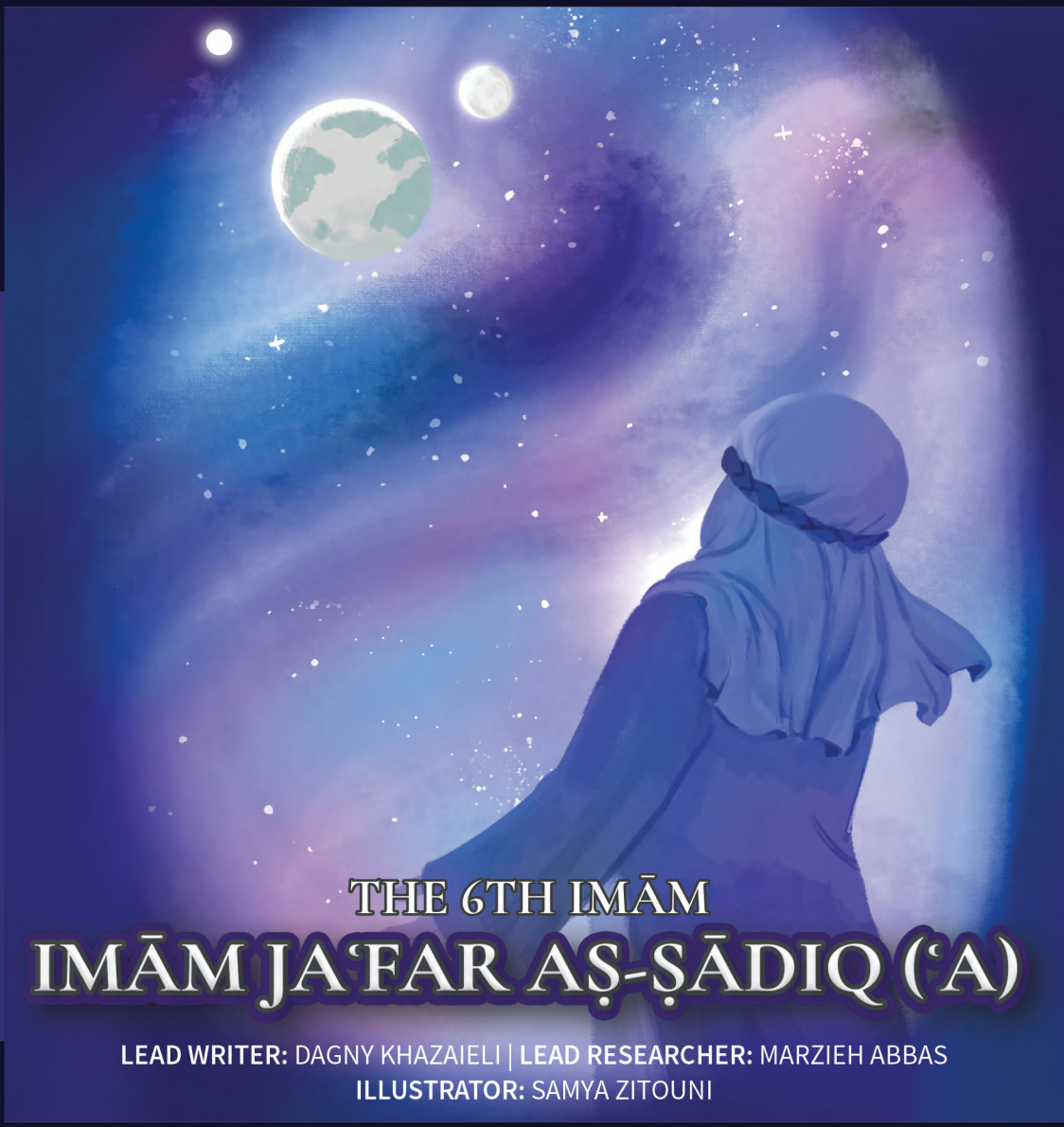
THE IMMACULATE 14

ONE MESSAGE, ONE MISSION

BOOK EIGHT



THE 6TH IMĀM

IMĀM JA'FAR AṢ-ṢĀDIQ ('A)

LEAD WRITER: DAGNY KHAZAIELI | **LEAD RESEARCHER:** MARZIEH ABBAS
ILLUSTRATOR: SAMYA ZITOUNI

KISA PUBLICATIONS | UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF MOULANA NABI R. MIR (ABIDI)

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to the beloved Imām of our time عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف.
May Allah ﷻ hasten his reappearance and help
us to become his true companions.

Acknowledgments

Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ: On the Day of Resurrection, the ink of the scholars will be weighed up against the blood of the martyrs, and the ink of the scholars will be heavier than the blood of the martyrs.
Nahj al-Faṣāḥah, Saying #3222

True reward lies with Allah, but we would like to sincerely thank
Shaykh Ehsan Ahmadi and Sisters Marzieh Abbas,
Masooma Mirza (Naqvi), Neelam Khaki, Fatima Merali,
Dagny Khazaieli, Samya Zitouni, Sabika Mithani, Nida Syed,
Zainab Hussain, Maliha Abdi, Rumina Hashmani, and Abeda Khimji.

May Allah ﷻ bless them in this world and the next.

Marḥūmīn Dedication

Please recite a Sūrah al-Fātiḥah
for the deceased family members of the team including;
Marḥūm Hamid Ali Mirza,
Marḥūm Mahmood Khazaieli Najafabadi,
and the marḥūmīn of Harris, Jafri, and Abdi families.

Transliteration Chart

Arabic terms in this book have been transliterated according to the following guidelines*:

ء	a, i, or u (initial form)
ء	ʾ (medial or final form)
ا	a
ب	b
ت	t
ث	th
ج	j
ح	ḥ
خ	kh
د	d
ذ	dh
ر	r
ز	z
س	s
ش	sh
ص	ṣ
ض	ḍ
ط	ṭ
ظ	ẓ
ع	ʿ
غ	gh
ف	f
ق	q
ك	k
ل	l
م	m
ن	n
ه	h
و	w
ي	y

ـَ	a
ـِ	i
ـُ	u
ـّ	double letter
آ / ـَا / ىٰ	ā
ـِي	ī
ـُو	ū

*Please note that due to limitations, the transliteration is not 100% accurate in capturing tajwīd rules.

Symbol Usage

Throughout this work, when taking the name of any of the revered personalities in Islamic history, including Allah ﷻ , Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, his select family members, and religious scholars, we have employed the following Arabic symbols to show the reverence to each of them. As a part of Islamic culture, readers are requested to send the salutations upon these personalities when they read this work.

سبحانه وتعالى	*All glory belongs to God, the Glorified and Exalted* Used exclusively for God (Allah ﷻ)
وعز وجل	*Mighty and Majestic (is He)* Used exclusively for God (Allah ﷻ)
صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم	*Blessings of Allah be upon him and his immaculate progeny* Used exclusively for Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ
عليه السلام	*Peace be upon him* Used for one honored male
عليهم السلام	*Peace be upon all of them* Used for three or more honored men or women or a combination
عليها السلام	*Peace be upon her* Used for one honored female
عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف	*May Allah, the Most High, hasten his noble return* Used exclusively for Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف
قدس سره الشريف	*May his spirit be sanctified* Used for religious scholars

Preface

Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ:
Nurture and raise your children in the best way. Raise them with the love of the Prophets and the Ahl al-Bayt ﷺ.

The goal of *The Immaculate 14* is to highlight key incidents of the lives of the Maʿṣūmīn to allow readers to connect with our role models and apply their lessons into our practical lives. Allah ﷻ, in His Infinite Mercy, sent down 124,000 Prophets and 12 Imāms, all immaculate and relatable. There has never been a time in the existence of human beings without a divinely appointed guide. And furthermore, these immaculate guides are one light (nūrun wāḥid), with one mission. Each would have acted in a situation the exact same way as the other.

Seeing as these are immaculate individuals, we should analyze their lives and use them as a compass for our own. However, we do not have a lot of historical information of all the Prophets, except a few that are mentioned in the Qurʾān and ḥadīth. But the history of the 14 Maʿṣūmīn has been documented in our books through the efforts of our great ʿūlamāʾ, may Allah ﷻ reward them. So this precious information of their lives, which lasted a period of 250 years, in which there is no contradiction between the actions of one Maʿṣūm to another, we do possess and should make an effort to learn from.

This series has been written with an effort to share a glimpse of these immaculate individuals in a simplified way, sharing a few stories from authentic sources, and some sayings as well. Their lives are not meant as a history lesson, as they are not historical figures but rather they are relevant today in every aspect of our lives. So when we look at their lives, it is in the context of how we can use their example in our present day. Every action they took, every word they spoke, is a guideline for us to live our lives by.

The information in this series is not presented in a chronological order, nor is it a complete look at their lives, but rather a small selection

to learn from, and connect our hearts to our Maʾṣūmin, from the Noble Prophet ﷺ to Imām al-Mahdī inshāʾAllāh عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف.

The research for this series has been done from authentic books, vetted by scholars, background information shared by myself, and then written by different authors.

Literature is an influential form of media that often shapes the thoughts and views of an entire generation. Therefore, in order to establish an Islamic foundation for the future generations, there is a dire need for compelling Islamic literature. Over the past several years, this need has become increasingly prevalent throughout Islamic centers and schools everywhere. Due to the growing dissonance between parents, children, society, and the teachings of Islam and the Ahl al-Bayt عليهم السلام, this need has become even more pressing. Al-Kisa Foundation, along with its subsidiary, Kisa Kids Publications, was conceived in an effort to help bridge this gap with the guidance of ʿulamāʾ and the help of educators. We would like to make this a communal effort and platform. Therefore, we sincerely welcome your constructive feedback and help in any capacity.

We hope that you will enjoy these books and use them as a means to achieve this goal, inshāʾAllāh.

We pray to Allah to give us the strength and tawfīq to perform our duties and responsibilities.

With Duʿās,

Nabi R. Mir (Abidi)

Introduction

Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ, the 8th title in the series of *The Immaculate 14*, had circumstances and conditions unique from the other Maʿṣūmīn. With the change in the dynasty between Umayyad and ʿAbbāsid occurring during this time, the political landscape allowed him to focus on the spreading of knowledge. He was able to establish universities, educate people, and awaken them.

It was also during this time that other schools of Fiqh emerged, and Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ being a well renowned scholar, would educate even the teachers of these other schools and engage in various discussions with their founders.

The mission of all the Maʿṣūmīn was always the same, and likewise the teachings Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ shared were those of the Prophet ﷺ, but in order to differentiate from the other schools, our Fiqh is known as the Jaʿfarī Fiqh, after him.

We pray to Allah to give us the strength and tawfīq to perform our duties and responsibilities.

With Duʿās,
Nabi R. Mir (Abidi)

IMĀM AṢ-ṢĀDIQ'S TIMELINE

1



Rabīʿ al-Awwal 17
702 AD • 83 AH
Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ is born in the city of Medina.

2



Muḥarram 25
713 AD • 95 AH
His grandfather, Imām as-Sajjād ﷺ is martyred.

3



719 AD • 100 AH
Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ has his first son, Ismāʿīl.

4



719 AD • 100 AH
He teaches thousands of students from all over the Muslim world in the university established by his father al-Bāqir ﷺ in Masjid an-Nabī.

5



Dhul Ḥijjah 7
733 AD • 114 AH
His father, Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir ﷺ passes away and he becomes the sixth Imām ﷺ.

6



740 AD • 123 AH
Zayd ibn ʿAlī, the uncle of Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ uprises against the Umayyads and is martyred.

7

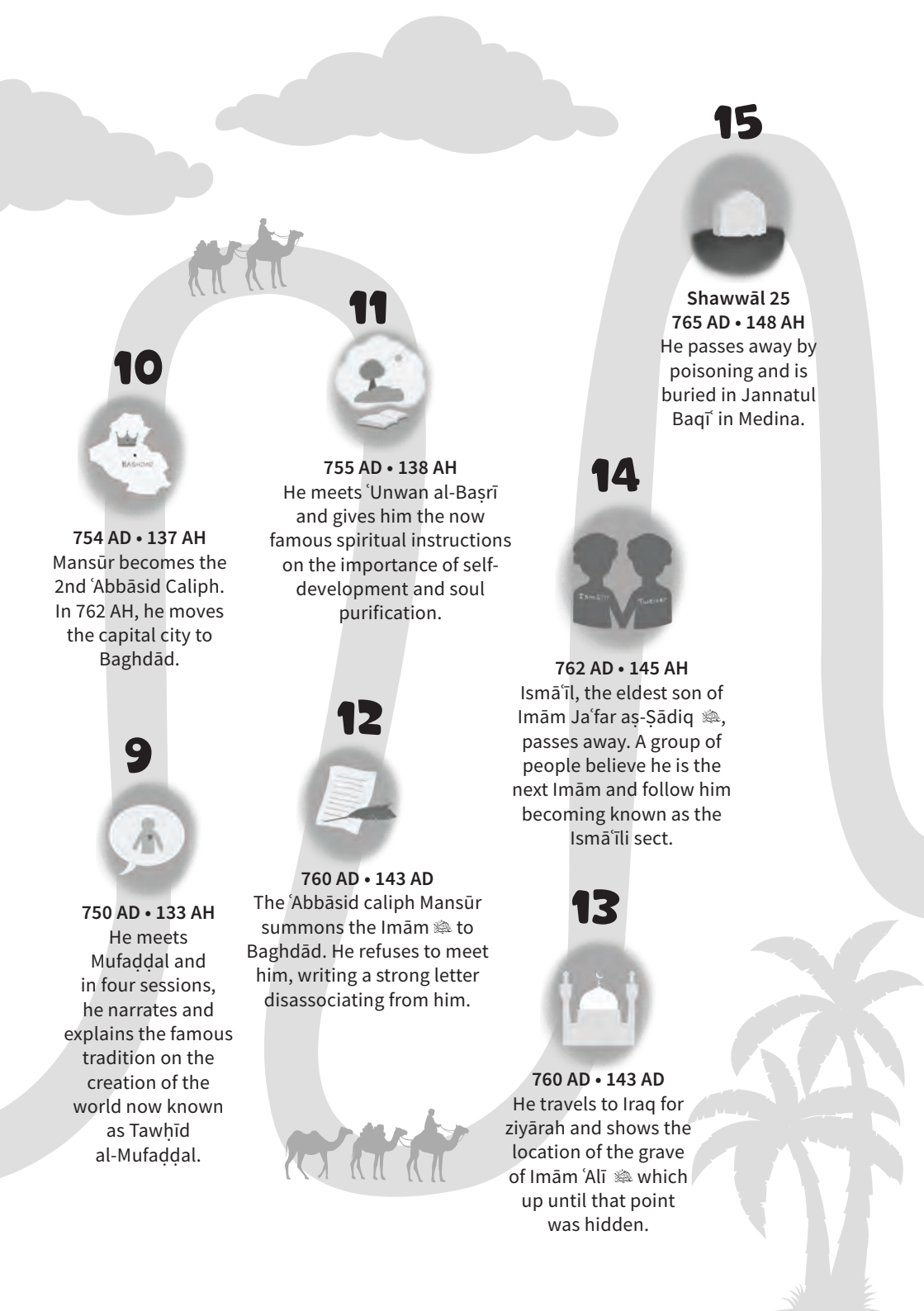


Ṣafar 7
745 AD • 128 AH
His son, Imām Mūsā al-Kāẓim ﷺ, is born.

8



750 AD • 133 AH
The ʿAbbāsids overthrow the Ummayads, founding a new dynasty. Saffah is the 1st Caliph.



9

750 AD • 133 AH
He meets Mufaḍḍal and in four sessions, he narrates and explains the famous tradition on the creation of the world now known as Tawḥīd al-Mufaḍḍal.

10

754 AD • 137 AH
Mansūr becomes the 2nd ʿAbbāsid Caliph. In 762 AH, he moves the capital city to Baghdād.

11

755 AD • 138 AH
He meets ʿUnwan al-Baṣrī and gives him the now famous spiritual instructions on the importance of self-development and soul purification.

12

760 AD • 143 AD
The ʿAbbāsid caliph Mansūr summons the Imām ﷺ to Baghdād. He refuses to meet him, writing a strong letter disassociating from him.

13

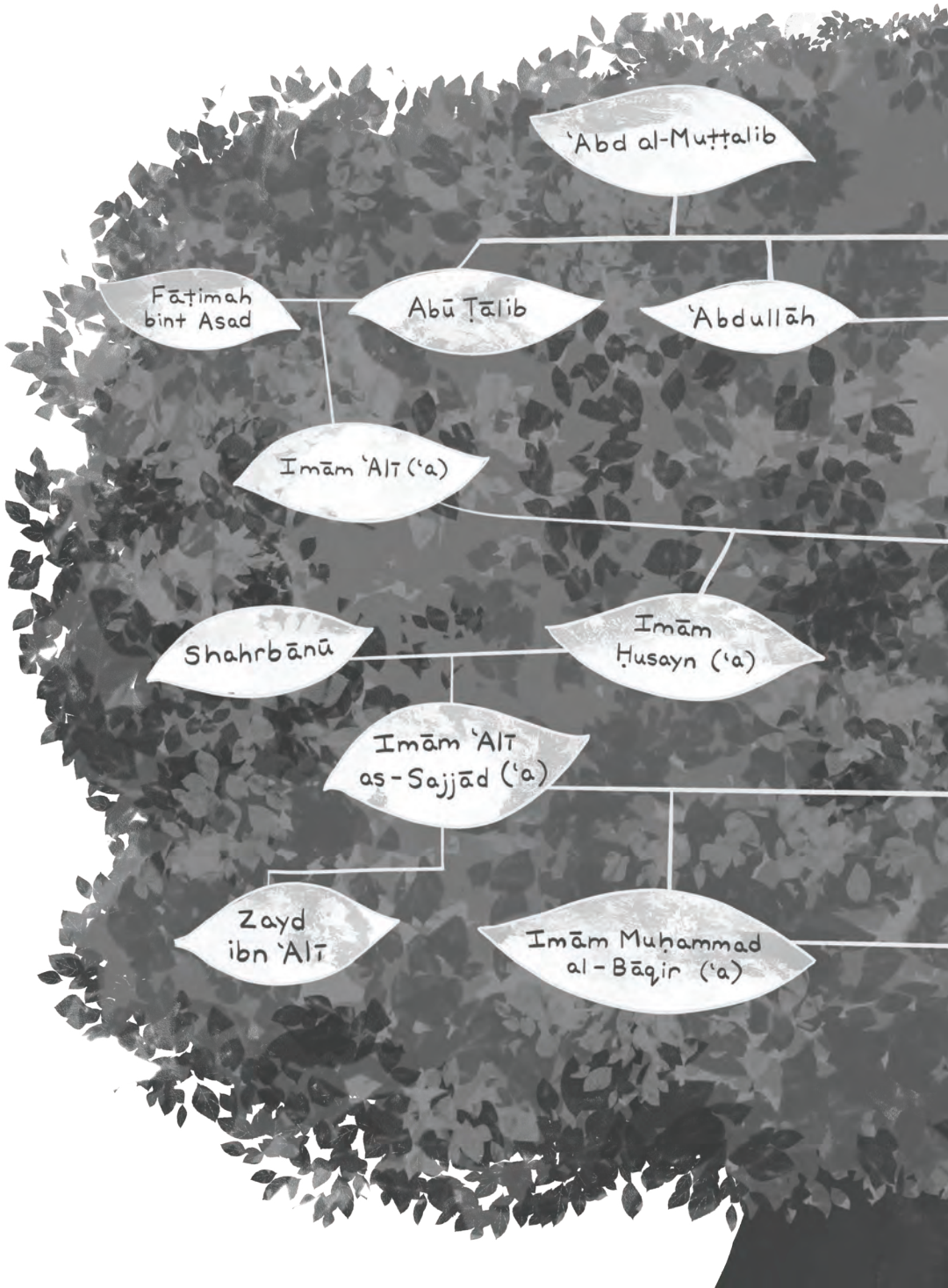
760 AD • 143 AD
He travels to Iraq for ziyārah and shows the location of the grave of Imām ʿAlī ﷺ which up until that point was hidden.

14

762 AD • 145 AH
Ismāʿīl, the eldest son of Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ, passes away. A group of people believe he is the next Imām and follow him becoming known as the Ismāʿīli sect.

15

Shawwāl 25
765 AD • 148 AH
He passes away by poisoning and is buried in Jannatul Baqīʿ in Medina.


ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib
Fāṭimah bint Asad
Abū Ṭālib
ʿAbdullāh
Imām ʿAlī (ʿa)
Shahrbānū
Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa)
Imām ʿAlī as-Sajjād (ʿa)
Zayd ibn ʿAlī
Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir (ʿa)


Āminah
ʿAbbās
Founders of the ʿAbbāsid Dynasty
Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ)
Lady Khadījah
Lady Fāṭimah az-Zahrā' ('a)
Imām Ḥasan ('a)
Umm Isḥāq
Fāṭimah bint Ḥasan
Umm Farwa
Imām Ja'far aṣ-Ṣadiq ('a)



Prologue

You may have heard the 8th century AD referred to as the 'dark ages'. From some perspectives, that's true. Europe took centuries to recover scientifically and culturally after the fall of the Roman Empire. But at the same time, in the Islamic World, it was the 1st century AH (after Hijrah), an era of great science, scholarship, and progress. That's all because of one immaculate man, descended from an immaculate lineage tracing back to Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ: the 6th Imām, Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ؑ.

But what does it mean when we call Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ؑ 'the greatest scientist'? Weren't all the Imāms ؑ 'one nūr' (light)? How could they be one nūr, but also be twelve separate people?

It's true, each Imām ؑ had their own life and faced their own unique challenges. 'One nūr' doesn't mean the Imāms ؑ were a single soul. It means that an Imām's actions and the guidance they bring all come from a single source: Allah ﷻ. Imamate is present from birth in each new leader whom Allah ﷻ chooses to guide humankind. When one Imām ؑ passes away, the next Imām ؑ steps forward so that the world is never left unguided. This way, each Imām ؑ functions as a link in the chain of guidance. They are individual, and also a piece of something greater. Fourteen immaculate and perfect humans: fourteen Maʿṣūmīn ؑ with one message; one mission.

Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ؑ was blessed with the second-longest period of Imamate, 33 years, from 114 to 148 after Hijrah. This was a time of major upheaval for the Islamic world. The Umayyad dynasty, which had held the caliphate for 90 years, was overthrown by the new ʿAbbāsid dynasty. Their wars lasted for years, distracting the government and creating a unique circumstance for Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ؑ. He faced

less harassment from the caliphs of his time than any other Imām ﷺ. Because of this, Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ left behind a wealth of knowledge and discoveries. He was able to build schools, educate thousands of students, and spread the message of Islam far and wide.

We have Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ to thank for a host of scientific revelations in biology, astronomy, chemistry and beyond. In Islamic science, Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ is the namesake of the Shīʿah code of laws: Jaʿfarī. But his influence is not only felt at the highest levels of law and science: Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ also left us gifts of guidance in his everyday life. Like all the Imāms ﷺ , Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ is an ideal role model of Islamic practice. His life is a blueprint for all Muslims to follow, even today. We can learn akhlāq from his words and actions, preserved in ḥadīth from those who interacted with him. Through these stories, we can imagine what it would have been like to meet Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ and we can experience his wisdom passed down through the centuries.

◆*A Meeting at the Oasis*[1]◆

When you hear Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq's name, your first question might be: Why was he called Jaʿfar? And why was he called aṣ-Ṣādiq? To answer this, we need to go back to Medina, the city of Prophet ﷺ, years before Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ was born...

On the road to Medina, there was a small oasis. It shimmered in vibrant contrast to the warm tones of the surrounding desert. Abū Khālid al-Kabūli caught sight of the sparkling water and decided he would lead his camel to drink. As the animal lowered its head, Abū Khālid raised his. He looked over the water and the sand, past the city wall, to the domes and roofs of Medina. They always shined brightly at this time of day. Abū Khālid smiled to himself and said a small duʿāʾ in his heart.

Yā Allah, thank you for guiding me here so that I could make this holy city my home.

1 Biḥār al-Anwār, Vol. 47, P. 8.

Abū Khālid had a special place in his heart for Medina. He had been born far, far away, in the city of Kabul, capital of Afghanistan. By the grace of Allah, he had undertaken that long journey to make a new home in a city he had never seen before. All he had known was that he would find his Imām ﷺ there, and so that was where he needed to be.

A man was walking near the city walls. He noticed Abū Khālid, and turned to approach him. In the years that Abū Khālid had been a companion of Imām ʿAlī as-Sajjād ﷺ, the Imām's ﷺ health had always been fragile. But today especially Abū Khālid noticed how slowly his Imām ﷺ walked. Imām as-Sajjād's expression was serene and content, but was there an extra grayness to his hair? Or maybe an extra sharpness to the bones of his face?

"Salāmun ʿalaykum, Abū-Khālid," said Imām as-Sajjād ﷺ, holding a hand to his heart.

"Wa ʿalaykum salām, my Imām, and peace and blessings be upon your grandfather Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and his immaculate family," Abū-Khālid touched his heart and dipped his head respectfully, then took the Imām's hand and kissed it. "May Allah ﷻ preserve you for us."

Imām as-Sajjād ﷺ was happy to see Abū-Khālid, and he smiled. Abū-Khālid met his Imām's gaze, and, as usual, felt it pierce straight through him. Imām as-Sajjād ﷺ knew there was a question weighing on Abū-Khālid's mind. He motioned for them both to sit. Abū-Khālid sat on his cloak, while Imām as-Sajjād ﷺ sat on a rock beneath one of the palm trees. Abū-Khālid's camel also sat, as if she too wished to pay her respects to the Imām ﷺ .

Abū-Khālid cleared his throat.

"O Master," he began, "May Allah ﷻ bless you and your progeny. I-" and then he paused. "Forgive me." The thought of losing his dear Imām ﷺ caused Abū Khālid's throat to tighten.

Imām as-Sajjād ﷺ nodded to encourage him.

"O Imām. If I may ask—who shall be the Imām after you?"

"My young son, Muḥammad, shall be the 5th Imām."

"Māshāʾ Allāh," said Abū-Khālid. "And... after him? I'm asking, my mawlā, because as you know, I've..."

Imām as-Sajjād ﷺ raised his hand; Abū-Khālid stopped speaking. They both knew what he was about to say. When he first came to Medina, Abū-Khālid had been the companion of a man named Muḥammad ibn-Ḥanīfah, who he had believed was the Imām, although al-Ḥanīfah had never claimed as such. In the aftermath of Karbalāʾ, when the Ahl al-Bayt ﷺ had been scattered and oppressed, there had been many people who were confused about the identity of their Imām ﷺ. Years passed before Abū-Khālid met Imām ʿAlī as-Sajjād ﷺ, and recognized the true Imamate through Imām as-Sajjād's character and knowledge.

"Kankar," said Imām as-Sajjād ﷺ, using his private name for Abū-Khālid. "After my son Muḥammad, the 6th Imām shall be his son, Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ."

"Aṣ-Ṣādiq?" asked Abū-Khālid. "I don't understand, Yā Sajjād. You are perfectly truthful, and so is your son Muḥammad. Why should this Imām have that title?"

Imām as-Sajjād ﷺ smiled warmly. "Because, many years from now, at the end of the life of the 11th Imām ﷺ, there shall be an unworthy man who also bears the name Jaʿfar. He will try to claim the 12th Imamate in place of his relative, Imām Muḥammad al-Mahdī عجل الله فرجه الشريف, the chosen of Allah ﷻ, but he shall not succeed. This man will be given the title Jaʿfar al-Khadhdhāb: Jaʿfar the Liar. That is why the 6th Imām shall be called Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ, the Truthful, so that the two men should never be confused."[2]

"But Mawlā, if I may—why does the name of man generations from now have an effect on the name of your grandson?"

2 Kamāl al-Dīn, Vol.1, Pp. 319-320.

“Why do you think, dear Abū-Khālid?”

Abū-Khālid paused for a long moment to collect his thoughts. Imām as-Sajjād ﷺ waited patiently, without a sign of annoyance.

“Maybe…” said Abū-Khālid, “because the Imāms are not leaders for only one generation. Every maʿṣūm is an example to all Muslims, not just for their lifetime, but for all time. People thousands of years from now will look to the 6th Imām for guidance so we cannot risk confusion.”

Imām as-Sajjād ﷺ smiled brightly and nodded.

“The title of every Imām is part of Allah’s great plan for guidance and is often based on the need of the situation. My great-grandfather's title was also aṣ-Sādiq since the trust of his people was crucial to his message, especially at a time when falsehood was in abundance!”

“I see,” said Abū-Khālid. “Thank you, my Imām.”

A warm, light feeling had flooded Abū-Khālid’s chest. It was overwhelming to be the recipient of such guidance. He thought *Allah ﷻ would never leave His creations alone, without guidance.* His own life was a clear example of that.

As Imām as-Sajjād ﷺ started to stand, a pang of worry entered Abū-Khālid’s heart. He remembered how slowly his Imām ﷺ had been walking. However, alḥamdulillāh, the Imām ﷺ rose easily without any help. Maybe Abū-Khālid had imagined those signs of frailty after all. The Imām ﷺ stood tall, with his shoulders back and eyes bright.

“May Allah ﷻ grant you endless health, comfort, and dignity, my Mawlā,” said Abū-Khālid. “I swear to you, I am your lifelong companion. And inshāʾAllāh, if Allah grants me enough years to see the Imamates of your son Imām Muḥammad ﷺ, and your grandson, Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ, I shall be their companion too.”

Abū-Khālid gathered his cloak and the reins of his camel. Then the two men, Imām ﷺ and companion, returned to Medina side by side.



Chapter One

Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ was born on the 17th of Rabīʿ al-Awwal in the year 83 after Hijra.[3] His birthdate is the same as that of his great-great-great-grandfather, Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ.[4] Besides a birthday, newborn Jaʿfar ﷺ and Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ share another honor: their title. Even before the Qurʾān's revelation, Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ earned a reputation for honesty. His fellow Meccans would rely on him to mediate their personal or business conflicts, and so they called him 'aṣ-Ṣādiq'.

Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq's father was the 5th Imām, Muḥammad al-Bāqir ﷺ, and his mother was Umm Farwah. She was blessed by Allah ﷻ, first as the wife of an Imām ﷺ, and then as mother to an Imām ﷺ, due to her akhlāq, piety, and God-consciousness. Umm Farwah also had a noble lineage. She was the granddaughter of Muḥammad, son of Abū Bakr, and also the great-granddaughter of Asmāʾ, daughter of Umays. Muḥammad ibn Abū Bakr, though a son of the 1st khalīfah, had been adopted and raised by Imām ʿAlī ﷺ. Even though Muḥammad ibn Abū Bakr was not his biological son, Imām 'Alī ﷺ considered him like his own. Asmāʾ bint Umays had spent her life as a loyal companion to Fāṭimah az-Zahrāʾ ﷺ. Yet, beyond her ancestry, it was Umm Farwah's character that made her worthy of the honor and responsibility she was blessed with. The women of Medina would seek out Umm Farwah for religious guidance. In ḥadīth, we find that Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ would later remember his mother as "[one] of the pious, faithful and devoted women."[5]

3 Uṣūl al-Kāfī, Vol. 1, P. 472.

4 Al-Irshād, Vol. 2, P. 180.

5 Biḥār al-Anwār, Vol. 47, P. 7.

On the day of Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq's birth,[6] his grandfather Imām as-Sajjād ﷺ, and his father, Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir ﷺ, sat in the front room of al-Bāqir's home. They spoke with anticipation of their duʿās and aspirations for the soon-to-arrive child. He will raise the flag of religion and revive the traditions of his grandfather, Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. Then the midwife hurried into the room. She announced that Umm Farwah had delivered a healthy baby boy with light colored eyes. Tears glistened in the eyes of as-Sajjād ﷺ and al-Bāqir ﷺ. They embraced, both thanking Allah for the gift of that blessed moment, and then hurried to meet the baby. Three Imāms ﷺ came together in one room to recite the adhān that welcomed Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ into the world.

◆ *Young Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ shows his Wisdom*[7] ◆

The students of Imām ʿAlī as-Sajjād ﷺ and his son, Muḥammad al-Bāqir ﷺ, came in all shapes and sizes. Some had been born in Medina; others had traveled for miles to study with the Prophet's descendents. Still, even in these diverse gatherings, one member stood out. He was the smallest and the youngest person, yet he was a teacher, not a student. His intellect towered above men twice his age. He was Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ.

At the universities which Imām-as Sajjād ﷺ and Imām al-Bāqir ﷺ founded, men would gather to debate Islamic law or philosophy, and it was common to see one young boy seated in a circle of bearded men. When the boy spoke, the grown men would listen closely so that they wouldn't miss any of his knowledge. Such was the status of Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ, even as a child.

One day, when he was 11 years old, aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ joined an astronomy class which his father was leading. The day was sunny and pleasant. Other children were playing games in the street; young Jaʿfar had seen them on the walk over. He had no problem with games; aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ did play with

6 Al-Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq Kamā ʿArrafahu ʿUlemaāʾ al-Gharb, P. 72.

7 Maghze Mutafakkire Jahāne Shīʿeh.

youths his age when the time was right for leisure. But he was at his happiest here, in the university of his father, doing his part to spread the truth.

There was a new student in the classroom that day; his name was Pedar Hooman. He had white hair and a thick, black beard speckled with gray. His forehead was creased from a lifetime of thinking. He had traveled from the faraway land of Persia to learn from the Ahl al-Bayt ﷺ. Hooman was certainly confused to see a child seated among all of these scholars, but no one else questioned the boy's presence, so he decided not to either. Besides, there was something special about the boy. He did not have the mannerisms of a normal child. His gaze was steady with confidence, deep with maturity and bright with nūr.

"Yā Mawlā," said Hooman, addressing al-Bāqir ﷺ. "Māshāʾ Allāh. You've taught us about the Heavens, the stars, and the moon. Would you now answer a question about our own world?"

Muḥammad al-Bāqir ﷺ nodded. Hooman said, "Jazākallāh khayran, my Mawlā. Many people say that our Earth is flat, like a disc. Is this true?"

To Pedar Hooman's surprise, it was not Muḥammad al-Bāqir ﷺ who answered him. The Imām ﷺ looked toward the young boy and gave a nod of permission. The young boy said:

"Thank you for your question, Pedar. The answer is that the Earth cannot be flat. Do we not observe how the sun rises in the East and then sets in the West? Do we not observe how, every twenty-four hours, the night and the day change? If the Earth was not round, these things would not occur in such a precise manner. Therefore, the Earth must be round."

The students murmured in agreement. Muḥammad al-Bāqir ﷺ smiled. Pedar Hooman looked in astonishment at the young boy.

"Māshāʾ Allāh!" he said. "You are a scholar far, far beyond your years! How can it be that you have such knowledge?"

“Because he is aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ,” answered another student. “He is the grandson of the Noble Prophet of Islam, and the son of Sayyidah Fāṭimah az-Zahrāʾ ﷺ. He is one of the fourteen Maʿṣūmīn ﷺ, and our future Imām ﷺ.”

Hooman repeated his cries of māshāʾAllāh, more loudly. How blessed was he to be in the presence of not one, but two immaculate persons? For the rest of the class, Hooman directed his questions to both aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ and al-Bāqir ﷺ, and they each took turns answering him.

Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq’s childhood was full of little miracles like these. Al-Bāqir ﷺ put young Jaʿfar ﷺ forward and let him demonstrate his divine knowledge in order to cleanse the people’s doubt. For all who met him, it was clear that this young boy was next in the line of Imamate.

Imām al-Bāqir ﷺ also knew that, years in the future, his son’s leadership would be a time of fragmentation, where different groups would create their own interpretations about how to live and worship. The Islamic world would splinter into different schools of law. On the side of Ahl al-Sunnah there would be four major schools. However, by the grace of Allah ﷻ, there would only be one school for the Shīʿah. Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ was undoubtedly the Imām. Even when he was a child, his wisdom had surpassed adults and scholars alike. Therefore, the Jaʿfarī school of law which he compiled must undoubtedly be the true message of Allah ﷻ, his Prophet ﷺ, and the Ahl al-Bayt ﷺ.



Chapter Two

Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ is a descendent of both the Masters of the Youth of Paradise through the marriage of his grandfather, Imām as-Sajjād ﷺ, son of Imam Ḥusayn ﷺ, to Fāṭimah, daughter of Imām al-Ḥasan ﷺ. When aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ reached adulthood and it came time for him to marry, his chosen bride was Fāṭimah al-Ḥasan. She shared the same name as his grandmother, and she too traced her lineage from the second Imām!

Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ and his wife Fāṭimah al-Ḥasan were blessed with two sons: Ismāʿīl and ʿAbdullāh al-Afṭaḥ. Sadly, after the birth of their second son, Fāṭimah died and left her husband a widower. After her death, Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ bought and freed a female slave named Ḥamīdah Khātūn ('lady' in Arabic). It was the young Imām's practice to welcome these newly freed people into his household and then train and educate them in Islamic sciences. He soon saw that the woman Ḥamīdah Khātūn was chaste and intelligent, with a pure heart and a noble character. Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ did not care that Ḥamīdah Khātūn was a former slave and a non-Arab, without a lineage. Ḥamīdah's ancestors were from a region in North Africa called the Barbary Coast; she was called 'Ḥamīdah al-Barbariyah' by some. Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ only cared about the quality of her akhlāq and the strength of her taqwā (God-consciousness), and soon they were married.

With her husband's guidance, Ḥamīdah Khātūn became a scholar herself. She would advise the women of Medina on religious matters and earned a high status, especially among women. She held classes and hosted lectures to help spread the message of the Ahl al-Bayt ﷺ. She balanced caring for her household with caring for the spiritual guidance of her community and worked in the constant service of Allah ﷻ.

Eventually, Ḥamīdah Khātūn and Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ were blessed with two sons of their own; Muḥammad al-Dībāj and Mūsā al-Kāẓim ﷺ, the next Imām.

◆ *ʿAbdur Raḥmān and the Errand* ◆

Everyday, ʿAbdur Raḥmān woke up and said alḥamdulillāh! He felt like the luckiest, most blessed person in all creation. He had prayed to Allah ﷻ asking for His help, and subḥānallāh, his duʿāʾ had been granted.

One moment, he was in the marketplace with his bare skin burning in the sun, ready to be sold as a slave. Heavy shackles cut and scorched his wrists. When he dared to look up, he saw a sea of leering, greedy faces. Voices called out the price they believed he was worth.

Then, the tide of his life turned in such a sudden moment. A man with a pure, radiant face had stepped forward and offered to buy ʿAbdur Raḥmān for far above the going price. There was no superiority or condescension in his tone. The slave seller hesitated, spellbound, then agreed to the price. ʿAbdur Raḥmān knew he had just been sold, but his heart was throbbing with hope.

Just as soon as ʿAbdur Raḥmān stepped forward and his shackles were removed, this savior had declared to the crowd that his new slave was free. Had the crowd whispered? Or cheered? ʿAbdur Raḥmān couldn't remember. The world swam before his eyes. The savior put a kind hand on ʿAbdur Raḥmān's shoulder while he wept in disbelief.

Am I truly free? ʿAbdur Raḥmān wondered to himself. *But where shall I go?*

This savior invited the newly freed man to join his household for a while, if he wished. ʿAbdur Raḥmān had agreed eagerly.

"Tell me your name, Yā Mawlā, so that I may properly thank you."

The savior introduced himself as Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad. He did

not proclaim his title or his unparalleled status. ʿAbdur Raḥmān heard the whispers from the crowd around them, calling his savior the Divine Imām ﷺ, chosen by Allah ﷻ.

Just being freed was overwhelming enough for ʿAbdur Raḥmān. Yet, somehow, he had received the even greater blessing of being a guest of Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ. Subḥānallāh! He was fed, clothed, and welcomed as a brother. He saw the classes Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ taught and before long, asked to join. The only expectations on him were that he should take his studies seriously, and lend a hand to Ḥamīdah Khātūn if she needed anything.

During the day, ʿAbdur Raḥmān focused on his studies. In the evening, he loved to go out and explore Medina. Sometimes he ventured as far as the desert, simply because he could. He was free to stay up as late as he chose. He loved to climb the hills after Fajr and just sit, watching, as the sky changed from black, to gold, and then to blue. Other times, he would join friends from the town. They would tell stories and play games late into the night.

ʿAbdur Raḥmān didn't know if his teacher was aware of these nightly adventures, or whether he noticed his fatigue the next day. ʿAbdur Raḥmān had never fallen asleep during a lecture, but he had yawned loudly once or twice. If aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ knew, he gave no sign.

One sweltering summer day, Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ approached ʿAbdur Raḥmān after their lessons. He held out a letter and asked if ʿAbdur Raḥmān might deliver it before Maghrib. ʿAbdur Raḥmān accepted the parchment and glanced at the name at the top. He knew the family; they owned a farm outside the city. The walk was long, with only a few stops for shade.

"Wa ʿalaykum salām. Of course, my Mawlā. I'll leave right away."

As he walked, ʿAbdur Raḥmān's back ached and heaviness grew

in his steps. The night prior he had stayed up all the way till dawn, playing with some friends he had made at Jumuʿah prayers. The fatigue in his feet spread to his legs, his arms, his shoulders, even his eyelids. Sand slipped into his sandals and rubbed against his skin. His turban became damp where it touched his forehead.

After some time, he noticed that the sun had reached the height of Ẓuhr. He stopped at the first palm tree he saw and prayed in its shade. He briefly lost focus in sajdah. Had he actually fallen asleep? Frustration helped ground him for the rest of ṣalāh. As soon as he finished, ʿAbdur Raḥmān flopped heavily against the trunk of the palm tree. A sweet, cool breeze rolled by, lifting the heat from his skin. The palm tree's leafy fronds rustled gently above him. There were hours to go until Maghrib. He still had time...

ʿAbdur Raḥmān's eyes blinked open. Where was he? A gentle breeze was brushing his cheek, but only on one side. He opened his eyes; the palm fronds above him were still. Beyond, the sky was dark and twinkling. He jolted forward in a flush of fear. It must be past Maghrib. Why did he sleep so long? How could he let this happen? He had missed the letter's delivery, and worse, he had failed his Mawlā.

Someone placed a hand on ʿAbdur Raḥmān's arm, startling him, and he instinctively pulled away. Then he realized that Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq 🕋 was sitting beside him.

For a moment, ʿAbdur Raḥmān was too stunned to speak. Aṣ-Ṣādiq 🕋 continued to smile at him, calm and reassuring. There was a palm frond in his hand. Suddenly, ʿAbdur Raḥmān understood where the breeze on his cheek had come from. Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq 🕋, the divinely appointed Imām 🕋, had been fanning his face as he slept. ʿAbdur Raḥmān threw himself onto the ground at his teacher's feet, crying:

"Mawlā! My Mawlā! May I be sacrificed for you and your family! Please forgive me."

Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ guided ʿAbdur Raḥmān up from the ground with a reassuring gesture. ʿAbdur Raḥmān felt sick with shame.

"Mawlā! How could you fan me in my sleep after how I've let you down?"

"ʿAbdur Raḥmān, my brother," replied his teacher. The Imām's expression was gentle and his smile was sympathetic. "There is one thing I want you to know: the day is for work, and the night is for rest. Remember that henceforth."

"I will, my Mawlā. I promise," ʿAbdur Raḥmān took Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq's hand, bent his head over it and kissed it.

Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ said nothing else about ʿAbdur Raḥmān's indiscretion. They walked to deliver the letter together, and then back home, talking and laughing as if nothing had happened. ʿAbdur Raḥmān had lived with Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ for some time. While he was not surprised, he could not help but be amazed at his Mawlā's constant calmness. It was obvious now that aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ knew everything about the late nights ʿAbdur Raḥmān spent wasting time with his friends. Yet, aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ had preserved ʿAbdur Raḥmān's dignity. He corrected so gently, yet it was more effective than the harshest of reprimands. ʿAbdur Raḥmān understood that aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ expected better from him, but also believed in him, and only desired for him to learn and grow.

When the two men arrived home, Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ gathered his household for a family meeting. He reminded them that everything is a blessing from Allah ﷻ, including our time on Earth. We all have a responsibility not to waste our time, but to spend it thoughtfully, and in full submission to Allah ﷻ.

ʿAbdur Raḥmān sat in duʿāʾ for a long time that night. He thanked Allah ﷻ for all the blessings he had been showered with that he could never hope to deserve. Allah ﷻ had granted him a life of freedom, and now he had a responsibility not to waste it. He had the choice of how to spend his time—in submission to his Lord, or in pursuit of his own

desires. With hands raised, ʿAbdur Raḥmān vowed to try to dedicate every second of his time, now that he was a free man, to the service of Allah ﷻ and His chosen Imāms ﷺ. Surely, he was as free as any human, blessed to be a slave of his All-Merciful and All-Kind Creator. ʿAbdur Raḥmān took a long, sighing breath, ran his hands across his face, and released a final subḥānallāh. And then he went to sleep.

◆*The Night Mission*[8]◆



8 Biḥār al-Anwār, Vol. 87, P. 702.

The outer walls of a city are only its first set of borders. Within it, the community is fractured according to religion, ethnicity, or prosperity. The richest, most coveted neighborhoods could sit just a street away from the most destitute neighborhoods and yet never mix. This is the story of a man who crossed a border in his own city and the lessons he learned.

Yaḥyā attended Jumuʿah every Friday. He visited the Prophet's mosque for every Eid, and, being one of the wealthiest merchants in Medina, he enjoyed a position in one of the front rows. He considered himself a great man, one of the most prominent citizens of one of the world's greatest cities. His father had built a business selling pottery, but it was Yaḥyā who had elevated that business into a small empire. Now he traded goods as far as Yemen, Egypt, and even Persia.

Usually, Yaḥyā took pleasure in the sound of his own voice. His wife would listen respectfully while he shared the events of his day or mused aimlessly about religion, or politics, or the weather. However, one night, Yaḥyā's wife was bursting with some news she had heard. He decided to humor her excitement.

"Umm Kulthūm at the market told me that there is a hero here in Medina!"

"A hero?"

"Yes! It's all very mysterious. Umm Kulthūm said he is a cloaked man who visits the poorest neighborhoods and distributes food in the cover of night. No one knows who he is, where he came from, or why he does it!"

"And which neighborhood is this?"

"The Christian one just a few streets from here."

Yaḥyā did not question his wife further, but her words were on his mind throughout the next work day. Despite himself, his curiosity was peaked. Why did the hero deliver his alms in the dead of night? Why did he disguise himself with a cloak? Most importantly, how could one be

sure this was a hero at all if the person's identity was unknown? Sneaking around in the night shouldn't earn someone the title of hero, especially not above honest, hard-working business people like himself.

Once the rumor had been planted, it sprouted and grew across Medina. Yaḥyā heard whispers about a charitable 'hero of the Christians' around the pottery wheels in his studio, at the masjid, but most often from his wife. She was captivated by the idea of this hero, who performed his good deeds with no desire for attention or reward.

"How can you be sure he's such a hero?" Yaḥyā had demanded, and she had responded with a puzzled frown.

He continued, "If he is a Christian, why should we look up to him? And worse, if he is Muslim, why he is choosing to help the Christians? Their poor are not our responsibility. To me, that clearly shows that he is doing this only for fame and attention."

"I don't know," said his wife quietly. "Charity is charity. Isn't that always a good thing?"

"Well then, what about me?" Yaḥyā's voice rose. "I give charity every Ramaḍān, in amounts I'm sure more that this Christian hero could never dream of. You don't see me lauded around the city as a hero! Plus, I always make sure my charity goes to believing Muslims, not non-believers."

Days went by and the city's praise for the hero grew, as did Yaḥyā's annoyance. He tried in vain to convince the governor to intervene. The governor replied that he had more significant problems to worry about than some unclaimed acts of charity. Yaḥyā even approached the Imām himself, Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ. Still, instead of offering his assistance, aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ calmly warned Yaḥyā not to interfere. Why would no one act?

Yaḥyā wanted to get to the bottom of this mystery once and for all. He purchased a long black cloak. He selected a night of the full moon when the streets and alleys were silvery bright, ideal for a night mission.

Yaḥyā navigated between the beams of silver light, keeping to the shadows, his cloak pulled over his face. He couldn't remember if he had ever been to any Christian neighborhood, especially not the poor ones, even though he had spent his entire life in this city. He discriminated against all non-believers equally. An alley was positioned across from a couple of decrepit houses; he crouched in the darkness to wait. Thanks to the moonlight, when this mysterious hero showed himself, he wouldn't have anywhere to hide.

Yaḥyā didn't have to wait long. A cloaked figure, the height and build of a man appeared leading a donkey. The donkey had baskets of food tied to its back. At each hovel, the man would halt the donkey, untie a basket, and lay it on the doorstep. Yaḥyā trailed behind the figure, lurking and waiting. When all the baskets had been dispersed, the man raised his hands to the sky and recited a long duʿāʾ. Then he mounted his donkey and rode away.

Yaḥyā continued to follow; at moments, he had to jog to keep up with the donkey. The cloaked men paralleled each other as they trotted down adjacent streets. Yaḥyā would pause and glance between buildings to keep an eye on his target. They traveled from the rundown outskirts of Medina into safer, well maintained, Muslim neighborhoods. After that, it wasn't long before the donkey stopped. The cloaked man dismounted and knocked at the door of a house. A woman opened it; her eyes smiled kindly. The cloaked man removed his hood as he stepped over the threshold, then shut the door behind them.

Yaḥyā fell back against the alleyway, stunned. He had immediately recognized the house. Still, if the man's hood had not come off, then maybe Yaḥyā could have doubted. The cloaked hero could have been a son of the household, or a cousin, or a companion. But the sight of that face, which held nūr like no other face, left no doubt. Medina's mysterious hero was the Imām himself, Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad, aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ.

Yaḥyā had no intention to confront Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ. As soon as he had seen the Imām's face, reality crashed upon him. Charity could

never be wrong or harmful, except to Yaḥyā's pride and jealousy. At night, he flashed back to his conversation with aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ, where the Imām ﷺ had smiled so knowingly and calmly warned him not to interfere with the mysterious hero. The weight of his hubris, the shame of his arrogance, was overwhelming for Yaḥyā. He told no one about his discovery. He couldn't imagine how he would ever face the Imām ﷺ again.

Yet, Allah ﷻ brought them together on the very next day. After Jumuʿah, Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ approached Yaḥyā. Yaḥyā's mouth went dry. His immediate impulse was to flee, but the Imām ﷺ had already made eye contact with him. The Imām's expression was so gentle and genial, it reassured Yaḥyā, even in his panic.

Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ inquired politely after the health of Yaḥyā's family. But his gaze was so knowledgeable that Yaḥyā was certain the Imām ﷺ knew everything about the night before. Sweat broke out on Yaḥyā's palms and brow; his mind raced.

"I.., uh" stammered Yaḥyā, "I… Well, I heard a rumor about the mysterious hero who gives alms to the poor, and I wondered who he was. So I followed him."

Yaḥyā glanced around and lowered his voice. Aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ waited patiently with an attentive expression.

"I had no idea it was you, O my Master, or I never would have done it! Forgive me. I see now that only the best of people choose to conceal their identity when going about the best of deeds, to keep their intentions pure: only for Allah ﷻ."

Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ nodded slowly. Yaḥyā swallowed. Maybe this great man was not as disappointed as he had feared.

"I suppose there was one other thing I wanted to ask you, if I may, Yā Mawlā... one thing I still can't understand. Clearly, you are doing a good and noble thing, but why for those people? Do you know that they are Christians? Surely, it is the responsibility of their own kind to care for them."

Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ replied: “I hurry to answer even the needs of my enemies for I fear that by rejecting them, they will move far from the path of Allah ﷻ, and His guide.”

Often, the Imām’s face was too dazzling to look into directly, but Yaḥyā tried this time to see if his master was angry. The Imām’s expression held only sympathy and concern. Of course, such a man who would care for even his worst enemy, in order to guide them, would have the patience to help Yaḥyā. This is what it meant to do everything for the sake of Allah ﷻ. “I will not take my sin lightly, my Master,” said Yaḥyā, bowing his head low, “and I will not forget this lesson.”



Chapter Three

In Muḥarram of 95 AH (after Hijrah), Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ was just 11 years old. At this tender age, he experienced his first great loss: the martyrdom of his grandfather, the fourth Imām, ʿAlī as-Sajjād ﷺ.

Imām ʿAlī as-Sajjād ﷺ, Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn, 'the adornment of the worshippers', had lived a quiet life in Medina since he returned from Damascus. For some Imāms ﷺ, such as Imām ʿAlī ﷺ and Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ, the circumstances of their lifetime had given them no other choice but to defend Islam from the attacks of the enemies on the battlefield. After Karbalāʾ, the Ahl al-Bayt ﷺ had only a small, oppressed following. Imām as-Sajjād ﷺ understood that the best way to keep the message of Allah ﷻ and His Prophet ﷺ alive was to educate those around him, and especially by reviving the message of Islam through duʿāʾ.

The Imām ﷺ was so closely monitored by the caliphs of his day that the followers of the Ahl al-Bayt ﷺ could not openly show their support. Still, Imām as-Sajjād ﷺ had kept the message of Allah ﷻ, the Prophet ﷺ, and Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ alive. He hosted lessons at the homes of his followers, often in secret. And so, even in the face of such great oppression, the number of Imām as-Sajjād's students and followers grew. The caliph Walīd, son of ʿAbdul Malik, saw the Imām's influence as a threat and chose to have him poisoned. Imām as-Sajjād's martyrdom was a heartbreaking time for the Ahl al-Bayt ﷺ.

The responsibility of Imamate transferred to Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq's father, Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir ﷺ. Al-Bāqir means 'the one who splits knowledge' because Imām al-Bāqir ﷺ was known for his prowess as a teacher. He could take the most profound or complicated topic and break it into small, simple pieces that were easy for his students to understand.

For some time, due to the political climate, Imām al-Bāqir ﷺ experienced lighter harassment than Imām as-Sajjād ﷺ had, so he expanded his father's efforts in a way that had not been available before. With the help of his son, Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ, Imām al-Bāqir ﷺ established a university at Masjid an-Nabī (the Prophet's Mosque) to teach Qurʾān, ḥadīth, and science.

Eventually, the Imāms' university had thousands of students, and the message of the Ahl al-Bayt ﷺ was spreading. Again, the caliph at that time, Hishām ibn ʿAbdul Mālik, saw the Imām's growing influence as a threat. Just 19 years after his father, Imām al-Bāqir ﷺ was also poisoned and martyred.

So, in the year 114 AH, Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ became the divinely appointed Imām ﷺ. He was 31 years old. The passing years had seen him become a husband, and then a father. He had watched his beloved father and grandfather martyred for the cause of Allah ﷻ. As the Imām, aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ would continue to build on their legacies. He would open more schools, educate thousands of students, and make foundational discoveries across the fields of Jurisprudence, Philosophy, Theology, & Science.

◆ *ʿAbdul ʿAlā at the Market*[9] ◆

Abdul ʿAlā would always remember the heat on that day. Not the usual, tolerable heat which defined everyday life in Medina. While visitors struggled in the desert climate, to a native, the scorching sun was part of life; accepted and then forgotten.

Not that day. The sun's rays seemed to pierce through clothing. The air was heavy and stifling. Every breath warmed ʿAbdul ʿAlā's throat as if he drank a fresh cup of chai. The sand baked, causing the horizon to shimmer. It was the kind of heat that led desperate men toward an imaginary oasis, then abandoned them to the sun's relentless force.

9 The Introduction to Infallibles, The 8th Infallible, Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq.

On such a day, no man would leave his home if it could be helped. ʿAbdul ʿAlā would have gladly stayed inside, fanning himself with a palm leaf, except his wife had said they had no rice for supper. So out to the market he went. He ducked as often as possible under the market stalls and pretended to be interested in their wares. In truth, all he cared for was their shade.

"No, thank you, brother. Salāmun ʿalaykum," said ʿAbdul ʿAlā. He set down the trinket he had been eyeing and braved the street once more. Ahead, a man was approaching. The man progressed slowly, placing a hand over his heart to acknowledge each person who greeted him. From any distance, ʿAbdul ʿAlā would have known the face of his Imām ﷺ. That face, so trustworthy, and tranquil, and always kind. Some days, when his grandchildren asked ʿAbdul ʿAlā to describe the Imām's face, he would admit that it wasn't the features which stood out in his memory. Surely, every line of that noble face was etched in his mind's eye: the shape of the nose, the eyes, mouth. But it felt inappropriate to describe the Imām ﷺ in terms of trivial physical attributes. All were transcended by the Imām's shining nūr.

"Salāmun ʿalaykum, ʿAbdul ʿAlā."

ʿAbdul ʿAlā had been so mesmerized, he hadn't realized that the Imām was now close enough to speak.

"Wa ʿalaykum salām, Abā ʿAbdillāh, my Mawlā," cried ʿAbdul ʿAlā. He pressed his hand to his heart and bowed his head. Then he said, "May I lay my life for you, aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ! You are the grandson of the Noble Prophet ﷺ, may Allah ﷻ bless him. Why have you troubled yourself in such hot weather?"

Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ smiled. He replied, "I have come out to work the land and earn a living."

"Why Imām, allow me to come and do this work for you! No one should have to labor in this heat, let alone you."

Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ placed a hand to his heart again, graciously acknowledging the gesture.

"I am here to guide you, not to burden you," he said.

"May Allah ﷻ bless you and your hands, my Imām," said ʿAbdul ʿAlā. "I could not imagine working right now. I am only out to buy food for my family."

"MāshāʾAllah," said the Imām ﷺ. "May Allah ﷻ accept your ʿibādah."

With that, the Imām ﷺ said his salāms and continued walking. ʿAbdul ʿAlā returned to his shopping with a light heart. Of course, even this simple grocery trip was ʿibādah, as long as he guarded his intentions and kept them pure.

ʿAbdul ʿAlā found rice, as his wife had requested, and decided he would also buy a chicken. His family would rejoice and have some meat. On the way back to his house, he saw a beggar at the side of the road. ʿAbdul ʿAlā offered the beggar the final dinar from his pocket. Then, as he held out the coin, the face of his Imām ﷺ rose to his mind.

"My brother," said ʿAbdul ʿAlā, "take this dinar, and also come eat with my family. Wouldn't you like to escape this heat?"

ʿAbdul ʿAlā's wife was pleased to see another person invited for supper. She had always encouraged him to bring others, friends or strangers, to share in their blessings and barakah.

"Salāmun ʿalaykum. Welcome, brother," she said to their guest. Then she turned to her husband, smiling. "I hope that the heat was bearable."

ʿAbdul ʿAlā replied, "At first the heat was awful, until I saw Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ in the market. He was on his way to toil at the land. I thought, if our Imām ﷺ chooses to work on such a day, I can at least bear a visit to the market!"

“The Imām ﷺ said he was out to work?” asked his wife.

“He said he would not be a burden on society,” ʿAbdul ʿAlā explained. “Out of anyone in the world, our Imām ﷺ deserves to be treated like a king. And yet, he would never expect or allow it. MāshāʾAllāh.”

“MāshāʾAllāh,” agreed his wife. “And of course, our Imām ﷺ is setting an example for us all. He knows that there are countless blessings in just one day spent in labor, to support one’s family, to uplift society, to please Allah ﷻ… as you did today, my dear.”

“All I did was take a trip to the market, my dear,” protested ʿAbdul ʿAlā. “Our Mawlā was going to work with his hands on his farm!”

“Subḥānallāh. He is truly the best of men. Still, you went out in this blazing heat when we needed it. May Allah ﷻ reward you.”

“Inshā’Allāh. Please make duʿāʾ that Allah ﷻ accepts my ʿibādah.”

She blessed him with a beaming smile, and then the family sat down to eat.



Chapter Four

All of creation is a sign of Allah ﷻ. Therefore, Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ؑ did not limit his teaching to any one field of study. The Imām ؑ knew the importance of balance. Religion, philosophy and science each exist to answer different questions. Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ؑ taught that the physical sciences - biology, chemistry, medicine, astronomy - can help us better understand our Creator by illuminating the beauty and organization of His creation.

When he was still a child, Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ؑ refuted Aristotle's theory that the sun rotates around the earth. In reality, the earth orbits the sun, as the Imām ؑ said. The Imām ؑ also taught us that the earth rotates on its own axis.[10] This theory would not be introduced in the west until the mid 19th century!

One of Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq's most famous teachings was his theory of light. In ḥadīth, the Imām ؑ describes light as a type of extremely fast-moving energy. He also discusses how light is reflected off of distant objects and enters into our eyes.[11] At that time, people believed that the light came out of our eyes. Centuries later, this knowledge would lead to the invention of the first telescope. The Imām ؑ also taught us that, even though our sun appears brighter, the light from stars is actually stronger, and only appears weaker because the stars are very far away.

Because of the divine knowledge Allah ﷻ blessed him with, Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ؑ had knowledge of the unseen. The elements hydrogen and oxygen would not be discovered by modern science until the late 18th century. However, a thousand years before that, Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ؑ taught

10 Biḥār al-Anwār, Vol. 3, P. 112; Maghze Mutafakkire Jahāne Shīʿeh, P. 96.

11 Maghze Mutafakkire Jahāne Shīʿeh, P. 239.

us about these elements. He even explained how we are made of them and in what proportions![12]

One of Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq's most unique theories would not be supported by scientific evidence until the 21st century (our modern day). The Imām ﷺ taught that everything except Allah ﷻ has its opposites, but this does not result in a conflict, otherwise the whole universe would be destroyed. On the contrary, Allah ﷻ has created everything in perfect balance. Today, we understand that the Imām ﷺ was describing antimatter.[13]

◆ *ʿAbdullāh Desānī and the Egg* [14] ◆

ʿAbdullāh Desānī stood in front of Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq's house, pacing back and forth. He kicked at the dirt with his sandal. He came up to the door, almost knocked, then turned and walked away again. *Why?* Why did he feel so uneasy? His stomach was unsettled, even though he had slept and eaten well the night before.

You know who you are, ʿAbdullāh reminded himself. *You are ʿAbdullāh Desānī, renowned scholar and scientist!* This man, Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad ﷺ, may have a noble family lineage, but he is really just a religious speaker. Someone needs to call him out, and show the world that religion has no place in the world of science.

With his confidence revived, ʿAbdullāh knocked on the door. To his surprise, it wasn't a helper who opened the door, but Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ himself. The Imām ﷺ welcomed ʿAbdullāh as if he had been expecting him. They sat together in the main room, holding a polite conversation about ʿAbdullāh's journey. A helper served them with fresh bread, fruits and dates. The sounds of family life—women's voices, children laughing—issued from the nearby rooms.

12 Maghze Mutafakkire Jahāne Shīʿeh.

13 Maghze Mutafakkire Jahāne Shīʿeh.

14 Short Stories from the Lives of the 14 Infallibles (Persian).

"O Jaʿfar," said ʿAbdullāh Desānī. "Many people have come to me talking about claims which you have made. Scientific claims—even though you are a man of religion, not science. I came here to see for myself how you came to these conclusions, and to observe for myself the extent of your scientific knowledge."

ʿAbdullāh knew he probably should have been more respectful, but the Imām's calmness was frustrating him. Even after this announcement, Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq's expression did not change. He also did not speak; instead, he glanced over his shoulder. At the same moment, a young boy ran from the hallway crying, "Baba! Baba!"

The child half-tumbled, then sat immediately next to his father. There was an egg cupped in his little hands. A woman, probably the boy's mother, glanced in from the hallway, but she retreated after Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq 🕋 nodded in reassurance.

ʿAbdullāh couldn't understand why the Imām 🕋 did not dismiss his son. Instead, Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq 🕋 smiled and gently accepted the egg which his son offered up.

"Yā Desānī. Tell me, how many compartments does this egg contain?"

ʿAbdullāh Desānī blinked in confusion. The Imām 🕋 continued, "There is a thick skin, a thin skin, a liquid substance such as silver (the egg white), and a fluid gold (the egg yolk). The gold and silver liquid will never mix. You can't tell if it will turn into a male or female chick. Yet, after some time, the egg breaks and a colorful peacock comes out."

"Yes…" said ʿAbdullāh Desānī. He licked his lips nervously and shifted on his cushion. "Obviously, an egg is full of delicate details which make it suited for its purpose. I have never denied that the world has organization."

Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq 🕋 smiled. "But you don't think all these details should have an organizer?"

ʿAbdullāh Desānī met his Imām's eyes. There was no arrogance or gloating; only serenity and patience. ʿAbdullāh had heard that this man was not just an Imām, but *the* Imām ﷺ; chosen by Allah ﷻ, free of sin, blessed with divine knowledge. But until that moment, he hadn't believed it.

"Subḥānallāh," whispered ʿAbdullāh. Then, he said louder, "Forgive me, O Imām ﷺ. Before, I was… I think... I see what you are trying to teach me."

The Imām ﷺ smiled. He encouraged ʿAbdullāh to go home, consider the example further, and then return the next day.

At home, ʿAbdullāh browsed his library for a few hours, looking for a counterpoint to bring against the Imam ﷺ. His heart was not in the task. Instead, he felt an urge, like an itch, to find his answers in another way. He retrieved a flat stone from his garden and laid it on the rug. He knelt behind the stone and raised his hands. When had he last spoken to God? He couldn't remember. So he decided to begin simply.

Yā Allah. Yā Allah. Yā Allah.

The impulse was sudden, but it was the strongest conviction ʿAbdullāh Desānī had ever felt in his life. He fell forward, head to stone.

Yā Allah. Yā Allah. Yā Allah.

In sujūd, he bowed to the power of his Creator. He bowed to the majesty and intricacy of His creation, that somehow, ʿAbdullāh had ascribed to mere chance. ʿAbdullāh bowed to the perfect mercy of his Creator. After all these years where he had preached Godlessness, and debated it with much passion, his Lord had never turned away from him. ʿAbdullāh had still been given a call to soften his heart and repent.

The next day, ʿAbdullāh Desānī joined his Imām ﷺ for a meal. Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ asked ʿAbdullāh if he had thought further about the example of the egg. Did he have anything he wanted to say?

“Yes I do, Yā Mawlā.”

ʿAbdullāh Desānī rose to his feet. With his eyes locked onto the shining face of his Imām, and he said,

“Ashhadu an-lā ilāha illallāh,

Wa ashhadu anna Muḥammadan-Rasūlullāh,

Wa ashhadu anna ʿAlīyyun walīyullāh!

I bear witness that there is no god except Allah ﷻ, And I bear witness that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, And I bear witness that ʿAlī is the successor after him.”



Chapter Five

The Imamate of Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ was a time of great change for the Muslim world. The Umayyad dynasty had begun with Muʿāwiyah, the father of Yazīd, during the lifetime of Imām Ḥasan ﷺ, and lasted for 90 years, until the lifetime of Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ. Then, in the later years of their dynasty, the Umayyads were challenged by a rising power: the ʿAbbāsids.

For years, the Umayyads' power had faded and they became increasingly weakened by attacks from the ʿAbbāsids. At the same time, there was also a major challenge to their power from within the Prophet's lineage. It was led by Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq's own uncle, Zayd, son of Imām as-Sajjād ﷺ.

Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ did not participate in Zayd's uprising. Through his wisdom, the Imām ﷺ knew that his era was not the right time for revolution. Instead, the Imām ﷺ took advantage of the caliph's distraction to spread the truth of Islam far and wide. He expanded his father's university and educated over 4,000 students.

Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ became a teacher to the great scientists, religious personalities and philosophers of his age. You may recognize the names of Abū Ḥanīfah, Mālik ibn Anas, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, and Muḥammad al-Shāfiʿī. That's because they are the four founders of the four schools of Sunnī law: Ḥanafī, Mālikī, Ḥanbalī, and Shāfiʿī. Mālik ibn Anas and Abū Ḥanīfah studied under aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ personally; Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal and al-Shāfiʿī were students of the other two, and so trace their scholarship back to Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ. Other famous students of the Imām ﷺ were Hishām ibn Ḥakam, a great debater, and Jābir ibn Ḥayyān, who is known as 'the Father of Chemistry'.

When he wasn't teaching students, Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ was organizing the knowledge of the Ahl al-Bayt ﷺ into a set of laws (or 'Fiqh' in Arabic). To separate it from the other schools which were forming, people called Imām Jaʿfar's school Jaʿfarī. But Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ took no credit for the knowledge he collected. He didn't invent the laws and he could not claim to be the ultimate source of their guidance. That guidance came to the world from Allah ﷻ through the Prophet ﷺ, the Qurʾān and the Ahl al-Bayt ﷺ. Allah ﷻ is the al-Hādī, the Ultimate Guide, and al-ʿAlīm, the All-Knowing.

◆*Abū Ḥanīfah Debates his Imām*[15]◆

The time for Ẓuhr andʿAsr had just passed. The sun's rays were weakening, casting shadows over the palm trees and rooftops. A group of five men walked through the streets of Medina. They had dust on their fine, well embroidered clothes. Slight accents gave them away as foreigners. In fact, these men had journeyed all the way from Kūfah to meet with Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad, aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ, the Imām of the time.

The Kūfans chatted cheerfully as they walked, completely unaware that they were being watched. A figure observed their approach from a shadowy alley across from Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq's door. He had been looking for a way to enter the house of Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ earlier. Now, he saw his chance.

The Kūfan's voices became clearer as they drew near.

"And what question are you going to ask the Imām ﷺ, Aḥmad?"

Aḥmad answered, "I wanted to question him on qiyās - using analogy between Islamic rulings to create new laws. It's becoming more popular in the other schools of thought, but I've heard that the Jaʿfarī school is quite against it."

Another man said, "I heard that the Imām ﷺ said religion can

15 Biḥār al-Anwār, Vol. 10, P. 22.

never be understood by analogy,[16] and that if a religion uses analogy to make its laws, that religion will be wiped out!"[17]

"That's a strong statement," said another companion. "I don't understand. How could making analogies be a problem?"

"Because," said Aḥmad, "if you take an existing law and use it as the foundation to make more, you could justify anything! For example, the Qurʾān says that the sun is a sign of Allah ﷻ, and the Qurʾān also tells us that it's good to behold and reflect on Allah's signs. Therefore, should there be a law encouraging Muslims to stare into the sun?"

"You seem to understand qiyās pretty well, Aḥmad," said another man. "Are you sure you wish to spend your time with aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ on that?"

Aḥmad nodded. "It's such a popular topic of debate. I would like to hear how our Imām ﷺ chooses to answer. His words will be far more eloquent than I could ever be."

The group came to a halt in front of Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq's home. It was an unassuming, simple house. Some would say it wasn't enough for such a great man, but anyone who knew Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ knew that he was not attached to material things.

The lead Kūfan knocked on the Imām's door. The Imām ﷺ welcomed them and showed them into a sitting area where food and chai were waiting. Maybe it was the excitement of meeting Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ; none of the Kūfans had noticed as a sixth person secretly joined their group. The man from the alley had slipped through the door just behind them, appearing as if he belonged. When the Kūfans sat with the Imām ﷺ, they assumed the intruder came from among the household. Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ knew he did not, but chose to say nothing.

The Kūfans chatted politely with the Imām ﷺ and each took turns

16 Tuḥaf al-ʿUqūl, P. 105.

17 Al-Kāfī, Vol. 1, P. 57.

asking him questions. One asked about fasting, another about science, while another asked about the Day of Judgment. Finally, it was Aḥmad's turn to speak.

"Yā Mawlā, may Allah ﷻ bless you and your noble family. My question is, could you explain why qiyās - the use of analogy to make laws - is so dangerous?"

Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ؑ explained, "We cannot know the reason behind every ruling Allah ﷻ gave to us. Sometimes, Allah's true reason is hidden. Our job as His servants is to obey. Allah ﷻ is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise, who loves us without limits. His laws are prescriptions for our worldly and spiritual health, and He prescribes only what is best for us. If we use analogy to compare between laws without knowing the law's true reason, we may justify actions which Allah ﷻ does not want us to do. This is especially dangerous in the hands of people who intend to mislead others, and who might use analogy to rewrite religion for their own convenience."

"Thank you, Yā Ṣādiq ؑ, jazākallāh khayran," said Aḥmad. "If I understand: our reason is a limited tool. We can't assume that we know why Allah ﷻ made a ruling. If we don't understand a law from all aspects, we can't use it as a foundation to make more."

Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ؑ nodded. Throughout this explanation, the intruder's blood had boiled hotter and hotter. He crossed his arms, frowned, and then the frown deepened into a scowl. Eventually, the intruder could not contain his anger any longer. It seemed clear to him that the Kūfans knew exactly who he was and wanted to insult him!

"Yā Ṣādiq ؑ!" burst the intruder. "How can you sit and discuss the intricacies of law with these men? Should you not instead send a representative to Kūfah and prohibit the people there from speaking abuse toward the companions of Muḥammad ﷺ? There are more than 10,000 people in that city who abuse the companions of the Prophet!"

Imām Ṣādiq's expression remained even and tranquil.

"The people will not accept that from me," he said.

The intruder replied, "How is it possible that they won't listen to your words, when you are the descendent of the Prophet of God?" And then he smirked.

"Abū Ḥanīfah," said Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ calmly. "You yourself are of those who do not listen to me. Did you not enter the house without my permission, and sit down without my permission, and then begin to speak without my permission?"

The Kūfans glanced amongst each other, shocked. Now that they noticed the intruder, they also recognized he was the lead scholar of the Ḥanafī sect. Abū Ḥanīfah pressed his lips into an angry line and said nothing. The Imām ﷺ spoke again.

"I have heard that you make religious laws using qiyās, analogy?"

"Yes, that's correct," said Abū Ḥanīfah.

"Be wary of whose company you are joining," said aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ. "The first individual who used qiyās was Shayṭān. When Allah ﷻ ordered him to prostrate before Ādam ﷺ, he said: 'I will not prostrate, for you have created me from fire and him from dirt, and fire is superior to dirt.'"

The Kūfans murmured. Abū Ḥanīfah took a breath before he spoke.

"Then debate me, Yā Ṣādiq ﷺ, and I shall prove the value of analogies."[18]

Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ kept eye contact with Abū Ḥanīfah as he spoke. His gaze was piercing, but without any harshness. "Which one do you think is more significant; adultery or murder?"

"Murder," said Abū Ḥanīfah, without hesitation.

"Then why are two witnesses sufficient for proving a murder,

18 This story was adjusted with different examples.

while four are necessary for proving adultery?"

Abū Ḥanīfah said nothing. The Imām ﷺ asked again,

"Can this rule be justified by the use of analogy?"

The Kūfans' heads all turned to look at Abū Ḥanīfah.

"It can't," he said shortly.

"Is urine more unclean, or is touching a dead body?" asked Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ.

"Urine, of course," said Abū Ḥanīfah.

"Then why has God ordered people to do only wuḍūʾ for the first, while for the second, he has ordered them to do a full ghusl? Can this ruling be justified by the use of analogy?"

After a beat, Abū Ḥanīfah replied. "No."

Again, Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ asked, "Is prayer more important, or fasting?

"Prayer," said Abū Ḥanīfah. "Then why, in some cases, is it obligatory on a woman to make up the fasts she has missed, but the make-up of her prayers is not? Can this rule be justified by the use of analogy?"

Abū Ḥanīfah frowned. He shook his head, acknowledging the Imām's point, but did not reply aloud. The Kūfans were all seated at the edge of their cushions. They were too interested to reach for the fruits or nuts. Cups of chai were going cold in their hands.

Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ smiled at Abū Ḥanīfah gently and without gloating; but he still had one final question. The Imām ﷺ said:

"I have heard that you interpret the verse 'Then you shall be questioned that day about the blessings you indulged in!' to mean that: God will call people to account over the delicious food and cold water that they have in the summertime."

Abū Ḥanīfah swallowed uneasily. “That’s correct.”

Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ said, “What would you say about a person who invites you to their home and hosts you with delicious food and cold water, and then afterward, places an obligation on you due to his invitation?”

“I would say he is a miserly individual,” said Abū Ḥanīfah.

“Then is God miserly, because He would call us to account for the food and drink He has given us?”

The Kūfans' eyes went wide as they understood. “Astaghfirullāh,” said one man. Abū Ḥanīfah sat up straighter and met the Imām’s benevolent gaze.

“Yes, I see your point. Because Allah ﷻ is the All-Generous, He would not call us to account over food and drink in a miserly way. But then, I ask you, what blessings does the verse refer to, that human beings will be called to account for?”

Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ smiled. “That blessing is our friendship and guidance. Friendship with the family of the Prophetic message, the Ahl al-Bayt ﷺ.”

A smile tugged at Abū Ḥanīfah’s lips. All of his anger had evaporated, like the steam. “Yā Ṣādiq ﷺ, I suspect that you knew I would sneak my way in, challenge you, and come to learn this lesson.”

Imām ﷺ gave a slow, verifying nod. Abū Ḥanīfah left his seat and crossed the circle of men, half crouching in a posture of humility. He grasped the Imām’s hand and kissed it.

“May Allah ﷻ preserve you, O best of men and best of teachers.”

◆*Hishām ibn-Ḥakam Finds his Path*[19]◆



19 Niʿma, Hishām ibn al-Ḥakam, P. 58.

When Hishām ibn-Ḥakam looked back on his life, there were three days - three moments - which stood out above all others. These three were his most vivid and precious memories. Everytime he revisited them in his mind, he could feel the rush of emotion, the serenity, the euphoria, the joy and the triumph as if he was living it all over again.

The first moment had been one he searched for, but it had come from a place he never expected. As a young man, still barely more than a boy, Hishām had undertaken a spiritual journey. He craved knowledge. In the back of his sharp mind, he was constantly asking: Why? How? What for?

Hishām worked as a fabric vendor and his days were filled by the material world. But his passion was for scholarship, philosophy and science.

At first, Hishām's quest for truth had led him to become the student of a famous non-believer named Desānī. Desānī noticed his pupil's intelligence and quick wit, and encouraged Hishām to debate with the students of other philosophies. Hishām did, and often, he came out the winner. But his heart was unsettled.

Next, Hishām became the student of a famous fatalist named Jahm ibn Ṣafwān. Fatalists believe that everything is predetermined and that humans have no free will, therefore, their actions have no consequence. Even more quickly, Hishām's heart became unsettled with this worldview and he was left still searching for the truth.

Hishām had an uncle, ʿUmar, who was a Shīʿah and follower of Imām Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad ﷺ. Hishām had heard about aṣ-Ṣādiq's vast scientific knowledge and respected him for it. Maybe, this was the next place he should turn. Hishām asked his uncle to arrange a meeting with Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ. At first, ʿUmar hesitated. Hishām was a bright and charismatic youth, yes, but he was also bold and quick to speak his mind. ʿUmar mentioned the idea to Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ, who was not worried at all. The Imām ﷺ invited young Hishām to meet with him.

That meeting was the first moment Hishām felt the feeling. It was a burst of certainty filling his chest. It was warmth from the nūr beaming off of his Imām's pure face. Conviction, which Hishām had never felt before, crashed over him like a powerful, intoxicating wave. That day, Hishām ibn-Ḥakam asked Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq 🕌 five hundred questions! The Imām 🕌 answered every single one with perfect patience and poise.

The second moment came a few days later. Hishām had requested another meeting with Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq 🕌. He was barely able to sleep or to focus at work in the fabric stall. He had so many questions to ask. The Imām 🕌 was a limitless source of truth, and Hishām could not bear to be separated from him now that he knew. Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq 🕌 agreed to this second meeting. Through ʿUmar, the Imām 🕌 instructed Hishām to meet him at a city called Ḥīrah, outside of Medina.

Hishām ibn-Ḥakam arrived early to the meeting place in Ḥīrah. It was a lovely, green garden, full of date trees and a natural spring. He paced, trying to contain his bursting excitement. At each rustle of the wind, his head snapped up. Finally, the figure he had been waiting for appeared on the horizon.

Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq 🕌 was approaching on a donkey, with his back straight, and eyes shining. The midday sun burned behind him, so the Imām 🕌 was surrounded by light without casting a shadow. Hishām's heart leapt with joy and the feeling flooded back. A thought came to his mind — one that would guide the rest of his life: "*His greatness, his splendor, can only be from Allah ﷻ. This immaculate personality could only come from the respect and position which an Imām 🕌 has before God.*"

When Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq 🕌 stopped before him, for a moment, Hishām was too overwhelmed to speak. Then, the words came bursting forth. Hishām declared himself a Muslim, a Shīʿah, and servant of his Imām 🕌. "I pray that Allah ﷻ should never separate me from you, Yā Ṣādiq 🕌, as long as I should live."

As the Imām's student, Hishām dedicated himself to study, day and night. He quickly grew to be a respected scholar, and especially a skilled debater. His quick mind and passionate heart combined to overcome every challenge he faced. This was an era of new thoughts, questions and confusion. The Islamic world was being pulled in five directions between the five schools of law which were forming. Hishām became a close companion of aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ, and one of the greatest champions of the purest of the schools; Jaʿfarī.

Few people have ever reached Hishām's level of knowledge, taqwā, and loyalty. Despite his youth, he became one of Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq's dearest companions. The Imām ﷺ did not hesitate to praise Hishām before others. He said, "This young man assists and defends our cause with all of his strength: heart, hand and tongue. Hishām is the protector of our cause and the annihilator of the babbling and idle speeches of our enemies. To follow him is just like following us, and likewise to be at enmity with him is like being at enmity with us."

Hishām's third great moment came a few years later, when he was still a very young man. It was near the time of Ḥajj, only a few days before the rituals officially began. Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ had pitched his tent close to the Masjid al-Ḥarām, at the foot of a mountain. Throughout the day, pilgrims had been presenting themselves at the Imām's tent to pose their questions. Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ kept his tent opened so that he would be available to anyone from far away who could not access him year-round. One such visitor was a Syrian man, and he said:

"I am a learned man, well-versed in the fields of theology and law and acquainted with religious obligations. I have come to debate with your followers and disciples."

Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ asked him: "Is your knowledge and reasoning based on the sayings of the Prophet of Islam ﷺ, or on your own way of thinking?"

The Syrian replied: "It is partly based on my own thoughts, and

partly on the sayings of the Prophet ﷺ."

Imām ؑ said: "Then, do you count yourself as a partner in the Prophethood?"

"No," He replied.

"Is obedience to you necessary as is obedience to the Prophet ﷺ?"

"No," said the Syrian again.

The Imām ؑ did not ask another question. Instead he turned his gaze out the door of the tent to where a camel rider was approaching. The Syrian turned his gaze as well. They both watched as a young man dismounted, entered, then touched his heart and bowed his head respectfully to the Imām ؑ. Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ؑ smiled warmly.

"Salāmun ʿalaykum, my Mawlā, my Allah ﷻ bless and protect you," said Hishām ibn-Ḥakam.

"Praise to him who defends us wholeheartedly with all his power and means," said the Imām ؑ. "Now, my dear Hishām, enter into a discussion with this Syrian. He has a few questions to ask you."

The Syrian's eyebrows shot up and he frowned. When he looked at Hishām ibn-Ḥakam, he didn't see a man worthy to debate him. Hishām wasn't a man at all, more like an overgrown boy with a patchy beard, gangling body and unlined face. Even worse, based on the boy's looks, the Syrian guessed he was non-Arab.

Hishām waited expectantly while the Syrian looked to Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ؑ. The man was clearly offended. Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq's expression remained serene and unreadable. Finally, the Syrian said:

"O boy! If you have anything to say about the Imamate of your Imām ؑ, tell me."

Hishām hesitated. He felt heat in his cheeks at being addressed

so disrespectfully, but his Mawlā had taught him that in debate poise and manners are just as important as knowledge. Hishām swallowed his anger, and then said: "Has our Lord created human beings in vain and left them without any leader and guide? Or has He paid His kind attention toward them and sent them immaculate spiritual guides, so that they would not be bewildered?"

The Syrian replied: "Of course, Allah ﷻ is generous toward His servants and is not neglectful of them."

Hishām said, "If it is as you say, then describe the conditions of His servant's leadership and guidance."

"Allah ﷻ has appointed His guide for human beings, so that they might not dispute among themselves and not separate from each other," said the Syrian. "Rather, they must love each other and come to friendly terms with each other. The guide must explain the commandments of the Creator for them."

Hishām then asked: "Who is that guide and leader?"

"The Prophets of God, of course."

"And when the Prophets left this world, who became responsible for the guidance of these people?"

The Syrian replied: "The Qurʾān and the traditions of the Prophet ﷺ."

"Today, it is a very long time since the death of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him," said Hishām. "Do you think the Qurʾān and the traditions alone can solve all disputes?"

"Yes, of course," said the Syrian. "They are sufficient."

"If it is just as you say, then why do you and I dispute? Why have you traveled such a long way from Syria to hold this debate?"

The Syrian froze for a moment, with his mouth half opened to answer. Then his mouth closed, and his eyes fell downward.

Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ asked him, “Go on, brother. Speak freely.”

“What could I say?” said the Syrian. “I have no reply. If I say we have no dispute, I would be telling a lie. On the other hand, if I say: The Qurʾān and the traditions of the Prophet ﷺ are enough to solve all problems, I would also be telling a lie. It’s not easy to understand the meaning of the Qurʾān and the traditions. If two men had a dispute, and each believed that they were right, what use would the Qurʾān and the traditions of the Prophet ﷺ be in that case?”

Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ said: “Ask Hishām himself the solution to your difficult problem.”

The Syrian hesitated, then he turned to face Hishām ibn-Ḥakam. “O Hishām, tell me, who is the supervisor of the deeds of the people and who is their leader? Does the Creator guide them Himself, or are the people themselves responsible for their own leadership?”

"Neither one of these is correct,” replied Hishām. “Rather, the Creator has appointed leaders for the people from amongst themselves. During his lifetime, the Prophet ﷺ was the guide of all people. But who, today, has our Lord appointed to invite the people to unity and to separate the straight path from that of the wrong one?”

“Who?” The Syrian had abandoned his haughtiness. He hung on Hishām’s next word. Hishām pointed toward Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ and said:

“Today, the only guide for the people is this exalted and noble person in whose presence we are standing now. Learned men come from all over the world to access his knowledge and virtue. It is he who, through the divine knowledge imbued in his lineage, makes us aware of the heavens and the earth.”

Hishām’s eyes followed the line of his own hand to meet the gaze of his Imām ﷺ. This was the third moment, and the greatest of

all. The Imām's face was shining, not just with his usual, awe-inspiring nūr, but also with pride. It was the pride of a father, and the pride of a teacher. Hishām's heart swelled. This man, this great man who was great beyond description, was proud of him. Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ was pleased with Hishām.

Hishām ibn-Ḥakam had a long life ahead of him, full of happiness and achievements. But that moment, in the tent of Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ, would always be his most treasured.



Chapter Six

In the year 133 AH, the ʿAbbāsids finally overthrew the Umayyads and a new dynasty began. Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ had been Imām for 18 years. He was now 50 years old.

The ʿAbbāsids had risen up by promising to restore power to the family of the Prophet ﷺ, where it belonged. Many Shīʿah pledged themselves to the ʿAbbāsids because of this promise, though Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ had warned them not to. The Imām ﷺ always reminded his followers not to be fooled. The ʿAbbāsids, he said, were no different from the Umayyads; illegitimate rulers who only cared about their own elevation.

Still, with the support of many Shīʿah, the ʿAbbāsids were victorious. First, they conquered the city of Khorasan in Iran. Then they had conquered Kūfah and crowned their leader as the new caliph. He was a man named 'Saffāḥ',[20] which means bloodthirsty. His real name was ʿAbdul ʿAbbās, but he earned the title Saffāḥ because of his ruthlessness toward his enemies. In the four short years of this reign, that ruthlessness turned toward Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ. The era of safety and distraction was over.

Saffāḥ's many abuses began when he had one of the Imām's most trusted servants, Muʿallah, tortured and killed. He wanted the names of the Imām's companions, but Muʿallah had resisted until he was martyred.

Then, Saffāḥ forced the Imām ﷺ to relocate his family from Medina. The ʿAbbāsids had chosen a city called Ḥīrah to replace Kūfah as the Muslim Empire's new capital. The Imām ﷺ and his household

20 Rusūm Dār al-Khalīfah, P. 129; Maʿāthir al-Anāqah, P. 84.

were forced to live in Ḥīrah for two years, always watched, constantly under threat. It took two years for Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ to convince the caliph that he had no intention to lead an uprising against him. Finally, the Imām's family was allowed to return home. Still, even in Medina, Saffāḥ continued his abuse. He persecuted the Imām's followers until it was no longer safe for them to visit him, even for the simplest ruling of law. Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ himself gave a statement encouraging his Shīʿah not to call on him for their own safety.

When Saffāḥ died, it could have been a relief for the Imām ﷺ. But Saffāḥ's successor, Manṣūr, was just as cruel. One of Manṣūr's first acts as caliph was to lure the military commander, Abū Muslim, to Ḥīrah and have him executed. Abū Muslim had been a loyal servant of the ʿAbbāsids through the years of the their rebellion, but Manṣūr had decided he was a threat, and so he was executed.

Manṣūr knew that ʿAbbāsids had many enemies. He feared Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ, who might rise up against him, but also needed the Imām's approval to legitimize the dynasty. The ʿAbbāsids' claim to power was weak: they were descended from ʿAbbās, the last living uncle of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. They argued that ʿAbbās' right to leadership was greater than Lady Fāṭimah's, even though she was the Prophet's direct progeny, because he was a man and she was a woman.

Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ spent twelve years under the tyranny of caliph Manṣūr. At this time the Imām ﷺ was in his 50s and 60s. Yet, Manṣūr summoned him to court again and again. The journeys kept the Imām ﷺ from teaching and limited his activities. Manṣūr wanted to force the Imām ﷺ to support him, and when that did not succeed, he attempted to harass and humiliate the Imām ﷺ. The Imām ﷺ met every challenge — despite his age, despite his pain. The ʿAbbāsids had killed his followers and his family. On top of that, in 138 AH, the Imām's eldest son, Ismāʿīl, died of natural causes. It was a time of great trial and heartache. But Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ was the chosen of Allah ﷻ and he had a mission. Just like the Umayyads before them, the ʿAbbāsids corrupted Islam to their own gains. The Imām ﷺ used his voice and his protests to preserve the

true practice of Allah's religion.

◆*The Oppression of Manṣūr*◆

Manṣūr had many wonderful things in his life that should have made him happy. He had a grand palace, wealth, riches, and the very best food. He had a whole court of men and women who feared him, bowed before him, and did whatever he commanded. He ruled a vast empire which spanned the civilized world. And yet, as caliph, Manṣūr was never quite comfortable. Everyday new threats arose to challenge him. The Shīʿah, whom he had used and betrayed to gain the throne, rebelled against him, and Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq 🕋 was their leader.

Manṣūr knew that the Imām 🕋 chose not to engage with politics. He had always done so, even during the uprising of his own uncle, Zayd. And yet, the Imām's very existence was a threat. He represented the only lineage with greater claim to leadership than the ʿAbbāsids. If he ever changed his political stance… Manṣūr didn't like to think about what might happen then. He knew he had a larger army, and could probably crush them; but slaughtering the Prophet's family at Karbalāʾ had not ended well for the last dynasty.

So Manṣūr sent a letter to Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq 🕋 requesting his presence at court. He was seated at dinner, enjoying a feast of meats and wines, when the Imām's reply arrived. The letter read, "We do not possess anything from the world, for we could become afraid of losing it. You, Manṣūr, do not possess anything for the Day of Justice (Day of Judgment), so why must I come to see you?"

Manṣūr's companions watched as his face darkened. He paused for a moment, glowering down at the table, and then drained his goblet. He snapped his fingers for a quill. He penned a hasty reply, reminding the Imām 🕋 that he was both his caliph and his cousin. "Come and advise me, Cousin," he wrote.

Thankfully, when the Imām's reply arrived Manṣūr wasn't in

public because it was even more infuriating. Aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ had written: "Whoever cares about the world after, will not be your companion, and whoever cares about this world, won't advise you. Because if he advises you, you will become his enemy and his life would be in danger."

Manṣūr's next message was delivered by a pair of armed soldiers. He requested Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq's presence at court, willingly or by force. Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ was granted a brief moment to say goodbye to his family, and then began the long, tiring journey to Ḥīrah with a soldier riding on either side of him.

"Welcome, Cousin! Finally, you're here and we can benefit from your wisdom," Manṣūr declared. He tried to win the Imām ﷺ with flattery, but Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ stood firm, offering neither aggression nor friendship. Then Manṣūr summoned none other than Abū Ḥanīfah to join them.

"Your former student, yes?" said the caliph. "Now, I hear he has a school of laws that rivals your own, and I am trying to choose who shall be my official lawmaker."

But this scheme turned into an embarrassment for Manṣūr. Abū Ḥanīfah had carefully prepared forty questions, and still, Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ did not falter. With each answer, the Imām ﷺ even elaborated on the different opinions between scholars, demonstrating his wisdom beyond all doubt. Manṣūr promptly had both the Imām ﷺ and Abū Ḥanīfah removed from court before the news could spread too far.

Who would be his official lawmaker now? Of course, he couldn't choose Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ for the job, and Abū Ḥanīfah had failed him. Ultimately, he chose another one of the Imām's former students, Mālik ibn Anas. All other lawmakers were forbidden from giving rulings.

Clearly, Manṣūr could never win the Imām's allegiance. If he could not have that, he must at least create an excuse to have the Imām ﷺ executed. Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ had a quick mind for science and law, but he was still only a man —and men can be tricked, Manṣūr thought.

The caliph selected one of his loyal followers, Ibn Muhājir, and sent him to Medina. Muhājir's mission was to infiltrate the Banū Hāshim, the tribe of the Prophet's family, by pretending to be a Shīʿah. Then, once he had won their trust, Muhājir shared the secret news that the Prophet's family had supporters waiting in Khorasan to revolt and overthrow the ʿAbbāsids. Muhājir collected signatures from all the high ranking men of Banū Hāshim, except Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ. Muhājir knew his signature would be the last and most important.

Muhājir finally got his opportunity when he found the Imām ﷺ praying alone in the Masjid. He loitered around, then gathered some courage and came to sit behind the Imām ﷺ. The Imām ﷺ stood, bowed, fell in sajdah, and did not move his head for some time. Finally, he rose to sit, raised his hands in duʿāʾ, and became perfectly still. Muhājir fidgeted as he waited. The Imām ﷺ continued to pray. Muhājir's eyes wandered, and then his mind wandered also. When aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ finally spoke, Muhājir jumped and startled.

"Salāmun ʿalaykum, Muhājir," said the Imām ﷺ. "Do not deceive my family."

"What?" Muhājir refocused to find Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ staring straight at him. That gaze cut through Muhājir, piercing him and leaving him speechless.

"I warn you: do not deceive my family."

The Imām ﷺ knew *everything*. Muhājir scrambled and left the masjid without another word. He went back to Ḥīrah and told Manṣūr that he had failed. He would rather face the caliph's anger than the Imām's knowing look.

The ʿAbbāsid caliph Manṣūr could not – would not – give up. However, he was also quite occupied building his grand new palace in Baghdad. While he formulated a new plan against the Imām ﷺ, he tasked the governor of Medina, Shaybah, with watching the Imām ﷺ and making sure none of his followers could access him. As governor,

Shaybah would sometimes give sermons on Fridays in the masjid. One Jumuʿah, he took the opportunity to praise the ʿAbbāsids, and he spoke ill toward Lady Fāṭimah ﷺ and her husband, Imām ʿAlī ﷺ.

From his place on the pulpit, Shaybah could see above the gathered crowd. He noticed immediately when one man rose to his feet. His heart panged with fear as he realized it was Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ.

"Shaybah!" cried the Imām ﷺ. "We, the Ahl al-Bayt ﷺ deserve all those merits and virtues you have mentioned, while you and Manṣūr deserve all those demerits and vices you have spoken of."

Then the Imām ﷺ turned his back to Shaybah and spoke out across the crowd:

"Do you know who will lose most on the Day of Justice? The person who sells his heaven for other people's world, such as this corrupt ruler."[21]

Shaybah reported the incident to Manṣūr, and finally, the caliph had enough of an excuse. Manṣūr summoned Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ to his new court in Baghdad, only to hear the Imām ﷺ recite Qurʾān so eloquently that, temporarily, even Manṣūr had no desire to behead him. For now, aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ was allowed to return home to his family.

Still, the summons continued, forcing the aging Imām ﷺto ride from Medina, to Iraq, and back again at the caliph's whim. Each time when he left, Hamīdah Khātūn and the children kissed him goodbye as if he might never return.

On one occasion, the Imām ﷺ was compelled to sit in the caliph's company on a particularly hot, heavy, sweltering day. Flies buzzed around the caliph's elegant guests. Jewelry clinked and jingled as they swatted and flailed at them. One particularly determined fly kept landing on caliph Manṣūr's forehead. Each time he swatted at it, it circled back and returned.

21 Kanz al-ʿUmmāl, Vol. 3, P. 510, Ḥadīth #7660.

“Why would God create flies?” Manṣūr demanded, turning to the Imām ﷺ.

Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ answered, “To disgrace and degrade the tyrants through them.”[22]

That moment had left Manṣūr especially angry. Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq’s presence could have been useful to him. Even if the Imām ﷺ did not support him in words, having the Imām ﷺ visit the palace made it look as if they got along. The problem was, aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ never sat quietly and allowed the charade to go on. The final straw was not far off.

Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ was invited to the birth celebration for caliph Manṣūr’s newborn son. He arrived at the palace, escorted by his guards, to find that the feast was already in progress. Manṣūr welcomed him and made a show of respect by opening a place for the Imām ﷺ near the head of the table. Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ took his seat, greeted his neighbors, but made no movement toward the food. Manṣūr noticed this. He flagged a servant and had a great platter of meat set before the Imām ﷺ. Still, Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ did not touch anything.

“Are you thirsty from your ride, Yā Ṣādiq?” called Manṣūr. He waved another servant forward, who poured the Imām ﷺ a goblet. Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ smelled the liquid being poured before he saw it. The crisp, acrid scent, and then, the dark red color.

As if in response to the Imām’s hesitation, the servant said, “This is the finest, purest wine sir, from the groves of Persia.”

Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ refused the goblet and stood up. Manṣūr stood up also.

“Are you going somewhere, aṣ-Ṣādiq?” said Manṣūr. “My servant made an error, of course. You need not drink it if it does not suit you. Water shall be brought.”

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22 Biḥār al-Anwār, Vol. 8, P. 189.

Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ shook his head. “The Prophet of Allah ﷺ said: ‘Whoever sits at a table where wine is being served is without blessings.’”

And then he left. Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ walked out of the feast hall and past the guards. Manṣūr said nothing to stop him. He watched the Imām ﷺ go, still in shock. The eyes of all of Manṣūr’s guests followed the Imām ﷺ out, then turned toward Manṣūr, waiting to see if he would explode with rage. They expected him to order the Imām ﷺ to be dragged back by his turban and killed, right then and there. Instead, the caliph just stood. His closest guests noticed that his hands were shaking with rage. Veins popped out as he gripped his goblet. Then, with his gaze still fixed on the spot where Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ vanished, Manṣūr brought the wine to his lips and drained it.

◆*A Knock on the Door*[23]◆



23 Short Stories from the Lives of the 14 Infallibles (Persian).

No one in the household had been expecting a knock at the door. When the sound came, Abā Baṣīr immediately looked to his wife, Laylah, who shook her head to answer the unspoken question. No one was expected that afternoon, but it was very common for family and friends to drop by without notice. Possibly, his mother-in-law had finished a new batch of pickles or jam that she wanted to deliver. Maybe brother Jarrah next door needed help lifting something heavy onto his donkey. Or maybe one of the neighborhood children wanted to invite his grandchildren to come play. Still, Abā Baṣīr felt a nagging sense of dread as he approached and opened the door.

ʿAbdur Raḥmān, student of Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ, was waiting on the doorstep. Abā Baṣīr's blood rushed cold. ʿAbdur Raḥmān's face was gray and haggard as if he had lived 20 years in the week since they had last met.

"Salāmun ʿalaykum," said Abā Baṣīr numbly.

"Wa ʿalaykum salām."

Next came the words that turned the bright sky gray. As Abā Baṣīr knew, their Imām ﷺ had been ill for a few days, ever since he returned home from Baghdad. Today, he had taken a turn for the worse. ʿAbdur Raḥmān began to cry.

"Brother…" Abā Baṣīr clapped his arms around ʿAbdur Raḥmān and embraced him.

ʿAbdur Raḥmān managed to say, "He is dying, brother! Our Imām ﷺ is on his deathbed. He has requested his companions to gather."

Abā Baṣīr looked behind him. Laylah had found an ʿabāyah and was lingering in the hallway. Her face was as white as a kafan. Their eyes met, and then she nodded silently.

"Let's go, brother," said Abā Baṣīr. "Let us hurry."

Abā Baṣīr and ʿAbdur Raḥmān hurried through the city. They

walked as fast as they could, or at moments broke into a jog. Was this really happening? Abā Baṣīr wondered numbly.

The weather was as bright and clear as a winter day could ever hope to be. Yet the city had changed. Anxiety hung heavy; all of Medina waited and prayed. There were no merchants on the street or bustling shoppers. There were no students hurrying in and out of the Imām's university. As they passed the Prophet's mosque, Masjid an-Nabī, there was a crowd building outside, but it was an eerily silent one. Everyone's eyes were downcast. Nearly all had their hands extended toward the sky.

Abā Baṣīr felt as though he were in a daze, in and out of time. In one blurry moment, he was outside the door to the Imām's house. Another crowd had gathered there. Some whispered with their hands raised in duʿāʾ, while others had already given in to wailing and beating their chests. ʿAbdur Raḥmān led Abā Baṣīr through. The crowd pulled at him, demanding news, but ʿAbdur Raḥmān had none. He said many salāms, and many apologies, before finally slipping past them and inside the home.

The Imām's closest companions waited within. Abā Baṣīr, despite his pain, had the clarity to make a small duʿāʾ. By Allah's mercy, he had been blessed with a place close beside the Imām ﷺ and the Ahl al-Bayt ﷺ in this tragic moment.

Scientists, students, and scholars approached Abā Baṣīr to greet and welcome him. ʿAbdullāh Desānī, the eminent former atheist, was seated in a corner, praying. It stood out, too, how many people were missing. Some, such as the Imām's companions in Kūfah, could not make it here in time. Others, such as the Imām's uncles and cousins, had already been reunited with Allah ﷻ. Too many of the Imām's beloved Shīʿah had been martyred by the Umayyads and ʿAbbāsids, such as his servant and dear friend, Muʿallah. Also missing was the eldest son, Ismāʿīl, who had died in his father's lifetime.

Abā Baṣīr approached Hishām ibn-Ḥakam, who was seated on

the floor. There were tears glistening in his eyes.

"Salāmun ʿalaykum, my brother."

"Wa ʿalaykum salām," Hishām motioned for Abā Baṣīr to join him and quickly noticed the expression on the elderly man's face. Abā Baṣīr, the loyal companion of the Imām ﷺ, was nearly ninety years old. Hishām sensed his friend's hesitation, and so answered the question hanging between them.

"I'm sorry, dear brother. No one can see the Imām ﷺ, peace be upon him, now. He has called all of the family to his side… to…"

Hishām hung his head. Abā Baṣīr's panic swelled. He fought to remain calm and keep his voice even.

"Are you sure, Hishām? Did you see him?"

Again, Hishām nodded.

"How did he look?" Abā Baṣīr pressed.

"Thin. Pale. That poison took everything from his body."

"How? Are you sure?" Abā Baṣīr asked again.

Hishām put a hand on his friend's shoulder, but did not reply.

"At least… please, Hishām! Did he say anything?"

"When I entered, the Imām ﷺ was speaking with his wife and sons to arrange how his wealth should be distributed. May Allah ﷻ bless him, he even left some provision for his cousin, Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī, who once attacked him. ʿAbdullāh al-Afṭaḥ questioned why the Imām ﷺ would do such a thing, and the Imām ﷺ replied, 'Those who cut relations with their family will not know the smell of heaven.'[24] I had to leave the room, the sight was too much for me. But alḥamdulillāh, I got to hear our Imām's voice one last time."

24 Kitāb al-Kāfī, Vol. 2, P. 349.

Abā Baṣīr swallowed. Was it possible that he too would get to hear his Imām's voice again? Yes, he still might. Everyone has a prescribed time, but why now? He needed more time to prepare, to understand…

A scream, and then a long wail came from the other room. Men and women's voices rose together, loudly crying. Abā Baṣīr's stomach dropped. The wave of grief burst from the back rooms of the house, through the companions, out to the street and through the city. It was a whirl of sound, and darkness. Abā Baṣīr couldn't remember what he had seen, or said. It felt like an eternity from when he pressed his palms into his eyes, letting the world go dark, to when the noise finally quieted.

Abā Baṣīr raised his head to see Ḥamīdah Khātūn standing before her guests. She was shrouded all in black. Her son Mūsā ﷺ was at her arm to steady her. Some of the companions still sniffed and sobbed, but they directed their full attention to Ḥamīdah Khātūn with their eyes cast respectfully downward.

"Bismillāhir Raḥmānir Raḥīm. May Allah ﷻ bless all of you," she said. "I will not speak too much now, when the wound of our loss is still so fresh and so deep that it cannot be properly expressed with words. Truly, we belong to Allah ﷻ and to him we shall return."

A fresh set of wails pierced the room. Ḥamīdah Khātūn hung her head. Her other children, all hovering nearby, came forward to shield her until she had ceased to cry. They all remained near her as she spoke again.

"Our Imām ﷺ loved and prayed for all of humanity, and he prayed for those in this room especially. Our beloved Imām ﷺ wanted one thing to be known to all of you; his dear Shīʿah, his companions. It was the last words he said to us, his family, before his eyes closed for the last time. He said, 'Our intercession in the hereafter will not include individuals who take their daily prayers lightly.'"[25]

25 Biḥār al-Anwār, Vol. 47, P. 2.

Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq's last words were at the front of Abā Baṣīr's mind as he wandered home. Even in death, the Imām ﷺ was thinking of everyone but himself, thinking far ahead of a regular man. How often might a believer feel a pang of hesitancy, or the weight of laziness, when the call to prayer rang out? Now, everytime they hesitated, or delayed, that believers would remember aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ. What a gift, an extra motivation to establish ṣalāh, was enshrined forever in the Imām's last words.

Abā Baṣīr found his eyes were drawn upward to the yellow prinpicks of stars in the vast, black sky. Despite their distance, the stars were always there, even during daytime when they cannot be seen. The stars, he thought, witness every event of human existence. You can't reach them, and yet you can rely on them to never shift and always indicate the right way. The stars hold a mystery, and a familiarity, all in one.

He found Laylah on her prayer mat, head bent in sujūd. She ran her hands over her face at his footsteps. They both hesitated for a moment, observing the tears on the other's cheeks.

"Salāmun ʿalaykum."

"Wa ʿalaykum salām."

Laylah stepped off of her prayer mat to fold it. "I just keep thinking of how much pain he was in," she murmured. "Such a cruel, brutal way to die… for such a noble man."

Abā Baṣīr sat down next to her, took her hand in his and squeezed it comfortingly.

"Dear Laylah, I know this is a time for tears. But I have to tell you about the beauty I witnessed today."

"Beauty?"

"Māshāʾ Allāh, so much beauty —in the community all mourning together; in Ḥamīdah Khātūn's strength and poise. I can truly feel it, how our Imām is still with us, witnessing. I don't think I understood

before, not truly."

"That's true."

"But the most beautiful - the most bittersweet - I can't explain to you how it felt, Laylah, was to watch Imām Mūsā ﷺ step into his role. I can't help but feel blessed to live during the Imāmate of two such men. Innā lillāhi wa innā ilayhi rājʿūn; verily we are from Allah ﷻ, and verily to Him is our return."

Epilogue

Imām Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad, aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ, was martyred on the 25th of Shawwāl 148 AH. He was 65 years old. With all the popularity and influence he had gained, Manṣūr had considered martyring Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ many times. When the Imām ﷺ had refused to sit and drink wine at the celebration of Manṣūr's son, the tyrant had had enough. He finally gave the order to have him killed. Once the Imām ﷺ returned to Medina, the governor of the city poisoned him using a bunch of grapes on the order of Manṣūr. Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq's sacred body was laid to rest beside those of his father, grandfather, and Imām Ḥasan ﷺ at Jannat al-Baqī Cemetery in Medina.

Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ had known the time of his death, and he had also known that Manṣūr would try to kill his successor - just as Manṣūr would kill the Imām ﷺ himself. So, in his will, Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ named 5 successors: his wife, Ḥamīdah Khātūn, his son ʿAbdullāh, his son Mūsā, the governor of Medina, and finally, caliph Manṣūr himself. This final act of protection stopped Manṣūr's plan to kill the next Imām ﷺ in its tracks. However, to the Imām's followers, it was obvious who possessed the divine knowledge required to lead. Imām Mūsā ibn Jaʿfar ﷺ also led his father's burial rights, which can only be done for an Imām ﷺ by another Imām ﷺ.

Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ was blessed with the longest life of any Imām. He was also blessed with the second longest Imamate; 33 years. In that time, he left a legacy so large that it is difficult to comprehend. Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ made foundational discoveries across the fields of science, from astronomy to medicine. He also directly trained or inspired the greatest scientists of his day, who would go on to make foundational theories of their own. In the field of Islamic sciences, Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ collected

and organized the wisdom of the Ahl al-Bayt ﷺ into the principles of law - Jaʿfarī - which all Shīʿah follow. Out of every Imām, the conditions of the situation of his time allowed most ḥadīth to be transmitted from Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ. Through these, he guides us to this day.

We may not have been granted the chance to live in the time of Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ. We can never see his blessed face. We live separated from our own Imām عجل الله فرجه الشريف, may Allah ﷻ hasten his return. But alḥamdulillāh, we have the stories preserved for us from Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq's many companions. Through their actions, stories and ḥadīth, we can learn more about this great man. We can find closeness to his noble personality, and, inshāʾAllāh, gain some wisdom from the life of The Greatest Scientist.

Though their lifetimes on this earth have passed a thousand years ago, our noble Imāms ﷺ are not limited to history. As immaculate individuals, and as shahīd (martyrs), the Ahl al-Bayt ﷺ are with us, witnessing our deeds and wishing us the best. Their intercession with Allah ﷻ is available to you, if you make the sincere effort to be among their true Shīʿah. This is called tawassul. So when you are tested, try to remember our 6th Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ, the truthful. Call on him when you feel tempted to tell a lie or break a promise. Call on him in those moments when you feel lost and confused. InshāʾAllāh (by Allah's will) he will grant you his intercession and carry your duʿās to Allah ﷻ. Cultivate your relationship with this noble man, as you would a friend, and inshāʾAllāh, he will help bring you closer to Allah ﷻ.

Glossary

ʿAbbāsid Dynasty: A dynasty of rulers after the Umayyad dynasty; descendants of ʿAbbās (the uncle of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, who usurped the government).

Adhān: The call to prayer.

Ahl al-Bayt: Divinely appointed family members of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ.

Ahl as-Sunnah: The largest branch of Islam that was formed after the death of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. They do not believe in the Divine successor-ship of Imām ʿAlī ؑ, and the Imāms who came after him, and instead follow the teaching of the caliphs. They are also referred to as the Sunnīs.

Akhlāq: Morals and ethics.

Al-Fātiḥah: The first sūrah of the Qurʾān, which is commonly recited and sent as a gift of prayer for the deceased.

Alḥamdulillāh: All praise is for Allah (God).

Allah: The Arabic term for God, a culmination of all His holy names and titles.

ʿ**Asr:** The obligatory afternoon prayer.

Astaghfirullāh: An expression meaning 'I seek forgiveness from Allah ﷻ.'

Baba: Father.

Bismillāhir Raḥmānir Raḥīm: (I begin) In the name of Allah, the All-

Kind (or All-Beneficent), the All-Merciful.

Chai: Tea.

Duʿāʾ: Supplication; a deep connection and communication between an individual and Allah ﷻ.

Fajr: The obligatory morning/dawn prayer.

Fiqh: Islamic Laws.

Ghusl: An Islamic ritual bath of the whole body, all the way from the head to the feet.

Ḥadīth: A report or narration from the Prophet ﷺ or Imāms ؑ that include sayings and actions.

Ḥajj: An act of worship where Muslims go on a pilgrimage to the city of Mecca, and perform a unique set of rituals over the course of 3 to 5 days. Ḥajj occurs annually between the 8th and 12th day of the 12th Islamic lunar month of Dhūl Ḥijjah. Performing Ḥajj is mandatory upon everyone who is physically and financially capable of doing so, and is sane and mature - once in their lifetime, and is one of the ten Furūʿ ad-Dīn (Branches of the Religion).

Hijrah: Migration.

ʿIbādah: Worship.

Imām: This word means 'leader' and can be used in multiple ways to include a local community religious leader; or the prayer leader of an Islamic center. However, its most specific usage is in terms of the 12 Divinely-appointed guides (Imāms) chosen by Allah ﷻ.

Innā lillāhi wa innā ilayhi rājʿūn: Verily we are from Allah ﷻ, and verily to Him is our return.

Inshāʾ Allāh: God-willing.

Jazākallāh khayran: May Allah (swt) reward you with the best.

Jumuʿah: The blessed day of Friday.

Kafan: Burial shroud.

Khalīfah: Caliph in Arabic.

Khātūn: Lady in Arabic.

Maghrib: The obligatory evening prayer.

Marḥūmīn: Literally means 'those who are in the mercy (of Allah)'; refers to those who have passed away.

Masjid al-Ḥarām: The Sacred Mosque in Mecca; the sanctuary that surrounds the Kaʿbah.

Masjid an-Nabī: The mosque of the Prophet ﷺ.

Mawlā: Master

Maʿṣūmīn: One who is inerrant (free of all sins, flaws, and impurities) through the divine protection and knowledge of Allah ﷻ.

Nūr: Light.

Qiyās: Using analogy between Islamic rulings to create new laws.

Qurʾān: The final of the Books or Scriptures sent by Allah ﷻ to the Prophets ﷺ for the guidance of humanity; this book was sent to Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ.

Ṣalāh: Prayer.

Salāmun ʿalaykum: Islamic greeting which translates as: Peace be upon you.

Shīʿah: Those who follow Imām ʿAlī ﷺ and the Imāms ﷺ after him in obedience to the order of Allah ﷻ and His Prophet ﷺ.

Subḥanallāh: All glory and praise belongs to God.

Taqwā: God-consciousness.

Tawassul: The act of resorting to someone or something that holds an elevated position with God in order to become closer to God. This high position must be known and supported; for example, the statuses of the Prophets, Ahl al-Bayt ﷺ and the Noble Qurʾān are well documented in Qurʾān and ḥadīth.

Tawfīq: Divine blessings from God (Allah) that give one the opportunity and ability to thrive toward success.

ʿUlamāʾ: Scholars.

Umayyad Dynasty: The dynasty of rulers from the descendents from Umayyah who usurped the caliphate from the noble household of the Prophet ﷺ.

Wa ʿalaykum salām: And peace be upon you too.

Yā: Calling out to someone; "O".

Ẓuhr: The obligatory noon prayer.

About the Board ʿĀlim

Moulana Nabi R. Mir (Abidi) is a scholar, an educator, a father, and an enthusiast for creating educational infrastructure and Islamic resources for the benefit of the global community. Always wanting to think 'outside of the box' by supporting the creation of innovative materials to engage young readers to pick up Islamic books, interact with Qurʾānic games, learn from the Steps to Perfection Curriculum, and begin their life-long journey of holistic education.

Being a dedicated student and graduate of *Darse Khārij* from the *Ḥawzah* (the Highest Level of Islamic Studies in the Seminary), Moulana Abidi knows the value of Islamic education. Also, having grown up in India, and now residing in the United States, he has had the honor of traveling to various communities and meeting many community leaders. He values the importance of collaboration and working together to optimize potentials, and to create open source platforms so that information and resources are available and accessible to everyone around the world.

You, dear reader, are now part of the Al-Kisa family.
Share the word, and join the mission.

SAYINGS FROM IMĀM JA'FAR AṢ-ṢĀDIQ ﷺ





مَنْ حَفِظَ مِنْ شِيْعَتِنَا أَرْبَعِيْنَ حَدِيْثًا بَعَثَهُ اللّٰهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ عَالِمًا فَقِيْهًا وَلَمْ يُعَذِّبْهُ يُعَذِّبْهُ.

1

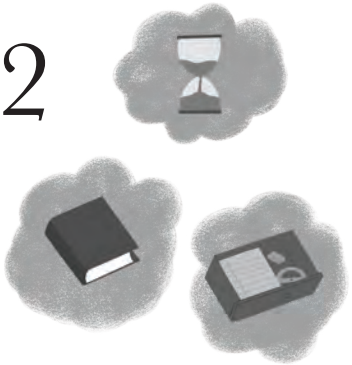


One, amongst our true followers, who memorizes and acts on 40 of our ḥadīth, will be raised by Allah on the Day of Judgment as a scholar, and will not not be punished.

AL-AMĀLĪ AṢ-ṢUDŪQ, P. 253

كَمَالُ الْمُؤْمِنِ فِى ثَلَاثِ خِصَالٌ : اَلْفِقْهُ فِى دِيْنِهِ ، وَالصَّبْرُ عَلَى النَّائِبَةِ ، وَالتَّقْدِيْرُ فِى الْمَعِيْشَةِ

2



The secret toward perfection for a believer is to excel in three qualities:

1) Religious knowledge, especially Islamic laws and rulings.

2) Have patience during hardship.

3) And be organized and proactively plan out their lives.

AL-AMĀLĪ AṬ-ṬŪSĪ, VOL.2, P. 279

عَلَيْكُمْ بِإِتْيَانِ الْمَسَاجِدِ ، فَإِنَّهَا بُيُوْتُ اللهِ فِى الْأَرْضِ ، وَمَنْ أَتَاهَا مُتَطَهِّرًا طَهَّرَهُ اللهُ مِنْ ذُنُوْبِهِ ، وَكُتِبَ مِنْ زُوَّارِهِ

It is important to visit mosques frequently as they are the houses of Allah on Earth. One who enters a mosque in a state of ritual purity (ṭahārah), Allah will purify them of their sins and count them from amongst His visitors.

SOURCE: WASĀʾIL ASH-SHĪʿAH, VOL. 1, P. 380, ḤADĪTH #2

3



مَنْ قَرَءَ الْقُرْآنَ فِى الْمُصْحَفِ مُتِّعَ بِبَصَرِهِ ، وَخُفِّفَ عَلَى وَالِدَيْهِ وَإِنْ كَانَا كَافِرَيْنِ

Whoever recites the Qurʾān from a muṣḥaf (the book itself) their insight (baṣīrah) will improve, and their parents will also benefit from the reward.

WASĀʾIL ASH-SHĪʿAH, VOL. 6, P. 204, ḤADĪTH #1

4



حَدِيْثٌ فِى حَلَالٍ وَ حَرَامٍ تَأْخُذُهُ مِنْ صَادِقٍ خَيْرٌ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَ مَا فِيْهَا مِنْ ذَهَبَ وَفِضَّةٌ

Hearing a ḥadīth about the commandments of Allah from a truthful believer is more valuable than the world and its riches.

SOURCE - AL-IMĀM AṢ-ṢĀDIQ (ʿA), P. 143

5



Over 1,000 years ago, in the city of Medina, an immaculate man was born. He was the 8th in the line of 14th divine leaders entrusted by God to support and guide humanity. Throughout his life, he brought knowledge to every aspect of society. He collected the laws of Shīʿah practice, and illuminated the laws of the scientific world. His name was Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ.

In this book, we will follow Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ from his birth to his martyrdom, learning about his most inspiring achievements and hearing stories from the everyday people who had the great blessing to meet him. We'll see examples of his immaculate character, including his patience, compassion, and wisdom.

Let's travel back to a time when Allah's divine leaders were not living in occultation and discover the wisdom that they have to share.

AL-KISA FOUNDATION
UNDER THE CLOAK OF GUIDANCE AND MERCY

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