

Imam Jaafar Al-Sadiq

—The Truthful—

Family

Born on 17th of Rabia al-Awal in 702 CE; i.e., 83 AH —“after hijra”.

- ◊ Birthplace ⇒ Medina, Umayyad Empire
- ◊ Father ⇒ Muhammad Al-Baqir, “the one who opens knowledge”, 5th Imam
- ◊ Mother ⇒ Farwah bint Al-Qasim
 - Grand-daughter of Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr, Imam Ali’s adopted son
- ◊ He is a direct descendant of Prophet Muhammad

Upbringing

- ◊ At the age of 12, his grand-father 4th Imam Al-Sajjad Zayn Al-Abedin —“the prostrating Imam, the adornment of the worshippers”— was poisoned in 95 AH by Ummayyad caliph Al-Walid ibn Abd Al-Malik.
- ◊ At the age of 34, in 117 AH, his father is poisoned by Ummayyad caliph Hisham ibn Abd al-Malik.
- ◊ He becomes Imam for the next 28 years.

Children

- ◊ First wife ⇒ Fatimah Al-Hasan, a descendant of Imam Al-Hasan ibn Ali.
 - They had two sons before she passed away:
 - Ismail who inspires an Islamic branch, then Abdullah al-Aftah “the broad”.
- ◊ Second wife ⇒ Hamidah Khatun, “the pure”.
 - They had two sons: Musa al-Kadim “the one who controls his anger”, the 7th Imam, then Muhammad al-Dibaj “the handsome”.

The Abbasids Caliphate

- ◊ The Ummayyad Caliphate:
 - Muawiyah ibn Abi Sufyan attacked Imam Ali at the battle of Siffin.
 - He became 6th caliph and eventually killed the 5th caliph, Imam Hassan ibn Ali.
- ◊ The 6th Imam lived in the time of Ummayyad Caliphs from Marwan I, ibn Al-Hakm, until the end of the dynasty with Marwan II.
- ◊ The Abbasids, descendants of Al-Abbas, the Prophet’s uncle, seized control in 750 CE.
- ◊ The 6th Imam was neutral: He did not pursue power nor did he aid others, such as the Abbasids, in doing so.

The Islamic Academy

- ◊ Being neutral, the 6th Imam was able to teach in a school that trained 4000 students, including:
 - Abu Hanifa and Malik ibn Anas, who later each founded a school of law.
 - Wasil ibn Ata, who later founds the Mutazila, “rationalist”, school.
- ◊ The Imam’s lessons ranged from theology to the physical sciences.
 - One of his students is Jabir ibn Hayyan, the father of early chemistry.
- ◊ The number of traditions left behind by the Imam and his father were more than all those of the Prophet and the other Imams.
- ◊ Imam Al-Sadiq is thus an important figure in multiple branches of Islam.

Al-Sadiq, like his predecessor Imam Ali, is considered by Sufis to have great spiritual knowledge.

Decisions —*al-amr bayn al-amrayn*

- ◊ The Imam says that God decreed some things absolutely but other things were left for humans to decide.
- ◊ Not predestination but not complete free will either, instead somewhere in the middle.

Quranic Interpretation

The Imam says there are four ways to view the Quran:

1. The plain statements —for the common people
2. The implied intent —for the elite, the intellectuals
3. The hidden meanings —for the ‘friends of God’
4. The exalted spiritual doctrines —these are the ‘province of the prophets’

Attempting to End Imamah

- ◊ Fearing he would take power as Imam, the Abbasids harassed him.
 - They burned his home and occasionally imprisoned him.
- ◊ After the Imam died, Al-Mansur ordered that whoever was named as the next Imam in Al-Sadiq’s testament would be killed.
- ◊ Imam Al-Sadiq’s testament named four people; in order: The caliph Al-Mansur, the governor of Medina, his eldest son Abdullah, then his younger son Musa.

Death

- ◊ Aged: 65 years old
 - Poisoned at the order of the second Abbasid caliph, al-Mansur.
- ◊ Like 3 Imams before him, he was buried in Jannat Al-Baqi in Medina, Saudi Arabia.
 - Which was destroyed in 1925 CE by the Wahabis, who dismiss shrines as leading to polytheism, *shirk*.

Quotes

1. *If you see something you don't like in your brother try to find from one to seventy excuses for him. If you can't find an excuse, say,
'There might be an excuse but I don't know it.'*
2. *One of the deeds God almighty appreciates the most is making his pious servants happy. This can be done through fulfilling their hunger, sweeping away their sorrows, or paying off their debts.*
3. *Write knowledge since you can't memorize unless with writing.
Heart confides to the written.*
4. *Everything has its tax and the tax of knowledge is to teach its people.*
5. *Being cheerful and affable (friendly) with people is by itself half of wisdom.*
6. *Everything has a foundation, and the foundation of Islām is our affection for the household of our Prophet.*
7. *The one who visits the grave of Imam Husayn knowing his right (of Imāmat), then it is as if he has visited God on the throne.*

Further Readings

- ◇ Al-Islam
 - <https://www.al-islam.org/story-of-the-holy-kaaba-and-its-people-shabbar-sixth-imam-jafar-ibn-muhammad-sadiq>
- ◇ WikiShia
 - [http://en.wikishia.net/view/Imam_Ja%27far_b._Muhammad_al-Sadiq_\(a\)](http://en.wikishia.net/view/Imam_Ja%27far_b._Muhammad_al-Sadiq_(a))
- ◇ Biography of Imam Jafar Sadiq by Sayed Ammar Nakshawani
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c8vBnoVjd0w>