

(.Childhood and Wisdom of Imam Muhammad Taqi (A.S

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Imam Muhammad Taqi (A.S.), the ninth Imam and son of Imam Reza (A.S.), was appointed to Imamate at age of seven. As Imam Muhammad Taqi (A.S.), also referred to as Imam Jawad and Abu Ja'far, was the first Imam to be appointed to Imamate at such a young age, many may question its possibility and reliability.

This selection will seek to answer the following questions: Is it really possible a young boy could have reached perfection and thus become successor of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.)? Have similar cases occurred to previous communities? Was this incident sudden and unordinary for the society of the time?

1. In general, based on human nature, to blossom in intellect and body, and to express abilities in thought and spirit; passage of time is essential. Allah (SWT) as one who created rules and regulations of nature is more powerful than to be limited to the regulations themselves. In other words, Allah (SWT) can easily change the normal regulations in life cycles of His selected servants. This case holds true in regards to prophets and Imams who as the Holy Quran recalls have been chosen by Allah (SWT).(1) The Quranic references are proof of the prophets' God given gifted characteristics, which are apart from materialistic tools and reasons. The characteristics prove that prophets had the necessary liabilities and qualifications for this position.

2. The Holy Quran informs us about previous generations who experienced young prophets, like in the example of Prophet Yahya (John) (A.S.), "O Yahya! take hold of the Book with strength, and We granted him wisdom while yet a child".(2) The Holy Quran also brings examples from the birth of Prophet Isa (Jesus) (A.S.) who defended his mother from the accusations and blasphemy of his community. For a normal human being it would take at least twelve months past his birth to begin saying his first words. What Prophet Isa(A.S.) said(3) at birth sounded like intellectual words a wise elderly man might have said.

Imam Reza (A.S.), father of Imam Jawad(A.S.), was aware of this fact and thus prepared the grounds by informing Muslims, especially Shiites and devotees about the concept of Imamate at a young age. A follower of Imam Reza (A.S.) narrates:

In the city of Khurasan we were present in a gathering with Imam Reza (A.S.). One of us asked, "O Master, if something occurred to you who should we refer to?" "To my son Abu Ja'far," replied the Imam. The reply of the Imam was not satisfactory for the

man as he felt Imam Jawad(A.S.) was too young. Imam Reza(A.S.) thus said, "Allah (SWT) appointed Isa ibn Maryam to Prophethood and gave him new teachings at an even younger age than Abu Ja'far."

Although the preaching of Imam Reza (A.S.) explained the possibilities of a divine position at a young age and prepared the grounds for the next Imam, yet because people were unaware of the teachings of previous Imams(A.S.), they questioned the authenticity. To find the truth, learned men and scholars held gatherings and meetings with Imam Jawad (A.S.). Imam Jawad(A.S.) firmly answered their questions and convinced them with his answers. (5) It should be noted that the detailed answers Imams (A.S.) would give to questions of the community about the belief and thought was a routine task in their life. Likewise the question/answer sessions of the Shiite society and the movement of Imam Jawad(A.S.) in clarifying doubts do not seem out of the ordinary.

((Selection taken from "The Face of the Leaders", by Mahdi Pishwayi

Footnotes:

- 1- "Allah did choose Adam and Noah, the family of Abraham, and the family of 'Imran above all people." (The Holy Quran, 3:33)
- 2- The Holy Quran, 19:12
- 3- The Holy Quran, 19:30-32
- 4- Sheikh Mufid, Al-Irshad, Maktab e Basirati, p. 319; Kuleini, Al-Usul Min al-Kafi, Tehran: Maktab al-Saduq, vol.1 pp 322 and 384.
- 5- Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, 2nd Edition, Tehran: Maktaba al-Islamiyyah, 1395 AH vol. 50, p. 98-100; Muhammad ibn Jarir Tabari, Ibn Rustam, Reasons of Imamate, 3rd Edition, Qum, .Manshoorat al-Razi, 1363 AH, pp. 204-206