

Cafer es-Sadik

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Ja'far al-Şādiq

Ja'far al-Şādiq ("the trustworthy"; d. 148/765), commonly referred as Abū 'Abdallāh in the Shī'ī sources, is the sixth Imām of the Twelver (Ithnā'asharī) branch of Shī'ī Islam and the eponym of the Twelver school of law (*madhhab*). He is the most important figure connected with the propagation of a specifically Shī'ī corpus of *ḥadīth* ("traditions") comprising religio-legal norms, doctrinal statements, Qur'ānic exegesis, and theology. Indeed, in the canonical collections of Twelver *ḥadīth* more traditions are cited from Ja'far than from all the other Imāms combined. The questionable attribution of these traditions, however, makes it extremely difficult to ascertain Ja'far's actual teachings.

Ja'far was born in Medina around the year 83/702 and was the son of the fifth Imām of the Twelvers, Muḥammad al-Bāqir ("the one who opens knowledge"; d. 117/735), and Umm Farwa bt. al-Qāsim, a great-granddaughter of the first caliph, Abū Bakr (d. 13/634). Ja'far was a direct descendant of the fourth caliph and first Twelver Imām, 'Alī b.

Abī Ṭālib (d. 40/661), through his son al-Ḥusayn (d. 61/680).

Throughout his life Ja'far maintained the political quietism of his father and refused to participate in the insurrections that he witnessed and that were led by other members of the Ṭālibī family (i.e., descendants of 'Alī's father, Abū Ṭālib (d. c.619), who was the paternal uncle of the Prophet). Ja'far played no part in the anti-Umayyad uprising of his paternal uncle Zayd b. 'Alī (d. 122/740) in 122/740 (al-Irbilī, 2:416) nor in the rebellion of 'Abdallāh b. Mu'āwiya (d. 129/746-7 or 130/747-8), a great-grandson of 'Alī's elder brother Ja'far b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 8/629), in 127/744 (both rebellions were in Kūfa). Likewise, Ja'far refused to give his oath of allegiance to his cousin Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh al-Nafs al-Zakiyya ("the pure soul"; d. 145/762) who led a revolt in Medina in 145/762 against the 'Abbāsīd regime (al-Iṣfahānī, 208, 255).

Before the 'Abbāsīd accession to the caliphate in 132/750, Abū Muslim (d. 137/755), the leader of the revolutionary movement in Khurāsān that ultimately overthrew the Umayyad dynasty