

# السلام عليك يا زين العابدين و سيد الساجدين

IMAM AL-SAJJAD [A.S]

امام السجاد (ع)

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 3

Imam al-Sajjād (as)

## Objectives >>>

### Students should:

- That Imam al-sajjād is our fourth Imam
- The amazing worship of Imam sajjād (as)
- The historical environment in which the Imam lived, and how he was an example for the Shi'ah through his worship and supplications
- The rewards of prostration and be introduced to special prostrations

Imam al-Sajjād (as) is the fourth divinely appointed Imam and successor of the Holy Prophet. In previous years, we have learnt about his great personality and his outstanding level of worship of Allah (SWT). In this lesson, we will take a brief look at the life of Imam al-Sajjād (as), focusing on some of the outstanding characteristics that the Imam had so we can learn from them, such as the amazing nature of his worship and supplications.

## IMAM AL-SAJJĀD (A.S)

Imam Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn (as) is our fourth holy Imam, and so the fourth successor after the Holy Prophet (saw). His father was Imam Ḥusayn (as), and his mother's name was Shahrbanoo, the daughter of the last Sassanid king of pre-Islamic Iran. Imam Ali ibn Ḥusayn worshipped Allah (SWT) while in prostration (sajdah) so much so that he was known amongst the people as al-Sajjād (the prostrating Imam), and Sayyidul-Sajidīn (the leader of those who prostrate). The Imam was also famously known as Zainul 'Abidīn (the Adornment of the Worshippers), due to the amount of worship he used to perform to Allah (SWT). It is said that time and again his grandfather 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib would hug him and say, "My son, you are Zainul Abidīn"

## THE AMAZING LEVEL OF WORSHIP

In order to illustrate the amazing worship of Imam al-Sajjād (as), we will relate the following story. It is reported by Sheikh Mufīd that once Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir (as) saw that his father's face had turned yellow through weeping all night. His forehead was hurt.

His legs and feet were swollen from standing long hours in prayers. Imam al-Bāqir (as) started weeping. Imam al-Sajjād (as) asked his weeping son to bring to him the book containing the prayers of Imam Ali (as). He then read from the book for a while and closing it, he said: "who is strong enough to worship the way 'Ali Ibn Abi Ṭālib used to do?" The message from Imam al-Sajjād (as) was: compared to my grandfather my prayers are too short and too little. So let me do as much as I can.

## **THE AFTERMATH OF KARBALA**

The historical period directly after Karbalā', was a very severe and difficult one for the Ahlul Bayt (as) and their followers. After the tragedy in Karbalā', more and more revolts and uprisings were occurring against the rule of Yazīd. As a result, the tyrant Yazīd continued to brutally pursue and kill anyone who opposed his rule. In order to keep Islam alive in such a severe situation, without angering the government of Yazīd, Imam al-Sajjād (as) led a quiet life while preaching Islam in two main ways.

Firstly, he kept alive the message of his father Imam Ḥusayn (as) regarding Islam through mourning. There was not a day that passed without the Imam crying in memory of his father and those who gave their lives in Karbalā'. He also encouraged his followers to regard it as their duty to remember the martyrs of Karbalā' as often as they could.

The second most important thing that the Imam did after returning from Damascus was to spend a lot of his time praying to Allah (SWT). His prayers were not only in the form of Salāt but also in the form of du'ā' or supplications. By reading these supplications and teaching them to his followers, the Imam not only taught Muslims how to pray to Allah (SWT), but also explained to them the true teachings and essence of Islam.

## **PROSTRATION: THE BEST POSITION**

As we mentioned earlier, Imam al-Sajjād (as) received this title because of his frequent and long prostration to Allah (SWT). What is the benefit of this prostration that our Imam used to do for long periods of time?

Our sixth Imam, Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) has said:

“Prostration is the highest degree of worship that man can perform.”<sup>i</sup>

So the closest we can ever get to Allah (SWT) spiritually is while we are in the state of prostration.

There are at least two special types of prostrations:

### **For gratefulness (shukr):**

- The prostration of shukr (thankfulness) is highly recommended. It is a way of expressing thanks to Allah (SWT) for the incessant divine blessings which have been showered upon us and our family. During the prostration of shukr, any dhikr or supplication is permissible, but the recital of “shukran lillĀh” (thanks to Allah) and “al-ĪamdulillĀh” (all praise belongs to Allah) are recommended.

### **For repentance (tawbah):**

- The prostration for repentance is a way of seeking the forgiveness of Allah (SWT) for past sins and mistakes that we have committed. In the prostration, any words can be recited, one of which is: ‘AstaghfirullĀh Rabbi Wa Atūbu llayh’ (I seek forgiveness from my Lord, and I repent to Him).

## **DU'A': OUR BOND WITH ALLAH (SWT)**

Another outstanding aspect of Imam al-Sajjād's (as) character was the Imam's attention to supplications to Allah (SWT). In the following āyah, Allah (SWT) says that had it not been for people supplicating to Him (their Creator), He would have had nothing to do with them:

" Say: 'Had it not been for your prayers (supplications), my Lord would not have cared about you'<sup>iii</sup>

So to keep a strong bond between us and our Creator, we have to continuously turn to our Lord and supplicate to Him.

Supplication also helps us reach our goals more easily. The Holy Prophet (saw) said:

“When Allah wants to answer or respond to His servant, He allows him [through divine succour] to supplicate.”<sup>iii</sup>

## AL-ṢAḤĪFAH AL-SAJJĀDIYAH

Most of the supplications of Imam al-Sajjād (as) today exist in a book called "al-Ṣaḥīfah al-Sajjādiyyah". The Imam used to teach these supplications to his sons Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir (a.s) and Zayd, the martyr. The following du'a' is from this most valuable book of wisdom and spirituality:

"Make us love what we dislike in Your decree and make easy for us what we find difficult in Your decision!"<sup>iv</sup>

### BRIEF SAYINGS OF THE IMAM

"Take care not to acquire the companionship of a liar for he is like a mirage (deceiving). He shows you the near thing as distant and the distant thing as nearby."

(TUHAFUL UQOOL, P 279)

"Guard against lies, both small and big of them, in all conditions, both in seriousness and joke."

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<sup>i</sup> (al-Da'aawat, p. 33, no. 70)

<sup>ii</sup> (Holy Qur'ān, 25:77).

<sup>iii</sup> (Kanz al-'Ummal, no. 3156)

<sup>iv</sup> (Sahifah Sajjadiya - His Supplication in Asking for the Best)

Other References:

## Review Questions

**Q1. Imam al-Sajjād (as) was also known as:**

- Sayyidul Sājīdīn (the leader of those who prostrate)
- Zainul 'Abidīn (the Adornment of the Worshippers)
- Both of the above

**Q2. Imam al-Sajjād (as) safeguarded Islam by:**

- Remaining at home and being silent
- Making a peace treaty with Yazīd
- Mourning for his father and teaching Islam through his amazing worship and supplications.

**Q3. According to Imam al-Ṣādiq (as), prostrating to Allah (SWT) is:**

- a good worshipping act
- quite rewarding but not as much as other acts
- the highest degree of worship that humans can perform

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