

# السلام عليك يا زين العابدين و سيد الساجدين

IMAM AL-SAJJAD [AS]

امام السجاد (ع)

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 4

## Imam al-Sajjād (as)

### Objectives >>>

#### Students should:

- Know the historical environment in which the Imam lived after Karbala
- Know how the Imam led the Shi'ah through that time with a focus on spirituality
- Know how the Imam used grief for events in Karbala as a motivation for the Shi'ah and that his grief was not out of despair or in futility
- Know the importance of building a strong relationship with Allah by discussing excerpts from the du'ā's taught to us by the Imam
- Understand the importance of becoming familiar with the du'ā's of the Ahlul Bayt

After the martyrdom of Imam Ḥusayn (as) the survival of Islam depended on Imam Zainul'Abidīn (as). He had a very hard job of letting the world know the mission of Imam Ḥusayn (as) and exposing the evil intentions of Yazīd and the BaniUmayyah. He had to keep the message of Islam alive and save it from being confused by the evil BaniUmayyah.

### THE AFTERMATH OF KARBALA

No Imam began his Imamate in a more tragic atmosphere. The first day of his Imamate saw him seriously ill and a captive of the army of Yazīd in Karbala. His father and predecessor had sacrificed all he had on the altar of truth; and Imam Zainul 'Abidīn found himself with a group of helpless widows and orphans being led from place to place. Finally they were thrown into a prison, where the Imam spent the first year of his Imamate, cut off from his followers.

Understandably, the tragedy of Karbala had created a chaos in the Shi'ah world. The Shi'ah were in a time of darkness and the community was in confusion.

Altogether, Imam Zainul 'Abidīn had three difficult tasks before him:

- To announce his Imamate publicly without seeming to oppose outsiders
- To unite the community together, doing it in such a way as not to give Yazīd an excuse to strike back.
- To expand true faith, providing a beacon of light to guide the seekers of truth to the safety of true faith and virtuous deeds - doing it without attracting the attention of his enemies

Imam Zainul 'Abidīn under divine guidance did achieve all these aims in such a beautiful way that even his followers, who tremendously benefited, and are benefiting, from his superb leadership did not consciously realise how they were being guided.

## **THE LEADERSHIP STYLE OF THE IMAM**

Sorrow and grief succeeds in binding the people together, while intellectual arguments and joyous functions fail to achieve that object. Have we not seen how at the time of a national tragedy all political differences are genuinely forgotten and how the whole nation unites together to share the sorrow and shoulder the resulting responsibilities? Imam Zainul 'Abidīn under divine command selected this method to unite the community.

It is said that he continued to weep till his eyes were endangered. And whenever he took water to drink, he wept till the tears filled the pot. Someone talked to him about it and he replied:

"Why should not I cry, when my father was denied the water which was free to the beasts and animals?

"And never was food brought to him but that he wept, so much so that a servant told him: "May I be your ransom, O Son of the Messenger of Allah! I am afraid that you would die (of this weeping)". The Imam said: 'I only complain of my distraction and anguish to Allah and I do not know. Never do I remember the massacre of the children of Fāṭimah but that tears strangle me.'

Naturally, this example set by their Imam was followed by the Shi'ah everywhere; and they joined hands to establish mourning of Imam Ḥusayn (as) whenever possible. This created a feeling of oneness and unity in all persons attending those mourning-sessions and motivated them to rise against tyrants and attempt to establish truth and help it overcome falsehood.

This institution of mourning became the focal-point of all religious activities of the Shi'ah community. In later periods, the enemies of the faith realised the vital role which the "mourning" plays in religious education and character-building of the Shi'ah, and they tried to stop it. Now they have changed their tactics. Now they ask: Why should one mourn for an event which occurred more than 1300 years ago? They ask it while they are fully aware that these mourning sessions (Majālis) are the best-organised, well-attended religious schools, where the participants

willingly learn the basic tenets of faith, are exhorted to emulate the way of life of Ahlul Bayt; and thus their Islamic outlook on the life and the world is fortified.



This seat of learning was given to the Shi'ah community by Imam Zainul 'Abidīn so unobtrusively that even the community did not realise its importance and significance in the beginning.

## **HIS SUPPLICATIONS**

Imam Zainul 'Abidīn was as patient as anyone could be and expressed himself through beautiful supplications that represent a moving spiritual, social and moral Islamic course. If we read his supplication we find within them a general Islamic course that covers all basic Islamic principles and concepts.

Some examples of the Imam's relationship with Allah (SWT) can be seen from the following excerpts of his supplications:

“My God, who can have tasted the sweetness of Your love, then wanted another in place of You? Who can have become intimate with Your nearness, then sought removal from You?”

(MunājātulMuḥibbīn)

“My God, how agreeable for hearts are the thoughts inspiring Your remembrance, how sweet travelling to You through imagination upon the roads of the unseen worlds, how pleasant the taste of Your love, how delightful the drink of Your nearness!”

(Munājātul‘Arifīn)

The Imam (as) taught us that invocations and supplications are the most powerful solutions to difficulties and also for obtaining needs. He showed us this through all his supplications, which were later compiled into a book called *al-Saḥīfah al-Sajjādiyah*.

These du‘ās show us that the relationship between us and Allah (SWT) is one of slave and Master – He is the Master, The Rich and Needless – whereas we are the slaves, poor and always needy.

Whenever we are in difficulty or even when we are in times of comfort, these du‘ās remind us that our source of relief is from Allah (SWT) and so is the source of our blessings which we enjoy and we should therefore be thankful to Him.

We are also encouraged by Allah (SWT) to call upon Him – in the Qur‘an He says:

“Supplicate your Lord humbly and secretly; He loves not transgressors.” (7:55)

From *al-Saḥīfah al-Sajjādiyah*, we can see that the Imam (as) has taught us how to humble ourselves before Allah (SWT) to ask Him for our needs and for help in difficulties.

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## BRIEF SAYINGS OF THE IMAM

“Be careful about committing sin along with joy (avoid it), since the felicity of committing a sin is itself a bigger sin (than the actual sin).

(BIHAR UL ANWAR VOL 78, P 159)

“Oh people, contemplate, meditate and practice for the (place, thing) that you have been created for, Allah did not at all create you in vain and uselessness.”

(TUHAFUL UQOOL, P 274)

## Review Questions

**Q1. The title of the fourth Imam – Al-Sajjād means:**

- a. The one who worships
- b. The one who constantly prostrates
- c. The one who feeds the hungry

**Q2. What is the name of the book in which the du‘ās of the Imam are compiled?**

- a. Al Kamilah
- b. Nahjul Balaghah
- c. al-Saḥīfah al-Sajjādiyah

**Q3. How did Imam Al-Sajjad (as) spread the message of Islam in his time?**

- a. Through fighting with the government
- b. By keeping quiet
- c. By spreading the message through du‘ās

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