



IMAM AL-ŞĀDIQ ^[A.S.]

امام الصادق (ع)

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Review basic biographical facts about the Imam (as)
- Review the historical and political circumstances of the life of the Imam (as)
- Discuss the importance the Imam placed on knowledge in this time
- Further develop the understanding of humility as an attribute of the Imam

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 5

Imam al-Şādiq (as)

Imam Ja'far bin Muḥammad al-Şadiq (as) was born and brought up under the care of his father, Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir (as). He is our sixth Imam. Before his martyrdom, our fifth Imam passed the Imamate to Imam al-Şādiq (as). He became the authority of jurisprudents, scholars and preachers.

Thousands of scholars from various fields learnt from him and were under his mentorship. He made the mosque of Medina a university that spread Islamic ideology. Scholars and preachers gave their testimonies in acknowledgement of his great standing and abundant knowledge.

POLITICS AT THE TIME OF IMAM AL-ŞĀDIQ (AS)

The period of his Imamate coincided with one of the most revolutionary and eventful era of Islamic history which saw the downfall of the Umayyad Caliphate and the rise of the Abbasid Caliphate. The internal wars and political upheavals were bringing about speedy changes in government. Thus the Holy Imam (as) witnessed the reigns of various caliphs from both Umayyad and Abbasid families. It was due to the political strife between these two groups that the Holy Imam was left alone undisturbed to carry out his devotional duties and peacefully carry on his mission to propagate Islam and spread the teachings of the Holy Prophet (saw).

In the last days of the Umayyad rule, their Empire was teetering on the edge of collapse, and a most chaotic and demoralised state of affairs prevailed throughout the Islamic lands. The Abbasids exploited such an opportunity and availing themselves of this political instability, assumed the title of "Avengers of Ahlul Bayt (as)". They pretended to have stood for the cause of taking revenge on the Umayyad dynasty for shedding the innocent blood of Imam Ḥusayn (as).

In actual fact, this was just a false claim, while they were plotting only to gain power for themselves for the sake of having power and nothing else. The common people were thus deceived into supporting them and when these Abbasids did succeed in snatching power from the Umayyads, they turned against the Ahlul Bayt (as).

Once they had settled into power, they began a reign of oppression against the Ahlul Bayt, killing a large number of innocent people from among them. In the end, the Abbasid dynasty was responsible for the murder of more Imams of the Ahlul Bayt (as) than even the Umayyads.

THE RELIGIOUS CONDITION AT THE TIME OF IMAM (AS)

The downfall of the Umayyads and the rise of the Abbasids constituted the two principal plots in the drama of Islamic history. This was a most chaotic and revolutionary period when the religious morals of Islam had gone down and the teachings of the Holy Prophet (saw) were being neglected, and a state of anarchy was rampant.

It was also at this time where the political battles between the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphates created an opportunity of freedom for the people to seek knowledge and ask questions regarding a wide range of topics from science to religion including importance concepts like the existence of God, His Unity and other fundamental aspects of faith. This allowed also people from other religions to visit Medina and discuss such issues with the Muslims.

It was amidst such an environment that the virtuous personage of the Imam (as) stood like a beacon of light. The world inclined towards his virtuous and admirable personality. On account of his great learning he was always triumphant in his many debates with the leaders of other groups like Atheists, Christians, Jews, etc.

EDUCATIONAL REVOLUTION AND THE IMPORTANCE OF KNOWLEDGE

During this period, the Imam had a golden opportunity to emphasise the importance of knowledge. His genius and exemplary level of knowledge and faith with the help of Allah (SWT) allowed him to start an educational revolution which led to a very powerful and yet subtle movement in favour of Islam.

The versatile genius of Imam al Ṣādiq (as) in all branches of knowledge was acclaimed throughout the Islamic world, and attracted students from far-off places towards him till the number of his students and disciples had reached four thousand. The scholars and experts in Divine Law have quoted many traditions (hadith) from Imam al Ṣādiq (as). His disciples compiled hundreds of books on various branches of science and arts including jurisprudence, Ḥadith, astronomy and chemistry.

An example of the students of the Imam was Jabir ibn Ḥayyan, a famous scholar of mathematics, astronomy and chemistry. He was one of the Holy Imam's disciples who benefited from the Holy Imam's knowledge and guidance and was able to write 400 books on different subjects.

THE WISDOM OF IMAM AL-ṢĀDIQ (AS)

Tawḥīd of Mufaḍḍal: a Reflection of the Imam's Knowledge

Mufaddal ibn 'Umar al-Kufi was a student of Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) who was instructed by the Imam for four days and compiled the Imam's teachings in the form of the above-named treatise.

One day when Mufaḍḍal was sitting in the mosque, some famous atheist by the name of Ibn Abi 'Aujā' came into the mosque with a comrade and began discussing with him concepts of religion and talking aloud began questioning the existence of God, and then claimed that there was no God.

Upon hearing this, Mufaḍḍal was outraged and said to him, "O disbeliever! Do you disbelieve in the faith of Allah (SWT) by totally denying the existence of Him, who created you in such perfection, transforming you from one state to another, till you arrived at your present form? Had you just considered about your own self and

had your fine understanding helped you truthfully, you would have recognised in your own soul such obvious proofs of the existence of the Almighty Allah, the signs of His All comprehending sustenance and the evidence of His boundless workmanship."

The atheist said: "If you are of the company of Ja'far ibn Muḥammad (as), it does not behove you to talk in the strain that you do, for his is not this mode of address, nor does he argue with us in such rudeness. He has heard more of our words than you have done, but he has never used any impropriety, nor has he ever retorted aggressively.

He is very forbearing, dignified, reasonable and of mature intellect. He is never harsh nor touchy. He listens to our talk very attentively. He invites our arguments, so much so that when we have exhausted our armoury and we think to have silenced him, he, with a brief resume, deadens all our reasoning and dumfounds us, so that we are left without a plank to answer the arguments of the revered personage. If you are of his company, then talk to us in the same strain."

Mufaḍḍal went to, Imam Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (as) in a sad state and sought advice. He was upset by what had happened at the mosque.

The Imam (as) told him to come back the next day when he gave him a detailed explanation about some biological facts which would leave no doubt for the existence of God.

These instructions of the Imam were compiled into a book, which is available in English and can also be accessed online at: <http://www.al-islam.org/tradition-of-mufaddal-pearls-of-wisdom-from-imam-jafar-as-sadiq>

Ḥadith about Creation

One day a notable person by the name of Abu Shakir asked the Imam about the creation of the universe. The Imam (as) said:

"The easiest evidence for that is what I will show you (now)," answered the Imam (as). Then he called for an egg and put it in the palm of his hand. "This is a compact protective container; inside it is the thin (substance of an) egg which is surrounded by what could be compared with fluid silver and melted gold. Do you doubt that?"

"There can be no doubt about that," replied Abu Shakir.

"Then it splits open showing a form like (for example) a peacock," continued the Imam (as). "Has anything entered into it other than what you knew (to be there already)?"

"No," he replied.

"This is the evidence for the creation of the world," concluded the Imam.

THE HUMILITY OF IMAM AL-ṢĀDIQ (AS)

Tawaḍu' (modesty and humility) is the opposite of arrogance and pride.

Imam as-Ṣādiq (as) lived as the most humble of people. Like the Holy Prophet (saw), he stopped at the places where children were gathered, greeted them, and played with them. If someone held him by the hand and wanted to lead him somewhere, he never objected. He helped his family members with the housework. When people were working, he worked with them. He mended his shoes and clothes and did all other domestic work. He sat at the table with his servants. He always welcomed the poor warmly, looked after widows and orphans, visited the ill, followed funeral processions, and answered the call of needy in his community.

Even though Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) was a highly respected person in the community and had a very high status with Allah (SWT), this status never made him proud. He never thought or acted like he was better than someone else on account of his knowledge and status. Instead, the Imam (as) was a very humble, friendly and helpful person especially to the poor and needy.

In today's world, people are proud of certain qualities they may have. Among these are:

- Good looks
- Money or wealth
- A good job, profession or position
- Knowledge and education
- Colour or race
- Nationality

We have to remember that many of these things are not even under our control and those that are, are only so

because Allah (SWT) has granted us the ability to attain those blessings and has given us permission to hold them in trust. There is no room to attribute any of the blessings we enjoy as being from our own selves and allow ourselves to be proud.

Instead, we should remain modest and humble, and never think that we are better than others, or act in such a way. This is one of the main lessons that we can learn from the life of Imam as-Ṣādiq (as).

Review Questions

¹ REFERENCES

- IMAM AL-SADIQ, By Shaykh Mohammed al-Husayn al-Muzaffar, Translated: Jasim al-Rasheed, Ansariyan Publications – Qum - http://www.maareffoundation.com/english/library/pro_ahl/imam06_sadiq/imam_sadiq/index.htm
- Why is humility important - <http://www.onislam.net/english/reading-islam/understanding-islam/ethics-and-values/452638-why-humility-is-so-important-in-islam.html?Values=>
- The Infallible, Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as Sadiq (as), taken from Kitab al Irshad, Sh. Mufid - <http://www.al-islam.org/masoom/bios/6thimam.html>

Q1. Which two governments were fighting each other at the time of Imam al-Ṣādiq (as)?

- Maliki and Hanbali
- Umayyad and Abbasid
- Abbasid and Sunni
- Umayyad and Kharijite

Q2. Who was the famous companion who has been known as the father of mathematics and Algebra in particular. He studied under Imam al Sadiq (as)?

- Abu Ḥanifa
- Jabir ibn Ḥayyan
- Mansour al Dawāniqi

- Imam Ja'far Sadiq (as) – www.madressa.net
- The Sixth Imam, Ja'far Ibn Muhammad El-Sadiq (as) - <http://www.al-islam.org/kaaba14/9.htm>
- A Biography of Imam Ja'far al Sadiq (as) by Muhammad Nasir Husayni 'Ala'l, translated by Mahboobeh Morshedian - <http://messageofthaqalayn.com/50-%20Jafar%20Sadiq.pdf>