

Imam al-Kāḍim [A.S]

امام الكاظم (ع)

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Learn basic biographical facts of the Imam (as)
- Understand the historical circumstances during the life of Imam
- Understand the benefits of controlling one's anger and strategies to control one's anger

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 5

Imam al-Kāḍim (as)

Name:	Mūsā
Title:	Al-Kāḍim
Born:	At 'Abwa (between Mecca and Medina) on Sunday the 7th Safar 128 A.H
Father:	Imam Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (as)
Mother:	Ḥamidah Khātūn
Martyred:	Aged 55 years in Baghdad on Friday, 25th Rajab 183 A.H. Buried in Kaḍimayn, Baghdad.
Poisoned by:	Hārūn-al-Rashīd. The ruling Abbasid Caliph of the time.



We have learnt about the life of Imam al-Kāḍim (as) in previous years. We learnt that he earned this title because of his amazing ability to control his anger. Another honour given to him by Allah (SWT) is that he is: bābul ḥawāij (the door to the needs). This special power of intercession was given to the Imam by Allah (SWT) because of the great hardship he suffered during his life.

THE POLITICAL CONDITION

Imam al-Kāḍim (as) was born during the struggle between the Umayyad and Abbasid families, who were both oppressors and tyrants, and he spent of his life under the tyrannical rule of the Abbasids. Both these parties claimed to hold the position of Islamic Leadership, whilst they both knew that this position rightfully belonged to the Ahlul Bayt (as). Due to this reason, the Imams always faced oppression for the tyrants feared they would gather support and try to overthrow them. The love of power and the world made these regimes treat the Imams unjustly, especially so in the life of Imam al-Kāḍim (as).

Imam al-Kāḍim (as) was the Imam for a period of 35 years, making his Imamate the longest after the Imamate of our present Imam (atfs). During his time as the imam, he spent 10 years under al-Manṣūur, 10 years under al-Mahdi, one year and some months under al-Hādi and about 12 years under the rule of Harān al-Rashid, who finally assassinated the Imam by poisoning him.

The Abbasid caliphs were extremely paranoid and always on alert on any attempts to overthrow them; and the Imam was fully aware of this danger. After all, they knew that the Imam was the most righteous and knowledgeable of the time, and they saw this as a threat to their dynasty.

Despite this, the Imam continued to teach the Muslim community and to disseminate true Islamic knowledge.

False Imprisonment

One of the hardships that Imam al-Kāḍim (as) faced was false imprisonment under the Abbasid regime, where he was imprisoned several times simply because the Abbasid rulers felt threatened by him and were scared he was plotting to overthrow them.

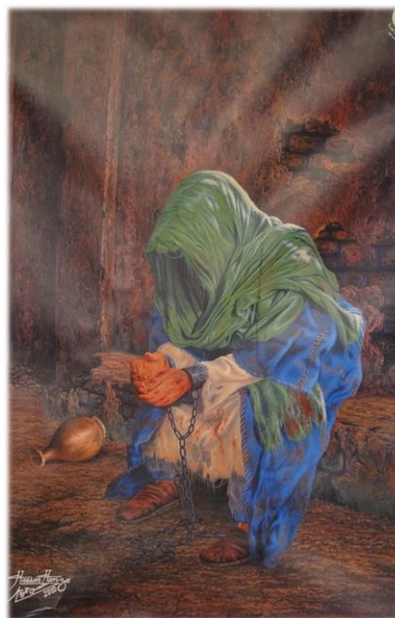
Thawbani narrates: Imam al-Kāḍim (as) for about ten years, performed a single prostration from sunrise until noon every day. "Hārūn would sometimes climb onto a roof that overlooked the prison cell wherein he has imprisoned the Imam. He would see the Imam (as) in prostration. He asked his companion, 'what is that cloth I see on that spot every day?' His companion replied 'O Commander of the Faithful, that is not a cloth but it is Mūsā ibn Ja'far (as). He performs a prostration every day from sunrise until noon.' Hārūn said, 'He is indeed one of the holy men from the Bani Hāshim.' I asked, 'Then

why have you confined him to captivity?' He said, 'Alas! That is how it must be.'ⁱ

Among the reasons that motivated Harūn to arrest the Imam and to throw him in a dark, underground prison is that the Imam indicated to him that he was amongst the grandsons of the Prophet and his inheritors, and because he was more appropriate for the Caliphate than him.

Imam Musa's attitude towards Harūn was strict and uncompromising when it came to the truth and justice. The Imam prevented his followers from co-operating with the ruling authority. An example of this is that he prevented his companion Ṣafwān al-Jammāl to hire his camels to Harūn, while the people used to hire them to go to Mecca to perform the Ḥajj pilgrimage. So Ṣafwān was forced to sell his camels.

THE IMAM IN VARIOUS PRISONS



The Imam (as) spent one year in Baṣra in this prison. Harūn then wrote a letter to the prison commander, 'Īsa to kill the Imam (as). Having received this letter, 'Īsa summoned some of his close friends and reliable ones, read the letter to them and sought their advice. They advised to ask Harūn to exempt him from this order, and this is what 'Īsa did. He wrote a letter to Harūn mentioning that the Imam has been in his prison for a long time and the spies have been watching his every movement and that the Imam was always busy praying. He said that Harūn should send someone to collect the Imam or he would free him.

It is said that one of the spies reported about the prayer, which he had heard from Imam (as) during his imprisonment:

“Oh God! You know that I have always wished that you put me in a place where I can be free to worship You, and You have granted me this...”

The Imam (as) was then taken to Baghdad. Here, he spent time in two prisons and both times the commanders of the prisons developed great admiration for him and refused to kill the Imam. Finally, he was moved to a third prison in Baghdad, ruled by a cruel Jewish jailor by the name of Sindi.

On the 25th of Rajab 183 A.H. Sindi poisoned the Imam (as) fatally. Even the corpse of the Imam was not spared. His body was taken out of the prison and left on the bridge of Baghdad. An announcement was made:

“This is the Imam of the Rāfiḍah (those who reject).”

The followers of the Imam were devastated by this. They recovered the body and managed to bury it in Baghdad, in a place now honoured with the name of the Imam.

A TERRIBLE MASSACRE

Hārūn’s tyrannical soul had neither mercy nor compassion toward the family of the Ahlul Bayt. He committed terrible crimes against the family of the Ahlul Bayt. He ordered a large group from the extended family of the Ahlul Bayt to be executed and assassinated, while they were the best of the Muslims in knowledge and piety. Some of these figures were as follows:

- ‘Abdullāh ibn al-Ḥasan: Hārūn received information that ‘Abdullāh (the grandson of the second Imam) was gathering people to revolt against him. Despite denying the accusations, ‘Abdullāh was imprisoned for a long time. After a long time in prison, he sent a letter to Hārūn cursing him, and soon after Hārūn had him beheaded.
- Yahyā ibn ‘Abdullāh: He was one another pious and brave man from the progeny of Imam Ḥasan (as). He led an uprising against Hārūn which eventually failed. He was captured, imprisoned in very harsh conditions, and shortly after being released, was killed under Hārūn’s orders.

AL-KĀDĪM (AS)

Imam Mūsā (as) was given this title because he had complete control over his anger. One of his contemporaries states:

“The patience and forbearance of Imam Musā was such that he was given the title of 'al-Kāḍim'. He was the embodiment of virtue and generosity. He devoted his nights to the prayers of God and his days to fasting. He always forgave those who did wrong to him.”

There are many stories of the Imam containing his anger and showing patience and forbearance which we have discussed in previous years.

ANGER

Anger is a mental condition that provokes the excitement of man in words and deeds. Because of the dangers and sins such as mocking, backbiting, beating, killing, and the like evils that are resulted from anger, it has been considered as the door to every evil.

Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) narrated on the authority of his father that a Bedouin came to the Prophet (saw) and said: “I live in the desert; hence, I want you to instruct me.” The Prophet said: “I instruct you not to be angry.” As the Bedouin repeated the same request three times, the Prophet (saw) repeated the answer three times:

“Do not become angry!”

The Bedouin commented: “I will not ask you for anything further. Certainly, the Messenger of God has instructed me the best.”

BENEFITS OF CONTROLLING ANGER

- Judgment:** Controlling anger will help analyse situations better with a positive mind. As anger makes a person incapable of being able to handle a situation well or make a better judgment and makes one prone to mistakes in making sound decisions.
- Better Communication:** Anger is often caused by misunderstandings, which are in turn caused by faulty communication between two people. Controlling anger will allow us to communicate in a more constructive and non-stressful way and will turn a person into someone who is more approachable and easy to talk to.
- Empathy:** Many a times, anger builds up because the person involved refuses to see the situation from the

other person's point of view. When you begin to develop empathy for the other person and try to see life from their perspective, there will be no room for conflict at all.

- d) **Healthy Relationships:** Since the people we love are closest to us, they are often the first victims when we lose control. Controlling anger will make the person concerned more capable of leading a life that is relatively free of ugly scenes or outbursts of anger.

STRATEGIES TO CONTROL ANGER

CHANGING YOUR STATE

The Messenger of Allah (saw) said:

“If any of you becomes angry and he is standing, let him sit down, so his anger will go away; if it does not go away, let him lie down.”

KEEPING SILENT

The Messenger of Allah (saw) said:

“If any of you becomes angry, let him keep silent.”

This is because in most cases, the angry person loses self-control and could utter words which they will later regret.

REMEMBERING GOD

Allah (SWT) revealed to one of His prophets:

“Son of Adam! Remember Me in your states of anger so that I will remember you in My Wrath and will not crush you with those whom I will crush. Consider Me as your supporter, for My support to you is better than your own support.”

SUPPLICATION AND ABLUTION

Supplication always the weapon of the believer, whereby he asks Allah to protect him from evil, trouble and bad behaviour and seeks refuge with Him from falling into the pit of wrongdoing because of anger. Practicing the ablution or washing the face with cold water, and touching the hand of the relative who is the object of anger also helps in the treatment of anger.ⁱⁱ

ⁱ (Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (as), v1, p.95)

ⁱⁱ **References:**

SML lecture on Imam al-Kadhimi (as) in Lives of the Ahlul Bayt course
<http://www.al-islam.org/masoom/bios/7thimam.html>
http://www.maaref-foundation.com/english/library/ethics/ethical_role_models/06.htm

QUR'ĀNIC VERSES & NARRATIONS ON ANGER

“Virtue and evil are not equal. If you replace evil habits by virtuous ones, you will certainly find that your enemies will become your intimate friends. Only those who exercise patience and who have been granted a great share of Allah's favour can find such an opportunity”
(41:34-5)

“And who also harness their anger and forgive the people. Allah loves the righteous ones” (3:134)

Imam ‘Ali advises Qanbar when Qanbar was about to answer in anger to the man who had insulted him: “Slow down, Qanbar! Leave him who reviled at you plunging in humility so that you will please the Beneficent Allah, annoy Satan, and punish your enemy. I swear by Him Who split the seed and made the soul, nothing like clemency (mercy) for the believers to achieve the satisfaction of the Lord, nothing like silence for them to annoy Satan...”

Imam al-Kāḍim (a) said: “Be steadfast against the enemies of the graces, for your best retaliation for those who acted disobediently to Allah against you is to act obediently to Allah with them.”

Review Questions

1. Choose a particular topic- it may be related to ethics, jurisprudence or theology. Try to gather at least two narrations on this topic from Imam al-Kāḍim (as). Write a short 400 word essay on the topic using these narrations as the basis for your research. Discuss this with your teacher and fellow students in your next class. Make sure to cross-check these narrations with other narrations from the Ahlul Bayt (as) on the same topic. A good resource to use is a book titled: ‘Tuhaful Uqool’.

http://www.maaref-foundation.com/english/library/pro_ahl/imam07_kadim/the_life_of_imam_musa_bin_jafar/index.htm
<http://lifestyle.iloveindia.com/lounge/benefits-of-anger-management-9677.html>
<http://www.tebyan.net/newindex.aspx?pid=60997>