

2.7 Imām as-Sajjād عليه السلام in Shām

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Develop strategies to understand the dark period in the history of Shī'ahs that the 4th Imām عليه السلام had to live through.
- Analyze the speech of the Imām عليه السلام that he gave in between the *adhān* in the court of Yazīd.
- Understand the importance of the leadership style of the Imām عليه السلام, and how it was necessary for the people of his time.

FROM THE DAY OF 'ĀSHŪRĀ' TO THEIR RETURN TO MEDINA: 10th Muḥarram 61 AH to 62/63 AH

No Imām عليه السلام began his *Imāmah* in a more tragic atmosphere than the 4th Imām عليه السلام. On the first day of his *Imāmah*, he was seriously ill and was taken as a captive by the army of Yazīd in Karbalā'. His father and other family members had all sacrificed themselves and everything they had for the Truth.

Imām Zaynul 'Ābidīn عليه السلام found himself with a group of widows and orphans being forced to march from place to place. They were thrown into a prison, where the Imām spent the first portion of his *Imāmah*, cut off from the entire community. Understandably, the tragedy of Karbalā' created chaos in the Shī'ah world. The Shī'ahs were in a time of darkness, and the community was in confusion.

Imām Zaynul 'Ābidīn عليه السلام had three difficult tasks before him:

- To announce his *Imāmah* publicly
- To unite the community, and prevent Yazīd from dividing them further
- To expand the faith of the believers (*mu'minīn*) without attracting the attention of the enemies

Imām Zaynul 'Ābidīn عليه السلام, under Divine guidance, achieved all of these aims in a beautiful way. His legacy is alive even until now in the *du'ās* and *ḥadīth* we have from him today.

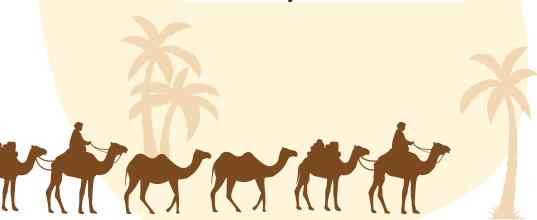
FROM KŪFAH TO SHĀM

From Kūfah, the captives were taken to Shām (Damascus). Perhaps it was on this journey that Imām as-Sajjād عليه السلام recited a supplication which eventually became known as Du'ā' #8 from *Aṣ-Ṣaḥīfah As-Sajjādiyyah*, "His Prayer for Seeking Refuge from Hateful Things."

Recitation of this *du'ā'*, and other pearls of wisdom that came from the Imām's blessed tongue, would catch the attention of those around him. His supplications discussed spiritual diseases such as arrogance, jealousy, and greed. He wanted to awaken the people and help them realize that their deception was rooted in diseases of the soul.

When the caravan reached an area near Shām, the army made them stop. Yazīd wanted to decorate the city to show their joy in the 'victory' over the grandson of the Prophet of Allah ﷺ. When the city was fully decorated, the Ahlul Bayt عليه السلام were paraded through the streets of Shām, and people celebrated the death of Imām Ḥusayn عليه السلام.

Unfortunately, the Banī Umayyah had spread so much propaganda and false rumors that the people were convinced that these captives were blameworthy and deserved being prisoners.





STOP AND REFLECT: List three ways in which news spreads in our day and age; and then list the ways in which misinformation can be spread.

One elderly man approached Imām as-Sajjād ؑ and unknowingly said to him: “All praise is for Allah ﷻ who destroyed you and granted the governor power over you.”

The Imām ؑ knew that this man had been deceived by the propaganda and people around him, so the Imām ؑ asked him: “Respected elder, have you read the Qur’ān?”

The man answered: “Yes, of course I have!”

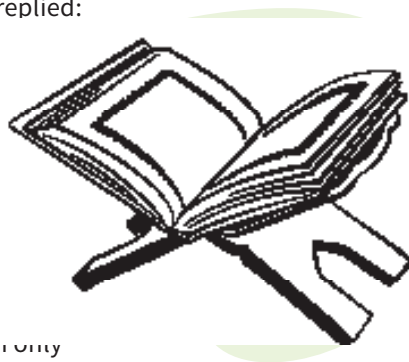
The Imām ؑ continued: “Have you read the verse that says: ‘Say: I do not ask from you any reward for it except love of my close ones;’ and the verse which says: ‘And give the [Prophet’s] relatives their [due] right;’ and the verse that says: ‘Know that whatever thing you may come by, a fifth of it is for Allah and the Messenger, and for the relatives [of the Prophet].’”

The elderly Syrian faintly replied:
“Yes, I have read all of the

The Imām ؑ then told him: “I swear by Allah that we are the relatives and kinsfolk referred to in all of these verses. Shaykh¹, have you read these words of Allah, the exalted: ‘Allah only desires to keep away impurity from you, O Household (of the Prophet), and purify you with a thorough purification?’”²

Again, the man answered: “Yes.”

The Imām ؑ continued: “We are the Household (of the Prophet) whom Allah favored with this Verse of Purification.”



By this point, the elderly man was shaking. *O how I wish that the earth had swallowed me up before I said my words*, he thought to himself. He asked the Imām ؑ: “By Allah, are you really those people?”

“I swear by our grandfather, the Prophet of Allah (Rasūlullāh), that we are—without any doubt,” replied the Imām ؑ.

Hearing the Imām’s ؑ reply, the man fell to his knees and began kissing Imām as-Sajjād’s hands. With tears in his eyes, he declared: “I dissociate myself before Allah from those who killed you!”

He asked the Imām ؑ for forgiveness, and the Imām ؑ immediately forgave the man.³

It was through his manners (*akhlāq*) and reminders to the people that the Imām ؑ managed to bring them out of their heedlessness (*ghaflah*), and awaken them, and help them realize who they were.



STOP AND REFLECT: Is implementing good treatment of others (*adab*) part of your responsibility when you are trying to advise them? Are there times in which you would need to dissociate yourself from others instead of advising them?

Even though he was taken through the city in chains, Imām as-Sajjād ؑ took every opportunity to remind the people about the status of the Ahlul Bayt ؑ. Whenever he was given a chance, he would speak bravely and eloquently. He demonstrated courageousness and standing up to the oppressors through dissociation with them. He continued to remind the people of justice, and encouraged them to worship Allah ﷻ in the right way. This was his duty as the Imām, because he knew what was right and what his responsibilities were.

1 Shaykh in this instance is referring to an elderly man as this was the norm in those days.

2 Noble Qur’ān, Sūrah al-Aḥzāb (33), Verse 33.

3 Sayyid Ibn Ṭāwūs, *Al-Luhūf*, P. 177.

SPEECH IN THE COURT OF YAZĪD

Perhaps one of the most powerful speeches given by Imām as-Sajjād ؑ was in the court of Yazīd in Shām. Yazīd had invited so many people to his palace, including important nobles, to celebrate his victory over the Ahlul Bayt ؑ. Once the court was full of people, he ordered a speaker to ascend the pulpit and curse Imām ‘Alī ؑ and the Ahlul Bayt ؑ, and praise Mu‘āwiyah and Yazīd. As the man was spouting these lies, Imām as-Sajjād ؑ interrupted him and said: “Woe unto you! You have traded the pleasure of the creation for the wrath of the Creator, so take your place in the fire of Hell!”

The Imām ؑ then turned to Yazīd and asked for permission to sit on some of the pieces of wood, and deliver a speech that would bring rewards for everyone present. Those in attendance were shocked at this prisoner who was also sick, and how he dared to interrupt the gathering. Of course, Yazīd refused his request to speak, but the people insisted.

STOP AND REFLECT: Why do you think the Imām said he wanted to sit on the pieces of wood instead of referring to it as a minbar?

The people were confused and asked Yazīd: “What can this sick man do to you?” They did not know who the Imām ؑ was. The people kept pressuring Yazīd, so he had no choice but to allow the Imām ؑ to deliver his talk.

The Imām ؑ sat on the pile of woods, indicating that even a minbar can lose its function if it is not used properly in the way of obedience of the chosen ones of Allah (under the *wilāyah*), and began speaking and delivering one of the most eloquent speeches in all of history: one that moved the entire crowd to tears. The Imām ؑ began by introducing himself and his family, and reminding the people that the Ahlul Bayt ؑ were sent as Divine guides to all of humanity.

He said: “Whoever recognizes me, knows me; but whoever does not recognize me, let me introduce myself and the family to which I belong...” Then he continued in this manner: describing himself, his grandfathers the Prophet of Allah ﷺ and Imām ‘Alī ؑ, and then finally mentioning the tragedy of Karbalā’ until the people were weeping uncontrollably.

Yazīd was sweating in his seat, thinking that the people would revolt against him. After all, the Imām ؑ explained to the Syrians all about himself and his family, igniting a cultural revolution. Yazīd quickly ordered the *mu’adhin* to recite the *adhān* so as to distract the people.⁴

The *mu’adhin* right away began to recite: “Allāhu Akbar, Allāhu Akbar!”

The Imām ؑ turned to him and said: “You have made great the One Who cannot be measured or felt by senses; and there is nothing greater than Allah ﷻ.”

The *mu’adhin* continued: “Ashhadu an-lā ilāha illallāh!”

The Imām ؑ then said: “My hair, skin, flesh, blood, brain, and bones bear witness that there is no god except Allah ﷻ.”

The *mu’adhin* went on: “Ashhadu anna Muḥammadan Rasūlullāh!”

At this point, the Imām ؑ turned to Yazīd and asked him: “O Yazīd, is Muḥammad your grandfather or mine? If you say that he is yours, then you are a liar; and if you say that he is mine, then why did you kill his family?”⁵

Yazīd was speechless and dumbfounded. The Imām’s grandfather was the Prophet of Allah ﷺ, whereas Yazīd’s grandfather was Abū Sufyān, the enemy of the Prophet ﷺ and Allah ﷻ.

STOP AND REFLECT: Why do you think the Imām ؑ focused his speech on identifying who he was? What was the effect of this?

The Imām’s speech had a massive effect on the Syrians. They left the gathering feeling they had been misled by the Banī Umayyah, and guilty about their transgressions. They began spreading the word about the Umayyad propaganda, and people’s attitudes toward Yazīd quickly began to change and became more negative.

4 ‘Allāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 45, P. 138.

5 Al-Qummī, Shaykh ‘Abbās, *Nafas al-Mahmūm*, P. 262.

THE AHLUL BAYT ﷺ ARE FINALLY FREED

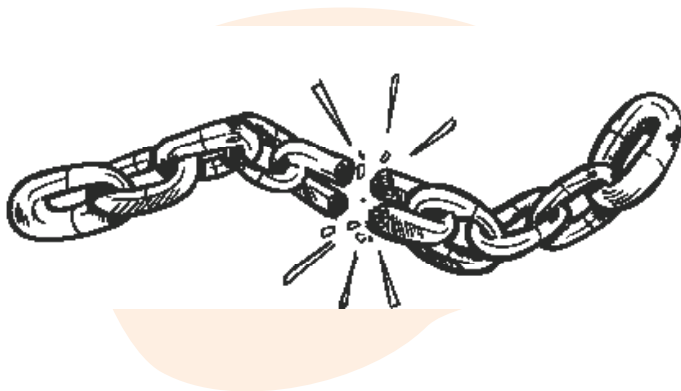
Soon, the Syrians became extremely restless and resentful toward Yazīd, so he knew that he had to amend the situation right away. Therefore, he summoned Imām as-Sajjād ﷺ and apologized to him so that the people would think that Yazīd was not at fault. He then shifted the blame for Imām Ḥusayn's death to Ibn Ziyād⁶ and said: "May Allah curse Ibn Ziyād! I swear by Allah that if I had been with Ḥusayn, he never would have asked me for a favor without me granting it to him! I would have protected him from death with all of my power, even if I had to sacrifice my own children!"⁷ He then told the Imām ﷺ that he could ask for anything he wanted. The Imām ﷺ knew that his apology was insincere and he was just trying to save face and himself, so he turned away and did not answer him.

Again, Yazīd called Imām as-Sajjād ﷺ and told him to ask for whatever he wanted. So, the Imām ﷺ replied: "I want my father's head back, and I want you to return to us whatever you plundered. If you want to kill me, then send someone to take my family back to Medina."

Yazīd bowed his head and thought about the Imām's requests. Then, he raised his head up and replied: "As for the face of your father, you will never see it. As for what was taken from you, it will be brought back to you. As for the women, no one will return with them except you; and as for you, I will not kill you."⁸

Imām as-Sajjād ﷺ and his family demanded that the heads be given back, and since Yazīd was at a loss due to the pressures around him, he realized that he had no choice left and had to comply with the Imām's request.

Yazīd ordered Nu'mān ibn Bashīr to escort Imām as-Sajjād ﷺ and the women back to Medina. According to some reports, the women asked Nu'mān to take them first to Karbalā' so they could perform the visitation (*ziyārah*) of Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ and the martyrs of Karbalā'. They remained there to mourn for three days before finally heading back to their hometown of Medina.



THE LEADERSHIP STYLE OF THE IMĀM ﷺ

Sorrow and grief can often succeed in bringing people together. At the time of a tragedy, everyone unites to share the sorrow, and shoulder the resulting responsibilities. Imām Zaynul 'Ābidīn ﷺ used this method to unite the community when he was freed from prison.

It is said that he continued to weep until his eyes became very weak. Whenever he would take a cup to drink some water, the water would become mixed with his tears.⁹ When he asked about this, he replied:

"Why should I not cry, when my father was denied water which was free for the beasts and animals even to drink?"¹⁰



The Imām ﷺ lived during a period of brutal caliphs, each one trying to outdo the previous one in their brutality to the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ. Imām as-Sajjād ﷺ used his tears and supplications to Allah ﷻ in order to teach his followers, especially since the caliphs limited him from preaching.

The Imām ﷺ was martyred at the age of 57, on the 25th of Muharram in the year 95 AH. He was poisoned by the caliph, Walīd ibn 'Abdul Malik, who was instigated to commit this crime by his brother, Hishām. When the Imām ﷺ passed away the sounds of crying and wailing were heard across the city of Medina. Men and women, young and old, free ones and the slaves—everyone was in a state of mourning. Pious people and sinners alike attended his funeral. He was laid to rest in the Baqī' Cemetery, next to his uncle Imām Ḥasan ﷺ.

6 Ibn al-Jawzī, Sibṭ, *Tazkirat al-Khawāṣṣ*, Pp. 261 and 265.

7 Ṭabarī, Muḥammad ibn Jarīr, *Tārīkh aṭ-Ṭabarī*, Vol. 5, P. 506.

8 *Al-Luhūf*, Vol. 1, P. 174.

9 *Al-Luhūf*, Vol.1, P. 121.

10 *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 45, P. 149.

Activity 2.7a: Comic Strip

Use the space below to illustrate one of the following events mentioned in this lesson:

- 1. Conversation with the elderly man in Damascus.
- 2. The speech of the Imām (عليه السلام) in the courtyard of Yazīd.
- 3. Imām as-Sajjād's conversation with Yazīd when the Ahlul Bayt (عليهم السلام) were freed.

Activity 2.7b: Worksheet

In this lesson, we briefly referenced the speech that Imām Zaynul ‘Ābidīn ؑ made in the court of Yazīd. Here is an extended version of this speech:

O people! We have been bestowed six qualities, and seven merits by Allah ﷻ. The six qualities we have are: Knowledge, forbearance, munificence, eloquence, valor, and friendship in the hearts of the believers.

While our (seven) merits are: The Prophet in Authority is from amongst us; the truthful one (Imām ‘Alī) is from amongst us; the one who flies (Ja‘far aṭ-Ṭayyār) is from amongst us; the Lion of Allah and that of His Prophet (Imām ‘Alī) is from amongst us; and the two youth (Imāms Ḥasan and Ḥusayn) of this nation are also from amongst us. Those who know me, know me; and those who do not know me, I will reveal my pedigree and ancestry for them until they recognize me.

O people! I am the son of Mecca and Minā. I am the son of Zamzam and Ṣafā.

I am the son of the one who was taken up to Sidrat al-Muntahā. I am the son of the one ‘who was bestowed revelation by the Almighty, what He did reveal.’¹¹ I am the son of Muḥammad, the Chosen One!

I am the son of the person who fought against the enemies with two swords. He emigrated twice, pledged allegiance twice (to the Prophet), and prayed in the two qiblahs. I am the son of ‘Alī, the Approved One.

I am the son of Fātimah az-Zahrā’.

I am the son of Ḥusayn, the one killed in Karbalā’. [It is said that the Imām became emotional at this time] I am the son of the one who was smeared in blood and sand. I am the son of the one who was lamented upon by the Spirit in the darkness of the night. I am the son of the one who was mourned by the birds.¹²

11 See Noble Qur’ān, Sūrah an-Najm (53), Verses 1-18 which describe this miraculous event.

12 *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 45, P. 138.

1. Let us take apart some of the lessons in this speech. What could the aim of the Imām ﷺ be in praising the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ so much?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

2. Recall how we have talked about self-confidence and arrogance. How can we explain that this speech is not a show of arrogance from the Imām ﷺ?

[illegible]

3. Why did Yazīd consider it necessary to stop the speech here, when the Imām ﷺ had just begun describing his family?

[illegible]

4. Do you think there were any people who were not affected by this speech? If so, then why?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

2.8 Imām ‘Alī as-Sajjād ؑ: Reforming Hearts

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Describe the atmosphere in Medina when Imām as-Sajjād ؑ returned after the martyrdom (*shahādah*) of his father, Imām Ḥusayn ؑ.
- Analyze the sociopolitical purposes behind Imām as-Sajjād’s supplications (*du‘ās*).
- Outline ways in which the Imām ؑ remained steadfast and patient despite the multiple unjust rulers of his time.
- Describe the legacy of Imām as-Sajjād ؑ.

RETURN TO MEDINA UNTIL HIS OWN MARTYRDOM: 2nd Rabī‘ al-Awwal 62 AH to 25th Muḥarram 95 AH

When Imām as-Sajjād ؑ and the caravan approached Medina, he set up a tent for the women. Then, the Imām ؑ turned to a man named Bashīr ibn Hadhlam, whose father was a famous poet, and asked him to enter Medina and announce the death of Imām Ḥusayn ؑ ahead of the caravan. Bashīr went near the Masjid an-Nabī where he loudly cried out:

*O people of Medina! May you never stay therein!
Ḥusayn was killed, so let the tears now rain,
His body is in Karbalā’, all blood-stained!
While his head is on a spear, for all displayed.*

Hearing this, the people began to cry out loudly and gathered around Bashīr, asking him for more information. He announced: “Here is ‘Alī ibn Ḥusayn, accompanied by his aunts and sisters; they have all returned to you. I am his messenger to inform you about where he is.”¹

The people went out to welcome the Imām ؑ and his caravan, all the while crying and wailing, offering their condolences.

IMĀM AS-SAJJĀD’S STRUGGLES IN MEDINA

Even though our Imāms ؑ were present, there were always those who sought to keep power for themselves and away from the Imāms ؑ, because they knew that they would not get special privileges if the Imāms ؑ lead the people with justice. Although people commonly think that Imām as-Sajjād’s problems ended when he returned to Medina, the city of his grandfather, the era of oppression continued until his own martyrdom.

There were many people in the city who abandoned the Imām ؑ out of fear of being associated with him, and out of a desire to be closer to the governing leadership. Even some of the people who used to love the Imām ؑ before he went to Karbalā’ were now hiding their love for him. During this time, the Imām ؑ said: “In Mecca and Medina, there are not even 20 people who love us, the Ahlul Bayt.”²

According to some scholars and historical narrations, for some years after returning to Medina, Imām as-Sajjād ؑ used to live in a black tent in the desert outside of the city. He did this because he did not want to be in contact with the people who had been disloyal to him. From the desert, the Imām ؑ would secretly go to perform the visitation (*ziyārah*) of his father and grandfather in Iraq. Imām as-Sajjād ؑ was not even allowed in the Prophet’s Masjid and would sit outside by the shoes.

¹ Sayyid Ibn Ṭāwūs, *Al-Luhūf*, P. 115.

² Ibn Abil Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*, Vol. 4, P. 104.

IMĀM AS-SAJJĀD'S SUPPLICATIONS (DU'ĀS)

One of the primary methods that Imām as-Sajjād ؑ used to bring people to the path of true Islam was to spread the pure teachings in the form of supplications (*du'ās*), whispered prayers, and advice.

For example, in a manner that would not be seen as political, he would talk about the concept of Imamate (*Imāmah*). He introduced *Imāmah* as a fundamental Islamic belief that all Muslims will be questioned about in their graves.

This made people think: *Who really are the Imāms ؑ in our time? Can the Banū Umayyah be the true and Divinely-appointed Imāms?!* Similarly the famous compilation of his supplications and whispered prayers in the book entitled, *Aṣ-Ṣaḥīfah as-Sajjādiyyah*, is full of Islamic teachings with regards to beliefs, culture, society, politics, as well as practical rulings—all passed on through the unique method of supplications. This book is one of the greatest treasures that we have today.

There are supplications for all different topics and issues, such as the rights of parents, children, and neighbors; for when you are in a difficult situation, have a worrisome task, engulfed in sorrows, or sickness. These *du'ās* can help us in every situation in our lives, and shape our hearts as well. It was through these *du'ās* that Imām as-Sajjād ؑ would preach to and teach the people. His supplications were full of important messages about ethics and morals (*akhlāq*), courage, knowledge, Monotheism (*Tawḥīd*), and so much more.



STOP AND REFLECT: How can prayers and supplications change and refine the state of people's hearts?

The governor at the time could not stop him because he was reciting supplications, but through these powerful *du'ās*, he was able to spread the teachings of Islam and slowly shape the hearts of the people. This was how he laid the foundations that allowed the people to start understanding Islam better, and become students of the Imāms ؑ after him, like Imām al-Bāqir ؑ and Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ؑ.

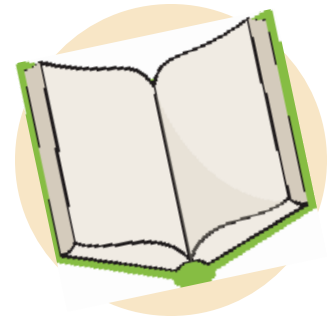
SPREADING AWARENESS OF 'ĀSHŪRĀ'

The Imām ؑ would also do everything in his power to educate the people about the events of Karbalā'. He knew that the key to keeping Islam alive was to remind others about the sacrifice of Imām Ḥusayn ؑ and the oppression that he and his family underwent. For example, whenever he would pass through the meat market and saw a butcher ready to slaughter an animal, he would ask them: "What are you doing?"

The butcher would reply: "I am about to slaughter this animal."

The Imām ؑ would tell them: "Make sure you give it some water! My father was slaughtered without any water!"³

Hearing this, people would become intrigued and want to know more about what had transpired.





STOP AND REFLECT: Why is reminding people about Karbalā' the key to keeping Islam alive?

The caliphate at that time had made it forbidden (*ḥarām*) to mourn and commemorate the sacrifice of Imām Ḥusayn ؑ, so the 4th Imām ؑ would hold secret gatherings (*majālis*) during the time of Ḥajj—underground and in abandoned locations. After seven years, due to the political disputes that were happening, the caliphs shifted their focus away from him.

After Imām as-Sajjād ؑ returned to Medina and word spread about the events of Karbalā', many people were outraged at Yazīd's blatant oppression. Rebellions began springing up all over the Muslim world, as people attempted to oust Yazīd out of power.

REBELLION IN MEDINA

When the news about Imām Ḥusayn's martyrdom (*shahādah*) reached the people of Medina, they were infuriated. As a result, the governor of Medina decided to send some nobles to Shām to meet with Yazīd. He was hoping that Yazīd would bribe them to calm them down. However, when they saw Yazīd up close—his drinking, gambling, and other bad habits—they returned to Medina even more upset. They began telling

everyone about Yazīd's un-Islamic behavior, and that he was completely unfit to be the leader of the Muslims. Soon after, a rebellion broke out, and the Umayyads—the followers of Yazīd—were kicked out of Medina.

When Yazīd heard about this, he sent an army to Medina to squash the rebellion. This happened almost three years after the tragedy of Karbalā'. His army surrounded the city, giving the people no choice except to surrender. After this, Yazīd's army entered the city and wreaked havoc, slaughtering and harming thousands of innocent and pious people. This horrible incident came to be known as the 'Tragedy of Ḥarrah.'

During this tragedy, Yazīd had given clear instructions to his commander not to harm Imām as-Sajjād ؑ or his family. Thus, the Imām's home actually became a safe haven, and many people were given shelter there. According to narrations, he housed more than 400 people during this time, many of whom had previously mistreated his family, such as Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam.



STOP AND REFLECT: Which good traits of morals and etiquettes (*akhlāq*) is the Imām ؑ demonstrating by giving shelter to those who hurt his family before? Can this action of the Imām ؑ be counted as a form of charity?

THE TAWWĀBĪN

(Those who were Penitents/Repenters)

Another notable rebellion that occurred as a result of the tragedy of Karbalā' was that of the Tawwābīn. They were the same individuals who gave their allegiance (*bay'ah*) to Muslim ibn 'Aqīl when he first came to Kūfah, but then they turned their backs on him. Immediately after the day of 'Āshūrā', they regretted their actions and wanted to atone for their mistake, hence their title: "The Tawwābīn" which means "those who repent." The Tawwābīn were led by a man named Sulaymān ibn Ṣurad al-Khuzā'i, and they rose up in the year 65 AH seeking revenge for Imām Ḥusayn (عليه السلام), but they were quickly suppressed and killed.

MUKHTĀR ATH-THAQAFĪ

Perhaps the most famous uprising was that of Mukhtār ibn Abī 'Ubayd ath-Thaqafī. Mukhtār was imprisoned before the battle of Karbalā', and therefore on the day of 'Āshūrā' he was not able to be with Imām Ḥusayn (عليه السلام). When he was released from prison, he began a mission to seek revenge for what had transpired on the plains of Karbalā'. Although it is not fully clear whether Imām as-Sajjād (عليه السلام) supported Mukhtār's movement or not, it has been established that he did not oppose it. He is recorded to have said: "May Allah reward Mukhtār with goodness,"⁴ when Mukhtār killed 'Ubaydullāh ibn Ziyād and 'Umar ibn Sa'd.

Mukhtār's uprising began in 66 AH, and his army managed to kill many of the enemies, such as Ḥarmalah, Shimr, and 'Umar ibn Sa'd. They also overthrew and killed Ibn Ziyād, the governor of Kūfah, and Mukhtār then took over and became the governor there. He only ruled for a little over a year, after which he was overthrown and killed by the army of Muṣ'ab ibn Zubayr.

THE STATE OF THE CALIPHATE (KHILĀFAH)

Yazīd was only the caliph (*khalifah*) for about three years. He died in the year 64 AH, after which his son, Mu'āwiyah ibn Yazīd, was appointed to the position. This man though was a pious person. He saw the oppressions that his father had caused to the family of the Ahlul Bayt (عليه السلام), so after 40 days he abdicated (relinquished) the caliphate and disapproved of his father and grandfather's opposition of Imām 'Alī (عليه السلام) and his children.

Now, the Umayyads were unsure about who the new caliph should be. Eventually, the caliphate fell into the hands of Marwān ibn Ḥakam. Marwān had previously been the governor of Medina, and he was the one who tried to force Walīd to get the allegiance (*bay'ah*) from Imām Ḥusayn (عليه السلام). Marwān was the ruler for 9 months, until he was assassinated in 65 AH. Then, his son, 'Abdul Malik ibn Marwān, became the caliph.

THE KHILĀFAH OF 'ABD AL-MALIK IBN MARWĀN

One of the darkest periods in the history of Islam was during the rulership of 'Abdul Malik ibn Marwān, which coincided with 21 years of Imām as-Sajjād's (عليه السلام) *Imāmah*. Prior to becoming the caliph, 'Abdul Malik was known to be a pious person in Medina because he would spend a lot of time worshipping.

According to several narrations, he was reciting the Qur'ān when he received the news about his father's death. Upon hearing this, he promptly closed the Qur'ān and said to this noble Book: "This is where you and I part ways!"



STOP AND REFLECT: How can a change in circumstances change the relationship that people have with Allah (ﷻ)?

His actions demonstrate how he truly did separate himself from the Qur'ān. He was a vicious oppressor whose heart became hard due to his horrible actions. He himself admitted: "I have changed so much to the point that if I do good actions, I do not become happy; and if I commit evil actions, I do not become upset."⁵

⁴ 'Allāmah Majlisī, *Bihār al-Anwār*, Vol. 45, P. 385.

⁵ Ibn Athīr, *Al-Kāmil fī at-Tārikh*, Vol. 4, P. 521.

THE KHILĀFAH OF WALĪD IBN ‘ABDUL MALIK

After the death of ‘Abdul Malik, his son Walīd became the next caliph. He felt that as long as Imām as-Sajjād ؑ was alive, his rulership was not safe because the people loved the Imām ؑ too much. Therefore, he decided to assassinate the Imām ؑ by ordering the governor of Medina to poison him.

After drinking the poison, Imām as-Sajjād ؑ suffered severe pain and was bedridden for a few days. During this time, he kept praying to Allah ﷻ, and whenever people came to visit him, he would praise Allah ﷻ and thank Him for granting him martyrdom.

Imām as-Sajjād ؑ finally left this world on the 25th of Muḥarram, in the year 95 AH. Prior to his martyrdom, he made it clear to the people that his son, Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir ؑ, would be the Imām after him.⁶

THE LEGACY OF IMĀM AS-SAJJĀD ؑ

Imām as-Sajjād ؑ left behind many beautiful supplications (*du‘ās*) and lessons for us in:

- *Aṣ-Ṣaḥīfah as-Sajjādiyyah*
(Collection of Supplications of Imām as-Sajjād)
- *Risālat al-Ḥuqūq*
(Treaties of Rights)
- *Al-Munājāt al-Khamsah ‘Asharah*
(The 15 Whispered Prayers).



After the death of Imām Ḥusayn ؑ, the circumstances remained very difficult for Imām as-Sajjād ؑ. We can use the lessons of his steadfastness and patience to think about different responsibilities that we have to fulfill in our lives.

We know for a fact that he made the best decision in every situation because the Imāms ؑ are *nūrun wāḥid*—meaning that they are all from the same light, and each one of them is immaculate. In our lives, we must always try our best to be tactful about the decisions that we have to make in order to ensure that they align with the teachings of the Ahlul Bayt ؑ.

⁶ Shaykh Ṣadūq, *Al-Amālī*, Vol. 1, P. 435.

Activity 2.8a: A Timeline of Imāmah

In the timeline below, add in the events that happened [during the life-time of Imām as-Sajjād ؑ] in the highlighted year.

Highlighted Year	Event
38 AH	
50 AH	
61 AH	
63 AH	
64 AH	
65 AH	
86 AH	
95 AH	

Activity 2.8b: Analyze a Supplication (Du‘ā’) from *Aṣ-Ṣaḥīfah as-Sajjādiyyah*

Sayyid Husayn M. Ja‘farī, a translator of *Aṣ-Ṣaḥīfah as-Sajjādiyyah*, answers the question: “Why does Imām as-Sajjād ؑ pray for forgiveness of sins when he is inerrant (free from committing any sins)?”

He writes that:

The original Arabic words استغفار and توبة (istighfār and tawbah) can be translated as ‘seeking forgiveness’ and ‘repentance,’ but they convey meanings far broader than the English terms, both of which are connected with a sentimental and moralistic sense of guilt.

When the Prophet ﷺ or Imām Zaynul ‘Ābidīn ؑ ask Allah ﷻ for forgiveness, they are perfectly sincere in this request, but it does not imply that they have any sins, rather they are asking forgiveness for not being able to truly thank Allah ﷻ how He deserves.⁷

With the lens above, examine the Whispered Prayer (*Munājāt*) #1 toward the end of *Aṣ-Ṣaḥīfah as-Sajjādiyyah* which is referred to as the ‘Whispered Prayer of the Repenters’ (*Munājāt at-Tā‘ibīn*). Read through the entire prayer, and then answer the following questions:

1. Why do you think Imām Zaynul ‘Ābidīn ؑ prays for forgiveness in so many of his supplications and prayers (*du‘ās* and *munājāt*)?

2. What can we learn from this whispered prayer?

⁷ Translator’s Foreword: <https://www.al-islam.org/sahifa-al-kamilah-al-sajjadiyya-imam-ali-zayn-al-abidin/translators-introduction>

3. Annotate this *munājāt* based on your reflections when you read each line or section. Do not share your reflections with others. For example, you may reflect on some of the sins in your life that you are reminded of.

[illegible]

4. When you reach the end of this whispered prayer which details Allah's forgiving attributes, reflect on how each attribute is connected with forgiveness and repentance. Write your reflections here.

[illegible]