

The Role of Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him), Revisited

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Overview

Week 1

The common understanding of Imam al-Sadiq's role (peace be upon him)

The philosophy of *Imamah*

The four periods of time during the lives of the Imams (peace be upon them)

A bit about the fourth period, Imams al-Sajjad and al-Baqir (peace be upon them)

Week 2

Specific examples of Imam al-Sadiq's political activities (peace be upon him)

The Common Image of the Imam (peace be upon him)

We have heard that he was...

Presented with an opportunity that his forefathers did not have

A champion in the field of knowledge, piety, ethics

The Muslim world was henceforth filled with his narrations

Avoided political interference, and forbade others from doing so

At times, out of *taqiyyah*, he supported or even praised the oppressive caliph

There are serious problems with this image...

The Imam (peace be upon him) was indifferent -- practically --- to the social ills?!

Fabricated narrations that this view is based upon

The Philosophy of *Imamah*

The life of the Prophet (s) was not long enough for the goal to be achieved

*Certainly We sent Our apostles with manifest proofs, and We sent down with them the Book and the Balance, **so that mankind may maintain justice**; and We sent down iron, in which there is great might and uses for mankind, and so that Allah may know those who help Him and His apostles [with faith] in the Unseen. Indeed Allah is all-strong, all-mighty. (57:25)*

The Imam is there to continue his path, as the circumstances allow him

Two fundamental elements to achieve the goal

1. An ideology
2. A society based upon tawhid

The Four Periods of Time

1. The period of quietism and even support (11 AH - 35 AH)

...I therefore withheld my hand till I saw that many people were reverting from Islam and trying to destroy the religion of Muhammad (may Allah bless him and his descendants)...

2. The period of political power (35 AH - 41 AH)

...you will be severely subverted, bitterly shaken as in sieving and fully mixed as by spooning in a cooking pot till your low persons become high and high ones become low...

3. The period of short-term planning (41 AH - 61 AH)
4. The period of long-term planning (61 AH - 260 AH)

Imam al-Sajjad (peace be upon him), 61 AH - 95 AH

Beset with a very difficult situation

Islamic values had been abandoned, moral degradation, economic injustices

The tragedy of Karbala and the movement of the Tawwabin left people terrified

An important lesson had been made clear to everyone

Imam al-Sajjad (peace be upon him) did not openly confront the caliph as later Imams did, rather he largely taught, trained and nurtured the nascent community

At times however his strong stance did come forth for people and history to see

His letter to Zuhri, his response to Abdul Malik's letters

Imam al-Baqir (peace be upon him), 95 AH - 114 AH

The Shi'ah community had grown substantially, e.g. Khuraasaan

The Umayyad caliphs were weaker and more interested in seeking pleasure

The situation in society -- spiritually, morally, economically -- was very bad

Some of Imam al-Baqir's (peace be upon him) stances

- Confronting the scholars and poets - Kuthayyir and 'Ikramah

- Preparing the hearts and minds of people with regards to the goal

- Clearly telling the Shi'ah what his own position was

- Strong stances against the caliph - his being arrested, his will