

# Introduction to al-Sahīfah al-Sajjādiyyah by By martyred Āyatullāh Sayyid Muhammad Bāqir al-Sadr

*In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate*

Imam ‘Ali b. al-Husayn, peace be upon him, was born in the year 38 A.H. or, perhaps as it is conjectured, a little before that and lived for a period of 57 years.

SMB al-Sadr after the introduction of the Imam and his lineage, talks about his exemplary devotion and piety towards God in all things. All Muslims in his age implicitly trusted and esteemed his knowledge, honesty, integrity and his excellence in jurisprudence, taking him for their leader in all matters and recognizing his authority in religious matters. Giving references from Sunni sources like:

Imam al-Shāfī considered Imam ‘Ali b. al-Husayn as the most supreme jurist of all the people of Medina.”

‘Abd al-Malik b. Marwān said to him, “In the area of religious sciences, in devotion and piety, you have been granted that which no one before you has had other than your ancestors.”

Further, Umar b. ‘Abd al-Azīz said, “The light of this life, the beauty of Islam is Zayn al-‘Ābidīn.”

Muslims in general had an abiding deep attachment for this Imam and he commanded the most profound spiritual loyalty and allegiance among them. The trust and veneration of the ummah in Zayn al-‘Ābidīn was not confined to the mere fact of his versatility in jurisprudence or his high stature in spiritual affairs. He was in fact considered to be a virtual spiritual leader and supreme spiritual authority by those belonging to various schools of thought and all matters both civic and spiritual which was because he was in the line of celebrated and pure ancestors.

Imam Zayn al-‘Ābidīn took over the mantle of spiritual responsibility after the martyrdom of his father. He took up this task during the second half of the first century during one of the most crucial phases in the history of the ummah, a period which was followed by a wave of early Islamic victories of liberation, a wave which extended over wide expanses of territory in the region and was spread by reason of the spiritual vigour and military and ideological enthusiasm of the Muslim armies. It shook the throne of Caesar and other vile tyrants of the time and spread the Divine message far and wide over the earth. The Muslims then became the spiritual and de facto conquerors and guardians of the greater part of the civilized world for over half a century of unchallenged supremacy.

Zayn al-‘Ābidīn, conducted research and scientific studies at the Prophet’s mosque, teaching various branches of Islamic knowledge and explaining and illustrating both the Holy Qur’an and Traditions, as well as teaching jurisprudence and the knowledge derived from his pure ancestors. A new consciousness was being developed among the intellectuals at the time with training in jurisprudence, reasoning and deduction. A large number of skilled muslim jurists and scholars were trained in these religious centers and a number of schools of jurisprudence sprung up giving a new vigor to religion which was to be developed further later on. This great Imam was able to produce a work of tremendous significance with the endowments with which he was graced from his lineage and his wonderful rhetoric and elegant styles in the Arabic language. Using his divinely gifted abilities, the Imam was able to weave out the most splendid and subtle meanings in his description of the links between the human being and the Divine, the links between the people and their Lord and Creator and to emphasize the qualities of faith, moral values and the duties that were necessary to a virile and spiritual society. His efforts were a steadying influence on the ummah who were urged to keep their steadfastness in the face of worldly attractions at a time when the pull towards a life of pleasure stood forth as a great temptation and to affirm and remind the Muslims of their spiritual roots and of their duty to remain trustees of the spiritual amidst a life of riches and prosperity as they had been trustees at a time of misery and poverty.

The Imam constantly adjured the people at Friday prayers in sermons to take warning against being engulfed wholly by the life of this world and to remind themselves constantly of the hereafter. His supplications, in their wonderfully moving way, were able to induce in his hearers a feeling of devotion, of thanks, praise and gratitude to the Almighty and to strengthen them in their sincerity, obedience and submission to God who has no partner.

One of His greatest contribution, Al-Sahīfah al-Sajjādiyyah then represents and stands out as a profound social work of the time and a reflection of a supreme endeavor to meet the exigencies of spiritual ordeals facing the society at the time of the Imam. But beyond this it is a profound collection of supplications in the Divine tradition, a unique compilation which will remain throughout the ages as a gift to mankind, a work of moral inspiration for worldly conduct and a torch of guidance.

What is one of the amazing aspect of his life is that the Imam achieved such a status in a short life of 57 years even though enduring the trajedy of Karbala, Kufa and Shaam.

Peace and blessings be upon our Imam ‘Ali b. al-Husayn Zayn al-‘Ābidīn.