

## Introduction to Al-Sahīfa al-Sajjādiyyah By Āyatullāh Sayyid Muhammad Bāqir al-Sadr – in Arabic<sup>1</sup>

سمحة آية الله العظمى السيد محمد باقر الصدر - مقدمة الصحيفة السجادية  
الحمد لله رب العالمين والصلاة والسلام على خاتم الأنبياء والمرسلين محمد وعلى آله الطاهرين و صحبه الميامين.  
وبعد، فإن هذه الصحيفة السجادية مجموعة من الأدعية الماثورة عن الإمام زين العابدين علي بن الحسين بن علي بن  
أبي طالب من أئمة أهل البيت الذين أذهب الله عنهم الرجس وطهرهم تطهيراً.

وهو الرابع من أئمة أهل البيت، وجده الإمام أمير المؤمنين علي بن أبي طالب وصي رسول الله(صلى الله عليه وآله)  
وأول من آمن به وكان منه بمنزلة هارون من موسى كما صح في الحديث عنه، وجدته فاطمة الزهراء بنت رسول  
الله(صلى الله عليه وآله)وبضعته وفلذة كبده وسيدة نساء العالمين كما كان أبوها يصفها، وأبوه الإمام الحسين أحد  
سيدي شباب أهل الجنة سبط الرسول وريحانته و من قال فيه جده: **حسين مني وأنا من حسين**، وهو الذي  
استشهد في كربلاء يوم عاشوراء دفاعاً عن الإسلام والمسلمين. وهو أحد الأئمة الإثني عشر الذين أخبر عنهم  
النبي(ص) كما جاء في صحيح البخاري ومسلم وغيرهما إذ قال: **الخلفاء بعدي اثنا عشر كلهم من قريش**

وقد ولد الإمام علي بن الحسين في سنة ثمان وثلاثين للهجرة وقيل قبل ذلك بسنة أو سنتين وعاش حوالي سبعة  
وخمسين عاماً قضى بضع سنين منها في كنف جده الإمام علي عليه السلام ثم نشأ في مدرسة عمه الحسن وأبيه  
الحسين سبطي الرسول وتعدى من نمير علوم النبوة واستقى من مصادر آبائه الطاهرين.

وبرز على الصعيد العلمي والديني إماماً في الدين ومنازلاً في العلم ومرجعاً في الحلال والحرام ومثلاً أعلى في الورع  
والعبادة والتقوى وآمن المسلمون جميعاً بعلمه واستقامته وأفضليته وانقاد الواعون منهم إلى زعامته وفقهه ومرجعيته.  
قال الزهري: (ما رأيت هاشمياً أفضل من علي بن الحسين ولا أفقه منه) وقال في كلام آخر: (ما رأيت قرشياً أفضل  
منه). وقال سعيد بن المسيب: (ما رأيت قط مثل علي بن الحسين). وقال الإمام مالك: (سمي زين العابدين لكثرة  
عبادته). وقال سفيان بن عيينة: (ما رأيت هاشمياً أفضل من زين العابدين ولا أفقه منه).

وعدّ الإمام الشافعي علي بن الحسين (أفقه أهل المدينة). وقد اعترف بهذه الحقيقة حتى حكام عصره من خلفاء بني  
أمية. على الرغم من كل شيء. فلقد قال له عبد الملك بن مروان: (ولقد أوتيت من العلم والدين والورع ما لم يؤته  
أحد مثلك قبلك إلا من مضى من سلفك) وقال عمر بن عبد العزيز: (سراج الدنيا وجمال الإسلام زين العابدين).

<sup>1</sup> From <http://tawiya.org/portal/topic/7166/> accessed on April 25, 214

وقد كان للمسلمين عموماً تعلق عاطفي شديد بهذا الإمام وولاء روحي عميق له وكانت قواعده الشعبية ممتدة في كل مكان العالم الإسلامي كما يشير إلى ذلك موقف الحجيج الأعظم منه حينما حج هشام بن عبد الملك وطاف وأراد أن يستلم فلم يقدر على استلام الحجر الأسود من الزحام فنصب له منبر فجلس عليه ينتظر ثم أقبل زين العابدين وأخذ يطوف فكان إذا بلغ موضع الحجر انفرجت الجماهير وتنحى الناس حتى يستلمه لعظيم معرفتها بقدره وحبها له على اختلاف بلدانهم وانتساباتهم وقد سجل الفرزدق هذا الموقف في قصيدة رائعة مشهورة. ولم تكن ثقة الأمة بالإمام زين العابدين على اختلاف اتجاهاتها ومذاهبها مقصور على الجانب الفقهي والروحي فحسب، بل كانت تؤمن به مرجعاً وقائداً ومفزعاً في كل مشاكل الحياة وقضاياها بوصفه امتداداً لآبائه الطاهرين ومن أجل ذلك نجد أن عبد الملك، حينما اصطدم بملك الروم وهدده الملك الروماني باستغلال حاجة المسلمين إلى استيراد نقودهم من بلاد الرومان لإذلال المسلمين وفرض الشروط عليهم وقف عبد الملك متحيراً وقد ضاقت به الأرض كما جاء في الرواية وقال: أحسبني أشأم مولود ولد في الإسلام، فجمع أهل الإسلام واستشارهم فلم يجد عند أحد منهم رأياً يعمل به، فقال له القوم: إنك لتعلم الرأي والمخرج من هذا الأمر! فقال: ويحكم من؟ قالوا: الباقي من أهل بيت النبي (صلى الله عليه وآله)، قال صدقتم، وهكذا كان. فقد فرع إلى الإمام زين العابدين فأرسل (عليه السلام) ولده محمد بن علي الباقر إلى الشام وزوده بتعليماته الخاصة فوضع خطة جديدة للنقد الإسلامي وأنقذ الموقف.

وقد قُدِّر للإمام زين العابدين أن يتسلم مسؤولياته القيادية والروحية بعد استشهاد أبيه، فمارسها خلال النصف الثاني من القرن الأول في مرحلة من أدق المراحل التي مرت الأمة وقتئذ، وهي المرحلة التي أعقبت موجة الفتوح الأولى فقد امتدت هذه الموجة، بزخمها الروحي وحماسها العسكري والعقائدي، فزلزلت عروش الأكاسرة والقيصرة وضممت شعوباً مختلفة وبلاداً واسعة إلى الدعوة الجديدة وأصبح المسلمون قادة الجزء من العالم المتمدن وقتئذ خلال نصف قرن. وعلى الرغم من أن هذه القيادة، جعلت من المسلمين قوة كبرى على الصعيد العالمي من الناحية السياسية والعسكرية، فأثارت عرضتهم لخطرين كبيرين خارج النطاق السياسي والعسكري، وكان لا بد من البدء بعمل حاسم للوقوف في وجههما.

أحدهما: الخطر الذي نجم عن انفتاح المسلمين على ثقافات متنوعة وأعراف تشريعية وأوضاع اجتماعية مختلفة بحكم تفاعلهم مع الشعوب التي دخلت في دين الله أفواجاً، وكان لا بد من عمل على الصعيد العلمي يؤكد في المسلمين أصالتهم الفكرية وشخصيتهم التشريعية المتميزة المستمدة من الكتاب والسنة وكان لا بد من حركة فكرية اجتهادية تفتح آفاقهم الذهنية ضمن ذلك الإطار لكي يستطيعوا أن يحملوا مشعل الكتاب والسنة بروح المجتهد البصير والممارس الذكي الذي يستطيع أن يستنبط منها ما يفيد في كل ما يستجد له من حالات كان لا بد من تأصيل

للشخصية الإسلامية ومن زرع بذور الاجتهاد وهذا ما قام به الإمام علي بن الحسين (عليه السلام) فقد بدأ حلقة من البحث والدرس في مسجد الرسول (صلى الله عليه وآله) يحدث الناس بصنوف المعرفة الإسلامية من تفسير وحديث وفقه ويفيض عليهم من علوم آبائه الطاهرين ويمرن الناهجين منهم على التفقه والاستنباط وقد تخرّج من هذه الحلقة عدد مهم من فقهاء المسلمين وكانت هذه الحلقة هي المنطلق لما نشأ بعد ذلك من مدارس الفقه والأساس لحركته الناشطة.

وقد استقطب الإمام عن هذا الطريق الجمهور الأعظم من القراء وحملة الكتاب والسنة حتى قال سعيد بن المسيب (إن القراء كانوا لا يخرجون إلى مكة حتى يخرج علي بن الحسين، فخرج وخرجنا معه ألف راكب).

وأما الخطر الأخر: فقد نجم عن موجة الرخاء التي سادت المجتمع الإسلامي في أعقاب ذلك الامتداد الهائل، لان موجات الرخاء تعرض أي مجتمع إلى خطر الانسياق مع ملذات الدنيا الإسراف في زينة هذه الحياة المحدودة وانطفاء الشعور الملتهب بالقيم الخلقية والصلة الروحية بالله واليوم الآخر وبما تضعه هذه الصلة أمام الإنسان من أهداف كبيرة وهذا ما وقع فعلاً وتكفي نظرة واحدة في كتاب الأغاني لأبي الفرج الاصبهاني ليتضح الحال.

وقد أحس الإمام علي بن الحسين بهذا الخطر وبدأ بعلاجه واتخذ من الدعاء أساساً لهذا العلاج. وكانت الصحيفة السجادية التي بين يديك من نتائج ذلك. فقد استطاع هذا الإمام العظيم بما أوتي من بلاغة فريدة وقدرة فائقة على أساليب التعبير العربي وذهنية ربانية تتفتق عن أروع المعاني وأدقها في تصوير صلة الإنسان بربه ووجده بخالقه وتعلقه بمبدئه ومعاده وتجسيد ما يعبر عنه ذلك من قيم خلقية وحقوق وواجبات.

أقول قد استطاع الإمام علي بن الحسين بما أوتي من هذه المواهب أن ينشر من خلال الدعاء جواً روحياً في المجتمع الإسلامي يساهم في تثبيت الإنسان المسلم عندما تعصف به المغريات وشده إلى ربه حينما تجره الأرض إليها وتأكيد ما نشأ عليه من قيم روحية لكي يظل أميناً عليها في عصر الغنى والثروة كما كان أميناً عليها وهو يشد حجر الجماعة على بطنه. وقد جاء في سيرة الإمام أنه كان يخطب الناس في كل جمعة ويعظهم ويهديهم في الدنيا ويرغبهم في أعمال الآخرة ويقرّع أسماعهم بتلك القطع الفنية من ألوان الدعاء والحمد والثناء التي تمثل العبودية المخلصة لله سبحانه وحده لا شريك له.

وهكذا نعرف أن الصحيفة السجادية تعبر عن عمل اجتماعي عظيم كانت ضرورة المرحلة تفرضه على الإمام إضافة إلى كونها تراثاً ربانياً فريداً يظل على مر الدهور مصدر عطاء ومشعل هداية ومدرسة أخلاق وتهذيب وتظل الإنسانية بحاجة إلى هذا التراث المحمدي العلوي وتزداد حاجة كلما ازداد الشيطان إغراء والدنيا فتنة. فسلام على إمامنا زين العابدين يوم ولد ويوم أدى رسالته ويوم مات ويوم بيعث حياً. النجف الأشرف - محمد باقر الصدر

By Āyatullāh Sayyid Muhammad Bāqir al-Sadr – English translation<sup>2</sup>

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

Praise be to the Lord of the Worlds and prayers and greetings be upon the seal of the Prophets and Messenger of God, Muhammad, and his pure progeny and righteous companions.

This book, al-Sahīfa al-Sajjādiyyah, includes certain supplications quoted from Imam Zayn al-‘Ābidīn ‘Ali b. Husayn b. ‘Ali Abī Tālib. He is one of the Imams belonging to the household of the Prophet whom God Almighty has kept pure and free of defilement.

The Imam was the fourth in the line of the Imams of the Prophet's household. His grandfather was Imam Amīr al-Mu‘minīn, ‘Ali b. Abī Tālib, the vicegerent and trustee of God's Prophet and the first to believe in him. His position in relation to the Prophet was like the position of Aaron in relation to Moses, according to authoritative Traditions.

The fourth Imam's grandmother was Fātima al-Zahrā, peace be upon her, the daughter of God's Prophet, most beloved to him and the highest among all the women of the world as the Prophet himself was used to describing her.

His father was Imam al-Husayn, peace be upon him, one of the two highest in degree among those who were destined for Paradise, a grandson of the Prophet and a very flower of his eye of whom the Prophet said: *Husayn is of me and I am of Husayn.*

Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, was foremost of those who were martyred at Karbalā on the day of ‘Āshūrā (the 10<sup>th</sup> of Muharram) in defense of Islam and Muslims. As stated in the Tradition narrated in the *Sahīh of Bukhārī* and *Muslim* and several others, Imam Husayn was one of the twelve Imams who were said to follow in the line of leadership (imamate) after the Prophet. The Prophet has been reported to have said: *The caliphs after me shall be twelve and all of them will be from among the Quraysh.*

<sup>2</sup> From *Al-Sahīfab Al-Sajjādiyyah*, translation by Sayyid Ahmad Muhani, Islamic Propagation Organization, Tehran, 1984

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, during a few years of which he grew up under the wing of his erstwhile grandfather, Imam ‘Ali, peace be upon him. Later he came under the guardianship and tutelage of his uncle, Imam Hasan, peace be upon him, and his father, Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, both grandsons of the Holy Prophet. He was nourished from the knowledge of the Prophet and nurtured by the sources of his pure ancestry.

In the religious sciences and in jurisprudence, ‘Ali b. al-Husayn was considered to be of high authority and a figure of supreme prominence as regards the orders and prohibitions of God which he was able to interpret and pronounce in the light of his knowledge. He was known for 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.

Al-Zuhrī said of him, “I have not seen a personality from the clan of Bani Hashim who excelled ‘Ali b. Husayn or one who was more just than he.” (The Banū Hāshim were among the most distinguished of the Arab tribes). In yet another context he said of him, “I have not seen a personality among all the Quraysh better than he”. (The Quraysh were the most distinguished among the Arab tribes and one of the largest). Sa‘īd b. Musayyib said “I have never seen a person the likes of ‘Ali b. al-Husayn. Imam Malik said, He was called by the name of Zayn al-‘Ābidīn (honored among worshippers) by virtue of his unceasing worship and prostration in prayer.” Sufyān b. Ayinah said, “I have not seen a personality from the Banī Hashim clan who was better than Zayn al-‘Ābidīn or one more just than he.” Imam al-Shāf‘ī considered Imam ‘Ali b. al-Husayn as the most supreme jurist of all the people of Medina.” The rulers of his time from the Banū Umayyad, despite many hostile acts, have had to admit this one fact about Imam ‘Ali b. al-Husayn.

For example, ‘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. His following among the Muslim public extended far and wide and the honor and adulation in which he was held by the Muslim people is recorded in a noteworthy poem of al-Farazdaq. In this he describes how during the annual hajj pilgrimage in the Holy City of Mecca, to which Hisham b. ‘Abd al-Malik went, the rush to get to the Sacred Black Stone (*al-hajar al-aswad*) was so great that this dignitary could hardly move towards it.

The people who knew him made a special place for him so that he could wait till the rush eased for him to make his way towards the Sacred Black Stone. Zayn al-‘Ābidīn then

happened to come along to perform the pilgrim rites. When the multitude present became aware of him, they all stood back, making way for him, bowing in adoration and respect as he passed by towards the Sacred Black Stone. Here then, says the poet, was a demonstration of the veneration, admiration and respect which Muslims of all countries, states and tribes held for Imam Zayn al-‘Ābidīn .

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.

It was related that the Muslims at the time turned to Zayn al-‘Ābidīn when they desired release from the oppression of the Roman emperor of his time. The Roman emperor desired to seek dominance in the region and to humiliate the Muslims during the reign of ‘Abdul Malik by imposing a Roman coinage and currency system in the Muslim lands. ‘Abdul Malik was perplexed not knowing how to meet this confrontation. He was so dejected and depressed that he was quoted to have said, I look on myself as one of the most pessimistic persons of those born in Islam. At this, the people around him are said to have told him that there was one who could provide him with a safe way out of his predicament. Asked who, they said, “One who remains from the household of the Prophet.” On hearing the name of Zayn al-‘Ābidīn, he said, “You have indeed spoken rightly and truly.”

Imam Zayn al-‘Ābidīn, whose help was sought, dispatched his son, Muhammad b. al-Bāqir to Damascus in Syria with secret instructions and from this there emerged a new plan to use an Islamic currency.

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.

Yet, despite the strength and power of Islam at the time, the *ummah* was exposed to two great dangers outside the military and political spheres. It was, therefore, necessary at this time to take a critical look and counter these dangers.

The first danger came from the fact that the Muslims now spread far and wide had their mental horizons opened to various cultures, customs and traditions, different social currents arising from the interaction with the nations which joined the folds of the religion of God in

vast numbers. It was now necessary to make special efforts in the scientific, religious and ideological fields emphasizing and affirming the ideological originality and freedom and the distinctive legislative advantages of Muslims which is derived from the Holy Book and the Traditions.

There has to be an ideological movement to awaken Muslims and to have their eyes opened to the pure vision of Islam so that it would be capable as being a torch-bearer and a light of both the Holy Book and the Traditions, bringing a message of enlightenment and perseverance of spirit among peoples with whom they came in contact. The trained intellectuals who were capable of benefiting from such teachings would have to embody and cultivate an Islamic personality to the full so that they could disseminate this among those with whom they came in contact.

Zayn al-‘Ābidīn, realizing the need for such a movement, 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.

Imam Zayn al-‘Ābidīn, in these efforts, attracted a large number of scholars and exegetists of the Holy Qur’an and the Traditions. Such was his renown that Sa‘īd b. al-Musayyib said, “The scholars did not leave Mecca until ‘Ali b. al-Husayn, peace be upon him, left. When he left, we left with him and we were thousands who rode along with him”.

The second danger to Islam at the time arose from the very fact of the wealth and general prosperity that was everywhere prevalent in Islamic society following the wide extension of its political power.

There was the risk that this new wave of prosperity would expose those who came in contact with wealth, power and worldly pleasures to contamination and eventually to undermining the very spiritual bases of Islam and destroy the vigor of the moral and spiritual renaissance which derived from belief in God Almighty and the life hereafter.

Imam ‘Ali b. Husayn realized this danger and began to take steps to remedy this situation. The foremost of his methods was to take the path of supplication. This book, *al-Sahifa al-Sajjadiyyah*, was one of the works that emanated as part of this great effort.

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.

It is my opinion that the Imam, with his multifarious gifts and his fervor in supplicating God, was able to include a truly spiritual atmosphere and create a moral tone in society which strengthened Islam at the time and served to act as a barrier against the invasion by the satanic values of the world to which Muslims were exposed in his time. 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 was amidst a life of riches and prosperity as they had been trustees at a time of misery and poverty.

It has been stated in the biography of the Imam that he 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.

*Al-Sahifa al-Sajjadiyyah* 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. Human beings will constantly remain in need of this Muhammadian 'Alawī tradition and the need increases whenever Satan comes to increase the allurements of the world for people and by its fascination to keep them in thralldom.

Peace and blessings be upon our Imam 'Ali b. al-Husayn Zayn al-'Ābidīn, from the time he was born, when he delivered his message, when he departed and to the time of his resurrection to life in the hereafter.

al-Najaf al-'Ashraf, Muhammad Bāqir al-Sadr.

***Al-Sahifa al-Kāmilah: The Perfect Epistle*** by Ahmed H. Sheriff<sup>3</sup>

It was during the years of 1950-60 when the Khwāja 'Abdul Latīf Ansārī, the eminent Pakistani scholar and preacher, was once discussing the glory and high status of the book *al-Sahifa al-Kāmilah*. He related his experience and contact with an American Christian lady who

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<sup>3</sup> From *The Light* magazine, published by Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania. Minor editing changes to transliteration of Arabic words.

had come to the East in the course of her research on rituals of prayers by different religions. She had previously come across and studied *Sahifa 'Alamiyya* consisting of invocations by his grandson Imam Zaynul 'Ābidīn (a).

Whilst in Iran, the lady had an opportunity of studying the *al-Sahifa al-Kāmilah*. Being an educated lady well-versed in the Arabic language, she could easily digest the underlying meaning and interpretation of the invaluable invocations by the Imam. She felt so much impressed and moved that she readily converted to Islam remarking that no other book would surpass this as it contained the supreme possible human approach towards the Creator Allah.

Such being the impact of this holy book, whoever took an opportunity of making a serious study could not remain without showering words of eulogy. Born in 1862 and educated in Al-Azhar University, the prominent Arab Professor of Philosophy and author of many valuable books, Shaykh al-Islam Tantāwī Jawhari from Alexandria was once presented by someone with a gift of *al-Sahifa al-Kāmilah*. He was so much overwhelmed by the contents that he expressed these views:

*I have studied this book with utmost care. I have gone through the invocations and supplications with searching eyes. I was stunned by the lofty meanings and deep sense contained therein. I was deeply impressed by the value and magnificence of these invocations. I wonder how the Muslims have all along been ignorant of such a valuable treasure. They have been in deep slumber for these centuries. They could not even feel that Allah has supplied them with such a precious store of knowledge. To the extent that I have been able to meditate over it, I notice that its words are above those of the created ones and below those of the creator.*

After the tragedy of Karbalā Imam Zaynul 'Ābidīn A.S. was virtually under house imprisonment. People in Medina, where the Imam lived, were still under harsh suppression of the Umayyad rulers of the time. It was a time when Ahlul Bayt were made to be ignored by the man in the street. It was almost impossible for people to approach the descendants of the Prophet to seek knowledge of the Holy Qur'an and Hadith. As the divinely appointed guide for the Ummah, how could the Imam carry on the dissemination of the knowledge of the faith without endangering his safety and that of his followers? The Imam chose the medium of invocation and supplication to Allah, which proved of lasting effect. What a sagacious and wise step this was to preserve the lofty teachings of Islam!

In order that this holy book is preserved for the benefit of posterity, Imam Zaynul 'Ābidīn (a) had originally dictated the invocations therein to two of his sons, Muhammad ibn 'Ali and Zayd ibn 'Ali. For some years the book was preserved secretly lest it was tampered with. However during the times of Imam Ja'far al-Sādiq (a), it was copied and circulated around among the followers of Ahlul Bayt. It is said that the copy from the hands of Zayd, after his death, was found to be incomplete whereas the one from Muhammad ibn 'Ali al-Bāqir was perfect, hence its name *al-Sahifa al-Kāmilah* became widely popular. The name may also have been meant to imply that this is a perfect book of guidance and spiritual help for the believers in their day-to-day problems.

The book came also to be known as *al-Sahifa al-Sajjadiyyah*, relating to one of the epithets of the Imam. It has also been referred to as *Zabur-e Ali Muhammad*, meaning the Psalms of the Children of Muhammad. Certainly the words of the Imam in the book are not below those of Hadrat Dāwūd in the *Zabur*. It also came to be known as *Injil-e Ali Muhammad* meaning the Evangel of the People of the House of the Prophet.

From in-depth study, the *Sahifa* will be found unveiling many secrets of learning and mysteries of knowledge. The heartrending invocations therein inspire a reader to abstain from evil and lean towards virtue and piety. One who recites the invocations with understanding is apt to concentrate his attention towards Allah and attain self-purification and spiritual upliftment. The invocations, some sixty-eight of them, pertain to different subjects and were recited on special occasions, like day of Arafat, ‘Eid al-Fitr, ‘Eid al-Adhā, commencement and end of the holy Ramadhān. Some are on occasions like thunderstorm, arrival of news of one’s death, when faced with heavy debt, hardships or seeking Allah’s forgiveness against sins. On such moments when the human heart is shaken or when one is bewildered [and] not knowing what to do, the sublime words in those invocations do indeed provide great solace and tranquility. Only when one recites the various invocations with full understanding can one can really appreciate the true value of this holy book.

If there was any holy book chosen by an Imam as a gift to be offered to one pious and high caliber jurist, it was *al-Sahifa al-Kāmilah*. The following story does indeed indicate the profound value and status of it: ‘Allāmah Muhammad Taqī Majlisī, the father of the famous Muhammad Bāqir al-Majlisī was well-known for his piety, excellence of character and his endeavors in the propagation of the traditions of Ahlul Bayt. In his book *Man Lā Yabdhuruhu al-Faqih* Vol. 4, he narrates how in the course of his dreams, he was being guided by the 12<sup>th</sup> Imam Sāhibul ‘Asr (af) on various knotty questions of jurisprudence and recommendation not to miss the mid-night prayers.

In a dream once, the ‘Allāmah requested the 12<sup>th</sup> Imam for a gift of a book from which he could constantly benefit. The Imam recommended *al-Sahifa al-Kāmilah* telling him that it was a gift from him and he should go and collect the book from a person named at a particular place. ‘Allāmah confirms that in accordance with the advice of the Imam, he collected the *Sahifa* from which he benefited a great deal in his exercises of self-purification. The book was cherished as an invaluable gift from the Imam and circulated round among the believers of the place.

### Teaching True Islam [through the *Sahifa*]<sup>4</sup>

The previous two tasks [i.e. the Announcement of His Imamate and Uniting the Shia Community] were stepping-stones to reach this most important of his responsibilities. We

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<sup>4</sup> S. Saeed Akhtar Rizvi, “The Illustrious Period of the Imamate of Imam Zayn al-‘Abidin,” from [www.al-islam.org/al-serat/vol-5-no-3-4-1979/illustrious-period-imamate-imam-zayn-al-abidin-sayyid-saeed-akhtar-rizvi](http://www.al-islam.org/al-serat/vol-5-no-3-4-1979/illustrious-period-imamate-imam-zayn-al-abidin-sayyid-saeed-akhtar-rizvi) accessed on May 5, 2014

have seen how the Imam announced his Imamate by means of a “family feud”, and how he gave his followers a platform of unity in the form of his mourning for his father. In neither instance he addressed any outsider; still the message got through.

Likewise, in meeting this third and most important of his tasks, he did not address any human being. He selected the form of Du‘ā (invocation) for this purpose. He recorded his Du‘ās in a book form and asked his two sons to make copies of the book. This recording itself is an indication that these invocations were not just a prayer, but also a means of guidance for the Muslims.

How could anyone tell him not to ask his wants from Allah? How could anyone come between Allah and His servant, when raising his hands he called his Lord in a heart-rending voice to come to his aid and to help him out of his difficulties.

But those recorded Du‘ās are a treasure of Islamic knowledge. One finds in them almost all theological and ethical questions answered eloquently and eruditely. Reading them, the heart is filled with true belief and sincere love of Allah; and the light of virtue and nobleness illuminates the character.

It is not possible to give here even a short review of this sacred book, generally known as *Al-Sahifah al-Sajjadiyyah* or *Al-Sahifah al-Kāmilah*; and also called “*Psalm of Ali Muhammad*”’d “*Injil of Ahlul Bayt.*”

When this book was shown to Egyptian scholars, they were thunderstruck and awed by its beauty. They were amazed and stunned by the purity of thought and perfection of character to which this book irresistibly leads its reader.

The renowned scholar, late Al-Tantawī wrote:

“I have studied this book with utmost care. I have gone through the Du‘ās (invocations) and *Munājāts* (supplications) with a searching eye. I was stunned by the lofty meanings and deep sense contained therein. I was deeply impressed by the value and magnificence of these invocations. I wonder how the Muslims all along been ignorant of such valuable treasure. They have been in deep slumber all these centuries. They could not even feel that Allah had supplied them with such a precious store of knowledge.

“The invocations in this book have two distinct approaches: the one seeks for the knowledge and guidance to keep away from sins and evil things, while the other persuades and exhorts one to enable one's 'self' by performance of virtuous deeds. We may say that these Invocations, full of knowledge and guidance, are a wonderful treasure of secrets, and contain hints regarding self-reproachment, admission of shortcomings, with tears and self-purification, warding off vicissitudes and difficulties, safe-guarding oneself from the tyrannies of the enemy, recovery from various diseases and so on. All such Du‘ās are found mostly in the first part of the book, while the later part consists of the loftiness and grandeur of Allah, His creation and other wonders of His power and might.

“Is it not wonderful? Does not it show that these holy personages are unveiling many secrets of learning and unravelling many mysteries of knowledge for Muslims, who happen to be completely ignorant of it? It is a fact that the affairs of human beings are divided into two parts: The one is to keep away from evil, the other to acquire good traits together with the knowledge of Divine existence, which is essential for self-purification and spiritual perfection.”

Then he goes on expounding these points with help of many invocations. In another article, he compares an invocation of Imam Zaynul ‘Ābidīn with the prayer of the Prophet Nūh (Noah). Just to give an example of the high religious and ethical standard taught by our Holy Imam, I am quoting here extracts from a Du‘ā, known as *Makārimul Akhlāq* (Noble Character). This Du‘ā is enough to lead the reciter on the right path, making him a perfect Muslim and a virtuous believer.

*O Lord, You are my shelter if I grow sad, and You are my resource if I am in need and unto You I cry for help, when deeply afflicted, and with You is recompense for what is lost, and reformation for what is corrupted, and alteration for what You disapprove:*

*Therefore, favour me with security before calamity and bounty before begging (for it) and right direction before error and spare me from bearing me peace on the day of resurrection and favour me with hand some guidance.*

*O Lord, bless Muhammad and his Āl (family) and ward off (evil) from me with Your grace, and nourish me with Your blessing, and reform me with Your graciousness and cure me with Your goodness and hide me in the shelter of Your mercy and clothe me with Your approbation, and help me, when matters grow difficult about me, (to choose) the most righteous of them, and when actions become dubious, (to select) the purest of them, and when the creeds conflict, (to adopt) the most praiseworthy of them.*

*O Lord, bless Muhammad and his Āl (family) and crown me with sufficiency and adorn me with the grace of Your love and grant me true guidance and do not try me with prosperity and confer on me the beauty of comfort and do not make my life a succession of trials, and do not reject my prayer with repulsion; for, I do not recognise any as Your rival, and I do not call upon any as Your equal.*

*O Lord, bless Muhammad and his Āl (family) and restrain me from extravagance and preserve my subsistence from waste and increase my possessions by giving blessing therein and let me walk along the path of benevolence; in whatever I spend my (wealth).*

In this way Imam Zaynul ‘Ābidīn spent his life providing guidance not only for the Muslims of his time, but also for the generations to come. When he left this world, he had more than accomplished all that he was entrusted with by Allah.

An-Najaf al-Ashraf, Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr