

## The Exemplary Life of Imam al-Jawad (A.S.)

“Or do they envy the people for what Allah has given them out of His grace? We have certainly given the progeny of Ibrahim the Book and wisdom, and we have given them a great kingdom”. (4:54)

According to the Tafseer of the Shia’hs, the mahsudeen (People upon whom others are jealous) are the progeny of the Holy Prophet (saww). And why are people jealous of them? It is because Allah (SWT), out of His grace, gave them Mulkan Adheeman meaning ‘great kingdom’ and this kingdom is in reference to the ‘Imamat’ (Divine Leadership) of our AImma (as). Imam Muhammad ibn ‘Ali al-Jawad (as) is also among those who were blessed with divine leadership; and on account of his Imamate, people were jealous of him including the rulers of his time!

### Important Lessons from His Life

Our 9th Imam (as) lived a very short life. He (as) was born in the year 195 AH and was poisoned and killed in the year 225 AH. Thus his lifespan was only 30 years. But if we carefully study his short life, we will find that he (as) made enormous contributions to Islam and in addition, our Imam (as) has taught us through his behaviour, a very important lesson of self-control despite all riches.

Our Imam (as) was young and we all know that in young age, people are usually very ambitious. If in young age, a person is surrounded by worldly wealth and luxuries; and there is no proper upbringing, the young man can fall into all sorts of vices. Our 9th Imam (as) lived for only 30 years – a period when a person is still considered as a youth and in these 30 years, most of his life was during the reign of Mamoon ar-Rasheed – the Abbasid ruler, who was responsible for the murder of our 8th Imam (as).

### Marriage to Mamoon's Daughter

Mamoon ar-Rasheed was a very cunning and a very shrewd ruler. He got our 9th Imam (as) married to his daughter Ummul-FadhI. Why?? Historians have given different reasons for this: Some say that Mamoon himself had said, “I would like to be a grandfather of one whose fathers are the Messenger of Allah (saww) and Ali bin Abi Talib (as)”. And they also believe that Mamoon admired the talents of our Imam (as).

If he had so much regard for the Ahlul-Bayt (as) then why did he kill Imam ar-Reza (as)? Some say that Mamoon wanted to show the public that he was innocent of assassinating Imam ar-Reza (as) –if he was the killer then why should he marry his own daughter with the son of Imam (as)? Some say that this was a ploy of Mamoon. He was too scared of the Imamate of our 9th Imam (as), therefore he wanted to keep track of all his activities and followers through his daughter hence the marriage.

However, The main motive of Mamoon was to mess around with the youth of our Imam (as) by occupying him with riches and diverting his focus to material things through marriage such that the office of Imamate becomes valueless. But Mamoon did not succeed in that! Some of the things, which Mamoon did to lure our Imam (as) away from his divine leadership:

When he wanted to marry his daughter to him, he brought 200 beautiful maids and gave each one of them a cup full of jewels to receive the Imam (as) when he (as) sat with the notable people – But the Imam (as) never paid any attention to them. A person with a long beard called Mukhariq, who was a singer, was brought to play lute and tambourine. Mamoon instructed him to play. Imam (as) neither looked at the right nor at the left for sometime and then addressing the singer, he (as) said, “Fear Allah! O you man of the beard”. The instruments immediately fell down from his hands and they became numb until his death. Mamoon once asked him as to what had happened to him and the man said, “Abu Ja’ffar shouted at me and this was its effect. Now I will never be able to play the instruments”.

Delegations of notable people came from Baghdad and other cities to congratulate him. Among them were leaders of the army and the officials of the government. Mamoon ordered that the gifts be brought and the lavish gifts were presented to the Imam (as) and prizes were given to the people. After this, whenever Imam (as) passed from any street, people would gather to salute him – a manner in which the great princes are saluted. Mamoon set aside the salary of 1 million dirhams per annum for our Imam (as). What was the reaction of our Imam (as)?? Today, if a young ambitious person, who has no fear of God, gets all these luxuries, one can imagine the disaster!

Imam (as) did not stay in Baghdad. Soon after his marriage, he (as) took his bride and left for Hajj on his way to Yathrib (Madina). There, he (as): Managed the affairs of the Shias;

distributed his annual salary among them and other needy people and led a very simple and humble life.

### Abhorring Pride

Despite being the son-in-law of the ruler of time, Imam (as) was never boastful and proud. In fact, he (as) abhorred pride (takabbur) of any kind and always cautioned others against it! For instance: Once three prominent people came to visit the Imam (as). They stayed with him for sometime and then got up to leave. Imam (as) pointed towards one of them, who was Ahmad bin Muhammad al-Bizenti and said, "As for you, please sit down". The man sat down and the Imam (as) conversed with him for a long time. Then as he wanted to depart, Imam (as) told him, "O Ahmad! Will you go or spend the night here?" The man said, "O Maula! It depends on you. If you want me to stay, I will stay and if you want me to go, I will go". He (as) said, "Stay!" As the Imam (as) got up and went inside, it occurred to this man, "Alhamdulillah. The authority of Allah and heir of the knowledge of the prophets has liked my company among my brothers". As this thought crossed his mind, Imam (as) came in, took his hand, shook it and said: "Once Ameer al-Mumineen (as) visited Sa'sa'a when he was ill. When he (as) got up to leave him, he (as) said to him: 'O Sa'sa'a, do not pride yourself before your fellows on my visiting you, Fear Allah!' and then he (as) left". (Hayaat Imam Muhammad al-Jawad)

### Victim of Jealousy

Abu Laylah was a chief justice in the court of Mu'tasim, the Abbasid caliph. One day, he came to his friend Zarqa in state of extreme anger and when asked the purpose of anger, Abu Laylah said, "O Zarqa! Today I was put to a very big test in which I failed. A thief, whose crime was established, was presented before Mu'tasim.

So Mu'tasim asked, 'Quran says that I should cut the hands of this thief. You tell me from which part shall his hand be cut-off'. I said, ' Quran states that chop-off the hand of a thief and in the verse of wudhoo, it is mentioned that wash your hands till your elbow. So from elbow downwards is considered as hand therefore cut his hand from his elbow'." Mu'tasim then asked other learned people in his court for their opinion.

Someone said, 'In the verse of Tayammum, hand has been mentioned till the wrist so cut the thief's hand from his wrist'. After a lot of discussion and debate, Mu'tasim then put the same question to the Imam of the Shia'hs, Muhammad ibn Ali, who happened to be present at the time. At first, he refused to comment but when Mu'tasim insisted, he said, "You will only cut-off the fingers of the thief because Quran says: The places of prostration are for Allah meaning parts of the body placed on the ground during Sajdah. Since the thief is also a Muslim who offers prayers, he will need his palms during Sajdah. So you have to leave that and cut only his fingers". O Zarqa! Mu'tasim was so pleased with this answer that he praised the Imam of the Shia'hs and we felt discredited.

O Zarqa! I am aware that whoever harms this young man will burn in the hell-fire but I will not rest till I have taken my revenge against him".

Having said this, Zarqa returned to Mu'tasim to provoke him against the Imam (as). He said to him, "What have you done? People, as it is believe in him as the true Imam and do not believe in you. Why did you give him preference over us? Now you have confirmed to the people through your action that indeed he is on truth and you are on falsehood". Mu'tasim was so affected by this, that shortly after this incident, he poisoned the Imam (as). (Bikhre Moti)