

At The Age Of Al-Ma'moon

Imam al-Jawad (a.s) had lived most of his life at the reign of al- Ma'moon and he lived no long after him. Historians saw that al- Ma'moon had great and sincere love towards Imam al-Jawad (a.s). Therefore, he married his daughter Ummul Fadhl to him, gifted him profusely, caring too much for him, defended him and feared for him from any misfortune. He said that he wanted, by doing that, the reward of Allah and to restore the kinship that his fathers had cut. As I think that this care and glorification were not out of believing and sincerity to Imam al-Jawad (a.s) but out of political motives as we shall discuss in the following chapters.

However, we have to study the life of al-Ma'moon to know his beliefs and intellectual tendencies and to know the truth of his glorification towards Imam al-Jawad (a.s) because it has a close relation with our study on the life of Imam al-Jawad (a.s).

The Aspects And Tendencies Of Al-Ma'moon

The most prominent aspects and tendencies of al-Ma'moon are as the following:

1. Cunning

The Islamic diplomacy in the Abbasid age did not know one cleverer than al-Ma'moon or more aware than him in the general political affairs. He was a politician from the first class. With his intelligence and political talents he could defeat many terrible events that afflicted him and were about to end his rule and finish off him. He could do away with his brother al-Ameen who was supported widely by the Abbasid family and the central authorities. He could defeat the revolution of Abu as-Saraya that was the greatest military movement against him and which grew until it covered many Islamic districts.

The aim of this revolution was the advocating for Imam ar- Ridha' (a.s) as the real and legal ruler of the umma. Imam ar-Ridha' (a.s), who was the chief of the Alawid family, was carried to Khurasan by the order of al-Ma'moon who forced him to accept the position of the heir apparent. He instructed all the bodies of his government to spread the virtues and exploits of Imam ar-Ridha' (a.s) everywhere. He

coined money with the name of Imam ar-Ridha' (a.s) and made the rebels and all the public movements supporting them believe that he (al-Ma'moon) was serious in his doings until they were certain that there would be no need for revolting and shedding bloods after Imam ar-Ridha' (a.s) had been the heir apparent. In this way he defeated the revolution and did away with its effects. This plan was one of the most wonderful political plans in the world throughout the stages of history.

2. Severity

Severity was one of the prominent qualities of al-Ma'moon. He had no mercy or kindness. He killed his brother al-Ameen when his army had occupied Baghdad and if he had a bit of mercy, he would not kill his brother.

After he had killed Imam ar-Ridha' (a.s), he treated the Alawids with utmost severity and violence. He instructed his men to torture or kill the Alawids whenever they were found.

3. Treachery

Another quality of al-Ma'moon was treachery. He had appointed Imam ar-Ridha' (a.s) as his heir apparent and after achieving his political purposes, he inserted poison to him and killed him.

4. His Tendency For Amusement And Play

The tendency for play and amusement was an element of his life. Nothing was more beloved to him than playing the chess.¹ He was interested in chess that he had composed some verses of poetry describing it. His father ar-Rasheed was interested in chess and he had given pawns of chess as a present to the king of France and they are now in one of the museums in France.

Al-Ma'moon was interested in singing and music. He was too interested in Abu Is~haq al-Mousili the songster who was one of the best and most famous musicians and singers in the Arab world. Al-Ma'moon said about this singer, 'Whenever he sings, my increasing scruples that come to me from the Satan get away from me.'²

He passed his nights with singing, dancing and playing the lute whereas the mention of Allah did not come to minds in his palaces during those nights.

Claiming Shiism

Al-Ma'moon pretended to be a Shiite through doing some things that made many researchers think that he was from the Shia. He did the following:

1. Giving Fadak Back To The Alawids

Al-Ma'moon gave Fadak³ back to the Alawids after the previous governments had confiscated it

intending to impose economical punishments against the Alawids and keep them live in poverty and neediness and thus the government would be safe from their resistance. By doing this al-Ma'moon had refreshed the Alawids and saved them from their economical problems that had struck them severely.

2. Preferring Imam Ali To Other Companions

Al-Ma'moon had done a dangerous deed. He had announced officially the preference of Imam Ali (a.s), the pioneer of social justice in the earth, to all the companions and had also announced the defaming and criticizing of Mo'awiya.

This action was one of the most important plans that made people think al-Ma'moon was Shiite because all his predecessors used to curse, criticize, and defame Imam Ali (a.s) and they preferred the companions to him.

3. Appointing Imam Ar-Redha As The Heir Apparent

There was another thing due to which people thought that al-Ma'moon was a Shia. It was his appointing Imam ar-Ridha' (a.s) as his heir apparent and thus he took out the caliphate from the Abbasids to the Alawids.

These were the most important points that those, who thought al-Ma'moon was a Shia, relied on. But, when we ponder on the matter, we find that al-Ma'moon was neither a Shia nor was he kind to the Shia. He did those things just to firm his policies and achieve his purposes. Here are some points that affirm our thought:

First, al-Ma'moon had disagreed with the Abbasid family whose tendencies were with his brother al-Ameen because his mother was Zubayda who was very generous and liberal and from the very Abbasid family while the mother of al-Ma'moon, Marajil, was from the servants of the Abbasid palace; therefore, the Abbasids despised him because of his mother. Hence, al-Ma'moon by pretending to be a Shia wanted to subjugate his family, the Abbasids, who were the bitterest enemies of Ahlul Bayt (a.s) and of their followers.

Second, He wanted to discover the Shia after they had been unknown to the Abbasid governments. He wanted to know their names, groups and activities. Some official documents issued by him proved this matter.

Third, He wanted to do away with the revolutionary movement that the Shia had established under the leadership of Abu as-Saraya. Al-Ma'moon saw that the best way to defeat this movement and stop its activities was through being kind to the Shia.

With Imam Al-Jawad (A.S)

What is important to the readers, as I think, is the study of the relation between Imam al-Jawad (a.s) and al-Ma'moon, the extent of that relation and his other affairs with him.

The First Meeting

The first meeting between Imam Abu Ja'far al-Jawad (a.s) and al-Ma'moon was in Baghdad when one day al-Ma'moon was going out with his train for hunting. On his way, he passed by some children among whom was Imam al-Jawad (a.s). When the children saw al-Ma'moon with his procession, they ran away for fear of him except Imam al-Jawad (a.s). When al-Ma'moon saw him, he stopped asking him why he had not run away. Imam al-Jawad (a.s) replied so wisely, 'The way is not narrow so that I would clear it to you and I have no guilt to fear from you. I think that you do not harm one who has no guilt.'

Al-Ma'moon was astonished at this answer. He kept on asking him,

'What is your name?'

Imam al-Jawad (a.s) said, 'Muhammad.'

Al-Ma'moon asked, 'Son of whom?'

'Son of Ali ar-Redha', said Imam al-Jawad (a.s).

Al-Ma'moon found this excessive intelligence not odd, for Muhammad (al-Jawad) was from the house of the Prophet (a.s), the source of the mission and the center of knowledge and sense in the earth. Al-Ma'moon prayed Allah to have mercy on Imam ar-Ridha'(a.s) and went on his travel towards the desert for hunting.

When he arrived in the place of hunting, he set free a falcon that was with him. The falcon disappeared and after some period it came back having a little fish, which was still alive, in his beak. Al-Ma'moon was astonished and he went back to his palace. He met Imam al-Jawad (a.s) again and asked him,

'O Muhammad, what is this in my hand?'

Imam al-Jawad (a.s) replied, 'Allah the Almighty has created in the sea of his power small fish that is fished by the falcons of the kings and caliphs to try with it the progeny of al-Mustafa (Prophet Muhammad).'

Al-Ma'moon could not hide his admiration and said, 'Indeed, you are the son of ar-Ridha!' He took Imam al-Jawad (a.s) with him, did him good and exaggerated in honoring him.⁴ This was the first meeting between Imam al-Jawad (a.s) and al-Ma'moon.

The Marriage Of Imam Al-Jawad To Al-Ma'moon's Daughter

All historians mentioned that al-Ma'moon liked Imam al-Jawad (a.s) to get married to his daughter Ummul Fadhl. It was he who had asked Imam al-Jawad (a.s) to marry his daughter. This was the second relation on this level between the two families; the Alawids and the Abbasids after all the bases of relation and kinship between them had come to nothing during the reign of the tyrant al-Mansor ad-Dawaniqi whose sons followed him in this way and kept on punishing the Alawids severely.

The Motives Of This Marriage

Historians and narrators mentioned many reasons that made al- Ma'moon marry his daughter to Imam al-Jawad (a.s). Here are some of them:

1. Al-Ma'moon said when intending to marry his daughter to Imam al-Jawad (a.s), 'I like to be a grandfather of one whose fathers are the messenger of Allah and Ali bin Abu Talib.'

As I think, this was not the real reason behind this marriage, for al- Ma'moon did not believe in this fact in the depth of his heart. If he had been true, he would not have assassinated Imam ar-Ridha' (a.s) and would not have instructed the bodies of his government to chase the Alawids and kill them.

2. That which made al-Ma'moon do that was his admiring the talents and genius of Imam al-Jawad (a.s) which were well-known to everyone. This opinion has not been evidenced.
3. He wanted to show the public that he was innocent of assassinating Imam ar-Ridha' (a.s), for if he had killed Imam ar- Ridha' (a.s), he would not have married his daughter to the son of Imam ar-Ridha' (a.s).

4. He tried to be aware of the activities of Imam al-Jawad (a.s) and know his political tendencies, his followers and supporters through his daughter who would be his (Imam al-Jawad's) wife.

5. Perhaps the most important and most serious reason was that al- Ma'moon tried, through this marriage, to take Imam al-Jawad (a.s) to the fields of amusement, play and diversion to destroy the edifice of imamate which the Shia believed in. The most important basis of imamate was the infallibility of the imam and his refraining from committing any sin whether intendedly or inattentively. Of course, al-Ma'moon had failed to do that because Imam al-Jawad (a.s) did not respond to him in any way even if he would lose his life.

But, what explains all that is that which Sheikh al-Kulayni has mentioned. He says, 'Al-Ma'moon managed every trick⁵ against Imam al-Jawad (a.s) but he failed. When he wanted to marry his daughter to him, he brought two hundred beautiful maids and gave each one of them a cup full of jewels to receive Abu Ja'far (al-Jawad) when he would sit in the place of notables, but Imam al-Jawad (a.s) did not look at them.'

There was a man of a long beard called Mukhariq. He was a singer and he played the lute and tambourine. Al-Ma'moon asked him to play and sing before Imam al-Jawad (a.s). He did for a period and Imam al-Jawad (a.s) looked neither to the left nor to the right. Then, Imam al-Jawad (a.s) raised his head and said, 'Fear Allah O you man of the beard!' The tambourine and the lute fell down from the singer's hands and he could not make use of his hands until he died. Al-Ma'moon asked him about his state and he said, 'When Abu Ja'far shouted at me, I was frightened that I would not recover forever.'⁶

This narration revealed the attempts of al-Ma'moon to draw Imam al-Jawad (a.s) to the fields of amusement and diversion. He offered to him all kinds of incitement and Imam al-Jawad (a.s) was then in the prime of youth, but he, with his great spiritual powers, refrained from what Allah had prohibited and therefore, he spoiled the plans of al-Ma'moon that intended to devoid the beliefs of the Shia in the infallibility of their imams. It was this fact—as we think—that was the reason for calling Imam al-Jawad (a.s) as at-Taqiy (God-fearing) because he feared Allah in the most difficult stages and therefore Allah had saved him from the evil of al-Ma'moon.⁷

The Fear Of The Abbasids

The Abbasids felt a great fear when they knew that al-Ma'moon had intended to marry his daughter to Imam al-Jawad (a.s). They held a meeting that their notables and men of consultation had attended to discuss the matter and the possibility of transmitting the caliphate and rule from the Abbasids to the Alawids. When they had discussed the matter from all sides, they decided to meet al-Ma'moon and show him their objection to what he had intended to do.

The Meeting Of The Abbasids With Al-Ma'moon

The Abbasids went to al-Ma'moon and said to him, 'O Ameerul Mo'mineen, we adjure you by Allah to give up marrying your daughter to the son of ar-Ridha'. We fear you will take a matter that Allah has endowed us with away from us and take off an honor from us that Allah has put on us. You have known what has been there between us and these people in the past and now and how the caliphs have exiled and made little of them. We are in fear of what you have done with ar-Ridha'. We ask you by Allah not to take us back to a distress that had abated from us. Give up your intention with the son of ar-Ridha' and choose one from your family who would fit for that better than others...'.

The Abbasids put before al-Ma'moon the points that provoked emotions. They reminded him of the spites and enmities of his fathers towards the Alawids and that which the previous caliphs had done to them such as exiling them from the rule and governmental positions and subjecting them to all kinds of torture and punishment. They asked him not to turn away from the path of his fathers because that would cause dangers to his family. Nevertheless, al-Ma'moon paid no attention to that and said to them,

'As for that which is between you and the family of Abu Talib (the Alawids), the fault is yours in that. If you have done justice to them, it would have been better to you for they are the closest to you. And as

for that which those before me had done to them, they had cut kinship and I seek the protection of Allah from that. By Allah, I have not regretted my appointing him as my heir apparent. I had asked him to undertake the matter (the caliphate) and I would retire but he refused; and the command of Allah is a decree that is made absolute. And as for Abu Ja'far Muhammad bin Ali (al-Jawad), I have chosen him because he is the best of all people in knowledge and virtue though he is still young and I have admired this in him. I hope that which I have known in him will appear to people and then they will know that what I have done is right...'.

Al-Ma'moon blamed the Abbasids for it was they who had cut the relation of kinship with the Alawids. If they were fair to themselves, they would see that the Alawids were worthier of the position of the Prophet (a.s) than them because they were his progeny and religion had been built by their jihad and sacrifice. The Abbasids had not offered any service to Islam or to Muslims, but what they had done harmed Islam and the Muslims.

Then the Abbasids asked al-Ma'moon to put off this marriage until Imam al-Jawad (a.s) would grow older and be more aware of religion.

Al-Ma'moon replied to them, 'Woe unto you! I know this young man more than you. He is from people of a house whose knowledge is from Allah Who has inspired them. His fathers have been rich in the knowledge of religion and sciences and been in no need of imperfect people. If you like, you can try Abu Ja'far to discover what I have described about him.'

Al-Ma'moon and the Abbasids had agreed on trying Imam al-Jawad (a.s) that he might fail to answer and then his marriage to the daughter of al-Ma'moon would be annulled besides that they would take that as a means to devoid the belief of the Shia that the imam was the most aware and most virtuous of all people of his time.

The Abbasids said to al-Ma'moon, 'O Ameerul Mo'mineen, we agree to try him. Let us alone with him and we shall appoint someone to question him in your presence on some things in jurisprudence of the Sharia. If he answers correctly, we shall have no objection to his marriage and the opinion of Ameerul Mo'mineen will appear right to people, and if he fails to answer we shall have the right to object.'⁸

The Abbasids went looking for a scientific personality that would be able to try Imam al-Jawad (a.s) and confute him.

Delegating Yahya To Try Imam Al-Jawad

The Abbasids had agreed on choosing Yahya bin Aktham, who was the head of the judges of Baghdad and one of the prominent jurisprudents at that time, to try Imam Abu Ja'far (a.s). They offered their suggestion to him and told him that they would give him great monies if he tried Imam al-Jawad (a.s) and confuted him. Yahya responded to them and left to his house looking in the books of jurisprudence and Hadith for the most complicated questions to test Imam al-Jawad (a.s) by them. The Abbasids went

to al-Ma'moon and told him that Yahya had accepted the offer and they asked him to assign a day for the trial.

The Questions Of Yahya

When the day of the trial came, the Abbasids hurried to the palace of al-Ma'moon. Notables, scholars and people of all classes attended the meeting. It was a memorable day. The hall of the meeting was full of people. Imam al-Jawad (a.s), who was nine years and some months then, took his seat in the front of the meeting as al-Ma'moon had ordered, Yahya sat before him and al-Ma'moon sat beside him.

The attendants opened their ears and Yahya asked al-Ma'moon permission to begin trying Imam al-Jawad (a.s). Yahya turned towards Imam al-Jawad (a.s) and said to him, 'Would you permit me – may I die for you – to ask you a question?'

Imam al-Jawad (a.s) smiled at him saying, 'Ask whatever you like.'

Yahya asked, 'May Allah make me die for you! What do you say about a muhrim⁹ who killed a game?'

Imam al-Jawad (a.s) said, 'Did he kill the game while being in his ihram or not? Was he aware of that or not? Did he kill it intendedly or not? Was the muhrim a free person or a slave? Was he a child or an adult? Was the game from birds or other than birds? Was it young or grown-up? Did the muhrim insist on his doing or he repented? Was it in the night or at day? Was the muhrim in the major hajj or in the minor hajj?'

Yahya was astonished and confused and failure appeared on him. He could not imagine these branches on his question. Loud calls of takbir and tahlil¹⁰ filled the hall. It was clear to the all that the imams of Ahlul Bayt (a.s) were the source of knowledge and wisdom and that Allah had gifted them, young and old, with that which He had gifted His prophets of perfection and knowledge.

Imam al-Jawad (a.s) had divided this question into these branches, although some of them had the same verdict as if when the killing of the animal was in the night or at day, to confute the opponent who had questioned Imam al-Jawad (a.s) just for testing and not for perceiving.

When al-Ma'moon saw that Yahya had failed, he turned to the Abbasids and said, 'Praise be to Allah for this blessing and for the successfulness of my opinion...do you know now what you have denied?'¹¹

It was clear to the Abbasids that Imam al-Jawad (a.s) had an important position and he was one of the great (men) of intellect and knowledge in Islam and it was clear to them that al-Ma'moon said to them that they did not know Ahlul Bayt (a.s).

Engagement

When Yahya bin Aktham failed and was confuted, and the talents of Imam al-Jawad (a.s) and his

preference to all others, despite his young age, appeared clearly to the attendants of the meeting, al-Ma'moon turned to Imam al-Jawad (a.s) and said, O Abu Ja'far, do you propose (to my daughter)?'

Imam al-Jawad (a.s) showed acceptance and then al-Ma'moon said to him, 'May I die for you! I have accepted you. Propose and I will marry my daughter Ummul Fadhl to you even if some people object to that.'

Then Imam al-Jawad (a.s) made the speech of engagement saying, 'Praise be to Allah as acknowledgment to His blessing, and there is no god but Allah as loyalty to His oneness, and the blessing and peace of Allah be on the master of His people and the choice from his progeny. From the favor of Allah on His people is that He has satisfied them with lawful (marriage) rather than unlawful (adultery). He, glory be to Him, has said, (***And marry those among you who are single and those who are fit among your male slaves and your female slaves; if they are needy, Allah will make them free from want out of His grace; and Allah is Ample-giving, Knowing.***)¹² Thus, Muhammad bin Ali bin Musa proposes to Ummul Fadhl the daughter of Abdullah al-Ma'moon and offers to her a dowry as much as the dowry of his grandmother Fatima the daughter of Muhammad; five hundred dirhams as horses. O Ameerul Mo'mineen, do you accept to marry your daughter to me with this dowry?'

Al-Ma'moon said, 'Yes, I marry her to you, O Abu Ja'far, with the mentioned dowry. Do you accept the marriage?'

Imam al-Jawad (a.s) said, 'Yes, I accept it and am satisfied with it.'¹³

Al-Ma'moon ordered the attendants with their different ranks and classes to have seats and not to leave the meeting. Then, tables were served for people to eat.¹⁴

Explaining The Question

Al-Ma'moon asked Imam Abu Ja'far al-Jawad (a.s) to explain the previous question that Yahya had asked him about. The answer of Imam al-Jawad (a.s) had been narrated in two ways. In the first way, al-Hasan bin Ali bin Shu'ba narrated, as in Tuhaf al-Uqool, that Imam al-Jawad (a.s) said,

'If a muhrim kills a game while being free from his ihram and the game is a grown up bird, he has to pay a sheep¹⁵ as penance. If he does that during his ihram, the penance is doubled. If he kills a chick while being free from ihram, he has to pay a lamb that is weaned and he does not have to pay its price because he is not in ihram. If he kills it in his ihram, he has to pay a lamb and the price of the chick. If the game is from beasts, he has to pay a cow or a camel for killing a zebra or an ostrich and if he cannot do that, he has to give food (a meal) to sixty poor persons and if he cannot do that too, he has to fast for eighteen days. If he kills a cow, he has to pay a cow and if cannot do that, he has to feed thirty poor persons, and if he cannot do that, he has to fast for nine days.

If the game he kills is an antelope, he has to pay a sheep and if he cannot, he has to feed ten poor

persons and if not, he has to fast for three days. If he kills the game while being in ihram, the penance is doubled as an offering to be brought to the Kaaba. He must slaughter the animal (of the penance) in Mina where people slaughter their sacrifices if he is in the great hajj and he must slaughter it in Mecca in the yard of the Kaaba if he is in the minor hajj. He should pay its price as charity so as the penance is doubled. In the same way, if he kills a rabbit or a fox, he has to slaughter a sheep and its price as charity.

If he kills a pigeon from the pigeons of the Kaaba, he has to pay a dirham as charity and buy some grains to the pigeons of the Kaaba with another dirham. For a young one half of a dirham is paid and for an egg a quarter of a dirham is paid. Whether a muhrim kills a game knowingly or unknowingly, intendedly or unintendedly he has to pay a penance for it. If a slave commits that, his master has to pay the penance. A child who is not adult yet, does not have to pay penance. If someone guides another one to a game and that game is killed, he too has to pay a penance. He, who kills a game (during his ihram) intendedly and insists on that, shall be punished in the afterlife even after paying the penance in this life.

A repentant one, after paying the penance, shall not be punished in the afterlife for that. If a muhrim kills a game in the night or he is obliged to do that, he does not have to pay a penance except if he intends to hunt whether in the night or the day; in this case he has to pay the penance. A muhrim in the hajj has to slaughter the animal (of penance) in Mina where people slaughter their sacrifices and a muhrim in the minor hajj has to slaughter the animal in Mecca.'

Al-Ma'moon ordered this explanation to be written down and narrated from Abu Ja'far al-Jawad (a.s). Then he turned to his relatives, who had denied marrying his daughter to Imam al-Jawad (a.s), and said to them, 'Can any one of you answer this question in this way?'

They said, 'No, by Allah we cannot even be the judge...O Ameerul Mo'mineen, you are more aware of him (of Imam al-Jawad) than we are.'

Al-Ma'moon said to them, 'Have you not known that the people of this house (Ahlul Bayt) are creatures unlike the rest of creatures? Have you not known that the messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) had paid homage to al-Hasan and al-Husayn while they were children yet and he had not paid homage to any child other than them? Have you not known that their father (al-Hasan and al-Husayn's father) Ali had believed in the messenger of Allah when he was just nine years old and Allah and His messenger had accepted his faith and no faith of a child other than him had been accepted, and the messenger of Allah had not pray Allah for a child other than him? Have you not known that they are a progeny one from the other and that which the last of them has (of knowledge and virtues) is as that which the first of them has had?'¹⁶

In the second way of the narration, Sheikh al-Mufeed mentioned that al-Ma'moon had said to Abu Ja'far (a.s), 'May I die for you! Would you please mention the jurisprudence of what you have detailed so that we would know and make use of it?'

Abu Ja'far (a.s) said, 'Yes, if a muhrim kills a game while being out of his ihram and the game is from grownup birds, he has to pay (slaughter) a sheep as penance and if he kills it during his ihram, the penance is doubled to him. If he kills a young bird when being out of his ihram, he has to pay a lamb that is weaned and if he kills it during his ihram, he has to pay a lamb and the price of the young bird he has killed. If the game being killed is from beasts such as a zebra, the penance is a cow and if it is an ostrich, the penance is a cow or a camel.

If it is a deer, the penance is a sheep. If he kills any of these animals during his ihram, the penance is doubled as offering to the Kaaba. If a muhrim kills an animal during the hajj, he has to slaughter the animal of penance in Mina and if he kills an animal during the minor hajj, he has to slaughter the animal of penance in Mecca. This penance must be carried out whether the muhrim who kills a game is aware or unaware of the verdicts. The muhrim who kills a game intendedly shall bear the sin of his doing even after paying the penance. A penance of a slave has to be paid by his master. There is no penance on children in this concern whereas it is obligatory on adults. A repentant person shall not be punished (for killing a game during ihram) in the hereafter while one insisting on his doing shall be punished then.'

The first narration is more detailed and comprehensive.

Imam Al-Jawad Asking Yahya

Al-Ma'moon asked Imam al-Jawad (a.s) to question Yahya bin Aktham. Imam al-Jawad (a.s) turned to Yahya and said to him, 'May I ask you?'

Yahay said politely, 'It is up to you, may I die for you! I may know the answer to your question; otherwise, I shall benefit from you.'

Imam al-Jawad (a.s) asked Yahay a question that was somehow like a riddle but Yahya could not answer it. When Imam al-Jawad (a.s) gave the answer clearly, the attendants were astonished at his intelligence while he was so young yet.

Al-Ma'moon said to his family, 'Can anyone of you answer this question with this answer or put forth such a question?'

They all said, 'No, by Allah! Ameerul Mo'mineen is more aware of what he sees.'[17](#)

Gifts On The Occasion Of Marriage

On the second day after concluding the bond of marriage, people came to the palace of al-Ma'moon. At the head there were the leaders of the army, the officials of the government and the other classes of people. They came to offer congratulations to Imam al-Jawad (a.s) and al-Ma'moon on this happy occasion. Al-Ma'moon ordered the donations and gifts to be brought. Three silver trays full of small balls of musk and saffron were brought. Inside the balls there were pieces of paper in which prizes of precious

donations were written. Al-Ma'moon ordered these balls to be scattered on his train and other gifts to be scattered on the leaders and the other attendants. People left taking with them precious prizes and gifts. And then, al- Ma'moon gave charities to all poor people.[18](#)

The Masses Honoring Imam Al-Jawad

During his residence in Baghdad, Imam al-Jawad (a.s) was surrounded with a halo of honoring and glorification and people gathered around him seeing in him a natural continuation of his pure fathers who had lit life with the essence of Islam and the truth of faith. When Imam al-Jawad (a.s) walked in the street, people lined up greeting him with takbir and tahlil and calling out, 'This is the son of Imam ar-Ridha'.

Al-Qassim bin Abdurrahman, who was a Zaydite, said, 'One day, I went to Baghdad. I saw people look forward and stop in crowds. I asked what that was and it was said to me that it was the son of ar-Ridha'. I said to myself, 'By Allah, I must see him.' He came riding on a mule. I cursed (with myself) those who believed in imamate where they said that Allah had made it obligatory to obey this man.

Imam al-Jawad looked at me, came towards me and said, 'O Qassim bin Abdurrahman, (***Is it a mortal man, alone among us, that we are to follow? Then indeed we should fall into error and madness.***)'. I was astonished when he knew my intention and then I turned to believe in his imamate.'[19](#)

His Lectures In Baghdad

Imam Abu Ja'far al-Jawad (a.s) exploited the period of his residence in Baghdad in giving lectures and teachings to charge the general intellect with the Islamic knowledge. He gave his precious lectures to the ulama and narrators in the yard of his house. His lectures were on different sciences and arts like Hadith, Tafsir, jurisprudence, theology and Usool, but concentrated more on jurisprudence.

His Travel To Yathrib

Imam al-Jawad (a.s) traveled to Yathrib after he had concluded the bond of marriage with Ummul Fadhl. He remained some years in Yathrib managing the affairs of the Alawids and helping the poor and needy. But he himself lived a simple life like his fathers. He did not live in luxury but in asceticism.

Jurisprudents, ulama and narrators of Hadith surrounded him taking from the springs of his pure knowledge and sciences. Ulama and narrators had narrated from him many sides of jurisprudence and other sciences as we have mentioned in the previous chapters.

His Wedding

When Imam al-Jawad (a.s) was fifteen years, he traveled to Baghdad to get married with Ummul Fadhl whom he had concluded the bond of marriage with before.

Al-Ma'moon was then in Tikrit. He went to him and al-Ma'moon received him with great honoring and respect. Al-Ma'moon ordered the wedding to be held. The marriage of Imam al-Jawad (a.s) with Ummul Fadhl (al-Ma'moon's daughter) took place in the house of Ahmed bin Yousuf that was at the bank of the Tigris. Imam al-Jawad (a.s) lived there until the season of the hajj and then he left this house.[20](#)

Congratulation

Delegations of the notable people of Baghdad and other towns came to Imam al-Jawad (a.s) to congratulate him on his marriage. From among those people was Muhammad bin Ali al-Hashimi who said,

'I went to Abu Ja'far in the next morning of his marriage to the daughter of al-Ma'moon. In the previous night I had some drug and therefore I was thirsty. I did not like to ask for water. Abu Ja'far looked at my face and said, 'I see you are thirsty.' I said, 'Yes, I am.' He said to one of the servants, 'O boy, bring us some water.' I said to myself, 'Now they will bring poisoned water.'

I felt distressed for that. The servant came with water. Abu Ja'far smiled at me and asked the servant to give him the water. He took the water and drank from it and then gave it to me and I drank. I remained long with him and felt thirsty. He asked for water and did as he did in the first time. I left him saying to myself, 'I think that Abu Ja'far knows what there is in one's mind as ar-Rafidha (the Shia) say.'[21](#)

Muhammad bin Ali feared for Imam al-Jawad (a.s) that the Abbasids might assassinate him through poison and that his relation with them through his marriage to their daughter would not prevent them from doing that because marrying their daughter to him was not out of good will.

From those who had come to congratulate Imam al-Jawad (a.s) on his marriage was Abu Hashim al-Ja'fari who said, 'The blessing of this day (the day of Imam al-Jawad's wedding) has been so great on us.'

Imam al-Jawad (a.s) said, 'O Abu Hashim, the blessings of Allah have been great in it.'

Abu Hashim ascribed the blessing to the day on which Imam al-Jawad (a.s) had got married, but the fact is not so because days do not give blessings but it is Allah, the Creator of the universe and the Giver of life, Who puts blessing in days.

Abu Hashim felt that his saying had something wrong. He said, 'O my master, what should I say about the day?'

Imam al-Jawad (a.s) said, 'You should say good so that you get it.'

Abu Hashim said, 'O my master, I will do so and nothing other than it.'

Days have no blessing or good to man but Allah gives that to whomever He wills from His people.

Imam al-Jawad (a.s) said, ‘Then, you shall be successful and shall not see except good.’

Leaving Baghdad

Imam al-Jawad (a.s) left Baghdad after his marriage with Ummul Fadhl. His family and relatives were with him. They went to Mecca to perform the hajj. The Abbasids were delighted when Imam al- Jawad (a.s) had left Baghdad, for they had great spite against him especially when they saw his great knowledge and virtues that spread among people everywhere in Baghdad though he was young yet. They feared that al-Ma'moon might entrust him with the caliphate as he had entrusted his father Imam ar-Ridha' (a.s) before...Imam al- Jawad (a.s) left Baghdad to live in Yathrib and to be away from the plots and spites of the Abbasids.

A Miracle

Historians and narrators mentioned that a miracle took place when Imam al-Jawad (a.s) was on his way from Baghdad to Yathrib. Sheikh al-Mufeed says,

‘When Abu Ja'far (a.s) left Baghdad towards Medina and Ummul Fadhl was with him, people went out escorting him. When he got to the street of the Gate of Kufa, he went to the house of al-Musayyab at the sunset. He went to the mosque to offer the prayer. In the Yard of the mosque there was a lote-tree. He asked for some water to make wudu'. He made wudu' at the roots of the lote-tree and went in to offer the prayers. When he finished the prayers, he went out and when he got to the lote-tree, people found it had good fruit. They ate from the fruit and found it sweet and with no stones. People farewelled Imam al-Jawad (a.s) and he left.’²²

Allah has endowed the infallible imams of Ahlul Bayt (a.s) with charismata and miracles as He has endowed their grandfather the messenger of Allah (a.s) so that people believe in them and resort to them during ease and misfortunes and make them as the means between them and Allah.

Ummul Fadhl Complains Of Imam Al-Jawad

Allah had willed to deprive Ummul Fadhl of offspring from Imam al- Jawad (a.s); therefore, he got married to one of his religious maids and Allah granted him offspring from her. Ummul Fadhl became so angry and wrote a letter to her father complaining of what Imam al- Jawad (a.s) had done. Al-Ma'moon replied to his daughter saying,

‘My daughter, we have not married you to Abu Ja'far to prohibit him from lawful things. Do not go back to what you have mentioned.’²³

Ummul Fadhl remained spiteful towards Imam al-Jawad (a.s) until she assassinated him with poison as some historians say.

The Annual Salary Of Imam Al-Jawad

Al-Ma'moon paid a salary of one million dirhams to Imam al-Jawad (a.s) a year.²⁴ Imam al-Jawad (a.s) did not spend these monies and the legal dues that came to him on his private affairs, but he spent them openhandedly on the poor and the needy of the Alawids and other than the Alawids.

The Death Of Al-Ma'moon

Al-Ma'moon went from Baghdad to Taratoss²⁵ for recreation and relaxation. He admired Taratoss for its beautiful, natural scenes. He walked in some of its parks and gardens and chose a beautiful place that was full of trees with flowing water and nice weather. He ordered his companions to stop at that place. They served food and sat to eat. Al-Ma'moon said to his companions, 'My self asks me for fresh, ripe dates.' While they were busy talking, they heard the sound of the caravan of mail coming from Baghdad. There were four containers of fresh dates with the caravan. He ate from those dates and felt that his inevitable end was near. He said, 'I have possessed the world. Everything in it has been subjected to me and I have reached my aims.'

He said, 'It is the last time I eat dates.' And it was as he said. He became so ill and his state turned worse day after another. He resided in the house of Khaqan al-Muflahi, the servant of ar-Rasheed. When he felt he was about to die, he ordered the servant to spread ashes for him and put him on them. He began tossing about on the ashes while saying, 'O You, Whose kingdom does not disappear, have mercy on one whose kingdom has disappeared.'²⁶

He began struggling with death. There was some man near him to dictate to him the Shahada. Ibn Masswayh, the physician, was present. He said to the dictator, 'Let him alone! He, in this state, does not differentiate between his God and Mani...'

Al-Ma'moon opened his eyes because these words had stung him and he wanted to assault ibn Masswayh but he was unable to talk.²⁷ He remained alive no long after that. He was forty-nine years when he died. The period of his rule was twenty years, five months and eighteen days.²⁸

Imam al-Jawad (a.s) was then more than twenty-two years. He, as historians says, waited for the death of al-Ma'moon impatiently because he knew that he himself would not live after al-Ma'moon but a little and then he would leave to the better world beside his Lord and be away from this world that was full of seditions and falsehood.

He said, 'Deliverance is thirty months after the death of al- Ma'moon.' He lived no more than thirty months after the death of al- Ma'moon and then he left to his Merciful Lord.

Here, we would like to show that al-Ma'moon was the best political and scientific personality of the Abbasid caliphs. He could defeat the most difficult, political crises that faced him and were about to do away with his rule. He was so clever that he had curried favor with the Alawids and their followers,

instructed the media to spread the virtues of Imam Ali (a.s) and his preference to all the companions, given Fadak back to the Alawids, appointed Imam ar-Ridha' (a.s) as his heir apparent and married his daughter to Imam al-Jawad (a.s). He did not do that out of faith and sincerity to Ahlul Bayt (a.s), but to know the secret movements and the political parties that worked secretly to overthrow the Abbasid rule and take the caliphate back to the Alawids.

Al-Ma'moon, through these acts, could know the political activities against the Abbasid rule. The Abbasid caliphs before him made every effort to know that but they failed. They followed every way in punishing the Alawids and their followers severely and killing them brutally but they got no information about them and could not discover their political activities.

- [1.](#) Al-Iqd al-Fareed, vol.3 p.254.
- [2.](#) The Arabic Civilization by Jack S. Risler, p.108.
- [3.](#) Fadak was a very vast, fertile village that the Prophet (s) had donated to his daughter Fatima (s). It was rich of date-Palms and other fruitful trees.
- [4.](#) Noor al-Absar, p.146, Akhbar ad-Duwal, p.116, al-Ittihof bihubil Ashraf, p.64, Bahr al-Ansab, vol.2 p.19.
- [5.](#) He wanted Imam al-Jawad (s) to drink with him and to enter with him in the filed of debauchery (far be he above all that).
- [6.](#) Usool al-Kafi, vol.1 p.494–495.
- [7.](#) Bihar al-Anwar and other sources.
- [8.](#) Al-Irshad, p.359–360.
- [9.](#) A muhrim is one in the state of ritual consecration at performing the hajj.
- [10.](#) Takbir is saying “Allahu Akbar: Allah is great” and tahlil is saying “la ilaha illallah: there is no god but Allahz”.
- [11.](#) Al-Irshad, p.361, Wassa'il ash-Shia, vol.9 p.187.
- [12.](#) Qur'an, 24:32.
- [13.](#) Al-Irshad, p.361–362, Wassa'il ash-Shia, vol.8 p.115.
- [14.](#) Al-Irshad, p.362.
- [15.](#) To slaughter it and distribute its meat among the needy.
- [16.](#) Tuhaf al-Uqool, p.452–453, Wassa'il ash-Shia, vol.9 p.188.
- [17.](#) Al-Irshad, p.363.
- [18.](#) Al-Irshad, p.363, Wassa'il ash-Shia, vol.14 p.519.
- [19.](#) Ithbat al-Hudat, vol.6 p.19.
- [20.](#) Tareekh Baghdad by Ahmed Tayfor, vol.6 p.33 (a manuscript in the Kashiful Ghita' Library), Tareekh at-Tabari, vol.1 p.623.
- [21.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol.12 p.112.
- [22.](#) Al-Irshad, p.364, Akhbar ad-Duwal, p.116, Wassa'il ash-Shia, vol.4 p.1059.
- [23.](#) Al-Irshad, p.364.
- [24.](#) Shatharat ath-Thahab, vol.2 p.48, al-Ibar fee Khabar man Ghabar, vol.1 p.380, an-Nujoom az-Zahira, vol.2 p.231, al-Wafi bil-Wafiyat, vol.4 p.105, Mir'at al-Jinan, vol.2 p.80, Mir'at az-Zaman, vol.6 p.105.
- [25.](#) A village in Sham (Syria).
- [26.](#) Al-Anba' fee Tareekh al-Khulafa', p.104.
- [27.](#) Tareekh ibnul Atheer, vol.5 p.227.
- [28.](#) At-Tanbeeh wel Ishraf, p.404.

<https://www.al-islam.org/life-imam-muhammad-al-jawad-baqir-shareef-al-qurashi/age-al-mamoon#comment-0>