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From His High Ideals

The personality of Imam Abu Ja'far al-Jawad (a.s) possessed all the high ideals and lofty examples that any human being would take pride in. Here are some of these ideals:

Imamate

Imam al-Jawad (a.s) assumed the imamate and the general religious leadership when he was just seven years and some months in age, as Jesus Christ (a.s) had assumed the prophethood when he was even younger than this in age.

Imamate is based on a deep philosophy that aims at exalting the position of man and administering the truth and justice that man seeks. And here, we will briefly digress to discuss some affairs of imamate.

Its Goals

Imamate takes great care to achieve its actual goals, under the shadows of which man can live happily and peacefully. From among the goals of imamate are the following:

- 1. Administering justice everywhere, social and political alike, so that the nation, under the shadow of imamate, will not face any social or individual injustice and no individual or community will be preferred to another for all should be equal before justice and the truth. By administering this pure justice, man can become the deputy of Allah on His earth and the nation will not find any crookedness in its path.
- 2. Rising against injustice and tyranny, resisting oppression and preventing the control of the strong over the weak; the Shia have undoubtedly undertaken this aspect. They have led successive revolutions against injustice and aggression and have fought the oppressive powers. The heads of their chiefs and imams have been raised on spears, forever illuminating the path of freedom and dignity.

Mo'awiya1 had a notable group of the Shia killed, among whom was Amr bin al-Hamq al-Khuza'iy, a propagandist for truth, freedom and struggle. After being killed, his head was raised on a spear and

circulated in the towns and countries, illuminating for people the way of struggle. Yazeed the son of Mo'awiya had the pure progeny of the Prophet (a.s) killed and their heads raised on spears as they were paraded through different towns. These and other revolutions have given Islam eternal glories throughout history. They have forced the world to recognize that Islam is a religion of struggle and revolt against injustice, oppression and tyranny.

The great revolutions that rose in the history of Islam rose not but by the inspiration of the imamate, whose shining principles occupied the hearts of those revolutionaries who mined the palaces and castles of the unjust and the tyrants with bombs that tore down all signs of their pride and arrogance.

- 3. Protecting the economy of the nation and not spending from the Treasury except to serve the public welfare, develop the economical resources, increase the individual income and reform the general economy to remove poverty, which is the equivalent of disbelief. The ruler and the other officers of the government have no right to meddle with the powers and properties of the state or to unlawfully take something for themselves or their relatives. The main cause of the revolution that overthrew the government of Othman, the chief of the Umayyad family, was the meddling of the Umayyads with the wealth of the state and seizing it for themselves and their followers.
- 4. Spreading faith in Allah, upon which the powers of good and peace on earth are based; when faith in Allah roots deeply inside a man, it becomes impossible for him to commit any injustice or oppression against others. Rather, the man becomes a source of mercy and good to others.
- 5. Purifying the souls and hearts and planting noble qualities and virtues in them so that doing good and avoiding evil may become one of their elements and constituents, and consequently the goals of humanity can be achieved.
- 6. Spreading peace and security and removing all kinds of disturbances and troubles, and thus, individuals may live peacefully, without feeling that fear follows them or terror chases them, and a sheep can live beside a wolf without fearing or being cautious of it.

These are some of the goals of the imamate in which the Shia believe and which is the higher base for the development of mankind in all stages of history.

The Qualities Of The Imam

An imam must have high qualities and noble ideals such as:

Knowledge

The Shia unanimously agree that an imam must be incomparable in his abundant knowledge of sciences and he must be the most aware of the people of his time in the affairs of the Sharia and the verdicts of religion. He must be aware of the political and administrative affairs and other affairs regarding what

concerns the people. As regards the evidences for this, they are so clear that no one can deny or hide them.

The first imam, Ameerul Mo'mineen Ali bin Abu Talib (a.s), the master of the pure progeny of the Prophet (a.s), established many fields of knowledge. They were thirty-two in number, as al- Aqqad2 has said. Over fourteen centuries ago, he was informing people of the technological development of this age. He said, "A time will come to people when the people in the West will be able to see the people in the East, and the people in the East will be able to see the people in the West."

He also said, "A time will come to people when the people in the West will be able to hear the people in the East, and the people in the East will be able to hear the people in the West." And this has been verified with the inventions of the radio and the television.

He also said, "A time will come to people when iron will move." This has also come true with the inventions of the car, the train and other things. Imam Ali (a.s) talked about many things like this, and our readers can find them in different books such as al-Ghayba by at-Toossi, Bihar al-Anwar by al-Majlisi and other books that have been written on this subject.

Imam as–Sadiq (a.s), a miracle of knowledge and intellect in the earth, talked about pollution in space and in the seas and its serious harms against man. He talked about the existence of life on some planets. It was he who established the bases of anatomy, especially the organs of man and talked about the wonders inside man's body and the wonderful systems such as the digestive system and other systems. All this has been mentioned in the book Tawheed al– Mufadhdhal, which is a wonderful tradition of Imam as–Sadiq (a.s) as narrated by al–Mufadhdhal.

Imam as–Sadiq (a.s) is considered as the first establisher of physics and chemistry, for he instructed their bases to his disciple Jabir bin Hayyan, the pride of the East and the pioneer of development in the earth.

Al-Jawad (a.s) proved what the Shia believe about the imamate. Though he was very young, he was skilled in all the different sciences. He was asked by the ulama and the jurisprudents about everything, and he answered all of them, and this caused Shiism to spread everywhere at that time and led most of the ulama to believe in imamate.

Many ulama, jurisprudents and narrators met with Imam al–Jawad (a.s) while he was seven years and some months of age. They surrounded him to drink from the spring of his knowledge. They narrated from him answers to many philosophical and theological questions. This is the clearest evidence of the Shia's belief in imamate.

Infallibility

There is another very important quality that the Shia believe inherent to their imams. It is the infallibility of

the imams and their immunity from entering into any field of sin and unlawfulness. This is a clear fact with no room for doubt. He who ponders over the lives of the pure imams will find this fact very clear.

Imam Ali (a.s) has said, "By Allah, if I were to be given the seven regions with all that is under their spheres just to disobey Allah by depriving an ant of a husk of a barley grain, I would not do so." Is infallibility other than this?!

If Imam Husayn (a.s) had made peace with the Umayyads and submitted to their policies, he would not have faced the misfortunes and disasters of Kerbala. Infallibility was the most prominent quality of the imams. They had great faith and infinite powers of piety that protected them from committing any sort of sin.

Infallibility, in this frame, does not contradict knowledge and is not irregular to the laws of life. He who denies the infallibility of the imams of Ahlul Bayt (a.s) will deviate from the truth and incline towards the untruth.

His Worship

Imam al–Jawad (a.s) was the truest worshipper who performed worships at his time, the most reverent to Allah and the sincerest in obeying Him, like all the pure imams from his fathers had been before him and had devoted their lives to Allah and done all that might take them closer to Allah. The forms of his worships were as follows:

His Offering Recommended Worships (Nafila)

Imam al-Jawad (a.s) used to offer a lot of recommended worships (nawafil).

Narrators of traditions have reported that he would offer two rak'as (units of prayer), in each of which he would recite the sura of al-Fatiha (1) and the sura of al-Ikhlaas (112) seventy times.4

He would offer a lot of worship in the month of Rajab. Ar-Rayyan bin as-Salt said, "When Abu Ja'far the second was in Baghdad, he fasted on the middle and the twenty-seventh of Rajab and all his servants fasted with him. He ordered us to offer a prayer that was twelve rak'as.

In each rak'a we had to recite the sura of al–Fatiha and another sura, and when we finished the prayer, we recited the suras of al–Fatiha, al–Ikhlass, al–Falaq (113) and an–Naas (114) four times each, and *la ilaha illallahu wallahu akbar, subhanallah wel hamdulillah, wa la hawla wa la quwwata illabillah al–aliy al–adheem* four times." 6

Imam al-Jawad (a.s) said, "In Rajab there is a night that is better than all that the sun rises on: it is the night of the twenty- seventh." He mentioned a special prayer to be offered that night.7

His Hajj

Imam Abu Ja'far al–Jawad (a.s) performed the hajj many times. Al–Hasan bin Ali al–Kufi narrated some of Imam al–Jawad's worships during the hajj. He said, "I saw Abu Ja'far the second (a.s) in 215 (or 225) AH bid farewell to the House (the Kaaba)...he circumambulated the House and kissed the Yemeni Corner in every turn. In the seventh turn, he kissed the corner and the Black Rock and rubbed his hand (over the Rock) and then rubbed his face with his hand. Then, he came to the Temple (of Abraham) and offered a prayer of two rak'as behind it. He went to the rear of the Kaaba, removed his dress from his abdomen and stayed long supplicating Allah.

Then, he went out from the gate of al-Hannatin and left. In 219 AH I saw him bid farewell to the House in the night. He kissed the Yemeni Corner and the Black Rock in every turn. In the seventh turn, he went to the rear of the Kaaba near the Yemeni Corner and on the rectangular rock. He removed the dress from his abdomen, kissed the Rock and rubbed on it. He went to the Temple, offered prayer behind it and then he left and did not come back to the House. He stayed at the rear of the Kaaba (al-Multazam) as much as the period of the circumambulation of some of our companions who circumambulated seven or eight turns..."8

Ali bin Mahziyar narrated, 'I saw Abu Ja'far the second (a.s) in the night of ziyarah (visit) make the circumambulation of women and offer prayer behind the Temple (of Abraham). Then, he entered the well of Zamzam and ladled some water with the bucket. He drank some and pour some over some of his body...one of our companions told me that he had seen him (Imam al–Jawad) in the next year do the same thing.'9

This detailed description of narrators is because the actions of the imams are from the Sunna that the Shia follow in their worship.

His Supplications

Imam al-Jawad (a.s) had many supplications showing the extent of his devotedness to Allah the Almighty.

From among his supplications is this one: "O You Who has no like or an example, You are Allah; there is no god but You. There is no creator save You. You annihilate the creatures and You remain. You are patient with whoever disobeys You. In forgiveness is Your satisfaction..." 10

Once, Muhammad bin al–Fudhayl had written to him asking to teach him a supplication. Imam al–Jawad (a.s) wrote to him, "In the morning and in the evening you say: 'Allah, Allah is my Lord, the Beneficent, the Merciful. I do not associate with Him anything' and if you add to this more, it will be good for you. You supplicate Allah with this supplication to satisfy your need because it is for everything by the will of Allah the Almighty and Allah does whatever He likes."11

The supplications of the infallible imams show the essence of sincerity and obedience to Allah. They had devoted themselves to Allah and His love had been impressed in their feelings and emotions and so they were wholeheartedly devoted when supplicated Him.

His Asceticism

Being ascetic in this life was one of the most prominent morals of the pure imams of Ahlul Bayt (a.s). They turned away from the pleasures of this life and did all that might take them closer to Allah.

Imam Ali (a.s), the pioneer of the great justice in the earth, during his caliphate wore the coarsest clothes and ate the coarsest foods. He did not take any gold or silver for himself, did not collect wealth or build houses. In the light of this shining conduct all the pure imams walked. They all were ascetic in this life and they turned away from its pleasures.

Imam al–Jawad (a.s) was in the prime of youth when al–Ma'moon gave him abundant monies about one million dirhams besides the legal dues that came to him from the Shia who believed in his imamate and the entailed endowments in Qum and other places, but he did not spend anything of those monies on his private affairs. He spent them on the poor and the needy.

Al-Husayn al-Mukari saw Imam al-Jawad (a.s) in Baghdad while being surrounded by honoring and glorifying by the official and public milieus. He thought with himself that Imam al-Jawad (a.s) would not go back to his homeland in Yathrib and he would reside in Baghdad where he lived at ease and luxury. Imam al-Jawad (a.s) knew Husayn's intention and so he went near him and said, 'O Husayn, the bread of barley and the ground salt in the sanctum (Medina) of my grandfather the messenger of Allah is more beloved to me than what you see me in...'12

Imam al–Jawad (a.s) did not like the means of luxury and ease the state had given to him. He was like his fathers who had divorced the worldly life and turned towards Allah thinking of nothing other than Him.

His Generosity

Imam Abu Ja'far (a.s) was one of the most generous and open– handed people. He was called al–Jawad (the generous) because of his excessive generosity, open–handedness, charitableness and kindness to people. Historians mentioned many scenes of his generosity.

1. One year, Ahmed bin Hadeed and some of his companions set out to perform the hajj. On their way, some robbers attacked them and robbed all the monies and luggage they had. When they arrived in Yathrib, Ahmed bin Hadeed went to Imam al–Jawad (a.s) and told him about what had happened to him and to his companions. Imam al–Jawad (a.s) gave him some clothes and a sum of money to be distributed among his companions. This sum of money was as much as that which had been robbed from them. 13 Imam al–Jawad (a.s) had saved them from their distress and recompensed them for what had been taken from them.

2. Al-Utbi narrated that one of the Alawids loved a bondmaid in Yathrib and he could not pay her price. He told Imam al-Jawad (a.s) of that. Imam al-Jawad (a.s) asked him about her keeper and he told who he was. Some days later, the Alawid man asked about the bondmaid and it was said to him that she had been sold. He asked who the buyer was and the answer was "we do not know". Imam al-Jawad (a.s) had bought the bondmaid secretly. The Alawid man was so upset and distressed. He hurried to Imam al-Jawad (a.s) crying out, 'The bondmaid was sold.'

Imam al-Jawad (a.s) smiled at him and said, 'Do you know who has bought her?'

The man said, 'No, I do not.'

Imam al–Jawad (a.s) took the man with him and went to the small village where the bondmaid was there. He took the man to a house and ordered him to come in. The man refused to go into the house because he did not know whose house it was. Imam al–Jawad (a.s) had just bought the house recently. Imam al–Jawad (a.s) insisted on the man to come in. They both came into the house and when they saw the bondmaid, Imam al–Jawad (a.s) asked the man, 'Do you know her?'

The man said, 'Yes, I do!'

Imam al-Jawad (a.s) said to him, 'She, the house with all its furniture, the garden and its yield are yours. You can live with the bondmaid.' The man's heart was filled with delight and he was confused how to thank Imam al-Jawad (a.s).14

These are some of the plentiful news historians have mentioned about the generosity of Imam al–Jawad (a.s). Narrators and historians say that the generosity of Imam al–Jawad (a.s) and his charity had included even the animals.

Muhammad bin al-Waleed al-Kirmani narrated, 'One day, I had a meal with Abu Ja'far the second (a.s). When I finished eating and the dishes were lifted, the servant went to pick the crumbs that were on the ground. Abu Ja'far (a.s) said to him, 'Leave whatever there is in the desert even if it is a leg of a sheep and pick whatever on the ground inside the house!' Is Imam al-Jawad (a.s) ordered his servant to leave the food that was in the desert for birds and beasts.

Doing Good To People

Being benevolent and merciful to people was another prominent quality of Imam al–Jawad (a.s). Historians mentioned many stories on his benevolence which we mention some here:

Ahmed bin Zakariyya as-Saydalani narrated that a man from bani<u>16</u> Hanifa from Sajistan had said, "I accompanied Abu Ja'far in the year when he went to perform the hajj at the beginning of the rule of al-Mu'tassim. <u>17</u> I said to him when we were at the meal, 'May I die for you! Our wali believes in you and loves you. On me there is a land tax to his diwan. If you please, may I die for you, to write to him to be

kind to me.' He said, 'I do not know him.' I said, 'May I die for you! He is one of your lovers and followers and your letter to him will benefit me."

Imam al–Jawad (a.s) responded to him and wrote this letter: "The bearer of my letter has mentioned the good beliefs of you. You will not be rewarded for your deeds except those which you do correctly. Do good to your brothers and know that Allah the Almighty will ask you about everything even to the weight of an atom and a grain of mustard...'

When the man went back to Sajistan, he found that the wali al-Husayn bin Abdullah an-Naysaboori, who knew about the letter that Imam al-Jawad (a.s) had sent to him, had come to receive him from two leagues before he would arrive. The wali took the letter and kissed it. He considered that as an honor to him. He asked the man about his need and the man told him.

He said to the man, 'Do not give me any tax as long as I am in my position' Then he asked him about his family and children to know their number and then he gave them presents. The man did not pay the tax as long as the wali was alive, besides that the wali did not stop his gifts to him. All that was due to the blessing and kindness of Imam al–Jawad (a.s).18

His Comforting The People

Imam al-Jawad (a.s) comforted people in their joys and sorrows. Historians said that Ibrahim bin Muhammad al-Hamadani had received a grievance from the wali and he wrote to Imam al-Jawad (a.s) telling him about what had happened to him.

Imam al–Jawad (a.s) felt pain and replied to him by this letter: "May Allah hasten your victory over him, who has wronged you, and save you from his burden (troubles). Be certain that the help of Allah will come soon inshallah and the good afterlife will be yours...and praise Allah too much' 19

He often comforted afflicted and distressed people. Once, he sent a letter to a man, who had been afflicted by the death of his son. He said in the letter: "In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. You mentioned your distress of losing your son and mentioned that he was the most beloved one among your children to you. Thus, Allah the Almighty takes from children and other than children the purest one that a family has, so that the reward of the afflicted ones is increased. May Allah increase your reward, comfort you and strengthen your heart, He is Mighty, Powerful. May Allah give you a descendant soon and I hope that He has done so inshallah...'20 This emotional letter showed the extent of the sympathy of Imam al–Jawad (a.s) with people and his comfort to them in their joys and sorrows.

A man of the Shia wrote to Imam al–Jawad (a.s) complaining to him the pain and the sorrow that occupied him after the death of his son and the imam replied to him in a letter of comfort saying: "Have you not known that Allah the Almighty chooses from the properties and the children of a believer the most precious ones to reward him in return?"21

Imam al–Jawad (a.s) participated with people in their joys and distresses, comforted them in their misfortunes and disasters and helped the poor and the week. By this benevolence and charity Imam al–Jawad (a.s) had occupied the hearts and the feelings and made people love him and be sincere to him in the full sense of the word.

These were some of the values and ideals of Imam al–Jawad (a.s) that had raised him to the highest position like his fathers who had made the springs of knowledge and wisdom overflow everywhere in the earth and raised the torch of guidance and faith.

Imam al–Jawad (a.s) was one of the most wonderful examples of virtue and perfection in the earth. People had never seen at his time an equal to him in knowledge, piety, devotedness and religiousness. He was unique in his virtues and morals which were the secret of his imamate.

The Islamic circles admired Imam al–Jawad (a.s) and wondered at his talents and intellectual and scientific abilities which were infinite. These talents and abilities have confirmed the faith and certainty of the Shia and their belief that the imam must be the most aware, most knowledgeable, most virtuous and most pious of the people of his time.

- 1. The first ruler of the Umayyad state.
- 2. He is an Egyptian author
- 3. Kerbala is a place in Iraq where Imam Husayn (s), his family and his companions were martyred at the hands of the Umayyad army on Ashura (the tenth of Muharram) in the famous event of Islamic history.
- 4. Wassa'il ash-Shia, vol. 5 p.298.
- <u>5.</u> la ilaha illallah (there is no god but Allah) wallahu akbar (and Allah is great), subhanallah (glory be to Allah) wel hamdulillah (and praise be to Allah), wa la hawla wa la quwwata illabillah al-aliy al-adheem (there is no power and strength save in Allah, the High, the Great).
- 6. Wassa'il ash-Shia, vol. 5 p.243.
- 7. Ibid., p.242.
- 8. Wassa'il ash-Shia, vol. 10 p.232.
- 9. Ibid., vol.9 p.515.
- 10. A'yan ash-Shia, vol.2,4 p.245.
- 11. Uyun Akhbar ar-Ridha', vol. 2 p.534.
- 12. Ithbat al-Hudat, vol.6 p. 185.
- 13. Al-Wafi bil-Wafiyyat, vol.4 p. 105, Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 12 p. 109.
- 14. Mir'at az-Zamaan, vol.6 p.105, a manuscript in Ameerul Mo'mineen

Library.

- 15. Wassa'il ash-Shia, vol. 6 p.499.
- 16. Bani means "the family of" or "the tribe of".
- 17. One of the Abbasid caliphs
- 18. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 12 p. 129.
- 19. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 12 p. 126
- 20. Wassa'il ash-Shia, vol. 2 p.874.
- 21. Wassa'il ash-Shia, vol. 2 p.893

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