



In the name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the  
Most Merciful

Imam Jafar as-Sadiq(as):  
Enlightening Muslims through Humility

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When asked to use the Ahlul Bayt to help alleviate major issues in Islam and in the world today, many would respond by tackling problems such as terrorism, poverty, and fascist governments. The majority of Muslims see problems that are rooted outside of the Ummah and are infiltrating it from the exterior. However, the Muslim community is plagued by many simple issues, such as character flaws, that are hugely detrimental to the way the world views Islam. As the flag bearers of Islam in America, we have a huge responsibility to Allah (swt) and to our fellow Muslims. It is on our shoulders to display an accurate and positive portrayal of Islam to counter the negative propaganda being used to incite hatred towards such a beautiful religion of peace. Forty-six percent of Americans polled in 2006 had an unfavorable view of Islam, meaning Muslims are not living up to their duty. Muslims have to do their best to perfect their character and behavior in order to follow their religion in their daily affairs. The Ahlul Bayt are the perfect role models for how we should behave and treat others. Imam Jafar as-Sadiq (as) demonstrated specific examples of ideal behavior and is a perfect person to study when trying to perfect oneself.

Imam Jafar's (as) knowledge was not only limited to religion and Allah (swt), but was unparalleled in the fields of math and science. His experiences gave him an intricate view of the world around him making him better able to lead the Ummah and help solve their problems. Therefore, Muslims should abide by the teachings of this incredibly knowledgeable scholar who felt it was his responsibility to help enhance the quality of

Muslims. Imam Jafar (as) said, “Ignorance is in 3 things: arrogance, the intensity of dispute, and the ignorance about God.” Muslims today display signs of arrogance and lack humility, things which, as Imam Jafar (as) said, prove one’s ignorance. Of course, self confidence is very necessary and encouraged in Islam, however, too much of it can make a person conceited. The Muslim community has been plagued with many instances of arrogant behavior. For example, many Muslims will not associate with other Muslims because they believe their race is superior to the other’s race. In Allah’s eyes, no one is exceptionally dear to God because of his race, ethnicity, physical abilities, or other corporeal characteristics. Instead, Allah (swt) judges people by their deeds and their faith. Why, then, can a practicing Muslim not sit next to someone in a mosque because of their nationality? If Muslims want people of other religions to respect, tolerate, and understand them, they have to begin by viewing all others equally, and treating them with the utmost respect. The Ahlul Bayt never discriminated against anyone based on the color of their skin, their background, or even their religion, and never offensively exaggerated their own importance.

Many Muslims today have escalated opinions of themselves and hold egotistical thoughts which lead to the put down of others. A person may not act arrogantly, but may still possess haughty thoughts which can lead to certain actions meant to mar other people. For instance, it may be the holy month of Ramadan and a Muslim may be fasting in a workplace with many non-Muslims. One of those non-Muslims may ask about the reasoning behind fasting and that Muslim may think arrogantly, “Why should I explain this? He’s too stupid to understand,” or “It doesn’t matter if he understands it or not.” This type of thinking is very detrimental to Islam and is an extreme hindrance for

Muslims worldwide. As Muslims are trying to help non-Muslims understand Islam and to further tolerate and respect it, it is necessary to be perceptive and willing to deal with any questions or comments. Simply explaining the reasoning behind Islamic worship opens many people's minds and helps get rid of many prejudices or stereotypes. The Ahlul Bayt believed no question is a stupid question and strove to answer every person's inquiry clearly and thoroughly. Someone once asked Imam Jafar (as) to show him God. Of course, this seems silly because as humans it is impossible to see Allah (swt) Himself. However, Imam Jafar (as) responded patiently and to the point. He said, "Look at the sun." The man said he could not because the sun is much too bright. Imam Jafar (as) replied, "If you cannot see the created, how can you expect to see the Creator?" No matter what a person may ask, it is vital to remain humble and stay as far away as possible from arrogant thoughts.

Allah (swt) sees it very important that money and materialistic things do not prevent a united Ummah. It is incredibly imperative for Muslims not to judge people by the clothes they are wearing, or the amount of money they make. Allah (swt) makes this apparent during the Tawaf of the Holy Kaa'ba during Hajj where everyone is forced to wear the Ihram. Allah (swt) is making it apparent that the vast expanse of people doing Tawaf are all exactly the same, and in worship of Allah (swt). This significant lesson should be implemented by Muslims in their lives and their view of others. Instead of acting arrogantly towards someone who may make less money or not dress as nice as them, Muslims should treat all equally, especially if the other party is pious and humble.

Another aspect of an arrogant person is the thought that everyone and everything else is meant to serve that person. Some Muslims believe that they are better than other

people because they are more “religious” and, therefore, believe that others should cater to their needs. It is narrated, “I saw Imam Jafar as-Sadiq (as) wearing rough dress and he was working in a garden like an ordinary laborer and perspiring all over. I said to him ‘Oh, the son of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) allow me to work for you.’ He said, ‘I love working for my livelihood and to taste the hardship of the burning heat of the sun like others.’” The Imam, which exceeded all people of his time in piety and faithfulness, never depended on anyone for his livelihood and never expected anyone to do him favors. He is an ideal role model for Muslims today who may need to redirect their perspective to become centered more on God and not themselves. Imam Jafar (as) is the quintessence of humility and piety and proved that no Muslim should depend on others for a living, or any other favor. Those who are dedicated solely to themselves cannot devote their lives to serving Allah (swt). As the Argentinean poet, Jorge Luis Borges has said, “...the image of the Lord has been replaced by a mirror.”

If Muslims want to avoid being ignorant individuals, it is essential that they be humble and erase all traces of arrogance. By acting according to their religion, Muslims will show the world what Islam is truly about. Imam Jafar (as) is the perfect person to follow and imitate when trying to portray Islam in a positive light. His humility, kindness, and piety attracted all types of people towards him. The followers of Islam need to weigh the outcome of their actions and use their relationship with Allah (swt) to create a better relationship with the people around them. Only when Muslims have established a view of equality amongst all people, can they establish a connection with a world that embraces Islam. By implementing the model of Imam Jafar as-Sadiq (as) in our everyday

lives, we can bring joy to the hearts of our guides, the Ahlul Bayt, and gain the abundant blessings of our supreme leader, Allah (swt).

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