(.The Role Imam Muhammad Taqi (A.S

Imam Muhammad Taqi (A.S.) is also known as Abu Ja'ffar meaning 'the father of Ja'ffar', and among his titles, the most popular ones are: Al-Jawad meaning 'the most generous' and Al-Taqi meaning 'the pious one'.

Our 9th Imam (A.S.) assumed the role of Imamate at a very young age. Some historians believe he (A.S.) was 7 years and some say he (A.S.) was 9 years of age.

However, in the matters of Prophethood and Imamat – age carries no value and this was made clear by Imam ar-Reza (A.S.) during his lifetime.

[One day, a companion asked Imam ar-Reza (A.S.), "If something happens (to you), whom shall we refer?" Imam (A.S.) said, "To my son Abu Ja'ffar". Imam al-Jawaad (A.S.) was still a child. So the man said, "I think he is still very young".

Imam ar-Reza (A.S.) replied, "Allah sent Jesus, the son of Mary as a prophet though he was younger than Abu Ja'ffar will be when he becomes the Imam".] (Hayaat al-Imam Muhammad al-Jawad)

What the Imam (A.S.) implied was that Allah (SWT) chose Jesus as a prophet and gave him knowledge while he was just a child and younger in age than Imam al-Jawaad (A.S.). Prophethood and Imamat are from one and the same source. Allah (SWT) does not see who is young or old, rather He (SWT) entrusts him with this responsibility whom He (SWT) likes!

Knowledge in Childhood

Indeed the signs of Imamate were evident in Imam al-Jawaad (A.S.) from his childhood.

[One day in Baghdad, some children were busy playing on a street. Among them was our 9th Imam (A.S.). Suddenly the children saw Mamoon ar-Rasheed, the Abbasid ruler passing by with his soldiers. The children quickly dispersed from that place. However, our Imam (A.S.) did not run away, rather he (A.S.) stood at his place. When Mamoon arrived at that spot, he looked at the young boy and asked,

"Haven't you recognized me? Why didn't you move from this place?" The young child replied, "The path is not narrow that it would become wider by moving aside, nor have I committed any crime that I should run away from you. Moreover, I do not think that you are the sort who would punish someone who is innocent". This hit Mamoon very hard. He stared at the handsome and illuminated face of this young child for sometime; and was wonderstruck. He realized that this child couldn't be an ordinary child so he asked, "Tell me what is your name?" The child said, "I am Muhammad".

"Whose son are you?" asked Mamoon. The child replied, "I am the son of Ali ibn Musa ar-Reza (A.S.)". When Mamoon heard this, he praised the 8th Imam (A.S.) and left.]

However, the Incident does not end here.

[After this brief meeting with our Imam (A.S.), Mamoon proceeded to a nearby forest for hunting. There, he released his eagle, which flew and returned after a while with a small live fish in its beak. Mamoon was quite surprised by this. As he returned and passed by the same spot where he had met our Imam (A.S.), he found this young child again at the same place. So he halted and asked him, "O Muhammad! Tell me what do I have in my hand?" Imam (A.S.) replied, "Allah (SWT) has created many vast oceans from which clouds are formed. When clouds are forming, they absorb small live fish which are caught by the eagles of the kings, who then use them to test the Imams of their times". Mamoon was dumbfounded by this reply and said,

"Indeed you are the son of Ali ibn Musa ar-Reza (A.S.) – for such miracles are not impossible (from his son".] (Ahsan al-Muqaal

A Lesson from His Life

One of the many lessons we learn from the life of Imam al-Jawaad (A.S.) is that: He (A.S.) used to encourage the singles to get married and he (A.S.) also went to an extreme of facilitating the same for them. This act was in compliance to the commandment of Allah (SWT) in the Holy Quran, in which He (SWT) says:

"And marry off those who are single among you and the upright among your male and female servants, if they are poor, Allah will enrich them out of His grace. And Allah is All-bounteous, All-knowing". (24:32)

It is reported that:

[One of the Alavids fell in love with a bondmaid in Yathrib and wanted to get married to her but he did not have money to pay her price and then marry her. He came to Imam al-Jawaad (A.S.) and mentioned his problem to him. Imam (A.S.) asked about her keeper and was told who he was. Few days later, the man went back to the owner of the bondmaid and was told that she has already been sold. When he asked as to who had purchased her, he was told, "By a man who is unknown". The truth was that our 9th Imam (A.S.) had purchased her. The man was so upset and distressed that he came running to our Imam (A.S.) and said to him, "The bondmaid is sold". Imam (A.S.) smiled at him and said, "Do you know who has bought her?" The man said, "No!"

Imam (A.S.) took the man to a small village nearby and brought him to a house, which he (A.S.)

asked him to enter. The man hesitated at first, but upon insistence, when he entered he found the bondmaid there. Imam (A.S.) said to him, “She, the house with all its furniture, the garden and its yields are yours”.

The Imam (A.S.) had not only provided the young man with a wife but also bought a house for him to live in happily. When the man saw this, his heart was filled with delight and did not know how to thank the Imam (A.S.).] (‘Ayn al-Hayaat)

Imam Ja’ffar as-Sadiq (A.S.) has said, “One who facilitates marriage for any single, he shall be among those on the day of Judgement whom Allah (SWT) will see with His Mercy”. (Meezan al-Hikmah)