

Leadership By Example

Man is a living creature. To live he must have food. Without food man cannot live long or make himself stronger.

Once, many, many years ago there was a great Imam living in the city of Madina. Madina was the main city of Arabia. The Imam was a descendant of Prophet Muhammad. His name was Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq. He was the most learned and most pious of all people.

One day he learned that there was wheat shortage in Madina. As a result citizens of Madina were overtaken by fear that wheat may no longer be available. Heads of the families flocked to the bazaar and bought as much wheat as their money would allow. Those people who had enough wheat in the house, they took good care of it. Many poor people could not buy food and stock. They did not have that much money. They bought their wheat from the bazaar on a daily basis and in little quantities that their little money would allow. And the price was going up every day.

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq called the in-charge of his house, named Muattab and asked him: "How much wheat do we have at present?"

Muattab replied: "Sir, we have enough to last us for several months."

"Take it to the bazaar and offer all for sale to the people", instructed the Imam.

"Oh! son of the Prophet! Wheat is very scarce in Madina. (If we sell our stock, perhaps it would be impossible to purchase later)" advised the care-taker.

"Do as I have said (Sell all our stock to the people).", replied Imam.

Muattab, did as he was told and sold all the wheat. He reported the result to his master.

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Thereafter, the Imam gave instructions to buy the requirement of his house on day to day basis like other people of Madina. He intended his house to be no different than the poorer citizens of Madina.

The Imam further told Muattab to use, from then on, half wheat and half barley for the bread of his household. Then he said:

“By the grace of Almighty I have the strength to provide my house with bread made from pure wheat. But I want Allah to see me living economically (just like other people around me).”

The Imam set a noble example of good leadership.

Sayings:

“The best man is he who is of most service to others”.

“By knowledge thou art saved; by ignorance thou art lost”.

“Ignorance is the most hateful enemy”. - Imam Ali (a)