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The Noble Rule of the Righteous: Organizing Divine Rule in the Human

Inner World

When the Noble Rule of the Righteous Takes Shape Within a Person

People often say they want something, yet their actions prove otherwise. This gap between verbal desire and true intention is a major obstacle to establishing the Noble Rule of the Righteous in the world. In the supplication “*Dua al-Iftitah*,” we ask God for a noble sovereignty—one that upholds the dignity of Islam and grants us nobility in both this life and the next. This request is not merely a political wish for the future, but rather it is a practical strategy for the present. This Noble Rule means that nobility must govern every part of a person's being. However, this prayer only becomes meaningful when it is applied to daily life through effort and sacrifice. Without inner transformation, words alone are ineffective.

From a Shia perspective, an individual must first achieve this noble rule internally before they can witness its external manifestation over the world. This article offers a reinterpretation of this concept, treating it as a mode of internal governance.

The Noble Rule of the Righteous: Actualizing God's Rule Within

The Noble Rule of the Righteous is not merely a social or historical phenomenon. If we view it only as an external event in the future, the connection between the individual and this rule remains unclear.

In Shia thought, this rule is a state where the truth governs not only politics but all human relationships. According to *Nahj al-Balaghah*, the rule is essentially the management of one's loves and hates. For example, in Letter 62, Imam Ali (Peace be upon him) says: "The warrior should be wakeful because if he sleeps the enemy does not sleep," suggesting that neglecting an enemy is equivalent to allowing them to rule. On an individual level, the Noble Rule of the Righteous means letting divine rationality rule over animal faculties. Those who truly await the Noble Rule of the Righteous are those who have established this 'rule' within themselves, refusing to let low desires take control.

On the individual level, this rule refers to a person's inner unity, where one is guided by a single core principle instead of being scattered and conflicted spiritually. That is, someone who makes every decision based on a passing desire, fear, or interest has not yet achieved the true, unified sovereignty. The noble rule begins when a higher principle becomes firm within the individual, and all other internal forces align with it. Discussing the Noble Rule of the Righteous without addressing this inner foundation is like discussing a result without explaining its cause.

True Desire: Beyond Verbal Claims

Verbal desire is merely expressing a wish; true desire is a fundamental shift in the direction of one's life. One may complain in prayer about having few supporters and many enemies. However, if this complaint does not change their choices, lifestyle or priorities, it is not a sign of sincere longing. True longing moves a person from being a mere spectator to becoming an active participant in sacrifice.

Therefore, prayer in this context is not just an emotional expression. It is a practical commitment. Anyone seeking the Noble Rule of the Righteous must demonstrate a readiness to endure hardship

and struggle to realize it. Otherwise, their words ask for something that their heart and actions have not yet accepted.

According to Imam Sadiq (Peace be upon him): “A person who would like to be among the companions of al-Qa’im should be in a state of (active) waiting (*Intizar*), and perform all of his deeds with *Wara’* [a level higher than *Taqwa*] and with the most beautiful etiquette and then one will be counted as being in a state of (true) waiting (*Intizar*)”¹. This means desiring the Noble Rule of the Righteous is an active process of self-improvement. The difference between verbal claim and true desire is defined by what one is willing to pay for it. As Imam Hussain (Peace be upon him) demonstrated on his journey to Karbala, the rule of the truth is established only through the total offering of one's life and wealth for a higher purpose.

The Hierarchy of Love: Prioritizing Values in the Human Inner Rule

In the Shia worldview, love is the core of an individual. As Imam Baqir (Peace be upon him) stated: “Religion is love and love is religion”². A healthy human state is one where beloveds are arranged in a clear hierarchy. When love for God and the Ahl al-Bayt (Peace be upon them) is placed at the highest level, all other attachments—such as family, career, and wealth—find their proper, subordinate place. If this hierarchy is disturbed, the individual falls into a subtle polytheism regarding their love hierarchy, and their inner rule lowers in favor of worldly pursuits.

The true human inner rule is achieved when the highest dimension of a person governs all other aspects of the soul. Practically, this is measured by what one truly loves and what they are willing to sacrifice. From this perspective, one’s true essence is revealed through their actual beloveds, rather than their verbal claims or social titles.

A balanced human inner state is marked by placing God, the Ahl al-Bayt, and *jihad* at the top of this hierarchy. This does not mean one must abandon all other attachments. Rather, it means that no other attachment should displace these highest values. As long as this top rank is protected, all other responsibilities and relationships retain their proper meaning. However, if this order is disrupted, the entire inner structure of the person falls into disorder.

How Do Existential Priorities Collapse?

This collapse begins when one loses the ability to distinguish between primary and secondary values. Family, work, status, wealth, and comfort all have their place in life. But problems arise when any one of them is given the highest priority. In such cases, a person may appear outwardly religious or committed, but their decision-making is actually being driven by different, lower motives.

Titles—whether student, professor, manager, or religious leader—do not define one’s true inner rule. The real test occurs when two values conflict: Which one does the person prioritize? If God, the Ahl al-Bayt (Peace be upon them), and *jihad* are removed from the top of one's priorities, the inner rule of the human collapses, moving from a state of guidance to one of spiritual decline.

The point of collapse is the moment one faces a conflict between divine interest and personal benefit. As Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him and his family) taught, an excessive attachment to worldly concerns is the root of all error. If, at a decisive moment, security or comfort is placed above *jihad*, it signifies that inner rule has shifted from the noble rule of the righteous toward the rule of worldly impulses. This decline often happens gradually, driven by negligence—the very state from which we seek refuge in God in the supplication *Ziyarat Jamia Kabira*.

Preserving the Inner Human Rule: The Greater *Jihad*

Every rule faces the constant challenge of staying in power once it is established. The inner human rule works the same way. It is not enough for a person to focus on spiritual values or divine love at one moment; these values are constantly threatened by competing impulses. Therefore, the inner state is not a fixed or safe condition, but a living status that must be actively defended.

This *jihad* is an internal struggle. It is a fight against forces that try to shift one's focus from higher spiritual principles to lower, impulsive desires. Every uncontrolled desire, deceptive thought, paralyzing fear, or excessive attachment acts as a rival. Consequently, maintaining the stability of the inner noble rule requires constant alertness and resistance. To keep this spiritual sovereignty, one must act like a vigilant leader: They must recognize their internal enemies and block every way they might gain influence.

Once a divine rule is established within a person as a spiritual foundation, protecting it requires what is known as the **Greater Jihad** (*Jihad al-Akbar*). After the Battle of Badr, the Prophet (Peace be upon him and his family) referred to that physical battle as the **Minor Jihad** (*Jihad al-Asghar*), while describing the internal struggle against one's lower desires as the Greater *Jihad*. This shows that the inner human state is not a settled destination, but a battlefield where enemies like estimation, anger, and lust are always active.

How Estimation and Negligence Destabilize the Inner Human Rule

Estimation is one of the strongest forces that can disrupt inner human governance. It works by distorting reality, making something seem more serious, dangerous, or desirable than it truly is. In this state, a person might logically know a thought is baseless, yet they still react emotionally as if

it were true. This proves that mere awareness is not enough; unless knowledge is used to govern one's actions, it cannot manage one's being.

However, the main reason estimation and other impulses succeed is through negligence. Negligence happens the moment a person stops guarding themselves spiritually and assumes that today's stability guarantees tomorrow's. One might rely on their past spiritual achievements or emotional strengths, but if they lose their vigilance, even these strengths can fade and fail.

Awaiting the Global Noble Rule of Imam Mahdi: The Practice of Self-Governance

The Noble Rule of the Righteous begins on a personal level when a person moves beyond merely wanting something and turns that wish into real determination. If someone sincerely wishes to live under this rule, they must show it through what matters most to them in daily life. The test is simple: In any meaningful choice, what stands at the top of your priorities, and what are you willing to give up? From this point, one's relationship with this rule stops being a distant hope and becomes a personal responsibility.

Building this rule means creating a stable inner hierarchy—one in which core values keep their rightful place and opposing impulses cannot take control. This is not achieved through a single moment of excitement or by empty claims. It requires both longing and watchfulness, both love and struggle. Only then does the noble rule of the righteous change from a phrase spoken in prayer into a living reality within a person, preparing them for a true relationship with that supreme human governance.

The Noble Rule of the Righteous is not just a final destination; the real destination is the journey of "becoming": becoming similar to God. The true awaiters of the Noble Rule of the Righteous are those who have already built justice and integrity within their own inner world. Working toward

this rule means practicing self-governance, so that a person becomes ready to be an efficient, fair, and faithful part of the global rule of the Infallible Imam (Peace be upon him). We ask for this rule through the *Dua al-Iftitah*, but we bring it into reality through striving.

References

¹ . Abdul-Rahim Mugahi, *40 Hadith on the 12th Imam, the Awaited Savior*, trans. Saleem Bhimji (The World Federation of KSIMC - Khoja Shia Ithna-Asheri Muslim Communities), 19.

² . Sayyid Muhammad Rida Hijaz, "The Concept of Love in the Shi'i Creed," *Al-Tawhid Islamic Journal*, vol. 11, no. 1-2.