

The Foundation and System of Religion

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ وَصَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ يَا وَلِيَّ الْعَصْرِ أَدْرِكُنَا

Protection of Religion: Imamat of Hazrat Wali-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.)

Aim of sending Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.)

In order to save people from ignorance and illiteracy, bring them out of disbelief, polytheism and deviation, keep them away from terrorism and bloodshed, lift them from the lowest level of animal nature to highest level of humanity, convert the trampled, filthy particles of dust into bright shining moon, raise them from the pit of disgrace to the highest grades (اعلى عليين), transform them from the slavery of carnal desires and lust into the servitude of God, convert the followers of Shaitaan into followers and obedient servants of Allah...

Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful, raised the greatest of the Prophets, the best Messenger, the resident of the Throne, Taha, Yaseen, mercy for the worlds, chief of first and the last, the teacher of Angels and Jibraeel, center of the revelation from the Lord of the worlds, teacher of clear Quran, Ahmad al-Mujtaba Muhammad al-Mustafa (s.a.w.a.) in the land Mecca as a Prophet, Messenger, Guide, Giver of Glad Tidings, Warner, an Illuminating Torch, Compassionate and Merciful.

The era of Tauheed, enlightenment, guidance and

knowledge began with his Prophethood. The period before his Messengership and Prophethood is known as the period of ignorance. The period of ignorance implies that period where although there was religions it was completely distorted. Realities existed but in corrupted forms, there was worship but sacrifices were made to seek nearness to idols. The period in which true religion did not exist and realities were not evident was called the period of ignorance. Ignorance of beliefs was much more severe than mere ignorance in actions and morals, It was obscurity of thoughts and views.

The Lamp of Religion

Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) by the command of Allah (s.w.t.) lit the lamp of guidance in this darkness of ignorance and amidst the storm of disbelief, polytheism and deviation. He transformed the period of ignorance into an era of Islam and belief. The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) who had equal vision on past, present and future by the grace of Allah (s.w.t.), who foretold all that would occur until the Day of Judgment, his eyes were witnessing how this message of guidance will be opposed, what efforts will be taken to extinguish this lamp of guidance, who will oppose and in what way. The opposition would begin from the camps of disbelief and polytheism but on being defeated they would then try to destroy this message of guidance and extinguish the lamp of Prophethood and Messengership in the form of hypocrisy. Islam would be pitted

against Islam and Quran against the Quran.

Winds of Opposition

Apart from this, Allah the All-Knowing and the All-Aware, who sent such a great message with His great Messenger for the deliverance of man, knew how the enemies of religion and mankind would treat it. When the angels knew in advance about the corruption, bloodshed and massacre that man will spread on the earth, then Allah definitely knew of all it.

Moreover, this was Allah's final message and this religion (of Islam) was the final religion. This book (the Noble Quran) was the last book and this Messenger was the Last of the Messengers and Seal of the Prophets. There was no new religion, book and laws to be revealed until the Day of Judgment. Hence, for this eternal, everlasting and unique religion (for which there neither was nor is any substitute), how have Allah and His Messenger ensured its protection... that too till the Day of Judgment?

The Lantern of Protection

Without getting into details, we will just mention that after fulfilling his promise in Madaaen when Hazrat Musa (a.s.) started his journey towards Egypt, then Allah (s.w.t.) commanded him thus:

اذْهَبْ إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّهُ طَغَىٰ ۖ قَالَ رَبِّ اسْرْخْ لِي
 صَدْرِي ۖ وَيَسِّرْ لِي أَمْرِي ۖ ۝٣٦ وَاحْلُلْ عُقْدَةً مِّنْ لِّسَانِي ۖ ۝٣٧
 يَفْقَهُوا قَوْلِي ۖ ۝٣٨ وَاجْعَلْ لِّي وَزِيرًا مِّنْ أَهْلِي ۖ ۝٣٩ هَارُونَ
 أَخِي ۖ ۝٤٠ اشْدُدْ بِهِ أَزْرِي ۖ ۝٤١ وَأَشْرِكُهُ فِى أَمْرِي ۖ ۝٤٢ كَىٰ نُسَبِّحَكَ
 كَثِيرًا ۖ ۝٤٣ وَنَذْكُرَكَ كَثِيرًا ۖ ۝٤٤

“Go to Firaun, surely he has exceeded all limits.
 He said: O my Lord! Expand my chest for me,
 And make my affair easy to me, And loose the
 knot from my tongue, (That) they may
 understand my word; And give to me an aider
 from my family: Harun, my brother, Strengthen
 my back by him, And associate him (with me) in
 my affair, So that we should glorify You much,
 and remember You oft.”¹

Vicegerent and Protector

Even before the beginning of any invitation or preaching,
 the demand for a vicegerent indicates towards the fact that the
 Divine system is so advanced and progressive that it plans for
 a successor right since inception such that after the departure
 of leader, an unfit one does not stand up to take responsibility
 of its protection and the enemies do not sabotage the system in

¹ Surah Tahaa (20): 24-34

the garb of friendship.

When Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) began proclamation of his Prophethood publicly by the permission of Allah (s.w.t.), he invited his nearest and dearest ones and informed them of his mission, which is known as 'Daawate Zul Asheera' in Islamic history. In that gathering, he (s.a.w.a.) announced that Hazrat Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) would be his successor and vicegerent. By this announcement Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) made it evident for all that after his departure from this world, this religion will not be without a leader and protector. Since this perfect religion and its pure Shariat had to continue till the Day of Judgment, there was a need for a system of successorship which would continue till the Day of Judgment and such successors and protectors be appointed who would be similar to Holy prophet (s.a.w.a.) in all attributes and characteristics except Prophethood and Messengership in order to ensure comprehensive protection from all the aspects. In relation to this, following traditions of Holy prophet (s.a.w.a.) (which have also been narrated by scholars of Ahle Tasannun) point towards this great arrangement made by Allah (s.w.t.).

Protection of Religion and Imamate

1. There will be 12 chiefs of this nation (Bukhari)
2. This religion will exist till the time there are 12 caliphs in it. (Muslim)
3. This religion will be honoured and dignified till the time

there are 12 caliphs in it. (Muslim)

4. The affairs of my nation will be virtuous till the time there are 12 caliphs in it. (Mustadrak ala al-Sahihain)
5. There will be 12 leaders of this nation, whoever forsakes them, it will not harm them (Imams) in anyway and all of them will be from Quraish. (Taareekh al-Khulafa)

Seeking the blessings from the five sacred and holy personalities (a.s.), we shall suffice by narrating only five traditions as the traditions on this topic have reached the limit of Tawaatur i.e. narrated consecutively from the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.). Traditions on this topic are considered authentic and reliable by the scholars of both Shia and Sunni sects. Ayatollah al-Uzma Lutfullah Saafi Gulpaygani in his valuable book 'Muntakhab al-Asar' has narrated 271 traditions in this regard which makes evident as to how much Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was concerned about the protection, honour and progress of his nation after him. It means that Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) had appointed a protector, guide, caliph, chief and Imam of his nation in his lifetime itself.

- ☐ By going through these traditions it is clear that after the departure of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) till the Day of Judgment, the number of his successors and caliphs will only be 12, neither 11 nor 13
- ☐ All these 12 caliphs and successors will be from Quraish not from any other tribe
- ☐ These caliphs will be the cause of honour and pride of

this sacred religion of Islam

- ❑ Those who forsake them, delineate themselves from them will only harm themselves and those who support and help them will benefit from it and they will get its reward in this world as well as hereafter

The Jeopardy of Scholars in search of The Twelve

Scholars and traditionalists have narrated such traditions in their respective books. However, while reconciling these traditions and looking for these 12 caliphs, those who didn't refer to Ahle Bait (a.s.) were faced with a great difficulty. On one hand, these traditions do not conform to those people whom they accepted as successors, caliphs of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and leaders of the nation from any aspect. They do not conform to anybody except the holy and sacred, pure and clean, infallible chain of Imams of Ahle Bait (a.s.) who were appointed by Allah (s.w.t.) because:

1. These traditions do not comply with the 'Rightly Guided Caliphs' because their number was not twelve
2. Apart from it, this caliphate ended in 40 A.H. with the martyrdom of Imam Ali (a.s.) while Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said that this chain of successorship will continue till the Day of Judgment. Was this religion of Islam going to last only up to 40 A.H. and thereafter Qiyamat was supposed to be established? In any case, Qiyamat is yet to be established while religion still

continues to exist and this caliphate was over and thus this tradition is not applicable to it.

3. These traditions cannot be applicable to the caliphs of Bani Umayya and Bani Abbas also because:

- ☐ They are not twelve in number
- ☐ The martyrdom of Hazrat Imam Husain (a.s.) and other Imams from Ahle Bait (a.s.) during the rule of those caliphs clearly states that they can't be the cause of honour and pride of Islam
- ☐ They did not abide by the rules of Islam in their life and rule. One who is not particular in implementing Islamic laws in his life, how can he make others follow them and protect Islam?
- ☐ The lives are filled with incidents of oppression and injustice. Their hands were stained with the blood of innocent people.
- ☐ It is also worth keeping in mind that none of those caliphates have survived till date. All of them were discontinued hundreds of years ago. Their discontinuation itself proves that these traditions are not applicable to them.

4. The system of caliphate was functioning somehow till quite a long time and in India this system found a lot of backing and support. After the revolution of Turkey, Mustafa Kamal Atatürk brought this very system to a closure. Now only the 'Khilafat House' remains but there

is no sign of caliphate. Therefore, it becomes clear that these traditions are not applicable to any of these series of caliphates.

5. At present, none of these series of caliphates are present anywhere in this world. Today there are kings, monarchs, Shaikhs, presidents, leaders, chiefs... but none of them is a claimant of caliphate.

Twelve Caliphs refers to whom?

Is there anyone on whom these Mutawaatir narrations are applicable or no? If not, then did Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), God forbid, say such a thing which has nothing to do with reality? Certainly not! As per the divine revelation, everything which the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said is a reality and its application is also present.

Numerous Ahle Tasannun scholars have provided explanations for these traditions in various ways but none of them seems to be accurate. However, the great Ahle Tasannun scholar and traditionalist Shaikh Sulayman al-Qunduzi, the Grand Mufti of Constantinople has explained this tradition thus:

“This tradition of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) conforms to the twelve Imams of Ahle Bait (a.s.) and this tradition does not apply to the caliphs after him since they were less than twelve in number... it cannot be applicable to the rulers of Bani Umayyah

as well since they were more than twelve and secondly, apart from Umar Ibn Abdul Aziz, all of them were oppressors and tyrants.¹ Thirdly they were not from Bani Hashim because the tradition which Abdul Malik has narrated from Jabir, Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) says, 'All of them will be from Bani Hashim.' This tradition is not applicable to the caliphs of Bani Abbas as well since firstly they are more than twelve and apart from that they did not honour the verse of Mawaddah and the verse of Tatheer i.e. they oppressed the Ahle Bait (a.s.).

Therefore this tradition is applicable only to 12 Imams of Ahle Bait (a.s.) since they were the most knowledgeable, pious, god fearing, honourable and respected of their time. Their lineage was the most noble and great. Their knowledge was transferred to them from their ancestors linked directly to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.). All these things support the fact that in these traditions when Holy prophet (s.a.w.a.) mentioned the twelve Imams he referred to Ahle Bait (a.s.). Hadees-e-Saqalain and other traditions also support this fact.

The tradition of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) that *'the entire Ummah will be united on it'* refers to the conditions at the time of reappearance of Qaem of Aale Mohammad Hazrat Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.). After his reappearance, the entire Ummah will

¹ This is the view of Qunduzi and not the Shiite view about Umar b. Abdul Aziz

be unanimous and united on his Imamate.”¹

With this clarification this matter becomes obvious that all these traditions refer to that chain of Imamate and Caliphate of which the first Imam is Ameerul Momineen Hazrat Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) and the last Imam is Hazrat Hujjat Ibn Hasan Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.). This pure and sacred chain of guidance and leadership, whose foundation was laid by the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) himself in his lifetime on the command of Allah (s.w.t.) and which started immediately after the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), today it exists in the form of Hazrat Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.).

Importance of Recognizing the Imam

Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) not only prophesied about this series of Imams and Guides but also made the recognition of these Imams (a.s.) as obligatory. The following tradition of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has been narrated in various ways:

مَنْ مَاتَ وَلَمْ يَعْرِفْ إِمَامَ زَمَانِهِ مَاتَ مِيتَةً جَاهِلِيَّةً

One who dies without recognizing the Imam of his time, dies the death of ignorance.

It is clear and evident that only he will be saved from the death of ignorance and will die on faith and Islam whose life will be free of ignorance i.e. the one who would accept this

¹ Yanaabi' al-Mawaddah, chapter 77

chain of Imamate and Guidance and recognize the Imam of his time.

Who is the Imam of the time?

After Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) till date, the entire Islamic fraternity, despite the sectarian differences and diverse schools of thought unanimously agrees that at any given point in time there can only be one person as the successor of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.). Even if there was a caliph in the past and the Ummah accepted him as successor, who is the successor of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) whose recognition can save us from the death of ignorance?

Presently if there is any successor of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) who is a reflection of his attributes and characteristics, is from Quraish, belongs to the clan of Bani Hashim, is the closest to Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) in terms of lineage and descent, is most reliable and authentic, then he is Hazrat Hujjat Ibn Hasan al-Askari (a.s.), Imam of men and Jinn, partner of Quran, Master of the time, Hazrat Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.). If we wish to lead a life and depart from this world on correct faith and Islam, wish to save ourselves from the death of ignorance and disbelief then it is essential and obligatory to acquire the recognition of Imam of the time, Hazrat Hujjat Ibn Hasan al-Askari (a.s.). The stronger, deeper and more profound this recognition is, more illuminated will be the stages of Qiyamat, the paths of reality will be more apparent

and ascending to higher grades will be easy.

On the occasion of 15th of Shabaan, such programs are a small step in this direction. May Allah make it worthy of being presented in the holy presence of Imam (a.t.f.s.).

Conclusion

The summary of this discussion is that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), on Allah's command, has categorically made complete and strong arrangements for the protection of this sacred religion of Islam. He made the twelve Imams (a.s.) its custodians. Since Islam is an eternal religion and will exist till the Day of Judgment, its protector is also alive today. Currently, the religion of Islam which is surviving till now is only and only due to the blessings of the Imam of the time Hazrat Hujjat Ibn Hasan al-Askari (a.s.). The deviant chains are also surviving due to true Islam because falsehood does not have any base and foundation of its own.

We shall complete our discussion with two traditions of Ahle Bait (a.s.).

Hazrat Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) said:

“Surely Allah, Mighty and Majestic be He, has explained His religion through the Imams of (true) guidance from the family of our Prophet (s.a.w.a.), and has illuminated through them the path of His system and plan. He has opened through them the hidden springs of His knowledge. Then whoever

from the Ummah of Muhammad (s.a.w.a.), recognizes his obligation toward the rights of his Imam he will experience the sweetness of his belief and will realize the superiority of his Islam.”¹

Ameerul Momineen Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) said:

“One who dies on his bed while he has the true recognition of his Lord and His Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and the right of Ahle Bait (a.s.), dies a martyr and his reward is upon Allah, Glorified be He, and he will get the reward for all those good actions which he (only) intended to perform. His (good) intention will be equivalent to his combat with the sword. For everything there is a limit which cannot be exceeded.”²

It is the recognition of the Imam of the time which equates the death of believer with martyrdom and converts his good intention into good actions thereby making it a medium of acquiring great rewards. May Allah grant us best, complete and eternal recognition of our Imam (a.t.f.s.).

Ameen O Lord of the worlds!

¹ Al-Kaafi, vol. 1, p. 203, H. 2

² Ghurar al-Hikam, H. 1997

The Foundation and System of Religion: Love of Hazrat Wali-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.)

The deliverance from the death of pre-Islamic era necessitates both the recognition and love of Hazrat Wali-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.). Allah has not only made the love of Ahle Bait (a.s.) as the recompense of prophethood but also the foundation on which the religion of Islam stands firm. In this era the Hazrat Wali-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.) is the member of Ahle Bait (a.s.) among us.

1. Foundation of Religion

Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ أَسَاسٌ وَ أَسَاسُ الْإِسْلَامِ حُبُّنَا أَهْلَ
الْبَيْتِ

“For everything there is a foundation, and the foundation of Islam is the love of us Ahle Bait (a.s.).”¹

2. System of Religion

Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) says:

¹ Al-Kaafi, vol. 2, p. 46, H. 2

حُبُّنَا أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ نِظَامُ الدِّينِ

“The love of us Ahle Bait is the foundation of the religion.”¹

It is therefore, in other words, only the love of Ahle Bait (a.s.) that can safeguard the religion from chaos, disorder, corruption and disunity. In an experiment, a Japanese scholar exhibited to a scholar that when the holy names like Muhammad, Ali, Fatima, Hasan and Husain were uttered, the molecules of the water arranged and organized themselves whereas the utterance of the names of the enemies of Islam left them in disorder.

As long as the world distances itself from the door of Ahle Bait (a.s.), it will be a victim of disunity, chaos and sectarianism.

3. Love of Ahle Bait (a.s.) is the love of Allah

In Ziyarate Jaameah, which is the most authentic and reliable Ziyarat, Hazrat Imam Hadi (a.s.) says:

مَنْ وَالَاكُمْ فَقَدْ وَالَى اللَّهَ وَمَنْ عَادَاكُمْ فَقَدْ عَادَ اللَّهَ وَ
مَنْ أَحَبَّكُمْ فَقَدْ أَحَبَّ اللَّهَ وَمَنْ أَبْغَضَكُمْ فَقَدْ أَبْغَضَ
اللَّهُ

“One who befriends you has surely befriended

¹ Amaali of Shaikh Tusi, p. 296

Allah, one who bears enmity with you has surely bore enmity with Allah, one who loves you has surely loved Allah and the one who keeps grudge against you has surely kept grudge against Allah.”

4. Love of Ahle Bait (a.s.) is the love of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.)

It has been narrated from Zaid bin Arqam:

I was in the Holy presence of the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) when Janabe Zahra came out from her house in state that she, while covering herself in a woolen cloak, was approaching the chamber of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) with her two sons Hasan and Husain and Ali followed them. When Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) saw them he (s.a.w.a.) said:

مَنْ أَحَبَّ هَؤُلَاءِ فَقَدْ أَحَبَّنِي وَ مَنْ أَبْغَضَهُمْ فَقَدْ
أَبْغَضَنِي.

*“He who loves these surely he has loved me and he who bears angers them then surely he has angered me.”*¹

5. Love of Ahle Bait (a.s.) – The Prerequisite of Tauheed

It is narrated from Jabir Ibn Abdullah:

¹ Tareekh-e-Damishq, vol. 91, p. 126, Imam Husain (a.s.)

A person came to the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) and inquired: O Messenger of Allah is there a price for Paradise?

Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) replied: *Yes. Surely there is.*

He asked: What is it?

Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) replied:

When a righteous servant recites the sentence

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ (There is no god except Allah) sincerely.

He asked: What does sincerity comprise of?

Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) replied:

Acting upon the things I have been raised with and the love of my Ahle Bait (a.s.).

He asked: Is the love of your Ahle Bait (a.s.) the right of Tauheed?

Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) replied:

Yes, surely their love is the greatest right of Tauheed.¹

Hazrat Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) said:

Surely there are certain conditions for the sentence

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ (There is no god except Allah). *I and my progeny are among its conditions.²*

Monotheism saves a person from disbelief and polytheism and purifies him. This command is the foundation of all acts of worship and the first principle of the belief. The love of Ahle Bait (a.s.) is the fundamental condition for the

¹ Amaali of Shaikh Tusi, p. 583, H. 1207

² Ghurar al-Hikam, H. 3479

acceptance of the sincerity of Tauheed. He whose heart is devoid of this love of Ahle Bait (a.s.) his belief in Tauheed is not complete.

6. Love of Ahle Bait (a.s.) – the condition of faith

Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

*“My Lord has promised me that He will not accept the faith of anyone devoid of the love of my Ahle Bait (a.s.).”*¹

In another tradition Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

*“No servant can be a believer till he loves me more than his self, holds my progeny and Ahle Bait dearer to him than his own and prefers me over his self.”*²

The above tradition is also narrated by the Ahle Tasannun. Since the love of Ahle Bait (a.s.) is the prerequisite of faith and the holy persona of Hazrat Wali-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.) represents them in this era, in absence of his love one can neither be a believer nor hope for paradise. If we wish to be believers and the inhabitants of the paradise we should love Hazrat Wali-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.) from the depth of our hearts and prefer him over our relatives, parents, children, brothers, sisters, friends and dear ones.

¹ Ehqaaq al-Haqq, vol. 9, p. 454

² Al-Mo'jam al-Kabeer, vol. 7, p. 75, H. 6416; Amaali of Shaikh Saduq, p. 274, H. 9

7. Purity of birth

The love of Ahle Bait (a.s.) is not only the condition of belief in oneness of God and faith rather it is essential for the purity of birth and pure lineage.

In Tarikh-e-Damishq, a reliable book of Ahle Tasannun, in the discussion concerning Ali (a.s.) in vol. 2, p. 35, following tradition of Holy prophet (s.a.w.a.) is narrated:

Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) while describing the merits of Ali (a.s.) said:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ! اِمْتَحِنُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ بِحُبِّهِ، فَإِنَّ عَلِيًّا لَا
يَدْعُو إِلَى ضَلَالَةٍ، وَلَا يَبْعِدُ عَنْ هُدًى، فَمَنْ أَحَبَّهُ فَهُوَ
مِنْكُمْ، وَمَنْ أَبْغَضَهُ فَلَيْسَ مِنْكُمْ

“O people! Examine your children by the love of Ali. Surely Ali will never call you towards deviation, nor will he distance you from the guidance. One who loves Ali from among your children belongs to you and one who hates Ali is not from you.”

Ameerul Momeneen Hazrat Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) narrates that Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) told Janabe Abuzar (r.a.):

“O Abu Zar! One who loves us Ahle Bait should thank Allah for the first bounty.”

Abu Zar inquired: What is the first bounty?

Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.):

“Purity of birth, none will love us except the one with the pure birth.”¹

There are numerous traditions to this effect. In this era the sacred personality of Hazrat Wali-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.) represents Ahle Bait (a.s.). He who finds his love in his heart is blessed with a pure birth, he who does not should investigate.

8. Purity of Heart

Hazrat Imam Mohammad Baqir (a.s.) says:

“None will love us and accept our mastership until Allah purifies his heart and Allah will not purify the heart of a servant till he submits to us and is obedient to us. When he is obedient to us, Allah will protect him from the severity of reckoning and the fear and terror of the Day of Judgment.”²

Paradise is a place where only those with pure hearts can enter.

The purity of the heart in turn necessitates the love and obedience of Ahle Bait (a.s.). One who longs for the purity of his heart and safety during the reckoning must love Imam-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.) and completely submit to him.

¹ Amaali of Shaikh Tusi, p. 455

² Al-Kaafi, vol. 1, p. 191, H. 1

9. Love of Ahle Bait (a.s.) – the best worship

Ameerul Momineen Hazrat Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) said

أَحْسَنُ الْحَسَنَاتِ حُبُّنَا وَأَسْوَأُ السَّيِّئَاتِ بُغْضُنَا

*“Our love is the best of righteous deeds whereas hatred towards us is the worst of evil deeds.”*¹

Hazrat Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) says:

إِنَّ فَوْقَ كُلِّ عِبَادَةٍ عِبَادَةٌ وَحُبُّنَا أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ أَفْضَلُ عِبَادَةٍ.

*“Surely above every worship there is worship superior to it and the love of us Ahle Bait (a.s.) is the most superior worship.”*²

10. First Question on the Day of Judgment

Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

*“The very first thing a servant will be questioned about on the Day of Judgment is the love of us Ahle Bait (a.s.).”*³

In another tradition Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

“On the day of judgment, a servant cannot proceed a single step until he answers four things:

¹ Ghurar al-Hikam, H. 3363

² Al-Mahaasin, vol. 1, p. 247, H. 462

³ Uyoon Ahbaar al-Reza (a.s.), vol. 2, p. 62, H. 258

- 1. His life – How did he spend it?*
- 2. His body – What did he use it for?*
- 3. His wealth – How did he acquire and spend it?*
- 4. And the love of Ahle Bait (a.s.) ¹*

This tradition is also narrated by the scholars of Ahle Tasannun.

There are several aspects apart from these but for the sake of brevity we suffice with ten of them:

The love and mastership of Ahle Bait (a.s.) is:

- ☐ The foundation of Islam
- ☐ System of the religion
- ☐ Love of Allah
- ☐ Love of Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.)
- ☐ Prerequisite of belief in Tauheed of God
- ☐ Condition for Faith
- ☐ Purity of Birth
- ☐ Purity of Heart
- ☐ Most superior worship and
- ☐ The very first question to be asked in on the Day of Judgment

The question that arises now is as follows:

Was this privilege specific to only those present during the time of Ahle Bait a.s.? If we, today wish this honour and desire to fulfill the reward of messengership whose holy existence should we make the center of our love?

¹ Faraaid al-Simtain, vol. 2, p. 301, H. 557

Is any member of the Ahle Bait (a.s.) present among us?
Is there anyone who possesses the majesty, perfection and the lofty attributes of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.)?

Hazrat Wali-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.) – The Reflection of the Perfection of Messengership

In this era none among the inhabitants of the heavens and the earth resembles attributes of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) more than Hazrat Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.). He is the concluding link of the chain of leadership, mastership and sucessionship. He is the last person referred to in the verse of nearest relatives i.e. مودة القربى.

He is the last person wearing the crown of the verse of purification. Since the sacred religion of Islam will rejoice, enliven, flourish, spread only at his hands, he is the hope of all the prophets, messengers, divine successors, truthful ones, martyrs, virtuous, believers and pious people. He is responsible for (enlivening) their religion. Everyone eagerly awaits his blessed reappearance. All have placed their hopes on him. Therefore loving Hazrat Hujjat Ibn Hasan al-Askari (a.t.f.s.) is akin to loving all prophets, messengers, divine successors, truthful ones, martyrs, virtuous, believers and pious people. All these and all virtuous servants of Allah and even angels and carriers of throne love the one who awaits and prepares the ground of his reappearance.

Therefore if we wish to be the one intended in the above

traditions we must love Hazrat Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.), may our lives be sacrificed for him.

We must not only love him but prefer him over ourselves and all our attachments. We should beg Allah for such a love of Hazrat that we are restless till we get the privilege of seeing his holy face, remember him day and night and pray for him after every prayer.

Demand of Religion: Obedience to Hazrat Wali-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.)

The Proof of God – Protector of the Divine Religion

It has become absolutely clear from the previous discussions that the pure religion of Islam is alive and firm due to the Imam of the time Hujjat Ibn Hasan al-Askari (a.s.), the greatest remainder of Allah on this earth. It is only due to the benevolence of the son of the prophet, the beloved of Imam Husain (a.s.), Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) that the religion of Islam survives despite the opposition and schemes of the enemies of religion. It is also abundantly clear that a person has to love Hazrat Mahdi (a.t.f.s.), the proof of God, the guiding Imam, the coolness of the eyes of Zahra (s.a) and the satisfaction of the heart of Murtuza (a.s.). He should love him for the sake of Allah and his Messenger (s.a.w.a), if he wants to gain the love and mastership of Ahle Bait (a.s.) and enjoy all the rewards, excellences and favours that come along with it. This love is the recompense of prophethood. It is a necessary condition for the completion and acceptance of all acts of worship. If, God forbid, the heart of a person remains empty of the love of the Imam of his time, none of his deeds are worthy of acceptance in presence of God. Also, we love a person due to the excellences found in his nature. Does there remain then any

praiseworthy attribute or an excellence in all its glory and beauty which is not present in the pure self of Wali-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.)? When he does reappear, the universe will welcome him in a changed manner.

He will fill the world with equity and justice. He will obliterate all kinds of inequity, injustice, inequality and oppression. He will grant the believers esteem and honor. The apostates, polytheists and the hypocrites will be debased. Corruption, dissension, killing, terrorism and plundering will be completely wiped out, peace and security will be everywhere, all essential commodities will be cheap, there will be no adulteration in goods, the earth will bring forth all its crops hence chemicals will not be needed. Man will be free from the toxicity of chemicals which are used today in the sowing of crops, diseases will be eradicated on a large scale, knowledge and science will make great leaps, there will be serenity in life, difficulties will be removed and mercy will descend. In short, the situation of the world will change and it will be an entirely new earth. Islam of Ghadeer will be everywhere and every mosque will resound with **عَلَيْهِ وَالِىَّ اللَّهُ**. The rule of Ahle Bait (a.s.) will be spread to all places. It will be their laws, their rules and the world will be governed by the administration of Ahle Bait (a.s.). The world will be like one country, one city, and one house. All racial lines will be blurred. The standard of honor, esteem, nobility and uprightness would be piety alone. Polytheism in all its facets

will be eliminated. Allah alone in his unity will be worshiped.

Ways to help Imam (a.s.)

We certainly want all these things to happen. How can we help in reaching this aim? What can we do?

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) said:

“One who loves us with his heart helps us with his tongue and hands, he and I will be in the elevated stages of paradise together.

One who loves us in his heart, speaks for us with his tongue, he will be in the stage below that

And one who loves us with his heart but does not help us with his hands and tongue, he will be in the stage below that.”¹

Hazrat Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) says:

“One who loves us with his heart, aids us with his tongue and fights against our enemies along with us, he will be along with us in the stages of paradise

And one who loves us with his heart and aids us with his voice but does not accompany us in our wars with our enemies he will be two stages below our stage

And one who only loves us only in his heart but

¹ Ehqaae al-Haqq, vol. 9, p. 484

does not aid us with his tongue or hands he will only just be in paradise.”¹

There are many other traditions under this topic .It is easy to say-we are getting paradise though maybe not the elevated stages. How eagerly we wish to stay in a good society in this world - what then would be the situation when we look upon the high stages of paradise and the neighbourhood of Ahle Bait (a.s.)? How anxious will we become? If we want to stay in the elevated stages of paradise along with Ahle Bait (a.s.), then we should as much as possible try to help Imam (a.s.) with hearts, speech and hands.

Obeying Imam is helping Imam

In this era when Hazrat Hujjat (a.t.f.s.) is in occultation and awaits the divine orders for reappearance, it is extremely important to be of help to him. However it is clear that every step taken for the sake of Imam Zamana (a.t.f.s.) first and foremost benefits us and gives us rewards. It is like helping ourselves. One of the methods of helping Imam Zamana (a.t.f.s.) today is acquiring piety and staying away from sins. Ameerul Momineen Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) has said:

“Every follower needs a leader who can be emulated and can be benefited for his knowledge. Take notice that your Imam has satisfied himself

¹ Al-Khesaal, p. 629, H. 10

with only two dresses to wear and two pieces of bread in this world. I know that this may not suffice for you.

وَلَكِنْ أَعِينُونِي بِوَرَعٍ وَاجْتِهَادٍ وَعِفَّةٍ وَسَدَادٍ

But assist me with piety, putting in effort, with chastity, self-respect and treading the straight path.”¹

Piety and Abstinence

The infallible Imams (a.s.) are the leaders of the pious and the abstinent.

They put in their best efforts to fulfill their obligations completely. It is also desired for their followers to abstain from seeking help from others, maintain their self-respect and tread on the right path.

Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) said:

أَعِينُونَا بِالْوَرَعِ فَإِنَّهُ مَنْ لَقِيَ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ مِنْكُمْ
بِالْوَرَعِ كَانَ لَهُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ فَرَجًا

“Help us by staying away from sins. Know that one from among you who meets Allah with abstinence will be free from difficulties.”²

¹ Nahj al-Balaagha, letter 45

² Al-Kaafi, vol. 2, p. 78

The infallible Imams (a.s.) have, in numerous traditions, appealed to their followers for help and assistance. This was a request to them to acquire piety and abstinence, an appeal to stay away from sins. Abstinence is not just staying away from sins but also from those things in which there exists a doubt about their being pure or impure. Where it is not known whether the thing is pure, impure allowed or prohibited, we should keep ourselves protected against them. Abstaining from the prohibited is the responsibility of common Muslims, the duties of the lovers of Ahle Bait (a.s.) is to keep away from things of a doubtful or suspicious nature.

Hazrat Wali-e-Asr (may our souls be sacrificed upon him) has informed:

إِنَّا غَيْرُ مُهْمِلِينَ لِمُرَاعَاتِكُمْ وَلَا نَاسِينَ لِدِكْرِكُمْ وَلَوْلَا
ذَلِكَ لَنَزَلَ بِكُمْ اللَّأْوَاءُ وَاصْطَلَبَكُمُ الْأَعْدَاءُ فَاتَّقُوا
اللَّهَ جَلَّ جَلَالُهُ وَظَاهِرُونَ أَعْلَى انْتِيَاشِكُمْ مِنْ فِتْنَةٍ قَدْ
أَنَافَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ

“We are not negligent about you nor do we forget you. If that were the case, difficulties would have descended and the enemies would have devoured you. Then fear Allah and help us in extracting you from the turmoil which surrounds you.”¹

¹ Behaar al-Anwaar, vol. 53, p. 175

This epistle from Hazrat Hujjat (a.t.f.s.) points to the fact that the enemies are not unaware of us but surround us from all sides in trials and turmoil. In literary terms ‘Nabasa’ indicates deep broadcast which means that these trials and tribulations are not of a superficial nature but are multi-layered. If you want to be safe from these difficulties and wish that Imams (a.s.) should grant you salvation then you should acquire their help through piety and abstinence. It is evident that for a savior to help a drowning man, the man himself should himself extend a hand for assistance.

The next point is that piety and abstinence would help the person himself. Staying away from sins and doubtful things is beneficial to one’s own self.

Unity and Concurrence

One of the ways of helping Wali-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.) in this time of occultation is unity and concurrence with each other. Looking upon the visage of Hazrat Hujjat (a.t.f.s.) and meeting him is a great goodness. The thing that has kept us from this great bliss is our internal differences. It is a known fact that all our deeds are presented before Hazrat. Hazrat is troubled over some of our actions.

In his epistle, Hazrat (a.t.f.s.) has addressed Shaikh Mufeed (a.r).

“O our sincere friend, the one who fights with the oppressors on our behalf. May Allah help and

assist you as he has assisted our virtuous friends.

We promise you

Whosoever from your religious brothers acquires piety and gives a share of the divine right from his wealth to the worthy. He will be safeguarded from the turmoil of the delusory and overcasting troubles.

Whosoever becomes miserly of the divine bounties and does not give the deserving his due, will be among the ones who are in loss in both this world and the next.

May Allah grant the taufeeq of submission to our Shias. If the Shias would be united in the fulfillment of our promise and covenant there would be no delay in our meeting. They would have the goodness of looking upon us with truthfulness and recognition.

The thing which has delayed our meeting are those undesirable news which have reached us and which we did not expect of them.

Allah is the helper and He is sufficient for us. Peace of Allah be upon the leader of the conveyors and the warners, Muhammad and his pure progeny (s.a.w.a).”¹

There are a few especially notable points in this epistle.

¹ Ehtejaaj of Shaikh Tabresi, vol. 2, p. 499

1. Imam Asr (a.s.) has promised. This is a vow which does not have even a slightest chance of deviation or cancellation.
2. One who will fight the oppressors in this era of occultation, (The struggle of Shaikh Mufeed was not through the sword, rather he has replied the insinuations of the enemies who wanted to create doubts in Mastership and Imamate and in turn he has safeguarded the beliefs of the friends of Ahle Bait (a.s.)) Allah will surely come to his help and support.
3. It is necessary to acquire piety and offer the divine right in our wealth to protect one's self from the turmoil, the traps and attacks of the enemies.
4. The people who do not pay the monetary rights and act miserly will be among the losers in this world and the next.
5. The meeting with Hazrat Hujjat (a.s.) and that too with recognition is possible when everyone fulfills the covenant together in unity and concurrence. That is, fulfilling of obligations should be as a society and not merely as an individual. Even monetary obligations should be fulfilled as a system and not exclusively.
6. Imam Zamana (a.s.) is aware of our actions.
7. Imam Asr (a.s.) has some special expectations from his Shias and followers.
8. Some of our deeds are a cause of dissatisfaction to Imam

(a.s.).

May Allah grant us all the taufeeq for doing the best of deeds with piety and abstinence and thus help Imam Asr (a.s.) by the right of Muhammad and Ale Muhammad (s.a.w.a). And give us the felicity to stay away from all those things which are a cause of consternation to Imam (a.s.). May Allah grant us success in performing such deeds as a society which will lead to meeting Hazrat Hujjat (a.s.) with his recognition.

Ameen O Lord of the worlds!