

"And We have elevated for you your remembrance"

When the talk is about elevations, heights and altitudes, human thoughts wander from the point of commencement in search of the end or at least to the benchmark of elevation. But the wings of human thoughts fly only to the extent of one's capacity and aptitude, after which its feathers start falling. At the end of the day, nothing remains in this flight except faintly movement and of course, the element of perplexity and wonder. When heights draw close together, they bring forth an imagination of an unknown central focus; and when they expand, they encompass all things, illuminating the valley of certitude in Allah's - Blessed and High be He-absolute power, where man spurs his thoughts and views to the extent of his ability. At this juncture, he raises his hands in front of the Almighty and beseeches, "O Allah! Surely, I ask you for the sake of Your mercy that encompasses all things."

(Dua-e-Kumail)

Allah - the Creator of the worlds, the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing-in Whose praise and glory the beloved of the Lord of the worlds, Hazrat Muhammad Mustafa (s.a.w.a.), invoked,

"O Allah! Verily You see but are not seen. You are at the highest point of vision. Certainly, the ultimate, the return is to You."

These words, uttered by the tongue of revelation, denote that the Almighty's Essence is so High and Elevated that the maximum flight of human thoughts and the most powerful of intellectual forays return frustrated in their quest to reach Him. Therefore, He surveys all, high or low, and has His eyes on each and every particle existing in the universe. No creature had nor will ever have the power and ability to set its sight on Him.

Allah – the High - bestowed mankind with the great bounty of intellect and lit a lamp in its depths that drives it towards Him; He also appointed the Prophets (a.s.) and Successors (a.s.) to act as a shield and a minder to this immeasurable gift. After such elaborate arrangements and providing for him sustenance as per his needs on this earth, He granted man freedom and power and said, 'O man! If you so desire, be grateful and if you wish, condemn yourself to the rows of the ungrateful ones.'

It is an undeniable reality that everything returns to its aim. For which, the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) remarked, 'O Allah! The ultimate, the return is unto you. In this sentence, the return is for both the believer as well as the unbeliever.

In the light of this premise, kindly pay attention to the progressive stages of the world that are giving human intellect a somersault view in an atmosphere of self-amazement and egoistic grandiose, where the arrogant man is simply submerged in nothing but 'I'. This ego has driven him out of his senses to the extent that he is hell bent on self-destruction and the time is not very far when the filaments of existence start giving way to the flames of devastation. The amazing flight of humanity has gone to such heights that today's man is able to see instant images of space on his laptop. No part of the vast earth is now hidden from him. In his quest to reach the planets, he has attained such heights that with every passing day, mind-boggling statistics concerning Mars occupy his intellect. The main motive of all these efforts is to hoist the flag of humanity at the pinnacle. A central habitat in space can become the cause of human dominance on this earth, a view that is gaining ground by the day. But in his craze for

ascendancy, man has neglected the fate of the earth, the place of commencement of his journey and the roots of all his efforts. What if the foundation starts quivering! Hence, today global warming has become a primary concern for responsible citizens. Tangible changes can be observed in the solar system. Effects of natural alterations can be observed in the earth. In the words of Allamah Iqbal (the Poet of the East), 'Stars shiver on man's progress'. Although this is an imagination of a poet but in its tone and tenor the reality is clearly reflected; man is taking such rapid strides that even his intellect is amazed and as a result, he has no option but to gallop unhindered.

On the other hand, regardless of the scientific flight taken by him, when man takes a close look at himself, he realizes his limitations; his elevation can by no means be termed as unlimited or infinite. In fact, only the name is elevation but in reality, human lows are being measured. He does not realize that his highest reach is far beneath the footprints of the Messenger of Allah's (s.a.w.a.) ascension. Wherever the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) is mentioned, these altitudes and elevations are enumerated as worthless depths.

How true is the Holy Quran! How great is the Book of Allah! Who can dare describe this Majestic tome! For the last fourteen centuries, this divine scripture is acting as a mirror to rebellious mankind. On numerous occasions, the Book of Allah warns man not to be arrogant of his scientific progress as all of humanity would be gobbled up by the apparently lowly earth. Highness, elevation, altitude and greatness are only for Allah the Almighty, His Messenger (s.a.w.a.), the Ahle Bait (a.s.) and the righteous believers. Finally, the Divine Pen jotted with unmistakable authority,

"And We have raised for you your remembrance."

That is, Allah the Almighty granted the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) elevations that was worthy of his position and matched up to the Divine Throne. When the humans and the Jinn together cannot conjure up one verse of the Holy Quran, how is it possible that they can visualize the elevations of the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.)? The Almighty has merely granted the creatures a few glimpses into these dazzling elevations. For instance, is there any corner and nook of the earth where the voice of the Azaan cannot be heard? Is there any part in the East and the West where one cannot hear the Muazzin calling out the name of the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) and testifying to his Messengership? Allah the High has joined His Own remembrance with that of His beloved (s.a.w.a.) in a way that one's prayers cannot be complete without both the testimonies. Thus, in the entire universe, the soul of worship is the remembrance of Allah, which in turn is attached with the remembrance of His beloved (s.a.w.a.) and one cannot visualize Allah's worship without it.:

O the one who is praised in the above verse! O the one who was raised to the unimaginable skies during ascension! O the one who attained proximity to the lote tree! O the one whose mention echoes through the skies and the earth and whose name has been granted elevation by the Almighty Himself! O the beloved of Allah! O the Seal of the Prophets (a.s.)! Please enlighten us as to how many more lights are engulfed in the prism of your manifestation!

When we open the windows of history and browse through the invaluable tomes of traditions and sayings of the infallible guides (a.s.), we hear the following words echoing from him (s.a.w.a.):

O Ali! Your remembrance is my. remembrance and my remembrance is Allah's remembrance and Allah's

remembrance is worship.

1. *My Lord has informed me 'And I have raised for you your remembrance through Ali, your son-in-law.*

(Behaar al-Anwaar, vol. 36, p. 116)

2. *I and Ali are from one light.*

3. *O Ali! My flesh and blood are your flesh and blood.*

4. *O Ali! Faith is mixed in your flesh and blood just as it is mixed in my flesh and blood.*

5. *O Ali! But for you, a believer would not have been recognized.*

6. *Ali is with truth and truth is with Ali.*

(Excerpts from Dua-e-Nudbah)

7. *On the Day of Ghadeer, he (s.a.w.a.) declared, "There will be twelve successors after me; the first of them will be Ali Ibn Abi Taalib (a.s.) and the last of them will be the Mahdi."*

8. *Again, in one of the prophecies, he (s.a.w.a.) remarked, "My last successor will have a prolonged occultation. His name will be my name and his agnomen will be my agnomen. When he reappears, he will fill the earth with justice and equity as it would be fraught with injustice and oppression."*

And Allah the High says in His Book, 'He will enliven the earth after its death. And Allah has addressed the creatures thus, 'The remnant of Allah is good for you if you are believers.'

Allah the Glorified has stationed the remembrance of the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) at all the elevated places and altitudes that one can imagine, and at one such level, He addressed the grandson of the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.), Imam Husain (a.s.), thus,

O contented soul! Return to your Lord, you are satisfied with your Lord and your Lord is Satisfied with you. .

In yet another place, the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) informed,

Wait. For, that day is near when the Mahdi reappears. It is only after his reappearance that self proclaimed jurists, manipulative historians, conscienceless traditionalists and the deniers of the excellences of the Ahle Bait (a.s.), who are striving endlessly to deform the face of Islam and consider themselves as the protectors of Islam through the evils of terrorism, will receive their retribution.

O my Imam! O my beloved leader! Please take a glance at the holy shrines of your ancestors! For the sake of the majestic and highest remembrance of your great ancestors, whose mantle of inheritance lies on your shoulders and whose radiance emanates from the cloak of infallibility day and night, please come and address the sufferings of the oppressed and downtrodden throughout the world.

Let us all call out together, 'Hasten, o Abaa Saleh, o Mahdi, help us.'

The Explanations Of Ziyarat Of Imam Zamana (a.s.) On Friday

(Continued from previous issue)

Salutations be upon you o purified and civilized one, the God fearing.

This verse has mentioned two characteristics of Imam Mahdi (a.s.). **MOHAZZABO** which can be loosely translated as purified civilized and well mannered and the other one is **KHAAEF**, means God fearing.

MOHAZZABO is a derivative of word **HAZABA** and nominal predicate in the BAAB-E-TAFE'EL. Lexicons have described this word **MOHAZZABO** as a man of etiquette, urbane of pure character and immaculate. All these characteristics portray the persona of Imame-Zamaana (a.t.f.s.) perfectly.

Imam-e-Zamaana (a.t.f.s.) is the successor of the people of the cloak (**ASHAAB-E-KISAA**), whose infallibility has been proclaimed in Quran in Surah-e-Ahzaab, verse 33. He belongs to the same holy family which has been protected from all the impurities and imperfections.

The other characteristic that has been mentioned in the verse is KHAAEF which means God fearing. It is derived from word KHAUF, which means 'fear', and KHAAEF is a nominal subject.

A) Significance of Fear of God

While extolling the virtues of believers, the Holy Quran says:

Their sides draw away from (their) beds, they call upon their Lord in fear and in hope, and they spend (benevolently) out of what we have given them.

(Surah Sajdah (32): Verse 16)

The leader of the pious, Ameerul Momineen Ali Ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) says:

Fear is the garment of those who have recognized Allah.

(Gorar al-Hekam)

In other words those who have actually recognized Allah and have understood His greatness and exalted magnificence will fear Him every moment and minute of their lives and will never commit any unbecoming or untoward act.

Nevertheless, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) says:

Those who fear Allah the most accordingly enjoy the elevated status:: in front of Him .

(Behaarul Anwaar, vol. 77, p. 180, trad. 10)

B) Fear of God is a sign of His recognition

The above mentioned tradition from Hazrat Ali (a.s.) indicates that the fear of Allah is directly related to the cognizance of Allah. Thus Allah, the High, says in the Holy Quran:

Certainly, among the servants of Allah who fear Him the most are the learned men.

(Surah Faatir (35): Verse 28)

The Supreme guide for the mankind, Hazrat Muhammad Mustafa (s.a.w.a.) says:

A man's degree of fear of Allah is directly in proportion to his recognition of Allah.

(Behaarul Anwaar, vol. 70, p. 393, trad. 64)

The more he will recognize the Almighty, the more God-fearing he will be. Hazrat Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) says: . Its inscribed in the wisdom of Dawood,

"O son of Adam, your heart has been hardened because you have forgotten the Greatness of Allah, if only you: would have been aware of Allah's knowledge and conscious of His Greatness, you would fear him every single moment of your life. . .

(Amaali of Shaikh Abu Ja'far-e-Tusi (a.r.), p. 203, trad. 346)

C) Signs of the God-fearing

There are few signs of God fearing men: As the Holy Quran says:

And as for him who fears to stand in the presence of his Lord and keeps away the soul from low desires, then surely the garden that is the abode.

(Surah Naazeaat (79): Verses 40-41)

Ameerul Momeneen Ali Ibn Abi Taalib (a.s.) says:

Surely there are few servants of God who are so scared of Allah that their hearts have been reduced to smithereens. Due to which their speech is frugal despite they being eloquent, articulate, intellectual and strong. On account of their purity of deeds, they are hastening towards Allah. Even if they have performed substantial good deeds, for them its nominal. They feel disappointed and dejected for not being able to perform enough good deeds. They enumerate themselves among the lowliest, while they are virtuous and pious men.

(Behaarul Anwaar, vol. 69, p. 286, trad. 61)

If we ponder over the words of Imam Ali (a.s.) then we will find that people with actual fear of Allah are so far and few -- Men who are sparing with words though they are expressive and wise. Men who are embodiment of virtues and piety, who serve the cause of religion incessantly yet they feel they were inadequate and blame themselves for any shortcomings. Despite being highly intelligent and smart, they consider themselves debase and lowly.

We seem so far from the high expectations which our Imams (a.s.) have from us.

D) The world is in awe of a Godfearing man

Among the special bounties that Allah has bestowed upon His pious and God fearing servants is to ensure that the whole universe is in awe of them.

Allah has clearly mentioned in the Holy Quran that He has placed the fear of believers in the hearts of the non-believers.

(Refer Surah Aal-e-Imraan, verse 151, Surah Anfaal, verse 12)

Imam Ja'far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) says: One who is afraid of Allah then the Almighty ensures that everyone is fearful of him and whoever is not afraid of Allah then the Almighty makes him scared of everyone.

(Al Kaafi, vol. 2, p. 68, trad. 3)

In other words, except Allah the High we should neither be afraid nor be submissive to anyone. One of the devices of Shaitan to deviate people is to make them scared of everyone, while the virtuous and pious people are immune to such tactics. Allah has warned us against such instruments of Shaitan:

It is only the Shaitan that causes you to fear from his friends, but do not fear them, and fear Me if you are believers.

(Surah Aal-e-Imraan (3): Verse 175)

Fear of Allah has been further classified into various levels and grades, those interested may refer to al-Khesaal of Shaikh Saduq (a.r.), Behaarul Anwaar of Allamah Majlisi (a.r.), Hekaayaatul Khaaefin. In fact there is lot more in the discussion of Khauf or fear of Allah but for the sake of brevity we will conclude our discussion here.

(5) ASSALAAMO WALIYYUN NAASEH

Salutations be upon you o Master, O Admonisher

Like the previous verse, in this verse too Imam-e-Zamaana (a.t.f.s.) has been mentioned with two titles, **WALEE** or Master and **NAASEH** or admonisher.

WALEE: Perhaps no other word in Arabic language has such an all encompassing and comprehensive meaning and interpretation as much as the word **WALEE**. In the special edition of Eid-e-Ghadeer, we had an extensive discussion on the word **MAWLAA** which is derived from **WALEE**. The Word **WALEE** is on the scale of **FAAE'L** which is used to indicate a hyperbole.

WALEE is one of the names of Allah. **WALEE** has different meanings few of which are Master of affairs, Incharge, Proposer, Strategiser, Chief, King, Omnipotent, Owner, Leader, etc. Arab litterateurs like Ibn Atheer, Ibn Manzoor, Ibn Sikkeet, have dwelled on the meanings of the word and attempted to present its various interpretations.

If we pay attention to all the meanings of the word Wali we will notice they all point towards one basic fact about a being who has complete control of power and rights over us. And certainly, the persona of Imam-e-Zamaana (a.t.f.s.) is the being who is the possessor of absolute power and command over us.

NAASEH: **NAASEH** is a nominal subject which means the admonisher. In this verse, our Imam-e-Zamaana (a.t.f.s.) has been mentioned as the one who admonishes us. The sacred religion of Islam has emphasized on the importance of advise and admonition.

A) The importance of admonition

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has said: Among the servants of Allah, he will definitely have the most privileged status on the Judgment Day who made endeavours to give good advice to His servants

(Kaafi, vol. 2, p. 208, hadith 5)

Good advice to fellow brothers increases the mutual love and respect for each other. In fact it's one of the duties of the religious brothers to advise each other. The foundation of admonition is love and affection because a jealous friend will never wish good for his brother. Only someone who is loyal will want to give a good advice to his friend..

B) The qualities of an admonisher

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said: There are four attributes of a genuine admonisher and well wisher 1) When he judges, his decisions are just and judicious, 2) He always dispenses righteousness from his side, 3) Whatever he likes for himself he wishes it for others as well, 4) He never raises a hand on anyone and never tramples on the rights of others.

(Tohaful Oqul, Ibn Shoaib Harraani, p. 60)

Undoubtedly, we will not get a better admonisher and well wisher than Imam-eZamaana (a.t.f.s.). He always wishes the best for us. It becomes our responsibility to reciprocate it by following those advices and act upon them lest we become the example of the following Quranic verse:

And if I intend to give you good advice, my advice will not profit you if Allah intended that He should leave you to go astray...

(Surah Hud (11): Verse 34)

It is quite likely that some people may wonder that how come an occult Imam be a source of admonition for us. The answer to the question is similar to the doubt that what is the benefit of an occult Imam. And it may be reiterated here that the occultation of Imam (a.s.) is from our side and not from his side.

As our fourth Imam, Zainul Abedin (a.s.) said,

During the Major Occultation there will be a few such sincere believers that their faith will be so strong that for them occultation of Imam (a.s.) will be like the presence of Imam (a.s.). These are the true believers and our genuine followers. They invite people towards the religion, publicly and privately.

Let all of us pray that Allah, the Exalted, may give us such good fortune that we are included among the true believers and genuine followers of Imam (a.s.)

(to be continued)

“Kitabul Ghaybah” Esoteric Sciences Of Aale Muhammad (a.s.)

The book 'Al-Ghaybah' is among the most valuable legacies of our religion. The book is on the subject of Imamate, which is our central and fundamental belief.

This invaluable book was practically lost but for an old manuscript. Even there, the errors of the copier had caused confusion in concepts. Around thirty years ago a pious scholar undertook the task of editing this book and got it published.

A Brief Introduction of the Author

It is necessary to present over here a short introduction of the author:

Name of book	: Kitab-ul-Ghaybah
Name of author	: Muhammad bin Ibrahim bin Jafar
Kuniyat of author	: Abu Abdillah
Title of author	: Al-Kaatib – Al Nomani
Common title	: Ibn Abi Zainab

His name is included in the list of the early traditionalists of the fourth century hijri. He was the student of the 'pillar of Islam' - Shaikh Yaqub al-Kulayni (r.a.), (whose book 'al-Kafi' is among the four main books of the Shias) and he (alNomani) learnt the subject of 'hadees' under his guidance. He got the honour of noting down the traditions (ahadith) narrated by his teacher and hence he became renowned by the title of 'al -Kaatib'.

The book 'Kitabul Ghaybah' which is commonly known as 'Ghaybat-e-Nomani' contains twenty six chapters. It is published by 'Maktab al-Sadiq' of Tehran and it contains 332 pages. Its date of publication is not mentioned but it was entirely edited in the year 1397 A.H

Chapter One

This chapter contains 58 traditions and deals with the topic of concealing the secrets of Ahlul Bait (a.s.) from the unworthy people. For instance, the Motezalah who accept the distinction of Ameerul Momeneen (a.s.) over all others but at the same time believe that an inferior person can be chosen over a superior person,

... Is He then Who guides to truth worthier to be followed, or he who himself does not go aright unless he is guided? What then is the matter with you, how do you judge?

(Surah Yunus (10): Verse 35)

Whether it is the Motazelah or the Ashairah or other enemies of Ahlul Bait (a.s.) – all of them are blind and biased. They are not able to distinguish truth from falsehood. Thus it is necessary that we don't narrate such traditions to these kinds of people. Otherwise they will go to the extent of refuting and rebelling against Allah, His messenger (s.a.w.a) and our holy Imams (a.s.). Imam Sadiq (a.s.) says in one tradition,

"Some people consider me as their Imam, but I'm certainly not their leader. May Allah curse them! Because the things that I conceal, they reveal it among the people. I say "so and so"

(without taking any. names) and they say "certainly Imam was referring to so and so person (they take the name)." Then Imam (a.s.) says, Certainly, I'm the Imam of the one who obeys me.

(Al Ghaybah; Chap. 1, H. No 8)

Chapter Two

The second chapter is based on the Tafseer (exegesis) of verse 102 of Surah Aal-e-Imran in which Allah says

“And hold fast by the covenant of Allah all together and be not disunited.”

(Surah Aal-e-Imraan (3): Verse 102)

A person came to Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and said 'I have heard that Allah has told the people to hold His rope (covenant) steadfastly. Then which is that rope (covenant) with whom we have to attach ourselves? And about which breakup and separation have we been cautioned?

Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) bowed down his head for a while. He (s.a.w.a.) then raised it and while pointing towards Ameerul Momineen Ali (a.s.) said,

He is the one who is the 'rope (covenant) of Allah.' The one who adheres to him will remain safe in this world and in the Hereafter too, he shall not be deviated.

(Ibid; Chap. 2, Trad. 1)

Chapter Three

The traditions concerning Imamate & Khilafat have been narrated in this chapter, The appointment of the Imam and his successor are Allah's prerogative and privilege.

Once a group of around twenty people were present with Imam Sadiq (a.s.). He (a.s.) said,

You may be under the impression that appointing an Imam is the responsibility of our family and we can appoint anyone whom we desire. By Allah! It is not as you think. This is a covenant from the side of Allah that He revealed on Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a). In it is the name written of every Imam in sequence.

(Ibid; Chap. 3, Trad. 1)

Chapter Four

This chapter includes those traditions that mention that Imams (a.s.) shall be only twelve and they are appointed by Allah. Hazrat Jibrael (a.s.) came in the presence of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) and said,

Allah (s.w.t.) has ordered you to get your daughter Fatima (s.a.) married to Ali (a.s.). Thus Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) did as he was instructed by Allah.

(Ibid; Chap. 4, Trad. 1)

Chapter Five

This chapter contains the traditions which discuss about those people who have falsely claimed the exalted rank of Imamate and also about those people who have forsaken the rightly appointed Imams (a.s.) and have chosen to follow the false claimants.

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) says, There are three groups of people with whom Allah will not speak on the day of Judgment nor shall He purify them. And He has destined a severe chastisement for them. The first group is of those people who falsely claim the divine status of Imamate for themselves. The second group is of those people who reject the divinely appointed Imam. The third group is of those people who consider the first two groups as correct and believe that Islam is benefited by them.

(Ibid; Chap. 5, Trad. 3)

Chapter Six

In this chapter, the author has collected those traditions of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) that mention his successors and which the famous scholars have collected in their books. The narrators of all these traditions are the revered & respected companions of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a).

For instance, Mashrooq narrates, We were once with Ibne Masood when a person came to him and asked, "Has your Prophet informed you about his successors?" Ibne Masood replied 'Yes. But you are the first person to ask me such a question while you are youngest among the people. I heard the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) say:

The successors after me shall be equal to the Nuqaba (chiefs) of Hazrat Moosa (a.s.).

(Ibid; Chap. 6, Trad. 1)

Similarly, he (s.a.w.a.) said in another tradition

They will be twelve, equal to the Nuqaba of Bani Israel.

(ibid, Chap. 6, Trad. 3)

In a similar manner, the author has bought traditions narrated by Anas bin Malik, Jabir bin Samorah Savaee, Abu Huzefa, Samorah bin Jundab and Abdullah bin Umar.

Chapter Seven

This chapter enumerates the traditions which state that anyone who passes the night without recognizing the Imam of his time and if he departs from the world in that condition, his death will be of jaaheliyah' (the period before the advent of Islam). Similarly if a person accepts the divine religion of Islam without acknowledging the Imam, then Allah will not accept his (good) deeds.

Imam Baqir (a.s.) says, The one who follows the religion of Allah by His worship and puts himself in difficulties for His sake, but he does not follow an Imam appointed by Allah, then his efforts will not be accepted and he will be deviated and in turmoil.

(ibid, Chap. 7, Trad. 1)

Numerous traditions on this topic have been mentioned in the earlier special issues of al - Muntazar and also in the

Correspondence Course Lessons' that are printed by Association of Imam Mahdi (a.s.). Esteemed readers can refer to them for more details.

Chapter Eight

'The earth can never remain devoid of a divine representative' Traditions on this topic are mentioned in this chapter.

Chapter Nine

Those traditions that say that 'If only two people remain in this world, then one of them will be the Proof of Allah' are mentioned in this chapter.

Chapter Ten

This chapter is devoted to the occultation of twelfth Imam - Imam al Muntazar (a.s.). It contains the tradition of Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) which cautions us about the things that are the cause of deviation during the occultation of Imam Zamana (a.s.). This chapter is very vast and has quite a few sections. It starts from page 140 and ends at page 194 – a total of 54 pages devoted to this topic. It deals with a range of topics related to occultation. The researcher, Ali Akber Ghaffari has adorned this chapter by including the views of contemporary scholars. Over here we will suffice ourselves by mentioning only one tradition.

Furaat bin Ahnaf narrates from Imam Sadiq (a.s.) who narrates from his ancestors (a.s.) that

During the reign of Ameerul Momineen Ali (a.s.), the water of the Euphrates had risen to dangerous levels. Ali (a.s.) along with his two sons – Imam Hasan (a.s.) & Imam Husain (a.s.) mounted their horses and reached a place by the name of Taifah-e-Saqif. When the people saw them they were relieved and knew that Ali (a.s.) would rescue them from the swelling river. Hazrat Ali (a.s.) addressed them and said, 1 and both my sons shall be martyred. Certainly, during the last times, Allah will raise a person from my progeny who shall avenge our blood. He shall remain in occultation so that the misguided and irresponsible people should not be able to identify him. In fact the ignorant and fools of those times will say Allah is not in need of the progeny of Muhammad.

(Ibid; Chap. 10, Trad. 1)

In the fifth section of this chapter, traditions from other Imams (a.s.) concerning Imam-e-Zamaana (a.t.f.s.) have been collected. Here, we shall mention a tradition that clearly indicates the type of people who shall have certainty during the occultation of Imam-e-Zamaana (a.t.f.s.). Imam Sadiq (a.s.) says,

When the Qaem shall rise, people will deny him because he will come before them as a youth. Only those people from whom Allah has taken a pledge in 'Alam-e-Zar' shall remain firm and steadfast.

(Ibid; Chap. 10, Sec. 5, Trad. 43)

Chapter Eleven

It contains those traditions in which the followers and lovers of Ahlul Bait (a.s.) have been exhorted to patiently await the reappearance of Imam-e-Zamaana (a.t.f.s.). The narrator asked Imam Baqir (a.s.) about the verse of Quran

"...be patient and excel in patience and remain steadfast..." Imam (a.s.) replied, Be patient in fulfilling your duties towards Allah. Be patient and tolerant against the enemies and be attentive to your Imam (a.s.) (i.e. be in contact with your Imam by means of awaiting:

Chapter Twelve

Here, those traditions have been compiled that mention about the divisions and differences among the Shias and their trials and tribulations during occultation: For instance, Imam Sadiq (a.s.) says.

His reappearance shall not occur until some of you spit on each other's face while some of you curse each other. Till the extent that some of you will call the others as liars.

Chapter Thirteen

The characteristics & traits of Imam-e-Zamaana (a.t.f.s.) in the light of Quranic verses and traditions of the Holy Imams (a.s.) have been mentioned in this chapter. The attributes of Janabe Narjis Khatoon (s.a.) too have been mentioned. The manner and approach of Imam-e-Zamaana (a.t.f.s.), his judgments, signs through which he can be recognized, his clothes, attributes of his companions and soldiers and other similar details have been discussed in this chapter.

Chapter Fourteen

This chapter deals with the signs that will appear immediately before the reappearance of Imam-e-Zamaana (a.t.f.s.). One point that needs to be kept in mind over here is that we are awaiting the reappearance of Imam-e-Zamaana (a.t.f.s.) and not the signs preceding it. Also we should always remember that just as the day of resurrection (Qiyamat) is a definite occurrence, likewise the reappearance of Imam-e-Zamaana (a.t.f.s.) too is a certainty and no change (Bad'a) can take place in this matter because it is a Divine Promise and Allah does not break His promises.

Chapter Fifteen

In this chapter, the calamities and the tribulations before the reappearance of Imam-e-Zamaana (a.t.f.s.) have been explained.

Mufazzal ibn Umar says that 'We were in the presence of Imam Sadiq (a.s.) when a discussion arose about Imam-e-Zamaana (a.t.f.s.). I said 'I hope his reappearance takes place easily.' Imam (a.s.) replied,

This affair (of reappearance) will not actualize till (due the severe calamities) you do not separate the frozen blood from the sweat.

The difficulties before reappearance shall be so harsh that the blood of an individual shall freeze, his flesh will be separated from his bones and he will be completely engulfed in troubles and difficulties.

Chapter Sixteen

This chapter comprises of traditions that prohibit the fixing of a time for the reappearance of Imam (a.s.). Muhammad ibn Muslim narrates that Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said

Don't hesitate in refuting the one who fixes a time for the reappearance (of Imam Zamana (a.s.)). For, we have not fixed the time of reappearance of the Qaem (a.s.) from our side.

(Ibid, Chap. 16, Trad. 3)

Chapter Seventeen

The problems that shall arise due to the deeds of ignorant and uninformed people after the reappearance of Imam-e-Zamaana (a.t.f.s.) have been enumerated in this chapter.

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) says, When our Qaem shall appear, he will have to deal with ignorant and immature people. The troubles caused by them will be more severe than those caused by the infidel Arabs to Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a). The narrator asked Imam (a.s.) 'How is this possible?' Imam (a.s.) replied

Certainly, Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) came at a time when the people were worshipping idols made of stone and wood. But when our Qaem shall appear, the people will be believing in the Book (of Allah) but they will interpret it exactly opposite to what it says and will argue with him (a.s.) through the Book. Then Imam (a.s.) said Know that his justice will enter every house just as (the heat of) summer and the chill of) winter enters every dwelling.

(ibid, Chap. 17, Trad. 3)

Note: It is easier to destroy the physical idols made of wood and stone than to destroy the views and opinions of an individual. They are 'mental idols' with whom every person is strongly attached. Then those who interpret Quranic verses according to their whims and fancies must be cautious. When Imam (a.s.) shall appear, he will wage a war against such people.

Chapter Eighteen

This chapter speaks about the 'standard' (flag) of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) that shall be carried by Imam-e-Zamaana (a.t.f.s.). It is the same 'standard' which Hazrat Ali (a.s.) had carried in the battle of Siffin and said

This is the flag that no one will raise after me except the Qaem

(Ibid, Chap. 18 Trad. 1)

Chapter Twenty

This chapter deals with the characteristics of the companions of Imame-Zamaana (a.t.f.s.). Traditions in this regard have been published in the earlier issues of al-Muntazar. Esteemed readers can refer to those issues. The companions of Imam (a.s.) will be those who are in the forefront of doing virtuous and righteous acts. Majority of the companions will be young. Very few shall be old - like salt in food or kohl (surma) in the eyes.

(Ibid, Chap. 20, Trad. 6)

Chapter Twenty One

The conditions of the Shias before and after reappearance have been mentioned in this chapter.

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) says. When our Qaem shall appear, those who would consider themselves as the beneficiary of his reappearance (i.e. Shias) shall rebel against him. On the other hand, those were worshipping the sun and the moon shall join his (a.s.) army and benefit from his reappearance.

(Ibid; Chap. 21, Trad. 1)

Note: This tradition clearly explains that we should not rest on the laurels of being a Shia and lover of Imam-e-Zamaana (a.t.f.s.). Rather we should intensely guard this precious bounty and regularly recite 'Dua-e-Ghareeq' so that at the time of difficulty we do not forsake the love and mastership of Ahlul Bait (a.s.). We should not be surprised to learn that sun & moon worshippers will join the army of Imam-e-Zamaana (ait.f.s.), History is a witness that people have changed their sides and have come out of darkness (of falsehood) into light (of truth). The example of Janabe Hurr (a.s.) is one such case

Chapter Twenty Two

This chapter deals with those traditions that state that Imam-e-Zamaana (a.t.f.s.) shall give a fresh invitation to the people. *Imam Sadiq (a.s.) says, When the Qaem shall appear, he will give a fresh invitation (to the people). Just as Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) had invited the people (to Islam)'*

On hearing this Janabe Abu Baseer stood up from his place, kissed the forehead of Imam (a.s.) and said 'I testify that you are my Imam in this world and in the hereafter. I love your friends and bear enmity with your enemies. I bear witness that you are the 'wali' (master) from the side of Allah' On hearing this Imam (a.s.) said:

May Allah have mercy upon you.

Chapter Twenty Three

This section deals with traditions that speak about the young age at which Imam-e-Zamaana (a.t.f.s.) attained the lofty rank of Imamate.

Chapter Twenty Four

This chapter is of special importance. It contains traditions in which Imam Sadiq (a.s.) has categorically stated that after him, his eldest son Janabe Ismail will not be the Imam. Rather, Imam Moosa Kazim (a.s.) will be his successor and the next Imam. Thus this chapter contains traditions that reject the Imamate of Janabe Ismail.

Chapter Twenty Five

This chapter talks about those traditions that say that the one who recognizes the Imam will never be harmed (in matters of faith) even if the deliverance be delayed.

Chapter Twenty Six

This is the last chapter and deals with the tenure of Imam Zamana's (a.t.f.s.) Imamate. According to the tradition of Imam Sadiq (a.s.), the period of Imamate of Imam-e-Zamaana (a.t.f.s.) is around 19 years and a few months

O Allah! Hasten the reappearance of Imam-e-Zamaana (a.t.f.s.) and grant tranquility to heart of Janabe Zahra (s.a.).

The Belief Concerning Imam Mahdi (a.s.) **And The Scholars Of Ahle Sunnat**

Every era has a distinct Imam (leader). Some people consider the Holy Quran to be an Imam. There are others who differ. The Holy Quran is not a book for any specific age; rather it is a book for all times.

The discussion about the Imam of the Age assumes greater importance in the light of the 71st verse of Surah Bani Israel,

(Remember) the day when we will call every people with their Imam.

It is with reference to this verse of the Holy Quran, that both Shiah as well as Sunni traditionalists have reported the famous tradition of the Holy Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.a).

One who dies without recognizing the Imam of his Age, has died the death of the era of ignorance.

There are some who allege that the belief in Imam Mahdi (a.s.) is only concocted by the Shias to soothe their hearts that were afflicted by defeats in history. This allegation necessitates a discussion on whether the belief in Imam Mahdi (a.s.) is peculiar only to Shias, or is it found in other sects of Islam as well?

When we glance at the books compiled by the scholars of other sects, it becomes clear that their reliable books, not only extensively discuss about Mahdaviyat but also consider the belief in Imam Mahdi (a.s.) as a pure Islamic belief. They accept that traditions in this regard are numerous.

The belief concerning Imam Mahdi (a.s.) and the Holy Quran

He it is Who sent His Apostle with guidance and the religion of truth, that He might cause it to prevail over all religions, though the polytheists may be averse.

(Surah Taubah (9): verse 33)

The exegesis of the above verse is explained by Saeed Ibne Jubair who reports that this verse refers to Imam Mahdi (a.s.) who is from the pure progeny of Hazrat Fatemah Zahra (s.a.)

This view is also echoed by Hafiz Ganji Sha'faei in his compilation, 'Al Bayan Fi Akhbaare Saahebiz Zamaan' (chapter 24, page 155) and by Shablanji in 'Noorul Absaar' (page 176)

In addition to the above there are several traditions from the Holy Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.a.) explaining verses of Quran which discuss the re-appearance of Imam Mahdi (a.s.). These are reported extensively by Janab Sulayman Qunduzi Hanafi (d. 1293 AH) in his celebrated compilation, 'Yanaabiul Mawaddah'. The 71st chapter of this book is dedicated to those verses of the Holy Quran which have been revealed about Hazrat Imam Mahdi . (a.s.) and his companions.

One of the several verses quoted in this chapter is the 105th verse of Surah Ambiya. The verse states,

And certainly We wrote in the Book after the reminder that (as for) the land, My righteous servants shall inherit it.

Regarding the above verse, the author brings forth a tradition from Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) and Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) which states,

in the above verse, righteous servants refers to Hazrat Qaem (a.s.) and his companions. In the same way, Ibne Sabbaaghe Maliki 12, page 345), while referring to the 61st verse of Surah Zukhruf narrates.

Mahdi (a.s.) is the one who will be present in the last era. The signs of Qiyamat will be apparent after his reappearance.: This means that the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (a.s.) will be near to Qiyamat."

A similar narration is reported by Abdullah Ibne Masood from the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.). This tradition is also reported by Abu Saeed Khudri and Abu Hurairah and has been included in the following books - 'Musnad' of Ahmad Hanbal (vol. 1, p. 376), 'Sunan of Tirmidhi (vol. 6, book 34, chap. 52, trad. 2231, p. 505) and 'Majmauz Zawaaed' (Haithami, vol. 7, p. 315). The tradition is as follows,

Resurrection will not occur till a person appears from my Ahle Bait (a.s.) whose name will be my name.

In other words, while Resurrection is a certainty, it will not occur till the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (a.s.). We can thus assert that the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (a.s.) is necessary and undeniable, just as Resurrection.

The Holy Quran states, · Those who do not believe in it would hasten it on, and those who believe are in fear from it, and they know that it is the truth. Now most surely those who dispute obstinately concerning the hour are in a great error.

(Surah Shooraa (42): verse 18)

With reference of the above verse, the book of 'Yanaabiul Mawaddah' (vol. 71, p. 425), reports a tradition from Mufazzal thus,

"When Mufazzal asked Imam Sadiq (a.s.) about the above verse, he said, The doubters are those who will ask that when Imam Mahdi (a.s.) was born; when will he reappear. O Mufazzal, remember that these talks are similar to harbouring a doubt in the decree and destiny of Allah. And these people will bear a heavy loss in this world and the hereafter.

A similar tradition is reported by Sudair Sairafi

The long period of occultation will cause many to deny (his existence) and will lead them into misguidance with discussions that he has not been born; others will say that he was born, but he died; some will say that the 11th Imam (a.s.) did not have any son; others will say that the spirit of the Quem (a.s.) is embodied in another person. All these discussions are inappropriate, corrupt and fraudulent.

The above tradition is also reported by Abdullah ibn Masood from the Holy Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.a.).

A similar tradition is reported by Ibne Hajar Asqalani in 'Lisaanul Meezaan' (vol. 5, p. 130) and by Jaabir Ibn Abdullah from the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) as follows:

Whoever denies the Mahdi (a.s.) is as if he has denied everything that is revealed upon Muhammad (s.a.w.a.).

The truthfulness of the prophecies in the tradition from Imam Sadiq (a.s.) about the doctrines regarding Imam Mahdi (a.s.) has been established beyond doubt.

Rejection of the belief in Imam Mahdi (a.s.) is tantamount to apostasy in Islam because this belief is among one of the pure fundamental beliefs of Islam. This has been evidently clarified in verses and traditions. Despite all these proofs, if a person chooses to reject the belief in Imam Mahdi (a.s.), he has gone out of the sphere of Islam. We seek the help of Allah that He protects us from misguidance in the last age.

Coming to the discussion about the frequency of these traditions especially in the books of other sects of Islam, the book, of Al-Sawaa'iqul Mohreqah (Chapter 11, Book 1, page 256) reports this narration from Abul Hasan Aaberi thus:

These traditions are numerous and a majority of the narrators of these traditions have reported them from the Holy Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.a.),

He (Imam Mahdi (a.s.)) will reappear and will be from my Ahle Bayt (a.s.). He will end oppression and injustice from this earth and establish a government based on equality and justice. It will be during his period that Hazrat Isa (a.s.) will reappear and will pray behind him.

Abul Hasan Aaberi is highly respected amongst the Ahle Sunnat. His full name was Muhammad Ibne Hussain Ibne Ibrahim Aaberi Sajistani (d. 363 AH). One of his famous books is 'Manaqabush Shafaei'.

Ibne Khaldoon writes on page 367 of 'Al-Muqaddimah',

"It is famous in every era of the Muslim community that, in the last age, a person from his Ahle Bayt (s.a.w.a.) will reappear. He (a.s.) will be a firm pillar for religion and will make justice and equality common in society. All the Muslims will be subservient to him and he will rule over all Islamic countries. His name will be Mahdi (a.s.)."

Janab Shamsuddin Muhammad Safaarini, a scholar from the Hanbali sect (1114-1188 A.H.) writes in his ode - "Adduraatul Muziyyah Fee Aqeedatil Firqatil Marziyyah" about the belief in Imam Mahdi (a.s.) and regarding his reappearance as follows -

"Whatever has been revealed in the Holy Quran and traditions about the signs of resurrection is the truth. There is no doubt in it."

After this he says,

"The sheer number of traditions reported about Imam Mahdi (a.s.) has reached to the extent of the belief being authentic. And this is considered amongst the Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat as a part of their belief. To believe in Hazrat Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) is among the necessities of religion. This is the view of the scholars and even the Shias agree on this." . Till now, we have concluded that the belief in Imam Mahdi (a.s.) is a pure Islamic belief and one who denies it is an apostate. Traditions that have been narrated on this subject are so many that their authenticity is beyond

doubt. Now let us turn our attention to the genealogy of imam Mahdi (a.s.) and understand what is referred to in the traditions as the "Ahle Bayt" of the Holy Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.a).

'Arful Wardi Fee Akhbaril Mahdi' (vol. 2, p. 166) and Jam'ul Jawaam'e' by Hafiz Jalaaluddin Suyuti (vol. 1, p. 5) report this narration from Aabri that Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) reports from his father, Imam Zainul Abedeen (a.s.) and he from his father till the narration reaches Janabe Fatemah Zahra (s.a.) who reports,

The Holy Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.a) said, O Fatemah! I give you glad tidings of Mahdi. He is from your progeny.

This tradition further highlights the merits of Imam Mahdi (a.s.). This is because the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) mentioned this to Janab Fatemah (s.a.) as a matter of pride that the Mahdi of Islam would be from her progeny.

In addition, a Hadis-e-Qudsi is reported about Imam Mahdi (a.s.). This tradition is narrated by Jaabir Ibne Abdullah Ansari, who saw it written on a green tablet - Lauhe Fatemi. A scholar has reported this tradition in great detail as follows -

Jabir Ibne Abdullah narrates that I take Allah as my Witness that I saw this written on a tablet

-

In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, The Most Merciful. This is a scripture descended from the Wise and Supreme God to Muhammad (s.a.w.a.), His Prophet, His Light, His Messenger, His Luminous veil and the Guide towards Him. Gabriel has brought this from the Lord of the Worlds.... I have raised no Prophet who completed his life and ended his time, except that I appointed a successor for him. O Prophet! I have made you superior to all prophets and made your successor superior to all successors. After him (Ali (a.s.)), I granted you honour through Hasan (a.s.) and Husain (a.s.), your beloveds and your grandsons. On the basis of love and hate for their descendents, I will reward or punish the people. The first among them is Ali (a.s.), the leader of worshippers and the ornament of My previous appointees. After him is his son Muhammad (Baqir) (a.s.). He is the splitter of My Knowledge and the treasurer of My Wisdom. Those who are skeptical of Jafar's (a.s.) position will soon perish. I shall raise Jafar's (a.s.) position. I will glorify him and make him happy by favoruing his followers, helpers and friends. After him I have selected Musa (a.s.). One who denies any one of them has denied My bounties. One who denies the eighth (successor) of them it is as if he has denied all My successors. Surely, Ali (a.s.) is my friend and helper. It is necessary for Me that I shall make his eyes cool through his son Muhammad (Taqi) (a.s.). He will succeed him. He is the inheritor of My knowledge and the treasurer of My wisdom. After him I shall perfect the goodness in his son Ali (Naqi) (a.s.), who is My successor and helper. In his progeny I shall bring out Hasan (a.s.) who shall invite people to My path and serve as the treasurer of My knowledge. Then I shall complete this lineage by his son MHMD, a mercy for the Universe. These are My true successors. Through them I shall remove obscure and blinding insurrection and correct the corruptions. Through them I will release my servants from bondage and slavery. On these people are continuous blessings and mercies from their religion. These are the ones who are rightly guided. The minarets of light for the guidance of mankind.

SHABAAN 1429 A.H.

(Faraedus Simtain, Shaikhul Islam Hamui Shafaei, Chapter 2, pages 137-139)

This is a very valuable tradition explaining many things. In this tradition, the twelve successors of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) are introduced clearly along with their names and special merits. These are the same twelve successors who are reported in the authentic tradition narrated by Jabir Ibne Abdullah and which is reported in Sihah Sitta.

We pray to Allah, morning and evening, that He hastens the reappearance of our beloved Imam Mahdi (a.s.). Amen.

Sheikh Murtuza Ansari (r.a.) And Imam-e-Zamaana (a.t.f.s.)

How can one eulogize that virtuous soul which not only made itself proximate to the source of light but enveloped its entire self within the shadow of that light. This light is not an ordinary illumination but the pure radiance of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) around which that person would circumambulate until he became the possessor of the salutation of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) to his fifth vicegerent (a.s.).

Yes! Indeed we refer to the exalted and illustrious companion of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), Janabe Jabir Ibne Abdullah Ansari (r.a.). His entire existence was in the service of the Pure Ahle Bait (a.s.).

It is customary that when a person achieves evident success, he is referred to by his ancestral lineage that he is the son or the grandson of this eminent personality. Keeping in tune with this tradition, we have prefaced this discussion of Sheikh Murtaza Ansari (r.a.) with the mention of his ancestor Janabe Jabir Ibne Abdullah Ansari (r.a.). In reality, it is the proof of the chastity of his blood that a person was born in his lineage, who strengthened Shiaism. He had reached to such an outstanding position in jurisprudence that he is recognized today as 'Khaatamul Mujtahideen' (The seal of Jurisprudents). It is as though the servitude to Ahle Bait (a.s.) has been handed to him in heritage. On studying the history of his life, we find that it is replete with the services to religion and to the Imam of the Age (a.s.).

It is a matter of excellence that he was born of the day of Ghadeer in the city of Darfool in 1214 A.H. His father Allama Sheikh Muhammad Amin (a.r.) was considered among the great Scholars of that period. His mother was the daughter of a well-known Scholar, herself being among the pious and knowledgeable women of the time.

Characteristics and Personality

It has been mentioned regarding the academic pursuits of Sheikh Ansari (r.a.) that he had learnt Qur'an by the age of five and had proceeded to the learning and mastery of various other sciences. These included Arabic grammar, syntax and language, logic and theology and other intellectual sciences. After this, he concentrated on Usul and Fiqh till he attained the position of Ijtihad (Jurisprudence) at the mere age of 16 years. His personality left an indelible mark on the scholarly community which is apparent even today. We find numerous recorded incidents that give us a glimpse into his illustrious personality. We briefly describe some of these.

His teacher Sheikh Ali (a.r.), the son of the renowned Sheikh Ja'far Kashiful Ghita (a.r.) says regarding him:

The hearing of a thing is greater than it's seeing except your Sheikh, Sheikh Murtaza, because seeing him is superior to what has been described regarding him. . .

(Fuqaha-e-Namdar-e-Shia, p. 329; Shakshiyat-e-Shaikh Ansari, p. 4)

Marhoom Hajj Mirza Habibulah Rashti (a.r.) enjoyed a position of eminence among the numerous students of Sheikh Murtaza (a.r.) who had reached the level of Ijtihad. He used to

explain the teachings of the Sheikh to others students after the completion of his lecture. His says regarding his teacher:

He (Sheikh Murtaza) was close to the position of infallibility in his knowledge and actions.

(Bidaeyul Afkaar, p. 457) Several signs originating from him have been recorded in the books.

Contact with Imam Zamaana (a.s.)

As has been described herein above, the life of Sheikh Murtaza Ansari has been a litany of perpetual service to Imam-e-Zamaana (a.t.f.s.) till it reached a position of such excellence that his character was a collection of virtuosity in body and soul.

He fulfilled the responsibilities of the age of occultation, garnered the satisfaction of Imam-e-Zamaana (a.t.f.s.). It was purity of his soul, sincerity of action, the fervor of his religious obligations and his earnest affection for the Imams (a.s.) that he acquired the honorable stature of meeting Imam-e-Asr (a.s.). Marhoom Sheikh Mahmoud Iraqi (air.), his student, enumerates him among the list of eminent dignitaries who have presented themselves before Imam-e-Zamaana (a.t.f.s.). He has mentioned concerning Shiekh Ansari (a.r.):

"The seventh of them is our great Sheikh, honourable teacher and respected authority - As-Sheikh Murtaza al-Tustari al-Ansari the chaste soul."

There have been many events documented concerning the meeting of Sheikh Murtaza (a.r.) with Imam-e-Zamaana (a.s.). We mention only two incidents herein.

(1)

Aga Mir Sayyed Muhammad Bahbahaani narrates through a student of the Sheikh. It was midnight in Karbala and I came out for a bath (in the Hammam). I had a lamp in my hand to dispel the darkness. I saw a man in the distance and recognized him to be Sheikh Ansari (a.r.). As I drew closer. I was perplexed: Where was the Sheikh, who incidentally had a weak eyesight, going in such pitch darkness? Carefully, I followed him. He stopped near a house and was reading the Ziyarat Jami'a at the doorstep. He entered on completion of the Ziyarat. Though I could not observe anything more, but I heard the voice of the Sheikh conversing with somebody. Then, I went to the Hammam and later performed the Ziyarat of the sacred Mausoleum. On return I presented myself before Shaikh Murtaza Ansari (a.r.) and asked him about the said night. He refused initially and after much insistence answered:

"I got permission to present myself before Imam -e-Asr (a.t.f.s.) and recited Ziyarat-eJameah at the corner of that house. I sought permission again and presented myself in his (a.s.) esteemed presence. I asked him some important questions to which he (a.s.) replied."

After this the Shaikh took a covenant from me that I shall not disclose this to anyone till he is alive.

(Zindagaani wa Shaksiyat Shaikh Murtaza Ansari, p. 106, Inayat Hazrat Mahdi-e-Mawo'od be Ulema wa Maraaje' Taqleed, p. 87)

2)

We can find another interesting incident in the life of Shaikh Murtaza Ansari (r.a.). When Ayatullah al Uzma Haaj Shaikh Muhammad Hasan Najafi, the author of Jawaharul Kalaam (r.a.) left for his heavenly abode, people approached Shaikh Murtaza Ansari (r.a.), asking him to assume the responsibilities of the Marje' Taqleed and sought Tauzeehul Masael from him. However, Shaikh Murtaza Ansari (r.a.) refused saying he will not accept Marjeyyat when Sayyadul Ulema Mazandarani (a.r.) who is more knowledgeable than him is alive and stays in Babylon.

Shaikh Murtaza Ansari (r.a.) wrote a letter to Sayyadul Ulema and requested him to come to Najaf and assume the office of Hauz-e-Ilmiyyah. In reply Sayyadul Ulema wrote:

"It is true that during my days in Najaf I debated with you and was better versed in fiqh than you. However I have left Najaf for a long period during which I have been unable to continue teaching and learning. I have also left debating and discussing. On this basis / find you more knowledgeable than me and request you to accept Marjeyyat."

Shaikh Murtaza Ansari (r.a.), however did not yet accept Marjeyyat and said that he does not deem himself to be worthy of such a position. He said he will accept the Marjeyyat only when Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) grants him the permission to do so.

One day as per the routine Shaikh Murtaza Ansari (r.a.) was with his students when an illustrious person entered. Nobility and dignity were reflecting from his face. He addressed Shaikh Murtaza Ansari (r.a.) asking:

What is your opinion about a lady whose husband has been transformed (Maskh)? (This problem has not been explained in any book because Maskh is not found in this nation).

Shaikh Murtaza Ansari (r.a.) replied: Since this problem has not been discussed in the books of Jurisprudence I cannot answer this question.

The person inquired: Let us assume that such an event takes place in this nation. What would be your opinion regarding this?

Shaikh Murtaza Ansari (r.a.) replied: My opinion. (Fatwa) is that the lady should undergo Iddah-e-Talaaq (Iddah of Divorce) if her husband is transformed into a living being because he is still alive, after which she can remarry. However if her husband is transformed into a non-living thing then she must undergo Iddah-e-Wafaat (Iddah of death) after which she is free to remarry.

The person said the following sentence thrice:

You are a Mujtahid .. You are a Mujtahid.. You are a Mujtahid.

Saying this the person left the place. Shaikh Murtaza Ansari (r.a.) knew that the person was none other than Imam-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.) who had granted him the permission to be a Jurisprudent. He immediately sent his students in search of that person. The students tried to find him but in vain. After this event Shaikh Murtaza Ansari (r.a.) accepted to be a jurist so that people can follow him.

(Narrated from the book Ganjeena Danish Mandaaan, Vol.8)

These events clearly bring out the fact that during occultation Jurists receive special favours from Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.).

His Writings

Among the books that Shaikh Murtaza Ansari (r.a.) authored, many are today the foundations of discussions and learning at the Hauz-e-Ilmiyyah. His books about Jurisprudence and Principles of Fiqh are frequently referred to by the students. We shall mention a few of them for the sake of brevity.

1. Alljtehad wa Taqleed
2. Usulul Fiqh
3. Taqleed al Mayyit wa A'alam
4. Al Taqayyah
5. Al Hashiyah Ala Qawaneen al Usul
6. Al Khums
7. Manasik-e-Hajj
8. Salatul Jama'ah
9. Al Ghasb
10. Al Fawaid al Usuliyah
11. Al Muta'a
12. Al Makaasib
13. Al Nikaah
14. Al Wasiyyah wa Ahkamoha
15. Faraidul Usul (Rasaael)

His demise

After illuminating the horizon of Islamic Jurisprudence for several years Shaikh Murtaza Ansari (r.a.) answered the divine call and left for his heavenly abode on Sunday night 18th Jamadiul Aakhir at the age of 67 years.

Surely to Allah we belong and to Him shall we return.

He is definitely among those intended in the following tradition

The death of a scholar leaves Islam with such a vacuum which cannot be filled with any thing till the day of resurrection.

His friends and students buried his holy body in the courtyard of Ameerul Momeneen's (a.s.) shrine in Najaf.

In the end we beseech Allah to give us the good fortune to tread the footsteps of Ahlebait (a.s.), O Allah! Hasten the reappearance of Hazrat Imam-e-Zamaana (a.t.f.s.) and include us among his helpers.

Excellences And Virtues Of The Companions Of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.)

It is a fact that the earth has never been devoid of Allah's sincere servants. The History is a witness that the virtuous servants of Allah have always worshipped Him without any anxiety. The rich and powerful stratum of society mocked at them, insulted them and severed relations with them. However, they never wavered from their goodness and piety. History tells us that many of the nations have even murdered their messengers (a.s.). The very messengers, who had come to save them from eternal calamities and misfortune, became victim to their nations' cruelty and oppression.

Thus, the earth has always been ruled over by tyrannical elements and the virtuous have been victims to their repression and have borne untold oppression. There were a few, who raised their voices against the unjust rule, but these voices were suppressed and their existence was wiped from the face of the earth. For such people, The Holy Qur'an announces:

Surely (as for) those who disbelieve in the communications of Allah and slay the prophets unjustly and slay those among men who enjoin justice, announce to them a painful chastisement.

(Surah Aal-e-Imran (3): verse 21)

These oppressed nations would complain to the messenger of their time, being tired of the burden of injustice upon them. The messenger would advise patience and give glad tidings of a time when the rule of the land would be in the hands of the virtuous.

It is found in the incident of Hazrat Musa (a.s.) in Surah Aa'raf (7), verse 128:

Musa said to his people: Ask help from Allah and be patient: Surely the land is Allah's; He causes such of His servants to inherit it as He pleases, and the end is for those who guard (against evil).

Who are these people whom Allah has made the successors and masters of the land? The Holy Quran has eulogized this group at various places.

On examination of the exegeses, it becomes clear that these people are the companions of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) about whom Ameerul Mo'mineen Ali (a.s.) has portrayed:

Men, who recognize Allah as He ought to be recognized, and they are helpers of the Mahdi (a.s.) of the last era.

(Kanzul Ummaal, 4/34)

The Majestic Quran informs regarding these companions:

He said: Ah! That I had the power to suppress you; rather | shall have recourse to a strong support.

(Surah Hud (11): Verse 80)

Under the exegesis of the above verse, Imam Sadiq (a.s.) informs:

'**QUWWAH** (power)' refers to (Imam) Qaem (a.s.) and '**RUKNIN SHADEED** (strong support)' refers to the might of the companions of Qaem (a.s.).

Each of them have been gifted the strength of forty men and surely their hearts are firmer than iron, and they will not sheath their swords until the time their Lord is satisfied with them.

(Kamaaluddin, vol. 5, p. 273, H. 26, Chap. 58)

These are the chosen ones, whom the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has regarded as brothers and given them priority over his faithful companions. Hence he (s.a.w.a.) prayed:

O Allah! Join me to my brothers.

His (s.a.w.a.) companions enquired: Are we not your brothers? He (s.a.w.a.) answered:

No! You are my companions. My brothers are a nation of people of the last era who have kept their faith on me while they have not seen me..... Then he (s.a.w.a.) described their virtues.

(Behaarul Anwaar, vol. 52, p. 125)

A narrator reports that: We were with Imam Sadiq (a.s.) when the companions of Imam Mahdi (a.s.) were discussed. He (a.s.) explained:

They are three hundred and thirteen in number and each one has the strength of a hundred men.

(Muntakhabul Asar, p. 485)

Other exegeses relate the answer by the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) to a Jew called Jundab at the end of a lengthy narration:

Congratulations to those who are patient in his occultation, congratulations to the pious upon their love. They are the ones described by Allah in his Book when He (s.w.t.) says: **And those who believe in the occult** and He says: **These are the group of Allah, Know that surely the group of Allah is successful.**

(Al-Ghaibah, Kifayatul Asar, p. 56, Al-Burhan, vol. 3, p. 146)

2) The friends of Allah

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) informs his companion in the explanation of verse 42 of Surah-e-Yunus.

O Abu Basir! Glad Tidings to the followers of our Qaem, the Awaiters of his Reappearance in his occultation and those submitting to him on his reappearance. They are the friends of Allah, those who neither fear nor grieve.

(Noorus Saqalain, vol. 1, p. 781; Yanaabiul Mawaddah, p. 422, Isbaatul Hodaat, vol. 3, p. 75; Al-Burhan, vol. 1, p. 564, As-Saafi, vol. 2, p. 173)

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) describes the companions of Imam Mahdi (May Allah hasten his reappearance):

*One among you will awaken and find below his head a book wherein is written: **TAA-A:TUN MA'ROOFATUN** (A reasonable obedience). (Isbaatul Hodaat, vol. 3, p. 582; Noorus saqalain, vol. 3, p. 616; Muntakhabul Asar, p. 440; Kamaaluddin, vol. 2, p. 654)*

This means their obedience will be common knowledge among the people. Mention of this fact is found in Surah Noor of the Quran in verse 53:

And they swear by Allah with the most energetic of their oaths that if you command them, they would certainly go forth. Say: Swear not; a reasonable obedience is desired); surely Allah is aware of what you do.

A tradition of Imam Sadiq (a.s.) has been mentioned under the exegeses of these verses:

And regarding this saying of Allah: 'Until they see what they have been promised' - is regarding the coming of Qaem (a.s.)

The narrator then questioned regarding the saying of Allah:

'And Allah increases the guidance of the guided ones'. He (a.s.) replied: *Their guidance will be increased on that day, when they will be guided on their firm belief of Qaem (a.s.) neither disputing with him nor denying him.*

(3) The loved ones of God

We find the following words of Quran in praise of these companions:

Then Allah will soon bring a people, He shall love them and they shall love Him, lowly before the believers, mighty against the unbelievers.

(Surah Maedah (5): Verse 54)

A tradition of Imam Sadiq (a.s.) is found in the Exegesis of this verse: · Surely Allah has chosen the companions of The Master of the Affair (Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.]). Even if everyone forsakes him, Allah will gather his companions for him about whom He has said:

'Therefore if these disbelieve in it, We have already entrusted with it a people who are not disbelievers in it.

They are those about whom it has been announced:

Then Allah will soon bring a people, He shall love them and they shall love Him, lowly before the believers, mighty against the unbelievers.

(Al-Burhaan, vol. 1, p. 78; Behaarul Anwaar, vol. 52, p. 380; Yanaabiul Mawaddah, p. 422; Gaibate Noamaani, p. 316)

In the same manner we find these phrases in 'Tafseer-e-Qummi':

There were people who were the companions of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and they usurped the right of the Progeny of Muhammad (a.s.) and turned away from the religion. In this manner, they afflicted themselves to perpetual chastisement. The progeny of the Prophet (a.s.) have been deprived of their legacy from the day of the passing away of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) till the present time. The members of their house and their supporters have been tortured and killed only due to the sin of having affection for them. In this manner, the progeny of Muhammad (a.s.) have been oppressed in every period. This tyranny will be avenged by Imam Mahdi (a.s.) and his companions in the last era. These are the other group mentioned in the traditions.

Allah has specified five characteristics of this group.

First, they will not deny the right of progeny of Muhammad (a.s.). They will submit to their position and their commands.

Second, Allah loves them and they have the love of Allah in their hearts. And this is the sign of faith.

Third, they will show consideration to the believers and be strict with the unbelievers. When they meet the believers, they will exhibit humility and kindness and be harsh to the apostate (an enemy of Ale Muhammad (a.s.)).

The **fourth** characteristic is that they will strive in the way of God. The striving here does not only mean holy war but in fact also includes striving in the face of adversity.

Lastly, they will not fear the reproach of the censors, being firm in their faith and actions regardless of the response.

(4) The oppressed ones

The companions of Imam Mahdi (a.s.) have been remembered by Qur'an as the oppressed ones.

Permission (to fight) is given to those upon whom war is made because they are oppressed, and most surely Allah is well able to assist them.

(Surah Hajj (24), Verse 39)

Imam Baqir (a.s.) says regarding this Verse:

This verse is regarding Qaem (a.s.) and his companions.

(Ta'veelul Aayah, vol. 1, p. 338; Al-Burhaan, vol. 1, p. 93; Behaarul Anwaar, vol. 24, p. 225; Isbaatul Hodaat, vol. 3, p. 563)

(5) The sanctuary which provides security:

The word 'Haram' (sanctuary) is usually applied to the Mosque of the Messenger (s.a.w.a.) or the House of God. Likewise, Makkah has also been remembered by Qur'an as the City of Safety. These are the locations where the killing of even a fly or a mosquito is prohibited. And these places are the areas of security for the whole of creation. When the Prophet of Allah (s.a.w.a.) conquered Makkah, he (s.a.w.a.) proclaimed that whosoever takes refuge in the House of God, or with my relatives or in the house of a believer will be provided security.

And this is how Makkah was won without a drop of blood being shed. If we scrutinize the verse of Qur'an, we will find that the earth will be filled with tyranny and oppression just before the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (a.s.). Not only will there be an inclination towards misdeed rather sinning itself will not be considered as misconduct. The believers and the chaste worshipers would be the butt of jokes. The power will rest in the hands of the transgressors and the foolish. Immorality will become common place. Diseases and accidents will occur daily. Murder and mayhem will be seen everywhere.

No city or place on earth will be safe from celestial adversity or human danger. When Hazrat Mahdi (a.s.) reappears, he (a.s.) along with his companions will cleanse the earth from the filth of oppression and disbelief.

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) says: The verse 'whoever enters it shall be secure' is regarding our Qaem (a.s.) and his companions. Whosoever takes allegiance to him and joins his assembly, will be secure.

(Elalush sharaa'e, p. 89; Tafseer Al-Saafi, vol. 1, p. 351; Hilyatul Abraar, vol. 2, p. 148; Tafseer Al-Burhaan, vol. 1, p. 299; Behaarul Anwaar, vol. 2, p. 291; Noorus Saqalain, vol. 1, p. 369; al-Awaalim, vol. 3, p. 613)

(6) A numerable nation

The words **UMMATUN MA'DOODATUN** have been used for the companions of Imam Mahdi (a.s.) in a tradition from Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.):

*The companions of the Master of the time (a.s.) will be a little more than three hundred and ten. Regarding them, the words **UMMATUN MA'DOODATUN** have been used by Allah in His Book Then he (a.s.) adds: They will be gathered in an hour like the gathering of rain clouds.*

(Tafseer Ayaashi, vol. 3, pg. 57)

The following tradition of Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) is found in explanation to the above verse in the book Ta' veelul Aayaat, he (a.s.) said:

*Chastisement herein refers to Qaem (a.s.) who is akin to chastisement over his enemies and **UMMATUN MA'DOODATUN** are those people who will fight along with him and their numbers will be the same as the warriors of the battle of Badr.*

(Ta'veelul Aayaat, vol. 1, p. 223, Trad. 3; Tafseer Al-Burhaan, vol. 2, p. 9, Trad. 80)

We conclude the following from these traditions.

1. Imam Mahdi (a.s.) and his companions will achieve justice and equity when this world would be filled with inequity. That their number will only be a little more than three hundred shows the scarcity of believers in that era.
2. Despite being spread across the globe, these people will miraculously assemble in the shape of an army before Imam Mahdi (a.s.) either in a single night or in a few moments.
3. This army has been compared to rain bearing clouds, which enliven the dry barren land. While on the other hand, rain can cause immense destruction in the shape of floods drowning the lowly.
4. The Holy Qur'an has used the word 'chastisement' for Imam Qaem (a.s.). For, he will be punishment for his enemies. This may be because the period of respite for the hypocrites and the unbelievers may be complete.

The Book of Allah and traditions have described the qualities and virtues of these respected individuals in great detail. In our brief article its difficult to relate all. .

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Lastly, we entreat to the Almighty that He may consider us for the good fortune of being among the slaves of these companions. We can thus present ourselves in the service of His last Hujjat (a.t.f.s.).

O Allah! Hasten the reappearance of your Wali. Let us be among his supporters, helpers and servants.