

## Discussions About Imam Mahdi In Past Nations

A plea: What can one say?' There is an upsurge in the rebellion of the worshippers of carnal desires. Axes are being sharpened to sever the little saplings in the garden. Enclosures and cages of myriad shapes are being prepared to confine and imprison the chirping birds. The incessant progress of the modern man has endowed his desires with wings with which he wants to soar to the skies. Manners and etiquette are thrown to the winds. The nature of everything is becoming chaotic. Women - with absolutely no modesty and which nothing left to the imagination - are visible in all gatherings. Adolescents are interacting with each other everyday – with conflicting views and opinions. Personal gain is their only interest. If we adopt a compromising approach, then we become like everyone else. If we seek refuge in these difficult times by uniting with the shameful we put our piety at stake. And if we don't do such a thing, we have no optic mute and helpless spectators. We are chucked out from the gatherings of liberated thinkers. If we keep quiet, we feel suffocated and if we protest, we are labelled as orthodox. O Allah! In your vast and colossal universe wherever I turn the same scenes are evident. If I open the newspaper to review the events of the world, I am inundated with such lewd and shocking images that even the humans of the earliest era of civilisation would be embarrassed! This is the plea of the one who complains and moans about today's progressive society and culture. It is the prayer of the one who believes resolutely in the Oneness, Independence, Power and Sovereignty of Allah. He believes that not only has Allah created the world, - and made humans as the most distinguished and honourable among His creatures - but He has also created them with a purpose and aim. Obviously if the faith of a believer – which is the fortune of his life - is hurt and wounded, he is bound to get agitated. The deeper the assault and attack of the rebellious powers, the more restless and upset will he become. This cry of helplessness is being raised since hundreds of years. It is another thing that the means of destruction and annihilation of the human civilisation are changing with the passage of time.

The question is whether these indecencies and vices are a matter of concern only for those who live in the present era? Is this immorality a threat only for those who were born in the recent past and have illuminated their maturity with the radiance of belief and consider obedience to Allah and a steadfast certainty in Him are the treasures of their life? These problems and obstacles, these obscene and vulgar advertisements and posters .- all enticing the viewers; and all other such means of sins and transgressions – are all crises only for the modern generation or even the pious and virtuous people of the past generations had to endure such threats and hazards? Have these vices spared any innocent person in the past? The truth is that such kinds of corruptions and immorality have always existed. Agonizing and dreadful tales of oppression have been recorded from times unknown. Each word is drenched in the blood of innocent and helpless individuals. What gave them the courage and strength to endure those tortures and atrocities, the persecution and sufferings which finally led to their martyrdom? They not only withstood the pain and the agony but they also handed over their inheritance to the next generation of noble people and finally departed to heaven. The oppressed ones of the bygone era no longer exist but their plea and implorations – in every subsequent age - are in quest of an individual who will mete out justice and fill the earth with equity. This imploration itself speaks of the presence of an invincible support who is also the master of the time. Thus hope – like a noble princess -.rides on him in every era, awaiting his reappearance. This optimism is not

clad in the coarse attire of gloom and despondency. Rather it appears as a fresh shining robe of honour in every era. This confidence is (the cause of) steadfastness and a pillar of strength. This plea mirrors and illuminates the divine power and manifests the covenant of Allah and thus lights up countless lamps of hope and expectations. This is because it is only this plea whose divine answer echoes through the heart like a harmonious and invigorating melody and takes this earthly man through a voyage of mountains and valleys. In every era and in every nation, the masses have always raised their voices against injustice and oppression and have always demanded their rights. In every era, the powerful and mighty of that nation have tried to quell their cries of justice. The divine books of those era bear testimony, that this small group of people who were victimized and persecuted due to their honesty, piety, truthfulness and integrity always believed – due to their knowledge and certitude - in the coming of a divine reformer who shall grant them salvation from all their tribulations.

Let us have a look and analyse the discussions – found in ancient books - about the one who is the promised one, the representative of divine justice and the fountain-head of life. He is a treasure of deliverance and the soul of the universe. Let us see what has been mentioned about him in those books. We can only review them collectively because the amount of research done by scholars and academicians on this topic is vast and exhaustive and is beyond the scope of this article.

### **(1) The Vedas**

This book is assumed to an ancient divine book. It is written in this book that "when the evils of the world will reach their zenith, a king will appear in the last times who will be the leader of the entire world. His name shall be Mansoor. He will rule over the entire world and will bring his religion. He will recognise the believers and unbelievers very evidently. Allah will grant him whatever he desires." (Mansoor is one of the titles of Imam Mahdi (a.s.))

### **(2) The Book of Baasak**

The irreligiousness of the people will come to an end. He will be the king of angels, fairies and humans. He will possess the news of the world and the heavens. Nothing will be concealed from him and none will be superior to him..

### **(3) The Upanishads**

On page 737 it is mentioned, "He will be the tenth incarnation of Vishnu. He will appear riding on a white horse with a sword gleaming like a shining star. Since he will possess power and authority, he will eradicate all the evils from the face of the earth and a give new life to creation. He will be the cause of Return (Raj'at) of the virtuous people.

### **(4) The Holy book of Jains**

When evil, discord and destruction shall reach its peak, at that time a "perfect man" who will be referred to "Tirthankar" meaning "the one who brings good news" will appear among the people. He will root out all forms of destruction and will establish nobility and chastity in every .corner of the world.

According to the Hindu beliefs, Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and possessor of the book were divine. The son of the "chief of creations" whose name will be "Kashn" will be a ruler and the leader of the entire world. (According to the Hindi dictionary "Kashn" means "prophet")

### **(6) Zaboor**

We will now delve on some extracts of the book of Zaboor. Readers may please pay attention. In "Mazaameer-e-Dawood" which is part of the Old Testament, Allah addresses H. Dawood (a.s.) and says, "(a) Don't investigate into the wrongs of the evil doers (b) because they will be severed like grass (c) and like green grass they will wither and die (d) have faith in Allah and perform good deeds (e) remain quiet to gain proximity to Allah and await his reappearance." Further on it is written in the Zaboor, "the people of knowledge and forbearance will inherit the earth. They will peacefully relish and enjoy the abundant divine bounties. On the other hand the followers of evil – with their naked swords and their bow and arrows - will ruthlessly kill the poor, destitute and the good doers. But after reappearance, the swords of the wicked people will be 'plunged in their own hearts and they will be decimated and overpowered."

Allah always helps His virtuous servants because He very well knows about the day when His righteous servants will inherit the earth for eternity. It is worth noting the verse of the Holy Quran wherein Allah says,

**"Surely we have written in the Zaboor after the "zikr" – surely the righteous servants shall inherit the earth"**

(Anbiya: 105)

### **(7) Torah (The Old Testament)**

We have mentioned about the divine book of Torah in the blessed verse of Surah Anbiya (above). The word 'zikr' refers to 'Torah'. As we have also spoken about it under verse 47 of Surah Anbiya.

### **(8) Injeel (The New Testament or The Bible)**

From the Gospel of Matthews verse 31, Gospel of Mark verse 133 and Gospel of Luke verse 35 we present the summary of their content so that our readers can know how sensitive and important is the discussion of the reappearance of Imam Zamana (a.s.): (a) Impostors using the name (of Isa) will dupe the people. (b) Liars and fraudsters will claim Prophethood and deceive the people (c) The one who remains patient till the last times will find salvation. (d) A son of a man will descend like lightening from the eastern sky and he will be visible even in the west. (e) He will be a human and he will move on clouds. He will be a person of power and authority. Angels will be his helpers. The heavens and the earth may perish but my prophecy will actualise.

### **(9) Jamsab nameh**

This is the book of the Zoroastrians (fire worshippers). The following quotation can be found in the book of Zoroastrians concerning Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and Imam Mahdi (a.s.), "An Arab

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will be the last prophet. He will be born in Makkah. He will ride a camel. His nation will be of camel riders. He will dine with humans and live among them. He will not have a shadow. He will be able to see in the front as well as the rear. His religion will be superior to all other religions. His book will abrogate the earlier divine books and neutralise all places of fire worship. .

One of the sons of this Prophet - whose name shall be "Shah-e-Zaman" - will be a king. All other rulers will bite the dust in front of him. In his reign the past prophets and other noble individuals shall return (i.e. Raj'at). Dear readers, the journey towards the reappearance of Imam-e-Zamana (atfs) is going On one hand the world is a place of tribulations for the pious people while on the other hand the ray of hope and the optimism of reappearance have been echoing since the ancient times. There is a break of around 600 years between H. Isa (a.s.) and the advent of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.). He is the last and the final prophet and messenger (s.a.w.a.). His religion is the final and most perfect religion. The Shariat rests on the solid foundations of his (s.a.w.a.) impeccable character and the Holy Quran in a manner that no amount of tremors can ever dislodge it. The Holy Quran has presented a bouquet of around 252 verses concerning Imam Mahdi (a.s.). The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) too has mentioned him at numerous occasions while he propagating Islam. Even while returning back from his (s.a.w.a.) final pilgrimage, he (s.a.w.a.) halted at Ghadeer-e-Khumm. Over there he (s.a.w.a.) not only placed the crown of wilaayah (mastership) upon Ameerul Momineen Ali (a.s.), but he also announced the names of his twelve successors as well as signs of reappearance of his twelfth successor. "His name shall be my name and his agnomen shall be my agnomen. The sunshine of equity will spread to all corners of the world while the darkness of oppression will retreat forever."

O Allah! Give us a glimpse of the radiance of Imam Mahdi (a.s.) – the one towards whom the people of the ancient times and every subsequent era till the present one - are moving for a joyous future. O Allah! Please include us in that golden era. Aameen!

## **Hazrat Imam Husain (a.s.) And Hazrat Imam Mahdi (a.s.)**

The cries of help raised by Imam Husain (a.s.) on the day of Ashura didn't die away in Karbala itself. Indeed, it reverberated with greater intensity with the passage of time. Those who weren't present in this physical world but were yet to come too had said labbaik on hearing his (a.s.) plea.

There's a strong connection between the martyrdom of Imam Husain (a.s.) and the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (a.s.). In the traditions narrated by Imam Husain (a.s.) as well as in supplications, we find the mention of Imam Mahdi (a.s.). Imam Mahdi (a.s.) too has often spoken about the afflictions that befell Imam Husain (a.s.). In this article we will try to make a brief analysis.

### **(1) Imam Husain (a.s.) in the eyes of Imam Mahdi (a.s.)**

Sa'ad bin Abdullah Qummi states that I inquired from Imam Mahdi (a.s.) the explanation of KAAF HAA YAA AYN SAAD.

He said: "These are the concealed words with which Allah had forewarned His servant J. Zakariyyaa (a.s.) and also reiterated it to Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.). J. Zakariyyaa (a.s.) had requested Allah to teach him the five (special) names and Allah had taught him those names through J. Jibraeel (a.s.). When I Zakariyyaa (a.s.) would take the names of Muhammad (s.a.w.a.), Ali (a.s.), Fatima (s.a.) and Hasan (a.s.) then the grief within him would subside. But, when he took the name of Husain (a.s.) his sorrow would intensify. One day he implored Allah, 'Oh Allah, when I take four names I find rest and inner peace but when I take the name of Husain, then sorrow overcomes me and tears start flowing from my eyes. Allah revealed the significance of these words.

'KAAF' means Karbala, 'HAA' refers to the massacre and martyrdom of the chaste progeny, 'YAA' is for the oppressor Yazeed, 'AYN' stands for thirst and 'SAAD' is for the patience of Imam Husain (a.s.).

On hearing this J. Zakariyyaa (a.s.) became so anguished that he did not leave his prayer niche for three days. He did not allow anyone to come near him. Even as he wept incessantly, he kept saying,

*'O Allah, I am in grief because calamities will befall on the son of your best creation. O Allah! Grant me a son who will be a support in my old age, who will be the light of my eyes, who will be my inheritor and my vicegerent. And then you involve me in his misery, just like how You have involved Your beloved messenger Muhammad Mustafa (s.a.w.a.) in his son's sorrow.'*

Allah granted J. Zakariyyaa (a.s.) a son named Yahya (a.s.) and then involved him in his suffering. Janabe Yahya (a.s.) and Imam Husain (a.s.) were born after six months of pregnancy'."

(Kamaluddin, Vol 2, page 420)

### **(2) Imam Mahdi (a.s.) in the eyes of Imam Husain (a.s.)**

*Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) says: Haaris al-A'war asked Imam Husain : (a.s.) the meaning of 'I swear by the sun and its heat' (Surah Shams, verse 1)" He (a.s.) replied "It refers to the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.)." Then he asked him about the second verse "I swear by the moon while it follows it". He said, "It refers to Hazrat Ameerul Momineen (a.s.), who is after the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.). Then he asked him (a.s.) about the third verse "I swear by the day when it manifests itself" He (a.s.) said: "It refers to Hazrat Qaem of Aale Muhammad, who will fill the earth with justice and equality"*

(Tafseer-e-Furaat Kufi, p. 212)

### **(3) Imam Mahdi (a.s.) the avenger of the blood of Imam Husain (a.s.)**

Imam Mahdi (a.s.) will avenge the brutal and tyrannical killing of Imam Husain (a.s.) and his companions. While explaining this verse of Quran,

**"..... and whoever is killed unjustly, We have indeed given to his heir authority, so he shall not be extravagant in slaying; surely he is aided"**

(Bani Israel 33)

*Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) says: "The oppressed ones are Imam Husain (a.s.) and his successors. When our Qaem will reappear he will account for their blood. He will take revenge in such a way that people will say that he has gone to the extreme."*

(Tafseer-e-Burhaan, vol 2, p. 419; Behar, vol 10, p. 15)

'Going to the extreme,' means to slay the innocent ones. Imam-e-Zamana (a.s.) is infallible, so there is no question of him shedding the blood of innocent people. This is the opinion of those who think that the killers of Imam Husain (a.s.) were present only in Karbala. On the contrary, in the eyes of Islam, even they are culpable who agree with the actions of the tyrants, justify it and then go all-out to prove their innocence. In our times too, we find some wretched people who praise Yazeed (l.a.) and those involved in the killing of Imam Husain (a.s.). Imam-e-Zamana (a.s.) will take revenge from all of them.

### **(4) Imam Mahdi (a.s.) - in the words of Imam Husain's (a.s.)**

In Ziyarate Ashura, Imam-e-Zamana (a.s.) is referred to as 'Mansoor (the helped one) Esa al-Khashaab inquired from Imam Husain (a.s.), 'Are you the Master of Affairs?'

*He (a.s.) said: "I am not the Master of Affairs. Rather he is the one who will be hidden from the eyes of the people. His dwelling is far away from the human inhabitants. He'll be the one to avenge the slaying of his father. His agnomen will be the agnomen of his uncle. The sword will rest on his shoulder for 18 months."*

(Kamaluddin, vol. 1, p. 318)

The words "Tareed" and "shareed" are synonyms. They are used for the one who has gone far away from the people because they deserted and abandoned him. The people did not value the blessing of Imam's (a.s.) presence. On the contrary, they dishonored him. They made the killing

of his family lawful, used their tongues and pens to oppose him and did all they could to take his remembrance out of the minds.

'He'll avenge the killing of his father. This could also mean Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) because he was martyred through poison and it could also mean Imam Husain (a.s.).

Imam Mahdi (a.s.) and the remembrance of Imam Husain (a.s.)

In Ziyarat-e-Naahiyah, Imam-e-Zamana (a.s.) has remembered Imam Husain (a.s.) in these words:

*'You were to the Messenger (s.a.w.a.) a son, an authority on the Noble Quran and its saviour. You were the pillar and supporter of the nation. You were diligent in obeying your Lord, a protector of the covenant and the oath, kept away from the paths of the sinners; were excessive in your bowing and prostrations. You had turned your face from the enticements of the world like the one who is departing from it, looking upon it with fear.*

(Behaar-ul-Anwaar, vol. 101, p. 239)

This is how Imam-e-Zamana (a.s.) has articulated ten qualities and specialties of his illustrious grandfather. The truth is that Imam Husain (a.s.) and Imam Mahdi (a.s.) share a special bond. They both share the same objective. Imam Husain (a.s.) desired to safeguard the religion while Imam-e-Zamana (a.s.) will enforce the religion in the entire world.

### **Imam Mahdi (a.s.) and the Day of Ashura**

Just as the title of Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) is exclusively for Imam Ali (a.s.) similarly the title of Qaem is only for Imam Mahdi (a.s.). Abu Hamza Thumali asked. Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.): "Are you not the Qaem? And why only Wali-e-Asr is called as the Qaem?" He (a.s.) replied:

*"When my grandfather Imam Husain (a.s.) was martyred the angels wailed loudly and they pleaded in front of Allah – 'O Allah, will you let go the ones who have massacred the best of Your creation - the one chosen by You and the son of your chosen one?" Allah revealed to the angels:*

***"O My angels, be patient! I swear by My Honour and Might, verily I will take revenge from these people even if it may be after a few days. Thereafter Allah removed the veil from the eyes of the angels and they saw the Imams from the progeny of Imam Husain (a.s.). Seeing this the angels became happy and they saw that among those Imams there was one who was in the state of qiyam (standing) and Allah said, 'Through this Qaem I will take revenge?***

(Dalaail-ul-Imaamah, Muhammad Ibn Jurair al-Tabari (he is different from the famous Sunni historian), p. 239)

### **Imam Mahdi (a.s.) and his yearning to help Imam Husain (a.s.)**

To be alongside Hazrat Imam Husain (a.s.) and be fortunate enough to attain martyrdom is the greatest achievement and honour. It is something which we mention repeatedly in Ziyarat-e-Waaresah,

*'O how we wish we would have been with you and attain this ultimate success.'*

In Ziyarat-e-Naahiyah, Imam Zamana (a.s.) has expressed this great desire in the following words:



*"O my oppressed father! I came in this world after you and by the decree of Allah I couldn't help you. Therefore, / will lament morning and evening and instead of tears I will shed blood."*

This gives us an idea that in the eyes of Imam-e-Zamana (a.s.), it is an honour and privilege to help Imam Husain (a.s.). The mission of Imam Husain (a.s.) will be completed by Imam Mahdi (a.s.) and the religion for which the Chief of Martyrs (a.s.) sacrificed his life will be put into practice in the entire world.

### **The Day of Ashura and the Day of Reappearance**

There's no particular day fixed for the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (a.s.). Some traditions, however, do speak of certain days on which there's a possibility of Imam (a.s.) reappearing. It means one can hope and expect the reappearance to happen on these days.

Some reports mention Friday. Some speak of Ashura and some also talk about Saturday.

These traditions can be reconciled broadly as - Ashura and Friday could be one day on which reappearance may take place while Saturday could be the day of announcement. So, in this way the day of martyrdom and reappearance will be Friday. Saturday will be the day of balancing the things. Thus the day of martyrdom will be the day when the religion will be stabilized and operational in the whole world. The day of martyrdom will be the day on which the powers of falsehood will be annihilated.

*Imam Jafar as-Sadiq (a.s.) says: On 23rd day of the holy month of Ramazan there will be a voice in the sky calling out the name of Hazrat Qaem (a.s.) and the day of Ashura will be the day when he will rise - the day on which Imam Husain (a.s.) was martyred.*

(Al-Ghaibah of Shaikh al-Tusi (r.a.), p. 474)

It appears the decision on the reappearance of Hazrat Wali-e-Asr (a.s.) will be taken in Shab-e-Qadr. He will be informed about his reappearance and the day of Ashura will be on which he will reappear and commence his uprising. Imam Mahdi's (a.s.) first speech

In his first speech after reappearance, Imam Mahdi (a.s.) will introduce himself in such a way that the deep connect between his reappearance and the martyrdom will be manifested. When Imam Mahdi (a.s.) will reappear he will introduce himself in the following way by standing between Hajar-e-Aswad and Maqam-e-Ibrahim:

*'O people of the world! Be warned; I am the Qaem' 'O people of the world! Know that I am the sword with which revenge will be taken. 'O people of the world! Know that my Husain was martyred thirsty.' 'O people of the world! Know that my Husain was left uncovered without a shroud on the dusty plains.' 'O people of the world! My grandfather Husain's body was trampled (by horses) after he was massacred*

(Intezaar, first year, second edition, p. 178)

Imam Mahdi (a.s.) will first declare that he is the Qaem. Then he will talk about taking revenge through his sword and then speak about the tribulations that befell upon Imam Husain (a.s.). Hazrat (a.s.) will start his oration with the majlis of Imam Husain (a.s.) This will make it clear to one and all the importance of narrating the tribulations and sufferings of Imam Husain (a.s.). It also becomes clear that the objective of Imam Husain's (a.s.) martyrdom will only be realized following the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (a.s.). Besides, it is evident that those who draw



attention to the afflictions that were faced by the Chief of Martyrs (a.s.), are actually following the path and tradition of Imam-e-Zamana (a.s.). Thus those who put obstacles in the way (of Azadari) can now judge their own fate.

### **Imam Mahdi (a.s.) and the avenging of the killing of Imam Husain (a.s.)**

Imam Husain (a.s.) told Imam Zainul Aabedeen (a.s.);

*By Allah! My blood will keep boiling until Allah makes Mahdi apparent. He will avenge my killing and he will slay seventy thousand transgressors and disbelievers.*

(Al-Manaaqib by Ibn Shahr Aashoob, vol. 4, p. 85; Behaar ul Anwaar, vol. 45, page 299)

The narrator asked Imam Reza (a.s.): What do you have to say about this tradition wherein Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) says:

*'When our Qaem will rise he will massacre the descendants of the killers of Imam Husain (a.s.) for the crime of their fathers! Imam Reza (a.s.) said, 'Yes it is true.*

Then the narrator asked, 'What is the essence of this verse of Quran then:

'No bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another,'

(Surah Anaam 164)

*Imam Reza(a.s.) replied: "What Allah has said is true but these people were happy and proud over what their ancestors had done. If a person concurs with the one who performs the action then he too becomes a party in it. If someone is killed in the east and the people of west are in accord with it then in the eyes of Allah they too are partners in crime along with the killers. For that Qaem will execute the sons of the killers of Imam Husain (a.s.) on the premises that they were in pleased and satisfied with their predecessors."*

(Elal al-Sharae', vol. 1, page 219; Oyoon Akhbaar ar-Raza (a.s.), vol. 1, p. 273; Behar ul Anwaar, vol. 52, p. 313)

### **Imam Mahdi (a.s.) and the Completion of Imam Husain's (a.s.) Journey**

Imam Husain (a.s.) had travelled from Makkah to Kufa because he wanted to live in Kufa. But, the tyrants of the time didn't allow him to complete his journey. They did not let him enter Kufa and instead martyred him in Karbala. Imam Mahdi (a.s.), after reappearing, will designate Kufa as his capital. Imam Mohammad Baqir (a.s.) says:

*Mahdi will reappear and then travel to Kufa, which will be his home.*

(Behaar ul Anwaar, vol. 25, p. 225)

*In another tradition he says: When our Qaem will reappear he will go to Kufa. At that time every believer will live in Kufa or at least will definitely go there.*

(Behaar ul Anwaar, vol. 52, p. 385)

These traditions clearly state that Kufa will be Imam Mahdi's (a.s.) seat of power; he will stay and rule over the entire world from there.

### **The Helpers of Imam Husain (a.s.) and Imam Mahdi (a.s.)**

Along with believers, angels from the skies too will join Imam Mahdi's (a.s.) troops. Rayyan ibn Shabeeb narrates from Imam Raza (a.s.):

*"Four thousand angels had descended from the heavens to help and support Imam Husain (a.s.). But when they reached Karbala, Imam Husain (a.s.) was already martyred. Since then, those angels have covered themselves in dust and are lamenting besides the sacred grave of Imam Husain (a.s.). They will remain in this condition till the reappearance of Qaem following which they will be among the helpers and their slogan will be, 'Revenge for the unjust killing of Imam Husain (a.s.)"*

(al-Amaali of Shaikh Sadooq (a.r.), Speech No. 27, Behaar ul Anwaar, vol. 44, p. 285)

The aspiration of helping Imam Husain (a.s.) can be met by helping Imam Mahdi (a.s.). Therefore, every person while reciting Ziyarat-e-Waaresah wishes that he too should have been present in the battle of Karbala, can attain this great of blessing by helping Imam e Zamana (a.s.) - even while Imam (a.s.) is in occultation. He can do that by spreading the name of Imam e Zamana (a.s.), by increasing the love of Imam e Zamana (a.s.) in the hearts of the people, by making them remember him, by erasing the doubts concerning him and preparing them for his reappearance and waiting for his reappearance devotedly. These are the ways of helping Imam (a.s.) and in whatever way it is possible one should step forward and realize the ambition of helping Imam Husain (a.s.).

### **The Birthday of Imam Husain (a.s.) and Remembrance of Imam Mahdi (a.s.)**

The third of Shabaan is the birthday of Chief of Martyrs - imam Husain (a.s.). It is a day of joy for the Ahle Bait (a.s.), their Shias and their friends. For Allah, this is a great day. On this very distinguished day, Allah had gifted His Messenger (s.a.w.a.) a tradition luminously etched on a green slate, which is called as Hadith-e-Lauh. This tradition elucidates the messengership, mastership and leadership of the Fourteen infallibles (a.s.). There's a special mention of Imam Mahdi (a.s.). The past editions of Al Muntazar have discussed this tradition extensively and that is why we will refrain from discussing it further in this issue.

There are exclusive supplications and actions prescribed for this day. In these supplications there is a special mentioning of Imam Mahdi (a.s.) along with Imam Husain (a.s.).

*O Allah beseech You for the sake of the son who was born on this day. I raise my hands in your presence, on whose birthday the news of his martyrdom was given; on whose martyrdom, the earth, the sky and everything that lived in it wept. And in return of the martyrdom, Imamate was bestowed in his lineage. The dust of his burial place has healing powers. In whose company lays success and good fortune and in his lineage is the Qaem for whom occultation has been decreed."*

(Misbah al-Mutahjjid, p. 758; Mafateehul Jinaan, Amaal of 3rd Shabaan)

### **The day of Imam Mahdi's (a.s.) birth and the remembrance of Imam Husain (a.s.)**

The night of 15th Shabaan is the greatest and most blessed after Shab-e-Qadr. On one night the silent Quran was revealed and on the other the speaking Quran was born. One is the night of 'Qadr' which is better than thousand months and the other night is a practical interpretation of Shab-e-Qadr. It is better to spend this night, too, in worship. The best action in this highly significant night is the Ziyarat of Imam Husain (a.s.) and the one who wants to shake hands with 1,24,000 Prophets then he should recite the Ziyarat of Imam Husain (a.s.).

As if, all the Prophets have come to congratulate Imam Husain (a.s.) on the birth of his dearest grandson Imam Mahdi (a.s.) this night. To praise him for the one who will fulfill the purpose for which he sacrificed himself and spread his religion in the entire world.

### **Shab-e-Qadr and the remembrance of Imam Husain (a.s.)**

Shab-e-Qadr is the most significant of all nights. This night is specifically related to Imam Mahdi (a.s.) because in this night the angels appear in the pious presence of Imam (a.s.) with the affairs of the entire year. The most commendable of actions for this night is Ziyarat of Imam Husain (a.s.). The one who recites it will have the honour of shaking hands with the souls of 124,000 Prophets (a.s.).

The day of birth of Imam Mahdi (a.s.), too, is of similar significance. The visitor will have the honour of shaking hands with 124,000 Prophets. Likewise, the one who does Ziyarat on Shab-e-Qadr will have the same privilege. Perhaps, the reason for this is that Imam Mahdi (a.s.) was born on the night of 15th Shaban and that he may reappear in Shab-e-Qadr. One night is holy on the basis of his birth and the other is from the perspective of reappearance. Both nights are categorically connected with Imam Zamana (a.s.) and on both these nights there is Ziyarat of Imam Husain (a.s.).

### **The supplication of Nudbah and the remembrance of Imam Husain (a.s.)**

Dua-e-Nudbah is one of the many supplications exclusively related to Imam Zamana (a.s.). Those who carry the desire of assisting Imam Mahdi (a.s.) recite this dua every Friday. From the depths of their hearts, they remember Imam (a.s.) and shed tears on being separated from him. They keep their hearts fresh with the remembrance of Imam (a.s.). From the point of legitimacy and on the basis of the actions of the Ulama, this is an absolutely authentic supplication. Along with Imam Zamana (a.s.) this dua also refers to Imam Husain (a.s.).

Pay attention to the following words from this dua:

*"Where is Hasan and where is Husain? Where are the sons of Husain? The virtuous – one after the other? The truthful - one after the other."*

Then Imam Husain (a.s.) is especially remembered in this manner:

*"Where is the avenger of the blood of the innocent martyrs of Karbala?"*

Thus, along with Imam Zamana (a.s.) the memory of Imam Husain (a.s.) too is revived every Friday.

### **Ziyarate Ashura and Imam Mahdi (a.s.)**

One of the most authentic Ziyarats is Ziyarat-e-Ashura. The Infallible Imams (a.s.) and in particular Imam Zamana (a.s.) have greatly emphasized that this ziyarat should be recited every day. Traditions speak of enormous rewards for the one who recites it. In this Ziyarat too Imam Mahdi (a.s.) is discussed.

*'O Allah! You give me the opportunity and the good fortune to be along with the victorious Imam from the descendants of Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) so that I can seek avenge for him.'*

Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.), under the verse... "and if anyone is slain unjustly," (Bani Israel 33) says:

"Imam Mahdi is the "Mansoor" (the helped one) just like how the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) is referred to as Ahmad and Muhammad and Janabe Eisa (a.s.) is called Maseeh."

This also means that Mansoor is one of the names of Imam Mahdi (a.s.).

*"O Allah! You give me the nobility and the opportunity to be alongside Imam Mahdi (a.s.) when he is avenging the blood of Imam Husain (a.s.) while he is visible and speaking."*

In this sentence is the prayer for the early reappearance of Imam Mahdi (a.s.) along with the plea for assisting him rightfully and avenging the slaying of Imam Husain (a.s.).

### **The Day of Ashura and the Remembrance of Imam Mahdi (a.s.)**

Just as the way Imam Mahdi (a.s.) has been mentioned in Ziyarat-e-Ashura, similarly amongst the recommended acts on the day of Ashura is to offer each other condolences on the severe tribulations braved by Imam Husain (a.s.) in the following manner:

*"May Allah grant us the highest rewards due to colossal calamity that befell Imam Husain (a.s.). May He include us and you amongst those who take revenge under the Mastership of Imam Mahdi (a.s.) who is from the progeny of Imam Husain (a.s.)."*

Take note, that on this day of severe afflictions, Imam Mahdi (a.s.) is mentioned along with Imam Husain (a.s.).

### **Imam Husain (a.s.) and Raj'at (the return)**

In the light of Islamic teachings, just as the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (a.s.) is a certainty, similarly Raj'at too is a certainty. Raj'at means that after the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (a.s.) those who have left this world will be brought back to life. Only those who don't believe in the Day of Judgment will consider Raj'at to be impossible.

Those who believe that the dead will be re-enlivened, are of the view that when the Day of Judgment nears it will not be surprising if some people are brought back to life following the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (a.s.) and his reign, as it is in accordance with the Sunnah of Allah.

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Amongst those who will return is Imam Husain (a.s.). According to a tradition from Imam Sadiq (a.s.), the first person for whom the Earth will split open to remerge is Imam Husain Ibn Ali (a.s.).

(Behaar ul Anwaar, vol. 53, page 39; Tafseer e Burhaan, vol. 2, p. 408)

In another tradition Imam Jafar as-Sadiq (a.s.) says:

*"The first amongst those who will return is Imam Husain (a.s.) and his faithful companions. At the same time Yazeed and his forces too will return and they all will be killed."*

After this Imam Jafar as-Sadiq (a.s.) recited the following ayat:

**"Then we will make you prevail again and will help you with wealth and children and increase your numbers."**

(Bani Israel: 6)

(Behaar ul Anwaar, vol 53, p. 76; Noorus Saqalain vol 3, p. 140)

In a tradition from Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) it is mentioned:

*"On the eve of Ashura, Imam Husain (a.s.) told his companions: "... heaven awaits you, after what will happen with us. Following that we will rest for as long as Allah wishes. Then Allah will bring us back to life, when our Qaem will reappear. Then revenge will be taken from the oppressors. Then you and I will see them chained and tied with ropes and will witness them facing the severest of punishment."*

(Kefaayah al-Muhtadi, pp. 105-106)

Have you realized how strong is the bond between Imam Husain (a.s.) and Imam Mahdi (a.s.)? They are mentioned together at all places. They gave tidings about each other and will fulfill each others aims.

O Allah! Include us all amongst the sincere servants of Imam Wali-e-Asr (a.s.) and raise us with the faithful companions. O Lord of Husain (a.s.)! For the sake of Husain (a.s.), for the tranquility of the heart of Husain (a.s.), hasten the reappearance of Hujjat (a.s.)! Aameen!

## The Weakened One

### **Introduction**

Right from the beginning of creation, mankind has been divided into three groups, which were found in every era and every society. Terminologically, they are referred to as

- (a) those who have been undermined and weakened,
- (b) those who were arrogant (rich and haughty) and
- (c) the laymen.

If the arrogant group would not have existed, then the oppressed and harassed too would not have existed. Persecution and tyranny have always been committed excessively by the group that is haughty and proud. Oppression, cruelty, intimidation and deceit are the hallmarks of this group. More often than not, the victims of their excesses were the unfortunate and weak people. We will elaborate later on the meaning of "the weakened one". But first let us shed some light on the third group - the general masses - on whom the arrogant people have some influence and control.

This group of the general masses is mostly neutral and adopts a middle path. They have a strong heart but are not resolute in their judgments. Since they are deprived of most things in life, thus they are weak - yet they can tilt towards either of the two groups. Maybe the virtuous and pious people of this group have been referred as the "people of A'raaf". The minority of this group – if they possess a pure "teenat" -- are inclined towards the "weakened ones". This small group adopts the ways and beliefs of the "oppressed and harassed people" and walk with them towards the path of salvation. However the majority of the (general) people incline themselves towards the arrogant group. They adopt and imitate the conduct, behavior and manners of the egoistical group. The majority of the general public – who emulate the "arrogant ones" – are always trying to raise themselves from the lower strata of the society to the affluent class.

In this group of general masses, we come across quite a few "jack of all" personalities. Sometimes it is Ali Mohammed "Bab", sometimes it is Ghulam Ahmed Qadiani while sometimes it those black coated Sufi malangs that you find everywhere. They are eager to break away from the ranks of the 'harassed ones' and become a part of the 'arrogant ones'. They are entangled in the web of customs, rituals and fancies and are under the impression that they too belong to the "poor and enfeebled group". But their actions are contrary to this group (of the weakened people). This group is of low intellect and is not steadfast on the path of truth. Greed and avarice prevents them from lending an ear to the promise of Allah.

If we were to analyze the overall scenario, we find that on one hand those who have been harassed, ostracized and weakened had to endure the atrocities and violence perpetuated upon them by the arrogant people while on the other hand they also had to face troubles and difficulties from the general masses about whom we have mentioned above. The tragedy that befell Hazrat Muslim Ibn Aqueel (r.a.) is a case in point. Thousands of letters were written to him inviting him to Kufa (to take a stand against Ibn Ziyad). An equal number had sworn allegiance upon his hands. Yet at the very end he was left with only thirty supporters. The wives

of these thirty helpers dragged their husbands back in the houses. Finally, Hazrat Muslim (r.a.) was left alone to fend for himself. Hazrat Muslim (r.a.) was "enfeebled and weakened" by this dramatic turnaround of the Kufans. Yet, he did not waiver in the protection of his great responsibility. These are the venerated and noble personalities whom the Quran has referred as "those who are rendered weak in the earth".

The word "mustaz'af" is profound in its meaning. It could mean weak, frail, feeble, incapable, helpless, powerless, infirm, shattered, the one whose right has been usurped, oppressed, lowly, deprived, abandoned, compelled, destitute, the one who endures tribulations or the one who is engulfed in difficulties. All these meanings can be interpreted for the word "mustaz'af". Yet, the "one who is weakened" (mustaz'af) - in spite of his problems - is a manifestation of his impressive eminence and noble morals. He is courageous and fearless and never negligent in the fulfillment of his responsibilities. He is the standard bearer of humanity as well as spirituality. He resolutely fulfills the tasks assigned to him. He is true in his words. He is valiant and brave. He is not scared of death if it comes in the way of fulfilling his duties. As an example, read the biography of Sulaiman who was the envoy of Imam Husain (a.s.) in Basra. The Holy Quran has used the word "mustaz'af" in this essence and meaning. (In the light of the various connotations and meanings of the word "mustaz'af", we will use the Arabic word itself in the remaining part of this article)

### **Islam and Mustaz'af**

It is not only the religion of Islam that has the group of "mustaz'afeen" (plural of 'mustaz'af'). Every divine religion that finally culminates in the religion of Islam had a group that was harassed, oppressed and made weak by the arrogant and tyrannical powers of the time. Yet, the past religions survived -only due to their (mustaz'afeen) struggles, sacrifices, determination, resolve, patience, steadfastness, knowledge, forbearance, foresightedness, preaching and propagations, fortitude, raising the voice against oppression, unblemished conscience, cautious in words, keeping away from destructive elements and speaking less. These impeccable and remarkable attributes imparted them such strength and forte that even the superpowers of their times could do no harm to the divine religions and nor could they force these individuals to abandon their divine mission. Hence, right from the time of Haabeel (Abel) and Qaabeel (Kane), till the era of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), history is replete with heart rending incidents of the tortures and cruelties afflicted on this group of "mustaz'afeen". But all this only made them more resolute and firm in their duties due to which the standard of religion was always fluttering on the horizon. On the other hand, no sooner did the obsession and madness of power and arrogance began to wane, the oppressors were forced to bite the dust and were annihilated.

### **Divine Promise**

Allah has revealed upon His last messenger - Hazrat Mohammed Mustafa (s.a.w.a.), who is also a mercy for the entire mankind – the Holy Quran which is also known as "Furqaan". In it, He has reiterated a promise that He had made earlier in the divine books of Torah and Injeel. He says in the Holy Quran

**"And We have decreed that we will oblige those who were "weakened" in the earth and We shall make them as leaders (Imams) and We shall make them inheritors."**



At another place in the Holy Quran, Allah mentions His Grace and favours by saying

**"We have made the "mustaz'af" as the inheritors of the (entire) earth - from the east to the west." Also Allah says often in the Quran "Surely Allah does not go against His promise".**

And Allah is the One Whose absolute and infinite power is mentioned in 'Dua-e-kumayl when we say "O Allah! O Omnipotent! / beseech You by Your power that encompasses all things". After reading all these verses, a genuine worshipper of Allah has three doors before him (a) to believe in the Infinite powers of Allah (b) The length and breadth of Earth (c) that person who is a believer and has certitude, yet has been made "mustaz'af".

**First Door:** It relates to the Infinite and All Encompassing power of Allah. He is giving glad tidings to those who have been enfeebled in the earth and are patiently enduring the ruthless onslaught of oppressions perpetuated by the tyrants. Thus we find in Ziyarat-e-Aashoora

*"May Allah's curse be upon Abu Sufyan, Muawiyah and Yazid ibn Muawiyah till eternity, on the day which was a day of celebrations for the progeny of Marwan because they had killed Imam Husain (a.s.)."*

At this point the heart trembles and runs towards the well - as if to quench its thirst. It wonders 'If Allah is Omnipotent then why are His virtuous servants engulfed in problems and difficulties? Why are the atrocities of the tyrants always on the rise? Why are the believers tested with trials and tribulations on every step that they take? Till when will all this go on?

**Second Door:** Man-created from the soil of earth-came in this world. It is said that this world is transitory and ultimately will be destroyed. Yet what we see is that even after thousands of years, it is still radiant and glowing, while the servants of Allah have to face all kinds of calamities. In fact, as its age is increasing, the supremacy and power of the tyrants is reaching the pinnacle. While for the "mustaz'afeen", the world is like a corpse – insensitive and uncaring. Why is it so?

**Third Door:** The righteous and obedient servants of Allah have always been entangled in difficulties and tribulations. There does not seem to be an end to their problems. Even after such a long period of time, there does not seem to be any light at the end of the tunnel. Why are they being examined so relentlessly? The response to all these questions and dilemmas is as follows

In reply to the discussions of the first part, we would like to quote the first two verses of Surah Mulk, wherein Allah says

**"Blessed is He in Whose hand is the kingdom and He has power over all things. Who created death and life (so) that He may examine you - which of you are the best in deeds. And He is the Mighty, the Forgiving."**

The answer to the question in the second part can be found in Surah Hadeed, verse no 17 wherein Allah says

**"Know that, Allah shall enliven the earth after its death" It means that when the world shall be filled with injustice and oppression, then Allah - through His successors and representatives - will fill it with justice and equity.**

The answer to the "Why" asked in the third part can be understood in the light of the famous saying - which if loosely translated means - "There may delay in Divine decrees but there is never any injustice from His side". It is a Divine promise that the religion of Islam is the true religion and it will finally overpower all other religions. It is also the promise of Allah and His proclamation that "Baqiyatullah" - the one who is the inheritor of the earth and the divinely appointed Imam – is the center of Divine blessings and grace. Thus, Allah has made an elaborate arrangement for him (a.s.). All the ancient religions have predicted his advent and even Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) mentioned him in Ghadeer-e-Khumm. Numerous traditions can be found about his birth, his occultation and his reappearance. Allah has protected and safeguarded this noble and distinguished personality for the sake of His grand and lofty mission. He has also kept Imam (a.s.) as a symbol of hope and optimism for His chosen servants - the mustaz'afeen - so that they do not become victims of despair and dejection. Thus Allah says

**"And certainly We wrote in the Zaboor after the reminder (Torah), that as for the land, My righteous servants shall inherit it"**  
(Surah Anbiya: 105)

Many such verses can be found in the Holy Quran. Even in the ancient Hindu scriptures – the Vedas, as well as the most authentic book of Jains viz. Jamasaab, and in New Testament - the divine book of the Christians - right till the event of Ghadeer, everywhere the predictions and prophecies concerning Imam Mahdi (a.s.) can be found.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was returning from his last pilgrimage. He halted on the blazing sands of Ghadeer-e-Khumm. Behind him (s.a.w.a.) was a sea of pilgrims returning to their homes. The scorching sun was at its zenith. On that hot and burning plain, Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) ordered all the pilgrims to settle down. Then in front of that massive gathering, he (s.a.w.a.) appointed Ameerul Momineen Ali Ibn Abi Taalib (a.s.) as his successor and caliph by saying "Whomsoever I am the master, then this Ali too is his master". After this significant and important announcement, he (s.a.w.a.) went on to give a very powerful and eloquent sermon. In it, he first spoke about his imminent departure from this material world and then proceeded to introduce his twelve successors. The first successor is H. Ali Ibn Abi Taalib (a.s.) and his last successor is Imam Mahdi (a.s.) – about whom he spoke in great detail. He informed the people about his (a.s.) name as well as his agnomen (kuniyyat). In the books of Behaarul-Anwaar & Muntakhab-ul-Asar, the traditions of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) concerning Imam-e-Zamana (a.s.) are as follows:

- (1) O people! Know that I am a warner to the nation while Ali (a.s.) is your leader and guide.
- (2) Beware! I'm a messenger while Ali (a.s.) is my successor
- (3) Know that the last of the Imams – al Qaaem - is from our progeny
- (4) Know that he will overpower all other religions
- (5) Beware! He will take revenge from the oppressors
- (6) Beware! For he will be victorious wherever he goes and will obliterate the citadels and erase all boundaries.
- (7) Beware! He will destroy all the polytheist tribes and nations
- (8) Know that he will take revenge on behalf of all the friends of Allah

- (9) know that he will be the helper and supporter of Allah's religion
- (10) Know that he will be pure and chaste like the waves that originate from the depths of the ocean or the sparkling water that flows through the rivers.
- (11) Know that he will recognize the people rightly - the scholars through their intelligence and the ignorant ones through their ignorance.
- (12) Know that he is the chosen one of Allah - bestowed with all noble traits
- (13) Know that he is the inheritor of all knowledge and their expert and authority.
- (14) Know that he will warn and caution the people about divine matters related to faith
- (15) Know that he is emblem of guidance. He is steadfast, resolute and unyielding.
- (16) Know that he is the Divine Proof and Allah's Remnant. There is no divine representative after him. The truth is only in him and with him.
- (17) Know that none can defeat or subdue him.
- (18) Know that he is the 'wali' of Allah among the people and also the trustee of His apparent and secret matters.

Many scholars are of the view that it was only at Ghadeer-e-Khumm - and nowhere else – that Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) not only introduced Ali (a.s.) as his successor but also elaborated and announced the wilayah (mastership) of Imam Mahdi (a.s.) and the other ten Imams (a.s.) in a very eloquent and articulate manner. Another reason he (s.a.w.a.) made it a point to introduce Imam Mahdi (a.s.) in the gathering of Ghadeer was to ensure that everyone would be aware and conscious about Imam Mahdi (a.s.). Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) wanted every Muslim not only to safeguard this light (of Imam Mahdi (a.s.)) in their hearts but also pass it to the later generations so that they should remain secure from the trials and tribulations of the world till the Day of Judgment. If the recognition and awareness of the existence and advent of Imam-e-Zamana (a.s.) would not have been of paramount importance, Allah would not have made such an elaborate and detailed arrangement to announce his reappearance. All the past Prophets (a.s.) and successors (a.s.) right till Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), left no stone unturned to inform and enlighten the people about Imam-e-Zamana (a.s.). As for the era and phases of the news and traditions about Imam-e-Zamana (a.s.), they can be classified into four parts:

First phase is the discussions concerning Imam Mahdi (a.s.) in the ancient books of Vedas, Zartosht, Jamasaab, Injeel, Zaboor etc. The second phase is Ghadeer-e-Khum - where Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) not only announced the termination of the series of messengers, but also declared the names of his twelve successors after naming H. Ali (a.s.) as his immediate successor. The third era is the birth of Imam-e-Zamana (a.s.) - which created a tumult among the tyrants and oppressors. During his (a.s.) minor occultation - which lasted for sixty nine years - there were four special representatives viz. (1) Usman Ibn Saeed Amri (2) Mohammed Ibn Usman Ibn Saeed Amri (3) Abul Qasim Husain Ibn Rauh Nawbhakti & (4) Ali Ibn Mohammed Seymouri (Allah's mercy be on them all). These representatives were a link between the people and Imam-e-Zamana (a.s.). Imam (a.s.) used to guide the people and answer their religious queries through letters (known as Tauqeeaat) which he used to address to his representatives.

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The fourth phase is the era of major occultation which continues till date. In this period, the practice of religious guidance from the side of the Imam (a.s.) is continuing through the Maraaje.

The golden and radiant era of reappearance with all its blessings and benevolence is just around the corner. It is as if we can hear the approaching footsteps of Imam-e-Zamana (a.s.). The prophecies of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) seem to have received a new lease of life and are comforting to the heart. No doubt, innocent blood is being spilled everywhere. Yet, neither the orphans have despaired of the reappearance of Imame-Zamana (a.s.) nor the widows are negligent about their master (a.s.) whose title is "Muntaqim" – the one who will take revenge. Today, all over the world the martyrdom of the beloved of J. Zehra (s.a) – Imam Husain (a.s.) – is commemorated with a lot of zeal and fervor. This upsurge in 'azadaari' is a sign that the more the enemies try to suppress it, the stronger and resilient it will become. The imminent reappearance of Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s) - the avenger of the blood of Imam Husain (a.s.) – has lit a thousand lamps in the hearts of the people and these lamps are now glowing radiantly. Hope and optimism are at their pinnacle and there is splendor and joy in the world of anticipation (intezaar). He (a.s.) will reappear very soon. The sounds of his reappearance are clearly audible. May Allah include all of us among the helpers and supporters of this benevolent and honorable personality who is presently in occultation! May the noble, virtuous and faithful servants of Allah – who have been oppressed and enfeebled - become the inheritors of this earth, as per the divine promise! Aameen!

### Exegesis Of Ziarat Of Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) On Friday

(Continued from the previous Shabaan issue of 1431 A.H.)

*"Peace be upon you O my Master. I'm your Slave. I acknowledge all of you [Ahle Bait (a.s.)], from your first one till the last one."*

The above sentence of the ziarat can be discussed on the basis of 4 words - Master (Maula), Acknowledge (Aarif), First (Ula) and Last (Ukhra). However, since the word Maula has already been discussed in some of the previous issues of Al Muntazar (especially in the special issue on 1400 years of Ghadeer) it would suffice to mention here that Maula is one of those words in Arabic which has contradictory meanings. It could mean a Master as well as a Slave. Both these meanings have been referred to in the above sentence. In the first instance it means Master whereas in the second part (**ANA MAULAKA**) means that I'm your slave. The other word Aarif, is the Nominal Subject of ma'refat and irfaan and since the word ma'refat has also been discussed extensively, we shall not delve into its details. This brings us to the two words First (Ula) and Last (Ukhra). Both these words are on the scale of fo'la and as per Arabic grammar, they are the feminine for the superlative degree. Ula means beginning, first and next and it is the feminine for Awwal. In the Holy Quran when this word has been used in connection with the Hereafter, then it implies this world (duniya) since it is before the Hereafter. For instance, "And the hereafter is better for you (s.a.w.a.) than the first." Similarly, UKHRA means the other, earlier, the end and it is the feminine for aakhir. It has been mentioned more than 20 times in the Holy Quran.

It could also be possible that implies the time before the reappearance of Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) whereas ukhra refers to the time after the reappearance and during his worldly rule. This can be emphasized through this tradition from Usool-e-Kaafi where Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) explains the 20th verse of Surah Shura, "...and in the hereafter he has no portion" in the following manner,

***"He shall not have any share during the truthful rule of the Qaim (of Ale Muhammad)."***

[Al Kaafi, vol. 1, page 435]

Similarly, it can also be related to Raj'at (The Returning) and Qiyamat. The conclusion here is that the one who recites this ziarat - while addressing his Master, Hazrat Baqiyatullah (a.t.f.s.) - confesses his slavery and servitude and simultaneously also claims that 'O my Master, I recognize you as you should be recognized. I'm aware of all your means and methods and Allah knows the best.

*"I seek proximity with Allah, the Most High, through your intercession and the intercession of your progeny."*

In the above sentence of the ziarat, Ahle Bait (a.s.) have been described as the source of gaining proximity to Allah, the Most High. It means that if a person wishes to reach Allah, he should approach Him through these pure souls whom Allah Himself has attributed to be the means of achieving His nearness.

There are certain groups of Muslims today, who deny the concepts of mediation (tawassul), intercession (shafa'at), visiting the graves (ziarat), etc. and their propagation is gaining such

immense strength that some of our Shias too are being influenced by this ideology. Hence, we feel it is our responsibility to emphasize on this subject in order to strengthen the beliefs of the believers and give a strong reply to the hypocrites, Inshallah. Let us first discuss briefly on the word 'I seek proximity (**ATAQARRABO**). The general meaning of the scale or pattern to which the word **ATAQARRABO** belongs is the acceptance of the effect of the verb. The word **ATAQARRABO** means that I seek proximity to Allah through a medium. A **MUTAQARRIB** is a person who is in pursuit of nearness. This sentence from the ziarat talks about seeking nearness to Allah, but through the medium of Aale Muhammad (a.s.). Now let us discuss certain important things related to mediation (**WASILAH**) albeit in a concise manner since this matter (concerning WASILAH) requires an entire book. First Part: Wasilah is a Divine Tradition (Sunnat of Allah).

Every Muslim, without a doubt, agrees to the fact that Allah, the Almighty, is Needless and Self-sufficient. In other words, Allah, the Most High, is a King Who has power over all things and does not need anyone. There is no partner for Him and everything is His creation. If anyone believes other than this, then that person has stepped out of the boundaries of Islam, and there are no exceptions to it. In spite of such magnanimous attributes, Allah, the Most High, has chosen means to execute His commands. No one in the world has the power to intentionally prevent it. But the AllPowerful, the One who is aware of all things, wished that He would execute all His commands through a medium. Hence, in order to execute His orders He created the Proximate Angels, Prophets, Messengers and their Noble Successors (peace be on them all). This is an undeniable reality. For instance, can anyone deny the sending of Prophets and Messengers for the guidance of mankind? Can anyone deny the sending of revelation (wahy) through Janabe Jibraeel (a.s.)? Can anyone deny that the responsibility of capturing the souls has been entrusted with Janabe Izraeel (a.s.)? Can the appointment of Janabe Israfeel (a.s.) as the 'blower of the trumpet' be denied? Can He not execute all of these by Himself? Definitely He can but He has chosen tawassul as His Sunnah. Perhaps, it is to prove to those so called Muslims who think that they can reach Allah directly. Allah Himself has commanded regarding tawassul,

**"O you who believe! Be careful of (your duty to Allah and seek means of nearness to Him and strive hard in His way that you may be successful."**

[Surah Maedah (5): 35]

### **Second: Tawassul - In the light of the Holy Quran**

Apart from the aforementioned verse of the Holy Quran, there are numerous other verses in which the concept of tawassul has been explicitly discussed. For instance, when the sons of Prophet Yaqub (a.s.) came to him and requested him to seek pardon for them - thereby implying that they intended to make Prophet Yaqub (a.s.) as their wasilah - he did not deny it but agreed to it. It is mentioned in the Holy Quran that,

**"They said: O our father! Ask forgiveness for our faults, surely we were sinners. He said: I will ask for you forgiveness from my Lord; surely He is the Forgiving, the Merciful."**

[Surah Yusuf (12): 97-98]

It is evident from this that Prophet Yaqub (a.s.) did not say that wasilah is bid'at (innovation), haraam (forbidden) and they should pray without any mediation. On the contrary, he (a.s.) accepted their mediation and breathed into them the hope of Allah's Mercy and Forgiveness. There are many other such verses in the Holy Quran but we shall "suffice with this keeping brevity in mind.

### **Third Part: Tawassul in the reliable traditions of Ahle Sunnat**

#### **Tradition 1**

Usman ibne Hunaif narrates that once a blind person came to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and said, "You pray to Allah that He cures me." He (s.a.w.a.) said, "If you want I'll pray for you and if you want you can be patient and patience is better for you." The blind person said, "You please pray." Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) ordered him,

*"You perform ablution (wuzu) and perform it with complete concentration, pray two rak'at namaz and recite this dua, "O Lord! I beseech you that I turn towards you, Your Prophet who is a Merciful Prophet that, O Muhammad I turn towards my Lord through you that you fulfill my wish. O Allah! You accept the intercession of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) in my favour."*

There cannot be any doubt over the reliability of this tradition because even the leader of the Wahhaabi sect, Ibne Taymiyyah, has confirmed its reliability. The famous Wahhaabi author 'Rafaa'ee', whose only aim was to refute the traditions concerning tawassul writes, "There is no doubt that this tradition is correct and famous and its reality is indisputably proven."

[At-Tawassulo-ita-haqeeqati-tawassul, p. 158]

This tradition has been narrated in Sunane-Nisaai, Sunan-e-Baihaqi, Mo'jam of Tabarani, Sunan-e-Tirmidhi and by Haakim Nishapoori in Mustadrak-us-Sahihain. [AtTawassul] ..

Apart from this Zaini Dahlaan writes in his book 'Khulasatul Aklaam', Bukhari in his Taarikh, Ibne Majah in his Sunan, Hakim Nishapoori in Mustadrak-us-Sahihain and Jalaluddin as-Suyuti in Jame' have narrated this tradition."

Ibne Maajah has confirmed this tradition to be reliable. Haakim Nishapoori writes, "This tradition conforms to the conditions of Shaikhain (Bukhari and Muslim) but both of them have not narrated it."

#### **Tradition 2**

*Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said, "When Hazrat Adam (a.s.) committed Tark-e-Ula, he raised his head towards the sky and said: O Lord! I beseech You through Muhammad and his progeny that you forgive me. Allah asked him: Who is Muhammad? Adam (a.s.) replied: When you created me, I raised my head towards the Throne (Arsh) and saw that on it was written 'There is no god except Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger. I said to myself that Muhammad must be the greatest creation of Allah that He has kept his name along with His name. At that time it was revealed to him that he (s.a.w.a.) would be the last Prophet from his progeny and had he (s.a.w.a.) not been there, We would not have created you (Adam) at all." (Tabarani in Mo'jamus Sagheer, Haakim Nisshapoori in Mustadrak-us-Sahihain vol. 2 page 615, Abu Noaim Isfahaani*



and Baihaqi in Dalaaelun Nubuwwah, Ibne Asaakir Shaami in his Tarikh, Jalaluddin as-Suyuti in al-Durrul Manthoor vol. 1 page 59 and Aaloosi in Ruhul Ma'ani have narrated this tradition)

### **Fourth Part: Tawassul as per Shia Traditions**

The concept of tawassul has been elaborately explained in Shia books of traditions. It is not possible to bring forth all the references but just to cite an example we bring only one reference from Behaarul Anwaar vol. 23 page 99 from the chapter - **BAABOANNAHUM (ALAHIMUS SALAAM) ALWASAAELO BAINAL KHALQE WA BAINALLAHE** meaning "Ahle Bait (a.s.) are the mediators between the creatures and Allah."

*"I await your reappearance and the manifestation of the Truth through you."*

There are many books and booklets of Association of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) which are pertaining to Awaiting (Intezaar) and Reappearance (Zuhoor). This topic has also been extensively discussed in previous Al Muntazar magazines.

*"I beseech Allah that He sends salutations upon Muhammad and his progeny and that He includes me amongst those who await your reappearance and amongst your followers and amongst your helpers against your enemies and amongst those who are martyred in front of you."*

In the above sentences of the ziarat, three important responsibilities and one reward for the lovers of Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) have been mentioned. The three responsibilities are awaiting, obedience and helping and their reward is martyrdom. There cannot be anything better for a believer that he attains martyrdom in front of his Imam (a.t.f.s.).

(To be continued later, Inshallah)

## A Glance At Behaarul-ul-Anwaar

### Preface

Our infallible Imams (a.s.) are the fountainhead of all material, religious and divine knowledge. Their words and deeds are a source of salvation for us. Following and submitting to them is incumbent upon us and acquiring this religious knowledge has been greatly emphasized. If for a moment, we disregard the teachings of the Imams (a.s.) in favour of worldly gains, then forget salvation of the hereafter, we would be among the losers and misguided ones of this world itself. Our scholars – right from the beginning till date - have rendered selfless service through their efforts and sacrifices in the collection of the treasures of knowledge and for which each and every man of the community remains grateful. This collection is the nations' wealth, the guarantee of our survival and the provision of the hereafter. This is the right of intercession. The one who is active in this field gets the privilege of rewards. When the flame of the lamp of knowledge lit by the Imams (a.s.) became more luminous through the efforts of these scholars, the hearts of the enemies exploded. The men of evil readied devious weapons and strategies to discredit and disgrace our venerated scholars. They targeted the front ranking scholars and highlighted their shortcomings and weaknesses in order to belittle their importance. These would then be fed into the conversations of the community to promote a vilified environment against them

Something like this happened with Allamah Muhammad Baqir Majlisi (r.a.), whose mind boggling work - the voluminous 110 parts of Behaar al-Anwaar al-Jaameah Le Durare Akhbaar al-Aimmah al-Athaar- and 30 other books will keep his personality alive till the day of Judgement. Especially in the case of Behaar al-Anwaar, whose authenticity and inclusiveness was put under doubt (with malafide intentions) for the seekers of knowledge, researchers and scholars so that they would remain confused in the authenticity of its narrations and explanations.

**Some Doubts:** A doubt fast gaining prevalence among some scholars and the people leaning towards a scholarly disposition - but not enumerated officially among the Ulama - is that the book (i.e. Behaar al-Anwaar) is a collection of both confirmed and unconfirmed, authenticated and unauthenticated, traditions gathered at a single place. The work of sieving and pruning is on the shoulders of the coming generation of scholars and researchers.

The other doubt spreading amongst scholars is that Behaar al-Anwaar is a collection of traditions, consisting of historical and religious knowledge collected and sorted by the students of Allamah Majlisi (r.a.) while he just lent his name on the cover for its publication after its finalization.

When a brother of Association of Imam Mahdi (a.s.) – who is competent in one field of research and is a skilful student - learnt of this doubt and discussions in the society, he undertook a brief assessment of Allamah's (r.a.) personality, remarkable works and the opinions of great scholars about this leading persona. He writes:

Behaar al-Anwaar and the author of this immense work Allamah Majlisi (a.r.) do not need any introduction in the Shiite world. The translations of his works are continually published in Urdu and Persian. Allamah Majlisi's (r.a.) father is also known by the title of Allamah (a very learned scholar) since he was a highly erudite academic. His name was Allamah Muhammad Taqi Ibn

Maqsood Ali (r.a.). He is even mentioned as Allamah Majlisi - the first – (Majlisi-e-Awwal) in discussions.

Allamah Majlisi (ar) was born in 1037 A.H in the city of Isfahan. He passed away on the 27th of Ramazan 1110 A.H He was buried in the grand mosque of Isfahan. His grave has visitors even today. (In the new edition of Behaar al-Anwaar, his date of expiry is mentioned as 1111 A.H but this is incorrect). The Seminary of Allamah Majlisi (r.a.) was one of the leading religious schools of Iran and its accomplishments and achievements will be remembered till the Day of Resurrection. The seminary has produced luminaries like Mulla Saleh Mazandaraani and the researcher Amina Khatoon through whom there have been a series of jurisprudents. This was a period of scheming and plotting by the Russian and British powers against the unity and scholastic achievements of Iran. The echoes of the sedition of Ali Muhammad Baab were heard and Prince Dalgorki was ready to enter Iran through the Baab. The center of knowledge was cognizant of the situation and acted as a protective fortification.

### **His Services**

Allamah Majlisi (r.a.) has collected traditions in his book from authentic Shiite sources other than the four main books: AlKaafi, Man Laa Yahzoruhul Faqih, Istibsaar and Tahzeeb. These four books are the pillars on which rests the Shiite religion.

Hardly has Allamah (r.a.) overlooked any aspect of the Islamic history mentioned by the Sihah and left it unanswered. The first version of Behaar al-Anwaar consisted of 25 volumes so huge that they were subdivided into a 110 volumes for the second edition. This book is a powerful weapon in the hands of our research scholars.

Of the 25 volumes, Allamah (r.a.) has himself provided the explanations and clarifications in 17 volumes, while he did not get an opportunity for the remaining 8 volumes. He made a will to his student Mir Muhammad Husain Khuldabadi (r.a.) to complete this task of exegesis of the remaining traditions. His work is in plain language and easy to understand.

### **Compilations of Allamah Majlisi (r.a.)**

Allah, the High, had bestowed him with great abilities. He was the master of astounding memory and had amazing knowledge. The treasures of knowledge left by the Allamah through his writings and speeches are as follows:

1. Behaar al-Anwaar
2. Hayaah al-Qulub in 3 volumes.
3. Haqq al-Yaqeen
4. Hilyah al-Muttaqeen
5. Ain al-Hayaah
6. Jalaa al-Uyoon
7. Tauheed-e-Mufazzal
8. Jawaabhaa-e-Masaele Mutafarriqah
9. Tazkerah al-Aimmah

And there are innumerable books pertaining to legal rulings. These compilation of books range presently at 58 books but is not a complete summation and there are other writings as well. His work Behaar alAnwaar has the position of an encyclopedia in all his works.

According to great islamic scholars, Allamah Majlisi (r.a.) has a position of such prestige that any praise falls short. The very mention of his name is a cause of reverence. The Late Mirza Husain Noori (r.a.), Allamah Waheed Bahbahaani (r.a.), the great teacher - Hajj Sheikh Murtuza Ansari (r.a.) - have not only addressed Allamah Baqir Majlisi (r.a.) as such but have gone on to record about his scholastic capacity, greatness and services and viewed it with admiration. He is respected as a grand researcher, the luminescence of knowledge and a heroic figure.

It is clear to a great extent that the Allamah was close to the fountainhead of divine knowledge and the heir to the teachings of the past Prophets (a.s.), the Imam of the Time (a.s.). Otherwise, the collection of such a vast base of knowledge was impossible for the succeeding generation of researchers. However, Allamah Majlisi (a.r.) did take the help of his students in this endeavor.

Despite the paucity of space, the introduction of Allamah Muhammad Baqir Majlisi (r.a.) was necessary. Our community should be aware of two things. One, they should recognize the scholar who has exposed the baseless arguments of the people concerning religion; and two, the writers and authors should desist from frivolous talk about the Allamah and pay attention to his writings.

The other reason was the introduction of Behaar al-Anwaar inclusive of 25 volumes of which the 13th volume is solely about Hazrat Hujjat Ibn al-Hasan Askari (a.s.).

It is sad that this volume is available only with some scholars. The 13th volume was later subdivided into three: 51st 52nd and the 53rd volumes of the new 110 volumes edition, and the total number of pages spanning the three volumes are 1118. Inshallah, we have the good fortune of taking a peek at all three volumes keeping brevity in consideration.

### **Imam Mahdi (a.s.) and the 51st, 52nd and 53rd volumes of Behaar al-Anwaar**

We present herein for the readers, a divisional preview of the detailed and documentary information regarding Imam Zamana (a.s.) in Behaar al-Anwaar:

#### **The First Chapter:**

The birth of Imam Zamana (a.s.) and the conditions of his mother (a.s.) are quoted therein. He has referred to the book Al-Kaafi of Sheikh Kulaini (r.a.) for the date of birth as 15th Shaban 255 AH. Quoting Kamaaluddin, he records that when Janabe Nargis Khatoon (a.s.) became pregnant, Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) informed her of the birth of a son who would be his successor. The next tradition narrates the incident of Janabe Hakimah Khatoon (s.a.), the paternal aunt of Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) and the daughter of Imam Muhammad Taqi (a.s.) being present with Janabe Narjis Khatoon (a.s.) at the birth of Imam Zamana (a.s.). Thereafter are the narrations of the aqeeqah of Imam Zamana (a.s.) and his introduction to the select companions of Imam Askari (a.s.) as the heir.

## **The Second Chapter**

The names and titles of Imam Zamana (a.s.) and their appellation have been mentioned. First being about the title Qaem narrated from Imam Baqir (a.s.) that though all the Imams are Qaem bll Haqq (steadfast on Truth) but the title is specific for Imam Zamana (a.s.) because he will rise for the revenge of the blood of Imam Husain (a.s.).

He is called Mahdi (guided one) because Allah has guided him towards the true affair. He will bring the real Torah and the other divine books to the fore. He will then judge the followers of the Torah according to Torah, the followers of the Bible according to the Bible, the followers of Zaboor according to Zaboor and the Muslims according to Quran.

There is no contradiction in the tradition that the believers of Torah will be judged according to the Torah and the narration that all will follow Islam because Imam (a.s.) will establish the arguments for conforming to Islam from the Torah itself.

## **The Third Chapter**

When and where should the name of Imam (a.s.) be said and when it should be avoided?

## **The Fourth Chapter**

His attributes, signs and lineage. For example, his hidden birth, the family of Ameerul Momineen (a.s.), the reappearance in the last epoch, his appearance of a middle-aged man, his looks, his identification marks and his lineage i.e. he is from the progeny of Imam Reza (a.s.) or Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.).

## **The Fifth Chapter**

The mention of verses interpreted by the Ahle Bait (a.s.) as pertaining to the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (a.s.). There are many verses in the Holy Quran that have a hidden meaning different from the apparent meaning and which indicate the appearance of Imam (a.s.).

## **The Sixth Chapter**

The traditions of Allah and His Messenger (s.a.w.a.) concerning Imam Zamana (a.s.) from Shiite and Sunni sources. For example, the narration of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) that we the children of Abdul Muttalib, the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), Hamza the chief of martyrs, Ja'afar Tayyar, Ali and Fatimah (a.s.), Hasan and Husain (a.s.) and Mahdi (a.s.) are the Chiefs of Paradise.

## **The Seventh Chapter**

The traditions about Imam Zamana (a.s.) narrated from Ameerul Momineen (a.s.).

The Chapters 8-15 contain narrations from Imam Hasan (a.s.), Imam Husain (a.s.), Imam Zainul Abedeen (a.s.), Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.), Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.), Imam Moosa Kazim (a.s.), Imam Ali Reza (a.s.), Imam Muhammad Jawad (a.s.), Imam Ali Naqi (a.s.) and Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) pertaining to Imam Zamana (a.s.).

### **The Sixteenth Chapter**

This chapter contains prophecies of soothsayers like the prophecy of an Arab Christian mystic Sutaih. He was from the Ishaan area of Jordan. The prophecy was made as a reply to the question pertaining to the future events by the king Zajedaan.

### **The Seventeenth Chapter**

The proofs elucidated by Sheikh Toosi (r.a.) concerning Imam Zamana (a.s.) and his occultation.

### **The Eighteenth Chapter**

The proofs of the occultation of Imam Zamana (a.s.) supported by proofs of occultation of the previous Prophets (a.s.).

### **The Nineteenth Chapter**

The replies to the opponents of the longevity of Imam Zamana (a.s.) and the evidences for his longevity and occultation through the mention of the long lives of some people through the ages. This is a lengthy chapter including references of people with long lives taken from the book Kamaaluddin by Sheikh Saduq (r.a.). The people who think long life as impossible have been rejected by use of these examples. References of amazing long ages have also been taken from Sayyed Murtuza (r.a.), Allamah Karajki (r.a.) and Sheikh Mufid (r.a.). It is proven that long life is not a new concept.

### **The Twentieth Chapter**

Some miracles of Imam Zamana (a.s.) and mention of his deputies. Forty two people have been mentioned. Imam Zamana (a.s.) has guided and helped his followers in these incidents. People were in awe as the events unfolded before them.

### **The Twenty-First Chapter**

The special deputies in the minor occultation and communication of Imam Zamana (a.s.) to his Shias through them have been mentioned. Abu Amr Uthman bin Saeed Amri (r.a.), Abu Ja'far Muhammad bin Uthman Amri (r.a.), Abul Qasim Husain bin Rauh Naubakhti (r.a.) and Abul Hasan Ali bin Muhammad Seymouri (r.a.) were the special deputies of Imam Zamana (a.s.). Imam (a.s.) established a perfect system through these deputies as a prelude to the major occultation. Imam (a.s.) stimulated the thought processes of the Shias, how they can keep in touch with the Imam and solve problems.

### **The Twenty-Second Chapter: The mention of the false claimants**

Some people have claimed deputyship in the minor occultation. Abu Muhammad Hasan Sharee'i was the foremost of them. The other claimants include Muhammad bin Nuzair Ghairi, Ahmad bin Helaal Karkhi, Muhammad bin Ali Bilaal, Husain bin Mansoor Hallaj, Muhammad bin Ali Shalmaghaani and Abu Bakr Baghdadi (also known as Abu Dalf the Insane). Allah degraded them all.

There are a total of 10 chapters in the 52nd volume. As we had mentioned in the foreword of the 51st volume, there are five introductory chapters and then the original discussion begins. The volume contains 22 chapters but after deducting the 5 chapters of the beginning, we come to a total of 17 chapters. The chapters of the 51st and 52nd volume constitute a total of 27 chapters.

### **The Eighteenth Chapter**

(That is the 23rd according to the system). It is regarding the persons who saw Imam Zamana (a.s.).

An incident is narrated below:

Narrated from Ali ibn Ibrahim Fadaki, from Awdi - I was circumbulating the Ka'ba. I had completed 6 circumbulations and was going to start the seventh. I saw some people sitting on the right side of Ka'ba. (If you face the door, then the Hajar al-Aswad is on the left and the stone of Ismail is on the right). A handsome and perfumed gentleman came near them and started conversing with them. I too thought of talking with him but the crowd did not allow me through. I asked a person, who is this man? He replied: He is the son of Allah's Messenger (s.a.w.a.). Every year on a particular day, he meets with some special people and converses with them. I turned towards him and said: 'I have come to you. Guide me, may Allah guide you!' He picked a handful of pebbles and gave them to me. I exclaimed: Pebbles! But when I opened my fist, I saw it filled with gold coins. When I moved from there, I saw the Master come towards me and said: 'The signs of truth are clear for you and the blindness of your heart has been uncovered, do you know me?' By Allah, I do not know you, I responded.

He said: 'I am the same Mahdi, the Qaem. I will fill the earth with justice and equity as it will have been filled with injustice and oppression. The world will never remain devoid of the Hujjat of Allah....

### **Reminder**

Innumerable incidents have been narrated where the Imam has met people in Makka, Madinah, Saamarraa, Qum, Najaf and different locations throughout the world and guided them.

### **The Nineteenth Chapter (24th Chapter of the old system)**

The meeting of Sa'd bin Abdullah Ash'ari with Imam Zamana (a.s.) and the replies given to his numerous queries. Sa'd bin Abdullah displayed a great zeal in collecting books and confirming the truth of Shiite beliefs with their help due to which he would sometimes be involved in



debates with the Sunnis. Imam Zamana (a.s.) was of great help to him and so the opponents had to face defeat and humiliation.

### **Twentieth Chapter (25 Chapter of the old system)**

Reason for the occultation of Imam Zamana (a.s.) and the deriving of benefit by people. Al-Muntazar has written various articles with the help of this chapter.

### **Twenty-First Chapter (26th chapter of the old sequence)**

The examination of Shias in the period of occultation and the consequential toughening of beliefs

It is narrated in this chapter that nobody knows the time of reappearance. Hence the person who fixes the time of reappearance is a liar.

### **The Twenty-Second Chapter (the 27th chapter from old sequence)**

The virtue of awaiting and the praise for Shias in the time of occultation; the responsibilities of shias in occultation - 77 traditions have been narrated in this regard. The famous tradition of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has been quoted in this chapter: Awaiting the Imam (Faraj) is the best action of my nation.

### **The Twenty-Third Chapter: (or the 28th chapter)**

The mention of those people who have (falsely) claimed to have met Imam in the major occultation

Hazrat Mahdi (a.s.) mingles with the people and observes them but they do not recognize him. His famous letter to his last special deputy Ali ibn Muhammad Seymouri (r.a.) where he informed him of the end of the minor occultation and the beginning of the major occultation is found in this chapter.

*Imam Reza (a.s.) states: "Khizr (a.s.) drank from the nectar of life. Thus he is alive and will not die till the trumpet is blown. Indeed he comes to us and he greets us. His voice is audible but he cannot be seen. And he is present wherever his name is mentioned. Thus, whoever among you mentions him, must say Salaam to him. Every year he is present in Hajj. He performs all the rituals and he camps at Arafat; says Aameen to the prayers of believers. And the Almighty Allah removes the loneliness of our Qaem (a.s.) during his occultation through the companionship of Khizr. (Hence Hazrat Khizr is known as the companion of Imam Zamana (a.s.) in occultation)*

### **The Twenty-Fourth Chapter (or the 29th chapter)**

Allamah Majlisi (r.a.) has narrated the meeting of Muqaddas Ardebeli (ar) in the shrine of Ameerul Momineen (a.s.), then the meeting of Mir Is'haq Astarabadi (popular as Tahyul Arz), the incidents of Mirza Muhammad Astarabadi and Muhammad ibn Isa Bahraini (popular for the incident of pomegranate).

### **The Twenty-Fifth Chapter (or the 30th chapter)**

This chapter throws light on the signs of appearance such as the emergence of Sufyaani and the coming of Dajjal, etc. It is very interesting as it covers the discussion of signs and contains doubts, debates and objections. Allamah Majlisi (r.a.) has replied to various doubts. There is reference to signs which of the signs are certain or uncertain, the conditions before and after reappearance are considered.

### **The Twenty-Sixth Chapter (or the 31st chapter)**

This chapter discusses the day of reappearance in particular. The happenings on that day - as stated by Imam Sadiq (a.s.) - "The Qaem from us Ahle Bait (a.s.) will rise on Friday." Or as Bakr ibn A'yan narrates that Imam Sadiq (a.s.) has explained regarding the stone of Aswad and the position where it is placed and said: A bird will alight at this column on Qaem and will be the first to pledge allegiance to him. By Allah, that bird is Jibraeel and this is the column against which Qaem will lean and it is the evidence of his being Qaem and the pillar will be witness for the people who pledge allegiance here..."

That day Prophet Eesa (a.s.) too will descend. Hazrat Abdul Azim (r.a.) whose shrine is at Rayy (modern-day Tehran) has narrated from Imam Muhammad Taqi (a.s.), "313 persons will collect near him. These will be the sincere ones. Then Imam (a.s.) will reappear. When the allegiance will be complete - i.e. their numbers will swell to ten thousand, then by the order of Allah, he will begin the uprising and annihilate the enemy such that Allah will be pleased." Hazrat Abdul Azim (r.a.) asked: Master, How will it be known that Allah is pleased? He (a.s.) replied, "He will cause His mercy to descend upon his (a.s.) heart." The Twenty-Seventh Chapter (or the 32nd chapter)

This chapter mentions his virtues and character, his companions, their number and their conditions. This chapter is fascinating. It answers many objections. It forms the last chapter of the 52nd volume.

### **The 53rd volume**

It is the 53rd volume of the new publication. It contains only four chapters. The elucidation is as follows:

### **The Twenty-Eighth Chapter (or the 33rd chapter)**

The conditions of the time of reappearance have been narrated from the famous companion of Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) and Imam Musa Kazim (a.s.), Mufazzal ibn Umar. He has asked both the Imams some questions to which they have replied. Like, "Is the time of the Awaited Mahdi's reappearance decided that people may know when to expect it? What will be the conditions at the time of reappearance? Is the time of reappearance undecided? What is the exegesis of the Quranic verse ...so that He may cause His religion to dominate all religions.'? Will his religion be the religion of Prophets Ibrahim (a.s.), Musa (a.s.), Isa (a.s.) and Muhammad (s.a.w.a.)? Is the nation of Prophet Musa (a.s.) called Jews? Why are the Christians called as Nasaaraa? Which is the land of his reappearance? Who will be his companion in occultation? In short, many such queries were answered by Imam Sadiq (a.s.) and Imam Musa Kazim (a.s.).

### **The Twenty-Ninth Chapter (or the 34th chapter)**

This chapter discusses the return (raj'at) from pages 39-145, i.e. around 107 pages and 162 traditions. We find excellent comments, clarifications and irrefutable replies of Allamah Majlisi (r.a.) that were given to the opponents in this chapter. Raj'at is a difficult and sensitive discussion. The Sunnis do not believe in Raj'at because they dislike the discussions in it. A tradition from Imam Baqir (a.s.) is narrated: "Do not discuss the matter of raj'at before them."

### **The Thirtieth Chapter (or the 35th chapter)**

This chapter discusses the caliphs of Mahdi (a.s.) and their children and what will happen after him.

### **The Thirty-First Chapter (or the 36th chapter)**

This is the last chapter of both the old and new publications. It includes 33 traditions. It consists of the letters (Tauqee') from Imam-eZamaana (a.s.). The tauqee' are letters or writings from Imam Zamana (a.s.) in the minor occultation, sent through the special deputies as replies to the various problems facing the Shias. It also includes a few letters written as replies to great scholars in the major occultation or sometimes written for their reformation.

In the end, we pray to the Almighty for the earliest reappearance of our Imam (a.t.f.s.) and include us among his helpers and companions!

O Lord of the Worlds! Help us to appreciate and comprehend the greatness and dignity of our scholars and gain the recognition of our Master, the Awaited Saviour (a.s.) in the light of the knowledge given by them. Aameen!

## Acquiring Of Knowledge During Occultation And Our Responsibilities

### **The Present Era**

The present era, the period of the occultation of our Last Imam (a.s.) is quite different from all other periods in the journey of human excellence. Man has made more progress in the last four hundred years than the entire human history. And this progress has not been limited to any one facet of life. It has spanned and encompassed the entire human life from all aspects. The intellectuals of the present century have coined phrases like "era of knowledge", "age of science and technology" etc. Numerous inventions of this century have made our lives comfortable.

The Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.a.) has gifted this era of knowledge with the ultimate miracle of knowledge - the Quran. The Infallibles (a.s.) have also foretold the nature of this period through numerous traditions.

But along with various discoveries, also comes the widespread misuse of science in the form of hateful propaganda and newer ways of committing sins and spreading evil. What would require a huge effort and much expense to do in the past, can now be done at the click of a button. Be it television or the internet. On one hand they are a means of getting knowledge and information, but they also spread corruption in the minds people - especially the youth. Oppression, debauchery, sloth and shamelessness have become rampant.

One sees morality being turned on its head and basic values cultivated by all faiths and ideologies bite the dust. Modesty and being true to religion is termed fanaticism.

The decadent are praised for their right to expose and the rich and famous are saluted and idolized. Spirituality has become outdated. The last age has arrived as Ameerul Momeneen Ali Ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) predicts:

*"I swear by Him, in whose hand is my soul. You will not meet what you like (the advent of al-Qaem (a.s.)) until a time comes that you spit at each other's face, call each others as liars and until none of you remain except like the kohl in an eye or like salt in food. I give you an example. It is like a man having some food (grains). He sifts and purifies it and then he keeps it in a store for some time. Then he comes back to find that his food has become infested with worm. He takes it out, sifts it and puts it back into the store. After a time he comes to find that his food has become infested again. He takes it out, purifies it and puts it back into the store. He does this again and again until nothing of his food remains, except the very least, which will never be harmed by the worms. So it is with you! You are going to be examined until none of you remain safe except a few, who will never be affected by seditions."*

(Behaar-ul-Anwaar, vol. 52, p. 115)

The present era has made our lives comfortable but eroded the core spiritual values. A grim situation indeed! What then can be the solution?

### **Importance of Education**

The very reading of this article proves that knowledge is the basic necessity for the understanding of anything. It is an obvious reality which needs no proof. If you want to gain

experience or do something you should know about it first. Even conjecture is dependent upon preconceived notions from our store of knowledge. Thus it is an undeniable logic that to be a Muslim one should know about Islam. To be a believer one should know about beliefs.

*The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said, Seeking knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim. Let it be known that Allah loves those who seek knowledge."* (Al-Kafi, vol. 1, pg. 30, h. 1)

It is necessary for every Muslim man and woman to gain knowledge about religion. This is crystal clear from the above narration. But what is also highlighted is that it is the means to Allah's love and in turn the love of the Infallibles (a.s.). Let us now turn to the narration about the person who does not make efforts for acquiring knowledge about religion.

Raavi says, "I heard Abu 'Abdillah (a.s.) advise,

*'It is necessary for you to have deep understanding of the religion of Allah. Do not be like Bedouins because those who do not gain deep understanding of religion, Allah will not look to them on the Day of Judgment nor will their deeds be cleansed.'*

(Al-Kafi, vol. 1, pg. 30, h. 1)

Deep understanding of religion is the path to paradise and the lack of it is the road leading away from the Mercy of Allah. Knowledge is the key which unlocks man's understanding and intellect.

As our seventh Imam (a.s.) advises Hisham in a lengthy tradition,

*... Those who are more knowledgeable in the commandments of Allah are the ones who have more powerful understanding (aql) and those who have more powerful understanding are at a higher degree of excellence in this world and in the hereafter.'*

(Al-Kafi, vol. 1, pg. 13, h. 12)

The following example should sufficiently illustrate the importance of a believer's understanding of his religion while he worships his Lord and the consequences if he is ignorant about religion:

The following tradition is found in the first volume of Al-Kafi of the esteemed Scholar Sheikh Kulayni (a.r.). The sixth Imam (a.s.) said,

*"The degree of reward is based on the degree of understanding. A man of Bani Israel worshipped Allah on an island in the ocean. The island was lush green, with many trees and abundant water. Once an angel passed by the worshipper and asked Allah to show how much reward and blessings the worshipper would receive for his good deeds. Allah showed the rewards due to the worshipper to the angel and the angel considered it very modest. Allah then told the angel to stay with the worshipper as a companion. The angel then appeared to the worshipper in the form of a human being. The worshipper asked, "Who are you?" The angel said 'I have heard about your great worship and your spiritual position at this place and I wish to join you in the worship of Allah.'" He spent that day with the worshipper and the next day the angel said to the worshipper, "Your place is beautiful and it should only be used for worship." 'Yes, it is but it has one shortcoming.' the worshipper responded. "What is that?" the angel inquired. "Our Lord does not have an animal. I wish He had a donkey so that we would look after the donkey to graze all the grass around. All this pasture is going to waste." 'Does your Lord have no donkey?' asked the angel. "Had our Lord a donkey all this grass would not have turned into waste." the*

*worshipper answered with sadness. Allah then revealed to the angel, "We reward everyone according to the degree of his/her understanding."*

(Al-Kafi, vol.1, pg.11, h.8)

Thus we need to gain knowledge, i.e. educate ourselves to increase our understanding.

The famous tradition which one reads from banners and posters across mosques and Islamic educational institutions reiterates the value of knowledge. The fifth Imam, Abu Ja'far (a.s.) who has said the following:

*"A scholar who benefits from his knowledge is better than seventy thousand worshippers."*

(Al-Kafi, vol.1, pg.33, h.8)

### **What is the source of this pure knowledge?**

Let us turn again to the Divine Representatives (a.s.) for the answer. Imam Mohammed Baqir (a.s.) informed Salama ibn Kuhayl and Hakam ibn 'Utayba,

*'Turn East or west, you two will not find true knowledge except that which has originated through us Ahlul Bayt (a.s).'*

(Al-Kafi, vol. 1, pg. 399, H.3)

True knowledge includes the knowledge of religion, the Quran and the narrations of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and his infallible progeny (a.s.). This should serve as sufficient and conclusive evidence on the need and importance of gaining knowledge, i.e. education among believers.

### **A social perspective**

A believer bears two responsibilities upon his shoulders - one being selfprogressive and the other being an aide and helper to other believers - be it family, neighbours or the community at large. Abu 'Abdillah, Imam Sadiq (a.s.), has said the following:

*"Allah is not worshipped better than by fulfilling the rights of the believer."*

(Al-Kafi, vol. 2, pg. 170, h. 4)

Then the solution to the problem of safeguarding our faith in these perilous times lies at the individual as well as the social level.

### **How does knowledge safeguard Religion?**

The virtues of education per se have already been discussed in the preceding paragraphs at great length.

The question is how does knowledge help us in these perilous times? Has it the capacity to stem the waves of evil away from our inner selves? Can we individually and collectively stay on the right path in the occultation of our Imam (a.s.)? The answer is a resounding yes. But as with everything, it is only possible with the help of Allah and His pure guides (a.s.).

### **First Step**

Since we bear individual as well as social responsibilities as per the above tradition, all further narrations will have to be viewed from both a personal and a social angle. How do the people of wisdom and understanding act in times of difficulty? Abu 'Abdillah (a.s.) has said the following:

*"It is in the wisdom of Aale-e-Dawud (a.s.): A person of understanding must learn about the nature of his time, pay attention to his affairs and safeguard his tongue."*

(Al-Kafi, vol.2, pg.116, h.20)

How clear are the words of the sixth Imam (a.s.)! A person who has understanding will educate himself (worldly and spiritually), gain a perspective about his situation, plan accordingly and move in a silent manner. A society which is well educated and systematic in approach is perceptive of the dangers of moral corruption and can tackle it accordingly.

### **The Most important Duty in occultation - Ma'refat of Imam-e-Zamana**

It would suffice to produce excerpts of the well-regarded book Mikyalul Makarim vol. 2, pages 170-175 (English Edition) regarding this. "It is obligatory to recognize our master (a.s.) and this is amply proved through traditional reports:

*Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) said: O Fudail, know your Imam, for if you recognize your Imam properly, the advancement or postponing of this matter will cause you no harm. Because one who recognizes his Imam but he dies before the advent is having the same position as one who sat in the Imam's (a.s.) tent; rather it is like one who sat under his banner. The narrator says: Some companions of the Imam (a.s.) said: The Imam said: It is like one who achieved martyrdom in the company of the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.).*

(Al-Kafi, vol. 1, pg. 371)

Also in the same book, through an approved chain of narrators, it is narrated from Fudail bin Yasar that he said: I heard Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) say:

*One who dies without having an Imam, dies the death of a pagan, and one who dies with the Imam's recognition, it will cause no harm to him whether this matter (reappearance) is advanced or delayed. And the one who dies having the recognition of his Imam, is like the one who has stayed in the tent of the Qaem (a.s.) with him.*

(Al-Kafi, vol. 1, pg. 371)

It is a report mentioned in Tafseer Burhan from Muawiyah bin Wahab narrating from Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) that he said:

*Indeed the best and the most obligatory duty of man is to recognize God and to confess ones servitude to Him. And after that is the recognition of the messenger of God and to testify for his prophethood ... After that is to follow an Imam in every circumstance after recognizing him by his name and qualities.*

(Tafseer Al-Burhan; Sayyed Hashim Behraani; Vol. 2, Pg. 34, Tr. No. 3)

Recognition of Imam (Maarefat) should then be the most sought after knowledge for a believer in the period of occultation. It is the true education, which should be both learnt and taught.



### **True education**

The best definition of this can only come from the Divine. And so we seek the guidance of the Infallibles (a.s.). Imam Sadiq (a.s) said:

*"God will not accept any deed that is without recognition, and will not accept any recognition unless it is accompanied by action. If you have cognition, it will help guide your actions. If you do not act, you do not have any recognition of it. Indeed some belief in one brings about the other."*

(Mishkat al-Anwaar, pg. 133)

The word recognition or cognition is of special significance for the tradition. For it states, that a person with recognition will act upon his beliefs. What then is recognition (ma'refat)? Imam Baqir (a.s.) advises his son:

*"Surely cognition is the comprehension (deraaya) of the narration and comprehending a narration raises a believer towards the farthest levels of faith."*

(Behaar-ul-Anwaar, vol. 1, p. 106)

Let us elucidate the word "deraaya" with a small example. It is possible to see a doctor smoking a cigarette or drinking wine, while it is clear for him that both substances are harmful to his health. But what if the doctor were to contract cancer? Would he then smoke? No, what was only knowledge (in terms of information) for him then has changed to clear comprehension of the reality of its effects.

Let us sum up the facts: Recognition is knowledge with comprehension of its reality and the only way of salvation in the hereafter. And a wise person must educate himself to be safe from the worldly corruption of the times.

### **What is the effect of knowledge and faith?**

The effect would be of enormous magnitude. For example when a person learns about his beliefs (and learning is obligatory upon him according to the traditions on knowledge), then he will be firm upon them. He learns of the good actions and he will act upon them. He will know about sins and he will avoid them. He will learn of the ways of aiding Imam (a.s.) and he will strive for it. In fact, true education of a believer and of the society becomes the primary duty of a believer in the occultation of Imam (a.s.) in view of the above two explanations. For, it is through true education that he is able to discharge all his other responsibilities. These then will be 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 prayed:

*O Allah! Join me to my brothers. His companions enquired: Are we not your brothers? He 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."*

(Behaar-ul-Anwaar, vol. 52, p. 125)

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So with the aim of his blessed service, in this day and this hour we renew our pledge to submit, follow, aid and defend our imam (a.s.).

*".... O Allah! In this morning of my day and the days that I have lived (of my life), I renew the covenant, the promise and the allegiance for him (a.s.) on my neck; I will never remove it nor shall I ever turn away from it.."*

(Dua-e-Ahd: Mafaateeh al-Jenaan)