

The Last Savior

The duties of those who await the Imam

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Introduction:

We leave at the time of Occultation meaning, we do not have a direct access to our Imam. But, the Imam lives among us, sees us, hears us, clearly witnesses our actions, and attends to our problems. The time of Occultation is a time we have to try our best to remain firm and pious and that the absence of our Imam do not let us become weak in our belief. This is a time that we are exposed to various forms of divine trials and should try to pass it successfully.

One who wait for the Imam to come should pursue the following factors:

1- To increase the knowledge about the Imam: Prophet Muhammad says, "One who dies without knowing the Imam of his age is like one who has died at the Age of Ignorance." Death in the Age of Ignorance means dying outside the pale of faith and Islam. An ignorant man never follows the verdict of his intellect and his religion and does what his carnal desires dictates. Imam is one who is the container of all Islamic values and if one does not recognize him, he will be void of many of those merits. Therefore, it is important for us to know how a true

believer should act while waiting for the return of Imam Mahdi.

2- To remember the Imam more often: one of the biggest responsibility of Shias during the major occultation is waiting for the Imam's appearance. This point that is repeatedly mentioned in Islamic narrations means that one has to always remember the Imam. To remember him means to remember out duties and to be always mindful of our responsibilities and to never let the absence of our Imam lead us to negligence. If I am a tyrant or an oppressor then how can I wait for the one who will oppose oppression? This is why we say that waiting means a complete awareness about not to do anything wrong.

3- To try to maintain the belief: The time of Occultation is a time many would gradually become weak in their belief, become tired of waiting and become disappointed. They would face many misconceptions about Islam in which they by themselves could not find the answer. During this time that is lasted for more than a thousand year and would last for

many years, one has to connect himself to the representatives of the Imam who are the qualified Islamic experts, should try his best not to lose hope and to know that the promise of God about the appearance of the Imam will actualize in a day, soon or later. The time of difficulties will pass and just those who have remained firm will be rewarded.

4- Pay attention to the real meaning of awaiting: Those who are waiting for the return of Imam Mahdi should live like true believers. When people expect someone, this expectation should be manifested in all of their behaviors and actions. For instance, if someone is expecting a guest, he cleans the house and gets prepared to be a good host. He wears good clothes and waits for his guest with a welcoming attitude. Such a person could claim that he is expecting someone. But if he has not cleaned the house and has not prepared anything for his guest or, is not even thinking about the guest, then if he claims that he is expecting someone, people will just laugh at him, or think that he is lying. In regard with

waiting for the appearance of the Imam, one has to make himself spiritually prepared which is done by paying attention to his religious duties.

5- prepare the ground for the Imam's appearance: The Imam will come when he has enough followers, when people feel the real need of a savior, and when people in their personal and social affairs feel readiness to welcome him. Therefore, those who truly wait for the Imam should correct themselves and the society they live in. They should enjoin others to goodness and forbid them from evil actions. Also those who are aware of Islamic knowledge should transmit it to others, remind them of their duties in regard with the Imam, and to meet their misconceptions.

Consequently, We should pray to God to make us one of those who await the Imam. Our acts should also be a testimony of our claim and should pray for Imam Mahdi to return sooner. Also it is recommended that if we face a problem ask Imam Mahdi to help us that he with the permission of God

will attend to our need. God may hasten to his appearance and make us one of his companions.