



بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

وصلی اللہ علیک یا ولی العصر ادرکنا

Editorial

These forlorn eyes crave for your delightful appearance...

To increase the remembrance and discussion of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.), and to keep it afresh in the hearts of the Shias, is one of our most important responsibilities today. In fact, this is something that we must pass on down generation after generation, as if it is the most precious family heritage. Not only must we ourselves anxiously await his reappearance, but we must also prepare our children to serve and help Imam (a.t.f.s.). We must persistently supplicate and wail in front of Allah to suspend the period of occultation (Ghaybat), and ensure the earliest reappearance of Imam (a.t.f.s.). In fact, the extension of the period of Ghaybat must never disappoint us, but if anything, it should only serve to increase the fervour and intensity of our supplications and lamentation. For surely, despairing Allah's mercy is the mark of a disbeliever, and not that of a mo' min.

We must prepare a schedule for ourselves that will help us enliven the remembrance of Imam (a.t.f.s.) throughout the year. However, the intensity of this remembrance must be at its peak in the month of Shabaan, especially on the 15th day of the month - the day of Imam's (a.s.) Wiladat. In this month, the level of Imam's (a.s.) recognition and our spiritual proximity with him, must reach its zenith. We must feel the loneliness and forlornness in the absence of our Imam (a.t.f.s.). Our eyes must feel the tiredness in his absence. Our forlorn eyes must crave for his delightful appearance.

When the beloved is missing, a man is totally consumed with the desire to search him and find him. He is restless, and cannot concentrate on anything, until he finds his beloved. In fact, everything else seems immaterial and insignificant to him, where his beloved is concerned. Those, whose hearts are empty of this love, find this restlessness amusing, and even ridicule it.

When Hazrat Yusuf (a.s.) disappeared as a result of his scheming brothers, Hazrat Yaqoob (a.s.) was deeply affected by this tragedy and was very restless. He used to only think about his lost son and grieved so much that he lost his eyesight. He used to always remember his son, Yusuf (a.s.) thus, 'O my son Yusuf! I loved you more than anyone else. But you have now disappeared from our midst. You were the light of my eyes and the fountainhead of my hopes and aspirations. Where have you gone, O apple of my eye? I can't forget those times when I used to make you sleep on my right arm, and caress you lovingly with my left one. Yusuf, of all people why did you have to disappear?'

O Yusuf! In times of loneliness I used to seek solace in your company. You were the only source of comfort for me in distress and grief.'

O my beloved, O my dear one! O light of my eyes! If only I had known where these people have abandoned you.'

"O Yusuf! If only I was with you at this moment, and suffered all the tribulations and difficulties that you are undergoing now."

In the light of Hazrat Yaqoob's (a.s.) lamentations, let us now reflect over some lines of Duda Nudbah:

لَيْتَ شِعْرِي أَيْنَ اسْتَقَرَّتْ بِكَ النُّوَى بَلْ أَيْ أَرْضٍ تُغْلِقُ أَوْ تُرَى

'If only I had known where you are living)! Which is that fortunate piece of land that is blessed with your existence?'

عَزِيزٌ عَلَيَّ أَنْ أَرَى الْخَلْقَ وَلَا تُرَى

'Indeed it is intolerable for me that I see everything else, but am deprived of your cherished appearance!'

عَزِيزٌ عَلَيَّ أَنْ تُحِيطَ بِكَ دُونِي الْبُلُوَى

Indeed it is intolerable for me that you (instead of me) are surrounded with difficulties, and my lamentation and complaints do not find their way to you.'

O son of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.), is there the slimmest of chances for a meeting with you?'

Hazrat Yaqoob (a.s.) was so overwhelmed with grief at Yusuf's (a.s.) disappearance that he asked Malakul Maut, 'Do you capture souls together or one at a time?' Malakul Maut replied, 'One at a time.' Hazrat Yaqoob (a.s.) asked, 'Have you captured Yusuf's soul?' Malakul Maut responded in the negative. It is then that Yaqoob (a.s.) told his sons:

يَبْنَى أَذْهَبُوا فَتَحَسَّسُوا مِنْ يُوسُفَ وَأَخِيهِ وَلَا تَأْيِسُوا مِنْ رَوْحِ اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ لَا يَأْيِسُ مِنْ رَوْحِ اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْفُؤْمُ الْكَافِرُونَ

'O my sons! Go and inquire respecting Yusuf and his brother, and despair not of Allah's mercy; surely none despairs Allah's mercy except the unbelieving people.'

(Surah Yusuf : 87)

Indeed the love of the father (Yaqoob (a.s.)) for his son (Yusuf (a.s.)) was very intense, and this intensity can be gauged by one amazing fact - When Yaqoob (a.s.) finally came to Egypt, the distance between Yusuf (a.s.) and him was of 19 days (journey). But the attachment and love of the father diminished even this vast distance to such an extent, that when Yusuf (a.s.) removed his cloak, Yaqoob (a.s.) commented, 'I can sense Yusuf's fragrance!'

When Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) reappears he shall get along with him this very cloak of Yusuf (a.s.).

When Yusuf's (a.s.) brothers finally recognised him, they were remorseful at their wrongdoing and addressed him thus:

"They said: Are you indeed Yusuf? He said: I am Yusuf and this is my brother; Allah has indeed been gracious to us; surely he who guards (against evil) and is patient (is rewarded) for surely Allah does not waste the reward of those who do good." 'They said: By Allah! Now has Allah certainly chosen you over us and we were certainly sinners.' 'He said: (There shall be) no reproof against you this day; Allah may forgive you, and He is the most Merciful of the merciful."

(Surah Yusuf : 90-92)

SHABAAN 1420 A.H.

Dear readers, today Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) is the Yusuf of Janabe Zahra (s.a.). Our sins have separated him from us. Therefore, we should rectify our actions and refrain from all those things that become the cause of Imam's (a.s.) grief and sorrow. Come let us confess to our Imam (a.t.f.s.), as Yusuf's (a.s.) brothers have confessed to him:

'O Chief! Distress has afflicted us and our family and we have brought scanty money so give us full measure and be charitable to us; surely Allah rewards the charitable.'

(Surah Yusuf : 88)

'O Imam! Surely our most prized possession is your love that we have in our hearts, although it is very little!'

'O Imam of the age! Surely we have committed serious transgressions and our disobedience is abundant, while our obedience is negligible!'

'O Imam! Surely there is no way out for us but that you forgive us, as Yusuf (a.s.) forgave his brothers, while you are more worthy of this action than Yusuf (a.s.)!'

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زيارت استغاثه به امام زمانه (عج) Exposition of

Ziyarat – e – Isteghaasa Imam – e – Zamana

As has been the custom over the past few years, this year too, we present an exposition of (as) زيارت استغاثه امام زمانه (عج) some people know it better as سلام الله الكامل التام

The chain of narration of this Ziarat and its revelation

This Ziarat and supplication has been recorded by the following Shia scholars: Sayyid Raziuddin ibne Taoos (r.a.) in his compilation Misbahuz Zaaer' (page 225-226), Shaykh Kafami (r.a.) in his 'Baladul Ameen' (page 158), Allamah Muhammad Baqir Majlisi(r.a.) in his colossal compilation Beharul Anwar' has recorded this Ziarat in four different places with minor variations (vol. 94 - page 31, vol. 101 - page 373, vol. 102 - page 97 and vol. 102 - page 642), Sayyid. Ali Khan (r.a.) in his Kalema-e-Tayyab' and Shaykh Abbas Qummi (r.a.) in his exemplary compilation Mafatihul Jinnaan! It is apparent that if so many distinguished Shiite scholars have recorded this Ziarat in their books and compilations, then there can be no two opinions about its authenticity.

Shaykh Abu Abdillahil Hussain ibne Hasan ibne Babwaiy (r.a.) narrates from his respected paternal uncle Jafar ibne Muhammad ibne Ali ibne Babwaiy (r.a.) who recounts: In the holy city of Qom, one of my esteemed teachers narrates - I was involved in a very difficult situation which became the cause of intense anxiety and tension. I did not think it appropriate to disclose my adverse condition to either my family members or my close companions.

Then while I was still afflicted with this adversity I saw one dream. It was a most amazing dream in which I saw an esteemed individual whose beauty and brilliance were without parallel. His clothes were magnificent and there was a beautiful fragrance, emanating from his person. The person came and stood before me. I initially felt that he was one of my distinguished teachers from Qom. I said to myself - How long should I keep my sorrow bottled up inside me. This is one of my teachers, if I narrate my difficulty to him maybe he can suggest a solution.

Before I could narrate my problem, that handsome person himself said, 'Go to your Imam and seek the solution of your problem from him. He is the best helper and the perfect refuge for his Shias. He rubbed his right hand over my right palm, and said, 'Go for your Imam's Ziarat and send salaam upon him. Even I shall request him to intercede for you near Allah, the Lord of the universe.' I asked him, 'Why don't you yourself instruct me on how to pray Ziarat, send salaam, and supplicate before Allah. My difficulty has made me forget all Ziaraat and supplications (Duas).

That person took a deep breath and said: لا حول ولا قوة الا بالله He took my hand, placed it on his chest and said, Allah is sufficient for you. Now you will never face any more difficulties. Then he commanded, 'Go perform ghusl, pray 2 rak'at namaaz, stand below the open sky, face the qibla and recite the Ziarat سلام الله الكامل الام :

Then when you have finished the Ziarat, seek from Allah whatever you wish'. At this point I woke up. I realised that I had just been inspired with a solution for my problem. Somehow the night seemed very prolonged. I wrote 'down the person's instructions that he had conveyed in the dream, lest I forget and forfeit the benefit of the dream.

I then performed ghusl, stood below the open sky and prayed 2 rak'at namaaz. In the first rak'at I recited Surah Hamd and after it, Surah Fateha. I recited the latter as if it was in front of my eyes. In the second rak'at, after Surah Hamd I recited Surah Nasr.

After completing the namaaz, I faced the Qibla and recited Ziarat. On its completion, I sought my demands, and took refuge in Sahebuz Zaman. Then I prostrated and thanked Allah, and continued to supplicate till I feared that the time for Namaaze Shab would lapse. I prayed Namaaze Shab, and after it the morning prayers (Namaaze Subh). After that I sat in the niche (mehraab) of the mosque and continued to supplicate Allah. By Allah! The sun had not even risen, when my problem was solved and I never had to face that problem again for the rest of my life. Indeed all bounties are from Allah's side, and to Him belongs all praise and adulation. It should be noted that performing ghusl and praying 2 rak'at namaaz below the open sky are highly recommended, but if for some reason a person can not do it, he should still recite the Ziarat. If he recites only the Ziarat, he will still be rewarded by Allah. This is what we find in traditions

أَخَذُ الْقَلِيلِ خَيْرٌ مِنْ تَرْكِ الْكَثِيرِ

To take a little is better than to leave everything.'

The Ziarat

The Ziarat commences in this manner: سَلَامُ اللَّهِ الْكَامِلُ الشَّامِلُ الْعَامُّ

'Allah's perfect salutation, comprehensive, encompassing everything, (be upon you).' We commence our Ziarat with salutations and greetings. Here we reveal the characteristics of Allah's salutations. Allah's salutation is unlike any other salutation. Allah's salutation is flawless, without any blemishes. His salutation sends greetings from all sides, and this salutation and greeting encompasses Imame Zamana (a.t.f.s.) completely. In other words - May Allah's salutation and security be upon Imam (äit.f.s.); which is perfect, complete and encompasses everything. May salutations upon salutations be on Imam (a.t.f.s.), salutations that will secure him (a.t.f.s.) from all disasters and adversities.

وَصَلَوَاتُهُ الدَّائِمَةُ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ الْقَائِمَةُ النَّامَةُ

'(May) Allah's continuous salutation and His innumerable bounties descend.'

Here we seek Allah's salutation and bounties, that will never end, and last forever.

So far in the first two statements of the Ziarat we have only discussed salutations, greetings and bounties. What is particularly noteworthy is the fact that the salutations, greetings and bounties have been associated with Allah. It is Allah, who is the fountainhead of perfection, who bestows, but bestowal does not result in any decrement, where He is concerned. A merciful glance from the Almighty Allah can enrich us with the most amazing taufeequat, while

a glance devoid of mercy will spell our doom. Then one can only imagine the station of that person on whom descends Allah's most perfect and complete salutations, greetings and bounties. As Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) narrates,

People's intellects can never assess our exalted station.

(Usule Kafi, vol.1, Kitabul Hujjah)

عَلَى حُجَّةِ اللَّهِ وَوَلِيِّهِ فِي أَرْضِهِ وَبِلَادِهِ خَلِيفَتِهِ عَلَى خَلْقِهِ وَعِبَادِهِ.

'All (the salutations, greetings and bounties) be upon the Allah's proof on His earth and in His cities, and His emissary on His creation and on His servants.'

All these greetings and salutations are sought for the one who is Allah's representative, Hujjat and caliph upon the people. Hujjat is that proof which illustrates the aim and objective. It explains in a way that cannot be refuted by anyone. Today, Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) is Allah's Hujjat on the people, which means that there is no one greater proof than the personality of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.). In fact, the Imam among the people is Allah's greatest, and ultimate proof upon the people. Only the irreligious and unfortunate will deny Allah's Hujjat. .

Like all other Imams (a.s.), Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) is Allah's ultimate proof and Wali upon the people. Wali over here implies representative, emissary and one who possesses ultimate power and capability after Allah. Wali is the one who has the final say in the interpretation of all divine commands and edicts, and whose authority can never be disputed by anyone. In the period of Ghaybata Kubra', the Shias must refer their religious problems to Imam's (a.s.) general representative (Naib-e-Aam) – jurists and fuqaha (Mujtahedeen), which they would otherwise have referred to Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.). One who wishes to acquire true knowledge and recognition must knock only at the door of the Ahle Bayt (a.s.).

فَمَنْ أَرَادَ الْحِكْمَةَ فَلْيَأْتِهَا مِنْ بَابِهَا

Then one who wishes to acquire knowledge and wisdom must enter only through the door (Ali a.s.) of the city of knowledge (Prophet s.a.w.s.).

سَلَالَةُ النَّبُوءَةِ وَبَقِيَّةِ الْعِثْرَةِ وَالصَّفْوَةِ

'Salutations upon the pure son of Prophethood, the immaculate progeny, and the last one from among Allah's chosen creatures.'

'Sulaala implies pure children. 'Baqiya' means remaining, preserved one. 'Itrat o Sufuwat' imply the Ahle Bayt (a.s.). Therefore Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) is the pure, preserved son of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). He is the final link in the chain of guidance. One who is unable to acquire guidance from him, will suffer the disgrace and humiliation of the blazing fire of Hell.

صَاحِبِ الزَّمَانِ وَ مُظْهِرِ الْإِيمَانِ وَ مُلَقِّنِ أَحْكَامِ الْقُرْآنِ وَ مُطَهِّرِ الْأَرْضِ وَ نَاشِرِ الْعُدْلِ فِي الطُّوْلِ وَالْعَرْضِ.

'Salutations upon the Master of the age, the manifestor of faith (Eemaan), the teacher and reminder of Quranic knowledge and culture, the purifier of the earth from injustice and oppression, and the establisher of peace and justice across the length and the breadth of the world.'

It means that the person upon whom we send salutations is the master of the world, and possesses complete control over it, after Allah. If wishes he can suspend time and impose restrictions on it. Time is subservient to his commands. After all he is the son of **رَادِ الشَّمْسِ** 'Raadush- Shams,' (the one who recalled the sun). The world is submissive to him, just like it was submissive to his forefathers before him. **مَظْهَر** 'Mazhar' from the aspect of Arabic grammar is the subject, which means that Imam (a.t.f.s.) will make evident Eemaan (faith) and the religion of Allah on his reappearance. **مُلَاقِقِن** 'Mulaqqin' is also the subject, and means the one who shall remind. It implies that Imam (a.t.f.s.) shall remind the people of the Quran and its edicts, till such a time that the people are completely familiarised with the Quranic culture. This is obviously not an easy task, because by the time Imam (a.t.f.s.) reappears, all traces of Eemaan and the true Quranic culture shall vanish. Religions shall be restricted to mere customs and formalities, and shall be propagated as such. **مُطَهِّر** 'Mutah-har' means the one who purifies. Imam (a.t.f.s.) shall purify the earth from sins and oppression. He shall cleanse it of all corruption and tyranny, and shall establish peace and equity across the length and breadth of the world.

وَالْحَجَّةُ الْقَائِمُ الْمَهْدِيُّ الْإِمَامُ الْمُنْتَظَرُ الْمَرْضِيُّ

'And Allah's upright guide, Imam Mahdi, the one who has earned Allah's satisfaction, the awaited one.'

Here some of Imam's (a.t.f.s.) more famous titles are discussed. Imam (a.t.f.s.) is Allah's proof (Hujjat), he is the Qa'im (upright), i.e. he is the one through whom Islam and religion shall be raised. According to a tradition of Imam Raza (a.s.), when this title of Imam (a.t.f.s.) (Qa'im) is taken, one must stand up (out of respect) and face the Qibla, with his right hand on his head. (While this action is not obligatory, one must do it out of reverence for Imam (a.t.f.s.))

المهدي 'Al-Mahdi' means the guided one. Allah's representative does not step into this world, but with guidance from Allah's side. This is the only way he can guide the people, else if he himself is not guided, he can hardly be expected to guide others.

الامام 'Al-Imam means one who leads from the front, always ahead. Then we are his followers, who are supposed to follow his footsteps. Then we should obey the Imam completely, unconditionally, just like we follow the Imam of the masjid in jam'aat namaaz. That is, we should neither try to surpass the Imam, nor should we lag behind.

المنتظر 'Al-Muntazar means the 'Awaited One'. We Shias are awaiting the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.).

المرضى 'Al-Murtaza' means the one who has earned the satisfaction of Allah and His Prophet (s.a.w.s.). Imam (a.s.) is the one with whom Allah as well as His Prophet (s.a.w.s.) are pleased.

وَابْنِ الْأَيْمَةِ الطَّاهِرِينَ الْوَصِيِّ بْنِ الْأَوْصِيَاءِ الْمَرْضِيِّينَ الْهَادِيَ الْمَعْصُومِ ابْنِ الْأَيْمَةِ الْهُدَاةِ الْمَعْصُومِينَ.

'And salutations be upon the pure son of the Imams (a.s.), the successor and vicegerent – son of the chosen vicegerents, the one who guides, and is secure from all impurities – son of the pure, impeccable guides.'

If we reflect only for a few moments on these words, we shall realise that these three adjectives - الْمَرْضِيِّنَ، الْمَرْضِيِّنَ، الْمَرْضِيِّنَ announce the fact that Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) is a member of the pure and immaculate progeny of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.).

الهداية Is the plural of هادي. This implies that Imam (a.t.f.s.) is not only the rightly guided Imam, but is also the one who guides others. He is among the successors of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.), which underlines the fact that to uphold such an illustrious status is not something anyone can lay claim to. He is the last among the virtuous, the truthful, the path (towards Allah) and the righteous.

Note: Until now we have been addressing Imam (a.t.f.s.) in this Ziarat in the third person. But now onwards we address Imam (a.t.f.s.) directly, i.e. in the second person.

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا مُعِزَّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الْمُسْتَضْعِفِينَ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا مُذِلَّ الْكَافِرِينَ الْمُتَكَبِّرِينَ الظَّالِمِينَ.

Salutations be upon you, who shall honour the believers, the weak and oppressed ones. Salutations be upon you, who shall disgrace the unbelievers, the arrogant ones and the tyrants.'

This statement highlights the fact that the friend of Imam (a.t.f.s.) is the one who shall be honoured by him, while his enemy is the one who shall be disgraced by him.

مستضعف means the one who was not weak, but was made weak by others. In fact this is exactly what the Quran says

وَنُرِيدُ أَنْ نَمُنَّ عَلَى الَّذِينَ اسْتُضْعِفُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَنَجْعَلَهُمْ أَئِمَّةً وَنَجْعَلَهُمُ الْوَارِثِينَ

And We desired to bestow a favor upon those who were deemed weak in the land, and to make them the Imams, and to make them the heirs,

Then certainly one who is tyrannical, oppressive, proud and arrogant, shall be put in his place by Imam (a.t.f.s.). Here to mention the tradition from Ameerul Momeneen (A.S.) about arrogance and pride will not be irrelevant.

عَجِبْتُ لِابْنِ آدَمَ أَوَّلُهُ نُطْفَةٌ وَآخِرُهُ جِنْفَةٌ وَهُوَ بَيْنَهُمَا وَعَاءٌ لِلْغَائِطِ ثُمَّ يَتَكَبَّرُ.

I am astonished at man whose creation was initiated with semen (impurity) and whose termination is in a corpse (again an impurity), and between these two stages he is the carrier of impurities (urine and stool), and despite this disgrace, he is proud and arrogant.'

Then anyone who is endowed with some talent, wealth, beauty, intelligence, aristocracy, etc. must memorise this tradition, and never forget it. He must abstain from all thoughts of pride and arrogance. Then it is our duty to reform the one who is afflicted with this disease. But if despite our exhortations there is no reformation in that person, we must ourselves behave arrogantly with that person, because as per traditions

الْكِبَرُ مَعَ الْمُتَكَبِّرِينَ عِبَادَةٌ

'Pride in front of the proud ones, is Allah's worship.'

When Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) reappears, he shall shatter the might and force of the proud and arrogant, the tyrants and oppressors.

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا مَوْلَايَ يَا صَاحِبَ الزَّمَانِ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا بْنَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا بْنَ أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا بْنَ فَاطِمَةَ الزَّهْرَاءِ سَيِّدَةِ نِسَاءِ الْعَالَمِينَ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا بْنَ الْأَيْمَةِ الْحُجَّجِ الْمُعْصُومِينَ وَالْإِمَامِ عَلَى الْخَلْقِ أَجْمَعِينَ.

'Salutations be upon you, O my master, Master of the age. Salutations be upon you, son of Allah's Prophet (s.a.w.s.). Salutations be upon you, son of Ameerul Mo'mineen (a.s.). Salutations be upon you, son of the Mistress of all women on earth, Fatema Zahra (a.s.). Salutations be upon you, son of the Imams, Allah's proofs, the infallibles, and upon the Imam of all the creatures.

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا مَوْلَايَ سَلَامٌ مُخْلِصٌ لَكَ فِي الْوِلَايَةِ أَشْهَدُ أَنَّكَ الْإِمَامُ الْمَهْدِيُّ قَوْلًا وَفِعْلًا وَأَنْتَ الَّذِي تَمْلَأُ الْأَرْضَ قِيَاطًا وَعَدْلًا بَعْدَ مَا مَلَأَتْ ظُلْمًا وَجَوْرًا.

'Salutations be upon you, O my master, (the salutations of the one) who is most sincere in your Wilayat. I bear testimony that you alone are the rightly guided Imam, in letter as well as in spirit, and indeed you are the one who shall fill the earth with peace and justice in such a manner as it would have been overwhelmed with injustice and oppression.'

Here we testify to the Wilayat of Imam (a.t.f.s.) with all our love and sincerity. We take him and only him as our leader in our personal as well social lives. There is no bragging and ostentation in our Wilayat and love for Imam (a.t.f.s.). We do obey him, and seek his Wilayat and love to achieve some worldly benefits, but the only objective is acquire Allah's pleasure and satisfaction. In other words, our love and attachment towards Imam (a.t.f.s.) is unconditional. Even in privacy we do not perform any such action that may sadden Imam (a.t.f.s.).

إِتَّقُوا مِنْ مَعَاصِي اللَّهِ بِالْخُلُوتِ فَإِنَّ الشَّاهِدَ هُوَ الْحَاكِمُ

'Fear Allah's disobedience even in solitude, for surely the Witness shall also be the Judge.'

Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) is the one who shall truly and comprehensively establish peace and equity on the earth, unlike other claimants who only made tall claims and declarations, but could not do anything to enact their claims. In fact this is the best way to discern between the claimants and Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.), for to cleanse the earth of injustice and oppression is the sole duty and responsibility of the Qaim of Ale Muhammad (a.s.). It is the characteristic of Ale Muhammad (a.s.) to accomplish the objective for which they were created, and not advance lame excuses and justification as the other claimants have done in the past.

فَعَجَّلَ اللَّهُ فَرَجَكَ وَ سَهَّلَ مَخْرَجَكَ وَ قَرَّبَ زَمَانَكَ وَ كَثَّرَ أَنْصَارَكَ وَ أَعْوَانَكَ وَ أَنْجَزَ لَكَ مَا وَعَدَكَ فَهُوَ أَصْدَقُ الْقَائِلِينَ، وَ نُرِيدُ أَنْ نَمُنَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ اسْتَضَعُّوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَ نَجْعَلَهُمْ أَيْمَةً وَ نَجْعَلَهُمُ الْوَارِثِينَ يَا مَوْلَايَ يَا صَاحِبَ الزَّمَانِ يَا بْنَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ حَاجَتِي كَذَا وَ كَذَا...

'Then may Allah hasten your reappearance, facilitate your return, make proximate your government and regime, increase the strength of your soldiers and companions and fulfill whatever He has promised regarding you, for surely He is the most truthful among all speakers.'

O my master, O Master of the age, O son of Allah's Prophet (s.a.w.s.), my need is ... at this point mention your needs and desires, Inshallah, Allah shall fulfill the same)

After sending salutations and greetings upon our beloved Imam (a.t.f.s.), we first pray for him, before we pray for ourselves. This is a very important aspect of our love for Imam . (a.t.f.s.), which we learn from this Ziarat. We must always remember to pray first for Imam (a.t.f.s.), his

safety and security, his earliest reappearance, favourable grounds for his return, solution of his problems and difficulties, and only after we have sought these things from Allah, should we place our demands in front of Him. This in itself is one of the biggest proofs of our immense love, attachment and affection for Imam (a.t.f.s.). For one who is engaged only in thinking about his own problems, and dismisses the difficulties and problems of his brothers is indeed selfish and mean. Then may Allah protect us from such detestable traits, which are unbecoming of a Shia.

Another critical point highlighted over here, is that Allah always fulfills His promises and never breaks His covenants. This in itself is a very comforting thought, and prevents man from losing hope in Allah's mercy, regardless of the intensity of his problem. That is why Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) narrates:

إِنْتَظِرُوا الْفَرَجَ وَلَا تَيَاسُوا مِنْ رَوْحِ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّ أَحَبَّ الْأَعْمَالِ إِلَى اللَّهِ إِنْتِظَارُ الْفَرَجِ

'Await the reappearance, and do not despair of Allah's mercy, for surely the most commendable action near Allah is awaiting the reappearance.'

Another important point underlined by this Ziarat is Allah's omnipotence, His complete undisputed dominion over the universe. He can completely alter the course of creation whenever He wishes. He is not bound to preserve the current course of the universe, and can replace it with another. If He wishes, He can send Imam (a.t.f.s.) at this very moment. In the span of a single night, Allah can prepare the necessary ground for Imam's (a.t.f.s.) reappearance and mobilise the necessary helpers and supporters for him. Therefore we must pray for Imam's (a.t.f.s.) reappearance day and night and never despair of Allah's mercy in arranging for his reappearance.

فَاشْفَعْ لِي فِي نَجَاجِهَا فَقَدْ تَوَجَّهْتُ إِلَيْكَ لِعِلْمِي أَنَّ لَكَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ شَفَاعَةً مَقْبُولَةً وَ مَقَامًا مَحْمُودًا فَبِحَقِّ مَنْ اخْتَصَّكُمْ بِأَمْرِهِ وَارْتَضَاكُمْ لِسِرِّهِ وَ بِالشَّانِ الَّذِي لَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ بَيْنَكُمْ وَ بَيْنَهُ سَلِ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى فِي نُجْحِ طَلِبَتِي وَ إِبَاقَةِ دَعْوَتِي وَ كَشْفِ كُرْبَتِي.

'Please intercede on my behalf for the acceptance of my supplications. I have approached you with my needs and aspirations with the hope and certainty that your intercession near Allah (regarding my supplications) shall never be refuted, for surely you occupy a elevated Station (Maqaame Mahmood) near Allah. Then I swear by the One who has chosen you for Imamat and Wilayat, and has preferred you (over others) for His secrets. I beseech you with that esteem and might that Allah has granted you. I implore you to beseech Allah on my behalf for the acceptance of our supplications and entreaties and with remain my restlessness.

The Ahle Bayt (a.s.) due to their distinguished station near Allah intercede on our behalf for the forgiveness of our sins. Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) being the sole surviving member of the Ahle Bayt (a.s.) in this age, is the object of our beseeching and implorations. It is with firm conviction that the Shias believe that the position occupied by the Ahle Bayt (a.s.) near Allah is without any parallel. The Praiseworthy Station (Maqaame Mahmood) signifies the impeccable status of the Ahle Bayt (a.s.). This Station with all its brilliance will be manifested on the Day of Judgement. Eventually, we beseech the One who has bestowed the Ahle Bayt (a.s.) with this enviable Station, viz. Allah. We conclude the supplication by imploring Imam (a.t.f.s.) to beseech Allah as only he can, for relief from difficulties and tribulations. This shows the sheer helplessness and despair that a Shia feels on his own capabilities. He realises that there is absolutely nothing he

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can do on his own. Therefore, he surrenders all his affairs to his Imam (a.t.f.s.), with this expectation and certainty, that if there is anyone on this earth who can intercede on his behalf, it is only and only Imam (a.t.f.s.).

Lastly, we request the readers to read this Ziarat/Dua as often as possible, especially on Mondays, Thursdays and/or Fridays (which is associated with our Imam (a.t.f.s.)), when our actions are presented to Imam (a.s.) for review.

The Arising (reappearance) of Hazrat Mahdi (a.s.) and the Descendant of Janabe Isa (a.s.)

The belief regarding the reappearance of Hazrat Mahdi (a.s.) coupled with the descent of Hazrat Isa (a.s.) from the sky, is among the more commonly accepted beliefs of the Muslims. In fact, even the Christians acknowledge the decent and reappearance of Hazrat Isa (a.s.).

Rather for them, Hazrat Isa (a.s.) himself is the promised deliverer from oppression and tyranny.

In the light of traditions, of the Holy Prophet (s.ā.w.s.), the rightly guided Imams (a.s.), and their companions (a.r.), it can be proved beyond doubt that Imam Mahdi's (a.s.) reappearance, shall be closely followed with the descent of Hazrat Isa (a.s.) from the fourth heaven. The latter shall then recite namaz behind Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.), and support him in his mission.

This being a widely acknowledged belief, the compilers of Sehaah-e-Sittah, Janabe Mohammad Ibn Ismail Bukhari (in his Sahih in Kitabul Ambiya) and Imam Muslim Ibn Hajaj (in his Sahih in Kitabul Imaan) have extensively quoted the companion of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) Abu Hurairah, in this regard.

عن ابي هريرة قال رسول الله (ص): كَيْفَ أَنْتُمْ إِذَا نَزَلَ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ فَيُخَمُّكُمْ وَ إِمَامُكُمْ مِنْكُمْ

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) declared, 'What will happen to you when Isa ibn Maryam (a.s.) descends (from the heavens) and your Imam is in your midst?

(Sahihe Bukhari 13/57, Pg. 1272, Kitabul Ambiya; Sahih Muslim, 29/ 1, Pub. by Darul Furqan, 722, Jame Masjid, Delhi, Kitabul Iman)

(2) Imam Muslim has also reported a tradition from the famous companion, Jabir Ibn Abdullah Ansari, that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said: 'Isa ibn Maryam (a.s.) will descend (on the earth) and the Amir of Muslims (Imam) will say to him 'come and lead the prayers. But Ibne Maryam (a.s.) with due regard for the respect and honour, which Allah has beneficently bestowed upon this nation (of Prophet Mohammad (s.a.w.a)), will decline stating, 'Only among yourselves will some be leaders of others'.
(Sahihe Muslim Ibid.)

(3) Other traditions have explained about Hazrat Isa (a.s.) in more detail. The narrator of this tradition is Anas ibne Samaan. While describing the characteristics of Dajjal, Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) had stated: "Allah, the Almighty will send the Messiah, Ibne Maryam (a.s.) who will appear on the white minaret in the eastern region of Damascus (Syria). This day the Messiah will be wearing two yellow dresses, resting both his hands on the wings of the angels, when he bends his head, beads will appear on his forehead and when he lifts it, they will fall like pearls on the earth. Any disbeliever who inhales the air of his breath will be annihilated and his breath will spread to the extremes of his vision. Then Isa (a.s.) will search for Dajjal and find him on Babe Ludd (name of a Syrian mountain) and then will slay him. Hereafter, the people whom Allah has saved from the corruption of Dajjal will flock towards Hazrat Isa (a.s.). He will wipe the dirt and grime off their faces, and give them the glad tidings of the stature, which they will acquire in heaven.

(Sahih Muslim, 2/243, Kitabul Fetan wa Ashraatus Sa'at)

The conclusion of these three traditions:

(i) The first tradition is about the appearance of Hazrat Isa (a.s.) and Hazrat Mahdi (a.s.) (ii) The second tradition is about the reciting of namaz by Hazrat Isa (a.s.) under the leadership of Hazrat Mahdi (a.s.)

(iii) While the third tradition speaks about the descent of Hazrat Isa (a.s.), the killing of Dajjal by him, annihilation of disbelievers, protection of believers and glad tidings to them of deliverance.

Innumerable traditions dealing with the above concepts are found in the Sehah Sittah, as also quoted in other books of traditions, which by itself is a proof of veracity. As an example, we quote some of these traditions:

Abu Saeed has quoted the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.)

مَنْ آذَى يُصَلِّيَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ خَلْفَهُ

The one behind whom Isa ibne Maryam (a.s.) will recite namaz is among us.'

(Eqdud Durar, Chp. 7, Tradition No. 223)

Abu Naeem Isfahani in 'Manaqib al-Mahdi', Shaikh Abdullah-e-Khanfi, Amr Teesi in Arjahul Matalib, pg. 378, Jalaluddin Suyuti in 'Arful Wardi fi Akhbaril Mahdi', Hafiz Abu Abdullah Naeem ibn Jamood in Kitabul Fitah has reproduced this tradition.

This short article does not possess the scope to reproduce all the traditions, rather a voluminous book is required. Hence, for sake of brevity, we list only the names of the books.

The researchers may refer to them.

(i) Janab Kaamil Sulaiman in his book Yawmul Khalaas, Persian - Ruzgaar rehahi, Vol. 1 pg. 300. quoted 13 traditions from both Shia and Sunni books.

(ii) Shaikh Najmuddin Jafar Ibne Mohammad Al-Askari in his book 'Al Mahdi al Maud Al Muntazar' Vol 2, Pg. 215 - 246 has brought 44 traditions entirely from Sunni sources. Some of these books are worth mentioning: Eqdud Durar, Al- Arbaen, Sehah-e-Sitta, Noorul Absaar, Yanabiul Muwaddah, Isaaful Raagebeen, Al-Qaulul Mukhtasar fi alaamate Al Mahdi al Muntazar, Faraidus Simmtain, arjahul Mataalib, Al Haowi Lil Fataewi.

Regarding the descent of Hazrat Isa (a.s.) the above mention traditions are more than sufficient and amply prove that there is absolutely no dispute among Muslim scholars in this regard. But, as in numerous cases, where weak and fabricated traditions are presented to misguide the people, so is the case with the belief of 'Descent of Isa (a.s.) and reappearance of Hazrat Mahdi (a.s.)', where a tradition is put forth to weaken this belief. This tradition is:

لا مهدي الا عيسى

'Mahdi is none (but) Isa'.

An Impossibility

We have already explained the details of this tradition in the special Shabaan edition of Al-Muntazar year 1412 A.H. Respected readers may please refer to the same. Under the circumstances it is proved that Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) and Hazrat Isa (a.s.) can never be one personality due to the simple reason that at one time both the leader and the follower cannot be the same person. (The Imam leading the prayers is also the person reciting the prayers behind him). And this exactly what the tradition implies.

Ibne Abbas quotes from Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) as saying:

إِنَّ خُلَفَائِيَّ وَأَوْصِيَائِي وَحُجَجَ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْخَلْقِ بَعْدِي اثْنَا عَشَرَ أَوَّلُهُمْ عَلِيٌّ وَآخِرُهُمُ الْمَهْدِيُّ فَيَنْزِلُ رُوحُ اللَّهِ عِيسَى بْنُ مَرْيَمَ فَيُصَلِّيَ خَلْفَ الْمَهْدِيِّ وَتَشْرِقُ الْأَرْضُ بِنُورِ رَبِّهَا وَيَبْلُغُ سُلْطَانُهُ الْمَشَارِقَ وَالْمَغَارِبَ.

“Verily, my caliphs, my leaders, my inheritors and Allah's proofs after me will be twelve. The first of them is Ali (a.s.) and the last of them is Mahdi (a.s.), then Ruhullah, Isa Ibne Maryam, will descend, and recite namaz behind Mahdi, and the earth will overflow with the light of its Lord and His Kingdom will extend from east to west. .

(Yanabiul Mawaddah, Pg. 447)

Reminder

This tradition is not in need of any explanation for its meaning rather even a simple-minded person will easily be able to understand it, wherein it is clearly directed that Hazrat Mahdi (a.s.) is from the progeny of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) while Hazrat Isa (a.s.) is a separate individual with a lineage distinct from Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.).

Other traditions have shown the two personalities interacting with each other. For instance:

Jabir Ibne Abdullah Ansari has quoted the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.): 'Isa ibne Maryam will descend (on the earth) and the Amir of Muslims (Imam) will ask him 'come and lead us in prayer'. Ibne Maryam having due regard for the respect and honour which Allah has beneficently bestowed upon this nation (of Prophet Mohammad (s.a.w.a)), will decline stating, 'Only among yourselves will some be leaders of others and will have supremacy on one and others.

(Sahih Muslim, Urdu translation, Published by Darul Furqan. Delhi, Kitabul Imaan, Pg. 29)

The fact is clarified further in this translation where both the personalities converse with each other and the decision prevails that Hazrat Mahdi (a.s.) is Imam, while Hazrat Isa (a.s.) is the follower.

Hence, no possibility remains that the tradition لا مهدي الا عيسى be regarded as true and correct.

Astonishing

The author of Al-Hawi lil Fatawi in vol. 2, pg. 167 of his book writes that when people will decline to recite prayer behind Hazrat Isa, it will be أعجب العجب among one of the most stupefying things because the reciting of prayer by Hazrat Isa behind Haazrat Mahdi {(a.s.) is proved by authentic traditions from the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), the fountainhead of truth. The traditions therefore simply cannot be ignored or denied. These traditions have been

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reproduced by Ahmad ibne Hanbal in his Musnad and by Hakim in Mustadarak and other Sehaah Sittah have quoted from Abu Hurairah thus:

'What will happen to you when Isa ibn Maryam descends and your Imam is among you?'

Kamaaluddin – A Brief Introduction

This book is among the earliest ones written on the subject. of occultation of Imame-Zaman (a.t.f.s.). The full name of this book is “Kamaaluddin wa Tamamun Nemah”. It is authored by Raesul Muhadtheen Abu Jafar Mohammad ibn Ali Babaway Qummi (r.a.) who is widely known as 'Sheikh-e-Saduq'.

Sheikh-e-Saduq (a.r.) was born in 302 A.H. in the city of Qom into a family famous for its religious knowledge. At that time the city of Qom was centre of lovers of Ahle-Bayt (a:s.).

The birth of Sheikh-e-Saduq was the result of the prayers of Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.). Sheikh-e-Saduq studied for twenty years under the guidance of his eminent father Ali ibn Ibrahim Babaway (a.r.). He was from among the companions of Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) and later had shifted to the city of Rayy. Sheikh travelled to Iraq, Iran and Turkey to collect the traditions of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and the Holy Imams (a.s.). While travelling to various places he imparted religious knowledge to many people whom he met on his journey.

People from different corners of Islamic world gained from the efforts of Sheikh. People sought answers to problems of jurisprudence (fiqh) from him. Sheikh-e-Tusi (a.r.) writes about him: "He was of the foremost level and commanded a very good memory. He was an

Alam' of Fiqh and had learned and memorised many traditions. He was unmatched. There could be seen none equal to him in intelligence and knowledge for the Quran."

(Al-Fehrist, Pg. 184 - 185, Sheikh-e-Tusi)

Sheikh has compiled and sorted the traditions of the Holy Infallibles (a.s.). This was not an easy task and according to research scholars - an extraordinary feat, of which only 18 books and treatises are available with us today, each of which is unique. To gather traditions of infallible Imams (a.s.) and sort it according to topics and to do 'Tajziyah' and 'Tahlul' is that magnificent achievement which resulted in the title of 'Raesul Muhadtheen' (chief of traditionists). This torchbearer of knowledge passed away in 380 A.H. in the city of Rayy. Even today his honored tomb is a revered monument in Tehran.

His Invaluable Works:

The following are some of the precious books of Sheikh which have reached us:

- (i) Resaale Iteqadaat
- (ii) Kamaaluddin wa Tamamun Nemah
- (iii) Kitab-e-Amali
- (iv) Kitab-e-Tauheed
- (v) Man La Yahzarul Faqih
- (vi) Kitab-e-Sawaabul Aamaal wa Iqaabul Aamaal
- (vii) Uyoone Akhbare Reza

However, Kamaaluddin' is one of his most important works. It contains numerous traditions regarding the existence of Imam Zaman (a.t.f.s.), his long life, occultation and other aspects of

Imam's (a.s.) life. In the preface of the book, Sheikh writes: "...when I woke up, I saw myself in Mecca circumambulating (doing tawaaf) the Holy Kaaba. I reached and was kissing the Hajar-eAswad and was saying ...". I have returned its identity and completed it so that you can testify its completion". Then I saw my master Imame-Zaman (a.t.f.s.). He (a.t.f.s.) looked at me. He was aware of the things in my heart. I saluted him (a.t.f.s.) and in reply he said "Why don't you write a book on Occultation so that all your desires are fulfilled? " I said "O Son of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.), I have already written some matter on the topic of occultation". He (a.t.f.s.) replied "That is not in the way I have ordered you to do. Now, you write a book on occultation which contains the discussion of occultation of prophets". Saying this Imam (a.t.f.s.) disappeared. And so on the order of Imam Zaman (a.t.f.s.), Sheikh wrote the book Kamaaluddin'.

If we glance at the period when the book was written, we will appreciate the work of Sheikh and the importance of the book. The Shia community of that period were besieged with doubts and uncertainties regarding the existence and the occultation of Imam (a.t.f.s.). Moreover, the Zaidiyyah and Ismailiyyah sects were raising doubts and objections regarding the holy existence of Imam-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.). In this literary work of Sheikh, he has discussed the proofs for the necessity of Imam (a.t.f.s.) and has given fitting answers to the objections of enemies of Imam (a.t.f.s.). The following are some of the topics that he has discussed in the book:

- (i) Khilafat before the creation
- (ii) Necessity of obeying the successors of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.)
- (iii) Appointing the successor is the prerogative of Allah, the Almighty
- (iv) Proof of Allah is required in every period
- (v) Necessity of proof of Allah
- (vi) Infallibility is necessary for Imam
- (vii) What were the things due to which Allah ordered the angels to prostrate before Hazrat Adam (a.s.)?
- (viii) Necessity of Marefat (recognition) of Imam
- (ix) Proofs regarding the occultation and the reasoning behind it.
- (x) Similarities between Imams (a.s.) and the Prophets (a.s.).
- (xi) Traditions about the demise of Mohammad ibne Hanafiyyah
- (xii) Negation of Nawasiyyah and Waqefiyyah ideas of occultation.
- (xiii) Traditions about the demise of Hazrat Moosa ibne Jafar (a.s.)
- (xiv) Traditions about the demise of Hazrat Hasan Askari (a.s.)

After discussing the above, Sheikh has dealt with the doubts and objections raised against Imam (a.t.f.s.) and replied to all the objections. Further, he has discussed about the reappearance of Imam (a.t.f.s.) and the filling of the earth with peace and justice. Also, Sheikh has proved that the Imam has to be from the progeny of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.). In the end, Sheikh has brought the debate, which he had with his rivals in the presence of Rukn Uddawala

The discussion in the first six chapters deals with the occultation of Hazrat Idris (a.s.), Hazrat Nuh (a.s.), Hazrat Ibrahim (a.s.), Hazrat Yusuf (a.s.) and Hazrat Moosa (a.s.). Then there is a discussion of occultation of the successor of Hazrat Moosa (a.s.).

The discussion of 'Necessity of the Existence of Imam' is in the twenty-first chapter of the book. The next chapter deals with the discussion of Presence of Proof of Allah from the time of Hazrat Adam (a.s.) till the Day of Qiyamat. In chapter 23, Sheikh has brought the discussion of nomination of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) from Hadith-e-Qudsi. The following chapter brings the similar discussion from Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a). Chapters 25 to 37 deal with the discussion of occultation from 13 Masoomen (a.s.). Chapter 39 deals with the topic of the fate of the person who denies Imam-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.) - such were the persons in the history of the past as well who had denied previous Masoomen (A.S.) and had died the death of disbelief & ignorance so the same will happen now & in the future.

Traditions regarding the mother of Imam (a.t.f.s.), his birth, the people who got the opportunity to see him and about his companions and soldiers can be found in. Chapters 41 to 43.

Chapter 44 discusses about the reasons behind the occultation of Imam (a.t.f.s.). The 'tawqee' (letters) of Imam (a.s.) have been reproduced in the book. Further Sheikh has brought a discussion about the long life of Imam (a.s.) and the traditions, which talk about people who in the past lived long life. This discussion is very helpful in proving the

Sheikh has brought the discussion of 'Intezar' (awaiting) for of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) and its merits and rewards in chapter 25. The following chapter deals with the prohibition on taking the name of Imam (a.s.).

The second-last chapter of the book deals with traditions which discuss the signs of reappearance of Imam (a.s.). Chapter 58 discusses miscellaneous topics about Imam (a.s.). In this topic, Sheikh has also brought the discussion of 'Fatrah' both in literal sense and from Holy Quran and traditions.

Sheikh has concluded the book by bringing the tradition from Imam Reza (a.s.) about Imamat and the position of Imam (a.s.).

A study of the book reveals the zeal and fervour with which the author defends the Imamat and Wilayat and has helped Shias to strengthen their faith and to come near Imam Zaman (a.t.f.s.). At the same time this book exhorts every lover of Imam (a.s.) to defend his Imamat with all his resources and capacity in increasing peoples' awareness and proximity towards Imam Zaman (a.t.f.s.).

The Companions Of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) In The Light Of Quran & Traditions

All the sects of Islam in general, and in particular, the Shiah are steadfast in their belief, that prior to the advent of the Day of Judgement (Qiyamat), injustice and inequality will be rife in the earth. In such a condition, Allah (swt), through His Proof (Hujjat) will fill the earth with justice and equality, as it will be filled with injustice and oppression.

Execution of this momentous mission of altering the administration of the world requires the presence of an equally great personality. We all are aware that the great person being referred to here, is none other than Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.). To complete his divine mission successfully, Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) will naturally require supporters and helpers.

Inshallah, with the help of Allah (swt) and the grace of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.), in this brief treatise, we shall delve into the characteristics of those personalities who will form the group of helpers of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.). Using the Holy Quran and traditions of our Holy Imams (a.s.), we shall try to find about more about those who will assist him (a.s.) in cleansing this earth from the stain of injustice and inequality and replacing it with justice and equality.

We shall divide our discussion into two sections;

1. The companions of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) in the light of verses of Holy Quran.
2. The companions of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) in the light of traditions.

The companions of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) in the light of Quranic verses

According to traditions of the infallible Imams (a.s.), numerous verses from the Holy Quran contain references to the companions of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) (may our lives be sacrificed for him). The commentaries and references under these verses draw our attention towards the characteristics and traits of the companions of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.).

Verse 1

أَيْنَ مَا تَكُونُوا يَأْتِ بِكُمُ اللَّهُ جَمِيعًا.

"...wherever you are, Allah will bring you all together;..."

(Surah Baqarah, verse 148)

With reference to the above verse, Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) says that this verse points to the companions of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.).

(Ghaybat-e-Nomani, page 313)

Imam Baqir (a.s.) says that in reality this verse refers to those 313 companions of Imam Mahdi (a.s.) who will in a single moment gather around him (a.s.) (like moths gather around the glow of fire), between Rukn and Maqaam and pay allegiance to him (a.s.).

Verse 2

وَلَيْنُ أَخْرَجْنَاهُمُ الْعَذَابَ إِلَىٰ أُمَّةٍ مَّعْدُودَةٍ لِّيَقُولُوا مَا يَحْسِبُونَ

"And if We hold back from them the punishment until a stated period of time, they will certainly say: What prevents it?..."

(Surah Hud, verse 8)

According to Imam Ali (a.s.), "Ummat Ma'doodah" (Maeaanah Ummat) refers to the 313 companions of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.)."

(Tafseer Qummi, volume 1, page 323)

Verse 3

فَإِنْ يَكْفُرْ بِهَا هَؤُلَاءِ فَقَدْ وَكَّلْنَا بِهَا قَوْمًا لَّيْسُوا بِهَا بِكَافِرِينَ

"...therefore if these disbelieve in it We : have already entrusted with it a people who are not disbelievers in it."

(Surah Anaam, verse 89)

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) says that this verse is a reference to the special companions of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.).

(Ghaybat Nomani, page 316)

Verse 4

فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِي اللَّهُ بِقَوْمٍ يُحِبُّهُمْ وَيُحِبُّونَهُ، أَذِلَّةٍ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ، أَعِزَّةٍ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ

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

(Surah Maedah, verse 54)

Imam Sadiq (a.s.), after reciting this verse, recited its preceding verse, and said this verse too refers to the companions of the previous Divine proofs.

(Tafseer-e-Ayyaashi, volume 1, page 326)

Verse 5

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ

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

(Surah Ambiya, verse 105)

In an explanation to the above verse, Imam Baqir (a.s.) remarks that it refers to the companions of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) in the last days.

(Tafseer-e-Majmaul Bayan, volume 7, page 66)

Verse 6

الَّذِينَ إِن مَّكَّنَّاهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ وَآمَرُوا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ نَهَوْا عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَاللَّهُ عَاقِبَةُ الْأُمُورِ

Those who, should We establish them in the land, will keep up prayer and pay the poor rate and enjoin good and forbid evil; and Allah's is the end of affairs.

(Surah Hajj, verse 41)

In an exegesis to the above verse, Imam Baqir (a.s.) says that in reality, this verse has been revealed with reference to the companions of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.). Allah will place the East and the West at their disposal, and through them He will establish His religion on this earth. There will remain no sign of injustice and oppression on this earth.

(Yanaabi ul Mawaddah, page 425)

Verse 7

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كَمَا سَخَّلْنَا الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ...

“Allah has promised to those of you who believe and do good that He will most certainly make them rulers in the earth as He made rulers those before them....”

(Surah Noor, verse 55)

Imam Zainul Abedin (a.s.), while swearing by Allah says that these are our lovers and our Shiahş. These are those who will be made the successors of this earth by Allah through the Mahdi (a.s.), who will be from amongst us.

(Yanaabi ul Mawaddah, page 426)

Readers should note that there is a promise made by Allah in the above verse and Allah never breaks His promise. If Allah promises that the rightful inheritors of this earth will be the companions of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.), then taking a cue from the tradition we should wait for this day with restlessness.

Allah's promise refers to that Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.), who, after his reappearance will fill the earth with justice and equality, just as it will be filled (at that time) with injustice and oppression. At this juncture, we raise our hands and pray to Allah (swt), that by the waseelah of Janab'e Zahra (sa), Allah grants us the taufeeq (opportunity) of waiting for Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) in the true sense of the word - that we may strive to prepare the earth for his reappearance. And that after his reappearance, our names be included in the celebrated list of companions who will help Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) in his mission.

The companions of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) in the light of traditions.

Lets us see what are the characteristics and special attributes of the companions of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) in the light of traditions.

(a) The number of companions

Aban Ibn Tuglab narrates that, "During my visit to Makkah, I presented myself in the company of Imam Sadiq (a.s.) in Masjidul Haram, and was honoured by the opportunity to kiss his hand. He (a.s.) said, 'O Aban, very soon, Allah will fill this Masjid with 313 persons.'"

(Ghaybat-e-Nomani, page 313).

In another tradition, Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) says, "Imam Qaem (a.s.) will not leave the city of Makkah till such time, that he completes the size of his group.

Abu Baseer, a famous companion of Imam Sadiq (a.s.) once asked the Holy Imam (a.s.) about the size of Imam Mahdi's (a.s.) group, to which Imam (a.s.) replied, "Ten thousand".

Apparently, the above traditions may appear in conflict with each other. But there is no contradiction. Explanations, which appear under these traditions, inform us that Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.), will have 313 'special companions'. Besides these, he (a.s.) will also enjoy the help and support of other people who will be his companions.

(b) The characteristics of Imam Mahdi's (a.s.) companions

While narrating the features of the companions of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.), Imam Sadiq (a.s.) narrates that, "They will be such men, that their hearts will be like pieces of iron".

There will exist not a shred of doubt in their minds, nor will they ever harbour any doubts. To uphold the rights of Allah, they will be unyielding (like hard stone). They will constantly circumambulate the presence of the Holy Imam as moth circumambulate the fire (as they are attracted to the glow of the fire). They will submit themselves in the service of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.). They will remain awake in the nights, and worship of Allah Through out. Their voices, as they worship Allah, will be similar to the humming sound of the honeybees. They will remain alert during the nights and prepare for jihad during the days. They will always be attentive towards the service and obedience of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.).

(Behaar ul Anwaar, volume 52, page 300)

(c) The strength of the companions of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.)

قَالَ لَوْ أَنَّ بِيْ بِكُمْ قُوَّةً أَوْ آوَى إِلَى رُكْنٍ شَدِيْدٍ

"He said: Ah! that I had power to suppress you, rather I shall have recourse to a strong support."

(Surah Hud, verse 80)

While explaining the above verse of the Holy Quran, Imam Sadiq (a.s.), quotes the words used by Hazrat Lut (a.s.) for his nation - "It is unfortunate that I do not possess the power and strength to control you. How excellent it would be, if I had the support of the people against you".

Imam Sadiq (a.s.), while continuing his narration says, "The power and strength, which is desired by Hazrat Lut, is in fact the strength of Hazrat Qaem (a.s.) and the steadfastness of his companions" ..

Each companion of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) will possess the power and the capacity equivalent to 40 people. Their hearts will be stronger than iron. If they pass by a mountain, then they will reduce it to dust.

(Kamaaluddin, volume, page 673)

The above traditions highlights the amazing power and strength of each companion of Hazrat Mahdi (a.s.) - such power that even a prophet like Hazrat Lut (a.s.) is desirous of it.

(d) The personalities of the companions of Hazrat Mahdi (a.s.)

Imam Baqir (a.s.) in a prophecy says that, "I see the companions of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) controlling everything in the East and the West. Every entity of this world will be involved in their obedience. Even the animals and the birds will be content in their obedience. The segments of the earth will take pride of pride themselves over each other saying that, "Today, a companion of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) has walked upon me."

(Behaar ul Anwaar, volume 52, page 327).

All the traditions enumerated above draw our attention to a special detail that will be found in every companion of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.). A thought provoking point is that whatever has been stated above, if we pay attention to it, will lead us to the conclusion that these points are not new at all! In fact these are exactly the Islamic way of life which has been taught to us by Quran, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and Imams (a.s.).

Also, a detail which should not be overlooked is that the companions of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) will not have any 'special' medicine, which on consumption, will enable all these characteristics to develop automatically in their personalities!

A cursory glance at the history of Islam, from the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) to the 11th Imam, Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) informs us that the companions of each of the infallible leaders (a.s.) were personalities of great eminence. We can quote examples of Salman Farsi, Miqdad, Misam'e Tammar, Hisham ibn Hakam, Abu Baseer and many more. In all these personalities we find the same high details and morals that have been stated for the companions of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.).

Each one of us is anxious for and desirous of being included amongst the companions of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) and we all pray to Allah (swt) to grant us the opportunity for the same. In particular, at this point we remember the words of Dua'e Ahad,

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِي مِنْ أَنْصَارِهِ وَاعْوَانِهِ وَالذَّائِبِينَ عَنْهُ

In any case, it is necessary to support this desire with our actions. It is essential that we strive to develop the same characteristics and actions into our personalities that is worthy of the companions of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.).

SHABAAN 1420 A.H.

Let us all pray to Allah that he kindles this desire in our heart for the companionship of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.). And that He grants us taufeeq to strive to develop the same characteristics and high moral traits that is expected from one desirous of the companionship of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.).

Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) in the eyes of Hazrat Ali (a.s.)

The discussion of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) is so critical that most of the important Islamic personalities have made some mention about it in their writings and sermons. Here we shall chronicle some of the traditions and sermons of Ammeerul Mo'mineen, Hazrat Ali b. Abi Talib (a.s.), who has spoken at length on this topic. It is vital that we gain maximum ma'rafah from these sermons and traditions so that we may avert a death of ignorance and apostasy.

Commencement with Ali (a.s.), conclusion with Mahdi (a.t.f.s.)

Often we learn about the conclusion from the commencement. Ameerul Mo'mineen (a.s.) is the first Imam, while Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) is the last one. Then we should draw some information about the last Imam from the first one. Ali (a.s.) reveals, "The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) informed me, 'Allah has favoured us, the Ahle Bayt, with seven persons, that He has not conferred on anyone before us, nor will He bestow it on anyone after us, viz., In our family is the Messenger of Allah, the chief of all Prophets and the seal of Prophethood. The Prophet's (s.a.w.a.) successor, Ali b. Abi Talib (a.s.), is more elevated than all other successors. He is the beloved of Allah, more than all other successors. His (s.a.w.a.) two grandsons, Hasan and Hussain, are the most excellent of grandsons. Our martyrs enjoy a distinction higher than the other martyrs, i.e. Hamza b. Abdul Muttalib, chief of all martyrs. Among us is the one who is granted a pair of wings by Allah, so that he can soar along with the angels in Paradise. He is Jafar b. Abi Talib. The Promised Qaim is also from us.

(Muntakhabul Asar, page 173)

Once Ameerul Mo'mineen (a.s.) disclosed to Abu Tufayl that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) informed him,

لَوْ لَمْ يَبْقَ مِنَ الدَّهْرِ إِلَّا يَوْمٌ لَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ رَجُلًا مِنْ أَهْلِ بَيْتِي بِمَلَأَهَا عَدْلًا كَمَا مَلِئْتُ جُورًا

'Even if a solitary day remains for the world to end, Allah shall raise a man from my Ahle Bayt who shall fill the world with justice and equity as it would have been devastated with oppression and tyranny.'

(Sunane Abi Dawood, Kitabul Mahdi)

While Ameerul Mo'mineen (a.s.) has time and again advanced irrefutable evidence to support his claim of being the Prophet's (s.a.w.a.) successor, he has also introduced his last successor in minute detail. We mention below a tradition that reveals the origin of creation, the brilliant light of the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.), the presence of this light in every age, creation of the Angels, creation of Hazrat Adam's (a.s.) face and the objective behind creating the light of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.).

Certainly Allah created Adam (a.s.) – the father of man, from those things that kept him concealed, and manifested his excellence and superiority. Allah designated him as the 'Imam' in the midst of Angels and enlightened them about the objective of Imamate and Wilayat.

And the same was parted from our brilliant light which was concealed in Adam in accordance with his capability. Then Allah has transferred this brilliant light from one era to another, till it came to rest with the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.).

Therefore, Allah has invited the people in an apparent as well as concealed manner towards His Messenger's (s.a.w.a.). obedience and his (s.a.w.a.) Shariat.

The Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) reminded the people of Allah's covenant, the very covenant Allah had taken from the people in the previous world (Aalam-e-Zar). In Aalam-e-Zar, some people had testified to the prophethood of Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.), and had illumined themselves with the light of his (s.a.w.a.) guidance. They had recognised him (s.a.w.a.) and submitted to his (s.a.w.a.) affair. However, there were some other people who in their negligence and obstinacy had rejected his (s.a.w.a.) prophethood.

Finally the light of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) came to reside in the twelve Imams (a.s.) of the Ahle Bayt. .

That is why the light of the heavens and the earth subsists only from our brilliance. That is why all sciences shall be manifested from only our light and all affairs shall revert only to us.

Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) is Allah's final Proof (Hujjat) and the last Imam

وَبِمَهْدِيْنَا تَنْقَطِعُ الْحُجَجُ، خَاتِمَةُ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَ مُنْقَذِ الْأُمَّةِ وَ غَايَةِ النُّوْرِ وَ مَصْدَرِ الْأُمُورِ

And through our Mahdi, the chain of Allah's Proofs shall end and Imamate shall reach its conclusion. He shall be the seal of Imams, and through him alone will the nation get deliverance. He is the Zenith and source of all affairs.

Ali (a.s.) and his successors are the best of creation

'Then, we are the most exalted of creatures, exceed others in the worship of One God and are Allah's Proofs upon the earth. Then those who accept our Wilayat, and are attached to us, shall be blessed with Allah's bounties.'

(Murujuz Zahab, 1/42-43, Beirut edition, 1393 A.H.)

We would like our readers to read this tradition carefully and reflect over it, as Ameerul Mo'mineen (a.s.) highlights the excellence of the Ahle Bayt (a.s.) and their Shias.

To attest in Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) in this age is necessary.

Ameerul Mo'mineen (a.s.) narrates that Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) is at the zenith of Allah's light and is the source of all affairs. Then the people should attach themselves to this light and try to acquire maximum recognition (Ma'refah) of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.), who is among Allah's greatest bounties to man. Indeed, only those who have been blessed with this recognition are worthy of deliverance.

... فَلْيَهْنَأْ بِالنِّعْمَةِ مَنْ تَمَسَّكَ بِوَلَايَتِنَا...

Then glad tidings of Allah's bounties are those who have attached themselves to our Wilayat.

Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) in Nahjul Balagha

A few days before his martyrdom, Ameerul Mo'mineen (a.s.) delivered a sermon in Kufa, standing on the stone that was fixed by Jo'dah b. Habirah Makhrumi. At that time Ameerul Mo'mineen (a.s.) was wearing woolen shirt, his (a.s.) reins were of date skin, and his (a.s.) shoes were also made of date leaves.

In this sermon, Ameerul Mo'mineen (a.s.) began by praising Allah and glorifying Him, narrating His attributes, His grace and bounties and then explained a few points about man's creation. Then he (a.s.) admonished the people to fear Allah. He (a.s.) spoke about the certainty of death by illustrating the case of Hazrat Sulaiman (a.s.) thus, 'If there was a way to attain permanence in this world or a means to avoid death, then it would have been done by Sulaiman b. Dawood (a.s.), who had dominion over the entire earth and was given authority over all Jinns and humans.

But when his term of life expired, death overtook him, his house and wealth could not avert his death, and after him, his inheritors took possession of all his property.

وَ إِنَّ لَكُمْ فِي الْقُرُونِ السَّابِقَةِ لَعِبْرَةً

'Surely there is lesson for you from every period of history.'

Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) shall end all forms of oppression

In this same sermon, Ameerul Mo'mineen (a.s.) while discussing the topic of tyranny and oppression, recounts thus: Amaaleqa and his son, Firaun, and his sons – the residents of the cities of the companions of Ras, killed a large number of people. They obliterated the ways of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), and superimposed the ways of tyrants and oppressors. When Ameerul Mo'mineen (a.s.) (a.s.) had impressed this point upon the people, he (a.s.) recited:

قَدْ لَبَسَ لِلْحِكْمَةِ جُنَّتَهَا وَ أَخَذَهَا بِجَمِيعِ أَدْبِهَا مِنَ الْإِقْبَالِ عَلَيْهَا...

His body shall be adorned with the attire of wisdom. He will have acquired it with all the conditions and etiquette. Recognise him accurately, his heart shall be devoid of any attachment whatsoever with this degraded world. Wisdom (Hikmah) near him (Imam Mahdi (a.s.)) shall be their lost property and their most cherished entity, which Imam (ait.f.s.) shall seek. (Imam (a.t.f.s.) shall always use hikmah, for as per traditions Mo'min's lost hikmah' i.e. a Mo'min always tries to repossess this hikmah which he has forfeited) Then Imam Mahdi (a.s.) shall be isolated in such a condition. Then when the disputes and controversies engulf the world, oppressors and tyrants gain a stranglehold over the people, Islam is weakened, and become like that camel, who in its moment of feebleness and fatigue, wags his tail, and in its helplessness drops its neck on the ground - i.e. Islam shall be weakened to an extent that it will have only a few faithful Muslims left. This is exactly what the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) had prophesied, 'Islam's advent was in isolation and seclusion, and it shall soon return to isolation and seclusion'.

In such a condition, Imam Mahdi (a.s.) shall be the last remnant among the successors of the Prophets (a.s.), and the lineage of Imams (a.s.).

(Nahjul Balagha (Urdu), Sermon 180, page 488 -translation by Mufti Jafar, Commentary on Nahjul Balagha Sermon 181, page 595, Persian translation by Faizul Islam)

Important points from the above sermon

1. Hikmah is the true insight of things, worship of Allah, piety and renunciation (Zohd). All this is present with Imam Mahdi (a.s.). That is why the etiquette, zohd, true worship, the reality behind the creation of things is something that is present only and only with Imam (a.t.f.s.) and can be acquired only from his threshold.

Another important narration of Ameerul Mo'mineen (a.s.):

فِي حَدِيثِهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ: فَإِذَا كَانَ ذَلِكَ ضَرَبَ يَغْسُوبُ الدِّينِ بِذُنْبِهِ فَيَجْتَمِعُونَ إِلَيْهِ كَمَا يَجْتَمِعُ قَزَعُ الْخَرِيفِ

(Nahjul Balagha (Urdu), page 886 - translation by Mufti Jafar, Nahjul Balagha (Persian) page 1,202, translation by Faizul Islam)

Ameerul Mo'mineen (a.s.) in this narration exemplifies the excellence and distinction of Imam (a.t.f.s.).

1) When Imam (a.t.f.s.) shall reappear he shall take his rightful place as the (ya'soob) caliph of religion. The people across the world shall throng to meet him like the clouds gather at the time of the Kharif season.

2) Another point highlighted by this narration is that Imam Mahdi (a.s.) is very much alive and lives on this very earth, protected from his enemies. He shall reappear at Allah's command.

3). Sayyid Razi (r.a.) - compiler of Nahjul Balagha, elaborates on the meaning of Ya'soobuddeen thus – the esteemed leader who shall be the sole master of the people's affairs on that day.

Ameerul Mo'mineen's (a.s.) statement that Imam (a.t.f.s.), on his reappearance shall take command with firmness and resolute this on attributes of actually an illustration based the honeybees. The chief of the honeybees is called Ya'soob. It spends the better part of its day in flight. At the end of the day, it settles down in its place firmly, fixedly. In this very manner, Imam (a.t.f.s.) also shall settle down in his rightful position as the caliph and leader of mankind, without anyone to challenge his supremacy.

4) قَزَع means clouds fragments. Clouds are delicate and subtle, regardless of whether they support water droplets or not.

Here Imam's (a.t.f.s.) companions are likened to the clouds of the Kharif season. This is because clouds no matter how widely dispersed they maybe, can converge very quickly within a few minutes.

5. ضَرْب means to roam stroll. ذُنْب means companions and supporters. ضَرْبُ ذَنْب means the sting of the honeybee. This implies that when Imam (a.t.f.s.) reappears, he shall annihilate the enemies with his sword, which will strike them like a bee

Enlivening the Book and the Sunnah

Ameerul Mo'mineen (a.s.) has prophesied regarding Imam (a.t.f.s.):

OR

يَعْطِفُ الْهَوَى عَلَى الْهُدَى إِذَا عَطَفُوا الْهُدَى عَلَى الْهَوَى وَ يَعْطِفُ الرَّأْيَ حَتَّى تَقُومَ الْحَرْبُ بِكُمْ عَلَى سَاقٍ بِأَيِّهَا نَوَاجِدُهَا
الخ...

'When the Awaited Imam (Imamul Muntazar) (a.t.f.s.) reappears, he shall channelise the unlawful desires towards guidance and Allah's worship, i.e. he shall guide those straying in darkness and treading towards light. Imam (a.t.f.s.) shall reappear at a time when the people shall mould religion to suit their selfish interests and wanton desires. They shall twist the Quranic verses to befit their greed and lust. When Imam (a.t.f.s.) reappears he shall suppress such deviant interpretation of the Quran and ensure its accurate interpretation. He shall ensure that the Quran is referred to in a manner it deserves, and he shall likewise enliven the affairs of the religion. Imam (a.t.f.s.) shall totally abolish conjecture and analogy in matters of the Book and affairs of religion.

In one place, Ameerul Mo'mineen (a.s.) mentions in his sermon, that there shall be an intense struggle on Imam's (a.t.f.s.) reappearance. Imam's (a.t.f.s.) opponents shall be positioned in a defiant and obstinate manner like wild animals that snarl, while baring and gnashing their teeth. They shall be confident of their triumph, but will be made to taste the bitterness of defeat and disgrace.

'Beware! What I am prophesying is bound to happen tomorrow, and tomorrow is very near. It shall get with it everything I have foretold. Imam (a.t.f.s.) shall have to face opposition from the kings of that era because the latter with their greed and lust shall find it difficult to deal with Imam's (a.t.f.s.) forthrightness and sense of justice and equity. Indeed when Imam (a.t.f.s.) reappears, the earth shall make evident its treasures, and shall surrender the keys of its treasures to Imam (a.t.f.s.). Then surely he will show you the true meaning of justice and equity. He shall revive (the teachings of the Book and the affairs of religion).'

(Nahjul Balagha (Urdu), Sermon 136, page 373 - translation by Mufti Jafar, Nahjul Balagha (Persian), page 424, translation by Faizul Islam)

Tomorrow's dawn

Ghaybat and reappearance are not terms that denote large distances or intervals. Ameerul Mo'mineen (a.s.) has warned the people against sins and transgression, that deviate one from the right path, (Seerate mustakeem) to the path of destruction and disgrace. Such individuals will oppress the righteous creatures of Allah and shall consider their shedding their blood as permissible. When the people heard this prophesy, they asked Ameerul Mo'mineen (a.s.), about the period when all this oppression would end. Ameerul Mo'mineen (a.s.) said **فَلَا تَسْتَعْجِلُوا** 'Don't make haste.' (Surely there shall be oppression and tyranny as I have prophesied) Then what is bound to happen shall happen. Don't display any haste in getting over whatever is destined to happen. Be patient. Then await the dawn of tomorrow, and refrain from showing dissatisfaction and discontent at what it gets with it. For surely there are many people who

show haste in securing something, and when they finally secure it, they exclaim in their regret: Alas I wish I had never acquired this! How near is the light of tomorrow's dawn from today's darkness.'

'O my nation, this is the promised Mahdi whose advent shall be marked with disputes and controversies. You have not yet experienced such disputes. (Today undeserving people have usurped my rights and have ignited the spark of controversy and strife. These disputes shall soon engulf the whole world, and you will see those events in the last age exactly as I have prophesied)

... أَلَا وَ إِنَّ مَنْ أَدْرَكَهَا مِنَّا يَسِرُّ فِيهَا لِسِرَاجٍ مُنِيرٍ...

'Beware! Then the one from us (Ahle Bayt (a.s.)) who shall get the final era, will stand illumined with the light of Wilayat and Imamat. He shall tread on the path of the righteous and virtuous. He shall steer the misguided away from darkness towards light. He shall release the ignorant from their bounds of ignorance. He shall disperse the advocates of falsehood, and mobilise the supporters of truth. He shall remain hidden from the eyes of the people. People shall try to seek his footsteps in order to trace his whereabouts, but shall return disappointed. But amidst all this, there shall be one nation, who shall be sharpened with acute conflicts and disputes, like the ironsmith sharpens the sword. (But despite these disputes and controversies they shall remain steadfast on their faith. They shall obey their Imam without any reservation) Their eyes shall be illumined with the light of the Quran, and its meanings shall constantly ring in their ears. They shall subsist on a diet of wisdom and erudition. (This nation shall constantly acquire knowledge and teachings of the Quran from their Imam (a.t.f.s.))

(Nahjul Balagha (Urdu), Sermon 148, translation by ... Faizul Islam)

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِي مِنْ أَنْصَارِهِ وَ أَعْوَانِهِ وَ اتِّبَاعِهِ وَ شِيعَتِهِ وَ أَرْنِي فِي آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ مَا يَأْمُرُونَ وَ فِي عَدُوِّهِمْ مَا يَحْذَرُونَ إِلَهَ الْحَقِّ. آمِينَ يَا ذَا الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ يَا أَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِينَ.