

## **Editorial**

### Covenant And Promise

Celebrate! For spring has dawned

Change the chains of the lovers once again

Be it the monsoon rains, the loneliness of the deserts or the roughness of the jungles, life constantly reminds man that there is someone who is controlling him. There is someone who is perennially changing him. The change is so subtle and slow that till date, humanity has been unable to find a scale to help man measure and observe this progress or otherwise. But can anybody refute that the newly born infant will not remain so for his entire lifetime? The force that brings in these alterations and transformations is that of Allah - the Blessed and the High. When we cannot observe the changes and modifications brought about by Him, it is certainly impossible to see His Being! A Being that is beyond all imaginations and thoughts! Therefore, He has sent Prophets (a.s.) and Messengers (a.s.) for the guidance of mankind. When the series of Prophethood came to an end, Allah the Almighty illuminated the earth by appointing an infallible Imam (a.s.) as His Caliph. He deemed this light of guidance as the protector of the lifestyle of His most beloved servant (s.a.w.a.) and His Book. He appointed him (a.s.) as the master of authority (ulul al-amr) and ordered His servants to make a covenant with him that they will never ever disobey his instructions.

When the devilish forces spread their evil dragnet throughout the world and all the factors and causes to extinguish the lamp of guidance were provided for, Allah the Self-Sufficient obliged and honored those who were willing to accept guidance by shielding this lamp with the glass of occultation. He will reappear when the tyrants and oppressors of the world will have exhausted all what they have of their tyrannies and injustices.

Every morning of the faithful begins with the covenant that they have with their master and which they utter in the following words

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أُجَدِّدُ لَهُ فِي صَبِيحَةِ هَذَا الْيَوْمِ، وَ مَا عَشْتُ بِهِ فِي أَيَّامِي عَهْدًا وَ عَقْدًا وَ بَيْعَةً لَهُ فِي عُنُقِي، لَا أَحُولُ عَنْهَا وَ لَا أَرْوُ أَبَدًا.

"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.) in my neck; I will never remove it nor shall I ever turn away from it."

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

The 15th of Shabaan is the birthday of Imam-e-Zamaana (a.t.f.s.). It is the date of evaluating the covenant and agreement that we have with him (a.t.f.s.). It is the date that has brought the tidings of joys. The morn of this day is assigned to spread the fragrance of Narjis' flower and the

Yusuf of Hazrat Zahra (s.a.). The joys of the heart know no bounds and the beauty of nature reaches the Divine Throne. The innumerable traps of the devilish forces are rendered useless. The caged birds of spirituality are set free. The desires of soaring high are fulfilled in unbridled airspace. The city of intellect and wisdom wakes up. Groups of friends march towards the gatherings of the manifestation of nature's beauty and splendor. These are mere words that we utter! What is the value of our words? We are not but weak and helpless creatures! Nay! It's the Lord of the Great Light, the Lord of the Throne and the Chair, the Lord of tumultuous oceans, the Lord Who has send down the Old Testament, the New Testament and the Holy Quran, the Lord Who is All-Knowing and All-Wise, Who has declared this morn as the dawn of acceptance for all those who seek forgiveness. Today, the doors of His joy are wide open. Today, His Nobility is even more restive. Therefore, on this day, keep asking till all your wants are exhausted.

True! All that is said is true! But when we look at ourselves, we realize that it is easier said than done. It is quite effortless to make a covenant but one has to bear the burden of mountains on one's heads in order to fulfill it. Those who dared to move forward for the love of their master went on to be in the company of Rushaid Hujari, the companions of Imam Husain (a.s.), Mufazzal- the disciple of the sixth Imam (a.s.), Hisham Ibn Hakam, Allamah Hilli, Shaikh Murtaza Ansari (mercy of Allah be on them all) and so on and so forth.

True! Very true! But when the feeling of shame, humiliation and embarrassment dawned on us helpless creatures, the blessings of the Imam (a.s.) born today gave a soft but firm helping hand. A ray of hope broke through the darkness of despair. A phrase from the supplication of his honorable ancestor, Ameerul Momineen (a.s.), infused a new lease of life in us lifeless souls.

إِلَهِي كَيْفَ أَدْعُوكَ وَ أَنَا أَنَا وَ كَيْفَ أَقْطَعُ رَجَائِي مِنْكَ وَأَنْتَ أَنْتَ.

"O God! How can I call You, while I am what I am (i.e. I am immersed in sins) and how can I can sever my hopes from You while You are what you are!(i.e. You are the all-Forgiving, the all-Merciful)"

Sufficient for us is the obligation that You have created us among the people who believe in Your beloved Caliph, Imam-e-Zamaana (a.t.f.s.) and have given us the opportunity to witness this morning time and again- the morn of his holy birth! O Imam-e-Zamaana (a.t.f.s.)! We love you from the depth of our hearts. When your name is taken, we stand up and place our hands on our heads. Every morning and evening, we send salutations on you. Today, we have come to seek the certificate of forgiveness and mercy from your honorable grandmother, the Queen of Paradise, Hazrat Fatemah Zahra (s.a.). We don't want anything but that you give us the opportunity to tread the path of your love and help us remain steadfast on the covenant and promise that we have made to you. Aameen!

Imam Zamana's (a.t.f.s.) Discourse On The Day Of Reappearance

**The First Word**

When the reappearance of Imam (a.t.f.s.) will be decreed, he will emerge and initiate the process of reformation of the world. Imam (a.t.f.s.) along with his band of 313 loyalists, who will form the core group of his army, will accept the allegiance from the people between Maqame Ibrahim and Rukne Yamani in the precincts of Masjidul Haraam. The first words that Imam (a.t.f.s.) will utter will be the 86th verse of Surah Hud. Imam Baqir (a.s.) says:

فَإِذَا خَرَجَ أَسْنَدَ ظَهْرَهُ إِلَى الْكُعْبَةِ وَاجْتَمَعَ إِلَيْهِ ثَلَاثُمِائَةٍ وَثَلَاثَةٌ عَشَرَ رَجُلًا مِنْ أَتْبَاعِهِ فَأَوَّلُ مَا يَنْطِقُ بِهِ هَذِهِ الْآيَةُ: (بَقِيَّتَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ) ثُمَّ يَقُولُ: أَنَا بَقِيَّةُ اللَّهِ وَخَلِيفَتُهُ وَحُجَّتُهُ عَلَيْكُمْ فَلَا يُسَلِّمُ عَلَيْهِ أَحَدٌ إِلَّا قَالَ: أَسْلَامٌ عَلَيْكَ يَا بَقِيَّةَ اللَّهِ فِي أَرْضِهِ .

When our Qaim will reappear, he will recline against the wall of Holy Kaaba. Among his followers, 313 men will assemble around him. The first words that he will speak will be the holy verse, 'What remains with Allah is better for you if you are believers...' Then he will say, I am the 'Remnant of Allah' (Baqiyatullah) and His Caliph and His Hujjat. At that moment everyone will address Imam (a.t.f.s.) thus - Peace be on you o Remnant of Allah in His Earth.

أَسْلَامٌ عَلَيْكَ يَا بَقِيَّةَ اللَّهِ فِي أَرْضِهِ .

**The Second Word**

The next thing that the Imam (a.t.f.s.) will say will be the 74th verse of Surah Zumar. Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) says:

يظهر وده

يَظْهَرُ وَحَدَهُ، وَ يَأْتِي الْبَيْتَ وَحَدَهُ. وَ يَلِجُ الْكُعْبَةَ وَحَدَهُ، وَ يَجُنُّ عَلَيْهِ اللَّيْلُ وَحَدَهُ، فَإِذَا نَامَتِ الْعُيُونُ وَ عَسَقَ اللَّيْلُ نَزَلَ إِلَيْهِ جِبْرَائِيلُ وَ مِيكَائِيلُ عَلَيْهِمَا السَّلَامُ وَ الْمَلَائِكَةُ صُفُوفًا فَيَقُولُ لَهُ جِبْرَائِيلُ: يَا سَيِّدِي قَوْلُكَ مَقْبُولٌ وَ أَمْرُكَ جَائِزٌ، فَيَمْسَحُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ يَدَهُ عَلَى وَجْهِهِ وَ يَقُولُ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي صَدَقْنَا وَ عَدَّهُ وَ أَوْرَثَنَا الْأَرْضَ نَتَّبِعُ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ حَيْثُ نَشَاءُ فَنِعْمَ أَجْرُ الْعَامِلِينَ، وَ يَقِفُ بَيْنَ الرُّكْنِ وَ الْمَقَامِ فَيَصْرُخُ صَرْخَةً فَيَقُولُ يَا مَعَاشِرَ نَقَبَائِي وَ أَهْلَ خَاصَّتِي وَ مَنْ دَخَرَهُمُ اللَّهُ لِنُصْرَتِي قَبْلَ ظُهُورِي عَلَى وَجْهِ الْأَرْضِ.

Our Qaim will reappear alone. When he will enter Masjidul Haram, he will be in a state of solitude. He will spend the night in the same solitary state. When the darkness will descend on the horizon, Jibraeel, Mikaeel and the angels will descend in hordes and Jibraeel will address Imam thus - O our master, your command will be obeyed. Your orders shall be executed. Subsequently, Imam (a.t.f.s.) will touch his face and say: All praise belongs to Allah who fulfilled His promise to us and made us to inherit the earth. We will stay in heaven where we fancy. This is the best reward for the good doers. Then he will stand between Rukne Yamani and Maqame

Ibrahim and with his soothing voice he will address his friends scattered in the various nooks and corners of the world. O our chosen ones, our confidantes, our companions and those who are selected by Allah for my assistance and were gathered on the earth prior to my reappearance, wherever you all are, rush towards me at once!" Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) says: 'The companions of Imam (a.t.f.s.) who would be busy worshipping or may be resting on their beds will immediately respond to Imam's (a.t.f.s.) earnest call and rush towards him in a jiffy. They will meet their Imam between Rukne Yamani and Magame Ibrahim.'

### The Third Word

Imam's (a.t.f.s.) third utterance will be the 10th verse of Surah Fatha, which he will recite while acknowledging the allegiance. The events of allegiance are related from Mufazzal who quotes Hazrat Imam Sadiq (a.s.):

O Mufazzal! Allah has cursed all those who had sworn allegiance or accepted allegiance on disbelief and hypocrisy prior to my reappearance. O Mufazzal, the Qaim will recline against the wall of Holy Kaaba and extend his hands. The skin of his hands will be very fair. He will say, 'this is the hand of God, on his behalf and on his command and then he will recite the following verse:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُبَايِعُونَكَ إِنَّمَا يُبَايِعُونَ اللَّهَ، يَدُ اللَّهِ فَوْقَ أَيْدِيهِمْ، فَمَنْ نَكَثَ فَإِنَّمَا يَنْكُثُ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ.

'Surely those who swear allegiance to you do but swear allegiance to Allah; the hand of Allah is above their hands. Therefore whoever breaks (his faith), he breaks it only to the injury of his own soul'.  
(Surah Fatha: 10)

### The Fourth Word

Imam's (a.t.f.s.) fourth expression will be a self-introduction. Abu Khalide Kabuli (r.a.) has narrated from Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.):

وَاللَّهِ لَكَأَنِّي أَنْظُرُ إِلَى الْقَائِمِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ وَ قَدْ أَسْنَدَ ظَهْرَهُ إِلَى الْحَجَرِ ثُمَّ يَنْشُدُ اللَّهَ حَقَّهُ ثُمَّ يَقُولُ: يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ مَنْ يُحَاجِّنِي فِي اللَّهِ فَأَنَا أَوْلَى بِاللَّهِ، أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ مَنْ يُحَاجِّنِي فِي آدَمَ فَأَنَا أَوْلَى بِآدَمَ، أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ مَنْ يُحَاجِّنِي فِي نُوحٍ فَأَنَا أَوْلَى بِنُوحٍ، أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ مَنْ يُحَاجِّنِي فِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ فَأَنَا أَوْلَى بِإِبْرَاهِيمَ، أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ مَنْ يُحَاجِّنِي فِي مُوسَى فَأَنَا أَوْلَى بِمُوسَى، أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ مَنْ يُحَاجِّنِي فِي عِيسَى فَأَنَا أَوْلَى بِعِيسَى، أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ مَنْ يُحَاجِّنِي فِي مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَأَنَا أَوْلَى بِمُحَمَّدٍ، يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ مَنْ يُحَاجِّنِي فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ فَأَنَا أَوْلَى بِكِتَابِ اللَّهِ، ثُمَّ يَنْتَهِي إِلَى الْمَقَامِ فَيُصَلِّي رُكْعَتَيْنِ وَ يَنْشُدُ اللَّهَ حَقَّهُ.

It is as if I can visualise the Qaim (a.t.f.s.) with his back reclined against Hajare-Aswad and swearing in Allah's Name:

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+ O People! Whoever argues with me with regard to proximity to Allah, then he must know that I am closer to Allah (than him). If someone competes with me with regards to Adam then I am closer to Adam.

+ O People! If someone competes with me with regards to Nuh then I am closer to Nuh.

+ O People! If someone competes with me with regards to Ibrahim then I am closer to Ibrahim.

+ O People! If someone competes with me with regards to Moosa then I am closer to Moosa.

+ O People! If someone competes with me with regards to Isa then I am closer to Isa.

+ O People! If someone competes with me with regards to Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) then I am closer to Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.a.).

+ O People! If someone competes with me with regards to the Book of Allah then I am closer to Book of Allah. Thereafter, he (a.t.f.s.) will come to the Maqam-e-Ibrahim, perform two rakats prayer and praise Allah as is His right.

### **The Fifth Word**

The fifth thing that Imam (a.s.) will elucidate is that he is the manifestation of all the past prophets. Mufazzal relates from Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.):

"Qaim (a.s.) will rest his back against the wall of Kaaba and say:

+ If anyone wants to see Adam and Sheeth then I am Adam and Sheeth.

+ If anyone wants to see Nuh and Saam then I am Nuh and Saam.

+ Whoever wants to see Ibrahim and Ismail then I am Ibrahim and Ismail.

+ Whoever wants to see Moosa and Yusha' then I am Moosa and Yusha'(a.s.)

+ Whoever wants to see Isa and Sham'un then I am Isa and Sham'un.

+ Whoever wants to see Muhammad and Ali, then I am Muhammad and Ali.

+ Whoever wants to see Hasan and Husain, then I am Hasan and Husain.

+ Whoever wants to see Imams from the offspring of Husain then I personify the Imams who descended from Husain..... Listen to me so that I can tell you about those things which you have heard and also those which you have not."

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All the noble traits and characteristics that distinguished the past prophets shall accumulate in the holy persona of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.).

As a poet said: 'Had the merits and excellences of all the men drawn together Then they shall integrate in thy holy self alone.'

Imam will raise the standard of Tauheed like Ibrahim, he will embody the steadfastness and sacrifice of Ismail. He will be awe-inspiring and dignified like Moosa. His exemplary conduct and cordial nature will be like his own great grandfather, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.). Imam's (a.t.f.s.) bravery, magnanimity, knowledge and forbearance will remind people of his grandfather, Imam Ali (a.s.). Imam (a.t.f.s.) will also be the elucidator of Imam Hasan's (a.s.) truce and the avenger of the sacred blood of Imam Husain (a.s.).

### **The Sixth Word**

There is a consensus between the Shias and Sunnis over the sixth word that Imam (a.t.f.s.) will utter on the day of his reappearance. Imam (a.t.f.s.) will reappear in Mecca after Namaz-e-Isha. He (a.t.f.s.) will be carrying the standard of Islam and wield the sword of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.). He will be dressed in the attire of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.). In addition to these, all other signs and evidence related to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) will be present in him. After concluding Namaz-e-Isha, he will speak aloud in his pleasant voice:

+ People! Recall the day when you all will be summoned to your Lord for accounts of your deeds.

+ People! (Don't you remember) numerous prophets had come to you and delivered the Message of Allah.

+ I warn you all against associating partners with Allah. I urge you to follow the divine command in its entirety and obey the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.).

+ Accept whatever the Holy Quran has ordained for you and refrain from what it has prohibited you.

+ Support guidance and assist piety.

+ The world is on its way to destruction and total annihilation.

+ I exhort all of you to worship Allah, obey the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and follow the Holy Quran, revive the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and eradicate falsehood.

At this juncture, the 313 faithful supporters will rise for Imam's (a.t.f.s.) assistance. These men will be worshippers at night and brave warriors during the day.

## Hazrat Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) In Hadise Qudsi

Like the verses of Holy Quran, Hadise Qudsi is also the divine word. However, there are few factors that separate the two:

- 1) The Holy Quran was revealed as a miracle, while Hadise Qudsi was not.
- 2) The words and concepts in the Holy Quran are that of Allah, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) merely conveyed the same to the nation with care and precision. While in Hadise Qudsi, the concept is that of Allah, however, the words and expressions belong to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.).
- 3) In namaz, during Qirat, only the chapters from the Holy Quran can be recited

(Derayatul Hadis, Kazim Mudir Shaanechi, pg. 13)

Hadise Qudsi is divine word. Shias and Sunnis have written entire books on Hadise Qudsi, focussing only on divine concepts delivered in prophetic speech. Two books that deserve a mention in this regard are that of Shaikhul Muhaddeseen, Muhammad b. Hasan Ali Husain Al Hurre Aameli (the author of Waasaelush Shia) who has written Al-Jawaherus Saniyya fil Ahaadisil Qudsiyya and Sayed Hasan Shirazi who has compiled Kalimatullah.

### **Importance of belief in Mahdaviyyat**

Apart from the Quran and traditions, Hazrat Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) has been elaborately mentioned in Hadise Qudsi as well. The previous divine books like Torah, Zaboor and other scriptures have mentioned that the earth will never be devoid of a divine proof. The past prophets had clearly indicated that the series of divine succession and guidance would continue till the Day of Judgment.

### **Hazrat Adam (a.s.)**

Hazrat Adam (a.s.) was the first prophet on this earth. When he reached the final stages of his life, Allah sent a revelation to him:

'O Adam, I have completed your term. Whatever knowledge you have like faith, the Great Name and other signs of prophethood, bequeath them to your progeny through Hebatullah (Janabe Sheeth, son of Adam) because I will not suspend this link from your offspring and shall continue it till the Day of Judgment. I shall never leave the earth without a prophet, i.e. a scholar, through whom My Religion will be recognised and the importance of my obedience will be known.'

(Al-Jawaherus Saniyya, pg. 10-11 and 14)

The same concept is also advocated in Hadise Qudsi revealed on Hazrat Nuh (a.s.), which for the sake of brevity we have not related over here.

### **Importance of recognition of Imam of the time**

Many a times there are problems in a man's life, which do not get resolved, except through prayers. However, for our prayers to reach the level of divine acceptance, they have to first reach an exalted station. And only those prayers reach the exalted station that are routed through a channel assigned by Allah. The Prophet or Imam of the time is the channel/door designated by Allah. In order to reach Allah, you have to supplicate through the Prophet/Imam. In today's age, Hazrat Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) is the Imam appointed by Allah and prayers addressed through his medium are worthy of divine acceptance.

Hazrat Moosa (a.s.) passed by a man who was busy in supplications with his hands raised towards the sky. After a week, when Hazrat Moosa (a.s.) happened to pass that way again, he saw the man in the same position engrossed in supplications.

Moved at the plight of the man, Hazrat Moosa (a.s.) inquired from Allah as to why the man had been beseeching Him for seven days without any apparent signs of acceptance. Allah revealed to Hazrat Moosa (a.s.):

'O Moosa! If he prays so much that both his hands fall off or both his hands and tongue cease to function, even then I will not accept his prayers until such a time that he enters through the door that I had ordained for him.'

(Al-Jawaherul Saniyya, pg. 59)

At that time, Hazrat Moosa (a.s.) was the Door of Allah and in the present era it is none other than Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.).

### **The calibre of guidance and deviation**

Allah addressed Hazrat Moosa (a.s.) in one of the revelations:

'O Moosa! Make me the beloved of my creatures and let the creatures become My loved ones.' Hazrat Moosa (a.s.) inquired: 'How do I fulfill this responsibility?' Allah replied: 'By making a mention of My Bounties, Blessings and Mercies you can make Me their beloved. If someone has gone away from Me or got deviated from My Path; and you bring him back to Me, then it will be better than year-long worship and fasting.' Hazrat Moosa (a.s.) asked: 'Who is this servant of Yours who has drifted from you?' Allah said: 'A sinner and obstinate servant of mine.' Hazrat Moosa (a.s.) persisted: 'Who has gone astray? Who has become stubborn?' Allah revealed: 'The one who is unaware of his times and does not even recognise the Imam of his time. Whoever is

ignorant of his hidden Imam, you should introduce the hidden Imam to him. Whoever does not know his religion and Shariat (religious code), you should teach him the principles of religion and Shariat. You should educate them about such things that they worship their Lord and seek His Pleasure.'

(Ibid pg. 64-65)

Try to imagine this - Hazrat Moosa (a.s.) is an Ulul Azm Prophet and the Kalimullah. Quranic verses are replete with references to him. Allah commands him to introduce the hidden Imam to the people and help them fulfilling their religious responsibilities. Should he do this, it would be better for him than worship and fasting for an entire year.

Likewise, introduction of Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) to just one man who is unaware of him, can become superior to year-long worship and fasting. Our foremost duty in these times is to introduce our hidden Imam to the people, who are unaware of him, and make them conscious of their religious responsibilities.

### **Hadise Lauh**

It is a narration whose authenticity is beyond doubt and has been related by noted scholars in their books and compilations. The list of these reputed authors is long. They are all highly venerated in the Shiite world. They include Shaikh Yaqub Kulaini in his magnum opus - 'Usule Kafi', vol. 1 pg. 527, Shaikh Saduq in 'Kamaluddin', pg. 64, Shaikh Tusi in 'al-Ghaibat', pg. 145, Shaikh Tabarsi in 'Ehtejaaj' vol. 1 pg. 85 and Ibn Shahre Aashob in 'al-Manaqib' vol. 1 pg. 255, Shaikh Hurre Ameli in 'al-Jawaherul Saniyya', Allama Majlisi in 'Behaarul Anwaar'.

This tradition was related by Abu Basir, Ishaq b. Ammar and Muhammad b. Sinan from Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) who quoted his father, Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.). Since the tradition is very important we have mentioned it here. In view of brevity we will skip the original text and reproduce only the translation. The original text can be referred to from the above-mentioned books.

### **The backdrop**

Abdul Rehman b. Saalim narrated from Abu Basir who reported from Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) that his father Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) told him: .

"One day my father told Jabir b... Abdillah Ansari - 'I have some work with you tell me when you can spare time so that I can ask you something.' Jabir replied, 'Whenever you say I can be at your service.' Thus at a mutually convenient time both of them met. My father told him. 'O Jabir, tell me about the Lauh (a tablet like the biblical tablets of Moosa (a.s.) that contained the

inscription of Ten Commandments) which you saw in the hands of my grandmother, Hazrat Fatema (s.a.). And what did she tell you about the text which was inscribed on the Lauh?'

Jabir replied: 'I make Allah my witness and say - in the lifetime of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) when I visited the house of Hazrat Fatema (s.a.) to congratulate her on the birth of Imam Husain (a.s.). She was carrying a green-coloured tablet in her hand. It seemed to be made of expensive pearls and the inscription seemed to be emblazoned with a silvery hue of sunlight. I asked her - O daughter of the Messenger, may my parents be sacrificed on you what tablet is this?'

Hazrat Fatema (s.a.) informed: 'It's a tablet which the Almighty has gifted to His Messenger. This tablet has the names of my father, my husband, my children and the names of the successors of my children. My father has gifted this tablet to me as a souvenir.'

Jabir continued his narration to Imam Baqir (a.s.),

'Your grandmother (s.a.) handed over the tablet to me, I read it and copied

My father (a.s.) asked Jabir, 'Can you show me the copy of the text that you reproduced?' Jabir said, 'Why not! I can definitely show it to you.' Then my father accompanied Jabir to his house. Jabir showed him a scripture made up of a thin hide. My father: 'You look at your copy while I read it out (from memory).'

As Jabir referred to his own handwritten text, my father continued reading the contents of the Lauh (from his memory). There was not the difference of even a single word or a punctuation mark. When Imam finished his narration.

Jabir said, 'I take Allah as my witness and affirm that I had seen exactly the same inscription in the tablet (as narrated by you).'

### **The original text of the Lauh**

The translation of the Lauh's contents is reproduced below:

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. This passage is from Allah, the Almighty and the Wise for Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) who is His Prophet, His Light, His Messenger, His Veil and His Evidence. Jibraeel has brought this Lauh from the Lord of the Worlds. O Muhammad! Venerate my (holy) names. Express gratitude for My Bounties and do not be ungrateful. Verily, I am Allah and there is no God other than Me. I destroy the unjust transgressors and accord respect to the oppressed. Whoever will disregard My Boundless Grace, expect from others and fear others instead of My Justice, then I will inflict such a chastisement on him that none would have faced such a punishment in the worlds. Then worship Me alone and rely solely on Me. I have not sent

any prophet but when his tenure was concluded I continued the series of succession for him. I held you superior over all the prophets and made your successor (Ali) better than the successors of prophets. I granted you respect through your two grandsons - Hasan and Husain. Then after his father's tenure was over, I made Hasan as the treasure of My Knowledge. And I made Husain as the wealth of My Revelations and enhanced his prestige and greatness through martyrdom. Nobility was perfected on him. Among the martyrs he is the greatest and his grade is the highest. I made him My Perfect and Complete Word and with him is My Complete Proof. Through his respect will I reward and through him will I inflict my punishment. The foremost among them is Ali, the chief of worshippers, the adornment of all My Past Friends. His son resembles his grandfather, Muhammad, the disseminator of My Knowledge and the Fountain of My Wisdom. Those who will doubt Jafar will be doomed to perdition. Rejection of his word is tantamount to rejection of My Word. I make it evidently clear that I will revere the position of Jafar. Certainly and with absolute conviction, I will bestow unabated delight and pleasure on his Shias, friends, aides and those who have affinity towards him. And when darkness will rise and aggravate, then I will nominate Moosa. My Chain of religious duties will not terminate and My Proof will not be concealed. Surely My Friends will be satiated. And whoever will deny even a single one among them would deny My Bounties. And whoever tampered with a single verse in My Book then he has forged a lie against Me. Moosa, who is My Servant, My Beloved and My Chosen One, will be followed by Ali. And whoever doubted him will face the punishment of hell. He is My Friend and My Helper whose responsibilities are similar to prophethood. Through him I will examine severely. He will be assassinated by a haughty man. He will be buried, in the city founded by My: Virtuous Servant, next to my worst creature. I pledge that after his sons, I will please him through his successor and inheritor of knowledge, Muhammad, who will be the treasure of knowledge, My Confidante and My Proof on My Creation. Whoever will believe in Muhammad will reach heaven, and from his family I will be considerate towards at least seventy of his family members who will be entitled to go to hell. Nobility will conclude with his son, Ali, who is My Friend and My Helper, a witness on My Creation and trustee of My Revelations. From his person will rise a caller towards My Path and treasure of My Knowledge - Hasan. The series will be completed through his son Meem, Ha, Meem, Daal, who will be the Mercy for the Universe. He will have perfection of Moosa, magnificence of Isa and patience of Ayyub. During the era of his occultation, My Friends will be humiliated - their severed heads will be gifted in the similar manner as the heads of Turk and Daylam were presented. They will be slaughtered, set ablaze, threatened, subjugated, harassed; the earth will be coloured with their blood, their womenfolk will wail and weep. These are my genuine friends, through them will I eliminate the dark troubles, hardships and calamities, and through them will I lighten the burden and grant freedom. Certainly, their Lord will shower blessings and mercy on them and only these people are truly guided.' Abdul Rehman b. Saalim quoted Abu Basir - in your entire

lifetime if you have not heard of any tradition except this one, then' even this tradition is sufficient for you; so don't convey it to the undeserving ones.

### A few important points

Each and every word of this tradition is thought-provoking. It commands our rapt attention and demands an explanation for the concepts espoused by it. For the sake of brevity, we will focus only on the key concepts:

- 1) This tradition is revealed from the Almighty to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) as a gift.
- 2) The sender of the gift is a Possessor of Might and Wisdom.
- 3) The receiver of the gift is His Prophet, His Light, His Messenger, His Veil and Proof.
- 4) In this tradition, Allah has used the word light for the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and in the 35th verse of Sura Noor , He declares **يَهْدِي اللَّهُ لِنُورِهِ مَن يَشَاءُ** 'Allah guides to His light whom He pleases.' In other words, to whoever Allah wishes to guide, then He gives him the recognition of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.).
- 5) A holy and trustworthy angel like Jibraeel has communicated this tradition.
- 6) This tradition descended on the occasion of the birth of Imam Husain (a.s.).
- 7) The series of Imamatus will continue in the progeny of Imam Husain (a.s.).
- 8) Such a divine gift on the occasion of Imam Husain's (a.s.) birth highlights his noble position.
- 9) The tradition mentions the perfect chain of guidance.
- 10) The tradition not only enumerates the names of the Imams (a.s.), but also indicates the circumstances during their times.
- 11) People will be rewarded or punished based on their acceptance or rejection of the Ahlul Bait (a.s.).
- 12) This tradition also mentions the characteristics and traits of Imams (a.s.). The companions of two Imams (a.s.) have found special mention in this tradition. Firstly, Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) about whom it is said:

**حَقَّ الْقَوْلُ مِنِّي لَأَكْرَمَنَّ مَتْوَى جَعْفَرَ وَلَا سِرَّنَهْ فِي أَشْيَاعِهِمْ وَأَنْصَارِهِمْ وَأَوْلِيَانِهِمْ.**

'I will revere the position of Jafar. Certainly and with absolute conviction, I will bestow unabated delight and pleasure on his Shias, friends, aides and those who have affinity towards him.'

Over here, the exalted status of the Shias, friends and helpers of Imam Sadiq (a.s.) is very apparent.

Then we find a reference to the companions of Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.). Allah has described Imam's (a.t.f.s.) companions thus:

فَيَذُلُّ أَوْلِيَانِي فِي زَمَانِهِ وَتَتَّهَادِي رُؤُسُهُمْ كَمَا تَتَّهَادِي، رُؤُسُ وَالتُّرْكِ وَالدَّيْلَمِ فَيُقْتَلُونَ وَ يُحْرَقُونَ..... أَوْلِيَاكَ أَوْلِيَانِي حَقًّا بِهِمْ  
أَدْفَعُ كُلَّ فِتْنَةٍ عَمْبَاءَ حُنْدَسٍ وَ بِهِمْ أَكْشِفُ الزَّلَازِلَ وَ أَدْفَعُ الْأَصَارَ وَ الْأَعْلَالَ.

'During the era of his occultation, My Friends will be humiliated - their severed heads will be gifted in the similar manner as the heads of Turk and Daylam were presented. They will be slaughtered, set ablaze, threatened, subjugated, harassed; the earth will be coloured with their blood, their womenfolk will wail and weep. These are my genuine friends, through them will I eliminate the dark troubles, hardships and calamities, and through them will I lighten the burden and grant freedom. Certainly, their Lord will shower blessings and mercy on them and only these people are truly guided.'

The lofty position of Imam-e-Zamana's (a.t.f.s.) companions is evident from this praiseworthy portrayal. Allah has referred to them as His Friends. Fortunate are those who will join the ranks of the companions of Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.). Also it is clear that there is a huge difference in being steadfast on religion during Imam's (a.t.f.s.) occultation and after his reappearance. Those who will cling to the religion during occultation will be accorded a higher rank by Allah.

13) In fact, Allah has not just mentioned the companions of Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) as His Friends, but has highlighted their position further with the following words:

بِهِمْ أَدْفَعُ كُلَّ فِتْنَةٍ عَمْبَاءَ حُنْدَسٍ وَ بِهِمْ أَكْشِفُ الزَّلَازِلَ وَ أَدْفَعُ الْأَصَارَ وَ الْأَعْلَالَ.

'Through them will I eliminate the dark troubles, hardships and calamities and through them will I lighten the burden and grant freedom.'

The pronoun used over here is in the plural and not in the singular. The tradition does not say through 'him' but through 'them'. Had it been used with the singular pronoun, it could have been construed as Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.). However, since the plural pronoun has been used, it refers to the companions of Imam (a.t.f.s.). These companions are so noble, that through them Allah will solve the problems. If this is the station of the companions, one cannot even imagine the station of their master Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) in front of Allah.

14) The tradition mentions Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) as Rehmatulil Aalameen - Mercy for the Universe -

وَ أَكْمَلَ ذَلِكَ بِإِنِّهِمْ م ح م د رَحْمَةً لِلْعَالَمِينَ.

'I will complete the series through his · son Meem, Ha, Meem, Daal, as Mercy for the Universe.'

Among all the prophets, Allah had appointed the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) as the Mercy to the Universe

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ.

And We have not sent you but as a mercy to the worlds.'

(Surah Ambiya, verse 107)

To comprehend the spheres of the worlds, recite the first verse of Surah Hamd.

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الْعَالَمِينَ.

All praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds.

To whatever extent is Allah's lordship; same is the scope of the Prophet's (s.a.w.a.) mercy. Now, to understand the meaning of mercy, recite 'Bismillahir Rehmanir Rahim'. The first characteristic that Allah has mentioned for himself is Rahman - All Beneficent and Rahim - All Merciful. Traditions explain that Allah's Beneficence is confined to this world, while his Mercy envelops this world as well as the hereafter. In the chain of prophethood, Allah nominated his last Prophet (s.a.w.a.) as 'Mercy to the Worlds' and in the series of successors (Imams), He declared the last successor as Mercy to the Worlds. In lay terms, both prophethood and Imamat are in fact mercy. With the declaration of Imam-e- Zamana (a.t.f.s.) as 'Mercy to the Worlds', his privileged position in front of Allah becomes evident.

### **The covenant in Aalame Zarr**

In some of the verses of the Holy Quran and several traditions of the Ahlul Bait (a.s.) it is explained in detail that prior to our creation in this material world, Allah has created our souls in Aalame Anwaar (the world of light) and Aalame Arwaah (the world of souls) at least 2,000 years before the physical body. At the time, Allah had extracted the pledge of His Godhood, the prophethood of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and the Imamat of Ahlul Bait (a.s.) from our souls. The souls acknowledged the Godhood, prophethood and Imamat out of volition, with complete freedom of will. Subsequently, after a lapse of 2,000 years when Allah created our bodies and made our souls to inhabit in them, He reiterated the triple covenant.

When Allah created Hazrat Adam (a.s.) and brought out the entire mankind in the form of minute particles from his loins, He repeated the entire process of covenant.

In the exegesis of Surah Aaraf, verses 172-173, there are several traditions in Behaarul Anwaar vol. 5, pg. 226-275. There is such an abundance of traditions available on this topic, that they

cannot be ignored or sidelined or branded as weak and unreliable. However, since Aalame Zarr is not our topic of discussion, we will not delve too much on it. We will get to our main subject right away viz. Hadise Qudsi and Imam Mahdi's (a.t.f.s.) discussion in it.

Hazrat Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) informs,

"Allah took the covenant from His Prophets and asked, 'Am I not your Lord? Is Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) not My Prophet? Is Ali not Ameerul Momineen?' All of them affirmed in unison, 'Yes it is so.' Allah repeated the same for the Ulul Azm Prophets. He declared, 'Certainly I am your Lord, Muhammad is My Apostle and Ali is Ameerul Momineen. After him his successors will be My Ulul Amr, the treasurers of My Knowledge. And certainly through Mahdi, will I help My Religion and through him will I establish My Kingdom. Through him will I avenge My Enemies. And through him I will be worshipped, willingly or unwillingly.' All the five prophets acknowledged, 'We all testify to everything that you have said.' It was on the basis of this prompt testimony that these five prophets were elevated to the status of Ulul Azm.

(Al-Jawaherul Saniyya, pg. 169)

### **The Narrative of Ascension (حديث معراج)**

Allah invited the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) to Meraj a number of times. According to some traditions, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) made 120 excursions to the celestial world. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) gave detailed descriptions to the Muslims of what he (s.a.w.a.) witnessed in Meraj and also whatever Allah conveyed to him (s.a.w.a.) that was relevant to the nation. Following are some of the points pertaining to Imam-e- Zamana (a.t.f.s.) that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) elaborated for the Muslims.

### **A Radiant Star (كوكب نوري)**

Saalim b. Abdullah b. Umar b. Al Khattab narrated from Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) while he was in Mecca. Saalim informed Imam (a.s.) that he had heard his father Abdullah b. Umar who related from the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) that:

"When Allah took me to Meraj, He revealed to me, 'O Muhammad! Who did you designate as your caliph and successor on the earth?'" (While Allah had better knowledge about it than me.) 'I said: My brother.' 'Allah said: O Muhammad! Is it Ali b. Abi Talib?' 'I said: Certainly, my lord.' 'Allah said: O Muhammad! When I glanced at the earth, I chose you. Hence My Name is never mentioned alone, because your name will be an integral part of Mine. I am Mehmood and you are Muhammad. When I looked at the earth again, I selected Ali b. Abi Talib. I made him your successor. You are the leader of the prophets and he is the chief of successors. I desired a name for him which was actually My Name. I am A'ala and he is Ali.'

O Muhammad! I created Muhammad, Ali, Fatema, Hasan, Husain and rest of the Imams from a common light. Then I advanced their guardianship (Wilayat) to the angels whoever accepted it got elevated in stature and whoever denied was branded as a disbeliever. If any of My servants worshipped Me to such an extent that his body is reduced to pieces and in this very state meets Me on the Day of Judgment but if he does not believe in the Mastership of these holy personalities, then I will hurl him in hell.' Then Allah asked: 'O Muhammad! Would you like to see these holy personalities?' When I replied in affirmative, Allah asked me to step further. When I did that, I saw Ali b. Abi Talib, Hasan, Husain, Ali b. Husain, Muhammad b. Ali, Jafar b. Muhammad, Moosa b. Jafar, Ali b. Moosa, Muhammad b. Ali, Ali b. Muhammad, Hasan b. Ali and Hujjat Al Qaim. Among them he (Qaem) was shining like a radiant star.' I asked: 'Who are these men?' Allah informed: 'All of them are Imams... and the Qaim will declare My permissible (halaal) as permissible and My prohibited (haraam) as haraam and will avenge My enemies. O Muhammad! Befriend him and be affectionate towards him because I Myself am fond of him and will love . him who will hold him dear.

(Behaarul Anwaar, vol. 36, pg 222-223, tradition 21)

The Lights of Lights (نور الانوار)

In another tradition it is narrated:

وَالْحُجَّةُ يَتَلَّأَلُ مِنْ بَيْنِهِمْ كَأَنَّهُ كَوْكَبٌ دُرِّيٌّ.

'And Hujjat was sparkling brilliantly among them like a radiant star.'

(Al-Jawaherul Saniyya, pg. 216-217, 220)

Over here, Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) is compared to the splendour of a brilliant star.

### The halo of light

In yet another tradition, the same point is conveyed with a slightly different perspective. The initial portions of the tradition are more or less similar. After the mention of the 11 Imams (a.s.), the 12th Imam (a.t.f.s.) is described in the following manner:

.....وَالْمَهْدِيُّ فِي ضَخْصَاحٍ مِنْ نُورٍ قِيَامًا يُصَلُّونَ، وَهُوَ فِي وَسْطِهِمْ- يَعْنِي الْمَهْدِيُّ- كَأَنَّهُ كَوْكَبٌ دُرِّيٌّ فَقَالَ: يَا مُحَمَّدُ! هُوَ لَأَعْبَادِ الْحُجَجِ وَهُوَ الثَّانِي مِنْ عَثْرَتِكَ، وَ عِزَّتِي وَ جَلَالِي إِنَّهُ الْحُجَّةُ الْوَاجِبَةُ لِأَوْلِيَائِي، وَ الْمُنتَقِمُ مِنْ أَعْدَائِي.

And the Mahdi was surrounded by an aura of brilliance. All the Imams were praying namaz, while Mahdi was in the position of Qiyaam (upright position). Among the Imams he was shining brightly. Then He (Allah) said O Muhammad! These are My Proofs and he (Qaim) is the one who will avenge your progeny. I swear by My Power and Might, for My Friends he is the absolute evidence and for My enemies he is the nemesis.'

(Behaarul Anwaar, vol. 36, pg. 216-217, tradition 18)

There are several traditions of this nature highlighting the same concept. In this regard, following points are worth enumeration.

- 1) Before arriving on the earth, the Imams (a.s.) were in the celestial heavens in the form of light.
- 2) They were busy in worshipping Allah.
- 3) In the night of Meraj, Allah showed the Imams (a.s.) to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.).
- 4) From the entire creation, Allah chose the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and Hazrat Ali b. Abi Talib (a.s.) for prophethood and Imamah respectively.
- 5) Allah loved Prophet Muhammad so much that His Name will never be mentioned in isolation, whenever and wherever His Name will be mentioned; the name of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) will also be mentioned.
- 6) Allah loved Imam Ali (a.s.) so much that He gave him His own name.
- 7) The reward for worship will be on the basis of belief in the Imamah and Wilayah of these divine personalities..
- 8) Whoever will deny their mastership, none of his action will not be accepted by Allah
- 9) Imam Mahdi's (a.t.f.s.) upright position (Qiyaam) in the state of worship (at the time of Meraj) is symbolic of his universal uprising and revolution.
- 10) Among the brilliance of all Imams (a.s.), his was the most striking, which means that he had a special status. Perhaps for this reason, whenever Imam Reza (a.s.) heard the title of Al Qaim, while referring to the 12th Imam, he used to rise and place his hand on the head. He did this while he was not even born.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) is the dearest creation of Allah, he is also named Habeeb (the beloved). Allah commands his most beloved servant - O Muhammad! Befriend him and be affectionate towards him because I Myself am fond of him and will love him who will hold him dear.

11) While Quran says:

‘If you love Allah then emulate me, Allah will love you and hold you dear.’

(Surah Aale Imran, Verse 31)

If the people will follow the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) then Allah will love them and forgive their sins. If the Holy Prophet (saw.a.) loves Hazrat Wali-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.) then Allah will love him (s.a.w.a.) even more

12) Allah will avenge the progeny of the Holy Prophet (wa) through Hazrat Wall-Asr (atfs) and retaliate against His own enemies through him.

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

The martyrdom of Imam Husain is such a distressing event that it has left the whole universe in a state of gloom and misery. Some of the venerable scholars have termed Ziarat-e-Ashoora to be Hadith Qudsi. This sacred Ziarat has the following statements in it:

يَا أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ لَقَدْ عَظَمْتَ الرَّزِيَّةَ وَجَلَّتْ وَ عَظَمْتَ الْمُصِيبَةَ بِكَ عَلَيْنَا وَ عَلَى جَمِيعِ أَهْلِ الْإِسْلَامِ وَ جَلَّتْ وَ عَظَمْتَ مُصِيبَتَكَ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ عَلَى جَمِيعِ أَهْلِ السَّمَاوَاتِ.

O Abu Abdillah! Certainly the calamity that struck us is too colossal and unbearable. Your afflictions are too excruciating for us and for the entire Islamic nation. This distressing pain is devastating for the skies and all its inhabitants.'

(Ziarat-e-Ashoora)

In another Ziarat it is said:

أَشْهَدُ أَنَّ دَمَكَ سَكَنَ فِي الْخُلْدِ وَ اقْشَعَرَّتْ لَهُ أَظْلَةُ الْعَرْشِ وَ بَكَى لَهُ جَمِيعُ الْخَالِقِ وَ بَكَتْ لَهُ السَّمَاوَاتُ السَّبْعُ وَ الْأَرْضُونَ السَّبْعُ وَ مَا فِيهِنَّ وَ مَا بَيْنَهُنَّ .

I bear witness that your sacred blood was placed in heaven which shook the shadow of Arsh. The entire creation grieved and wept on it all the seven heavens wept as also the seven layers of earth. And all those who are in between the heavens and the earth wept

(Mafatihul lengan, pg 423)

The tragic martyrdom of Imam Husain (a.s.) has engulfed the whole universe in grief and every particle of the universe is pained by it. The angels were deeply affected by Imam Husain's (a.s.) killing and to date they have not recovered from the shock.

Abu Hamza Saabit b. Deenar Somali has related the following tradition from Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.).

Imam (a.s.) narrates, 'The angels screamed at the killing of Imam Husain (a.s.) and mourned him aloud and beseeched Allah, 'O our Lord and our Master, will you spare those who killed the chosen one of your chosen ones'. Then Allah revealed to the angels, 'O My Angels be patient, I

swear by My Might and Power, I shall definitely take revenge from them even if it is after a delay.'

Then Allah unveiled the holy lights of the Imams (a.s.) who were about to descend from the offspring of Imam Husain (a.s.). The angels were pleased at the sight of the Imams (a.s.). One of the Imams (a.s.) was in standing position. Allah informed, 'Through this upright one (Qaim) I will take revenge from them (killers of Imam Husain (a.s.)).'

(Al-Jawaherul Saniyya, pg. 19)

These are the phrases from Hadise Qudsi that Allah will exact the revenge of Imam Husain's (a.s.) blood through Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.). This has been explained clearly in Ziarate Ashoora. It is not out of place to reiterate that Ziarate Ashoora is regarded as Hadise Qudsi, which means that it is a divine concept expressed in the Prophet's language.

'So I supplicate Allah, the One who gave you exalted position and due to you raise my status. Then grant me so that I can avenge your blood along with the Imam, who is divinely helped and is from the Ahlul Bait of your prophet, Muhammad (s.a.w.a.)...and assist me to seek revenge for your blood along with the rightly guided Imam when he appears, proclaiming the truth from your family...  
(Ziarate Ashoora)

The significance of revenge for the blood for Imam Husain (a.s.) is of paramount importance so much so that it has been mentioned twice in Ziarate Ashoora and that too by none other than Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.). The angels were placated only after they learnt that an Imam from the offspring of Imam Husain (a.s.) would retaliate for the injustices meted out to him.

May Allah grant us the opportunity to avenge the blood of Imam Husain (a.s.) under the guidance of Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.).

### **Final stage of purpose of creation**

Allah created man, with the sole purpose of His Worship and Recognition. But never except for a brief period when Hazrat Adam (when he and Hazrat Hawwa were the only humans on earth) Allah was worshipped as He ought to be worshipped. Apart from that short period, people have always associated partners with Allah (i.e. they committed Shirk). So the main purpose of creation - divine worship and recognition is yet to be achieved. This all-important objective will be realised only after the reappearance of Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.).

Let us see what Allah and His Messenger (s.a.w.a.) have to say about the purpose of creation. An interesting dialogue between Allah and the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) transpired during Meraj at the highest point - Sidratul Muntaha, after the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) had transcended the seventh heaven. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) had surpassed even the 'Veil of Light'.

The very occasion, backdrop and venue of the dialogue will give us an insight into the importance of the subject. It is such a position where neither a prophet or nor the most venerable of angels could access. The conversation is between Allah, the Creator of the whole universe and Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.a.), the person for whom the universe came into existence. The topic of conversation is prophethood, Hazrat Ali (a.s.), his descendants and the mastership of Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.). It indicates that for Allah, Wilayat is the most important subject, particularly the Imamate of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.).

Asbagh b. Nubata related from Ibn Abbas who quoted from the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.):

"When I went to Meraj, I crossed the seventh sky and reached Sidratul Muntaha. Then I stepped into the Veil of Light where my Lord told me:

'O Muhammad! You are My servant and I am your Lord. So be sincere and humble to Me and worship Me alone. Also trust Me alone. I am pleased with the fact that you are My slave, My beloved and My apostle. I am also pleased that your brother Ali is your caliph and confidante. He is My proof on the servants and Imam of My creation. Through him My friends and foes will be distinguished. And through him will My followers gain dominance over the party of Satan. Through him My religion will be established, precepts of faith disseminated and My laws will be protected. It is because of you, him and Imams in his progeny that I am Merciful to My creatures. Through your Qaim will I spread My glorification (سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ) slogan of unity (لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ), word of purification (سَبُّوحٌ قُدُّوسٌ), word of greatness (اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ) and hymns of veneration (الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ) on the earth.'

'And through him will I cleanse the earth from My enemies and make My friends inherit it. And through him will I disgrace the apostates and ensure that My word dominates. And through him will I revive My servants and cities. And through him will I uncover My treasures and invaluable. And through him will I reveal the secrets and manifest the thoughts of people.' 'To establish My command and proclaim My religion, I will assist him through my angels. He is My real friend and the genuine Mahdi for My Servants.'

(Al-Jawaherul Saniyya, pg. 184, Behaarul Anwaar, vol. 51, pg 66, tradition 3)

The tradition clearly specifies that the divine purpose of sending numerable prophets, their successors, divine scriptures and Shariat (religious code) will be fulfilled only with the reappearance of Hazrat Wali-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.). In light of this reality, isn't it time that we pray sincerely for the earliest reappearance of our beloved Imam and Master of the Era - Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.)?

### **Imam – e – Zaman (a.s.) And Shaikh-e-Mufeed (r.a.)**

If we turn the pages of history, we will find numerous examples of personalities who have enlivened Islam through their sacrifices of life and wealth. One such personality is Abu Abdullah Muhammad Haaris Akbari famous as Shaikh Mufeed (r.a.). Mufeed implies the one who benefits others. He was born approximately seven years after the commencement of Ghaibat-e-Kubra in the month of Zilqad, 336 A.H. in the north of Baghdad.

Shaikh Mufeed (r.a.) with the help of his vast knowledge passed through various difficulties and welcomed all the obstacles that came his way with a smile. He sipped real recognition from the ocean of Wilayat and quenched the thirst of the followers of Wilayat. He was attached to the infallible Imam (a.s.) and the Shias benefited immensely from him. This man of medium height and wheatish complexion had a ready solution for problems of a religious, ethical and social nature. It is because of this that he had become a thorn in the eyes of his opponents. At the age of 40 years, he shouldered the great responsibility of defending the Shiite creed. It was an era when Greek and Hindu philosophies were rupturing the fabric of traditional Islam. Twisted beliefs and concocted views were finding their way into the realm of Islam. The enemies of Allah had prepared the groundwork to extinguish the light of truth. In such a situation, how could the one who was given the title of 'Mufeed' by Imam Zamana (a.t.f.s.) and who was the fifth descendant of Janabe Saeed b. Jubair (a companion of Imam Baqir (a.s.)) sit quiet while ignorance and deviation were raising their heads and corrupt beliefs and views were gaining ascendancy as were the Sufis seated in their shelters (Khaneqaa)? Expectedly, he lived up to his title 'Mufeed' and with the help of Allah and His Proof (Hujjat) he laid low the false, corrupt beliefs and nonsensical philosophies through his penetrative writings, teachings and training of students for debates.

He rescued the people from deviation and invited them towards the religion of Allah which was manifested through the teachings of Ahlul Bait (a.s.). In this manner many deviated sects received guidance. May be this was the reason why Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) called him 'Mufeed' as he was a helper for Imam (a.t.f.s.) and a source of joy for people.

The above possibility is proved through various Tawqees (signed letters) from

Imam (a.t.f.s.) to Shaikh Mufeed (r.a.). . But have we ever pondered why Imam

(a.t.f.s.) referred to him by the title 'Mufeed? Why he received so many letters from Imam (a.t.f.s.)? Why Imam (a.t.f.s.) in his letter remembers Shaikh Mufeed (r.a.) respectfully and calls him as his 'sincere friend'?

The answers to these questions manifest for us the remarkable personality of Shaikh Mufeed (r.a.).

The respect of Imam (a.t.f.s.) for Shaikh Mufeed (r.a.) was the result of his memorable services for which he surrendered his entire existence. For the satisfaction of the Imam of his time, he willingly accepted all the difficulties so as to be enumerated among his (a.t.f.s.) servants. He was engulfed in his love for Imam (a.t.f.s.) in such a way that the flames of this attachment killed his desire for the world and its allurements.

In the eyes of Shaikh Mufeed (r.a.), everything paled in significance to Allah and His Proof (a.t.f.s.). His heart was a dwelling of the love and remembrance of Imam (a.t.f.s.); it did not have any place for worldly desires. He considered all his small and big works, his behaviour (ethics) and speech as the scale of love and satisfaction of Imam Zamana (a.t.f.s.). He never desired anything other than this. All his efforts and services were for the satisfaction of Imam of the time and for propagating the beliefs of religion to the Shias with weak faith. His life was based on the saying of Imam Sadiq (a.s.):

"Our scholars are an obstacle for Shaitan to reach the weak and helpless Shias. Know that whoever rises from our Shias for this is better than a Mujahid who fights in difficult conditions against the enemies. A Mujahid (only) protects the physical boundaries of people but they (scholars) protect the religion."

With his untiring efforts in the path of Imam Zamana (a.t.f.s.), Shaikh Mufeed (r.a.) merits inclusion among Allah's best creatures. We find in traditions:

'The best and most superior of all people after us are those who enliven our affairs and invite people towards our remembrance.'

This is the reason that Imam (a.t.f.s.) holds him in such high esteem and lauds his efforts.

Imam (a.t.f.s.) in his first letter to Shaikh Mufeed (r.a.) addresses him:

'This letter is for my brother and friend Abu Abdullah Mohammed b. Noman (Shaikh Mufeed) - May Allah keep him respected - May Allah's Peace be on you, you have adorned yourself with our friendship through sincerity and love and have preceded the rest in faith and belief... We are thankful to Allah for the bounties of your existence. And pray to Allah that He sends his mercy on our Master Hazrat Muhammad b. Abdillah (s.a.w.a.) and his Ahlul Bait (a.s.). For helping the truth and striving to help our friends, Allah has rewarded you and has given us permission to correspond with you.' .. 'It is your responsibility that you convey our message and commands to our Shias - May Allah give them taufeeg of His Obedience and safeguard them in His Religion...' In the last Tawqi, Imam (a.t.f.s.) wrote: 'Know that your actions should be such which bring you closer to us and refrain from sins that are a cause of our dissatisfaction. O Shaikh Mufeed! May Allah inspire you with success and guidance through the unseen.'

(Ehtejaaj, vol. 2, pg. 597, Behaarul Anwaar, vol. 53, Pg. 175)

The Tawqis which have been addressed to Shaikh Mufeed (r.a.) by Imam (a.s.) have been compiled by scholars in their books viz. Shaikh Tabarsi (r.a.) in Ehtejaaj, Qazi Nurullah Shustari (r.a.) in Majaalisul Momineen, Allamah Sayyed Bahrul Uloom (r.a.) in Rejaal, Sayyed Muhammed Baqir Khunsari (r.a.) in Rauzaatul Jannaat, Allamah Majlisi (r.a.) in Behaarul Anwaar, Allamah Muhaddisse Noori (r.a.) in Mustadrakil Wasaail and Shaikh Abdullah Maamqaani (r.a.) in Tanqeehul Maqaal and Mirza Muhammed Tankaabuni (r.a.) in Qasasul Ulamaa.

Mirza Muhammed Tankaabuni (r.a.) has recorded a Tawqi which is based on a strange incident. Over here we have extracted only the relevant portion from the incident. Marhum Tankaabuni narrates, "A person from the suburbs of Baghdad approached Shaikh Mufeed (r.a.) to seek the solution of a vexing problem. He asked, "A pregnant woman has expired but her child is alive in the womb, what do you say? Should the foetus be removed through surgery or be buried along with the woman?"

Shaikh Mufeed (r.a.) replied, "Bury the mother along with the foetus." On getting the reply, the man left for his village. On the way, a horse rider crossed his path. He asked the man to halt and said, 'Shaikh Mufeed (r.a.) has said that the foetus should be removed from the womb through surgery and then the woman be buried alone."

The person accepted it and acted on it.

After some time, the man came to Baghdad and narrated the incident to Shaikh Mufeed (r.a.). Shaikh Mufeed (r.a.) said, 'I did not send anybody with this edict. It seems that the person was Imam-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.) (who gave the edict)'. Shaikh Mufeed (r.a.) says, "After this (wrong edict) I am not capable of giving edicts and undertaking the responsibility of Marjaeyyat. After that day I closed the doors of my house and told the people to no longer seek solutions of their problems from me. It was not long before I received a letter from Imam (a.t.f.s.) in which he (a.t.f.s.) wrote:

"You give edicts, we will save you from mistakes and errors. We will not desert you to commit mistakes.""

In this manner, Shaikh Mufeed (r.a.) by the order of Imam (a.t.f.s.) shouldered the responsibility of Marjaeyyat and recommenced solving the problems of the people.

At the end we can only beseech our beloved Imam - O son of Prophet! O son of Zahra! We lack the spirituality of Shaikh Mufeed (r.a.). We do not love you with the same intensity. On the

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contrary, we are immersed in sins from head to toe. Help us to love you. O our Master! Help us, look at us, to enable us to walk on the Straight Path.

O Allah! For the sake of Muhammed and his progeny (a.s.), hasten the reappearance of the last inheritor of religion (a.t.f.s.). Aameen!

## Awaiting – Importance And Prerequisites

### **(1) Awaiting (Intezaar) is obligatory:**

Every religious action is accompanied by some conditions in order for it to be accepted by Allah. These conditions are related to the one who is performing that action. The word 'Deen' refers to these very actions and it implies the rightful religion that is according to the satisfaction of Allah (viz. Islam). In the light of a tradition of Ameerul Momineen (a.s), only good actions performed by a religious person shall be accepted by Allah. In other words, good actions performed by those who are not on the 'true religion' will not be accepted. He (a.s) says

أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ! دِينَكُمْ! دِينَكُمْ! تَمَسَّكُوا بِهِ لَا يَزِيلَنَّكُمْ أَحَدٌ عَنْهُ لِأَنَّ السَّيِّئَةَ فِيهِ خَيْرٌ مِنَ الْحَسَنَةِ فِي غَيْرِهِ لِأَنَّ السَّيِّئَةَ فِيهِ تُغْفَرُ وَ  
الْحَسَنَةُ فِي غَيْرِهِ لَا تُقْبَلُ.

'O people! Protect your religion. Protect your religion. Be attached to it. And be careful that no one should turn you away from it. Committing bad deeds while being on the right religion is better than the performing good deeds while following a false religion. Because the sins of the one who follows the true religion will be forgiven, but the good deeds of the one religion shall not be accepted. (Maanil Akhbaar, pg. 185, 186)

Thus, it is very important for us to recognise the true and correct religion since it is a pre-requisite for the acceptance of our actions. This matter can only be clear and evident for a person if he refers to the sayings of Ahlul Bait (a.s). Once a person approached Imam Baqir (a.s) while he had a letter in his hand. Before he could say anything, Imam (a.s) informed him:

هَذِهِ صَحِيفَةٌ مَخَاصِمٍ يَسْأَلُ عَنِ الدِّينِ الَّذِي يُقْبَلُ الْعَمَلُ

"This letter (which you are carrying) is from (our) adversary who wants to know about that religion through which deeds shall be accepted.' The man replied May Allah have mercy on you. I have come to ask you this very question'. Imam (a.s.) replied

شَهَادَةٌ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا صَ عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَتَقَرَّرَ بِمَا جَاءَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَالْوَلَايَةُ لَنَا أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَالْإِبْرَاءَةُ مِنْ عَدُوِّنَا وَالتَّسَلُّيمُ لِأَمْرِنَا وَالْوَرَعُ وَالتَّوَضُّعُ وَالتَّوَضُّعُ قَائِمِينَ فَإِن لَنَا دَوْلَةً إِذَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ جَاءَ بِهَا.

(Religion implies) To bear witness that there is no god except Allah, Who is One and Unique and He has no partner and that Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) is His servant and His messenger and to accept all that he (s.a.w.a.) has brought from the side of Allah and to accept our Wilayat (mastership) and to love us while at the same time to bear enmity with our enemies, to submit to our commands and to act with piety and modesty and to await the reappearance of our Qaim (a.t.f.s.). For certainly our government shall be established when He wishes.

(Usul-e-Kafi - Kitabul Imaan wal Kufr, Chapter of "Pillars of Islam", tradition 13)

In the light of this tradition, awaiting the reappearance of Imam Zamana (a.t.f.s.) is among the pillars of faith and the reason for our religion being accepted by Allah. A similar tradition from Imam Sadiq (a.s.) can be found in the book 'Ghaibat-e-Nomani'; Chapter 11, tradition 16.

Thus Allah shall not accept any religious action unless it is accompanied with awaiting for the 'Promised Mahdi'. Here "acceptance of an action" implies "to receive the reward promised for that action and to gain proximity to Allah." Only that action is worthy of a reward, which is performed along with all the relevant conditions. Else all the efforts expended in its performance will be futile. Of course, if Allah wishes, then out of His Boundless Mercy and Grace, He will accept the acts of worship even if some of the conditions are not fulfilled. Of course, that is a different matter altogether.

But the promise of Allah clearly stipulates the fulfilment of all these conditions.

### **(2) The necessity of awaiting for Imam Zamana (a.t.f.s):**

Numerous traditions of the infallible guides (a.s.) have introduced Qaim-e-Aal-e-Muhammad - awaiting for whom is included among the fundamentals of religion. For example, Imam Muhammad Taqi (a.s.) says in a tradition

إِنَّ الْقَائِمَ مِنَّا هُوَ الْمَهْدِيُّ الَّذِي يُجِبُّ أَنْ يُنْتَظَرَ فِي عَيْبَتِهِ.

'Certainly, our Qaim is that (very) Mahdi whose awaiting is obligatory during his occultation.'

(Kamaluddin, vol. 2, pg. 377, chap. 36 tradition 1)

The above tradition contains the word 'obligatory' and it indicates the fact that during occultation it is the duty of every Shia to familiarise himself with the characteristics of awaiting the Imam. Any individual who wishes to worship Allah will certainly not take this matter lightly. A question that comes to mind is, 'Can awaiting the Imam (a.t.f.s.) be classified as a voluntary act? Is it principally right to classify it as an obligatory act?'

The reply to this question lies in the fact that the one who finds the sentiment of · awaiting within him will surely testify that this condition can never be found in an individual without the fulfilment of certain pre-requisites. And if all the 'essentials' - in their complete form - are found in the initial stages within a person, then it gives rise to the feeling of awaiting and there is no need for any external influence or inspiration. Thus awaiting for the Imam is unlike other voluntary acts - like eating and drinking - for which we can give an order. So if someone desires to inculcate the feeling of awaiting within himself, then it is necessary for him to pay attention to the pre-requisites and essentials of awaiting.

It should be kept in mind that like all other conditions there are varying intensities and levels in awaiting the Imam. Every level of awaiting has its own set of demands and pre-requisites. The lowest level of awaiting is to believe in the occurrence of the event, i.e. reappearance of Imam (a.t.f.s.). The intensity of the awaiting depends upon this fact. The more certain one is of the event, the stronger will be the awaiting. Some of the pre-requisites to cultivate and develop the feeling of awaiting are as follows:

**(a) Conviction:**

A person should firmly believe in the person that he is awaiting and should not have even an iota of doubt or reservation concerning him in his mind. The stronger is his conviction, the greater will be the feeling of awaiting in his heart.

**(b) To consider it near:**

The awaiting one (muntazir) should always feel that the reappearance is near and imminent. For, if a person is certain about a matter but considers it to be a remote possibility, then the intensity of his wait will be feeble. On the other hand, if he is convinced and confident about the nearness of the event, then his awaiting will be that much more intense.

**(c) To love it:**

If we are certain that a particular thing is bound to occur and we are also conscious that its occurrence is very near, yet if we are not inclined towards it nor do we have any special affection towards it, then obviously we would never want that event or thing to draw near. On the other hand, when we hear about the arrival of a very dear and beloved friend, then the feeling of awaiting becomes more intense and powerful.

**(d) Preparedness:**

The more prepared we are for a particular event the more acute is our anticipation for its advent. For instance, if a student has studied hard and has put in lot of effort, then certainly he will look forward to his exams and will also be restless for the results; for he is sure that he will be successful. Likewise, the family of a bride look forward to welcoming the guests for the marriage only after they have made thorough preparations for the occasion. The family members are unlikely to look forward to receiving the guests while the preparation of the stage, food, decorations are incomplete.

The aforementioned four conditions and pre-requisites are essential while awaiting the reappearance of Imam Zamana (a.t.f.s.).

### **1. To have a firm belief in his (a.s.) reappearance:**

The more an individual inculcates the knowledge and certainty concerning the reappearance of Imam Zamana (a.t.f.s.) within himself, the more intensely will he await the reappearance of Imam (a.t.f.s.). But if - God forbid - any doubt arises in his mind concerning the reappearance of Imam (a.t.f.s.), then not only will this weaken his belief, but even the intensity of his awaiting will diminish and fade away. It is also possible that excessive doubts concerning Imam Zamana (a.t.f.s.) may lead him into the sphere of disbelief. Both Shia and Sunni scholars have narrated a tradition from Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) pointing towards this fact wherein he (s.a.w.a) declares

مَنْ أَنْكَرَ خُرُوجَ الْمَهْدِيِّ فَقَدْ كَفَرَ.

'The one who denies the reappearance of Mahdi, then he has indeed disbelieved'

### **2. To consider the reappearance of Imam (a.s.) to be near:**

It is possible that one may not deny the reappearance of Imam Zamana (a.t.f.s.), but he may consider it to be a distant event and does not believe that it can occur in the near future. Such a thought will make his belief weak and lethargic. On the other hand, if he considers the reappearance of Imam (a.t.f.s.) to be imminent then his awaiting will be intense and firm. As we read in Dua Ahad

إِنَّهُمْ يَرَوْنَهُ بَعِيدًا وَنَرَاهُ قَرِيبًا.

'They (the polytheists) consider it (reappearance) to be far, while we consider it to be near.'

Hence this belief will by itself increase the level of awaiting.

### **3. To look forward to his (a.t.f.s.) reappearance:**

A true Awaiter is the one who is fervently looking forward to the advent of Imam (a.t.f.s.). He awaits the advent of his Imam (a.t.f.s.) just as a person awaits his beloved friend. He is willing to sacrifice all his personal treasures and worldly bounties to meet his long lost friend.

مَتَى تَرَانَا وَتَرَكَ.

'O Master! When will the time come when your benevolent glance will fall on us - unfortunate servants? And when will we be granted the privilege of seeing you? This is the slogan of every true Awaiter.

### 4. Vigilance:

The more we prepare ourselves for the reappearance of Imam (a.t.f.s.), the stronger will be our desire of awaiting for him. Without being prepared for his reappearance, the feeling of awaiting will be a farce and have little meaning. As Sibte Jafar writes: 'We keep saying 'al - ajal' (hasten), but what will we do if he were to really come? How prepared are we? And what will we offer him? .....Our shrewdness and our arrogance and our cunning treachery? What is the value of our fasts and our prayers? How much sincerity is there in them and how much pretension? What preparations have we made for the sake of Imam (a.t.f.s.)? What face shall we show him when he reappears?

When these four conditions combine, then the feeling of awaiting inevitably develops in a person. The intensity of awaiting is proportionate to the degree of these four 'pre-requisites'. The stronger they are within a person, the more intense will be his awaiting.

Thus if we are desirous of fulfilling our responsibility of awaiting, then it is imperative that we strengthen its four pre-conditions. The directive of awaiting for Imam Zamana (a.t.f.s.) is in reality an order for developing and inculcating these four pre-conditions. For strengthening the first and second pre-requisites, it is necessary for us to frequently refer to the Holy Quran and traditions of infallibles (a.s.), believe in the glad tidings and prophecies concerning Imam Zamana (a.t.f.s.) that are mentioned in them and give them the highest level of importance. And an individual can do all this voluntarily. In order to fulfil the third pre-requisite, we should acquire the recognition (Maarefat) of Imam (a.t.f.s.) so that the flames of his love are ignited in our hearts and keep on burning till the last breath of our lives. Only then will our awaiting be fervent and passionate - just like that of a mother who is anxiously searching her lost son.

Come let us end this short treatise by presenting ourselves in the holy presence of Imam Zamana (a.t.f.s.) and addressing him (a.t.f.s.) with tears in our eyes

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا مَوْلَايَ أَنَا مَوْلَاكَ أَتَقَرَّبُ إِلَى اللَّهِ تَعَالَى بِكَ وَ بِآلِ بَيْتِكَ وَ أَنْتَظِرُ وَ ظُهُورَكَ وَ ظُهُورَ الْحَقِّ عَلَى يَدَيْكَ وَ  
أَسْأَلُ اللَّهَ أَنْ يُصَلِّيَ عَلَيَّ مُحَمَّدٍ وَ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَ أَنْ يَجْعَلَنِي مِنَ الْمُتَنَظِّرِينَ لَكَ

'Peace be upon you - O my Master and my Chief! I am your servant and I seek proximity to Allah through you and through your progeny. I am awaiting the reappearance of your (esteemed) self and also of the truth through your hands. I pray to Allah to bestow His blessings on Muhammad (s.a.w.a) and his progeny (a.s.) and he should include me among those who await your reappearance. Aameen!

### The Holy Quran And Religion In The Last Era

Islam is the religion chosen by Allah. . The Holy Quran is the book revealed by Allah which will continue to guide those who fear Him and those that guard against evil till the Day of Judgement. The Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammed Mustafa (s.a.w.a.) - the last and final prophet was sent by Allah with the station of messengership for the propagation of Islam. Allah appointed twelve protectors, one followed by another, and granted them authority and raised them to the distinguished position of Imamat after the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) for the protection of Islam and His Book. He granted a long life to the twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.) and concealed him through occultation, thus completing His Proof upon the people. He also promised that at an appointed hour He would cause the last Imam (a.t.f.s.) to reappear and through him, fill the earth with justice and equality just as it would be rife with injustice and inequality.

Leaving aside absurd arguments, in the light of reasoning and the narrations, is there any Muslim who can deny these truthful statements and reject them? Does he have an option but to accept these statements from the depth of his heart? Allah, in His infinite Wisdom, established all facilities for the protection of the religion of Islam and clearly illuminated the path of guidance for the entire humanity. The seed of Islam, with its inherent strength, softened the barren land; strengthened its roots; and spread across the world. Meccans and Medinites from the centre of Arabia, Syrians, Iranians, Afghans, Turks and Africans - in fact humanity from all around the world arose with the flag of Islam thereby establishing it as the second largest religion in the world. . .

Here we raise a thought provoking question - Is the Islam we know today the same Islam which spread throughout the world by virtue of its peace-loving principles and lofty teachings? Is the spirit of Islam, whose protection was promised by Allah intact in our times or has it been weakened? To answer these questions, I would like to quote a tradition from Saheeh Muslim,

إِنَّ الْإِسْلَامَ بَدَأَ غَرِيْبًا وَ سَيَعُوْدُ غَرِيْبًا كَمَا بَدَأَ فَطُوْبَىٰ لِلْغُرَبَاءِ.

'Surely Islam was deprived at its inception, then it will return to its deprived state. Then glad tidings for the deprived ones!'

(Saheeh-e-Muslim, vol. 1, pg. 90)

If we take a fair and impartial view of the 1,400 years of Islamic history, firstly, by casting away our prejudices, we see that from the 73 sects of Islam, only one which adheres to the 12 Imams (a.s.) corresponds. to the above tradition. When we speak of deprivation in the early stages of Islam, we refer to Imam Husain (a.s.) - that venerable personality who was the beloved of the Holy Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.a.). He was raised with great effort love and care by his mother the

honourable lady Hazrat Fatema Zahra (s.a.); and despite these merits was mercilessly martyred on the planes of Karbala after three painful days of hunger and thirst. The hands of thousands of Muslims were coloured with his blood. The family of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was paraded through the markets of Kufa and Syria and imprisoned unjustly.

We mourn this very deprivation of Islam in its early stages. Yet, we are certain of the survival of Islam and its perpetuity. We are well aware that there will come a time when religion will be treated as something of little value; when the Quran will be kept at a high place, but only to seek blessing and not for its teachings. When we realise this, we lament for the one who recited the verse of Surah Kahf while his head was raised on the lance.

When this was the state of degeneration in Islam at its origin, can one truly comprehend and grasp the situation during its last days when the entire world will be rife with injustice and inequality? The following tradition of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) echoes this sentiment,

يُوضَعُ الدِّينُ وَ تُرْفَعُ الدُّنْيَا

'Religion will be belittled and the world (materialism) will be glorified.'

(Ilzamun Nasib, pg. 181)

One can neither claim that this is the last era, nor that the last era is far away on the horizon. However when we pay attention to the current helplessness of religion, we find that these times are a reflection of those traditions which have been enumerated in this regard. Ayatollah Murtuza Mutahhari (r.a.) while describing these times writes, :. "If the fragrant and sweet tasting fruit of reappearance (zuhoor) is yet to ripen, then the blistering heat of the sun must increase in future and the condition of religion and opposition to the Holy Quran will be more severe."

There is a rich treasure trove of traditions which detail the conditions of the last era, pertaining to society, culture and attitude of the people. These traditions are narrated from the infallible Imams (a.s.). The occurrence of these conditions point towards the early reappearance of the hidden Imam (a.s.). Here, we shall discuss some of the traditions from the holy infallibles (a.s.) that highlight the sorry state of religion and the Holy Quran which is so apparent today.

تَجْتَمِعُ الْأَجْسَادُ، وَالْقُلُوبُ مُخْتَلِفَةٌ، وَ دِينٌ أَحَدِهِمْ لِعَقَّةٍ عَلَى لِسَانِهِ!!!

'Physically the people will gather at one place but their hearts will differ with each other. Religion will be stuck on the tongues of each one of them.'

(Nahjul Fasaha, Ilzamun Nasib, pg. 181)

يَأْتِي عَلَى أُمَّتِي زَمَانٌ، لَا يَبْقَى مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ إِلَّا رَسْمُهُ وَلَا مِنَ الْإِسْلَامِ إِلَّا اسْمُهُ. يُسَمَوْنَ بِهِ وَهُمْ أَبْعَدُ النَّاسِ عَنْهُ.

'A time will come upon the people of my Ummat when the Quran will not exist except as an object of decoration; Islam will remain, through only in name. The people will be Muslims, but from among all people, they will be farthest from Islam.'

(Muntakhabul Asar, pg. 427; Behaarul Anwaar, vol. 52, pg. 195)

إِضَاعَةُ الصَّلَوَاتِ وَاتِّبَاعُ الشَّهَوَاتِ وَالْمَيْلُ إِلَى الْأَهْوَاءِ.

'In that era, prayers will be wasted; lusts will be followed and people will incline towards carnal desires.'

(Ilzamun Nasib, pg. 182)

Our times are a fairly accurate reflection of the above traditions. A majority subscribes to the views of that group whose members disregard the limits of Islam and 31 it efforts; follow un-Islamic codes of ethics 31 in their daily lives; who claim that namaz is Bi merely a ritual and who sacrifice everything 3 in the relentless pursuit of worldly desires.

There are but a few families who despite their wealth and worldly status hold the teachings of the Quran close to their heart. At this juncture, we are reminded of the following tradition:

الْعُرَبَاءُ فِي الدُّنْيَا أَرْبَعٌ. قُرْآنٌ فِي جَوْفِ ظَالِمٍ وَ مَسْجِدٌ فِي نَادَى قَوْمٍ لَا يُصَلُّونَ فِيهِ وَ مُصْحَفٌ فِي بَيْتٍ لَا يُقْرَأُ فِيهِ وَ رَجُلٌ صَالِحٌ مَعَ قَوْمٍ سَوَاءٍ.

'Strangers in this world are of 4 types:

1. The Quran which is in the heart of the oppressors.
2. The Mosque, which is in a locality of those who do not pray namaz.
3. The Book in a house where there is none to read it.
4. A righteous person amongst an evil people.

1. Our Mosques and holy places today are the targets of bombs and explosives by the very people who claim that the teachings of the Quran are close to their hearts. And despite this, they consider such horrendous acts to be permissible. They are deaf to the pleas of orphans and women who are widowed for no fault of theirs and are amused by their cries of anguish. Indeed, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) spoke the truth that the Quran is poor in the heart of the oppressors.

2. A study of our cities, villages and localities will establish that there are places where a sizable population exists but where the Mosques moan the lack of worshippers.
3. The Quran resides in houses that are devoid of any inclination to recite it. Even when there is recitation, there is little or no reflection.
4. The presence of a pious individual in the midst of impious and immoral people is another tragedy of this era.

يَأْتِي عَلَى أُمَّتِي زَمَانٌ، الصَّابِرُ مِنْهُمْ عَلَى دِينِهِمْ كَالْقَابِضِ عَلَى الْجَمْرِ.

'A time will come upon the people of my nation when the patient will remain firm upon their principles. For, them it will be as (difficult as) clutching a lighted flame in the palm of their hands.'

(Nahjul Fasaha, vol. 2, pg. 645, Ghaibate Nomani, pg. 173)

يَكُونُ حَجُّ الْمُلُوكِ نَزْهَةً، وَحَجُّ الْأَغْنِيَاءِ تِجَارَةً وَحَجُّ الْفُقَرَاءِ مَسْأَلَةً.

'The kings will travel to Mecca for the sake of enjoyment and politics during Hajj; the wealthy for business and the destitute for the sake of begging.'

(Ilzamun Nasib, pg. 174, Muntakhabul Asar, pg. 429)

إِذَا ظَهَرَتِ الْمَعَارِفُ فِي حَرَمَيْنِ وَ عُمِلَ فِيهِمَا بِمَا لَا يُحِبُّ اللَّهُ. لَا يَمْنَعُ مِنْ ذَلِكَ مَانِعٌ وَلَا يَحُولُ دُونَ ذَلِكَ الْعَمَلِ الْقَبِيحِ.

'When the signs of amusement appear in the Haramain and those acts which are not loved by Allah occur there and if these take place without an opposition - no steps will be taken to prevent such actions and no person will step forward to prevent such unsuitable and unbefitting deeds, (then consider such a time to be the last era).'

(Bayaan az Rozgaar-e-Rehaee pg. 796)

In this regard there is a remarkable and astonishing tradition which prophecies the recitation of the Holy Quran in a melodious and singing tune during the last era. After reading this tradition we feel that truly the times we live in are the days of the last era.

يَتَّخِذُ الْقُرْآنُ مَرَامِيرَ، وَ يُوضَحُ عَلَى الْأَحَانِ الْأَغَانِي يُقْرَأُ بِلَا حَشْيَةٍ.

'The Holy Quran will be recited in a melodious or singing tune and while reciting it, no signs of the fear of Allah will appear in the recitor.'

(Bashaaratul Islam, pg. 26)

There are few traditions which mirror the apathy of our present times as closely as the one narrated above. Today it is customary to recite the Holy Quran in a melodious tune. There are no signs of fear of Allah apparent in the recitor of Quran, nor is any effect of the Allah's Majesty or His Recognition created in the hearts of the listeners. There is no increase in knowledge for any group, and for those who do not understand the Arabic language, they only hear 'Allah', 'Allah'. Truly, it is incumbent upon all recitors of the Quran that they pay attention to these traditions and prevent the people from going astray.

لَا يَظْهَرُ الْقَائِمُ حَتَّى يَكُونَ أَمْرُ الصِّبْيَانِ وَ تَضْيَعُ حُقُوقُ الرَّحْمَنِ، وَ يَتَغَنَّى بِالْقُرْآنِ.

"The Qaim (a.t.f.s.) will not appear till the time when religion will be in given in the hands of children, the rights of Allah will be trampled upon and Quran will be recited in a singing tune.'

(Ilzamun Nasib, pg. 178)

In the above tradition as well, our attention is drawn towards the fact that people will turn away from the rights of Allah and that Quran will be recited in a singing fashion. In the last era, the people for whom the Quran was revealed as a source of guidance will deny the innumerable bounties and mercies of Allah and will not fulfill the rights of Allah in this regard. Yet, there are a few servants of Allah who are pious and obedient to His Command, and who thank Him profusely for the bounties. These individuals are willing to sacrifice their health, wealth and loved ones for the sake of fulfilling their duty towards the last Imam (a.t.f.s.).

The reappearance of the 12th Imam (a.t.f.s.) is due in the last era when the following signs are evident:

يُكْفَرُ بِاللَّهِ جَهْرَةً ..... وَ تُؤَخَّرُ الصَّلَاةُ وَ تُسْتَمُّ الْأَبَاءُ وَالْأُمَّهَاتُ.

'People will openly deny Allah; namo: will be recited at its last time (towards the time of Qaza) and parents will be abused (by. their children).'

(Basharatul Islam, pg. 75)

We live in times where it is common to abuse parents. Our prayers are recited towards its last time - especially the namaz of Zohr and Asr which is more often than not recited as the sun is setting. Often the mother is calling out to her children to 'recite namaz quickly for its time is passing away!' However we should consider this as fortunate for there are many homes in which the folks find it difficult to even recite the weekly Friday prayers!

سَيَأْتِي عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِي زَمَانٌ لَيْسَ فِيهِ شَيْءٌ أَحَقُّ مِنَ الْحَقِّ وَ لَا أَظْهَرَ مِنَ الْبَاطِلِ وَ لَا أَكْثَرَ مِنَ الْكُذْبِ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَ رَسُولِهِ! وَ لَيْسَ عِنْدَ أَهْلِ ذَلِكَ الزَّمَانِ سِلْعَةٌ أَبْوَرُ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ إِذَا تَلَّى حَقَّ تِلَاوَتِهِ وَ لَا أَنْفَقَ مِنْهُ إِذَا حُرِفَ عَنْ مَوَاضِعِهِ؟!، وَ لَا فِي الْبِلَادِ شَيْءٌ أَنْكَرَ مِنَ الْمَعْرُوفِ وَ لَا أَعْرَفَ مِنَ الْمُنْكَرِ.

'Soon a time will come upon you after me when nothing will be more concealed than the truth and nothing will be more evident than falsehood. Nothing will be more common than lying about Allah and His Prophet (s.a.w.a.). Nothing will be cheaper (in the markets) than the recitation of the Quran correctly and nothing will be more expensive than the fallacious exegesis of the Quran and baseless explanations. Nothing will be considered as unworthy as goodness and nothing will be considered as worthy as evil.'

(Yanabiul Mawaddah, vol. 3, pg. 104, tradition 203)

How true are the prophecies of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) about the last era! Dear readers, it is the mercy of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) - the most loved of Allah - who warned us of the events in the last era. Indeed satanic inclinations are so widespread that we are already witnessing these prophecies. Goodness is present in our society but in name only.

May Allah for the sake of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) continue to guide us and grant us the opportunity (taufeeq) to remain on the right path. It is for this reason that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) of Islam said,

وَرَأَيْتَ النَّاسَ قَدْ اسْتَوَوْا فِي تَرْكِ الْأَمْرِ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَالنَّهْيِ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ، وَتَرَكَ التَّدْيِينَ بِهِ.

'And you will see that the people are united in forsaking Amr bil Ma'roof (calling towards righteousness) and Nahi anil Munkar (preventing evil); and in their devoutness towards it.'

(Behaarul Anwaar, vol. 52, pg. 259)

Indeed the prophecies mentioned in the traditions about the last era are unfolding before our eyes. In another tradition, it is reported,

إِذَا كَثُرَ الْجُورُ وَالْفَسَادُ وَظَهَرَ الْمُنْكَرُ وَآمَرَ النَّاسُ بِهِ، وَنَهَوْا عَنِ الْمَعْرُوفِ، وَكَثُرَ الْقَتْلُ وَاسْتَحَفَّ النَّاسُ بِالِدِمَاءِ.

'When oppression and corruption will be rampant in the world, evil will be manifest, people will be called to it and stopped from the evil. Murders will increase and people will regard killing as insignificant.

(Behaarul Anwaar, vol. 52, pg. 193)

Our daily lives and the conditions around us are testimony to the words of the tradition about the last era.

إِذَا اسْتَحَلُّوا الْكُذِبَ، وَاتَّبَعُوا الْأَهْوَاءَ، وَاسْتَعْلَنَ الْفُجُورُ وَ قَوْلُ الْبُهْتَانِ وَ صِدْقَ الْكَاذِبِ وَانْتُمِنَ الْخَائِنُ، وَ شَهِدَ الشَّاهِدُ مِنْ غَيْرِ أَنْ يُسْتَشْهَدُ، وَ شَهِدَ الْآخِرُ، فَضَاءَ لِذِمَامِ بَعْضِ حَقِّ عَرَفَةَ - فَعِنْدَ ذَلِكَ الْوَحَا الْوَحَا!

'(A time will come) when people will consider lying to be permissible; they will be a slave to their carnal desires; will maintain relations with those who are having no relation with religion and slander will be common. Liars will be considered truthful and the corrupt will be considered trustworthy. Witnesses will give testimony without knowing the fact, on mere recommendation. People will provide false witness without being aware of the event. In such circumstances, fires will burn everywhere!'

Indeed the world has become a smaller place with the advent of television and the Internet. News now filters to us by the minute and we are able to access information on almost everything around the world. The consequence of this is that humanity is now a lot more aware than in the past. These eyes can see everything - is it not true that globally lies are clothed in the garb of truth? Isn't our society and culture being developed by those who have no contact with religion? Aren't our courts of law, whether they be small or big rampant with corruption and false evidences? Isn't murder and slaying common in our society? Aren't fires being lit everywhere by the explosions of bombs and explosives? And this will continue. Maybe we will reach a stage when fires will rage everywhere and no drop of water will be available to us from the skies. At that stage, the earth will turn barren and the cycle of environment will stop turning..

And at that stage, it is certain that we will hear the footsteps of the beloved of Janabe Fatema (s.a.) - the twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.)! His advent will enliven the lifeless environment and make it joyful. Every corner of this world will turn fragrant and the clouds of falsehood will vanish. The world will glow with the radiance of truth.

The promise of Allah will be fulfilled. He will definitely complete his favour upon those who have been suppressed upon this earth. And He will nominate them as the inheritors of the earth.

Imam Baqir (a.s.) was asked who is referred to in the following verse,

وَنُرِيدُ أَنْ مَنَّ عَلَى الدِّينِ اسْتَضْعَفُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَنَجْعَلُهُمْ أَيْمَةً وَنَجْعَلُهُمُ الْوَارِثِينَ.

'And We desire to bestow a favour upon those who were deemed weak in the land, and to make them the Imams and to make them the heirs.'

(Surah Qasas, verse 5)

He (a.s.) replied, 'This verse refers to the 313 companions of Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) who will function as his aides and assist him (a.t.f.s.) in governing the entire world.'

Ameerul Momineen Ali (a.s.) spoke about the evils which would plague the last era at a time when ordinary people would not have been able to even imagine such events. He said,

إِذَا دَرَجَ الدَّارِ جُؤْنَ وَ قَلَّ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ، ذَهَبَ الْمُجْلِبُونَ.

'There will come a time when people will advance in temptations according to their convenience (or mood). The believers will be very few in number. The religious and diligent ones will soon disappear from our midst.'

Indeed Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) has highlighted a point that is so relevant in our times. Today, people act according to their convenience and mood. They don't act because Islam demands it. For instance, we know that piety and abstinence (from evil) are the cornerstones of Islamic ethics and there is a lot of reward on adopting these principles, but we don't have the will to act on them because we don't feel the mood to do it!

Acting on Islamic precepts, awareness of our responsibilities, reflection on Quran are all very dear to us, but acting on them is selective. We will adhere to them only when we feel like it!

At the end we have another tradition to highlight the falling standards of our times.

وَ ضُيِّعَتِ الصَّلَاةُ، وَ عُصِرَتِ السَّمَوَاتُ فَحِينِيذٍ تَكُونُ السَّنَةُ كَالشَّهْرِ وَالشَّهْرُ كَالْأَسْبُوعِ وَالْأَسْبُوعُ كَالْيَوْمِ وَالْيَوْمُ كَالسَّاعَةِ.

'Namaz will be squandered, the skies will be spread out for man (like the earth) and at that time, the year will be like the month, the month will be like the week, the week will be like the day and the day will be like the hour.'

There can be little debate on the importance of namaz and how we belittle it. The skies have got a lot more accessible to man. Man has hoisted his flag on the moon. He flies frequently in planes and rockets and reaches in hours where he took months to reach. Another important aspect highlighted by the tradition is the fast and furious pace of life in the last era. From infancy to childhood to adulthood to old age - a man's life is over even before he realizes it. There is hardly any time to reflect and take account of deeds. Consequently man is not able to repent for his deeds. His life is 81. but amusement and sport. When his eyes open, its too late.

Today Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.), who is 181 the master of the era, is beckoning us. He is calling out to us. We must respond to his invitation. Truly, when our Master advances by a step towards us, he actually approaches us by ten steps. That is why it is important that we honour religion and the Holy Quran, and abide by the traditions. Only in this way, can we hope to earn the pleasure of our Master and make ourselves eligible for his companionship.