



بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

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**Love And Attachment With Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.)**

Every living being is overwhelmed with emotions of love and attachment. These are emotions that man is very familiar with, and everyone has experienced these strong emotions at some stage in his life. However, those who reflect on these emotions are few. Even fewer are those who comprehend the reality and foundation of the emotions. We all understand that love can increase and decrease as well. An intense feeling of love and attachment can melt the most hardened of hearts. It can make a person weep and it can also make a person smile. Love can be witnessed in the battlefield, over there it can be heard from the resonance of swords and spears striking each other. It can also be witnessed in more peaceful and secure times. Indeed love can have a powerful influence on an individual.

An incident in this regard from the highly acclaimed compilation - Najmus Saqib (by Muhaddiss-e-Noori) is worth mentioning over here. Once a group of people belonging to a nomadic Qazaak tribe had lost its way in the desert. They were totally exhausted from trying to find a way out of the desert. Suddenly they saw some smoke emanating from a hillock at a distance. Out of curiosity they went towards the hillock and saw a caravan on the other side. The leader of the caravan was very benevolent and generous and seeing their worn out condition invited them for a meal. When the Qazaaki group had their fill they left. But seeing the wealth of the caravan, they were tempted and they turned back in order to plunder the caravan. The leader of the caravan was quick to discern their intentions and he drew his sword from its sheath. He drew a line on the ground and announced in an awesome tone, 'If anyone tries to cross this line, I will behead him.' His voice was so terrifying, that the group of Qazaakis fell down from their mounts. May the lives of our parents be sacrificed upon the : benevolent and generous leader of the caravan. O the avenger of Imam Husain's (a.s.) blood!

Love can be an overwhelmingly powerful emotion. Love has in it the ability to drown the person with its intensity and force. However, love has several levels and grades. It has ways and it has gateways; each gateway has its own peculiarities and a different approach should be adopted for every gateway. Likewise, the gateway... of Imam's (a.t.f.s.) love has its own peculiarities. and requires a completely different approach. We must try to discern the path towards Imam's (a.t.f.s.) love and attachment. We must try to gauge the different levels of his love and the difficulties involved in the path of his love. We must try to assess the requirements and prerequisites of the love and whether we find those criteria in ourselves. Only after understanding all the prerequisites and conditions involved in Imam's (a.t.f.s.) love, we might claim - We love Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.). But if negligence overpowers us, then it can expel us from the domain of Imam's (a.t.f.s.) love and attachment. That is why it is crucial that we understand this love and its criteria. .

The love of Imam (a.t.f.s.) resides in the heart. For this love to grow and be nurtured, the heart must be clean and pure from all corruption. We have to see how Allah, the Benevolent and the Merciful, has guided us towards his love. Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) is the last successor and vicegerent of the Chief of the Apostles (a.s.) and the Seal of the Prophets (a.s.). He is Allah's



Proof upon His creatures. Therefore we should also assess the relationship between love and the raising of Prophets (a.s.). We should see how Imam (a.t.f.s.) reminds men of Allah's signs, how he purifies the souls, how he illumines man's existence with the radiance of love. We should see how our teachers and guides have prepared us for purification with love and how they have awakened us for this love. Only then will we understand that we can never adequately return Imam's (a.t.f.s.) love for us and fall woefully short in this regard.

However, history does throw up instances of several personalities who were from an immaculate and cultured background, who possessed amazing prowess and had remarkable accomplishments to their credit and were supported by an unseen force in their efforts. These personalities tread the path of love and affection for Imam (a.t.f.s.). It is not easy to tread on the path which they strode, however it is not impossible either. That's why we say - we can never 'adequately' return Imam's (a.t.f.s.) love.

However, even the inadequate love and attachment that we have for Imam (a.t.f.s.) is very powerful and carries tremendous impact **مَنْ اخْتَصَّكُمْ بِأَمْرِهِ وَارْتَضَاكُمْ لِسِرِّهِ**. To reach that position requires a Herculean effort. Let us take a look at what the scholars have had to say in this regard.

Scholars assert that love is an emotion that can only be experienced. It is inherent in man's nature. It is an emotion that cannot be defined by mere phrases. Love is too profound for that. However for the sake of litterateurs and writers we can state the definition of love in dictionary is described as, 'Love is an emotion that introduces gentleness and harmony in man's nature. That emotion which inculcates harshness and severity in man's nature is called hatred, Love flows from recognition and comprehension. Therefore as recognition increases, love also increases.

The above definition outlines the meaning of love and hatred. Both these emotions are closely linked to man's conscience and heart. It is a widely accepted fact that Allah has introduced love to the human heart. Here we are discussing two emotions - love and hatred. To sustain love it is important that man refrains from certain actions and performs others. So every despicable act must be condemned and one must not think of performing such actions, since it will have a destructive effect on man's ability to love. On the other hand, every praiseworthy act must be lauded and man must try his best to rush towards that action, as this will give a fillip to love in his heart. The illustrious scholar and prolific writer Allamah Murtuza Mutahhari has dealt with this topic in detail in his renowned book, "Polarization around the character of Ali Ibn Abi Talib (a.s.)". However, to discuss details of the book over here is beyond the scope of this short treatise. In brief, it is imperative for us to act on the obligations and necessary conditions of love, to identify the pre-requisites of love and to discharge them in the best possible manner. Indeed these are the necessary qualifications of love and we must abide by them if we want love to blossom in our hearts. At the same time, we must not ignore the other prerequisite of love - avoiding all such actions that support and give a fillip to hatred. These actions not only further hatred in a person, but also inhibit the emotion of love.

Mankind, Allah's most noble creation has derived its Arabic term **إنسانيت** from **أنس**. Allah, Who has created man, has outlined adequate means for his survival and progress. Let us glance at the Holy Quran and see what it has indicated in this regard.

Allah, the Almighty, has announced in the Quran

”إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ“

"Surely the (true) religion with Allah is Islam"

(Surah Aale Imran : 18)

In order to proclaim His path and religion, Allah, the Almighty, raised a number of prophets (a.s.), who guided man towards the divine command. Finally, Allah raised His greatest Apostle, Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) and announced in the Quran

هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ (٢)

"He it is Who raised among the illiterates an Apostle from among themselves, who recites to them His communications and purifies them, and teaches them the Book and the Wisdom, although they were before certainly in clear error."

(Surah Jumah : 2)

In Islam, it is important to purify the self by reciting the Quranic verses. If the self is not purified, then wisdom and Quranic teachings will be of no benefit. Indeed only if the self is purified, will the brilliance of wisdom and the Quran will permeate in the self and illumine the dark recesses of the heart. With this, man's faith and certainty in Allah increases manifold. With the increase in certainty and faith in Allah, man testifies to Allah's Word and his nature is overwhelmed with love for Allah. Allah declares,

.....الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِلَّهِ

"...Those who believe are stronger in love for Allah."

(Surah Baqarah : 165)

This is the reason why Imam Husain (a.s.) most willingly sacrificed his life in the way of his Lord out of sheer love and devotion. His face bore a striking radiance with the love of his Lord. Since our discussion is veering from Islam to faith (eemaan) and from faith to love, it is imperative to see how often Allah has discussed love in the Holy Quran. Love محبت come and attachment مودت are two words very closely linked to each other. Both these terms have been used in the Quran extensively. We see the word love appearing in the Quran 115 times, while attachment is repeated 28 times. And these words are always used in relation to and as an interpretation of faith and love. Another version of the love عشق has not been used in the Quran at all. However, we see this word appearing in the traditions of the infallibles (a.s.). For instance, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) declares

أَفْضَلُ النَّاسِ مَنْ عَشَقَ الْعِبَادَةَ

'The best of men is the one who loves worship.'

(Usul-e-Kafi, vol. 2, Chapter of Worship, trad. 3)

The word Ishq means 'excessive love'. Litterateurs believe that this word is more often used to convey illicit and forbidden love. However, the prophetic tradition we have narrated earlier negates this view, as the word has been used to convey love for excessive worship, which is a commendable action. We have also used this word to convey similar implications, never alluding to the illegitimate form of love.

Love for Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) is the cause of our existence, the most important objective of our lives and the aim of our creation. We love our Imam (a.t.f.s.) and are intensely attached to him. Indeed this is what the religion of Islam instructs us. When the early Muslims wanted to thank the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) for his efforts in the way of Islam, they approached him (s.a.w.a.) and said, 'O Prophet of Allah (s.a.w.a.), indeed you have taken us out from the darkness of ignorance and we had the taufeeq of accepting Islam at your hands and thereby we were illumined with the light of faith. We were disgraced but you honoured us. We were deviated but you guided us. With your grace and favours, Allah gave peace to our distressed hearts. How can we repay you for your efforts in the propagation of the prophetic message?' Allah revealed to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.),

قُلْ لَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا إِلَّا الْمَوَدَّةَ فِي الْقُرْبَىٰ

'Say: I do not ask of you any reward for it but love for my near relatives'

(Surah Shura :23)

Then those who understood the underlying message behind this Quranic verse acted upon it. There were others who ignored this command.

But the true lovers did not let anything come in between their love and attachment for the Ahle Bait (a.s.). One such group of lovers were in Karbala. They were so intense in their attachment, that Imam Husain (a.s.) proclaimed, 'I have got companions that neither my grandfather (s.a.w.a.), nor my father (a.s.) nor my brother (a.s.) could get.' These were the companions who repaid the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) for his efforts towards Islam, by attaching themselves to his progeny. They acted on this Quranic verse:

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِلَّهِ

'those who believe are stronger in love for Allah'

(Surah Baqarah : 165)

In fact, they gave ample proof of this by shedding their blood in the way of Islam.

And Allah addressed their leader (Imam Husain (a.s.)) as النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةَ.

Allah, the Almighty, declares in the Quran that a favour can be repaid only with another favour. The grace and favour of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) in his propagation of Islam is something that can never be truly repaid by us. Love is the only thing that makes understand the importance of this favour and helps us adorn our character. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) used to beseech Allah

'O Allah! Don't let a transgressor confer a favour upon me, thereby introducing his love in my heart.'

This tradition highlights an important fact that conferring a favour leads to love, even if that favour is from a disbeliever. Indeed humanity and Islam owe their existence to Imam Husain (a.s.). If the incident of Karbala had not occurred, Islam's appearance would have changed completely and it would have been unrecognisable from the Prophet's (s.a.w.a.) Islam. If Karbala had not been there true faith would have been considered as what Yazid was observing, Allah forbid! Many of the prohibited acts would have been made permissible and many of the permissible acts would have been made prohibited.

Indeed love for Imam Husain (a.s.) is the reward of the prophethood of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.). This is because Imam (a.s.) rescued Islam, Allah's chosen religion, which was propagated by his grandfather, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.). O lovers of Imam Husain (a.s.)! The criterion for love is to follow the beloved in letter and in spirit and to give preference to his wishes and desires over our own. We should pay attention to what Imam Husain (a.s.) has said concerning his ninth son, Allah's last proof, and we should try to act upon it. We should mould our behaviour and disposition according to it and we should be careful that we are not accounted among the ungrateful ones.

Abdul Rahman b. Sulait narrates that Imam Husain (a.s.) said, 'There will be twelve guides from amongst us. The first one is Ameerul Mo'mineen (a.s.)- Ali b. Abi Talib (a.s.), while the last one is my ninth son the Qaim (a.t.f.s.). Through him Allah will enliven the dead earth and will make the rightful religion subdue all other religions even if this displeases the apostates. There is an occultation for him, which will be the cause of one group of Muslims rejecting him and returning to disbelief after belief, while another group will continue to believe in him and will remain steadfast in their faith. Those who will remain steadfast will become the target of taunts and it will be said to them, if reappearance is indeed a promise then when will the promise be fulfilled. Those who are patient and steadfast on the intense difficulties of occultation will attain the status of a warrior who has done jihad alongside the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) against the infidels.

(Kamaluddin, vol. 1, chapter 30)

The above tradition related by Imam Husain (a.s.) highlights a few very pertinent points.

- A) Allah's final proof will be the ninth son of Imam Husain (a.s.).
- B) He will rise one day after his occultation.
- C) His occultation will be prolonged.
- D) Allah shall subdue all other religions with the religion of truth.
- E) He shall enliven the earth after its deterioration.
- F) The nation shall be divided in two sections. One shall steadfastly believe in him while the other shall reject him.
- G) The steadfast ones shall be subjected to intense difficulties and calamities.
- H) The steadfast group shall enjoy the same position as that of the early Muslims who did jihad alongside the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) against the apostates.

This tradition underlines the importance of love for Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.). The bond of love must be firm and resolute. It should not be that we accept Imam (a.t.f.s.) by our tongues and fall short in our actions. It should not be that we become despair about the rise of the nation. Even if we aren't struck by pessimism and doubt, it should not be that we believe in Imam (a.t.f.s.) as if it is folklore of a person who will rise one day and will establish truth and justice and will usher in an era of goodness where no evil will exist and in this entire affair we don't have to do anything except sit and watch.

This is the time when we should sit back and reflect on ourselves. We should for a moment consider the loyal companions of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) who accompanied him (s.a.w.a.) in the battles and willingly gave up their lives to attain martyrdom. Indeed their character, certainty, determination, faith, love for Allah and love for His Apostle were so firm and unshakeable that we get some idea of what is expected from us. Then we realise that we have not fulfilled the obligations of love. We have not honoured the pre-requisites of attachment. And if it is not so then why is the occultation of Imam (a.t.f.s.) being prolonged to such an extent? Imam's (a.t.f.s.) reappearance depends upon the steadfast ones of the Islamic nation who are being disgraced but are patient and steadfast on difficulties and everyday recite the verse

أَشْهَدُ أَنَّكَ الْإِمَامُ الْمَهْدِيُّ قَوْلًا وَفِعْلًا

'I bear witness in letter and in spirit that certainly you are Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.).'

(Ziyarate Salaamullahil Kaamil, Mafaateehul Jenaan)

To perform religious obligations today is a himalayan task. To strive and struggle with the self against the calamities and disputes in this age and to nurture love and affection (for Imam (a.t.f.s.)) is indeed difficult. We are passing through the era about which Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) had said مَلَأَتْ ظُلُمًا وَجُورًا (when the earth shall be filled with injustice and oppression). Satan is working overtime to deviate the people. Man is involved in all kinds of diseases, related to the body and the soul. There are new calamities emerging every day. The prophesies of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) about the last era are unfolding in front of our eyes. There are a thousand means of deviation and destruction but hardly any source of survival. Man's intellect is stumped and the whole society is engulfed in this epidemic and is unable to decide on a particular course of action, no matter how simple it is.

Let us have a glance of the past and the present. We are living in an age far worse than the age of the Umayyads and the Abbasides. Despite the torment and persecution of those eras, the people had the good fortune of witnessing the Imams (a.s.) in their midst. They could approach the Imams (a.s.) and reap the benefits of their radiant teachings. The glorious traditions of the infallibles (a.s.) and their guidance illumined the darkest recesses of their existence. The love of the Imams (a.s.) in the hearts of the Shias overcame every other distraction, be it wealth, status or the love of this world. The Shias ignored everything else in favour of the Imams (a.s.) and their teachings.

There was a poor and destitute companion of Imam Sadiq (a.s.). One day in the presence of Imam (a.s.), he made mention of his poverty and compared it to the wealth of the attendants of the Abbasides. Imam Sadiq (a.s.) on hearing of this comparison removed a bag of gold coins and

gave it to the companion and said, 'You can take this, however, I would like you to return the love and attachment that you have for me in your heart.' The companion immediately realised the fallacy in his comparison (between himself and the Abbaside attendants) and continued to lead the rest of his life in poverty and thanked Allah for the love of the Ahle Bait (a.s.). Similarly the companions of Imam Husain (a.s.) must have been deeply stirred and roused by this statement of their master, 'O Allah! Indeed what has one gained by losing You? And what has one lost after gaining You?'

(Dua-e-Arafah)

Today the comparison between the lovers (of the Ahle Bait (a.s.)) and the rich will show even more disparity and the lovers will be outnumbered by the rich by a large margin.

However, the chain of Aal-e-Muhammad (a.s.) is continuing till date. It is not over as yet. Not only are the Shias saying this, but even the renowned and illustrious scholars of the Ahle Sunnah have admitted this in their compilations.

They have recorded thousands of traditions to support their belief. Today Allah's Proof on the earth exists and is a means of security from disasters. Those who hold on to his support understand this only too well. Those who don't understand it can try taking the name of Imam (a.t.f.s.) and they will also see the results. Indeed the lovers of Imam (a.t.f.s.) have found a strange soothing effect in his name that helps them overcome the most trying of calamities.

The path towards the love of Imam (a.t.f.s.) is strewn with thorns. It is an examination for those who claim to tread the path of his love. It is a path with many temptations and distractions. It is slippery and beguiling. It has dangerous twists and turns. However, Imam (a.t.f.s.) has not deserted his lovers. His help and guidance always helps them negotiate the perils of this path. A small ray of his light is sufficient to ease the murkiness and gloom of this path. The strong bond of love can help the lovers overcome every hurdle on the path. The treaders of this path must understand the prerequisites and conditions of love so as to reach Imam (a.t.f.s.). We have only briefly outlined a few of those pre-requisites.

### **1. Seeking favours only from the beloved**

One of the most important prerequisites of sincere love is that one does not go to anyone else to seek his demands. He only approaches the beloved in this regard.

### **2. To maintain contact**

We must maintain close contact with our beloved ones - our relatives, our friends, our immediate family members, our brethren-in-faith. A companion of Imam Sadiq (a.s.) asked him, 'One believer is drowning and another is being deviated by some people. Who should we rescue?' Imam (a.s.) replied,

'Go to the rescue of the one who is being deviated.'

Then Imam (a.s.) elaborated,

'Keep close contact with the one whose faith is exposed to danger, always maintain close relations with him. Rescue him hereafter.'



This is the need of the hour today - to keep in contact with the believers in distant areas and to introduce the Imam of their time (a.t.f.s.) to them. This is our most important duty today. It is not a difficult task, provided we work with dedication and an unshakeable spirit of sacrifice.

### 3. Patience and forbearance

Love is the greatest test of patience and forbearance. Even death does not act as a hurdle for the person. Love is such a powerful force that it takes a person towards his beloved, step by step, ignoring all obstacles in the path.

### 4. Maintaining relations

Maintaining relations with the relatives is an important duty and benefits the society as a whole. It is a crucial responsibility in this period and a fundamental proof of love for Imam (a.t.f.s.).

### 5. Acquiring knowledge

Love for Imam (a.t.f.s.) and ignorance about him are two opposite events. It is not possible for both these events to occur simultaneously in a person. Imam (a.t.f.s.) is the pillar of knowledge and invites others towards knowledge of Allah and His religion. If we call ourselves his Shias, it is critical for us to acquire this knowledge. If we fail in this duty then we run the risk of being termed as لَا يَشْعُرُونَ وَلَا يَعْقِلُونَ (they don't perceive, they don't comprehend). And the element of love will subside. Moreover our actions lose their significance as to act without recognition (marefat) is futile. Even our love for Imam (a.t.f.s.) will amount to nothing. Therefore we should struggle and endeavour constantly in our quest for knowledge. The thirst for this knowledge can be quenched only at the doorstep of the Ahle Bait (a.s.) otherwise love will be injured and the pain will be unbearable.

### 6. Activity

Laziness, negligence and lethargy are detrimental to love. To reach towards the object of our love we must be active and energetic. We must fulfill our religious obligations. We must be cautious of Satanic whisperings and be vigilant of his devious charms. A believer must fast in the days and maintain vigil in the nights (صَائِمُ النَّهَارِ قَائِمُ اللَّيْلِ). Indeed this is the ascension (Meraj) of a believer.

### 7. Struggle (Jihad)

One who loves Imam (a.t.f.s.) must be prepared to struggle and labour with his self, his pen and his wealth in the way of Imam (a.t.f.s.).

### 8. Constant remembrance (Zikr)

Traditions highlight that remembrance is the key that increases love and affection (الذِّكْرُ مِفْتَاحُ الْأُنْسِ). We should remember and discuss about Imam (a.t.f.s.) excessively that even if our tongues tire, our hearts should not be satiated and our thirst should not be quenched.

### 9. Gifts

To present the beloved with gifts is a proof of love and attachment. The gift must be presented keeping in mind the stature, position and preferences of the person. For instance, we should

perform recommended namaz, fasts, recite Quran, etc. for Imam (a.t.f.s.) with utmost sincerity and devotion. 10. Charity and supplications

We should constantly pray for the protection and security of Imam (a.t.f.s.) and invoke divine help for his affairs. We must give charity on his behalf to ensure his safety. To supplicate for his earliest reappearance must be a part of our daily schedule. We must complain to Allah about his prolonged absence and must re-affirm our pledge with him. 11. Awaiting the reappearance (Intezar)

Imam (a.t.f.s.) shall spread justice and equity across the length and breadth of this world (وَنَاشِرُ الْعَدْلِ فِي الطُّوْلِ وَالْعَرَضِ). We must await this era eagerly and always endeavour to be included among the true and sincere awaiting ones. We must never despair of Imam's (a.t.f.s.) reappearance, as despair and despondence are satanic traits.

There are other obligations and duties to be discharged to fulfill the demands of love and affection, but we have sufficed with the few mentioned above. Finally we plead with Allah and beseech Him to bestow us with true recognition of Imam (a.t.f.s.). This recognition alone will inspire sincere love and attachment for Imam (a.t.f.s.) in our hearts. We pray to Allah to make steadfast our faith, which is the root of love as the Quranic verse proclaims

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِلَّهِ

'Those who believe are intense in their love for Allah.'

### Imamat And Nahjul Balagha - A Perspective

There is a famous tradition from the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) recorded by both - the Shias and the Ahle Sunnah traditionalists

مَنْ مَاتَ وَلَمْ يَعْرِفْ إِمَامَ زَمَانِهِ مَاتَ مِيتَةً جَاهِلِيَّةً.

'One who dies without recognising the Imam of his time, dies the death of ignorance.'

This means that even if a person accepts and conforms to all the Islamic beliefs and puts in practice all the edicts, but dies without recognising the Imam of his time, his death will be on ignorance and apostasy. Such a person is condemned to eternal Hellfire regardless of his deeds in this world. This is because good deeds will only benefit a person provided his beliefs are correct, as espoused by the Quran and traditions. Hence, any person, who wants to secure himself from the raging fire of hell, should necessarily possess the recognition of the Imam of his time and not simply rely on his worship and virtuous deeds.

#### Two Kinds Of Imams

The Holy Quran has mentioned two types of leaders (Imams). The first type is the one who leads the people towards Hell. Allah declares in Surah Qasas: 41,

"And We made them Imams who call to the Fire, and on the Day of Resurrection they shall not be assisted.'

It means that the end of the one who accepts such an Imam will be in Hell.

The second group of Imams guides the people by Allah's command. Surah Sajdah:24 points out 'And We made of them Imams to guide by Our command when they were patient, and they were certain of Our communications.'

'Say: Is there any of your associates who guides to the truth? Say: Allah guides to the truth. Is He then Who guides to the truth more worthy to be followed, or he who himself does not go aright unless he is guided? What then is the matter with you; how do you judge?'

(Surah Yunus : 35)

Hazrat Ali (a.s.) has described the characteristics of both kinds of Imams in his orations. 'The reality of people is not understood by their names but by the pattern of their behaviour and mannerisms. Just as clothes hide the defects of the body, external manners cloak the defects of the soul. A connection of the soul is a necessity between the Imam and the follower. If a person (i.e. Imam) is not pious in his own heart, he will not be able to guide his followers towards piety and servitude. Hence if we desire Heaven and want to safeguard our eternal life from the chastisement of the Hellfire, then we have to search for an Imam whose inner and outer selves both are complete manifestations of divine command. Such an Imam must necessarily be adorned with piety completely, i.e. must be an infallible.

We will discuss the characteristics of the Imam of Hellfire and the Imam who guides to the truth, in the light of the sermons of Hazrat Ali (a.s.).

### The Imam of the Hellfire

...certainly, the worst man before Allah is the oppressive Imam who has gone astray and through whom others go astray. He destroys the accepted Sunnah and revives abandoned innovations. I heard the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) predict - On the Day of Judgement the oppressive Imam will be brought without anyone to support him or anyone to advance excuses on his behalf, and then he will be thrown into Hell, where he will rotate as the hand-mill rotates. Then eventually he will be confined to its hollow.'

(Nahjul Balagha, Sermon 164, vol. 1, pg. 608-609, Ansariyan Publications)

An oppressor is not only the one who usurps the rights of others and persecutes others. The Quran declares,

...and whoever exceeds the limits of Allah these it is that are the unjust.'

(Surah Baqarah : 229)

These include those disobedient of Allah's commands, who have violated His edicts and exceeded His limits. The Quran further proclaims,

'and whoever did not judge by what Allah revealed, those are they that are the unjust.'

(Surah Maidah : 45)

If somebody makes additions to the religion or forbids an obligation, he has violated the divine command which tantamounts to injustice.

Therefore, any person who has not been appointed an Imam by Allah and he claims this position for himself, he has transgressed the limits of Allah and has disregarded Allah's orders. He is a tyrannical and an oppressive leader, whose end has been described above in Hazrat Ali's (a.s.) sermon.

Indeed the Holy Quran condemns even those people as oppressors who befriend such persons - ....and whoever makes friends with them, these are the unjust.'

(Surah Mumtahanah : 9)

### Imam of light and guidance

Hazrat Ali (a.s.) outlines the characteristics of the just and rightly guided Imam,

'You should know that among the creatures of Allah, the most distinguished person before Allah is the just Imam who has been guided (by Allah) and guides others. So, he stands by the recognised ways of the Prophet's (s.a.w.a.) behaviour (Sunnah) and destroys the innovations. The (Prophet's (s.a.w.a.)) ways are clear and they have signs, while innovations are also clear and they too have signs.'

(Nahjul Balagha, Sermon 164, vol. 1, pg. 608, Ansariyan Publications)

In another sermon, Hazrat Ali (a.s.) declares,



Certainly the Imams are the vicegerents of Allah over His creatures and they introduce Allah to His creatures. None will enter Paradise except he who recognises them (Imams) and knows Allah, and no one will enter Hell except he who rejects them and denies Him.

(Nahjul Balagha, Sermon 152, vol. 1, pg. 554, Ansariyan Publications)

He elaborates on this further,

'O my Allah! You know that it was neither our (Ahle Bait) objective to seek power, nor to acquire anything from the treasures of the world. Rather we wanted to restore the signs of Your religion and to spread prosperity into Your cities so that the oppressed among Your creatures may be safe and Your forsaken commands could be established. O my Allah! I am the first who was inclined (towards Thee) and who heard and responded (to the call of Islam). No one preceded me in prayer except the Prophet (s.a.w.a.).'

'You certainly know that he who is in charge of honour, life, booty, (enforcement of) legal commands and the leadership of the Muslims should not be a miser as his greed would aim at their wealth. Similarly he should not be ignorant as he would then mislead them with his ignorance, nor should he be rude as he would estrange them with his rudeness. He should not be unjust in distributing wealth by preferring one group to another, nor should he accept bribes while taking decisions, as he would forfeit the rights of some and decree without decisiveness, nor should he ignore the Sunnah as he would ruin the people.

(Nahjul Balagha, Sermon 131, vol. 1, pg. 496, Ansariyan Publications)

By referring to these brilliant sermons, it becomes abundantly clear that the leader and Imam who possesses the following characteristics can alone guide the people towards the truth.

1. He is guided.
2. He guides others towards the true path.
3. He enlivens the Sunnah.
4. He destroys innovations.
5. His recognition is the cause of deliverance for the people.
6. His rejection is the cause of eternal chastisement.
7. He does not desire worldly power and authority.
8. He does not crave for the treasures of the world.
9. He makes manifest the signs of religion.
10. He establishes peace and tranquility in Allah's cities.
11. He provides shelter to His oppressed servants.
12. He revives the forgotten commands.
13. He is not a miser.
14. He is not ignorant.

15. His traits and mannerisms are not evil and wicked.

16. He is not a coward.

17. He is not a corrupt.

18. He does not destroy the Sunnah.

Hazrat Ali (a.s.) highlights the above points in another sermon,

'Certainly, there is no obligation on the Imam except what has been devolved on him from Allah, namely to convey warnings, to exhort and advice, to revive the Sunnah, enforce penalties on those liable and issue shares to the deserving.'

(Nahjul Balagha, Sermon 105, vol. 1, pg. 400, Ansariyan Publications)

### **The Ahle Bait (a.s.)**

If we search for the characteristics of the rightly guided Imam, we find that these traits are present only in the pure and infallible members of the Ahle Bait (a.s.). Hazrat Ali (a.s.) exhorts,

'Look at the people of the Prophet's (S.a.w.a.) family - Ahle Bait (a.s.). Adhere to their direction. Follow their footsteps because they will never misguide you, and never throw you into destruction. If they sit down, you too must sit down, and if they rise, you also rise. Do not go ahead of them, as you will go astray and do not lag behind them, as you will be ruined.

(Nahjul Balagha, Sermon 97, vol. 1, pg. 378, Ansariyan Publications)

أَيُّ الَّذِينَ زَعَمُوا أَنَّهُمُ الرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ دُونَنَا كَذِبًا وَبَغْيًا عَلَيْنَا

'Where are those people who have lied and have tormented us and have deceitfully claimed that they are 'the ones firmly rooted in knowledge' and not us? (They lie against us and covet over position) because Allah, the All-Merciful has exalted our status and has made them inferior to us. He has conferred upon us an eminence from which He prevented them from surpassing us. He allowed us entry to the transcendental sphere of divine revelation, which He denied them. Remember that guidance could be acquired and ignorance could be dispelled through us only. Undoubtedly the Imams shall be from the Quraish, from the Bani Hashim. This divine appointment has been made for this august progeny, and none else deserves this sublime and sacred rank.'

(Nahjul Balagha, Sermon 144, vol. 1, pg. 528, Ansariyan Publications)

These assertive and decisive statements make it abundantly clear that the rightful possessors of Imamatus and Caliphate are the Ahle Bait (a.s.). No one else is deserving of this honour and station. Only the Ahle Bait (a.s.) can direct the people to the path of guidance and lead them to paradise. If somebody considers a person other than them as his leader, guide and Imam, he has deviated and is far from guidance.

When Hazrat Ali (a.s.) appointed Janab Mohammad ibn Abi Bakr as governor of Egypt, he (a.s.) wrote a letter to him in which he said:

'The leader towards guidance, and the leader towards destruction, the friend and the enemy of the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.), can never be alike.'

(Nahjul Balagha, Letter No. 27, vol. 2, pg. 314, Ansariyan Publications)

Hazrat Ali (a.s.) has tried to awaken the consciousness of man with this powerful statement. The statement appeals to the people to open their eyes and refer to their intellects and then decide with deep reflection - Are the leaders of guidance and the path bearers to paradise equal to the guides towards the hell fire and darkness? Never! Awaken and decide for yourselves.

### **Chain of guidance**

It is crystal clear that Imamah is the exclusive right of the Ahle Bait (a.s.) and anyone who claims this right for himself/themselves is a liar and an oppressor. There is a well-known tradition from the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) widely narrated by all scholars and traditionalists in their books. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) prophesied,

'This nation will have twelve leaders and guides and all of them will be from the Quraish. The one who leaves them will not harm them.' (i.e. the one who has distanced himself will be among the losers, because his death will be that of ignorance).

(Musnad-e-Ahmad b. Hanbal, vol.5, pg. 312)

The tradition of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) clearly highlights that there will only be twelve Imams till the Day of Judgement and all these leaders will be from the tribe of Quraish. Within the Quraish, the Imams will be from Bani Hashim. From the traditions mentioned above we conclude that after the demise of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) till the Day of Resurrection, this nation will have twelve Imams and all of them will be from Bani Hashim.

Regarding the tradition from the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) -

'I leave among you two weighty things (Saqalain), the Book of Allah and my progeny,

Hazrat Ali (a.s.) was asked - Who is the progeny? He (a.s.) replied:

I, Hasan (a.s.), Husain (a.s.) and the nine Imams (a.s.) from the progeny of Husain (a.s.), of whom the ninth one will be the Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) and the Qaim (a.t.f.s.). Neither will they separate from the Book of Allah nor will the Book of Allah separate from them, till they meet the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) at the Pool of Kausar.'

(Kamaluddin, vol.1, pg. 240-241)

Aamir b. Kasir asked Hazrat Ali (a.s.): O Ameerul Momineen (a.s.)! You have made us aware of the guides of disbelief and the caliphs of evil, now introduce to us the guides of truth and the real guides after you.' Hazrat Ali (a.s.) informed him,

'Yes, surely it is the promise of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) to me that this religion will have twelve Imams and leaders, nine of whom will be from the progeny of Husain (a.s.). The Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) has narrated, 'When I went to the heavens for Meraj, I saw written on the pillar of the Arsh

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ أَيْدَتْهُ بِعَلِيٍّ وَنَصَرَتْهُ بِعَلِيٍّ

There is no god except Allah, Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) is His Messenger, and I have aided him through Ali (a.s.) and I have helped him through Ali (a.s.)'

And I saw twelve Lights. I asked: O My Lord! Whose lights are these? The reply was -

These lights are of Imams from your progeny.

Then I (Ali (a.s.)) asked:

O Messenger of Allah, will you not tell me their names?'

The Holy Prophet replied,

'Yes, certainly. You are Imam and Caliph after me, you will repay my debts and fulfill my promises. After you will be your two sons, Hasan (a.s.) and Husain (a.s.), and after Husain (a.s.) will be his son Ali - Zainul Abedeen (a.s.), after Ali (a.s.) will be his son Muhammad (a.s.) whose title is Baqir. After Muhammad (a.s.) will follow his son Jafar (a.s.) whose title is Sadiq. After Jafar (a.s.), will be his son Moosa (a.s.) whose title is Kazim. After Moosa (a.s.), will be his son Ali (a.s.) whose title is Reza. After Ali, his son Muhammad (a.s.) will succeed him and his title is Zaki. After Muhammad (a.s.) will follow his son Ali (a.s.) whose title is Naqi. After Ali (a.s.) will come his son Hasan (a.s.) whose title is Ameen and Askari. After him will be the son of Hasan (a.s.), Qaim (a.t.f.s.), whose name will be my name and who will bear maximum similarity with me. He will fill the earth with justice and equity as it would have been filled with oppression and injustice.'

(على ابن ابي طالب ما روى عنه حول الامام المهدي، (vol. 1, pg. 138

There isn't just one tradition like this. We find several traditions on these lines and the number goes up to 20. For instance, Hazrat Ali (a.s.) recounts from the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) who has categorically stated that from the time of his (s.a.w.a.) death till the Day of Qiyamat there will only be twelve Imams, and then each has been mentioned by his name.

The entire arrangement was made so that people would know that Allah and His Prophet (s.a.w.a.) had already selected the Imams. It was not that anyone could be an Imam according to the wishes of the Islamic nation. It was not that an Imam who was supposed to follow his father in the chain of Imamatus, died in his father's lifetime, leaving the chain of Imamatus suspended until the people appointed the deceased's son as the Imam in his place.

All the above traditions, were narrated when Janabe Ismail b. Jafar Sadiq was not even born. The list of Imams (a.s.) narrated by the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and Hazrat Ali (a.s.) does not show Janabe Ismail's name. Therefore, if he was never destined to be an Imam then where does the question of usurping his Imamatus arise?

Another thing that is evident is that the twelve Imams (a.s.) enumerated in the prophetic tradition mentions the first Imam as Hazrat Ali (a.s.) and the twelfth and last Imam as Hazrat Wali-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.), who is the Imam of our time and is alive on this earth today and is amongst us but we are deprived of his meeting due to our sins and disobedience.

Asbagh b. Nubata (r.a.) a very reliable companion of Hazrat Ali (a.s.) narrates, 'I presented myself before Hazrat Ali (a.s.). I saw that he was engrossed in some thought and marking with his blessed finger on the earth. I queried, 'O Ameerul Momineen (a.s.)! What is the matter, I find you today in some perplexity, making signs on the earth, do you love this earth? He (a.s.) replied:



I swear by Allah that it is not so. I have never befriended this world, rather I was reflecting about that son, the eleventh one from my progeny. He is the Mahdi (a.t.f.s.), who will fill the earth with justice and equity as it was filled with injustice and tyranny. There is an occultation for him in which some people will be deviated while others will be guided.

(Kamaluddin, vol.1, pg. 288-297, A'laamul Wara, pg. 400)

How clearly Hazrat Ali (a.s.) has described and illuminated the chain of guidance and Imamat. Who could be more unfortunate and wretched that despite such a clear and illumined chain of guidance and Imamat, rejects it for those deviated guides who have usurped Hazrat Ali's (a.s.) right? Those who have harassed and persecuted Janabe Zehra (s.a.), burned down her door and waged war against her husband - the rightful Imam and celebrated on his martyrdom and were the main protagonists of the incident of Karbala. Their sons killed Imam Husain (a.s.) in Karbala, they made captives the Ahle Bait (a.s.) and martyred them one after the other. Their lives were devoid of Islamic teachings, they opposed the Quranic commands secretly and publicly, they were steeped in sins and prohibited acts and abandoned the religious obligations completely. They were prisoners of their carnal desires and neglected the hereafter and in this manner deprived themselves of guidance. Then how was it possible for them to guide others?

Guidance has only one path and that path is the way of Hazrat Ali b. Abi Talib (a.s.), finally terminating in Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) who is the Imam today. There is no other path leading to true guidance and there is no other guarantee for success and happiness in the world and the hereafter.

We end this discussion with the declaration of Hazrat Ali (a.s.) inviting everyone to leave aside prejudices and rise above personal interests, to purify the intellect and consciousness, to decide about one's own end, lest the coming of the Angel of Death finds us perplexed and uncertain. Today there is time and tomorrow could be too late. Our decision will take us either to Paradise or to Hell. Let us not spoil our hereafter for this fleeting world.

'Observe this world, which you desire, towards which you move with desire and proximity, which sometimes angers you and at other times makes you happy. It is neither your actual abode nor the station for which you were created, nor is it the place towards which you are invited.'

'Take lesson, for it is not going to remain for you, nor are you in it forever. If it has beguiled you with its charm then it has also made you fearful with its wickedness. Do not be influenced by its scare and do not seek it greedily out of its fear.'

'Advance towards that abode towards which you have been invited and turn your hearts away from this world. None of you should lament like • maids on deprivation of a thing of this world. Be patient on the obedience of Allah and wish for the completion of the bounties by safeguarding that which has been commanded by our Book to be safeguarded.'

'Pay heed, if you have safeguarded your religious beliefs then loss of anything of this world will not harm you. And if you have wasted and destroyed your religion then none of the worldly things, which you have safeguarded, can bring you any benefit.'

(Nahjul Balagah, Sermon 173, vol. 1, pg. 644, Ansariyan Publications)

### Importance Of Imamat And Status Of Imam (a.s.)

Imamat is a matter of great merit. In fact no other issue in Islam is more significant than the subject of Imamat. Its importance lies in the fact that it's the only reliable means to reach to the true recognition of Allah. It is only through Imamat that one can obtain the true recognition of Allah and comprehend the manner of worshipping Him. If anyone adopts some means of worshipping Allah other than the one suggested by the Imams (a.s), he will never be successful in his endeavour. . The following phrases of Ziarat-e-Jameah-e-Kabirah highlight this point beautifully.

بِأَبِي أَنْتُمْ وَ أُمِّي وَ نَفْسِي وَ أَهْلِي وَ مَالِي مَنْ أَرَادَا اللَّهَ بَدَأَ بِكُمْ وَ مَنْ وَحَدَهُ قَبْلَ عَنْكُمْ وَ مَنْ قَصَدَهُ تَوَجَّهَ بِكُمْ.

"May my parents, myself, my family and my wealth be sacrificed for you. The one who desired to reach Allah began from you. The one who has acknowledged His Unity has obtained Tauheed from you. The one who loves Allah turns towards you"

(Mafatihul Jinaan)

In this same Ziarat, it is mentioned elsewhere

مَنْ آتَاكُمْ نَجِييَ وَ مَنْ لَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ هَلَكَ إِلَى اللَّهِ تَدْعُونَ وَ عَلَيْهِ تَذَلُّونَ.

"The one who comes to you has received salvation and the one who forsakes you is ruined. You invite (the people) towards Allah and point towards Him."

(Mafatihul Jinaan)

When we ponder over these phrases of Ziarat-e-Jameah, it becomes clear that only the path shown by the Ahle Bait (a.s.) can lead us to true recognition of Allah and His Tauheed and in this manner He can be worshipped as He ought to be worshipped. And should it not be like this? These are the personalities who invite the people towards Allah and show the path towards Him since Allah has created man solely for His worship. Allah says in the Quran

مَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

'I have not created man and the jinn except that they should worship Me.'

(Surah Zaariyat : 52)

If man wants to realise the aim of his creation, then he should worship Allah. And for Allah's genuine and acceptable worship it is necessary to tread the path shown by the Ahle Bait (a.s.).

In the light of the phrases of Ziarat-e-Jameah let us also cast a glance at the phrases of Dua-e-Nudbah. This Dua is specifically for Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.). It is recommended to recite it on Idd-ul-Fitr, Idd-uz-Zoha, Idd-e-Ghadeer and every Friday in which it is found

أَيْنَ بَابُ اللَّهِ الَّذِي مِنْهُ يُؤْتَى أَيْنَ وَجْهُ اللَّهِ الَّذِي إِلَيْهِ يَتَوَجَّهُ الْأَوْلِيَاءُ أَيْنَ السَّبَبُ الْمُتَّصِلُ بَيْنَ الْأَرْضِ وَالسَّمَاءِ

... Where is that gate of Allah through which it is possible to reach Him? Where is the face of Allah towards whom all other 'friends (Awliya) of Allah turn? Where is the one who is the medium between the heavens and the earth?'

The Imam (a.s) of every era is the means for reaching towards Allah. It is through the Imam alone that Allah's true recognition can be acquired and it is through him that one can learn to worship Allah and reach Him. In this era the 'Proof (Hujjat) of Allah and the Imam of the time is none other than our twelfth Imam Hazrat Hujjat b. Hasan Askari (a.t.f.s.).

Genuine recognition and Allah's worship i.e. establishing a divine link through knowledge and actions, is facilitated through the belief in Imamat. The belief in the Imamat of Imam-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.) means acknowledging the gate that helps man reach Allah's recognition.

### Status of Imamat

Allah has bestowed the illustrious status of Imamat upon our Imams (a.s) not without any reason or wisdom. Allah Himself alludes to this fact in the noble Quran when He declares

وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْهُمْ إِمَّةً يَهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا لَمَّا صَبَرُوا

'So when they were patient, We made them Imams from amongst themselves who guide the people by Our commands.'

(Surah Sajdah:24)

This brief verse highlights four crucial points:

(١) جَعَلْنَا

'We have made them as Imams.'

This shows that the right of appointing an Imam rests exclusively with Allah and with none else. This is a matter of appointment of an Imam for the entire creation and not a matter of appointing some 'Imam' for congregational prayers in a local mosque.

(٢) مِنْهُمْ

Allah has appointed only a few from the nation for this crucial position. This shows that each and every person is not eligible for this rank. Allah sees the qualities and abilities and only then does He bestow this honour.

(٣) يَهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا

They guide the people by Our commands and orders. There are two types of systems prevalent in the universe viz. (a) خلق (creation) and (b) امر (order). The system of creation is that system wherein the things come into existence through the normal process of "cause and effect". For instance the sperm gradually (after passing through various stages) is converted into a man. Or a seed after undergoing through the normal processes finally becomes a tree. On the other hand, in the system of 'Amr' - which is superior to the system of creation - things don't move through the normal process. Nor is time and space a pre-condition for the actualisation of the outcome. Here only the intention of 'Be' is sufficient. As Allah says in the Quran:

إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُ إِذَا أَرَادَ شَيْئًا أَنْ يَقُولَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ

'His command - when He intends anything - is only to say, "Be" and it becomes.'

(Surah Yasin: 82)

This means that the mere intention of a thing is sufficient to bring about its existence. Neither any cause or reason is essential nor are there any restrictions of time and place. These Imams (a.s) guide by virtue of (this) command of Allah. If they desire to guide someone then a simple intention on their part is enough to guide that person. Like the way Janabe Zohair b. Qain (r.a.) was guided by Imam Husain (a.s). In a brief meeting of a just a few moments, Imam (a.s) changed Zohair b. Qain (r.a.) completely. But in order to be included in this form of guidance it is necessary that a person raises himself to such a high level that he becomes eligible to derive benefits from the winds of guidance. Idleness is from our side. It is essential for the earth to bear such qualities that will make it profit from the pure drops of rain and will lead to the flourishing of flora and fauna, Today this guidance is present for us in the form of Hazrat Wali-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.). The only precondition is that we should derive benefit from him.

(٤) لَمَّا صَبَرُوا

This particular phrase shows why this distinction of Imamatus was granted to them. It is truly a miracle of Quran that it had explained the exalted status of Imamatus in only two words. As if the entire sea has been capsuled in a pair of hands. Allah - through the phrase لَمَّا صَبَرُوا has defined the foundation of Imamatus and through the phrase يَهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا He has elucidated the responsibility of Imamatus.

### The Origin of Patience

Patience has various levels. In logical terminology it is a 'sum total' with different degrees and which cannot be applied universally. It is of three kinds viz. patience near sins, patience in the face of calamities and patience on one's desires. However, it is not our aim over here to get into a detailed discussion on this topic.

The origin of patience lies in talking less, in controlling one's tongue, in refraining one's self from talking nonsense or irrational talks. It involves training oneself to talk only when it is necessary and that too in a concise manner. This is the very first stage of patience. There is a lot of emphasis on silence in books related to spiritual training. Along with the tongue it is also essential to keep one's eyes also in control. The 'Nafs' of a person employs these two faculties in a lot of futile things.

### Perfect Patience

Gradually a person should prepare himself to be patient on the bounties of this world. The heart should not be accustomed to the comforts of the world, nor should any of its pleasures build a house in it. No form of lust or greed should be allowed to enter the heart. We find in Dua-e-Nudbah

بَعْدَ أَنْ شَرَطْتَ عَلَيْهِمُ الزُّهْدَ فِي دَرَجَاتِ هَذِهِ الدُّنْيَا الدَّنِيَّةِ وَ زُخْرُفَهَا وَ زِينَتِهَا فَشَرَطُوا لَكَ ذَلِكَ وَ عَلِمْتَ مِنْهُمْ الْوَفَاءَ بِهِ فَقَبِلْتَهُمْ وَ قَرَّبْتَهُمْ وَ قَدَّمْتَ لَهُمُ الذِّكْرَ الْعَلِيِّ .....

.....shell 'And when you fixed the condition that they will forsake this detestable world and its luxuries and comforts and will not attach one's self to it, then they accepted this condition. Then when You saw that they fulfilled this demand in totality, You favoured them and made them Your proximate and You reserved for them the best of remembrances and the finest of descriptions and adulation and You descended upon them Your angels.'



To remain patient on the bounties of this world is just one of the stages. There are many more stages of patience after this.

The stage after the world is that of 'Barzakh'.

Another form of patience is to exercise complete restraint and mastery on our thoughts. This particular stage is more arduous than being patient upon the bounties of the world. Man can turn his face away from the luxuries of this world. But his thoughts too should be in his control. He should have such command and influence upon his 'Nafs' that no thought should be able to enter his mind without his consent. It is not a matter of few moments, hours, days and years. No doubt this is extremely difficult. Just try to keep yourself focussed on one particular point for a few moments - taking care that your attention is not distracted by any other thought - you will realise the magnitude of this task. When it is difficult to concentrate for such a small duration of time then to keep one's mind free from distractions and diversions for the whole life is that stage of patience which is far higher than being patient on calamities. Here the mind falters and becomes helpless.

Imam Husain (a.s), even when surrounded by grief and calamities says

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ وَ بِاللَّهِ وَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ

'In the name of Allah, by the strength and support of Allah and for the sake of Allah.'

'At the time when he (a.s) was strewn with wounds and injuries and when he fell from his horse to the ground and when he was rubbing his blood on his face at that time too he was saying

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ وَ بِاللَّهِ وَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ

In such dangerous and difficult times too no other thought could distract Imam Husain (a.s) from remembering Allah.

اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ حَيْثُ يَجْعَلُ رِسَالَتَهُ

'Allah knows best where He places His message.'

(Surah An'aam : 124)

After this world comes the Hereafter. Nothing from the Hereafter should attract a person. Neither the bounties of Paradise nor the chastisement of Hell nor the stages of Mahshar. Ameerul Momineen - Imam Ali ibn Talib (a.s) has expressed this most eloquently when he says

إِنَّ قَوْمًا عَبَدُوا اللَّهَ رَغْبَةً فَتِلْكَ عِبَادَةُ التَّجَارِ وَ إِنَّ قَوْمًا عَبَدُوا اللَّهَ رَهْبَةً فَتِلْكَ عِبَادَةُ الْعَبِيدِ وَ إِنَّ قَوْمًا عَبَدُوا اللَّهَ شُكْرًا فَتِلْكَ عِبَادَةُ الْأَحْرَارِ

'Some people worship Allah for the sake of rewards. This is the worship of traders. While some worship Allah due to the fear of being punished. This is the worship of a slave. Yet others worship Allah out of gratitude for His bounties. This is the worship of free men.'

(Nahjul Balagha: trad. 237, vol. 2, Ansariyan Publications)

One should have so much control on one's 'Nafs' that while worshipping Allah he should neither think about the bounties of Paradise nor about the punishments of Hell. It is extremely difficult

to reach to this stage of patience. And this stage too demands a remarkable amount of restraint on the 'Nafs'

### **The ideal worshipper**

Allah's worship is solely for Him. Nothing can be associated with Allah in His worship. It means that the sole aim of our worship is to achieve Allah's satisfaction, neither this world nor Barzakh nor the Hereafter. It is obvious that the one who has submitted himself to Allah's love and whose excellence lies in Allah's worship, then to him nothing else matters. All other things are worthless in his eyes. Everything is subservient and obedient to his wishes and orders. It is found in Ziarat-e-Jameah wherein it is said

وَدَّلَ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ لَّكَ

'Everything is lowly and subservient to you.'

Our Imam is not only for humans on this earth. He is the Imam of the entire universe. It is because of presence of Imam (a.s.) that rain descends on the earth, the heaven and the earth are secure in their respective places and our difficulties are repelled.

When a person reaches to this perfect level of worship then he becomes a symbol of divine attributes. In fact many a times those who are far removed from reality and are not well versed with : the teachings of Ahle Bait (a.s.) start considering this emblem of divine characteristics as Allah Himself! This complete worshipper - by the permission of Allah - nurtures the entire universe and provides sustenance to each and every individual and arranges for all other necessities of life so that everyone is able to reach to his goal of perfection. It is for this reason that it is mentioned for Imam-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.)

بُؤْجُودِهِ تَبَتَّتِ الْأَرْضُ وَالسَّمَاءُ وَبِئْمَنِهٖ رُزِقَ الْوَرَى

'It is due to his existence that the heavens and the earth are secure in their place and it is due to his benevolence that everyone acquires sustenance.'

No doubt that Allah is the One Who is the giver of life. However, He gives it due to the benevolence of Imam-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.). Allah is the One who provides sustenance, but it is through the blessings of Imam-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.). All the bounties that are available on this earth are due to the benevolence of Hazrat Hujjat ibne Hasan Askari (a.t.f.s.). Now, when all the favours that we receive from Allah are through Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) then all our worship and supplications towards Allah will be worthy of acceptance if they are acceptable near Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.). Keeping in mind the endless benefits that we receive from Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) we are obliged to confess with a sense of remorse that 'O Master of the time! It's been a long time since we are receiving benefits through you. We are living our lives through your grace and acquiring Allah's bounties due to your benevolence. It is due to your venerable presence that our body and soul are being nourished. It is only because of you that Allah's kindness reaches us. Yet when we look at our actions and within ourselves, it becomes apparent to us that we have still not been able to acquire your true recognition. We have not recognized your true value nor have we been able to fulfill your rights. We have contributed so much to your suffering that we shudder to think how Allah will take our account. At every step we have derived benefits from you but have not done anything for you. We have acquired fame and

status through you but have not done anything to glorify your name. We have received our sustenance due to your grace but have not spent anything in your way. We have exploited you in all walks of our life for our personal gains but have failed to endure any form of adversity for your sake.'

'O the Yusuf of Janabe Zahra! We - like the brothers of Hazrat Yusuf (a.s.) - are ashamed of ourselves in front of you. We confess that we have oppressed and wronged you. And we seek forgiveness from you for our actions.

### **Patience of Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.)**

In light of the latest scientific research, it has been firmly established that past events are present in the atmosphere. However, our perception is so weak that we are unable to comprehend those occurrences. With some focused training of the soul, a person can visualise an event in the past like Day of Ashoora and see it with his eyes. However, there are some episodes in the event of Karbala, which are very heart rending. It is beyond the capacity of ordinary humans to endure them. But the entire event of Karbala - right down to its minutest details - is witnessed by Imam-e-Zamana's (a.t.f.s.), including all those events that are unbearable for the average human being. Besides this, the dress of Imam Husain (a.s) drenched in his blood is present right in front of Imam-e-Zamana's (a.t.f.s.) eyes and fresh blood is continuously dripping from it. This will continue till the reappearance of Imam (a.t.f.s.), when he (a.t.f.s.) finally avenges the massacre of Karbala.

Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) has to witness all these calamities every day and then be patient upon them. He actually sees the calamities with his eyes and is patient upon them while it is difficult for us to bear it even by listening to them. Indeed what must be the level of Imam's (a.t.f.s.) patience and forbearance? Apart from the tribulations of Karbala, Imam (a.t.f.s.) also witnesses the calamities that befell Janabe Zahra (s.a) and Ameerul Momineen (a.s.), then Imam Hasan (a.s) and every Imam till his father Imam Hasan Askari (a.s). All persecution that was meted out to his friends and lovers (i.e. Shias) are also before his eyes. He sees them, but is extremely patient and forbearing. In spite of having the authority, he has to accept Allah's command and remain in occultation and be patient. If someone reflects on all this, he will comprehend the troubled and distressed condition of Imam (a.t.f.s.). He will also realise the significance of praying for the earliest reappearance of Imam (a.t.f.s.), preparing the ground for his reappearance, bringing the people closer to him (a.t.f.s.) and making them eager and restless for his presence. These are some of our continued from page no. 18 responsibilities in the period of occultation. It should not be that lapses and laziness on our part become the cause of increase in his (a.t.f.s.) pain and suffering. Otherwise we will lose face in front of our Imam and will be very regretful after that.

We hope that by pondering on this discussion the readers may have comprehended the significance of the phrases لَمَّا صَبَرُوا of the verse.

Come let all of us present ourselves in front of Allah through Imam (a.s.) and pray to Him that He should forgive our shortcomings. And through the afflictions heaped on Janabe Zahra (s.a), let us beseech and pray for the earliest reappearance of Yusuf-e-Zahra.

### **The First Deputy – Hazrat Usman Bin Saeed-e-Amri (R.A.)**

Respected readers, in the last year's edition. (Shabaan, 1421 A.H.) you have read about the need for deputyship in the era of occultation. Going forward, we shall now discuss each special deputy (Naib-e-Khaas) in detail so as to give the readers an insight into their lives.

Hazrat Usman b. Saeed (r.a.) was the first special deputy of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) in Ghaibat-e-Sughra. The renowned Shiite scholar, Shaikh Muhammad b. Hasan Tusi (r.a.) records in his illustrious book, 'Ghaibat' - Among the companions that the infallible Imams (a.s.) considered as virtuous and pious, was Hazrat Usman b. Saeed-e-Amri (r.a.). Imam Ali Naqi, Al Hadi (a.s.) and Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) have spoken highly of him and he was their most trusted companion.'

(Ghaibat-e-Shaikh-e-Tusi, pg. 353)

#### **His name and title**

Usman was his name and his father's name was Saeed. His name in Riyaal-e-Kashi is recorded as 'Hafs b. Amr', but other scholars of Ilm-e-Riyaal (science of narrators of traditions) have considered this erroneous. His name is widely recorded as Usman b. Saeed.

He has been attributed with 2 agnomens (Kunniyat) - Abu Amr and Abu Muhammad. He was called Abu Amr since his grandfather's name was Amr. He was called Abu Muhammad because of his son Muhammad. In books of Riyaal and traditions he is referred to as Abu Amr. However, in Safinatul Behar and Beharul Anwaar, he is referred to as Abu Muhammad.

Among Shias Hazrat Usman b. Saeed (r.a.) is known by four titles.

#### **1. Saman / Zayyat (Oil Vendor)**

Hazrat Usman b. Saeed (r.a.) took up the profession of oil-vending to camouflage his more critical duties and responsibilities of deputyship from the masses in general and the tyrant kings of Bani Abbas in particular. In this way, he protected his own life and the lives of Shias from the persecution of the Bani Abbas. He had a very ingenious way of operating. He would collect all the money and trusts from the Shias for Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.). Out of fear of the Bani Abbas caliphs, he would conceal all money and trusts in his oil barrels so as to escape the scrutiny of the common masses. In this way, he could safely courier everything to Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.).

(Ghaibat-e-Shaikh-e-Tusi (r.a.), pg. 354)

To keep his position of deputyship secret, he used to supply oil and other goods to the army.

(Rozgar Rehai Az Kaamil-e-Sulaiman, vol. 1, pg. 291)

#### **2. Asadi**

He was a member of the Bani Asad clan and was therefore also famous as 'Asadi'.

#### **3. Askari**

He used to reside in Samarra, in a place called 'Askar'. This was the reason he was also called as Askari.



### 4. Amri

Scholars are unanimous that 'Amri' was one of his titles. However, scholars of Ilme-Rijaal have given differing reasons for this title. The illustrious scholar Muhammad b. Hasan - Shaikh Tusi (r.a.) has explained, 'First of all he was referred to as Amri due to his grandfather whose name was 'Amr'. Some scholars have recorded that Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) did not like that the names Usman (name of third caliph) and Abu Amr should 'combine in one person. That is why he ordered Usman to change his Kunniyat from Abu Amr to Amri.

(Ghaibat-e-Shaikh-e-Tusi (r.a.), pg. 354)

### Special deputy of three Imams (a.s.)

Shaikh-e-Tusi (r.a.) records that at the tender age of 11 years, Hazrat Usman b. Saeed (r.a.) swore allegiance to Imam Ali Naqi (a.s.) and commenced serving Imam (a.s.). Shaikh-e-Tusi (r.a.) has discussed the companions of Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) in detail. While mentioning about Hazrat Usman b. Saeed (r.a.), he says - He was an oil trader famous as Abu Amr. He was an esteemed and reliable companion in the eyes of Imam (a.s.), and was also Imam's (a.s.) special deputy. The statement of Shaikh Tusi (r.a.) makes it clear that he was deputy of three Imams (a.s.).

He further records that he was also a special deputy of Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) and enjoyed an elevated and eminent status among the Shias of that period. Likewise, Ibne Dawood-e-Hilli in his Rijaal, Marhoom-e-Qahyaai in his Majmaul Rijaal, Syed Muhammad Mahdi Bahrul Uloom (r.a.) in his Rijaal have recorded this fact. This has also been mentioned in several other books of Rijaal like Tanqeehul Maqaal, Qamoos-e-Rijaal, Mojamul Rijaalul Hadis.

(Pazoohashi Piraamun-e-Zindagani Nawwab-e-Khaase-Imam-e-Zaman (a.s.) by Ali Ghaffarzadeh, pg. 106)

### Note

Dr. Jasim Husain in his 'Tarikh-e-Siyaasi -e-Ghaibat-e-Imam-e-Dawazdahum (a.t.f.s.)' has reported that Hazrat Usman b. Saeed (r.a.) was among the companions of Abu Jafar-e-Saani - Imam Muhammad Taqi al-Jawad (a.s.). Likewise Ibne Shahr-e-Ashob in 'Manaqib-e-Abi Talib (a.s.)', Shaikh Abbas-e-Qummi (r.a.) in Safinatul Behar and Allamah Hilli (r.a.) have recounted this fact.

Ali Ghaffarzadeh in his 'Pazoohashi Piraamun-e-Zindagani Nawwab-e-Khaas-el-mam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.)' has rejected the fact that Hazrat Usman b. Saeed (r.a.) was the deputy of Imam Jawad (a.s.). He writes, 'Anyone who is even briefly acquainted with the lives of the Imams (a.s.) and Ghaibat-e-Sughra will know that Hazrat Usman b. Saeed (r.a.) was not a deputy nor a companion of Imam Jawad (a.s.). This is not an established fact of history and there is no chain of narration to support such an idea.'

After making this claim, Ali Ghaffarzadeh has outlined the names of scholars who have recorded in their books that Hazrat Usman b. Saeed (r.a.) was not a companion of Imam Jawad (a.s.).

- i. Haaj Muhammad Ardabeli (r.a.) in his book 'Jaameul Rowaat'
- ii. Shaikh Abdullah Uqaani (r.a.) in 'Tanqeehul Maqaal'
- iii. Allamah Shustari (r.a.) in 'Qaamoosul Rijal'
- iv. Ayatullah Uzma Khoie (r.a.) in 'Mojamul Rijal'

After referring to the books of these scholars Ali Ghaffarzadeh concludes that Hazrat Usman bin Saeed (r.a.) was not among the companions of Imam Jawad (a.s.).

(Pazoohashi Piraamun, pg. 109-10)

It is possible that he did spend a few years under the Imamate of Imam Jawad (a.s.), but may have been too young to qualify for companionship. .

### **His (r.a.) status in the words of Imams (a.s.)**

Ahmed b. Ishaaq Qummi (r.a.) narrates, 'I was in the presence of Imam Ali Naqi, al-Hadi (a.s.). I said, 'O my master! At times I have the good fortune of meeting you and at times I am deprived of this blessing. It is not always possible for me to be in direct contact with you. Under such circumstances, who should I contact and whose commands should I obey?' Imam (a.s.) informed me,

هَذَا أَبُو عَمْرٍو النَّقِيُّ الْأَمِينُ مَا قَالَهُ لَكُمْ فَعَنِّي يَقُولُهُ، وَمَا آدَاهُ إِلَيْكُمْ فَعَنِّي يُؤَدِّيهِ

'This man - Abu Amr (Hazrat Usman b. Saeed (r.a.)) is a reliable, upright and trustworthy person. Whatever he relates to you is from my side. Whatever he gives to you is from us.'

(Beharul Anwaar, vol. 51, pg. 344)

Imam's (a.s.) narration in favour of Hazrat Usman b. Saeed (r.a.) underlines the level of Imam's (a.s.) trust and confidence in him. Moreover, it underscores another important fact - Hazrat Usman b. Saeed (r.a.) performed some critical duties i.e. to convey Imam's (a.s.) message and commands to the Shias. The duty of the Shias was to accept this communication and implement it.

After Imam Hadi's (a.s.) martyrdom, Ahmed b. Ishaaq Qummi (r.a.) once again approached Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) and repeated his previous query who responded thus:

هَذَا أَبُو عَمْرٍو النَّقِيُّ الْأَمِينُ الْمَاضِي وَتَقَتِي فِي الْمَحْيَا وَالْمَمَاتِ فَمَا قَالَهُ لَكُمْ فَعَنِّي يَقُولُهُ وَمَا آدَى إِلَيْكُمْ فَعَنِّي يُؤَدِّيهِ-

'This man - Abu Amr (Hazrat Usman b. Saeed (r.a.)) is a reliable, upright and trustworthy person. He was dependable for the previous Imam and is dependable and reliable even for me in my lifetime and even after my death. Whatever he conveys to you is from our side and everything he gives to you is from us.'

(Beharul Anwaar, vol. 51, pg. 344)

### Deputyship of Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.)

Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) appointed Hazrat Usman b. Saeed (r.a.) as the first special deputy of Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) in the presence of 40 Shias.

Some Shias like Jafar b. Muhammad b. Malik-e-Fazari, Ali b. Bilal, Ahmed b. Helal, Muhammad b. Muawiyah b. Hakeem, Hasan b. Ayyub b. Nuh have all narrated that they approached Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) specifically to inquire from him about his successor. They recount - In addition to us, there were 40 other people who were present with Imam (a.s.). Then Hazrat Usman b. Saeed (r.a.) rose and asked Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.), 'O son of Allah's Apostle! We wish to ask you a question of which we are sure you are aware.' Imam (a.s.) replied, 'O Usman, be seated.' All of a sudden the expression on Imam's (a.s.) face changed and he went out of the room after ordering us to stay in our places and not follow him outside. We did as Imam (a.s.) commanded us. After some time, Imam (a.s.) called out Usman b. Saeed's (r.a.) name and the latter rose. Then Imam (a.s.) said, 'Should I inform you about the reason why you all are here?' All of us said, 'O son of Allah's Apostle! Please inform us.' Imam (a.s.) revealed, 'So that you may know who is the Imam after me.' The members in the assembly replied, 'Yes. We just saw a young child whose face was beautiful like the moon and looked very similar to you.' Imam (a.s.) informed, 'After me, he is your Imam and my successor. Obey him and do not scatter in confusion about him else your religion will be destroyed. After this meeting you shall never see him again until his appointed time. That is why take whatever news you get from Usman b. Saeed (r.a.).

فَهُوَ خَلِيفَةُ إِمَامِكُمْ وَالْأَمْرُ إِلَيْهِ

'He is the deputy of your Imam and deputyship is for him alone.'

(Beharul Anwaar vol. 51, pg. 346) Usman b. Saeed (r.a.)

### Usman Bin Saeed (r.a.) - Deputy of deputies

Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) wrote a lengthy letter to Ishaq b. Ismail Nishapouri, stating, 'Don't leave the city until you meet Usman b. Saeed (r.a.). Convey to him my salaam. He is trustworthy, pious and reliable and is most proximate to us.

فَكُلُّ مَا يُحْمَلُ إِلَيْنَا مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مِنَ النَّوَاحِي فَلَيْهِ الْمَسِيرُ آخِرُ أَمْرِهِ لِيُوصَلَ ذَاكَ إِلَيْنَا

'All the wealth that is collected from various places for us, is first accumulated with Usman b. Saeed (r.a.) so that it reaches us safely.'

(Beharul Anwaar vol. 50, pg. 323)

### Note

Imam's (a.s.) letter emphasises an important point. All cities where the Shias used to inhabit had deputies. These deputies accumulated money by way of Khums, Zakaat, etc. from the Shias on behalf of Imam (a.s.). These deputies collectively transmitted all this money to Hazrat Usman b. Saeed (r.a.), who in turn finally submitted it to Imam (a.s.) himself.

### **The religious and political scenario of the time**

If one casts even a cursory glance at the political and religious scenario at the time of Ghaibat-e-Sughra, he will appreciate the significance of the deputyship of Hazrat Usman b. Saeed (r.a.). The government had appointed spies in every nook and corner so as to keep a close watch on the Shias of Imam (a.t.f.s.), especially the trusted and reliable Shias who were known to be proximate to Imam (a.t.f.s.). As if the government's persecution was not enough, the differences between the Shias and outbreak of various sects only added to the confusion. (Refer to Al-Muntazar Shabaan issue 1421 A.H.) Under such trying circumstances, deputyship was an impossible task. However, under Imam's (a.t.f.s.) constant supervision and guidance, the Shias were rescued from the darkness of doubt and uncertainty and were steered towards the light of guidance and certainty. Being the special deputy of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.), Hazrat Usman b. Saeed (r.a.) played a very important role in this regard.

The criticality of his role can never be fully comprehended and appreciated. On the one hand, he had to unite the Shias who had split into many sects. On the other hand, he had to contend with Jafar ibn Ali Naqi the government's candidate for the role of Shiite leadership. To challenge Jafar was a monumental task. On the martyrdom of Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.), Jafar usurped the mantle of Imam's (a.s.) successorship, which gave him the right to lead the Shias after Imam (a.s.).

Shaikh Mufeed (r.a.) writes in his book 'Kitabul Irshad': 'After the martyrdom of Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) when Jafar b. Ali Naqi (famous as 'Jafar-e-Kazzab') saw that their Imam (a.s.) did not have a successor, he usurped his (a.s.) property, imprisoned his (a.s.) maids and the women of the household and said evil things about his (a.s.) companions who were steadfast in their faith that Imam (a.s.) had a son and were waiting for his reappearance. He threatened them but they did not pay attention to him. Finally, Jafar approached the Caliph of the time and sought his assistance to claim the position of his brother (Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.)). He paid a huge amount to the government by way of bribe, but failed miserably in his evil plans.'

(Kitabul Irshad, chap. 34)

Hazrat Usman b. Saeed (r.a.) had to face the uphill task of Jafar's claim of Imamatus, his standing to lead the funeral prayers of Imam (a.s.) and creating doubts about the Imamatus of Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.). He provoked the government of the time to help him in his cause, he imprisoned the Ahle Bait (a.s.) and persecuted them and sought religious dues (khums, zakat) from the people. Under these grievous circumstances Hazrat Usman b. Saeed (r.a.) with the help of Imam-e-Zaman (a.s.) humiliated Jafar and protected the status and Imamatus of Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.).

When the Shias heard of Jafar's claim and his usurping Imam's (a.s.) property and seeking help from Bani Abbas, some of them consulted Hazrat Usman b. Saeed (r.a.) and requested for a 'Tawqee' from Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) to clarify the matter and remove all suspicion and doubts once and for all. Our readers should find the following incident very interesting.

Jafar b. Ali wrote a letter to a follower of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) - I am the Imam after my brother and I have the knowledge of the permissible and the prohibited and all other sciences with me. When the companion received the letter, he became sorrowful. He took the letter to Ahmad b.

Ishaaq Ashari, a close confidante of Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.). Ahmad b. Ishaaq wrote a letter to Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) enclosing Jafar's letter. He gave it to Usman b. Saeed (a.s.) to be forwarded to Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.). Imam (a.t.f.s.) gave a very strong-worded reply and refuted the Imamate of Jafar. Following is the extract of Imam's (a.t.f.s.) letter:

"This defrauder (Jafar) has falsified Allah and has claimed Imamate. We do not know on what basis he has made such a claim. If he claims knowledge in the Ahkam and Fiqh of Allah's religion, then by Allah, he is not able to distinguish between the permissible and the prohibited. He cannot distinguish between the clear and ambiguous verses of the Holy Quran. He is not even aware about the limits and timings of namaz. And if he is having certainty about his piety then by Allah he has forsaken namaz for forty days. His claim should be based on a miracle. Let him forward his miracle and if he has proof then he should explain it."

(Pazoohashi Piraamun, pg. 128, narrating from Ehtejaj-e-Tabarsi, vol. 2, pg. 468)

It was with the representation of Hazrat Usman b. Saeed (r.a.) that such letters could reach Imam (a.t.f.s.) and Jafar failed in his nefarious plans. Once in a gathering Hazrat Usman b. Saeed (r.a.) said 'The caliph (Motamid-e-Abbasi) thought that Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) left this world without appointing his successor and gave his inheritance to such a person (Jafar) who did not deserve it. The followers of Imam (a.s.) were patient on it and were vacillating in state of confusion. Nobody dared to recognise him and help him or to convey something to him.

(Usule Kafi, vol.2, pg. 121, Persian edition)

### **Hazrat Usman b. Saeed (r.a.) in Baghdad**

After the martyrdom of Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.), the first representative of Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) came to Baghdad from Samarra by the order of Imam (a.s.). The reason being that the government vigilance and control in Samarra was very strict and it had relatively ignored Baghdad. Samarra was the capital of the Abbasi government. Motamid was appointed as ruler on 12th Rajab, 256 A.H. Till the end of his rule, Samarra remained the capital. In 279 A.H., the capital was shifted to Baghdad. Till that time Baghdad was the Shiite center. The migration to Baghdad helped Hazrat Usman b. Saeed (r.a.) to keep in touch with the Shias residing in different places. In this way, his activities spread to different areas and were not restricted only to Baghdad. If he was in Samarra or if Baghdad had been the capital of the Abbasides, then this would have been very difficult.

(Pazoohashi Piraamun, Pg. 130)

### **His (r.a.) mode of operation**

Hazrat Usman b. Saeed (r.a.) had appointed some agents in Baghdad who used to coordinate with the other agents of Iraq and other areas. People met these agents in Baghdad, who collected the wealth and accepted the letters and queries from the Shias and forwarded them to Hazrat Usman b. Saeed (r.a.) and he in turn forwarded the same to Imam (a.s.)

Hajiz bin b. Yazid-e-Washsha, Ahmed b. Ishaaq Ashari, Mohammad b. Ahmad b. Jafar Qattaan, Ahmad b. Ishaaq were initially the representatives of Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) in Qum, Iran. After the martyrdom of Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) they returned to Baghdad as helpers of Hazrat Usman b. Saeed (r.a.).

Mohammad b. Ahmad Qattaan had taken up the work of selling clothes so that nobody could cast any doubt on his real purpose. The other agents delivered the letters and wealth wrapped in a cloth to him and he forwarded it to Hazrat Usman b. Saeed (r.a.).

History is replete with such incidents wherein the special representatives employed such ingenious methods to protect Imam (a.t.f.s.) and his Shias. The wealth used to reach Imam (a.t.f.s.) without anybody learning about his (a.t.f.s.) actual abode.

### **His (r.a.) demise**

The duration of his deputyship and the exact date of his demise has not got wide coverage in books of history and traditions. But it is clear that the combined duration of his own deputyship and that of his son - Hazrat Muhammad b. Usman (r.a.) was 45 years.

Janabe Bahrul Uloom (r.a.) has recorded in Taaleqa-e-Rijal that Hazrat Usman b. Saeed (r.a.) expired in 264 A.H. or 255 A.H.

Ali Ghaffarzadeh in his book has narrated from historians and scholars - the death of Hazrat Usman b. Saeed (r.a.) took place before 267 A.H.

(Pazoohashi Piramun, pg. 144)

### **His grave**

He is buried near western Baghdad inside Shaare Maidan in Masjid Zarab.

(Beharul Anwaar, vol. 51, pg. 347)

Today there is market near his grave and one has to pass through several small lanes to reach the grave. Due to this, some visitors (Zaaireen) avoid going for ziyarat. His ziyarat has a lot of merit and it is similar to meeting him when one comes to meet Imam (a.t.f.s.), as he was Imam's (a.t.f.s.) deputy.

### **Obituary**

After the demise of Hazrat Usman b. Saeed (r.a.), Imam (a.t.f.s.) wrote a condolence letter to his son, Muhammad:

"Surely we are from Allah and we will return to Him. We submit ourselves to His command. Your father devoted his entire life to goodness and right till the end he was praiseworthy. May Allah have mercy on him and include him with His friends and the Imams (a.s.). He continuously endeavoured and struggled in the affairs of his Imams (a.s.) till he met Allah, the High, and the Imams (a.s.). May Allah make his face contented and happy.'

(Beharul Anwaar, vol. 51, pg. 349)



### **Remembering Imam (a.s.) An Important Responsibility**

Our responsibilities during the major occultation (Ghaibat) of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) have been dealt with in great detail in the book, 'Mikyalul Makarem Fi Favaidid Dua lil Qaem' (a.t.f.s.) by Ayatullah Muhammad Taqi Musawi Isfahani (r.a.). He has highlighted the responsibilities in the second volume of the book.

Just by looking at the responsibilities outlined in the book it should be clear to the reader that fulfilling these duties is beneficial to us and forsaking them is detrimental to our interests. We realise that executing these responsibilities is proof of our love and attachment for Imam (a.t.f.s.). Performance of action is an important indication of strength of faith. Moreover, it makes one successful in this world and the hereafter. We have discussed some of these responsibilities in our previous issues of Al-Muntazar. Inshallah, we will discuss another important responsibility, which is fairly easy to observe and very beneficial. The duty is remembering Imam (a.t.f.s.) and reminding others about him (a.t.f.s.). This responsibility can be accomplished individually as well as socially

The first step in fulfilling this duty is to increase our love towards Ahle Bait (a.s.). Books are laden with traditions regarding the love of Ahle Bait (a.s.). Here, we will outline three traditions dealing with the topic.

(1) Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) says:

إِنَّ فَوْقَ كُلِّ عِبَادَةٍ عِبَادَةٌ وَ حُبُّنَا أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ أَفْضَلُ عِبَادَةٍ

'Surely for every act of worship, there is another superior to it and the love of us - Ahle Bait - is the most superior act of worship.'

We are thankful to Allah that we were born in a family where the love of Ahle Bait (a.s.) was continuously infused in our hearts, just as food and water was constantly fed into our bodies.

(2) The standard for perfect faith and glad tidings

on the Day of Judgement is the love of Imam Zamana (a.t.f.s.). The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) declared:

فَدِّ كَمَلِ إِيمَانَهُ وَ حَسَنِ إِسْلَامَهُ فَلْيَتَوَلَّ الْحُجَّةَ صَاحِبَ الزَّمَانِ الْمُنْتَظَرَ ..... مَنْ أَحَبَّهُمْ وَ تَوَلَّاهُمْ كُنْتُ ضَامِنًا لَهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ تَعَالَى بِالْجَنَّةِ.

'(If one wishes) to have perfect faith and desires that his Islam is best, then he should love Hujjat - Sahebuz Zamana Al Muntazar (Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.)). Whoever loves them (Imams (a.s.)) and accepts their mastership, then I take guarantee from Allah, the High, for Paradise.'

(Beharul Anwar, vol. 36, pg. 296)

Dear readers, the only way to increase the love of Ahle Bait (a.s.) is their remembrance. An important benefit of this remembrance is that we will be safe from the assaults of Shaitan. A great scholar used to explain to his students that Shaitan is smarter than we are. He has promised Allah that he will deviate the progeny of Adam (a.s.). To achieve his aim he employs various tactics to deviate us. The easiest and the most successful way to save ourselves from his deceit is put the shield of remembrance of Ahle Bait (a.s.) between ourselves and Shaitan. We

find a similar concept in traditions as explained by the scholar to his students. Shaitan stays away from those who are busy in the remembrance of Ahle Bait (a.s.).

(3) Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said to his famous companion, Dawood bin Sarhan:

'O Dawood, give my salutations to my Shias and convey my message to them that when two persons meet and discuss our traditions then Allah's mercy is on both of them. The third between them is an angel who seeks forgiveness for them. No two persons meet and discuss about us but Allah prides Himself on this fact among His angels. (I order you) whenever you meet keep yourself busy in our remembrance. This remembrance enlivens our affairs. The best people after us are those who narrate our traditions and invite people towards them.'

(Beharul Anwaar, vol. 1, pg. 200)

Dear readers, Imam (a.s.) in this brief tradition, has conveyed some important points:

- 1) Whenever two persons discuss the traditions of the Holy Infallibles (a.s.), the third entity among them is an angel and not Shaitan.
- 2) The angel seeks forgiveness for all persons participating in the discussion. It is quite possible that our repentance is not accepted by Allah, but the supplications of angels is always accepted.
- 3) The holy Infallible Imam (a.s.) is constantly praying for Allah's mercy for all these persons who discuss the traditions.
- 4) Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) has ordered us to gather and discuss traditions of the Ahle Bait (a.s.).
- 5) When their traditions are discussed, the affairs of the holy Infallibles (a.s.) are enlivened.
- 6) Allah, the Almighty, prides over such gatherings.
- 7) Such people will be enumerated among the best people.

An Arab poet who was intensely attached to Imam Zamana (a.t.f.s.) has recited the following couplet:

اللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ أَنِّي لَسْتُ أَذْكُرُكُمْ فَكَيْفَ أَذْكُرُكُمْ إِذْ لَسْتُ أَنْسَاكُمْ

'Allah knows that I don't remember (you) How do I remember you when I don't forget you.'

(Mikyalul Makarem Fi Favaidid Dua Lil Qaem, vol. 2, pg. 308)

The above couplets are an example of the tradition of Imam Moosa Kazim (a.s.) when a person asked him whether the twelfth Imam (a.s.) will be unseen? Imam (a.s.) replied:

نَعَمْ يَغِيبُ عَنْ أَبْصَارِ النَّاسِ شَخْصُهُ وَلَا يَغِيبُ عَنْ قُلُوبِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ذِكْرُهُ وَهُوَ الثَّانِي عَشَرَ مِنَّا.

'Yes, physically he will be unseen but his remembrance will not be absent from the hearts of the believers and he is the twelfth one from us.'

(Kamaluddin Wa Tamamun Nemah, chap. 34, trad. No. 6).

May our lives be sacrificed for Babul Hawaij - Imam Moosa Kazim (a.s.). Most of his life was spent in worshipping Allah in the dreadful and uncomfortable prison of the Abbasides. In the above tradition, he emphasises the importance of remembering our last Imam (a.t.f.s.) at all times.

In another incident we learn the significance of remembering Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.). Once an old person from Syria came to Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.). He saluted Imam (a.s.), kissed his hand and started crying. Imam (a.s.) consoled him and asked him the reason for crying. He said: O master! After the incident of Karbala, every day I have been anticipating that maybe today or tomorrow, this week or the next week, this month or the next month, this year or the next year, an individual from the progeny of Imam Husain (a.s.) will rise and avenge his blood. But I do not see any sign of this (rising) in you.' After hearing this, Imam (a.s.) cried even more than the old man and said: O old man, I am not that individual (who is to rise) but he is the last from us, Hujjat b. Hasan Askari (a.t.f.s.). As you have his love in your heart and you await him, even if you die before his reappearance he will raise you from your grave.

(Muntahul Aamaal, Shaykh Abbas-e-Qummi (r.a.))

O lovers of the oppressed Imam (a.s.)! O aggrieved ones for Imam Husain (a.s.) - the beloved of the Holy Prophet's (s.a.w.a.) daughter (s.a.)! Is it possible that we be negligent of Imam Husain's (a.s.) heir and abandon his remembrance from our hearts and gatherings?

Remember, if we are the true lovers of Imam (a.t.f.s.), then we should remember the avenger of Imam Husain's (a.s.) blood just like that old Syrian who came in Imam Sadiq's (a.s.) presence. Like him we must also cry and beseech Allah for Imam's (a.t.f.s.) earliest reappearance. We should know that the one who is fully aware of the incident of Karbala and of the oppression inflicted upon Janabe Zahra (s.a.) remembers his Shias by saying:

إِنَّا غَيْرُ مُهْمِلِينَ لِمَرَاعَاتِكُمْ وَلَا نَاسِينَ لِدُرُكِكُمْ

'Surely we are never negligent of your affairs nor do we forget your remembrance.'

After witnessing such affection on Imam's (a.t.f.s.) part, does it behove us that we remember him (a.t.f.s.) only on 15th Shabaan?

According to reliable traditions, our deeds are presented to Imam (a.t.f.s.) twice a week. When he (a.t.f.s.) glances at our bad deeds he (a.t.f.s.) cries intensely and supplicates to Allah that their (Shias) hearts are filled with the love of my ancestors (a.s.), therefore forgive their sins.

Dear readers, let us resolve that from today, we will perform certain recommended acts to remember Imam (a.t.f.s.) and through it, we will save ourselves from the attacks of Shaitan. With this we will include ourselves amongst those people for whom the angels seek forgiveness and Allah prides over them. In this manner we will be under Allah's perpetual mercy and will be included among the true lovers of Imam Husain (a.s.) and not be the cause of Imam's (a.t.f.s.) sorrow and grief. 1) To recite Dua-e-Ahad after every morning prayer. It is narrated from Imam Jafer Sadiq (a.s.) that one who recites Dua-e-Ahad for forty mornings, then Inshallah, he will be included among the companions and helpers of Imam (a.t.f.s.) at the time of his (a.t.f.s.) reappearance. If he dies before Imam's (a.t.f.s.) reappearance, he (a.t.f.s.) will raise him from his grave. We remember Imam (a.t.f.s.) in this Dua with these beautiful words:

إِنَّهُمْ يَرَوْنَهُ بَعِيدًا وَنَرَاهُ قَرِيبًا

'They (enemies) perceive your reappearance as distant but we consider it as near.'

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنْ حَالَ بَيْنِيْ وَ بَيْنَهُ الْمَوْتُ الَّذِيْ جَعَلْتَهُ عَلٰى عِبَادِكَ حَتْمًا مَّقْضِيًّا فَاخْرِجْنِيْ مِنْ قَبْرِىْ مُؤْتَرًّا كَفَنِيْ شَاهِرًا سَيْفِيْ مُجَرِّدًا  
قَنَاتِيْ مُلَبِّيَا دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِيْ

'O my Allah, if death comes between me and him (Imam (a.t.f.s.)), which you have decreed as a certainty for your servants, then raise me from my grave, enshrouded, my sword uncovered, wielding a naked spear answering to the call of the caller in cities as well as deserts!'

This supplication can be found in Mafateehul Jinaan (without translation) pg. 542, published by Haidari Kutub Khana, Mafateehul Jinaan (with translation) pg. 988, published by Tanzeemul Makatib, Beharul Anwaar, vol. 102, pg. 112 2)

Every Friday morning to organise an assembly for Dua-e-Nudba in the house and/or in the locality. Nudba means intense wailing. In this Dua, the lovers of Imam Husain (a.s.) in the condition of waiting asks:

اَيْنَ الطَّالِبُ بِدَمِ الْمَقْتُوْلِ بِكَرْبَلَاءَ

'Where is the one who will take the revenge of the blood of the martyrs of Karbala?'

لَيْتَ شِعْرِيْ اَيْنَ اسْتَقَرَّتْ بِكَ النَّوْىُ

'I wish I had known where you are living!'

بِنَفْسِيْ اَنْتَ اُمْنِيَّةُ شَانِقٍ يَتَمَنَّى مِنْ مُؤْمِنٍ وَمُؤْمِنَةٍ ذِكْرًا فَحَنًّا.

May my life be sacrificed for you, you are the desire of every believing man and woman who has remembered you and sympathised with you.'

This supplication can also be found in Mafateehul Jinaan (without translation) pg. 536, published by Haidari Kutub Khana, Mafateehul Jinaan (with translation) pg. 974, published by Tanzeemul Makatib

### 3) To organise gatherings and assemblies

(majaalis) wherein Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) is remembered. Enliven the hearts of your children and believers. It is narrated in traditions that hearts are enlivened with the remembrance of Imam (a.t.f.s.) and sins are forgiven. The hearts will remain alive on that when all other hearts will be dead. For more details, (Beharul Anwaar, vol. 1, pg.200.)

4) Read and narrate the incidents of people who have met Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) so that the desire and love of meeting Imam (a.t.f.s.) is revived in the hearts. A lover of Imam (a.t.f.s.) has stated beautifully:

'We desire to see you but this journey is not possible. If we are unable to reach you, then you only come to us.'

5) As it is commanded in the last verse of Surah Aal-e-Imran, gleilsg 'And be in contact'. Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) says?

وَ رَابِطُوا اِمَامَكُمْ الْمُنْتَظَرَ

'Be in contact with your Imam, the Awaited One'. Day and night whenever you get the time be in contact with your Imam (a.t.f.s.).

ابطوا in occultation means to always remember Imam (a.t.f.s.), to seek mediation (tawaasul) through him (a.t.f.s.) and to seek solution of all our problems through him (a.t.f.s.) only.

6) Shaikh Abu Amr has narrated 'Dua-e-Ghaibat' from Imam (a.s.). This supplication should be recited on Friday. Shaykh Abbas-e-Qummi (r.a.) has narrated in his book, 'Muntahal Aamaal' that even if no recommended action is performed on Friday then at least one should read this supplication and should never abandon it as it is prayed to have perfect belief in Imam (a.t.f.s.) in the period of occultation.

This supplication can be found in Mafateehul Jinaan (without translation) pg. 588, published by Haidari Kutub Khana.

7) Before performing any action we must think whether Imam (a.t.f.s.) will be pleased with it or not?

O Allah, by the right of Hazrat Zahra (s.a.) fill our hearts with the love of Imam (a.t.f.s.) and give us the taufeeq to remember him (a.t.f.s.) and make others remember him (a.t.f.s.).

8) In the month of Muharram or even otherwise, whenever we cry for the martyrs of Karbala and the prisoners of Ahle Bait (a.s.), we should offer our condolences to the one who will avenge the blood of Imam Husain (a.s.) and we should pray for his earliest reappearance.

9) We must celebrate the birthday of Imam (a.t.f.s.) on 15th Shabaan in such a way that people inquire about the occasion. Apart from reciting verses in praise of Imam (a.t.f.s.), we should organise other programmes so that people can increase their recognition (ma'refat) of Imam (a.t.f.s.) and attain proximity towards him (a.t.f.s.).