

The Necessity of a Divine Proof

All our beliefs are based on intellect and Shariah (divine laws). It is the decision of the intellect and the Shariah that for maintaining order in the universe and for its smooth functioning, there must exist a 'perfect individual', a 'divine representative', and a 'proficient and dynamic mind', whose existence precedes the existence of this universe. He should be the ruler and the leader of this universe. His existence should be superior and distinct from the existence of all other mortals. He must have precedence and supremacy over all other creatures. If this individual does not exist then the existence of the entire universe would be in jeopardy. All these are the pronouncements of the intellect. Whatever bounties this universe is receiving, be it knowledge or life or strength or benevolence, are solely due to the presence of this revered personality. An example will make this point clearer.

The rays of the sun illuminate the entire world. It lightens the lands, houses, mountains, oceans etc. In fact the entire natural environment is lit up due to the sun. The rays of the sun are spread all over the place. Now some of the things are nearer to the sun while others are far away. Yet whatever light is found on those distant objects is nothing but sunlight. Is it possible that the rays of the sun will illuminate those objects that are very far away while the near ones remain in darkness? Can one imagine that the sunlight will first fall on a point that is far from it, while those proximate to it will be engulfed in gloom? Certainly not. The intellect does not affirm this and every wise person will concur that this is impossible. They will also agree that if the sun lightens all things then obviously the objects nearer to it will light up first and only then will the distant objects become resplendent. Rather it will brighten the nearby objects first and then gradually, the distant objects will be lit up in phases. Also, the objects that are closer to the center will be brighter than the objects farther away. The nearby objects will bear more characteristics of the illuminating source. They will be a collection of the attributes of the primary cause of light. The only difference will be that the light emanating from the nearby objects is not their own but due to that central and pivotal source of light.

Similarly, the 'sun' which illuminates the world, that divine and heavenly radiance, it is the light of life, knowledge, supremacy, divinity and majesty. He is the fountainhead of all perfection and is the cause of light for all creatures. The essence of each of these creatures is illuminated with his presence. Whatever perfection is found in the creatures is a blessing of this 'divine light'. When the divine light manifested itself then that 'essence' whose status is very lofty and exalted and whose station is very proximate to Allah was the first one to be lit up by that (divine) light. The light of divinity manifested with its entire splendor and brilliance in this essence. Had this 'essence' not been there, divine bounties would not have reached to the other creatures. Thus, the bounties that we receive are exclusively due to the existence of this entity.

Various levels of creatures

Due to his status, man is superior to animal, which in turn is superior to plants, which are superior to stones. This difference in levels is not only because of their existence but it is because of the presence of those significant characteristics that are found in one group but are absent in another. Man is better than animals because he possesses intellect and understanding. Animals are better than plants because they possess an instinct. Plants are

superior to stones because they possess the characteristics of growth and development. Thus the various groups of creatures are superior to each other because of the differing levels of perfection found in them. It is man who will benefit first from the bounties of Allah and is therefore at the highest degree of perfection compared to all other creatures

The highest creation is 'Allah's Proof

Just as there are different levels of creatures - one group being superior to the other - in the same way there are grades among humans as well, depending on their degrees of excellence. On this basis, the first person to benefit from the grace and bounties of Allah will be the one who will be at the highest level of excellence - a truly perfect being. In other words, the divine attributes will be found in that individual who is superior and surpasses the rest in his perfection. It is this being who will become the center of divine light and the collection of divine characteristics. Everyone else will derive comfort and benefit from this entity. In traditions this individual has been referred to as the 'Proof of Allah' (Hujjatullah). It is not possible to accept that the most degraded creature is deriving benefits from the bounties of Allah while it is devoid of a supreme personality. The stable existence of the entire universe is the clearest proof of the presence of this revered being. It is only due to his existence that we see the prevalent order and harmony in the universe. This particular being who is not only the most exalted creation of Allah but also His most perfect creation, is referred to terminologically as '**Al-Mumkin Al-Ashraf**' (the noblest creature).

Today this pure and revered being is the holy existence of Hazrat Hujjat b. Hasan Askari (a.s.) due to whom the system of this universe subsists and survives.

”بِقَائِهِمْ بَقِيَتِ الدُّنْيَا“

"The world subsists due to his survival."

”وَ بِبِئْمَانِهِمْ رُزِقَ الْوَرَى“

"Due to his blessings, the creatures are sustained."

”بِوُجُودِهِ تَبَتَّتِ الْأَرْضُ وَالسَّمَاءُ“

"On account of his existence, the heavens and the earth remain intact."

(Dua-e-Adeelah, MafaatihulJinaan, p.58)

It is far fetched to accept that each and every creature of this universe is deriving benefit from Allah's grace while the 'perfect being', the 'representative of Allah' is deprived of it. This is because the bounties from the 'fountainhead of (all) bounties' are being transmitted solely due to this divine proof. Therefore, not only was the Hujjat of Allah present before the creation, but he is present along with the creation and will be present after the creation. Traditions reiterate this point:

”الْحُجَّةُ قَبْلَ الْخَلْقِ وَ مَعَ الْخَلْقِ وَ بَعْدَ الْخَلْقِ“

'The divine proof (al-hujjah) was before the creation, is with the creation and will remain after the creation.'

(Behaarul Anwaar; vol. 23 p. 38, tradition 66)

Whatever bounties this universe is witnessing and all future bounties, are purely due to the Hujjat of Allah. Had he not been there, the universe would have been deprived of Allah's Benevolence. The following tradition of Imam (a.s) explains the above fact:

“لَوْ بَقِيَتِ الْأَرْضُ يَوْمًا بِلَا إِمَامٍ مِنَّا لَسَاخَتْ”

'This world will disintegrate if even for a single day there is no Imam from us (Ahle Bait (a.s.))'

(Beharul Anwaar, vol. 23p. 37, tradition 64)

Hence even if one single man is alive on the earth, it means that an Imam is present somewhere. In fact, the famous tradition clearly states, 'If two people are alive on the face of the earth then one of them will be an Imam.'

Recognition of Favours and Gratitude

Human wisdom decrees that you should always remain thankful to the one who obliges you. This feeling of recognizing an obligation and being thankful to the one who has done us a favour is not restricted to humans alone. Even animals follow this principle. If you place your hand affectionately on an animal, it looks at you with eyes filled with gratitude. In its own way, it will express its respect for you. If someone is not grateful to the one who has bestowed favours upon him, then he is worse than an animal. From our earlier discussion, it is clear that this universe and whatever is in it is indebted to Hazrat Hujjat b. Hasan Askari (a.s.) for existence, sustenance and all kinds of perfection and bounties found in it. Imam (a.t.f.s.) is the means for the stability of the earth and skies. He is the axis that keeps the earth secure and poised. His existence serves as the decisive factor in the stability and permanence of this universe. In reality everything is due to him. Allah has ordered us to be appreciative to our parents because they are the medium for our coming into existence. For this momentous favour, he has commanded us to accord our highest respect to them, always do good to them and obey them at all times. Only then one can imagine our responsibilities towards our Imam (a.t.f.s.), the extent to which we have to be thankful to him, obey him unconditionally and try to recompense him for all his favours with goodness. The Holy Quran says

“وَإِذْ تَأَذَّنَ رَبُّكُمْ لَئِن شَكَرْتُمْ لَأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ ۖ وَلَئِن كَفَرْتُمْ إِنَّ عَذَابِي لَشَدِيدٌ.”

And when your Lord made it known 'if you are ungrateful (then) My chastisement is very severe.'

(Surah Ibrahim:7)

If this life and the things related to it are bounties then the greatest bounty is that venerable personality due to whom we receive these bounties. Now the question is 'What is the best way of thanking our Imam?' Had the people valued and treasured all our previous Imams (a.s.), respected and honoured them, not given preference to others over them, not obtained religion from others despite their presence, obeyed their orders and instructions, then most surely our present Imam would not have gone into concealment. His occultation is the result of our negligence and ingratitude towards him and his forefathers (a.s.).

Unfortunately, even today, we don't remember the Imam of our era, as he ought to be remembered. The belief in his existence and issues related to it should flow through our lives and embrace our existence just as blood circulates through the body, or rather as the soul is attached to the body. As the feelings and pleasures of worldly life are entirely due to the soul.

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Similarly, the contentment and gratification of religious life is only due to Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s). If we don't possess this sentiment then indeed life becomes valueless.

Come let all of us strengthen and intensify this desire in our daily lives. Let us enliven this feeling in a manner that we prepare and develop the ground for the earliest reappearance of our Imam so that Allah's mercy is inspired and the doors of acceptance of supplications open. And finally the orders for his reappearance are promulgated immediately:

إِنَّهُمْ يَرَوْنَهُ بَعِيدًا وَنَرَاهُ قَرِيبًا

'Surely they perceive it (reappearance) to be far away while We see it to be very near.'

(Dua-e-Ahad)

"And when your Lord made it known 'If you are grateful then I will certainly give you more,

The Deed Of Allegiance

Introduction

A deed of allegiance (bay'ahnamah) serves the purpose of conveying the idea of an 'agreement' present in its written format. It will be under the rules and regulations of this very agreement that the workers, helpers, friends, companions and the populace as a whole, take the oath of allegiance and faithfulness to the Master of the Time (may our souls be sacrificed for him). Before we move on to mention some of the conditions of this 'agreement', it would be prudent to view in context the meaning of allegiance (bay'ah).

What does bay'ah mean? Where and when was the word used before the advent of Islam? And after the arrival of Islam, what historical importance did this word construe? Till what period did this word remain in common usage? Later, was its usage suspended or discontinued or did the word become clothed in seclusion so as to protect it from being usurped by tyrannical dynasties? Let us search for the answers of these questions in brief.

The literary meanings of bay'ah are oath, allegiance and covenant. Ibne Khaldun has noted in his Al-Muqaddamah:

”كَانُوا إِذَا بَايَعَ الْأَمِيرَ جَعَلُوا أَيْدِيَهُمْ فِي يَدِهِ تَأْكِيدًا فَاشْتَبَهَ ذَلِكَ فِعْلَ الْبَايَعِ وَالْمُشْتَرَى

(Tafsire Namuna, vol. 22, p. 70 from the al-Muqaddamah preface of Ibne Khaldun p.174)

'When paying allegiance (bay'ah) to a ruler, they would, for emphasis, place their hands upon his hand. This action was like a transaction between a buyer and a seller.'

Bay'ah means oath, allegiance and covenant (Al-Munjid in Urdu).

Gheyaas al-Lughaat has discussed it in greater detail by adding sincerity, loyalty, and following in friendship.

Since the dawn of Islam, the word bay'ah has been used at the time of Hajj, when at Aqabah (in Ta'if) twelve persons connected with Banu Khazraj came from Medinah and pledged allegiance (bay'ah) at the hands of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.). This incident is known in history as al-Bay'ah al-Oola (the first allegiance).

After this, another group of seventy-three persons from Medina also pledged allegiance to the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) again at Aqabah. This bay'ah is known as al-Bay'ah al-Saania (the second allegiance). 'Al-Bay'ah al-Ridhwan' is at the second important turning point in Islam. This is the historical allegiance finding mention in the Holy Quran and Allah, the Almighty, declares:

”لَقَدْ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ يُبَايِعُونَكَ تَحْتَ الشَّجَرَةِ...

'Certainly Allah was well pleased with the believers when they swore allegiance to you (i.e. on the hands of the Prophet) under the tree....'

(Surah Fath: 18)

This incident occurred in the sixth year of Hijrat when the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) had set out for pilgrimage and had sent Uthman b. Affan as his emissary to Mecca when a rumour spread that Uthman had been murdered. Thereafter, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) gathered the

believers and took oath and covenant that they would engage in war, fighting the unbelievers till their last breaths and would never flee from the battlefield. This oath of allegiance is known as Al-Bay'ah al-Ridhwan. When this news reached the people of Mecca, it resulted in great turmoil and anxiety, which ultimately culminated in the Treaty of Hudaibiyah.

Bay'ah from women

The third important bay'ah worth mentioning here is the pledge of allegiance taken from women. The Holy Quran described it in Surah Mumtahanah: Verse 12, which was revealed after the victory of Mecca,

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِذَا جَاءَكَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتُ يُبَايِعْنَكَ عَلَىٰ أَنْ لَا يُشْرِكْنَ بِاللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَسْرِقْنَ وَلَا يَزْنِينَ وَلَا يَقْتُلْنَ أَوْلَادَهُنَّ وَلَا يَأْتِينَ بِبُهْتَانٍ يَفْتَرِينَهُ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِنَّ وَأَرْجُلِهِنَّ وَلَا يَعْصِيَنَّ فِي مَعْرُوفٍ ۖ فَبَايِعْنَهُنَّ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُنَّ اللَّهُ ۖ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٢﴾

'O Prophet! when believing women come to you giving you a pledge that they will not associate aught with Allah, and will not steal, and will not commit fornication, and will not kill their children, and will not bring a calumny which they have forged of themselves (i.e. they will not attribute the child of others to their husbands), and will not disobey you in what is good. Then, accept their pledge and ask forgiveness for them from Allah; surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.'

The aforementioned two deeds of allegiance mentioned in the Holy Quran with regards to the covenant of Prophethood of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) enlighten the context as well. When taking a pledge and oath from men, the focus is on steadfastness and consistency (not to flee from the battlefield). And it was only three years preceding (the oath) that this situation was witnessed. The Holy Quran has repeatedly emphasized steadfastness.

اصْبِرُوا وَصَابِرُوا وَرَابِطُوا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

"Be steadfast, have patience, fight, fear Allah perhaps you may succeed."

(Surah Ale Imran:200)

The verse emphasized the affirmative aspects, i.e. the orders and prohibitions of Allah. The prospective factor of flight (from battle) generates itself rather quickly in men, hence the need for a firm stand was emphasized. After the passing away of the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.), both the pen and the sword had undertaken an unscrupulous slight to generate a change in the mindsets of the Muslims, culminating in the drastic incident of Karbala.

The Imam of our Time (a.t.f.s.) laments over it:

سَلَامٌ مَنْ لَوْ كَانَ مَعَكَ بِالطُّفُوفِ لَوْ قَاكَ بِنَفْسِهِ حَدَّ السُّيُوفِ

'If only I was at Karbala with you, I would protect you even at the cost of my life.'

(Ziyarate Naahiyah)

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) took the pledge of allegiance from women after the victory of Mecca and directed their attention towards the five prohibitions. {Readers can refer to the article of Muharram issue of Al-Muntazar (1422 A.H.) captioned 'Who are the Ale Ziyad?' for some insight into their previous lifestyles. Some Arab women did possess the aforementioned defects in mentality and morality. Therefore, the prohibitions were imposed upon them}.

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The next era of bay'ah is of Ameerul Momineen (a.s.). After the killing of Uthman, the people of Medina and its outskirts gathered in numbers at the doorstep of Hazrat Ali (a.s.). They all took the oath of complete obedience to him. They pledged their unconditional allegiance at his hands, when he stated that

'I have a right upon you and you have a right upon me. And your right is that I be attentive towards your wellbeing and give you your complete entitlement from the public treasury, that I teach you so that you may no longer remain ignorant and train you in the manner in which you style your life.... And my right upon you is that you fulfill (the conditions and duties of) your pledge and guard my interests both before me and behind my back. When I beckon you, you should respond to my call and when I order something, obey it."

(Nahjul Balagha)

The third era is when Imam Hasan (a.s.) was sitting with some people, while the Amir of Syria, (Muawiyah) entered. Some people pledged allegiance at his hands, at which Imam (a.s.) remarked,

أَلَا تَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّنِي إِمَامُكُمْ مُفْتَرَضُ الطَّاعَةِ عَلَيْكُمْ.

'Do you not know that verily I am your Imam whose obedience is obligatory upon you (i.e. bay'ah is fundamental in Islamic law whose fulfillment is obligatory upon you. And you leave that for pledging your fealty to some other).'

(Kamaaluddin vol1, p. 316, chap.29, tradition 2).

The fourth setting of bay'ah can be witnessed at the time of Imam Husain (a.s.). When Yazid was crowned as king, he wrote a letter to the governor of Medina instructing him to extract a pledge of allegiance from Husain (a.s.), the grandson of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) or despatch to him his severed head. Accordingly Walid b. Atbah summoned Imam (a.s.) to Darul Amaarah informing him about the mandate. Imam (a.s.) replied,

'I am from the Ahle Bait of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.). I am the treasury of knowledge and Prophethood, the hub of the descent of angels, the focal point of all benevolence. O Amir! Yazid is a drunkard, kills noblemen and commits sin openly.'

مِثْلِي لَا يَبَايِعُ مِثْلَهُ

'One like me will not pledge allegiance to one like him.'

(Al-Muntazar, Moharram, 1422 A.H.)

It was only within six months of this incident that the event of Karbala took place.

Soon the chastity, purity and honor of bay'ah began to be exploited. Vile and debased rulers started demanding bay'ah from the chosen ones of Allah. It was a huge calamity for Islam. Before the enthroning of Yazid, Mughaira sent 140 persons from Kufa to Muawiyah who paid allegiance to Yazid. Muawiyah took the leader of this contingent aside and questioned him, 'For how much did Mughaira buy your fealty?' He answered, '400 dirhams'.

(Al-Muntazar, Muharram, 1422 A.H.)

Bay'ah means love and loyalty, oath and covenant, purity and virtue. All of this was crushed and trampled upon by the deception and guile of the rulers. The soul of Islam was searching for its lost prestige and glory of yesteryears within the framework of bay'ah when the voice of Imam Husain (a.s.) rose through the air in Medina:

مِثْلِي لَا يَبَايِعُ مِثْلَهُ

This voice enveloped the entire universe. The year 61 A.H. bears testimony that bay'ah became out of reach of the oppressive and debased rulers and enclosed itself in its last and safest refuge. The reappearance of Hazrat Hujjah (a.t.f.s.) is an established fact and so is the renewal of bay'ah at the time of his reappearance. At this juncture, we feel we are in the midst of a beautiful dream and my heart swells with joy when I visualize the shape of bay'ah through the veils of its systems and commissioning. But as reality dawns, dispersing the threads of dreams, we can hear the muted anguish of the soul from behind the scrolls of dark deeds of an incapable people. Then, our existence is shaken by an intense fear. It is as if we have fallen flat on our faces after the distant journey through history. We can see a known face sitting on the wall of Kufa, shedding tears at the slaughter of someone at the time of the martyrdom. He knows the truth but instead of responding to the call 'Is there any helper for me?' he sits involved, in the blaze of the afternoon heat, lying himself with his companions in the fetters of interpretations.

This was the voice of our innermost selves, which was delivered through the tongue in the shape of a sigh. Fourteen centuries have passed from the event of Karbala and the advent of the Minor Occultation (Ghaibat-e-Sughra). The guards posted at the door of the 'Solution of Difficulties' have since been removed and the door of representation forever closed. The lengthy period of the Major Occultation (Ghaibat-e-Kubra) has indeed arrived. We, as Shias, now call upon the jurists (maraaje') and the path to taqleed has been opened for the ease of myriad problems. The virtuous and the jurists, through their efforts and persistence, have maintained the link of solutions to our difficulties with Hazrat Qaem (a.t.f.s.). They have not let the dust settle on the moist flower of bay'ah. They have protected its originality, virtue, greatness, freshness and fragrance and gifted us its methodology through the supplications of the infallible Imams (a.s.). Furthermore, it is only after passing through an expedition of blood, travails, problems, efforts and research that the jurists have presented us with the light of perception and explanation of bay'ah and informed us of its beautiful form through the news that 'Bay'ah is pledged only to the Messenger of God and the Infallible Imams (a.s.) and that the breaking of the bay'ah is a major sin'. And in Behaarul Anwaar vol 67, Chapter 10, p.185, H.3, it has been narrated from Imam Moosa b. Jafar (a.s.),

ثَلَاثَةٌ مُؤَبِّقَاتٌ: نَكَثُ الصِّفْقَةِ، وَ تَرَكَ السُّنَّةَ وَ فَرَأَى الْجَمَاعَةَ

"Three sins destroy a person and involve him in a grievous chastisement. The breaking of allegiance, the leaving of Sunnah and forsaking the congregational prayers."

The conclusion of this entire treatise is that the chapter of bay'ah is a lengthy discussion, having a historical facet, which introduces bay'ah in bold lettering. For bay'ah, there are certain conditions in belief and some scales by which the character, behaviour, activity, lifestyle, etiquette, food and clothing, individual and social contacts of the believers of the religion of

Allah, i.e. all that which is entrusted to the wealth of life, is measured and weighed. The difference between the proponers and opponents is clearly understood and a style of life with an understanding is developed. Those who wear the necklace (of bay'ah) around their necks, also have their differences in levels, views and opinions.

Let us view the time when the divine government will be established from this angle.

When the Proof (Hujjat) of Allah will prevail upon the cities and the entire planet, when all the creatures and servants of Allah will come under the authority of the Caliph of Allah. When, for the first time, the brilliant sun of Imamah will make his brilliant visage apparent from the veil of the dense clouds of occultation (ghaibat). There, at the Maqame Ibrahim and the wall of the Holy Ka'baa, will be the 313 chosen ones of Allah to take precedence in stepping forward. They will pledge their allegiance at Imam's (a.t.f.s.) hands. A refreshing dawn, uplifting the souls and permeating effervescence everywhere! The morning breeze will whisper peace and satisfaction. The scale of the value of bay'ah will be in front of us. The heartbeats seeped in divine benefaction will pound in praise of Allah and Imam (a.t.f.s.) in a divine litany making the surroundings beautiful. There will be the conditions, oaths and covenants. And there will be loyalty, friendship and sacrifice. The purest in lineage, focus of attention (a.t.f.s.) will be free from danger and fear. This bay'ahnamah is the one, which was given in the written format by the leader of the pious, the Commander of the Faithful, Ali b. Abi Talib (a.s.) to his followers during his rule, so that hope should not be lost nor should desperation overwhelm the Shias. The awaiting (intezaar) should survive. The enlightened aspects of truth should be apparent. That very bay'ahnamah is presented for the benefit of our readers. We pray to Allah the Almighty to make us present in the first row on the Promised Day to have the honour of giving bay'ah at the divine hand of mercy and success.

يُيَايِعُونَ عَلَى أَنْ لَا يَسْرِقُوا وَلَا يَزْنُوا وَلَا يُسْبُوا مُسْلِمًا، وَلَا يَقْتُلُوا مُحْرَمًا وَلَا يَهْتَكُوا حَرِيمًا مُحْرَمًا. وَلَا يَهْجُمُوا مَنْزِلًا وَلَا يَضْرِبُوا أَحَدًا إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا يَكْنُزُوا ذَهَبًا وَلَا فِضَّةً، وَلَا بَرًّا وَلَا شَعِيرًا وَلَا يَأْكُلُوا مَالَ الْيَتِيمِ، وَلَا يَشْهَدُوا بِمَا لَا يَعْلَمُونَ، وَلَا يَخْرِبُوا مَسْجِدًا، وَلَا يَشْرَبُوا مَسْكَرًا، وَلَا يَلْبَسُوا الْخَرَّ وَلَا الْحَرِيرَ وَلَا يَتَمَنَّقُوا بِالذَّهَبِ، وَلَا يَقْطَعُوا طَرِيقًا وَلَا يَخُوفُوا سَبِيلًا وَلَا يَفْسِقُوا بَعْلًا وَلَا يَحْبِسُوا طَعَامًا مِنْ بَرٍّ وَشَعِيرٍ وَ يَرْضُونَ بِالْقَلْبَلِ وَ يَشْتَمُونَ بِالطَّيِّبِ وَ يَكْرَهُونَ النَّجَاسَةَ وَ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَ يَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَ يَلْبَسُونَ الْخَشِينَ مِنَ الثِّيَابِ وَ يَتَوَسَّدُونَ التُّرَابَ عَلَى الْخَدْوِ، وَ يَجَاهِدُونَ فِي اللَّهِ حَقَّ جِهَادِهِ وَ يَشْرَطُ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ لَهُمْ أَنْ يَمْشِيَ حَيْثُ يَمْشُونَ وَ يَلْبَسُ كَمَا يَلْبَسُونَ وَ يَرْكَبُ كَمَا يَرْكَبُونَ وَ يَحُونَ مِنْ حَيْثُ يَرِيدُونَ، يَرْضَى بِالْقَلْبَلِ وَ يَمْلَأُ الْأَرْضَ بِعَوْنِ اللَّهِ عَدْلًا كَمَا مَلَأَتْ جَوْرًا يَعْبُدُ اللَّهَ حَقَّ عِبَادَةٍ وَلَا يَأْخُذُ حَاجِبًا وَلَا بَوَابًا.

The companions of the Qaem (may Allah hasten his reappearance) will take a covenant at his hands that we will:

1. Not steal.
2. Not commit adultery.
3. Not abuse a Muslim.
4. Not murder anyone unlawfully.
5. Not violate anyone's honour.
6. Not attack anybody's dwelling.

7. Not harm anybody.
8. Not hoard gold, silver, wheat and barley.
9. Not usurp the property of the orphan.
10. Not give false testimony.
11. Not forsake the mosque.
12. Not drink wines and intoxicants.
13. Not wear clothes made of silk or golden thread.
14. Not wear a golden belt.
15. Not indulge in robbery.
16. Not attack travelers and wayfarers.
17. Not indulge in homosexuality.
18. Not destroy food stocks like wheat and barley.
19. Be contented with less.
20. Use perfumes and fragrances.
21. Stay away from uncleanness.
22. Exhort towards goodness.
23. Keep away from prohibited acts.
24. Wear coarse cloth.
25. Rest on an earthen pillow.
26. Strive in the way of Allah as is the right to do so.

And Imam (a.s.) will promise them that

1. He will stay with them.
2. He will dress like them.
3. He will keep a mount similar to theirs.
4. He will work according to their will.
5. He will stay contented with a little.
6. He will, with Allah's aid, fill the earth with equity and justice as it would be filled with oppression and tyranny.
7. He will worship Allah as is the right of worship.
8. He will not post a guard or sentry for himself.

(Kitabe Jahan b'ad az-Zuhur,p. 125-126)

Today's Shia society (in any corner of the world) should give undiluted attention to the conditions of this oath and covenant. Big or small, educated or uneducated, everyone should safeguard this deed of allegiance like a prized object dear to his life. If care is taken of the prohibitions of this deed of allegiance, it will culminate in the shape of a healthy, happy and foresighted society. The freedom of a human being is kept in view from every aspect. You take an oath from the commanders and soldiers of your army that they do not indulge in unnecessary shedding nor usurp the wealth of an orphan. That they will refrain from adultery and other bad actions, they will lead a pure life, avoid flashy dressing, will not stare at women, will be satisfied with simple food, etc. They will remain clean and fresh, emanating fragrance. A point to be noted here is that they recline on an earthen pillow. This statement can be both factual as well as symbolic. It means that it is not incorrect for a soldier to sleep with the earth below as his pillow and the fact in account is also that his attribution is towards the service of the successor of Abu Turab (Ali Ibn Abi Talib). This highlights the characteristic of humility and modesty, even if the vast expanse of the world's activities is within one's control and the reins of governance in one's grasp.

This deed invites an open-minded person towards justice and equity and urges him to keep it in perpetual consideration. It has been enshrined in the pages of history from the time of Ameerul Momineen Ali Ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) to reach to us today.

The following questions take shape in this long period:

1. Are the paths of travels despite all precautionary inventions, truly safe?
2. Has the blood shedding decreased? The truth is that every step taken is on dangerous ground.
3. Has there been a decrease in the violation of human rights?
4. Is there no arson of scores of villages full of helpless innocents? Daily news informs us that global peace is being slaughtered. It is indeed lifeless. It is only for propaganda that a shroud of words covers the corpse of peace.

It is only the hope of this deed of allegiance, which illuminates a thousand lamps in this encompassing darkness. The infallible (a.s.) has instructed that every Shia should recite Dua-e-Ahad in the morning with a heavy heart and contemplate on its meanings. Pay attention to these sentences of Dua-e-Ahad:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أُجَدِّدُ لَهُ فِي صَبِيحَةِ يَوْمِي هَذَا وَمَا عَشْتُ مِنْ أَيَّامِي عَهْدًا وَبَيْعَةً لَهُ فِي عُنُقِي...

'O Allah! Surely I renew for him (a.t.f.s.) on the morning of this day and of all evenings through my life, this pledge and oath and covenant upon my neck...!'

(Dua-e-Ahad, Mafaatihul Jinaan)

On the morning of this day

Our day starts in the morning. Dua-e-Ahad reminds us that the day of trials is commencing. The accounting of the self is necessary. The practice of sacrifice should continue. It is a message of loyalty and trust to the nobles and a reiteration of contentment for the indigent. Keep the abdomen safe from prohibition and doubt. These are the days of character building, of

beautification and smartening the persona and of rectification and reformation. Then there will be another such morning, another such dawn, the sun will rise, it will be noon, after which, the shadows will lengthen and the evening will fall. The night brings with itself, the stupor of slumber. And then the morning will return, and with, the chanting of Dua-e-Ahad by the worshippers. Finally, the listener will utter, "(O Allah!) Soothe my eyes with a glance at him (a.t.f.s.)."

Signs indicate that that morning is near when he (a.t.f.s.) shall arrive with a bright, shining forehead, surrounded by his diehard lovers and followers. He will place the deed of allegiance, which has been preserved through the course of history, in front of them. Thereafter, he will take the oath of fealty from the officers and commanders of his army.

Raj'at

The Return (Rajat) will occur and old and antiquated graves will split. The awaiters in darkness will come alive, wrapped in shroud, spear in hand, responding to the voice of Imam (a.t.f.s.) and rushing forth to his service. The Dua-e-Ahad will be authenticated. Not only this, but the testimony of Dua-e-Ahad will be voiced that these are those who refreshed their oaths every morning and used to say:

“عهداً و عقداً و بيعة له في عنقي”

O Allah! For the sake of Your Mercy, transform our filthiness into purity. Grant us the purity of the body and that of the heart. Save the vision of our eyes and the understanding of our hearts. Delusions are the order of the day. Confer upon us the grace to fight them. Bestow upon the ladies in whose embrace nurtures our nation, a ray of the illumination of the patience, knowledge, forbearance of Janabe Zainab (s.a.). And by the right of her veil, give the women of our households the grace to veil themselves. So that they train such offspring, who at the time 'when the expanse of the earth is spread with justice and the court of the Imam (a.t.f.s.) is resplendent under the sky', are present in the gathering and have the honour of taking the pledge of fealty.

The Second Special Deputy Muhammad B. Uthman Saeed Amri (r.a.)

In the special issues of 15th Shabaan 1420 and 1421, you have already read articles on the need for deputyship in Imam's (a.t.f.s.) occultation and the first special deputy - Uthman b. Saeed-e-Amri (r.a.) respectively. In this issue we shall continue the chain by relating the conditions of the second special deputy - Muhammad b. Uthman b. Saeed Amri (r.a.).

Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) declares:

قَالَ الْأَمَامُ الْحَسَنُ الْعَسْكَرِيُّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ:
"الْعَمْرِيُّ وَابْنُهُ ثِقَتَانِ فَمَا آدِيَا فَعَنِي يُؤَدِّيَانِ....."

'Amri (Uthman b. Saeed (r.a.) and his son (Muhammad b. Uthman (r.a.)) are both reliable and trustworthy (in narration). Whatever is conveyed to you from them is from us.'

(Tarikhe Ghaibate Sughra by Syed Muhammad Baqir al-Sadrp.403)

Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) reiterates,

"لَمْ يَزَلْ ثِقَّتَنَا فِي حَيَاةِ الْأَبِ. رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ."

'He is for us, trustworthy and reliable, from the time of his father (Uthman b. Saeed (r.a.))'

(Tarikhe Ghaibate Sughra by Syed Muhammad Baqir Sadrp.403)

Our salutations to that great personality, who is considered as trustworthy and reliable by two infallible Imams (a.s.).

We bear witness, O Muhammad b. Uthman (r.a.) (during the period of Ghaibate Sughra) you were the door to reach Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) and that you accomplished this responsibility in the most excellent manner, and that you were a trustworthy representative. And we bear witness that Allah chose you for this deputyship with His Light.

In the backdrop of this information, we shall now learn more about this esteemed personality.

Note

We have already mentioned about the importance of the position of deputyship in our previous issues. After learning about the conditions of the life of Janab Muhammad b. Uthman (r.a.), Inshallah, our belief and certainty in Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) and his representative will strengthen further.

Name, Title and Agnomen

His name is Muhammad and his father's name is Uthman and his grandfather's name is Saeed. His grandfather was from Amr, hence Amri is added to his name and he is known as Muhammad b. Uthman b. Saeed Amri. His agnomen (Kuniyyat) is Abu Jafar and no other agnomen is found in the books other than this. His titles are Amri, Asadi, Kufi, Sammaan and Askari.

Opinions of Scholars

We have already gauged his importance in the beginning through the sayings of the guided Imams (a.s.). Hereunder are the opinions of some scholars:

Shaykh Tusi (r.a.) writes in his book of Rejaal - Muhammad b. Uthman b. Saeed Amri (r.a.), his agnomen is Abu Jafar and that of his father is Abu Amr. Both of them were the representatives of Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) and had an esteemed position among the Imamite Shiites.

(Rejaal al-Tusi, No. 101 p. 509)

A similar narration is recorded by Allama Hilli (r.a.) in his book on Rejaal, Part 1, under the alphabet of meem, no 57.

Marhoom Maamqaani (r.a.) records in his book Tanqeehul Maqaal - "The great position and high status of this man (Muhammad b. Uthman (r.a.)) is renowned and does not warrant any explanation and proof. While studying the conditions of the life of his father it becomes evident that he (Muhammad b. Uthman (r.a.)) during the life of his father itself had received the testimonial of being the representative of Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) after his father.'

Marhoom Maamqaani (r.a.) has narrated the above with references from Behaarul Anwaar of Allama Majlisi (r.a.) Ayatullah Uzma Syed Abul Qasim Al Khoei (r.a.) writes in his book - Mojamul Rejaal

“وَالرَّوَايَاتُ فِي جَلَالَتِهِ وَ عَظَمَةِ مَقَامِهِ مُتَاضِفَةٌ.”

'The traditions that have been narrated regarding the majesty and greatness of the position of Muhammad b. Uthman (r.a.) are numerous.'

Some scholars of Rejaal have also called him as a compiler and author. Hence a famous saying is narrated as follows:

Ibne Nuh (Abul Abbas Ahmad b. Ali b. Nuh Sairafi) says: Abu Nasr Hebatullah, maternal grandson of Umme Kulthum, daughter of Abu Jafar (Umme Kulthum was the daughter of Muhammad b. Uthman and Abu Nasr Hebatullah was the maternal grandson of Umme Kulthum) says that Abu Jafar Muhammad b. Uthman has written books on Fiqh in which he has collected all the traditions from Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.), Imam-e-Zamana (a.s.) and from his father Uthman b. Saeed (r.a.) who in turn has narrated from Imam Ali Naqi (a.s.) and Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.). Among these books is one titled Al Ashrebah. Umme Kulthum daughter of Abu Jafar (r.a.) narrates, 'This book as per the will of Muhammad b. Uthman (r.a.) had reached to the third deputy Husain b. Rawh (r.a.). Abu Nasr says, 'I assume that after Husain b. Rawh (r.a.), it must have been passed on to the fourth deputy Abul Hasan Ali Ibn Muhammad Seymouri (r.a.).

(AlGhaibat of Shaikhe Tusi p. 363)

The late Ayatullah Uzma Al Khoei (r.a.) in his book Mojamur Rejaal writes after this narration, 'This narration proves two things,

- i) Muhammad b. Uthman (r.a.) is the author of the book.
- ii) He has narrated traditions from Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) and Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.).

Refuge of Shias

When we look at the conditions of the life of Muhammad b. Uthman (r.a.) and study the traditions and Imam's (a.t.f.s.) letters (tawqeeaat) that have reached us through him, it is evident that his representatives across several cities were referring to him for matters related to jurisprudence, theology (kalaam) and society and he used to solve them. We narrate an incident in this regard:

Abul Hasan Ali b. Ahmad Dallal al-Qummi narrates: 'Among the Shias there was a difference of opinion on whether Allah has delegated creation and distribution of sustenance to the Imams (a.s.)? One group argued that this is impossible because no one can create the bodies except Allah, while the other group believed that Allah has delegated the power of creation and distribution of sustenance to the Imams (a.s.) and therefore they can create and provide sustenance. This disparity became more intense with every passing day. Finally someone suggested: 'Why don't you refer the matter to Abu Jafar Muhammad b. Uthman Amri (r.a.) so that he clarifies the truth for you? He is the representative of Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.)'. Everybody agreed. The query was written and delivered to Muhammad b. Uthman (r.a.). He referred the matter to Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.). In reply, he received a Tawqee wherein Imam (a.t.f.s.) had written:

'Undoubtedly only Allah creates the bodies and distributes the sustenance. He neither has a body nor does He assume any form and there is none like Him. He is the All-Hearing and All-Knowing and the infallible Imams (a.s.) seek from Him and He Himself creates. They request from Him and He accepts their request and to honour and elevate them He delegates to them the power to create and sustain'.

The period of Muhammad b. Uthman's (r.a.) deputyship was quite lengthy and as we have already mentioned that in this period, he served as a sanctuary for the Shias. He solved numerous issues related to jurisprudence, society and belief. During his deputyship all that has been received by him from Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) in the form of Tawqeeaat is present in different books under different topics. However, there are some books dedicated to the Tawqeeaat and one can find them all in one place.

We have reproduced below a part of an important Tawqee received by Muhammad b. Uthman (r.a.) from Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) which was addressed to Ishaq b. Yaqub in reply to various questions put forth by him:

Ishaq b. Yaqub says that this Tawqee has been written by the blessed hand of my master Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) and is as follows: .

'May Allah guide you and keep you steadfast upon the true beliefs. As for your concern that some of my relatives and paternal uncles and cousins have denied my existence, know that Allah does not recognise relations with anyone (when it comes to believing in us) and the one who denies us is not from us. The path that he is treading is the path of the son of Nuh (a.s.). And my paternal uncle Jafar and his sons have chosen the path of the brothers of Yusuf (a.s.).'

Other topics in this tauqee include

As for fuqaa' (alcohol from barley) it is prohibited but there is no harm in drinking shalmaab (shalmaab is made from sheelam which resembles barley).'

And as for that wealth which you send us as gifts, we accept them in order that your sins are forgiven. Therefore there are those who wish to send us gifts while others don't know that whatever Allah has given us is better than what you give.'

'None knows the time of reappearance.' In the same tauqee Imam (a.t.f.s.) adds: 'The time of my reappearance is linked to Allah's wish. Whoever fixes a time of reappearance is a liar.'

Guidance

'And when you come across any new issues then refer to the narrators of our traditions because they are our proofs upon you and I am the Proof of Allah.'

Thereafter, Imam (a.s.) has emphasised on numerous issues like the reliability of Muhammad Ibn Uthman Amri (r.a.), supplication for dispelling the doubts of Ali Ibn Mahziyaar Ahwaazi, the illegitimacy of wealth of singing women, enumeration of Muhammad Ibn Shazaan Ibn Naeem Neshapuri among the lovers of Ahle Bait (a.s.), cursing Abul Khattab Muhammad Ibn Abi Zainab **and his followers, etc.**

Improper use of Sahme Imam

On this topic Imam (a.t.f.s.) warns,

'And as for those who keep our wealth with them, and if they consider some part of it permissible for themselves and they spend it, then it is as if they have taken fire into their bellies...'

Reason for occultation

And as for the reason for occultation Allah, the Almighty, cautions in the Holy Quran:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَسْأَلُوا عَنَ أَشْيَاءٍ إِن تَبَدَّلَ لَكُمْ تَسْوُؤُكُمْ

'O you who believe! Do not question about things which if declared to you, may trouble you.'

(Surah Maidah : 102)

Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) will not pay allegiance to anyone

In the same tauqee Imam (a.t.f.s.) informs,

'My forefathers (a.s.) have lived their lives under the tyrannical reign of despots. However, I shall reappear at a time when there shall be no allegiance upon me...'

He further explains that people can benefit from his existence in occultation just as they benefit from the sun when it goes behind the clouds.

This tauqee has been recorded by Shaikh Sadooq (r.a.) in his book Kamaaluddin vol. 2 p. 483, tradition 4 and by Allama Majlisi (r.a.) in Behaarul Anwaar vol 53 p. 180 tradition 10.

Similarly there are many such tauqeeaat that have been conveyed by Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) for his Shias through Muhammad b. Uthman (r.a.). Some other personalities who have been sent tauqeeaat by Imam (a.t.f.s.) as are follows:

Abul Hasan Muhammad b. Jafar Asadi

He was the representative of Janab Muhammad b. Uthman (r.a.) in the city of Rayy (near Tehran). He expired in Rabi-us Saani 312 A.H. It was about him that it was said in the Tauqee - Keep up prayer (Namaz) as you are the one who asked about the timing of Namaz during the rising and setting of the sun. It is as the people say that the sun rises from between the two horns of Satan and also sets between his two horns. That is why there is nothing better than Namaz if one wants to rub Satan's nose in dust. So keep up prayer and rub Satan's nose in dust (i.e. humiliate him).

(Kamaaluddin vol.2 p.520, tradition 49)

End of dispute between husband and wife

Before mentioning this tauqee it will be in order to first review its practical aspect. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and the infallible Imams (a.s.) are the fathers of the Islamic nation. In this regard we have already outlined earlier in this article that Allah, the Almighty, due to their honour and respect has blessed them with great powers. They have been delegated the task of distributing sustenance to the creation. This implies that whatever they desire from Allah, He grants them. They are the ones through whom difficulties are relieved and calamities are repelled. In this tauqee, this particular point has been highlighted.

Abu Ghalib Ahmed b. Muhammad Zorari says:

'There arose serious differences between me and my wife. This resulted in a lot of hostility between us and conciliation was almost ruled out. Due to the nature of this problem, I was under a lot of stress. So I wrote a letter and gave it to Muhammad b. Uthman (r.a.) to present it in the service of Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.). In this letter I had requested Imam (a.t.f.s.) to pray for me. It was quite some time since I had sent the letter and there was no reply. One day when I met Abu Jafar (Muhammad b. Uthman (r.a.)) he told me, "The reply of your letter has come." I went to his house. He took out a register and flipped through its pages and finally took out a letter from it. He gave it to me. In it was written: And as for the query regarding the problem between the husband and wife, know that Allah has decreed peace and reconciliation between them.

Abu Ghalib Zorari says - Earlier my wife always behaved harshly with me. But after this event there were no problems and differences. In fact sometimes I intentionally did certain things just to irritate her but there was no reaction from her side.

(Pazohashi Payramune Zindagaaniye Nawwaabe Khaase Imam-e-Zamana(a.t.f.s.)p. 176)

Note

In all problems and difficulties we should approach the door of Ahle Bait (a.s.). In this era, that door of access is Imam-e-Zamana (a.s.). He is Allah's Gate (Babullah) and hence we send salutation upon him in the Ziarat:

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا بَابَ اللَّهِ

Peace be upon you O Allah's Door

Muhammad b. Uthman (r.a.) and False Claimants

Due to the restrictive and sensitive conditions prevalent in their times, Imam Ali Naqi (a.s.) and Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) attended public gatherings sparingly and cautiously. Therefore, they had appointed special representatives so that they could maintain contact with the general people through them. Another rationale behind the practice of representation was to acquaint the Shias with this method and prepare the ground for the minor occultation (Ghaibate Sughra) when this practice was to gain prominence. Finally the people were accustomed to this method and after the onset of Ghaibate Sughra, they regularly sent their letters to Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) through the special deputies and got their replies in the same way. During this period some selfish and opportunistic people tried to take advantage of this and claimed to be the deputy of Sahebul Amr (Master Of the Affair), Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.). We have already read about this discussion in many of our previous issues under several topics and there is no need to repeat them here. We mention below the names of those imposters who advanced such claims during the deputyship of Muhammad b. Uthman (r.a.);

1. Abu Muhammad Hasan Shariee.
2. Muhammad b. Naseer Numairy.
3. Ahmad b. Halal Abartaee.
4. Abu Tahir Muhammad b. Ali b. Bilal.
5. Abu Bakr Muhammad b. Ahmed b. Uthman popular as Abu Bakr Baghdadi. He was the nephew of Muhammad b. Uthman (r.a.)
6. Ishaq Ahmed. 7. Baaqataani 8. Husain b. Mansoor al-Hallaj.

Note

The details of most of the claimants outlined above have been highlighted in our previous issues. It is noteworthy that all of them rivaled Muhammad b. Uthman (r.a.) and refuted his deputyship. Their beliefs were distorted and their faith was weak. They were declared as fanatical and wretched during the period of Imam Hadi (a.s.) and Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) itself. By this we can easily gauge the extent of their jealousy towards Muhammad b. Uthman (r.a.) and the problems they posed in his working. But Muhammad b. Uthman (r.a.) dealt with them all with the help of Imam (a.t.f.s.) and fulfilled all his duties.

Why did the people trust Muhammad b. Uthman(r.a.)?

During Muhammad.b. Uthman's (r.a.) period, the false claimants wanted to deceive the people and desired to usurp the religious dues (Khums, Zakaat) from them. They nearly injured Muhammad b. Uthman (r.a.) It was a difficult trial for the people in that era to recognise the true deputy of Imam (a.t.f.s.). Under such circumstances to win the confidence of the people and overcome the enemies was a gigantic task.

The people reposed their confidence in Muhammad b. Uthman (r.a.) due to various reasons. The most important among them were those Tawdeeaat, which were sent by Imam (a.t.f.s.) to him. Not only did they contain the replies to various social and religious problems, but also information about some hidden affairs which acted as a compelling argument for the people to accept his deputyship. There are many incidents wherein news of hidden affairs was given by Muhammad b. Uthman (r.a.). We narrate one such incident hereunder:

News of the Unseen

Jafar b. Muhammad Matteel narrates that Abu Jafar Muhammad b. Uthman Samman (r.a.), who was famous as Amr, called me and gave me some pieces of cloth and a purse containing some dinars. He told me that it is necessary that I immediately go to Wasit (a place between Kufa and Basra) and hand over this property to the first person I meet proceeding towards Shatta. I felt aggrieved at the thought that a (honourable) person like me has been chosen for this petty assignment. Anyway, I mounted my horse and proceeded towards Wasit. The first person I met, I asked him about the conditions of Hasan b. Muhammad Quttat Saidalaani who was the representative in Wasit. He replied, 'I am Hasan b. Muhammad, who are you?' I replied, 'I am Jafar b. Muhammad b. Matteel.' He recognised me and we exchanged salutations. I told him that Abu Jafar Muhammad b. Uthman (r.a.) has conveyed salutations to you and sent these pieces of cloth and purse for you. He said, 'All Praise is for Allah! Since Muhammad b. Abdullah Aameri has died, I am on my way to arrange for his shroud (kafan). When we opened the purse there was money in it for the burial expenses. I took part in the burial and returned home.

(Kamaaluddin p. 504, chap of Tauqeeaat, Behaarul Anwaar vol. 51p. 336)

Note

If Imam-e-Zamana (a.s.) had not informed Muhammad b. Uthman (r.a.) about such incidents, he would not have had knowledge about them.

When we read the life sketches of the deputies, we find many such episodes wherein Imam (a.t.f.s.) has informed them about future events of which none else had the faintest inkling.

For details, readers may refer to the book of Kamaaluddin of Shaikh Sadooq (r.a.) and Behaarul Anwaar of Allamah Majlisi (r.a.).

Traditions Narrated by Muhammad b. Uthman (r.a.)

The Tauqeeaat addressed by Imam (a.t.f.s.) to Muhammad b. Uthman (r.a.) are still found among the people in the form of traditions. However, we have taken this opportunity to narrate some traditions in this regard. The reason being that some scholars of Rejaal have not included him among the narrators of traditions from Imams (a.s.) and some of our scholars have also objected to the fact that he was not considered as a narrator of traditions. Without delving too much on this dispute, we shall proceed to narrate some traditions narrated by him:
1) Muhammad b. Hammam says - I heard from

Muhammad b. Uthman Amri, 'I have received a tauqee from the pure personality (Imam (a.t.f.s.)) in a script (handwriting) which I recognise i.e. in the writing of Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) and it was written in that:

مَنْ سَمَّانِي فِي مَجْمَعٍ مِنَ النَّاسِ بِاسْمِي فَعَلَيْهِ لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ

May Allah curse the one who calls me by my name in any assembly or gathering.'

Abu Ali Muhammad b. Hammam says that I wrote a letter to Imam (a.t.f.s.) enquiring about the time of his reappearance. He (a.t.f.s.) informed,

كَذَبَ الْوَقَاتُونَ

'Those who fix the time of my reappearance are liars.'

(Kamaaluddin vol. 2 p. 486 tradition no 3, Behaarul Anwaar vol. 51 p.33)

Note:

Imam (a.t.f.s.) himself has explained the rationale behind the prohibition of uttering his (a.t.f.s.) name in public:

إِمَّا السُّكُوتَ وَالْجَنَّةَ، وَإِمَّا الْكَلَامَ وَالنَّارَ، فَإِنَّهُمْ إِنْ وَقَفُوا عَلَى الْإِسْمِ أَدَاعَوْهُ وَإِنْ وَقَفُوا عَلَى الْمَكَانِ دَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ.

to go ...or one should refrain from taking the name so that he may become deserving of heaven or he should talk (about him) so that he is put in hell because those who are aware of his name will spread it and if they become aware of his residence, then they will inform the people.'

(Behaarul Anwaar vol.51 p.351)

Note:

The author of Wasaailush Shia (Shaikh Hurre Aameli (r.a.)) has mentioned in vol. 16, p. 240, chap. 33, tradition 21,460 that the reason for prohibition of taking the name was due to (taqayyah) dissimulation and fear of enemies.

2) Abdullah b. Jafar Himyari says that I told Muhammad b. Uthman (r.a.), 'I wish to ask you the same question that Hazrat Ibrahim (a.s.) asked Allah and said:

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ أَرِنِي كَيْفَ تُحْيِي الْمَوْتَى ۖ قَالَ أُولِمُ تَأْمِنُ ۖ قَالَ بَلَىٰ وَلَٰكِن لِّيَطْمَئِنَّ قَلْبِي ۖ

And when Ibrahim said: My Lord! Show me how You give life to the dead. He said, 'What! And do you not believe?' He replied, 'Yes (I believe), but (I ask) that my heart may be at ease.'

(Surah Baqarah :260)

'Please inform me whether you have seen Sahebul Amr (Master of the Affair)? Muhammad b. Uthman (r.a.) replied, 'Yes and his neck is like this and he pointed towards his own neck with his hand.'

(Kamaaluddin, Chapter 1 - Those who have witnessed Qaem (a.t.f.s.) tradition 3)

3) Abdullah b. Jafar Himyari narrates that I heard from Muhammad b. Uthman (r.a.)

وَاللَّهِ إِنَّ صَاحِبَ هَذَا الْأَمْرِ لَيَحْضُرُ الْمَوْسِمَ كُلَّ سَنَةٍ فَيَرَى النَّاسَ وَ يَعْرِفُهُمْ وَيَرُونَهُ وَلَا يَعْرِفُونَهُ.

'I swear by Allah that Sahebul Amr (a.t.f.s.) visits Mecca every year (at the time of Hajj). He sees the people and recognises them and the people also see him but do not recognise him.'

Note:

Muhammad b. Uthman (r.a.) witnessed Imam (a.t.f.s.) in Masjidul Haram near the Ka'ba praying:

”اللَّهُمَّ أَنْجِزْ لِي مَا وَعَدْتَنِي“

'O Allah! Fulfill the promise that you have made unto me.'

(Ibid. tradition9) He also narrates the following tradition: I saw Imam (a.t.f.s.) near Babul Mustajaar clutching the cloth of Kaaba, beseeching Allah

اللَّهُمَّ ائْتَقِمْ لِي مِنْ أَعْدَائِي (أَوْ أَعْدَائِكَ)

'O my Lord, let me take revenge from my enemies.'

(Behaarul Anwaar vol.2, p.30)

Note:

Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) is awaiting Allah's permission for his reappearance and is vehemently praying for it. We too should always pray for his reappearance, especially at those sanctified places where supplications are accepted like at the time of Hajj at Al Mustajaar.

Dua-e-Semaat

The famous Dua-e-Semaat has been communicated to the Shias through Muhammad b. Uthman (r.a.) This supplication is recorded in Mafaateehul Jinaan. It is also called as Dua-e-Shaboor and is recommended to recite it in the late evening (Asr) of Friday. Shaikh Abbas-e-Qummi (r.a.) has reported this supplication from old, reliable sources. This supplication has also been narrated from Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) and Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.). Allama Majlisi (r.a.) has narrated this supplication in Behaarul Anwaar along with its interpretation.

Caliphs of Bani Abbas

Following is the list of Bani Abbas caliphs who ruled during the deputyship of Muhammad b. Uthman(r.a.):

1. Motamid Billah (256 A.H. -279 A.H.)
2. Motazid Billah (279 A.H.-289 A.H.)

3. Muktafi Billah (289 A.H.-295 A.H.)

4. Muqtadir Billah (295 A.H.-320 A.H.)

Duration of Representation

It is famous among the scholars of Rejaal that the period of Muhammad b. Uthman's (r.a.) representation lasted for approximately 50 years, although this seems improbable. The reason being that Muhammad b. Uthman (r.a.) died in 305 A.H., 45 years after the martyrdom of Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.). The period of the minor occultation begins after the demise of Imam Hasan Askair (a.s.) i.e. 260 A.H. After Imam Hasan Askari's (a.s.) martyrdom, Uthman b. Saeed (r.a.) assumed deputyship for 5 years, until his expiry. Therefore the actual period of Muhammad b. Uthman's (r.a.) deputyship works out to forty (40) years.

Death

As per the available records, Muhammad b. Uthman (r.a.) died in Jamadiul Ulaa 305 A.H. Some writers have also mentioned it in 304 A.H. Abu Ghalib Zorari, who was the representative of Husain b. Rauh (r.a.) in Kufa and was also very close to Muhammad b. Uthman (r.a.) has recorded his death in 305 A.H. The scholars of research have given precedence to this narration.

Muhammad b. Uthman had himself foretold his death two months in advance. Abul Hasan Ali b. Ahmed Dallal Qummi narrates, 'One day I was with Muhammad b. Uthman (r.a.) and saw a slate in front of him, on which he was making some sketches and writing the verses of the Holy Quran. And in the margins of that tablet, he was writing the names of the Holy Imams (a.s.). I asked him about it. He replied, 'This is for my grave and I will be kept on this" or according to another report, he said, "This will be my pillow". Then he revealed, 'Everyday I enter my grave and pray one part of the Quran and then I come out.' In another tradition, it is narrated that after this Abul Hasan Ali b. Ahmed says that Muhammad b. Uthman (r.a.) caught my hand and took me near his grave. After looking at it he said, 'On such and such date of such and such month of such and such year, I will die and be laid in this grave and this tablet will be with me.' I remembered his words and waited for that time. Just after a few days he became sick and finally expired on the same day, month and year which he had prophesied to me and was buried in the same grave which he had shown.'

(Tarikhe Siya asie Ghaibate Imam-e-Dawaazdahum, p.170)

A similar tradition has also been narrated by Muhammad b. Ali b. Aswadi Qummi. For details, please refer Behaarul Anwaar vol. 51 p.351, Kamaaluddin vol. 2 p. 502 tradition 29.

Visitation of his Grave

Those whose hearts have been sealed will not recognise Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.), much less his deputies. In order to break open the seal of the hearts, one should go to the grave of Muhammad b. Uthman (r.a.) and see that even today this grave is informing us of his representation and deputyship. His grave is situated in East Baghdad in a very clean, posh and

populated area in a mosque, famous as Khallani. Till date Shias visit his shrine believing him to be the deputy of Imam (a.t.f.s.) and recite his Ziarat:

أَشْهَدُ أَنَّكَ بَابُ الْمَوْلَى جِئْتُكَ عَارِفًا بِالْحَقِّ الَّذِي أَنْتَ عَلَيْهِ وَأَنْتَ مَا خُنْتُ فِي التَّادِيَةِ وَالسَّفَارَةِ. أَسَلِّمُ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ بَابِ
مَا أَوْسَعَهُ.....

'I bear witness that you are the door of mercy of my Master I have come to your door after recognising your right on which you remained firmly established and I know that you have not breached the trust reposed in your deputyship or in conveying the news. Peace be upon you O the most expansive door of mercy!

(Mafatihul Jinaan translated by Allama Jawadi(r.a.), p.897)

Ziarate Aale-e-Yasin - A Brief Explanation

Regular readers of Al Muntazar are well aware of our practice of translating and explaining a popular supplication (doa or ziaarat) related to Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) in the special issues of Sha'baan. This year too, we have attempted to compile a brief exegesis on a very well known ziaarat-Ziaarate Aal-e-Yasin.

The chain of narrators

Numerous Shia scholars of the highest stature have documented this ziaarat in their compilations and have vouched for its chain of narrators. Here, we shall outline the names of a few books wherein this Ziaarat has been mentioned. (Being followers of the five infallibles (a.s.) from the Incident of the Cloak (Hadis-e-Kisa), we have taken a similar number and have mentioned 5 references.)

(1) Al-Ehtejaaj vol.2 p.316-318: This is the oldest reference available for the Ziaarat. The compiler of this invaluable work is the great traditionalist - Abu Mansoor Ahmed b. Ali b. Abi Talib Tabarsi (r.a.). This traditionalist of the 6th century Hijri is considered to be one of the all-time great Shia scholars and teachers. Scholars of narrators (Ulama-e-Rijaal) have spoken highly of him for his greatness and piety.

(2) Behaarul Anwaar: The compiler of this great and unique book needs no introduction. He is the pride of the Shiite world and one of its greatest traditionalists-Allamah Shaikh Muhammad Baqir Majlisi (r.a.) Considering the importance of Ziaarate Aal-e-Yaasin, he has mentioned it in 3 places - i) vol. 53 p.171-73 under the Chapter of letters (tauqeeaat) of Imam-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.) ii) vol. 94 p. 5-6 under the Chapter of Allah's remembrance and supplications iii) vol. 102 p.81-83 under the Chapter of Ziaarat.

(3) Fauze Akbar dar Tawassulate Imam-e-Muntazar (a.t.f.s.) p. 68-70: Hujjatul Islam Mirza Muhammad Baqir Faqih Eemaani (r.a.) is the compiler of this book. It is noteworthy that he has mentioned this Ziaarat right at the beginning before other Ziaaraat.

(4) Takaaliful Anaam fi Ghaibatil Imam (a.t.f.s.) p. 135-38: Sadrul Islam Hamadani (r.a.) has recorded this Ziaarat in the 25th duty during the major occultation (ghaibah).

(5) Mafaatihul Jinaan (Urdu translation Allamah Zeeshan Haider Jawadi (r.a.) Tanzeemul Makatib Lucknow edition) p. 956-959: The compiler of this momentous work is Shaikh Abbas al-Qummi (r.a.).

It is worth noting that the main narrator of this Ziaarat is Abdullah b. Jafar (r.a.) [240 A.H.-300 A.H.] (Qurbul Asnad, p.2-3). Shaikh Sadooq's (r.a.) father - Ali b. Baabwaiy (r.a.), Muhammad b. Hasan (r.a.) (Shaikh Sadooq's (r.a.) teacher) and Muhammad b. Yaqoob Kulaini (r.a.) have reported this Ziaarat along with numerous other traditions from Abdullah b. Jafar (r.a.). Given this list of illustrious personalities who have narrated this tradition, there remains no doubt about the authenticity of the chain of narrators.

A Peculiar Feature of the Ziarat

A very exceptional trait of this Ziaarat is that the instructor of this Ziaarat is also its addressee, i.e. the one conveying salutation (salaam) and the one to whom the salutation is addressed is one and the same. Such ziaaraat are indeed very few. Generally, Ziaaraat are recorded from one infallible (a.s.) addressing another infallible (a.s.). For instance, Imam Sajjad (a.s.) has taught his Shias the Ziaarat of Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) and Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) introduced the Ziaarat of the martyrs of Karbala (r.a.).

About the introduction of Ziaarat-e-AAal-e-Yaasin, it is narrated that Janabe Himyari (r.a.), the narrator of this Ziaarat, received a letter from Imam-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.) in which, he (a.t.f.s.) first answered the queries asked. Then he wrote, 'You (people) neither understand Allah's affair (wilayat) nor acknowledge His friends (Imams (a.s.)). The Imam is Allah's Perfect Wisdom but it has become futile to scare the people with it. Salutations be upon us and upon Allah's pious servants. Then whenever you intend to turn your attention towards Allah through our mediation or wish to turn towards us then say as Allah has ordered,

“سَلَامٌ عَلَى آلِ يَسٍ.....”

We beseech Allah to give us the grace to convey the exegesis of this invaluable Ziaarat to our readers (keeping brevity in mind).

(١) سَلَامٌ عَلَى آلِ يَسٍ

Salutation upon Aal-e-Yaasin means salutations upon the progeny of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.). This opening salutation has great significance although this is a Ziaarat related to Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) and all salutations after the opening one are addressed to him. Despite the Ziaarat being associated with him, Imam (a.t.f.s.) has commenced it by sending salutations upon all his family members. It is apparent that the opening salutation on the infallible progeny of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) is derived from two. Quranic verses. The first verse is derived from Surah Yasin, verse 1

يَسٍ

The second verse is derived from Surah Saaffaat, verse 130

سَلَامٌ عَلَى الْيَاسِينَ

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) was asked, 'O son of Allah's Prophet, what is the meaning of the divine word يَسٍ? He (a.s.) replied,

اسْمٌ مِنْ أَسْمَاءِ النَّبِيِّ وَ مَعْنَاهُ يَا سَامِعَ الْوَحْيِ

"It is a name from the Prophet's (s.a.w.a.) names and implies, 'O hearer of revelation!'"

(Maanil Akhbaar by Shaikh Saduq (a.r.),p.22, Tafsiir-e-Burhaan (Sayed Haashim Bahraani (a.r.), vol. 2 p.3.)

As far as verse 130 of Surah Saaffaat is concerned, several Quranic exegeses and readers of the Holy Quran like Naafe', Abu Aamir and Yaqoob have recited it as Aal-e-Yaasin. (الْيَاسِينَ) is in reality Aal-e-Yaasin).

(Tafsir-e-Abul Futooh, vol. 9, p. 338; Tafsir-e-Majma-ul-Bayaan by Shaikh Tabarsi (a.r.) vol. 8, p. 456).

In addition to this, even traditions of the Ahle Bait (a.s.) support this explanation. For instance, Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) has narrated a tradition from his grandfather Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) regarding the Quranic verse

”يَسُّ مُحَمَّدٌ وَنَحْنُ آلُ يَسِّ“

'Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) is Yasin and we (Ahle Bait (a.s.)) are Aal-e-Yaasin.'

(Tafsire Burhan, vol. 2, p.33)

For more information readers can refer to Behaarul Anwaar vol. 23 p. 167-171 (Chapter of 'Surely Aal-e-Yaasin are Ale Muhammad (a.s.)). Revered commentators of the Ahle Sunnah like Qurtubbi (vol. 15 p.119) and Aaloosi in Tafsir-e-Ruhul Ma'ani (vol. 23 p. 142) too have advanced similar views.

(٢) السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا دَاعِيَ اللَّهِ وَرَبَّائِي آيَاتِهِ

Salutations upon you, O the caller towards Allah and the nourisher of His Creation

The opening salutation is addressed specifically to Imam's (a.t.f.s.) holy and glorious existence. From among his innumerable attributes, we find two attributes highlighted in the first salutation.

- a. داعي الله (Caller towards Allah)
- b. رباني آياته (Nourisher of His creation)

The first attribute داعي is a Subject (فاعل) (according to Arabic grammar) and means-the one, who calls or invites. Over here it means that Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) invites the people towards Allah.

The position of inviting towards Allah

The opening salutation of this Ziaarat mentions inviting towards Allah, This is from among the exalted attributes of Imam-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.) that right from 260 A.H. till date and from today till the day of his reappearance, he has and will continue to persistently and tirelessly invite the people towards Allah.

The other attribute highlighted in the opening salutation is رباني. Marhoom Turaihi (a.r.) writes that in Tafsir-e-Kashshaaf of Zamakhshari, the word رباني refers to the one who is firmly attached to religion and his obedience to Allah is firm and intense. In Qamoos, رباني, is defined as one who worships Allah with recognition. Tabarsi (a.r.) writes that the one who improves and regulates the affairs of the people is called as رباني. This is also supported by the tradition

لَا عِلْمَ إِلَّا مِنْ عَالِمِ رَبَّائِي

"There is no knowledge except with the divine scholar."

(Majmaul Bahrain vol. 2 p.65 under the alphabets رَبَّائِي)

In view of the above explanation, the first line of the Ziaarat can be read as, 'Salutation upon you who invites towards Allah's Religion and who himself is Allah's Religion. Your obedience is tantamount to divine obedience. Salutation upon you, the one who improves and regulates the affairs of Allah's creatures.' Allah, Glorified be He, has delegated the regulation of all His creatures to His cherished one - Muhammad Mustafa (s.a.w.a.) and his infallible family - the Ahle Bait (a.s.). Today our Imam - Hazrat Wali-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.) is the representative of this family and has been entrusted with this all-important responsibility.

(۳) اَسْلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا بَابَ اللَّهِ وَ دِيَانَ دِينِهِ

Salutation upon you, O Allah's Door and the regulator and governor of His Religion.

Like the previous salutation, this salutation also embraces two attributes. The first is 'Allah's Door' and this attribute is indeed very popular and finds mention in several ziaaraat. In traditions, the Ahle Bait (a.s.) are referred to as 'Allah's Door'. For instance, Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) informs

“الْأَوْصِيَاءُ هُمْ أَبْوَابُ اللَّهِ الَّتِي يُؤْتَى مِنْهَا وَلَوْلَا هُمْ مَا عُرِفَ اللَّهُ عَزَّوَجَلَّ وَ بِهِمْ اِحْتَجَّ اللَّهُ تَبَارَكَ وَ تَعَالَى عَلَى خَلْقِهِ”

'The Holy Prophet's (s.a.w.a.) successors are the 'Doors of Allah' through which He can be accessed. If they were not there, Allah the Almighty, would not have been recognized. Through them, Allah the Almighty, has completed His arguments against His creatures.'

(Tafsir-e-Burhaan vol. 1 p.. 190)

Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) declares

“نَحْنُ حُجَّةُ اللَّهِ وَ بَابُ اللَّهِ”

'We are Allah's Proofs and Allah's Door.'

(Tafsir-e-Burhaan vol. 1 p. 190)

In Duae Nudbah, which is associated with Imam (a.t.f.s.) himself, we address him:

أَيْنَ بَابُ اللَّهِ الَّذِي مِنْهُ يُؤْتَى

'Where is Allah's Door, through which He is accessed?'

What is the meaning of باب? of means door or gate. However, this by no means, implies that Allah resides in an abode, the door of which is Ahle Bait (a.s.). To dispel such misleading notions, it is necessary that we first understand some peculiarities about a door. Take the door of any house or garden. What is the function and purpose of the door? The primary and most critical function of the door is to allow access to the house or garden and to that extent it is without any competition and parallel. Of course, a person can still jump the wall or sneak inside through the window, but that is not in keeping with the norms of a cultured society and any rational person will disapprove of such uncivilized behavior. The Islamic Shariat and intellect have condemned this in no uncertain terms.

The renowned commentator on the Holy Quran belonging to the Ahle Sunnah - Hafiz Jalaluddin Suyuti narrates, 'Once the second caliph, Umar b. Khattab, was on his famous night strolls. Suddenly he heard some strange sounds from a house and this aroused his suspicions. He went to the periphery of the house and seeing no way to enter it jumped the wall. Inside the house,

he was surprised to see a man, drinking wine and seated with a woman in a compromising position. The caliph exclaimed, 'O Allah's enemy! Do you really believe that your disobedience is concealed from Him?' The man, though drunk, shot back instantly, 'O Amirul Momineen! Don't act in haste. If I have committed one sin, you are guilty of perpetrating three major sins. Allah commands, '... and do not spy' and you have disobeyed him by spying (on me). Allah commands, '...and go into the houses by their doors, while you have jumped the wall.' Allah commands, Do not enter the houses until you are acquainted and saluted their inmates, while you have neither sought permission nor saluted us.'

(Tafsir-e-Durrul Manthoor, vol. 6, p.93)

It is in conformity with etiquette and intellect that man enters a garden, house or a city through their doors.

The other term used in the salutation is دِيَانِ دِينِهِ. What is the meaning of jus and why is Imam-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.) being referred to as دِيَانِ? Tabarsi (r.a.) records, una is among the titles of Allah. It means dominant, ruler and judge. In the Holy Prophet's (s.a.w.a.) praise and eulogy, he says

“يَا سَيِّدَ النَّاسِ وَ دِيَانَ الْعَرَبِ”

O leader of men and the ruler (or judge or dominator) of the Arabs.' Likewise traditions declare

“كَانَ عَلِيٌّ دِيَانَ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ بَعْدَ نَبِيِّهَا”

'Ali (a.s.) is the ruler (or judge or dominator) of this nation after the Prophet (s.a.w.a.).'

(Majmaul Bahrain vol. 6, p. 253, Aqrabul Mawaarid)

It is evident that the entire progeny of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) also possesses these merits and can be ascribed with them (and this fact is highlighted in several Ziaaraat). In this era, Imam-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.) is the sole representative of the Prophet's infallible progeny (a.s.) and by virtue of this, he is the sole possessor of these merits.

(٤) أَسَلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا خَلِيفَةَ اللَّهِ وَ نَاصِرَ حَقِّهِ

Salutations upon you, O Caliph of Allah and the Helper (in the way) of His Right

This salutation also highlights two crucial attributes - Allah's Caliphate and the support of His Right. In Arabic terminology, caliph has been described as:

“مَنْ يَخْلُفُ غَيْرَهُ وَ يَقُومُ مَقَامَهُ وَ السُّلْطَانَ الْأَعْظَمَ وَ فِي الشَّرْعِ: الْإِمَامَ الَّذِي لَيْسَ فَوْقَهُ إِمَامٌ (اقرب المورد، مادّه خلف).”

say I good! 'Caliph is the successor of another and the one appointed by him. That is why a king is referred to as a Caliph.

According to the Islamic Shariat, the caliph is the Imam, and he is matchless in his superiority and supremacy.

In the current era, Imam-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.) is the Imam and the sole claimant to the exalted and lofty status of Imamate. He is the dominant and supreme king, in front of whom, even Hazrat Dawood (a.s.) and Hazrat Sulaiman (a.s.) with all the embellishments of their monarchies, appear small and inadequate. He is the true Caliph and Guide, who is unchallenged in his caliphate and guidance. In this regard, Hafiz Muhammad b. Yusuf Ganji Shafei', the illustrious

Sunni scholar, has recorded a pertinent tradition in his compilation 'Al Bayaan fi Akhbaar-e-Sahibiz Zaman (a.t.f.s.) (Chapter 15)'

يَخْرُجُ الْمَهْدِيُّ وَعَلَى رَأْسِهِ عِمَامَةٌ فِيهَا مُنَادٍ يَنَادِي هَذَا الْمَهْدِيُّ خَلِيفَةُ اللَّهِ فَاتَّبِعُوهُ

'Mahdi shall reappear while there will be a cloud hovering over him. From within it, an announcer shall announce - This is Mahdi, Allah's Caliph, so obey him!'

وَنَاصِرَ حَقِّهِ

This is the second important attribute underlined in this salutation. While it's true that all prophets (a.s.) and successors (a.s.) were helpers of the divine cause, it is noteworthy that Imam-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.) has been specially preserved for this motive. In order to appreciate this point, it is necessary that we understand the word dés, déo means Allah's Right. Imam (a.t.f.s.) is the helper of Allah's right (i.e. His cause). What is Allah's right? The fourth Imam Imam Zainul Abedeen. (a.s.) explains Allah's right in the very beginning of his compilation 'Risaalatul Huquq'

فَأَمَّا حَقُّ اللَّهِ الْأَكْبَرُ عَلَيْكَ فَأَنْ تَعْبُدُوهُ (و) لَا تُشْرِكَ بِهِ شَيْئًا.

'The most fundamental right that Allah, the Almighty, enjoys upon you is that you worship only Him and do not associate partners with Him.'

(Khesaal by Shaikh Saduq (a.r.), p.522)

As explained by Imam (a.s.), Allah's right upon His Creatures is the belief in monotheism. It means that we should worship only Him and not set up partners for Him. As we have mentioned earlier, this is the objective with which all prophets (a.s.) and messengers (a.s.) were raised. However, none could accomplish complete success in this regard. For instance, Hazrat Nuh (a.s.) propagated for 950 years, but despite his considerable efforts, the Quran says

”وَمَا آمَنَ مَعَهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ“

"And none believed with him (Nuh) but a few."

However, while prophesying about Imam-e-Asr's (a.t.f.s.) advent

”يَعْبُدُونَنِي لَا يُشْرِكُونَ بِي شَيْئًا“

'...they shall serve Me, not associating aught with Me..'

(Surah Nur:55)

In this momentous endeavour, Allah, Himself, shall help Imam (a.t.f.s.) through His angels. In Dua-e-Iftetaah, Imam (a.t.f.s.) himself espouses this fact,

اللَّهُمَّ اعِزَّهُ وَاعِزُّ بِهِ وَانصُرْهُ وَانْتَصِرْ بِهِ وَانصُرْهُ نَصْرًا عَزِيزًا وَافْتَحْ لَهُ فَتْحًا يَسِيرًا وَاجْعَلْ لَهُ مِنْ لَدُنْكَ سُلْطَانًا نَصِيرًا.

'O Allah! Honour him (Imam (a.t.f.s.)) and through him honour us. Help him and through him help us avenge our enemies. Help him with a mighty helping and grant him an easy victory. And arrange from Your side a dominating and overwhelming support for him.'

(Mafaatihul Jinaan; Iqbaalul A'maal by Sayyed b. Tawoos (r.a.) p. 142)

(٥) أَسْلَامٌ عَلَيْكَ يَا حُجَّةَ اللَّهِ وَدَلِيلَ إِرَادَتِهِ

'Salutations upon you, O Allah's Proof and the indicator towards His intention.'

Imam's (a.t.f.s.) brilliant personality is Allah's most magnificent proof and argument on the earth. Allah shall complete His argument upon His creatures through Imam (a.t.f.s.) and the creatures shall witness Allah's argument through the persona of Imam (a.t.f.s.). This means that if a person cannot recognize His Creator through the mediation of Imam (a.t.f.s.), he will never arrive at the truth and all his attempts in this regard will prove futile.

Hakimah Khaatoon (r.a.), the daughter of Imam Muhammad Taqi (a.s.), informs, 'As soon as Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) stepped into this world, he immediately fell in prostration. On his arm were engraved in a radiant light, the words:

“جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَزَهَقَ الْبَاطِلُ”

'Truth has come and falsehood vanished'

(Surah Bani Israel:81)

I took the infant in my arms and carried him over to his father Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.). Imam (a.s.) ran his fingers lovingly across the head of his beloved son and urged,

“تَكَلَّمْ يَا حُجَّةَ اللَّهِ وَبَقِيَّةَ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَخَاتَمِ الْأَوْصِيَاءِ وَصَاحِبِ الْكُرَّةِ الْبَيْضَاءِ وَالْمَصْبَاحِ مِنَ الْبَحْرِ الْعَمِيقِ الشَّدِيدِ الضِّيَاءِ. تَكَلَّمْ يَا خَلِيفَةَ الْأَتْقِيَاءِ وَنُورَ الْأَوْصِيَاءِ.”

"shogi 'Speak up O Allah's Proof and the remnant of the past prophets, O the seal of successors, O restorer of brilliance and light to the deep ocean, speak up, O Caliph of the Pious Ones and the Light of the Successors.'

Later, again we see Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) giving glad tidings to Imam (a.t.f.s.) at noon when the latter was offering water to his father for ablutions:

“أَبَشِّرْ يَا بُنَيَّ فَأَنْتَ صَاحِبُ الزَّمَانِ وَأَنْتَ الْمَهْدِيُّ وَأَنْتَ حُجَّةُ اللَّهِ عَلَى أَرْضِهِ وَأَنْتَ وُلْدِي وَوَصِيِّ...”

'O my son, I give you glad tidings that you are the Master of the Age, you are the Mahdi, you are Allah's Proof on the earth, you are my son and my successor...'

(Al-Ghaibat by Shaikh Tusi (r.a.)p. 165)

Another significant fact revealed in this salutation is دَلِيلَ إِرَادَتِهِ .

This can be read as, 'Salutations on the one who signifies Allah's Intention.' Indeed Imam's (a.t.f.s.) glorious existence is a proof and indicator of Allah's Intention. Before deliberating on the proof of intention, it is necessary first to understand the meaning of Allah's Intention. Allah's Intention has two aspects the World of Creation (Aalam-e-Takveeni) and the World of Action (Aalame Tashreei). In Aalam-e-Takveeni, Allah's Intention implies His Creation like earth, sky, sun, moon, etc. Regarding Aalam-e-Takveeni, Allah only has to utter 'Be' 'مَنْ' and 'It is' (فِيَكُونُ). In Aalam-e-Tashreei, Allah's Intention is His Commands and Prohibitions that He has defined for his creatures.

In the light of the above explanation, when we reflect upon Imam's (a.t.f.s.) attribute of being a pointer towards Allah's Intention, we realise that he guides us towards both these worlds. In

Aalam-e-Takveeni, every creation points towards Allah's Intention. However, Imam's (a.t.f.s.) wonderful existence is the best pointer towards Allah's Intention taking precedence over all other creation. This is because, if it weren't for the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and his infallible progeny (a.s.), there would not have been earth, sky, arsh, kursi, 'U jinn, men, rather nothing would have existed at all.

Allah Himself declares

نُؤَلِّكَ لِمَا خَلَقْتَ الْأَفْلَاقَ

'O Prophet, but for you, I would not have created the world.'

إِنِّي مَا خَلَقْتُ سَمَاءً مَبْنِيَّةً وَلَا أَرْضًا مَدْحِيَّةً وَلَا شَمْسًا مُضِيئَةً إِلَّا لِأَجْلِ وَ مَحَبَّةٍ هَؤُلَاءِ الْخَمْسَةِ الَّذِينَ هُمْ تَحْتَ الْكِسَاءِ.

'Surely I (Allah) did not create the elevated sky, the expansive earth, the brilliant sun....but for the sake and for the love of these five persons, who are inside the cloak.'

(Hadis-e-Kisa)

Moreover, Allah conveys His Intention to His creatures through Imam-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.). Imam Sadiq (a.s.) while instructing the Shias about the Ziaarat of Imam Husain (a.s.) declares

إِرَادَةُ الرَّبِّ فِي مَقَادِيرِ أُمُورِهِ تَهْبِطُ إِلَيْكُمْ وَ تَصْدُرُ مِنْ بَيْوتِكُمْ

"O Ahle Bait! Allah's intention in the destinies of affairs descends on you and emanates from your house."

(Furu'al-Kafi by Shaikh Muhammad Ibn Yaqub al-Kulayni (a.r.), Kitabul Hajj, The Chapter of Ziyaarat of Imam Husain's (a.s.) grave, Hadees 6; Mafaatihul Jinaan, Imam Husain's (a.s.) first ziyaarat)

In another tradition, Imam Ali Naqi (a.s.) informs,

إِنَّا اللَّهُ جَعَلَ قُلُوبَ الْإِمَمَةِ مَوْرِدًا لِإِرَادَتِهِ فَإِذَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ شَيْئًا شَاؤُوهُ وَهُوَ قَوْلُ اللَّهِ وَمَا تَشَاؤُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ.

"Surely Allah has made the hearts of the Imams as a place for His intention's descent. Thus, whenever Allah intends a thing, they too intend the same and this is the meaning of the verse, 'And you intend not (a thing) but that Allah intends

(it)."

(Behaarul Anwaar, vol. 25, p.372)

In yet another tradition, Imam Sadeq (a.s.) declares,

”إِنَّ الْإِمَامَ وَكَرَّ لِإِرَادَةِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ

"Surely the Imam is the nest for Allah's (Mighty and Glorified be He) intention."

(Ibid. p. 385)

As for Aalam-e-Tashreei, an Imam is the best guide towards Allah's commands and prohibitions. In other words, there is none in the world, who can comprehend Allah's laws better than the Imam or perform them in a manner more appropriate than him. Hence, if any one desires to see as to which type of worship includes Allah's satisfaction, he must look at Imam and attempt to . imitate him to the best of his abilities.

(٦) اَلْسَّلَامُ عَلَیْكَ يَا تَالِيَ كِتَابِ اللّٰهِ وَ تَرْجُمَانَهُ

Salutation upon the reciter of Allah's Book and its interpreter

Like the previous statement, this is also a salutation on two entities. However, unlike the previous salutation, the entity in question is one and the same - the Holy Quran. Or to be precise it deals with the two Qurans - the Silent Quran (the book itself) and the Speaking Quran (Imam-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.)) and highlights the cohesive and durable bond between the two. Indeed, the two shall always remain united in this world until they meet the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) in the hereafter. The renowned prophetic tradition underlines this fact:

”إِنِّي تَارِكٌ فِيمَكُمُ الثَّقَلَيْنِ كِتَابِ اللّٰهِ وَ عَشْرَتِي أَهْلَ بَيْتِي مَا إِن تَمَسَّكْتُمْ بِهِمَا لَنْ تَضِلُّوا بَعْدِي أَبَدًا فَإِنَّهُمَا لَنْ يَفْتَرَقَا حَتَّى يَرِدَا عَلَيَّ الْحَوْضِ.“

'I am leaving behind in your midst, two weighty things: the Book of Allah and my progeny. If you fasten to them, you will never be led astray after me and these two shall not separate from each other till they meet me at the pond (hauz) of Kausar.'

Traditions like this or with similar implications are aplenty. These are recorded by the Ahle *, Sunnah and Shia scholars and are deemed authentic and reliable by them. In view of the tradition mentioned above, it is evident that every age has a representative of the Prophet's (s.a.w.a.) progeny and in this era, Hazrat Wali-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.) holds this esteemed position.

Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) warns Amr b. Ubaid,

”فَاتَمَّا عَلَى النَّاسِ أَنْ يَفْرُوُوا الْقُرْآنَ كَمَا أُنزِلَ فَإِذَا احتَاجُوا إِلَى تَفْسِيرِهِ فَالْإِهْتِدَاءُ بِنَا وَ إِلَيْنَا يَا عَمْرُو.“

'O Amr, it is obligatory on the people to recite the Quran as it was revealed. When they feel the need to interpret its verses, they should necessarily refer to us and acquire guidance.'

(Tafseer-e-Furaat al-Kufi, p. 91)

(٧) اَلْسَّلَامُ عَلَیْكَ فِيْ اَنَاءِ لَيْلِكَ وَ اطْرَافِ نَهَارِكَ

'Salutations upon you in the night time and during the day.'

With this salutation, you are announcing your intention to send peace upon Imam (a.t.f.s.) at every moment, be it day or night.

This statement is borrowed from the Quranic verse

وَ مِنْ اَنَاءِ اللَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحْ وَ اطْوَاغِ النَّهَارِ لَعَلَّكَ تَرْضَى

'...during hours of the night do also glorify (Him) and during parts of the day...'

(Surah Taha: 130)

(٨) اَلْسَّلَامُ عَلَیْكَ يَا بَقِيَّةَ اللّٰهِ فِيْ اَرْضِهِ

Salutation upon the Remnant of Allah in His earth

Over here, Imam (a.t.f.s.) has been addressed with the renowned title that finds a mention in the Holy Quran.

“بَقِيَّةُ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ.”

"Surely the remnant of Allah is good for you if you are believers."

(Surah Hud:86)

The word has several meanings. However, for brevity we have delved only on one meaning which is relevant to our discussion over here.

بَقِيَ مِنْهُ: تَرَكَ بَعْضَهُ

i.e. some of it's part is left.

This means that Imam-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.) is the last link preserved by Allah in His chain of Prophets (a.s.) and their successors (a.s.) sent for mankind's guidance.

This is also the meaning used in Ziaaraat and supplications.

“السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا بَقِيَّةَ مَنْ أَوْلِيَانِهِمْ وَحُجَجِهِمْ.”

'Salutation upon the Remnant of Allah, from His Friends and Proofs'

(Fauz-e-Akbar, p. 71)

Baqiatullah was the title of even the previous Imams (a.s.). However, it is used more specifically for Imam-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.). The following tradition underscores this fact.

A denier of the Holy Quran approached Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) and asked him, 'I have read in the Quran, 'the Remnant of Allah is better for you.' Who is this Remnant of Allah?

Imam (a.s.) informed,

'This refers to the Mahdi, who shall reappear after a period of intense examination. He shall then fill the earth with justice and equity as it would have been filled with tyranny and injustice. Among his signs are occultation and a concealed lifestyle. At that time, rebellion and upheavals will be common and the fire of vengeance will be stoking strongly among the people.'

(Behaarul Anwaar vol. 93, p. 115)

When Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) introduced Ahmed b. Ishaq (r.a.) to Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) while he was still an infant, Imam (a.t.f.s.) declared to Ahmed b. Ishaq (r.a.)

“أَنَا بَقِيَّةُ اللَّهِ فِي أَرْضِهِمْ”

'I am the Remnant of Allah on His earth.'

This is the very statement that Imam (a.t.f.s.) shall proclaim on his reappearance. Imam (a.t.f.s.) shall be sighted first in the precincts of the Holy Kabaa where while leaning against the Kabaa, he shall recite this statement.

The poet has depicted this thus:

بَقِيَّةُ اللَّهِ وَصَفْوَةُ الرُّسُلِ
وَ نُخْبَةُ الْوُجُودِ مَا شِئْتَ فَقُلْ

The remnant of Allah and the chosen one of messengers

The selected among the existents, say as you please

(٩) اَلْسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا مِيثَاقَ اللَّهِ الَّذِي اَخَذَهُ وَ وَكَّدَهُ

Salutations upon you (Allah's Covenant that he has taken and emphasized upon it.

ميثاق means pledge and allegiance. Reliable traditions reveal that in Aalam-e-Zarr (the world that preceded this material world and roughly translated as 'the world of particles'), Allah had taken the pledge from the Shias with regards to the mastership of the infallible Imams (a.s.) of the Ahle Bait (a.s.). That is why in this Ziaarat we refer to Imam-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.) as 'Allah's Covenant'. Imam (a.t.f.s.) is the covenant regarding which Allah has put a lot of stress and emphasis on His creatures.

In Aalam-e-Zarr, when all the creatures were present in the form of zarr (particles) they were made to affirm the pledge regarding Allah's divinity, the Holy Prophet's (s.a.w.a.) prophethood and Ameerul Momineen's (a.s.) mastership. However, when the creatures were examined in this matter with complete free will and without any compulsion, most of them were unsuccessful and failed to affirm the allegiance. After this triple allegiance (divinity, prophethood and mastership), Allah questioned the creatures regarding Imam-e-Asr's (a.t.f.s.) occultation and reappearance. After this examination, even more creatures were unsuccessful and failed to affirm the pledge regarding Imam-e-Asr's (a.t.f.s.) occultation and reappearance. It is because of this that this pledge has become a subject of divine emphasis. It is this very covenant, the affirmation of which made some prophets (a.s.) reach the exalted station of 'firm in determination' (Ulul Azm), in preference over other prophets (a.s.).

In this aspect, Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) declares

وَ اَخَذَ الْمِيثَاقَ عَلَى اَوْلَى الْعَزْمِ اَنْنِي رَبِّكُمْ وَ مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُوْلِي وَ عَلِيٌّ اَمِيْرُ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ وَ اَوْصِيَاْتُهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَاُولَاةُ اَمْرِي وَ خَزَانُ عِلْمِي وَ اَنَّ الْمَهْدِيَّ اَنْتَصَرَ بِهٖ لِديْنِي وَ اَظْهَرَ بِهٖ دَوْلَتِي وَ اَنْتَقَمَ بِهٖ مِنْ اَعْدَائِي وَ اَعْبَدُ بِهٖ طَوْعًا كَرْهًا.....

'Allah has taken this pledge even from the Ulul Azm Prophets (a.s.): I am your Lord, Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) is My Prophet, Ali (a.s.) and his infallible sons (a.s.) are the masters and treasurers of My affair. I will most certainly help My religion through Mahdi and through him My reign will prevail. Through him, I will avenge My enemies and through him all will submit to My Worship willingly or otherwise.'

(Usul al-Kafi, vol. 2, p. 8, Chapter 3, Hadis 1)

As is evident from the tradition, all the Ulul Azm Prophets (a.s.) have testified to the fact in Aalam-e-Zarr that religion will be helped by and attain deliverance through Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.).

(١٠) اَلْسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا وَعْدَ اللَّهِ الَّذِي ضَمِنَهُ

Salutation upon you, O Allah's Promise regarding which He has given His Assurance

In several supplications and Ziaraat, Imam (a.t.f.s.) has been referred to as the 'Promised One' and this is a fairly common title. A distinctiveness of Ziaarat-e-Aal-e-Yaasin is that Imam (a.t.f.s.) over here has been addressed as 'Allah's Promise', a promise that has been endorsed further by a divine assurance. Perhaps, Imam (a.t.f.s.) has been referred to as a Promise, because of the hopes and expectations behind his promised advent. In fact, the word Promise only evokes Imam's (a.t.f.s.) remembrance and mention as is evident in 75th verse of Surah Maryam:

”حَتَّىٰ إِذَا رَأَوْا مَا يُوعَدُونَ

"Till they see what they had been promised."

Under the exegesis of this verse, Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) reveals,

”فَهُوَ خُرُوجُ الْقَائِمِ

'Here the Promise refers to the advent of Qaim (a.t.f.s.).'

(Usul al-Kafi, vol. 1, p.231, Hadis 9)

Likewise, readers can refer to other Quranic verses like Surah Nur: 55. .

Another noteworthy point on the subject of promise is that Allah never reneges on His Promise. When it comes to honouring one's word and abiding by a promise, indeed who can take precedence over Allah? Certainly none! Allah's promise itself is sufficient for any event to occur. Then, what about the Promise for which Allah has given an added assurance. In this era, it is our duty to wait for the realization of the divine promise. It is regarding this Promise that we find in Ziaraat:

”السَّلَامُ عَلَى الْمُهْدِيِّ الَّذِي وَعَدَ اللَّهُ عَزَّوَجَلَّ بِهِ الْأُمَّمَ أَنْ يَجْمَعَ بِهِ الْكَلِمَ وَ يَلْمَ بِهِ الشَّعْثَ وَ يَمْلَأَ بِهِ الْأَرْضَ قِسْطًا وَ عَدْلًا وَ يَمَكِّنَ لَهُ وَ يُنْجِزَ بِهِ وَعْدَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ.”

"Salutation upon Mahdi - Allah's Promise to the nations. Through him (Imam (a.t.f.s.)) Allah will gather the people and unite the scattered ones and fill the earth with justice and equity as it would have been filled with tyranny and injustice. And it is through him (Imam (a.t.f.s.)) that Allah will fulfill His Promise to the believers.'

(MafaatihulJinaan, p.530, Aadaab-e-Sardaab)

We have elaborated only a few lines of this lofty Ziaarat and it continues further. However, keeping in mind brevity and restriction of space, we end the first part of this exegesis over here. We implore Allah to give us taufeed and support in completing the exegesis of this Ziaarat in the next editions, Inshallah.

O Allah! Hasten the reappearance of our master, Hazrat Baqiyatullah, your proof on Your earth! Aameen!