

EDITORIAL

WAKE UP ! O CHEERFUL BREEZE, FOR THE BEAUTIFUL GARDEN IS NIGH

In the words of the Imam (a.s.), "Then strive and await. Congratulations to those who live under the mercy (of Allah)."
(Muntakhabul Asar)

How cruel are the nights of anticipation! One who awaits is surrounded by a peculiar darkness. He spends each moment in grief. "O waves of calamities! Strike a couple of blows to them too who watch the storm from the sea shore."

They do not know how lengthy is each moment of awaiting! Awaiting that morning when the sun of justice and equity will rise. This is the very dark night, whose dangerous waves and whirlpools sink the ships of life at each and every step !

How should the broken and forlorn man of today breathe for his life?

It is the time when all man-made principles and all efforts and planning pertaining to salvage happiness have transformed into despair and disappointments.

Even the thoughts and philosophy of man are held up in the mire of this age. At every step is fire, hunger, destruction and atrocity. The sound of sighs from the oppressed people is echoing throughout the world. The clouds loaded with tribulations are sailing all over the firmament of humanity. Pains, aches, diseases, hunger, famine, murder, destruction, etc. are found everywhere- In such a scenario, there is still a dimly lit lamp of hope in the hearts of the people.

When shall that hidden guide come out from the curtain of occultation and illuminate the universe? When shall he remove the darkness prevalent in the world through his brilliant light? When shall he eradicate injustice and oppression and spread justice and peace? When shall he lay the foundation of a new world order with the help of his unflinching supporters?

Certainly, he will do all these! But when? When will he come?

When will his truthful followers and supporters, who are steadfast as mountains, purify the earth from the impiety and falsehood?

Where are those who wait for Imam-e-Zamana (A.S.)? Where are the zealous hearts and the restless eyes filled with tears in anticipation of Imam-e-Zamana (A.S.)? Where are those who wander in search of 'Yusuf-e-Zahra'? Where are those who have surmounted difficulties in the initial stages of the struggle of acquiring knowledge of Imam-e-Zamana (A.S.)?

Where are those who have kindled the flame of his recognition in their hearts? Where are those who are combating the enemies of Imam-e-Zamana (A.S) and that too without much apparent help from anywhere? Where are those who never give hope even if the reappearance is much delayed? They shall never deviate from the right path. Their emotion of ardent expectations will never cool down.

The following saying of Amirul Momineen Ali (AS) guides them, "People Await /or reappearance / Do not be disappointed, Allah's mercy will be upon you. Certainly the best deed before Allah is to await the reappearance."

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Those who are his true devotees, those who always keep their hearts warm with his love and remembrance, and those who hear the glad tidings from Allah, that he shall establish peace and justice on earth, are fortunate in achieving their goals.

Such people are always enlightened, active, zealous and full of aspirations, Then where are they?

Whose characteristics have been described by our sixth Imam, Imam Jafar Sadiq (AS) "One who desires to be in the way of Quem; he will have to keep up the emotion of awaiting him throughout his life, be pious and have impeccable morals. Only (one who does this is a true Montazir (awalter)"

Hasten! O, the group of awaiters for Imam-e-Zamana (A.S.), Congratulations ! Make haste ! The dawn is about to break. The army of this morning is about to come. It will annihilate the darkness of injustice and oppression. Imam too is awaiting for the command of Allah. And you await his order.

The whole world is awaiting the Qaem from the twelfth progeny of Muhammad (S.A.W.), the remaining proof of Allah, the true guide of this age.

The order for reappearance is about to be issued. He is about to raise his voice while resting his back with the wall of Kaaba saying "I am the Qaem of this age, I shall fill the earth with justice and equity just as it is filled with injustice and oppression."

The believers are filled with terror. The detestful face of the carth wishes to transform itself into a delightful spring. Where are the helpers and supporters? His companions are those who speak the same language as he does. Where are those who weep and writhe in his wait? Success and victory is near,

This is a divine promise. **"Allah has promised to those of you who believe and do good that He willingly make them rulers in the earth ... they shall serve Me, not most certainly make them rulers in t associating aught with me..."** (Sura Nur: 55)

The divine promise can never be false ... But when?

Very soon... dawn is near ...sights are fixed to have a look at this morning. These eyes have hardly enjoyed sleep in the dark nights - the face of the darkness is worrisome -Now the darkness has increased -pitch black - why should it not be so?

Now the advent of the enlightened leader is near.

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Means of Nearness to Allah

“Say: The Unseen is only for Allah, therefore wait - surely I too, with you am of those who await.” (Yunus: 20)

If one does not have a spiritual connection and relation with the Imam of his time, undoubtedly, he cannot have any spiritual or intellectual gain. Can one have any connection with the Almighty Allah, without this channel? The reply to this is given by Quran itself in the following words,

“O you who believe! Be careful (of your duty to) Allah and seek means of nearness to him...”

(Maaidah: 35)

In Tafseer-e-Qummi, Imam (A.S.) explains the above verse thus: "Try to seek proximity to Allah through the Imam of the time." Ibne Shahre Aashob has narrated from the Commander of the faithful, Ali Ibn Abi Talib (A.S.), in the explanation of this verse, that he said, "I am the means of proximity to Allah."

(Manaaqeb of Ibne Shahre-Aashob, Vol. 3, p. 75)

A man asked in the presence of Imam Mohammad al Baqir (A.S.) and Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (A.S.), "We see a section of people who are outwardly religious and very strict in following the religious laws. Their worship also seems to be with great humility and sincerity. Then, is their worship of any use to them when they have no connection or relationship with you, [Imams (A.S.)]?"

Imam (A.S.) replied,

"There was a group in Bani Israel. Every person of this group was such that if he prayed for forty consecutive days that prayer was surely accepted by Allah. One person of this group once prayed for forty nights but his prayer was not answered. He came to Hazrat Isa (A.S.), complained about it and requested him two rakat namaz and prayed for him. It was revealed upon him, O Isa! This man has followed a method other than what I had prescribed. Thus even though he prays, in his heart, he doubts your greatness and prophethood. Thus, even if he prays to the extent of his neck being broken and every joint of body disintegrates, I will definitely not accept his prayers!"

"Imam of the time has a key role in the universe, creation, divine unity and the affairs of Marefat (divine cognition). Without this channel, it is impossible for any one to reach the heights of spiritual and intellectual achievements. Those who try to attain spirituality without having any relation with Imam (a.s.) are ignorant. They are squandering their lives in disbelief. Only Allah knows when such people will awake from the sleep of ignorance. It is really sad that they will awake at the time when it might be too late. By then, there will be no time or opportunity to make amends.

*On the day when the hypocrites will say to those who believe: Wait for us that we may have light from your light, it shall be said: **"Turn your back and then seek a light."***

(Hadid: 13)

Now isn't such personality deserving to be revered? Does he not merit devotion? If the situation does not demand Taqaiya (Simulation), is it not necessary to oppose by words and actions those who disbelieve in his existence? Yes, both reason and belief demands this from us. Yet, when we sift through Quranic verses and traditions, we find numerous verses and traditions supporting this logic that the foundation of belief is in love of Allah and in hating His enemies. This love and hatred is termed as Urwatul wuthqa (the strong rope) of belief.

One day the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) addressed his companions thus, "Which is the strongest relation among the relations of faith?" Some said, "Prayers", others said, 'fasting', and yet some others Jihad'. One group said, 'Hajj and Umra'. The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) said, "Certainly all these have their own importance but none of them can be called Urwatulwuthqa (the strong rope). The strongest relation is the relation of faith.

"To have friendship for Allah and to make enemies for Allah. Following the loved ones of Allah and hating the enemies of Allah is incumbent upon us." (Al-Kafi, Vol. 3)

It is not possible to love Allah and hate the enemies of Allah till a person loves the loved ones of Allah and hates their enemies. In many traditions, we see the same concept. For example, "One who loves us, Ahlul Bayt, loves Allah and whoever harbours enmity against us, is inimical to Allah." (Behaar, Vol. 27, p. 88)

The following sentences of Ziarat-e-Jamea Sageerah are also noteworthy:

"Peace be upon those pure personalities, one who loves them also loves Allah, and one who bears malice towards them, also bears enmity to Allah. One who recognises them, he has definitely recognised Allah and one who is ignorant of them, is ignorant of Allah."

(Mafaateehul Jinaan)

If we read the lines of Ziarat-e-Jame Kabeera, we will realise that they are postulating the statements of truth and reality. It is impossible to belie them. Anyway, this love and hatred should emerge from the depth of the heart. Also, it must be expressed verbally and then ending up in the desired actions. If these three stages are complete, his belief will be deemed to be perfect. But if he lacks therein, his faith is of no value in the eyes of Allah. The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) says,

"Belief (Iman) is confession by tongue, knowledge in the heart and actions through the limbs." (Behaar, Vol. 64, p. 69)

Actions are also important from the point of view of the qualification of true love'. One's actions should be such that they are liked by the beloved. If it is not so, then the actual meaning of love is not achieved.

Ameerul Momineen Ali Ibn Abi Taalib (A.S.) says, "One who loves us, his duty is to make his actions correspond to our's (that is, he must follow us in action)."

Imam Jafar Sadiq (A.S.) says, *"I do not consider him as a believer who does not desire to follow us in each and every matter."* (Al Kafi, Vol. 3, p. 124)

Ending this discussion here, we would like to state that it is common knowledge of the scholars and intellectuals that Allah has not hidden the Imam of this time in such a way that it is absolutely impossible for any person to offer him his services.

Can we disregard those innumerable incidents which are recorded by reliable scholars in their books, which describe the anecdotes of those who had the honour of meeting their Imam (a.s.)?

Although, many more of such incidents have remained as secrets and buried forever with those who witnessed them.

When we analyse all such incidents, we conclude that all those who had the books.com honour of meeting Imam (A.S.) had done so only after they had strived greatly to develop spiritual relations with him.

It is a fact that those who follow the correct and the prescribed way, pray to Imam-e-Zamana (a.s.) fervently for help and perform such deeds, only can attract his attention. They are also blessed with his meeting. Through which, they realise how pleasant it would be to meet the Lord.

Those who are enchanted by the attractions of this temporal world and forgo the pleasures of the hereafter are indeed in a slumber of ignorance. In fact they are under the false impression that they will be able to attain salvation.

It must be the earnest desire of every believer that by getting the recognition of Imam-e-Zamana (A.S.), he achieves the honour of meeting Imam (A.S.), even if he has to sacrifice his wealth, his dignity, his existence and his life to attain it.

"It is intolerable for me that I see the people but do not see you. And, neither do I hear a sigh of breath nor (any) whispering from you. It is intolerable for me that you are surrounded by calamities and that, neither my plaintive cry nor my complaint reaches you."

"May I be sacrificed for you who seems to be concealed physically, but is not far away from us."

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"May I be sacrificed for you who seems to be an emigrant but is not far from us."

"...How long am I to wait for you, O my master! And how long and with what words should I praise you, and what secret talk (should I adopt with you)."

"It is intolerable for me to talk and receive a reply from others but not from you."

"It is intolerable for me that I cry for you while all others forsake you."

(Extracts from Dua-e-Nudba)

The desire to meet Hazrat (A.S.) should be so intense that even if one dies praying for it he shall be brought back to life after the reappearance of Hazrat (A.S.), and Allah shall enable him to join his ranks. In the invocations for Imam (A.S.) the following sentences must be recited:

"O my master! If I am able to reach the period of your just rule, I shall be steadfast in following your orders and prohibitions. And through this obedience I hope to be included in your army and achieve the lofty position of martyrdom.

Master! If I am dead before your blessed reappearance, I pray to the Almighty through the good offices of your pure ancestors (may He send blessings upon Muhammad (S.A.W.) and his purified progeny) that He brings me back to life at the time of your reappearance so that I can

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present myself in your service. In your presence I may fulfil that great aim and take revenge from your enemies, thus palliating the sad and forlorn heart."

(Mafaateehul Jinaan, Duae-Ghaibat)

One who hopes to meet Imam (A.S.), prays to Allah to express his helplessness. He implores that the prolonged occultation of Imam (A.S.) should not dilute his belief. He always invokes Allah that he may not forget the Imam (A.S.). He wishes that his belief and confidence in the existence and reappearance of Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) remains as firm as his belief in the Prophethood of the Holy Prophet of Islam (S.A.W.).

This is the meaning of the sentences of Dua-e-Ghaibat as mentioned in the paragraph above. The above Dua is also present in Mafatihul Jinan.

O Allah do not deprive us of our belief in Imam (A.S.) due to his long absence from among us. Do not even make us bereft of his remembrance, of his anticipation, of the belief in his existence and his reappearance.

Do not make us forgetful of invoking for him and sending blessings upon him.

Due to his prolonged occultation, do not let us despair of his reappearance. Make our belief in his existence in the formation of his government as firm as our belief in the call of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) and our conviction in the revelation upon the Prophet (S.A.W.) and the heavenly books.

Truly, those who have Marefat, do not prefer the worldly bounties to the bounty of meeting or seeing the Imam (A.S.). We must be cognizant of these facts. So much so that we must express our love and attachment to him as much in privacy as in public. For, expressing our devotion to him in solitude has special benefits. Thus there is a saying of one Imam-e-Masoom (A.S.). *"We are not thrifty in any matter with regard to our followers. Lest he may be compelled to ask those things from someone other than us."*

In order to maintain piety and at the same time to achieve closeness and true love, we must try to benefit as much as possible from the Quranic verses and the utterances of the infallibles (A.S.).

Hence, the Quran Says,

"If you are careful of (your duty to) Allah, He will grant you a distinction..." (Anfaal: 29)

In order that we may differentiate between good and evil, Allah bestows an inner light. That is why when the knowledgeable people are asked regarding the whereabouts of Imam-e-Zamana (A.S.) they say, "First you reform yourself, Imam (A.S.) will himself seek you."

Many of the Quranic verses and traditions on this subject prove this point. Hence we come across the following incident in history.

Imam Zainul Abedin (A.S.) was washing his head and a slave girl was pouring water from a utensil. She dozed off and the container fell upon the head of Imam (A.S.) and injured him. He looked at the maid. She said, "Allah says, and those who restrain their anger."

Imam (A.S.) said, "I have controlled my anger."

She said, "And forgive the mistakes of the people."

Imam (A.S.) said, "May Allah forgive your mistakes."

Again he (A.S.) said, "I free you for the sake of Allah's pleasure and satisfaction."

Thus we see how a maid benefited from quoting the Quranic verses, pleased the Imam (A.S.) and gained his satisfaction. One who loves and has attachment with the Divine Nominee approaches the Masomeen (A.S.) in this way:

"O the Purified Ahle Bayt! Only you are the apparent demonstration of Divine mercy, majesty, anger, forbearance and forgiveness. So please if I have committed a mistake it befits your dignity and honour to overlook it, as if you have not witnessed my mistake and pardon me."

Amirul Momineen Ali (A.S.) says "The most honourable act of a benevolent person is to overlook what he knows (of others' faults)." (Nahjul Balagha)

It means that even after seeing the mistakes of others, he acts as if he has seen it.

At another place in Nahjul Balagha is the saying, "If a person has a good idea about you, confirm it through your actions."

Thus someone requests you, "O Son of the Prophet (S.A.W.), I expect goodness from you. No act of yours has been performed except that it was good. I expect benevolence from you. Do not change my hope into despair."

Briefly, all Quranic verses and the sayings of the infallibles on the subject of faith and the believers, are always encouraging the love of these sacred personalities.

The teachings of the infallibles emphasize upon the necessity of the love and devotion towards all of them and especially towards Imam-e-Zamana (A.S.). This is evident in their supplications wherein they have craved for closeness to Imam-e-Zamana (A.S.). Thus Amirul Momineen Ali (A.S.) Says, in this (A.S.) praise: *"His (may his reappearance be hastened by Allah) abode is much bigger than any of yours. His knowledge is more than all of you. He is superior to you in the matter of being good to the relatives. O Allah! Make his allegiance the end of all grief and sadness. Through him unite the ummah. If the Almighty Allah wishes goodness from you may He destine for you that day when you are firm like a mountain. If you reach the time of his government, then you do not be attracted towards anyone else except him. If you find the way to reach him do not ignore it."* Then Ali (A.S.) pointed towards his chest and said,

"O how much I long to see him!" (Behaar, Vol. 51, p. 118)

Imam Hasan (A.S.) said, "How fortunate is the one who reaches his rule and acts upon his commands." (Yaumul Khalaas, old edn. p. 268)

Imam Muhammad al Baqir (A.S.) said to Abu Hamza Thumali, "Our Daem (A.S.) will reappear in such a time when the whole world will be terror struck and fearful. Discontent would be everywhere. Discord and tribulations will weigh heavily upon the people. Before these corruptions, there would be wide spread plague on the earth. The Arabs will be under the rule of the swords (oppression). There would be controversies and disunity in religion. The people would be so much fed-up with these conditions that day and night they would be praying to Allah to give death to them. Amidst such an atmosphere of despair and hopelessness, our Qaem will reappear. How fortunate will be the one who will reach the period of his reappearance and

stand up for his help and assistance. And how sorry will be the one who will disobey his commands and rise up in opposition."

(Basharatul Islam, p. 105)

Imam Sadiq (A.S.) said, "If I reach him I shall serve him for my whole life."

(Behaar, Vol. 51, p. 148)

The famous poet Debal Khuzaai went to Imam Raza (A.S.) and recited his wellknown eulogies. When he reached the following lines:

The Imam (A.S.) whose reappearance is imminent and certain. He will arise by the name of Allah and harness the bounties of Allah. He will separate the truth and falsehood from among us. And reward and punish for the good and evil (deeds) When Debal recited these lines, Imam Reza (A.S.) began to weep profusely. When he ceased, he raised his head and said to Debal:

"Ruhul Qudus has made you recite these couplets. Do you know who is that Imam? And when he will reappear?" Debal answered in the negative. "I have only heard from your family that an Imam will appear. And that he will purify the earth from calamities and destruction. He fill it with justice and equality just like it would have been fraught with injustice and oppression."

Imam Reza (A.S.) said, "*Debal! After me (the Imam) will be my son, Muhammad. After Muhammad, his son Ali. After Ali, his son Hasan and after Hasan his son Hujjat who is the Qaem (peace be upon all of them).*

People will await his reappearance during his occultation. On his reappearance they will follow his commands. Even if a single day remains for this world, Allah shall prolong that day so much so as to enable the Divine proof to reappear and to fill this earth with justice and equity like it would be filled with injustice and oppression."

(Behaar, Vol. 51, p. 54)

May Allah give all of us the Tawfeeq that till our last breath, we are dedicated to Allah, His prophet (S.A.W.) and his purified Ahlul Bayt (A.S.) especially Hazrat Hujjat (ATFS). May our lives be spent in the assistance of Islam.

Hazrat Imam Mahdi (a.s.) – The Quranic View

One of the principles of faith that the Quran postulates and testifies is the principle of the belief in Imam Mahdi (A.S.) and his characteristics.

The Holy Quran says:

"We have not neglected anything in the Book."

(Anam: 38)

On another occasion the book of Allah states:

"...and we have revealed the Book to you explaining clearly everything."

(Nahl: 89)

It is naturally incumbent upon the Quran not to remain silent upon such an important basic principle; as the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) has also called a person who does not believe in Imam

Mahdi (A.S.) an infidel. To explain the Quranic stand regarding the belief in Mahdaviyat, numerous traditions have exegesised these verses through both Shia as well as Sunni chains of transmitters. These traditions, clearly state that these verses are about Imam Mahdi (A.S.). The book which has the best collection of Quranic verses that speak of Imam Mahdi (A.S.) in the light of Sunni traditions and report, is 'Al Mahdi Fil Quran' written by respected scholar Syed Sadiq Shirazi in. 1978.

This book records 86 Quranic verses that are related to or concerning Hazrat Imam Mahdi (A.S.). Hence the books of Ahle Sunnat are replete with such traditions along with the chains of transmitters.

As far as the Shia scholars are concerned, they have compiled numerous books on this subject. The foremost and the oldest book is 'Al Muhajja Feema Nazala-fil-Qaaemil Hujjah.' This book is written by the great Shia scholar Allama Syed Hashim Behrani (1174 A.H.). In this invaluable work of research, the author has recorded one hundred and twenty Quranic verses that refer to Imam Mahdi (A.S.). He has relied upon the Shia traditional reports making use every of narrations from AhlulBait (A.S.). Certain reliable scholars have carried out researches and concluded that the Book of Allah contains 217 verses that speak explicitly about Hazrat Imam Mahdi (A.S.)

(Ref: Al-Ayaatul Baahira Fi Baqiyatil Itratiut Taahira: written by Syed Dawood Meer Sabiri]

In the present discussion, we shall mention some of such verses about whom the exegesis and the commentary states that they have been revealed concerning Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) (May Allah hasten his reappearance). We shall quote from both Shia as well as Sunni books of hadith.

A. Quranic verses revealed about Hazrat Imam Mahdi (a.s.) as recorded by the Sunni scholars

(1) Huzaiifa bin Yamani says: "One day I entered in the presence of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) and asked regarding the following verse

"...these are those upon whom Allah has bestowed favours from among the prophets and the truthful and the witnesses and the good, and what a good company are they!"

(Nisa: 69)

I (Hazaifa Yamani) asked as to who are the people referred to in this verse?

The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) replied: "O Huzaiifa, the word prophets' upon whom Allah has bestowed favours refers to me: I am the first of the prophets who was selected first for prophethood (before the creation of the world) and I am the last of them to be sent to the world. The word 'truthful' refers to Ali Ibn Abi Talib (A.S.)."

"When the Almighty Allah sent me as a Prophet, the first one to testify for my Prophethood was Ali (A.S.). The word 'witnesses' implies Hamza and Jafar at Tayyar (A.S.). The word 'good' stands for the two chiefs of the youths of Paradise, Hasan and Husain (A.S.). The goodly company' refers to Mahdi in his time."

(Shawahid ut Tanzeel by Haakim Haskani 1/155)

The last portion of the hadith infers that these people in the time of Mahdi (A.S.) will be associates of each other and will remain united. This report also indicates the 'Rajat (resurrection of the Ahlul Bayt (A.S.) in the era of the reappearance. of Hazrat Mahdi (may Allah hasten his reappearance).

(2) *In a lengthy tradition, Hazrat Imam Muhammad al Baqir (A.S.) describes the events of the days of reappearance: "When Mahdi (A.S.) reappears his back will rest on the wall of Kaaba. The scene would be such that he would be surrounded completely by 313 of his most obedient and loyal supporters. The first words that he shall utter would be the Quranic verse, "What remains with Allah (Baqiyatullah) is better for you if you are believers..."*

(Hud: 86)

"After this he shall declare, 'I am the Baqiyatullah, the divine vicegerent and His proof upon you.' Later, whoever shall approach him, will salute him and say, "As Salamo Alaika Ya Baqiyatallahe Fil Arz' (Salutations upon you, O the Baqiyatulla upon the earth)."

(Nurul Absar by Syed Momin Shablanjee Shafae exp. 172 A.H.)

(3) Hasan bin Khalid enquired about the following verse from Hazrat Ali Ibn Musa as Raza (A.S.):

"He (Iblis) said: My Lord! Then respite me till the time when they are raised.

He (Allah) said: So surely you are of the respited ones, till the period of the time made known."

(Hijr: 36-38)

The reporter asked Imam (A.S.), "Does Shaitan request Allah for respite till the day of Judgement and did Allah respite him till the appointed hour?"

Imam Reza (A.S.) replied, "The period of the time made known refers to the day of the reappearance of our Qaem (A.S.)." The Imam (A.S.) was further asked, "O Son of the Prophet of Allah, which one of you Ahlul Bayt (A.S.) is Qaem?"

He (A.S.) replied, "He shall be from my fourth generation. He would be the son of the chief of the maids of Allah. He will cleanse the face of the earth of all types of injustice and tyranny and purify it of all kinds of evils." (Faraaedus Simtain by Shaykhul Islam Hammui, Vol.2)

In this exquisite tradition the eighth Imam, Imam Reza (A.S.) has introduced Imam Mahdi Allah (A.S.) as his fourth descendant i.e. the twelfth Imam. He has also indicated that the respected which mother of Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) will be Narjis Khatoon. She is stated to be the daughter of honourable parents but was sold as a slave maid.

(4) It is recorded from the great Sunni exegetist, Saeed bin Jubayr that he says regarding the following verse:

"He it is who sent His Apostle with the guidance and the true religion that He may make it prevail over all the religions; and Allah is enough for a Witness."

(Fath: 28)

The phrase "that He may make it prevail over all the religions" refers to the same Mahdi (A.S.) who is from the progeny of Fatima az-Zahra (S.A.).

(Al Bayan Fi Akhbare Sahibizzamaan Hafiz Ganji Shafae, p. 73)

Hence the divine promise that Islam shall prevail over all religions will be fulfilled only in the period of the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (A.S.).

(5) One of the stalwarts among the writers of Ahle Sunnat, Hafiz Abu Jafar at Tabari narates from Zaid bin Arqam the companion of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) that he said, 'When the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) was returning from the last Hajj, he halted at Ghadeer-e-Khumm at the time of Zohr braving the extremely hot and scorching sun. He led the Muslims in prayers and later delivered an eloquent and meaningful sermon. In it, he recited the Quranic verse, **"Therefore believe in Allah and His Apostle and the Light which we e have have revealed..."**

(Sura Taghabun 64: 8)

Then the *Prophet (S.A.W.)* said, *"O People! The Light that Allah has revealed is in me. After me in Ali (A.S.) and after him in his progeny. Till this sequence reaches alQaem al-Mahdi (A.S.)"*.

(Maza' FiatTaarikh - Allama Qubaisi, 3/145-147)

Hence, this Light is the light of divine guidance and that of the leadership of the Ummat. First this light was present in the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) followed by Ameerul Momineen Ali (A.S.) and after him it will continue to exist in his infallible descendents till it reaches Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.). All these lofty personalities shall be the Divine Proofs.

(B) The Quranic verses revealed about Hazrat Mahdi (a.s.) according to the traditions: recorded by Shia authorities

(1) It is reported from Yahya bin Abil Qasim: I asked Imam Jafer Sadiq (A.S.) regarding the divine statement - "Alif Lam Mim. This Book, there is no doubt in it, is a guide to those who guard (against evil). Those who believe in the unseen." (Baqarah: 1,2)

The Imam (A.S.) remarked, "those who guard (against evil) are the Shias of Ali (A.S.) and the unseen infers the unseen proof (Imam)." Our contention is corroborated by the following verse of the Holy Quran; "And they say, why is not a sign sent to him from his Lord? Say: The unseen is only for Allah, therefore wait - surely I too with you am of those who wait."

(Yunus: 20)(Ref: Kamaluddin by Shaykh Sadooq, Vol. 2, p.340)

It is evident that the belief in the Hidden Proof, Imam Mahdi (may Allah hasten his reappearance) is one of the characteristic features of the Shias of Ali (A.S.).

(2) Abu Jafar Imam Muhammad al Baqir (A.S.) explains the following verse of the Holy Quran:

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

(Hajj: 41)

He (A.S.) says, "This verse concerns the progeny of Muhammad (S.A.W.). The Almighty Allah will present the east and the west of the earth in the service of Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) and his companions. He, the Almighty, will make the Islamic religion universal and through Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) and his companions,' eradicate innovations (in religion) and evil." (Taweelul Ayaatiz Zaahirah, p.343): This ayat lays the foundation of the reappearance, rising and the rule of Hazrat Imam Mahdi (A.S.).

(3) When Abu Basir asked Imam Jafar Sadiq (A.S.), the meaning of the following verse: "Allah has promised to those of you who believe and do good that He will most certainly make them rulers in the earth as He made rulers those before them and that He will most certainly establish for them their religion which He has chosen for them and that He will most certainly, give them security in exchange, (as) they serve Me (and) do not associate aught with Me..."
(Nur: 55)

Imam (A.S.) replied, "This verse is revealed in connection with al-Qaem (A.S.) and his companion."
(Al-Ghaybah, p. 126)

This Quranic verse about the reappearance and uprising of Imam Mahdi (A.S.) - the belief common to Ahle Sunnat too - mentions four characteristics and aims of the universal rule of Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.)

- a) The establishment of a Universal Government.
- b) Absolute power to the religion of Islam.
- c) The atmosphere of complete security and peace.
- d) The annihilation of polytheism (Shirk).

(4) Muhammad bin Abdullah bin Hasan enquired from Imam Muhammad al Baqir (A.S.) the meaning of the following verse:

"And certainly We wrote in the Book after the reminder that (as for) the land, My righteous servants shall inherit it."
(Anbiya: 105)

Imam Baqir (A.S.) said, - "the righteous servants in the last age shall be the companions of Mahdi Mahdi (A.S.)."
(Taaweelul Ayaatiz Zahira)

This verse indicates that the glad tidings of the universal government of helpers and the followers of Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) has been mentioned in the Torah and the Zaboor.

(5) Ammar-e-Yasir (R.A.) has reported a lengthy tradition from the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) wherein he has mentioned the lofty position and merits of Ali Ibn Abi Talib (A.S.). The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) has stated in this narration that Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) would be a descendant of Ali (A.S.). In reply to the query of Ammar-e-Yasir as to 'who is Mahdi' the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) said, "O Ammar! the Almighty Allah has promised me that from the loins of Husain (A.S.) will be born nine Imams (a.s.). The ninth one of them shall be hidden from the public eye. For the same reason Allah says, "Say: Have you considered if your water should go down in the earth, who is it then that will bring you spring of flowing water?"

(Mulk: 30)

For him (i.e. Mahdi (A.S.) the 12th Imam) it would be such a prolonged occultation that a section of the people would turn away from their belief. Whereas another section (of the people) will remain firm steadfast. Then he will reappear and rise during the last period (or time) and will fill the earth with justice and equity just as it would be fraught with injustice and oppressions..."

(Kifayatul Asar, p.12)

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This verse compares the existence of Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) to the underground spring of flowing water, gushing forth from the earth. This brief discussion shows that the Holy Quran contains the various aspects of the reappearance, occultation as also the characteristics of Hazrat Mahdi (a.s.). All this is agreed upon by both the Shia as well as the Sunni scholars who are most authoritative and reliable.

May the Almighty Allah, by the intercession of his dear ones, bring to an end the occultation of the last hope of Humanity, hasten his reappearance and include us among his helpers and followers. Amen.

Meaning of Occultation

Although all kinds of doubts have been raised regarding 'Mahdaviyat', the matter of 'Ghaibat (occultation) seems to be the most complicated one - as regards its concept and significance. It is for this very reason that to have belief in the Hidden Imam is one of the necessary qualifications of a believer. Traditions regarding the occultation of Imam Mahdi (A.S.) are found in exceedingly large numbers in the books of both the Sunnis and the Shias. For example, the famous scholar of Sunnis, Allama Muttaqi Hindi in his book 'Al Burhan Fi Alaamaat-e-Akhirizzaman', Allama Suyuti in his book "Al Arful Wardi Fi Akhbaril-Mahdi" and Muqaddasi Shafae in "Iqduddurar Fi Akhbaril Muntazar" have narrated such traditions. Other Sunni scholars have also collected numerous traditions on the same topic. Similarly the Shia scholars also have compiled a great number of books with regard to the occultation of Imam Mahdi (A.S.). These books deal exhaustively with the topic of occultation. For example, Shaykh Sadooq [a.r.] in his famous book Kamaaluddin wa Tamaamun Nemat'. Shaykh Toosi and Shaykh Nomani in their books 'Ghaibat' (both the scholars have given the same title to their respective books). All these books have a large number of traditions from the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) and the infallible Imams (A.S.) which discuss the various aspects of occultation. On the basis of the large body of traditions that exists on the ghaibat of Imam (A.S.), we must admit that there is no scope of any doubt in this regard.

However, a question arises at this juncture as to the meaning and definition of 'Occultation'. Secondly, in what sense of the word is our Imam (A.S.) hidden?

I - Meaning of Occultation:

Occultation does not mean that our Imam (A.T.F.S.) is present in some other world - like the belief of the Shaikhiya Sect. Occultation also does not mean that our Imam (A.S.) is hidden in some well or cellar. And that he will come out of his hiding place only at the time of reappearance-like some Sunni Scholars believe. Also occultation does not mean that Imam (A.S.) is possessing a body which is invisible like a spirit or a soul. And that it is because of this that the people are unable to see him - as is the belief of some common people. Finally, occultation also does not imply that Imam (A.S.) is residing in a secret location on this earth and never leaves his place of stay -as is evident from some narrations in certain books.

The true meaning of 'Ghaibat' of Imam (A.S.) is that like his pure predecessors he too possesses a material body and is living his life in this world. He speaks and responds to the calls of help from people. He guides those who have lost their way. He participates in the rituals of the Hajj. He visits the graves of other Masoomeen (A.S.). His help reaches the oppressed and the Shias who seek his assistance. People see Hazrat-e-Hujjat (A.S.) and speak to him but are unable to recognise him.

However, all these facts do not deny the possibility that the Imam (A.S.) escapes dangers with the help of extraordinary powers like indetectability by others. Just as his respected grandfather, the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) left his house on the night of hijrat and was not detected by the infidels of Mecca. Hence our Imam (A.S.) is not an invisible Imam but an Imam who is not recognised when seen by the people.

II - Story of the Cellar (sardab)

Concerning the belief of Mahdaviyat, the most common objection of the Sunnis against the Shias is that the latter believe that after the martyrdom of Imam Hasan al Askari (A.S.), Imam Mahdi (A.S.) descended into a well or a cellar in the city of Samarra and lives there. And that he will emerge from there only at the time of his reappearance. Sunnis allege that, it is for this reason the Shias recite supplications to Imam at the edge of a well when they go to Samarra for Ziarat. Some of the ignorant Sunni scholars and poets have written couplets in this regard and termed as the 'fiction of the cellar'.

Extensive research into this episode has brought to surface the fact that the originator of this piece of 'fiction' is Hafiz Mohammad bin Yusuf Ganji (d. 658 A.H.) who was a native of Syria and an important leader of the Shafae school. The Hanafis have followed him in this regard and copied the episode from him. However all that is written in the Shia books refutes this allegation rather than support or defend it. Such shrewdness in fabricating allegations proves conspiracy of defamation.

The Shias have never had the belief that their Imam (A.S.) is hidden in some cave or cellar. How is it possible to call him 'Hidden' if everyone knows that he is in that cellar?

According to the Shiite belief, Imam (A.S.) participates in the Hajj every year. People see Imam (A.S.) but do not recognise him. Thus this belief contradicts the "fiction of cave or cellar. Shias as well as Sunnis have the belief that Hazrat (ATFS) will reappear from the Holy Kaaba. Thus if the narration of 'cellar' is true, then he would have reappeared from the 'cellar'. The author of the book 'Al-Yawaaqeeto wal Jawaahir' has mentioned besides Hasan Iraqi, other Sunnis who had the opportunity to meet Imam Mahdi (A.S.) in different parts of the world. Whereas according to the fictitious allegation all these meetings should have been at the cellar. During the time of 'Ghaibat, none can say for sure where Imam (A.S.) is. Every

Friday the Shias address him in the following words, "I wish I had known in which part of the land you are!" This only shows that none is cognizant of the location of Imam (A.S.).

On the basis of this it is not the belief of the Shias that Imam (A.S.) is in some cave or cellar. Only one point remains to be clarified. That if the Shias do not accept the belief that Imam (A.S.) is in the cave or cellar then why do they perform the ziarat of the cellar (Sardab) in Samarra? The reply to this question is clear enough. It is that place which had been the home of three Imams (A.S.), viz. Imam Ali Naqi (A.S.), Imam Hasan al Askari (A.S.) and Imam-e-Zamana (ATFS). It is one of those houses about which Allah (A.J.) says,

"In houses which Allah has permitted to be exalted and that His Name may be remembered in them..."
(Nur: 36)

It is because that this house had been inhabited by the Imams (A.S.) and thus is blessed and not that the Imam (A.S.) still resides in it. It is just like the respect shown to the houses of the other Prophets (S.A.W.).

The belief that Imam (A.S.) is confined in the cellar from the time of his birth till the time of his reappearance may be a Sunni belief but is definitely not a Shia one. And this assertion is not without a valid argument. The argument is that the renowned Sunni scholar, Hafiz Abdulla Mohammad bin Yusuf Ganji Shafai (born 958 A.H.) wrote in the 25th chapter of his book 'Al

Bayan Fi Akhbare Sahebizzamaan.', "The disbelievers in Mahdi raise the objection that if Mahdi is confined to the cave then how does he receive nourishment?" Now this statement of Hafiz Ganji proves that he had the belief that Imam Mahdi (A.S.) was residing in the cellar. The only question that remained to be answered was that of his nourishment. Because of this belief, he tries to reply this question. The great Shia scholar Ibn Isa Irbeli (R.A.) who had studied the book Al Bayan' from Hafiz Ganji himself, writes in his book Kashf-ul-Ghumma' after discussing about this matter, "It is strange indeed that those who refute the existence of Hazrat Mahdi (ATFS) believe this (that he is in the cellar), whereas those who accept his existence do not (believe that he is in the cellar)."

Those who have visited Iraq and other warm countries are aware of the fact, as is also the custom in the hot areas of India, that people in these places used to construct basements in their houses in order to take shelter from the scorching summer heat. They used to spend the summer season in these cellars. The house of Imam Hasan al Askari (A.S.) was in Samarra, Iraq, which is known for its hot climate. According to the custom of that period, this house also had a cellar, which is known as 'Sardaab' in Arabic. The family members of Imam Hasan al Askari (A.S.) used to put up in this cellar during the summer. After the martyrdom of Imam Hasan al Askari (A.S.), the agents of the tyrant Caliph were despatched to arrest Imam Mahdi (A.S.). When they reached the cellar they saw the Imam (A.S.) occupied in prayers. But by the help of Allah's power they failed to arrest him and had to return empty handed. According to another report, when the house of Imam (A.S.) was invaded by the soldiers, Imam (A.S.) managed to escape from the cellar in the same way as his respected grandfather, the holy Prophet (S.A.W.) had eluded the infidels of Mecca on the eve of hijrat. The soldiers searched the house but could not find Imam (A.S.). This narration is reported by Nuruddin Abdul Rehman Jani Hanji in his book 'Shawahid Nabuwwah.'

Hence our discussion proves that the belief of Mahdi (A.S.) hiding in a cellar or a cave is a Sunni belief. None of the Shia scholars ascribe to this view. And this belief is absolutely the opposite of the actual Shia belief. It is not known as to how some Sunni scholars ascribe to such baseless opinions.

After the martyrdom of his respected father, Imam Hasan al-Askari (A.S.), Imam Mahdi (A.S.) went into occultation to remain safe from the atrocities of the tyrant caliphs who followed the way of Pharaohs and Nimruds. He has been kept away from the sight of the people. He has entered into occultation by the permission of Allah and living a life with none knowing of his whereabouts. He shall remain in occultation as long as Allah wishes. When Allah will desire, he will reappear. Insha-Allah.

Imam-e-Zamana (a.s.) – The Cause Of Survival Of The Universe

The Imam or the divine representative is needed not merely for the dissemination of the rules of the Shariah and their compliance. That is, his duty is not confined only to the guidance of the world but the whole creation depends upon him for their existence. If Imam ceases to exist, the entire system would collapse.

It is related from Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (A.S.) that he stated, "If Imam (A.S.) is absent from the world even for a moment, the earth would suck in all its inhabitants like the stormy sea drowns the sea farers." (Ghaibate-Nomani, p. 139, Chap. 8, Hadith No. 10)

Nearly all Muslims are unanimous in their belief that the world has been created for the sake of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) and his purified progeny (A.S.). A well-known Hadith-e-Qudsi is that the Almighty Allah told the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.)

"But for you I would not have created the skies."

In another tradition, He says, *"I have created you for Myself and the rest of the things for your sake."*

IMAM (A.S.): THE SOUL OF UNIVERSE:

Hazrat Ali (A.S.) in a couplet has compared man to the 'Greatest Creation'. The oft-heard couplet is as follows: "Do you think that you are an insignificant speck whereas a great world is concealed in you." Man's heart is the central point of the human body. Not a single organ is independent of it. Till the heart remains healthy, the body will be in order. However emaciated the latter may get, if the heart is alive, it will continue to radiate the warmth of life throughout. If, God forbid, a calamity befalls the heart or if it ceases to function or is detached from the body, it is reduced to a corpse.

A remarkable fact is the sea that even though the heart is the source of life for the body, it cannot be seen and remains concealed. But the living body is a surety that the heart exists. And the heart derives its 'life from the soul which in turn is a 'divine affair'.

The existence of Imam (A.S.) in this vast world is having the same position as the soul and the heart. As the body's will movement is a proof of the presence of heart and the soul. In the same way, the living world is a proof of the existence of the soul of the universe, Hazrat Vali e Asr (may our lives be sacrificed for him).

Another matter that becomes clear is that the benefit of the Imam of the time is not dependent upon his being apparent or visible. The survival of the world is one of the benefits of the Imam (a.s.)'s existence.

Just as the heart, concealed in the body, continues to nurture all its organs and cures each and every pain and discomfort, Imam-e-Asr (a.s.) (may our lives be sacrificed for him), even though in occultation, continues to benefit the whole creation. He removes the difficulties of those in trouble and attends to those in need.

Whatever strength and power the corporeal body possesses is due to the soul. All the organs of the human body are subservient to its commands. These parts cannot dare to overlook even the smallest injunction of the soul.

Imam (a.s.) is the soul of the universe. Whatever life, strength, power and warmth exists, is only for his sake. (may our souls be sacrificed upon him). Just as the organs obey the orders of the human will, every particle of the universe is even more obedient to the will and desire of Imam-e-Asr (A.S.).

Not a single particle disobeys even single slightly the order of Imam (A.S.). Therefore, it is not surprising that the Imam (A.S.) performs miraculous acts. It is for this very reason that Imam (A.S.) is at liberty to utilise his power whenever and in whichever way he likes.

All these points have been derived from the incident involving the companion of Imam Jafar Sadiq (A.S.). Hisham bin Hakam and the Basri scholar, Amr bin Ubayd. When Imam Jafar Sadiq (A.S.) had listened to the arguments he had remarked, "These points have been mentioned *in the Old Testament.*"
(*Usoole-Kafi, Vol. 1, p. 169, Hadith No. 3*)

Even among the Ahle Sunnat, such traditions are lightly found which state that if the Imam of the time ceases to exist, earth will sink along with it's inhabitants.

Hence, it is recorded by the famous hadith scholar of the Sunnis, Abdulla bin Bath Akbar in his book, 'Al Ayanata' from his chain of narrators that the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) said,

- *"This religion will remain established till the twelve (Imams). When these twelve persons depart, it will sink inside with its dwellers".*
(*Kashful Astaar, p. 99*)

All these things clearly prove that this world continues to exist for the sake of the beloved grandson of Ali al-Murtaza (A.S.), the apple of Narjis' eyes and the dearest one of Hasan alAskari (A.S.). For due to him, we receive sustenance. If we have Islam and belief, it is due to him. In other words, our existence and everything related with it depends only on Imame-Asr (A.S.).

The least recompense we can offer is to remember him and not to forgo his remembrance even for a moment And to wait for him and prepare the world for his reappearance. We must kindle the light of love and marefat (Knowledge) of Imam-e-Asr (A.S.) in the hearts of our children, our family members, friends and acquaintances.

IMAM IS THE GOAL OF THE ENTIRE CREATION

The Almighty Allah has created the world in such a way that every lowly object is made for not be a lofty thing. It could be explained in a better way by stating that every deficient object is created for a perfect one. If the perfect creation had not been under consideration, the creation of the imperfect objects would have been of no use. The following example shall the concept. The life in the womb is a prelude to the life of this world. If terrestrial life had not been intended, the life within the womb would have been purposeless.

Therefore the organs and the capacity that were given were not of use inside the womb but rather for the life on earth. Thus the pre-natal life is the prelude to the life after birth. The life on the earth is more complete than that in the womb. In the same way, the life on this earth is a prelude to the hereafter, where there is only life and every sort of perfection. If there had been no belief in the life of the hereafter, this terrestrial sojourn would have been, in the words of the Holy Quran, futile. The existence of a life after death has made this life purposeful. The life of the hereafter is the perfect life.

If we observe the different creations, we arrive at the same conclusion. For example, the inorganic chemicals are the base for organic matter or vegetation which in turn is for the animal world. The animal world is subservient to the superior-most neither creation called man.

Each of the lower class of creatures provide a proof of the existence of a higher one. Here, we notice that everything is moving towards perfection. The lifeless world of inorganic matter was made purposeful by the vegetable kingdom. The stagnant vegetative world is gifted a meaningful existence by the moving animals. The irrational creatures are made useful by the rational man. Man is made to be purposeful due to the existence of Imam (A.S.). Now let us examine the following famous tradition of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) which says,

“O Ali; if we had not been there, Allah would have created neither Adam nor Hawwa, neither beaven nor hell, neither sky nor the earth.”

(Kamaluddin, Chap. 33, Hadith No. 4, p. 254, Vol.1)

Ibn Hajjaj has recorded this hadith-e-Qudsi upon the authority of Ibn Abbas.

The Almighty Allah revealed to Hazrat Isa (a.s.)

“O Isa! Believe in Muhammad. And command your people that whosoever from them lives upto his time, must also believe in him. For, if Muhammad did not exist, I would not have created Adam. And if Muhammad did not exist, I would not have created heaven and hell.”

(Shawaahidul Haqq Fil Isteghatha Basayyedil Khalq by Nabhani, p. 139 Published from Istanbul 1394)

The traditions clearly explain the fact that the personality of Imam-e-Asr (A.S.) is an absolute perfection and an apparent face of the divine qualities. He is the aim of creation. It is thus certain that if Imam (A.S.) had not been there, the universe would have vanished.

One who is cognizant of the recognition of "Imam (A.S.). And each corner of his heart is filled with the love of Imam (A.S.). One who wishes to scale the grades of perfection in following those divine qualities. One who endeavours to walk the path of his immaculate ancestors... he is definitely the one who is spending a purposeful life. On the other hand, those who do not have any such aim, they are merely a dead load that moves about on the earth.

The following statement of Hazrat Ali (A.S.) must appropriately explain the above concept while it contains in itself a world of meaning, and

"We (Ahle Bait) have been created for the Almighty and the creatures have been created for us."

(Nahjul Balagha, Letter No. 28)

IMAM (A.S.) IS THE CAUSE OF THE CONTINUED EXISTENCE OF THE WORLD

Ziarat-e-Jamea Kabeera is an authentic ziarat (salutations). This ziarat is recorded by Shaykh Sadoog in his book 'Man La Yahzorohul Faqih' (Vol. 2, p. 609) and another of his book 'UyoonO-Akhbar ar-Reza' (Vol. 2, p. 277).

Shaykh Tusi (R.A.) has also quoted it in his 'Tahzibul Ahkam' (p. 95, Vol. 2). Concerning this ziarat, Allama Majlisi (R. A.) says, "Ziarat Jamea is authentic from the aspect of the chain of narrators. It's eloquent and expressive text makes it the best of Ziarats."

(Biharul Anwar, Vol. 102, p. 144)

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This Ziarat was taught by Imam Ali Naqi (A.S.) upon the request of his companion by the name of Musa Bin Abdullah Nakhai. Hazrat Imam-e-Asr (May our souls be sacrificed upon him) has exhorted us to recite it regularly. (Najmus Saqib, p. 342-343)

This Ziarat is excellent for getting the recognition of Imamat. As stated above, an Imam is the divine light upon the earth, the absolute proof of Allah upon His creatures, the life-vein of the universe, the spiritual connection between the Creator and the creatures, the mirror of perfection, the supreme example of all the positive human qualities, the collection of merits, the visible face of the knowledge and Power of Allah, the ideal for a worshipper, pure from every blemish, knower of divine secrets, knower of the past, present and future of the world, treasure-chest of the divine sciences, inheritor of the Prophetic miracles, etc.

The following lines of Ziarat-e-Jamea make it amply clear that if there is no Imam, the sky will crash to the earth and not even a single drop of rain will reach the earth.

May my parents, life, family and wealth be sacrificed for you, O Imam. One who intends to reach Allah, begins with you. One who believed in the Oneness of Allah has received the monotheistic teachings from you. One who wishes to be steadfast on it, should seek guidance from you.

O Master, your praises and extolations cannot be enumerated. The reality of your praise cannot be perceived. Your qualities cannot be estimated. You are the light of the righteous, the guide of those who do good and the proof of Allah, the All Powerful.

Allah has initiated the creation of this universe) with you. And its end will also be with you. The heavens pour because of you. The skies hold for your sake alone. Of course, by His permission. For you alone, Allah removes the sorrows and solves the difficulties of the people. Through you, the universe receives the bounties of Allah.

Lack of belief in such an Imam, not to remember him, not to weep in his anticipation, not being restless for his reappearance, not to prepare the earth for his arrival, is against humanity and religion. If intellect demands gratitude to one who confers a single favour on us, then what should be our attitude to the one who is the basis for all the favours and blessings?

From the above discussion, it becomes apparent that every particle of this universe is a proof of the existence of Imam (A.S.). They repose their belief in him and align their royalties towards him.

May Allah illuminate our hearts by his love. May Allah count us among his sincere and loyal servants.

Amen. The Lord of the Worlds.

A Meeting with Imam-e-Zamana (a.s)

Shaykh Jalil Ibne Abi Faraas in the last part of his book Tanbihul Khaatir, Vol. 2, relates from Ali bin Jafar bin Ali Al Alavi that there used to reside in Kufa a person by the name of Qasaar'. He was famous for his piety and religiousness. He was considered among those who abstain from worldly indulgence. Certainly, he can be included among the righteous. For they pass away from this world emulating the lives of the Holy Imams (a.s.).

Shaykh Says,

One day I was in the service of my father, when Qasaar entered the assembly. He reported a strange incident to my father. He said, "Masjid al-Jaafi is an ancient mosque in the rear part of Kufa. It was midnight. I was busy in prayers in a corner of the mosque. Suddenly I saw three people entering the mosque. One of them moved ahead and sat in the central portion of the mosque.

He moved his hands from his right to the left. I was astonished to see clear and glistening water appear from the area traversed by his hand:

This person performed wuzu and asked his other two companions to do the same. They obliged after which the water disappeared automatically. Thereafter, that person stood up to lead the prayers. I too found the time appropriate and joined the two in prayers. When the prayers concluded, I enquired from these two men, "Who is this respected man?" Both of them smiled and one said, "He is Sahibul Amr (Master of all affairs), Hujjat Ibn al Hasan Al Askari. I dared to move forward and kissed the hands of my lord and master. I composed myself and put a question to him, "O Son of the Prophet (S.A.W.), is Sharif Omar bin Hamza on the right (path)?" He replied, "No, But there is a possibility that he may receive guidance, because he will not die till he has seen me."

The memory of this incident was always fresh in my mind. Then a long period elapsed. Till Sharif Omar passed away. But it was not yet known whether he had the honour of meeting. Imam (A.S.) or not.

One day, I was sitting with Shaykh Qasaar. I reminded him about his report when he had said that Sharif Omar bin Hamza will not die before seeing the Imam (A.S.). I said it with emphasis so that he may not refuse to acknowledge it. "Did you not relate the incident in the assembly of my respected father?" He replied, "How do you know that he died before from having an audience with Imam (A.S.)? Some days ago, I met Sharif Ibne Abil Manaqib, the son of Sharif Omar bin Hamza. When I enquired about his respected father he said, 'One day I was sitting near my mother. My father was seriously ill. The illness had weakened his strength. His speech had almost failed him. The symptoms of death were apparent. Suddenly the outer door of our house opened. A handsome man entered. A sort of fear came upon me and I did not have the courage to question him. He went to my father and sat near him. He conversed softly with my father, got up and disappeared from our sight.

My father gathered all his strength and said, "Make me sit." I and my mother helped him to sit up. Wiping his tears and opening his eyes, my father said, 'Where is that person who was sitting beside me?' I replied, 'He went back the way he had come.'

"Run! Go fast and call him back."

I ran, saw that the door was closed as before, and he was nowhere in sight. I returned to my father and reported the matter, "The door is closed. No one is to be seen. He has disappeared. Not even his footsteps could be heard." I then asked my father about the identity of this mysterious person.

My father told me, "He was my master Hujjat Ibnal Hasan al Askari. He was the Sahibul Amr."

Then his condition began to deteriorate and he lost consciousness.

According to the writer, Abu Mohammed Hasan was from the Sadaats of Ajlah. He was from the nobility, a renowned scholar and litterateur. He used to recite couplets extempore. Once, he visited the tomb of Salman Farsi (R.A.) with Muntasir billah, the Abbasi. .: Muntasir said,

"Some Ghulat (extremists) Shias claim that when Salman (R.A.) died, Ali (A.S.) reached Madaain from Medina in a single night. He gave the ceremonial bath (ghusl) to Salman and returned to Medina!" and began to laugh mockingly.

On hearing this, Abu Mohammed recited a few couplets and countering the allegations said, "Asif Ibn Barkhiya brought the throne of Bilquis before the flick of the eye. People are surprised when my master Ali (A.S.), who is the "Mazharul Ajaeb" (Manifester of miracles), went to Madaain from Medina and returned the same night."

There is an aim in relating to the readers the incident of meeting with Imam (A.S.).

(1) It is surmised from the sequence of events that the intention is to preserve it in history and not allow it to be forgotten. . The event of the mosque occurred in the presence of the Shaykh. Enquiries were made regarding Sharif Omar Bin Hamza. This was mentioned in the company of the scholar and consequently recorded at the end of the book titled, 'Tanbihul Khaatir' Vol. 2.

(2) The miraculous power of Hazrat was such that the earth was subservient to him. By the touch of his hand the earth would reveal its treasures. In other words, an apparently lifeless thing like earth was cognizant to its Master's intention. By returning the water of wuzu it provided food for thought to those who possess intellect. O rational man, recognise your Imam.

(3) Piety, abstinence, avoidance of the worldly evils. All these acts make us eligible to have a glimpse of Imam-e-Zamana (a.s.).

(4) Difficulties are elixir for the faith. Who knows the reason of his 'no' with regard to the deliverance of Sharif Umar bin Hamza. "He may receive guidance", he had added. He further said, "He will not die till he has seen me." Hazrat met him! When? At the time when the illness was intense and Sharif Umar Bin Hamza was passing the last moments of his life. How earnest he must have been. The following couplet of Ghalib seems to describe it effectively.

"Though I call him feverently, yet I wish, something should affect him so much that he is compelled to come."

Is there still any doubt regarding the possibility of meeting the Imam? If one is capable to reform and achieve perfection for himself nothing is impossible for him.

Our duty is to muster up the spirit of serving him. The opportunity shall be provided by him (a.s.).

Master ! Assuage Our Hearts

(O Allah ! Assuage our hearts through Imam-e-Zamana (A.S.) - Dua-e-Iftetaah)

The religion that has come to perfect human ethics, to create the feelings of brotherhood, love and amity in the depth of hearts of the people and to eliminate enmity, injustice and inequality. Then why do people say, "Islam is the best religion but Muslims are the worst people."

Why are the Muslims a divided lot? Why do they harbour malice, hatred and enmity against each other? Why are their hearts disunited? Why do they detest each other? There is only one reply to all these questions. We are neither aware of the way our Imams lived nor of their instructions and guidance. Even if we have some knowledge, we are not ready to act upon it. The result obviously is discord, disharmony and disputes.

Let us examine our habits and customs in the light of the injunctions of our present Imam, Hujjat ibn al Hasan al Askari (may Allah hasten his reappearance):

Let us see how steadfast we are upon his teachings. Are we straying far away from him instead of becoming closer to him? Are we among those people of whom Imam (A.S.) has said, *"... Then nothing keeps us away from them but those reports about their actions which we do not expect from them."* (Behaar, Vol. 53, p. 176)

Is he (a.s.) referring to us when he complains dejectedly,

"Had our Shias - may Allah bless them with His obedience - remained firm upon their covenant unitedly with resolute hearts, our meeting with them would not have been delayed."

Have we ever pondered upon the statement of Imam-e-Zaman (A.S.) that piety can help us get rid of our difficulties?

"O Mufeed From among our brother in faith, one, who is fearful of his Lord (pious) and gives to the rightful owner whatever he owes, shall remain safe from difficulties and calamities."

Imam-e-Zamana (A.S.) had written this in a Tawqee to Shaykh Mufeed (R.A.)

Have we reflected upon the fact that Imam-e-Zamana (A.S.) has prohibited us from asking unnecessary & meaningless questions?

"Do not ask those questions which are of no use to you."

Patience helps solve the greatest of problems and difficulties. The attribute of patience is found in Allah. It is for this reason that Imam (a.s.) has instructed us to acquire this quality

"Allah the Almighty is Patient whereas you are unduly hasty."

Do we ever find time to serve the

Shias of AhleBait (a.s.)? Do we ever strive to solve the problems of our friends, relatives and believers? Does the thought of satisfying their needs ever enter our minds? Most probably not!

But Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) wrote to Abul Hasan Isfahaani, a Marja of his time, "Make yourself cheap(ly available), meet the people easily and fulfil their needs, we will help you."

Do you know that Imam-e-Zamana (A.S.) loves the pious and solves their difficulties? Hence, he exhorts.

“Fear Allah, submit (yourselves) completely to us and leave all your work upon us (i.e. have faith in us), then it would be incumbent upon us to extract you from all types of calamities.”
(Kalematul Imam al-Mahdi, Tomo Vol. I, p.302)

Hazrat Imam Mahdi (may Allah hasten his reappearance) orders his Shias through Usman bin. Saeed Amri and his son Mohammad bin Usman:

“They must remain aloof from lust and greed.”

Have we ever considered how much greed we harbour in ourselves? Are we aware that some people consider drinking to be a sign of cultural advancement? Whereas Imame-Zamana (a.s.) says, “Drinking beer is haraam (prohibited).”

(Kalematul Imam al-Mahdi, Vol. I, p.276)

Respected readers! It is our duty to take account of ourselves in the light of these traditions. Let's make sure we are not heading towards destruction. For, disobedience to the commands of Imam (a.s.) leads to annihilation. The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) warns,

“Do not go ahead of them (the Imams) lest you be destroyed” (ASSawaiq al-Muhriqa, p.89)

In order to expound these points, we shall quote an injunction of Imame-Zamana (A.S.) and a supplication which he has taught us: “You must all perform deeds that bring you nearer to our love and remain aloof from those acts that will bring you closer to our dislike and anger.’

Please ponder upon the following supplication

O Allah! Give us "tawfeeq" (divine encouragement) for obedience, keeping away from sins, purity of intention, and recognition of prohibited acts. Honour us love and through guidance and steadfastness. Control our tongues to speak that is necessary and wise. Fill our hearts with knowledge and recognition. Purify our stomachs from prohibited and doubtful foods. Restrain our hands from injustice and theft. Lower our gazes against sins and treachery. Refrain our ears from listening to vain things and back-biting. (O Lord) Shower Your Graceupon the women to acquire modesty and chastity, upon the affluent to be humble and generous, upon the poor to be patient and contented...

(For complete detail, refer to Mafaateehul Jenaan, p.116)

O Allah! Cure our hearts through him (a.s.).

The Tawqee Of Imam-e-Zamana (a.s.) Concerning Mansur-e-Hallaj

In the history of Islam, we find many personalities, who due to their beliefs or propaganda or both, were able to influence the society to such an extent that the common people were carried away by them. Erudite scholars and renowned thinkers too were not exempted.

One such person was Abul Mugees al Husain Bin Mansur Muhammi Al Bayzaawi Al Hallaj, a well-known Sufi.

Al-Hallaj is also known in Persian, Turkish and Urdu literature as 'Mansur'. He was born in 244 A.H. in the district of Fars at a place called "Tur' which is to the north - east to 'Al Bayza'. It is said that Hallaj was the grandson of a fire-worshipper and was from the progeny of Abu Ayyub, a companion of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.). His father was a (cotton) carder but he himself was not. His father left Tur for Waasit. Waasit is a town which was founded by the Arabs whose inhabitants were mostly Hanbalis. Some extremist Shias (Ghalis) also resided in it's rural areas. In such an environment, Hallaj lost touch of Persian conversation. An important Madressa of Quranic recitors existed there. Here, he memorised the whole Quran before the age of twelve. Even in that tender age, he was inclined to search for it's hidden meanings. He aligned himself with the Sufi school of Sahl-e-Tustari. .

At the age of twenty, he left Sahle-Tustari for Basra where he joined the Sufi order of Amr bin Uthman Al Makki and wore the sufi dress (kharqa). He married Ummul Husain, the daughter of Abu Yaqoob Al Aqta. From her, he had three sons and a daughter. Due to his wedlock with Ummul Husain, Uthman Al Makki became jealous of him and began to oppose him. Although Hallaj is accused to be a Ghali Shia at one time, a deep research into the matter clearly shows that all along he ascribed to the Sunni faith.

(Ref: The History of Islamic Philosophy by M. M. Sharif, Vol. I, p. 346)

Hallaj was also in contact with the famous Sufi, Junaid. He went Baghdad for exchange of thoughts with him. Although Junaid persuaded him to stay there, he refused. For, he was completely fed up with the dispute between his father-in-law Al-Aqta and Amr al-Makki. Therefore, he left Baghdad after the uprising of Zanjies was quelled..

From Baghdad, he came to Mecca where he performed his first Haj. He vowed to remain inside the holy precincts for a year, praying and fasting. In this way, he kept testing his personal method for "divine unification". And opposing the principle of "Hifz-e-Sirr" (Protection of Divine Secrecy-a Sufi doctrine), started propagating his own ideologies. Amr al Makki dissociated himself from him. Yet, Hallaj managed to collect more disciples around him.

After he returned to Khuzistan, he ceased wearing the Sufi dress. He began to dress like the common people to enable him to speak and propagate more freely. His method of propagation raised doubts and suspicions. The main plank of his campaign was that each man should be made capable of finding Allah in his own heart (It was for this that he received the title Hallaj ul Asrar (the Carder of Distinctions)] Hallaj gained popularity in different towns under different titles in different periods of time. According to Ibn Kathir, he is known to Indians as Abul Mugees, the Khorasanis remember him as Abul Mameez, the people of Fars as Abu Abdullah Az

Zahid, the Khuzistanis Hallaj ul Asrar, the Baghdadis as Mustalim and Basraites as Al Muhayyar. (Al Bidaya wan Nihaya, Vol. and II, p. 133)

But he also acquired notoriety for a number of reasons. Scholars, both Shia as well as Sunni, accused him of cheating and showing false miracles.

He performed his second Hajj with four hundred disciples. There some of his former friends and Sufis accused him of sorcery, magic and being in contact with the Jinns. Even after this Hajj, he made a long tour of Turkey and India. There he came in contact with the Hindus, Buddhists and Jains. (Ref: Tazkiratul Awliya: Essay on Husain Bin Mansoor Al Hallaj)

Around 290 A.H. he performed his third and last Hajj. This time, he had a patched shawl on his shoulders and an Indian Lungi tied to the lower part of his body. On the plains of Arafat, he invoked, "O Allah, annihilate me. Make me wretched in the eyes of the people." After completing this Hajj, he returned to Baghdad and made a replica of Kaaba in his house. At nights, he prayed on tombs and graves and during days, he roamed the bazaars and streets, displaying his mad love for Allah. He used to show himself as a wretched man in the eyes of the people and also expressed his wish to die. He implored, "O Muslims! Save me from Allah. He has permitted you to shed my blood. Kill me!"

Muhammad Bin Dawood Az Zaaheri was infuriated with this statement. He convicted Hallaj and wanted him to be put to death. But the Shafae jurist, Ibn Surrayij was of the view that the position and condition of the Sufis rating was beyond the courts of law. It was during this period that Hallaj announced his infamous slogan "Anal Haq" (I am The Truth, (read God)) in the mosque of Al Mansur in the presence of Ash-Shibli. In the last part of 290 A.H., the revenue officer of the young Abbasid Caliph Muqtadir, Al Furat arrested Hallaj and filed a case against him. Hallaj was brought to Baghdad. Here, he was subjected to the ire of Hamid (a Sunni) and kept in jail for nine years. In 301 A.H., Ibne Isa, nephew of a minister who was Hallaj's disciple, dismissed the case against him. He also freed the jailed supporters of Hallaj. In 303 A.H., Hallaj cured successfully the chronic fever of the caliph. In 305 A.H., he brought to life the dead parrot of the crown prince. The Mutazelis denounced him as a charlatan and a sorcerer.

During the period of 304-306 A.H. the charge of Ibn Isa's ministry was taken up by Ibn Furat. He was a sworn adversary of Hallaj but the Caliph's mother did not allow him to revive the case against Hallaj. It seems that two important writings of Hallaj belong to this period.

(1) Taaseenul Azal - which is a treatise on the argumentation of Iblis.

(2) A discussion on the Meraj (ascension) of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.). He expressed that due to the spiritual experience of the Holy Prophet. (S.A.W.), it is possible for man to be merged with Allah. Due to the influence of Husayn Ibn Rauh Nawbakhti, the case was revived. It was debated upon in the years 308-309 A.H. Hallaj claimed, " (The real) Kaaba is inside the heart. It is more important to circumbulate it seven times."

Due to this, he was convicted of being from the Qeraametah (who were in favour of its demolition). The Maliki judge of this case, Qazi Abu Umar bin Yusuf passed the following verdict, "It is lawful to shed your blood." At last, the Abbasid caliph Muqtadir signed the warrant for sending him to the gallows. On 24th Zilqad, at the gate of Khorasan, Hallaj (who had a crown on his head) was lashed to unconsciousness in front of a huge crowd. When he was

nearly dead, he was hung at the gate. The order for beheading him was received from the caliph late at night. Actually the verdict of his crucifixion was postponed for the morrow. All those who had signed the verdict said loudly,

“Whatever has been done is under the Islamic law. We are responsible for his death.” Later, Hallaj was beheaded and his body charred by putting kerosene on his body. His ashes were consigned to the river from a high tower. According to the eye-witnesses, his last words were:

"The most important thing for a Gnostic is, by the permission of Allah, the Almighty, to achieve perfect physical unification (with Allah)."

During the case, Hallaj was accused of various conspiracies against the religious and economic policies of the government. He was accused of defaming Allah and propagating the concept of assimilation (with Allah). His theory of giving importance to the religious symbols only from the aspect of its hidden meaning showed the confusion commotion of his mind. It also indicated that he was advocating their destruction. Regarding assimilation, Hallaj had actually written, "Your (Allah's) soul has merged with my soul like amber fuses with the fragrant musk."

(Diwan-e-Hallaj translated by Massinon, p.41)

He really took the cake by claiming, "We are two souls who are put in one body..." (Ibid)

The above quoted statement clearly proves that Mansur Hallaj who lived during the minor occultation of Imam-e-Zamana (A.S.) was a polytheist. He had evidently violated the belief of Tawheed.

MANSUR HALLAJ AND THE CLAIM OF DEPUTYSHIP

Mansur Hallaj was one of those who had falsely claimed the special deputyship during the minor occultation (Ghaibat-e-Sughra). It is narrated by Husain bin Ibrahim Abul Abbas Ahmed Bin Ali Bin Nuh, from Abu Nasr Haibatullah bin Mohammed, the scribe of Ibne Binte Umme Kulsum binte Abi Jafar Amri:

"Allah intended to expose the fallacies of Hallaj and that he may be degraded and insulted. Abu Sahl bin Ismail bin Ali Nawbakti (R.A.) was among those who had become aware of the plots and deceit of Hallaj. Hallaj thought that Abu Sahl was ignorant (of his charlatanism) and hence went to him to convince him of his claim. First, he wrote to Abu Sahl that he (Hallaj)'was the representative of Imam-e-Asr (A.S.) and that the Imam had ordered him to correspond with the former.

He offered Abu Sahl to help him in his work so that the heart of Abu Sahl may rest in peace. Abu Sahl replied, "I have a small problem which only you can solve. I know that it is nothing in comparison to the extraordinary feats that you have performed. I am highly desirous of young girls but they are repulsed by my greying hair. And I find it too cumbersome to apply henna (herbal dye). If you can make my hair permanently black, I shall help and assist you, and do whatever you desire".

When Hallaj received this reply, he at once realised that Abu Sahl had seen through his fraud and discontinued the correspondence.

Shaikh Sadooq says, "Hallaj went to the city of Rom. There he wrote to the relatives of my father and invited them to his cause. The relatives forwarded his letter to my father, who tore

up Hallaj's letter and wrote to them. "What is this nonsense! Which fool is trying to deceive you? Who is this cheat who has instigated you?"

Due to these blatant assertions, Hallaj was disgraced and expelled from the city of Qom.

On account of his false claims and nonsensical beliefs, Vali-e-Asr Imam-eZamana (A.S.) cursed him and issued a Tawqee to denounce him. It read as follows:

"We seek refuge in Allah and His Prophet (S.A.W.) from him (Hallaj). We invoke one curse after another on him. secretly as well as openly, at all times, in all conditions and on everyone who follows him despite getting our message." (Kalematul Imam al-Mahdi p. 282)

After examining the above Tawqee, it becomes clear that in the school of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.), there is no place for evil people like Husain Bin Mansur Hallaj. It was the impact of this tawqee that during the minor occultation and till the later centuries, Shia scholars continued to denounce Hallaj. But in the seventh century, some people began to defend Hallaj, ignoring the Tawqee of Imam (A.S.). They began to call Hallaj, Wali of Allah. As if this was not enough blasphemous, they even composed eulogies glorifying him. Like him, they also repeated the words of "Anal Haq' (I am God). Allah alone knows which facet of Mansur's personality has attracted them! That they ignored the clear Tawqee of an infallible Imam cursing Hallaj and followed and expressed their love for this deceiver and cheat. Imam (a.s.) has clearly stated that whosoever follows Hallaj is also accursed.

Let us pray to the Almighty Allah that may He give us the ability to discern falsehood from truth. That we may not be misled by any false claimant or charlatan. Amen.

An-Najm-us-Saqib – The Star Among Books

Janabe Zahra (a.s.) informed the mother of Muhaddith Mirza Husain Noori: "O Ummal Husain ! Your son Husain has started writing a book on my son Mahdi. He has titled it 'An-Najm-us-Saqib'." While uttering these words, the luminous face of Janabe Zahra (S.A.) lit with delight.

The belief regarding Hazrat Imam Mahdi (A.S.) holds such importance in Islam that in every period, numerous scholars have either written books on or devoted special chapters for it. These actions have ensured them everlasting rewards in the hereafter.

Among this treasure of books, the one by great Muhaddith Al Haj Aqa Mirza Husain Noori Tabarsi, "AnNajmus Saaqib Dar Ahwaal Imam e Ghaib", stands apart.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR Birth

Muhaddith-e-Noori was born in 1254 A.H. at a village called "Noor". His father was Mirza Mohammed Taqi Noori (R.A.). While still a young boy, death deprived him of his father. He obtained his elementary education at his native village of Noor. Later, he travelled to Tehran, Samarra, Kazmain, Karbala and Najaf for higher studies and studied under the leading scholars of that time. By his continuous efforts, extra-ordinary talents and memory, he attained mastery over the science of traditions i.e. Ilmul Hadith. Muhaddith-e-Noori expired at the age of sixty six in 1320 A.H. in Najaf-e-Ashraf. He was buried in the eastern yard of the holy shrine of Ameerul Momineen, Ali (A.S.).

Allama Aqa Buzurg Tehrani (the author of Az-Zareeah) narrates from Sayed Mohammed Kashani, "Seven years after the death of Muhaddith-e-Noori, his wife also died. She was to be buried next to Muhaddith e Noori. When his grave was dug, it was found that his body had not decayed. Even the colour of the shroud cloth (Kafan) was untouched, neither torn nor eaten by worms. Thus, we can say that the servants of the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) and those who lay down their lives for them, live forever.

Teachers

Muhaddith-e-Noori was trained under great teachers of his time. He acquired elementary knowledge from Maula Mohammed Ali Mahallati. At Tehran, his teacher was Shaykh Abdur Raheem Burujardi. His other teachers were Ayatullah Shaykh Abdul Husain Tehrani and the highly celebrated teacher of the jurists Ayatulla Shaykh Murtuza Ansari at Iraq. Lastly, he studied under the famous Marja of that time Hazrat Ayatulla Al Uzma Mirza Muhammad Hasan Shirazi (who is wellknown for his edict (fatwa) against tobacco which succeeded in defeating the aims of the enemies of Islam). The impeccable training of his teachers made Muhaddith-e-Noori a luminous personality.

Intellectual achievements

Allama Shaykh Buzurg Tehrani writes, "Muhaddith-e-Noori is the best example of the past scholars. In his time, none was his equal. He alone scaled the heights of intellectual achievements and was a unique example of the divine signs. He possessed unlimited capabilities and qualities and was thus able to command respect as a scholar even at a young age. He passed his entire life in the service of religion. He shall live forever in his writings. His influence

upon other scholars will be everlasting. He pledged his life in the way of knowledge. All his efforts were aimed in collecting, compiling, classifying and elaborating the traditional reports (ahaadith). He collected some very valuable treasures in the field of traditions. It seems as if he was created only to compile the traditions of the holy Ahlul-Bayt (A.S.)." (Mustadrak al Wasael, Vol. 1, New edition)

The great traditionalist Shaykh Abbas Qummi writes about his teacher thus:. He possessed the gist of every type of knowledge. He had expertise in the science of traditions and Ilme Rejaal (the science of the narrators of traditions). He had profound insight into the meaning and applicability of the traditions. His command upon these sciences was astonishing."

(Fawaidur Razawiyyah, p.152)

Allama Murtuza Mutahhari (r.a.) says: "If Muhaddith Noori quotes a tradition from non-Shia channels, it means that it has not been quoted by any one of the Shia traditionalists. For, it is impossible for a tradition recorded by a Shia traditionalist to go unnoticed by Muhaddith-e-Noori."

(Guftaar-e-Man, Vol. 1, p. 98)

His Students

Although, every scholar who was his junior benefitted from his guidance, his outstanding pupils include the great Aqa Buzurg Tehrani, the author of Az-Zareeah and Tabaqaatul Islam wa al-Shia. Another student who earned fame was Allama Shaykh Abbas Qummi, who penned Safeenatul Behaar and the widely read Mafaateehul Jenaan.

His Writings

Despite his numerous responsibilities and duties, Muhaddith Noori compiled nearly thirty books. Each of his books remains unsurpassed in merit. Aga Mulla Mohammed Kazim Khorasani (the author of Kifayatul Iddith Usool) said in a gathering of five hundred Mujtahids regarding the masterpiece of Muhaddith-e-Noori, "Mustadrakul Wasael": "Alongwith other books, it is necessary to study Mustadrakul Wasael. Without it, attaining Ijtehad is not possible." (Mustadrakul Wasael, Vol. 1, New edition)

Some of his works

(1) Mustadrakul Wasael - First this book was printed in three large volumes. Now it is published in 18 volumes.

(2) *Darus Salaam Feema yatallaqo birroya wal manaan - Consisting of four volumes, this book deals with the interpretation of dreams and other related topics.*

(3) *Masalimul Bahr fi istibrakul bihar as-saabe ashar*

(4) Jannatul mawa fi mun faazaa be leqaa e Hujjat alaihis salam fil ghaibatil kubra - This book contains anecdotes of those people who had the honour of meeting the Imam-e-Zamana(A.S.) during the major occultation. Now, it is published as a part of Allama Majlisi's Behaarul Anwaar (53rd volume).

(5) *Faizul Qudsi fi Abwaal Allama Majlisi* - It is a biography of Allama Majlisi. It is also published with *Behaarul Anwaar*.

(6) *As Sahifatus-saaniyatul alawiyya*

(7) *As sahfatur Rabe al Behaariya*

(8) *Najmus saqib dar ahwal Imam Ghaib (A.S.)*

(9) *Lo Lo wa Marjaan* - This book contains advices and exhortations for the orators and speakers.

(10) *Kashful astaar fi abwaal al Imam al ghaib anil abasar*.

Worship and Piety

Muhaddith-e-Noori was a manifest exemplar of worship and piety. In the words of Shaykh Abbas Qummi, "Muhaddith-e-Noori paid special attention to worship. He was very pious. He never missed the recommended Salat-eShab and invocation to Allah in the serenity of the night. He possessed every type of merit." (Fawaaidur Razaviyyah, p. 153)

Muhaddith-e-Noori had allotted time for everything. From Asr prayers upto sunset, was for writing. He studied from Maghrib till the time of going to bed. He always slept with ablution (wuzu) and purification. He used to go to the shrine of Ali (A.S.) for an hour. Since at that time the door of the shrine was kept closed, he used to perform the Namaz-e-Shab outside. When the door of the shrine opened, he entered the shrine as it's very first visitor. He assisted the care-taker in opening the other doors & windows. Thereafter, he lit the candles of the holy shrine. After which, he used to recite the invocations and salutations till the time of the morning prayers. After performing the morning prayers, he used to continue the recitation of Duas after the prayers till sunrise. On Fridays, when he returned from the shrine, he studied the books of tragedies that afflicted the Ahlu Bayt (a.s.). When he narrated the afflictions of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.), his beard became wet with tears. He did not sit to write after Asr on Fridays, but used to go to the shrine and recited invocation till the time of Maghrib."

(Tabaqaat-eAlaamush Shia)

Muhaddith-e-Noori and Imam-e-Qaem (A.S.)

Imamat and mastership are the strong principles of the religion of Islam. The recognition and love of Imam (A.S.) is obligatory upon everyone. The first and foremost duty of every Shia is to obtain knowledge regarding his Imam (A.S.). He must know as to what pleases and displeases our Imam (A.S.). In the time of the major occultation, the best action is to wait for his reappearance. It is the duty of the scholars and the learned to make the people aware of their responsibilities and thus bring them nearer to Imam-e-Asr (A.S.). If it is not so, then under whose patronage have they raised the standards of religion?

Muhaddith-e-Noori was among those exalted scholars who achieved merits in this field. A poet, in a single couplet, objected against the belief of Mahdaviyat. To reply him, Mohaddes Noori wrote a full length book titled, "Kashful Astaar Fi Ahwal Al Imam An Naib Anil Absar." This book explained as to how despite his occultation, Imam-e-Asr (a.s) helps his Shias and takes care of

their affairs. He wrote another book “Jannatul Mawa Feeman Faazaa Beleqaae Al Hujjat (A.S.) fil ghaibatil Kubra.” This book records the incidents of those fortunate people who had the honour of meeting the Imam (A.S.) in occultation.

The first book consisted of three parts. The first part dealt with those Sunni scholars who have confessed to the belief of Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.)'s existence. The second part replies to the objections against occultation. The third is in reply to various other objections like “The fiction of the cellar.”

Najmus Saqib dar Ahwaal-e-Imam-e-Ghaib (A.S.).

This is a comprehensive book about Imam Mahdi (A.S.). Before presenting the summary of this book, let us read the following incident:

One day a reliable and respected scholar saw Muhaddith-e-Noori strolling in the scorching heat of Samarra. He asked the reason for being outside on such a terribly hot day. Mohaddis replied, “I was sleeping in the cellar, had a pleasant dream and hence came out in delight. I saw my mother telling me, May you achieve honour in this world as well as in the hereafter. You have earned for me a place of honour among women. Everyday I am present in the service of Hazrat Zahra (a.s.). She (S.A.) makes me sit besides her and addresses me as 'Ummul Husain'. Whenever you begin writing a book, she (s.a.) informs me of it. Today when I went in her presence, she (s.a.) accorded more than usual respect to me saying, “Ummul Husain! Your son has begun writing a book concerning my son Mahdi. He has · titled it 'Najmus Saqib'. While saying this, the signs of delight became apparent upon the luminous face of Hazrat Zahra (a.s.)” (Najmus Saqib)

The twelve chapters of Najmus Saqib: Each chapter deals with the following aspects of Imam Mahdi (a.s.)'s life .

CHAPTER ONE: Birth

CHAPTER TWO: Names, Titles and Agnomens

CHAPTER THREE: Characteristics and Merits

CHAPTER FOUR: Authenticity of the belief in him [a.s.]

CHAPTER FIVE: His being the son of Imam Hasan Al Askari (A.S.) , 1.

CHAPTER SIX: Forty miracles.

CHAPTER SEVEN: Hundred incidents of those who had the honour of his meeting

CHAPTER EIGHT: Possibilities of his visitation in major occultation

CHAPTER NINE: Helping the people and answering their invocations during occultation

CHAPTER TEN: Ten duties of the Shias in the major occultation

CHAPTER ELEVEN: An account of the special timings and days and the prayers specially devoted to him (A.S.)

CHAPTER TWELVE: Those actions and deeds which are a cause of proximity to him (a.s.)

SHABAAN 1417 A.H.

The titles of the different chapters are enough to show the comprehensiveness of this book. It would enable the people to be more knowledgeable of their Imam (A.S.). If someone could summarise and translate it in other languages, it would help the readers to be nearer to the Imam of their time."