



وَصَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْنَا يَا وَدَّ الْعَصْرُ أَذْرِكُنَا

Ameerul Momineen Ali Ibn Abi Taalib (a.s.) said

الْعِلْمُ مُصْبِحُ الْعَقْلِ

Knowledge is the lamp of wisdom*

BELIEF IN IMAM MAHDI (A.S.)

* Ghurar al-Hikam, Vol. 1, P. 43

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى وَبِذِكْرِ وَرَسُولِهِ

Preface

This Belief in Imam Mahdi (a.s.) syllabus has been adapted by the Association of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) for its religious classes. We have taken great pains to ensure that the syllabus conforms to the teachings and ideology of the Holy Quran, traditions of the Ahle Bait (a.s.) and the books of respected and renowned Shiite scholars.

While we have tried our best to make the syllabus as accurate as possible, we will appreciate if our readers come forth with valuable suggestions for the improvement of the same and point unto us our shortcomings.

At the end, we beseech Allah, the Almighty, to hasten the reappearance of Hazrat Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.). May He include us amongst Imam's (a.t.f.s.) most sincere companions and grant us success in preparing the ground for his earliest reappearance!

Aameen!

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ وَصَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ يَا وَلِيَّ الْعَصْرِ (عج) أَذْرِكُنَا

Belief in Imam Mahdi (a.s.)

PART - 1

Chapter One

Necessity of Imam Mahdi's (a.t.f.s.) Recognition

The Holy Quran declares,

يَوْمَ نَدْعُو كُلَّ أُنَاسٍ بِإِمَامِهِمْ ...

On the day when We shall call every nation with their Imam (leader)...¹

Every wise person is aware of the fact that it is obligatory to recognise Allah and His Prophets (a.s.). Besides believing in Allah and His emissaries (a.s.), it is also necessary that everybody must know the Imam of his time and believe in his Imam. That is, after Divine Monotheism (توحيد) and Prophethood (نبوت), it is compulsory for everybody to believe in Imam (امامت) and hence the call for recognition. The importance of Imam's (a.s.) recognition is underlined by the following tradition of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) which is narrated by both Shia as well as Sunni traditionalists,

مَنْ مَاتَ وَلَمْ يَعْرِفْ إِمَامَ زَمَانِهِ مَاتَ مِيتَةً
جَاهِلِيَّةً

One who dies without recognising the Imam of his

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time, dies the death of jaahiliyyah (ignorance).¹

Jaahiliyyah is the period before Islam when only deviation prevailed. If somebody believes in Tauheed, Prophethood, Qiyamat, Quran and Islam and also fulfils his religious obligations but lacks only one thing, i.e. he does not recognise the Imam of his time and dies in this very condition, indeed his death is that of disbelief and ignorance. If one really intends to take advantage of Tauheed, Qiyamat and all other beliefs and actions, it is essential that he acquires the recognition of the Imam of his time.

Therefore, if the people of Imam Sadeq's (a.s.) era did not recognise him, their religion would be flawed. Similarly, in today's time, it is necessary to recognise the Imam of the time, viz. Hazrat Mahdi (a.t.f.s.). If somebody does not possess the Imam's recognition, indeed his religion is incomplete. In other words, along with subscription to the belief in Tauheed, Qiyamat and other Imams (a.s.), it is necessary for all of us to recognise the Imam of our time and to believe in him.

During his historic journey to Neyshaapoor, Imam Reza (a.s.) received a hearty welcome from the people and the scholars of the Ahle Sunnat, who insisted him to relate some traditions. Imam Reza (a.s.) narrated this tradition for them on the authority of his ancestors, extending till the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), that Allah the Almighty, says

كَلِمَةً لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ حِصْنِي. فَمَنْ دَخَلَ

¹ Musnad of Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, 2/73; Saheeh Bukhari, 5/17; Saheeh Muslim, trad. No. 1849; Al-Kafi of Kulayni (r.a.), 1/377; Kamaaluddeen of Shaykh Sadooq (r.a.), ch. 39, pg. 410, 411

¹ Surah Bani Israel (17): verse 71

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حَصْنِيْ أَمِنْ مِنْ عَذَابِيْ

The statement, there is no god but Allah, is My Fort, and the one who enters My Fort is saved from My Chastisement.

On hearing this, the Ahle Sunnat scholars were delighted and made way for the Imam (a.s.). Then, he raised his head from the cubicle and elaborated this Hadith-e-Qudsi thus,

بِشَرْطِهَا وَ أَنَا مِنْ شَرْوُطِهَا

(This belief in Tauheed) has some conditions. And I (i.e. the belief in my Imamat) am one of the conditions.¹

Thus, in the present era, to complete our faith and to protect ourselves from eternal chastisement, it is necessary that we believe in the Imamat of Hazrat Mahdi (a.t.f.s.). This treatise has been arranged to facilitate recognition concerning Imam (a.s.). It is our aim to provide important cognition in the light of the Holy Quran and traditions and to answer the common questions on this topic.

We hope that the Almighty Allah illuminates our hearts with the recognition of the holy Ahle Bait (a.s.) and Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) and may we die with these correct beliefs. Aameen!

¹ Oyoon-o-Akhbaar al-Reza (a.s.), chap. 37, vol. 4, pg.134, Trad. 4

Chapter Two

Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) in the light of the Holy Quran and other heavenly scriptures

The Holy Quran says,

وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تَبْيَانًا لِّكُلِّ شَيْءٍ

And We sent on you the Book as an explanation of everything.¹

The belief in the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.), his holy household (a.s.) and in the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) is not confined to the Shias alone. The Prophethood of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a), the prophesies regarding the Ahle Bait (a.s.) and the glad tidings concerning the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) are found in all heavenly scriptures. The Prophets (a.s.) of yore and their nations too believed in these. In this regard, the Holy Quran mentions,

وَلَقَدْ كَتَبْنَا فِي الزَّبُورِ مِنْ بَعْدِ الذِّكْرِ أَنَّ
الْأَرْضَ يَرِثُهَا عِبَادِيَ الصَّالِحُونَ

And indeed We have written in the Psalms after the Old Testament that My righteous servants shall

¹ Surah Nahl (16): Verse 89

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inherit the earth.¹

All the Shia commentators and some Ahle Sunnat interpreters are of the opinion that the phrase ‘**My righteous servants**’ in this verse implies Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.).²

This explains that the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) and his universal government have been discussed in the Psalms (Zaboor) and other divine books. The nations of the previous Prophets (a.s.) were also aware of this fact. It is significant to note that such glad tidings are available in these scriptures despite their distortions.

(For details one can refer “Nejaatbakhshi wa Adyaan by Mohammad Taqi Muhassal).

When other heavenly books contain the discussion of Hazrat Mahdi’s (a.t.f.s.) reappearance, then is it possible that the Holy Quran will be devoid of it? Certainly not! In fact, the Majestic Quran has discussed about it, time and again. Renowned traditionalist, Sayed Hashim Bahraani (r.a.), in his book “*Al-Muhajjah fi ma nazala fil Qaaemil Hujjah*” has mentioned 120 verses revealed regarding Hazrat Mahdi (a.t.f.s.). Besides, there are other verses that have not been mentioned in these books.

Contemporary researchers have counted the number of verses to be around 265.³

The abundance of verses underlines the importance of this belief.

¹ Surah Anbiya (21): Verse 105

² Eqdud Durar by Sullami Shafe’ei, pg. 217

³ Refer ‘Mojam al-Ahaadees al-Imam al-Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) by Shaykh Ali Kuraai, vol. 5

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These verses not only discuss the reappearance but also the occultation, the aim of his government, the characteristics of the period of occultation, traits of his friends and helpers, views and efforts of his opponents and our responsibilities towards Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.).

Relating these verses Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) is not confined only to the Shias. Rather, even celebrated Sunni scholars and interpreters have deemed them thus. We shall cite just one Sunni scholar as an instance. Shaykh Sulayman Qundoozi Hanafi was a great scholar from Turkey in the thirteenth century. He has written a book named “Yanaabeeul Mawaddah”. In its third volume, he has devoted the 71st chapter to the verses of the Holy Quran related to Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) and discusses fifty of them. Before concluding this chapter, we shall mention a couple of Quranic verses acknowledged by both Shia and Sunni scholars to be about Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.).

Describing the characteristics of the pious, Allah the Almighty says,

(1)

الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ

...those who believe in the Unseen.¹

Interpreters have implied the occultation of Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) as one aspect of the Unseen for he will have a prolonged

¹ Surah Baqarah (2): Verse 3

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occultation.¹

(2)

هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ
لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُشْرِكُونَ

He is the One Who sent His Messenger with guidance and true religion so that He may dominate it over all other religions even if the polytheists dislike it.²

According to Shia and Sunni interpreters, this dominance will be achieved only after the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.).³

We hope that Allah the Almighty destines the reappearance of Hazrat Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) at the earliest as promised by the Holy Quran and other divine books.

¹ Ahle Sunnah: Tafseer-e-Neshapoori, refer under the aforementioned verse. Shia: Al-Muhajjah, Sayed Hashim Bahraani (r.a.), pg. 149. There are various other verses which have been brought in the beginning of each chapter of this syllabus.

² Surah Taubah (9): Verse 33

³ Al-Muhajjah, pg. 86. Ahle Sunnat: Tafseer Mafaateeh al-Ghaib (also famous as Tafseer-e-Kabeer) of Fakhre Raazi, vol. 16, pg. 40.

Chapter Three

Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) in the light of Traditions

إِنَّ عِدَّةَ الشُّهُورِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ اثْنَا عَشَرَ شَهْرًا فِي
كِتَابِ اللَّهِ يَوْمَ خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ...

Surely the number of months with Allah is twelve in the Book of Allah since the day the skies and the earth were created...¹

The abundance of traditions regarding Imam Mahdi's (a.t.f.s.) reappearance and his characteristics narrated from the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and other infallibles (a.s.) can easily lead us to the conclusion that so many traditions are not narrated with regards to any other infallible barring Ameerul Momineen Ali (a.s.). The glad tiding concerning the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) is so definite that many years before his birth, companions of the seventh and eight Imams (a.s.) have written books about his occultation and reappearance. Therefore, rarely can one find any book of tradition devoid of the mention of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.).

The Musnad of Ahmad b. Hanbal (exp. 241 A.H.) is the oldest authentic book of traditions of the Ahle Sunnat. It contains approximately one hundred traditions regarding Imam-e-Zamana

¹ Surah Taubah (9): Verse 36

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(a.t.f.s.). Moreover, Sunane Abi Dawood (275 A.H.), Sunane Ibn Maaajah (273 A.H.) and Sunane Tirmidhi (297 A.H.) have each devoted one chapter to Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.). Moreover, Ahle Sunnat scholars have written more than a hundred books specifically on this subject. Books comprising at least one chapter on Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) are numerous.

Shia traditions outnumber Sunni ones manifold {the reason being that Shia narration is sourced from the Imams (a.s.) besides the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.)}. Only a single book, ‘Muntakhabul Asar’¹ contains more than ten thousand traditions. Books written by Shia scholars exclusively on Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) number two thousand (and these are only those that are known).²

The presence of so many traditions by both Shia and Sunni traditionalists may be because of the fact that all agree to the belief of the Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) regardless of their differences on the issue of Imamate and Caliphate. There is no dispute regarding the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.). The Sunnis have gone to the extent of narrating the following tradition from the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.),

مَنْ كَذَّبَ بِالْمَهْدِيِّ فَقَدْ كَفَرَ

*One who denies the Mahdi has indeed disbelieved.*³

¹ Lutfullah Safi Gulpaygani had penned this compilation on the order of the revered Marja Ayatullah Buroojardi (r.a.).

² Refer the book ‘Hazrat Mahdi (a.t.f.s.)’ by Ali Akbar Mahdipur

³ Al-Burhaan fi alaamaate Mahdi Aakherez Zamaan by Allama Muttaqi Hindi, pg. 170, Trad. 2

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Moreover, they have also narrated the following tradition from Allah’s Messenger (s.a.w.a.):

لَوْ لَمْ يَبْقَ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا يَوْمٌ وَاحِدٌ لَطَوَّلَ اللَّهُ ذَلِكَ الْيَوْمَ حَتَّى يَبْعَثَ فِيهِ رَجُلًا مِنْ وُلْدِي إِسْمُهُ إِسْمِي وَ كُنْيَتُهُ كُنْيَتِي يَمْلَأُ الْأَرْضَ قِسْطًا وَ عَدْلًا كَمَا مَلَأَتْ ظُلْمًا وَ جَوْرًا.

*If there remains only one day for the end of this world, Allah will prolong that day till He raises a person from my progeny whose name will be my name and whose agnomen will be my agnomen. He will fill the earth with justice and equity as it would be fraught with injustice and tyranny.*¹

Due to unflinching faith of both Shias and Sunnis in the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.), some people have also taken undue advantage. History has thrown up individuals, Shia as well as Sunnis, who have claimed the esteemed position of ‘Mahdi’ for themselves or for their leaders, without possessing any of the significant traits of the promised Mahdi (a.t.f.s.). For example, in Northern Africa, Mahdi of Sudan claimed the title for himself. In Hejaz, Mohammad b. Abdulla Qahtaani, a Wahhaabi by belief, also made a similar assertion. Similarly, among the Shias, a person called Mirza Ali Mohammad Shirazi announced himself to be the Mahdi.

We wait for that momentous day when the world will be replete

¹ Sunane Abi Dawood, Kitab al-Mahdi, Trad. 2482; Sunan Tirmidhi, Bab-o-Ma Jaa fil Mahdi, Trad. 2231.

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with justice and equality, the two pillars of Imam-e-Zamana's
(a.t.f.s.) government.

Chapter Four

A Brief Introduction to Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.)

بَقِيَّةُ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ

The remainder of Allah (His last proof) is good for you if you are among the believers.¹

The characteristics of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) are mentioned in the traditions of the infallible Imams (a.s.). We shall mention a few of them hereunder taking brevity into consideration:

- Name** : His name is the same as that of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.).²
- Titles** : His titles are many and each one of them indicates a particular perfection and trait. The most famous undoubtedly is 'al-Mahdi' which means the guided one. Another title 'Baqiyatullah' means the last surviving proof of Allah. 'Saahebul Amr' (master of the affairs) and 'Saahebul Zamaan' (master of the time) are other famous titles. Yet another epithet is 'al-Qaim' implying the one who will rise. Treading the footsteps of Imam Ali Reza (a.s.), whenever this

¹ Surah Hud (11): Verse 86

² Traditions prohibit taking the name of Imam (a.s.). Therefore, some authors write as _____ and generally his title is used to refer to him.

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title is uttered, the Shias stand up and place their right hands on their heads in an expression of readiness for his reappearance.¹

Agnomen : Even his agnomen is similar to that of Allah's Messenger (s.a.w.a.) i.e. Abu al-Qasem. His other famous agnomen is 'Abu al-Saaleh'.²

Father : The eleventh Imam, Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.). From the paternal side, Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) is the ninth descendant of Imam Husain (a.s.) and from the side of Janab Fatima binte Hasan b. Ali b. Abi Talib (a.s.) (the mother of Imam Muhammad Baqer (a.s.)), he is the descendant of Imam Hasan al-Mujtaba (a.s.).

Mother : Janab Narjis Khatoon (s.a.). Her father was Yashu'a, the prince of Rome, and her mother was the descendant of Janab Shim'oon (a.s.), the successor and companion of Hazrat Eesa (a.s.).

The other names of Janab Narjis (s.a.) are also Sosan and Maleekah. When she was living in the palace of the Roman King, she saw the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) in her dream asking for her hand for his son Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) from her ancestors, Hazrat Eesa (a.s.) and Janab Shim'oon (a.s.). Hazrat Eesa (a.s.) was delighted at the suggestion. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) commenced reciting the sermon after taking due permission from

¹ Muntakhabul Asar, pg. 506, Trad. 3

² That title which commences with "Abu" or "Umm" is called as agnomen. Like Abu Abdillah, Umme Salmah, etc.

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her ancestor, Janab Shim'oon (a.s.) and her marriage with Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) was solemnised. In another dream, she accepted Islam at the hands of Hazrat Fatema Zahra (s.a.w.a.). In yet another dream, Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) advised her to disguise herself as a slave-girl and participate in a war between the Romans and Muslims. This enabled her to enter the Muslim homeland along with the Roman army and when the latter was defeated, she was brought to Baghdad with other prisoners of war.

Due to his unseen knowledge, Imam Ali Naqi (a.s.) was aware of all the developments. He dispatched his slave, Bishr b. Sulaiman to Baghdad where, on the bank of the Euphrates, prisoners of war were being sold. Imam (a.s.) narrated all the characteristics of Janab Narjis Khatoon (s.a.) to Bishr and gave him 220 silver coins along with a letter in the Roman language. He advised her that if she does not agree initially, on seeing this letter she will definitely give her approval. Bishr went to the market. He recognised Janab Narjis Khatoon (s.a.) among the prisoners, gave her the letter of Imam Askari (a.s.) and brought her to Saamarra after handing over the bag of coins to her seller.

Imam Ali Naqi (a.s.) said to his sister:

O Daughter of Allah's Messenger (s.a.w.a.)! Kindly take Narjis to your house and acquaint her with Islamic laws and manners. For, she will be the wife of my son Hasan (a.s.) and the mother of Mahdi (a.s.).¹

Thus, we see that Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) is a descendant of a Prophet and the successor of a Prophet {the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.)

¹ Behaarul Anwaar, vol. 51, pg. 10, Trad. 12

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and Hazrat Shim'oon (a.s.)} and two kings {the King of Iran, Yezdgard III, the maternal grandfather of Imam Zainul Abedeen (a.s.) and the King of Rome, the paternal grandfather of Janab Narjis (a.s.)}.¹

Characteristics: He is the twelfth Imam (a.s.) and the last proof (خاتم الاوصياء) of Allah. Like other divine proofs, he (a.s.) too is infallible. Like his ancestors (a.s.), he is superior to all other Prophets (a.s.) barring the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.). Perhaps this is the reason Hazrat Eesa (a.s.) will pray behind Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.).

May Allah increase our recognition of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) each day and give us the good fortune of being included in his prayers.

¹ Hazrat Imam Ali Naqi (a.s.), Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.), Janab Narjis Khatoon (a.s.) and Janab Hakeema Khatoon (a.s.) are buried in Saamarra under one tomb. This shrine was the house of Hazrat Imam Ali Naqi (a.s.) and is visited by thousands of Shias to pay their respect to these holy personalities.

Chapter Five

Birth of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.)

وَقُلْ جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَزَهَقَ الْبَاطِلُ إِنَّ الْبَاطِلَ
كَانَ زَهُوقًا

Say (O Prophet)! Truth has come and falsehood vanished. Certainly, falsehood was bound to vanish.¹

Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) was born on the 15th Shabaan 255 A.H. in Saamarra, an Iraqi city during the reign of the Abbaside caliph, Motamid. He had heard in the traditions that the son of Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) will be the destroyer of all false governments and fill the earth with justice and equity. Hence, on various pretexts, he had employed spies in the house of Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) so that he may get the news of the birth of his son and following in the footsteps of Firaun and Namrood, kill the prospective saviour. But the will of Allah dominates all intentions and conspiracies. On divine command, there were no signs of pregnancy in Janab Narjis Khatoon (s.a.) like they were absent in the mothers of Hazrat Moosa (a.s.) and Hazrat Ibrahim (a.s.). Consequently, his birth too was a concealed affair.

Both Shia and Sunni books have narrated the birth of Imam Mahdi

¹ Surah Bani Israel (17): Verse 81

(a.t.f.s.) in the following manner:

Janab Hakimah Khatoon (a.r.) was the guest of Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.). When she was ready to leave for her house, Imam (a.s.) told her, “*Please stay back in my house tonight because a son will be born to me who is revered in the eyes of Allah and who will enliven the earth after its death.*” Janab Hakimah (a.r.) enquired about the mother of this child. He (a.s.) replied, “Narjis.” Janab Hakimah (a.r.) agreed to the request. But when she saw Janab Narjis (a.r.), to her utter amazement, there were no signs of pregnancy. She came back to Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) and expressed her surprise. Imam (a.s.) smiled and said,

The signs of pregnancy shall appear at dawn because Narjis is similar to the mother of Hazrat Moosa (a.s.). None was aware of his birth and the signs of pregnancy appeared only at the exact moment of birth of the child. For, Firaon used to tear apart the wombs of the pregnant women to prevent the birth of Hazrat Moosa (a.s.). This son resembles Hazrat Moosa (a.s.) in this aspect.¹

After midnight, Hakimah Khatoon (a.r.) stood up to perform her night-vigil prayers. Dawn was near. She saw Janab Narjis (s.a.) fast asleep and observed no signs of pregnancy in her. At this moment, doubts began to invade her mind when suddenly the silence was broken by Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.)’s voice, “*Aunt! Don’t be in haste. The appointed hour is near.*” Janab Hakimah (a.r.) felt ashamed of her thought, albeit transient, and she began

reciting the Holy Quran. Hardly any time had passed, when Janab Narjis (s.a.) suddenly got up from her slumber, performed wuzu and the night-vigil prayers. The dawn was cleaving apart the night. She felt the labour pains at the time of *Azaan*, and in a few seconds, the proof of Allah and the promise of the Prophets (a.s.) {who will fulfil the divine promise in the entire universe}, viz. Hazrat Hujjat Ibn al-Hasan al-Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) was born. He was free from all impurities. On his right arm, the following verse was inscribed, “**Truth has come and falsehood vanished. Certainly, falsehood was bound to vanish.**” Immediately on his arrival in this world, Imam (a.t.f.s.) went into prostration and raising his index finger towards the heavens, recited, “*I witness that there is no god but Allah, the Unique, and there is no partner for Him.*” Thereafter, he took the name of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) followed by the names of the ten Imams (a.s.). When he reached to his own name, he said, “*O Allah! Fulfil what You have promised unto me. Make me reach my goal. Make me steadfast in the holy war and fill the earth with justice and equity through me.*”

On this, Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) called out, “*Aunt! Please give the child to me.*” The infant did salaam to his mother while in her lap. Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) took the child, cuddled him, gave his tongue in his mouth and said, ‘*My son! Speak to me.*’ Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) recited the verse,

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

And We intend to oblige those who have been

¹ Kamaaluddin by Shaikh Saduq (a.r.), chapter 42, Shawaahedun Nobuwwah by Abdur Rehmaan Jaami

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rendered weak in the earth by appointing them as Imams (a.s.) and appointing them as heirs.¹

Thereafter, he gave the testimony of monotheism, Prophethood of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and of all the Imams (a.s.) till his father, Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.).

At this juncture, Janab Hakimah (a.r.) saw some birds flying. One bird, on the command of Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.), took the child and flew towards the heavens. Other birds followed suit. Janab Hakimah (a.r.) enquired about the birds, Imam (a.s.) replied,

“It is Hazrat Ruhul Qodos (the greatest angel of Allah). Allah has appointed him for us Imams as a helper in our actions, to assist us in achieving success and to keep us abreast about the will of the Almighty.”

Later, following the Islamic tradition, Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) arranged for the customary shaving (*aqeeqah*) of the child by slaughtering a few sheep and distributed a large quantity of meat and bread among the Bani Hashim.²

To avoid creating skepticism in the minds of the Shias regarding the birth of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) i.e. whether he is actually born or not, Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) regularly introduced him to different reliable Shias and companions or informed others through correspondence. To his representative in the city of Qum, Ahmad b. Ishaq Qummi, Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) wrote,

A son is born to me. Keep this news only to yourself and do not inform others about it. We have given this

¹ Surah Qasas (28): verse 5

² Kamaaluddin, pg. 433, 434

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information only to our close relatives on account of their relation and to our friends due to their proximity. Hence, I thought of informing you too so that you may also rejoice on account of this occurrence.¹

Moreover, whenever Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) was sure that there were no spies or informants in the house, he (a.s.) allowed his reliable Shias and friends to visit Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.). Therefore, once a group of forty Shias went to the house of Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) to visit his son. Imam (a.s.) went inside the house and brought with him his handsome son and said,

He is your Imam.²

Sometimes, people used to come in the presence of Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) to ask a few questions. Imam (a.s.) used to make his son answer their queries so that the Shias may know and follow their Imam (a.t.f.s.) in practice. When Kaamil b. Hasan came to Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) with a set of questions from the Shias of Madina, he (a.s.) asked him to refer to a gorgeous-looking child who provided complete answers for each and every question without even hearing them.³

O Allah! Grant honour to his friends and degrade his enemies. Aameen!

¹ Kamaaluddin, pg. 424, Trad.16

² Isbaatul Hudaat by Shaykh Hurr Aameli (r.a.), vol. 7, pg. 20

³ Al-Ghaybah by Shaykh Toosi (a.r.), pg. 148

Chapter Six

The Imamat of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا
الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ

O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those who possess authority among you.¹

Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) was martyred in Saamarra on the 8th Rabi al-Awwal, 260 A.H. That moment marked the commencement of the Imamat of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.). Just as Hazrat Eesa (a.s.) and Hazrat Yahya (a.s.) attained the esteemed position of Prophethood in childhood and Imam Muhammad Taqi (a.s.) and Imam Ali Naqi (a.s.) were endowed with the holy status of Imamat before adulthood, Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) too reached this hallowed position at a very young age. For, Allah's position is *conferred* and *endowed* and *not acquired* that it be in need of age or experience. When Hazrat Eesa (a.s.) was in his mother's lap and was hardly a few days old, he (a.s.) had addressed the Jewish scholars thus:

إِنِّي عَبْدُ اللَّهِ آتَانِي الْكِتَابَ وَجَعَلَنِي نَبِيًّا

¹ Surah Nisa (4) : Verse 59

Surely I am the slave of Allah. He has given me a book and appointed me as a Prophet.¹

After the demise of Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.), his brother Jafar claimed Imamat and rejected the birth of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) outright. He thought it as a good opportunity to recite the funeral prayers of Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) to prove that he is the Imam and that the eleventh Imam (a.s.) had no son as a successor. The true Shias and students of Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) were aware of the evil designs of Jafar. They watched, in shocked silence, Jafar stepping forward to lead the prayers. Suddenly, a handsome youth stepped forward, caught hold of Jafar's robe and thundered,

*Uncle! Go back. I will lead the funeral prayers of my father.*²

On hearing this, Jafar turned pale and retreated without a word. Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) led the funeral prayers^{3,4}

Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) is the last of Allah's proofs. Like other Imams (a.s.), he too has been endowed with divine knowledge and power. Various books have mentioned his numerous extraordinary feats.⁵

¹ Surah Maryam (19): Verse 30

² Only an infallible can lead the funeral prayer of an infallible.

³ Kamaaluddin, pg. 475, Trad. 25

⁴ It is worth mentioning that in the Indian sub-continent, many believe that Jafar, the uncle of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.), had later repented for his misdemeanours and hence is called as Jafar-e-Tawwab (Jafar the Repentant) and not Jafar-e-Kazzaab (Jafar the Liar). Although we don't have evidence to support this idea but nevertheless **Allah knows the Best.**

⁵ For instance one can refer to the book, 'Madinatul Maajiz' by Sayed

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These miracles are themselves proof enough for his Imamat. These comprise of healing the sick, helping the poor, guiding the deviated, showing the way to those who have lost the path, prophecies, etc. In other words, the occultation of Imam (a.s.) is not an obstacle to fulfilling or discharging his duties as an Imam (a.s.).

O Allah! Enumerate us among the companions of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) in his occultation as well as his reappearance, in this world as well as the hereafter. Aameen!

Chapter Seven

The Occultation of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.)

قَالَ أَقْسِمُ بِالْخُنُوسِ. الْجَوَارِ الْكُنُوسِ.

**But nay I swear by the stars that run their course
(and) hide themselves.¹**

Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) was not well known and famous among the masses at the time of his birth and in his childhood. But the sincere Shias who frequented Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) had the fortune and honour of being in his presence (a.t.f.s.) and visiting him. From the commencement of his Imamat, social conditions had taken a turn for the worse due to which he was forced to go into occultation on the command of Allah and live in isolation.²

But this way of life was not an obstacle in the performance and discharge of his duties and responsibilities.

The occultation of Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) is divided into two halves: Minor () and Major (). It is worth noting that even Sunni scholars have narrated traditions concerning occultation in their books. Long before the occultation, traditions have been narrated in detail on the authority of the Holy Prophet

¹ Surah Takveer (81): verses 15, 16

² Al-Ghaibah by Nomaani, pg. 149-150, Trad. 6&7 narrating from Imam Baqer (a.s.)

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(s.a.w.a.) and other Imams (a.s.). In one tradition, Imam Sadeq (a.s.) says,

There are two occultations for the Qaem. One of them is longer than the other.¹

The minor occultation commenced with the martyrdom of Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.), which also marked the commencement of Imam-e-Zamana's (a.t.f.s.) Imam. The duration of the minor occultation was sixty-nine years, i.e. 260 – 329 A.H.² The era thereafter is called as the major occultation which will continue till his reappearance.

The peculiarity of the minor occultation was that there were some special representatives in this period who were a medium between Imam (a.t.f.s.) and the people. They conveyed the letters, questions, wealth, offerings, gifts, etc. to the Imam (a.t.f.s.) and in return, carried his replies to the people. These were four people who became famous as the 'Four Representatives' (نواب اربع). Numerous miracles and extraordinary feats were performed by these four representatives, which are recorded in the books of traditions.

They used to reside in Baghdad and their graves are found there even today. Their names are as follows:

- 1) **Abu Amr Usman b. Saeed al-Amri** (exp. 265 A.H.): He was the representative of Imam (a.t.f.s.) from the beginning

¹ Al-Ghaibah, pg. 170, traditions 1&2 and Eqdud Durar, Muqaddas Shaafei, pg. 133&134

² Some people consider the beginning of occultation since his birth. They consider the duration of the minor occultation to be seventy-four years.

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of his Imam. Prior to him (a.s.), he was also the representative of Imam Ali Naqi (a.s.) and Imam Hasan Al-Askari (a.s.).

- 2) **Abu Jafar Mohammad b. Usman b. Saeed al-Amri** (exp. Jamaadi al-Awwal 304 or 305 A.H.): He succeeded his father after the latter's demise. He too was the representative of Imam Hasan Al-Askari (a.s.). When forty Shias came to the presence of Imam Hasan Al-Askari (a.s.)¹ and got the opportunity of meeting Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.), at that time he (a.t.f.s.) discussed the representation of these two deputies.
- 3) **Abul Qasim Husain b. Rauh al-Nawbakhti** (exp. 18th Shabaan, 326 A.H.)
- 4) **Abul Ali b. Muhammad al-Seymouri** (exp. 15th Shabaan 329 A.H.): He was the last special representative of Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.). Six days prior to his demise, he received a signed letter from Imam (a.t.f.s.) which prophesied his death. It also announced the termination of the era of deputyship and the beginning of the major occultation.²

Today, it is more than eleven hundred years since the commencement of the major occultation. During this period, Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) has not appointed any individual as his special deputy. Rather, he has instructed the people to refer to narrators of traditions (those jurists who possess religious

¹ This incident is mentioned in the fifth chapter.

² Ehtejaaj of Shaikh Tabrisi (r.a.), vol. 2, pg. 193

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knowledge and requisite characteristics) for all religious problems in this period of major occultation. Therefore, nowadays the Maraaje and the great jurists are called as the *general representatives* (نواب عام) of Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.).

In one of his signed letters (*tauqee'*), Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) wrote,

وَأَمَّا الْحَوَادِثُ الْوَاقِعَةُ وَارْجِعُوا فِيهَا إِلَى
رُؤَاةِ حَدِيثِنَا فَإِنَّهُمْ حُجَّتِي عَلَيْكُمْ وَأَنَا حُجَّةُ
اللَّهِ

And for the future occurrences, refer to those who narrate our traditions because they are my proofs upon you and I am the proof of Allah.¹

In the period of occultation, Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) is living as an unknown among the people. He goes for Hajj every year. He guides the people and grants refuge to those without shelter. He benefits the people like the sun behind the clouds.²

People constantly derive benefit from his light, his existence, his warmth and his attraction although they do not recognise him.

Now in the period of occultation, people are not aware of the residence of Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) and are unable to recognise him. They cannot go directly in his presence. But by the command of Allah, there are some fortunate people in the major occultation

¹ Kamaaluddin, pg. 484, Trad. 4

² The Holy Prophet (s.a.) has mentioned the (benefit of) existence of Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) in the period of occultation in this very manner. Kamaaluddin, pg. 253, Trad. 3

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who got the opportunity to meet and visit Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.). There are numerous such incidents mentioned in authentic and reliable books.¹

¹ Great traditionalist Mohaddis Mirza Husain Noori (a.r.) in his books “Najmus Saaqib” and “Jannatul Ma’waa” has mentioned about a hundred such incidents and meetings.

PART –II

Chapter Eight

Longevity

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ فَلَبِثَ فِيهِمْ أَلْفَ
سَنَةٍ إِلَّا خَمْسِينَ عَامًا...

**And indeed We sent Nuh to his nation; so he stayed
among them for a thousand years save fifty...**¹

The plan of Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) is gigantic and mammoth, which he will implement on Allah's Command. But the ground is not yet ready for this colossal event. Allah the Almighty has granted longevity to His Last Proof so that when the big moment arrives, He may grant him permission for reappearance and all his goals will be achieved. Therefore, Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) enjoys a long life and from this aspect, he is similar to Hazrat Nuh (a.s.) and Hazrat Khizr (a.s.). Imam Zainul Aabedeen (a.s.) says,

فِي الْقَائِمِ سُنَّةٌ مِنْ نُوحٍ وَهِيَ طَوْلُ الْعُمَرِ.

*In the Qaem, there is a Sunnah (tradition) from Nuh
and that is longevity.*²

According to the Holy Quran, Hazrat Nuh (a.s.) propagated among

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his nation for nine hundred and fifty years before the famous deluge. If the years before the propagation and after the deluge are included in his age, then his life easily exceeds 2,500 years.¹

Presently, Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) is not even half of this age. Prophet Khizr (a.s.) lived in the time of Hazrat Moosa (a.s.) and all Muslims, Shias as well as Sunnis, believe that he is alive till date.² The difference between the proclamation of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and the death of Hazrat Moosa (a.s.) is approximately 2,000 years. Thus, Hazrat Khizr (a.s.) is *at the very least* 2,300 years elder to Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.). Imam Sadeq (a.s.) says that Hazrat Khizr (a.s.) was granted a long life so that it may be an example for the longevity of Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.).³

It is not that only the friends of Allah have been granted long lives. The fact is that even His enemies and opponents have been bestowed with longevity. The best instance is Iblis. The Creator Who can grant long life to his most staunch enemy, can He not do the same with His friend and obedient servant? Moreover, it should be borne in mind that the knowledge of the Unseen lies with Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.). With its help, he can distance himself from the causes of sickness, weakness and old age; then in this case, if he acquires a very long life, then what is so amazing about it?

Not only does Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) enjoy a long life, he is also

¹ Kamaaluddin, pg. 523, Trad.1 narrating from Imam Sadeq (a.s.)

² In Surah Kahf (18): verses 60-82, the incident of Hazrat Moosa (a.s.) and Hazrat Khizr (a.s.) is related.

³ Kamaaluddin, pg. 257, Trad. 53

¹ Surah Ankaboot (29): verse 14

² Kamaaluddin, pg. 322, Trad. 4 & 5; pg. 524, Trad. 5

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preserved from old age. His visage is like that of a youth.¹
Whoever sees him will think him to be of forty years or even lesser.²

May Allah grant him a long life and hasten his (a.t.f.s) reappearance!

Chapter Nine

A Glance at the Virtues of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s)

وَالسَّائِقُونَ السَّائِقُونَ. أُولَئِكَ الْمُقَرَّبُونَ.

And the foremost (in faith) are the foremost; these are they who are nearer (to Allah).¹

The virtues of Imams (a.s.) in general and Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) in particular are so many that none can ever encompass them. For, their status and position is much higher than human thought. Only Allah the Almighty and his emissaries are aware of their virtues. Traditions have mentioned quite a few of these characteristics. We shall mention a few of them hereunder:

Like other divine ambassadors, Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) too is infallible. He is free from all defects, sins and impurities. The verse of Tat'heer was revealed in honour of the Ahle Bait (a.s.).² Hence the command of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) is in fact Allah's command, his happiness is that of Allah and his anger is Allah's anger. One can find this statement in Ziyarat-e-Aale Yaasin,

فَالْحَقُّ مَا رَضِيئُمُوهُ وَالْبَاطِلُ مَا أَسَخَطْتُمُوهُ

¹ This fact has been narrated even by the scholars of the Ahle Sunnat. For instance, Eqdud Durar by Sullami Shaafei, pg. 41 & 44 narrating from Imam Muhammad Baqer (a.s.) and Imam Husain (a.s.)

² Muntakhabul Asar, pg. 284-285, Trad.2

¹ Surah Waaqeah (56): verses 10, 11

² "إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا" "Allah only desires to keep away the uncleanness from you, O people of the House, and to purify you a (thorough) purification." (Surah Ahzaab (33): Verse 33)

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وَالْمَعْرُوفُ مَا أَمَرْتُمْ بِهِ وَالْمُنْكَرُ مَا نَهَيْتُمْ
عَنْهُ

Then truth is that with which you are satisfied and falsehood is that with which you are angry and goodness is that which you command and evil is that which you prohibit.

Barring the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), he (a.t.f.s) is superior to all Prophets (a.s.) and angels. When he reappears, Jibraeel (a.s.) will kiss his hand.¹

Hazrat Eesa (a.s.) will descend from the heavens to assist him in his mission. According to famous traditions among both Shias and Ahle Sunnat, Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) will lead the congregational prayers and Hazrat Eesa (a.s.) will pray behind him.²

Hazrat Eesaa (a.s.) will be among the helpers of Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) and a commander of his army. Imam Sadeq (a.s.) has expressed his desire to serve him (a.t.f.s.)³ When his name was taken before Imam Reza (a.s.), the latter rose, faced the Qiblah, placed his right hand on his head and prayed for his reappearance.⁴

He possesses divine knowledge. He is a witness to the entire world and all its inhabitants. Everyday, the angels attend to him and

¹ Behaarul Anwaar by Allamah Majlisi (r.a.), vol. 53, pg. 8 narrating from Imam Sadeq (a.s.)

² Muntakhabul Asar, part 7, chapter 8

³ Behaarul Anwaar, vol. 51, pg. 148, Trad. 22 “If I find his era, I will serve him for my entire life.”

⁴ Muntakhabul Asar, pg. 506, Trad.3

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present the deeds of his Shias.¹

Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) sees our actions and is aware of each and every deed done by us. He is a witness upon the people from Allah’s side. He knows what is in our hearts and is informed of our secrets. In his letter to Shaykh Mufeed (a.r.), he (a.s.) wrote,

فَأِنَّا يُحِيطُ عَلَمُنَا بِأَبْنَائِكُمْ وَلَا يَعْزُبُ عَنَّا شَيْئًا
مِنْ أَحْبَابِكُمْ

Then indeed our knowledge encompasses all your news and nothing of your matters is concealed from us.²

Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) is the sign of Allah’s mercy and benevolence. He is kinder than a father to his son and more benevolent than a mother to her children.³ Everyone is a subject of the prayers and mercy of Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.). But the Shias and especially those who are attached with him (a.s.) and pray to him and for him constantly are conferred with special bounties by him. In one signed letter to Shaykh Mufeed (a.r.), he wrote,

إِنَّا غَيْرَ مُهْمَلِينَ لِمُرَاعَاتِكُمْ وَلَا نَاسِيْنَا
لِذِكْرِكُمْ

Surely we are neither negligent in your protection nor are we forgetful of your remembrance.⁴

¹ Tafseer-e-Ahle Bait (a.s.) of Surah Baqarah (2) : Verse 143 and Surah Taubah (9) : Verse 105

² Behaarul Anwaar, vol. 53, pg. 15, Trad.7

³ Al-Kafi, vol.1, pg. 200

⁴ Behaarul Anwaar, vol. 53, pg. 175, Trad.7

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Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) possesses the characteristics and perfection of previous Prophets (a.s.) and Imams (a.s.). His mother's pregnancy was concealed and his birth was unknown like in the cases of Hazrat Ibrahim (a.s.) and Hazrat Moosa (a.s.).¹ Like Prophet Eesa (a.s.) and Prophet Yahya (a.s.) and Imam Muhammad Taqi (a.s.) and Imam Ali Naqi (a.s.), his Imamate commenced at a very tender age.² His longevity is similar to Hazrat Nuh (a.s.) and Hazrat Khizr (a.s.). His occultation is akin to Prophets Idris (a.s.), Saleh (a.s.), Ibrahim (a.s.), Yusuf (a.s.) and Moosa (a.s.).³ His youth is like that of Hazrat Yunus (a.s.).⁴

In withstanding loneliness and the difficulties of the period of occultation, he possesses the patience of Hazrat Ayyub (a.s.). After reappearance, his uprising and revolution will be like his ancestor, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) i.e. with the sword. Imam Sajjad (a.s.) says,

Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) possesses the traditions and characteristics of the previous prophets (a.s.). He has the qualities of Prophets Adam (a.s.), Nuh (a.s.), Ibrahim (a.s.), Moosa (a.s.), Eesa (a.s.), Ayyub (a.s.) and the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.). In longevity, he resembles Hazrat Adam (a.s.) and Hazrat Nuh (a.s.). In concealed birth and being away from the people, he is akin to Hazrat Ibrahim (a.s.). In fear and occultation, he is similar to Hazrat Moosa (a.s.). Differences will arise among the people because of him as was the case with Hazrat Eesa (a.s.). In facing difficulties, he is akin to

¹ Refer to the fifth chapter

² Refer to the sixth chapter

³ Refer to the eighth chapter

⁴ Kamaaluddin, chapter 1-7

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*Hazrat Ayyub (a.s.), and like the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), he will rise with the sword.*¹

O Allah! Grant us the recognition of Your Proof, Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.). For, if You do not grant us his recognition, we will deviate from our religion.

¹ Kamaaluddin, pg. 322, Trad.38

Chapter Ten

Reappearance of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.)

وَلَهُ أَسْلَمَ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ طَوْعًا
وَكَرْهًا

**...and to Him submits whoever is in the heavens and
the earth, willingly or unwillingly...¹**

All heavenly books discuss the reappearance of Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.). All the Prophets (a.s.) and Successors (a.s.) have waited for his advent. But when will his occultation come to an end and when will the Almighty permit him to reappear? Its knowledge is only with Allah and none else.² Therefore, whoever fixes a time for the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.), is a liar and a deceiver. In a signed letter (توقيع), Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) has warned,

أَمَّا ظُهُورُ الْفَرَجِ فَإِنَّهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَكَذَبَ
الْوَقَائِدُونَ.

And as for the reappearance, then it is upon Allah. And

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those who fix a time are liars.¹

But it is also true that the period of occultation (a period of great difficulties and travails for the Shias) can be curtailed and the reappearance hastened through *incessant, heartfelt* and *congregational* invocations and supplications. For, Allah the Almighty had reduced the calamities of the Bani Israel by 170 years (which was previously ordained for 400 years) only on account of their entreaties and pleas. He sent Hazrat Moosa (a.s.) to them and saved them from the clutches of the evil Firaun. Thus, Imam Sadeq (a.s.) has exhorted the Shias to pray as much as possible for the early reappearance like the Bani Israel did.²

Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) will reappear from the Holy Kaaba, Masjidul Haraam, near Hajar-e-Aswad³ along with 313 companions and helpers.⁴ At that moment, Archangel Jibraeel (a.s.) will announce his reappearance from atop the Kaaba, a call heard by all the people of the universe.⁵ The believers, from every nook and corner of the world, will set out for his aid and assistance. Hazrat Esa (a.s.) will descend from the heavens, participate in his army and pray behind him.⁶

Those believers who died while waiting for his reappearance will be brought back to life and will help him in the achievement of his goal. When the number of his supporters and helpers swells to ten

¹ Kamaaluddin, pg. 484, Trad. 4

² Tafseer-e-Ayyashi, vol. 2, pg.154, Trad. 49

³ Behaarul Anwaar, vol. 52, pg. 307, Trad. 81

⁴ Refer to Surah Baqarah (2) : Verse 148

⁵ Refer to Surah Shu'ara (26) : Verse 4

⁶ Muntakhabul Asar, part 7, Chapter 8

¹ Aale Imran (3): Verse 83

² The non-fixation of the time of reappearance has been likened to the time of Qiyamat. In this regard, one can refer to the exegesis of the Ahle Bait (a.s.) under the verse of Surah A'raaf (7): verse 187

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thousand, he will announce his revolution.¹

After conquering Makkah, he will move towards Madinah and then to Kufa. He will declare the city of Kufa as the capital of his universal government.²

Thereafter, he will dispatch his armies to different parts of the world.

One peculiarity of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) is that none of his armies will face the ignominy of defeat. Wherever they will march, victory will be a certainty.³ For, anybody facing his armies will submit immediately. The moment they witness the extraordinary feats, signs, conversation, morals, attractive personality and spirituality, it will be extremely difficult for them to deny him. Of course, there will be some resistance and opposition from the staunch opponents of Islam, like the Jews and the enemies of the Ahle Bait (a.s.), but that will be squashed.⁴

Within a short duration of eight months, the entire globe will be under the rule of Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.).⁵

In these wars and victories, as the companions and helpers will be on the rise, angels too shall descend from the heavens to offer their assistance and help.⁶

¹ Kamaaluddin, pg.378, Trad.2

² Al-Ghaibah of Shaykh Toosi (r.a.), pg. 275, Kaamiluz Ziyaaraat, pg.26, Trad.11

³ Refer to the exegesis of the Ahle Bait (a.s.) under Surah Ale Imran (3) : Verse 83

⁴ Behaarul Anwaar, vol. 52, pg. 361, Trad. 129

⁵ Behaarul Anwaar, vol. 52, pg. 312, Trad. 5

⁶ Behaarul Anwaar, vol.52, pg. 388, Trad. 206; pg. 327, Trad. 43; pg. 324,

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Moreover, natural forces too will support Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.). The enemy will be under such awe and fear that they will develop cold feet.¹

In all these wars, Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) will stand against the oppressors and tyrants. He will snatch whatever they possess and make them pay for their repression and misdeeds. If the unbelievers and polytheists insist on their disbelief and polytheism, he will eliminate them. The enemies of the Ahle Bait (a.s.) will be degraded and humiliated.²

The devils among the men and jinn who are busy spreading mischief and corruption in the earth will be annihilated. Rebels, transgressors and deniers will be killed. Shiite Islamic law will be implemented in the entire universe under the leadership of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.).

O Allah! Make us witness that day at the earliest!

Trad. 36

¹ Behaarul Anwaar, vol. 52, pg. 356, Trad. 119

² Behaarul Anwaar, vol. 52, pg. 373, Trad.167

Chapter Eleven

The Government of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.)

إِعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُحْيِي الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا

Know that surely Allah will give life to the earth after its death...¹

After the uprising of Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) and a brief period of war, all the enemies of Islam including polytheists, rebels, corrupt and mischief mongers will be destroyed and annihilated. The entire world will submit before the command of Allah and the government of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.). The Holy Quran has discussed the aims of this government in the following words:

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كَمَا اسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذِينَ
مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ وَ لِيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِينَهُمُ الَّذِي ارْتَضَى
لَهُمْ وَلِيُبَدِّلَنَّهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ خَوْفِهِمْ أَمْنًا يَعْبُدُونَنِي
لَا يُشْرِكُونَ بِي شَيْئًا وَمَنْ كَفَرَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ
فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ

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 after their fear give them security in exchange; they shall serve Me, not associating aught with Me. And whoever is ungrateful after this, these are the transgressors.¹

In this verse, four aims of Imam-e-Zamana's (a.t.f.s.) government have been mentioned:

Establishment of a Universal Government

The government of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) will be universal, encompassing five continents. The entire world will have only a single rule. International borders will be wiped out and the world will become a global village. Governments will be brought down. Wars will come to an end. Entire humanity will be one nation. There will be only one ruler and one government in the whole world.

Government of Shiite Islam

The law and culture of this government will be Islamic. Not any Islam but the Islam with which Allah is satisfied and contented i.e. the Islam of Ghadeer.² Islam will dominate all religions. Islam will

¹ Surah Nur (24): Verse 55

² The verse of Maaedah (5): Verse 3 which was revealed in Ghadeer Khumm is indicating towards the fact that the Islam by which Allah is satisfied is that of the Imam and mastership of Ali (a.s.) viz. Shiite Islam. The verse is as follows: **الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتَمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيْتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا** "This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My

¹ Surah Hadeed (57): Verse 17

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rule the world. The Holy Quran has pointed out towards this reality in the following words:

هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ
لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُشْرِكُونَ

He is the One Who sent His messenger with guidance and true religion so that it may dominate all religions, even if the polytheists dislike it.¹

Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) will eliminate the hypocrites and enemies of Ahle Bait (a.s.).²

He will end all innovations introduced in the pure religion of Islam. He will reintroduce, re-establish the forgotten Sunnah and grant it a new lease of life.³

Establishment of Justice, Security and Equality

The most important objective of the government of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) is to establish justice and equity and annihilate tyranny and oppression of every kind. When injustice and oppression will be finished, obviously there will be justice and equality all around. There will be wealth everywhere. One of the peculiarities of this government will be that with the help of divine knowledge, Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) will be aware of the inner differences and feelings of the people. He will not be in need of any witness or

Bounties upon you and am satisfied with Islam as a religion for you.”

¹ Surah Taubah (9): Verse 33. Surah Saff (61): Verse 9

² Behaarul Anwaar, vol. 52, pg. 376, Trad. 77

³ Al-Irshad of Shaykh Mufeed, pg. 364; Behaarul Anwaar, vol. 52, pg. 352, Trad. 108

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advocate. Therefore, the judgement and decree of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) will resemble that of Hazrat Dawood (a.s.).¹

Termination of Polytheism

Worshipping only Allah and not prostrating before anybody else is the most elementary aim of human creation. This goal will be achieved in its true and most complete sense in the government of Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.). He will wage a relentless battle against the unbelievers and polytheists. All forms of disbelief and polytheism will be brought to an end. Hence, only Allah will be worshipped in the whole world and none else. The Holy Quran has mentioned this concept in the following words:

الَّذِينَ إِن مَّكَّنَّاهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ
وَأَتَوْا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَمَرُوا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَنَهَوْا عَنِ
الْمُنْكَرِ

Those had We established them in the earth, would perform prayers, pay the poor rate, enjoin good and prohibit evil...²

How pleasurable it would be to live in the reign of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.). O Allah! Hasten his reappearance at the earliest!

¹ Al-Kafi of Shaykh Kulayni, vol. 1, pg.397, Trad.1

² Surah Hajj (22): Verse 41

Chapter Twelve

The Helpers and Companions of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.)

...فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِي اللَّهُ بِقَوْمٍ يُحِبُّهُمْ وَيُحِبُّونَهُ أَذِلَّةٍ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَعِزَّةٍ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ يُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا يَخَافُونَ لَوْمَةَ لَائِمٍ ذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَن يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

Then soon will Allah bring a nation, He will love them and they will love Him. They will be humble before the believers and mighty in front of the unbelievers. They will struggle in the way of Allah and will not fear the accusation of any accuser. This is the grace of Allah; He gives it to whomsoever He wishes. And Allah is Ample-giving, Knowing.¹

Initially, the number of helpers and companions of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) will equal the number of soldiers present in the Battle of

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Badr.¹ Gradually, their strength will increase till it reaches ten thousand.² These friends enjoy such an elevated status that Prophets (a.s.) pray to be enumerated among the friends and helpers of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.). In the ninth lesson we have already stated that Imam Sadeq (a.s.) has expressed his keenness to serve Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.).

لَوْ أَدْرَكْتُهُ لَخَدَمْتُهُ أَيَّامَ حَيَاتِي

If I reach his era, I will indeed serve him for my entire life³.

The supplications that we have been recommended to read, very often contain sentences like,

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِي مِنْ أَنْصَارِهِ وَأَعْوَانِهِ وَالذَّابِّينَ عَنْهُ وَالْمُسَارِعِينَ إِلَيْهِ فِي قَضَاءِ حَوَائِجِ وَالْمُتَمَتِّلِينَ لِأَوَامِرِهِ وَالْمُحَامِلِينَ عَنْهُ وَالسَّائِقِينَ إِلَى إِرَادَتِهِ وَالْمُسْتَشْهِدِينَ بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ...

O Allah! Make me from his helpers, his supporters, those who protect him, those who rush for the fulfilment of his needs, those who are obedient to his commands, those who support him, those who compete to achieve his intentions and seek martyrdom in his

¹ Behaarul Anwaar, vol. 52, pg. 323, Trad. 32 narrated from Imam Sajjad (a.s.)

² Kamaaluddin, vol.2, pg. 654, Trad.2, narrated from Imam Sadeq (a.s.)

³ Al-Ghaibah by No'mani (r.a.), pg. 245, Trad. 46

¹ Surah Maaedah (5): Verse 54

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*presence*¹.

They have gained this status due to the characteristics and traits they possess. Come, let us become acquainted with a few of these characteristics so that we may strive to acquire them and with the grace of Allah, be enumerated among the helpers and companions of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.). Here, we shall mention a few of these traits as discussed in the traditions:

1) Worship and Piety

The friends and helpers of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) are the true worshippers of Allah. They are the signs and symbols of obeisance and piety. Imam Sadeq (a.s.) has described these traits thus,

*They pass their nights in worship. Their crying during their prayers is like the humming of the honeybee.*²

It is rare to find a person involved in earning his sustenance energetically and at the same time, engrossed heartily in prayers and worship. Hence, we find another tradition where Imam Sadeq (a.s.) says,

*Their foreheads are embossed with the marks of prostration. They spend their nights in worship but move like lions during the day.*³

2) Strength and Endeavour

All the friends and helpers of Imam (a.t.f.s.) will be young and

¹ Behaarul Anwaar, vol. 53, pg. 95, Trad. 111

² Behaarul Anwaar, vol. 52, pg. 308, Trad. 82

³ Behaarul Anwaar, vol. 52, pg. 308, Trad. 82

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energetic. The elderly will be far and few. Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) has described them thus,

*The helpers of Mahdi will be all young. The old among them will be like kohl in the eyes or salt in food.*¹

Their youth connotes their faith, strength, bravery, courage, enthusiasm and preparedness for the holy war. For, their gigantic responsibilities demand essential qualities like power, courage, decisiveness and determination. Imam Sadeq (a.s.) says,

*Each one of them possesses the strength and power of forty people. Their hearts are stronger than steel. They are so strong that if they pass by mountains, they will uproot them. They will not put their swords back in sheaths till Allah is satisfied with them.*²

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

*If they are ordered to destroy a city, they will convert it into ruins immediately. Their speed in work is like a rider on the back of swift horse.*³

3) Belief and Insight

The friends and companions of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) are people of strong faith, torch bearers of knowledge and insight. They recognise Allah with a true recognition.⁴ These are the people who

¹ Al-Ghaibah of Shaykh Toosi (r.a.), pg. 476, Trad. 501

² Kamaaluddin, vol. 2, pg. 673, Trad. 26

³ Behaarul Anwaar, vol. 52, pg. 308, Trad. 82

⁴ Many traditions have described the associates of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) in the following words, رَجَالٌ عَرَفُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ مَعْرِفَتِهِ “They are men who recognise Allah as He should be recognised.” (Kashful Ghummah by Irbili

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have acquired divine beliefs and recognition only from the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and his holy successors (a.s.). They have not obtained their religious knowledge from anybody else.¹ They possess deep insight in religion and their knowledge is profound. Imam Sadeq (a.s.) while talking about them says,

*The believers among whom Allah will make Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) appear will be the chosen ones. They will be worthy for governance and judgement. They will bear deep insight and understanding of religion.*²

4) Love and Obedience

Their hearts will overflow with the love for Imam Mahdi (a.s.). They will be as obedient to him as a slave is to his master. They will submit completely to his commands. They will not forsake him at any cost. Imam Sadeq (a.s.) says,

*His helpers will touch the saddle of his horse only to be blessed. In the battlefield, they will surround him and act as a shield for him. Whatever the Imam desires, will be fulfilled (by them).*³

Let us enlighten this chapter with the following tradition from

(r.a.), vol. 3, pg. 268, narrated from Imam Ali (a.s.).

¹ Al-Kafi, vol. 1, pg. 429, Trad. 83 Imam Muhammad Baqer (a.s.) explaining the following verse, وَيُجَلُّ لَهُمُ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَيُحَرِّمُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْخَبَائِثِ، **The pure things have been permitted for them and the unclean things have been prohibited for them** (Surah A'raaf (7) : Verse 157)

² Dalaaelul Imaamah by Emaaduddin Tabari (r.a.), pg. 310

³ Behaarul Anwaar, vol. 52, pg. 308, Trad. 82

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Imam Sadeq (a.s.) and strive to make it a motto of our lives:

مَنْ سَرَّهُ أَنْ يَكُونَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ الْقَائِمِ
فَلْيَنْتَظِرْ وَلْيَعْمَلْ بِالْوَرَعِ وَمَحَاسِنِ الْأَخْلَاقِ
وَهُوَ مُنْتَظَرٌ.

*One who desires that he should be among the companions of the Qaem (a.s.) then he should await (the reappearance), act with piety, have good morals and ethics while he is awaiting.*¹

We shall conclude this chapter with a sentence of a supplication taught to us by Imam Ali Reza (a.s.).

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْنَا ... مِمَّنْ تَنْتَصِرُ بِهِ لِدِينِكَ وَتُعِزُّ
بِهِ نَصْرَ وَلِيِّكَ وَلَا تَسْتَبْدِلْ بِنَا غَيْرَنَا.

*O Allah! Make us among those through whom You have helped Your religion, through whom You have granted honour to Your Vali (Imam-e-Zamana), and do not replace us with others (for his service).*²

¹ Al-Ghaibah of No'mani (r.a.), pg. 200, Trad. 16

² Behaarul Anwaar, vol. 92, pg. 331, Trad. 4

Chapter Thirteen

The Rights of Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.)

أَنْ أَشْكُرَ لِيْ وَلِوَالِدَيْكَ

That you thank Me and your parents.¹

Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) enjoys tremendous rights over us. We can fulfil these only if we are attentive towards them. Hereunder, we shall mention a few of them:

Right of Guiding and Teaching

Allah has guided the people through Prophets (a.s.). Presently, Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) is Allah's representative, divine guide and leader. Therefore, all those rights which a teacher enjoys over his students and a guide enjoys over the one seeking guidance, Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) enjoys over us.

Rights of Parents

Parents possess great rights over their children. But the true and real father of every era is the Imam of the time. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has declared himself and Ali (a.s.) as the father of the Islamic Ummah.² The pain that Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) has of the

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nation in his heart, the way he takes care of the nation, the care and attention bestowed on the nation by him, is certainly much more than the benevolence of a father towards his child. Imam Ali Reza (a.s.) says,

الإِمَامُ الأَيْبَسُ الرَّفِيقُ وَالوَالِدُ الشَّفِيقُ وَالأَخُ الشَّقِيقُ وَالأُمُّ البَرَّةُ بِالوَلَدِ الصَّغِيرِ.

An Imam is a close friend, a benevolent father, an equal brother and (like) a loving mother towards her small child.¹

The Right of Governance and Caliphate

The Caliph appointed by Allah over the people enjoys numerous rights over his subjects. The Proof of Allah is the ruler of his time over His servants, a status held today by Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.). All of us are his subjects. Hence, all those rights which a ruler enjoys upon his subjects, Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) enjoys over us.

Now, as Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) is our leader, teacher, guide, loving and affectionate parent, ruler, caliph and governor of the time, therefore he enjoys quite a few rights over us. It is necessary and obligatory upon us to discharge these with utmost diligence and sincerity. Hence, we recite the following sentence in Dua-e-Nudbah,

وَأَعِنَّا عَلَى تَأْدِيَةِ حُقُوقِهِ إِلَيْهِ

(O Allah!) And help us in fulfilment of his rights to him.

¹ Surah Luqman (31): Verse 14

² Al-Mufradaat of Raaghib Isfahaani under the word, 'Ab' (father)

¹ Al-Kafi, vol. 1, pg. 199

Chapter Fourteen

Our Responsibilities

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ
الصَّادِقِينَ

O you who believe! Fear Allah and be among the truthful ones.¹

Human beings in general and today's Muslims in particular, have various responsibilities towards Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.). The emotion of gratitude is natural. It demands that we try our utmost to fulfil these responsibilities. These duties and responsibilities are so significant that some scholars have devoted various chapters of their books on the subject. Some have gone to the extent of mentioning eighty duties and obligations in the period of occultation.² We shall discuss a few of these responsibilities in this chapter.

Love

In the discussion of Imamah, we have already mentioned that the Holy Quran has ordered the love of the Holy Prophet's (s.a.w.a.)

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Ahle Bait (a.s.).¹ This love has been made obligatory on every Muslim. Today, nobody is a closer relative of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) than Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.). He is the most proximate relation, his most direct descendant and successor. Therefore, it is obligatory upon every Muslim to love him. To possess the love of the Ahle Bait (a.s.) in our hearts is the most valuable gift of Allah.²

But this love and affection can be increased through constant contact and incessant reference. So, if we refer to the books concerning Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.), read the miracles and extraordinary feats performed by him and see how he has helped his Shias and solved their difficulties in different situations, then definitely our love for him will increase.

Supplication (*Dua*)

Whoever possesses the love of Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) in his heart, will definitely miss his presence in occultation and pray for his early reappearance. Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) has himself in one *tauqee*,³ ordered us to pray excessively for him.

وَ أَكْثِرُوا الدُّعَاءَ بِتَعْجِيلِ الْفَرَجِ فَإِنَّ ذَلِكَ
فَرَجُكُمْ

And pray more for the reappearance, then in it is your salvation.³

¹ Surah Shura (42): verse 23

² Tohoful Oqool by Ibne Shoab Harraani (r.a.) Trad. no. 313 from Imam Sadeq (a.s.)

³ Kamaaluddin vol. 2, pg. 484, Trad. 4

¹ Surah Taubah (9): verse 119

² Mikyaalul Makaarim by Muhammad Taqi Musavi Isfahaani

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Awaiting (انتظار)

The best deed today that we can perform is to await Imam's (a.t.f.s.) reappearance. For, numerous traditions have deemed it to be the best worship and the best action. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) declares,

أَفْضَلُ أَعْمَالِ أُمَّتِي إِنْتِظَارُ الْفَرَجِ

The best action of my nation is awaiting the reappearance¹.

Some traditions liken those who await the reappearance to the warriors and participants of the Battle of Badr.²

Rather, they have been declared similar to the one who has fought with the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) against his enemies and was with him (s.a.w.a.) in his tent.³

Why has so much importance been lent to the concept of waiting for Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.)? What does it mean? *Intezaar* means to wait restlessly for the establishment of truth, the desire to see the government of Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) and to feel the pain of being deprived of his presence. Has it not occurred to you that when you wait anxiously for a dear one or a close friend, you look around everywhere in desperation, look at your watch frequently, vow to recite *salwaat* or *laanat*, etc. In other words, you are very restless and uneasy. This is the concept of waiting. We have to be

¹ Behaarul Anwaar, vol.52, chapter 22, Trad. 2, 7, 11, 21, 33 and 56

² Behaarul Anwaar, vol. 52, chapter 22, Trad. 18, 24

³ Behaarul Anwaar, vol. 52, chapter 22, Trad. 14, 15, 16, 30, 50, 53, 55, 56, 57, 69

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restless and restive in this very manner due to our separation from our beloved Imam (a.s.). Obviously, this condition of *intezaar* can be achieved only when we know and recognise our Imam (a.s.), are aware of his status and position and find his love in our hearts. When all these are available, then the obvious consequence will be praying and invoking for his reappearance, keeping away from sins and always being prepared for his advent.

Attachment (رابطه)

It is the duty of every Shia to possess the recognition of his Imam (a.s.). He should always remember him, have a burning desire to meet him, crave to draw benefit from him and to maintain a non-severing attachment with him. The Holy Quran has talked about this duty thus:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اصْبِرُوا وَصَابِرُوا
وَرَابِطُوا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

O you who believe! Be patient and excel in patience and remain steadfast, and be careful of (your duty to) Allah that you may be successful.¹

Imam Muhammad Baqer (a.s.) has interpreted this verse in the following manner,

Be patient on the performance of the obligatory acts, advise each other to be patient in facing the enemy and maintain relations and attachment with the awaited

¹ Surah Ale Imran (3): Verse 200

Imam (a.s.).¹

Occultation is never an obstacle in maintaining relations and being attached with Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.). One cannot maintain direct relations with him during this period but the doors of spiritual contact are always wide open. The practical way to this attachment is that man should pray to him for all his problems and difficulties i.e. matters related to faith, ethics, material, spiritual, individual, social, scientific, familial, etc. We should not confine our reference to only worldly matters. Rather, we present all our difficulties to him and seek their solution from him. In this regard, we have been ordered to recite various supplications and invocations like *Allahumma Kun Le Waliyyek* (which should be recited in the qunoot of every namaz), *Dua-e-Ahd* every morning, *Ziyarat Ale-Yasin*, etc.

Thus, we can maintain relations and attachment with our Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.).

May Allah the Almighty grant all of us the *taufeeq* to discharge our duties towards Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) and let his prayers be our protector in every journey and on every path!

¹ Tafseer-e-Burhaan by Sayed Haashim Bahraani (r.a.), vol.1, pg. 334, Trad.2, 3, 12

Chapter Fifteen

The Sayings of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.)

مَا آتَاكُمْ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ
فَانْتَهُوا

**Whatever the Prophet gives you, take it and
whatever he prohibits, refrain from it.¹**

Numerous traditions have been narrated by our twelfth Imam, Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) for our guidance. Most of these traditions are his ripostes to queries posed by the people through his special deputies.

These priceless and invaluable sayings are recorded in various books like Kamaaluddin of Shaykh Saduq (a.r.) and Al-Ehtejaaj of Shaykh Tabrisi (a.r.). Terminologically, these replies are called as 'Tauqee' (توقيع).

Apart from these *tauqeeaat*, there are other quotes from Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.), which are his direct responses to questions from the people. These meetings have occurred during the minor occultation in his childhood and in the major occultation as well.²

¹ Surah Hashr (59): Verse 7

² The tauqeeaat, sayings, quotes and invocations from Imam Mahdi (a.s.) have been registered in many books of which, 'Kalemaatul Imam al-Mahdi' by Sayed Hasan Shirazi (r.a.) is the most popular. This book has

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The sayings of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) are a precious treasure of Shiite gnosis and knowledge. These comprise of various topics like the exegesis of Quran, Imamate, the position of the Ahle Bait (a.s.), rejection of false beliefs, refutation of impersonators of Mahdaviyyat and their claims, elucidation of discussions on Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) like occultation and reappearance, supplications, divine remembrances, problems related to ethics and jurisprudence, etc.¹

In the previous lessons,² we have narrated a few sayings from Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.). To gain more insight from his enlightening statements, let us take a glance at some more quotes.

(1) Creation of the universe is not in vain:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى لَمْ يَخْلُقِ الْخَلْقَ عَبَثًا وَلَا أَهْمَلَهُمْ
سُدَى.

Allah the Almighty has not created the creation in vain nor has He left them to wander.³

(2) Presence of a divine proof in every era is obligatory:

إِنَّ الْأَرْضَ لَا تَخْلُو مِنْ حُجَّةٍ إِلَّا ظَاهِرًا

been printed along with footnotes and its Persian translation is in two volumes.

¹ Numerous supplications and invocations like Dua-e-Iftetaah, Ziyarat-e-Aale Yaseen, supplication during occultation, etc. are mentioned in these signed letters (توقيعات).

² Refer to chapters 7, 9, 10 & 14

³ Behaarul Anwaar, vol. 53, pg. 194, Trad. 21 in reply to the queries posed by Ahmad b. Ishaq Qummi (r.a.)

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وَأَمَّا مَعْمُورًا

Surely the earth will never be devoid of a divine proof, whether is apparent or he is hidden.¹

(3) Rejection of false claimants:

إِنَّ الْحَقَّ مَعَنَا وَفِينَا لَا يَقُولُ ذَلِكَ سِوَانَا إِلَّا
كَذَّابٌ مُفْتَرٌ.

Certainly the truth is with us and in us. Anybody who makes this claim other than us is a liar, a deceiver.²

(4) Benefits of an occult Imam:

وَأَمَّا وَجْهَ الْإِنْتِفَاعِ بِي فِي غَيْبَتِي فَكَالِإِنْتِفَاعِ
بِالشَّمْسِ إِذَا غَيْبَتْهَا عَنِ الْأَبْصَارِ السَّحَابُ.

And as for the aspect of my benefit in my occultation, then it is like the advantage drawn from a sun when the clouds hide it from the eyes.³

(5) His Introduction:

أَنَا خَاتَمُ الْأَوْصِيَاءِ بِي يَدْفَعُ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ
الْبَلَاءَ عَنِ أَهْلِ وَشِيعَتِي.

I am the seal of the successors. Through me, Allah,

¹ Kamaaluddin, vol. 2, pg. 511, Trad. 42 addressing the first and the second special deputies in refutation of his uncle Jafar

² Ibid

³ Kamaaluddin, vol. 2, pg. 485, Trad. 2 in reply to Ishaq b. Yaqoob (r.a.)

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Mighty and Glorified Be He, will dispel the calamities from my family and my followers.¹

(6) Acquire religion only from the Ahle Bait (a.s.):

طَلَبُ الْمَعَارِفِ مِنْ غَيْرِ طَرِيقِنَا أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ
مُسَاوِقٌ لِإِنكَارِنَا.

Seeking knowledge from any other way than the way of the Ahle Bait (a.s.) is tantamount to our rejection.²

(7) Endeavour leads to guidance:

إِنْ اسْتَرْشَدْتَ أُرْشِدْتَ وَإِنْ طَلَبْتَ وَجَدْتَ.

If you seek guidance, you will find it and if you seek knowledge, you will get it.”³

(8) Why we cannot meet him?

فَمَا يَحْبِسُنَا عَنْهُمْ إِلَّا مَا يَتَّصِلُ بِنَا مِمَّا
نُكْرَهُهُ.

Nothing has kept us away from our Shias but those actions (that they have performed) which we dislike.⁴

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(9) Responsibilities of Shias during Occultation:

فَلْيَعْمَلْ كُلُّ امْرِئٍ مِنْكُمْ مَا يَقْرُبُ بِهِ مِنْ
مَحَبَّتِنَا وَلْيَتَجَنَّبْ مَا يُذْنِبُهُ مِنْ كَرَاهِيَّتِنَا
وَسَخَطِنَا.

Then each one of you should act in a way that will take you closer to our love and refrain from all those acts that will lead to our detest and wrath.¹

(10) Importance of Namaaz:

فَمَا أَرْغَمَ أَنْفَ الشَّيْطَانِ أَفْضَلَ مِنَ الصَّلَاةِ.

Nothing rubs the nose of the devil in dust more than namaaz.²

(11) Significance of Sajda-e-Shukr:

سَجْدَةُ الشُّكْرِ مِنَ الزُّمِّ السُّنَنِ وَأَوْجِبَهَا.

Sajda-e-Shukr (which is performed after Namaaz) is the most necessary and obligatory sunnah.³

¹ Kamaaluddin, vol. 2, pg. 441, Trad. 12 while addressing Abu Nasr Turaif
² Deen-o-Fitrat by Ali Reza Modarres Gharavi, Preface of vol. 1, when Ayatullah Mirza Mahdi Isfahani (a.r.) got the honour of meeting Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.)
³ Kamaaluddin, vol. 2, pg. 509, Trad. 38 in his response to that person who was searching for Imam (a.s.)
⁴ Behaarul Anwaar, vol. 53, pg. 177, Trad. 8. The second *tauqee* of Shaykh

Mufeed (a.r.) circa 412 A.H.
¹ Behaarul Anwaar, vol. 53, pg. 176, Trad. 7. The first *tauqee* of Shaykh Mufeed (a.r.) circa 410 A.H.
² Kamaaluddin, vol. 2, pg. 520, Trad. 49, in reply to Muhammad b. Jafar Asadi
³ Behaarul Anwaar, vol. 53, pg. 161, Trad. 3 in reply to Muhammad b. Abdullah Himyari circa 307 A.H.

(12) Protection of Imam-e-Zamana's (a.t.f.s.) wealth:

مَنْ أَكَلَ مِنْ أَمْوَالِنَا شَيْئًا فَإِنَّمَا يَأْكُلُ فِي بَطْنِهِ
نَارًا وَ سَيَصَلِّي سَعِيرًا.

*One who eats a thing (or anything) from our wealth,
then he has only taken fire in his belly and shall be
thrown in hell.¹*

¹ Kamaaluddin, vol.2, pg. 520, Trad. 49 in reply to Muhammad b. Jafar Asadi