



AL MUNTAZAR
A C A D E M Y



Illuminating Rays from The Hidden Sun

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَصَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ يَا وَلِيَّ الْعَصْرِ (عج)
أَذْرَكُنَا

Illuminating Rays

from

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Allah and His Prophet (s.a.w.a) have called Ahle Bait (a.s.) as “Minaret of Guidance” and “Ark of Salvation”. Loving them is loving Allah and His Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and bearing enmity with them is bearing enmity with Allah and His Prophet (s.a.w.a.). Following and obeying them is salvation and opposing and disobeying them is straying and destruction. Good behaviour towards them is source of great rewards. Troubling and oppressing them is cause of great punishment and chastisement. They have been appointed as leaders and Imams of the nation. The nation has been ordered to follow them. The books of their opponents are full of their virtues. When Ibne Shahr Aashoob was writing his book “Al Manaaqib”, his library had thousand books with the name “Al Manaaqib”.

Even with all these virtues and characteristics, when the mention of the Ahle Bait (a.s.) is mentioned, objections and questions surface, especially from some scholars. It is truly said, *“A spot in one's eye isn't visible, but a speck on another's eye can be seen.”*

The matter of Ahle Bait (a.s.) is somewhat like this, there isn't even a speck here, yet efforts are made to find one. Among the matters, a critical issue is the occultation of Imam Wali Asr (a.t.f.s.). This issue is presented in various ways and perspectives, as if such an incident, from the time of Hazrat Adam (a.s.) till now, has never occurred. This is the first, unique, and solitary incident in the history of mankind.

We take the pleasure of presenting various aspects of the occultation of Hazrat Wali Asr (a.t.f.s.). through the mediation of Ahle Bait (a.s.) beseeching Allah for the Taufeeqaat.

This booklet is an excerpt and summary of the article, “Bain Al-Sehate wa al Takhsees fi Zaman al Ghaibate Quraato fi Adwaar al Imam Mahdi (a.s.)” from the publication “Al-Maw'ood”, issue 14, published by “Markaz al Deraasaat al Takhseeya fil Imam al Mahdi (a.s.)”, Najaf, Iraq.

People consider the occultation of Hazrat Wali Asr (a.t.f.s.) as weakness of our religion. As per them, a leader and an Imam should be someone who:

- Is present in front of them all the time.
- Is accessible to them, visible, and can be physically approached.
- Can directly teach them.
- Can be consulted for daily issues and seek guidance from him.

But if an Imam and leader, who remain unseen and there no means of meeting him... then what's the benefit of such an Imam's existence? We will analyse in the following pages.

(1) Faith in the infallibility of the Infallible

(a) There is wisdom in every action of Allah, the Almighty

The demand for believing in Allah, the Almighty is that a believer should have complete certainty that there is no action of Allah devoid of wisdom. There should be no doubt in the heart regarding the actions of Allah, even though we might not be aware of the wisdom and benefit behind that action.

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) mentions in a tradition:

“If people worship the One God without partners, establish prayers, pay zakat, perform the pilgrimage to the House of

Allah, observe fasting in the blessed month of Ramazan, and then speak against the outcome of something decreed by Allah and His Messenger that 'Wish Allah had done contrary to it' Or they deny it in their hearts, they would be considered as polytheist (Mushrik). After this, Imam (a.s.) recited the noble verse:

فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ حَتَّىٰ يُحَكِّمُوكَ فِي مَا شَجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُوا فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ حَرَجًا مِّمَّا قَضَيْتَ وَيُسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا

“But no! by your Lord! they do not believe (in reality) until they make you a judge of that which has become a matter of disagreement among them, and then do not find any straightness in their hearts as to what you have decided and submit with entire submission.”¹

Then Imam (a.s.) said: It is obligatory upon you to submit completely.”²

(b) In the field of theology, it has been consistently clarified through evidence that Allah, the Almighty, is Wise and Knowing. Regardless of how ordinary and insignificant any action of His might seem to humans, it is never devoid of wisdom. There has to be wisdom in it. It is not necessary that our limited and incomplete knowledge encompasses His wisdom. Our responsibility is to have faith and certainty in the wisdom of Allah, the Almighty.

Holy Quran has talked about this reality in the following verse:

لَا يُسْأَلُ عَمَّا يَفْعَلُ وَهُمْ يُسْأَلُونَ

“He cannot be questioned concerning what He does and

¹ Surah Nisa (4), verse 65

² Al Mahaasin of Al Barqikhi, vol. 1, pg. 271, chp. 38, h. 365

they shall be questioned.”¹

Janab Jabir Jo'fi inquired from Imam Mohammad Baqir (a.s.): “Why can't we question about the action of Allah?” He (a.s.) replied:

لَا تَنْتَ لَا يَفْعَلُ إِلَّا مَا كَانَ حِكْمُهُ وَ صَوَابًا

“Because whatever He does is nothing except with wisdom and correctness.”

(c) Baqiyatullah Al Aazam Hazrat Wali Asr (a.s.) has not chosen his occultation. It is because of the command of Allah, the Almighty. Abdullah bin Fazl al-Hashimi has narrated a tradition from Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.):

يَا ابْنَ الْفَضْلِ إِنَّ هَذَا الْأَمْرَ أَمْرٌ مِنْ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى وَ سِرٌّ مِنْ سِرِّ اللَّهِ وَ غَيْبٌ مِنْ غَيْبِ اللَّهِ وَ مَتَى عَلِمْنَا أَنَّهُ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ حَكِيمٌ صَدَّقْنَا بِأَنَّ أَفْعَالَهُ كُلَّهَا حِكْمَةٌ وَ إِنَّ كَانَ وَجْهَهَا غَيْرَ مُنْكَشِفٍ

“O Son of Fazl! This matter (occultation) is from the matter of Allah, a secret from the secrets of Allah and an unseen from the unseen of Allah. When we know that He is Wise, we testify that all His actions are with wisdom though its reason are not clear to us.”²

It is clear from the tradition that the occultation of Imam Asr (a.s.) is a secret from the secrets of Allah and an Unseen from His Unseen. If the reason becomes fully clear to us, then why the secret will call as secret?

In another tradition it is mentioned: “Just as the wisdom of the actions

¹ Surah Ambiya (21), verse 23

² Kamaaluddin, vol. 2, pg. 482, chp. 44, h. 11

of Janab Khizr (a.s.) (making hole in the boat, etc.) became known later and was found to be beneficial, similarly, the benefits of occultation of Hazrat Wali Asr (a.s.) will become evident upon his reappearance.”¹ At that time, people will say how beneficial and necessary was the occultation.

All those who have faith in the knowledge of Allah and His Wisdom should be certain about the prolonged occultation of Hazrat Wali Asr (a.s.) and should not fall prey to doubts and suspicions.

(2) Hazrat Wali Asr (a.s.) is Infallible

Along with the belief of Imamatus and Wilayat of Ahle Bait (a.s.), the belief of their infallibility and purity is firmly established. There are verses of the Holy Quran especially the Verse of Purification (Ayat Tatheer) and the reliable traditions of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) on this belief are available. The belief of the infallibility of Ahle Bait (a.s.) is undeniable belief. In view of brevity, we will not cite evidences in this regard. Those seeking evidences may refer to books of theology on this subject.

Infallibility implies that the responsibilities entrusted by Allah to the Infallible Imam are fulfilled without a slightest error in fact it is performed in a manner that could not be better. Hazrat Wali Asr (a.s.) is infallible. The responsibilities entrusted by Allah on him is being carried out by him even during his occultation. There is not a single responsibility that he has not fulfilled in the best possible manner.

Some of the responsibilities of an Infallible Imam (a.s.)

The necessity of Infallible Imams (a.s.) can be explained in some ways:

¹ Kamaaluddin, vol. 2, pg. 482, chp. 44, h. 11

- 1) Imam (a.s.) is the Hujjat (Proof) of Allah. Allah has appointed him as Imam and Proof.
- 2) He is medium of Divine Grace and Guardian of the universe.
- 3) He is a sympathetic father for the nation.
- 4) He is the source and center for people in all religious matters.
 - a) Traditions clarify the interpretations of the Quranic verses.
 - b) He provides answers to doubts and questions against Islam.
 - c) He explains the responsibilities of people about Shariah.
- 5) He is a judge and ruler for solving the disagreements among people.
- 6) He leads the people.

Below, we briefly assess each one of the above responsibilities. Also, need to emphasize that Imam (a.s.)'s occultation is not hindrance in benefiting from him and fulfilling the responsibilities.

(1) Imam Asr (a.s.) is Proof (Hujjat) of Allah

Being the Proof of Allah for Imam Asr (a.s.) is not exclusive to his presence or occultation. The existence of earth and the stars is due to the gravitational force. Though the force is not visible, but the earth's existence relies upon it. Can any sensible person claim that as this force is not visible therefore it has no benefit? Rather, every sensible person will say that the survival of earth is because of the gravitational force. This fact is elucidated in a tradition, *"If there is no Proof of Allah, the earth would be destroyed"*.

Therefore, Hazrat Wali Asr (a.s.) being the Proof of Allah is a reality, irrespective of his presence or occultation. Allah, by appointing a Proof, establishes him as center of the universe's existence. The appointment of the Proof is not linked to seeing or not seeing the Proof by the

people. Therefore, the occultation of Imam Asr (a.s.) is not an obstacle in the way of his being Proof of Allah.

(2) He is medium of Divine Grace and Guardian of the universe

Allah has established this universe based on the system of cause and effect. Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) says:

أَبَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَجْرِيَ الْأَشْيَاءُ إِلَّا بِأَسْبَابٍ فَجَعَلَ لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ سَبَبًا

"Nothing occurs except through causes, so He appointed a cause for everything."¹

Allah has appointed the Imam of the time as the Proof and cause of peace and security of the earth.

Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) has stated in a long tradition:

"We are the Imam of the Muslims. Divine proof upon the universe, leaders of the believers, leaders of shining foreheads. Guardian of the believers."

وَنَحْنُ أَمَانٌ لِأَهْلِ الْأَرْضِ كَمَا أَنَّ النُّجُومَ أَمَانٌ لِأَهْلِ السَّمَاءِ
وَنَحْنُ الَّذِينَ بِنَا يُمْسِكُ اللَّهُ السَّمَاءَ أَنْ تَقَعَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا
بِإِذْنِهِ وَبِنَا يُمْسِكُ الْأَرْضَ أَنْ تَمِيدَ بِأَهْلِهَا

ثُمَّ قَالَ وَلَمْ تَخُلْ الْأَرْضُ مِنْذُ خَلَقَ اللَّهُ آدَمَ مِنْ حُجَّةٍ لِلَّهِ فِيهَا
ظَاهِرٌ مَشْهُورٌ أَوْ غَائِبٌ مَسْتُورٌ وَلَا تَخْلُو إِلَى أَنْ تَقُومَ
السَّاعَةُ مِنْ حُجَّةٍ لِلَّهِ فِيهَا وَلَوْ لَا ذَلِكَ لَمْ يُعْبَدِ اللَّهُ

"We are security for the people of the earth just as stars are a security for the people of the sky. It is by us that Allah keeps the sky from falling onto the earth without His permission, and He keeps the earth from shaking its

¹ Al Kaafi, vol 1, pg. 183

*inhabitants off. Since the creation of Adam by the Lord of the worlds, the earth has never been without a Proof of God, and it will never remain empty until the Day of Judgment, whether the Proof of Allah is apparent and well-known or hidden and concealed. Otherwise, Allah would not be worshiped."*¹

There are several similar narrations emphasizing that everything obtained from the universe is through the Proof of Allah, Imam of the time. Therefore, Imam Wali Asr (a.s.)'s role as a mediator of divine grace isn't contingent upon his apparent presence. Consequently, his occultation doesn't hinder his role as a mediator, whether he is visible or hidden during this time.

(3) A Compassionate Father for the Nation

The Imams (a.s.) are not just the Proof of Allah and the means of His grace, but they are also compassionate fathers for the nation. The reason behind their boundless love is their immense affection for their followers and their Shia. Just as a father loves his children limitlessly, the Imam (a.s.) of their time love their Shia immeasurably. Imam Ali Reza (a.s.) interpreted the Imam as "Compassionate Father". This love and connection have no relation to their rule and authority. A father does not show love to his children only when he has resources and means available; even when he is in straits, he still loves his children and tries to fulfil their needs as much as possible. Since the Imams (a.s.) have boundless love for their Shia, despite being deprived of rulership and Caliphate and having all resources taken away, they continue to solve the problems of their Shia.

Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) in one of the traditions while mentioning about

¹ Kamaaluddin, vol. 1, pg. 207, h. 22

his (s.a.w.a.) and Imam Ali (a.s.) obedience and disobedience, his Imamat and Caliphate, his love and enmity says:

وَهُوَ مَوْلَى مَنْ أَنَا مَوْلَاهُ وَ أَنَا مَوْلَى كُلِّ مُسْلِمٍ وَ مُسْلِمَةٍ وَ
أَنَا وَ إِبَاهُ أَبَوَا هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ

“And He (Ali) is the Master of those of whom I am the Master. I am the Master of Muslim men and women and I and he are the father of this nation.”

In another tradition, Imam Ali (a.s.) narrated from the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.):

سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ص يَقُولُ أَنَا وَ عَلِيٌّ أَبَوَا هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ، وَ
لَحَقْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ أَعْظَمُ مِنْ حَقِّ آبَائِهِمْ وَ لَدَتِهِمْ، فَإِنَّا نُنْقِذُهُمْ- إِنِ
أَطَاعُونَا- مِنَ النَّارِ إِلَى دَارِ الْقَرَارِ، وَ نُلْحِقُهُمْ مِنَ الْعُبُودِيَّةِ
بِخِيَارِ الْأَحْرَارِ

“I heard the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) saying, I and Ali are the fathers of this nation. Our right upon them is greater than the right of their biological parents. If they obey us, we will rescue them from the Fire and take them to the Abode of Permanence. We will remove them from the clutches of slavery and lead them to life of freedom.”¹

Besides these traditions, there are incidents that depict their fatherly love. Nowadays, generally, both the special and the common people are not paying attention to this aspect of Imam Asr (a.s.). Therefore, here are a few incidents to shed light on this aspect:

(1) Abu Saeed Khudri narrated this incident through Rumailah: In the era of Imam Ali (a.s.), I fell severely ill due to intense fever. On the day

¹ Minhaajus Saaleheen (Ayatullah Waheed Khorasani), vol. 1, pg. 285

of Friday, my condition improved. I thought, 'What could be better than having a bath and attending Friday prayers behind Imam (a.s.)?' So, after bathing, I came to the Masjid. When Imam Ali (a.s.) ascended the pulpit, my fever intensified again. After the prayer, I went to the Imam (a.s.)'s house.

Imam (a.s.) asked me, 'What happened to you? Were you feeling uncomfortable?' I replied, 'Yes, Master! I narrated the whole incident to him. Then I added: The desire to pray behind you brought me to the masjid. ' At that moment, Imam (a.s.) said:

"O Rumailah! A believer does not fall sick, but we share his illness. He does not feel sad, but we become sad. He does not supplicate but we say "Ameen" to his prayers. If he remains silent, we supplicate for him."

"I said, 'O Ameerul Momineen (a.s.)! May I be sacrificed for you. Is this concern only for those who are presently with you or is it for all the people of the Earth?'

He (a.s.) replied:

يَا رُمَيْلَةُ لَيْسَ يَغِيبُ عَنَّا مُؤْمِنٌ فِي شَرْقِ الْأَرْضِ وَ لَا فِي غَرْبِهَا

*"O Rumailah! No believer is hidden from us, whether they are in the East or the West."*¹

(2) Abu Hashim Jafari was once imprisoned by Bani Abbas for quite some time. He complained about his imprisonment and hardships in the service of Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.).

Imam (a.s.) replied in writing to him, 'Today, you will offer the noon

¹ Basaaerud Darajaat, chp. 16, h. 1

prayer at your home.'

At noon, I was free and prayed the noon prayer at home. At that time, I was in dire need and wanted to request for some Dinars. I felt ashamed and returned home. When I reached home, Imam (a.s.) sent me 100 Dinars and wrote:

إِذَا كَانَتْ لَكَ حَاجَةٌ فَلَا تَسْتَحْيِ وَلَا تَحْتَشِمِ وَاطْلُبْهَا فَإِنَّكَ
تَرَى مَا تُحِبُّ إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ

*"If you have a need, do not feel shy or hesitant. Seek it, and you will get what you desire, God willing."*¹

Our current distress, worries, and poverty are due to our running around every door, stretching our hands before every other person. But we do not ask for our needs from the Imam of the time, Imam Hujjat Ibne Hasan Askari (a.s.), who is more compassionate toward us than our parents and the possessor of boundless authority. We do not present ourselves sincerely in his court.

The saying of Imam Ali (a.s.): 'In the East or West, no one is hidden from our sight.' It is evident that Imam (a.s.) not only resolves issues of those who are before him but also resolves problems of those who are apparently not present before him. Therefore, to resolve problems and issues, it is not necessary for Imam (a.s.) to be present in their sight. Even while being distant from people's sight, he can still resolve issues and problems. In the same way, the occultation of Imam Asr (a.t.f.s.) is not hinderance for resolving the issues and problems of the people as witnessed by the events during his occultation. We will narrate few incidents:

¹ Al-Kafi, vol. 1, pg. 508, h. 10

Directly solving issues

During this time of occultation, it's impossible to count how much help Imam Wali Asr (a.s.) has extended to people, resolved their issues and problems. There are countless incidents where Imam Asr (a.s.) has solved the problems and issues of people, but people are not aware of this. Who resolved these issues and problems and how they were resolved—these are things that people are not attentive to. Imam (a.s.) belongs to the family of Ahle Bait (a.s.) whose motto is:

إِنَّمَا نَطْعِمُكُمْ لَوَجْهِ اللَّهِ لَا نُرِيدُ مِنْكُمْ جَزَاءً وَلَا شُكْرًا

“We feed you for the sake of Allah alone. We do not seek any reward or thanks from you.”

Imam Asr (a.s.) is not like the people of today, who provide to one person but inform thousands. A poor reaches home with the provision later but the news reaches across the globe first. Nonetheless, pay attention to these incidents to understand the fatherly affection of Imam Asr (a.s.)

(1) Imam Wali Asr (a.s.) wrote a letter (Tauqee) to the esteemed scholar and reliable jurist Janab Sheikh Mufeed (a.r.). He writes in it:

“Although currently we live far away from the places of oppressors, as long as the world is under the rule of sinners, living in this manner is better for us and for our Shias. Our knowledge encompasses everything about you and nothing about you is hidden from us. We are aware of the disgrace and humiliation you are facing, and the reason for it is that many of you are heading towards what your predecessors used to avoid. You have disregarded the covenant and pact made with us as if you have no knowledge of it.”

(This is our condition, these are our actions, despite all these

wrongdoings, let us prostrate in gratitude for the leadership of the compassionate and merciful Imam.)

After this, Imam Asr (a.s.) states:

أَنَا غَيْرُ مُهْمَلِينَ لِمُرَاعَاتِكُمْ وَ لَا نَاسِينَ لِذِكْرِكُمْ وَ لَوْ لَا ذَلِكَ
لَنَزَلَ بِكُمْ اللَّأْوَاءُ وَ اصْطَلَمَكُمُ الْأَعْدَاءُ...

"Indeed, we do not neglect your affairs, nor do we forget your remembrance. If it were not for this, calamities would descend upon you and enemies would have crushed you..."¹

In this letter, observe the kindness and generosity of Imam Wali Asr (a.s.), how much he desires and cares for his followers, keeping their well-being in mind every step of the way. Despite knowing everything, the cause of all our disgrace and humiliation is our own actions and conduct, which are entirely different from the ways of our ancestors who used to avoid certain things. We are entangled in those actions. Despite all these carelessness, it's due to his grace and kindness that we are safe from major calamities and protected from the assaults of enemies.

(2) Mohammad bin Yusuf al-Shaafi states:

"I had a fistula and I consulted doctors. I spent a considerable amount of money but to no avail. I wrote a Areeza (request) in the service of Imam Wali Asr (a.s.) seeking his prayers. In response, Imam Wali Asr (a.s.) wrote:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اَلْبَسْكَ اللهُ الْعَافِيَةَ وَ جَعَلْكَ مَعَنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَ الْآخِرَةِ

"May Allah give you well-being and make you among us in

¹ Al Ehtejaaj, vol. 2, pg. 322-323

this world and the hereafter."

Before the arrival of Friday, I had completely recovered. Where there used to be a fistula, it was as clean and clear as a palm. There was no trace of the wound.

I showed it to my doctors, and they all said, 'We have no knowledge of such a treatment; this health has been bestowed upon you limitlessly by the grace of the Almighty.'¹

(3) During the period of occultation, Imam Asr (a.s.) resolves people's issues through his representatives. During this time of occultation, the information reached Ubaidullah bin Sulaiman al-Wazeer that some representatives of Imam Asr (a.s.) are collecting funds from the people.

Ubaidullah bin Sulaiman intended to arrest these people. The King said, "This matter is very important; make sure to find this person." The Minister replied, "We will arrest all these people." The King said, "Don't do that. Instead, give some money to an unknown person and tell him to deliver it to a representative. Once the representative receives money from that person, just arrest him."

(When the government started plotting in this way and intended to arrest interrogate the representatives of the Imam) at that time, a message came from Imam Wali Asr (a.s.) to all the representatives:

"Do not accept any amount from anyone. Rather, refuse it, and make it clear that we have no knowledge in this matter."

At that time, a stranger came to Mohammad bin Ahmad whom he didn't recognize. He said, "I have some money and I want to deliver it." Mohammad replied, "You are mistaken; I have no knowledge in this

¹ Al Kafi, vol. 1, pg. 519, Chapter on Imam Zamana (a.s.), h. 11

matter."

The person kept insisting, and Mohammad kept declaring his lack of knowledge. At that moment, spies were deployed everywhere, but no representative accepted any amount from anyone.¹

This incident perfectly indicates how much Imam Wali Asr (a.s.) values the honour, dignity, life, and wealth of his representatives. Even in occultation, he (a.s.) is aware of every matter and is protecting.

People consider Imam Wali Asr (a.s.) as an imam of a mosque who has limited capabilities, but in reality, he is the Imam of the entire universe. The entire universe is within his control. The universe is obedient not to his commands but his indications and intentions. Occultation poses no hindrance to his intentions. Such incidents are clear evidence of this fact.

(4) Source and center of all religious matters for the people

This is the rule of the world and the principle of governance and kingdom. Kings and rulers do not carry out all tasks themselves; rather, they delegate many matters to their trusted individuals. Similarly, under the supervision of the king and ruler, all matters of the kingdom are accomplished.

The sacred religion of Islam is the most advanced system among all advanced systems in the world. Islam spoke of this system when the world was not inclined towards any system. In his final advice, Hazrat Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) stated:

وَنَظِّمُ أَمْرَكُمْ

"Make your affairs organized."

¹ Al Kafi, vol. 1, pg. 525, Chapter on Imam Zamana (a.s.), h. 30

Ahle Bait (a.s.) are the epitome of the sacred religion of Islam. Imam Wali Asr (a.s.) is the most comprehensive image of the Imamatus. This is the comprehensive image in which all the characteristics and attributes of all the prophets, messengers, and infallible Imams (a.s.) shine forth in their entirety.

There can be several forms of religious matters:

- a) Explanation and clarification of the verses of Holy Quran and elucidation of traditions.
- b) Answers to misconceptions and questions about Islam.
- c) Explanation of religious laws.
- d) Judgment in disputes among people.

These are the responsibilities that the Imams (a.s.) fulfilled during their presence and referred to their trusted disciples from their school.

The real issue is the fulfilment of responsibilities. The objection arises where responsibilities are not fulfilled. If responsibilities have been fully discharged, then the question of who facilitated them is not very logical. The actual issue is quenching thirst, whether the king himself performs this action or delegates it to one of his representatives.

It is true that these responsibilities are the fundamental duties of the Infallible Imams (a.s.). However, executing all these responsibilities by themselves is not right. Till competent individuals were not available, these responsibilities were fulfilled by the Imams (a.s.) themselves. But when trustworthy and qualified disciples were trained, some of the responsibilities were entrusted to them as part of the management system.

This sequence continued from Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) to Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.). Since then, this tradition has persisted with the same dignity and grandeur. Considering brevity, let's present a few instances:

(A) During the time of Holy Prophet Mohammad (s.a.w.a.)

Some people from Medina came to Mecca to perform Hajj. Among them, a few individuals, due to fear of the Meccan disbelievers, met with Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) at a place called 'Uqabah' at night and accepted Islam, pledging allegiance on the blessed hands of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.). As this pledge occurred at the location of 'Uqabah', it's known as the 'Pledge of 'Uqabah.' When these individuals started to return to Medina after taking the pledge, they requested the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) to send someone to teach them the teachings of Islam and guide them.

Although, the Holy Quran states:

يُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ

“Teach them the Book and the Wisdom.”¹

The responsibility of teaching the people is originally of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.). He delegated this responsibility as a system. In situations where it was not feasible for him to go personally, he entrusted this responsibility to trustworthy individuals. Thus, while residing in Mecca, Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) fulfilled the need of the people in Medina through his representative, Mus'ab Ibne Umair, completing this responsibility.

(B) During the time of Hazrat Imam Ali (a.s.)

Hazrat Imam Ali (a.s.), in his apparent caliphate, appointed Qasam ibn Abbas as his representative in Makkah and wrote:

وَ اجْلِسْ لَهُمُ الْعَصْرَيْنِ فَأَقْتِ الْمُسْتَفْتِي وَ عَلِّمِ الْجَاهِلَ وَ
ذَاكِرِ الْعَالِمِ

¹ Surah Baqarah (2), verse 129

"And sit for them in the afternoon, so provide verdict (Fatwa) for those who ask for them, teach the ignorant, and engage in discussions with the learned."¹

Imam Ali (a.s.) used the term " فَأَفْتِ " here, which means to issue a verdict. This implies to give verdict on religious matters to people based on the teachings imparted by Imam (a.s.).

(C) During the time of Imam Mohammad Baqir (a.s.)

Hazrat Imam Mohammad Baqir (a.s.) said to his companion Aban ibn Taghlib:

اجْلِسْ فِي مَسْجِدِ الْمَدِينَةِ وَ أَفْتِ النَّاسَ، فَإِنِّي أُحِبُّ أَنْ يَرَى
فِي شِيعَتِي مِثْلَكَ

"Sit in the mosque of Madinah and issue verdicts to the people, surely I desire to see people like you among my Shias."²

(D) During the time of Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.)

Sulaiman ibn Khalid narrates: I heard Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) saying:

مَا أَجِدُ أَحَدًا أَحْيَا ذِكْرَنَا وَ أَحَادِيثَ أَبِي عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ إِلَّا
زُرَّارَةً وَ أَبُو بَصِيرٍ لَيْثُ الْمُرَادِيِّ، وَ بُرَيْدُ بْنُ مُعَاوِيَةَ
الْعَجَلِيُّ وَ لَوْ لَا هَؤُلَاءِ مَا كَانَ أَحَدٌ يَسْتَنْبِطُ هَذَا. هَؤُلَاءِ حُقَاقُ
الدِّينِ وَ أَمَنَاءُ أَبِي عَلَى حَلَالِ اللَّهِ وَ حَرَامِهِ

"I do not find anyone who revives our remembrance and the traditions of my father (a.s.) except Zurarah, Abu Basir, Lais al-Muradi, and Buraidd ibn Muawiya al-Ajali. If it were

¹ Nahjul Balagha, pg. 457, h. 67

² Rejaal-e-Najjaashi, vol. 10, no. 7

not for them, no one would be deducing this. They are the guardians of the religion and the trustworthy of my father on Allah's lawful and unlawful matters.”¹

These individuals were the ones who conveyed the teachings and traditions of Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) and Imam Mohammad Baqir (a.s.) to the people. The Imams (a.s.) were pleased with their work and took pride in them. They acted as representatives of Imams (a.s.) in disseminating Islamic teachings to the people.

(E) During the time of Imam Ali Reza (a.s.)

Ali ibn Musaib says that I said to Imam Ali Reza (a.s.): "I live far away; I cannot always be present in your service. From whom should I seek religious teachings? From whom should I seek guidance on religious matters?"

Imam (a.s.) said:

مِنْ زَكَرِيَّا بْنِ آدَمَ الْقُمِّيِّ الْمَأْمُونِ عَلَى الدِّينِ وَالْدُنْيَا

“From Zakariya ibn Adam Al-Qummi, he is trustworthy in matters of religion and the world.”

Ali ibn Musaib stated: "When I returned, I went to Zakariya ibn Adam Al-Qummi and sought guidance on all necessary matters from him."²

Imam Ali Reza (a.s.) did not say that when you come to us then only ask. Instead, he said, "Zakariya ibn Adam Al-Qummi is in your area, seek guidance from him," meaning that when access to us is difficult, refer to our trusted and reliable representatives.

¹ Ikhteyaar-e-Maarefatil Rejaal, vol. 1, pg. 248, no. 219

² Ikhteyaar-e-Maarefatil Rejaal, vol. 3, pg. 858, no. 2

(F) During the time of Imam Ali Naqi (a.s.)

It was a period when the government of the Abbasi imposed many restrictions. Reaching the Imam was very difficult and was the cause of other difficulties. Imam Ali Naqi (a.s.) did not say to his followers, 'Now that reaching us is very difficult, solve your problems on your own.' Rather, he sent a message to his followers to refer to our trusted person, Usman ibn Saeed.

Ahmad ibn Ishaq asked Imam Ali Naqi (a.s.), 'Whom should I contact? From whom should I seek guidance? Whose words should I accept?' Imam (a.s.) replied:

الْعَمْرِيُّ ثِقَتِي فَمَا أَدَّى إِلَيْكَ عَنِّي يُؤَدِّي وَ مَا قَالَ لَكَ
عَنِّي فَعَنِّي يَقُولُ فَاسْمَعْ لَهُ وَ أَطِعْ فَإِنَّهُ الثِّقَةُ الْمَأْمُونُ

*"Al-Amri is my trustworthy. So, whatever he conveys to you from me, he conveys it on my behalf. And whatever he says from my side to you, then he says it on my behalf. So, listen to him and obey him, for he is trustworthy one."*¹

This signifies not only financial trust but also trust in all religious matters. Here also, the Imam (a.s.) entrusted responsibilities to trustworthy individuals and instructed people to refer to them.

(G) During the time of Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.)

During the time of Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) there were more restrictions compared to the era of Imam Ali Naqi (a.s.). There were so many spies and strictures that Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) wasn't allowed to be publicly greeted. Anyone who greeted him would face difficulties. Hardships and restrictions do not end people's problems or questions.

¹ Al Kafi, vol. 1, pg. 329-330, h. 1

Therefore, when the era of Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) arrived, Ahmad ibn Ishaq Qummi asked him the same question that he had asked Imam Ali Naqi (a.s.).

The answers indicate how the Imams (a.s.) were paving the way for the era of occultation, informing people that certain responsibilities could also be fulfilled through others. Thus, the condition for their appearance and presence wasn't necessary. They were preparing minds for the idea that during the time of occultation, these responsibilities could still be carried out through intermediaries.

Hence, Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) replied to Ahmad ibn Ishaq saying:

الْعَمْرِيُّ وَ ابْنُهُ ثِقَتَانِ فَمَا أَدَيَا إِلَيْكَ عَنِّي يُؤَدِّيَانِ وَ مَا
قَالَ لَكَ فَعَنِّي يَقُولَانِ فَاسْمَعْ لَهُمَا وَ أَطِعْهُمَا فَإِنَّهُمَا الثِّقَتَانِ
الْمَأْمُونَانِ

“Al-Amri and his son are reliable. Whatever they convey to you from me is as if conveyed by me, and whatever they say to you, they say on my behalf. Then listen to them and obey them, for they are the two trustworthy ones.”¹

(H) During the time of Imam Mahdi (a.s.)

There are two periods during the life of Imam Mahdi (a.s.):

- 1) Ghaibat-e-Sughra (Minor Occultation)
- 2) Ghaibat-e-Kubra (Major Occultation)

Ghaibat-e-Sughra (Minor Occultation)

This form of occultation initially occurred within the nation, although it was mentioned in narrations, it was the first practical experience for

¹ Al Kafi, vol. 1, pg. 329-330, h. 1

common people. Therefore, it was a highly sensitive period.

Due to this, Imam Wali Asr (a.s.) had made special arrangements because during this period, general meetings with Imam (a.s.) was not possible. Therefore, if Imam Wali Asr (a.s.) had only mentioned attributes and qualities, many false claimants would have emerged, making it difficult for ordinary people to distinguish between truth and falsehood.

Hence, Imam Wali Asr (a.s.) appointed four special deputies, the first two being Usman bin Saeed and his son Mohammad bin Usman, who were the reliable representatives of Imam Ali Naqi (a.s.) and Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.). People recognized and trusted them. The remaining two, viz. Husain ibn Ruh and Ali ibn Mohammad Samari, were renowned personalities of their time known for their knowledge, piety, confidentiality, and trustworthiness. Due to the prolonged duration of the occultation, people became accustomed to referring to these personalities for their issues and questions. Imam Wali Asr (a.s.) declared the end of the Minor Occultation and made it clear to everyone that anyone claiming such special representation now is false. This declaration closed all avenues of exploiting the representation of the Imam until his reappearance. During the Minor Occultation, Imam Wali Asr (a.s.) made the people accustomed to refer to his representatives and seek solutions to their problems.

Ghaibat-e-Kubra (Major Occultation)

During the Major Occultation, Imam Wali Asr (a.s.) ordered the people to refer to those jurists (Fuqaha) whose attributes and qualities were described by his ancestors and his father.

(1) Hazrat Imam Ali Naqi (a.s.) said:

لَوْ لَا مَنْ يَبْقَى بَعْدَ غَيْبَةِ قَائِمِكُمْ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ مِنَ الْعُلَمَاءِ
الدَّاعِينَ إِلَيْهِ وَ الدَّالِّينَ عَلَيْهِ وَ الدَّائِبِينَ عَنْ دِينِهِ بِحُجَجِ اللَّهِ وَ

الْمُنْفِذِينَ لِضُعَفَاءِ عِبَادِ اللَّهِ مِنْ شِبَاكِ إِبْلِيسَ وَ مَرَدَّتِهِ وَ مِنْ
فَخَاخِ النَّوَاصِبِ لِمَا بَقِيَ أَحَدٌ إِلَّا ارْتَدَّ عَنْ دِينِ اللَّهِ وَ لَكِنَّهُمْ
الَّذِينَ يُمَسِكُونَ أَرْمَةَ قُلُوبِ ضُعَفَاءِ الشَّيْعَةِ كَمَا يُمَسِكُ
صَاحِبُ السَّفِينَةِ سُكَّانَهَا أَوْلَئِكَ هُمُ الْأَفْضَلُونَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَ
جَلَّ

*"If it were not for those who remain after the occultation of
your Qaem among the scholars*

inviting towards him,

guiding to him,

defending his religion with the arguments of Allah, and

*rescuing the weak servants of Allah from the traps of Iblees
and his cronies and*

the snares of the enemies,

*no one would have remained except deserted the path of
Allah. But those who hold the reins of the hearts of the
weak Shia just as the owner of the ark holds its inhabitants,
they are the best in the eyes of Allah, the Exalted."*¹

Reflect upon each word of this tradition. Imam Ali Naqi (a.s.) highlighted the extent of reliance on the scholars during the Occultation and explained their responsible role during this period.

At present, those remaining followers to the Shia faith are because of the scholars, who occupy an elevated status near Allah. Also, common people criticise these scholars.

In this tradition, Imam Ali Naqi (a.s.) has explained five qualities of

¹ Al Ehtejaaj, vol. 1, pg. 18

scholars during the Major Occultation:

- 1) They invite towards the Imam Asr (a.s.) without self-praise.
- 2) They guide towards the Imam Asr (a.s.). They make people refer and pay attention towards Imam (a.s.) in their difficulties without elevating themselves.
- 3) They defend the religion by relying on Allah's and the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.)'s established proofs. They do not utilise their own ideas. They explain the words of Allah and His Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and abstain from giving their ideas.
- 4) They counter the doubts created by Satan and his rebellious groups, strengthening the weak beliefs of the Shias, without creating new suspicions that could divide the community.
- 5) They protect the followers of Ahle Bait (a.s.) from the doubts spread through social channels like WhatsApp, Facebook, and other means. They do not try to compromise their beliefs and necessities of religion in order to seek nearness of others.

Scholars possessing these traits are indeed present today, not allowing weak Shias to deviate from the religion of Ahle Bait (a.s.). These scholars are the honour and dignity of Shiaism.

(2) Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) described the characteristics of the responsible scholars during the period of occultation in the following way:

فَأَمَّا مَنْ كَانَ مِنَ الْفُقَهَاءِ صَائِنًا لِنَفْسِهِ حَافِظًا لِدِينِهِ مُخَالِفًا
عَلَى هَوَاهُ مُطِيعًا لِأَمْرِ مَوْلَاهُ
فَلِلْعَوَامِّ أَنْ يُقْلَدُوهُ...

"As for the one from the jurists (Fuqaha) who safeguard himself, guard his religion, oppose his desires, and is obedient to the command of his master, it is for the

common people to follow him...”¹

Fiqh (Jurisprudence) signifies a deep and investigative understanding of the religion. A jurist who holds an extensive, in-depth knowledge and understanding of the religion of Ahle Bait (a.s.). Imam (a.s.) has explained the traits as follows:

- 1) Safeguards himself from the things not liked by Allah and His Prophet (s.a.w.a.).
- 2) Safeguards his religion and not a self-guardian.
- 3) Opposing the desires of the self, being worshipper of Allah and not worshipper of his self.
- 4) Fully adherent and obedient to the commands of Imam (a.s.).

It is necessary for the common people to do Taqleed (follow) the scholars who possess these qualities, on every step, and act upon their advice.

(3) What directive did Imam Wali Asr (a.s.) give concerning explaining the laws (Ahkaam) in the period of occultation?

In the light of the following saying of Imam Wali Asr (a.s.) and in the light of the above-mentioned two traditions, all objections and issues that are being raised at this time by those with superficial knowledge are being addressed. Since these scholars are having special attention of Imam Asr (a.s.), the efforts of such individuals to keep people away from the scholars are not bearing any fruit.

Imam Wali Asr (a.s.) says:

وَأَمَّا الْحَوَادِثُ الْوَاقِعَةُ فَارْجِعُوا فِيهَا إِلَى رِوَاةٍ حَدَّثَنَا فَإِنَّهُمْ
حُجَّتِي عَلَيْكُمْ وَأَنَا حُجَّةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِمْ

¹ Al Ehtejaaj, vol. 2, pg. 458

*"And for future occurrences, refer to the narrators of our traditions. They are my proof over you, and I am the proof of Allah over them."*¹

Imam Ali Naqi (a.s.) used the term "scholars (Ulama)", Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) used the term "jurists (Fuqaha)", and Imam Wali Asr (a.s.) used the term "narrators of our traditions." The individuals possessing these qualities, as explained by the preceding Imams as scholars and jurists, are being referred to by Imam Asr (a.s.) as "narrators of our traditions."

Imam Wali Asr (a.s.) has declared these individuals as proof, meaning they possess firm evidence that leaves no room for excuses. It is evident that Imam Wali Asr (a.s.) cannot designate individuals as proof who lack comprehensive and complete knowledge of traditions. During the period of occultation, these scholars and jurists who possess these qualities are entrusted with the responsibility of explaining the laws (Ahkam).

Establishment of Schools and Seminaries

Imams (a.s.) have been bestowed with knowledge by the Allah, the Almighty, therefore, they do not require any institution for learning. During the period of occultation, the responsibilities lie with the scholars and jurists, who are not directly educated by Allah. Hence, there's a necessity for such institutions and seminaries that can train these scholars accordingly. This emphasizes the need for the acquisition of knowledge as emphasized by the Imams (a.s.).

Teaching and Learning

Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) is not just the leader of all Prophets and

¹ Kamaaluddin, vol. 2, pg. 484, chp. 45, h. 4

Messengers; rather, his teachings surpass and excel the teachings of all past prophets and messengers. In the era of 'Clear Misguidance,' he initiated his teachings with 'Read,' 'Teach by the Pen,' and 'Teach man what it did not know,' conveying this message to the entire world and specifically to the Muslims.

Islam is a religion of knowledge, education, and the pen. After him, all our Imams (a.s.) emphasized greatly on teaching and learning.

(1) Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

مَنْ سَلَكَ طَرِيقًا يَطْلُبُ فِيهِ عِلْمًا سَلَكَ اللَّهُ بِهِ طَرِيقًا إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ

“Whoever treads on a path to seek knowledge, Allah will take him to the path of Paradise.”¹

(2) Hazrat Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) said:

اُطْلُبُوا الْعِلْمَ وَلَوْ بِخَوْضِ اللَّجَجِ وَ شَقِّ الْمُهْجِ

“Seek knowledge, even if it requires diving into depth of the sea and spill blood.”²

It means knowledge should be acquired even one has to undergo severe difficulties.

(3) Hazrat Imam Ali Reza (a.s.) said:

“May Allah show mercy upon the person who revives our teachings.”

The narrator asked: “How can one revive your teachings?”

He replied: “By learning our knowledge and teaching it to others. When people become familiar with the excellence

¹ Amaali Shaikh Saduq (a.r.), pg. 60

² Behaarul Anwaar, vol. 75, pg. 277

of our words, they will follow us.”¹

(4) Hazrat Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) said:

مَنْ تَعَلَّمَ لِلَّهِ وَ عَمِلَ لِلَّهِ وَ عَلَّمَ لِلَّهِ دُعِيَ فِي مَلَكُوتِ السَّمَوَاتِ
عَظِيمًا

“One who learns for the sake of Allah and acts for the sake of Allah and teaches for the sake of Allah, he is known as ‘Great’ in the kingdom of the skies.”²

Ahle Bait (a.s.) have emphasized on knowledge and teaching and if one wants to collect their narrations then it will translate in to a book. Besides these sayings, throughout every era, our Imams (a.s.), trained prominent students to disseminate the knowledge of Ahle Bait (a.s.) and enlighten people with the teachings of Ahle Bait (a.s.).

From Ameerul Momeneen, Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) to Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.), all the outstanding students were adorned with the knowledge of Ahle Bait (a.s.). Some of these companions have been mentioned in previous pages. Books are filled with their biographies and their academic achievements.

These esteemed personalities, besides excelling in piety and ethics, held prominent positions in the field of knowledge. They nurtured their students. Just like all other works, this work began in a very simple manner and gradually became more organized and systematic to fulfil the needs of each era.

When issues were simpler, the narrators who explained these issues were called "narrators of traditions." And when the issues became complex, and they dived deep into the sea of verses and narrations and

¹ Maani al Akhbaar, chp. 18, h. 1

² Amaali Shaikh Tusi (a.r.), chp. 167, pg. 280

extracted invaluable gems from the ocean of narrations. They sought solution in the sea of verses and traditions for the new issues and satiate the people with the knowledge of Ahle Bait (a.s.). Due to their efforts in researching the solutions they were called "Jurists" (Faqih) and due to their day and night endeavours, they were called as 'Mujtahid'.

Ahle Bait (a.s.) had mentioned about the occultation many centuries before it happened and had also organized the issues that would arise during the occultation many centuries before it took place.

The system of jurisprudence of Ahle Bait (a.s.) is the result of their far-sighted vision. This very system of jurisprudence and Ijtehaad has been maintaining the religion and beliefs of the Shia from the beginning of the occultation until today. The status and position that the Shia hold today are due to this very system of jurisprudence and Ijtehaad.

System of Jurisprudence and Ijtehaad

In every era, and especially nowadays, there are various objections and questions raised regarding the system of jurisprudence and Ijtehaad. All these discussions are happening because this very system has safeguarded Shiaism from disintegration and the assaults of all colonial powers. Some people wish to either abolish or weaken this system so that the entry of colonial and non-colonial powers becomes easier, and the organized framework of Shiism becomes vulnerable. The desire of these people will never be fulfilled because the protection of this system is by an Infallible Imam (a.s.), who is never negligent in protection.

Ijtehaad and Nass

Not knowing the meaning of a word and similarity of words create issues. This is the current state of the term "Ijtehaad." When people hear the term "Ijtehaad," immediately the concept of confrontation

between Ijtehaad and Nass (textual sources) emerges in their minds, and then the objections against the Mujtahids begin.

In the school of Ahle Bait (a.s.), Ijtehaad in no way contradicts the Nass (texts) and established principles. Instead, Ijtehaad is an effort to extract rare pearls from the limitless world of verses and narrations of the Ahle Bait (a.s.) based on the principles by Ahle Bait (a.s.).

Hazrat Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) said:

إِنَّمَا عَلَيْنَا أَنْ نُلقِي إِلَيْكُمْ الْأُصُولَ وَ عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْ تُفَرِّعُوا

*"It is only upon us to present to you the principles, and upon you to derive the details."*¹

Another narration attributed to Hazrat Imam Ali Reza (a.s.) echoes the same sentiment:

عَلَيْنَا الْقَاءُ الْأُصُولَ وَ عَلَيْكُمْ التَّفْرِيعَ

*"It is upon us to present the principles, and it is upon you to derive the details."*²

Thus, Ijtehaad near us is finding solutions to new issues in the light principles and law given by Imams (a.s.). The personal opinion of the Mujtahid holds no significance. In Shia Ijtehaad, anything permitted by Allah, cannot be declared forbidden, and anything declared forbidden by Allah cannot be declared permissible.

Hazrat Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) said:

مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ حَلَالًا وَ لَا حَرَامًا إِلَّا وَ لَهُ حَدٌّ كَحَدِّ الدُّورِ وَ إِنَّ حَلَالَ مُحَمَّدٍ حَلَالٌ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ وَ حَرَامُهُ حَرَامٌ إِلَى يَوْمِ

¹ Al Sarair al-Haavi le Tahreer al-Fataawa (wa al-Mustarefaat); Wasaaelush Shia, vol. 27, pg. 61, h. 33201

² Wasaaelush Shia, vol. 27, pg. 62, h. 33202

“Allah has not created anything lawful or unlawful except that there are boundaries like the boundaries of the house. The things lawful made by Mohammad will remain lawful until the Day of Judgment, and the things unlawful made by him will remain unlawful until the Day of Judgment.”¹

This jurisprudence and Ijtehaad continues to guide the Shia amidst challenges and attacks from all sides and foes, safeguarding their existence, thoughts, beliefs, and morals in the light of the teachings of Ahle Bait (a.s.). If the Imams (a.s.) had not laid the foundation of this field, just like other sects of Islam who have tarnish the image of Islam, Shiaism would also have been a part of that. Today, the elevated status and position of Shiaism worldwide are based on this jurisprudence and Ijtehaad. Imam Ali Naqi (a.s.) has discussed about the scholars in his tradition, as highlighted in the previous pages.

The Need for Expertise?

Presently, discussions of this nature are ongoing religious laws are found in traditions and traditions are available in books. Through these traditions, we can solve our problems ourselves; there is no need for expertise. If we can refer to traditions ourselves, why should we consult a Mujtahid and seek solutions from him?

Answer: In today's market, especially on the internet, all books on medicine and engineering are available. Accessible to everyone, yet in this scenario, anyone studying these books can solve all their problems on their own. What is the need for a specialist doctor or engineer?

So, the answer is that not everyone can make correct use of those

¹ Basaaerud Darajaat, pg. 167, part 3, chp. 13, h. 7

books. Only those who are specialists and experts in the field can make the right use of those books. This is the same situation with traditions; they exist in books, accessible to everyone, but only a specialist and expert in that knowledge field can make the correct use of them. Just as seeking treatment without consulting specialists and experts can lead to disaster, similarly, using traditions without consulting specialists and experts can lead to misguidance. Therefore, in this period of occultation, it is necessary and crucial to turn to Mujtahid to protect the religion and remain steadfast upon it.

Reality

Ijtehaad means to strive a lot to seek the reality. It's about searching for the reality, not inventing it. In Shiaism, it is not the case that if everyone agrees on something, it becomes the reality, or if everyone disagrees, it becomes false. The reality is not related to the consensus of people. The reality is the reality whether people agree or disagree.

Therefore, in Shiaism, for every fatwa of a Mujtahid the presence of a valid religious evidence is necessary. The personal opinion of the Mujtahid holds no significance. Hence, here, in comparison with the text (Nass), the opinion of the Mujtahid holds no truth, while in other sects of Islam, the Mujtahid's opinion holds significance. Sometimes, it is preferred over the Quran and the Traditions. For instance, 'Mutah' is such example.

Therefore, only those individuals have considered as Proof and Trustworthy who present issues in the light of the traditions of the Imams (a.s.), whom Imam Wali Asr (a.t.f.s.) has called as 'Narrators of our traditions.' Imam Ali Naqi (a.s.) has explained them as "Those who defend our religion with the arguments of Allah."

For sake of brevity, we are not presenting the traditions again. However, another reading will be cause of strengthening ourselves.

In summary, the knowledge of the infallible is based on a hundred

percent reality, devoid of any possibility of error or confusion, whereas in the knowledge of the Mujtahid, despite all effort and caution, the possibility of error and confusion exists. Therefore, the knowledge of the Mujtahid can never be equal to the knowledge of the Imam, and a thousand Mujtahids cannot be independent of one Imam. The successes of the Mujtahids are due to the blessings and grace of Imam.

May Allah hasten the reappearance of Imam Wali Asr (a.s.) and through his reappearance, bring justice and equity to this world. Enlighten the world with the teachings of the Ahle Bait (a.s.). May Allah spread the Ghadeeri flag in the nook and corner of the world through him. Take benefit from his teachings. Protect him from all calamities. Safeguard all the scholars and jurists under his shade from the evil of envious people. In this period of occultation, keep us all steadfast on the path of the Ahle Bait (a.s.). Include us all among the sincere servants of Imam Wali Asr (a.s.) Ameen. O Lord of the worlds.

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