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2. Awaiting for the Imam's Victorious Appearance

The second main duty during the period of occultation is known as *intidhar*; which means "waiting (for the appearance of the Imam)". We shall study this matter from two aspects:

- 1. The importance of *intidhar* from *hadith's* point of view.
- 2. The reality of *intidhar*.

The importance of Intidhar

In the *ahadith* of the Imams, *intidhar* (hopefully waiting for the victorious appearance of the Imam) has been mentioned as the second main duty of the Shi'ahs. *Intidhar* in its real sense is such a sacred deed that it has been named as "*ibadat*" in the following *ahadith*:

- 1. "One who waits for the appearance of Imam Mahdi is like a martyr who was braided in own blood in the way of Allah." 1
- 2. "The one who dies among you while he is waiting for the appearance of Imam Mahdi, he is like the one who is in the tent of the Imam Mahdi...nay, rather like the one who has fought with the Imam ... rather, like the one who was martyred while fighting with the Prophet." 2

There are many other *ahadith* which convey the same idea with a little difference in the expression. But what does this "waiting" mean which has been elevated to the degree of an '*ibadat* like *jihad*?

The Reality of Intidhar

Does *intidhar* mean just to wait without doing anything to reform and improve our society? No. The *intidhar* which is elevated to the level of jihad and shahadat, is the *intidhar* which follows love of the

Imam. It is similar to the waiting of a lover for his beloved.

When someone from our family or friends goes to study or work in another country, we long to see him and we "wait" for his return. But this waiting does not mean that we do not have any connection with him during his absence. We try to do everything possible to make his stay in the foreign country happy.

When we know that he is going to come back, we begin to prepare the facilities for him so that he would be happy during his stay at home. The true sense in "waiting for the appearance of the Present Imam" also has a similar meaning. "Waiting for the Imam" does not mean that we should just let the affairs of ourselves, our family, our community and society go on from bad to worst, hoping that the Imam would come and reform all the corruption and disorder.

If our "waiting" is based on true belief in, and knowledge of, the Imam, we will try our best to reform our behaviours, our way of living, our way of thinking, etc, hoping that when the Imam appears, he shall be pleased to see us.

Going back to the example given above, before our family-member or friend returns back from where he is working or studying, we stay in contact with him by the means of correspondence and telephone. In the same way, during the period of the occultation of the Present Imam, there exists a "postal system" between the Shi'ahs and their Imam.

Of course, in this "postal system" only we write the letters; nay, rather our actions and deeds write the letter on our behalf. To understand this more clearly, read the following: According to our *ahadith*, every Thursday night, the scrolls of deeds of all the human beings are presented to the Present Imam. The cause of our Imam's happiness and pride or sorrow and grief (whatever the case may be), are the scrolls of deeds of the Shi'ahs.

When he looks at the scrolls of deeds of the Shi'ahs and finds that most of them are full of wrong and un-Islamic deeds, his sorrow and grief knows no bound.

So, in other words, these scrolls of deeds are our weekly letters which we send to our Imam during the period of the occultation. If we want to keep the Imam happy and proud, we should write good news in our letters to him; and that means we have to be careful in our daily lives and see that whatever we do is not against the laws of the shari'ah.

In conclusion, we can say that the one who is truly waiting for the Imam (*muntadhir*) is one who feels the presence of his Imam all the times, and tries to live in such a way which would make the Imam happy.

At the end of this article, I would like to present the translation of an invocation (*du'a'*) which has reached to us from our Present Imam, Imam Muhammad al–Mahdi (may Allah speed his appearance). By reading this du'a', every member of the Islamic community can understand what the Imam expects from him.

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O Allah!
Bless us with
success in obeying (You);
farness from sins:
sincerity in intention;
cognition of (our) limits;
bless us with guidance and steadifastness; guide our tongues to rightness and wisdom;
fill up our hearts with knowledge and cognition;
purify our bellies from haram and doubtful (foods);
restrain our hands from injustice and theft;
lower our eyes from immorality and breach of faith;
close our ears to nonsense talks and backbitings.
(O Allah!) Bless
our 'ulama' with piety and preaching;
the students with the spirit of hard working and interest;
the audience (of the preacher) with the power to follow;
the sick Muslims with cure and repose:
the dead Muslims with mercy and forgiveness;
the old with prestige and patience;
the young with obedience and repentance;
the women with modesty and chastity;
the rich with humbleness and generosity;
the poor with patience and satisfaction;
the mujahidin with help and victory;
the prisoners with freedom and comfort;
the rulers with justice and compassion;
the citizens with equity and good way of life;
and bless the pilgrims with means of travel and expenses;
and accept their hajj and umrah which You have made obligatory on them;
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O the most Merciful of the mercifuls.3

(accept our prayers) with Your grace and mercy,

Suggested Reading

The following books on the Present Imam (upon whom be peace) are recommended for the general readers:

1. An Inquiry Concerning al-Mahdi

by Sayyid Muhammad Baqir as-Sadr, published by WOFIS,

- P. O. Box 2245, Tehran, Iran.
- 2. The Revolution of Imam Mahdi

By MurtadhaMutaharri,

3. Kitab al-Irshad

(The last chapter of)

by Shaykh al-Mufid,

4. The Occultation of the Twelfth Imam

By Jassim M. Hussain,

The last three books are available from TahrikeTarsile Qur'an,

P. O. Box 1115,

80-08 51st Avenue

Elmhurst, New York 11373, U. S. A.

- 1. Shaykh an-naduq, Kamalu 'd-Din waTamamu 'n-Ni'mah, p. 336.
- 2. 'Allamah Majlisi, Biharu 'l-Anwar, vol. 53, p. 126.
- <u>3.</u> On the authority of Shaykh al-Kaf'ami as mentioned in Mafatihu 'l- Jinan, by Shaykh 'Abbas al-Qummi, (Arabic translation by Muhammad Radha an-Nuri), Beirut, p. 116.

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