

2) Textual Proof

Numerous traditional reports that reach to the level of Tawatur (widely related) are recorded on this subject but here for the sake of brevity we shall only relate a few selected ones from the book, Kafi of Thiqatul Islam Muhammad Kulaini:

In an authentic report from Muawiyah Ibne Ammar it is related that: When His Eminence, Imam Ja'far Sadiq (as) was asked regarding the verse:

وَلِلَّهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا

“And Allah’s are the beautiful names, therefore call on Him thereby.”(Surah Araaf 7: 180)

He said: “By Allah! We are those beautiful names as the Almighty Allah does not accept any deed of the people except through our identification and recognition.”^{[1](#)}

We say: Perhaps the Imams are compared to the ‘beautiful names’ because they are the proof and guidance of the people towards Allah and they are the signs of divine power and might just as the name is a means of identifying the person to whom it belongs; Allah knows best.

In a reliable report from Abdus Salih, His Eminence, Imam Moosa bin Ja'far (as) is reported to have said:

“Verily, the Proof is not established by Allah on His creatures except through an Imam who is recognized.”^{[2](#)}

I say: His Eminence intends to highlight the necessity of establishment of proof by Allah and the recognition of Allah is not possible except through the existence of the Imam (as). Therefore it is incumbent on the people to recognize the Imam and his appointment is necessary for Allah.

In an authentic report is mentioned a sermon of His Eminence, Abu Abdillah Sadiq (as) wherein he is

describing the qualities of the Imams (as). In that sermon it is mentioned:

“Verily, Allah to Whom belong Might and Majesty, has unveiled His religion through the Imams of right guidance of the Ahlul Bayt of our Prophet (s.a.w.s.), and has made clear through them the direction of His path. He has opened through them the innermost part of the springs of His knowledge.

Thus, whoever among the community of Muhammad (s.a.w.s.) has recognized the rights of his Imam which are obligatory has found the taste of sweetness of his faith and has known the superiority of the goodliness of his Islam, since Allah, the Blessed, the Sublime, has set up the Imam as a sign for His creatures and has made him a Proof for those who receive his provisions and those of his time. Allah has crowned him with dignity and has enveloped him with the Light of His Might. He makes a rope to stretch up to heaven, whose provisions are not cut off from him.

Nothing can be obtained from what is with Allah except by means of him, nor does Allah accept the good deeds of His creatures except through their recognition of him. Thus, he knows (with certainty) what reaches him of the ambiguities of darkness, the obscurities of the paths and the complications of the disturbances. Allah, the Blessed, the Sublime, has not ceased to select them for His creatures from the sons of al-Husain (as) after each Imam. He prefers them for this and chooses them, He approves them for His creatures and is well pleased with them.

Whenever one Imam from them passes away, He sets up an Imam after him for His creatures, as an evident sign, a brilliant light, a custodian leader (Imam) and a knowledgeable Proof. They are Imams from Allah, who guide to the truth and by it act with justice³

They are the Proofs of Allah, the callers to Him and His shepherds for His creatures through whose guidance the people practice the religion. Places of habitation are lit up by their light, what they (people) have from old is revived through their blessing (increase, Barakah). Allah has made them life for the created beings, lamps for the darkness, keys for speech and pillars for Islam. Allah's determining for them occurred in this way with certainty.

Thus, the Imam is the one who is selected and approved; the guide, the one entrusted (by Him); the upholder, the one in whom there is hope. Allah has preferred him in this way and has formed him in His sight, in the (world of) scattering when He scattered him, and in the (world of) fashioned things when He fashioned him. He was a Zill before the creation of any living thing, on the right side of His throne, being gifted with wisdom because of the hidden knowledge which was with Him. Allah has selected him (through) His knowledge, and has chosen him for His purity.

The Imam is what remains of Adam, the best of the seed of Nuh, the preferred one from the progeny of Ibrahim, the descendant of Ismail and the elite of the relatives of Muhammad (s.a.w.s.). He does not cease to be watched over in the sight of Allah; He protects him and guards him with His covering, being kept far from the net of Iblees and his hordes; the gathering darkness and the blowings of every evil-doer is repelled from him, and he is free from any physical defect. He is veiled from misfortunes, immune

from slips and well-protected from indecencies, well-known for forbearance and virtue from his youth.

He is qualified by modesty, knowledge and excellence in his last days. The affairs of his father have been passed to him. He remains silent during the life-time of his father, then when the extent of his father's life comes to an end, the decree of Allah concerning him (his father) becomes fulfilled by His Will; the Will of Allah comes to him by His Love, and the extent of his father's life reaches its end, then he passes away, and the command of Allah reaches him after him (his father), and He entrusts His religion to him, and appoints him the proof over His creatures and His custodian over His inhabited lands, and confirms him with His Spirit, and gives him His knowledge, and makes him to know his decisive speech, and commits His secret to him, and appoints him to His great affairs, and makes him to know the excellence of the expression of His knowledge, and establishes him as a sign for His creatures, and appoints him as the Proof over the people of his time, the Light for the people of His religion, and the custodian over His creatures.

Allah approves him as an Imam for them, commits His secrets to him, makes him the safeguard for His knowledge, confines His Wisdom to him, makes him a shepherd of His religion, appoints him to His great affairs, and to light through him the tracks of His way, His ordinances, and His restrictions. When the ignorant are confused and the disputers (in matters of religion) confuse, he sets up in justice the brilliant light and the beneficial healing through the clear truth and a lucid explanation of everything which requires it by the trodden path along which his truthful fathers (as) passed.

There is no-one who ignores the right of this man of knowledge except a wicked person, no-one denies him but the misled and the misleader, and no-one bars from him except the insolent towards Allah, to Whom belong Majesty and Supremacy.”[4](#)

Some commentators have stated that ‘those of his time’: in the sentence:

And has made him a Proof for those who receive his provisions and those of his time.

Denotes the people or the provisions. And perhaps it implies the intellects because the provision of Marefat is that same intellect and these two additions that is the provision and ‘those of his time’ by the use of pronoun of the Almighty Allah by attaching it to Laam in ‘Le Khalqih’ has restricted its connotation. That is the Almighty Allah appointed the Imam as a proof and everything must refer to the Imam in its praise, glorification, worship and humility.

There is another possibility also that ‘those of his time’ implies the ages and physicalities and the word ‘those’ denotes the individualities and spiritualities. As for the possibility that ‘those who receive his provisions’ denotes the people who love him, it is a very remote possibility because it would mean that we have relied on the words preceding that.

I say: The correct thing is that there is no individuality except for the Almighty Allah and the above statement is not a solid proof in its favor, rather it a proof against it which was proved in its place and

there is no need to explain the matter further. And as for that the retroactive be taken as the interpretation and explanation of that which is mentioned before, it is not remote even though there is a rule for it that the retroactive can be taken on some other meaning.

In a traditional report just like authentic, it is related from His Eminence, Imam Muhammad Baqir (as) or Imam Ja'far Sadiq (as) that he said:

“No one can be a believer until he knows Allah, His Messenger (s.a.w.s.) and all the Imams (including the Imam of his time, and refers (everything) to him and submits to him.”

Then he said: “How can someone know the last one when he is ignorant of the first?”⁵

In an authentic tradition it is narrated from Zurarah that he asked His Eminence, Imam Muhammad Baqir (as):

“Let me know whether knowledge about the Imam from among you (Ahlul Bayt) is obligatory on all people.” He said: “Verily, Allah, to Whom belong Might and Majesty, has sent Muhammad (s.a.w.s.) to all mankind as His Messenger, and to all His creatures on His earth as Allah's Proof. So it is obligatory on one who believes in Allah, in Muhammad (s.a.w.s.) the Messenger of Allah, and who follows and affirms him, that he knows the Imam from among us; and how can it be obligatory on one who does not believe in Allah and His Messenger, who has never followed him and affirmed him, and has never known the right of both (i.e., Allah and His Messenger) to know the Imam, while he does not believe in Allah and His Messenger, and know the right of both of them?”⁶

I say: It implies that the obligatoriness of Marefat and recognition of Allah and the Prophet is more important and the obligatoriness of recognizing the Imam is not that it negates the obligatoriness of the Imam for one who does not recognize Allah and the Prophet. In other words, anyone who in the first stage is obliged to recognize Allah and the Prophet in the second stage he has to create recognition and Marefat of the Imam and leader that the Almighty Allah has appointed for him.

In an authentic report from Muhammad bin Muslim it is narrated that he heard His Eminence, Imam Muhammad Baqir (as) saying:

“Everyone who is obedient to Allah, to Whom belong Might and Majesty, by worship in which he exerts effort but who does not have an Imam (appointed) from Allah, his strivings are unacceptable; and he is astray and bewildered. Allah detests his actions. Such a person is like a sheep which has strayed away from its flock and its shepherd, and which runs in this and that direction the whole day. When the night descends on it, it sees some flock of sheep with a shepherd. It goes towards it and is deceived. It passes that night with that flock in their resting- place.

And when the shepherd herds the flock, that sheep refuses to recognize the flock and the shepherd. It runs in bewilderment seeking its shepherd and its flock. Then it sees another flock of sheep with its

shepherd. Again the sheep turns towards it and is deceived by the second flock. The shepherd shouts: “Join your shepherd and your flock. You are lost from, and bewildered over, your shepherd and your flock.” So the sheep runs away in fear, bewilderment and loss, having no shepherd to guide it to a pasture or back to its own place. Being like this, a wolf takes advantage of its being lost, and eats it.

Thus is it, by Allah, O’ Muhammad! He who wakes up in this community without having an Imam (appointed) from Allah, to Whom belong Might and Majesty, who is manifest (Zaahir) and just, wakes up astray and lost.

If such a person dies in this condition, he dies the death of unbelief and hypocrisy. Know, O’ Muhammad! Unjust Imams and their followers have been expelled from the religion of Allah. They are misguided and they misguide.

“So the actions which they perform are as ashes whereon the wind blows strong upon a tempestuous day. They have no power over that they have earned – that is the far error (Ibrahim, 14: 18).”⁷

I say: Note the Imam’s words:

“O’ Muhammad! He who wakes up in this community without having an Imam (appointed) from Allah, to Whom belong Might and Majesty, who is manifest (Zaahir) and just..”

If the text of the tradition is supposed to have the word ‘Taahir’ instead of ‘Zaahir’ it would imply the infallibility of the Imam. That is one who will attach himself to an Imam who is infallible...If it is ‘Zahir’, that is the existence of the Imam is clear for the people from the manifest proofs and clear signs even though the Imam may be hidden from short-sighted eyes.⁸

According to a chain of narrators that is as authentic or from certain aspects is authentic, it is recorded from Imam Muhammad Baqir (as) that he said:

“Verily, he who knows Allah, to Whom belong Might and Majesty, and worships Him is the person who knows Allah and recognizes His Imam from among us, the Ahlul Bayt: and he who does not know Allah, to Whom belong Might and Majesty, and does not recognize the Imam from among us, the Ahlul Bayt, knows and worships other than Allah. By Allah, all such as this is misguidance.”

In an authentic report is stated that Imam Muhammad Baqir (as) said:

“The apex of the thing, the height of it, the key to it, the gate to everything and the good pleasure of ar-Rahman, the Blessed, the Sublime, is obedience to the Imam after knowing him.” Then he said: “Allah, the Blessed, the Sublime, says:

مَنْ يُطِيعِ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللَّهَ ۗ وَمَنْ تَوَلَّىٰ فَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَفِيظًا

Whosoever obeys the Messenger, thereby obeys Allah; and whosoever turns his back – We have not sent thee to be a watcher over them.”(Surah Nisa 4:80)

“And if a person stands for prayer in the nights, fasts during the days, gives away all his property in Sadaqah and goes for the Hajj every year of his life but does not have recognition of the Wali of Allah so that he may follow him and perform all his deeds under his guidance, he is not eligible to receive any rewards from Allah and he is not from the believers.”⁹

Also in an authentic report from Isa bin as-Sirri Abul Yasa it is said that he asked Imam Ja’far Sadiq (as):

“No one can reduce the recognition of the pillars of Islam and if one deranges them his religion will become corrupted and his deeds will not be accepted in the court of Allah. And one who recognizes them and acts according to them, his religion is accepted by Allah and he will not be punished for knowing other matters. They asked: Please enumerate them. The Imam said: The testimony of ‘There is no god except Allah’ and to believe that Muhammad (s.a.w.s.) is the Prophet and Messenger of Allah and to confess that His Eminence has been sent by Allah, and the share of Zakat in wealth and Wilayat that the Almighty Allah has commanded is the Wilayat of Aale Muhammad (as).”

The narrator asked: Is there in Wilayat something less than other that its minimum should be understood? He replied: “Yes,

Allah, the Mighty and the High says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ

“O you who believe! obey Allah and obey the Apostle and those in authority from among you...”(Surah Nisa 4:59)

And the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) said:

“One who dies without recognizing the Imam of his time, dies the death of ignorance.”

“And this Imam was the Prophet and ‘Ali while others said it was Muawiyah; after that it was Hasan and then, Husain while others said, Yazid bin Muawiyah!! No! No! They were not equal. At that moment he fell silent and after that he said: Shall I say more? Hakam Awaar a person present there said: Why not, may I be sacrificed on you? He replied: After that it was ‘Ali bin al-Husain, then Abu Ja’far Muhammad bin ‘Ali (as). And the Shias before the period of the Imamate of His Eminence, Abu Ja’far Baqir (as) were not knowing the rules of their Hajj till His Eminence opened the door of knowledge and explained to

them the rules of Hajj and lawful and unlawful because the people were in need of Ahle Bayt (as) after they had been needful of others and in this way it will pass and the earth shall not be without the Imam and one who dies without recognizing the Imam of his time is like one who dies in the age of ignorance. And it is the most needful matter for you when your soul reaches here – and he pointed to his neck – and the world is cut off from you, he will say: I was in a good condition and I has had a righteous religion.”[10](#)

I say: In narrator’s question (is there in Wilayat something lesser than something?) there are two possibilities:

1 – It is that there is a determined limit for Wilayat and the least of it is not the permissible limit that the questioner may take it as the Imam (as) has replied to him mentioning two matters: First is the Marefat of Imam and second is his obedience and he proved it by quoting the holy verse of obedience and tradition of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) about the Marefat of Imam (as) and this aspect is supported by the authentic tradition mentioned previously.

2 – It is that the aim of explaining was the proof from Qur’an or Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) that proves the obligatoriness of Wilayat of Aale Muhammad (as) so that it be an evidence for the opponents, because when His Eminence said that the Wilayat that the Almighty Allah has commanded is the Wilayat of Aale Muhammad (as) the narrator asked: Is there in it something, that is an evidence that would be reliable for the opponents and which they cannot reject or deny? After that mentioned two proofs, one from the Holy Qur’an and another from the Sunnah which the opponents cannot refute.

Explanation: The point of evidence in the verse and the tradition quoted by the Holy Imam (as) is: One who possesses the least insight if he makes his intellect a judge he will confess that Allah, the Mighty and the High has not ordered His believer servants to follow a person who is a transgressor, a sinner or a tyrant. Rather He has ordered them to follow a person who is pious and infallible. In the same way the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) did not say that one who dies without recognizing a person who committed various sins like Muawiyah and Yazid and others like them, would die the death of ignorance. Rather it is obligatory to refer to one without whom it is not possible to understand the religious laws and that which supports this possibility is the last portion of the tradition that he said:

“And others said it is Yazid bin Muawiyah and Husain bin ‘Ali No! No! They were not equal.”

The authentic report of Muhammad Muslim quoted above (6 tradition) also supports this point.

10 – In an authentic tradition from Harith bin al-Mughaira it is mentioned that he said: I asked His Eminence, Abu Abdillah Sadiq (as):

Did the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) say:

“One who dies without recognizing the Imam of his time dies the death of ignorance?”

He replied: “Yes.”

I asked: “What ignorance is it, absolute ignorance or the ignorance of one who does not recognize his Imam?”

He replied: “Ignorance of disbelief, deviation and hypocrisy”¹¹

I say: A large number of traditions are recorded on this subject.

11 – It is mentioned in Kamaluddin that: The Seventh Imam, Abul Hasan Moosa bin Ja’far Kazim (as) said:

“One who doubts in any of the four things is a believer in all the affairs the Almighty Allah has sent; one of them is the recognition of the Imam in every period of time, with regard to his identity and characteristics.”¹²

12 – In the same way this book also narrates from Imam Ja’far Sadiq (as) from his respected forefathers that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) said:

“Whoever denies the Qa’im from my progeny during his occultation, dies the death of ignorance.”¹³

The same book also contains a tradition related from His Eminence, Imam Ja’far Sadiq (as) who quotes that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) said:

“Whoever denied the Qa’im from my progeny has in fact denied me.”¹⁴

13 – It is mention in Ghaibat Nomani from the author’s chain of narrators that Imam Ja’far Sadiq (as) said:

“One who passes a night without recognizing the Imam of his time, dies the death of ignorance.”¹⁵

Numerous other traditional reports narrated from the Purified Imams (as) have been recorded stressing the above point. However, what recognition and identification actually means? If Allah wills, in the first of the eight chapters it shall be explained that two things are incumbent in recognition; one is knowing the identity of the Imam by his name and genealogy and secondly knowing his characteristics and special qualities that make him superior to other people.

Note

The latter Mujtahids have stated: An authentic report is one whose narrator at every stage is a just Imam. However, the former scholars maintained that an authentic report is one about which one is satisfied that it has come from the Infallible. In this chapter I have taken ‘Sahih’ in the former sense and when I have stated that a particular report is ‘like authentic’ it is on basis of some aspects implied to the second sense.

- [1.](#) Usul al-Kafi; Muhammad bin Yaqaob Kulaini; Vol. 2/249
- [2.](#) Usul al-Kafi; Muhammad bin Yaqaob Kulaini; Vol. 1/143
- [3.](#) Ref al-Araaf, 7: 159, 181
- [4.](#) Usul al-Kafi; Muhammad bin Yaqaob Kulaini; Vol. 1/203
- [5.](#) Usul al-Kafi; Muhammad bin Yaqaob Kulaini; Vol. 1/180
- [6.](#) Usul al-Kafi; Muhammad bin Yaqaob Kulaini; Vol. 1/180
- [7.](#) Usul al-Kafi; Muhammad bin Yaqaob Kulaini; Vol. 1/374
- [8.](#) That which supports this matter is a tradition that Thiqatul Islam Kulaini has mentioned in Kafi (Vol. 2/336, Tr. 3) narrating from Mufaddal bin Umar that he said: I heard from His Eminence, Abu Abdillah Sadiq (as) that he said: Lest you reveal it, by Allah, your Imam will be in occultation for a period of time and you shall be involved in a difficult test. Till different things will be said about him; (he is) dead, killed, gone to which valley?

Indeed the eyes of the believers will weep at that, and they will be tossed by the waves of calamities just as a boat is tossed by stormy waves. Then no one will get deliverance except those from whom the Almighty Allah has taken a covenant, whose faith is strong and whom He supports by revelation from Him. And twelve flags of doubts will be raised which must be rejected, as they won't know where to turn.

The narrator says: So I began to weep as asked: Then what should he do? His Eminence glanced at the Sun that was illuminating the courtyard and said: O Aba Abdillah, do you see this Sun? "Yes," I replied. He said: By Allah, our affair is more illuminated than the Sun. (Writer)

- [9.](#) Usul al-Kafi; Muhammad bin Yaqaob Kulaini; Vol. 1/185
- [10.](#) Usul al-Kafi; Muhammad bin Yaqaob Kulaini; Vol. 2/19
- [11.](#) Usul al-Kafi; Muhammad bin Yaqaob Kulaini; Vol. 2/377
- [12.](#) Kamaluddin; Shaykh Saduq; Vol. 2/413
- [13.](#) Kamaluddin; Shaykh Saduq; Vol. 2/412
- [14.](#) Kamaluddin; Shaykh Saduq; Vol. 2/412
- [15.](#) Al-Ghaibah; Ibne Abi Zainab Nomani; Pg. 62

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