

3. Love

Submission is a condition for love and love is a Pre-requisite for faith (imaan)

One of the signs of submission in a Shia is his love and attachment towards the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.). It is a sign of recognition of the Imams (a.s.), especially in the period of occultation. As far as love is considered, it is sufficient to say that it is the foundation of Islam.

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) asserts,

لكلّ شيء أساس ، وأساس الإسلام حبنا أهل البيت

'Everything has a foundation and the foundation of Islam is the love for us, the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.).'¹

Therefore, traditions have introduced love of the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) as the highest and the most privileged form of worship. Imam Sadiq (a.s.) informs further,

إنّ فوق كلّ عبادة عبادة وحبنا أهل البيت أفضل عبادة

'Love of us Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) is the highest form of worship.'²

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) introduced the names of all the Imams (a.s.) to the Muslims. When he introduced Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) he declared,

من أحب أن يلقي الله وقد كمل إيمانه وحسن إسلامه فليوال الحجة صاحب الزمان المنتظر

'One who wants to meet Allah in such a condition that his faith is perfect and his Islam is in good condition then he should accept Mastership of Imam al-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) the awaited.'

And at the end of the tradition he (s.a.w.s.) stated,

فهؤلاء مصابيح الدجى وأئمة الهدى وأعلام التقى ومن أحبهم وتولاهم كنت ضامناً له على الله الجنة.

They (Imams) are the lamps in darkness and the Imams of guidance and signs of piety. One who loves them and accepts their Mastership, then I assure Paradise for him near Allah.³

Faith begins with Mastership and love of Amirul Mo'mineen (a.s.), and attains perfection with mastership and love for Hazrat Hujjat (a.t.f.s.). Therefore without love for the unseen Imam (a.t.f.s.), faith will never reach perfection.

But love by itself is not something that Allah would simply bestow on all His servants just like that. Rather He grants it only to such servants that He wishes to guide.

Love and affection towards Imam (a.t.f.s.) is one way of reaching this grace, and this one of the most important bestowals from Allah's side.

Imam Baqir (a.s.) reveals to Abu Khalid:

'By Allah, O Abu Khalid! Unless Allah purifies the heart of a servant, he cannot love us nor can he accept our Mastership. And Allah does not purify his heart till he does not submit to us and is not in a state of submission towards us. If he is submissive towards us, Allah will protect him from strict accounting and will keep him in His security from the great fear on the Day of Judgment.'⁴

If the heart is not pure, love and Mastership of the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) cannot find a place in it. And purity of the heart comes only from submission towards the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.). Hence, one who seeks the love of his Imam (a.t.f.s.) will strengthen in himself the feeling of submission. As he scales the peak of submission, the purity of his heart will increase and consequently his attachment and affection towards Imam (a.t.f.s.) will intensify.

The way to perfect the feeling of submission is that man should try in every matter to act as per the wishes of the Imams (a.s.) and should not have an opinion against them. He must always give preference to their wishes over his own and over that of the others. And the wishes of the Imams (a.s.) can be realised in occultation by referring to their traditions. This particular trait can help man in scaling the highest peaks of faith.

A person asked Imam Sadiq (a.s.), 'How often have I heard you remembering Salman al-Farsi (r.a.)!' Imam (a.s.) said,

'Don't say Salman – e – Farsi, rather say Salman al- Muhammadi.'

Imam (a.s.) asked,

'Do you know why I remember him so much?'

The person replied, 'I don't know.' Imam (a.s.) revealed,

'Due to three characteristics – the first one is giving preference to wishes of Ameerul Mo'mineen (a.s.) over his own wishes...'⁵

Thus, Salman al-Muhammadi (r.a.) scaled such a high peak that Imam Sajjad (a.s.) uses the term 'from us Ahlul Bayt'. Salman al-Muhammadi (r.a.) attained this elevated position near the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) with his complete and unconditional submission in front of their wishes and commands. His spirit of submission was so dominant that Ameer ul Mo'mineen (a.s.) did not have to give him instructions. Rather, the moment he knew his Imam's (a.s.) implicit wish, he rushed to implement it and gave it preference over his own wishes.

Indeed this position is higher than the position of obedience concerning Imam's (a.s.) explicit wishes. To obey Imam's wish and implement his commands even before he (a.s.) can convey it verbally is the highest form of submission. So, one of the conditions to attain the position of 'from us Ahle Bait' is submission to the wishes of the Imams (a.s.) in the manner Salman al-Muhammadi (r.a.) did. Even earlier we have discussed Ameerul Mo'mineen's (a.s.) advice to Kumayl b. Ziyad (r.a.)

لَا تَأْخُذْ إِلَّا عَنَّا تَكُنْ مِنَّا

'Don't acquire (knowledge) but from us, you will be from us.'

Submission in the period of occultation can only be realized by referring to the traditions of the Imams (a.s.) and being bound to them concerning all our problems and uncertainties in belief, actions or worldly affairs. In this period, when there is restricted access to Imam (a.t.f.s.), one should take additional precaution in binding oneself to the traditions of the Imams (a.s.). Separation from Imam (a.t.f.s.) must not make us lax in submitting to his wishes and commands.

Crying for Imam (a.t.f.s.) out of intense attachment

Love is one of the most powerful emotions that is directly related to the level of recognition and attachment towards the beloved. So, higher the level of recognition, more intense would be the affection and attachment. Among the most unmistakable symptoms of attachment is constant remembrance of the beloved, mixed with an intense craving for his meeting.

Just a mention of the beloved along with a narration of his hardship and difficulties provokes acute restlessness and turmoil within the person, finding expression in his tears. Allah, out of His Grace and Mercy has sowed this attachment in our hearts, thereby purifying our polluted hearts and cleansing it of the filth of sins. As Imam Sadiq (a.s.) reveals to Fuzail b. Yasir:

يا فضيل من ذكرنا أو ذُكرنا عنده فخرج من عينيه مثل جناح ذباب غفر الله ذنوبه ولو كانت أكثر من زبد البحر

'O Fuzail, one who remembers us or our mention is made in his presence and if tears flow from his eyes even to the extent of the wing of a fly, Allah will erase all his sins even if they are to the extent of the foam of the ocean.⁶

The magnitude of this reward is a direct reflection on the esteemed status of the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.). Allah in His Mercy has graced the lover with this bounty.

The pain of separation from Imam's (a.t.f.s.) holy existence in the period of occultation and his remembrance in moments of solitude and loneliness, intensified further with his own sorrow are just some of the factors that make his Shias weep for him. As it was mentioned earlier, Imam Sadiq (a.s.) narrates,

أما والله ليُغَيَّبَنَّ إِمَامَكُمْ سِنِينَ مِنْ دَهْرِكُمْ.... وَ لَتَدْمَعَنَّ عَلَيْهِ عُيُونُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

'Pay attention, by Allah! Certainly your Imam will be in occultation for some years in your time.the eyes of the believer will surely cry for him.'⁷

How valuable is the painful heart, wails and tearful eyes of longing near Imam Sadiq (a.s.) that he has prayed especially for such Shias. Moaviyah b.Wahab narrates, ' I saw Imam Sadiq (a.s.) in prostration. He was praying for the visitors of the shrine of Imam Husain (a.s.) at Karbala –

O Allah, those eyes which cry for us, makes them a place of Your mercy. Shower mercy on those hearts which are restless and burn for our sake. Show mercy to those who wail and complain for us.'⁸

This is the reward of the tears that are shed out of sympathy and grief from intense longing for Imam (a.t.f.s.) in the period of occultation. Indeed how incredible is the reward and how amazing is the glad tidings that Imam (a.s.) has promised those who shed a few tears for the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.). This is one of the reasons why Dua-e-Nudbah has been highly recommended on the four Eids – Fitr, Azhaa, Ghadir and Fridays.

These are the four most important days on which Allah showers His Mercy upon His creatures. On the days of Eid, Allah establishes everything on the earth for the sake of Imam's (a.t.f.s.) holy existence. Ghadeer is the day when the Muslims renew their allegiance with the Imam appointed by Allah. And now that the divinely selected Imam is absent, the Muslims must wail and complain by remembering him at all times and feel the pangs of separation.

أَيْنَ الطَّالِبُ (المُطَالِبُ) بِدَمِ الْمَقْتُولِ بِكَرْبَلَاءَ؟

'Where is the one who will avenge the blood of the martyrs of Karbala?'

أَيُّنَ الْمُضْطَّرُّ الَّذِي يُجَابُ إِذَا دَعَا

'Where is the distressed one, who is answered when he calls?'

In this supplication, friends of Imam (a.t.f.s) express their restlessness at the separation from him (a.t.f.s.) thus,

'O son of Taha and Clear Verses, O son of Yasin and Zaariyat, O son of Tur and Aadiyat, I wish I had known where you are living? It is indeed intolerable for me that I see everybody but am unable to see you and I do not hear your sighs and whispering. It is indeed unbearable for me that all have deserted you while I still cry for you!'

While seeking other friends and companions of Imam (a.t.f.s.) we wail,

هَلْ مِنْ مُعِينٍ فَأُطِيلَ مَعَهُ الْعَوِيلَ وَالْبُكَاءَ، هَلْ مِنْ جَزُوعٍ فَأُسَاعِدَ جَزَعَهُ إِذَا خَلَا، هَلْ قَدِيتُ عَيْنٌ فَسَاعَدْتَهَا عَيْنِي عَلَى الْقَدَى

'Is there any supporter along with whom I may prolong my wailing? Is there a restless friend with whom I may share his restlessness? Is there an eye, which is afflicted with excess crying that I may sympathize with it?'

These are but some of the expressions of the friends of Imam (a.t.f.s.) that emanate from the hearts on the occasion of Eid. These expressions serve to highlight the grief of the friend on separation from his beloved master on an important occasion like Eid.

Friendship with the friends of Imam (a.t.f.s.) and enmity with his enemies

One of the prime requisites of love and affection towards Imam (a.t.f.s.) is that one must seek proximity with his friends and distance himself from his enemies. This particular aspect has been emphasised with some detail in the period of occultation.

'Glad tidings to the one who understands the Qaim of my Ahlul Bayt (a.s.), while he believes in his Imam during occultation, preceding his reappearance, and befriends his friends and maintains enmity with his enemies. Such a person is from my friends and will be from the most honourable of people on the Day of Judgment.'⁹

It must be noted here that friendship with Imam's (a.t.f.s.) friends and enmity with his enemies is not distinct from his Mastership. Rather it is propounded in traditions as an inseparable part of Mastership. In another tradition of Imam Moosa Kazim (a.s.) this particular aspect has been outlined thus,

'Glad tidings to our Shias who are attached to our rope (of Mastership) in the time of occultation of our Qaim, are steadfast on our friendship and are aloof from our enemies. They are from us and we are from them. They are satisfied with our Imamatus and we are pleased with them. Glad tidings be to them, then again glad tidings be to them! By Allah, they will be with us on the Day of Judgment in our grade.'¹⁰

Explaining the meaning of the term طوبى, Abu Basir (r.a.) has narrated a tradition from Imam Sadiq (a.s.) thus:

طُوبَى لِمَنْ تَمَسَّكَ بِأَمْرِنَا فِي غَيْبَةِ قَائِمِنَا فَلَمْ يَزُغْ قَلْبُهُ بَعْدَ الْهُدَايَةِ.

'Tooba is for the one who is attached to our Mastership at the time of our Qaim's occultation. Then his heart is never deviated after guidance.'

Then Abu Basir (r.a.) asked Imam (a.s.), 'May I be sacrificed for you, what is Tooba?' Imam (a.s.) replied,

'It is a tree in Paradise – its trunk and roots are in the house of Imam Ali b. Abi Talib (a.s.) and a branch from its branch is in the house of each believer. And this is the meaning of Allah's saying, 'Tooba and food is for them.'¹¹

From this tradition we can gauge the significance of befriending the friends of the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) and distancing oneself from their enemies. This act is so important near Allah that He will reward for it with a position in the neighborhood of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) and such a person will enjoy an exalted status near the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) on the Day of Judgment.

This means that if a person is from the friends of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.), he should be befriended and not be spurned and deserted. It is quite possible that this person is a sinner, in which case it is necessary to despise his evil action, while holding him dear because of his status near the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.). Then out of personal enmity and animosity, we should not turn hostile towards him, rather we should become proximate towards him because of his love for Ahlul Bayt (a.s.).

In fact such a person should be given preference over others who are more cultured and ethical, but do not love the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.). In other words, the only benchmark for friendship must be one's love for the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.). And this is a test of sincerity for the one who possesses recognition of the Imams (a.s.). Such a person disregards his own differences and gives preference to the wishes of the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) in matters of friendship.

The next step after establishing friendship is to observe the rights of the friend. One's sincerity in fulfilling the rights of the friend (due to the latter's love for the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.)) underlines the extent of his sincerity and his commitment towards friendship with the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.). Then one who is indifferent in observing the rights of a friend, has in fact shown indifference and disregard for the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.).

Fulfilling the rights of those who have the love and Mastership of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) and who are described in traditions as believers, has excessive importance. Imam Sadiq (a.s.) declares:

ما عُبِدَ اللهُ بِشَيْءٍ أَفْضَلَ مِنْ أَدَاءِ حَقِّ الْمُؤْمِنِ.

'Allah is not worshipped by anything better than fulfilling the right of a believer.'¹²

Once when Moalla b. Khunais asked Imam (a.s.) about the rights of a believer, Imam (a.s.) replied:

سبعون حقاً لا أخبرك إلا بسبعة ، فإنني عليك مشفق أخشى ان لا تحتمل

'There are 70 rights, but I will inform you only about 7, because I am worried that you will not be able to bear it.'

Thereafter Imam (a .s.) explained those seven rights thus:

'Do not be satiated, when he is hungry. Do not be clothed when he does not have clothes to wear. Be a guide for him, and be a dress for him that he wears (i.e. conceal his defects). Be a tongue for him with which he speaks. Whatever you desire for yourself, desire the same for him. If you have a servant sends him to your brother-in-faith so that he may sweep his floor and prepare his bed and make effort day and night to fulfill his needs. If you are like that, then you have joined your Mastership, with our Mastership and our Mastership with Allah, the Almighty's Mastership.'¹³

The assertion made in the above tradition is very categorical, without a shred of ambiguity or uncertainty. A believer is expected to be a dress and a tongue to his brethren-in-faith at all times. Just like the dress protects a man from nakedness and dangers and gives him apparent respect, a man should also safeguard his brethren from dangers and disgrace. The tongue is a medium for narrating needs and a mode for mutual communication with other believers.

A believer should be such that his brethren benefit from him and are able to get their needs fulfilled. A maidservant is constantly in the service of her master. So a believer should be such that if he is able to facilitate some matter for his brother, he should do it in every possible way. Then he should not withhold this facility from his brother be it of a financial nature or some other worldly possession that he has or can acquire from his social position. He should try to make his brother as comfortable as possible with all his financial and social faculties. If fulfilling the needs of his brethren involves that he wake up in the nights, then he should sacrifice his sleep and strive for his brethren.

This offers a brief insight in to the rights of believers over each other. It is evident that if one is serious and committed in fulfilling the demands of Mastership, he must first fulfill the demands of his brethren and take great care in this regard.

Alleviating the distress of Imam's (a.t.f.s.) friends

Fulfilling the needs of one's brother assumes a more serious nature, when the distressed brother himself approaches one with his demands so as to ease his difficulty. Till such a time that a distressed brother does not approach another brother with his difficulties, the latter's responsibilities are limited.

However, when a distressed brother approaches another with his problems in the hope that the latter, out of love for the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.), will address his needs, the responsibilities of that brother increase manifold. This reference by the distressed brother is in fact a mercy from Allah's side. The believer must realise this point.

'When a believer approaches another brother for removal of his difficulties, this reference is a mercy from Allah's side, which He has dispatched towards the servant. Then if he addresses the distressed believer's needs, he has attached (himself) with our Mastership while our Mastership is attached with Allah's Mastership. But if he rejects the distressed believer despite being able to fulfill his demands, Allah appoints one python from the Fire over him, that chews his toe in the grave till the Day of Judgment, regardless of whether he is forgiven or is in chastisement. And if that distressed believer excuses him (from fulfilling his demands) then that person's condition becomes even worse.'¹⁴

The one who approaches another believer for solving his problem, has in fact placed his respect and honour at stake. And since a believer is very honourable near Allah, He does not like his honour and respect treated callously and does not tolerate rejection of the believer's requests without a valid reason. And due to this reason, if another believer is in a position to fulfill his need but does not do it, then he has invited the chastisement of the grave upon himself, even if his end is in goodness. He will remain in that condition of chastisement till the Day of Judgment.

The point worth noting in this tradition is that the Holy Imams (a.s.) have considered fulfilling the needs of another believer as a matter related to their Mastership and the one who befriends them should take precedence in fulfilling the demands of a distressed believer as a measure of friendship with the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.). His intention behind fulfilling the demand of another believer is to fulfill the rights of his Mastership of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.).

The latter half of the tradition – 'if that distressed believer excuses him (from fulfilling his demands) then that person's condition becomes even worse' is particularly interesting. Allama Majlisi (r.a.) explains that by excusing himself, the distressed person has shown his sense of dignity and respect to the other person. Due to his dignity and respect, he enjoys a higher level of faith and Mastership and enjoys a greater right over his believer brethren. And out of regard for his brotherhood, his demands need to be fulfilled more promptly and he should not be turned back in disappointment. Therefore rejecting him is not like rejecting the one who is not as elevated in nobility and faith as him. Rejecting a believer with strong faith and high nobility is a more serious offense near the Ahlul Bait (a.s.) as compared to rejecting an ordinary believer.

Therefore under no condition should a believer be left to fend for himself. The believer who deserts his brother in his time of need will incur Allah's wrath and the displeasure of the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.). Therefore a believer should do everything in his power to alleviate the grief and distress of his brethren, and he will be rewarded for the same, regardless of whether he is successful in his endeavours. Such is the importance of answering the call of a distressed believer that Allah rewards him even if his efforts to help the believer prove to be futile. In this regard, Imam Sadiq (a.s.) reveals,

'One who goes forth to solve the problem of his brother-in-faith, with the intention of earning Allah's satisfaction in fulfilling the needs of the (afflicted) brother, Allah writes for him reward of one Hajj and one Umrah, which are accepted, and fasts of two months from the respected months along with their **إعتكاف** in Masjid ul Haraam. And the one who strives to fulfill his brother's need, with the intention of earning Allah's satisfaction, but is unable to complete that work, Allah writes for him one Hajj which is accepted, for his endeavours. Therefore you should be inclined towards good deeds.'¹⁵

As is more than evident from the above tradition, Allah likes the effort and endeavor of one brother in the way of fulfilling another brother's needs and rewards the former for that. If the work is successfully completed, the brother who has endeavored will earn more reward, while if he is unsuccessful, he will nevertheless be rewarded for his efforts in trying to complete that work, as the intention of a believer is more important than his action.

The position of that believer is even higher (than what has been outlined above), who knows that he does not have the power and capacity to fulfill the need of his brother-in-faith (who has approached him), but nevertheless aspires in his heart to fulfill that in such a way that if it was within his power, he would have employed his faculties to fulfill his need. Such a believer, who is unable to complete the work, will none the less be rewarded by Allah with an extra-ordinary reward only on the basis of his selfless and sincere intention. Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) says:

'A believer who is approached by his brother-in-faith with some problem, but does not have the power to help him, while in his heart he wants to help him, (in such a way that if he was capable he would have certainly done it), then Allah, the Almighty, due to his sincere intention, includes him from the people of Paradise.'¹⁶

From traditions like the one highlighted above, it is apparent that near Allah more important than actually doing the work of an afflicted brother, is to have the intention to help him and relieve him of his distress. Friends of the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) should be sincere and affectionate with each other so that the importance of Mastership and love of the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) is clear to everyone in this world as well as the hereafter.

¹. Usul al-Kaafi, Kitaab-ul-Imaan wal Kufr, Bab Nisbat-ul-Islam, Tradition 2

². Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 27, Pg. 91, Tradition 48

³. Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 36, Pg. 296

⁴. Usul al-Kafi, Kitabul Hujjat, Chapter about Imams are the lights

⁵. Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 22, Pg. 327

- [6.](#) Behaar-ul-Anwaar, Vol. 44, Pg. 282, Tradition 14
- [7.](#) Kamaluddin, Chap. 33, Tradition 35
- [8.](#) Kameluz Ziarat, Pg. 117
- [9.](#) Kamaluddin, Chap. 25, Tradition 2
- [10.](#) Kamaluddin, Chap. 34, Tradition 2
- [11.](#) (13: 29) Kamaluddin, Chap. 33, Tradition 55
- [12.](#) Usul al-Kafi, Kitabul Iman wal Kufr, Chapter of a Believer's rights over others, Tradition 4
- [13.](#) Usul al-Kafi, Kitabul Iman wal Kufr, Chap. of a Believer's right over others, Tradition 14
- [14.](#) Usul al-Kafi, Kitab ul Iman wal Kufr, Chap. of Fulfilling the needs of believers, Tradition 13
- [15.](#) Usul al-Kafi, Kitab ul Iman wal Kufr, Chapter of Fulfilling the needs of believers, Tradition 9
- [16.](#) (Usul al-Kafi, Kitab ul Iman wal Kufr, Chap. of Fulfilling the needs of believers, Tradition 14)

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