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Responsibility 15: Rejecting the Imposters

Renunciation of those who claim to be the specific representatives of Imam al-Mahdi (ajtf) during the major occultation is another responsibility of the true believers. The Imamiyah Shi'a firmly believes that with the death of the four specific representatives of the Imam during the period of the minor occultation, namely his last one, Shaykh 'Ali. Muhammad Samari al-Ra'ī, the specific representation of Imam al-Zaman (ajtf) came to an end.

During the era of the major occultation, there is absolutely no specific representative of the Imam. However, a general representation¹ of the Imam is possible and permissible and the proofs confirm the existence of general representatives of the Imam and tell us that the scholars who act according to their knowledge and fulfill the conditions² which have been mentioned in the sayings of the Ahlul Bayt (as) are the general deputies and representatives of the Imam.

In a tradition narrated by Muhammad al-Hasan b. Ahmad we read that:

كُنْتُ بِمَدِينَةِ السَّلَامِ فِي السَّنَةِ الَّتِي تُوقِي فِيهَا الشَّيْخُ عَلِيُّ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ السَّمُرِيُّ رِضْوَانُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ فَحَضَرْتُهُ قَبْلَ وَفَاتِهِ بِأَيَّامٍ، فَأَخْرَجَ إِلَى النَّاسِ تَوْقِيْعًا نُسَخْتُهُ: بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ. يَا عَلِيُّ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ السَّمُرِيُّ أَعْظَمَ اللَّهُ أَجْرَ إِخْوَانِكَ فِيكَ فَإِنَّكَ مَيِّتٌ مَا بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَ سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ، فَأَجْمَعْ أَمْرَكَ وَ لَا تُوصِلْ إِلَى أَحَدٍ فَيَقُومَ مَقَامَكَ بَعْدَ وَفَاتِكَ فَقَدْ وَقَعَتِ الْغَيْبَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ فَلَا ظُهُورَ إِلَّا بَعْدَ إِذْنِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَ ذَلِكَ بَعْدَ طَوْلِ الْأَمَدِ وَ قَسْوَةِ الْقُلُوبِ وَ امْتِلَاءِ الْأَرْضِ جَوْرًا وَسَيِّئَاتِي شِيعَتِي مَنْ يَدْعِي الْمُشَاهَدَةَ أَلَا فَمَنْ ادَّعَى الْمُشَاهَدَةَ قَبْلَ خُرُوجِ السُّفْيَانِيِّ وَ الصَّيْحَةِ فَهُوَ كَذَّابٌ مُفْتَرٍ وَ لَا حَوْلَ وَ لَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْعَظِيمِ

“I was in the city of Peace (Baghdad) in the year in which Shaykh 'Ali b. Muhammad al-Samuri, may Allah's grace be upon him, passed away and was with him a few days before he left this world. At that time, he brought out a piece of paper with some writing on it that stated: “In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

O 'Ali b. Muhammad al-Samuri! May Allah grant your brothers a grand reward concerning you since you are going to die soon and between you and death, only six days remain. Thus, gather your affair

and do not appoint anyone to be in your place (as my representative) after your death for the time of the second occultation is here and there will be no advent until after the permission of Allah, the Noble and Majestic.

This will be after a long period (has passed) after the hearts have become hardened and the Earth has become full of corruption. And there will come some from my Shi'a who will claim to have seen me. Certainly the person who claims to have seen me before the appearance of al-Sufyani and the Call is a liar and a fabricator. And there is no power or strength, save with Allah, the Most High, the Majestic.'"³

Confirming the specific representation of the Imam can be possible through the following three ways:

1. A direct and explicit text from Imam al-Zaman (ajtf) himself.
2. A clear text from one of the direct representatives of the Imam (ajtf)
3. A person who claims to be the representative of the Imam (ajtf) shows supernatural actions which would prove the relationship between him, Allah and the Imam.

During the minor occultation, the four specific representatives of the Imam were either explicitly appointed directly by the Imam or through a written text from the preceding representative based on the Imam's directive and each one was able to perform supernatural actions to prove their status.

Therefore, as long as the specific representation is not proven through the definite proofs, we cannot accept his claim! In actuality, it is forbidden (haram) to make this claim and to accept the claim from one who makes it!

During the period of the major occultation, it is hard to arrive at the three conditions mentioned rather, it is impossible as there is no explicit text from the Imam himself or one of the directly appointed representatives, nor can we find a single person who could produce such supernatural and paranormal acts that would be able to confirm his appointment as a specific representative of the Imam!

Indeed, it is possible that a person or a group of people may claim to be specific representatives of Imam al-Zaman (ajtf), however we must test them to see if they possess any of the three points mentioned above.

Through testing them and closely monitoring their speech, actions, behavior and their claims of specific representation, their lies and trickery will clearly be seen as from the beginning of the major occultation until today, not only have we not heard, but also we have not seen any of these signs in any person.

A person who claims this status must be one who acts upon the Shari'ah and the religion of Allah. In addition, there must not be even the smallest slips in his character or in the performance of the religious duties. He must perform all of the obligatory (wajib) acts and refrain from all of the prohibited (haram) acts.

Of course, all reprehensible (makruh) acts must be avoided and the recommended (mustahab) acts

must be carried out. In addition to this, the supernatural acts would have to be shown as this defines his relationship with Imam al-Hujjah (ajtf) and his being a specific representative of the Imam.

In the tradition quoted above, the Imam noted: “Whoever claims to have seen me (during the occultation) is a liar and has leveled a false accusation against me” and this statement clearly proves that there are currently no specific representatives of the Imam!

Thus, if a person claims to have a certain status granted to him by the Imam or claims to have met the Imam just like the (four) specific representatives of the Imam had done (during the minor occultation), then he must be called a liar and must be introduced as one who has placed a false accusation against the Imam.

1. The proofs which speak about the general representation are many and can be found in the books which are related to the issue of the Wilayatul Faqih. There are traditions in regards to this topic which are found in the thirteenth responsibility in this book, from Imam Hasan al-’Askari ؑ and one from the 12th Imam ؑ himself.

2. Refer to the Tawdhiul Masa’il manual under the section of Taqlid, Issue 1

3. Kamal ad-Din wa Tamam an-Ni’mah, vol. 2, pg. 516, sec. 45, no. 44

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