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Responsibility 24: Achieving Closeness to the Imam

Seeking closeness to Imam al-'Asr (ajtf) is another responsibility of the believers. This closeness can be divided into three categories, however before discussing them, it should be stated that one meaning of closeness is to maintain the boundaries which exist between ourselves and the enemies of the Imam.

Another more general interpretation is the general boundary of life and this means that we must look after and be aware of everything happening in the world around us (to the best of our ability).

As for the meaning of closeness which has been mentioned in the book of Allah and the Sunnah, it is related to the following three things:

1. Looking after and keeping one's weapons ready be it a horse or anything else in anticipation of the advent of Imam al-Zaman (ajtf) with the hope that one will be able to help him and make use of those things in the service of the Imam during his advent. This type of closeness was mentioned in the previous responsibility and is one of the recommended acts in Islam.

2. Those things which the scholars have mentioned in their writings in the 'Book of Jihad'. In these writings, the scholars have stated that a true believer must protect and defend his country when there is a possibility that the enemies will launch an attack. One must also keep his stead and weapon ready so as to protect the Islamic lands from the enemies attack and in the event of an attack, must rise up to defend Islam!

The minimum amount of time a believer must spend in protecting the Islamic territory is three days while the maximum is forty days. However, if he guards the territory for more than forty days, then he will be given the reward of a Mujahid (one who is struggling) in the way of Allah!

This type of closeness with the Imam at the time of his advent or during the occultation is a recommended act.

The Messenger of Allah (S) has said:

رَبَاطُ الْخَيْلِ لَيْلَةً فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ مِنْ صِيَامِ شَهْرٍ وَ قِيَامِهِ فَإِنْ مَاتَ جَرَى عَلَيْهِ عَمَلُهُ الَّذِي كَانَ يَعْمَلُ وَ أُجْرِي عَلَيْهِ رِزْقُهُ وَ أُمِنَ الْفَتَانُ

“To be prepared (for war) one night in the way of Allah is better than fasting an entire month and spending all its night in worship. If a person is to die (in this state), then the (reward) for the action he performed will continue, his sustenance will continue to be given to him and he will be saved from the Angel of Examination (in the grave).”¹

The Messenger of Allah (S) also said:

كُلُّ مَيِّتٍ نَحْتِمُ عَلَى عَمَلِهِ إِلَّا الْمُرَابِطَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّهُ يَنْمُو لَهُ عَمَلُهُ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ وَ يُؤْمِنُ مِنْ فِتْنَةِ الْقَبْرِ

“The actions of every deceased person are sealed except one who is garrisoned in the way of Allah – this person’s good deeds will continue to grow until the Day of Judgment and he will have protection from the Angels of the Grave.”²

3. A true believer must maintain his affiliation and closeness to Imam al-Zaman (ajtf) by making a pact with the infallible leaders of the religion and forging a covenant reaffirming his belief in these individuals.

Through this, one will be able to develop close times with his Imam. In addition, one must consider the acts of helping, assisting and following the Imam as being incumbent upon him. This sort of affiliation is Wajib al-’Ayni meaning that it is obligatory upon every true believer.

This relationship with the Imam is different than the second meaning of the affiliation which must be shown since at the level we are currently discussing, a person is not permitted to have someone else step in and perform this task for him. Thus, this form of pact with the Imam is very important and is one of the pillars of true faith and without it, Allah shall not accept the actions of any person.

Imam Ja’far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) has said:

إِصْبِرُوا عَلَى الْمَصَائِبِ وَ صَابِرُوا عَلَى الْفَرَائِضِ وَ رَابِطُوا عَلَى الْأَيْمَةِ

“Have patience in the face of difficulties, observe patience in relation to the performance of obligatory acts, and establish an affinity with the A`immah.”³

In regards to the verse of the Qur`an in which Allah ﷻ has said:

“**O’ you who have firm faith! Observe patience, have endurance and establish a relation**”⁴

Imam Muhammad b. ‘Ali al-Baqir (as) has said:

إصْبِرُوا عَلَى أَدَاءِ الْفَرَائِضِ وَصَابِرُوا عَدُوَّكُمْ وَرَابِطُوا إِمَامَكُمْ الْمُنْتَظَرَ

“Observe patience in relation to performing the obligatory acts, have endurance in facing your enemies and establish closeness with your Imam, al-Muntadhar (the Awaited One).”⁵

In relation to the verse that states:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اصْبِرُوا وَصَابِرُوا وَرَابِطُوا﴾

“O’ you that have faith! Observe patience, stand firm and close [your] ranks.”⁶

Imam Ja’far. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) said that ‘establish a relation’ means:

الْمُقَامُ مَعَ إِمَامِكُمْ

“Standing firm (and resolved) with your Imam.”⁶

¹. Jawahir al-Kalam, vol. 21, pg. 40; Tahrir al-Ahkam, vol. 1, pg. 134

². Jawahir al-Kalam, vol. 21, pg. 40; Majma’ al-Faidah wal Burhan, vol. 8, pg. 449

³. Biharul Anwar, vol. 24, pg. 220, sec. 57, no. 20

⁴. Surah Ale Imran (3), Verse 200

⁵. al-Ghaybah of Nu’mani, pg. 199, no. 13

⁶. Biharul Anwar, vol. 24, pg. 217, sec. 57, no. 11

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