

## Responsibility 60: Awaiting the Advent

Another responsibility is to await the advent of Imam al-Mahdi (ajtf) every day and night rather we must await his return every single hour of our life. In essence, the true believer must always be in a state of anticipation of the return of the Imam.

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

طُوبَى لَشَيْعَةٍ قَائِمِنَا الْمُنتَظِرِينَ لِظُهُورِهِ فِي غَيْبَتِهِ وَ الْمُطِيعِينَ لَهُ فِي ظُهُورِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ  
وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

“Glad tidings (of Paradise) to the Shi'a of our Qa'im (ajtf) those who are awaiting his advent during his occultation and those who are obedient to him during his advent. Surely these are the close, intimate friends of Allah for whom [There shall be no grief, nor shall they have any sorrow.]”<sup>1</sup>

Imam 'Ali b. Husain as-Sajjad (as) has said:

إِنَّ أَهْلَ زَمَانِ غَيْبَتِهِ وَ الْقَائِلِينَ بِإِمَامَتِهِ وَ الْمُنتَظِرِينَ لِظُهُورِهِ أَفْضَلُ مِنْ أَهْلِ كُلِّ زَمَانٍ

“Surely the people who are living during the period of his occultation and who believe in his (Divinely appointed) leadership and are awaiting his advent are the best people of all times.”<sup>2</sup>

Imam Muhammad b. 'Ali al-Taqi (as) has said:

فَيَنْتَظِرُ خُرُوجَهُ الْمُخْلِصُونَ وَ يُنْكِرُهُ الْمُرتَابُونَ

“The sincere ones will await his advent, while the doubters shall deny it.”<sup>3</sup>

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

فَعِنْدَهَا فَلْيَتَوَقَّعُوا الْفَرَجَ صَبَاحاً وَ مَسَاءً

“During the occultation, they will await his (Imam al-Mahdi’s) advent every morning and evening.”<sup>4</sup>

In numerous traditions it has been mentioned that to await the advent of Imam al-’Asr (ajtf) is actually a part of the religion of Allah and all people must observe this.

In addition, it has been mentioned that even the Muslims who lived during the lives of the other infallible A`immah (as) awaited and expected the advent of Imam al-Mahdi (ajtf) as this was also obligatory upon them. Thus, this is something which is not only limited to the period of his occultation!

The period of waiting for the Imam’s advent will not earn us a Divine reward (thawab) unless it coupled with the intention of seeking nearness to Allah and conforming to His commandments, just as the performance of prayers, fasting and Hajj all necessitate a Divine reward from Allah when performed with the intention of seeking nearness to Him.

Of course the intention of seeking nearness to Allah has limits and can be realized in different forms and be achieved in various ways the best form being that a believer performs these acts simply to follow the commandments of Allah and in His obedience.

It goes without saying that He is the most worthy of being worshipped and obeyed and therefore our worshipping of Him should not be done for the love which one has for Him, nor for Paradise, nor to earn His pleasure and definitely not due to the fear of the fire of Hell and the punishment and chastisement!

All of these are simply forms of seeking nearness to Him and therefore, it is best that a true believer stays away from these sorts of intentions (in his acts).

If what we have just stated is correct, then what would be the state of a person if his intention for the advent of the Imam is his own material gains and pleasures in this world??

We must also realize that awaiting the advent is not limited to a particular time or place or only in certain circumstances. Rather, a true believer must always be in a state of anticipation and awaiting the Imam.

One must never go into a state of hopelessness or despair since this is forbidden and most definitely, a person who falls into a state of despair will never be able to patiently wait for the advent of the Imam.

Having even ‘partial despair’ in his advent is not correct, and this too is forbidden! By a ‘partial despair’ we mean that one must not lose hope in the return of Imam al-Hujjah (ajtf), the minor or major occultation, or other things related to him based on his own feelings and way of thinking.

For example it should not be said that: “The Imam will not make his advent for another fifty years” or that “He will not make his advent today since it is a Saturday” or that “It is such and such time of the day or night and thus, he will not make his return since the traditions tell us something different.”

It is clear that no matter what level of despair we fall into, the spiritual state of anticipation for the advent of the Imam will be taken away from us in that same amount. In addition, we would have neglected the performance of an obligatory act legislated by Allah.

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

وَتَوَقَّعْ أَمْرَ صَاحِبِكَ لَيْلِكَ وَنَهَارِكَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ هُوَ فِي شَأْنٍ، لَا يَشْغَلُهُ شَأْنٌ عَنْ شَأْنٍ

“Anticipate the advent of your patron (i.e. the Imam) in your day and night, for Almighty Allah has a decision every moment and no affair may distract Him from another.”<sup>5</sup>

It has been mentioned in the traditions that we must not specify a specific time or occasion as to when the advent of the Imam will take shape. Rather, the advent of the Imam can take place at any time.

The period of advent of the Imam is one of those events which are subject to alteration, and can either be hastened or delayed and is related to its own causes and conditions which must be realized (before it can be manifest). Due to this, we are not able to specify a specific time as to when it will occur.

As well, it has also been mentioned that his advent will occur unexpectedly, when people are in state of complete hopelessness.

It has been narrated from Imam 'Ali b. Muhammad al-Hadi (as) that:

فَتَوَقَّعُوا الْفَرَجَ مِنْ تَحْتِ أقدامِكُمْ

“Anticipate the advent from (the land) under your feet (meaning at any place and time).”<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup>. Kamal ad-Din wa Tamam an-Ni'mah, pg. 357, no. 54; Biharul Anwar, vol. 52, pg. 149; sec. 22, no. 76

<sup>2</sup>. Kamal ad-Din wa Tamam an-Ni'mah, pg. 320, no. 2

<sup>3</sup>. Kamal ad-Din wa Tamam an-Ni'mah, pg. 378, sec. 36, no. 3

<sup>4</sup>. Biharul Anwar, vol. 52, pg. 94, sec. 20, no. 9; Kamal ad-Din wa Tamam an-Ni'mah, pg. 339, no. 17

<sup>5</sup>. al-Iqbal, pg. 201

<sup>6</sup>. al-Kafi, vol. 1, pg. 341, sec. 'The Occultation,' no. 24

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