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## Some Queries

There are some doubts regarding the occultation of His Eminence, the Awaited Imam (a.s.) that we shall study in the following pages.

### [What is the Benefit Derived from the Occultation of the Imam of the Age \(a.s.\)?](#)

A lot of discussion is carried out on the benefits of the occultation of the Awaited Imam (a.s.). Those who do not have deep understanding of the matter have expressed their view saying that the existence or absence of the Imam (a.s.), whether he is in occultation or not is one and the same. The Shia scholastic theologians have later rebutted their view and mentioned numerous benefits, and they are as follows:

Firstly: Even though His Eminence (a.s.) is concealed from public view, his existence is the cause of security for the inhabitants of the earth, as mentioned clearly in numerous traditions regarding this matter. Some of them are as follows.

The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

“My Ahlu Bayt (a.s.) are security for the inhabitants of the earth. If my Ahlu Bayt (a.s.) are not there, the inhabitants of the earth shall be destroyed.”<sup>[1](#)</sup>

The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

“This religion shall always be upright till there are twelve chiefs from Quraish. When they pass away, the earth will swallow all its inhabitants.”<sup>[2](#)</sup>

His Eminence, Amirul Momineen (a.s.) said:

“Yes! The earth is never devoid of the Qaim (a.s.) from Allah (SwT)...”

Other traditions also prove that the Purified Imams (a.s.) are the security for the inhabitants of the earth

and their existence repels calamities and troubles from all the people of the earth. And the traditions also prove that the occultation of His Eminence, Imam Mahdi (a.s.) is for the well-being of people.

Secondly: The occultation of the Awaited Imam (a.s.) is so because the people do not deserve him and also because of prevailing evils among the people. Were they righteous and deserving and had not deviated from the path of truth, His Eminence (a.s.) would have appeared. The great scholar, Tusi (a.r) has pointed towards these two causes mentioned above. He says:

“The existence of His Eminence (a.s.) is a grace; his authority is another grace.”<sup>3</sup>

Thirdly: While he is in occultation, Imam Mahdi (a.s.) is kind on his Shias and he prays for them and there is no obstacle in his prayer and if the prayer of the Imam (a.s.) had not been for them, the oppressors would never have allowed the righteous people to control their desires and they would have destroyed all of them. The same point is mentioned in a letter of His Eminence (a.s.) to Shaykh Mufeed (a.r.). In the letter he says:

“Surely we are neither negligent of your affairs, nor are we forgetful of your remembrance. Had it been so, afflictions would have descended upon you and enemies would have suppressed you.”

Fourthly: His Eminence, the Baqiatullah (a.s.) has himself mentioned a benefit of his occultation and said:

“Taking benefit from me during my occultation is like getting benefit from the sun while it is hidden from the view.”

Sulaiman Amash bin Mehran asked His Eminence, Imam Sadiq (a.s.): How do the people benefit from His Eminence, the Proof (Hujjat) (a.s.) when he is concealed from the view? His Eminence, Imam Sadiq (a.s.) replied:

“Just as they benefit from the sun when a cloud comes over it.”

Allamah Majlisi (a.r) explains this tradition and says:

Effulgence, generosity, knowledge and guidance reaches the people through His Eminence (a.s.) because it is proved from traditions that His Eminence (a.s.) is the cause of the creation of the creatures. Thus if he had not been there no one else would have come into existence.

Rather, sciences and recognition is due to his blessings and cure and mediation of His Eminence (a.s.) becomes apparent on the people and calamities are repelled through him. It is so because if they had not been there, people would have been involved in various chastisements due to their evil deeds. As the Almighty Allah (SwT) has said: “Allah (SwT) would not punish them till you are among them.”

And we have often experienced that when we are in difficulties and our avenues are closed and we are

distanced from the Almighty and we have closed the doors of mercy due to our deeds. Yes! At that time we have made those noble personages as our mediums. And we pray through the holy effulgence of those personages in proportion to our proximity with them. Our complicated problems are solved and whosoever's heart Allah (SwT) has illuminated with faith realizes this fact and is not able to deny it.

Just as people gain benefit from the sun hidden behind clouds and wait for the cloud to move away so that they could gain more benefits, in the same way the real awaiter and the sincere Shias wait for His Eminence (a.s.) during the occultation every moment that when His Eminence (a.s.) reappears there may be greater benefit from him.

One who denies His Eminence (a.s.) during the period of occultation is like one who has denied the sun when it is behind the clouds.

Sometimes, when the sun is behind the clouds, it is for the good of the people. In the same way the occultation of His Eminence (a.s.) is better for the people rather than his reappearance due to the condition of the people (who are not capable or deserving).

It is ordinarily not possible to see the sun directly when it is not behind a cloud. It can lead to blindness if one sees the sun with naked eyes. In the same way the sun of the existence of His Eminence (a.s.) may cause the incapable people to be blinded of truth.

Sometimes the sun comes out from behind the clouds and some people see it. In the same way during the period of occultation some people see His Eminence (a.s.) and are honored to be in his service.

His Eminence (a.s.), like the sun, gives benefit to all, although one who is blind is not able to take benefit from him. As the Almighty Allah (SwT) says:

وَمَنْ كَانَ فِي هَذِهِ أَعْمَىٰ فَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ أَعْمَىٰ وَأَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا

***“And whoever is blind in this, he shall (also) be blind in the hereafter, and more erring from the way.” (Surah 17, Verse 72)***

It is explained in this way:

Just as the rays of the sun enter the house according to the space of the slits and windows and by it gives light and energy, in the same way are the hearts of the people. As much as they remove the curtains of sensuality and physical attachments and open up the slits and windows of the heart for the recognition of Allah (SwT), the same proportion of the light of guidance of those great personages would benefit them.

In the same way they must remove from them the obstacles and curtains like one who stands below the shining sun and the rays of the sun surround him. By this eight doors of Paradise of spirituality are

opened up for him and the rays of guidance and guardianship (Wilayat) cover him...[4](#)

Fifthly: We do not know the Hidden wisdom of the occultation of His Eminence (a.s.) as many traditions have explained.

Abdullah bin Fazl Hashimi says that he heard from His Eminence, Imam Sadiq (a.s.) that he said:

“The Master of this affair has an occultation which is certain, and every untrue person falls into doubt regarding it.”

Abdullah asked: “May I be sacrificed for you. Why is it so?”

His Eminence (a.s.) replied:

“It is a matter regarding which we are not permitted to inform you.”

Abdullah asked: “Then what is the wisdom behind occultation?”

The Imam (a.s.) said in reply:

“The wisdom behind the occultation of His Eminence (a.s.) is the same that had been in the occultation of the previous Divine Proofs. The cause of the wisdom shall be known after the reappearance just like the wisdom behind the actions of His Eminence, Prophet Khizr (a.s.), regarding the damaging of the boat, the killing of the boy and the repairing of the wall. It was not clear to His Eminence, Prophet Musa (a.s.) till they were about to part ways.

O son of Fazl! This is an affair of Allah (SwT) and the secret and mystery of the occultation is from the secrets and mysteries of Allah (SwT). As we have faith that Allah (SwT) is the wisest one, we must have certainty that all His actions are based on wisdom. Even though we may not be aware of the hidden wisdom in detail.”[5](#)

These were some causes and factors regarding the benefits of the occultation of His Eminence, Imam Mahdi (a.s.).

## **Longevity of the Imam of the Age (a.s.)**

Numerous questions are raised regarding the age of the Imam of the Age (a.s.) and it is asked how His Eminence (a.s.) has continued to live for 1150 years and how natural factors like old age and weakness have not affected him?

In reply to this question it is said:

Firstly: It is logically possible for one to have a long age and it is not from the impossibilities. In the same way it is not possible for a thing to be single and two at the same time. On the other hand it is rationally

possible for a person to land on the moon or another planet and therefore after obtaining the causes and means of it, his landing becomes practical.

In the same way, the prolonging of the life of a man is rationally possible and from the scientific and rational view there is no doubt in it. When divine providence has favored him, his body is shielded from natural factors and unaffected by the ageing process and old age does not approach him.

Such an example is also present in the Holy Quran, where Prophet Nuh (a.s.) is said to have lived among his people for 950 years. On the basis of this, how do we accept the long age of Nuh (a.s.) but not accept the long age of His Eminence, Imam Mahdi (a.s.)? Even though both of them were appointed for the reformation of humanity.

Secondly: If, supposedly we accept that an age of hundreds and thousands of years is an impossible thing because it is against the natural factors, but we say that it is possible for the Almighty Allah (SwT) and it is very much in His power if He wants.

Just as fire has a natural effect of burning; He made it cool and comfortable for His friend, Ibrahim (Surah Anbiya 21:69). And He split the sea for His Prophet, Musa (a.s.) and saved Musa (a.s.) and his people and drowned the Pharaoh and his people. Thus when the Almighty Allah (SwT) intends such things, He does it.

Therefore, He can also protect and shield His Wali from natural disasters and ageing factors. The Almighty Allah (SwT) renders the natural qualities of various things ineffective. Just as infidels and polytheists of Mecca were unable to see His Messenger (S) and he went out right under their eyes.

## Why Such a Long Age?

Here another question arises that why the Almighty Allah (SwT) has bestowed such a long life to His Eminence (a.s.)? And why his age was not like his respected great grandfather, the Messenger of Allah (S) and his ancestors, the Infallible Imams (a.s.)?

The reply to this is that His Eminence, the Baqiatullah (a.s.) is an exception among them, because the reformation of all the world and saving of all the people from the waves of darkness and ignorance is restricted to His Eminence (a.s.).

Therefore, the Awaited Imam (a.s.), is the last reformer of human society of the world, thus it should be that the afflictions should be maximum on the people when the illuminated sun of His Eminence (a.s.) grace shines upon them and that he fills the whole earth with justice and equity.

His Eminence, Imam Mahdi (a.s.) is that champion that will alter the flow of the history of the world. He would on the basis of a lofty civilization destroy all those civilizations that have filled the earth with injustice and oppression and dominated the whole world. Thus it is necessary for His Eminence (a.s.) to

have a long life so that he could cover the whole world and he may reform them in every way.

## **Why does the Imam of the Age (a.s.) not Reappear?**

One of the questions that arise regarding His Eminence, Imam Mahdi (a.s.) is that why His Eminence (a.s.) is not reappearing to establish the rule of God on the Earth and save the people from difficulties and problems?

Its reply is that the reappearance of His Eminence (a.s.) is not in the control of man and the will of humanity. It is in the hands of the Almighty Allah (SwT). The Almighty Allah (SwT) raised the great Prophet of Islam (S) after five centuries of ignorance. And he was raised only when the conditions that were suitable for his advent had been fulfilled.

Apparently such an advent did not take place before the conditions were conducive for it. The reappearance of His Eminence, Imam Mahdi (a.s.) is also like that. Till the world and all the conditions of the world are not eligible for reformation and the atmosphere is not conducive for his reappearance, his reappearance will not occur.

When its time would be mature and the worldly systems would not be able to lead humanity, such is the time when His Eminence (a.s.) would arise and install the system of divine religion in human society, which is presently incapable of guiding the people.

## **How would the Imam of the Time (a.s.) Reform the World?**

Another question regarding His Eminence (a.s.) is how can one individual take upon himself the task of reforming the whole world and fill the earth with justice and equity as it would have been filled with injustice and oppression in such a way that the rights of everyone are protected and that the oppressors, oppression, deprivation and poverty is destroyed? And all the human beings, to whichever religion they may belong, would have their rights protected.

The reply is as follows: The greatest systems and events that changed the world were caused at the hands of a single individual and not by a group of people. For example, the Prophet of Islam (S) was a single individual, who had such influence that he destroyed the systems of the period of ignorance and replaced it by a heavenly and illuminated system.

The same was the case of Prophets Musa (a.s.) and Isa (a.s.), that each of them, completely and even without the help of their relatives, rose up and fulfilled the functions of their divine messengership. All of them performed those feats single handedly and not in the form of a group.

It is against what the Marxists believe, who say that it is not possible for an individual to compete and bring about complete reformation. Rather a group would be effective in this. However, this view of the Marxists is not based on facts and it is far from reality.

In all conditions, His Eminence, the Awaited Imam (a.s.) would arise like his holy great grandfather to establish peace, justice, truth and prosperity and save humanity from all difficulties and evils and spread love and brotherhood and unity of mankind. The time of his reappearance is not in control of anyone except that it is at the discretion of the wise will of the Almighty Lord.

- [1.](#) Zakhairul Uqbah, Pg 17, Kanzul Ummal, 6/116
- [2.](#) Muntakhabul Athar, Pg. 27, quoted from Kashful Astar
- [3.](#) Sharh Tajreed, Tusi, Pg. 389 (Iran Edition)
- [4.](#) Muntakhabul Athar, Pg. 271-272
- [5.](#) Jalalul Uyun, 3/157

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