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Our Responsibilities during the Period of the Occultation

As we are approaching the 15th of Sha'ban, the Shi'ahs all over the world are preparing themselves for celebrating the birth anniversary of our Present Imam, Imam Muhammad al-Mahdi (upon whom be peace). On the occasion of his birthday, we gather together in mosques and religious centres where speakers and scholars are invited to talk about the Present Imam; people felicitate each other and are presented with sweets, etc.

But the question is, do our responsibilities in regard to the Present Imam came to an end after this celebration of the 15th of Sha'ban? No, not at all. The responsibilities which the Shi'ahs have during the period of occultation (ghaybah) have been explained by the Imams of Ahlu 'l -Bayt in many *ahadith*.

After considering the various sayings of our Imams, we can conclude that there are two main responsibilities of the Shi'ahs during the period of the occultation of the Present Imam. These two responsibilities are:

1. Knowledge of the Present Imam.

2. Awaiting hopefully for his victorious appearance. In this short article I intend, with the help of Allah, to elaborate these two responsibilities.

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