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Preface

بسم الله الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ و صلى الله عليك يا وليّ العصر أدركنا

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) says,

"فهؤلاء مصابيح الدجى و أئمة الهدى و أعلام التقى من أحبهم وتولاهم كنت ضامناً له على الله الجنة"

'They (Imams) are the lamps in darkness and the Imams of guidance and signs of piety. One who loves them and accepts their Mastership, then I assure Paradise for him near Allah.'[1]

Most of us have heard the famous Prophetic (s.a.w.s.) tradition:
"One who dies while he has not recognized the Imam of his era, has died the death of ignorance."

Shias and Ahlul Sunnah scholars alike have narrated this tradition, which highlights the status of the Imam of the age and the role of his recognition in the acceptance of religion.

All of us know that this recognition is not acquired only by knowing his name and his genealogy; because even the deniers of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) and other Muslims have access to such information. Therefore, the interpretation of 'recognition' in this important tradition assumes a higher level than mere information of his name and genealogy. More out of ignorance than anything else, everyone will make an attempt to explain this higher meaning (of recognition) based on his own limited understanding and comprehension.

Till now, the significance of this recognition is not really evident for us. Indeed this significance will become evident by reading the traditions, wherein, the consequences of not recognizing the Imam are made amply clear. Also, the benefits of his recognition have been highlighted. For instance, pay attention to this esteemed tradition from Imam Baqir (a.s) on recognition.

"One who dies without the recognition of Imam, he has died the death of ignorance. And the one who

dies with the recognition of his Imam, the advancement or postponement of this affair (i.e. reappearance) will not harm him. And one who dies with the recognition of his Imam, he is like the one who was along with the Qaim (a.t.f.s.) in his tent."

Here one discovers a very profound matter, and is confronted with a very critical question: How does the recognition of Imam (a.s.) find such importance in religion? What is death with the recognition of Imam (a.s) that has got all these effects and blessings? Reaching the era of reappearance of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) and being in his tent is good fortune. Indeed this is the greatest desire of the lovers of I mam (a.t.f.s.). But what is the recognition of Imam (a.t.f.s.), acquiring which ensures such high status? How can one acquire it so that he may attain guidance and good fortune that has been promised to him in traditions?

An effort is made in this book to answer some of the questions mentioned above. We have explained the points in a simple and lucid manner. By referring to it, the reader, will understand the various dimensions of the subject as per his capacity and will be able to gauge his responsibilities in this matter. Our method of explaining the subject is by referring to traditions of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) only and refraining from any kind of logical analogy. It is due to this reason that you will find several traditions in the book and sometimes we have explained one tradition in the light of another tradition.

This book, 'A Glance at the Beloved', outlines how recognition of Imam (a.t.f.s.) can be acquired in the era of occultation, its distinguishing features and its effects on those who possess this recognition. It shows the way to those who are captivated by the love of Imam (a.t.f.s.) and are in quest of his recognition.

It is important for us to comprehend the significance, origin and necessity of recognition in the light of traditions of the infallibles (a.s.).

The origin of recognition is a spiritual process that initiates from the heart. However its relation with the external persona of the individual cannot be denied. To enhance the discussion, it is imperative to divide this topic in 10 parts and deal with each separately. The practical aspects of these 10 parts will become clear as we progress.

1. Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 36, Pg. 296

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