

**Second Edition**

# **Who and Why?**

**Islamic Creed Answers**

**Ayatollah Sheikh Mohammad Hussein Al-Ansari**

Translated by: Mohammad Basim Alansari



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Islamic Creed Answers

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

الحمد لله رب العالمين والصلاة والسلام على محمد وآله الطيبين الطاهرين

العقيدة المهدوية بما تحمل من زخم للحياة الكاملة والرقى الانساني كانت ولا زالت هدفاً للبشرية جمعاء وذلك للنزعة الفطرية نحو الكمال والسعادة ، واختلاف المصاديق والسلوك نحو ما يعتبره الإنسان كمالاً قد يختلف من فرد لآخر ومجتمع وآخر ، ولكن هذا لا يغير مسار النزعة الفطرية نحو الكمال ، فلذا كان لابد من التعريف بالعقيدة المهدوية على هذا الأساس ، فمن خلال هذه الرؤية الشاملة تستطيع عقيدة الانتظار للمصلح العالمي التوسع والانتشار في جميع الأديان بل المجتمعات البشرية لما لها من حالة استقطاب وتمحور ، ويمكن من خلالها مد جسور التعارف الثقافي مع الغرب باستخدام لغة يفهمها الغربيون لننتقل من خلال هذه الدراسة الى ايجاد صبغة مشتركة للتعاون المعرفي وحوار الحضارات.

والكتاب الذي بين يديك عزيزي القارئ لشيخنا الأستاذ سماحة الشيخ محمد حسين الأنصاري دامت بركاته هو عرض للعقيدة المهدوية بأسلوب يتناسق مع الذهنية الأوروبية وطرح يتناغم مع تطلعات الشعوب الغربية.

ومركز الدراسات التخصصية في الإمام المهدي عليه السلام إذ يقدم هذا الكتاب للشباب المثقف الغربي والجاليات الناطقة باللغة الانكليزية فإنه يبارك سماحة الأستاذ المؤلف مبادرته الطيبة هذه ويسأل الله تعالى أن يزيد في توفيقه لخدمة مذهب أهل البيت عليهم السلام ونشر العقيدة المهدوية.

نسأله تعالى أن يجعلنا جميعاً من أنصار سيدنا ومولانا صاحب العصر والزمان إنه نعم المولى ونعم النصير

السيد محمد القبانجي

مدير مركز الدراسات التخصصية في الامام المهدي عليه السلام

## **Foreword**

**By: His Eminence Allama Sayed Mohammad al-Qubanchi**

**Director-General**

**Centre for Specialist Studies about Imam Mahdi**

**Under the wing of Supreme Religious Authority (Marje'ya)**

**of Grand Ayatollah Sayed Ali al-Sistani, Najaf al-Ashraf**

In the name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful

All praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds

Peace and salutations be upon Mohammad and his purified Progeny

The belief in a saviour contains a great motivation for striving towards a better life and advancement. Therefore, it has become and continues to be an aim for all humanity because of the natural desire of mankind to achieve perfection and happiness. Though, a variation in ideas exists due to the differences of individuals' or societies' perspectives and philosophies. Granting, they all share that natural desire to grow towards perfection. The belief in Imam Mahdi as saviour can be defined through this widely spread notion of looking for a global reformer to achieve peace. Especially that most religions and cultures consider this idea as part of their schools of thought. Hence, a serious engagement about this issue with the world including

the Western part using their language can provide the common ground for building cultural bridges and dialogue.

Dear reader: this book, ‘Who and Why? Islamic Creed Answers’, was authored by our master and professor, His Eminence Sheikh Mohammad Hussein al-Ansari (May his blessings continue) to present the most important issues surrounding Imam Mahdi in a style that suits the Western audience and engages their ambitions.

The Centre for Specialist Studies about Imam Mahdi proudly presents this book to the educated Western youth and English-speaking communities while commending its Eminent Scholar and Author for his virtuous project and asks Allah to increase his success in serving the School of Ahlul Bayt as well as spreading the message of Imam Mahdi.

We pray to His Almighty to grant us all the blessing of being amongst the companions of our Master, Leader and the Imam of our time as He is the best Lord and the best Support.

Sayed Mohammad al-Qubanchi

Director-General of Centre for Specialist Studies about Imam Mahdi

## Introduction

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds

O Allah, salute and bless Mohammad and the Progeny of Mohammad

Humans have always strived for perfection by initiating cultural or legal structures that shape their societies and address any differences they may have. Islam aims to achieve the ultimate goal of success for humanity by creating an ideal society. A society that is based on moral principles and values stemmed from the Creator of the universe. In other words, it introduces a set of guidelines set by God to ensure the optimisation of life and living conditions for all creation. This is achieved through a notion of unity, understanding and mutual love of one another which is sincere at its core and humanitarian in its outlook.

Unfortunately however, many Muslims today are far from this model including some supposed scholars or preachers who are fuelling the fire of hatred against Islam the religion and those who follow it rather than helping it. They are ready to go as far as burning innocent people by allowing their 'religious' decrees to be used as excuses for mass murder. Likewise, there are the so-called educated elite, some live in

fantasies and have learnt one concept while overlooking many others. For instance, they may be prepared to die for someone they love and if they hate someone they are prepared to destroy them either with words or actions. The result of which has clearly divided the Muslim collective 'Umma'.

In the midst of a fractured Umma, a disaster has manifested. This disaster has, on the one hand, seen ordinary people unjustly claiming divine roles and positions of guidance to the masses. On the other hand, the disaster has manifested with the existence of tyranny and oppression throughout the Muslim world. Some claim ownership of absolute power and abuse their positions, others initiate and participate in bloody coups to replace their tyrants and in doing so sell their country to colonial powers.

All these circumstances drive one to shed some light on the basics of Islam and what one is ought to believe in and hold on to during these troubled times. Importantly, it presents substantiative arguments about who Muslims should follow during these times. In doing so it not only enriches but equips you (in particular the youth) with the understanding to navigate through the complications and challenges you may find yourself experiencing day to day. Ultimately, we hope armed with the knowledge and understanding you will stay steadfast on the right path until the reappearance of Imam Al Mahdi (as) which we hope is near. May Allah hasten his return to fill the world with justice and peace!



So please read this book attentively and wholeheartedly without paying attention to who wrote it but rather on what is being said so you can be of those who Allah states:

*“...listen to the words and follow the best of it. Those are guided by Allah, and those are the ones endowed with intellect (people of understanding).”<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> Quran, Zumar, 18.



## **Part I: What are the principles of Islam?**

### **Phase I: Know God (Allah)!**

#### **I.1. Who is God?**

The first step on the path to seek rightness and truth is curiosity about the origin of all creation, including one's self. This curiosity, when accompanied with thought and vision, will eventually lead us to God. This is an obvious concept that is sometimes overlooked even by Muslims themselves. Otherwise, how can one follow a path without knowing its origin?

The first step towards God is the statement "There is no God but Allah"! It starts with denouncing any notion of any God that might come to one's view either of a physical or imaginary nature; then accepting the only true God through reason, logic and research. In other words, a God that does not share any of His characteristics with any materialistic creations and their limited multidimensional perception.

The first line that Prophet Mohammad (as) used in leading people towards Allah was simply:

*“Oh People! Say there is no god but Allah and you shall succeed”<sup>2</sup>*

This notion has been used by every messenger of Allah in his message, as the verse states:

*“We have revealed to every messenger that we sent before you: that there is no god but me, so worship me”<sup>3</sup>*

So God is the all-knowing, unique and almighty creator and sustainer of the universe known in the Islamic faith as Allah.

## **I.2. Why is it necessary to know God?**

It is important to know God in order for one to know the origin of the existence, the wisdom of life and the ultimate destiny. It is also a necessity to know God to know religion and follow the right order that He has formed in order for one to reach perfection. As it is the ultimate goal of all creations to reach the perfection in their endeavours.

Imam Ali (as) also states: “The beginning of religion is to know Him (Allah)”<sup>4</sup>. When he was once asked about the minimum level of knowledge of Allah, he replied:

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<sup>2</sup> Narrated by Musnad Imam Ahmad, al-Baihaqi in al-Dalaeal, al-Tabari in his Tareekh, etc.

<sup>3</sup> Quran, Prophets Chapter, Verse 25.

*“To confirm that there is no god except Him; that there is no one like Him neither similar to Him; that He is eternal, proven, existing and never absent; and that there is nothing resembling Him.”<sup>5</sup>*

The minimum requirements in knowing Allah are therefore:

1. Accepting the truth of His existence
2. That He is ‘wajib al-wojood’ i.e. His eternal independent existence is a necessity
3. Believing in His proven characteristics that are based on His unlimited knowledge and power
4. Rejecting any characteristics of need and/or incidence in Him, and
5. That injustice or any hideous or repulsive action or characteristic is not attributed to Him.

At a minimum the knowledge expressed in the above five points should form the conscious conviction of the responsible person. As a test, he or she should be able to explain these beliefs in a convincing manner irrespective of the words used.<sup>6</sup>

Let’s take this point further by quoting a famous, well accepted Prayer that has been narrated from the Imams:

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<sup>4</sup> Nahjul Balaghah, Sermon 39.

<sup>5</sup> Al-Kulaini, Usool al-Kafi, Tawheed Chapter, p 1.

<sup>6</sup> Al-Ansari, Sheikh al-Adham, Faraed al-Usool, Vol 1, p 564-568. Al-Shahedain, al-Alfeya and al-Nafleya, p 38. Al-Karky, al-Resalah al-Jafarya, Vol1, p 80.

*“O Allah, introduce me to Yourself; because if You do not introduce me to Yourself then I would not know Your messenger.*

*O Allah, introduce me to Your Messenger, because if You do not introduce me to Your Messenger then I would not know Your Proof.*

*O Allah, introduce me to Your Proof, because if You do not introduce me to Your Proof then I would be misled about my religion.”<sup>7</sup>*

It is obvious through this passage that the whole request revolves around knowing Allah (s.w.t). Without this step, then the Prophet (as) cannot be really known, which is the basis of knowing Allah’s Proofs and without them, all would be going astray from true faith.

This brings a vital question to mind and that is: How do we pray to Allah to introduce us to Him, while our request from Him can only be made when we know Him? Otherwise, how are we praying to Him?

Two answers can be given here. Firstly, the quick answer which makes the assumption that we have only known of Him through our logic and now we seek further knowledge about Him. The second answer can be divided into two points:

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<sup>7</sup> Al-Sadooq, Kamal al-deen wa Itmam al-Neama, p 342. Al-Kulaini, al-Kafi, 377/1.

1. There is a difference between knowing something and having knowledge about it. This is because knowing of that concept can be a result of an imaginary perception that should be followed by knowledge. In other words, the person has known of His existence first, and then has asked Him to grant him the understanding to know him then follow him.
2. The real dimension of this question is the consequence of that knowledge. In other words, knowing Allah alone without knowing the path to Him can be misleading and therefore this supplication is seeking the guidance from Allah for the person to recognise his path and know him through the right sources. As Imam Baqir (as) once told one of his companions:

*“Verily only the person who knows Allah worships Him; and the person who does not know Him is misled in his worship”.*

The companion asks what the meaning of knowing Allah is, the Imam replied:

*“Believing in Allah, the exalted, believing in His Messenger and following Ali as the guardian and Imam as well as the Guided Imams. Also, by denouncing, in front of Allah, their enemies. This is how Allah can be known.”*<sup>8</sup>

This will lead us to the next two phases in this brief.

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<sup>8</sup> Al-Kulaini, al-Kafi, 180/1.





## Phase II: Know God's Messenger (Prophet)

### II.1. Who is the Prophet?

The important step that connects all knowledge is that of Prophethood, since they must first know that a particular person is a Prophet of God to prove he is a Messenger and that message is from God. The status of Prophethood must be proven first then the legitimacy of the message. From amongst the Prophets and Messengers there were those with the status of 'Ulu Al-Azm' or 'Messengers sent to all of humanity'.

A verse in the Quran revealed their names clearly:

*"We took from the prophets their covenant and from you and from Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus son of Mary."*<sup>9</sup>

All of these Prophets and Messengers are faithful servants of Allah. Our belief as in the verse:

*"All believe in Allah and His angels, His Books and His Messengers and do not differentiate between any of the Messengers."*<sup>10</sup>

Further the Almighty said:

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<sup>9</sup> Quran, Ahzab, 7.

<sup>10</sup> Quran, Baqarah, 285.

*“Messengers that We have mentioned unto you before; and  
Messengers we have not.”<sup>11</sup>*

It is our belief that they numbered about 124,000 Prophets and 124,000 guardians. Each Prophet had appointed a trustee as a guardian for his nation by direct order of God<sup>12</sup>.

## **II.2. Why is it necessary to know the Prophet?**

The Prophet is our direct connection to God besides our indirect connection through logic. We believe in their statements and guidance after accepting their evidence from Allah (s.w.t). We know that they were sent to guide us to the right path. They are infallible and obeying them is obeying Allah (s.w.t), as both their statements and actions reveal the message of Allah.

It is necessary to state here that knowledge comes as the first priority, even to obligatory prayers. This is because being ignorant of the status and characteristics of God and His messengers whilst having easy access to knowledge is considered as a form of denouncing their guidance and distancing one's self from them. This lack of knowledge can be considered a shortcoming, which critically needs to be addressed.

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<sup>11</sup> Quran, Nisa, 146.

<sup>12</sup> Al-Sadooq, Iateqadat, p 92.

So as mentioned previously, we seek assistance from Allah to enable us to know Him first and foremost. Then through Him to know His Prophet and Messengers the final of whom is Mohammad bin Abdullah (may Allah bless him and his family) who conveyed the Religion of Allah, Islam and his eternal miracle the Holy Quran.

The minimum requirements for a Muslim are to instil the following principles that were revealed unto the Prophet (Allah blesses him and his family) <sup>13</sup>:

- Belief in the notion of creation and resurrection (physical resurrection)
- Carrying out acts of worship
- Acknowledging that questioning and punishment will occur after death
- Conviction that we will be interrogated on the Day of Judgement
- Understanding what the straight path is
- Having awareness of the balance of deeds
- Holding true that Heaven and Hell exist

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<sup>13</sup> Al-Ansari, Sheikh al-Adham, Faraed al-Usool, Vol 1, p 564-568.



## **Phase III: Know God's Proof (Imam)**

### **III.1. Who is the Imam?**

### **III.2. Why is it necessary to know the Imam?**

These two questions are inter-related as knowing who the Imam is stems from knowing the necessity for his role; hence his direct appointment through the Prophet by the direct command of Allah.

In the narration mentioned previously by Imam Baqir (as):

*“O Allah, introduce me to Yourself; because if You do not introduce me to Yourself then I would not know Your messenger.*

*O Allah, introduce me to Your Messenger, because if You do not introduce me to Your Messenger then I would not know Your Proof.*

*O Allah, introduce me to Your Proof, because if You do not introduce me to Your Proof then I would be misled about my religion.”<sup>14</sup>*

One first ought to know God, the Prophet and then the Proof. It is clear from the narration that if we do not know them we will be led

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<sup>14</sup> Al-Sadooq, Kamal al-deen wa Itmam al-Neama, p 342. Al-Kulaini, al-Kafi, 377/1.

astray. It is interesting to note that this notion is very similar to the statement of the Prophet which has been narrated by all Muslims in which he states:

*“whoever dies without knowing the Imam of his time, then he has died as an ignorant person.”<sup>15</sup>*

**So who is this Imam of the time that is mentioned in these narrations or the Proof that is mentioned by the above supplication?**

This question can be answered by using very basic logic:

No Muslim claims that if anyone does not know particular individuals even the caliphs themselves, then that person is astray. Therefore, there should be someone who is meant in these statements that we need to identify and follow. If we focus deeply on the prayer narrated by Imam Baqir (as), then we notice that everything revolves around Allah (s.w.t). So the request is from Allah, the requester is the servant of Allah and knowledge (of the Imam) is requested from Allah. Furthermore, the messenger is the Messenger of Allah and the Proof is that of Allah. Hence, this prayer can be summarised carefully to mean “la ilaha illa Allah” or there is no god but Allah. It contains real

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<sup>15</sup> Yanabea al-Mawada, Vol 3, p 372. Tabaqat al-Hanafia, p 457. Other references also mention it in various formats.

knowledge about Allah, understanding the pure oneness of Allah (Tawheed) and shows practical worship of Allah.

This understanding then can lead one to know the whole universe and whatever it contains as it is the basis of all concepts, as Imam Ali states: “whoever knows himself, knows Allah”<sup>16</sup>. This is because there should be a need (for instance the search for human perfection) in order to spark the flame of curiosity and the motivation to pursue it. In carrying out the prayer – one should look at his/her existence and understand the notion of existence itself before searching deeper into the universe to seek the truth and understand the aim of its existence. This step is illustrated in the Quran when Allah profoundly states:

*“I was a hidden treasure, and then I liked to be known. So I created the creation to be known.”<sup>17</sup>*

After knowing about God, one should know His representatives on earth. It follows that such a representative must necessarily be present at all times on earth. Prophethood being the first of such representation of God; With the passing away of the final Prophet (Mohammad) Prophethood as a form of representative of God ended but the notion of Imamate continued as the subsequent representation of God.

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<sup>16</sup> Al-Amdi, Ghurar al-Hekam, 7946.

<sup>17</sup> Al-Sebzawari, Sharh al-Asmaa al-Husna, Vol 1, p 37. Al-Majlisi, Behar, Vol 84, p 199.

**At this moment, one should explore the dilemma of how to choose an Imam?**

After the passing away of the Prophet (saw) some people at the time concluded that a successor can only be chosen through two means:

- (i) elections or
- (ii) consultations (“shura”).

However, these people missed the essence of what it means to be the ‘successor’ of the Prophet. Allah (s.w.t) clearly states in the Quran in the verses about Adam’s creation that He told the angels: “I am placing a representative on Earth”<sup>18</sup>. This shows us more than anything that this representative can only be a Prophet (Adam in this case) or his appointed successor. In other words, by knowing God we can know His representative. Also, by knowing the Prophet, we can know his successor. We also notice that the angels during the story mentioned earlier, replied: “may you be exalted; we have no knowledge, except that which you have taught us”<sup>19</sup>. This is while Satan was expelled and cursed as a consequence of his rejection of God’s choice. This is the same trap that occurred at the time of ‘Saqifah’ when there was a gathering by some after the Prophet of Islam passed away to decide on his successor.

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<sup>18</sup> Quran, Baqarah, 30.

<sup>19</sup> Quran, Baqarah, 32.



By thinking that they could simply elect someone as a successor against what Allah (swt) has commanded and the Prophet (as) reaffirmed to us, these people fell into the same trap as mentioned above. In doing so these people demonstrated their lack of understanding the verse in the Quran which clearly states:

*“when Allah and His Prophet make a decree, then they (people) do not have a choice”<sup>20</sup>;*

This is despite the fact that the above verse is taken to be a basic concept in Islam – not having choice in a matter which has been decreed by Allah and His Prophet. Therefore, we have to know the right successor who is the Imam of the time and the one who according to the Prophet himself, us not knowing, will lead us astray. It is not suffice to just know of him as a person since non-believers knew the Prophet very well but staunchly stood against him to the point where they plotted to kill him, forcing the Prophet to leave his homeland. They continued to fight him until he was victorious and they became Muslims, either through fear or greed.

As a result, we have to be aware and know the Proof of Allah (s.w.t) exactly the same way that early believers knew the Messenger and followed him despite the consequences. This is especially relevant in current times where there is widespread mischief and corruption in the world leading people astray. In these times you see the everyday man seeking guidance from so called intelligent ones who themselves

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<sup>20</sup> Quran, al-Ahzab, 36.

have gone astray. So only knowing his ancestry does not benefit us nor does knowing that he is the Imam. We should recognise him as the Proof of Allah of his creation. Hence, the supplication clearly asks Allah (s.w.t) to grant us the knowledge about his Proof and to make us immune from going astray.

There is clear evidence to show that the original and rightful reference point after the Prophet is Ahl al-Bayt as the Prophet clearly alludes to in this famous narration cited and accepted by all Muslims unanimously:

*“I have left you with something that if you hold unto, you will never go astray after me: two weighty things, one larger than the other, the Book of Allah, a rope stretched from heaven to earth, and my progeny, the people of my home – ‘Ahl al-Bayt. They will not be separated until they come back to me in the heavens.”<sup>21, 22</sup>*

This hadith is agreed upon by Sunnis and the Shiites alike. So ponder carefully over this very significant narration. Think about the weightiness of the words especially this section – ask yourself what can be of more importance than this statement - “if you hold to, then you will not go astray after me ever” He also left us with two weighty things coupled as one, not to be followed separately or worse – one

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<sup>21</sup> Al-Muthafar, Aqaed Imamy, p 71

<sup>22</sup> Al-Termethi, Sahih, vol 2, p 308. Many other reference books also narrate the Hadith in this structure or similar words.

without the other. So with both of them together (the Quran and Ahl al-Bayt), we will never go astray! Also note the clear expression: “They will not be separated until they come back to me in the heavens”. This indicates that the person who approaches them separately and does not stick to them both together, will not find guidance. Consequently, they have been described by the Prophet as:

*“My progeny amongst you are like the Ship of Noah, whoever attached to it will reach salvation and whoever left it will reach destruction”<sup>23</sup>.*

This Hadith has also been narrated with expressions such as the “rescue ship” and “the safety for the people of Earth”. Whoever leaves them will drown in the arguments of error and would not be safe from loss. To restrict the interpretation of this narration to mean only love them without taking their statements and actions as a guide is escaping from the truth.

All Muslim scholars agree that the Prophet has talked about twelve successors after him but most of the Muslims unfortunately fail to name them. The common agreement is based on widely accepted hadiths that have been narrated by major references about the Prophet emphasising that his successors are twelve in number. Few will be mentioned here to illustrate this point.

1. Jabber bin Sumrah has narrated:

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<sup>23</sup> Sebt ibn al-Jawzi, Tathkeratul Khawas, p 323.

*“My father and I were visiting the Prophet when I heard him stating: “There will be twelve successors after me. All of them are from ...” then he whispered the end part; so I asked my father what did the Prophet whisper? My father said that the Prophet said: “All of them are from Bani Hashem.”*<sup>24</sup>

The same narration has been repeated on other authentic hadith books but with “All of them are from Quraish” at the end.<sup>25</sup>

2. Abdullah bin Masood has narrated:

*“Prophet of Allah stated: “My successors are twelve, the same number as the elders of the Israelites”.*<sup>26</sup>

3. Anas bin Malik has narrated:

*“Prophet of Allah stated: “This Religion will continue to exist until the twelfth leader from Quraish. When they all finish, then Earth will be destroyed along all its inhabitants”.*<sup>27</sup>

The answer to those who question as to why the Quran does not mention them by name directly is clear in this narration by Abu Basir:

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<sup>24</sup> Yanabea al-Mawadah, p 445.

<sup>25</sup> Sahih al- Bukhari, vol 4, p 175. Sahih Muslim, vol 2, p 191. Etc.

<sup>26</sup> Al-Kanji al-Shafei, Yanabea al-Mawada, p 258.

<sup>27</sup> Al-Halabi, Taqreeb al-Maaref, vol 53, p 173. Aalam al-Wara, p 36.

*“I asked Abu Abdullah [Imam Sadeq] (peace be upon him) about the words of God Almighty: "Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those of you with authority"<sup>28</sup>, he said: “It was revealed about Ali bin Abu Talib and Hassan and Hussein (peace be upon them)”. I told him that people say why it did not name Ali and his household (peace be upon them) in the book of God Almighty? He said: “Tell them that prayer descended upon the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and his family) but God did not mention three or four rukas; till the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and his family) is the one who explained it to them. And Zakat was revealed to him but God did not name that for each forty dirhams, you have to pay a dirham; till the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and his family) is the one who explained it to them. And the pilgrimage was revealed but God did not say to them: do the Tawaf seven times; till the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and his family) is the one who explained it to them. And "obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those of you with authority" was revealed about Ali, Hassan and Hussein. So the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and his family) said: “whomever I am his master, then Ali is his master”. ”<sup>29</sup>*

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<sup>28</sup> Quran, Nisa, 59.

<sup>29</sup> Al-Kulaini, al-Kafo, vol 1, p 286.

The names of the twelve successors after the Prophet have been proven through strong evidence by Shia scholars and they are:

- Ali bin Abu Talib, cousin of the Prophet and the husband of his daughter, Fatima.
- Hassan bin Ali and son of Lady Fatima
- Hussein bin Ali and son of Lady Fatima
- Ali bin Hussein Zain Alabideen
- Mohammad bin Ali al-Baqir
- Jafar bin Mohammad al-Sadiq
- Musa bin Jafar al-Kadhim
- Ali bin Musa al-Redha
- Mohammad bin Ali al-Jawad
- Ali bin Mohammad al-Hadi
- Hassan bin Ali al-Askari
- Al-Mahdi bin Hassan al-Hujjah. The proof and Imam of our time.

### **Who is the Proof (Imam) of our time then and why?**

It should be stated at the beginning that all Muslim scholars agree that at the end of time, the Mahdi (as) will rise who is the Proof from Allah. Shia scholars go further to state that he is living and present but hidden from view by people. We can identify him based on the many

narrations that talk about him personally. One such narration is by a companion of Imam Hassan al-Askari, who said that:

*“One day, we were forty men in Hassan bin Ali’s house (the 11<sup>th</sup> Imam), when he showed us his son and said: “this is your Imam after me and my successor upon you so obey him. Do not divide up in your religions and then get destroyed. Verily, you will not see him after today” then we left his house and after few days, he (Imam Hassan) passed away.”*<sup>30</sup>

The Almighty said:

*“Allah has promised those who have believed among you and done righteous deeds that He will surely grant them succession [to authority] upon the earth just as He granted it to those before them and that He will surely establish for them [therein] their religion which He has preferred for them and that He will surely substitute for them, after their fear, security, [for] they worship Me”*<sup>31</sup>

This verse shows us clearly that there will be some people who believe in God that will succeed on Earth as it is a promise by God. The successor and Proof amongst the believers cannot be a Prophet as Prophethood came to an end with the death of our Prophet

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<sup>30</sup> Al-Sadooq, Kamal al-Deen, Vol 2, p 435.

<sup>31</sup> Quran, Noor, 55.

Muhammad the Prophet of mercy (may Allah bless him and his family). Therefore the person who will lead the believers at the end of the time has to be:

- (i) Appointed by God
- (ii) Reaffirmed by the Prophet
- (iii) From the Prophet's descendants, and
- (iv) Does not contradict the character and teachings of the Prophet

This person is none other than the twelve Imam and final Proof of God, Imam Mahdi (peace be upon him).

Finally, let us end with this narration and take it as a guide for our lives so that we can always practice piety and express ourselves in the best manner, as well as deal with people in our wider society with wisdom, politeness and humbleness. It has been narrated that a companion of Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him) has mentioned to the Imam that some of his Shia (followers) have gone astray and were performing prohibited acts while saying that the religion is indeed knowledge so if you know your Imam, then do whatever you like!

Imam Sadiq replied:

*“To God we belong and to Him we shall return! [This sentence is said when showing great sorrow] The unbelievers have claimed a concept that they do not understand. It was said: Seek knowledge and then do*



*whatever you like from good deeds as it will be accepted from you, because Allah does not accept a deed of any person without proper knowledge. If a man performed all good deeds and fasted all his life, stayed up every night worshipping, spent all his wealth in charity for the sake of Allah and performed only what pleases Allah all his life but did not know his Prophet who conveyed all these obligations, he did not believe him and did not have faith in him, and he did not recognise the Imam of his time that Allah has made it obligatory upon him to obey.; then all his deeds will not benefit him even a bit from Allah's perspective. Allah described these people and said: "We shall turn unto the work they did and make it scattered motes." <sup>32</sup> <sup>33</sup>.*

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<sup>32</sup> Quran, al-Furqan, 23.

<sup>33</sup> Al-Tabrasi, Mustadrak al-Wasael, vol 1, p 174.



## Part II: Who should we follow currently? Why?

The words of God will be our guide through this journey to identify the one who we ought to follow and to take as our lead to be safe during this life and the hereafter.

*“Allah’s remnant with you is better for you if you are believers; and I am not a keeper over you.”<sup>34</sup>*

We should start by referring back to the verses leading to this honoured verse to be able to reflect thoroughly in our interpretation. These verses mention the story of Shoaib, the Prophet (peace be upon our Prophet and his family and peace be upon him), in his city, which God sent him to guide. It states:

*“And unto Midian (We sent) their brother Shoaib. He said: O my people! Serve Allah. Ye have no other Allah save Him! And give not short measure and short weight. Lo! I see you well-to-do, and lo! I fear for you the doom of a besetting Day.”<sup>35</sup>*

Then Shoaib warned them that this is one of the causes of discontent and indignation of God, so he said to them:

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<sup>34</sup> Quran, Hood, 86.

<sup>35</sup> Quran, Hood, 84.

*“O my people! Give full measure and full weight in justice, and wrong not people in respect of their goods. And do not evil in the earth, causing corruption.”<sup>36</sup>*

Then he told them:

*“Allah’s remnant with you is better for you if you are believers; and I am not a keeper over you.”<sup>37</sup>*

Ibn Abbas said that this means what God has kept for you after conducting proper transactions and being honest with weighing goods is better for you than what you take through lies and fake transactions. Mujahid has said: the remnant of God (as mentioned in the above verse) means obedience to God is best for you. It was said that the remnant of God means that what God kept of your rewards in the Hereafter is better for you than what you get from unlawful money in this world.<sup>38</sup>

These statements are in line with the story of Shoaib and his people but do they contain the whole point of this verse?

If we reviewed some of the other interpretations it becomes clear that the meaning exceeds that of the above statements based on the understanding of other scholars. Ibn al-Jawzi mentions eight different possible meaning by various scholars:

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<sup>36</sup> Quran, Hood, 85.

<sup>37</sup> Quran, Hood, 86.

<sup>38</sup> Al-Shehhi, al-Khazen, vol 3, p 476.

*“Meaning of this verse has eight possibilities: “Allah’s remnant with you is better for you”<sup>39</sup>*

1. That which God has kept for you after conducting proper transactions and being honest with weighing goods is better for you than what you take through lies and fake transactions (as stated by Ibn Abbas).
2. Sustenance of God is better for you. This was also narrated by Ibn Abbas and as stated by Sufian.
3. Obedience to God is best for you (as stated by Mujahid and al-Zajaj).
4. Your luck from God is better for you (as stated by Qatada).
5. God's mercy is better for you. (as stated by Ibn Zayd).
6. Commandment of God is better for you (as stated by al-Rabea).
7. Reward of God in the Hereafter is better for you. (as stated by Muqatel).
8. Monitoring of God is best for you (as stated by al-Fara).

The verse was also recited by Hassan al-Basri differently to read: “Piety of God is better for you”.

The meaning of “if you are believers” is putting the condition of faith for the above to be better for them. This is due to the fact that if they were believers in God Almighty, they would know the truth of what he says.

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<sup>39</sup> Quran, Hood, 86.

The meaning of “and I am not a keeper over you” has three points of view:

1. I was not ordered to fight you or force you into faith.
2. I was not ordered to watch over you while you are doing business to stop you from wrong doing.
3. I will not protect you from the punishment of God if it was brought upon you”.<sup>40</sup>

Ibn al-Arabi has also said: “Allah’s remnant with you is better for you if you are believers”. This means that if you believe in the survival of anything, then know that what Allah keeps for you of perfection, heavenly happiness, knowledge and practical gains is better for you than those mortal gains which you go through difficulties to gain and keep them. You then leave them all behind upon death and would not take them with you except the consequences of your deeds as well as the associated punishment.<sup>41</sup>

It is clear from the above statements that we cannot take the “remnant of Allah” on its face value as we have to appreciate the existence of a deleted concept within the verse. Thus, the commentators of Quran have gone to various lengths in their estimation of this hidden concept. Some claim that it means obedience, others claim it refers to waiting for His rewards, while others claim that it refers to goodness or gains, etc. The meaning should not be limited to these statements

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<sup>40</sup> Ibn al-Jawzi, *Zad al-Maseer fi Ilm al-Tafseer*.

<sup>41</sup> Ibn al-Arabi, *Tafseer al-Quran*.

as it ought to be taken as a general principle. This has been the method of scholars in dealing with such verses. Basically, one should not stop at the obvious words of the verse but to go deeper and reflect on the holy verse. In order for us to think deeper into the verse we ask: why has God added the word God to the remnant? stating “remnant of Allah”!

Every concept’s value is showed through the title added to it. For example, one says the house of God and the paradise of God. This does not mean that the house where God lives but rather to declare its honour and status as God is worshiped within it more than any other place. Hence it can be attributed to Him and is the same as when one says Abdullah or servant of God. Thus, If it is acceptable for ‘remnant’ to be the gains that are attributed to God, then the verse can be extended to mean the true servant of God who is sincere in his actions and intentions as he is the remnant of the Prophets and Messengers of God. He is the remnant of God’s laws and the remnant of the religion of God, especially that “the remnant is the legacy of something that has passed, meaning the remnant of the graces of God.”<sup>42</sup>

This concept is further acceptable if we agree with the notion that remnant refers to obedience of God. This is because obedience is better for the obeying person himself, while the purified obeying

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<sup>42</sup> Al-Tosi, Tafseer al-Tebyan.

person is the best for himself and the people. As God stated in the Quran when Yusuf told his inmates:

*“It never was for us to attribute aught as partner to Allah.  
This is of the bounty of Allah unto us (the seed of Abraham)  
and unto mankind”*<sup>43</sup>

So their distance from attributing partners to Allah is a general mercy upon them as Prophets as well as upon the public as followers, so please reflect on this verse further. This becomes more apparent if the meaning of the word “remnant” is noted. The word (remnant) is:

*“a universal word associated with many meanings in the Arabic language such as: continuity as opposed to being perished. Adding (remnant) to Allah can be taken in any of its meanings universally, and is used to show the honour and the blessing of the concept. It also shows that this remnant is from his mercy or by his orders.”*<sup>44</sup>

Based on this, it is correct to expand the meaning to what al-Janebethi has said in his commentary:

*“the remnant of Allah are his successors in the land, those who call you to what is better for you than your leaders in*

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<sup>43</sup> Quran, Yusuf, 83.

<sup>44</sup> Ibn Aashor, Tafseer al-Tahreer wa al-Tanweer, vol 13, p 140-141.



*blasphemy, so he (Shoaib) used this statement to refer to himself.”<sup>45</sup>*

Majlisi states:

*“Most commentators interpreted the "remnant of God" as referring to:*

- *That which God reserved for them of bounties because they kept away from what was prohibited such as Cheating in weights and measures*
- *Or keep God blesses over them;*
- *Or the rewards of the eternal Hereafter*

*Whereas the verse meant keeping the Prophets and the successors on Earth to guide people, or the guardians and Imams who are the remnants of the Prophets in their nations.”<sup>46</sup>*

This is also evident in the narration about the birth of Imam Ridha (as). Imam Kadhim gave him (Imam Ridha) to his mother Najma and said: "Take him as he is the remnant of Allah in His land."<sup>47</sup> Salim bin Qays has also narrated that:

*“Ali bin Abu Talib (peace be upon him) came out and we gathered around him in the mosque, then he said: "Ask me*

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<sup>45</sup> Al-Janebethi, Tafseer Bayan al-Saada fi Maqamat al-Ibada.

<sup>46</sup> Al-Majlisi, al-Bihar, vol 24, Sec 56, p 211-212.

<sup>47</sup> Al-Majlisi, al-Bihar, vol 24, sec 56, p 212.

*before you lose me! Ask me about the Quran, as the Quran contains the knowledge of all mankind, it does not leave any statements for any talker and no one knows its interpretation except Allah and those firmly grounded in knowledge. They are not just one person while the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and his family) was one of them. Allah taught the Messenger the Quran and he taught me it and it will continue within Prophet's descendants till the final day." Then he recited: "A remnant of that which the house of Moses and the house of Aaron left behind, the angels bearing it."<sup>48</sup> I am to the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and his family) like Aaron to Moses, but without prophecy. Knowledge will stay in our descendants till the final day." Then he recited: "He made it a word enduring among his descendants."<sup>49</sup> Then he said: "The Messenger of God was the descendant of Abraham and we, Alul Bayt (the people of the house) are the descendants of Abraham and Mohammad." "<sup>50</sup>*

It was also narrated from Imam Baqir (peace be upon him)

*"The first statement that the Qaem (Mahdi) (peace be upon him) will state is this verse 'Allah's remnant with you is better for you if you are believers'. Then he will say 'I am*

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<sup>48</sup> Quran, Baqarah, 248.

<sup>49</sup> Quran, Zokhruf, 28.

<sup>50</sup> Al-Majlisi, al-Bihar, vol 24, p 179. Kanz al-Fawaed, p 290.

*the Remnant of Allah, His Proof and His Successor upon you’! Then every Muslim will recognize him and say: ‘Peace upon you, the Remnant of Allah on His land.’”<sup>51</sup>*

These narrations, amongst many others, made the title of the ‘Remnant of Allah’ to be used specifically for the twelfth Imam (peace be upon him) on the grounds that he is the remnant of the Message (Islam) and the remnant of God on Earth.

*“Allah has promised those who believe and perform good deeds that He will surely make them to succeed on Earth the same way as He caused those who were before them to succeed and that He will surely establish for them their religion which He has approved for them; and will give them in exchange, safety after their fear. They serve Me. They ascribe no thing as partner unto Me.”<sup>52</sup>*

Allah has bestowed his blessings on humanity by appointing direct guides to reveal his messages to them as well as to lead them towards inner peace, peace in society and around the globe. God insists here that He will complete his mercy by granting these representatives, which He has appointed, to establish His religion on this Earth and spread peace and justice.

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<sup>51</sup> Ikmal al-Deen, p 310.

<sup>52</sup> Quran, Noor, 55.

This is an extension to the will of God to appoint Adam as His successor on Earth, who was followed by thousands of Prophets until the Prophet of Islam. Therefore, because Prophethood has ended by our Prophet Muhammad, the Prophet of mercy (may Allah bless him and his family), God's successor amongst the believers today cannot be a Prophet. Hence the successor and proof of Allah on Earth will not be a Prophet, rather someone directly appointed by the Prophet by the order of Allah (swt).

None of the Muslims claims this position for anyone except those who use the Prophet's many narrations including that of the allegiance of Ghadeer, which was reported by more than 120,000 companions<sup>53</sup>, to state the Ali was the rightful heir and successor of the Prophet. Then Ali appointed his successor and so on, till the twelfth successor as the Prophet has promised. All Muslim scholars agree that the last successor of the Prophet is Imam Mahdi, who is from the direct descendants of the Prophet from his daughter Fatima and Ali, although they may differ on the details of his characteristics.

*“Lo! We revealed it on the Night of Predestination. Ah,  
what will convey unto thee what the Night of  
Predestination is! The Night of Predestination is better  
than a thousand months. The angels and the Spirit descend*

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<sup>53</sup> For further details please refer to the book ‘al-Ghadeer’ by Allamah Amini.

*therein, by the permission of their Lord, with all decrees.*

*(The night is) Peace until the rising of the dawn.”<sup>54</sup>*

The Night of Predestination as all are aware, was not restricted to the time of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and his family), be aware of that, O Muslim. God herein is informing us of the descension of the angels, but do we ask ourselves upon whom do the angels and the Spirit descend while Prophet Mohammad has already passed away? And with what they descend while the Revelation has ended, the Message was completed, the Religion was fulfilled and Allah was pleased for Islam to be our Faith? Have you considered these questions, my Muslim brother/sister?

It should be the case that this person, whom the angels and Spirit descend upon, is the one whose appointment complemented the religion and Islam was accepted to be our religion. All of this indicates the issue of guardianship that continued after the Prophet through his appointed successors, the proofs of Allah. In other words, it is through knowing the Proof that the religion was completed and Allah was pleased for Islam to be our Faith. This is not to say that there is a Prophet or Messenger after Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him and his family) as he says, "no prophet after me"<sup>55</sup>. Allah describes His Messenger in His Holy Book as: "the Seal of the Prophets"<sup>56</sup> because the descent of the angels is not just upon Prophets

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<sup>54</sup> Quran, Qadr, 1-5.

<sup>55</sup> Bukhari, Sahih, vol 6, p 3.

<sup>56</sup> Quran, al-Ahzab, 40.

and Messengers, so be aware. How? The Blessed Virgin Mary is a clear example, as revealed by the Holy Quran explicitly, she is not a Prophet but the Quran declares:

*“Then We sent unto her Our Spirit and it assumed for her the likeness of a perfect man.”<sup>57</sup>*

Many more examples are contained within the Quran. These include those such as the stories of Taloot, Abraham and Loot, where ordinary people saw the angels and/or talked to them<sup>58</sup>. This concept is also mentioned in many narrations about the companions of the Prophet and others which is referred to by Ibn Taymiya when he said:

*“dignities of companions and followers after them, and other righteous people are too many, such as Usayd bin Hudhayr who was reciting the Surah of al-Kahf when a shade came down from the sky like canopy, which contained something like the saddle; They were the Angels who descended because of his recitation. The angels also used to greet Imran bin Husayn.”<sup>59</sup>*

These accounts amongst others indicate that the descent of the angels upon people other than the Prophets is not strange and is accepted by all Muslim scholars. This is said here because of the fear of someone objecting by stating that angels only descend on a Prophet and

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<sup>57</sup> Quran, Mariam, 17.

<sup>58</sup> Please refer to Sura al-Tharyat in the Holy Quran.

<sup>59</sup> Ibn Taymiyah, Majmoat Fatawa Ibn Taymiyah, vol 11, p 276.

prophecy was ended with Mohammad (may Allah bless him and his family).

Returning to our initial point commentating on Surah of Qadr, Allah (s.w.t) says that angels and the Spirit descend on the Night of Predestination each year with a decree. Therefore, they must come down on the one who takes the place of the Prophet Mohammad (may Allah bless him and his family)! This position is not claimed by any of the Muslims worldwide as it is impossible for anyone to make such a remarkable claim. The only explanation can be found within the Shia Twelvers.

The Shia Twelvers believe in the existence of the person who is the Leader, Imam and the Twelfth Successor of the Prophet amongst the Imams which are unfortunately only mentioned by number for the rest of the Muslims. This has led to people not being able to access him because of the negligence that people had towards the eleven Imams who were before him, as we pointed out before. Glory to Allah, the Night of Predestination is indicative of his presence as the decrees are revealed to him by the permission of God and perhaps one of the great blessings of this significant Night is to prove this point.

In summary, there are five premises to be deducted from this discussion and form the basis of the conclusion:

- a) The Night of Predestination is the best and most special night of the year, which has special characteristics

- b) It is not limited to any particular time but it is a continuous concept as the verb used refers to current and future action
- c) The descending of the angels and the Spirit is definite and their descent is not meaningless
- d) They carry decrees of all God's orders as mentioned clearly in the verse;
- e) The person receiving them has to be the rightful successor of the Prophet and worthy of such a great descent;

Therefore, these premises can lead us to state that there is no person that exists on Earth with significant qualities to enable him to receive such a great honour except Imam Mahdi. This is also connected to the verse

*“O you who believe! Obey Allah, and obey the messenger and those of you who are in authority (the ones with the decree).”<sup>60</sup>*

So the authority is the Imam as he is the one who received the decrees from Allah, and he is the one who is the closest to the Prophet to the extent that Allah declares that the obedience to His Almighty is continued through the obedience of the Prophet and the Imams; while placing the Imams in the same category as the Prophet at the end of the same verse by stating:

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<sup>60</sup> Quran, Nisa, 59.



*“and if you have a dispute concerning any matter, refer it to Allah and the messenger if you are (in truth) believers in Allah and the Last Day. That is better and more seemly in the end.”*<sup>61</sup>

Then after few verses, God comes back to the topic to emphasise the importance of this leadership by stating:

*“And if any tidings, whether of safety or fear, come unto them, they noise it abroad, whereas if they had referred it to the messenger and to those of them who are in authority, those among them who are able to think out the matter would have known it. If it had not been for the grace of Allah upon you and His mercy ye would have followed Satan, save a few (of you).”*<sup>62</sup>

This picture was further clarified when Allah said:

*“Your guardian can be only Allah; and His messenger and those who believe, who establish worship and pay the poor rate while bowing down (in prayer).”*<sup>63</sup>

It is noticeable here that Allah chose the word ‘innama’ which is an Arabic word meaning absolute restriction. So, the guardianship was restricted to only Allah, His Prophet and those people who carry these

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<sup>61</sup> Quran, Nisa, 59.

<sup>62</sup> Quran, Nisa, 83.

<sup>63</sup> Quran, Maedah, 55.

characteristics. This verse was revealed about Imam Ali and is agreed by all commentators. So be careful my Muslim brother/sister to pay careful attention to this concept and do not lose the right path, because Allah says immediately afterwards:

*“And who so takes Allah and His messenger and those who believe as their guardian, Verily, the party of Allah are the victorious.”*<sup>64</sup>

So be the victors, and do not follow any of the self-proclaimed imams or guides without any given proof from God as such a path will not lead except to blasphemy, mischief and loss of one's self and others, as well as the destruction of society and religion.

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<sup>64</sup> Quran, Maedah, 56.

## Part III: Who is Imam Mahdi?

Imam Mahdi was appointed by Prophet Mohammad and the Imams by the command of Allah as the twelfth and final Imam of the Ahlul Bayt who will rise at the end of time with Jesus, the Christ to promote justice and peace throughout the world.

**His name:** is the same as the Prophet's name, Mohammad. He has many titles such as: al-Mahdi (the Guided), al-Qaem (the Upriser), al-Muntadhar (the Awaited), al-Mawood (the Promised), Imam al-Zaman (Imam of the time), al-Hujah (the Proof) and Baqiatu Allah (Remnant of Allah).

**His Father:** Imam Hassan bin Ali al-Askari, eleventh Imam of Ahlul Bayt.

**His Mother:** Lady Narjes, the daughter of Joshua, the son of Caesar and ruler of Rome. Her mother is from the descendants of Sham'oun (Simon) who was one of the closest companions and successor of Prophet Jesus.

**His Birth:** Some of the non-Shia references that have mentioned the birth of Imam Mahdi in the 15th of Sha'ban of 255 AH and that he is the son of Imam Hassan al-Askari:

Some narrators that mentions his birth:

- Mohammad Bin Talha al-Halabi al-Shafei in his book (Matalebul Seol Fi Manaqebe Aal al-Rasool) has mentioned that: "the twelfth chapter about Abul Qasim, Mohammad bin al-Hassan ... al-Mahdi, al-Hujah, al-Khalaful Salih, al-Muntadhar ... He was born in Seru Man Ra'a [Samara, Iraq]." He also said: "al-Mahdi is the son of Abu Mohammad al-Hassan al-Askari, he was born in Samura."
- Serajul Deen al-Refaei in (Sehahul Akhbar) has said: "Imam Hassan al-Askari has left the Man of the Cellar, al-Hujah al-Muntadhar, Waliu Allah, al-Imam al-Mahdi."
- Ibn Khalkan in his book (Wafayatul A'ayan) has said: "His birth was on Friday the mid of Sha'aban in the year 255 AH. When his father passed away he was 5 years old. His mother's name is Khamat; also it has been said Narjess."
- Mohammad Ameen al-Baghdadi al-Sewedi in (Sabaeik al-Thahab) has said: "Mohammad al-Mahdi, who was 5 years old at the time of the death of his father."

## **Imam Mahdi's two Occultations:**

### **Minor Occultation:**

It started upon the death of his father and the start of his Imamate at the year 260 A.H. and continued until the year 329 A.H. It lasted seventy years, when the people were connected to him by his four specially appointed representatives:

1. Othman bin Saied al-Omari.
2. Mohammad bin Othman al-Omari.
3. Hussein bin Rooh al-Nubakhti.
4. Ali bin Mohammad al- Sumari.

### **Major Occultation:**

It started at the year 329 A.H. after the death of his last special representative. It will last for an unknown period of time until the day when Allah (s.w.t) chooses for him to fill the world with justice and peace as it has been filled with oppression and injustice. He does not have a special representative during this period but he has general representatives. They are the just scholars as Imam al-Mahdi ordered us to

*“Follow the narrators of our Hadiths (jurist scholars) in the occurring matters, as they are my proof upon you and I am Allah’s proof upon them”<sup>65</sup>.*

Imam Hassan al-Askari has also outlined their characteristics in stating:

*“Whoever from the jurists that was protecting himself from sins, keeping his religion, acting against his desires, following the commands of his master (Allah), it is for ordinary people to follow (do taqleed of) him.”<sup>66</sup>*

In the next part of this book will discuss this issue in depth. For more detail and thorough discussion, please refer to the many books written about the Imam and his occultation<sup>67</sup>.

### **Why is Imam Mahdi absent?**

The absence of the Imam (peace be upon him) during this current time has many reasons but the most important are:

- Firstly to protect the Imam until the right time, followers and circumstances emerge for his public reappearance;

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<sup>65</sup> Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, vol 53, p 181.

<sup>66</sup>Hurr al-Aamali, Wasail al-Shia; vol 27, p 131.

<sup>67</sup>Such as:- Sheikh Mohammad Hussein al-Ansari (author of this book) in his book (End of Knowledge, the Remnant of Allah) - Sheikh Najmuldeen al-Askari in his book (al-Mahdi, the Promised, the Awaited) - Sheikh Lutfullah Safi Gulpaigani in his book (Muntakhabul Athar Fi al-Imam al-Muntadhar).

- Secondly, for scrutiny of the people and so that all those with doubt can be separated from those with firm beliefs and spiritual growth.

It should be known that the reappearance will only happen with God's will and not the will of His creation.

### **What one needs to know about Imam Mahdi?**

A believer should at least know some of Imam Mahdi's characteristics and accept them as true. The most important are:

1. To know him
2. To accept him as our Imam who has been directly appointed by Allah.
3. To not follow his opponents and to reject them.
4. To believe that he is Allah's Proof and witness upon us.
5. To hold him as our Guide.
6. To refer to him as the Holder of Authority (wali amr) and divine knowledge in our time.
7. To believe in his return and prepare ourselves for it.
8. To obey him the same as the Prophet as their abidance is stemmed from that of God.
9. To accept him as the Successor of the Prophet.

10. To know that he is the first to do any good and honourable deed.
11. To acknowledge him as God's gateway.
12. To accept him as the infallible leader.

### **Explanation of the above mentioned points:**

#### 1) To know him

Knowing who he is, his father and mother and other basic information, such as the ones mentioned above. All Muslims narrate that the Prophet stated:

*“whoever dies without knowing the Imam of his time, then he has died as an ignorant person.”<sup>68</sup>*

#### 2) To accept him as our Imam who has been directly appointed by Allah.

Some companions of Imam Hassan al-Askari narrated that:

*“one day, we were forty men in Hassan bin Ali's house, when he showed us his son and said: “this is your Imam after me and my successor upon you so obey him. Do not divide up in your religions and then get destroyed. Verily,*

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<sup>68</sup> Yanabea al-Mawada, Vol 3, p 372. Tabaqat al-Hanafia, p 457. Other references also mention it in various formats.



*you will not see him after today” then we lift his house and after few days, he (Imam Hassan) passed away.”<sup>69</sup>*

3) To not follow his opponents and to reject them.

Imam Baqer (as) once told one of his companions that:

*“verily only the person who knows God worships Him; and the person who does not know Him is misled in his worship”. The companion asks for the meaning of knowing God and Imam replied: “Believing Allah, the exalted, believing His Messenger and following Ali as the guardian and Imam as well as the Guided Imams; also, by denouncing, in front of Allah, their enemies. This is how Allah can be known.”<sup>70</sup>*

4) To believe that he is Allah’s Proof and witness upon us.

Allah has stated:

*“Thus We have appointed you a middle (modest) nation, that you may be witnesses on mankind and that the messenger may be a witness on you.”<sup>71</sup>*

Imam Baqer (as) has explained this verse to mean:

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<sup>69</sup> Al-Sadooq, Kamal al-Deen, Vol 2, p 435.

<sup>70</sup> Al-Kulaini, al-Kafi, 180/1.

<sup>71</sup> Quran, Baqara. 143.

*“We are the middle (modest) nation; we are the witnesses of Allah, the Exalted and Almighty, on His creation and His Proofs on His lands.”<sup>72</sup>*

5) To hold him as our Guide.

Allah has stated:

*“Verily you are a Warner and for every folk, there is a guide.”<sup>73</sup>*

Imam Sadiq (as) has explained this verse to mean:

*“Every Imam is a guide for the people of his time.”<sup>74</sup>*

Imam Baqer (as) stated:

*“The Prophet of Allah is the Warner and for every time period, there is a guide from us who guides people towards what the Messenger of Allah conveyed, then the guides following him, Ali then the successors one after the previous one.”<sup>75</sup>*

Thus, the Imam of our time is our guide as well as our role model and divine leader.

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<sup>72</sup> Al-Kulaini, al-Kafi, Chapter of Imams are the witnesses of God on His creation.

<sup>73</sup> Quran, Raad, 7.

<sup>74</sup> Al-Kulaini, al-Kafi, Chapter of Imams are the Guides.

<sup>75</sup> Al-Kulaini, al-Kafi, Chapter of Imams are the Guides.

6) To refer to him as our Holder of Authority (wali amr) and divine knowledge.

Allah states:

*“O you who believe! Obey Allah, and obey the messenger and those of you who are in authority (the ones with the decree).”<sup>76</sup>*

Imam Sadeq (as) stated:

*“We are the ones with authority (decrees) from Allah; and we are the keepers of the knowledge from Allah; and we are the focus of the revelation of Allah.”<sup>77</sup>*

7) To believe in his return and prepare ourselves for it.

We have been ordered to await him as it has been narrated from The Prophet of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny) that:

*“The best of worship is awaiting the (Faraj) relief.”<sup>78</sup>*

8) To obey him the same as the Prophet as their abidance is stemmed from that of God.

Allah states:

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<sup>76</sup> Quran, Nisa, 59.

<sup>77</sup> Al-Kulaini, al-Kafi, Chapter of People with Authority and Knowledge from Allah.

<sup>78</sup> Kamal al-Deen, vol 1, p 287.

*“For we bestowed upon the Progeny of Abraham the Scripture and wisdom, and We bestowed on them a great kingdom.”<sup>79</sup>*

Imam Baqer (as) explained this verse to mean:

*“He appointed messengers, prophets and Imams from amongst them; so how are they accepting these positions for the Progeny of Abraham but reject it for the Progeny of Mohammad?” Then he continues: “The great kingdom is that he appointed Imams from amongst them, whoever obeys them obeys God and whoever disobeys them disobeys God, that’s a great kingdom.”<sup>80</sup>*

Also Zarara has narrated from both Imam Baqer and Imam Sadeq stating:

*"Allah, the Exalted and the Glorified, has accredited His Prophet (May the blessings and peace of Allah be upon him and his family) the authority over His creatures, in order to determine their abidance". Then he read this Verse, "Abide to that what the Prophet commanded you, and cease that which he forbids for you."<sup>81</sup>*

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<sup>79</sup> Quran, Nisa, 54.

<sup>80</sup> Al-Kulaini, al-Kafi, Chapter of People with Authority and Knowledge from Allah.

<sup>81</sup> Quran, Hashr, 7.

There are many verses of the Quran and narrations of Ahlul Bayt (May peace be upon them) conveying similar meaning.<sup>82</sup>

9) To accept him as the Successor of the Prophet.

Prophet Mohammad stated:

*“I have left you with something that if you hold to, then you will not go astray after me ever: two heavy concepts, one larger than the other, the Book of Allah, a rope stretched from heaven to earth, and my progeny, the people of my home. They will not be apart until they come back to me in the heavens.”<sup>83</sup>*

10) To know that he is the first to do any good and honourable deed.

Allah states:

*“Then We gave the Scripture as inheritance unto those whom We elected of Our bondmen. But of them are some who oppress themselves and of them are some who keep themselves half way, and of them are some who outstrip (others) through good deeds, by Allah's leave. That is the great favour!”<sup>84</sup>*

Imam Baqer (as) explained this verse to mean:

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<sup>82</sup> Al-Tabatabaei, al-Mizan, vol 19, p 204.

<sup>83</sup> Al-Muthafar, Aqaed Imamy, p 71.

<sup>84</sup> Quran, Fater, 32.

*“the one who outstrips (others) through good deeds is the Imam; and the one who keep themselves half way is the knower of the Imam; and the one oppresses themselves is the not knower of the Imam.”<sup>85</sup>*

11) To acknowledge him as God’s gateway.

Imam Sadiq (as) stated:

*“The successors are the gateways of Allah that is approached through them. Without them, Allah would not be known. Through them, Allah provided His proofs to His creation.”<sup>86</sup>*

12) To accept him as the infallible leader.

Imam Sadiq (as) stated:

*“Surely once we have proved that we have a creator and maker that is beyond us, and all his creation, and that this manufacturer was wise; then it is not applicable for Him to watch his creation, while there is no physical contact, exchange or communication. Therefore, it is affirmed that He has ambassadors amongst His creation and His worshipers. Ambassadors who guide people towards their interests and benefits and what is the best for their survival*

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<sup>85</sup> Al-Kulaini, al-Kafi, Chapter of People with Authority and Knowledge from Allah.

<sup>86</sup> Al-Kulaini, al-Kafi, Chapter of Successors of Allah.

*and what avoidance may lead to their destruction. So there were indeed, proven promoters of good and denouncers of evil within His creation representing the Wise God. It follows that He has appointed interpreters for His words, who are the prophets and the elites of his creation who are wise and polite with insight and envoys with wisdom, who do not share the same ordinary characteristics of people although share the same creation and bodies with them.”<sup>87</sup>*

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<sup>87</sup> Al-Sadooq, al-Tawheed, p 249.





## Part IV: Who to follow during the occultation of Imam Mahdi? Why?

This question can be answered in three parts:

- 1) Quranic;
- 2) Narrations;
- 3) Logic.

### 1) Quranic Verses

Some Quranic verses that directly state the status of scholars in Islam:

*“The believers should not all go forth together. If a contingent from every expedition remained behind, that they (who are left behind) may gain sound knowledge in religion, and that they may warn their folk when they return to them, so that they may beware.”<sup>88</sup>*

*“Among His servants only the scholars fear Allah”<sup>89</sup>*

*“Say (unto them, O Mohammad): Are those who know equal with those who know not?”<sup>90</sup>*

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<sup>88</sup> Quran, Tawbah, 122.

<sup>89</sup> Quran, Fater, 28.

*“Allah will exalt those who believe among you, and those who have knowledge, to high ranks.”<sup>91</sup>*

## **2) Narrations:**

Some narrations that directly state the status of scholars in Islam:

The Holy Prophet Mohammad:

*"The Scholars (Ulama) are the Inheritors of the Prophets.”<sup>92</sup>*

Imam Ali Zain al-Abideen:

*"If only people knew how much reward there is for seeking knowledge, they would have sought it even if they would have had to shed their blood for it or dive in large waves. Allah, the Blessed and Most High, revealed to Daniel saying, ‘The most hated among my creatures are the ignorant ones who disrespect the scholars and do not follow them. The Most beloved to Me in My servants are the pious ones who work hard to become entitled for greater rewards, who always stay close to the scholars, follow the fore-*

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<sup>90</sup> Quran, Zamr, 9.

<sup>91</sup> Quran, Mujadala, 11.

<sup>92</sup> Kanz al-Umal, Hadith 28677.

*bearing people and accept (the advice of) people of wisdom.*"<sup>93</sup>

Imam Jafar al-Sadiq:

*"Whoever acquires knowledge and practices what he has learned and teaches it to others for the sake of Allah, among the angels of heavens he will be called a great personality.*

*It will be said there: 'He learned for the sake of Allah, practiced for the sake of Allah and taught it for the sake of Allah.'*"<sup>94</sup>

Imam Jafar al-Sadiq:

*"Imam Ali said, 'One of the rights of a scholar is that one must not ask him many questions and must not hold to his garment (excessive questioning). When one would enter in his presence while other people are there one should offer salutation to all of them and special greetings to the scholar only. One must sit before him and not behind him. One must not blink his eyes before him or make hand gestures and must not speak much in his presence such as so and so said so and so opposite to what he says. The length of his meeting must not disappoint one because the case of a scholar is like a fruit bearing tree in which case one needs*

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<sup>93</sup> Al-Kulaini, al-Kafi, vol 2, Chapter on the Reward of the Scholars, Hadith 5.

<sup>94</sup> Al-Kulaini, al-Kafi, vol 2, Chapter on the Reward of the Scholars, Hadith 6.

*to wait until the tree lets fruits to fall onto one. The reward for a scholar is greater than that for one who fasts and prays very often and those who fight for the cause of Allah.*”<sup>95</sup>

Imam Mahdi:

*“Follow the narrators of our Hadiths (scholars) in the occurring matters, as they are my proof upon you and I am Allah’s proof upon them”*<sup>96</sup>

Imam Hassan al-Askari:

*“Whoever from the jurists that was protecting himself from sins, keeping his religion, acting against his desires, following the commands of his master (Allah), it is for ordinary people to follow (do taqleed of) him.”*<sup>97</sup>

### **3) Logic:**

Islamic religious rulings are divided into two categories. The first category contains all those rulings that are considered as principles of religion and are a necessity for Muslims to follow. This type of ruling which is necessarily binding, does not compose more than a small

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<sup>95</sup> Al-Kulaini, al-Kafi, vol 2, Chapter 6, Hadith 1.

<sup>96</sup> Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, vol 53, p 181.

<sup>97</sup> Hurr al-Aamali, Wasail al-Shia; vol 27, p 131.

percentage of the total religious rulings. It does not involve any disagreement between jurisprudence's scholars as the dissimilarity amongst them is apparent in the religious rulings that are theoretical and whose approval are based on the use of theory and logic in the light of the academic and practical research in the two fields of knowledge, the *Usool* (principles) and *Fiqh* (jurisprudence). Ordinary people do not need to consult or follow *Mujtahids*, as such regulations do not involve the process of *Ijtehad* and are outside of its scope. These binding or mandatory rulings of Islam which are a minor part of the religion do not give insight or solve many of the complicated problems that arise in human life in both its personal and social spheres.<sup>98</sup>

The second category contains the rulings that have a more theoretical basis. These types of ruling are decided based on the concept of *Ijtehad* and the full understanding and application of its principles. This category involves most of the religious regulations of the faith, including those with ethical dimensions or which treat scientific or technological developments.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Al-Fayadh, Brief Overview of Ijtehad, p 11-12.

<sup>99</sup> Al-Hakim, The Religious Authority.

## What is *Ijtehad*?

The concept of *Ijtehad* has been defined differently by each school of thought and has been a major point of conflict among Muslim scholars throughout history. Shiites define *Ijtehad* as the examination of the sources of the faith to reach knowledge about the various issues and obligations of religion.

A *Mujtahid*, one who possesses the position of *Ijtehad*<sup>100</sup>, is a high-ranking Shiite religious authority regarded as worthy of emulation in matters of religious law and interpretation. A *Mujtahid* is given the formal title *Ayatollah*. An *Ayatollah* who has followers (referred to as *Muqallad*) emulating them (*Taqleed*) in matters of jurisprudence is given the title of Grand *Ayatollah*.

*Ijtehad* is a core concept in Shia Islam. It is the basis of most theological reasoning as well as religious rulings. It is a process in which a scholar uses both theoretical and applied knowledge to seek a ruling on a question and address the concerns of an individual, a group, or the community. The question may be specific to a particular context or a particular region, or may require a more generic stance.

Following *Mujtahids* is considered a necessity, as not all laypeople have access to the knowledge which these experts in the field have, as

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<sup>100</sup>*Ijtehad* is a term used to indicate both an academic process and the position of someone qualified to engage in such a process.

is the case with any other scientifically-based discipline such as medicine.

Differences in opinion amongst Shia scholars are allowed and widely accepted as they are considered to be thought provoking and contribute to the advance of knowledge. The differences in opinions do not in fact constitute or contribute towards an argument that is either right or wrong. They are considered right in and of themselves primarily because of the acceptance of the process of *Ijtihad*. This makes *Ijtihad* an academic concept, which is powerful, dynamic and broad reaching to the extent that it is not permissible to follow a dead mujtahid.

Sheikh al-Mudhafar summarises this topic nicely by stating:

*“We believe that a fully qualified mujtahid is a representative of the Imam, in the case of the latter's absence. Thus he is an authority over Muslims and he performs the functions of the Imam as regards judgement and administration among the people. This is well illustrated in the narration from Imam Jafar al-Sadiq who stated: “To deny the authority of a mujtahid is to deny the authority of the Imam, and to deny the authority of the Imam is to make an objection to the authority of Allah. and this is tantamount to polytheism (shirk). Therefore the qualified mujtahid is not only one who issues fatwas, but he also has general authority over Muslims who must consult him if they*

*require judgement, this being obtainable only from him. It is correspondingly wrong for anyone to give judgement except him or one who is appointed by him, as no-one can pass sentence without his permission. Also, all that which belongs to the Imam should be given to the mujtahid. Such authority has been bestowed upon the qualified mujtahid by the Imam so that he may represent him in his absence; hence he is known as the representative of the Imam (na' ib al-imam).”<sup>101</sup>*

*Ijtehad* is a process that has always been present from the beginning of the regulatory age of Islam<sup>102</sup>. The only difference was that in the past *Ijtehad* was a relatively simple process. Moreover, the participants (companions of the Prophet and those of the Imams) did not need to be familiar with the theoretical concepts that formed the foundations of research and their limitations, especially their importance in the *Ijtehad* process. In contrast, the current process of *Ijtehad* has become a complicated and difficult discipline that depends on many variables. These include the doubts and misleading

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<sup>101</sup> Al-Muthafar, Aqaed Imamyah.

<sup>102</sup> The era after the Prophet Mohammad when laws and regulations started to be written.



impressions raised from various sides because of the big gap between this age and the early regulatory era.<sup>103</sup>

Human knowledge today has increased a great amount and new disciplines and sciences have been put in place. Furthermore, life and its complications became more convoluted and require more rulings and laws based on ‘religious thought’ to give it a better order.

### **What is a ‘religious thought’?**

Nowadays, “a ‘religious thought’ is a form of thought which is concerned with any of the problems of a religious nature within a particular faith, in the same sense that mathematical thought is the form of thought which deals with mathematical questions and solves mathematical problems. Needless to say religious thought, like other forms of thought, must have reliable sources from which the raw material of its thought originates and upon which it depends. Similarly, the process of reasoning necessary for the solution of mathematical problems must have a series of established mathematical facts and principles.”<sup>104</sup> The collection of these religious thoughts forms the *Shariah Law*.

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<sup>103</sup> Al-Fayadh, Brief Overview of Ijtehad, p 11-12.

<sup>104</sup> Al-Tabatabaei, al-Shia, p 1.

## **What is *Shariah Law*?**

*Shariah Law* (Islamic Law) is a multidimensional legal system with complicated structure and interrelated regulations, thoughts and processes. It is generally conceived by the public through its five practical acts namely:

- Halal (allowed),
- Haram (prohibited),
- Mustahab (recommended),
- Makrooh (un-recommended) and
- Mubah (lawful).

These five varieties of rulings relate to all the deeds of the servants of Allah (s.w.t) and it is compulsory for every mature Muslim adult to know these laws at a minimum to at least do the halal and not do the haram ones.

Religious rulings become even more complicated when divided further to situational or verdicts and then to either primary or secondary. Primary rulings are given by or based on a verse or narration, such as the prohibition of alcohol or the obligation of fasting. Secondary rulings are made by religious scholars using verses, narrations, and their reasoning, and weighing up the potential benefits and harms of the concept at hand.

### **How is the Islamic Law deducted?**

It is only possible to know the Islamic Law and its application to ones' deeds and actions if one is free and dedicated to conduct the necessary research and investigation. This involves concentrating heavily on and knowing the words of the Book of Allah (Quran) and the Sunnah (Traditions) of the Prophet(s) and Ahlayl Bayt as well as the applicability of Aql (Logic) and its limitations.

### **Why not every Muslim is able to deduct his/her own rulings?**

The time needed to really probe into these sources and attain the knowledge required across all the five regulations of one's actions in this world requires a very considerable amount of time. In fact it might take a whole life time to attain this knowledge and even still they will not really be able to fully grasp the intricacies of how each of the five laws apply to each action and deed. Consequently, it is obligatory on the businessman to leave his business and the employee to leave his work and the farmer to leave his farming and the engineer to leave his engineering work and so on in order for everyone to study these rules. If this was to actually occur in society there will be nothing other than disorder and confusion which will ultimately lead to the destruction of humanity and civilisation.

Rationality therefore, follows that human society since its development of civilization was based on a multi-disciplinary society.

This is such that some people will take up and perform the duties in difficult jobs and some will choose other jobs while others choose to undertake jobs that are fundamental and imperative to the society. In doing so they will in effect be lifting the burden from others in society that may not be ready, willing or able to take up these jobs but at the same time are dependent on the benefits and results that these jobs offer them and society as a whole.

In light of the above a few people in society will then be able to free themselves to know the laws of the Lord. In this case, knowledge becomes their food, piety their way of life and purification of the soul and self their objective and focus. These people will then be able to comprehend the laws of the Lord and convey them to the public.

The people who choose to not pursue the path of knowledge can go about their worldly duties and responsibilities with the peace of mind knowing that others have chosen to dedicate their lives to acquiring and mastering this knowledge and relaying and syndicating these to them in a manner that they can understand and apply in their daily activities and general lives.

Our Imams have mentioned the above points in their various statements and sought to show and guide us to the need for certain people in society to take the onus of devoting their lives towards acquiring and distributing knowledge of the laws of the Lord. The Holy Quran has also drawn attention to this point where it clearly stipulates that:

*“If a contingent from every expedition remained behind, they could devote themselves to studies and religion and admonish the people when they returned to them”*<sup>105</sup>

The masses are then instructed to follow the people that have safeguarded and protected their soul, maintained close proximity to religion to repel their desires and follows the order of his Master. With this in mind the journey of any person towards their eventual ending and hereafter will be a successful one given that the journey involves referring all matters to the learned ones in society.

### **What is *Taqleed*?**

*Taqleed* involves most of the lay people. The definition of *Taqleed* is that the “Muqalaf” (mature person who has reached puberty) does all of his or her deeds based on the fatwa (laws) of the most knowledgeable Mujtahid and that they take their orders based on all aspects of life.

### **Why the most knowledgeable Marja’ should be followed?**

It is obligatory for us to be very careful in our religious matters, because our worship and deeds are absolutely dependent upon whom we follow. The way of thinking of the wise people, has put emphasis

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<sup>105</sup> Quran, Tawbah, 122.

on us to follow the most knowledgeable and the narrations have proved this point. For instance:

Salim bin Quais has narrated from Imam Hassan (as) in one of his sermons that has stated:

*“The Prophet of Allah (s) has said: “There is no nation that has given its leadership to a man that there is someone more knowledgeable than him (within that nation), except that their matters (of leadership) would go destroyed”<sup>106</sup>*

In the narration of Barki, from the Prophet of Allah that has stated:

*“Whoever leads a nation while they have someone more knowledgeable than him, or more learned in Jurisprudence, the nation’s matters will be going backwards until the Day of Judgement”<sup>107</sup>*

Sheikh al-Mufeed narrates that the Prophet (s) has said:

*“The leadership cannot be valid except for its people, so anyone who invited people to himself and there was someone amongst them that is more knowledgeable than him Allah swt will not look at him on the Judgment Day”<sup>108</sup>*

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<sup>106</sup> Al-Toosi, al-amali Majalis, vol 21, p 566.

<sup>107</sup> Al-Mahasin, vol 1, Chapter 18, p 93.

<sup>108</sup> Al-Mufeed, al-Ikhtesas, p 251.

In the Sahiha (meaning ‘correct’ narration) of ‘Ees bin Qasim narrates that Imam Sadiq has stated:

*“It is upon us to be God conscious and fear him alone where there is no partner for him, and guard yourself. I swear by Allah swt that the man that has sheep and chooses a Sheppard where there is someone that knows in his sheep better than the one that he has chosen, he has to remove him and bring that man that is more knowledgeable in his sheep to replace the one before.”*<sup>109</sup>

There are many other narrations that possibly can benefit us in supporting this point. From all of this, the Olama have concluded that the most knowledgeable should be the one that the masses have to follow.

### **How is the most knowledgeable *Marja*’ is recognised?**

Many of the current Mujtahids have chosen to carry the responsibility of Marjeit. Most of them state in their Islamic Law books that to follow the most knowledgeable Mujtahid of the living scholars is compulsory upon every mature person. They draw this conclusion from multiple evidence points in special books of Jurisprudence (Fiqh). So based on that point, the person has to refer to other professional Olama that have reached the level of Ijtihad or that are

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<sup>109</sup> Bin Qasim, Sahiha, vol 15, Chapter 13, Hadith 1, p 50.

very close to that very high position to know the most knowledgeable maraja, in order to follow him. However, this is not possible for the ordinary people to recognize the most knowledgeable Marja only by reading many books or listening to many lectures, even if they had stunning sentences and nice meanings. This specifically has to be done by professionals in the respected field. Those professionals recognize the most knowledgeable by reading the books and the productions of all of the scholars, also by being present in their Islamic lectures. They also compare and contrast their research methodology, understanding and conclusion of the resources of Islamic laws.

### **What are the options for acquiring Islamic Law?**

In regards to acquiring the Islamic laws, one ought to pursue one of three options:

1. To strive to become a *Mujtahid* (jurist) and possess the knowledge of the detailed proofs and religious laws, this is a unique and rare level for one to acquire
2. To strive to become a *Muhtat* (cautious), who acts on the basis of precaution. To become a *Muhtat*, one has to have the complete knowledge of the laws and then choose to apply the toughest laws from these. To reach this level one needs to engross themselves in many years of learning and you will find



that only a very limited amount of people have achieved this level of knowledge in regards to religious laws, or

3. The final option for a Shia Muslim is that they must be a *Muqaled* (follower) of a qualified *mujtahid* that has successfully met all conditions and criteria of *Ijtihad*. The follower is required to refer all matters of jurisprudence and religion to their *mujtahid* so as to derive the laws and their obligations from him. This last category is where you will find most of the people falling into.

### **What is the Islamic view towards someone who is not a *Mujtahid*, *Muhtat* or *Muqaled*?**

It is clearly evident that whoever from the people that has not reached the level of *Ijtihad* and is not a *Mujtahid*, nor a *Muhtat* and is not following any of the *Maraje'* (a *Mujtahid* who steps up to be followed) in meeting their obligations as a *Muqaled* (follower) of a Jurist, then all of their worship and deeds are deemed void and will never be accepted even if they are found to be people that pray and fast in due course, except for one instance. This is on the condition that the one not falling into the above three categories is actually performing their deeds, actions and transactions in line with the real and original Islamic Laws. However how is it possible logically that a human being that is not in the above categories to know and be able to apply these laws in life?

The other notable point is of course that if one chooses to become a *Muqaled* later on in their life, their previous deeds and actions will only be accepted if it meets the opinion of the most knowledgeable *Marja'* that they have decided to follow in regards to jurisprudence.

### **Summary of *Marjeya* section and some related advice:**

In summary, if any society worldwide did not possess scholars then it will be questioned on the Day of Judgment and all its inhabitants will face the possibility of punishment as ignorance is not an excuse. On the other hand, if all of us leave our daily jobs to free ourselves to study and acquire the religious laws then the circle of life and fabric of society will be broken and disjointed. The eventual result will be that of the destruction of urban and social development within the civilisations of the world.

Based on this premise we are left with the reality that the masses are to value and appreciate the struggle, sacrifice and position of our Eminent Olama (learned scholars) because we are truly blessed by their presence. For they enlighten us and guide us with their knowledge and example and allow us to have all disciplines, such as physicians in society to practise medicine, engineers to practise engineering, entrepreneurs to practise business and so forth.

It is vital to note here that an unfortunate notion has been publicised between people that "I follow so and so Marja because his laws fit

with our time” or because “his laws are easier to perform because we are living in a western world” or “he has it that Friday Congregational Prayers are obligatory and therefore he knows more about such matters than other Maraja” or vice versa, or “he is from my city” or “he is from my country” or “because he is Iranian” or “because he is Arab, he will have the ability to understand the text better, because the text has been in the Arabic language”.

This is the strangest conclusion that one can draw, and the strange thing is that many Arabs are unable to understand the language itself when it is communicated with and to them. And how many non-Arabs have become masters in Eloquences and Fluency of Speech. So this matter as it is apparently obvious for those whom have two eyes (wise person) will be based on studying, reading, investigating and researching. Moreover it is vital to note that there are many great scholars in the Arabic language who do not originate from an Arab background. Some examples include, Saybowayh or a more current example, the scholar in the Arabic language and literature, Dr Mustafa Jawad who is a very great example of this point.

In answering to this notion, we all know that a deed without Taqleed is void. Then if the Taqleed was wrong, the deed will be without Taqleed. The deed without Taqleed will not be accepted by Allah s.w.t, except if his/her past deeds match/meet the laws of the person that his Taqleed is obligatory upon or that it met 100% the real law of

Allah s.w.t as we have mentioned previously. However, how can anyone know the exact actual laws of Allah?

So it is obligatory to be careful not to make Taqleed based on our desires, race, literature, political parties or nationalism. It is important to do this so that we avoid making the least knowledgeable as the most learned, and the non-Marja' as a Marja. If this was hidden from the Orphans of Ale Mohammed (s) it is not hidden from the High Almighty of the heavens and earth and the Judgment Day is very close.

It is very useful to end this part with this narration that answers a lot of possible doubts as well as forms a good guideline in order for us to all have detecting radars:

A number of our people have narrated from Ahmad bin Mohammad bin Khalid from 'Abdullah bin Yahya from Ibn Muskan from Abu Basir who has said the following:

*"I asked Imam Abu 'Abdullah (as.) (Sadiq) about the verse of the holy Quran that says: 'They (unconditionally) obeyed their rabbis and monks and worshipped the Messiah, son of Mary, as they should have obeyed God. .'"<sup>110</sup> The Imam replied, "By Allah they did not call people to worship them. If they had done so people would not have accepted it. The*

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<sup>110</sup> Quran, Tawbah, 31.

*Rabbis and monks made unlawful acts lawful for them and the lawful acts as lawful. This way they worshipped them unintentionally."* <sup>111</sup>

Ali bin Mohammad has narrated from Sahl bin Ziyad from Ibrahim bin Mohammad al-Hamdani from Mohammad bin ‘Ubayda who has said the following:

*"Abu al-Hassan (as.) (Imam al-Hadi) said: ‘O Muhammad, Do you observe Taqlid more strictly or the group of Murji’a (a sect in early Islam)?’, "I replied, ‘They observe Taqlid and we observe Taqlid.’ The Imam then said, "I did not ask you about this. " I did not have any answer other than the first one. The Imam then said, "The group of Murji’a chose a man whose obedience was not obligatory (in the commands of Allah) but they obeyed and followed him strictly. You chose a man and considered obedience to him necessary (in commands from Allah) and then you did not follow him strictly, therefore, they are stricter in Taqlid, following, than you are."* <sup>112</sup>

May the Almighty Allah (swt) protect us all from ignorance, arrogance and following the wrong path and a bad ending.

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<sup>111</sup> The Book on Virtue of Knowledge, H 154, Ch 18, h 2.

<sup>112</sup> The Book on Virtue of Knowledge, H 155, Ch 18, h 3.



## Part V: How to await the return of Imam Mahdi?

This part begins with the reminder that we as Muslims are ordered to wait for the relief upon the reappearance of Imam Mahdi since the beginning of his mission. It has been narrated from Ali bin Mahzyar that he wrote a letter to Imam Hassan al-Askari asking when to expect the relief. Imam replied:

*“At the moment that your companion (Imam) disappears from the lands of the tyrants, then you should expect the relief any moment.”<sup>113</sup>*

The believers have followed this advice for centuries as the narrations of the Prophet and Imams were clear about the long duration of this occultation.

The world has gone through many waves of change, tyranny, poverty, wars and natural disasters so on, which has made the believers looking for his reappearance even more and eager for his presence even stronger than ever before. Some may even claim that the occurrences today from the endless natural disasters and world affairs indicate the nearness of his arrival and the proximity of the relief. This has made some even compile books and state the exact date of his return. However, we know that no timing that can be given as this

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<sup>113</sup> Al-Qumi, al-Imama wa al-Tabsera men al-Heera, p 93.

will occur suddenly just as the Day of Judgment because the Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him and his progeny) has said:

*“His return is like the coming of the Day of Judgment, a great occurrence that will be felt throughout heavens and Earth, it will not come to you except suddenly.”<sup>114</sup>*

### **How to evaluate the signs of Imam Mahdi’s return?**

This is a topic that is vague and no one can be sure about although some may use certain signs to indicate the nearness of the return but overall, whoever claims to know the exact date or anything similar should be ignored. This is one of the exact circumstances why the scholars should be followed in order for the believer to always be guarded from the self-proclaimed liars or pretenders who are imposters leading people astray to fulfil their own desires, political motives or some other hidden agendas. Having said this, it should be noted that there will be signs leading to his reappearance that have been mentioned by Ahlul Bayt to keep the believers’ hope and encourage them to feel his presence and eminence of his return. Allah, the Exalted, states in His Holy Book:

*“And say: Praise be to Allah Who will show you His portents so that you shall know them. And your Lord is not unaware of what you do.”<sup>115</sup>*

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<sup>114</sup> Kefayat al-Athar, p 168, 250. Yanabea al-Mawadah, vol 3, p 310.



Imam Sadeq (peace be upon him) has specified that these portents are for the believers by stating:

*“Verily, before Mahdi, there will be signs from Allah to the believers.”<sup>116</sup>*

### **One may then ask, what are these signs?**

It is important to note here that these narrations have been mixed and played with. To the extent that some of the narrations are obviously fake. The reason is that our knowledgeable scholars throughout the past centuries have concentrated most of their time and efforts on jurisprudence and left these kinds of narrations aside. They have taken such a step to guard the religion of God and to make sure that the Islamic Law is passed on to the next generations clearly and to the last extent possible, original. Therefore, we can notice today that the Shia school of thought is the strongest from a thought and reasoning perspective. It was not affected by any ruler or political movement neither changed its path to suit any particular variable circumstances despite all the oppression and prosecution that these scholars were exposed to since the time of their Imams. Therefore, their focus has led to these narrations about the signs of the reappearance to be relayed through sources that lacked major academic credibility while

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<sup>115</sup> Quran, Naml, 93.

<sup>116</sup> Al-Sadooq, Kamal al-Deen, p 649, Hadith 3.

many of the authentic narrations were destroyed by the tyrants and their aids as well as many went missing throughout these long centuries.

Some stories are even the absolute fiction of some creative minds or the rulers trying to make these signs applicable to their reign, hence grant themselves some sort of religious approval. This statement is extended even if the narrations were indeed authentic, as some people might try to twist and turn the narrations to suit their aims.

Furthermore, even if we could visibly see that these narrations might be applicable to some characters or personalities and it is possible for some personalities to look or seem like others, especially that billions of people have lived since the absence of the Imam and many more billions will live before his return. As it has unfortunately been the norm in our society today that if an author saw any narration that might have a bit of sign or charisma that he might think applicable to something or someone, then he will make it about that concept or person just because he likes or supports them, even though it was against logic or the actual meaning of the words. Despite the fact that whoever commits such acts is actually mocking people's intelligence and abusing divine commands.

For that reason, we have to be careful when reciting such narrations and refer to the scholars for their authenticity as well as meaning. However, this does not mean rejecting or overlooking every hadith

regarding the end of time as we have some that were protected from all these occurrences. Hence, Imam Baqer said:

*“I swear by Allah that the most beloved of my companions for me is the most pious, most conversant of the jurisprudence and protector of our narrations amongst them. Whereas the most disliked and worst of them in my eyes is the one who hears a narration that is claimed to be from us and related to us, then he rejects it, feels discomfited from it, refuses it and considers whoever believes it as blasphemous; though he does not even know that the narration might have stemmed from us and it was our authentic statement. A person with such an attitude is outside the realm of our guardianship.”<sup>117</sup>*

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<sup>117</sup> Al-Kulaini, al-Kafi, vol 2, p 223.



## **Part VI: What is the advice for the Muslim youth during these troubled times?**

After having all the above in mind, these are some recommendations as advice for our youth to take into consideration in order for them to be immune from any trials or challenges they may face. It is also a formula for success in this life and the hereafter.

### 1. Know God and through Him, Islam.

Allah has provided all the means for us to intellectually think and direct ourselves to Him. Then He sent messengers to guide and lead us towards Him. Allah tells His Prophet:

*"We have revealed unto you the Remembrance that you may explain to mankind that which has been revealed for them and that they might give thought." <sup>118</sup>*

He also tells us:

*"He it is who has sent among the Meccans a messenger of their own, to recite unto them His revelations and to make them grow, and to teach them the scripture and Wisdom." <sup>119</sup>*

Then he orders us to obey the Prophet by stating:

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<sup>118</sup> Quran, Nahl, 44.

<sup>119</sup> Quran, Jumuah, 2.

*"And whatsoever the messenger gives you, take it. And whatsoever he forbids, abstain (from it)" <sup>120</sup>*

And to go further by taking the Prophet as our role model as He says:

*"Verily in the Messenger of Allah, you have a good example" <sup>121</sup>*

Allah finally directs us to refer all our matters to those who have been chosen by Him through stating:

*"O you who believe! Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger and Those of you who are in authority; and if you have a dispute concerning any matter, refer it to Allah and the messenger if you are (in truth) believers in Allah and the Last Day. That is better and more seemly in the end." <sup>122</sup>*

## 2. Staying firm on the loyalty to Ahlul Bayt during the absence.

Imam Ali bin Hussein Zain al-Abideen:

*"Whoever stayed firm on our loyalty (Muwalah) during the absence of our Riser. God grants him the rewards of a thousand martyrs, of the same status of martyrs of Badr and Uhud." <sup>123</sup>*

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<sup>120</sup> Quran, Hashr, 7.

<sup>121</sup> Quran, Ahzab, 21.

<sup>122</sup> Quran, Nisa, 59.

<sup>123</sup> Kashf al-Ghummah, vol 2, p 522.

3. Remember that the most important duty you have is to know your Imam.

It has been narrated by al-Fudhail bin Yasser that he asked Imam Sadeq about the verse:

*“On the day when We shall summon all men with their Imam”<sup>124</sup> Imam replied: “O Fudhail, know your Imam as if you knew your Imam, then it would not matter for you if this matter was brought forward or delayed. Further, whoever knew his Imam then died before the rising of the holder of this matter then he will be given the same status as if he was amongst his crowd, even more, the same status as those setting right under Imam’s standard.” Some companions said that Imam has actually states that “the same status as the martyrs with the Prophet of Allah.”<sup>125</sup>*

Imam Baqer also states:

*“Whoever dies without an Imam, then he will die as an ignorant one. Whoever dies knowing his Imam then it would not matter for him if this matter was brought forward or delayed; and whoever dies knowing his Imam, he would be like the person living with the Riser inside his tent.”<sup>126</sup>*

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<sup>124</sup> Quran, Isra, 71.

<sup>125</sup> Al-Kulaini, al-Kafi, Chapter of Knowing the Imam.

<sup>126</sup> Al-Kulaini, al-Kafi, Chapter of Knowing the Imam.

4. Do not rush for the Imam to emerge:

The notion of rushing the reappearance runs the risk of falling into trials.

Imam Sadeq states:

*“Those who rush will perish”*<sup>127</sup>.

5. To await the relief by prayers and supplication.

Mohammad bin Othman has narrated from Imam Mahdi:

*“Perform a lot of Dua (pray) for the acceleration of the reappearance, as this is your relief.”*<sup>128</sup>

6. To not believe anyone that claims direct communication with Imam Mahdi before the due signs.

The last letter from Imam Mahdi to his last special representative demonstrates this advice very clearly. This letter is widely known and accepted as authentic by major scholars such as al-Sadooq, al-Tabrasi and al-Toosi. It states:

*“In The Name Of God the Beneficent, the Merciful. O Ali bin Mohammad al- Sumari! May Allah increase the reward of your brothers on account of the difficulties borne by your*

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<sup>127</sup> Ibn Babawayh, Imama and Tabserah, p39.

<sup>128</sup> Al-Sadooq, Kamal al-Deen, p 485. Kashf al-Ghumah, vol 2, Ch 3, p 531. Aalam al-Wara, p 452.



*death. You will die within six days. Regulate your affairs and sum them up. Do not make a will to anybody to replace you in your position. After you, this chain (of special deputyship) will end and it will mark the beginning of the major occultation. Now, I will only reappear on divine command. But that will be after a long time when the hearts of the people will become hardened and the world will become full of injustice. There will be some who will claim to be my special deputies. Whoever claims to meet me before the emergence of Sufiani and the heavenly Voice, he is a deceiver and liar. There is no power and strength except that of Allah, the Almighty the High."<sup>129</sup>*

So this letter contains two important pieces of information:

- a) Some will claim meeting with the Imam; which has happened.
- b) No one will be able to meet the Imam before the rise of the Sufiani and the heavenly Voice. Therefore, we have to reject anyone who claims to have met the Imam before these two occurrences and know that he or she is a liar.

A famous question will emerge here and that is:

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<sup>129</sup> Al-Toosi, Al-Ghaybah, p 395. Al-Majlisi, Behar al-Anwar, vol 51. P 361. Al-Sadooq, Kamal al-Deen, p 516, Hadith 44. Al-Tabrasi, al-Ihtejaj, Editor al-Kharsan, vol 2, p 297.

**How is it conveyed then that some scholars, even some ordinary people have seen him and talked with him (peace of God be upon him)?!**

This has been answered by a number of scholars before, such as: Sheikh al-Majlisi mentions this letter then writes:

*“Perhaps referring to the ones who claim seen the Imam and given a delegate status by him. So that they convey his news to the Shiites, exactly the way his special deputies was. If this is the case, then it is not contradicting the news of the people who have seen him, which this book will contain some of their names. And God knows best.”<sup>130</sup>*

Sayed Jafar Murtadha al-Aameli also states:

*“It is possible that in his statement “Whoever claims to meet me ... is a deceiver and liar”, Imam meant those who claim to have met him while recognizing him as whoever makes such a claim, then should be deemed a liar and to be told off. However, the claim of some noble servants of God during the absence that they saw him (peace be upon him) is not accompanied with recognizing him during the meeting; but they had known him after the event through being aware of few concepts and signs that showed them that he was*

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<sup>130</sup> Al-Majlisi, Behar al-Anwar, vol 52, p 151.

*indeed the Imam.”<sup>131</sup> Then he continues to write: “Perhaps his debut to some of the noble servants at spread times is to strengthen the faithful through connecting to their hearts, saving their certainty and supporting them when in doubt as well as increase their sense of security, peace and safety.)”*

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Overall, this letter as well as others indicate clearly that we should reject all those pretenders who claim to be ambassadors of the Imam; even worst, those who claim to be the son of the Imam, or that he had married their sister, or accompanied by Imam ... And other such nonsense. Indeed, there is no power but from God, the Almighty.

7. To watch for the signs of Imam’s arrival carefully.

Imam Baqer said:

*"The rise of Yamani, Sufiani and Khorasani is in the same year, and in the same month, and in the same day, in a fashion similar to the beads when they follow each other."*

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Therefore, we do not believe anyone claiming to be the Yamani, because he as well as Sufiani and Khorasani will come out in one year and he cannot rise alone. So be aware as not to get lost. Furthermore,

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<sup>131</sup> Al-Aameli, Mukhtasar Mufeed, vol 11, p 88.

<sup>132</sup> Al-Aameli, Mukhtasar Mufeed, vol 11, p 89.

<sup>133</sup> Al-Numani, al-Ghaybah, p 253, Hadith 13.

pay attention to the order of some events: the murder of the purified one along seventy of the righteous, to be followed in three weeks by Imam's reappearance. The heavenly Voice will occur after the eclipse, which we will refer to it in the next paragraph, as it indicates its nearness for us to be prepared for it.

8. To look for the special eclipse as it is the first definite sign for Imam's arrival.

The eclipse of the sun in the middle of the month and the eclipse of the moon at the end are the most important signs of the holy reappearance in that year. Badr bin al-Khalil al-Azdi said:

*“I was sitting with Abu Jafar (Imam Sadeq) (peace be upon him) when he said: “There will be two signs before the rise of the Riser (peace be upon him), which have not happened since Adam came to the Earth. There will be a sun eclipse in the middle of the month of Ramadan, and the moon eclipse at the end.” A man said: “O son of the Messenger of Allah! But the sun eclipses at the end of the month, and the moon in the middle!” Abu Jafar (Imam Sadeq) (peace be upon him) said: “I know what you are saying, but they are two signs that have not happened since Adam.””<sup>134</sup>*

Kumait also narrated from Imam Sadeq (peace be upon him):

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<sup>134</sup> Al-Kulaini, al-Kafi, vol 8, p 212. Al-Numani, al-Ghaybah, p271. Al-Mufeed, al-Irshad, p 359. Al-Toosi, Al-Ghaibah, p 270. Ilam al-Wara, p 429.

*“The moon will eclipse five days and the sun will eclipse fifteen days before the end of the month of Ramadan. Therein all the calculations of the astrologers shall end.”*<sup>135</sup>

The irony is that this has been narrated even by the other groups of Muslims. It was reported in Sunan al-Bayhaqi from Jabber from Mohammad bin Ali:

*“Our Mahdi will have two signs that never occurred since the creation of the heavens and the earth. The moon will eclipse in the first night of Ramadan, and the sun will eclipse in the middle of it. This has never happened since God created the heavens and the earth.”*<sup>136</sup>

9. To not listen to political slogans and follow them blindly.

We need a nice introduction to illustrate this point. In some countries when they describe someone as faithful, they do not categorise him as such for his faith nor acts of worship, but the amount of hostility he or she has towards America; so the more intense their hostility to America, the greater their faith. This book is not concerned about the hostility between Muslims and America as it is not within its objectives. But we want to draw the believers’ attention to a trap that

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<sup>135</sup> Al-Numani, al-Ghaybah, p 271. Al-Sadooq, Kamal al-Deen, vol 2, p 655. Al-adad al-Qaweyah, p 66. Al-Majlisi, Behar al-Anwar, vol 52, p 207.

<sup>136</sup> Sunan al-Darqutni, vol 2, p 65. Tathkerat al-Qurtubi, vol 2, p 703. Al-Hawi, vol 2, p 66. Merqat al-Mafateeh, vol 5, p 186.

we are afraid they fall into unknowingly, especially if we are really living the days of the reappearance.

It has to be noted that the real balance of faith and disbelief is Ali bin Abu Talib (peace be upon him). Al-Nisaei, a major Sunni scholar and historian, even went to the extent of writing a special section in his book (Sunan) called (Chapter on the Sign of the Hypocrite), in which he stated a narration that was mentioned widely in the books of the two major Muslim denominations. The Commander of the Faithful Ali (peace be upon him) said:

*"I swear by the One who split the matter and created the aura! It is a promise that the Meccan Prophet has given me that only a believer will love me and whoever hates me is a hypocrite."<sup>137</sup>*

Furthermore, the great companion Abu Dhar al-Ghafari (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

*"We did not the hypocrites except by their lying to Allah and His Messenger, not attending the prayers and their hatred towards Ali bin Abu Talib."<sup>138</sup>*

Likewise, Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri said:

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<sup>137</sup> Al-Nisaei, Sunan al-Nisaei, vol 8, Chapter on the Sign of the Hypocrite. Ibn Majah, al-Sunan, vol Introduction, Ch 11, Hadith 114. Muslim, Sahih Muslim, vol 1, Chapter on the Love of Ansar and Ali is of Faith, Hadith 78.

<sup>138</sup> Mustadrak al-Sahihain, vol 3, p 129.

*“Verily, we, the Ansar, knew the hypocrites through their hatred of Ali bin Abu Talib.”* <sup>139</sup>

Consequently, this is the balance of faith and the other affairs, not love or hatred of America; in view of the fact that following slogans and politically motivated stances will only lead us astray. This is because if the balance became political, then the result will be that whoever is hostile against America is right. This is what really happened when some young Muslims looked favourably towards "Bin Laden" when he declared his hostility to America; although he was an American ally as the leaders of the United States have publicly admitted. Some even appreciated his efforts, even some of them dared to declare that this evil criminal man is equal to one hundred of the turbans. I do not like to comment on this nonsense, but I say if this becomes the balance, then we are facing a very uncertain downfall. Let's suppose Sufiani rose and showed enmity towards America (especially that Sufiani's path is the same as the cursed terrorist Bin Laden), then how many people like the mentioned will join his camp and fight alongside his soldiers for no valid reason except for his hostility towards America?!

This is a slippery slope that everyone has to pay attention to its dangers. So to illustrate the point further, let's take an actual example from our history: It is well known that Muawiya was an enemy of Ali (peace be upon him); but this does not mean that the enemy of

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<sup>139</sup> Al-Tirmithi, Sunan al-Tirmithi, vol 5, Chapter of Manaqeb, p 83, Hadith 300.

Muawiya is on the right path. This is because that party may be an enemy of Muawiya and at the same time, an enemy to the right path. This was the case of the Kharijites, who were enemies to Muawiya and at the same time they were enemies of the right path represented by Ali bin Abu Talib (peace be upon him). So please pay attention, my Muslim brother to not fall in any traps or bumps.

10. To perform all obligatory and recommended deeds.

Imam Mahdi (peace be upon him):

*“Every one of you should perform that which draws him closer to us and our love; and keep away from that which draws him close to our resentment and disapproval.”*<sup>140</sup>

This is done through cleansing one’s intention by making it all for the sake of Allah alone then seeking knowledge and performing all the obligatory deeds and most importantly the ten branches of religion: Prayer, Fasting, Charity, Pilgrimage, Khums, Struggle to improve as a person and as a society, Promoting the good, Discouraging the bad, Following the Prophet and his Progeny and Disapproval of their enemies. This is further enlightened through the recommended private acts such as Night prayers and public ones such as commemorating Imam Hussein (peace be upon him) as well as spreading his message of peace and justice.

11. To live in the wider society ethically and in the best manner.

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<sup>140</sup> Al-Tabrasi, al-Ihtejaj, vol 2, p 323.



Islam has always emphasised the importance of considering all humans as equals while living within the wider society based on the ethical Islamic principles of respect, help and peace. The quotes below are all examples of this point:

Almighty Allah states:

*“Speak to people kindly.”<sup>141</sup>*

*“And spend in the way of Allah and do not throw [yourselves] with your [own] hands into destruction. And do good; indeed, Allah loves the good doers.”<sup>142</sup>*

*“O mankind! Lo! We have created you male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that ye may know one another.”<sup>143</sup>*

*“And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend.”<sup>144</sup>*

Prophet Mohammad states:

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<sup>141</sup> Quran, Baqarah, 83.

<sup>142</sup> Quran, Baqarah, 195.

<sup>143</sup> Quran, Hujurat, 13.

<sup>144</sup> Quran, Fussulat, 34.

*“A Muslim is the one who people were safe from his hand and tongue.”<sup>145</sup>*

Imam Ali states:

*“Live amongst people in such a manner that if you are away, they will crave for your company and if you die, they weep over you.”<sup>146</sup>*

*“People are either your brothers in religion or your equal in humanity.”<sup>147</sup>*

*“The one who takes what is not his right, and the one that oppresses others and the one who consumes what is not his, is not considered as one of our followers (Shia).”<sup>148</sup>*

*“Grant your friend your advice; and your relatives your help; and to the rest of people your smile”<sup>149</sup>*

## 12. To be proud of being a true Muslim.

The following narrations are great gifts to every believer at the time of occultation.

Abu Khalid al-Kabuli<sup>150</sup> narrated that Imam Ali bin Al-Hussein, Zain al-Abideen (peace be upon him) said:

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<sup>145</sup> Ahmad, al-Musnad, vol 2, p 224, Hadith 7086.

<sup>146</sup> Al-Majlisi, Behar al-Anwar, vol 42, p 247.

<sup>147</sup> Imam Ali, Nahjul Balaghah, Letters Chapter, No. 53.

<sup>148</sup> Al-Qadhi al-Maghrebi, Daam al-Islam, vol 1, p 56.

<sup>149</sup> Ghurar al-Hekam, Hadith 2466.

“... The absence of the Successor of Allah, the Twelfth of Trustees of the Messenger of Allah and the Imams, will extend for long. O Abu Khalid! The people of the time of his absence, those who believe in his Imama and waiting for his reappearance are the best people of all times, because God, the Almighty, gave them sharp minds, comprehension, and cognition to the extent that Imam’s absence became for them same as his presence. God made them at that time like the companions who struggled alongside the Messenger of Allah. They are really the faithful. They are honestly our Shia. They are the preachers of the religion of Allah in secret and in public.”<sup>151</sup>

So congratulations to you indeed. Also, it is important to always remember that the person who awaits his Imam should be loyal in reality to show the qualities of devoted Shiites; so that he or she advocates the religion of Allah secretly and openly, through word and action, as described by Imam Zain al-Abideen.

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<sup>150</sup> Fadhl bin Shadhan said: “There was no companion for Imam Ali bin al-Hussein at the beginning of his Imama except five people; Saed bin Jubair, Saed bin al-Musaeb, Mohammad bin Jubair bin Mutem, Yahya bin Um al-Taweel and Abu Khalid al-Kabuli. Abu Khalid's name was Werdan and his title ‘Kankar’. He was one of the disciples of Ali bin al-Hussein who was witness to many of the evidences of the Imama. Al-Qumi, al-Kena wa al-Alqab, vol 1, p 60.

<sup>151</sup> Al-Tabrasi, al-Ihtejaj, vol 2, p 50.

It was narrated from Imam Kadhim (peace be upon him) in the description of steadfast believers in the era of the absence of the Imam:

*“Those are from us and we are from them. They have accepted us as their Imams, and we accepted them as our Shiites. Beatitude for them, and more beatitude for them. I swear by Allah that they are with us in our level on the Day of Resurrection.”*<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> Al-Sadooq, Kamal al-Deen, p 361. Kefayat al-Athar, p 270.

**This book ends with this supplication of the time of the absence of Imam Mahdi, may Allah hasten his reappearance and grant us the strength and glory of being his true followers and aids in promoting peace and justice throughout the world.**

***“O God introduce me to Yourself; because if You do not introduce me to Yourself then I would not know Your Messenger.***

***O God introduce me to Your Messenger, because if You do not introduce me to Your Messenger then I would not know Your Proof.***

***O God introduce me to Your Proof, because if You do not introduce me to Your Proof then I would be misled about my religion.”***



## References

1. <sup>1</sup> Quran, Zumar, 18.
  2. <sup>1</sup> Narrated by Musnad Imam Ahmad, al-Baihaqi in al-Dalaeal, al-Tabari in his Tareekh, etc.
  3. <sup>1</sup> Quran, Prophets Chapter, Verse 25.
  4. <sup>1</sup> Nahjul Balaghah, Sermon 39.
  5. <sup>1</sup> Al-Kulaini, Usool al-Kafi, Tawheed Chapter, p 1.
  6. <sup>1</sup> Al-Ansari, Sheikh al-Adham, Faraed al-Usool, Vol 1, p 564-568. Al-Shahedain, al-Alfeya and al-Nafleya, p 38. Al-Karky, al-Resalah al-Jafarya, Voll, p 80.
  7. <sup>1</sup> Al-Sadooq, Kamal al-deen wa Itmam al-Neama, p 342. Al-Kulaini, al-Kafi, 377/1.
  8. <sup>1</sup> Al-Kulaini, al-Kafi, 180/1.
  9. <sup>1</sup> Quran, Ahzab, 7.
  10. <sup>1</sup> Quran, Baqarah, 285.
  11. <sup>1</sup> Quran, Nisa, 146.
  12. <sup>1</sup> Al-Sadooq, Iateqadat, p 92.
  13. <sup>1</sup> Al-Ansari, Sheikh al-Adham, Faraed al-Usool, Vol 1, p 564-568.
  14. <sup>1</sup> Al-Sadooq, Kamal al-deen wa Itmam al-Neama, p 342. Al-Kulaini, al-Kafi, 377/1.
  15. <sup>1</sup> Yanabea al-Mawada, Vol 3, p 372. Tabaqat al-Hanafia, p 457.
- Other references also mention it in various formats.

16. <sup>1</sup> Al-Amdī, Ghurar al-Hekam, 7946.
17. <sup>1</sup> Al-Sebzawari, Sharh al-Asmaa al-Husna, Vol 1, p 37. Al-Majlisi, Behar, Vol 84, p 199.
18. <sup>1</sup> Quran, Baqarah, 30.
19. <sup>1</sup> Quran, Baqarah, 32.
20. <sup>1</sup> Quran, al-Ahzab, 36.
21. <sup>1</sup> Al-Muthafar, Aqaed Imamyā, p 71
22. <sup>1</sup> Al-Termethi, Sahih, vol 2, p 308. Many other reference books also narrate the Hadith in this structure or similar words.
23. <sup>1</sup> Sebt ibn al-Jawzi, Tathkeratul Khawas, p 323.
24. <sup>1</sup> Yanabea al-Mawadah, p 445.
25. <sup>1</sup> Sahih al- Bukhari, vol 4, p 175. Sahih Muslim, vol 2, p 191.  
Etc.
26. <sup>1</sup> Al-Kanji al-Shafei, Yanabea al-Mawada, p 258.
27. <sup>1</sup> Al-Halabi, Taqreeb al-Maaref, vol 53, p 173. Aalam al-Wara, p 36.
28. <sup>1</sup> Quran, Nisa, 59.
29. <sup>1</sup> Al-Kulaini, al-Kafo, vol 1, p 286.
30. <sup>1</sup> Al-Sadooq, Kamal al-Deen, Vol 2, p 435.
31. <sup>1</sup> Quran, Noor, 55.
32. <sup>1</sup> Quran, al-Furqan, 23.
33. <sup>1</sup> Al-Tabrasi, Mustadrak al-Wasael, vol 1, p 174.
34. <sup>1</sup> Quran, Hood, 86.
35. <sup>1</sup> Quran, Hood, 84.
36. <sup>1</sup> Quran, Hood, 85.



37. <sup>1</sup> Quran, Hood, 86.
38. <sup>1</sup> Al-Shehhi, al-Khazen, vol 3, p 476.
39. <sup>1</sup> Quran, Hood, 86.
40. <sup>1</sup> Ibn al-Jawzi, Zad al-Maseer fi Ilm al-Tafseer.
41. <sup>1</sup> Ibn al-Arabi, Tafseer al-Quran.
42. <sup>1</sup> Al-Tosi, Tafseer al-Tebyan.
43. <sup>1</sup> Quran, Yusuf, 83.
44. <sup>1</sup> Ibn Aashor, Tafseer al-Tahreer wa al-Tanweer, vol 13, p 140-141.
45. <sup>1</sup> Al-Janebethi, Tafseer Bayan al-Saada fi Maqamat al-Ibada.
46. <sup>1</sup> Al-Majlisi, al-Behar, vol 24, Sec 56, p 211-212.
47. <sup>1</sup> Al-Majlisi, al-Behar, vol 24, sec 56, p 212.
48. <sup>1</sup> Quran, Baqarah, 248.
49. <sup>1</sup> Quran, Zokhruf, 28.
50. <sup>1</sup> Al-Majlisi, al-Behar, vol 24, p 179. Kanz al-Fawaed, p 290.
51. <sup>1</sup> Ikmal al-Deen, p 310.
52. <sup>1</sup> Quran, Noor, 55.
53. <sup>1</sup> For further details please refer to the book 'al-Ghadeer' by Allamah Amini.
54. <sup>1</sup> Quran, Qadr, 1-5.
55. <sup>1</sup> Bukhari, Sahih, vol 6, p 3.
56. <sup>1</sup> Quran, al-Ahzab, 40.
57. <sup>1</sup> Quran, Mariam, 17.
58. <sup>1</sup> Please refer to Sura al-Tharyat in the Holy Quran.
59. <sup>1</sup> Ibn Taymiyah, Majmoat Fatawa Ibn Taymiyah, vol 11, p 276.

60. <sup>1</sup> Quran, Nisa, 59.
61. <sup>1</sup> Quran, Nisa, 59.
62. <sup>1</sup> Quran, Nisa, 83.
63. <sup>1</sup> Quran, Maedah, 55.
64. <sup>1</sup> Quran, Maedah, 56.
65. <sup>1</sup> Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, vol 53, p 181.
66. <sup>1</sup> Hurr al-Aamali, Wasail al-Shia; vol 27, p 131.
67. <sup>1</sup> Such as:- Sheikh Mohammad Hussein al-Ansari (author of this book) in his book (End of Knowledge, the Remnant of Allah) - Sheikh Najmuldeen al-Askari in his book (al-Mahdi, the Promised, the Awaited) - Sheikh Lutfullah Safi Gulpaigani in his book (Muntakhabul Athar Fi al-Imam al-Muntadhar).
68. <sup>1</sup> Yanabea al-Mawada, Vol 3, p 372. Tabaqat al-Hanafia, p 457.  
Other references also mention it in various formats.
69. <sup>1</sup> Al-Sadooq, Kamal al-Deen, Vol 2, p 435.
70. <sup>1</sup> Al-Kulaini, al-Kafi, 180/1.
71. <sup>1</sup> Quran, Baqara. 143.
72. <sup>1</sup> Al-Kulaini, al-Kafi, Chapter of Imams are the witnesses of God on His creation.
73. <sup>1</sup> Quran, Raad, 7.
74. <sup>1</sup> Al-Kulaini, al-Kafi, Chapter of Imams are the Guides.
75. <sup>1</sup> Al-Kulaini, al-Kafi, Chapter of Imams are the Guides.
76. <sup>1</sup> Quran, Nisa, 59.
77. <sup>1</sup> Al-Kulaini, al-Kafi, Chapter of People with Authority and Knowledge from Allah.

78. <sup>1</sup> Kamal al-Deen, vol 1, p 287.
79. <sup>1</sup> Quran, Nisa, 54.
80. <sup>1</sup> Al-Kulaini, al-Kafi, Chapter of People with Authority and Knowledge from Allah.
81. <sup>1</sup> Quran, Hashr, 7.
82. <sup>1</sup> Al-Tabatabaei, al-Mizan, vol 19, p 204.
83. <sup>1</sup> Al-Muthafar, Aqaed Imamy, p 71.
84. <sup>1</sup> Quran, Fater, 32.
85. <sup>1</sup> Al-Kulaini, al-Kafi, Chapter of People with Authority and Knowledge from Allah.
86. <sup>1</sup> Al-Kulaini, al-Kafi, Chapter of Successors of Allah.
87. <sup>1</sup> Al-Sadooq, al-Tawheed, p 249.
88. <sup>1</sup> Quran, Tawbah, 122.
89. <sup>1</sup> Quran, Fater, 28.
90. <sup>1</sup> Quran, Zamr, 9.
91. <sup>1</sup> Quran, Mujadala, 11.
92. <sup>1</sup> Kanz al-Umal, Hadith 28677.
93. <sup>1</sup> Al-Kulaini, al-Kafi, vol 2, Chapter on the Reward of the Scholars, Hadith 5.
94. <sup>1</sup> Al-Kulaini, al-Kafi, vol 2, Chapter on the Reward of the Scholars, Hadith 6.
95. <sup>1</sup> Al-Kulaini, al-Kafi, vol 2, Chapter 6, Hadith 1.
96. <sup>1</sup> Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, vol 53, p 181.
97. <sup>1</sup> Hurr al-Aamali, Wasail al-Shia; vol 27, p 131.
98. <sup>1</sup> Al-Fayadh, Brief Overview of Ijtehad, p 11-12.

99. <sup>1</sup> Al-Hakim, The Religious Authority.
100. <sup>1</sup> *Ijtehad* is a term used to indicate both an academic process and the position of someone qualified to engage in such a process.
101. <sup>1</sup> Al-Muthafar, Aqaed Imamy.
102. <sup>1</sup> The era after the Prophet Mohammad when laws and regulations started to be written.
103. <sup>1</sup> Al-Fayadh, Brief Overview of Ijtehad, p 11-12.
104. <sup>1</sup> Al-Tabatabaei, al-Shia, p 1.
105. <sup>1</sup> Quran, Tawbah, 122.
106. <sup>1</sup> Al-Toosi, al-amali Majalis, vol 21, p 566.
107. <sup>1</sup> Al-Mahasin, vol 1, Chapter 18, p 93.
108. <sup>1</sup> Al-Mufeed, al-Ikhtesas, p 251.
109. <sup>1</sup> Bin Qasim, Sahiha, vol 15, Chapter 13, Hadith 1, p 50.
110. <sup>1</sup> Quran, Tawbah, 31.
111. <sup>1</sup> The Book on Virtue of Knowledge, H 154, Ch 18, h 2.
112. <sup>1</sup> The Book on Virtue of Knowledge, H 155, Ch 18, h 3.
113. <sup>1</sup> Al-Qumi, al-Imama wa al-Tabsera men al-Heera, p 93.
114. <sup>1</sup> Kefayat al-Athar, p 168, 250. Yanabea al-Mawadah, vol 3, p 310.
115. <sup>1</sup> Quran, Naml, 93.
116. <sup>1</sup> Al-Sadooq, Kamal al-Deen, p 649, Hadith 3.
117. <sup>1</sup> Al-Kulaini, al-Kafi, vol 2, p 223.
118. <sup>1</sup> Quran, Nahl, 44.
119. <sup>1</sup> Quran, Jumuah, 2.
120. <sup>1</sup> Quran, Hashr, 7.

121. <sup>1</sup> Quran, Ahzab, 21.
122. <sup>1</sup> Quran, Nisa, 59.
123. <sup>1</sup> Kashf al-Ghummah, vol 2, p 522.
124. <sup>1</sup> Quran, Isra, 71.
125. <sup>1</sup> Al-Kulaini, al-Kafi, Chapter of Knowing the Imam.
126. <sup>1</sup> Al-Kulaini, al-Kafi, Chapter of Knowing the Imam.
127. <sup>1</sup> Ibn Babawayh, Imama and Tabserah, p39.
128. <sup>1</sup> Al-Sadooq, Kamal al-Deen, p 485. Kashf al-Ghumah, vol 2, Ch 3, p 531. Aalam al-Wara, p 452.
129. <sup>1</sup> Al-Toosi, Al-Ghaybah, p 395. Al-Majlisi, Behar al-Anwar, vol 51. P 361. Al-Sadooq, Kamal al-Deen, p 516, Hadith 44. Al-Tabrasi, al-Ihtejaj, Editor al-Khersan, vol 2, p 297.
130. <sup>1</sup> Al-Majlisi, Behar al-Anwar, vol 52, p 151.
131. <sup>1</sup> Al-Aameli, Mukhtasar Mufeed, vol 11, p 88.
132. <sup>1</sup> Al-Aameli, Mukhtasar Mufeed, vol 11, p 89.
133. <sup>1</sup> Al-Numani, al-Ghaybah, p 253, Hadith 13.
134. <sup>1</sup> Al-Kulaini, al-Kafi, vol 8, p 212. Al-Numani, al-Ghaybah, p271. Al-Mufeed, al-Irshad, p 359. Al-Toosi, Al-Ghaibah, p 270. Ilam al-Wara, p 429.
135. <sup>1</sup> Al-Numani, al-Ghaybah, p 271. Al-Sadooq, Kamal al-Deen, vol 2, p 655. Al-adad al-Qaweyah, p 66. Al-Majlisi, Behar al-Anwar, vol 52, p 207.
136. <sup>1</sup> Sunan al-Darqutni, vol 2, p 65. Tathkerat al-Qurtubi, vol 2, p 703. Al-Hawi, vol 2, p 66. Merqat al-Mafateeh, vol 5, p 186.

137. <sup>1</sup> Al-Nisaei, Sunan al-Nisaei, vol 8, Chapter on the Sign of the Hypocrite. Ibn Majah, al-Sunan, vol Introduction, Ch 11, Hadith 114. Muslim, Sahih Muslim, vol 1, Chapter on the Love of Ansar and Ali is of Faith, Hadith 78.
138. <sup>1</sup> Mustadrak al-Sahihain, vol 3, p 129.
139. <sup>1</sup> Al-Tirmithi, Sunan al-Tirmithi, vol 5, Chapter of Manaqeb, p 83, Hadith 300.
140. <sup>1</sup> Al-Tabrasi, al-Ihtejaj, vol 2, p 323.
141. <sup>1</sup> Quran, Baqarah, 83.
142. <sup>1</sup> Quran, Baqarah, 195.
143. <sup>1</sup> Quran, Hujurat, 13.
144. <sup>1</sup> Quran, Fussulat, 34.
145. <sup>1</sup> Ahmad, al-Musnad, vol 2, p 224, Hadith 7086.
146. <sup>1</sup> Al-Majlisi, Behar al-Anwar, vol 42, p 247.
147. <sup>1</sup> Imam Ali, Nahjul Balaghah, Letters Chapter, No. 53.
148. <sup>1</sup> Al-Qadhi al-Maghrebi, Daam al-Islam, vol 1, p 56.
149. <sup>1</sup> Ghurar al-Hekam, Hadith 2466.
150. <sup>1</sup> Fadhl bin Shadhan said: “There was no companion for Imam Ali bin al-Hussein at the beginning of his Imama except five people; Saed bin Jubair, Saed bin al-Musaeb, Mohammad bin Jubair bin Mutem, Yahya bin Um al-Taweel and Abu Khalid al-Kabuli. Abu Khalid's name was Werdan and his title ‘Kankar’. He was one of the disciples of Ali bin al-Hussein who was witness to many of the evidences of the Imama. Al-Qumi, al-Kena wa al-Alqab, vol 1, p 60.

151. <sup>1</sup> Al-Tabrasi, al-Ihtejaj, vol 2, p 50.

152. <sup>1</sup> Al-Sadooq, Kamal al-Deen, p 361. Kefayat al-Athar, p 270.

**This book is a genuine effort by a prominent scholar, Ayatollah Sheikh Mohammad Hussein Al-Ansari, to ask the important questions of Muslim youth today and explain their Islamic answers. It addresses a number of pressing challenges Muslims are facing as we, hopefully, near the time of the reappearance of Imam Mahdi. In doing so, this book is intended to help Muslims understand what they ought to believe in and why. Critically, this book presents arguments about who best to follow for guidance in these anxious times.**

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