



THE LAST LEADER



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We are free of the worship of mortal men. Let us cast aside the propensity to follow blindly and irrationally. Let us set out in conquest of the truth and embrace it wherever it may be found so as to attain to the heights of human dignity and emancipate ourselves from servility and worship of Man.

Leader and Its Significance in Islam

Let us see what Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) himself has said on this subject, which is as follows:

“He who dies without recognizing the Imam (leader) of his time, is as one who dies in the days of ignorance.¹”

It would appear that it is the matter of greatest importance to recognize and know the leader in whatever time of age he may live. When he spoke of the ‘days of ignorance’ the Prophet implied that it is only the ignorant who would fail to recognize such a leader, stressing therefore, how vital it is to be able to know the leader and to die in the ‘days of ignorance’ means to die before having realized and been fulfilled in knowledge, to die as if prior to the days of Islam, a pagan’s death. In other words his Islam is not truly acceptable until and unless he has seen the length by a recognition of the leader, his Imam.

Who Is the Present Imam?

According to indications which have come down to us from the Prophet and the sayings of the Imams, the present leader of the Islamic world is none other than **Muhammad bin Hasan al-Askari**.

Roots of the Belief

The birth of Imam Mahdi (PBUH) and the reality of his existence is a thing agreed upon and acknowledged by all Islamic sects, Qur’anic verses, the Prophet's traditions and the sayings of his successors, the Imams, all bear indisputable testimony and have been recorded both in the books of Shias and Sunnis. Debates and discussions are redundant in the light of the consensus to be found in such testimony. The Prophet introduced and identified his successors, the Imams. To quote from texts of his own word, he said as follows:

¹ A’lam al-Wara by Shaikh Tabarsi p.415 and Kafi by Kulaini

“The Imams are my successors and they are 12 in number² and the foremost among them is Ali³ while the last is Mahdi Abul Qasim Muhammad bin Hasan al-Askari⁴. He is my 12th successor and deputy⁵. He is the 12th authority of God unto the people⁶. His occultation will be long and will be a test and trial unto the people of that age⁷. Some people will be firm on their faith, some say he has not born, some other say he was born but died and some people say the 11th Imam had no child⁸.”

The 6th Imam of the Shias, Imam Sadiq (a.s) says:

“Whoever determines the time of appearance of our Mahdi, he may regard himself an associate and partner of God in his knowledge because, in other words he has been able to come by the Divine Knowledge hidden from Man.⁹”

Imam Ali (a.s) says:

“Know that whoever among the Shias is firm in faith, never deviates from the path of Islam, nor goes astray deviating into error and his heart remains the same during the absence of the Imam, he will be close to me and attain to a grade equal to mine on the Day of Resurrection.¹⁰”

Now that we know from what roots the belief in the last leader (Imam) derives, logic dictates that it is incumbent on us to publicize and propagate this truth.

Birth and Life of Imam Mahdi (a.s)

In the early hours of dawn on 15th of Sha'ban in the year 255 A.H (approx. 834 A.D) a son was born to Imam Hasan al-Askari¹¹. He was named in the name of his grandfather the Prophet and his nickname. He was in his 5th year when his father - Imam Hasan al-Askari -

² Yanabi al-Mawaddah p.445; A'lam al-Wara p.362/366; Kamaluddin p.150 by Shaikh Sadooq

³ Yanabi Al-Mawaddah p.447; Kamaluddin p.164; A'lam al-Wara p.375-378

⁴ Yanabi Al-Mawaddah p.487; A'lam al-Wara p.399

⁵ Yanabi al-Mawaddah p.488

⁶ Yanabi al-Mawaddah p.487

⁷ Kamaluddin p.167 by Shaikh Sadooq and Kafi by Kulainil vol.2 p.169

⁸ Montakhab-al Athar by Safi Golpaygani p.260

⁹ Behar al-Anwar New Edition. vol.53, p.3 by Allama Majlisi

¹⁰ A'lam al-wara p.400

¹¹ Yanabi al-Mawaddah p.452; Kafi by Shaikh Kulaini vol 2. p.581

dies.¹² Although only an infant, the deeds he performed marked him out, revealing his greatness and magnanimity. He proved the world that he was unique and not a common child. As the 12th Imam of the Muslims he appeared before all people gathered at the funeral of his father Imam Hasan al-Askari and stood to conduct the funeral prayers over his father's body.¹³

Occultation of Imam Mahdi (a.s)

After the demise of his father Imam Mahdi had to face up two important matters. One was to protect himself from harm coming to him from his enemies who kept dogging him like murky shadows awaiting an opportunity to destroy him totally. Next, he had to identify himself to the world and announce his aim and his program to all people.

The caliph of the time was fully aware of the sayings and predictions of the Prophet to the effect that this boy was the repository of a Divine Mission intended to eradicate tyranny from the face of the earth. Hence the existence of this boy was a cause of utter dread to the caliph of the time. Every type of plot and plan was designed to kill him. Nevertheless, the Imam was able to know of the caliph's intentions and the dangers that hung over him. He was the sole heir in the Prophet's line and the survival of the Prophet's household depended on him. He had to be kept safe for that hour when he had to bring to finality the Divine Mission vested in him. So it was that Divine Protection came to cover him and conceal him behind a veil beyond which he disappeared. His absence was only a veil that covered and enfolded him from the vision of mortal sight, so that he may be kept safe for his reappearance at the promised moment. He kept in contact with the world until the year 329 A.H through his four deputies.¹⁴

Signs and Events Preluding the Appearance of Imam Mahdi (a.s)

There are several signs and events which are known to prelude the appearance of the last Imam of the Muslims and will enable people to recognize him when he appears thus precluding of possibility of fakers claiming fraudulently to the role of deputyship.

¹² Yanabi al-Mawaddah p.452; Manaqib ibn Shahr-e-Aashoob vol.4 p.422

¹³ Montahi-al-Aamaal vol2 p.276

¹⁴ Montahi-al-Aamaal vol.2, p.345

One such sign of his appearance has been foretold by the Prophet when he said:

“Mahdi bin Hasan shall fill the earth with equality and Justice at a time when the world will be covered over by tyranny and injustice.¹⁵”

And again Imam Ali (a.s) says:

“My heir will subject himself to two types of occultation, one short and the other long. He whose faith is strong and knowledge right will adhere unflinchingly to the Imam¹⁶ (leadership) of my heir.¹⁷”

Imam Sajjad (a.s), the 4th Imam has this to say:

“When Mahdi comes into this worldly arena there will be no part of the globe which will not echo with the cry of THERE IS NO GOD BUT ALLAH AND MUHAMMAD IS ALLAH’S MESSENGER.¹⁸”

Still another sign which is related by Imam Sadiq is that God will vest Mahdi with the power to perform all types of miracles whereas his apostles were endowed with power to perform only particular miracles suited to certain occasions only. Mahdi will perform such miracles in order to convince his enemies who can then have no excuse to deny him.¹⁹ No loophole will remain as to be a cause for deviation and doubt. What the Imam is and the signs and events proclaiming his advent have already been given to the knowledge of Muslims. Hence there can be no room at all for doubts or disputes.

In the coming articles we shall see how there appeared in the course of history false claimants to the role of deputyship and how such claims were exposed in the end. Truth prevails above all as the sun which does not remain behind clouds for ever but breaks forth in all its splendor. All masks and disguises shall fall away as the light of truth shines on them. Only Truth shall remain.

¹⁵ A’lam al-Wara p.377 and 399

¹⁶ إمامة

¹⁷ Yanabi al-Mawaddah p.427

¹⁸ A’lam al-Wara p.402; Yanabi al-Mawaddah p.421

¹⁹ Montakhab al-Athar p.313 narrated from the book Arbaeen known as Kashf ul-Haq



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