

AWAITING IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF RESPONSIBILITIES:

Awaiting' (**Intezar**) is the result of two conditions. Firstly, he is not satisfied with the present circumstances and secondly, he expects the improvement in his circumstances. If either of these conditions are not fulfilled then it is not awaiting and the person concerned is not an 'awaiter' * (**Muntazir**).

The awaiting of **Hazrat Imam Mahdi (A.S.)** also holds the same distinct characteristics. Even here awaiting purports that an **awaiter** is not satisfied with his present circumstances and is hoping for a bright and better future.

A believer is a witness to the assaults of the enemies of Islam which they are inflicting on Islam with their full might and munitions. The genuineness of beliefs and deeds are not judged as per the criterion set by Quran and **Hadith**. Instead they are examined through the clannish prejudice and norms set by their forefathers. In such circumstances, a genuine awaiter should not sit idle. Rather, the Holy Quran has instructed him in these words:

"And say to those who do not believe that you act as much you can. We are also trying. You all await and surely we all are awaiting."

It is an open challenge for the enemies, that let them make their best efforts. In the light of this challenge can anyone say that awaiting implies sitting idle and remaining oblivious ? Or awaiting means to remain always alert and defeat enemies on every front. **Of course**, it necessitates that a believer should never exult on his strength but should always rely on Allah. Because reliance in Allah gives victory to weaklings over their stronger adversaries. Imam

Mohammad Baqir (A.S.) said:

"If you act on our advices and teachings and remain in the same conditions, then whosoever dies before the advent of our Qaem (A. S.) will attain martyrdom."

(Beharul-Anwar, Vol. 52, Chap. 22) In another tradition Imam Jafar Sadiq (A. S.) said :

"The one who desires to be among the companions of Hazrat Qaem (A.S.), then he must wait, adopt piety and behave courteously. If he dies in such a condition before the advent of Qaem (A.S.), then his reward will be similar to the one who attains his (Qaem's (A.S.)) era. Hence strive vigorously, await his arrival congratulations to you all for your relentless await-ing".

(Ghaibat-e-Nomani, Chap. 11, Hadith 16)

While the first tradition calls for complete emulation of Ahle-Bait (A.S.) so that human thinking and beliefs may not be distracted from the right path the second tradition exhorts for adopting piety and doing good, so that even in the field of practice, there should not be any aberration.

The following tradition further clarifies that awaiting does not mean remaining idle and careless. It never purports mere verbal claim without practice but it signifies endless efforts and incessant endeavors as Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) himself says :

"Then all of you must do such deeds which draw you nearer to our love and affection. And refrain from such acts which evoke your anger and displeasure"

(Beharul Anwar, Vol. 53, Chap. 21) He is the true awaiter who always seeks to please his Imam (A.S.). His every effort is directed at achieving the invaluable pleasure of Imam (A.S.) and it is but evident that the pleasure of Imam is in abiding by the tenets of Islam and not in its sacrilege.

It is a command for us and our Imam has encouraged us and has instilled enthusiasm in us through these words :

"We are not negligent of your affairs and are not forgetful of your remembrance. Had it been so, then terrible calamities would have struck you and your enemies would have destroyed you. Fear Allah, strengthen your hands, so that we may relieve you of the tribulations that have afflicted you."

Such love, kindness, affection, and fondness is not found even in the parents, let alone anyone else. After seeing so much kindness and compassion whose heart will not be moved for action? Whose eyes will not shed tears at the separation from such an Imam, while his love is glowing in his heart when we see such a magnanimity we yearn to place our forehead at his feet. But the burdens of sins benumbed our agility and the clutches of bad character retarded our steps. The reason of being deprived of his esteemed presence, as explained by Imam (A.S.) himself, is that :-

"If our Shias (may Allah give them the grace of obedience) would have fulfilled their covenants with united hearts then surely there would have been no delay in our meeting and they would have received the blessings of our visitation. But the things which increased the distance between us are those news which we have received about them regarding those actions which we dislike and which we do not expect from them."

(Beharul Anwar, Vol. 53, Chap. 21)

In this Tauqee a signed letter from Imam (A.S.) Imam has not only explained the reason for the delay in his reappearance but has also shown a clearway to approach him. When a true awaiter is blessed with the Ziyarat of Imam (A.S.) in Samarra then he addresses his dearest Imam thus :

"O Master be a witness I pledge to thee even if your occultation is prolonged to such an extent that my life is on the verge of exhaustion. Still my certitude will enhance every moment. Your love will keep on increasing manifold, with the increment in my trust in you. I will keep waiting for you unswervingly and I shall be waiting

for (your) call of Jihad relentlessly.

"May my life, my wealth, my children, my family and whatever Allah has conferred upon me, be sacrificed for you and I leave them in your authority."

[Mafatihul-Jenan, Ziyarate-Imam-e-Asr (A.S.)] It becomes clear after this explanation that a true

awaiter never tires of waiting for Imam. **He** keeps on exerting continuously instead of being a silent spec-tator.

Merely being discontent with the present cir-cumstances is not sufficient hut he must strive to bring change in it. It becomes evident that in such vicious atmosphere and sinful surroundings, what is the responsibility of a true awaiter? And how impor-tant it is? Besides these there are also other respon-sibilities which are as follows :

Character Building:

The foremost thing which a true awaiter **is** expected to do is to build his character. Character-building implies following the tenets of Islam, developing good traits and purify his self in such a way that every aspect of his personality should reflect the teachings of **Ahlebait** (A.S.). Often the friends and **helpers** of **Hazrat Mahdi** (A.S.) are described with such superlatives :-

"Those who will believe in the hidden Imam they are the most pious ones and their faith is of the highest degree. They will establish prayers and spend generously in the way of God. They believe firmly in Quran and other divine scriptures and they are certain of Qiyamat."

(Tafsire-Nurus-Saqlain, Vol. 1, Sura Baqarah)

"They are obedient, sincere, honorable, good doers, patient, devout, helpers of the op-pressed, cordial and pure-hearted."

Their hearts are of steel. If they cast a glance at an iron mountain, it will crumble and reduce to bits.

(Izmun-Naasib, Vol. 1, Pg. 67)

Their bodies will emit fragrance of musk, while their countenance will be dazzling like a full moon."

(Kamaluddin, Chap. 24, Tradition No. 11)

"They will be braver than lions and sharper than spears."

(Beharul-Anwar, Vol. 52, Chap. 27, Tradition 17)

"They will worship at night."

(Muntakhabul Asar section 9, Chap: 3, Tradition No.1)

(Now whosoever wishes to be among the friends and helpers of **Hazrat Mahdi** (A.S.) then he must adorn his self with the above mentioned attributes and characteristics)

"In the period of occupation they will hold religious convictions and will not allow the devil to meddle with their faith.

(Kamaluddin.Pg.51)

Their gnosis will be pure and veritable, while their faith will increase constantly. They will mould their character in such a way that nothing will stop them from emulating the Ahlebait (A.S.)."

(Kamaluddin, Pg, 51)

These excerpts were extracted from various traditions which clarifies that in the period of **occultation** one of our **P** vital **responsibilities** is to **absorb** the teachings of Ahlebait (A.S.) in our character and personality so that we may not wander hither and thither **while** our beloved Imam (A.S.) is far from our eyes. In such an aimless wandering, it is quite possible that a wanderer may end up getting attached to any mundane caller, because every belief which is not a product of the teachings of **Ahlehait** (A.S.) is a clear deviation and every **courteousness** which does not reflect their mannerisms is intact sheer discourtesy.

It is a proven fact that as much as a man holds Imam (A.S.) dearer that much he will be attracted towards good deeds and demeanors. And he will cleanse his self from bad habits and vices. Numerous such incidents can be found in the hooks, stories of those persons, particularly youths who felt the love of Imam (A.S.) in their hearts which changed their entire lives. Undoubtedly, love is such an elixir by which every impossible is made possible. The Reformation Of Society.

One of our important responsibilities in the period of **occultation** is the reformation of society. The holy **Quran** in **Surae-Asr** has suggested a remedy for those who want to remain secure from loss i.e. enjoining patience to each other'. Islam is against **reclusion** and **ascetism**. Rather it advocates a social and **public** life. The deplorable aspect of the contemporary world is that people want to lead a social life but due to the fear of society, they do not want to take any initiative for reformation. The fear of "what the people will say" has superseded the fear of God. Hazrat Imam **Ali Naqi** (A.S.) has extolled the virtues of those who are fulfilling their responsibilities in the period of occultation in the following **words**: -

"Had there not been such scholars in the period of occultation who call the people towards the Ahlebait (A.S.), guide towards them, defend their religion with the proofs of Allah, protect weak Shias from the devilish designs, deception of the tyrants and tentacles of the enemies of Islam, then surely all would have deviated from the religion of Allah. But it is they who are guarding the hearts of the weak Shias like a captain guards the passengers on his ship. They are those who enjoy a supreme position in front of Allah".(Mahajjatul-Baizaa, Vol. 1, Pg. 32)

If they would not reform their society then how would it be known that the whole society is awaiting Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.). The following tradition throws light on our responsibilities in the period of occultation :-

In the exegesis of the Holy Quran attributed to Imam **Hasan Askari** (A.S.), the Holy Prophet **(S.A.)** had explained the significance of word 'Orphan' in the following verse;

"And when we took the covenant from the children of Israil of not worshipping anyone but Allah and goodness to parents and by giving to near ones and orphans."

(Baqarah : 83) The Holy Prophet (S.A.) said :

"Allah the Almighty has commanded to do good with the orphans and to act as (a source of) guidance for them. Since they are deprived of their kind and affectionate father. Allah will extend his grace to the one who will have mercy on the orphans. If a person caresses the head of an orphan then as many number of hairs come under his hand those many vast and expansive palatial mansions will be given to him in Paradise. This place will contain all sorts of comforts and luxuries in its precincts... These people will stay in it forever."

(Tafseer attributed to Imam Hasan Askari (A.S.),Pg.239)

Imam Hasan Askari further elucidates the tradition of Holy Prophet (S.A.) in these words :

"There is another orphan whose plight is more pitiful. He is the one who is far from his Imam and cannot have access to him. He who is not aware of his religious obligations .

Yes indeed O' people - one who teaches and trains our far off Shias then he is similar to the guardian of an orphan.

Be aware if somebody teaches an ignorant, guides a misguided one, instills the teachings of Ahlebait then on the day of Qiyamat he will be with us. We will give him a seat next to us wherever we may be."

(Tafseer attributed to Imam Hasan Askari (A.S.) , Pg. 239)

In this period of **occultation**, when we are separated from our kind Imam(A. S.) then what else can be the reward of teaching, training, and reforming the society ? Where is the teaching and training of society and where is the proximity to **Masumeen** (A.S.) and the fortune of staying with them ? This tradition is sufficient to enlighten the keen and sensitive Shias. Even women can join hands with men in fulfilling this responsibility.