

## THE NEED OF RECOGNIZING ALLAH'S PROOF IN WORSHIPPING ALLAH

Allah has created man for His worship. Even wisdom dictates that worshipping God is necessary for man. Obedience to Him is the best way of thanking Him for His bounties. However, wisdom on its own is unable to establish the method of worship, as this is beyond its limit. Those who relied on their wisdom in determining the methods of worship were deviated. They ended up worshipping someone other than Allah.

Allah sent the Messenger to invite the people towards the (worship of the) True God. The Apostles tried to arouse man's 'innate recognition' of God through reminders. They taught man the correct way of worshipping Allah so that their worship may become a means of attaining nearness to Him.

The words and actions of Prophets (a.s.) turns the focus of the people towards Allah. The people then beseech Allah regarding all their matters. Here it is necessary to highlight a very crucial point. How do we distinguish between a true and a false Prophet/Imam? In order to discern between the true Prophet/Imam and an imposter we should observe his assertions and conduct. If his words and deeds refrain the people, from disobedience and rebelliousness and invite them towards the worship of Allah, then indeed he is a true Prophet/Imam. As against this, if his assertions and conduct incite the people to disobey Allah and alienate them from His worship, then he is an imposter. Here, his falsity is established by his words itself requiring no further proof.

Hazrat Ali (a.s.) asserts, **"Recognize Allah by Allah and the Messenger by his message"**. (Ref. - *Usul'-e-Kafi, Kitabut Tawheed, Vol. 1, Pg. 75*)

Indeed the sayings of the Ahle Bayt (a.s.) are enough to ascertain the veracity of the claimants.,

Ziarate Jaamea fittingly illustrates the eminence of Ahle Bayt (a.s.). In this Ziarat, Ahle Bait (a.s.) have been depicted, "The practical implementation of His revelation, the pillar of His Unity, the witness over His creation, the flag of guidance for His servants, the minarets of light in His cities, the proof and guides towards His path". Allah has safeguarded them from all types of errors, granted them safety from all types of corruption, refined them of all types of impurities and purified them a thorough purifying.

Despite attaining such a lofty station and acquiring complete dominance over other creatures, the impeccable Ahle Bait (a.

s.) never invited the people towards themselves. Disdain, self-esteem and ostentation were never a part of their natural disposition. Indeed their natural disposition was in stark contrast to people who are bloated with self-respect and arrogance after attaining some token standing among the people.

Ziarate Jaamea elaborates further the elevated status of the Ahle Bayt (a.s.) thus, **"You (Ahle Bait a.s.) recognised the exalted station of God, honoured His splendour, praised His munificence, enacted His message, attested His covenant. You reinforced the bond of obedience to Him and exhorted (the people) towards His obedience secretly and openly. You called unto His way with wisdom and good admonitions. (You) sacrificed your lives in seeking His pleasure. (You) endured patiently hardships in His cause. You established the prayers and paid the poor dues. You enjoined what was right and forbade what was wrong. You endeavoured for Allah excessively..."**

Indeed the efforts and endeavours of the Ahle Bayt (a.s.) reaped amazing results for the people and their objective was realised. The Ziarat declares further, 'You manifested His summons, made evident His ordinance, firmly established His limits, unfolded the wisdom behind His laws and exemplified His precepts.'

The impeccable Ahle Bayt (a.s.) aimed to execute Allah's message. This message spread to the most obscure parts of the world. Today, whatever Islam is evident in the world is largely due to the efforts of the Ahle Bayt (a.s.). Allah's worship can be performed only in the manner specified by Him. The daily prayers are a means of worshipping Allah only if the prayers are performed in line with His edicts and decree. For instance, if a person supplements the morning obligatory prayers with two additional units, then this prayer will be rejected and cannot be a way of attaining nearness to Allah, as it was not performed in accordance to His explicit commands. Imam Jafer Sadiq (a.s.) states, **"Allah ordered the angels, Prostrate before Adam (a.s.). All prostrated except Iblis, thus manifesting his envy. Allah asked him, what has stopped you from prostrating in front of Adam?' He replied, 'I am better than him as You have created me from fire and him from clay."** Hence the first person to act on conjecture (in the matter of worship) was Iblis. He was proud and arrogant. Pride for him acted as a hurdle in Allah's obedience. Iblis requested Allah, **"O my God, excuse me from prostrating before Adam, and I will worship you in such a way that neither the angels nor prophets would worship you".** Allah replied, **"I don't need your worship. I desire to be worshipped in the manner I like. Iblis remained obstinate in his refusal to prostrate. Allah then said, "Get out from here! Surely My curse is on you till resurrection!"**  
(Behaarul Anwaar, vol. 11, pg. 141)

Thus, it is evident even if a person spends his entire life prostrating in front of Allah, but his prostration is not accordance with Allah's wishes, then his worship is worthless. On the contrary it will only serve as means of separation from Allah.

The criterion for belief is not only to attest the unity of Allah (Tauheed) and reject all partners for Him, but also to seek laws of religion from the door that has been declared by Him to be **'His door'**. And this **'Door of Allah'** are His Messengers (a.s.) and pure Imams (a.s.) Hence, the belief in Nabuwat and Imamat is an absolute must to consummate the belief in Tauhid.

Imam Jafer Sadiq (a.s.) says, **"If someone feels that he can deem the permissible as permissible and the prohibited as prohibited, without the recognition of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.), then he has in fact not reckoned the permitted of Allah as permitted and prohibited of Allah as prohibited. If a person performs prayers, pays the poor-due, performs Hajj and Umrah without the recognition of that personality whose obedience has been made obligatory by Allah, then in reality he has not performed anything! Neither he has prayed nor fasted nor paid the poor-due nor performed Hajj and Umrah nor has taken the ritual obligatory bath nor observed purity nor considered prohibited of Allah as prohibited nor permitted of Allah as permitted. His prayers in reality are not prayers, though he bows and prostrates. His poor-due in reality is not poor-due. Nor is his Hajj accounted as Hajj. All these are deemed legitimate only if they are performed with the recognition and guidance of those personalities whose obedience has been made obligatory by Allah upon the people."**

**"One who has the recognition of the representative of Allah and acquires the religion and its laws from him alone, only then has he obeyed Allah."**

(Behaarul Anwaar, vol. 27, pg. 176)

Indeed Imam Sadiq's tradition in this regard is most amazing. Imam (a.s.) narrates, **"One worshipper from Bani Israel worshipped Allah and dried up like a toothpick. However, Allah revealed to the Prophet of that era to inform him, that Allah will not accept his worship even if his worship makes him disintegrate like the flesh of the sheep when cooked, until (of course) he gains proximity to Allah from the door from which He has ordered to approach Him"**.

(Behaarul Anwaar, vol. 27, pg. 176)

The above mentioned traditions make it amply clear that the recognition of the representative of Allah is an important criterion for His worship and obedience.. Another tradition from the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) in this regard is worth noting. This tradition has been recorded by both Shia as well as Sunni scholars. The Prophet (s.a.w.s.) warns, **"One who dies without recognizing the Imam of his time, then his death is that of an ignorant person."**

(Yanaabiul Mawaddah, vol. 39, pg. 137)

In today's era, belief in the Imamah of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) is the criterion for Allah's worship. In fact, belief in the Imamah of Hazrat Vali-e-Asr (may our lives be sacrificed for him) is the foundation of the entire edifice of our belief and worship. A doubt (about his Imamah) equal to the measure of a grain will take us away from religion and render our actions void. In this context the following incident establishes the necessity and importance of recognizing the proof of Allah.

There was a family in Bani Israel. Any member of this family who worshipped Allah for forty nights would have his prayers accepted. Their entreaties were never rejected by Allah. One person from this family worshipped Allah for forty nights. Thereafter, he beseeched Allah for fulfilment of his desire. But his prayers were rejected. He presented himself before Hazrat Isa (a.s.) and briefed him about his condition. He requested Hazrat Isa (a.s.) to implore Allah on his behalf. Hazrat Isa (a.s.) performed ablution and prayed. Allah replied to him thus,

**'O Isa! This servant of mine has not approached Me through the door from which I should be approached. While he is calling Me, he still has some doubts regarding you. Hence, I will not accept his entreaties even if he calls Me in such a way that his neck is broken and his fingers fall apart.'**

(Usul-e-Kafi, vol. 2, pg. 400, under 'The Chapter of Doubt')

One can well imagine what will be the consequence of disobeying Allah's proof, when the person from Bani Israel only doubting about him. (Allah's proof). When a person beseeches Allah by disregarding His proof, then he has rejected the means of approach appointed by Allah. That is, he has chosen another mode of approaching Allah in grave disregard of the mode endorsed by Him. The Holy Prophet (s. a.w.a.) has narrated the following Hadithe Qudsi from Jibrael (a.s.) who in turn narrated it from the Allah, the Almighty who declares,

**"The one who considers Me worthy of worship, considers Muhammad to be My worshipper and messenger, reckons Ali ibne Abi Taalib to be My caliph, deems the Imams in his lineage to be My proof then out of My mercy I will make him enter Paradise. On the basis of My forgiveness I will deliver him from Hell and give him a place in My neighbourhood. I will ordain My mercy and grace a must for him. I will fulfill My bounties over him. I will enumerate him among my special and sincere friends. If he calls Me, I will reply to him. If he entreats before Me, I will accept his entreaties. If he asks Me, I will grant him. If he is silent, I will initiate. If he does evil, I will give him a place in My benevolence. If he runs, I will call him towards Me. If he returns, I will accept him. If he knocks on My door, I will open My doors for him. But one who does not attest to My unity or testifies to it but does not witness the prophethood of My servant**

**and Apostle Muhammad (s.a.w.a) or acknowledges his prophethood but does not accede to the Caliphate of Ali ibne Abi Talib or accedes to the Caliphate of Ali but does not accept the Imamatus and Wilayat of Imams in his lineage, then indeed he has rejected My bounties. He has deemed My greatness to be of little value. He has rejected My signs and My book. If he turns towards Me, I will hide Myself from him. If he asks Me, I will not listen to him. If he hopes from Me, I will disappoint him. This is his punishment from My side and I am never unjust to My servants."**

The last few words underline how important is the recognition of Allah's proof in reaching Allah. (Kamaluddin, chapter 27, hadith no. 3, pg. 258)

Without the recognition of Allah's proof, deliverance from His punishment is inconceivable. Man may do any number of good deeds on account of his knowledge, but if he does not possess the recognition of the 'the True Imam', then his deliverance is impossible.

Imam Jafer Sadiq (a.s.) declares', **"Allah does not feel shy from punishing those who accept an Imam whom Allah has not appointed, though they may be from among the-virtuous. And Allah shies from chastising those who believe in an Imam appointed by Him, though they may be from among the sinners."** (Usul-e-Kafi, Kitabul Hujjah, vol. 1, pg. 376)

It should be noted that shyness for Allah is not the same as it is for humans. This only connotes Allah's ways and methods. Definitely, this tradition does not mean that committing sins is excusable for those who acknowledge the 'True Imam'. On the contrary after gaining the recognition of the 'True Imam', one should distance oneself from sins and transgression, so that it can be established that the followers of the Rightful Imam are well aware of the criteria for his belief.

**O Lord! Increase (for us) the recognition of the Imam of the era. With every passing moment illuminate our hearts with his love and grant us more opportunities for his service.**