



REVEALING THE TRUTH

Imamate; The Perfection of Deen

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1. Imamate; The perfection of Deen

In Surah Rum verse 43, Allah (swt) tells **"Then set your face upright towards the established religion before that day comes from God, when there will be no escape"**. We are told to turn to Deen before the Day of Judgement when people will be separated. The verse tells mankind to search for that perfect deen.

If we look at the world around us, we commonly see an object whose recognition comes through its individual characteristics. If you remove these characteristics, the object will lose its identity, it will become unrecognisable.

There exist some things in nature whose recognition requires no identification, for example the sun coming out, its very presence serves as its identification, it requires no further verification. In some cases, something has no identity, it does not present itself, rather it depends upon others to present it, for example *adalat* (justice), *ibadat* (worship) are concepts which on their own have no identification, they have no physical presence, you can not just point at something and conclude this is *adalat*.

The identification of concepts such as worship and justice are dependent upon implementation through people. It is our duty to identify those individuals who are living examples of *ibadat* (worship), *adalat* (justice) etc, whose actions stand as practical definitions of these concepts.

Returning to the verse under scrutiny, Allah (swt) tells us to focus on perfect Deen. It is not until we are able to identify perfect deen that we will be able to turn to it. What is the perfect Deen, we know that it is Islam. What is Deen? Deen is a way of life made up of rules / regulations, it does not present itself, it is identified through those persons whose actions define all aspects of deen, whose deeds act as practical commentaries to the Qur'an.

The famous Deobandi scholar Syed Maudoodi, writing on the Deen states, **"With Allah, Deen is only that creed which makes man recognise Allah"**.

Fundamentals of Islam, by Syed Abul A'la Maudoodi, p 8, published by Markazi Maktaba Islami, p 81

Deen is therefore the means through which Allah (swt) can be recognised. At the same time Allah (swt) did not physically appear and teach us about Deen, he used the Seal of all Prophets' *Hadrath Mohammed* (saaws) to explain Deen to his followers.

At a glance we know that the perfect example of Deen was *Hadrath Mohammed* (saaws), deen can be recognised through his *Sirat* (life). *Rasulullah* (saaws) was the walking deen; everything that deen dictates was in him. When Allah (swt) tells us to turn to the perfect deen we are in fact being told to turn to *Hadrath Mohammed* (saaws), learn from his *Sirat*, from his *Sunnah* and follow him as an example in our every day lives.

With the departure of *Mohammed* (saaws) from the world, did Deen come to an end? Certainly not! *Alhumdolillah* deen will remain until the Day of Judgement, but it still requires recognition through individuals whose actions are practical definitions of deen, who follow the Prophet (saaws) step by step. If such persons do not exist then deen will not be perfect, because we have no examples to turn to.

As Muslims we fast, perform *Salat* etc, but yet when we look at ourselves we know that we have deficiencies, we make mistakes, as such we are Muslims but we cannot be defined as deen.

Deen can only be recognised through individuals who are 100% practical reflections of deen, which is why Allah (swt) says in his Glorious Book **"Verily in the Prophet you have a perfect example"**. After the Prophet (saaws) we argue that Allah (swt) continued to provide the Ummah with perfect examples, if we deny this then Allah (swt) is not just having bestowed

an example to the Sahaba and ignored all generations that followed.

During his lifetime Islam was recognised through the Prophet (saaws) and after him, Islam is recognised through his Imam. This is clear from the fact that the Prophet (saaws) told his followers **'He who dies without giving bayah to the Imam of his time, dies the death of one belonging to the days of jahiliyya'**.

Munsub e Imamate (The position of the Imam), by Shah Ismail Shaheed

The identification / recognition of the Imam of your time is therefore inexorably linked to deen. It is therefore incumbent on us to attain guidance from those Imams who are the absolute embodiment of Deen. They are perfection par excellence, they are the authorised guides and it is through them that we can seek guidance on all aspects of deen.

"I have booked a holiday abroad with British Airways. When I arrive at the checking out point and see a person sitting at the position the first thing that I will check is the name and credentials of that individual. Has he been appointed as a BA representative or has he just occupied this seat having found it unoccupied. You will check to determine he possess any ID which confirms that he is indeed the appointed representative of BA. Once this has been proven, verified and clarified and you are convinced 'Yes this person has been appointed by BA to do this job' then you have your complete faith in that person. He will become your means of approach, if that person tells you to board the following flight at the following check point you will do as he says. You will follow his guidance / instructions; you have faith in that representative'.

Allah (swt) tells us in the Qur'an, that the sole reason for creating Man and Jinn is so that they worship Him. We are here to worship Allah (swt), who also says in the Qur'an **"Fear Allah and find a wasila to him (5:35)"**.

The definition of wasila is 'a means of approach', so worship is not direct - it is attained via a means of approach, a guide. Remember Allah (swt) is not telling you to create a wasila, he is telling you to **find** it. So it exists, it is down to you to find it. For mankind that wasila can only be through a fellow human being, we have no contact with jinns' and therefore they cannot act as a wasila.

Angels likewise cannot act as a wasila to Allah (swt) as they have no contact with us until the time of death. The wasila will have to be a human being, because the earth is inhabited by humans and as Allah (swt) says when explaining the appointment of Prophets **"If there were angels on the earth I would send them an angel as a Prophet from heaven (Surat al Isra verse 95)."**

It is on this premise that we argue that the guide for society, following the departure of the Seal of all Prophets, must be human. At the same time we are fully aware that men possess defects and weaknesses and are capable to err. The wasila we need for true guidance will therefore have to be the 'perfect individual' who will not err, who you can put your faith in, which will act as source of guidance in everything that you do.

We know that there is a wasila, and that there is a duty to recognise our Imam of our time. Clearly, these two must be interlinked, the Imam is the authorised guide who will act as the wasila to Allah (swt), but 'do we have any clear signposts which will help us to recognise these Imams'? Well what better guide is there than the hadith of the Prophet (saaws): **"The religion will continue to be established till the hour comes as there are twelve Caliphs over them, everyone of them coming from the Quraish"**.

Mishkat al Masabih: (Vol 4 p 576), Hadith 5

"The Islamic religion will continue, until the hour has been established, or you have been ruled over by 12 Caliphs, all of them being from Quraish"

Sahih Muslim, hadith number 4483, English translation by Abdul Hamid Siddiqui

Now just ponder over these ahadith The Islamic religion will continue - the Muslims can suffer oppression, go through hardships etc. but Islam will remain intact, with all it's conditions, qualities and virtues as long as there exist these 12 Khalifa's. Think carefully, deen is attached to the ruling of 12 Khalifa's. The number 12 is of significance here, it can not apply to political leadership, *Jalaladeen Suyuti in Tarikh ul Khulufa* recounts that there were 4 Rightly guides khalifas', 14 khalifas' from Banu Ummayah and 49 Khalifas' from the Banu Abbasids.

The number 12 does not fit anywhere here, because the Prophet (saaws) was not talking about leaders appointed by men. The Prophet (saaws) was referring to absolute religious leadership, through which deen can be identified, it started at Ghadhir Khumm when the Prophet (saaws) declared before a gathering of 124,000 Sahaba **"Of whomsoever I am Maula (Master) Ali is his Maula"**.

It was here that the succession to Prophethood, Imamate was declared. What is crucial is the verse which descended following the sermon declaring Ali (as)'s Wilayat.

"Today, I have perfected your religion and completed my bounty upon you, and I was satisfied that you religion be Islam" (Quran 5:3).

This verse makes it clear Allah (swt) did not declare the perfection of religion, the completion of his bounties and his satisfaction until Hadhrath Ali (as)'s Imamate was formally declared at the end of the Prophetic mission.

Recognition of Islam is through these 12 Khalifa's. Khalifa means, "to follow" they are the Prophet (saaws)'s khalifas' but they are our Imams for they lead us. These are the 12 Imams the Prophet (saaws)'s authorised representatives.

If you want to travel abroad the best means is to make contact with an authorised representative. You went to get to a specific place and you want to follow the route, which of these paths is the clear, straight chosen path... the path will get you to that point. There may well be four routes to a specific destination, but you are unable to travel all four so how can you say that all four are okay? You will need to decide which will take you to your desired destination...the path which will ensure you arrive there safely...the path chosen by Allah (swt). Let's assume that you finally reach your destination point. Even then to get out of the airport, you'll first of all need to convince the authorised representative that you have the correct documentation, only when you have convinced him will you be given authorised entry.

Remember this, because authorised representatives exist in this world and the next, for Hadhrath Abu Bakr said that **"No one will be able to cross the Sirat (Path) leading to Heaven on the Day of Judgement unless he gets the stamp of Ali"**.

Al Sawaiqh al Muhriqa, by Ahmad Ibn Hajar al Makki, page 126 (A book written against the Shi'a)

Now lets us take a look at the two routes being adopted to reach the Deen.

Sharra Fiqa Akbar by Mulla 'Ali Qari is the Hanafi Book of aqaid. On the very first page it is stated that the book sets out the aqeedah of Ahl'ul Sunnah wa al Jamaah. Everything set out in this book is the aqeedah of Hanafi Sunni Muslims. *Mulla Ali Qari* sets out who the 12 khalifas are:

1. Abu Bakr

2. Umar
3. Uthman
4. Ali
5. Mu'awiya
6. Yazid bin Mu'awiya
7. Abdul Malik bin Marwan
8. Walid bin Abdul Malik bin Marwan
9. Sulayman bin Abdul Malik bin Marwan
10. Umar bin Abdul Aziz
11. Yazid bin Abdul Malik bin Marwan
12. Hasham bin Abdul Malik bin Marwan

Taken from Sharra Fiqa Akbar, by Mulla Ali Qari, p 176 (publishers Muhammad Saeed and son, Qur'an Muhalla)"

This was one route, now lets have a look at the other path – the path of the Ahlul Bayt e Muhammad (saww)

1. **Imam** Abul-Hasan **Ali** ibn e Abi Talib (al-**Murtaza**) (as)
2. **Imam** Abu Muhammad al-**Hassan** (al **Mujtaba**) (as)
3. **Imam** Abu Abdallah al-**Hussain** bin Ali (**Sayyid al-Shuhada**) (as)
4. **Imam** Abu Muhammad Ali bin al-Hussain (**Zainul-'Abideen**) (as)
5. **Imam** Abu Ja'far **Muhammad** bin Ali (al-**Baqir**) (as)
6. **Imam** Abu Abdallah **Ja'far** bin Muhammad (al-**Sadiq**) (as)
7. **Imam** Abu Ibrahim **Musa** bin Ja'far (al-**Kazim**) (as)
8. **Imam** Abu al-Hasan **Ali** bin Musa (al-**Reza**) (as)
9. **Imam** Abu Ja'far **Muhammad** bin Ali (**Taqi** al-Jawaad) (as)
10. **Imam** Abul-Hasan **Ali** bin Muhammad al-Hadi al-**Naqi**(as)
11. **Imam** Abu Muhammad al-**Hasan** bin Ali (al-**Askari**) (as)
12. **Imam** Abul-Qasim **Muhammad** bin al-Hasan (al-**Mahdi**) (as)

It is incumbent that we search for that wasila through which deen can be recognised. Allah (swt) tells us in his glorious book **"Guide us to the right path, the path of those you have favoured" (1:6-7)** and your priority should be to seek those persons on the right path who will likewise guide you to it. This point can not be ignored; particularly when Rasulallah (saaws) warned that the Ummah would be divided in to 73 sects and that only one would be saved.

At the same time the Prophet (saaws) told us which party would be saved, when he said **"I am leaving amongst you two things, the Qur'an and my Ahlulbayt, if you follow them you will never go astray"**.

Sahih Muslim, part 7, Kitab fada'il al-Sahabah [Maktabat wa Matba`at Muhammad `Ali Subayh wa Awladuhu: Cairo] pp. 122-123

al-'Imam al-Hafiz Abu `Abd Allah al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, *al-Mustadrak `ala al-Sahihayn* [Dar al-Ma`rifah li al-Tiba`ah wa al-Nashr: Beirut), vol. iii, pp. 109-110

The Prophet recounted this tradition to his Sahaba, which proves the Sahaba could go astray if they turned away from these two sources of guidance. When the Christians of Najran came to debate with the Prophet (saaws) he first presented *Islam as a theory* via verses from the Qur'an, when the challenge of mubahila was made to prove which Deen is correct, the Prophet (saaws) took with him those who presented **Islam on a complete practical level**, he took his Ahlulbayt and no one else.

"Recognition of the family of Muhammad is freedom from the Fire. Love of the family of Muhammad is crossing over the Sirat. Friendship for the family of Muhammad is safety from the fire".

1. Ash-Shifa, page 142 by Qadi Iyad, (d.544 Hijri) English translation by Aisha Bewley, Madinah

Press 1991.

2. Yanabi al-Mawaddah, al-Qundoozi al-Hanafi, section 65, p370

Muslims are dependent on Islam while Islam is dependent on the Ahlulbayt, that is why when a prominent sahabi advised Imam Hussain (as) to pledge allegiance to Yazid the reply from the Imam was "by my doing so do you think Islam will remain on the earth?".

It is the Party which has taken hold of both the Qur'an the Ahlulbayt who are on the right path, for they have grasped the Qur'an which sets out deen and the Imams from Ahlulbayt who are walking commentaries of deen, through which Islam can be recognised.

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