

The Last Luminary and Ways to Delve Into the Light



Sayyid Ridha Husayni Mutlaq

**Translated by
Shaykh Saleem Bhimji**

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This work authored by Sayyid Ridha Husayni Mutlaq, presents ninety-nine rights and responsibilities which the true believers have to the Living Imam. The author demonstrates that the best way which one can fulfill such responsibilities is through purification of the soul and in addition, a spiritual change must take place within each person and we must seek to maintain closeness to Allah.

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In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

All praise belongs to Allah, the one who created us and then sent to us His Messengers, specifically His final Prophet, and made apparent for us the divinely appointed guardianship of His intimate friends, the A'immah of true guidance, for the perfection of the faith.

He then guided us towards the best of ethical traits and the keys for the acceptance of our actions and

permitted us to seek the reward of our actions so that we may enter into the haven of peace that we may reside in the permanent gardens, where He will allow us to witness the Angel who will say to us, ﴿Salam [Peace] this is the word from your Lord, the Merciful.﴾

May the prayers and salutations be upon the final Messenger of Allah, Muhammad al-Mustafa and upon his pure and immaculate family members – those who came to explain to us the responsibilities which we must fulfill (towards Allah) through their righteous words, and who came to lead the servants toward the oceans of light using the flame which is like a ﴿Glowing lamp lit from the oil of the blessed olive tree.﴾

Since the dawn of civilization, humanity has had to grapple with the forces of good versus evil. Societies sometimes live in periods of relative calmness and security, but just when everyone starts to get comfortable, oppression raises its ugly head, bringing peace to a standstill.

This has been the situation since the coming of the first human being on Earth, namely Prophet Adam, and will persist until as we continue to ‘progress’ in terms of science and technology, we see that humanity is ‘digressing’ in terms of morality, culture and its interaction with other nations.

Asides from the countless ‘natural disasters’ which have displaced and killed millions of people over the ages, the current century has seen wars on the increase, and it is the innocent men, women and children who are caught in this cross fire.

How can it be that humanity has evolved to such a level that they can penetrate the furthest points of the solar system, but we cannot live in harmony with our neighbors? Why is it that we can feed our insatiable appetite for the latest technological gadgets, but we cannot manage to nourish the hungry children dying of malnutrition?

How is it possible that we can spend billions of dollars on the design and production of the latest weapons of mass destruction, but we cannot afford to provide education and basic health care services to the most vulnerable of our society? Is there any hope for the underprivileged and deprived people of the world? Yes there is a beacon of hope.

The belief in an awaited reformer and savior of humanity is an embodiment and a symbol of an aspiration cherished by mankind, in spite of its divergent religious doctrines. The Mahdi (ajtf) as he is referred to in the Islamic beliefs is the crystallization of an inspiration through which all people, regardless of their religious affiliations, are waiting for.

They all look forward to a day when the Heavenly mission will materialize when the tiring march of humanity across history will culminate and the world will be able to live in peace and tranquility.

Religion, when it endorses this common consciousness and stresses that in the long run, this world will be filled with justice and equity after having been filled with injustice and oppression, gives it a factual

value and converts it into a definite belief.

This belief is not merely a source of consolation rather it is a source of *virtue* and *strength*. It is a source of *virtue* because the belief in the Mahdi (ajtf) means the total elimination of injustice and oppression prevailing in the world and it is a source of inexhaustible *strength* because it provides hope which enables humanity to resist frustration, however hopeless and dismal the circumstances may be.

The belief in the appointed day of his advent proves that it is possible for the forces of justice to face and prevail over a world previously filled with injustice and oppression and reconstruct the world order.

After all, prevalence of injustice howsoever dominant and extensive it may have become is an abnormal state and must be eliminated. The prospect of its elimination after having reached its climax infuses a great hope in every persecuted individual and every oppressed nation, that it is possible to change the state of affairs of this world.

The concept of a Mahdi (ajtf) is more widespread than just within the Muslim community however its detailed features, as determined and explained by Islam, are more in line with mankind's aspirations and dreams.

The Islamic concept of the Mahdi (ajtf) is in greater conformity with the feelings and sentiments of the oppressed and the persecuted of all times, more so than in any other religion or tradition. It is Islam which has given a concrete shape to an abstract idea!

It is no longer necessary to look forward to an unknown savior, who *may* come into the world at a distant future, rather as the savior *is* already here we simply have to look forward to the day when the circumstances are appropriate for him to reappear and begin his great mission.

The Mahdi (ajtf) is no longer an idea. He is no longer a prophecy. We do not need to wait for his birth. He *already* exists. We only have to *wait* for the inauguration of his role. He is a specific entity living among us in his real human form and he shares our hopes and our joys; and grieves at our sorrows and times of distress.

He witnesses all the acts of oppression and persecution which are perpetrated on the face of the earth, and somehow or another, he is affected by them. He too is anxiously waiting the moment when he will be able to extend his helping hand to *everyone* upon whom any wrong has been done, and that he will be able to eradicate injustice and oppression completely.

Although this *Awaited Savior* is living among us, waiting for the appointed moment of his advent, however, he has been ordained not to proclaim himself, nor disclose his identity.

The concept of the Mahdi (ajtf) as espoused by Islam shortens the gap between the oppressed and the expected savior. It connects the bridge between them, howsoever long the period of waiting may be.

The traditions (*ahadith*) urge the believers in the Mahdi (ajtf) to keep on waiting for him and to continue looking forward to solace. The idea is to establish a close spiritual and intuitive link between the believers on the one hand and with the Mahdi(ajtf) and all that he stands for, on the other hand.

It is not possible to establish such a link without believing that the Mahdi (ajtf) has already been born and that he is a living and contemporary personality. The late Professor Henry Corbin, philosopher and researcher on Islam, and a student of the late 'Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husain Taba`taba'i has stated:

“To my mind, the Shi’ite is the only sect which has preserved and perpetuated the link of Divine guidance between man and God through its belief in the Imamate. According to the Jews, the prophethood, a real link between man and God, came to an end with Moses. They do not believe in the Prophethood of Jesus and Muhammad. The Christians too, do not go beyond Jesus. The Sunnite sect has also stopped at the Prophet Muhammad and believes that the link between man and God has been severed with the end of the Prophethood.”

Thus, it is only the Twelve Shi’a, who believes that the link between man and God still exists through the Mahdi, and this belief will continue to exist forever!

However, being in a state of Intiḡar or ‘active expectation’ for the awaited savior of humanity, the Shi’a differ greatly from other religious traditions and the various schools of thought within the Islamic world, Since it is them who have been ordered to and are actively working to lay the foundations which will herald the glorious advent of Imam al-Mahdi (ajtf).

The word, Intiḡar comes from the ‘Arabic root word “نظر” which literally means “to see” something. However, when it is put into the fourth of the ten (most common) ‘Arabic verbal forms, it becomes “إنتظار” which literally means “to wait or to anticipate (something)”.

From the Islamic texts and the writings of the scholars, we understand that Intiḡar is an active state which a true believer must be in 24 hours a day. What is the proof of this?

One of the great Mara’ja (sources of emulation) of this current era and the foremost authority on issues of the 12th Imam, Ayatullah al-’Uzma al-Hajj ash-Shaykh Lutfullah Safi Gulpaygani (may Allah keep him under His projection) explains that term of actively waiting for the Mahdi (ajtf) in his work, “Intiḡar: The Force Behind Resistance and Opposition [to Tyranny].”

In this work he states:

“Intiḡar is a state (which a person finds himself in) which is comprised of true faith and firm belief in the sources (of legislation) in the faith of Islam (The Qur`an and Sunnah of the Prophet and A`immah) and in the mastership and guardianship (Wilayah) of Imam al-Zaman (ajtf). It (Intiḡar) is a spirit of zeal and keen desire for the advent, governance and living along side with the Ahlul Bayt (as).

It is the detestation of the current state which we are in times of imperfection, corruption, perversity and degeneration of our surroundings. This state of affairs (being separated from the Imam and the corruption around us) burns deep within the heart of a person and creates turbulence within the heart and affects one's entire presence including one's individual actions and struggles to better the entire society..."

The late Henry Corbin stated the following in regards to the anticipation of the Imam:

"In the meantime it is the duty of all the Muslims, especially the Shi'a, to strive steadfastly for the creation of the proper atmosphere and the right climate for the establishment of a world order based on justice, virtue and piety.

They should not only mould their individual lives according to the teachings and high ideals of Islam, but they should also bend their efforts to set up the Islamic order on the collective and communal level.

They should devote themselves to the service of the faith and be prepared to receive the Awaited Savior. That is what was meant by the Imams when they exhorted the Muslims to keep on waiting for the Mahdi (ajtf)."

The founder and leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the late Ayatullah al-'Udhma al-Hajj Sayyid Ruhullah Khumayni (may his spirit be sanctified) stated the following in regards to awaiting the final Imam (ajtf):

"What has value is that a person stands up in opposition to oppression. He stands up and puts an end to the face of despotism and does not permit inhuman acts of injustice to take place this is what has value and worth!

We have a responsibility! It is not correct to believe that since we are awaiting the advent of Imam al-Zaman (ajtf), we just sit at home, take the prayer beads (tasbih) in our hands and merely repeats the prayer, 'may his return be a speedy one.' Rather, the swift return of the Imam must be made such by our own actions! We ourselves must lay the groundwork for the return of the awaited Imam!"

Therefore, we see that we have a very important role in preparing ourselves and the society for the return of the Mahdi (ajtf).

He is alive and visits different places and takes an interest in world events. He often attends the assemblies of the faithful, but does not disclose his true identity. He will reappear on the appointed day, and will fight against the forces of evil, lead a global revolution and set up a new world order based on justice, righteousness and virtue.

Allah in the Noble Qur'an has clearly promised that a day will come when truth will prevail and the righteous will come to power:

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كَمَا
اسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ وَلَيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِينَهُمُ الَّذِي ارْتَضَى لَهُمْ... ؟

“Allah has promised those of you who believe and do good deeds that He will surely make them successors on the Earth as He made those who were before them and that He will surely establish their religion which He has chosen for them...” (Suratul Noor, 24: 55)

It is clear from this and other verses that ultimately, the righteous will take the world administration in their hands and Islam will be victorious over all the other religions. However, as we are instructed, those awaiting the glorious advent and the eradication of all forms of evil need to actively engage in laying the groundwork for the return of Imam al-Mahdi (May Allah hasten his reappearance).

The book that you have in your hands details over 80 responsibilities, divided into 99 chapters which provide us with practical steps that need to be performed and implemented in order to put in place the foundations for the advent of the Imam of our time.

Some of the responsibilities mentioned in this work perhaps are things which we already perform on a regular basis, without being aware that they are our duties towards the Imam. By simply ‘shifting’ our intention and enacting them with the thought in mind that they are being done to herald the return of the Awaited Savior, we can do our part to ensure that his advent is hastened and that we have done whatever is in our power to assist him.

We would like to thank everyone who played a role in helping this publication materialize, for without your continued support of this and our other publications, such works would not see the light of day.

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We pray to Allah that He grants all of the donors and anyone who had a role in the publication of this book the greatest blessings, and keeps them under His Mercy and Protection, and that He accepts this humble work from us, and Insha-Allah, enables us to be among the helpers and Shi’a of Imam al-

Zaman (may Allah hasten his glorious advent).

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Muharram 25th, 1429 ah

Martyrdom anniversary of Imam 'Ali b. Husayn Zainul 'Abidin (peace be upon him)

All Praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the Universe. May the prayers and salutations be upon our master and leader, the chief of all the Prophets and those who have been sent by Him, the beloved of the Lord of the Universe, the best of His creations and the best of humanity, Abul Qasim Muhammad (S).

In addition, may prayers and salutations be upon his family, the righteous and pure Infallibles (as) especially the Remnants of Allah on His Earth, Imam al-Hujjah ibn al-Hasan al-'Askari (ajtf). Finally, may the greetings and salutations be upon all of the great Maraja' [sources of emulation] of the faith and the shining lights of the Shari'ah the past and present especially the late Ayatullah Khumayni, may Allah be pleased with all of them.

The purpose of humanity's creation is for them to attain spiritual growth and advancement towards the pinnacles of greatness and closeness to Allah, the Most High. The only path which one can traverse to reach this station is The Straight Path (as-Siratul Mustaqim) and we cannot diverge from this course.

According to the accepted proofs¹, The Straight Path is nothing other than the Imam whom we have been ordered to follow. Therefore, in every time period, the Imam and Divinely appointed proof of Allah, the Most High, is the true straight path and his is the only direction which leads towards happiness in both worlds.

In the time which we are living, which is full of tribulations and calamities, and during this state of uneasiness and anguish, the straight path which leads to Allah, the Most High, is none other than the 12th Imam who is in occultation (*ghaybah*) and whose advent is awaited by all.

He is the proof of Allah on this Earth, even though he is behind the curtains of occultation and his example is just like the sun which occasionally veils itself behind the clouds; however we still benefit from its rays.

In fact, the twelfth Imam (ajtf) has stated: "During my period of occultation, you will benefit from me just as you benefit from the sun when it goes behind the clouds and is veiled from your sight. Thus, I am the source of refuge and protection for the people of Earth."²

During the current age, acquiring *ma'rifah* (a deep understanding and insight into the Imam, his

characteristics and traits), bringing about true faith and love for him, and complete obedience to him is the straight path of Allah and is the only road towards salvation and happiness.

We must traverse this path and must not show any lapses rather, we must expend all of our energies in attaining piety and consciousness of Allah so that we may reach to the highest level of our goal. The purification of our soul and the attainment of the consciousness of Allah in our heart.

Taqwa of Allah is the only component which makes up the reality of the straight path, and is the true essence of the path. It is also the same reality and firm foundation which the Imam and proof of Allah of our time, al-Hujjat ibn al-Hasan (as) has invited his Shi'a (followers) and those who are actively awaiting his noble advent to observe:

فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ جَلَّ جَلَالُهُ وَظَاهِرُونَا عَلَى أَنْتِيَاشِكُمْ مِنْ فِتْنَةٍ قَدْ أَنْفَتَ عَلَيْكُمْ

“So be conscious of Allah, Majestic is His Glory, and help us to save you from a seditious matter that is about to overcome you.”³

He has also stated:

فَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَسَلِّمُوا لَنَا وَرُدُّوا الْأَمْرَ إِلَيْنَا

“Be conscious of Allah and submit to us and refer all affairs to us.”⁴

In addition, he has told us:

وَالْعَاقِبَةُ بِجَمِيلٍ صُنِعَ اللَّهُ سُبْحَانَهُ تَكُونُ حَمِيدَةً لَهُمْ مَا اجْتَنَبُوا الْمَنْهِيَّ عَنْهُ مِنَ
الذُّنُوبِ

“The end result, by virtue of the excellent arrangement of Allah, Glorious is He, shall be praiseworthy for them (our followers) because they avoided committing the sins which He forbade them to perform.”⁵

Those who have a claim over us are many the greatest of which is Allah after Him, His friend (*wali*) and representative on the Earth (*khalifah*) has a right over us and thus, the true definition of taqwa is to fulfill the rights of these individuals.

The rights which must be observed while on the path of truth and which belong to the representative of

Allah, Imam Waliul 'Asr (ajtf) are many. Some are related to particular individuals, while others are related to the believers in general.

In this work, we have restricted ourselves to the second category the rights related to the believers in general and as the reader can appreciate, we can only cover some of them.

Our purpose in compiling this work was to make these responsibilities available to the lovers of the Imam (ajtf) and those who are seeking to follow the path of true guidance. It is hoped that the believers will be able to uphold these responsibilities which we have to Imam al-Hujjah (ajtf).

In addition, the believers will also be acquainted with responsibilities which the Imam (ajtf) himself has to fulfill towards his followers.

In the current era, the enemies of the faith have increased and have been able to use various weapons against the believers. Through their onslaught, they have launched wars against religion and those who follow Divine guidance, and without doubt, one of their aims is to misguide the young generation of Muslims.

Unfortunately, those who are unaware of their personal responsibilities have fallen into the trap of the enemies, and either knowingly or unknowingly, has assisted them and may actually be at the forefront of helping them.

The actions of the enemies of Islam, both in the past and present, have been enacted in order to remove the aura of spirituality which exists amongst the true believers and to delude the people from their primary goals of life.

In such a time, it is incumbent upon the scholars and researchers of the faith of Islam to elucidate upon the spiritual issues and pure teachings of the religion of Islam.

In order to further advance the spiritual teachings, one must pay attention to the discussions related to Imam al-Zaman (ajtf) as he is the spiritual sun of the universe and the primary reason for all spiritual movements. It is through the dissemination of these teachings that we will arrive to the best methods of explaining the spiritual issues, which will in turn, have a favourable impact upon the entire Islamic society.

Thus, we hope that this book will lead to a continuation of discussions in regards to Imam al-Hujjah (ajtf) especially those which focus on the practical actions which we must perform.

As mentioned previously, this work focuses on the rights and responsibilities which the true believers have to the Imam. As we know, the best way which one can fulfill such responsibilities is through purification of the soul and in addition, a spiritual change must take place within each person and we must seek to maintain closeness to Allah.

Therefore, with the permission of Allah, and through the blessings which we pray are showered upon us by Imam al-Mahdi (ajtf), may our souls be sacrificed for him, we hope to be able to reach our goal and encounter a favourable end while on this path.

We pray that we are able to grant contentment and happiness to the Imam (ajtf) and that we are given a grand status for our endeavours.

This book is an abridgment of various books which have been written on this topic and its contents has been extracted from works such as *Mikyalul Makarim*⁶ and *Spiritual Links with the Sacred Presence of the Mahdi*⁷ however the work in your hands has been presented with slight modifications from these two books.

We have elucidated upon close to eighty responsibilities, however when we look at all the responsibilities and their sub categories as presented in this book, the number reaches ninety-nine.

Where we have deemed necessary and in order to offer a deeper explanation, we have divided a duty into numerous discussions. Obviously, all of the branches of that particular responsibility are merely extensions of the primary responsibility.

As you shall see, responsibilities which are branches of the general responsibility are noted accordingly.

17th of Rabi' al-Awwal, 1420 ah

Birth Anniversary of Prophet Muhammad b. 'Abdullah (S) and Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as)
Sayyid Muhammad Rida Husaini Mutlaq

1. These proofs can be seen in the books of traditions such as Biharul Anwar, and Usulul Kafi in the discussions related to the Divinely appointed leadership (Imamah).
2. Kamal ad-Din wa Tamam an-Ni'mah, pg. 483 – the letter given by the Imam in response to questions by Ishaq b. Ya'qub; al-Ihtijaj (al-Tabrisi), vol. 2, pg. 284
3. Biharul Anwar, vol. 53, pg. 175, sec. 31, no. 8 (the letter written by the Imam to Shaykh al-Mufid)
4. al-Ghaybah of Shaykh Tusi, pg. 285; Biharul Anwar, vol. 53, pg. 179, sec. 31, no. 9
5. al-Ihtijaj, pg. 498 (The letter written by the Imam to Shaykh al-Mufid); Biharul Anwar, vol. 53, pg. 177, sec. 31, no. 8
6. Written by the late Ayatullah Sayyid Muhammad Taqi Musawi Isfahani.
7. Written by the late Sadrul Islam Mirza 'Ali Akbar Hamdani.

One of the most important responsibilities for a Shi'a is to acquire ma'rifah (a detailed and profound understanding) of the Imam of the time, and the testimony to this can be seen in both the logical and narrated proofs (ahadith).

It is clear from the traditions that we must know the characteristics and specific traits of the Imam (as) whom we are all obliged to follow. This must be done so that we do not mistake him for someone who claims his status. In addition, there are also numerous traditions which oblige us to have a ma'rifah of

our Imam (as).

It has been related from Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) that the Prophet of Allah said:

مَنْ مَاتَ وَلَمْ يَعْرِفْ إِمَامَ زَمَانِهِ مَاتَ مِيتَةً جَاهِلِيَّةً

“One who dies while he does not have ma'rifah of the Imam (as) of his time, dies the death of Jahiliyyah (the period of Ignorance before the time of the Prophet (saws))”¹

In another tradition, this one from the eleventh Imam, Hasan 'Ali al-'Askari (as), it is mentioned that:

أَنَّ الْأَرْضَ لَا تَخْلُو مِنْ حُجَّةِ اللَّهِ عَلَى خَلْقِهِ وَأَنَّ مَنْ مَاتَ وَلَمْ يَعْرِفْ إِمَامَ
زَمَانِهِ مَاتَ مِيتَةً جَاهِلِيَّةً فَقَالَ: إِنَّ هَذَا حَقٌّ كَمَا أَنَّ النَّارَ حَقٌّ فَقِيلَ: يَا ابْنَ رَسُولِ
اللَّهِ فَمَنْ الْحُجَّةُ وَالْإِمَامُ بَعْدَكَ؟ فَقَالَ: ابْنِي مُحَمَّدٌ هُوَ الْإِمَامُ وَالْحُجَّةُ بَعْدِي
فَمَنْ مَاتَ وَلَمْ يَعْرِفْهُ مَاتَ مِيتَةً جَاهِلِيَّةً

“Unquestionably, the Earth can never remain devoid of a hujjat (proof) of Allah over His creations. Indeed the person who dies without recognizing the Imam of his age has died the death of Jahiliyyah.” The Imam (as) continued: “Surely this (the issue of an Imam existing for all ages) is true, just as the (existence of) hell fire is true.”

It was said to the Imam: “O' son of the Messenger of Allah! Who is the hujjat and Imam after you?” The Imam replied: “My son, Muhammad is the Imam and hujjat after me. Whoever dies and has not recognized him (as his Imam) has died the death of Jahiliyyah.”²

Without doubt, the meaning of these traditions which state that it is obligatory to recognize the Imam of the time is that those who possess true faith must know the Imam in the way and to the extent that would lead to their happiness in this world and the next.

In addition, the recognition of the Imam must be such that there remains no room for misguidance or confusion in regards to this noble personality.

Thus, recognition can be divided into two types:

1. Ma'rifah of the personality of the Imam;
2. Ma'rifah of the Imam himself.

In order to acquire these two forms of ma'rifah, we must refer to the writings of the scholars of the faith.³

We must realize that recognizing the character and personality of the Imam can only be achieved through understanding his qualities, attributes and special traits which are related to the status of Imamate.

If we are successful in becoming acquainted with the status of Imamate, its central role in Islam and its characteristics and qualities, then we will become acquainted with any Imam since all of the A'imma are created from one nur (Divine celestial light) and in the words of the leaders of true guidance themselves:

"The first of us is Muhammad, the middle of us is Muhammad and the last of us is Muhammad!"⁴ Thus, we must have ma'rifah of the merits and excellence of all of our A'imma (as) since they share these traits amongst themselves

On the other hand, we must also become acquainted with the merits of excellence which are specific to the Imam whom we wish to know more about so that our ma'rifah of him can become complete. This form of ma'rifah can be acquired through knowledge of his name, title, titles of appellation, genealogy, characteristics, virtues, and other traits which relate to the specific time and place in which he lives.

The minimum and maximum limits of these two types of ma'rifah of the Imam can be understood by our intellect and in brief, we will mention the minimum limit as stated in the traditions.

Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) has said: "The minimum level of ma'rifah of the Imam is to know that he is on par with the Prophet except in the status of prophethood. The Imam is the inheritor of the Prophet, and obedience to the Imam is equivalent to obedience of Allah and the Messenger of Allah.

Thus, you must submit to the Imam in all issues, and all questions must be referred to him. You must act in accordance with his commands and must know that the Imam after the Messenger of Allah was 'Ali b. Abi Talib (as). After him it was Hasan (as), then Husain (as), then 'Ali b. al-Husain (as), then Muhammad b. 'Ali (as), then Ja'far b. Muhammad (as), then Musa b. Ja'far (as), then 'Ali b. Musa (as), then Muhammad b. 'Ali (as), then 'Ali b. Muhammad (as), then Hasan b. 'Ali (as) and then al-Hujjah b. al-Hasan (ajtf) – these are your leaders."⁵

As was previously mentioned, in order to recognize the Imam, we must know his name, titles of appellation, the name of his father and other incidental facts. However, we must also know his qualities of excellence and special merits.

The Imam of our time (ajtf) shares the same first name as the Prophet Muhammad (S). His title is also the same as that of the Prophet of Allah (S) (Abul Qasim) and his title of appellation is al-Mahdi. He has a beautiful black mark on his right shoulder blade, a very handsome face with a nose that is slightly protruded and is of average height.

In addition, we also need to understand the specialties related to the time and place of the Imam and the events surrounding him including his actions and speech.

For example, we need to know that in order for the Imam to make his advent, five signs must be fulfilled. We know that when he makes his appearance, the Earth would be full of oppression and corruption. However, before his advent, a sound will be heard from the sky an image of a hand will be seen on the moon the staff of Musa will be seen with him and many other signs.

It should be noted that all of these signs are mentioned in the books of traditions⁶ and the appearance of these will herald his return. In addition, there are also other special signs related to him which we must know and understand. Therefore knowing these signs constitutes one of the ways in which we can recognize our living Imam.

1. Biharul Anwar, vol. 53, pg. 175, sec. 31, no. 7; al-Ihtijaj, pg. 498
2. Wasa'il ash-Shi'a, vol. 11, pg. 491, sec. 33, no. 23
3. Books such as: al-Ghaybah, written by Shaykh Muhammad b. Ibrahim Nu'mani better known as Ibne Abi Zainab; al-Ghaybah of Shaykh Tusi; Najm al-Thaqib of Shaykh Tabrisi Nuri; Kamal ad-Din wa Tamam an-Ni'mah of Shaykh Saduq; A'yan ash-Shi'a (section on Imam al-Mahdi); Biharul Anwar (section on Imamah and the book of Imam al-Mahdi); Usul al-Kafi, vol. 1 and 2.
4. al-Ghaybah of Nu'mani, pg. 85; Biharul Anwar, vol. 36, pg. 399, sec. 46, no. 9
5. al-Burhan, vol. 2, pg. 35, no. 3
6. Books such as al-Ghaybah of Shaykh Muhammad b. Ibrahim Nu'mani better known as Ibne Abi Zainab; al-Ghaybah of Shaykh Tusi; Najm al-Thaqib of Shaykh Tabrisi Nuri; Kamal ad-Din wa Tamam an-Ni'mah of Shaykh Saduq.

Another responsibility which the believers have is to ask Allah for a thorough ma'rifah of Imam al-Zaman (ajtf) and one must be sincere in praying for this.

Just as was previously stated, after attaining the ma'rifah of Allah and His Messenger (S), the next most important action for the believers is to have ma'rifah of Waliul 'Amr, Imam al-Zaman (ajtf).

Only Allah can grant this level of ma'rifah to his servants for this is something which is out of the power of human beings to acquire without the help of Allah. Thus, this ma'rifah cannot be achieved through a person's own struggles as this is a nur (Divine celestial light) which Allah places in the heart of those whom He wishes. Therefore, we must request the recognition of our Imam from the Almighty through supplications.

It has been narrated that Muhammad b. Hakim said to Abu 'Abdillah, Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as):

اَلْمَعْرِفَةُ مِنْ صُنْعِ مَنْ هِيَ؟ قَالَ مِنْ صُنْعِ اللَّهِ لَيْسَ لِلْعِبَادِ فِيهَا صُنْعٌ

“Who is responsible for granting this ma’rifah (of the Imam)?” He replied: “It is the doing of Allah and the servants have no role in it (on their own – without the intervention of Allah).”¹

In order to arrive at the recognition of the Imam, the following supplication is very effective:

اللَّهُمَّ عَرِّفْنِي نَفْسَكَ...

“O’ Allah! Grant me ma’rifah of Your Self...”²

1. al-Kafi, vol. 1, pg. 163, sec. on the “Necessity of Having a Hujjah”, no. 2
2. The full text of this supplication will be mentioned in the next responsibility.

Reciting the supplications which the Ahlul Bayt (as) has advised us is another responsibility of the believers. The books of tradition have stated that the following supplication should be recited and this is clearly seen in the following tradition.

It has been narrated from Zurarah that he heard Imam Ja’far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) say:

إِنَّ لِلْغُلَامِ غَيْبَةً قَبْلَ أَنْ يَقُومَ قَالَ: قُلْتُ: وَ لِمَ؟ قَالَ: يَخَافُ وَأُومِي بِيَدِهِ إِلَى بَطْنِهِ ثُمَّ قَالَ: يَا زُرَّارَةُ وَ هُوَ الْمُنْتَظَرُ وَ هُوَ الَّذِي يُشَكُّ فِي وَلَادَتِهِ مِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَقُولُ مَاتَ أَبُوهُ بِلَا خَلْفٍ وَ مِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَقُولُ حَمَلٌ وَ مِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَقُولُ إِنَّهُ وُلِدَ قَبْلَ مَوْتِ أَبِيهِ بِسَنَتَيْنِ وَ هُوَ الْمُنْتَظَرُ غَيْرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ يُحِبُّ أَنْ يَمْتَحِنَ الشَّيْعَةَ فَعِنْدَ ذَلِكَ يَرْتَابُ الْمُبْطِلُونَ! يَا زُرَّارَةُ إِذَا أَدْرَكْتَ ذَلِكَ الزَّمَانَ فَادْعُ بِهَذَا الدُّعَاءِ: اللَّهُمَّ عَرِّفْنِي نَفْسَكَ فَإِنَّكَ إِنْ لَمْ تُعَرِّفْنِي نَفْسَكَ لَمْ أَعْرِفْ نَبِيَّكَ. اللَّهُمَّ عَرِّفْنِي رَسُولَكَ فَإِنَّكَ إِنْ لَمْ تُعَرِّفْنِي رَسُولَكَ لَمْ أَعْرِفْ حُجَّتَكَ. اللَّهُمَّ عَرِّفْنِي حُجَّتَكَ فَإِنَّكَ إِنْ لَمْ تُعَرِّفْنِي حُجَّتَكَ ضَلَلْتُ عَنْ دِينِي.

“Verily there is a period of occultation for my son before he makes his advent.’ It was said to the Imam: ‘And why is this?’ The Imam replied: ‘He will be frightened’ and placed his hand on his abdomen and then said: ‘O’ Zurarah! He is the one who will be awaited, and he is the one whom the people will have doubt in with regards to his birth.

Some people will say: ‘His father died without a child’ others will say ‘His mother was pregnant with him (when his father died)’ others will say ‘He was born two years before his father passed away’ and he is

awiated, for surely Allah, the Noble and Grand, loves to test the Shi'a and it is then that the impugnors begin to doubt. O' Zurarah! If you witness that period (of confusion) then supplicate with this supplication:

اللَّهُمَّ عَرِّفْنِي نَفْسَكَ فَإِنَّكَ إِنْ لَمْ تُعَرِّفْنِي نَفْسَكَ لَمْ أَعْرِفْ نَبِيَّكَ. اللَّهُمَّ عَرِّفْنِي رَسُولَكَ فَإِنَّكَ إِنْ لَمْ تُعَرِّفْنِي رَسُولَكَ لَمْ أَعْرِفْ حُجَّتَكَ. اللَّهُمَّ عَرِّفْنِي حُجَّتَكَ فَإِنَّكَ إِنْ لَمْ تُعَرِّفْنِي حُجَّتَكَ ضَلَلْتُ عَنْ دِينِي

“O’ Allah! Grant me ma’rifah of Yourself for if I do not have the ma’rifah of You then I will never know Your Prophet. O’ Allah! Grant me ma’rifah of Your Messenger for if I do not have the ma’rifah of Your Messenger than I will never know Your Representative. O’ Allah! Grant me ma’rifah of Your Representative for if I do not have the ma’rifah of Your Representative, then surely I have gone astray from my religion.”¹

1. al-Kafi, vol. 1, pg. 337; al-Ghaybah of Nu'mani, pg. 166, no. 6

Another responsibility of the true believers is to be familiar with the signs of the reappearance of Imam al-Zaman (ajtf).

Just as was previously mentioned, it is important for us to recognize the signs of his return, as this is actually considered as a part of knowing the Imam. There are numerous signs which will herald his advent and they are divided into two categories:

1. Signs which are absolute and will definitely happen.
2. Signs which may or may not take place.

According to the narrations, it is obligatory to know and understand both types of signs. However, it is much more important to know the first type those that will definitely occur before his return.

According to the Islamic narrations, the signs that must occur before the Imam will return are five with a small discrepancy in some of them (due to there being various traditions in this regards). The differences in the signs will become obvious when we look at them directly from the traditions.

In brief, these signs are:

1. The arrival of Sufyani.
2. The arrival and uprising of Yamani.
3. A loud noise from the sky.

4. The killing of a pure soul (Nafs-e-Zakiyyah).
5. The sinking of Bayda`.

It has also been mentioned in the traditions that the image of a hand will be seen on the moon and this is also considered as one of the definite signs.

Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) has said:

لِلْقَائِمِ ۞ خَمْسُ عَلَامَاتٍ: ظُهُورُ السُّفْيَانِيِّ وَالْيَمَانِيِّ وَالصَّيْحَةُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَقَتْلُ
النَّفْسِ الزَّكِيَّةِ وَالْخَسْفُ بِالْبَيْدَاءِ

“There are five (definite) signs for the return of al-Qaim (ajtf) the appearance of al-Sufyani (the appearance of) al-Yamani, a loud cry from the sky, the killing of a pure soul [an-Nafs al-Zakiyyah]; and the caving in (of the earth) at Bayda`.”¹

It has been mentioned in the traditions that al-Sufyani is a reddish white coloured man with a black eye and that he will make his advent during the month of Rajab. We are told that he will take over a few countries of the world and that the advent of al-Mahdi (ajtf) will be in the same year.

After many victories, al-Sufyani will turn his attention towards 'Iraq and it is at this time that Imam al-Mahdi (ajtf) will make his advent from Makkah. At this point, a large contingent of forces will be sent to attack the Imam (by al-Sufyani), however when this army will reach the place known as Bayda` a location between Makkah and Madinah they will be swallowed into the Earth.

In addition, before the advent of the Imam (ajtf), many uprisings will take place such as the revolts of al-Hasani and al-Yamani and according to some traditions, the uprising of al-Yamani is also one of the definite signs.

The hearing of two cries one from the sky and the other from within the Earth is also one of the definite signs. During the first call, Jibra'il will call the name of Imam al-Qa'im (ajtf) and his father and will proclaim that the truth is with 'Ali ibn. Abi Talib (as) and his Shi'a (followers). Everyone will hear this call in their own language and even the women who are in their house behind locked doors will hear the call.

As well, before the advent of the Imam, a noble person will be killed during the Hajj rites in Makkah. In the traditions, this person has been referred to as the Pure Soul or an-Nafs al-Zakiyyah. Detailed information about this individual has been mentioned in the books concerning the occultation of Imam al-Zaman (ajtf).

The importance of knowing the signs which will take place before the advent of our Imam, especially the definite signs that must occur, can best be understood when we review the history of Islam.

We see that some other signs may have already taken place and thus, a number of people falsely claimed to be the Mahdi (ajtf). Without doubt, these people have fallen out of the fold of Islam and it is they who are misguided and are left alone in utter spiritual darkness.

The reason for them falling into this state is that they were not acquainted with the signs related to the advent and uprising of the Imam such that they could follow them. In addition, they lacked awareness of the specific signs which will herald in the advent of the Imam.

If they had knowledge of these signs, then they would not have been led astray and would have stayed firm on the Imamate and Wilayat of the Imam (as). They would not have been fooled nor would they have mistaken anyone else for the real Mahdi (ajtf).

Possessing a ma'rifah of the signs of the advent, especially the definite signs which must take place, helps us in differentiating between truth and falsehood, and by recognizing Imam al-Zaman (ajtf), we would actually look forward to and prepare the groundwork for his uprising. We would also not falter in our obedience to him or our delay in adhering to him.

It has been narrated by Zurarah that Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) has said:

يُنَادِي مُنَادٍ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ أَنَّ فُلَانًا هُوَ الْأَمِيرُ وَ يُنَادِي مُنَادٍ أَنَّ عَلِيًّا وَ شِيعَتَهُ هُمُ
الْفَائِزُونَ. قُلْتُ: فَمَنْ يُقَاتِلُ الْمَهْدِيَّ بَعْدَ هَذَا؟ فَقَالَ إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ يُنَادِي أَنَّ فُلَانًا وَ
شِيعَتَهُ هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ يَعْنِي رَجُلًا مِنْ بَنِي أُمَيَّةَ. قُلْتُ: فَمَنْ يَعْرِفُ الصَّادِقَ مِنَ
الْكَاذِبِ؟ قَالَ: يَعْرِفُهُ الَّذِينَ كَانُوا يَرَوْنَهُ حَدِيثًا وَ يَقُولُونَ إِنَّهُ يَكُونُ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَكُونَ
وَ يَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُمْ هُمُ الْمُحِقُّونَ الصَّادِقُونَ

"A caller will announce from the sky: 'Certainly so and so is the leader.' Then a caller will announce: 'Certainly 'Ali (as) and his followers are the victorious ones.'" I said to the Imam: "So then who will fight against the Mahdi (ajtf) after this (call)?" The Imam replied: "Unquestionably, Satan will also call out: 'Certainly, so and so and his followers will be the successful ones' meaning a man from the tribe of Bani Umayyah."

I said to the Imam: "So then how will a person be able to recognize the truthful one from the imposter?" The Imam replied: "Those who narrate traditions will recognize (the difference) and they will say that it (the call from the sky) will come before (the advent), and they will understand this and will know that they (the ones who make the first call) are speaking the truth."²

1. al-Ghaybah of Nu'mani, sec. 252 on the signs of the return, no. 9

2. al-Ghaybah of Nu'mani, pg. 246, no. 28

Another responsibility of the Shi'a, is to fulfill the rights which the Imam has over us.

Without doubt, the most important right which we owe to others starts with those which we owe to Allah, followed by the Messenger of Allah and then the rights which we must fulfill to our Imam. Obviously, the rights which our Imam demands from us must be carried out in the most perfect way.

In regards to this responsibility, there are numerous traditions which have been mentioned. Since it is not possible to narrate all of them, we suffice with one tradition from the Infallibles which states:

مَا كَانَ لِلَّهِ تَعَالَى مِنْ حَقٍّ فَهُوَ لَنَا

“Any right or privilege which belongs to Allah, the Most High, is also a privilege that belongs to us (the Ahlul Bayt).”¹

1. Mikyal al-Makarim, vol. 2, pg. 282; in Biharul Anwar, vol. 27, pg. 314, sec. 9, no. 11 it is mentioned with a slight variation in the wording.

The next responsibility which rests upon the shoulders of the believers is to invite others to have a better knowledge of the Imam and to help them advance in their conviction. In addition, the believers must also be ready to guide one another to the highest pinnacles of ma'rifah of the Imam.

There are many proofs which stress the importance of this responsibility, such as 'Amr bil Ma'ruf (enjoining others to what is right) and the benefits which are given to guiding people to the path of truth.

We are told that each person must invite others to the path of the Imam in accordance with their level of awareness and understanding of the Imam. One must educate others on the characteristics of the Imam, his moral fiber and other issues related to him, and in actuality, this is a responsibility which we all share towards this noble personality and it is through this act that we bring ourselves closer to the Imam.

A person who is active in this sort of invitation must not only possess the theoretical knowledge of the Imam (and of Islam), rather he must also manifest this knowledge through his actions.

As we know, it is through both the theoretical knowledge and our practical actions that we are able to educate and guide the people towards the Imam so that they too may be able to take him as their own personal example and guide to follow in life.

Without a doubt, inviting others to the path of guidance through one's practical actions has a greater effect than merely possessing theoretical knowledge.

From another point of view, we see that a person who is engaged in inviting others to the way of the

Imam must also employ good exhortation and advice, and through a combination of these methods, should guide others towards the Imam.

If needed, the path of warning (of the punishment of Allah) can also be used so that the hearts of the people are awakened to the truths around them and so that their spiritual souls are kept enlivened.

A person inviting to the Imam must also be able to make use of the reliable proofs (traditions) and with the various proofs and logical arguments available, should be able to convince others of the existence of the Imam and acquaint them with their true leader.

One of the Infallibles has said:

وَإِنَّ الْعَالِمَ الَّذِي يُعَلِّمُ النَّاسَ مَعَالِمَ دِينِهِمْ وَ يَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَى إِمَامِهِمْ أَفْضَلُ مِنْ
سَبْعِينَ أَلْفَ عَابِدٍ

“Surely the scholar who instructs the people in matters of their religion and invites them to their Imam is better than seventy thousand worshippers.”¹

In another tradition, this one from Imam ‘Ali b. Muhammad al-Hadi (as) it is stated that:

لَوْ لَا مَنْ يَبْقَى بَعْدَ غَيْبَةِ قَائِمِنَا مِنَ الْعُلَمَاءِ الدَّاعِينَ إِلَيْهِ وَ الدَّالِّينَ عَلَيْهِ وَ
الذَّابِّينَ عَنْ دِينِهِ بِحُجَجِ اللَّهِ وَ الْمُنْقِذِينَ لَضُعَفَاءِ عِبَادِ اللَّهِ مِنْ شِبَاكِ إِبْلِيسَ وَ
مَرَدَّتِهِ وَ مِنْ فِخَاخِ النَّوَاصِبِ لَمَا بَقِيَ أَحَدٌ إِلَّا ارْتَدَّ عَنْ دِينِ اللَّهِ وَ لَكِنَّهُمْ الَّذِينَ
يُمْسِكُونَ أَرْزَمَةَ قُلُوبِ ضُعَفَاءِ الشَّيْعَةِ كَمَا يُمْسِكُ صَاحِبُ السَّفِينَةِ سُكَّانَهَا.
أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْأَفْضَلُونَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ

“If after the occultation of your Qa'im (ajtf) there were not to remain a person from amongst the scholars who invite towards him (the Imam) guide others to him defend his religion by the proofs of Allah, rescue the downtrodden servants of Allah from the snares of Iblis and his hoards, and the traps of the enemies (of the Ahlul Bayt), then there would not remain a single person (on Earth) except that he would have left the religion of Allah.

However, these scholars take it upon themselves to be the protectors of the hearts of our downtrodden Shi'a just as the captain of a boat takes control of the lives and safety of those on his ship. Thus, these (scholars – the ‘Ulama) are the best people in the sight of Allah, the Noble and Great.”²

1. Mikyal al-Makarim, vol. 2, pg. 274
2. Biharul Anwar, vol. 2, pg. 6, sec. 8, no. 12

Another responsibility is to mention the merits and qualities of Imam al-Mahdi (ajtf). The narrations have encouraged the believers to do this for all of the Infallible A`immah (as) and specifically Imam al-'Asr (ajtf).

Without doubt, mentioning and reminding others of the merits and virtues of the Imam is the same as mentioning goodness in itself (as the Imams are the personification of everything good) and this is one of the best actions which a believer can perform and is a way to show enmity towards Satan.

Imam Musa b. Ja'far al-Kadhim (as) has said:

وَإِنَّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَلْتَقُونَ فَيَذْكُرَانِ اللَّهَ ثُمَّ يَذْكُرَانِ فَضْلَنَا أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ فَلَا يَبْقَى عَلَى
وَجْهِ إِبْلِيسَ مُضْغَةٌ لَحْمٍ إِلَّا تَخَدَّدُ حَتَّى إِنَّ رُوحَهُ لَتَسْتَغِيثُ مِنْ شِدَّةِ مَا يَجِدُ مِنَ
الْأَلَمِ

“Indeed when two believers meet one another and remember Allah and then mention the greatness of us the Ahlul Bayt (as), no flesh remains on the face of Iblis (Satan) except that it gets wrinkled and his soul cries out due to the severity of the pain (he feels).”¹

In a tradition from Imam ‘Ali b. Husain as-Sajjad (as), it is stated that:

وَأَمَّا حَقُّ ذِي الْمَعْرُوفِ عَلَيْكَ فَإِنَّ تَشْكُرَهُ وَتَذْكُرُ مَعْرُوفَهُ وَتَنْشُرُ لَهُ الْمَقَالَهَ
الْحَسَنَةَ

“As for the right of the person who has done good to you over you, it is that you should thank him, remember his favor and spread (to others) good words about him.”²

1. al-Kafi, vol. 2, pg. 188, no. 7
2. Tuhaf al-'Uqul, pg. 265; Makarim al-Akhlaq, pg. 459

The next responsibility is to take part in gatherings in which the merits of Imam al-Mahdi (ajtf) are mentioned or in which his noble ancestors are remembered. We must be present in such gatherings and through our presence, offer a spiritual gift to these great personalities and make such programs dynamic

as this is one of the signs of true love for our Imam.

A companion narrated that Imam Muhammad b. 'Ali al-Baqir (as) said:

أَتَخْلُونَ وَتَتَحَدَّثُونَ وَتَقُولُونَ مَا شِئْتُمْ؟ فَقُلْتُ: أَيَّ وَاللَّهِ... فَقَالَ ۞: أَمَا وَاللَّهِ
لَوَدِدْتُ أَنِّي مَعَكُمْ فِي بَعْضِ تِلْكَ الْمَوَاطِنِ أَمَا وَاللَّهِ إِنِّي لِأُحِبُّ رِيحَكُمْ وَ
أَرْوَاحَكُمْ وَأَنْكُمُ عَلَى دِينِ اللَّهِ وَدِينِ مَلَائِكَتِهِ فَأَعِينُوا بِوَرَعٍ وَاجْتِهَادٍ

“Do you seclude yourselves and speak to one another about whatever pleases you (in regards to the teachings of Allah)?” I replied: “Yes, by Allah.” The Imam replied: “I swear by Allah that surely I would love to be with you in some of these gatherings.

Surely, by Allah I love the pleasant aroma that emanates from you (by holding such gatherings) and I love your souls! Surely you are all on the religion of Allah and the religion of His Angels so help (one another) to observe piety and struggle (in these regards).”¹

1. al-Kafi, vol. 2, pg. 187, no. 5

Another responsibility of the believers is to arrange gatherings in which Imam al-Zaman (ajtf) is mentioned, as this is also a sign of one's love for the Imam. If a true believer is well versed in public speaking and is able to speak about the Imam and his qualities, then he must perform this act.

Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) said to Fudhail:

تَجْلِسُونَ وَتُحَدِّثُونَ؟ قَالَ: نَعَمْ جُعِلْتُ فِدَاكَ قَالَ: إِنَّ تِلْكَ الْمَجَالِسَ أُحِبُّهَا
فَأَحْيُوا أَمْرَنَا يَا فَضِيلُ فَرَحِمَ اللَّهُ مَنْ أَحْيَا أَمْرَنَا

“Do you gather and discuss (about us the Ahlul Bayt)?” Fudhail said: “Yes, may I be sacrificed for you!” The Imam said: “Verily I love such gatherings, so keep our teachings alive O' Fudhail! May the mercy of Allah be upon a person who keeps our teachings alive.”¹

Indeed, establishing such gatherings is the true essence of helping the religion of Allah and the Hujjah of our time and will result in the spread of the religion of truth.

In fact, it is possible that at certain times, it may actually become obligatory to establish such programs. For example, if there is a possibility of danger coming to the religion and people are being led astray,

then in order to save the faith and protect the souls of the people, it will become obligatory to hold such gatherings.

1. Biharul Anwar, vol. 44, pg. 282, sec. 34, no. 14

Another responsibility is to recite poetry, write books or other such things in which the merits and virtues of the Imam are mentioned. Such writings should also contain praise and admiration of the Imam and words of consolation, solace and lamentation for him (since he is in the major occultation).

Of course, this should be carried out according to one's ability and indeed, this is one way in which we can help the religion and our Imam. The pure A`immah (as) used to recommend their followers to extol the virtues of the Ahlul Bayt (as) through their words and deeds and there are many traditions in this regard.

For example, Imam 'Ali b. Musa al-Ridha (as) has said:

مَا قَالَ فِينَا مُؤْمِنٌ شِعْراً يَمْدَحُنَا بِهِ إِلَّا بَنَى اللَّهُ لَهُ مَدِينَةً فِي الْجَنَّةِ أَوْسَعَ مِنْ
الدُّنْيَا سَبْعَ مَرَّاتٍ يَزُورُهُ فِيهَا كُلُّ مَلَكٍ مُقَرَّبٍ وَ كُلُّ نَبِيٍّ مُرْسَلٍ

“There is not a single believer who recites a poem in our (the Ahlul Bayt's) praise except that Allah builds for him a city in Paradise whose expanse is more than the world seven times over and wherein all the closest Angels (to Allah) and every appointed Messenger will come to visit him.”¹

1. Wasa'il ash-Shi'a, vol. 10, pg. 467, sec. 105, no. 3

Another responsibility of the believers is to obey the Imam, during the time of his advent and also during his occultation. Obeying him means that we must adhere to the legislations sent by Allah.

During the period of the occultation, obeying the Imam can be achieved by following the commandments of his noble ancestors which are found in the books of narrations.

Imam 'Ali b. Husain as-Sajjad (as) has said:

لَا كَرَمَ إِلَّا بِتَقْوَىٰ وَ لَا عَمَلَ إِلَّا بِالنِّيَّةِ وَ لَا عِبَادَةَ إِلَّا بِالتَّفَقُّهِ أَلَا وَ إِنَّ أَبْغَضَ النَّاسِ
إِلَى اللَّهِ مَنْ يَقْتَدِي بِسُنَّةِ إِمَامٍ وَ لَا يَقْتَدِي بِأَعْمَالِهِ

“There is no honour except by being Godwary, and there is no action except when accompanied by the (correct) intention, and there is no worship except with contemplation. Surely the most hated of people in the sight of Allah is one who follows the tradition of the Imam, however does not follow him in his actions.”¹

In a second tradition from one of the Imams it has been stated:

كُونُوا لَنَا زِينًا وَ لَا تَكُونُوا عَلَيْنَا شَيْنًا

“Be a beautification for us (the Ahlul Bayt) and not a source of embarrassment to us.”²

In a final tradition for this responsibility, we quote the words of the sixth Imam, Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) who said:

إِنَّا لَا نَعُدُّ الرَّجُلَ مُؤْمِنًا حَتَّى يَكُونَ لِجَمِيعِ أَمْرِنَا مُتَّبِعًا مُرِيدًا أَلَا وَ إِنَّ مِنَ التَّبَاعِ أَمْرِنَا وَ إِرَادَتِهِ الْوَرَعَ فَتَزَيَّنُوا بِهِ يَرْحَمَكُمُ اللَّهُ وَ كَبِدُوا أَعْدَانَنَا بِهِ يَنْعَشَكُمُ اللَّهُ

“Indeed we do not classify a person as a true believer until he follows all of our teachings. Certainly piety is attained by following our teachings so beautify yourselves with it, may Allah have mercy upon you, and hurt our enemies with it and Allah will enliven your spirits.”³

1. al-Kafi, vol. 8, pg. 234, sec. 8, no. 312

2. Biharul Anwar, vol. 68, pg. 151, sec. 19, no. 6

3. al-Kafi, vol. 2, pg. 78, sec. al-Wara', no. 13

Another responsibility of the believers is to place the wishes and desires of Imam al-Zaman (ajtf) above our own wishes and desires. A true believer must always give precedence to the Imam's requests over his own pleasure and happiness.

Before a believer carries out a task, one must first think to himself if that action is in accordance with the wishes of the Imam or not? If one feels that the Imam will be happy with it, then one should go ahead and follow through and that too only to earn the Imam's satisfaction and not for one's own pleasure or to satisfy his lower desires.

If an action one wishes to perform will not please the Imam, then one should not perform it. In essence, a believer should try to struggle against the lower self in order to earn the satisfaction of the Imam.

A person who acts in this manner will definitely earn the attention of the Imam and will be of those whom the Imam will love. In turn, the Imam will remember that person in a positive way and supplicate for him.

The following tradition narrated by Abi ‘Abdillah, Imam Ja’far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) sheds more light on this issue in which a person asked the Imam a question:

مَا أَكْثَرَ مَا أَسْمَعُ مِنْكَ يَا سَيِّدِي ذَكَرَ سَلْمَانَ الْفَارِسِيِّ؟ فَقَالَ لَا تَقُلْ سَلْمَانَ الْفَارِسِيِّ وَلَكِنْ قُلْ سَلْمَانَ الْمُحَمَّدِيِّ. أَتَدْرِي مَا كَثَرَتْ ذِكْرِي لَهُ؟ قُلْتُ لَا قَالَ لثَلَاثَ خِصَالٍ إِحْدَاهَا إِثَارُهُ هَوَى أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلَى هَوَى نَفْسِهِ وَالثَّانِيَةُ حُبُّهُ الْفُقَرَاءَ وَاخْتِيَارُهُ إِيَّاهُمْ عَلَى أَهْلِ الثَّرْوَةِ وَالْعُدَدِ وَالثَّالِثَةُ حُبُّهُ لِلْعِلْمِ وَالْعُلَمَاءِ. إِنَّ سَلْمَانَ كَانَ عَبْدًا صَالِحًا حَنِيفًا مُسْلِمًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

“Why do I hear you speak so much about Salman al-Farsi, O’ my master?” The Imam replied: “Do not call him Salman al-Farsi, rather refer to him as Salman al-Muhammadi. Do you know why I speak so much about him?” The man replied to the Imam: “No I do not know.” The Imam said: “Because of three traits which he possessed.

The first one is that he preferred the wishes and desires of the Commander of the Faithful, ‘Ali. Abi Talib (as) over his own desires. The second reason is because he loved poor people and preferred them over those who had wealth and riches. The third reason is due to his love of knowledge and those who possess knowledge (the ‘Ulama). Unquestionably Salman was a servant (of Allah), righteous, upright, submissive (to Allah) and he was not from among the polytheists.”¹

1. Biharul Anwar, vol. 22, pg. 327, sec. 10, no. 33

Another responsibility is to know the narrators of traditions, scholars of the religion and those who are well acquainted with the traditions of the Ahlul Bayt (as), especially those who (in addition to knowing these sciences), act according to what they know.

These are none other the people who make up the glorious chain of great Jurisprudents and respected scholars (who are worthy of being followed).

The second section of this responsibility is to obey the rulings of such scholars and this is one of the most important responsibilities of a servant of Allah during the occultation. Rather, even in the period of the Imam’s advent, this will also be one of the most important duties.

During the occultation, it is obligatory to have faith in and testify to such scholars and it is also mandatory

upon the people to perform taqlid (to follow) one of the Mujtahidin from amongst them.

It goes without saying that a detailed discussion regarding taqlid cannot be covered in this book. However in brief we can state that during the period of occultation, a true believer has one of three choices, He himself becomes a Mujtahid; he acts according to precaution (Ihtiyat) in the performance of all his actions or becomes a ‘muqallid’ which means that he follows a person who is at the highest level of Ijtihad.

If one does not fit into the first two categories, then one must perform taqlid of a Marja’ who fulfills all of the requirements to be followed¹ in all areas of the Furu’ ad-Din (the practical Islamic regulations).

Just as the narrators of traditions and the scholars of the religion have been ordered to guide the people in their religious injunctions and issues related to the next life, so too the people have been commanded to take guidance from such scholars of the faith.

Through relying upon our intelligence and the Islamic proofs, we can deduce that not only is it permissible to refer to the people of knowledge when an issue comes up, rather it is the only way to achieve success and reach our goals!

The Qur`an clearly tells us:

﴿ فَاسْأَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴾

“Ask the people of the remembrance (those who have knowledge on a particular issue) if you do not know.” (16:43)

In regards to issues of the next life and this transient world and how to achieve success in both, the only path of salvation lies in referring to the people of knowledge and those who are permitted to express their opinion the scholars of the faith who act according to their knowledge.

At the head of all responsibilities which we have, it is this one which makes the duty of a true believer clear in regards to the representative (of Allah).

It is through following this commandment that a person’s actions, in relation to the life of this transient world and the next, are given a stable footing; it is under the shadow of obeying the commandments of the Marja’ through the act of taqlid that obedience to the Imam is realized it is also through this act that happiness in this transient life and the next world are guaranteed.

In reality, following the commandments of the Imam can never materialize except under the shadow of obedience to a Marja’ who fulfills all of the requirements to be followed² and this status can be referred to as Wilayatul Faqih or the Guardianship of the Jurisprudent.

The only way that one can obey Imam al-Mahdi (ajtf) is by obedience to his general representative, as it is this person who is at the forefront of the narrators of the tradition, scholars and callers towards the faith.

The principle of Wilayatul Faqih is the foremost foundation of Islam and the person who wishes to possess true faith during the period of occultation must believe in and accept this.

Even if the term Wali al-Faqih is thought of as being coined in our current era, we see that it simply means to follow the Marja' who fulfills all of the requirements (of being followed) as it is he who is responsible for leading the Islamic society.

He is the one who is permitted to lead the Muslim community as they have accepted his leadership and authority (Wilayah). Therefore, once he is entrusted with this authority, his obedience is at the pinnacle of all obligatory acts.

Without doubt, it is obligatory to obey all of those who narrate the traditions and are considered as true scholars of the faith, however if from amongst these, there are Mara'ja who fulfill the requirements, and amongst this select group there is an individual who is recognized as the Wali al-Faqih, then he is the first one who must be followed since he possesses the guardianship over the entire Muslim nation.

As we know, following Imam al-Hujjah (ajtf) can only be done under the shadow of following the orders of the Wali al-Faqih who has taken on the responsibility of guardianship of the entire community. Therefore, to disobey his orders is tantamount to disobeying the commandments of Imam al-Hujjah (ajtf).

قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى لِعِيسَى ۙ عَظَّمَ الْعُلَمَاءَ وَ اعْرِفْ فَضْلَهُمْ فَإِنِّي فَضَّلْتُهُمْ عَلَى
جَمِيعِ خَلْقِي إِلَّا النَّبِيِّينَ وَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ كَفَضَلُ الشَّمْسِ عَلَى الْكَوَاكِبِ وَ كَفَضَلُ
الْآخِرَةِ عَلَى الدُّنْيَا وَ كَفَضَلَنِي عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ

Allah, the Most High, said to 'Isa: "Hold the scholars in great esteem and recognize their greatness since surely I have granted them greatness above all My creations, with the exception of those who have been sent as Prophets and Messengers just like the sun enjoys greatness over the other stars, and the next life enjoys greatness over the transient world, and like My greatness over all other things."3

In a letter which Imam al-Hujjah (ajtf) wrote to Ishaq b. Ya'qub, he stated:

وَ أَمَّا الْحَوَادِثُ الْوَاقِعَةُ فَارْجِعُوا فِيهَا إِلَى رُؤَاةِ حَدِيثِنَا فَإِنَّهُمْ حُجَّتِي عَلَيْكُمْ وَ أَنَا
حُجَّةُ اللَّهِ (عَلَيْهِمْ)

“As for (guidance in) the events which transpire, refer to those who narrate our traditions, since they are my proof over all of you and I am the proof of Allah (over them).”⁴

In a tradition from Imam Hasan b. ‘Ali al-‘Askari, he said:

فَأَمَّا مَنْ كَانَ مِنَ الْفُقَهَاءِ صَائِنًا لِنَفْسِهِ حَافِظًا لِدِينِهِ مُخَالَفًا عَلَى هَوَاهُ مُطِيعًا
لِأَمْرِ مَوْلَاهُ فَلِلْعَوَامِّ أَنْ يُقَلِّدُوهُ وَذَلِكَ لَا يَكُونُ إِلَّا بَعْضُ فُقَهَاءِ الشَّيْعَةِ لَا كُلُّهُمْ

“As for the one who is from amongst the Fuqaha (scholars) and who protects his soul safe guards his faith goes against the passions of his lowly desires obeys the commands of his master (Allah) it is required that the common people should follow him. However these characteristics are present only in some of the Fuqaha of the Shi’a not all of them.”⁵

1. Refer to the Tawdhiul Masa’il of any Marja’ Taqlid, section on Taqlid, issue 1
2. A Mujtahid who fulfills all of the requirements [Jami’ul Shara’it] in order to be followed must possess the following qualities: male, mature (Baligh), Shi’a Ithna-Asheri, of legitimate birth, alive and Just (‘Adil), one who protects his own soul (from sins), one who protects and safeguards his religion, one who goes against the desires of his lower soul and follows the commands of Allah, the Most High. (Risalah Tawdhiul Masa’il, section on Taqlid, issue 2)
3. Biharul Anwar, vol. 2, pg. 25, sec. 8, no. 91; Muniyat al-Murid, pg. 121, sec. on the Greatness of Knowledge
4. Wasa’il ash-Shi’a, vol. 18, pg. 101, section 11, no. 9; Biharul Anwar, vol. 2, pg. 90, sec. 14, no. 13
5. Wasa’il ash-Shi’a, vol. 27, pg. 131, sec. 10, no. 33401; Biharul Anwar, vol. 2, pg. 88, sec. 14, no. 12; al-Ihtijaj (Tabrisi), vol. 2, pg. 283

Another responsibility is to imitate the close, intimate friends of Allah. The Awliyah and The Divine Gnostics. This means that it is obligatory to spiritually travel towards Allah and to follow those who have reached the station of union and annihilation in Allah.

One must strive to become like those who have decorated themselves with the Divine virtuous traits and etiquette have reached lofty stations of ma’rifah of Allah and arrived to the pinnacles of their spiritual migration to the Almighty. While on this path, the believer must cut himself off from all other individuals in his life other than those who are on this path.

Amongst the scholars of the religion and those who narrate the traditions of the pure and infallible Ahlul Bayt (as) and those who practice what they know with true sincerity, there is a group who through their hard work, have attained the status of the sincere individuals (al-Mukhlisun).

It is this group of people who possess complete ma’rifah of Allah, and through spiritual union with Him, have completely annihilated themselves in His Sacred Essence.

It is incumbent upon the true believers to go in search of these people so that through them, the

believers are guided. It is through following their direction that one can benefit from the springs of goodness which they possess and through which one may be able to reach the highest goals.

According to the intellect and the traditions, it is obligatory to follow these scholars as they are at the spiritual forefront over all others. These scholars must be sought after throughout the entire Earth and one must be able to identify them and know who they are. Once this is accomplished, one must then strengthen his aspirations and become a disciple of such people.

Through both the inner being and the outer self, one must have full trust in them and not deviate from their path even in the slightest. It is under the shadow of their guidance that a true believer will be able to reach his goal – the lofty levels of spiritual closeness to Allah ﷻ and purification of the soul.

Through this, one will become a true manifestation of the collection of verses of the Qur`an which start with:

﴿ قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ... ﴾

“Surely successful are the true believers...”¹

In every era, there are certain individuals who make up the pure tree (Shajaratul Tayyibah) and for the one who is searching for the truth, finding such individuals is:

أَيْسَرَ مِنْ كُلِّ يَسِيرٍ

“Easier than all other easy tasks.”

Those who wish to follow this responsibility must seek to be amongst those whom Imam Ja’far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) has spoken in regards to when he said: “I swear by the One who holds my life in His hands.

Verily on the land and its surroundings, there are true believers for whom the entire transient world does not even measure in the worth of the wing of a fly. If the entire material world and all that is within it and upon it was to be turned into gold and was to be put around their neck and was then to fall off of their neck, they would not even feel that something was on their neck nor would they realize that something had fallen off!”

After explaining some of the characteristics of the close, intimate friends of Allah, then Imam went on to say: “Ahh!

How I long to sit and speak with these people and how much grief I have for that which they have – however by sitting with them, my grief would go away! I am looking for these people and when I find them and benefit from their Divinely granted Light, then I too shall be guided. Through them, we will all be successful in this life and in the next.

Such people are more scarce than red sulphur. Their ornament is their prolonged silence, keeping of secrets, establishing the Salat, Zakat, Hajj and Fasting, being in solace, helping their brothers in faith when they have the ability and even when they are in difficulty.

These are their ornaments and things that they love to do. Glad tidings upon these people and what a good return (from Allah) they will have! These are the people who shall be the inheritors of the Firadus wherein they shall abide for eternity.”²

The Noble Prophet ﷺ had stated: “O’ Usamah! This group of people shall have knowledge of all corners of the Earth. Anytime the Mihrab (place of worship) will not find them within them, they will lament!

Thus, take these people as your treasure and worth it is possible that through them you shall be saved from the difficulties of this transient world and the fears and uncertainties of the Day of Resurrection! Ensure that you follow the path they are on because if you leave their path, then your feet shall definitely tremble and you will slip into the hell-fire.”³

In a tradition from Imam Ja’far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) , we read:

حُبُّ اللَّهِ إِذَا أَضَاءَ عَلَى سِرِّ عَبْدٍ أَخْلَاهُ عَنْ كُلِّ شَاغِلٍ وَكُلِّ ذِكْرِ سِوَى اللَّهِ عِنْدَ ظُلْمَةٍ وَالْمُحِبُّ أَخْلَصَ النَّاسَ سِرًّا لِلَّهِ وَأَصْدَقَهُمْ قَوْلًا وَأَوْفَاهُمْ عَهْدًا وَأَزْكَاهُمْ عَمَلًا وَأَصْنَفَاهُمْ ذِكْرًا وَأَعْبَدَهُمْ نَفْسًا، تَتَبَاهَى الْمَلَائِكَةُ عِنْدَ مُنَاجَاتِهِ وَتَفْتَخِرُ بِرُؤْيَيْهِ وَبِهِ يَعْمُرُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى بِلَادَهُ وَيَكْرُمُ عِبَادَهُ يُعْطِيهِمْ إِذَا سَأَلُوا بِحَقِّهِ وَيُدْفَعُ عَنْهُمْ الْبَلَايَا بِرَحْمَتِهِ فَلَوْ عِلِمَ الْخَلْقُ مَا مَحَلَّهُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَمَنْزِلَتُهُ لَدَيْهِ مَا تَقَرَّبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ إِلَّا بِتُرَابِ قَدَمَيْهِ

“When the love of Allah illuminates the inner self of a servant, it distracts him from all preoccupations and all thoughts other than Allah. One who loves (Allah) will become the most sincere of all people to Him in secret the most truthful in words; the most faithful in his promise, the purest in deeds, the most earnest in remembrance (of Allah) and the most obedient in worship.

The Angels will be delighted when he whispers (to his Lord) and will feel proud when they see him. It is because of him that Allah makes His lands prosper; and in favour of his honour will Allah honour His servants.

He gives them when they beseech Him in his name, and He wards off misfortunes on account of His mercy (for him). Had the creation known the actual status and standing of such a loving servant with Almighty Allah, they would not have sought nearness to Allah except by the dust of his feet!"⁴

1. Suratul Mu'minun (23), verse 1; Suratul A'la (87), verse 14; Suratul Shams (91), verse 9
2. Biharul Anwar, vol. 67, pg. 351, sec. 14, no. 54
3. The Spiritual Link with the Sacred Essence of al-Mahdi, pg. 264; al-TahSin (Ibne Fahd al-Hilli), sec. 3, pg. 22
4. Biharul Anwar, vol. 70, sec. on the Love of Allah, pg. 23, no. 23

Renunciation of those who claim to be the specific representatives of Imam al-Mahdi (ajtf) during the major occultation is another responsibility of the true believers. The Imamiyah Shi'a firmly believes that with the death of the four specific representatives of the Imam during the period of the minor occultation, namely his last one, Shaykh 'Ali. Muhammad Samari al-Ra^{iqi}, the specific representation of Imam al-Zaman (ajtf) came to an end.

During the era of the major occultation, there is absolutely no specific representative of the Imam. However, a general representation¹ of the Imam is possible and permissible and the proofs confirm the existence of general representatives of the Imam and tell us that the scholars who act according to their knowledge and fulfill the conditions² which have been mentioned in the sayings of the Ahlul Bayt (as) are the general deputies and representatives of the Imam.

In a tradition narrated by Muhammad al-Hasan b. Ahmad we read that:

كُنْتُ بِمَدِينَةِ السَّلَامِ فِي السَّنَةِ الَّتِي تُوفِّيَ فِيهَا الشَّيْخُ عَلِيُّ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ السَّمُرِيِّ
رِضْوَانُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ فَحَضَرْتُهُ قَبْلَ وَفَاتِهِ بِأَيَّامٍ، فَأَخْرَجَ إِلَى النَّاسِ تَوْقِيعًا نُسَخْتُهُ:
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ. يَا عَلِيُّ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ السَّمُرِيُّ أَعْظَمَ اللَّهُ أَجْرَ إِخْوَانِكَ
فِيكَ فَإِنَّكَ مَيِّتٌ مَا بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَ سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ، فَأَجْمَعْ أَمْرَكَ وَ لَا تُوصِلْ إِلَى أَحَدٍ
فَيَقُومَ مَقَامَكَ بَعْدَ وَفَاتِكَ فَقَدْ وَقَعَتِ الْغَيْبَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ فَلَا ظُهُورَ إِلَّا بَعْدَ إِذْنِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَ
جَلَّ وَ ذَلِكَ بَعْدَ طُولِ الْأَمَدِ وَ قَسْوَةِ الْقُلُوبِ وَ امْتِلَاءِ الْأَرْضِ جَوْرًا وَسَيِّئَاتِي
شِيعَتِي مَنْ يَدَّعِي الْمُشَاهَدَةَ إِلَّا فَمَنْ ادَّعَى الْمُشَاهَدَةَ قَبْلَ خُرُوجِ السُّفْيَانِيِّ وَ
الصَّيْحَةِ فَهُوَ كَذَّابٌ مُفْتَرٍ وَ لَا حَوْلَ وَ لَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْعَظِيمِ

"I was in the city of Peace (Baghdad) in the year in which Shaykh 'Ali b. Muhammad al-Samuri, may Allah's grace be upon him, passed away and was with him a few days before he left this world. At that time, he brought out a piece of paper with some writing on it that stated: "In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

O' 'Ali b. Muhammad al-Samuri! May Allah grant your brothers a grand reward concerning you since you are going to die soon and between you and death, only six days remain. Thus, gather your affair and do not appoint anyone to be in your place (as my representative) after your death for the time of the second occultation is here and there will be no advent until after the permission of Allah, the Noble and Majestic.

This will be after a long period (has passed) after the hearts have become hardened and the Earth has become full of corruption. And there will come some from my Shi'a who will claim to have seen me. Certainly the person who claims to have seen me before the appearance of al-Sufyani and the Call is a liar and a fabricator. And there is no power or strength, save with Allah, the Most High, the Majestic.'”³

Confirming the specific representation of the Imam can be possible through the following three ways:

1. A direct and explicit text from Imam al-Zaman (ajtf) himself.
2. A clear text from one of the direct representatives of the Imam (ajtf)
3. A person who claims to be the representative of the Imam (ajtf) shows supernatural actions which would prove the relationship between him, Allah and the Imam.

During the minor occultation, the four specific representatives of the Imam were either explicitly appointed directly by the Imam or through a written text from the preceding representative based on the Imam's directive and each one was able to perform supernatural actions to prove their status.

Therefore, as long as the specific representation is not proven through the definite proofs, we cannot accept his claim! In actuality, it is forbidden (haram) to make this claim and to accept the claim from one who makes it!

During the period of the major occultation, it is hard to arrive at the three conditions mentioned rather, it is impossible as there is no explicit text from the Imam himself or one of the directly appointed representatives, nor can we find a single person who could produce such supernatural and paranormal acts that would be able to confirm his appointment as a specific representative of the Imam!

Indeed, it is possible that a person or a group of people may claim to be specific representatives of Imam al-Zaman (ajtf), however we must test them to see if they possess any of the three points mentioned above.

Through testing them and closely monitoring their speech, actions, behavior and their claims of specific representation, their lies and trickery will clearly be seen as from the beginning of the major occultation until today, not only have we not heard, but also we have not seen any of these signs in any person.

A person who claims this status must be one who acts upon the Shari'ah and the religion of Allah. In addition, there must not be even the smallest slips in his character or in the performance of the religious duties. He must perform all of the obligatory (wajib) acts and refrain from all of the prohibited (haram)

acts.

Of course, all reprehensible (makruh) acts must be avoided and the recommended (mustahab) acts must be carried out. In addition to this, the supernatural acts would have to be shown as this defines his relationship with Imam al-Hujjah (ajtf) and his being a specific representative of the Imam.

In the tradition quoted above, the Imam noted: “Whoever claims to have seen me (during the occultation) is a liar and has leveled a false accusation against me” and this statement clearly proves that there are currently no specific representatives of the Imam!

Thus, if a person claims to have a certain status granted to him by the Imam or claims to have met the Imam just like the (four) specific representatives of the Imam had done (during the minor occultation), then he must be called a liar and must be introduced as one who has placed a false accusation against the Imam.

1. The proofs which speak about the general representation are many and can be found in the books which are related to the issue of the Wilayatul Faqih. There are traditions in regards to this topic which are found in the thirteenth responsibility in this book, from Imam Hasan al-’Askari ؑ and one from the 12th Imam ؑ himself.
2. Refer to the Tawdhiul Masa’il manual under the section of Taqlid, Issue 1
3. Kamal ad-Din wa Tamam an-Ni’mah, vol. 2, pg. 516, sec. 45, no. 44

Another responsibility is to pray to Allah for the attainment of the necessary traits which a believer must possess. A true believer must ask Allah for that which is good for this world and the next. He must also ask Allah to grant him the virtuous ethical traits such as patience, truthfulness in speech, intelligence, aptitude, wisdom and insight.

If having patience is one of the necessary traits of the believers during the occultation of the Imam, then its corresponding responsibility is that a believer asks Allah for this trait to be instilled within him. As well, if fulfilling the rights of the Imam is considered as one of the duties of a believer, then another responsibility is that one must pray for the ability to fulfill the rights of the Imam.

Thus in summary, one must supplicate to Allah ﷻ to be able to fulfill every important task.

The Messenger of Allah has said:

سَلُّوا اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ مَا بَدَأَكُمْ مِنْ حَوَائِجِكُمْ حَتَّى شِسْعَ النَّعْلِ فَإِنَّهُ إِنْ لَمْ يُيسِّرْهُ
لَمْ يَتيسَّرْ

“Ask Allah, the Majestic and Glorious, for the necessities that you require, even for as much as your

shoelace, because if He does not make it easily available for you then it will not be attainable.”¹

1. Biharul Anwar, vol. 93, pg. 295, sec. 16, no. 23

The next responsibility is to acquire the noble ethical traits (Makarimul Akhlaq) and a believer must struggle to attain these virtuous qualities.

The noble ethical traits and worthwhile qualities that a Shi'a of Imam al-Zaman (ajtf) must possess are many some of which include: silence, knowledge, forbearance, fellowship with the people, never going to extremes in the faith or in life, and other things.

Jabir b. 'Abdullah al-AnSari said to Imam Muhammad b. 'Ali al-Baqir (as):

يَا ابْنَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ مَا أَفْضَلُ مَا يَسْتَعْمَلُهُ الْمُؤْمِنُ فِي ذَلِكَ الزَّمَانِ؟ قَالَ حَفْظُ
اللِّسَانِ وَ لُزُومُ الْبَيْتِ

“O’ son of the Messenger of Allah! What is the best action for a true believer during that time (the period of occultation)?” The Imam replied: “Protecting one’s tongue (watching what he says) and staying at home (protecting one’s self from corruption).”¹

The meaning of protecting the tongue is to keep quiet and may refer to using dissimulation (taqiyyah) when necessary; staying at home means that one keeps away from corruption, refrains from sins and acts with caution with the transient world and the over-indulgence of pleasures contained within it.

The narrator of the following tradition asked Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) for guidance in regards to the best actions during the period of occultation, to which the Imam replied:

إِقْرَأْ عَلَى مَنْ تَرَى أَنَّهُ يُطِيعُنِي مِنْهُمْ وَ يَأْخُذُ بِقَوْلِي السَّلَامَ وَ أُوصِيكُمْ بِتَقْوَى اللَّهِ
عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَ الْوَرَعَ فِي دِينِكُمْ وَ الْإِجْتِهَادَ لِلَّهِ وَ صِدْقَ الْحَدِيثِ وَ آدَاءِ الْأَمَانَةِ وَ
طُولَ السُّجُودِ وَ حُسْنَ الْجَوَارِ فَبِهَذَا جَاءَ مُحَمَّدٌ ؟ أَدُوا الْأَمَانَةَ إِلَى مَنْ اتَّيَمَّكُمْ
عَلَيْهَا بَرًّا أَوْ فَاجِرًا فَإِنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ؟ كَانَ يَأْمُرُ بِآدَاءِ الْخَيْطِ وَ الْمَخِيطِ

“Convey my salutations to the Shi'a whom you know to be obedient to me and who acts upon my words.

I also advise you to maintain consciousness of Allah, the Glorious and Noble, piety in relation to your religion struggle in the way of Allah, truthfulness in speech and giving back a trust (when you have been

entrusted with something), prolonging the prostrations and to be a good neighbour since these (are all things) that Muhammad (blessings of Allah be upon him and his family) brought.

Give back the trust that someone has given to you to keep whether he be a good person or an open sinner, because certainly the Messenger of Allah (blessings of Allah be upon him and his family) used to command the return of the trust even if it be (something as small as) a thread and needle.”²

Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) also said:

إِنَّا لَنُحِبُّ مَنْ كَانَ عَاقِلًا فَهَمًّا فَفَقِيهَا حَلِيمًا مُدَارِيًّا صَبُورًا صَدُوقًا وَفِيًّا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ خَصَّ الْأَنْبِيَاءَ بِمَكَارِمِ الْأَخْلَاقِ فَمَنْ كَانَتْ فِيهِ فَلْيَحْمَدِ اللَّهَ عَلَى ذَلِكَ وَ مَنْ لَمْ تَكُنْ فِيهِ فَلْيَتَضَرَّعْ إِلَى اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَلْيَسْأَلْهُ إِيَّاهَا. قَالَ قُلْتُ: جُعِلْتُ فِدَاكَ وَ مَا هُنَّ؟ قَالَ ۞: هُنَّ الْوَرَعُ وَ الْقَنَاعَةُ وَ الصَّبْرُ وَ الشُّكْرُ وَ الْحِلْمُ وَ الْحَيَاءُ وَ السَّخَاءُ وَ الشَّجَاعَةُ وَ الْغِيْرَةُ وَ الْبِرُّ وَ صِدْقُ الْحَدِيثِ وَ آدَاءُ الْأَمَانَةِ

“Surely we love that person who is intelligent, has understanding; deep knowledge of the religion, forbearing, compassionate, patient truthful and trustworthy. Surely Allah, the Glorious and Noble, graced the messengers with the noblest of ethics so whoever has these traits in himself should praise Allah for this and whoever does not possess them should beseech Allah, the Glorious and Noble, and plead for them from him.”

The companion continued: “I said to the Imam, may I be sacrificed for you, what are they?” The Imam replied: “They are to keep away (from sin), to be satisfied (with what one has), patience, thankfulness, forbearance, chastity, benevolence, courage, dignity, righteousness, truthfulness in one’s speech and returning the entrusted.”³

1. Kamal ad-Din wa Tamam an-Ni'mah, vol. 2, pg. 330

2. al-Kafi, vol. 2, pg. 636, no. 5; Wasa'il ash-Shi'a, vol. 12, pg. 6, sec. 1, no. 10496

3. al-Kafi, vol. 2, pg. 56, sec. on Makarimul Akhlaq, no. 3

Another responsibility is to ask Allah for the noble traits (Makarimul Akhlaq) so that a believer can resemble and manifest the traits of the Imam, thus earning his love.

In regards to this responsibility, it is highly recommended to recite the prayer known as “Makarimul Akhlaq”¹ which has been mentioned in various books of supplications, as this Du'a is very beneficial in attaining this rank. This supplication starts as follows:

اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلٰى مُحَمَّدٍ وَاٰلِهٖ وَ بَلِّغْ بِاِيْمَانِي اَكْمَلَ الْاِيْمَانِ وَاَجْعَلْ يَقِيْنِيْ اَفْضَلَ
الْيَقِيْنِ...

“O’ Allah! Send your blessings upon Muhammad and the family of Muhammad and elevate my faith to a perfect faith and make my certitude the best of certitudes...”

Reciting these sorts of supplications is important for developing the noble ethical traits and reaching this state is only possible with the assistance of Allah for it is out of the reach of humanity to attain on their own.

A believer can only struggle and choose the path meaning that it is up to him to choose the path towards the noble traits and then struggle to reach one’s goal.

However, the true point of achieving these traits, for example, arriving to the stage of possessing the noble ethical traits, is dependent upon both the intention and struggles of a person and the desire of Allah ﷻ to grant the believer such a status.

1. Supplication number 20 in as-Sahifah as-Sajjadiyah al-Kamilah; also found at the end of Mafatih al-Jinan.

Another responsibility is to fulfill the rights of fellow believers and this is actually regarded as fulfilling the rights of the Imam!

The rights which our fellow believers have upon us are numerous however one of these is to satisfy their needs and to act with goodness and honesty towards them.

Imam Musa b. Ja’far al-Kadhim (as) has said:

وَ مَنْ قَضٰى حَاجَةً لِاَحَدٍ مِنْ اَوْلِيَائِنَا فَكَأَنَّمَا قَضَاهَا لِجَمِيعِنَا

“A person who fulfills the need of one of our friends is like the one who has fulfilled the need for all of us (the Ahlul Bayt).”¹

Once, a person asked Imam Ja’far. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) about the rights of another believer to which he replied:

سَبْعُونَ حَقًّا

“These are seventy rights.”²

In addition, Abul Hasan has said:

مَنْ أَتَاهُ أَخُوهُ الْمُؤْمِنُ فِي حَاجَةٍ فَإِنَّمَا هِيَ رَحْمَةٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى سَاقَهَا إِلَيْهِ فَإِنْ
قَبْلَ ذَلِكَ فَقَدْ وَصَّلَهُ بَوْلَايَتَنَا وَهُوَ مَوْصُولٌ بِوَلَايَةِ اللَّهِ وَإِنْ رَدَّهُ عَنْ حَاجَتِهِ وَهُوَ
يَقْدِرُ عَلَى قَضَائِهَا سَلَّطَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ شُجَاعاً مِنْ نَارٍ يَنْهَشُهُ فِي قَبْرِهِ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ
مَغْفُوراً لَهُ أَوْ مُعَذَّباً فَإِنْ عَذَرَهُ الطَّالِبُ كَانَ أَسْوأَ حَالاً

“When a person is approached by his believing brother in need of assistance, this is actually a mercy from Allah, the High, which He sent to that person.

Therefore, if a person accepts this (and helps his brother) then it will bring him to our custodianship and the custodianship of Allah.

However, if he rejects his brother’s request (for help) while he is able to help him, then Allah will make a large serpent of fire come that will frighten him in his grave until the Day of Judgment, either a means of forgiveness for him (if he had done other good deeds in the world) or a punishment. And if the seeker forgives him then he will be in a worse state.”³

From these and other traditions, we can deduce that fulfilling the rights of the believers is one of the best ways to get closer to Allah ﷻ and Imam al-Zaman (ajtf)

1. Mikyal al-Makarim, vol. 2, pg. 420; Biharul Anwar, vol. 100, pg. 121, sec. 2, no. 26
2. al-Kafi, vol. 2, pg. 184, sec. ‘The rights of a believer over his brother,’ no. 14
3. al-Kafi, vol. 2, pg. 196, sec. ‘Fulfilling the needs of a Believer,’ no. 13

Another responsibility is to hate the enemies of the Imam. One of the definitions of an enemy of the Imam is a person who is an enemy of Allah and this concept has been referred to as Tabarraḥ in the Furu’ ad-Din (Principles of Religion) and is one of the signs of true faith.

A true lover of Allah will be able to show the truthfulness of his love through the hatred of the enemies of the one whom he truly loves.

The enemies of the Imam are various and come from all walks of life and thus, we cannot elucidate upon all of them. However in summary we can state that his main enemies are: the disbelievers, hypocrites, agnostics, and those who are working against the faith (of Islam). Of course, these people are his enemies as long as they persist in their incorrect beliefs and actions and do not accept him.

In addition, those who openly (and knowingly) commit sins and carry on in this way without returning to the straight path are also his enemies.

Just as the enemies of Imam al-Zaman (ajtf) are in different stages and levels in their hatred towards him, so too the hatred that we must show to them must also be at different stages and levels.

The minimum level of hatred for them is the spiritual aversion in the heart. After this, a physical aversion and separation from them – in addition to the aversion of the heart such as not speaking with them, business transactions, partnership or working together and being in their company, etc Must also be enacted.

However, along with the hatred which we show and our means of interaction, the conditions of enjoining the good and forbidding from the bad (‘Amr bin Ma’ruf and Nahi ‘anil Munkar) must also be carefully observed.

One of the enemies of Imam al-Zaman (ajtf) is Satan (May he be removed from the mercy of Allah) and a true believer must take him as an enemy! Without doubt, the best form of enmity that one can show towards Satan and his helpers is to work against his orders. In other words, one must obey Allah and the religion that He sent and must also obey Allah’s representative and travel the path of self-purification.

The other enemies of the Imam include those with extremely negative ethical traits and people who intentionally try to mislead the masses. These influences may take on the form of cultural invasions and include those who write books to mislead the people, centers of corruption, wrong ideas and systems of economics (such as taking interest), and other effects of disbelief, transgression and rebellion which a true believer must protect himself from.

In describing the Shi’a, Imam Ja’far. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) has stated:

لَا يُحِبُّ لَنَا مُبْغِضًا وَلَا يُبْغِضُ لَنَا مُحِبًّا

“They (our Shi’a) are those who will not love the people who have enmity towards us (the Ahlul Bayt) and will not hate those who love us (the Ahlul Bayt).”¹

Imam Muhammad. ‘Ali al-Baqir (as) has said:

وَأَبْغِضْ مُبْغِضَ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَإِنْ كَانَ صَوَّامًا قَوَّامًا

“Have enmity for those who have enmity for the family of Muhammad even if they fast and stand (for

Salat) a lot.”²

Imam Ja'far. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) has said:

وَاللّٰهُ مَا جَعَلَ اللّٰهُ لِأَحَدٍ خَيْرَةً فِي اتِّبَاعِ غَيْرِنَا وَإِنْ مَنْ وَافَقَنَا خَالَفَ عَدُوَّنَا وَ
مَنْ وَافَقَ عَدُوَّنَا فِي قَوْلٍ أَوْ عَمَلٍ فَلَيْسَ مِنَّا وَلَا نَحْنُ مِنْهُمْ

“I swear by Allah that Allah has not permitted anyone to follow anybody other than us (the Ahlul Bayt) and whoever follows us (the Ahlul Bayt) has gone against our enemies; and whoever agrees with our enemies in their words or deeds is not from us and we are not from them.”³

1. Biharul Anwar, vol. 68, pg. 165, sec. 19, no. 16; Biharul Anwar, vol. 68, pg. 179, sec. 19, no. 37

2. Wasa'il ash-Shi'a, vol. 11, pg. 444, sec. 17, no. 19

3. Wasa'il ash-Shi'a, vol. 18, pg. 85, sec. 9, no. 33

Another responsibility is to ask Allah to remove His mercy from the enemies of the Imam, as this is one of the best ways to show our hatred for his enemies.

A true believer must keep these enemies in mind, ask Allah to remove His specific mercy from them, and pray to Allah ﷻ to increase His chastisement over them. This act is actually considered as a good deed and in addition, it has a positive effect on the spirit of a person and will assist in strengthening his soul against the opposing enemies!

The greatest historical enemies of Imam al-Mahdi (ajtf) include the Bani Umayyah and Bani 'Abbas and the believer must remember to curse these people every day and night with his heart and tongue.

The simplest level of 'cursing' them is to detest them through one's actions. In this regards, Imam Muhammad b. 'Ali al-Baqir (as) has said:

إِذَا انْحَرَفْتَ عَنْ صَلَاةٍ مَكْتُوبَةٍ فَلَا تَنْحَرِفْ إِلَّا بِانْصِرَافٍ لَعْنِ بَنِي أُمَيَّةَ

“When you have departed from your obligatory Salat then do not leave (your prayer area) until you have cursed the Bani Umayyah.”¹

The Messenger of Allah has said:

مَنْ ضَعُفَ عَنْ نُصْرَتِنَا أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ فَلَعَنَ فِي خَلَوَاتِهِ أَعْدَانَنَا بَلَغَ اللَّهُ صَوْتَهُ جَمِيعَ
الْأَمْلاَكِ مِنَ الثَّرَى إِلَى الْعَرْشِ فَكَلَّمَا لَعَنَ هَذَا الرَّجُلُ أَعْدَانَنَا لَعْنًا سَاعَدُوهُ
فَلَعَنُوا مَنْ يَلْعَنُهُ ثُمَّ تَنَوَّهَ فَقَالُوا: اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى عَبْدِكَ هَذَا الَّذِي قَدْ بَذَلَ مَا فِي
وُسْعِهِ وَ لَوْ قَدَرَ عَلَى أَكْثَرَ مِنْهُ لَفَعَلَ. فَإِذَا النِّدَاءُ مِنْ قِبَلِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى: قَدْ أَجَبْتُ
دُعَاءَكُمْ وَ سَمِعْتُ نِدَاءَكُمْ وَ صَلَّيْتُ عَلَى رُوحِهِ فِي الْأَرْوَاحِ وَ جَعَلْتُهُ عِنْدِي مِنَ
الْمُصْطَفَيْنِ الْأَخْيَارِ

“If one is too weak to support us the Ahlul Bayt (in open) and thus curses our enemies in secret, Almighty Allah makes his voice reach all the creatures from the earth up to the Divine Throne (‘Arsh).

Hence, whenever one curses our enemies, they support him by cursing the one whom he is cursing then they laud him saying: “O Allah! (Please) send blessings on this servant of yours who is doing the best he can and who would certainly do more if he could.”

Almighty Allah answers: “I have responded to your prayers and have listened to your requests therefore, I send blessings upon the soul of this servant and I include him with the ‘Company of the Elect, the Virtuous.”²

1. Wasa'il ash-Shi'a, vol. 4, pg. 1038, sec. 19, no. 2; Biharul Anwar, vol. 86, pg. 58, sec. 38, no. 64

2. Tafsir of the Qur'an by Imam Hasan b. 'Ali al-'Askari, pg. 47, no. 21

Another responsibility of a true believer is to keep away from people who are not worthy of associating with those who are not on the path of the Imam or do not follow his way of life. People who have distanced themselves from the righteous and noble individuals and do not remember the Imam. This is definitely one of the important responsibilities for one who loves and is seeking closeness to the Imam.

It is possible for a person to be considered as a Muslim and even a Shi'a and it is possible that he performs the Salat, Sawm, pays his Zakat and other charities and Islamically legislated “taxes” and fulfills all other obligations, but is still considered as one who is not worthy of associating with.

In essence, these people spend most of their time preoccupied with the material world and follow their lower desires and passions. They pay very little attention to spiritual issues, the spiritual journey towards the final abode or treading on the path towards Allah. They have fled the difficult paths (of this life), have run away from the slope that leads towards the next life and have given preference to a life of ease, comfort, relaxation and negligence (of the faith).

If they approach the Salat and fasting and other Islamic acts, then they do so because they are seeking a good outcome in the next life and because of their fear of the hell fire. Thus, the only reason for them

to perform these acts is in order to get a lofty place in Paradise!

When a person looks at their acts of worship, one sees that they are performed in a particular manner such that it does not intrude with the goals of the transient world!

How many times has it been seen that their acts of worship are simply performed because they wish to look good amongst the people (that others see them perform these acts) and to gain something for this world from another person. Therefore, such people actually seek to acquire even more of the transient world by misleading the people (through the acts of worship!)

Even in the face of many solid proofs, they refuse to submit to true guidance and refuse to turn away from the path they are on (of seeking the material world). Such individuals are drowning themselves in unattainable desires and wishes.

These types of people, whose number is not small, and whom we can safely say make up a large percentage of the followers of the path of truth(The Shi'a) If they are not classified as enemies of the Imam, it can safely be said are not true friends of the Imam either! Thus, the true followers of the Imam must keep their distance from such people.

In addition, one should also keep away from them when it comes to business dealings and working with them in other issues of life – except in the case of necessity.

Of course, there is no problem in guiding them and taking them by the hand to enlighten them with the hope that this will have an effect on them and that some change may take place. Rather, this is actually obligatory (wajib) upon the true believer! However, in other than this situation, one must keep their distance from them.

One who associates with them, speaks with them and remembers them, will definitely forget the Imam even though they apparently may be righteous people.

If being with a certain individual or speaking with him makes one forget the love of the Imam, then it is not worth associating with that person – even if he or she is not an enemy of the Imam and is a part of the nation of the Imam! In essence, any person who makes a true believer negligent of his responsibilities to the Imam is not worth associating with!

In addition, if a person does not help his brother or sister in their spiritual growth and achieving closeness to the Imam, then it is not advisable to associate with that person – even if they does not prevent one from these things.

The only people who are worthy of keeping company with are those who help one another on the path towards the Imam; those who have the same spiritual course in life; and those who have the same desires and goals and are actively awaiting the Imam.

Of course, that which has been expressed in this responsibility does not go against the reciprocal rights that one must fulfill in relation to brothers in the faith. For example, if one does not associate with a person who is not worthy of associating with, this does not mean that he has broken off family ties (which is a sin in Islam).

Another responsibility of the believers is to prepare and keep their weapons of warfare ready. In addition, according to some traditions, one should keep a horse to help the Imam upon his advent.

During the period of waiting for the advent of the Imam, these and other ways which will be explained in detail must be followed if one wishes to establish a relationship with the Imam.¹

Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) has said:

لِيُعِدَّنَ أَحَدُكُمْ لَخُرُوجِ الْقَائِمِ ۚ وَ لَوْ سَهْمًا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى إِذَا عَلِمَ ذَلِكَ مِنْ نِيَّتِهِ رَجَوْتُ لَأَنْ يُنْسِيَ فِي عُمُرِهِ

“Each one of you must prepare for the advent of al-Qa'im (peace be upon him) even if it be (by as much as) an arrow because when Allah, the High, knows that a person has this intention, then He will grant such a person a longer life.”²

Imam Muhammad. 'Ali al-Baqir (as) has said:

كَمْ الرِّبَاطُ عِنْدَكُمْ؟ قَالَ الرَّأَوِي: قُلْتُ أَرْبَعُونَ قَالَ ۚ: لَكِنْ رِبَاطُنَا رِبَاطُ الدَّهْرِ وَمَنْ ارْتَبَطَ فِينَا دَابَّةً كَانَ لَهُ وَزْنُهَا وَوَزْنُ وَزْنِهَا مَا كَانَتْ عِنْدَهُ وَمَنْ ارْتَبَطَ فِينَا سِلَاحًا كَانَ لَهُ وَزْنُهُ مَا كَانَ عِنْدَهُ

“How many days do you calculate a ribat (stationing of an army) to be?” The narrator answered: “Forty days.” The Imam (peace be upon him) said: “Yet, the ribat for our sake is as long as one's lifetime.”³

One who stations a riding animal for our sake shall be rewarded according to its weight as well as the weight of it as long as it will be kept by him; and one who keeps a weapon prepared for our sake shall be rewarded according to its weight as well as the weight of it as long as it is kept by him.”⁴

The meaning of 'weapons' in this tradition are the very weapons of war whatever type they may be such as bow and arrow, spear, mace, lance, dagger, sword or gun.

However according to some traditions, the meaning of weapon is specifically limited to the sword and this can be deduced from the (various) proofs and the traditions since we know that in some countries, it is not permissible to possess weapons such as guns.

The meaning of the Imam when he spoke about the relationship ‘.for one’s entire lifetime’ (as was seen in the second tradition quoted above) will be discussed in the next responsibility.

1. A deeper explanation of this point will appear in the next responsibility.
2. al-Ghaybah of al-Nu’mani, pg. 320, sec. ‘That which has been mentioned about the Shi’a’.
3. Commenting on this narration, Shaykh Kulayni says: “This means that the Shi’a are required to dedicate all their efforts to the obedience of the Imam and to the expectation of the advent as they must prepare themselves for such.
4. al-Kafi, vol. 8, pg. 381, sec. 8, no. 576

Seeking closeness to Imam al-’Asr (ajtf) is another responsibility of the believers. This closeness can be divided into three categories, however before discussing them, it should be stated that one meaning of closeness is to maintain the boundaries which exist between ourselves and the enemies of the Imam.

Another more general interpretation is the general boundary of life and this means that we must look after and be aware of everything happening in the world around us (to the best of our ability).

As for the meaning of closeness which has been mentioned in the book of Allah and the Sunnah, it is related to the following three things:

1. Looking after and keeping one’s weapons ready be it a horse or anything else in anticipation of the advent of Imam al-Zaman (ajtf) with the hope that one will be able to help him and make use of those things in the service of the Imam during his advent. This type of closeness was mentioned in the previous responsibility and is one of the recommended acts in Islam.
2. Those things which the scholars have mentioned in their writings in the ‘Book of Jihad’. In these writings, the scholars have stated that a true believer must protect and defend his country when there is a possibility that the enemies will launch an attack. One must also keep his stead and weapon ready so as to protect the Islamic lands from the enemies attack and in the event of an attack, must rise up to defend Islam!

The minimum amount of time a believer must spend in protecting the Islamic territory is three days while the maximum is forty days. However, if he guards the territory for more than forty days, then he will be given the reward of a Mujahid (one who is struggling) in the way of Allah!

This type of closeness with the Imam at the time of his advent or during the occultation is a recommended act.

The Messenger of Allah (S) has said:

رَبَّاطُ الْخَيْلِ لَيْلَةً فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ مِنْ صِيَامِ شَهْرٍ وَ قِيَامِهِ فَإِنْ مَاتَ جَرَى عَلَيْهِ
عَمَلُهُ الَّذِي كَانَ يَعْمَلُ وَ أُجْرِي عَلَيْهِ رِزْقُهُ وَ أَمِنَ الْفَتَانَ

“To be prepared (for war) one night in the way of Allah is better than fasting an entire month and spending all its night in worship. If a person is to die (in this state), then the (reward) for the action he performed will continue, his sustenance will continue to be given to him and he will be saved from the Angel of Examination (in the grave).”¹

The Messenger of Allah (S) also said:

كُلُّ مَيِّتٍ نَخْتِمُ عَلَى عَمَلِهِ إِلَّا الْمُرَاطِبَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّهُ يَنْمُو لَهُ عَمَلُهُ إِلَى يَوْمِ
الْقِيَامَةِ وَ يُؤْمِنُ مِنْ فَتَانِ الْقَبْرِ

“The actions of every deceased person are sealed except one who is garrisoned in the way of Allah – this person’s good deeds will continue to grow until the Day of Judgment and he will have protection from the Angels of the Grave.”²

3. A true believer must maintain his affiliation and closeness to Imam al-Zaman (ajtf) by making a pact with the infallible leaders of the religion and forging a covenant reaffirming his belief in these individuals.

Through this, one will be able to develop close times with his Imam. In addition, one must consider the acts of helping, assisting and following the Imam as being incumbent upon him. This sort of affiliation is Wajib al-’Ayni meaning that it is obligatory upon every true believer.

This relationship with the Imam is different than the second meaning of the affiliation which must be shown since at the level we are currently discussing, a person is not permitted to have someone else step in and perform this task for him. Thus, this form of pact with the Imam is very important and is one of the pillars of true faith and without it, Allah shall not accept the actions of any person.

Imam Ja’far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) has said:

إِصْبِرُوا عَلَى الْمَصَائِبِ وَ صَابِرُوا عَلَى الْفَرَائِضِ وَ رَابِطُوا عَلَى الْأُئِمَّةِ

“Have patience in the face of difficulties, observe patience in relation to the performance of obligatory acts, and establish an affinity with the A`immah.”³

In regards to the verse of the Qur`an in which Allah ﷻ has said:

“**﴿O’ you who have firm faith! Observe patience, have endurance and establish a relation﴾**4,

Imam Muhammad b. ‘Ali al–Baqir (as) has said:

إِصْبِرُوا عَلَى أَدَاءِ الْفَرَائِضِ وَ صَابِرُوا عَدُوَّكُمْ وَ رَابِطُوا إِمَامَكُمْ الْمُنْتَظَرَ

“Observe patience in relation to performing the obligatory acts, have endurance in facing your enemies and establish closeness with your Imam, al–Muntadhar (the Awaited One).”5

In relation to the verse that states:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اصْبِرُوا وَصَابِرُوا وَرَابِطُوا ﴿٩﴾

“﴿O’ you that have faith! Observe patience, stand firm and close [your] ranks.﴾

Imam Ja’far. Muhammad as–Sadiq (as) said that ‘establish a relation’ means:

الْمُقَامُ مَعَ إِمَامِكُمْ

“Standing firm (and resolved) with your Imam.”6

1. Jawahir al–Kalam, vol. 21, pg. 40; Tahrir al–Ahkam, vol. 1, pg. 134
2. Jawahir al–Kalam, vol. 21, pg. 40; Majma’ al–Faidah wal Burhan, vol. 8, pg. 449
3. Biharul Anwar, vol. 24, pg. 220, sec. 57, no. 20
4. Surah Ale Imran (3), Verse 200
5. al–Ghaybah of Nu’mani, pg. 199, no. 13
6. Biharul Anwar, vol. 24, pg. 217, sec. 57, no. 11

Another responsibility of the believers during the period of occultation of the Imam is that they should consider the door to Imam al–Zaman (ajtf) open at all times. However, it should be noted that the applicability of this issue, its meaning, and realization cannot be realized by just anyone.

A true believer must accept the fact that the path towards the Imam is open and thus, he must speak to him and ask his wishes since the Imam can see and hear us and without doubt, he will reply to the

requests of the believers.

A companion of the Imam once said: “I wrote to Abul Hasan that there is a person who would like to convey something directly to his Imam and to Allah, the Great.” The Imam replied:

إِنْ كَانَتْ لَكَ حَاجَةٌ فَحَرِّكَ شَفَتَيْكَ فَإِنَّ الْجَوَابَ يَأْتِيكَ

“If you have a need, then move your lips (and mention it) and the reply will surely come to you.”¹

It is mentioned in the traditions that Imam ‘Ali. Muhammad once said to a man:

إِذَا أَرَدْتَ أَنْ تَسْأَلَ مَسْأَلَةً فَاكْتُبْهَا وَضَعْ الْكِتَابَ تَحْتَ مُصَلَّاكَ وَدَعُهُ سَاعَةً ثُمَّ
أَخْرِجْهُ وَانْظُرْ فِيهِ

“If you want to ask a question (to your Imam), then write it down and place the writing under your prayer mat and leave it there for an hour. Then take it out and look at the paper.”²

The companion stated: “I did just as I was told and received the answer that I was looking for. The signature of the Imam was even on the paper!”

1. Biharul Anwar, vol. 50, pg. 155, sec. 3, no. 41

2. al-Kharaij, pg. 419, Biharul Anwar, vol. 50, pg. 155, sec. 3, no. 41

During times of difficulty, misfortunes, sickness and other such things even in the times of confusion and spiritual difficulties which can wreak havoc on the belief system and faith of a person one should hold tight to Imam al-Zaman (ajtf) and seek help and support from him. During such a time, one must cry out for help to the Imam.

Allah has said in the Qur`an:

﴿ وَ لِلّٰهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا ﴾

“And to Allah belong the most beautiful names so call upon Him by them.”¹

In relation to this verse, it has been narrated from Imam Ja’far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq ؑ that:

نَحْنُ وَاللَّهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَى

“We (the Ahlul Bayt) are, by Allah, the most beautiful names (of Allah).”²

In addition, Imam ‘Ali b. Musa al-Rida (as) has said:

إِذَا نَزَلَتْ بِكُمْ شِدَّةٌ فَاسْتَعِينُوا بِنَا عَلَى اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَهُوَ قَوْلُهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: ﴿؟﴾ وَاللَّهُ
الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَى فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا ﴿؟﴾

“When difficulties come upon you, then seek assistance through us (the Ahlul Bayt) as intermediaries with Allah, the Noble and Grand, and this is the meaning of His words, the Noble and Grand, ﴿؟﴾ And to Allah belong the most beautiful names so call upon Him by them. ﴿؟﴾”³

Indeed, the believers must refer to their Imam and seek assistance from him because if they do not do so, then they will remain in troubles and will not be protected from disgrace and humiliation.

1. Suratul A'raf (6), Verse 180
2. al-Burhan, vol. 2, pg. 52 under the commentary of Suratul A'raf (6), Verse 180
3. Biharul Anwar, vol. 94, pg. 5, sec. 28, no. 7

A true believer must perform the supplications, Salat and other acts of worship which the A`immah of guidance have instructed us to perform as a form of Tawassul (seeking assistance) from the Imam in order to fulfill our needs and remove any difficulties that we have.

In this responsibility, we mention some of these prayers and supplications which are various ways and means that we can request our needs from our Imam.

One Salat: On either a Wednesday or Thursday night, one should go under the open sky with one's head uncovered and perform a two Rak'at Salat. After the Salat, the following should be said 55 times:

يَا حُجَّةَ الْقَائِمِ

“O' Hujjatul Qa'im.”¹

One Du'a: This Du'a was taught by our twelfth Imam to a man who had been sent to prison. After reciting this short supplication, he was freed:

إِلَهِ عَظُمَ الْبَلَاءُ وَبَرَحَ الْخَفَاءُ وَانْكَشَفَ الْغَطَاءُ وَانْقَطَعَ الرَّجَاءُ وَضَاقَتِ الْأَرْضُ
وَمُنِعَتِ السَّمَاءُ وَأَنْتَ الْمُسْتَعَانُ وَإِلَيْكَ الْمُشْتَكَى وَعَلَيْكَ الْمُعَوَّلُ فِي الشَّدَّةِ
وَالرَّخَاءِ. اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ أُولِي الْأَمْرِ الَّذِينَ فَرَضْتَ عَلَيْنَا
طَاعَتَهُمْ وَعَرَفْتَنَا بِذَلِكَ مَنْزِلَتَهُمْ فَفَرِّجْ عَنَّا بِحَقِّهِمْ فَرَجاً عَاجِلاً قَرِيباً كَلِمَحِ
الْبَصَرِ أَوْ هُوَ أَقْرَبُ. يَا مُحَمَّدُ يَا عَلِيُّ يَا عَلِيُّ يَا مُحَمَّدُ اكْفِيَانِي فَإِنَّكُمَا كَافِيَانِ
وَانصُرَانِي فَإِنَّكُمَا نَاصِرَانِ. يَا مَوْلَانَا يَا صَاحِبَ الزَّمَانِ، الْغُوثُ الْغُوثُ الْغُوثُ،
أَدْرِكْنِي أَدْرِكْنِي أَدْرِكْنِي، أَلْسَاعَةَ أَلْسَاعَةَ أَلْسَاعَةَ، أَلْعَجَلَ أَلْعَجَلَ أَلْعَجَلَ. يَا أَرْحَمَ
الرَّاحِمِينَ بِحَقِّ مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ الطَّاهِرِينَ

“O’ Allah, terrible is the calamity; and its evil consequences are visible the covering has been removed (all) hopes have been cut off; the (plentiful) Earth has shrunk (with very little room to spare); the heavenly blessings have been withheld.

You alone can help, we refer our grief and sorrow to you, we have full faith in you, in the times of distress, as well as in good fortune.

O’ Allah send Your blessings on Muhammad and the family of Muhammad, whom we must obey as per Your command, through which we become aware of their rank and status, and let there be joy after sorrow for us, for their sake, right away, in the twinkling of an eye or even more rapidly than that.

O’ Muhammad, O’ ‘Ali, O’ ‘Ali, O Muhammad, Give me enough, because both of you provide sufficiently (by the permission of Allah). Help me, because both of you help and protect (by the permission of Allah). O’ our master, O’ the Imam of our Time! Help me, help me, help me! Assist me! Assist me! Assist me!

At once, in this hour. Be quick, be quick, be quick. O’ the Most Merciful of those who show mercy, for the sake of Muhammad and his pure family.”²

One written request: It is mentioned in the traditions that if a person has a legitimate desire, then he should write the following on a piece of paper and place it inside the grave of one of the A`immah.

If this is not possible, then he may seal it with pure mud and place it in a deep well, river or any other body of flowing water and it will reach to Imam Sahib al-Zaman (ajtf). The Imam himself has guaranteed that he will answer the requests of the person:

كَتَبْتُ يَا مَوْلَايَ صَلَوَاتُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكَ مُسْتَعِثّاً وَشَكَوْتُ مَا نَزَلَ بِي مُسْتَجِيراً بِاللَّهِ
عَزَّ وَجَلَّ ثُمَّ بِكَ مِنْ أَمْرِ قَدْ دَهَمَنِي وَأَشْغَلَ قَلْبِي وَأَطَالَ فِكْرِي وَسَلَبَنِي بَعْضَ لُبِّي

وغيرَ خَطِيرِ نِعْمَةِ اللَّهِ عِنْدِي (أَسْلَمَنِي عِنْدَ تَخِيلٍ وَرُودِهِ الْخَلِيلُ وَتَبَرّاً مِنِّي عِنْدَ تَرَائِي إِقْبَالِهِ إِلَيَّ الْحَمِيمُ وَعَجَزْتُ عَنْ دِفَاعِهِ حِيلَتِي وَخَانَنِي فِي تَحْمَلِهِ صَبْرِي وَقُوَّتِي، فَلَجَأْتُ فِيهِ إِلَيْكَ وَتَوَكَّلْتُ فِي الْمَسْئَلَةِ لِلَّهِ جَلَّ ثَنَاؤُهُ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَيْكَ فِي دِفَاعِهِ عَنِّي عِلْماً بِمَكَانِكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَلِيَّ التَّدْبِيرِ وَمَالِكِ الْأُمُورِ وَاثْقاً بِكَ فِي الْمُسَارَعَةِ فِي الشَّفَاعَةِ إِلَيْهِ جَلَّ ثَنَاؤُهُ فِي أَمْرِي مُتَيْقِناً لِإِجَابَتِهِ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى إِيَّاكَ بِإِعْطَائِي سُؤْلِي وَأَنْتَ يَا مَوْلَايَ جَدِيرٌ بِتَحْقِيقِ ظَنِّي وَتَصَدِيقِ أَمَلِي فِيكَ فِي أَمْرٍ كَذَا وَكَذَا... (فِي) مِمَّا لَا طَاقَةَ لِي بِحَمْلِهِ وَلَا صَبْرَ لِي عَلَيْهِ وَإِنْ كُنْتُ مُسْتَحِقّاً لَهُ وَلِأَضْعَافِهِ بِقَبِيحِ أَفْعَالِي وَتَفْرِيطِي فِي الْوَاجِبَاتِ الَّتِي لِلَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ فَأَغْنِنِي يَا مَوْلَايَ صَلَوَاتُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكَ عِنْدَ اللَّهْفِ وَقَدَمِ الْمَسْأَلَةِ لِلَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ فِي أَمْرِي قَبْلَ حُلُولِ التَّلَفِ وَشِمَاتَةِ الْأَعْدَاءِ فَبِكَ بَسَطْتَ النِّعْمَةَ عَلَيَّ وَاسْتَلَّ اللَّهُ جَلَّ جَلَالُهُ لِي نَصراً عَزِيزاً وَفَتْحاً قَرِيباً فِيهِ بِبُلُوغِ الْأَمَالِ وَخَيْرِ الْمَبَادِي وَخَوَاتِيمِ الْأَعْمَالِ وَالْأَمْنِ مِنَ الْمَخَاوِفِ كُلِّهَا فِي كُلِّ حَالٍ إِنَّهُ جَلَّ ثَنَاؤُهُ لِمَا يَشَاءُ فَعَالٌ وَهُوَ حَسْبِي وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ فِي الْمُبْدَأِ وَالْمَالِ

“I am writing to you, O my master, may Allah’s blessings be upon you, seeking your aid. And I am complaining about what has befallen me, seeking protection from Almighty Allah and then from you against the trouble that has inflicted me; busied my heart; occupied my mind; deprived me of my prudence; and changed the great favors of Almighty Allah upon me.

It has disappointed me after I had thought of it as my friend; and disavowed me after it had pretended itself as my close comrade. Thus, all my means have failed to defend me against it; and my endurance and power have been too short to bear it.

I therefore resort to you against it and I depend upon Allah, the greatly Praised, and upon you, on account of my confession of your (unique) standing with Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, the Source of perfect management, and the Prevailer over all affairs, in protecting me against it and I am sure that you will expedite interceding for me before Allah, the greatly Praised, regarding my affair.

I am certain that He, the Blessed and Elevated, will respond to me by answering my appeal. Verily, you, my master, are worth causing my expectation to come true and making my hope achievable concerning **so-and-so...**”

In the place of the last words in bold, the person would proceed to write his needs and then continue by writing:

“...which I cannot stand to bear although I have deserved not only that problem but also many times as

many as it due to my misdeed and negligence of my duties towards Almighty Allah. O my master!

May Allah's blessings be upon you, (please) aid me as I am anxious, and provide my request before Almighty Allah before I am injured and my enemies gloat over my grief. It is through you that the bounties have been spread over me.

Please ask Almighty Allah to grant me a great assistance and a near victory through which my hopes may be attained, the commencements and ends of my deeds may be made good, and all my apprehensions secured under all circumstances. Verily, He, the greatly Praised does whatever He wills; and He is Sufficient for me! Most Excellent is He in whom we trust first and last."

The person should then stand near the river or body of water and by taking the name of the one four specific representatives of the Imam (it is best to take the name of Hasan b. Ruh) call upon him and say:

يَا فُلَانُ بْنُ فُلَانٍ (حَسَنَ ابْنِ رُوحٍ): سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكَ. أَشْهَدُ أَنَّ وَفَاتَكَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَ
أَنْتَ حَيٌّ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ مَرْزُوقٌ وَقَدْ خَاطَبْتُكَ فِي حَيَاتِكَ الَّتِي عِنْدَ اللَّهِ جَلَّ وَعَزَّ وَ
هَذِهِ رُقْعَتِي وَحَاجَتِي إِلَى مَوْلَانَا فَسَلِّمْهَا إِلَيْهِ فَأَنْتَ الثَّقَةُ الْأَمِينُ

"O' so and so (Hasan b. Ruh): Peace be upon you! I bear witness that surely your death was in the way of Allah and that indeed you are alive in the presence of Allah being sustained (by Him) and thus I address you in your life which you have in the presence of Allah, the Noble and Grand, and this writing of mine has my needs that are to be given to our master so then submit this to him since you are the trustworthy and reliable."

The person should then throw the paper into the flowing water so that his desires will be fulfilled, Insha-Allah.³ [This is common known as the Areezah.]

One ziyarat: Among the best rites of visitation that can be recited for the Imam to have our legitimate desires fulfilled (by the permission of Allah ﷻ) is the Ziyarat of Aale Yasin⁴ which has been recorded and preserved in many books of supplication and it is as follows:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

سَلَامٌ عَلَى آلِ يُسَۥ ﷻ أَلْسَلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا دَاعِيَ اللَّهِ وَرَبَّانِي آيَاتِهِ. أَلْسَلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا بَابَ

اللّٰهُ وَدَيَّانَ دِينِهِ. اَلسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا خَلِيفَةَ اللّٰهِ وَنَاصِرَ حَقِّهِ. اَلسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا حُجَّةَ
اللّٰهِ وَدَلِيلَ اِرَادَتِهِ.

“Peace be upon (the) progeny of Yasin. Peace be upon you, O the caller of Allah and place of manifestation of His signs. Peace be upon you, O the door of Allah and the devout one of His religion. Peace be upon you, O the vicegerent of Allah and the helper of His truth. Peace be upon you, O the proof of Allah and the symbol of His ordinance.

اَلسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا تَالِيَ كِتَابِ اللّٰهِ وَتَرْجُمَانَهُ. اَلسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ فِي اَنَاءِ لَيْلِكَ وَاَطْرَافِ
نَهَارِكَ. اَلسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا بَقِيَّةَ اللّٰهِ فِي اَرْضِهِ. اَلسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا مِيثَاقَ اللّٰهِ الَّذِي
اَخَذَهُ وَوَكَّدَهُ.

Peace be upon you, O the reciter of Allah’s book and its interpreter. Peace be upon you in your night and in your day. Peace be upon you, O the vestige of Allah on His earth. Peace be upon you, O the covenant of Allah, which He took and affirmed.

اَلسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا وَعْدَ اللّٰهِ الَّذِي ضَمِنَهُ. اَلسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ أَيُّهَا الْعِلْمُ الْمَنْصُوبُ وَالْعِلْمُ
الْمَصْنُوبُ وَالْغَوْثُ وَالرَّحْمَةُ الْوَاسِعَةُ وَعِدًا غَيْرَ مَكْذُوبٍ

Peace be upon you, O the promise of Allah which He guaranteed. Peace by upon you, O the raised flag and the one who is molded with knowledge, the help, the far-reaching mercy and the promise which is not a lie.

اَلسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ حِينَ تَقُومُ، اَلسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ حِينَ تَقْعُدُ، اَلسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ حِينَ تَقْرَأُ
وَتُبَيِّنُ، اَلسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ حِينَ تُصَلِّي وَتَقْنَتُ، اَلسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ حِينَ تَرْكَعُ وَتَسْجُدُ،
اَلسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ حِينَ تُهَلِّلُ وَتُكَبِّرُ، اَلسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ حِينَ تَحْمَدُ وَتَسْتَغْفِرُ، اَلسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ
حِينَ تُصْبِحُ وَتُمْسِي

Peace be upon you while you are standing. Peace be upon you while you are sitting. Peace be upon you when you are reading and explaining (the Qur`an). Peace be upon you when you are praying and supplicating.

Peace be upon you when you are bowing (in Ruku') and prostrating (in Sajdah). Peace be upon you when you are announcing the Tahlil (saying: 'There is no god but Allah') and Takbir (saying: 'Allah is greater [than can be described].') Peace be upon you when you are praising (Allah) and seeking forgiveness. Peace be upon you when you enter the morning and the evening.

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ فِي اللَّيْلِ إِذَا يَغْشَى وَالنَّهَارِ إِذَا تَجَلَّى، السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ أَيُّهَا الْإِمَامُ
الْمَأْمُونُ، السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ أَيُّهَا الْمُقَدَّمُ الْمَأْمُولُ، السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ بِجَوَامِعِ السَّلَامِ

Peace be upon you in the night when it envelops and the day when it becomes manifest. Peace be upon you, O the protected leader. Peace be upon you, O the one whose coming is hoped for. Peace be upon you by the collections of the salutations.

أَشْهَدُكَ يَا مَوْلَايَ أَنِّي أَشْهَدُ أَنَّ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ
وَرَسُولُهُ لَا حَبِيبَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَأَهْلُهُ

I call you as a witness, O my Master, that certainly I testify that there is no god except Allah, He is alone, there is no partner with Him. And (I testify) that indeed Muhammad is His servant and His Apostle; there is no beloved except him and his progeny.

وَأَشْهَدُكَ يَا مَوْلَايَ أَنَّ عَلِيًّا أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ حُجَّتَهُ، وَالْحَسَنَ حُجَّتَهُ، وَالْحُسَيْنَ
حُجَّتَهُ، وَعَلِيَّ بْنَ الْحُسَيْنِ حُجَّتَهُ، وَمُحَمَّدَ بْنَ عَلِيٍّ حُجَّتَهُ، وَجَعْفَرَ بْنَ مُحَمَّدٍ
حُجَّتَهُ، وَمُوسَى بْنَ جَعْفَرٍ حُجَّتَهُ، وَعَلِيَّ بْنَ مُوسَى حُجَّتَهُ، وَمُحَمَّدَ بْنَ عَلِيٍّ حُجَّتَهُ،
وَعَلِيَّ بْنَ مُحَمَّدٍ حُجَّتَهُ، وَالْحَسَنَ بْنَ عَلِيٍّ حُجَّتَهُ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّكَ حُجَّةُ اللَّهِ

And I call you as a witness, O my Master, that certainly 'Ali, the Commander of the Believers is His proof and Hasan is His proof and Husain is His proof and 'Ali, son of Husain is His proof and Muhammad, son of 'Ali is His proof and Ja'far, son of Muhammad is His proof and Musa, son of Ja'far is His proof and 'Ali, son of Musa is His proof and Muhammad, son of 'Ali is His proof and 'Ali, son of Muhammad is His proof and Hasan, son of 'Ali is His proof and I testify that indeed you are the proof of Allah.

أَنْتُمْ الْأَوَّلُ وَالْآخِرُ وَأَنْ رَجَعْتُمْ حَقٌّ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهَا يَوْمَ لَا يَنْفَعُ نَفْسًا إِيْمَانُهَا لَمْ

تَكُنْ آمَنَتْ مِنْ قَبْلُ أَوْ كَسَبَتْ فِي إِيمَانِهَا خَيْرًا

You (all) are the first and the last. And surely your return is a truth, there is no doubt in it, (on) the day when (the) belief of none will benefit him who previously did not believe or acquired goodness through his belief.

وَأَنَّ الْمَوْتَ حَقٌّ وَأَنَّ نAKIRًا وَنَكِيرًا حَقٌّ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ النَّشْرَ حَقٌّ وَالْبَعْثَ حَقٌّ وَأَنَّ الصِّرَاطَ حَقٌّ وَالْمِرْصَادَ حَقٌّ وَالْمِيزَانَ حَقٌّ وَالْحَشْرَ حَقٌّ وَالْحِسَابَ حَقٌّ وَالْجَنَّةَ وَالنَّارَ حَقٌّ وَالْوَعْدَ وَالْوَعِيدَ بِهِمَا حَقٌّ

And indeed death is (an inescapable) truth; and indeed (the questioning of) Nakir and Nakir is a truth; and I testify that indeed the dispersion (in Qiyamat) is a truth; and the resurrection is a truth; and indeed the (narrow) path (over hell) is a truth; and the place of observation is a truth; and the (measuring) scales is a truth; and the gathering (of all human beings) is a truth; and the accounting (of deeds) is a truth; and Paradise and Hell is a truth; and the promise and the threat are both a truth.

يَا مَوْلَايَ شَقِيٌّ مَنْ خَالَفَكُمْ وَسَعِدَ مَنْ أَطَاعَكُمْ فَاشْهَدْ عَلَيَّ مَا أَشْهَدُكَ عَلَيْهِ وَأَنَا وَلِيُّ لَكَ بَرِيٌّ مِنْ عَدُوِّكَ فَالْحَقُّ مَا رَضِيتُمُوهُ وَالْبَاطِلُ مَا سَخَطْتُمُوهُ وَالْمَعْرُوفُ مَا أَمَرْتُمْ بِهِ وَالْمُنْكَرُ مَا نَهَيْتُمْ عَنْهُ

O my master, one who opposes you (all) is wretched and the one who obeys you (all) is successful. Then testify whatever I made you a witness upon. And I am a friend of yours, distanced from your enemy. So the truth is whatever you are pleased with, and falsehood is whatever you are angry with, and goodness is whatever you have ordered, and evil is whatever you have prohibited.

فَنَفْسِي مُؤْمِنَةٌ بِاللَّهِ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَبِرَسُولِهِ وَبِأَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَبِكُمْ يَا مَوْلَايَ أَوْلَكُمْ وَأَخْرِكُمْ وَنُصْرَتِي مُعَدَّةٌ لَكُمْ وَمَوَدَّتِي خَالِصَةٌ لَكُمْ آمِينَ آمِينَ

So I am a believer in Allah, the One, He has no partner, and (I am a believer) in His Messenger and in the Commander of the Faithful and in you O my master, the first among you and the last among you. And my help is ready for you and my love is purely for you. Ameen! Ameen! (Accept! Accept! [whatever I have asked for])”

The following du'a should then be recited to complete this Ziyarat:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَسْأَلُكَ اَنْ تُصَلِّيَ عَلٰى مُحَمَّدٍ نَبِيِّ رَحْمَتِكَ وَكَلِمَةِ نُورِكَ وَاَنْ تَمْلَأَ قَلْبِيْ
نُورَ الْيَقِيْنِ وَصَدْرِيْ نُورَ الْاِيْمَانِ وَفِكْرِيْ نُورَ النِّيَّاتِ وَعَزْمِيْ نُورَ الْعِلْمِ وَقُوَّتِيْ
نُورَ الْعَمَلِ وَلِسَانِيْ نُورَ الصِّدْقِ وَدِيْنِيْ نُورَ الْبَصَائِرِ مِنْ عِنْدِكَ، وَيَصْرِيْ نُورَ
الضِّيَآءِ وَسَمْعِيْ نُورَ الْحِكْمَةِ وَمَوَدَّتِيْ نُورَ الْمُوَالَاةِ لِمُحَمَّدٍ وَاٰلِهِ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ
حَتّٰى اَلْقَاكَ وَقَدْ وَفَيْتُ بِعَهْدِكَ وَمِيْثَاقِكَ فَتُغْشِيْنِيْ رَحْمَتَكَ يَا وَلِيُّ يَا حَمِيْدُ

“O Allah, surely I ask you to send blessings upon Muhammad – the Prophet of Your mercy and the aphorism of your light. And fill my heart with the light of certainty; and my chest with light of faith; and my thinking with the light of intentions and my determination with the light of knowledge and my strength with the light of action and my tongue with the light of truthfulness.

And my religion with the light of understanding from You and my vision with the light of illumination and my hearing with the light of wisdom and my love with the light of friendship for Muhammad and his progeny, peace be upon (all of), them until I meet You having certainly fulfilled (my duty to) Your promise and Your covenant. So you cover me with your mercy, O Master! O Praiseworthy.

اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلٰى مُحَمَّدٍ حُجَّتِكَ فِيْ اَرْضِكَ وَخَلِيْفَتِكَ فِيْ بِلَادِكَ وَالدَّاعِيْ اِلَى
سَبِيْلِكَ وَالْقَائِمَ بِقِسْطِكَ وَالسَّائِرَ بِاَمْرِكَ، وَلِيَّ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ وَيَوَارِ الْكَافِرِيْنَ وَمُجَلِّيَ
الظُّلْمَةِ وَمُنِيرَ الْحَقِّ وَالنَّاطِقَ بِالْحِكْمَةِ وَالصِّدْقِ وَكَلِمَتِكَ التَّامَّةِ فِيْ اَرْضِكَ،
الْمُرْتَقِبَ الْخَائِفَ وَالْوَلِيَّ النَّاصِحَ، سَفِيْنَةَ النِّجَاةِ وَعَلَمَ الْهُدٰى وَنُورَ ابْصَارِ
الْوَرٰى وَخَيْرَ مَنْ تَقَمَّصَ وَارْتَدٰى وَمُجَلِّيَ الْعَمٰى الَّذِيْ يَمْلَأُ الْاَرْضَ عَدْلًا وَقِسْطًا
كَمَا مِلْتُ ظُلْمًا وَجَوْرًا، اِنَّكَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ

O Allah send your blessings upon Muhammad, your proof on your earth, your vicegerent over your lands the caller towards your way, the establisher of your justice, the one who follows Your command. The master of the believers and the (cause of) ruin of the disbelievers, the enlighten of the darkness, the illuminator of the truth the speaker with wisdom and truth.

Your complete word on Your earth, the anxious anticipator and the counseling master, the ship of salvation, the flag of guidance, the light of the sight of mankind, best of he who was attired and was clothed and the illuminator of the blind, the one who will fill the earth with justice and equity, just as it was filled with injustice and oppression. Surely you are Powerful over all things.

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى وَلِيِّكَ وَابْنِ أَوْلِيَاكَ الَّذِينَ فَرَضْتَ طَاعَتَهُمْ، وَأَوْجَبْتَ حَقَّهُمْ،
وَأَذْهَبْتَ عَنْهُمْ الرَّجْسَ وَطَهَّرْتَهُمْ تَطْهِيراً. اللَّهُمَّ انصُرْهُ وَاَنْتَصِرْ بِهِ لِدِينِكَ
وَاَنْصُرْ بِهِ أَوْلِيَاكَ وَ أَوْلِيَاءَهُ وَشِيعَتَهُ وَأَنْصَارَهُ وَاجْعَلْنَا مِنْهُمْ

O' Allah send your blessings upon your close friend and son of your close friends those whom you have ordered (us) to obey, you made (the observation of) their rights compulsory, you removed from them all uncleanness and purified them a thorough purification. O' Allah help him and come to the aid of your religion through him and help your close friends (those who are) his friends and his followers and his helpers, and place us among them.

اللَّهُمَّ أَعِذْهُ مِنْ شَرِّ كُلِّ بَاغٍ وَطَاغٍ وَمِنْ شَرِّ جَمِيعِ خَلْقِكَ، وَاحْفَظْهُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ
وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ وَعَنْ يَمِينِهِ وَعَنْ شِمَالِهِ وَاحْرُسْهُ وَأَمْنَعْهُ مِنْ أَنْ يُوْصَلَ إِلَيْهِ بِسُوءٍ
وَاحْفَظْ فِيهِ رَسُولَكَ وَآلَ رَسُولِكَ وَأَظْهِرْ بِهِ الْعَدْلَ وَأَيِّدْهُ بِالنَّصْرِ وَأَنْصُرْ نَاصِرِيهِ
وَاخْذُلْ خَاذِلِيهِ وَأَقْصِمِ قَاصِمِيهِ وَأَقْصِمِ بِهِ جَبَابِرَةَ الْكُفْرِ وَاقْتُلْ بِهِ الْكُفَّارَ
وَالْمُنَافِقِينَ وَجَمِيعَ الْمُلْحِدِينَ حَيْثُ كَانُوا مِنْ مَشَارِقِ الْأَرْضِ وَمَغَارِبِهَا بَرِّهَا
وَبَحْرِهَا، وَامْلَأْ بِهِ الْأَرْضَ عَدْلًا وَأَظْهِرْ بِهِ دِينَ نَبِيِّكَ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ

O Allah! Protect him from the evil of every tyrant and despot and from the evil of all your creatures and grant him protection from his front, his back, his right and his left and protect him and prevent from him the reaching of any evil.

Protect Your Apostle and the progeny of Your Apostle through him and make justice manifest through him; support him by victory; aid his helpers and abandon his deserters; crush his enemies and break up the forces of disbelief through him.

Through him, kill the disbelievers and the hypocrites and all the infidels wherever they be, in the east of the earth and its west, its land and its sea. Fill the earth with justice through him and manifest the religion of Your Prophet, blessings be upon him and his progeny (through him).

وَاجْعَلْنِي اللَّهُمَّ مِنْ أَنْصَارِهِ وَأَعْوَانِهِ وَاتَّبَاعِهِ وَشِيعَتِهِ، وَأَرِنِي فِي آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ عَلَيْهِمُ
السَّلَامُ مَا يَأْمُلُونَ وَفِي عَدُوِّهِمْ مَا يَحْذَرُونَ، إِلَهَ الْحَقِّ آمِينَ يَا ذَا الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ
يَا أَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِينَ

And place me, O Allah, among his helpers and his aides and his followers and his partisans. And show me in the progeny of Muhammad peace be upon them, whatever they are hoping for and in their enemies whatever they (the enemies) are afraid of. O Lord of the truth, Ameen (Accept). O the Possessor of Splendor and Honor! O the Most Merciful of all the Merciful.”

One dhikr: When a person has a legitimate need that must be fulfilled, he should stand facing the Qiblah with his head uncovered, and say the following 570 times:

يَا حُجَّةَ الْقَائِمِ

“O’ Hujjatul Qa’im.”⁵

One form of tawassul: We are able to seek an intermediary to Allah through the 12th Imam (ajtf) by reciting this supplication:

اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلٰى مُحَمَّدٍ وَ اَهْلِ بَيْتِهِ وَ اَسْأَلُكَ اللّٰهُمَّ بِحَقِّ مُحَمَّدٍ وَ ابْنَتِهِ وَ ابْنَيْهَا
الْحَسَنِ وَ الْحُسَيْنِ اِلَّا اَعَنْتَنِيْ بِهِمْ عَلٰى طَاعَتِكَ وَ رِضْوَانِكَ وَ بَلَّغْتَنِيْ بِهِمْ اَفْضَلَ
مَا بَلَّغْتَهُ اَحَدًا مِنْ اَوْلِيَائِهِمْ فِيْ ذَلِكَ

“O’ Allah! Send your blessings upon Muhammad (S) and his household (as) and I beseech you, O Allah, in the name of Muhammad (S), his daughter (sa), and her two sons, al-Hasan and al-Husayn (as), that by their right you help me to obey you and attain your pleasure and that you grant me the best of all that which you have ever granted to any of their close friends.

وَ اَسْأَلُكَ بِحَقِّ وَلِيِّكَ اَمِيْرِ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ عَلِيِّ بْنِ اَبِيْ طَالِبٍ اِلَّا اَنْتَقَمْتَ لِيْ بِهِ مِنْ
ظَلَمَنِيْ وَ كَفَيْتَنِيْ بِهِ مُؤْنَةً مَنْ يُّرِيْدُنِيْ بِظُلْمٍ اَبَدًا مَا اُبْقَيْتَنِيْ

And I beseech you in the name of Your close servant, the Commander of the Faithful, ‘Ali b. Abi Talib, that by his right, You take revenge on him who has wronged me, and by his right, You stand against anyone who intends to injure me as long as You will to keep me alive.

وَ اَسْأَلُكَ بِحَقِّ وَلِيِّكَ عَلِيِّ بْنِ الْحُسَيْنِ اِلَّا كَفَيْتَنِيْ بِهِ وَ نَجَيْتَنِيْ مِنْ جَوْرِ السَّلَاطِيْنَ
وَ نَفَثِ الشَّيَاطِيْنَ

And I beseech you in the name of Your close servant, ‘Ali b. al-Husayn, that by his right, You protect and save me from the persecution of the rulers, and the evil inspirations of the devils.

وَأَسْأَلُكَ اللَّهُمَّ بِحَقِّ وَلِيِّكَ مُحَمَّدَ بْنِ عَلِيٍّ وَجَعْفَرَ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ إِلَّا أَعَنْتَنِي بِهِمَا عَلَى أَمْرِ آخِرَتِي بِطَاعَتِكَ

And I beseech you in the name of your two close servants, Muhammad b. ‘Ali and Ja’far b. Muhammad, that by their right, you help me manage the affairs of my next life by means of obedience to you.

وَأَسْأَلُكَ اللَّهُمَّ بِحَقِّ وَلِيِّكَ الْعَبْدِ الصَّالِحِ مُوسَى بْنِ جَعْفَرٍ الْكَاطِمِ بَغِيْظِهِ إِلَّا عَافَيْتَنِي بِهِ مِمَّا أَخَافُهُ وَأَحْذَرُهُ عَلَى بَصَرِيَّ وَجَمِيعِ سَائِرِ جَسَدِيَّ وَجَوَارِحِ بَدَنِيَّ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَنَ مِنْ جَمِيعِ الْأَسْقَامِ وَالْأَمْرَاضِ وَالْأَعْلَالِ وَالْأَوْجَاعِ بِقُدْرَتِكَ يَا أَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِينَ

And I beseech You, O Allah, in the name of Your close righteous servant, Musa b. Ja’far, who suppressed his anger (al-Kadhim), that by his right, You safeguard me against all that which I fear and am careful about regarding my sight and the rest of my entire body, and all my organs the external and the internal from all illnesses, diseases, ailments, and pains, out of Your power, O the most Merciful of all those who show mercy.

وَأَسْأَلُكَ اللَّهُمَّ بِحَقِّ وَلِيِّكَ عَلِيِّ بْنِ مُوسَى الرَّضَا إِلَّا أَنْجَيْتَنِي بِهِ وَسَلَّمْتَنِي مِمَّا أَخَافُهُ وَأَحْذَرُهُ فِي جَمِيعِ أَسْفَارِي فِي الْبَرَارِيِّ وَالْقِفَارِ وَالْأَوْدِيَةِ وَالْغِيَاضِ وَالْبَحَارِ

And I beseech You, O Allah, in the name of Your close servant, ‘Ali b. Musa al-Riḍa, that through him, You rescue me and guard me against all that I fear and am careful about in all my journeys through the lands, deserts, valleys, jungles, and seas.

وَأَسْأَلُكَ اللَّهُمَّ بِحَقِّ وَلِيِّكَ أَبِي جَعْفَرٍ الْجَوَادِ إِلَّا جُدْتَ عَلَيَّ بِهِ مِنْ فَضْلِكَ وَتَفَضَّلْتَ عَلَيَّ بِهِ مِنْ وَسْعِكَ مَا أَسْتَغْنِي بِهِ عَمَّا فِي أَيْدِي خَلْقِكَ وَخَاصَّةً يَا رَبَّ لِنَاْمَهُمْ وَبَارِكْ لِي فِيهِ وَفِيمَا لَكَ عِنْدِي مِنْ نِعَمِكَ وَفَضْلِكَ وَرِزْقِكَ إِلَهِي انْقَطِعْ

الرَّجَاءُ إِلَّا مِنْكَ وَ خَابَتْ الْأَمَالُ إِلَّا فِيكَ يَا ذَا الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ

And I beseech you, O Allah, in the name of your close servant, Abu Ja'far al-Jawad, that by his right, you generously confer upon me your favours and bestow upon me with your expansive grace so that I will no more need what is possessed by Your creatures and in particular the cruel among them.

Bless all that which you confer upon me as well as your favours, grace, and sustenance that I possess. O my God! All my hopes have failed except that which I put in you, and all the expectations have been disappointed, except those which I expect from You; O the Lord of Majesty and Honour.

أَسْأَلُكَ بِحَقِّ مَنْ حَقُّهُ عَلَيْكَ وَاجِبٌ أَنْ تُصَلِّيَ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَ أَهْلِ بَيْتِهِ وَ أَنْ تَبْسُطَ عَلَيَّ مَا حَظَرْتَهُ مِنْ رِزْقِكَ وَ أَنْ تُسَهِّلَ ذَلِكَ وَ تُيسِّرَهُ فِي خَيْرٍ مِنْكَ وَ عَافِيَةٍ وَ أَنَا فِي خَفْضِ عَيْشٍ وَ دَعَةٍ يَا أَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِينَ

I beseech You in the name of him whose right You have made incumbent upon you, that You bless Muhammad and his Household, and grant me the sustenance which You have kept from me, and make it easy for me (to acquire) in goodness and wellbeing while I enjoy good living and comfort; O the most Merciful of all those who show mercy.

وَ أَسْأَلُكَ اللَّهُمَّ بِحَقِّ وَلِيِّكَ عَلِيِّ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ إِلَّا أَعَنْتَنِي بِهِ عَلَى قَضَاءِ نَوَافِلِي وَ بَرِّ إِخْوَانِي وَ كَمَالِ طَاعَتِكَ

And I beseech You, O Allah, in the name of Your close servant, 'Ali b. Muhammad, that through him, You help me perform my supererogatory actions, act righteously with my brethren-in-faith, and obey You perfectly.

وَ أَسْأَلُكَ اللَّهُمَّ بِحَقِّ وَلِيِّكَ الْحَسَنِ بْنِ عَلِيٍّ الْهَادِي الْأَمِينِ الْكَرِيمِ النَّاصِحِ الثَّقَةِ الْعَالِمِ إِلَّا أَعَنْتَنِي بِهِ عَلَى أَمْرِ آخِرَتِي

And I beseech You, O Allah, in the name of your close servant, Hasan b. 'Ali al-Hadi, the trustworthy, the generous, the sincere counselor, the trust-worthy scholar; that through him, you help me in the affairs (which are beneficial) for my next life.

وَأَسْأَلُكَ اللَّهُمَّ بِحَقِّ وَلِيِّكَ وَحُجَّتِكَ عَلَى عِبَادِكَ وَبَقِيَّتِكَ فِي أَرْضِكَ الْمُنتَقِمَ لَكَ
 مِنْ أَعْدَائِكَ وَأَعْدَاءِ رَسُولِكَ بِقِيَّةِ آبَائِهِ الطَّاهِرِينَ وَوَارِثِ أَسْلَافِهِ الصَّالِحِينَ
 صَاحِبِ الزَّمَانِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَ عَلَى آبَائِهِ الْكَرَامِ الْمُتَقَدِّمِينَ الْأَخْيَارِ إِلَّا
 تَدَارَكْتَنِي بِهِ وَنَجَيْتَنِي مِنْ كُلِّ كَرْبٍ وَهُمْ وَحَفِظْتَ عَلَيَّ قَدِيمَ إِحْسَانِكَ إِلَيَّ وَ
 حَدِيثَهُ وَأَدْرَرْتَ عَلَيَّ جَمِيلَ عَوَائِدِكَ عِنْدِي

And I beseech You, O Allah, by Your close servant, and Your proof over Your servants, and Your representative in Your lands, (the one) who will take revenge on Your enemies and the enemies of Your Messenger; the perfection of his Immaculate fathers, the inheritor of his Infallible predecessors, the Patron of the Age, may Allah's blessings be upon him and upon his fathers, the virtuous, the preferred ones, and the honourable ones that You make me his follower and deliver me from all misfortunes and griefs, and protect Your favours upon me, old and new, and shower upon me with Your excellent boons.

يَا رَبِّ أَعِنِّي بِهِ وَنَجِّنِي مِنَ الْمَخَافَةِ وَمِنْ كُلِّ شِدَّةٍ وَ عَظِيمَةٍ وَ هَوْلٍ وَ نَازِلَةٍ وَ
 غَمٍّ وَ دَيْنٍ وَ مَرَضٍ وَ سُقْمٍ وَ آفَةٍ وَ ظُلْمٍ وَ جَوْرٍ وَ فِتْنَةٍ فِي دِينِي وَ دُنْيَايَ وَ
 آخِرَتِي بِمَنِّكَ وَ رَأْفَتِكَ وَ رَحْمَتِكَ وَ كَرَمِكَ وَ تَفَضُّلِكَ وَ تَعَطُّفِكَ يَا كَافِيَ مُوسَى
 فِرْعَوْنَ وَ يَا كَافِيَ مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَوَاتُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ وَ آلِهِ مَا أَهَمَّهُ

O Lord! help me through him and save me from the fear (that I have) and from all hardships, calamities, horrors, disasters, griefs, debts, illnesses, diseases, epidemics, persecutions, prejudices, and seditious matters concerning my religion, worldly affairs, and affairs of my next life out of Your grace, compassion, mercy, magnanimity, favour and sympathy.

O He Who saved (Prophet) Musa from the Pharaoh! O He Who relieved Muhammad, Allah's blessings be upon him and his Household, all that which grieved him.

وَا يَا كَافِيَ عَلِيٍّ مَا أَهَمَّهُ يَوْمَ صِفِّينَ وَ يَا كَافِيَ عَلِيٍّ بْنِ الْحُسَيْنِ يَوْمَ الْحَرَّةِ وَ يَا
 كَافِيَ جَعْفَرِ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ أَبَا الدَّوَانِيقِ صَلَّى عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَ آلِهِ وَ اكْفِنِي مَا أَهَمَّنِي فِي
 دَارِ الدُّنْيَا وَ كُلِّ هَوْلٍ دُونَ الْجَنَّةِ بِرَحْمَتِكَ يَا أَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِينَ يَا قَاضِيَ الْحَوَائِجِ
 يَا وَهَّابَ الرِّغَائِبِ يَا مُعْطِيَ الْجَزِيلِ يَا فَكَكَ الْعُنَاةِ

O' He who rescued 'Ali from that which grieved him on the day of Siffin, O' He Who rescued 'Ali b. al-

Husayn on the day of (the Battle of) al-Harrah, O' He Who saved Ja'far b. Muhammad against Abu al-Dawaniq (i.e. Abu-Ja'far al-ManSur, the 'Abbasid ruler).

Send blessings upon Muhammad and his Household and relieve me against all that which has grieved me in this worldly abode and against all horrors aside from Paradise out of Your mercy, O' the most Merciful of all those who show mercy. O' He Who grants all needs! O' He Who fulfills all the desires! O' He Who provides abundantly! O' He who delivers from anguish.

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنَّكَ تَعْلَمُ اَنِّيْ اَعْلَمُ اَنَّكَ قَادِرٌ عَلٰى قَضَاءِ حَوَائِجِيْ فَصَلِّ عَلٰى مُحَمَّدٍ وَ اٰلِهِ وَ
عَجَلْ يَا رَبِّ فَرَجٍ وَلِيَّكَ وَ ابْنِ بَنْتِ نَبِيِّكَ وَ اقْضِ يَا اللّٰهُ حَوَائِجَ اَهْلِ بَيْتِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَ
اقْضِ لِيْ يَا رَبِّ بِمُحَمَّدٍ وَ اَهْلِ بَيْتِهِ حَوَائِجَ الدُّنْيَا وَ الْاٰخِرَةِ صَغِيْرَهَا وَ كَبِيْرَهَا
فِيْ يُسْرٍ مِنْكَ وَ عَافِيَةٍ وَ تَمِّمْ نِعَمَتَكَ عَلَيَّ وَ هِنِّئْنِيْ بِهِمْ كَرَامَتِكَ وَ اَلْبِسْنِيْ بِهِمْ
عَافِيَتَكَ وَ تَفَضَّلْ عَلَيَّ بِعَفْوِكَ وَ كُنْ لِيْ بِحَقِّ مُحَمَّدٍ وَ اَهْلِ بَيْتِهِ فِيْ جَمِيْعِ اُمُوْرِيْ
وَلِيًّا وَ حَافِظًا وَ نَاصِرًا وَ كَالِئًا وَ رَاعِيًّا وَ سَاتِرًا وَ رَازِقًا مَا شَاءَ اللّٰهُ كَانَ وَ مَا لَمْ
يَشَأْ لَمْ يَكُنْ لَا يُعْجِزُ اللّٰهُ شَيْءٌ طَلَبُهُ فِي الْاَرْضِ وَ لَا فِي السَّمَاءِ هُوَ كَائِنٌ هُوَ كَائِنٌ
اِنْ شَاءَ اللّٰهُ

O' Allah! You indeed know that I admit that You have the power to grant all my needs, therefore, bless Muhammad and his Household and hasten, O' Lord, the advent of Your close servant, the son of Your Prophet's daughter, and grant, O' Allah, the needs of Muhammad's household, and grant, O' Lord, in the name of Muhammad and his household, all my needs in this world as well as in the Next World.

Be they big or small, with easiness and wellbeing from You; and perfect Your graces for me, and make me enjoy Your honor, and dress me with Your (bounty of) wellbeing, and confer upon me with Your pardon, and, in the name of Muhammad and his Household, be my Guardian, Custodian, Supporter, Savior, Overseer, Protector and Sustainer, in all of my affairs. Only that which Allah wills shall occur; while that which He does not will shall not occur. Nothing is difficult for Allah to do in the Earth or in the Heavens. This shall be; this shall be, Allah willing.”⁶

It may be possible that some of the lovers of the Imam may have other ways which they use to seek help and assistance from the Imam to fulfill their needs and requests.

For example, it is possible that a person has a need which he wants fulfilled and he conveys this to the Imam either in his dreams or even while awake in a state of Mukashifa (an awoken state in which one experiences the presence of the Divine or His appointed agents) with the answer coming directly from the Imam.

In addition, it is possible that a person verbally declares his desires and an answer comes from the Imam.

Also, it is possible that a person may write his requests to the Imam and keep it under his prayer rug and one will see his answer written on that paper.

In this regards, Imam ‘Ali b. Muhammad (as) has said:

إِذَا أَرَدْتَ أَنْ تَسْأَلَ مَسْأَلَةً فَاكْتُبْهَا وَضَعْ الْكِتَابَ تَحْتَ مُصَلَّاكَ وَدَعُهُ سَاعَةً ثُمَّ أَخْرِجْهُ وَانْظُرْ فِيهِ. قَالَ الرَّأْيِي: فَفَعَلْتُ فَوَجَدْتُ جَوَابَ مَا سَأَلْتُ عَنْهُ مُوقِعًا فِيهِ

“When you wish to ask for something, then write it down (on paper) and place this writing underneath your prayer mat. Wait for an hour and then take the paper out and look at it.” The narrator said: “I did just this and I found the answer to what I has asked for with the signature of the Imam on it (the paper).”⁷

1. Spiritual Bond with the Sacred al-Mahdi, pg. 252
2. MiSbah of al-Kaf’ami, pg. 176; Mafatih al-Jinan after Du’a at-Tawassul
3. Biharul Anwar, vol. 102, pg. 234, sec. 10, no. 2; al-Balad al-Amin, pg. 157; MiSbah al-Kaf’ami, pg. 404
4. Biharul Anwar, vol. 53, pg. 171, sec. 31, no. 5
5. Spiritual Bond with the Sacred Mahdi, pg. 252
6. Biharul Anwar, vol. 102, pg. 252, sec. 10, no. 10
7. al-Kharaij, pg. 419; Biharul Anwar, vol. 50, pg. 155, sec. 3, no. 41

Another responsibility which a true believer has is to pray for the protection of Imam al-’Asr (ajtf) from all types of trials and tribulations which can appear from the Earth or Heavens, and from evil of the devils among mankind and the Jinn.

The lover of the Imam must supplicate, whenever he is able to, for the Imam. As we are told, the best time to pray to Allah ﷻ is when the supplications are most readily accepted and these specific times will be mentioned in the next responsibility.

One of the best supplications which can be read for his protection is the following short Du’a (which we will mention in detail in the next responsibility):

اَللّٰهُمَّ كُنْ لَوْلِيِّكَ الْحُجَّةِ بْنِ الْحَسَنِ...

“O’ Allah, be for your deputy (Wali), al-Hujjat b. al-Hasan...”¹

1. The entire text of this supplication will be mentioned in the next responsibility.

Another responsibility of a believer is to supplicate to Allah for the Imam and the best supplication for his protection is the famous one which has been taught to us by the infalliable A`immah (as):

اَللّٰهُمَّ كُنْ لِّوَلِيِّكَ الْحُجَّةِ بْنِ الْحَسَنِ، صَلَوَاتِكَ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَىٰ اَبَائِهِ، فِي هَذِهِ السَّاعَةِ وَ
فِي كُلِّ سَاعَةٍ، وَلِيًّا وَحَافِظًا وَقَائِدًا وَنَاصِرًا وَدَلِيْلًا وَعَيْنًا حَتَّىٰ تَسْكُنَهُ اَرْضُكَ
طَوْعًا وَتُمَتِّعَهُ فِيْهَا طَوِيْلًا

“O’ Allah, be for Your deputy, al-Hujjah b. al-Hasan, may Your Blessings be upon him and his forefathers, now and at all times, the Master, Protector, Guide, Helper, Proof and Guard until he resides peacefully on Your earth and let him enjoy (the blessings of this life) for a long time.”¹

1. MiSbah al-Mutahajjid, pg. 630; al-Balad al-Amin, pg. 203

Another responsibility is to give Sadaqah (charity) for the safety and protection of the Imam. The amount and type of Sadaqah given is not important, rather what is vital is the sincere intention that it is given with, and that what is given is within one’s ability (a person does not go through untold hardships to offer this charity such as giving too much).

The giving of Sadaqah for the safety of the Imam can be done on a daily, weekly or monthly basis whatever is easy for the believer and at the time of giving the Sadaqah, one should remember and pray for the safety of Imam al-Hujjah (ajtf).

A person giving the Sadaqah can and should pray for the safety of his friends and family members his father, mother, children, and others such as his teacher and other people as well. Therefore, within the intention, one can specify that he is giving Sadaqah with the hopes that it will be accepted as a protection for all of these people not just the Imam.

We should not take the ‘proper name’ of Imam al-Zaman (ajtf) when we mention him and should observe taqiyyah (dissimulation) as much as possible. The proper name of the Imam is his first name which is the same as the Prophet of Islam (ص ح م د). Since we are not permitted to refer to him by his proper name, we should refer to him through his titles and names of appellation.

Without a doubt, it is forbidden (haram) to mention the name of the Imam in gatherings in which the enemies of the religion are present and any place where there is a fear of the enemies. If there is fear that danger may come to a person, then it becomes forbidden to mention the title of the Imam and the names or titles of the other A`immah as well.

However, the prohibition of not mentioning the name of the Imam in other instances, for example in gatherings in which there is no fear or danger of the enemies of Islam, and where it is not necessary to observe taqiyyah. This is a matter of debate amongst our scholars. However that which we deduce from the traditions which speak about this issue is that it is prohibited to mention his proper name (in any gathering).

The Messenger of Allah (S) has said:

هُوَ الَّذِي لَا يُسَمِّيهِ بِاسْمِهِ ظَاهِرًا قَبْلَ قِيَامِهِ إِلَّا كَافِرٌ بِهِ

“He is the one whom no one calls by his (proper) name openly before his advent, except the one who disbelieves in him.”¹

The Messenger of Allah has also said:

فَلَا يَحِلُّ لِأَحَدٍ أَنْ يُسَمِّيَهُ أَوْ يُكْنِيَهُ بِاسْمِهِ وَكُنْيَتِهِ قَبْلَ خُرُوجِهِ صَلَوَاتُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ

“It is not permitted for anyone to call him by his name or his title before his advent, may the blessings of Allah be upon him.”²

There are many reliable traditions found in the well-known books of hadith on this issue which reach to the level of mustafiha³ rather, they reach to the level of being mutawatir-e-ma'nawi⁴ and tell us that it is impermissible to mention the name and title of Imam al-Mahdi (ajtf) before his advent.⁵

It is permissible to mention the name of the Imam in supplications and the whispered prayers (Munajat) which are recited in private, however one should keep away from this in large gatherings and according to ihtiyat⁶ it is still better not to do this.

The same holds true for mentioning the name of the Imam in secret and in one's heart such that only the person himself can hear what he is saying this too is permitted, however it is better to observe precaution in these regards as well.

In addition, it also goes against precaution to mention the proper name of the Imam in writings and

books. Thus, from the time of the late Shaykh Kulayni رحمته الله until now, we see that our great scholars have not mentioned the name of Imam al-Zaman (ajtf) in their books or writings and the methodology of our scholars is constant and none of them have gone against this custom.

Mentioning the proper name of the Imam (ajtf) through the use of the individual letters of his name (م ح م د) as a way of indicating him is permissible and just as it was previously stated, his name is the same as the name of the Messenger of Allah and his title is the same as that of the Prophet of Allah (S).

This same ruling (about mentioning him) applies in regards to remembering him by his name and title in closed gatherings and programs those gatherings in which the Shi'a, especially those particular Shi'a such as the 'Ulama and the pious people are present as long as there is no fear or danger and there is no need to be in a state of taqiyyah.⁸

So, what is the reason for it to be prohibited to mention the name and title of the Imam? Numerous reasons can be cited why it is forbidden to mention his name, however we must concede that the true reason for this prohibition has been hidden from us (by Allah, the Prophet and the A'imma).

Another name of Imam al-Mahdi (ajtf) which is also one of the names of the Prophet is Ahmad. So the question arises that is it also forbidden to mention the Imam by this name? In brief we can state that it is not forbidden to call the Imam with this name, however, according to precaution, it is better to refrain from this as well.

From some of the traditions, we can deduce that it is also prohibited to mention the specific title which the Imam is known by, as it shares the same ruling as mentioning his proper name.

Some people state that it is forbidden to mention his name and titles and we must not call him by such things is this true? In answer to this we state that the strongest opinion⁹ is that it is not forbidden to mention the titles of Imam al-Mahdi (ajtf). However, according to precaution it is not permitted and this is how we should tread in these regards (by observing this precaution).

فِي حَدِيثِ الْخَضِرِ: وَأَشْهَدُ عَلَى رَجُلٍ مِنْ وَلَدِ الْحُسَيْنِ لَا يُكْنَى وَلَا يُسَمَّى حَتَّى يَظْهَرَ أَمْرُهُ

In the tradition of al-Khidhr it has been mentioned: "And I bear witness to that man who will come from the children of al-Husain (as) whose title will not be expressly mentioned nor will his name be called until his advent."¹⁰

1. Mikyal al-Makarim, vol. 2, pg. 111; Mustadrak al-Wasa'il, vol. 12, page 285, sec. 31, no. 14106

2. Mikyal al-Makarim, vol. 2, pg. 117; Mustadrak al-Wasa'il, vol. 12, page 280, sec. 31, no. 14095

3. Any tradition that has not reached the level of being classified as being Tawatur is called Khabar-e-Wahid. However, if

the number of narrators of the tradition is greater than three, then that tradition is referred to as a mustafidh tradition which is one of the best types of “khabar-e-wahid” tradition.

4. A Mutawatir tradition is of two types: The literal/verbal and the figurative/abstract. The literal/verbal mutawatir tradition is one in which the words of the various traditions are exactly the same with no difference in them while the figurative/abstract mutawatir tradition is one in which the words and phrases are not exactly the same, however their content is similar and thus, all of the hadith on that one topic have the same content and substance with different wordings.

5. Please refer to books such as Kamal ad-Din wa Tamam an-Ni'mah, vol. 2; Mustadrak al-Wasa'il, vol. 2; al-Kafi, vol. 2

6. Ihtiyat is in the meaning of a recommended precaution here.

7. His exact birth date is not known, however he passed away in the year 328 or 329 and had seen the special representatives of Imam al-Zaman (ajtf) and his book al-Kafi is also one of the Kutub al-Ar'bah or Four Major books of Shi'a tradition and is the most important of all of them.

8. It is our opinion that in this era, the name of the Imam (ajtf) can be mentioned without any fear and when we look at the history and see the fear and fright of the past which does not exist today and thus, it is not necessary to refrain from calling the Imam (ajtf) by his name.

9. That which the Mujtahid feels is the most correct way and which is also in the meaning of Ihtiyat Mustahab.

10. Kamal ad-Din wa Tamam an-Ni'mah, vol. 1, pg. 315; al-Ihtijaj, pg. 267

Another responsibility of the true believer is to observe the proper etiquette and to refrain from anything which would be considered as bad manners in the presence of Imam al-Zaman (ajtf).

Taking part in gatherings in which Imam al-'Asr (ajtf) is spoken about in a bad way or in which people openly question and deny his existence, or where he is made fun of, are examples of things which would be classified as bad manners in relation to the Imam.

In addition, we must also stay away from programs which do not have the remembrance of Allah and Imam al-'ASr (ajtf) as this too is a sign of not observing manners and etiquette in relation to the Imam.

Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq(as) has said:

مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلَا يَجْلِسُ مَجْلِسًا يُنْتَقَصُ فِيهِ إِمَامٌ أَوْ يُعَابُ فِيهِ مُؤْمِنٌ

“He who has true belief in Allah and the Last Day will not attend gatherings in which the Imam is being disparaged or in which the defects of a believer are being spoken about.”¹

Actions such as not observing the responsibilities which one has to fulfill in regards to Imam al-Zaman (ajtf) displaying our own shortcomings in relation to these rights, seeking help (tawassul) from other than the Imam or his pure family in times of difficulties, trying to find faults and defects in the rulings of the religion and that which the Prophet of Islam brought, or insulting the laws of Allah are all things which are equivalent to insulting the Imam.

In addition, actions such as having hatred for the friends and lovers of Imam al-Zaman (ajtf), or loving the enemies of the Imam and enemies of the religion are also practical examples of showing disrespect and not observing the correct etiquette in relation to the Imam.

Therefore, these and many other things which are considered as showing disrespect to the Imam must be kept away from and without doubt, those with intellect and understanding can clearly understand this responsibility.

1. al-Kafi, vol. 2, Page 377, no. 9

Another responsibility is to observe the proper etiquette when the Imam's name is mentioned.

A true believer should only call upon the Imam by his titles such as: al-Hujjah, al-Qa'im, al-Mahdi, Sahib al-Amr, Sahib az-Zaman, Aba Salih and others.

In addition, when one wants to say or write the blessed name of the Imam, one must also display the utmost of respect.

For example, if we use the word 'Haqir' or 'Mawla' or things such as this before his name, then we must also add the various forms of greeting, salutations and prayers after mentioning him, such as: "عَلَيْهِ" (peace be upon him): "سَلَامُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ" (may Allah's peace be upon him): "عَلَيْهِ الصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ" (prayers and peace be upon him): "أَرْوَاحُنَا لَهُ الْفِدَاءُ" (may our souls be sacrificed for him) or "عَجَّلَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى" (may Allah, the Most High, hasten his noble return) after his blessed name.

The Messenger of Allah (S) has said:

مَنْ صَلَّى عَلَيَّ فِي كِتَابٍ لَمْ تَزَلِ الْمَلَائِكَةُ تَسْتَغْفِرُ لَهُ مَا دَامَ إِسْمِي فِي ذَلِكَ
الْكِتَابِ

"Whoever sends blessings on me in writing, the Angels will continue to ask forgiveness for him for as long as my name is in that book (or writing)."1

Therefore based on this tradition, we must remember to show honor and respect to the Prophet, the Imam of our time and the other A'immah and this cannot be achieved by merely writing (ص) in the place of (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَ سَلَّمَ), or (ع) in the place of (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) or (عج) in the place of (عَجَّلَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى) (فَرَجَهُ الشَّرِيفَ) and other things such as these.

Many times, we see scholars write long dissertations and do not even try in the least to keep their words to a minimum or we see speakers who deliver long lectures and never suffice with short talks, however

when it comes to showing respect to the A`immah of true guidance, they never follow the code of honor in relation to them or if they do, they resort to using the abbreviated forms of respect.

Therefore, instead of writing out (صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ) they will write (ص) or even worse, they will cut the salutation off and write (صَلَّى اللّٰهُ)! In place of the prayer, (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) and in place of (عَجَّلَ اللّٰهُ تَعَالَى فَرَجَهُ) they will use the symbols (ع) and (عج)! Sometimes, in place of the prayer (رِضْوَانُ اللّٰهُ تَعَالَى عَلَيْهِ) or the prayer (رَحْمَةُ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ) they will shorten them and write them as (رض) and (ره).

We should keep in mind that not only is the use of such shortened expressions in relation to these noble personalities rude and impolite, but it is also one of the greatest forms of disrespect towards them!

Another point of etiquette in showing respect to the Imam is that we should not touch his name or any of his titles without Wudhu' (spiritual purity).

What we have just mentioned in relation to showing respect and honor to the Imam is just the tip of the iceberg and there are many other forms which can be manifest and indeed these are clear for the one who has true insight and understanding (of the Imam).

It goes without saying that what we have stated in this responsibility in regards to the last Imam also holds true for the rest of the Infallibles.

1. Biharul Anwar, vol. 94, pg. 71, sec. 29, no. 65; Munyat al-Murid, pg. 347 (The section of Writing and Keeping Books)
2. In most English publications, this is written as (S), (s), (SAW), (saws), (pbuh&hf) and other such ways. (Tr.)

Another responsibility of the believers is that when they hear or see the name of Imam al-Zaman or any of his titles, they should immediately show the appropriate form of respect. In addition, as a sign of acknowledging his status, they should stand up when they hear his blessed title, al-Qa`im.

One day, a person was in a gathering with Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) when another person took the name of Imam al-Zaman (ajtf) and out of respect to the 12th Imam, the 6th Imam stood up!¹

Once, a companion named Di'bil, who lived in the later part of the Islamic history, recited a poem which he had composed in which he mentioned Imam al-Hujjah (ajtf) to the 8th Imam, 'Ali b. Musa al-Rida (as). When he mentioned the 12th Imam, Imam al-Rida (as) stood up and placed his right hand on his head as a form of respect to the final Imam and prayed for his speedy arrival!²

The philosophy behind standing up when one hears the blessed name or title of the Imam, especially al-Qa`im (ajtf) is that we are showing our readiness to rise to help and assist the Imam.

Indeed, whenever and wherever the name of the Imam is taken, he immediately makes himself present in that gathering and looks with attention towards the people (who have taken his name) and therefore, it

is recommended to show respect to the Imam by standing up whenever his name is mentioned.

1. Spiritual Relation with the Noble Personality of the Mahdi, pg. 240, Muntakhab al-Athar, pg. 506, al-Zaimun NaSib, vol. 1, pg. 371
2. Ibid.

Another responsibility of the followers of the Imam is that we must have humility and humbleness and show concern in our hearts (for the Imam) when we mention him.

قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: ﴿أَلَمْ يَأْنِ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْ تَخْشَعَ قُلُوبُهُمْ لِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَمَا نَزَلَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ﴾^١

Allah, the Most High has said (in the Noble Qur`an):

“Has not the time come that those who have true faith begin to show humility in their hearts when Allah and that which He has revealed of the Truth is mentioned?”¹

Imam Muhammad b. ‘Ali al-Baqir (as) has said that: “Remembering us (the Ahlul Bayt) and mentioning us is the same as remembering or mentioning Allah.”²

Therefore, the hearts of the true believers must have humbleness which can only come about through remembering the name of the Imam, just as Imam Ja’far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq(as) stated in his supplication for Friday:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّى اَتَقَرَّبُ اِلَيْكَ بِقَلْبٍ خَاضِعٍ وَ اِلَى وَلِيِّكَ بِبَدَنٍ خَاشِعٍ وَ اِلَى الْاَئِمَّةِ الرَّاشِدِيْنَ بِفُؤَادٍ مُتَوَاضِعٍ

“O’ Allah! Indeed I seek nearness to you with a submissive heart, and (I seek nearness) to your representative with a body that is humble and (I seek nearness) to the rightly guided A`immah by a heart filled with humility.”³

1. Suratul Hadid (57), Verse 16
2. al-Kafi, vol. 2, pg. 396, no. 2
3. Jamal al-Ushbu’, Pag 230, Biharul Anwar, vol. 89, pg. 332, sec. 4, no. 5

A true believer’s entire presence must show humility to the 12th Imam. By this we mean that every part

of our body must be in the service of and ready to carry out the commands of the Imam.

We must know that in the presence of the Imam, we are weak and insignificant and that it is the Imam who possesses greatness and magnimity. In addition, we must follow the Imam by our actions and our heart.

Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) has said the following in his supplication for the day of Friday:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَتَقَرَّبُ إِلَيْكَ بِقَلْبٍ خَاضِعٍ وَإِلَى وَلِيِّكَ بِبَدَنٍ خَاشِعٍ وَإِلَى الْأَئِمَّةِ
الرَّاشِدِينَ بِفُؤَادٍ مُتَوَاضِعٍ

“O’ Allah! Indeed I seek nearness to you with a submissive heart, and (I seek nearness) to your representative with a body that is humble; and (I seek nearness) to the rightly guided A`immah by a heart filled with humility.”¹

1. Ibid.

Another responsibility that the believers have is to love the Imam since he is one of the infallible members of the Ahlul Bayt (as) of the Prophet Muhammad (S).

The consecutively narrated traditions tell us that loving the Ahlul Bayt (as), and specifically Imam al-Zaman (ajtf), is one of the responsibilities of the true believers.

As we know, it is obligatory upon every believer to love the family of the Prophet which is actually the reward he asked for bringing us the message of Islam. In addition, this act is also regarded as a part of having true faith and is one of the conditions for our actions to be accepted in the presence of Allah.

All of the permitted, pure blessings of Allah and the various pleasures which the believers have been granted are due to the presence of the Imam and the blessings he brings with him and it stands to reason that a person must love the one who is the reason for all of the blessings which he has been granted. Indeed, the Islamic traditions tell us that the presence of the twelfth Imam is the reason that we are blessed.

Thus, our intelligence commands us to love him and in principle, human nature commands people to this truth we must love the one who has given us blessings and bounties and has done good to us.

In addition, there are numerous traditions that speak directly about the need to have love for our living Imam.

قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: يَا مُحَمَّدُ أَحِبَّهُ فَإِنِّي أُحِبُّهُ وَأُحِبُّ مَنْ يُحِبُّهُ

Allah has said in a Sacred Tradition (Hadith al-Qudsi): “O’ Muhammad! Have love for him (al-Mahdi) since surely I love him and I love anyone who loves him.”¹

The Messenger of Allah (S) has said:

وَمَنْ أَحَبَّ أَنْ يَلْقَى اللَّهَ وَقَدْ كَمَلَ إِيمَانُهُ وَحَسَنَ إِسْلَامُهُ فَلْيَتَوَلَّ الْحُجَّةَ
صَاحِبَ الزَّمَانِ الْمُنْتَظَرَ

“A person who would like to meet Allah in a state of perfect faith and in the best form of submission should love al-Hujjah Sahib al-Zaman al-Muntadhar (ajtf).”²

1. Biharul Anwar, vol. 36, pg. 223, sec. 40, no. 21

2. Biharul Anwar, vol. 36, pg. 296, sec. 41, no. 125

In addition to having love for the Imam, a true believer must also encourage others to love him in essence, they must pull others towards the Imam and towards love for him!

Imam Ja’far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) has said:

رَحِمَ اللَّهُ عَبْدًا حَبَّبَنَا إِلَى النَّاسِ وَلَمْ يُبَغِّضْنَا إِلَيْهِمْ

“May Allah have mercy upon a servant who endears us to the people and does not make them have hatred towards us (the Ahlul Bayt).”¹

In another tradition, Imam Ja’far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq has said:

رَحِمَ اللَّهُ عَبْدًا اجْتَرَّ مَوَدَّةَ النَّاسِ إِلَيْنَا فَحَدَّثَهُمْ بِمَا يَعْرِفُونَ وَتَرَكَ مَا يُنْكِرُونَ

“May Allah have mercy upon that servant who encourages the people to love us (the Ahlul Bayt) through speaking to them whatever (positive) they know (about us), while refraining from mentioning that which they do not find acceptable (about us).”²

1. al-Kafi, vol. 8, pg. 229, sec. 8, no. 293

2. al-Amali (Shaykh Saduq), pg. 99

Expressing one's desire to meet the Imam is another responsibility of the believers.

In the supplications which are specifically related to Imam al-Zaman (ajtf) such as Du'a al-Nudbah¹, there are passages (which as we know are the exact words of Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq) in which this responsibility has been clearly mentioned:

عَزِيزٌ عَلَيَّ أَنْ أَرَى الْخَلْقَ وَ لَا تُرَى وَ لَا أَسْمَعُ لَكَ حَسِيساً وَ لَا نَجْوَى

“How difficult it is for me that I am able to see all the creation, however you cannot be seen, and I do not hear any sound or whisper from you!”

The Commander of the Faithful, ‘Ali b. Abi Talib (as) has said:

هَاهُ! وَ أَوْمَى بِيَدِهِ إِلَى صَدْرِهِ شَوْقاً إِلَى رُؤْيَيْهِ

“Aah! (O’ how I wish I could see him!)” And then he struck his hand on his chest as a sign of longing to see the Imam (al-Mahdi).²

1. This supplication has been narrated in the reliable books of supplication such as Mafatih al-Jinan, Mikyal al-Makarim, vol. 2, pg. 93–100; the hand written copy of Mizar al-Kabir of Ibne al-Mashadi, pg. 822; Mizar (the old Version) by Qutb Rawandi; the hand written copy of Mizar of Sayyid ibne Tawus which is known by the name of MiSbahul Zair, pg. 334; Biharul Anwar, vol. 102

2. Mikyal al-Makarim, vol. 1, pg. 115; Biharul Anwar, vol. 51, pg. 115, sec. 2, no. 14

Another responsibility of a believer is to ask Allah for the ability to meet Imam al-Mahdi (ajtf). We must pray to Allah that the Imam permits us to see him, but of course we should ask to see him while we are in a state of true faith and performing good deeds.

Therefore, we should be blessed to meet him having full faith in Islam so that we do not cause any spiritual harm to the Imam and such that we are not among those whose his anger is taken out upon.

This type of meeting with Imam al-Mahdi (ajtf) is possible both during his advent and during his occultation. Therefore, it is possible for the believers to see and meet him during his occultation, just as it is possible to see and meet him during his advent. Thus, just because he is currently hidden from the

eyes of the people, we must not deny the fact that it is possible to see him.

To see the Imam during his advent or during the period of occultation while awake or asleep is something that everyone aspires towards and this must be the wish of all true believers. They must sincerely ask Allah for this honor and the best way to achieve this is to supplicate to Allah to be granted the opportunity to meet the Imam upon his advent.

In the Du'a of 'Ahd (The Supplication of the Pact to the Imam)¹ which has been narrated by Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as), we pray the following:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اَرِنِي الطَّلَعَ الرَّشِيْدَةَ وَ الْغُرَّةَ الْحَمِيْدَةَ وَ اَكْحُلْ نَاظِرِيْ بِنَظْرَةٍ مِّنِّيْ اِلَيْهِ...

“O'Allah! Show me the appearance of the one who is rightly guided and the finest of those deserving praise; and beautify my sight with the ability to look upon him...”²

Later on in this same supplication we appeal to Allah ﷻ and say:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَسْئَلُكَ اَنْ تُرِيْنِيْ وَلِيَّ اَمْرِكَ ظَاهِرًا نَافِذَ الْاَمْرِ...

“O Allah I ask that you show me the authority of your affairs manifestly as he carries out your orders...”³

Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) has said:

اِذَا تَمَنَّى اَحَدُكُمْ الْقَائِمَ فَلْيَتَمَنَّهٗ فِيْ عَافِيَةٍ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ بَعَثَ مُحَمَّدًا رَّحْمَةً وَ يَبْعَثُ الْقَائِمَ نَقْمَةً

“Anytime one of you has the desire (to see) al-Qa'im (ajtf), then you should desire that (you see him while) you are in a good (spiritual) state since surely Allah had sent Muhammad (S) as a mercy but will send al-Qa'im (ajtf) as an avenger.”⁴

In addition, it has been mentioned in Du'a al-Nudbah⁵:

وَ اَرِهٖ سَيِّدَهُ يَا شَدِيْدَ الْقُوٰى...

“And allow him (Imam al-Mahdi) to see his Master, O’ the Almighty...”⁶

In another supplication⁷, it has been mentioned:

وَأَجْعَلْنَا مِمَّنْ تَقَرُّ عَيْنُهُ بِرُؤْيَيْتِهِ

“And make us of those whose eyes are delighted by seeing.”⁸

Imam Ja’far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) has said:

مَنْ قَرَأَ سُورَةَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ فِي كُلِّ لَيْلَةٍ جُمُعَةٍ لَمْ يَمُتْ حَتَّى يُدْرِكَ الْقَائِمَ فَيَكُونَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِهِ

“A person who recites Surah Bani Isra’il (17) every Thursday night will not die until he sees al-Qa’im (ajtf) and becomes one of his companions.”⁹

Imam Ja’far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) has also said:

مَنْ قَرَأَ بَعْدَ كُلِّ فَرِيضَةٍ هَذَا الدُّعَاءَ فَإِنَّهُ يَرَى الْإِمَامَ م ح م د بْنَ الْحَسَنِ عَلَيْهِ وَ عَلَى آبَائِهِ السَّلَامُ فِي الْيَقَظَةِ أَوْ فِي الْمَنَامِ

“A person who recites the following supplication after every obligatory Salat will definitely see Imam (م ح م د) Ibn al-Hasan, may peace be upon him and upon his forefathers, (either) while he is awake or in his dreams.”¹⁰

Then the Imam recited the following supplication:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ. اَللّٰهُمَّ بَلِّغْ مَوْلَانَا صَاحِبَ الزَّمَانِ اَيْنَمَا كَانَ وَ حَيْثُمَا كَانَ...

“In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. O’ Allah! Convey to our Master, Sahib al-Zaman (ajtf), wherever he is and everywhere he is...”

1. Biharul Anwar, vol. 102, pg. 1111, sec. 7, no. 2; MiSbah of al-Kaf'ami, pg. 550
2. Biharul Anwar, vol. 102, pg. 90
3. Ibid.
4. al-Kafi, vol. 8, pg. 233, no. 306
5. This supplication has been narrated in the reliable books of supplication such as Mafatih al-Jinan, Mikyal al-Makarim, vol. 2, pg. 93-100; the hand written copy of Mizar al-Kabir of Ibne al-Mashadi, pg. 822; Mizar (the old Version) by Qutb Rawandi; the hand written copy of Mizar of Sayyid ibne Tawus which is known by the name of MiSbahul Zair, pg. 334; Biharul Anwar, vol. 102
6. Biharul Anwar, vol. 102, pg. 90
7. Biharul Anwar, vol. 89, pg. 310, sec. 3, no. 14
8. Biharul Anwar, vol. 102, pg. 90
9. Biharul Anwar, vol. 86, pg. 61, sec. 38, no. 69
10. Ibid.

Another responsibility of the believers is to go to those places where this is a possibility that the Imam visits such as Masjid al-Sahlah (in 'Iraq), Masjid Jamkaran (in Iran) and other places, especially at the specific times which have been mentioned that he may be there¹ the gatherings in which the greatness and traits of the Imam and the other infallible A`immah are mentioned.

Programs to commemorate the marriage of the Sadat and the 'Ulama and especially those gatherings in which the Sadat scholars who also possess the qualities of abstaining from sins and who adhere to piety are present, gatherings in which the troubles that befell the Ahlul Bayt are mentioned programs in which the teachings of Allah and in which the infallible A`immah are remembered.

Especially the days which are relevant to them such as 'Ashura, 'Eid al-Fitr, Thursday night and other days accompanying the dead bodies of the scholars and those who love the Imam especially the true Shi'a to their burial site are all programs and gatherings which a true believer should be present in. In addition, the joyous occasions which take place during the year such as 'Eid al-Ghadir, 'Eid al-Qurban, the Nights of Qadr in the Month of Ramaḡhan and others, are also times in which Imam al-Hujjah (ajtf) is present and thus, we should also be sure to take part in programs which are held around these great days.

1. For example according to the traditions it is stated that Imam Wali al-'ASr attends the Hajj every year and on the day of 'Arafat, he is present on the Plains of 'Arafat.

Another responsibility of a true believer is that one must feel grief and sorrow due to one's separation from the Imam and not being able to see him. This state of grief should be a continuous feeling for a believer and should not be limited to merely a few days during the year.

If a true believer is only able to be in spiritual contact with the Imam for certain hours or parts of the day, then at least in those time periods, one must express grief at being separated from the Imam and the

delay in his advent.

There is a section in Du'a al-Nudbah which explains the sorrow one feels at being separated from his Imam:

هَلْ مِنْ مُعِينٍ فَأُطِيلَ مَعَهُ الْعَوِيلَ وَ الْبُكَاءَ؟

“Is there any assistant that will be alongside me in prolonging my grief and tears (at being separated from you, O’ Imam?)”¹

1. Biharul Anwar, vol. 102, pg. 90

Another responsibility of the believers is to shed tears due to being separated from the Imam and because of the trials and tribulations which he has had to endure. If it is not possible for a person to cry, then he should try and force himself to cry or at least ‘pretend’ to cry which is known as ‘tabaka’ in ‘Arabic.

In a tradition from Imam Ja’far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) it is mentioned that:

مَنْ ذَكَرَنَا أَوْ ذُكِرْنَا عِنْدَهُ فَخَرَجَ مِنْ عَيْنِهِ دَمْعٌ مِثْلُ جَنَاحِ بُعُوضَةٍ غَفَرَ اللَّهُ لَهُ
ذُنُوبَهُ وَ لَوْ كَانَتْ مِثْلَ زَبَدِ الْبَحْرِ

“Anyone who remembers us or when we are remembered in his presence, a tear-drop the size of the wing of a gnat comes out from his eye, Allah will forgive his sins even if they are the amount of the foam on the waters of the sea.”¹

In another tradition from Imam Ja’far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) he has stated:

إِيَّاكُمْ وَالتَّنْوِيَةَ أَمَّا وَاللَّهِ لَيَغِيْبَنَّ إِمَامُكُمْ سَنِيْنًا مِنْ دَهْرِكُمْ وَلَيَمَحِصَنَّ حَتَّى يُقَالَ
مَاتَ أَوْ هَلَكَ بِأَيِّ وَادٍ سَلَكَ وَلَتَدْمَعَنَّ عَلَيْهِ عُيُونُ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ

“Take care not to refer to him (by name))! By Allah (I swear that) your Imam will disappear for many years during which time, you shall be (intensely) tested until it will be said: “He died” or “He has perished” or “Which valley has he taken as his place of recluse?” Verily, the eyes of the believers shall

دَخَلْتُ أَنَا وَ الْمُفَضَّلُ بْنُ عُمَرَ وَ أَبُو بَصِيرٍ وَ أَبَانُ بْنُ تَغْلِبَ عَلَى مَوْلَانَا أَبِي عَبْدِ
اللَّهِ جَعْفَرِ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ فَرَأَيْنَاهُ جَالِسًا عَلَى التُّرَابِ وَ عَلَيْهِ مِسْحٌ خَيْبَرِيٌّ مُطَوَّقٌ بِلَا
جَيْبٍ مُقَصَّرٍ الْكُمَيْنِ وَ هُوَ يَبْكِي بُكَاءَ الْوَالِهَةِ التُّكْلَى ذَاتَ الْكَبِدِ الْحَرَّى قَدْ نَالَ
الْحُزْنَ مِنْ وَجَنَتَيْهِ وَ شَاعَ التَّغْيِيرُ فِي عَارِضِيهِ وَ أَبْلَى الدُّمُوعُ مَحَجَرِيهِ وَ هُوَ
يَقُولُ: سَيِّدِي غَيْبَتُكَ نَفَتْ رُقَادِي وَ ضَيَّقَتْ عَلَيَّ مِهَادِي وَ أَسْرَتْ مِنِّي رَاحَةَ
فُؤَادِي! سَيِّدِي غَيْبَتُكَ أَوْصَلَتْ مُصَابِي بِفَجَائِعِ الْأَبَدِ وَ فَقَدْتُ الْوَاحِدَ بَعْدَ الْوَاحِدِ
يُفْنِي الْجَمْعَ وَ الْعَدَدَ فَمَا أَحْسُ بِدَمْعَةٍ تَرْقِي مِنْ عَيْنِي وَ أَنْيْنُ يَفْتُرُ مِنْ صَدْرِي عَنْ
دَوَارِجِ الرِّزَايَا وَ سَوَالِفِ الْبَلَايَا إِلَّا مُثْلَ لِعَيْنِي عَنْ عَوَائِرِ أَعْظَمِهَا وَ أَفْظَعِهَا وَ
تَرَاقِي أَشَدِّهَا وَ أَنْكَرَهَا وَ نَوَائِبَ مَخْلُوطَةٍ بِغَضَبِكَ وَ نَوَازِلَ مَعْجُونَةٍ بِسَخَطِكَ! قَالَ
سَدِيرٌ: فَاسْتَطَارَتْ عُقُولُنَا وَلَهَا وَ تَصَدَّعَتْ قُلُوبُنَا جَزَعًا عَنْ ذَلِكَ الْخَطْبِ الْهَائِلِ
وَ الْحَادِثِ الْغَائِلِ وَ ظَنَنَّا أَنَّهُ سِمَةٌ لِمَكْرُوهَةٍ قَارِعَةٍ أَوْ حَلَّتْ بِهِ مِنَ الدَّهْرِ بَائِقَةٌ
فَقُلْنَا: لَا أَبْكِي اللَّهَ يَا ابْنَ خَيْرِ الْوَرَى عَيْنِيكَ مِنْ أَيِّ حَادِثَةٍ تَسْتَنْزِفُ دَمْعَتَكَ وَ
تَسْتَمْطِرُ عَبْرَتَكَ وَ آيَةُ حَالَةٍ حَتَمَتْ عَلَيْكَ هَذَا الْمَاتَمَ؟ قَالَ فَزَفَرَ الصَّادِقُ زَفْرَةً
انْتَفَخَ مِنْهَا جَوْفُهُ وَ اشْتَدَّ مِنْهَا خَوْفُهُ وَ قَالَ: وَيَكُمُ إِنِّي نَظَرْتُ فِي كِتَابِ الْجَفْرِ
صَبِيحَةَ هَذَا الْيَوْمِ وَ هُوَ الْكِتَابُ الْمُشْتَمِلُ عَلَى عِلْمِ الْمَنَايَا وَ الْبَلَايَا وَ الرِّزَايَا وَ
عِلْمِ مَا كَانَ وَ مَا يَكُونُ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ الَّذِي خَصَّ اللَّهُ تَقْدَسَ اسْمُهُ بِهِ مُحَمَّدًا
وَ الْأَئِمَّةَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ عَلَيْهِ وَ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ وَ تَأَمَّلْتُ فِيهِ مَوْلِدَ قَائِمِنَا وَ غَيْبَتَهُ وَ
إِبْطَاءَهُ وَ طُولَ عُمُرِهِ وَ بُلُوَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ بِهِ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ فِي ذَلِكَ الزَّمَانِ وَ تَوَلَّدَ
الشُّكُوكُ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مِنْ طُولِ غَيْبَتِهِ وَ ارْتِدَادُ أَكْثَرِهِمْ عَنْ دِينِهِمْ وَ خَلْعُهُمْ رِبْقَةَ
الْإِسْلَامِ مِنْ أَعْنَاقِهِمُ الَّتِي قَالَ اللَّهُ تَقْدَسَ ذِكْرُهُ ^١ وَ كُلُّ إِنْسَانٍ أَلْزَمْنَاهُ طَائِرَهُ فِي
عُنُقِهِ ^٢ يَعْنِي الْوَلَايَةَ فَأَخَذْتَنِي الرَّقَّةُ وَ اسْتَوَلَتْ عَلَيَّ الْأَحْزَانُ. فَقُلْنَا يَا ابْنَ رَسُولِ
اللَّهِ كَرَّمْنَا وَ شَرَّفْنَا بِإِشْرَاكَكَ إِيَّانَا فِي بَعْضِ مَا أَنْتَ تَعَلَّمُهُ مِنْ عِلْمٍ؟ قَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
تَبَارَكَ وَ تَعَالَى أَدَارَ فِي الْقَائِمِ مَنَّا ثَلَاثَةً أَدَارَهَا فِي ثَلَاثَةٍ مِنَ الرُّسُلِ قَدَّرَ مَوْلِدَهُ
تَقْدِيرَ مَوْلِدِ مُوسَى وَ قَدَّرَ غَيْبَتَهُ تَقْدِيرَ غَيْبَةِ عِيسَى وَ قَدَّرَ إِبْطَاءَهُ تَقْدِيرَ إِبْطَاءِ نُوحٍ
وَ جَعَلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ عُمَرَ الْعَبْدِ الصَّالِحِ أَعْنِي الْخِضَرَ دَلِيلًا عَلَى عُمُرِهِ. فَقُلْتُ:
اكَشِفْ لَنَا يَا ابْنَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ عَنْ وَجْهِ هَذِهِ الْمَعَانِي. قَالَ: أَمَّا مَوْلِدُ مُوسَى فَإِنَّ
فِرْعَوْنَ لَمَّا وَقَفَ عَلَى أَنَّ زَوَالَ مُلْكِهِ عَلَى يَدِهِ أَمَرَ بِإِحْضَارِ الْكَهَنَةِ فَدَلَّوْهُ عَلَى

نَسَبِهِ وَ أَنَّهُ يَكُونُ مِنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ وَ لَمْ يَزَلْ يَأْمُرُ أَصْحَابَهُ بِشَقِّ بُطُونِ الْحَوَامِلِ
مِنْ نِسَاءِ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ حَتَّى قَتَلَ فِي طَلَبِهِ نِيفًا وَ عِشْرِينَ أَلْفَ مَوْلُودٍ وَ تَعَذَّرَ عَلَيْهِ
الْوُصُولُ إِلَى قَتْلِ مُوسَى لِحِفْظِ اللَّهِ تَبَارَكَ وَ تَعَالَى إِيَّاهُ كَذَلِكَ بَنُو أُمِّيَّةَ وَ بَنُو
الْعَبَّاسِ لَمَّا وَقَفُوا عَلَى أَنَّ زَوَالَ مُلْكِهِمْ وَ الْأُمَرَاءِ وَ الْجَبَابِرَةِ مِنْهُمْ عَلَى يَدِ الْقَائِمِ
مِنَّا نَاصِبُونَ الْعَدَاوَةَ وَ وَضَعُوا سُيُوفَهُمْ فِي قَتْلِ آلِ بَيْتِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ وَ إِبَادَةِ نَسْلِهِ
طَمَعًا مِنْهُمْ فِي الْوُصُولِ إِلَى قَتْلِ الْقَائِمِ وَ يَأْبَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَكْشِفَ أَمْرَهُ لَوَاحِدٍ مِنَ
الظَّلْمَةِ إِلَى أَنْ يَتِمَّ نُورُهُ... وَ لَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُشْرِكُونَ وَ أَمَّا غَيْبَةُ عِيسَى فَإِنَّ الْيَهُودَ وَ
النَّصَارَى اتَّفَقَتْ عَلَى أَنَّهُ قُتِلَ وَ كَذَبَهُمُ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ بِقَوْلِهِ وَ مَا قَتَلُوهُ وَ مَا
صَلَبُوهُ وَ لَكِنْ شُبِّهَ لَهُمْ كَذَلِكَ غَيْبَةُ الْقَائِمِ فَإِنَّ الْأُمَّةَ تُنْكِرُهَا لِطُولِهَا فَمِنْ قَائِلٍ بِغَيْرِ
هُدًى بِأَنَّهُ لَمْ يُولَدْ وَ قَائِلٍ يَقُولُ إِنَّهُ وُلِدَ وَ مَاتَ وَ قَائِلٍ يَكْفُرُ بِقَوْلِهِ إِنْ حَادِيَ
عَشْرًا كَانَ عَقِيمًا وَ قَائِلٍ يَمُرُقُ بِقَوْلِهِ إِنَّهُ يَتَعَدَّى إِلَى ثَالِثِ عَشَرَ فَصَاعِدًا وَ قَائِلٍ
يَعْصِي اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ بِقَوْلِهِ إِنَّ رُوحَ الْقَائِمِ يَنْطِقُ فِي هَيْكَلِ غَيْرِهِ وَ أَمَّا إِبْطَاءُ نُوحٍ
فَإِنَّهُ لَمَّا اسْتَنْزَلَ الْعُقُوبَةَ عَلَى قَوْمِهِ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ بَعَثَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ جَبْرَائِيلَ الرُّوحَ
الْأَمِينَ بِسَبْعَةِ نَوِيَاتٍ فَقَالَ يَا نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَبَارَكَ وَ تَعَالَى يَقُولُ لَكَ إِنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ
خَلَائِقِي وَ عِبَادِي وَ لَسْتُ أُبِيدُهُمْ بِصَاعِقَةٍ مِنْ صَوَاعِقِي إِلَّا بَعْدَ تَأْكِيدِ الدَّعْوَةِ وَ
الْإِزَامِ الْحُجَّةِ فَعَاوَدَ اجْتِهَادَكَ فِي الدَّعْوَةِ لِقَوْمِكَ فَإِنِّي مُثِيبُكَ عَلَيْهِ وَ اغْرَسَ هَذَا
النَّوَى فَإِنَّ لَكَ فِي نَبَاتِهَا وَ بُلُوغِهَا وَ إِدْرَاكِهَا إِذَا أَثْمَرَتِ الْفَرْجَ وَ الْخَلَاصَ فَبَشِّرْ
بِذَلِكَ مَنْ تَبِعَكَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فَلَمَّا نَبَتَتِ الْأَشْجَارُ وَ تَأَزَّرَتْ وَ تَسَوَّقَتْ وَ تَغَصَّنَتْ
وَ أَثْمَرَتْ وَ زَهَا الثَّمَرُ عَلَيْهَا بَعْدَ زَمَنِ طَوِيلٍ اسْتَنْجَزَ مِنَ اللَّهِ سُبْحَانَهُ وَ تَعَالَى
الْعِدَّةَ فَأَمَرَهُ اللَّهُ تَبَارَكَ وَ تَعَالَى أَنْ يَغْرَسَ مِنْ نَوَى تِلْكَ الْأَشْجَارِ وَ يُعَاوِدَ الصَّبْرَ
وَ الْاجْتِهَادَ وَ يُؤَكِّدَ الْحُجَّةَ عَلَى قَوْمِهِ فَأَخْبَرَ بِذَلِكَ الطَّوَائِفَ الَّتِي آمَنَتْ بِهِ فَارْتَدَّ
مِنْهُمْ ثَلَاثُ مِائَةِ رَجُلٍ وَ قَالُوا لَوْ كَانَ مَا يَدَّعِيهِ نُوحٌ حَقًّا لَمَا وَقَعَ فِي وَعْدِ رَبِّهِ
خُلْفٌ ثُمَّ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَبَارَكَ وَ تَعَالَى لَمْ يَزَلْ يَأْمُرُهُ عِنْدَ كُلِّ مَرَّةٍ أَنْ يَغْرَسَهَا تَارَةً بَعْدَ
أُخْرَى إِلَى أَنْ غَرَسَهَا سَبْعَ مَرَّاتٍ فَمَا زَالَتْ تِلْكَ الطَّوَائِفُ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ تَرْتَدُّ
مِنْهُمْ طَائِفَةٌ إِلَى أَنْ عَادَ إِلَى نِيفٍ وَ سَبْعِينَ رَجُلًا فَأَوْحَى اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ عِنْدَ ذَلِكَ
إِلَيْهِ وَ قَالَ يَا نُوحُ الْآنَ أَسْفَرَ الصُّبْحُ عَنِ اللَّيْلِ لِعَيْنِكَ حِينَ صَرَّحَ الْحَقُّ عَنْ
مَحْضِهِ وَ صَفَا الْأَمْرُ لِلْإِيمَانِ مِنَ الْكُذْرِ بِارْتِدَادِ كُلِّ مَنْ كَانَتْ طِينَتُهُ خَبِيثَةً فَلَوْ
أَنِّي أَهْلَكْتُ الْكُفَّارَ وَ أَبْقَيْتُ مَنْ قَدْ ارْتَدَّ مِنَ الطَّوَائِفِ الَّتِي كَانَتْ آمَنَتْ بِكَ لَمَا
كُنْتُ صَدَقْتُ وَعْدِي السَّابِقَ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ الَّذِينَ أَخْلَصُوا التَّوْحِيدَ مِنْ قَوْمِكَ وَ
اعْتَصَمُوا بِحَبْلِ نُبُوتِكَ بِأَنْ أَسْتَخْلِفَهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَ أُمْكِّنَ لَهُمْ دِينَهُمْ وَ أَبْدِلَ

خَوْفَهُمْ بِالْأَمْنِ لِكَيْ تَخْلُصَ الْعِبَادَةُ لِي بِذَهَابِ الشَّكِّ مِنْ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَ كَيْفَ يَكُونُ
الِإِسْتِخْلَافُ وَ التَّمْكِينُ وَ بَدَلَ الْخَوْفِ بِالْأَمْنِ مِنِّي لَهُمْ مَعَ مَا كُنْتُ أَعْلَمُ مِنْ
ضَعْفِ يَقِينِ الَّذِينَ ارْتَدُّوا وَ خُبْتُ طِينَتَهُمْ وَ سُوءِ سَرَائِرِهِمُ الَّتِي كَانَتْ نَتَائِجُ
النِّفَاقِ وَ سُنُوحِ الضَّلَاةِ فَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ تَسَنَّمُوا مِنِّي مِنَ الْمُلْكِ الَّذِي أُوتِيَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
وَقَتِ الْإِسْتِخْلَافِ إِذَا أَهْلَكْتُ أَعْدَاءَهُمْ لَنَشَقُّوا رَوَائِحَ صِفَاتِهِ وَ لَأَسْتَحْكَمْتُ سَرَائِرُ
نِفَاقِهِمْ وَ تَأَبَّدَ حِبَالُ ضَلَالَةِ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَ كَاشَفُوا إِخْوَانَهُمْ بِالْعَدَاوَةِ وَ حَارَبُوهُمْ عَلَى
طَلَبِ الرَّيَاسَةِ وَ التَّفَرُّدِ بِالْأَمْرِ وَ النَّهْيِ وَ كَيْفَ يَكُونُ التَّمْكِينُ فِي الدِّينِ وَ انْتِشَارُ
الْأَمْرِ فِي الْمُؤْمِنِينَ مَعَ إِثَارَةِ الْفِتَنِ وَ إِيقَاعِ الْحُرُوبِ كَلَّا فَاصْنَعِ الْفُلْكَ بِأَعْيُنِنَا وَ
وَحِينَا. قَالَ الصَّادِقُ وَ كَذَلِكَ الْقَائِمُ تَمْتُدُّ أَيَّامَ غَيْبَتِهِ لِيُصَرِّحَ الْحَقُّ عَنْ مُحْضِهِ وَ
يَصْفُوَ الْإِيمَانُ مِنَ الْكَدْرِ بَارْتِدَادِ كُلِّ مَنْ كَانَتْ طِينَتُهُ خَبِيثَةً مِنَ الشَّيْعَةِ الَّذِينَ
يُخْشَى عَلَيْهِمُ النِّفَاقُ إِذَا أَحْسَوْا بِالِإِسْتِخْلَافِ وَ التَّمْكِينِ وَ الْأَمْنِ الْمُنْتَشِرِ فِي عَهْدِ
الْقَائِمِ. قَالَ الْمُفَضَّلُ: فَقُلْتُ يَا ابْنَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ النَّوَاصِبَ تَزْعُمُ أَنَّ هَذِهِ الْآيَةَ
نَزَلَتْ فِي أَبِي بَكْرٍ وَ عُمَرَ وَ عُثْمَانَ وَ عَلِيٍّ؟ قَالَ لَا يَهْدِي اللَّهُ قُلُوبَ النَّاصِبَةِ مَتَى
كَانَ الدِّينُ الَّذِي ارْتَضَاهُ اللَّهُ وَ رَسُولُهُ مُتَمَكِّنًا بِانْتِشَارِ الْأَمْنِ فِي الْأُمَّةِ وَ ذَهَابِ
الْخَوْفِ مِنْ قُلُوبِهَا وَ ارْتِفَاعِ الشَّكِّ مِنْ صُدُورِهَا فِي عَهْدِ أَحَدٍ مِنْ هَؤُلَاءِ وَ فِي
عَهْدِ عَلِيٍّ مَعَ ارْتِدَادِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَ الْفِتَنِ الَّتِي كَانَتْ تَثُورُ فِي أَيَّامِهِمْ وَ الْحُرُوبِ
الَّتِي كَانَتْ تَنْشَبُ بَيْنَ الْكُفَّارِ وَ بَيْنَهُمْ. ثُمَّ تَلَا الصَّادِقُ حَتَّى إِذَا اسْتَيْسَسَ الرُّسُلُ وَ
ظَنُّوا أَنَّهُمْ قَدْ كُذِّبُوا جَاءَهُمْ نَصْرُنَا. وَ أَمَّا الْعَبْدُ الصَّالِحُ الْخَضِرُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ تَبَارَكَ وَ
تَعَالَى مَا طَوَّلَ عُمُرَهُ لِنُبُوءَةِ قَدَرِهَا لَهُ وَ لَا لِكِتَابِ يُنْزَلُهُ عَلَيْهِ وَ لَا لِشَرِيعَةٍ يَنْسَخُ بِهَا
شَرِيعَةً مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَهَا مِنَ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَ لَا لِإِمَامَةٍ يُلْزَمُ عِبَادَةُ الْإِقْتِدَاءِ بِهَا وَ لَا لِطَاعَةٍ
يَفْرِضُهَا لَهُ بَلَى إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَبَارَكَ وَ تَعَالَى لَمَّا كَانَ فِي سَابِقِ عِلْمِهِ أَنْ يَقْدَرَ مِنْ عُمَرِ
الْقَائِمِ فِي أَيَّامِ غَيْبَتِهِ مَا يَقْدَرُ وَ عِلْمُ مَا يَكُونُ مِنْ أَنْكَارِ عِبَادِهِ بِمَقْدَارِ ذَلِكَ الْعُمَرِ
فِي الطُّوْلِ طَوَّلَ عُمَرَ الْعَبْدِ الصَّالِحِ مِنْ غَيْرِ سَبَبٍ أَوْجَبَ ذَلِكَ إِلَّا لِعِلَّةِ الْإِسْتِدْلَالِ
بِهِ عَلَى عُمَرِ الْقَائِمِ وَ لِيَقْطَعَ بِذَلِكَ حُجَّةَ الْمُعَانِدِينَ لِئَلَّا يَكُونَ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَى اللَّهِ

حُجَّةٌ

Sudair al-Sairafi says: "I along with al-Mufaddal b. 'Umar, Abu BaSir, Aban b. Taghlib entered upon our master Abu 'Abdillah Ja'far b. Muhammad (as). We saw him sitting on bare earth with a Khaibari woolen cloak that was ringed at the neck, did not have any pockets and had short sleeves.

He was crying like a deeply afflicted and bereaved mother of a child from the depths of a heart that was

full of mourning. Grief had appeared in the sides of his face, the change had spread on to both of his cheeks, and tears were rolling on the sides of his visage, as he was saying: 'My master, your occultation has taken away my night's sleep it has narrowed my bed for me, and has snatched away the solace from my heart.

My master, your occultation has turned my tragedies into the atrocities of eternity. The loss of one after the other perishes a crowd and a multitude.

No more I feel the tear that drops from my eye, and the moan that faintly leaves my chest from the places of tragedies and past calamities except that it exemplifies before my eye the greatest and cruelest of catastrophes, the most dismal and disdainful mishaps, mixed with your wrath, and calamities coupled with your anger.'"

Sudair says: "Our hearts and minds were overwhelmed by that terrifying scene and mortifying view. We thought that it is the sign of a dreadful shattering or times have brought him a calamity.

We said: 'May Allah, O' son of the best of the creation, never bring tears into your eyes. For what incidents are your eyes pouring and your tears raining and what situation has led you to this mourning?'

Sudair says, as-Sadiq (as) took a deep sigh that his chest expanded and his fright enhanced, and he said: 'O' you, I looked at the Book of al-Jafr this morning, and that is the book that encompasses the knowledge of deaths, trials and tribulations and the knowledge of all that has been and all that will be until the Day of Judgment, which Allah, glory to His name, has exclusively imparted to Muhammad and the Imams after him, peace be unto him and them.

I viewed therein the birth of our Qa'im (ajtf) and his disappearance and its protraction and the length of his lifespan and the trials of the believers through him after him in that period and the generation of doubts in their hearts from the length of his disappearance and the apostasy of most of them from their religion and their removing the cord of Islam from their necks.

About which Allah, glory to His name, has said: "We have fastened to everyman's neck his fateful record' which is the wilayah. So emotions overpowered me and grieves overwhelmed me.'

We said: "O' son of the Messenger of Allah, dignify us and bestow honor upon us by sharing some of what you know from the knowledge.'

He said: "Allah, the Exalted, has consigned three qualities in the Qa'im (ajtf) of ours, which He had consigned to three of the apostles. He foreordained his birth like the birth of Moses, his disappearance like the disappearance of Jesus and his protraction like the protraction of Noah. Moreover, He made the lifespan of His virtuous servant al-Khidhr a proof of his lifespan.'

I said: "remove the curtains for us, O' son of the Messenger of Allah from the faces of these concepts.'

He said: "As for the birth of Moses: When the Pharaoh discerned that the demise of his kingdom is in his hands, he ordered the soothsayers be called, who foretold him about his lineage and that he will be from the Children of Israel. Pharaoh did not cease to have his men rip open the abdomens of the pregnant women of the Children of Israel, until he killed in the pursuit of Moses twenty and some odd thousand babies.

He was unable to murder Moses, for Allah, the Exalted, protected him. Likewise, when the Umayyad and the 'Abbasids discovered that the demise of their kingdom and that of their kings and tyrants will be at the hands of the Qa'im (ajtf) from us.

They showed enmity towards us and took their swords out for the murder of the House of the Messenger of Allah (as) and to cut off his progeny in order to make certain they have killed the Qa'im (ajtf). However, Allah dislikes not revealing His Command for one of the oppressors until His light is full, even if the pagans may dislike this.

As for the disappearance of Jesus: The Jews and the Christians formed unanimity that he has been killed whereas Allah belied them in His verse:

"They did not kill, nor crucify him, but rather, it was made dubious for them."

Likewise is the disappearance of the Qa'im (ajtf) since one congregation denies it for its length ranging from one misguided person who says: "He was never born", to another who says: "He was born and he died", to another who rejects faith by saying that our eleventh was barren, to another who deviates by saying: "This will increase to thirteen and upwards", and another who sins against God, the Exalted, by saying: "The spirit of the Qa'im speaks through the body of someone else."

As for the protraction of Noah: When he prayed for the descent of punishment against his people from the heavens, Allah, the Exalted, sent Gabriel, the Trusted Spirit, with seven kernels, and said: "O' Apostle of Allah, Allah, the Exalted, says to you: "They are my creation and my servants.

I will not perish them with a lightening from my thunderbolts until the call has been stressed upon and the proof has become binding.

Retain your hard labor in making the call to your people, for I will reward you for that. Plant these kernels, because your relief and liberation will be at its plantation, outgrowth, and fruition when it reaches fruition. Give this glad tiding to your believing followers.'

When the trees grew and thrived and their trunks and branches developed and spread out and their fruits grew big, he asked Allah, the Exalted, for the fulfillment of the promise. Allah, the Exalted, ordered him to plant the seeds of those trees and retain patience and hard work and make the call to his people.

He informed the nations that believed in him; three hundred men of them turned away from him and said: "If what Noah is claiming were true, the promise of his Lord would not have been violated.' Then

Allah, the Exalted, continued to order him every time to plant the seeds until they had been planted seven times.

Nations of believers continued to lose congregations until they were left only seventy and some odd men. At that time, did Allah, the Exalted, sent a message to him and said: "O' Noah, now the dawn on your eyes has broken the night as the truth has manifested with clarity and the order of belief has become pure from impurity by the apostasy of everyone who had a wicked disposition.

If I had destroyed the disbelievers and kept those who have apostatized from amongst the believers in you, I had not fulfilled my early promise to the believers from your people who were sincere in their belief in Me and had adhered to the rope of your Prophet hood that I would make them heirs in earth and empower for them their religion and replace their fear with security, so that worship be pure for me by the departure of doubts from their hearts.

How could I provide heirship and empowerment and replacement of fear with security while I know the weakness of certainty of the people who apostatized and their wicked dispositions and their evil insides, which were the outcomes of hypocrisy and the initiation of misguidance?

If they had procured from Me the kingdom that will be given to the believers at the time of heir ship when I will have killed their enemies, they would have sniffed the smells of its attractions, and it would have strengthened the inner secrets of their hypocrisy, and eternalized the strings of misguidance in their hearts, and they would have faced their brothers with enmity and would have battled them in pursuit of chieftdom and the distinction of commanding and forbidding.

And how can the religion's empowerment and the Command's spread amongst the believers coexist with rise of mischief and occurrence of wars? Never. Build the ark under our eyes and as We reveal."

AS-Sadiq (as) said: "Likewise is the Qa'im (ajtf). The days of his occultation will be lengthy so truth may become clear and belief may become pure from impurity by the apostasy of everyone from the Shi'a with a wicked disposition, who are feared they are hypocrites when they expect heir ship and empowerment and a vast security in the reign of the Qa'im (ajtf).'

al-Mufasssal says, I asked: "O' son of the Messenger of Allah, the nawasib believe this verse has been revealed about Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthman and 'Ali (as)!"

He said: "May Allah not guide the hearts of the nawasib. When was the religion which Allah and His Messenger pleased with empowered through spread of security in the Ummah and departure of fear from their hearts and doubts from breasts during the reign of anyone of them? In the reign of 'Ali (as) especially with the apostasy of Muslims and mischief which were occurring in their days and the wars that were breaking out between the disbelievers and between themselves.'

Then as-Sadiq (as) recited this verse:

“Until, when the apostles despaired and deemed they were counted liars, our succor came to him”

As for the virtuous servant of Allah, al-Khidr: Allah, the Exalted, did not lengthen his lifespan for the sake of an apostleship ordained to him, nor for a book sent to him, nor for a code of law replacing the previous codes from other messengers before him, nor for an Imamate obliging His servants to follow him, nor any obedience mandated with respect to him.

Instead, since Allah, the Exalted, knew how lengthy He would make the life of the Qa'im (ajtf) in the days of his disappearance and He knew the rejection of His servants with respect to the length of that life, He lengthened the lifespan of the Virtuous Servant for no other reason but to argue on its basis for the lifespan of the Qa'im (ajtf) and so that the argument of the adversaries may cease and people may not have any proofs against Allah.”³ and 4

1. Biharul Anwar, vol. 44, pg. 278, sec. 34, no. 3
2. al-Ghaybah of al-Nu'mani, pg. 152; Kamal ad-Din wa Tamam an-Ni'mah, vol. 2, pg. 347, sec. 23, no. 35
3. Kamal ad-Din wa Tamam an-Ni'mah, vol. 2, pg. 352, sec. 33, no. 50; Biharul Anwar, vol. 51, pg. 219, no. 9
4. The translation of this tradition has been taken from the English translation of Biharul Anwar, vol. 51, published by Ansariyan Publications and translated by Hasan Allahyari.

The believers should make others cry due to the separation with the Imam or because of the difficulties which the Imam and his pure fore-fathers had to endure of course, this should be done in accordance with ones' ability.

It must be noted that this responsibility must only be carried out through the means permitted by the faith. By this we mean that one must enact this responsibility through recalling the authentic traditions which recount the trials and tribulations which the Ahlul Bayt (as) went through.

Thus, a believer must not make others cry by lying or changing the history of what the Infallibles went through as it is not permitted to make up historical narrations simply to make people cry as this is not what Allah ﷻ and the pure and infallible family of the Prophet want from us.

Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) has said:

وَمَنْ بَكَى أَوْ أَبْكَى وَاحِدًا فَلَهُ الْجَنَّةُ وَمَنْ تَبَاكَى فَلَهُ الْجَنَّةُ

“A person who cries or makes one other person cry will be granted Paradise and even a person who pretends to cry (if he cannot cry) will also be granted Paradise.”¹

1. al-Luhuf, pg. 11; Biharul Anwar, vol. 44, pg. 288, sec. 34, no. 27

Another responsibility of the believers is to recite Du'a al-Nudbah¹ which has been taught to us by Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as). This supplication can be recited at any time, however we are told that it is highly recommended to be recited on the four days of 'Eid, namely: the day of Jumu'ah (Friday); 'Eid al-Fitr; 'Eid al-Qurban and 'Eid al-Ghadir.

According to the opinion of some of our 'Ulama², it should also be recited on Thursday night which is another very blessed time. After reciting this supplication, one should also perform a two Rak'at Salat of Ziyarat to the Imam.

1. Biharul Anwar, vol. 102, pg. 111, sec. 7, no. 2; MiSbah of al-Kaf'ami, pg. 550.

2. Muhaddith Nuri (related from the book Mizar Qadim)

Another responsibility is to remember Imam al-'Asr (ajtf) at all times and places as much as possible, especially during the times of the year related to the Imam such as every Friday; the 15th of Sha'ban, the Nights of Qadr (in the Month of Ramaḡhan) and after each of the daily prayers.

We must always be in a state of remembering the Imam and must always keep him in our hearts. If it is possible to remember him with the tongue (openly and verbally), then this must be done, otherwise if it is only possible to remember him in the heart (silently), then one must act in this way, and if it is only possible to remember him in the mind, then this is how he must be remembered. The point is that we should never be negligent of him.

When the heart of a true believer is taken over by the remembrance of Imam al-Mahdi (ajtf), then his entire presence goes into a state of his remembrance and this is the best state we can find ourselves in.

In order for a believer to be able to always remember the Imam, one need to be vigilant¹ and constantly protect his heart and keep away from everything other than the Imam.

The greater in frequency of the verbal remembrance of the Imam, and the purer the intention, the more of an effect this will have on a person. This will also make the remembrance of the Imam stronger in our heart.

In certain instances, the remembrance of the Imam can actually be obligatory as those who have a deep spiritual insight into this issue will attest to the remembrance of the Imam in any time and in all forms is equivalent to remembering and mentioning Allah, and in a tradition from Imam Muhammad b. 'Ali al-Baqir (as) we read:

إِنَّ ذِكْرَنَا مِنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ

“Surely our remembrance is from the remembrance of Allah.”²

Here, we refer to some of the specific times and places which we have been highly recommended to remember Imam al-Mahdi (ajtf):

The night and day of the 15th of Sha’ban.

The nights of Qadr (in the Month of Ramaḥan)

The night and day of ‘Ashura (the 10th of Muharram)

The night and day of Jumu’ah (Friday)

The Day of Nuruz (first day of spring)

The afternoon of Monday and Thursday since it is these two days when all of our actions (good and bad) are presented to the Imam

Before going to sleep

The last one-third of the night when even the Imam is busy in Salatut Tahajjud (Salatul Lail)

Whenever one is reciting Du’a

Anytime when a person is crying and asking Allah ﷻ for his needs³

The initial rising of the sun (Fajr time)

After Salatut Fajr

The beginning of the afternoon (Zuhr)

After Salatut Zuhr

After Salatut ‘Asr

At sunset

The Day of ‘Arafah (9th of Dhul Hijjah)

1. The Days of ‘Eid such as ‘Eidul Ghadir, ‘Eidul Fitr and ‘Eidul Qurban, the birth anniversaries of the Infallibles ﷺ and their death anniversaries.

2 .As for the places which are specifically related to the Imam and should be shown veneration, they include:

Masjid al-Haram

Masjid as-Sahlah

Masjid al-Kufah

Masjid Jamkaran

The cellar in Samarra where his occultation began

Masjid Zaid

Masjid Sa’Sa’ah

The Plains of ‘Arafat⁴

The burial sites of all of the Infallibles (pubth), especially Karbala.

The gatherings and programs in which Allah is remembered and in which the greatness, traits and trials and tribulations of the Ahlul Bayt (as) are recalled.

Indeed, one of the responsibilities of the true followers is to remember Imam al-Zaman (ajtf) in these times and places by visiting them and holding them in great esteem and by observing the etiquette and performing the acts which are related to each of these areas.

If we truly wish to remember the Imam in these places then we must see what his wish and desire is for us to perform. Through this, we will be able to perform the deeds which will earn his pleasure and happiness.

Remembering the Imam performing his visitation; sending greetings and prayers to him praying for him and calling upon Allah for him dedicating the reward of righteous acts such as the Salat and also the performance of certain other acts by means of proxy for him within the acts of worship and servitude to Allah, are some of the ways in which this responsibility towards the Imam can be carried out.

1. Refer to responsibility Fifty-Six for more information on this issue.
2. al-Kafi, vol. 2, pg. 496, no. 2
3. From some of the narrations we can deduce that the Imam does not sleep and spends his whole night in the worship and obedience of Allah ﷻ just as his noble fore-fathers before him used to do and it may be for this reason that when the traditions speak about the colour of his complexion as being a light yellow/brown colour, it is due to the fact that the Imam spends this entire night in worship and prayer to Allah ﷻ.
4. Masjidul Haram is in Makkah and includes the Ka'bah, Maqam of Ibrahim, and the well of Zamzam; Masjid as-Sahlah is one of the largest Masajid and is located in Kufah; Masjid al-Kufah is the most sacred masjid in the city of Kufah and is also one of the oldest Masajid after Masjidul Haram and was built by Prophet Adam ﷺ; Masjid Zaid b. Sawhan and the Masjid of Sa'Sa'ah b. SawSan are also two important Masajid in Kufah; Masjid Jamkaran is one of the Masajid of the Shi'a in Iran which is approximately eight kilometres south-east of the city of Qum; the Plains of 'Arafat are approximately twenty-one kilometres from the city of Makkah just around the mountain known as the Mountain of Rahmah (Jabal al-Rahmah) and is one of the spots in which those performing the Hajj visit during the days of the pilgrimage and is one of the pillars of the hajj rites.

A true believer must always remember the Imam in all acts of worship whether obligatory or recommended even in the Salat. One must be aware that we are performing the Salat in the presence of Imam al-Zaman (ajtf) and we must realize that the Imam is watching us.

When a true believer says:

إِهْدِنَا صِرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمِ. صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ... ؟

“Keep us on the straight path, the path of those whom You have blessed” 1

One must remember that the Imam is the Siratul Mustaqim (the Straight Path) and Allah completed and perfected His bounties and favours upon him and his forefathers.

When one recites the Tashahhud and says:

اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلٰى مُحَمَّدٍ وَّآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ

“O’Allah! Send your prayers upon Muhammad and the family of Muhammad” then at this time too, one must remember the Imam since he is the most perfect manifestation of the family of Muhammad!

When a believer recites the Salam in the Salat and says:

اَلْسَّلَامُ عَلَيْنَا وَ عَلٰى عِبَادِ اللّٰهِ الصّٰلِحِيْنَ

“Peace be upon us and upon the righteous servants of Allah” or one says:

اَلْسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَ رَحْمَةُ اللّٰهِ وَ بَرَكَاتُهُ

“Peace be upon all of you and may the mercy and blessings of Allah be upon you as well” then one must also remember the Imam and the righteous servants of Allah and realize that this line is actually being spoken to Imam al-Mahdi (ajtf).

Even during the Ruku’, Sujud, Qunut one must remember the Imam in short, one must always be thinking about him.

This great personality must always be in our minds and the focus of our intentions, and when we send prayers upon him and his noble family we must say:

اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلٰى مُحَمَّدٍ وَّآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ

“O’Allah! Send your prayers upon Muhammad and the family of Muhammad.”

Another responsibility is to supplicate to Allah and thank Him for placing us amongst the lovers, friends, and true Shi'a of the Imam both in this world and the next.

As we know, the only way true success can be achieved in either of the two worlds is through friendship and love for the Imam and to be recognized as his Shi'a.

In this regards, there are many supplications which can be recited, including Du'a al-'Ahd (The Supplication of the Pact)¹ which is as follows:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

اَللّٰهُمَّ رَبَّ النُّوْرِ الْعَظِيْمِ وَ رَبَّ الْكُرْسِيِّ الرَّفِيْعِ وَ رَبَّ الْبَحْرِ الْمَسْجُوْرِ وَ مُنْزِلَ
التَّوْرَةِ وَ الْاِنْجِيْلِ وَ الزَّبُوْرِ وَ رَبَّ الظِّلِّ وَ الْحَرُوْرِ وَ مُنْزِلَ الْقُرْاْنِ الْعَظِيْمِ وَ رَبَّ
الْمَلٰئِكَةِ الْمُقَرَّبِيْنَ وَ الْاَنْبِيَاِ وَ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ

“O’Allah! Lord of the Great Light, Lord of the Exalted Throne, Lord of the tempestuous sea, the Revealer of the Taurat, the Injil and the Zabur; Lord of the shade and the heat; the Revealer of the great Qur`an, Lord of the Honoured Angels, the Prophets and the Messengers.

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَسْئَلُكَ بِوَجْهِكَ الْكَرِيْمِ وَ بِنُوْرِ وَجْهِكَ الْمُنِيْرِ وَ مُلْكِكَ الْقَدِيْمِ يَا حَيُّ يَا
قَيُّوْمُ اَسْئَلُكَ بِاسْمِكَ الَّذِي اَشْرَقَتْ بِهِ السَّمٰوٰتُ وَ الْاَرْضُوْنَ وَ بِاسْمِكَ الَّذِي
يَصْلُحُ بِهِ الْاَوَّلُوْنَ وَ الْاٰخِرُوْنَ يَا حَيُّ قَبْلَ كُلِّ حَيٍّ وَ يَا حَيًّا بَعْدَ كُلِّ حَيٍّ وَ يَا حَيًّا
حِيْنَ لَا حَيٍّ يَا مُحْيِي الْمَوْتَى وَ مُمِيْتَ الْاَحْيَاءِ يَا حَيُّ لَا اِلَهَ اِلَّا اَنْتَ

O’ Allah I ask you by your benevolent countenance and by the illumination of your brilliance and your eternal kingdom. O’ the Ever-Living, O’ the Self Subsisting! I ask you through your Name by which the heavens and the earth are illuminated, and through your Name by which the predecessors and the successors are reformed.

O’ the Ever-Living before any living thing existed, and the Ever-Living even after all life will cease. O’ Ever-Living even when there was no life at all, O’ One Who gives life to the dead and brings death to the living, O’ Ever-Living, there is none worthy of worship except you.

اَللّٰهُمَّ بَلِّغْ مَوْلَانَا الْاِمَامَ الْهَادِيَ الْمَهْدِيَّ الْقَائِمَ بِاَمْرِكَ صَلَوَاتُ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْهِ وَ عَلَى
اَبَائِهِ الطّٰهَرِيْنَ عَنْ جَمِيْعِ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ وَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ فِيْ مَشَارِقِ الْاَرْضِ وَ مَغَارِبِهَا
سَهْلِهَا وَ جَبَلِهَا وَ بَرِّهَا وَ بَحْرِهَا وَ عَنِّيْ وَ عَنِ الْوَالِدِيْنَ مِنَ الصَّلَوَاتِ زِنَةَ عَرْشِ
اللّٰهِ وَ مِدَادَ كَلِمَاتِهِ وَ مَا اَحْصَاهُ عِلْمُهُ وَ اَحَاطَ بِهِ كِتَابُهُ

O' Allah, convey to our Master, the Imam, the guide, the guided, the establisher of Your authority, may Your blessings be on him and his pure forefathers, from all the believing men and women, in the east and the west of the world, in the plains and on the mountains, on the lands and in the sea, and from me and my parents, the blessings that are equal in weight to the Throne of Allah, the ink of His words and such as only encompassed by His knowledge and covered by His book.

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اُجَدِّدُ لَهُ فِيْ صَبِيْحَةِ يَوْمِيْ هَذَا وَ مَا عِشْتُ مِنْ اَيَّامِيْ عَهْدًا وَ عَقْدًا وَ
بَيْعَةً لَهُ فِيْ عُنُقِيْ لَا اُحُولُ عَنْهَا وَ لَا اَزُولُ اَبَدًا

O' Allah, I renew on the dawn of this day and all the remaining days of my life, my pledge, covenant and allegiance to him, which I shall neither contravene, nor neglect ever.

اَللّٰهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِيْ مِنْ اَنْصَارِهِ وَ اَعْوَانِهِ وَ الذّٰبِبِيْنَ عَنْهُ وَ الْمُسَارِعِيْنَ اِلَيْهِ فِيْ قَضَاءِ
حَوَائِجِهِ وَ الْمُتَمَتِّلِيْنَ لِاَوْامِرِهِ وَ الْمُحَامِيْنَ عَنْهُ وَ السَّابِقِيْنَ اِلَى اِرَادَتِهِ وَ
الْمُسْتَشْهَدِيْنَ بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ

O' Allah include me among his helpers, supporters, protectors, those fulfilling his commands, his defenders, the fore-runners to carry out his wishes and those to be martyred in his presence.

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنْ حَالَ بَيْنِيْ وَ بَيْنَهُ الْمَوْتُ الَّذِيْ جَعَلْتَهُ عَلَى عِبَادِكَ حَتْمًا مَّقْضِيًّا
فَاُخْرِجْنِيْ مِنْ قَبْرِيْ مُؤْتَزِّرًا كَفْنِيْ، شَاهِرًا سَيْفِيْ، مُجَرِّدًا قَنَاتِيْ، مُلَبِّيًا دَعْوَةَ
الدَّاعِي فِي الْحَاضِرِ وَ الْبَادِي

O' Allah should death come between me and his reappearance the death which You have made inevitable on your servants then bring me out from my grave covered in my shroud, my sword unsheathed, my spear poised, responding to the call of the caller in the cities and the deserts.

اَللّٰهُمَّ اَرِنِي الطَّلَعَ الرَّشِيْدَةَ وَ الْغُرَّةَ الْحَمِيْدَةَ وَ الْكُلَّ نَاظِرِيْ بِنَظْرَةٍ مِّنِّيْ اِلَيْهِ وَ
عَجِّلْ فَرَجَهُ وَ سَهِّلْ مَخْرَجَهُ وَ اَوْسِعْ مَنَاجِزَهُ وَ اسْلُكْ بِيْ مَحَجَّتَهُ وَ اَنْفِذْ اَمْرَهُ
وَ اشْدُدْ اَزْرَهُ

O' Allah grace me with a sight of the appearance of one rightly guided and the finest of the praise-
worthy, and cool my eyes with a glance towards him, and hasten his return; ease his re-appearance;
widen his course; lead me onto his path; cause his orders to be executed, and strengthen his back.

وَ اَعْمُرِ اللّٰهُمَّ بِهٖ بِلَادَكَ وَ اَحْيِ بِهٖ عِبَادَكَ فَاِنَّكَ قُلْتَ وَ قَوْلُكَ الْحَقُّ ۚ ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ
فِي الْبَرِّ وَ الْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ اَيْدِي النَّاسِ ۚ

***O' Allah populate your cities through him and revive your servants by him, for indeed you have
said and your words are true: "Corruption has appeared in land and sea on account of what the
hands of the people have wrought." (Al-Qur'an 30:41)***

فَاَظْهَرِ اللّٰهُمَّ لَنَا وَلِيِّكَ وَابْنَ بِنْتِ نَبِيِّكَ الْمُسَمَّى بِاسْمِ رَسُوْلِكَ حَتَّى لَا يَظْفَرَ بِشَيْءٍ
مِّنَ الْبَاطِلِ اِلَّا مَزَقَهُ وَ يُحِقَّ الْحَقَّ وَ يُحَقِّقَهُ

O' Allah make appear for us your friend and the son of the daughter of your Prophet who bears the
name of Your Messenger, until nothing false remains but that he destroys all of it and manifests the truth
fully and implements it.

وَاجْعَلْهُ اللّٰهُمَّ مَفْزَعًا لِّمَظْلُوْمٍ عِبَادِكَ وَ نَاصِرًا لِّمَنْ لَا يَجِدُ لَهُ نَاصِرًا غَيْرَكَ وَ
مُجَدِّدًا لِّمَا عَطِلَ مِنْ اَحْكَامِ كِتَابِكَ وَ مُشِيْدًا لِّمَا وَرَدَ مِنْ اَعْلَامِ دِيْنِكَ وَ سُنَنِ
نَبِيِّكَ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَ اٰلِهِ

O' Allah! Make him a refuge for your oppressed servants; a helper for him who has no other helper
besides you, a reviver of the commandments of your book which have been neglected; the strengthener
of the teachings of your religion, and the traditions of Your Prophet. May Allah's blessing be upon him
and his progeny.

وَاجْعَلْهُ اللَّهُمَّ مِمَّنْ حَصَّنْتَهُ مِنْ بَأْسِ الْمُعْتَدِينَ

O' Allah place him among those whom you have protected from the evil of the transgressors.

اللَّهُمَّ وَ سِرِّ نَبِيَّكَ مُحَمَّدًا صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَ آلِهِ بِرُؤْيَيْتِهِ وَ مَنْ تَبِعَهُ عَلَى دَعْوَتِهِ
وَ أَرْحَمِ اسْتِكَانَتَنَا بَعْدَهُ

O' Allah please Your Prophet Muhammad, may the blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny, and those who accept the invitation of the Imam and have mercy on our state of abasement after his appearance.

اللَّهُمَّ اكْشِفْ هَذِهِ الْغُمَّةَ عَنْ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ بِحُضُورِهِ وَ عَجِّلْ لَنَا ظُهُورَهُ إِنَّهُمْ يَرَوْنَهُ
بَعِيداً وَ نَرَاهُ قَرِيباً بِرَحْمَتِكَ يَا أَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِينَ

O' Allah remove this grief from this Ummah by his presence and hasten his reappearance for “verily they (the hypocrites) regard it to be distant and we see it very near” (al-Qur`an 70:6-7) by Your mercy, O' the Most Merciful.”

One should then strike one's right hand on the right thigh three times, and each time recites the following:

أَعَجَلَ الْعَجَلَ يَا مَوْلَايَ يَا صَاحِبَ الزَّمَانِ

“Hasten, Hasten, O' my Master O' Master of the time.”

It has been narrated that after Prophet Ibrahim saw the celestial lights of the fourteen Infallibles, he said to Allah:

إِلَهِي وَ سَيِّدِي أَرَى عِدَّةَ أَنْوَارٍ حَوْلَهُمْ لَا يُحْصِي عِدَّتَهُمْ إِلَّا أَنْتَ. قَالَ يَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ
هَؤُلَاءِ شِيعَتُهُمْ وَ مُحِبُّوهُمْ. قَالَ إِلَهِي وَ بِمَا يُعْرِفُونَ شِيعَتَهُمْ وَ مُحِبُّوهُمْ؟ قَالَ
بِصَلَاةِ الْإِحْدَى وَ الْخَمْسِينَ وَ الْجَهْرِ بِبِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ وَ الْقُنُوتِ قَبْلَ

الرُّكُوعَ وَ سَجْدَةَ الشُّكْرِ وَ التَّخَتُّمَ بِالْيَمِينِ. قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ: اَللّٰهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِيْ مِنْ شَيْعَتِهِمْ
وَ مُحِبِّيهِمْ. قَالَ قَدْ جَعَلْتُكَ فَاَنْزَلَ اللّٰهُ فِيْهِ: ﴿۱﴾ وَ اِنْ مِنْ شَيْعَتِهِ لِإِبْرَاهِيمَ اِذَا جَاءَ
رَبَّهُ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيْمٍ ﴿۲﴾

“O’ my Lord and my Master! I see lights encircling around these (fourteen celestial lights) of which none know the number except You!” Allah replied: “O’ Ibrahim! These are their Shi’a and their lovers (of the Ahlul Bayt).” Ibrahim said: “O’ my Lord! How are their Shi’a and lovers known?”

Allah replied: “Through their fifty-one Rak’at of Salat their pronouncing the phrase ﴿۱﴾ In the Name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful ﴿۲﴾ out loud (in their Salat); their performance of the Qunut before going into the Ruku’, the prostration of thanks and wearing a ring on their right hand.”

Ibrahim then said: “O’ Allah! Please place me among their Shi’a and their lovers (too).” Allah replied to him: “I have placed you among them.” At this point, Allah revealed the following, [And surely from amongst their Shi’a was Ibrahim when he went into the presence of his Lord with a pure and submissive heart (Qalb-e-Saleem).]2

1. This supplication is mentioned in Biharul Anwar, vol. 102, pg. 110, sec. 7. It can also be seen in Mafatih al-Jinan after Du’a al-Nudbah and we have also included it in this responsibility.

2. Biharul Anwar, vol. 36, pg. 213, sec. 40, no. 15

Another responsibility is to help the Imam as in essence, this is equivalent to assisting Allah. The meaning of assisting Imam al-’Asr (ajtf) is that a true believer must accept and follow whatever the Imam himself has put into place and must struggle to bring the wishes of the Imam into being.

Helping the Imam takes on various forms according to the time, place, situation and events that one is surrounded in. However it must be noted that helping the Imam during the period of occultation is different than helping him during his advent.

Helping him during the occultation means that a true believer should spiritually purify himself and observes awareness of Allah (taqwa). He must not abandon dissimulation (taqiyyah) when it is required, and must supplicate on behalf of the Imam and his Shi’a.

During the occultation, a believer must also mention the greatness and qualities of the Imam, and convey the importance of helping the Imam to his friends and Shi’a. One must also write and spread whatever knowledge one has to help keep the religion alive. It goes without saying that these are all to be done according to one’s ability.

As for helping the Imam during his advent, it includes things such as struggling (jihad) on the side of the

Imam; bearing difficulties with patience, and giving up one's life and property for the sake of the Imam.

In order to help Imam al-Zaman (ajtf) during his advent, we must have a strong spiritual heart and be firm in our beliefs entering absolutely no doubts or confusion in regards to him (and things related to him). In this regards, Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) has said:

إِنَّ لَكُمْ ثَوَابَ مَنْ اسْتَشْهَدَ مَعَهُ بِنِيَّاتِكُمْ وَإِنْ مِتُّمْ عَلَى فَرَشِكُمْ

“Indeed for you is a promised reward equivalent to becoming a martyr with him (the Imam) which results from your intention – even if you die on your beds.”¹

In another tradition from Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) it is stated:

إِنِّي لَا أَخْرُجُ نَفْسِي مِنْ شُهَدَاءِ الطُّفُوفِ وَلَا أَعُدُّ ثَوَابِي أَقَلَّ مِنْهُمْ لِأَنَّ مِنْ نِيَّتِي
النُّصْرَةَ لَوْ شَهِدْتُ ذَلِكَ الْيَوْمَ وَكَذَلِكَ شِيعَتُنَا هُمُ الشُّهَدَاءُ وَإِنْ مَاتُوا عَلَى
فَرَشِهِمْ

“I do not think of myself as being out of the ranks of the martyrs of al-Tufuf (Karbala), nor do I count myself as having a lesser reward than them because it is from my intention to help if I had witnessed that day. This is also the case with our Shi'a they too are martyrs even if they die on their beds.”²

1. Mikyal al-Makarim, vol. 2, pg. 229

2. Mikyal al-Makarim, vol. 2, pg. 228

Following the previous two responsibilities, another obligation upon the believers is for them to gather together and agree to help Imam al-Zaman (ajtf).

Indeed, there is a great spiritual effect in gathering together and agreeing (to help the Imam), which is not present when one does this act on his own in private.

In a verse of the Qur'an, we read that:

﴿تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَى﴾

“Help one another towards good deeds and God consciousness.”¹

This verse proves that it is obligatory to gather together and help each other.

In a tradition from the Commander of the Faithful, ‘Ali b. Abi Talib (as) it has been mentioned that:

أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ! لَوْ لَمْ تَتَخَاذَلُوا عَنْ نَصْرِ الْحَقِّ وَلَمْ تَهْنُوا عَنْ تَوْهِينِ الْبَاطِلِ لَمْ
يَطْمَعْ فِيكُمْ مَنْ لَيْسَ مِثْلَكُمْ وَلَمْ يَقْوِ مِنْ قَوِيَّ عَلَيْكُمْ

“O’people! Had you not failed to support the right and undermine the wrong, he who is not from you would not have overcome you and he who is now ruling over you would not have had the opportunity to do so.”²

In addition, it has been stated by Imam al-Mahdi (ajtf) in one of the letters he wrote that:

وَلَوْ أَنَّ أَشْيَاعَنَا وَفَقَهُمُ اللَّهُ لَطَاعَتَهُ عَلَى اجْتِمَاعِ مِنَ الْقُلُوبِ فِي الْوَفَاءِ بِالْعَهْدِ
عَلَيْهِمْ لَمَا تَأَخَّرَ عَنْهُمْ الْيَمْنُ بِلِقَائِنَا

“And if our followers, May Allah make them successful in obeying Him, were united with their hearts in fulfilling the promise that is upon them, there would be no delay for them from the good fortune of meeting us.”³

1. Suratul Ma'idah (5), Verse 2

2. Nahj al-Balagha, sermon 165, pg. 542

3. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 53, pg. 177, sec. 31, no. 8

The true believers must supplicate to Allah that when Imam al-Mahdi (ajtf) makes his advent, He places them among his companions, helpers and those who are his attendants. In addition, this supplication will also petition Allah for the opportunity to witness the Imam's return!

There are various supplications which have been narrated in the books of prayers in regards to this responsibility, such as Du'a al-Nur¹, Du'a al-'Ahd² and others all of which are from the Ahlul Bayt (as).

In Du'a al-'Ahd, we read the following:

وَاجْعَلْنِي مِنْ أَنْصَارِهِ وَأَشْيَاعِهِ وَالدَّابِّينَ عَنْهُ وَاجْعَلْنِي مِنَ الْمُسْتَشْهِدِينَ بَيْنَ

“And place me among his helpers and followers and defenders and among those who (are blessed to) seek martyrdom in his presence.”

Therefore, the believers must pray to Allah that during the occultation, they are given the opportunity to be with the companions and helpers of this great personality.

Just as we yearn to be blessed with this rank during his return, even during his occultation, we should have the same wish.

1. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 102, pg. 111, sec. 7, no. 2; MiSbah of al-Kaf'ami, pg. 550
2. Refer to the footnote in the forty-eighth responsibility.

Another responsibility is to recite Du'a al-Nur¹. This supplication has been narrated from the A`immah of the Ahlul Bayt (as) and is a prayer which is found in many of the reliable books of supplication.

It has been narrated that Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) said: “Any person who makes a promise with Allah with this du'a for forty mornings will be among the helpers of our Qa'im (ajtf).

If that person is to die before the return of the Imam, then Allah the High will bring him forth from his grave (to help the Imam). For every letter of this pact, one thousand good deeds will be written in the person's book of records and one thousand sins will be erased.”²

This supplication has been mentioned in responsibility forty-eight.

1. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 102, pg. 111, sec. 7, no. 2; MiSbah of al-Kaf'ami, pg. 550
2. Ibid.

Another responsibility which the true believers must fulfill is to renew their pledge of allegiance to Imam al-Zaman (ajtf).

According to the narrations, it is best that this act is done after every obligatory Salat or at least once a day and if this is not possible, then at least once a week.

The meaning of pledging allegiance to the Imam is that the person obligates himself to help the Imam. While fulfilling this promise, one must not show any remorse or regret if one needs to help the Imam with his life or wealth.

One of the first times this sort of pledge was taken was during the speech of Ghadir when the Prophet

commanded the entire nation to make a pledge of allegiance to all the infallible A`immah.

This pledge of allegiance is actually one of the necessary acts of true faith and in essence, a true believer will never have faith until he realizes and comprehends this pledge of allegiance and stays firm on it after making it.

The following conditions must be observed in this pledge of allegiance:

1. A person making the allegiance must have the intention in his heart to obey the Imam and must promise that he will help him. In addition, a person must not show remorse if he has to give up his life or wealth to maintain this pact.
2. The pledge of allegiance, intention to help the Imam and initiating this firm covenant must be done verbally.

Of course, when the advent of the Imam takes place and when his government is established, the pledge of allegiance for these two issues will be done physically with the Imam by a shaking of hands.

It should be noted that the realization of this pledge of allegiance in which a person will place his hand in the hand of the person whom he is pledging to is obligatory and this can only take place when the person whom the allegiance is being made to is one of the Infallibles or one of their directly appointed representatives. Thus, it is not permissible to make this kind of pledge to anyone else!

Obviously, during the period of occultation, the fulfillment of this form of allegiance in which a person places his hand in the hand of Imam al-Zaman (ajtf) or his specific representative is not possible since according to the traditions, the Imam is hidden from the view of the people and thus, this form of the responsibility is limited to the time when he makes his advent.

During the period of the occultation, no one has been designated by the Imam to accept the pledge of allegiance, thus this form of allegiance cannot be performed with any person and it is actually forbidden even if the person to whom the pledge is being made is a scholar.

In addition, even if the scholar was a Faqih Jami' al-Shara`it (Wali al-'Amr al-Muslimin), still it is not permissible to make such a pledge of allegiance to him.

Therefore, there is no proof of the permissibility of this form of pledge of allegiance during the time of the occultation. Rather, the traditions have actually forbidden this and we all know that in issues of the religion, such as this pact of allegiance, are all contingent upon what the religious commandments specify and the permissibility of these particular acts rest on the legislation of the Islamic laws.

Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) has said:

يَا مُفَضَّلُ! كُلُّ بَيْعَةٍ قَبْلَ ظُهُورِ الْقَائِمِ فَبَيْعَتُهُ كُفْرٌ وَنِفَاقٌ وَخَدِيعَةٌ لَعَنَ اللَّهُ
الْمُبَايِعَ لَهَا وَالْمُبَايِعَ لَهُ

“O’Mufaddal! Every pledge of allegiance that takes place before the advent of al-Qa`im (ajtf) is disbelief, hypocrisy and deception. May the curse of Allah be upon a person who makes such a pledge of allegiance and the one who accepts this pledge of allegiance?”¹

Without doubt, the meaning of bay’ah in this tradition is the hand to hand bay’ah and not all forms of pledging allegiance since in other traditions, some forms of the bay’ah have not been completely forbidden. Therefore, during the period of the occultation, the bay’ah (pledging loyalty) which is done without giving one’s hand is not a problem and is actually one of the signs of true faith and has been emphasized.

According to the traditions, during the period of the occultation of Imam al-Zaman (ajtf), we are permitted to pledge our allegiance to the general representatives of the Imam. Thus, we can pledge ourselves to a scholar who fulfills the conditions of being followed especially the Wali al-Faqih who is the guardian of the Muslim community.

This bay’ah is done with the thought in mind that paying allegiance to him is due to the fact that he is a scholar who fulfills all of the conditions of being followed, is the Wali al-Faqih and that the pledge of allegiance to him is actually a pledge to Imam al-Zaman (ajtf), and the pledge of allegiance to the Imam is actually the pledge of allegiance to Allah.

There are many ways in which we can make the bay’ah to Imam al-Zaman (ajtf) as have been narrated by the infallible A`immah, one them is Du’a al-’Ahd.²

The scholars³ have stated that these supplications are recommended to be recited every day after Salat al Fajr. Rather, it should be recited after every obligatory Salat, if possible. In addition, due to there being some proof in the traditions, it is recommended that this pledge of allegiance should be repeated every Jumu’ah (Friday).

It has also been recommended rather it is essential that Du’a of ‘Ahd which has been narrated from Imam Muhammad b. ‘Ali al-Baqir (as) should be recited at least once during a person’s lifetime.

Imam Muhammad b. ‘Ali al-Baqir (as) has said: “Whosoever among our friends and followers reads this supplication once in their life, it will be written on the parchment of worship of Allah (that he recited this prayer) and his name will be mentioned in the book of al-Qa`im (may Allah hasten his glorious advent).

Then, when al-Qa`im (ajtf) makes his advent, the name of the person who read this supplication and his father’s name will be announced. In addition, the parchment which contains the names of the worshippers of Allah will be given to him and it will be said that: ‘Take this writing which contains the

transcript of the promise which you made to us in the world.”

Imam Muhammad b. ‘Ali al-Baqir (as) then said: “This is the truth which Allah, the Noble and Grand stated when he said the following:

إِلَّا مَنْ اتَّخَذَ عِنْدَ الرَّحْمَنِ عَهْدًا ۚ

“...except the one who has taken a covenant with the Most Merciful.”⁴

As well, while in a state of ritual purity, the following supplication should be recited:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

اَللّٰهُمَّ يَا اِلَهَ الْاَلِهَةِ يَا وَاحِدُ يَا اَحَدُ يَا اَخِرَ الْاٰخِرِيْنَ يَا قَاهِرَ الْقَاهِرِيْنَ يَا عَلِيُّ يَا عَظِيْمُ اَنْتَ الْعَلِيُّ الْاَعْلٰى عَلَوْتَ فَوْقَ كُلِّ عُلُوٍّ. هٰذَا يَا سَيِّدِيْ عَهْدِيْ وَ اَنْتَ مُنْجِزُ وَعْدِيْ

“O’ Allah: O’ the God of all gods! O’ the One! O’ the One and Only! O’ the Last of the last! O’ the most Omnipotent one over the powerful ones! O’ the High! O’ the All great. You are verily the High, the Most High. You have been High over all zeniths. This is, O’ master, my pledge; and you shall certainly fulfill your promise to me.

فَصَلِّ يَا مَوْلَايَ وَعْدِيْ وَ اَنْجِزْ وَعْدِيْ اَمَنْتُ بِكَ وَ اَسْأَلُكَ بِحِجَابِكَ الْعَرَبِيِّ وَ بِحِجَابِكَ الْعَجَمِيِّ وَ بِحِجَابِكَ الْعِبْرَانِيِّ وَ بِحِجَابِكَ السُّرْيَانِيِّ وَ بِحِجَابِكَ الرُّومِيِّ وَ بِحِجَابِكَ الْهِنْدِيِّ وَ اَثْبِتْ مَعْرِفَتِكَ بِالْعِنَايَةِ الْاُولٰى فَاِنَّكَ اَنْتَ اللّٰهُ لَا تُرَى وَ اَنْتَ بِالْمَنْظَرِ الْاَعْلٰى

So, O’ my Master, (please do) admit my pledge and fulfill your promise to me. I believe in you and I pray to you in the Name of Your ‘Arab Veil, Your non-’Arab Veil, Your Hebrew Veil, Your Syriac Veil, Your Roman Veil, and Your Indian Veil. And I admit my recognition of You on account of the earlier care (of

You over me), for You are verily Allah Who cannot be seen while You are in the most elevated view.

وَأَتَقَرَّبُ إِلَيْكَ بِرَسُولِكَ الْمُنْذِرِ وَبِعَلِيِّ أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ صَلَوَاتُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ الْهَادِي
وَبِالْحَسَنِ السَّيِّدِ وَبِالْحُسَيْنِ الشَّهِيدِ سِبْطِي نَبِيِّكَ وَبِفَاطِمَةَ الْبُتُولِ وَبِعَلِيِّ بْنِ
الْحُسَيْنِ زَيْنِ الْعَابِدِينَ ذِي الثَّنَاتِ وَ مُحَمَّدَ بْنَ عَلِيٍّ الْبَاقِرِ عَنْ عِلْمِكَ وَ بِجَعْفَرِ
بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ الصَّادِقِ الَّذِي صَدَقَ بِمِيثَاقِكَ وَ بِمُوسَى بْنِ جَعْفَرِ
الْحَصُورِ الْقَائِمِ بِعَهْدِكَ وَ بِعَلِيِّ بْنِ مُوسَى الرِّضَا الرَّاضِي بِحُكْمِكَ وَ بِمُحَمَّدِ بْنِ
عَلِيٍّ الْحَبَرِ الْفَاضِلِ الْمُرْتَضَى فِي الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَ بِعَلِيِّ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ الْأَمِينِ الْمُؤْتَمَنِ
هَادِي الْمُسْتَرَشِدِينَ وَ بِالْحَسَنِ بْنِ عَلِيٍّ الطَّاهِرِ الزَّكِيِّ خِزَانَةِ الْوَصِيِّينَ وَ أَتَقَرَّبُ
إِلَيْكَ بِالْإِمَامِ الْقَائِمِ الْعَدْلِ الْمُنْتَظَرِ الْمَهْدِيِّ إِمَامِنَا وَ ابْنِ إِمَامِنَا صَلَوَاتُ اللَّهِ
عَلَيْهِمْ أَجْمَعِينَ

And I seek nearness to You through Your Messenger, the warner; and through ‘Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, the guide, Allah’s blessings be upon him and through al-Hasan, the master, and al-Husayn, the martyr, the two grandsons of Your Prophet, and through Fatimah, the immaculate and through ‘Ali b. al-Husayn the Adornment of the Worshippers and the one with a callus on his forehead (due to incessant worshipping) and through Muhammad b. ‘Ali, who split (the profundities of) Your knowledge.

And through Ja’far b. Muhammad, the truthful who fulfilled his covenant and promise to you and through Musa b. Ja’far, the chaste one who undertook his oath to You and through ‘Ali b. Musa, the one who was pleased with Your judgement and through Muhammad b. ‘Ali, the well-versed and the virtuous who is accepted by the believers and through ‘Ali b. Muhammad, the honest, the trusted, and the guide of those who seek true guidance.

And through al-Hasan b. ‘Ali, the pure, the infallible, and the treasure of the successors. And I seek nearness to You through the Imam (of the age), the director of justice, the awaited, the well-guided, our leader and the son of our leader may Allah’s blessings be upon all of them.

يَا مَنْ جَلَّ فَعْظُهُ وَ هُوَ أَهْلُ ذَلِكَ فَعَفَى وَ رَحِمَ، يَا مَنْ قَدَرَ فَلَطُفَ، أَشْكُو إِلَيْكَ
ضَعْفِي وَ مَا قَصُرَ عَنْهُ عَمَلِي مِنْ تَوْحِيدِكَ وَ كُنْهِ مَعْرِفَتِكَ وَ اتَّوَجَّهُ إِلَيْكَ بِالتَّسْمِيَةِ
الْبَيْضَاءِ وَ بِالْوَحْدَانِيَّةِ الْكُبْرَى الَّتِي قَصُرَ عَنْهَا مَنْ أَدْبَرَ وَ تَوَلَّى وَ آمَنْتُ بِحُجَابِكَ
الْأَعْظَمِ وَ بِكَلِمَاتِكَ التَّامَةِ الْعُلْيَا الَّتِي خَلَقْتَ مِنْهَا دَارَ الْبَلَاءِ وَ أَحَلَلْتَ مَنْ أَحْبَبْتَ
جَنَّةَ الْمَأْوَى آمَنْتُ بِالسَّابِقِينَ وَ الصِّدِّيقِينَ أَصْحَابِ الْيَمِينِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَ

الَّذِينَ خَلَطُوا عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَ آخَرَ سَيِّئًا أَلَّا تُؤَلِّيَنِي غَيْرَهُمْ وَلَا تُفَرِّقَ بَيْنِي وَ بَيْنَهُمْ
 غَدًا إِذَا قَدَّمْتَ الرِّضَا بِفَصْلِ الْقَضَاءِ أَمَنْتُ بِسِرِّهِمْ وَ عَلَانِيَتِهِمْ وَ خَوَاتِيمِ أَعْمَالِهِمْ
 فَإِنَّكَ تَخْتُمُ عَلَيْهَا إِذَا شِئْتَ يَا مَنْ أَتَحَفَّنِي بِالْإِقْرَارِ بِالْوَحْدَانِيَّةِ وَ حَبَانِي بِمَعْرِفَةِ
 الرَّبُّوبِيَّةِ وَ خَلَّصَنِي مِنَ الشَّكِّ وَ الْعَمَى رَضِيتُ بِكَ رَبًّا وَ بِالْأَصْفِيَاءِ حُجَجًا وَ
 بِالْمَحْجُوبِينَ أَنْبِيَاءَ وَ بِالرُّسُلِ أَدِلَاءَ وَ بِالْمُتَّقِينَ أُمَرَاءَ وَ سَامِعًا لَكَ مُطِيعًا

O' He who is Most Elevated and Most Magnificent, and He is deserving of this and has thus pardoned and treated mercifully! O' He Who ordains decrees with compassion: I complain before you about my weakness and about the inadequacy of my actions as regards to my confession of Your Oneness and the essence of my recognition of you.

And I turn my face towards you, (praying to You) by the white nomination and the great monotheism that have not been realized by those who fled and turned away from You. And I believe in your greatest veil and Your perfect, exalted words from which You have created the abode of trial and through which You shall allow him whom You wish to enter the abode of Paradise.

I believe in the “foremost” and the truthful, the companions of the right hand, among the believers and those who have mixed a righteous act with another evil one (for which they sought forgiveness): (I pray to You by all of these) that You do not allow me to follow anyone other than these ones (i.e. the Imams) and that You do not exclude me from their group tomorrow when You will stipulate (Your) pleasure as the criterion of Your judgement.

I believe in their secret and public teachings, and the sealing of their deeds, for you decide the sealing of anyone's deeds if you will. O' You Who have honoured me by the confession of Your Oneness, bestowed upon me with the recognition of Your Lordship, and deprived me of doubt and blind-heartedness: I admit You as my Lord, and admit the Pure Ones as the intermediaries to You, and admit the Veiled Ones as Prophets, and admit the Messengers as guides (to You), and admit the Pious Ones as leaders, and pledge myself as always listening to and obeying You.”

1. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 53, pg. 8, sec. 28, no. 1

2. Refer to responsibility Forty-Eight.

3. Sayyid ibne Tawus, in his book Misbah al-Zair and 'Allamah Majlisi in Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 102, pg. 110 have covered this.

4. Surat Mariam (19), Verse 87

The true believers must supplicate that Allah bestows the wilayah (mastership) of Imam al-Zaman (ajtf) upon them and that they are granted the ability to gain true faith, love and obedience to the Imam and that these characters are increased within them. One must be serious and earnest in this supplication

and must take this as something important.

The happiness of the true believer is contained within the wilayah, faith, love and obedience to the Imam and the more the wilayah is made stronger and increases in the heart, so too the status and rank of a true believer in the presence of Allah will also increase, and thus, closeness to Allah will also increase.

Since the way to achieve this wilayah is only possible through the power of Allah ﷻ and is out of the realm of a person to acquire on his own, the only way to achieve this is to request it from Allah. The attainment of the wilayah and faith (in the Imam) and other things such as these even things such as knowledge and sustenance are all issues which are related to the essence of Allah and are out of the power of people to acquire without the help of Allah.

The true believer needs to be vigilant in regards to the spiritual stations, ranks and closeness to the Imam. One must ensure that nothing is done to damage this spiritual rank that one is not distanced from the Imam through one's action, nor loses the attention and friendship of the Imam.

A believer must be vigilant so that in fulfilling one's responsibilities which are the right of the Imam over him, there is no negligence and that he performs them in the best possible way.

A believer must also be attentive since he is constantly in the presence of Imam al-Zaman (ajtf) and must keep away from anything which would lead the Imam to becoming upset.

In addition, one must ensure that in whatever state he is in, whatever movements he takes, and even his silence are all performed in accordance with and for the intention of earning the love of the Imam.

A Muslim must not fall into negligence for even one instant in regards to earning the pleasure of the Imam which is equal to pleasing Allah. According to the traditions from the Ahlul Bayt (as), the actions of the Shi'a are constantly being presented to Imam al-Zaman (ajtf) with extra emphasis given on the days of Monday, Thursday and Friday when a report of our actions is given to him.

Thus, it is imperative that a true Shi'a remains attentive and vigilant and does not do anything which would result in being embarrassed in the presence of the Imam or would result in the Imam being put into an uncomfortable situation when he sees our deeds.

It has been narrated from one of the infallible A'imma (as) that: "The actions of the Ummah are presented to the Prophet every Tuesday and Thursday and thus, he is constantly informed about them. In addition, the A'imma are also presented with the actions and they also have knowledge of this."¹

Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) has said: "The actions (of the Ummah) are presented to the Messenger of Allah and the A'imma on Thursday."²

The meaning of showing vigilance is that in all of our actions, dealings, movements and all of our words, a true believer must be observant of his Imam. He must know that the Imam is with him and that he should not, even momentarily, (spiritually) separate himself, or fall into negligence.

Imam al-Mahdi (ajtf) has stated:

فَإِنَّا نُحِيطُ عِلْمًا بِأَنْبَائِكُمْ، وَ لَا يَعْزُبُ عَنَّا شَيْءٌ مِنْ أَخْبَارِكُمْ

“Surely we have complete knowledge of your situation and there is nothing which is hidden from us concerning you.”³

In another tradition, Imam al-Mahdi (ajtf) has stated:

إِنَّا غَيْرُ مُهْمِلِينَ لِمُرَاعَاتِكُمْ وَ لَا نَاسِينَ لِذِكْرِكُمْ

“Verily, we are not inattentive in taking care of you nor are we heedless in remembering you.”⁴

A true believer must know where the pleasure of Allah lies and must know that Imam al-Zaman (ajtf) himself is also seeking the pleasure of Allah. One must also realize that this pleasure can only be attained by following the Imam in all affairs, with complete obedience to the religion of Allah and by purification of the soul.

It is clear that this observance and vigilance will slowly enable a person to reach a desirable end and permit one to attain the higher levels of proximity to Allah, as the most important thing in life is to attain proximity to Allah.

1. Najm al-Thaqib, sec. 11, pg. 825; Majma' al-Bayan, vol. 5, pg. 69; In addition, verse 105 of Suratul Tawbah (9) also mentions this point where Allah ﷻ says:

وَقُلْ ۖ عَمَلُوا فَيَسِيرَ ۖ لِلَّهِ عَمَلُكُمْ وَ رَسُولُهُ ۖ وَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ

ﷻ Say: then do what you want (but know that) Allah sees your actions and so does His Messenger and the true believers.ﷻ

Without doubt and according to the traditions which have come to us, the meaning of the true believers as mentioned in this verse are the Infallible A'immah ﷻ and without doubt, the complete and definite interpretation of the word “المؤمنون” are the Infallible A'immah ﷻ.

2. Najm al-Thaqib, pg. 825, sec. 11; BaSair al-Darajat, pg. 426, no. 16

3. al-Ihtijaj, pg. 497; Biharul Anwar, vol. 53, pg. 174, sec. 31, no. 7

4. al-Kharaij, pg. 902; Biharul Anwar, vol. 53, pg. 174, sec. 31, no. 7

The true believers must supplicate to Allah that He makes them firm and resolute on the wilayah of the Imam and that they can move spiritually closer to the Imam. They must also make du'a that the blessing and approval of the Imam (over his true followers) is not removed from a person and that one does not lose this great spiritual rank once he has attained it!

For example, if a person is blessed to be among the companions, helpers and Shi'a of the Imam (either during the period of the occultation or during his advent), then this blessing which has been bestowed upon him should be protected and there should be no change in his status (of closeness to the Imam) nor should he do anything to have someone else put in his place. In actuality, this is the same thing which we recite in the following du'a:

وَلَا تَسْتَبْدِلْ بِنَا غَيْرَنَا فَإِنَّ اسْتِبْدَالَكَ بِنَا غَيْرَنَا عَلَيْكَ يَسِيرٌ وَهُوَ عَلَيْنَا كَبِيرٌ

“And do not place someone else in our place since surely Your replacement of us with others is something easy for You to perform, however this is something grave (and difficult) for us (to bear).”¹

1. MiSbah al-Mutahajjid, pg. 409; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 95, pg. 330, sec. 115, no. 4; Mafatih al-Jinan, sec. 3, Part 10 after Du'a al-Nudbah and Du'a al-'Ahd.

Protecting the Imam and safeguarding the religion which he shall perfect (in its global implementation) and preserving the sunnah (tradition) of the Messenger of Allah is another responsibility which the true believers must enact.

This protection can be carried out very easily through propagating and disseminating knowledge of the faith among the people and obviously, a person who is an 'Alim (religious trained scholar) and is aware of the truths must fulfill his responsibility and spread his knowledge.

Thus, the command of defending the religion and the truths is the scholars' responsibility and is something which they must carry out in the best possible way – obviously, according to their ability.

The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

إِذَا ظَهَرَتِ الْبِدْعُ فِي أُمَّتِي فَلْيُظْهِرِ الْعَالِمُ عِلْمَهُ فَمَنْ لَمْ يَفْعَلْ فَعَلَيْهِ لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ

“When innovations come up in my nation, it is obligatory upon the scholar to make his knowledge known to the people (to guide them). If he does not do this, then the curse of Allah is upon him.”¹

Serving the Imam to the best of one's ability is another responsibility of a true believer and even the Angels and the Prophets take pride in assisting the Imam! In addition, we are told that one of the Prophets who holds a very high status namely Prophet Khidr comes to the assistance of the Imam when a need arises.

Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) has said:

وَلَوْ أَدْرَكْتُهُ لَخَدَّمْتُهُ أَيَّامَ حَيَاتِي

“If I would have met him (al-Mahdi), I would serve him for my entire life.”¹

Helping other believers is a highly recommended act in Islam which carries a great reward. In addition, it is one of the distinct characteristics of the true believers and leaders of the faith, that they can be easily recognized through their assisting the creations of Allah.

Therefore, providing assistance to the Imam who is the true leader of our time and for all the faithful, is the best form of worship and obedience (to Allah)

Prophet 'Isa b. Mariam has said:

يَا مَعْشَرَ الْخَوَارِجِينَ لِي إِلَيْكُمْ حَاجَةٌ أَقْضُوها لِي. قَالُوا قُضِيَتْ حَاجَتُكَ يَا رُوحَ
اللَّهِ. فَقَامَ فَقَبَّلَ أَقْدَامَهُمْ (أَوْ فِي بَعْضِ النُّسخِ فَغَسَلَ أَقْدَامَهُمْ) فَقَالُوا: كُنَّا نَحْنُ
أَحَقُّ بِهَذَا يَا رُوحَ اللَّهِ! فَقَالَ: إِنَّ أَحَقَّ النَّاسِ بِالْخِدْمَةِ الْعَالِمُ إِنَّمَا تَوَاضَعْتُ هَكَذَا
لِكَيْمَّا تَتَوَاضَعُوا بَعْدِي فِي النَّاسِ كَتَوَاضَعِي لَكُمْ

“O’ assembly of disciples! I have a desire which I wish you to fulfill for me.” They said: “Consider it done O’ Spirit of Allah!” So he (‘Isa) stood up and kissed their feet [in some narrations it is mentioned that he washed their feet]. The companions said: “We were more worthy to do this for you, O’ Spirit of Allah!”

He said: “Indeed the person who has the most right to serve the people is the scholar. I have displayed this humility (to you) so that after me, you too will show this form of humbleness to the people just as I have done for you.”²

Indeed, Imam al-Mahdi (ajtf) is the most worthy of people who is deserving of our assistance and there

are many proofs for this.

Thus, assisting Imam al-Hujjah (ajtf) can be accomplished through helping his friends, followers and the Shi'a of the Imam fulfilling their needs, alleviating the difficulties and solving issues which may come up their lives all of these are ways in which one can assist the Imam.

In addition, establishing gatherings for the remembrance of the Imam or to write and spread the teachings in relation to him strengthening the theological seminaries, etc if these are done with the intention that one wishes to assist the Imam, then they are counted and recognized (by Allah) as being things done to help the Imam.

Therefore, we see that there are many ways in which one can assist the Imam, however they must be performed with the intention that they are being doing with the purpose of assisting him.

It must be mentioned that there is a difference between 'serving' and 'helping'. The word 'serving' is much more specific in its meaning than 'helping', and thus, every form of 'helping' does not necessarily mean that one is 'serving' someone.

'Serving' another person can be accomplished through overseeing and also directly acting and performing a task, however 'helping' and assisting does not require overseeing nor the direct performance of a task.

Thus, assisting someone can be done without anyone overseeing the task and can also be done indirectly and through the help and assistance of other people.

In other words, in regards to serving, the one who is serving another person must himself be overseen and perform the actions himself. However the act of helping can even be done by hiring someone else to do the job.

Another difference is that with serving, a person who is performing this task is humbling and lowering himself and expressing his insignificance to the one whom he is serving however this is not the case in regards to helping someone else.

It is also important to mention that if the act of assisting is done with the intention of serving a person and there is some form of overseeing in this issue, then it would be counted as serving (that person) as well. ﴿٩﴾

1. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 51, pg. 148, sec. 6, no. 22

2. al-Kafi, vol. 1, pg. 37, sec. 'The Characteristics of the 'Ulama,' no. 6

Another responsibility is to await the advent of Imam al-Mahdi (ajtf) every day and night rather we must await his return every single hour of our life. In essence, the true believer must always be in a state of

anticipation of the return of the Imam.

Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) has said:

طُوبَى لَشِيعَةِ قَائِمِنَا الْمُنْتَظَرِينَ لِظُهُورِهِ فِي غَيْبَتِهِ وَ الْمُطِيعِينَ لَهُ فِي ظُهُورِهِ
أُولَئِكَ أَوْلِيَاءُ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

“Glad tidings (of Paradise) to the Shi’a of our Qa’im (ajtf) those who are awaiting his advent during his occultation and those who are obedient to him during his advent. Surely these are the close, intimate friends of Allah for whom [There shall be no grief, nor shall they have any sorrow.]”¹

Imam ‘Ali b. Husain as-Sajjad (as) has said:

إِنَّ أَهْلَ زَمَانٍ غَيْبَتِهِ وَ الْقَائِلِينَ بِإِمَامَتِهِ وَ الْمُنْتَظَرِينَ لِظُهُورِهِ أَفْضَلُ مِنْ أَهْلِ كُلِّ
زَمَانٍ

“Surely the people who are living during the period of his occultation and who believe in his (Divinely appointed) leadership and are awaiting his advent are the best people of all times.”²

Imam Muhammad b. ‘Ali al-Taqi (as) has said:

فَيَنْتَظِرُ خُرُوجَهُ الْمُخْلِصُونَ وَ يُنْكِرُهُ الْمُرْتَابُونَ

“The sincere ones will await his advent, while the doubters shall deny it.”³

Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) has said:

فَعِنْدَهَا فَلْيَتَوَقَّعُوا الْفَرَجَ صَبَاحاً وَ مَسَاءً

“During the occultation, they will await his (Imam al-Mahdi’s) advent every morning and evening.”⁴

In numerous traditions it has been mentioned that to await the advent of Imam al-’Asr (ajtf) is actually a part of the religion of Allah and all people must observe this.

In addition, it has been mentioned that even the Muslims who lived during the lives of the other infallible A`immah (as) awaited and expected the advent of Imam al-Mahdi (ajtf) as this was also obligatory upon them. Thus, this is something which is not only limited to the period of his occultation!

The period of waiting for the Imam's advent will not earn us a Divine reward (thawab) unless it coupled with the intention of seeking nearness to Allah and conforming to His commandments, just as the performance of prayers, fasting and Hajj all necessitate a Divine reward from Allah when performed with the intention of seeking nearness to Him.

Of course the intention of seeking nearness to Allah has limits and can be realized in different forms and be achieved in various ways the best form being that a believer performs these acts simply to follow the commandments of Allah and in His obedience.

It goes without saying that He is the most worthy of being worshipped and obeyed and therefore our worshipping of Him should not be done for the love which one has for Him, nor for Paradise, nor to earn His pleasure and definitely not due to the fear of the fire of Hell and the punishment and chastisement!

All of these are simply forms of seeking nearness to Him and therefore, it is best that a true believer stays away from these sorts of intentions (in his acts).

If what we have just stated is correct, then what would be the state of a person if his intention for the advent of the Imam is his own material gains and pleasures in this world??

We must also realize that awaiting the advent is not limited to a particular time or place or only in certain circumstances. Rather, a true believer must always be in a state of anticipation and awaiting the Imam.

One must never go into a state of hopelessness or despair since this is forbidden and most definitely, a person who falls into a state of despair will never be able to patiently wait for the advent of the Imam.

Having even 'partial despair' in his advent is not correct, and this too is forbidden! By a 'partial despair' we mean that one must not lose hope in the return of Imam al-Hujjah (ajtf), the minor or major occultation, or other things related to him based on his own feelings and way of thinking.

For example it should not be said that: "The Imam will not make his advent for another fifty years" or that "He will not make his advent today since it is a Saturday" or that "It is such and such time of the day or night and thus, he will not make his return since the traditions tell us something different."

It is clear that no matter what level of despair we fall into, the spiritual state of anticipation for the advent of the Imam will be taken away from us in that same amount. In addition, we would have neglected the performance of an obligatory act legislated by Allah.

Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) has said:

وَتَوَقَّعْ أَمْرَ صَاحِبِكَ لَيْلِكَ وَنَهَارِكَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ هُوَ فِي شَأْنٍ، لَا يَشْغُلُهُ شَأْنٌ
عَنْ شَأْنٍ

“Anticipate the advent of your patron (i.e. the Imam) in your day and night, for Almighty Allah has a decision every moment and no affair may distract Him from another.”⁵

It has been mentioned in the traditions that we must not specify a specific time or occasion as to when the advent of the Imam will take shape. Rather, the advent of the Imam can take place at any time.

The period of advent of the Imam is one of those events which are subject to alteration, and can either be hastened or delayed and is related to its own causes and conditions which must be realized (before it can be manifest). Due to this, we are not able to specify a specific time as to when it will occur.

As well, it has also been mentioned that his advent will occur unexpectedly, when people are in state of complete hopelessness.

It has been narrated from Imam ‘Ali b. Muhammad al-Hadi (as) that:

فَتَوَقَّعُوا الْفَرَجَ مِنْ تَحْتِ أَقْدَامِكُمْ

“Anticipate the advent from (the land) under your feet (meaning at any place and time).”⁶

1. Kamal ad-Din wa Tamam an-Ni'mah, pg. 357, no. 54; Biharul Anwar, vol. 52, pg. 149; sec. 22, no. 76
2. Kamal ad-Din wa Tamam an-Ni'mah, pg. 320, no. 2
3. Kamal ad-Din wa Tamam an-Ni'mah, pg. 378, sec. 36, no. 3
4. Biharul Anwar, vol. 52, pg. 94, sec. 20, no. 9; Kamal ad-Din wa Tamam an-Ni'mah, pg. 339, no. 17
5. al-Iqbal, pg. 201
6. al-Kafi, vol. 1, pg. 341, sec. 'The Occultation,' no. 24

Thee believers should supplicate for an early return of Imam al-Zaman (ajtf) and this should be carried out every day and night rather if possible, it should be done every hour of the day!

There are numerous supplications which have been related from the Infallibles (as) and have been preserved in the books of prayers and supplications in regards to praying for an early advent, however in this work, we relate the prayer¹ given to us from Imam ‘Ali b. Musa al-Riḍa (as):

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

اَللّٰهُمَّ اَدْفَعْ عَنِّ وَلِيِّكَ وَخَلِيْفَتِكَ وَحُجَّتَكَ عَلٰى خَلْقِكَ وَلِسَانِكَ الْمُعْبَّرِ عَنْكَ النَّاطِقِ
بِحِكْمَتِكَ، وَعَيْنِكَ النَّاطِرَةِ بِاِذْنِكَ، وَشَاهِدِكَ عَلٰى عِبَادِكَ، الْجَحَّاجِ الْمُجَاهِدِ
الْعَائِذِ بِكَ الْعَابِدِ عِنْدَكَ، وَاَعِذْهُ مِنْ شَرِّ جَمِيعِ مَا خَلَقْتَ وَبَرَأْتَ وَاَنْشَأْتَ
وَصَوَّرْتَ

“O Allah! Defend Your close servant, Your representative and Your proof over your creation, Your mouthpiece who speaks on Your behalf, the speaker with Your wisdom, Your eye that sees with Your permission, Your witness on Your servants, the master and the striver (for the sake of Allah) the seeker of Your protection, Your sincere worshipper. Keep him safe from the evil of all that which you have created and made, and that which You fashioned and formed.

وَاحْفَظْهُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ وَعَنْ يَمِينِهِ وَعَنْ شِمَالِهِ وَمِنْ فَوْقِهِ وَمِنْ تَحْتِهِ
بِحِفْظِكَ الَّذِي لَا يَضِيعُ مَنْ حَفِظْتَهُ بِهِ، وَاحْفَظْ فِيهِ رَسُوْلَكَ وَاَبَاءَهُ اُتَمَّتِكَ وَدَعَائِمُ
دِيْنِكَ، وَاجْعَلْهُ فِي وَدِيعَتِكَ الَّتِي لَا تَضِيعُ وَفِي جَوَارِكِ الَّذِي لَا يُخْفَرُ وَفِي مَنَعِكَ
وَعِزِّكَ الَّذِي لَا يُقْهَرُ

And protect him from his front and from behind, from his right and his left, from above him and from beneath; with your protection that preserves the one whom you protect! And keep your messenger and his (i.e. Imam al-Mahdi) forefathers, the pillars of your religion, safe through him. Include him in your deposit that never diminishes, and with your proximity that is never covered, and with your protection and power that are never defeated!

وَأَمِنْهُ بِأَمَانِكَ الْوَثِيقِ الَّذِي لَا يُخْذَلُ مَنْ أَمَنْتَهُ بِهِ، وَاجْعَلْهُ فِي كَنْفِكَ الَّذِي لَا يُرَامُ
مَنْ كَانَ فِيهِ، وَأَنْصُرْهُ بِنَصْرِكَ الْعَزِيزِ وَأَيِّدْهُ بِجُنْدِكَ الْغَالِبِ وَقَوِّهِ بِقُوَّتِكَ وَأَرْدِفْهُ
بِمَلَائِكَتِكَ، وَوَالِ مَنْ وَالَاهُ وَعَادْ مَنْ عَادَاهُ، وَأَلْبِسْهُ دِرْعَكَ الْحَصِيْنَةَ وَحِفَّهُ
بِالْمَلَائِكَةِ حَفًّا

Secure him by your impenetrable security in which one who takes asylum is not forsaken, put him under Your guardianship in which one who is put under is not left (unsecured) aid him with Your might help

assist him with Your undefeatable army strengthen him with Your strength and put Your Angels at his disposal, support the one who supports him and oppose the one who opposes him, dress him with Your fortified armor, and make the Angels surround him.

اللَّهُمَّ اشْعَبْ بِهِ الصَّدْعَ وَارْتُقْ بِهِ الْفَتْقَ وَأَمِتْ بِهِ الْجَوْرَ وَأَظْهِرْ بِهِ الْعَدْلَ وَزَيِّنْ بِطُولِ بَقَائِهِ الْأَرْضَ، وَأَيِّدْهُ بِالنَّصْرِ وَأَنْصُرْهُ بِالرُّعْبِ وَقَوِّ نَاصِرِيهِ وَاخْذُلْ خَاذِلِيهِ، وَدَمِّمْ مَنْ نَصَبَ لَهُ، وَدَمِّرْ مَنْ غَشَّاهُ، وَاقْتُلْ بِهِ جَبَابِرَةَ الْكُفْرِ وَعَمَدَهُ وَدَعَائِمَهُ، وَأَقْصِمْ بِهِ رُؤُوسَ الضَّلَالَةِ وَشَارِعَةَ الْبِدْعِ وَمُمَيِّتَةَ السُّنَّةِ وَمُقَوِّيَةَ الْبَاطِلِ، وَذَلِّلْ بِهِ الْجَبَّارِينَ، وَأَبْرِ بِهِ الْكَافِرِينَ وَجَمِيعَ الْمُلْحِدِينَ فِي مَشَارِقِ الْأَرْضِ وَمَغَارِبِهَا وَبَرِّهَا وَبَحْرِهَا وَسَهْلِهَا وَجَبَلِهَا، حَتَّى لَا تَدَعَ مِنْهُمْ دِيَّاراً وَلَا تَبْقَى لَهُمْ آثَاراً

O Allah! Through him, patch up the differences bring order out of confusion, eradicate oppression, manifest justice, and adorn the Earth by a lengthy life for him. Support him with (Divine) assistance, aid him by putting terror in his enemies' hearts; strengthen his supporters, thwart his enemies, destroy those who declare war on him, annihilate those who double-cross him and through him, kill the chiefs, pillars and supports of infidelity.

Through him, crush the heads of deviation, the innovators of heresies, the eradicators of the sunnah and the supporters of misguidance. Through him, humiliate the haughty tyrants, and terminate the infidels and all the atheists (wherever they are) in the east or the west of the world, on the lands or in the oceans, in the plains or on the mountains, until You do not leave a single one of them and no trace of them is left.

اللَّهُمَّ طَهِّرْ مِنْهُمْ بِلَادَكَ وَأَشْفِ مِنْهُمْ عِبَادَكَ، وَأَعِزِّ بِهِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَأُحْيِ بِهِ سُنَنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ، وَدَارِسَ حُكْمِ النَّبِيِّينَ، وَجَدِّدْ بِهِ مَا أَمْتَحَى مِنْ دِينِكَ وَبَدِّلْ مِنْ حُكْمِكَ، حَتَّى تُعِيدَ دِينَكَ بِهِ وَعَلَى يَدَيْهِ جَدِيداً غَضّاً مَحْضاً صَحِيحاً لَا عَوَجَ فِيهِ وَلَا بَدْعَةَ مَعَهُ وَحَتَّى تُنِيرَ بَعْدْلَهُ ظُلْمَ الْجَوْرِ وَتُطْفِئَ بِهِ نِيرَانَ الْكُفْرِ وَتُوضِحَ بِهِ مَعَاقِدَ الْحَقِّ وَمَجْهُولَ الْعَدْلِ، فَإِنَّهُ عَبْدُكَ الَّذِي اسْتَخْلَصْتَهُ لِنَفْسِكَ وَأَصْطَفَيْتَهُ عَلَى عَيْنِكَ، وَعَصَمْتَهُ مِنَ الذُّنُوبِ وَبَرَّأْتَهُ مِنَ الْعُيُوبِ، وَطَهَّرْتَهُ مِنَ الرَّجْسِ، وَسَلَّمْتَهُ مِنَ الدَّنَسِ

O Allah! Purify your lands from them (the disbelievers) and heal your servants' hearts from them, honor the faithful believers through him (the Imam), and through him, revive the norms of the messengers and

the ways of the prophets.

Through him, renew the signs of Your religion that were erased and Your judgments which were distorted, until You rekindle Your religion through him and by his hands, as well-defined, pure and sound as it was, free from distortions and heresies, and until You illumine the darkness of injustice (by means of his justice).

Extinguish the fires of disbelief through him, and elucidate the positions of truth and the misunderstood issues of justice, for he is Your servant whom You have chosen for Yourself, and whom You have selected, and whom You have protected against sins, and from whom You have removed all defects, and whom You have purified from filth saved from all impurity.

اَللّٰهُمَّ فَاِنَّا نَشْهَدُ لَهٗ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَيَوْمَ حُلُولِ الطَّامَّةِ اَنَّهُ لَمْ يُذْنِبْ ذَنْبًا وَلَا اَتَىٰ حُوبًا
وَلَمْ يَرْتَكِبْ مَعْصِيَةً وَلَمْ يُضَيِّعْ لَكَ طَاعَةً وَلَمْ يَهْتِكْ لَكَ حُرْمَةً وَلَمْ يُبَدِّلْ لَكَ
فَرِيضَةً وَلَمْ يُغَيِّرْ لَكَ شَرِيعَةً، وَاَنَّهُ الْهَادِي الْمُهْدِي الطَّاهِرُ النَّقِيُّ الرَّضِيُّ
الزَّكِيُّ. اَللّٰهُمَّ اَعْطِهِ فِي نَفْسِهِ وَاَهْلِهِ وَوَلَدِهِ وَذُرِّيَّتِهِ وَاُمَّتِهِ وَجَمِيعِ رَعِيَّتِهِ مَا تُقَرُّ بِهِ
عَيْنُهُ، وَتَسْرُّ بِهِ نَفْسُهُ وَتَجْمَعُ لَهُ مُلْكُ الْمَمْلَكَاتِ كُلِّهَا قَرِيبَهَا وَبَعِيدَهَا وَعَزِيزَهَا
وَذَلِيلَهَا، حَتَّىٰ تُجْرِيَ حُكْمَهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ حُكْمٍ، وَتَغْلِبَ بِحَقِّهِ كُلَّ بَاطِلٍ

O Allah! We shall testify for him on the Day of Resurrection and on the day when the catastrophe will take place that he: did not commit a single sin (that he did not) practice any unlawful thing nor perform any act of disobedience, nor miss any act of obedience (to Allah), nor violate any sanctified thing; nor distort any precept, nor did he change any law.

(We testify that) he is the guide and the rightly guided, the pure and the pious, the immaculate, the approved and the righteous. O Allah! Grant him for his own self, his family, his children, his offspring, his nation and all of his subjects all that which makes him delighted and all that which pleases him, put all kingdoms under the sphere of his authority, the near and the remote, the powerful and the weak, until You cause his rule to prevail on every (false) rule, and his right will overcome all the wrong.

اَللّٰهُمَّ اسْلُكْ بِنَا عَلَىٰ يَدَيْهِ مِنْهَاجَ الْهُدَىٰ وَالْمَحَجَّةَ الْعُظْمَىٰ وَالطَّرِيقَةَ الْوُسْطَىٰ
الَّتِي يَرْجِعُ اِلَيْهَا الْقَالِي وَيُلْحَقُ بِهَا التَّالِي، وَقَوِّنَا عَلَىٰ طَاعَتِهِ وَثَبِّتْنَا عَلَىٰ مُشَايَعَتِهِ،
وَاَمْنُنْ عَلَيْنَا بِمُتَابَعَتِهِ وَاَجْعَلْنَا فِي حَزْبِهِ الْقَوَّامِينَ بِاَمْرِهِ الصَّابِرِينَ مَعَهُ الطَّالِبِينَ
رِضَاكَ بِمُنَاصَحَتِهِ، حَتَّىٰ تَحْشُرَنَا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فِي اَنْصَارِهِ وَاَعْوَانِهِ وَمَقَوِّتِهِ
سُلْطَانِهِ

O Allah! Lead us, through him, to the course of guidance; the greatest path; the middle path to which those who had gone too far will return to (repentant) and those who had fallen back will catch up with. Strengthen us in carrying out the acts of obedience to him and make us stand firm in following him.

Grant us the favor of adherence to him and include us with his faction as those who act upon his commands with steadfastness and are seeking his pleasure by exhorting (each other) towards him until you gather us on the Resurrection Day among his supporters and helpers and those who consolidate his authority.

اَللّٰهُمَّ وَاَجْعَلْ ذٰلِكَ لَنَا خَالِصًا مِنْ كُلِّ شَكٍّ وَشُبْهَةٍ وَرِيَاءٍ وَسُمْعَةٍ، حَتّٰى لَا نَعْتَمِدَ
بِهٖ غَيْرَكَ وَلَا نَطْلُبَ بِهٖ اِلَّا وَجْهَكَ وَحَتّٰى تُحِلَّنَا مَحَلَّهُ وَتَجْعَلَنَا فِي الْجَنَّةِ مَعَهُ،
وَأَعِزَّنَا مِنَ السَّامَةِ وَالْكَسَلِ وَالْفَتْرَةِ، وَاجْعَلْنَا مِمَّنْ تَنْتَصِرُ بِهٖ لِدِينِكَ وَتُعِزُّ بِهٖ
نَصْرَ وَلِيِّكَ، وَلَا تَسْتَبْدِلْ بِنَا غَيْرَنَا فَإِنَّ اسْتِبْدَالَكَ بِنَا غَيْرَنَا عَلَيْكَ يَسِيرٌ وَهُوَ عَلَيْنَا
كَبِيرٌ

O Allah! Make us do all these things without any doubt, confusion, ostentation or seeking reputation so that we do not rely upon him except for You and we do not seek from him anything other than Your proximity and put us up in his vicinity and place us with him in Paradise and protect us against weariness, laziness and lethargy.

Include us with those whom You make helpers of Your religion and whom You make the aider of Your close servant and do not replace us with others, for it is easy for You to put others in our places, but this would be extremely difficult upon us (to bear).

اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَىٰ وُلَاةِ عَهْدِهِ وَالْأَئِمَّةِ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ، وَبَلِّغْهُمْ آمَالَهُمْ وَزِدْ فِي آجَالِهِمْ،
وَأَعِزِّ نَصْرَهُمْ، وَتَمِّمْ لَهُمْ مَا أَسْنَدْتَ إِلَيْهِمْ مِنْ أَمْرِكَ لَهُمْ، وَثَبِّتْ دَعَائِمَهُمْ
وَاجْعَلْنَا لَهُمْ أَغْوَانًا وَعَلَىٰ دِينِكَ أَنْصَارًا، فَإِنَّهُمْ مَعَادُنْ كُلِّمَاتِكَ وَخُزَّانُ عِلْمِكَ
وَأَرْكَانُ تَوْحِيدِكَ وَدَعَائِمُ دِينِكَ وَوُلَاةُ أَمْرِكَ وَخَالِصَتُكَ مِنْ عِبَادِكَ، وَصَفْوَتُكَ مِنْ
خَلْقِكَ، وَأَوْلِيَائُوكَ وَسَلَائِلُ أَوْلِيَائِكَ، وَصَفْوَةُ أَوْلَادِ نَبِيِّكَ وَ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَيْهِمْ
وَرَحْمَةُ اللّٰهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ

O Allah! Send blessings upon his (the Noble Prophet's) representatives and on the leaders after him fulfill their wishes; increase their ages, give value to their support; make perfect for them that, which helps them in carrying out your will, strengthen their foundations.

Make us their helpers and the supporters of Your religion for they are the sources of Your Words the treasures of Your knowledge, the supports of (the belief in) Your Oneness, the pillars of Your religion, the ones in authority of Your command, the closest of Your servants, the well-chosen ones among Your creatures; the selected descendants of Your Prophet peace and Allah's mercy and blessings be upon him and them."

As is seen in the traditions from the Ahlul Bayt (as), we have been told that making haste in any action goes against the principle of patience and submission to the will of Allah. However, supplicating and asking Allah to hasten the advent of the Imam is not from the negative, despised and prohibited forms of haste.

Supplicating for the speedy advent of the Imam is the epitome of certainty, true faith and complete submission to the will of Allah ﷻ and complying with 'predestination'.

In reality, these supplications are a manifestation of the truth that the advent of Imam al-Mahdi (ajtf) and the gathering of all of the causes needed for him to make his advent are only in the hands of Allah and that his advent and dawn can only be made possible through His permission. Therefore in reality, these prayers show our belief and conviction in the existence and life of the Imam and that he will make his advent.

The recitation of these prayers is a manifestation of the pure certainty and true faith in the Imam, his uprising and revolt, and is nothing other than exercising patience and submission in the presence of the wishes of Allah.

1. MiSbah al-Mujtahid, pg. 409; Biharul Anwar, vol. 95, pg. 330, sec. 115, no. 4; Mafatih al-Jinan, sec. Three, Part Ten after Du'a al-Nudbah, Du'a al-'Ahd and Du'a al-Nur.

Another responsibility is to prepare for the advent of the Imam and we must perform those actions which should be carried out during the period of awaiting the Imam.

It is clear that if a person is awaiting something to come about or waiting for a friend to arrive, one will prepare himself accordingly. Thus, one who is awaiting Imam al-Mahdi (ajtf) must prepare himself to meet the Imam and be ready to accept the Imam and follow his commands and this cannot be accomplished except through purification of the soul, guiding others and following the appropriate people (the scholars of the faith).

During this period, one must also strive to attain the praiseworthy ethical traits which cannot be achieved except through piety, reaching the level of wara' (a stage even higher than taqwa in which even the mubah acts are not performed) and in striving to follow all of the commandments of Allah.¹

Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) has said:

مَنْ سَرَّهُ أَنْ يَكُونَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ الْقَائِمِ فَلْيَنْتَظِرْ وَ لْيَعْمَلْ بِالْوَرَعِ وَ مَحَاسِنِ
الْأَخْلَاقِ وَ هُوَ مُنْتَظَرٌ

“A person who would like to be among the companions of al-Qa'im (ajtf) should be in a state of waiting and perform all of his actions with piety and with the most beautiful etiquette and only then, will one be counted as being in a state of waiting.”²

1. Of course there are people who, in regards to this issue, do not possess the correct understanding and belief and thus have been misguided from the truth and have not considered that this preparation and purification of the soul and seeking guidance and enlightenment from others as being something necessary and some have actually outright denied this requirement!

2. al-Ghaybah of Nu'mani, pg. 200, no. 16

The next responsibility is to submit entirely to Allah and not make haste in regards to the return of the Imam. A true believer must not be in a state of hurriedness or say: “Why has the Imam not made his advent yet? I have had enough of the occultation! I don't have the ability to bear this any longer!” One must be extremely patient and content with the wish of Allah and must not complain about the apparent delay of the Imam.

However, this does not mean that a believer should not supplicate for the speedy advent of the Imam, nor does it mean that one should not seek to lay the groundwork for the advent of the Imam! Rather, these things are recommended to be performed during his occultation.

One of the companions said to Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as):

جَعَلَنِي اللَّهُ فِدَاكَ، مَتَى هَذَا الْأَمْرُ الَّذِي تَنْتَظِرُونَهُ؟ فَقَدْ طَالَ عَلَيْنَا. فَقَالَ: كَذِبَ
الْمُتَمَنُّونَ وَ هَلَكَ الْمُسْتَعْجِلُونَ وَ نَجَا الْمُسْلِمُونَ وَ إِلَيْنَا يَصِيرُونَ

“May Allah sacrifice me for your sake, when will this definite command (the advent of al-Mahdi) which you are waiting for (come about)? For it has taken very long.’ The Imam (as) replied: ‘Those who desire his advent (to appear soon) are liars, and those who want his advent to occur soon are the ones who shall be destroyed, and surely the Muslims are those who will be saved and will wind up with us.’”¹

Without a doubt, being in haste and showing impatience has many harmful effects. It is possible that a person who is in a hurry may run after those (false) people who claim the status of Mahdawiyyah (claim to be the Imam), in which case they will take the wrong person as being al-Mahdi (ajtf) and will actually end up misguiding themselves and others.

In addition, it is possible that a person who makes haste in this affair would also become despondent or may even completely deny the advent of the Imam as ever taking place. He may also entertain doubts and uncertainty in regards to the words of the infallible A`immah (as) and the promises which they have given us in regards to the return of the Imam.

Such a person may end up denying the return of the Imam, rejecting it entirely or may fall prey to denying Allah, the decree and decision of Allah and His justice. Through all of this, one will cease activity in the state of anticipation and recitation of supplications for the Imam or one may give up performing the responsibilities which one must fulfill towards the Imam. Such a person may also go towards those actions which the faith of Islam is not pleased with!

Thus, the physical and mental state, words and deeds of a true believer must be exactly that which Imam al-Hujjah (ajtf) himself has stated:

وَأَنْتَ الْعَالِمُ غَيْرُ مُعَلِّمٍ بِالْوَقْتِ الَّذِي فِيهِ صَلَاحُ أَمْرٍ وَلَيْكَ فِي الْإِذْنِ لَهُ بِإِظْهَارِ
أَمْرِهِ وَكَشْفِ سِرِّهِ فَصَبِّرْنِي عَلَى ذَلِكَ حَتَّى لَا أُحِبَّ تَعْجِيلَ مَا أَخَّرْتَ وَلَا
تَأْخِيرَ مَا عَجَّلْتَ

“And You O’ Allah are the All-Knowing, without the aid of a teacher, about the time which is best for your close servant to get the permission to make his advent and to reveal his secret! So grant me patience in this issue so that I do not wish to make haste in what you have decided to delay and that I do not wish there to be delay in what you have decided to hasten...”²

1. al-Ghaybah of Nu'mani, pg. 197, sec. 'That which the Shi'a have been Commanded to Follow,' no. 8

2. Kamal ad-Din wa Tamam an-Ni'mah, pg. 512

Another responsibility for those living during the period of occultation of the Imam is to supplicate for the protection of one's faith and to show humility while in the presence of Allah.

We must seek assistance in the protection of our religion from the devils which are from among the Jinn and mankind, the disbelievers and hypocrites, the enemies of the Ahlul Bayt (as) and from the doubts and uncertainties which may strike us and affect our faith.

In this regards, reciting the supplication which is mentioned in the next responsibility is sufficient to protect ourselves.

Another responsibility of the people of true faith is to recite the following supplication which has been

mentioned in the tradition quoted below.

This supplication has been narrated from Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as):

سَتُصِيبُكُمْ شُبُهَةٌ فَتَبْقُونَ بِلاَ عِلْمٍ يُرَى وَ لاَ إِمَامٍ هُدًى وَ لاَ يَنْجُو مِنْهَا إِلاَّ مَنْ دَعَا
دُعَاءَ الْغَرِيقِ. قَالَ الرَّاوي: كَيْفَ دُعَاءُ الْغَرِيقِ؟ قَالَ ۞ يَقُولُ: يَا اللَّهُ يَا رَحْمَنُ يَا
رَحِيمُ يَا مُقَلِّبَ الْقُلُوبِ ثَبِّتْ قَلْبِي عَلَى دِينِكَ

“You shall be plagued with doubt (during this period) when you will remain without any visible flag (of leadership), and no (apparent) Imam to guide you and there is none who will be saved from this state, except for the person who recites the Du'a of al-Ghariq.” The narrator asked the Imam: “What is the supplication of al-Ghariq?” The Imam (peace be upon him) replied: “Say:

يَا اللَّهُ يَا رَحْمَنُ يَا رَحِيمُ يَا مُقَلِّبَ الْقُلُوبِ ثَبِّتْ قَلْبِي عَلَى دِينِكَ

O' Allah, O' the Merciful, O' the Compassionate, O' the Reformer of the Hearts! Make my heart firm on your faith.”¹

1. Kamal ad-Din wa Tamam an-Ni'mah, pg. 351, no. 49

Another responsibility is to supplicate for the victory of the Imam over the disbelievers, hypocrites, those who do not accept him and all of his adversaries. In summary, this supplication should be targeted against all enemies of the religion of Allah.

One of the best supplications to use in these regards is Du'a al-Nudbah¹, however there are many other ones mentioned in the books of supplication.

In Du'a al-Nudbah, we come across many lines which convey the victory of the Imam:

اَللّٰهُمَّ وَ اَقِمِّ بِهِ الْحَقَّ وَ اَدْحِضْ بِهِ الْبَاطِلَ...

“O' Allah! Through him (the Imam), establish truth and destroy all falsehood.”

In addition, we read:

وَأُذِلِّ بِهِ أَعْدَاكَ...

“Through him (the Imam), humiliate all of your enemies.”

1. Refer to footnote on responsibility Thirty-Nine for more information.

Another responsibility during the period of occultation is that we must not rise up in revolt or wage war against the people of falsehood, oppressive governments and super-powers of our time. During this era, we must seek to safeguard our faith and religion and must work for the betterment of ourselves in this life and the next and this is something which has been mentioned in numerous traditions.

This issue has been emphasized many times in the words of the Ahlul Bayt (as), and from the narrations we can deduce that to rise up and fight against the governments of our time is not correct and does not lead to the pleasure of the Ahlul Bayt (as).

In Sahifatul Sajjadiyah, it has been narrated from Imam ‘Ali b. al-Husain as-Sajjad (as) that:

مَا خَرَجَ وَ لَا يَخْرُجُ مِنَّا أَهْلُ الْبَيْتِ إِلَى قِيَامِ قَائِمِنَا أَحَدٌ لِيَدْفَعَ ظُلْمًا أَوْ يَنْعَشَ
حَقًّا إِلَّا اصْطَلَمَتْهُ الْبَلِيَّةُ وَ كَانَ قِيَامُهُ زِيَادَةً فِي مَكْرُوهِنَا وَ شِيْعَتِنَا

“None of us, the Ahlul Bayt (as), have risen or will rise until the advent of the Awaited Imam (ajtf), to repel oppression or revive the truth except that he shall definitely be overcome by misfortunes and his revolt shall result in more adversity of us and our Shi’ah.”¹

However supposing that this tradition or other traditions such as this (which are many) are all correct, and if we suppose that the chain of narrators are correct and there is no issue of taqiyyah (dissimulation) and that there is no other impediment in the traditions (which would prevent us from understanding them).

Then we understand that what has been prohibited in this and other traditions is not that we are not permitted to rise up against an oppressor or oppressive government, rather, it means that we are not permitted to fight against them with force and weapons and this is what has been prohibited.

From another point of view, the task of understanding the meaning of this tradition is not the job of just anyone. Rather, the responsibility of analyzing this (and other such) traditions and bringing forth its correct understanding is the duty of the prominent ‘Ulama, Fuqaha and the learned ones who possess the ability to carry out this task.

In addition, it is possible that after extracting and understanding the truth of this type of tradition according to his understanding, a Mujtahid would act according to his grasp of knowledge of such a statement.

Indeed, we know that those who are not at the level of ijtihad (the ability to pass legal judgment on the laws of Islam) would be obliged to follow (perform taqlid of) the Mujtahid who fulfills all of the conditions of being followed. Thus, the layman's obligation is merely to perform taqlid and not to simply follow the Qur'anic verses and Prophetic traditions.

Thus, if we agree with these types of traditions which tell us that it is not correct for us to rise up and fight against a government, then we cannot say that if a Mujtahid who fulfills all of the conditions of being followed was to rise up and fight against an oppressive government that we would leave him alone and not support him!

Rather, it is imperative upon the followers (muqallidin) to refer to the scholar's fatawa and act according to what he has decreed! They must work together with him and provide the support needed and thus, they too must rise up if he says to!

In summary, it is correct to state that: The true believers must not rise up and fight against the governments of their time except if the Mujtahid who fulfills all of the conditions² for being followed gives a hukm (ruling) that it is obligatory to rise up and fight. In this instance, according to the proofs of the performance of taqlid, this uprising and revolt would be permissible and correct for the followers rather, it would be obligatory.

Therefore, from this responsibility, we are better able to understand that the people must not drift away from the path of taqlid of their Maraja' (sources of emulation).

In the traditions, jurisprudential sources and references it has been mentioned that in certain instances, the act of jihad (fighting) can become obligatory and the ruling of this is based on the ruling (fatwa) and injunction (hukm) of a Mujtahid and this information can be seen in the 'Section of Jihad' which is in the books of Islamic jurisprudence where a complete and detailed discussion has been given.

1. as-Sahifat as-Sajjadiyah (Compiled by Faidhul Islam), pg. 22

2. Refer to the footnote in responsibility Thirteen.

The believers must not set a specific time for the return of Imam al-Mahdi (ajtf) and this responsibility can be proven from many traditions. For example, Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) has said:

يَا مُفَضَّلُ! لَا تُوقِّتْ فَإِنَّ مَنْ وَقَّتَ لِمَهْدِيْنَا وَقْتًا فَقَدْ شَارَكَ اللَّهَ فِي عِلْمِهِ وَادَّعَى أَنَّهُ أَظْهَرُهُ (اللَّهُ تَعَالَى) عَلَى سِرِّهِ

“O’Mufaṭṭaḥ! Do not specify a time (of advent of the Imam) since anyone who specifies a time for the return of our Mahdi (ajtf) has (claimed to) become a partner with Allah in His knowledge and has declared that He (Allah, the High) has given him knowledge of His secret.”¹

A companion once asked Imam Muhammad b. ‘Ali al-Baqir (as):

هَلْ لِهَذَا الْأَمْرِ وَقْتُ؟ فَقَالَ: كَذِبَ الْوَقَّاتُونَ، كَذِبَ الْوَقَّاتُونَ، كَذِبَ الْوَقَّاتُونَ

“Is a time set for this event (the advent of al-Mahdi)?” The Imam (peace be upon him) replied: “Those who specify a time are liars those who specify a time are liars those who specify a time are liars!”²

The meaning of not being permitted to set a time for the advent of the Imam is that the date, year, month, week or even hour of his advent must not be specified or speculated about. However, we know that the time of his advent has been alluded to in the traditions through the various signs and events which will occur. Therefore, it is not a problem to explain his return in this manner.

Abu BaSir said to Imam Ja’far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as):

جُعِلْتُ فِدَاكَ، مَتَى خُرُوجُ الْقَائِمِ؟ فَقَالَ: يَا أَبَا مُحَمَّدٍ! إِنَّا أَهْلُ بَيْتٍ لَا نُوقِتُ وَ قَدْ قَالَ مُحَمَّدٌ ﷺ كَذِبَ الْوَقَّاتُونَ! يَا أَبَا مُحَمَّدٍ إِنَّ قَدَامَ هَذَا الْأَمْرِ خَمْسَ عِلَامَاتٍ أُولَاهُنَّ النَّدَاءُ فِي شَهْرِ رَمَضَانَ وَ خُرُوجُ السُّفْيَانِيِّ وَ خُرُوجُ الْخُرَسَانِيِّ وَ قَتْلُ النَّفْسِ الزَّكِيَّةِ وَ خَسْفُ الْبَيْدَاءِ

“May I be your ransom! When will al-Qa’im (ajtf) make his advent?’ The Imam replied: “O’ Aba Muhammad! Surely we the Ahlul Bayt (as) do not specify a time for his advent as (the Prophet) Muhammad (Peace be upon him and his progeny) has said: “Those who specify a time for his advent are liars!”

O’ Aba Muhammad! Indeed before this command comes to pass, there are five signs (which must occur): The first is the call (from the skies) during the month of Ramaṭṭan the coming of Sufyani the coming of Khurasani, the killing of the (one with a) ‘pure soul’ and the sinking of the ground in Bayda` (into the Earth).”³

1. Biharul Anwar, vol. 53, pg. 3, sec. 28, no. 1

2. al-Ghaybah of Shaykh Tusi, pg. 426, sec. ‘Prohibition of Setting a Time for his Advent.’

3. al-Ghaybah of Nu’mani, pg. 289, no. 6

Another responsibility which lies on the shoulders of the believers is that if a person tries to set a specific time for the return of the Imam, he must be called a liar, he must be introduced to the community at large as a liar and one who commits fraud and deceit! In this regards, Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) has said:

مَنْ أَخْبَرَكَ عَنَّا تَوْقِيْتًا بِوَقْتٍ لَا تَهَابِنَّ أَنْ تُكَذِّبَهُ فَإِنَّا لَا نُؤَقِّتُ لِأَحَدٍ وَقْتًا

“Whoever reports to you from us regarding a specified time (for the advent of the Imam), do not hesitate to belie him, for we have never specified the time (of the advent) to anyone!”¹

1. al-Ghaybah of Nu'mani, pg. 289, no. 3

The purification of the soul is another responsibility and while traversing this path, the believers must strive to acquire knowledge, ma'rifah and complete faith. In addition, the believers must seek to clothe themselves with the noble humanistic traits.

They must strive to be the people of taqwa and wara' and keep away from all types of spiritual pollutants and through this, emulate their Imam and group themselves with him.

In reality, this is one of the most important responsibilities which the true believers have, whereas everything mentioned up to this point and those which will be mentioned later on, all return back to this responsibility.

Therefore, the first responsibility is the purification of the soul¹ and to travel spiritually towards Allah.

Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) has said:

مَنْ سَرَّهُ أَنْ يَكُونَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ الْقَائِمِ فَلْيَنْتَظِرْ وَ لِيَعْمَلْ بِالْوَرَعِ وَ مَحَاسِنِ
الْأَخْلَاقِ وَ هُوَ مُنْتَظَرٌ

“A person who would like to be among the companions of al-Qa'im (ajtf) should be in a state of waiting and perform all of his actions with piety and with the most beautiful etiquette and only then, will one be counted as being in a state of waiting.”²

Imam Muhammad b. 'Ali al-Baqir (as) has said:

...فَاعِينُوا بِوَرَعٍ وَاجْتِهَادٍ

“...So then assist (us) through piety and struggle.”³

Imam al-Mahdi (ajtf) wrote the following:

فَمَا يَحْبِسُنَا عَنْهُمْ إِلَّا مَا يَتَّصِلُ بِنَا مِمَّا نَكْرَهُهُ وَلَا نُؤْتِرُهُ مِنْهُمْ وَاللَّهُ الْمُسْتَعَانُ وَهُوَ حَسْبُنَا وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ

“Nothing prevents us from them (our followers) but their coming to us with that (action) which we detest, and we do not like this from them; and Allah is the only one from whom help is sought and He is Sufficient for us! The most Excellent trustee!”⁴

In the letter which was written to Shaykh al-Mufid, Imam al-Mahdi (ajtf) stated:

وَلَوْ أَنَّ أَشْيَاعَنَا، وَفَقَّهَهُمُ اللَّهُ لِبَاطِعَتِهِ، عَلَى اجْتِمَاعِ مِنَ الْقُلُوبِ فِي الْوَفَاءِ بِالْعَهْدِ عَلَيْهِمْ لَمَا تَأَخَّرَ عَنْهُمْ الْيَمْنُ بِلِقَائِنَا وَتَعَجَّلَتْ لَهُمُ السَّعَادَةُ بِمُشَاهَدَتِنَا عَلَى حَقِّ الْمَعْرِفَةِ

“And if our followers, may Allah make them successful in obeying Him, were united with their hearts in fulfilling the promise that is upon them, there would be no delay for them from the good fortune of meeting us, and their happiness would be hastened by witnessing our advent with complete understanding.”⁵

1. There are many books written on the topic of the purification of the soul – of which the first and foremost is the noble Qur`an and principally, the main objective of the revelation of the Qur`an is for this purification of the soul and this was also the task of and the reason for the deputation of the prophets.
2. al-Ghaybah of Nu`mani, pg. 200, no. 16
3. al-Kafi, vol. 2, pg. 187, no. 5
4. Biharul Anwar, vol. 53, pg. 177, sec. 31, no. 8
5. Biharul Anwar, vol. 53, pg. 177

Observing taqiyyah (dissimulation)¹ is another responsibility for those of true faith during the period of occultation.

A true believer must practice dissimulation in the face of the enemies of the faith, the deniers, hypocrites,

disbelievers – and in summary, in the presence of anyone who is not worthy of hearing the truth!

Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) has said:

التَّقِيَّةُ تُرْسُ الْمُؤْمِنِ وَالتَّقِيَّةُ حِرْزُ الْمُؤْمِنِ وَ لَا إِيمَانَ لِمَنْ لَا تَقِيَّةَ لَهُ

“Dissimulation (taqiyyah) is the shield of the believer, dissimulation is the safeguard of the believer, and the person who does not observe dissimulation has no faith.”²

Just as was mentioned, we must observe dissimulation (taqiyyah) while in the presence of disbelievers, hypocrites, objectors, deniers of the truth and anyone who displays any type of animosity and opposition to the truth.

In addition to these groups of people, we must also practice dissimulation in the presence of those whose understanding of the faith is weak. These may be people who, even though they possess true faith, are still not able to handle or safeguard the secrets (of the Ahlul Bayt) and keep them hidden from others and thus, we must observe dissimulation even when around such people.

In addition, we must also observe taqiyyah while in the company of people who do not have inclinations for the truth, would not benefit from such information or would harm them because they cannot bear to hear it.

However, what do we do in regards those whose mental state we are unaware of? What do we do in regards to those about whom we are not aware if they can acknowledge and accept such truths?

Since we do not know if such people would safeguard the teachings or if they would expose them to others not worthy of hearing such things, we are told that there is no need to practice taqiyyah around them and can convey the teachings to them.

However with that said, we must be careful to expose the truths to them piece by piece, and if we see that they are accepting of them and are able to safeguard the secrets, then we can continue.

Taqiyyah is not to be used in regards to those who are: confused and full of doubt, misguided or have gone astray from the faith, those who have fallen into error in regards to affairs of the life of this world or the next life, those who are ignorant of the truths of the faith but have the ability to accept the truth (if told to them) and are able to keep secrets from other people who are not worthy of such knowledge.

Thus in regards to such individuals, we must not observe taqiyyah and it makes no difference if they are ignorant or just misled or plagued with confusion and doubt or whether they are people of faith, disbelief, hypocrisy or willful disobedience.

Rather, it is sufficient that these people are those who are not willfully opposed to the truths and that

they have the ability within them to accept, bear, safeguard and hide the truths from those who are not worthy of such truths being told to them and that there is a possibility that knowing these things will be of spiritual benefit to them.

The complete discussion concerning taqiyyah, how it works and under what conditions it is applicable has been mentioned in its own relevant place in the sources of Islam and those interested in learning more about this issue are advised to refer to the various Islamic resources.

Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) has said:

إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ مِنْ أَحْتِمَالِ أَمْرِنَا التَّصَدِيقُ لَهُ وَالْقَبُولُ فَقَطْ مِنْ أَحْتِمَالِ أَمْرِنَا سِتْرُهُ وَصِيَانَتُهُ مِنْ غَيْرِ أَهْلِهِ. فَأَقْرَأُهُمُ السَّلَامَ وَقُلْ لَهُمْ: رَحِمَ اللَّهُ عَبْدًا اجْتَرَّ مَوَدَّةَ النَّاسِ إِلَى نَفْسِهِ، حَدَّثُوهُمْ بِمَا يَعْرِفُونَ وَاسْتُرُوا عَنْهُمْ مَا يُنْكِرُونَ. ثُمَّ قَالَ [؟]: وَاللَّهِ مَا النَّاصِبُ لَنَا حَرْبًا بِأَشَدَّ عَلَيْنَا مَوُونَةً مِنَ النَّاطِقِ عَلَيْنَا بِمَا نَكْرَهُ

“To undertake our affair is not only to believe it and accept only rather, it means to conceal and protect it against those who are not worthy of knowing about it. Thus, you must greet them and say: ‘May Allah have mercy upon the servant who tries to acquire the people’s love for him.’

Speak with them about subjects which they are familiar with, but conceal from them the matters which they deny. The Imam then added: ‘By Allah (I swear): He who wages war against us is not worse than him who reports from us matters that we detest (to publicize).’³

In a tradition from the Commander of the Faithful ‘Ali b. Abi Talib (as) it has been stated that:

إِنَّ حَدِيثَنَا صَعْبٌ مُسْتَصْعَبٌ خَشِنٌ مَخْشُوشٌ، فَاَنْبِذُوا إِلَى النَّاسِ نَبْذًا، فَمَنْ عَرَفَ فَزِيدُوهُ، وَمَنْ أَنْكَرَ فَأَمْسِكُوا، لَا يَحْتَمِلُهُ إِلَّا ثَلَاثٌ: مَلَكٌ مُقَرَّبٌ، أَوْ نَبِيٌّ مُرْسَلٌ، أَوْ عَبْدٌ مُؤْمِنٌ إِمْتَحَنَ اللَّهُ قَلْبَهُ لِلْإِيمَانِ

“Verily, our traditions are difficult, hard to understand (properly), uneasy to pass, and alarming; therefore present a little of it to the people. If one realizes it, then you may give him more; but if he denies it, then stop. None can bear it except three (groups of people): (1) An archangel, (2) a Prophet who is sent with a Divine Message, or (3) a believing man whom Almighty Allah has tried his heart’s competence for faith.”⁴

1. The definition of taqiyyah is to hide one’s true beliefs and teachings which one follows due to a fear of the oppression of

others and the fear of them putting extra pressure on a person.

2. al-Kafi, vol. 2, pg. 221, sec. 'Taqiyyah,' no. 23

3. al-Kafi, vol. 2, pg. 222, sec. 'al-Kitman,' no. 5

4. BaSair al-Darajat, pg. 21, no. 5

Another responsibility is to observe patience in the face of persecution and harassment and to withstand the hatred of the enemies, hypocrisy of the hypocrites; and to patiently bear the difficulties, losses, tribulations, poverty, abjectness and sufferings and all other types of afflictions which come upon a true believer.

In addition, one must also observe perseverance in relation to the affairs of the faith and must be firm in regards to the Shari'ah.

One must observe patience in the face of the examinations which come from Allah ﷻ and must be able to bear them and strive to become victorious during these tests. During this period, one must be patient with those who deny the Imam and mock the religion and must show forbearance in the face of those who belie and seek to deny the Imam.

Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) has quoted the Messenger of Allah as saying:

سَيَأْتِي عَلَى النَّاسِ زَمَانٌ لَا يُنَالُ الْمُلْكُ فِيهِ إِلَّا بِالْقَتْلِ وَالتَّجْبُرِ وَلَا الْغِنَى إِلَّا
بِالْغَصَبِ وَالْبُخْلِ وَلَا الْمَحَبَّةُ إِلَّا بِاسْتِخْرَاجِ الدِّينِ وَاتِّبَاعِ الْهَوَى، فَمَنْ أَدْرَكَ
ذَلِكَ الزَّمَانَ فَصَبَرَ عَلَى الْفَقْرِ وَهُوَ يَقْدِرُ عَلَى الْغِنَى وَصَبَرَ عَلَى الْبَغْضَةِ وَهُوَ
يَقْدِرُ عَلَى الْمَحَبَّةِ وَصَبَرَ عَلَى الذُّلِّ وَهُوَ يَقْدِرُ عَلَى الْعِزِّ آتَاهُ اللَّهُ ثَوَابَ خَمْسِينَ
صَدِيقًا مِمَّنْ صَدَّقَ بِي

“A time will come upon the people when they will not acquire power except by means of murder and tyranny; they will not gain riches except by means of usurpation and stinginess and they will not gain love (and respect from the people) except by abandoning the religion and pursuit of lowly desires.

So whoever lives in such a period and endures poverty although he can acquire riches; endures hate (and enmity of the people) even though he can acquire their love; and endures humility even though he is able to acquire honour then the Almighty Allah shall grant him the reward of fifty entirely truthful individuals who believed in me.”¹

In another tradition, Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) has stated that:

أَلَا تَعْلَمُ أَنَّ مَنْ انتَظَرَ أَمْرَنَا وَصَبَرَ عَلَى مَا يَرَى مِنَ الْأَذَى وَالْخَوْفِ هُوَ غَدًا فِي
زُمْرَتِنَا؟

“Do you not know that a person who waits for our command to come and is patient upon that which he sees from the difficulties and the fear will, tomorrow, be (with us) in our company?”²

As well, Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) has said:

عَلَيْكَ بِالصَّبْرِ فِي جَمِيعِ أُمُورِكَ

“I advise you to observe patience in all of your affairs.”³

Of course, the meaning of patience and withstanding difficulties does not go against the principle of supplicating and taking legitimate steps to remove any difficulties or obstacles; nor does it go against the principle of the right of a person to defend himself.

Without doubt, a true believer must struggle to ensure that all of the difficulties, challenges and problems are kept far away from him and of course, this must be done through the legitimate means.

1. al-Kafi, vol. 2, pg. 91, sec. 'Patience,' no. 12

2. al-Kafi, vol. 8, pg. 37, no. 7

3. al-Kafi, vol. 2, pg. 88, sec. 'Patience,' no. 3

Encouraging others to observe patience and staying firm on this path during the period of the occultation (as was mentioned in the previous section) is another responsibility that the true believers must perform.

One must command and encourage his family, friends, brothers and sisters to observe patience and stay firm on the true faith.

The Messenger of Allah (S) has said:

وَفِي عَلِيٍّ نُزِّلَتْ [وَ الْعَصْرِ] وَ تَفْسِيرُهَا: وَ رَبِّ عَصْرِ الْقِيَامَةِ، [إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ
لَفِي خُسْرٍ]: أَعْدَاءُ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ [إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا] [بَوَلَايَتِهِمْ] وَ عَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ [
بِمُؤَاَسَاةِ إِخْوَانِهِمْ] وَ تَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَ تَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ [بِالصَّبْرِ فِي غَيْبَةِ
غَائِبِهِمْ]

“Surat al-’Asr was revealed about ‘Ali (as) and its exegesis is as follows: I swear by the time, I swear by the Lord of the Day of Judgement. Verily all of mankind is at loss, the enemies of the family of Muhammad Except for those who believe in their (the Ahlul Bayt’s) wilayah, And perform righteous actions showing kindness to their brothers in the faith, and encourage others to observe the truth and encourage others to observe patience they encourage the observing of patience during the occultation of the one who is in occultation.”¹

1. al-Iqbal, pg. 457

Another responsibility of the people is to have good thoughts about the twelfth Imam (ajtf).

A true believer must always perform good deeds which will earn the pleasure of the Imam and this cannot be achieved except through obedience to the commandments he has given us and through possessing taqwa of Allah.

In reality, the followers of each of the A`immah (as) wanted the best for their Imam and obeyed them in all matters and tried to always follow their orders. Therefore, the true beauty of a person is that he does those things which are the best for his Imam and refrains from anything which would hurt or annoy him.

Imam Muhammad b. ‘Ali al-Baqir (as) has stated that the Messenger of Allah said:

مَا نَظَرَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ إِلَى وَلِيِّ لَهُ يُجْهِدُ نَفْسَهُ بِالطَّاعَةِ لِإِمَامِهِ وَ النَّصِيحَةِ إِلَّا كَانَ
مَعَنَا فِي الرَّفِيقِ الْأَعْلَى

“Almighty Allah never looks at a servant and finds him working hard in obedience and compliance with his Imam, but that He includes him with us in the most exalted rank. “¹

Imam Ja’far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) has stated that:

كُونُوا لَنَا زِينًا وَ لَا تَكُونُوا عَلَيْنَا شَيْنًا

“Be a beauty for us (the Ahlul Bayt) and do not be a source of embarrassment for us.”²

1. al-Kafi, vol. 1, pg. 404, sec. ‘That which the Prophet commanded,’ no. 3

2. Biharul Anwar, vol. 68, pg. 151, sec. 19, no. 6

Another responsibility of the true believer is to remain unknown and refrain from gaining popularity within

the society because being well-known may result in problems in the spiritual growth and may prevent the believer from ease and free time.

Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) has said:

إِنْ اسْتَطَعْتَ أَنْ لَا يَعْرِفَكَ أَحَدٌ فَأَفْعَلْ

“If you are able remain unknown to others, then do so.”¹

Jabir b. ‘Abdullah al-AnSari said to Imam Muhammad b. ‘Ali al-Baqir (as):

يَا بْنَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ مَا أَفْضَلُ مَا يَسْتَعْمِلُهُ الْمُؤْمِنُ فِي ذَلِكَ الزَّمَانِ؟ قَالَ: حِفْظُ
اللِّسَانِ وَ لُزُومُ الْبَيْتِ

“O’son of the Messenger of Allah! What is the best action which a true believer can perform in that period (of the occultation of the Imam)?” The Imam replied: “Protecting the tongue and staying at home (to remain unknown to the people).”²

The Commander of the Faithful ‘Ali b. Abi Talib (as) has said:

وَذَلِكَ زَمَانٌ لَا يَنْجُو فِيهِ إِلَّا كُلُّ مُؤْمِنٍ نَوْمَةٍ إِنْ شَهِدَ لَمْ يُعْرِفْ وَإِنْ غَابَ لَمْ
يُفْتَقَدْ، أُولَئِكَ مَصَابِيحُ الْهُدَى

“During that time (the occultation), none will be saved except the anonymous believers who, when they are present, will not be recognized and when they are absent, nobody will miss them. They are surely the lanterns of true guidance.”³

1. al-Kafi, vol. 2, pg. 456; Biharul Anwar, vol. 77, pg. 216, sec. 8, no. 1 (with slight difference)

2. Kamal ad-Din wa Tamam an-Ni'mah, vol. 2, pg. 330

3. Nahj al-Balagha (Faidhul Islam), pg. 305, Speech 102

A true believer must protect himself so that during the advent of the Imam, one may be able to assist him.

In regards to this, Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) has said:

إِذَا كَانَتْ دَوْلَةُ الظُّلْمِ فَاَمْشِ وَ اسْتَقْبِلْ مَنْ تَتَّقِيهِ بِالتَّحِيَّةِ فَإِنَّ الْمُتَعَرِّضَ لِلدَّوْلَةِ قَاتِلُ نَفْسِهِ وَ مُوْبِقُهَا، إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَقُولُ: [؟] وَ لَا تُلْقُوا بِأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلَى التَّهْلُكَةِ [؟]

“In the reign of the unjust regime, you must walk carefully and receive those whom you fear with greetings. Verily, one who opposes such a regime will have killed himself and brought about his own perdition. Surely Allah says: And do not cast yourselves with your own hands to destruction.”¹

Imam Muhammad ibne ‘Ali al-Baqir (as) has said:

كَأَنِّي بِقَوْمٍ قَدْ خَرَجُوا بِالْمَشْرِقِ يَطْلُبُونَ الْحَقَّ فَلَا يُعْطَوْنَهُ ثُمَّ يَطْلُبُونَهُ فَلَا يُعْطَوْنَهُ
فَإِذَا رَأَوْا ذَلِكَ وَضَعُوا سِوْفَهُمْ عَلَى عَوَاتِقِهِمْ فَيُعْطَوْنَ مَا سَأَلُوا فَلَا يَقْبَلُونَهُ حَتَّى
يَقُومُوا وَ لَا يَدْفَعُونَهَا إِلَّا إِلَى صَاحِبِكُمْ قَتَلَاهُمْ شُهَدَاءُ أَمَا إِنِّي لَوْ أَدْرَكْتُ ذَلِكَ
لَأَبْقَيْتُ نَفْسِي لِصَاحِبِ هَذَا الْأَمْرِ

“It is as if I see myself with a people who rose up from the east. They demand their right but it will be withheld from them. They will ask for it again but it will not be given. When they see this, they place their swords on their shoulders (ready to use them), so they are given whatever they ask for but they do not accept it.

They revolt and deliver their victory to your patron (al-Mahdi). Their killed ones will be martyrs. Verily, were I to live until that time, I would try to save myself for the Patron of this Matter (so as to join him).”²

Imam Ja’far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) has narrated that if one wishes to have a long life and be able to assist the Imam, then one should recite the following prayer. The narrator of this supplication states that: “When I continuously recited this supplication, my life extended to such an amount that I was satisfied with living.”

اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ. اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنَّ رَسُوْلَكَ الصّٰدِقَ الْمُصَدَّقَ
صَلَّوَاتِكَ عَلَيْهِ وَ آلِهِ قَالَ اِنَّكَ قُلْتَ: مَا تَرَدَّدْتُ فِي شَيْءٍ اَنَا فَاعِلُهُ كَتَرَدُّدِي فِي
قَبْضِ رُوْحِ عَبْدِي الْمُؤْمِنِ يَكْرَهُ الْمَوْتَ وَ اَنَا اَكْرَهُ مَسَائَتَهُ. اَللّٰهُمَّ فَصَلِّ عَلَى
مُحَمَّدٍ وَ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَ عَجِّلْ لَوَلِيِّكَ الْفَرَجَ وَ الْعَافِيَةَ وَ النَّصْرَ وَ لَا تَسُوْنِي فِي نَفْسِي
وَ لَا فِي اَحَدٍ مِنْ اَحِبَّتِي وَ لَا فِي فُلَانٍ (وَ لَا فِي فُلَانٍ)...

“O’Allah! Bless Muhammad and the family of Muhammad. O’ Allah! Your Messenger, the truthful, the trustworthy – may Your blessings be upon him and his household has said that You say ‘I have not hesitated in a matter that I decide to do more than My hesitation in taking the soul of My believing servant who hates to encounter death and I hate to perturb him.’

O’ Allah! Bless Muhammad and the family of Muhammad and hasten the relief of your intimate servant and give him wellbeing and succor, and do not perturb me or any of those whom I love, including so and so.”³

If one wishes, he can then take the names of each of his friends and close acquaintances whom he wishes this supplication for and in place of the word **فلان** and the words which appear in the brackets, one can mention all of his friends.

1. Tuhaf al-’Uqul, pg. 309; Suratul Baqarah (2), Verse 195
2. al-Ghaybah of Nu’mani, pg. 273, sec. 14: “Signs before the Advent,” no. 50; Biharul Anwar, vol. 52, pg. 243, sec. 25, no. 116
3. Biharul Anwar, vol. 86, pg. 7, sec. 38, no. 7; Makarim al-Akhlaq, pg. 284

Another responsibility of the true believers is that they must follow the manners and etiquettes of their living Imam and seek to emulate him in all aspects of their life.

One must constantly be striving to follow the commandments which he has been given to help him improve his manners and act in the way that his Imam is known to act in. There are many manners and etiquette of the Imam which those who have a deep understanding of this issue are aware of, some of which include:

Performing the Salat al Lail and staying awake a portion of the night in worship. Continuously performing the supplications and whispered prayers (munajat) to Allah. Performing the daily Nawafil or additional recommended prayers (we must perform a minimum of 51 rak’at of Salat every day which are made up of the 17 obligatory Salat and the 34 recommended prayers in a 24 hour period).

We must cry and show our grief and sorrow every morning and evening upon the loss of Imam Husain b. ‘Ali (as).

We must perform the recommended actions and refrain from the discouraged act which is one of the specific qualities of the twelfth Imam (ajtf). We must seek to stay aloof from the material world and develop a desire and longing for the next life.

Another responsibility is to give a gift¹ to the Imam through our wealth or whatever we possess from the material world. It goes without saying that this must be done according to one’s own ability without going

to extravagance and that this should be carried out every year, month, week and every day if possible!

Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) has said:

دِرْهَمٌ يُوصَلُ بِهِ الْإِمَامُ أَفْضَلُ مِنْ أَلْفِ أَلْفٍ دِرْهَمٍ فِيمَا سِوَاهُ مِنْ وُجُوهِ الْبِرِّ

“One dirham which reaches the Imam is better than two million dirham’s (spent) in all other good deeds.”²

During the advent of the Imam, this wealth will be given directly to the Imam, however during the time of the occultation of the Imam the wealth or whatever we have from this world which we wish to offer to him can be spent in ways which would earn his pleasure. Of course the intention for this act would be to offer the gift to the Imam (directly).

Our money can be used to print much needed books to uphold the faith; or the money can be spent in holding gatherings (majalis) and programs in which the Imam or his close friends are remembered.

In addition, the fellow Shi’a can be given this money so that they are able to fulfill their own needs and material requirements especially if they are the children and offspring of the Noble Prophet, or are scholars, propagators and missionaries of the faith!

Imam Musa b. Ja'far al-Kadhim (as) has said:

وَمَنْ لَمْ يَقْدِرْ عَلَى صِلَتِنَا فَلْيَصِلْ عَلَى صَالِحِي مَوَالِينَا يُكْتَبُ لَهُ ثَوَابُ صِلَتِنَا

“A person who is not able to present us with a gift should give it to the righteous ones from among our followers and through this, a reward will be written for him as if he had given this gift to us.”³

1. The meaning of gift in this responsibility is any present or offering which a person would give for the Imam to gain his spiritual attention; in other words, it is those gifts and presents which would lead to our Imam (peace be upon him) being pleased and happy with us which are offered to him.

2. al-Kafi, vol. 1, pg. 538, sec. ‘Offering a Gift to the Imam,’ no. 65

3. Kamil al-Ziyarat, pg. 319, no. 1

Another responsibility is to please and cheer up the true believers, friends and Shi’a of the Imam as this actually makes the Imam happy!

We can please another believer through various ways, including: removing any difficulties from his life;

helping him in his problems or worries; fulfilling his needs; helping one in the treatment of his sickness; and supplicating for the believer and showing respect and honour to him. One can also help his friends and close relatives such as his immediate family members, and children through material gifts.

Helping a true believer can be done through various means; however in all of them, if the person helps someone else purely for the pleasure of Imam al-Hujjah (ajtf) then without doubt, one has succeeded in attaining the pleasure of another believer and the happiness of the Imam of the Time!

Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) has said:

لَا يَرَى أَحَدُكُمْ إِذَا أَدْخَلَ عَلَى مُؤْمِنٍ سُرُورًا أَنَّهُ عَلَيْهِ أَدْخَلَهُ فَقَطْ، بَلْ وَاللَّهِ عَلَيْنَا،
بَلْ وَاللَّهِ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ

“None of you should think that if you bring happiness to a believer that happiness has been brought to that person alone. Rather, by Allah, it has also brought us (the Ahlul Bayt) happiness, rather, by Allah, it has even brought happiness to the Messenger of Allah!”¹

1. al-Kafi, vol. 2, pg. 189, sec. ‘Bringing Happiness to a True Believer,’ no. 6

Another responsibility is to give gifts to the righteous Shi'a and friends of the Imam from one's wealth and whatever else one has in this material world and this is something that has been mentioned in the traditions which we will shortly review.

Not only does this act earn the pleasure of other believers, rather it also has an impact on the society in general and as a result, the Shi'a and friends of the Imam, through the exchange of gifts, actually help to alleviate poverty amongst one another! This will, in turn, help them to lift themselves up from their abject state through which, their lives will improve and they will not fall victim to difficulties and tribulations!

Imam Musa b. Ja'far al-Kadhim (as) has said:

وَمَنْ لَمْ يَقْدِرْ عَلَى صَلَاتِنَا فَلْيَصِلْ صَالِحِي مَوَالِينَا يُكْتَبُ لَهُ ثَوَابُ صَلَاتِنَا

“A person who is not able to present us with a gift should give it to the righteous ones from among our followers. It will be written for him as a reward for presenting a gift to us!”¹

1. Kamil al-Ziyarat, pg. 319, no. 1

The next responsibility is to give precedence to the Imam and to give him priority at all times.

How can we distinguish this important act and employ it in our daily lives? This is up to the believer himself to realize. For example, if we are able to supplicate for only two people, then we must first make supplication for the Imam, if one wants to make tawassul to one of two people, then the Imam must be the one whom we make tawassul to if the people are called to have a better understanding of something and to perform good deeds.

Then after the call and invitation to Tawhid, before anything else, one should invite others to the Imam and his wilayah if a person decides to give a gift, then the first person one should give this gift to is the Imam and if a person wants to perform the Ziyarat or send salutations upon another infallible, then one must start by sending greetings and salutations to the Imam and send prayers upon him first.

And if it is decided that one will perform a task and send the reward of this task to a person for example if one was to perform Salat or hajj and give the reward to someone, then it should be first given to the Imam (the Imam should be kept in mind when this act is being performed so that the reward is given to him).

If a person is able to perform the various prayers and supplications after every obligatory Salat, then one must perform those which are related to the Imam as this will establish a closer relationship with him.

The true believers must place the Imam first when performing any supplication.

Before one remembers himself, he must first remember the Imam and pray for him. After this, one may pray for himself and other people and this becomes a manifestation of the love a true believer has for the Imam.

Without doubt, every supplication which a true believer makes for the Imam will earn him many things one will obtain the Divine reward from Allah, gain the specific benefits related to that particular supplication and in addition, the contents of the supplication and what was prayed for will be accepted and fulfilled both for the Imam and the believer.

It has been mentioned in the traditions that whenever a person supplicates for another person, whatever he prayed for will also be applicable to him and his pleas will be accepted. In this regards, Imam Muhammad b. 'Ali al-Baqir (as) has said:

هُوَ الْمُؤْمِنُ يَدْعُو لِأَخِيهِ بظَهْرِ الْغَيْبِ فَيَقُولُ لَهُ الْمَلِكُ: آمِينَ وَيَقُولُ اللَّهُ الْعَزِيزُ
الْجَبَّارُ: وَلَكَ مِثْلًا مَا سَأَلْتَ وَقَدْ أُعْطِيتَ مَا سَأَلْتَ بِحَبْلِكَ إِيَّاهُ

“He is a believer who prays for his brother (in faith) in his absence, to which the Angel says: ‘Ameen (May Allah accept your prayer).’ At this time, Allah, the Noble and Grand says: ‘And for you is granted twice of that which you have asked (for your brother in faith) due to your love for him.’”¹

Imam Musa b. Ja’far al-Kadhim (as) has said:

إِنَّ مَنْ دَعَا لِأَخِيهِ بِظَهْرِ الْغَيْبِ نُودِيَ مِنَ الْعَرْشِ: وَلَكَ مِائَةُ أَلْفِ ضِعْفٍ

“Verily when one supplicates for his (believing) brother in his absence, a sound is heard from the Noble Throne: ‘For you is one hundred thousand times (the reward for what you supplicated for him).’”²

1. al-Kafi, vol. 2, The Book of Du’a, sec. ‘Making supplication for one’s brother while he is not there’; pg. 507, no. 3; Biharul Anwar, vol. 93, pg. 388, sec. 26, no. 19

2. al-Kafi, vol. 2, The Book of Du’a, sec. ‘Making supplication for one’s brother when he is not there’; pg. 508, no. 6; Biharul Anwar, vol. 93, pg. 384, sec. 26, no. 8

Another responsibility is to keep away from anything which would lead to the Imam being upset or saddened with us.

Without doubt, the primary reason for the Imam being upset with his followers is due to us not obeying the orders of Allah ﷻ and instead, following our base desires. In other words when we do not follow the religion and teachings of the Imam (which as we know, is the same religion and set of teachings which his noble fore-fathers taught), it is at this time that the Imam becomes upset with us.

Indeed, the Ahlul Bayt (as) sacrificed everything including their own lives to implement the religion, just like the sacred chain of previous prophets had done.

Disrespecting the sacred beliefs of the faith, objecting to and desecrating the faith and its teachings and the method of the Prophet of Islam, exposing the secrets of Allah ﷻ in places where they should not be mentioned, not observing taqiyyah, not having taqwa, exaggerating and over glorifying the pure Ahlul Bayt (as) are all things which lead to the Imam becoming distraught and thus, we must keep away from all of these things.

Imam al-Mahdi (ajtf) wrote the following to his followers:

قَدْ آذَانَا جُهْلَاءُ الشَّيْعَةِ وَحُمَقَانُهُمْ وَمَنْ دِينُهُ جَنَاحُ الْبَعُوضَةِ أَرْحَجُ مِنْهُ

“Surely the ignorant and foolish Shi’as have upset us and the person whose faith is (as weak as) the

wing of a gnat is better than one of them (the ignorant Shi'as).”¹

1. Biharul Anwar, vol. 25, pg. 266, sec. 10, no. 9; al-Ihtijaj (Tabrisi), pg. 473

Another responsibility is to show respect to those who are related to and are close to Imam al-Zaman (ajtf).

The higher a person's (spiritual) status is, the closer that person is to Imam al-Zaman (ajtf) and the more important it is for the true believers to show respect and honor to such a person.

Those who are related to the Imam include the noble family of the Sadat, especially the children of the twelfth Imam the scholars who act according to the Islamic injunctions, and the true believers who possess taqwa. The final categories of those who must be respected include all of the true believers and lovers of Imam al-Mahdi (ajtf) no matter what level or societal class they belong to.

The most deserving of people who should be shown respect and those who are the closest to the Imam compared to all others are the scholars who act according to the Islamic teachings. More than all others, these are the people of taqwa and wara' and from among these, the closest are the great scholars and those who make up the chain of the mujtahidin (Jurists) from among the Maraja' Taqlid (sources of emulation). In any case, the true believer must love all of the friends of the Imam and respect them.

The Noble Prophet has said:

طُوبَى لِمَنْ أَدْرَكَ قَائِمَ أَهْلِ بَيْتِي وَهُوَ يَأْتُمُّ بِهِ فِي غَيْبَتِهِ قَبْلَ قِيَامِهِ وَ يَتَوَلَّى أَوْلِيَاءَهُ
وَيُعَادِي أَعْدَاءَهُ، ذَلِكَ مِنْ رُفَقَائِي وَ ذَوِي مَوَدَّتِي وَ أَكْرَمِ أُمَّتِي عَلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ

“Glad tidings to the one who meets the Qa'im (ajtf) of my Ahlul Bayt (as) while he has followed him during his occultation before his advent and has been an ally to those who are his allies and an enemy to those who are an enemy to him. These people are my friends and those who have my love, and are the noblest of my nation to me on the Day of Judgement.”¹

1. Kamal ad-Din wa Tamam an-Ni'mah, vol. 1, pg. 286, sec. 25, no. 2

Showing respect to those things which are associated to the Imam is another responsibility of the true believers.

Some of these things which we need to show respect to include the places which are related to the Imam such as Masjid as-Sahlah the celler where his occultation began in the city of Samarra the

Grand Masjid of Kufah; Masjid Jamkaran¹ Masjid al-Haram the places which have been visited by the Infallible A`immah, the prophets and their successors; and the graves of the intimate friends of Allah and the true believers.

Showing respect to places which are associated to the Imam is related to the level of connection which that thing or place has to the Imam and thus, the respect is of various degrees and levels – the more the connection to the Imam, the more respect, honor and esteem should be shown.

Showing respect to places² such as Masjid as-Sahlah, Masjid Jamkaran and other places such as these is possible through various ways, including beautifying them improving or re-construction work, laying carpets, cleaning, deodorizing, illuminating, frequenting, entering the premises barefooted, entering them with humility, keeping busy with the remembrance of Allah while visiting them.

Recitation of prayers, Qur`an, supplications and other things, ensuring that these places are not made impure (najis) or dirty, purifying that area in the event that it becomes impure (najis), sweeping and cleaning the area; not entering while in a state of ritual impurity (janabat or for a woman, during her monthly period).

Ensuring that there is no mixing of the genders while in these areas; keeping away from all acts which are reprehensible and forbidden, keeping away from pointless joking and laughing and speaking and arguing in a loud voice. These and all other such acts must be observed while in similar sacred places.

1. Refer to the second footnote on responsibility Forty-Six for more information.
2. There are some places that shall be mentioned separately whose explanation shall be given in the next responsibility.

We are also obliged to show respect and reverence to Masjid as-Sahlah and to perform the special acts of worship in that place.¹

As for the sanctity and greatness of this Masjid, it has numerous characteristics which other Masajid do not have – for example, it was the original house of Prophets Ibrahim and Idris ؑ, and was also a place that the great man of Allah, al-Khiṣr frequented. It is also a place where Imam al-Mahdi (ajtf) occasionally resides.

Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) has stated that:

كَأَنِّي أَرَى نُزُولَ الْقَائِمِ فِي مَسْجِدِ السَّهْلَةِ بِأَهْلِهِ وَ عِيَالِهِ. قُلْتُ يَكُونُ مَنْزِلُهُ جُعِلَتْ
فِدَاكَ؟ قَالَ نَعَمْ. كَانَ فِيهِ مَنْزِلُ إِدْرِيسَ وَ كَانَ مَنْزِلُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ خَلِيلِ الرَّحْمَنِ وَ مَا
بَعَثَ اللَّهُ نَبِيًّا إِلَّا وَ قَدْ صَلَّى فِيهِ وَ فِيهِ مَسْكَنُ الْخَضِرِ وَ الْمُقِيمُ فِيهِ كَالْمُقِيمِ فِي
فُسطَاطِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ وَ مَا مِنْ مُؤْمِنٍ وَ لَا مُؤْمِنَةٍ إِلَّا وَ قَلْبُهُ يَحِنُّ إِلَيْهِ وَ فِيهِ صَخْرَةٌ

فِيهَا صُورَةُ كُلِّ نَبِيٍّ وَ مَا صَلَّى فِيهِ أَحَدٌ فَدَعَا اللَّهَ بِنِيَّةٍ صَادِقَةٍ إِلَّا صَرَفَهُ اللَّهُ
 بِقَضَاءٍ حَاجَتِهِ وَ مَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ اسْتَجَارَهُ إِلَّا أَجَارَهُ اللَّهُ مِمَّا يَخَافُ. قُلْتُ هَذَا لَهُوَ
 الْفَضْلُ، قَالَ نَزِيدُكَ؟ قُلْتُ نَعَمْ، قَالَ هُوَ مِنَ الْبَقَاعِ الَّتِي أَحَبَّ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُدْعَى فِيهَا وَ
 مَا مِنْ يَوْمٍ وَ لَا لَيْلَةٍ إِلَّا وَ الْمَلَائِكَةُ تَزُورُ هَذَا الْمَسْجِدَ يَعْبُدُونَ اللَّهَ فِيهِ أَمَا إِنِّي لَوْ
 كُنْتُ بِالْقُرْبِ مِنْكُمْ مَا صَلَّيْتُ صَلَاةً إِلَّا فِيهِ يَا أَبَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَ مَا لَمْ أَصِفْ أَكْثَرَ.
 قُلْتُ جُعِلَتْ فِدَاكَ لَا يَزَالُ الْقَائِمُ فِيهِ أَبَدًا؟ قَالَ نَعَمْ. قُلْتُ فَمَنْ بَعْدِهِ؟ قَالَ هَكَذَا مِنْ
 بَعْدِهِ إِلَى انْقِضَاءِ الْخَلْقِ

“It is as if I see the descending of al-Qa`im (ajtf) in Masjid al-Sahlah, accompanied by his family and close relatives family.’ (The companion said) I asked: ‘May Allah accept me as ransom for you! Will it be his dwelling place?’ The Imam stated: ‘Yes, it will be. It was the dwelling place of Prophet Idris and Prophet Ibrahim, the intimate friend of the all-Merciful and Allah did not send any prophet but that he offered prayers in it (Masjid al-Sahlah).

It was also the house of al-Khiṣr. He who resides in it is like one who resides in the tent of Allah’s Messenger. The hearts of true believing men and women yearn for it (Masjid al-Sahlah). In it there is a rock which has the pictures of all the Prophets.

Nobody prays there and supplicates to Almighty Allah with a sincere intention but that his needs are fulfilled by Almighty Allah; and nobody takes it as a shelter but that he is protected by Almighty Allah against whatever he fears.’ I said: ‘This is indeed an excellent virtue.’

The Imam said: ‘Should I tell you more?’ The companion replied: ‘Yes.’ The Imam continued: ‘It is one of the places where Almighty Allah likes to be called upon. There is no day or night when the Angels are not frequenting this Masjid to worship to Almighty Allah. Verily, if I were to live near you, I would not offer a single prayer anywhere else. O’ Abu Muhammad! There is more than what I have just said.’

I asked: ‘May Allah ransom me for you! Will al-Qa`im (ajtf) reside in that place for all time?’ The Imam replied: ‘Yes, he will.’ The companion then asked: ‘Will those who come after him reside in the same place?’ The Imam replied to the man: ‘Yes, they will up until the end of creation.”²

1. Mafatih al-Jinan, sec. 6: “the greatness and actions to be performed in Masjid al-Sahlah.”

2. Biharul Anwar, vol. 100, pg. 436, section 7, no. 7

Another responsibility is to visit Masjid Jamkaran and to perform the recommended actions in that sacred masjid. Masjid Jamkaran was built under the direct order of Imam Waliul ‘Asr (ajtf) and has specific acts of worship which are recommended to be performed in it.

In addition, it is one of the places which the Imam frequents and where the legitimate requests of the people are fulfilled and the Imam himself has ordered the people to visit this sacred site!

In regards to the construction of this masjid, the following has been narrated by Hasan Muthallah Jamkarani: "I was sleeping in my home in the village of Jamkaran on Tuesday night, the 17th of the month of Ramaḡān in the year 313 ah. It was just after midnight that out of nowhere, a group of people came to my house, woke me up and said: 'Wake up and answer the call of your Master, Imam Mahdi Sahib al-Zaman (ajtf) who has summoned you!'"

Hasan continued: "I woke up, collected myself and prepared to get dressed and said to the people: 'Just let me put my shirt on.'

At that time, I heard a voice saying: 'That is not your shirt!'

After removing the shirt, I reached for my pants, and again I heard a voice say: 'Those are not your pants! Do not put them on!'

I removed them too and was able to find my own shirt and pants. I got dressed and then started to look for the key to unlock the door when a voice said: 'The door is already unlocked and open!'

I went towards the door, opened it, and saw a group of pious, noble people. I offered them my greetings, to which they replied accordingly.

They took me to a place where the present location of Masjid Jamkaran is located and as I was looking around, I saw a couch surrounded by fine carpets and pillows. A young man, who looked to be around 30 years old, was reclining on the couch, resting against the pillows. An old man was sitting beside him reading a book out loud while more than 60 men were around them some of them dressed in white and others in green offering their Salat.

The old man, whom I later found out was Prophet Khiḡr asked me to be seated. At that time, the Imam, who was sitting next to Prophet Khiḡr, called me by name and said: "You must go to Hasan Muslim and give him the following message.

Tell him that for the past five years, you have been farming on this land, planting and growing many things, but whatever you grow is being destroyed. This land is sacred, and Allah the Almighty has chosen this land above all others and bestowed distinction and honor to it.

Even this year, you have intended to plough and cultivate this land, though you do not have the authorization to do so! Thus, whatever financial earnings you have earned from this land must be returned so that a Masjid can be built on this spot.

Since you have taken this land which does not belong to you, Allah the Glorious and Powerful, has taken two of your young children away from you, but still you have not realized the wrong you are doing! If you continue in this way, the punishment of Allah which is beyond your imagination, will strike you."

I said: “O’ my Master, I must have some convincing signs, since without this, the people will not believe me.”

The Imam said: “I will show you the signs at this spot so that your statement will prove to be truthful. You simply go and convey the message to the people. Go and see Sayyid Abul Hasan in Qum and tell him to come with you to visit Hasan Muslim and collect from him the earnings of the farm land for the past few years, and with this money, lay the foundation for the Masjid.

For the remaining expenditure, you may collect it from the village of Rihaq, in the Ardhal region (near Kashan) which belongs to me, to complete the building of the Masjid. Also, half of the estate of the village of Rihaq has been given as Waqf (endowment) for the maintenance of the Masjid. Tell the people to visit this place, and to respect and honor it by offering four Rak’at of Salat as follows:

The first Salat of two Rak’at should be prayed with the intention of ‘Salutation to the Masjid’ (تحية المسجد) where in each Rak’at, Suratul Fatiha is recited once, followed by Suratul IkhlaS seven times. In every Rak’at, the dhikr:

’in Ruku: سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْعَظِيمِ وَ بِحَمْدِهِ

and in Sajdah: سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْأَعْلَى وَ بِحَمْدِهِ

Should be recited seven times, the second Rak’at should be recited exactly as the first one.

The second Salat is also two Rak’at and it should be prayed with the intention of ‘Salat for Imam al-Zaman’(ajtf) in which Suratul Fatiha is recited once, and the line:

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ ﴿١﴾

is recited one hundred times. The surah should then be completed, followed by the recitation of Suratul IkhlaS once.

In every Rak’at, the dhikr:

’in Ruku: سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْعَظِيمِ وَ بِحَمْدِهِ

and in Sajdah: سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْأَعْلَى وَ بِحَمْدِهِ

Should also be recited seven times each. The second Rak'at is to be recited exactly like the first one.

Once both of the Salat are finished, the following line should be said once:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

Followed by the Tasbih of Fatimah az-Zahra (sa):

34 times: اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ

33 times: الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ

33 times: سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ

After this, you should go into sajdah and recite Salawat on Prophet Muhammad (S) and his family (as) one hundred times:

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ

The Imam then said:

فَمَنْ صَلَّاهَا فَكَأَنَّمَا صَلَّى فِي الْبَيْتِ الْعَتِيقِ

‘Whoever performs this Salat (will receive the same reward) as the one who prays inside the ‘Ancient House’ (the Holy Ka’bah).”¹

1. Najm al-Thaqib (al-Tabrisi), sec. 7, story 1

Another responsibility of the true believers is to honor the specific times, days and nights which are related to the Imam.

For example, on the days of ‘Eid which include: ‘Eid al-Qurban; ‘Eid al-Ghadir, ‘Eid al-Fitr, the 15th of Sha’ban (the birth anniversary of the Imam), the days which mark the birth or the martyrdom of each of his pure forefathers, the day of Nawruz which marks the (solar) new year; the Hajj season; the Day of

‘Ashura, the night preceeding and the day of Jumu’ah, and the nights of Qadr in the month of Ramaḥan, must all be respected and honored.

In these time periods, it is incumbent upon a true believer to pay special attention to the Imam and more than other people, one should strive to fulfill the rights of the Imam which are related to these specific times.

As for how one can show honor and veneration to some of these time periods, this shall be mentioned in later sections. However generally speaking, respecting the times which are related to the Imam can be carried out in various ways such as performing the specific acts of worship which have been mentioned in the traditions.

The etiquette which each of these time periods have related to them has been mentioned in the books of traditions and Du’a, and these should be followed by the true believers. Therefore, the supplications and Ziyarat which have been mentioned to be read at specific times should be performed in order to fulfill this responsibility.

The next responsibility is to show honour to the night and day of the 15th of Sha’ban with extra emphasis on the night of the 15th. In addition, one must perform the specific acts which have been recommended to be performed on this night. 1

The 15th of Sha’ban is equal in greatness to the night of Qadr (in the month of Ramaḥan), is very important and is one of the time periods related directly to the Imam.

In regards to the greatness of this night, Imam Muhammad b. ‘Ali al-Baqir (as) has stated:

هِيَ أَفْضَلُ لَيْلَةٍ بَعْدَ لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ فِيهَا يَمْنَحُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى الْعِبَادَ فَضْلَهُ وَ يَغْفِرُ لَهُمْ بِمَنْهَ
فَاجْتَهِدُوا فِي الْقُرْبَةِ إِلَى اللَّهِ فِيهَا فَإِنَّهَا لَيْلَةٌ إِلَى اللَّهِ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ أَنْ لَا يَرُدَّ سَائِلًا لَهُ
فِيهَا مَا لَمْ يَسْأَلْ مَعْصِيَةً وَ إِنَّهَا اللَّيْلَةُ الَّتِي جَعَلَهَا اللَّهُ لَنَا أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ بِإِزَاءِ مَا
جَعَلَ لَيْلَةَ الْقَدْرِ لِنَبِيِّنَا فَاجْتَهِدُوا فِي الدُّعَاءِ وَ الثَّنَاءِ عَلَى اللَّهِ

“It (the 15th of Sha’ban) is the best of nights after the night of Qadr. In it Allah grants His blessings to His servants and through His generosity and nobility, He forgives them. So strive and struggle to seek closeness to Allah, the Most High, in it.

For it is a night in which Allah has ordained upon Himself not to turn away anyone who comes to Him asking for something as long as the request is not something impermissible. It is the night which Allah

the High, has placed for us (the Ahlul Bayt) just as the Night of Qadr (in the month of Ramaḡhan) was placed for our Prophet.

Thus, strive to perform the supplications and praise Allah, the High (in it).”²

The reason for the greatness of this night over all the other nights and times is the felicitous birth of Imam Waliul ‘Asr (ajtf) during the early morning period.

1. These acts are mentioned in Mafatih al-Jinan, sec. 2: “The greatness and actions of the Month of Sha’ban.’

2. Iqbal al-A’mal, pg. 695; MiSbah al-Mutahajjid, pg. 831

Another responsibility of the true believers is to consider the Nights of Qadr (in the month of Ramaḡhan) as nights of reverence and respect and to perform the specific actions for these nights.¹

The Nights of Qadr are directly related to the 12th Imam (ajtf) and therefore, the best act which can be done on these nights is remembering and focusing on him and seeking intercession from the Imam.

The Night of Qadr is that night which the entire year cannot reach in greatness, and the actions which are performed on that night are better than the actions performed during the span of one thousand months!

It is on this night that all of the commands for the next year are decreed and the Angels and the Ruh who is the greatest of Angels descend to the Earth by the permission of their Lord and arrive in the service of Imam al-Zaman (ajtf). Whatever has been decreed for every person for the entire year is then presented to the Imam.

Thus, we must perform those specific actions related to these nights and seek closeness to Allah through the Imam. We must also hold firm to the Imam, take him as our intercessor and ask our needs and wants through him (and with the permission of Allah, these will be granted).

1. Mafatih al-Jinan, sec. 3: “The greatness and actions of the Blessed Month of Ramaḡhan and the actions for the Nights of Qadr.’

Another responsibility of the servants of Allah is to show honor to everything which is related to the Imam (this is separate from the times and locations and the things which we have already spoken about). This includes things such as: his titles and appellations whether these are spoken and mentioned out loud or if they are written on paper, plaques, rocks or anything else.

In addition, the letters, speeches and traditions which have been narrated from the Imam must also be shown veneration. This also includes the books which contain writings in regards to the Imam.

Works of art, cultural and religious artifacts which are related to the Imam or his great forefathers such as the hand written copies of the Qur`an, must also be respected.

At the forefront of all things which are related to the Imam is the Noble Qur`an and one must show honor and respect to this. We are able to deduce the necessity of showing honor to the Qur`an from the traditions which have come to us from the Messenger of Islam and the Infallible A`immah (as) and this is something which all of the sects of Islam accept.

The Qur`an is, just as the Prophet described it, the “Greater of the two weighty things (al-Thaqalayn)” which he advised his nation to follow when he said, “The Ahlul Bayt (as) shall never be separated from the Qur`an” and thus, the Muslim nation must follow both the Qur`an and Ahlul Bayt (as).

Guarding the Qur`an and showing it honor can be done through acting according to the verses and as we know, even Imam al-Zaman (ajtf) himself has also been ordered to follow its commandments. Thus, to show honor and esteem to the Qur`an and to act according to its verses is the most important responsibility for us to perform and it is also one of the duties towards the Imam.

Another responsibility is to perform acts of worship on behalf of the Imam such as giving Sadaqah, performing Hajj and recommended Salat and going for the Ziyarat of the Infallible A`immah (as) or other righteous believers either alive or dead. It should be noted that this is something other than performing the act and dedicating the reward to the Imam.

Therefore, the meaning of performing acts of worship and other righteous acts which can be done by proxy do not include the obligatory act of worship such as the five daily Salat or the obligatory fasting of the month of Ramaḡhan since it is not permissible to do these things by way of proxy (for one who is alive).

The narrator of the following tradition said that he asked Imam Musa b. Ja`far al-Kadhim (as):

أَحِبُّ وَأُصَلِّي وَأَتَصَدَّقُ عَنِ الْأَحْيَاءِ وَالْأَمْوَاتِ مِنْ قَرَابَتِي وَأَصْحَابِي؟ قَالَ:
نَعَمْ، صَدَقَ عَنْهُ وَصَلَّ عَنْهُ وَ لَكَ أَجْرٌ (آخِرٌ) بِصِلَتِكَ إِيَّاهُ

“Can I perform the Hajj and the Salat and give Sadaqah for the living and deceased from among my close family and friends?” He replied: “Yes, give Sadaqah and perform the Salat on their behalf and due to you seeking to maintain the ties of closeness with them, there is an additional reward for you.”¹

From this tradition, we clearly understand that to perform actions by proxy for Imam al-Zaman (ajtf) the leader and master of all the true believers – according to the first way mentioned is permissible.

A true believer must give whatever amount of Sadaqah or perform the recommended Salat on behalf of his Imam. For example, one can perform the Salat of Ja`far al-Tayyar or the Salat of the Commander of

the Faithful ‘Ali b. Abi Talib (as) on behalf of his living Imam.

Through this act, not only will the believer avail himself of the reward for performing that action, but in addition he will also receive a reward for maintaining the ties and relations with his Imam!

Some of the acts of worship which a person is able to perform by way of proxy for the Imam include:

1. Different Salat [the Salat of Ja’far al-Tayyar, Salat of the Commander of the Faithful ‘Ali b. Abi Talib and the other Infallibles and the other recommended Salat which have been mentioned in the detailed books of prayer and supplication]. A person is even able to perform a general two Rak’at Salat with the intention that he is offering the prayer as a gift to the Imam.
2. The recommended Hajj or ‘Umrah
3. Tawaf of the Ka’bah
4. Giving Sadaqah
5. Recitation of the Qur’an
6. Sacrificing an animal
7. Paying back the debts of a true believer
8. Performing the visitation (Ziyarat) of the graves of the Messenger of Allah and the other Infallibles (as) and their righteous companions. In addition, one can also visit the graves of other true believers from either far or near with the intention that the reward is to be given to the Imam.
9. Freeing a captive, and in this day and age, freeing a prisoner by paying his debts, for example.

Just as has been mentioned, performing actions by proxy in relation to the obligatory actions such as the five daily prayers is not permissible, except in certain circumstances such as in the performance of the Hajj. A person once asked Imam Ja’far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as): “A person performs the Hajj on behalf of another person – how much of a reward and recompense is he given?”

The Imam replied:

لِلَّذِي يَحُجُّ عَنْ رَجُلٍ أَجْرٌ وَثَوَابٌ عَشْرٍ حَجَجٍ

“For a person who performs the Hajj on behalf of another person there is a reward and recompense equal to the performance of ten Hajj.”²

In another tradition, Imam Ja’far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) said:

لَوْ أَشْرَكْتَ أَلْفًا فِي حَجَّتِكَ لَكَانَ لِكُلِّ وَاحِدٍ حَجَّةٌ مِنْ غَيْرِ أَنْ تَنْقُصَ حَجَّتَكَ شَيْئًا

“If you were to make a thousand people partners in the reward for your Hajj, then for each and every one of them, there will be a reward for performing one Hajj, with no reduction in the reward of your Hajj!”³

Imam Musa b. Ja'far al-Kadhim (as) said:

فَإِذَا أَتَيْتَ قَبْرَ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ فَقَضَيْتَ مَا يَجِبُ عَلَيْكَ، فَصَلِّ رَكَعَتَيْنِ ثُمَّ قِفْ عِنْدَ رَأْسِ
النَّبِيِّ ﷺ ثُمَّ قُلْ: أَلَسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ مِنْ أَبِي وَأُمِّي وَزَوْجَتِي وَوُلْدِي وَ
جَمِيعِ حَامَّتِي وَمِنْ جَمِيعِ أَهْلِ بَلَدِي، حُرِّهِمْ وَعَبْدِهِمْ، وَأَبْيَضِهِمْ وَأَسْوَدِهِمْ
فَلَا تَشَاءُ أَنْ تَقُولَ لِلرَّجُلِ: إِنِّي أَقْرَأْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ عَنْكَ السَّلَامَ إِلَّا كُنْتَ صَادِقًا

“When you come to the grave of the Prophet (saws), and after performing that which is obligatory upon you (the Ziyarat rites) then perform a two rak'at Salat. Then, stand near the head of the Prophet (saws) and say:

أَلَسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ مِنْ أَبِي وَأُمِّي وَزَوْجَتِي وَوُلْدِي وَجَمِيعِ حَامَّتِي وَ
مِنْ جَمِيعِ أَهْلِ بَلَدِي، حُرِّهِمْ وَعَبْدِهِمْ، وَأَبْيَضِهِمْ وَأَسْوَدِهِمْ

“Peace be upon you, O' Prophet of Allah, from my father, mother, wife, children, all of my friends and everyone in my city the free and the enslaved the white skinned and the black skinned.’

(If you act in this way) then you will not say to a person “I conveyed greetings and salutations to the Messenger of Allah on your behalf’ except that you will be speaking the truth.”⁴

When it comes to the recommended deeds, a true believer can either perform them himself for the Imam or hire another person to do them on his behalf.

For example, one can hire somebody else to, on behalf of the Imam, perform the Hajj or perform a recommended Salat.

1. Wasa'il ash-Shi'a, vol. 5, pg. 367, no. 9 (with a slight difference); Biharul Anwar, vol. 88, pg. 310, no. 3

2. al-Kafi, vol. 4, pg. 312, no. 2

3. Ibid., vol. 4, pg. 317, no. 10

4. al-Kafi, vol. 4, pg. 316, no. 8

Another responsibility is to donate the reward of acts of worship to the Imam whether obligatory or

recommended acts.

For example, after a person has finished performing his Salat, he can donate the reward of that prayer to the Imam one can perform the Hajj and give the rewards of the Hajj to the Imam.

A companion once said to Imam Hasan b. 'Ali al-'Askari (as):

إِنِّي زُرْتُ أَبَاكَ وَجَعَلْتُ ذَلِكَ لَكَ فَقَالَ ۞: لَكَ بِذَلِكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ ثَوَابٌ وَ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ وَ
مِنَّا الْمَحْمَدَةُ

“I visited your father and gave the reward of this act to you.” The Imam replied: “Due to this act of yours, there is a great reward and recompense for you from Allah and a commendation from us.”¹

One of the Imams said:

مَنْ جَعَلَ ثَوَابَ صَلَاتِهِ لِرَسُولِ اللَّهِ وَ أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَ الْأَوْصِيَاءِ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ
صَلَوَاتُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِمْ أَجْمَعِينَ وَ سَلَّمَ أَضْعَفَ اللَّهُ لَهُ ثَوَابَ صَلَاتِهِ أَضْعَافًا
مُضَاعَفَةً حَتَّى يَنْقَطِعَ النَّفْسَ وَ يُقَالَ لَهُ قَبْلَ أَنْ تَخْرُجَ رُوحُهُ مِنْ جَسَدِهِ: يَا فُلَانُ
هَدِيَّتُكَ إِلَيْهَا وَ نَفَعْتُكَ وَ الطَّافُكَ لَنَا فَهَذَا يَوْمٌ مُجَازَاتِكَ وَ مُكَافَأَتِكَ فَطَبِّ نَفْسًا وَ
قَرَّ عَيْنًا بِمَا أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَكَ وَ هَنِيئًا لَكَ بِمَا صَرَّحَ إِلَيْهِ. قَالَ: قُلْتُ وَ كَيْفَ يُهْدِي
صَلَاتَهُ وَ يَقُولُ؟ قَالَ ۞: يَنْوِي ثَوَابَ صَلَاتِهِ لِرَسُولِ اللَّهِ

“A person who offers the reward of his Salat to the Messenger of Allah, the Commander of the Faithful and the successors who come after him, may the blessings of Allah be upon all of them Allah will increase the reward of his Salat, a multi-fold increase, until his soul departs and before his soul leaves his body, it will be said to him: “O’ so-and-so!

Your gift, goodness and kindness has reached us therefore, today is the day for your reward and repayment of your goodness. Thus, may your soul be pleased and may your eyes be brightened due to that which Allah has prepared for you and glad tidings to you for what you have reached.’

The narrator of the tradition then asked them Imam: “How does one send the reward of his Salat, and what does he say?”

The Imam replied: “one makes the intention that the reward of the Salat be given to the Messenger of Allah.”²

1. Wasa'il ash-Shi'a, vol. 10, pg. 464, sec. 103, no. 1
2. Jamal al-Ushbu', pg. 15; Biharul Anwar, vol. 91, pg. 215, sec. 3, no. 1

The true believers must perform the Ziyarat and send greetings to the Imam every week rather if possible, this should be done every day!

Greeting the Imam can be done at any place and time however it is best to greet the Imam during those times and in those places which he has a special affinity to, such as the night and day of Jumu'ah, the Nights of Qadr in the month of Ramaḡhan, the 15th of Sha'ban and special places such as Masjid as-Sahlah and Masjid Jamkaran.

It is recommended to read the Ziyarat of Imam al-Mahdi (ajtf) every day and the visitation rights and salutation to him should be those which have been taught to us by the Ahlul Bayt (as) and recorded in the books of prayers and supplication. These prayers include Ziyarat Aale Yasin¹ which can be read at any time one wishes to greet Imam al-'Asr (ajtf), and it starts with²:

سَلَامٌ عَلَى آلِ يَاسِينَ^٣، أَلْسَلَامٌ عَلَيْكَ يَا دَاعِيَ اللَّهِ...

“Peace be upon the family of Yasin. Peace be upon you O' caller to Allah...”

In addition, the other special Ziyarat³ for the 12th Imam on the day of Jumu'ah should also be recited [this Ziyarat will be mentioned in the next responsibility.]

1. Biharul Anwar, vol. 53, pg. 171, sec. 31, no. 5; Mafatih al-Jinan, sec. 3, part 10: “The rites when one visits the celler in Samarraḡ and how one must perform the Ziyarat of the representative of Allah over His servants.’ – the first Ziyarat.
2. The complete Ziyarat is mentioned in responsibility Twenty-Seven of this book (tr.).
3. Biharul Anwar, vol. 102, pg. 215, no. 1; Jamal al-Ushbu', pg. 37; Mafatih al-Jinan – just before Du'a al-Sabah and after Du'a Kumayl.

Another responsibility upon the servants of Allah is to perform the ziyarat of the forefathers and pure ancestors of Imam al-Zaman (ajtf) on the days when their Ziyarat has been recommended to be recited.

According to a tradition from Imam 'Ali b. Muhammad al-Hadi (as), each day of the week has been reserved for one or more of the Infallibles (as) and on those days, we should perform their Ziyarat.¹

Saturday: The Messenger of Allah (S)

Sunday: Amirul Mo`minin 'Ali b. Abi Talib (as) and Fatimah az-Zahra (sa)

Monday: Imam Hasan (as) and Hussain (as)

Tuesday: Imam ‘Ali b. Husain as–Sajjad (as), Imam Muhammad b. ‘Ali al–Baqir (as) and Imam Ja’far b. Muhammad as–Sadiq (as)

Wednesday: Imam Musa b. Ja’far al–Kadhim (as), Imam ‘Ali b. Musa al–Riḍa (as), Imam Muhammad b. ‘Ali al–Taqi (as) and Imam ‘Ali b. Muhammad an–Naqi (as)

Thursday: Imam Hasan b. ‘Ali al–‘Askari (as)

Friday: Sahib al–‘Asr wal Zaman, Imam al–Mahdi (ajtf), may Allah hasten his return.

The specific Ziyarat which we have been recommended to recite is as follows:2

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

أَسْلَامٌ عَلَيْكَ يَا حُجَّةَ اللَّهِ فِي أَرْضِهِ، أَسْلَامٌ عَلَيْكَ يَا عَيْنَ اللَّهِ فِي خَلْقِهِ، أَسْلَامٌ
عَلَيْكَ يَا نُورَ اللَّهِ الَّذِي يَهْتَدِي بِهِ الْمُهْتَدُونَ، وَيُفَرِّجُ بِهِ عَنِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

“Peace be upon you O’ Proof of Allah on His Earth, peace be upon you O’ Representative of Allah with His Creations peace be upon you O’ Divine Light of Allah by whom those who seek guidance are guided and through which he grants salvation to the true believers.

أَسْلَامٌ عَلَيْكَ أَيُّهَا الْمُهَذَّبُ الْخَائِفُ، أَسْلَامٌ عَلَيْكَ أَيُّهَا الْوَلِيُّ النَّاصِحُ، أَسْلَامٌ
عَلَيْكَ يَا سَفِينَةَ النِّجَاةِ، أَسْلَامٌ عَلَيْكَ يَا عَيْنَ الْحَيَاةِ

Peace be upon you O’ refined and awe–inspiring; peace be upon you O’ the intimate advisor; peace be upon you O’ ship of salvation peace be upon you O’ essence of life!

أَسْلَامٌ عَلَيْكَ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَى آلِ بَيْتِكَ الطَّيِّبِينَ الطَّاهِرِينَ، أَسْلَامٌ عَلَيْكَ
عَجَّلَ اللَّهُ لَكَ مَا وَعَدَكَ مِنَ النَّصْرِ وَظُهُورِ الْأَمْرِ

Peace be upon you – prayers of Allah be upon you, and upon your family (the Ahlul Bayt) the pure and pious ones. Peace be upon you may Allah hasten for you that what He has promised you of (His) help and appearance of the (universal world) order.

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا مَوْلَايَ، أَنَا مَوْلَاكَ عَارِفٌ بِأَوْلَاكَ وَأُخْرَاكَ. أَتَقَرَّبُ إِلَى اللَّهِ تَعَالَى بِكَ وَبِآلِ بَيْتِكَ وَأَنْتَظِرُ ظُهُورَكَ وَظُهُورَ الْحَقِّ عَلَى يَدَيْكَ

Peace be upon you O' master, I am your friend and follower, and I am well aware of your aim and ultimate purpose. I seek nearness to Allah, the Most High, through you and your family (the Ahlul Bayt). And I await your advent and the advent of the truth at your hands.

وَأَسْأَلُ اللَّهَ أَنْ يُصَلِّيَ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ، وَأَنْ يَجْعَلَنِي مِنَ الْمُنتَظِرِينَ لَكَ وَالتَّابِعِينَ وَالنَّاصِرِينَ لَكَ عَلَى أَعْدَائِكَ وَالْمُسْتَشْهِدِينَ بَيْنَ يَدَيْكَ فِي جُمْلَةِ أَوْلِيَائِكَ

I ask Allah that He send blessings upon Muhammad and the family of Muhammad and that He places me among those who are awaiting you and those who follow (you) and those who will help (you) against your enemies; and those who will achieve martyrdom (when fighting) with you, in the ranks of all of your intimate and close friends.

يَا مَوْلَايَ يَا صَاحِبَ الزَّمَانِ صَلَوَاتُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَى آلِ بَيْتِكَ هَذَا يَوْمُ الْجُمُعَةِ، وَهُوَ يَوْمُكَ الْمُتَوَقَّعُ فِيهِ ظُهُورُكَ، وَالْفَرَجُ فِيهِ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلَى يَدَيْكَ، وَقَتْلُ الْكَافِرِينَ بِسَيْفِكَ، وَأَنَا يَا مَوْلَايَ فِيهِ ضَيْفُكَ وَجَارُكَ، وَأَنْتَ يَا مَوْلَايَ كَرِيمٌ مِنَ أَوْلَادِ الْكَرَامِ، وَمَأْمُورٌ بِالضِّيَافَةِ وَالْإِجَارَةِ فَأُضِيفُ وَأُجْرِنِي، صَلَوَاتُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَى أَهْلِ بَيْتِكَ الطَّاهِرِينَ.

O' my master, O' the Present Imam of our time! Blessings of Allah be upon you and your family (Ahlul Bayt). This is the day of Jumu'ah (Friday) and it is the day in which your advent is expected and the coming of relief for the believers (from their difficulties) by your hands, and (in which will be the) execution of the disbelievers with your sword.

And I am, O' my master, in it (this day), your guest and neighbor, and you O' my master are generous, from the sons of the generous ones. And you have been commanded to receive guests and welcome neighbors. So then receive me and welcome me, blessings of Allah be upon you and upon your family

(the Ahlul Bayt), the purified ones.

1. The Ziyarat for each day of the week are not mentioned in this work, however readers who wish to benefit from them can refer to “Daily Duas” published by Tayyiba Publishers (tayyiba@telus.net [8]) which features the Ziyarat in ‘Arabic with full English translation. (Tr.)
2. Biharul Anwar, vol. 102, pg. 210, sec. 9, no. 1; Jamal al-Usbu’, pg. 25

Another responsibility is to visit those righteous people who love and have a strong affinity for Imam al-Mahdi (ajtf) as such a visit will give a person the same reward as performing the Ziyarat of the Imam himself!

This responsibility can be fulfilled with those who are alive or those who have left this world especially the scholars in the religion who are amongst those with the taqwa of Allah!

Imam Musa b. Ja’far al-Kadhim (as) has said:

مَنْ لَمْ يَقْدِرْ أَنْ يَزُورَنَا فَلْيَزُرْ صَالِحِي مَوَالِينَا يُكْتَبَ لَهُ ثَوَابُ زِيَارَتِنَا

“A person who is not able to perform our Ziyarat should instead visit the righteous people from among our followers and the reward of visiting us will be written for him.”¹

1. Kamal al-Ziyarat, pg. 319, no. 1

Another responsibility is to send prayers and salutations upon Imam al-Mahdi (ajtf).

In order to fulfill this responsibility, a true believer may for example, say something like the following line:

اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلٰى مَوْلَانَا صَاحِبِ الزَّمَانِ

“O’Allah! Send your blessings upon our Master, the Master of the Time.”

In the books of Du’a, many different greetings¹ have been mentioned in regards to Imam al-’Asr (ajtf) and the other Infallibles (as) and we must only use these greetings when saluting him since these have been taught to us by the Ahlul Bayt (as) and thus, what better greeting can there be than these?

Sending salutations upon the Imam (ajtf) is a form of Du’a a complete and comprehensive supplication. In this form of a petition and request from the true believer (the salutations to the Imam), we see the

desire for the Imam to be protected and the prayer for the protection of his helpers and friends all forms of grief and anguish to be removed from the Imam's heart, prayer for his advent to be hastened the desire that he is granted a victory and many other subtle points.

In reality, the greetings and salutations which we send to the Imam are actually us praying and seeking His mercy in all areas related to the Imam, whether these are the affairs of this world or the next life.

Thus, we affirm that the key to the rectification of all issues is in the hands of Allah alone.

1. Such as those mentioned in Mafatih al-Jinan, sec. on Ziyarat, right after Ziyarat Jami'a under the heading of: "Greetings upon the Righteous Proofs of Allah"

Another responsibility of the believers is to fulfill the financial rights of Imam al-Zaman (ajtf) namely the Khums which is one of the obligatory "taxes" in the Shari'ah.

As we know, Khums is considered as one of the Furu' ad-Din (Branches of the Faith) of Islam and we must fulfill this requirement. In addition, we must ensure that we do not spend any money upon which the Khums is due as this is not permitted (for other details regarding the Khums, refer to your Mar'ja Taqlid or the relevant books on the topic).

Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) has said:

إِنَّ أَشَدَّ مَا فِيهِ النَّاسُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَنْ تَقُومَ صَاحِبُ الْخُمْسِ فَيَقُولُ: يَا رَبِّ
خُمْسِي!

"Surely the hardest of thing for a person to bear on the Day of Resurrection is when the person whom the Khums belonged to stands up to protest and says: "O' Lord! (What about) My Khums!"¹

There is a letter which is from one of the specific representatives of Imam al-Hujjah (ajtf) written to Abul Hasan Asadi which states:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ، لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ عَلَى مَنْ
اسْتَحَلَ مِنْ أَمْوَالِنَا (مَالِنَا).

"In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. May the curse of Allah and the Angels and all of mankind be upon that person who considers (the use of) the portion of our wealth as being permissible for them."

Abul Hasan Asadi stated: “My heart trembled that such a curse would be justified for that person who takes even one dirham of the wealth of the Imam and considers it is as being permissible for him...”

He continued and said: “I swear by the One who raised Muhammad with the truth and made him as a giver of good tidings, that after I saw this letter and I looked into my heart (and what I thought of this issue), I completely changed (my outlook on the Khums).”

The 12th Imam (ajtf) has stated:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ، لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ عَلَى مَنْ أَكَلَ
مِنْ مَالِنَا دِرْهَمًا حَرَامًا.

“In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. May the curse of Allah and the Angels and all of mankind be upon that person who uses even one dirham of our wealth without permission.”²

Imam al-Mahdi (ajtf) also told us:

وَمَنْ أَكَلَ مِنْ أَمْوَالِنَا شَيْئًا فَإِنَّمَا يَأْكُلُ فِي بَطْنِهِ نَارًا وَ سَيَصْلَى سَعِيرًا

“A person who consumes anything from our wealth has surely put fire in his stomach and soon he shall enter the flaming fire.”

Imam al-Mahdi (ajtf) has said the following in relation to that person who considers the using of the wealth of the Imam (Khums) as being permissible:

فَمَنْ فَعَلَ ذَلِكَ فَهُوَ مَلْعُونٌ وَ نَحْنُ خُصَمَاؤُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَقَدْ قَالَ النَّبِيُّ الْمُسْتَحِلُّ
مِنْ عِثْرَتِي مَا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ مَلْعُونٌ عَلَى لِسَانِي وَ لِسَانِ كُلِّ نَبِيٍّ مُجَابٍ

“A person who does so (inappropriate our wealth which we are entitled to) is cursed and we will be his enemies on the Day of Resurrection and surely the Prophet (Muhammad) has said: ‘The person who considers it permissible to use that which belongs to my progeny, which Allah has made impermissible, is cursed by my tongue and the tongue of all the prophets whose supplications are accepted.’”³

1. ‘Awail al-Layali, vol. 3, pg. 127, sec. on Khums; al-Muqnah, pg. 280, sec. on the Ziyarat.

2. Biharul Anwar, vol. 53, pg. 183, sec. 31, no. 12; Kamal ad-Din, pg. 522

3. Biharul Anwar, vol. 53, pg. 182, sec. 31, no. 11; al-Ihtijaj, pg. 479

The final responsibility of a believer (which we will cover in this book) is to keep away from and also to proclaim those who claim to be the Mahdi (ajtf) as being liars.

This responsibility cannot be realized except through a complete understanding of the rightful Imam and successor of the Messenger of Allah (S) as it is only through this correct understanding that one can recognize those who falsely claim to be al-Mahdi (ajtf).

It is possible for a person to falsely claim the status of Mahdawiyyah, and to introduce himself to others as being the Mahdi (ajtf) and those who lack intelligence or are ignorant and do not recognize the true Imam or a group of people who are only looking out for their own interests or are plagued with following Satan and who are on the path of confusion and spiritual darkness, and disbelief and hypocrisy, may take this (false) claim of Mahdawiyyah and fall into error and also lead others to the wrong path and thus, they will have strayed away from the path of Allah and the religion of His Messenger and his rightful Successors.

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