

# The Ahlul Bayt

## Introduction

Ahlul Bayt, or People of the House (of the Prophet), is in reference to Lady Fatima al-Zahra', her father Prophet Muhammad, her husband, Imam Ali, and her sons, Hasan and Husayn, as well as Husayn's nine *ma'soom* descendants. They are also referred to as the fourteen *ma'soom* or infallible. In this respect, Allah Almighty has revealed about them, [Indeed Allah wills to repel all impurity from you, O People of the House, and purify you a thorough purification.] 33:33. Imam Ali, his sons Imams Hasan and Husayn, along with Imam Husayn's nine *ma'soom* descendants are the twelve Imams who have, on divine instructions, been appointed by Prophet Muhammad to succeed him and lead humanity after him. The first of the *ma'soom* Imams is Imam Ali, and the twelfth is Imam Mahdi who is hidden from view and will reappear to fill the earth with justice after it is filled with tyranny and injustice. Prophet Muhammad said of the Ahl al-Bayt, "The example of my Ahl al-Bayt is that of Noah's Ark; whoever boards it is saved, and whoever abandons it drowns." Towards the end of his blessed life, the Prophet said, "I leave behind with ye two momentous entities – Allah's Book and my kin the Ahl al-Bayt – as long as ye adhere to them both ye would never go astray after me." Editors.

- ❖ Almighty Allah has put all the forces of the universe under the authority/command of the *ma'soom* Imam, peace be upon him, and this is evident from the declarations and words of the *ma'soomeen* themselves, peace be upon them all.
- ❖ Almighty Allah has established only one path for the fulfilment of his creation and legislation and that is the path of Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them.<sup>1</sup>

- ❖ Everything that concerns our fate, or any changes to our fate; whether concerning us as individuals or the family, or the community, or nations at large, is reflected in the honorable hadith of Imam Sadiq,<sup>2</sup> peace be upon him, in which he states, addressing Imam Husayn, peace be upon him: “The ordinance of the Lord concerning His commands descend upon you, and are issued from your houses.”
- ❖ It is evident from numerous hadith – as well as logical reasoning – that all aspects of existence and its forces are put in the hands of the *ma‘soom* Imam, peace be upon him, by Almighty Allah; whether relating to humans or to objects; in the past or in the future.
- ❖ The Imams, peace be upon them, are Allah’s authorities upon the entire creation; they are the auspicious successors to His Prophet, and they are all from the light of Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, blessed with the same holiness as the Prophet’s.<sup>3</sup>
- ❖ The Imams were like the Prophet, peace be upon them all, in their knowledge, forbearance, virtue and piety, justice and infallibility, noble morals and magnanimous nature, and all other qualities and praiseworthy traits. How could it be otherwise, given that they are his divinely appointed successors, the leaders of the people and creation, and Allah’s authorities over all mankind after the Prophet himself?

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<sup>1</sup> This is really a reflection of surah al-Qadr, in which it is stated that on the eve of al-Qadr the angels and Holy Spirit descend – on the *m‘asoom* – concerning every matter, and this is in order to seek acceptance/approval for those matters, and the Imam may, for example, intercede and beseech the Almighty to alter some of those fates or matters.

<sup>2</sup> Imam Sadiq is the sixth of the twelve divinely-appointed successors of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family.

<sup>3</sup> Great many authentic and unanimously accepted hadith are reported quoting Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family, saying, “The successors after me are twelve in number, until the day of judgement”, and in other hadith the Prophet mentions the twelve successors by their names.

- ❖ There is no doubt that the *ma'soom* Imam, peace be upon him, is the most superior and knowledgeable of Allah's creation, who has a lofty spirit which transcends all creation, yet he has a heart full of passion which surpasses that of all humanity, despite having the most superior and rational mind.
- ❖ The Imams of Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them, have unparalleled qualities but regrettably there are those amongst us who do not fully understand and appreciate these unique attributes.
- ❖ Obedience to the Messenger and the Imam, peace be upon them, are directly derived from obedience to Allah Almighty which is primary and central to faith.
- ❖ Since obedience to Almighty Allah is mandatory, and as He has ordered us to obey Allah's Messenger, Muhammad, and his Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them; then their obedience is also mandatory upon us, as per His command.
- ❖ If Almighty Allah, Glory be to Him, had ordered us to obey people other than Ali ibn Abu Talib and his descendant Imams, peace be upon them, we would have complied with such order.
- ❖ Since obedience to the Prophet and the Imam are, in essence, the same, almighty Allah did not differentiate between the two by using the word "obey" in the holy verse [Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those of authority amongst ye] as opposed to His obedience. A distinction is made between His obedience and the obedience of the Messenger and of the Imam, by repeating the word "obey" to reveal the difference.

- ❖ We believe in the *imamate* (leadership) of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib, peace be upon him, and the *imamate* of Hasan<sup>1</sup> and Husayn, peace be upon them, and also the *imamate* of the other Imams, the descendants of Husayn, peace be upon them, because Almighty Allah commanded us to do so.
- ❖ As the Imams lived in different times, the actions and styles of each Imam differed according to his time. Also his conduct differed from that of the Imam who lived in a different time and under different circumstances. This explains the apparent difference in the conduct and style of the Imams, peace be upon them. However, this does not mean that there are differences between them individually, since “they are all one light”.<sup>2</sup>
- ❖ The example of the Imam, peace be upon them, is not like that of twelve lanterns similar to one another, rather their example is like a single lantern.
- ❖ The difference we observe in the conduct of our Imams, peace be upon them, reflect the instructions they received from Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, who in turn received them from Almighty Allah, through Archangel Gabriel, each according to their respective prevailing circumstances.

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<sup>1</sup> Imam Hasan is the second of the twelve divinely-appointed successors of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family.

<sup>2</sup> The phrase in quotes is in reference to a body of hadith from Allah and His Messenger: *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol.25/p24, 26/16, 27/131, 33/480, 35/10, 35/33-34, 36/222, 36/280, 36/301, 36/323, 37/81, 38/125,150,329.

- ❖ It is obligatory for us to learn the biography and history of the *ma'soom* Imam, peace be upon him, in order to be guided by it and follow his example.
- ❖ What do we gain by merely professing to be following the Imams such as al-Sajjad, al-Baqir,<sup>1</sup> and al-Sadiq, peace be upon them, if we remain ignorant about their biography and history?!
- ❖ It is essential for us to study, even if briefly, the history and biography of Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them, so that our faith is underpinned by better knowledge and understanding about those blessed personalities Almighty Allah has commanded us to obey.
- ❖ Our role models are our Imams, peace be upon them. The Commander of the Faithful (*Amir al-Mo'mineen*) Imam Ali, peace be upon him, gave up his right [to succeed the Prophet as the head of state] for fear of the people turning back and apostatizing. If we claim to be followers of Imam Ali, peace be upon him, we should follow our Imam in this respect too.
- ❖ However eloquent and knowledgeable one purports to be, one would not be able to grasp the deepest meanings of the teachings of Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them, because they are the mainspring of language and the masters of literature and eloquence.

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<sup>1</sup> Imam al-Sajjad is the fourth, and Imam al-Baqir is the fifth of the twelve divinely-appointed successors of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family.

- ❖ It is one's utter misfortune and wretchedness to seek knowledge and understanding from other than Ali and his descendants, peace be upon them. And that knowledge, if gained, would be nothing like the one [gained from Ali and his descendants] because it would be devoid of moral and spiritual values, and removed from the spirit of the Sharia.<sup>1</sup>
  
- ❖ The struggle of al-Mostafa,<sup>2</sup> peace be upon him and his holy family, his sincerity in conveying the Almighty's instructions, and the blood of the Ahl al-Bayt that were shed in the cause of Islam were instrumental in preserving the laws of Almighty Allah. This helped the religion to endure and survive in the face of obstacles.
  
- ❖ Our Lady Fatima al-Zahra', peace be upon her, was like her father in the way she devoted herself to worship, in asceticism, piety and ethics. Almighty Allah revealed many verses in the Holy Qur'an about her.
  
- ❖ Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, gave our Lady Fatima al-Zahra' the title "*Sayyidat-o-Nisa' el-'Alameen*" meaning the "Chief of the Women of the Worlds", and the agnomen "*Umm-o Abeeha*" meaning the "mother of her father". The Prophet used to love her immensely, and revered her greatly such that when she used to come to see him he used to greet her by rising up for her out of respect, seating her in his place and kissing her hands. Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, used to say, "Indeed what pleases Fatima pleases Allah, and what angers her angers Him."

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<sup>1</sup> And it would therefore be entirely false.

<sup>2</sup> al-Mostafa means "The Chosen One", and it is one of the titles of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family.

- ❖ As we approach the anniversary of the birthday of Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, I would like to recommend three simple courses of actions, which every one of us can do. In this way, maybe we can make up for our failure towards Imam Husayn, peace be upon him.
- 1. Inform everyone you meet, whether in workplace or on your way home, or a friend you come across, that the 3<sup>rd</sup> of Sha‘ban is the birthday of Imam Husayn, peace be upon him. I would not be exaggerating if I said many of those you live amongst do not know that.
- 2. On the anniversary of the birthday of Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, let’s give a gift to our children, to those in our custody, and those in our care, so that they grow up with the love of Imam Husayn, peace be upon him.
- 3. Let’s express joy and happiness and give presents and sweets to our colleagues in our workplace and in our neighborhood on the anniversary of the birthday of Imam Husayn, peace be upon him.
- ❖ In our daily lives we spend a lot of money on various matters, and also we spend a lot of effort and time with the children and wife at home, and in the workplace and suchlike. Let it be known that whatever wealth is spent and effort made in the cause of Imam Husayn is of best benefit and outcome, because one attains a higher station and a greater value.
- ❖ During the *ziyarah* of 15<sup>th</sup> of Sha‘ban, millions of pilgrims from around Iraq, and also from the continents around the globe, converge on the holy city of Karbala to visit the master of the martyrs Imam Husayn, and his brother Abul-Fadl al-Abbas, peace be upon them, and the chosen pure ones from amongst the descendants of Ahl al-Bayt, and from amongst the loyal devout supporters who were martyred along with the

master of the martyrs Imam Husayn. By the blessing of this visit, these pilgrims will have the privilege to greet the souls of the one hundred and twenty four thousand prophets and messengers, and they all are the guests of Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, and the guests of the people of Karbala.<sup>1</sup>

- ❖ Imam Zayn al-‘Abideen,<sup>2</sup> peace be upon him, had a great role in destroying the Umayyad rule. However, the role of Imam Zayn al- ‘Abideen was not like that of his father Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, because if he were to utter a single word against the regime, that would have guaranteed his extermination. Thus he adopted other ways.<sup>3</sup>
- ❖ Imam Zayn al-‘Abideen, peace be upon him, managed to demolish the Umayyad rule without engaging in a military battle against them, because it was not possible for him to unsheathe the sword under those extremely savage and harsh circumstances.
- ❖ The primary principle of the existence of the Imam of the Time [i.e. Imam Mahdi], and the acknowledgement of him as the Imam whose obedience is obligatory [upon every Muslim] is deemed one of the fundamentals of Islam, and it is one issue that is undisputedly established and frequently reported. And when something reaches the level of frequent recurrence, then argument about it would be of the category of sophistry and denial of the obvious.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn Quoluwayh, *Kamil al-Ziyarat*, chapter 38.

<sup>2</sup> Another name for Imam al-Sajjad, peace be upon him.

<sup>3</sup> Imam Zayn al-‘Abideen, peace be upon him, tirelessly worked to elucidate and spread the teachings of Islam in order to enable the masses to distinguish between the Holy Prophet’s Islam and the twisted version of Islam propagated by the Umayyad ruling dynasty. The Imam endeavoured to expose the Umayyad and the crimes they committed, by relaying the horrifying tragedy of Karbala. Imam Zayn al-‘Abideen, peace be upon him, also adopted the strategy of leading the masses back to Allah after being misled by the Umayyad. This was through his well-known and unparalleled spiritual supplications.

Another policy Imam al-Sajjad is famous for is that of buying off slaves and freeing them after educating them. It is reported that the slaves the Imam bought and freed in this way over his life span runs into thousands.



- ❖ We need billions of books about the Imam of the Time, peace be upon him, since there are billions of souls around the globe. So from now on, let every one of you allocate an amount of money to publish a book about the Imam of the Time, and in doing so there is no objection to seeking help from one's family; one's spouse, offspring and siblings. It is not compulsory that the book is massive; everyone should endeavor according to their abilities. If you cannot give the sum in a day you may be able to give it in a month. This is a simple task and it is the least we could do for the service of the Imam of the Time, may Allah hasten his honorable reappearance.
- ❖ Let us make a covenant with Almighty Allah on the anniversary of the birthday of Imam Mahdi, may Allah hasten his reappearance that we start to follow the path of Almighty Allah, so that we may attain the goal after a while, however long or short it may be, for whoever treads the Path will ultimately reach the goal.
- ❖ We should try and make every effort to seek the contentment of the Imam [of our Time] for this is Almighty Allah's contentment; and the Imam's contentment is that we faithfully discharge our obligations according to our creed.