Responsibilities of Awaitors for imam Mahdi

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Abstract: *In contemporary society, some issues and principles which are of religious and practical essentialities are covered by the shed of ignorance, and eventually they lose their importance. One of the fundamental beliefs which is of high importance and it should be considered, and it is felt to be needed more than any other time is the belief in imam Mahdi (may God hasten his reappearance) and reviving his remembrance and waiting his reappearance. These are regarded as religious duties. According to the sayings of our infallible imams, besides this fact that reappearance of imam Mahdi can be the relief of all good people, this waiting itself can be a relief and problem-solver and has constructive results for awaitor and society. The first part of the present article is a brief look over the birth, imam's short and long hidden life and then the meaning of awaiting for imam and the importance of it according to the words of infallibles are mentioned. The second part is dealing with the moral effects of this waiting on people. The third part is allocated to the moral effects of this waiting on society. The forth part is dealing with the effects of the effects of this waiting psychological- wise.*

Keywords: *waiting, awaitor, duties, effects of waiting, waiting for imam reappearance*

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Results of awaiting for Imam Mahdi and responsibilities of awaitors

A. Generalities and concepts

a. The concept of waiting

1. The literal meaning

The word in Arabic is derived from نظر (nazar) . of its synonym we can refer to the words which mean " contemplating" and " looking forward".[1]

Intezar (انتظار) in word means contemplating on affairs, looking forward, and having hope in future.[2]

b. Expressional meaning:

As a term, it means waiting for reappearance of the last living asset of God and being prepared for to help him in order to establish just and fair rulership all over the world. In other words, it is a spiritual state which causes readiness in human beings to what they expect. The opposite of this feeling is the state of being fearful and hopeless. The more waiting, the more interested and enthusiastic. This interest will make people more active and ready.

B. Birth and short time and long time hidden life

The last imam of Shia and the twelve successor of holy Prophet, was born in the half of Shaban month in 255 A.H. (868 B.C.) in Samera in Iraq. His father was the eleventh imam of Shia, imam Hasan Askari and his great mother, was Narjes, an honored lady for whose nationality there narrated various traditions.

According to a tradition, she was the daughter of "Yasho" the son of Rome emperor, and her mother was from "Shamoon" descendant, the successor of "Isa". In this tradition, we read that Narjes converted to Islam after a wondrous dream. And as imam Hasan Askari told her, she joined Roman troops who were on their way to fight muslims. She was taken as prisoner of war with some others. Imam Hadi sent someone to buy her and bring to Samera.

The name and epithet of the last imam is the same name and epithet of the holy Prophet of islam and in some traditions people are prohibited of saying his name before his reappearance.

The famous epithet of him are as follows: Mahdi, Ghaem, Hujat, Khalf Saleh, Mansoor, Sahib al-amr, Sahib al-Zaman and Vali Asr which the most famous one is Mahdi.

The birth of imam Zaman was hidden from public but Imam Hasan Askari introduced him to reliable people and a group of Shia elites. This introduction could help people not to go astray or being puzzled regarding their last imam.

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Imam Mahdi answered to the religious and professional questions of one of the great scholars of Shia, Saad ibn Abdullah, when he was a child. Imam Hasan Askari suggested hi receive the gifts which are sent by Shia gathered by Ahmad ibn Ishaq then to classify them as Hallal and Haram, and send those which Haram to the real owners of them.

After the martyrdom of imam Hasan Askari, Imam Mahdi lead the pray to the body of his father. Imam Mahdi's imamat and leadership has started since this time in the year 260 A.H.. since then his short time hidden life started and lasted for about 70 years (up to 329 A.H.)

The most important feature of the short time hidden life of him is that people were related to imam Mahdi through the special deputies. People received messages of imam by them. and in some cases, they were honored to meet imam by these deputies.

After the death of the last deputy of imam, in the year 329 A.H., the long hidden life of imam has been started and it will continue until God desires to reappear him. At this time, people can benefit from direct rays of his guidance.

C. Importance and meaning of waiting

Any religious actions to be accepted by God should enjoy some conditions which most part of these conditions. These are what we know as religion. True religion which God wants.

Abubasir narrated from imam Sadiq that he said,

الا اخبركم لايقبل الله عزوجل من العباد عملا الا به؟

Shouldn't I inform you that God would not accept any action of human beings unless with conditions?

Abu basir told, yes. Please tell us. Then imam said,

شهادته ان لا اله الا الله و ان محمدا عبده و رسوله و الاقرار بما امر الله و الولايه لنا و البرا من اعدائنا – يعنى الائمه خاصه- و التسليم لهم و الورع و الاجتهاد و المانينه و الانتظار للقائم.

The testimony to the Unity of God and the fact that Mohammad is His servant (who is sent by Him and confession to what God orders, and our villayah, and regarding our enemies as your enemies – enemies of infallibles and being surrender to them, and forbearance and endeavors (to put religious actions in practice) , and patience and looking forward for his reappearance. Therefore, no religious in accepted unless it is done while the doer is looking forward for his reappearance. Acceptance means to be regarded as a religious duty which deserves rewards of God and causes closeness to God.

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The rewards which are considered for a special action and included in Quran and Sunnah, all are considered for an accepted action and if that action does not enjoy essential conditions, the doer of that action will not receive any reward from God. Regarding this, no action will be rewarded unless the doer experience the feeling of waiting.

In the meaning of waiting various explanations have been given. For example, the author of Mikyal said,

معنى الانتظار... هو كيفيه نفسانيه ينبعث منها التهيو لما تنظره ... فكلما كان الانتظار اشد كان التهيوا اكد. الا ترى انه اذا كان لک مسافر تتوقع قدومه، ازداد تهيوک لقدومه كلما قرب حينه.

The meaning of waiting is a spiritual state which results in getting ready for what one is waiting for… . therefore, the stronger the feeling of waiting, the readiness is more. Do not see when you are waiting for a traveler, the more closer the time of his arrival, the more ready you are.

فالمومن المنتظر لقدوم مولاه، كلما اشتد انتظاره ازداد جهده فی التهيو لذلک بالورع و الاجتهاد و تهذيب نفسه عن الاخلاق الزذيله و اقتنا الاخلاق الحميده.

Therefore any faithful person who is expecting reappearance of his master will increase his attempt to get ready by getting closer to the time of reappearance- through piety, Ijtihad, and removing improper traits and acquiring values.

Waiting for the reappearance of Imam Mahdi will create readiness in an individual and will affect his life in all aspects, social-wise and personal-wise.

The moral effects of waiting for imam Mahdi from personal-wise

A. Self-construction

It is obvious that the more we know a person, the more effective his/her personality on us. In fact, the higher is the level of this knowledge about one, in case of surrendering to this knowledge, the deeper his/belief in that person. It means if a person enjoys a deep knowledge about someone, his forgetfulness and mistakes will be less regarding the path of truth. Therefore, if a person desires to find the truth, the best way is to recognize imams through the most authentic ways.

If a person knows Imam is a witness on all his affairs – witness of hidden affairs and public affairs- it can cause a person be very exact in all his actions and take a path which brings God’s satisfaction. To keep the true belief is the most significant issue in the eyes of such a person and is not ready to exchange Imam’s satisfaction with anything else. Here is the point which being pious and

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knowing the ways of being pious finds its importance.

Imam Sadiq said,

من سره ان يكون من اصحاب القائم فلينظر و ليعمل بالورع و محاسن الاخلاق و هو منتظر

Anyone who likes to be of the companions of Qaim (a.s.) should wait and while he is waiting, be pious and good-tempered.

Therefore, in this regard, we can point out to three main axis of psychological training which have great role in construction of human beings:

a. Observe piety, do obligatory actions and avoid forbidden things

The first and the most basic condition of building yourself up is to observe religious acts and do them. a waiting faithful person can not see an obligatory action is neglected, because he knows the best thing in front of God is to do obligatory actions.

Of course, it is not easy to be committed to do obligatory actions as it is against the laziness and carnal desires of human beings. But a real awaiter waits and makes himself be committed to do obligatory actions. Imam Sadiq said about this verse:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اصْبِرُوا وَصَابِرُوا وَرَابِطُوا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

Believers, be patient, and race in patience, be steadfast, fear Allah, in order that you will be victorious. (3:200)

Besides acting upon obligatory actions stands avoidance of forbidden actions.

As much as waiting of a person is more, he will remember his imam more and the more waiting, the more interest in committing sins.

b. Real fear of God and hope (خوف و رجا)

One of the other fundamental bases of construction is fear of God and hope in Him. According to traditions, faith without these two will not be achieved. Imam Sadiq said,

لايكون المومن مومنا حتى يكون خائفا راجيا، و لا يكون خائفا راجيا حتى يكون عاملا لما يخاف و يرجو.

A faithful person is not faithful and is not fearful and hopeful unless he acts upon his fear and hope.

Therefore, the condition of being faithful is to have fear in heart; but it doesn't mean all kinds of fear; but this fear should have an impact on the actions of a person. What is the sign of this holy fear in human beings? Imam Sadiq answered this question like this:

من خاف من شى هرب منه.

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The one who fears something will run away from him.

A faithful person if is really fearful of his past sins and wrong steps, will frighten of repeating them in future and escape from them.

c. The attitude towards the world

The third axis of building up spiritual aspect of human being which should be regarded as a fundamental principle is the attitude of a person towards this world. It should be noted that most of mistakes are rooted in the love of this world and they should be uprooted to dry out the roots of other sins. If the love of the world obsesses a person to the extent that he sees nothing else, he is far from the sweet taste of faith. The only way towards tasting the sweetness of the blessing of faith is to be moderate in this world. Therefore, those who are waiting for imam Mahdi must remember this and live a life which is compatible with this attitude.

The second part: knowledge and prudence

A faithful person who is a waiter tries to prepare himself in all aspects. One of these aspects is to be ready intellectually. The result of a waiting faithful person's intellectual attempt is to achieve prudence and wisdom.

Doubts can bring ignorance and can cause only the son of the waiting school who is intellectually grown up can be wise and ready. He knows that shia school of thought since the time of its spread was always attacked by enemies and at the time of Ghiebah (hidden life of imam) the extent of these attacks is drastically augmented. The enemies find the time of disappearance of imam an opportunity to mislead people. But faithful people know it is their duty to defend Shia believes and answer the doubts and Satanic temptations.

A waiting faithful person is companion of history and learn from it. His role model is Abalfazl who was prudent. A faithful waiter is awake. God has given them logic and wiseness; for them the time of absence is similar to the time of the presence of imam Mahdi. They have a kind of prudence that they can answer doubts easily.

Third part: not to be solved in the darkness of his environment

Another important effect of this waiting is not to be solved in the immoralities of the environment and not to be surrounded to the impurities of the world around. In explanation, we should say that, when immorality spread every where and induces a great number of people, good innocent people will face a difficult psychological dead-end, a dead-

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end which is resulted from losing hope; they lose their hope of any revolution. Sometimes, they think darkness conquers every where and any attempt to stay pure is fruitless. This hopelessness will gradually push them towards immorality, they may not save themselves from impurity and relent!

The only thing which can give them hope and encourage them to resist is the hope in final victory. Only in this case they will continue their attempt.

The result of this hope, hope of reappearance of a savior, has a growing effect on psychology and give assurance to them against the powerful waves of immorality. Not only will they not lose their hope but also they see their goal close to them and their interest to try harder is increased.

Third chapter: the moral effect of waiting for Imam Mahdi (a.s.) from social aspect

First part: resistance against strangers

The only thing which help Muslims be patient against their opponents and ultimately unite Muslims to stand up against them was the promises of Quran and prophet who said, this religion will not be eradicated and future will be for Islam. Islam will overcome every where and the flag of unity of God, Justice and Truth will be raised every where.

These promises have been always giving hope to muslims that islam and its period will not go to an end and the Islamic government like Bani Omayyeh and Bani Abbas are not the role model of Islam, we should be looking forward to the future and do not retreat, we should stay powerful in protecting our borders, until the golden time of the rulership of Justice. In that time which is the time of imam reappearance all plans which Islam had for Islam will be performed, in that time, the world would escape from all chaotic thoughts and peace and unity will fill every corner. Then the world will be embraced by security and assurance.

Muslims are always expecting for the best and each situation no matter how much good it is not perfect for them; therefore, they do not regard it as an ultimate. And if the situation in which they are is not desirable and in fact is non-Islamic, they will not lose their hope and it is their duty to fight against injustice. To stay aside and be indifferent to what is going on has no place in Islam. All attempts of Muslims especially Shia during history was due to this hope and this belief; they never leave their fortress and continued their combat.

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Awaiting for imam Mahdi gives providence to awaitors and prepares them for resistance, assiduity, fighting ignorance and corruption. And familiarize awaitors with this significant philosophy in history.

Second part: strengthening and spreading the religious values

Waiting for the-end-of-the-time-savior, Imam Mahdi (p.b.u.h.), in addition to be backed by strong religious pillars, has excellent social philosophy.

Muslims believe that true belief in God will spread every where and the world will be saved from all these chaotic disorders, modernity minus humanity, relief minus peace. Returning to back and to the era of ignorance is in the opposite of infallibles' mission and Islamic thoughts.

Muslims who are living with this prospect, never will join corrupted, disbelieved or atheist groups. They try to preserve their prudence and hope in future, take steps firmly towards future. They are certain that tyranny and corruption will be eradicated one day and future is for pious ones. Therefore, they do not surrender to tyrants and do not unite corrupted people.

This waiting is not rooted in weakness or laziness in taking responsibilities, and no one excuse is accepted for his/her inactivity to do goods and stop evils. Silence and immobility, indifference and acceptance of present situation, hopelessness and depression are not excusable. This waiting is a movement, mission, mobility, devotion, fighting with heresy. This waiting is a live and constructive school of islam and Muhammad and his companions and followers.

Third part: strengthening public believes

The real ones who are waiting for Imam Mahdi (p.b.u.h.) should not only work on themselves but also be aware and take care of others; because waiting for him is not a personal plan. It is a plan which should be fulfilled by all, it is public-governed movement. All attempts should be led to this.

In a vast battle field of war, no one can neglect his/her friend, but should help wherever he finds a shortcoming or weak points, backs and supports weak ones; it is because no war can be won without unity of all.

The real awaitors not only think of their own growth but also know themselves responsible to help others. And this is another constructive result of awaiting for the LAST SAVIOR.

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Fourth part:

The educative results of the belief in imam Mahdi (p.b.u.h.) from psychological aspect

First: spreading real hopes

Hope is the motor of people's movement towards future. Some people know it as a drive and some need of human being. According to Maslow, a psychologists of self-actualization, motivation is a common and inborn need which stands in a hierarchy of the strongest to the weakest needs. To explain this, it can be said that human beings continuously and after finishing an action is to find a clear end and also before any action he/she needs a strong motivation to start that activity.

Therefore, human beings always need a strong motivation to go forward, to tolerate difficulties and to pass through hard situations. This motivation is manifested in " hope in future." A future which is better, more beautiful, and more peaceful than our today's. this is of high importance for young people. Because, in the light of this hope, they can give meaning to their endless energy.

This subject has different interpretations, meanings and positions in various religious and non-religious schools of thought. As an example, belief of followers of religions to miracles is a proof on having hope and relief after difficulty. While in materialistic or secular schools of thought, there is no place for miracle. Even among believers of divine faith, this issue has different manifestation.

Against the pessimistic approach which is taken to future and exists in the most of schools of thought, there are pessimistic approaches; for example the belief in the reappearance of a savior, imam Mahdi, which is not only a reasonable, logical and understandable phenomenon but also it is regarded as the greatest relief.

Now, if we consider this issue from psychological aspect, we will find the role of hope in psychological health significant.

Kant regarded the issue of "hope" as a feature shows intelligence of mankind and wrote that for any one who is wise and aware and is thinking about his life, three questions will be raised: one, what can I know? Second: what should I do? Third: what can I expect and hope for?

Having futuristic point of view has a positive relationship with "psychological health". We find this relationship in Frankl who said that healthy personalities have other characteristics: they look at future and pay attention to prospective goals and

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duties. In fact, they need these goals. This is human characteristic that he/she can only live by being futurist.

He added that without future, the spiritual concept of life will be erased and soul and body will be deemed to destruction. To live a life, a reason is needed; to work for a goal, otherwise life will lose its meaning.

According to Frankl, having hope in future, is a factor of having a meaningful life and a factor of its continuation. This definition is a summit among psychological theories in this regard.

Waiting for a savior in Shi school of thought, not only is a hope for future, but also means waiting for a great change; this savior is the manifestation of all dreams and unfulfilled hopes of mankind during centuries.

According to this, future is going to be better and brighter than today. Because most of our disputes and disagreement are due to limitations of our understanding and in the light of wisdom, when flourishes, these disputes will be exchanged with mercy and friendship.

Regarding this fact, depression has no place among awaitors. If mankind does not expect a better future, he/she would sink in hopeless and depression. The importance of this will become more obvious when we know that depression is the most common and difficult disorder contemporary human beings are tackling with.

The second part: movement towards a goal

Life is meaningful when there is movement in it or in another word, a person who is active can find a meaning for his presence in the world. Because he can go far from routines and reach meaningful life.

When a person is not satisfied with the present situation and decides to change it for better, it means he himself should play a role in this change and is not a mere spectator. But is an actor of an specific role.

Mobility can be studied from two aspects: first an active person stands up against any indifference and this is the creator of innovation, and creativity. Its result is proportional satisfaction of life and of himself. Because he sees some impacts of his presence in the world. Though, movement without any goal is barren and goal with no movement is meaningless.

Therefore, according to this it can be inferred that waiting for imam Mahdi (p.b.u.h.) should cause these two aspects: mobilization and goal-orientation; because a awaitor is waiting for a society in which all promises of infallibles are fulfilled. Therefore, he

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tries to take part as much as he can in construction of such a world. He knows what he is trying for. He has a clear, defendable motivation. His attempt leads to a great goal which is " waiting for reappearance".

In summary, the results of this kind of waiting are: A. actualizing dormant talents and abilities. B. purification of inside while waiting for this reappearance. C. meaning-oriented way of life. D. becoming stronger against discomfort and difficulties. E. moving towards perfection.

Conclusion

According to what is said imam Mahdi has two periods of hidden life, one of them is short time (about 70 years) and one of them is long; the most important difference between these two, is that in the short period of time, Shia people could keep in touch with their Imam by special representative and could get familiar with their duties, but in the long period of time this relationship is cut and people to know their religious responsibilities should refer to the general representative of that holy Imam. In addition to it, at the time of imam hidden life, waiting his reappearance is regarded as duties of Shia people.

Human beings in social and personal life owe to the blessing of waiting and if they are not awaitors, they would lose their hope in future, and life would be meaningless for them. movement and waiting are intrigued and can not be separated. Waiting is the cause of movement. The subject of expectation the more is sacred and elevated, the more valuable and holy. Therefore, a faithful person who is waiting the reappearance of imam, will increase his attempt and his interest. A real awaitor, whether social-wise or personal-wise, attempt to prepare himself for the time of reappearance; he tries to spread piety and honesty. He will not be absorbed in the darkness of society. He is looking forward for his imam and he makes a change in his life and the environment of him to be suitable for Imam's return.

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[1] Khoori Shartooni, Saeed, Aghrab al-Mavared, Farhange bozorge Jamee Novin

[2] Mostafavi, Hasan, al-Tahghigh fi kalamat al-Quran al-Karim, vol.12, p.166

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