

Imam-e-Mubeen

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In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

There are two facets of Allah's Characteristics – 1) His Entity and 2) His Authority. In Quran on different occasions Allah (SWT) has alternatively spoken about His Entity and His Authority. The ayahs 45 and 75 of Surah-e-Nisa mentioned below are the examples:

وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ وَلِيًّا وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ نَصِيرًا

“(And Allah suffices as a Guardian, and Allah suffices as a Helper.)”

The above ayah talks about Allah's Entity – His Ownself which is sufficient as a Guardian and a Helper. If one considers some other entity as a partner to Him it would amount to 'Shirk'. And if one rejects Allah (SWT) as his Guardian and Helper it is 'Kufr'.

وَاجْعَلْ لَّنَا مِن لَّدُنكَ وَلِيًّا وَاجْعَلْ لَّنَا مِن لَّدُنكَ نَصِيرًا

“(And give us from Thee a guardian and give us from Thee a helper.”)

The above ayah talks about Allah's Appointed Authority – His Vicegerent on earth as a guardian and a helper. Hence if one considers someone else as an authority upon him except the one appointed by Allah (SWT) then it would amount to 'Shirk' and if one rejects the appointed authority as his guardian and helper it would be 'Kufr'.

→ Allah (SWT)'s Entity is invisible to us but He has created His Authority which can be seen and followed in order to have a better understanding of His Entity and His religion. This article is an effort in the direction to recognize his Authority.

One of the virtues of Allah (SWT) the Supreme is that He is 'Ala kulli shay'in qadeer'. The appointed Authority of Allah (SWT) should also be appropriately empowered to make the mankind to be able to obey and respect it. Let us look at this ayah:

- “Aur unn sabko Imam banaya ki Hamare hukm se hidayat karte the aur Humne unnke paas nek kam karne aur namaz padhne aur zakat dene ki 'wahi' bheji thi aur yeh sab ke sab hamari hi hidayat karte the.” – (Surah-e-Ambiya, ayah 73)

“(And We made them Imams who guided (people) by Our command, and We revealed to them the doing of good and the keeping up of prayer and the giving of the alms, and Us (alone) did they serve.)”

The above ayah informs that **the authority appointed by Allah (SWT) are Imams**, who are guided by none but Allah (SWT) Himself by way of revelations which they get from Him (SWT) and they are empowered to guide the mankind by His Command. They are pious in their conduct and serve the cause of Allah (SWT) alone.

Just as we are careful in our daily lives in selecting a reliable carrier while sending something of value or importance from one destination to another Allah (SWT) too made arrangements for descent of these pious and guided Imams to this earth through a reliable and chosen lineage. The Quran confirms this fact in the following ayah:

- *"Ae Rasool (S.A.W) Bani Israel ko woh waqt bhi yaad dilao jab Ibrahim (A.S) ko unke Parvardigar ne chand baton main aazmaya aur unhone pura kar diya to Khuda ne farmaya Main tumko logon ka Imam banane wala hoon. **Hazrat Ibrahim (A.S) ne arz ki aur meri aulad main se.** Farmaya haan magar mere ahad per zaalimon main se koi shakhs faaez nahin ho sakta." – (Surah-e-Baqra, ayah 124)*

*("And when his Lord tried Ibrahim with certain commands, he fulfilled them. He said: **Surely I will make you an Imam of men.** Ibrahim said: **And of my offspring?** My covenant does not include the unjust, said He.")*

As mentioned in the ayah when Ibrahim (as) fulfilled all the commandments and trials which Allah (SWT) tried him with, Allah made him Imam of the righteous in his lifetime. **Ibrahim (as) further asked Allah (SWT) to bless his progeny with Imamate.** This wish was fulfilled by Allah (SWT) as He **made Imams descent on this earth through Ibrahim (as)'s lineage.** Quran testifies the presence of a guide to the mankind in the following ayah:

- *"(Ae Rasool (SAW)) tum to sirf khauf e Khuda se daraane wale ho, aur har qaum ke liye ek hidayat kar ne wala hai." – (Surah-e-Ra'ad, ayah 7)*

*"(O Prophet, surely, you are a warner and for **every people there is a guide**)".*

Sa`labi writes in his tafseer on the authority of Abdullah ibn Abbas that when this verse was revealed, **the Prophet said that through Ali (as) Muslims will be guided.** This has also been recorded by various authentic sources in other prominent books (Ref: Durr-e-Mansoor, Mulla Jalaluddin Suyuti, Vol 4 Page 45, Ibn-e-Asakir)

The prominent hadith of the holy prophet (pbuh), which is mentioned below, also supports the above ayah:

- *"Ali is **your guide** and all of you are to come to me at the Hauz-e-Kausar..." (Ref: Kanz-ul-Ummal Vol2, p. 350)*

➔ Allah (SWT) is an Entity which is not like anything else and cannot be compared with anything else. It is difficult to understand Him and hence He has kept Himself away from our vision and comprehension. He has created **His Authority – The Imams from the lineage of Ibrahim (as) and progeny of the holy Prophet (SAWW)** – to make us understand His Entity. Imam Ali (as) is the first Imam and guide upon us. The many trials and hardships he

underwent during his lifespan and the battles he fought were for the cause of Allah (SWT) alone.

It is knowledge which gives power and authenticity to leadership. Mawla Ali (as) is Imam chosen by Allah (SWT) hence **Imam Ali (as) is adorned with complete knowledge to exercise his authority upon us.** Quran endorses his knowledge in the ayah mentioned below:

- “*Aur Ae Rasool (SAW) kafir log kehte hai ke tum paighambar nahin ho to tum un se kehdo ke mere aur tumhare darmiyan meri risalat ki gawahi ke waste Khuda aur wo shakhs jis ko aasmani kitab ka ilm hai kafi hai.” – (Surah-e-Raad, Ayah 43)*

*(“Yet those who are disbelievers say: "You are not the apostle sent (by God)." Tell them: "God is sufficient as witness between me and you, **and he who has knowledge of the Book.**”)*

As per the Islamic scholars and historians **the witness mentioned in the above ayah who has the complete knowledge of the book is Imam Ali (as).** (Ref: Tafseer-e-Suyuti, Vol 4, P 69, Ahteyaj-e-Tabresi, Tafseer-e-Ayashi)

The holy Prophet (SAWW) in the following hadith further confirms about the knowledge of Mawla Ali (as):

- “O mankind, **there is no such knowledge which Allah has not taught me, and I have not taught Ali (as)** and whatever knowledge Allah taught me, Allah confined it in me; and **I confined it in Imam-ul-Mutaqeen (as).**”

Allama Ibn Hajar has mentioned a tradition according to which the holy Prophet (pbuh) has said:

- “**O Ali you will be the distributor of Heaven and Hell** - you will say to Hell: “This one is for thee and that one for me.”

To deliver a just verdict, a judge should know each and every aspect of the matter which comes to him. In the light of the above hadith if Mawla Ali (as) is the appointed judge on the day of Judgement he should have the complete records of every human being born since Aadam (as) till the day of Judgement to do the justice. Hence the Quran says:

- “*Hum hi yaqeenan murdon ko zinda karte hai aur jo kuch wo log pehle kar chuke hai unko aur unki achhi ya buri baaqi maanda nishaaniyon ko likhte jaate hai aur Hum ne har cheez ko Imam-e-Mubeen main gher diya hai.” – (Surah-e-Yaasin, ayah 12)*

*(“Surely We give life to the dead, and We write down what they have sent before and their footprints, and We have **recorded everything in Imam-e-Mubeen**”)*

In the above ayah Allah (SWT) says that **every good or bad deed of mankind is recorded in “Imam-e-Mubeen”.**

When this ayah was revealed, Abu Bakr and Umar were standing beside the Prophet (pbuh) they asked whether Imam-e-Mubeen was ‘*Tauret*’? He (pbuh) said ‘No’, then they asked whether it was ‘*Injeel*’ to which he again said ‘No’, they further asked whether it was ‘*Quran*’ he again replied in negative. At this moment Mawla Ali (as) appeared from the front, **he said pointing towards Imam Ali that he is “*Imam-e-Mubeen.*”** (Ref: *Durr-e-Mansoor, Vol 5 P 261, Jalaluddin Suyuti, Ubaid bin Hamid bin Jureira, Ibn-e-Abi Hakim*)

And Imam Ali (as) has said:

- “I swear by Allah, **I am the Imam-e-Mubeen (Obvious Imam), I state clearly what is right and wrong**, and I got this designation in inheritance from the holy Prophet (pbuh).”

→ Imam Ali (as) is *Imam e Mubeen* and appointed authority of Allah (SWT). He has been empowered to guide us to *Hauz-e-Kausar*. He has been bestowed upon with the complete knowledge of deeds of the mankind and thus would be the distributor of Heaven and Hell amongst them.

In the introductory section of this article we inferred that if we consider someone not appointed by Allah (SWT) as the authority upon us it would lead to ‘*Shirk*’ and misguidance. The following ayah confirms this inference:

- “*Aur yeh log Khuda ko chhodkar unn logon ki ibadat karte hain jinke liye na to Khuda hi ne koi sanad naazil ki hai aur na uss (ke haq hone) ka khud unhain ilm hai aur qayamat main to zaalimon ka koi madadgar bhi nahin hoga.*” - (Surah-e- Al Hajj, ayah 71)

“(And they serve besides Allah that for **which He has not sent any authority**, and that of which they have no knowledge; and **for the unjust there shall be no helper.**)”

The ayah explains that **to serve the people not appointed as an authority by Allah (SWT) is to be unjust** and such people would not find any helper. Hence it is important to recognize Allah’s Authority – the Imams from the progeny of the holy Prophet (SAWW) - to remain guided and steadfast on the path of Allah.

In the same introductory section we saw *ayah 75* from *Surah-e-Nisa*, which seeks a guardian and a helper from Allah (SWT). In this ayah Allah (SWT) hinted that **He has appointed a Guardian and a Helper for us**. While in the following ayahs (5:55:56) from *Surah-e-Maida* Allah (SWT) clearly indicates to us our true guardians:

إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ رَاكِعُونَ
وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فَإِنَّ حِزْبَ اللَّهِ هُمُ الْغَالِبُونَ

“(Verily your *Vali (Guardian)* is only Allah and His messenger **and those who believe; those who establish worship and pay the poor-rate while they bow down in prayer.** And

whoever takes Allah and His apostle and those who believe for a guardian, then surely the party of Allah are they that shall be triumphant)”

As per the ayah, the Muslims have 3 ‘Vali’ (guardians) above them. They are Allah (SWT), the Holy Prophet (SAW) and a Momin **who pays the poor-rate while bowing down in ruku**. The momin mentioned in the ayah is **Ameerulmomeen - Mawla Ali, who gave his ring to a beggar while bowing down in ruku**. (Ref: Imam Nasai in Saheeh-e-Nasai, Aljam’a Bain-ul-Sihah-ul-Sittah, Sa’labi)

Imam Baqer (as) has said:

- **“Allah Almighty assigned Ali (as) as a banner between Him and His creations. Hence whoever knows him is a believer; whoever denies him is a disbeliever; whoever does not know him is lost; whoever believes in another matter along with him (as) is a polytheist and whoever believes in his Wilayah (Divine Guardianship) shall enter Heaven.”** (Ref: Al Kafi vol 1 P. 437, Al Bihar vol 32 P 364, Amali Al Tousi P 487, Hilat Al Abrar vol 2 P 422, Al Hada’iq Al Nadira vol 18 P. 148, Kamal Al Deen P 412)

➔ Thus we have 3 ‘Vali’ (Guardians). **1) Allah Himself** - Allah’s Greatest Entity **2) The Holy Prophet (pbuh)** – Allah’s Greatest Prophet and **3) Imam Ali (as)** – Allah’s Greatest Authority. Love for Imam Ali (as) is the foundation of belief of any momin as **He is Ameerulmomeen** and whoever recognizes his wilaya and follows him joins Allah’s triumphant Party. **He is the assigned banner** between us and Allah (SWT). Thus **it is important to understand his ‘wilaya’ to understand Allah’s Entity in a true sense.**

On the day of judgment, the destiny of the followers would depend on the destiny of Imam they followed. Some imams are those who invite people to Hell fire. They are tyrannical leaders of each era (like Pharaoh, etc.). The presence of such imams is mentioned in the ayah below:

- **“Aur Humne unnko (gumrahon ka) imam banaya ke (logon ko) Jahannum ki taraf bulate hain aur Qayamat ke din (aise bekas hongee ki) unnko kisi tarah ki madad na di jayegi.”** – (Surah-e-Qasas, ayah 41)

(“And We made them (but) imams inviting to the Fire; and on the Day of Judgment no help shall they find.”)

In order to save ourselves from such imams it is important to recognize a true Imam duly authorized by Allah (SWT). In this world people are identified and recognized by their surname and a family name. If a person has a reputed and a noble family name behind him, the people would view him with an eye of respect, in the same way on the day of Judgement we would be identified and recognized by our Imams.

- **“Uss din (ko yaad karo) jab Hum tamam logon ko unn ke Imamom ke saath bulayenge.”** – (Surah-e-Isra, ayah 71)

(Remember) the day when **We will call every people with their Imam**

If the Imams we follow in this world were noble and were duly appointed by Allah (SWT), only then shall we be seen with respect on the day of Judgement and be worthy of attaining salvation. Recognizing and understanding their *wilaya* is the passport for crossing the bridge of *Sirat* as confirmed by our beloved Prophet (SAWW):

- **“He alone will cross the bridge of *Sirat* whom Ali permits.”**

Before we conclude the article let us see couple of ahadith of the holy Prophet (SAWW) and an excerpt of a sermon of Mawla Ali (as) on Imams from the Progeny of the holy Prophet (SAWW):

- ‘In every generation of my followers there are going to be **just and righteous members of my Ahl-ul-bait** to counteract the alterations and corruptions which the misguided people will try to make in my religion, to remove false allegations of the untruthful and to contradict the misinterpretations of the ignorant. Beware ! **Your Imams (pontiffs) shall be your representatives before Allah.** So, be careful whom you adopt as your representatives.” (Ref: Recorded by Mulla (Jami) in his *Seerat* and also by Ibn-e-Hajar in *Sawaiq-e-Mohriqa*, P. 90)
- ‘Mine will be **twelve Amirs.** And all of them would come down from **the Quraish.**” (Ref: Recorded by Jabir Bin Samarah, *Saheeh Bukhari*, P 628, *Saheeh Muslim* vol. 2, 119)
- “Where are those who falsely and unjustly claimed that they are deeply versed in knowledge, as against us, although **Allah raised us in position** and kept them down, bestowed upon us **knowledge** but deprived them, **and entered us (in the fortress of knowledge)** but kept them out. **With us guidance is to be sought** and blindness (of misguidance) is to be changed into brightness. **Surely Imams (divine leaders) will be from the Quraysh. They have been planted in this line through Hashim.** It would not suit others nor would others be suitable as heads of affairs.” – (Ref: *Imam Ali’s Sermon 143, Nahjul balagha*)

➔ The 12 Imams from the holy Progeny of our beloved Prophet (SAWW) are the true guides and duly appointed authority of Allah (SWT) upon us. Following them and seeking help from them is faith and rejecting their *wilaya* is ‘*Kufr*’. Under their banner we would be identified and recognized on the day of Judgement and hence let us pray to Allah (SWT) that our beloved 12th Imam (Imam Mehdi (as)) comes out of occultation soon and be our guardian and provide us safety under his banner. Aamin

