

Introduction of Imam^{asws}

Hadeeth -e- Tariq¹

Tariq bin Shihab asked: "O Ameer al-Momineen^{asws} please explain the virtues of an Imam (masoom), Ameer al-Momineen^{asws} replied:

"O Tariq, the Imam is the 'Kalima-tul-Allah' word of Allah; 'Hujat-Allah' the proof of Allah; 'Waj-Allah' the direction to Allah; 'Noor-Allah' the light of Allah; 'Hijab-Allah' the veil of Allah and 'Aiat-Allah' the sign of Allah². He^{asws} is chosen by Allah^{azwj} who bestows onto him whatever (qualities, perfections) He^{azwj} Chooses, and Makes it compulsory on all His creatures to Obey him-the Imam. Thus he is Allah^{azwj}'s appointed ruler in the heavens and on the earth. Allah^{azwj} has taken a covenant regarding this from all His servants. Whosoever precedes the Imam^{asws} has denied established kingdom of Allah^{azwj}. An Imam^{asws} can act as he finds it appropriate, however his actions only correspond to the will of Allah^{azwj}.

Inscribed on his upper limb is the-declaration: The words of Allah^{azwj} are accomplished with truth and justice. For the Imam^{asws} are both the justice and the truth. A column of light (stretching) from the earth to the sky is created for him, in which he witnesses the actions of the mankind. He^{asws} is enrobed in the cloak of power and dignity; he knows what is in the minds and has access to the unseen-al-ghayb; he has been entrusted with absolute power (in conducting his affairs); he beholds all that rests between the dominions of the East and the West: Nor is anything from the realms of 'Mulk and Malakoot' which is hidden from him; and he has the ability to communicate with the birds, who submit to his^{asws} Wilayah³.

Thus, he is the only one, whom Allah^{azwj} has chosen for His revelations, has approved him for (knowledge of) the al-ghaib (Unseen), has strengthened him by his speech, and instructed him in wisdom. His heart has made a station for His will. (Allah^{azwj}) has proclaimed his governance and has granted him the (privilege) to rule, and has commanded all to obey him. This is because the Imamate is the legacy of the Prophets, is equal to the rank (Manzilat) of the Awsiyaa (those who instruct to good). Indeed it is the vicegerency of Allah^{azwj} and his messengers and therefore is regarded

¹ Khutabah of Amir ul momaneen^{a.s.}, Nahjul Asrar

² These titles of masoom Imam^{a.s.} are frequently used by non-masoom Mullahs^{l.a} of our time, as did Abu Bakr^{l.a}, Ummer^{l.a} and Usman^{l.a} in the past.

³ Total authority and command on all aspects of life.

infallible, with (true) dominion and governance. Indeed, it is the (True) guidance since it is the perfection of the 'deen' and the benchmark of all virtues.

The Imam^{asws}, is the guide for the seekers of the truth, an inspiration for the rightly guided, an established path for the travellers to Allah^{azwj} and a radiant sun in the hearts of devotees of Allah^{azwj} (al-Arifoon). His Wilayah is the vehicle leading to salvation, submission to him is obligatory in this life, (and has many benefits) as well as an instrument (of deliverance) in the hereafter, he is the source of courage and glory (izz) for the true believers; means of intercession for the sinners; a minarets of deliverance for those who immensely love him; a standard of triumph for the obedient. This is due to the fact that Imam, is the only one who can guide to the real Islamic path, through revealing the virtues of 'Aman', recognition of limits of rewards and punishments and clarifying the laws related to permissible and forbidden. Thus this status is only given to no one but to the one who is specially nominated and blessed by Allah^{azwj} and is given a clear distinction and right to administer public affairs and is made sole responsible for people's sustenance. Indeed, Imam^{asws} provides knowledge of the boundaries and injunctions (of Allah^{azwj}) and makes clear the lawful and unlawful.

The Imamate is a station that none can reach except those whom Allah^{azwj} has chosen and has given them precedence (over others), investing them with the authority to rules and to judge. Thus wilayah is nothing other than safeguarding people from danger and disaster and the management of their all affairs, (even down to) demarcating the days and months.

The Imam^{asws}, is Fresh and sweet water for those thirsting (for knowledge & wisdom) A guide to true Guidance. The Imam^{asws}, is ayat-e-Tathir, acquainted with mysteries of the unseen. The Imam^{asws}, is the sun that rises over Allah^{azwj}'s servants with its (illuminating) rays.

The grasp and understanding of people cannot comprehend his^{asws} attributes. This is alluded to in the words of Allah^{azwj}, most high (in the Quran): "To Allah^{azwj} belongs fearlessness and glory (Izza) and to his messenger and to the believers". Here, the believers are being referred to as, Ali^{asws} and his progeny^{asws}. Thus might and glory is for Allah^{azwj}, His Prophet^{sqww} and his progeny^{asws}. (This verse shows that) the Prophet^{sqww} and his family cannot be separated from one another until the end of the time, they are at the centre of the sphere of the faith; they are the

poles of existence (i.e. around which all existent/ entities revolve); they are the sky of generosity and the honour of all creation; they are the radiance of the sun of tribute, and the illumination of its moon; they are the origin of all power and glory and the source of inspiration; they are faith's true meaning and its foundation.

The Imam^{asws}, is the bright source of light (to enlighten the dark and cruel) path; the flowing stream leading to Allah^{azwj}; stream of fresh water for the dried land; the swirling sea; the resplendent full moon (badr) and the brimming brook of guidance, the path and the deliverance in places of peril. The torrential cloud, the roving rain the perfect full moon, the noble guide, the shading sky, the glorious blessing, the sea that will never dry. Nobility that cannot be described, a fountain that forever flows, a garden (full of singing) birds, a fragrant and delightful flower (with) the sweetest smell and wafting aroma, the righteous conduct, the successful trade, the clear way, the gentle Physician, the compassionate father, the refuge for people in times of calamity, the judge, the command giver, the Prohibitor, Allah^{azwj}'s ruler over His people, His (Allah^{azwj}'s) confidant on (matters of) reality, Proof of Allah^{azwj} over His servants (He is) the object of pilgrimage on Allah^{azwj}'s earth and the universe, 'Informed' of the Unseen. His personal qualities cannot be encompassed, his inner virtues cannot be imagined and he is unfathomable reality. He is Unique of his age and unparallel to none. He is Allah^{azwj}'s deputy in His injunctions and prohibitions

There is none similar to him and no one can take his place.

So, who is there that can attain knowledge about us; or can reach our rank; or can witness our miracles; or can ever comprehend our status. In this matter, wisdom and intellect are bewildered; understanding becomes perplexed. Our status is so eloquent that the great ones appear worthless, and the scholars dwindle (into insignificance); the Poets become exhausted and wary; the genius stutter and are speechless; the noble orators begin to stammer; and the masters of language are humbled.

Who has the ability and perception to recognise even one Divine attribute of an Imam^{asws}, or could image or comprehend as the heavens and the earth are humbled when they (attempt) to describe the reality of the one who is in the focal point of the Universe, the pivot of all that revolve, the secrets of all that is possible to exist, the ray of Divine creator, the majesty of the Most Great and the honour of the heavens and the earth.

The station of the Prophet^{saww} 's progeny is exalted above description of the describers and the qualifications depicted by the highly qualified. Nor can they be compared with anyone in any realm or world. How could it be possible to describe them, since they are the first light (created by Allah^{azwj}), the lofty words, the radiant Divine names and the greater oneness of Allah^{azwj}. Thus whoever turned away from them has indeed deserted oneness of Allah^{azwj}, as they are the greatest veil of Allah^{azwj}.

Thus who has the merits to select such an Imam^{awsw}, who cannot be recognised by the wisdom. Actually, there is no one who had abilities to identify the noble Imam or even describe one of his virtues. However, those who image that some of the qualities of Prophet's progeny can be found in other people are, in fact, crafty liars and have gone astray from the righteous path and they chosen to worship the Calf (false god), as their Lord and have joined the ranks of shaytaan. This is all due to their intense animosity against the house of Devine qualities, and the family of the virtuousness and infallibility and jealousy towards the household of Prophet^{saww}.

Shaytaan has made them believe that their (devious) actions, after all, are honourable. May Allah^{azwj} destroy them and destine them towards hellfire. How could they have selected an ignorant as an Imam, who used to worship idols and was a well know deserter on the day of Holly wars (Battle). Although, it is incumbent that the Imam should be the most knowledgeable and not ignorant; brave and not withdrawing individual. And none should be superior to him in (nobility) descent and nor should be inferior (to anyone) in his lineage. Beware; the Imam can only be from the best of the Quraysh, the most nobility of Hashim and from the progeny of Abraham^{as}. He is from the bloodline of Prophet^{saww} and is the 'Nafas'-e-Rasool^{saww} 4. He is chosen by the will of Allah^{azwj} and his selection is directly executed by Allah^{azwj}.

Thus, he^{asws} is the honour of all nobles and a branch from the (descendants of) Abd Manaaf; he has (complete) knowledge of (worldly) affairs and is well versed in the governance (of all affairs). Obedience to him^{asws} is incumbent until the day of judgement and Allah^{azwj} has made his Heart a (vessel) for His mystery and elects to speak through Imam's tongue. Thus, He^{asws} is infallible, represents Allah^{azwj} and is free from any element of ignorance and weakness.

⁴ Replicating the qualities of Prophet^{saww}

O Tariq, the people have abandoned him and followed their own desires and who can be more astray than the one who follows his whims without any guidance from Allah^{azwj}. O Tariq! the Imam^{asws} may be considered like an angel in the appearance of human being, a heavenly body, a divine command, a sacred spirit, a lofty station, a manifest light, a hidden secret. He is angelic in essence with attributes of the Divine powers, endowed with unlimited good qualities, posses the knowledge of the realms of the Unseen, specifically chosen by the Lord of the Worlds and is connected with the Truthful and Trustworthy (messenger of Allah^{azwj}). All this is for the household of Muhammad^{saww} alone; nobody else can partake in this with them. This is because they are: the source of revelation and the meaning of its exposition; the elect of the Lord of Majesty; The place of Gibrael, Al-Ameen's descent; the words of the attributes of Allah^{azwj}; His secret and His words; the tree of Prophet hood; the source of chivalry; the essence of all opinions; the ultimate meaning and signification; the station of apostolic wisdom; the illumination of majesty in proximity to Allah^{azwj}, and in His care the location of Allah^{azwj}'s word; the key to his wisdom; the lamps of Allah^{azwj}'s mercy; the well springs of His bounty; the path that leads to Allah^{azwj}-the salsabeel-the Qistaas al Mustaqeem (the upright scale) the straight path; the remembrance (full) of wisdom; the noble face; the eternal light; possessors of honour and repute; take precedence over all noble and exalted; the successors of the noble Prophet^{saww}; the progeny of the compassionate and gentle (Prophet^{saww}); we are the progeny of one from the other, in the custody of the most High, the most Mighty- Allah^{azwj} knows all and observes all of these.

These are the immense and unmistakable signs of guidance and the straight path. Whosoever recognises them^{asws} and takes (guidance) from them^{asws}, he is belongs to us. As per Rasool Allah^{saww}'s statement, "He who follows me, surely he is from me", is an allusion to this (reality). Allah^{azwj} created them (Prophets household) from the illumination of his majesty and entrusted them with the governing of the affairs of His^{azwj} kingdom. (Thus there is no doubt) they are the treasured secret of Allah^{azwj} and His friends, those who are near (Awliya al-Muqarraboon).

Allah^{azwj}'s (creative) command is between the letter 'Kaaf' and the letter 'Nun'. Infact they are the 'Kaaf' and the 'Nun' since they invite to Allah^{azwj}, speak only what they receive from Him and carry out His commands. The knowledge of all the Prophets, the (divine) mysteries of the Awsiyaa and

the power and glory of the Awliyaa, in comparison to them^{asws}, is like a drop out of an ocean and a grain out of a desert. Indeed, the heavens and the earth to the Imam are like the hand and its palm. He recognises what is visible as well as what is hidden; He knows the pious among the sinners; what is in the wet and within the dry forms. This is because Allah^{azwj} has taught his Prophet^{saww} the knowledge of what has been passed and what would appear, and all these protected secrets were inherited by Prophet's noble Awliyah. Whosoever, denies this is a cruel and cursed wretch, and as such is cursed by Allah^{azwj} as well as by all those who also send curse in Allah^{azwj}'s obedience.

How could Allah^{azwj} make incumbent upon his servants the obedience of the one who is veiled from the mysteries of the heavens and the earth. The reality is that, a single word uttered (in Quran) in the praise of Aal-e-Muhammed, exceeds seventy dimensions (of knowledge). (Consider further), How often in the verses of the Noble reminder, the blessed book, the eternal words are mentioned in our praise, i.e., al-Ayn (eye), al-Wajh (face), al-Yadh (hand) and al-Janb (side). (It is obvious that) What is meant by these words is this Wilayah (pointing to himself^{asws}), as Imam^{asws} is the side of Allah^{azwj}, the face of Allah^{azwj}, that is, the reality of Allah^{azwj}, the knowledge of Allah^{azwj}, and the essence of Allah^{azwj}. (As for the phrase) 'Hand of Allah^{azwj}' they are the manifestation of the implicit dimensions of the visible attributes. Thus, their (Ahlai-bait's) implicit is the manifestation of the Allah^{azwj}'s explicit attributes. They^{asws} are the explicit manifestation of the implicit and the implicit dimensions of the explicit. This is alluded to in the saying of the Prophet^{saww} "Indeed Allah^{azwj} has no eyes and hands, but surely you and me, Ya Ali^{asws}, are from them".

They^{asws} (The Ahlai-Bait) are the most elevated side (Al-Janb al-Aliyy); the most agreeable face (al-Wajh ar-Radiyy); the thirst-quenching spring; and the straight path. They^{asws} are the means to (reach) Allah^{azwj}, the link to His^{azwj} pardon and His^{azwj} pleasure. They^{asws} are the mystery of the One, and the Uniqueness of the Unique (Allah^{azwj}). It is not possible to compare anyone from mankind with them^{asws}; They are: the elect of Allah^{azwj} and chosen purely by Him^{azwj}; the secret of religion and its wisdom; the gateway to faith and its Kaaba; the proof of Allah^{azwj} and His destination; the signposts of guidance and its standard; the grace of Allah^{azwj} and His mercy; the absolute certainty and its reality; the path of the Real and His protection; the origin of existence and its goal; the power of the Lord and His will; the source (origin) of the book and its end; the eloquent speech;

the symbols and guardians and protectors of the revelation; the verse of Rememberance and its interpretation; the origin of revelation and its final (destiny); they are the lofty stars; they are the elevated illuminations, kindled from the sun of Fatimah's honour in the sky or Muhammed's majesty; they are the branches of Prophet hood gushing forth from the tree of Ahmed; the divine mysteries placed in the form of a human (body).

The Ahlai-Bait^{asws} are: The pure progeny from Hashimite descent; the (truly) guide and the (truly) guided; thus they alone are the best of creation; they are the pure leaders; the infallible family (protected from sin); the noble offspring; the rightly guided successors (of the Prophet^{saww}); the greatest of the Siddiqeen (the truth ones); the noble Awsiyaa; the tribe whom Allah^{azwj} was pleased with; the rightly guided deliverers; the finest of the fine, from the family of Taha and Yaseen; The proof of Allah^{azwj} for the first and last.

Their names are etched on (every) stone, on (every) leaf of (every) tree, on the wings of every bird; on the gates of heavens and hell; on the throne (of Allah^{azwj}); on the horizons; on the wings of angels; on the veils of majesty and on the canopies of glory and beauty.

With their name the birds glorify (Allah^{azwj}) and fish in the depths of ocean ask for forgiveness on behalf of their followers.

In fact, Allah^{azwj} did not create anything until he made them declare the **oneness (of Allah^{azwj}), the wilayah (supremacy) of the pure progeny and revulsion for their enemies. The Throne (of Allah^{azwj}) did not attain stability until it was inscribed with Divine light; There is no deity except Allah^{azwj}, Muhammed is the messenger of Allah^{azwj}, and Ali^{asws} is the Wali of Allah^{azwj}.**