

To (remain patient and) wait for the Relief is the best kind of worship

The final hope

5- To prepare the ground for the Imam's appearance:

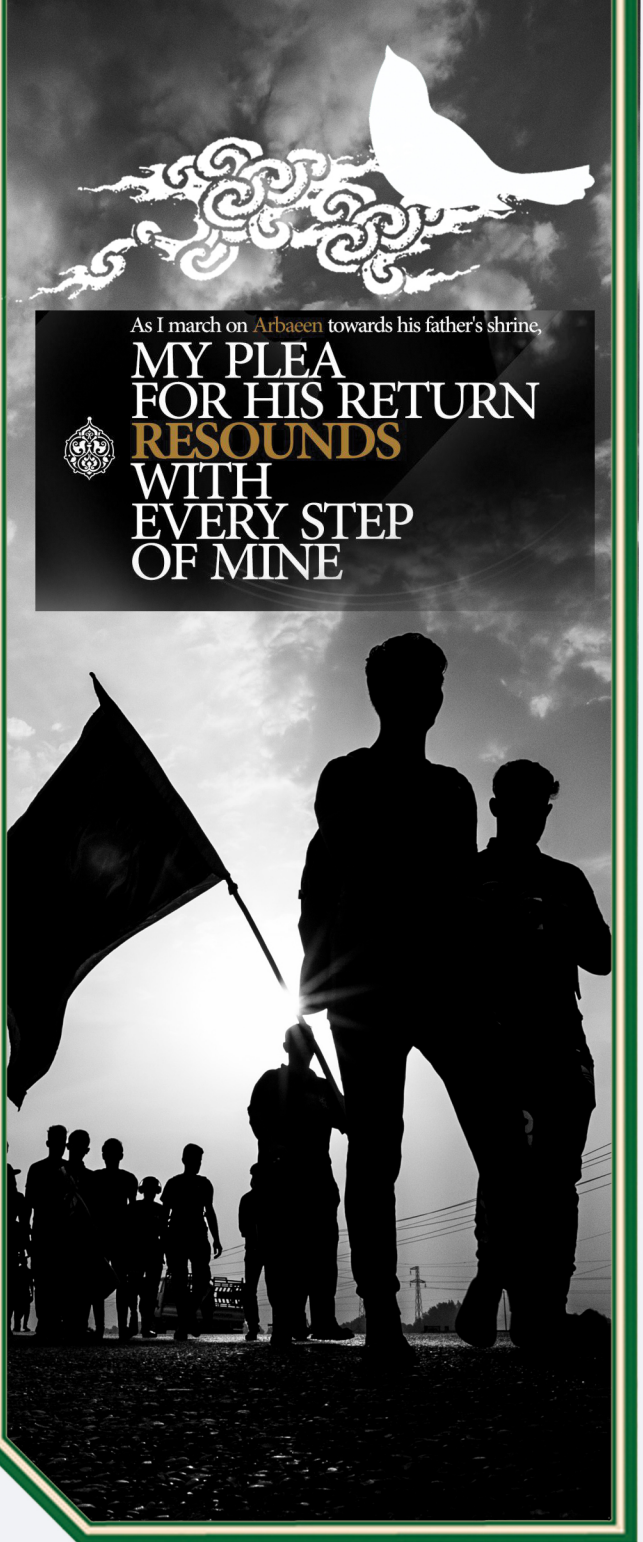
The Imam will come when he has enough followers, when people feel the real need of a savior, and when people in their personal and social affairs feel readiness to welcome him. Therefore, those who truly wait for the Imam should correct themselves and the society they live in. They should enjoin others to goodness and forbid them from evil actions. Also those who are aware of Islamic knowledge should transmit it to others, remind them of their duties in regard with the Imam, and to meet their misconceptions.

Consequently, we should pray to God to make us one of those who await the Imam. Our acts should also be a testimony of our claim and should pray for Imam Mahdi to return sooner. Also it is recommended that if we face a problem ask Imam Mahdi to help us that he with the permission of God will attend to our need. God may hasten to his appearance and make us one of his companions.

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Arbaeen The Largest annual peaceful gathering in the world



As I march on **Arbaeen** towards his father's shrine,

**MY PLEA
FOR HIS RETURN
RESOUNDS
WITH
EVERY STEP
OF MINE**

The Prophet says:

“To (remain patient and) wait for the Relief is the best kind of worship.”

(Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 52, p. 25)

Main Duties of Those Who Are Expectant for the Advent of Imam al-Mahdi

Introduction:

Awaiting the advent of Imam al-Mahdi, as the Last Savior, plays a key role in maintaining people's belief and in helping them to remain patient and firm. Those who believe in the appearance of the Imam, surely know that all of the difficulties they sustain during the time of Occultation and all of what they do to prepare the ground for the Imam's coming, would not be in vain and they will be rewarded by God even if the appearance of the Imam does not take place in their lifetime.

Whereas we live at the time of Occultation, we do not have a direct access to our Imam. But, the Imam lives among us, sees us, hears us, clearly witnesses our actions, and attends to our problems. The time of Occultation is a time we have to try our best to remain firm and pious and that the absence of our Imam do not let us become weak in our belief. This is a time that we are exposed to various forms of divine trials and should try to pass it successfully. One who waits for the Imam to come should pursue the following factors:

1- To increase the knowledge about the Imam:

Prophet Muhammad says, "One who dies without knowing the Imam of his age is like one who has died at the Age of Ignorance." Death in the Age of Ignorance means dying outside the pale of faith and Islam. An ignorant man never follows the verdict of his intellect and his religion and does what his carnal desires dictates. In summary, this narration contains the following points:

- It is duty upon everyone to know the Imam of his time; and to recognize the Imam is part of the religion. On the other hand, not to know him or to reject him is rendered as to be like the people at the Age of Ignorance.
- The one who dies while he did not accept the leadership of the Imam his death is like the Death of Ignorance though he would be a learning man.
- People should obey the Imam and should listen to his orders.
- In each time, there should be an Imam and the line of these consecutive Imams should not be broken even for a short period of time (so that there would be no one to die without an Imam in that time.)



Imam is one who is the container of all Islamic values and if one does not recognize him, he will be void of many of those merits. Therefore, it is important for us to know how a true believer should act while waiting for the return of Imam Mahdi.

2- To remember the Imam more often:

One of the biggest responsibility of Shias during the major occultation is waiting for the Imam's appearance. This point that is repeatedly mentioned in Islamic narrations means that one has to always remember the Imam. Of course, the hearts of a real expectant ones usually have an inclination towards their Imam. They pray for the Imam, loves him, respects him and asks Allah to hasten the Imam's appearance. Many people wish to see him so, attend regularly the Mosques of Jamkarān or Sahlah, or other holy places to have a better spiritual closeness with him, to talk to him and to ask him to solve their problems. But the key point here is that how much we try to make our actions similar to those of our Imam's. If we wish our Imam to come sooner to reform the world and to purify it, how much do we try to do the same in our life? If we love our Imam since he is the best example of a pious man, how much do we attempt to be pious? Just to wish, pray, and want, but practically do something else is the greatest kind of abnormality. Real expectant followers of the Imam, should act like a ready soldier who is always careful to listen to the order of his commander and should not withhold any possible assistance. As much as we try to liken our actions to our Imam's it indicates that we are more true to our beliefs.

3- To try to maintain the belief:

The time of Occultation is a time many would gradually become weak in their belief, become tired of waiting and become disappointed. They would face many misconceptions about Islam in which they by themselves could not find the answer. During this time that is lasted for more than a thousand year and would last for many years, one has to connect himself to the representatives of the Imam who are the qualified Islamic experts, should try his best not to lose hope and to know that the promise of God about the appearance of the Imam will actualize in a day, soon or later. The time of difficulties will pass and just those who have remained firm will be rewarded.

4- To Pay attention to the real meaning of awaiting:

Those who are waiting for the appearance of Imam Mahdi should live like true believers. When people expect someone, this expectation should be manifested in all of their behaviors and actions. For instance, if someone is expecting a guest, he/she cleans the house and gets prepared to be a good host. He or she wears good clothes and waits for the guest with a welcoming attitude. Such a person could claim that he/she is expecting someone. But if he/she has not cleaned the house and has not prepared anything for that guest or, is not even thinking about the guest, then if he/she claims that he/she is expecting someone, people will just laugh at him/her, or think that he/she is lying. In regard with waiting for the appearance of the Imam, one has to make himself/herself spiritually prepared which is done by paying attention to his/her religious duties.

In fact, the real meaning of awaiting is to remember our duties and to be always mindful of our responsibilities and to never let the absence of our Imam lead us to negligence. If I am a tyrant or an oppressor then how can I wait for the one who will oppose oppression? This is why we say that waiting means a complete awareness about not to do anything wrong.

ve remained firm will be rewarded.

