

## **The 12<sup>th</sup> Imam – *By Rabiya Kermalli***

The Prophet has said: “No one is considered to be a believer from me except those who love me more than themselves and love my children more than they love their children”. Today, the only living person who can claim to be the son of the Prophet is the 12<sup>th</sup> Imam, our living guide. He is the Imam of our time.

It is because of him that Allah has created the sun to rise every morning and the oxygen to allow us to breathe. We, as people living during his time are just benefiting off of this air.

From the hadith that I started with, it is clear that we need to love this Imam more than we love our own children. If we do not do this, we simply do not believe in the prophet. This love is something very difficult to cultivate into our hearts and requires time and deep devotion of our selves. To understand what it means to love the twelfth Imam, let us relate to how the mother loves her child.

When a mother sends her child to school, she is expecting for him or her to be home at the dot of three. One minute late, the mother brushes it away, five minutes late, the mother keeps glancing at the clock, ten minutes late, the worry starts nagging at the mother, half an hour late the mother starts panicking. An hour late, the mother is not only panicking, but calling the school, the police, and is beside herself with worry. She can't think, she can hardly breathe because she is waiting for her child to be home.

This is how we Shias who love our Imam should be waiting for him. And when we collectively have this need and anticipation for our Imam, as a community of Shias, then only will he come. As we are waiting for our Imam to reappear, so is he waiting for the order from Allah to establish Allah's rule on earth.

This emotion of love is not just a feeling. It is doing, it is action. When a mother smiles lovingly at her child, it is the result of this inner feeling of love. When we love the Imam, we need to do something with our love.

For instance the desire to meet a loved one comes with much anticipation and anticipation. When one loves another, they are always aware of the other person's likes and dislikes. The person strives to please his loved one. Whatever pleases the loved one, pleases the one who loves.

In this respect, in one of the Imam's letters to Sheikh Mufid (RA), the Imam writes, "Every person among you should do those things that draw him nearer to us, the Ahlul Bayt, and should keep away from those things that we do not like."

Why is loving the Imam so important? The prophet before departing from this world said, "I leave behind me two precious things, the Qur'an and the Ahlul-Bayt. If you attach yourselves to these two, you will never, never go astray, after me, because these two things, will not separate themselves from each other, until they meet at the spring of kawther."

The Imam lives among us and visits us frequently. Awareness of his presence is essential if we want to benefit fully from his ghaybah. The prophet has said, "The best action of my ummah during the "akhiruzzamaan" is to wait for the reappearance of the Mahdi." The Imam wants to see us firm and steadfast in our faith, despite the corruptive outside world.

A hadith from Imam Zaynul Abideen says, "Whoever remains firm in our love during the absence of our Qaim, Allah will reward him with the equivalent reward of a thousand martyrs from among those martyred in Badr and Uhd."

We might wonder, How is this love of the Imam cultivated? Here are a few ways to create this desire to love the Imam.

Daily recitation of Duas related to the 12<sup>th</sup> Imam, like Ziyarat Ala'Yasin, Dua Ahd, Dua Nudbeh and Ziyarat Nahiya.

Giving Sadaqa daily or weekly, specifically for the health and safety of the 12<sup>th</sup> Imam. This sadaqah is not because he needs it, but because we need him. Remember my dear sisters, we are living on borrowed air.”

Also doing mustahab A'maals with the intention of giving the thawab to the 12<sup>th</sup> Imam will automatically create this love in our hearts for the 12<sup>th</sup> Imam.

Researching about the 12<sup>th</sup> Imam, wanting to know about his status, his history also comes naturally when our love for him becomes intense.

In Ziyarat Nahiya we come to understand how the Imam feels everyday and every night because of the tragedy of Imam Hussein. Loving the Imam of our time, we should be feeling the same way. Imam, in ziyarat Nahiya says if he had been present with Imam Husain at Karbala, he would have sacrificed his last drop of blood for Imam Husain. He would have sacrificed his body and soul, property and children for Imam Husain. Imam says, because I have been pushed behind by the passage of time and I was prevented from helping you and could not fight those who had fought you, and since I had not been able to face your enemies I will continue to weep morning and evening and weep for you, with tears of blood. The pain and sorrows of your calamities and the painful sighs will never recede, so much so, that I will depart from this world with the same grief and sorrow of the tribulations suffered by you”. Our Imams do not exaggerate. If he says he cries morning and evening tears of blood, he does just this. Let us not forget to send our condolences to the 12<sup>th</sup> time, during these difficult months, on the death of his grandfather.

In Dua Nudbah, we say, where is the seeker of revenge for the blood of the one martyred in Karbala? I ask where is the one who will come and ease the pain in the heart of Bibi Fatima (as).  
Ya Allah Hasten the reappearance of the 12<sup>th</sup> Imam.

