

*In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful
Blessings of Allah be on you, O Saaheb al-Amr, help us and forsake us not*

Who is a Shia?

The word 'Shia' is a term that denotes a 'follower of someone' or a 'partisan'. In the context of this booklet, a Shia is taken to be the one who is a follower of Hazrat Ali b. Abi Talib (a.s.) and his immaculate sons (a.s.) in the matter of all affairs related to the world and the hereafter. The Shias have assumed this subservient role as they believe that to be the command of Allah. As evidence they advance the following tradition of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.):

'I am the City of Knowledge and Ali is its Gate. One who wants to enter the City must enter from the Gate.'

Al-Bidaaya wa al-Nihaaya v 7 p 358, 133, Al-Mustadrak Alaa Al-Sahihain v 3, p 126

It is acknowledged by all Muslims that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) is the fountainhead of all Islamic science related to actions, beliefs, ethics and jurisprudence. It is for this reason that the Shias adhere to none other than Hazrat Ali (a.s.) and his immaculate sons (a.s.) in the post-Prophet era. If the Islamic sciences are derived from any other source, it will be in direct contravention of the numerous assertions of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) designating Hazrat Ali (a.s.) and his sons (a.s.) as the divinely appointed successors of religion.

In addition to this tradition, there are innumerable occasions when the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) publicly appointed Hazrat Ali (a.s.) as his successor right from the dawn of Islam (Daawat-e-Zul Asheera) till the last days of his life (Ghadeer-e-Khum). He not only vehemently announced Hazrat Ali's (a.s.) caliphate but was also particular in making the Muslims pledge their allegiance to him as their Master and Guardian. In response, the Muslims not only pledged their allegiance to Hazrat Ali (a.s.), but also saluted him as Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) – Commander of the Believers.

Taarikh-e-Ibne Asaakir v 2 p 260, Al-Ghadeer v 1 p 270

Moreover, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) emphasized that to love Hazrat Ali (a.s.) was faith and piety and to hate him was apostasy and hypocrisy.

Kashf al-Ghummah v 1, p 121

It is for this reason that in the era of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) himself, there were a group of Muslims who were devoted to Hazrat Ali (a.s.) and adhered to his commands. These Muslims came to be identified as 'Shias of Ali'. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) himself mentioned these Muslims as 'the best of men' (Khair al-Bariyyah).

Surah Bayyinah (98): 7)

He informed Hazrat Ali (a.s.) – O Ali, you and your Shias are the exemplars of this Quranic verse. You all will be the contented ones on the Day of Resurrection. May Allah be pleased with all of you.

Tafseer-e-Durr al-Mansoor v 1, p 379 by Jalaal al-Deen Suyuti a revered Ahle Sunnah scholar.

Ghaayah al-Maraam p 226

The term ‘Shia’ was coined by none other than the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) himself which establishes the authenticity of this sect as opposed to other sects of Islam which came into existence long after the demise of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.).

How the Shias Gained Prominence

The Holy Quran is a divine revelation. Its laws are binding on all Muslims. No one has the authority to interpret the Holy Quran according to his own whims and fancies. In this regard, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) declared –

‘One who interprets the Quran according to his own whims and fancies will be made to reside in the Fire.’

However, after he (s.a.w.a.) passed away, the Muslims disregarded the Prophet’s (s.a.w.a.) instruction and interpreted the Quran to suit their agenda. The most telling consequence of this action was that one Quranic verse came to contradict another Quranic verse. Moreover, Islamic laws were twisted to suit the political rulers of the era bringing them in conflict with the Holy Quran. For e.g. Islam has ordained public stoning for the adulterer. However, the rulers of the era elevated such disgraceful persons to positions of power hiding behind the excuse of Ijtehaad i.e. derivation of Islamic laws, which in fact were in contravention of the Holy Quran and the Sunnah. Likewise, while Islam permits Muslims to inherit property, the rulers of the era confiscated the property of the Muslims arbitrarily to fill the government’s coffers. These are but some examples of the sins of commission and omission of the rulers of the era.

Under the circumstances, some people remained satisfied with the situation because they stood to benefit from the same. While some yes men went along with the situation because they were too timid to protest. However, a select group of Muslims thought it more important to please the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) than the rulers of the era and boldly registered their protests at great risk to their lives. They found unpalatable the open flouting of Islamic laws and misinterpretation of the Holy Quran. Even more disgusting for them was the fact that the violation of Islamic laws and misconstruing of Quranic verses was occurring at a time when the Door to the City of Knowledge was present amongst the people. It was baffling to this select group of the Prophet’s (s.a.w.a.) companions, why the Muslims were not approaching the chosen one of the Prophet

(s.a.w.a.) to resolve the difficult matters of the Quran and religion. After all, he was appointed for this very purpose by Allah and His Prophet (s.a.w.a.). Then why was he being mistreated? Why was the caliphate usurped from him?

As their protests got shriller discomfoting the caliphate, the illegitimacy of the latter became apparent to the other Muslims. They joined the protesting Muslims and demanded that Islam be interpreted in the light of the Ahle Bait's (a.s.) teachings. Of course, this did not go down very well with the rulers of the era. They particularly did not like it when this group of conscious Muslims highlighted in public the many mistakes and blunders of the rulers in interpreting Islamic laws with complete disregard to the Holy Quran and the Sunnah. In a bid to stifle the growing dissent, the rulers imposed harsh penalties on the leading figures of the revolt. The inhuman treatment meted out to Hazrat Abu Zarr (r.a.) ultimately resulting in his death, is but one example of the government clampdown.

Fundamental Reason

The point that distinguished this group of Muslims from the others was their vehemence in demanding that Hazrat Ali b. Abi Talib's (a.s.) right to caliphate be recognized. They backed this claim with irrefutable proof from the Holy Quran and the Prophet's (s.a.w.a.) Sunnah. They emphasized that with the overwhelming evidence of Quranic verses and traditions, it was not possible to reject Hazrat Ali's (a.s.) caliphate and appoint others in his place. The Muslims have no say in a matter when Allah and His Apostle have already decided the same.

(Surah Ahzaab (33): 36)

Those who usurped the caliphate offered the following excuse to defend their action – since Hazrat Ali (a.s.) had participated in most of the battles from the earliest days of Islam and had killed many apostates in the process, he would not be acceptable to the vast majority of the Muslims who were descendants of those killed by him.

To refute this baseless argument we only need to ask them only one question – did Hazrat Ali (a.s.) kill these people for personal gain or for a higher cause i.e. Islam? The answer is obvious – all his actions including battle were for the sake of Islam. His untold sacrifices in the way of Allah and His Prophet (s.a.w.a.) find mention in the Holy Quran itself and even his staunchest enemies confess to the same. In light of this, the Muslims should have rallied behind Hazrat Ali (a.s.) rather than sympathizing with the apostates who were killed by Hazrat Ali (a.s.) on the orders Allah and His Prophet (s.a.w.a.). Maybe this explains why some Muslims chose not to participate actively in the battles so as to not offend the apostates as this would impact their ability to claim caliphate at a later stage.

Even if, for a moment, this argument were to be considered, reason demands that when some obstinate people are opposed to the truth they should be counselled to form a favourable opinion of the truth rather than giving in to their perverse views. Clearly, there is no point in taking a

stand on truthfulness if there is no inclination to persuade those on falsehood to align themselves with the truth.

Briefly put, the Muslims who were aligned with Hazrat Ali (a.s.) were presented baseless arguments by the rulers of the era to justify the unsuitability of Hazrat Ali (a.s.) for caliphate. On their part these Muslims refused to be cowed down by the rulers and their nonsensical arguments and posed an unwavering opposition to them. In this manner, they became eligible for the divine reward and all the Muslims who tread their path after them are obliged to them.

This should make it abundantly clear that Shias are not a group of people divorced from Islam. On the contrary, they are Muslims who existed right from the time of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and chose to align themselves with the City of Knowledge (Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and its Gate (Hazrat Ali (a.s.)) in all matters of knowledge, laws, beliefs and ethics. Therefore there is no question of branding them as infidels or non-Muslims or deviated Muslims.

Teachings

Religious teachings can be divided into two parts. One part is related to beliefs to which one testifies from the depths of one's heart. These are defined as the Roots of Religion i.e. Usool-e-Deen. The other part is related to the physical aspects of one's existence viz. arms and limbs. These religious laws and decrees (Ahkaam) form the Branches of Religion i.e. Furu-e-Deen. In addition to this twin structure, there is another science of religion i.e. Ethics (Akhlaaq). For the sake of brevity, we have explained these teachings in brief. Interested readers can refer to the reliable book of Shias for the details.

A) Beliefs

1) Recognition of Allah

A moment of reflection, even if a passing one, leads man to conclude that although his existence is apparently his own, he is dependent for the most basic needs of life on others. Every phase of his life is punctuated with changes and tumult. One moment he is happy, while the next moment he is sad. One moment he experiences pleasure, while in the next moment he senses pain. All this leads him to conclude that another power exercises control over him more than he exercises over himself. This power forces the change in his existence that he is helpless to control. Sickness after health, pain after pleasure, sorrow after joy are the changes that he must live with and about which he cannot do anything. These changes make man reflect on the poverty of his own existence and the strength of the power that so effortlessly controls his existence. When he perceives the untraversable chasm between himself and the power, he invariably falls in prostration before this power out of submission. He is influenced to the core by this power because at some stage he realizes that he possesses innumerable bounties while he did not deserve a single bounty nor did he ever beseech the power to grant him one. This only

underscores his helplessness before the almighty power and inspires him to readily worship the power.

This is the reason for the repeated reference to this notion in the traditions of the Ahle Bait (a.s.):

Arabic

‘One who recognizes himself has recognized his Lord.’

The path to divine recognition is paved with a moment of reflection on one’s poverty and the unlimited power of the Creator. It is another matter, however, that man’s innumerable worldly engagements leave him with no time to reflect on himself.

2) Justice of Allah

If the two root causes of oppression were to be shortlisted, weakness and desires would rank the highest. One, who is a victim of his desires and is incapable of acquiring them legitimately, will not hesitate to oppress so as to achieve his desires. Individuals gripped by the desire to amass wealth, property or ruler ship understand that these can rarely be acquired legitimately. So they do not think twice before wreaking oppression in a bid to usurp this from others. This concept can be traced to a supplication recited on Thursday nights:

Arabic

‘Only the weak resort to oppression.’

We have already defined the Creator who is wealthy beyond comprehension and who grants to His Creatures so much so that His Bounties are beyond enumeration. So there is no question of Him resorting to oppression.

Moreover, when man reflects on himself and on the world around him he finds everything, big and small, positioned in the most appropriate place. He witnesses order and harmony in everything. The precise arrangement leads him to conclude that the Creator is Just.

3) Recognition of the Prophets (a.s.) - Prophethood

Everything that is created attempts to gain perfection. Be it a seed that is planted in the earth or an embryo in the womb; the journey towards perfection can be observed everywhere around us. It is no different with man, who came into being as a clot and is since continuously engaged in striving towards perfection.

Man’s creation is two-dimensional. While his body is materialistic , his soul is spiritual. Man’s spirituality is a defining trait that distinguishes him from other creations.

Mankind’s other distinguishing trait is its affiliation for all things social. Man prefers to live in a society with others which gives rise to social equations and responsibilities. This calls for laws

and regulations to ensure that these social responsibilities are fulfilled in a manner that suits all members of the society. Laws are aimed at eschewing oppression and violations of rights thereby promoting an atmosphere of peace and security in society. This way human society can progress towards perfection in a manner that is in harmony with Allah's Wish.

Without doubt to achieve such a state of idealism is demanding and not within man's grasp. Therefore he is in need of a divine guide to implement Allah's plan for human society. The guide being Allah's Representative on earth, must first and foremost, himself eschew all kinds of oppression and sins and be a model for others. He must be above seeking personal gains. He must strive only in the way of Allah so as to seek divine pleasure to the exclusion of everything else. This is critical because if he himself is prone to making mistakes and errors he can never be a role model for the masses. If he himself is a victim of greed and vices, he can never hope to salvage others from this malaise. In such a condition, human society instead of progressing towards peace and security will find itself hurtling towards oppression and catastrophes. In other words, infallibility is the most important criterion in a divine representative to ensure fulfillment of the divine plan.

Infallibility although very important is not a trait that is immediately evident to the people. It is a concealed trait and man can conclude infallibility for someone only if Allah informs him about it. That is why appointing a guide for man's guidance is the sole prerogative of Allah as only He is aware of the condition of hearts. Since being a divine guide is an important position, it is obvious that those greedy for power and leadership, would stake a claim for this position. Therefore it is necessary for divine guides to possess irrefutable proofs so as to conclusively distinguish them from the imposters.

These irrefutable proofs are miracles which are beyond the imposters. Miracles are also referred to as signs (of Allah) as they are divine proofs that establish the truthfulness of the claimant. The guide is referred to as Nabi (Prophet) or Rasool (Messenger) and this position is Prophethood or Messengership.

According to traditions there are 124,000 prophets. Of this, five prophets communicated a new divine code (Shariat) to the people as mentioned in the 13th verse of Surah Shura (42):

Arabic

'He has made plain to you of the religion what He enjoined upon Nuh and that which We have revealed to you and that which We enjoined upon Ibrahim and Moosa and Esa...'

Messengers who communicated a new Shariat are also referred to as Ulul Azm. They are

- i) Hazrat Nuh (a.s.)
- ii) Hazrat Ibrahim (a.s.)

- iii) Hazrat Moosa (a.s.)
- iv) Hazrat Esa (a.s.)
- v) Hazrat Muhammad Mustafa (s.a.w.a.)

Hazrat Muhammad Mustafa (s.a.w.a.) is the last prophet as referred to in the Holy Quran – Khaatam al-Nabiyyeen.

(Surah Ahzaab (33): 40)

There will be no prophet after Hazrat Muhammad Mustafa (s.a.w.a.). Likewise, no Shariat can abrogate Islam and no future book can ever challenge the supremacy of the Holy Quran till the Day of Resurrection.

It is the Holy Quran that is the eternal miracle of Hazrat Muhammad Mustafa (s.a.w.a.) which establishes his prophethood to people of all time. To read the Holy Quran and adhere to its tenets in letter and spirit is the religious duty of every Muslim.

4) Recognition of the Guides (a.s.) – Imamat

We have already established, under the discussion of Prophethood, mankind's need for guidance at all times. This role was played to perfection by the prophets with Hazrat Muhammad Mustafa (s.a.w.a.) concluding this sequence as categorically stated in the Holy Quran.

It is also an accepted fact that when a leader of a group ventures out for a few days on a mission, he is prompt in appointing a successor to perform all duties in his absence. In fact, appointing a successor is the most important responsibility of a leader and to abandon his position without installing a successor is contrary to the verdict of the intellect and goes against the very grain of human nature. While such irresponsibility is considered blameworthy for an ordinary leader, it is inconceivable for a divine leader raised for guiding an entire nation to neglect appointing a successor in his absence. This is not some whimsical conclusion; it is the decision of the intellect and in fact rooted in human nature.

The religion of Islam is in harmony with the intellect and human nature. Every Islamic law is compatible with both, although man may not always appreciate this since perfection of intellect and purity of human nature are necessary conditions to realize this fact.

With regards to the discussion of the Prophet's (s.a.w.a.) successorship, all Muslims agree that the he (s.a.w.a.) was informed by the archangel Hazrat Jibraeel (a.s.) about his impending demise. This implies that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) must appoint a successor immediately on being informed about his demise. Moreover, he must introduce all Muslims to his successor so as to dispel confusion in this regard. However, the majority of the Muslims deny the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) ever did such a thing. But the intellect goes by the Prophet's (s.a.w.a.) track record. The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) who was careful to explain the minutest details of all laws and actions

including the etiquette to answering nature's call, cannot be expected to ignore the matter of successorship, the most important issue after his own prophethood. The Prophet's (s.a.w.a.) station is too high for him to neglect such an important task and his awareness of his own duties would never allow him to overlook appointing a successor. This is the verdict of the intellect and human nature.

That is why the Shias claim that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) appointed a successor before departing from the world. This was in response to the divine command, which made it obligatory on the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) to do so. Not just the appointment, several rounds of introduction were made by the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), both in private and public, leaving no doubt whatsoever in the minds of the Muslims and in certain cases even non-Muslims, as to the identity of his successor.

Not only did he introduce his successor – Hazrat Ali b. Abi Talib (a.s.) to the Muslims, but he was particular in making the Muslims pay allegiance to him as his (s.a.w.a.) successor and caliph. This fact is corroborated by the Ahle Sunnah based on authentic and consistently-transmitted traditions in their oldest and most reliable books leaving no doubt in this regard.

For the sake of brevity, we have reviewed only a few Quranic verses and traditions underscoring the caliphate of Hazrat Ali b. Abi Talib (a.s.). For a detailed discussion, it is necessary to refer to the numerous books on this topic.

Certain Quranic verses were evidently revealed in favour of Hazrat Ali b. Abi Talib (a.s.) emphasizing his claim to caliphate viz.

- i) Verse of Inzaar – Warning (Daawat-e-Zul Asheera) – (Surah Shuara (26): 214)
- ii) Verse of Wilayat – Guardianship – (Surah Maaidah (5): 55)
- iii) Verse of Itaa'at – Obedience – (Surah Nisa (4): 59)
- iv) Verse of Ghadeer – (Surah Maaidah (5): 67)
- v) Verse of S'ala Saail – A questioner questioned – (Surah Maarij (70): 1)
- vi) Verse of Ikmaal-e-Deen – Perfection of Religion – (Surah Maaidah (5): 3)

Many traditions also endorse the guardianship of Hazrat Ali b. Abi Talib (a.s.). We mention a few over here:

- i) Hadis-e-Manazelat (Tradition of Stature)

Arabic

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) declared: 'O Ali you are unto me as Haroon was to Moosa except that there will be no prophet after me.

According to the Quran, Prophet Haroon (a.s.) was the direct successor of Hazrat Moosa (a.s.).

(Surah Aaraaf (7): 142)

ii) Hadis-e-Saqalain (Tradition of Two Weighty Things)

Arabic

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) informed the people: ‘Surely I leave behind you two weighty things viz. the Book of Allah and my Progeny, my Ahle Bait. So long as you adhere to them both, you will never be deviated after me. For surely they will never separate from each other until they meet me at the Pond of Kausar.’

Just like it is not permissible to give preference to any other book while the Holy Quran is in the midst of the Muslims, likewise it is not permissible for the Muslims to give preference to anyone while the Ahle Bait (a.s.) are in their midst.

iii) Hadis-e-Safina (Tradition of the Ark of Salvation)

Arabic

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) declared: ‘The likeness of my Ahle Bait is comparable to that of the Ark of Nuh. One who mounts it is safe, while one who abandons it is drowned.’

After the demise of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), the Ahle Bait (a.s.) alone are the Ark of Salvation. One who acknowledges their guardianship and caliphate immediately after the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has in fact mounted the Ark and only such individuals will find salvation.

iv) Hadis-e-Haqq (Tradition of the Truth)

Arabic

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) announced: ‘Ali is with the truth and the truth is with Ali.’

v) Hadis-e-Ghadeer

Arabic

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) declared: Of whomsoever I am the Master, Ali is his master.’

In this announcement, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has categorically pronounced Hazrat Ali (a.s.) as his successor and caliph in front of a vast majority of Muslims. This implies that all rights and authority that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) exercised on the Muslims, will be exercised by Hazrat Ali (a.s.) immediately after him (s.a.w.a.). Just like there is no question

of believing in a prophet while the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) is in the midst of the Muslims, there is no question of believing in any other caliph or guardian while Hazrat Ali (a.s.) is present among the Muslims. This tradition clearly marks Hazrat Ali b. Abi Talib (a.s.) as the successor and caliph of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) immediately after him (s.a.w.a.).

vi) Hadis-e-Qirtaas (Tradition of the Paper)

When the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was on his deathbed, surrounded by his eminent companions, he requested:

‘Bring me pen and paper so that I may instruct you in a manner that will never expose you to deviation you after me.’

Saheeh al-Bukhaari v 1 p 37, v7 p 9
Musnad-e-Ahmad v 1 p 336

At that critical moment, Umar declared – the Prophet seems to be hallucinating from his illness, the Book of Allah is sufficient for us.

All these traditions and incidents underscore the exclusive right of Hazrat Ali b. Abi Talib (a.s.) to caliphate immediately after the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.). That is why the Shias maintain that Hazrat Ali (a.s.) is the only successor ever appointed by the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and he alone has the right to guide the Muslim nation after the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.).

Just like the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) appointed Hazrat Ali b. Abi Talib (a.s.) as his immediate successor and caliph, he was equally particular about nominating all the successors and Imams to succeed Hazrat Ali (a.s.) till the Day of Resurrection.

Salmaan-e-Faarsi (r.a.), the respected companion of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), reports: ‘I approached the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) while his grandson – Imam Husain (a.s.) was seated in his lap. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was repeatedly kissing his eyes and his lips and was informing him – You are the leader and the son of a leader. You are the Imam and the son of an Imam. You are Allah’s Proof and the son of Allah’s Proof and you are the father of Allah’s nine Proofs of which the concluding one will be the Qaim.’

Yanaabi al-Mawaddah p 307

The twelve Imams (a.s.) whose obedience has been made obligatory on the Muslims by Allah and His Prophet (s.a.w.a.) are as follows:

1. Hazrat Ali b. Abi Talib (a.s.)

2. Hazrat Hasan b. Ali (a.s.)
3. Hazrat Husain b. Ali (a.s.)
4. Hazrat Ali b. Husain – Zain al-Abideen (a.s.)
5. Hazrat Muhammad b. Ali al-Baqir (a.s.)
6. Hazrat Jafar b. Muhammad al-Sadiq (a.s.)
7. Hazrat Moosa b. Jafar al-Kaazim (a.s.)
8. Hazrat Ali b. Moos al-Reza (a.s.)
9. Hazrat Muhammad b. Ali al-Taqi (a.s.)
10. Hazrat Ali b. Muhammad al-Naqi (a.s.)
11. Hazrat Hasan b. Ali al-Askari (a.s.)
12. Hazrat Hujjat b. Hasan al-Qaim (a.t.f.s.)

The twelfth Imam is also referred to Hazrat Imam Mahdi Saaheb al-Zamaan Wali al-Asr (a.t.f.s.). Imam (a.t.f.s.) is alive under Allah's protection and is witnessing our misdeeds in occultation (Ghaybat). When the groundwork for his reappearance is completed and the divine command permits him, he will reappear on the earth. At present, the people benefit from his blessed existence like they benefit from the Sun when it is concealed behind the clouds.

One of the most critical responsibilities of Shias in the era of occultation is to await the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) day and night and at every moment of their lives. A Shia must inculcate in himself the qualities and merits that characterize an obedient slave who is at the beck and call of his master. In this way, he can be among the choicest followers of Imam (a.t.f.s.) and also set an example for other Shias around him so as to create an atmosphere of intense desire for the earliest reappearance of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.).

5) Recognition of the Day of Resurrection

The God who created the world and its creatures the first time out of nothing can create it once again. This is a fundamental belief of Islam. To deny this belief means that a Muslim has exited the domain of Islam and can therefore no longer be treated as a Muslim.

Numerous Quranic verses and traditions have forewarned the Muslims of the advent of the Day of Resurrection. In the Holy Quran belief in God (Tauheed) is often mentioned alongside the belief in the Day of Resurrection underscoring the importance of this belief.

Belief in the Day of Resurrection is important for the following reasons:

- i. To live forever is every man's cherished desire, so much so that the mere thought of death and destruction frightens him. He is willing to spend a fortune to prolong his life for a few days. Despite all its advancements and facilities, the world cannot preserve man against death. This is because the world itself will not be preserved and will face annihilation one day. If the world is taken as the purpose of creation then it is a deficient purpose as the Holy Quran has pointed out:

Arabic

'What! Did you then think that We had created you in vain and that you shall not be returned to Us?'

(Surah Mominoon (40): 115)

Clearly, the temporal world is not the aim of creation. Instead there is another world which is permanent in nature and can never be tainted by destruction. That is why when the Holy Quran and traditions refer to the Hereafter they repeatedly associate it with eternity and permanence.

- ii) The world is filled with cases of individuals who have suffered humiliation and disgrace at the hands of tyrants and oppressors. So much so, the oppressed individuals pass away in this condition and they receive no recompense for their sufferings. On the other hand, the tyrants and oppressors get a free rein to do as they please until death overtakes them. They escape unscathed from the law and even when they are punished the penalty is insufficient. Not to punish the oppressor is itself a crime and Allah, the Almighty, is far above this. Allah is not an oppressor, he is Just. He does not oppress His Creatures even to the extent of an atom's weight. Therefore His Justice demands the existence of another world where all the people are resurrected, so that the oppressor can be punished for his crimes and the oppressed one can be recompensed for his worldly sufferings. In this way, everyone gets his due, which is not possible in the world.

Belief in the Day of Resurrection is the elixir that can cure man of all his worldly evils. The man who believes from the depths of his existence that he will be called one day to account for every action will shake the negligence that has gripped his existence and will struggle to eschew sins and increase his good deeds.

The Holy Quran declares:

'So, he who has done an atom's weight of good shall see it. And he who has done an atom's weight of evil shall see it.'

(Surah Zilzaal (99): 7-8)

In the world, few things are more upsetting for man than to be caught red-handed in a crime and getting exposed in front of all the people. Likewise, once man is convinced that his actions will be exposed in the hereafter for all to witness, he will strive to reduce his sins. He will not even let the shadow of sin fall on his character and Allah will definitely help him in this regard and keep him steadfast.

The interval between death and the Day of Resurrection is called Barzakh. On the Day of Resurrection man will be called to give a detailed account of his deeds. The deeds will be weighed. Man will then be called to cross the Bridge (Serat). Those who negotiate the Bridge will reach Paradise. Those who slip will be engulfed by the Fire of Hell raging below. It should be noted that no action will benefit man on the Day of Resurrection more than the Guardianship of the Ahle Bait (a.s.) to the exclusion of all other actions and beliefs regardless of their quality and/or quantity.

B) Actions

Islamic teachings are divided into two parts. The part related to the physical aspects of one's existence viz. arms and limbs are referred to as Branches of Religion (Furu-e-Deen). To adhere to these teachings is obligatory on every Muslim. The Muslim can act on the religious commands on his own if he is qualified to do so i.e. he is a Mujtahid. Alternatively, if he himself is not qualified to act independently on the religious commands, he must follow a person who is qualified to do so. This act of following a qualified person (i.e. Mujtahid) in matters of Furu-e-Deen is referred to as Taqleed. Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) has commanded the Shias living in the era of occultation to abide by the verdict of scholars in matters of Furu-e-Deen and prohibited the Shias from disobeying them making this tantamount to disobeying Imam (a.t.f.s.) himself.

Furu-e-Deen embraces all matters of livelihood and this can be found discussed at length in the Tauzihul Masaael. If someone is neither a Mujtahid nor is willing to follow a Mujtahid and wishes to act on religious laws according to his own whims and fancies, then his actions will be rejected by Allah. Therefore it is important that we understand the laws of the Tauzihul Masaael and act diligently on them.

The discussion on Tauzihul Masaael is divided in several sections. Over here the names of the important sections have been listed:

1. Kitab al-Tahaarat (Book of Purity)
2. Kitab al-Salaat (Book of Prayers)
3. Kitab al-Sawm (Book of Fasting)
4. Kitab al-Khums (Book of Khums)

5. Kitab al-Zakaat (Book of Poor-rate)
6. Kitab al-Hajj (Book of Pilgrimage)
7. Kitab al-Jihad (Book of Battle in Allah's Way)
8. Kitab al-Amr bil Maroof wa Nahy anil Munkar (Book of Commanding Good and Prohibiting Evil)
9. Kitab al-Tejaarat (Book of Trading)
10. Kitab al-Shirkat (Book of Partnership)
11. Kitab al-Sulh (Book of Reconciliation)
12. Kitab al-Ijaarat (Book of Rent)
13. Kitab al-Joala (Book of Reward)
14. Kitab al-Zira'at (Book of Agriculture)
15. Kitab al-Musaaqaat (Book of Irrigation)
16. Kitab al-Muflis (Book of Bankruptcy)
17. Kitab al-Wikaala (Book of Representation)
18. Kitab al-Qarz (Book of Bankruptcy)
19. Kitab al-Hawala (Book of Transfer)
20. Kitab al-Dain (Book of Debt)
21. Kitab al-Zamaan (Book of Guarantee)
22. Kitab al-Kifaala (Book of Sponsorship)
23. Kitab al-Aariya (Book of Loan)
24. Kitab al-Wadeeat (Book of Trust)
25. Kitab al-Nikaah (Book of Marriage)
26. Kitab al-Talaaq (Book of Divorce)
27. Kitab al-Ghasb (Book of Usurped Property)
28. Kitab al-Luqatah (Book of Lost Property)

29. Kitab al-Zibaahah (Book of Slaughter)
30. Kitab al-Sayd (Book of Hunting)
31. Kitab al-Akl wa al-Shorb (Book of Eating and Drinking)
32. Kitab al-Nazr (Book of Pledge)
33. Kitab al-Ahd (Book of Covenant)
34. Kitab al-Yameen (Book of Promise)
35. Kitab al-Waqf (Book of Endowment)
36. Kitab al-Wasiyyah (Book of Will)
37. Kitab al-Irs (Book of Inheritance)
38. Kitab al-Diyyah (Book of Blood Money)
39. Kitab al-Hudud (Book of Punishments)

If we want to perform all our actions in the prescribed manner so that Allah may accept them, we must familiarize ourselves with the *Tauzihul Masaael* and act according to its tenets. If we perform these actions erroneously, they will be rendered invalid thereby making it necessary for us to perform them all over again in the manner prescribed by the *Tauzihul Masaael*. If we are unable to find the details of certain actions in the *Tauzihul Masaael*, then we should consult a competent religious scholar.

Ethics (Akhlaaq)

We have already seen that man is a combination of body and soul. The soul is what defines man and must be adorned with admirable traits and ethics. At the same time care must be taken to ensure it is not tainted with evil actions and ideas. Islam wants to see man scale the peaks of perfection by adopting the best ethics and traits and eschew all forms of evil and in this way surpass the station of angels to an even higher level. For this man must be particularly careful of eliminating sins, mainly the greater sins (*Gunaahan-e-Kabeera*) which if committed even once, can drag man to Hellfire.

Of course, the best way to achieve this is to regularly recite the supplications recommended by the infallible Imams (a.s.). If one recites supplications like *Dua-a-Kumail*, *Dua-e-Sabah*, *Dua-e-Makaarimul Akhlaaq*, *Dua-e-Taubah*, *Dua-e-Nudbah* and the various supplications of *Sahifa-e-Sajjaadiyya* with sincerity and after absorbing the concepts, he will witness a sea change in his ethics as also his beliefs.

Mentioned below are the key traits, both good and evil, that every Muslim must be aware of so as to adopt the way of life prescribed by Islam.

Good Traits	Evil Traits
Good ethics	Evil ethics
Truthfulness	Lies
Safeguarding the trust	Squandering the trust
Performing the obligations	Abandoning the obligations
Obeying the parents	Disobeying the parents
Humility	Pride
Forebearance	Anger
Forgiveness	Vengeance
Fulfilling the promise	Breaking the promise
Maintaining relations	Severing relations
Contentment	Greed
Gratefulness	Ungratefulness
Repaying the debt	Negligence in repaying the debt