

THE CAUSES OF OCCULTATION OR DIVINE PRACTICE

The occultation of Hazrat Imam Mahdi (A.S.) was an abrupt affair which was absolutely unexpected and hence people were not prepared for the same. If we study those traditions which are related to Hazrat Imam Mahdi (A.S.), then it becomes crystal clear that from the very beginning whenever his attributes were described, then even his occultation was mentioned along with his characteristics. It has been repeated so often that the personality of Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) becomes inconceivable without the occultation, that it was reiterated so much that the companions of the Holy Prophet (S. A.) many a times inquired from him that "When the Imam will go into the occultation, then how will the people be benefited from his existence?" To which he was replying that **"They will benefit from him as they were benefiting from the sun behind the clouds."**

OCCULTATION NOT PARTICULAR WITH IMAM-e-ZAMANA (A.S.)

Time and again this question has been raised that why from amongst the Prophets (A.S.) and the Imams (A.S.), Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) was singled out for the occultation.

Since we are feeling his absence to the core, hence we are thinking that the occultation is particular with Imam Mahdi (A.S.) only otherwise even Prophets (A.S.) have gone into occultation. The names of Hazrat Ibrahim, Hazrat Idris and Hazrat Musa (A.S.) can be mentioned.

Even our Holy Prophet (S.A.) has gone into occultation. e.g. While he was in 'Shobe-Abi Talib', where practically he was away from the society. Similarly, when he migrated from Mecca to Medina on his way, he had to stay in a cave for days at a stretch and thus was hidden from the eyes of the people. From our Imams, Imam Musa Kazim (A.S.) passed his life incessantly under imprisonment. As a poet expressed it, **"(Our) Master had to pass through endless miseries, Alas! In prison his youth and old age came to pass.**" While he was in prison, he was far off from the eyes of people and access to him was not possible. Apart from him Imam Ali Naqi (A.S.) and Imam Hasan Askari (A. S.) led a major part of their lives under strict surveillance and no one could gain an easy access to them. These things make it abundantly clear that the occultation was not particularly meant for Hazrat Mahdi (A. S.).

THE CAUSES OF OCCULTATION:

It is admitted that in regard with the occultation, Imam Mahdi (A.S.) is not alone. But then the pertinent question arises, "what is the cause of his

occultation?" In this regard, whatever could be explained in the light of traditions, we are explain-ing it here so that the heart may become compla-cent and the belief may increase.

THE DIVINE SECRET:

In some of the traditions, the occultation of **Imame-Asr** (A.S.) is pronounced as a 'Divine Secret'.

"**Abdullah bin Fazi Al-Hashmi** heard Imam Jafar Sadiq (A. S.) as saying: -
"Certainly occulta-tion is essential for Sahebe-Amr during which every man of wicked belief will fall into doubt and skepticism. "I asked: "Why will he go into occultation?"

Imam (A.S.) replied: **"For such a reason which is not permitted to be divulged. "O Fazi! This occultation is one of the commands of Allah, one of the closely guarded secrets of Allah, it is one of the hidden things with Allah. And when we know that the Almighty is All-Wise and often we have testified that all of His actions are based on wisdom though we may not be aware of the reasons behind His actions."**

(Elalush Sharaye, Vol. 1, pg. 234, tradition No. 8)

When the occultation of Imam (A. S) is a secret and if the actual reason is known to everybody then how **will** it remain a secret anymore? If someone insists that he will not admit unless the real cause and wisdom is known to him then it is exactly similar to the situation that someone says that he **will** not pray unless the real cause behind the number of **rakaats** in **namaz** does not become clear to him.

AFTER THE REAPPEARANCE:

The real cause of **occultation** will be disclosed only after the reappearance. During the journey of **Hazrat Musa (A.S.)** and **Hazrat Khizr (A.S.)**, on the way whatever inscrutable acts were commit-ted by Hazrat Khizr (A.S.) the cause of the acts were not divulged to Hazrat Musa (A.S.) until they were on the verge of parting their ways.

(**Beharul Anwar**, Vol. 52, pg. 91)

THE FEAR OF GETTING KILLED:

In several traditions one of the causes of occulta-tion as explained by various Imams (A.S.) is the fear of getting killed. If Imam **Mahdi (A. S.)** would have appeared in such circumstances, there was every possibility of his assassination. Since he is the final sequel to the series of guidance, he has to live **upto** the dawn of **Qiyamat**. Such traditions are quoted from the Holy

Prophet (S.A.), Imam Baqir (A.S.), Imam Jafar Sadiq (A.S.), Imam Musa Kazim (A.S.), Imam Reza (A.S.), Imam Hasan Askari (A.S.) and Hazrat Hujjat (A.S.) himself. The exact words, quoted from them are:

"If he would be recognized then he would be reduced to bits and pieces."

(Ghaihat e Tusi, pg. 333; Beharul Anwar, Vol. . 52,pg.98)

It is according to the norms of intelligence to adopt seclusion or escape from the habitation when there is the virtual apprehension of one's murder. It was for this reason that when the conspiracy to eliminate Hazrat Musa (A. S.) was at the upsurge, then he left his city and migrated to Madayen where he remained secluded from his people for a very long time. Similarly, when the infidels of Mecca joined hands to assassinate the Holy Prophet (S. A.) and surrounded his house to execute their macabre intention, the Holy Prophet (S.A.) escaped from Mecca and hid himself in a cave. If he would not have gone into hiding at that moment, then perhaps **he would** have been killed. Saving oneself from murder is neither cowardice nor shunning the bliss of martyrdom. Rather, it is the protection of life for achieving a great aim, which was the propagation and **dissemination** of the religion of Allah.

For similar reasons Hazrat Hujjat (A.S.) himself had gone into **occultation**. Several attempts on his life were made. So many times his house was besieged, the well-armed contingent of soldiers repeatedly attacked his house..... Allah, the Al-mighty had protected him from assassination for accomplishing an unparalleled feat in the history of mankind. That is establishing justice and equity and uprooting injustice, oppression, tyranny and despotism.

THE TURBULENT TEST:

The obstacles in the tasks of the prophets (A.S.) and Imams (A.S.) were always those men who apparently were very close but they were devoid of noble characteristics like courage, de-termination, fortitude and valour. These men were more interested in their selfish motives rather than keeping their aims at fore. The inevi-table consequences of such an attitude were that just at the moment of victory they used to desert their leaders and announce the fulfillment of their nasty selfish designs. Such men were there with Hazrat Musa (A.S.) who used to say, **"You and your Lord may fight; we shall sit over here."** **The Holy Prophet (S.A.) also had such faithless com-panions who despite repeated emphasis of Quran disobeyed him. The battle of Ohad and the army of Osamah are two glaring examples. Even Hazrat Ali (A. S.) had such companions who converted a certain victory into the impasse of arbitration. Keeping these things in mind, the test has been explained as one of the chief causes of occulta-tion. As Imam Musa bin Jafar (A.S.) puts it: "For the sake of God, take care of your religion. Be on guard lest someone**

may make you away from the religion. The occultation is inevitable for Sahebe-Amr.... This is also a trial through which Allah, the Almighty tests His servants."

(Ref. Mikyalul-Makarim, Vol. 1,pg. 126-127)

This is the era of trial, of one who remains steadfast in the occultation of Imam (A.S.), who practically serves his religion, who makes the circumstances favorable for his reappearance, Who enlivens the hearts with his remembrance and makes them the true partisans and **awaitees** of Imam (A.S.).

THE TRIUMPH OF TRUTH:

Hitherto the events took place in more or less the same way, where falsehood always gained **upper hand** and the truth was subdued. Like **Namrud** catapulted Hazrat **Ibrahim** (A.S.) to the holocaust, Pharaoh exiled Hazrat **Musa** (A.S.) from Egypt, the Jews (in their opinion) crucified Hazrat **Isa** (A.S.), the pagans forced the Holy Prophet (S.A.) to migrate from Mecca, the Mus-lim masses deprived Hazrat **Ali** (A.S.) of his proven right, usurped the property of Hazrat **Fatema Zahra** (S.A.), Imam **Hussain** (A.S.) was ruthlessly martyred, Imam **Musa Kazim** (A.S.) was imprisoned and a strict surveillance was, imposed upon Imam **Ali Naqi** (A.S.) and Imam **Hasan Askari** (A. S.)..... which means falsehood always superseded the truth and its followers were deprived of their just right. As a result, the truth can never be disseminated freely. None of the Prophets or Imams (A.S.) could preach the tenets of religion with utmost freedom. The cer-tain fallout of this way was that truth and justice can never be established and tyranny, injustice and oppression can never be undone, while these hold sway even to this day.

If our last Imam **Hazrat Hujjat** (A.S.) was to remain present, then perhaps he would have been deprived of freedom like his forefathers were in **their times**. Almighty Allah may have kept him in **occultation** so that no despotic ruler could overrule him and he might preach and propagate Islam with complete free-dom, and establish all the tenets and precepts of Islam. The truth and Justice could be established and every nook and **corner would** be purged from tyranny and oppression. This necessitates that he should vanquish all while none could overpower him. These words can be often found in the traditions of Hazrat **Ali** (A.S.), Imam **Hasan** (A.S.), Imam **Zainul Abedein** (A.S.) and Imam **Jafar Sadiq** (A.S.) that: **"When our Qaem will reappear then none can overcome him."**

(Elaamul-Wara, pg. 400, Beharul Anwar, Vol. 5 l.pg. 122,279)

For these things, it is imperative that his helpers and assistants should be so courageous and gal-lant that they are not scared of any falsehood, are not in awe of any ruler, are not affected by the glamour of this world and are

needless of all such things which can hinder the aid of truth.

OUR DEEDS:

One of the causes of the occultation of Hazrat Imam Mahdi (A.S.) is our own misdeed, detest-able actions, bad mannerisms, misdemeanours, mutual relationship, love of this world, disregard for the religion..... following incarnal cravings..... being more prompt and regular in regard of customs and rites than the command of Allah..... interest in base literatures and distances from the teachings of Ahlebait.....

These are those things which have increased the distance between us and Imam (A. S.). Hazrat Ali (A.S.) has said: **"Know that this earth will never remain devoid of the proof of Allah. But Allah conceals His proof because of the continu-ous sins, injustice and oppression of His crea-tures."**

(Beharul Anwar, Vol. 51, pg. 112; Mikyalul Makarim, Vol. 1, pg. 132)

Hazrat Hujjat (A. S.) himself had explained the same thing in his Epistle (Tawqee) which he dispatched to Shaikh Mufid (R.A.) inter alia replying to other questions. He wrote: **"If our partisans (May Allah help them in His obedience) would have fulfilled their covenant with united hearts then there would have been no delay in our meeting and they would have been blessed with our visitation at the earliest along with the recog-nition of truth and confirmation of our rights. Those things which have increased the distance between them and us are those detestable reports (about their deeds) which are not expected of them. And Allah is the best helper."**

(Ehtejaaj Tabarsi, Vol. 2, pg. 325; Mikyalul Makarim, Vol. 1, pg. 132)

These words from Imam (A.S.) himself prove that our sinful deeds are the cause and conse-quence of his occultation. That means it is be-cause of us that Imam is in occultation. If yet we have realized it then we must strive for his reap-pearance and must shun all those vices because of which Imam (A. S.) is forced to be away from us.

THE HIDDEN TRUSTS

One of the causes of occultation is the generation of those believers who are in the loins of disbeliev-ers and are yet to take birth. When it was inquired of Imam Jafar Sadiq (A.S.) that, "Why did not Hazrat Ali (A.S.) wage war in the initial period of his times?" Imam (A.S.) replied that:

"It was because of one ayat of Quran, viz. "IT IS THEY WHO DISBELIEVED AND TURNED YOU AWAY FROM THE SACRED MOSQUE AND (TURNED OFF) THE OFFERING WITHHELD FROM ARRIVING AT

ITS DESTINED PLACE; AND WERE IT NOT FOR THE BE-LIEVING MEN AND THE BELIEVING WOMEN, WHOM, NOT HAVING KNOWN, YOU MIGHT HAVE TRODDEN DOWN, AND THUS SOMETHING HATEFUL MIGHT HAVE AFFLICTED YOU ON THEIR AC-COUNT WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE-SO THAT ALLAH MAY CAUSE TO ENTER INTO HIS MERCY WHOM SO EVER HE PLEASES; HAD THEY BEEN WIDELY SEPARATED ONE FROM ANOTHER, WE WOULD SURELY HAVE PUNISHED THOSE WHO DISBE-LIEVED FROM AMONG THEM WITH PAIN-FUL PUNISHMENT.

'The narrator asked what does the separation mean? He said, "It presages about those trusts of believers which are reposed in the loins of disbe-lievers. Similarly Hazrat Qaem (A.S.) will not reappear unless these trusts are not delivered...." (*Elalush Sharae, pg. 147; Kamahid-Deen, pg. 641, Behand Anwar, Vol. 52, pg. 97*)

THE DISCLOSURE OF SECRETS

Some naive simpletons **divulge such** things out of their simplicity that it proves quite detrimental. Today, every devotee of Hazrat Hujjat (A.S.) wants to see him and everyone is waiting for him earnestly. If, at such a time they learnt about his whereabouts, then naturally, these naive men will disclose every thing to others. Probably it may result in the termination of Imam (A.S.)'s pre-cious life... As Imam Mohammad Baqir (A.S.) has said: "**Do not be in petulant haste. By Allah the reappearance was drawn nigh but when peo-ple divulged these secrets then Allah caused delay in it....**" (*Behanil Anwar, Vol. 52, pg. 389*)

After the martyrdom of Imam Hasan Askari (A.S.) people asked about his name and place. The reply was: "**If you will name the name then they will spread it and if they will learn of the place then they will tell others.**" (*Al-Kafi, Vol. I, pg. 333*)

THE DIVINE COMMAND

It is an accepted reality that most of the com-mands or decisions of God would be devoid of any wisdom. Each and every command of Allah is a reflection of wisdom hidden in its fold;

whether we understand it or not, is a different matter. The occultation of Hazrat Hujjat (A.S.) is also due to the command of Allah. Once it is clear that it is a Divine decree, then there remains no room for us to dig and delve into the cause of such a decree because our minds are not so firm as yet to understand the rationality of each and every command of Allah, with every precise detail. Imam Jafar Sadiq (A, S.) said that: "**When we are aware**

and we believe in the wisdom of Allah and we confirm that all His actions are based on wisdom, then it does not matter if we do not understand the rationale behind it."

(Behar vol.52, pg.91)

We have mentioned it earlier that the actual cause of Occultation will be known only after the reappearance, as Occultation is due to Divine command. Of course, our invocations and good deeds can advance the hour of reappearance.

OCCULTATION FROM OUR SIDE:

The occultation does not imply the absence of any contact or communication from the either side. Rather, it means that we cannot see Imam (A.S.) face to face, neither we can talk to him directly nor we can meet him at will.... As far as Imam (A.S.) is concerned he is maintaining a close watch on all of us, keeping an eye on our deeds, protecting us, helping us, listening to our requests. As he himself has said in his epistle which he addressed to Shaikh Mufid (R.A.) that:

"We do not shun your remembrance and protection and also do not neglect you." At another place he said: "Had we not looked after you then your enemies would have overpowered you, and suppressed you." It is explained under the topic 'Our Deeds' that our sinful actions are causing delay in his reappearance.

Hence we must make ourselves worthy of looking at the brilliant face of Imam (A.S.) and make ourselves capable enough to have a direct meeting with him. Hazrat Ali (A.S.) said: **"By the Lord of Ali, the Proof (of God) will remain on the earth, he will walk on the paths on the earth's surface. He will frequent the houses and palaces of the people, will keep on moving between the east and the west, will hear the chatter of the people, will greet the congregation; he will see everybody but none would see him. Finally the appointed Hour will usher and the celestial call will be heard."**

(Al-Ghaibat-Numani pg. 82-83, Yaumul Khalaas.pg. 139)

May our greetings and wishes and the greetings of the whole universe be upon the holy personality of Hazrat Ali (A.S.) who predicted the events to come, hundreds of years in advance. Today this saying is proved true verbatim. Such traditions are the incontrovertible proofs of the veracity of our Imams and our religion.

Imam Jafar-e-Sadiq (A.S.) said : **"The Imam will disappear from among the people. Every year he will perform Hajj. He will see them but they**

will not see him."
(Kafi Vol. I pg. 339)

When the condition is such then we must always think while acting that our Imam is look-ing at us

THE FORTUNATE ONES:

Finally let us cast a glance on this aspect too before we conclude. **It is not that Hazrat Hujjat (A. S.)** is all alone and absolutely forlorn in this gloomy era of **Ghaibat-e-Kubra**. Although **precise** details are **not known** about such matters but whatever has been mentioned in the tradi-tions is as follows :

Imam Zainul Abedeen (A.S.) said : "**None will know about his whereabouts, neither a Wali (friend of God) nor any commoner... .but that person who serves him and carries out his orders.**"
(Behar Vol. 52, pg. 152, Ibid 5 3/324)

Imam Mohammad Baqir (A.S.) said : **There is a house of Saheb-e-Amr, which is named as Baitui Hamd'. A lamp is lit since his birth and will remain so upto his reappear-ance.**"

(Ghaibat-e-Sughra, Tusi, pg. 280, Behar Vol. 52, pg. 158, Yaumul Khalaas, pg. 140)

Imam Jafar Sadiq (A.S.) said : "**....There are two occultation's for our Qaem, one of them is brief while the other would be prolonged. In the former occultation, his whereabouts will be known to his especially privileged Shias. While in the latter occultation only they will know his place who are his best of friends and servants in religion.**"

(Kafi, Vol. I,pg.340,IlzaamunNasib,pg. 81, Behar, Vol. 52, pg. 155)

These traditions evidently state that **Hazrat Hujjat (A.S)** is passing his life on this very earth along with his trusted servants and loyal aides. He scrutinizes our deeds and is awaiting the order of Allah to reappear. We wish if only we were enough sincere, pure-hearted and firm believers then we could have been included in His slaves and servants

"O Allah! Hasten his reappearance."