

Postings Related to the Recognition of the Light of the Holy Imam, Noor Mowlana Shah Karim Al-Hussaini Hazir Imam (a.s.)

Posting No. 1: Recognition of the Light of the Imam

The work, Pandiyat-i Jawanmardi, or "Advices of Manliness" is a collection of instructive religious and moral advices and maxims of Imam NOOR Mowlana Shah Mustansir bi'l-laah II. Let us reflect on the following excerpt:

"The (real) believer is one who from the Shariat arrives at tariqat, and from the latter to haqiqat, which is the real inner meaning of Shariat. Shariat may be compared to a candle, tariqat to the path, and haqiqat to the destination. One must strive to walk along the correct path, lit by the candle, and reach the abode of haqiqat. The foundation of haqiqat is to recognize the Imam. The purpose of everything is its inner meaning, which forms its (real) substance, its essence and sweetness. Therefore, the ultimate purpose of Shariat introduced by the Prophet was its inner meaning which is haqiqat, i.e., the recognition of the Imam of the time." (page 2)

Posting No. 2: Recognition of the Light of the Imam

Let us first reflect on following extract of Pir Shihabu'd-din Shah Al-Husayni from his book 'True Meaning of Religion' on the topic of 'itrat (Close relatives)¹ and relate it to the theme of 'Recognition of the Light of the Imam':

"Muhammad and 'Ali both were manifestations of one and the same Divine Light*, but they came in two different persons (libas,—dress) in order to uphold each other's mission amongst humans, and in order to introduce each other to the people. However, the people did not recognize them. Salman Farsi said in Persian, on the day when Abu Bakr was in appearance (zahir) elected as a caliph: 'kardid—na-kardid,' i.e., 'you have done this, and yet you have not done it.' He meant that they had appointed a lieutenant to the Prophet, and yet, in reality, nothing had been done. But this is a long story, O, God!

The holy Light which manifested in Muhammad and 'Ali continued in the world through Fatima, in her sons, Hasan and Husayn, and no power in the world can extinguish this Light. It is said (Holy Qur'an 9:32): 'they wanted to extinguish the Light of God, but God brings His light through, to the end,' i.e., to the completion of its mission.

Even if traitors and apostates dislike this, how can this Light disappear from the world? Or how should it return to its Source without accomplishing what it was destined to accomplish?

Therefore those people who are born later, what have they to do, and whom have they to follow, so as not to stray from the right path? And even if they do not recognize it, and wantonly go on a wrong path, God, nevertheless, has to manifest a Guide (hujjat), who should be with them." (page 40)

*Please note that the unity of Allah, Ali and Muhammad occurs at the level of LIGHT (NOOR). There is only ONE Noor which has to complete its mission. In all previous postings, the word NOOR has been used with great care because these instructions are from the level of LIGHT. Hence, the name, Enlightenment Postings. Al-Hamdulillah!

Posting No. 3: Recognition of the Light of the Imam

Let us now reflect on the following extracts from three Khutba of Hazrat (Noor) Mowlana (Shah) Murtaza Ali (a.s.) which clearly describe the position of aale-e-Muhammad (Descendants of Muhammad, may the peace of Allah be upon them) and relate these to the theme of 'Recognition of the Light of the Imam':

"The Almighty God has placed His trust in Aale-e-Muhammad (Descendants of Muhammad, may the peace of God be upon them). They are strongholds where His Commandments receive protection and from which they are expounded and interpreted. They are fountain heads of knowledge created by Him, shelters for His teachings, refuges for Heavenly Books, mountain like citadels to defend His religion. Islam in its beginning was weak and helpless, they came to its help and defence. Islam was nervous of the infidels around it, they made it strong and powerful." ²

"I swear by the Lord that I know fully well all the messages of God that the Holy Prophet (may the peace of God be upon him and his descendants) has received, the ways of fulfilment of promises made by God and of all the knowledge that science or philosophy could disclose.

We, the progeny of the Holy Prophet (may the peace of God be upon him and his descendants), are the doors through which real wisdom and true knowledge will reach mankind: we are lights of religion." ³

"Remember that descendants of the Holy Prophet (S.A.S.) are stars in the Heaven, if one sets the other will rise to illumine your path; the Merciful Lord has thus completed His Blessings amongst you." ⁴

Posting No. 4: Recognition of the Light of the Imam

In Pandiyat-i Jawanmardi, Imam NOOR Mowlana Shah Mustansir bi'l-laah II (a.s.) teaches us about the recognition of the Light of the Imam:

"O, believers! The path of God (Haqq) is the "Straight Road" (Siratu'l-mustaqim). This means the recognition (marifat) of the Imam of the time. His leadership is the right path. So far as you can, try by every means to follow that right path in order to attain the goal of Truth (manzil-i haqiaqat), which is the recognition of the Imam of the time. Strive to perfect your devotion and faith (din wa iman) when you are still young, and arrive at the coveted "Spring of water", because towards the end of your life you may become weakened. You may then become greedy for (pleasures of) this world, neglecting (religious matters). Therefore comprehend this and fulfill it now if you can." (pages 9-10)

"The real man is one who is hospitable. This does not mean that he will be like a lion at another's table, or like a fox. His face is always friendly. He has a true love for and perfect faith in the Imam of his time. He tries to attain that lasting wealth, the recognition of the Imam of the time. He is benevolent and well-behaved, as one should be, being kind and friendly to the friends and devotees ('ashiqan) of that Lord (Mawla)." (pages 10-11)

Posting No. 5: Recognition of the Light of the Imam

In Pandiyat-i Jawanmardi, Imam NOOR Mowlana Shah Mustansir bi'l-laah II (a.s.) teaches us about the recognition of the Light of the Imam:

"Some people appeal to God while they have no knowledge of the Imam of their time, or oppose him. They should enter the Ark of Noah of the time because all other ships will be drowned. Therefore follow the (spiritual) authority and your leader, so that you may sit in the house of the Truth, entering the Ark of the Noah of your time, and reaching the land safely. That authority, that Noah of your time, is the Imam of your time. Know him, and enter the Ark of Noah, i.e. the path of his preaching (tariqa'i dawat-i u), so that your faith may become perfect and your souls may become safe from calamities. The house which has no windows or openings remains dark. Similarly, the heart of one who does not know the Imam of his time, who is the sun of that period, remains dark, without light and enlightenment. It always remains in darkness of irritation and enmity. Darkness causes one suffering and to stray from the path, becoming lost. Therefore the one who does not know the Imam of the time (hadir), and regards him as absent (gha'ib) from the world, is erring, alien to the community, and an enemy. People like these, owing to the absence of spiritual guidance, become split into sects, continually struggling, quarrelling and opposing each other. They are at war with every other community until at last they perish." (page 29)

Posting No. 6: Recognition of the Light of the Imam

In Pandiyat-i Jawanmardi, Imam NOOR Mowlana Shah Mustansir bi'l-laah II (a.s.) teaches us about the recognition of the Light of the Imam:

"If a man does not recognize the Imam (Wali) of his time, does not accept him as such, treats his orders as already contained in the plain commandments of the Shari'at, ascertains from ordinary theologians ('ulmama-y-i zahir) the indications (ma'ni) of the Coran and the various hadiths concerning the institution of Imamatus, and if he acts according to the theologian's opinion, all his pious acts will be fruitless and his troubles useless,—he will finally go to Hell. This is because the correct meaning of the Coran and hadiths is only with the Imam. The Prophet,—peace be upon him,—himself said that whoever accepted his progeny ('itrat) and the Book of God as his guidance would never be lost. The expression "my progeny" refers to the Imam, according to the words of the Coran (III, 30): "...my progeny, one following the other". But the Imam can only be recognized with the help of another Imam, being the person whom the Imam appoints to that office from amongst his own progeny (dhurriyyat). Only he will be the Imam, no one else. Ordinary mortals (makhluq) cannot appoint any one as their Imam. Whomever the Imam selects for (the transfer of) the light of Imamatus from amongst his own sons, and confers upon him by an indication (nass) the mysteries of Imamatus, that person only is the Imam and a member (aal) of the dynasty. His other sons will be (ordinary) people who deserve salvation (ahl-i najat), if they obey him and serve him.

Therefore follow the Imam in order that you may be connected with him, i.e. the Imams, one generation after another. If others have no connection with the Imam, this is because they opposed him, adopting a hostile attitude towards

him, and the Imam concealed himself from them, while they began to follow the ordinary theologians,—this is why they err." (pages 30-31)

Posting No. 7: Recognition of the Light of the Imam

In Pandiyat-i Jawanmardi, Imam NOOR Mowlana Shah Mustansir bi'l-lah II (a.s.) teaches us about the recognition of the Light of the Imam:

"The learned, however, know that the world cannot be without an Imam even for a moment, because if it is, the earth with its population will instantly perish. But their craving for position and importance (in the community) compels them to conceal this, and (outwardly) deny this. Surely, that strife which they had with various prophets and saints was due to this desire to preserve their position of respect.

O, believers, it is astonishing to see how one who has no connection with the Imam, yet laughs and rejoices, but it is still more astonishing when one rejects the Imam of the time, and adopts a hostile attitude towards him. He is like a child playing on the edge of the dam of a water mill, or on the roof of a house, or with a snake in his hand. Do you see such inopportune laughter or untimely and out-of-place rejoicing among the ordinary people? It is bound to become the cause of their calamity, their punishment and sorrow.

O, believers, O, sincere ones! Smile only then when you are saved from the calamities and perils, when you are out of the whirlpool and on dry land, when you are safely back from the journey. It means, then, that joy will be attained when you arrive at the recognition of the Imam of the time, becoming his faithful and obedient slaves, and not being even for a moment disobedient or forgetful of him. You will then become enlightened by his recognition,—and it is this time which will be appropriate for joy and merriment." (page 31)

Posting No. 8: Recognition of the Light of the Imam

In Pandiyat-i Jawanmardi, Imam NOOR Mowlana Shah Mustansir bi'l-laah II (a.s.) teaches us about the recognition of the Light of the Imam:

"The true believer is one who always occupies himself with mention (dhikr) of the Lord (Khudawand), whose heart is full of love and whose tongue is busy with glorification of the Creator (Khudawandgar). He will hear the instructions given to those who tread the path of truth, will act accordingly, and will admonish his friends, thus acting righteously himself first, and later on inducing others to do so.

Man attains the recognition of his Creator when he acquires knowledge of himself. First you must acquire the knowledge of your body, limb by limb. You should realize that it has not come into existence by itself, but has been created by some one else. Then you should reflect: who is this who has created me? For what purpose? Where is he going to take me? — Then you will see that if your body maintains a state of balance in its elements, it will be free from disease. Otherwise its condition will be upset. He must then abstain from unsuitable foods. He may thus infer that if one abstains from excesses, in every thing observes a proper measure, not deviating from it to either side, and if he purifies his moral self, whenever he discovers in himself the properties of brutes and beasts, he then acquires human properties, and purifies himself. And when his heart has become pure, and doubt and dishonesty leave his mind, when, he acquires certainty in the recognition of the Imam of his time, seeing him as everywhere present before him, looking upon him, he then reaches the stage of self evident certainty ('ilmu'l-yakin), and attains the stage of absolute truth (haqqu'l-yaqin) when his heart becomes enlightened by the absolute light and in that light he begins to see his soul (jan). Thereafter he begins to see with absolute self-evidence the place in which his Creator is." (page 38)

Posting No. 9: Recognition of the Light of the Imam

In Pandiyat-i Jawanmardi, Imam NOOR Mowlana Shah Mustansir bi'l-laah II (a.s.) teaches us about the recognition of the Light of the Imam:

"O, believers, O, dear ones, the real believer for the sake of the hereafter changes his evil ways for right ways, persevering in them. The real believer serves his brother believer for the sake of the hereafter. There were (in the past) those who were doing this of their own accord, who took up the service of enlightened pirs (piran-i rawshan-dil), those who used to ask questions from the teachers concerning the matters of the Truth (sukhan-ha-y-i Haqq), and acted (according to what was said to them). Some people for the sake of the hereafter, and for the sake of the didar of the Imam of their time, have given up royal thrones. This is the decision of wisdom, because it is due to profound wisdom when one gives up for this (something) transient, as royal authority or high position. Some give up worldly authority for the sake of the didar of the Imam, thus acquiring eternal authority. But how numerous is the filthy rabble who give up the didar of the Imam, running after position, thus abandoning light for darkness, or water in order to get into fire.

The good ones used to give up their relatives and their people for the sake of the didar. Others, similarly, gave up their properties, estates, families, position and respect. Others again for the sake of the didar and out of love for the Imam of the time used to walk (long distances), making their feet sore. Others for the sake of the hereafter served their spiritual brothers at their assemblies. Good ones sat in the assemblies of the believers for the sake of making their faith perfect, occupying themselves with worship and acts of piety, or asking of their teachers questions concerning the true knowledge ('ilm-i haqiqi), and memorizing it. They used to learn it, sitting and listening to their teachers, and memorizing what they said, acting piously according to their instruction, being full of love for the religion of the truth (din-i haqq).

O, believers, be all in love with the pure religion of the Imam! Be ready to comprehend the meaning of (his) word and knowledge ('ilm), never neglecting your own progress and behaviour, because neglect of the truth is a calamity." (pages 33-34)

Posting No. 10: Recognition of Light of Holy Imam and Eternal Existence

In Pandiyat-i Jawanmardi, Imam NOOR Mowlana Shah Mustansir bi'l-laah II (a.s.) teaches us about light and eternal existence:

And now, O brothers, Mawlan-na Shah Mustansir bi'l-lah, the Imam of the time says:

"Whoever treats himself as something (important) in this world, being sure of his own (important) existence, will become non-existent (non-entity); will be deprived of a share of existence. Man (by himself) is neither extant nor non-existent, neither light or darkness. If the Imam, who possesses association (with God, walayat), helps him, he becomes endowed with being and light. But if he does not recognize (the Imam) from a (false) sense of security, and does not swear allegiance to the Imam of the time, he will become non-existent and dark."

O, believers! our Lord (Mawla-na) and King of the time, Shah Mustansir bi'l-lah says:

"Whoever in this world has connection with us, and for this reason suffers at the hands of (our) enemies, and experiences hardships, and yet preserves his heart pure and warm, he will attain relief in the hereafter, and will rejoice at the vision (liqa') of his creator."

O, believers, Mawlan-na Shah Mustansir bi'l-lah says:

"Whoever in this world consorts with the followers of the Truth (Ahl-i Haqq), learning the knowledge of religion from them, my look of mercy will rest on the head of that devotee. At the point of death he will safely (re-)join the Truth."

O, believers, Mawlan-na Shah Mustansir bi'l-lah says:

"The true believer is one who has no malice in his heart, which is pure. Whoever wants to attain my didar in this world and the hereafter, must keep himself away from every defect, opposition and evil act. And according to how far he achieves purification of his heart, and is able to see his Creator in this world, so he will also see Him in the hereafter. It is obligatory and necessary for the true believer to recognize his Creator who is manifest in this world in the form of a human being, and to see Him here in order to see Him also in the hereafter." (pages 62-63)

In his message to students in Bombay⁵, NOOR Mowlana Shah Sultan Muhammad Shah Al-Husayni (a.s.) explained about the fundamental principle of our Holy faith:

" ... While the material conditions of life change, the spiritual conditions which are not only limited to this life but go beyond, are based on one fundamental principle, namely search for enlightenment by the right spiritual contact with the light of your holy faith."

End Notes

1. Pir Shihabu'd-din Shah Al-Husayni. *True Meaning of Religion*, 40
2. Imam Hazrat (Noor) Mowlana (Shah) Murtaza Ali (a.s.). *Nahjul Balagha: Sermons, letters and saying of Hazrat Ali* (Translated by Jafery, Syed Mohammed Askari), Khutba 5, 7-8.
3. Imam Hazrat (Noor) Mowlana (Shah) Murtaza Ali (a.s.). *Nahjul Balagha: Sermons, letters and saying of Hazrat Ali* (Translated by Jafery, Syed Mohammed Askari), Khutba 123, 91.
4. Imam Hazrat (Noor) Mowlana (Shah) Murtaza Ali (a.s.). *Nahjul Balagha: Sermons, letters and saying of Hazrat Ali* (Translated by Jafery, Syed Mohammed Askari), Khutba 103, 72-73.
5. Imam Noor Mowlana Shah Sultan Muhammad Shah Al-Husayni. *Precious Pearls*. No. 43

References

1. Pir Shihabu'd-din Shah Al-Husayni. 1970. *True Meaning of Religion* (Risala dar Haqqiqat-i Din). Translated into English by W. Ivanow. Published by Shia Imami Ismailia Association for Tanzania, Dar es Salaam.
2. Imam Noor Mowlana Shah Mustansir bi'l-laah II. *Advices of Manliness* (Pandiyat-i Jawanmardi). Translated from Persian to English by W. Ivanow. The Ismaili Society Series A No. 6.
3. Jafery, Syed Mohammed Askari. *Nahjul Balagha: Sermons, letters and saying of Hazrat Ali*, Tahrike Tarsile Quran, New York, 1981.
4. Aga Khan III. *Memoirs of Aga Khan*. Cassell, London, 1954.

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