

Am I a Follower of Ahl al-Bait?

Part II

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Abstract:

In the previous part of this article, the first seven sections of a Hadith by Imam Hasan al-Askari (p.b.u.h.) concerning the meaning of the term “Shia” was provided.[†] In this Hadith, the Imam (p.b.u.h.) quotes some of his ancestors in order, namely, the Prophet (p.b.u.h. & h.f.), Lady Fatima (p.b.u.h.), and the first nine Imams (p.b.u.h.) regarding this subject.

Key words:

Ahl al-Bait, hadith, Imam Hasan al-Askari, Shia

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[†] The entire Hadith is found in the Tafsir of Imam Hasan al-Askari (p.b.u.h.), pp. 306-320. It is also narrated in *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 65, pp. 154-163, Hadith 11.

Following is the English translation of the remaining sections of this precious Hadith as well as some explanatory notes and supplementary information from the holy Quran and the sayings of the Ahl al-Bait (p.b.u.h.).

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Imam Hasan al-Askari (p.b.u.h.) continued:

It was mentioned to Imam al-Sadiq (p.b.u.h.) that Ammar al-Duhni went to testify something before Ibn Abi Layla, the judge of Kufa. The judge said, “Cease! Your testimony is not accepted since you are a rejecter (*Rafidhi*).” Upon that, Ammar stood up to leave while trembling and weeping. The judge told him, “You are a man of knowledge and Hadith. If the title of rejecter offends you, just disavow from this sect so that you become our brother.”

Ammar replied, “It is not what you think! I am crying for myself and you. I cry for myself because by considering me a Rafidhi, you have attributed to me a noble rank that I do not deserve. Woe onto you! Indeed Imam al-Sadiq (p.b.u.h.) has narrated to me that ‘the first people who were called Rafidhi were the magicians who, upon witnessing the signs of Moses (p.b.u.h.), believed in him, followed him, rejected the command of the Pharaoh, and were patient to all that befell them. The Pharaoh called them rejecters as they rejected his custom. Thus, the term rejecter (*Rafidhi*) has been used for anyone who

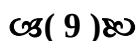
rejected all that Allah disliked and acted according to all that Allah commanded.’¹ Who is like them in this era?

And indeed, I cried for myself because admitting this noble title for myself passed through my mind in a moment and I fear that Allah, the mighty and the majestic, condemns me for that, saying, ‘O Ammar! Have you truly rejected falsehood and acted according to Our commands?’ Then, I will be considered negligent if He overlooks me, and will be entitled to a great punishment if He questions me unless my masters rectify it for me by their intercession. On the other hand, my cry for you was for the greatness of your lie by calling me with other than

¹ This piece that praises the rejection of enemies of Allah and their customs, appears at the middle of the series of traditions concerning adherence to Ahl al-Bait (p.b.u.t.), which emphasizes the fact that a true follower (*Shi’a*) of Ahl al-Bait (p.b.u.t.) is always a true rejecter (*Rafidhi*) of their enemies and their methods, ideas, etc. Therefore, the titles *Rafidhi* and *Shi’a* refer to the same fact and cannot be realized separately. Anyone who claims to “adhere” to the customs of Ahl al-Bait (p.b.u.t.), should naturally “reject” other customs; otherwise he is not truthful in his claim and is a polytheist in his obedience to Allah because he has associated human-generated ideas and methods with the divine instructions that has reached him through Allah’s representatives. In fact, rejecting falsehood has priority over accepting the truth and is its prerequisite. Allah, the mighty and the majestic, states in the holy Quran, “He who rejects *Taghut* and believes in Allah, he has indeed adhered to the most trustworthy handhold which shall never break” (2:258). Imam al-Riza (p.b.u.h.) interpreted “*Taghut*” as those who usurped the rights of the family of Muhammad and “the most trustworthy handhold” as the guardianship of the Commander of the Believers (Imam Ali) and the Imams after him (cf., Tafsir Ali Ibn Ibrahim al-Qummi, (under the commentary of this verse). Imam al-Sadiq (p.b.u.h.) said, “Whoever claims to recognize us but he adheres to other handholds is a liar” (*Ma’ani al-Akhbar*, p. 399, Hadith 57; *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 2, p. 83, Hadith 7). See also the explanation in the footnote towards the end of this article on the meaning of monotheism.

my name, and that how your body could endure the divine punishment for disgracing one of the most honourable names.”

Upon hearing this account, Imam al-Sadiq (p.b.u.h.) said, “Had Ammar had sins greater than the heavens and the earth, they have certainly wiped off from his record by uttering these words, and his good deeds have multiplied in the sight of Allah, the mighty and the majestic, such that each one of his smallest deeds even to the extent of a mustard seed has become a thousand times greater than this world.”



*I*n addition, Imam Musa Ibn Ja'far (p.b.u.h.) was told, “We were passing by a person in the market who was proclaiming that he is an earnest Shia of Muhammad and his family, peace be upon them, and he was hawking certain cloth for more money. Imam Musa (p.b.u.h.) said, “One who knows the value of his soul will not be wasted nor will he act ignorantly. Do you know whom this man resembles? He resembles a person who claims ‘I am like Salman, Abu Dhar, Miqdad, and Ammar’ while he undervalues (people’s goods) when he buys, and hides the defects of the merchandise before his customer (when he sells). He purchases something (with deferred payment) for a certain price, and then overcharges an unfamiliar layman who wants that merchandise by imposing it on him. If in any event he loses his customer, he informs the original seller that he does not want the merchandise (that he had already bought) except for a lower price regardless of his debit. Is he like Salman, Abu Dhar, Miqdad, and Ammar?! We

seek refuge in Allah from such an idea.¹ However, what prevents him from saying, ‘I am among those who love Muhammad and the family of Muhammad (p.b.u.h. & h.f.), love people who believe in their guardianship, and feel hostile towards their enemies’?”

❧ (10) ❧

When Ma'mun appointed Imam Ali Ibn Musa al-Riza (p.b.u.h.) as heir apparent, his secretary came to him and said, “At the door, there are some people who request to meet

¹ Nawf once asked Imam Ali (p.b.u.h.) to describe the characteristics of his Shi'a. By remembering his Shi'a, the Imam (p.b.u.h.) wept and said, “O Nawf! My Shi'a are, by Allah, cognizant of Allah and His religion, active in obeying Him and His commands, and are guided by means of His love. They are emaciated as a result of devotion, and obligate themselves to withdraw (from pleasures of the world). They have yellow complexions due to staying awake for midnight worship, bleary eyes because of (abundant) weeping, dry lips for uttering the remembrance (of Allah), and empty stomachs by (exercising) hunger. Their divine education is recognized in their faces, and their horror from the pleasures of the world is seen in their manner. They are the guiding lamps in any darkness, and the sweet basils in any society. They do not bear enmity in their heart against those who preceded them in submission, and do not follow them without proof. Their evil is kept under control in them. Their hearts are (full of) sympathy, their souls are chaste, and their demands are little. They burden themselves while people are at rest because of their service. They are clever, sincere, and noble people of wisdom. They are like foxes who (stealthily) escape with their religion (i.e., distrusting the sinful environments, they move from place to place to safeguard their religion. They live unknown such that) they are not noticed or appreciated when present, and are not remembered when absent. These are my most pleasant followers (Shi'a) and my most honorable brothers. Ah! I wish so much to meet them!” (*al-Amali*, al-Tusi, p. 576, Hadith 1189; *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 65, p. 177, Hadith 34).

you. They say they are of the Shia of Ali (p.b.u.h.). He (p.b.u.h.) answered, "I am busy. Dismiss them." Therefore, the secretary dismissed them. They came the following day saying the same thing and were treated similar to the previous day. They continued to come at the door of the Imam's house for two months saying the same, but he (p.b.u.h.) turned them away every time.

When they were disappointed from meeting the Imam (p.b.u.h.), they said to his secretary, "Tell our master we are the Shia of your father Ali Ibn Abi Talib (p.b.u.h.). Indeed, our enemies have rejoiced to see that you are avoiding us. We will leave this time and will distance from our city due to the shame and humiliation that befell on us and because we cannot tolerate the pain resulting from the rejoice of our enemies in our city." This time, Imam Ali Ibn Musa (p.b.u.h.) permitted them to enter. They entered and greeted him, but he (p.b.u.h.) neither returned their greetings nor did he permit them to sit. While standing, they asked, "O son of the Messenger of Allah! What is the reason for this humiliation after that harsh avoidance? How could anyone of us live after this affliction?"

At this point, Imam al-Riza (p.b.u.h.) said, "Recite: *'Whatever of affliction strikes you is because of your own deeds, and He forgives much (of the sins)'* (42:30). I followed none but my Lord, the mighty and the majestic, the Messenger of Allah (p.b.u.h. & h.f.), the Commander of the Believers (p.b.u.h.), and my pure fathers after him on this issue. They reproached you and I followed them accordingly." They asked, "For what reason, O Son of the Messenger of Allah?"

He (p.b.u.h.) replied, “For your claim that you are the Shia of the Commander of the Believers (p.b.u.h.)! Woe on to you! Verily his Shia were al-Hasan (p.b.u.h.), al-Husain (p.b.u.h.), Salman, Abu Dhar, al-Miqdad, Ammar, and Muhammad Ibn Abi Bakr who neither disobeyed any of his commands nor did they commit his prohibitions of any kind. You said you are his Shia while you contradict him in most of your actions, fall short concerning many obligatory deeds, neglect the great rights of your brothers in faith, observe *Taqiyya* when it is not required, and leave *Taqiyya* when it must be observed.¹ Had

¹ In the language of Hadith, *al-Taqiyya* refers to concealing belief in the case of danger. The root of this term is *Waqqa*, which means “to safeguard; to shield; to shelter; to preserve.” The meaning of *al-Taqiyya* is very close to that of *Mudaaraat*, which means tolerating people and getting along with them. In modern terms, *al-Taqiyya* can be translated as “diplomacy”. Traditions also confirm this meaning. Imam al-Sadiq (p.b.u.h.) said, “O Sufyan! Observe *Taqiyya*. Surely, it was the Sunna of Ibrahim al-Khalil (p.b.u.h.). Verily Allah, the mighty and the majestic, said to Moses (p.b.u.h.) and Aaron (p.b.u.h.), ‘Go both of you to the Pharaoh, for he has indeed transgressed (all bounds). But speak to him with a gentle word so that he may take warning or feel afraid’ (20:43-44). Allah, the mighty and the majestic, told them to call him with proper title and then speak to him. And when the Messenger of Allah intended a trip, (for the security of the city during his leave) he used to conceal it and act as if another person would leave. He also said, ‘Allah has ordered me to be lenient (*Mudaaraat*) with people as much as he has ordered me to fulfill the obligatory deeds’. Surely Allah educated him (in the art of) *Taqiyya* and said (to him), ‘Repel (evil) with what is best; that way, a person that between you and him is hatred will appear as if he is your friend and intimate. But none is granted such achievement save those who exercise patience and self-restraint, and none is granted it save the owner of the great prosperity’ (41:34-35). O Sufyan! He who applies *Taqiyya* in the religion of Allah, he shall indeed ascend to the climax, and he who does not own his tongue shall regret.” (*Ma’ani al-Akhbar*, p. 385, Hadith 20, *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 72, p. 396, Hadith 18). A believer is required to conceal his belief and even is

you said you believe in his guardianship (*Walaya*), love him, love those who adhere to him, and are the enemy of his enemies, I would not have denied your saying. However, you claimed such a noble position that if your actions do not confirm your saying, you will perish unless a mercy from Allah rectifies it for you.” They said, “O Son of the Messenger of Allah! We ask forgiveness from Allah and return to Him from our saying. We say as our master taught us that we love you, love people under your guardianship, and are the enemy of your enemies.”

At this time, Imam al-Riza (p.b.u.h.) said, “Now, welcome to you my brothers and my friends. Come near! Come near!” He (p.b.u.h.) embraced them and then asked his secretary how many times he met them. He answered, “sixty times.” He (p.b.u.h.) said to him, “Then go and come to them sixty times consecutively

allowed to utter disbelief if otherwise substantial danger threatens him or other believers. This attitude is the opposite of hypocrisy in which one conceals disbelief in his heart and pretends to be a believer. The believer, by definition, is required to always maintain and practice faith in his heart. According to the traditions, acknowledgement and recognition of faith is the required action of heart (cf. *al-Kafi*, vol. 2, p. 34, Hadith 1). This is an internal action. However, a believer is also required to put his belief into practice outwardly when he can. Notice that Allah commands us to disassociate ourselves from the disbelievers (those who have heard the message of Ahl al-Bait (p.b.u.t.) but rejected it), avoid friendship with them, and take them as enemies (cf. holy Quran, 3:28, 5:51, 9:1, 9:3, 9:16, 9:23, 60:1; 2:98, 4:101). Thus, we can never unite with the disbelievers in reality, and we cannot accept them in our heart. Our cooperation with them at times in a worldly matter may only be due to *Taqiyya* as a diplomatic, superficial, and circumstantial relation. In order to maintain faith, one should control his apparent relationship with the disbelievers such that it could not gradually undermine the disgust from them in one’s heart.

and offer them my Salaam for verily their sins were wiped off by asking for forgiveness and because of their repentance. Now, they deserve high respect due to their love for us and accepting us as their guardians. Look into their problems and present them and their families with gifts and financial aids.”

❧(11)❧

In addition, a person came to Imam Muhammad al-Jawad, son of Ali al-Riza (p.b.u.h.), appearing very happy and delighted. He (p.b.u.h.) asked, “Why are you so happy?” The man answered, “O Son of the Messenger of Allah! I have heard your father saying, the most deserving day to make a servant happy is a day that Allah helps him give charities and alms to his believing brothers and solve their problems. Today, I received ten believing brothers who were needy and had dependents. They came to me from another city. I gifted each one of them with money, and this is why I am delighted.” The Imam replied, “By my life! You deserve to be happy if you have not nullified your deed and if you do not nullify it later.” He said, “How could I ruin my deed while I am one of your sincere Shia?!” He (p.b.u.h.) replied, “Ah! Certainly you just invalidated your benevolence and charity to your brothers.” He asked, “How come, O Son of the Messenger of Allah?” The Imam (p.b.u.h.) replied, “Recite the saying of Allah, the mighty and the majestic, ‘*O you who believe! Cancel not your charity by reminders of your generosity or by annoyance.*’ (2:264)” He said, “I did not remind my generosity to the people that I gave charity and did not hurt their (feelings).”

The Imam (p.b.u.h.) said, “Allah, the mighty and the majestic, said you should not nullify your generosity by reminding or by annoyance, and He did not say by reminding to or annoying only the people to whom you give charity. It includes all harassments. Do you believe annoying the people that you helped is greater or annoying us and the angels who scribe your deeds?” The person answered, “Of course, the latter.”

The Imam (p.b.u.h.) said, “Certainly, you have bothered me and them and have cancelled your charity. Woe onto you! Do you know who are our sincere Shia?” He replied in the negative. The Imam continued, “Our sincere Shia (in the ancient nations) were Hizqil (Khirqil), (who was) the believer of the family of the Pharaoh¹, and the companion (mentioned in the Surah) of Yasin about whom Allah said, *‘Then a man came running from the farthest part of the city, [saying, O my folk! Obey the messengers]’* (36:20) and (their examples in this nation were) Salman, Abu Dhar, al-Miqdad, and Ammar. Do you equate yourself with them? Didn’t you annoy us and the angels by such a claim?”

The man said, “I ask for forgiveness from Allah and repent to Him. Then, what should I say about myself?” He (p.b.u.h.) replied, “Say: I am of people who acknowledge your *Walaya*, love you, love people who love you, and I am hostile to your enemies.” He said, “This is what I believe, and I repent from the claim that you and the angels rejected since whatever you deny is what Allah has denied.” At this time, the Imam (p.b.u.h.)

¹ cf. the holy Quran, Chapter 40, Verse 28.

said, “Surely, the reward of your charity has just been returned to you and was saved from nullification.”

❧ (12) ❧

Imam al-Askari (p.b.u.h.) , then, added: “Indeed, the Shia of Ali (p.b.u.h.) are those about whom Allah, the mighty and the majestic, said, *‘Those who have faith and do good deeds; they are companions of the Garden wherein shall they abide forever.’* (2:82). They are those who believe in Allah, name Him by His names and do not attribute to Him other than His names, acknowledge Muhammad (p.b.u.h. & h.f.) in his sayings (i.e., his Hadiths), direct themselves according to his actions, believe in Ali after him as a master, an Imam, and a noble chief that no one in the nation of Muhammad (p.b.u.h. & h.f.) can equate, and that his merits outweigh the merits of the Prophet’s nation all together, and his superiority over them is like the superiority of the heavens over earth, while (in this comparison) earth is just a tiny particle.”

“The Shia of Ali (p.b.u.h.) are those who do not worry in the path of Allah whether death receives them or they receive death (like in a battle).¹ The Shia of Ali (p.b.u.h.) are those who give their brothers *‘preference over themselves even concerning the things that they themselves urgently need’* (59:9). They are those whom Allah does not see them on the actions

¹ Describing the FFi’a of Ahl al-Bait (p.b.u.t.), Imam al-Baqir (p.b.u.h.) said, “They are impregnable fortresses, trustworthy breasts, and sober-minded people of patience. They are neither disclosers of the secrets, nor are they ostentatious disobedients. They are humble and God-fearing worshippers by night and brave as a lion by day” (*Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 65, p. 180, Hadith 38).

that He forbade them, and does not miss them on the actions that He commanded them.”

“The Shia of Ali (p.b.u.h.) are those who follow Ali’s example in honoring their brothers in faith. What I tell you is not just my saying; rather I am relating the explicit saying of Muhammad (p.b.u.h. & h.f.). Such is the above saying of Allah ‘*do good deeds*’ (2:82), which means they fulfill all the obligations. After belief in monotheism (*al-Tawhid*)¹, prophethood (of

¹ As we can see from this Hadith, observing monotheism (*al-Tawhid*) is the foremost condition towards becoming a Shi’a of Ahl al-Bait (p.b.u.t.). Monotheism, which is the basic requirement of faith, is established at two levels: Belief in the uniqueness of Allah (which we call intellectual monotheism), and belief in the uniqueness of His path (which we refer to as practical monotheism). Both levels are proven by independent reason. In the intellectual level, *al-Tawhid* means believing that Allah is unique, matchless, and has no resemblance of any kind with His creation. Notice that uniqueness does not refer to the number “one” since anything that can be expressed by a quantity is limited (cf. the first sermon of *Nahj al-Balagha* by Imam Ali (p.b.u.h.)). Believing in any resemblance between the Creator and the creation even in the most abstract levels and concepts is associating Allah with His creation, which signifies a limitation for Him. Moreover, because Allah is the Creator of our reason, He can never be comprehended by reason; otherwise He is limited. On the other hand, the reason testifies that He is undeniable due to the existence of His abundant signs, which are His creation. In other words, a monotheist while admitting that Allah is not comprehensible believes that He is undeniable. In the language of Hadith, the intellectual sense of *al-Tawhid* is defined as regarding Allah free from the two extreme limits: resemblance (*Tashbih*) and denial/disproval (*Ta’til*, *Ibtaal*). When different Imams were asked if one can say that Allah is an existing thing, the Imams replied in the affirmative, but added that by saying this, one should regard Him outside the two limits of resemblance and disproval. (cf. *al-Kafi*, vol. 1, p. 82, Hadith 2; *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 3, p. 265, Hadith 29). Based on the intellectual monotheism, one has no way towards Allah by himself, and thus, attaining the pleasure of Allah is rationally impossible unless through the door

that Allah Himself *may* open to His creation by sending a representative. Therefore, intellectual monotheism rationally guides one towards a deeper level of monotheism, which is practical monotheism. In practical level, observing *Tawhid* means, believing that one should acquire all the knowledge of religion *only* from Allah's representatives and should not associate any idea or opinion derived from human sciences with the divine instructions given by the Prophet and his successors, peace be upon them. Moreover, a true monotheist tries his best to conform his actions to the divine instructions that have reached him in the form of traditions. Therefore, besides practicing monotheism by being selective concerning the input information he receives, a believer observes monotheism by controlling his output actions *only* according to the divine standard. In this manner, he serves Allah alone and does not associate anyone in his obedience to Allah. According to the Quran and traditions, practical monotheism, which is the very essence of *al-Walaya* (submitting to the guardians assigned by Allah in order to obey Him alone), is a requirement of faith and is necessary for salvation in the Hereafter. Imam Ali (p.b.u.h.) said, "Verily a believer does not take his religion from his opinion, but he accepts what comes from His Lord." (*al-Kafi*, vol. 2, p. 45, Hadith 1; *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 65, p. 311, Hadith 4). Imam Ali (p.b.u.h.) said to Kumail, "O Kumail! Do not take anything (related to the religion) except from us so that you become of us" (*Tuhaf al-Uqul*, p. 171; *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 74, p. 269, Hadith 1). In one of his *Tawqi'* (written piece of document) Imam Mahdi (p.b.u.h.) wrote, "Seeking the knowledge of the religion from other than us (Ahl al-Bait (p.b.u.t.)) is equal to denying us" (*Mustadrak Safinatul Bihar*, Shaikh Ali al-Namazi, vol. 1, p. 10). Yunus Ibn Abdurrahman narrates, I asked Imam Musa Ibn Ja'far (p.b.u.h.), "How do I practice monotheism?" He (p.b.u.h.) answered, "O Yunus! Do not be an innovator (in the domain of religion). Whoever looked into his opinion has perished. Whoever left the Ahl al-Bait of the Prophet (p.b.u.h. & h.f.) has gone astray, and whoever left the Book of Allah and the sayings of His Prophet has become a disbeliever" (*al-Kafi*, vol. 1, p. 56, Hadith 10). Imam al-Riza (p.b.u.h.) said, "The Messenger of Allah said, 'He who adopts a religion without hearing (from Allah's Messenger), Allah necessitates for him (as punishment) to go astray towards destruction. He who adopts a religion by hearing from other than the door that Allah has opened for His creation, is a polytheist.'" Then, the Imam (p.b.u.h.) continued, "And the trustworthy door on Allah's revelation is Muhammad

(p.b.u.h. & h.f.).” (*Uyun Akhbar al-Riza*, vol. 2, p. 9, Hadith 22). A similar narration exists in *al-Kafi*, vol. 1, p. 377, Hadith 4; *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 2, p. 105, Hadith 68). Imam al-Riza (p.b.u.h.) said, “The Messenger of Allah (p.b.u.h. & h.f.) said, ‘He who listens and inclines towards a speaker, he has surely worshipped/served him. Thus, if the speaker is from Allah, the person has indeed worshipped Allah, and if the speaker is from Satan, the person has indeed worshipped Satan’”... Then, Imam al-Riza (p.b.u.h.) continued, “O Ibn Abi Mahmud! If you see that people take the routes of the East and the West, steadfast in our path, for surely whoever stays with us we will stay with him, and whoever separates from us we will separate from him. Certainly, the simplest thing that could take away the faith of a person is ‘to call a small stone as a seed’, then believe in it, and disassociate from anyone who opposes him on that (without divine instruction). O Abi Mahmud! Safeguard what I just narrated to you as I have gathered (in it) for you all the goodness of this world and the Hereafter.” (*Wasa’il al-Shi’a*, vol. 27, p. 128, Hadith 33394; *Uyun Akhbar al-Riza*, vol. 1, p. 303, Hadith 63; A similar narration from Imam al-Jawad exists in *al-Kafi*, vol. 6, p. 434, Hadith 24). Imam al-Sadiq (p.b.u.h.) said, “Whoever associates a leader who is not assigned by Allah with a leader who is assigned by Allah is a polytheist and has associated partners with Allah” (*al-Kafi*, vol. 1, p. 373, Hadith 6; *Kitab al-Ghaiba*, al-Nu’mani, p. 130, Hadith 8). Furthermore, Imam al-Sadiq (p.b.u.h.) said, “Our rejecter (or our sayings) is a disbeliever and a rejecter of Allah, and he is like the one who has taken partners besides Allah.” (*al-Kafi*, vol. 1, p. 67, Hadith 10; *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 2, pp. 220-221). Several authorities narrated from Imam al-Baqir (p.b.u.h.) and Imam al-Sadiq (p.b.u.h.) who said, “Whatever has come from the Commander of the Believers (Ali (p.b.u.h.)) should be accepted and whatever he has forbidden should be abandoned. For him is like what was for Allah’s Messenger in terms of the right of obedience and superiority, and for the Messenger of Allah was superiority over everything that Allah created. He who tries to find fault in any of his orders is like the one who tries to find fault in Allah, the mighty and the majestic, and His Messenger. He who tries to precede him is like the one who tries to precede the Messenger of Allah. (Since he commands on behalf of Allah,) rejecting any of his minor or major commands is equivalent to taking partners with Allah (in obedience)” (*al-Kafi*, vol. 1, pp. 196-

Muhammad), and the leadership (of the Imams), the greatest obligations are fulfilling the rights of the brothers in faith¹ and

197, Hadith 1, 2, & 3; *Basa'ir al-Darajat*, pp. 199-200, Hadith 1 & 2; *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 16, p. 358, Hadith 53; vol. 39, p. 344, Hadith 16).

¹ Imam al-Sadiq (p.b.u.h.) said, "By Allah, a believer has indeed more rights than the *Ka'ba*" (*Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 65, p. 64, Hadith 115). Imam al-Kadhim (p.b.u.h.) said, "Proceeding towards fulfilling a need of a faithful is better than residing and fasting inside *Masjid al-Haraam* for two months" (*Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 71, p. 235). Abu Isma'il said to Imam al-Baqir (p.b.u.h.), "The number of Shi'a in our place is great!" He (p.b.u.h.) asked, "Do their rich have compassion on their poor? Do their well-doers forgive their wrongdoers? Do they share their property (with the poor)?" I answered, "No!" He (p.b.u.h.) said, "They are not Shi'a, the Shi'a are those who behave so." (*al-Kafi*, vol. 2, p. 173, Hadith 11). It is narrated that Imam al-Kadhim said, "When a faithful brother comes to someone with a demand, it is, without doubt, a mercy from Allah that is dispatched to him. If he fulfills his request, he has indeed attached him(self) to our guardianship (*Walaya*), which is attached to guardianship of Allah, the mighty and the majestic. However, if he denies him concerning his demand while being able to fulfill it, he has indeed wronged himself and ill-treated that (mercy)" (*Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 71, p. 313). In a similar Hadith, Imam al-Kadhim (p.b.u.h.) said, "When a brother in faith seeks refuge or appeals for help from someone, and he does not give him shelter and aid when he can, he is indeed detached from the guardianship of Allah, the mighty and the majestic" (*al-Kafi*, vol. 2, p. 366, Hadith 4). Mu'alla Ibn Khunais said: I asked Imam al-Sadiq (p.b.u.h.), "What is the right of a believer over other believers?" He (p.b.u.h.) replied, "He has seven obligatory rights. If one opposes any of them, he has stepped out of the guardianship of Allah, left His obedience, and has no share of the religion of Allah." I said, "May I be sacrificed for you! Tell me what they are." He (p.b.u.h.) said, "O Mu'alla! I am concerned about you and fear that you become negligent and do not safeguard them, and learn but do not act upon them." I said, "There is no strength except by Allah." He (p.b.u.h.) said, "The easiest right (to fulfill) among them is to like for him what you like for yourself and dislike for him what you dislike for yourself. The second right is that you should proceed towards fulfilling his needs and gaining his satisfaction, and should not oppose his request. The third right is that you should have care for him by your soul, your property, your hand, your foot,

acting upon *Taqiyya* before the enemies of Allah, the mighty and the majestic.”

Conclusion

After studying this set of traditions as well as other complementary traditions provided in the footnotes, we might feel that we are far away from the prescribed standard in practice. However, instead of being disappointed, we should look into its positive aspects. Learning these facts increases our love and respect for the title of Shia and those who deserve this revered title more than ever. It also makes us more cautious of using this term for ourselves and others in the future. Most important of all, learning these traditions leads us to refine our goals. They also teach us the right method of approaching these sacred goals.

In fact, it is a duty of every believer to learn the ideal goals set by the Prophet (p.b.u.h. & h.f.) and his Ahl al-Bait (p.b.u.t.) and to consider them reachable by an ordinary human with the help of

and your tongue. The forth right is that you should be his eye, his guide, his mirror (before himself), and his covering (before others). The fifth right is that you should neither be full when he is hungry, nor wear a favourite cloth when he is without proper clothing, and nor quench your thirst when he is thirsty. The sixth right is that if you have a servant and he cannot have one, you should (regularly) send your servant to aid him in washing clothes, and cooking and cleaning his house. And the seventh right is that you should acknowledge his oath, accept his invitation, visit him if he is sick, attend his funeral if he passes away, and initiate to fulfill his need in person before he is obligated to ask for it. Once you comply with all these rights, you have joined his *Walaya* to your *Walaya* and your *Walaya* to the *Walaya* of Allah, the mighty and the majestic” (*Rawdhat al-Wa'idhin*, vol. 2, p. 291; *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 71, p. 224, Hadith 12).

Allah. Since goal is a matter of faith, it must be correctly viewed, and should not be compromised due to one's weaknesses. It is only in this situation that one can maintain a faith that is acceptable by Allah, and become ready for a change. In the next step, one needs to approach these goals in practice to the extent of one's ability, which certainly pleases Allah and guarantees one's salvation.