

(.The General Life-Style of the Holy Ahlul Bayt (A.S

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The other members of the Ahl al-Bayt (AS) are the perfect examples of the education and training of the Holy Prophet (SA). Their characters and life-style resemble the character of the Holy Prophet (SA).

Certainly, during 250 years, beginning from the 11th year of Hijrah (the year of Holy Prophet's [SA] demise) until the year 260 AH (when al-'Imam Muhammad al-Mahdi's [AS] Ghaybat al-Kubra, i.e., Great Occultation started), in their associations with people, the infallible guides, the Imams faced various situations showing their style of living in different forms. They, however, never gave up the main objective of the Holy Prophet's (SA) policy which consisted of safeguarding the Usul al-Din (the fundamental principles of Islam for believing in) and the Furu' al-Din (the secondary principles of Islam for action on) from undergoing changes and transformations, and the education of people, as far as possible.

Within 23 years since his call and invitation to Islam, the Holy Prophet (SA) passed three phases of his life. He secretly called the people to Islam in the first three years of his al-Bi'that al-Nabawiyyah. He, then overtly invited the people to Islam in the next ten years. However, he and his followers lived under the severe tortures and persecution of the society and enjoyed no freedom of action that could make a tangible reform in the society. The Holy Prophet (SA) spent the remaining ten years (after the Hijrah) in an atmosphere in which the revival of truth and reality was the main goal and in which the holy Islam gained striking achievements day by day, thus opening up a new gate of knowledge and perfection to the people at every moment.

It is certainly obvious that these three different environments demanded different expedencies and would display the character and life-style of the Holy Prophet (SA), who had no other objective but to revive the truth and reality, in various forms.

The different environments, in which the guiding Imams (AS) lived, were not unlike the pre-Hijrah period of the Holy Prophet's (SA) call. Sometimes, like the first three years of the prophetic mission, it was impossible even to highlight the truth and thus the Imams (AS) performed their duties with utmost care, as was the case at the time of the fourth Imam (AS) and the latter part of the time of the sixth Imam (AS) who had similar expedencies. Sometimes, like the ten years prior to Hijrah, when the Holy Prophet (SA) overtly called the people to Islam in Makkah and when he and his followers were unable to resist the pressure of the unbelievers, the Imams (AS) also proceeded to educate the people with the teachings of

religion and the propagation of religious precepts. The influential men of the time, however, left no stone unturned in torturing and persecuting them and created new problems everyday. Indeed, an environment resembling the Holy Prophet's (SA) post-Hijrah milieu to some extent was the one in which Amir al-Mu'minin (Commander of the Mu'minin), 'Ali (AS), ruled as a caliph for five years, the one in which Hadrat Fatimah (AS) and al-Imam al-Hasan (AS) lived for a small period, and the one in which al-Imam al-Husayn (AS) and his disciples lived for a short duration. In all these environments, the truth and reality were openly manifested, thus clearly reflecting the image of the general condition prevailing during the Holy Prophet's (SA) time.

In short, except in what has been mentioned, the infallible Imams could not oppose the tyrant and usurper rulers and commanders of the time basically and openly. Therefore, they were obliged to have taqiyyah (concealing one's true beliefs when life is in danger) and to give no excuse to the rulers of the time to bother them. Nevertheless, their enemies left no stone unturned to put off the lights of their guidance and nullify their efforts

THE ROOT CAUSE OF THE DIFFERENCES OF THE IMAMS (AS) WITH CONTEMPORARY GOVERNMENTS

Various governments, which came into being in the Islamic society after the Holy Prophet (SA), under the name of Islam were all in serious disagreement with the Ahl al-Bayt (AS). This irreconcilable antagonism served as a root which never dried.

Although the Holy Prophet (SA) had mentioned about the virtues and excellent qualities of his Ahl al-Bayt (AS), the most important of which were the honour of knowing the teachings of the Holy Qur'an and distinguishing between halal (Islamically permissible) and haram (Islamically prohibited) matters and even though it was incumbent upon the Ummah to respect and honour the Ahl al-Bayt (AS), the Ummah, in spite of this recommendation and emphasis, did not discharge their obligations in this connection.

When the Holy Prophet (SA) openly invited people to Islam, on the very first day he mentioned about his relatives, embracing Islam and nominated 'Ali (AS) as his successor. He manifestly specified 'Ali's (AS) succession in Ghadir Khumm and elsewhere during the last days of his life. In spite of this fact, the people designated others as successors of the Holy Prophet (SA) after his death thus denying the Ahl al-Bayt (AS) of their indisputable rights. As a result, the governments of the time always considered the Ahl al-Bayt (AS) as dangerous rivals and were frightened of them. These governments exploited various possibilities to annihilate the Ahl al-Bayt (AS).

The governments of the time considered a deep discrepancy between the Ahl al-Bayt (AS) and

the so-called Islamic governments indispensable. The Ahl al-Bayt (AS) believed that Islamic governments must observe, preserve, and enforce the divine precepts of Islam. As seen in their endeavours, however, the so-called Islamic governments that came to power after the Holy Prophet (SA) did not completely observe the enforcement of the precepts of Islam and the adherence to the sirah (life-style) of the Holy Prophet (SA).

On several occasions, the Almighty Allah enjoins the Holy Prophet (SA) and the Islamic Ummah not to make any changes or transformations in the divine precepts and warns them of showing the slightest tendency against any one of the Islamic precepts and orders. On the basis of these unchangeable and immutable orders, the Holy Prophet (SA) adopted a life-style through which he displayed no difference in the implementation of Islamic laws as far as time, place, and people were concerned.

Observing the divine precepts was incumbent upon everybody and even upon the Holy Prophet (SA) and was obligatory on the part of everyone. The Islamic laws were steadfast and effective in all circumstances.

As a result of this equality and justice, all types of preferences among the people disappeared. The Holy Prophet (SA), who by Allah's order was the ruler and commander and whose obedience was obligatory, did not have the slightest privilege over others in the internal and external affairs of his life. He did not avail himself of any luxury, maintained no protocol and formalities commensurate to his position as a ruler, and did not boast of his greatness and position. He showed no magnanimity or reverence. He could not be distinguished from the rest of the people through any outward appearance.

No group from the various strata of people sought superiority over others only by relying on their own discriminative preferences. Men and women, the rich and the poor, the strong and the weak, the urban and the rural, the slaves and the free men, and the black and the white all were equally ranked and no one was under obligation to perform actions beyond his religious duty. Everyone was immune against paying homage to the powerful people of the society or to be belittled by the influence and oppression of the oppressors.

With a little consideration, it will be clear (particularly after we have had long experiments after the death of the Holy Prophet [SA]) that the sole objective of the Holy Prophet's immaculate character was the just and equitable implementation of the divine orders of Islam among the people and the immunity and preservation of these laws against changes and transformations. But the "Islamic governments" did not conform their conduct with that of the Holy Prophet (SA) and entirely changed his course of action. As a result:

(1) Shortly, class distinctions appeared in the "Islamic society" in the worst form. The people

were divided into two groups, the strong and the weak. The life, property, and reputation of one group were subjected to destruction through the whims and desires of another group.

(2) The so-called "Islamic government" gradually changed Islamic laws. Sometimes, under the pretext of safeguarding an Islamic society and sometimes under the pretext of saving the government and its policy, these "Islamic governments" refrained from compliance with Islamic commandments and implementation of Islamic laws and provisions. This mode of working expanded day by day to such an extent that the so-called Islamic governments felt no responsibility towards the observance and implementation of Islamic laws. It is quite obvious to know as to what would be the status of Islamic laws and general provisions which have no proper executive power for implementation.

In Short, the "Islamic governments", during the lives of Ahl al-Bayt (AS), brought about changes in the precepts and laws of Islam as per the "expediency of the time". It was due to these changes that their conducts were contrary to that of the Holy Prophet (SA). But according to the Qur'anic directives, the Ahl al-Bayt (AS) considered the precepts of the conduct of the Holy Prophet (SA) indispensable.

Due to these differences and contradictions, the contemporary powerful governments did not refrain from crushing the Ahl al-Bayt (AS). They embarked on using every possible means to extinguish the light of their guidance.

Although the Ahl al-Bayt (AS) continuously faced many problems and encountered stubborn and sinister enemies, they continued their invitation of Islam to people and the work of Islamic tabligh (communication) in accordance with their divine duty, they did not leave any stone unturned for education of the righteous individuals.

To appreciate this matter, one must refer to history and notice the large population of Shi'ahs during the five-year Khilafah (caliphate) period of the Amir al-Mu'minin, 'Ali (AS). Certainly, this population had come up during the 25 years of , Ali's (AS) seclusion. Also, there Was similar gathering of a large number of Shi'ahs at the house of Al-Imam al-Baqir (AS). They were those who were quietly educated by Al-Imam al-Sajjad (AS). Furthermore, hundreds of thousands of Shi'ahs following the Ahl al-Bayt (AS) and faithful to Al-Imam al-Rida (AS) were the truth seekers whom Al-Imam Musa ibn Ja'far (AS) had guided even from the dark comers of the prisons.

Finally, because of the continuous training and education by the Ahl al-Bayt (AS), the Shi'ahs, who were an insignificant number at the time of the death of the Holy Prophet (SA), sharply .(increased to an amazing number during the last period of the infallible Imams (AS

AN EXCEPTIONAL POINT IN THE POLICY OF THE AHL AL-BAYT (AS)

As mentioned earlier, the Ahl al-Bayt (AS) of the Holy Prophet (SA) spent their lives under tyranny and accusation. They performed their assigned duties in the atmosphere of taqiyyah and under the most difficult conditions. Only four members among the Ahl al-Bayt (AS), for brief periods, could exceptionally have an opportunity to work independently without restraint and taqiyyah. We will briefly discuss the biographies of the members (other than the Prophet (SA) whose life-sketch has been already given) of the Ahl al-Bayt (AS) here