

Similarity to the Imam and the Necessity of This Similarity

What Does Similarity to the Imam Mean, and What Are Its Requirements?

At different points in our lives, we try to be like others. We may face many ups and downs or the positive or negative effects because of the role model we have chosen to be like. But the important question is: “Is anyone worth being like?” Or “In what circumstances similarity to another person is to our benefit, so we must not avoid it?”

In fact, similarity has different levels, and similarity to the Imam is inevitable for a person who has come to know his true self. Just as we cannot become a teacher without becoming similar to the habits, behavior, and skills of a teacher, without similarity to the Imam and the perfect human being, we cannot develop our human and [supra-rational dimension](#) and call ourselves a human being. In this article, we intend to address what similarity means, how it proceeds, and what are its requirements.

If you have experienced dealing with children, you must have noticed that trying to be like a role model who is attractive or important to us begins from childhood. That is, from the moment we know ourselves, we start to imitate the behavior of and make ourselves similar to the closest people around us, i.e. parents. This process continues into adulthood and only the subject of our imitation changes. For example, when we are teenagers, we may be driven to look like a certain singer, actor, or athlete. Or when we enter a certain profession, we may choose the best person in that profession as our role model and try to be like them. Usually, as we

develop and achieve intellectual maturity, the role models we choose to resemble change, and the imitation includes more fundamental issues. For example, in adolescence, this similarity may be in the way of dressing or hair style, but in adulthood, we may become interested in following a particular school of thought or a sociopolitical model . Of course, if we achieve a certain level of growth and self-knowledge and know our true self, we will gradually seek to find role models that are compatible with the structure of our existence and the purpose of our creation. In fact, even if we do not know, in such circumstances, we look for similarity to the Imam.

Not Every Role Model Is Suitable

Willingly or unwillingly, with or without a role model, we are pursuing the path of life, moving towards our destination, which is to return to the realm of *Malakut* (Celestial Kingdom). According to the value we give to each dimension of our existence, we have desires and wishes for ourselves. Some of us have no desire greater than acquiring wealth and improving our house and car models, while others spend their entire lives looking for a fitter body, better job, or higher education degree.

Our life is usually full of role models, but they are the role models that attract our attention on billboards and social media. A role model is suitable for us as long as he provides the conditions necessary for reaching the purpose of our creation and getting to know our human dimension or true self. If we know our existential structure and know that the needs of our supra-rational dimension cannot be met in any way in the material and limited world, our origin and destination lie

somewhere beyond this earthly realm, and the purpose of our creation is beyond our material existence, then it would be impossible to consider reaching our goal by relying on our worldly intellect and knowledge.

We are constantly becoming, but whether our path is towards perfection and growth or stagnation and decline depends greatly on the role model and guide we have chosen to be like. With the passage of every moment of life, the process of our becoming is taking place and we are getting closer to our ultimate destination. Becoming in a true way, acquiring a sound heart, and achieving the purpose of creation all depend on whether we know our human status, know our path, and choose a suitable guide and role model for ourselves. We must know that we are God's deputies on earth and our goal is to acquire divine names and attributes. And only similarity to the Imam can bring us closer to this goal.

The importance of similarity to the Imam or infallible expert becomes clear when we realize that the infallible Imam is the only role model who manifests all the divine names and attributes. Other role models either have limited manifestations or are not role models for our human or supra-rational dimension at all. Even in our worldly life, when we acquire any skill, we seek to be like the most skilled and professional person in that field. Therefore, it is natural to seek a perfect role model to develop and grow the human dimension of our existence. Similarity to the Imam as the most complete and comprehensive role model is the best possible choice for reaching our destination and purpose of creation.

The Importance of Similarity to the Imam

Not all the decisions we make or the neglects we have suffered in life are equally important. Sometimes our decisions only have a short-term and temporary effect and do not harm us much. However, in some cases, these neglects end up destroying the entire eternity ahead of us. The issue of similarity to the Imam is not something that we can simply ignore, either because of negligence in recognizing its importance, or stubbornly considering ourselves omniscient and seeing no need for similarity to the Imam.

The Imam or the Infallible expert is the only one who knows all our needs to achieve the purpose of our creation and to acquire a sound heart, and he can meet all of them at once. He helps us to safely navigate the path to becoming the role model and perfect example that God has set for us, by using the tools that God has provided for us.

As we discussed in the previous lessons, the infallible Imam is the most complete manifestation of God's perfections. As a result, anyone who tries to achieve perfection in this world and seeks to learn it is trying to become like the Imam, even if he does not know this concept. The reason for our innate feeling of closeness to the infallible Imams is that they have and manifest the perfections that we desire to achieve.

In this article, we discussed the effort to gain similarity in different stages of life. We stated that the higher the level of our growth and elevation, the more significant similarity and emulation at higher levels become. In this context, similarity to the Imam is the most important one because it will help us gain self-knowledge, know the purpose of our creation, and try to achieve it.

What role model do you try to be like? Have you ever considered the importance of similarity to the Imam?

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