

What Is the Necessity of Being with the Leader, and How Can It Be Achieved?

How Is Being with the Leader Achieved; What Is the Connection between Companionship with the Imam and Committed Love?

In previous lessons, we became familiar with the concepts of *mahabbah* (general love) and *mawaddah* (committed/devoted love) toward the Household of the Prophet (Peace be upon them). Understanding the concept of committed love makes us aware of our duties and the prerequisites for our connection with the Infallible leader (Imam), and ensures that the outcome of our behavior toward the Infallible Imam enjoys relative soundness. It is essential to note that having a relationship full of devoted love is considered a prelude to achieving our ultimate human goal. Our goal in this relationship is to attain similarity to Allah, acquire the position of Divine deputyship, and the status of being with the leader, all of which are considered effects of committed love and devotion toward the Imam.

Of course, achieving the status of being with the infallible Imam, which ultimately leads to becoming of the same rank as the leader or attaining the praiseworthy status (*Maqam al-Mahmud*), is not easily possible. While tempting, this status requires the highest levels of care and has a close connection with the type of our love and devotion because regardless of what our desire is, we will ultimately be with and resurrected with that to which we have linked our hearts and which we love! In fact, being with the leader requires aligning life's priorities and directing the heart in accordance with this companionship.

Fundamentally, our value is determined by the beloved we choose for ourselves, and we will ultimately be with that to which we have directed our concerns. It is our choice: We can either follow a guide whose companionship shapes our bliss both in this life and the hereafter, demanding that we become like him, or we can choose inanimate, vegetative, animal or, at best, intellectual perfections that vanish when we depart from this world.

The point is that making this decision is not only related to our worldly life but also influences our eternal life because, as we mentioned earlier, it is our worldly life that prepares the prerequisites and tools for our life in the hereafter, and being with the leader in the hereafter necessitates being with that infallible leader in this world. In this lesson, we intend to examine the importance of accompanying the Imam and mention the prerequisites for this companionship.

Why Is Being with the Leader a Necessity?

Although our eternal bliss depends on being with the infallible Imam, it is obvious that only a few individuals will reach such a status because understanding the need for being with the leader and acting in line with his desires first requires awareness of our own existential levels. As long as we define ourselves as merely a material existence and have no understanding of our infinite existence and the eternal path ahead of us, we will not grasp the importance of following the only expert who is qualified to guide us on this path.

As long as we are unaware of the purpose of our creation and do not feel the need to become like our Creator, Allah, we also do not feel the need for a perfect role model to connect with Allah. Therefore, the prerequisite for our

understanding of the necessity of the Imam's existence and reaching the status of being with him is, above all, our proper self-knowledge.

Our short lifespan and the difficulty of the eternal journey ahead of us leave us no room for any procrastination or negligence in acquiring this self-knowledge, and drive us to quickly seize the opportunity and outrun others in the path of being with the leader, upon whom our bliss depends.

Being with the Imam Is the Result of Committed Love

Reaching the status of devoted love toward the Imam is a gradual process and does not happen suddenly; this path certainly has stages and prerequisites, and is not limited to a simple, superficial, and uncontrolled affection, even if only a part of this journey is apparent to us at times.

If love reaches its peak and involves our actions, it transforms into committed love; this devoted love is what moves us to sacrifice and act according to what the Imam wants, and it is precisely along this path that being with the leader takes shape, that is, when the feeling of closeness in the heart transforms into an existential bond and true companionship. At the same time, there are always obstacles and harms that prevent the formation of our true committed love toward the Imam and keep us from reaching the status of being with the leader. These are obstacles that, by engaging our soul with worldly perfections and animalistic concerns, prevent devoted love for the Imam from being at the top of our priorities.

True committed love is not just a feeling in the heart; it is a reality that not only transforms our outlook and our choices but also encompasses and influences all dimensions of our lives. One who has reached this stage sees the infallible Imam not only in the spiritual dimension but present in the core of their life and is ready to offer everything they have for his sake. Only when we fully see the Imam in every part of our lives and are ready to sacrifice for him will we achieve the status of being with the leader because companionship means living in the light of the Imam's presence and aligning with his will and desire in every moment of life!

Devoted love for the Household of the Prophet (Peace be upon them) means becoming similar to and close to them; in reality, a person whose heart has always felt the infallible Imam's presence, who has been considered his companion, and who will die while serving him, will achieve this, even if they never physically see the Imam.

Being Resurrected with the Infallible Imam

Committed love for the Imam goes beyond superficial and outward affection; it must lead us to act in accordance with fulfilling the Imam's desires. Expecting to accompany the Imam while having a materialist and animalistic lifestyle is nothing more than an illusion. One can consider oneself as accompanying and being of the same rank as the Imam only if they have perfected the lower stages of this companionship and have aligned their concerns and desires with the wishes of the Infallible Imam. Being with the leader is not possible without enduring the hardships arising from this companionship, and it is useless to claim

companionship with the Imam if one does not align with the Infallible Imam's decisions and plans.

Being with the leader means aligning decrees with the Imam's decrees, which, as its first step, demands approaching the Imam's desires and worldview. Achieving the status of accompanying the Imam will be possible through closeness and similarity to him, and in a word, through consonance with the Imam. Thus, accompanying the infallible Imam, who is the manifestation of God's beneficence, generosity, justice, and other infinite names and attributes, is not possible simultaneously with anger, hatred, bad temper, or oppression, and is merely a futile imagination.

In this lesson, we addressed the concept of being with the leader and determined that reaching such a status is dependent upon having an accurate perception of oneself. We stated that companionship is considered one of the effects of committed love for the infallible Imam and determines our position in eternity. We examined the role of devotion and aligning one's lifestyle with the Imam's desires in achieving this companionship, and stated that we will ultimately be with that which we love.