

Human Attachments and Imam Mahdi: Are Attachments Obstacles or Aids to the Imam?

How Human Attachments and Imam Mahdi Intertwine on the Path of Awaiting?

The human is a being full of desires and inclinations, and no one can be found who is entirely free from attachments. Every human heart is tied to something; these ties are sometimes overt and material, such as attachment to wealth, power, social status, or fame, and sometimes they form in the hidden layers of the mind and heart, such as beliefs and knowledge that an individual is unwilling to re-examine. In any case, attachments always play a decisive role in the course of our lives because anything that binds the human heart and prevents it from moving freely on the path of truth falls within the scope of attachments.

In this lesson, we examine the relationship between human attachments and Imam Mahdi (May Allah hasten his advent), and we analyze how these dependencies can either hinder or facilitate helping the Imam. Attachments are a natural response to innate (*fitri*) human needs such as security, well-being, and family, and if managed moderately, they form an important part of human spiritual and social development. However, when they are prioritized over truth and justice, they become an obstacle to spiritual maturity and the ability to accompany the Imam.

The Holy Quran has warned that if love for family, possessions, and trade is prioritized over love for God, the Ahl al-Bayt (Peace be upon them), and striving in His path, humanity will deviate from the path of truth and lose the ability to assist

the Imam [1]. Religious teachings also indicate that Imam Mahdi (May Allah hasten his advent) is a living symbol of justice and truth, and only those whose hearts are free from the shackles of attachments can join his path.

Therefore, part of the secret of the Imam's occultation must be sought in this very dominance of attachments over hearts; these dependencies prevent humanity from being ready for the uprising and assisting the Imam. Consequently, one of the fundamental steps to embark on the path of assisting Imam Mahdi (May Allah hasten his advent) is to clarify our relationship with attachments: Are we capable of overcoming these attachments? Or will we retreat in historical moments, faced with the greatest call to freedom and justice?

These questions invite every human being, regardless of religious boundaries, to reflect, just as Imam Hussain (Peace be upon him) said on the Day of Ashura: “O, followers of Abi Sufyan! If you do not believe in any religion, and you do not fear the Judgment, then be free in this world. [At least think for yourselves] Go and examine yourselves, if you are Arabs as you claim.”

Human Attachments: An Obstacle or an Asset on the Path of Assisting Imam Mahdi?

In life, humanity is constantly faced with a set of natural needs and attachments such as security, well-being, family, social respect, and even knowledge and position. These inclinations are not inherently reprehensible and can be a foundation for growth. The problem begins when these attachments turn into bonds that make the right choice difficult or impossible in crucial moments.

As long as life proceeds in peace and prosperity, few people realize their captivity in the snare of attachments, like someone whose shoelace is unknowingly tied to a chair leg, only realizing their entanglement when they try to stand up. Attachments also reveal their true nature at major turning points. Determining the relationship between human attachments and Imam Mahdi (May Allah hasten his advent) clarifies whether an individual's dependencies serve as tools to assist the Imam or become a serious obstacle on the path of accompanying truth.

Worldly attachments often lead to consequences such as greed, fear, sorrow, and the waste of one's life. The history of Ashura is the best mirror for observing the impact of attachments on human destiny. Many who saw Imam Hussain (Peace be upon him) refrained from helping him due to their attachment to wealth, life, family, or social status.

For example, Ubaydullah ibn al-Hurr al-Ju'fi, in response to the Imam's invitation, said: "O son of the Prophet of God, if I assist you, I will be the first to sacrifice my life, but I will offer my horse, which has always saved me" [2]. This historical example provides a clear picture of the relationship between human attachments and Imam Mahdi (May Allah hasten his advent); attachment to life prevented Ubaydullah from joining the ranks of his Imam's companions.

Shabath ibn Rib'i, who was once alongside Imam Ali (Peace be upon him), changed his stance multiple times due to his attachment to social status and political games, eventually standing against the Imam. Dahhak ibn Abdullah al-Mashriqi also fought only on the condition of preserving his life and ultimately fled the battlefield of assisting the Imam under the pretext of family and debts.

These examples show that merely seeing the Imam is not enough. Attachments can blind one's eyes to the truth and strip them of the power to make the right choice. The clear message of Ashura is that not everyone reaches their destination. The relationship between human attachments and Imam Mahdi (Peace be upon him) is a decisive one; either attachments become an obstacle, or detachment from them opens the gate to accompanying the Imam. Only those succeed in this battle who have freed their hearts from the bonds of dependencies and whose attachments serve the truth and assisting the Imam.

Revisiting Human Attachments and Imam Mahdi in Historical and Contemporary Trials

The experiences of Ashura are not limited to the past, Kufa, and Karbala. If the people of Kufa refrained from assisting Imam Hussain (Peace be upon him) due to fear of poverty and attachment to family, wealth, or status, we too face the same trials today. Attachment to wealth, prosperity, fame, or intellectual rigidity can separate us from Imam Mahdi (May Allah hasten his advent). Therefore, in every era, special attention must be paid to the relationship between human attachments and Imam Mahdi (May Allah hasten his advent) because the same attachments that prevented people from helping the Imam in Karbala can also stop us from truly waiting for the Imam today.

A consumerist lifestyle, excessive attachment to comfort and status, or stubborn insistence on limited beliefs are bonds that immobilize humanity at social and ethical junctures. A proper understanding of the relationship between human

attachments and Imam Mahdi (May Allah hasten his advent) requires us to see how worldly dependencies strip us of the ability to make the right choice.

One of the essential necessities on the path of waiting for the Imam is a re-evaluation of attachments and a change in lifestyle. Wealth, power, knowledge, and family, if they serve the truth and assist the Imam, are assets, but if they prevail over truth, they become the greatest obstacle to movement. As Imam Khomeini (May Allah be pleased with him) stated, detachment from attachments is a prerequisite for attaining the status of being a true human [3]. Truly waiting for Imam Mahdi (May Allah hasten his advent) is nothing but the practice of this detachment and readiness to prefer truth over self-interest.

Human attachments and Imam Mahdi (may Allah hasten his advent) represent two distinct orientations; one acts as earthly roots that shackle humanity, while the other is a heavenly horizon that invites individuals to the truth. Ashura showed that freedom from the bonds of attachments is a prerequisite for reaching the truth and accompanying the Imam. Contemporary humanity, too, has no choice but to let go of enslaving attachments to join the caravan of the true companions of the Imam of our Time (May Allah hasten his advent).

What relationship do you see between human attachments and Imam Mahdi (May Allah hasten his advent)? Which hidden dependencies can prevent making the right choice at critical moments? Share your thoughts with us.

References

[1]. "Say, [O Prophet,] 'If your parents and children and siblings and spouses and extended family and the wealth you have acquired and the trade you fear will decline and the homes you cherish— [if all these] are more beloved to you than Allah and His Messenger and struggling in His Way, then wait until Allah brings about His Will. Allah does not guide the rebellious people.'" (Quran, 9:24)

[2]. Then, al-Husayn (a.s) set out until he disembarked in al-Qatqatana. He found a pavilion set up, so he said: "Who does this pavilion belong to?" So, it was said: "It belongs to `Ubaydullah b. al-Hurr al-Ju`fi." So, al-Husayn (a.s) sent for him and said: "O man! You are a sinner and you are in error. Allah will punish you for what you have done if you do not repent to Allah in this very moment and support me; so that my grandfather may be your intercessor before Allah." So, he said: "O son of the Messenger of Allah! By Allah, if I were to support you, I would be the first to be killed before you. However, this is my horse, so take it for yourself, for, by Allah, I have never ridden it except that I achieved what I wanted with it, so take it." So, al-Husayn (a.s) turned his face away from him, then said: "We do not need you nor your horse. I do not take the misguided ones as supporters. Leave, and do not be with us nor against us. Surely, whoever hears our cries – the Ahl al-Bayt – yet does not come to our aid, Allah will throw him face-first into the Fire of Hell." (Saduq, Al-Amālī. Book 1, Chapter 30)

[3]. "The attention and attachment of the self to material things precludes one from the caravan of humanity, while the severance of material attachments and turning to God, the Blessed and Exalted, takes one to the station of humanity." *Sahifeh-ye Imam*, vol. 8, p. 265.