

Becoming Like the Ahl al-Bayt: The Best and Surest Path to the Purpose of Creation

Why Is Becoming Like the Ahl al-Bayt (Peace Be Upon Them) the Only Way to Reach the Purpose of Creation?

Deep within every human being lies an innate drive for growth, self-improvement, and movement toward perfection. We always desire to transcend limitations and become a more complete version of ourselves, but the fundamental questions are:

- Where is the destination of this human journey?
- Who can be our guide on this path?
- What criterion indicates that we are on the right track?

From the perspective of Islamic self-knowledge, the ultimate destination of this journey is to become like God; however, since the Divine essence is not directly observable to us, we need a clear and tangible role model to show us the way, a role model that is both like God and we can emulate. The Ahl al-Bayt (Peace be upon them) fulfill precisely this role; they are the embodiment of divine values and the fullest scale for being human: a practical blueprint for achieving that true likeness.

In this article, we will demonstrate why becoming like the Ahl al-Bayt is not a secondary choice, but the only sure way to reach the purpose of creation, and how this emulation can guarantee our path of growth and perfection.

The Concept of Becoming Like God and the Role of the Ahl al-Bayt in its Realization

Becoming like God does not mean superficial imitation or acquiring extraordinary power; rather, it refers to "becoming compatible" with Divine perfections. This likeness does not mean becoming one with the essence of Allah; rather, it means that Divine names and attributes, such as mercy, knowledge, and power, manifest within us. This process is much like the relationship between a student and their teacher; the student, through practice and diligence, gradually acquires the teacher's skills and perfections to the point where they too bear the same "name" and title. The path to becoming like God is the path of acquiring Divine names and attributes ¹.

But the important question arises: How can one become like God when He is infinite and unattainable?

We cannot directly take Allah as a role model because we do not see Him and cannot objectively observe His actions and attributes in various life situations. We need an example that, on one hand, is a perfect mirror of Divine perfections, and on the other hand, has lived among us in the form of a human being so that we can observe and emulate their behavior in the details of life, from how they interact with family and friends to how they confront enemies and difficulties.

The Ahl al-Bayt: The Scale and the Perfect Human on the Path of Similarity

On the complex and sensitive path of human growth, no traveler embarks without tools for measurement and evaluation. Just as a mountaineer needs an altimeter

and a captain needs a compass, humans, to move correctly toward perfection, require an accurate "scale." This scale helps us evaluate our actions, thoughts, and intentions, and understand whether we are moving on the right path or have strayed from the main goal.

However, this scale cannot be merely dry and soulless laws; the human spirit is alive and dynamic, and it requires a living role model. The Ahl al-Bayt (Peace be upon them) are the complete manifestation of truth and the true embodiment of the perfect human. They are the actualized version of what we potentially possess within ourselves. By looking at their lives, we can see the faults and wrongs in our own souls and truly start the journey toward becoming like God. An infallible Imam is not just a guide, but the scale and criterion of deeds ². The Quran also states: "On the Day We call every people with their Imam" ³. This means that people's status in the Hereafter will be judged by their degree of similarity to the infallible Imams. Therefore, the only way to reach the purpose of creation is through becoming like the Ahl al-Bayt (Peace be upon them), and any role model other than them is incomplete and misleading.

Traversing the Path of Similarity: From Heartfelt Longing to Lifestyle

Knowing the destination and the role model is the beginning of the path, but traversing the path of becoming like the Ahl al-Bayt (Peace be upon them) requires practical action. This action begins with a deep heartfelt longing, the very desire that the Ahl al-Bayt themselves have taught us in the *Ziyarat* Ashura: "...place me with you in this world and the hereafter, ... and bring me to that praiseworthy station that you have with Allah." However, becoming like the Ahl

al-Bayt (Peace be upon them) is not possible through prayer alone. We must align our lifestyle with their conduct. One cannot inwardly wish to be with the purest of humans while, in practice, following a path contrary to their way and manner. This is like someone who claims to be climbing a peak but has not taken the necessary equipment and is distracted by other amusements at the foot of the mountain.

Becoming like the Ahl al-Bayt (Peace be upon them) means that in all our choices, relationships, thoughts, and behaviors, from how we earn a living and our family relationships to how we deal with friends and enemies, our criterion and measure should be their conduct and way of life; otherwise, the claim of similarity is nothing but fantasy.

Challenges on the Path of Similarity: The Danger of False Role Models

The greatest danger on the path of becoming like the Ahl al-Bayt (Peace be upon them) is choosing false role models. In today's world, many personalities are presented as role models, from artists and athletes to philosophers and scientists. However, these role models, at best, lead a person only to the boundaries of intellect or animality, not to similarity with God because they themselves have not reached this station.

If our role model is someone who has only grown in one dimension, such as knowledge, art, or social power, we will, at best, grow only to that extent. One whose role model is a scientist will ultimately reach the peak of intellect, and one who takes an athletic champion as their role model will remain within that framework. But if we wish to approach infinity and fully develop all the

dimensions of our existence, we must choose a role model who has themselves reached infinity. In reality, just as we entrust our most sensitive material matters to the most expert individuals, we must entrust our soul, which is the human part of our being, to an infallible expert. Following false and incomplete role models will result in nothing but misguidance and regret.

In this lesson, we discussed the human journey and its ultimate purpose, stating that the path of human growth is a journey from "self" to "Allah." The culmination of this journey is similarity to God and becoming like the Ahl al-Bayt (Peace be upon them), as perfect humans have provided us with both the scale for evaluation and the roadmap for this journey. The roadmap is their conduct, and the scale is their very existence.

References

¹. Murtadha Mutahhari, *Revelation and Prophethood*. Islamic Seminary Publications, p. 16.

². In *Ziyarat* Imam Ali(as) at Najaf Shrine, we say, "Peace be upon the Scale of the deeds."

³. Quran, 17:71