

Contents

Ending the Isolation of the <i>Wali</i> of Allah: A Reflection on the Logic of Solidarity and the Engineering of Loyalty	2
From the Quranic Covenant to Human Action	3
Solidarity: The Essential Companion to Loyalty	3
A Critical Examination of Sacred Forms and Hidden Neglect	4
<i>Taqwa</i> and Its Connection with Loyalty	5
The Role of Patience and Steadfastness in Remaining with the Imam	6
Building Structures of Support for the Imam in Daily Life	7
The Advent: The Divine Reward for Loyal Solidarity	7
References	9

The Engineering of Loyalty: Essential Requirements for the Advent of Imam Mahdi

Ending the Isolation of the *Wali* of Allah: A Reflection on the Logic of Solidarity and the Engineering of Loyalty

Imagine a small bird trapped inside the hard shell of an egg. Its entire life depends on one vital action: breaking through the shell and entering a larger world. If the bird pecks randomly at different parts of the shell, it may spend all its energy without ever escaping. In the end, exhaustion and lack of oxygen will overcome it. But if it focuses all of its limited strength on a single point and keeps striking it like a drill, the shell will crack, and a new life will begin.

This simple example offers a clear picture of humanity's condition during the Occultation of Imam al-Mahdi (Peace be upon him). The Occultation is not an unchangeable divine decree. Rather, it is a barrier created by the scattered wills and fragmented efforts of human beings. To leave the prison of a world without the visible presence of the Imam, we must redirect our efforts.

Many of us devote tremendous energy to religious, social, and cultural activities. Yet these efforts often move in different directions. Because these efforts are not aligned and concentrated on the essential conditions for the advent of Imam Mahdi (Peace be upon him), they fail to achieve the ultimate goal: the Advent (*Zuhūr*) itself.

In a well-known statement, Imam al-Mahdi identifies only two essential requirements for the swift realization of the Reappearance: solidarity and loyalty. Without these two foundations, even the most sacred activities—such as holding mourning gatherings for Imam Hussain (Peace be upon

him) or participating in religious education—may fail to contribute to his Advent. They may even amount to neglecting Imam Mahdi (Peace be upon him). In fact, the key to this movement is the engineering of loyalty at both the individual and collective levels.

From the Quranic Covenant to Human Action

Loyalty is not merely a moral virtue; it is a fundamental principle that shapes human character and guides the journey toward perfection. In a profound verse, the Quran divides believers into two groups: those who remained faithful to their covenant and were martyred, and those who are still waiting and have never betrayed their promise ¹. This verse teaches us that faith, without keeping one's covenant, becomes fragile and incomplete.

To actively cultivate this loyalty, we must understand that it means a lasting commitment to one's obligations toward God and His appointed successor. This quality is so decisive that, in the event of Karbala, it became the boundary between salvation and misery.

The companions of Imam Hussain (Peace be upon him), despite their great differences in religious knowledge and their backgrounds in worship, reached unity in one essential quality: loyalty. From Wahb ibn Abd Allah al-Nasrani, who had only recently embraced Islam, to Abu al-Fadl al-Abbas, who represents the peak of spiritual knowledge and insight, all shared this same principle.

In contrast, figures such as Shimr ibn Dhi al-Jawshan, who had a long history of standing among the supporters of truth and possessed knowledge of *hadith*, stood against Imam Hussain (Peace be upon him) at the decisive moment because they lacked loyalty.

Solidarity: The Essential Companion to Loyalty

Loyalty is a necessary condition, but it is not enough on its own. History shows that even if thousands of people remain loyal as individuals, the *Wali* of Allah ² will still stand alone if they lack genuine solidarity ³.

The people of Kufa sent thousands of letters inviting Imam Hussain (Peace be upon him), but because they failed to build genuine solidarity and organized collective action, only about seventy-two to one hundred and fifty truly loyal followers remained in the end. Their lack of solidarity caused Imam Hussain to be deprived of the support necessary to uphold his divinely granted position.

Solidarity means coming together, standing side by side, and wholeheartedly helping one another in supporting the Imam. According to the Quranic promise, twenty steadfast believers who stand together in solidarity will overcome two hundred ⁴. This verse teaches us that solidarity and unity multiply the power of our efforts and bring divine blessing to them.

In the engineering of loyalty, we must learn to move beyond individualism. We must build real cooperation in institutions such as the mosque, religious associations, and the workplace, so that together we can truly prepare the ground for the Reappearance.

A Critical Examination of Sacred Forms and Hidden Neglect

One of the most important discussions in the path of preparing for the Advent is recognizing the obstacles that appear in the guise of goodness. Any action or thought that causes human beings to become neglectful of Imam Mahdi (Peace be upon him) is a form of disloyalty—even if that action is a sacred practice such as mourning for the infallible Imams. If our tears for Imam Hussain (Peace be upon him), who was martyred in 61 AH, make us indifferent to the isolation and exile of the Imam of our time, then we have, in reality, taken the wrong path.

Today, we witness billions being spent on religious ceremonies, some of which lead to waste and excess, while Imam Mahdi remains in Occultation. If the media, cinema, religious seminaries, and cultural institutions do not make Mahdism and the removal of the obstacles to the Reappearance the central focus of their efforts, they have, in reality, wasted society's energy on matters that are not essential.

Building a foundation of true allegiance requires us to view even acts of worship—such as prayer, fasting, and pilgrimage (*ziyārah*)—as means of cultivating loyalty, rather than as final goals in themselves.

***Taqwa* and Its Connection with Loyalty**

Disloyalty can be regarded as the greatest manifestation of a lack of *taqwa*. We attract divine goodness and blessings in proportion to our loyalty. Desires such as the pursuit of academic status, the desire for knowledge, leadership, popularity, and even intense emotional or material attachments can gradually dry up the roots of loyalty.

To remain beside the Imam, we must rise above our small, worldly concerns and reach a heavenly concern—concern for the isolation and exile of the Imam of our time. Unlike worldly concerns, which often lead to despair and depression, this heavenly sorrow brings happiness, inner peace, and divine blessing, because it connects us to the true Source of strength. This is where the engineering of loyalty helps us reexamine the priorities of our hearts.

One example of attaining God's support through loyalty and solidarity is the historical experience of the Islamic Revolution of Iran. It represents a concrete example of the realization of the conditions for the Advent on a national scale. At the beginning of Imam Ruhollah Khomeini's movement, public loyalty and solidarity had not yet reached the desired level, and the number of

martyrs during the early years remained small. However, after fifteen years of sustained efforts by the network of Shia religious scholars to explain and disseminate Islamic teachings, the people developed a high degree of loyalty and solidarity toward the deputy of Imam Mahdi (Peace be upon him). As a result of this change, Imam Khomeini returned home to a welcoming nation.

This pattern shows that whenever God sees loyalty and solidarity in a people, He changes their destiny. Over the past forty years, including during the Iran–Iraq War, the Iranian nation demonstrated a level of loyalty that, from the perspective presented here, surpassed that of the people of the Hijaz during the lifetime of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him and his family) and the people of Kufa during the time of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (Peace be upon him). This characteristic greatly strengthens the hope for the advent of Imam Mahdi (Peace be upon him). Even so, to reach that final turning point, the engineering of loyalty must expand from the national level to the global and civilizational level.

The Role of Patience and Steadfastness in Remaining with the Imam

Imam Hussain (Peace be upon him) stated that the condition for remaining with him is “patience in the face of the sharpness of swords and the wounds of spears”⁵. Loyalty cannot endure without patience. Many people begin the journey with enthusiasm and sincere commitment, but when they face hardships, economic sanctions, or social pressure, they fail to remain faithful to the covenant they once made. Patience is the backbone of loyalty.

In the process of forging this steadfast devotion, we must remember that patience is not merely passive endurance. It is an active steadfastness that enables us to remain faithful to our covenant. The women who endured the tragedy of Karbala and the journey back to Medina provide outstanding examples of this patience and loyalty.

Building Structures of Support for the Imam in Daily Life

How can we become part of this process of cultivating allegiance in our everyday lives? The answer lies in redefining our personal and social activities. Whether we are students, employees, seminarians, or artists, each of us should ask: Where does my work fit within the roadmap of preparing the ground for the Advent?

If the cultural activities carried out in religious institutions or associations as well as mosques are not directed toward removing the obstacles to the Reappearance and establishing the greatest good (*ma'rūf*) in society—that is, preparing the ground for the governance of the *Wali* of Allah—they will never become truly blessed. Loyalty means resisting everything that distracts us from remembering our divinely appointed Guardian and Benefactor. We must be careful not to remain mere spectators in theater, cinema, the media, or even in writing books. Instead, we should become active participants whose efforts are directed toward ending the Occultation.

As long as our adversaries dominate the cultural front—producing hundreds of films that attack or undermine the belief in Mahdism—while we remain silent or rely on fragmented, unfocused efforts, the Occultation will only persist.

The Advent: The Divine Reward for Loyal Solidarity

The advent of Imam Mahdi (Peace be upon him) is not a random event. It is a divine response to the inner transformation that takes place within human beings. As the Imam wrote in his famous letter to Shaykh al-Mufid, “If our followers had remained united in faithfully honoring their covenant, the blessing of meeting us would never have been delayed”⁶.

Bringing this to life demands a deliberate effort to cultivate collective loyalty. It requires every believer to step out of isolation and stand united, striking continuous, powerful blows against

disloyalty. We must move beyond our small personal sorrows and attain the happiness and inner peace that come from supporting the Imam. If we define our plans and activities around helping him, he will hasten toward us, and the prolonged Occultation will ultimately give way to the radiant dawn of the Reappearance.

Finally, we should remember that the engineering of loyalty is not a short-term project; it is a way of life. It begins with recognizing the necessity of the Advent, is refined through patience and *taqwā*, and ultimately bears fruit through social solidarity. This is the only path that can break the hard shell of the Occultation and lead humankind into the boundless realm of justice in the presence of the Infallible Imam.

Therefore, every step we take today to strengthen our heartfelt bond with the Imam and to deepen our sincere cooperation with our fellow believers becomes another brick in the great structure of the advent of Imam Mahdi (Peace be upon him). Along this path, the quality of our presence and our steadfastness are the most decisive factors in the history that lies ahead. Bringing an end to the Imam's more than eleven centuries of loneliness is in our hands today—provided that we keep striking the right point like a drill.

In closing, no sincere effort is ever lost, and every drop of devotion will ultimately join the ocean of the Advent. Our own future, and the ultimate flourishing of generations to come, depends on this systemic loyalty becoming firmly rooted in both our hearts and our actions. Commitment to this path marks the beginning of the end of darkness, serving as the common language of all those who refuse to live in a world without Imam Mahdi (Peace be upon him). The final principle is this: The Imam longs for the Reappearance even more than we do, and he is only waiting for hearts that remain steadfast in their covenant.

References

- ¹. **Quran 33:23**: “Among the believers are men who have been true to their covenant with Allah. Some of them have fulfilled their vow by death, and some are still waiting, and they have never changed their commitment.”
- ². **Wali of Allah**: In Twelver Shia Islam, this term refers to God's divinely appointed representative, whose authority comes from God rather than from popular choice. Depending on the historical period, it refers to a prophet or an Imam.
- ³. Sayyid Muhammad Hussainyn Tabataba'i, *Shi'ite Islam*. Trans. Seyyed Hossein Nasr. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1975, pp. 173–193.
- ⁴. **Quran 8:65**: “O Prophet! Encourage the believers to fight. If there are twenty steadfast among you, they will overcome two hundred; and if there are one hundred, they will overcome one thousand of those who disbelieve, because they are a people who do not understand.”
- ⁵. Muhammad Baqir Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*. Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Wafa', 1983, vol. 44, pp. 366–367.
- ⁶ Ibid., 1983, vol. 53, p. 177.