

# **RISALA-E-IKHTEDA (Following an Imam in Prayer)**

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Farman-e-Imam Mahdi al Maud (A.S.)

"Don't follow in prayer (Namaaz) an imam who -refuses to believe in Mahdi".

Hazrat Imamuna Mahdi al Maud(A.S.) was born on Monday, 14th Jamadiul Awwal 847H (8th September 1443). He was renowned as Asad-ul-Ulama (The Lion among the learnt) and syed-ul-Aulia (The sardar of saints). After the battle with Dalpat and the trance (Jazba) for 12 years when he attained the age of 40, Allah ordained him to go on Hijrat with an intention to perform Haj in kaaba (The house of Allah}. Hence he commenced his Hijrat from Jaunpur in 887 H .On the first place of stay and rest at Danapur Imam's wife Bibi Allahdati (RZ) (The mother of Musaddiqin} and at other places companions and Muhajireen told the Imam (AS) that it had been intuitionally learnt by them from Allah that the Imam is the promised Mahdi (AS) (his birth and teachings being predicted by Prophet Mohammad (Peace Be Upon Him). The Imam (AS) told them that was true but the time of its proclamation was yet to come. At Mecca in 901 H the Imam (AS) proclaimed for the first time:

" I am the promised Mahdi and who ever follows me is a Momin"

After returning from Haj he repeated the same sentence at Ahmedabad in 903 H. In 905 H when the Imam came to Badli, he announced:

Eighteen years earlier to this time when I was at Danapur, the Presence and Lights of Allah overwhelmed I ordained thus:

Syed Mohammad! I have made you the learnt of my book (Quran) I have taught you the real meaning of Quran. I have bestowed on you the "Imaan" and I have given in your hands the keys of the treasures of Imaan. I have made you the Naser (Helper) of Mohammad's (PBUH)

Deen and I am your Naser (Helper). You should proclaim your Mehdiat. Your refusal is my refusal."

The Imam (A.S.) said..."After this Allah gave this order again and again to me and I humbly expressed my weakness (to take up this tofty mission on me). Eighteen years passed like this. Today the order has been bestowed on me with great stress and wrath that I have taken the decision (it is not going to be changed). If you obey Our order and be patient on what ever hardships befall on you, you will be rewarded and if you still hesitate, you will be away from Our Durgah (Presence)".

After this the Imam (A.S.) further said: "Today I have nothing but to obey the command of Allah. Hence under the direct command of Allah (in which there is no room for dream or kashf) with full health and consciousness I proclaim to be the Promised Mahdi Khalifatullah and the khatim-e-Vilayat-e-Mohammadia. One who obeys me and confides in me is a momin and one who refuses to accept me as Mahdi will be treated as an infidel (Kafir). Kitab-ul-lah and my adherence (Ittiba) to Prophet Mohammad are my proclamation."

This proclamation of the Imam (AS) is final and is called Dava-e-Muakkida i.e. after this proclamation the Imam announced that a disbeliever in him will be a Kafir). When he proceeded to Thatta, the capital of Sind he told his believers:

Don't follow in prayer (Namaaz) an Imam who does not have belief in Mahdi. If you have done so (by mistake) repeat your prayer."

This farman (saying of the Imam A.S.) is present in all the books of Mahdavia traditions (Naqliyat) and Haz. Bandagimian Syed Khundmir Siddiq-e-Vilayat (R.A.) has also mentioned it in "Aqida

sharifa" the correctness of which is believed by all companions (Sahaba) of Mahdi (A.S.) This tradition (Naql) is famous and accepted by all the Mahdavis in its words and meanings and disbelieving in it leads to kufr.

After this short introduction the meanings of the farman are quite clear. The personality of the Imam (A.S.) is Khalifatullah, free from all sins (as that of Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) and he is the promised Mahdi whose acceptance is obligatory (Farz) and whose denial and refusal is Kufr. This is the important reason why a Mahdavi should not say his prayer behind a non-believer. No further explanation is needed. Besides, the person of the Imam (A.S.) is the final authority and no question or arguments can be levelled against his order. This farman is also in full accordance with the precepts of Shara Shareef which says that if there are some conditions or condition in a person testifying his Kufr, prayer behind him (under his Imamat] and is not right (and is prohibited).

Under the light of the Quran and the traditions of the Prophet (PBUH) the four Imams of Fikha and the ulema-e-Islam have decided that to say prayers behind an imam the imam must have external and internal cleanliness or purification. The case of internal purification (i.e, Imam's having right belief) will be dealt later. External purification means the imam's body and clothes are clean. He must have wuzu. He performs all the parts of prayer fully and correctly. He must face towards Khibla. He must know the things which undo a prayer etc.

If any person's body or clothes have some unclean or impure material, if he is not with Wuzu, if he made Wuzu even though bathing was necessary for him, then prayer behind him, as imam will get void. Under matters of purification and full prayer there are certain things which are necessary to observe under one Imam {of Fikha) without which the prayer will not be correct where as under

some other Imam (of Fikha) the prayers can be fully and rightly performed without these things. Under such differential cases (Masael) every follower in prayer performs his prayer on the instructions of his own Imam (Fikha). A follower in prayer must see whether the imam has any thing, which will undo the correctness of his (follower's) prayer. If he performs prayer behind such an Imam, his prayer will not be right. Now see the following cases as examples:

{1) Under Hanafi if blood or puss comes out from any part of the body, if vomiting is done or blood is rendered out (Fasd Kholna), the Wuzu breaks but under shafaiia the Wuzu does not break under the above conditions. Hence a Hanafi Muslim cannot perform his prayers behind a Shafai imam who has vomited or rendered his blood out or blood has come out of his nose and says his congregation prayers without performing fresh Wuzu. Under the condition the Hanafi follower will consider the Shafai without Wuzu.

2. In Wuzu touching the head (Massah) is farz under all imams of Fikha. But the difference lies in how much head is to be touched. Under Imame-e-Azam Rah, touching of 1/4 the head is obligatory. Under Imam Shafai Rah if one Muslim cannot perform his prayer behind a Shafai imam who has not touched 1/4th of head in Wuzu. For him Shafai imam is without wuzu.

3. Under Imam Shafai Rah. Khillateen (i.e. 500 rattle water) is supposed to be enough water for performing Wuzu inspite of the fact that some impure thing has fallen in it. But under Hanafia such water becomes impure and Wuzu cannot be performed. They say water must be spread so wide that if you move water on one bank, it should not affect the water on other bank. In such a wide space of water any fallen impure thing will not affect the purity of water. They say the water must spread ten yards in length and width and the area must be 100 sq. yards. Hence a

Hanafi Muslim cannot say his prayer behind a shafai imam **who** has made his Wuzu in khillateen and something impure has fallen in it.

4. If a person laughs a full-mouthed laugh, his Wuzu will break as per Hanafia but it will not break as per Shafai doctrines. If a Shafai imam goes to prayer after such a laugh, a Hanafi cannot say his prayer behind him as he feels the Shafai imam has broken his Wuzu by laughter.

5. If a person touches his penis or touches some stranger woman, his Wuzu will break according to Imam Shafai Rah. but it does not break according to Imam Azam R.A. Now a Shafai follower cannot say his prayer behind a Hanafi imam if he has touched his penis or some woman as he has broken his wuzu.

6. As per Imam Malik Rah after Rukoo a person must stand (in Khoma) and has to finish his prayer saying Assalam Alaikum. Both these things are farz {obligatory}. But these are not farz as per Imam Azam Rah. If a Hanafi or two hairs are touched it will be enough. Hence a Hanafi imam goes directly to sajda without standing after Rukoo and finishes his prayer with some other word, then the Maliki follower's prayer will not be rightly performed.

These were some of the examples in-group of Ahl-e-Sunnat. These show how the follower of One Imam of Fikha cannot consider his prayer right behind the imam of another Imam of Fikha. Now consider over two examples of differences between the Ahl-e-Sunnat and Shia communities

For Ahl-e-Sunnat washing of the feet in Wuzu is farz. If any part of foot remains unwashed, the wuzu will be incomplete. The Imamia community consider the massah (touching) of the feet

enough. Hence a Sunni follower's prayer will not be right behind a Shia imam.

The Ahl-e-Sunnat believe in Massah-e-Khaffin i.e. if in Wuzu both the feet are washed and socks are put on, then while staying at one place for one day and one night and in journey for three days and three nights, while making wuzu, socks need not be removed and feet washed. Only massah on socks will be enough. The Imamia community does not feel it right. Hence behind a sunni imam who has done Massah-e-Khatfin a Shia follower's prayer will become void. In the Rasayel-e-Shia (Fikha-e-Shia) Hazrat Imam Jaffer Sadiq Raz's saying goes thus :

*i.e. Neither do massah on socks, nor follow an imam (in prayer) who does massah on socks.*

Out of uncountable differential problems, these are only a few. On considering them it will be clear that a Shafai follower's prayer behind a Hanafi imam and a Hanafi follower's prayer behind a Shafai imam will get void. Similarly, a Maliki follower's prayers behind a Hanafi or shafai or Humbali imam will be incorrect as the Imam does not stand In Khoma which is as good as leaving a farz. In the Fikha of Imam Ahmed Ibn Humbal Rah if two persons have enmity between them, none of them can follow the other in prayer. Ibn-e-Taimia (Humbaly) writes thus:

*That is if the Imam and the follower have such enmity as is present between persons following their wishes and those following religious beliefs, then the follower should not say his prayer behind the imam.*

There is an important Fikhai principle that in problems differently interpreted by four Imams (Imam Azam Rah, Imam Malik Rah. Imam Shafai Rah and Imam Ahmed ibn Humbal Rah), the Mazhab (the school of Fikha) of the follower is seen and

the follower's correctness of prayer depends on his school of Fikha). The Imam's school of Fikha is not taken into consideration. In fataway-e-Tatar Khamia this is written:

The meaning of this is that if the follower finds any point of difference, which invalidates his prayer, he should not follow the imam. It is because his opinion is counted in understanding whether offering prayer behind a certain imam is right or not. The imam's opinion or his school of Fikha is not taken into consideration. In the Kitab-ul-Fikha-Mazahib-e-Arba under conditions of Imamat this is written:

That is out of the conditions of Imamat one is this that imam's prayer will be correct according to his follower's school of Fikha.

Ibn-e-Najeem has written in Bahr-ul-Raikh thus:

That is in the matter of not following in prayer it is specific with Shafia only. On the other hand a Hanafi has to adhere to this principle while saying his prayer behind an Imam of any other school of Fikha other than his.

With these examples it becomes clear that every Muslim performs his religious deeds as per the instruction of the Imam-e-Fikha of whom he is a follower. That is necessary for him. As an imam's external purification and performance of different acts of prayer, and farz and wajib are necessary for the correctness of prayer, in the same way his right belief {Aqida) is also a very important condition. If an imam's body and dress are clean, has performed his wuzu, has kept his face towards khibla, is performing all frayez, sunun and wajibat nicely, yet is a non- Muslim, then following him in prayer will make the prayer void. This is because his wrong belief {kufr) stops a follower to say his prayer behind

him. Hence his internal purification (right belief) is an important condition along with his external cleanliness for correctness of the prayer.

Under the Imam's internal impurity one important principle of Fikha says if the imam is impure due to his severe sins (fasik and fajir) prayer behind him is allowed only as Makrooh (dislikingly). If the imam has a severe flaw in his belief, which makes him Kafir, following him in prayer is not right. In Fatava-e-Alamgiri the Hanafi School of Fikha this is written:

*That is if the imam bears a flaw in his belief, which does not make him Kafir, prayer behind him is Makrooh. If he has a flaw in belief which makes him Kafir, prayer behind him will be invalid.*

It is written in Sharha Hidayah that if a Muslim goes to such extremes (Ghulu) in his belief that does not make him Kafir, prayer behind him will be valid, but if his extremes make him Kafir, prayer behind him will be invalid. It further writes:

That is under an extremist Rafzi (Shia) who refuses the Khilafat of Abu Bakar Raz. prayer is not correct.

Imam Shafai's School of Fikha is this:

*That is when it is known that the imam's prayer will be invalid (e.g. due to his being Kafir) following him will not be right.'*

Imam Ahmed's principle of Fikha is this.

*That is prayer under the Imamah of Kafir is invalid even though you don't have knowledge of his Kufr.*

Imam Ahmed does not allow the following in prayer behind a severe sinner (Fasik). His book says:

*That is follower's prayer behind a severe sinner is not totally correct.*

In Kitab-ul-Fikha-e-Mazahib-ul-Arba the collective principle of all Imams is thus written.

Under the conditions of the correctness of congregational prayer, one condition is that a Kafir's Imamat is invalid.

Ulema-e-Ahl-e-Hadis (those who don't follow the Imams of Fikha) also do not consider the following of a Kafir Imam valid. Wahiduzzama Khan writes.

That is prayer under a Bidati (who brings new things in Islam) is Makrooh (undesirable) if his Bidat does not reach Kufr. If it reaches Kufr, then prayer under him is not valid.

The shias have gone a step further, For them following in prayer is invalid behind an opponent, an illegally born person and a person who, is not circumcised. It is written in Hidayat-ul-Hidaya thus

That is following in prayer is not valid behind an opponent of Ahl-e-Haq (i.e.Shias) or whose whereabouts are not known (Majhool-ul-Hal) or who is a severe sinner (Fasik) or who is not circumcised or who is illegally born.

Hazrat Imam Jaffer Sadiq Raz. says:

(Rasayel-e-Shia)

That is don't follow in prayer an imam who calls you Kafir and don't follow him also whom you call Kafir.

All these sayings prove that Imams of Ahl-e-Sunnat don't consider the following of a Kafir Imam valid. Imam Ahmed and the Shias consider the following of a severe sinner as invalid.

The meanings of Kufr in the dictionary are disobedience or ingratitude. Kufr also means to hide. A peasant, who hides the grain into earth, is called a Kafir. In this way a person who hides the truth is called a Kafir. If a person is called a Kafir it means he hides the truth of Allah (Haq poshi). Allah has used the words Kafir, Kafiroon, Kafireen in the Holy Quran for hundred to one hundred and twenty five times. As per Arabic language the meanings (of these words) will be those people who went astray, did not have belief in Allah and His Prophet (P.U.B.H.) and did not obey the commands of Allah.

Allah has ordained the Prophet (PBUH)

*That is say O' people who did not believe in Allah and in my Prophethood*

If a muslim says Kafir to a non-Muslim the meanings will be that he did not believe in Allah's oneness and the Prophethood of our Prophet (PBUH). This is not an abuse but a fact telling. Thus in terms of sharia disbelieving or refusing to obey the commands and teachings of Allah and the Prophet (PBUH) are called Kufr. Hence even if in a Muslim there is refusal of commands and teachings of Allah and the Prophet (PBUH), that person will also be governed by the term of Kufr, Thus Allama Tahtavi writes:

If a man is cut-off (Kharij) from ahl-e-khibla (Muslims) or refuses to believe in the destruction of this world or denies the Day of Judgement and accountability or denies Allah's knowledge of minute things, then there is no difference of opinion about his kufr because he has denied those things which have been shown by Rasoolullah (PBUH) as necessities of Deen. (Hashia Durrul Mukhtar).

The books of Ahl-e-Sunnat are full of causes of kufr and at every step a Muslim becomes Kafir (due to one cause or the other) this is not the time to go in details, but consider the following situations.

As per doctrines of Imam Azam:

1. If a person refuses any of the necessities of Deen, he becomes Kafir, (Durrul Mukhtar).
2. If a person says something against the dignity and glory of Allah or laughs at any of his commands or denies his reward and punishment (Sawab and Azab) or combines with Him some other god (Shirk) or attributes any ignorance or flaw in Him, in all these cases he becomes a Kafir. (Fatawa-Alamgiri)
3. If anyone says that if Allah Himself orders me to do this, I will not do it then he becomes Kafir. (Fatawa Alamgiri)
4. If a person says this or that person is in full comfort and I am bearing hardships and difficulties, and further asks is this justice? Such a person becomes Kafir. (Fatawa Alamgiri)
5. If a person tells his wife that he loves her more than he loves Allah, then he becomes Kafir (Fatawa Alamgiri)
6. A person is reciting Quran. Another person remarks: what is this stormy voice, then the person who remarks thus become Kafir (Fatawa Alamgiri)
7. If a person reads Quran along with beating Duff he becomes Kafir (Fatawa Alamgiri)

8. If a person points out a lawful thing and says it is prohibited and a prohibited thing as lawful, then he becomes a Kafir (Fatawa Alamgiri)

In the book Kifaya Sharah-e-Hidaya it is written that a person who refuses the Caliphate of Abu Bakar Raz. is Kafir but in Fatawa Alamgiri it is written thus

This means that the true saying is a person refusing the Caliphate of Abu Bakar Raz. and Umer Raz. is Kafir.

In the doctrines of Imam Malik, Shafar and Ahmed Raz. there are also many points to make a person Kafir.

Under Imam Malik's doctrines if a person denies the obligatory aspect of prayer or does not say Zina (unlawful meeting of man and woman) is prohibited, he becomes Kafir.

If a person refuses to accept something in Deen for which Quran is a testimony, or continuously repeated traditions mention it, he becomes Kafir. (Akhrabul Masalik)

If a person denies some books of Allah or abuses Allah or any prophet, or proclaims himself to be a prophet or insults any religious matter or Quran, he becomes Kafir (Akhrabul Masalik)

Under the doctrines of Imam Shafai if a person refuses to accept Allah or prophets, does not differentiate between lawful and prohibited, refuses to accept any thing approved by Ijma (Congregation of Ulema) as Wajib (essential) or says a thing Wajib which the Ijma does not say so, he becomes a Kafir. To hesitate or doubt about his Kufr will also be Kufr. (Minhaj Fikha Shafai)

If a person refuses to accept the Caliphate and companionship of Hazrat Abu Bakar Raz. or says abusive words for Hazrat Ayesha Raz, he becomes a Kafir (Minhaj Fikha Shafai)

Some followers of Imam Shafai say that to abuse Hazrat Abu Bakar Raz. Hazrat Umer Raz. Hazrat Hassan Raz. and Hazrat Hussain Aaz. is also Kufir.

Under the religious doctrines of Imam Ahmed laughing at Allah's Promises or not considering people of other religions as Kafir or saying any thing about a companion of the Prophet which testifies his Kufir, will make a person Kafir. (Ghayat-ul-Muntaha Fikha Humbali)

Ulema-e-Ahl-e-Hadies (who do not follow any of the four Imams of Fikha) feel a Muslim may become Kafir. After quoting several essentials that make a man Kafir they - write:

A person who refuses Rasoolullah or refuses things that have been pointed out as essentials of Deen by the prophet will become a Kafir. A person also becomes Kafir if he considers a prohibited thing (Haram) as lawful (Halal) and refuses to accept essentials of Deen and sharia will become Kafir (Hadya-tul-Mehdi). These people very boldly declare other Muslims, who follow the Imams of Fikha, as ! Bidati (innovator) and Kafir. Mohammad Waheeduzzama Khan writes in the book:

Followers of Imams of Fikha are innovator Muslims. Prayer behind them will be Makrooh only under the condition that they do not insult Quran, Prophet's Sunnat and Ahl-e-Hadies and have this belief that following the Prophet is first and better than following any Imam-e-Fikh. If they don't believe this then they are Kafir and prayer behind them is void and prohibited."

Imamia Community (Shias) also believe that a Muslim can become

Kafir. For example if a person refuses to believe in life after death (Aakhirat) he becomes a Kafir. This refusal may be due to enmity or merely in humour (it makes him Kafir). A person who refuses the essentials of Deen such as Namaz etc or says some things- in insult to Quran, Hadith and religion or pungently says O~ what command is this of Allah, or of Quran or of the Prophet, he becomes a Kafir. (Minhajur Rashad Shiai Fikh) ..

These examples are a few from the many. These Ulemas don't give such decision due to enmity or ill will. Their aim is to point out that denial of Allah and His prophet, refusal of their orders and commands, insulting the commands of Allah and the prophet is in other words a revolt against Allah and the Prophet. This is what they call Kufr. **To think that a person who says La ilaha Illallah Mohammad Rasoolullah cannot be a Kafir and to offer prayers behind him is not a correct thing.** If there is any point against Imam and Islam in one's belief he can be governed by Kufr. Allama Tuftazani writes in Sharh-e-Makhasid thus: "If a man considers this world as existing without any beginning (Khadeem), refusus to believe in the Day of Judgement and Accountability, denies that Allah knows the minutest things, and other essentials of Kufr emanate from him, then there will be no difference of opinion about his being a Kafir"

**Hence the correctness of following an imam not only depends on his external purity and cleanliness but it also requires his correct belief. This condition is important under all conditions In all times and all piaces. In the same way Mahdavi doctrines are "following an imam who refuses to believe in Mahdi is void and incorrect. This principle is in accordance with the instructions of Fikha. The famous book of Fikha Durrul Mukhtar writes thus:**

**That is any person who denies the essentials of Deen becomes Kafir and saying prayer behind him is void and incorrect. Remember this point or problem (Masala).**

This point is also to be remembered that for the correctness of following in prayer (Ikhteda) the religious beliefs (Aetekhdat) of the follower (Muktadi) are taken into consideration. Imam's beliefs are not seen. The imam thinks that he has his right belief but for the follower it is necessary to consider him (Imam) having the correct belief.

In all the above problems pertaining to imam's external and internal purity and cleanliness, it cannot be said that the Imams of Fikha have passed these instructions due to their enmity or hate (not to follow one imam or the other). On the other hand every Imam-e-Fikha has tried to put his maximum of knowledge and research to make prayer flawless. Whatever point is essential as per a particular Imam of Fikha if it is not found then the followers of that

Imam of Fikha will consider such prayer incomplete and imperfect and the repetition of prayer will become essential.

Uncountable points are mentioned in Fatawa Alamg[ri (Hanafi Fikha) which point out when the prayer's repetition becomes essential. For imam's external purity, if it is known that the imam led in prayer without Wuzu or his clothes were unclean then repetition of prayer becomes essential. For internal cleanliness it is written thus:

That is if it is known that the imam is Kafir, repetition of prayer is essential.

In Bajury and Nehayat-ul-Muhtaj (Shafai Fikha) among other things it is written

That is if the imam is openly a Kafir as Zimmi hidden Kafir as Zindeeq (Severe sinner) then the repetition of prayer is essential.

In this way under Imam Shafai's religious doctrines the hidden Kurt is also a point to deny for following him in prayer.

Under the hidden Kufr there is an interesting anecdote. Hazrat Bayazid Bustami or some other pious person was travelling. At the time of Asr prayer, he offered his prayer in a mosque. After the prayer the Imam of the mosque asked him "where from have you come?" Now The pious man said "from the country of Allah." The other question was "where from you get your food (Risq)". He said, from the house of Allah." The Imam of Masjid said "what is your means of earning." Now the pious man answered: "stay! Let me first repeat my prayer." After the repetition of prayer the Imam of the Mosque said, Prayer can be valid under a severe sinner (fasik) also. The pious man retorted "yes, but it is not valid behind a Kafir". Allah says

For every person who waits on earth providing food is essential on Allah. A person who does not trust in the *promise* of Allah is a Kafir."

Hazrat Imam Jaffer Sadiq said: If there is one who falsifies Allah's devine fate, prayer behind him will have to be repeated. (Rasayal-e-shia)

Hence Hazrat Imamuna Mahdi's (A.S.) farman "don't say prayer behind a person who refuses Mahdi and if by mistake you have done so repeat your prayer" points out to this proposition of shara. Under this commandful instruction we don't say our prayer behind a person who is not Mahdavi and if this is done by mistake, we repeat our prayer.

All the above problems have been clarified and told by Imams of

Fikha and other Ulema etc, whose affirmation is neither farz (obligatory) nor their refusal is Kufr. They are not sent by Allah nor have been honoured by Khilafat-e-ilahia. They are not Masum (innocent). But all the Muslims of the world follow these Imams of Fikha and take up their doctrines. Every person thinks that the decision taken by his Imam of Fikha is only valid. In the same way if Mahdavis take any decision about non-Mahdavis and think offering prayer behind them *is* void and wrong, they do not do so by their personal opinion but on the commands of Allah and the prophet and under the following (Itteba) of that true Imam 'whose tasdeeq (affirmation) is farz (obligatory) and whose refusal is Kufr. He is the apostle from Allah that is he is sent to save the umma of Mohammad (PBUH) from destruction and to offer help to the Deen of Mohammad (PBUH). He is the attainer of the lofty Khilafat-e-ilahia and who is innocent as Mohammad (PBUH)

As a result, to say anyone Kafir or not to offer prayer under some Muslim person is not specific only to Mahdavia community. On the other hand all the Imams of Fikha and their followers do the same.

"This is such a sin which is done in your city also."

Justice loving persons have seen how broad-mindedly, Ulema-e-Ahl-Sunnat apply the term Kufr on Muslims and prohibit their following in prayer. We also know they have their own reasons and explanations for their instructions. In the same way if Mahdavis also attribute some thing *on* a person and ask not to follow him in prayer they too have .the best of reasons for it. The most important reason for this is that the person who calls non-Mahdavis as Kafirs and prohibits to say prayers behind them is the innocent Khalifa of Allah and is also the master of Shara (Deen) of Mohammad (PBUH)

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**A doubt cleared**

At the time of Haj some Mahdavis feel that saying prayer along with

the big congregation at the sacred Haram (Kaaba) brings Allah's great reward (Sawab). Hence on this occasion Mahdavis saying prayer separately will bring sectarian feelings. They also say that in our books we don't find how Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) prayed when he came for Haj. They further say that there is a possibility of our Imam (A.S.) offering his prayer following the Ameer-e-Haj as he performed the Haj following the Ameer. Some people say that the Imam of Haram Shareef remains Saketh (i.e. he neither accepts nor denies Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) but all these doubts are baseless and not to be care if for at all.

The problem of Imamat, i.e. which Imam is to be followed and which *one* not, is based on religious Instructions. Anybody's opinion or looking for concession or criticism have no place *in* it. The Deeni (Religious) instructions can not be changed. As per the shariat it is *not* necessary for all the Muslims of the world to give up thir beliefs (Aquayed) and follow one Imam in prayer. On the other hand the sacred shariyat has itself instructed, that in the event of differences in belief, prayer should be offered separately. The question of difference and sectarianism does not arise because Mahdavis, inspite of the fact that they do not say their prayer behind a non- Mahdavi Imam, they are one with all other Muslims of the world in Islamic considerations and safeguarding Islamic interests. If Haj is taken as a common Islamic conference Mahdavis are equal participants in it with others. But during the days of Haj saying of prayer only in one congregation is not necessary. The instructions of Fikha say that for saying prayer there should be no difference between the beliefs of the Imam and the follower. Even minute difference in making Wuzu and saying prayer does not allow the following of the Imam.

Till recently in Haram Shareef (Kaaba) there were four Musallas (different sections around kaaba for the followers of different Imams of Fikha) called Hanafi mosque, Maliki mosque, Shafai mosque and Humbali mosque and each Imam separately led the congregation at

prayer of his followers in his mosque. As imamia (Shia) community does not follow a Sunni imam, the king Nadir Shah of Iran applied to the Khalifat-ul-Muslemin (Sultan of Turkey) to create a fifth Musalla (Section) for the Shias, so that they may say prayer as per their own method. Nadir Shah sent his envoys time and again for this but Shaikh-ul-Islam and the Sultan of Turkey did not accept this request. (jahan Kushai Nadiri)

This means that from long times there are different congregational prayers performed in Haram Shareef. Shia community does not follow imam of Haram Shareef even today. If other muslim sects follow him, the reason is either they think the imam's beliefs are those of their own or they don't have proper knowledge of their sect and in this way make their prayer void. In any condition their deeds *or* actions cannot be an argument or proof (Hujjat) for the Mahdavis. Moreover this is a fact that even today after the congregational prayer under the imam of Haram there are several other congregations. People are free either to say their prayer singly or along with some congregation.

Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) performed his Haj in 901 H. He made his last claim of Mahdiyati in 905 H and along with this he called a person, who does not affirm him, Kafir. He asked his followers (Mahdavis) not to follow a non-Mahdavi imam in prayer after 905 H. Hence the question of how he said his prayer at the time of Haj (901) is an unrelated argument.

The appointment of Ameer of Haj is purely an administrative and management matter and has nothing to do with the rites of performing Haj. Abu Dawood quotes Abu Sayeed Khudari Raz. and Abu Hurairah Raz. saying:

That is Rasoolullah (PBUH) said when three of you *start*; on a journey, make one your Ameer.

In every travel making one as Ameer is Sunnat and Mustahab (desirable). So during Haj also it is done. The Prophet (PBUH) himself went to Haj or sent Haz. Abu Bakar Raz. or Ali Raz. as Ameers of Haj so that they might address the people in Arafat and perform other rites of Haj. This method is followed even today. The idea that when Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) went to Haj he must have followed the Ameer in performing the rites of Haj is not correct because

in Haj there is no question of following anyone. Every person performs the Haj singly and on his own. It has nothing to do with the following in prayer. Suppose Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) has done his Haj in the following of the imam-e-Haram, then this event occurred five years earlier than his final claim (Dawaye Muakkida) (from which date the Kufr of the Non.Mahdavis has been shown). However some people have also been worried about the matter of one being Saketh (i.e. people who neither accept nor reject Mahdi (A.S.)). It is said that if a person does not know the proposition of Mahdiyat or he knows it but it is not proved that he rejected it, then how can we govern him with the order of Kufr. But this is also a delusion. We cannot go in details now. However it must be understood that today in the world there are countless places and people who do not know the term Islam, but due to their ignorance they cannot be free from their responsibility (of accepting Islam) and cannot be free from accountability. A Muslim cannot form with them matrimonial or Deeni or religious relations. Those people are counted under persons who deny the Prophet (PBUH). There is no place of saketh in shara as per Quran, traditions of the Prophet and the Imams of Fikha. Today in the world there are Muslims and non-Muslims. In our (Mahdavia) terms in the period from the last claim and the demise of Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) if there were persons thinking whether to accept him or not, we called such persons saketh. But after the demise and completion of the Dawat (Calling) the term saketh lost its meaning. Now we have either acceptors (mukhbils) or deniers (Munkirs). The constitution of worldly governments is also based on this principle. When the government

passes a law no person can make an excuse of not knowing the law. A person not following the law will be considered a criminal. After understanding this truth a Mahdavi must offer his prayers during Haj either singly or with the congregation of Mahdavis. Thinking that the big congregation will give a person great rewards is a wrong idea. It is deceiving of the self (nafs) and is a result of ignorance of religion. It is because there is no knowledge of the problem of following (Ikteda). Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.)'s farman "Don't follow in prayer a non-Mahdavi Imam" is full and complete. There is no exception. This farman is commanding in all places India or Sindh, Arabia or non-Arabian country Mecca or Madina, Haram or non-Haram. It is also commanding in travel or stay and in all times. Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.)'s farman is the final order and neither any question can be put on it nor any proof can be demanded. Besides this farman, the Fikha also says that if there are differences in beliefs, following an imam is not correct. In Durr-uI-Mukhtar it is written

That is if anyone denies any of the essentials of Deen, for example he says Allah has a body (like his creations) or refuses to accept the companionship (Sahabiyat) of Abu- Bakar Raz. he becomes Kafir and following him in prayer is not right.

In Kifaya Sharha Hidayah it is written pertaining to the problem of the question of imamat and Kufr thus:

That is an extremist Rafzi (Shia) who denies Ab Bakar Raz. as Khalifat-ur-Rasool is Kafir and prayer behind him is not lawful.

It is written in Fatava-e-Alamgiriya:

That is a person who denies not only the Imamat and Khilafat of Abu Bakar Raz. but also denies that of Umer Raz. becomes Kafir.

Abu Bakar Raz.'s companionship (of Rasoolulla" (PBUH)) is

established from a verse of Quran and its denial is certainly Kufr. But it is a point for consideration that the man who denies the Imam and Khilafat of Abu Bakar Raz. and Umer Raz. is also Kafir as per the Imams of Fikha and following him in prayer is not right. Now consider how a Mahdavi can offer his prayer rightly behind a person who denies (Mahdi (A.S.), the promised one of Allah, the Khalifatullah and one who is sent and appointed by Allah. The belief of a Mahdavi and that of imam of Haram have a difference far and wide (as that between sky and earth). During Haj if a Mahdavi does not find a Mahdavi congregation and offers his prayer singly he gets a right to have high rewards from Allah. According to some traditions a person offering his one prayer in Haram gets the rewards of one lakh prayers. If a Mahdavi offers his prayer behind a non-Mahdavi in the congregation of thousands and lakhs of people, he will not get any reward. On the other hand he would be a person who did not offer his prayer at all (Be-Namaz)

If a Mahdavi offers his prayer behind a non-Mahdavi it will be under two conditions. If he does not consider the imam as Kafir, he denies Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.). If he considers praying behind such an imam is lawful and right then he denies the farman (Command) of Mahdi (A.S.). Both these conditions pertain to Kufr. If a person does any of these he should return to his right belief (Ruju) and repent. If he does this unknowingly he must repeat his prayer. But he should not continuously offer his prayer behind a non-Mehdavi and repent. This will be playing with Deen, which is unlawful and incorrect.