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Responsibility 23: Being Ready & Equipped to Assist the Imam

Another responsibility of the believers is to prepare and keep their weapons of warfare ready. In addition, according to some traditions, one should keep a horse to help the Imam upon his advent.

During the period of waiting for the advent of the Imam, these and other ways which will be explained in detail must be followed if one wishes to establish a relationship with the Imam. 1

Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) has said:

لِيُعِدَّنَّ أَحَدُكُمْ لِخُرُوجِ الْقَائِمِ ؟ وَ لَوْ سَهْمًا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى إِذَا عَلِمَ ذَلِكَ مِنْ نِيَّتِهِ
رَجَوْتُ لِأَنْ يُنْسِيَ فِي عُمُرِهِ

“Each one of you must prepare for the advent of al-Qa'im (peace be upon him) even if it be (by as much as) an arrow because when Allah, the High, knows that a person has this intention, then He will grant such a person a longer life.”²

Imam Muhammad. 'Ali al-Baqir (as) has said:

كَمْ الرِّبَاطُ عِنْدَكُمْ؟ قَالَ الرَّاوي: قُلْتُ أَرْبَعُونَ قَالَ ؟: لَكِنْ رِبَاطُنَا رِبَاطُ الدَّهْرِ
وَمَنْ ارْتَبَطَ فِينَا دَابَّةً كَانَ لَهُ وَزْنُهَا وَوَزْنُ وَزْنِهَا مَا كَانَتْ عِنْدَهُ وَمَنْ ارْتَبَطَ فِينَا
سِلَاحًا كَانَ لَهُ وَزْنُهُ مَا كَانَ عِنْدَهُ

“How many days do you calculate a ribat (stationing of an army) to be?” The narrator answered: “Forty

days.” The Imam (peace be upon him) said: “Yet, the ribat for our sake is as long as one’s lifetime.³

One who stations a riding animal for our sake shall be rewarded according to its weight as well as the weight of it as long as it will be kept by him; and one who keeps a weapon prepared for our sake shall be rewarded according to its weight as well as the weight of it as long as it is kept by him.”⁴

The meaning of ‘weapons’ in this tradition are the very weapons of war whatever type they may be such as bow and arrow, spear, mace, lance, dagger, sword or gun.

However according to some traditions, the meaning of weapon is specifically limited to the sword and this can be deduced from the (various) proofs and the traditions since we know that in some countries, it is not permissible to possess weapons such as guns.

The meaning of the Imam when he spoke about the relationship ‘.for one’s entire lifetime’ (as was seen in the second tradition quoted above) will be discussed in the next responsibility.

1. A deeper explanation of this point will appear in the next responsibility.

2. al-Ghaybah of al-Nu’māni, pg. 320, sec. ‘That which has been mentioned about the Shi’a’.

3. Commenting on this narration, Shaykh Kulayni says: “This means that the Shi’a are required to dedicate all their efforts to the obedience of the Imam and to the expectation of the advent as they must prepare themselves for such.

4. al-Kafi, vol. 8, pg. 381, sec. 8, no. 576