

What Is the Relationship Between Knowing God and the Infallible Imams (PBUT)?

Exploring the Connection Between the Purpose of Human Creation and Knowing God and the Infallible Imams (Peace Be Upon Them)

One of the most significant topics in self-knowledge is the purpose of human creation. In fact, it would not be an exaggeration to say that nearly all discussions in this field are in some way connected to this purpose. One question arising from this topic is: What is the relationship between knowing God and the Infallible Imams (Peace be upon them)? At first glance, this question may seem unrelated to the purpose of creation, but a step-by-step analysis of the terms reveals their profound connection.

God created every being with a purpose, and the highest, most valuable purpose was assigned to humanity. He created us to ultimately reflect His names and attributes. If we fail to achieve this goal, it is akin to a fetus that either remains underdeveloped or is miscarried. A healthy fetus is one that recognizes its ultimate purpose and begins to build the necessary tools to achieve it. Thus, knowledge plays a crucial role in fulfilling our purpose.

For human beings, given that our goal is to reflect God's names and attributes and attain the status of the Perfect Human (*Insan al-Kamil*), knowing God is of utmost importance. This means we must know God to ultimately reflect His attributes. Importantly, the first step in knowing God is to understand ourselves, as Imam Ali (Peace be upon him) stated:

"Whoever knows himself, knows his Lord" ¹.

The next step is finding specific role models whose guidance helps us traverse the path to our purpose with maximum efficiency and minimal error. When examining the characteristics of such role models, the role of the Household of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon them) in human creation becomes evident. These two steps converge in discovering the connection between knowing God and the infallible Imams (Peace be upon them), which this article seeks to explore.

The Relationship Between Knowing God and the Purpose of Creation

As mentioned, analytical discussions can demonstrate that the concepts of knowing God and the infallible Imams (Peace be upon them) are deeply intertwined. To prove this, let us begin with a narration from Imam al-Ridha (Peace be upon him):

"The beginning of servitude to God is knowing Him" ². Previously, we noted that servitude to God is humanity's purpose of creation and how worship and servitude lead us to this goal. Achieving any purpose requires first understanding it and the reasons for seeking it, followed by identifying the best role models and pathways to reach it.

God, being the Absolute Perfection, created us with an innate desire for absolute perfection. However, perfection must manifest itself outwardly for us to comprehend it. If God had no external manifestations, we would struggle to

¹. *Ghurar al-Hikam wa Durar al-Kalim (Exalted Aphorisms and Pearls of Speech)*. trans. Tahir Ridha Jaffer, p. 1602, *hadith* 153.

². Shaykh Muḥammad al-Ṣaduq, *Al-Tawḥīd*. trans. Sayed Ali Raza Rizvi, book 2, chap. 2, *hadith* 2.

connect with Him. All of God's creation are manifestations of the names and attributes of the Absolute Perfection, but these manifestations are limited. Manifestations such as worldly beauty and transient perfections cannot fulfill the desires of our infinity-seeking hearts, and since we cannot directly perceive Allah in our physical dimension, we may feel lost.

To fully know God, we must recognize His most complete manifestation. Divine wisdom necessitates the existence of a perfect manifestation of the Absolute Perfection. The critical point here is to avoid mistaking other instances for the Absolute Perfection. Since the most significant aspect of our being is our human dimension, we must identify the Absolute Perfection in this dimension and follow its manifestation to achieve our purpose of creation.

The Relationship Between the Infallible Imams (Peace Be Upon Them) and the Purpose of Creation

God created the universe based on precise principles and mathematical laws. Every creation must adhere to these principles to fulfill the purpose of its creation. The most critical principle in creation is for humanity to attain the status of Allah's deputy on earth (*Khalifatullah*) and to reflect His names and attributes. A key condition for achieving this is knowing God and having a perfect role model to guide us.

To know God, one must first understand his innate human nature and truth, which originates from the light of the Prophet and his Household (Peace be upon them). God created the Household of Prophet Muhammad as the first beings³ and

³. "The first things that Honorable the Exalted God created were our spirits which He made declare His Unity and Exalt Him." Shaykh al-Ṣaduq. *Uyūn akhbār al-Riḍā*. trans. Dr. Ali Peiravi, book 2, chap. 26.

manifested their light in the creation of other beings. One of the greatest divine blessings upon humanity is that our very origin is connected to them.

By breathing His spirit and the light of the Household of Prophet Muhammad into us, God has made us inherently drawn to Him and to them. Our inner desire is to reach their status, which represents Allah's deputy on earth. But how do we attain this status?

The best way to achieve a goal is by first understanding it. And the most reliable method of understanding anything is through familiarity with its most perfect example. The same principle applies to knowing God.

Allah is the infinite entity, and while He manifests Himself in countless ways across creation, each being can manifest God's names and attributes only to the extent of their existential capacity. The Household of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon them) are the best manifestations of God and have the highest rank among all creations. Any other being has a limited manifestation of God and surely, limited manifestation cannot lead us to the Infinite Beloved. Thus, anyone seeking the Infinite, Absolute Perfection and Existence needs to begin with the Household of the Prophet Muhammad ⁴. We cannot know and reach Allah without the Household of Prophet Muhammad.

The Household of Prophet Muhammad are the only human manifestations of the Absolute Perfection and the complete reflection of divine names. Without knowing them, Knowing God and reaching Him is impossible. As mentioned in *Ziyarat Jami'ah Kabirah*:

⁴. *Ziyarat al-Jami'a al-Kabira*.

“Whoever seeks God begins with you”⁵.

Imam al-Sadiq (Peace be upon him) beautifully elaborated on this connection:

"Through us, God is known, and through us, He is worshipped"⁶. This statement highlights that all divine names and attributes manifest in the Household of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon them). They are the epitome of the Absolute Perfection and the best practical examples for us to emulate in achieving the purpose of our creation.

What we have discussed regarding the characteristics of the Household of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon them) reveals their pivotal role in our lives and their direct connection to the purpose of our creation. Attaining the status of these noble individuals is essential for achieving an eternal and human inward self. If we aim to reach the purpose of our creation in the healthiest and most complete way, we must follow these luminaries, who embody all the qualities of the "Perfect Human" and the "deputy of God."

In this article, we sought to uncover the connection between knowing God and the Infallible Imams (Peace be upon them). To do so, we identified a common point and used it to explore this connection. Initially, we pointed out that the purpose of human creation is to become like God and attain the status of being His deputy on Earth. To manifest the names and attributes of God, we must first know Him, but not all paths to such knowledge are acceptable.

⁵. *Ziyarat al-Jami'a al-Kabira*

⁶. Shaykh Muḥammad b. Ya'qūb al-Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfi*. trans. Shaykh Muhammad Sarwar, vol. 1, book 3, chap. 23, *hadith* 10.

God manifests Himself in as many forms as there are creations, yet we must identify His most complete manifestation. Limited manifestations provide an incomplete understanding of God and cannot lead us safely and fully to the purpose of creation. Based on our discussion about the "Perfect Human," the Household of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon them) represent the most complete manifestation of God. Moreover, we are created from the light of the Household of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon them), and whatever is attributed to them is, in reality, a reflection of our inner truth. Therefore, reaching their exalted status is possible for us as well.

The purpose of human creation served as the common point through which we could uncover the connection between knowing God and the infallible Imams (peace be upon them). One crucial point to remember is that the Household of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon them) is one of the greatest blessings God has bestowed upon us. Humanity grows and ascends in proportion to their relationship with individuals greater than themselves, such as role models, mentors, and infallible Imams. Building a relationship with these noble figures, akin to the relationship between a teacher and a student, gradually transforms us to become similar to them. This, in turn, enables us to reach the highest status they possess, to know God, and ultimately to fulfill the purpose of our creation.