

FOREWORD

A Message to the Summit of Muslim Scholars, Clerics, and Preachers throughout the UK

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In the Name of Allah, the All Compassionate, the All Merciful.

I would like to take the opportunity to extend my greetings to the honorable audience participating at the Summit of the Shia Scholars and Ulema and appreciate the efforts made by the organizers of the event.

A fundamental principle of Islam, Imamate is the leadership of people as the Prophet's (SAW) successorship in the affairs of religion and those of this world and it is incumbent on everybody to follow the instructions issued by the custodian of the affairs.

The Imam's characteristics include his resemblance to the Prophet (SAW) in many respects. Therefore, except for serving as the recipient of divine revelation, the Prophet's responsibilities, e.g., guiding people towards the good and right, happiness in this world and the hereafter, taking care of everyday affairs, establishment of justice, preventing injustice and transgression, maintaining the divine laws, clarification of the Book, improving people's minds and manners, as well as establishment of reconciliation entirely vest in the Imam.

The Imam, similar to the Prophet, is divinely chosen, as reflected in the Holy Qur'an, "And We made them leaders, guiding by Our Command (21:73)," and it is God Almighty Who designates the Imam and the divine message is conveyed by the Prophet (SAW): "Convey everything revealed unto you from your Lord, for if you do not, then you have not conveyed His message" (5:67). Although it is incumbent on people to swear their allegiance to him and follow his instructions, but neither consensus of the ummah nor designation by people play any role in this respect, since God Almighty is but aware of certain qualities of the Imam, the most significant of which include infallibility and special knowledge; divested of these two wings, he may not soar in the sphere of Imamate and leadership of the society.

It is to be noted in passing that Imamate is a main pillar of religion – rather than political and societal leadership of the Islamic society which is considered as one of the secondary principles or ancillaries of faith – ignoring which will result in failure to convey the message itself, let alone conveying it in its entirety. Contrary to certain misconceptions, we believe that Imamate can serve as the axis of social solidarity of the ummah whose members come from a variety of schools and denominations. Further, the sayings of the Infallible Imams (AS) from the Prophet's Ahl al-Bayt may reconcile Muslims having different perspectives. By virtue of the teachings of the Infallible, mankind and followers of religions are, God willing,

capable of finding the road map, the true models of Islamic life and peaceful coexistence with all human beings and followers of religions.

I would like to express, once again, my deep appreciation for participants and organizers of this summit of significance and wish them success in their valuable endeavors with long-lasting effects.