

Mahdism and the Eve of Mab'ath



The Specialized Center of Mahdism

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An introduction

Mab'ath is a day when the Gabriel descended to prophet Muhammad on Mount Noor, Cave Hera (close to Mecca) with the first few verses of the Holy Quran. This event took place on Rajab 27 (June 25, 610), thirteen lunar years before Hijra.

At that magnificent night, Gabriel, the angel of Revelation, was appointed to read some verses of the Quran to Muhammad to honor him with Prophethood. Muhammad was forty at this time, when was demanded by Gabriel to recite these verses:

﴿اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ. خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ. اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ. الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ. عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ﴾¹

“(O Muhammad!) Read in the name of your Lord, Who created; created man from a clinging mass. Read, and your Lord is the Most Generous, Who taught by the pen, taught man what he did not know.”

The Prophet started the call to Islam from his own home. First, his wife, Khadīja, and his cousin, Ali acknowledged their faith in the Prophet. The first

1. The Quran, 96: 1-5.

call was totally secret.

After three years, the Prophet declared his Prophethood to the public and firstly initiated with announcing to his close relatives. Now, after more than 1450 years, his Divine mission is spread all over the world.

The word “Mab’ath” which is derived from the word “Ba’t’h” originally denotes “rising up” points to the selection of the Prophet by Allah to proceed with guiding people.

At the time this great mission of the Prophet commenced, most people of that region were idol-worshippers and their distance from intellectuality was highly visible in their lifestyle. The Prophet on that day was ordered to invite them to monotheism and wipe away all sorts of paganism and ignorance.

Mab’ath is not merely the initiation of a limited movement and a start of a simple progress, rather it is marked as a beginning of a global reformation. The religion that the Prophet introduces, which is identified as the final divine religion, contains all the basic features for leading a good life in this world and reaching the eternal salvation in the Hereafter.

In other words, Mab’ath is not a spontaneous occurrence in the barren landscape of the Arabian

Peninsula; on the contrary, it is the highest watermark in history that separates good from evil and sifts right from wrong to help people build a mindset for the single universal unity.

In better terminology, Mab'ath is labeled as a turning point for avoiding ignorance and oppression; distancing from superstition and indiscretion; and keeping away from everything that is not connected to Allah, and on the other hand, it means to implement justice and establish a close relationship with Allah Who is the source of every merits and goodness. Mab'ath is therefore, the most significant event since the creation of Adam.

A glance at the state of humanity, prior to and after the proclamation of the Prophet's mission, confirms this point. The pre-Islamic society, not just of Arabia, but also of the supposedly civilized worlds of the Roman, the Persian, the Chinese, the Indian, etc. is called Jahiliyya or the Age of Ignorance. People despite their access to power and material achievements, sorely lacked some basic fundamentals of a reason-based society. An outstanding example of their lack of wisdom is seen in their disbelief in the Oneness of Allah and practicing various sorts of barbarism.

As a result, Mab'ath means the renewal of a covenant to all wise people to implement divine prin-

ciples in their life and it would lead to the building of the real unified and powerful monolithic Islamic society.

It is due to this great potentiality of Mab'ath that it enjoys a very remarkable position among Muslims. It is the beginning point of Islam; the religion that in its early years had few followers and soon afterward expanded too much and attracted numerous hearts.

Could the Prophet fulfill his mission?

Allah through His last Prophet provided mankind with all He demanded and people needed; revealed the Quran to him and made him responsible for elaborating and clarifying the verses of it to people. But since the Prophet during his noble life could not explain all the religious phrases to people and in fact, did not have the necessary opportunity to institutionalize his religion in society, Allah provided a supplement to his guidance that began with Ghadīr Khumm. On that day which was the last days of the Prophet's life, the Prophet introduced Imam Ali as his successor to the people. This event took place when tens of thousands of people accompanied the Prophet on his return of the last pilgrimage to Mecca.

Unfortunately, Imam Ali and other Infallible Imams were also pushed to the margins by the oppressors and faced restrictions and unfairness, which again they failed to achieve their divine goals and could not implement the principles of the religion in their society.

But the question is that who should compensate for these shortcomings?

It is deduced from the Islamic sources that Imam Mahdi is the complement of this blessed movement and is the final ring of this chain. He is the accomplisher of the goals of the Prophet's religion. In fact, Mahdism and the Mab'ath are inevitably intertwined.

Let's point to some of the unfinished goals of Islam that will be fully achieved after the appearance of Imam Mahdi:

1- Elimination of ignorance and establishment of divine servitude

It is quoted from the Prophet to have said,

«أَلَا كُلُّ شَيْءٍ مِنْ أَمْرِ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ تَحْتَ قَدَمَيَّ مَوْضُوعٌ».²

“Know that I have put all the beliefs and customs

2. Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 21, p. 405, hadith 40.

of the days of ignorance under my feet and declare them invalid.”

The pre-Islamic era was a mixture of many wrong methods, both in terms of thinking and in human values. The Prophet spent his whole life changing people’s style of ignorance and backwardness; and altering the path from idolatry to the practice of monotheism. He tried to breathe a new life into the lifeless body of people.

Unfortunately, after his demise, according to some hadiths, most people returned to the ignorance and this ignorance has been continued up to our time, with the difference that it has changed from traditionalism to modernity. The best example of this modern ignorance is depicted through the massacre of innocent people with weapons of mass destruction.

2. Ethics and self-refinement

The religion of Islam is the religion of morality. The Prophet himself in expressing the philosophy of his prophethood declared,

«إِنَّمَا بُعِثْتُ لِأَتَمِّمَ مَكَارِمَ الْأَخْلَاقِ».³

“Verily I was sent to complete the moralities.”

3. Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 68, p. 382.

The Quran also accentuates on the purification of the souls by sending the Prophet by saying,

﴿لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ﴾⁴

“Truly, Allah conferred a great favor on the believers, as He raised up a messenger from among themselves, reciting to them Allah’s words of revelation, purifying them and teaching them the Book and the wisdom whereas before that they had been in an obvious error.”

Nonetheless, due to many impediments, the implementation of morality was not executed as it was expected and the Islamic society has never been considered a one-hundred percent moral society.

3- Justice-orientation

One of the main goals of Islam is the fair distribution of God-given blessings. That is, it should not be the case that one person possesses everything, but another person is deprived of the necessities of life. Although during the caliphate of Imam Ali, the Islamic society enjoyed the sweet taste of justice a little, but after his martyrdom, equality, peace, and tranquility, in the true sense of the word, has never been applied completely in any of the Islamic

4. The Quran, 3:164.

countries.

4. Unity of human societies

One of the great blessings of the mission of the Holy Prophet, like the previous apostles was to create unity among people. Allah says in the Quran,

﴿كَانَ النَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً فَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ النَّبِيِّينَ مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ وَأَنْزَلَ مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ فِي مَا اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ...﴾⁵

“At the beginning, people were one nation; then Allah sent messengers as givers of glad tidings and warners; and sent down [with them] the Book with the truth to judge between men in whatever they differed...”

The prophets, especially prophet Muhammad, tried to solve disagreement, conflict, animosity, and divisions that existed among people. Their ideology, if implemented, was sufficient to put an end to these sorts of problems.

The religion that was revealed to the Prophet was perfect and he applied it in his society in the best possible way, but the Muslims could not maintain and act in accordance with his nugget of guidance.

5. The Quran, 2:213.

On the other hand, Islam is the last religion, and if it is not completely performed, Allah's purpose will not be fulfilled in this religion. Accordingly, there must be someone who presents the true essence of this religion to people and be able to execute its teachings entirely.

What is deduced from the authentic sources is that in the government of Imam Mahdi all the ideals of Islam will be realized, the majority of people of the world will become God worshippers, they will gather under a single banner, and a unified global government will be established.

In addition, the living conditions of people will be so affluent that no one will need more. This means that justice will be achieved so highly that there will be no stimulus for betraying, stealing, or violating the rights of others.

Consequently, the movement that the Prophet started on the twenty-seventh day of Rajab has not yet ended, and we must all strive to achieve those goals and ideals until the true owner of the religion who is the Last Savior appears and counterbalances all the existing shortcomings in the best way.

May Allah hasten to his noble appearance.