

AWAITS US

Sayyid Hasan Mu'minī

He will reappear, and he will deliver man from utter oblivion. Human society as a whole will find salvation; it will find a true future! Anticipating this deliverance means not accepting—and in fact actively rejecting—the contemporary situation, a situation that has befallen man due to his ignorance and due to his carnal desires.



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Sayyid Ḥasan Mu'minī



المواقع الموا

Title: The Uprising of the Mahdi AWAITS US

Author: Sayyid Ḥasan Mu'minī

Translate: Al-Mustafa International Translation and Publication Center Publication: Al-Mustafa International Translation and Publication Center

First Print: 2011

Typesetting: Hadi Abdulmaleki

Publication Supervisor: Ne'matullah Yazdānī

ISBN: 978-964-195-469-9

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 Bookstore of Al-Mustafa International Translation and Publication Center, next to Jameat Al-Ulum, Salariyah T-Junction, Ameen Blvd, Qum, Iran.

Tel/Fax: 0098251 2133106 / 0098251 2133146 www.miup.ir, www.eshop.miup.ir

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WORD FROM THE PUBLISHER

The antic field of Islamic Sciences for basic sciences such as Jurisprudence [Fig'h], Dogmatic Theology Philosophy, Ethics and for practical sciences, such as "Rijāl" flives of illustrious men], Déraveh and Rights [Huquq] has had many ups and downs during the passed fourteen centuries. With the glorious victory and triumph of the Islamic Revolution and in a time when globalization has been achieved, new questions and new challenges have taken shape and stood before the Islamic erudite, especially in the field of Human Sciences: this fact is in a way, under the difficult and rigorous responsibility of leadership; in the present era, one should be committed and faithful to Religion and Tradition and this, in worldwide managements and from all aspects is indeed a great challenge.

For that matter, modern, complete, concise and practical studies and researches appear as something essential and necessary in the Religious field; and one should act, according to the worldwide measures and evaluations, which are trustworthy and also according to the depth and originality of beautiful thoughts; thus, the prevention of all kinds of mental and educational deviations in researchers in the Religious field

is indeed a mandatory necessity that the founders of that "Goodly Tree" [Shajareye Tayyabah] and most of all, the great architect of the Islamic revolution: Imām Khomēyni and the illustrious spiritual leader: Ayatollāh Khāmēnēyi have taken into account, most effectively.

For that matter, "Jāme'at Al-Mustafā Al-Ālamiyah" has founded the "International Centre for Translation and Publication Al-Mustafā" in order to fulfill this great responsibility and offer great works, for a better knowledge of the venerable Prophet of Islam.

In the end, we would like to show our deepest gratitude to all those who have taken part in the achievement and publication of this book. All those who had asked the assistance of the possessors of knowledge, in order to let us know their constructive and positive opinions.

International Centre for Translation and Publication Al-Mustafā

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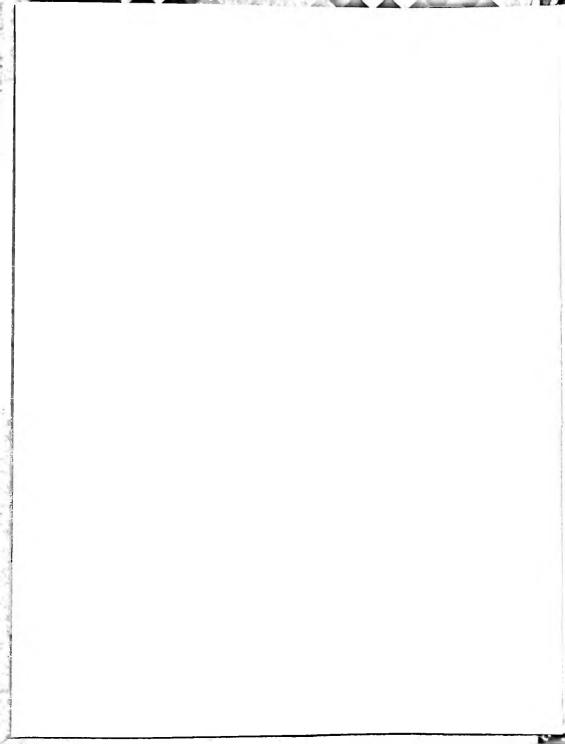
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Introduction

This book is for those dear readers who are unaware of the grand personality mentioned therein; Imam Mahdī ('a)—the promised saviour and that divine figure who, it is said, will spread justice throughout all the lands at the end of time. This introduction is nothing but a brief survey of the life of Imam Mahdī ('a).»

1. Birth1

After the Prophet, as the Qur'an indicates, the Prophet ordained Imam 'Alī as the first imam, and thereafter the eleven imams stemming from the progeny of 'Alī and Fāṭimah. Imam Mahdī is the twelfth imam, the son of Imam Ḥasan 'Askarī, who was born at dawn' on Friday the 15th of Sha'bān³ in the year 255 hijrī (869 CE). He was born in a

Shaykh Saduq, *Kamāl al-Dīn*, pgs.427-428.

¹ Pür Sayyid Aqa'ī, Bīdārī-yi Pinhān, second chapter with small changes and additions (after permission was obtained from the author)

The majority of books written by Shia authors are in agreement about this date.

⁴ Shaykh Mufid, Irshād, v.2; Kāfi, v.1, p.514; Shaykh Ṭūsī, Al-Ghaybah, p.238; Shaykh Ṣadūq, Kamāl al-Dīn, v.2, p.430; A'yan al-Shia, v.2,

military section of Samara. This section was controlled by the Abbasid caliphs. The Imam was born while his father was being imprisoned in this area. The caliph of the time ordered soldiers to kill any baby that was born. This is why the Imam's birth was hidden.

The birth of Imam Mahdī is a historical certainty. In addition to the Imams, the scholars, historians, and scholars of traditions (both Shia and Sunni) clearly testified to his birth. There are some researches which list 65 scholars who mention the birth, along with the books in which the account is recorded.²

a. Name

The name of the imam is the same as the name of his grandfather, the Messenger of Allah.³ All historians and scholars of traditions agree that the Prophet chose this name for him.⁴ This name was not without reason. It states that just as the Prophet's advent saved the world from misguidance and ignorance, twelve generations later, his grandchild's advent will save mankind from darkness and misguidance.⁵

p.44; Bāqir Sharīf al-Qurshī, Ḥayāh al-Imām Muḥammad al-Mahdī (a), p.29; Tārīkh Ibn Khaldūn; Waſīyāt al-A'yan, v.4, p.176; Al-Itiḥāf bi-Ḥubb al-Ashraſ, p.178; Yanābī' al-Muwaddah, v.3, p.171; Dr. Ibrāhīm Ḥasan, Tārīkh al-Islām, v.3, p.193.

Imam Ridā (a) said: "Until Allah raises for this matter a servant from us. His birth will be hidden; but not hidden amongst his relatives." Kāfī, v.1, p.341.

² Refer: Muḥammad Riḍā Ḥakīmī, Khurshīd-i Maghrib, pgs.18-20
³ Refer: Ṣāfī Gulpāygānī, Muntakhab al-Athar, pgs.182-184; Biḥār al-

Anwar, v.51, pgs.2, 5, 15, and 38.

Baqir Sharif al-Qurshi, Hayah al-Imam al-Muḥammad al-Mahdī (a), p.27, narrated from 'Aqd al-Durar.

⁵ Biḥār al-Anwār, v.52, p.338; Irshād, v.2, p.384.

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3. Nickname

The famous nicknames of the Imam are: Mahdī, Qā'im, Muntazar, Ḥujjah, Khalaf al-Ṣāliḥ, Baqīyatullāh, Manṣūr, Ṣāḥib al-Amr, Walī al-'Asr, and Ṣāḥib al-Zamān. The most famous nickname is Mahdī.¹ Each one of these nicknames has one or more reasons behind them. For instance, the Imam is called Mahdī because he has been guided with the truth.² He is called Qā'im because he will rise with the truth. He is called Muntazar because the believers are waiting for his return. He is called Ḥujjah because he will be the divine argument against His creation.³

4. Mother

Shaykh Ṭūsī related a tradition which states that his mother's name was Rayḥānah. But, he immediately adds that she was also called Narjis, Ṣayqal, and Sawsan. Shaykh Mufīd considered her name to be Narjis. This is the only name by which she is called in the tradition transmitted by Ḥakīmah, Imam 'Askarī's ('a) aunt. Ṣadūq, in his chain leading to Ghīyāth, narrates that Imam Ḥasan 'Askarī's ('a) successor was born on Friday and his mother was Lady Rayḥānah, who was

¹ A'yan al-Shia, v.2, p.44; Ḥayāh al-Imām Muḥammad al-Mahdī (a), p.27; Biḥār al-Anwār, v.51; pgs.28-43.

Mahdī is a passive participle of huda, which means guidance. There is a tradition which states: "Verily, he was named Mahdī because he guides in a hidden manner." Nu'mānī, al-Ghaybah, p.243; Bihār al-Anwār, v.51, p.29. Of course, one who is guided in all aspects guides in all aspects as well.

³ Biḥār al-Anwār, v.51, pgs.28-31 and 51; Ḥayāh al-Imām Muḥammad al-Mahdī (a), pgs.27-28.

⁴ Shaykh Tūsī, Al-Ghaybah, p.393; Refer: Kamāl al-Dīn, p.431.

5 Al-Irshad, v.2, p.339.

⁶ Kamāl al-Dīn, v.2, p.429; Biḥār al-Anwār, v.51, p.12.

also called Narjis, Ṣayqal, and Sawsan. She was called Ṣayqal because she had a special gleam to her when she was pregnant.¹

There are various reports about the race of the 12th Imam's ('a) mother. Shaykh Ṣadūq, according to a tradition, states that her mother was Malīkah, the daughter of Yashū', the son of the Caesar of Rome and her mother was from the progeny of Simon, one of the disciples of Christ ('a). She was taken prisoner by the Muslim army and was sold as a slave. Imam Hādī ('a) had his representative purchase her from the slave marketplace of Baghdad. She was then sent to Imam Hādī ('a), who lived in Samara.²

That which is important is that this woman reached such a grand station that she became the mother of the Imam of the Age ('a). Ḥakīmah, Imam 'Askarī's ('a) aunt, was a prominent female member of the family of the Prophet. She considered the mother of the Imam to be one of her own—to be a member of her family. She considered herself to be the servant of the mother of the Imam.³ The Prophet (s),⁴ the Commander of the Faithful ('a),⁵ and the fifth and sixth imams⁶ consider her to be one of the best slaves and their eventual leader.

At the end, a tradition about the birth of the 12th Imam ('a) from the words of Ḥakīmah, Imam 'Askarī's ('a) aunt and the

Kamāl al-Dīn, p.432.

² Kamāl al-Dīn, v.2, p.422 (this tradition is examined and criticized in Tārīkh-i Sīyāsī-yi Ghaybat-i Imām-i Dawāzdahum (a), pgs.114-115).

³ "You are my master and the master of my family." Kamāl al-Dīn, p.424; "Rather, I serve you with all my heart." Ibid, p.427.

Shaykh Mufid, Al-Irshād, pgs.275-276; Al-Kāfī, v.1, p.323; A'lām al-Wara, p.330; Bihār al-Anwār, v.50, p.21.

⁵ Biḥār al-Anwār, v.51, p.36; Shaykh Mufīd, Al-Irshād, v.2, p.382; Shaykh Tūsī, Al-Ghaybah, pgs.470 and 478.

⁶ Kamāl al-Dīn; Nu mānī, al-Ghaybah, narrated from Hayāh al-Imām Muhammad al-Mahdī (a), p.240; Bāqir Sharīf al-Qurayshī, p.22.

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daughter of Imam Jawad ('a), will be related. This is a precise account of his birth. It was considered trustworthy during the lifetime of Mas'ūdī (d.345). Shavkh Sadūg narrated from Hakimah, the daughter of Imam Jawad ('a), the son of Imam Rida ('a):

Abu Muhammad Hasan bin 'Alī ('a) sent word requesting my presence. He said: "Aunt, break your fast with us tonight because it is the 15th of Sha'ban. Tonight, Allah will make his Testament appear on the earth." I asked him; "Who is his mother?" He replied: "Nariis." I said: "May my soul be sacrificed for you! But, there are no signs of pregnancy in her." He responded: "What I said will happen." Therefore, I came in and was greeting the household when Nariis came forward to take off my shoes. She addressed me: "My mistress, how are you doing?" I responded: "You are my mistress and the mistress of my family." She rejected what I said and answered: "Aunt, what are you saying?" I told her: "My daughter, tonight Allah will give you a son. This son will be the master of this world and the next." She became shy and blushed. I broke my fast, performed the night (ishā') prayers, and then went to sleep. I woke up in the middle of the night to pray. I prayed while Narjis was sleeping. She did not show any signs of being pregnant. I sat down and supplicated. Then, I went to bed and woke up again while she was still sleeping. Then, she woke up, prayed, and lied back down. I left the room to watch dawn approach. But, she was still sleeping. Therefore, I started doubting what Imam 'Askarī ('a) was expecting. Just at that moment, the Imam called out: "Aunt, do not hasten the time is near." I sat down and started reciting Sürahs Saidah and Yāsīn. Then, Narjis woke up. I moved towards her and said: "Collect yourself." I then felt extremely tired and fell asleep. I was awoken by the voice of my master. When she lifted her clothing I saw the Imam prostrating. I

Refer: Tārīkh-i Sīvāsī-vi Ghavbat-i Imām-i Dawāzdahum (a), p.119.

cuddled next to him and saw that he was pure and clean.

Imam 'Askarī ('a) called me and said: "Aunt, bring me my son." I brought him. He kissed him and caressed his eyes, ears, and elbows. Then he said: "My son, speak." The infant started speaking and said: "I bear witness that there is no god save the One, who has no partners. I bear witness that Muḥammad is the Messenger of God." Then, he passed greetings to the Commander of the Faithful and each Imam one by one. He stopped speaking when he mentioned the name of his father.

Imam 'Askarī said: "Aunt, take him to his mother so he can greet her. Then, bring him back to me." I did this and left them thereafter. The Imam addressed me: "Aunt, come back in seven days to see him again." I came back the next day to greet Imam 'Askarī. I pulled back the curtain to see my master, but I did not see him. Then I asked the Imam: "May my soul be sacrificed for you. What happened to my master?" He answered: "Aunt, I handed him over to the same person that the mother of Moses handed her son to."

Hakīmah continued: "I came back on the seventh day and greeted him before I sat down. Imam 'Askarī said: "Bring me my son." They wrapped him in a blanked and brought him over. The Imam repeated everything that he said on the first day and the infant repeated exactly what he said before. Then, he recited the following verse of the Qur'an:

رِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَن الرَّحِيم وَ نُرِيدُ أَنْ نَمُنَّ عَلَى اَلَّذِينَ اسْتُصْمُفُوا فِي الْأَرْض وَ نَجْعَلَهُمْ أَئِمَةً وَ نَجْعَلَهُمُ الُوارِثِين وَ نُمَكِّنَ لَهُمْ فَى الْـأَرْض وَ نُرَى فِرْعَوْنَ وَ هَامَانَ وَ جُنُودَهُمَا مِنْهُم مَّا كَانُواْ يَحَذَرُون

And We desired to show favour to those who were abased in the land, and to make them imams, and to make them the heirs, and to establish them in the land, and to show Pharaoh and Haman and their hosts from them that of which they were apprehensive. 1.1

Quran, 28:5-6.

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5. Hidden Birth

The Abbasid rulers were deeply worried during the imamate of Imam Hādī ('a) and Imam 'Askarī ('a). They put them under military house arrest in Samara. The reason that they were worried was that there were many traditions of the Prophet (s) and Imams ('a) which stated that Imam Ḥasan 'Askarī would father a son who would destroy the foundations of invalid governments. He would demolish crowns and thrones and spread justice throughout the earth.² Therefore, these two Imams, especially Imam Ḥasan 'Askarī, were put under strict surveillance. The caliphate tried to prevent the birth of such an Imam.³

Hence, the pregnancy and birth of Imam Mahdī ('a) was hidden from the people. Imam Riḍa ('a) stated that the hidden birth is one of the characteristics of this Imam. It has been stated in many traditions that Mahdī ('a) has many similarities with Prophet Abraham ('a) and Prophet Moses ('a).⁴ After his birth, nobody saw Imam Mahdī ('a) except select companions of his father, and that on sporadic occasions. Some of these people will be mentioned when the hidden stage of the Imam's life is described.

6. Characteristics

Historians and scholars of traditions have mentioned the Imam's characteristics in their books in accordance with the multiple traditions narrated by the Noble Prophet (s) and the Imams.⁵

Refer: Muntakhab al-Athar, fasl 2, bāb 25 and 34.

Ibid, p.286.

¹ Kamāl al-Dīn, pgs.424-426.

In a tradition, Imam Hasan 'Askarī (a) states that one of the reasons that the Ummayad and Abbasid dynasties opposed the Ahl al-Bayt (a) was the existence of such multiply-transmitted traditions. See for instance Muntakhab al-Athar, p.291.

Some traditions state: "His hair flows over his shoulders." Muntakhab

In these traditions it is reported that he has a striking physique. He also has a mark on his shoulder similar to the mark of prophethood.

This child from the lineage of the Prophet (s) is the ninth leader from the progeny of Sayyidah Fāṭimah Zahrā through her son Imam Ḥusayn ('a), the Master of the Martyrs. He is the final divine saint; the final saviour, and the leader of the world. He has two occultations; he was and is hidden from the people in two stages. One of these stages was the minor occultation and the other was the major occultation. On the completion of the major occultation, he will fill the earth with justice after it has been filled with injustice.²

There are tens of signs which will occur before, during, and after the advent of this Mahdī.

Mahdī is a specified and ordained imam. It would be pure stupidity to accept anyone else who is brought forward for this position.

Mahdī ('a) is presently hidden from our eyesight. He lives amongst the people and sees everyone while the people do not see him. His is the rightful caliph, the absolute authority (walī), the final divine saint, the trustee (waṣī) of the all trustees, the final saviour, the leader of the world, the great revolutionary, and the grand reformer. When he returns from occultation, he will present himself in the Ka'bah with the flag of the Prophet (s) in his hand. He will revive Islam and implement divine laws throughout the world. He will unsheathe his sword and fill the world with compassion after

al-Athar, p.185; A'yān al-Shia, v.2, p.44; Kashf al-Ghummah, v.2, p.426.

Muntakhab al-Athar, abwāb 4 to 25; for further information about his characteristics refer to: A'yān al-Shia, v.2, p.44; Nuʿmānī, Al-Ghaybah, bāb 13, p.212; Kashf al-Ghummah, v.2, pgs.464-470.

Ibid.

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it has been filled with oppression.1

He will be a person of uprising and struggle, worship,² humility,³ asceticism,⁴ patience,⁵ justice, and righteousness.⁶. He is the most knowledgeable of all⁷ and full of justice, blessings, and purity.⁸

7. The Stages of the Imam's Life

The life of the Imam is divided into three stages: the disappearance, the minor occultation, and the major occultation. The advent and after the advent can also be considered stages of the Imam's ('a) life. These stages are discussed in books of theology.

a. The Stage of Disappearance

This stage starts from the Imam's birth (255) and ends with the passing of Imam 'Askarī (260). He lived with his father for the duration of these five years.

Imam 'Askarī ('a) had two important responsibilities during his lifetime. The first was to protect his son from the Abbasid caliphs and the second was to establish his existence and the signs of the 12th Imam's imamate.

The eleventh Imam introduced him to his friends and followers at suitable times. Due to the strict surveillance he was under by the Abbasid caliphs, only a few of Imam 'Askarī's ('a) trustworthy followers saw him. Some of the followers who

¹ Muhammad Ridā Hakīmī, Khurshīd Maghrib, p.29.

² Makyāl al-Makārim, v.1, p.122.

^{3 &#}x27;Aqd al-Darar, p.158; Al-Mulāhim wa al-Fitan, p.265.

⁴ Bihār al-Anwār, v.52, p.354.

^{5 &}quot;He has the patience of Jonas," Kamāl al-Dīn, p.310.

^{6 &}quot;The one who awaits justice," Masātīḥ al-Janān, du'ā al-istitāḥ.

⁷ Bihār al-Anwār, v.51, p.115; Kamāl al-Dīn, v.2, p.653.

^{8 &}quot;When Allah raises a man from my pure progeny he will be just, blessed, and pure," Al-Mulahim al-Fitan, p.108.

were aware of his birth were: Abū Hāshim Ja'farī, Aḥmad bin Isḥāq, Ḥakīmah, and Khadījah (aunts of the 11th Imam).

Mu'awiyah bin Ḥakīm, Muḥammad bin Ayyūb bin Nūḥ, and Muḥammad bin 'Uthmān 'Umrī narrated: Forty Shia gathered around Imam 'Askarī ('a) and he showed them his son. The Imam said: 'This is your Imam after me; he is my successor. Follow him and do not disperse away from him or else you will be destroyed and your faith will be ruined. Also, know that you will not see him after today."²

In accordance with historical evidence, Imam 'Askarī ('a) hid his son in Samara and then Medina. He did this to protect him. The 12th Imam ('a) lived in Medina under the care of his paternal grandmother.³

According to the tradition transmitted by Mas'ūdī, Imam 'Askarī ('a) asked Ḥadīth, his mother, in the year 259, to perform ḥajj. Then, Ḥadīth and her grandson went to Mecca while being protected by Aḥmad bin Muṭahhar, a close friend of Imam 'Askarī.⁴ It seems that after performing the pilgrimage rites they chose Medina to be the place where Imam Mahdī would hide. Some traditions support this opinion. For instance, Abū Hāshim Ja'farī asked Imam 'Askarī: "Where should one find your successor after you pass away?" He answered: "In Medina."

¹ Tārīkh-i Sīyāsī-yi Ghaybat-i Imām-i Dawāzdahum (a), p.123.

² Kamāl al-Dīn, p.435; Kashf al-Ghummah, v.2, p.527; Biḥār al-Anwār, v.52, p.25; for further information about one who met with the Imam more than anyone else during this time refer to: Muntakhab al-Athar, pgs.355-358.

Tārīkh-i Sīyāsī-yi Ghaybat-i Imām-i Dawāzdahum (a), p.124.

⁴ Ithbāt al-Waṣīyah, pgs.247 and 253.

⁵ Al-Kāfī, v.i, p.328; It should be noted that many researchers consider this Medina to mean utopia; not the actual city; Refer: 'Allāmah Majlisī, Marāh al-'Uqūl, v.4, p.2; In addition to this, there are traditions from Imam Jawād which support this opinion, for

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Some researchers state that the most probable possibility is that the 12th Imam ('a) spent the majority of the period of his childhood in Medina because Imam 'Askarī ('a) recognized the danger of him residing in Iraq.

The Abbasid efforts to capture Imam 'Askarī's ('a) child,

Imam Mahdī ('a), will be discussed in further detail.

b. The minor occultation

The 12 Imam's ('a) minor occultation started when Imam 'Askarī ('a) was martyred in 260. It lasted for seventy years culminating in the year 329.² This occultation is called the minor occultation due to its short duration. It played an important role in preparing the Shia for the major occultation.

The Imam was hidden from eyesight for the duration of the minor occultation. But, there were individuals who were in direct contact with the Imam; they were the Imam's specific representatives. The representatives would relate the difficulties that the Shia were facing to the Imam and receive his answers and solutions. Sometimes a group of people would accompany the specific representatives in order to participate in a meeting with the Imam.³ There were four such representatives, hence

³ Shaykh Saduq, Kamāl al-Dīn, pgs. 434-479, a number of these people

are listed in this source.

instance: He said: "In Medina." I asked: "Which city (madan)?" He answered: "Is our Medina different than the Medina of others." Nu mānī, Al-Ghaybah, p.185.

Tārīkh-i Sīyāsī-yi Ghaybat-i Imām-i Dawāzdahum (a), pgs.124-125
Shaykh Mufīd states in Irshād, v.2, p.340 that the minor occultation started when Imam Mahdī was born and ended when the period of specific representation culminated with the death of the final specific representative who was able to communicate directly with the Imam (a). This would mean that the period of the minor occultation was 75 years. The reason that Shaykh Mufīd holds this opinion is because during the first five years of Imam Mahdī's (a) life he was not present amongst the people; he was hidden.

they are famously known as the Four Representatives.

The names of these representatives, who were all prominent scholars, are:

- 1. Abū 'Amr, 'Uthmān bin Sa'īd 'Umrī. He was the representative from the year 260 until his death, which apparently occurred before the year 267. Some scholars have stated that he died in the year 265.
- 2. Abū Ja'far, Muḥammad bin 'Uthmān 'Umrī. He was the representative from the time that the first representative passed away until the year 305.
- 3. Abū al-Qāsim, Ḥusayn bin Rūḥ Nawbakhtī. He was the representative between the years 305 and 326.
- 4. Abu al-Ḥasan, 'Alī bin Muḥammad al-Samarī. He was the representative between the years 326-329.

c. The Major Occultation

The third period of Imam Mahdī's ('a) life is the major occultation. This is the extended period of occultation. This period started after the culmination of the minor occultation and continues till today. This period will continue, through the divine decree, until the groundwork is laid for the acceptance of his world leadership and governance. The groundwork must be laid in the area of numbers of followers and of facilities.

This stage is the biggest test for human beings. It is a scale with which the faith of believers can be tested. The divine argument is hidden behind the scenes in this stage; it is similar to the sun when it illuminates from behind the clouds.³

Representation, just as occultation, is divided into two stages. The specific representation occurred in the minor occultation

³ Biḥār al-Anwār, v.52, p.93.

Refer: Tārīkh-i Sīyāsī-yi Ghaybat-i Imām-i Dawāzdahum (a), p.156.

² Hāshim Ma'rūf Ḥusaynī, narrated from *lbid*, p.155.

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and the general representation occurs in the major occultation.

The specific representation occurred as the Imam would specifically name individuals as his representatives. Each one of them was introduced to the people by the previous representative.

But, the Imam appointed general representatives by specifying certain general and specific characteristics. Whoever has these characteristics, in all of their multifarious aspects, becomes the guardian (walī) of the society in religious and worldly affairs as the representative of the Imam.

This station of representation was given to the scholars who meet the criterion by Imam Mahdī ('a) himself.

Shaykh Ṭūsī, Shaykh Ṣadūq, and Shaykh Ṭabarasī all narrated from Ishāq bin 'Ammār who said:

Our master, Imam Mahdī ('a) [spoke about the duties of the Shia during the occultation]. He said: 'As for the events which will occur, turn to the narrators of our traditions, because they are my proof to you, while I am the proof of Allah.'

Likewise, Ṭabarsī narrated from Imam Ḥasan 'Askarī ('a), who said:

It is incumbent upon the laymen to follow (in taqlīd) those amongst the jurists who are careful of their souls, protect their religion, oppose their carnal desires, and obey the commands of their master.²

Therefore, the person responsible for the affairs of the

² *İbid*, v.2, p.458.

Țabarasī, Iḥtijāj, v.2, p.469.

Muslims during the major occultation is the jurist. He takes charge of the guardianship and leadership of the ummah. In other words, he is the guardian jurist (walī al-faqīh); the affairs of the ummah must be placed under his supervision. The jurists were given the authority of issuing religious decrees and judgment by the Infallible Imams ('a) before this period. But, officially recognizing the religious authority of Islamic jurists started from this period and will last until the Imam ('a) returns. After Imam Mahdī's ('a) advent, the government of the time' will continue from these divine saints.²

² Biḥār al-Anwār, v.52, p.312; Kamāl al-Dīn, v.10, p.256; 'Ayūn Akhbār al-Ridā (a), v.1, p.264.

Refers to the verse: "...and We make such vicissitudes rotate among mankind, so that Allah may ascertain those who have faith..."

Quran, 3:140.

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¹ Qurān, 24:35.

Many traditions have been recorded which correlate this verse with the Infallible Imams. Many commentators of the Qur'an considered the verse to mean just this. The late Tabarsi, after mentioning the verse, stated: "Through research, the blessed tree mentioned in the verse is the tree of piety and satisfation (ridwan) of the Ahl al-Bayt of the Prophet (s). The roots of which are prophethood and the branches imamate..."

The Messenger of Allah (s) states that the Muslims must be guided through the Qur'an and the Ahl al-Bayt in the famous Tradition of Thaqalayn. Imam Khumaynī states:

اللَّهُمَّ صلِّ على محمد و آله مظاهر جمالِك و جلالِك و خزائن اسراد كتابك الذى تجلّى فيه الأحديّة بجميع أسمائك حتى المُسْتَأثَر منها الذى لا يَعْلَمُهُ غَيْرُك

"O' Allah, bless Muḥammad and his household, the manifestations of your beauty and sublimity; the treasures chests of the secrets of your book which you have manifested therein the oneness of all of your names, even the exclusive names which are not known by anyone other than yourself."

Allah has a name or names which are unknown to all. These names relate only to the divine essence and are called the exclusive names (musta'thar).

i Al-Kāsī, v.1, p.195; Rawdah al-Kāsī, v.8, p.379 in the Commander of the Faithful's (a) speech, Masā'il 'Alī bin Ja'sar, p.317; Manāqib, v.1, p.280; Al-'Umdah, p.356; Tassīr al-Qumī, v.2, p.103; Kitāb al-Tassīr, v.2, p.308; Tassīr Sharīs Lābīsī, v.3, p.29; Tassīr Furāt Kūsī, p.282, Al-Mīzān, v.15, p.14 (where many other traditions and sources are listed).

²Majma' al-Bayān, v., p.225, with minor changes to the original text.

³ Waṣīyatnāmah-i Sīyāsī-Ilahī-yi Imam-i Khumaynī, introduction, p.2; he wrote this after narrating the Tradition of Thaqalayn. For further information, refer to: Ism-i Musta'thar dar Waṣīyat-i Imam wa Za'īm-i Akhar, Tehran, Mu'assasah-i Tanzīm wa Nashr-i Athār-i Imam-i Khumaynī, 1385.

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The Station held by the Infallible Imams

Through the divine will, the Infallible Imams hold all of the stations of the universe other than divinity and prophethood. It is impossible for normal human beings, even for the most prominent scholars, to understand this station. For instance, many prominent Shia scholars have written papers about Imam Mahdī ('a), but they have not been able to express the reality of the station that he holds or his lucent personality. What information do I, being a member of the Mobilization Resistance Force (basis), even with my doctorate in medicine, membership on the intellectual board of the university, and experience in the armed forces, have in order to speak about Imam Mahdī ('a)? What information do I have in order to write something about Imam Mahdī ('a)? What do I understand? Will I be able to express what I do understand? I am not a scholar; I only consider myself one who considers Imam Mahdī ('a) to be the living and present Imam. I am always at his service and love him intensely.

I believe that Imam Mahdī ('a) is present everywhere. The limitations of space and time do not exist for him. The Shia of Imam Mahdī ('a) should never feel that they are alone because he is always connected to them. He sees us; he hears what we say. He looks upon us with grace.

First: One of the Shia values is naming children with the name of the Prophet and his household. Keeping the names of the divine saints alive is similar to opening a window into the realm of deep meaning. There is no doubt that the strong spiritual connection that believing Shias have with the Infallibles causes them to reach lofty stations. Khājah Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, a prominent Shia scholar, remained in a fort for forty years due to the unfamiliarity that the people and government of his time had with divine knowledge. He pondered over divine concepts. The blessings of this forty

years of thinking about religion enabled him to destroy three superpowers of his time through mere gestures and speech. First, he converted the disbelieving, idol-worshiping Mongols who invaded Iran and converted into Christianity. They became Shia at his hands. Through Khājah Naṣīr's efforts, Sultān Muḥammad Khābandah (Hūlākū Khān Mughūl) became Shia minted coins with the names of the Imams.

Second: Ḥasan Ṣabbāḥ, along with his army, were the strongest guerrilla force in history. Ṭūsī was able to bring him down from his terrifying fort and forced him to surrender to

the Shia government of the time.

Third: the caliphate in Baghdad was the Islamic centre of oppression, injustice, and deception. The power of this caliphate was solidified through 200 years of bloodshed and fighting. The caliph was captured and the eminent scholar ordered that he be killed. But nobody had the audacity to perform this task. They responded: "He is holy," they feared that the skies would darken with his death. He said: "Put him in a carpet and keep rolling him, If a cloud appeared in the skies, if thunder, lighting, and tornadoes appeared, then leave him. If this did not happen then continue rolling him." They continued rolling him until he died.

Khājah Nasīr would send blessings (salawāt) upon Imam

Mahdī in the following manner:

والْعَلَن، دافع الكَرْبِ وَالبِحَن، صَاحبِ الجُودِ و البِنَن، الْإمَامِ بِالحَقَّ، أَبِي القاسِم محمّد بن الحَسَن، صَاحبِ العَصْر والزَّمان، وقَاطِع البُرْهان، و خَلِفَة الرَّحمن، و شَرِيكِ القُرآن، و مُظهر الإيمان، و سيّدِ الإنس وَ المجانّ، صَلَواتُ اللَّه و سلّامُهُ عَلَيْهِ و عَلَيهم أَجمَعين. الصَّلاةُ و السَّلامُ عَلَيْك، يا وصَى الحَسَن، و الخَلَف الصَّالِح، يا إمامَ زَماننا

"O' Allah, send salutations and peace, increase and blessings, upon the master of the mission of prophethood, the sergeant of Haydarīyah, infallibility of Fatimiyah, the clemency of Hasaniyah, the bravery of Husavnīvah, the worship of Saijādīvah, the pride of Bagiriyah, the influence of Ja'fariyah, the knowledge of Kazimiyah, the proof of Radawiyah, the generosity of Tagawiyah, the purity of Nagawiyah, the prestige of 'Askarīyah, and the one in divine occultation. He stands for the truth and invites towards absolute verity. He is the word of Allah and is protected by Him. He is the divine authority and stands for the divine commandments. He establishes religion. He makes the divine commandments victorious. He dissolves into the divine sanctity. He is the Imam of the secret and the known. He is the dispeller of distress and tribulation. He is full of generosity and kindness. He is the truthful Imam. Abī al-Oāsim Muhammad bin Hasan, Sahib al-'Asr wa al-Zaman. He is the decisive argument and merciful caliph. He is the partner of the Our'an and the manifestation of faith. He is the master of the iinn and mankind. May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him and all of them. May peace and blessings be upon you, O' waşī al-hasan and khalaf al-şālih. O' Imam of our age!"1

¹ Muḥammad Ridā Ḥakīmī, Khurshīd-i Maghrib, pgs.175-176, the original salutation is found in Al-Manāqib, v.1, p.312 and Kafama,

This salutation expresses the characteristics that Khājah Naṣīr, with all of his knowledge and understanding, believes that Imam Mahdī ('a) has.

He states that this Imam holds the greatest traits of all of the Imams. Take this yerse:

هُوَ اللَّهُ ٱلْخَلِقُ ٱلْبَارِئُ ٱلْمُصَوِّرُ لَهُ ٱلْأَسْمَاءُ الْخُسْنَىٰ ۚ يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ مَا فِي ٱلسَّمَاوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ

He is Allah, the Creator, the Maker, the Former. To Him belong the Best Names. Whatever there is in the heavens glorifies Him and [whatever there is in] the earth, and He is the All-mighty, the All-wise."

Man is unable to see Allah, but Allah created the world to show himself.² The sight that is obtained through receiving divine knowledge allows one to be able to witness and feel this glorification.

Misbāh, with major alterations, especially in the later portion.

Qurān, 59:24. ² Refers to the Hadith Qudsi which states: "I was a hidden treasure. Then, I had to be known. So, I formed the creation in order to be known." Biḥār al-Anwār, v.84, p.198; this tradition has been transmitted with an incomplete chain of transmission in many books on Islamic mysticism and philosophy, such as: Jāmi' al-Asrār, pgs.102, 144, 159, 162, and 601; Sadr al-Muta'alihin, Al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah, v.2, p.285, and v.6, p.301; It has also been mentioned in many commentaries to Fusus al-Hikam, and in Misbah al-Uns. The first Majlisi narrated it in many of his books. Rāzī mentioned it in his tafsīr ,v.28, p.234, as well as Ibn 'Arabi, Tafsīri Mansūb bih Ibn 'Arabī, v.2, p.123, Narāqī, Jami' al-Sa'ādāt, v.1, pgs.99 and 110; Muhaddath Nūrī, Nass al-Rahman, p.237; Hāfiz Barasī, Mashāria Anwār al-Yaqīn, p.39. It has been presented in the speech of many Sufis and mystics. The majority of them base their principles around this (narrated from Al-Kashf al-Wāfi fi Sharh Usul al-Kāfi, D.149 and Muhammad Sālih Māzandarānī, Sharh-i Usūl-i Kāfī, v.1, p.24.

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The revelation of the Qur'ān is a blessing that Allah gave us. Human beings, created from dirt, must use this book; must benefit from the scripture; must understand the divine speech. Allah revealed the Qur'ān so man can benefit from His mercy. Then, supplication, which is the rising Qur'ān, takes him higher, takes him to the place that the Qur'ān was revealed from.

The Imams, as the revealed Our'an and supplication to the divinity (the rising Qur'an), are sent to enable man to be able to benefit from divine knowledge. A noble scholar in Mashhad was commentating on the Our'an in the Islamic Republic courtyard of Imam Rida's ('a) shrine. He said: "Greet everyone whose appearance is religious, who does not have the signs of corruption on his face, with peace, God forbid one would be deprived of greeting Mawla Mahdī ('a) with peace. Mahdī was sent down to guide us. But, awe and appearance are not the same. In accordance to what is widely known, he does not limit himself to wearing the clothing of scholars, soldiers, Arabs, Iragis, and Hijāzīs. He appears in every society wearing the clothing of the people of that society. Imam Mahdī ('a) was even seen in Kermanshah wearing Kurdish clothing. He has also been seen wearing Iranian clothing. Therefore, he does not always wear robes, thobes, turbans, and green scarves. The clothing of the scholars is dignified; it is the holiest, most beautiful, most loved clothing in the angelic realm ('alam-i malakūt) and the universe. It is designated for the people of knowledge: it is the clothing of the Prophet (s) and Imam 'Asr ('a). But, it is not known that Imam Mahdī ('a) always wears the clothing of the scholars. Rather, he will face each and every person in a form congruent to their station.

The lifestyles of our Imams are filled with compassion and guidance. It is incorrect to compare the Infallible Imams with others, even righteous servants and believers. Imam Khumaynī,

Ayatollah Sayyid Ridā Şadr, Rāh-i Mahdī (a), p.267.

our beloved leader, with all of the positive qualities that he possessed, considered love of him to be the love of everything positive. He was only considered one of the followers of the Infallible Imams and the Ahl al-Bayt school of thought.

Awaiting for the return is not actualized by mere words and slogans. The author feels that it is necessary to relate a story here: There is a place called the Maqām of Imam Mahdī ('a) located in the Iraqi city Hillah, the city where 'Allāmah Hillī was born. The story behind the naming of this place is that Shaykh 'Alī Hillāwī lived in the city. He was in tune with his feelings and was awaiting the reappearance of Imam Mahdī ('a). His awaiting was the awaiting of a layman. He would travel to the desert surrounding Hillah and would lament: "Mahdī! Aqā! Imam Mahdī! Where are you? Come, the Shia are waiting and oppression has filled everywhere. When do you want to come? Don't you know our pain?"

On one of those days the Imam came to him wearing simple clothing and asked: "Shaykh 'Alī Hillāwī, what are you saying?" He responded: "I am calling on Imam Mahdī ('a)."The Imam asked: "What do you want with him?" He said: "I want him to reappear sooner." The Imam inquired: "Isn't it said that Imam Mahdī will reappear when he has 313 followers?" He responded: "Hey, you, what do you know? There are at least 1,000 people in Hillah who would aid Imam Mahdī ('a)." The Imam retorted: "Since this is the case, go buy two goats and inform a butcher. Then, write down the names of the thousand people that you think will help Imam Mahdī. Then, separate the best of them, those who do not have any envy or weak hearts. Put the rest aside until they are forty in number. Invite these forty people to your house tonight and take the goats upstairs. Imam Mahdī ('a) will also come there."

Shaykh 'Alī invited forty people and told them that Imam

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Mahdī ('a) will also attend this gathering. They were excited and full of love when they gathered. They sat down in supplication waiting for the Imam. Suddenly a light was seen from over the roof and they heard: "Shaykh 'Alī Ḥillāwī, come upstairs." The Shaykh went. Then, the man said: "Bring the butcher as well." After the butcher went upstairs, the guests saw blood flowing down the rails. They thought that the Imam first beheaded Shaykh 'Alī. They stood up one by one and escaped. They said: "We are taking our souls and leaving. There are thousands of other people in our city who will help the Imam." Shaykh 'Alī Ḥillāwī looked and did not see anyone other than himself and the butcher. The following is stated in a zīyārah of Imam Mahdī ('a):

وَ نَصرَتِي مُعَدَّةً لَكُمْ

"We are prepared to aid you."2

The Ahl al-Bayt consider the best form of worship to be waiting for or anticipating the reappearance.³ Imam Mahdī has said himself:

وَ ٱكْثِرُوا الدُّعَاءَ يِتَعْجِيلِ الْفَرَجِ فَإِنَّ ذَلِكَ فَرَجُكُم

"Increase prayers to hasten the reappearance because that is your relief."

Therefore, a person who dies while waiting for the

Refer: Al-'Abgarī al-Ḥissān, v.2, p.77; Mīr-i Mahr, p.282.

² This is part of Zīyārat Al Yasīn, Ihtijāj, v.2, p.92; Bihār al-Anwār, v.53, p.171, in the section of letters; Bihār al-Anwār, v.91, p.2 and v.99, p.81. It is also seen in other books of zīyārah.

³ Kamāl al-Dīn, v.1, p.287; Biḥār al-Anwār, v.52, p.125; Irshād, v.1, p.302; Tuḥuf al-'Uqūl, p.201, Gharrar al-Ḥikam, p.280.

^{*} Ihiijāj, v.2, p.469; I'lām al-Wara, p.452; Shaykh Tūsī, Al-Ghaybah, v.2, p.483; Bihār al-Anwār, v.52, p.93 and v.53, p.185; All of these books mentioned this in the letter given to Ishāq bin Ya'qūb which is the most important letter written by the Imam in the minor occultation.

reappearance is similar to one who was one of the Imam's companions. He would be similar to one who met the Imam and who fought alongside him. There is no doubt that such an individual would be granted the rewards of martyrdom.

Khājah Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, whose traits and miracles were previously mentioned, said:

وجُودُه لُطفُ وَتَصَرَّفُه آخُرَ وَعَدَثْه مِنَّا

"His existence is a grace, his power is another grace, and his nonexistence (occultation) is our fault."²

Khājah Naṣīr considers everyone to be a partner in his words. He states that the advent has been delayed because the society is unprepared. It has been delayed because the society is not prepared for the reappearance; the society is full of sin and ethical problems instead of being prepared for the return.

Unfortunately, our problem is that we see faults in others; we do not try to build ourselves up. We state that Imam Mahdī ('a) has not come back due to the sins of others. We have remained unaware of ourselves. When blood starts to flow from the pipe everyone starts to think of themselves; not the miraculous Imam. It should be known who he is going to kill when he returns and who he is going to be compassionate

أ Imam Ṣādiq (a) said: مَنْ مَاتَ مُنْتَظِراً لِهَذَا الْأَمْرِ كَانَ كَمَنْ كَانَ مَعَ الْقَائِمِ فِي فُسْطَاطِهِ لَا بَلْ كَانَ كَالضَّادِبِ بَيْنَ يَدَيُ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ بِالسُّيْفِ لَا بَلْ دِرَ اللَّهِ كَمَن اسْتُشْهِدَ مَعَ رَسُولِ الله

[&]quot;Whoever dies waiting for this is similar to one who was with the Qā'im in his special tent; rather is similar to one who fought with a sword alongside the Messenger of Allah, rather, by Allah, is similar to one who was martyred alongside the Messenger of Allah." Kāfī, v.1, p.372; Nu'mānī, Al-Ghaybah, p.330; Kamāl al-Dīn, v.2, p.338; Biḥār al-Anwār, v.27, p.127; Maḥāsin, v.1, p.172 in the section: whoever dies upon this matter is similar to one who was martyred alongside the Messenger of Allah (man māt 'ala hadhā al-amr kān Kaman ustashhad ma' rasūl Allah).

² Kashf al-Murād, p.491.

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with. One can see a small example of the Mahdī's ('a) uprising by looking at the events which occurred during the Islamic Revolution. After the victory of the revolution, 211 corrupt sinners, whose hands were dirtied with the blood of youth and the innocent, were executed by firearm. Imam Mahdī ('a) will come and destroy such individuals. Many people imagine that the Imam will come and create bloodshed; but they do not know whose blood will be spilt. It is pertinent to review this yerse:

وَلَكُمْ فِي ٱلْقِصَاصِ حَيَوٰةٌ يَنَأُوٰلِي ٱلْأَلْبَنبِ

There is life for you in retribution, O you who possess intellects...1

Therefore, the Imam will come at a time when the earth is filled with oppression. People will no longer have the right to live due to all of the oppression and bloodshed that will fill the world. He will come to establish justice, which does not mean bloodshed. Rather, it means securing the rights of the oppressed from the oppressors.

Imam Mahdī ('a) will come and bless everyone. Beauty will reach its peak with his advent. He will come and build the world as every human being desires it. Imam Mahdī ('a) said:

وَ لُو أَنَّ أَشْيَاعَنَا وَقَقَهُمُ اللَّهُ لِطَاعَتِهِ عَلَى اجْتِمَاع مِنَ الْقُلُوبِ فِي الْوَامِ الْهُمُن الْمُعْنِ الْمُعْنَى الْمُعْنَا وَ لَتَعَجَّلَتْ لَهُمُ الْمُعْنَ الْمُعْنَا وَ لَتَعَجَّلَتْ لَهُمُ السَّعَادَةُ إِيمُسُا هَدَيْنَا عَلَى حَقَ الْمَعْرَفَةِ وَ صِلاَقِهَا مِنْهُمْ إِنَا فَمَا يَخْبِسُنَا السَّعَادَةُ إِيمُ اللَّهُ الْمُستَعَانُ وَ عَنْهُمْ إِلَّا مَا يَتُصِلُ بِنَا مِمَّا نَكُرَهُهُ وَ لَا نُوْيُوهُ مِنْهُمْ وَ اللَّهُ الْمُستَعَانُ وَ عَنْهُمْ إِلَّا مَا يَتُصِلُ بِنَا مِمَّا نَكُرَهُهُ وَ لَا نُوْيُوهُ مِنْهُمْ وَ اللَّهُ الْمُستَعَانُ وَ اللَّهُ الْمُستَعَانُ وَ عَنْهُمْ إِلَّا مَا يَتُصِلُ بِنَا مِمَا نَكُرَهُهُ وَ لَا نُوْيُوهُ مِنْهُمْ وَ اللَّهُ الْمُستَعَانُ وَ

"If our Shia, may Allah grant them the success of obedience, gather sincerely to be true to their pledge,

¹ Qurān, 2:179.

then our meeting with them will not be delayed. They will be quickly blessed with the ability to see me under true knowledge and truthfulness towards us. Therefore, nothing imprisons us from them except the news which comes to us about them; news which is disliked by us, which we do not expect from them. Allah is the aider and we rely upon him; the excellent trustee.

A prominent scholar who spent his life learning about Islam and who was a true lover of Imam Mahdī ('a) was on his death bed. He was asked: "We want to meet Imam Mahdī ('a). What should we do?" He answered: "Do not commit sins." They said: "We want to feel the purgatory (barzakh)." He responded: "Do not sin," then continued: "Whatever you ask I will respond with the same answer."

A sin is forgoing an obligation or acting in opposition to a divine commandment.

We are awaiting the return; we want Imam Mahdī ('a) to come. We must fix our faults. Our school of thought is the school of reform. If we are not reformers we cannot await for the reformer. If we do not uprise we do not have the right to wait for the one who will uprise. There is nothing confusing or incomprehensible in our religion. One can speak to Allah and the infallibles just as he speaks to his mother and father. One can seek paradise from Allah just as he seeks money from his parents. One confesses his sins to Allah just as he confesses his mistakes to his mother. The path of communication with Allah is this easy. Allah will answer everyone in accordance to that which is in their benefit. The Prophet (s) and the Ahl al-Bayt are intermediaries between us and Allah. One of the best forms of communication with Allah is using them, their children, and prominent religious figures connected to them, as intermediaries. When one performs zīyārat to an Imam or a

¹ *Iḥtijāj*, v.2, p.499; *Al-Kharā'ij wa al-Jarā'iḥ*, v.2, p.903; Shaykh Mufid, *Mazār*, p.11; *Bihār al-Anwār*, v.53, p.177.

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child of an Imam, there is no doubt that the shrined will welcome him; will answer his greetings, and will hear his problems.

Is it possible for these prominent figures not to answer us? Is it possible for Imam Mahdī ('a) not to respond to our call? Responding to a greeting is obligatory. How would it be possible to greet the Prophet (s) or the Imams ('a), especially Imam Mahdī ('a), and not receive a response? How would those who acted in accordance to all of their obligations not answer our greeting? In our prayers we greet the Prophet (s), Imam Mahdī ('a), and his followers when we state:

"Peace be upon you O' Prophet, with the mercy and blessings of Allah; peace be upon us, and upon the righteous worshippers of Allah."

They will not leave these greetings unanswered. Greeting and responding to greetings is so important that Allah ordained it as part of the prayer. Prayer is concluded with these greetings.

Imam Mahdī has two categories of rights over us. One ategory is the general rights which are similar to the rights of the other Imams. Examples of these general rights are respecting his station, honouring his name through holding religious ceremonies, suitable propagation, authoring books, and cultural actions. The other Imams have these same rights.

The other category of Imam Mahdi's rights is specific rights. Examples of these rights are the right of obedience that he has over us, paving the groundwork for his return, and

For instance:

وَ أَعِنًّا عَلَى تَأْدِيَةِ حُقُوقِهِ إِلَيْهِ وَ الِاجْتِهَادِ فِي طَاعَتِهِ وَ الِاجْتِنَابِ عَنْ مَعْصِيَتِه

[&]quot;Help us to perform the rights of the Imam; to strive to obey him; and to refrain from angering him." Iqbal al-A'mal, p.299; Biḥār al-

acting in accordance to the Imam's suggestions in important manners, for instance respecting the scholars. Imam Mahdī's ('a) occultation created a huge responsibility for us. Regarding the governing jurist (walī al-faqīh), who is placed in his position while he is in occultation, the Imam said:

"Our master, Imam Mahdī ('a) [spoke about the duties of the Shia during the occultation]. He said: 'As for the events which will occur, turn to the narrators of our traditions, because they are my proof to you, while I am the proof of Allah to them."²

The command of Imam Mahdī ('a) proves the obligation of obeying the governance of the jurist (wilāyah al-faqīh). This is the same thing as Allah said:

"O you who have faith! Obey Allah and obey the Apostle and those vested with authority among you."³

Anwār, v.99, p.108; Mikyāl al-Makārim, v.2, p.91; all books of supplications narrate from these books.

من انتظر أمراً تهيّا له :Awaiting is preparation

[&]quot;One who awaits for something prepares for it."

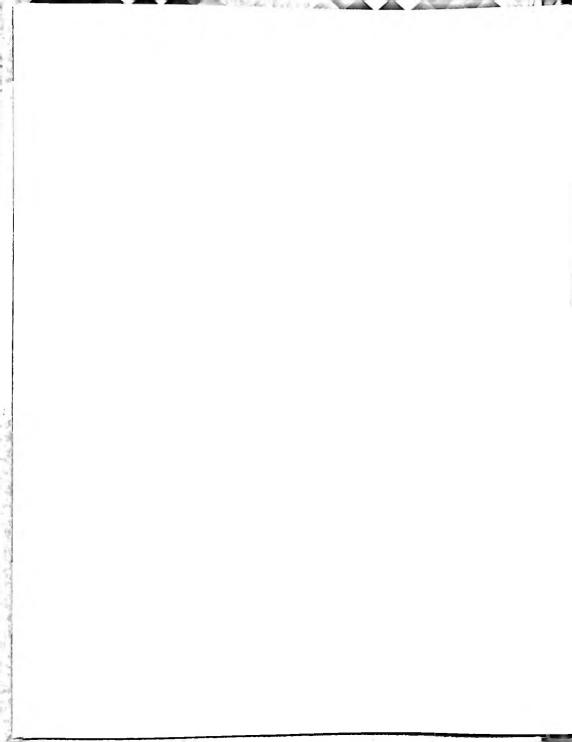
² The principle sources for this tradition are Tassīr-i Mansūb bib Imām 'Askarī (a), p.300 and all of the books of traditions and jurisprudence, such as: Iḥtijāj, v.2, p.338; Wasā'il al-Shia, v.27, p.131; Biḥār al-Anwār, v.2, p.88; Al-Burhān sī Tassīr al-Qurān, v.1, p.257; Tassīr Kinz al-Daqā'iq, v.2, p.6; Taḥrīr al-Wasīlah, v.1, p.5; all of the books of Islamic laws, in their section of taqlīd, have used this tradition.

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The commandment of Imam Mahdī ('a) is the same as that of Allah. Obeying him is obligatory upon us. Obeying the governing jurist of the time, Imam Khamenei, is the specific right that Imam Mahdī has over us. The Imam has a right over us; we must prepare ourselves for his advent; we must pave the groundwork for him to return.

"Imam Mahdī's ('a) uprising is awaiting us."1

¹ This was taken from a speech of Imam Khumaynī and Ayatollah Khamenei.



THE STRATEGY OF A GOVERNMENT PAVING THE WAY TOWARDS OBEDIENCE TO AND A DESIRE FOR THE MAHDI

Introduction

Obeying the concept of Mahdism, in addition to the Imam's obedience of the Creator and the followers' obedience of the Imam, depends upon a society which revolves around obedience. Social interactions must be based on seeking justice and righteousness. In any case, in order for a society to be awaiting obedience of this level, it must possess three other factors: security, capability, and independence. These factors are only achieved through worship; through serving the creation for the Creator. The advent of the one in occultation will be prolonged until these factors are secured.

The nonexistence of a society which revolves around obedience is a shortcoming that the awaiting Shia must rectify. It regards the advent of the Pearl of Creation, the object of desire. It regards the loyalty that people show. Shia culture is based on this ideology. Shia culture has been planned in accordance to this. The prophets, in congruence with this ideology, desired to establish justice amongst the people. They

wanted to train the people in such a way that they would establish justice themselves; that they would perform righteous deeds themselves; that they would hold the hands of the deprived themselves; that they would bid the right and forbid the wrong themselves. This is the most progressive form of a society which revolves around obedience; a form which depends upon awareness and freedom. This would be a society which has surpassed the point of worship and is traveling along the path of servitude; of divine proximity. In any case, the just Imam, the Saviour of Humanity wants followers who are obedience and loyal. An obedient government needs an obedient nation.

وَتَرْجُون مِنَ ٱللَّهِ مَا لَا يَرْجُونَ

"...but you expect from Allah what they do not expect..."

There is a tradition in this regard which must be pondered over. It has been narrated that Imam Bāqir ('a) said:

عَنْ أَبِي جَعْفَرِ: سَأَلَهُ خُمْرَانَ: فَقَالَ جَعَلَنِيَ اللَّهُ فِلدَاكَ لَوْ حَدَّثُنَنَا مَتَى يَكُونَ هَذَا الْأَمْرُ فَسُرِرْنَا بِهِ فَقَالَ: يَا حُمْرَان... إِنَّ الزَّمَانِ الْأَوَّلَ كَانَ زَمَانَ الذَّنبِ وَ إِنَّ الزَّمَانِ النَّانِي كَانَ زَمَانَ الْخَانِي وَ إِنَّ الزَّمَانِ النَّانِي كَانَ زَمَانَ الْكَبْشِ يَهُمُّ وَ لَا يَفْعَلُ وَ كَذَلِكَ كُنْتَ آنْتَ تَهُمُّ وَ لَا تَفِي وَ كَانَ هَذَا زَمَانَ الْمِيزَانِ وَ كُنْتَ فِيهِ عَلَى الْوَفَاء

Imam BÁqir (Ýa) clearly shows that if people are as wolves, if they do not have the desire or loyalty to establish a truthful government then divine anger will continue. Nothing will change. If they are as ewes they will have a desire to return the

Qurān, 4:104.

caliphate, but will take no action. As a result, nothing will happen. The only period which will pave the groundwork for the return would be the period of the scale where the people have strong desire, are active, and obedient. They will return the right of imamate which was taken away from its rightful owners allowing imamate and justice to prevail throughout the world.¹

In the viewpoint of the Qur'ān, salvation is a process which occurs through the human will. The divine will also aids the servant's will to succeed.

"That is because Allah never changes a blessing that He has bestowed on a people unless they change what is in their own souls..."²

The theory of a desire which would cause the return and a

حَتَّى تُسْكِنَهُ أَرْضَكَ طَوْعاً و تُمتَّعُهَ فيها طويلاً

² Qurān, 8:53; also:

الْيُومُ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ وِينَكُمْ وَأَتْمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلاَمَ دِيناً

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لا يُغَيِّرُ ما يقوم ختَّى يُغَيِّرُوا ما بِالنَّفْسِهِمْ

As the supplication reads:

[&]quot;Until you make him live one the earth, in obedience, and cause him to live in it for a long time."

[&]quot;...Today the faithless have despaired of your religion. So do not fear them, but fear Me. Today I have perfected your religion for you, and I have completed My blessing upon you, and I have approved Islam as your religion..." Quran, 5:3, and:

[&]quot;...Indeed Allah does not change a people's lot, unless they change what is in their souls..." Qurān, 13:11.

glorious end to human history depends on a divine sunnah, which forms the human will. In the end, if divine satisfaction is obtained, the divinely promised return would actualize. Otherwise, whoever claims to know when the return will occur is a liar.2 The requests of the Imam himself are in accordance with attracting this absolute actualization of the return depends upon man passing through the stages of preparation; depends upon attracting man's ability and desire; depends upon the followers and the environment of the return. This would make the return possible.3 Therefore, the period when this will, will be actualized in human society is unpredictable. Rather, it necessitates paving the groundwork so that all of the effective factors in the society will be sifted through and the implementation of this grand will, will be prepared.4

الَّذِي ارْ تَضَى لَهُمْ

² A tradition states:

كَذَبَ الوَقَاتُون

"Those who state the time lie." This tradition has been mentioned in many sources, such as Kāfī, v.1, p.368; Ihtijāj, v.2, p.469; I'lām al-Wara, pgs.451-452; Al-Kharā'ij wa al-Jarā'ih, v.1, p.178 and v.3, p.1113; Shaykh Tūsī, Al-Ghaybah, pgs. 290 and 426; Nu'mānī, Al-Ghaybah, pgs.289 and 294; Kashf al-Ghummah, v.2, p.531; Kamāl al-Dīn, v.2, p.483; Muntakhab al-Anwār al-Mudī'ah, p.122; Bihār al-Anwār, v.4, p.132, v.52, pgs.103-119; v.53, pgs.180, 184, and v.75, p.380.

The Quran states:

أنَّ الْأَرْضَ يَرِثُهَا عِبَادِيَ الصَّالِحُونَ

⁴ The Quran states:

وتنجعلهم أنيئة وتنجعلهم الوارثين

¹ The Qurān states:

[&]quot;...which He has approved for them..." Qurān, 24:55.

[&]quot;...Indeed My righteous servants shall inherit the earth." Qurân, 21:105.

[&]quot;...and to make them imams, and to make them the heirs." Quran, 28:5, also:

Thus, according to the ethical philosophers, any will that seeks the formation of the divine will regarding the return out of its own desire and obedience, takes one step towards the desired goal. In clearer terms, the return will occur when each one of the awaiting societies will benefit from the necessities of the return. Their historical awareness and experience will enable their intellects to receive the message of the saviour's return. They will work academically to achieve this. Those who are awaiting the Righteous (Ṣāliḥ) must be righteous (ṣāliḥ). A righteous individual is one who intellectually chooses this path and then works tirelessly for its actualization. In this case, the collective will is formed in congruence with the divine will. A society will be formed; a society which the divine sunnah has promised. Imam Ṣādiq ('a) told Zarārrah:

إعْرِفْ إِمَامَكَ فَإِنَّكَ إِذَا عَرَفْتَ لَمْ يَضُرُّكَ تَقَدُّمْ هَذَا الْأَمْرُ أَوْ تَأْخُرَ

"Know your Imam because if you know him, this matter [occurring] before or after [the appointed time] will not harm you."²

Therefore, the ideal movement in implementing imamate, as understood by Islam and the Jafarī sect, is increasing understanding in the society through awareness. Religious scholars and researchers during the occultation, in addition to

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهُ لَمْ يَكُ مُغَيِّراً نِعْمَةُ أَنْمَهَا عَلَى قَوْمٍ حَتَّى يُعَيِّرُوا مَا بِالْفُسِهِمْ وَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِعٌ عَلِيمٌ "That is because Allah never changes a blessing that He has bestowed on a people unless they change what is in their own souls, and Allah is all-hearing, all-knowing." Quran, 8:53.

Amongst the contemporary scholars, the late Mawlawi, a prominent mystic and teacher of ethics, answered those who asked him to pray for them to be able to meet Imam Mahdī (a) by saying: "My children, instead of longing to meet the Imam, long for his guidance." This was narrated by Shaykh Khusruwī, one of the late Mawlawi's agents.

² Kāfī, v.1, p.371; Nu'mānī, Al-Ghaybah, p.329; Shaykh Ṭūsī, Al-Ghaybah, p.459.

inviting people to the Divine Authority ('a), also have the responsibility of defending their Imam. He must be protected from the superstitions and deviant separation caused by ignorant friends and exposed enemies. They must defend the poisonous weapons that the enemies are using to destroy the belief in the Mahdi. They must be active in their time and must know the language of their age. They must be knowledgeable about the time period that they are living in, they must observe the waves of corruption (fitna) and must contemplate solutions to them. Certainly, this person will also act in accordance with principles and correct methodology, as all religious personalities did throughout history. The Imam will come to strengthen human will and freedom. Through establishing the freewill that Allah has granted mankind, he will enable them to responsibly choose the correct path. The society of the return must be able to accept obedience to the divine law and must act in congruence with the divine will and divine promises. This obedience, desire, and potential must be firm in order to solidify Imam Mahdī's just government; in order to be able to have it continue for a lengthy period of time:

و تمتّعه فيها طويلاً

"And cause him to live in it for a long time."

In this regard, Imam Mahdī ('a) ordered that people refer to the jurist about new events.² Imam Mahdī ('a) will diligently

The Imam has said:

من نام عن عدوه أنبهته [نبهته] المكايد

Gharrar al-Ḥakam, p.334; 'Alī bin Muḥammad Laythī Wāsiṭī, 'Uyūn al-Ḥakam wa al-Mawā'iz, p.441.

² The Imam said:

أمًّا الْحَوَادِثُ الْوَاقِعَةُ فَارْجِمُوا فِيهَا إِلَى رُواةِ حَدِيثَنَا فَإِنَّهُمْ حُجَّتِي عَلَيْكُمْ وَ آنا حُجَّةُ اللَّهِ

[&]quot;Our master, Imam Mahdī (a) [spoke about the duties of the Shia during the occultation]. He said: 'As for the events which will occur,

act in accordance to these divine and humane responsibilities. The truth will be completely victorious due to the deep and responsible understanding that the human intellect will have during that age. The majority of people will obey the Imam and have a positive outlook on the situation due to their understanding of revelation, the words of the infallibles, and rational foresight. The ideal society will thus be formed.

وَعَدَ ٱللَّهُ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مِنكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا ٱلصَّلِحَتِ
لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي ٱلْأَرْضِ كَمَا ٱسْتَخْلَفَ ٱلَّذِينَ
مِن قَبْلِهِمْ وَلَيُمَكِنَنَ هَمُمْ دِينَهُمُ ٱلَّذِيك ٱرْتَضَىٰ هَمُمْ
وَلَيُبَدِّلَنَّهُم مِّنُ بَعْدِ خَوْفِهِمْ أُمْنَا ۚ يَعْبُدُونَنِي لَا
يُشْرِكُونَ بِي شَيْكًا

"Allah has promised those of you who have faith and do righteous deeds that He will surely make them successors in the earth, just as He made

turn to the narrators of our traditions, because they are my proof to you, while I am the proof of Allah to them." Iḥtjāj, v.2, p.469; Shaykh Ṭūsī, Al-Ghaybah, p.290; Kashf al-Ghummah, v.2, p.531; Kamāl al-Dīn, v.2, p.483; Wasā'il al-Shia, v.27, p.140; Biḥār al-Anwār, v.53, p.181; He also said:

"It is incumbent upon the layman to perform taqlīd to the jurist who guards his soul, protects his religion, opposes his carnal desires, and obeys the commands of his master." The principle source for this tradition is: Taſsīr Mansūb bih Imām 'Askarī (a), p.300. It is also found in books of traditions and jurisprudence, such as Iḥtijāj, v.2, p.458; Wasā'il al-Shia, v.27, p.131; Bihār al-Anwār, v.2, p.88; Al-Burhān fī Taſsīr al-Qurān, v.1, p.257; Taſsīr Kinz al-Daqā'iq, v.2, p.46; Taḥrīr al-Wasīlah, v.1, p.5 (and all of the books of Islamic jurisprudence and laws in the section of taqlīd).

those who were before them successors, and He will surely establish for them their religion which He has approved for them, and that He will surely change their state to security after their fear, while they worship Me, not ascribing any partners to Me..."

Therefore, one must try to find the method and strategy of forming this will and inserting it into the people, societies, and governments. One must find the method of increasing potentials for the advent; must connect them with divine sunnahs and promises in order for them to continue.

Note: The term *taw* in Arabic is an infinitive. It means desire, obedience, volunteering, and forbearance coupled with desire. Those who are awaiting read the following line in the supplication of *Faraj*:

حَتَّى تُسْكِنَهُ أَرْضَكَ طَوْعاً و تُمتَّعُهَ فيها طويلاً

"Until you make him live one the earth, in obedience, and cause him to live in it for a long time."

In this line they announce their obedience and seek the Imam's return; seek the true sunrise. This supplication points to the fact that the Imam will return in order to obey the divine command and implement the divine will. Therefore, a person who is awaiting must supplicate in the following manner: "Lord, bring the Imam to live in Your earth while he obeys you and implements your commands."

Some commentators of the Qur'an believe that the term taw' means free choice, true desire as opposed to being forced. In this case, there would still be two possibilities. One would state: "Lord, bring the Imam to live in Your earth while he sincerely surrenders to your desire." The second possibility

Qurăn, 24:55.

would be: "Lord, bring the Imam to live in Your earth as Your will denotes this."

Another understanding is that the Shia who are living during the occultation are thirsty for his return. They are preparing themselves spiritually, physically, and with the necessary tools out of love for him. They are preparing themselves for Sāhib al-Amr's ('a) return. Those who are awaiting obtain the qualities of those who are longing; of those who are deserving followers. In their supplications, they consider this social preparation as the foundation of the formation of the divine will regarding his return. From another angle, intellectual, physiological, and psychological opinions have confirmed that longing and desire is the principle cause behind human action. One must have an uninterrupted desire in order to continue his movement. His desire and motivation must be the source of his knowledge understanding. Islamic teachings show understanding, presence of the heart, and the intention of seeking proximity with the divine are conditions for the actualization of worship and divine duties.

Awaiting the return, in accordance with many traditions of the infallibles, is considered to be the most important form of worship. It is not an exception to this rule. One will not decide to implement an action until he is aware of it and then is motivated through his awareness. He would not patiently perform the action until his desire is completed. Therefore, he must be heavily motivated and

This subject has been mentioned in many books of traditions, such as: عن الْبَاقِر عَنْ آبَانِهِ قَالَ قال رَسُولُ اللَّهِ: وَالْفَضَلُ الْعِبَادَةِ الْبَطَارُ الْفَرَجِ

Imam Bāqir (a), narrates from his fathers (a), who narrate from the Messenger of Allah (s), who said: "The best form of worship is awaiting the faraj." Kamāl al-Dīn, v.1, p.287; Biḥār al-Anwār, v.52, p.125; Irshād, v.1, p.302; Tuḥuf al-'Uqūl, v.201; Gharrar al-Ḥakam, p.280.

have presence of heart in order to solidify his desire.

Islam states that social desire and longing is an approach which is different than carnal desires and involuntary actions. Allah has created desire and longing in order to form the voluntary actions of one who has understanding and who protects his divine disposition (fitrah). This longing prepares the formation of a righteous, innovative, just, knowledgeable, free, anti-oppressive, and compassionate society. The patience, resistance, struggle, and selflessness that one shows on the path of justice, ethics, values, or discovering reality depict the existence of a motivated divine disposition. Likewise, worship, love of beauty, desire to perform righteous deeds, and the desire to live a sensational human life also depict the existence of a motivated divine disposition. The desire to perform these amazing actions leads man to the return. Sufficient preparation in learning the methods of obedience, guided motivation on the path of securing divine satisfaction, and constant movement along the path of human perfection and the perfect society is considered immensely important in Islam. Therefore, the question that this research is trying to answer is: what is the method of creating, strengthening, and manifesting this sense of longing in the Islamic society? What hidden source does the creation of this sense of longing have to stem from?

The Necessity and Importance of this Research

The contemporary world seeks faith, ethics, and justice. Although democracy differs throughout the world, human

¹ Qurān, Nahj al-Faṣāḥah, Nahj al-Balāghah, Saḥīſah Sajjādīyah, the biographies of the Noble Messenger (s) and his pure and infallible family, and the supplications of the infallibles are all filled with the culture of self-purification, spiritual training, spiritual teaching, and the philosophy behind Islamic ethics.

rights and the seeking of human rights are growing in relation to the expansion of civilizations and an increase of awareness in human societies. All societies are seeking definitions of rights and just powers. Oppression has been defined in opposition to rights. Political justice is considered a right which is sought after. The ideal society, the utopia of all positive schools of thought and justice-seeking religious ideologies, search for these issues on a global scale.

According to this, the international community would not be a formed on geographical lines, but rather would become a suitable ground for the formation of an awaiting society. This society would have to have the sense of longing and corresponding characteristics which would secure spirituality, ethics, freedom, intellectualism, and justice. This would then create the desire of the formation of a just society which would become a role model for the rest of the world. It would be an exemplary base which would enable the possibility of true balance between the cultures of justiceseeking and ethics on the world scale. It would be as a universal which is connected to each other. It must be considered that a connected universal would be a collective body in unison and would not mean identical collections. It would be a society which would be able to secure the rights of all human beings through this unison while considering the multiplicity that exists in the world. Naturally, the desired political system of such a society would have to have the ability to secure the political and social rights of the human society while considering the multiplicity of the world. Therefore, the ideal society of the world must be congruent with the acceptable standards and motivation of the public in all fields. It cannot be a role model for a minority which could only be correlated with one group, one society, or the followers of one religion. Rather, it must a role model which

would include the desires of the divine disposition (fitrah) and the sense of seeking Allah. Allah has promised that if this is the case, it would encompass the entire globe.

There is no doubt that the contemporary role models in the materialistic world secure human ethics, justice, and democracy, at best, on a limited scale and in specific cases. They are only relatively affective. At the same time, they do not have the ability to become worldwide; to include all societies. The supporters of these role models do not usually benefit from the interests of the majority, they are not usually congruent with the divine sunnah, and they do not usually benefit from perfect human beings. Therefore, awaiting for the establishment of a just government in the international community depends upon the acceptance and longing for a righteous leader coupled by complete support of him, in addition to creating the specific and social conditions for his advent. In accordance to the sect, this depends on the existence of followers who are believers, wise, loyal, righteous, selfless, revolutionary, committed, forbearing, authentic, principled, disciplined, sincere, sympathetic, prepared, and tireless. Examples of such followers can be seen amongst the companions of the Messenger of Allah (s), the companions of the Commander of the Faithful ('a), the companions of Imam Husayn ('a), and in the contemporary era, the martyrs of the Imposed War or the members of the Iranian paramilitary 'Mobilization of the Oppressed' Therefore, it must be understood how to secure social desires. The society must be architected around the most important axis of paying the groundwork for the return so that the Islamic Republic of Iran would become the principle and suitable base for the return. The possibility of achieving lofty goals would be secured under the goal of forming an awaiting society.

The Objective of the Research

If one wants to review the theory of obedience during the presence of the Imam he would have to express it in the framework of divine sunnahs. There is no doubt that the world is in need of a future holding an ethical, just, and anti-oppressive leader. This has been emphasized in all religions. The ideology of longing for the formation of this future takes refuge in awaiting the return of the Ḥujjah ('a). In opposition to some divine sunnahs which are predestined, certain, and outside of the human will, the groundwork for the formation of this sunnah is found in the divine will, but, according to the school of awaiting, it is not outside of the human will either.

The Language of Research

All schools of thought in psychology consider it necessary to pay attention to achieving one's objectives through his desires, limitations, and goals. They must answer needs such as peace. hope, satisfaction, danger, encouragement, blossoming, loyalty, and seeking perfection. The most prominent contemporary schools of thought in psychology and the most prominent contemporary psychologists rely completely upon religious methods and the divine disposition (fitrah) in order to provide answers for and secure these needs. Western psychologists of the previous century used different methods to answer human needs and actualize their psychological desires. Sigmund Freud considered absolute pleasure seeking (psychosexual tendencies) to be the bases of general encouragement, while Alfred Adler considered it to be through seeking social power. Victoria Frankel considered it to be through seeking a collective meaning. But, some psychologists considered their tactics to be authoritative while being influenced by various religions.

The most prominent philosophers of the twentieth century

tried to provide answers to questions about social responsibility and participation. They provided strategies in this field. Many of them had an atheistic opinion about social longing. Sartre considered life to be based on childish enthusiasm. He did not believe in the life of the hereafter and considered death to be the end of the road. He believed that life just continues to repeat itself. He had a negative and contentious opinion about God and the world. He believed that God limited man's existence. Since he could not correlate the existence of God with human freewill, he put God aside in order to state that man has complete freedom; that man is not limited. He thought that the existence of God would take away from man's freewill and freedom.

But, prominent contemporary Islamic professors of ethics and philosophy, such as Ayatollah Mishkīnī, 'Allāmah Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabā'ī, Ayatollah Shahīd Muṭahharī, 'Allāmah Muḥammad Taqī Ja'farī, and 'Allāmah Jawādī Amulī, have strived to understand and train man's divine disposition (fiṭrah). They have introduced the divine disposition as the cure for mankind's pains, as an answer to human needs, as a means to actualize desires and their psychological longing. Imam Khumaynī (r) proved through practice during the Islamic revolution that the pure Islamic faith can cure social pains and answer human needs. Today, the affects of this ideology has influenced al other ideologies of the world.

One of the loftiest ideals of the Abrahamic faiths is to aid human growth and perfection. The prophets were sent to allow human potentials to blossom. The prophets enlivened people through revelation, through honouring human nobility, and through officially recognizing all dimensions of the human existence. Can the desire of the Mahdī

¹ Refer to the discussions of 'Allāmah Ja'farī and Jean-Paul Sartre; Shahīd Hāshimīnejād, Manāzirah-i Duktur wa Pīr.

psychologically provide an answer for man's responsible, aware, and purposeful movements?

In the contemporary world geographical borders, language, race, history, and other agreed upon items amongst nations, pleasures, and material profit are considered extremely important. They affect human feelings, compassion, and thought to such an extent that many pivotal human concepts which would save mankind from the yokes of oppression; which would lead man to freedom, justice, and ethics have lost their authority. Whereas, in the society which is awaiting its saviour, all factors behind material and racial superiority will become tacky amongst the Authority of the Time and his chosen followers. All effort will be made to replace declining factors, such as nationalism, wealth, beauty, and social stature with items such as faith, righteous deeds, and the station of proximity. In this society, the only criterion would be a desire for the Mahdī. People will try to make themselves closer to his ideals. People will stand out due to this. Therefore, the language of obedience and the desire of the Mahdī have been architected in accordance to a strategy which is to be implemented before the return. There are three principle guidelines in this strategy:

- 1. One must be completely realistic. He cannot disregard environmental, psychological, and social realities.
- 2. The path must be presented. This means that the path of the awaiting society to achieve this desire for the return must be clear.
- 3. The final and intermediate goals must be specified for the obedient society. The goals must be prioritized.

The government which is paving the return must have the necessary preparation and ability for implementation and for achieving the necessary results. Therefore, the body which paves the groundwork must insert three functions into the individual and society:

1. Reforming oneself and preparation for servitude.

- 2. Hope for the future and the actualization of the divine will.
- 3. Elating the environment of awaiting and trying to increase it.

A person who is awaiting is similar to a mother who is awaiting the birth of her child. She is always careful of her child's health, the food she takes in, and actions she performs. She constantly consults with doctors and people older than herself. She keeps her house clean and recognizes what she will need. Then, she counts the moments until the birth. The closer that the date of birth comes the more she does. Despite the severity of her difficulties she gains hope and becomes happier the closer it becomes. A person who is awaiting also tries to develop a relationship between his soul and the Imam. He has internal happiness due to the hope that he has of a good future. He does not allow himself to feel hopeless. The desire for the Mahdi before his return encourages one to purify his soul. He looks at Imam Mahdī ('a) and the ideal society with love. This is in opposition to Plato's utopia which was merely a theory; an imaginative ideal in which there was no motivation to actualize. The holiness of it was nonexistent. But, Mahdism is considered holy by its followers. It is motivating. It pushes the believers in the direction of actualizing it. The followers consider it a certainty. The strategy of servitude during the occultation is to provide the means to grow, coupled with formation. Therefore, traditions consider serving those who are awaiting the return to be the best action. An awaiting servant always tries to reach his desired conditions. He is never without purpose. Rather, before the return he has internal satisfaction, happiness, and peace. He has hope of a better life and bears difficulty in order to further the objectives of the return.

Many contemporary psychologists believe that spirituality and religious beliefs cause human beings to be more patient when afflicted with adversity. Religious objectives and prospects

of human life create eternal movements in human beings. Therefore, the correction of the relationship that man has with religion and spirituality elates the human soul. It makes him think about the future; about the hereafter. He is saved from a life of unimportance and bitterness. His life takes on meaning and is transformed into happiness through the pearl of faith. He would never allow his life to be wasted. The ideology of awaiting, through a correct belief about the existence of the saviour, through recognition of the Imam, through recognition of the victorious return, and through recognition of the teachings of the Ahl al-Bayt, provides motivation much stronger than an intellectual or psychological outlook. Man's soul grows; man's soul becomes perfected. It refreshes one's life and people such as Imam Khumaynī (r) and his followers are given to the world as presents.

The language of religious desire as motivation, man's innate desires and holiness, the formation of an awaiting society along with examining what the language of obedience states and the desire of awaiting in the verses of the Qur'ān, show that the return is conditioned upon preparing the groundwork. Man must seek this from Allah. Allah has said: "...and I have approved Islam as your religion..."

Religious belief states that Imam Mahdī's message (the message of a man who is a perfect human being, a perfect role model for human beings, and the leader of the ideal human society) is considered to be an actual role model. It expresses that which has happened and that which is possible. It enlivens

رَّضِيتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلاَمَ دِيناً

Another verse states:

دِينَهُمُ الَّذِي ارْتَضَى لَهُ

Qurān, 5:3, the Arabic is as follows:

[&]quot;...their religion which He has approved for them..." Quran, 24:55.

the individual and the society. They increase the separation from the present conditions and the desired conditions. The language of longing is formed only along this path. The longing is accompanied with an understanding of the conditions and serving him with love in order to actualize his holy objectives. It entails a meaning of action and responsibility. In this arena, any action that is performed by the one who is longing; any effort that he puts forth in trying to implement justice and provide general rights to the people; any form of preventing others from committing negative acts, would be considered an act of awaiting. It would be a step towards the desired conditions. These actions would be permanent and would manifest themselves in the age of the return. Therefore, it is said: "A member of the creation that is awaiting the reformer (muslah) must be righteous (sālih)."

An individual or society that takes a step along this path has definitely prepared himself to serve and obey the saviour.

هَلْ إِلَيْكَ بَا ابْنَ أَحْمَدَ سَبِيلٌ فَتُلْفَى

Iqbāl al-A'māl, p.298; Bihār al-Anwār, v.99, p.108, this phrase is seen in Zīyārah Al Yāsīn, Zīyārah Hadrat Ṣāḥib al-Zamān (a), Zīyārah Jāmi'ah, and the Supplication of Nudbah.

The supplication states:

وتمتّعه فيها طويلاً

"and cause him to live in it for a long time." Kāfī, v.4, p.162; Al-Balad al-Amīn, pgs.145, 203, and 359; Falāḥ al-Sā'il, p.46; Miṣbāḥ, pgs.146 and 586; Shaykh Ṭūsī, Miṣbāḥ al-Mulahjad, p.630; Biḥār al-Anwār, v.83, p.354; Mustadrak al-Wasā'il, v.7, p.483, this is a phrase used in the Supplication of Faraj which is narrated from Imam Ṣādiq (a) and Imam 'Askarī (a).

Khurshīd-i Maghrib, p.333; it must be stated that this phrase was not used in any tradition of the prominent religious figures. Its origin needs to be examined. Those who are righteous and have correct beliefs are truly awaiting the reformer in opposition to those who claim to be

awaiting. The majority of traditions do mention this issue.

¹ A tradition states:

He has understood that it is his responsibility to determine the time of the return and he is committed to it.

It must be accepted that movement towards that level of responsibility and commitment must start from a mixture of understanding the objective, encouragement, obedience, and allowing oneself to melt in guardianship (wilāyah). The start of the movement must have begun with faith and with a commitment to secure divine satisfaction. It must have been heartfelt. In this case it can be said that he longs to experience the return and the presence of the Imam. Those who are responsible, who understand the conditions, who recognize the criterion and the objectives of the saviour of humanity, try to actualize those objectives. The individual or the society constantly connects himself to Imam Mahdī's ('a) objectives in order to symbolize the fact that he is awaiting. Therefore, they must perform the best actions in order to satisfy him. Hence, the one who is awaiting is not concerned with the date of return; rather he performs positive actions and betters the society in order to take a step closer to the return. He does this so Allah continues to connect him to perfect justice coupled with perfect human ethics. A government which is paving the groundwork must take on the responsibility of preparation with the intention of movement, action, and actualizing these ideals. It must consider itself at the service of this concern; it must be committed. The preparation of the government and the society must have the intention of securing his satisfaction and the satisfaction of Allah.

How would the generation of awaiters and believers in the Mahdī await without the longing for Mahdism? It seems as if there is a cause and effect relationship between the longing for Mahdism and the training of a generation of awaiters. The

¹ Shahīd Ayatollah Ṣadr: "Melt into Imam Khumaynī just as he has melted into Islam."

reforming generation; those who await for and believe in Imam Mahdī ('a) are the affects of an efficient system of longing.

Foundational Strategies in the Development of an Eager Society

The most important objectives for the preparatory order are perfection seeking, a combined effort for the encouragement of the society that anticipates, in the direction of the subsequent objectives:

- 1. The acceptance and adherence to a culture of earnest effort, creative human development with attention to the processes that arise from faith in God, the precepts of Islam, the teachings of divine books—the Qur'an in particular—and the progressive and pure Islamic school of Muhammad (s).
- 2. A god seeking culture accompanied with combating satanic forces in order to correct political social functions in a human society (monotheism and resisting tyrannical powers).
- 3. To design, exposit and establish strategic models to facilitate ease in comprehension and application of the school of the promised saviour, justice seeking, and eagerness in establishing justice throughout the world.
- 4. To be attentive and supervise the establishment of think tanks that help the development of moral virtues, and acceptance of social liability in the society to eradicate moral vices from their roots from the family environment and the public arena.
- 5. To be attentive to the development of the notion of human dignity through comprehension of the structure, the concomitants of acquiring beneficial knowledge, and intellectual growth.
- 6. Preparing the necessary cultural fields in saving the people from the claws of the dominating and perverted

powers. This should be accomplished by means of expanding media operations, and manifesting a culture of justice seeking and resisting oppression.

7. Theory development and establishment of think tanks accompanied with the propagation of the notion and culture of social justice and divinely pivoted moral dispositions in the societies.

8. To culturally and spiritually support deprived nations in understanding the message of the promised Mahdī ('a) and to propagate avidity with regards to Mahdism in acquiring the desired dispositional perfections at the individual level and that of the society.

9. To develop exemplar models and to strengthen and propagate a reformed society, and resists oppression and the tyrannical powers.

10. To help establish and develop a people's governments, however this should be accomplished within the bounds of Islamic precepts.

11. To endeavour in forming revolutionary movements that fight against discrimination, monopolies, and enforced racial systems.

12. To endeavour in the formation of world movements that fight against hunger, poverty, illnesses, and imprisonment of deprived people in all the corners of the world.

If we wish to attain these lofty and holy objectives, it is essential that each individual who wishes for these objectives to materialize from among anticipating the awaited saviour ('a), must rectify his own spiritual dispositions, grab a hold of these lofty objectives and occupy himself in reforming his self. If this is accomplished, the eager society shall take its true

¹ This is to be done by taking the prophets ('a), and awlīyah and the paths of life they had chosen as a model, particularly Prophet Jesus ('a), Prophet Muhammad (s), and Imam Ali ('a).

form and shall become firmly inclined to assist the government of the promised Mahdī ('a).

These are the characteristics that grant an anticipating society distinction over others. These characteristics are of two categories. On one hand it requires characteristics like perfection seeking, a strong firm inclination towards the revolution to come, to be spiritually pivoted, and moral growth, whereas on the other hand it requires, a sense of duty, commitment, discipline and planning. The latter are the responsibility of the preparatory order that is assigned the duty of materializing the conditions for the government to come.

Assessed Strategies in Affixing Eagerness in the Society and the Acceptance of Commitment in a Society that Anticipates [the advent]

A society that anticipates is in pursuit of developing human salvation, justice, and a development that is substantiated by a divine promise. Such a society is invaluable. It endeavours to distance itself from oppression and aggression, and support and honour the oppressed. With its efforts it hopes to eradicate the distress and insecurity that has encompassed the world. The firm inclination and avidity of the anticipators should be assessed and guided. The support and amplification of eagerness in the preparatory order should be established on the subsequent principles:

1. To observe the principles and mannerisms of a people's rule, and a wilāyah pivoted nature, the head of which is the jurist in whom all the necessary conditions have materialized, the mujtahid, administrator and prudent Supreme leader. Such an elevated position demands a pious god-seeking individual who has driven away his lowly desires, and has deemed obedience to the Imam of

our time ('a) obligatory. Such a person gathers the virtuous and sincere companions of the Imam ('a) around this school of thought and strategy.

- 2. To prevent distortions and moral decline from manifesting, and establish the invalidity and hollowness of atheistic ideologies. It is essential that great attention be paid to the manifestation of such ideologies in the society. Hypocrisy and potential intellectual infiltration of the notion of Mahdism must be distanced from it. Otherwise these can be the cause of wars, corruption, oppression and sectarianism. The reality of this era is that humanity seeks divine ideals and perfection. We should not let deceitful and hollow ideologies infiltrate these ideals.
- 3. An essential priority of an eager anticipating society is moral and social development, perfection of human virtues and accepting commitment in the field of administration and development. This is because this eagerness should manifest itself in a struggle against the appearance of moral and social decay, and legal measures against it. A person who wishes to serve Imam Mahdī ('a) and his elevated objectives must by all means restrain and distance himself from moral impurities such as ostentation, short weighing, deceit, greed, transgression etc. He should invite people to good and forbid them from evil in all aspects of social life.
- 4. A firm inclination towards Mahdism in an anticipating society should observe its crystallization in the preparatory order that is in movement towards the advent. The structure and mold the preparatory order should be an example of the society and order that is to come with the promised Mahdī ('a). Ayatullah Mahdavi Kenī has said the following in this regards, "The officials of this government must act in a manner that Imam Mahdī ('a) accepts them [for the continuation of his work] upon his return. They

should not behave in a manner that the Imam ('a) removes them from their position upon his return."

- 5. Legislation is in the hands of the parliament of the preparatory order. It must ensure that the laws it legislates are divinely pivoted (based on the Qur'ān and the traditions of the infallibles). It should deem divine will and guardianship capable of the materialization, success and management of the world's affairs. It must be firm with regards to this affair and distance itself from any form of doubt.
- 6. The potentials an anticipating society follows the assessment and control of an active and reliable eagerness of the advent. The eagerness of those who anticipate causes them to offer all their capabilities at its service. God has also promised that if they utilize their potential in this path, He will grant them success.
- 7. The only light of salvation for fleeing from darkness, hypocritical whispers, and the schools of infidelity, is the pure school of the Prophet Muhammad (s). An eager society can only present itself by holding onto the lofty precepts the pure form of Islam has to offer. Reliance on the foundational teachings the Islamic Revolution can help spread the eagerness of the advent.
- 8. If the society wishes to achieve success with regards to the advent, it is necessary for them to elevate their management skills, and develop structural and human resources. The government must endeavour till it provides growth to the different human dimensions in the fields of science, technology, industry, ideology, and values. It should have a designed strategic plan for every one of these fields.

¹ Narrated by Dr. Ahmedinijad from Ayatullah Mahdavi Kenī in the third international exhibition of the doctrine of Mahdīsm in 2007.

9. It is necessary for us to seek divine pleasure in this endeavour, and refrain from selfishness, and position seeking. It is also essential to develop structure, and a culture of inclination towards the advent. If this is materialized, God has given us glad tidings that such a society, such a team shall most definitely be supported by Him, regardless of the era of place.

With this approach, an anticipating society shall be able to build friendly relationships based on wilāyah with nations of the world, based its essential benevolence and humanly mannerism. It will be able to establish an international model that surpasses any form of national boundaries or time. It will be able to utilize all the potential energies available throughout the world so that it may employ them in a united effort to fight against the oppression, poverty, corruption and discrimination that exists in the world today.

We beseech God to grant continuity, honour, and firmness to the Islamic Republic of Iran under the prudent guidance of the deputy of the Imam of our era ('a), his eminence Ayatullah Khamenei. God willing, his government shall be the very government that is to materialize the conditions for the Imam's ('a) advent. May God make his honourable being a source of guidance to God's remainder on earth!

¹ This is a reference to the verse: If you help God, God will most certainly help you. 47:7.



THE STRATEGY OF PROSPICIENCE IN THE DOCTRINE OF MAHDISM

Introduction

With its magnificent victory against the modern world, the Islamic Revolution accompanied humanity to acquire a virtuous life that corresponds with divine ideals. The greatest victory of this grand revolution was its re-establishment of religious values in the social arena. A futuristic outlook is dependent on historical self-awareness. From the moment man has acquired awareness of his historical being, and the historical documentation of being, he has been able to foresee various future events, in particular natural phenomenon, social and political events. In this manner, this methodological and metaphysical forecasting will explain the myths present throughout the world pertaining to different occurrences throughout different eras. The roles of meta-historical personalities will be crystallized, while the futurist outlook of each nation would be systemized in such a manner. What has been understood from this is that if such foresightedness has a reality, then its subject (i.e. the future), too exists and has a reality whose materialization is certain. It is an essential

opportunity to produce such a future that should not be lost. The notions of free will and predestination should be propounded in a moderate manner, particularly with regards to the future. This is the approach the Qur'an has taken:

Indeed Allah does not change a people's lot, unless they change what is in their souls. (13:11)

This section of the book intends to elaborate on the human role in developing the atmosphere of the advent, and its share in establishing the grounds required for it. We shall however, leave the discussion of the historical philosophy of a futuristic outlook to another discussion. We previously said that a free human deems futuristic outlook and futurism as concomitants of one another. A futuristic outlook is by no means to prophesize future events for an active form of preparation for events that shall definitely materialize.

If we analyze the holy books of various divine religions, we shall see that they refer to a reformer that is to arise in the end of times. The reformer will transform a world full of oppression and injustice into a world of peace and justice. In the Zanbūr of David, it is said: "He shall judge the nations with justice". The Old Testament has said: "Await him, though he delays, for his appearance is a thing ordained". The New Testament says: "You shall see the son of Adam who shall come forth in power and grandeur". Similar statements are also present in the holy books of Hindus. Here is a citation:

Kālkī is the tenth form of Vishnu. He shall come at the end of the time of metal. He shall come to you upon a white horse with his shining sword unsheathed. When he appears, he shall eradicate the evil doers in their entirety.

The following said in the holy book Māyūneh: "Khird Shahr İzd shall appear in the end of times, and shall fill the earth with

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justice". Furthermore, in the book of the Zoroastrian is it said: "Sushiyānat shall make religion prevalent throughout the world".

Though it is true that the specifics pertaining to the reformer differ in all the religions of the world and that we may not able to reach common grounds regarding them, however, what is present in all of them is the existence of a certain reality that shall be actualized in the future. With this common certain reality we can support and collaborate efforts in building strategical movements and activating those anticipating a reform of justice throughout the world.

Certain approaches exist in Islam that deals with the advent in particular. They elaborate on characteristics and instructions for the anticipators. They encourage those anticipating, to acquire the capabilities and principles required for the advent. Imam Kāzim ('a) has said: "It is two hundred years the Shī'a are being trained by means of their hope of relief".

Training and preparation for the advent of the Imam ('a) is not separate from the need of self-building, reformation of the soul, and internal purification. With this approach, they can utilize the aforementioned by guiding them within the boundaries of the strategic plan, accompanied with a lofty management system. This has been alluded to in other traditions. Imam Sādiq ('a) explicitly refers to it in a tradition saying:

Whoever is desirous to be among the companions of our Qā'im should anticipate the advent. He should act with piety and virtuous dispositions. Such a person is truly in the state of anticipation. If he dies [in such a state], and our Qā'im rises after his death, he shall have the reward of one who witnessed him. So be serious in your affair and anticipate. Felicitations be upon you, O company that is encompassed by God's mercy!

¹ Kitāb al-Ghaybah Nu'mānī, page 200; Biḥār al-Anwār, volume 52, page 140.

In his comprehensive commentary, Ayatullah Jawādī Āmūlī says:

اللهم عرفني حجتك فانك ان لم تعرفني حجتك ضللت عن ديني

O God, [I beseech You] to grant me gnosis of Your authority, for if You do not grant me gnosis of Your authority, I would certainly be misled from my religion.

A part of this supplication is a reference to the necessity of acquiring gnosis of God's authority on earth. There is a serious rational and philosophical analysis hidden in this supplication that separates it from other supplications. Its distinction exists so that it does not once again take the believers from Ghadīr to Saqīfah and drives them away from the dry democracy of the West, to a religious democracy. In this phrase, the authority of God is a reference to God's caliph who is the manifestation of His greatest name. Both divine legislation and the affairs of creation are in his hands with God's will. Fatimah's ('a) argument when attempting to restore the right of caliphate and wilāyah [to its rightful owner] was the following:

أَفَحُكُمْ ٱلْجَاهِلِيَّةِ يَبْغُونَ وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ مِنَ اللَّهِ حُكْمًا لِقَوْم يُوقِئُونَ

Do they seek the judgment [of pagan] ignorance? But who is better than Allah in judgment for a people who have certainty?

Therefore if a person does not know [have gnosis] the imam of his era, he shall certainly not be among those anticipating his advent. His life shall be a pagan life of ignorance, and so shall his death. Today the deputation of this wilāyah possesses great importance.

Imam Khumaynī (r) deemed the responsibility of the Iranian

¹ Al-Kāfī, volume 1, page 337 and 342; Al-Balad al-Amīn, page 306; Jamāl al-Usbū', page 520; Shaykh Ṭūsī al-Ghaybah, page 333; Nu'mānī al-Ghaybay, page 166; Kamāl al-Dīn, volume 2, page 512; Miṣbāḥ al-Mujtahid, page 411.

nation with regards to the Imam of the time ('a) as follows, "We are all in anticipation of the relief. We must all serve this cause, for the anticipation of the relief is the strength of Islam".

This statement is perhaps the most foundational statement with regards to the compilation of the doctrine of Mahdism during the era of his deputy, the Supreme Leader Ayatullah Khamenei. The basis of this statement is the two terms used in it, namely, the service, and anticipation. This notion is an active notion that is comprises of hope, patience, vigorous efforts, gathering strength, and to achieving readiness throughout the world. This is in a manner that his legitimate deputy doms service of the anticipation other than service that is unintrotood by the people.

If the spirit of serving the anticipation rules the people in both the theoretical and practical arenas, it seems that they will all the activities pertaining to serving the anticipation will acquire a form of sanctity. This will bring certain forms of blessings to the movement. If the future plans take the lead of the movement, not only will it guarantee the nation's material and spiritual needs, but will further grant it greater intensity and strength.

Our nation should follow up these strategic plans based on a futuristic insight. This should be accomplished in two stages. The first of these deals with the governmental officials and management, followed by the people. Such a culture, transformation is direly needed in the intellectual development and planning stage in both practical and theoretical arenas. Imam Sādiq ('a) has said:

و لو ادركته لخدمته ايام حياتي

If I were alive during his time, I spend my entire life in his service.²

Saḥīfat al-Nūr, volume 8, page 374.

² Nu'mānī al-Ghaybah, page 245; Bihār al-Anwār, volume 1, page 147.

An Exposition of an Issue

The end of times is one of the horizons from the many horizons of time. Throughout history, it has attracted a lot of attention with regards to human destiny. Those who are inattentive towards the end of times, see the present as a multiple passing events before themselves. This is while they ask themselves what things will be like, and what events will take place when the promised saviour appears. The dire importance of these issues has attracted a number of schools of thoughts to itself in a manner that its presence can be observed in one way or the other in all divine ideologies. A vast number of these schools have deemed their success in incorporating the objectives of the promised saviour as part of their own. With this regards, the religious and non-religious schools of thought have followed this approach with the objective of forming a dynamical faith within the boundaries of the notion of the end of times.

Another point is the possibility of reviving a dignified past full of comfort, ease and security. If we managed to establish such a grand civilization in the past, why should we not able to reproduce such an atmosphere? What is the role of this past civilization in the future of humanity?

Without a doubt, the appearance of the final saviour of humanity in the end of times shall be a unique event that humanity would not have seen before. Along with its signs, this grand revolution has a number of conditions. Thus the possibility of their cognition and helping their materialization is extremely important. What are the conditions of this advent going to be like?

Based on the hypothesis in the discussion of Mahdism, if the cultural system is accompanied with a correct doctrine, and logic, it can form an assured future. It shall be able to remove the obstacles that lie in its path and be able to utilize the

opportunities available to establish a culture within the boundaries of the divine promise. The issue that the Shī'a and the companions of the promised saviour cannot change the past is manifested in the movement towards the idea, and in parallel or in opposition outlook of the Mahdism school. This begs the question; can they change the future and be effective in its formation with a system of planning and forecasting the transitions of events?¹

A futuristic outlook can help produce development. Contrary to a historicist outlook, which is passive, there a futuristic outlook can produce important output. A futuristic outlook is founded on human free will regarding which God has taken a pledge, so man can reflect over his possible role in the future and actualize it. If a nation with a civilization wishes to be the primary player in the future with this procedure, it must know its strength, and how know its level of cognizance of the possible scenarios [it may fall into] along with knowledge of its competitors.

It is evident that all the conditions of the struggles of the future are not in our hands. However, we should acquire all the necessary capabilities and roles that are proportional to our divine obligations at the time of the advent. We must analyze our provisions for the advent and whether a religious strength and approach, and the current culture can help us in the future or not? Is out strength before the tyrannical rivals able to convince the followers that they are able to live in the future? In which of the conditions of the advent will the future be secured and materialized?

The Necessity of Research

There are two currents and historical movements that have

¹ Muhammad Mazāhirī, Imkān-e-ṭūl 'umr ta Bīnihāyat, page 85.

manifested themselves throughout time. The first of them is the blessed movement that works towards reform and spirituality through the formation of systems that seek to establish justice and provide services [to the people]. The second of them is the evil movement that is based on the carnal desires and cruelty. The first movement calls humanity to felicity, security, and justice, whereas the second calls to materialism, Satan and evil.

The growth of the future is also dependent on the clash of these movements with one another. As time progresses, the clash between these two intensifies. The first movement, overlooks the future in an intellectual, profound manner and is revolutionary in its true meaning. It endeavours to transform the historical state and the current state into the promised future (also referred to as the Day of the World (yawm al-Dunya), or the Day of Retribution (yawm al-Dīn)).

In Islam, Mahdism means hope in a bright future, based on which, a divine man shall arise and will actualize that which the people were hoping a perfect actualization of. This outlook endeavours to help the society develop values and virtues in order to render it a society with objectives, and values. This is because:

- 1. Being attentive to the future holds a crucial position because the future and the destination are unknown
- 2. To specify the hypothesized and desires state of the future is the first real step in the hope of actualizing strategies. It is necessary to develop fitting procedures for the research strategies so that the present human needs are discovered so that the movement is transformed from the current state to the desired state.

In giving due importance to the futuristic outlook of the doctrine of Mahdism, a new and wide vista that is comprised

¹ Sulaymān Khudamurād, Bāzgasht be Dunya dar Pāyān Tārīkh, page 151.

of all the various aspects of human society and life opens up. In other words, foresight and a futuristic outlook develops certain innate potentials and functionalities that can then be put at the disposal of planning. Functionalities such as:

- 1. Preparing of Society with respect to the Future: By taking into account the contingencies and possibilities of future events, we can prepare ourselves and others for the future and even guide its realization. Hence by recognizing the opportunities and threats that lie ahead we can plan to make use of the former and avert the latter.
- 2. Depicting and Modelling the General Scenario at the time of the Advent: By using the prospicience of Mahdism, we can recognize the seeds of future events in the present. Moreover we can gain more knowledge about those things that are in the process of manifesting themselves and becoming realized, so as to better know our role and the role of society with respect to them.
- 3. Recognizing Early Warnings and Signs: In addition to perceiving the opportunities and threats, prospicience acts as an early warning system that helps in keeping us informed and aids us in managing upcoming events.
- 4. Providing Confidence and Self-belief: After having understood the process of the advent and after having carried out a comprehensive study of future events and having prepared for them, we are imbued with a sense of belief in self and confidence.
- 5. Acquiring Ascendency and Power: Prospicience is in fact to make decisions about the future in the present. That is to say, we make decisions today about our issues tomorrow and employ our energies and potentials to chart our course. The knowledge and vision that prospicience provides helps us to gain the higher ground in averting threats.

- 6. Balancing Goals and Facts (or Ideals and Realities): If we stop to think about the future here and now, we stop being afflicted by complacency and procrastination. Consequently we can bring about balance and a constructive interaction between ideals and the unpredictable realities.
- 7. Acquiring Information with respect to Effective Elements: Another benefit of prospicience is that it provides information about those forces and factors that will be effectual in the end-times. Knowing these elements and factors is quintessential in being able to understand the future.
- 8. Strategic Managing and Supervising of Changes: Understanding the forces and factors that have influence on chain of events helps planners to be more aware of upcoming possible changes. It also allows them to apply strategic policies and plans to prepare for any and all threats and opposing forces.

Of course there are two inter-linked ways to provide order to the scenarios and modelling of the future: The first revolves around the non-possibleness of the future. It holds that the future cannot be changed and is pre-destined. The second is centred on the possibleness of the future. It says that the future can be changed and is in the influence of human free-will and not a prisoner to historicism. In other words, future changes can be predicted and also influenced. Hence those who can in some way understand the future and model it here and now, can also in some sense "create" it. This idea, in particular when it refers to that special time and period that has been promised by God, is all the more important and of greater consequence. This is because His will and providence ensures the realization of the promise that He has made necessary for man to act upon or to make the efforts towards

إِن تَنصُرُواْ ٱللَّهَ يَنصُركُمْ وَيُثَبِّتَ أَقْدَامَكُمْ

If you help Allah, He will help you and make steady your feet (47:8)

It is extremely important to see how effective we will be in the future's atmosphere and in which direction we will take our steps.

Based on the second approach, the advent of the saviour is a possible occurrence that we are anticipating. We can have a positive effect and intervention in it. There are a number of valid and invalid traditions regarding a futuristic religious outlook. These traditions indicate the existence of signs in the future.

The Objective of the Research

It is by no means possible to acquire the future possibilities or the possible futures and the manner of transformation of the present to the future in materializing the desired future without knowledge cognition. Future building accompanied with cognition of the movement of the present to the future, conceptualizes the achievable future in the mind, and begins to investigate the path of reaching the desired future from the present situation. It then endeavours to actualize the desires future by utilizing all the necessary factors for its actualization. Based on this hypothesis, the objective of this research is to cognize, and make evident a future building strategy of the necessary conditions of Imam Mahdi's ('a) advent. With the help of this they can design a society founded on the notion of Mahdism in the foreseeable future, and be helpers of the advent based on the divine promise and tradition.

¹ Sayyid Tayyib Jazāyirī, Akharīn Umīd-e-Jahān, Wujūd-e-Muqaddas-e-Imam Zamān ('a), page 41.

Question of the Research

What are the foundational principles in the prospicience of the advent's conditions, and the research of the Mahdism doctrine? Furthermore, how is it possible to obtain the contingency of a creative effect in the conditions of the advent of Imam Mahdī ('a)?

Theorem of the Research

Sketching the conditions of the advent within the boundaries of religious prospicience, the contingency of the actualization of the Madism doctrine can be attained, and the strategies for actualizing it can be guaranteed, and expedited.

The Method of the Research

The method of this research like other research is prospicient, prescribed and normalized. This method primarily concentrates on the conditions that the future must possess. That means with attention to values, and individual or organizational preferences, a sketch or sketches of the desired future can be acquired. Then with planned operations, the desired future will gradually be unveiled. However, futurist², and religious experts have a general consensus pertaining to certain aspects of this method. A thematic exposition to Qur'anic verses and Islamic traditions in the process of unveiling the prescribed prospicient religious normalization is from among the factors on which there is a consensus. A researcher seeks the answers to the

¹ Al-Wīn Taflur, JābeJāī dar Qudrat, Tarjumeh Shāhīn Dakht Khuwārzimī, page 132-149.

² Here by futurists, we do not mean the movement that began in Italy in the early twentieth century. The intended meaning here are people who are able to foresee the future based on research of occurrences...

questions through research in Qur'anic verses, Islamic traditions, rational propositions, consensus within the boundaries of a comprehensive expositional method

Method of Compiling Strategies

This research is accepted by the main principles of familiarity of schools and anthropology. This thought is benefitted till the researcher finds the process and its result in the field of human understanding in formatting the meaning of strategy. Those who express the views of this school must explain the ways of recognizing the environment to compile strategies in different manners. The similarity of all of them will be with studying the environmental demands and its insistence on future centres.

The Method and Tools for Collecting Information

This research in accordance to the topic, uses methods of libraries and information from interviews. It utilizes the different Qur'anic sources and commentaries, articles of specialization, books and works of scholars and experts. In the topic of interviewing, those who should be referred to are groups of strategic teachers and scholars in higher universities in defense of the nations, and managers who research Mahdism especially practical institutions of the future.

Different future processes from the end of the mythical period and to the beginning of philosophy can divided in three major groups.

- 1. Future processes of utopia: Undoubtedly, this situation will draw a beautiful future and goal in the frame of desiring justice and preventing different effects. In the writings of everyone concerning the future has a great effect.
- 2. Drawing the line of future civilization: Undoubtedly, based upon specific policies, the different changes in the

world, the abundance of different schools to prevent deficiency and excess.

3. Analysing the future based on industry and technology: By spreading the 'The Third Wave' in different dimensions which were not seen before and increased the world's attention to this. By spreading books like 'Future Pages,' 'Changes in Power,' and 'War and Anti-War and Formation of a New Civilization.' The head of the future researches and prediction in the west and has captured the attention of the United Nations.

Utopia from the Islamic View

Islam includes fair research, battling oppressive governments, recognizing the illegality of cooperation with them as fundamental accesses of a religious utopia. Based on this, those who believe in Mahdism in the time of waiting should try to carry out justice and equality in society and combating oppression. From this path, it can prepare a society for a great reappearance with the flag of justice. More than two-hundred and fifty verses in the Qur'an disapprove of oppression, its acceptance and tolerance, compromise and relations with the oppressors. Many difficulties, hardships and adversities of a society comes from oppression. Compromise and acceptance of the rule of oppressors does not have room in the school of those who are waiting for the saviour. Cooperation and collaboration with corrupters and oppressors and silence in the face of oppression are very disgusting. The real waiter depends of the true divine promise in the path of removing oppression and battling the rule of the arrogant. They solidify the prose of the victory of the oppressed over the arrogant through standing and combat.

A person should be after governmental and canonical methods for future changes especially for the social and

political changes. Today in the in this science of predicting some parts have been recognized. Some of these things are also concealed. Predictions only have meaning when the links of cause and effect in present and future are formed. The present condition must be completely recognized. Then can current changes and processes be outlined so the future can be determined.

With the possibility that these conditions are manifested, the waiters cannot be idle in the face of the future. They should be after spreading the truth and looking in the future. So by waiting, the current condition will become satisfactory. To carry this fundamental out, current conditions must be understood to those humans who are waiting can reach the level of awareness and can deal with any type of situation. At that time, the possibility of voluntary action which is aware and can guide the waiters in the movement towards the desired future. Therefore, with focus on this, the changes of the world will be unexplained and have no meaning. Explanations and conditions regarding the waiting must be distinguished and one must strive in its implementation.

There are necessary conditions in outlining and compiling goals so that a society who is waiting for the promised saviour create something similar. The active preparations, the correct tracking of goals and the program of Imam Mahdī must be created. His selected jurists are like a lamp and guide based on the responsibility which they have. The foremost of this guidance must be built so the conditions of the reappearance can be followed.

Imam Bāqir in reciting the verses and signs of the reappearance in the future, commentated on this verse.

لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلَّهِ

... That He may make it prevail over all religions...

In the Name of Allah

Prediction is possible only when a causal relationship exists between the present and future, prevailing conditions are completely known, and the evolutionary transition of the present into the future is delineated. In this way, future conditions may be inferred from present circumstances. If these stipulations are fulfilled, those who await the Mahdī (may God Almighty hasten his noble relief) and futures researchers cannot remain passive regarding the future. They must undertake to bring about the future they await. In this way, their waiting will lead to a satisfactory end result through the normal evolution of current events. In order for this principle to be implemented, prevailing conditions must be identified so that awaiters can have influence as informed. voluntary agents. Therefore, in the progression from the present towards a desirable future, it will be possible to apply informed free will and guide those who wait on the basis of causal relationships. In accordance with this approach, reshaping the world is meaningless without first defining it. Definitions of the world and expected conditions must be explicated and then endeavours can be made to achieve them.

In this explication, aims and conditions must be clarified which can simulate a society awaiting the promised Saviour, and establish active and creative principles with which to follow up on the aims and commands of the Mahdī. This system must make the chosen jurists (faqīh) of the Saviour leaders and trendsetters of guidance on the basis of their responsibilities so that they may pursue optimal effectuation of conditions required by the Advent.

¹ MurtazaMutahari, Imdād-hayiGhaybīdarZindigī Bashar bi Damimih-yi Chahār Maqālih Digar (Invisible Aid in Human Life and Four Other Articles), p. 72.

لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى ٱلدِينِ كُلِهِ،

...that He may make it prevail over all religions... (9:33)

Imam Bāqīr ('a) explained signs of the Advent under the interpretation of the above verse as follows:

[At the time of the Advent of noble Mahdī (may Allah hasten his return)] no one will remain that has not confessed to (the prophethood of) noble Muḥammad (s).

This is indicative of the great knowledge and understanding of the people of that time. Also, under the exegesis of verse 83 of surah Āl-i 'Imrān, he has declared:

When he rises, no region will remain in which the cry of the testimonies cannot be heard—that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.²

There is much emphasis on issues related to the Advent including the necessity of learning about the Mahdī and aiding him in achieving his aims. Considering the aim of disseminating justice, it is of critical importance to determine and carefully consider his actions as well as to acquire knowledge on the principles of understanding and judgment.

Noble 'Alī ('a) has considered contemplation to be a requirement for correct understanding of truth and justice. He has said the following in this regard:

Justice is based on four things: profound understanding, indepth knowledge, virtuous judgment, and endless patience.

¹ Translated from Tafsīr'Ayyāshī, vol. 2, p. 87; and Biḥār al-Anwār, vol. 52, p. 346.

² Translated from Tassīr'Ayyāshī, vol. 1, p. 183; Nūr al-Thaqalayn, vol. 1, p. 362; Burhān, vol. 1, p. 296; Ṣāfī, vol. 1, p. 353; Ta'wīlĀyāt al-Zāhirah, p. 415; Ithbāt al-Hudāh, vol 3, p. 549; Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 52, p. 340; Muntakhab al-Athar, p. 293; Mu'jamAhādith al-ImāmMahdī (may God hasten his return), vol. 5, p. 60.

Whoever understands reaches the depth of knowledge and becomes saturated with (knowledge of) the laws of the religion.¹

The leader of Gnostics, noble Imam Khumaynī (may God bless him) has said the following regarding the responsibility of those who wait:

What is better than to spend this short life in the service of Islam and Muslims so that before the holy Presence of Almighty God we may stand proud among those who serve...² If a person is successful in carrying out a divine responsibility, the desired result is achieved regardless of whether or not the targeted result is achieved....³

Furthermore, various Narrations consider the virtue and worthiness of the Faithful to be incumbent upon serving the people until the Advent of the Imam of the Age (may God Almighty hasten his noble relief).⁴ On this basis, we must carry out our duties without worrying about the end result since in this case, whether or not we achieve our goals, we have performed good.

1. Giving Hope to the Religious Community

Several elements of the Mahdī doctrine are like the blood in the flesh and the soul in the body for every nation. One of these elements is hope. Sometimes powerful, oppressive hands menace weak nations until they lose hope.

¹ Nahj al-Balāghah, p. 473, hikmah no. 31; I'lām al-Dīn, p. 108; Rawdah al-Wā'izīn, vol. 1, p. 43; and Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 65, p. 348. Also see: ShaykhṬūsī, Amālī, p. 37; Kāfī, vol. 2, p. 50; and Wasā'il al-Shī'ah, vol. 15, p. 186.

² Ṣaḥīfahlmām, vol. 3, p. 263.

³ Ibid, vol. 2, p. 87.

⁴ Most Shia books on Hadith contain chapters on 'ishrah (which includes advice on helping the Faithful). See: Kāfī, vol. 2, p. 635; Kitāb al-'Ishrah; Wasā'il al-Shī'ah, vol. 12, p. 5; AbwābAḥkām al-'Ishrahfī al-Safar wa al-Hadar, and Biḥār al-Anwār, vol. 71-73.

In such conditions, belief in the Mahdī doctrine and in the existence of the holy person of the promised Mahdī (may our souls be sacrificed for him) restores hope to the hearts of the people. A person who believes in this principle will never despair. Why? Because such a person knows that there will certainly be a good end to everything without fail. This person strives to reach that destination.¹

2. Furthering Social Acceptance of the Doctrine

What is your responsibility today? What must you do today? You must lay the foundations for his Advent. One cannot start with nothing to work with! Only societies that are ready and have the capacity for it can receive the promised Mahdī (may our souls be sacrificed for him);otherwise, the same will happen to the Mahdī that has happened to the prophets and saints throughout history.²

3. Furthering Virtue and Creative Merit

According to Islam, the world is evolving towards the governance of truth and virtue. The prophets and saints came to lead humans to a superhighway free of barriers in which they may realize all their potentials.

Basically, all these endeavours can be traced back to the belief that this world will culminate in the victory of virtue and reform. This may happen sooner or later, but its occurrence is assured. It is certain that in the end virtue will triumph over corruption. The forces of good will prevail over the forces of evil. This is a point in the worldview of Islam in which there is no doubt.³

¹ See: Speech of the Supreme Leader when visiting the people on the birthday of noble Mahdī (may God hasten his return), 12/16/1997.

² See: Ibid.

² See: Ibid.
³ See: Speech of the Supreme Leader when visiting government officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran, 12/02/2000.

4. Laying the Foundations for Creative Understanding

Today, human ideology should include the understanding, knowledge, and faith that a great person shall come to free the mortal world from oppression and fill it with justice. This is what all prophets have struggled to achieve. As per the Qur'ān, the prophet of Islam has promised the people the following:

وَيَضَعُ عَنْهُمْ إِصْرَهُمْ وَٱلْأَغْلَالُ ٱلَّتِي كَانَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ ...and relieves them of their burdens and the shackles that were upon them... (7:157)

The hand of divine might can actualize this dream for humanity through a lofty person, a Godly person, a person who is associated with hidden and spiritual worlds—worlds that cannot be perceived or understood by short-sighted people like us.¹

The age of the Mahdī will correspond with a world suffused with justice, purity, honesty, understanding, and kindness. Human life will truly start from then on.

The true life of humans in this world pertains to the era after the Advent of the Imam of the Age. God knows the greatness humanity shall achieve in that era.²

5. Spread of Teachings about the Mahdī

The aim of one of these teachings is for everyone to know and believe that the progression of the world is towards virtue and bright horizons. Let the arrogant hegemonic governments in the world say what they want and flaunt their power; the army of truth and the caravan driven by humanity towards justice is

² See: Speech of the Supreme Leader during Friday Prayer, 4/14/2000.

¹ See: Speech of the Supreme Leader during the great celebration of those who await the Advent, coincident with the week of Basīj and the birth anniversary of noble Mahdī (may God hasten his return), 11/24/1999.

becoming greater by the day. The passage of years cannot destroy or diminish the hope in the human heart that in the future—hopefully in the near future—all human individuals will experience justice in the true sense. The legitimacy of this divine government in the world will proceed from the fact that every person will receive their share of cognition of the truth and can act upon it. The endeavours of the powerful, the arrogant, the tyrants, and the resource-hoarders the world over will not be able to thwart this movement—this natural function—of humanity towards virtue.

6. Integrating Mahdī Slogans with Strategic Measures

There was a time when the slogans of monotheism, spirituality, and religiousness had become extinct in the world. Many endeavoured to forget about them. But now, these slogans are the mottos of an entire country and its government. This is a great step towards achieving the aims of the Imam of the Age (may God Almighty hasten his noble relief). Today, in this region of the world, these slogans are the official slogans of a government. They are the official slogans of the country's administration and of the people. In addition, these slogans are the desires of Muslim nations in many countries of the world. These slogans will one day be realized.²

7. Predictive Preparation for Bringing the Advent Closer

In order to bring the Advent closer, people must do their utmost to enhance their cognitive competence by improving their virtues, qualifications, knowledge, innovativeness, and morals as well as through practicing sincere service and Godly behaviour. Realization and acceleration of these conditions are in the power in human beings. If people become more

² Ibid.

¹ See: Speech of the Supreme Leader, 11/12/2000.

virtuous, the Advent will grow closer.

The Islamic Revolution, the sacrifices in the way of religion and the Revolution, and the generations that organized the revolution have brought the Advent closer. They have become a basic paradigm in this age for performance of the responsibilities of the age of waiting. In the continuation of the Revolution, youths who are just starting their lives and endeavours must venture to improve the groundwork for such an age—for an age that is completely free of all manners of oppression, an age in which thought and knowledge in the Islamic world will be even more active and creative than before, an age in which the power of Islam will prevent warmongers from starting war.

There is no true ease or tranquillity before the age of the promised Mahdī('a). Narrations have stated that God will test us severely and that He will put us under pressure. Where and when are the tests? They occur at any time there is occasion for endeayour.

Before the Advent of the promised Mahdī('a), pure people will be tested in the field. They shall enter the fires of trials and tribulations and exit successfully. Thus, day by day, the world will approach the ideal age of the promised Mahdī (may our souls be sacrificed for him). This is the great hope. For this reason, the 14th of Sha'bān (i.e. the birthday anniversary of Imam Mahdī('a)) is a great holiday.²

8. Knowing One's Enemies: the Key to Awareness

Examination of the actions of policy-makers and strategists of hegemonic powers shows that the most important issues

² See: Speech of the Supreme Leader, 2/19/1992.

¹ ShaykhṬūsī, *Al-Ghaybah*, p. 340; Na'mānī, *Al-Ghaybah*, p. 205; *Tafsīr al-'Ayyāshī*, vol. 1, p. 199; and *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 52, p. 101 and 114, yol. 5, p. 216.

they are working on in regard to the future of the Islamic world is spread of a defeatist atmosphere in the area of reforms and advances that are required in Islamic countries. Arrogant powers seek to make Muslim nations weary of competencism and performancism so as to preserve their ascendancy. If nations remain optimistic about a future in which they can make a difference and make self-confidence and belief in their future roles keynotes in their strategic management, this machination of the enemy will lose its effectiveness. The enemy strives to depict a dark future for these nations. In this depiction, the innate force, the culture, the beliefs, the character, and the national and religious identity of these nations cannot guarantee them an acceptable future; therefore, great powers must aid them in having active creative progress. The thought process of waiting, which governs Islamic environments and followers of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), is the exact opposite of this passive approach.

Progress on the path shown by hopeful hearts—the path of truth—leads to a desirable future. This is the favoured path of human life and the course that gains substance, form, and significance though waiting for the Advent of the promised Mahdī (may God Almighty hasten his noble relief). Accordingly, the foundations of future understanding can be secured, and strategic insight and creativity can be manifested in awaiters of the return.

This leads to a second issue. We can be considered true awaiters only when we prepare the foundations of the Advent. The way must be paved for the Advent of the promised Mahdī (may our souls be sacrificed for him). This consists of carrying out Islamic precepts and submitting to the authority of Islam and the Qur'ān. As stated above, God shall test us and put us under pressure. This great trial faced by the devotees and Shias of the Imam of the Age (may our souls be sacrificed for him) is the test of endeavouring to realize the goal of Islamic

supremacy. Muslims must strive to achieve the governance of Islam; our great nation has taken this one step. 1

9. Enhancing the Power and Sovereignty of Islamic

The most prominent motif in the Mahdī doctrine is justice. One of the most acclaimed of slogans is that he is the person who shall fill the world with justice and equity after it has been filled with oppression and tyranny. We await him to suffuse the entire world—not just one region—with justice and equity.

The justice that we await—the justice of noble Mahdī ('a) which belongs to the whole world—cannot be realized through advising others. The promised Mahdī ('a) will not counsel the oppressors of the world to stop their oppression, greed, tyranny, and exploitation. Justice cannot be established anywhere in the world though advice alone.

Establishment of justice, both on the global level—as shall be implemented by the heir of the prophets—and in each region of the world, requires just, competent, and justice-seeking individuals to be in power who can communicate with oppressors from a position of power. Those who are drunk with tyrannical power cannot be spoken to in an admonitory tone. They must be spoken to in the language of power.²

10. Perpetuation of Constructive Disillusionment

The waiting that has been discussed does not subsume huddling in a corner somewhere weeping in expectation. Awaiting the Advent requires that we prepare ourselves for service to the Imam of the Age. Service to the Imam is not as easy thing. Service to a great saviour who aims at campaigning

See: Ibid.

² See: Speech of the Supreme Leader when meeting the people in Muşallā of Tehran on the birthday of noble Mahdī, 10/22/2002.

against all corrupt international centres of power requires selfdevelopment, awareness, and keen perception.

Some people use the Mahdī doctrine as an excuse to stop themselves and others from caring. This is wrong. We must not think that since the Imam of the Age will come and fill the world with justice and equity, we do not have any responsibilities yet. It is quite the opposite, in fact. Today, we have the duty to advance on the path of readying ourselves for the Advent of the Mahdī('a). You may have heard that in the past, those who were waiting always carried their weapons on their person. This is a symbolic act meaning that persons must continuously improve themselves scientifically, intellectually, and practically. Also, they must always be ready for action.

During the years of the Holy Defence (i.e. the imposed war between Iraq and Iran), those who took part in the defence with enthusiasm were true awaiters. Only those who are prepared to defend their Islamic values, their country, and the banner of Islam when their country is threatened can claim that they shall march in dangerous territories behind the Mahdī('a). However, how can those whose knees weaken, those who lose sight of the path when faced with danger, deviation, or worldly pleasures, or those who are not willing to take any steps that may endanger their personal goods be considered awaiters of the Imam of the Age('a)? Those who await the great reformer must prepare within themselves the underpinning of virtue and reform. They must fortify themselves so they can persevere on the path to achieving perfect reform.

11. Perfection of the Religious People-based Government

The future government of the promised Mahdī (may our souls be sacrificed for him) is a government of the people in the complete sense. What does people-based government mean? It means that it

¹ See: Ibid.

is based on the faith, free will, and power of the people. The Imam of the Age will not fill the world with justice and equity alone. It is with the faithful people of the world and through reliance upon them that the Imam will establish the foundations of divine justice throughout the world and will institute a perfect people-based government. There is a world of difference between this type of people-based government and modern governments that claim to be people-based or democratic. In the modern world, governments that have been named democratic or socialist are the dictatorships of old in new clothing. It is the dictatorship of political parties. If there is any competition, it is between parties and the people have no say. The party that gains power uses and abuses its political power, which gives them complete authority over the country, to gather even more power, wealth, and assets for itself, using newly acquired facilities to further its hegemony in a vicious circle of ascendancy. Modern democracies the world over are based on misleading the people through false, enchanting propaganda and veiling the perception of eyes and hearts. In every country in the world with democracy as their motto, you can easily see what candidates for presidency or senatorship do to advertise themselves. They spend money. Democracy is a prisoner to the dominance of wealth. The focus on people in the government of the Imam of the Age('a)—i.e., religious people-based government—fundamentally differs from the 'democratic' methodology.1

12. The Bond between Mahdism and Jurist Trusteeship

According to the Shia belief, Imamate and trusteeship (wilāyah) make up the essence of political power in the Islamic government. For this reason, the political identity of the Shia creed includes belief in the presence or the indirect supervision of an Imam. The absence of the Imam of the Age ('a)in the society has placed the political existence of the Shia in an

¹ See: Ibid.

elaborate process of awaiting and expectancy. On the basis of this fundamental teaching, Mahdism is the continuance of the course of Imamate. In this extended process of absence, the world is not deprived of a deputy of noble Mahdī ('a). In this way, the functions of protecting the religion, leading the people, and shouldering the responsibility of the Islamic society as well as political administration can be performed.

13. Central Role of the Clergy in Organizing the Advent

The fundamental of juristic trusteeship (wilāyahfaqīh) has foregrounded the role of the clergy such that religious authorities (marāji), religious scholars, and the general clergy enjoy a special status among the society-in-waiting. The status and role of the clergy in various pillars of the religious society—specifically in the Islamic Republic of Iran—is unprecedented among political parties and organizations of Islamic nations. They assume two critical roles in the Islamic society.

- a) Intellectual intermediation between the jurist trustee (wilāyahfaqīh) and advocates of religious people-based government in the Islamic world while protecting the Islamic identity of the republic and ensuring that its actions conform to the illuminating religion of Islam
- b) Valiant and prudent dissemination of belief in thesaviour among monotheistic religions with the aim of uniting nations that believe in the One God and the promised saviour.

Soteriology: Religious Futuring

Soteriology (i.e. study of the doctrine of salvation) is a topic in futurology. Researchers believe the rules of soteriology will gradually reveal themselves in religious futures studies and study of the appearance of a powerful saviour in the final age. Most thinkers in this area are of the opinion that when

speaking about soteriology and soteriological futurology, three views about this issue must also be discussed.

One perspective pertains to those who have an intuitive view about the future and who mostly rely on their beliefs and creativity. Accordingly, or according to their own sources and idealistic perspectives, they present clear predictions. Some thinkers consider objective actualization of these predictions to stem from the intelligence and prowess of these practitioners in the area of psychological analysis. Others point to the special talents of these practitioners, the knowledge they have gained from their environment, history, and trends as well as their ideas about future events as factors that have aided them in forecasting future events.

A second type pertains to persons who view the future as the scope for fulfilment of divine promises. This group depends on the qualities of appointed individuals whom God considers to have had the competence to apprehend such conditions. These researchers ascertain the future through traditional research on divine revelation, narratives of relevant personages, and the cogitation of jurists. They limit research on the future to historical research and social experience in the past and present.

A further type is modern futures studies, which is based on popular scientific conjectures. Futures studies consists of understanding principles and making informed assumptions from the principles in question. One of the most basic premises of scientific futures studies is the existence of a loose continuity between events. Futures practitioners consider the range of world events to be rule-based and cohesive. They hold that future events follow rules and conditions that have existed to some extent throughout the past and into the present. According to futures practitioners, these rules are not influenced by change and innovation. Therefore, the future is nothing but repetition of the past in a new form and with novel symbols.

Saint Augustine, founder of this thought has said:

Time is a conceptual thing. It is created through the relationship between the subjective analytical self and existence or natural or social extants. That is, it is I who says what the past of this phenomenon, the present of this phenomenon, and the future of this phenomenon is. Therefore, it is acceptable to presume that events are not essentially segregated and have a more or less unitary trend. This trend is evocation and interpretation of the past of an object and then prediction of the future of that object on the basis of the interpretation and description of its performance, which has been experienced in the past and present.

He is of the belief that the appearance of new events are in fact past occurrences that reoccur in another form. Thus, another classification can be made in the analytical methodologies of futurist theorization.

First is the method that considers the future to be a set of probabilities that have exchangeable scenarios, in which a solution from the past may be substituted. Second is the view that the future is the likelihoods of the manifestation of one or more probabilities. Therefore, by relying on principles, possibility potentials, logical causes of prevailing conditions, and change management, it is viable to identify a continuum of possible occurrences. In this approach, two steps are recommended for futures studies.

Step One: Welcoming the Future

This is one of the general procedures of futures studies, which has evolved from two views as follows.

First is a historicism project that assumes a fixed future and

¹ Karl Raimund Popper, FaqrTārīkhīgarī (Original title: Poverty of Historicism), Ahmad Aram [trans.], p. 47.

considers it the task of the researcher to achieve that future or identify the conditions of societies in a point during historical evolution of said future.

Second is the subject-based approach that relies on the creativity of humans throughout the passage of time. According to this type of futures studies, humans create a world for themselves which leads to a new destiny for humanity.

Step Two: Principles of Futures Studies

Any type of prospective thought requires knowledge of the future which in turn requires futures studies (in view of the premises concerning the existence of relationships and continuance between events). A futures practitioner aims at describing future conditions, which may pertain to a great or small social or natural system. In the study of futures, the practitioner has a special view, either conscious or unconscious, about the characteristics of events and the relationships between them.

Analysis

Many thinkers and futures researchers have no doubts about the necessity and the parameters of their target future. However, they do not usually present a clear picture of this future. In view of the discussion in the literature review on the exigency of the Advent and its historical and philosophical ideals, it is necessary to add five cognitive factors to the legitimizing, sustaining, and cognitive factors required in a strategy for the future. These will be qualitatively analysed and exhaustively discussed.

In the cognitive premises for analysing futures studies data and designing a strategy, a conceptual process is required in the minds of strategic leaders that is manifested as a strategy, form, policy, plan, design, program, and

framework. This process determines how people must use resources and the environment in the course of their achievable ideals.

These inputs are only intuitive interpretations of the world and are defined on the basis of how the existence of such interpretations can be objectified. In other words, through this school, one can reshape the matrix of ideals, expectations, and world truths into a strategic model, developing a framework which may then be implemented.²

Therefore, in the form of a "strategic school of cognition", the futuristic approach to the Mahdī doctrine can define its strategies as follows:

1. Course Map

- 1. The doctrine of Mahdism must have a strong and resolute approach for implementing its future actions
- 2. Faith in the Mahdī('a)must extend to all Muslims, especially youths
- 3. Strategic teachings of Mahdism must be culture-building
- 4. Preparatory measures for the Advent must be stimulating and inspirational
- 5. Implemented strategies must be harmonistic and unificatory and must avoid causing division among monotheistic and saviouristic religions
- 6. The origin of the Shia love for the doctrine and the historical experiences of the Shia as well as the successful experiences of the Islamic revolution must be used as exemplars and sources of inspiration
- 7. The paradigm of belief in the saviour must be propagated and epitomized with clarity
- 8. The strategies and doctrine of Mahdism must be

² Ibid.

¹ See: W. H. Walsh, An Introduction to the Philosophy of History.

legitimized and publicized on the basis of the recommendations and guidance of the deputy of the Imam of the Age; that is, the incumbent jurist trustee

 Theoretical interference in the areas of awaiting the saviour and Mahdism must be prevented among various Shia cultural spheres

10. Methods and ideas of the awaiters of and believers in the Mahdī('a)must be broadcasted as paradigms in the mass media and their forward-looking cultural orientations about the aims of Mahdism must be considered

11. Priority must be given to promoting awareness, preparedness, and positive action among the younger generations with focus on belief in the Mahdī('a)

12. Socio-political officials must establish Mahdīst strategies as the basis of their performance and production of national power

2. Strategic Framework:

a) Giving Priority to Service in the Age of Occultation

Service to others is much different from service to oneself in one's own interests. The destiny of not only one country or one nation but—in view of the importance of this country and nation—the destiny of the Islamic world as a whole is in the hands of officials of the Islamic government of Iran. All of us must cherish this. This opportunity will not always be available. One day we work in one place and another day we work elsewhere. The next day we are no longer even in this world. Being a government official is an advantageous opportunity. A great mission is being undertaken by every one of the components of the government of the Islamic Republic. Therefore, value this opportunity. \(^1\)

¹ Speech of the Supreme Leader when meeting the president and government officials, 6/30/2007.

Some use this opportunity to serve and others use it to secure their future and gather wealth. Amīr al-Mu'minīn'Alī('a) has said:

Do not consider this responsibility that has been given to you to be similar to a hunting quarry. It is not a quarry that you can fall upon in order to adorn yourself, your stomach, and your life. It is a valuable opportunity for you to serve and work up good deeds for the next life.¹

b) Sustainment of the Islamic Revolution until the Rise of the Promised Mahdī('a)

In previous years some have thought that we have reached the end of the principle slogans of the Revolution, the greatness of Islam, the battle against Global Arrogance, the endeavours to release the abased from weakness, and the endeavours towards justice. It has become clear, however, that they were mistaken. Awaiters of Mahdī (may God Almighty hasten his noble relief)must be kind to each other and observe one another's rights. They must aid each other in hardship. This tradition is attributed to the promised in all religions. These are great steps that are taken to set the groundwork for the Advent. Such steps are not wrong. Today, the strategic approach to Mahdism must focus on belief in the saviour in all monotheistic religions and also on bolstering common ground between these religions. Believers in the Advent of the saviour must be aided in their political, cultural, and defensive preparations. moral. Mahdism should not be thought of only as a Shia ideology.²

The point must become widely known that it is important to wait for the reformative, justice-spreading saviour with a constructive attitude towards the future. This approach is divine and the followers of other religions have understood

¹ Nahj al-Balāghah, letter 53, letter of noble 'Alī('a) to MālikAshtar.

² HasanFiruzabadi, Collection of Articles of the Third Conference of the Mahdīsm Doctrine, Isfand (February-March), 2008.

this. How can this awaiting be realized and managed? All monotheistic awaiters must heroically follow this course.

c) Heroic Leader-based Service

We have need of courageous action. One of the things in this government for which I thank God is that the bravery to take action exists. Great things cannot be achieved with doubt, agitation, or fear. It is necessary to enter the field bravely. It is important to note, however, that bravery does not include acting rashly. Studies must be performed. Rational deliberation must be carried out. Then, when a conclusion is reached, you must take action without doubt or weakness.

...and consult them in the affairs, and once you are resolved, put your trust in Allah...'

Hold consultation, perform your studies, and consider all sides of the problem. When you reach a conclusion, trust in God and enter the scene. This courage is necessary.²

When a soldier or officer attacks enemy lines, materialistic persons only think about returning in victory. However, Muslims—Shias—form spiritual links between themselves and the noble Master of the Age (may God Almighty hasten his noble relief). They have love for God and faith in Him, in the victory of the Islamic army, and in spirituality. In peace times, this love and faith must be focused on service to knowledge production, development, action, and defence of the religion of God. This will lead to unity and cohesion of the Islamic army and strong cooperation with the leader having the authority of trusteeship. Following orders in the army of Islam

¹ Surah Āl-i 'Imrān 3:159.

² Speech of the Supreme Leader when meeting the president and government officials, 6/30/2007.

is tantamount to following the orders of the jurist trustee, the Imam of the Age (may God Almighty hasten his noble relief), the Prophet of Allah (s), and God. Warriors always battle in the company of the saints of God. When they see martyrs, they are invigorated.

If strategies are formed on the basis of the culture of Mahdism, the culture will lead to salvation in the areas of politics, international relations, economy, and human edification as well as family life. The aesthetics of this cultural paradigm is one of the best characteristics that extend its supremacy.¹

d) Offensiveness in Foreign Relations

In the area of foreign politics, the Islamic government awaiting the Advent must have an offensive stance, demanding what is right. It is a mistake for awaiters of the Mahdī ('a)to exchange their offensive stance for a defensive one. True awaiters must be demanding with the neo-colonialist world. Neo-colonialists have filled the earth with corruption. They have caused domestic wars and have sold weapons of war to various factions. They have propagated the use of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons. They have corrupted morality, have bred the culture of obscenity and unrestraint, and have promoted carnality. Thus, they bring nothing except corruption. They must be strongly challenged with the claims of a living nation demanding answers.

The Islamic Mahdīst government must pursue an offensive policy in its foreign relations. Awaiters must know that Global Arrogance is corruptive and greedy. We must politically attack this culture of anti-justice and follow up on the demands of true awaiters creatively and judiciously.²

² Speech of the Supreme Leader when meeting the president and government officials, 6/30/2007.

¹ Hasan Firuzabadi, Collection of Articles of the Third Conference of the Mahdism Doctrine, Isfand (February-March), 2008.

The 14th of Sha'bān is a day of hope. This hope is not specific to the Shias or even the Muslim people. Hope in a bright future for humanity and the appearance of a promise saviour, a hand that spreads justice throughout the entire world, is shared by advocates of almost all religions in the world. Apart from Islam, Christianity, and Judaism, even the religions of India, Buddhism, and religions that most people of the world do not even know about have given news of such a future in their teachings. This belief, in fact, shares hope with all humans throughout history and responds with truth to the human need for this hope.¹

If awaiters of a promised reformer and spreader of justice are aware and create bonds with the saviour, they will become spreaders of his values, opposers of Global Arrogance, challengers of falseness, and revolutionaries as well. Central importance must be placed on this teaching in all futures studies. A Muslim that awaits the Mahdī (may God Almighty hasten his noble relief) and has deep knowledge about him is a reformist and an opposer of Global Arrogance.

Forward-looking Strategies towards the Advent

a) Attention to both Material and Spiritual Needs of

In addition to satisfying external needs such as housing, peace, and welfare, the Islamic government is obligated to pay attention to morality and religious guidance of people upon the straight path, which youths purposefully and enthusiastically seek out. In educating and edifying them, the government must attach importance to their scientific and religious growth. In this way, they will avidly bind themselves to the duty of sincere service to the people and will not fail to do their best.

Speech of the Supreme Leader, 8/18/1999.

Today, an aim of every arrogant hegemonic force that desires to completely control all the power, technology, and mass media in the world is to crusade against idealistic societies. They strive to prevent humanity from thinking about spirituality in order to orient the world towards materiality. They do not understand, however, that humanity thirsts for spirituality and has decided to take part in achieving the Advent of the chosen saviour. The whole world must be made to realize that the promised saviour of the awaiters will surely appear. In this way, all people in the world, regardless of their beliefs, will endeavour to prepare the way for the appearance of the reformist saviour who will spread justice all over the world. This view must be disseminated in the form of spirituality.

b) Campaigning against Backwardness and Corruption

This title subsumes the fight against economic corruption. Within the government, the importance of the campaign against economic corruption is even greater. The judiciary is responsible for punishing the corrupt and the executive is responsible for pre-empting corruption, which is of even greater importance since it is prevention. It is within the intricacies of the executive—both in the planning phase and in the execution phase—that corruption finds life. The germs of corruption are generated. They grow and breed. They must be stopped. Needless to say, the campaign against corruption requires virtue; we must first be virtuous ourselves and keep away from corruption in order to truly fight against it. If we have a weakness towards corruption, we can no longer be sure of ourselves in case we want to enter the scene. We must be vigilant regarding our own selves.²

² See: Speech of the Supreme Leader when meeting the president and government officials, 6/30/2007.

Hasan Firuzabadi, Collection of Articles of the Third Conference of the Mahdism Doctrine, Isfand (February-March), 2008.

c) Attention to Innovativeness and Motivation in Propagation With the aim of preventing incorrect and divergent understanding, it is crucial to propagate the stimulating and forward-looking culture in religious seminaries and among religious preachers. This can aid servants of the promised saviour in preparing themselves and the society for the Advent through pure deeds, bravery, and awareness. Stagnation, indifference, defending the status quo, and waiting listlessly for the Advent of the promised are completely rejected in this approach. This is because the ideal government in the age of the Advent shall be a product of the perfectionistic process of a humane, moral, and powerful society.

Even if having love for the Mahdī and waiting inactively is passably acceptable, it is not good enough. Love and anticipation must be proven through active, wide-ranging endeavours. Use of teachings such as 'saviourism', 'active awaiting', 'constructive jihad', and 'juristic authority (marja'iyyah) and trusteeship (wilāyah faqīh)' has given this approach a special dynamism making the Shia the most worthy propagators of this progressive doctrine among all monotheists.

d) Consolidation of the Cultural Foundations of Unyieldingness before Enemies

A nation that believes in Mahdism must never feel weak; rather, it must follow its course with strength and sheer perseverance in the face of pressure and adversity. It should maintain its power and must not submit to aggressors and tyrants.

e) Spreading the Logic of a Clear Glorious Future

No obstacle is effective against the perfectionist advance and progress of believers in Mahdism. A people who assume the system of awaiting the Mahdi must surely have a beautiful, pleasant destiny in their future. There are those who seek to

keep the Islamic nation back, to keep them under their thumb, to keep Muslims in need of outsiders. Islam, however, does not permit Muslims to be dependent upon others. The Iranian nation has been able to carry itself to the borders of independence, development, and power. It has become known among nations of the world as an exemplar and in the words of the Qur'an a 'median nation' (Ummah wasai). In this regard, the leader of the Revolution has said the following:

It must not be thought that there is nothing that can be done, that this situation must be accepted. No, let it be known that this situation is transitory—according to a popular Arabic saying, evil is ephemeral. That which belongs to this world, that which is in the nature of this world, is the establishment of a just government. He shall come. This is the meaning of faraj. Faraj means relief. In the school of awaiting, Muslims learn relief. They learn that there is no dead end in human existence. They must await the final relief. They must also await relief in all areas of personal and social life. You must not permit despair to control your hearts.

f) Strengthening the Nation's Determination for Service and Production of Knowledge

Many Muslims have realized that they can outstrip everyone else in all areas of knowledge and service through complete unity and solidarity under the glorious banner of the Islamic government. This government is a brilliant ray that has branched out from the future government of the Mahdī('a). This is a fact because the Imam of the Age (may our souls be sacrificed for him) observes and supervises our actions. Through unity, we can reach the lofty summits of perfection and happiness. The manner in which our faithful youths

¹ Speech of the Supreme Leader when meeting the people on the birthday of noble Mahdī, 9/20/2005.

display their sincerity and vivacity in various domains—such as the domain of spirituality, worship, and understanding, the domain of work and endeavour, the domain of political battle, and the domain of jihad when had been required—makes the Imam of the Age ('a)pleased and happy. The Iranian nation will never submit to threats, force, or pressure. Today, it has become more powerful than in the past. It remains standing unfalteringly to advance its lofty aims and ideals—which are in national interests—with fierce determination.

Conclusion

The aim of researchers of the future is to challenge the thoughts and mentalities of the society. Hence, they inspire the people to critically review their habitual behaviour, to consider other alternatives, to seek out unknown circumstances, to analyse their own aims and values, to become more conscious of the future and future management in their power, and to contemplate the freedom and advancement of future generations.

In order to achieve the ideal religious society, we must be futures researchers. With the perspective of world justice and human freedom, various futures must be envisioned and one must be elected. A virtuous and worthy society must be created. The society's vision of the future, its cognition about what the future is, and the manner in which the future can be realized through belief in the saviour must be assessed. The society must be guided to where they can think with awareness and free will about how the future must be. They must know for sure that neither can we inherit the future from anybody nor will anyone grant it to us. The future is something that we are duty-bound to envision, construct, and follow up on the basis of what has been promised.

¹ Ibid.

Strategy of Prospicience

As per the will of God, there is no escape from the passage of time and movement towards the future. We must not be indifferent about the future. Especially when considering various signs, we realize that the end times belong to worthy, virtuous, sincere, knowledgeable, brave, and religious humans. Awaiters of the Reformer cannot be passive watchers. They must strive to attain these characteristics and spread them in the society. Forward-looking strategies must first correctly orient towards future conditions and events. After dealing with the question of "What will happen?", the question of "What must be done?" should be dealt with.

Using principles and guidelines for developing forward-looking strategies, this research has dealt with the questions of "What will happen?", "Why will this happen?", and "What must be done?" This view about time not only evaluates resources and achievements but also examines the faraway horizons of a future which seems very close for advocates of this view.



AWAITING THE IMAM OF THE AGE: SHAPER OF PREACHERS AND ACTIVISTS

يَنَأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِيرَ ءَامَنُواْ آصْبِرُواْ وَصَابِرُواْ وَرَابِطُواْ وَٱتَّقُواْ ٱللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

O you who have faith! Be patient, stand firm, and defend the boundaries (of Islam and the Islamic country), and be wary of Allah so that you may be felicitous. (3:200)

Revolutionary Force and Salvationistic Activism

The Islamic Revolution now exists in sensitive conditions. In modern times, the criteria of noble Imam Khumaynī's (may God bless him)movement, the blood of martyrs, and pure Islam have spread throughout the globe and the fragrance of the Islamic Revolution can be scented in the gatherings of people the world over. In various corners of the globe, people carry the flag of the Islamic Republic of Iran in their demonstrations. Their slogans bear the name of Iran. Praise be to God for the blessings of the Revolution and the guidance of

jurist trustees. From the time of noble Imam Khumaynī (may God bless him) to the incumbency of the present leader, noble Ayatollah Khamenei, the Islamic Revolution has been developed through wisdom, insight, and great endeavours as well as the guiding light and blessings of the noble Master of the Age (may God Almighty hasten his noble relief). Every day, new blossoms of development thrive in the country through the effort and devotion of the strongly spiritual souls of those trained in the school of Imamate. Even so, from the very first day the Islamic Revolution was formed until now, the Great Devil—America—has threatened our revolution.

It is a characteristic of the campaign of prophets and saints, which the Islamic Revolution is a continuance of, that bullies, advocates of evil, tyrants, and oppressors form ranks against it. Today, in which the fruits of the garden of understanding about the Master of the Age (may God Almighty hasten his noble relief), the Qur'ān, the Ahl al-Bayt('a), and pure Islam have grown beautifully, the malevolence and outrage of our enemies towards the Revolution and our great country, Iran, is spiralling upward. By the blessing of the Lord, the claws of the beneficiaries, agents, and disciples of the Great Devil were cut off from the Revolution long ago. Afterwards, with the help of other powers of evil, disbelief, and polytheism throughout the world, America has done its utmost to destroy the Islamic Revolution.

Throughout recent history, the Western world—and at its top America, the Great Devil—has striven to gain power, however frail and artificial. They have endeavoured to secure the interests of Global Arrogance through interference in the administration of other countries as well as starting and directing regional wars. Also, they have ventured to prevent people's moral-based movements—movements which are continuations of the course of the prophets. But now, the American strategy has gone beyond attaining frail military,

political, and economic power, and controlling international relations. Now, America thinks it can also accuse any country it deems appropriate of whatever it wants and then vocally and militarily attack it. America has targeted the Islamic Republic of Iran with this strategy and seeks to overthrow the heart of the Islamic world. The Islam that rose from the movement of Imam Khumaynī (may God bless him)—that is, pure Islam stood against this stratagem. With the aim of protecting and spreading human and religious values in the country, evil was kept at bay by provisions that were made for the preparation and participation of the nation in the field, mobilization of the nation, manifestation of the unity and solidarity of the Iranian nation, and the power of revolutionary armed forces. Thus, enemies who had brazenly come fully prepared had become frightened of Iran. The power of Iran kept them away and struck terror in their hearts. Hence, they did not dare to attack Iran. The secret of this power is sincere belief in the guiding light of trusteeship and true obedience to Allah in the form of adherence to the trustee.

What is Our Duty Today?

According to the strategy of the holy government of the Islamic Republic, the mission of the armed forces is to deflect threats of enemies and to destroy them in case of aggression. The armed forces are charged with gaining as much power as is prudently achievable. They must equip and train. They must bar the way of the satanic enemies of Islam by earth, air, and sea, keeping them away from the bounds of the Islamic Republic. In the case of the impudence and imprudence of an enemy—deciding to violate our borders—they are to ward off and crush the aggressors.

Formation of a God-centred army that relies on the love of God and on divine values has made Iran a repeller of evil. America, Israel, Britain, and their allies do not fear humans or

nations in and of themselves since they can easily penetrate into countries and plunder their wealth. However, America and other fragile powers do fear God and Islam. Imam Khumaynī (may God bless him) has declared:

The victory of Khurramshahr was not normal. It was supernatural.

Also, the Qur'an states:

...and you did not throw when you threw, rather it was Allah who threw... (8:17)

The mission of the representative body of the jurist trustee within the armed forces is to train forces to be warriors of Allah, to trust God in all things, to see Him as their supporter, and to see their own force, which relies on divine power, to be stronger than the united fully-equipped forces of devils. They reason the 15th of Khordad and the 22nd of Bahman were entitled Days of God (ayyāmallāh) by Imam Khumaynī (may God bless him) was that these victories were realized though the Divine Will. A duty of politico-ideological centres as well as the Islamic clergy is to make the armed forces God-centred. They must shape faithful, hopeful, jihadist exponents of the religion. National solidarity is achieved through having faith, understanding the Imam of the Age (may God Almighty hasten his noble relief), having love for the jurist trustee, and following him as the leader.

Understanding the Imam of the Age

One of the best methods for having a faithful army and nation that triumphs over their carnal soul as well as their external enemies is giving them deep knowledge about the holy person

¹ ṢaḥīfahNūr, vol. 16, p. 270.

of the Imam of the Age (may God Almighty hasten his noble relief), an Imam that is alive, oversees our tasks, and is sympathetic to our hardships.

Benefits of Having Understanding about the Imam of the Age

1. Hope: The presence of a living Imam that observes our deeds from behind the veil of Occultation brings about hope for victory as well as a positive outlook.

2. Solidarity: The aim of Imam Khumaynī (may God bless him) and his successor, Ayatollah Khamenei, has been formation and preservation of solidarity in the society. When there is dispute in important issues, it is the jurist trustee that makes a final judgment everyone must uphold. This is an effect of solidarity. The secret of solidarity is existence of the holy person of the Imam of the Age (may God Almighty hasten his noble relief).

3. Protection of the religion: It is the duty of all the Faithful to safeguard the religion and pray for the Imam since we have faith in the presence and supervision of the great vicegerent of Allah (may God Almighty hasten his noble relief) and his guidance and prayer for us. We know that he will resolve any problems that arise for great religious personages. He supervises the task of jurists since he has said:

...for they are my arguments (hujjat) for you and I am the argument of God...¹

4. Training forces: One of the reasons for the Occultation of the Imam of the Age (may God Almighty hasten his noble relief) was the threat to his life. When Faithful persons see that

¹ Iḥtijāj, vol. 2, p. 469; ShaykhṬūsī, Al-Ghayhah, p. 290; Kashf al-Ghummah, vol. 2, p. 531; Kamāl al-Dīn, vol. 2, p. 483; Wasā'il al-Shī'ah, vol. 27, p. 140; Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 53, p. 181.

the life of their leader is in danger they endeavour to train forces that will dutifully gift their hearts to their beloved Imam with devotion and passion. From the 15th of Khordad, 1342 (6/5/1963) to the 22nd of Bahman, 1357 (2/11/1979) passionate hearts and minds grew to such extent that they were able to return their Imam (Khumaynī) from exile. A part of the prayer for the health of the Imam of the Age (may God Almighty hasten his noble relief) refers to the readiness of the people for welcoming their Imam, which occurred in Iran regarding Imam Khumaynī (may God bless him). Realization of the Occultation of the Master of the Age (may God Almighty hasten his noble relief) fills the heads of young and old with passion and their hearts with sentiment and grief. It causes a transformation in faithful, hopeful, and activist persons who truly await the Master of the Age (may God Almighty hasten his noble relief) with both love and grief. True anticipation has various effects. We prepare to entertain guests who we invite to our homes and await them excitedly. Awaiting the Imam of the Age (may God Almighty hasten his noble relief) must be like this. If we gain true understanding of the Imam of the Age (may God Almighty hasten his noble relief), we will all prepare to receive him.

Imam Sajjād('a) has declared:

The people of the time of Occultation of the (last) Imam who believe in his Imamate and await his appearance are better than the people of other times since God Almighty has given them intellect, understanding, and cognition that makes the Occultation tantamount to observation for them. During that time, He shall make them as warriors of the Prophet of Allah—peace of Allah upon him and his family—who have risen for jihad armed with their swords. They are truly sincere persons, our genuine Shias, and claimants to the religion of God Almighty

in secret and in public. He has said, "Awaiting the relief is the greatest relief (of all)."

Superior Approach to Establishment and Spread of Enthusiasm in the Waiting Society

In the edification of hopeful, faithful, and activist persons, true awaiting affects their words, deeds, and even their gestures. Faithful, activist individuals who have deep knowledge about their Imam (may God Almighty hasten his noble relief) act for the satisfaction and happiness of their beloved Imam. They continuously strive to achieve his satisfaction and keep away from acts that cause his anger. In the comparison between the faithful awaiters of the Imam of the Age (may God Almighty hasten his noble relief) and the Faithful living during the time of the Prophet (s) who battled under his command, two points can be indicated:

First, the Faithful who battled under the banner of the Prophet (s) during his lifetime enjoyed all virtuous moral and faithful characteristics. They combated with pure intentions, desired martyrdom, and were proud of fighting in the company of the Prophet (s). This is the meaning of having a basījī spirit. That is, those who claim to be awaiters act such that it seems they see their Imam. They love their Imam and are proud to believe in his creed and live in his country. In this way, they act in accordance with the following verse:

يَتَأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِيرَ ءَامَنُواْ آصْبِرُواْ وَصَابِرُواْ وَرَابِطُواْ وَٱتَّقُواْ ٱللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

¹ Translated into English from *Iḥtijāj*, Ja'farī [Persian trans.], vol. 2, p. 148. See also: *Iḥtijāj*, vol. 2, p. 317; Rāwandī, *Qiṣaṣ al-Anbiyā'*, p. 364; *I'lām al-Warī*, p. 407; *Kamāl al-Dīn*, vol. 1, p. 319.

O you who have faith! Be patient, stand firm, and defend the boundaries (of Islam and the Islamic country), and be wary of Allah so that you may be felicitous. (3:200)

In the exegesis of this holy verse, Imam Sādiq('a) has stated:

Have perseverance in performing the precepts of God, stand fast against your enemies, and establish a relationship with (rābiṭu) your awaited Imam (or adhere to your Imam who you are awaiting), 1

The word rābiṭū means 'defend the borders of Islam and the Islamic country'. The phrase 'ittaqūallāh' means 'be wary of Allah', in which case, la'allakumtufliḥun: 'you may be felicitous'. If you battle with pure intentions and have understanding of the Imam, if you are faithful, hopeful, activist persons who spread the religion, and if you act in accordance with religious principles, you will surely be delivered.

Second, the Faithful at the advent of Islam who fought by the side of the Prophet (s) considered themselves propagators of the Islamic religion.

of the Islamic religion.

Considering these points, the trustee of the Imam of the Age (may God Almighty hasten his noble relief), esteemed Khamenei, has two requirements of us:

- 1. A warrior in the battlefront of righteousness must battle the enemy with power, training, bravery, and the best of weapons, endeavouring to protect the creed of their Imam.
- 2. We must spread the teachings of the Imam of the Age ('a). Just as the Faithful at the advent of Islam had a critical role in the dissemination of the religion and establishment of Islam, faithful warriors must be

¹ Na'mānī, Al-Ghaybah, p. 27 and 199; Ta'wīl al-Āyāt al-Zāhirah, p. 133; Al-Burhān, vol. 1, p. 730; Biḥār al-Anwār, vol. 24, p. 217.

cognizant about the Imam so they can also be good propagators of the religion.

Fending off major military threats requires warriors. A people who possess deep knowledge of the Imam of the Age (may God Almighty hasten his noble relief) and of God are formidable warriors. Such warriors are great propagators of the religion in the arena of cultural attack.

As previously indicated, Imam Sajjād('a) has clarified our responsibility in this regard. Therefore, the undertaking of cultural operations is the duty of the clergy. It is their responsibility to spread the teachings about the Imam of the Age (may God Almighty hasten his noble relief).

Laying the Groundwork for the Advent

One of the primary responsibilities of the clergy is preparing for the Advent of the noble Master of the Age (may God Almighty hasten his noble relief). In AH 1348 (1969-70 CE), martyr Hāshimīnizhād (may God bless his soul) has said:

Our awaiting is like the awaiting of an army whose commander has gone on a journey and has told his soldiers to be ready for a military operation saying, "I shall give the order to attack immediately after I return."

The revolution of the Master of the Age (may God Almighty hasten his noble relief) is an Islamic revolution. Our Islamic Revolution was relative to our own abilities and the Islamic revolution of noble Mahdī (may God Almighty hasten his noble relief) will be relative to his abilities. He shall bring with himself the genuine religion and lift the veils. He will resolve ambiguities and end oppression.

¹ See section 'Benefits of Understanding about the Imam of the Age (may God Almighty hasten his noble relief)'. See also: Iḥtijāj, vol. 2, p. 317; Rāwandī, Qiṣaṣ al-Anbiyā', p. 364; I'lām al-Warī, p. 407; Kamāl al-Dīn, vol. 1, p. 319.

1. Propagating the magnetic Qur'an, the truth of Islam and revolution

What must be done as a prerequisite for the reappearance of the Imam? Is preparation by us taking arms and waiting for his return; or waiting for the skies to declare his blessed call? No, it is not like this; through propagation of the magnetic Qur'an, the reality of the Mahdī revolution must be established. An type of attraction with the divine revelation derived from the tenets of the Qur'an that are present in our revolution. To express the values and beauties emanating from the revolution is conforming to the human nature. The human nature does not attract to evil and those things which have no value. The justice-principle of the Qur'an, Islam and revolution has an attraction in humans. For this reason, Hugo Chavez says:

I do not know its reason, but I know however much you say it, it is right.

This is the attraction of the Qur'an and revolution.

- 2. Generating knowledge and benefitting from it The request of our beloved leader is that the people should aspire in three things: the economical progress of the country, disdain towards the enemy's psychological war and progress of the country through the expansion of knowledge. These are also the foundations for the reappearance.
- 3. Firmness, Perseverance and Courage We should foster these valuable merits which are commanded by the Qur'an and are a part of the culture of revolution.
 - 4. Piety and Adherence to Morals, Human and Property Rights

¹ The president of Venezuela.

Contrary to the meaning of piety is impiety. The beloved leader repeatedly says to abandon impiety. Most of us are not pious so he says to bring forward piety and leave impiety. Abandoning impiety and adhering to Islamic morals are the fundamentals for the reappearance of Imam Mahdī.

- 5. Faith and Trust in God Preparation for the groundwork of the reappearance includes striving to increase faith, to trust God and to understand God's victory in the people.
 - 6. Economic and Social Collaboration and Assistance based on Islamic Fraternity

The foundation of the reappearance include assisting the oppressed and suffering people, realizing the social agonies of those who are deprived and by aiding them through actions like rebuilding, volunteering, relief committees, supporting the families of the martyrs, stocks of justice, etc.

7. Keeping Cordial Relations between one another for the Pleasure of God

This is the meaning of this verse: Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good advice. Believing and struggling humans have the responsibility for propagating the sciences of religion. The propagation of the sciences of religion and tenets of the Qur'an prepare for the reappearance of the Imam with the condition that it is with wisdom, rational deduction and logic. Advocates of this must be kind and attract the hearts of people. When there is disagreement among the people, different perspectives and opinions exist on politics, then discussions must be held based on justice and good intentions. Current national unity will come if groups within the Islamic

¹ Chapter al-Nahl, Verse 125.

country treat one another fairly. Islamic harmony will come into existence when the followers of different schools of thought interact with one another with wisdom and justice. This is the reason our beloved leader named a year 'National Unity and Islamic Harmony.' That year in reality was a year of wisdom and justice. If interactions were with wisdom and justice, then national unity and Islamic harmony will be attained and this is another fundamental for the reappearance of the Imam Mahdī.

8. Appointing the Representative of the *Imām* and *Wilāyat* al-Faqīh as the Judge in Personal and Societal Differences This is the path of the Qur'an. God tells the Prophet:

But no, by your Lord! They will not believe until they make you a judge in their disputes, then do not find within their hearts any dissent to your verdict and submit in full submission.

The Walī Faqīh will become this type of unity and salvation. All the groups, societal, political and cultural groups, classes, nations and schools of thought must refer to the ruling of those are vested with authority when differences arise and be content with it. When the Walī Faqīh says national unity and Islamic Harmony, all of the schools of thought and groups must obey his command and treat each other with wisdom and justice.

9. The Battle of Truth and Falsehood

With the victory of the Islamic revolution, everything is not complete. The fundamental for the reappearance of Imam Mahdī is battling truth against falsehood, and continuing to do so with more energy and joy from before.

10. Preparing the Groundwork of the Reappearance to Recognize the Divine Leader

All must accept that God has distinguished Imāmat and leadership. A society which recognizes this and accepts the rule

Chapter al-Nisa', Verse 65.

of the divine leader will be waiting for the reappearance.

The Enemy's Secret

Now we will discuss the politics that all the strata of society, especially the armed forces, should make the criterion for their actions. We want to explain a new goal which recently one of the enemies of Islam confidentially disclosed and debunk its secret. This matter is crucial in understanding the responsibility of politics in today's age.

A Better Glance at Expanding and Establishing Affection in a Waiting Community

During the period of the *Tāghūt*, one of the English commanders heard the call to prayers from the speakers of the Masjid. He turned to one of his workers and asked, 'What is he saying?' The worker replied, 'It is the call for prayers.' The commander asked, 'Will this action damage English interests?' He replied, 'No. The people gather and pray.' Then the commander said, 'Leave it, let them say it.'

The words of Imam were that the enemies of Islam do not fear from American Islam. If Islam and Muslims were to cooperate and befriend it, accept their proposals and plundering, and remain under their command, then it is not problematic. To accept the Western message and harmonize with it which some people in our community are saying, is exactly American Islam.

The pure Muhammadan Islam, like Imam 'Alī with his sword in hand, stands in face of the enemy; just like Fāṭimah stood up with all her energy. Therefore, the goal of the colonialists is the pure Islam. It is necessary to direct attention that the world colonialists seek to annihilate the pure Islam which is promoted by the Islamic Republic of Iran. The enemies seek to halt the spread of pure Islam in the world

because many values have come from revolution and the people have benefitted from it. The western colonialists and the great Satans seek the destruction of Iran such that the land nor Islam should not exist. They are not against the Islam which was present during the era of Pahlavi. They do not want the Islam of Khumaynī.

Since the beginning of the revolution till now, America and its allies have fought with Iran on two fronts.

Governing Front

They had the intention to hurt the Islamic system by aiding and arming groups and inciting Saddam to attack Iran and pulling his troops to the area. Today, due to divine assistance they have lost to the governing strength of Iran. Their hope for calming Iraq is just for this reason.

Cultural Front

During this entire time, they tried to empty the pure Islam of its contents and restore it to the American Islam. For this goal of theirs, they tried everything. First, they used books, radios, television, satellites and internet. But they saw the hearts of the believers become sturdier than to be influenced by these things. They then focused on the Islamic government and they sought to take control of the government and change the Islamic Iranian culture to western culture. Praise to God and with His grace and Imam of the time, they failed in this task of theirs.

Today is the day that the enemies have become hopeless to overthrow the government of the Islamic Republic. America, the west, and the colonialists have discovered that Iran has many Islamic merits, has a Husayni and Mahdism culture, has examples like Khumaynī and Khamenei, has won the imposed war, has the best youthful forces and military equipment, whose country has been approved numerous times through

referendums and elections, has destroyed the instruments of western propaganda, and has become a model and a paradigm for the world. Till now, the interest of the enemy is to prevent the progress of the Iran.

The leader of the Islamic revolution knows it is an interest (of Iran) and a current great strategy to expand the country based on knowledge. The enemies could not at first believe that Iran was able to manifest this and for several years were mocked. For eighty years, they tried to extinguish the flame of knowledge in this country. They sought to destroy all the causes and structures of progress and development. Praise to God, the Islamic revolution rebuilt all of the infrastructures in the country based on pure Islam. Today, not only is the Islamic Republic of Iran progressing, but has become a model for progress, generating knowledge and developing peaceful nuclear technology.

What was the reaction of America and the west? They strived together to prevent the progress of Iran. They tried to present the Islam which Imam Khumavnī introduced to the world and the resistance of Iran as the cause for deprivation, misery and decline. They are striving to destroy the generation of knowledge and prevent Iran from progressing. This is the reason the Iranian nuclear file in International Atomic Energy Agency, which is the place for nuclear assistance and advancement according to the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and who should be helping Iran with nuclear technology, is being taken to United Nations Security Council. This is being done to prevent the peaceful nuclear technology of Iran from completing its course. Their taking of our Iran's nuclear file to the Security Council with the excuse of preventing Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons is to prevent our advancement.

The Security Council passed resolutions and warned Iran

They appointed sanctions as their own right. They appointed sanctions are their own right. They appointed sanctions are their commanded to halt transactions with Iran.

They expected Iranian university students from their expected Iranian university students from their expected Iranian university students from their expected Iranian university students from their expected Iranian university students from their expected Iranian university students from their expected Iranian

The Role of the Clerics

The desics are the soldiers of Imam Mahdi and teachers of his school of thought, they are the clear sources for the pure cultural revolution. They must teach the people that current resistance for development is economics, knowledge and jihād. The strategy of the today's enemy is to prevent economical prosperity and knowledge. The enemy desires sanctioning and isolating to become bulwarks for our progress. So, today's struggle is to act upon three orders given by our beloved leader: Economical development, disdain towards the enemy's psychological war and expanding the knowledge of the country.

One of the aspects of strength is the power of the government. Praise to God, we have a strong government that can deter the enemy. Another aspect of strength is the strength of culture and Wilayat. In face of these great merits of ours, the enemy has kneeled down. The power to advance the country has caused the enemy to aspire less in preventing progress. The people of Iran must be alert in facing this plot. The responsibility of our clerics is to encourage everyone to economical development, progress and expand the knowledge of the country so that, God-willing, the country of Imam Mahdī will become powerful in all aspects.

THE STRATEGY OF WAITING AND THE RESPONSIBILITY OF MUSLIMS IN PREPARING FOR THE REAPPEARANCE

A Society Waiting for the Reappearance

The culture of the awaiting is a path which gives hope and is productive by inviting the believers to the reappearance of the saviour and reformer and to disseminate divine justice. It guides humanity to one universal government, one religion, one military, one law and a unified society.

The doctrine of this path is a preparation for the saviour and reformer who will spread divine justice. In this doctrine, the leaders of the society should seek to arrive at these goals:

- 1. Increasing the awareness and knowledge of the people regarding the saviour.
- 2. Inviting the people to establishing a spiritual link with the saviour.
- 3. Encouraging the people to carry out the rights which the saviour has upon those who are waiting for him such that they spread his name and remembrance, act according to his counsel, recognize and follow his representatives and supporters.

- 4. Inviting those who are waiting to be watchful over their actions and words, and calling towards noble beliefs.
- 5. Strive to remove the bulwarks of the reappearance among themselves.
- 6. Preparing the waiters to withstand the enemies' threats about the saviour.

In reality, the goal of the doctrine of the awaiting and the spreading to divine justice, is preparation for the reappearance of the saviour. The path of waiting for the reappearance should be explained with these following questions.

- 1. What is the responsibility of the people?
 - a. Are there productive actions?
 - b. Are there any impediments among friends?
 - c. Are there threats expected from the enemies?
- 2. We need to study in depth and discover what our responsibility is.
 - a. What are productive actions for the preparation of the reappearance?
 - b. Which things are impediments for the reappearance?
 - c. What are the expected threats?
- 3. With clear answers about responsibilities and tasks, what must be done?

Is passivity the right course of action? Should one endure and remain quite till:

- a. Oppression and corruption take over the world
- b. The time of reappearance materializes by itself Is being active the right course of action?
 - a. Carrying out productive actions?
 - b. Removing barriers?
 - c. Countering threats?
 - d. All three of the above?
 - 4. What is the limit of our struggle?
 - a. Is it individual?
 - b. Is it linked to a specific nation or people?

Responsibility of Muslims

- c. Is it regional?
- d. Is in worldwide?
- 5. What is the nature of our struggle in carrying out our responsibility?
 - a. Is it a reality?
 - b. Is it law-based?
 - c. Is it society-based?
 - d. Is it cultural?
 - e. Is it civil?
 - f. Is it governmental?
 - g. Is it political?
 - h. Is it non-political?
- 6. Who does leadership belong to?
- 7. What is the goal?
- 8. To what time does the perspective extend to?
- 9. What are its limits and borders?
- 10. What is the level of work to be done?
 - a. What is the path to be taken?
 - b. What is the work to be done?
 - c. Is it tactical and technical?
 - d. Is it all three of the above?

The answers to these questions will guide us to the preparation of the saviour's reappearance.

The Innate Nature for the Waiting of a Saviour

Waiting for the saviour who will reform and spread justice is originated in the innate nature of humans. It is a general and shared belief among nations and religions. It is not particular to one nation.

This promise can be found as being innate in the Zabūr of David, the Old and New Testaments of Moses and Jesus, the Avestas of Zoroaster, the heavenly scriptures of the Hindus, the beliefs in Buddhists, and different religions. It has also

come in the holy Qur'ān; the fulfillment of the promise coming has been pointed. In the words of the great Prophet of Islam it has also come in the form of Qiyām Qā'im. It is also in the different schools of thought as duhūr Mahdī and in the Sh'ia school of thought, he is introduced with the name of his forefathers.

In Islam, many different names have been commentated for the reappearance of the Imam. A few examples are: Baqīyat Allāh, Qiyām Qā'im Āl Muḥammad, waiting in the time of Imam's occultation and the end of Satan's power which is known in the Qur'ān as 'the day of known time.' It also announces to the Muslims Imam Mahdī Muntazar and his return and establishment of a just government and as the saviour who will reform and spread justice.

The promise of God is below.

وَعَدَ ٱللَّهُ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مِنكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا ٱلصَّلِحَتِ
لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي ٱلْأَرْضِ كَمَا ٱسْتَخْلَفَ ٱلَّذِينَ مِن
قَبْلِهِمْ وَلَيُمَكِّنَنَ هُمْ دِينَهُمُ ٱلَّذِي ٱرْتَضَىٰ هُمْ وَلَيُبَدِّلَهُم
مِنْ بَعْدِ خَوْفِهِمْ أَمْنَا يَعْبُدُونَنِي لَا يُشْرِكُونَ بِي شَيْاً وَمَن كَفَر بَعْدَ ذَالِكَ فَأُولَتِيكَ هُمُ ٱلْفَسِقُونَ وَمَن كَفَر بَعْدَ ذَالِكَ فَأُولَتِيكَ هُمُ ٱلْفَسِقُونَ

Chapter al-Hijr, Verse 38.

² There is a reliable tradition regarding this from Abū 'Abdullah. 'O Wahab! Do you think this is the day of resurrection of humans. No! God has given a period till the day the *Qā'im* is brought up and will take the front hair and throw him on his neck. This is the day of known time.' Kitāb Tafsīr, Volume 2, Page 242; Al-Burhān, Volume 3, Page 366; al-Aṣfā, Volume 1, Page 631; Tafsīr Ṣāfī, Volume 2, pag3 184; Tafsīr Kunz al-Daqā-'iq, Volume 7, Page 129; Tafsīr Nūr al-thaqalayn, Volume 3, Page 14; al-Mīzān, Volume 12.

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God has promised those of you who have faith and do righteous deeds that He will surely make them successors in the earth, just as He made those who were before them successors, and He will surely establish for them their religion which He has approved for them, and that He will surely change their state to security after their fear, while they worship Me, not ascribing any partners to Me. And whoever is ungrateful after that-it is they who are the transgressors.

This is the promise given to the believers and those who are noble as powerful words in the book of wisdom.

Doctrine of Mahdism.

We have explained the doctrine of the waiting for the saviour who will reform and spread justice as the promise of mankind (known as doctrine of *Mahdism*) and the preparation for the reappearance as found in all religions and beliefs. We will study the political, social and cultural conditions and the features and functions of the society waiting for the reappearance.

In this time and age filled with worldwide corruption, worldly and physical indulgences, excitement over valueless items, satanic parties, imposition of wars on people; nothing except the remembrance of God will bring tranquillity. The condition of tranquillity and safety in the God's trench is faith, an unwavering belief, the promise of the last age, his remembrance which will reduce panic and bring about happiness.

The most important effect of the final global promise in divine religions is the manifestation of unity and its political and social effects. Among the things which make clear the manifestation of unity in the reappearance of Imam Mahdī are the goals of divine religions like the unification of government

Chapter al-Nür, Verse 55.

and military, a unified law, a unified religion and society which will be completed through him.

Many traditions about Mahdism are present. Regarding the verse, 'While to Him submits whoever there is in the heavens and the earth,' Imam Ṣādiq says: When the Mahdī stands up, no land will remain except that from it will called 'There is no deity except God and Muhammad is the messenger of God'.

Other social and political effects of waiting for Imam Mahdī include the existence of hope, unity in words, and training of revolutionary humans. The nation of Iran has seen this effect from the 15th of Khurdad (1342) to 12th Bahman (1357) during the exile period of the great leader of Islamic revolution, Imam Khumaynī. He was an active leader, the guardian during the occultation who was set on reaching the goal and generated energy and trained others.

When the resistance with apartheid government in South Africa, the leader was in an English prison but his utmost presence gave hope and mobilized the black population. He was aware of the events till the victory of their uprising.

Another sign of the saviour is the struggle of the arrogant world powers to counter these effects. They propagate instability, anxiety, war and hopelessness so the philosophy of their lives becomes absurd. Through this they make them hopeless of a saviour. In these conditions, the cure for safety, ease, hope and resistance is inviting the people towards the promise. Every time one remembers him, he is like the sun behind the clouds, giving life, progress and movement. He brings forth the beauty of life and adds excitement in the lives of humans. Therefore, the existence of a saviour in the time of occultation and the lack of a leader to teach and train is like the sun behind the clouds, still having important effects.

1. Protecting Tawhīd and the religion of God

Chapter Ål-i 'Imrān, Verse 83.

Responsibility of Muslims

- 2. Training those who are waiting for him by making them willing to sacrifice, filling them with divine love, making their hearts full of faith and sincerity, and preparing them to reform the world.
- 3. Influencing the spirituality of the believers; the heavenly leader along with training their manner of talking, behavior, teaching and preparing; he will also spiritually train and expand the spiritual personality and internal attraction in the believers.
- 4. Outlining the point of creation; the saviour who will reform and spread justice has a divine goal. The creator is void of any type of deficiency and need; He will assist His servant in removing their needs. In the end, the task of the saviour who will reform and spread justice is divine. He will guide his followers in removing the needs of the deprived and oppressed. The social and political effects of the saviour and his followers are to bring about reform and descend goodness and blessings on the society.

Imam 'Alī says: Indeed, the earth will never remain without a proof of Qā'im; whether is open and manifest or hidden and covered from vision. Until the proofs and signs of God's religion vanish, regardless of how many there are and wherever

they may be.

In an Islamic tradition, the best form of worship is the awaiting. This type of the awaiting based on study, precision and struggle. This type of the awaiting builds humans and brings about foresight. A real muntadar appoints his actions, words and movements upon the contentment and satisfaction of the beloved. He becomes willing to sacrifice for goals, promotes goodness, nobility and divine counsel. In contrast, the one who has not recognized the Imam and is not waiting for him has compared to those in the time of ignorance in Shi'a and Sunni traditions. A tradition about this is as follows:

I told Imam Ṣādiq that the Prophet said: Whosoever dies

and does not recognize the Imam, dies the death of ignorance. The Imam replied: Yes. I said: Complete ignorance or the ignorance in which he does not recognize the Imam? He said:

The ignorance of polytheism, hypocrisy and deviation.

Based on this, the Mahdism doctrine is a prerequisite for the reappearance of the saviour of the world. With regard to the explanations above, the the awaiting of the reappearance of the saviour who will reform and spread justice, he will manifest the promise of God by different works and by raising upright individuals who are reformers, hopeful, revolutionary and pious. He will bring them to social and political fields. From one side, he will point to the bright horizon and outlook of a just world; he will train them in a certain way so that they will not be satisfied with the state of present things and will think how to bring about a purer world with more love and justice. This type of upbringing reforms the society and politics and is a prerequisite for the reappearance.

Experience points to that when revolutions reach their conclusion at a time which in the beginning they were due to different reasons, were a prerequisite for the revolution. The global revolution of the saviour who will reform and will be focused on justice, will be Imam Mahdī, the Qā'im of the last time. The revolution will be the last, the most important, the most comprehensive and deepest of world revolutions. It will encompass all aspects of the world; this is not an exception from the rule. It is a prerequisite for the reappearance and is among the motives and responsibilities of those who are

waiting for him.

Waiting for the promise of the world and humanity will be a future victory and for this reason has been counted among the best actions. This action is itself a prerequisite for the revolution. We are waiting for the government, which according

Kāfi, Volume 1, Page 377 and Volume 2, Page 21.

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to traditions is the peak of knowledge, technology, justice, sincerity, research, foresight, agricultures, livestock and a complete economic system. It will be the highest form of civilization and it is clear that those who are waiting for Imam Mahdī, must work in all of these aspects and remain strong and in-depth. Just as the revolution of the Prophet was based on thought, action, work, struggle of the people in all aspects, the global revolution will also be like such. In contemporary times, the Islamic Revolution of Iran is a model as this prerequisite.

Regarding the methods of Imam Mahdī, many traditions have come from Imam Ṣādiq.

'Abdullah bin 'Aṭā Makkī says I asked Imam Ṣādiq about the method of Imam Mahdī. Imam replied: He will employ the same method of the Prophet. He will destroy the previous methods and will rebuild Islam and complete it.

Factors in the Preparation of the Reappearance

By researching the books and thoughts of Islamic scholar, ten factors can be counted for the preparation of the reappearance.

A Better Glance at Expanding and Establishing Affection in a Waiting Community

One of the factors from one aspect for the victory in the early stages of Islam, as well as the Islamic revolution, was harmonization with the commands of the great Prophet and Imam Khumaynī with the intellect, conscience and humanity. Another aspect was battling from every type of pollution, poverty, misery and injustice. This was a great magnet to attract humans and its result was victory.

1. Generating knowledge and ideas and working on them

¹ Na'mānī, al-Ghībah, Page 230; Biḥār ul-Anwār, Volume 52, Page 353.

By generating knowledge and ideas and working on them, it is possible to travel one-hundred years in one night. Currently, the beloved leader of the Islamic revolution, Hadrat Imam Khamenei, marks the beginning of his advice with generating knowledge. One of the prerequisites for the establishment of the global government by the divinely promised leader is generating knowledge and understanding and benefitting from them.

2. Encouraging the culture of steadfastness, resistance and courage

The divine book of Muslims mentions one-hundred and four times patience and forbearance. Patience and forbearance in religion is patience and forbearance in face of enemies. It also includes alertness in one's limits and faith and these are among the conditions of the believers.

3. Remaining with piety and Adherence to Morals and Human Rights

One of the important factors in attracting and influencing people is remaining with piety and adhering to morals, human and property rights and protecting others' reputation. This was important in the time of the Prophet and beginning of Islam; additionally, it can be seen in our time with the blessed presence of Imam Khumaynī and his followers and the beloved leader of the revolution.

4. Encouraging faith and trust in God
By encouraging faith and trust in God, it is fundamental in
unification of the government. In the beginning of Islam
during the victory of Mecca, Abu Sufyān came to side of the
Islamic army and said: If only I knew through what means
Muḥammad gained victory over me. The great Prophet put his
hand on his shoulder and said: We became victorious through
the help of God.

Faith and trust in God build unity, solidarity and a strong spirit as we have seen since the beginning of the Islamic revolution when the shadow of faith and trust and empty fists

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became victorious over the eastern and western tanks given to the Shah as presents.

5. Economic and Social Collaboration and Assistance based on Islamic Fraternity

Economic and social collaboration and assistance based on Islamic brotherhood and assisting in the challenges of social area are prerequisites for a bright future.

6. Reforming the Social and Political Methods and Interactions Reforming social and political methods and interaction among social and political individuals and groups and different schools of thoughts.

7. Appointing the Book and Prophet of God, and the Representatives and Successors of the Promise of the Last Time as Judges in Personal, Societal and Political Differences In the Islamic revolution of Iran, Wilāyat al-Faqīh is the personality with faith and piety, who is aware of the book of God and the traditions of the Prophet and the representative, who is courageous, administrative, pondering and the judge of the affairs of the people and government.

8. Continuity of the Battle of Truth and Falsehood,
Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil

9. Constant Remembrance of the Promised Reformer who will Spread Divine Justice, Not Forgetting his Global Revolution One must always remember the promised reformer who will spread divine justice, moving towards him, not forgetting his global revolution, the prerequisites of global justice, his guaranteeing of the rights of humans, granting the government to the oppressed, the victory of deprived over the arrogant and the squanderers of the entire world. In the end, we would like to enlighten this discussion by sketching the justice-spreading government of Imam Mahdī in the world.

All of the humans in reforming, purifying, equality and forming fraternal bonds must live together with one another. War-mongering, militancy, massacring, oppressing, pillaging,

corruption, poverty and hunger must all be removed from the people. The oppressed, with its complete meaning include those who are oppressed intellectually, economically, politically and socially, will achieve it through leadership, greatness, pondering and global spirituality. Divine goodness will encompass all the people of the world. The flag of safety and protection will wave throughout the world. Everyone will be under the blessing and perfection of his holy presence and will succeed and benefit. For this reason, we will understand why all the prophets and leaders have attributed him as the one with the sword, $Q\bar{a}$ im towards truth, and the righteous successor.

Peace upon that saviour that holds the responsibility of the prophets and divine leaders and through his reappearance, will their goals be manifested.

Peace upon Mahdī, that beneficent Joseph who was imprisoned in the prison, who is waiting for his own friends so he can help them and destroy the prison.

Peace upon that captain like Noah, who lead the ship of salvation and destroyed polytheism, oppression and hypocrisy from the world through his torrential revolution; and the slogan of 'there is no deity, but God' was being chanted.

Peace upon Mahdi who like the stand of Moses brought the punishment of arrogance to Pharaoh and those who are haughty and brought their abjectness to the dirt.

Peace upon the reviver, through the breath of the Messiah revived the dead earth of polytheism and oppression; and gave the spirit of life to the lifeless body.

Peace upon Mahdī whose truthful victory will come with his stand and the rightful servant will rule during his time and will inherit the land.

ROLE OF PROPAGATORS OF RELIGION IN EXPANDING THE RELIGIOUS BELIEF OF THE SAVIOUR

Summary

The culture of the awaiting is a path giving hope and development by the believers calling towards one global government by the saviour who will reform and spread justice. It is call towards a unified religion, system, law and human society.

To call humanity towards the saviour and removing the impediments so it can be accepted by all, the doctrine of culture which has methods and appropriate procedures must be brought forth in centres of learning and culture. This cultural doctrine must be based on social justice in all areas of the world. The social conditions, propagation, and legislation must be made clear on a macro-scale and take form. The following things must become goals: adopting an appropriate doctrine based upon the beliefs of scholars and the nation, taking account the geographical and climatic conditions of each reason, shaping general boundaries for the propagating the cultural and artistic movements in

delivering the message of the saviour. Surely in a gradual stage, masses of people will attach and research the saviour.

Introduction

The culture of the awaiting is a path giving hope and development by the believers and ad calling towards the saviour who will reform and spread justice, unified government (unified religion, system, law and human society). The concept of the awaiting in the divine religions is a matter of the innate nature. This has been pointed to in the Zabūr of David, the Old and New Testaments of Moses and Jesus, the Avestas of Zoroaster, the heavenly scriptures of the Hindus, the beliefs in Buddhists, and different religions. It has also come in the holy Qur'ān.

The most important effect of the promise in divine religions is the manifestation of unity and its political and social effects. The goals of unity and divinity will be fulfilled like: the unification of government and military, a unified law, a unified religion and society which will be completed through him. The arrogant powers will struggle to fight the effects of the promise and the saviour; they propagate instability, anxiety, war and despair so the philosophy of their lives becomes absurd.

The focus of threats of the Zionists, imperialists and Tāghūt in the beginning will be to make the call of the saviour difficult and intense than how it really is. They will intensify and increase their threats and opposition. They will direct blame at him. It is clear that in this stage, one needs awareness of the invasive scenarios to prevent its influence among them. To oppose this, methods of propagation and information must be utilized according to the geographical, climatic, governmental, national and cultural conditions. At that time, this doctrine will be able to become powerful in the hands of aware believers who are knowledgeable and steadfast. They will

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be able to guide in the face of any threat, change, novel culture, political or insecurity. The will be able to guide towards a calm society desiring justice and the saviour.

This research is in response to the role of those who believe in the saviour in upbringing and a unified population seeking justice. Others questions also arise:

- 1. Can one strategy work for societies having different political, economical, societal and cultural differences? Or is it needed to be localized with different cultural, social and political conditions?
- 2. What are the different strategies for institutionalizing the concept of the saviour in different societies?
- 3. What is the most important component for human training to combat the arrogant powers and moving towards justice?

Based upon the hypothesis of this research and keeping in mind the innate nature of the saviour and the human struggle to leave the crisis as well as the spiritual state of the world, a saviour-oriented person can volunteer with more energy.

This writing after a description and stating the parts of this doctrine, will explain the strategy of those who are saviour-oriented and look at the practical approaches of this theory.

The concept of this Doctrine

In the foundational dictionaries of different languages and in books pertaining to strategy, this concept has been explained in different words. There are some outer differences, but also unified and shared beliefs. The doctrine is the foundation of belief, the framework of the government, and the fundamental root through which other branches of science, accumulation of science, experience, study, analysis, experiments, collections and future actions are given development. Capabilities are employed for goals in those fields of implementation.

The doctrine is a deep concept and has a wide implementation in which the fundamentals, policies and

strategies in the centres of action are expressed in an official manner with specific considerations and being political-economic-governmental-cultural based. It is the fundamental, foundational, methodological and guiding principle in supporting general policies.

Principle of the Doctrine

The doctrine has three strategic parts which can be separated to its explanation, its implementation and its technical aspects.

A Better Glance at Expanding and Establishing Affection in a Waiting Community

This doctrine is the source for other doctrines. The structure of this doctrine allows for culture-building, generating power for propagation, teaching, answering problems, preparing governments and associations. It is also used for being a rule in geographical regions, gathering basics, and source for developing possibilities, assisting people in goals and policies, and securing a sufficient foundation for a cultural plan. This doctrine through developing efficiency and effectiveness, executing the sources and foundations for propagation, provision and support, securing methods of propagation and essential needs for cultural development, will create an appropriate environment for propagating powers. The most important foundation of the strategies in this doctrine is to protect the secrets and which if weak, will stop the task.

B) Application of the doctrine

This doctrine distinguishes fundamental principles and rules based on calling to the saviour and more specifically, Mahdism. By taking benefit of experiences in propagation and education, beliefs, formation in the minds of thinkers, it can be guided through administration of cultural systems in centres and institutes of religion, education, propagation and publishing. In other words, this doctrine is the guide of

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systems in carrying out central religious works and it is sufficient if this is common in carrying out actions.

The application of this doctrine follows the strategy of this doctrine and the general principles by taking into account specific situations and capacities of cultures in propagation and communication with cultural centres and religious seminaries. It also takes into account the geography based on cultural, language and civil considerations.

C) Technical Doctrine

The technical aspect of this doctrine is how to execute the cultural plan in geographical locations of the world. The technical elements will guide in propagation. The technical doctrine has two types of regulations: Individual, which have been mentioned in the books of propagation and art of speech, and organizational, like teachings, contents of agreements, and contracts and statutes of centres of propagation, teaching, knowledge and culture. Individual regulations, specialties, talents and how to use the tools of propagation, relations and communication will be mentioned. It will distinguish every part of the cultural system, ways of planning and carrying out programs.

Fundamental Considerations in Compiling Strategic Theories

Based on these explanations of practicality of the doctrine, the following merits must be taken as fundamental and basics in formulating the theory.

- 1. The practicality of the theory is fundamental in propagation. It is also in the representation of the fundamentals and basic theories of pondering about the saviour, specifically the saviour, to reach the goals and success. All the components and institutions must be taken.
- 2. The practicality of the theory must be dynamic and active

in different times and situations as well as flexible. Based on this doctrine, it should be logically synchronized with changes in the environment, opposition, support, threats from hardware and software, institutions, cultural and technical centres and elements of propagation. In other words, it should be flexible and adaptable.

It is necessary the practicality of the doctrine to be intelligent. In the stage of action, it requires, the ability to distinguish. Therefore, its groundwork needs to be explained to influence the guidance and direction of advocates and centres of propagation.

3. The practicality of doctrine must take over action so the centres and elements of propagation can act upon the teachings, lessons and experience of which they have faith in. From this, training workshops in native locations must be formed so methods can be developed.

4. To compile the practical doctrines in face of superpowers, all geographical regions of the world must be assumed to be locations of propagation, sensitive and places where culture has not been taken. Additionally, opponents must be counted as important factors who changed the cultural expansion, and do quick and wide actions in different fields. The promise of the saviour must be propagated in all parts of the world.

5. The enemy by thinking about Mahdism in order to achieve their own goals will take into regard the geographical aspects of every regions, the situation of borders, the components and densities of nation, population, culture, customs and traditions. It is necessary to keep in mind the necessities of opposition in all institutions.

6. The enemies of the concept of Mahdism are the enemies of humanity. Centres of thinking should organize physical means and must benefit from investments and less-known methods. In these conditions, powers and

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centre of propagation must be protected. Supporting and assisting the powers must be considered.

Methods of Implement Theoretical Discussions

- 1. Increasing the knowledge and belief of the promised saviour who will spread justice.
- 2. Executing bases of centre and thinking, preparing and compiling texts about recognizing the saviour who will spread justice, changing methods of propagation, distinguishing models of software and hardware, improvement of the human awareness about cultural threats from secularism and western liberalism in culture and belief.
- 3. Guiding centres of religion and advocates from advancing and harmonizing religious propagation to oppose and defend the cultural invasion.
- 4. Bringing about unity of perspectives in educational planning, western propagation means, changing and improving instructional texts, skills of advocates in countries and areas appropriate to attacks and threats, the practical doctrine of the righteous saviour who will spread justice to humanity
- 5. Clarifying, reviving and improving the sciences of religious and cultural advocates based on three things: speed, carefulness and method of propagation, swift response of organizations and religious and education centres to oppose the western cultural invasion
- 6. Executing necessary and practical changes in building the centres of propagation and teaching, how to spread the advocates with a deep understanding who aware of the principles and focusing on new ways of the call towards the saviour who will spread justice.
- 7. Distinguishing the framework for education planning and shared propagation.

8. Preparing the grounds for propagation appropriate to the attack and intensity of the western cultural invasion.

9. Modulating and harmonizing original programs in

different grounds and areas of propagation

10. Reducing the vulnerabilities of the propagating sources in face of attack, especially in the first stages of propagation and calling towards the righteous saviour who will spread justice

11. Planning and preparing the powers in areas and centres of propagation, with threats and enticement and with

arrogant deception,

12. Explaining to centres of propagation the psychological actions of enemies and cultural organization depended on the arrogant powers about the saviour of mankind

13. Warning centres of propagation about wasting time and extra power to combat misguided groups and elements

which were enticed

14. Acting with wisdom, insight for their guidance and enlightenment

15. The uses of systems and connections of multimedia
Result

If every nation is not willing to sacrifice for the goals, they will be destroyed under the oppressive boots of cultural invasion of secularism. In every amount, the economical, political, and cultural capabilities will lose. Therefore, the most important pillars of a steadfast nation are the existence of the will to resist, desire to defend the original culture and readiness for sacrifice.

The small village of the western world is strategically in the state of culturally invading nation in several technical stages. The people in each stage of the pyramid must culturally resist the enemies' attack. Therefore, administration and mental preparation of the people is important for organizing and

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deploying for defence of the original culture.

The cultural invasion of the future will be under the influence of changes and accelerated technological developments. Threats and attacks will increase in technology. With the existence of this, nations have options available: First, to depend on the original and native culture, and second, internal and fundamental weakness of the west.

Therefore, in face of the world-squanderers, the only hope is in the righteous saviour who will administer justice in world and he himself defends nations. He stands with them through his sacrifice in the way of enhancing the belief and physical benefits. It can be suggested that the doctrine of calling towards the righteous saviour and who will spread justice in the world, is the defender of the original and divine culture. This doctrine is the fundamental resistance to the invasion of the secular culture and capitalism of the west. It will bring the nations to victory. This path is the underhand of all nations with different religions and beliefs until the one saviour of humanity comes and unifies the nations and religions with his rule.



THE ESSENTIAL POSITION OF THE CLERGY IN THE SCHOOL OF IMAM MAHDI

Preface

If we look at the history of colonial powers throughout the world, particularly the sensitive and critical area of the Middle East, we will notice that the dominance seeking western powers adopted particular methods of acquiring dominance over the available resources their colonies, be it through aggression. At times they actualize their evil plots with their physical occupation and direct administration of the area. This method is referred to as ancient colonialism. At other times they politically occupy a country by means of controlling its elites and political leaders. They deem this method as the best method of plundering a nation's wealth. This method is well known as modern colonialism.

In the current times, occupation of software systems of countries, control of their production systems and distribution by means of intelligence information and technology have been determined as effective methods in this tyrannical process. This method has been referred to as post modern colonialism by the far sighted Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Regarding this, an extremely important point that holds immense importance is that despite the many conspiracies and enmity, the honourable and powerful Iranian nation stood up against this dirty colonial devil in all three phases; namely, ancient colonialism, modern colonialism and post-modern colonialism. They resisted both the foreign colonial powers and their internal workers. With their resistance they have been successful as a model for resistance against the colonial powers in the Muslim nations and the world. The Tobacco Movement, the Mashrūtiyat Movement, the nationalization of oil production and the most important of all, the explosive light of the pure Muhammadan (s) Islam that spread across the world was all an iron fist that that developed in the hands of this honourable and free nation with the leadership of the clerics. This iron fist was rammed into the hearts of the ancient and modern colonial powers that were full of enmity towards this nation.

In the current times, the revolutionary Iranian nation has taken great strides in the development and advancement of science, such as the nanotechnology, biotechnology, and aerospace technology. The most important of these is the advancement of the peaceful nuclear program. These scientific advancements have given a bright light to the face of the revolution and has granted hope and confidence to the Islamic awakening so that through it, it can bring the post modern colonial powers to their knees in submission and humility.

What is the secret behind this resistance and persistence? What is the secret behind the freedom pride, enthusiasm and self confidence? What is the point of difference between this nation and other nations and how can be this great distinction and impenetrable nature of this nation be explained?

With a bit of attention and justice, we can observe an illuminated red movement of martyrdom that was present in all historical events, be they big or small. It stood up against

both the colonial powers and the despotic rule. It is the movement of Prophet Muhammad (s) and his pure progeny. It is the movement of imamate and wilāyah that is under prophetic guidance. It granted this movement continuation with its sincerity and altruistic nature. In the path of its divine missions, it did not fear any power, be it great or small by means of seeking refuge in divine fear.

This illuminated movement is none other than the movement led by the spiritual clergy of the Shī'a school which is in quest of pure Muhammadan(s) Islam and the vanguard of reviving Islamic culture and civilization. This is the very reason why the despotic and colonial powers and their workers have ever been struggling to put out this divine light and cut this divine cord.

The Foundation of the Shī'a School

The Shi'a school is the school of the Imam of our time. The experts of this school are the clergy. The Shi'a school holds no meaning without them. In a certain tradition from the Imam of our time ('a), it is said: They are my authority over you and I am the authority of God. This tradition has made our duty evident. It establishes that the chain of authority from us to God the exalted comprises of only two mediums, the jurist and Imam Mahdī ('a).

Colonial Powers in Iran

When colonial rule came close to Iran, unlike many other Islamic countries in which they easily reached their objectives, they did not attain any of their objectives regardless of the

¹ Iḥtijāj, volume 2, page 469; Shaykh Ṭusī, al-Ghaybah, page 290, Kashf al-Ghaybah, volume 2, page 531; Kamāl al-Dīn, volume 2, page 473; Wasāil al-Shī'a, volume 27, page 140; Biḥār al-Anwār, volume 53, page 181.

amount of threats they used. They could not affect Iran even though they came to Iran before attempting to occupy the other countries in the region. They began their aggressions against Iran at the time of Shah Abbāsī Safavī and while they began their movement towards other countries approximately one hundred to one hundred and fifty years afterwards. They were successful in their plots in other countries, but their attempts failed in Iran. They then understood that there is a factor they need to take into consideration in Iran that serves as an impediment to their plots of taking control of the people - since the objective of all rule is to take control of the affairs of the people. Upon their analysis of the events that took place, they came to the conclusion that the reason for their unsuccessful attempts in Iran was the presence of the clergy there. The clergy here is the source of the obligations and the prohibitions of the people. This is the reason they tried to the establish public law as something in opposition to the clergy. Thus so long as public law is in place, the maraja' cannot be the criteria for the action of the people.

During the years of Imam Khumaynī (r)'s leadership, and even in the current times, some modernists and legal experts are promoting the same ideology. Their assertion is that regardless of whether a law is present in the books of Islamic law [of the marāja'], it cannot be implemented in the society until it is converted into a law of the legal system.

The Beginning of the Colonial Infiltration

The colonial infiltration in Iran began during the time of Mashrutiyat. They put a great amount of effort and resources to achieve a result. Their methods were accompanied by foundational strategic plans that were implemented against Shi'a in the West. On many occasions, incognizant of their schemes, many of our own elites were helping the

materialization of their objectives. Their actions and speeches would help implement the plan of the westerners while they thought they were on the right path.

The reality is that the events that took place in our country in the years 1941 – 1978 were implanted in the year 1930. A hired servant by the name of Reza Khan was given the job of wiping the trace of the clergy from the society. He was commanded to change the replace the clothes of the society, which were like the clothes of the clergy and that he should suspend the commemorational programs for Imam Husayn ('a), ensure the people shave their beards and remove the chador from the women. All the aforementioned steps were implemented in order to remove the place of leadership of the clergy from the society.

The western leaders were able to infiltrate a social layer from the society. Some university affiliates, newspaper editors, hotel owners, and people in position in large cities such as Tehran were inclined towards the West. Western ideology took form in the society in this manner, and the modernist westernists came into the picture. Though all the methods adopted by the westerners and the westernists were in line with Islamic objectives in their apparent form, they were entirely beneficial to the westerners. They wanted to communicate to the people that a non-clergy can also lead the society. They would publish books pertaining to Islamic precepts written by non-clergy. In an attempt to prove their point, they would place their photos with ties and hats on the cover of the books.

The Method of Colonial Infiltration

Colonialist would always implement their conspiracies in secrecy with the exception of one instance in which they directly pressurized Nādir Shah to omit clergy from society's grounds. If we review the countries newspapers between the

years 1941-1978, we will note that there were always two types intellectual leadership presented to the society, namely the clergy and the westernists.

The replacement of religious leaders in the modern times by people from the nationalistic groups is a product of the colonial success in omitting clergy. Some of the believers who were supportive of the clergy would also give their lives for the nationalistic leaders. They were thus able to take some power away from the clergy by means of a form of nationalistic revolution.

It is simple-mindedness to believe that the groups Nehdate-Āzādī, Ḥizb Tawdeh, Munāfiqīn and Fadāyān-e-Khalq and the remaining left wing and right wing groups were formed without any attachment with Shah's government. They were all affiliated with Shah's regime who hoped for their survival and the West was also supportive of them. They did this because they are of the notion that the ability to gain control over Iran is directly proportional to the amount of non-clergy leadership they can give rise to within the country. All the groups had elements that were assigned their position by the Shah, and were affiliated with the branch of propagation. They would collect and grant intelligence to the regime while the regime would provide them with direct guidance.

Reza Khan's objective in dispatching groups of university elites to the West was to develop a group of leadership opposing the leadership of the clergy. This was a part of the colonialist plan so that such elites could return to Iran and act as an appropriate replacement for the religious leadership. People like the deceased Mahdī Bāzargān were not selected as part of the dispatched group to the West because of their own efforts, rather the colonialists wanted to attract and train somebody there who had a religious appearance and had concern for religion. They wanted these elites to speak to the people in a manner that was clothed with religion so that they would begin to believe or accept the possibility of a non-clergy leadership.

In the Shī'a school of thought, establishing a system with non-clergy leadership is equal to opposing Imam Mahdī ('a). In order to achieve their goals, the colonialists would not only establish men who would not reject Imam Mahdī ('a) as a whole, rather they would place those who would propagate his being. In the years preceding the Islamic Revolution, a man by the name of Sajjadī was the head of an association by the name of Hujjatiyyah. He had peculiar operations running from Mashhad. We also spent a great portion of our times listening to his speeches. The people would say that Sajjadī speaks of Muhammad's (s) revolution. Sign boards and affixed in the streets and universities for his lectures and the regime of the time seemed to have no conflict with him. He would exposit the events from the early stages of Islam in a beautiful manner. He would enumerate the various deceptions of the enemies and would add that the sole threat to Islam in this day and age is Baha'ism and it is a threat that we must struggle against.

The establishment of these kinds of individuals as the leadership of the university was a crucial issue for the colonialists. The return of elites from foreign countries had such an immense effect on the psychology of some people that they came to the conclusion that additions need to be made to Islam. Some clergy began to wear standard clothes with hats to match the clothing of the westernists. Deceased Muhammad Taqī Sharī'atī, the father of Doctor Ali Sharī'atī was from this group of modernists. He ended up authoring a modernized exposition to the Qur'ān. There was a controversial sentence in his modernized exposition that had no historical evidence. This is an indication of his ideological difference with the clergy along with the difference of his clothing. Wherever he should lecture, he would always say:

Being a clergy is to be a modernist. The identification of a clergy is not his clothing. This notions were like poison that penetrated the Shī'a society. The objectives of this notion was to

invalidate the tradition of Imam Mahdī ('a) in which he said they are my authority over you. This was to make the people believe they have to pledge their obedience to somebody else.

Prior to Iran, these types of individuals and ideologies manifested themselves in other countries as well. An example is Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan from India was a Muslim leader whom the English had given the title 'Sir' to. Contrary to the explicit verses of the Qur'an, he would claim that when Moses ('a) cross the river Nile, its water did not separate and did not create two walls of water, rather it was a tide and ebb that helped him cross the river. He would claim that there were hill like earth at the bottom of the river Nile. Once the water receded, the peak of the hills became apparent and thus Moses ('a) and his people cross the Nile by using them. The flow back of the water then drowned Pharaoh and his people.

A great number of these kinds of individuals and claims can be found within the last hundred years. This kind of ideology was first established in a coordinated manner with the groups Nehdat-e-Āzādī. Mujāhedīn Khalq came to existence through these roots. In the year 1964 the group called Furqān was formed. This group would provide exposit the foundational issues of the Qur'ān. They later became the murderers of both Martyr Ayatullah Mutahharī and Martyr Ayatullah Mufatteh.

From amongst the non-clergy religious leaders, Doctor Ali Sharī'atī was successful in his endeavour and provided a valuable service to Islam. He revived religious thought within Iran's society, in particular the universities. He put confronted Communism and guerilla warfare and propagated Shī'aism to the people. Regardless of all this, Shah's regime and its western owners had no problem with him because he was not amongst the clergy. From the beginning of the fifties 1949 till the Islamic Revolution, religious thought in Iranian universities was mostly in the hands of Doctor Sharī'atī. In the end, like

other religious leaders, Doctor Sharī'atī was imprisoned. However, he did not face the torture and tribulations that others such as Martyr Ayatullah Saīdī and Martyr Ayatullah Ghaffārī went through. They would grant him permission to lecture in Mashhad and Tehran (mainly in the Irshād Islamic Centre), and many university students would sit and listen to his speeches. His books were published and were distributed throughout the universities, while this was prohibited for other religious books. Being caught would entail imprisonment. Those caught distributing or with them were however never charged nor questioned.

In the time of Doctor Shari'ati's activities another phenomenon came into existence, which was employed clergy who would act contrary to Islamic teachings. The house of one of these individuals by the name of Nawghānī was on the same road of our university in Mashhad. He would wear the attire of the clergy and would give lectures in the halls of Imam Riḍa's ('a) shrine. When the Shah would come to Mashhad, he would pay him a visit. Members of Savak would also visit him. Such individuals would carry out their activities with ease due to the anti-religious atmosphere.

The reputation of the clergy would be tarnished in this manner and the rumours of their corruption would spread. Numerous books were published in this regard. One book by the name of Ruhāniyat dar Shī'a was distributed. Another renowned book in this regard was Nawishteh Ruhāniyat which was vastly distributed. This was while many books that were essential for the Shī'a society were prohibited, and the real clergy were prohibited to speak or were imprisoned, or were exiled. It was difficult to find a bookshop that did not sell these books.

The Strategy of Colonial Powers

The strategic and tactical objective of the enemy, was and is to

destroy imamate and Shī'aism. A number of young university affiliates would bring western teachings into the country to propagate them. Bazargan, Sahabi, Musaddag and the leaders of Mujāhedīn-e-Khalq and Fadāīyān-e-Khalq were from among the renowned religious leaders of the time. In the years 1974 the lectures of men such as Hanīf, Ashraf Dahgānī, Istālīn held particular position among the people. That year, along with a number of Islamic seminary students, and some youth, we decided to run down to the shrine of Imam Rida ('a) from a road that was not so much under the surveillance of the Savāk, and scream out Imam Khumavnī (r)'s name. We thought that the name Khumaynī is familiar to the people just as it was familiar to us. After this, we heard some shop keepers of the area saying that we heard a bunch of clergymen run down the road screaming 'Kholayni Kholayni'. This was utterly strange that in a religious city such as Mashhad, in which two Islamic seminaries were operating, the name of the religious leader of the Shī'a was foreign to the extent that even if a hundred people screamed out his name together, it would not be heard. This was a reality that was prevalent in Iran at the time.

In the last ten years of Shah's rule, non-clergy leadership was accepted among Iranian youth. They [the Iranian youth] would seek answers to their canonical queries among this crowd. When I was occupied with my education program at Mashhad University, a non-clergyman would give speeches in the faculty of literature. During the same period and time, Martyr Muṭahhari would give speeches in the conference hall of Qā'im hospital. We would notice a great deal of marketing for the non-clergyman's speeches. However, they would merely say some shaykh is delivering some speeches with regard to Martyr Muṭahhari's lectures. The attendees of his lectures were a mere ten to twenty people.

The Outset of Resistance against the Colonial Powers

Once the elite clergy who were supporters of Imam Khumaynī (r) came into the scene, such as Martyr Beheshti, Martyr Bahonar, Martyr Muffateh, Martyr Mutahhari and others, they began to elaborate on the revolutionary issues. The youth gradually began to accept their ideology and began to rather believe in them. Imam Khumaynī (r) became successful in actualizing the revolution. Imam Khumaynī (r) was a divine gift. When his leadership manifested itself, all the leaders they had created were overshadowed by his greatness. They had created weak lighted stars that would go unnoticed before the grand light that was given birth from the illumination of Muhammad (s). This was the reason that the majority of the non-clergy leaders, even the Fadāīvān-e-Khalq who attempted to an uprising, and Mujāhedīne-Khalo, who inclined towards Imam Khumaynī (r), did what they did because they deemed Imam's revolution successful and in control. Once a temporary government under the leadership of Bāzargān was formed, the modernists began their operations again with the belief that they could put Imam Khumaynī (r) aside and establish a non-clergy leadership. They thus revived their operations. They began with recruiting people into the government that had no previous experience and were not know by anybody. The only quality these individuals had was that they were trained in the West. The apparent of the intellectual leaders of these westernist in various parties, such as Bazargan, was religious. They would offer their prayers and so forth. They had managed to take control of the administrative affairs of the country. There was perhaps no other option other than this in those times, but later Imam Khumayni (r) realized that it was not possible to continue working with these kinds of individuals.

If we analyse the Sahifat al-Nur, we will note Imam Khumaynī (r)'s reminders to these individuals. He would warn them not to come forward [into the government's affairs] or he would expose them to the religious faction of the nation. In

the beginning the religious faction thought he was referring to the sultan seeking groups that were present in the country. However, once they observed his reaction with regard to their opposition of legal retributions for the crimes that were committed, they realized who he was referring to. They thus lost their credibility before the people leaving the nationalistic group demolished.

Imam Khumaynī (r) and his followers began their secret struggle against the puppet leaders the West desired to establish in order to demolish clergymen from the scene and occupy the country. Open resistance would have caused the followers of the non-clergy leadership to stand up against Imam Khumaynī (r). Up till this point, they [the followers of the westernist] did not realize the reason why Imam Khumaynī (r) opposed them, or why he deemed them a threat to the revolution. The deceased Doctor Dīālmah was one of the individuals who wanted to begin an open struggle against them; however we opposed his suggestion due to the aforementioned reason. Publicizing this issue would have caused segregation and disunity within the country. This would have caused all the efforts that were put into the cultural development and social unity to go to waste.

During this time, the enemies of the revolution began a hidden and painful struggle against the clergy. The dispute between Imam Khumaynī (r) and Banī Ṣadr pertained to this issue. Banī Ṣadr would claim that jurisprudence has fifty distinctions. Muntaẓarī has forty nine of them, while I have fifty. When he was asked what the role of the clergy in the struggle is, he replied saying "I myself am a clergyman because anybody stands up for and defends Iran's independence and its resources, is a clergyman". He offered a new definition for clergy with his book Wilāyat-e-Faqīh.

The reason they martyred Ayatullah Beheshtī, Ayatullah Muṭahhari, Ayatullah Mufatteḥ, Ayatullah Dastghayb and

their likes was that they had established firm stones in the path of those who wished to abolish clergymen. Their work protected the leadership of clergymen and the school of Imam Mahdī ('a). If the enemies wanted to reach their objectives, it was crucial for them to rid of them. This was the very reason for the revival of the group Mujāhedīn-e-Khalq. This group had managed to attract a great number of our youth. I had asked one of my close friends who had joined the Mujāhedīn-e-Khalq who his marja' is. He replied saying "Mas'ūd Rajavī". I asked him who derives Islamic verdicts. He replied saying "The central department of the organization".

The method of the United States, the West, and Mas'ūd Rajavī was that people seek guidance swith regard to their religious affairs] from people they did not know. They changed the system of marjaīyyat and Islamic leadership to a non-clerical unknown administrative department of an organization. The reason the hypocrites insisted in keeping Jalal Guniehi, who wore the attire of clergyman and would always sit next to Rajavi, was that they wanted to portray that they were supportive of the clergy and the clergy was also supportive of them. Even in the processions that were and still are carried out in Iraq, Jalal Gunjehī would be positioned next to their leadership. They wanted to communicate a message to the people saying that clergy is an occupation like other occupations. In the same manner the people are religious, the clergy too are religious. However, the notions of the Shī'a school differs. The logic of the Shī'a school is as Imam Khumaynī (r) said, "Islam without the clergy is like a country without physicians. The country can only progress under the guidance of the clergy".

The State of the Country after the Islamic Revolution

There were various ideologies among the religious faction and the supporters of the revolution. These were all consequences

of the notion of abolishing the clergy. Some of them are as follows:

- 1. There was a conflict between the Friday prayer leader and the governor general in some provinces. The governor general would question what role do he had in this province? And if they are the representatives of the government, then what is the Friday prayer leader's role? The Friday prayer leader was a representative of the Supreme leader, and the governor general was the representative of the government. The Friday prayer leader is to allot most of his time for the religious affairs of the people, whereas the governor general should deal with the administrative affairs. Both are powers of the system, Islamic Revolution and under the supervision of the Supreme leadership. Rather than grasping this simple issue, they disputed over the issue.
- 2. There was also the dual government notion developed by the Americans which entailed omitting the clergy and the Shī'a school from the system. Imam Khumaynī (r) nullified one hundred year operations of the colonial powers with the Islamic Revolution. He once again established the clergy as the social reference point of society. Thus with the support of the westernists, and those who opposed the clergy, they were not only uninterested in bringing back democracy and freedom, rather they wanted to use these as a means to take back all the interests Imam Khumaynī (r) had taken away from the West.
- 3. There is another group that still exists today. They are a group who has placed Islam and the revolution in their hands and wallets. They manifest polytheism, disbelief in all its aspects. They attend the congregational prayer with their lengthy beards and tasbīḥ. They stand in the front

row on the right hand side of it, the exact place which has the ruling of jihad. They leave the congregation and then go and watch obscene films and...

4. There is another group in which faith has penetrated their spirits and their being. They are the real religious faction and pay heed to the words of Imam Khumaynī (r) and Ayatullah Khāmaneī. They beseech God to protect the revolution and the Supreme leader. If there is any distortion in the revolutionary path, they become full of concern, shed tears for its well being and struggle to correct it.

The Supreme leader of the Islamic Revolution has said the following regarding a complete exemplar:

In the early days of Islam, there were three groups of hypocrites. The reality of hypocrisy is one, but the Qur'an has categorized hypocrites into three categories or three levels. If we fail to recognize these three categories, we will definitely fall into error. Know that the situation of those days was much more difficult than the current time. In the early era of Islam, there was no means by which the hypocrites could be identified; however, today we have a simple criteria by means of which of which we can identify them. That criterion is collaboration with our already identified enemies!

The intended meaning is that hypocrites still exist today. Their operations are of such a nature that can damage the revolution. We observe during every election period, a group of people begin to support an ideology that is anti-clergy. This is the basis of their work. The West utilizes all its form of media to support individuals that are anti-clergy, at times without even

¹ Note 1, Speech of the Supreme leader of the Islamic Revolution before army unit 10 Hadrat Sayyid al-Shuhadā of the Revolutionary in the year 1998.

knowing the person concerned. However, anybody who speaks in support of the clergy sudden becomes the target of their criticism. This is the continuation of the very same operations that were developed to many centuries ago to abolish the Muhammadan (s) revolution and the Shī'a school of thought. They deem their success in the elimination of the clergy. They are of the notion that if the clergy are eliminated, they shall be able to reach their objectives with ease.

The world population is six billion. Based on current statistics, the Muslim population is one billion and four hundred million. From among the Muslims, approximately only one hundred and ten million are Shī'a. We are a small group that has so many internal conflicts. Let us depict the world's situation based on the aforementioned statistics. There are only one hundred and ten million people who accept Imam Mahdī ('a) as an Imam. Our enemies are aware of all the issues pertaining to our situation. They know well that it is the Shī'a that are going to ultimately rule the world. They are aware that the Shī'a are awaiting a world government based on justice. Thus they are constantly endeavouring to struggle against this movement. The Supreme leader of the revolution has said the following in a gathering of clergy:

In the beginning of the revolution we went to Imam Khumaynī (r) accompanied with Martyrs Beheshtī, Bāhonar and others, to ask him why he repeatedly defends the clergy. The group reminded him that there are both good and bad between the clergy, so defending the clergy in general may be problematic. Imam Khumaynī (r) replied affirming their understanding of the clergy. He added that his defense of the clergy was defense of the revolutionary among them. This is because when the enemies attack the clergy, it is this particular group they attack. As for the impious clergy, they have no quarrel with

them. In fact, they are even support of them. The reason of Imam Khumaynī (r)'s support of all clergymen was in to maintain the honour and respect for the revolutionary among them who had the responsibility to propagate the true form of Islam. His deep insight was strategic. We should not lose our strategic insight when dealing with the people's affairs. Thus you should know that the cultural affairs of the nation are the hands of the clergy.

Cultural Development

Those working in cultural institutions and the administrative system for cultural development must have firm faith in Imam Mahdī ('a). They should deem themselves as his soldiers. This is the responsibility of the Islamic seminaries and the clergy. The administrative system of the country cannot be considered the soldiers of the Imam ('a) on its own [separated from the clergyl. Such a notion should not be propagated either. It is extremely dangerous and harmful to render the administrative system the ideological, cultural and intellectual leader of our society. An example of this is the issues that were propagated in the preceding years with insistence. This is far more dangerous than the ideology of establishing non-clergy leadership. This is because power and self pride exists in the administrative system. The ideological, cultural intellectual leadership must not be established in such a place. Power and self pride is a part of Islam; however, it should be in the hands of the Supreme leadership that has the wilayah of the people.

The Islamic governing system is not the cultural leader of a nation even if the president of the government is a person who has expertise in cultural development. I myself have experience in cultural development. However, I discontinued my cultural work once they assigned me as the president of the general headquarters

of the armed forces. I even abstained from manifesting my experience and occupied myself solely with work related to the armed forces because I know my current obligation pertains to the armed forces. I do not wish to be the cultural face of the society. If such a perception materializes, it is incorrect.

It is not appropriate for such a notion to exist in the administrative system. Its management lies within the boundaries of the executive faculties of the government. The administrative manager is not a representative of the Supreme leader. Rather he is an employee for the government that is overlooked by the Supreme leader. He is not a jurist with the ability of iithad. His position is similar to the armed forces. All the various commanders in the armed forces are under their respective commander in chief. These stages of commandership are not ijtihad. They are positions defined by the armed forces. The personnel of the armed forces cannot develop spirituality. Their operations are based on the procedures and stipulations of the law. If one of the commanders has a suggestion, he is to offer it to the headquarters. Upon investigation, it is to be sanctioned by the commander in chief. Every commander is under the command of the commander in chief and is not his representative who takes his place. However, the representatives of the Supreme leader differ. They take his place as a leader because the jurist himself is the authority of Imam Mahdī ('a). They based their judgments on the Qur'an and traditions from the infallibles.

The administrative system and armed forces is not of this nature. Their job is defence, be it defence against armed threats, intelligence threats or cultural threats. We must design operational schemes to defend ourselves from these attacks. We must also organize our operations, train our forces, and then execute our operations. All the aforementioned processes are to be accomplished under a proper management system.

A crucial point with this regard is that we should not deem the clergy and the Islamic seminaries as competitors of the executive system of the government. To propound such notions is to violate the sanctity of the clergy. The Shī'a clergy and the administrative system both belong to wilayah and ultimately Imam Mahdī ('a). This government is the government of Imam Mahdī ('a). Our honourable Supreme leader is Imam Mahdī's ('a) deputy. Thus contrary to what has been propagated in the previous years, namely that there are two opposing competitors in the cultural fields of the country, one being the clergy, and the other being managers of the administrative system, there is no such conflict. The administrative management must be in communication with the clergy and should convince the society that the essential responsibility of the clergy is cultural development. I do however agree that non-clergy should also carry out cultural work by means of teaching, lectures and other such activities, but they should not be granted precedence over the clergy. All such activities should be executed under the supervision of the clergy.

It is possible that some may have the ability to write well, thus author books, propagate and distribute them to the public. However, such works should be overlooked and accepted by a council of clergy. We should see the works of nihilism produced by unknown authors published and distributed in the public only to later determine that it was the work of some intelligence services. Therefore these kinds of books should be accepted and authenticated by a council comprising of jurists and those experts. Consider a book that is authenticated by the likes of Ayatullah Hasan Zādeh Āmūlī. The divine light of such a significant scholar should penetrate into the hearts of the reader. We should not face situations where if a reader wishes to perform a search pertaining to the author of a book, he comes to realize that he neither has

religion nor moral dispositions. Rather he discovers that he is one of the hypocrites. The same author then flees to England as a refugee, or to the United States as a professor of their universities while being a claimant of being a clergyman and at the same time rises in opposition to them [the clergy] in defence of the logic the West has to offer. To have such individuals as the ideological leaders of the society is extremely dangerous. They feed the western media with their presence in the university arena by arousing structural conflicts. The enemies then disseminate this kind of news with utter exaggerations.

A vivid example of these kinds of individuals is 'Atā Allah Muhājirānī who tried to propagate the concept of dormancy with regards to cultural affairs along with westernist ideology. He once said to me that we must work in such a manner that. women should come to the Friday prayers in their miniskirts and put on their chador there to offer their prayers. Upon completion, they should take off their chador and put it in their handbags, leaving in their mini-skirts. This is the reality of the views of Muhājirānī others like him. When Muhājirānī become an ideological leader of the society, he authored two books, one of Zaynab ('a), while the other in reply to Salman Rushdie. He did not author a reply to Rushdie in obedience to Imam Khumaynī (r)'s ruling, for he himself held anti-religious sentiments like Rushdie. The publication of Rushie's book, Satanic Verses built the grounds for non-clergy leadership for the like of Muhājirānī in the Shī'a system.

There are three models for cultural development in the Shī'a society:

Model 1: Separation of Policy Making and Supervision of Administration

The policy making and supervision of cultural affairs should be in the control of the clergy in a Shī'a society and the

execution of the policies should be accomplished by the administrative body of the government. This however leads to a question. What is meant by executing policies? Does the process of executing the policies entail that each official commissioned in the process is to be a Islamic propagator (muballigh), or that they should be trained as such? This is one of the instances of differing viewpoints. If an official of one of the administrative system or a cultural institution is to be trained as a Islamic propagator, it would be the responsibility of the Islamic seminaries. This should be carried out under the guidance of the clergy. If a person wishes to be a Islamic propagator of the Islamic Revolution, and wants his words and actions to conform to the pure form of Islam, he must be trained by the Islamic seminaries. His speech should be from the speech of religious scholars. The responsibility of a Islamic propagator that operates under the Supreme leader, who is the deputy of Imam Mahdī ('a) and establishes his judgments based on the Qur'an and the traditions of the infallibles, is to abide by the instructions of the Supreme leader.

Model 2: Thematic Division of Cultural Activities

This is an unacceptable model in a Shī'a society. The responsibility of the Islamic seminaries is to train Islamic propagators that are well versed with all subject matters of Islam. Thus we cannot divide cultural activities thematically. For example, it is not possible to assign Qur'ānic education, and education pertaining to Islamic precepts to the Islamic seminaries and assign the remaining issues to non-clergy. Such a move would not be in line with the well being of a Shī'a society.

The division model which is based on the operations of two groups; namely, the Islamic seminaries and the administrative system in which the cultural work is divided between them.

Therefore the face of cultural work within the organizations

should be a pure Islamic face that is derived from the Qur'ān and traditions. Furthermore, it should be founded on the Islamic seminaries. The employees of cultural institutes and organizations should be trained and educated through the Islamic seminaries. Imam Khumaynī (r) demanded propagation of the pure form of Islam from the government and the administrative system. This macro strategy of the Islamic Republic of Iran was set in place to protect the school of Imam Mahdī ('a).

The method of the Supreme leader of the revolution, whom I have had the honour of knowing for 38 years was and is the same. He has always exerted in tear the veils that lie between him and the new generation. He converses with people, the youth in particular; in a manner that they feel they are conversing with an intimate friend. He has emphasized on this issue in the ideological precepts that he gives to his representatives and officials of the government. He would even summon some of the officials and advise them to approach their responsibility as clergy rather than presidents.

I have always insisted that if a person is to visit the armed forces and give spiritual lectures and advise the commanders, such invitations should be organized through the ideological-political office. I never write that I have invited these gentlemen; rather I have always insisted that they write that this gathering has been sanctioned by the president of the ideological-political office. This is not a mere political formality. I want the commanders to attend lessons by the clergy that are organized by the clergy and with the invitation of the clergy.

The Islamic seminaries should be manifested in every cultural movement in the Shī'a society. During the time of the Tabas earthquake, before the revolution, we were in Imam Khumaynī (r)'s camp in Tabas. The formation of the camp was in the following manner. A group of men from Tabas, and

Sadūq came together next to a small garden in Gulshan park in Tabas and said: "We are forming the Imam Khumaynī (r) camp here so that the marjāīyat is involved in the administrative affairs of the people who experienced this disaster". This was the only thing we heard from them, after which, we never saw them again. Subsequently, one of the scholars would attend the camp every three days. One day Shaykh Nāṭiq, another day we say Shaykh Hāshemī Nijād, and another day we saw Ayatullah Khāmenaī. We were a group of university students in those days who worked at the campsite. There were also some unions present there. Both groups worked together under one system. We were also accompanied by a number of clergymen. The apprehension of the people was that a group of clergymen have established this campsite for the disaster stricken area. This establishment was extremely effective.

The internal factions of cultural organizations should work in a similar manner. Expert, adept individuals talented in rhetoric, oration, composition etc. should be utilized. One of the Supreme leader's policies is that talented individuals be utilized in cultural development operations. This talent should be utilized under the supervision of the seminaries. — page 218

One of the prominent issued that confronts our society is the lack of unity between the Islamic seminaries and universities. This unity never materialized thought tremendous amounts of effort was exerted in establishing it. The seminaries should draw near to the universities in such a manner that it [the university] utilizes the seminaries views to serve the society. They must both takes steps in the same direction. In the past, a number of clergy entered the university scene and gradually began to oppose the seminaries. We also had a number of university professors who gradually became clergymen. These are losses that the revolution has sustained over the years. We must ensure these are not repeated.

Religion should not take on the form of ruler ship or party divisions. Great effort has been exerted to ensure the religious issues are not transformed into party based ones. Our activities should be in such a manner that everyone feel themselves to be in a position to propagate Islam, a position of worship and obedience. This is the current of Shī'a propagation. This process should be centralized around a clergyman who has assistants. His assistants should be intellectuals who have open shop occupations and are esteemed by our revolutionary people. Their responsibility should be to form a think tank to develop plans and policies pertaining to religious ceremonies, Friday prayers, youth gatherings, Qur'ānic gatherings other similar activities. Such measures are to be taken to develop pure Islamic culture in the society.

Model 3: Division of Duties Based on Different Audiences

Both models that divide the policy making and supervision of administration along with the model that divides responsibilities based on geographical location are incorrect if isolated [from other models], and are in opposition to the Islamic view. The Islamic seminaries, the mariatvat and the jurists should be involved in every faction of the society. It is erroneous to say that the university faction demands nonclergy to speak to them, whereas the remaining people require men from the Islamic seminaries. With a combination of the two aforementioned models, we can reach the conclusion that the responsibility of disseminating Islamic ideology, political outlook, cultural development and religious guidance is that of the Islamic seminaries. All the elites in the cultural department are soldiers in the operations of the cultural department. The responsibility of their education and training lay upon the Islamic seminaries, while the responsibility of utilizing their skills lay upon the cultural institutions.

Policy making and supervision does not require investment, rather its dire need is training. Since all of the employees in the cultural department are not propagators of Imam Mahdī's ('a) school, it is necessary that they be trained and transformed as such. This duty lies with the government with the collaboration of the Islamic seminaries. The methods of executing the aforementioned responsibilities are to be determined by the seminaries, whereas the administrative system should prepare the necessary tools. The seminaries and the cultural administration should collaborate this affair between themselves, and regulate the educational and propagational activities in the country. The seminaries prepare the content, which is to be organized and implemented.

The plan of educating the people can only be executed with the collaboration of the seminaries and government, in the same manner different factions of the armed forces carry out an operation in collaboration with each other. The ground force, air force and the navy is guided by one commander. Some of the operations carried out during the war were of the same nature, such as operation Fajr Eight. I was also present in that operation. Half of the provisions were provided by the Sepah, while the other half by the government.

It is not possible to protect the intellectual structure of Imam Khumaynī (r)'s revolution, which is from the pure form of Muhammadan (s) Islam and is the target of cultural assaults, without the Islamic seminaries. This is the very obligation that Imam Mahdī ('a) established for us. We should know that we are in the presence of Imam Mahdī ('a) and that he watches over our actions, tends to our affairs, and rewards us for our efforts.

The standpoint of the seminaries and government officials is the same with regard to the primary strategic movement of the Shī'a. The notion that the leadership of the Shī'a

movement should be with the seminaries is evident. It is a notion Imam Mahdī ('a) has expressed emphatically. Imam Khumaynī (r) and the Supreme leader's view has been the same. The Supreme leader sanctions the general policies. A collaborated scheduling system is then developed which is then sanctioned by the Supreme Cultural Council of the Revolution. The programs are then compiled, and the budget is determined. The budget of the country is related to Imam Mahdī ('a). When there is a combined program, there is no harm if the program necessitates that a ten million dollar budget be allocated to the Islamic seminaries. The funding allocated to the seminaries does not go unaccounted for. The funding is utilized for the general policies and the collaborated programs that have been sanctioned.

The models for Islamic propagators of our nation should be Abu Dhar, 'Ammar Yasir, and the martyrs from of Islam. Along with fulfilling commencement responsibilities, the cultural officials should defend the school with their tongues. We ultimately want to reach the following conclusion, that implementation of the policies in the society is not the responsibility of the seminaries; rather it is the duty of the executive branches of the government. However, like all the other major policies of the country, it should be sanctioned by the Supreme leader. These activities should be executed in a united manner by the seminaries and the executive branches under the supervision of the Supreme leader. The executive branches of the government must utilize the skills of the clergy so that they and the seminaries consider them from amongst themselves. The individuals working in these departments should be like minded. God forbid there fragmentation arises within the departments. If there is a conflict of views between two individuals of the departments, it should not be ignored. It should be resolved so to avoid any disunity.

It is necessary to emphasize on an important note in conclusion. The Islamic seminaries of the Shī'a school of thought always have been and must remain independent. The intent of the aforementioned plan is to refer the managers to the holy Islamic seminaries so they may benefit from its blessings. It is evident that the Islamic seminaries are also interested playing an effective role in guiding the cultural affairs of the Islamic nation. The aforementioned are solely suggestions. We are hopeful, God willing, that it is useful to governmental officials, the leaders of the Islamic seminaries and the soldiers of Imam Mahdī ('a).



POWER IN THE SALVIFIC REVOLUTIONARY RESISTANCE

Introduction

The discourse pertaining to Mahdism in the current era revolves around two issues. The first of them pertains to Iran and the Islamic Revolution, in which Imam Mahdi's ('a) deputy is established as the ruler. The second pertains to Mahdism in the world. Mahdism is a universal issue, and more importantly it is a monotheistic issue. The view an intellectual, with an expanded heart, has regarding Imam Mahdī ('a) is the same view he has about God. This is because Imam Mahdī ('a) is a manifestation of God on earth after the realization of monotheism. God created earthly creatures to manifest Himself through them. Envisioning God in its true meaning shall materialize during the rule of Imam Mahdī ('a).

The Islamic Republic of Iran was formed based on Imam Khumaynī (r)'s derivation that the guardianship of the jurist is the continuation of the movement of the prophets ('a). The objective is to develop a society that can be a model for the government that Imam Mahdī ('a) is to bring to existence. Therefore, the most crucial issue in the Islamic Republic is Mahdism for our Supreme leader is his deputy.

The guardianship of the jurist is founded on the

guardianship of Imam Mahdī ('a). He is the authority of God on earth in our time. It is a gift from him to us that we refer to the guardian jurist during his occultation. The jurists selected the guardian jurist from amongst themselves. The source of all beauty in the Islamic Republic is the being of Imam Mahdī ('a). The viewpoint of our Supreme leader is the viewpoint of Imam Mahdī ('a). This is the very element that has created a spiritual attraction in the Islamic Republic, attracting the hearts of many. It created the grounds for the gnosis of the Prophet's (s) pure progeny and evoked the revolution. Thus the discussion of Mahdism is the primary issue of the Islamic government.

We observe the contrary of the aforementioned throughout the world. The enemies of Islam and those who are a threat to the uprising of Imam Mahdī ('a) are ruling the world. The tyrants of the world and the great Satan are demonstrating their opposition to Imam Mahdī ('a). The bombing of the two shrines in Iraq was carried out by America's stooges and is a sign of the importance they give to the birthplace of Imam Mahdī ('a). The first time this holy sanctuary was demolished, an American soldier opened fire at the holy tomb from within the shrine.

If we analyse the event in a shallow manner, it may seem that they opened fire at the shrine. However, if we pay heed to the training they are given, and the sources that are available to them, we can conclude that perhaps he assumed that Imam Mahdī ('a) was inside the tomb and thus he opened fire at it. Bush and Blair declared on a number of occasions that we have occupied Iraq for the sake of Jesus Christ ('a). This is another indication of the religious aspect of their operations.

The Zionists have convinced Bush and Blair that the Muslims are an impediment to Jesus Christ's ('a) return. Thus we must first remove the Muslims from our path so that the conditions of Jesus Christ's ('a) return are actualized.

The people who assign the likes of Bush and Blair their positions are a group of secret societies of Zionists who

POWER IN THE SALVIFIC REVOLUTIONARY RESISTANCE

determine the events of the world. Their objective is to increase crime, transgression, sedition and fear in the world. They have prepared a life style for the western countries to ensure that they do not get the chance to ponder over spiritual matters. They hope to establish a similar system in the Islamic world. They do not realize that the world is thirst for the blessed name of Mahdī ('a). One of our objectives is to communicate an important message to all humanity, whatever religion they are. This message is that we all have a saviour. He is the promised saviour that is to bring peace and justice to the world mentioned in your religion. All of God's prophets ('a) introduced a saviour to their people. They all advised them that near the end of times, there shall come a man who will establish a rule of peace and justice throughout the world.

There is no difference between us and other religions with this aspect of the saviour to come. We do not need to invite people from other religions to accept our Mahdī ('a). The Christians await a saviour who shall bring justice to the world, as do the Buddhist, Hindus and Jews. The primary step that must be taken by the leaders of all the nations is they are vigilant against the oppression, injustice, and fear that has spread across the world. They should thereafter propagate the concept of the saviour from their own religion among their people. If the aforementioned is achieved, half of the foundational work for the uprising of Imam Mahdī ('a) shall have materialized.

In the second international exhibition for the doctrine of Mahdism in the year 1996, a Buddhist spoke about the promised saviour of his religion. I thought to myself how excellent it would be if this exhibition is published in their newspapers accompanied with the article authored by the Buddhist man. This could have a tremendous effect. We cannot expect for the speeches and articles of Shī'a scholars to be published in Buddhist newspapers and effective for their people. However, at times such things are effective. I was in

Philippines in the 1981. I noticed that Imam Khumaynī (r)'s sermons regarding Israel were printed in their newspapers uncensored and without alteration. Sometimes God wishes for His message to reach everyone's ears.

In the current age, the concept of Mahdism indicates a saviour who shall bring justice to the world, shall be the cure for the perplexity of the people and the oppression they are facing. If this concept is propagated to each nation based on their teachings, it shall have a deep and lasting effect. However, it should be noted that God the exalted shall bring forth the conditions and the faithful of Mahdī ('a) shall endeavour to bring universal unity with this regard.

With the existence of the numerous distortions in divine religions, the concept of a promised saviour still remains one of their foundational principles. In the current era, Mahdism is like a cultural nonpolitical network, the objective of which is grant life to human psychology. There are a number of questions those thirsty for the advent of the promised saviour ask. What are his characteristics? What is my responsibility with his regard? This vision towards divine horizons pulls them to spirituality.

An important issue that can be elaborated within the dimensions of Mahdism is human rights. The justice seeking dimension of the promised saviour is a cultural discussion that can be presented in all religions. If this is accomplished, a various impediments that stand in the path of Mahdism's propagation shall be eliminated. The strategical and pragmatic approach to the concept of Mahdism is that it should not be approached with prejudice. Once of the significant victories of the Islamic Revolution is that reinforcement of this concept in the society.

When some university students of the Wahabi faction in Medina were faced with Mahdism, they were forced respond to it by authoring tens of books because they were unable to deny it. They claim that Imam Mahdī ('a) shall be born in the future. This is despite the presence of the numerous prophetic traditions in

Sunni sources pertaining to the twelve specified caliphs. However, there are distortions in their sources in which they establish Imam Mahdī ('a) as the fourteenth or fifteenth caliph. That means they have established twelve caliphs after the four rightly guided caliphs. Thus the Sunnis too have faith in Mahdism. Their Mahdī has the same justice seeking characteristics as ours. We should endeavour to elevate the culture of Mahdism without focusing on the differences that exist.

An Iranian traveled to Moscow. A priest there told him that Imam Khumaynī (r) did not only revive Islam, rather he revived religion altogether. The religious scholars of other faiths know well that the Islamic Revolution brought honour and respect to their religions as well. This has enabled them to introduce the promised saviour who is to bring peace and justice to their societies.

The Doctrine of Mahdism

The primary principle of Mahdism is attention to its secrets. This doctrine has no meaning without its secrets. We can give movement to the leaders of all religion by preserving its secrets. It is narrated from Imam Sajjād ('a): God the exalted granted the believers of the awaited one, those who await his advent, understanding and intellect in a manner that it is as if they see him. The meaning of Imam ('a) is that we should take people by the hand and take draw them nearer to Imam Mahdī ('a). He then says: They are in relation to Mahdī ('a) as the companions of the Prophet (s) acted according to his commands.

There are two important characteristics established in this tradition. The first is struggle, and the second is propagation. If the anticipating Shī'a are trained properly, they shall be transformed into Islamic propagators, combaters of oppression that have gnosis of Imam Mahdī ('a). This can be materialized in those who have faiths in a promised saviour

who shall bring justice in other religions as well.

Prior to the victory of the Islamic Revolution and guidance of Imam Khumaynī (r), the people would revive the concept of Mahdism in another manner. People would set up sign boards saving "The world awaits you O Mahdī!" A sign board with the same statement would be set up on the dome of the Coharshah Mosque in Mashhad. The board would be ten meters in length and between two to three meters in height. People would preserve the cultural of Mahdism and liven up their hearts with this slogan. They would seek knowledge pertaining to Mahdism in the works of individuals like Shaykh Ahmad Kāfī. We too, along with many youth of the time, would behave similarly. His lectures would be played on tapes all over the country. His words were an indication of the pact people had made with Imam Mahdī ('a). The move for the Imam ('a) was alive in the people's hearts through the words of Shavkh Kāfī. The scholar of our mosque would say "Kāfī is sufficient for the commoners of our community". What he meant was Kāfī has preserved Imam Mahdī's ('a) place between the commoners of the society. Thus anyone who would distribute the announcements of Imam Khumavnī (r) would do so in love of Imam Mahdī ('a). Those who made pacts with Imam Khumavnī (r) were awaiting Imam Mahdī ('a).

The only system that would withhold our youth from joining the hypocrites after the victory of the revolution was the marjī'at. After the leaders of the hypocrites were released from prison, they began to exert greater efforts in the universities. They managed to attract a great number of youth to themselves. At first, the youth did not perceive them to be in opposition to the revolution and deemed them to be in line with Imam Khumaynī (r)'s thoughts. Their true intentions were gradually revealed to the people. The love that was seeded in their hearts for Imam Mahdī ('a) pulled them towards Imam Khumaynī (r). This is why the Islamic Republic of Iran

is the defense headquarters of the Shī'a. Whether some like it or not, this place is connected to Imam Mahdī ('a) and the Supreme leader is his deputy.

The Roots of Marja'īyah in Mahdism

The roots of Mahdism can be found in Islamic traditions narrated from Imam Sajjād ('a). Those who went to the war front were trained in the school of awaiting the promised saviour. If we analyze Saddam's army, we will notice it is a classical army equipped with the most modern technology. On the other hand, if we look at the Iranian army after the revolution, it is young army, the foundation of which is the people. The youth officials neither had the necessary experience nor expertise. Regardless, they proceeded to the war front with the cultural of Mahdism and resisted the opponent's heavy armed forces.

I was among the religious youth prior to the revolution. I have a correct mental perception of the time. We deemed training with weapons an obligation. We would travel to the mountains and train in order to strengthen our bodies. Along with the aforementioned, we would also occupy ourselves in our education, we would attend Qur'anic exposition lesson with some clergymen. With all this, we would constantly endeavour to learn weaponry. The people of Gorgan would for many centuries unsheathe their swords, remove their rust and sharpen them every Thursday night just in case Imam Mahdī ('a) reappeared the following day. They wanted to be ready for his appearance. This form of cultural of Mahdism was present in Iran. This has been cited by Martyr Hashemī-Nejad in his book Masail-e-'Asr-e-Ma. Somebody asked him what waiting [for Imam Mahdī's ('a) advent] means. He replied, a society that anticipates the advent is like an army whose commander has gone on a journey and has advised them that the moment

he returns, he will issue the order to attack. In such an army, its soldiers are prepared with regards to their weaponry, logistics, their physical training and operation strategy.

The Supreme leader spoke in a gathering of Qur'ānic lessons prior to the revolution. It was an exciting gathering that was attended by a large number of university students. With allusion to a verse pertaining to Imam Mahdī's ('a) advent, similar to Martyr Hāshemī Nejād's statement, I said, "Waiting means blood!" The atmosphere of the mosque became such that it was as if blood overtook the mosque. Savāk was after tried to track down the speaker. They even interrogated our Supreme leader. He had advised them that he was behind a window and was unable to see the speakers face. The issue of the anticipation was of such a nature prior to the revolution.

The nature and approach to the anticipation has changed enormously since the revolution. A basījī is somebody who awaits Imam Mahdī ('a). Such an individual is loves the guardian jurist because of his love for Imam Mahdī ('a). The cause of the people's obedience to Imam Khumaynī (r)'s instructions was their love of Imam Mahdī ('a). This love has numerous indicators, one of which is the mosque of Jamkarān. Though this mosque existed prior to the revolution, its expanse and its attendees are not comparable to today. The millions of attendees at the mosque are an indication of how the revolution revived the embedded love the nation had for their imam. This is the same love that drives them towards the revolution.

Mahdism and the Armed Forces

The flare that came to being through the blessings of the prophetic progeny ('a) it is effective inside the country just as it is effective outside. The culture present in the armed forces is not the result of cultural development work carried out by institutes. A few years ago, the president of the radio asked be regarding the

lifestyle of the soldiers of the armed forces. He would criticize some of these aspects. I told him that this is the result of twenty years of education from you. The love of the prophetic progeny ('a) and Imam Mahdī ('a) should come into being prior to a soldier or basiii's admission into the armed forces. We should not believe that it is possible to produce strong youth at training camps or universities. The same can be said for children that are being educated Islamic sciences. The training of children begins during the pregnancy of a mother. Today more than ninety percent of our children's time is occupied by the programs of the national broadcasting and education department. They play a major role in the training of our children. A great number of university students complete their military training or take admission in the Basii after completing their education. Without a doubt, the love these youth have for Imam Mahdī ('a) attracts them towards the Basij. This is because a great number of them are basīj as children and early youth.

The investment in training the youth can be categorized into three parts:

1. Education of Islamic sciences which can be accomplished through lessons and educative camps.

2. Practical training that cannot be taught inside a class environment. This can be accomplish by things such as taking the youth on trips to holy sites such as the shrine of Imam Rida ('a), the shrine of Lady Ma'sūmah ('a), the house of Imam Khumaynī (r) and other sites filled with the gnosis of the prophetic progeny ('a).

3. Hold basījī training camps accompanied with military training. There is a revolutionary inclination embedded internally in a faithful youth. They wish to strengthen this inclination to struggle again the tyranny present in today's world. Military camps shall help elevate this inclination and also empty the stimulated energy inside them.

Military training is an affair that branches off the faith of a

basījī. The characteristics of the helpers of the Messenger of God (s) are enumerated in a tradition from Imam Sajjād ('a). He says that they are people full of energy, struggle, military readiness, and altruism, while at the same time are owners or high moral dispositions, friendship, brotherhood. They constantly seek to help others, particularly the deprived. The path of joining the basīj is still open. Every Iranian can become a part of the basīj. Our honourable Supreme leader deems every individual of our nation as basīj. The gathering of people from different divisions of society, with differing tastes and differing expertise in the form of basīji units shall be the cause the development of an assembly of love for Imam Mahdī ('a).

We have seen this state of affairs in the warfront. The nights spent at the warfront were nights spent in secret conversations with God, and with Imam Mahdī ('a). In the first line of war, not a single soldier would move without the slogans 'O Mahdī', 'O Husayn', or 'God is great'. In the recent times when the English crossed into our waters, one of our combatants jumped into a boat while screaming out God is great. This caused great fear in them. These Islamic terms, in particular the term Mahdī, are from amongst the most important terms that establish bravery in our men. Such terms and slogans were the cause of movement in our frontlines. We must ensure to maintain this culture, keeping it alive. This can be accomplished by correct propagation. These secrets and relations based on love are from the blessings of the being of Imam Mahdī ('a).

The Best Propagation of Mahdism

The blessed name of Imam Mahdī ('a), the anticipation of his advent, and his overlooking our actions is the cause of the development of morale in our combatants. It motivates them to accomplish fearless operations. Armed forces that have faith in the being of Imam Mahdī ('a) cannot be compared with forces that do not have faith in him. I will cite an example

here. When the Muslim army entered Mecca, God's messenger guaranteed safety to Abu Sufyān, who was the leader of Mecca and the enemies of Islam of that day. The Prophet (s) established his house as a sanctuary for those seeking to surrender. Abu Sufyān was from the elite of the Arab tribes. He was a wealthy man who had access to a large number of armed forces who had the latest weaponry of the time. During this event he was walking besides some of the soldiers of Prophet (s) and began to say, "I wish I knew how Muhammad (s) gained victory over us". The Prophet (s) placed his hand over his shoulders and said, "God gave us victory over you".

Trust and attention towards God and depending on godly men, the head of who is Imam Mahdī ('a), is the cause of morale among the armed forces. This is the reality of an armed force that has faith in Imam Mahdī ('a). We are in no need of an atomic bomb. In fact, we deem it impermissible as it causes human destruction. The spiritual connect we build with Imam Mahdī ('a) grants us greater power and strength. It should however be pointed out that this connection is only one of the many religious notions we have. There are a number of other notions that also grant morale to our men. One of the most important of these is martyrdom. A materialist without faith is constantly in hope of winning so that he can return, acquire some stars, and increase his salary. However, Muslim combatants are ever in hope of martyrdom. There is no difference for him whether he is victorious or killed. He constantly beseeches God to grant him martyrdom. He beseeches him to grant him worthiness to reach his martyrdom so that he may shed his blood in the path of God and the Prophet (s).

The doctrine of Sepah is faith and love of God, spirituality and love of the infallibles ('a). The Islamic commanders are by no means equal to those who fight solely to acquire a higher status within the army. This love and reliance [on God] creates knowledge, movement and resistance under the guidance

of chief commandment. The commander in chief of the Islamic army is the guardian jurist, our Supreme leader who is the deputy of Imam Mahdī ('a). When he sees the martyrs, he gains inner strength once he gains martyrdom, he reunited with his comrades.

The Armed Forces Doctrine is Founded on Islamic Doctrines

In our armed forces doctrine, there is solidarity, structure, millions of basījīs, the army and solidified strong Sepah, development of knowledge, modern technology, everything else that an enemy fears. When this doctrine is derived from Islam and the concept of Mahdism, it grants strength and unity to the forces. The concept of Mahdism grants the military and logistic elements geometrical progression. Thus the strength of an Islamic military is incomparable with that of others. The display of resistance that Iran has demonstrated against the West who has brought all its technology and strength to this area is in the light of Mahdism. All the movements of our enemies are under the surveillance of our forces. The enemies know this very well and exert every effort not to error in their operations. When the English army personnel were capture, they order their operation area to be drawn back by one hundred kilometers. The US navy was also instructed to be cautious in their moves. This is an indication of the strength of our forces.

Propagating the Culture of Anticipation

As we know, oppression and injustice has overtaken the world. The United States is insisted on behaving in a manner that fuels and expands the wars in the world. Now imagine with such an atmosphere present in the world, how effective can propagating the culture of the anticipation of the one

who is to bring justice to the world be for the nations around the world?

We believe that propagating the culture of the anticipation is not only has a soothing effect on human psychology; rather it also takes people out from being passive, accepting oppression and torturing confusion. It grants them vivacity and high spirits. God the Almighty said to Prophet David ('a), that I am always looking for an excuse to shower my servants with My blessings. When a person realizes that he has a God of such a nature, he is transformed into a motivated, strong individual with complete physical and spiritual readiness. Such a person rejoices in life regardless of the presence of the

tyrannical powers in the world.

Faith in the saviour brings people closer together, and more tolerant and merciful towards each other. The relationship between Iran and Latin America is of this very nature. Hugo Chavez has said, "I don't know why, but whatever Iran says is correct". The reason for this is our faith in the justice bringing saviour. In the current day, a great deal of enthusiasm and trust is seen in African countries with regards to Iran. Have we done something for the African counties that they have faith in us? They people of their countries know that the dominating powers have come to their countries solely for the sake of looting them. However when they look towards Iran, they see good conduct and genuineness. The difference between faith in the culture of Mahdism and the non-existence of it comes down to this point. The politics of the Islamic Republic of Iran is not to seek expansion. It solely seeks friendship with the people and governments of nations around the world and their honour and independence. The culture of Mahdism is the best model for politics, foreign relations, economics, training and family life.

The Anticipation from the Viewpoint of Imam Khumaynī

The World is Prepared for the Rise of the Sun of Wilayah from the Horizon of Mecca

Today we are able to envision the dissemination of the Islamic revolution throughout the world of the weak and the oppressed. The movement of weak and the oppressed against the tyrannical powers of the world has begun and is expanding. The future is hopeful and manifest. We can see the materialization of God's promise closer and closer. It is as if the world is prepared for the rise of the sun of wilāyah from the horizon of Mecca. ¹

We Must Prepare for our Objectives

We must prepare for our objectives. Preparing the means [to actualize our objectives] is to bring our objectives near. We should employ ourselves to accomplish it in such a manner that it world becomes ready for the advent of Imam Mahdī ('a).²

Awaiting the Deliverance in the Words of the Supreme Leader Ayatullah Imam Khamenei

This is Your Certain Future

The Iranian nation shall definitely be able to uplift and grant honour to the Islamic civilization throughout the world by the help of spiritual unseen assistance, with the pure prayers of the people and the spiritual guidance of Imam Mahdī ('a). The nation shall the mighty palace of Islamic civilization. This is

² Sermon of Imam Khomeini (r) on the anniversary of Imam Mahdi's ('a) birthday on the 3rd April, in the year 1988, Şaḥīfeh-e-

Imam, volume 21, page 17.

¹ The message of Imam Khomeini (1) on the occasion of the anniversary of the Islamic Revolution on the 5th June, in the year 1983, Şahīfeh-e-Imam, volume 17, page 480.

your certain future. The youth must prepare themselves for this mighty movement. The faithful and sincere forces should establish this as their objective.¹

There is No Comfort, Well-Being or Ease-Seeking prior to the Advent of Imam Mahdī ('a)

There is no comfort, well-being, or ease seeking prior to the advent of Imam Mahdī ('a). Pure men shall be tested in the in the battlefields of struggle prior to his return. They shall be tested in the furnace of trials. They will succeed with their heads up in pride and the world shall come closer each day to the objectives of the awaited Imam (may our souls be sacrificed for him). This is the very grand hope [that is promised to us], thus the 15th of Sha'bān is a day of celebration.²

The Reality of the Anticipation

The anticipation is to have a heart overflowing with hope regarding the end of human life. It is possible that some may not witness this happening [due to its distance], however it exists without a doubt. Thus, the celebration of this 'id, which is the celebration of the awaited relief, directly opposes the beliefs and atmosphere the enemy wants to bring to existence.

We shall only be deemed amongst those who truly await if we build the grounds for his advent. The grounds for his advent must be built. The grounds are to act in accordance to Islamic precepts, and an Islamic and Qur'ānic rule. The first step for the Islamic and Qur'ānic rule, which is to bring the Muslim nations closer to the advent has been taken by the Iranian nation. That is the establishment of a Qur'ānic rule.³

Sermon of Imam Khamenāī for the Altruists, 20/08/1997.

³ Sermon of Imam Khamenei on the birth anniversary of Imam Mahdī ('a), 16/12/1997.

² Semon of Imam Khamenei at a gathering in Qum on the anniversary of Imam Mahdī ('a), 19/02/1992.

We Must Prepare the Grounds

The issue of Imam Mahdī's ('a) birthday possesses great importance due to the notion of the anticipation that is present in our faction, or rather the Islamic creed in its entirety. It is necessary that this even brings us to research, pay detailed attention, and open discussion pertaining to this issue. You must prepare the grounds for him to return, and builds the grounds [for his mission]. It is not possible to begin with nothing! Our society can be the hosts of the promised Mahdī ('a) (may our souls be sacrificed for him). There should be readiness and potential in it, or the end shall be the end that came upon other prophets and awlīyah.

He Will Fill the Earth 4with Justice, and Eradicate Injustice from its Roots

One of the characteristics of Imam Mahdī ('a) in the view of Muslims is that he shall fill the earth with justice as it is filled with oppression and injustice. Establishment of justice in the society, ridding of injustice and oppression from the entire earth is a characteristic of the promised Mahdī ('a)...Humanity is in movement towards something that is the manifestation of the promised Mahdī ('a). He is the one shall is established as the one who shall fill the earth with justice and eradicate injustice from its roots in our Islamic traditions.²

A Virtuous Affair

The spiritual relation — and that of the heart — people have with Imam Mahdī ('a) is a virtuous affair. In fact, it is a necessary affair which results in numerous effects. This is because it establishes the notion of hope and the anticipation constantly in the human heart.

² Sermon of Imam Khamenei at Khajasteh on the birth anniversary of Imam Mahdi ('a), 3/03/1989.

¹ Semon of Imam Khamenei at a gathering of some armed forces on the birth anniversary of Imam Husayn ('a), 1/03/1989.

The Manifestation of Divine Justice

Imam Mahdī ('a) is the manifestation of divine justice. We know that the most manifest characteristic of Imam Mahdī ('a) that has been alluded to in Islamic traditions, supplications and ziyārāt is justice. God shall fill the earth with justice through him.

We Must Employ Ourselves and Struggle in this Direction

Since we deem ourselves among those awaiting Imam Mahdī ('a), we should direct our lives in the same direction that is to be established upon the establishment of Imam Mahdī's ('a) government. However, it should be noted that we are too weak to form establishments as the awlīyah of God have formed or shall form. We should however employ ourselves and struggle in this direction.

The Remnant of the Progeny of Revelation

All we know is that Imam Mahdī ('a) is an instance of divine promise. All we know is that this remnant of the progeny of revelation is the honoured flag of God on earth.

They Visit Him

...The divine authority on earth exists, and lives amongst the people. He sees them and is with them. He senses their pain. Individuals who are felicitous, and have the capacity visit him while they are unaware. He exists. He is a real human, known, with a known name, with a specific mother and father and is among the people. This is a characteristic of the Shī'a ideology.²

¹ Sermon of Imam Khamenei before a gathering of people on the 15th of Sha'bān, 17/08/2008.

² Sermon of Imam Khamenei on the birth anniversary of Imam Mahdī ('a), 2/03/1991.

He will Illuminate the Outlook of Human Life with the Light of His Justice

There shall come a time when the overwhelming power of God shall eradicate all the summits of crime and injustice. He will illuminate the outlook of human of life with the light of his justice. This is the meaning of the anticipation of the advent of Imam Mahdī ('a).

The Islamic Revolution's Message for the World

Know that humanity awaits the advent of Imam Mahdī ('a) with a dire thirst. They want him to return. Their restlessness with regards to his return is because he is to come and bring justice to the world. This is the Islamic Revolution's message to the world. It is responsible to help actualize this and has vowed to do so.²

There is Hope in the Heart of the Children of Adam ('a)

Imam Mahdī, may God's peace be upon him, is the secret of divine justice on earth and its manifestation. This is the very reason why all of humanity awaits his advent in one form or the other... The notion of Mahdism from this perspective is not particular to the Shī'a, or the Muslims for that matter. This notion is rather in the hearts of all groups and nations around the world. There is hope in the heart of the children of Adam ('a) so the history of humanity moves towards virtuousness. Such a hope grants strength, illuminates the hearts, and makes evident that every justice seeking movement is in the direction of the natural laws that exist in this heart and human history.³

² Sermon of Imam Khamenei in a gathering of people on the birth anniversary of the Commander of the Faithful ('a), 7/01/1993.

¹ Sermon of Imam Khamenei in Qum, on the birth anniversary of Imam Mahdī ('a), 9/02/1992.

³ Sermon of Imam Khamenei in a gathering of foreign guests on the birth anniversary of Imam Mahdī ('a).

A Grand Deliverance

The world is in movement towards justice. This is the very meaning of waiting for Imam Mahdī ('a) and the relief. The meaning of awaiting the relief is that there is a grand deliverance inscribed in human destiny, and we are in movement in its direction.

The Role of Faith in the Promised Mahdī ('a)

When it is said to you that you should anticipate [the advent], it means that the current situation that bring you suffering, and brings anguish to your hearts is not eternal and shall come to an end... This is the role of faith in the promised Mahdī ('a). It was this faith that helped the Shī'a cross the peculiar struggles and turns that came in its path throughout history. Now, all praise is God's, the flag of honour, Islamic pride and the Qur'ān is in the hands of the Muslim, Shī'a nation of Iran. Whenever such a faith exists, there shall be hope and struggle.

How Can He not be Present?

Though our great infallible dear Imam ('a), the pole (quit) of the realm of possibility, the refuge of creation is in occultation, and has not reappeared, he is present. How can he not be present? A believer can sense this presence in his heart and with his being... His occultation does not harm the sense of his presence. He is in occultation; however, he has manifested his presence in the hearts and in the lives of the nation. How can he not be present?!

We Must Appreciate This

A pious nation that has faith in God, and relies on Him, is always hopeful of the future. They are always in communication with the hidden forces of the higher realms. A nation in whose hearts the sun's light and divine emanations

shine shall never fear nor surrender! It shall not flee from the battlefield because of these kinds of words. This is the result of the faith in the spiritual notion of the promised Mahdī ('a) (may thousands of salutations and blessing be upon him). Faith in the Imam of the time ('a) has this tremendous effect in the inner dimensions of an individual, his social movement, and in his future. This must be appreciated by us.

Real Human Life Shall Begin After it!

The world overflowing with justice, purity, truth, gnosis, love is the world during the era of Imam Mahdī ('a). Know that the real form of human life shall begin after it! The realm form of human life in this realm shall actualize after the advent of Imam Mahdī ('a). Only God knows what grandeur mankind shall reach in that period.²

These Slogans Shall Materialize One Day

The slogans of our people today are the very slogans that Imam of the time, peace and salutations be upon him (may God hasten his relief), shall establish and actualize in the world. These are the slogans of a country, of a government. These slogans shall materialize one day.³

That Day Shall be the Day the Saviour of the Human Realm shall Reappear with God's Blessings

The day it becomes evident that the foundations exists for people to speak in opposition to the materialist tyrants, and that it is

¹ Sermon of Imam Khamenei in a gathering of people on the birth anniversary of Imam Mahdī ('a), 7/01/1996.

² Sermon of Imam Khamenei at Friday prayers of Tehran, 14/04/2000.

Sermon of Imam Khamenei on the birth anniversary of Imam Mahdī ('a), 7/11/2000.

possible for the people to stand by their words, it shall be the day of Imam Mahdi's ('a) advent. That day shall be the day the saviour of the human realm shall reappear with God's blessings. His message shall attract all the prepared hearts that exist all around the world. The tyrannical powers who rely on their oppression [to accomplish their objectives] shall not be able to withhold the truth or hide it as they have been doing throughout history.

He Will Destroy the Mansions of Oppression!

Imam Mahdī ('a), may our souls be sacrificed for him, will destroy the mansions of oppression with his power while relying on the power he has acquired through the elevated faith, and the faith of his companions. It is this faith that shall bring them to power.

It Should be Accompanied with Action!

One of the lessons that we learn from the notion of Mahdism and the celebrations of mid-Sha'bān is that though there is no doubt in the elevated and ideal nature of our faith in the promised Mahdī ('a) (may our souls be sacrificed for him), it is an ideal that should be accompanied with action! The anticipation that has been spoken of is not merely to sit and shed tears.

We Must Prepare Ourselves to Be Soldiers in the Legion of Imam Mahdī ('a)

The meaning of the anticipation is that we must prepare ourselves to be soldiers in the legion of Imam Mahdī ('a). It shall be a legion that will fight again all the centres of power and transgression around the world. This requires self development, awareness and clear sightedness... We should not imagine that since Imam Mahdī ('a) is going to come and fill the earth with justice, we have no duty in the current era. No, it is rather the contrary! Today, we have the duty to move in

that direction so that we are prepared for his advent. Faith in Imam Mahdī ('a) does not mean to isolate ourselves... If we observe that there is injustice, tyranny, and discrimination in all the corners of the world, these are the very issues Imam Mahdī ('a) shall return to fight again. If we are from Imam Mahdī's ('a) legion, we must prepare ourselves to fight these.

The Greatest Responsibility of the Anticipators

The greatest responsibility of the anticipators [the advent] is that they prepare themselves with regards to spirituality, morality, their [religious] practice, and their religious, ideological and emotional connections with the believers. They must also prepare themselves to fight against the tyrannical powers of the world. Those who were at the battlefront during the war were truly awaiting the relief. Those who are ready to defend and Islamic countries and Islamic values when an enemy threats of attacks and Islamic country and raise the flag of Islam before them can claim they would stand by Imam Mahdī ('a) in the difficult battlefronts to comes when he returns. On the other hand, how can those who become sluggish and are overwhelmed by their worldly gains when face with danger? How can those who are unwilling to place their personal benefits in danger when danger arises, be deemed among those anticipating the advent of Imam Mahdī ('a)? A person who is ready for the appearance of the great reformer ('a) must builds the foundation of reform in his self. He must do something that enables him to stand up for the materialization of the reform to come.

A Hundred Percent People's Rule

... The forthcoming rule of the promised Mahdī ('a) (may our souls be sacrificed for him) shall be a people's rule in its entirety... It is not that Imam Mahdī ('a) will bring peace and justice to the world on his own. Rather he will rely on the believers and utilize

them in establishing divine justice throughout the world. He shall establish a one hundred percent people's rule.

He is a Witness [over us] that Oversees

Imam Mahdī ('a) is a witness [over us] that oversees. Imam Mahdī ('a) witnessed your choice. He witnessed your *i'tifāf*, he witnessed the efforts of you youth of decorating for the 15th of Sha'bān, he witnessed and witnesses the presence of you all, men and women, in various arenas, he witnesses the actions of the government official in various arenas. He is pleased with all actions that are Islamic signs, and signs of firm determination of faith. On the other hand, God forbid, if we act to the contrary, it displeases him ('a). Pay heed what a great factor this is.²

This is the Meaning of Awaiting the Relief

The meaning of awaiting the relief, or in other words, awaiting the advent is that a believer in Islam, a believer in the school of the prophetic progeny ('a) deems the current affairs of the world as an impediment and knot in the life of humanity... Imam Mahdī ('a) will reappear in order to bring relief to the entire humanity so he may save them from descent, save them and save their future. Awaiting the relief is to not accept the state of affairs that takes control over human life based on ignorance and desires. This is the meaning of awaiting the relief.

The anticipation, a Dominating, Powerful, Malakūtī Hand of God

...The anticipation is a dominating, powerful, malakūtī hand of

² Sermon of Imam Khamenei before a gathering of people on the birth anniversary of Imam Mahdī ('a), 12/10/2002.

¹ Sermon of Imam Khamenei before a gathering of people on the birth anniversary of Imam Mahdī ('a), 20/7/1381.

God that must come and eradicate the encompassing injustice in the world with the help of the people. It shall give strength of the truth, revive justice in the lives of the people, raise the flag of monotheism, and transform people into true servants of God. It is essential to prepare ourselves for this affair...this is the meaning of the anticipation. The anticipation is a movement, it is not being stagnant. The anticipation is not to sit in a corner and hope for affairs to materialize themselves. It is to be prepared. To anticipate [the advent] is to pull up ones sleeves, and prepare oneself to struggle in for the objectives that Imam Mahdī ('a) shall reappear for. That great historical revolution shall be carried out to acquire those objectives. That is the establishment of justice, to establish a truly human life, a divine life, and divine servitude. This is the meaning of awaiting the relief.

You Are Our Master, You Are the Master of this Country

O our master, our guardian. We are doing what we are supposed to do. We have and will continue to say what needs to be said. I have an insignificant life. I have a defective body. I have a little bit of honour which you have given to us. I have taken a hold of all these in my hands and will sacrifice them in the path of Islam. May these be sacrificed for you. Our master, our guardian, please prays for us. You are our master; you are the master of this country. You are the master of this revolution; you are our support. We will continue this path and will continue it with strength. Please support us with your prayers and your attention. 1

Sermon of Imam Khamenei for Friday prayers Tehran, 19/06/2009.