

**Alhassanain (p) Network for Islamic Heritage and Thought**

# **Humanitarian Rights in the Time of Appearance of the Mahdi (Pbuh) or World Promised Saviour**

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## Foreword

"Generosity is that which is by one's initiative, because giving on asking is either by way of self-respected or to avoid rebuke." (1) The promised Messiah or Saviour will rule the world with justice and equality for all humanity. Nobody will suffer of hunger or will be oppressed by others. He will avoid tyranny, and his appearance will mean the end of the corruption of the economic, social and political system of today's world.

He will propitiate an equal distribution of world's resources. He will appoint wise political leader to govern with transparency and honesty, following the Will of God on earth.

The aim of this paper is to highlight the dramatic situation of the stateless and internally displaced people in our world today before the appearance of the Mahdi (Pubh) or Saviour and to present some of the values and principles that will have to be implemented in order to avoid this suffering to millions of people that do not have access to food, to medical assistance and not even have a place to die.

I.-The four most relevant sacred emigrations in the past. God's promises to their unshakeable faith.

## Abraham

"His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron, son of Zohar the Hititte, east of Mamre, the field that Abraham purchase from the Hitittes. There Abraham was buried, with his wife Sarah." (2)

Abraham is the Patriarch of the three Semitic religions and the oldest representative of monotheism. He is also the archetype of prophetic religions and a friend of God. Father of Ishmael, his first-born child, who founded the Kaaba together with him as central sanctuary of the One God; and father of Isaac.

From the spiritual point of view, Abraham and Ishmael are the exemplary figures of the entire system of the pilgrimage.

Now the Lord said to Abraham , "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you, I will make of you're a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one that curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." (3)

Abraham abandoned the land of his fathers without a complaint, without conditions. He took his wife Sarah and his nephew, Lot, the son of his brother, and left with all the chattels he had earned and the household members that he had acquired in Aram Naharayim, heading for Canaan. At that time, the Canaanites were in the country. Abraham crossed Canaan and headed for the sacred site of Shechem, to the oak of Moreh.

Hunger assailed the land and Abraham had to go down into Egypt seeking pasture and food. From Egypt, on his continuous peregrinations, he went back once more to the Negev accompanied by his wife and Lot, but the land no longer made it possible for them to remain together because his

chattels had multiplied and quarrels usually broke out between the shepherds of Abraham and those of Lot.

The Lord said to Abraham, after Lot had separated from him:

"Raise your eyes now, and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward, for all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever." (4)

Abraham believed in God and understood faith as "being firm", not as "holding to be true" what could not be demonstrated; rather, it was an unyielding faith in a promise that could not be fulfilled by human means. He was a man who, on the basis of that faith, was capable of surmounting the greatest tests to which he was submitted, down to the extreme measure of sacrificing his own son.

After Moses, Abraham is the most-cited Biblical figure. And in the Qur'an he is mentioned in twenty five Suras, whereby the fourteenth Sura bears his name.

When Abraham's Lord tested him with certain commandments, which he fulfilled, He said, "I will make you a leader of people. Abraham asked, "And will You make leaders from my descendants too? God answered, "My pledge does not hold for those who do evil." (5)

### **Moses**

He is the most often cited Old Testament character. Many see him as the founder of the Jewish religion. His name is Egyptian, although probably he was not Egyptian but Semitic. Moses led the Israelites in their exodus from Egypt.

Then the Lord said: " I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry.....Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey..(...)." (6)

He led the march of his "tribes" through the desert and conducted them towards an uncertain future. He was sustained only by his deep faith in God and in the fulfilment of his mission, accepted with a profound submission and obedience towards the divine commands. He knew that he had to fulfil the will of God, and he did not doubt at any time that that will was good for his people.

Moses said, "Pharaoh, I am a messenger from the Lord of all the Worlds, duty-bound to say nothing about God but the truth, and I have brought a clear sign from your Lord. Let the Children of Israel go with me." (7)

Nowadays, no one will argue that the Fathers of Israel came from the desert and were nomads. Their nomadism simultaneously encompasses conquest, immigration and constructive social revolution within a coherent and absolutely structured social, political and religious model.

Through his faith and by fulfilling the will of God, he initiated and led this process of social, political and economic change played out by a group of emigrants leaving Egypt in order to "be free men", guided by the power of God.

## Jesus of Nazareth

The Flight to Egypt represents the displaced, the emigrants, the homeless, all those persons who, for political, social or economic reasons find themselves forced to abandon their land and the land of their fathers to save their lives.

Now after they have left, an angel of Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." (8).

Without waiting for dawn, he prepared to flee to Egypt. The journey must have been gruelling and very hard, but nonetheless he was faithful to the words of the angel and the will of God, he made the preparations, and he trusted in the goodness of the Lord.

Egypt, as we know, was the classic country of political refuge in that time, being a Roman province. There were many Jews there, flourishing colonies and districts inhabited by them. There is no data specifying where they settled upon reaching Egypt.

Herod, fearful of a Messianic plot, gave the brutal order to kill all male children younger than two years of age in the town of Bethlehem, an order that was fulfilled and which went down in history as "the massacre of the Holy Innocents".

"Thus says the Lord: "A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping, Rachel is weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are no more. (9)

Once more, as he rested, the angel appeared to him in dreams and announced that he could return already, as Herod had died. "Get up, take the child and his mother and go back to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead." Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. (10)

The flight to Egypt is the icon of emigration of a family, the emigration that causes hunger, wars, social marginalization and persecution. Jesus began his peregrinations as a child and became an emigrant, a refugee, someone who had to abandon his land to save his life.

Muhammad (PBUH)

In the Islamic history and tradition, Ethiopia is known as the "Haven of the First Migration of Hijra." Ethiopia was the country chosen by the Prophet (Pbuh) when his followers needed protection and freedom from oppression.

After the conversion of Hamza, the Companions of the Prophet (Pbuh) began to offer prayers publicly. In turn the Quraysh intensified their opposition by torturing the Muslims. The companions and relatives of the Prophet (Pbuh) were prepared to sacrifice and suffer all sorts of hardship and alienation rather than give up their own convictions and freedom.

"Those who believe, who migrated and strove hard in God's way with their possessions and their persons, are in God's eyes much higher in rank; it is they who will triumph; and their Lord gives them the good news of His mercy and pleasure, Gardens where they will have lasting bliss" . (11) The Prophet (Pbuh) slowly began to attract some followers, most of them young

and modest social standing, including his cousin Ali (Pbuh), the son of his uncle and protector Abu Talib.

When Muhammad (Pbuh) began to impugn the traditional polytheism of his native town, the rich and powerful merchants of Mecca realized that the religious revolution taking place might be disastrous for their own interest.

Members of the two warring tribes the Banu Awz and the Banu Khazraj, asked the Prophet (Pbuh) to act as peacemaker in a conflict between them. His mediation was impeccable and revealed great political wisdom. In the Prophet (Pbuh), prophetic mission and political ability complemented each other, making him a statesman apart from Messenger of God.

The First Migration of the companions and relatives of the Prophet (Pbuh) to Ethiopia celebrates the birth of freedom of expression and beliefs, whereas, the Second Migration of the Prophet (Pbuh) to Madinah celebrates the end of oppression.

History has shown that both migrations have laid down the foundations of the Islam as an universal religion. They accepted the universality of the message of the Prophet (Pbuh) and the Qu´ran describes their belief in these words:

This people are not given to arrogance and when they listen to what has been sent down to the Messenger, you will see their eyes overflowing with tears because they recognize the Truth. They say, "Our Lord, we believe, so count us amongst the witnesses." (12)

The Holy Scriptures tell us that the lives of God's Chosen are sustained by two fundamental pillars: one, their nomadic existence, and the other, their faith in God.

"Provide yourself for the journey because the call for departure has been announced...(...).You should therefore cut away all the attachments of this world and assist yourself with the provision of Allah´s fear." (13)

Through their absolute faith in God, they progressively live their faith and their reality in perfect coherence with the promises received from God. And this opens them to a new and transcendent hope that keeps them tensing towards a future that they are called to build, knowing that the promise will come true in the same process and that it will be God who makes it so, even in the most adverse human conditions. And it will come true unexpectedly, because their faith in the promise advances inseparably from their faith in God.

## **II. Emigration and mass movements in the world today**

### **World stateless people**

Recent research suggest that may be eleven million people globally without a country to "call their own". Article I of the 1954 Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons spells out the legal definition, indicating that, "someone who is not a national of any state under relevant laws is therefore stateless."

Parents cannot officially register the birth of a newborn baby. He or she may not be able to attend school or university and when these people die, they will be buried in an anonymous burial without official recognition, like if they never existed. People who do not have a country to call their own.

The issue of statelessness is politically sensitive in many affected countries and often viewed as an internal problem. Doubt to this many governments have not made accurate figure what makes it very difficult to really know the magnitude of the actual problem.

They became stateless through a very complicated series of political, legal, or administrative directives, which includes among others: Arbitrary deprivation of nationality by a government; Administrative oversight, misunderstandings or conflicts of law; Administrative procedural problems. Several international and regional treaties offer a degree of guidance and emphasize that everyone should have a nationality. However, international support of these treaties has been lethargic and needs to be strengthened. Fewer governments know the precise magnitude of the problem in their countries.



## **Internally Displaced People**

They are the world's largest group of vulnerable people. The overall number of internally displaced people is around 25 million in 52 countries and that half of them are in Africa.

The definition of the internally displaced describes them "as persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict.

The internally displaced often face a very difficult situation because they may be trapped into the ongoing internal conflict of their own country. Their governments retains ultimate control of their fate.

Competent authorities have the primary duty and responsibility to establish conditions, as well as provide the means, which allow internally displaced persons to return voluntarily, in safety and with dignity, to their home or places of habitual residence.

### **III.- Poverty and Globalization POVERTY AND HUNGER**

"Take away from this world your hearts before your bodies go out of it, because herein you have been put on a trial, and you have been created for the other world." (14)

According to the latest data facilitated by the FAO, there are now 854 million malnourished and hungry persons in the world and another 100 million on the verge of becoming so.

The UN calls this drama that causes the death of 25,000 human beings every day, among them one malnourished baby every five seconds, a "silent tsunami". As a result of the lack of food in a fair part of the planet and the rising prices of the last three decade, reality is got worst. (El Mundo, Editorial, June 6th 2008)

The FAO, which, since 1945, has held the mandate for guaranteeing food security, spent several million of euros in gathering together representatives from 183 countries at the Food Summit, which concluded last 5th of June in Rome with "disappointing results", according to the majority of attending observers and experts. The result was a paltry declaration of intentions that skirted around the fundamental problems. (El Pa?s, International, June 6th 2008)

The FAO and the international community have given evident signs that they are not prepared to govern a business that kills millions of people from starvation. Behind the almost 72 hours of diplomatic discussions in Rome lies a terrible reality: almost a fifth part of the population on our planet does not have anything to eat.

"O'ibne Hunaif I have come to know that a young man of Basra invited you to a feast and you leapt towards it. Foods of different colours were being chosen for you and big bowls were being given to you. I never thought you would accept the feast of a people who turn out the beggars and invite de rich." (15)

### **Emigration**

In 2007 the total number of both refugee and internally displace people came to approximately 32.9 million persons. The phenomenon of

emigration today occupies international attention and public debate in numerous countries.

Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers? He said the one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise." (16)

The change of millennium has come accompanied by an intense revitalization in international migratory currents, to the point of making this phenomenon, along with the free movement of capital, one of the characteristic features of our current reality: globalization. A greater international freedom in the flow of trade and the movement of capital in the world logically demands a greater and growing freedom of movement for people in the world.

"The poor emigrants who were driven from their homes and possessions, who seek God's favour and approval, those who help God and His Messenger - these are the ones who are true." (17)

Emigration is one of the fundamental dimensions of the globalization process that we are living. It is likewise a result of the rupture of traditional and collective ties, as well as the absence of collective and individual projects for progress in the country of origin. This is the reason why the phenomenon increases in the cases of social crisis and decomposition in the affected countries.

He prostrated himself at Jesus feet and thanked him. An he was a Samaritan. Then Jesus asked, "Were not ten made clean? But the other nine, where are they? Was none of them found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner." (18)

We are confronted with a growing and lasting phenomenon. It is not a question of tolerance, is a question of respect for the dignity of all human beings, regardless of their social situation, ethnic origin, nationality, religion, or any other difference. Only then will peaceful coexistence and the construction of a just and free global society be possible.

"What will you do with this vast house in this world, although you need this house more in the next world. If you want to take it to the next world you could entertain in it guest and be regardful of kinship and discharge all (your) obligations according to their accrual. In this way you will be able to take it to the next world. (19)

### **Who rules de world**

One of the rulers of our world today, perhaps the most powerful, is the G20.

The G20 is a group consisting of 19 of the world's largest economies, together with the European Union. This Economies are the following: US, UK, Germany, France, Italy, Canada, Russia, Japan, South Africa, China, Brazil, Australia, Argentina, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, South Korea and Turkey.

"Together, this countries, account for 90% of the world gross product and over 80% of the world trade. Added to this, with their combined voting power in the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, these countries completely dominate these institutions." (The New Ruling Aristocracy of the World? , Shawn Hattingh)

"No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth." (20)

We live in a world with an economic system organized for the profit of the few. More and more people in the world are becoming aware of this situation that is affecting their lives and the society as a whole.

Evidence is mounting that economic growth and free trade are not leading us toward economic and justice and environmental sustainability. To the contrary, they are taking us in the direction of increasing economic injustice and environmental un-sustainability.

Capitalism in the age of the new digital technology produced hundreds of new billionaires in the world, meanwhile, three billion people, nearly half of the world, lived on less than \$2 per day.

Jesus looked at him and said, "How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God! Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." (21) The world's most powerful instrument of governance is not a government, nor is a global corporation, rather is a global financial system, running dangerously out of control.

A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. Then he called his disciples and said to them: "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. For all of them contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on." (22)

### **Another type of Globalization**

Means an integrated and supportive economy that works for peace and not for war. We know from experience which are the results of wars. Wars provoke more poverty and more hunger in the world. A real global economy cannot accept that millions of people in the world suffer from hunger and lack of food as they suffer today. Our first task is the humanization of our societies and this means working continuously on different fronts at the same time.

"Beware practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; ...(...). But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret...(...)." (23) Opening ourselves to global communication in an open and sincere dialogue will make us see that our problems are not so different from the problems of the other people. We will then see that unity creates the necessary strength and capability to change the urgent matters that have to be changed soon.

### **IV.-International Responsibility**

Political and social leaders.

".....(.....) Certainly, Allah, the Sublime, has made it obligatory on true leaders that they should maintain themselves at the level of low people so that the poor do not cry over their poverty." (24)

The management of global issues in the 21st century will require the active participation of all members of the international community. The developing countries with 80 per cent of the world's population, must be

part of a shared vision for this new century. The success or failure of poor people and poor countries in making their way in an interdependent world will have a profound influence in shaping the 21st Century. One should choose to be among the persecuted, rather than the persecutors. (25)

The heads of States and Governments representative, gathered together at the United Nations General Assembly in New York between the 6th and the 8th of September 2000, adopted the "United Nations Millennium Declaration".

Allow me to highlight one of the most relevant points that make reference to "dignity, equality, equity, vulnerable people and extreme poverty". - "We recognize that, in addition to our separate responsibilities to our individual societies,, we have a collective responsibility to uphold the principles of human dignity, equality and equity at the global level. As leaders we have a duty therefore to all the world's people, specially the most vulnerable and, in particular children of the world, to whom futures belongs. (Values and Principles, Point I, paragraph 2)

Here is my servant, whom I uphold my chosen, in who my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to nations." (26) As long as there is a contradiction between the stands of righteous and the corrupt ways of worldly societies, there will be those righteous people who will rise up and call society and their rulers to account. This people will put their lives at risk to speak out for the welfare of the community.

"If however, you warn the righteous not to sin, and they do not sin, they shall surely live, because they took warning; and you will have saved your life." (27)

All authorities and international actors shall respect and ensure respect for their obligations under international law, including human rights and humanitarian law, in all circumstances.

"Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the road is easy that leads to destruction, and there are many who take it. For the gate is narrow and the road is hard that leads to life, and there are few who find it". (28)

The chief concern of any government should be the welfare of its citizens. Therefore the ruler, and hence the government, should be like parent to the people, putting their concerns and needs ahead of his own. The ruler should give his highest consideration to the poor and provide them sufficient means of support. Such a government will be respected by the people, who then will easily submit to its rule.

Guardianship is not to give an order but to give one's self. (29)

Government should operate impartially and with integrity. Its leaders should be honest, moral, and virtuous people, who will not take bribes or act corruptly. Because people look up to a nation's leaders as role models, they should set a good example for people. "The best deed of a great man is to forgive and forget. " (30)

## Religious Leaders

Argue only in the best way with the People of the Book, except with those of them who act unjustly. Say, "We believe in what was revealed to us and in what was revealed to you: our God and your God are one (and the same); we are devoted to Him." (31)

Syria's Grand Mufti Ahmad Badr Al-Din Hassoun opening his address to Members of the European Parliament, on Tuesday 15th of January 2008, saying: "Religion gives civilization its moral values but culture is something that we built", he stressed adding that religion "is the work of God" whereas civilization is created by mankind.

"We do not believe, in our region, in the multiplicity of religions. Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Mohamed (Pbuh) came with one single religion". Therefore, "there is no holy war, because a war can never be holy; it is peace that is holy".

Then they came up and laid hands upon Jesus and seized him. And Behold, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck the slave of the high priest, and cut off this ear. Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword." (32)

Interreligious dialogue recognizes the plurality of the world's religious systems as a valuable resource for discovering and working together toward a common goals.

Dialogue begins with the willingness to question and to be questioned. Dialogue requires an effort to comprehend the inherent value of difference in this complex global society. Dialogue is the only instrument to achieve a real peaceful world based on mutual respect and understanding.

"All states shall take effective measures to prevent and eliminate discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief ....(.....) All states shall make all efforts to enact or rescind legislation where necessary to prohibit any such discrimination." (33)

## Civil Society

We live in a society that we call developed, a society that produces great masses of scorned, exploited, hungry human beings; a society whose supreme value is money. A society that has achieved an unparalleled technological development during the last few decades and that possesses the sufficient economic, cultural and spiritual capacity to achieve a more just and supportive universal social order for all, without excluding anybody.

"No one of you is a believer until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself." (34)

The pillars of society are those people who provide its spiritual and moral vision to the society . They are righteous people with courage who realize the truth within themselves and are willing to take responsibility for their community.

We are all conscious today that our world has become a virtual communicational unity, that its nations and regions are increasingly economically interdependent, and that war is insanely destructive. The

survival of the human family requires urgently the articulation of ethical principles. "Treat people in such a way and live amongst them in such a manner that if you die they will weep over you; alive they crave for your company."(35)

### **V.- Guiding Principles from the Book of Ben Sira**

Duties toward the Poor and the Oppressed (36)

My child, do not cheat the poor of their living, and do not keep needy eyes waiting. Do not grieve the hungry, or anger one in need.

Do not add to the troubles of the desperate, or delay giving to the needy.

Do not reject a suppliant in distress, or turn your face away from the poor.

Prudence and Common Sense (37)

"Do not contend with the powerful, or you may fall into their hands.

Do not quarrel with the rich, in case their resources outweigh yours; for gold has ruined many, and has perverted the minds of kings.

Concerning rulers (38)

A wise magistrate educates his people, and the rule of an intelligent person is well ordered.

As the people's judge is, so are his officials; as the ruler of the city is, so are all its inhabitants.

The government of the earth is in the hand of the Lord, and over it He will raise up the right leader for the time.

Human success is in the hand of the Lord, and it is he who confers honor upon the lawgiver.

Concerning humility (39)

The poor are honored for their knowledge, while the rich are honored for their wealth.

One who is honored in poverty, how much more in wealth!

An one dishonored in wealth, how much more in poverty!

Responsible use of wealth (40)

If one is mean to himself, to whom he will be generous? He will not enjoy his own riches.

No one is worse than one who is grudging to himself; this is the punishment for his meanness.

The miser is an evil person; he turns away and disregards people.

Do good to friends before you die, and reach out and give to them as much as you can.

The temptations of Commerce (41)

A merchant can hardly keep from wrongdoing, nor is a tradesman innocent of sin. As a stake is driven firmly into a fissure between stones, so sin is wedged in between selling and buying.

If a person is not steadfast in the fear of the Lord, his house will be quickly overthrown.

### **VI.-Final Comments**

By faith we believe and understand that the worlds were created by the Word of God.

By faith Enoch was taken so that he did not experience death.

By faith Noah, warned by God about events yet not seen he built the ark to save his household.

By faith, Abraham obeyed when he was called to set out for a place that he was to receive as an inheritance and he set out not knowing where he was going.

By faith Moses left Egypt without fear of Pharaoh's anger and he led the people through the desert to the promised land. Without faith is no possible to please God.

It is hard to believe that science, technology, politics and economics can effectively offer a unifying vision of the complexity of our world today and find the solutions to our everyday increasing problems.

Our world is in a state of imbalance created by man's misuse. The appearance of the Mahdi (Pbuh) or Saviour will restore and balance the earth.

We have to be prepared to change our present modes of living to ensure the future of mankind in this world. Adequate our needs according to the needs of all people of the world and enter in a new and truthful understanding of the meaning of sharing.

The Mahdi (Pbuh) or Saviour, knows that deep in the hearts of men is the aspiration for justice and love, but we need to end with the fear that stop us from living according to the light of God.

Today, from all corners of our planet we hear the cry of despair of displace people, stateless people, emigrants; no matter how we call them, they suffer from the same disease: poverty, hunger, isolation and scorn.

Among His most important concerns is the welfare of the poor and dispossessed. Half the world's populations enter this category and present an enormous challenge to the goodwill of men. The Mahdi (Pbuh) or Saviour of the world will inspire the goodwill that will put an end to injustice and corruption.

Slowly, people will become aware that to share the resources of the world is in their own best interests and will willingly accept the need. This will end the suffering of the poor.

"Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" He said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." (42)

Are we moving forward towards the Mahdi (Pbuh) or Saviour of the World most important concern?

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\*VII.-Notes \*

(1) Ali Ibn Talib (pbuh), Saying 53, Najhol-Balagha (2) Genesis 25, 9-10 (3) Genesis 12, 1-3 (4) Genesis 13, 14-15 (5) Qur'an, Sura 2, 124 (6) Exodus 3,7-8 (7) Qur'an 7, Sura 7,104-105 (8) Matthew 2, 20-21 (9) Jeremiah 31, 15 (10) Matthew 2, 20-21 (11) Qur'an, Sura 9, 20-21 (12) Qur'n, Sura 5, 82-83 (13) Ali Ibn Talib (pbuh) Serm?n 203, Najhol-Balagha (14) Ali Ibn Talib (pbuh) Serm?n 202, Najhol-Balagha (15) Ali Ibn Talib (pbuh) Letter 45, Nahjol-Balagha (16) Luke 10, 36-37 (17) Qur'an, Sura 59,8 (18) Luke 17, 12; 16-18 (19) Ali Ibn Talib (pbuh) Sermon 208, Najhol-Balagha (20) Matthew 12, 24 (21) Luke 18, 24-25 (22) Mark 12, 42-44 (23) Matthew 6,1;3-4 (24) Ali Ibn Talib (pbuh) Sermon 208, Nahjol-Balagha (25) Talmud, Baba Kamma 93a (26) Isaiah 42,1 (27) Ezekiel 3, 21 (28) Matthew 7, 13-14 (29) Nyika Proverb, Kenia and Tanzania (30) Ali Ibn Talib (pbuh) Saying 201, Najhol-Balagha (31) Qur'an, Sura 29, 46 (32) Matthew 26, 51-52 (33) Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Believe, United Nations General Assembly Resolution 36/55, 25th of November, 1981. (34) Forty hadith of an-Nawawi 13 (35) Alib Ibn Talib (pbuh) Saying 10, Najhol-Balagha (36) Sirach 4, 1-4 (37) Sirach 8, 1-2 (38) Sirach 10, 1-2; 4-5 (39) Sirach 10, 30-31 (40) Sirach 14, 5-6; 8 ; 13 (41) Sirach 26, 29; 27, 2-3 (42) Matthew 22, 36-40



## **Horizontalization of Vertical Eschatology As Recipe For Planetary Survival**

Twelve years ago, while we were sitting in front of a college in Mindanao State University-Main Campus, Philippines, a Seventh-Day Adventist friend of mine from Bukidnon, Mindanao, told me, "Everything can serve any purpose. You see, if I position this horizontally (referring to a blue ballpen he was holding), it serves as a bridge, but if I put it this way (that is, vertically), it becomes a wall."

Accordingly, 'horizontal' God is He who is viewed as the Creator and Lord of the universe and all mankind.

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord." (Deuteronomy 6:4 and Mark 12:29)

"I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no savior." (Isaiah 43:11)

"I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside me." (Isaiah 45:5)

"I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me." (Isaiah 46:9)

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me." (Exodus 20:3-5)

"And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou has sent." (John 17:3)

"Say, 'He is Allah, the One. Allah is the All-embracing. He neither begat, nor was begotten, nor has He any equal.'" (Surah al-Ikhlās, 1-4)

This Supreme Being becomes 'vertical' when He is thought to have certain few 'favorites' at the expense of a 'damned' majority.

Religions also function as a bridge if the common elements among them such as spirituality, moral principles and a notion of Judgment Day are more emphasized. This function was illustrated by *la convivencia* ('coexistence' or 'living together') put into practice in Toledo in particular during the Moorish rule of Spain. As a microcosm of the atmosphere of religious tolerance then prevalent in the city, Jews, Christians and Muslims were working together in the city's libraries, translating books from Arabic into Castilian Spanish and then into Latin.

This scientific collaboration continued for sometime after the end of the Moorish rule. Jane Smith thus observes:

Transmission of knowledge from Arabic to Latin came close on the heels of the Christian reconquest of Sicily and of large areas of Muslim Spain. When Toledo was taken in 1085, a major step in the Christian reconquest of Spain, a large number of Arabic manuscripts were made available to Christian scholars. By the twelfth century Toledo had become a center of study as scholars from all over Europe came to work with native speakers of Arabic.

As corroborated by J.B. Trend,

The gates of oriental learning and story were opened both to Spain and to the whole of Europe by the capture of Toledo (1085), which became a school of translation from oriental languages. As early as 1120 Petrus Alfonsi, a Spanish Jew who was baptized and whose godfather was Alfonso VII, introduced Indian fable into Spain by the celebrated collection of

stories known as *Disciplina Clericalis*. The Spanish translation of the 'Indian tales' of *Calila e Dimna* made directly from the Arabic text dates from 1251.

When "Toledo, the greatest center of Muslim learning in the West, fell before the Spanish Christians" also says Max Meyerhof:

Latin students began to come to the new capital to admire the remains of Moorish civilization and to study the *Artes Arabum*. The intermediaries for the learning and later on the translation work were native Jews and former Muslim subjects (Mozarabs). Charles and Dorothea Singer... have painted a lively picture of this collaboration, which gives a clear idea of a curious scientific syncretism.

The first prominent European man of science who came to Toledo was Adelard of Bath, an English mathematician and philosopher. On the other hand a Spanish Jew converted to Christianity, Petrus Alphonsi, went to England where he became physician to Henry I and spread the science of the Muslims there for the first time.

On the contrary, there is no more need of embellishing this paper with accounts of religions in 'vertical' position as human history is drenched enough with innocent blood spilled in their name.

### **Eschatology**

Eschatology is no exception to this horizontal-vertical binary. Etymologically derived from the Latin *eschatos* ('last' or 'farthest'), eschatology refers to the branch of theology concerned with the final events in the history of the world or the ultimate destiny of mankind. Simply put, eschatology is a doctrine or theory (*logos*) of the end (*eschaton*) whose origin, according to *Encarta Encyclopedia*, is almost as old as humanity as "archeological evidence of customs in the Old Stone Age indicates a rudimentary concept of immortality.

According to *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, "end" here can have two meanings:

First, it can mean the end of each individual human life. Second, it can mean the end of the world-or, more narrowly, of the human race. In the first, the individualistic, sense eschatology is an account of the destiny that awaits each person after death. In the second, the cosmic or social, sense it is a description of a goal (*telos*) in which history will be fulfilled.

This goal may be either a this-worldly or an otherworldly kind.

One of the important subjects of eschatology is the idea of a 'savior' to come at the end of time. This awaited savior is known by various names and titles-Saoshyant, Messiah, Christ (in his Second Coming), and Mahdi, among many others. Since after the reign of King Solomon, the Jews have been waiting for the coming of a Messiah who, it is believed, would restore their lost glory and grandeur. Post-ascension of Jesus Christ is a period where the Christians have been longing for the second coming of Christ (*Parousia*).

The Muslims, on the other hand, have been expecting for the advent of Al-Mahdi (the Guided One) who, as a descendant of both Ishmael and Isaac, is believed to have been the epitome of fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant:

"And when his Lord tested Abraham with certain words, and he fulfilled them, He said: 'I am making you the Imam of mankind.' Said he: 'And from among my descendants?' He said: 'My pledge does not extend to the unjust.'" (Surah al-Baqarah, 124)

Neither is Filipino folklore devoid of it. Legend tells us that Bernardo Carpio who is confined in a cave in Mt. Tapusi in Montalban Mountains (or Mt. San Mateo in Rizal) or trapped within two clashing mountains for a long time will one day come out to redeem the Philippines. (Ferdinand Marcos, as I was told by a Marcos loyalist when I was 12 during the 1986 Presidential Snap Election in the Philippines, was the personification of Bernardo! Remember the catchphrase, "This nation can be great again!")

Sociologically, human society in whatever appearance it takes-race, nation, class or religious order-upholds this concept. As argued by Dr. 'Ali Shari'ati, a contemporary Iranian sociologist and historian, all known communities, without exception, display two common characteristics.

First, every community holds that in the distant past it had a 'golden age' during which there was justice, peace, tranquility, and love, and that this golden age came to an end at some point in time and was followed by corruption, darkness and injustice. Secondly, they believe in a great and liberating upheaval in the future and a return to the golden age-the age of victory of justice, equality and brotherhood.

These beliefs obviously serve as a bridge as they give a sense of hope, determination and common universal vision and purpose for all peoples of diverse cultural currents and religious persuasions. This is the 'horizontal' side of the story.

### **'\*\*Vertical' Eschatology**

\*\* Its 'vertical' side is now spectacularly moving toward its catastrophic climax as suggested by the carnage of civilians perpetrated daily by 'Islamist puritans' in Iraq, Pakistan and elsewhere. Interestingly enough, certain messianic extremists in Iraq are reportedly as zealous in resisting foreign occupiers as in engaging in intra- and inter-sectarian frenzy of reprisals, executions and vandalism.

How to convey a sectarian message totally comprehensible to adherents and at the same time capable of fending off outsiders' accusation of the message's advocacy of sectarian-based civil war and division of the ummah? The solution lies in playing with the ambiguity of the word rafidah. Literally means 'one who rejects', rafidah (plural rawafid) is translated as 'heretic' and its derivative modifier rafidi as 'sectarian'.

For centuries and especially more recently, it is increasingly used as a pejorative designation for the Shi'ah who are demographically the majority in Iraq before and after its British-midwived birth in 1920. Until the fall of the Ba'ath regime in 2003, however, this majority had been persecuted and politically disenfranchised.

Vitriolic verdicts on the urgency of killing rawafid channeled through audiotapes distributed within the flock of votaries and downloadable at insurgent websites are coupled with everyday carnage of civilians in public places such as markets and houses of worship. Condemnation of these mass

murders is immediately deflected by claiming that the targets are only the "collaborators working with the Crusaders".

Granting that police stations, military outposts and political figures are legitimate targets, why market-goers and worshippers are daily victims?

If ever pounded with this question, rafidah-manipulators argue that voters are responsible for the actions of leaders they elected: "[T]hey are not ordinary people... for they have become the soldiers of the infidel occupier... Did not al-Ja'fari, al-Hakim and others come to power through their votes?"

Given this line of argument, one may wonder how and at which voting precinct the dome and two minarets in Samarra cast their votes for which they were condemned to destruction for two counts. Hence, the use of such word is truly a powerful bomb that must be detonated. In postmodernist parlance, this textual interplay at work requires either deconstruction or double reading, or both.

Meanwhile, televangelists and other 'new armies of God' are passionate enough in freeing the genie of apocalyptic prophecies (e.g. Daniel 9, Ezekiel 38, Revelation 16:14-16) out of the bottle and wish for their governments to unleash trigger-happy dogs of war in the Middle East, thereby heralding the 'coming of the Lord'.

In a recently published book, titled "Beyond Iraq: The Next Move-Ancient Prophecy and Modern-Day Conspiracy Collide" (Whitestone Books, Florida, 2003), Texas-based author and preacher Michael Evans who is one of the most notorious American Christian fundamentalist preachers today, spells out a grand design for American global hegemony under the guise of a holy global war in which key players include the CIA, the American government and army, and Israel, besides various Christian fundamentalist outfits.

Another popular televangelist, Pastor John Hagee, who leads the 18,000-member Cornerstone Church in San Antonio, Texas, argues in his 2006 book, "Jerusalem Countdown," that a confrontation with Iran is a necessary precondition for Armageddon and the Second Coming of Christ. He insists that the United States must join Israel in a preemptive military strike against Iran to fulfill God's plan for both Israel and the West.

An equally smart version of 'vertical' eschatology is the espousal of God's alleged consignment of land to His selected 'darlings' to the detriment of the 'outcasts' and 'bastards'. Obviously, political Zionism is an illustrious example of this version of 'vertical' eschatology.

Zionists seemingly regard themselves as the chosen children of God, who had been granted the privilege to take other peoples' land and properties by trickery when in a state of weakness and by force when in a state of power. By invoking the alleged curse of Noah upon his son Ham, believed to be the ancestor of the Africans, and his descendants to a status of slavery (Genesis 9:18-27), the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa gave theological support to the Apartheid in the 1930s.

## **Conclusion**

In this critical moment when eschatology is extensively fielded via satellite and in the cyberspace as a weapon of mass destruction (WMD), a

universal campaign to stop its 'verticalization' is an indubitable recipe for planetary survival. Sincere followers of the three Abrahamic faiths have the religious potential as well as duty to spearhead this campaign, first to their co-religionists, and then to members of other creeds.

This annual worldwide gathering on Messianism/Mahdism is a seminal stride, though a limited one, in a long gradual process of forging a 'Non-Proliferation Treaty' specifically covering this more devastating type of WMD.

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## **A Study of the Socio-cultural Conditions Leading To the Realization of the Appearance of the Mahdi (as)**

"It is He who has sent His messenger with the guidance and the religion of truth to make it prevail over every other religion. However much the disbelievers may dislike it."

(Surah al-Tawbah: 9:33 and Surah As-Saff: 61:9)

### **Introduction**

This paper will InshaAllah begin by looking at the historical movement of human beings and the progression of society over time. We will also show how this progression will reach its climax with the appearance of the Imam of our time (may Allah hasten his appearance). This is based on the promise of Allah (SWT ) that Islam will be implemented globally by the last and final successor of Prophet Muhammad (SAW ).

This movement of humankind will be studied in the context of the socio-cultural conditions prevailing before the appearance of the 12th Imam (AS ). The socio-cultural conditions that will prevail before the appearance will be studied from two different angles.

The first will be the conditions prevailing in the general society, the society of individuals ignorant of the existence of the 12th Imam (AS) and those who are aware but have not paid any heed to it. The second angle will look at the conditions of the society of individuals who are aware of the existence of the 12th Imam (AS) and who are anxiously awaiting his appearance.

This paper will end with Ahadith from the Aimmah (AS) on what believers should do in the absence of the Imam (AS) while awaiting his (AS) appearance.

### **Historical progression of mankind and the belief of Islam**

The way we have progressed as human beings from time immemorial may point to future direction of humanity. Based on history, human beings have been pursuing a path of pure materialism along with its selfish moral and social values. And as long as we, as human beings, are not brought back to our spiritual origins, it is impossible to imagine how a God-centered human society can materialize.

With materialistic consumerism at its height, and individualism and secularism functioning as its two wings, God and God's ethical and spiritual directives have been practically trivialized and systematically removed from our public life. At the same time, there is this natural urge in human beings to seek out their Creator, to worship the Merciful, Compassionate God. Until and unless that is satisfied human beings will not find peace and harmony.

Islam has emphasized this natural urge of humanity as it is founded upon an innate disposition to worship One God. The divine leaders of Islam also sought to implement the Will of God on earth by creating an ethical and spiritually-oriented society.

It is only when humanity acknowledges a God-centered universe that it will be able to further the ideal global community. Such a community will



naturally respond to the call of Islam and the Prophet of Islam (SAW) whose invitation to the peoples of the Book was to abandon differences and concentrate on One Lord, the Almighty God, as is enshrined in the Holy Quran.

"O People of the Book! Come now to a word common between us and you, that we serve none but God, and that we associate not aught with Him, and do not some of us take other as Lords, apart from God." Surah Al 'Imran, verse 64

The Quran presents this revolutionary program of creating an ethical order that will reflect the divine Will on earth through God's righteous servants who have submitted themselves to His will. The Prophet has also informed us that the uniquely qualified person to lead humanity to become united under Allah (SWT) by abandoning all forms of idolatry and concentrating on the divine purposes for humanity will be the promised Mahdi (AS), a descendant of his.

A God-centered human will therefore materialize, based on our certain belief in the appearance of the Mahdi (AS). The Holy Quran says:

"Allah has promised to those of you who believe and do good that He will most certainly make them rulers in the earth as He made rulers those before them, and that He will most certainly establish for them their religion which He has chosen for them, and that He will most certainly, after their fear, give them security in exchange; they shall serve Me, not associating aught with Me; and whoever is ungrateful after this, these it is who are the transgressors." Surah An-Nur, verse 55

General socio-cultural conditions before the appearance of the Imam (AS)

One of the socio-cultural conditions that has to prevail universally before the appearance of the 12th Imam (AS) is that all believers will have been born. It has been mentioned in a Hadith from Imam Sadiq (AS) that:

"In the loins of disbelievers and hypocrites God has deposited a seed for believing persons. It was for this reason that Imam 'Ali b. Abi Talib (AS) refrained from killing the fathers of disbelievers so that believing children could be born of them. After that whenever he met them he would endeavour to kill them. Similarly, our Qa'im (AS) will not rise until God's trust from the loins of the disbelievers has been delivered. After that he will appear and will eliminate disbelievers."

When the 12th Imam (AS) appears, he will offer the religion of Islam to the non-believers. Anyone who accepts that call will be saved from being killed. All those who refuse to accept Islam will be killed. Now, we know that history is replete with cases of believing children born of non-believing and hypocritical parents. This was the case of the early Muslims who were born of non-believing parents in the pre-Islamic age.

If the Prophet had killed all the non-believers during the conquest of Makkah, the Muslims then born of their generation would never have come into existence. God's grace and benevolence necessitates that human beings should be left alone to their beliefs so that in time those believers among their children will be born.



As long as a human being procreates and brings forth a believer and worshipper of God, he or she should remain on earth. When the Imam of the Age (AS) appears, those who persist in their disbelief, and who will be killed, will be the people from whom there will be no believing offspring.

In another tradition Imam Muhammad Baqir (AS) said in response to a question asked by a companion on when the Qa'im (AS) will emerge, "At the time when men will imitate the women and women will imitate the men; when women will ride on saddles; when people will cause their prayers to die and will follow their carnal desires;

when people will turn usurers; when shedding of blood will become something insignificant; when trade and business of the people will be based on usury; when people will openly commit adultery; when they will make towering constructions; when they will consider lie to be lawful; when they will accept bribes; when they will follow their lusts and desire; when they will sell their religion for this world;

when they will sever their relation (with others); when they will hold under obligation the one whom they feed; when they will consider forbearance to be the sign of weakness and feebleness and injustice to be an honour; when their rulers will be evil and their ministers liars; when the trustworthy amongst them will be traitors;

when the helpers amongst them will be unjust; when the reciters of Quran will be transgressors; when cruelty and oppression will become manifest; when divorce will increase; when people will engage in debauchery and libertinism; when forced witness and lie will be accepted; when they will engage in drinking and gambling; when men will be mounted on; when women shall engage with women (indecent acts); when people will consider Zakat to be a booty and charity to be a loss;

when they will fear from the tongues of the wicked people; when Sufyani shall revolt from Syria and Yemen; when Baidah which is between Mecca and Medina will sink; when a child from the progeny of Muhammad (SAW) will be killed between Rukn and Maqaam and when a live voice will be heard from the heavens crying out that the truth is with Mahdi (AS) and his followers. It will be then that our Qa'im will emerge. When he re-appears, he will stand with his back against the wall of Ka'aba and 313 of his followers would gather around him..."

This Hadith summarizes the socio-cultural conditions preceding the advent of the Imam (AS). It talks about a time when men will imitate women and women will imitate men. This imitation could be in the form of dress, appearance, role in society and so on. The Imam (AS) also mentions the rise of carnal desires.

This perhaps means that people will pursue their lusts for wealth, power and physical desires without caring whether what they receive in return is Halaal or not. Usury has also been noted as one of the conditions in the society - a condition which will be the norm and businesses will be based on it.

The Imam (AS) also points to the openness and lack of guilt in committing sins such as adultery, lying, drinking, gambling, taking bribes, committing indecent acts and so on. The prevalence of such vice and

corruption in society will throw humanity into disarray and it is amidst all this that the Imam (AS) will appear.

The Hadith touches on the rise of oppression in the society. This will be in the form of severing relations with others, holding under obligation one who is fed and rise of unjust rulers, among others. There will be widespread injustice and oppression and total absence of peace and security in such a way that fear, terror, calamities, problems, corruption, mischief and ignorance will dominate human society.

The people shall do anything for the sake of the world and they shall compete with each other on the way of sin and evil and in their view sin would be considered good and the Islamic Law, like in the beginning, would be unknown to the people. This oppression will be obliterated and replaced with justice and freedom under the rule of the 12th Imam (AS) when he appears.

The Imam (AS) concludes by talking about some of the physical conditions that will take place just before the rising of the 12th Imam (AS). This will be the rising of the Sufyani, the sinking of Baidah and the killing of the child from the progeny of the Holy Prophet (SAW), among others.

The final point is crucial. Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (AS) says that in these conditions, which can be summarized as political, economic and socio-cultural conditions, the 12th Imam (AS) will emerge. This Hadith gives the followers of the Ahlul Bayt (AS) and insight into what sort of environment shall prevail before the appearance of the Hujjah (AS).

In another Hadith, it is narrated from Imam Muhammad Baqir (AS) that he said, "Mahdi (AS) will reappear at the time when fear, mischief, calamities, epidemics, violence, divisions in religion and transformation of the peoples' condition shall be dominant on the world and society. Day and night people would yearn for death and shall be at each other's throat.

In other words despair and hopelessness would have conquered them. At that time His Eminence would reappear; and congratulations to the one who reaches Imam Mahdi (AS) and becomes his supporter and woe to the one who opposes him."

This above Hadith further expounds the socio-cultural condition of the society in general before the appearance of the 12th Imam (AS). Specifically, it talks about the despair in the people with the state of affairs and that it is these conditions that will lead to the appearance of the Qa'im (AS).

Conditions of those awaiting his appearance and Those awaiting the appearance of the 12th Imam (AS) will be Shia who will have acknowledged and believed in his existence and Wilayah (unconditional authority). The condition of such people will be in resonance with the Ahadith from the Aimmah (AS), which speak to the characteristics of those waiting for the Qa'im (AS). Some of the Ahadith will be studied in this section to identify the conditions of those who are consciously awaiting the appearance of the 12th Imam (AS).

Imam Zainul Abideen (AS) said, "Truly those people who in the occultation (of Imam Mahdi (AS)) acknowledge his Imamate, await his reappearance, are better than the people of all times because Allah has given

them such an understanding that occultation for them is as good as meeting him. At the time of occultation these people are like those who did Jihad under the command of the Holy Prophet (SAW). In the sense they are sincere and they are our true Shias, they invite to the way of Allah (SWT) secretly and openly."

The first thing that the 4th Imam (AS) says is that those who have acknowledged the Imamate of 12th Imam (AS) are better than the peoples of all times. The Imam (AS) ends by identifying a quality or a trait of the people who have acknowledged the Imam and are awaiting his appearance - and this is that these people will invite to the way of Allah (SWT) secretly and openly. And we can add that they will continue to do this, if given the opportunity, until the appearance of the 12th Imam (AS). They will carry out such activities in anticipation of deliverance from the appearance of the 12th Imam (AS).

Abu Saeed Khudri narrated that the Holy Prophet (SAW) said, "In the Last Age, severe tribulations would afflict my community from their rulers and kings such that they have not heard of more severe atrocities and the earth shall become constricted for them and become filled with injustice and oppression and the faithful believer would have no place of refuge from those oppressions.

At that time, Almighty Allah would send a man from my progeny who would fill the earth with justice and equity and all inhabitants of the earth and heavens would be satisfied and happy and the earth would spew out its treasures and the sky would shower its blessings..."

The point we want to identify in this Hadith is that the Holy Prophet (SAW) says that the faithful believer will have no place of refuge from the oppressions of the rulers. This is another condition that will prevail for those who are consciously awaiting the appearance of the 12th Imam (AS). They (believers) will suffer oppression and will be victims of tyranny before the appearance of the 12th Imam (AS).

## **Preparation For the Coming of the 12th Imam (as) in Light of the Conditions That Will Prevail Before His (as) Appearance**

Our scholars have identified and written in their books certain things Muslims ought to do during the occultation: to pray for the twelfth Imam; to do charitable works for him; to perform hajj and to appoint someone to do that on his behalf; to seek his help and assistance in times of difficulty, and so on. There is no doubt that all these suggestions are praiseworthy, however the most important obligation mentioned in the sources and that which needs further elaboration is awaiting deliverance through him (intizar al-faraj).

There are many traditions from the Imams, both recommending the awaiting and enumerating its merits and excellences, during the occultation. Some of these Ahadith are presented below.

Imam Sadiq (AS) says, "Any one who dies with the love (Wilayat) of the Ahl al-Bayt while awaiting deliverance (through the appearance of the Qa'im (AS)), resembles the one who will be in the Qa'im's tent."

Imam 'Ali Rida (AS) reporting from his forefathers and from the Prophet (SAW) relates the Hadith from the latter, who said: "The best deed of my community is to await for the deliverance."

Imam 'Ali b. Abi Talib (AS) says, "Any one who awaits our government, resembles the one who, in the way of God, has rolled in his own blood."

In another tradition Imam Rida (AS) praises the one who awaits the deliverance, and says, "How praiseworthy are patience and awaiting for deliverance! Have you not heard that God says in the Quran: 'You await, and We too are awaiting?' So be patient because deliverance will come after despair. Those who were before you were even more patient than you."

Imam Ja'far ibn Muhammad as-Sadiq (AS) said: "A person who would like to be among the companions of al-Qa'im (AS) should be in a state of (active) waiting (Intizar), and perform all of his deeds with Wara' [a level higher than Taqwa] and with the most beautiful etiquette and then one will be counted as being in a state of (true) waiting (Intizar). Then if such a person was to die and al-Qa'im (AS) was to make his advent after this, then that person would receive the reward as the one who witnessed his (al-Mahdi's) advent."

There are numerous traditions on a similar theme. The Imams always used to advise their followers to await deliverance. They reminded them that the mere act of awaiting for deliverance is a kind of emancipation. The one who awaits is like the one who fights against the disbelievers on the battlefield and has rolled in his own blood. As such, there is no doubt that the weightiest obligation for Muslims during the occultation is to anticipate deliverance.

In the next few paragraphs we would like to expound on the meaning of this awaiting or anticipating deliverance. How can a person who anticipates deliverance acquire the greatest reward that accrues to the one who does good? It is not sufficient for the one awaiting the deliverance to materialize

to just say with their tongue that they are awaiting the appearance of the Imam of the Age.

An individual cannot escape every kind of social responsibility, and stay away, from the moral responsibility of commanding the good and forbidding the evil; from taking a stance against corrupt and sinful behaviour; from not stopping injustice, and simply say: "O God, let the deliverance through the Imam of the Age be imminent so that he can prevent this corrupt behaviour!" This is not awaiting the appearance of the 12th Imam (AS).

This person's status cannot be comparable to the status of the one who is killed defending his religion. His status cannot be equal to the one who has sacrificed all his wealth, his family, and his comfort and security in the way of God and attained the status of a martyr.

There is a deeper meaning and significance to the act of awaiting the appearance of the Imam.

Imam Ja'far ibn Muhammad as-Sadiq (AS) has said: "Surely the possessor of this command (Imam al-Mahdi) will go into an occultation. So the servant should have consciousness (Taqwa) of Allah during the period of the occultation and should hold firm to his religion."

Therefore firstly, as Muslims, we need to work diligently at reforming ourselves from within and with all the necessary seriousness. We should adorn ourselves with Islamic virtues, perform all the duties that are obligatory on us, and apply the directives provided by the Quran in our daily lives. We should endeavour to attain Taqwa and hold firm to the teachings of Islam.

Second, we should extract the social teachings of Islam from the Holy Quran, the Prophet (SAW) and the Ahl al-Bayt (AS), in order to execute those perfectly in our societies. By implementing the Islamic economic programs we should resolve our economic problems and fight against poverty, unemployment, and concentration of illicit wealth. By adopting the divinely ordained laws we should rid ourselves of injustices and corruption.

In short, we should commit ourselves to set in motion the realization of an Islamic political, social, economic, and legal system, and present this to the world as a viable alternative, to the best of our ability.

We realize that the perfect system of governance in all aspects can only be implemented by the 12th Imam (AS). In addition, by combining a complete legal code with the spiritual and moral concerns of the Islamic system, Muslims can become the source of emulation for a humane political, social and economic system.

Those who are engaged in these endeavours to make the revolution of the Mahdi (AS) possible and successful are the ones who are truly awaiting for deliverance through the appearance of the 12th Imam (AS). It is in way that we can also affect our social and cultural surroundings and thus be in the state of readiness for the realization of the appearance of the 12th Imam (AS).

## **Conclusion**

Over time, man has been evolving into a materialistic being. The true purpose of life is not at the forefront of man's life, as is evidenced by the

increasing war, instability and oppression in the world today. However, Allah (SWT) has promised in the Holy Quran that, "It is He who has sent His messenger with the guidance and the religion of truth to make it prevail over every other religion. However much the disbelievers may dislike it."

From this verse, we deduce that the religion of Islam will prevail over all other religions and from Ahadith we are told that this will occur under the rulership of the 12th Imam (AS).

Ahadith tell us the general state of the society before the appearance of the 12th Imam (AS). The condition of the rulers has been painted as being oppressive and tyrannical whereas the ruled will be oppressed and victimized. In this environment, the condition of the believers will be that of awaiting the reappearance of the Imam. Their condition amidst all the oppression and tyranny will be that of Taqwa - and this is what we as the followers of the Imam (AS) must aim for.

## **Government Which Paves the Way For the Reappearance of Imam Mahdi (af)**

In the name of Allah, the unblemished One Who bestows safety to the believers. The One with majesty and greatness, May Allah bless Muhammad and the progeny of Muhammad, the most pure and chaste of the creatures and exalt them with the most exalted of the blessings.

"One who dies while expecting the government of Al-Qaim is like one who is in the presence of al-Qaim." (Imam Jaafer as-Sadiq (a))

The Holy Quran clearly predicts the final victory of the forces of righteous, peace and justice over those of evil, oppression and tyranny, of the world-wide spread of Islam, the complete and all-round establishment of high human values, the formation of a utopian and an ideal society at the hands of the representative of God. Surely, the land is Allah's; He gives it for an inheritance to whom He wills, from His servants and the future shall be for the pious and devote servants. (Holy Quran, Sura Aaraaf, verse 128).

This paper presents a study on the concept how we could achieve the preferred political, social and cultural conditions to establish a fair and just global government in preparation for the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (af).

History has shown that man is incapable of electing the right people to leadership. Islam itself makes it necessary for its believers to live within the framework of an Islamic order. Some of their religious obligations can only be fully realized within a political state where the leadership and structure of government are divinely ordained. The Islamic government is an extension of the authority of the Prophet (s) and holy Imams (as) because it works for social justice and welfare of the people which is the main purpose of divine laws and decree.

The invaluable guidance from Imam Ali (a) as collected in the Nahj ul Balaghah is a reliable source for a jurist at helm of any government to explore political fiqh and draw strategies so as to overcome the problems concerning human rights, internal policy, international relationships, and economics, military and political sociology.

The famous epistle in the Nahj ul Balaghah, letter 53 from Imam Ali (a) to Malik al-Ashtar al-Nakh'i his just Governor of Egypt is still the greatest set of administrative commands on human freedom and rights. Dated from 662AD/37 Hijri this 7th century historical charter written by Imam Ali deserves to be called the constitution of Islamic policy.

It is based on the Holy Quran and the principles of Islam and is a basic guide to administration covering almost all its essential aspects - the advisory, the services, judiciary, revenues, and clerical establishment.

Every article of this constitution serves as a custodian of common interests and protector of collective society. Its enforcement has no touch of selfishness or any degree of self-interest. It contains such basic principles of the fulfillment of our obligations to Allah, the protection of human rights without distinction of religion or community, the care of the destitute and the poor and the provision of support to the down-trodden and helpless.

It provides full guidance for the propagation of rights and justice, establishment of peace and security and the prosperity and well-being of the people. It presents discreet ways of dealing with the different classes of



society, the poor, business, industrial, farmers and sectors engaged in agriculture. This provides direction not only for men of position but it is also a desirable code of conduct for anyone engaged in people management and is a handy guide in dealing with various administrative situations.

The nature and structure of the first Islamic state to exist in modern history, the Islamic Republic of Iran, is based on the political doctrine of Imam Khomeini (ra) and those who advocate the idea of wilayat al-faqih (guardianship of the jurisconsult). This is the formation of a government on the basis of the guardianship of the faqih (jurisconsult) during the occultation of the awaited Imam al Mahdi (af).

The guardianship (wilayah) is absolutely indivisible and should be vested in the wali-amr. The notion of jurists consulting and working with the people responsible for selecting experts in various scientific and technical fields to governorship is expected to be more successful in achieving Islamic unity at political, intellectual and emotional levels.

However the authorization of the extent of the Wali e Faqih and its dimensions has not so far been fully explored in any government because the conditions have not been conducive as yet.

My study examines how effectively this concept can be further enhanced and replicated to encourage similar robust systems globally to bring about the renaissance to establish the Will of Allah, the last of Allah's representatives to mankind, Imam Mahdi (af) on earth. "It is He who has sent His messenger with guidance and the religion of truth to make it prevail over every other religion. However much the disbelievers may dislike it." (Holy Quran Sura al-Tawbah 9:33 and Sura As-Saff 61:9).

### **Belief in One God and human freedom**

The root and essence of Islamic belief is monotheism. We believe that the creator of the world and of all beings in the universe including mankind is the one and only Exalted God who knows all and is capable of all things and to Him belongs all things and objects.

This principle teaches us to be submissive only before the power of God and to obey no man unless obeying him is equal to obeying God. On this basis no individual has a right to force any other man to bow to him.

"Say: O followers of the Book! Come to an equitable proposition between us and you that we shall not serve any but Allah and we shall not associate anything with Him, and that some of us shall not take others for lords besides Allah;..." (Holy Quran Sura Ale-Imran:64).

This code of faith teaches us the principle of human freedom. That is no man has the right to deprive an individual or community of liberty, to legislate for them, to regulate their conduct according to his own understanding of it which is generally defective, or regulate the conduct of others according to his wishes or desires.

The most important pillar of Islam is the belief that man has been created by God and is subservient to none but Him ( Holy Quran Sura Ar-Ra'd:36) and that one of the primary objectives of the Prophet's(s) mission is to release mankind from all burdens and chains enslaving it (Holy Quran Sura Al-A'raf:157).



This provides not only the essence of the Islamic Charter for individual freedom from all bondage but also subjects man to the sovereignty of God in all aspects of life which essentially implies subordination of man to the moral law as specified in the Holy Quran and by the examples and traditions of the Ahlul Bayt (a).

It is for this reason that the social rules and regulations begin with opposition to tyrannical and colonialist powers. From the principle of faith and belief in one God who has created everyone and belief that we are all His Creatures and born to obey and attest to His Glory and thus worship Him is what leads to the principle of equality of men.

Man's only distinction and preference to one another rest in his desirable quality and keeping detached from perversion and sin. Therefore anything that upsets this equality and create self-important and ridiculous distinctions must be fought in every community.

The Islamic state should ensure that it does not discriminate between religious minorities and other segments of society. The only difference between people is their degree of piety and fear of God Most Exalted, according to the Qur'an "The most honorable of you in the sight of Allah is the best in practicing taqwa" (Holy Quran Sura Hujurat: 13).

Man is inclined intuitively to achieving perfection. However it is a domain which exclusively belongs to God Most Exalted for it is He who is the source of all perfections and power. In order to elevate man from his base nature to lofty heights of achieving awareness and closeness to his Creator, man should be shown how to actively seeking perfection. Thus he will be disposed to achieving the ideal environment for himself.

The legislation for man's progress lies with God alone, just as the laws of creation and being are willed by Him. Man's success and movement towards perfection is linked to the obedience to divine laws which have been brought to humanity by the Messengers of God (peace be upon them all) - the great reformers of mankind.

In fact the philosophy of the prophetic missions was a means for leading men from darkness towards the light that the Almighty God - to activate man's perfection seeking power, in reformation of society and in the establishment of equity and justice. This is the first step towards creating the foundations of the perfect Islamic society to pave the way for the reappearance of Imam al Mahdi (af).

### **Purpose**

To achieve political, social and cultural conditions of performance in preparation for the reappearance of Imam Al Mahdi (af), it is necessary to raise spiritual awareness and readiness to recognize the Imam of the Age. The people and leadership together must work together to create and establish a conducive environment in their personal lives and in society that lays the foundation of the establishment of a just government by His Eminence, Imam Mahdi(af).

It seems evident that, in order bring about a religious revival in modern world, more than striving for a theoretical, theological, jurisprudential, ethical, scholarly or revolutionary revival of religion, religious reformers

and well-wishers must strive for an elemental and spiritual revival of religion.

There should be no exaggerated nationalism which leads to the concept of the superiority of race, colour, language and geographic and historic positions. These are the results as shown by history of efforts to divide and rule, to sow dispute and to impose the domination of arrogant political factions.

The creation of a favourable environment for the growth of moral virtues based on faith and piety and the struggle against all forms of immorality and corruption. The government must raise the level of public awareness in all areas through the use of media and public relations organizations.

## **Features of the Government**

An ideal Islamic state awaiting the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (af) would elevate the spiritual level of the society and minimize moral laxity and corruption. It would fulfill its obligations for general economic welfare within the limits of its resources and ensure that justice is distributed equitably and has completely eradicated opportunities for exploitation and corruption. The state should make a concerted effort to gather the maximum feasible level of resources and to harness them as efficiently as possible for filling the widest possible range of responsibilities.

All civil, penal, financial, economic, administrative, cultural, military, political and other laws and regulations must be based on Islamic principles.

The state must be able to identify the causes of the problems in society rather than simply treating the effects. The structure is made up of political parties, councils, national foundations for social and human sciences, legal institutions, academic institutions, foreign affairs, trade and treaties, intelligence, military and internal police, media national and international branches, environment and natural resource conservation.

## **Benefits**

The state should ensure that its accords rights and responsibility to the common man, minority and protected groups, women, interfaith, intercultural dialogue, promotion and make common the traditions of Islamic culture. There should be systematic promotion of the ideologies of the final government for preparation of the reappearance of Imam of the Time (af).

Fulfillment of basic material needs is, in the Islamic frame of reference, as necessary for human welfare as spiritual uplift. Allah has provided all necessary resources for man's material well-being. Says Allah in the Holy Quran: "He it is Who has created for you everything on earth." And has made subservient to you whatever is in the heavens and the earth and granted you His Bounties, manifest and hidden".

The basic material needs of individuals that must be satisfied are:

Training and education to develop the innate abilities of the individual and to enable him to cater for his well-being independently without becoming a burden on others.

a suitable job, profession, or trade in keeping with his capability, aptitude, ambition and needs of society so that he and society both benefit from his ability and training.

adequate food and clothing,

comfortable housing

a generally healthy environment combined with appropriate medical facilities and

adequate transport facilities to enable a worker to commute to place of work without unreasonable discomfort and to convey his product to appropriate markets at reasonable costs.

Although the fulfillment of these material needs of individuals and society is a vital role by the state, it must be stressed that it is basically the

moral responsibility of the individual to cater for his own needs through his own violation and effort.

The individual is not only expected to work for his own livelihood and welfare but is also expected to do his best on every job or mission he undertakes in keeping with the optimum potential of his God-given talents. It is the responsibility of the government to play a positive role in guiding and regulating the economy to ensure that the objectives of the Islamic laws are fulfilled.

Two fundamental principles may be derived from these verses. One that God-given resources are for "you", which is addressed to all people and not to any privileged group or class; and two, that they are meant for general human welfare, and at least, for eradicating poverty and fulfilling the basic material needs of all people.

Since economic resources are a trust from God, it is the moral obligation of the trustee to employ these resources efficiently to realize the purpose of the trust which rests with all vicegerents of God. Thus there are mutual responsibilities here between the individual and the state.

### **Scope of the role of the state**

To understand the scope of the role the Islamic leadership should play in the economy and how much regulation or control should it exercise, we look to Imam Ali (a)'s statement addressing his governor, as the head of state: "You must never forget that just as you are their ruler, your Imam and Vali e Amr is your superior and God is Supreme Lord of your Imam and Vali e Amr. God has trusted you with the administration of their affairs in order that you look after their interests and improve their living conditions. He has put you to test through them. .

In essence the state should play the main role in order to bring to fulfillment the goals of the Islamic system without unduly sacrificing individual freedom or compromising social welfare.

An important measure would be to contain the self-interest of individuals within moral restraints so as to prevent the individual from exploiting society to gratify his self-interest, and to safeguard against society exploiting the individual by curbing his inherent rights or preventing him from enjoying the lawful fruits of his labour and skill.

### **Leadership**

Imam Ali (a) said: "Turn to God and His Prophet for guidance whenever you feel uncertain as to what you have to do. There is commandment of God delivered to those people whom He wishes to guide aright." The jurisconsult government represents the practical aspects of jurisprudence in confronting the whole gamut of social, political, military and cultural differences.

The prerequisite for such leadership is self- purification, preservation, integrity, ingenuity for public administration, sagacity, justice and expertise in Islamic jurisprudence and divine laws. Imam Ali (a) advised never to take counsel of the miser, the coward and the greedy "for he will vitiate your magnanimity and frighten you of poverty." .

In a Islamic government the door of ijihad must be always open and the opinions of mujtahids on diverse matters even if contradictory should be

freely offered and accepted. However ijtehad is not enough. It is critical for the leadership to recognize the interests and effects of modern society and be armed with the correct knowledge of governance so that the state can lay its plans with accuracy and foresight in line with the interests of the people.

Legal knowledge and being equitable are the two most important conditions which are necessary for a leader provided he is sane and has the skills necessary for management. The one who wants to observe the limits of Allah, to execute the penal code of Islam, to undertake protecting the public treasury, the income and expenditure of the country, and to be given by Allah the responsibility managing the affairs of His servants, he himself must not be of the wrongdoers: "My covenant does not include the wrongdoers." ( Holy Quran Sura Al-Baqarah: 124).

Wilayatul Faqih means the guardianship over the affairs is granted to the equitable leader who possesses these characteristics of leadership. Just as the noble Prophet(s) was enjoined to execute the precepts and establish the Islamic law and Allah appointed him the chief and ruler over the Muslims who are bound to obey him,

similarly the equitable faqihs must also be chief and rulers execute the laws and establish Islamic social regulations... " O people of the Faith! Obey God and Obey His Prophet and those from among you who hold authority over you. And refer to God and His prophet whenever there is difference of opinion among you." (Holy Quran Sura Nisa 4: 59).

With regard to the concept of the jurisconsult, Imam Mahdi (af) wrote in a letter to Ishaq ibn Yaqub: "But as for problems which will occur in the future, you should refer to the narrators of our traditions for their verdicts as they are my proofs to you, and I am Allah's Proof (Hujjatu llah) to them."

It is a question of performing a duty and not of status. The wilayah means directing the country and enacting the sacred religious laws which are weighty tasks. The leadership of the Muslim society should be vested in the present wali-amr, although it is believed that every faqih is vested with absolute wilayah over the wealth and lives of people throughout the world.

Imam Khomeini ® expounded the theory of "formation of the Islamic government on the basis of the guardianship of the faqih during occultation". The success of the model of a religious government that Imam Khomeini introduced in the Islamic Republic of Iran is based on leadership by a fully qualified mujtahid or jurisconsult.

If the jurisconsult is to be a source of authority for every issue concerning the Muslim society then a committee comprising of distinguished scholars and experts from different fields should be set up to elaborate the stand of Islam on various matters.

The jurisconsult undertakes the consultation with the people for the appointment of a leader and lays down qualifications for leadership of the Islamic order.

"When the people as a whole agree upon a thing, do not impose your own view on them and do not neglect to discharge the responsibility that rests on you in consequence; for the eyes of the people will be on you and you are answerable for whatever you do to them" Imam Ali (a) emphasized that the leadership should: "Meet the oppressed and the lowly periodically in

an open conference and conscious of the Divine Presence there... so that the representative of the poor might state their grievances fearlessly and without reserve" The Holy Prophet (s) has said:

"No nation or society will occupy a high position in which the strong do not discharge their duty to the weak."

Imam Ali (a) said: "It is the common man who is the strength of the state and religion. It is he who fights the enemy. So live in close contact with the masses and be mindful of their welfare" Thus the strength of the Islamic rule is the mutual love and trust between the people and the leadership.

As Imam Khomeini said " people's awareness, their participation, cooperation and supervision with the government chosen by themselves, is itself a major guarantee for protection of the society."

The religious scholars and thinkers should be together as one and preserve unity amongst them and work in a single direction always alert and rise against oppression to deliver humanity from the despotic control of the deceitful and conspiring minority. The framework of the individual competencies lies in their honesty and veracity so that the people through their votes take part in the supervision of the highest affairs relating to the destiny of the Islamic society.

Eradication of poverty and create conditions for full employment and a high rate of growth;

Eradication of poverty and satisfaction of all basic human needs; secondly full and efficient employment of all human and material resources to attain an optimum rate of economic growth and improve the standard of living of all people; and thirdly avoidance of conditions generating deficient or excess demand and leading to unemployment or inflation.

Islam's main concern is in encouraging economic development with social justice. Thus economic growth is not an isolated phenomenon and has to be seen against its impact on the moral fabric of Muslim society, the goal of social and economic justice, and the overall welfare of all people.

## **Physical and Social Infrastructure**

The state should invest capital in the physical infrastructure which allows the economy to grow and develop in a healthy and prosperous way. Public works programs for the improvement and extension roads and highways, building of dams and bridges, provision of irrigation networks, construction of ports, airports and telecommunication services are necessary for the physical infrastructure of the economy.

Economic policies with technology should be based on four principles:

Workplaces should be located where people live (thereby avoiding the need for migration into overcrowded cities).

Workplaces should be cheap to organize (thereby avoiding the problems of borrowing a great deal of capital to get started).

The manufacturing systems should be uncomplicated (so that demand for high skills is avoided).

The production should be based on local materials for local use (thereby avoiding high transportation costs).

## **Education: Religious and Scientific**

It is essential that the masses are literate order to work with the government in introducing change that would bring about the Islamic environment as laid down in the Quran and as shown by the Holy Prophet (s). Therefore the state should invest in education so that all citizens regardless of ethnic group or tribe enjoy equal rights to education and physical training regardless of colour, race and language.

The government has the duty to create equal conditions for all citizens the opportunity to learn and utilize talents, expertise and knowledge in order to become competent at different kinds of work. The teaching of new skills aimed at continuous improvement and development so that the incentive for research and invention of new techniques of production and distribution is stimulated amongst the people in order to utilise resources to their maximum potential.

It is essential to raise the spirituality of the individual with the aim of building morally upright characters but also inculcates the spirit of hard work and efficiency, economy and frugality, avoiding waste and extravagance. This encourages people to make productive investment of savings so that both the individual and the society benefits.

## **Art and Culture that portrays the Awaiting**

Art and culture is the most eloquent way of portraying and promoting the principles of justice, honour and equity so that it reflects the hopes and longings of people for the Reappearance and the loathing of injustice, aggressive power and oppression.

The art acceptable to the Holy Quran is that which glosses the true Islam of the noble Prophet (s), of the Imams of guidance, of the suffering poor people, of the barefooted and of the down-trodden in the bitter and disgraceful history of deprivation.

The responsibility of artists of the nation is to illuminously depict equity, honour and fairness and to personify the disappointment of the hungry inflicted by the wrath of power and money. Theatre and cinema present arts



should actively the culture of Awaiting to create in the hearts of people a devout and real link with Imam Mahdi (af) to symbolize the longing for His Eminence (af).

In order for such culture to evolve and be refined, people should acquaint themselves with the Imam (af) and be prepared for the appearance of the Imam. They must learn and reflect in their behaviour the characters and merits of the companions of the Imam (af). Their hearts and souls should blaze with love and affection for him.

Their thoughts should be devoted to his service and their desire should be to meet His Eminence. Their prayers ask for the blessing of Allah to be showered on the Imam (af) and their supplications should be for their salvation.

### **Health**

Public health is another sphere of the social capital that is the responsibility of the state. This includes the provision of adequate medical facilities in order to improve the health people and to reduce suffering from ill health and disease in all living, leisure and working areas. Sanitation facilities in residential and public places, promoting public awareness of keeping a clean environment and curbing of pollution, providing clean water supplies, comfortable housing and encouraging healthy eating habits and regular physical upkeep and exercise are essential to achieve a healthier public.

### **Stability of real value of monetary assets**

In a world where all countries are mutually interdependent and where the monetary fiscal policies of certain countries are responsible for substantial degree of price stability, it is necessary for the Islamic state should be clear about its own role and work with determination to resort to healthy financial policies and appropriate direct controls.

" O believers, fear God; and give up outstanding interest, if you are believers. But if you do not, then be informed of the declaration of war ( against you) by God and His Messenger; yet if you repent, you shall have your principal, neither you shall suffer nor inflict injustice." ( Sura Baqarah Verses 278-279). It is critical for the long term growth of the economy that inflation and decline in the real value of money is contained due to the adverse effects this erosion has on social justice and welfare of the society.

The Quran unequivocally states:

And give full measure and weight with justice (6:152). So give full measure and weight without defrauding men in their belongings and do not corrupt the world after its reform. This is better for you, if you are believers." (7:85, and see also 11: 48, 17:35 and 26:181). These injunctions towards honesty and justice in all measures apply not just to individuals but also to society and the state. This term encompasses all measures of value and not just conventional weights and measures.

### **Market forces**

The state should play an active and conscious role in not only determining priorities and guiding or challenging the scarce resources in the



light of those priorities but also regulating demand so that occurrence of recession or inflation is avoided in order to lead to optimum efficiency in the use of resources.

Undisciplined self-interest and unguided play of market forces do not always work out for the best of all sections of society because of limitations or individual horizon, lack of awareness or appreciation of social costs, and unbalanced growth in different sectors of the economy unrelated to the welfare needs of the people.

## **Non Governmental Organisations**

Non governmental organisations (NGOs) are important elements in a society as they are at the leading edge of change. They share crisis intervention work with the government and take an interest in long term development of society.

This enables individuals to take an active role in working for a better society such as through voluntary work. People would willingly volunteer their time, money and services to NGOs that they may not necessarily be able to do so for official government jobs.

The Islamic state should encourage NGOs to bring about change and alternative models. Through their advocacy work they provide innovations, fresh thinking and new visions.

They are sometimes response for setting the pace in areas like economic development and environmental protection. Ethical investment guidelines based on the guidance provided by God in the Holy Quran should be adopted by the government so that there is no investment in foreign corporations that are major defence contractors, or corporations which injure the environment, discriminate against women or minorities or are involved in repressive regimes. Imam Ali (a) said: "Do not appropriate to your self that in which all the people have an equal share."

## **Taxes**

The Islamic state has the right to raise resources through taxes provided that taxes are raised in a just manner and are within the bearable limit of the people. Imam Ali has stressed that taxes should be collected with justice and kindness. The taxes and the budget suggested by Islam were not only to meet the needs of the poor and the needy ones of the Holy Prophet's (s) descendents, but to establish a government and to meet its necessary expenditure required for a vast executive-administrative system.

Khums is one the huge incomes pouring into the Islamic treasury forming part of the budget. It is levied on profits coming from agriculture, commerce, the internal and external and resource and in general it is taken equitably from all kinds of profits and incomes. After extracting their own expenditures, every individual has to pay one-fifth of his surplus profits to the Islamic authority. The aim of such a tax system is to remove the financial needs of the several departments and enable it to discharge the functions of a modern Islamic state.

## **Law and Order**

The degree of law and order in a society and the extent of security of life and property are one of the prime determinants of growth and stability of an economy and the inner happiness of individuals. Thus it is the duty of the state to safeguard the life and property of all individuals within its boundaries.

## **Social and economic justice**

Equal treatment of all individuals in society and before the law would be not be meaningful unless everyone gets his due for his contribution to society and there is no exploitation of one individual by another. "Defraud

not people in their dues goods" (Holy Quran Sura Ash-Shu'ara: 183) where God cautions man not to withhold what is justly due to others.

### **Women's rights**

Islam shows a concern for women that it does not show for men in that it pays greater regard to their rights than those of men. "... and they (women) have rights similar in fairness..." (Holy Quran Sura 2:228). The government should ensure the rights of women in all respects, in conformity with Islamic criteria and create a favourable environment for the growth of woman's personality and accord her material and intellectual rights. The state should provide protection for mothers during pregnancy and child rearing.

Imam Khomeini held women in especially high regard especially in their role as mothers. He prayed to Allah to protect women so that they may carry on the job of training human beings, a job that the prophets were also assigned. Imam Khomeini addressed the ladies in stressing: "It is in your laps that virtuousness, decency and greatness are fostered. You have a duty to raise your children well, to bring up with Islamic values, with human values..."

Orphans and destitutes without guardians.

In absence of legal guardians, the orphan's interest is to be protected by awarding their guardianship to worthy mothers. "...And they ask you concerning the orphans. Say: To set right for them (their affairs) is good," (Holy Quran Sura Baqarah: 220). There is the establishment of special social security for widows and aged women and women without support.

### **Justice**

It is the indisputable right of every citizen to seek justice by recourse to the judicial system. "... And whoever judges not by what God has sent down, they are the unbelievers." (Holy Quran Sura Maidah : Verse 44). "... And whoever judges not by what God has sent down, they are unjust." (Sura Maidah Verse 45). "... And whoever judges not by what God has sent down, they are corrupt." (Sura Maidah: Verse 47). The state should ensure that access to courts and lawyers must be easy and affordable.

This also entails that no one is entitled to exercise his rights in a way that is detrimental to others or public interests. The judges of courts are not to execute laws and regulations of the government which are in conflict with Islamic laws.

Social security and equitable distribution of income and wealth.

It is the duty of the Islamic state to ensure a respectable standard of living for every individual who is unable to take care of his own needs and hence requires assistance.

Imam Ali emphasized the gravity of this role: "Beware! Fear God when dealing the problem of the poor who have none to patronize, who are forlorn, indigent and helpless and are greatly torn in mind - victims to the vicissitudes of time." "For God's sake safeguard their rights; for on you rests the responsibility of protection. Assign for their uplift a portion of the state treasury, wherever they may be..." For no excuse will be acceptable to God.

"Make such provision for these poor people as shall not oblige you to offer an excuse before God on the Day of Judgment."

### **To harmonise international relations and ensure national defence**

Islam has come to all nations and to all peoples. Therefore the Islamic state is not hostile to any nation and it has friendly relations with those who want to have friendly relations with it. This humanistic leadership is expected from all nations and governments.

Struggle and defending of human rights is an important role of the Islamic state regardless of borders. Under the Islamic leadership the two principles are applied: "Be neither a wrongdoer nor a wronged". The struggle is the stand of the right with the wrong and it has no end.

The state's foreign relations policy is based on the principle of protecting the freedom of the people, independence, interests of Islam and the Muslims. Therefore if another country accepts that, then the Islamic state will act on mutual respect. Imam Ali (a) has cautioned: "Bear in mind that you do not throw away the offer of peace which your enemy may himself make.

Accept it for that will please God. "...Under the peace treaty if you have accepted any obligations these are to be discharged scrupulously. It is a trust and must be faithfully upheld." Imam Ali (a) exhorts to exercise extreme vigilance so that the enemy does not lull the state into a false sense of security.

With regard to national defense, peace is a source of comfort to the army; it reduces the government's worries and promotes order in the state. "And make ready for them whatever you can of force and of horses tethered." (Holy Quran Sura al-Anfal: 60). This is an order by God to be on the alert by preparing as much as possible of the armed forces and defensive power in general. It is an order to be ready and to always keep watch during peacetime. The army has to be not only well prepared but also hold high morale and have an unwavering belief in its ability to achieve victory.

### **Unity in Rising: Difficult times ahead**

God the Blessed and Exalted says: "I exhort you only to one thing: to rise for Allah." (Holy Quran Sura Saba': 46). Imam Hussain (a) the Master of Martyrs said of an oppressive ruler that whoever sees an unjust ruler governing among the people unjustly; he must oppose and stop him as much as he can. Rising against injustice and steadfastness are the two characteristics of prophets.

God exhorts "Arise and warn" (Holy Quran Sura al-Muddaththir: 2) The steadfastness and keeping to the right path will prove valuable in paving the path for easy and pleasant reappearance of His Eminence our Imam (af). "Continue then in the right path as you were commanded." (Holy Quran Sura Hud: 112).

The system encourages the citizen at every level to be resolute and determined. This firm determination will cause the individual not to despair or become pessimistic, despite the fact that there may be no help while the all powerful and influential forces of evil are seemingly against him.

Impostors and false representations of the Mahdi (a)

The writers, orators and speakers must think and tell the person of the danger and confusion which threatens the entire humanity. All the people of the world should be informed about devastating destruction and uncertainty including the rise of impostors and false propaganda and representations of the Mahdi (a) that will prevail before the reappearance of our Imam (af). The people should be supported so as not to lose heart but to be steadfast and mobilized to raise a single call and to have a single objective.

The Islamic state which is prepared for the Reappearance of Imam al-Mahdi (af) stands for effort, struggle, movement and social reconstruction. "Allah does not change the condition of a people until they change what is in their souls" (Sura ar-Ra'd:11).

The Islam that is practiced by the people in the Islamic state is not merely a set of beliefs. This is why both the state and the citizen work together as one, hand in hand to achieve the state's primary function of guiding the citizen's development with economic development which is how it will lay the foundations in preparation of the Reappearance.

Each individual has to be inspired to seek the One Creator and purifying oneself to rise to protect Islam so that both individually and collectively with the state, each citizen will contribute to creating a firm establishment that withstand the turbulence and utter confusion that will prevail before the emergence from occultation of Imam al-Mahdi the Remainder of Allah on Earth to firmly establish the absolute peaceful and productive environment where there will be tolerance and justice for all of mankind.

May Allah (swt) hasten the reappearance of our Twelfth Imam (af) to establish equality, truth, and justice throughout the world.

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