

A monthly magazine for a better
knowledge about
Imam al-Mahdi, the Twelfth Imam.

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The Final Hope

- * Imam al-Mahdi in the Quran
- * General Deputies of Imam al-Mahdi
- * The Signs of Appearance
- * Teenage Corner

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قال الإمام الصادق عليه السلام:

«وَاللَّهِ لَيَغِيْبَنَّ إِمَامَكُمْ سِنِينَ مِنَ الدَّهْرِ...
وَلتَفِيضَنَّ عَلَيْهِ أَعْيُنُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ»¹.

Imam al-Sādiq says: “I swear by Allah that your Imam will go into an occultation for a number of years ... [during that period] the eyes of the true believers shall be filled with tears [due to being separated from him].”

¹ Bihār al-Anwār, v. 51, p. 147.



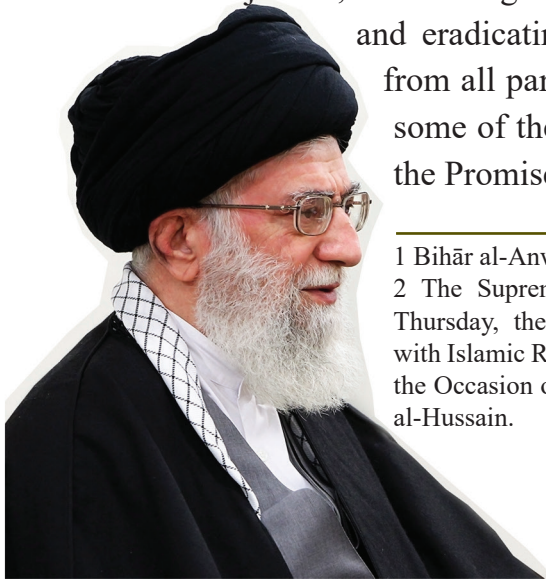
The Supreme Leader of Islamic Republic

Likewise all the faithful people (from all religions) wait for a Peacemaker, all the Muslims await the Promised al-Mahdi. Based on the vision of the Muslims, Imam al-Mahdi (Allah may hasten his appearance) enjoys the following trait:

«يَمْلَأُ اللَّهُ بِهِ الْأَرْضَ قِسْطًا وَعَدْلًا كَمَا مَلَأَتْ ظُلْمًا وَجُورًا».¹

“With him, Allah will fill the earth with justice and equality as it was filled with oppression and tyranny.”

Upon the content of this narration, institutionalizing fairness and justice, establishing equality in sociality, and eradicating the oppression from all parts of the earth are some of the basic features of the Promised al-Mahdi.²



¹ Bihār al-Anwār, v. 36, p. 316.

² The Supreme Leaders speech on Thursday, the first of March, 1990 with Islamic Revolutionary Guards on the Occasion of the birthday of Imam al-Hussain.

The Final Hope

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Table of Contents

8 Imam al-Mahdi in the Quran

14 General Deputies of Imam al-Mahdi

20 The Necessity of Imamate ... (Part three)

30 The Signs of Appearance

46 Teenage Corner

47 Poetry

49 Hearty Words

51 When Imam al-Mahdi Corrected the Verdict ...

Editorial

Imam al-Mahdi is hidden from us, but it does not mean that he is not with us; even it does not mean that we cannot see him yet, still would not recognize him. The Imam is with us, sees us, and knows us. He is like Prophet Joseph who saw his brothers and identified them, but his brothers who could watch him could not notice that he was their brother.¹

Moreover, we read in Nudbah supplication,

«بِنَفْسِي أَنْتَ مِنْ مُعَيَّبٍ لَمْ يَخْلُ مِنَّا، بِنَفْسِي أَنْتَ مِنْ نَازِحٍ مَا نَرَجِعَ عَنَّا»²

“May I be at ransom of the one who is hidden, but is among us. May I be at ransom of the one who is away from our vision, but is not away from us.”

In addition, it is said that, when the Imam appears many or some people will be astonished since they remember that they saw him many times.

O Imam al-Mahdi! You are here, among us, but we cannot identify you. The fault is with us since we are polluted with sins, not with you who are eager to appear.

1 Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 52, p. 154, hadith 9.

2 Refer to Maphāhīh al-Jinān, Nudbah Supplication.

I love to sense your presence with the whole of my essence and realize that although you are hidden, we can connect you with our hearts.

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Imam al-Mahdi in the Quran

Surah al-'Isrā', verse 71

Allah in Surah al-'Isrā', verse 71 says something that implies there should be a person as Imam in every period of time,

﴿يَوْمَ نَدْعُوا كُلَّ أُنَاسٍ بِإِمَامِهِمْ فَمَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِيَمِينِهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَقْرَءُونَ كِتَابَهُمْ وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ فَتِيلًا﴾

“[Mention, O Muhammad], the Day We will call forth every people with their Imam. Then whoever is given his record in his right hand - those will read their records, and the slightest injustice will not be done to them, [even] as much as a thread [inside the date seed].”

The word Imam in this verse may refer to two things:

One of them is to mean the infallible Imams and as a result, it means that in the Day of Judgment, every nation will be congregated with their Imam. Therefore, every man should recognize the Imam of his time that just by this way he will reach salvation and his record will be given in his right hand; otherwise, his Imam will witness against him and his record will be given to his left hand.

The second possibility is that the word Imam means someone who the man follows regardless of the one that

is followed is a good man or a bad one. Therefore, those who follow someone like an oppressive king, they will be resurrected with him as their Imam and since their records will not be given to their right hand, they will face punishment. Some people may also follow a good man (an infallible Imam or another good man) and they will be resurrected with him.

However, both of the two mentioned meanings can be intended by the verse at hand.

Two explanatory narrations:

«الْفُضَيْلُ بْنُ يَسَارٍ قَالَ: سَأَلْتُ أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ عَنْ قَوْلِ اللَّهِ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى يَوْمَ نَدْعُوا كُلَّ أُنَاسٍ بِإِمَامِهِمْ فَقَالَ: «يَا فَضَيْلُ اعْرِفْ إِمَامَكَ فَإِنَّكَ إِذَا عَرَفْتَ إِمَامَكَ لَمْ يَضُرَّكَ تَقَدَّمَ هَذَا الْأَمْرُ أَوْ تَأَخَّرَ وَمَنْ عَرَفَ إِمَامَهُ ثُمَّ مَاتَ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَقُومَ صَاحِبُ هَذَا الْأَمْرِ كَانَ بِمَنْزِلَةِ مَنْ كَانَ قَاعِدًا فِي عَسْكَرِهِ لَا بَلَّ بِمَنْزِلَةِ مَنْ قَعَدَ تَحْتَ لِيَوَائِهِ».¹

Fudayl bin Yasār says, “I asked Imam al-Sādiq (the Shia’s sixth Imam) about the words of Allah the Exalted, the Glorified saying “the Day We will call forth every people with their Imam”. The Imam al-Sādiq replied, ‘O Fudayl! You should recognize

¹ 'Usūl al-Kāfī, v. 1, p. 371, hadith 2.

your Imam. As a matter of fact, if you know your Imam (and you live in the time of Occultation) it will not be important whether the advent of the Imam takes place sooner or later. Everybody who knows his Imam and dies before the advent of the last Imam (the 12th Imam) he will be like one who will be present in the Imam's army and even higher, he will be like one who is under his flag (and will be so close to him)."

This narration is based on the first meaning of the verse (as we explained above). For the second possibility there is also another narration saying that a man namely Bishr bin Ghālib asks Imam al-Hussein (the Shia's third Imam) and says:

«يَا ابْنَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أَخْبِرْنِي عَنْ قَوْلِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ يَوْمَ نَدْعُوا كُلَّ أُنَاسٍ بِإِمَامِهِمْ قَالَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ: «إِمَامٌ دَعَا إِلَى هُدًى فَأَجَابُوهُ إِلَيْهِ وَإِمَامٌ دَعَا إِلَى ضَلَالَةٍ فَأَجَابُوهُ إِلَيْهَا هَؤُلَاءِ فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَهَؤُلَاءِ فِي النَّارِ»¹.

“O the son of the Prophet! Tell me about the words of Allah the Exalted, the Glorified, ‘The Day We will call forth every people with their Imam.’ and the Imam replied, ‘An Imam sometimes invites people

¹ Bihār al-Anwār, v. 44, p. 313, hadith 1.

to guidance and some people accept his invitation and an Imam may also invite others to misguidance and some people may accept it from him. The first group will go to heaven and the second ones may be sent to hell.’”

Based on this verse, those who want to reach heaven should follow a good man and the best example of such a man is an infallible Imam.

Points:

- 1. The word “Imam” that is singular contains a special meaning:** The word Imam in the verse and the mentioned narration is used in a singular way. It tells us that although one has to recognize all of the twelve Imams, to know the Imam of the age enjoys a special importance and one has to know him and obey him. It requires that man should match his actions with the guidance of the Imam of his time and that he will be resurrected with his Imam and the Imam will bring testimony to what people of his nation did.
- 2. The importance of divine leadership in Islam:** To believe in Imam is not a subsidiary issue. It is so important that as soon as one is resurrected it

shows itself and people will be gathered around their Imam. One who does not recognize his Imam, cannot match his belief and actions with him and it means that his action is not done in a way that Allah wants. The issue of Imamate is so important that is not limited to this world – it also will be continued in the next world.

- 3. To choose an Imam is unavoidable:** One has to choose someone as his Imam and it is impossible for one to be resurrected with no Imam. The Imam is sometimes divine and it is when one chooses the leadership of a divine Imam and acts in accordance to his guidelines, but sometimes one chooses an inappropriate man as his Imam like those who act in accordance to their oppressive kings or ungodly people.



General Deputies of Imam al-Mahdi

Al-‘Ayyāshī al-Samarqandī (d. 368 A.H. / 979 A.D.)

Abū Nazr, Muhammad bin Mas‘ūd al-‘Ayyāshī al-Samarqandī known as *al-‘Ayyāshī* was one of the greatest Shiite jurist and commentator scholars in the 10th century (the 4th Hijrī century)¹ and he was contemporary of some of great scholars like al-Kashshī and al-Kulaynī. Though he was specialist in the sciences of jurisprudence (Fiqh), Arabic literature, and hadith, mainly he is famous as a commentator of the Quran due to his commentary book i.e. *Tafsīr al-‘Ayyāshī*, a Shia exegesis on the Quran.

Al-‘Ayyāshī’s exact year of birth has not been recorded. It is only mentioned that he was named as al-Irāqī, al-Kūfī, and al-Samarqandī² but most of the great Sunni and Shia scholars believe that his birthplace was in Samarqand.³

His great status

At first, like the most inhabitants of Samarqand, al-‘Ayyāshī was the follower of Sunni sect, but later he became Shia in result of reading the narrations of the Imams of Shia and the scientific works of Shiite

1 Rijāl, al-Najāshī, p. 247.

2 Samarqand was established by Iranians (the Achaemenian dynasty 529-330 B.C.), but now is one of the regions of Uzbekistan.

3 Al-Fihrist, by Ibn al-Nadīm, p. 361; Rijāl, al-Najāshī, p. 247; Jāmi‘ al-ruwāt, vol. 2, p. 192.

scholars.¹ He acquired knowledge in Islamic disciplines and pursued his education with several educated mentors in the famous seminaries of Samarqand, Kufa, Qum, and Baghdad. Ishāq bin Muhammad al-Basrī and Ibrahim bin Muhammad bin Fāris (two disciples of Imam al-Hassan al-‘Askarī) and Ibn Sahl al-Baghdādī are among the masters who tutored him in different fields.² He was one of the jurists and theologians who tried to introduce Shia to the followers of other Islamic sects in that he compromised two scientific gatherings: one for individuals whom mainly were Sunni and other for Shias.³

He was in such a great rank of piety and knowledge that some scholars named him as one of the innovators of Shia religion. Regarding this, ‘Allāmah Tabātabā’ī says, “He endeavored to innovate the teachings of Shia in a way that his house was the assembly for scholars and researchers.”⁴

To establish Dār al-‘Ulūm (the house of learnings)

Al-‘Ayyāshī’s father was from a worthy, reputable, and charitable family in Samarqand. He bequeathed a

1 Rijāl, al-Najāshī, p. 247.

2 Tanqīh al-Maqāl, vol. 1. P. 899.

3 Al-Fihrist, by al-Tūsī, p. 136.

4 Mafākhir-e- Islam, vol. 2, p. 323.

large house and around three hundred thousand dinars to his family; but his son (al-‘Ayyāshī), after reaching the great state of knowledge, spent this considerable load of money in the revival of Ja'farī school of thought and also changed the house to a cultural center for researchers in Islamic matters. It has been said that his house like a mosque or Islamic seminary was full of traditionalists, theologians, jurists, and the commentators of the Quran gathered to discuss about different religious subjects.¹ It is well-known that he was engaged with other sciences like Medicine, Astronomy, Physiognomy, Versification, Dream interpretation etc. and compiled many books in these spheres. On this matter, Āqā Buzurg Tehranī says, “Muhammad bin Mas‘ūd al-‘Ayyāshī al-Samarqandī known as al-‘Ayyāshī, compiled 200 books.”² Also, Ibn al-Nadīm mentioned the name of 150

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1 Rijāl, al-Tūsī, p. 136; Al-Fihrist, by Ibn al-Nadīm, p. 361.

2 Al-Dharīah ilā Tasānīf al-Shia, vol. 4, p. 295.

of his works in which some of them are as follows: *al-Tafsīr*, *al-Manāsik*, *al-Da‘awāt*, *Mi‘yār al-Akhhbār* etc.¹

Tafsīr al-‘Ayyāshī

Though most of al-‘Ayyāshī’s works have been lost, his *Tafsīr* which is one of the most important books of his, is one of these reminded works. This book is a Shiite exegesis of the Quran written according to the narrations of Twelver Shia in a way that more than 1693 traditions used in. Similar to *Tafsīr al-Furāt al-Kūfī* and *Tafsīr al-Qummī*, this work is a collection of commentaries upon selected verses, not a unified commentary of the entire text of the Quran. Of course, it should be noted that just the first half of the commentary reminded (i.e. from the beginning of the Quran to the end of chapter 18 *al-Kahf*, The Cave). In praise of this work, the great commentator of the Quran, ‘Allāmah Tabātabā’ī says, “Despite the passage of eleven centuries of compiling this *Tafsīr*, none of the great and well-known scholars reproached al-‘Ayyāshī for his writing.”²


His demise

Al-‘Ayyāshī’s exact year of demise has not been


1 *Al-Fihrist*, by Ibn al-Nadīm, p. 361.

2 Refer to the preface of *Tafsīr al-‘Ayyāshī* by investigation of Rasūlī Mahallātī.

recorded, but whereas he was contemporary with Kulaynī it is estimated that he passed away in the first half of the fourth century of Hijrī. On this basis, the history of his death recorded between 320 A.H. till 368. He was buried beside the shrine of Qutham bin ‘Abbās (the cousin of the prophet) in Samarqand.



**The Necessity of
Imamate Based
on Intellectual and
Theological Reasoning
(Part Three)**



It is unavoidable that a man, who is spiritually perfect and we name him the “Perfect Man”, exists among people. This Perfect man sometimes is a prophet and sometimes is his successor. It is obvious that people cannot directly take their religious obligations from Allah and there should be a mediator like a prophet.

During the life of the Prophet, the religion was completed and everything that should be said to people was delivered to the prophet, but the Prophet did not express all of them to people since, firstly, some of those pieces of knowledge were so high that people at that time could not digest them, and secondly, people at the time of the Prophet did not need some of them since those points were about some special issues which people yet, were not involved with; just as we see that people, after the demise of the Prophet, every time they got engaged with an issue that its law was unknown to them, they referred to the successor of the Prophet and asked him their questions. As a result, the Prophet should bestow those detailed and comprehensive knowledge to a Perfect Man who, like the Prophet could gradually

deliver them to people and he was no one but Imam Ali bin Abī Tālib whose knowledge was equal to the knowledge of the Prophet.

This is why Shia believe that Imamate, which is a title given to the successors of the Prophet, is a must and it just should be granted to those whom the Prophet had appointed in his life since just the Prophet knew to whom he bestowed the entire of his knowledge.

The Argument of Purpose

Putting aside the authentic narrations written in the books of traditions, there are some intellectual arguments that prove the necessity of Imamate one of which is called *the Argument of Purpose*.

We know that there is a purpose behind whatever Allah does; and Allah Who is All-Wise never creates something that is useless in which there is no clear purpose or reason behind it. Some Sunni theologians who are called Ash‘arites believe that it is not a must that there should be a goal behind what Allah does since it forces Allah to just follow a purpose while no one can oblige Allah to do anything.

Contrary to this wrong belief, the Shia and

another sect of Sunni theologians who are called Mu'tazilites believe that if Allah does not intend to follow a purpose in His creation it leads to futility and pointlessness, while Allah clearly rejects it in the Quran by saying,

﴿أَفَحَسِبْتُمْ أَنَّمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ عَبَثًا﴾¹

“Did you think that We created you in vain?”

To give answer to the misconception of Ash‘arites, we can say that,

Firstly, we do not impel Allah to do something, rather Allah Who describes Himself in the Quran tells us that His attributes requires that He just should follow a purpose since doing something in vain is not suitable for the magnificent position of Allah the Great.

Secondly, the benefit of whatever Allah intends as purpose does not go back to Himself, rather it just reaches His creatures.

Now back to *the Argument of Purpose*, we ask, why Allah created this vast and splendid world with all of these glory, beauty, and exact order. This vast universe that our galaxy is just a small spot in it, could not cause any perfection in fierce animals since they have no intellect.

¹ The Quran, 23:115.

Of course, it should cause perfection in mankind and the world should be created for him.

On the other hand, we witness that not all the people can receive this perfection since some of them are totally brutal, usurper, violator, and barbarian. Can we say that Hitler, who killed many people, was the goal behind this creation?

There is no way but to confess that this world is created for a Perfect Man who possesses all of the required merits and good moralities; a man who can sense every details of this scientific world and the far-reaching methods applied in the universe.

The Argument of Purpose says that there should be a goal behind whatever Allah creates and the uppermost purpose of creating this immense universe is the most virtuous man who is the Imam. Therefore, a living Imam should exist in each time to be the purpose behind Allah's creation.

We, the human, also do the same and are more willing to bestow our favor to the man whom we

respect more. For instance, if we invite some people in our house for a dinner, when we want to provide food for them, we are more willing to put the best of it in front of the one whom we love more. Our natural inclination and our basic instinct lead us to pay attention more to the one who is more beloved or more important. Even sometimes we hold the whole ceremony just for that special guest and because of him, we invite others.

Allah also does the same and although He loves all of His creatures, His most important purpose is to create this world for a Perfect Man whom He loves more and because of that Perfect Man, others also receive a portion of Allah's mercy.

In addition, perfection has various levels. Beside the Perfect Man who possesses the utmost spiritual level, other pious and virtuous individuals also can have a share of it. Because of this, these people also could be the purpose behind the creation of this world.

Here, we have to consider an important point which is that if the most Perfect Man did not exist, others would not be able to obtain a high level of piety, were not able to worship Allah properly and would

lead a barbarian life since they could not directly get connected to Allah to receive their rulings and their worldly and ritual obligations. Without the Perfect Man people would just consider their life in this world as the only possible phase of existence and would not believe in the next world. Therefore, people would want to gain as much as possible of this world since they do not believe in the Day of Judgment and consider their death the final level of existence. Then, would we be worthy enough to be the purpose of Allah's creation of this world?

This is why we read in many authentic narrations that if the Prophet or Imam (who is the Perfect Man) was not among people, the earth would swallow its inhabitants.¹ It means that only the Infallibles are the purpose of the creation of this world and if they were not among people, Allah would not let others to enjoy life on the earth.

Moreover, we read in a similar supplication, that is named al-‘Adīlah, after naming the Prophet and naming his successors from Imam Ali bin Abī Tālib up to Imam al-Hassan al-‘Askarī (the eleventh Imam),

¹ Kāfī, vol. 1, p. 534, hadith 17.

«ثُمَّ الْحُجَّةُ الْخَلْفُ الصَّالِحُ الْقَائِمُ الْمُنْتَظَرُ الْمَهْدِيُّ الْمُرْجَى الَّذِي بِنَقَائِهِ بَقِيَتِ
الدُّنْيَا وَبِيَمِينِهِ زُرْقُ الْوَرَى وَبِوُجُودِهِ ثَبَّتَتِ الْأَرْضُ وَالسَّمَاءُ...»¹.

“After him, the Proof of Allah, the righteous offspring, the Upriser who is the awaited al-Mahdi, the expected that because of him the earth is existent and due to his blessing, people will receive their sustenance and because of his existence the earth and the heaven are stable.”

The Argument of Instinct

The other intellectual proof of the necessity of Imamate is called *the Argument of instinct*. People with different religions have an instinctive tendency towards a Perfect Man as the Savior who knows everything, can solve every problem, and is able to bring about peace, security, and unity in the world. When all people in the world without a single example are like this, it means that Allah has created this feeling as an instinct within us.

Add to it, that to create a feeling in someone without fulfilling it makes the creation of the feeling to be without a purpose. It would be like the creation of thirst

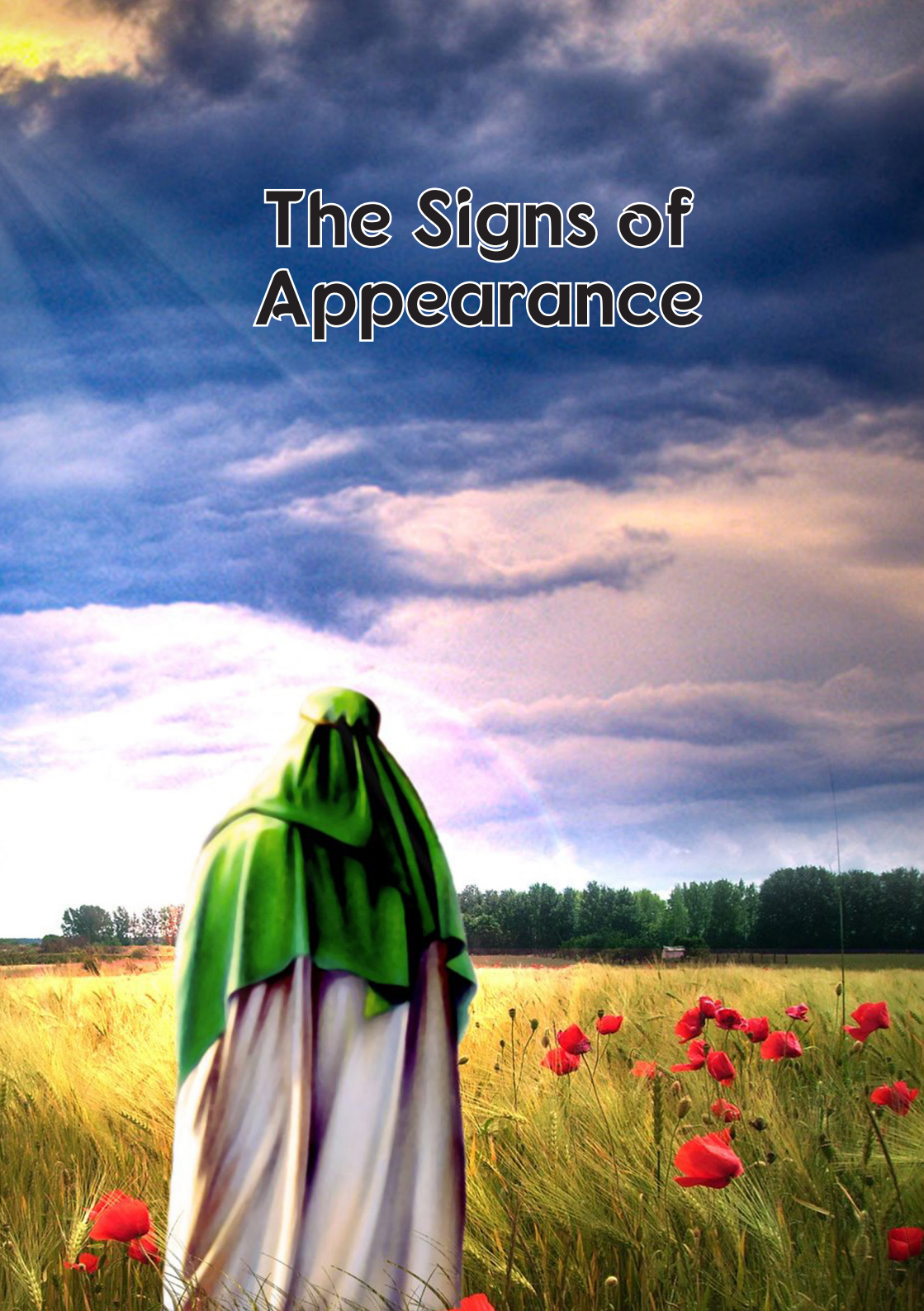
¹ Zād al-Ma’ād, by Allāmah Majlesī, p. 423.

without the creation of water, or like the creation of ability to see without the creation of light to let us see something.

Let me explain it more, one of the reasons proving the existence of the next world and that pious people will enter heaven is that one of the created fillings in our inner body is an insatiable demand of good things. For instance, if someone is after wealth, would he say that, that amount of wealth is sufficient for him and will no longer add any penny to it and that he does not want to become wealthier? Even those who are after knowledge like the scholars, scientists, discoverers, and inventors would they suffice themselves to a limited part of knowledge and then say we are saturated and never want to add anything to our learning? Of course not. This non-stop feeling tells us that Allah should saturate it and it is done in the heaven as many verses of the Quran point to by telling that people in Heaven will have whatever they want and still the available kinds of mercy are more than what they could imagine. In addition, because of the feeling to be alive forever and never die, people in Heaven will stay alive forever.

Back to our discussion, when all people in this world strongly need that there should be a mighty and powerful man to fulfill their need of security and safety in this world, this feeling should be saturated in this world and there should exist a Perfect Man to fulfill this feeling.

The Signs of Appearance



The Earth Swallowing in al-Baydā'

One of the definite signs of Imam al-Mahdi's appearance is that the earth will engulf some impious people in the land of al-Baydā'. It is also certain that those people are from the Sufyānī's army and al-Baydā' is the name of a land located between Medina and Mecca.

In a narration, this sign is referred to as a definite one as Humrān bin A'yan narrates from Imam al-Sādiq to have said,

«مِنَ الْمَحْثُومِ الَّذِي لَا بُدَّ أَنْ يَكُونَ مِنْ قَبْلِ قِيَامِ الْقَائِمِ خُرُوجِ السُّفْيَانِيِّ وَ حَسْفِ بِالْبَيْدَاءِ وَقَتْلِ النَّفْسِ الزَّكِيَّةِ وَالْمُنَادِي مِنَ السَّمَاءِ».¹

“Among the definite signs (of the appearance) that must take place prior to the rising of the Upriser are: The rise of the Sufyānī, the earth swallowing in al-Baydā', the murder of the Pure Soul (al-Nafs al-Zakīyyah), and a caller (who will call) from the skies.”

1 Al-Ghaybah by al-Nu'mānī, p. 264, hadith 26.

In another narration from Imam al-Sādiq, he states,

«وَقَتْلُ النَّفْسِ الزَّكِيَّةِ مِنَ الْمَحْثُومِ وَالْقَائِمِ مِنَ الْمَحْثُومِ وَحَسْفُ الْبَيْدَاءِ مِنَ الْمَحْثُومِ...»¹.

“The murder of the Pure Soul is certain, (the rising of) al-Qāim is certain and the earth swallowing is certain...”

‘Umar bin Hanzalah says that he heard Imam al-Sādiq to have said,

«قَبْلَ قِيَامِ الْقَائِمِ خَمْسُ عَلَامَاتٍ مَحْثُومَاتٍ: الْيَمَانِيُّ وَالسُّفْيَانِيُّ وَالصَّيْحَةُ وَ قَتْلُ النَّفْسِ الزَّكِيَّةِ وَالْحَسْفُ بِالْبَيْدَاءِ.»²

“There are five definite signs that will take place before the appearance of the Upriser: (The rise of) the Yamānī, (the rise of) the Sufyānī, the cry (from the skies), the murder of the Pure Soul (al-Nafs al-Zakīyyah), and the earth swallowing in al-Baydā’.”

In any case, narrations pertaining to this event are abundant in our Islamic sources.

1 Ibid, p. 257, hadith 15.

2 Kamāl al-Dīn Wa Tamām al-Ni’mah, vol. 2, p. 650, hadith 7.

At any rate, the story is that the Sufyānī will be informed that Imam al-Mahdi has moved from Medina to Mecca. He stays in his headquarters and dispatches an army to Mecca to arrest the Imam and to have him murdered. They also decide to attack Mecca and their purpose would be to demolish the Holy Ka‘bah and kill Meccan people. The number of this troop is referred to differently in Islamic books. When they reach to al-Baydā’, miraculously, the earth takes them all in and kills all of them except for two or three of them who remain alive to tell others about what happened to them.

This extraordinary event will not be new in history. In the Quran, in the 28th Surah we read that the same happened to Qārūn. He lived at the time of prophet Moses and was a wealthy man. He, instead of helping others, started to bully them and become full of arrogance. He also opposed Moses and, as it is demonstrated in history, he in order to break the dignity of Moses accused him of having a forbidden relationship with an unchaste woman. Moses heard it and asked Allah to punish him as the Quran says,

﴿فَخَسَفْنَا بِهِ وَبِدَارِهِ الْأَرْضَ فَمَا كَانَ لَهُ مِنْ فِئَةٍ يَنْصُرُونَهُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُنتَصِرِينَ﴾¹

“So, We caused the earth to swallow him and his house, and he had no party that might protect him from Allah, nor could he rescue himself.”

The punishment of being eaten up by the earth is mentioned in a number of other verses as a threat. Allah in Surah al-Nahl says,

The Earth swallowing is a definite sign of Appearance that will take place in al-Baydā' which is between Medina and Mecca. This event indicates that the time of Imam al-Mahdi's advent is near.

﴿أَفَأَمِنَ الَّذِينَ مَكَرُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ أَنْ يَخْسِفَ اللَّهُ بِهِمُ الْأَرْضَ أَوْ يَأْتِيَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ﴾²

“Do those who make evil schemes feel secure that Allah will not make the earth swallow them, or the

1 The Quran, 28:81.

2 The Quran, 16:45.

punishment will not overtake them whence they are not aware?"

Pertain to this latter verse, there is a narration from Jābir al-Ju'fī who narrates from Imam al-Bāqir to have said,

«فَإِذَا خَرَجَ رَجُلٌ مِنْهُمْ مَعَهُ ثَلَاثُ مِائَةٍ وَبِضْعَةَ عَشَرَ رَجُلًا وَمَعَهُ رَايَةُ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ عَامِدًا إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ حَتَّى يَمْرَ بِالْبَيْدَاءِ حَتَّى يَقُولَ هَذَا مَكَانُ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ يُخَسِّفُ بِهِمْ وَهِيَ الْآيَةُ الَّتِي قَالَ اللَّهُ: ﴿أَفَأَمِنَ الَّذِينَ مَكَرُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ أَنْ يَخْسِفَ اللَّهُ بِهِمُ الْأَرْضَ أَوْ يَأْتِيَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ أَوْ يَأْخُذَهُمْ فِي تَقْلِبِهِمْ فَمَا هُمْ بِمُعْجِزِينَ﴾»¹.

“When one of the progeny of Imam al-Hussein rose up (against the current government) with him were more than three hundred people. He was holding the flag of the Messenger of Allah and was headed towards Medina till he reached the land al-Baydā’. There he said, ‘This is the place where the earth will take in a group of people and this is what Allah says in the Quran, ‘Do those who make evil schemes feel secure that Allah will not make

¹ Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 52, p. 224.

the earth swallow them, or the punishment will not overtake them whence they are not aware? Or that He will not seize them in the midst of their bustle, whereupon they will not be able to thwart [Him]?”

Moreover, there is another verse of the Quran that in Shia and Sunni sources is interpreted to the mentioned event. Allah says in Surah Saba’,

﴿وَلَوْ تَرَىٰ إِذْ فَزِعُوا فَلَا فَوْتَ وَأُخِذُوا مِنْ مَكَانٍ قَرِيبٍ﴾¹

“What if you to see when they are stricken with terror, [and left] without an escape, and are seized from a close quarter.”

In Shia sources, it is quoted from Imam Ali bin Abī Tālib to have said,

﴿وَيَأْتِي الْمَدِينَةَ بِجَيْشٍ جَزَارٍ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا انْتَهَىٰ إِلَىٰ بَيْدَاءِ الْمَدِينَةِ خَسَفَ اللَّهُ بِهِ وَذَلِكَ قَوْلُ اللَّهِ عَزَّوَجَلَّ فِي كِتَابِهِ - ﴿وَلَوْ تَرَىٰ إِذْ فَزِعُوا فَلَا فَوْتَ وَأُخِذُوا مِنْ مَكَانٍ قَرِيبٍ﴾﴾².

“Al-Sufyānī will come to Medina with an

1 The Quran, 34:51.

2 Al-Ghaybah by al-No’mānī, p. 305, hadith 14.

enormous troop. When he reaches the Baydā' of Medina, Allah will move them inside the earth and this is what Allah says in the Quran, 'What if you to see...'"

In Sunni sources, Huzayfah al-Yamān narrates from the Prophet to have said,

«و يخلي جيشه التالي بالمدينة، فينهبونها ثلاثة أيام ولياليها، ثم يخرجون متوجهين إلى مكة، حتى إذا كانوا بالبيداء، بعث الله جبريل، فيقول : يا جبرائيل ! اذهب فأبدهم، فيضربها برجله ضربة يخسف الله بهم، فذلك قوله في سورة سبأ: ﴿وَلَوْ تَرَى إِذْ فَزِعُوا فَلَا فَوْتَ...﴾»¹.

"For three days and nights, al-Sufyānī will let his army to plunder freely the city of Medina. Then, they will exit it moving towards Mecca. When they arrive in al-Baydā' Allah will call Gabriel and will tell him to come to those people to demolish them. Then Gabriel will hit the earth with his foot and Allah will plunge them inside the ground. This is what Allah says in Surah Saba' 'What if you to see when they are stricken with terror, [and left] without an escape.'"

¹ Jāmi' al-Bayān, by al-Tabarī, vol. 22, p. 129, hadith 22082.

The time of this event

There is no specific time mentioned for this event in Islamic narrations; however, some traditions compare the time of this event with the time of Appearance. Accordingly, we come across with three different groups of traditions:

1. Some narrations say that the earth swallowing will take place after the appearance. Imam al-Bāqir says in an authentic narration,

«وَهُمْ وَاللَّهِ أَصْحَابُ الْقَائِمِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ يَجْتَمِعُونَ وَاللَّهُ إِلَيْهِ فِي سَاعَةٍ وَاحِدَةٍ، فَإِذَا جَاءَ إِلَى الْبَيْدَاءِ يُخْرِجُ إِلَيْهِ جَيْشُ السُّفْيَانِيِّ فَيَأْمُرُ اللَّهُ الْأَرْضَ فَتَأْخُذُ أَقْدَامَهُمْ»¹.

“By Allah! They are the followers of al-Qāim (Imam al-Mahdi) who will gather round him at the same time. When Imam al-Mahdi arrives in al-Baydā’, the army of al-Sufyānī pursue him (and when they get to the land) Allah gives order to the earth to take them and the earth take their legs in itself.”

In another narration, Jābir bin Yazīd al-Ju‘fī quotes from Imam al-Bāqir as saying,

¹ Tafsīr al-Qummī, vol. 2, p. 205.

«فَيَبْلُغُ أَمِيرَ جَيْشِ السُّفْيَانِيِّ أَنَّ الْمَهْدِيَّ قَدْ خَرَجَ إِلَى مَكَّةَ فَيَبْعَثُ جَيْشاً عَلَى
أَثَرِهِ فَلَا يُدْرِكُهُ... فَيَنْزِلُ أَمِيرُ جَيْشِ السُّفْيَانِيِّ الْبَيْدَاءَ فَيُنَادِي مُنَادٍ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ
يَا بَيْدَاءُ أَبْيَدِي الْقَوْمَ فَيُخَسِفُ بِهِمْ فَلَا يُفَلِّتُ مِنْهُمْ إِلَّا ثَلَاثَةً»¹.

“The commander of al-Sufyānī’s army will be informed that al-Mahdi has gone to Mecca. Therefore, he sends an army after him, but they cannot find him... When they reach al-Baydā’, (they hear) a heavenly voice saying: “Oh the land of al-Baydā’! Destroy them all!” so the earth takes them all in and destroys the whole army and, except for three of them, no one will remain safe.”

Yaqūb al-Sarrāj in an authentic narration relates from Imam al-Sādiq to have said about the appearance,

«يَنْزِلُ مَكَّةَ فَيُخْرِجُ السَّيْفَ مِنْ غِمْدِهِ وَيَلْبَسُ الدِّرْعَ وَيُنْشُرُ الرَّايَةَ وَالْبُرْدَةَ وَ
الْعِمَامَةَ وَيَتَنَاوَلُ الْقَضِيبَ بِيَدِهِ وَيَسْتَأْذِنُ اللَّهَ فِي ظُهُورِهِ... فَيُظْهِرُ عِنْدَ ذَلِكَ
صَاحِبُ هَذَا الْأَمْرِ فَيَبَايِعُهُ النَّاسُ وَيَتَّبِعُونَهُ وَيَبْعَثُ الشَّامِيَّ عِنْدَ ذَلِكَ جَيْشاً
إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ فَيُهْلِكُهُمُ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ دُونَهَا»².

“The Imam arrives in Mecca, then takes the sword out of its sheath, wears the armor, rises the flag

1 Al-Ghaybah by al-Nu’mānī, p. 280, hadith 67.

2 Al-Kāfī, Vol. 8, p. 225, hadith 285.

up, puts on his cloak and turban, holds on a cane in his hand and Allah permits him to appear... then, the Owner of this Matter (Imam al-Mahdi) will appear and people swear allegiance to him and follow him. Here, al-Shāmī (al-Sufyānī) dispatches an army to Medina, but Allah the Exalted, the Glorified will perish them before they do anything.”

Abū khālid al-Kābulī narrates from Imam al-Sādiq to have said,

«يَخْرُجُ الْقَائِمُ فَيَسِيرُ حَتَّى يُمْرَبِمَرَ فَيَبْلُغُهُ أَنَّ عَامِلَهُ قَدْ قُتِلَ فَيَرْجِعُ إِلَيْهِمْ فَيَقْتُلُ الْمُقَاتِلَةَ وَلَا يَزِيدُ عَلَى ذَلِكَ شَيْئاً ثُمَّ يَنْطَلِقُ فَيَدْعُو النَّاسَ حَتَّى يَنْتَهِيَ إِلَى الْبَيْدَاءِ فَيَخْرُجُ جَيْشَانِ لِلْسُّفْيَانِيِّ فَيَأْمُرُ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ الْأَرْضَ أَنْ تَأْخُذَ بِأَقْدَامِهِمْ وَهُوَ قَوْلُهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ «وَلَوْ تَرَى إِذْ فَرَغُوا فَلَا قُوَّةَ وَأُخِذُوا مِنْ مَكَانٍ قَرِيبٍ»¹.

“The Upriser will rise up then he moves on till he reaches a place namely Morr then he will receive a news that his agent was killed. He will return back to those people and will kill those who fight against him and won't kill others. Then he will go on and invite people to follow him till he arrives in al-Baydā’. Here two groups of al-sufyānī’s army

¹ Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 52, p. 188, hadith 13.

chase him and Allah will command the earth to take in their legs and this is what Allah says (in the Quran), 'What if you to see when they are stricken with terror, [and left] without an escape, and are seized from a close quarter.'"

2. Narrations telling that the mentioned event takes precedence over the time of Appearance. These narrations are divided into two groups:

A. Some of these narrations clearly say that the earth swallowing takes place sooner than the advent.

It is narrated from Imam al-Bāqir to have said,

«وَيُقْبَلُ الْجَيْشُ حَتَّى إِذَا نَزَلُوا الْبَيْدَاءَ... حُسِفَ بِهِمْ فَلَا يُفْلِتُ مِنْهُمْ إِلَّا مُخْبِرٌ
فَيَقُومُ الْقَائِمُ بَيْنَ الرُّكْنِ وَالْمَقَامِ»¹.

"The corps of al-Sufyānī will move forward till they arrive in al-Baydā'... then the earth will swallow them and no one among them will remain safe except for just one man to tell others about the matter. Then al-Qāim rises up between the corner of the Ka'bah and the Station of Abraham."

¹ Tafsīr al-'Ayyāshī, vol. 1, p. 65, hadith 117.

B. Narrations that regard the earth swallowing as one of the signs of the appearance. Then it is obvious that this event should take place prior to the time of the advent. Muhammad bin Sāmit narrates from Imam al-Sādiq,

«قُلْتُ لَهُ مَا مِنْ عَلَامَةٍ بَيْنَ يَدَيِ هَذَا الْأَمْرِ فَقَالَ بَلَى قُلْتُ وَمَا هِيَ قَالَ هَلَاكُ الْعَبَّاسِيِّ وَخُرُوجُ السُّفْيَانِيِّ وَقَتْلُ النَّفْسِ الرَّكِيَّةِ وَالْحَسْفُ بِالْبَيْدَاءِ»¹.

“I asked the Imam, ‘Isn't there a sign for this event (the rising up of Imam al-Mahdi)?’ The Imam replied, ‘Yes.’ I again asked, ‘And what is it?’ The Imam responded, ‘The death of al-‘Abbāsī, the rise of al-Sufyānī, the murder of the Pure Soul and the earth swallowing in al-Baydā’”

«عُمَرُ بْنُ حَنْظَلَةَ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ يَقُولُ: خَمْسُ عَلَامَاتٍ قَبْلَ قِيَامِ الْقَائِمِ الصَّبْحَةُ وَالسُّفْيَانِيُّ وَالْحَسْفُ وَقَتْلُ النَّفْسِ الرَّكِيَّةِ وَالْيَمَانِي»².

“Umar bin Hanzalah says that he heard Imam al-Sādiq to have said, ‘there are five signs that will take place before the appearance of the Upriser (Imam al-Mahdi): The cry from the skies, the rise of

1 Al-Ghaybah by al-Nu'mānī, p. 262, hadith 21.

2 Al-Kāfī, Vol. 8, p. 310, hadith 438.

the Sufyānī, the earth swallowing in al-Baydā', the murder of the purified soul (al-Nafs al-Zakīyyah), and the rise of the Yamānī'”

Moreover, Abū Basīr narrates from Imam al-Sādiq to have said to him,

«يَا أَبَا مُحَمَّدٍ إِنَّ قَدَامَ هَذَا الْأَمْرِ خَمْسَ عِلَامَاتٍ أَوْلَاهُنَّ التِّدَاءُ فِي شَهْرِ رَمَضَانَ... وَخَسْفٌ بِالْبَيْدَاءِ»¹.

“O Abā Muhammad! Prior to this event (the rise of Imam al-Mahdi) there are five signs: The first of them is a cry from the skies in the month of Ramadan..., and the earth swallowing in al-Baydā'”

3. Narrations saying that both of the two events occur somehow simultaneously:

Imam al-Bāqir says in a reliable narration after pointing out to the event of the earth swallowing,

«وَالْقَائِمُ يَوْمِنَا بِمَكَّةَ قَدْ أَسْنَدَ ظَهْرَهُ إِلَى الْبَيْتِ الْحَرَامِ»².

“And at the same day al-Qāim is in Mecca leaning his back on the wall of the Ka‘bah.”

1 Al-Ghaybah by al-Nu'mānī, p. 209, hadith 6.

2 Al-Ghaybah by al-Nu'mānī, p. 281, hadith 67.

As we have noticed, there are three groups of narration, but we say that they may come in congruency with each other since these two events (i.e. the earth swallowing and the appearance) will take place approximately close to each other with a little time gap; and the transmitters of these narrations sometimes talked about one of these events first and the other next. Later on, the narrators thought the event that was talked about first would take place sooner than the other and because of it, clearly mentioned that so and so event will occur sooner than the next. This will gain more sense if we know that the narrators of a hadith were not obliged to relate a narration word by word, rather they were permitted to narrate a hadith by their own words and because of it, the difference emerged in their narrations.

Another way to make an agreement between these three groups of narration is that some believe that there will be time lapse between the time of the appearance and the time of the Imam's rising up. If this supposition is true, we can say those narrations telling that the event of the earth swallowing will happen first, they mean that it will happen sooner than the time of the Imam's uprising; and those narrations saying that it will happen next, they intend to say that it will take

place after the appearance. So the sequence would be like this, first, the appearance will take place, then the event of the earth swallowing and finally the rising up of the Imam.

Moreover, those narrations stating that the two mentioned events would take place at the same time, they mean roughly at the same time not exactly, since normally if two incidents take place with a little time gap, ordinary people regard both of them to happen at the same time.

Teenage Corner



Poetry

**My eyes have lost their vision and sight;
Days and months my tear filled eyes I've wiped.
When will a reply be given to me?
When will your brilliant face I see?**

**O the twelfth petal of al-Zahra's flower!
On the seekers of the truth! Allah's blessings do shower.**

**O the beloved! Without you how may I survive?
Your guidance I require through out of my life.
I am a vine, and you are my support;
May I be sacrificed for you; you are my fort!**

**O the twelfth petal of al-Zahra's flower!
On the seekers of the truth, Allah's blessings do shower.**

**I am a butterfly, who circles around you;
My bond of love every day I renew.
Friday supplications have become cries of distress,
Till when . . . O the beloved must my wails, I suppress?**

**O the twelfth petal of al-Zahra's flower!
On the seekers of the truth, Allah's blessings do shower.**

**You are a pillar of strength for me;
By Allah, your love is sweeter than honey!
O 'Abā Sālih, where are you now?
I have in hand; my begging bowl!**

**O the twelfth petal of al-Zahra's flower;
On the seekers of the truth, Allah's blessings do shower.**

**Bless me Master with just one glance;
Your love in my heart has a deep resonance.
Awaiting for your warmest reply;
I seal this poem with tears of my eyes!**

**O the twelfth petal of al-Zahra's flower;
On the seekers of the truth, Allah's blessings do shower.**

Hearty Words

O my dear forgotten Imam!

I know that it is not rational to wait for a dear friend to come to our house, but not to be ready for him to come. Unfortunately, we have done the same to you; we confess that we are willing for you to appear, but our sinful actions prove otherwise.

O my dear master who is left alone! What should I say about my feeling towards you while whatever I say would be just a lie? If I say, “I sorely have missed you” you would respond, “Which of your actions and behavior proves that you have missed me?” I know that if I am a real expectant I should be more pure and godly.

How can we ask you to come while one of the main causes of your occultation is our bad actions? I know

that you are visible and shiny, but we do not have a pure eye to see you. You are not hidden, but we are blind.

I once read in some Islamic narrations that when the Prophet looked at his companion Salmān he became happy. Likewise, when Imam Ali looked at his friend Mālik usually he smiled. Am I in such a way so that if you remember me become happy or I just make you uncomfortable? I am ashamed if I was not like what you expect, but I truly love you and want to satisfy you. Please help me.

When Imam al-Mahdi Corrected the Verdict of Sheikh al-Mufid

Sheikh al-Mufid was one of outstanding Shia scholars who was born in the north of Bagdad seven years after the Major Occultation of Imam al-Mahdi.

Sheikh al-Mufid with the help of his vast knowledge, served Islam a lot, gave answer to many of the misconceptions brought up against Islam, could successfully pass through various difficulties and welcome all the obstacles that came his way in his Islamic life. He took abundantly from the vast ocean of Ahl al-Bait's knowledge and quenched the thirst of his followers. He was attached to the Infallible Imam and the Shias benefited immensely from him.

It was an era when Greek and Hindu philosophies were rupturing the fabric of Islam. Twisted beliefs and fake views were finding their way into the realm of Islam. The enemies of Allah had prepared the groundwork to extinguish the light of the truth. On the other hand, Sufis were ambitious to promulgate their beliefs and by the absence of Imam al-Mahdi gave advantage to some vicious people to corrupt the belief of others.

In such a situation, Sheikh al-Mufid could not sit

quiet. Expectedly, he stood up and with the help of Allah and His Proof (Imam al-Mahdi) laid low the false, corrupt beliefs and nonsensical philosophies through his penetrative writings, teachings, and training of students for debates. He also wrote many books in this regard and it is said that his works are roughly amount to two hundred.

The Imam titled the Sheikh in his letter:
 “To my most beloved brother, Sheikh al-Mufid (the beneficial Sheikh) who is strong in his belief.”

He also received many letters from Imam al-Mahdi and in one of these letters the Imam gave him the title of al-Mufid which means beneficial. The Imam wrote at the beginning of the letter:

«للأخ الأعز السديد الشيخ المفيد».

“To my most beloved brother, Sheikh al-Mufid (the beneficial Sheikh) who is strong in his belief.”

The following is one of the examples that the Imam assisted the Sheikh in giving a verdict:

Mīrzā Muhammad Tunkābonī writes in his book that once a person from the suburbs of Bagdad approached the Sheikh to seek the solution of a ritual problem. He asked that a pregnant woman had died, but the child was alive in her womb. Should the fetus be removed through surgery or be buried along with his mother?

Sheikh al-Mufīd replied, "Bury the mother along with the fetus."

On getting the reply, the man left for his village. On the way, a horse rider crossed his path. He asked the man to halt and said, "Sheikh al-Mufīd has said that the fetus should be removed from the womb through surgery and then the woman be buried alone." The person accepted it and acted on it.

After some time, the man came back to Baghdad and narrated the incident to the Sheikh and said that the fetus was a healthy individual. Sheikh al-Mufīd said, "I did not send anybody with this edict. It seems that the person was Imam al-Mahdi (or a man from him who gave the edict)". Therefore, the Sheikh said to himself, "After this wrong edict, I am not capable of giving edicts and undertaking the responsibility of answering people's questions."

After that day, he closed the doors of his house and told the people who had ritual questions to no longer seek solutions of their problems from him.

It was not long before he received a letter from Imam al-Mahdi in which the Imam wrote: "It is a duty upon you to give edicts and on the other hand, we are responsible to support you and save you from mistakes and errors."

In this manner, Sheikh al-Mufid by the order of the Imam shouldered the responsibility of giving edicts and recommenced solving the problems of the people.

*O Allah! For the sake of Muhammad
and his progeny hasten the appearance
of the last inheritor of religion.*

Amen!

عجل الله فرجه

عذرا
الربط
ممنوع

