

The Future of the World under the Leadership of Imam Mahdi (AS) in the Quran and the Gospel

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Abstract

Significant advancements in empirical sciences have intensified feelings of self-forgetfulness, emptiness, meaninglessness, stress, and loneliness in humans. As a result, individuals in our time more than any other time need a solid foundation for guidance. The belief in "Mahdism," which is a common belief among all Abrahamic religions and has a special prominence in Shia Islam, can serve as a strong and salvific foundation against cognitive, ethical, and psychological crises with utmost effectiveness. In this article, we delve into the various dimensions of this idea from the perspective of Quranic verses and Islamic narrations and its role in addressing various crises in modern society, as well as addressing some intellectual doubts rose against this idea. By referencing religious and rational sources, we will analyze and elucidate the Islamic perspective on the Mahdi and his revolutionary efforts.

Modern humans desire peace, wisdom, and justice, which are

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lofty ideals. Based on historical texts and religious narrations, Imam Mahdi is a figure who will realize these ideals and overthrow the adversaries. Imam Mahdi will establish a government based on justice that will encompass the entire world. He will actualize the Quranic invitation: "Say, O! People of the Book come to a word that is equitable between us and you." (Quran, 3:64).

Religious evidence indicates that Imam Mahdi establishes an ideal relationship among individuals and eliminates discord, oppression, and ignorance. He establishes a government based on kindness and mercy by actualizing the Quranic verse "The believers are brothers" (Quran, 49:10). There are over three thousand hadiths from the Prophet of Islam (PBUH) and the impeccable Imams specifically related to the topic of the Imam of the Time. These hadiths can be found in Shia and Sunni texts. It is noteworthy that many renowned Sunni scholars have published specialized books on the topic of the Imam Zaman (AS). Throughout history, the concept of anticipation and hope for a brighter future has been a common belief among nations and religions and will continue to be so. This outlook is intrinsic to humanity. However, the difference lies in the representative of civilization and the leader of global sovereignty. Within the framework of Shia thought, emphasis is placed on the honorable Imam who experiences the hardships of life like any other individual. He holds authority among the people and is a partner in their joys and sorrows. There are two distinct forms of anticipation. The first type is recognized as effective, empowering, and enduring anticipation, which can even be considered a form of selflessness and service to the truth. On the other hand, the second type of anticipation is deemed sinful, destructive, and paralyzing, ultimately leading to captivity.

In the contemporary era, there is an increasing consensus that a global leader is necessary to address the multiple crises we are facing. This leader will have the ability to eradicate wars, conflicts, power abuse, colonialism, and other forms of injustice and inequality. However, it is essential to identify an individual with the necessary

qualities to fulfill this important role. The global leader who will bear this immense responsibility must serve as a role model.

Critics of Shiism believe that according to the beliefs of this school of thought, the hidden Imam must now have lived for almost twelve centuries, which is impossible for any human being. In response, it must be clarified that this criticism is merely based on the improbability of such a scenario, not its impossibility. In fact, a lifespan of this length or even longer is usually impossible, but not logically impossible. However, those who delve into the hadiths of the Prophet of Islam and the impeccable Imams find that they describe this life as miraculous. A miracle is by no means impossible, and it cannot be refuted with scientific arguments. Furthermore, it is strange that these criticisms arise from the People of the Book, including Jews, Christians, and some Muslims, as they themselves accept the miracles of the prophets of God based on their holy scriptures.

According to the Islamic traditions and Quranic verses, it can be concluded that Imam Mahdi will appear to restore the position of the heavenly book and the teachings of the Prophet of Islam. He will establish global justice and renew the spiritual essence of the religious community. These are issues that no prophet has succeeded in fully realizing. The real life of the book and tradition lies in implementing global justice. The ultimate goal and purpose of God in creation will be fully realized through the most selfless servants, reformers, and devoted followers of the Prophet of Islam.

Imam Mahdi will begin his mission by inviting people to a healthy and civilized life through faith. People worldwide, tired of the trials and tribulations of life and disillusioned with the emptiness of human ideologies, will respond eagerly and wholeheartedly to the call of Mahdi and strive to develop their mental powers and deepen their religious knowledge. Therefore, with determined resolve, leadership, and steadfast support from his loyal followers, Mahdi is poised to create a fundamental framework for a global governing body that upholds justice. The ultimate goal of Islam is to establish global justice (Quran, 57:25). God's definitive promise of victory guarantees the completion of Islam's historical philosophy, especially the triumph

of the oppressed: "We wanted to bestow favor upon those who were oppressed in the land and make them leaders and inheritors." (Quran, 28:5) Belief in the Mahdi not only guarantees a hopeful outlook on the future of the world and humanity but also signifies a fundamental progress towards intellectual growth and maturity.

Keywords: Mahdi, Mahdism, Waiting (Intizār), Absence of Imam Zaman.

Introduction

Human beings nowadays aspire for peace, wisdom, and justice, which are noble ideals. According to historical texts and religious narratives, Imam Mahdi is the figure who will realize these ideals and overthrow those who oppose them. Imam Mahdi will establish a government based on truth that will encompass the entire world. He will fulfill the Quran's call and invitation: "Say, O! People of the Book come to a word that is equitable between us and you" (Quran, 3:65).

Religious evidence indicates that Imam Mahdi will establish an ideal relationship among individuals, eliminating discord, tyranny, and ignorance. He will establish a state of grace, fulfilling the Qur'anic verse, "The believers are but brothers" (Quran, 49:10). This achievement will be made possible through the transformative actions of the Imam. The dream of universal security, mental well-being, and social harmony has always been cherished by humanity. This dream will be realized in the era of Sahib al-Zaman, that is, Imam Mahdi. Numerous verses of the Qur'an and hadiths unequivocally affirm this truth and reality. It is a divine promise that, in the end, security and justice will prevail throughout the world, allowing humanity to savor the sweetness of life through justice.

We possess a collection of over three thousand hadiths from Islam's Prophet (A.S) and impeccable Imams, which specifically pertain to the issue of the Imam of the Age. These hadiths can be found in texts belonging to both Shia and Sunni schools of thought. Notably, numerous renowned Sunni scholars have published dedicated books on the subject of the Imam of the Age (Tajlil Tabrizi, 1996). The concise encyclopedia of Islam mentions in the entries dedicated to "al-Mahdi", "Jesus", and "Shia" that a common belief among scholars, past and contemporary, from Sunni and Shia traditions is the emergence of a descendant of the Prophet's household who will bear the same title as him. His majesty will have authority over both Islamic and non-Islamic nations, and people from all around the world will follow him. He will establish a reign based on justice, reason, and meritocracy, ultimately reviving and practicing Islam (H.A.R. Gibb and J.H. Kramers, 1953).

According to Sheikh Ali Mansour Ali Nasef, a renowned scholar from “Jāmi‘a al-Azhar” in Egypt, in his book “al-Tāj al-Jāmi‘ al-Uṣūl fī Aḥādīth al-Rasūl,” numerous companions of the Prophet Muhammad and esteemed narrators such as Abū Dāwūd, Tirmidhā, ibn Mājah, Ṭabarī, Abū Ya‘lī, Bazzāz, Imam Aḥmad Ḥanbal, and Ḥākim Niyshābūrī have documented the hadiths about the uprising and establishment of a just state by Imam Mahdi. These narrations can be found in their books (Ali Nāsif, Shaykh Ali Manṣūr, 1975, p.360).

Furthermore, the hadith of the Holy Prophet that is unanimously accepted by all Muslims, “Mahdi is of my Progeny”, supports this belief (Ali Nāsif, Shaykh Ali Manṣūr, 1975, p.360). It is a unanimous belief among Islamic sects that a man will emerge who will bring justice to the world. This view is based on the noble verses of the Qur'an, such as al-Anbīyā' (105)¹, al-Qaṣaṣ (5)², and al-Tawbah (33)³.

Different Kinds of waiting and reformer

Throughout history, the notion of waiting and holding hope for a brighter future has been a shared belief among nations and religions, and it will continue to be so. This prospect is inherent in the very essence of humanity. However, the distinction lies in the representative of a civilization and the leader of a universal reign. In the context of Shi'ite thought, the emphasis is placed on an esteemed Imam who, like any other person, experiences the hardship of life. He holds authority among the people, while also sharing in their joys and sorrows.

There are two distinct forms of waiting, known as Intizār. The first type of Intizār is characterized as effective, invigorating, and sustaining. It can even be seen as a form of devotion and service to truth. On the other hand, the second type of Intizār is considered

1 “Surely We wrote in the Psalms, after the exhortation, that the earth shall be inherited by My righteous servants.”

2 “We wanted to bestow favour on those who were oppressed in the land. We wanted to make them leaders and heirs.”

3 It is He Who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth, to make it superior over all religions even though the idolators hate (it).

sinful, destructive, and paralyzing, which ultimately leads to captivity (Motahhari, 2020, p.7). These two variations of Intizār stem from different interpretations of the promised Mahdi's uprising. These interpretations, in turn, are influenced by two perspectives on historical revolutions (Motahhari, 2020, p.7). The positive form of Intizār serves as a powerful social catalyst, motivating individuals to embrace values of sovereignty and eradicate counter-values. Consequently, this type of Intizār is regarded as the highest form of worship.

Every nation has followed its own unique path and expressed its own distinct beliefs. According to the Shi'a faith, the responsibility of guiding and leading the world during its era of scientific and cognitive advancement lies in the hands of a chosen Imam, known as the "Ṣāhib al-'Aṣr" (the possessor of age), "Qā'im" (the uprising one), and "Muntazir" (the Expected). The Imam is believed to be a descendant of the last prophet and a member of the Prophet's household. His name is "Mohammad ibn Hassan" and he was born in Samarra, Iraq in year 255 (A.H.). His father, Imam Hasan Askarī, was poisoned in Samarra. The name of his mother was "Nargis". With these details, the reformer of Islam is recognized with clarity and possesses the characteristics and identity of a remarkable figure. The Twelfth Imam remained hidden from the public eye, and only a select few among the Shi'ah community had the privilege of meeting him.

Following the martyrdom of his father, he assumed the role of Imam and, as commanded by God, entered into occultation (Ghaybat). From then on, he only appeared to his deputies (Nā'ib) and even then, only in exceptional circumstances (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1971, p.210; Majlisī, 1983, vol.1, pp.2-34; 343-366).

The occultation of the twelfth Imam is divided into two parts: the first being the short occultation (Ghaybat Sughrā), which began in 260 AH/872 AD and ended in 329 AH/939 AD, lasting approximately seventy years. The second part is the long occultation, which started in 329 AH/939AD and will continue until God wills it. In a hadith whose authenticity is unanimously accepted, the Holy Prophet states, "If there were to remain in the life of the world but one day, God would

prolong that day until He sends in it a man from my community and my household. His name will be the same as mine. He will fill the earth with equity and justice as it was filled with oppression and tyranny” (Majlisī, 1983, vol.1, p.211).

Furthermore, the reformer of Islam emerges among the people and, with their support and adherence to the rules of the Quran, attains spiritual and material perfection that benefit all individuals. In Islam’s perspective, the concept of Intiḍār (waiting) differs from that of other civilizations and religions, as it comes with responsibilities. Everyone, including the Imam, companions, leaders, and masses, bears responsibility. No one is without responsibility. Therefore, the fundamental idea of an Islamic reformer resembles that of the Prophet of Islam, emphasizing the spiritual practice for individuals and the cultivation of moral and spiritual virtues.

The characteristics of the chosen global leader

In the contemporary era, there is a growing consensus that a worldwide leader is essential to address the numerous crises we face. The leader would have the ability to eradicate wars, conflicts, abuses of power, colonialism, and various other manifestations of injustice and inequality. However, it is essential to identify the individual who possesses the required qualities to take on this significant role. The global leader, who will bear this immense responsibility, must serve as an exemplar. Essentially, they should embody the attributes and traits described below:

1. It is of great significance for him to exhibit honesty in his assertions. When offering an invitation to humanity for a more favorable state and existence, he asserts that he intends to rescue the world from conflicts, brutalities, and injustice. He needs to uphold the truthfulness of these claims; otherwise, he would be deceiving himself and going against his principles.

2. Throughout the course of history, there have been numerous reformers who displayed unwavering dedication toward reshaping society and upholding principles of justice. These individuals harbored sincere intentions and were transparent in their assertions.

Nevertheless, their endeavors to instigate transformation and ensure fairness were ultimately thwarted as a result of inadequate strategies and legislation that failed to harmonize with the inherent nature of humanity.

3. A leader who serves as a role model must embody courage, audacity, and bravery, while also being devoid of any weaknesses; without these indispensable qualities, even the most minor threat or temptation from enemies can lead to their downfall.

4. This outstanding leader should be acknowledged for their impeccable qualities and demonstrate utmost integrity. It is through these attributes that they can gain the confidence of the individuals and be granted their unwavering loyalty and companionship (Fereidouni, edited by Alaedin Pazargadi, 1983, p.17).

Upon meticulous consideration, it becomes apparent that an ordinary individual lacks the qualities necessary to be an exemplary leader for a nation that upholds universal justice and wisdom. Consequently, we assert unequivocally that the sole individual deserving and competent enough to shoulder the immense responsibility of this role is Imam Mahdi, the last Imam of the Shi'a.

He possesses all four of the aforementioned qualifications. He is the one who tirelessly preaches the word of God, emphasizing the divine call of prophets and the last prophet. His ultimate objective is to rescue humanity from the clutches of injustice and inequality. Furthermore, he possesses the most impeccable and comprehensive plan, which is the Islamic plan, and he addresses all of humankind.

Endowed with bravery, courage, and flawlessness, he exemplifies the embodiment of an ideal human being. Additionally, he hails from the noblest and most virtuous family, the household of Islam's prophet. From these perspectives, he stands unparalleled and unmatched, with no historical figure capable of comparison. It is indisputable that he is the sole individual deserving to lead the era of universal justice, and there is no doubt that he will effectively establish it.

Human beings possess an inherent capability to receive divine revelations through prophecy, thanks to the universal law of guidance

that governs all existence. These revelations act as a guiding compass, leading individuals toward the realization of the ideal human standard and the overall well-being of the human race. The bestowed power of prophecy would lose its meaning and purpose if perfection and happiness were unattainable for humans, who inherently possess a social nature. However, creation itself lacks futility, thereby affirming the importance and purpose behind this divine gift (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1971, p.211).

Throughout history, humanity has always longed for a satisfying social life, filled with authentic happiness. This inherent longing is deeply rooted within our essence, similar to the instinctual craving for food when hungry or the desire for water when thirsty. Just as the absence of reproduction would eradicate the attraction between sexes, the absence of this yearning for a significant social existence would not have been ingrained in us if it lacked a tangible existence (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1971, p. 211).

Motahhari shares a narrative from the Prophet, underscoring the divine assistance granted to humanity through the presence of Imam Mahdi. As a result, he deduces that Allah has never forsaken the world without a mentor and will never do so (Motahhari, 1996, p. 212-213).

In the future, the upcoming era will experience a period where the structure of human society will be filled with fairness, and all people will live together in peace and tranquility. During that time, humanity will embody moral goodness and superiority completely. Achieving this state will be made possible by the collective endeavors of human beings, aided by the Divine. The person, who will guide and lead such a society, acting as the savior of mankind, is known as “the Mahdi” in the language of the hadith.

Objections against the idea of Occultation

Critics of Shi'ism argue that according to the beliefs of this school, the hidden Imam should now be almost twelve centuries old, which is impossible for any human being. In response, it must be clarified that the objection is based solely on the unlikelihood of such an occurrence, not its impossibility. Indeed, a lifespan of such length or

even longer is highly improbable. However, those who delve into the hadiths of the Holy Prophet and the Imams will discover that they describe this life as possessing miraculous qualities. Miracles are by no means impossible and cannot be refuted through scientific arguments. Furthermore, it is strange that these objections arise from people of the Book, such as Jews, Christians, and some Muslims, as they themselves accept the miracles performed by the prophets of God according to their sacred scriptures (Motahhari, 1996, p. 212-213).

Mufid, the prominent Shia theologian in the 10th century AD, offers two rebuttals against this objection. Firstly, the concealment of the Imam does not rule out the real need of the community for him as the protector of the Law and God's evidence (Ḥujjat) on earth. However, the Imam does not necessarily have to personally fulfill this role. He may appoint a representative, just as the prophets often acted through vicars and agents during their time on earth. However, if he witnesses his followers straying from the customs he has imparted to them, he must subsequently emerge and assume direct responsibility for matters (Mufid, 1951, pp.24-25; Mcdermott, 1978, p.128).

The adversaries outside the Shi'ite community are the target of his second argument. If the concealment of the Imam leads to evil prevailing on earth, the responsibility does not lie with God for hiding him, but with the wicked individuals who have forced his concealment. If the Imam was taken away by God without any justification, then God would be accountable for the resulting evil. Nevertheless, this is not the case (Mufid, 1951, pp.24-25). Mufid verifies the credibility of this hadith: "Those who pass away without acknowledging the Imam of their era will experience a death similar to those in the era of ignorance" (Kulaynī, 1968, vol.3, p.58). Nevertheless, there arises a query as to why the Imam conceals himself from his devoted adherents. Mufid, in his retort, asserts that knowing the concealed Imam is not an arduous task. The Shi'a community firmly upholds the belief that the Imam is alive. The interlocutor continues to inquire about the significance of knowing the Imam, even though we are unable to perceive him physically. He also clarifies that our understanding of the Imam's presence, his

leadership, impeccability, and excellence bestows upon us numerous benefits. Our prayer for the hastening of the reappearance of the Imam is a kind of worship that protects us from punishment and fulfills our duty as commanded by God.

Furthermore, the opponents of Shi'ism have failed to grasp the true essence of the Imam. The discussion on the imamate, as highlighted by Ṭabāṭabā'ī (1971, pp. 173-189) and McDermott (1978, pp. 105-132), reveals that the role of the Imam extends beyond merely explaining religious verdicts and providing exoteric guidance to the people. In addition to his outward guidance, the Imam also holds the responsibility of Vilayah¹, which entails providing esoteric guidance to people. The Imam directs their spiritual lives and aligns their actions and emotions towards God. Importantly, the physical presence or absence of the Imam does not impact this role. Even if hidden from their physical sight, the Imam supervises individuals internally and maintains a spiritual connection with their souls and spirits.

In various global religions like Judaism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism, and Islam, there are mentions of an individual who will emerge as the savior of humankind. These religions have consistently conveyed happy news about his arrival, albeit with certain variations in specific aspects that becomes apparent upon a careful comparison of their teachings.

The Promise of the Old Testament

The Old Testament states regarding the end of the world: “For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth..”(Psalms 37:9). The 29th phrase from the same chapter reads: “The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein forever.” (Psalms 37:29)

The chapter 11th of the book of Isaiah states: “...but he will judge

¹ Vilayah or Valayah is a general concept of the Islamic faith and a key word in Shia Islam that refers, among other things, to the nature and function of the Imamate. Vilayah is a word which a power gives authority and guardianship to a person, community, or country that is under the direction and rule on behalf of another.

the poor with justice and will rule the world for the oppressed, he will hit the world with the rod of his mouth and will kill the sinners with the whiff from his lips.”

“And the belt from his waistline will be justice and the belt of his middling will be trust.”

“And the wolf with the lamb inhabit beside the sheep, and the panther will rest beside the goat, and the calf and the lion and the cow together, and a child will be their shepherd...an infant will play beside the snake hole.” (Asiah)

The New Testament also refers to prophecies and assurances concerning the future of the world. For example, in the 25th chapter of Matthew, it is stated: “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goat. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left” (Matthew 25:31-55).

A careful reader will realize that the “Son of Man” mentioned in the gospel does not refer to the Holy Christ, as these promises concern the future of the entire world. Hence, it is clear that the “Son of Man” will reveal himself in the future. In the book of Revelation, it is written: “He who overcomes and he who keeps my callings to the end, to him I will give authority over the nations. He will rule them with a Rod of Iron, shattering them like clay pots” (Revelation to John, 2:26-27).

The above narrations show that the brighter future and promises mentioned in the Old Testament and the Gospel have not yet been fulfilled, neither during the time of Christ, the prophet of Islam, nor in our current time. Therefore, we still await their realization.

In Christianity, the concept of the promised Savior takes on three distinct forms. Firstly, there is the Messiah of the Jews, whose role is that of a savior. The most significant Christian and messianic prophecies are found in the Book of Isaiah (1-11:9). Secondly, the Messiah is expected to appear at the end of time as a universal judge. Lastly, there is the promise made by Jesus Christ himself, who spoke

of the coming of a comforter and the true Spirit, known to Christians as the Holy Spirit, who would testify for him.

The second form, which holds significance in Christianity, suggests the reincarnation of Christ as a universal judge at the end of time. In this new era, Jesus Christ will return to save and guide people towards perfection. Some passages in the New Testament, such as the Gospel of Matthew (chapter 24, no.24) and the Gospel of Luke (chapters 9, 31, and 32), allude to the impending arrival of the Son of God. However, a detailed examination of different religious perspectives on the idea of a Savior would require further exploration and analysis.

The Holy Quran, the Mahdi, and the Revival of Religion

The Holy Quran discusses “The Promised Time” when seekers of truth and defenders of righteousness will possess power and spread the religion of justice worldwide: “Allah has promised those among you who are faithful and do good deeds, that He will certainly give them the Caliphate and reign on earth as He did with those before them; and that He will certainly establish for them the religion which He has chosen for them, and will turn their prior fear into peace; they must worship Me and not ascribe anything as a partner to Me; and whoever is ungrateful after this – it is they who are disobedient” (Quran, 24:55).

This Surah, al-Nūr, clearly outlines three promises to the faithful and righteous:

1. The reign based on righteousness and justice belongs indirectly to God.
2. The complete propagation of religion and God's laws worldwide.
3. The complete replacement of fear and insecurity with peace.

Since these promises have not been fulfilled by any prophets sent by God, we must await their realization. Imam Mahdi, a guided man of God, will rise to fulfill universal justice and revive the spirit of social religion. With the aid of his righteous and knowledgeable companions, he will not only fulfill God's promises worldwide but

also realize the old dreams of humanity.

Ṭabarsī, in his book “al-Bayān”, narrates from Imam Sajjād, implying that God will fulfill His promise through Imam Mahdi and his followers. This meaning is echoed by Imam Bāqir and Imam Ṣādiq in Ṭabarsī’s “Mu‘jam al-Bayān.” (Ṭabarsī, 2015, Vol.7, p.152)

The Mahdi and the Re-appearance of Truth

The Holy Quran declares: “It is He Who hath sent His Apostle with guidance and the Religion of Truth, to proclaim it over all religion, even though the Pagans may detest it” (Quran, 9:33). This message is reiterated in Surahs al-Ṣaff: 9 and al-Fath: 28, conveying a significant message across these three Ayahs. These messages are absolute with no exceptions, indicating Islam’s triumph over all other religions.

Imam Bāqir comments on this Ayah, stating that the promise given in the dawn of truth and Islam’s development will be fulfilled with the coming of Imam Mahdi. He adds that everyone will admit the truthfulness of Islam when the Mahdi rises.

The ultimate victory of truth and the defeat of falsehood will occur with the uprising of Imam Mahdi: “The truth has come and falsehood has vanished; surely falsehood is a vanishing (thing)” (Quran, 17:81). Imam Bāqir asserts that when the Mahdi rises, all evil states will be eliminated.

The Holy Quran also states: “The people who, if We give them control in the land, would keep the prayer established and pay charity and enjoin virtue and forbid from evil; and for Allah only is the result of all works” (Quran, 22:41). This Ayah is attributed to Imam Mahdi and his followers or the family of Mohammad in general. Imam Bāqir confirms this interpretation, asserting that “We are those.”

Security under the Mahdi’s Reign

It is evident that by upholding truth, religion, and social justice, and opposing the causes of injustice, the roots and foundations of fear and anxiety will be eliminated. Consequently, complete individual, mental, and social security will be granted to every human being.

Security is a fundamental need of humanity and is essential for

resolving all difficulties and crises. Imam Mahdi will guarantee this as complete security necessitates faith, competence, and capability, all of which the Mahdi and his associates possess entirely. Imam Mahdi and his commanders are all trustworthy, righteous, and perfect, and desire justice for everyone.

Imam Mahdi is the guardian of humankind. Today, the world is not secure, but he will bring universal security with him. The Mahdi's state will provide comprehensive security in all aspects: individual, social, intellectual, political, and cultural. This state aims to eradicate all causes of insecurity, ensuring that everyone can experience peace and bring blessings to both the sky and the earth.

Imam Ali (AS) says: "The day that our Proof would rise, the blessing rain will fall from the sky, the earth will bear fruitful plants, and hearts will be purified from greed and loath. Wild and domestic animals will live beside one another in peace, and a woman can travel from Iraq to Sham (Syria) with all her jewelry and accessories, and no one would bother her, and she would not fear anyone" (Shaykh Ṣadūq, 1983, vol.2, p.626).

The revival of Islamic teachings forms the foundation of the Mahdi's reign, aiming to ensure security and eliminate the root causes of insecurity. "Who feeds them against hunger and gives them security against fear" (Quran, 106:4). When that proof of God rises, the help of God comes and establishes entire security against fear and hunger.

Economic Revolution

During the era of the Mahdi, a remarkable economic transformation will take place, characterized by the seamless integration of technology. In this era of unwavering faith and moral excellence, the abundant blessings of both heaven and earth will be bestowed upon all individuals, and the divine covenant of God, along with its inherent inclinations, will be fulfilled. "And had the people of the dwellings believed and been pious, We would have surely opened for them the blessings from the sky and the earth, but they denied, and We, therefore, seized them on account of their deeds" (Quran, 7:96).

In the state of the Mahdi, people across the universe, as a result of evolution and scientific growth, will adopt loyalty and conviction in place of rebellion, opposition, and defiance towards divine messages. The brilliance of this state will usher in a new era where the gates of heavenly and earthly grace and blessings shall be unlocked.

Consequently, faith, virtue, and the use of technology and various industries will lead to an abundance of blessings among all people. On the other hand, Imam Mahdi will eliminate all corrupted economic reports. Following his ancestor, Imam Ali, the Mahdi will put an end to all shortcomings. The properties and fields captured by oppressive rulers or granted to others by them will be shared and distributed among all.

Undoubtedly, the approach of Imam Mahdi aligns with the moral values and traditions of Imam Ali. Another reason for the blessing and economic revolution is the fair distribution of wealth. It is narrated from the Prophet that: “the Mahdi will divide wealth with fairness and will fill the hearts of this nation with prosperity” (Kashf al-Ghummah, vol.2, p.474). In another hadith, it is stated that Imam Mahdi will divide the wealth in a way that you would not find anyone suffering from hunger or in need of charity (zakat).

Another event that will occur as a result of the fair division of wealth and the accurate implementation of social justice is the removal of castes. The effect of abundant grace is that all the citizens of this earth, without greed, avidity, reserving, prejudice, tyranny, and cruelty, will live beside one another as equals.

The Mahdi has infinite mercy. Jābir ibn ‘Abdullāh narrates from the Prophet: “The Mahdi will divide wealth without even counting it.” So, in such a setting, people will not have any need for reserving, egoism, deceit, and seduction (Majlisī, 1983, vol. 51, p.92, vol. 52, p. 390). Instead, people will appear as equals (Ibn Ḥayyān, 1409 A.H., vol. 3, p. 398). People of all races and social backgrounds will unite without any prejudice, standing together in solidarity and expressing their faith and gratitude towards God. In the Mahdi’s state, individuals will experience a profound sense from the depths of their hearts and believe that their positions, wealth, rank, and exceptional abilities are

divine blessings bestowed upon them as a means of testing their faith and serving the Almighty and the people.

Revolutionary Evolution in Social and Juridical Affairs

The above points show that revolutionary and spiritual evolutions will occur to maintain human equality by the hands of the Mahdi. On that day, no neighbor would be unwary of their neighbor's issues and troubles. Imam Ali states: "By God, by God, that your neighbors are recommended by our Prophet. The Prophet was always concerned about them while we thought that the neighbor is among the heirs" (al-Rāḍī, 1967, p. 422).

In that age, the spirit of brotherhood will dominate our lives in a way that they can borrow from their brothers what they need without being ashamed. According to some hadiths, apart from the universal prosperity and absence of hunger, the inclination towards personal gain and self-centeredness will be eradicated. These ideal relationships are completely reasonable and acceptable. In that age, as a result of the high level of faith, virtue, and supreme culture, people would not squander anymore. In his era, high welfare would be available for all, and at the same time, people would not be materialistic. The pursuit of elite status, wasteful resource consumption, and burdening others will be met with resentment and disapproval.

Meaningful Evolutions in Culture and Science

Some hadiths indicate that cultural and scientific advancements will be fully realized through the efforts of the Mahdi. The development of compassionate connections and comprehensive humanitarian organizations, as mentioned earlier, are the outcomes and fruits of these cultural and economic progressions. The attainment of truth, coupled with the eradication of falsehood and the elimination of educational limitations and barriers, will lead to the realization of the human intellect's utmost potential and the fulfillment of virtuous moral principles. On this occasion, it is narrated from Imam Ṣādiq: "When our Qā'im would rise, he will put his hand on the head of

people, servant of God and humanity; he will enhance all the mental abilities of human beings; the level of wisdom will outburst and rise to a considerable degree by his hands (Kulaynī, 1968, vol. 1, p. 26)".

Therefore, in the age of the Mahdi, the level of rationality of societies will rise. The intellectual perception will be perfected. Surely, no movement or revolution would prosper without mental and cultural evolution. Consequently, the uprising of the Mahdi and his state with the features that were mentioned require scientific and cultural evolution and perfection.

The divine system in its origin and legislation is founded on knowledge, wisdom, intellect, and science. The Mahdi, who is the reviver of the divine system, will base his reformation on wisdom and knowledge. Therefore, in his age, a wondrous evolution in science and technology will occur, and all the doors of perception and skills will be opened for people. Imam Ṣādiq states that: "Knowledge and science are 27 letters and all the knowledge available now for humanity is just 2 of those letters and the other 25 letters will be taught to them by Imam Mahdi" (Majlisī, 1983, vol. 52, p. 336).

This scientific movement represents a significant cultural and scientific advancement, signifying that the current state of human knowledge renders us mere novices. In comparison to the scientific university of Imam Mahdi, all existing scientific universities and institutions can be likened to elementary schools. The challenges encountered by individuals in this era, encompassing cognitive, ethical, virtuous, mental, spiritual, atheistic, and skeptical crises, stem from humankind's limited comprehension of oneself. To clear our point, it is necessary to point out concisely these crises and then the role of religion in obliterating them.

Cognitive Crisis

Some theorists in our era acknowledge knowledge solely through senses and experience, while rejecting anything beyond sensory perception and empirical evidence. The feature of this kind of knowledge is that metaphysical affairs are considered as meaningless. The result of this view is materialism. Also, some have restricted the

instruments of knowledge to intellect and have doubted the creditability of the sense of cognition. Some groups like mystics have restricted knowledge to mystical intuition; they have neglected the methods of mental and experiential knowledge. Setting these restrictions in the implementation of knowledge is the result of the lack of knowledge of human beings and their true abilities. These kinds of boundaries in attaining knowledge have caused some scientific thinkers to explain all existence, even religion, miracles, and revelation in material and scientific terms. The result of this materialistic worldview is to be silent toward metaphysics. This view may lead to skepticism, relativism, and atheism, and it is precisely this cognitive crisis that has permeated contemporary society.

Ethical Crisis

The modern individual is facing ethical crises. Ethical corruption is reaching a dangerous level. Corruptions like alcoholism, lechery, sexual abuse, political tyranny, and divorce rates are affecting human society. In most of today's world, the standards for good and evil are based on materialistic benefits and pleasure. In some societies, the call for ethical values has become meaningless. The fundamental cause of this crisis lies in the lack of understanding regarding metaphysical elements, inherent values, and disregard for God and the prophets' teachings.

Mental and Spiritual Crisis

Despite the advancements made by modern human beings in various domains, they remain ensnared by spiritual and mental challenges such as restlessness, anxiety, hopelessness, sorrow, and numerous other afflictions. The influence of modernity and science has constrained humanity, leading them astray from their authentic selves and causing a loss of identity. Human beings are suffering from emptiness, hollowness, loneliness, and meaninglessness. All these crises and predicaments are a result of human beings failing to discover their genuine human essence and losing their sense of fulfillment, which lies in their connection with God.

The Revival of Universal Religion and Resolving of Crises

A. Resolving of Cognitive Crisis

In a religious view, methods of acquiring knowledge include sense, intellect, mystical intuition, and divine revelations. The human intellect proves the necessity of divine revelation and clears many unraveled truths using the human mind. Divine revelation, truly understood, does not conflict with our reasoning. Religion not only does not limit our understanding to a specific way of knowing but also presents a new perspective that goes beyond what the intellect alone can comprehend.

The other point is that the modern mind is shattered and torn to pieces in the Western culture. For example, in Kant's view, theology and divinity are cast aside from the scope of human knowledge and reason. It is beyond the capacity of our reason to prove or deny metaphysical matters. Additionally, within the realm of ethics, the extent to which reasoning and speculation can be utilized to support or refute arguments is restricted; it can only justify a restricted range of issues. In this view, the mind only stands as an instrument. With the revival of the universal religion of Islam, the level of reason will rise, and there will be no vague, anonymous, or inconclusive matter left. Therefore, the grounds and causes of religious afflictions, skepticism, and atheism will not remain.

On that day, the verse "Most surely the religion for Allah is Islam" (Quran, 3:19) will be realized completely. It is narrated from the Prophet: "On that day Islam would spread throughout all the houses made of stone or tents" (Ṭabarsī, 2015, vol. 4, p. 25). Imam Ṣādiq states: "This truth will be realized when our Qā'im Imam Mahdi rises, on that day the ones who do not believe in God will not remain." (Ṭabarsī, 2015, vol. 4, p. 25) The signs of gradual realization of this truth are visible now. The evidence shows that human beings in the 21st century are increasingly recognizing the significance of religion in conflict resolution. In the present day, as positivism has been overcome in the realms of science and knowledge, and the ideologies of Marxism and communism have been defeated in the realms of economy and political thought, there is now an opportunity to reflect

on spiritual matters and reconnect with divine traditions.

B. Resolving Ethical Crisis

The resolutions of crises during the era of Imam Mahdi will lead to the establishment of a system based on justice and advancements in science. Religion has long served as the foundation of moral principles and continues to do so. God is the creator of humanity and their moral compass, always observing their actions. The prophets have been selected to uphold ethical values and establish the foundations of morality. The realization of these awakenings and enlightenment will occur upon the emergence of the Mahdi, as previously mentioned. During that period, our motivation, goal, and standard for compliance would stem from a deep and inherent devotion to God. As a result, immoral deeds and indecent conduct will be substituted with moral principles, ultimately resulting in the elimination of the aforementioned ethical dilemmas. On that day, individuals who have attained enlightenment will willingly, affectionately, and consciously dedicate their focus to the instructions of God. During that period, the observant and guided individual will pay heed to the appeals of their conscience, inherent disposition, and prophets, instead of yielding to the allure of the devil, desire, or gratification.

C. Resolving Mental Crisis

When the Mahdi appears, the truth will triumph over all challenges and assert its authority. In this momentous event, believers and followers will be blessed with a profound sense of tranquility, peace, and confidence. Their hearts will be liberated from doubt, fear, and insecurity, empowering them to face any crisis with unwavering courage. "He is who sent down tranquility into the hearts of the believers that they might have more faith added to their faith" (Quran, 48:4). Placing our faith in the all-powerful Allah will bring about a sense of serenity and calmness, replacing any mental disturbances and stresses. The Holy Quran teaches us that neglecting and turning away from God is the root cause of a difficult and burdensome life: "And

whoever turns away from My reminder, he shall lead a straitened life, and We will raise him on the day of resurrection as blind” (Quran, 20:124).

Conclusion

Based on the Islamic hadiths and Qur’anic Ayahs, we can conclude that Imam Mahdi will emerge to restore the sanctity of the Holy Book and the teachings of Islam’s prophet. He will establish universal justice and rejuvenate the spiritual essence of religious society. These are the issues that no prophet has succeeded in achieving completely. The true vitality of the Holy Book and tradition is dependent on the implementation of universal justice. God’s ultimate objective and purpose of creation will be fully accomplished through the unwavering dedication and righteous actions of His most exemplary servants, reformers, and the devoted followers of the last prophet.

Imam Mahdi will begin his mission by summoning and calling people to embrace a healthy and civilized life through faith. Following the trials and tribulations of life and growing disenchanted with the hollowness of human ideologies, people across the globe will eagerly and wholeheartedly respond to the Mahdi’s summons, striving to develop their mental prowess and delve deeper into the authentic core of religion. Thus, with his resolute determination, leadership, and the steadfast backing of his loyal followers, the Mahdi is set to establish the foundational framework for a global governing body that advocates for fairness and harmony within. The individuals who possess knowledge and wisdom in this global society would comprehend that the attainment of peace, prosperity, and spiritual fulfillment can solely be accomplished by embracing faith and adhering to the teachings of divine figures. The ultimate objective of Islam is to establish universal justice (Quran, 57:25).¹ God's certain promise of victory ensures the completion of Islam’s historical philosophy, particularly about the triumph of the oppressed: “We desired to bestow a favor upon those who were deemed weak in the

¹ “Indeed We sent Our Messengers with Clear Signs, and sent down with them the Book and the Balance that people may uphold justice.”

land, and to make them the Imams, and to make them the heirs” (Quran, 28:5). Having faith in Mahdism not only guarantees a hopeful perspective on the future of the world and mankind but also represents a crucial advancement towards intellectual development and maturity.

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