

The Awaited Imam Mahdi, (peace be upon him)

The promise of heaven, the hope of humanity

By:
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In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

O Allah, be for your Wali (guardian) Al-Hujjah ibn Al-Hasan, may Your blessings be upon him and his forefathers, in this hour and in every hour, a protector, a leader, a helper, a guide, and an eye until You make him dwell on the earth willingly and allow him to enjoy a long life therein by Your mercy, O the Most Merciful of the merciful.

O Allah, bless Muhammad and the family of Muhammad.

Introduction:

All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of all worlds, and blessings and peace be upon the noblest of messengers, Muhammad, and his pure and immaculate progeny.

The issue of the awaited Imam Mahdi, may Allah hasten his appearance—the Twelfth Imam according to the Shia Ja'fari Muslims—has never been a subject of contention among Muslim scholars and thinkers.

Rather, they unanimously agreed, despite their different schools of thought, on the belief in the Mahdi and his appearance. They believe that he is from the household of the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him and his family, and his name is the name of the Prophet.

He is from the progeny of Fatimah, the daughter of Muhammad, peace be upon them, and he will emerge to fill the earth with justice and equity as it was filled with oppression and tyranny. This is supported by the authentic and widely transmitted traditions from the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family.

The traditions regarding the authenticity and widespread transmission have reached such a level that many scholars have authored numerous books on the subject. Many of them have even concluded that whoever does not believe in the Mahdi is considered to be rejecting the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him and his family, and denying an essential aspect of faith.

The promise of Imam Mahdi, peace be upon him, was not merely a historical commitment articulated by the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him and his family. Rather, it was a divine promise to establish comprehensive divine justice, so that the entirety of religion would be for Allah alone. On that day, the earth will

blossom with the light of its Lord, and all creatures will feel secure, as they adhere to the generous Sharia and absolute justice. This promised day is not only for Muslims but also for the adherents of all divine religions. It is the long-awaited day of truth, justice, and peace for all believers throughout the inhabited world, from the beginning of creation until our present day.

As time progresses, we find ourselves drawing closer and closer to the issue of Imam Mahdi, may Allah hasten his appearance. He is the Imam of the era, whom we must know and obey. Through following the noble prophetic traditions and conducting scientific and objective verification regarding them, we can acquaint ourselves with his personality and identity. We commit ourselves to him as the seal of the Imams from the household of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his family, including the descendants of Ali and Fatimah, may peace be upon them. This is stipulated by the noble prophetic texts.

By the hand of the awaited Mahdi, peace be upon him, will come the end of the intense labor pains and the harmful conflict witnessed in the world today between the values of truth, justice, and ethical principles on one side, and misguided principles, deviant ideas, corrupted civilizations, and ignorant societies on the other. What we witness in our world today is the collective despair of people seeking salvation in the guidance of Allah and His Shariah, as a beginning to the comprehensive divine victory by the hand of Imam Mahdi, may Allah hasten his appearance. Therefore, the issue of hope for believers since the dawn of history, to fill the earth with justice and equity and for the entirety of religion to be for Allah, is a matter for every Muslim in our present era.

This book about Imam Mahdi, peace be upon him, enables us to understand the personality of the Imam, whether in the Quran, the Sunnah, or the ancient history of religions and cultures, as documented by sources. It is for the reader to contemplate, study the book carefully and objectively, and grasp its contents, and Allah is the Guide to the path of truth.

In the Noble Quran, Imam Mahdi, peace be upon him, is referred to as the inheritance of the righteous:

The movement of history unfolds according to social laws and norms, just as the natural world operates according to cosmic laws and patterns established by divine wisdom and kindness, under meticulous divine organization where human dignity plays its free and effective role. It was Allah, in His kindness, wisdom, and mercy towards His servants, who wished to care for humanity, surround them with His compassionate care, provide them with what benefits them, draws them closer to Him, and keeps them away from misery, sin, and crime.

The presence of prophets is a manifestation of this divine kindness, as they bring humanity a call to goodness, reform, guiding principles, and peace on this earth. The prophets have formed this line and historical continuity throughout the generations.

Allah the Almighty said in Surah Fatir, verse 24:

"And there is no nation but that there has passed within it a warner."

The struggle between good and evil has extended throughout this earth since the dawn of life, and the battle

will remain a debate between the two lines, the line of guidance and the line of misguidance. These are the lines of the prophets and the ignorant tyrants. The guides of guidance, Islamic scholars, and their descendants represent the dynamic extension and intellectual communication of the line of the prophets. Indeed, the nation committed to the line of the prophets continued its role and responsibilities in conveying the message. This line was embodied in the guided Imams, the working scholars, and the callers to Islam who strive in the cause of Allah for establishing truth, goodness, and peace on this earth.

The lives of the prophets and the callers to Allah witness to this epic of struggle and bitter struggle. The calls of guidance have achieved victories in the history of prophets, such as the victory achieved by the guided Messenger Muhammad, peace be upon him and his family. The victory for the Islamic message was achieved through him, and the pure march progressed, and the civilization of monotheism was built. Humanity has made significant strides based on knowledge and faith. It has been illuminated by this light and guided by this bright guidance.

However, the momentum of this march began to weaken as the corrupt ignorance civilization became active, and regression started in the movement of Islamic civilization, advocacy, and leadership. Humanity was deprived of living in the shade of truth, justice, and peace.

The ignorant evils once again infiltrated human life, denying principles of faith and righteousness, and oppression and injustice began to spread across the earth.

However, Allah's kindness did not fade from this planet, even with the cessation of prophecy. The methodology of the prophets, embodied in the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His trustworthy Messenger Muhammad, peace

be upon him, remains true, calling for guidance and reform. It moves forward under the great hope of (inheritance of the righteous) and (the victory of the oppressed).

So, the divine promise of purifying the sources of evil and corruption and achieving a great upheaval and comprehensive change will be fulfilled by the reformer of humanity, the establisher of the traditions of the prophets, and the builder of life on the basis of the Quran and the purified Sunnah, who is the Mahdi of this nation. Allah the Almighty decreed, after the cessation of prophecy and the sealing of it with the Master of Messengers, Muhammad, peace be upon him and his family, to appoint a reformer to undertake the mission of the prophets in calling to the principles of guidance and acting upon what the Guide, Muhammad, peace be upon him and his family, ordained. This is a true promise articulated by the Quran and affirmed by the divine scriptures.

Thus, the reformer and the great hope, who smashes the idols of ignorance and fills the earth with justice and equity as it was filled with oppression and tyranny, is mentioned in the Quran to be the great reformer, the Mahdi, peace be upon him. Allah the Almighty made him from the progeny of Fatimah, the daughter of the greatest Prophet, Muhammad, peace be upon him and his family, and her blessed offspring, as mentioned by the interpreters of the Quran.

This is indicated by His saying in Surah Al-Anbiya, verse 105:

"And We have already written in the book [of Psalms] after the [previous] mention that the land is inherited by My righteous servants."

The scholar al-Tabrisi, may Allah have mercy on him, interpreted this verse, relying on authentic narrations, by

saying: "(And We have already written in the book [of Psalms] after the [previous] mention)." Regarding this, various opinions have been expressed:

One of them is that the Psalms were the books of the prophets, and its meaning is that "We have written in the books that We revealed to the prophets after the writing of the mention," meaning the Original of the Book, which is in the heavens, and it is the Preserved Tablet. This is narrated from Sa'id ibn Jubayr, Mujahid, and Ibn Zayd, and it is the choice of al-Zujaj. They said: "The Psalms and the Book are same meaning."

The second opinion is that the Psalms refer to the books revealed after the Torah, and the mention refers to the Torah. This is narrated from Ibn Abbas and Dahhak.

The third opinion is that the Psalms refer to the Psalms of David, and the mention refers to the Torah of Moses. This is narrated from al-Sha'bi. It is also reported that the mention refers to the Quran, with "after" meaning "before" ("And We have already written in the book [of Psalms] after the [previous] mention"). It is said that the land mentioned in the verse ("The land [of Paradise] is inherited by My righteous servants") is the land of Paradise inherited by the obedient servants, according to Ibn Abbas, Sa'id ibn Jubayr, and Ibn Zayd. This is similar to the saying of Allah, "And We have made the earth a place of settlement" (Quran 18:7), and His saying, "Those who inherit Paradise" (Quran 15:47). It is also said that it refers to the well-known land inherited by the nation of Muhammad, peace be upon him and his family. He said: "The earth was shown to me, and I saw its eastern and western regions, and the sovereignty of my nation will reach whatever was shown to me of it."

And in another narration from Ibn Abbas, he said: "And Abu Ja'far (Imam Baqir), peace be upon him, said: They are the companions of the Mahdi, peace be upon him, at the end of time." This is indicated by what is narrated by both Sunni and Shia sources from the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his family, that he said: "If there remains only one day left in the world, Allah will prolong that day until He sends a righteous man from my family. He will fill the earth with justice and equity as it was filled with oppression and tyranny."⁽¹⁾

Sayyid Hashim al-Bahrani in "Tafsir al-Burhan mentioned several Hadeeths about this verse like:

Muhammad ibn al-Abbas said: Ahmad ibn Muhammad narrated to us from Ahmad ibn al-Hussain, from his father, from al-Hussain ibn Mukhariq, from Abu al-Ward, from Abu Ja'far (peace be upon him), who said: "The saying of Allah, Mighty and Majestic: '{Verily My righteous servants shall inherit the earth}',' refers to the family of Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family)."

- And from him, he said: Muhammad ibn Ali narrated to us, he said: My father narrated to me, from his father, from Ali ibn al-Hakam, from Sufyan ibn Ibrahim al-Jurayri, from Abu Sadiq, who said: "I asked Abu Ja'far (peace be upon him) about the saying of Allah, Mighty and Majestic: '{And certainly We wrote in the Book after the reminder that (as for) the land, My righteous servants shall inherit it}',' He said: "They are us."

He said: I said, "Is there not in this a clear message for a people who serve?" He said: "They are our Shia."

- And from him, he said: Muhammad ibn Hammad narrated to us, from Muhammad ibn Isma'il, from Isa ibn

1. Al-Tabrisi: Majma' al-Bayan fi Tafsir al-Quran. Vol. 7, p. 66.

Dawud, from Abu al-Hassan Musa ibn Ja'far (peace be upon him), regarding the saying of Allah, Mighty and Majestic: "{And certainly We wrote in the Book after the reminder that (as for) the land, My righteous servants shall inherit it.}"

He said: "The family of Muhammad (peace be upon them all) and those who follow them on their path, and the earth is the land of paradise."

- And from him, he said: Ahmad ibn Muhammad narrated to us, from Ahmad ibn al-Hassan, from his father, from al-Hussain ibn Muhammad ibn Abdullah ibn al-Hassan, from his father, from Abu Ja'far (peace be upon him), who said: "The saying of Allah, Mighty and Majestic: '{Verily My righteous servants shall inherit the earth},' refers to the companions of the Mahdi (peace be upon him) in the end of times."

- Ali ibn Ibrahim said regarding the meaning of the verse: "All the scriptures are reminders, and '{Verily My righteous servants shall inherit the earth},' refers to al-Qa'im (peace be upon him) and his companions."

- At-Tabrisi said Abu Ja'far (peace be upon him) said: "They are the companions of the Mahdi (peace be upon him) in the end of times."⁽²⁾

One of the Quranic indications heralding the Mahdi, peace be upon him, is the verse from Surah At-Tawbah, verse 33: **"It is He who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth to manifest it over all religion, although they who associate others with Allah dislike it."**

Al-Tabrisi interpreted this verse by saying, "It is He who has sent His Messenger," referring to Muhammad, and

2. Sayyid Hashim al-Bahrani in "Tafsir al-Burhan," Vol. 6, P 304.

charged him with the messages he conveys to his nation "with guidance," meaning with proofs, evidences, and clear signs. "And the religion of truth," which is Islam and what it encompasses of the laws deserving reward and punishment. Any religion other than Islam is false and deserving of punishment. "To manifest it over all religion," meaning to elevate Islam above all other religions through proof, predominance, and dominance, so that no religion remains on earth except subdued, and no one from the people of Islam is overcome by argument while they overcome the people of other religions by argument.

As for manifesting through predominance, it is that every faction of Muslims prevails over a faction of the polytheists, subjecting them to domination from their side. It is also said that it means the descent of Jesus, son of Mary, so that no one remains adhering to a religion except Islam or paying the jizyah, according to al-Dahhak. Abu Ja'far, peace be upon him, said: "This will occur upon the emergence of the Mahdi from the family of Muhammad, so that no one remains except acknowledging Muhammad," which is the opinion of al-Suddi.

Al-Kalbi said, "No religion will remain except that Islam will prevail over it, and that will happen, it is not something yet to come, and the Hour will not be established until that happens."

Al-Muqdad ibn al-Aswad said, "I heard the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family, say, 'There will not remain on the face of the earth a house made of mud or hair, except that the word of Islam will enter it, whether by honor or humiliation. If their honor, Allah will make them of its people so they are honored by it, and if He humiliates them, they will embrace it.'"

Ibn Abbas said, "'Although they who associate others with Allah dislike it,' meaning even if the polytheists detest this religion, Allah will manifest it against their will."⁽³⁾

Imam Malik, the founder of the Maliki school of thought, interpreted the fifth verse of Surah Al-Qasas: "And We desired to confer favor upon those who were oppressed in the land and make them leaders and make them inheritors." He interpreted it as indicating that the fulfillment of the verse had not yet occurred, and that the Ummah (Muslim community) still awaited someone through whom this verse would be realized. Abu al-Faraj al-Isfahani narrated that when the Alawites (followers of Ali ibn Abi Talib) were persecuted during the Abbasid era and the oppression intensified against them, Muhammad ibn Ja'far al-Alawi complained to Malik ibn Anas about this. Malik ibn Anas advised him to be patient until the interpretation of this verse, "And We desired to confer favor upon those who were oppressed in the land and make them leaders and make them inheritors," was fulfilled.⁽⁴⁾

Ibn Babawayh said: Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn al-Haytham al-Ajali narrated to us, he said: Abu al-Abbas Ahmad ibn Yahya ibn Zakariya al-Qattan narrated to us, he said: Bakr ibn Abdullah ibn Habib narrated to us, he said: Tamim ibn Bahlul narrated to me from his father, from Muhammad ibn Sinan, from al-Mufaddal ibn Umar, who said: I heard Abu Abdillah (peace be upon him) saying: "Indeed, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family) looked at Ali, Hassan, and Hussain (peace be upon them), and he wept, and said: 'You are the oppressed

3. Al-Tabrisi: *Majma' al-Bayan fi Tafsir al-Quran*. Vol. 5, p.24

4. Abu al-Faraj al-Isfahani, "Maqatil al-Talibiyyin," P. 539.

ones after me." Al-Mufaddal said: So I asked him: "What does that mean, O son of the Messenger of Allah?" He said: "It means you are the Imams after me. Indeed, Allah Almighty says: 'And We desired to confer favor upon those who were oppressed in the land and make them leaders and make them inheritors.' So this verse is ongoing concerning us until the Day of Resurrection."

Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari reported in "Musnad Fatimah (peace be upon her)": Abu al-Mufaddal narrated to us, he said: Ali ibn al-Hussain al-Munqari al-Kufi narrated to me, he said: Ahmad ibn Zaid al-Duhan narrated to us, from Mukhul ibn Ibrahim, from Rustam ibn Abdullah ibn Khalid al-Makhzumi, from Sulayman al-A'mash, from Muhammad ibn Khalaf al-Tahiri, from Zadhan, from Salman, who said: The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family) said to me, "Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, did not send a prophet or a messenger except that He appointed for him twelve commanders." So I said, "O Messenger of Allah, I have known this from the people of the two scriptures." He said, "O Salman, have you known who my commanders, the twelve whom Allah chose for leadership after me, are?" So I said, "Allah and His Messenger know best." The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family) said, "Allah created me from the purest of His light and called me, and He created Ali from my light and called him, and He created Fatimah from the light of Ali and called her, and He created from me, Ali, and Fatimah, Hassan, and called him, and He created from me, Ali, and Fatimah, Hussain, and called him. Then Allah named us with five names from His names: He is Allah, the Praised, and I am Muhammad, and He is Allah, the Highest, and this is Ali, and He is Allah, the Creator, and this is Fatimah, and He is Allah, the

Eternal Bestowed of Good, and this is Hassan, and He is Allah, the Benevolent, and this is Hussain. 'Then Allah created from us and from the light of Hussain nine Imams. He called them, and they obeyed Him before He created a structured heaven, or a praised earth, or air, or angels, or humans apart from us. We were a light glorifying Allah, hearing Him, and obeying Him.'" Salman said, "So I said, 'O Messenger of Allah, by my father and mother, what about those who do not know them?' He said, 'O Salman, whoever knows them truly, follows their example, supports their successor, and disassociates from their enemies, he is, by Allah, among us. He will return where we return and reside where we reside.' So I said, 'O Messenger of Allah, can one have faith in them without knowing their names and lineages?' He said, 'No.' So I said, 'O Messenger of Allah, how can I be with them when I have only known up to Hussain (peace be upon him)?' He said, 'Then Ali ibn al-Hussain, the master of worshippers, then his son Muhammad ibn Ali, the one who clarifies for the earlier and later generations from among the prophets and messengers, then Ja'far ibn Muhammad, the truthful tongue of Allah, then Musa ibn Ja'far, who suppressed his anger for the sake of Allah, the Mighty and Majestic, then Ali ibn Musa al-Rida, obedient to the command of Allah, then Muhammad ibn Ali, the chosen one among the creation of Allah, then Ali ibn Muhammad al-Hadi, guided to Allah, then Hassan ibn Ali, the silent trustee of the secret of Allah, then Muhammad ibn al-Hassan al-Hadi, the Mahdi, the speaker, the upholder of the right of Allah.'"⁽⁵⁾

So these are the opinions of the interpreters and their narrations about the awaited Mahdi, peace be upon him,

5. Sayyid Hashim al-Bahrani in "Tafsir al-Burhan," Vol. 7, P 191.

whom Allah willed to be from the progeny of the Prophet's household through Fatimah. Through him, the inheritance of the righteous and the victory of truth will be realized, along with the establishment of the global Quranic state.

Humanity is currently living in a terrifying period of ignorance, worse than the ignorance of past nations, and it is in need of a reformer to rescue humanity from the darkness of ignorance and its downfall, just as the guided prophets did. He will achieve their goals by establishing justice, guiding humanity, and leading them out of misguidance.

This salvation, as indicated by the repeated religious prophecies, hinges on the call to await the arrival of the awaited Mahdi, peace be upon him. His existence is a manifestation of divine mercy towards humanity.

The disagreement lies in the identity of the Mahdi (peace be upon him), not in his existence:

Muslims, with their various opinions and sects, unanimously agree on the existence of the great reformer, the Mahdi, who will fill the earth with justice as it was filled with injustice and oppression. He is the Imam and inheritor through whom the inheritance of the righteous will be fulfilled. They differ, however, in identifying his person and birth. Consequently, there are two conflicting opinions among them.

One opinion is held by the followers of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) (the Shia Imamiyah), who believe that the Mahdi (peace be upon him), whom Muslims unanimously agree will appear and rise with the burdens of calling and reform in the late epochs, is Muhammad ibn al-Hassan al-Mahdi. His father is Imam Hassan al-Askari, son

of Imam Ali al-Hadi, son of Imam Muhammad al-Jawad, son of Imam Musa al-Kadhim, son of Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq, son of Imam Muhammad al-Baqir, son of Imam Ali al-Sajjad, son of Imam Hussein the Martyr, son of Fatimah al-Zahra, daughter of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family), and his father is Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon them all). The mother of Imam al-Mahdi is (Narjis) (peace be upon her). He was born during the lifetime of his father, Hassan al-Askari (peace be upon him), on the 15th of Sha'ban in the year 255 AH in the city of Samarra, Iraq, five years before his father's death, while he is still alive but in occultation. He will appear, by the permission of Allah Almighty, and fill the earth with justice.

As for the other opinion among Muslims, it differs from the Shia Imamiyah in that they believe the Mahdi (peace be upon him) has already been born and is in occultation, awaiting his emergence, just as the entire Muslim Ummah awaits the hour of his appearance and the fulfillment of his great reformatory mission.

According to this belief, he will be born at a certain time and will fulfill his designated role. All Muslims agree that he is from the purified progeny of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon them, meaning he is from the lineage of the noble Messenger and the descendants of Fatimah, peace be upon them.

Thus, the difference among Muslims in this significant doctrinal matter lies in identifying the personality of the Mahdi (peace be upon him), rather than in his emergence or the validity of his great reformatory role.

The Mahdi (peace be upon him) in the prophetic Sunnah:

The Mahdi (peace be upon him) in the prophetic Sunnah refers to the prophetic traditions and narrations that mention the awaited Mahdi, who is described as a righteous leader from the lineage of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). These traditions highlight his emergence during a time of turmoil and injustice, his role in establishing justice and equity, and the support he receives from Allah to lead the believers to success. The concept of the Mahdi in the prophetic tradition is significant in Islamic eschatology and is mentioned in various collections of hadith.

Many narratives and hadith books have documented the narrations in which the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) informed his Ummah about matters of the unseen concerning the delivery of his message and the destiny of his nation. This was to clarify the path for them and to guide them onto the right track. From this, we understand that the belief in the existence of the Mahdi, the reformer (peace be upon him), is an Islamic creed embraced by all Muslims. It is not a Shia concept born out of circumstances of oppression, terrorism, and misery; rather, it is a psychological solace and hope instilled by the suppressed subconscious mind to alleviate the imaginary burdens on souls burdened by injustice and tyranny.

The noble Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) informed about the appearance of the Mahdi, the reformer, may Allah hasten his noble relief, and established many signs of his appearance. Muslims from various sects have narrated these signs. Sayyid Abdullah Shibr, may Allah have mercy on him, mentioned in his book "Haqq Al-Yaqin":

"Know that it has been narrated in consistent narrations and converging hadiths about the glad tidings of the Mahdi, peace be upon him, and that he will have a period of occultation. This has been transmitted through both Scholars of Sunni and Shia.

It has been narrated by the Sunni scholars such as Al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawood, At-Tirmidhi, the author of Jami' al-USul, and others. In the books of the general public, there are more than 150 narrations about the Qa'im Al-Mahdi, and in the respected and established sources, there are more than a thousand narrations. In the "As-Sawa'iq Al-Muhriqah" by Ibn Hajar, in the circumstances of Al-Askari, it is mentioned: 'He left no one but his son, Abi Al-Qasim Muhammad Al-Hujjah, peace be upon him, and he was five years old when his father passed away. However, Allah brought wisdom in it, and he was named the awaited Qa'im because he disappeared from the city and his whereabouts were unknown.' Other Sunni scholars have mentioned similar points, such as Ibn Khalkan, the author of "As-Suhul Al-Muhimah", "Matla' Al-Su'ool", and "Shawahid Al-Nubuwwah"..."⁽⁶⁾

And also from Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri: The Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, said, "There will be among my nation the Mahdi. If his rule is shortened to seven years, or if it extends to nine years, my nation will enjoy blessings during his reign such as they have never experienced before. Food will be abundant, and nothing will be withheld from them. Wealth on that day will be like dust, and a man will rise and say, 'O Mahdi, give me!' and he will reply, 'Take.'"⁽⁷⁾

6. Sayyid Abdullah Shibr: Haqq Al-Yaqin, Vol.1. P222.

7. Ibn Majah, Sunan Ibn Majah, Vol. 2, p. 1366.

As for the great narrator Ibrahim al-Juwayni al-Khurasani, he mentioned in his book "Fara'id al-Simtayn" on the authority of Abu Sa'id al-Khudri, and al-Majlisi also cited from Abu Sa'id al-Khudri, with the same wording: "The Messenger of Allah said: 'I give you glad tidings of Al-Mahdi, who will be sent in my Ummah amid different peoples and earthquakes. He will fill the earth with justice and equity as it was filled with oppression and injustice. The one who dwells in the heavens will be pleased with him, and the one who pours on the earth will pour it, dividing wealth equitably.' A man asked, 'What is meant by equitably?' He replied, 'Equally among people.' Additionally, al-Juwayni al-Khurasani narrated from Sa'id ibn Jubayr, from Abdullah ibn Abbas, and al-Majlisi cited the same chain, stating: "The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him and his family, said: 'My successors, trustees, and proofs of Allah upon His creation after me are twelve: the first of them is my brother, the last of them is my son.' Someone asked, 'O Messenger of Allah, who is your brother?' He said, 'Ali ibn Abi Talib.' It was asked, 'And who is your son?' He said, 'Al-Mahdi. He will fill the earth with justice and equity as it was filled with oppression and injustice. By Him in whose hand is my soul, if there were to remain of the world but a single day, Allah would prolong that day until He sends forth my son, Al-Mahdi. Then, the spirit of Allah, Jesus son of Mary, peace be upon him, will descend and pray behind him. The earth will shine with the light of its Lord, and his authority will extend to the East and the West.'"⁽⁸⁾

Also reported by Ibn Umar: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him and his family, said: "Al-

8. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 51, p. 92.

Mahdi will emerge with a cloud above his head, in which there will be a caller proclaiming: "This is the Mahdi, the Caliph of Allah, so follow him."⁽⁹⁾

Al-Muttaqi al-Hindi narrated: "In the end of my Ummah, Al-Mahdi will emerge, whom Allah will provide with rain, causing the earth to bring forth its vegetation, and he will distribute wealth equitably. Livestock will increase, and the Ummah will prosper for seven or eight years."⁽¹⁰⁾

Imam Abu al-Fida' Isma'il ibn Kathir also reported in his book: "Al-Fitan wal-Malahim" with the following narration:

"Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal narrated to us, and Hujjah and Abu Nu'aim said: Hajjaj and Abu Na'im reported to us, both from Qatadah, from al-Qasim, from Abu al-Tufayl. Al-Hajjaj said: 'I heard Ali saying: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him and his family, said: If there were only one day left of the world, Allah would prolong it until He sends a man from us who will fill it with justice, just as it was filled with oppression.' Abu Nu'aim said: 'A man from among us...'" It is understood that this refers to Amir al-Mu'minin (Ali), may Allah be pleased with him, saying "a man from among us".⁽¹¹⁾

The Prophetic traditions have defined the appearance and attributes of Al-Mahdi. These narrations contain distinctive characteristics clarifying this great personality, so that people are not confused by attributes, and so that false claimants do not arise. When we examine the attributes of Al-Mahdi, peace be upon him, we find them as follows:

9. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 51, p. 71.

10. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 51, p. 81.

11. Al-Muttaqi al-Hindi. "Kanz al-Ummal," Vol. 14, p. 273.

- 1- The narrations confirm that the Mahdi is from the Quraysh. Ahmad and al-Mawardi reported that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) said: "Glad tidings of the Mahdi, a man from the Quraysh of my family, will emerge at a time of discord among the people, and there will be upheavals. He will fill the earth with justice and equity as it was filled with injustice and oppression."⁽¹²⁾
- 2- The Mahdi is from the descendants of Abd al-Muttalib. Ibn Majah narrated with his chain of transmission from Anas ibn Malik, who said: "I heard the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) saying: 'We, the sons of Abd al-Muttalib, are the chiefs of Paradise: I, Hamza, Ali, Ja'far, Hassan, Hussain, and the Mahdi.'"⁽¹³⁾
- 3- The Mahdi is from the family of Muhammad and from his pure progeny. His name is Muhammad. Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal narrated through Hujjah and Abu Nu'aim, who narrated from Qatadah from al-Qasim, from Abu al-Tufayl. Al-Hajjaj said: 'I heard Ali saying: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him and his family, said: If there were only one day left of the world, Allah would prolong it until He sends a man from us who will fill it with justice, just as it was filled with oppression.' Abu Nu'aim said: 'A man from me...'⁽¹⁴⁾
 Imam Ahmad said: "Fadl bin Dulein informed us, who reported from Yasin al-Ajli, who

12. Ibn Hajar Al-Haytami's: "Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah", P. 99.

13. Ibn Majah, Sunan Ibn Majah, Vol. 2, p. 1368.

14. Al-Suyuti: Al-Jami' al-Saghir, Vol. 2, p. 377.

reported from Ibrahim bin Muhammad bin al-Hanafiyyah, from his father, from Ali, who said: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him and his family, said: "The Mahdi is from us, the people of the household. Allah will rectify him in a night..."⁽¹⁵⁾

And it is also narrated from Sufyan: "The world will not pass away until a man from my household holds sway, whose name will match my name."⁽¹⁶⁾

And thus, Ahmad narrated it from Amr ibn Ubayd and from Sufyan ibn 'Uyaynah, and from the narration of Sufyan al-Thawri, all of them from 'Aasim. At-Tirmidhi narrated it through the route of the Fayaaniyyin, and he said: " This hadith is graded as good and correct."

At-Tirmidhi said: "Abdul Jabbar ibn Al-'Ala Al-'Ataar narrated to us, Sufyan ibn 'Uyaynah narrated to us from 'Aasim from Ibn 'Abbas from the Prophet (peace be upon him) who said: 'A man from my household will rule, whose name matches mine.'" 'Aasim said, "And Abu 'Aasim Saleh narrated to us from Abu Hurairah who said: 'If there remains nothing of this world except for a day, Allah will prolong that day until he takes charge.'" This hadith is graded as good and correct.⁽¹⁷⁾

Abu Dawood reported: Sahl ibn Tamim ibn Bazi' narrated to us, 'Imran al-Qattan narrated to us from Qatadah from Abu Nadrah from Abu

15. Al-Suyuti: *Al-Jami' al-Saghir*, Vol. 2, p. 580.

16. Al-Muttaqi al-Hindi. "*Kanz al-Ummal*," Vol. 14, p. 263.

17. Al-Muttaqi al-Hindi. "*Kanz al-Ummal*," Vol. 14, p. 267.

Sa'eed who said: "The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: "The Mahdi is from me, with a broad forehead and a long, curved nose. He will fill the earth with justice and fairness as it was filled with oppression and injustice. He will rule for seven years.""⁽¹⁸⁾

Ahmad and Abu Nuaim narrated from Abu Sa'eed who said: 'The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "The world will not end until a man from my household rules the earth, filling it with justice as it was filled with oppression. He will rule for seven years."' ⁽¹⁹⁾

Al-Suyuti confirmed in his book "Al-Hawi lil-Fatawi" in the chapter of the Hadith of the Mahdi, saying: "This is a part where I collected the narrations and reports about the Mahdi, summarized in it the four hundred (Hadith) that Al-Hafiz Abu Nuaim compiled, and I added to it what he missed, and I symbolized it with the letter 'K.'" ⁽²⁰⁾

- 4- The Mahdi, peace be upon him, is from the offspring of Fatimah, peace be upon her. Ibn Majah reported in his Sunan from Sa'id ibn al-Musayyib who said: "We were with Umm Salamah discussing the Mahdi, and she said: 'I heard the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, say: 'The Mahdi is from the offspring of Fatimah.'" ⁽²¹⁾

18. Al-Suyuti: Al-Jami' al-Saghir, Vol. 2, p. 580.

19. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 51, p. 78.

20. Al-Suyuti: Al-Hawi lil-Fatawi, Vol. 2, p. 57.

21. Ibn Majah, Sunan Ibn Majah, Vol. 2, p. 1368.

- 5- The twelve successors (Imams) are confirmed by some narrators, as the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him and his family, explicitly mentioned the Twelve Imams, namely: Ali, Hassan, Hussain, Ali ibn al-Hussain (Zayn al-Abidin), Muhammad ibn Ali (al-Baqir), Ja'far ibn Muhammad (al-Sadiq), Musa ibn Ja'far (al-Kadhim), Ali ibn Musa (al-Ridha), Muhammad ibn Ali (al-Jawad), Ali ibn Muhammad (al-Hadi), Hassan ibn Ali (al-Askari), and Muhammad ibn al-Hassan (al-Mahdi al-Muntadhar), peace be upon them all.

The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him and his family, indicated that his successors and guardians are twelve, with Ali being the first and the Mahdi being the last.

This hadith, along with previous narrations that discuss the Mahdi being from the Ahl al-Bayt and from the offspring of Fatimah from the lineage of Hussain, acquaints us with the personality of Imam al-Mahdi, may Allah hasten his reappearance.

The Jawaini narrated in "Faraid al-Samtayn" from Sa'id ibn Jubayr from Abdullah ibn Abbas, who said: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him and his family, said: "Verily, my successors, my trustees, and the proofs of Allah over mankind after me are twelve. The first of them is my brother, and the last of them is my son." It was asked: "O Messenger of Allah, who is your brother?" He said: "Ali ibn Abi Talib." It was asked: "Then who is your son?" He said: "The Mahdi, who

will fill the earth with justice and equity as it was filled with oppression and injustice."⁽²²⁾

Among those who have spoken about the Mahdi, peace be upon him, and have authenticated the narrations regarding him is Muhammad Siddiq Hassan Al-Qunji Al-Bukhari in his book "Al-Idha'ah Lima Kan wa Yakoon Bayn Yad Al-Saa'ah" (Announcing What Was and Will Be Before the Hour). He said: "Among them is the Promised Mahdi, the Awaited Fatimi, who is the first among them. The narrations concerning him are numerous, reaching the level of mass transmission. They exist in the Sunan and other collections of Islamic literature, including dictionaries and chains of transmission."

Then he said: "The narrations about the Dajjal and Jesus have also reached the level of mass transmission and uninterrupted succession, with no room for denial, as demonstrated by the eminent judge Muhammad Al-Shawkani Al-Yamani in 'Al-Tawdih fi Tawatur Ma Ja'a fi Al-Mahdi Al-Muntadhar wa Al-Dajjal wa Al-Masih' (Clarification Regarding the Mass Transmission of What Came Concerning the Awaited Mahdi, the Dajjal, and the Messiah)." He continued: "The narrations concerning the Mahdi, which have been authenticated, number fifty, including those classified as authentic, good, weak, and compelled. They are unquestionably mass transmitted and beyond doubt. The description of mass transmission applies to them, and there is no room for interpretation in such matters."

Then he said: "The esteemed scholar Badr Al-Millah Al-Manir Muhammad ibn Ismail Al-Yamani has compiled the conclusive narrations regarding the emergence of the

22. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 51, p. 71.

Mahdi, his lineage from the family of Muhammad, peace be upon him and his family, and his appearance in the end times. It has not been determined when he will emerge, except that he will come out before the emergence of the Dajjal."

Abdulaziz bin Baz, the head of the Islamic University in Medina, clarified: "The emergence of the Mahdi is an undeniable reality. This is evident from his statement: "The matter of the Mahdi is a known fact, and the narrations concerning him are abundant, indeed they are mass transmitted and mutually supportive. Therefore, they truly indicate that the emergence of this promised individual is confirmed and his coming is inevitable.""⁽²³⁾

Thus, it becomes clear to us that the narrations concerning the emergence of the promised reformer, Imam Mahdi (may Allah hasten his noble reappearance), are credible hadiths, with some of them being widely transmitted among all Muslims, whether Sunni or Shia.

Who is Imam Mahdi, peace be upon him:

Imam Mahdi is the figure awaited by Muslims at the end of time to emerge and lead the world towards justice and peace, achieving reform in the Islamic nation and humanity in general. Shia Muslims believe that he is the twelfth Imam from the infallible Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt, and that he currently lives in his occultation and will return in the end

23. The Islamic University Journal, Issue 3, page 161.

of times to fill the earth with justice as it has been filled with oppression.

As for those who read the books and sources of the narrations attributed to the Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them, and connected to the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his family, they find texts and contents of those aforementioned narrations that have also been narrated at times with the same chains of transmission. They are, in the terminology of scholars of narration and hadith, considered among the consistent narrations that convey knowledge and dispel doubt and confusion. Al-Majlisi, speaking about Imam Mahdi, peace be upon him, in his book "Bihar al-Anwar," said: "His birth, peace be upon him, was on the night of the fifteenth of Sha'ban in the year 255 AH, and his age at the time of his father's death, Al-Askari, peace be upon him, was five years old. Thus, the birth of Imam Muhammad ibn al-Hassan, peace be upon him, occurred during the Abbasid Caliphate, during a period of turmoil and disturbances described by al-Tabari as, 'His caliphate, meaning the guided Abbasid, and the entire Islamic world, were afflicted.'"⁽²⁴⁾

The Imam was born in the care of his father, Imam Hassan ibn Ali al-Askari, peace be upon him, who surrounded him with complete care and secrecy out of concern for his safety and in fulfillment of the promise of Allah and the covenant they inherited from their grandfather, the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family. Narrations have been consistently transmitted, both in wording and meaning, through reputable chains of transmission among all Muslims, all of which affirm the declaration, promise, and glad tidings of

24. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 51, P.23.

the awaited Mahdi, peace be upon him. As mentioned earlier, some of these narrations are also transmitted through Sunni scholars. Here are some of them, as narrated through the Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them, confirming the narrations transmitted through the narrators of Ahl al-Sunnah, and clarifying that the Mahdi is Muhammad ibn al-Hassan, in accordance with the statement of the Prophet al-Hadi, peace be upon him and his family.

Sheikh Saduq mentioned in his book "Amal al-Deen wa Itmam al-Ni'ma" from Majilawayh from Hamza ibn Abi al-Fath who said: "One day, the good news came to me that yesterday a child was born in the house to Abu Muhammad, peace be upon him, and he ordered that it be kept secret. I asked: What is his name? He said: He was named Muhammad and nicknamed Ja'far."⁽²⁵⁾

Saduq also narrated from Abu al-Abbas Ahmad ibn Abdullah ibn Mihran from Ahmad ibn Ishaq al-Qummi who said: "When the righteous successor, peace be upon him, was born, a letter from our master Abu Muhammad al-Hassan ibn Ali came to my grandfather Ahmad ibn Ishaq. In it was written by his hand, peace be upon him, which he used for signatures: "The newborn should be kept hidden from you and concealed from all people. We have informed you, not because of his closeness to you or his guardianship, but so that you may find ease in it as we have found ease. Peace be upon you."⁽²⁶⁾

And Al-Arbali quoted in his book "Kashf al-Ghummah" from Ibn al-Khashab, the author of the book "Mawalid al-A'imma," from Ibrahim, the companion of Abu Muhammad (peace be upon him), that he said: "My master

25. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 51, P.15. Quoting from Ikmal al-Din.

26. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 51, P.16. Quoting from Ikmal al-Din.

Abu al-Hassan (peace be upon him) sent me four rams and wrote to me: In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. (Alif, Qaf) This is concerning my son Muhammad Al-Mahdi. Convey my greetings to whoever you find among our Shi'a."⁽²⁷⁾

Additionally, Al-Saduq also narrated that Ahmad bin Ishaq said: "I heard Abu Muhammad Al-Hassan bin Ali Al-Askari (peace be upon him) saying: 'Praise be to Allah who has not taken me out of this world until I see the successor after me, who is the most similar of people in character and creation to the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him. May Allah, glorified and exalted be He, preserve him in his occultation, then he will appear to fill the earth with justice and equity as it has been filled with injustice and oppression.'"⁽²⁸⁾

Sheikh al-Mufid spoke about the death of Imam al-Hassan al-Askari, peace be upon him, the father of Imam Muhammad ibn al-Hassan al-Mahdi, saying: "He left behind his awaited son for the establishment of the truth. He had concealed his birth and kept his affair hidden due to the difficult circumstances and the intensity of the search for the authority of the time. When the belief in the Imami Shia school spread and their anticipation of him became known, his son did not appear during his lifetime, nor was he known by the public after his death."⁽²⁹⁾

This collection of narrations unanimously agrees with Sunni sources that the Mahdi, peace be upon him:

1. Is from the progeny of Fatimah.
2. Is from the progeny of Hussain.

27. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 51, P.16. Quoting from "Kashf al-Ghummah"

28. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 51, P.161. Quoting from Ikmal al-Din.

29. Al-Mufid's "Al-Irshad," page 345.

This is a belief held by Muslims across various denominations and schools of thought. However, the Imami Shia, followers of the Ahl al-Bayt, additionally believe, as we have read in this collection of narrations, that:

* The Imam Mahdi, peace be upon him, is Muhammad ibn al-Hassan al-Askari, peace be upon him.

* He was five years old at the time of his father's death.

* By divine will, he experienced occultation and disappearance. His occultation occurred in two phases:

1. The period of Minor Occultation: During this period, his communication was maintained through four appointed deputies.

2. The period of Major Occultation: During this period, his contact with the ummah was severed after informing them about it and directing them to refer to the jurists until the conditions for his reappearance are met, and he can fulfill the divine mission of major reform and establish the awaited divine justice.

Studying and analyzing the narrations concerning the Ahl al-Bayt of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his family, their love, and allegiance to them, reveals numerous and diverse indications. Muslims unanimously agree that love for the Ahl al-Bayt and loyalty to them are signs of faith and piety. They have not differed regarding the elevated status and scientific and social significance of the Ahl al-Bayt. The compilers of hadith collections have cited many narrations affirming these truths, such as: "I am leaving among you two weighty things, the Book of Allah

and my progeny, my Ahl al-Bayt. If you hold fast to them, you will never go astray."⁽³⁰⁾

Another narration states: "The example of my Ahl al-Bayt among you is like that of the Ark of Noah. Whoever boards it will be saved, and whoever remains behind will drown."⁽³¹⁾

The hadiths and narrations presented in this book indicate that the presence of Imam Mahdi, may Allah hasten his reappearance, and his intellectual and leadership role represent a natural extension of the roles of his noble ancestors: Ali, Hassan, Hussein, Ali ibn Hussein, Muhammad ibn Ali, Ja'far ibn Muhammad, Musa ibn Ja'far, Ali ibn Musa, Muhammad ibn Ali, Ali ibn Muhammad, and Hassan ibn Ali, peace be upon them. The narration attributed to the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicates that the caliphs are twelve and that the Mahdi is the last of the caliphs.

While Muslims may differ in defining the leadership roles of the remaining Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them, they do not differ in defining the leadership role of Imam Mahdi, peace be upon him. They agree that the Mahdi is from the Ahl al-Bayt and from the lineage of Hussein, and he is the reformer, leader, and savior of this nation, renewing the covenant of the noble Muhammadan message.

30. The hadith you mentioned from Al-Suyuti's "Revival of the Dead" is numbered 6, 7, and 8, and it is cited in various sources.

31. Al-Suyuti's "Revival of the Dead" is numbered 24,25,26, and 27.

The political circumstances surrounding the birth of Imam Mahdi (may Allah hasten his reappearance):

It is very clear to anyone familiar with Islamic history and the biography of the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them, and their struggle against the Umayyad and Abbasid regimes. It is evident to those acquainted with the course of this struggle that the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them, and their intellectual and political line represented a force of opposition and political confrontation against those regimes and authorities.

Therefore, the Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them, endured various trials including persecution, assassination, pursuit, imprisonment, and displacement. Often, the hardships and deteriorating conditions compelled the Alawite family to resort to revolution and armed conflict.

Historians recount the intense suffering experienced by Imam al-Hassan al-Askari from the rulers of his Abbasid era and their confrontation with him, as well as the turmoil in security, morality, politics, and economy, and the intensification of the authorities' fear of the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them. In that turbulent period, narrators confirm the birth of Imam Muhammad ibn al-Hassan al-Mahdi, peace be upon him.

Given the importance of this great personality and his historically significant role in human life, which fulfills the goals of the divine message, it is necessary for us to understand the political circumstances surrounding his birth and concealment. As recorded by historical sources, Shia sources mention that the birth of Muhammad ibn al-Hassan al-Mahdi occurred in the year 255 AH in Samarra during the reign of the Abbasid caliph al-Mu'tamid.

Historical texts depict the turbulent political situation, which placed the Abbasid house in a state of internal conflict, moral decline, and power struggles among fathers, sons, and brothers for authority and pleasures. This weakened the authority's prestige and emboldened military leaders, political figures, and influential individuals, turning the Abbasid caliphate into a pawn in the hands of these military leaders, especially the Turks who held influential positions in power at that time.

Furthermore, these turbulent political circumstances provided an opportunity for Alawite rebels to mobilize and launch their revolutions against the Abbasid authority during that turbulent period surrounding the birth of Muhammad ibn al-Hassan al-Mahdi, peace be upon him. Al-Mu'tazz, the Abbasid caliph, was killed in the month of Rajab in the year 255 AH, eighteen days before the birth of Imam al-Mahdi, peace be upon him. According to some historical narratives, after al-Mu'tazz, his son al-Muhtadi assumed the caliphate on the second day of his father's death.

And thus it becomes clear that Imam Mahdi (may Allah hasten his reappearance).

According to narrations, Imam Mahdi (may Allah hasten his reappearance) was born during the reign of al-Muhtadi al-Abbasid, whose rule lasted for approximately a year. However, a disagreement arose between him and the Turks, who eventually plotted against him and killed him. His demise occurred in the month of Rajab in the year 256 AH. Following his death, al-Mu'tamid al-Abbasid, Ahmad ibn Ja'far al-Mu'tawakil, assumed the caliphate on the same day al-Muhtadi passed away.

Let us delve into historical documents that discuss this period to understand the severe tribulations that befell the

household of the Prophet, peace be upon them, and the Alawites from the lineage of Ali ibn Abi Talib, the progeny of Hassan and Hussein, peace be upon them, and Ja'far ibn Abi Talib, peace be upon him. By examining the circumstances surrounding the occultation of Imam Mahdi, peace be upon him, and the challenging hardships that altered the course of history.

During that period, there were relentless persecutions against the Alawites, and Alawite revolutions and uprisings took place. Abu al-Faraj al-Isfahani recorded the names of those Alawites who were killed, imprisoned, or died under torture in the prisons of the Abbasids. Let us read what Abu al-Faraj al-Isfahani and other historians wrote and contemplate them carefully:

Abu al-Faraj al-Isfahani stated:

"Isa ibn Isma'il ibn Ja'far, who was from the lineage of Hassan ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib, peace be upon them, died in captivity.

Ja'far ibn Muhammad ibn Ja'far, who was from the lineage of Imam Ali ibn al-Hussein, Zain al-Abidin, was killed in Rey, Iran. Ibrahim ibn Muhammad, who was from the lineage of Abbas ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib, was also killed.

Al-Harth ibn Asad, the employee of Abu Saaj in Medina, imprisoned Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Yahya ibn Abdullah ibn Hassan ibn Hassan ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib in the house of Marwan, and he died in captivity."

Also, Harth ibn Asad captured Muhammad ibn al-Hassan ibn Muhammad ibn Ibrahim ibn al-Hassan ibn Zaid ibn al-Hassan ibn Ali and took him to Medina, where he passed away in the region of Safra. Harth then severed his legs, took chains that were on them, and threw them away.

Then Abu al-Faraj al-Isfahani mentioned the uprising of Ali ibn Zaid, saying: "Among those who participated in the uprising during these days was Ali ibn Zaid ibn al-Hussein ibn Isa ibn Zaid ibn Ali ibn al-Hussein ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib. His mother was the daughter of al-Qasim ibn Aqil ibn Muhammad ibn Abdullah ibn Muhammad ibn Aqil ibn Abi Talib. His uprising took place in Kufa, where some people of Kufa and its Bedouins pledged allegiance to him. The Zaidis and people of virtue and prominence did not show any inclination towards him, and those who followed him were few in number, adhering to his doctrine. The Abbasid caliph al-Muhtadi al-Shah sent a large army to confront him before the uprising of al-Najm in Basra. This rebel could not gather many supporters, so he engaged in a decisive battle with the army of al-Muhtadi. His companions numbered around two hundred Persian horsemen in the vicinity of Kufa. Nevertheless, with his bravery and skillful tactics, he managed to defeat the Abbasid army.

And the star of the uprising in Basra was al-Najm, where Zaid ibn Ali emerged. He was accompanied by a group of his followers, including Muhammad ibn al-Qasim ibn Hamza ibn al-Hassan ibn Ubaidullah ibn al-Abbas ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib, and Tahir ibn Ahmad ibn al-Qasim. They were all with Zaid ibn Ali in the camp of al-Najm.

When Ali ibn Zaid's intentions and mission became clear, and his call and purpose were revealed, he would sway his followers, acquainting them with his cause, and inviting them to join him. The news of his intentions reached al-Najm, so he was summoned along with the other two. However, they faced their fate with patience. This occurred during the reign of al-Muhtadi al-Abbasid,

although their uprising occurred during the days of al-Muhtadi.

During these days, Musa ibn Bugha emerged, residing in Hamadan. He directed Kiglagh towards the battle of Kokabi in Qazvin, where a deadly encounter took place in which Hussein ibn Muhammad, Hamza ibn al-Qasim ibn al-Hassan ibn Zaid ibn al-Hassan ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib was killed.

And it was also mentioned: The companions of Abdullah ibn Abdul Aziz killed Yahya ibn Ali, who was from the lineage of Zaid, in a village near Ray.

Sa'id ibn al-Hajjaj also killed Ja'far ibn Ishaq al-Alawi in Basra. Sa'id ibn al-Hajjaj also captured Musa ibn Abdullah al-Alawi in Iraq. Musa was a righteous man and a narrator of hadith. He was accompanied by his son Idris, his nephew Muhammad ibn Yahya, and Abu al-Tahir Ahmad ibn Zaid al-Alawi. The sons of Fazara executed them at the hands of Sa'id. Musa refused to go with them, but then he returned with Sa'id. Sa'id then poisoned him, killing him in the area of Zubala. His head was taken to al-Muhtadi in Muharram 256 AH.

Abdul Rahman captured Abu al-Saj (Isa ibn Ismail), from the lineage of Ja'far ibn Abi Talib, and took him to Kufa, where he died.

Abdullah ibn Aziz killed Muhammad ibn Abdullah, from the lineage of Ja'far ibn Abi Talib, between Ray and Qazvin.

Isa ibn Muhammad al-Makhzumi imprisoned Ali ibn Musa al-Alawi in Mecca, where he died in captivity.

Abdullah ibn Aziz, the governor, took Taher to Samarra along with Muhammad ibn al-Hussein al-Alawi and Ali ibn Musa al-Alawi. He imprisoned them until they died in captivity.

Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Isa ibn al-Mansur, the governor appointed by al-Muhtadi in Medina, imprisoned Ibrahim ibn Musa al-Alawi, where he died in captivity.

Abu al-Saj imprisoned Abdullah ibn Muhammad al-Alawi in Medina. He remained in captivity until the reign of Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn al-Mansur, after which he passed away while still in confinement.⁽³²⁾

Al-Yaqoubi also documented incidents of other revolutions, in which he mentioned the uprising of a man from the followers of the Tabi'in named Ibrahim ibn Muhammad, from the descendants of Umar ibn Ali, known as al-Sufi, in the region of Upper Egypt.

In that area, there was also a man who claimed to be Abdullah bin Abdulhamid bin Abdullah bin Abdulaziz bin Abdullah bin Umar bin Al-Khattab. He fought against the Sultan and gained influence over the ruler of Basra, then turned against him and caused chaos. He got involved in the internal conflicts among the people of Basra even to the extent that some of them burned the houses of others.⁽³³⁾

Then al-Yaqoubi mentioned the rejection by the Abbasid caliph of the Turks, allowing the shedding of their blood and seizure of their wealth, plundering their homes, and killing a group of them, They rebelled against him, killing him, and his caliphate ended in the month of Rajab in the year 256 Hijri.

During the Abbasid Caliphate, Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Alawi emerged, and Ahmad ibn Tulun killed him at the gate of Aswan, delivering his head to the caliph. Salab al-Turki, Hamzah ibn al-Hassan from the lineage of Ja'far ibn

32. Abu al-Faraj al-Isfahani, *Maqatil Altalibyyin*. P:670-681.

33. Al-Yaqubi, *History of Al-Yaqubi*, Vol.2, P.506.

Abi Talib, was also killed by Sabra after being captured in a battle between Salab and Hudhān al-Dulaymī. Similarly, Hamzah ibn Isa al-Alawi, Muhammad ibn al-Hassan, his brother Ibrahim, Hassan ibn Muhammad al-Alawi, and Isma'il ibn Abdullah from the lineage of Ja'far ibn Abi Talib were killed in the battle between Hassan and Ya'qub ibn al-Layth al-Saffar in Tabaristan. Muhammad ibn al-Hussain al-Alawi was imprisoned during the reign of the caliph al-Mu'tadid and died in prison. Similarly, Musa ibn Musa al-Alawi died in prison in Samarra during the reign of al-Mu'tadid, who had been brought from Egypt during the reign of al-Mu'tazz and had been imprisoned in Samarra ever since until his death. Sa'id al-Hajib, Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Isa al-Alawi, and his sons Ahmad and Ali were also imprisoned. Muhammad and his son Ahmad died in prison, and his son Ahmad was released.

Thus, these documents and incidents depict to us the politically charged circumstances fraught with terrorism, murder, and persecution against the descendants of Ali ibn Abi Talib. It is evident that the Abbasid caliphs had entrusted the Imamate to the lineage of Hussain ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib. They coexisted with Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq from the inception of their authority in 132 AH (Islamic calendar), and their struggle with the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt continued one after another. They clashed with Musa ibn Ja'far, imprisoning him until his death in captivity. This conflict persisted during the reign of Mamun al-Abbasi, during the life of Imam Ali ibn Musa al-Ridha and his son Muhammad ibn Ali al-Jawad, peace be upon them. The confrontation intensified against Imam Ali ibn Muhammad al-Hadi, peace be upon him, who bore the burdens of Imamate immediately after the passing of his father, al-Jawad, peace be upon him. This intense and violent

confrontation extended through the reigns of al-Mu'tazz, al-Muhtadi, and al-Mu'tamid, against Imam Hassan ibn Ali al-Askari, peace be upon him, the father of Imam Muhammad ibn Mahdi (May Allah hasten his honorable reappearance).

Sheikh al-Mufid, Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn al-Nu'man al-Akbari al-Baghdadi, tells us that fear, terrorism, and persecution against the family of Ali, peace be upon them, along with the Abbasid caliph's knowledge that the Imamate was in the lineage of Hassan al-Askari, peace be upon him, and their insistence on eradicating its extension, prompted Imam al-Askari, peace be upon him, to conceal his son and not disclose his birth. He said, "And his awaited son will succeed to the state of truth."

Thus, these documents and events depict a political context charged with terrorism, killing, and persecution of the progeny of Ali ibn Abi Talib. It's evident that the Abbasid caliphs had entrusted the Imamate to the lineage of Hussein ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib. They coexisted with Imam Jafar ibn Muhammad al-Sadiq from the beginning of their assumption of power in 132 AH, initiating their conflict with the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt thereafter.

They clashed with Musa ibn Ja'far, imprisoning him until his death. This conflict persisted during the reign of Mamun al-Abbas in the lifetimes of Imam Ali ibn Musa al-Ridha and his son Muhammad ibn Ali al-Jawad. The struggle continued aggressively against Imam Ali ibn Muhammad al-Hadi, who assumed the Imamate immediately after the death of his father al-Jawad. This intense and violent confrontation extended through the reigns of al-Mu'tazz, al-Muhtadi, and al-Mu'tamid, with Imam Hassan ibn Ali al-Askari, the father of the awaited

Imam Mahdi (may Allah hasten his reappearance), facing persecution.

Sheikh al-Mufid, Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn al-Nu'man al-Akbari al-Baghdadi, tells us that fear, terrorism, and persecution of the family of Ali persisted due to the Abbasid caliph's awareness of the Imamate in the lineage of Hassan al-Askari. Their insistence on eradicating the extension of the Imamate led Imam al-Askari to conceal his son and not reveal his birth during his lifetime, nor was he publicly recognized after his death. Ja'far ibn Ali, the brother of Imam Muhammad al-Hadi, seized his inheritance and attempted to imprison the household of Imam al-Hadi and arrest his supporters, intimidating them with the expectation of his son's emergence, denying their presence, and claiming his Imamate. He manipulated and coerced them until he caused them to fear and disperse them. Consequently, he faced significant resistance from the followers of Imam Muhammad al-Hadi, resulting in his imprisonment, confinement, threat, belittlement, and humiliation.

However, the Sultan gained nothing substantial from them, and Ja'far ostensibly inherited the Imamate from Imam Muhammad al-Hadi. He endeavored to assert his position among the Shia but was met with disbelief and rejection from them.⁽³⁴⁾

This historical document, issued by Sheikh al-Mufid, who lived between (338- 413) AH, sheds light on the events near the era of ambassadors during the period of the Minor Occultation, which ended in 329 AH.

34. Al-Mufid, Al-Irshad, p. 345.

The situation after the martyrdom of Imam al-Askari, peace be upon him.

As is known, the passing and martyrdom of Imam Hassan al-Askari, peace be upon him, occurred in the year 260 Hijri, causing a significant and intense upheaval within his Shia community and followers thereafter. The situation became turbulent, and many of them were seized by confusion, pondering whether Imam al-Askari, peace be upon him, had a successor in Imamate or if the Imamate ceased after him with no offspring. Various answers emerged, and numerous factions arose. Sheikh al-Saduq elaborated on this reality in his book "Ikmal al-Din," narrating from a chain of narrators from Abu Hatim who said, "I heard my father, Muhammad al-Hassan ibn Ali, peace be upon him, say in the year 260: 'My Shia scattered. In it, Abu Muhammad [Imam al-Askari] passed away, and his Shia and supporters dispersed. Among them are those who adhered to Ja'far, some who became lost and doubtful, some who stood perplexed, and some who remained steadfast in their faith by the grace of Almighty Allah.'"⁽³⁵⁾

In what follows, we will shed light on some of the events of that period and the intellectual conflict that took place among the Shia and their followers, as well as the prevailing opinions and the clarification of that historical scene. Let us read what Abu Muhammad al-Hassan ibn Musa al-Nawbakhti, one of the prominent scholars of the third century Hijri and a prominent figure among the Shia at that time, wrote about the views and the factions that emerged after the passing of Imam Hassan ibn Ali al-Askari, peace be upon him. The text states:

35. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 51, P.161. Quoting from Ikmal al-Din.

"Imam Hassan ibn Ali, peace be upon him, was born in the month of Rabi' al-Awwal in the year 232 Hijri and passed away in Samarra on Friday, the 8th of Rabi' al-Awwal in the year 260. He was buried in his home, in the same place where his father was buried, at the age of 28. His funeral prayer was led by Abu Isa ibn al-Mu'tazz. His Imamate lasted for five years, eight months, and five days. He passed away without leaving any trace or known offspring. His apparent inheritance was divided among his brother Ja'far and his mother, who was called Asfan. Later, she was named Abu al-Hassan al-Hadithi. Afterward, his followers split into fourteen sects:

1. One faction claimed that Hassan ibn Ali did not die and is still alive, merely in occultation. They argued that it is not permissible for him to die, and he must have an apparent offspring because the Earth cannot be devoid of an Imam.

2. Another faction asserted that Hassan ibn Ali had indeed died." And lived after his death, claiming to be Al-Mahdi.

3. The sixth faction stated that Imam Hassan ibn Ali had a son named Muhammad, which is indicated by evidence. The matter is not as claimed by those who asserted that he died without leaving an heir, but rather his successor, the Qa'im, was born before his death by several years.

4. The seventh faction believed that Hassan had a son born eight months after his death, and those who claimed otherwise during his lifetime were false and their claims invalid, as the news of his offspring would not have been

concealed if it were true, but it passed without any known offspring.

5. The eighth faction asserted that Hassan had no offspring at all. The eleventh faction believed that Hassan ibn Ali was an Imam who had passed away, and the Earth cannot be without a proof from Allah. They suspended judgment until the matter became clear to them.

6. The twelfth faction, known as the Imamiyya, did not entirely agree with any of the aforementioned views. They believed that Allah had appointed a proof on Earth from the offspring of Hassan ibn Ali, and Allah's command is supreme. He is the successor appointed by his father upon the divine practices and traditions.

Therefore, they accepted the fact of his passing and recognized that he had a standing successor from his lineage, who is the Imam after him until he reappears and declares his command, as he is hidden, fearful, and concealed by the covering of Allah. ⁽³⁶⁾

7. The fourteenth faction claimed that after Hassan, his son Muhammad, who is the awaited Mahdi, lived and will rise with the sword to fill the Earth with justice and equity as it was filled with oppression and tyranny. ⁽³⁷⁾

Thus, this reading clarifies the period of turmoil and the multiplicity of opinions among the Shia in defining and diagnosing the personality of Imam al-Mahdi (may Allah hasten his reappearance), until the matter settled according to what the Imami Shia stated, which is that Imam al-

36. The Nawbakhti Shia Factions, excerpts from pages 105-117.

37. Sayyid Mortada, Selected Chapters excerpted from the margins of "Shia Factions" pages 105-106.

Mahdi is Muhammad ibn al-Hassan al-Askari, who was born in Samarra five years before his father's death. Allah willed for his reappearance to fill the Earth with justice and equity after it had been filled with oppression and tyranny.

The Occultation and Ambassadors:

After we have read through that group of narrations and understood that belief in the appearance of the Mahdi is an Islamic doctrine that unites Muslims, and after it has become clear to us that the Imami Shia unanimously agree that the Mahdi is Muhammad ibn al-Hassan and also unanimously agree that his father concealed his birth, which only a select few among his companions were aware of, out of fear of terrorism, persecution, and pursuit as expressed in historical narrations and events of the period, many expressions and statements have been made. The Mahdi, peace be upon him, experienced two occultations:

The first was the Minor Occultation, which began either from his birth in 255 Hijri during his father's lifetime, where he lived for five years, or from his father's death in 260 Hijri until 328 or 329 Hijri during the reigns of al-Mu'tamid, al-Mu'tadid, al-Muqtadir, al-Muqtafi, and al-Qahir, during which he maintained contact with his followers through his four representatives after his father's demise, namely:

1. Uthman ibn Sa'id al-Asadi.
2. Muhammad ibn Uthman ibn Sa'id al-Asadi, who died in 304 or 305 Hijri. son of the first ambassador.
3. Al-Hussain ibn Rooh al-Nawbakhti, who died in 320 Hijri.

4. Ali ibn Muhammad al-Samarri, who died in 328 or 329 Hijri.

The second was the Major Occultation, which began with the death of the fourth ambassador, Ali ibn Muhammad al-Samarri, in 328 or 329 Hijri, during which his connection with his followers, adherents, and deputies was severed until the time of his reappearance and the fulfillment of the great mission.

Introduction to the Four Ambassadors:

Due to the importance of the period of minor occultation and its shrouding in mystery for many people, and the skepticism of the majority about it, and its significance in proving the personal existence of Imam Mahdi, the son of Imam Hassan al-Askari, peace be upon them, because it was a period of hidden and secret communication characterized by precision and organizational discipline. Given the importance of that, let us get to know the four ambassadors, as knowing them constitutes one of the means of proving the personal existence of Imam Mahdi, the son of Imam Hassan al-Askari, peace be upon them, and that he is the awaited Imam.

He used to communicate with those ambassadors and convey through them the orders and directives to his followers, who were living in a phase of secrecy and concealment, suffering from the persecution and state terrorism imposed on them by the rulers of the Abbasid dynasty. That period was one of the most chaotic and turbulent in terms of political oppression, terrorism, and

persecution of the followers of the Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them. Imam al-Askari inherited from his father, Imam al-Hadi, a network of agents, leaders, and representatives in all corners of the Islamic world, who formed the fundamental pillars of the structure of followers, supporters, and sympathizers, managing it intellectually, ideologically, and politically, often operating as an organized secret entity, loyal to the Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them, and working according to their jurisprudential, political, educational, and bright Islamic vision, which Imam al-Askari worked to maintain and develop to hand it over to his son, Imam Mahdi, may Allah hasten his honorable reappearance.

Therefore, the approach of Imam Mahdi, may Allah hasten his reappearance, was like that of his fathers, the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them, in preserving the authenticity, purity, and clarity of the Islamic message, calling for its implementation, resisting oppressive rulers, and supporting the oppressed.

He continued on the same secret approach and managed a network of followers and agents who kept their work and intellectual and jurisprudential call concealed, based on the purity and authenticity of Islamic principles.

Therefore, he appointed the ambassadors who he communicated with secretly to be intermediaries between him and his followers, so that their existence would not be revealed to the rulers who were searching for them and seeking to eliminate them.

It has been mentioned that Imam Mahdi had four ambassadors during the period of the first occultation, and we have mentioned their names and the duration of their agency on his behalf. Here, we get to know the four

ambassadors and confirm some of the documentation mentioned about them.

Al-Saduq said: "The praised ambassadors are known during the period of occultation." Among the praised ambassadors during the period of occultation, the first was Abu al-Hassan Ali ibn Muhammad al-Askari, and Abu Muhammad al-Hassan, the son of Ali ibn Muhammad, upon them be peace, and he is the trustworthy sheikh, Abu Amro Uthman ibn Said al-Amri, who belonged to the tribe of Asad. He was named al-Amri because Abu Nasr Habibullah ibn Muhammad ibn Ahmad, the scribe, the son of the daughter of Abu Ja'far al-Amri, mentioned it. Abu Nasr said: He belonged to his grandfather, and some of the Shia said that Abu Muhammad al-Hassan ibn Ali said: "Do not use the patronymic of Ibn Uthman and Abu Amro." He ordered to break his patronymic, and some said "al-Amri" with a broken accent. He is also called "al-Askari" because he was from the military family of Samarra. He is also called "al-Samman" because he traded in fat to cover the matter. When the Shia carried to Abu Muhammad, peace be upon him, what they should carry of money, they would deliver it to Abu Amro, who would put it in a container of fat and his sack, and then carry it to Abu Muhammad, peace be upon him, for protection and fear.

Al-Saduq also said: "A group informed me about Abu Muhammad Harun ibn Musa, from Abu Ali Muhammad ibn Himmam al-Askafi, who told us that Abdullah ibn Ja'far al-Hamiri narrated to us, saying: Ahmed ibn Ishaq ibn Saad al-Qumi told us that I entered upon Abu al-Hassan Ali ibn Muhammad, peace be upon him, one day and said, "My master, I am leaving, and I bear witness that it is not easy for me to reach you whenever needed, if I testify at all times. So, should I say, 'From whom do we accept, and to

whom do we refer?"". He, peace be upon him, said to me, "May Allah's blessings be upon him. This is Abu Amro, the trusted, the reliable. What he says to you is from me, and what he conveys to you is from me as well."

After Abu al-Hassan, peace be upon him, passed away, I reached his son, Abu Muhammad, the son of al-Hassan, the companion of the military, peace be upon him, one day and said to him the same words I said to his father. He replied, "This is Abu Amro, the trusted, the reliable, trusted in the past and trusted in life and death. What he says to you is from me, and what he conveys to you is on my behalf."⁽³⁸⁾

These two testimonies clarify that Uthman ibn Sa'id al-Amri al-Asadi, who was appointed by Imam Ali al-Hadi and his son Hassan al-Askari, peace be upon them, was the one who established contact with Imam Mahdi, may Allah hasten his noble reappearance, who was hidden from the public eye.

The truthfulness and reliability of this man dispel the doubts raised by some skeptics about the existence of the Imam and that he is Muhammad ibn Hassan, peace be upon him. Uthman ibn Sa'id and his son Muhammad were among the ambassadors and agents who served as the link between Imam Mahdi, peace be upon him, and his followers.

Sheikh al-Saduq spoke about the relationship of Uthman ibn Sa'id and his son Muhammad with Imam Mahdi and their mediation for him. He said, "The signatures of the Imam, peace be upon him, were issued through the hands of Uthman ibn Sa'id and his son Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn

38. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 51, P.344. Quoting from Ikmal al-Din.

Uthman to his Shia and the close associates of his father, Abu Muhammad, peace be upon him, in matters of command, prohibition, and responses to the questions asked by the Shia when conveyed to him."⁽³⁹⁾

Imam Ali al-Hadi, peace be upon him, said: "I asked him (referring to Abu al-Hassan al-Askari), 'Who do I deal with? And from whom do I take? And whose word do I accept?' He said to me, 'Al-Amri is my trust, so what he conveys to you, he conveys from me, and what he says to you, he says on my behalf. So, listen to him and obey him, for he is the trustworthy and reliable one.'"

Abu Ali reported that he asked Abu Muhammad al-Hassan ibn Ali the same questions, and Al-Amri and his son were both described as trustworthy. Abu Muhammad said to him, "Whatever they convey to you, they convey from me, and whatever they say to you, they say on my behalf. So, listen to them and obey them, for they are the two trustworthy and reliable ones."

Sheikh al-Tusi mentioned in his book "Al-Ghaibah" that a group of people narrated from Harun ibn Musa, who reported from Muhammad ibn Hammam, who said: "Abdullah ibn Ja'far al-Hamiri told me, 'When Abu Amro passed away, the books written in his handwriting, which we used to write with during the residence of Abu Ja'far, came to us.'"

With this chain of narration from Muhammad ibn Hammam, he said: "Mohammed ibn Hamwiya ibn Abdul Aziz al-Razi reported to me in the year 280, he said, 'Muhammad ibn Ibrahim ibn Mahziyar al-Ahwazi went to him after the death of Abu Amro and his son, may God

39. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 51, P. 346. Quoting from Ikmal al-Din.

preserve them, never ceased to be our trust during the lifetime of the father, may God be pleased with him and satisfy him. His face was a source of joy for us, and his presence filled our hearts with comfort. The son acted according to our orders, and through him, God managed our affairs.' He continued until he said, 'and they recognized our dealings.'"

A group of narrators also reported from Abu al-Qasim Ja'far ibn Muhammad ibn Abu Ghaleb al-Zurari and Abu Muhammad al-Talakbari, all of them from Muhammad ibn Ya'qub, who reported from Ishaq ibn Ya'qub. He said, "I asked Muhammad ibn Uthman al-Amri to deliver to me a letter in which I had asked some questions that troubled me. The signature was made in the handwriting of our master, the Imam of the Time. As for Muhammad ibn Uthman al-Amri, may Allah be pleased with him and his father, they were trusted by me, and his writing is my writing."⁽⁴⁰⁾

Sheikh al-Tusi also reported in the book al-Ghaybah that Abu Ali Muhammad ibn Hammam, may Allah be pleased with him and satisfy him, said: "My father, Ja'far ibn Muhammad ibn Uthman al-Amri, may his soul be sanctified, gathered us before his death, and we were the faces and elders of the Shia. He said to us: 'If anything happens to me, refer to Abu al-Qasim al-Hussain ibn Rooh al-Nubakhti. I have instructed that he should take my place after me, so turn to him and entrust your affairs to him.'"⁽⁴¹⁾

Sheikh al-Tusi also reported: "(And his deputy (meaning the Imam al-Mahdi) was Uthman ibn Sa'id. When Uthman ibn Sa'id died, he appointed Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn

40. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 51, P. 346. Quoting from al-ghayba.

41. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 51, P. 349. Quoting from al-ghayba.

Uthman as his successor. We sent Abu Ja'far to Abu al-Qasim al-Hussain ibn Rooh, and we sent al-Raqqasah to Abu al-Hassan Ali ibn Muhammad. When al-Samari attended, he asked to be instructed. It was said to him: 'It is a matter for Allah. He is aware of it.' After this, al-Samari passed away, may his secret be sanctified."⁽⁴²⁾

Tabrisi, in al-Ihtijaj, also mentioned the appointed representatives and commendable envoys during the period of occultation. The first among them was the trustworthy scholar Abu Amr Uthman ibn Sa'id al-Amri. He was appointed initially by Abu al-Hassan Ali ibn Muhammad al-Askari, peace be upon him, and then by his son Abu Muhammad al-Hassan ibn Ali, peace be upon him. He took care of their affairs during their lifetimes. After them, he was entrusted with the matters by the Master of the Age, peace be upon him, and his signatures and responses to inquiries were issued through him. When he departed, his son, Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Uthman, assumed his position and proclaimed it publicly. After his departure, Abu Al-Qasim al-Hussain ibn Rooh, from the Nubakhti family, took his place. When he left, Abu al-Hassan Ali ibn Muhammad al-Samari assumed his position. None of them assumed this role except by explicit appointment from the Master of the Age, peace be upon him, and the explicit appointment from his predecessor.⁽⁴³⁾

Who are the Four Ambassadors?

The term "Four Ambassadors" refers to the representatives of Imam Mahdi (may Allah hasten his

42. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 51, P. 355. Quoting from al-ghayba.

43. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 51, P. 362. Quoting from al-Ihtijaj

reappearance) and his deputies, or those entrusted with special agency on his behalf during the period of his minor occultation. During this time, when direct contact with Imam Mahdi (may Allah hasten his reappearance) was not possible for most people, individuals could only communicate with him through these four ambassadors.

These ambassadors are also known as the Four Deputies. They were chosen and appointed by Imam Mahdi (may Allah hasten his reappearance) himself and were among the prominent scholars and ascetics of the Shia community. Some of them were companions of previous Imams (peace be upon them).

The Role of the Four Ambassadors:

The ambassadors served as the link between Imam Mahdi (may Allah hasten his reappearance) and his Shia followers in various regions. They carried messages, questions, and expressions of love from the Shia community to Imam Mahdi (may Allah hasten his reappearance), and then returned with his responses. Additionally, they were responsible for collecting religious dues and forwarding them to Imam Mahdi, or managing them according to the best interests of the community.

The period of the Four Ambassadors lasted for about 70 years, from 260 to 329 AH (Approximately 874 to 940 AD), which is known as the period of the minor occultation.

Names and Biographies of the Four Ambassadors:

1. The First Ambassador:

- Name: Uthman bin Sa'id bin Amr al-Amri al-Asadi, known as Abu Amr al-Samman al-Askari.

- He served Imam Abu al-Hasan Ali ibn Muhammad al-Hadi (peace be upon them). Later, he served Imam Abu Muhammad al-Askari (peace be upon them). He also had the honor of serving Imam Mahdi (may Allah hasten his reappearance) for a short period.

- He was highly esteemed, with numerous narrations praising his character. He passed away around the year 265 AH and was buried in Baghdad.

2. The Second Ambassador:

- Name: Muhammad bin Uthman bin Sa'id al-Amri al-Asadi, known as Abu Ja'far al-Askari.

- He was praised by Imam Mahdi and his father peace be upon them. He authored books on jurisprudence based on what he learned from Imam Hasan al-Askari and Imam Mahdi. He passed away in either 304 or 305 AH.

- He served as an ambassador for approximately forty years. He was informed of his death by Imam Mahdi and prepared his own grave. His grave is located in the Khallani Square in Baghdad.

3. The Third Ambassador:

- Name: Hussain bin Rooh al-Nubakhti, known as Abu al-Qasim, also called al-Baghdadi.

- He was a knowledgeable jurist, eloquent, revered, and highly respected. He was trusted by the Shia community for his wisdom and piety. He served as an

ambassador from around 304 or 305 AH until his death in 326 AH.

- He was buried in the Nubakhtiyah, the residence of Ali bin Ahmad al-Nubakhti in Baghdad.

4. The Fourth Ambassador:

- Name: Ali bin Muhammad al-Samari, known as Abu al-Hasan, also called al-Baghdadi.

- He was the last of the Four Ambassadors. He served as an ambassador from the death of the third ambassador, Hussain bin Rooh al-Nubakhti, until his own death in 329 AH.

- He was buried near the Abu Aqabah River in Baghdad, and with his death, the era of special deputies ended, marking the conclusion of the minor occultation period.

Falsely claiming to the embassy that someone is acting on behalf of the Imam:

Those who study the historical context surrounding the Imams of the Ahlul Bayt (peace be upon them) from the time of Imam Ali, Imam Hassan, Imam Hussain, Imam Zain al-Abideen, Imam Muhammad al-Baqir, Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq, Imam Musa al-Kadhim, Imam Ali al-Ridha, Imam Muhammad al-Jawad, Imam Ali al-Hadi, and Imam Hassan al-Askari, up to the era of Imam Muhammad al-Mahdi (may Allah hasten his reappearance), contemplate the ideological currents and opinions that were created by some deviants and misguided individuals among the extremists, heretics, and liars. They attempted to associate

these currents with the guidance and teachings advocated by the Ahlul Bayt (peace be upon them), discovering the deviations and malicious hands that sought to infiltrate and distort the authentic intellectual lineage of the school of the Ahlul Bayt (peace be upon them).

The Imams of the Ahlul Bayt (peace be upon them) fought against this conspiracy, exerting strenuous efforts to purify the school and its doctrinal and jurisprudential currents from those deviant and misguided attempts. These deviant sects and directions proliferated to the extent that some scholars categorized and authored works about these sects, considering them as factions within the Shia community due to their claims of affiliation with the Ahlul Bayt (peace be upon them).

Just as Al-Nubakhti did when he authored a book titled "The Sects of Shia" in which he enumerated deviant sects and their followers, whom the Imams of the Ahlul Bayt (peace be upon them) cursed and expelled. This is a mistake that must be corrected and paid attention to. Those sects have no relation to the Ahlul Bayt (peace be upon them) nor to their committed Shia adherents who adhere to their methodology. They do not uphold the creed of monotheism or the principles of the Holy Quran, which the Ahlul Bayt dedicated their lives to. Shia, in its intellectual and legislative sense, is only what encompasses the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family). And Shia, in its political connotation, is nothing but loyalty to the Ahlul Bayt (peace be upon them) and advocating for their leadership and guardianship.

During the period of Minor Occultation, which lasted for approximately 70 years, the four deputies continued their responsibility of secret communication with Imam

Mahdi, the son of Imam Hassan (peace be upon him), conveying his verdicts and directives to his followers. However, during this time, various liars and claimants emerged, some of whom deviated into extremism (Ghulat), which is an ideological deviation attributing divine qualities to the Ahlul Bayt, such as the Ghulat al-Mughayriyah, al-Khattabiyyah, and al-Mufawwidah. Additionally, atheism and the promotion of licentiousness, claiming to have a connection with Imam Mahdi and considering themselves as his gate and ambassadors to the nation, emerged. Imam Mahdi, the son of Imam Hassan, may Allah hasten his reappearance, cursed and condemned them.

And this reached [the people] through his deputies and followers, who disassociated themselves from them and cursed them. The books of biography, narration, and history have informed us about those deviants, as well as the positions of Imam Mahdi, may Allah hasten his reappearance, towards them and towards his companions.

Sheikh al-Tusi said in the book al-Ghaibah: "A group informed us, from Abu Muhammad al-Talla'ukbari, from Abu Ali ibn Hammam, who said: 'The Shari'i was known as Abu Muhammad.' Harun said: 'And I think his name was al-Hassan, and he was among the companions of Abu al-Hassan Ali al-Hadi, peace be upon him, and then al-Hasan ibn Ali ibn Muhammad, the Imam al-Askari, after him. He was the first to claim a position that Allah did not appoint him to, nor was he deserving of it. He lied about Allah and His proofs upon them, attributing to them what is not befitting of them, and they are not of that kind. So the Shia cursed him and disassociated from him. The Imam's declaration of cursing and disassociating from him was issued.'"

Harun continued: "Then from him emerged the words of disbelief and atheism. All these claimants initially lied to the Imam, and they are his representatives. They call the weak-minded to their allegiance with these words, then their matter progresses to the words of the Hululiyah, as was known from Abu Ja'far al-Shalmaghani and his counterparts, upon them be the curse of Allah, one after the other."⁽⁴⁴⁾

Among them was Muhammad bin Nasir al-Namiri, who was initially among the companions of Imam al-Hasan al-Askari, peace be upon him, and the father of Imam Mahdi, may Allah hasten his reappearance.

However, he deviated and espoused deviant beliefs, claiming to be a follower of the Bab after al-Sharī'ī. Consequently, the followers of the Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them, disassociated themselves from him and his Shia.

Another example is Hussain bin Mansur al-Hallaj, who claimed to be the ambassador and representative of Imam Mahdi.

Also among them was Ali bin Muhammad al-Shalmaghani, whom Imam Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Mahdi cursed and disassociated from.

The Imam, peace be upon him, sent a message to his ambassador, Hussain bin Rooh, in the month of Dhu al-Hijjah, 312 AH, clarifying the deviation and misguidance of al-Shalmaghani. The message stated: "May Allah extend your life, and may He grant you all goodness. Your deeds have been sealed. Whoever trusts in his religion and abides by its intentions from among our brothers _may Allah bless

44. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 51, P. 367. Quoting from al-ghayba.

you_ should know that Muhammad bin Ali, known as al-Shalmaghani, has apostatized from Islam, deviated from it, and disbelieved in Allah, the Exalted Creator.

He has fabricated lies, slander, and great sins. The just have denied Allah and strayed far from the path, incurring a clear loss. We disassociate ourselves before Allah, His Messenger, and His family, peace be upon them, from him. We curse him with the curse of Allah, openly and secretly, at all times and in all situations, and upon those who support and follow him.

We warn against him, just as we did with his predecessors such as al-Sharī'ī, al-Namiri, al-Hallaj, and al-Balālī, and others. Despite this, Allah's praise has always been beautiful, and we trust in Him and seek His assistance. He is sufficient for all our affairs, and He is the best guardian."⁽⁴⁵⁾

Ibn al-Athir discussed al-Shalmaghani and his deviant views, and it was also confirmed that the one who exposed this deviant figure was Abu al-Qasim al-Hasan bin Ruh, the third ambassador of Imam al-Mahdi, peace be upon him. Ibn al-Athir stated: "In the year in which Abu Ja'far Muhammad bin Ali al-Shalmaghani, also known as Ibn Abi al-Qaraqir and Shalmaghan, was killed, a village near Wasit was attributed to him.

The reason for this was that he introduced a heretical doctrine in Shia Islam, including the concept of reincarnation and the incarnation of divinity in it, among other things attributed to him. This was evident from the actions of Abu al-Qasim al-Hassain bin Rooh, whom the Imamiyya refer to as the "Bab"...) ⁽⁴⁶⁾

45. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 51, P. 376. Quoting from al-ghayba.

46. Ibn al-Atheer: Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh. Part 8, p. 190.

Ibn al-Shalmaghani was sought by the ruling authority at that time, so he fled and disappeared in Mosul, then fled to Baghdad and disappeared there. In the year 322 AH, he was captured by Ibn Maqla, who was a minister during the reign of al-Muqtadir al-A'as'ath.

He was imprisoned and his house was searched, where pieces and books indicating his deviation were found. Al-Shalmaghani was then crucified in Dhu al-Qa'dah in the year 322 AH and burned with fire."⁽⁴⁷⁾

Thus, this historical period witnesses the conflict between the approach of dialogue and authenticity carried by the Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them, and the deviant elements and groups from the extremists and heretics.

Allah, the Almighty, says in Surah Al-Anbiya, verse 18: **"Rather, We dash the truth upon falsehood, and it destroys it, and thereupon it departs."**

Signs of appearance:

Every significant event in history has its beginnings, signs, and indicators that point to it. The future is a reality that lives in the consciousness of the present, and historical events, while sometimes appearing surprising to us, are not surprising in their entirety as their precursors and overall factors leading to their occurrence start with birth and expression, then the significant event materializes, taking its place in the realm of events.

The emergence of the awaited Mahdi, the reformer, is one of the greatest events in human history. Therefore, the

47. Ibn al-Atheer: Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh. Part 8, p. 190-191

noble Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his family, informed his nation and acquainted them with what Allah Almighty had informed him of regarding the appearance of a great reformer from the unseen world. The Prophet, the guide, instructed his nation to believe in him and follow him upon his appearance as a reformer who acts in accordance with the Quran and the purified Sunnah, leading humanity to the shores of guidance and peace, shattering the idols, values, ideas, and destructive civilization of ignorance. To bring this hidden idea closer to minds and prepare souls to accept it, the noble Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, and the household of the Prophet, peace be upon them, elaborated on the signs of the Mahdi's appearance and drew attention to them. It is noteworthy to mention here that many historical and narrated accounts regarding the Mahdi, peace be upon him, and the signs of his appearance contain numerous falsehoods and myths.

Therefore, it is necessary to refine and sift through these narrations, verifying them to reveal the unadulterated truth, as informed by the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his family, and elucidated by the Imams, the guided ones, peace be upon them. Prophetic narrations indicate two types of signs: social signs and natural signs. Among the most prominent social signs signaling the appearance of the Mahdi, peace be upon him, is the decline of civilization and human life into the depths of ignorance, reaching levels reminiscent of the pre-prophetic eras.

When humanity sinks into the morass of ignorance, and ideas, beliefs, systems, customs, morals, and ignorant relationships prevail in human life, and the economic and security situations deteriorate, fear, anxiety, wars, injustice, and oppression spread. Humanity is in need of a great

reformer who can change the course of history, initiating a comprehensive revolution against the path of prophethood and its leading monotheistic call.

Narrations also indicate that among the signs of the Mahdi's appearance is the advancement of humanity in scientific and industrial fields and the maturity of human thought. Additionally, the narrations affirm another sign: the birth of the base and the supporters, and the social, political, and military movement prepared for the Mahdi, peace be upon him, leading up to his emergence.

Thus, the social signs are characterized by:

1. The prevalence of injustice and the open domination of ignorance.

2. The resurgence of ignorant life with its beliefs, ethics, and civilization.

3. Significant scientific progress.

4. Wars, destructive conflicts, and the absence of security and peace.

5. The emergence of liars and false claimants to reform.

6. Economic inflation and deterioration.

7. The appearance of those preparing and facilitating from movements, leaderships, and reformist calls, seeking to rid themselves of the ignorance supported by material power and aggression.

And here are some narrations that confirm these signs:

Al-Saduq, may Allah have mercy on him, narrated in his book "Man La Yahduruhu al-Faqih" that Al-Asbagh ibn Nubatah reported from Amir al-Mu'minin Ali ibn Abi Talib, peace be upon him, saying: "At the end of time, as the Hour approaches, the worst of times will emerge. Women will appear publicly dressed but naked, adorned yet debauched, deviated from religion, carrying within them a disease that spreads fitnah, rushing towards desires and

pleasures, making permissible what is forbidden, and they will be eternally damned in hell."⁽⁴⁸⁾

And Al-Majlisi narrated in "Bihar al-Anwar" from "Thawab al-A'mal" on the authority of his father, from Ali, from his father Al-Nawfali, from Al-Sukuni, from Abu Abdallah (peace be upon him) who said: "The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said: 'A time will come upon my nation when their secrets will be corrupted, and their actions will be adorned publicly out of greed for the world. They will not seek anything with it but what is with Allah, Almighty. Their affair will be hypocrisy mixed with fear, and Allah will be angry with them. They will invoke Him like the call of the drowning person, but He will not answer them.'"⁽⁴⁹⁾

And with the same chain of narration: "The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him and his family, said: 'A time will come upon my nation when nothing will remain of the Quran except its traces, and nothing will remain of Islam except its name. They will be called by this name while they will be the farthest of people from it. Their mosques will be well-furnished but devoid of guidance. The scholars of that time will be the worst among the scholars under the sky, from them the tribulations emerge, and to them they return.'"⁽⁵⁰⁾

48. Lutfullah Al-Safi: Muntakhab Al-Athar, P. 426. Quoted from Man La Yahdrahu Al-Faqih>

49. Lutfullah Al-Safi: Muntakhab Al-Athar, P. 426. Quoted from Bihar al-Anwar.

50. Lutfullah Al-Safi: Muntakhab Al-Athar, P. 427. Quoted from Bihar al-Anwar.

It is also narrated from Imam Al-Baqir, Muhammad ibn Ali (peace be upon them) that he said: "The Mahdi will not come out until he rises up from the oppressors."⁽⁵¹⁾

And it is narrated from Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him) from the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him and his family: "Islam began as something strange, and it will return as something strange, so blessed are the strangers." It was asked: "Who are they, O Messenger of Allah?" He said: "Those who repair [society] when people become corrupt. There is no loneliness or strangeness for a believer. Whenever a believer dies in a strange land, the angels weep for him, and his grave is illuminated with light from where he is buried to the place of his head."⁽⁵²⁾

In Ibn Majah's collection in the second part, under the chapter of "The Trials," concerning the trial of the Antichrist, Abu Umamah Al-Bahili reported: "The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, delivered a sermon, and most of his sermon was about the Antichrist. He warned us about him, and he said: 'There has not been a trial on earth since Allah dispersed Adam's offspring greater than the trial of the Antichrist. Allah has not sent a prophet but warned his nation about the Antichrist. I am the last of the prophets, and you are the last of the nations, and he will emerge among you without fail.'"⁽⁵³⁾

51. Lutfullah Al-Safi: Muntakhab Al-Athar, P. 436. Quoted from *almullahim wal fitan*.

52. Lutfullah Al-Safi: Muntakhab Al-Athar, P. 461. Quoted from *The Jaafariyya and the Ash'iyat*.

53. Lutfullah Al-Safi: Muntakhab Al-Athar, P. 461. Quoted from *Sunan Ibn Majah*.

Al-Kulayni narrated in "Al-Kafi" a tradition from Imam Ja'far ibn Muhammad Al-Sadiq (peace be upon him), describing the level of knowledge and industry attained by humanity: "When our Qa'im rises, may Allah, Mighty and Majestic, extend to our Shia the ability to hear and see him, such that there will be no obstacle between him and the one speaking to him, and they will hear and see him from wherever they are."⁽⁵⁴⁾

It is also narrated from Imam Al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) that he said: "In the time of the Qa'im, the believer in the east will see his brother in the west, and likewise, the one in the west will see his brother in the east."⁽⁵⁵⁾

We can say that these two narrations point to the development of communication means achieved by modern science, such as the invention of devices for transmitting images and sounds like television and radio, and their like. These two sciences were not known before, and thus these narrations can be considered as some material evidence indicating the truth of the awaited appearance.

Sheikh al-Tusi narrated in the book of Ghaybah from Muhammad ibn Muslim and Abu Baseer that they said: We heard Abu Abdullah (Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq) peace be upon him saying: "This matter will not come to pass until two-thirds of the people are gone." So we asked, "If two-thirds of the people are gone, then who will remain?" He replied: "Would you not be satisfied to be among the remaining third?"⁽⁵⁶⁾

Abu Nu'aim narrated from Ali ibn Abi Talib, peace be upon him, in the book of al-Burhan regarding the signs of

54. Al-Kulayni al-Kafi, Vol.8, P. 240 -241

55. Abdullah Shubar Haqq al-Yaqin, Vol.1, P. 229

56. Lutfullah Al-Safi: Muntakhab Al-Athar, P. 452. Quoted from Ghaybah.

the Mahdi at the end of times, saying: "The Mahdi will not emerge until one-third is killed, one-third dies, and one-third remains."⁽⁵⁷⁾

These narrations also speak about the signs and social indicators of the Mahdi's appearance.

There are other narrations that mention natural signs and phenomena such as lunar and solar eclipses occurring at abnormal times, indicating a change in the astronomical and natural order. It is important to note here that the narrations discussing the appearance of Imam Mahdi, peace be upon him, confirm his emergence from Mecca and his establishment of his caliphate and state, where people will flock to him between the corner (Rukn) and the station (Maqam) in the Sacred Mosque.

Despair and Hope:

In the midst of the detestable ignorance, humanity lived centuries before the message of guidance dawned upon the world, and the call for reform was sent by the savior of humanity, the greatest Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his family. During that dreadful period, humans lived in an environment of misery, despair, and wretchedness. However, when they were preached with the word of salvation and heard the voice of the bearer of glad tidings leading the caravan of humanity, their hearts opened to the call, and they responded to the call of hope and aspiration.

57. Lutfullah Al-Safi: Muntakhab Al-Athar, P. 452. Quoted from al-Burhan regarding the signs of the Mahdi at the end of times.

Thus, every time the darkness of ignorance shrouds the world of humans, and hope is lost, and they are surrounded by waves of calamities, the divine message becomes the savior and the leader in the world of reform. Allah, the Almighty, said in Surah Fatir, verse 24:

"And there is no nation but that there has passed within it a warner."

The lights of the Holy Quran shone forth, and the clouds of darkness dispersed. Humanity regained its natural freedom and dignity, which had been seized by the oppressors.

In every period of human history, there arises a prophet and messenger who bear the responsibility of guidance and reform. The phenomenon of Prophethood is a manifestation of Allah's mercy and care for His creation. It is clear that the existence of the reformer, the Mahdi, peace be upon him, represents the continuous extension of divine mercy, the mercy that calls upon humanity to await it, just as it called for the anticipation of the reformer prophets. However, this anticipation is coupled with the responsibility of enjoining good, forbidding evil, inviting to Islam, and striving in the path of Allah, lest the law of guidance be obstructed and injustice and corruption prevail.

This call to await is not a call for submission, acquiescence, or relinquishing responsibility. Yet, some have misunderstood the issue of awaiting the Mahdi peace be upon him, the reformer, reaching the point of obstructing legal rulings and abandoning the responsibility of reform, relying solely on the Mahdi peace be upon him, contrary to the explicit message of Islam and the spirit of divine calling.

Many narrations emphasize the awaiting of Imam Mahdi (may Allah hasten his reappearance), and the virtue of those who await him (may Allah hasten his reappearance). Some narrations suggest that it is part of the faith, while others indicate that those who recognize the Imam will be rewarded as if they supported him. Among these narrations are:

1. Authenticated by Abu al-Jarud, who said: I said to Abu Ja'far (peace be upon him), "O son of the Messenger of Allah, do you know my affection for you, my longing for you, and my allegiance to you?"

He said, "Yes." I said, "I ask you a question to which you will respond; I am visually impaired and have difficulty walking, and I cannot visit you frequently." He said, "State your request." I said, "Tell me about your religion, by which you and your household worship Allah, so that I may worship Allah accordingly." He said, "If you have abbreviated your discourse, you have indeed magnified the matter. By Allah, I will give you my religion and the religion of my forefathers, by which we worship Allah: testifying that there is no god but Allah, that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, acknowledging what has come from Allah, allegiance to our authority, disavowal of our enemies, submission to our command, awaiting our Qa'im, diligence, and piety." A similar narration is attributed to Isma'il al-Ja'fari and others.

2. Authenticated by Tha'labah bin Maymun, who said: "Know your Imam, for if you know him, it will not harm you whether this matter precedes or lags behind. And whoever knows his Imam and then witnesses this matter, and then the Qa'im emerges (may Allah hasten his reappearance), he will have the reward of those who were with the Qa'im in his ranks." Although the narration is

implicit - meaning the speaker is not explicitly mentioned - it is clear that it is attributed to the Imam (peace be upon him) because its content does not suit it being narrated by anyone other than the Imam (peace be upon him). A similar narration is attributed to Abdullah bin Ajlan from Abu Abdullah (peace be upon him), who said: "Whoever knows of this matter and dies before the Qa'im emerges (may Allah hasten his reappearance), he will have the reward of those who were killed alongside him."

The Quran is a call to faith, action, implementation, and a mandate for reform, enjoining good and forbidding evil. It does not permit the obstruction of divine law and rulings. The meaning of obstructing divine law is the dominance of injustice, corruption, and shadows, which Allah, glorified be He, does not permit.

When a person, oblivious to the divine promise of inheriting the righteous and the appearance of the Mahdi, succumbs to despair, loses hope, and resigns to the status quo.

The Islamic call has focused on instilling hope and optimism in the hearts and has called for uprooting the phenomenon of despair from the realm of reform, rejecting submission to the domination of ignorance and tyranny. It heralded victory and succession on earth. This glad tidings came to those working in the path of Allah, those who invite to His message as a guiding principle governing life's events.

Allah, exalted be He, says in Surah An-Nur, verse 55: ***"Allah has promised those who have believed among you and done righteous deeds that He will surely grant them succession [to authority] upon the earth just as He granted it to those before them and that He will surely establish for them [therein] their religion***

which He has preferred for them and that He will surely substitute for them, after their fear, security, [for] they worship Me, not associating anything with Me. But whoever disbelieves after that - then those are the defiantly disobedient."

The Quran, before clarifying Allah's promise of succession to the believers, spoke about the responsibility of the believing individual, calling them to obey Allah and His Messenger, represented by adhering to all that the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his family, brought forth. It called for this in a manner that would result in succession and empowerment on earth as a consequence of obeying Allah and His Messenger and the cause and effect relationship therein. Allah says:

"Say, 'Obey Allah and obey the Messenger; but if you turn away - then upon him is only the [duty of] clear notification.' "(Surah An-Nur, verse 54).

Those who despair of reform are captive to a pathological state and become victims of despair and defeatism in the face of the tide of ignorance. They hinder the movement of the nation and its historical and civilizational progress. The true call, advocated by the Quran and elucidated by the great Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his family, is a call to action, jihad, and reform at a time when humanity awaits the emergence of the promised reformer. Islamic activists pave the way for the inheritance of the righteous and for the anticipated phase of succession on earth.

It is necessary to mention the topic of the method of spreading the call to establish an Islamic state during the occultation. As for the method of working towards establishing an Islamic state now, it varies - akin to any other method aimed at establishing a state - into two types:

1. Revolution: By this, armed revolution is meant, which involves using force to eliminate the infidel rule in the Islamic nation and replacing it with Islamic governance. Here, revolution is conditionally permissible according to Islamic law, provided its conditions and prerequisites are met.

2. Gradualism: This refers to following peaceful methods, such as: educating the nation politically, enlightening individuals and communities, both specific and general. We proceed as follows:

1. By opening schools at all levels: from kindergarten to primary, secondary, and tertiary, for both genders, provided that their curricula and textbooks are purely Islamic, drawing from our authentic and pure civilization. The aim is to nurture our children with constructive Islamic culture, transforming Muslims into active participants in shaping the Islamic society, and ensuring that those in charge of administration and education are principled Muslims.

2. By issuing magazines and newspapers of various types: daily, weekly, monthly, and quarterly, both popular and specialized, provided that they are imbued with creative and purposeful Islamic thought.

3. By disseminating individual and serial books, both popular and specialized, aiming to promote purposeful and creative Islamic culture.

4. By establishing libraries with different sections: mobile and fixed, rural and urban, equipped with all the books and Islamic publications required by their levels and fields.

5. By establishing clubs: cultural and sports, provided that they are serious in instilling, developing, and utilizing Islamic spirit.

6. By forming associations for social services in light of what Islam commands regarding acts of charity, benevolence, and mutual support, and the like.

7. Political alliances, provided they adhere to methods within the framework of Islamic rulings.

It is necessary to mention here the narrations from some of the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them, which prohibit rebellion and uprising against oppressive authorities before the appearance of the promised reformer, Imam Mahdi (may Allah hasten his reappearance). They admonish the Alawi rebels during that period due to their inability to achieve victory and the inefficiency of some leaders of those unjust uprisings. They advise against abandoning the laws of Allah and waiting for Imam Mahdi to eradicate injustice and establish divine justice.

As the historical turning point and the monumental civilizational transformation led by this great leader approach, one who realizes the dreams of the prophets and rescues humanity from the darkness of ignorance and the oppression of tyrants, rebuilding humanity on the foundation of monotheistic belief and the values of the divine message. Therefore, it is imperative to examine this issue, deepen awareness about it, and prioritize it as part of the major Islamic and humanitarian concerns.

Preparing individuals for revolution against injustice and tyranny, instilling hope in themselves, and overcoming the state of psychological weakness and defeatism in the face of tyrannical forces are essential.

One of the prominent effects of paying attention to the issue of Imam Mahdi (peace be upon him) and deepening the study around it is its transmission to the media space, which connects the nation with its awaited leader and

prepares for rallying under his banner when his call is made. His prominence in the political and leadership sphere rises. Belief in Imam Mahdi (peace be upon him) is a matter of the unseen that deepens faith, spiritual consciousness, and psychological connection to the realm of the unseen, alongside practical fieldwork in the material world.

Before the missions of the prophets, nations and peoples awaited the reformer prophet, living in a state of anticipation and monitoring signs, to gather under the banner of the sent prophet.

After the cessation of revelation and the sealing of Prophethood with the Prophethood of the great Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family), Allah Almighty willed that reform would be led by an Imam from the progeny of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family), building his revival and reform on the basis of the Quran and the noble Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family).

Therefore, it is essential to focus on the issue of Imam Mahdi (may Allah hasten his reappearance) and to connect humanity with the awaited reformer, actively engaging with his anticipated leadership and working under the banner of this great reformer to cultivate a spirit of seriousness in reform. There must be an increase in supplication and turning to Allah, beseeching Him to hasten the emergence of the great reformer to fulfill his role and mission.

It should be noted here that a historical cycle has begun to manifest its omens on the stage of human life, as the Islamic project has become the civilizational project and social system advocated by Muslims worldwide. They strive against darkness and tyranny, sacrificing everything precious for its establishment.

There are signs and indications that an Islamic resurgence has begun, and that the Islamic current and global Islamic movement are paving the way for a comprehensive intellectual, social, and political revolution based on Islam and drawing from it the methodology and system of life. These indicators are among the strongest motivators and elements of hope driving Muslims towards working to establish Islamic life and implement the sacred Islamic law.

The meaning of not establishing a political entity for Muslims and failing to establish the Islamic state is succumbing to ignorant ideological and political doctrines and submitting to the authority of tyranny.

When Muslims abandoned their leadership and political role in leading themselves and humanity, they left room for ignorant, atheistic, and secular theories such as Marxism and capitalism. Muslims suffered from this tragedy and continue to live in a bitter struggle with states, parties, and organizations that are based on these principles and theories that threaten the essence of Islamic belief and the existence of Muslims intellectually and apostolically.

What the world is witnessing today in the collapse of the socialist system, which was seen as a bastion of atheism, and the downfall of its tyrants, is nothing but a clear indication of the failure of all ignorant systems and atheistic material principles.

It is a historical lesson and a political admonition for humanity, a harbinger of the collapse of the materialistic, hedonistic Western system and ideology.

It is the responsibility of Muslim individuals, especially scholars, intellectuals, Islamic writers, Islamic preachers, Islamic movements, parties, and organizations, to call for the establishment of Islamic life and state.

It is clear to us that the nation, as a whole, is addressed with the obligation to establish Islam and implement its laws.

In the context of Shia doctrine, the term "al-intidar" refers to readiness and anticipation for the emergence of Imam Mahdi, peace be upon him, who is believed to be concealed in his major occultation and awaited to appear at the appropriate time by the permission of Allah. This concept expresses the believers' anticipation for his return and their readiness to cooperate with him when he appears to establish justice and reform in the world. Believers are encouraged to maintain constant readiness and patience in anticipation, and this waiting is considered part of the test of faith and the aspiration for the anticipated goodness in the future.

The doctrine of awaiting Imam Mahdi, peace be upon him, is an integral part of the belief system within Twelver Shia Islam. Imam Mahdi peace be upon him is believed to be the Twelfth Imam of Shia, who was born in the 9th century AD and disappeared under mysterious circumstances during his childhood. Since then, it is believed that he is in a state of occultation awaiting the appropriate time to emerge and fill the earth with justice and equity.

There are several beliefs and details associated with the doctrine of awaiting Imam Mahdi peace be upon him:

1. Just emergence and justice: It is believed that Imam Mahdi's emergence will bring about complete justice on earth and eradicate oppression and unfavorable conditions.

2. The awaited savior: Imam Mahdi peace be upon him is considered a righteous and inspired figure, representing hope and aspiration among Shia Muslims.

3. Occultation and anticipation: Awaiting Imam Mahdi peace be upon him is viewed as a test of faith, encouraging believers to exercise patience and steadfastness in anticipation of his appearance.

4. Divine role: The arrival and appearance of Imam Mahdi peace be upon him are believed to be linked to divine decree, occurring at the appropriate time according to the will of Allah.

5. Collaboration with Imam Mahdi peace be upon him: Believers are expected to prepare to support Imam Mahdi upon his appearance and contribute to the realization of his project for justice and reform.

These are some of the fundamental aspects of the doctrine of awaiting Imam Mahdi peace be upon him within Shia Islam. This anticipation forms an important part of faith and worship among Shia Muslims, serving as a source of hope and adherence to religious values and principles.

Some researchers have pointed out in their research the issue of the Shiites' adherence to this hope in order to give them strength, resilience, and steadfastness in their adherence to higher values. The French researcher has pointed to this as an example of this issue, according to what was reported by the Center for Specialized Studies of Imam Mahdi, peace be upon him, as stated in the text:

French researcher Joseph,⁽⁵⁸⁾ in his research titled "Shia and Their Perplexing Promotions of Ideas," discusses the

58. Joseph Arthur de Comte de Gobineau (1816 AD - 1882 AD) was a French writer and diplomat who was famous for his research and studies on the East, where he combined poetry, journalism, the novel, and philosophy. His most prominent intellectual product was "The Disparity Between Human Races." He was influenced by those who believed in German racism, and he wrote many novels and

distinctive features of the Twelver Shia doctrine compared to other Islamic sects. He predicts the spread of this doctrine worldwide and concludes his research by discussing the belief in the Imam Mahdi, peace be upon him, stating: "Among the significant political issues that foster the Shiite sect and its prosperity is the belief in the existence of Imam Mahdi, peace be upon him, and awaiting his appearance in a manner untouched by anyone. They all hope for the Mahdi's appearance at dawn, believing that all nations and peoples will be among his followers.

It is widely believed that every individual among the Shia, whether male or female, holds authority and poverty in their hands. When night falls, they sleep with the hope that when morning comes, it will be a time of submission for their enemies, and they will achieve all promotions. The diligent believers among them believe themselves to be deputies of the Mahdi. It is not hidden from the discerning that this common belief among the individuals of this great sect, once firmly rooted in their minds, must inevitably pave the way for them through natural causes one day.

Despair and deprivation are the causes of all calamities, humiliation, and discord, diverting one's heart from firm belief, which, by the nature of things, is the cause of prosperity and salvation. Since Eastern religious beliefs exert their full influence after a couple of centuries, it can be said that because of this group, the Shia, with this assembly and the natural causes and the incidental factors of promotion, have the right to surpass others in this

memoirs, including "The Pleiades," "Asian Stories," and "Three Years in Asia." This thinker resided in Iran for five years and was an official at the French embassy in Tehran.

period. They become at the forefront of nations in terms of number, strength, and power. After the decline of materialistic beliefs, this sect has sufficient strength to preserve its dignity, power, authority, and control, regardless of the supernatural and sectarian forces."⁽⁵⁹⁾

The rise of the Islamic State occurred before the era of occultation:

Definition of the Islamic State: It is beneficial here to define the Islamic State and provide a brief overview of this entity. The concept of the Islamic State is clear and well-defined in Islamic thought and legislation, as it was established by the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, in Medina. Its legal and political identity was defined, embodying both its intellectual and executive nature. It is:

1. That authority and governance belong solely to Allah.
2. A doctrinal and ideological state, founded on Islamic beliefs and rulings.
3. A legal state, where governance and sovereignty adhere to divine law, the law of truth and justice.
4. Governance and authority are a trust in the hands of the ruler, as the ruling apparatus is a custodian responsible for upholding human principles, values, the interests of the nation, and its noble goals in life. As Allah says in Surah An-Nisa, verse 58:

59. Al-Intidhar Magazine: Issue 7th, 2nd Year 1427 AH. p. 72.

"Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due and when you judge between people, to judge with justice."

It is not the will of the ruler that dictates judgment and legislation.

5. The nation holds the right to authority and chooses its leaders through consultation and selecting the capable and righteous. Allah says in Surah Ash-Shura, verse 38: ***"And their affair is [determined by] consultation among themselves."***

6. Criticism and holding authority accountable are rights of the nation. There is no tyranny or political dictatorship in Islam. Allah directed His noble Prophet towards consultation to guide and prepare his nation according to this political method. In verse 59 of Surah Al-Imran:

"And consult them in the matter."

The Quran further clarifies this in Surah At-Tawbah, verse 71:

"The believing men and believing women are allies of one another. They enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong..."

7. The Islamic ruler has limited legislative powers within the bounds of assessing interests and preventing harm. This is termed as the area of discretion or delegated interests. The Islamic government is given a specific and variable legislative scope based on "bringing benefits and preventing harm". Thus, it can issue secondary laws after identifying the interest in various fields such as politics, economics, health, administration, security, military, etc. This includes imposing additional taxes, restricting the import or export of certain goods, materials, or currencies, and setting prices if economic necessity dictates so.

Similarly, the Islamic ruler is obliged to enforce laws regulating traffic, trade, education, municipalities, and other areas. This includes laws pertaining to traffic regulations, commerce, education systems, municipal governance, and so forth.

It should be noted that Islamic rulings are divine, originating from the Quran and the Sunnah (the teachings and practices of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him). Furthermore, the process of ijtihad (independent legal reasoning) contributes to deducing various legislations not explicitly mentioned in the Quran and Sunnah. This falls within the jurisdiction of qualified jurists who are knowledgeable about the social and objective circumstances experienced by the nation.

8. All Muslims are obligated to obey the Islamic government, provided it adheres to the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger, peace be upon him. Allah says in Surah An-Nisa, verse 59:

"Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you."

And in Surah Hud, verse 113:

"And do not incline toward those who do wrong, lest you be touched by the Fire."

It is narrated from the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him:

"There is no obedience to a creature in disobedience to the Creator."⁽⁶⁰⁾

9. If the ruler deviates from Islam, there is no obedience to him. It is incumbent upon Muslims to depose him and replace him with a just and competent ruler.

60. Al-Hurr Al-Ameli: Al-Wasa'il, vol. 6, p. 422.

Wilayat al-Faqih (Guardianship of the Jurist):

Wilayat al-Faqih (Guardianship of the Jurist) is a concept in Islamic jurisprudence that refers to the authority of the qualified jurist who is considered to possess both religious and political authority over the Muslim community. It is believed that this jurist is capable of interpreting Islamic law, determining public policies, and making decisions in accordance with it.

Historically, this concept emerged within Twelver Shia Islam and developed and expanded in modern times with the existence of the Islamic Republic of Iran, where the current Iranian leadership is considered the highest authority of the Islamic system in Iran as an example of this. While this concept is supported by some Shia Muslims, it sparks wide controversy in the Islamic world, with some considering it detrimental to the understanding of democratic transition and legitimate governance through concepts like consultation (Shura) and social justice.

Shaikh Ali Alkorani in his book (era of appearance) said:

In Iran, there is a prevailing sense that the presence of the awaited Mahdi, peace be upon him, is the greatest presence among all the leaders and scholars of the revolution. He is considered the true leader of both the revolution and the state. Imam Khomeini is seen as his representative and deputy, with his name mentioned with profound respect and reverence. It's often said, "Our souls are sacrificed for the dust beneath his feet." They also express that the country belongs to Imam Mahdi, and their

ultimate aspiration is to be faithful and deliver the country to its original owner, peace be upon him.

In the consciousness of the people of Iran, in their slogans, the names of their children, their institutions, streets, and commercial establishments, Imam Mahdi is revered as the sacred master who is present among them. In the hearts of the fighters, who eagerly long for him with tears in their eyes and envision him in their dreams, Imam Mahdi's presence is paramount.

Their anticipation of meeting him on the path to Jerusalem fills their waking moments, and they eagerly anticipate the honor of encountering him.

The reservoir of longing, love, and reverence held by Imam Mahdi in the hearts of our souls, as well as in the hearts of Muslims in general, is unmatched by any other figure on Earth today. This popularity and interest in his affairs will only increase until Allah fulfills His promise and establishes His religion through him, surpassing all other religions.⁽⁶¹⁾

There is significant divergence in the opinions of Shia scholars regarding the concept of Wilayat al-Faqih. Some Shia scholars agree with and support the idea, while others oppose it. This divergence reflects the diversity of opinions within Shia jurisprudence stemming from different interpretations of religious texts and historical applications.

Supporters of Wilayat al-Faqih view it as a means to achieve social justice and to correctly and effectively implement Islamic law in Muslim societies. They believe

61. Sheikh Ali Al-Kourani Al-Amili: The Era of Appearance, P.8.

that a qualified and just jurist can serve the interests of people and guide them towards goodness.

Opponents of Wilayat al-Faqih consider it a departure from traditional Shia heritage and see it as a contemporary innovation that may lead to deviations in the understanding and application of religion. They downplay the role of the jurist in political affairs and instead advocate for the delegation of authority to the people or specialized religious bodies.

Of course, there are currents and trends within the Shia community that vary in their opinions between these two camps, and moderate views or preferences for specific governance styles that transcend this division may emerge.

In Twelver Shia belief, the Imam Mahdi peace be upon him is believed to be the Twelfth Imam and the awaited Mahdi who has not yet appeared, and he is believed to be living in occultation (major occultation). Shia Muslims still await his emergence to achieve justice, peace, and reform for the community.

Regarding the concept of Wilayat al-Faqih in the time of major occultation, there are different and diverse interpretations among Shia scholars. Some see Wilayat al-Faqih as remaining valid during the occultation, where the qualified and just jurist is considered a representative of Imam Mahdi (peace be upon him) and responsible for interpreting Sharia law and managing the affairs of Muslims.

Others see Wilayat al-Faqih as subject to variation during the occultation, where it may be linked to the unique circumstances and conditions of the Islamic community. In this case, scholars and jurists may have an important role in guiding the community, but they cannot replace Imam Mahdi (peace be upon him) in full and legitimate authority.

Imam Mahdi Peace be upon him before era of Islam:

The skeptics among the adherents of the three heavenly religions - Judaism, Christianity, and Islam - believe that the promised savior is a product of human intellect! They believe that this belief arose as a result of human injustice towards their fellow humans.

This theory emerged following what they observed of the belief of the followers of non-heavenly religions in the existence of a savior who saves humanity from injustice and tyranny. They said that the idea of the emergence of this savior is not limited to heavenly religions, as many humans, including pagans, believe in it. Indeed, regardless of beliefs and religions, humans hope for a day when they will be freed from injustice and oppression, and the earth will enjoy peace, security, and stability. Therefore, the concept of the savior (reformer) is the common dream of humanity, which may or may not be realized..

The truth is that this mistaken conception of the belief in the savior among these individuals came as a result of narrow-mindedness, lack of objectivity in reading history, and thus indifference in issuing fair judgments.

The simplest reading of history confirms that the followers of non-heavenly religions are also descendants of Adam, and after him, Noah and Abraham (peace be upon them). So, it is not surprising that some traces of prophecy remain in their beliefs despite the deviation of their

followers and their lack of belief in monotheism and prophecy, especially since the belief in the savior (the rescuer) can be employed as an idea to support their beliefs.

Furthermore, the three heavenly religions came as a natural extension of the noble messages of these prophets, which included the glad tidings of the promised savior.

Some other skeptics have doubted the strength of the texts found in the heavenly books regarding the promised savior, claiming that they do not clearly indicate him. They attempted to interpret these texts differently from their correct context, leading them to reject the idea of the savior altogether.

It is undeniable that the arguments of these individuals are invalid because they diverge from the consensus of the scholars of the three heavenly religions who affirmed the validity and reliability of these texts.

Moreover, the texts that prophesied the promised savior in the heavenly religions are numerous and clear, making it impossible for any fair-minded researcher to doubt them or attempt to interpret them differently. This is particularly evident in the religion of Islam, through the Quran, reports, and narrations, which delineate the personality of the reformer and his identity by naming him the Mahdi, as well as specifying the signs of his appearance on the political scene in an exceedingly accurate manner.

We will shed light on what is mentioned in the Jewish and Christian religions, and the stance of the scholars of those religions towards this figure. Then, we will present some of what is mentioned in the Quranic texts and prophetic traditions to see the extent of alignment between what is mentioned in the heavenly religions regarding the promised savior.

The Jews believe that the promised savior is from the children of Israel, descended from the Prophet David. They claim that this savior, whom they call the Messiah, will emerge in the end times, establish justice, rectify the corrupt morals and behaviors of people, and bring goodness and blessings to the earth upon his arrival.

The Jews did not specify the characteristics of this savior or the place of his appearance. They surrounded him with mystery and contented themselves with saying that they await this savior to reveal himself upon his appearance. This Jewish stance has its own reasons stemming from within themselves because what is mentioned in their scriptures does not align with their desires and inclinations for this savior to be related to them by lineage.

They find texts in their scriptures that assign a character unrelated to them, neither in terms of creed nor lineage, as he is the son of the promised prophet in the end times, whose religion all of humanity will adhere to. This prophet will be from the lineage of Ishmael, the son of Abraham (peace be upon them), and not from the lineage of Isaac as they wished. Hence, they deliberately concealed many aspects of these two personalities and surrounded them with symbols and allegories so that other nations would not recognize them.

Despite this, some texts with clear indications and evidence have appeared, such as in paragraph 20 of chapter 17 of the Book of Genesis, where it says: "I have heard your prayer concerning Ishmael. Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him

exceedingly. Twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation" ⁽⁶²⁾

This Torah text came as a response from God Almighty to the prayer of Hagar, the wife of Abraham the Patriarch, for her son Ishmael, after Abraham (peace be upon him) had resolved to take her and her son to Mecca, the honored house of God, where there was neither cultivation nor water.

The text is clear in its symbolism. It is also mentioned in the authentic Hadith narrated by Jabir ibn Samurah that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "Islam will remain strong until there are twelve caliphs." Then he said a word that I did not understand, so I asked my father: What did he say? He said: "All of them will be from Quraysh" ⁽⁶³⁾.

In Psalm 72 of David's Psalms (peace be upon him), it is stated: "O God, give your judgments to the king, and your righteousness to the king's son, that he may judge your people with righteousness, and your poor with justice. Let the mountains bring peace to the people, and the hills, through righteousness. He will judge the poor among the people, he will save the children of the needy, and he will crush the oppressor. They shall fear you as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations. He will come down like rain upon the mown grass, like showers that water the earth. In his days the righteous shall flourish, and abundance of peace, until the moon is no more. He

62. Book of "Bashair al-Asfar" by Muhammad and his pure family, p. 55.

63. Sahih Muslim, vol. 6/4, people are affiliated with Quraysh and caliphate in Quraysh.

shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth".⁽⁶⁴⁾

At the beginning of this passage, Prophet David (peace be upon him) calls upon his Lord to grant His judgment to the king. This supplication must be concerning the final law that gathers all the heavenly religions under its shade and dominates them, as clarified by the subsequent paragraphs of the text. This law will govern all nations and peoples, hence it is expressed as belonging to the "king."

The phrase "and your righteousness to the king's son" is a reference to the promised savior who will rule with the law of his father that will encompass the world and possess the earth from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth. This paragraph came to confirm that the promised savior who will fill the earth with justice is the son of the owner of the final religion whose law will dominate the world. He is Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his son, the Mahdī, as mentioned in the authentic Hadith.

It is narrated from Ali (peace be upon him) who said: "I said, 'O Messenger of Allah! Is our Mahdī from our descendants or from others?' He said: 'No, he is from us, the Ahlul Bayt. Allah will conclude the religion through him as He began it. By us they will be saved from discord as they were saved from polytheism, and through us Allah will reconcile their hearts. After hostility and discord, they will become brothers in religion as they were after hostility and polytheism'"⁽⁶⁵⁾.

64. Book of "Bashair al-Asfar," p. 130.

65. *Al-Burhan fī Alamāt Mahdī Ākhir al-Zamān* (The Proof of the Signs of the Mahdī at the End of Time), p. 91.

In chapter 46 of the Book of Jeremiah, it is stated: "Go up, O horses, and rage, O chariots, and let the mighty men go forth; the Ethiopians and the Libyans, who handle the shield, and the Lydians, who handle and bend the bow. For this is the day of the Lord God of hosts, a day of vengeance, that He may avenge Himself on His adversaries. The sword shall devour, and it shall be satiated and made drunk with their blood; for the Lord God of hosts has a sacrifice in the north country by the River Euphrates" ⁽⁶⁶⁾.

This passage refers to a significant event by the Euphrates River, where one of the close allies of God is sacrificed. The text attributes this sacrifice to "God," indicating the exalted status and high position. A representative of God, referred to as the "Lord God of hosts," will avenge the killing of this close ally and kill his adversaries after fierce battles waged against them.

History, nor the heavenly books, have not conveyed to us that there was anyone other than Hussein ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon them) who was sacrificed at the Euphrates, and his avenger is his son, the Mahdi (peace be upon him), as mentioned in the interpretation of verse 33 of Surah Al-Isra by Imam Al-Sadiq (peace be upon him). He was asked about the saying of Allah: "And whoever is killed unjustly - We have given his heir authority, but let him not exceed limits in [the matter of] taking life. Indeed, he has been supported [by the law]" ⁽⁶⁷⁾.

He (peace be upon him) said: "That is the Qa'im of the family of Muhammad (peace be upon them), who will emerge and be killed with the blood of Hussein (peace be

66. Bashair al-Asfar," p. 239.

67. Al-Muhajja fi Mā Nazala fi al-Qā'im al-Hujja," p. 127, from the book "Kāmil al-Ziyārāt," p. 63.

upon him). If the people of the earth were to be killed, it would not be considered excessive. And his saying 'but let him not exceed limits in [the matter of] taking life' means he would not have done anything so as to be considered excessive." Then Abu Abdullah (peace be upon him) said: "By Allah, the infants of his killers will be killed"⁽⁶⁸⁾

The Christians compiled the books and scriptures of the Jews along with their own books and scriptures into one book called the "Holy Bible." They labeled the Jewish scriptures as the "Old Testament" and their own scriptures as the "New Testament," which begins with the appearance of Jesus son of Mary (peace be upon him) in the call to God.

The Christians believed in the existence of the Savior who would save humanity in the last days, based on what is found in the Holy Bible. They said that the promised Savior, heralded in the books of the Old Testament, whom the Jews called the Messiah, is Jesus son of Mary. Therefore, they referred to him as "Lord Christ."

Christian scholars attempted to interpret what was mentioned in the books of the Old Testament to prove that the promised Savior is indeed Jesus son of Mary. However, they faced many difficulties due to the mismatch between the attributes of the promised Savior and the characteristics of their prophet and what befell him. Such difficulties are evident in passages like the first verse of Psalm 72 of David's Psalms: "O God, give your judgments to the king, and your righteousness to the king's son."

The Christians couldn't provide a convincing answer to this verse. If Jesus is the one given the law, then who is his

68. Bashair al-Asfar bi Muhammad wa Ālihi al-At'har," p. 141.

son when he never married? And if he is the son of the king who possesses the law and extends his authority over the kingdoms of the earth, then who is his father?

Thus, the problematic issues persist in other passages mentioned previously, such as the sacrifice of the Lord in the north near the Euphrates River, and other passages like the following one found in the Book of Daniel: "I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed".⁽⁶⁹⁾

Indeed, Christians believe that Christ is the Son of God. So, who is the Son of Man? The Son of Man is the son of the lawgiver who extends the authority of his father's law over all nations and peoples, and he is the Mahdi of the family of Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family).

Similarly, Christians have failed to explain what is mentioned in their books and scriptures regarding the promised Savior, and they have been unable to interpret them in a logical way that satisfies the mind. An example of this is what is mentioned in the Book of Revelation by John, the author of the Gospel of John, in his twelfth vision:

69. Bashair al-Asfar bi Muhammad wa Ālihi al-At'har," p. 219.

1. "Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars.

2. Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth.

3. And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads.

4. His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born.

5. She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne.

6. Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

7. And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought,

8. But they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer.

9. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

10. Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, 'Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our

brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down."⁽⁷⁰⁾

These are excerpts from the vision of Saint John, which narrates to us a divine epic symbolically allegorical, in which there is a conflict between the woman clothed with the sun and crowned with twelve stars, along with her offspring, against the dragon, which is a symbol of tyranny and evil.

Church scholars interpreted the woman clothed with the sun as Mary (peace be upon her), and the twelve stars above her head as the disciples of Jesus (peace be upon him). They interpreted her son, who rules the nations with a rod of iron - symbolizing the promised Messiah - as Jesus, the son of Mary.

This interpretation appears to be inconsistent with the explicit texts of the four Gospels they adhere to. Mary had only one offspring according to the Gospel - Jesus (peace be upon him) - and likewise, Jesus had no offspring who waged jihad for the sake of God and resisted tyrants and despots; in fact, he had no offspring at all.

Moreover, Jesus himself did not command his followers to engage in jihad against the corrupt leaders such as the chief priests and rulers, as his mission came with integrity, for he found no support for such actions. Also, it is understood from the Gospels that Mary (peace be upon her) had no role in conveying the heavenly message alongside her son, as her role was peripheral, limited to being the mother of Christ.

70. Bashair al-Asfar bi Muhammad wa Ālihi al-At'har," p. 230.

Therefore, the woman destined in this vision is certainly not Mary but another woman who has many offspring fighting against darkness and tyrants, and her son is feared by these tyrants, so they try to kill him (yet Allah snatches him to His throne).

This great woman is Fatimah al-Zahra (peace be upon her), who had a great role in establishing the principles of the true Islam, as well as her offspring who sacrificed much wealth and lives for Islam. The foremost among them is her son Hussain (peace be upon him) and the pure members of her household who were unjustly killed at the river Euphrates, referred to in the Gospel as "the sacrifice of the Lord in the north by the river Euphrates."⁽⁷¹⁾

In the Sunan of Ibn Majah, it is narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) said: "Verily, we, the Ahl al-Bayt, are chosen by Allah for the Hereafter over the worldly life. Indeed, my Ahl al-Bayt will face trials and tribulations after me until a group from the East comes with black banners, asking for the truth but not being given it. They will fight and be victorious, and they will be given what they asked for, but they will not accept it until they hand it over to a man from my Ahl al-Bayt. He will fill it with justice just as it was filled with injustice."

As for their interpretation of "the twelve stars" as being the disciples of Jesus (peace be upon him), it contradicts their own Gospels. The Gospels explicitly state that some of these disciples denied Christ at the time of trial, and some doubted the truth of his words, leading him to accuse them of having little faith. Among them were those who conspired with the Jewish chief priests to betray him for a

71. Book of "Al-Imam al-Mahdī," p. 66, from "Al-Dam'at al-Sākibah" 3/238.

handful of coins. This is the state of the disciples as described in their own Gospels, so how can they, in this state, be guiding stars for humanity?

The guiding stars whose light leads humanity are the Imams of guidance, the successors of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) over his nation, and the protectors of his message. The first among them is Ali ibn Abi Talib, and the last is the Hujjah ibn al-Hassan (peace be upon them all), who will rule the nations with a rod of iron. He is the one who will fill the earth with justice as it was filled with oppression and injustice. He will conceal himself from the eyes because "God will take his son to Himself and to His throne," so that the tyrants of the Abbasid dynasty will not find him and kill him.

In a noble Hadith narrated by Jabir ibn Yazid al-Ju'fi, he said: "I heard Jabir ibn Abdullah al-Ansari saying: When Allah Almighty revealed upon His Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family), 'O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you'... I said, 'O Messenger of Allah! We know Allah and His Messenger, but who are those in authority whose obedience Allah has linked to yours?' He (peace be upon him and his family) said: 'They are my successors, O Jabir, and the Imams of the Muslims after me. The first among them is Ali ibn Abi Talib, then Hasan, then Hussain, then Ali ibn al-Hussain, then Muhammad ibn Ali, known as al-Baqir, and you will meet him, O Jabir. When you meet him, convey my greetings to him. Then Ja'far al-Sadiq, then Musa ibn Ja'far, then Ali ibn Musa, then Muhammad ibn Ali, then Ali ibn Muhammad, then Hassan ibn Ali, then the awaited Mahdi, who will fill the earth with justice just as it was filled with oppression. He is the one whom God will open the East and the West

through his hands. He will go into occultation from his Shia and his followers, a concealment in which no one will remain steadfast in believing in his Imamate except those whom Allah has tested their hearts for faith."⁽⁷²⁾

As for the moon under the feet of the woman in the vision, it symbolizes the righteous among the Shia of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them), who are like the moon deriving their light from the sun. They draw their guidance from the light of the message and the guardianship. The placement of the moon under the feet of the woman is a metaphor indicating that the Shia are the fundamental support for carrying out the mission of the message and the guardianship, defending them and the rights of their owners, who are the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them). They are like the earth upon which man establishes his pillars and foundations.

There are other texts about the promised Savior found in the Gospels and the scriptures of the Christians, but we refrain from citing them to avoid prolonging the discussion.

The religion of Islam came to support what was revealed in the previous divine religions regarding the existence of the promised Savior, who was referred to as the Mahdi among Muslims. Islam considers belief in him as one of the fundamental principles of the religion, and it is not permissible for any individual claiming affiliation with Islam to deny it.

Therefore, we see that the texts that speak about the personality of the Mahdi are very numerous, and they have encompassed all the characteristics of this personality,

72. *Al-Burhan fi Alamāt Mahdī Ākhir al-Zamān*, p. 89.

which will be from the nation of Islam. Due to the abundance of these texts, they can be divided into two types based on their implications.

The first type: These are the texts that came concerning the belief in the Mahdi, such as the narrations that specify his lineage and those that clarify his attributes, circumstances of birth, and occultation. Among these narrations is what Abu Dawood, Ibn Majah, and al-Tabarani narrated from Umm Salamah who said: "I heard the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family) saying: 'The Mahdi is from my progeny, from the offspring of Fatimah.'"⁽⁷³⁾

Also, what al-Saduq narrated in his book "Ikmal al-Din" through his chain of narrators from Abdul Rahman bin Sulayt, who said: "Al-Hussain bin Ali bin Abi Talib (peace be upon them) said: 'Among us are twelve Mahdis, the first of whom is the Commander of the Faithful, Ali bin Abi Talib, and the last of whom is the ninth from my progeny, who is the Imam al-Qa'im with truth. Allah will revive the earth through him after its death, and he will manifest the true religion over all religions even if the polytheists dislike it. He will have an occultation in which some will revert from the faith, while others will remain steadfast on the religion. They will be harmed, and it will be said to them: ***'When is this promise, if you are truthful?'***"

Among the narrations that mentioned the features of the Mahdi (peace be upon him) is what was narrated by Imam al-Baqir (peace be upon him) through his fathers (peace be upon them) from the master of the pure family, Imam Amir al-Mu'minin (peace be upon him), that he said

73. Al-Imam al-Mahdi min al-Mahd ila al-Zuhur," p. 79.

while on the pulpit: "A man from my offspring will emerge at the end of time, white in color, with a reddish complexion, protruding belly, broad thighs, prominent shoulders, a mole on his skin resembling the mole of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family)."⁽⁷⁴⁾

The second type: These are the texts that speak about the emergence of Imam Mahdi (peace be upon him) from concealment to begin the process of change.

Among them is what was narrated by Abu Hamzah al-Thumali who said: "I said to Abu Abdullah (peace be upon him): 'Indeed, Abu Ja'far (peace be upon him) used to say: 'The emergence of al-Sufyani is from the foreordained, and the call is from the foreordained, and the rising of the sun from the west is from the foreordained, and things he used to say are from the foreordained.' So Abu Abdullah (peace be upon him) said: 'And the discord of so-and-so's son is from the foreordained, and the killing of the pure soul is from the foreordained, and the emergence of al-Qa'im is from the foreordained.'"⁽⁷⁵⁾

Narrated by Nu'aym bin Hammad from Ali bin Abi Talib (peace be upon him) who said: "A man will emerge before the Mahdi from his household in the east, carrying a sword on his shoulder for eighteen months. He will kill and slaughter and will head towards Bayt al-Maqdis, but he will not reach it until he dies."⁽⁷⁶⁾

Furthermore, al-Daraqutni narrated in his Sunan from Muhammad bin Ali (peace be upon them) who said: "There are two signs for our Mahdi that have not occurred since the creation of the heavens and the earth: the lunar eclipse

74. Hayāt al-Imam al-Mahdī, " p. 32.

75. Book of "Al-Ghaybah" by al-Tusi, p. 435.

76. Al-Burhan fi Alamāt Mahdī Ākhir al-Zamān, " p. 103.

on the first night of Ramadan, and the solar eclipse in the middle of it, and they have not occurred since the creation of the heavens and the earth."⁽⁷⁷⁾

There are other texts that include both types, and they are also numerous, and they can be extracted from the sources of both groups, the Shia and the Sunni.

The belief in the Promised Redeemer is one of the truths established by the three heavenly religions through clear texts, as we have mentioned a portion of them earlier. We observed in these texts how they linked the Promised Redeemer to the Seal of the Prophets in the religions, indicating the unity of belief and lineage between both personalities.

The Jewish and Christian scholars who composed their books and scriptures in ancient times know with certainty that this Promised Redeemer is the son of the Seal of the Prophets and the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family), as Allah (Mighty and Majestic) said in His Noble Book: "Those to whom We gave the Scripture before it - they know it as they know their own sons."

So, the Jews wished for this Redeemer to be Jewish from the lineage of David. Therefore, they attempted to interpret some texts and conceal others, and they distorted some out of envy from themselves because they knew that this Redeemer is from the lineage of Ishmael, the son of Abraham the Friend (peace be upon them), and they placed in their scriptures signs of the emergence of this Redeemer in a manner that is disconnected from reality. Instead, they

77. The previous source, p. 107

are a collection of wishes for wealth and the humiliation of others.

As for the Christian scholars, they have said that the Messiah mentioned in the Old Testament scriptures is Jesus son of Mary, who is the Promised Redeemer. However, they stopped short of interpreting the texts that indicate the unity of identity between the Promised Redeemer and the Seal of the Prophets.

The lack of belief in the sanctity of the texts among the Jews and the Christians is what led them to distortion, interpretation, and neglecting of the truths to satisfy their desires and inclinations. Hence, we find that the concept of the Promised Redeemer contradicts in its implications in both the Jewish and Christian religions.

The Jews did not specify the identity of this figure but rather placed signs for his emergence. As for the Christians, they identified the figure but did not specify signs for his emergence. What came in the Islamic religion resolves these dilemmas and contradictions that occurred among the Jews and the Christians.

The Islamic religion has precisely identified the identity of this Redeemer and called him the Mahdi, stating that he is from the lineage of the Seal of the Prophets, and his religion is the seal of religions. Then, the narrations mentioned signs for his emergence in precise detail, conclusively proving that this Promised Redeemer is the son of the Seal of the Prophets.

Our observation at the beginning of our article directed us to the fact that the glad tidings of the awaited Redeemer are not limited to the three heavenly religions. Instead, these glad tidings came through the prophets and messengers who preceded these religions, with the first being the Prophet Adam, the father of humanity.

The religion of God is one, and the line of prophets and messengers is one, which is the call to God Almighty. These three heavenly religions are considered the natural extension of the line of these great prophets (peace be upon them). Therefore, we see that all humanity inherited these glad tidings from various religions, whether heavenly or non-heavenly.

Finally, it must be said that the Promised Redeemer is the hope of humanity for liberation from the evils of their deeds, and God Almighty promised them in His books, which He revealed to His prophets, by sending the reformer who saves them in the end of time after the earth is filled with injustice and tyranny, filling it with justice and equity. Indeed, God does not fail in His promise.

Father Georges Khawam: Salvation is viewed in terms of history and hope.

Father Georges Khawam (may the Holy Father Georges Khawam, the Paulist Metropolitan of the Archdiocese of Latakia, Tartus, and their dependencies for the Melkite Greek Catholics, be sanctified).

Regarding the topic of salvation in Christianity, the former director of the St. Paul Institute for Philosophy and Theology and the publishing department at the Paulist Library, Dr. Georges Khawam, stated: "Christianity sees the issue of salvation from two perspectives. Firstly, there is a historical aspect that occurred at a specific time by the hands of Christ's apostles and disciples who were with Him. This has become, for us today, a realized past upon which we base all theological or doctrinal studies in this matter. The second aspect related to salvation is the concept of 'hope,' meaning what is yet to come from the

future days. There is also a part of history that has not yet occurred, and it will have another connected reality to what preceded it in events, individuals, and teachings."

He also said: "The person of the Savior whom we hope will appear for humanity is this appointed one who, at the end of the world, will see everyone marching under one banner, the banner of the Imam with the teachings of the Lord Christ. It is also a steadfast and tangible hope that we aspire to through our invitations in societies, despite all the suffering and pains they may endure."

With the author Joel Richardson in his book "The Islamic Antichrist":

In the United States, a book titled "The Islamic Antichrist" by researcher and journalist Joel Richardson has been released, and it has become the number one bestseller in the humanities category, according to the New York Times. In this book, the author claims that the awaited Mahdi, whom the Islamic nation awaits for his appearance to save the world, is actually the same as the Antichrist awaited by Christians in the end times.

The author states: "The Bible prophesies in the last days that a leader with charismatic personality will establish a global following in the name of peace. Islamic prophecy also predicts that a man will rise to lead the nations, pledging to initiate an era of peace. The savior of Islam is called the Mahdi. However, the man in the Bible is the Antichrist."

Research and analysis conducted by Joel Richardson suggest that the Mahdi and the Antichrist may actually be the same entity. In his book "The Islamic Antichrist," Richardson introduces Western readers to Islamic

traditions and predicts that the end times may not be here yet. Richardson's findings will astonish readers who are unaware of the similarities between the Antichrist and Islamic expectations regarding the return of Jesus. His interpretation of the relationship between Christian end-time prophecy and Islamic expectations of world domination has shocked readers and sparked a revolution in the eschatological expectations of an entire generation. "The Islamic Antichrist" is a must-read book for insights into the fastest-growing religion in the world and the future of the world.

Although the author notes from the beginning that the concept of the Mahdi is primarily a Shia phenomenon, he asserts that Sunni Muslims also believe in it. Thus, he overlooks the differences between the Sunni and Shia sects regarding the awaited Mahdi, without attributing it to one group over another, as it is prevalent among followers of various sects in both denominations, including Sufis.

The author goes further than Islamic traditions, considering that the Bible also indicates that the Antichrist will be the spiritual leader recognized by the whole world. He claims that the Antichrist will establish a "worship movement" worldwide, indicating that the awaited Mahdi or the Antichrist will work towards this with the help of a Muslim man who claims to be Jesus, to eliminate anyone who adheres to any religion other than Islam and force people to abandon their faith and worship of God.

On the other hand, the author asserts, saying: "Thus, we see that the Mahdi is the leader of the global revolution that will form the 'new world order,' which will be based on the religion of Islam. This is a direct denial of the God of the Bible and his son Jesus Christ." He explains that this is why some Muslims feel strongly enough to say that the Mahdi

will eliminate Christians and Jews who refuse to embrace Islam.

The author expects the end of the world to be near, affirming that this idea led him to believe that the awaited Mahdi is actually the Antichrist. He considers that if the Antichrist in Christianity brings evil, then the awaited Mahdi will come to eliminate all followers of other religions. Therefore, in his view, they are one and the same person.

Richardson's book sheds light on the relationship between Christian end-time prophecy and Islamic expectations of world domination. He believes that most people in the West are unaware of what the Quran says about Jesus and do not know that the basis of Muslim beliefs relies not only on the Quran but also on the Sunnah, which interprets the Quran. He claims that without the Sunnah, the Quran cannot be properly understood, and many aspects and practices of Islamic religion are not mentioned in the Quran but are only found in the Sunnah of the Prophet. Most Islamic beliefs about the end of the world are based on Prophetic traditions.

Richardson states that there is a consensus among Muslims about the appearance of the Mahdi, who will come from the family of Muhammad, and he will bear the name of the Messenger of Muslims, "Muhammad." They believe that Jerusalem will serve as the capital of the Mahdi's rule on Earth. Islamic tradition portrays the Mahdi as an ordinary young man who will join an army of Muslim warriors carrying black flags. He will then rise to lead this army and lead them to Jerusalem to reclaim the land from the Jews and slaughter them. The Mahdi is depicted as a regular man, not a supernatural being, and he is expected to rule for seven years before he dies.

The concept of waiting in religions:

The awaited Imam Mahdi, peace be upon him, is a prophecy that was included in all previous religious beliefs before Islam. Islam came to affirm and explain the details of this prophecy, surpassing many other doctrinal issues in terms of the abundance of authentic narrations we have about Imam Mahdi, peace be upon him.

Indeed, celestial religions share the idea of salvation for humanity by a savior from the unseen world, through an event orchestrated by the Creator, although they differ in diagnosing the element, event, and in naming the divine man who will undertake the great mission of salvation. Among these religions are Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikhism, and others.

The belief in the awaited savior, reformer, or universal benefactor who will spread justice and prosperity upon his appearance, and cleanse the earth from injustice and oppression, is a prominent doctrine embraced by the religions or situational faiths, where natural phenomena, as well as political, social, and economic circumstances, have played a role in the emergence of the belief in waiting.

The identity of this savior varies in situational faiths. For instance, among the ancient Egyptians, he was represented as the Nile, while among the ancient Iraqis, his persona was embodied in the deity Tammuz. In Hinduism, he is represented by the figures of Krishna and Rama, in Buddhism by Buddha, and in ancient Persian religion by Zarathustra. Additionally, he appears as the proletariat in the ideologies of Marxist thinkers.

Situational faiths converge with other celestial religions, such as Judaism and Christianity, in terms of the concept of believing in the awaited savior or reformer who will rescue humanity from injustice. Although the reasons for this belief differ, its essence lies in persecution, oppression, and injustice. Judaism and Christianity have added other reasons that have made the content of the belief in the awaited savior an authentic concept, as it exists in their beliefs, teachings, and sacred sources.

Situational and celestial faiths (Judaism and Christianity) converge with Islam, which considers a global revolution against the injustices committed against humanity as necessary. Belief in the awaited savior or rescuer is one of the important, if not fundamental, doctrines among Muslims. The awaited one for them is Imam Mahdi, peace be upon him.

When observing Islamic thought, we notice that the belief in awaiting Imam Mahdi, peace be upon him, is an agreed-upon matter among the majority of Islamic sects and denominations. This is because the Quranic verses and Prophetic traditions that mention the news of Imam Mahdi, peace be upon him, and the anticipation of his advent to fill the earth with justice and equity, as it was filled with injustice and tyranny, are narrated by Sunni and Shia scholars alike.

This issue is almost universally accepted among all Muslims, meaning that there is a great global shift towards truth and righteousness through a divine revolution led by a divine Imam peace be upon him from the descendants of Muhammad, peace be upon him and his family. However, the crucial question to ponder is the context in which this transformation will occur, from degradation to exaltation, from falsehood to truth, from the prevalence of injustice to

the arrival of justice, and from the spread of corruption and immorality to the supremacy of values and virtues. Will this transformation occur due to unseen factors resembling the miracles that occurred with the previous prophets, which manifested direct intervention from the unseen into the world of testimony, according to a divine vision that necessitated protecting religion and truth from the attacks of falsehood? This requires safeguarding religion for the sake of its survival and continuity of life. This intervention is the non-absent presence in the world of testimony, the perpetual presence that witnesses all worlds of existence, and affects the care of humans, bestowing sustenance upon them and showing kindness in their conditions. It also influences the support, guidance, and assistance for the righteous and their mission. Therefore, the intended intervention is the intervention that enforces a change in the effects of natural equations, imposing outcomes and effects contrary and opposing to these attempts.

Suspensions and responses about Imam Mahdi, peace be upon him:

Doubts and speculations have indeed arisen regarding the reality of Imam Mahdi, peace be upon him, and his occultation. These doubts stem from various factors, including theological differences, historical interpretations, and skepticism towards eschatological beliefs.

One of the primary issues revolves around the concept of occultation itself. Skeptics question how a figure like Imam Mahdi peace be upon him could remain hidden for so long without any concrete evidence of his existence or

activities. Some argue that such a prolonged absence contradicts traditional understandings of leadership and religious authority.

Furthermore, there are historical controversies surrounding the identities of individuals who have claimed to be the Mahdi peace be upon him throughout history. Critics point to these instances as evidence of confusion or manipulation rather than genuine divine guidance.

Moreover, interpretations of prophetic traditions (Hadith) regarding the Mahdi vary widely among Islamic scholars, leading to disagreements about his nature, role, and the timing of his appearance.

Additionally, in modern times, the lack of empirical evidence or scientific validation for the existence of supernatural beings like the Mahdi peace be upon him has fueled skepticism among some segments of society.

Despite these doubts, belief in the Mahdi peace be upon him remains central to Shia Islam, with many believers holding steadfast to the conviction that he will eventually emerge to bring justice and righteousness to the world. For them, faith in the Mahdi's eventual return serves as a source of hope, resilience, and moral guidance amidst the challenges of the present age.

Some Shia scholars, may Allah elevate their status, have undertaken the task of responding to these doubts and questions regarding the reality of Imam Mahdi, may Allah hasten his noble reappearance. Among them was the late Sayyid Muhammad Ali al-Halawi, may Allah have mercy on him. The magazine "Al-Intidar" (Issues 6 and 7) deemed it necessary to present these doubts in its issues sequentially, along with their responses, to clarify the shining truth, which is one of the foundations of belief. Here are four of them:

The First Misconception:

The Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his family, said: "***Whoever dies without knowing the Imam of his time dies the death of ignorance.***"

Are we obligated by this hadith to know the Imam personally, so that if someone were to ask any of us to point him out, identify him, and specify him from among a group of people, we would be able to? Or are we obligated to know his characteristics? Or is it sufficient for us to know that he is alive and existing as proof, even if he is absent?

The Response:

This hadith is well-established among all Islamic sects, and it has been narrated by prominent hadith scholars. Among the Shia, it is narrated by al-Kulayni in al-Kafi, al-Saduq in Kamal al-Din, al-Humayri in Qurb al-Asnad, and al-Saffar in Basa'ir al-Darajat. Among Sunni scholars, it is narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim in their Sahihs, Ahmad ibn Hanbal in his Musnad, Abu Dawood al-Tayalisi, al-Tabarani, al-Hakim, al-Haskani, Abu Nu'aim, al-Bayhaqi, al-Nawawi, al-Haythami, and Ibn Kathir.

Some may interpret this hadith to refer to every Imam, whether righteous or corrupt, including unjust rulers, tyrannical leaders, foolish presidents, and others. However, this does not represent the intended meaning of the Sharia regarding recognition and obedience. Reason does not dictate the obligation to recognize unjust, tyrannical, or foolish individuals. Recognition is a guidance that leads to the truth, as well as a guidance that shows the truth and righteousness to those recognized. Those who oppress and commit injustice cannot truly guide people to righteousness

due to their corruption, and those who lack something cannot provide it.

Therefore, others cannot convince us to turn away from the Household of the Prophet, peace be upon them, to guide the unjust to the truth, as happened in the claims of Imamate for the Umayyads and Abbasids. It is known that those who besieged Medina, attacked the Kaaba with catapults, and killed the descendants of the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, cannot be guided leaders. Those who tore apart the Quran and used it as a target for arrows, like Walid, have no authority to guide people to righteousness. Similarly, those who collectively killed the Hashemites, like the Abbasid Mansur, and those who indulged in debauchery and revelry during the Abbasid era cannot be believed to guide people to the truth and righteousness. Therefore, the claim of the necessity of knowing them is invalid unless the Imam is characterized by righteousness and guidance, protected by infallibility and piety, and obedient to Allah in all circumstances. Only then does he have the right to guide his followers to the path of guidance and righteousness.

What supports the Imam who must be known to be a guide is what Ibn Babawayh narrated with his chain of transmission to Imam Abu Ja'far, peace be upon him: "Whoever dies without knowing his Imam dies the death of ignorance, disbelief, and hypocrisy."⁽⁷⁸⁾

And from Imam Abu Abdullah Al-Sadiq, peace be upon him, with the same wording except that instead of the word

78. "Al-Imamah wal-Tabsirah" by Ibn Babawayh al-Qummi: Pages 219 and 220, Al al-Bayt Foundation, peace be upon them.

"hypocrisy," he said: "disbelief, polytheism, and misguidance."⁽⁷⁹⁾

No two people differ that the rulers of oppression and the sultans of injustice are people of misguidance and hypocrisy, as they manifest faith while hiding disbelief, exhibit piety while concealing wickedness. This was evident in the hypocrisy of Muawiyah, the pretense of piety by Marwan ibn al-Hakam and Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan, and similar cases. Conversely, most of the rulers of oppression from the Umayyads did not hesitate to openly commit atrocities and violate what should be concealed. They indulged in all kinds of prohibited acts and shamelessly displayed their immorality, as seen in the cases of Walid ibn Abd al-Malik, Yazid ibn Walid, and others like them, who were known for their debauchery and immorality. The accounts documented by al-Suyuti in "Tarikh al-Khulafa" and similar sources about the atrocities committed by these Umayyad rulers and their ilk, as well as the descendants of the Abbasids who committed every forbidden act, testify to this fact. The history of the Umayyads, the days of the Banu Marwan, and the events of the Abbasids serve as witnesses to this.

From this, we deduce that the Imam must be a guide characterized by righteousness and infallibility, appointed by Allah. This is the doctrine of the Imamiyyah and their unanimous agreement on their leadership and jurisdiction.

Therefore, it is necessary to know the Imam for the purpose of following him. It is not sufficient to know only his characteristics without adhering to him exclusively, because true guidance cannot be attained through ambiguity, nor can its perfection be achieved without

79. Same Previous Source.

precise identification and knowledge of his essence, not just his attributes. Imam Al-Sadiq, peace be upon him, indicated the necessity of investigating the essence of the Imam and urged to know his person rather than just his attributes or relying solely on hearing about his command without further inquiry.

Ibn Babawayh narrated with his chain of transmission from Muhammad ibn Muslim who said: "I said to Abu Abdullah, peace be upon him: 'May Allah grant you well-being, your complaint reached us and we felt compassion. But if you were to inform us of your successor?'

He said: 'Ali, peace be upon him, was knowledgeable, and knowledge is inherited. Knowledge does not perish except that someone remains after him who possesses knowledge like his or as Allah wills.'

I said: 'Will the people not be left without knowing who comes after the scholar?'

He said: 'As for the people of the city [Medina], no. As for others from different cities, they will have their appointed leaders.

Indeed, Allah says: ***"The believers should not all go out to fight. Of every division of them, a party only should go forth, that they (who are left behind) may gain sound knowledge in religion, and that they may warn their folk when they return to them, so that they may beware."*** (Surat Al-Tawbah, verse 122).

I said: 'What about those who die during that time?'

He said: 'They are like those who leave their homes migrating towards Allah and His Messenger, then death overtakes them, and their reward is upon Allah.'

I said: 'How will they recognize their leader?'

He said: 'They will be endowed with tranquility, dignity, and awe.'

This narration emphasizes the concept of the inheritance of knowledge and the appointed leadership after scholars. It suggests that while the people of Medina will not be left without guidance, those in other cities will have appointed leaders. Additionally, it reassures that those who pass away during such times will be rewarded by Allah, and their successors will be recognized through the traits of tranquility, dignity, and awe.⁽⁸⁰⁾

The recognition of the Imam through his characteristics of tranquility, dignity, and awe indicates the necessity of knowing the Imam personally.

Narrated by Ya'qub ibn Shu'ayb from Abu Abdullah, peace be upon him, who said: "I said, 'If the Imam perishes and news reaches a people who are not in his presence?'

He said, 'They go out to seek [knowledge], for they remain excused as long as they are seeking.'

I said, 'Do they all go out, or is it sufficient for some of them to go out?'

He said, 'Indeed, Allah says: ***"Why, then, was there not among the generations before you any learned men who might have warned against corruption on earth?"***

I said, 'We have gone out, but some of them died on the way.'

He said, 'Indeed, Allah says: ***"And whoever leaves his home as an emigrant to Allah and His Messenger."***

So, the necessity of seeking knowledge about the Imam peace upon him is excusatory until they are aware of the Imam's news. If one of them dies while seeking, they are excused because seeking itself is a task and it is a

80. Same Previous Source.

prerequisite duty, according to the argument, leading to the necessity of knowing the Imam personally.

Limiting knowledge to mere description without understanding the essence may lead to confusion and error in diagnosing the Imam, which is tantamount to associating partners with Allah.

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq narrated from his father, peace be upon them both, who said: "Whoever associates with an Imam whose Imamate is not from Allah, he is associating partners with Allah."⁽⁸¹⁾

This means that following someone other than the true Imam leads to worship of the one being followed besides Allah, and thus the follower of other than the true Imam could be worshipping other than Allah or associating partners with Him, as apparent from the narration.

This concerns the present Imam. As for the Imam during the period of occultation, it is necessary to know him in essence and his characteristics, as he is present and alive, affiliated with the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad, son of al-Hasan al-Askari, son of Ali al-Hadi, son of Muhammad al-Jawad, son of Ali al-Ridha, son of Musa al-Kadhim, son of Ja'far al-Sadiq, son of Muhammad al-Baqir, son of Ali Zayn al-Abidin, son of Husayn the Martyr, son of Ali ibn Abi Talib, and he is the son of the daughter of the Messenger of Allah, Fatimah, peace be upon her and her progeny. This necessitates knowing Imam al-Mahdi personally and what his occultation requires, which entails knowing him personally and striving to ascertain his identity through the narrations and encounters with people, as well as through his lineage, and being alive to oversee the affairs of his Shia and followers.

81. Same Previous Source.

Regarding Imam al-Mahdi, peace be upon him, knowledge of him after his occultation is obtained through knowing the signs of his reappearance, enabling us to diagnose him personally. The signs of his reappearance have been mentioned in their place and have been extensively discussed in this regard.

However, there are certain observations that must be considered in this matter:

Note 1:

Attempting to find parallels for the personalities of the signs of reappearance is inaccurate, as well as clinging to some incidents and considering them definitive signs of reappearance is incorrect. While it is possible to find supportive possibilities with evidence to support the applicability of these signs to those contexts, it is important not to be conclusive about it. In summary, the note emphasizes the importance of not rushing to judgment to ensure our sincerity in dealing with the signs of reappearance.

Note 2:

Encouraging knowledge of the signs of reappearance helps build a comprehensive personality, fosters a sense of hope, and helps avoid feelings of frustration and despair due to the injustices suffered by Shia individuals.

Note 3:

Dealing with the sources of narrations is one of the methods of juristic inference, aimed at determining the authenticity of a narration. As for the narrations about reappearance, they resemble the human condition

accompanying an individual in understanding the future and anticipating events. Hence, one seeks truth and follows the narration of these signs keenly to understand what fate awaits. This applies to any person, regardless of their reliability. Therefore, we do not hesitate about the sources of these signs if they do not contradict the Quran, Sunnah, and reason.

Note 4:

We must consider the motives and intentions of the narrators regarding the signs of reappearance, as some narrators may try to manipulate a particular region for political or ideological reasons. They may present some signs of reappearance as derogatory or detrimental to its people, aiming to benefit from the oppression of its followers. For instance, in a narration by Ubaidullah bin Amr in a gathering with Muawiyah, addressing some known supporters of Ali in Iraq, he claimed that the Antichrist would emerge from their land, specifically from Babylon. However, narrations about the Antichrist indicate a Jewish force in Isfahan that aids him in executing his plans and movements. Therefore, Abdullah bin Amr attempted to discredit the people of Iraq and to manipulate one of the signs of reappearance to serve his agenda.

The Second Misconception:

Our response to the first misconception, which states: "Based on the noble hadith: 'Whoever dies without recognizing the Imam of his time dies the death of ignorance,' are we obligated to know the Imam personally, or is it sufficient that he is alive and present as evidence, even if he is absent?" We answered that in the time of occultation, it is necessary to know the Imam personally

and his characteristics. This misconception follows the same line of questioning: If you say "personally," then are all Twelver Shia now aware of the Imam of the time (the Mahdi) personally and can identify, indicate, and distinguish him? If you say yes, then specify him for us, and if you say no, then are your deaths deaths of ignorance?

The Response:

We said that the characteristics of the occultation do not necessitate that the obligated individuals point to the Imam personally. When we say "absent," it means that the possibility of seeing him is limited except for the elite among his Shia and the chosen ones among his followers. Otherwise, there would be no meaning to referring to his time as the time of occultation. Yes, the characteristics of knowing the absent Imam can be summarized as follows:

First: Knowing the obligation of the proof (Hujjah) and that the earth is never devoid of a known or concealed proof – as mentioned in some statements of Imam Amir al-Mu'minin, peace be upon him.

Second: Knowing his person, lineage, which is: Muhammad ibn al-Hassan al-Askari ibn Ali al-Hadi ibn Muhammad al-Jawad ibn Ali al-Rida ibn Musa al-Kadhim ibn Muhammad al-Baqir ibn Ali Zayn al-Abidin ibn al-Hussain, the grandson of Imam Hussain, the martyr of Karbala, son of Ali ibn Abi Talib and Fatimah, the daughter of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon them all.

Third: Submitting to the fact that he is alive but in occultation by the command of Allah, and he will appear by His command to fill the earth with justice and equity after it has been filled with injustice and tyranny.

Knowing him to this extent during his occultation is a prerequisite, and to this extent, recognizing him personally is affirmed, not recognizing him as a mere attribute.

The traditions indicate that he, peace be upon him, was not hidden in his person but in his title. He roamed the lands and interacted with people, looking after the interests of his Shia. He met with his Shia without them knowing him, and he followed their affairs and observed their interests, to the extent that when he appeared, peace be upon him, everyone said, "I have seen this person" due to his frequent contact and interaction with them. However, the nature of his occultation necessitates his concealment and the people's lack of knowledge about his affairs, for reasons known only to Allah, although some of these reasons are attributed to his fear of enemies, caution against their plots, and avoidance of their surveillance.

There is no wonder in this, for Prophet Yusuf used to interact with people despite their denial of him until Allah Almighty permitted him to inform them about himself and his matter. As reported by al-Saduq in "Kamal al-Din" with his chain of narration to Sadeer from Imam Abu Abdullah al-Sadiq, peace be upon him, who said: "Indeed, in al-Qa'im, there is a similarity to Yusuf." I said, "Are you referring to his news or his occultation?" He replied to me, "Why does this nation deny what resembles pigs?! Indeed, Yusuf's brothers were sons of prophets, they traded with Yusuf, pledged allegiance to him, and they were his brothers while he was their brother, yet they did not recognize him until he said to them: '(I am Yusuf, and this is my brother).' So, why does this nation deny that Allah Almighty, at times, wishes to conceal His proof from them? Yusuf was once the ruler of Egypt, and there was a journey of eighteen days between him and his father. If Allah

wanted to reveal his whereabouts, He could have done so. Indeed, Allah made Yaqub and his sons travel to Egypt in nine days when they received the good news. So why does this nation deny that Allah Almighty can do with His proof what He did with Yusuf, walking among them and in their markets while they do not recognize him until Allah Almighty permits him to reveal himself, just as He permitted Yusuf, peace be upon him, when he said to them: *'(Do you know what you did with Yusuf and his brother while you were ignorant?) They said, 'Are you indeed Yusuf?' He said, 'I am Yusuf, and this is my brother.'*"⁽⁸²⁾

The Third Misconception:

What is the wisdom behind the absence of the Imam, and how does this absence align with the duties and responsibilities of Imamate? Especially considering that the Twelver Shia consider the Imam's presence as a kindness to the worshippers. Is it permissible for this kindness to be absent from those in need of it?

The answer to that:

The wisdom behind his absence is concealed from us, and the manifestation of wisdom will occur upon his reappearance. If a part of the wisdom or some of it is revealed, it is to safeguard his honorable self from the plots of enemies and their pursuit of him. Therefore, his presence, which upholds the wisdom of Allah among His creation, must be preserved through this presence.

82. Kamal al-Din wa Tamam al-Ni'mah" by al-Saduq, P145.

As for the duties of Imamate, his absence does not contradict them. The mere existence of the Imam, peace be upon him, is among the duties of Imamate. Moreover, knowing the Imam, regardless of his presence or absence, places the believers within the scope of (the one who dies without recognizing the Imam of his time dies the death of ignorance). Therefore, his presence and the knowledge of the worshippers about him are additional obligations within the responsibilities of the worshippers.

His existence, peace be upon him, is a manifestation of divine proof without which the earth and its inhabitants would perish. Therefore, his mere existence is one of the greatest benefits for the worshippers. Additionally, the Imam serves as the conduit for divine grace, whether present or absent. The effusions of Allah do not descend upon the earth and its inhabitants except through an intermediary, and the only intermediary for Allah's effusions is the Imam. Hence, his presence facilitates the descent of divine grace. This is exemplified in the Night of Qadr, during which angels and the spirit descend with the permission of their Lord upon the Imam. If not for him, this descent would not have occurred. To whom would this descent have occurred if not for the Imam?!

Imam al-Sadiq, peace be upon him, indicated this in his visitation to his grandfather Imam al-Hussein, peace be upon him, saying: "For Allah has chosen you, through you, He exposes falsehood, through you, He repels calamities, through you, He opens and seals, through you, He erases what He wills, through you, He establishes, through you, He frees us from disgrace, through you, Allah fulfills the needs of every male and female believer, through you, the earth grows its trees, through you, the trees bear fruits,

through you, the sky sends down its raindrops, through you, Allah removes distress, through you, Allah sends down rain, through you, the earth brings forth what it carries of your bodies..."⁽⁸³⁾

Indeed, the Imam is considered a witness to the deeds of the worshippers, as indicated in the Quranic verse: "Thus, We have made you a just community that you will be witnesses over the people and the Messenger will be a witness over you." (Quran, Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:143)

It is established in its context that Allah rewards and punishes based on witness testimony, which is a manifestation of His justice. Therefore, there must be a witness to the deeds of the worshippers, and this witness is the proof (hujjah) upon the creation, whether present or absent.

Additionally, the presence of the Imam instills peace of mind and stability in hearts. This is akin to the presence of the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him and his family, during battles. Even if he did not directly engage in combat, his presence reassured the souls and strengthened the resolve of the fighters. Similarly, the compassion of the Imam towards his followers, his care for them, and his concern for their well-being are affirmed by his prayers for them. The prayers of the Imam are answered by Allah, the Most High.

Here is the translation of the text you provided:

83. Man La Yahduruhu al-Faqih" by Sheikh Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Babawayh al-Qummi, commonly known as Al-Saduq, Vol. 2, Hadith number 1614 in the book.

"We, though distant in our remote abode from the dwellings of the unjust, according to what Allah, the Almighty, has ordained for us in terms of rectitude, and for our faithful Shi'a, while the worldly dominion remains in the hands of the transgressors, yet, we are fully aware of your affairs, and none of your matters escapes our knowledge. We are well aware of the humiliations that have befallen you since many among you inclined towards what the righteous predecessors abandoned, forsaking the covenant they had taken, as if they were oblivious. We are not neglectful of your considerations, nor oblivious to your remembrance. Were it not for that, calamity would have befallen you, and the enemies would have attacked you. So, fear Allah, the Majestic and Mighty, and support us against the turmoil that has encroached upon you."⁽⁸⁴⁾

"And there is no clearer evidence of the benefit of his existence—even during his occultation—than what has been reported from Imam As-Sadiq (peace be upon him) when asked about the benefit of his occultation. He responded in a similar manner to how the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) responded when asked the same question. He said, 'By the One who sent me with prophethood, they are enlightened by his light and benefit from his guardianship during his occultation, just as people benefit from the sun even when it is veiled by clouds.'⁽⁸⁵⁾

As for his existence being a kindness, this kindness does not diminish during his occultation. The reason for people not benefiting from this kindness lies with them; they are the ones who have caused themselves to be deprived of it.

84. Al-Ihtijaj by Al-Tabarsi, p. 497.

85. Man La Yahduruhu al-Faqih: Al-Saduq.

The Imam's kindness exists under all circumstances, but people's distance from his kindness is due to their failure to create opportunities to benefit from it. The Imam is not the reason for depriving people of his kindness. Similarly, Allah's kindness exists, and the disbelief of the disbelievers does not negate Allah's kindness. Rather, the disbeliever misses out on the opportunity to experience Allah's kindness for themselves. Therefore, the kindness of Imamate does not contradict the Imam's occultation."

The Fourth Misconception:

It is not reported that any of the Twelve Imams went into occultation. So why did the divine plan differ for the Imams when it came to Al-Mahdi, leading to his prolonged occultation? Especially considering that most of the Twelve Imams share the same reason for Al-Mahdi's occultation, which is fear and lack of support (as you claim)?"

Response:

Whenever the circumstances require an Imam to go into occultation, he does so without a doubt, just as Imam Al-Mahdi did. Occultation is a characteristic seen in some prophets but not in others. For example, Moses was absent for forty nights from his people, while Jesus did not have a similar period of absence. This difference in the manifestation of divine plans does not affect the Prophethood of those who went into occultation compared to those who did not.

It is known that both Imam Al-Hadi and Imam Al-Askari, peace be upon them, concealed themselves from their followers for a period of time, indicating that any

Imam may go into occultation if the circumstances require it.

Furthermore, the mission of Imam Al-Mahdi differs from that of his predecessors. His call for establishing a comprehensive divine justice threatens the oppressive rulers, which leads to their vigilance and fear of his message. Unlike his ancestors, who pursued a peaceful approach towards the rulers, Imam Al-Mahdi's mission presents a direct challenge to the unjust regimes. Hence, the reasons for pursuing Imam Al-Mahdi are more significant, as he advocates for the overthrow of oppressive systems. Therefore, it is necessary for Imam Al-Mahdi to protect himself from harm until God grants him victory over the oppressors, especially since he currently lacks the necessary support and resources for effecting change."

Centenarians throughout history:

Over time, history has witnessed the emergence of many individuals who have surpassed the age of a century, known as "centenarians." These unique figures hold significant importance in studying the evolution of humanity and understanding how various factors influence the lifespan.

Prominent examples of centenarians throughout history are among the most inspiring figures, showcasing the strength of willpower, health, and environmental factors in overcoming obstacles and living for an extended period. Through studying their lives and circumstances, valuable insights can be gained regarding the factors influencing longevity and their impact on health and well-being.

These factors include genetics, lifestyle, nutrition, physical activity, healthcare, environment, as well as social and psychological factors. By understanding the influence of these factors, strategies can be developed to enhance health, well-being, and increase opportunities for long-term living.

It is also important to consider centenarians within the context of the historical and cultural settings in which they lived, where customs, traditions, and social conditions play a significant role in shaping lifestyle and health habits.

Taking into account these aspects, we can leverage the experiences of centenarians in history to guide healthy living and nutrition practices and promote public health, thus contributing to enhancing quality of life and increasing opportunities for long-term living for individuals in the future.

Here are some of the centenarians mentioned in religious and historical texts:

1- Prophet Noah (peace be upon him):

In Al-Kashaf, it is stated that he lived for 1,050 years. He was sent as a prophet when he was 250 years old, and he remained among his people for 950 years. He lived for some time after the flood for 60 years. According to Wahb, he lived for 1,400 years.

Ismail ibn Abi Ziyad narrated from Ibn Abi Ayash al-Abdi, who narrated from Anas, that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family) said: "When Allah sent Noah to his people, he was 250 years old. He stayed among his people for 950 years, and after the flood, he lived for another 250 years."

In the Tafsir of Al-Tabari and in his history, it is reported through the chain of Awn ibn Abi Shaddad that Allah sent Noah to his people when he was 350 years old. He spent 950 years calling them to the truth before boarding the ark. After that, he lived for 350 years, making his total lifespan 1,650 years.

In another narration from Ibn Abbas, it is mentioned in Al-Tabari's history that Allah sent Noah when he was 480 years old. He called his people to the truth for 120 years, and he boarded the ark when he was 600 years old. After that, he lived for 350 years.

In Kamil Al-Din, it is narrated from Imam Ja'far ibn Muhammad Al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) that Noah lived for 2,500 years, of which he spent 850 years before being sent as a prophet, 950 years calling his people, and 700 years after descending from the ark.

Additionally, there is a narration in Kamil Al-Din from Muhammad ibn Ja'far, who narrated from his father, who narrated from his grandfather, Ali (peace be upon him), that the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) said Noah lived for 2,450 years.

2- Adam, peace be upon him:

In the book "Kamal al-Din" with the advanced chain of narration on the Prophet, it is mentioned that Adam lived for 730 years. In "Tarikh al-Tabari" and "Al-Kamil" by Ibn al-Athir, it is reported from the Prophet that Adam lived for 1,000 years. Al-Mas'udi, in "Muruj al-Dhahab," states that Adam lived for 930 years. Ibn al-Athir and al-Tabari also narrate from the people of the Torah, mentioning Ibn Abbas's account that Adam lived for 936 years.

3- Prophet Isa (Jusis), peace be upon him:

It is believed that Allah raised him to Himself while alive, and he will remain until the appearance of Imam Mahdi, peace be upon him. All Islamic scholars unanimously agree on this, and it is supported by extensive texts from the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him.

4- Prophet Elijah, peace be upon him:

It is said that he was the king of his time, sought by people who wanted to kill him. So, he appointed Elisha to lead the children of Israel, and Allah raised him from among the people, cutting off his desire for food and drink, clothing him in feathers and clothing of light, making him an earthly and heavenly king.

Al-Tabari narrates in his Tafsir through Muhammad ibn Ishaq, and al-Nisaburi in his Tafsir through al-Tha'labi, among others. Al-Nisaburi also mentioned that Elijah is entrusted with the wilderness, while al-Khidr is entrusted with the seas, and they are the last of Adam's descendants to die. It is said that they meet annually at Arafat, as will be discussed later when mentioning al-Khidr. It is also said that Elijah is Idris, peace be upon him.

5- Idris, peace be upon him:

Allah, the Exalted, raised him to the heavens, as indicated by the verse: ***"And We raised him to a high station"*** [Quran 19:57]. In Al-Kashaf, it is reported from Anas ibn Malik that he was raised to the fourth heaven, while Ibn Abbas mentioned the sixth heaven, and Al-Hasan mentioned Paradise. In Majma' al-Bayan, it is said he

was raised to the fourth heaven, according to Anas, Abu Sa'id al-Khudri, Ka'b, and Mujahid, while Ibn Abbas mentioned the sixth heaven. Mujahid also stated that Idris was raised as Isa, peace be upon him, and he is alive, not dead. It is said he was elevated in rank and status, or he was taken between the fourth and fifth heavens. This narration is attributed to Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq, peace be upon him.

6- Al-Khidr, peace be upon him:

Abu Hatim Sahl ibn Muhammad ibn Uthman al-Sajistani mentioned in the book "Al-Mu'ammariin" that Abu 'Ubaydah, Abu al-Afghan, Muhammad ibn Salam al-Jumahi, and others stated that the longest-lived human being was Al-Khidr, peace be upon him, whose name was Khidrun, the son of Qabil, the son of Adam, peace be upon him. In the book "Tadhkirat al-Khawass," Ibn al-Jawzi mentioned that a group of scholars believed that Al-Khidr and Elijah are among the living on earth, and Jesus and Idris are in the heavens.

In the forty-fifth chapter of "Al-Yawaqit wa al-Jawahir" by Al-Sha'rani, a narrative from the seventy-third chapter of "Al-Futuh al-Makkiyah" by Sheikh Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi mentions that the world never lacks a spiritual pole, similar to the prophets, peace be upon them. Hence, Allah has kept alive four among the prophets in their bodies on earth: Idris, Elijah, Jesus, and one holding the divine knowledge, which is Al-Khidr, peace be upon him. Idris is said to be in the fourth heaven, Jesus in the second heaven, and Elijah and Al-Khidr are on earth.

We will suffice with mentioning the names of these centenarians as an example, and there are many centenarians in history, whose names and conditions were

mentioned in the book of centenarians. So, there is no harm in one of these people being imams being Imam Mahdi, may God hasten his honorable appearance. Thus, there is an answer to the suspicion that the Imam, peace be upon him, remained alive for such a long period. Oh God, protect the ruler of our time before us, hasten his relief for us, and make us among his supporters and helpers and those who seek to meet his needs, Amen. Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds.

Contents

Introduction:.....	5
In the Noble Quran, Imam Mahdi, peace be upon him, is referred to as the inheritance of the righteous:	7
The disagreement lies in the identity of the Mahdi (peace be upon him), not in his existence:.....	17
The Mahdi (peace be upon him) in the prophetic Sunnah:.....	19
Who is Imam Mahdi, peace be upon him:.....	28
The political circumstances surrounding the birth of Imam Mahdi (may Allah hasten his reappearance):.....	34
The situation after the martyrdom of Imam al-Askari, peace be upon him.....	43
The Occultation and Ambassadors:	46
Introduction to the Four Ambassadors:	47
Falsely claiming to the embassy that someone is acting on behalf of the Imam:	56
Signs of appearance:.....	61
Despair and Hope:.....	67
The rise of the Islamic State occurred before the era of occultation: ..	79
Wilayat al-Faqih (Guardianship of the Jurist):	82
Imam Mahdi Peace be upon him before era of Islam:	85
The concept of waiting in religions:	106
Suspensions and responses about Imam Mahdi, (PBUH):	108
Centenarians throughout history:	125