

Imam al-Mahdi, the Son of Lady Fāṭima al-Zahrā

The phrase “*Mahdi bin Fāṭima*” is frequently used by the Shia. Although using this phrase is a matter of taste, it is rooted in narrations which, in different aspects, represent a special relation between Lady Fatima¹ and Imam Mahdi. Some aspects of this relation are briefly mentioned in this article:

1- Imam Mahdi the offspring of Fatima

According to numerous narrations, quoted by the Shia and the Sunnite, the Holy Prophet predicted that the Promised Mahdi will be from Fatima`s generation.

«عن امّ سلمة ، قالت سمعتُ رسولَ الله يقولُ: المَهْدِيُّ مِنْ عَثْرَتِي مِنْ وُلْدِ فَاطِمَةَ.»^٢

"It is narrated from Umm Salamah to have said, 'I heard from the Messenger of Allah (Muhammad) to have said, 'Mahdi is of my lineage, from Fatima's sons.'"

In another narration, it is quoted from Ali Ibn al-Hussain who narrated from his father, Hussain, and he narrated from the Messenger of Allah, to have said to his daughter Fatima,

«أَبْشِرِي يَا فَاطِمَةَ ، فَإِنَّ المَهْدِيَّ مِنْكَ.»^٣

"O Fatima! Good news for you since truly Mahdi is of your lineage."

2. Imam Mahdi the consoler of Lady Fatima`

On many occasions, the Holy Prophet consoled Lady Fatima by telling her about some future news and the world`s final events which would occur by Imam Mahdi. As regards this title, these two events are mentioned:

1- Lady Fatima came to visit the Holy Prophet when he was near to demise. As her Majesty saw that the Holy Prophet was not feeling well, she started to cry. The Holy Prophet raised his head

¹ Lady Fatima is the only surviving child of the Prophet of Islam, the wife of Imam Ali and the mother of Imam Hassan and Imam Husain, who was martyred in Medina at the age of 18.

² Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 51, p. 75, hadith 30; Sunan, by Abī Dāwūd, vol. 4, p. 1832, hadith 4284; Sunan, by Ibn Mājih, kitāb al-Fitan, Section Khurūj al-Mahdi, hadith 4086.

³ Kanz al-'U'mmāl, by al-Muttaqī al-Hindī, vol. 12, pp. 105 and 106.

and asked her the reason. Lady Fatima replied, “I am fearful that your religion and descendants be destroyed after you.” The Holy Prophet, seeing Lady Fatima’s worries and discomfort, after informing her about the future of the world, gave her noble daughter good news of Imam Mahdi. In a part of this relatively long narration, we read,

«عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ هِلَالٍ عَنْ أَبِيهِ قَالَ : دَخَلْتُ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَهُوَ فِي الْحَالَةِ الَّتِي قَبِضَ فِيهَا فَإِذَا فَاطِمَةُ عِنْدَ رَأْسِهِ فَبَكَتْ حَتَّى إِزْتَفَعَ صَوْتُهَا فَرَفَعَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ إِلَيْهَا رَأْسَهُ فَقَالَ: حَيِّبَتِي فَاطِمَةُ مَا الَّذِي يُبْكِيكِ فَقَالَتْ أَخَشَى الضَّيْعَةَ مِنْ بَعْدِكَ فَقَالَ «... يَا فَاطِمَةُ وَالَّذِي بَعَثَنِي بِالْحَقِّ إِنَّ مِنْهُمَا [الحسن و الحسين] مَهْدِيَّ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ إِذَا صَارَتِ الدُّنْيَا هَرْجَاءً وَ مَرْجَاءً وَ تَظَاهَرَتِ الْفِتْنُ وَ انْقَطَعَتِ السُّبُلُ وَ أَغَارَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ فَلَا كَبِيرٌ يَرْحَمُ صَغِيرًا وَ لَا صَغِيرٌ يُوقِرُ كَبِيرًا فَيَبْعَثُ اللَّهُ عِنْدَ ذَلِكَ مِنْهُمَا مَنْ يَفْتَحُ حُصُونِ الضَّلَالَةِ وَ قُلُوبًا غُلْفًا يَقُومُ بِالذِّينِ فِي آخِرِ الزَّمَانِ كَمَا قُمْتُ بِهِ فِي آخِرِ الزَّمَانِ وَ يَمْلَأُ الْأَرْضَ عَدْلًا كَمَا مَلِئْتُ جَوْرًا...»⁴.

"Ali Ibn Hilāl narrated from his father saying, 'I visited the Prophet Muhammad (May Allah's greeting be upon him and his progeny) when he was in his deathbed and Lady Fatima was sitting near his head. Suddenly, she cried and the voice of her cry rose. The prophet raised his head and asked her, 'My dear Fatima! What did make you cry?' She replied, 'I am afraid of being deprived of my rights after your departure.' He answered, '... O Fatima! I swear to Allah Who sent me as a prophet that Mahdi of this Ummah (Muslim community) is of al-Hassan and al-Hussain's lineage. When the world will become full of chaos, some accommodations will take place, all ways [physically and spiritually] will be blocked, some people will raid others, and no elder will have mercy upon the younger and no younger will respect the elder, then Allah will delegate a person of their lineage (Imam Hassan and Imam Hussain). He (Mahdi) will conquer citadels of misguidance and impenetrably wrapped hearts and will establish the religion of Islam in the Last

⁴ Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 51, p. 78.

Days as I did it. (I am the Prophet of the Last Days). He will fill the world with justice as it will have been full with injustice."

2- It is also narrated from Imam Sādiq that by the time Imam Husain was born, the Holy Prophet informed Lady Fatima that her son will be martyred. Knowing this news made her fully depressed, but the Prophet calmed her by giving her good news,

«عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ قَالَ: دَخَلَتْ فَاطِمَةُ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَعَيْنَاهُ تَدْمَعُ فَسَأَلَتْهُ مَا لَكَ فَقَالَ إِنَّ جِبْرَائِيلَ أَخْبَرَنِي أَنَّ أُمَّتِي تَقْتُلُ حُسَيْنًا فَجَزَعَتْ وَشَقَّ عَلَيْهَا فَأَخْبَرَهَا بِمَنْ يَمْلِكُ مِنْ وُلْدِهَا فَطَابَتْ نَفْسُهَا وَ سَكَتَتْ»⁵.

"Abi 'abd Allah, Imam Sādiq said," Fatima visited the Prophet Muhammad and saw him crying bitterly and his eyes were tearful. She asked him about the reason. The prophet answered, 'Gabriel informed me that Hussain would be assassinated by my ummah.' Hearing that, Fatima became impatient and restless. So, the prophet made her aware that one of her sons will become the master [of the world]; therefore, she felt glad and became calm."

3. Lady Fatima a role model for Imam Mahdi

Without a doubt, one of the methods used by Islam and the household of the Prophet for setting up a program for other's life and those who may lead people to reach perfection and spiritual improvement is making and introducing a proper role model for them. In the Holy Quran, Allah the Exalted, the Glorified uses the term "exemplar" in many cases when it wants to talk about this matter. For instance, He introduces the Prophet as a good exemplar by saying,

«لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ
الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا»⁶.

"There is certainly a good exemplar for you in the Apostle of Allah for those who look forward to Allah and the Last Day and remember Allah much."

⁵ Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 44, p. 233, hadith. 19.

⁶ The Quran, 33:21.

This fact that the Prophet is the good exemplar means that he possesses the best merits and admirable qualities which people should resort to and act upon them.

Moreover, considering the classification of the exemplars in the Quran, the Holy Prophet is a complete and fully perfect exemplar. This means that he is a good leader and exemplar in all imaginable aspects in worldly and spiritual dimensions. In short, we can say that the Prophet of Allah's messenger is an infallible role model since Allah unconditionally introduces him as a yardstick in every aspect of life.

In another verse of the Holy Quran, Prophet Ibrahim and his followers are introduced as exemplars which indicates that being an exemplar is not specified to the Holy Prophet and Prophet Ibrāhīm; rather everyone who completely follows their way can be a role model for others.⁷

Consequently, the household of the Prophet are the real examples of those who are in the way of Allah and the Prophet; and they are the best role models after the Prophet.

The interesting note is that Imam Mahdi as a perfect human and infallible Imam has announced in one of his letters that Lady Fatima is a proper role model for him. He stated,

«... وَ فِي ابْنَةِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَ آلهِ لِي أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ...».

"... In the Prophet's daughter (Fātima), there is a good exemplar for me..."

Lady Fatima, according to the 29th verse of Surah al-Fath is among "those who were with the Prophet." and this is why Imam Mahdi chose her as his role model. Lady Fatima's behavior was so close to the Prophet that even her posture in walking and sitting; and her tone in speaking was similar to those of the Prophet.

This is what 'Ayesha, the wife of the Prophet, says about her,

«مَا رَأَيْتُ أَحَدًا مِنَ النَّاسِ أَشْبَهَ بِالنَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَ سَلَّمَ كَلَامًا وَ لَا حَدِيثًا وَ لَا جِلْسَةً مِنْ فَاطِمَةَ».

"I have not seen anyone more similar to Prophet Muhammad in speaking, saying, and the style of sitting than Fatima."

⁷ The Quran, 60:4 and 6.

⁸ Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 53, p. 180, hadith, 9.

⁹ The Quran, 48:29.

¹ Al-Sunan al-Kubrā, by Nasāʿī, vol. 5, p. 391.

Moreover, the Prophet, describing the spiritual glory and moral status of Lady Fatima, said to Salmān,

«... يَا سَلْمَانَ ابْنَتِي فَاطِمَةُ مَلَأَ اللَّهُ قَلْبَهَا وَجَوَارِحَهَا إِيمَانًا إِلَى مُشَاشِهَا تَفَرَّغَتْ لِبَطَاعَةِ اللَّهِ...»¹

"... O Salman! Allah has filled Fatima's heart and organs up until her bone marrows with faith, so she dedicated herself exclusively with obedience to Allah..."

4. The special status of Lady Fatima and Imam Mahdi in connection to Qadr night (the night of Ordainment)

One of the similarities between Imam Mahdi and Lady Fatima pertains to the truth of Qadr night. In fact, Qadr night is one of the times which is of high importance in Islamic sources. According to the verses of the Holy Quran, in this night, the Quran was sent down to the Holy Prophet's heart; this night is more important than one thousand months and in this night the destiny of all of the affairs with regards to the creatures are ordained.

Understanding the greatness of this night is so difficult that Allah addresses the Prophet by telling him,

﴿وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ﴾.

"And what would make you realize what the Night of Ordainment is?"

Based on narrations, one should acquire proper knowledge about Lady Fatima's spiritual state to comprehend the blessings of Qadr night.

There is a narration of Imam Sādiq to have said,

«إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ اللَّيْلَةَ فَاطِمَةُ وَالْقَدْرُ اللَّهُ فَمَنْ عَرَفَ فَاطِمَةَ حَقَّ مَعْرِفَتِهَا فَقَدْ أَدْرَكَ لَيْلَةَ الْقَدْرِ وَ إِنَّمَا سُمِّيَتْ فَاطِمَةَ لِأَنَّ الْخَلْقَ فُطِمُوا عَنْ مَعْرِفَتِهَا﴾.

¹ Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 43, p. 46.

¹ The Quran, 97:2.

¹ Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 43, p. 65, hadith. 58.

"(In the verse of the Quran when Allah says,) "Verily, We sent down the Holy Qur'an in the Night of Qadr" the word "al-Layla" (the night) means Fatima and "al-Qadr" (Ordainment) means Allah.¹ Therefore, whoever knows Fatima truly and completely has realized "laylat ul-Qadr". Surely, she has named "Fatima" because, decidedly, creatures cannot know her (as she is, so understanding the real preciousness of that night is unlikely.)"

On the other hand, concerning the connection between Qadr night and the Imamate of the twelve Imams, Ibn 'Abbās narrated from Imam Ali to have stated,

«إِنَّ لَيْلَةَ الْقَدْرِ فِي كُلِّ سَنَةٍ وَ إِنَّهُ يَنْزِلُ فِي تِلْكَ اللَّيْلَةِ أَمْرٌ
السَّنَةِ وَ لَذَلِكَ الْأَمْرِ وَ لَأَنَّ بَعْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَ آلِهِ فَقَالَ
إِبْنُ عَبَّاسٍ مَنْ هُمْ؟ قَالَ أَنَا وَ أَحَدَ عَشَرَ مِنْ صُلَيْبِ أَيْمَةِ مُحَمَّدٍ»².

"Indeed, there is the Night of Ordainment in every year and the affairs of every year are sent down and ordained in that night. There are guardians for this matter (who receive these affairs) after the departure of the Messenger of Allah." Ibn 'Abbas asked, "Who are those guardians?" The Imam answered, "I and the eleven Imams of my lineage to whom angels send down and speak."

Moreover, according to narrations, after the demise of the Prophet, the angels descend to the real successor of the Prophet who is Imam Ali, and after the demise of each Imam, the next one will take this position till it comes to the turn of Imam Mahdi who is the successor of the Prophet in our time. Hence, the Qadr chapter can be used to prove the existence of a spiritually perfect human who is the caliph of Allah and the deputy of the Prophet in our present time.

In this regard, the ninth Imam of the Shiites (Imam Muhammad Taqī) stated,

«يَا مَعْشَرَ الشَّيْعَةِ خَاصِمُوا بِسُورَةِ إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ
تَفَلَّجُوا فِوَّ اللَّهِ إِنَّهَا لِحُجَّةُ اللَّهِ تَبَارَكَ وَ تَعَالَى عَلَى الْخَلْقِ بَعْدَ رَسُولِ
اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَ آلِهِ وَ إِنَّهَا لَسَيِّدَةُ دِينِكُمْ وَ إِنَّهَا لَغَايَةُ
عِلْمِنَا...»³.

¹ This means that just as it is⁴difficult to see objects in the darkness of night, the position of Lady Fatima is also difficult to understand because it is so high. In addition, Allah, Who knows the value of everything correctly, is aware of her great worthiness.

¹ Al-Kāfī, vol. 1, p. 532, hadith 11.

¹ Kāfī, vol. 1, p. 249, hadith 6.⁶

"O the nation of our Shias! Argue with your adversaries by using the content of surah al-Qadr to defeat them. I swear to Allah this surah, surely, is a proof of Allah the Exalted, the Glorified for the creatures after the departure of the Messenger of Allah, (to prove that Allah has chosen some infallible men to succeed the Prophet, one after the other) and it is the head of your religion. This surah shows the perfection of our knowledge."

The result is this:

Firstly, we need to consider that on Qadr night the angels descend to the infallible Imam who is the most perfect human. This man in our time is Imam Mahdi.

Secondly, to fully recognize the importance of this night is dependent on understanding the spiritual state of Lady Fatima.

Consequently, it is concluded that in this great night, paying close attention to Lady Fatima and Imam Mahdi, which means to seek recourse to them and looking at them as role models in both material and spiritual life, is very important. In other words, if someone during the night of Qadr tries to gain knowledge about Lady Fatima and her teachings, s/he can be hopeful to be honored with Imam Mahdi`s special grace as well.

5. Lady Fatima and Imam Mahdi; the two Divine remainders of Allah

Lady Fatima enjoyed the closest family relationship with the Prophet. She was the only Prophet`s daughter from whom the pure generation of the Prophet continued and the eleven Shia Imams were her offspring. In fact, she was the prophetic reserve to whom the survival of religion depended. After her father`s demise, her majesty was aware of her responsibility which was to retaining the Prophet`s religion and keeping it alive. For this reason, she made the greatest effort to survive the religion of Allah and help the successor of the Prophet who was Imam Ali to such a degree that she can be considered as a Divine reservoir without whom the religion of Allah would have remained unfinished, deviated, and eventually perished.

Lady Fatima sacrificed her life for the survival of Imamate. Her role is so indispensable in Islam that the eleven Imams (including the Imam of our present time, Imam Mahdi) are from her and without her existence, they also would not exist.

It is narrated that after the Fadakiyah sermon that offered by her, Imam Ali and Lady Fatima had a conversation in which Imam Ali addressed her majesty by giving her these titles,

«... يَا ابْنَةَ الصَّفْوَةِ، وَ بَقِيَّةَ النَّبُوءَةِ...».

"... O the daughter of the preferred and sincere servant of Allah! O the reminder of prophecy! ..."

On the other hand, Imam Mahdi is a Divine reserve too and he is the last survivor of the Imams and the final infallible man in Prophets` lineage that the survival of Allah`s religion depends on his existence. Just as Lady Fatima caused the religion of Allah to survive and continue, Imam Mahdi will complete the prophetic mission of all the prophets and will make the Divine religion of Allah rule in every part of the world. Accordingly, some of his titles are «بَقِيَّةَ اللَّهِ» "the Remainder of Allah"¹ and «بَقِيَّةَ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ» "the Remainder of the Prophets"¹ .

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6. The love of the Holy Prophet for Lady Fatima and Imam Mahdi

A. The love and affection of the Prophet for Lady Fatima

The great and infinite love of the Holy Prophet for Lady Fatima is not hidden from anyone; this love was so much that the Prophet always used to say:

«فَاطِمَةٌ بَضْعَةٌ مِنِّي مَنْ سَرَّهَا فَقَدْ سَرَّنِي وَ مَنْ سَاءَ هَا فَقَدْ سَاءَ نِي
فَاطِمَةٌ أَعَزُّ الْبَرِيَّةِ عَلَيَّ».

"Fatima is a part of me; everyone who delights her verily delights me, and everyone who grieves her verily grieves me. Fatima is my dearest one."

The way the prophet behaved toward Lady Fatima shows his special attention and inestimable love for this great lady; for example, it is pointed out in a narration from Thawbān, a servant of the Prophet Muhammad, to have said,

«كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِذَا سَافَرَ آخِرُ عَهْدِهِ بِإِنْسَانٍ مِنْ أَهْلِهِ فَاطِمَةٌ وَ أَوَّلُ
مَنْ يَدْخُلُ عَلَيْهِ إِذَا قَدِمَ فَاطِمَةٌ عَلَيْهَا السَّلَامُ».²¹

¹ Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 29, p. 322.

¹ Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 37, p. 331, hadith. 73.

¹ Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 99, p. 181.

² Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 43, p. 39, hadith 41.

² Sunan, by Abī Dāvūd, vol. 2, p. 391, hadith 4231; Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 43, p. 89, hadith 10.

"Whenever the prophet decided to make a journey, the last one he used to bid farewell with was Fatima and whenever he came back from a journey, the first one he used to visit was Fatima."

Moreover, in another narration quoted by Jābir bin 'Abdullah Ansāri, the Holy Prophet addressed Fatima by using a unique expression,

«قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ فِي مَرَضِهِ الَّذِي قُيِّضَ فِيهِ لِفَاطِمَةَ عَلَيْهَا
السَّلَامُ يَا بُنَيَّةُ يَا أَبِي أَنْتِ وَأُمِّي...».

"In his deathbed, the Prophet Muhammad told Fatima 'May my parents be sacrificed for the sake of you.'"

In addition, in a part of Zyāratnāmah² of Lady Zahra is read, ³

«اللَّهُمَّ... صَلِّ عَلَى الْبَثُولِ... فَاطِمَةَ بِنْتَ رَسُولِكَ وَ بَضْعَةَ لَحْمِهِ وَ
صَمِيمَ قَلْبِهِ وَ فِلْدَةَ كَيْدِهِ... وَ حَيْبَةَ الْمُصْطَفَى...»⁴:

"O, Allah!... Bless on the chaste (Fatima)..., Fatima is Your Messenger's daughter, part of his essence, the core of his heart, and the apple of his eyes..., and she is al-Muṣṭafā's² beloved one..."

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This is clear that the love of the Prophet for Lady Fatima was not just because of the paternal relationship, though this affection cannot be ignored. The Prophet's behavior towards Fatima showed that this deep kindness was based on her special Divine principles.

Moreover, it should not be neglected that meeting Lady Fatima reminded the Prophet of the purest and kindest woman of the world - "Lady Khadija" the Prophet's wife and the mother of Fatima who endured many considerable hardships and spent her wealth for the sake of her husband and his divine mission.

However, the affection between the Holy Prophet and Lady Fatima was so much that in the last days of the Prophet's life, when Lady Fatima was very sad and could not leave his side, the prophet told her a secret that caused her to smile; and at that moment the Prophet passed away.

After the demise of the Prophet, her majesty revealed the secret of her smile,

² Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 24, p. 263, hadith 22.

² A prayer read while visiting the holy shrine of holy people or when someone intends to talk to them from a distance.

² Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 97, p. 200, hadith 20.

² It is the title of the Prophet which means "Who was selected by Allah."

«أَنَّهُ قِيلَ لِفَاطِمَةَ (عَلَيْهَا السَّلَام) . . . مَا الَّذِي أَسْرَّ إِلَيْكَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ) فَسُرِّيَ عَنْكَ مَا كُنْتَ عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الْحَزَنِ وَالْقَلْقِ بِوَفَاتِهِ قَالَتْ إِنَّهُ خَبَّرَنِي أَنَّي أَوَّلُ أَهْلِ بَيْتِهِ لِحُوقاً بِهِ وَ أَنَّهُ لَنْ تَطُولَ الْمُدَّةُ بِي بَعْدَهُ حَتَّى أُذْرِكَهُ فَسُرِّيَ ذَلِكَ عَنِّي»^{٢٦}

"Someone asked Fatima, 'What did the prophet murmur in your ear that relieved your grief and distress about his departure?' She replied, 'He informed me that I am, surely, the first one of his household who will join him, and that my life will not last long after him, and I will soon go to him. This matter relieved my grief.'"

B. The love of the Prophet for Imam Mahdi

One of Lady Fatima`s offspring is Imam Mahdi, who the Prophet repeatedly pointed out that he would come in a day and fill the world with justice. These narrations are undoubtedly the greatest sign of the Prophet's love for the Imam who is the last savior of humanity and the only man who will fulfill the purpose of all the prophets.

Expressions used by the Prophet and the narrations offered by his household and also the Sunnite's hadiths contain some wonderful contents that indicate the great affection of the last Prophet for his last successor. In one narration quoted by Imam Ali, it is said that the Prophet while introducing Imam Mahdi, referred to his love for him and said,

«بِأَبِي وَ أُمِّي سَمِيِّي وَ شَبِيهِ وَ شَبِيَهُ مُوسَى بْنِ عِمْرَانَ عَلَيْهِ جُيُوبُ النُّورِ أَوْ قَالَ جَلَابِيْبُ النُّورِ يَتَوَقَّدُ مِنْ شَعَاعِ الْقُدْسِ»^{٢٧}

"May my father and mother be sacrificed for the sake of him (Mahdi), he is my namesake. He is similar to me and Prophet Moses bin Imran. Halos of light, gaining their brightness from Divine light, envelop him."

The next narration is from Imam Husain who has said, "One day I saw my grandfather while he was talking with Obay bin Ka`b and telling him about some issues pertaining to his own love for the Upriser and the salvation of people who will meet him, and stated,

² Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 22, p. 470, hadith. 19.

² Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 36, p. 337, hadith 200.

«... يَا أَبِي طُوبَى لِمَنْ أَحَبَّهُ وَ طُوبَى لِمَنْ لَقِيَهُ وَ طُوبَى لِمَنْ قَالَ
بِهِ بِهِ يُنْجِيهِمُ اللَّهُ مِنَ الْهَلَكَةِ...»².

"... O Obayy! Blessed are those who love him (Imam Mahdi), visit him, and believe in him. Allah salvages them through him from destruction."

Indeed, the Upriser was so beloved by the great Prophet that the Prophet's love to him is mentioned in the *Ahd* supplication² as we read,

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«اللَّهُمَّ وَ سُرَّ نَبِيِّكَ مُحَمَّدًا بِرُؤْيَيْتِهِ»³.

"O, Allah! Delight your prophet Muhammad by meeting him (Imam Mahdi)."

Of course, the Prophet's love and affection for Imam Mahdi are not without reason; because he is the divine reservoir and is beloved by Allah Almighty. Therefore, the Prophet and his lovers are ordered by Allah to love him. Accordingly, there is a long narration that represents some parts of the event of the Mi'rāj night.³ At the end of this narration, the prophet has mentioned the high divine position of the twelve Imams and says,

«... ثُمَّ قَالَ (اللَّهُ تَبَارَكَ وَ تَعَالَى) يَا مُحَمَّدُ أَ تُحِبُّ أَنْ تَرَاهُمْ قُلْتُ
نَعَمْ قَالَ تَقَدَّمَ أَمَامَكَ فَتَقَدَّمْتُ أَمَامِي وَ إِذَا عَلِيٌّ بَنُ أَبِي طَالِبٍ وَ
الْحَسَنُ وَ الْحُسَيْنُ وَ عَلِيٌّ بَنُ الْحُسَيْنِ وَ مُحَمَّدُ بَنُ عَلِيٍّ وَ جَعْفَرُ بَنُ
مُحَمَّدٍ وَ مُوسَى بَنُ جَعْفَرٍ وَ عَلِيٌّ بَنُ مُوسَى وَ مُحَمَّدُ بَنُ عَلِيٍّ وَ عَلِيٌّ بَنُ
مُحَمَّدٍ وَ الْحَسَنُ بَنُ عَلِيٍّ وَ الْحُجَّةُ الْقَائِمُ كَأَنَّهُ كَوْكَبٌ دُرِّيٌّ فِي وَسْطِهِمْ
فَقُلْتُ يَا رَبِّ مَنْ هَؤُلَاءِ فَقَالَ هَؤُلَاءِ الْأَئِمَّةُ وَ هَذَا الْقَائِمُ يُحِلُّ حَلَائِي
وَ يُحَرِّمُ حَرَائِي وَ يَنْتَقِمُ مِنْ أَعْدَائِي يَا مُحَمَّدُ أَحِبَّهُ فَإِنِّي أَحِبُّهُ وَ
أُحِبُّ مَنْ يُحِبُّهُ»³.

"... Then Allah the Exalted, the Glorified said, 'O Muhammad! Do you like to visit them (the twelve infallible Imams)? I answered, 'Yes.' Allah said, 'Go ahead.' I went ahead and abruptly saw 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib, al-Hassan, al-Hussain, 'Ali Ibn al-Hussain, Muhammad Ibn 'Ali, Ja'far Ibn

² Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 36, p. 208, hadith. 8.

² This is a supplication that those who wait for the Imam's appearance renew their covenant with him by reciting it.

³ Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 99, p. 1912.

³ The night when the Prophet ascended to heaven to meet some of the great signs of Allah.

³ Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 36, p. 223, hadith. 21.

Muhammad, Musa Ibn Ja'far, 'Ali Ibn Musa, Muhammad Ibn 'Ali, 'Ali Ibn Muhammad, Hassan Ibn 'Ali, and al-Hujjat al-Qāim. Al-Qāim who was like a brightly shining star among them.' I asked who they were. Allah said, 'They are the Imams and he is the Upriser who permits every deed I permitted and prohibits every deed I prohibited. He revenges on my enemies. O Muhammad! Love him because I love him and everyone who loves him.'"

7. Lady Fatima and Imam Mahdi are both oppressed

The prophets and the infallible saints from Adam to Imam Mahdi, who is the last Divine proof of Allah, have suffered a lot in the way of spreading the religion of Allah, guiding people, and preventing them from going astray.

A. The oppression on lady Fatima

After the demise of the Holy Prophet, a network of hypocrites deliberately carried out the worst kind of behaviour against the dear daughter of the Prophet and his successor – Imam Ali. The polytheists who had converted to Islam out of materialistic intentions and a deep greed to gain more benefits made sinister plans for Islam and its future during the life of the Prophet and the first moments after the demise of him. A clear example of this fact can be seen in ignoring the rights of lady Fatima by usurping her properties namely Fadak and those of her children that the tongue is unable to express the vastness of this oppression.

Of course, when the great Prophet on the last days of his life witnessed Fatima's grief while giving good news to her that she would have joined him immediately, predicted the oppression that would be inflicted on her and said,

«يَا فَاطِمَةُ لَا تَبْكِي فِدَاكَ أَبُوكِ فَأَنْتِ أَوْلُ مَنْ تَلْحَقِينَ بِي مَظْلُومَةٌ
مَغْضُوبَةٌ وَ سَوْفَ تَظْهَرُ بَعْدِي حَسِيكَةُ النَّفَاقِ وَ يَسْمُلُ جِلْبَابُ الدِّينِ
أَنْتِ أَوْلُ مَنْ يَرِدُ عَلَيَّ الْحَوْضَ».³³

"O Fatima! May your father be sacrificed for you. Do not cry because you are the first one who will join me; however, you will be oppressed and your rights will be usurped. Soon after me, hypocrisy thorns will become apparent and the garment of religion will become old-fashioned.

³ Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 36, p. 288, hadith. 110.

[Moreover, in the Day of Judgment] You are the first one who will come to me near the Kawthar Pool."

However, the oppression inflicted on lady Fatima is an indisputable historical issue³ .

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In addition, even if we ignore the successive historical narrations talking about the oppression imposed on Fatima, there are certain indications and proofs that point to her being tyrannized. One of these shreds of evidence is "her will to be buried at night" so that the oppressors would not attend her holy funeral.

Moreover, "the secrecy of the place of her noble tomb" is one of these obvious signs. Accordingly, the Commander of the faithful, Imam Ali, while referring to the oppression inflicted on his noble wife says,

«... إِنَّ فَاطِمَةَ بِنْتَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ) لَمْ تَزَلْ مَظْلُومَةً مِنْ حَقِّهَا مَمْنُوعَةً، وَ عَنْ مِيرَاثِهَا مَدْفُوعَةً، لَمْ تُحْفَظْ فِيهَا وَصِيَّةُ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ) ، وَ لَا رُعِيَ فِيهَا حَقُّهُ، وَ لَا حَقُّ اللَّهِ (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) ، وَ كَفَى بِاللَّهِ حَاكِمًا وَ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ مُنْتَقِمًا...»^{٣٥}

"... Indeed, the daughter of the Messenger of Allah, Fatima, was always oppressed. He was prohibited from her rights and was deprived of her heritage. The Messenger of Allah's will about her was not executed. Furthermore, the right of Allah and the prophet's right about Fatima were not observed. Allah is quietly Sufficient for judgment and taking revenge from the transgressors."

Indeed, these oppressions were committed against whom the Prophet made various lovely statements,

«إِنَّمَا فَاطِمَةُ ابْنَتِي بَضْعَةٌ مِنِّي يُؤْذِينِي مَا آذَاهَا»^{٣٦}

"Indeed, Fatima is a part of my essence. Whatever annoys her, annoys me."

³ Al-Musannaf, by Ibn Abī Shāybah, vol. 7, p. 432; Ansāb al-Ashrāf, by Bilāziri, vol. 1, p. 576; Farā'id al-Simtayn, by Juwaynī, vol. 2, p. 34; Sahīh, by al-Bukhārī, vol. 2, p. 504, Kitāb al-Khums, section 837, hadith 1265; Sahīh, by Muslim, vol. 4, p. 30, Kitāb al-Jihād Va al-Siyar, section 15, hadith 52.

³ Amālī, by Shaykh Tūsī, p. 156, hadith 258.

³ Sahīh, by Muslim, vol. 12, p. 203; Sahīh, by Bukhārī, section 12, p. 484.

B. The oppression on Imam Mahdi

The fact is that many people believe that the oppression on Imam Mahdi is far greater and more complex than the oppression applied on prophets and Imams in the past time; because he has witnessed many sorts of crime against the greatest noble humans in history and has been waiting for performing the divine rule against these kinds of maltreatments for more than one thousand and one hundred years so far; and it may take many more years, and more importantly, he is alone and hidden.

On the other hand, many people, unfortunately, have forgotten him, while he does not neglect them even for a moment, since he is the only mediator of grace between Allah and His creature and the exclusively promised saviour who is alive.

Therefore, the Commander of the faithful – Imam Ali to depict the oppression imposed on his son - Imam Mahdi and the long exile of him says,

«صَاحِبُ هَذَا الْأَمْرِ الشَّرِيدُ الطَّرِيدُ الْفَرِيدُ الْوَحِيدُ».

"The Owner of this Matter,³ Mahdi is displaced, rejected, sole, and lonely."

Also, Imam Ali has mentioned the mutual love between Imam Mahdi and his devotees in another narration while, in a subtle way, he clarifies the oppression put on Imam Mahdi during his imamate by saying,

«سَيَأْتِي اللَّهُ بِقَوْمٍ يُحِبُّهُمْ وَ يُحِبُّونَهُ وَ يَمْلِكُ مَنْ هُوَ بَيْنَهُمْ غَرِيبٌ...».

"Allah will create a nation whom He loves and they love Him. Their Imam who is a stranger among them will govern them..."

Also, Dāvūd bin Kathīr al-Reqqī, an eminent companion of Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm, says,

«سَأَلْتُ أَبَا الْحَسَنِ مُوسَى بْنَ جَعْفَرٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ عَنْ صَاحِبِ هَذَا الْأَمْرِ
قَالَ هُوَ الطَّرِيدُ الْوَحِيدُ الْغَرِيبُ الْغَائِبُ عَنْ أَهْلِهِ الْمَوْتُورُ بِأَبِيهِ
عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ».

³ Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 51, p. 120, hadith. 21.

³ This is one of the titles given to Imam Mahdi in narrations pointing out that he is the owner of the divine caliphate.

³ Ihqāq al-Haqq, p. 978, hadīth 19.

⁴ Kamāl al-Dīn, vol. 2, p. 361, hadith. 4.

"I asked Aba al-Hassan Mūsā ibn Ja'far about whom the occultation pertains to. The Imam replied, 'He is rejected, lonely, stranger, and absent from his family. He will be the revenger of his father ['s blood Imam Hussain].'"

The word "*tarīd*" (the outcast one) is said to someone who is dismissed and rejected. The Imam of the Age is truly an outcast because his dignity and position are not considered properly, and his rights are not respected as it should and none of the thanksgiving steps for this great divine blessing is properly performed.

In other words, while the general blessing of the existence of the Imam of the Age encompasses everyone, no one is gratitude for him as required to the extent that people, knowingly or unknowingly, has ignored him and there is no sign of paying attention to him in people's hearts, tongues and behaviours.

The word, "*wahīd*" (the lonely one) means someone who is alone and does not have a helper.

8. The essential role of Lady Fatima and Imam Mahdi in combating deviations and false innovations

In Arabic terms, "*bid'ah*" means "innovation", "a new idea" and "something unprecedented"; and in religious term, it means "inserting something into the religion that is not part of the religion" or "attributing something to the religion that is not really part of it". In English, we describe this religious term as "a false innovation."

Creating the "false innovation" in the field of religion and religious values causes confusion between right and wrong, makes it difficult to distinguish right and righteousness from wrong and false claimants, and ultimately, leads to the spread of oppression, murder, injustice, distrust, etc. Therefore, false innovation is considered a great sin and is deeply forbidden, and it is so dangerous that if not confronted, the basis of religion and its values will be wavered and it leads to deviation and misguidance of people.

The history of false innovation in Islam dates back to the time after the demise of the Prophet; despite the repeated recommendations of the Holy Prophet, at the first moments after the Prophet's demise, the Ummah deviated from accepting the leadership of Imam Ali, because of some pre-designed plans made by some people who wanted to gain some worldly goals. This deviation,

later on, brought about some changes in the Muslim community that led to the abuse of the Umayyad caliphs who took advantage of the unfavorable and corrupt atmosphere and gained domination over the Islamic community. This deviation was to the extent that led to the destruction of the principles and values of the Prophetic and Alawī school of thought and marked the bloody tragedy of Karbala. Although Imam Hussain, following the way of his grandfather, father, mother, and brother, fought against Umayyad's dangerous false innovations and deviations by sacrificing his life and declined its blasphemous speed, the effect of that deviation remains and continues to our present time.

However, the fact is that, if it were not for the fundamental struggle of Lady Fatima and her noble progeny, no trace of Islam would be visible today. The Prophet has mentioned the role of Imamate against false innovation and stated,

«إِنَّ عِنْدَ كُلِّ بَدْعَةٍ تَكُونُ مِنْ بَعْدِي يُكَادُ بِهَا الْإِيمَانُ وَلِيًّا مِنْ أَهْلِ بَيْتِي مُوَكَّلًا بِهِ يَذُبُّ عَنْهُ يَنْطِقُ بِإِلْهَامٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَ يُعَلِّنُ الْحَقَّ وَ يُنَوِّرُهُ وَ يَرُدُّ كَيْدَ الْكَائِدِينَ يُعَبِّرُ عَنِ الضَّعَفَاءِ فَاعْتَبِرُوا يَا أُولِيَ الْأَبْصَارِ وَ تَوَكَّلُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ».⁴

"Surely, in the time of every false innovation that would harm the faith, there is a guardian from my Household, who is an agent to defend the faith. He speaks according to inspirations from Allah, declares and enlightens the right, thwarts the conspiracy of the guileful people, and is the expressive tongue of the powerless people. Therefore, take lesson, O you who have insight! And put your trust in Allah."

Moreover, Imam Ali has pointed to the role of the Household of the Prophet in real fighting against false innovation and deviation in the 164th sermon of Nahj al-Balāqah by stating,

«...فَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ أَفْضَلَ عِبَادِ اللَّهِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ إِمَامٌ عَادِلٌ هُدِيَّ وَ هَدَى فَاقَامَ سُنَّةَ مَعْلُومَةٍ وَأَمَاتَ بَدْعَةَ مَجْهُولَةٍ...»⁵

"... Know that the best servant of Allah is a just Imam who is rightly guided and guides others. He preserves determined traditions and abolishes false innovation."

⁴ Al-Kāfi, vol. 1, p. 54, hadith¹⁵.

⁵ Nahj al-Balāqah, Sermon no² 164; Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 31, p. 489, hadith 9.

The role of lady Fatima in combating deviations

As it emerges from the short but mysterious life of lady Fatima, she sacrificed her life for the sake of the Prophetic and Imamate mission, so that the religion would remain and the false innovations and deviations be eliminated, and her father succeed in his efforts. For, as it is mentioned, the greatest deviation is the nation's deviation from the path of what Allah has introduced in His religion.

Of course, there is an expansive talk about Fatima's combating the false innovation; *the Fadakiyah* sermon and some eloquent lectures of her, are some distinguished examples indicating her real stand against those religious diversions. In this way, Lady Fatima never refused to act against the dangerous deviation that took place concerning the guardianship of the household of the Prophet who were the source of wisdom and knowledge, and always warned about the ominous and continuous consequences of deviating from the school of the Prophet. For example, she publicly moved against the dangerous innovation that emerged in the form of usurping the Caliphate position in the form of her famous sermon she delivered to the women in Medina. Pointing out to the bad consequences of this deviation said stated,

«أَمَّا لَعَمْرِي لَقَدْ لَقَحْتُ، فَنَظَرَةٌ رَيْثَمَا تُنْتِجُ، ثُمَّ احْتَلَبُوا مِلءَ الْقَعْبِ دَمًا عَيْيَطًا، وَ دُعَافًا مُيِيدًا، هُنَالِكَ يَخْسِرُ الْمُبْطِلُونَ وَ يَعْرِفُ التَّالُونَ غَيْبَ مَا أَسَسَ الْأَوْلُونَ، ثُمَّ طَيَّبُوا عَنْ دُنْيَاكُمْ أَنْفُسًا وَ اطْمَئِنُّوا لِفِتْنَةٍ جَاشًا وَ أَبْشُرُوا بِسَيْفِ صَارِمٍ وَ سَطْوَةِ مُعْتَدِ غَاشِمٍ وَ بِهِرَجٍ شَامِلٍ وَ اسْتِبْدَادٍ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ يَدْعُ فَيُنْكُمُ زَهِيدًا وَ جَمَعَكُمْ حَصِيدًا. فَيَا حَسْرَةً لَكُمْ وَ أَنَّى بِيكُمْ وَ قَدْ عَمِيَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ؟ (أَنْلَزِمُكُمْوهَا وَ أَنْتُمْ لَهَا كَارِهُونَ)».^{٤٣}

"Be aware that the camel of the Caliphate is pregnant (Those who intended to usurp the caliphate succeeded.) Wait for a little to see it gives birth to its baby. Then, instead of a bowl of milk, wash the bowls full of fresh blood mixed with deadly poison. Then, the vain doers become the losers. Later, whoever follows this falsehood will comprehend the consequences of what the predecessors established. You rejoiced in your life in this world and your heart is at peace with this sedition. (You committed the sedition without anxiety and worry.) Consequently, I warn you to wait for the

⁴ Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 43, p. 160, hadith 9.

sharp swords, the onslaught of the aggressive oppressors, the pervasive chaos and bewilderment, and the tyranny of the oppressors. They will pay you a meager income and will scatter you. You will have a lot of regrets. How far the truth is with you while things are vague for you! Shall we force it upon you while you dislike it?"

The fact is that Lady Fatima could see and understand the hazards of future events with her heart, therefore, she fought against that false innovation with all of her ability and continued till she was martyred for the sake of protecting the divine guardianship after the Prophet.

The role of Imam Mahdi in combating deviations

Imam Mahdi also behaves like lady Fatima in dealing with false innovations and deviations. Because, the confrontation of the hypocrites with religion and their misuse of sacred things is not limited to a specific time. In addition, such deviations have reached their dark peak at the time of the Imam of the Age; and *Dajjals* and *Sufyanies* are engaged in spreading seduction, murder, looting, corruption, and plundering the material and spiritual capitals of the oppressed people in the form of different names, false claims (with regard to the deputyship of the Imam), and forming complex networks of terror and corruption. Therefore, the Upriser will fight against their false thoughts and deeds according to his divine duty, and he will revive the divine duties, and the true Prophetic and Alavi traditions. According to this, the Commander of the faithful states about him and his mission,

«يَعْطِفُ الْهَوَىٰ عَلَى الْهُدَىٰ إِذَا عَطَفُوا الْهُدَىٰ عَلَى الْهَوَىٰ وَ يَعْطِفُ
الرَّأْيَ عَلَى الْقُرْآنِ إِذَا عَطَفُوا الْقُرْآنَ عَلَى الرَّأْيِ... فَيُرِيكُمْ كَيْفَ
عَدْلُ السَّيْرَةِ وَ يُحْيِي مَيِّتَ الْكِتَابِ وَ السُّنَّةِ»^{٤٤}

"He (Mahdi) will subordinate desires to guidance when people subordinate guidance to desires and will subordinate opinions to the Quran when people subordinate the Quran to their opinions. ... He will show you the just way to govern and will revivify ignored injunctions of the Book and the tradition."

Also, Imam Bāqir states about Imam Mahdi's persistent combating against false innovation and deviation to revive the true traditions of the Holy Messenger of Islam and stated,

⁴ Nahj al-Balāqah, sermon 138.

«إِذَا قَامَ الْقَائِمُ... فَلَا يَتْرُكُ بَدْعَةً إِلَّا أزالَهَا وَ لَا سُنَّةً إِلَّا أَقَامَهَا».^{٤٥}

"When Imam Mahdi rises, he discards all false innovations and perpetuates all Islamic traditions."

Thus, in the noble prayer of *Ahd*, the most important duty of the Upriser in combating deviation is mentioned as it says,

« أَيْنَ الْمُدْخَرُ لِتَجْدِيدِ الْفَرَائِضِ وَ السُّنَنِ أَيْنَ الْمُتَخَيَّرُ لِإِعَادَةِ الْمِلَّةِ وَ الشَّرِيعَةِ أَيْنَ الْمُؤَمَّلُ لِإِحْيَاءِ الْكِتَابِ وَ حُدُودِهِ أَيْنَ مُحْيِي مَعَالِمِ الدِّينِ وَ أَهْلِهِ؟...»^{٤٦}

"Where is the reserved person [by Allah] for reviving obligatory duties and [Divine] traditions? Where is the opted person for restitution of the religion and nation [of Islam]? Where is the wishing person for revivifying the Book [Quran] and its ambits? Where is the person who revives the works and signs of religion and the believers ... "

Source: *The Final Hope*, January 2021, Issue no. 4

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⁴ Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 52, p. 339, hadith 84.

⁴ Mafātīh al-Jinān, Nudbah supplication; Iqbāl al-A'māl, by Sayyed bin Tāwūs, p. 295 - 299.