

PROMISED PEACE

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An International Magazine on the Reappearance of Imam Mahdi, the Twelfth Imam (AJ)

Fascinating Facts about Imam Mahdi (AJ)



**Doing Good Deeds and Avoiding Sins Affect
Humans' Understanding of the Imam**

**Globalization Has Actually Facilitated
The Appearance of Imam Mahdi (AJ)**

Prophet Muhammad (SAW) says:
One who dies and does not know the Imam of his time
will have died the death of ignorance.

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله: من مات ولم يعرف إمام زمانه، مات ميتة جاهلية
Mosnad, vol 4, p 96, Ahmad Hanbal, Ibid, vol 3, p 89, Sahih Bokhari 13:5, Bokhari, Bihar al anwar, Allameh Majlesi

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Editorial

Guidance on Spiritual Issues for Mankind is Something beyond Tangibility

Mahdism

Ayatollah Khamenei: "Hajj is a Great Opportunity for Muslims to Strengthen Solidarity"

A Modern Strategy for Global Preparation of Mahdism with a Stress on

Intercultural Dialogue between Religions

God-Pleasing Life, The Fruit of Knowledge (Ma'refat) about Imam

Doing Good Deeds and Avoiding Sins Affect Humans' Understanding of the Imam (AJ)

Let's Know Our Imam Once More

The Savior in Religions

Fascinating Facts about Imam Mahdi (AJ)

A Selection of the Statements by Ayatollah Khamenei on the Birthday Anniversary of

Imam Mahdi (AJ)

Absolute Benevolence: One of the Attributes of the Promised Savior

Globalization Has Actually Facilitated the Appearance of Imam Mahdi (AJ)

Youth Corner

Life Skills in the Age of Occultation

Kinder than Mother

Du'a& Supplication

Du'a for Marifah of Imam Zaman (AJ)

Guidance on Spiritual Issues for Mankind is Something beyond Tangibility

By: Turan Jamshidian

Translator: Rezvan Sadoughi

Mankind's need for help and assistance in life and even in his being alive is so essential that at times, living would be impossible without the help of another person. On the other hand the needs of mankind for guidance and leading is so urgent that he cannot live without it either, as he is in need of being guided and trained by a specialist to learn a new career and new techniques.

As indigenous and intellectual needs of mankind have been proved from materialistic point of view, his ideological and intellectual needs of guidance from spiritual point of view could definitely be proved as well, since to provide mankind with guidance on material issues is something tangible while guidance on spiritual issues is something beyond tangibility. As a result, they enjoy more intricacy and importance in life. So it is substantial to see where mankind's spiritual leading and guidance is from? And who can lead him to the true way?

To answer these questions, one shall say: mankind has been created and one who is created actually has a creator; thus, the creator of a phenomenon is best aware of his own creation. For instance; consider a skillful computer engineer who designed a complex and coded computer software. Nobody but him is aware of its codes and complex structure. In fact, the engineer is the creator of that software and the computer is his creature and artifact. Do you think you can find somebody else to have mastery over the computer program except for him? Actually No. since the creator is best aware of his own creation and has control over all its details. Thus; as it is the creator and maker of a computer program or of any other appliances who leads others on the way of using it, so it is only the creator of mankind who can lead him to the right way, since mankind is the greatest of God's creations whose guidance requires specific carefulness and delicacy that only his creator, i.e. God, the All-mighty, can provide. As God, the Omnipotent, keeps reminding us this truth in Holy Qur'an as saying: "actually it is Our responsibility to guide and lead" in this regard there is another verse saying: "our God is One Who created everything and then led them"

Mankind has been created, and a creation is innately in need of guidance which is in the hand of its creator. Since the creator of mankind is God, the Infinite, He guided him by His prophets and apostles. To sum up, this spiritual guidance is so vital that it has always been with mankind, from the beginning of his life on earth up to its end. He has never been and will not be without this divine guidance even for a minute or for a short period of time, whereas history has proven that in different era's mankind refused to obey God's apostles and prophets because of not recognizing God's leader and due to their mundane jobberies, only a few managed to follow them.

Since knowing something is the very first step of recognizing its value and eminence, affecting mankind's latter steps and decisions strongly, knowing mankind's ultimate savior is no exception of this regard. Having a supreme place in religions and cultures history, particularly in Islamic culture, it has occupied a very supreme position so that the blessed prophet of Islam (SAW) says: "whosoever dies while not knowing the living Imam, his death is indeed a death in ignorance." (Biharolanvar, vol32,p331) By ignorance he means a life without Imam and leader. As Qur'an says so, no one is left without an Imam and leader and if there is anyone who says I don't need anyone to guide me, I will make my own decisions and find my way on my own and so forth, he is making a big mistake, since God, the Omnipotent, who is the creator of mankind and best aware of his needs and status determines a general policy according noble verses of Surah Al-Baqarah (the bull) as saying: "any human being, whoever he wants to be, is in need of an Imam and a leader. This leader can be either the devil or a divine leader and apostles. Everyone picks one of them and his mundane and hereafter prosperity relays on this choice and this choice is the only means of his salvation and bliss." (2:255-257)

In conclusion, after getting to know God, the most important task of mankind is to know their Imam and leader, something on which mankind's dishonor and honor relies. This is an important issue in this period of time which is named apocalyptic era since believing in advent of a celestial savior and hope for a delightful future without any anxiety and terror in which all darkness will disappear in the world and oppression, ignorance and corruption will be uprooted, thank to advent of a celestial and supreme person is a general, stable belief which has always been heard everywhere and among all nations.

Over time many scientists and scholars believe in this, however; there are some disagreements in regard to the way that the living Imam would advent and in that who he is and what doctrine he would apply after his advent.

However, it is very important to see who this savior is and what special characteristics he has.

Having considered the function of a savior, we come to this conclusion that a savior must be an authoritative, sage and cognizant leader so that he would be able to save strayed man of this age from the current crisis. One who saves man from problems, leading him to growth and sublimity, one who fights against oppression and one who is well informed of all ways of saving with control over mankind's inside and outside powers, something which is the best way of overcoming these days' problems. The other obvious characteristic which leads man to growth and evolution is lack of discrimination and inequality within the society so that talents can be blossomed and this is something that requires fair distribution of wealth and equipments between people. Here is the place where the character of the ultimate savior of mankind appears to be more ostensible. The other major characteristic is generalization and comprehensiveness of the savior's plans. Actually, it can't be admitted that one of the ultimate savior of mankind's character is justice while his plans are designed for some specific people, thus; the savior's plans must be generalized and compiled for everybody, and the plans should also have an universal domination. The savior is determinant and considers kinship cordiality and sentiment to reach his goal, the savior also must be free from any faults and errors. The intermediary between the savior and source of creation must be reliable and trustworthy:

The savior must have reliability and a defined identity, so are his intermediaries, meaning that they must commit almost no errors and mistakes.

We should know the ultimate savior of mankind for a number of reasons:

A) To prevent aberration and astray

Necessity of knowing the promised Imām Mahdi (AJ) is felt when man falls into corruption and astray due to being far from his Imām, to get rid of this dangerous pitfall there is no way except for following an Imām. Imām Kāzīm (AS) quoted as saying: "Imām is the demonstrative reasoning (*Hujjah*) of mankind. Whoever detaches from Imām would go astray, and whosoever attaches to him would be secured and enjoy salvation".

Abū Ja'far Omarī, the First Deputy of living Imām (AJ), wrote in his letter to Abū Alī Muhammad ibn Humām, "O Allah! Make Yourself known to me, If

you do not make Yourself known to me I will not know Your Messenger. O Allah! Make Your Messenger known to me, if you do not make Your Messenger known to me I will not know Your demonstrative reasoning (*Hujjah*). O Allah! Make Your demonstrative reasoning known to me, If you do not make Your demonstrative reasoning known to me I will fail in my Faith (*Dīn*)."

B) To prevent Actions from being invalidated

Acceptance and approval of one's actions before God and preventing those actions to be invalidated relies on an innocent Imām's acceptance. Imām Bāqir (AS) said to Zurārah: "Islam is built upon five pillars: 'Prayer (*Salāt*), Alms giving (*Zakāt*), Pilgrimage to Mecca (*Hajj*), Fasting (*Sawm*), and Imām's Guardianship (*Wilāyah*)". Zurārah said: "Which one is the most important?" Imām Bāqir (AS) replied: "Imām's Guardianship – because it is the key and the guide to the other four. If a man spends his nights and days praying and fasting, and spends all his wealth on alms, and travels to Mecca on pilgrimage every year while he does not know his Imām to follow him and to put himself under his guidance, then he will not be rewarded by Allah for any of his doings and he will not be a man of faith".

C) To Attain to Spiritual Life

Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) quoted as saying: "O people, whoever wants to be similar to me in his life and death, he must accept Ali's Guardianship and follow the Imāms after Ali"

D) To avoid Death in Ignorance

In a saying which is reported by both Shiite and Sunni it is stated that one who does not know his living Imām, will die in death of ignorance. God's Messenger, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) states that: (whoever does not know the living Imam of his time will die in a death of ignorance)

Having searched for the saviors evidences in religions and then compared them with rational features of a savior, one can conclude that Shiite evidences for the living Imam of the time, Imam Mahdi (AJ) is the most reliable one. He is one to whom God, the Al-mighty, dedicates the supreme features of a savior. And this is he who has domination on saving the universe from any aspects. It is he who knows the disasters, seditions, problems and crisis and uproots them making the world of justice for mankind. People of different religions and nations will follow him; it is he who will be the world leader and treat people as his own friend and feel sympathetic toward them and uproot oppression and cruelty.

Mahdism



We are so slight to fill the volume of your solitude.

Ayatollah Khamenei: “Hajj is a Great Opportunity for Muslims to Strengthen Solidarity”

October 2nd , 2014

In a speech during in Hajj, the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Sayyed Ali Khamenei, discussed the Takfiri threat to the unity of the Islamic Ummah or community through the creation of discord and sedition and explained the Muslims duties are to overcome the Takfiri scheme.

Sayyed Ali Khameneie,
Dhu- Al-Hijja, 5th 1435,

The following are his remarks: Today, one of the most important methods of the enemies of the Islamic Ummah are creating discord. They create discord. If someone accepts that the Islamic movement and the Islamic Awakening threatens the interests of great powers, they can naturally understand that these great powers focus all their efforts on creating discord among Muslims, keeping them busy with trivial things, pitting them against one another and preventing them from thinking. This is what they are doing with all their power.

They provoke the elements of discord between Islamic denominations – between Shi’ism and Sunnism in particular – as much as they can.

They want to fill hearts with grudge and suspicion. This is what the hands of colonialism are doing in the present time. Unfortunately, some people among us Muslims – whether Shi’ite or Sunni – are helping them. They are ignorant. They do not know that what they are doing in the area of creating grudges and enmity and showing hostility and opposition is at the service of the interests of great powers. They do not understand this.

During Hajj pilgrimage, you should do your best to decrease this lack of understanding and the fake grudges that the enemies of Islam and the Islamic Ummah are injecting into Muslims. You should work to decrease it. Today, the great interest of the world of

Islam lies in solidarity among Muslim brothers. Muslim brothers have certain common points. Muslims have many common points, but the enemy wants to deny them.

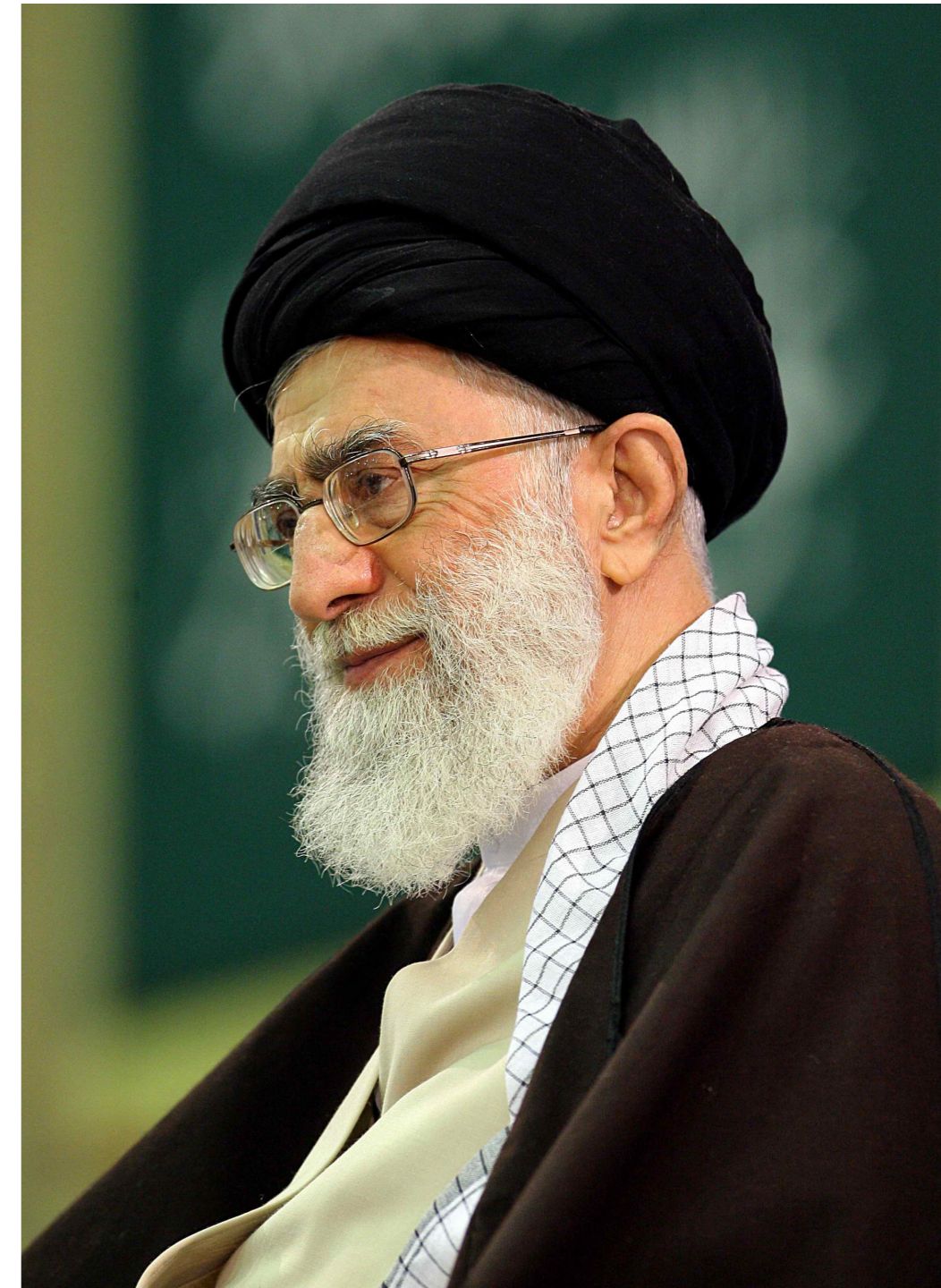
Today, in some parts of the world of Islam, there is certain propaganda against Shi’ism which is focused on removing these common points. They promote the idea that the opinion of Shi’ism towards the Holy Qur’an is different from Muslims’ opinion. They promote the idea that the Shi’ite opinion towards the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S) is different from that of Muslims. They are promoting these ideas and they are spending money on them. They slander their Muslim brothers to the advantage

of arrogant organizations, America, Zionism and the enemies of the Islamic Ummah.

You should do your best to dispel this lack of understanding and these suspicions and lies. The gathering of Muslims in Hajj is a great opportunity. Therefore, this opportunity should not be missed. The best way this opportunity can be used is to make Muslims get close to one another. Everyone should participate in different ceremonies together with others. Everyone should participate in spiritual ceremonies and daily prayers together with others. All Muslims should prostrate themselves before God the Exalted together. All Muslims should worship God before His house together. You should take away the enemy’s plot.

Today, you can see that Takfirism is an element for the enemies of Islam and the enemies of the Islamic Ummah. They excommunicate not only Shi’ite Muslims but also Sunni Muslims. They bomb the mosques of Sunni Muslims to the advantage of the Zionist regime. They do this to pit people and Muslims against one another so that they ig-

nore the important issue of Palestine and the presence of the enemy in the heart of the world of Islam. These are their goals and some people follow them whether knowingly or unknowingly. We should pay attention to this.



A Modern Strategy for Global Preparation of Mahdism with a Stress on Intercultural Dialogue between Religions

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Abstract:

The globalization of culture and the reactions following it has made the analysis of the status of intercultural communication in the international arena necessary. Dialogue in the context of intercultural communication is more than a means of conveying concepts it's merely a modern strategy. In this approach, dialogues help to solve many recent disagreements between different religions only if the world religious leader will modify their outlook on such dialogues and let them transform from mere tools to the ultimate goal. The intercultural dialogues have recently emerged and dominated the modern world and its modern inhabitants. This, along with the close and complex multicultural communication between people, is a benevolent approach that helps us take a drastic step both to **develop Mahdism among religions** and to expand universal justice.

Key words: Dialogue, intercultural communication, *Mahdism*

Introduction:

If a community, which holds a certain series of cultural principles, wants to continue its existence, it should closely study how theories and cultures transform and develop in the world. As one of the most important fields in contemporary world's intellectual and cultural developments, the theory of intercultural communication endeavors to replace the process of "antagonizing the other" with "acknowledging the other" in international developments. Moreover, in intercultural debates the emphasis is more on understanding others and their cultures. Intercul-

tural philosophy also encourages people to pursue life based on intercultural dialogues in order to procure another opportunity for the world communities. The proponents of intercultural dialogue believe that this is a practical strategy for people to avoid considering "Other" necessarily a menace and thus antagonistic to the "Self" despite the accelerating transformation of humankind. The fundamental presumption in intercultural approach is that people must open up an opportunity to hear the other people's words and learn to master the arts of listening and speaking with equal fineness., the author

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» from a narrower point of view, Mahdism is only an Islamic idea, but from a macrocosmic point of view, it is a universal teaching that promises the creation of a utopia which is to some extent comparable to what many humanistic schools of thought pursue.

primarily focuses on the cultural aspect of this process and maintains that one should be more attentive to the global aspect, in the interaction between intercultural dialogues and the faith in *Mahdism* in different religions.

Dialogue

Goft-o-Gou in Persian means "debate, argument, conversation, discussion, etc."¹ *Goft-o-Gou* is commonly translated as "Dialogue" in English which connotes "an exchange of ideas and opinions"²

When two or more people enter a dialogue, it implies that they

would like to have a peaceful coexistence based on mutual understanding. Therefore, each side should consider dialogue and negotiation necessary to their communication.³

Intercultural communication

Intercultural communication refers to the interactions between people whose cultural conceptions and symbolic orders are so dissimilar that they understand and reflect communicational phenomena in very divergent ways. "Presumably, beside the general implication of intercultural

communication, it specifically refers to communication between people and thus it tries to examine issues – especially the ones related to cognition and mutual understanding – raised when two people from two different cultures try to communicate

Mahdism

Given the fact that in *Mahdism* ideology the doctrine of Imamate is the principle concern, the political issues related to *Mahdism* play very crucial roles in explicating its dimensions. This is because when Imam Mahdi (AJ) sets up his universal sovereignty, oppression and cruelty will disappear and the Islamic Utopia will be established. In fact, *Mahdism* Ideology is so central in Islamic discourse that the Holy Prophet of Islam (SAW) and the infallible Imams (AS) have constantly given the hope of the appearance of the Savior. One of the outstanding qualities of *Mahdism* ideology is its potential to be explored from different perspectives. In fact, from a narrower point of view, *Mahdism* is only an Islamic idea, but from a macrocosmic point of view, it is a universal teaching that promises the creation of a utopia which is to some extent comparable to what many humanistic schools of thought pursue.

The universality of *Mahdism* ideology is one of the central principles in *Mahdism* because it does not exclusively belong to a single community, region or an ethnicity. On the contrary, it is the Will of God for all humans and thus it has a universal dimension. Moreover, to await the appearance of the Savior is, in fact, to await the attainment of humankind's ultimate goal, which will happen according to the Will of God. Moreover, a characteristic of the Islamic community awaiting the Savior is that it puts so much stress on virtue and felicity. Whereas in the modern age freedom is the prime concern, in a society which believes in and practices *Mahdism*, to achieve the ultimate goal – which is to prepare to bring about felicity, virtue and perfection for humankind – demanding justice is counted as a necessary factor.⁵

The possibilities of intercultural dialogue between religions; a modern strategy for the global preparation for *Mahdism*

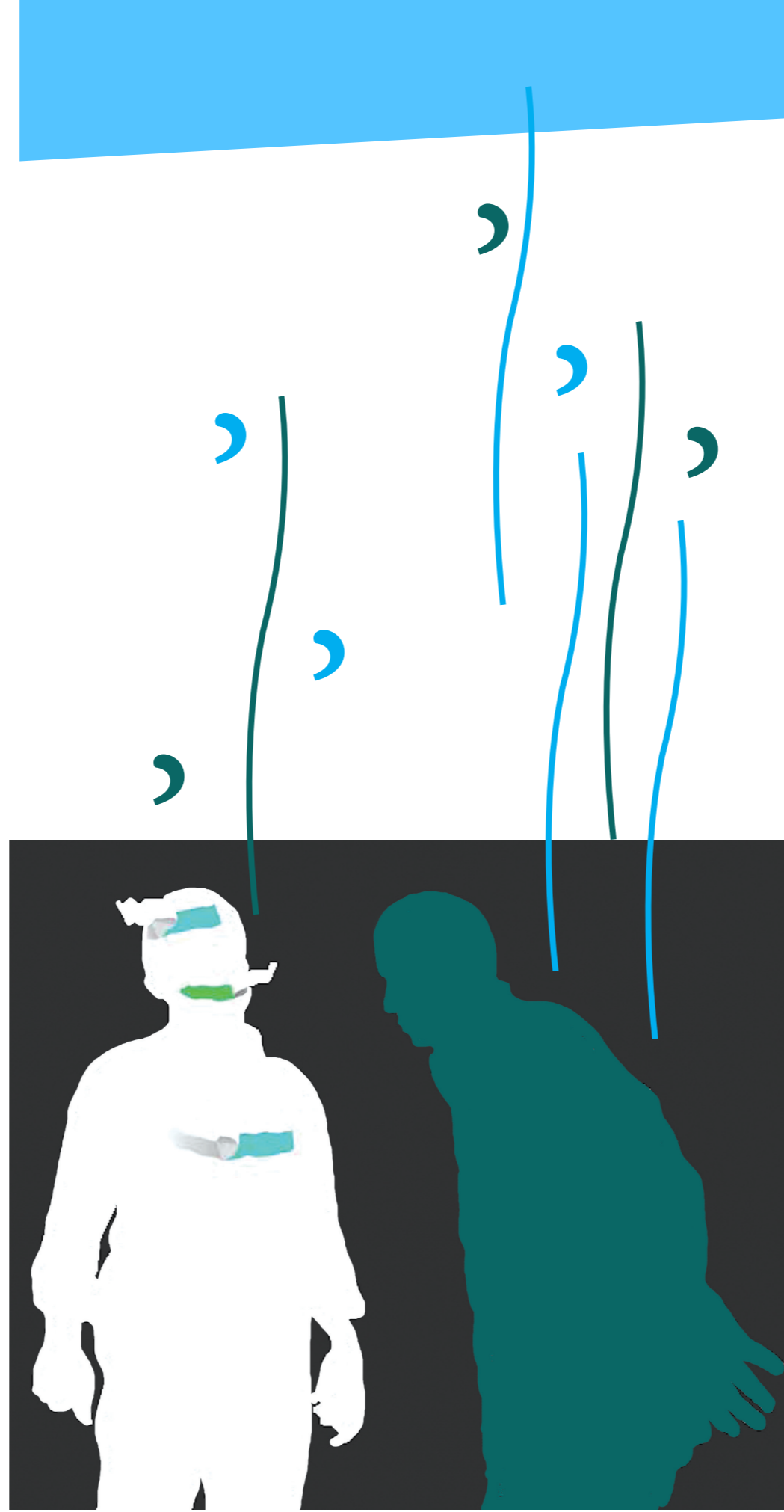
Developments in communication sciences have turned the world into a village in a relatively short time; therefore, the time we live in has been alternatively called the age of communication. One after another the walls are torn down; either the physical walls such as country borders or the invisible ones like cultural discrepancies. And communication sciences are responsible for pushing forward this global project.⁶

Since it fills the gaps, communication affects and transforms cultures. On the other hand, a culture might not remain with-

out communication and, in turn, communication would be bereft of any content and message if it does not contain cultural significance. Therefore, culture and communication are interdependent and the failure of each brings about the breakdown of the other.⁷ In order to develop mutual understanding, we must improve reciprocal communication. This is in fact the prerequisite of having a fruitful dialogue and in this condition an enforced dialogue is the last thing we want.⁸

Accordingly, we must first see whether or not the purpose of establishing communication is to facilitate the process of a dialogue; then we should realize what the purpose of that dialogue is. Afterwards, we must find answers to the following questions: What is the most effective way to “globalize *Mahdism*” by means of intercultural communication with a stress on dialogue? And what aspects of dialogue are in harmony with such transformations?

In order to establish a successful dialogue a number of conditions must be observed. To begin with, in a dialogue, there must be something to say and others must understand what is said. Moreover, a feeling of sympathy accompanies dialogue and a sympathetic conversation should be heard with one's heart and soul. More to the point, neither side of a dialogue would like to cheat. If they have any such intention then the process of maintaining a dialogue fails. In addition, dialogue is in fact a conversation between two ways of thinking.⁹ And finally, dialogue might



In a dialogue, two ways of thinking find a shared language with which to communicate. Dialogue begins in the domain of ideas. There it flows, and there it comes to a conclusion. Dialogue decides and establishes politics, economics, societal interactions, laws, etc. and thus each person may gain an advantage from it.

happen if only both sides are in equal positions. That is, they ought to prepare themselves and have the patience to hear each other's words and try to keep the balance between what they hear and what they say.¹⁰

In a dialogue, two ways of thinking find a shared language with which to communicate. Dialogue begins in the domain of ideas. There it flows, and there it comes to a conclusion. Dialogue decides and establishes politics, economics, societal interactions, laws, etc. and thus each person may gain an advantage from it.¹¹

In its method, Intercultural communication has to form a dialogue and has important requirements; for instance, the decisive factor is that either side should be of equal ranks.¹² In intercultural communication, the commonality and discrepancies ought to be finally registered and what are not understandable in the context of a foreign culture will remain unchanged and appreciated.¹³

The picture that humans have in their minds of “dialogue” must change. It's more than being a tool to convey concepts, dialogue is a modern method of living; a method which is based on seeking justice, truth, peace, as well as practicality and patience. In dialogue, we must avoid ver-

bosity, which hinders dialogue and communication, and be as succinct as possible.¹⁴ We are humans because we communicate by establishing dialogues.¹⁵ To explain the fundamental bases of intercultural communication in the sphere of dialogue, we can refer to three central perspectives:

- A) To reproduce the information available to the public
- B) To officially recognize the differences
- C) To achieve social respect and to observe the equality of all humans.¹⁶

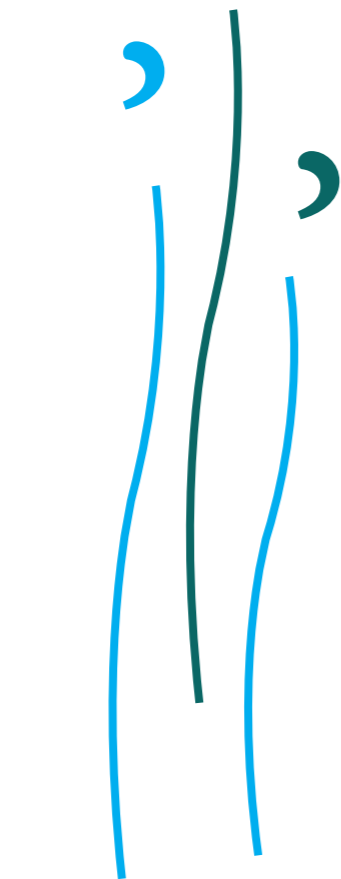
According to the importance of dialogue in intercultural communication, debates over *Mahdism* – which roughly focus on the ultimate Savior of Mankind – in different religions would begin with the question of justice. Justice, in fact, is a universal process and cannot be restricted to narrow ethnical, national and geographical borders. The most important topics in religious studies cover a series of human ideals; that is how and where the Promised Savior, who will eventually establish justice, appears. The idea of Promised Savior is not exclusive to Shiism or even Islam. Nonetheless, all divine religions and faiths unanimously believe in a Savior who will come to set things right with his

miraculous powers when people live in a dark and critical age and the world is stricken with corruption, coercion and atheism. He appears to revolutionize the state of the chaotic world and to help monotheism prevail over atheism and materialism.¹⁷

Nevertheless, each nation identifies him with a different name; the Zoroastrians call him Sushians, which means the savior of the world; the Christians name him the Promised Messiah; The Jews describe him as the mashiach and Muslims recognize him as the Promised Mahdi. Each nation also considers the Savior to be from among them; for instance, Zoroastrians believe that the Savior is Persian and follows Zarathustra; Christians think that the Messiah is from their own faith; Jews claim that he is one of the Israelites and a Moses' follower. Finally, Muslims believe that he belongs to the House of Banu-Hashem and is descended from the Holy Prophet of Islam (SAW); however, unlike other religions, Islam has explicitly and thoroughly introduced the Promised Savior.¹⁸

To summarize all the opinions about the Promised Savior in different religions and to mention what they unanimously agree upon in a few sentences, we can point out three things: First, in all religions the outlook on the Savior is combined with a spiritual approach to the world. Second, according to almost all widely discussed religious manuscripts, the Savior will spread justice in the world. Third, Satan will eventually be expelled from all intellectual, cultural and material spheres of human's life.¹⁹

According to the importance of dialogue in intercultural communication, debates over Mahdism – which roughly focus on the ultimate Savior of Mankind – in different religions would begin with the question of justice.



In addition to the Quran, in many holy manuscripts of other religions – such as “The Zend Avesta”, “the Book of Jamasb”, “the Book of Shakyiamuni Buddha”, “The Book of Zephaniah”, “the Book of Isaiah”, “the Book of Daniel”, “the Book of Mathew”, “the Book of Luke” – the good tidings of His Highness's Coming has been mentioned. Yet, it must be noted that different religions, nations and ethnici-

ties disagree about the name of the Savior but they totally agree about his eventual appearance, his general attributes, his reformative programs and his plan to establish a universal government based on justice and freedom.²⁰ Bertrand Russell, the British philosopher writes, “The world expects the advent of a Savior who will bring it all under one flag and motto”.²¹

The truth is that the humanities in the course of history have looked at this issue from a religious perspective and have considered the process of expecting the Savior a holy duty. But, at present, taking advantage of the change of attitudes in this regard, unfortunately the extremists have introduced themselves as the real expectants of the Savior.²²

Therefore, they have turned the Advent into a challenging and critical issue for the people who believe in the Coming of the Savior. And that is because an overemphasis on ethnicity and race would make the movement afflicted by a kind of totalitarianism and consequently the real expectants of the Savior would lose any opportunity of holding dialogues. Be that as it may, the idea of expecting a Savior as expounded by the extremists suffers from an innate paralysis and thus falls short of exchanging ideas in order to reach an agreement up to a point with others.²³ It is clear to any well-informed scholar that there are close affinities in different faiths about the Coming of the Savior. A comparison of the information obtained through the holy manuscripts of different religions can unquestionably prove this claim.

In different religious manuscripts one can find references to the religious elites' good tidings about the unbelievable scientific development, and social welfare after the time of his Coming as well as explanations about the signs of the appearance of the Savior. This can prepare the grounds for the establishment of dialogue and discussion between the real expectants of the Savior.²⁴

Conclusion

Intercultural communication with emphasis on dialogue has provided new capacities and capabilities in the course of global developments. Culture and the power which it ensues are at the service of the improvement of intercultural communication. In the space of such communications, the culture of power is transformed. Dialogue and its prerequisites – especially the recognition of the “Other” and the humble acceptance of “differences” – can direct the global developments towards more tolerant attitudes. They also will finally accelerate the “globalization of Mahdism among religions” and the worldwide spread of justice.

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God-Pleasing Life, The Fruit of Knowledge (Ma'refat) about Imam

By Zahra Mostowfi
Translated: Nosrati

All Islamic branches (The Shia and Sunni), have quoted Prophet Muhammad (SAW) as saying: “the one who dies without knowing the Imam of his time will die a death of ignorance (“Jahiliyyah”).¹

In history, the period before emergence of Islam, is known as the age of Ignorance (“Jahiliyyah”). This period has various features; the most important of them are dominance of Idolatry and Blasphemy. Also alive burial of new born baby girls, tribal battles, prejudiced wars, idolatry and usury are all indicative of being far from God and Divine instructions.

According to the Holy Prophet’s saying (SAW), the one who dies without knowing the Imam of his time is like a person who was living in the Age of Ignorance (“Jahiliyyah”) and died in the state of idolatry and blasphemy; and he didn’t enjoy the benefits of Islam.

The Noble Qur’an considers death to be the sap of

man’s life. This means that human beings die in the same way as they have lived (i.e. he will die in proportion to his deeds). If a man leads a good life, he dies in relief; and if he leads a bad life, he dies a bad death. Life is like a tree which is being cultivated by the man until it fruits. Then, at the time of death, they will feed that fruit to the man. According to the kind of life led by the man, the fruit of man’s life will be either sweet or bitter.

The one who has led a God-pleasing and divine life, i.e. he has done good deeds and has obeyed the God’s orders and His Messengers, and also has helped his fellowmen, then the fruit of his life will be sweet and delectable. But if he has lived a life far away from God and has committed evil

deeds, at the time of his death, the fruit which will be given to him _ the result of his life _ will be extremely bitter.

According to the Noble Qur’an, the Prophet of Islam (SAW) never speaks out of personal taste, “Nor doth he speak of (his own) desire”.² Therefore, when he says that the one, who dies without knowing the Imam of his time will die a death of Ignorance (“Jahiliyyah”), he means that the fruit of this man’s life will

The Noble Qur’an considers death to be the sap of man’s life. This means that human beings die in the same way as they have lived (i.e. he will die in proportion to his deeds).

be very bitter and he will die a death of ignorance (“Jahiliyyah”), _ the prime importance of which is unbelievers’ death. But the one, who has known the Imam of his time, will die a death of believers and Islam. This is indicative of the importance of knowing the Imam in every time and period.

Now there raises the question that how does the one who knows the Imam of his time live a life which results in a sweet and God-pleasing death? And in Qur’an’s culture, what is the true life gained and achieved by knowing the Imam of time?

In Qur’an’s culture, the scale of true and God-pleasing life is not industrial development and enjoying financial and material welfare. The Noble Qur’an exemplifies tribes which enjoyed comfort and welfare, but God was not pleased with their life. They were doomed with the disaster of his punishment, because they had not developed a good relationship with God and divine Prophets. For example,

the tribe of Aad, who according to the Qur’an verses, was enjoying an advanced civilization and they had huge buildings, and affluent joyful cities; and also the tribe of Thamud, who had an advanced civilization, they cut huge rocks and built safe and strong houses in the heart of mountains. But according to the Qur’an’s verses, these tribes rebelled against God, they became enemies of the God’s Messengers, and involved in corrupt conducts on the earth; so, they deserved the God’s punishment.³

Therefore, the sign of God-pleasing life is not superficial welfare and advancements; instead its sign is in union with God and His Agents. Qur’an recognizes the true life in obedience of God and the holy Prophet, and acting upon God and holy Prophet’s orders. Thus, a real believer is the one who leads a God-pleasing life because he listens to God’s Call.⁴ The Qur’an considers the disbelievers as dead people, for example in the holy verse: “to warn whosoever



liveth, and that the word may be fulfilled against the disbelievers”⁵, The God, puts the “alive” in front of the “disbeliever” and not the believer in front of disbeliever. Because the unbeliever who doesn’t lead a divine life, is not alive anymore; and thus he has lost his sacred essence _that is the gem of faith and Godliness_. This reflects the fact that the sign of God-pleasing life is faith in God.

In other words, from the view point of Qur’an, the man is alive when his life reflects his Godliness. And in his beliefs, behaviors, conducts and other aspects of his life, he thinks and acts mono-theistically. To have a Godly life, one should form his life based on true union with God and His Agents. The Noble Qur’an introduces the Prophet Muhammad as the exemplar for the Muslims. This means that a believer and true Muslim should know the Prophet and his successors in such a way that he can be able to align his life with the Prophet’s life; and like the holy Prophet, all his beliefs and conducts be for the sake of God’s pleasure; he also should be on his best behavior towards the people.

It is here that the importance of knowledge about Imam becomes clear, because

To have a Godly life, one should form his life based on true union with God and His Agents. The Noble Qur’an introduces the Prophet Muhammad as the exemplar for the Muslims.

union with him _ as the God’s Agent _ will cause that the man live and act upon God’s commands. And undoubtedly, this relationship and union will not be possible unless having knowledge about Imam.

Now we should answer the question that what type of knowledge is meant by saying that “knowing the Imam, will result in a God-pleasing life”?

Upon gaining very little knowledge of the purified Imams, the people will be attracted to their virtue and merits, no matter what religion they have. One of the examples is all intellectual people and scholars’ interest and regard for the holy shrines of Ali ibn Abu Talib (Amir al-Muminin) and Imam Hussein (peace be upon them). Many of the world’s great thinkers have admired Imam Hussein (peace be upon him). One example is Washington Irving, the American historian, who states that:

I know, Imam Hussein’s soul will remain forever under the scorching sun and on the hot sands of Iraq. I honor you,

O, my Lord, the shining lesson of bravery and sacrifice!⁶ And Gandy says:

“I have read the story of Imam Hussein’s life (peace be upon him) _ the Great martyr of Islam _ carefully while paying sufficient attention to the Karbala scenes. And it has been clear for me that if India wants to achieve victory, then it must follow in the footsteps of Imam Hussein (peace be upon him)”.⁷

But does this knowledge and kindness cause that the man be alive with a rational and divine life?

To answer this question, we should say that God-pleasing life is realized by having true knowledge about the Imam; not merely being attracted to Imam’s virtue. The truth of Imamate means that one considers Imam as a true and complete man and recognizes him as the God’s Agent that obeying him is obligatory. According to Amir al-Muminin, one should know Imam by acting upon divine duties, justice and goodness.⁸ Divine duty is whatever which

according to wisdom, Verses and narrations is considered as goodness. Thus, superior humane characters and practical and scientific virtues are considered divine duties. So, the one will achieve knowledge about Imam when he first acknowledges that Imam has been chosen by God and acting upon his commands is obligatory. Second, he recognizes goodness, justice and divine duties in Imam and take the Imam as his exemplar.

The other point worth mentioning, is this question that why having knowledge about Imam, will lead to God-pleasing and Qur’anic life? In other words, what are the effects of knowing the Imam on the man which lead him to divine life?

One will achieve a God-pleasing life by acting upon God’s commands. The one who understands the truth of Imam, will try to follow his orders _which are the very God’s commands _ and he will take the Imam as his exemplar in life. Such a person will offer his soul _which is like a sterile land _ to Imam of his time to be cultivated and revived by him; i.e. in the light of God’s grace which reaches us through Imam, this person’s soul will be cultivated and revived by Imam.

One more issue which contributes to leading a God-pleasing life is waiting for Imam Mahdi at the current time. This waiting originates from knowing the Imam of time. The man only waits for someone in whose problem-solving characteristic he believes. The higher and deeper is knowledge about Imam, the more true and deeper is the waiting. To wait for a true reformer means waiting for justice, faith and a divine society. Undoubtedly, the one who waits for such a society will try to adorn himself with these virtues in order to be a member of such kind of society.

In short, those who have God-pleasing life will die a sweet and God-pleasing death, too. And God-pleasing life is realized through true faith and acting upon God’s demands.

Knowing the Imam causes that the man act upon the Imam’s orders _ which are the very God’s commands_, and achieve above mentioned kind of life. Therefore having knowledge about Imam will prevent from dying a death of Ignorance (“Jahiliyyah”) and ungodliness.

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- 2- Surah An-Najm, verse:3
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- 4- Surah Al-’ Anfāl, verse:24
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- 6- Didar-e-ashena magazine, no.33,p226
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Doing Good Deeds and Avoiding Sins Affect Humans' Understanding of the Imam

By Zahra Mostofi

Translated by Dr. Mohsen Hanif

There is a question, how human beings, who are generally imperfect and limited, can fully know the Imam, who is a perfect human being. In other words, is it possible for imperfect humans, who have not achieved perfection yet, to know their Imam? If the response is positive, then how deep could their understanding be? And how one can further deepen one's knowledge in this respect?

In short, imperfection and limitation would not hinder one's understanding of a perfect human being like an Imam. Clearly every person, based on their capacity, can gain an understanding of God. And a perfect human or the Imams are only a reflection of the perfection of God; therefore, it is also possible for us to obtain an understanding of the Imam. It should be noted that, for humans, it is impossible to develop a thorough understanding of God, so is true about an Imam, whose comprehensive understanding is unfeasible for ordinary people.

For humans, there are various methods to gain an understanding. Humans can broaden their understanding by means of their intellect, their heart or their senses. Moreover, the Divine speech and religious elites' advice – which are referred to as *Naql* (i.e., the Qur'an and the Tradition), also help humans in the better understanding of religious issues.

However from among these three ways of perception, for two outstanding reasons it is less useful to employ sensory organs



in order to understand the Imam. First, the range of the function of the sensory organs is limited to the Imam's outward look. Second, it could have only worked partly for the Imam's contemporaries.

Thus, intellect, heart and *Naql* (the Qur'an and the Tradition) are the most important means of understanding the Imams and other perfect humans. Humans can realize the necessity of the existence of the Imams and can grasp some of their characteristics by means of their intellect. The intellect deduces that, in order to understand the Imam, first we ought to understand God because the Imam fully reflects God and is His vicegerent on earth. There is no doubt that in order to recognize the true vicegerent of God on earth, one must first know Him.

Another point is that to know an Imam, one must know Imamate (the mission of the Imam); furthermore, knowing the primary features of Imamate is possible only when intellect assists us. Although the intellect indicates the necessity of Imamate and has introduced some of Imam's general characteristics, it is unable to provide us with an example of such a human as well as most of his characteristics. Then, *Naql* (i.e., the Qur'an and tradition) comes to the intellect's rescue and presents examples for the Imam and offers his other characteristics which intellect alone has been unable to find out. For example, possibly people by dint of their intellect may not know that the Imam has been the angels' guides and is superior to them. Hence, intellect and *Naql* (the Qur'an and the Tradition) together, can help humans to understand and know the Imam. Another way to know the Imam is with one's heart. To know somebody with your heart is the superior kind of knowledge but not everybody can easily gain such an understanding.

However, when acquiring

Understanding the Imam by intuiting with one's heart means that the person senses some truths with his heart's eyes and ears that are not otherwise unveiled to his physical eyes or ears.

knowledge about the Divine teachings with one's heart, we should pay attention to the difference between "believing in something with one's heart" and "intuiting something with one's heart". The former happens when a human accepts something with a strong conviction which he has already realized through his intellect and *Naql* (the Qur'an and the Tradition) together. For instance, everybody knows that a dead body is unable to do anything but often people are scared of a corpse; whereas somebody whose job is to wash the corpse before the burial has come to "believe with his heart" that he should not be afraid of corpses.

"Intuiting with one's heart", on the other hand, is the reception of teachings and knowledge with one's heart. A simple example of intuition with one's heart is "Real Dreams", in which a person dreams something which shortly comes true.

Understanding the Imam by intuiting with one's heart means that the person senses some truths with his heart's eyes and ears that are not otherwise unveiled to his physical eyes or ears. As a case in point, this person may intuit with his heart that the Imam is the angels' mentor. Intuiting with one's heart is the highest level of knowledge and whoever is capable of it has for sure the power to "believe with his heart".

To successfully intuit with one's

heart, human beings ought to strengthen their heart's sensory powers. That is, they must avoid committing sins which cause the failure of heart's power of perception.

More to the point, people do not perceive equally the Imam and Imamate because they make use of their intellect, heart and *Naql* to different extents.

Now we must find an answer to the question "what should we do to have the best and the deepest understanding of the Imam?"

In order for humans to gain a better understanding, they must reinforce their inner self and their will to know the truth. That is, they should develop to the fullest of their powers of intellect and heart – which are the means of knowing the truth. To do so, we ought to consider the following points:

1. We must engage in intellectual and scientific activities: from among things which help humans to develop their intellect and gain a wider scope of knowledge is to engage in intellectual and scientific endeavors. In other words, the more a human uses his intellect, the stronger his intellect will be and thus the better will his performance be in the process of obtaining knowledge.

2. We must acknowledge that human being is an integrated entity, all of whose faculties are related to one another: according-

ly, humans' deeds have a strong impact on their power of perception. Or to put it in another way, humans can pave the way for a better understanding of the truth of the universe by doing good deeds and avoiding sins.

Moreover, some evil deeds make us unable to obtain the truth and impede the proper function of the means of gaining the truth – especially that of heart. Similar to a person who is physically unable to have a vision of the world, someone whose heart's eye has been blinded by sins is incapable of gaining true knowledge.

Another point is that, for humans to do good deeds and avoid sins, they need the Imam and a guide. Mutually, these deeds also affect humans' understanding of the Imam. Therefore, it is helpful to seek the Imam's help in each phase of developing an understanding of him.

3. The most important issue that should be observed in the process of developing an understanding of the Imam is that we should seek the help of God: This is because God has created humans and He will show them the path to true knowledge. So we should constantly pray: اللهم عرفني حجتك O God! Let us know your Hujjat.

4. (Where is the conclusion? Systematic writing asks for a conclusion at the end of each essay)

Let's Know Our Imam Once More

Knowledge about the Imam does not mean to know his name, family root, or the date and place of his birth. Here one has to be a bit more thoughtful.

The eleven infallible Imams of the Shias were martyred, one after another. Now there is only one left for humanity to survive, and only one redeemer. He is the heir of all the prophets over the globe. He is the Mahdi (AJ), the promised one.

Is it not still the time to believe that the Imam of the present age is alive? We must believe in this and make others also believe. We must be sure of his presence in our life. We must embrace this certitude that all the superiority, perfection, and riches that exist in this world is due to the blessings of the Imam, the vicegerent of Allah on earth.

What has kept us away from the Imam is nothing but our self and egoism.

Shiites believe that by his will, everything happens and the security of the whole world lies in his hand. We are in his guidance. Life without the Imam is death; and without knowing the Imam even death is the death prior to believing in Islam, (i.e. the death in the era of ignorance).

Inexcusable Blame:

There are those who, by hearing the name of the Imam (AJ), picture him as a murderer with a sword in his hand in their minds.

They think that he beheads the dead bodies and makes blood flow in canals. More deplorable is that they convey this distorted image of the Imam to others. The kind comely image of that justice performer, the Imam of the present time, is ruined little by little with this false illustrations. As such no one will pray for his early appearance. This is not doing justice to our Imam. The Imam is, in fact, very kind, generous, charitable and merciful.

The Imam is the last of Prophet Muhammad's successors, the last Imam, as the Prophet was the last of the prophets. The Prophet was a mercy to the worlds. Our Imam too is the continued mercy to the world as the Prophet was.

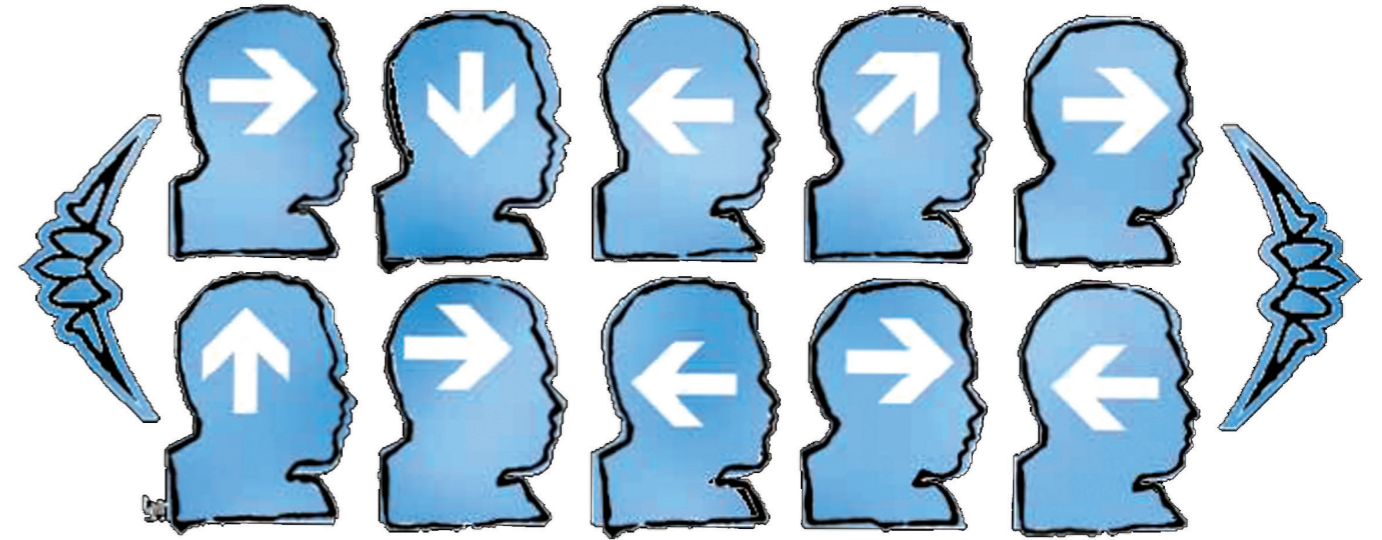
In the span of this period, Allah has kept the Imam as a refuge to helpless ones and a justice given to the oppressed ones. He is kinder and of far better behavior and conduct than all other

— The kind comely image of that justice performer, the Imam of the present time, is ruined little by little with this false illustrations.

people. It is said about him that when he appears on the scene, he will invite people with all kindness toward obedience to the religion. He will leave no excuse for the people and he will guide all.

The holy Prophet (SAW) says (about the days of His appearance): "The hearts of the people will be filled by worship and obedience to Allah. Justice will govern and rule every corner of the earth. Allah will wipe away all lies from the screen of the earth. Cruelty will be wiped out from human beings' nature. There will be no yoke of serfdom on the necks. "[1]

The holy Prophet (SAW) says: "no one shall remain in poverty. People will set out to home in



— Our eleven Imams (AS) have shown us the way. Our last, the twelfth Imam (AJ) since his disappearance has not kept anything hidden from us. As an Imam; he has guided us and has never refrained from doing so.

search of a needy person they could give their charities to. But they will not find one." [2]

There are sayings of much credibility which claim that "when the Imam appears on earth, all the sick people will recover their health. Health will rule the bodies and ages will be prolonged, reaching to a hundred and above. The days and years will become longer – it is said that days will be ten times longer. People will not carry malice against one another anymore and will become kind to one another. not only do human beings attain perfection, but also wild animals will be tamed and friendly with human beings.

People will truly worship Allah with faith and sincerity. Monotheism will exist in those days in its true sense and meaning. There will exist no frontiers and no borders. The whole globe will be under one rule, one law, and one administration. One will be free to travel from the east of the earth to its west. There will be no hindrance, no botheration, and no objection.

Conclusion

Regarding the deprivation of mankind from this great blessing from Allah, and the eleven infallible Imams of the Shiites (AS), whom the tyrants of the history martyred one after another, leaving now

only the twelfth, who had to disappear, there is no margin here to dwell on.

As a matter of fact, the starting point of all this havoc is the insurgency and disobedience to the Prophet with regard to his successor.

Our eleven Imams (AS) have shown us the way. Our last, the twelfth Imam (AJ) since his disappearance has not kept anything hidden from us. As an Imam; he has guided us and has never refrained from doing so.

If we act according to their guidance, certainly there is redemption for us from this impasse. We can avail respect and reverence in this world and the next. We cannot go astray from the right path. The Shi'a school teaches us to obey our Imam in every single detail.

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The Savior in Religions

The Savior in Zoroastrianism

By Hurieh Lajevardi

Translated by Dr. Mohsen Hanif



In Buddhist theology, he is the fifth and the last Buddha from among the earthly Buddhas.

Unlike other religions which await the appearance of one single Savior, the Zoroastrians expect the advent of three Saviors. They believe that each of these Saviors will appear cyclically after each millennium. The Saviors are Zarathustra's three sons who will successively spread justice in the world: Hushidar appears a thousand years after Zarathustra.

- Hushidar Mah appears two thousand years after Zarathustra.
- Sushians (or Sushiant) appears three thousand years after Zarathustra and his advent heralds the end of the world.

The word Sushians has its root in "su, sav" which means beneficial. Used in *Avesta*, it means emanci-

pated or savior: "therefore, the last Savior is called Sushians because he gives benefit to the entire material world". Sushians who symbolizes all the humanity has been miraculously conceived and has a prominent position in the universe. On how Sushians was born, Zoroastrians believe: "In the last millennium of the world, the last creation of *Ahura-Mazda* [the name of God in Zoroastrianism] is born from the House of Behrouz the Theist. When thirty, Sushians is entrusted with the task of prophethood and the Sun stops in the middle of the sky as a herald of his appearance. When he appears *Ah-*

riman [the Devil] and the demon of deceit vanish forever. Sushians's followers, who are from among the immortals, rise up and accompany him until the dead people are resurrected and the spiritual world shows up." Somewhere else it is noted that "Sushians (the great Savior of the world) spreads the religion in the world, uproots poverty and destitution, and liberates *Izadan* [gods or goddesses] from the tangles of *Ahriman* and makes all the people follow the same frame of thought, speech and deed." The Zoroastrian Savior intends to save the entire humanity. The Savior thus has a universal pros-

pect and is not trapped in the insignificant loop of ethnic values.

The Savior in Buddhism

The idea of Savior in Buddhism comes along with the concept of Mitria. Mitria is a Sanskrit word which etymologically comes from *Mitre* meaning kindness and lovely. In Pali¹, however, it is called *Miteh*.

In Buddhist theology, he is the fifth and the last Buddha from among the earthly Buddhas. He has not appeared yet, but he will finally come to save the entire mankind. In the Buddhist symbolic painting, he is portrayed as a man ready to stand up; an action which represents his readi-

ness to rise up. Some people, though, consider him to be the seventh Buddha.

In *Mahayana*, it is stated that *Mitrieh* has a prominent position. His life story is narrated and it is revealed that a long time ago he was a king and later he became the King of the gods and eventually in order to become Buddha, he has established himself in the Sky of *Tushita*. Now he resides in there but finally he will descend and be born on the earth. In *Mahavansa*, which discusses the history of Sri Lanka, the day to day events related to the rise of Mitria are recounted:

When *Shakyamuni* reached the Great Nirvana, the universe is

already socially and cosmologically degenerating. Five thousand years after the last Buddha, the sun of Buddhist teachings sinks and humans' lifespan decreases to ten thousand years. But then the cycle turns upside down; the life transforms and people's lifetime reaches eighty thousand years. Human's long life, along with the suitable circumstances to spread Buddha's teachings, paves the way for the appearance of *Cakravartin* (the Guide). He will bring people welfare and prosperity and will disseminate Buddha's teachings. When such a heaven-like condition is set, *Mitria* will descend from the Sky of *Tushita*, attains

perfection in Buddhism and teaches Dharma to the elites. To give service to Buddha and hear his illuminating teachings, *Mahakashyapa*, one of Buddha's outstanding followers, regains his consciousness after a deep trance into which he had fallen long time ago. (2)

The Savior in Hinduism

In Hinduism, the Savior, who is called *Kalki*, will appear at the end of the last epoch of the world's tetracyclic periods; in the fourth period which is usually referred to as *Kali Yuga*.

Kalki or *Kalkin* is the tenth descent of Vishnu and is expected to appear at the end of Kali Yuga. He will save the world from the rule of savage kings and will establish Dahrama. Kaleh (Time) will encourage him to rise up and at the end of the Kali period, he will be born in the Sambahleh Village like a Brahmin.

Riding on a white horse and brandishing an unsheathed sword, the tenth and last descent of Vishnu, called *Kalki*, will appear to uproot cruelty and mischievousness and establish justice and righteousness. The white horse symbolizes power and erudition. He will destroy Yama (Death) and emerge victorious over all his antagonists. *Kalki* has godly aspects, too. He is a divine creature and shares

riding on a white horse and brandishing an unsheathed sword, the tenth and last descent of Vishnu, called *Kalki*, will appear to uproot cruelty and mischievousness and establish justice and righteousness.

God's immeasurably high eminence.

In Hindu teachings and among the religion's followers, *Kalki* has a special position; therefore, striking descriptions have been used to illustrate him:

Based on the prophecies noted in Hindu manuscripts, *Kalki* will rise up like a hero on a white horse. He will win over all forces of humanity. In this battle, he beats all the thieves, offers a horse as a big sacrifice, and hands over the earth to the Brahmins. And when his mission is accomplished, he will move into a delightful forest.

In different Buddhist manuscripts, there are repeated references to the Savior of the end of the world. For instance, in *Shakmuni*, it is written:

The ruling of the world ends up with the son of the Lord of the both worlds, *Kashan*. He will reign the eastern and western mountains of the world, and will ride on clouds and the angels will work for him, and genies

and humans will be at his service, and his sovereignty spans from Sudan, which is below the equator, to *Tas'een*, which is below the north pole to the regions beyond the seas; and the religion of the world becomes one and the religion of God is revived, and his name is "Standing," and he is a theist.

The Savior in Hinduism possesses the following characteristics:

- The Savior is a human being.
- He has divine aspects.
- Functionally, he considers the emancipation of the entire humanity and has a spiritual and social mission.
- His physical appearance is surprisingly comparable to the Savior in Islam.
- The idea of the Savior in Hinduism is by no means ethnocentric and despite the fact that outwardly it seems to be special to Hinduism, it is totally universal. (3)

Source:

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Fascinating Facts about Imam Mahdi (AJ)

By Fatemeh Khadem-Shirazi

Translated by: Masood Sheikhzadeh



Did you know these facts about Imam Mahdi?

Sidrat-ul-Muntaha

Or the Lote-tree is the name of a tree in the seventh sky which is mentioned in the Najm Surah, Verse 14. Sidrat-ul-Muntaha is the nickname of Imam Mahdi (AJ).

Abul-Hassan

Or the father of Hassan is one of the agnomens of the Master of Time. Abul-Hassan is also the agnomen of Imam Ali (AS).

Maghdirah (Moghaddarah)

This is another nickname for Imam Mahdi (AJ). Meaning ability and power, it refers to the fact that many of wonders and divine power is shown in him majesty, as so he is the pure example of divine power.

Khatamul-Aemmah

It means the seal of Imams and in the book "Gardens of Eternity" is mentioned as one of the nicknames of Imam Mahdi (AJ).

The childhood habitat of Imam Mahdi (AJ)

From his birthday up until the martyrdom of his father, Imam Hasan Al-Askari (AS) (from 255 to 260 AH), Imam Mahdi (AJ) was hidden from the sight of common people and only special companions could meet him and ask him their questions. It is said that like Moses,

his habitat was hidden in order to be safe from evils.

The Absence Time Prayer

Sheikh Koleini has quoted this prayer from Imam Sadiq (AS) who taught it to Zararah to be said and recited at the time of Imam Mahdi's (AJ) absence: "Oh Lord! Introduce me yourself, so if you don't introduce me yourself, I won't know your prophet. Oh Lord! Introduce me your prophet, so if you don't introduce me your prophet, I won't know your Hujjah. Oh Lord! Introduce me your Hujjah, so if you don't introduce me your Hujjah, I will stray from my religion".

Rising Lecture

After reappearance and before rising, Imam Mahdi (AJ) will give a lecture. Imam Baqir (AS) states that "Qaeem¹ will be in Mecca at the time of his reappearance, he will lean against the walls of the house of God and will call: Oh people! We ask for help from God and those of you who accept our invitation. We are the people of the house of your prophet Muhammad (SAW) and we are the most deserved ones in respect to God and Muhammad (SAW). One who pleads about Adam

should know that I am the closest one to Adam. One who talks to me about Noah, know that I am the most deserved in respect to Noah. One who pleads about Abraham, know that I am the most deserved one in respect to Abraham. One who talks about Muhammad, peace be upon him, should know that I am the most deserved one in respect to all the prophets. I am the survivor of Adam, an alternate to Noah, a chosen from Abraham and a selected from Muhammad (SAW). You must know, one who want to plead about the book of God, I am the most deserved in respect to the book of God. You must know, one who want to plead about the traditions of God's messenger, I am the most deserved in respect to the traditions of God's messenger. For the sake of God, anyone who hears these words, deliver it to those who are absent. I swear to God, his prophet and myself, my right on you is the right of kinship ties. I want you to help us and protect us against those who tyrannized us. They terrorized us, treated us with cruelty and kept us away from our land and family. They tyrannized us and trampled our rights

and the ignoble, they trumped up against us. For God's sake, remember us, do not abandon us and help us, may God help you".¹

The Flag of Imam Mahdi at the Time of Reappearance

According to many Hadiths, the flag of Imam Mahdi (AJ) is the flag of prophet Muhammad (SAW). The importance of this subject is so much that in Na'manie's book of *Ghiybah*,² a whole chapter is devoted to this issue and that the flag of prophet Muhammad (SAW) will not be raised after the battle of *Jamal*³ unless by Qaeem (AJ). "I swear to God that the Flag is not made of cotton, nor canvas, nor silk." said Imam Sadiq to abu-Basir. "So what is it made of?" asked abu-Basir. "It is made of leaves from heaven. The God's messenger raised it in the battle of Badr and then gave it to Ali (AS). It was with Ali (AS) until the battle of Basra when he raised it again. So God gave him victory. Then he gathered the flag up and it is here with us. No one will raise it until the rise of Qaeem (AJ) and when he rises, he will raise it." Imam Sadiq replied. It is also quoted from Ali (AS) when Imam Mahdi (AJ) raises his flag everything

will be illuminated for him in between the West and the East.

Special Deputation

Imam Mahdi (AJ) appointed some Specials as his deputies and introduced their identities and let people recognize each of them from the former deputy. So those who were deputies at the minor occultation and were introduced with their names, are called special deputies. The special deputies are also called quadruple deputies.

General Deputation

After the end of the Minor Occultation and Special Deputation and with the start of the major occultation, leading Shiites started in the form of General Deputation by Imam Mahdi, in a way that he gave some general principles and characteristics which at any time, the special person who in all respects these principles apply to him, should be considered as the deputy of Imam and supervisor of the society in their religion and their life. One whose words are the words of Imam, obedience to him is obligatory and defiance against him is prohibited. Indeed these general deputies of Imam Mahdi are those who have protected the holy Islam

from deviation during Major Occultation, set forth the people's problems and stabilize the hearts of Shiites. Indeed all the victories have been obtained by the exhaustless efforts and endeavors of Shiite jurists and traditionalists from the end of Minor Occultation until now.

Knowing Imam Mahdi (AJ)

Knowing Imam is essential for his followers at any time. But what makes knowing the last leader so important, is his special circumstances. His clandestine birth, hidden life and difficult trials are some of these circumstances. The intriguers, who are the companions of Imam Mahdi at the time of reappearance, know their Imam as best as possible and their whole entities are imbued with this conscious knowing. Therefore, intriguing for the reappearance of His Holiness is not possible without knowing him. Though Imam Mahdi is behind the screen of occultation, but the beauty of his entity has not been hidden for anyone who believes him. If there is no wisdom towards him, meeting him with the eyes would not be useful, as there were many people who were always meeting the Holy Prophet and the Imams

(AS) but didn't get much from those symbols of creation.

The Special Companions's Characteristics

Most of the special companions of Imam Mahdi are in their youth few of them are elders and aged. These companions have unified thoughts and uniform views and their hearts are unified. Imam Ali once said about them: "The companions of Qaeem are all young and there are not old people among them, unless as much as kohl around eyes or as much as salt in the provision for a journey and salt has the lowest content in the package you prepare for a journey". One can find no differences between their thoughts, speech and views as if they all have a single thought, heart and language. They have no fear of solitude for one who is in contact with God, never scares anything. Their dream is to be martyred in the path of God.

Footnotes:

1. Another nick name for Imam Mahdi (AJ)
2. Meaning Absence
3. Jamal is the Arabic word for Camel.

References

1. Al-Ghiybah, Chapter 14, Hadith No. 67

A Selection of the Statements by Ayatollah Khamenei, the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, on the Birthday Anniversary of Imam Mahdi (AJ)

Compiled by Shahrzad Shahsavan
Translated by :Dr.Tahereh Rezaee

The tremendous movement of the prophets towards spreading the Divine Call among the humans has continued ceaselessly. Humanity has always needed the prophets, the Divine Call and the people who could invite others to listen to the words of God. And presently, this need still exists although throughout the time humans have come closer to tangibly feel the teachings of the prophets. At present, people's cognitive, mental and civil developments have allowed them to grasp many of the prophets' teachings which had been unclear to people living in the past centuries. The cause of justice, freedom and human dignity, to name a few, which are now on top of the worlds' agenda, had already been spelled out by the prophets. At that time, the ordinary people and the public opinion could not comprehend these concepts; however, the unremitting comings of the prophets and the spread of their calls internalized these thoughts in the spirit of humanity from gen-



The remarkable birthday anniversary of Imam Zaman (AJ), along with the great truth inherent in it, belongs to all nations and humans living in all times. [This is what in Ale-Yasin prayer reads]

eration to generation. The chain of these divine guides has not been broken until now and the existence of Imam Mahdi (AJ) proves the continuation of the line of the divine guides. On this matter, in *Al-e Yassin* prayer we read: "السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا دَاعِيَ اللَّهِ"، "وَرَبَّانِي آيَاتِهِ", which suggest that we hear Moses', Jesus', Muhammad's (SAW) and all other prophets' and divine guides' callings, re-stated in Imam Zaman's (AJ) divine mission. His

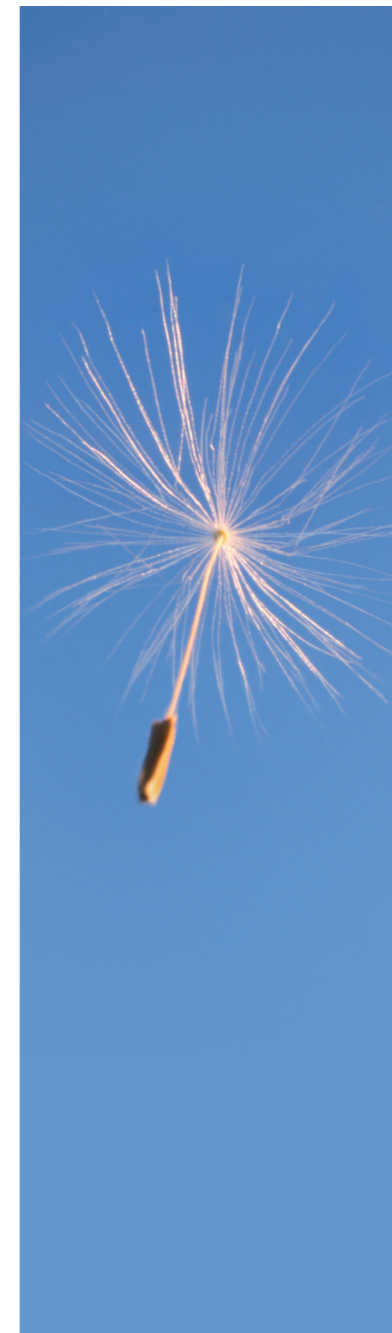
Highness is the heir to prophets and holds up their flag and calls all humanity to the teachings and thoughts which the prophets had been calling to throughout the time.

The remarkable birthday anniversary of Imam Zaman (AJ), along with the great truth inherent in it, belongs to all nations and humans living in all times. [This is what in Ale-Yasin prayer reads]: "السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا مِيثَاقَ اللَّهِ"

الَّذِي أَخَذَهُ وَوَعَدَهُ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي ضَمِينَهُ; in which God's promise to humankind in reiterated. God has assured fulfillment of this promise. All humanities in all times have felt the deep spiritual need to believe in such a tremendous and wonderful phenomenon. This is because history has been constantly commingled with cruelty, depravity and wickedness. Through belief in a Savior, rays of hope begin to shine in the hearts of all the people who have suffered oppression – both the people who have been the target of oppression and have thus suffered, and also the people who have grieved over the cruelties to others.

I am not able to say new words about the blessings of this auspicious birthday anniversary, nor can I tell you any new fact regarding His Holiness, *Vali-Asr* (AJ). My words are not enough to express the spiritual eminence of and the divine truth about the greatest man in the world who is the vicegerent of God on earth and personifies the Divine attributes. They themselves should speak of Imam Zaman (AJ), as they should also speak of Imam Ali (AS) and other Friends of God.

We only know that the existence of Imam Zaman (AJ) is a proof of God's promise. We only know that his Highness is the heir to the Prophet and his mission, and he is the God's standard on the earth



We only know that the existence of Imam Zaman (AJ) is a proof of God's promise. We only know that his Highness is the heir to the Prophet and his mission, and he is the God's standard on the earth. [In Ale-Yasin prayer again we read: "He is the God's promise and an indication of God's compassion for all humanity. He is hidden from our eyes but is one of the Friends of God (*Ulia*'), one of the Chosen Men (*Asfia*), and also the best servant of God. He shows the benevolence of God towards human beings. These are what they themselves have expressed. If we conceive of these statements as much as our own limited power of understanding, we are still winners.

The Luminous Sun

Nowadays the presence of the *Hujjat* (AJ) among the people of the earth is the source of blessing, wisdom, insight, beauty and all other felicities.

[...] For men who possess knowledge and insight, nothing is better than the feeling of being connected with and being seen by a Friend of God, the rightful Imam, and the virtuous and chosen subject of God who is His vicegerent on earth.

The Tidings of a Bright Future: “Is not the Dawn Near” [Al-Hud; 81]

Today, the humanities suffer from cruelty and oppression more than any other time in history. Divine Knowledge is superior to any progress humankind has ever made. The Coming of Imam Zaman (AJ) is near because people have gained more spiritual insight.

At present, the mind of humankind is ready to perceive and acknowledge that a superior human will come to the rescue of all humanities from under the loads of oppression and cruelty; a goal for which all prophets have struggled; something that the Holy Prophet of Islam (SAW) had promised people in a Verse of the Qur'an: “و يضع عنهم اصرهم و الاغلال التي كانت عليهم” [Al-A'raf; 157]. By means of a holy human, a godly human, a human connected to the invisible and spiritual worlds that common prude people like us cannot perceive, the Hand of the Divine Power, can fulfill this wish for humankind. Therefore, hearts, fervors, and passions are all directed to that point and become more concentrated daily.

Faith in the Advent of Promised Mahdi (AJ) has helped Shiism to pass safely through the strange labyrinthine ways up

At present, the mind of humankind is ready to perceive and acknowledge that a superior human will come to the rescue of all humanities from under the loads of oppression and cruelty; a goal for which all prophets have struggled;

to now and today, *Alhamdolillah*, the flag of Islam's and the Quran's honor is in the hands of you, the Muslim and Shiite Nation of Iran. Wherever such a faith exists, there we witness the same hope and resistance. So, one of the fundamental strategies of the colonial and imperial powers has been to eradicate any faith in hope and resistance. Many a time they have tried to put out this light but they were not successful.

We know about the endeavors that the colonial and imperial powers have made – not only in Iran but throughout the world of Islam – to turn this light out.

Before the Advent, there is no relief, comfort and freedom.

Before the Advent, there is no relief, comfort and deliverance...before the Coming of The Promised Mahdi (AJ) virtuous men are tested in different areas of action and conviction. God tests them in different ways. They fulfill them pretty well and in this way every day the world comes a step closer to the ideal and aimed age of

Promised Mahdi (AJ). That is the Great Hope; Thus *Mid-Sha'ban* Day (Imam Zaman's Birthday Anniversary), is a Great Holiday.

If there was no *Mahdism*, all the efforts the prophets have made and their appointments by God as well as their Divine Calls have been of no avail. All this backbreaking labors have been futile and ineffective. Thus, *Mahdism* is a fundamental principle; and is among the most important Divine teachings. Therefore, in all Monotheistic religions, as far as I know, usually there is a concept comparable to *Mahdism* although in distorted fashions, in vague forms and without being clear what they exactly want to say.

The issue of *Mahdism* is an undeniable fact in Islam; which means, it is not particular to Shiism. All other Islamic creeds believe in the great purpose behind the world which is the establishment of truth and justice by the hands of Imam Mahdi (AJ). Different Islamic sects unanimously accept various credible statements by the

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Holy Prophet of Islam and other great religious elites on this matter. Therefore, there is no doubt in it; however, Shiism is privileged because *Mahdism* is not a vague issue in it. *Mahdism* is not a complicated issue ungraspable to people; it is a clear issue for which there are lucid proofs that Imam Zaman exists. We know those proofs, we know his attributes, we know his ancestors, we know his family, we know about his birth, and we are aware of numerous details.

Mid-Sha'ban anniversary is the day of hope. This hope is not exclusive to the Shiites or even the nation of Islam. The principle of hope for a bright future for all humanities and the coming of a Promised person, a Savior, a Justice-seeking hand in the entire world, are by and large unanimously agreed by all the religions we know in the world. Beside Islam, Christianity and Judaism, even the religions in India, Buddhism, and the religions that people of the world know little about have given the occurrence of such a future in their teachings. This is in fact an offer of hope to all the people down the course of history and a response to peoples' need to have hope in their lives along which a truth has been expressed.

Absolute Benevolence: of the Promised Savior

Asra Nameliati

Translated by Dr. Mohsen Hanif

The Holy Prophet's successor, Imam Mahdi (AJ) will protect Islam and respond to the needs of humankind. He has a high moral character and is virtuous, upright and infallible; all of which are in harmony with his position as an Imam and leader. He has inherited his knowledge from Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and is thus connected to the Divine Wisdom. Hence, he can help everybody in all their material and worldly as well as spiritual and religious spheres. According to Shiism, some of the most significant characteristics of the Promised Savior are his embellishment with the admirable moral qualities to the utmost degree, his ability to govern and perfectly manage the entire humanity based on religious teachings, and his appointment by God.

The Savior, from the Shiites' perspective, has some outstanding personality traits and inclinations that some of them will be pointed out in this text.

A) He is truly obedient to God

One of the most fundamental dimensions of a human being's existence is his inclination to pray and worship. Qur'an explains that never does anybody tell people that you ought to worship anything, and that the entity you worship must be God; on the contrary, the Qur'an tells us that human beings cannot live without worshipping. Moreover, in the course of history, prophets have taught human beings who to worship and they've also forbidden the deification of anything other than God.¹ One of the greatest attributes of the prophets and other Friends of God which Qur'an has paid close attention to is the total de-

votion and obedience to God.² This is so important that none of the prophets has ever been mentioned in Qur'an unless a description of his servitude to God follows his name.

Imam Mahdi (AJ) who is the last in the line of the Friends of God and, according to Islam is the Savior of all humanity, shows extreme humility before the Divine Grandeur. Although God and His Grandeur are reflected in the Savior's personality, His Highness always apprehends God's Wrath and never takes pride in the position that God has bestowed upon him.

B) He will establish the reign of justice

Another outstanding characteristic of Imam Mahdi (AJ) is his

Although God and His Grandeur are reflected in the Savior's personality, His Highness always apprehends God's Wrath and never takes pride in the position that God has bestowed upon him.



successful attempt to establish justice in all spheres so that people witness justice everywhere in the world. Every corner of the earth favors his justice and beneficence. Even animals and plants will take benefit from this attribute of the Savior.³ When His Highness rules, no one will sense any injustice against himself and the punishments are regulated according to the Law of God.⁴ Many Hadiths have reiterated that the Savior's justice is so all-encompassing and precise that no one in any domain will be wronged.⁵ About Imam Mahdi (AJ), Imam Beghar (AS) stated: "He will rule impartially among people no matter if they are the righteous people or the wrong-do-

ers."⁶

C) He has good temperament and has great behavior

The Savior has a good temperament which means having a lively spirit, kind speech and power of eloquence.

In Quran, the Holy book of Muslims, the Verses on jurisprudence are approximately five hundred in number, but the pieces of advice on ethical truths and good temperament are abundant and could be found in each Surah. The Quranic Verses and Hadiths by the Prophet of Islam (SAW) and his successors about the importance of the ethical truths are so many that they have been subjected to numerous books. The Noble Qur'an introduces

the prophets, among them Ibrahim and Muhammad (SAW), as "exemplary" characters in different aspects of life. Moreover, The Qur'an praises Muhammad (SAW) for his moral character: "وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ" ("And indeed, you are a great moral character.")⁷

The Prophet of Islam (SAW) told his successor: "Ali! Three things are good moral actions: if somebody severed his connections with you, establish your relations afresh; if somebody was ungenerous to you, be kind to him; and if somebody was cruel to you, forgive him."⁸

One day Imam Ali (AS), The Prophet's successor, looked at his son, Imam Hussein (AS),

and said, “My son is a great man. The Prophet also called him a great man; God has destined that a man, who will be the Prophet’s namesake, will be born of Hussein’s posterities. This man is similar to His Highness [the Prophet] in moral character and will reappear when everybody is neglectful and Truth is overlooked and oppression is rampant in the world...”⁹

This narrative shows that Imam Mahdi (AJ), who will one day come to rescue people from oppression and darkness, is similar in moral character and personality to his great forefather, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW). It is necessary to search in historical books and narratives in order to know about the Prophet’s character: The Prophet’s moral character was so great that his contemporary cruel people gave up their spiteful practices – like burying their daughters alive and trampling on other people’s rights – and embellished themselves with faith to God and good deeds. In his life, never did the Holy Prophet (SAW) waste his time. He always took refuge in God from indolence and encouraged Muslims to work. Imam Bagher (AS) states: “The Prophet Moses

asked his Lord: ‘O God! Which of your subjects do you hate the most?’ God replied: ‘the one who is like the dead at night and slothful in the day.’”¹⁰

The Holy Prophet of Islam (SAW) was always inclined towards justice and equanimity. Never did he resort to deceit and duplicity in his trades and never was he strict in commerce. Hardly ever did he squabble with others and was never stubborn, and barely did he put his responsibilities on others’ shoulders. He considered truthfulness and trustworthiness to be the pillars of a good life because, according to Shiism, these two attributes have been stressed in all the prophets’ teachings.¹¹

In the Holy Prophet’s opinion, all the people in the society must put up resistance to the oppressors and never should we be mere passive onlookers. His Highness stated: “help your brother no matter if he is an oppressor or oppressed. If he is an oppressor, stop him from oppressing others, and if he is oppressed, him help.”¹²

He loved to endure hunger so that he could strengthen his patience. Sometimes he had to tie a stone to his stomach to alleviate

the agony caused by hunger.¹³ He acted with forgiveness with people who harassed him and thus they felt ashamed of their actions.

According to a narrative, “the Prophet (SAW) owed a Jew some Dinars which he claimed from the Prophet. The Messenger of God (SAW) told the man, ‘Jew! Presently I have nothing to give you.’ The Jew said, ‘then I will not depart from you until you pay your debt.’ The Prophet (SAW) replied, ‘Then I will sit beside you...After some time the Jew said, ‘Hark, swear to God! My behavior towards you was just because I had noticed your characteristics in the *Torah*; because I read in it that Muhammad ibn Abdullah will be born in Mecca and will immigrate to Medina. He is not bad-tempered or irascible. And he will not taint himself with swear and dirty words. I bear witness that there is no God but Allah and you are the Messenger of Allah. These are my properties, give orders on how they should be spent as the Law of God ordains.’ And that Jew had a lot of properties.”¹⁴

The Prophet’s modesty, geniality and humility did not diminish the greatness of his character and spirituality. Having a

good moral character was so important to him that he said it was half of religion.¹⁵ In this regard, he said, “The best thing granted to Man is good behavior and the worst thing given to Man is evil character with a beautiful face.”¹⁶ He took pity on minors and respected the elderly; he entertained and sheltered the orphans, was good to the poor, cared about animals and forbade people from abusing them. His Highness had strongly advised his people that, when in war, do not kill the elderly, children and women, and urged them not to mutilate the corpses of the slain enemy. He invited the entire humanity to establish peace in the world and avoid war unless it was necessary and inevitable. Certainly, the Savior of the

world, Imam Mahdi (AJ), similar to his noble forefather, is great, elegant and humble. Imam Mahdi wears ragged clothes and eats simple bread. He is the Prophet’s namesake and has his moral character.¹⁷

D) He is knowledgeable and wise

The knowledge and wisdom of Imam Mahdi (AJ), the twelfth of the Prophet’s successors, is connected to the Divine Wisdom and thus guarantees the preservation of religion and responds to the needs of all humanity, About the Savior, Amir Al-Mumeneen Ali (AS) – the first of the Prophet’s successors – says, “He is the most knowledgeable of the people”.¹⁸

Imam Bagher (AS) – the fifth of the Prophet’s successors – states: “the insight about the Book of Almighty God and the Holy Prophet’s Tradition grows in our Mahdi’s heart like flowers growing out of the earth. Then, if any of you saw him, tell him, ‘peace be upon you, the heir to mercy and prophethood, and the treasury of knowledge and the proof of the eminence of the Mission’”¹⁹

E) He is virtuous and ignores the worldly possessions

The eighth of the Prophet’s successors, Imam Reza (AS) has also given the good tidings of Mahdi’s Reappearance. Imam Reza (AS) says about him, “the attire of the Savior is naught but



“the attire of the Savior is naught but rough clothes and his sustenance is naught but some stale food.”²⁰

rough clothes and his sustenance is naught but some stale food.”²⁰

F) He is generous and munificent.

One of the characteristics of Imam Mahdi (AJ) is his generosity towards others. The Holy Prophet of Islam (SAW) said About Mahdi (AJ), “a man will come to him and say, ‘Mahdi! Grant something to me.’ And then Mahdi will give him as much property as he can carry with himself.”²¹

Other Characteristics of Imam Mahdi (AJ)

As already mentioned, Muslims believe that, at the End of Time, the Savior of humanity is Mahdi (AJ). He is responsive to everybody in all material, spiritual, religious and worldly matters. He is embellished with the greatest moral characteristics; he is able to govern and perfectly manage the entire humanity based on religious teachings; and he is also appointed by God.

Benevolence will become a widespread cultural value in his time. More to the point, it has been mentioned in different Hadiths that, in his reign, the believers will not demand interests from each other in their transactions. Imam Mahdi (AJ), the twelfth of the Prophet’s suc-

cessors, is absolutely benevolent and will fulfill the demands and wishes of the others without being hard on them. Although he is kind and lenient with the poor and the underprivileged, he is strict with his envoys and agents.²²

Since he is the heir to all the noble prophets and Friends of God, Imam Mahdi (AJ) possesses a comprehensive range of great moral attributes.

He prays and worships God from the depth of his heart and is very courageous and firm although, at the same time, he is very patient; all of which are from among his myriads of moral features.

The patience and tolerance of each person must be tested against the miseries and misfortunes he confronts in his life.

How many years have the most tolerant people in history bore hardships and agonies? For sure the calamity Imam Mahdi (AJ) has undertaken in these centuries²³ is incomparable to any misfortune that any human being has had experienced in his or her life. The reason is that not only

the enormity of the catastrophes in these long years might be the touchstone to test his forbearance, but also the kind of responsibility he has tells us how much tolerant he is. Hence, Hazrat Mahdi (AJ) is the Imam, *Hujjat* and superior of all the believers as well as the father and protector of all the Shiites.

With such a familiarity with the Promised Mahdi’s sacred character, each and every human being expects and wishes to have a secure, safe and peaceful life in his reign. But for him to reappear, we need to prepare the way; both personally by self-refinement and socially by the introduction of His Highness’s attributes and mission to the people.

We look forward to that Day

(Endnotes)

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Globalization Has Actually Facilitated The Appearance of Imam Mahdi (AJ)

Promised Peace magazine interviewed Dr. Mohsen Reza Hyderi, MD, PhD, neuroscientist and faculty member at Tarbiat Modares University, Tehran, Iran.

Dr. Hydari, thank you in advance and I am certain that the readers of this English journal highly appreciate your answers to the following questions.

PP: With respect to the current needs of the people of the world, which subjects of the Mahdism would help them fill the voids of their life, like in spiritual, psychological, or ethical aspects?

Dr. Hydari: All of the above with addition of divinity or divine values.

PP: Which topics of Mahdism and the Messiah are hottest among others?

Dr. Hydari: The concept of Mahdi or the Savior in major religions.

PP: What aspect of Mahdism is most welcomed all over the world?

Dr. Hydari: Global Justice as far I realize.

PP: What is the relationship between globalization and the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (AJ).



Dr. Hydari: Globalization has actually facilitated the appearance of Imam Mahdi [AJ].

PP: In which dimensions of messianic, the people whom you are in contact with, are facing untrue information?

Dr. Hydari: Many people believe it is not possible to have a global savior because the United States of America is very powerful. Some others have misconceptions about the characteristics of Imam Mahdi [AJ] or Messiah and the aggressive side of his movement.

PP: Which doubts about the Mahdism among the Muslims and the Messiah among all the people are the most common as far as you see it?

Dr. Hydari: Same as above.

PP: In today's world, which topics are being discussed by Anti-Messianics in order to oppose this idea?

Dr. Hydari: Promotion of unethical and extremely deviated lifestyles to counter-Mahdism and an ideally ethical society.

PP: What characteristics, those who pretend to be the Messiah or his representative, try to simulate? In other words, which one of their characteristics attracts people the most?

Dr. Hydari: The outward or charismatic aspect.

PP: On which topics, do Anti-

Imamates stress the most and which doubts do they discuss the most? (Please, name both the logical and anecdotal doubts)

Dr. Hydari: Promotion of unethical and extremely deviated lifestyles to counter Mahdism and an ideally ethical society.

PP: In today's world, which one is more awaited, a divine Messiah or a human one? Why has the belief in a divine Messiah grown weak?

Dr. Hydari: Divine messiah. Because materialistic tendencies have increased.

PP: Do those who try to erase the Messianic, with false teachings circulate?

Dr. Hydari: As it is mentioned in previous questions, promotion of unethical and extremely deviated lifestyles to counter Mahdism and an ideally ethical society.

PP: Please name the media including journals, TV channels, websites among others working on Messianic (Please mention whether they are working about or against Messianic).

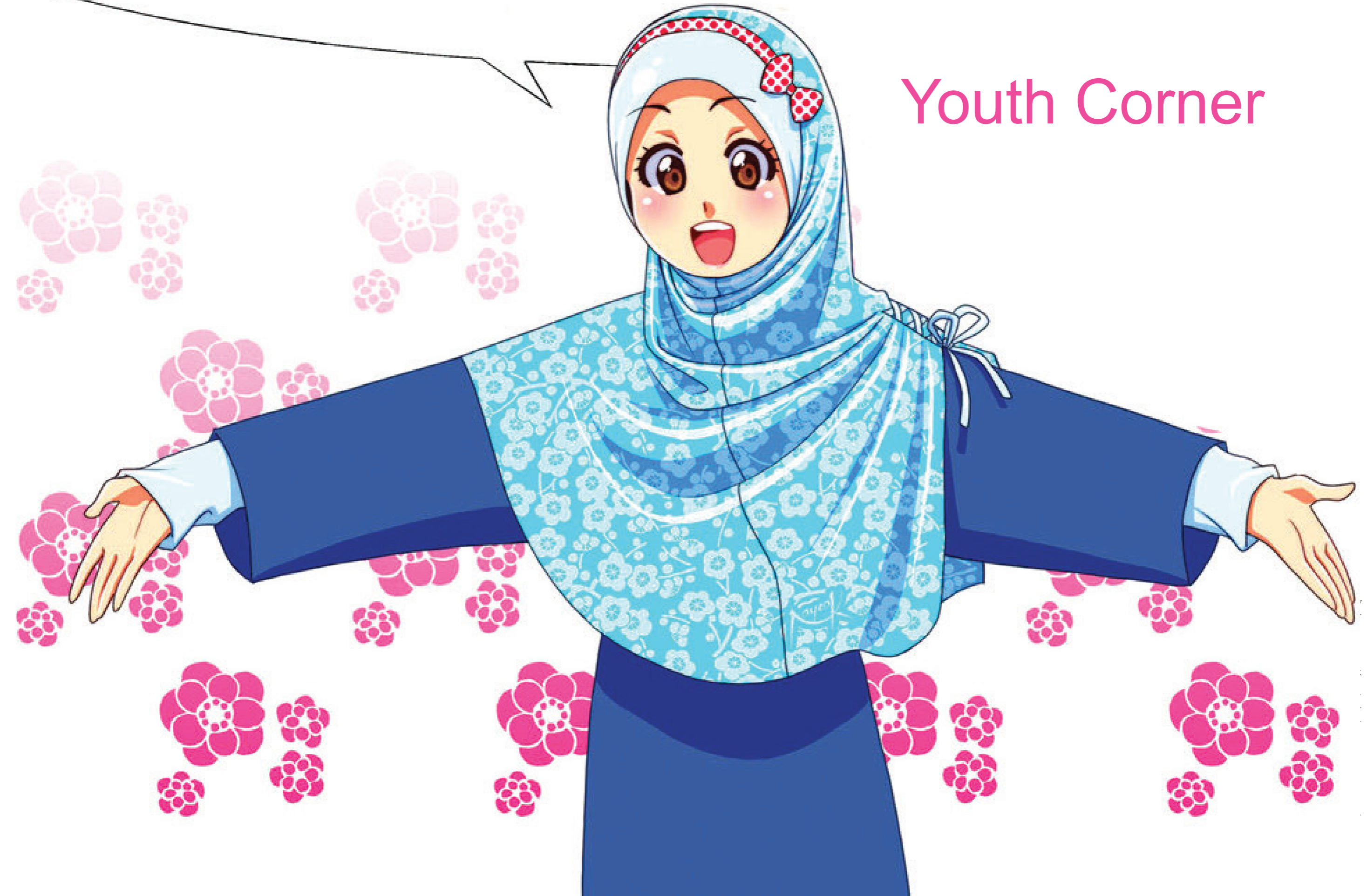
Dr. Hydari: I am not aware of any.

PP: What training strategies can be pursued at both family and society levels to shape an awaiting society?

Dr. Hydari: True Islamic teachings, both in theory and practice.

Thank you for your kind reply to our questions.

Youth Corner



Life Skills in the Age of Occultation

Compiled by Shahrzad Shahsavan
Translated by Dr. Mohsen Hanif

This article is in continuation of the subject raised in the previous issue of the magazine. In the previous part we came to the following point.

Life skills consist of a series of capabilities that help the process of adapting oneself to different circumstances and encourage the development of a positive perspective and productive behavior. These life skills enable us to accept our social responsibilities and also give us the power to confront the daily demands, expectations and difficulties, especially in our interpersonal communications better. Hence, all of us need to learn and apply life skills in our daily lives. The employment of these skills helps us be happier, more successful and more influential people. They also help us act wisely in different situations. Particularly now, in the age of Occultation, we need such good life skills more than any other time in order to be capable of making correct choices. Besides the skills explained in the previous part, other skills that we require to develop in ourselves are as follows:



1-How to say No and avoid sins

The ability to say no to indecent people, wrong ideas and erroneous movements, and also to avoid improper and tainted environments highly increases our chances to succeed in life and subsequently results in many positive outcomes. For example, it helps us in a number of ways such as:

- A. managing and saving our time
- B. getting rid of the life redundancies
- C. staying clean in improper and tainted and corrupted social environments
- D. obtaining opportunities for planning and the management of personal affairs
- E. preserving spiritual health by avoiding immoral acts
- F. protecting our religious and moral bounds
- G. surviving from the punishments of hereafter and the divine wrath

2-How to remain vigilant

In a *Hadith*, Imam Sadiq (AS) puts much stress on vigilance (...کن مترقبا).

Vigilance means guarding oneself against bad conditions, depraved people, dark thoughts and wrong behaviors. In order to remain upright and virtuous at the time we expect the Coming of the Savior, learning this skill is very essential because negligence in this regard may throw us into the vortex of devastation.

What follows are some examples of vigilance:

- a) Feeling God's omnipresence
- b) Observing our duty to Imam

One of the life skills we need to improve in the age of Occultation is self-modification, which means the acquisition of ethical beauties and the ornamentation of our spirit with noble moral attributes in order to better our pattern of behavior.

Mahdi (AJ)

c) Controlling our heart and intellect against temptations, improper thoughts and faulty attributes

d) Controlling our limbs and organs against corporeal sins

e) Protecting ourselves against serious physical diseases.

f) Protecting ourselves against any persuasion to earn a living in illegal or *Haram* ways

g) Restraining ourselves at parties and meetings in which morally improper things happen

h) Protecting ourselves against the Divine Wrath and Punishment

i) Securing ourselves against enemies and strangers

j) Safeguarding our family and property

k) Defending our nation and land

3-How to modify our pattern of behavior

One of the life skills we need to improve in the age of Occultation is self-modification, which means the acquisition of ethical beauties and the ornamentation of our spirit with noble moral attributes in order to better our pattern of behavior.

The Holy Prophet of Islam (SAW) introduced the development of noble moral attributes and the refinement of humankind's soul and psyche as the prime goals of his Mission.

As pointed out in many

Hadiths, if we embellish our heart with spiritual beauties and admirable attributes, we will then enjoy numerous worldly and otherworldly benefits; some of which are as follows:

1. Life will become pleasant
2. The reward of Jihad for the sake of Allah will be endowed upon us in the life hereafter
3. our good deeds will increase
4. we will become closer to and more intimate with the Holy Prophet (SAW)
5. we will win promotion
6. we will prosper financially
7. the number of our friends will increase
8. We will have a longer and more successful life
9. Our expiations will be accepted
10. Towns will boom and thrive

4-How to be earnest and diligent

One of the ethical damages threatening us in the age of Occultation is despair, disappointment and self-disempowerment. The reasons why such a negative ethical attribute may dominate a person are the alleged success of the enemy and its depraved culture, the weakness of the righteous people to fight the enemy back, the procrastination of the age of Occultation and also the inaction of the believers to carry out personal and social reforms. Therefore, The Qur'an and *Ahl*

Al-Bayt (The House of the Prophet Muhammad) have repeatedly advised people to be earnest and diligent in both personal and social domains; the former signifies the inner battle against the dominance of carnal desires and the latter refers to the struggle for social reforms. Untiring persistence and Jihad for the sake of Allah brings about a number of positive results. For example, it helps us to

- Achieve many or some of the goals
- Take benefit from the pure Divine Guidance
- Succeed in our plans
- taste the sweetness of victory
- Motivate other people
- Improve self-confidence and the sense of fruitfulness
- Have our sins forgiven by God
- Solve ours and others' problems
- Nullifying and thwarting the enemies' plots and plans

5-How to seek refuge in the Qur'an

In the precarious age of Occultation when sedition, darkness, doubt, wickedness, apostasy, misbehavior and immorality is rampant, in order to improve their faith, morality and virtue, each person needs to take refuge in a citadel which would bulwark them against any blight and menace.

Ahl Al-Bayt suggests that, in order to survive, the believers must seek refuge in the Qur'an and its elucidating Verses. The guidelines that the Qur'an offers can be discussed in two categories; first, the routine guidance which is the same in all ages and circumstances and, second, the especial plan to seek advice in the Qur'an which is exclusive to a critical age, especially the time when we expect

the reappearance of the Savior. There are numerous Hadiths that further explain the issue. For instance, Imam Ali (AS) states: "In the Qur'an is the remedy for the greatest pains; the pain of heresy, duplicity, corruption and depravity. God has endowed upon you His Book which is the tight rope, the enlightening light and the healing cure...whoever speaks according to the [Qur'anic] principles, he is right, and whoever acts based on its advice, he will stay ahead. Know that the Qur'an contains the future science, the past wisdom, the remedy to your pains and whatsoever that helps keep discipline and order among you."

The Holy Prophet (SAW) states: The best of you are those who learn the Qur'an and teach it to others.

6-How to study and get accustomed to reading books

One of the required techniques to have a successful and prosperous life is to steadily improve our knowledge while keeping our interest in creating a science-friendly environment for ourselves. One of the most important and usual ways to create such an environment is to learn how to get accustomed to reading books enjoyably. Books on developmental psychology remark: In today's world, the reading skill is counted as one of the most fundamental life skills.

Imam Ali (AS) states: books are gardens of scientists.

People who pacify themselves with books will never lose any peace and tranquility.

Since the acquisition of this skill is very decisive in a person's success, it is necessary to be familiar with the benefits of the habit to read.

Usual reading can have benefits in

The reading skill is counted as one of the most fundamental life skills.



our personal, familial and social spheres.

There are many personal advantages of reading, For instance:

- It gives you the good feeling of being knowing and a scientist.
- It helps you find answers for your questions
- Books can be friends who accompany you in your times of solitude.
- It enriches your times of privacy and leisure
- It strengthens our intellect and spirit
- It soothes our soul and psyche

Some of familial and social advantages of habitual reading are as follows:

- It brings about the growth of the society's reading habit and the development of book industry
- It causes the promotion of social culture
- It helps the insightful and unbiased regulation of social interactions
- It stimulates the quality enhancement of the contents of the books as well as printing industry

It is necessary to know that according to the advice of the religious elites, one of the techniques to confront the events of the end of Time is to grow the habit of reading.

Imam Sadiq (AS) states: "write down your knowledge and spread it among your brethren and when you are about to die bequeath it to your children because a chaotic time will come when people will befriend nobody but their books."

The reasons why *Ahl Al-Bayt* put a lot of stress on reading books are:

- a) The need to know religious teachings
- b) The complexity and chaos of social interactions
- c) The lack of access to the infallible Imam
- d) The difficulty of reaching trustworthy religious scholars because of either their being few or their busy schedule
- e) The prevalence of devious pseudo-scholars
- f) Various social troubles and seditions as well as the difficulty of distinguishing the Right from the Wrong
- g) The preservation of the scholars' findings and the written culture

Below are the strategies which enable us to put in practice *Ahl Al-Bayt's* advice in this regard:

- a) Putting aside a part of our income to buy books and getting accustomed to this habit
 - b) Writing research papers and pamphlets
 - c) Giving each other suitable and scientific books as gifts and encouraging one another to read
 - d) Holding family gatherings to discuss books and scientific issues
- Centralizing the Qur'an and Hadiths by *Ahl Al-Bayt* in this Regard

7-How to preserve Religion

One of the biggest spiritual assets of humankind is religion and its preservation takes a lot of physical and spiritual energy.

Different Ahadith have variously described the value of this asset:

- Religion is honor
- Religion is light
- Religion brings the noblest

- family and ancestry
- Religion dignifies human beings in the afterlife
- Religion is the cause of life
- Religion is a fruitful tree
- Religion is the boiling spring of ethics and spirituality
- Religion is the best guardian and the strongest support

However, some strategies have been noted in Hadiths to secure religion when Imam Mahdi (AJ) is in Occultation:

- a) Building up a strong relationship with God
- b) Praying to God to give us real insight and help us to remain steadfast in our path
- One of the prayers of the Holy Prophet (SAW) was: "O God who keep hearts firm! Keep our hearts firm with your religion."
- c) Trying to achieve certitude about our heartfelt faith by means of reason and intellect
- Imam Ali (AS) states: "remaining steadfast in religion is possible with the power of certitude."
- d) Attracting *Ahl Al-Bayt's* kind attention

Imam Baqir (AS) states: "is religion anything other than the love (of *Ahl Al-Bayt*)?"

- e) Developing our insight
- Imam Ali (AS) said: "preservation of religion is the result of gaining insight."

- f) Being reason-oriented
- Imam Ali (AS) said: "a religion is not reformed unless with the power of reason."

- g) Being ethics-oriented
- h) Having religious knowledge

The Holy Prophet (SAW) states: "only a person who has an all-

encompassing knowledge of religion can help to preserve it."

- i) Being Qur'an-oriented
- Imam Sadiq (AS) says: "someone who knows his religion through the Book of the Almighty God will never be doubtful about his religion even if the mountains move."

- j) Not being strict and austere about religion

The Holy Prophet of Islam (SAW) says: "O people! The religion of God is simple."

- k) Being hopeful about the future
- One of the principle psychological factors in order to remain vivacious and lively is to be optimistic about our personal and social life and be hopeful about future.

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Kinder than Mother

Mother

Joseph was studying in his room when Marry knocked on his door and entered.

Marry: "Joseph, our teacher told us to write a paper about Mothers, but I can't think of anything and I've got nothing to write about. Can you help me?"

Joseph: "Of course, But I have to think about it for a while"

Marry: "Don't you think that father has been a bit late tonight?"

Joseph: "Yes"

After a while dad came home. During dinner mom asked dad: "Why were you late tonight? Was everything alright?"

Father: "On my way, the sound of someone moaning caught my attention, and I followed the voice, an old lady who had a grocery bag was sitting on a seat in an alley, looking all tired and exhausted. I said: "Do you need help, Ma'am?" and the poor lady who couldn't even speak loudly out of exhaustion, softly said: "yes, that would be great, thank you". On the way she told me about her life; that her husband had passed away and that she had to go to work from early in the morning till late at night and when she came home, she had to do the house works and take care of her children, and this is why I was late tonight."

Suddenly Joseph thought of Mary's paper. He told her: "Mothers are the angels on earth. Look at our mother; she works day and night without any payment, without any complaint. There's always a smile on her face and kindness in her eyes. Think about the woman that father just told us about, and you could write a good paper."

As she was thinking, Mary took a pen and paper and went to her room and started writing the paper.

The next day Mary's teacher asked her to read her paper out loud. Mary started in the name of God and continued:

"It was a topic which I had no idea what to write about when our teacher assigned it to us. But after some thinking and with the help of my brother, I realized that you can write about mothers so much that it can fill all the skies and all the oceans, and maybe even more. There are no words in any language that can fully describe mother.

Being a mother is the hardest job in the world, with no payment, no rewards, no retirement, nothing.

Mother is a person who whenever there is not enough food, she is the one who's not so hungry and she is the one who gets full sooner than everybody else. When we get sick, she is the one who takes care of us. Mother is the masterpiece of all the creation and heaven belongs to her.

Mother, I wanted to thank you because of all the things that you have done for me and because by sacrificing your life you made my life bright and beautiful, and tell you that I love you with all my heart."

When her paper was done, Mary's teacher and all her classmates clapped for her and praised her for this beautiful paper.

When she came home, Joseph asked her about her paper. She told him that everyone liked it and they applauded her but her teacher had told her that: "All the things that you said are right. Everybody's mother is the best and kindest person to them but there's only one person whose kindness is equal for everyone and is even kinder than mothers.

He takes care of people and watches over them and loves everyone regardless of their gender, race, and color or where they reside in this world."When her words came to this Joseph asked her: "who is that person, Marry?"

And she said: "He is our Mr. Kind!"



Du'a for Marifah of Imam Zaman (AJ)

One who really loves his Imam (AJ) while saying Du'a or praying for his reappearance tries to say Du'a from one's heart and search him in the depth of one's soul. He not only speaks with his tongue, but also his heart is burning for his beloved. His heart feels lost, being far from his love and his eyes are tearful looking forward and waiting to meet him.

Religious men advise Hazrat Mahdi's friends, believers and lovers to carefully read this Du'a all the time. In other words it is one of the responsibilities of those who await his reappearance.

“O' Allah! Grant me ma'rifah of Yourself for if I do not have the ma'rifah of You then I will never know Your Prophet.

O' Allah! Grant me ma'rifah of Your Messenger for if I do not have the ma'rifah of Your Messenger than I will never know Your Representative.

O' Allah! Grant me ma'rifah of Your Representative for if I do not have the ma'rifah of Your Representative, then surely I have gone astray from my religion.” (1)

Du'a for the Health of Imam Zaman (AJ)

One of the responsibilities of the Imams' friends is to say Du'a and pray for his health and keep him from danger and risks which threaten him. They can pray in any language which they know, and it is better to say those Du'as mentioned in Maftih al-Jenan like the following: “In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

O Allah, please send blessings to Muhammad and his household,

O Allah, be, for Your representative, the Hujjat (proof), son of Al-Hassan,

Your blessings be on him and his forefathers, in this hour and in every hour,

a guardian, a protector, a leader, a helper, a proof, and an eye. Until You make him live on earth for You,

and cause him to live in it for a long time.”

Transliteration:

Allaahumma Kun Le-Waliyyekal Hujjatibnil Hasane Salawaatok' A'layhe W' A'laa Aabaa-Ehi Fee Haazehis Sa'-A'te Wa Fee Kulle Sa'-A'tin Waliyyawn Wa Haafezawn Wa Qaa-Edawn Wa Naaserawn Wa Daleelawn W' A'ynan Hattaa Tuskenahu Arzaka Ta'-A'n Wa Tomatt'-A'hu Feehaa Tawee-laa.

Du'a for his early Reappearance

One of the certain responsibilities of Shiites at the time of his absence is to pray and ask Allah to hasten in his reappearance. A real Shiite and lover of Imam is one who asks Allah to rush the emergence of Imam Mahdi (AJ) all the time, at the time of prayers, morning and night, or during all his essential prayers. O' Allah please hasten the emergence of your helper Imam Mahdi (AJ).

Imam Sadiq (AS) in this regard says:

“Await his reappearance every morning and night.”

And in other Hadith, he says:

You must be waiting for the reappearance of your master every day and night.

Therefore all the believers and his lovers should remember him all the time and say Du'a for his reappearance and ask God to accelerate his reappearance as fast as possible in order to rescue all the nations from oppressing and Shi'a rise to the highest esteem and greatness.

Imam Mahdi (AJ) also says:

Pray a lot for hurrying in our reappearance because it results in your rescue. (2)

1. Koleyni, Osul-al-Kafi, Vol.1

2. Shia 24.

Du'a & Supplication





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