

AWAITING IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF RESPONSIBILITIES

Awaiting (Intezar) is the result of two conditions. Firstly, he is not satisfied with the present circumstances and secondly, he expects the improvement in his circumstances. If either of these conditions are not fulfilled then it is not awaiting and the person concerned is not an "awaiter" *(Muntazir).

The awaiting of Hazrat Imam Mahdi (A.S.) also holds the same distinct characteristics. Even here awaiting purports that an awaiter is not satisfied with his present circumstances and is hoping for a bright and better future.

A believer is a witness to the assaults of the enemies of Islam which they are inflicting on Islam with their full might and munitions. The genuineness of beliefs and deeds are not judged as per the criterion set by Quran and Hadith. Instead they are examined through the clannish prejudice and norms set by their forefathers. In such circumstances, a genuine awaiter should not sit idle. Rather, the Holy Quran has instructed him in these words:

"And say to those who do not believe that you act as much you can. We are also trying. You all await and surely we all are awaiting." (Hud: 122)

It is an open challenge for the enemies, that let them make their best efforts. In the light of this challenge can anyone say that awaiting implies sitting idle and remaining oblivious? Or awaiting means to remain always alert and defeat enemies on every front. Ofcourse, it necessitates that a believer should never exult on his strength but should always rely on Allah. Because reliance in Allah gives victory to weaklings over their stronger adversaries. Imam Mohammad Baqir (A.S.) said:

"If you act on our advices and teachings a remain in the same conditions, then whosoever dies before the advent of our Qaem (A.S.) will attain martyrdom."

(Beharul-Anwar, Vol. 52, Chap. 22)

In another tradition Imam Jafar Sadiq (A.S.) said: "The one who desires to be among the companions of Hazrat Qaem (A.S.), then he must wait, adopt piety and behave courteously. If he dies in such a condition before the advent of Qaem (A.S.), then his reward will be similar to the one who attains his (Qaem's (A.S.)) era. Hence strive vigorously, await his arrival congratulations to you all for your relentless awaiting".

(Ghaibat-e-Nomani, Chap. 11, Hadith 16)

While the first tradition calls for complete emulation of Ahle-Bait (A.S.) so that human thinking and beliefs may not be distracted from the right path the second tradition exhorts for adopting piety and doing good, so that even in the field of practice, their should not be any aberration.

The following tradition further clarifies that awaiting does not mean remaining idle and careless. It never purports mere verbal claim without practice but it signifies endless efforts and

incessant endeavors as Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) himself says: ***"Then all of you must do such deeds which draw you nearer to our love and affection. And refrain from such acts which evokes your anger and displeasure"*** (Beharul Anwar, Vol. 53, Chap. 21)

He is the true awaiter who always seeks to please his Imam (A.S.). His every effort is directed at achieving the invaluable pleasure of Imam (A.S.) and it is but evident that the pleasure of Imam is in abiding by the tenets of Islam and not in its sacrilege.

It is a command for us and our Imam has encouraged us and has instilled enthusiasm in us through these words:

"We are not negligent of your affairs and are not forgetful of your remembrance. Had it been so, then terrible calamities would have struck you and your enemies would have destroyed you. Fear Allah, strengthen your hands, so that we may relieve you of the tribulations that have afflicted you."

(Beharul Anwar, Vol. 53, Chap. 21)

Such love, kindness, affection, and fondness is not found even in the parents, let alone anyone else. After seeing so much kindness and compassion whose heart will not be moved for action? Whose eyes will not shed tears at the separation from such an Imam, while his love is glowing in his heart when we see such a magnanimity we yearn to place our forehead at his feet. But the burdens of sins benumbed our agility and the clutches of bad character retarded our steps. The reason of being deprived of his esteemed presence, as explained by Imam (A.S.) himself, is that: ***"If our Shias (may Allah give them the grace of obedience) would have fulfilled their covenants with united hearts then surely there would have been no delay in our meeting and they would have received the blessings of our visitation But the things which increased the distance between us are those news which we have received about them regarding those actions which we dislike and which we do not expect from them."***

(Beharul Anwar, Vol. 53, Chap. 21).

In this Tauqee a signed letter from Imam (A.S.)] Imam has not only explained the reason for the delay in his reappearance but has also shown a clear way to approach him. When a true awaiter is blessed with the Ziyarat of Imam (A.S.) in Samarra then he addresses his dearest Imam thus:

"O Master be a witness I pledge to thee even if your occultation is prolonged to such an extent that my life is on the verge of exhaustion. Still my certitude will enhance every moment. Your love will keep on increasing manifold, with the increment in my trust in you. I will keep waiting for you unswervingly and I shall be waiting for (your) call of Jihad

"May my life, my wealth, my children, my family and whatever Allah has conferred upon me, be sacrificed for you and I leave them in your authority."

[Mafatihul-Jenan, Ziyarate-Imam-e-Asr (A.S.)]

It becomes clear after this explanation that a true awaiter never tires of waiting for Imam. He keeps on exerting continuously instead of being a silent spectator

Merely being discontent with the present circumstances is not sufficient but he must strive to bring change in it. It becomes evident that in such vicious atmosphere and sinful surroundings, what is the responsibility of a true awaiter? And how important it is? Besides these there are also other responsibilities which are as follows:

Character Building

The foremost thing which a true awaiter is expected to do is to build his character. Character-building implies following the tenets of Islam, developing good traits and purify his self in such a way that every aspect of his personality should reflect the teachings of Ahlebait (A.S.). Often the friends and helpers of Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) are described with such superlatives: **"Those who will believe in the hidden Imam they are the most pious ones and their faith is of the highest degree. They will establish prayers and spend generously in the way of God. They believe firmly in Quran and other divine scriptures and they are certain of Qiyamat"**.

(Tafsire-Nurus-Saqlain, Vol. 1, Sura Baqarah)

"They are obedient, sincere, honorable, good doers, patient, devout, helpers of the oppressed, cordial and pure-hearted."

(Kamaluddin, Chap. 43, Hadith 19)

Their hearts are of steel. If they cast a glance at an iron mountain, it will crumble and reduce to bits.

(Ilzamun-Naasib, Vol. 1, Pg. 67)

Their bodies will emit fragrance of musk, while their countenance will be dazzling like a full moon."

(Kamaluddin, Chap. 24. Tradition No. 11)

"They will be braver than lions and sharper than spears."

(Beharul-Anwar, Vol. 52, Chap. 27. Tradition 17)

"They will worship at night."

(Muntakhabul-Asar section 9, Chap. 3. Tradition No. 1)

(Now whosoever wishes to be among the friends and helpers of Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) then he must adorn his self with the above mentioned attributes and characteristics)

"In the period of occultation they will hold religious convictions and will not allow the devil to meddle with their faith.

(Kamaluddin, Pg. 51)

Their gnosis will be pure and veritable, while their faith will increase constantly. They will mould their character in such a way that nothing will stop them from emulating the Ahlebait (A.S.)."

(Kamaluddin, Pg. 51)

These excerpts were extracted from various traditions which clarifies that in the period of occultation one of our P vital responsibilities is to absorb the teachings of Ahlebait (A.S.) in our

character and personality so that we may not wander hither and thither while our beloved Imam (A.S.) is far from our eyes. In such an aimless wandering, it is quite possible that a wanderer may end up getting attached to any mundane caller, because every belief which is not a product of the teachings of Ahlebait (A.S.) is a clear deviation and every courteousness which does not reflect their mannerisms is in fact sheer discourtesy

It is a proven fact that as much as a man holds Imam (A.S.) dearer that much he will be attracted towards good deeds and demeanors. And he will cleanse his self from bad habits and vices. Numerous such incidents can be found in the books, stories of those persons, particularly youths who felt the love of Imam (A.S.) in their hearts which changed their entire lives. Undoubtedly, love is such an elixir by which every impossible is made possible.

The Reformation Of Society

One of our important responsibilities in the period of occultation is the reformation of society. The holy Quran in Surae-Asr has suggested a remedy for those who want to remain secure from loss i.e. 'enjoining patience to each other'. Islam is against reclusion and ascetism. Rather it advocates a social and public life. The deplorable aspect of the contemporary world is that people want to lead a social life but due to the fear of society, they do not want to take any initiative for reformation. The fear of "what the people will say" has superseded the fear of God. Hazrat Imam Ali Naqi (A.S.) has extolled the virtues of those who are fulfilling their responsibilities in the period of occultation in the following words:

"Had there not been such scholars in the period of occultation who call the people towards the Ahlebait (A.S.), guide towards them, defend their religion with the proofs of Allah, protect weak Shias from the devilish designs, deception of the tyrants and tentacles of the enemies of Islam, then surely all would have deviated from the religion of Allah. But it is they who are guarding the hearts of the weak Shias like a captain guards the passengers on his ship. They are those who enjoy a supreme position in front of Allah".

(Mahajjatul-Baizaa, Vol. 1, Pg. 32)

If they would not reform their society then how would it be known that the whole society is awaiting Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.). The following tradition throws light on our responsibilities in the period of occultation:

In the exegesis of the Holy Quran attributed to Imam Hasan Askari (A.S.), the Holy Prophet (S.A.) had explained the significance of word 'Orphan' in the following verse; *"And when we took the covenant from the children of Israil of not worshipping anyone but Allah and goodness to parents and by giving to near ones and orphans."* (Baqarah: 83)

The Holy Prophet (S.A.) said:

"Allah the Almighty has commanded to do good with the orphans and to act as (a source of) guidance for them. Since they are deprived of their kind and affectionate father. Allah will extend his grace to the one who will have mercy on the orphans. If a person caresses the head of an orphan then as many number of hairs come under his hand those many vast and can expansive palatial mansions will be given to him in Paradise. This place will contain all sorts of comforts and luxuries in its precincts... These people will stay in it forever."

(Tafseer attributed to Imam Hasan Askari (A.S.),Pg. 239)

Imam Hasan Askari further elucidates the tradition of Holy Prophet (S.A.) in these words *"There is another orphan whose plight is more pitiful. He is the one who is far from his Imam and cannot have access to him. He who is not aware of his religious obligations. Yes indeed O'people - one who teaches and trains our far off Shias then he is similar to the guardian of an orphan.*

Be aware if somebody teaches an ignorant, guides a misguided one, instills the teachings of *Ahle-bait then on the day of Qiyamat He will be with us. We will give him a seat next to us wherever we may be."*

(Tafseer attributed to Imam Hasan Askari (A.S.), Pg.239)

In this period of occultation, when we are separated from our kind Imam (a.s.) then what else can be the reward of teaching, training, and reform for ing the society? Where is the teaching and training body of society and where is the proximity to Masumeen to (A.S.) and the fortune of staying with them? This tradition is sufficient to enlighten the keen and sensitive Shias. Even women can join hands with men in fulfilling this responsibility.

IN THE VIEW OF IMAM MAHDI (A.S.) - WAHABIS

After propounding Qura'nic and traditional, arguments there remains no doubt amongst any Muslim - irrespective of his being Sunni, Shia, Wahabi or Non-Wahabi, regarding the belief in Imam Mahdi(A.S.) and it is proved beyond doubt that it is a genuine Islamic belief. But since the Wahabi sect is having a very narrow-minded belief about some of concepts of Islam hence from its very inception, it has been a butt of rebuke from the Muslim scholars In this brief article we will analyze the viewpoint of Wahabis regarding Imam Mahdi (A.S.).

In fact the following proofs will clarify that like other Muslim scholars even Wahabi Scholars believe in Mahdaviyat and they regard this belief as the culmination of the Islamic creed.

1- The Wahabi sect is an offshoot of the Ahle Sunnah and like other Muslims, believe in Qur'an and traditions. They also have faith in the traditions of Seah-e-Sittah and other authentic books. Since the traditions pertaining to Imam Mahdi (A.S.) are quoted from the Holy Prophet (S.A.) and are found in abundance in the books of traditions, hence they do believe in Imam Mahdi (A.S.).

2- Ibn Taimiyyah (exp. 728 A.H.) was a Hanbali scholar of 7th-8th century who is also known as the ideological leader of Wahabis. In his book 'Minhaajus-Sunnah' (which was a vehement assault on Shias), he considers the traditions regarding Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) as authentic and says about him in the following words: "Those traditions by which the advent of Imam Mahdi (A.S.) is expostulated are correct which are recorded by Abu Dawood, Tirmidhi, Ahmed Hanbal, and other traditionalists. For instance, the tradition of the Holy Prophet (S.A.) related by Ibn Mas'ud that: - "Even if a single day will remain from the eve of doomsday, Allah the Almighty will prolong that *day to such an extent till He raises a man from my Ahle Bait (A.S.).*"

3 - Shamsuddin Mohammad bin Abi Bakr, popularly known as Ibn Qayyum-e-Jauzi (exp. 751 A.H.), a noted celebrity of the Hanbali sect and an the ardent follower and preacher... of Ibn Taimiyah's ideas, has compiled an entire book on the topic of Imam Mahdi (A.S.). He has adorned his book with the title of 'Al-Mahdi'.

The same scholar has written another book by the name of 'Al- Munaar Al Munif Fis-Sahih Waz Zaeef' which is infact an explanation of Ibn Jauzi's book 'Al-Mauzoo'aat'. In this book in the 15th Chap from Pg. 326 to 344, he has quoted some traditions regarding Imam Mahdi (A.S.) along with the discussion on the authenticity of the traditions. He has concluded that traditions pertaining to Imam Mahdi (A.S.) are genuine and a part of the Islamic tradition. In the same book, he has written, while quoting from the book of 'Abdul Husain Aberi 'that: "The traditions regarding Imam Mahdi (A.S.) are plenty (Mutawatir) and abundantly prove that he will be from the progeny of the Holy Prophet (S.A.)."

4- Allama Mohammad bin Ali Shaukani (exp 1250 A.H.) was formerly a Zaidi who later on converted to Wahabism to become its prolific preacher in Yemen. He was such a staunch

believer in Mahdaviyat that he wrote one whole book on the subject 'Al-Tauzeeh Fi Tawatir Ma Ja'aa Fil Mahdi wal-Dajjal wal Maseeh'.

This book has been a major source of reference of most scholars. The following sentence from this book deserves attention:"Those traditions which are narrated regarding Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) are plenty. It is sufficient for him who possesses little faith and justice."

5 - Shaikh Abdul Mohsin bin Ahmad Abbad, an erudite professor of the Wahabi university of Medina, has written a book by the name of 'Aqidato Ahle-Sunnat wal-Asar Fil Mahdi Al-Muntazar' in which he has debated that the belief in Mahdaviyat is not confined only to Shias but is a pure Islamic belief. The traditions regarding Mahdaviyat are continuous and believing in Hazrat Imam Mahdi (A.S.) is essential. Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) is from the progeny of Fatema Zahra (S.A.) and will reappear in the last era of the world. Moreover, he has enlisted the names of one twenty six companions who have quoted the traditions regarding Imam Mahdi (A.S.), thirty eight names of celebrated scholars and traditionalists who have related the traditions, of which four are compiler of the Sehahs. Then he has mentioned the names of ten great Sunni scholars who have written books on this subject.

Shaikh Abbad has written another book as a refutation to the book of his contemporary scholar from Kuwait whose name was Shaikh Abdullah bin Zaid who made some very strident objections on the belief. This book is called:" Ar-Raddo Ala Man Kazeba bil Ahadith As Sahiha fil Mahdi."

In this article, first the vitriol objections of the Kuwaiti writer are quoted verbatim then he has them and later and later given fittings replies.

Keeping these facts in mind, is there any Muslim who can doubt the veracity of this belief? Is it possible that someone claims to be a Muslim but does not believe in this fundamental creed?

May Allah helps us in following the right path.

MAHDI (A.S.) THE TWELFTH IMAM

Some persons and things bear common characteristics which make them a part of one common category. Similarly some persons and things possess such exceptional attributes and qualities which give them an edge of peculiarity. It is only because of such peculiar and distinct characteristics that they are known and recognized.

These peculiar characteristics form part of the philosophy among the philosophies of the world of creation which is the foundation of the permanence of the universal order.

1) The Popular Commonality

It is a characteristic which is common in different people which means that they are found in every one. These characteristics are found in a majority of people at a time. For example there are so many Muslims in the world. Similarly walking, talking and laughing are common traits found in all and sundry. So many similar examples can be quoted of the popular commonality'.

2) The Distinct Peculiarity

These are such characteristics which make a distinct difference between men or things. These distinguish one man or thing from another.

It is but evident that one man may possess innumerable peculiarities though to remember all of them may be quite an uphill task. Well it is possible that some distinct attributes may be remembered and with help of a standard criterion that person may be recognized and distinguished. For instance if a person's physical appearance is to be described, then his face, features, countenance, complexion, mane, eyebrows and stature will be described at length. If person's lineage or pedigree is to be explained, then her mother, grandfather, grandmother and grandparents are mentioned. Similarly, if a person's deeds or achievements are to be discussed, then his reformatory steps, wars and skirmishes, covenants and contracts, efforts and endeavors, historical incidents, manners and dealings are mentioned. When his knowledgeable abilities are discussed, then his thinking, ideology, faith is mentioned. When his demeanors are discussed, then his character, mannerisms, bravery, generosity, fortitude, self-control, humility, patience, justice and such other attributes are described and if the person concerned is bad charactered then antonyms of all the above mentioned adjectives are ascribed to him. The more these attributes are explained, the better the persons would be recognized

If a person intends to travel but neither decides his destination nor arranges his travel-kit properly then certainly he will not reach any where or even if he does manage to reach somewhere, then it will certainly not be his desired destination. Indeed if the very same person decides his destination or arranges a proper travel-kit, then no doubt his journey will start and end well and finally he will reach his desired destination.

Similarly if a person wants to attain salvation, then he must select a saviour who will salvage him from deviation and lead him to salvation..

Now the question arises who this saviour should be? How he should be? How to recognize him? etc.

The answers to all such questions are furnished by Quran and Prophetic traditions in the form of principles and guidelines which can help in the search of a saviour and thus achieve success and salvation in this world and the hereafter.

One of the easiest instructions is to find one guide and tread on the path shown by him while the responsibilities of deeds will be on his shoulders so: that the person may attain enviable heights in both the worlds. The Holy Prophet (S.A.) said:

"The one who desires to live and die like me and enter in the paradise which Allah has promised to me and is known as 'Khuld', then after me he should love Ali and his progeny who will come after him. Befriend them (Peace be upon them all) because neither they will allow you to forsake the path of salvation nor will they let you be on the path of misguidance."

(Quoted from the reference of 'Al-Muraje'at viz Kitabul Kanz, Pg. 155, Tradition No. 2578)

"Obey Allah, obey the Apostle and those who are vested with authority." (Nisa:59)

[For the details and 'tafsir' of this verse refer 'Al- Montazar' Lesson Series No. 6, Chap. 6]

The Holy Quran has guided towards salvation by exhorting to obey Allah and His Apostle and those who are vested with authority. Allah and His Apostle are recognized but the problem arises in the recognition of 'Ulil Amr'. The Holy Prophet (S.A.) had solved even this problem by informing us of those signs through which 'Ulil Amr' can be identified. One of those signs is that they will be twelve in number. Some traditions and references are quoted in this regard as follows:

The Twelve Successors of the Holy Prophet (S.A.)

Jabir bin Samarah relates that once I visited the Holy Prophet (S.A.) along with my father. I heard the Holy Prophet(S.A.) saying, "This religion will not be completed unless twelve caliphs do not come to pass." Then he said something in a subdued tone, which I could not hear. I inquired from my father as to what did the Holy Prophet (S.A.) say. He replied: "Islam will remain dominant until the reign of the twelve caliphs." In another narration, the words quoted are "The religion will remain powerful, dominant and protected until the era of the twelve caliphs," or according to yet another version, "The religion will remain established upto Qiyamat unless twelve caliphs will rule upon you while all of them will be from Quraish."

The above mentioned tradition can be seen in the following books of Sunni scholars:

- 1- 'Sahih Muslim' published from 'Darul Fur qan, Jame Masjid, Delhi, Vol. 2, Pg. 65.
- 2- 'Sahih Muslim' published from 'Darul Furqan', Egypt, 1348 A.H. Vol. 2, Pg. 191.
- 3-Sunane-Abi Daud published from 'DarulEhya As-Sunnat-An-Nabaviyah, Part four 'The Book of Mahdi, Tradition No. 4289, 4280.
- 4- Al-Mojam-Al-Kabir of 'Allamah Tabarani', Pg. 108.

The noticeable point is that Sahih Muslim and Sunane-Abi Daud are enumerated amongst 'SehahSitta', the six most authentic books of traditions as per the Sunni belief. The scholars of Ahle-Sunnat rank these books as the basic and original source of Islam after the Holy Quran. The remaining four Sahih books are 1) Sahihe-Bukhari 2) Sahihe-Tirmizi 3) Sunane-Ibne Majah 4) Sunane-Nisai.

*** The Prophecies of the Holy Prophet (S.A.)**

The Holy Prophet (S.A.) said: "This religion will remain ever perfect and prestigious. After me there will be twelve successors. All of them will be from Quraish and will overcome their enemies".

(Tarikhul- Khulafa by Hafiz Suyuti, expired in 911 A.H.) He was well known amongst Sunnis and Shias. One of his famous books is "Tafsire-Durrul-Mansur". Soon after quoting this tradition, he has added a remark; "This tradition is quoted by Muslim and Bukhari and also by others".

(Sahih Bukhari, Vol. 9, Pg. 81)

The Holy Prophet (S.A.) said: "There will be twelve Emirs after me."

Who is Mahdi?

After clarifying that there will be twelve successors after the Holy Prophet (S.A.), it remains to be clarified as to who is Mahdi, and which successor of the Holy Prophet (S.A.) he is first, second, third, fourth ---- or twelfth? The Holy Prophet (S.A.) had clarified even this point.

Abdullah bin Abbas related from the Holy Prophet (S.A.) that: "I am the chief of the Messengers and Ali bin Abi Talib is the chief of successors. Certainly after me, there will be twelve successors. The first of them being Ali and last of them will be Al-Qaem".

(Faraaedus-Simtain by Shaikhul-Islam Al-Muhadith Al Kabir Ibrahim bin Mohammad bin Al-Moayyad Al-Hammui (exp. 832 A.H.) Vol. 2, Pg. 228).

In the same reference the Holy Prophet (S.A.) is reported to have said:

"There will be twelve Caliphs and successors after me. Verily the proofs of Allah on the creatures are twelve. Of them first will be my brother and last of them will be my son." They asked, 'Which of your brothers and which son?' He replied: "My brother Ali bin Abi Talib. My son Mahdi, the one who will fill justice and equity in this world as it would be fraught with injustice and oppression."

(Faraaedus-Simtain, Vol. 2, Pg. 226)

The Conclusion

The Holy Prophet (S.A.) will have twelve successors. The proofs of Allah will be twelve. The twelfth successor will be the last and he will be the Mahdi. The divine religion will remain upto his reappearance as the Holy Prophet (S.A.) said:

"This religion (Islam) will never decline until there will be twelve successors of mine."

[*Sunane-Abi Daud, Part four, Kitabul Mahdi, Pg. 40, also Pg. 150, printed at Egypt*]

The characteristic of Mahdi being the twelfth successor. Such traditions can be found in abundance in Shia books of traditions. Lutfullah Safi Gulpaigani has compiled hundreds of traditions on such topics in his book "Muntakhabul-Asar". The topics under which traditions are collected are as follows:

The twelfth Imam will be the ninth descendant of Imam Husain, the fourth descendant of Imam Reza (A.S.), the third descendant of Imam Mohammad Taqi (A.S.), the grandson of Imam Ali Naqi (A.S.), the son of Imam Hasan Askari (A.S.), etc.

A Ponderable Point

When it is proved that the caliphs or Imams will be twelve, then the verdict on the veracity of the system of Caliphate can be rendered. Hence, that series of Caliphate which is beyond Quraish like the caliphs of Turkey or which is within Quraish but its number is more or less than twelve, then definitely it is not a Divinely established system of Caliphate. For, it is dead impossible that Allah may have informed the Holy Prophet (S.A.) wrongly about the number of caliphs. Even this is not evidently possible that the Holy Prophet (S.A.) had predicted such a thing without Divine revelation. Here is the point "When neither God can commit a mistake nor can the Holy Prophet (S.A.) falter, then what could be the reason behind the differences in the number of caliphs as suggested by the Holy Prophet (S.A.)? Precisely speaking how could there be only four truly-guided caliphs while the Holy Prophet (S.A.) had predicted twelve? Ofcourse even this point has to be admitted that the system of caliphate which originated after the Holy Prophet (S.A.) as a result of Ijma (consensus), Istekhlaaf (appointment), Shura (selection committee) and Qahr-o-Ghalba (coercion) and which by no means was confined by the figure of twelve was not a system approved or approbated by Allah or the Holy Prophet (S.A.).

A Critical Stage

Let the teeming multitude of the Musims around the world reply that Khilafate-Rashida (Four guided caliphs), caliphate of Bani Abbas, caliphate of Bani Umayya, caliphate of Spain, caliphate of Turkey, Egyptian empire, kingdom of Saudi Arabia etc., whether any of these series of caliphate passes through the criterion set by the Holy Prophet (S.A.)?

*Is the number of their caliphs limited to twelve which will remain dominant upto Qiyamat? No Muslim can reply to these questions in the affirmative. Quran says: "**Then if you cannot do it and you never do it then fear the fire whose fuel is men and stones and which is kindled for the disbelievers.**"* (Sura Baqarah: 24)

Suggestion

Accept and conform to that series of caliphate: whose number is twelve - The Holy Prophet (S.A.) had identified each of them individually. Nasal (or Magsal according to some books) and Jandal bin . *Junadah who were Jews when converted to Islam* asked the Holy Prophet (S.A.) about his successors. *He named all of them one after another. There are many traditions of such contents. Refer 'Al- Muntazar' of Shabaan 1410 A.H., Pg. 25. Similar type of another traditions can be found in the Sunni he will scholar, Mohammad bin Abil Fawaras in 'Arbaeen' on page No. 38 quoted from Mufazzal bin Umar bin Abdullah.*

We all pray to the Almighty: "**O'Allah! If In this period of occultation, when we are death becomes a barrier between me and his separated from our kind Imam(A.S.) then what else (Mahdi's) reappearance, (death) which is inevitable your servants, then raise me from my grave, my body covered with my shroud, my sword un sheathed, with my pointed spear. I will respond to the call of the caller whether I am in journey or at home.**"

(A Part of Dua-e-Ahd, Mafatihul Jinan)

THE SAVIOUR OF MANKIND

The majority of the world's religions irrespective of their being divine or earthly, believe in the advent of a "Saviour". The spiritual leaders of different religions have discussed and debated on this subject. A 'Saviour' is described as deliverer of the mankind, who will appear in the ultimate era of the world, fill this earth with justice and equity as it would be filled with tyranny and oppression, eradicate deviation and ignorance and disseminate monotheism and justice. Such ideas can be found in various religions and in their books, one can even find the various attributes and characteristics of the saviour. One thing becomes very clear that the belief in a saviour is based on instinct and every man wishes that the world should rather culminate in goodness instead of having an evil ending. Following are some of the excerpts from the ancient religions about the saviour:

Zoroastrianism And Belief In Saviour

Zoroastrianism or Dualism is regarded as an ancient religion. It is known through discussions and extracts from letters that one of the significant principles of this religion is the belief in a 'Saviour' who will defeat 'Ahreman' (devil) after his reappearance and will lead the world towards the light (Nur). Even in the renowned book of 'Zend' the conflict of 'Ahreman' and Yazdan is narrated as follows: "---- Then Yazdan will achieve a great triumph and Ahreman will be annihilated ----. The world will receive its virtual salvation after the victory of Yazdan and with the elimination and destruction of Ahreman the sons of Adam will recline on the thrown of virtues."

In this excerpt the triumph of Yazdan or the saviour is regarded as the success of humanity.

Another celebrated book of Zoroastrians, 'Jamasp Namah' which is written by Zoroaster himself, explains the same thing in the following manner:

"A man will rise from the land of Taziu (Arabia) ---- who will have a flowing mane, tough physique, will reconstruct the lofty ideals, march towards Iran, civilize it, inhabit it and will fill the earth with justice and equity."

If we browse through "Avesta" while keeping these things in mind, then we find that the conqueror of the world is named as 'Sushiyant'. He will be the last conqueror of the world who will purge and establish purity in the world."

(The Lexicon of Avesta, Part II Yashtaha, Pg. 226 and Sushyans, Pg. 16).

"We appreciate chaste men and extol chaste women - We honor every strength and power and regard it in high esteem, from Kiumars to the conqueror of Sushiyant."

Similarly in the book of 'Farvardeen Yasht (Sentence No. 128-129), the reason for naming the saviour as 'Sushiyant' is elaborated.

The one who will be remembered as 'the conqueror of Sushiyant' or "Astut Art'. He is named as Sushyant because he will benefit the whole world. He will raise his voice against the lies fabricated by men. Finally the good-doers will triumph over the evil-doers ---- ."As it can be seen that how a saviour is remembered and mentioned even if in the name of Sushyant' who will be the harbinger of all the goodness that can be imagined and expected in the world. It is evident from all these excerpts that even

Zoroastrians have discussed, debated and testified about "the Saviour'.

The Jews and the Saviours

The history of Jews can be traced to very ancient times. They have distorted and tampered with their Divine books to the greatest possible extent, and have cunningly endeavored to delete all those portions which prophecises about Islam and the Holy Prophet (S.A.). Since Allah wishes to illuminate the darkness of deviation with the beacon of guidance, hence despite the exertions of Jews, such parts can be seen in their books where predictions regarding the advent of a Saviour who will establish justice and equity in the world are recorded. This world will become a haven of peace where a lion and a goat will graze together.

Following are the excerpts from their books which pertinently state about their saviour:

"An offshoot from the mouth of Lesi will spring up and a branch of its branches will sprout ---- He will be an equitable command for the contemptuously mean person and a virtual warning (cause of enlightenment) for the inhabitants of the earth ----."

'His griddle is Justice'. 'Faithfulness is the hilt of his sheath'.

A wolf will associate with the herd of goats while a small child will be their shepherd.

There will not be an iota of chaotic turmoil in My sacred mountains because the earth will be brimming with the knowledge of Allah the Almighty just as an ocean is replete with water.

"The truthfals will inherit the earth and will abide in it forever."

(Ash-Iya-e-Nabi, section 11, Sentence 4)

"Because the pious men will inherit the earth but the accused will perish."

(Psalms of David, 37, Sentence 22 & 29)

These sentences clarify that the saviour will be pious, the ruler of a just kingdom and caretaker of the Divine precepts. The old Gospels i.e. Taurat does not suffice with it's narration over here. It has gone much ahead, like in the Book of Prophet Habaquq in seventh chapter, saying:

"If he delays (in coming) then await him because he will certainly come and will not delay or procrastinate his arrival. Rather he will garner all the people around him and will prepare himself to face all the nations."

As a conclusion the awaiting of the saviour fortifies faith and strengthens belief. Even this is

certain that his advent will spell defeat and disgrace for all the tyrants and oppressors on the earth. Allah will empower him to vanquish all the fiendish nations pitted against him.

There are such innumerable sentences scattered in different chapters and sections of Taurat and it is not possible to quote all of them in such a brief article.

The Christians and the Saviour

There are plenty of verses in the holy book of Christians (formerly called as "Injeel" and now known as "The New Testament ") regarding the saviour. But since there are lot of distortions in it hence so many verses cannot be found in the presently available copy. Despite such blatant distortions, there are quite a few verses which talk about the saviour. Following are some examples to prove our point.

The **Gospel of Mathews**, Chap. 24

"As lightning shoots up from the east and is visible upto the west similar is the advent of the son of man."

"They will see the son of man on the clouds coming with his glorious pomp and splendor ----."

"And he will send his angels (helpers) with a clamour (trumpets) and they will gather the chosen ones."

The Gospel of Luke , Chap. 24 "Be prepared and let the lamp glow. Be as if you are awaiting your master restlessly so that when he knocks at your door you may open it immediately."

From the above verses, the advent of saviour, the importance of waiting for him and the signs of his reappearance become clear.

In another verse from the same chapter it is stated that

"The hour will arrive suddenly----. Then always keep praying and be awake---- Be prepared that when this hour comes to pass you may find yourself guided and may be able to present yourself in front of the son of man ----."

The Christians have also misinterpreted the meaning of this verse and have misconstrued the meaning of saviour as Hazrat Isa (A.S.) (i.e. Jesus Christ) rather than someone else.

Even if we assume just for the sake of argument that these verses are regarding Hazrat Isa (A.S.) then maximum it can be interpreted as his advent after Hazrat Mahdi's (A.S.) reappearance. And this world will achieve salvation at the hands of these two great personalities.

Hence according to the Islamic traditions, after his reappearance, Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) will lead the prayers while Hazrat Isa (A.S.) will pray behind him. Hence it can be concluded that almost all the religions, whether divinely or earthly, believe in the advent of a saviour.

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The rays of this belief can be found even amongst the Hindus, Chinese and Egyptians. If all such excerpts are collected at one place then it would become like a detailed compilation. Hence we suffice our discussion with the above stated excerpts and raise our hands praying to Allah that:

"O Lord! Hasten the advent of the promised saviour and make it known to the world that he is none but Mohammad bin Al-Hasan Al-Askari (A.S.).

IMAM MAHDI (A.S.) IN SEHAH-E-SITTAH

The belief in Imam Mahdi (A.S.) has been a topic of debate since the very inception of Islam. Most of the Islamic scholars are so deeply drowned in the pit of prejudice that they deny the existence of Imam Mahdi (A.S.) in its entirety. They assert that it is an idea fabricated by the Shias which has no origin either in Quran or in Prophetic traditions and is an unfounded belief. As far as Quran is concerned, time and again in several articles of Al-Montazar we have proved the point. God-willing in this article we shall try to prove the holy existence of Imam Mahdi (A.S.) from the Prophetic traditions. We shall also try to establish that not only this belief is not concocted by Shi'te zealots but it is such a foundation of Islam which cannot be rejected. The Holy Prophet (S.A.) and his companions were awaiting such a 'Reformer' who will establish justice and equity in the world and thus fulfill the Divine Promise of "so that it (Islam) may prevail upon all the religions" (Quran).

Why Sehad-e-Sittah?

Often it happens that when Shia Scholars bring some proofs, then immediately the Sunni learned men retort by, "If you prove it from Sehad-e-Sittah we will believe. We believe only in the references of Sehad-e-Sittah and nothing else." How far their reply is correct or incorrect is beyond the limits of this article. But it will not be out of place to mention that umpteen Sunni beliefs are not to be found in Sehad-e-Sittah. For instance the belief in 'Ashrae- Mubashshirah', these are those ten 'fortunate' companions of the Holy Prophet (S.A.) who were promised paradise in their lifetime. But, this belief of Ahle Sunnat is not to be found in any of the Sehad. Nevertheless in order to exhaust the arguments, we will confine our references and citations from Sehad Sittah alone.

Imam Mahdi (A.S.) is from the Holy Ahlebait (A.S.)

1- Hafiz Abu Abdullah Mohammad bin Yazid Al Qazvini narrates in his 'Sunane-Ibn Majah' that Hazrat Ali (A.S.) related from the Holy Prophet (S.A.) that: "The Mahdi is from us Ahlebait, Allah shall organize his affairs within one night."

(Sunane-ibn Majah, Kitabul Fitah, Tradition No. 4085).

Bukhari has quoted the same tradition ditto in his "Tarikh" but only Allah knows who advised him against quoting the tradition in his 'Sahih'.

2- Saeed bin Musayyab relates that once we were sitting in the company of Umme Salmah (R.A.) when we mentioned about Mahdi, she replied that I have heard the Holy Prophet (S.A.) saying: "The Mahdi is from the offspring of Fatema."

(Ref: Sunane Ibn Majah, Tradition No. 4086.)

3- Anas bin Malik related from the Holy Prophet (S.A.) that "We, the progeny of Abdul Muttalib viz. I, Hamza, Ali, Jafar, Hasan, Husain and Mahdi are the chiefs of inhabitants of Paradise."

(Sunane-Ibn Majah, Hadith No. 4087)

4- Abu Isa Mohammad bin Sauda narrates in his Sahihe-Tirmizi, that the Holy Prophet (S.A.) said: **"The world will not perish unless a man from my progeny will not rule on the land of Arab."**

(Sahihe-Tirmizi, Kitabul Fitan, Chapter of 'The Reports on Mahdi', Tradition No. 2230.)

Abu Isa opined that the tradition is also quoted from Ali (A.S.), Abu Saeed Umme Salma and Abu *Huraira. This is a correct and authentic tradition. Apart from this, classifying a separate chapter in his Sahih about Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) itself speaks volumes about the importance of the subject.

There are numerous such traditions from the Holy Prophet (S.A.) which proclaim that the Mahdi will be only from Ahlebait (A.S.) and none else. Two conclusions can be derived from such traditions. Firstly, Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) is not an ordinary person. He is such an extraordinary and sublime person of whom the Holy Prophet (S.A.) is proud. He (S.A.) heaves a breathe of pride when he announces that Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) is from his own progeny. Secondly, these traditions exposed and unmasked all those imposters and pseudo-Mahdis who were neither related to the Holy Prophet (S.A.) nor were in any way linked to his Ahlebait (A.S.).

The Reappearance Of Imam Mahdi (A.S.) Is Inevitable

Some persons reject the existence and the reappearance of Imam-e- Zaman (A.S.) because of his concealed birth, occultation and longevity.

Today when the majority of the Islamic sects are scoffing at us because we are convinced of the existence of Imam Mahdi (A.S.) then it should not be in the least surprising because the believers were always made the target of mockery. (For details refer to Holy Quran). The Holy Prophet (S.A.) had spoken a lot about Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) and declared emphatically that Qiyamat will never occur unless Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) does not arrive. Thus it has been quoted from the Holy Prophet (S.A.) that: "If a single day remains from the age of this world then Allah will prolong that day to such an extent that, He will raise a man from my progeny on that particular day----." (Sunane-Abi Daud, Kitabul Mahdi, Tradition No. 4282)

There are numerous such traditions in the books of 'Sehah-e-Sittah'. Often a question arises that why always a similarity is struck between the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (A.S.) and the occurrence of Qiyamat?

The reason is that Qiyamat is one of the promises of Allah, the Almighty, Who always fulfills His promises. Similarly, Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) is also one of the promises of Allah. Hence occasionally, he is also referred as "Mahdi-e-Mauood' (The Promised Mahdi) whose advent is mentioned in the Holy Quran in the following words:

"(O Prophet say) Then await certainly I am awaiting too."

(Araf:81)

Hence if Qiyamat is an irrefutable reality then the advent of Mahdi too is an incontrovertible fact.

Secondly the belief in Mahdaviyat is one of the fundamentals of Islam and as much a basic principle as Qiyamat is. This purports that the denial of the belief in Mahdaviyat is like the abnegation of a basic fundamental of Islam, and denial of any of the fundamentals of Islam is infidelity. All the same, Khwaja Kalan Qunduzi Hanafi narrates a tradition from the Holy Prophet that: "The one who denied the reappearance of Mahdi (A.S.) then it is as if he has disbelieved in all that which was revealed upon the (Prophet) Mohammad (S.A.)."

Is there any further proof required? The conclusion which is derived after keen perusal of logical and traditional reasoning is that anyone who denies the existence or the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (A.S.) will be an infidel and not a Muslim

Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) And Justice

Whenever the Holy Quran has mentioned about the aims of Prophets then it has mentioned about the establishment of justice as a chief objective of their mission. As it is said in the Holy Quran that: "So that man may deal with justice." (Hadeed:25)

In Sehad Sittah whenever Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.)

is mentioned, then along with it, his attributes also have been described. One of these descriptions is that when he will come, he will fill the earth with justice and equity as it would be fraught with injustice and inequity. For instance "He will fill the earth with justice and equity as it would be rife with tyranny and oppression".

(Sunane-Abi Daud, Tradition Nos. 2283, 4282)

It can be inferred from these traditions that the purpose of the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (A.S.) is the dissemination of justice. Secondly, when he will arrive then injustice and oppression would be rampant in the world. The oppressors would be obeyed and the disbelievers would be disgraced. There will be only one person who will turn the tide whose name will be on the name of Holy Prophet (S.A.) and his epithet will be same as that of the Prophet (S.A.). It will be the era of the fulfillment of Divine promises such as: "... The last era is for the pious men" (Araf: 127)

and

"... So that it (Islam) may prevail upon all religions though the polytheists may resent."

(Tauba: 33)

and people will realise the truth of the following verse:

"Say (O Prophet) truth has come and falsehood vanished, Surely falsehood was bound to vanish."

(Bani Israil: 80)

An Emphatic Command For The Believers

The revolution of Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) will not be an ordinary one. It will bring a sea change in the cosmic order in its wake. It is evident that for bringing about such an unparalleled revolution Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) will need a legion of companions who are determined and can endure all sorts of untold calamities in their way. Perhaps for this reason the Holy Prophet (S.A.) had laid emphasis on the believers to aid and assist Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) when he reappears. He (S.A.) put the same in the following words:

"So if you will see him then pledge allegiance to him even if you have to crawl on an iceberg because he is the Caliph of Allah, the Mahdi."

(Sunane-Ibne-Majah, Tradition No. 4084)

It can be inferred from this tradition that it has been stressed to assist Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) in all conditions, either in comfort or calamity. Alas ! the Muslims slaughtered the one whom the Holy Prophet (S.A.) regarded as his son in Karbala and denied the existence of one in whom he reposed all his hopes and expectations. Only Allah knows how this community will face Him and His Prophet (S.A.) on the day of Qiyamat.

Anyhow, all the topics discussed over here are extracted from Sehah-e-Sittah which are unchallengeable and undefiable. For, a majority of Sunni scholars agree that whoever dared to reject or question Sehah-e-Sittah has infact repudiated the Holy Prophet (S.A.) and has consequently disbelieved in Islam. Also it can be noticed that those compilers of Sahih who have not narrated the traditions regarding Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) in their books have quoted the same in their other books. If any of the Sehah does not contain a proper and adequate narration about him then it does not cast any serious impact on the veracity of the beliefs in Imam Mahdi (A.S.), because in other Sehah it has been related redundantly. Here it was mentioned only to apprise others that even Sehah-e-Sittah is not devoid of the traditions regarding Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.). This much should suffice to those who are skeptical of the veritability of this pristine belief.

A GLANCE AT THE CONCOCTED TRADITIONS

It is an indisputable fact of Islam that a noble man of the highest caliber, from the progeny of the Holy Prophet (S.A.) and offspring of Hazrat Fatema Zahra (S.A.) will appear in the last era of the world, defunct religion, establish justice and equity and purge the world from all evils. All the sects of Islam unanimously agree that this major upheaval will be known as "the Revolution of Mahdi". Verily the Sunni traditionalists have adorned and embellished their books with the detailed narration of this glorious revolution. Ofcourse there is a difference of opinion in their view point regarding his pedigree like some say that he is the immediate son and successor of Imam Hasan Askari (A.S.), while others opine that he is from the offspring of Imam Hasan al Mujtaba (A.S.), still others think that he is from the generation of Imam Husain (A.S.). There are a few who falter that he will belong to Abbasid lineage. Some of them believe that he was born in 255 A.H. and others are adamant that he is yet to take birth. Some predict that he will reappear from Holy Mecca, while some forecast that he will arrive from Khurasan; there are also some who assert that he will rise from the far west. There are some pedantic scholars who out of their shallow and scant knowledge arbitrated that Mahdi and Hazrat Isa (A.S.) are one and the same person. Precisely speaking according to them, Mahdi is none else but Hazrat Isa (A.S.).

Such different and discordant narrations have stemmed from those contradictory traditions which are recorded in various books. It is deplorable, indeed such fabricated and concocted traditions have slowly and gradually penetrated into the books of Ahle Sunnat traditionalists. From the historical view point it is evident that such traditions were fabricated by those imposters who claimed to be 'Mahdi' and have attracted hordes of naive followers. Some of the renowned Sunni scholars and traditionalists have admitted to the rampant fabrication of traditions in their books viz Ibn Jauzi in 'Al-Mauzoo'aat', Zahabi in 'Meezanul Etedaal', Ibn Araq in 'Al Ahadithuz-Zaeefa wal-Mauzoo'ah'.

In this brief article, such concocted and fabricated traditions will be discussed, their authenticity scrutinized and their truth exposed.

1. Ibn Majah Qazveeni in his 'Sahih' narrates from Anas bin Malik who relates from the Holy Prophet (S.A.) that:

"Mahdi is none else but Jesus, the son of Mary."

Which purports that the Mahdi of Islam is Hazrat Isa (A.S.). None of the scholars of Ahle-Sunnat have accepted this concept (that Isa is Mahdi) because this tradition contradicts various other traditions of the Holy Prophet (S.A.) which are authentic and continuous. Particularly those traditions in which the Holy Prophet (S.A.) has said that 'He will be from my progeny and from the offspring of Fatema (S.A.)'. The noted celebrity of Ahle Sunnat, Imam Qurtubbi (exp. 671 A.H.) in his famous exegesis of Quran i.e. "At-Tazkera fi Umuril Akhera' has declared that it is a

weak tradition because in the reliable traditions of the Holy Prophet (S.A.) it is clearly mentioned that he will be from his own lineage, from the children of Fatema (S.A.). These traditions are much more authentic and reliable than the one in question. Hence the verdict will be based on the most authentic traditions rather than the weaker ones. Such objections are raised by other

Sunni stalwarts too. Like Ibn Qayyim in fiftieth chapter of Al-Munar Al-Munif Fil-Hadith As-Sahih waz-Zaeef . And according to Baihaqi, the narrators of this tradition are unknown or unreliable. Also the sequence of tradition is not consistent but is lost from somewhere in between. This tradition is one of the single reports of Mohammad bin Khalid Junaidi. Zahabi in his Meezanul-Etedaal in third volume, Pg. No. 535 has decisively stated that Mohammad bin Khalid is an unknown narrator and the traditions related by him are not acceptable. More or less similar thing is indited by another great scholar Abul Hasan Aaburi in 'Manaqibush-Shafei'.

However the unreliability of narrators and in- correct contents of the traditions prove that it is a spurious tradition. But despite all such inherent weaknesses some of the Sunni scholars like Ibn Kathir and Qurtubbi have made efforts to prove it a correct tradition by whimsical interpretations and fragile justifications. They have asserted that the Mahdi does not imply a particular person but it is used in its literal sense which means 'guided'. Thus Hazrat Isa (A.S.) is the best guided person though this meaning is not correct in itself. Those things which are pertinent to this tradition like the events and conditions of last era, commotion and distraught which will be ubiquitous refute this justification were given in order to maintain the credibility of the book i.e. Sunane-Ibn Majah because it is claimed that all the traditions in the book are correct and authentic.

2. Ibn Asakir from the third Caliph Usman bin Affaan and he had related from the Holy Prophet (S.A.) that: **"The Mahdi is from the progeny of my uncle Abbas",**

means 'Mahdi will be from Bani Abbas. In this context Hafiz Mohibuddeen Tabari in his "Zak-haerul-Uqba' Pg. 206 has quoted on the authority of Hafiz Sahmi, who quoted from Ibn Abbas who related from Holy Prophet (S.A.) that: ***'Once the Holy Prophet (S.A.) addressed him thus: "Mahdi will be from your offspring who will disseminate guidance and quell deviations. Allah the Almighty commenced His religion from me and will culminate it on your progeny."***

Muhibuddeen Tabari has quoted two more traditions from Abu Huraira and from Abdus-Samad of similar contents. Besides this, Abul Faraj Isfahani has quoted from a courtier scholar of Bani Abbas namely Qati bin Abbas in his book 'Al-Aghani' (Vol. 12, Pg. 81), a tradition ascribed to Holy Prophet (S.A.) without mentioning the chain of narrators.

All these traditions are supporting the notion that Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) will be from the lineage of Abbas, the uncle of the Holy Prophet (S.A.). In other terms he will be from Bani Abbas. But if a person is scantily aware of the traditions of the Holy Prophet (S.A.) in this regard then he can

infer on his own that it is a concocted and an unscrupulously fabricated tradition. Such few traditions are starkly contradictory to those authentic and continuous traditions which abound the books of traditions. Such as: "Mahdi will descend from my lineage from the offspring of Fatema."

It was this reason that such a great Sunni scholar like Dar Qutni has objected to the former tradition and thus commented:

"This is a weird and queer tradition related only by the slave of Bani Hashim namely Mohammad bin Walid."

As it was hinted earlier that historically these were the product of claimants to attract the laymen towards themselves and gain their sympathies. As a further step they entitled Mohammad bin Abdullah bin Ali as 'Mahdi'. They distorted the religion of Holy Prophet (S.A.) for their greed of rule for few days in this transient world. Qazi Luqman bin Mohammad has hinted towards such heinous vices of Bani Abbas in his eulogy.

"The time when gems were compared to their like. Similarly Mohammad bin Abdullah was entitled as "Mahdi'. This Mohammad bin Abdullah bin Ali Abbasi is a wretched transgressor. If mere similarity in names was sufficient then every man named as 'Ahmed' would have been a Prophet. Alas! every name is not like its named ones. And ignorance made them dumb and blind."

This is not the only attempt to dupe and deceive the common populace but there are numerous such instances which are cited over here.

3. Tirmizi in his 'Sahih' has quoted from 'Zaeda', he narrated from 'Aasem' and in turn he quoted from "Zar', who narrated it from Abdullah bin Masud who related from the Holy Prophet (S.A.) that:

"If a solitary day is left from the eve of doomsday then Allah will prolong that day to such an extent that a man from my progeny will rise. Whose name will be my name and his father's name will be my father's name. He will fill the world with justice and equity as it would be filled with injustice and oppression."

The contents of this tradition are continuous and reliable according to Shia and Sunni scholars. It has been narrated in various ways.

The thing which has made this narration of Tirmizi skeptical are those words which are not quoted in other authentic books. In other books the phrase of 'his father's name is the same as my father's, is not recorded they all have recorded only 'his name will be same as mine'.

This doubt holds ground when we notice the name of "Zaeda' in the chain of narrators, which according to Sunni scholars of 'Rejal' is not reliable and adds more words in the concept of traditions. Because that chain of narrators where Zaeda's name is not there and only names of

Asem, Zar, Abdullah bin Masud are mentioned then addition of his father's name is same as that of my father is not seen. But all have sufficed upto 'his name will be same as mine'.

This point requires special attention that Tirmizi whose book is enumerated among Sehad Sittah has narrated the same tradition elsewhere but has not narrated this addition (i.e. his father's name will be my father's name) over there. Similarly in the ranks of traditionalists Ahmed bin Hanbal is accorded precedence over Ibn Majah. Ahmed bin Hanbal in his 'Musnad' has recorded the same tradition at four places but even for once he has not mentioned this addition'. (Vol. 1, Pg. 377, 430, 448)

The renowned scholar of Ahle-Sunnah and reliable traditionalists of fifth century Hafiz Abu Noaim Isfahani has recorded the traditions regarding Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) from very reliable sources in his book 'Manaqibul-Mahdi'. He has narrated this tradition from 31 different channels with the exception of Zaeda's' narration. Not a single tradition included the added phrase. This phrase is narrated only by "Zaeda'.

(Ref. Al-Bayan Fi-Akhbare-Sahibiz Zaman, at the end of first chapter Pg. 94-96).

It is undoubtedly proved that Zaeda, as his name implies has added the so-called phrase. But it is deplorable to note that Abu Daud has ignored other reliable channels of narration and has opted to choose only the narration of Zaeda. Some other scholars of AhleSunnah too have benefitted from this fabricated tradition. Albeit, the author of 'Iqdud-Durar has quoted this tradition from Sunane-Abi-Daud but did not record this addition. On this basis it can be concluded that the versions of Sunane-Abi- Daud must have been tampered with (particularly after the seventh century) or correctors must have added the phrase on their own accord while verifying. Apart from this the acclaimed traditionalists of Ahle-Sunnah, who have a deep dexterity and expertise in sitting and sorting out the traditions have objected to this tradition vociferously. Some of them are Hafiz Ganji Shafei in 'Al-Bayan Fi-Akhbare-Sahibiz Zaman', Khwaja Mohammad Parsa Hanafi (exp.866)

in the footnotes of 'Faslul-Khitab' and Ibn son Talha Shafei in Ghayatus-Sol. They all have unani mously regarded it as weak, unreliable, discontinuous and contradictory to correct traditions.

The reason for this tradition of Zaeda being fabricated are those authentic and continuous traditions in which the name of Hazrat Mahdi's (A.S.) father is mentioned as "Hasan'. The below given tradition is quoted as an example.

The accredited traditionalist of Ahle-Sunnah Noaim Isfahani narrates from a veteran interpreter Ibn Khashaab who relates from Imam Ali Reza (a.s.) that:

"The Mahdi is the pious son of Hasan Askari."

Such traditions are also found in 'Faraedus-Simtain'(Chap 35, 73)

4 - The Doyen of Traditionalists of Ahle-Sun nah Abu Daud, whose book is among the much 'Sehah-e-Sittah' narrates one tradition: from Abu Ishaq who quoted Hazrat Ali (A.S.) and who related that Hazrat Mohammad (S.A.) said *looking at Imam Hasan (A.S.): "This son of mine is the chief ----descendants will bear the name of your Prophet."*

Some of the great Sunni scholars like the ideological guide and Leader of Wahabis, Ibn Qayyim Jauzi in Al-Munar-Al-Munif, Sehudi (exp. 911), Ibn Kathir in 'Al-Fitan wal-Malahim and Ibn Hajar in Sawaeq have quoted this tradition profusely in their respective books and have regarded Imam Mahdi (A.S.) from the lineage of Imam Hasan (A.S.) on the grounds that since a person from his lineage will avenge this humiliation hence he had signed the truce.

But even this tradition is fabricated and disorted as the earlier ones. As can be seen from the following facts:

a) Same tradition is quoted by the author of 'Iqdud Durar' from the same chain of narrators from Sunane Abi Daud but instead of phrase 'he looked towards his son- Hasan' the author has in Husain'. Perhaps the scribe must have written "Hasan' instead of 'Husain'. Those who are experienced in this field will realise that this possibility does exist.

(b) There are innumerable traditions which have continuously stated that Imam Mahdi (A.S.) will be the descendant of Imam Husain (A.S.). Hence according to the science of traditions if one lone The tradition is contradictory to numerous continuous Abu (Mutawatir) traditions then this tradition will not be taken into consideration. Ibn Hajar has related from Reza (A.S.) that: Hazrat Ali (A.S.) in his book "As-Sawaequl Muharreqa' on Pg. No. 165 that: **"The world will not perish unless a man, from the progeny of my son Husain, will not rise who will fill the earth with justice as it was fraught with injustice."** Muhibuddeen-e-Tabari in Zakhaerul-Uqba' on Pg. 136 has narrated from Huzaifa Yamani who related from the Holy Prophet (S.A.) that **"If a single day remains from the age of this world then Almighty will prolong that day to while such an extent that one of my sons will appear, one of his whose name will be as mine."**

Hazrat Salman inquired: "From the progeny of which son"? The Holy Prophet (S.A.) placed his hand on Imam Husain (A.S.) and said: "From the progeny of this son."

(c) If despite these two narrations we accept the tradition of Abu Daud even then the point is not against us. Because Imam Baqir (A.S.) is the first grandson of Imam Husain (A.S.) and the second grandson of Imam Hasan (A.S.). His mother was Fatema, the daughter of Imam Hasan (A.S.). Hence Imam Mahdi (A.S.) is the son of Imam Hasan (A.S.) as well as Imam Husain (A.S.). Hilali relates that once the Holy Prophet (S.A.) consoled his daughter Hazrat Fatema (S.A.) in these words: " ----The two sons of this nation are your sons (Hasan and Husain, who descend from me. They are the chiefs of the youth of Paradise. By

Allah, their parents are superior to them. O ! 'Fatema by Allah the Mahdi of this nation will descendant of both of them." (Faredus- Simtain, Chap. 12; Al-Bayan, Chap. 1; Iqdud-Durar,

Chap. 7-9; Zakhaerul-Uqba, Pg. 136; Arful-Wardi, Pg. 66; Arjahul-Matalib, Pg. 382; Al-Arbaeen of Abus Noaim, Tradition No. 6)

(d) Keeping these facts in mind that it is a lone tradition which is contradictory to other several continuous traditions, also there may be a possibility of error in script. This becomes crystal clear that it is not an authentic tradition particularly when the historical facts are contrary to the tradition. The reason is that those who are attributed as Mahdi, among them is the grandson of Imam Hasan (A.S.), Mohammad bin Abdullah known as "Nafse-Zakiyya. Bani Abbas's campaign attributed him to be Mahdi so as to earn the sympathy of masses and take undue advantage of this belief which is deep-rooted in their hearts and thus topple the reign of Bani Umayyaa. They publicized and promoted his name and first thing they did was that they added his father's name is same as that of my father (as it was hinted in the discussion on third tradition), since the name of this 'Mahdi's' father was Abdullah. Then for dispelling further doubts they falsely claimed that Mahdi is the Continued from Pg. 24 descendant of Imam Hasan (A.S.), because Mohammad bin Abdullah descended from the lineage of Imam Hasan (A.S.). Then for consolidating their position they fabricated another tradition from the mouth of Abu Huraira that there was a stammering in the speech of Imam Mahdi (A.S.) (Ref. Maqatilul Talebin) because Mohammad bin Abdullah had stammering in his tongue. Finally Bani Abbas succeeded in grabbing power, by deriving undue advantage from this belief and intimidating their masses. When they got absolute control then they killed the same Mahdi and his father and again spread the that Nafse-Zakiyyah who would be killed news before the Mahdi is slain and the reappearance of Mahdi has drawn nigh. Imam Jafar Sadiq (A.S.) had predicted about each and every event long back. (*Maqatilul-Talebeen*, Pg. 141-142, *Al-Adabus-Sul taniyyah* Fakhri Pg. 16 has mentioned everything in | detail.) The embezzlement and meddling of Bani Abbas are not limited to politics or ethics. But they have not even spared the interpretations of Quranic verses and traditions. The details of which shall be given later in another article.

But those who commit such despicable embezzlement, distort the religion of Allah, make additions in the tradition of Holy Prophet (S.A.) or ascribe false things to him and record such baseless things in their books, which misguide the simpletons and ordinary believers; are they not among those who are condemned in this verse: "*Surely those who conceal such clear evidences and guidance which we have revealed and clarified in the book for the people, they are cursed by Allah curse of cursers be upon them.*" (Baqarah: 159) All the hopes are reposed in the day when Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) will reappear and reform the distortions and misguided men.

HAZRAT MAHDI (A.S.) IN SUPPLICATIONS

The powers and effects of supplications are miraculous. While on one hand supplications are confessions of man's servitude towards his Lord, on the other hand, the contents of prayers are an expression of man's spiritual satisfaction. If a request is repeatedly made with the insistence on its acceptance and this presentation is made in various modes and manners on every important occasion with an untiring persistence, then certainly with their repeated requests, we can realise its extraordinary nature. The importance of such a supplication is enhanced manifold when we see it in verbal expressions of Ahlebait (A.S.). There are so many Ziyarats (salutations) and duas (supplications) where some demand has been made in some way or the other. Whether it is Ziyarat-e-Ashoora or Ziyarat-e-Jameah or Dua-e- Iftetah or Dua-e-Abu Hamzah Semali, or the supplications of Shabaan and Ramazan. All these duas, Ziyarats and invocation have one thing very much common among them, though it may have different face or form and that common feature is the supplication regarding the joyous reappearance of Hazrat Imam Mahdi (A.S.). Although there are ample of traditions describing the various facets of Imam Mahdi (A.S.), but his reappearance is such an epoch-making hall mark that it was not sidelined even in the supplication to the Lord of the worlds. Through supplications, we realise the importance of the belief in Hazrat Imam Mahdi (A.S.) and praying for his reappearance. The persistence in this supplication also reflects the certitude in its acceptance. Ultimately, the prayers will be accepted if not today then certainly tomorrow.

The only thought which persists is that should his reappearance take place in our life time then we would have witnessed the victory of Islam and the defeat and disgrace of disbelief and hypocrisy.

Ziyarat-e-Ashoora is an important and authentic ziyarat. Some of the scholars have even vouched for this ziyarat to such an extent that they consider it to be from Hadis-e-Qudsi (those traditions of the Holy Prophet (S.A.) which have been quoted from Arch angel Jibraeel (A.S.) but do not form a part of the Quranic revelation). This ziyarat has proclaimed salutations and blessings on the Ahlebait (A.S.) and sent choicest curses on their enemies. In it twice Hazrat Imam Mahdi (A.S.) has been mentioned. This ziyarat has been narrated by Imam Mohammad Baqir (A.S.) with great reward attached to it and can be recited in Karbala or from a far off place. Emphasis has been laid to recite it daily. This ziyarat ensures the acceptance of supplications that follows it. There is a supplication in the ziyarat that:

"Then I ask of Allah, who elevated your position and honoured me due to you, to allow me to avenge your blood along with Imam-e-Mansur (i.e. Hazrat Imam Mahdi (A.S.)."

We should pray for Hazrat Imam Mahdi's (A.S.) reappearance in our supplications and to have the desire to avenge the blood of Imam Husain (A.S.) along with Imam Mahdi (A.S.).

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In the beginning, Imam (A.S.) is referred to as Imam-e-Mansoor (the one who is divinely assisted) and further this reference is made clear in the following words,

"May Allah allow me to seek the revenge of your blood along with Imam Mahdi (A.S.), who will reappear, talk righteously and will be from you Ahlebait (A.S.)]."

Here the desire for the reappearance is also: clarified along with its aim. Whether it is the event "... of Karbala or the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (A.S.), it seems as if both are part of the same series of guidance. Even this became evident from the Ziyarat-e-Ashoora that the belief in the advent of Imam Mahdi (A.S.) can never be separated from the events of Karbala. Whosoever's heart is aggrieved

and eyes shed tears on the event of Karbala, he will never stop from praying for the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (A.S.) so that the vengeance for the blood of Imam Husain (A.S.) can be sought at the earliest.

The phrase in the Ziyarat-e-Waresa viz. "I am certain of the return of you all" also hints at the reappearance because the Imams (A.S.) will return (Raj'at) only after the advent of Imam Mahdi (A.S.).

Ziyarat-e-Jameah is another significant and authentic Ziyarat. About this Ziyarat Allama Majlisi:

opined that "It is a marvel of a Ziyarat from the view of text, authenticity, eloquence and rhetorics. His father also regarded it as the most perfect and the nicest of Ziyarats. Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) himself had emphatically advised to Sayyed Rashti in these words: "Ashoora! Ashoora! Ashoora!, Jameah! Jameah! Jameah!" i.e. never miss Ziyarat-e-Ashoora or Ziyarat-e-Jameah. If you pay attention to the following sentences of Ziyarat you will realise the importance of this statement: "I confess of your veracity, believe in your guided ones are guided. return, testify to your 'Raj'at', awaiting your command and prepared for your government". Furthermore it is said: "May I be enumerated among your, among those who will be returned in. your Raj'at, who will rule in your government, who will be dignified in your protection, who will get status in the days (of your government), whose eyes will be cooled by seeing you." At yet another place it is found that Until Allah the High, will revive His religion through you and return you in His days. And to make you reappear for His justice and equity. And establish you on His earth." It can be noticed that how time and again the same demand is repeated in different ways and manners

The repetitions show the importance of this Dua. These are those Ziyarats which are not particular with Imam-e-Zamana (A.S.). If so much insistence is there in these Ziyarats then what would be the intensity of supplication in those Ziyarats which are exclusively about him. In other duas too, Imam Mahdi (A.S.) is referred to and remembered regularly. Following are the names, epithets, agnomens and titles of Imam Mahdi (A.S.) by which he has been remembered in different duas (supplication), ziyarats (salutations) and invocations of blessings:

- 1) The reviver of the Sunnat (of the Holy point Prophet (S.A.)).
- 2) The riser with the command.
- 3) The caller towards Allah.
- 4) The proof of Allah.
- 5) The guide towards Allah.
- 6) The representative of Allah on the earth.
- 7) The witness (of God) on the servants.
- 9) The light of Allah by which the
- 10) The one through whom the problem of the believers are solved.
- 11) The chaste, the fearful. companions
- 12) The master, the admonisher
- 13) The ship of salvation.
- 14) The source of life.
- 15) The riser.
- 16) The awaited.
- 17) The guided..
- 18) The successor, the proof.
- 19) The owner of time.
- 20) The master of era.
- 21) The master of age.
- 22) The expressor of faith.
- 23) The teacher of Quranic percepts.
- 24) The purifier of earth.
- 25) The preacher of justice.
- 26) The resigner (to the will of God).
- 27) The one who will grant honour to believers and the oppressed.
- 28) The one who will degrade the apostates, arrogant and the unjust.
- 29) The fortified shelter.
- 30) The helper of the distressed and the destitutes.
- 31) The refuge for the refrainers from sins.
- 32) The respect of the self-respecting persons.
- 33) The scintillating light of Allah.
- 34) The splendor of Allah.
- 35) The beacon of light.
- 36) The hidden, the concealed.
- 37) The sword of Allah which never misses it's
- 38) Allah's Light which shall not be extinguished.
- 39) The dignified forebearer.
- 40) The axis of the universe.
- 41) The protector of age.
- 42) The master of Authority.
- 43) The expected, the riser.
- 44) The awaited justice.
- 45) The riser with the religion of Allah.

- 46) The caller towards the Book of Allah.
- 47) The caller of Allah.
- 48) The cherisher of the signs of Allah.
- 49) The door of Allah.
- 50) The reckoner of the religion of Allah.
- 51) The helper of the Right of Allah.
- 52) The sign of the Will of Allah.
- 53) The Reciter of the Book of Allah.
- 54) The interpreter of the Book of Allah,
- 55) The remnant of Allah on His earth.
- 56) The covenant of Allah.
- 57) The promise of Allah.
- 58) The established flag.
- 59) The expansive knowledge.
- 60) The asylum (of creatures).
- 61) The vast mercy.
- 62) The representative of Allah in His cities.
- 63) The caller towards the path of Allah.
- 64) The riser with the equity of Allah.
- 65) The avenger by the command of Allah.
- 66) The friend of the believers.
- 67) The destroyer of the disbelievers.
- 68) The illuminator of darkness.
- 69) The light of truth.
- 70) The speaker with wisdom and truth.
- 71) The perfect word of Allah.
- 72) The apprehensive, the fearful.
- 73) The flag of guidance
- 74) The light of the vision of creatures.
- 75) The best dressed and the best robed.
- 76) The vision of the blind.
- 77) The one who will fill the earth with justice and equity.
- 78) The successor of his guided forefathers.
- 79) The successor of the past successors.
- 80) The protector of the secrets of the Lord of the universe.
- 81) The remnant of Allah from the chosen ones.
- 82) The dazzling light.
- 83) The enlightened standard..
- 84) The treasure of Prophet's (S.A.) knowledge.
- 85) The door of Allah, none can gain access to Allah except through him.
- 86) The path of Allah, upon which those who ☆do not tread shall perish.
- 87) The onlooker of Sidratul Muntaha' and "The Tree of Tuba'.
- 88) The proof of Allah which is not concealed.
- 89) The proof of Allah upon whatever exists in the earth and the skies.

- 90) The proof of Allah on the past and the remaining people.
- 91) The treasurer of every knowledge.
- 92) The creator of every joint.
- 93) The actualizer of every truth.
- 94) The nullifier of every falsehood.
- 95) The flawless, established truth.
- 96) The true promise of Allah.
- 97) The avenger with the abnegators and the violators (of pledge).
- 98) The order of the religion.
- 99) The leader of the pious.
- 100) The honour of the monotheists.
- 101) The new truth.
- 102) The possessor of unlimited knowledge.
- 103) The reviver of the believers.
- 104) The eliminator of the disbelievers.
- 105) The guide of nations.
- 106) The collected discourse.
- 107) The caliph of the past people.
- 108) The honorable one.
- 109) The proof of the Worshipped One.
- 110) The word of the Praised One..
- 111) The giver of honour to the friends.
- 112) The humiliator of enemies.
- 113) The heir of Prophets (A.S.).
- 114) The seal of the successors.
- 115) The riser, the awaited.
- 116) The open justice.
- 117) The unsheathed sword.
- 118) The luminescent moon.
- 119) The brilliant splendor.
- 120) The sun of darkness.
- 121) The full Moon.
- 122) The blossom of creation.
- 123) The freshness of days.
- 124) The holder of the sword.
- 125) The divine religion.
- 126) The written Book.
- 127) The remnant of Allah in His cities.
- 128) The proof of Allah upon His servants.
- 129) The ultimate in Prophetic heritage.
- 130) The confidant of secrets.
- 131) The master of command.
- 132) The successful one by the command of Allah.
- 133) The brave youth who admonishes with wisdom and good advice.

- 134) The reliever in difficulties.
- 135) The redresser of griefs.
- 136) The averter of calamities.
- 137) The hidden one among the creatures of Allah.
- 138) The awaiter for the command of Allah.
- 139) The awaiter for the permission of Allah.
- 140) The remnant of Allah from the guiding progeny of the Holy Prophet (S.A.) from whom the earth will never be void.
- 141) The appointed one to end the rule of the oppressors
- 142) The awaited one who will end discords and disputes.
- 143) The one who is expected to eliminate injustice and tyranny.
- 144) The preserved one who will renew obligatory and optional commands.
- 145) The authority for reviving religion and divine laws.
- 146) The one who is expected to enliven Quran and its injunctions.
- 147) The reviver of religion's teachings and
- 148) The destroyer of despotic dominance.
- 149) The demolisher of the people of
- 150) The annihilator of sinners and disobedients.
- 151) The one who cuts the branches of
- 152) The terminator of wanton cravers
- 153) The one who will sever the ropes of .
- 154) The eliminator of arrogants and haughty
- 155) The destructor of enemies, deviated
- 156) The one who gives honour to the friends.
- 157) The one who disgraces the enemies.
- 158) The one who collects the people on
- 159) The face of Allah towards whom the
- 160) The link between the earth and the sky.
- 161) The chief of the day of victory.
- 162) The hoister of the flag of guidance.
- 163) The avenger of the Prophet's (S.A.) blood.
- 164) The avenger of the blood of Prophet's sons.
- 165) The seeker of revenge of the martyrs
- 166) The one who is helped against his enemies and the deviated ones.
- 167) The distressed one whose supplications
- 168) The chief of all the creatures, owner of goodness and piety
- 169) Son of the chosen Prophet (S.A.).
- 170) Son of Ali Murtaza (A.S.).
- 171) Son of Khadija, the respectable
- 172) Son of Fatima, the greatest
- 173) Son of proximate leaders.
- 174) Son of selected noble men.
- 175) Son of rightly guided guides.
- 176) Son of well-disciplined men.

- 177) Son of the purest men
- 178) Son of the purest and selected men.
- 179) Son of the chosen authorities.
- 180) Son of the great stars.
- 181) Son of the scintillating moons.
- 182) Son of the glowing beacons.
- 183) Son of illuminated meteors.
- 184) Son of sparkling stars.
- 185) Son of the clear paths. men.
- 186) Son of the shining standard.
- 187) Son of the perfect sciences.
- 188) Son of the famous traditions.
- 189) Son of the divine knowledge.
- 190) Son of the existing miracles.
- 191) Son of the firm arguments.
- 192) Son of the straight path.
- 193) Son of the great news.
- 194) Son of the basis of books. .
- 195) Son of the signs.
- 196) Son of the evidences.
- 197) Son of the apparent arguments.
- 198) Son of the clear and dazzling proofs.
- 199) Son of the perfect proofs.
- 200) Son of the revealed bounties.
- 201) Son of "Taha" (Holy Prophet (S.A.))
- 202) Son of 'Yaseen' and 'Zariyaat'.
- 203) Son of 'Tur' and 'Aadiyat.
- 204) The speaker with divine wisdom.
- 205) The tongue of Allah which expands divine aims.
- 206) Son of the close than the closest ones (in Meraj)
- 207) The all seeing eyes of Allah.
- 208) The witness on the servants of Allah.
- 209) The dignified crusader.
- 210) The one in Allah's refuge.
- 211) The worshiper of Allah.
- 212) The patient.
- 213) The grateful.
- 214) The struggler.
- 215) The guide from deviations.
- 216) The healer of ignorance.
- 217) The preserved one for honoring the friends of Allah.