

**IMAM MAHDI (A.S.)
THE LAST REFUGE
OF HUMAN BEINGS**

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In the Name of God
the Beneficent, the Merciful

IMAM MAHID:

THE LAST RISING SUN AND THE PROMISED ONE OF THE NATIONS

We can see the appearance of a reformer in the oldest historic texts, and it is one of the most essential lines of human thought, so it is linked with human history. You will find the expectation of a better future in the culture of various nations, as it is combined with their nature and their intellect, and the more perfect a religion is, the greater is your expectation.

Expectation is an old hope which is propounded to the human communities for a better future by various religions and philosophers. In this field of thought the great messengers of Allah had the biggest role and duty. Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad (A.S) have declared this principle in their decrees, and other great men like Budah, Zoraster etc. have spoken of it, too. It is noticeable that, we can find a very great difference between the reformers in Islam specially in Shiism and in other religions and ideologies¹ because in other religions and ideologies, the reformer was (needed) just for a nation or for a limited region. But, in Islamic sources we can find that a reformer has been required for the world and all nations.

If other ideologies have introduced him ambiguously Islam has introduced him with all his characteristics and qualities. If in their culture the reformer belongs to another world, in Islam the Imam and reformer rise from the people to perform many tasks and providing them frequent assistance¹ If in other religions a person waiting for the advent of the reformer is free from any responsibility, in Islam the very act of expectation creates a responsibility for that person and for all such believers. The

Hindoos named the reformer "Barahman-Cala", the Zoroastrians called him "SaG-Chiant" the Jews named him "Jusha" the Christians call him "Jesus" and "The Son of Man" and finally the Muslims call the reformer "Mahdi"- "Chaem" and Muhammad.

IMAM MAHDI IN THE BIBLE

In this chapter we have references from the Bible which can be the evidence of our claim about the reformer:

"For the wicked shall be cut off, but those Who wait for the Lord shall possess the land."

A psalm of David 37: 9

"The righteous shall possess the land and dwell upon it for ever."

A psalm of David 37: 29

"In his days may righteousness flourish and peace abound, till the moon be no more; May he have dominion from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth."

A psalm of David 32:7,8

You can see in other parts of the Old Testament phrases as the following:

“There shall come forth a shoot from the stumps of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him the spirit of wisdom and understanding the spirit of counsel and ‘night, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.

And his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear;

but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,

and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;

and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth,

and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked.

Righteousness shall be the girdle of his waist,

and faith fullness the girdle of his Loins The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid,

and the calf and the lion and the fatling together,

and a little child shall lead them.

The cow and the bear shall feed;

their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox, The sucking child shall play over the hole of the asp,

and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder’s den.

Isiah 11: 1-9

In the above good tidings you can expect a day when justice and security will cover the surface of the earth and human -beings live happy and prosperous. In the latter phrases it has been mentioned that the reformer is a “Shoot from the stamp of Jesse” and it must be taken into consideration that the “Jesse” means “strong” and Jesse is the father of David, and we Muslims believe that our expected reformer “Imam Mahdi” is the son of Nargess whose great grandfather is David. When you read these characteristics about that day, you can precisely say that our world hasn’t seen such a day, hence you will believe and accept that man will witness these days in the future.

I/we refer to the New-Testament. We will find some good tidings for better days. These are some of the references about this matter.

“When the Son of man comes in his glory. and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne.

Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats”

Matthew 25, 31-33

With a brief glance. the dear reader will find out that the “Son of the man” cannot be Jesus because all these good tidings speak about the future, so it is obvious that the 1’Son of the man” has to come in the future.

“He who conquers and who preserves my work until the end, I will give him power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken pieces, even

as I myself have received power from my Father. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

The revelation to John 2: 26-29

It must be actually heard what the spirit says to the churches.

The reformer in the above words can't be Jesus, because the verbs in this good tidings belong to the future, so we must expect better days for man in the future. We can see that various religions have tried to draw a very nice picture for their followers, and by this drawing, sow seeds of hope in their hearts and minds.

IMAM MAHDI IN ISLAMIC SOURCES

A researcher will surely find many verses in the holy Quran and Islamic traditions about this very important matter which we choose some and mention here:

“O, you who believe! whoever from among you turns back from his religion, then Allah will bring a people, He shall love them and they shall love Him, lowly before the believers, mighty against the unbelievers; they shall strive hard in Allah's way and shall not fear the censure, of any censurer, this is Allah's grace; He gives it to whom He pleases, and Allah is Ample-giving, Knowing.”

(Quran Maidah 54)

These are many traditions about this verse which explain that this verse is about Imam Mahdi (greeting to him).

“They desire to put out the light of Allah with their mouths, and Allah will not consent save to perfect His Light, though the unbelievers are averse.”

(Quran Baraat 32)

The sixth Imam of Shi'as Imam Sadegh says about this verse, “It is about Imam Mahdi (greeting on him)”:

“And certainly we wrote in the Book after the reminder that (as for) the land, My righteous servants shall inherit it.”

(Quran Anbiya 105)

Our fifth Imam Hazrat Bagher declares after this Verse: “Righteous servants were the followers of Imam Mahdi.” Allah has promised to those of you who believe and do good that He will most certainly make them rulers in the earth, as He made rulers those before them, and that He will most certainly establish for them their religion which He has chosen for them, and that He will most certainly, after their fear, give them security in exchange; they shall serve Me, not associating aught with Me; and whoever is ungrateful after this, these it is who are the transgressors.”

(Quran Nur 55)

Imam Sajjad (the fourth Imam) says that verse was about Mahdi (A S): "And we desired to bestow a favour upon those who were deemed weak in the land, and to make them the Imams, and to make them the Imams, and to make them the heirs." (Quran Qasas 5)

It is stated by Imam Ah that Allah will rouse Imam Mahdi and he strengthens the weak.

"They desire to put out the light of Allah with their mouths, but Allah will perfect His light, though the unbelievers may be averse." (No matter what any people do, Allah will make Islam successful) (Quran Saff 8)

Imam Sadegh (A.S) declares about the above verse this completing of the light of Allah will be achieved by Imam Mahdi (greeting upon him). Certainly there can be found many phrases in Islamic sources about this very important matter, some of which we have mentioned.

REFORMER AND THE SINGLE WORLD -WIDE SOVEREIGNTY FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF PHILOSOPHERS

Since ancient times, philosophers have proposed some solutions for human communities because of the existence of injustice, cruelty and ferocity in these communities. One of these ways is "Creating a single world-government"

You can find many of these viewpoints in various history books of philosophy, and we mention some of these viewpoints of philosophers in this chapter:

(1) Plato offers 'Utopia' as an ideal city for human life which is full of peace and prosperity.

(2) Oscar Wild says, "The Cosmorama map which doesn't show the 'Utopia' hasn't any value to see because this map has ignored the land on which humanity has descended, so when humanity comes upon such a country he looks around and when he finds a better region he sails his ship to that region.

History of Philosophy By Will Durrant

Oscar Wild says that looking at a map which lacks the ideal country has no value, and the ideal country is a place where humanity has alighted.

(3) Nehru the late Prime-minister of India has a very fine statement, he says:

"The world in which we are living is full of brutality and ferocity. In my opinion human fate is necessary, and this necessity is now greater than ever. We believe that the future is better than now, and we are working for those better days, so we can easily bear the difficulties in our present life."

The Message of Unesco Magazine

This is a very fine and interesting hope for the future which is declared by Nehru.

(4) We must mention another statement by Rabind -Ranat Tagor the Indian poet which is similar to Nehru's statement.

"Now I don't commit this crime to lose my hope, and lose my belief in the future of human beings, and think that this failure is the final defeat of humanity. I am looking to the future, and see a

future when this great catastrophe ends, history leaves turn over and the sky is illuminated, We do not know; maybe the dawn breaks from the east where the sun rises and at that time human beings can be happy and prosperous.”

You, dear reader, can see that this is a very attractive anticipation for a better future. Tagor says that he was very hopeful of better days

(5) Van Loon says:

“Our world needs people who can hold the helm of the ship of civilization. Such persons ought to be brave and have faith, and must know that mankind is at the start of his way and, so they must guide mankind to the ideal harbour. For this reason they have to know the new ways of sailing. These people should spend some years in the school of time, to manage to reach the front of the ship which is the captain’s place. It is probable that dissatisfied sailors will not obey them and may even kill them, but at the end the great captain will bring the ship to its destination and human beings will consider them as great captains.”

Man’s Story By Hendrick Van Loon

As you see Van Loon states that we need a captain who can guide the ship of mankind to a safe and ideal harbour.

Toynby, the historian and philosopher speaks about a single world government: “The only way for peace and saving human beings is the constitution of a unique world government and prohibition of atomic weapons.

He said these sentences in the peace conference in New York. Toynby confesses that the only person for saving man is a reformer who can guide human beings all over the world.

Of course he doesn’t speak of the characteristics of the reformer, but everybody knows that the constitution of a single world government needs a leader. But as to who can be the leader of this government, he can’t say anything, We will however speak about the reformer and his characteristics later on.

One of the most important confessions belongs to Sartre who has been famous in our time and is the founder of the Existentialism. He says, “To create real social understanding, everybody has to regard his neighbour as his neighbour regards him, and this is not possible now, but in my opinion when sentimental, economic and cultural variations occur in the people, this becomes possible, a single world government.”

Jean Paul Sartre in the book

“What I am”

16

him, and this is not possible now, but in my opinion when sentimental, economic and cultural variations occur in the people, this becomes possible, a single world government.”

Jean Paul Sartre in the book

“What I am”

Bertrand Russel has very interesting remarks: We are every day waiting for the third international war, but if it happens, nobody who is hopeful about the future will lose his belief, and it is a duty for us to keep our hope alive even though darkness, and sorrow, surround the world, and we must think of the future. Clearly, the greatest adversity for man is war and the best way for

protection against war is creating a single world government. As long as this government has not been established, great wars are inevitable. Russel and other thinkers confess that the world needs a single government, but they cannot find a leader for this government. If we suppose that the present leaders in various countries can be suitable for this

government, can we expect better days in our world?

No! Of course not. So it is obvious that, because now-a-days we are witnessing the results of their policies in the world, we have not any hope in these leaders. For this reason we say that a responsible leader for this world government ought to be another man, or we should rather say that we need a divine man.

In another chapter we shall discuss this leader and his characteristics more fully.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE WORLD RULER

In the previous chapter we showed that many thinkers and philosophers and nearly all religions have confessed that in order to save the world, we need a single world government. In this Chapter, we want to discuss this important matter "Who can be the ruler of this government and with what characteristics. A man who wants to have such a great and important responsibility ought to have these characteristics:

(1) He must be truthful in his claim, and when he invites the people to a better condition and better

living, and when he says that he has come to save the world from brutality and injustice, he must be truthful in all these claims and if he isn't truthful, he will be defeated.

(2) He must have a right plan and laws for saving man. Our history has shown very truthful men who have been interested in reforming in the world, but they did not succeed because although they

were truthful, they had not the proper plan and rules for their goal.

(3) He ought to have no weak point either personally or genetically, because if he has such points he will be defeated by a threat or allurements of his enemies. So they do not succeed in their aim,

(4) Their ancestors must be known for innocence and chastity, because a man who belongs to a noble family can sooner win the confidence of people to listen to his call and help him.

We will now discuss these questions as to who has these four characteristics and who can be the founder and ruler of the world government?

I am sure that you dear reader will say that we do not know even one man with the above characteristics. A leader who is truthful, and offers the right plan without any weak point, and with noble ancestors and family.

But we can say that nobody among ordinary people can be our ideal man for founding and ruling this world. So we have explicitly confessed that the only man who can be responsible and capable of this great affair is our last Imam, Hazrat Mahdi (greeting upon him)

He has the four above characteristics, because he is truthful in his claim, and his aim is actually saving the people of the world from injustice and cruelty; he has the best and most correct plan and rules which are the Holy Quran and without any the prosperity and happiness of human beings.

He has no weak point, because he is innocent; he has committed no fault and sin, and he belongs to a family the like of which human history hasn't seen at all. He is from a family whose members are known for chastity, knowledge, humanity, devotion, generosity and piety. If we require history to introduce to us a family with those qualities, it will show us only one family, the family of our Prophet Hazrat Muhammad.

Our expected reformer is the son of eleventh Imam, whose ancestors are Imam Ah, Imam Hossein and other eminent Imams. He is the only man who can be worthy of this title: "The ruler of world government".

THE BIOGRAPHY OF IMAM MAHDI

Imam Mahdi is the son of Imam Hassan Askari and his mother was Nargess or Sussan who had a very strange history, because she was taken captive in one of the wars between the Muslims and Romans, and she was a Roman princess and had married her cousin. But this ceremony which had taken place was interrupted and she didn't accept this marriage. After this happening she had a very wonderful dream as it is written in history books. She saw in her dream, a very glorious ceremony where Jesus and his disciples had gathered in her palace. Meanwhile the Prophet of Islam, Hazrat Muhammad and a group entered the palace.

Jesus went forward to welcome Hazrat Muhammad and embraced him. Then the Prophet of Islam said:

"I have come to ask for the hand of the daughter of your successor Shamoan for my son, Imam Hassan. Jesus said to Shamoan, "It is a very great honour for you to give your daughter to that holy man."

Then Hazrat Muhammad (G .H,) climbed the chair and read a sermon and concluded the marriage contract with his son Imam Hassan Askari and took the disciples as witnesses to this sacred marriage.

When she woke up she became ill and some nights after she saw the Holy Mary and the greatest woman in the world Hazrat Fatima Zahra, the dear daughter of Hazrat Muhammad (G .H.) in another dream;

Holy Mary began to introduce Hazrat Fatima to Nargess and said that she was the best woman in the world,

when Nargess knew this lady started to complain to her of her separation from her son, Imam Hassan, the Holy Fatima said: "As you are not a Muslim it is impossible for you to marry my son". Nargess replied: "I am very eager to be a Muslim". So Nargess was converted to Islam in the sleep.

After that she met Imam Hassan in her sleep every night.

One night her dear husband Imam Hassan told her:

'Your father is collecting an army to fight against the Muslims and you can join army and go with them. Then you will be taken captive by the Muslims, and they will take you with them and I shall buy you in the market through my servant Beshr-Ibn-Soleyman".

After that night she went with the army and she was taken captive by the Muslim soldiers, and then Beshr came and bought her for his Lord Imam Hassan Askari, and this holy marriage took place in 254 (A H) (Hejira) or 877 (A.D). The birth of the last Imam Hazrat Mahdi happened in 255 (A .H) or (878 AD) on the 15th Shaaban. He was five years old and then his father died

His birth is very wonderful, and we briefly mention this important happening: His father's aunt Hakima says: "I went to see Imam Hassan, and he told me not to return because they were expecting a baby to be born that night, a baby who would become his successor and would be the last Imam in the future. I asked Imam Hassan who his mother was and he replied that his mother was Nargess. I told him: "I don't see any sign of pregnancy in her. The Imam smiled and said: "It will be clear by the end of the night because my son is like Moses and his mother is like the mother of Moses, because the cruel and guilty emperor (Pharaoh) was watching every

pregnant woman as he knew that the son would destroy his authority and empire. So he was waiting for the birth of this baby. But he couldn't find Moses, as Allah wanted him to live, then Imam Hassan said to his aunt, "My dear aunt, my son is like Moses; you can't see any sign of pregnancy in Nargess."

When Hakima heard the insistence of Imam Hassan, she decided to stay there that night.

She got up at midnight for prayer, and then she started her prayer, and all the time she was watching Nargess, but she couldn't see any trace of childbirth in Nargess, because she slept calmly

Near dawn Nargess woke up and she felt uncomfortable.

Hakima touched her breast and asked her,

"My dear, do you feel anything?"

Imam Hassan Askari ordered Hakima to read some holy phrases from the Quran.

When the moment of birth was near a bright curtain was seen between the two ladies, Nargess and Hakima, and after some moments Hakima saw a very beautiful boy by Nargess who had descended on the earth and was reading this Verse:

"And we desired to bestow a favour upon those who were deemed weak in the land, and to make them the Imams, and to make them the heirs." (Qasas 5)

It seems hard to believe that a newly-born baby would begin to speak, but everybody who knows and believes Allah and his power can easily believe this extraordinary matter. As we know that holy Jesus too spoke in his first moments of birth.

Hazrat Mahdi and Jesus were similar in two points of view.

(1) Speaking in the cradle.

(2) Jesus had been nominated as the Prophet of in childhood, and Imam Mahdi has been chosen in his childhood.

After the birth, his father Imam Hassan ordered his aunt Hakima to bring his child to him and kissed him and caressed him and wanted him to speak. The baby started to read some verses of the Quran and then Imam Hassan ordered one of his companions to buy a sheep and sacrifice it and distribute the flesh among the poor.

The intimate companions of Imam Hassan were very glad and congratulated Imam Hassan

When two very intimate companions met they congratulated each other, but advised that the birth of Imam Mahdi should be kept secret, and they should not tell this secret to anyone. Here Imam Hassan had two important duties:

(1) To bring up his son to become the next leader in the distant future.

(2) To protect his son and the next leader from the cruel and sinful caliph, because they were expecting his birth, as they knew that Imam Mahdi would destroy palaces of injustice. So they wanted to search for him to find and kill him, The best way against these aims was hiding the birth of Imam Mahdi except from very close friends and companions of Imam Hassan Askari

After this happening (birth of Imam Mahdi in 255 A.H or 878A.D) for five years he lived secretly, and in 260 (A.H) or 893 (A,D) he became the formal Imam after the death of his father Imam Hassan Askari

After the year 260 (Hegri A.H) he has had two periods of absence:

- (1) The short absence
- (2) The long absence

The short one was for 69 years from 260-329 (A H) or 893-962 (A.D) and in his short absence he had four special mediators between him and the people. These four mediators were called deputies, and they were:

- (1) Uthman ibn Sai'd Amri
- (2) Muhammad ibn Uthman
- (3) Hossein ibn Ruh Nawbakhti
- (4) Ali ibn Muhammad Simari

By studying the character and beliefs and piety of these individuals, the greatness of their personalities becomes clear to us.

Ali ibn Muhammad Simari was the last special deputy.

His death coincided with the 15th of Shaaban 329A.H,

The last letter of Hazrat Mahdi (G.H) to the fourth special deputy was addressed to this honourable man.

In this order the Imam announced the death of Ali-ibn Muhammad and the end of the special deputation:

“In the name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful. You are going to die in six days, may Allah grant patience to your brothers in faith on your departure. So, be prepared, but appoint no one in your place, because from the day of your death the period of my major absence will begin. Henceforth, no one will see me, unless and until Allah makes me appear. My reappearance will take place after a very long time when people will have grown tired of waiting and those who are weak in their faith will say: “What? Is he still alive?” When men will come cruel and inconsiderate, and the world will be full of injustice and violence.”

After the year 329 (A.H) (962 A.D) we are in the period of long absence. But we believe that our living Imam is among the people of the world, and he actually lives on the earth, and even though he has been living a very long time)he seems like a youth, or a 35-year young man.

Our last Imam is waiting for Allah's permission for his glorious and victorious rise, but in this period he is not idle. In another chapter of our book we will talk about the benefits bestowed by our kind and dear Imam.

THE BENEFITS OF THE LAST IMAM

One of the most important and difficult questions about Imam Mahdi is this question:

“What are the benefits of an absent Imam, because we need an Imam to be amongst the people and to be recognized by all and to be consulted about their difficulties and questions. But when we don't know him or his place, how can we benefit from such an absent Imam?”

As an answer to these questions we mention some important matters and we classify our answers:

(1) The Imam is beneficial for himself before benefitting the others, because we know that as holy the Quran says, the aim of creation is spiritual progress, and the Imam like other people is advancing every day by his prayers and worships, so he is improving his life. Finally, we can have such an advantage from our discussion that his life is useful for himself without any relationship with others.

(2) We believe that, as our Islamic sources and references say, Allah's blessing reaches the people through the special innocent leaders (who are called a prophet and Imam). So, when we say we need various blessings of Allah, like knowledge, power, sustenance and even life's blessing, many of our Islamic traditions say that to receive these blessings of God we need an Imam.

We even believe that for establishing laws in the world like the rotation of the earth and other stars around the sun, rain, snow, growth of herbs etc... a living Imam is necessary, and it makes no difference for us to know and see this Imam or not.

In conclusion we say that all the world needs the Imam for its survival.

(3) This very long life of our Imam (1105 years) in his absence gives him another readiness for his very important duty.

The explanation of the above sentence is: None of the prophets and reformers had a duty like our Imam Mahdi¹ because he is responsible to convert all the people into Islam. He is responsible for these two important affairs: Monotheism and social justice, and these two duties certainly need a great readiness for him. For this reason, the long life of Imam and his absence from human societies give him some possibilities for his glorious and victorious moment of rising.

(4) The belief in the existence of a great reformer for reforming and progressing in their improvements because they know that if they stay in the way of reform and improvement and understand the rising time of Imam Mahdi, they will join his group, and will be considered as his companion. But they are not aware of the time of his rise, they will be comfortable and calm, because they have done their duty and have played their role in the time of his absence.

(5) Our Islamic books are full of adventures of the people who were involved with the Imam Mahdi, They had become free from their needs and discomforts.

THE LONGEVITY OF IMAM MAHDI

One of the most important questions and even objections about our last Imam is his longevity. For, the Shi'as believe their Imam is 1105 years old (1983-878) and this figure does not seem believable, not seem believable.

In relation with this figure of his age the first question that arises is: "Is it possible and believable for us that a human being can live such a long time? As we know and see the average age in our time is 60-80 years for a human being and science can't tell us that the body cells can be alive for 1105 years, because the maximum age is 100-200 years, so how we can believe that we have a figure amounting to 1105 years. It seems that the last Shi'a Imam is not a real man and he seems to be a fable!!

With the help of Allah we clarify this problem and analyze it and will find a convincing answer:

(1) The first answer is this question: "What is life?"

Can we find amongst the biologists a man who is able to give us a correct answer to this question? What is the difference between living and dead matters? For example what is the difference between dead carbon which makes the coke and living carbon which is combined with other substances in a human cell? I am sure that nobody can answer these questions.

To get more information about this complicated matter of the life we mention two examples:

a) There are some creatures which are called Macrolicotus that are sent to the shore pits by the waves, and after these pits are dried they are dried and transported to other places by the wind, and they stay there for a long time, and everybody who looks at them supposes that they are dead, because they haven't any sign of life, but after a long period, under suitable conditions they show themselves alive.

b) In 1935 Dr. Stanley of the Medical Institute of Rockefeller in Princeton in U.S.A could obtain a virus which is called the Mosaic virus in pure chemical substance form.

He tore the tobacco leaves which are the hosts of this virus and got the extracts of these leaves, and he could obtain them by centrifugal force in pure form and made purified viruses in crystallized form. Before this experiment everybody believed that a crystallized matter is not alive at all. So we must believe that these viruses must be dead, but Dr. Stanley proved that these crystallized viruses are alive and if we put them on tobacco leaves, after a long time they proliferate and infect the whole leaves.

Attention to these two examples shows us that life is not a known problem, and in relation with

This discussion, we can mention the title of a chapter of a book (One, Two, Three, Infinity (By George Gamof) called "The Puzzle of Life". By studying these cases we can find that, the reality of life is not clear and understandable even by physiologists and biologists let alone ordinary people.

(2) The second answer to this question is: Can we fix a limit for age? Can we claim that the maximum age of a human being is 200 years? Really it is difficult and even impossible for us to mention and fix a maximum for the age of human beings

(3) Another point which ought to be mentioned here is this: What is natural, eternal life or death? Of course we can state this matter in another form, which of two these states need a reason! To die or live?

Everybody answers that life doesn't need any reason, and we don't ask why Mr X or Mr Y is alive, but when we hear that a person has died after a long life, we naturally ask why he died.

It is proper to mention what Professor Wisman says about this matter:

"What is natural is everlasting life, not death."

(4) We can find many exceptions in the permanent biological laws, and in our century we have many examples of people who had a long age.

Some years ago, it was written in a newspaper

that in China there is a man who is called Lee-Ching, and he is about 250 years old, and he has had 23 wives. He is still healthy and his hairs are still black.

b) According to the report of the Institute of Gerontology of U.S.S.R one of the most important factors for a longer life is working. A qualified man of this institute says that they knew a peasant who was 124, a carpenter who is 128, and a shepherd who is 131 years old.

Russian scientists claim that they have had about 19304 persons in their country who were more than 100 years old.

As everybody knows that oldest man in Russia was Shir Ah Muslim Of who was 167 years old when he died.

So as we can say that longevity is not impossible for human beings according to science and reason.

LONGEVITY AND THE BIBLE

Here we will give some examples from the Bible about longevals.

In the Old Testament which is acceptable to the Jews and Christians we can find the story of longevals with a long age:

"When Adam had lived a hundred and thirty years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth, 4 The days of Adam after he became the father of Seth were eight hundred years, and he had other sons and daughters.5 Thus all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years, and he died ... 6

when Seth had lived a hundred and five years, he became the father of Enosh 7 , Seth lived after the birth of Enosh eight hundred and seven years, and had other sons and daughters. 8 Thus all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years, and he died. 9

When Enosh had lived ninety years, he became the father of Kenan 10 Enosh lived after the birth of Kenan eight hundred and fifteen years, and had other sons and daughters 11. Thus all the days of Enosh were nine hundred and five years, and he died. 12

When Kenan had lived seventy years, he became the father of Mahal'alel.¹³ Kenan lived after the birth of Mahal'alel eight hundred and forty years, and had other sons and daughters. ¹⁴ Thus all the days of Kenan were nine hundred and ten years and he died.¹⁵

When Mahal'alel had lived sixty five, he became the father of Jared. ¹⁶ Mahal'alel lived after the birth of Jared eight hundred and thirty years, and had other sons and daughters. ¹⁷ Thus all the days of Mahal'alel were eight hundred and ninety five years, and he died. ¹⁸

When Jared had lived a hundred and sixty- two years he became the father of Enosh. ¹⁹ Jared lived after the birth of Enosh eight hundred years, and he had other sons and daughters ²⁰ Thus all the days of Jared were nine hundred and sixty-two years, and he died .. ²¹

When Methu'selah had lived a hundred and eighty-seven years, he became the father of Lamech.²⁶ Methu'selah lived after the birth of Lamech seven hundred and eighty-two years, and had other sons and daughters. ²⁷ Thus all the days of Methu'selah were nine hundred and sixty-nine years, and he died ... ²⁸

Old Testament Chapter 5,6 (Genesis)

All the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years, and he died.²⁹

Old Testament Chapter 9 (Genesis)

We can summarize what we mentioned from the Old Testament about the longevals:

Adam 930 years, Seth 912 years, Enosh 905 years, Kenan 910 years, Mahal'alel 895 years, Jared 962 years, Metu'selah 969 years, and Noah 950 years.

These are some samples from longevals in true history, so the longevity of our Imam is not strange and impossible and everybody who believes in the Bible will believe the longevity of Imam Mahdi¹

At the end of this chapter we must add that, when we believe in Allah, it is very easy for us to believe in Imam Mahdi who is the last reformer for human beings. He is a man who is responsible for carrying out the program of all prophets, and we believe that Allah has wanted to keep him for his great and important duty. For this reason Allah says: "I have wanted to keep him alive for long years". Here is a question:

Can Allah keep the last Imam alive for long years or not? We can answer that Allah can surely do so.

THE FORM OF HIS RISING

As we read in the Islamic traditions Imam Mahdi shall rise and fight against his enemies with the sword' so here we are faced with a question. This is an important and interesting question:

Many people ask that as everybody knows and even can see, we are in a strange and wonderful time of human progress and civilization¹ and our world is full of various forms of weapons like

atomic, hydrogenic and even neutronic bombs which are very strange and powerful, and we can see all forms of tanks, guns and machine-guns.

In view of all this, how can we believe that Imam Mahdi will rise and fight against his enemies with only primitive and ancient weapons like the sword⁵ and is it acceptable that he will defeat his enemies who are armed with modern and advanced weapons, with his sword.

In answer we can say:

His rise is not like a human rise, because he is responsible to do the most difficult work in human history. As we spoke of this great duty in the previous pages, we can say he has an extraordinary duty, so he is allowed to use his extraordinary power which Allah has given to him, and with this explanation we can say that his rise with the sword is a symbolic explanation. It means that he is ordered to convert human beings into Islamic faith, and for this important duty he uses his power, and the sword in Islamic traditions is a symbol of power.

To confirm our explanation there are some traditions in this field.

(1) One of the aids of Imam Mahdi are angels which are invisible powers, and they are at the service of Imam Mahdi by the permission of Allah.

(2) His second weapon are natural powers like rain, storm, sun, cloud etc, ... and we can suppose that nobody can fight against natural powers.

(3) The third instrument for him against his enemies is fear, because Allah will infuse His fear into the hearts of his enemies, so they are frightened for Imam Mahdi. Therefore, he has a very strong aid which is called a psychic weapon.

In conclusion, we can have this advantage that as his rise and fight against materialism and any form of injustice, darknesses and disaster is a divine duty and program. For this reason Allah will help him and make him victorious against all enemies.

THE WORLD AFTER

THE RISE OF IMAM MAHDI

As we said previously, the rise of the last Imam is combined with justice, because he is ordered by Allah to carry out divine laws in human societies, and establish absolute justice all over the world. So it will be very interesting for us to know what views we have about the future, and after the rise of our promised Imam. We can select some phrases from the Islamic references in this field:

(1) Our Prophet Hazrat Muhammad says: "When Our Qu'aim (promised Imam) rises, justice will spread all over the world. After it has been filled with cruelty and injustice, and this happening will take place before Resurrection."

(2) The first Imam of the Shi'as Imam Ali (G.H) says:

“When our Mahdi rises, the sky will offer its rain, the earth will grow its herbs, the rancour will be removed from the hearts of human beings, and wild beasts will live with sheep, cows and domestic animals and even a young girl will go from the east to the west and nobody asks her where she is going?”

3) Our eighth Imam Hazrat Reza (G H) says:

“My fourth son is Qu¹em³ who purifies the earth by the order of Allah, when he rises. He will spread justice all over the world, and at that time nobody oppresses another.”

(4) Hazrat Bagher (G.H) the fifth Imam says:

“Mahdi will kill all polytheists and atheists and leaves no one on the earth except Monotheists In his time, even an old woman will travel from the east to the west of the world, and nobody hinders her, and Allah will let all the seeds grow from the earth, and will let the sky offer rain.

(5) Our sixth Imam Hazrat Sadegh (G H) says:

“When our Qu¹em rises the earth will be illuminated with the light of Allah, and the people will become free – of the sun, and everybody will live very long. and life-span becomes longer, even everyone will have a thousand children.”

We hope to see the days of his glorious rise.

WHAT IS EXPECTATION?

The time of the rise and rule of Imam Mahdi is the time of justice, prosperity and the time of heavenly laws, so it is obvious that anybody who wants to be a disciple of Imam Mahdi must be wholly qualified as a follower for his advent and prepare himself for it.

Our holy Quran says:

“The earth will be for pious servant, the leaders of the earth will be such human beings as pious servants.”

So we clearly see that a servant must be pious and competent to be a disciple of Imam Mahdi, and to be a leader of those who want to have the next leadership of the world.

One of the greatest objections about the expectation and the belief of Shi ‘as is this

The expectation of the absent Imam creates idleness, indifference, and sleepiness, because the Shi ‘as believe that the reformer comes and removes all injustice, cruelty, and sinfulness

The answer to this objection is:

“A believer in the last heavenly reformer is a man who spends all his time reforming and building up especially human reforms, because he believes that he is waiting for an Imam who comes and changes human life; he comes and destroys all bad habits and morals in human societies; he comes and fights against all injustice, cruelty and guilt. He comes to show the real visage of right living to the people of the world; he comes to execute true human laws; he comes to fight

against all the ideologies which invite human beings to idleness and pessimism; he comes to end the age of all religions, and in short, he is the enemy of all bad habits, morals and behavior. So let us see who can be a person who waits for such an Imam?"

It is clear that a man who claims that he is waiting for Imam Mahdi has to be the enemy of all bad habits, morals, and behaviour.

A man who is expecting future bright days must try to create such an environment, which is based on justice, monotheism, kindness and favour.

Such a man must fight against all cruelty and guilt. It would be illogical to believe in this expectation without making any more in the direction of building a better society.

In conclusion we must add that the people who are expecting the rise of a reformer must reform themselves.

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