



The Aroma of Mercy

**Grand Ayatollah Sayed
Sadiq AlShirazi**

Translated by:
Mohammad Baqer Al-Qazwini

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A lecture by: Grand Ayatollah Seyid Sadiq

Al-Shirazi

Translated by: Mohammad Baqer Al-Qazwini

Publisher: Yas Zahra

First Edition: 1385 – 2006 – 1427

Pages: 64

Copies: 2000

Size: pocket

Printer: neinava

Price: 1\$

ISBN:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

**In the Name of Allah,
the Compassionate, the
Merciful**

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Note:

The expression [swt] is used after mentioning the name of God. In Arabic, it stands for *subhanahu wa ta'ala*, which means “may He be glorified and exalted.”

The expression [s] is used after mentioning the name of Prophet Mohammad. In Arabic, it stands for *salla-allahu alayhi wa alih*, which means “peace be upon him and his family.”

The expression [a] is used after mentioning the name of an Imam. In Arabic, it stands for *alahyi al-salam*, which means “peace be upon him.”

The expression [atf] is used after mentioning the name of Imam Al-Mahdi [atf]. In Arabic, it stands for *ajjal-allahu farajah*, which means “may Allah hasten his reappearance.”

The expression [p] is used after the name of a prophet. It stands for “peace be upon him.”

Translator's Foreword

Through His infinite mercy and unlimited compassion, Allah [swt] created this vast universe and created us to expose us to His mercy and justice. The

creation of Allah [swt] varies in degree of importance in this universe. The most beloved of Allah's [swt] creation is not the vastness of this universe, the complexity of our biology, or the angels. As certain *ahadeeth*, or narrations by Ahlul Bayt [a] indicate, the most beloved of Allah's [swt] creation is the intellect. There is not much meaning to the universe without the intellect. The presence of a perceptive, intellectual being allows the universe to be understood and appreciated. Therefore, it makes perfect sense that the entire universe is created for the intellect, for without the intellect, the universe would not have much meaning.

Now if we look at the history of the universe, we find that the complete and flawless intellect was embodied by the holy Prophet Mohammad [s], his revered daughter Fatimatul Zahra [a], and the twelve infallible Imams of Ahlul Bayt [a]. They were the perfect representation of the complete intellect. Hence, it becomes clearer why the universe was created for them. There are many narrations (i.e. Hadith Al-Kisa') that unambiguously state this point. Furthermore, as confirmed by verses 6 and 36 of chapter 33 of the Holy Qur'an, Ahlul Bayt [a] have full authority over us.

The one who currently represents the continuation of prophethood and its succession (Imamate) is Imam

Al-Mahdi [atf], may all of our lives be sacrificed for him. He embodies the complete intellect and is the perfect being on this earth. Thus, he is the *Hujja*, or proof of Allah [swt] on this earth. Allah [swt] has also endowed him with the legislative authority (alwilaya al-tashree'iyya) and the natural/constructive/physical authority (alwilaya al-takweeniyya).

Imam Al-Mahdi [atf], who was named Mohammad by his grandfather the holy Prophet [s], was born on the 15th of Shaaban, year 255 AH (868 AD) in the Islamic lunar calendar in the holy city of Samarra, Iraq. His father, Imam Hassan Al-Askari [a], was martyred in the year 260 AH (872 AD) when Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] was almost five years old. After the martyrdom of his father, Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] assumed the role of being the last Imam and universal leader. It is no surprise that the Imam, at that very young age, became the representative of Allah [swt]. Prophet Jesus [a] spoke to the people from his cradle soon after he was born. His mother, Narjis [a], was a Byzantine princess by the name of Melika. She was the granddaughter of King Caesar, a Christian king, and the daughter of Prince Yusha. She is amongst the descendants of Peter (Chamoun), the righteous disciple of Prophet Jesus [a]. She miraculously declared her Islam and went to Samarra to marry Imam Hassan Al-Askari [a].

The Imam went into occultation at that very young age, and there was limited access to him. This first disappearance or concealment of the Imam, which lasted for a little over seventy years, is known as the “minor occultation.” During this period, the Imam had four deputies: Uthman Ibn Saeed Al-Amri, Mohammad Ibn Uthman, Hussain Ibn Ruh, and Ali Ibn Mohammad Al-Samari. People would have access to the Imam through these four great servants of Allah [swt]. After the death of the fourth deputy, Al-Samari, the major occultation started and it has continued ever since.

The real reason why Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] went into occultation remains with Allah [swt]. However, several possible reasons may also be derived and concluded from the history of Ahlul Bayt [a] and their traditions. First, history reveals that all of the eleven infallible Imams were killed and martyred by tyrannical and oppressive powers and regimes. Naturally, then, if Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] was apparent and accessible to everyone, the same despotic regimes would have killed him as well, just as they did so to his grandfathers. Even though Allah [swt] could have miraculously kept him apparent by protecting him from all efforts to kill him, Allah [swt] did not do so in order make His test valid since we all have free will. Through our free will

and through the evidence that Allah [swt] has revealed to us, we must struggle to discern the right path from the wrong one and achieve guidance. Keeping the Imam apparent and miraculously protecting him from all efforts to kill him would defeat the purpose of the test for which Allah [swt] has created us. It is like having a professor disclose all of the answers to the students on their final exam.

Second, it is possible that the twelfth Imam went into occultation in order to test us. To believe in the unseen is much more difficult than to believe in the tangible and apparent. Believing in an Imam who is in occultation is a more profound and difficult test than believing in an Imam who is seen and apparent to everyone. Allah [swt] has established his proof by sending 124,000 prophets and twelve Imams to humankind. As Allah [swt] sent more prophets and humanity was more exposed to divine messages, the proof of Allah [swt] became stronger. Consequently, the divine test also became more difficult. The test for someone who was exposed to the message of Prophets Abraham, Moses and Jesus [a] is naturally more difficult than the test of someone who was exposed to the message of Prophet Adam [a] simply because more divine proofs have been established. Thus, when it came to the time of the twelfth Imam, Allah [swt] had

sent, in addition to the 124,000 prophets, eleven Imams as well. It was then natural for the test to be greater for the people, as more proofs and pretexts were presented to them throughout the course of history. One of the ways of intensifying the test is to have it require believing in the unseen. Believing in the unseen represents the most difficult test one is challenged with.

One may wonder what benefit a hidden Imam would have. There are many narrations by the Prophet [s] and the Imams [a] which portray the benefit of the hidden twelfth Imam [atf] by comparing him to the sun that is sheltered behind the clouds. Even though the sun may be covered by the clouds, it nonetheless carries out its task and offers its benefits. Similarly, while the Imam is hidden we are nevertheless subjected to his rays of mercy, and he imparts us and all of creation with his innumerable benefits. First, through his mere existence and presence on the earth, Allah [swt] continues to sustain us and avert punishment away from us, just as the presence of the Prophet [s] was a protection for the people from Allah's [swt] punishment (refer to 8:33 of the Qur'an). Second, Imam Al-Mahdi [atf], as he himself has declared, protects his followers from all efforts to destroy and eradicate them. If we look at the history of

the Shias, it is indeed a miracle that till this very day they have survived despite the countless attempts by various governments and groups to eliminate them. Even today, in many countries Shias are persecuted, and there are deliberate attempts to squash them. Third, Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] guides the scholars and leaders of his followers. For example, throughout history, there are many instances of Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] rectifying the rulings (*fatwas*) of prominent scholars. Fourth, the mere presence of a leader and guide, although in occultation, serves to keep the followers motivated. Our hidden twelfth Imam is a source of inspiration for us to continue our efforts in the face of difficult and modern challenges.

However, a valid question that might arise is why Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] has not reappeared yet. As it is with the reason why he went into occultation, the real reason lies with Allah [swt], but it is possible to infer several reasons. First, Allah [swt] generally allows the course of this life to progress naturally without much divine intervention in order to keep the test of this life valid to the fullest extent. A possible reason why Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] has not appeared yet, as indicated by many narrations and the history of the Imams [a], is the lack of support. Many narrations state that Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] will reappear with 313 loyal

companions. Allah [swt] can allow the Imam to emerge victorious without needing the support of a single person, but Allah [swt] wants to test humanity so that the one who chooses the right path is discerned from the one who chooses the wrong path. Imam Ali [a], as he explains in Nahjul Balagha, did not rise and resist simply because he had no supporters. Imam Al-Hassan [a] compromised with Mu'awiya, the Ummayyd tyrant and dictator, because he had no supporters. However, amongst the reasons why Imam Al-Hussain [a] revolted against Yazid, the corrupt son of Mu'awiya, is that he had supporters although they were few. Hence, it is possible that the lack of true and sincere supporters for Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] has delayed his reappearance.

Second, Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] has not appeared yet because the world is not ready yet. Further scientific and knowledge-based progress must be made in preparation for his reappearance. Spiritual and psychological advancement is also required. A more advanced global network must be developed in order for it to be conducive to the government of Imam Al-Mahdi [atf]. Third, people must arrive at the conclusion that he is the world's only hope and savior. People must reach complete despair in their governments and believe that only Imam Al-Mahdi

[atf] will establish a just and upright government. Before his reappearance, people will have tried democracy, socialism, communism, capitalism, dictatorship, autocracy, oligarchy, monarchy, authoritarianism, theocracy, bureaucracy, fascism, etc. But once the people will witness the failure of all of their political systems and the way in which they implement them, their only hope will remain in the government of Imam Al-Mahdi [atf]. But of course, the actual reason lies with Allah [swt].

Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] and the concept of the savior is not a creed confined to the Shias only. All religions, whether divine or not, and many thinkers believe in the savior and that he is the world's only hope. In the New Testament, in the books of Barnaba, Matthew, Mark and Luke, the savior who will reappear at the end of times is mentioned many times. The savior, who is referred to as "the son of man," applies to Prophet Jesus [a] only several times, but most of the time it only applies to Imam Al-Mahdi [atf]. In the Old Testament, there is a reference to Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] and that he would inherit the earth with his righteous companions in the books of Exodus, Isaiah, Daniel, and Habakkuk. In Hindu books there are also many references to the Imam. As for the thinkers and intellectuals, there is a belief in a utopia that will take

place on the earth, which is the government of Imam Al-Mahdi [atf]. For example, in his book of relativity, Einstein speaks of a unified global government being the only hope from global destruction. Bertrand Russel also believes that without a unified global government we must eventually accept the extinction of humans. Plato believed in the creation of a utopia that is free from poverty and oppression. On Sundays at church, Henry Corbin used to read *Al-Sahifa Al-Mahdiyya*, which is a compilation of the supplications that have been authored by Imam Al-Mahdi [atf]. Thomas Campanella, a positivistic philosopher, spoke of the "city of the sun," and he once said, "Today's utopia is tomorrow's reality." Thomas Moore believed in paradise on earth, and Auguste Comte pictured a world governed by intellectuals.

In essence, all of these philosophers and thinkers believe in the unified and global government of Imam Al-Mahdi [atf]. This belief that complete justice will be established is part of our *fitra*, or innate nature that Allah [swt] has created. Allah [swt] has created us with certain desires and needs, and He has created for us the means by which we can fulfill these desires. Allah [swt] has created hunger and thirst in us, but He has also created for us food and water. It would have been an injustice on Allah's [swt] part to create us with

hunger and thirst but deny us food and water. If sometimes we suffer from hunger and thirst it is due to our oppression and mistakes. Allah [swt] has created in us the desire and love for justice. Even the biggest tyrant and dictator will tell you that he or she desires justice. It is an innate disposition that we all have. Thus, Allah's [swt] justice entails that at one point or another, complete justice is established on this earth to fulfill our desire for justice. Thus, these thinkers and philosophers believe in a utopia in which full justice is established due to their natural and innate disposition created by Allah [swt]. They are just simply ignorant of this utopia being the government of Imam Al-Mahdi [atf].

Furthermore, the justice of Allah [swt] also necessitates the existence of Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] on this earth. There are always four forces acting on a human being, and there is a constant struggle between them. Two are external and two are internal. The two internal opposing forces are the *Aql*, or the intellect, and the inner soul that is prone to evil (*al-nafs al-ammara*). Allah [swt] has created *Iblis*, the devil. The devil seeks to misguide the people. The devil is an external force that is always pulling us to deviation. The justice of Allah [swt] entails that there also must be an external force that serves to cancel out or defy

the forces of the devil. Throughout history, this role has been mainly assumed by the prophets of Allah [swt]. Now, the one who assumes this role is Imam Al-Mahdi [atf]. The justice of Allah [swt] entails that if the devil is present and misleading the people, there must be a completely infallible being who represents the source of full guidance. That being is Imam Al-Mahdi [atf].

One might wonder why Allah [swt], through various divine religions and means, has informed us of the savior in the first place. So what if there is a reformer who will reappear at the end of times and establish peace and justice. Our knowledge of the savior and world reformer serves at least four significant purposes. First, it lends confidence and faith to those who devote themselves to Allah [swt] and preach His religion. Even though they may be persecuted, belittled, or even mocked, they are certain that their efforts will never go in vain. Their efforts will yield fruition when the savior reappears. Second, it casts despair and anguish in the hearts of the enemies of Allah [swt] and the unbelievers. It is a message to them that no matter how much they try to advance their own agenda, spread corruption in the world, and excel in this world, there will come a time in which a reformer will roll up their despotic governments and

obstruct their activities. Third, like the philosophy of not knowing when we will die, it serves to prepare the believers. Finally, it gives us the honor to contribute to Imam Al-Mahdi's [atf] global revolution, for he will succeed in part by the efforts of his sincere and diligent companions who will prepare the grounds for him.

It has been over 1100 years since Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] went into occultation. There are copious traditions, narrated by Shias and Sunnis, to the effect that Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] will reappear when the earth is filled with injustice and oppression, and he will come to fill the earth with justice and equity. No one knows that exact timing of his reappearance, as this knowledge is reserved solely for Allah [swt]. However, in the narrations of Ahlul Bayt [a], many signs of his reappearance have been mentioned. These signs indicate that his reappearance is drawing closer and closer. Some of these signs are definite and indicate that he will reappear within a number of years or months only, while others are indefinite and generally state the pervasive condition of the world as his reappearance draws closer.

These signs first serve to corroborate the veracity of the holy Prophet [s] and the infallible Imams [a], and second to prepare us and raise awareness amongst us that once they do occur we are alert to them and know

how to react. When one knows what to expect, he or she will generally be confronted with less problems, and matters will go as planned. Amongst the signs that address the general state of the world as his reappearance draws closer are those which speak about social corruption. People will worship their desires, life will be all about fun, and the Hajj (holy pilgrimage to Mecca) will be for business and pleasure purposes. People will spend money for music and signers, usury and interest will spread and be applied everywhere, divorce rates will rise and increase, and none of the laws of Allah [swt] will be implemented. With respect to moral corruption, people will resort to homosexuality and adultery, and prostitution will be so widespread and will be treated as a business. Women will abandon their motherly responsibilities and people will delay their prayers, *if* they even pray. One narration states that their stomachs will be their gods, their women their direction, and their money will be their religion. Every dollar will be an idol. During these times, natural disasters, such as earthquakes, hurricanes and pandemics, will be on the rise. The Prophet [s] was the savior of the first time of ignorance, and Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] will be the savior of the second time of ignorance.

Amongst the more specific and definite signs are

those that address different events that will be concurrent or close to each other in terms of time. Once these signs occur, the Imam will reappear within months or several years. There will be several divine calls from the sky, one being on the night of the 23rd of the holy month of Ramadhan which will announce the reappearance of Imam Al-Mahdi [atf]. Al-Sufyani, with a large army, will emerge and cause mischief in many parts of the world. He and his army will eventually be annihilated on their way to Mecca from Media by a rupture in the ground which will swallow them. The murder of the pure soul, who is a descendant of the Prophet [s], will take place in *Majsid Al-Haram* in Mecca. Al-Sayed Al-Hasani will emerge with a large group of followers and will pledge allegiance to Imam Al-Mahdi [atf]. Two eclipses will occur during the month of Ramadhan: a solar eclipse during the *middle* of the month and a lunar eclipse at then *end* (which is abnormal). There are many other signs as well. Then Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] will emerge from Mecca, and he will establish his government on the tenth day of Muharram, which marks the day Imam Al-Hussain [a] was martyred in Karbala.

The government of Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] will be one of justice, compassion, equality, mercy, advancement, wisdom, and perfect leadership. As for

the religious state of his government, there will be an unprecedented unity amongst the people. The Imam will also exercise religious tolerance. By observing the clarity of the truth, people will call that there is no god but Allah [swt] and that Mohammad [s] is His messenger everywhere around the world, day and night. Economically, everyone will be financially well off and rich to the extent that a person will bring his charity but he/she will not find *anyone* to take it or need it. Scientifically, all sorts of advancements will take place very rapidly. Complete safety will dominate his government all around the world. There will be no political division or any sort of oppression. While everyone will enjoy economic comfort, Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] will exercise the humbleness of his grandfather Imam Ali [a]. He will eat coarse food and wear rough clothes. He will implement the system of the holy Prophet [s] and Imam Ali [a]. All the inhabitants of the earth and sky will love him.

There are two important reasons, amongst others, why Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] will exercise full justice. First, as one supplication that is recited on Thursday night states, only those who are weak are in need of oppression. Human beings, because they feel insecure and experience various inferiority complexes, resort to oppression and injustice. The one who does not lack

any weakness does not need to oppress. Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] is the perfect creation of Allah [swt]. Thus, he does not need to oppress anyone, for he does not have any feelings of insecurity and inferiority complexes. Second, Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] is infallible and divinely guided. He always seeks his direction from Allah [swt], and Allah [swt] will always protect him from making a mistake. Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] is the leader of all the angels, and as the holy Qur'an ascertains, the angels are infallible. Hence, he also must be infallible since he is their leader. For these reasons, amongst others, Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] will never resort to violence and oppression. He simply does not need to.

In the meantime, while the Imam is absent, we all have a grave responsibility that rests on our shoulders. There are many narrations by the holy Prophet [s] and the Imams [a] to the effect that the most important responsibility during Imam Al-Mahdi's [atf] occultation is to *wait*. It is the best way to prepare for his reappearance. Unfortunately, many people take these traditions with a passive attitude. The act of "waiting" can be done either actively or passively. Imagine that a very prominent or important figure, such as a prophet, a king, a CEO, an important businessman, a president, a leader, etc., is planning to

visit your company. Obviously you will be waiting for this important figure. But how exactly will you wait? Will you just sit behind your desk, support your head by your arms and simply wait? Of course, what is expected is that one would carefully prepare the company. This means that first the place must be very clean and tidy. The proper foods must have been arranged. The appropriate persons must be invited to be there at the meeting or visit. You will have spent endless hours preparing to present something at the meeting. You will make the necessary charts, PowerPoint slides, and projector overheads if you are giving an overview of your company or presenting a future goal and objective. All sorts of other arrangements must be done. This is active waiting, and such waiting is expected from us. We must prepare ourselves such that when Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] reappears we have nothing to worry about.

In order to prepare ourselves and “wait” actively, just as the Prophet [s] has instructed us, we must first develop ourselves. One must be keen on observing piety, for it is the garment of righteous people. It keeps one in check. It means observing the limits Allah [swt] has put for us. Avoiding sins, whether big or small, is a central component of piety. As the Qur'an asserts (9:105), Allah [swt], the Prophet [s] and the believers,

who are the infallible Imams [a], watch every action we make. In order to succeed in this life and the hereafter, and in order to be immune and protected from the evil traps of the devil, one must constantly exercise piety. Humbleness is also fundamental to the development of one's inner self. Arrogance was the first sin ever committed, which led the devil to eternal damnation. Allah [swt] loves those who are humble and wear the garment of humility. Arrogance, sooner or later, simply devours one's deeds and destroys one's actions. Sincerity is the foundation upon which everything is built. Without sincerity, one is fooling him/herself. Since only Allah [swt] is really eternal and independent, to Him all of our actions must be dedicated. Otherwise, all of our efforts will prove futile because they would be aimed at something temporary and diminishing. What really adorns our actions and lives is genuine worship. Amongst the descriptions of the companions of Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] is that they spend their nights engaging in prayer and supplication. However, worship also requires knowledge and consciousness. One must know, to the greatest extent possible, whom he or she is worshipping. This is why one must seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave and frequently engage in deep contemplation. Finally, what restrains us all from quitting, giving up and despairing is the virtue of patience. As the

reappearance of Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] draws closer, the more difficult our test will be, and the more challenges the believers will be confronted with. The enemies of Allah [swt] and Islam will exert all of their efforts to mock and destroy the believers. They will be persecuted wherever they go around the world. All of this demands strong patience. Therefore, developing the self is imperative for success and genuine preparation for the reappearance of our Imam. We should prepare ourselves such that if he reappears at any time, we have nothing to worry about nor will anything hold us back. For example, before going in the presence of Imam Al-Mahdi [atf], who knows all of our actions, we must be on good terms with our parents, relatives and friends. We should observe the rights of everyone. Our religious obligations, such as our prayers, fasting, charity, etc., must all be fulfilled.

As for specific duties, one must serve his or her Imam in accordance with the area in which they specialize in. But before proceeding to one's specialized field, one must always have a clear goal in mind. Lack of a goal will not yield any progress for the long run. To lack a clear goal is a waste of time, money and energy. In this age of motion pictures, numerous satellite channels are necessary to spread the message of Islam and Imam Al-Mahdi [atf]. There are

thousands of corrupt and misguiding television stations that fight the religion of Islam in one way or another. The internet is expanding by the second, and more and more people are getting access to it. Almost two-thirds of the internet is dedicated to pornography and corrupt websites. There are tens of websites alone that fight the concept of the savior and Imam Al-Mahdi [atf]. Thus, thousands of websites are needed to educate the masses about Imam Al-Mahdi [atf]. Newsletters, books, pamphlets, and journals must be dedicated to our Imam. If one has the ability to write well, it is his/her responsibility to write about the Imam. Weekly discussions and monthly gatherings should be conducted in order to address facing modern challenges and how to satisfy Imam Al-Mahdi [atf]. It is very important and beneficial to conduct educational and commemorative conferences during the middle of the month of Shaaban, which marks the birth of our Imam. Amongst the most important obligations, especially for mothers, is to raise children that grow to be true supporters of Imam Al-Mahdi [atf]. So everyone should serve the Imam according to their area of expertise and capacity.

Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] has so much love and compassion for his followers. In a letter he wrote many centuries ago to a great scholar, he stated that he never

neglects looking after his followers, nor does he ever forget their mention. How much do we remember our Imam? Despite his greatness and exalted status, he is so loving and humble to treat us in such a kind way. However, do his followers ever reciprocate to him a fraction of the consideration he gives us? Certain *ahadeeth* indicate that every Monday and Thursday Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] examines our deeds. If he comes across a good deed he smiles and becomes pleased. But if he comes across a bad, sinful deed, his heart aches and tears flow from his eyes. Every year Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] lives the tragedy of his grandfathers, and he is pained by the heartrending events that befell them. On top of it all, many of his followers continue to increase his pains constantly. Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] is the Imam of our time, the continuation of Ahlul Bayt [a], and the representative of Allah [swt] on this earth. We will be asked about him on that first, dark, and lonely night of our grave. We must seek his satisfaction and implore him to be subjected to his special mercy. Otherwise we will harm no one but ourselves.

Since Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] will reappear to establish justice and eliminate depravity and oppression, he is a threat to the despots, corrupters, and

the enemies of Allah [swt]. Thus, it is natural that throughout history many have tried to attack the concept of the savior and the personality of Imam Al-Mahdi [atf]. Many have attempted to paint a very violent and nasty image of his approach and government in order to instill contempt in the hearts of people against him. Many are also afraid of him because he will terminate their evil interests, so they have propagated lies against him to distort the truth. Hence, this booklet, which is a compilation of several speeches delivered by the great scholar and jurist (Marje') Grand Ayatollah Sayed Sadiq Al-Hussaini Al-Shirazi, is an attempt to examine several false traditions that have been fabricated to paint a repugnant image of Imam Al-Mahdi [atf]. Then the book looks at several authentic traditions that compare the just government of Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] with the governments of Prophet Mohammad [s] and Imam Ali [a]. We ask Allah [swt] to make us amongst the sincere and devoted servants of Imam Al-Mahdi [atf], and may

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He hasten his reappearance.

Mohammad Baqer Al-Qazwini

8 Safar 1427 / 9 March 2006

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*In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate,
the Merciful*

The Significance of Knowing Imam Al- Mahdi (May Allah hasten his reappearance)

All praise is due to Allah [swt], the lord of the worlds, and may His peace and blessings be on Prophet Mohammad [s] and his immaculate and pure family. And as a completion to His religion, may His curse be upon the enemies of Mohammad [s] and his family until the Day of Judgment.

Amongst the principal obligations that rest on the shoulders of every Muslim is the recognition and obedience of the Imam (Godly appointed leader) of the time. The most important source we have that confirms and proclaims this obligation is the authentic *hadeeth* (narration) by the Prophet [s] that states, “The one who dies without knowing the Imam of his time shall die the death of the *jahiliyya* (the era of paganism that

preceded Islam and followed the period after Prophet Jesus [p]).” Thus, according to this narration, if one departs from this world without having known the Imam of his time, it is as if he has died in the religion of the pagans, being distant from Islam.

This *hadeeth* is amongst the very accurate and authentic narrations. Furthermore, both Shias and Sunnis concur that this *hadeeth* is *motawater*.¹ Al-Shaykh Al-Mufeed, who was one of the greatest Shia scholars of all time, states in his prominent book *Al-Ifsaah*, “This *hadeeth* (the one mentioned above) has been narrated from the honorable messenger, peace be upon him and his family, carrying a *motawater* status.”² In another document, entitled “The First Article of the Occultation,” Al-Mufeed states, “The *hadeeth* ‘he who dies without knowing the Imam of his time shall die the death of the *jahiliyya*’ is an authentic report affirmed by all scholars of tradition.”³

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1. In Islamic scientific terms, *motawater* refers to a *hadeeth* or narration in which its chain of narrators is verified, successive, and it signifies that it was not possible for the narrators to conspire and forge the *hadeeth*.
 2. *Al-Ifsaah*, by Al-Shaykh Al-Mufeed, pg. 28, published in Qom, Iran by Al-Bi'tha Institute.
 3. Articles of the Occultation, by Al-Shaykh Al-Mufeed, vol. 1,

Moreover, from the Sunni scholars, we point to Sulayman bin Ibrahim Al-Qandoozi Al-Hanafi, who openly states that the *hadeeth* “he who dies...” is agreed upon by all Muslim scholars.⁴

From this *hadeeth*, we understand and conclude that the Prophet [s] is comparing the one who does not know the Imam of his time with the atheists who deny God and the pagans who worship the idols, since he states that such a person dies the death of the *jahiliyya*. The Prophet [s] associates such a person with the pagans to demonstrate that not knowing the Imam of one’s time results in transgression and deviation from the straight path. The more one deviates from the right path and ambles aimlessly in life, the more one becomes distant from the target, so much so that one eventually ends up where the people of the *jahiliyya* did—ascribing partners to God. Therefore, based on this awareness and understanding, it becomes mandatory upon us to strive and make the effort to know the Imam of our time. By doing so, we will save ourselves from going astray and salvage our souls from being at peril.

pg 3, published in Beirut, Lebanon by Dar Al-Mufeed.

4. Yanabee’ Al-Mawaddah, vol. 3, pg 456.

There is not the slightest doubt that the Imam of our time is Imam Al-Mahdi [atf], may Allah [swt] hasten his reappearance. In general, Islamic books are inundated and overwhelmed with references to his name. There is an abundance of *hadeeth* and traditions in Islamic and history books that reveal Imam Al-Mahdi's [atf] lineage and dearoma, his characteristics and descriptions. The *ahadeeth* also establish that Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] is from the line of Imam Ali [a] and Lady Fatima [a]; he does not trace his lineage back to any other than them as some claim. The descriptions of the Imam to whom we must pledge our allegiance and obey only fit Imam Al-Mahdi [atf]. He is alive, by the will of God, receiving his sustenance from his Lord. Furthermore, the Imam witnesses all the actions and endeavors of the people, especially the Shias, for they are true followers of the Prophet [s] and the followers of Ahlul-Bayt.⁵ The Imam keeps even a closer eye on the scholars and the students of religious studies, for they are the leaders and guiders.

Unfortunately, those who lack the true and genuine knowledge about Imam Al-Mahdi [atf], either because

5. Ahlul-Bayt are the family and progeny of Prophet Mohammad [s]. They include the twelve Imams appointed by God to succeed the Prophet [s].

they are ignorant or have deliberately misinterpreted the narrations that address his personal and social ways, have fabricated numerous *ahadeeth* that accuse him of various falsities. Consequently, these offences and aberrations have led some to believe the accusations and lies put forth against the Imam. It is inappropriate to attribute most of these accusations to an ordinary person, let alone an Imam ordained and appointed by God to serve as a universal leader and guide.

In general, it is possible to put the accusations aimed at Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] into two categories. The first category involves the system and the approach which Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] employs to form his government. The second category concerns the way he rules after he reappears and forms an Islamic government, and how he imposes his leadership on the world.

Imam Al-Mahdi's System in Establishing a Government

Unfortunately, many have continuously painted a violent and rough picture of Imam Al-Mahdi [atf]. In their distorted views, they believe that he will establish

his government and spread his rule through the sword by shedding the blood of his enemies. In concocting such views, they rely on certain sayings and narrations, and we will shortly discuss their authenticity and the reliability of their chain of narrators. Such narrations have reached the people through some theologians and certain books. For example, these scholars and books relate that when Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] appears, he will deal with the people in such a rough and harsh manner that they will wish they would have never been subjected to his rule so he would treat them so aggressively. Another narration states that because he will be so harsh and violent, people will start to doubt that he is in fact from the lineage of Prophet Mohammad [s] and is his descendant.

The Fabricated Narrations and Mohammad Ibn Ali Al-Kufi

Nearly fifty fabricated *ahadeeth* about Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] have been collected, thirty of which trace back to a man called Mohammad Ibn Ali Al-Kufi. Al-Kufi is notoriously known for maliciously fabricating *ahadeeth*. He is known amongst all the scholars to be very unreliable and untruthful. Al-Kufi was a contemporary of Imam Hassan Al-Askari [a]. His

unreliability and mendacity is proven by the evidence that Fadhl Ibn Shadhan⁶ puts forth. Ibn Shadhan says about Al-Kufi, “He is amongst the liars.”⁷ In another document, he says, “I almost made *qunoot* against him.”⁸ He means that due to the extent of his dishonesty and deception, he was so close to making prayer against him during his *qunoot* when performing his prayer.

Here are several of Al-Kufi’s false narrations:

The first narration: This lengthy narration, which exceeds a page in *Behar Al-Anwar*, says:

After the reappearance of Imam Al-Mahdi, a group of Muslims will emerge seeking refuge to the Christians of Rome. In return for granting them refuge and safety, the Romans will set the condition that they must all convert to Christianity and visibly wear the

6. Fadhl Ibn Shadhan is one of the greatest Shia narrators. Imam Hassan Al-Askari [a], in praising him, says, “The most envied status in Khorasan is the status of Ibn Shadhan.”

7. Rijal Al-Kashi, by Shaykh Al-Tousi, vol. 2, pg 823, no 1033.

8. Khulasatul Aqwal, by Allama Al-Hilli, pgs. 398-399, no 29.

cross on their chest. Fearing Imam Al-Mahdi's authority and power, they will accept the condition and convert to Christianity. Then Imam Al-Mahdi, seeking revenge from them, will send after them and succeed in driving them out from the Romans' refuge. Once they have been taken back, the Imam will "kill their men and slash the stomachs of their pregnant women."⁹

We must always keep in mind that our master, Al-Mahdi [atf], is an Imam. He is the most knowledgeable person about Islamic laws and rulings. Thus, the Imam is absolutely aware of the Islamic law that stipulates if a pregnant woman commits a crime or a sin that calls for punishment, such as committing adultery and four just witnesses present a testimony against her, it is prohibited to execute the punishment on her until she gives birth. Therefore, is it at all conceivable to say that Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] would slash the stomach of a pregnant woman, let alone punish her? Isn't this narration a flagrant instance of falseness and fabrication?

The second narration: This narration appears in the book "Al-Ghayba," by Al-Nomani:

9. Behar Al-Anwar, vol. 52, pg. 388, no. 206.

Ali Ibn Al-Hussain¹⁰ narrates from Mohammad Ibn Yahya Al-Attar, who narrates from Mohammad Ibn Al-Hassan Al-Razi (an unknown narrator), from Mohammad Ibn Ali Al-Kufi, from Ahmad Ibn Mohammad Ibn Abi Nassr Al-Bazanti, from Abdullah Ibn Bakeer, from his father, from Zorara.¹¹ I asked [Imam Al-Baqer], “Will the Hujjah (Imam Al-Mahdi) pursue the path of Mohammad?” He replied, “Impossible, impossible! Oh Zorara, he will not follow his path!” So I said, “I sacrifice my life for you, but why?” He said, “The messenger of Allah treated his

10. The father of Shaykh Al-Sadouq (a prominent Shia scholar).

11. This is an example of a chain of narrators or transmitters. In order to verify the authenticity of a narration, a scholar must examine each narrator very closely to determine, through various sources, whether the narrator is reliable or not. Once the reliability and authenticity of every narrator that appears in a chain of narrators is verified, a scholar concludes that the *hadeeth* is authentic. However, if even one narrator transmitting the *hadeeth* is not verified, is unknown, or sources indicate that the narrator is not reliable, the *hadeeth* is rendered weak. The process of verifying the reliability of narrators is very complex and intricate, and an entire science, called the Science of Men, is dedicated to it.

people with gentleness and got along with them, but the Qa'em (Imam Al-Mahdi) will exercise killing.”¹²

In addition to this *hadeeth* being weak, because its chain of transmitters is not complete and authentic, it clearly contradicts the authentic and verified narrations that speak of Imam Al-Mahdi's [atf] rule and the way he will deal with his people. Those authentic narrations assert that Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] will follow the path of Prophet Mohammad [s], and that his approach is perfectly consistent with the Prophet's approach. We will discuss these narrations shortly.

The third narration: This narration has the same chain of transmitters of the previous one, narrated on the authority of Al-Kufi from Al-Bazanti, from Al-Alaa'. This narration, like the previous ones, speaks a great deal about killing. It is attributed to Imam Al-Baqer [a], in which he supposedly said, “If people realize what the Qa'em (Imam Al-Mahdi) will do once he appears, most of them will hope not to witness him kill the people.”

This saying that is attributed to an infallible Imam by one of the fabricators is not accepted, but is utterly rejected. Let's assume that a liar accuses a believer of

12. Ghaybatul Nomani, pg 153, no 14.

consuming alcohol. This accusation will not be accepted by any rational or sensible person, nor will it be allowed to be transmitted and passed on to others. So what do you think if an accusation is perpetrated against an infallible Imam? ¹³

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13. Many lies and accusations have been produced by various fabricators and attributed to the immaculate Imams, especially Imam Al-Baqer [a] and Imam Al-Sadiq [a]. Simply analyzing the traditions reveals these lies and accusations. It has been narrated that Imam Al-Sadiq [a] once said, “Al-Mugheera Bin Saeed, may Allah curse him, has interpolated narrations into the books of my father’s companions that he never said. So fear Allah and never accept anything attributed to us if it conflicts with the sayings of our Lord, the Exalted, and the tradition of our Prophet Mohammad. Whenever we speak, we say ‘Allah, the Glorified, has said, or the Messenger of Allah has said.’” Yunus says: I traveled to Iraq and met a cluster of Imam Al-Baqer’s [a] companions. I also met the companions of Imam Al-Sadiq [a], and since they were many and easily accessible, I listened to their sayings and acquired some of their books. When I later presented the books to Imam Al-Redha [a], he refuted many of them and doubted that they were the narrations of Imam Al-Sadiq [a]. Then he said to me, “Abul Khattab has told lies about Imam Al-Sadiq. May Allah curse Abul Khattab and the companions of Abul Khattab. They continue to interpolate and insert such narrations into the books of the companions

The narration continues, “Until many people will say, ‘He (Imam Al-Mahdi) is not from the family of Mohammad. If he was from the family of Mohammad, he would have [displayed some] mercy.’”¹⁴ People will supposedly say this because of his excessive killing. Whom do you think this narration is speaking about? Is it speaking about Al-Hajjaj Ibn Yusef Al-Thaqafi (a notorious tyrant and killer), or about one of the purest creations of Allah [swt], Imam Al-Mahdi [atf]?

The fourth narration: Mohammad Ibn Ali Al -Kufi narrates from Al-Bazanti, from Asem Ibn Hameed Al-Hannat, from Abu Basir who said: Imam Al-Baqer [a] said, “His mission is by the sword. He will not pardon

of Imam Al-Sadiq.” Hesham Ibn Al-Hakam also reports that he heard Imam Al-Sadiq [a] say, “Al-Mugheera Bin Saeed used to deliberately tell lies about my father and seize the books of his companions. His companions, who pretended to be my father’s companions and mixed with them, used to take the books of my father’s companions and submit them to Al-Mugheera. Al-Mugheera would insert in them [excerpts] of disbelief and infidelity and pass them back to his companions.” (Source: Mojam Rijal Al-Hadeeth, by Sayed Al-Khoei, vol. 19, pgs. 300-301.)

14. Ghaybatul Nomani, pg 233.

anyone.”¹⁵

The interesting point here is that Mohammad Ibn Ali Al-Kufi used to attribute his lies to reliable narrators so as to lend some truth to his narrations. By incorporating the names of reliable narrators into his chain of transmitters, he appears reputable and venerated.

The fifth narration: This time Mohammad Ibn Ali Al-Kufi narrates from Al-Hassan Ibn Mahboub (one of the four pillars),¹⁶ from Ali Ibn Hamza Al-Bata’ini,¹⁷

15. Behar Al-Anwar, vol. 52, pg 354, no 114. Also, Ghaybatul Nomani, pg. 233.

16. The expression “the four pillars” was coined by the great scholar Mohammad Ibn Idris Al-Hilli, in vol. 3, pg 589 of his book “Al-Sara’ir.” They were outstanding companions of the Prophet [s] who did not deviate after him. The other three are Salman Al-Farisi, Al-Miqdad Ibn Al-Aswad, Abu Thar Al-Ghifari, and some added Huthayfa Ibn Al-Yaman.

17. He was amongst those who deviated and went astray. He was the leader of the Waqifiyyah sect, who believe that Imam Al-Kadhem [a] was the last Imam and claimed that he is the hidden Imam and the one who is in occultation. Therefore, how can we accept the narration of a man who does not even believe in the twelfth Imam and render him reliable? Furthermore, in one of his sayings, Imam Al-Redha [a] reveals to us that Al-Bata’ini was struck by two

from Abu Basir, from Imam Al-Sadiq [a], who said, “Do not be so eager and impatient for the appearance of Al-Qaem (Imam Al-Mahdi), for I swear by God that it is nothing but the sword and death under the sword.”¹⁸

The sixth narration: Ali Ibn Abi Hamza Al-Bata'ini narrates on the authority of his father, who narrates from Abu Basir, from Imam Al-Sadiq [a], “When the Qaem emerges, nothing but the sword will be between him and the Arabs and Quraysh, and whatever he takes from them shall be by the sword.”¹⁹

These are just a few narrations and traditions that are concerned with the rule and style of Imam Al-Mahdi [atf]. In addition to Mohammad Ibn Ali Al-Kufi

angels in his grave because he denied the Imamate (or leadership) of Imam Al-Redha [a]. He was struck by “a blazing rod of fire that burned and set his grave aflame till the Day of Judgment” (Manaqib Al-Abi Talib, vol. 3, pg 449). How can we then accept his narration if he is burning in his grave for over 1200 years?

18. Al-Ghayba, by Shaykh Al-Tusi, pgs. 459-460, narration 473, and also Al-Khara'ij, vol. 3, pg. 1155, narration 61.

19. Al-Ghayba, by Shaykh Al-Tusi, pg 277, and also Behar Al-Anwar, vol. 52, pg 355.

and Mohammad Ibn Ali Al-Bata'ini, there are other narrators who have reported such fictitious and defective narrations. Even if we overlook the authenticity and reliability of the chain of transmitters of these narrations, we see that they flagrantly contradict the fundamentals and principles of Islam, and in no way can they be justified or accepted. It is confirmed and certain that the role of Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] is to establish justice and roll up the carpet of oppression and despotism. Therefore, it is inconceivable to believe that Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] will establish justice by way of oppression and violence, and that he will revive the *sunnah* (tradition) of his grandfather Prophet Mohammad [s] and Imam Ali [a] by way of instituting heresy and defective innovations. The *sunnah* of Prophet Mohammad [s] prohibits sentencing a pregnant woman to any physical punishment, while it is attributed to Imam Al-Mahdi [atf], God-forbid, that he will deal with a pregnant woman in that cruel and ruthless manner, thereby compelling her to convert to Christianity out of fear and terror. And this is all according to the narration of Mohammad Ibn Ali Al-Kufi, whose notorious status as a forger and impostor has already been established.

The Correct and Authentic Narrations

There is clear and consistent evidence that refutes the fictitious and fabricated narrations. This evidence consists of authentic and reliable narrations that portray a completely different picture from what the previous narrations have depicted. These genuine narrations unambiguously accentuate the conformity of Imam Al-Mahdi's [atf] method and system to the way of his grandfathers Prophet Mohammad [s] and Imam Ali [a]. Here we shall explore a number of these narrations:

The first narration: There is a reliable and suitable²⁰ narration, recorded in the book "Al-Ghayba" by Al-Nomani, that states: Ibn Oqda narrates on the authority of Ali Ibn Al-Hassan (Ibn Fathal), who narrates from his father, from Rofa'a, from Abdullah

20. In the Science of Men, there are certain terms that refer to the degree of reliability of a narration. A narrations rendered reliable (*muwathaqa*) is more accurate and dependable than a suitable (*hasanah*) narration. The highest degree of reliability is when a narration is rendered authentic (*sahiha*). This narration has two sources, one of which is reliable and the other is suitable. Thus, this narration is considered reliable.

Ibn Atta', who says, "I asked Imam Al-Baqer, 'When the Qaem reappears, in what manner will he deal with his people?' Imam Al-Baqer [a] replied, 'He will abolish what was before him just as the Messenger of Allah did, and he will recommence Islam anew.'"

With the advent of Islam, Prophet Mohammad [s] abolished the pillars of idolatry and polytheism, as he also revoked the adulterated beliefs of the Jews, Christians, and Magians.²¹ Similarly, just as the Prophet [s] annulled what preceded him, Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] will rectify the religion of Islam by eliminating everything superficial that claims to act in the name of Islam while in reality it embraces and implements that which is contrary to Islam. Consequently, Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] will establish the real and genuine Islam in a just and rightful government.

When the Prophet [s] introduced Islam to his people and disseminated the word of God, he embarked on his mission in accordance with the Holy Qu'ran. In describing the manner in which the Prophet [s] introduced Islam to his people, the Qur'an says, "Thus

21. The Magians, also known as *Magus*, are adherents of the Zoroastrian religion who worship fire.

it is due to mercy of Allah that you dealt with them gently, and had you been rough, hard-hearted, they would have certainly dispersed from around you (3:159).” The Prophet [s] revoked the adulterated and false teachings that preceded him in a very gentle and lenient approach, to the extent that not only did he treat the Muslims this way, but his gentleness and clemency embraced the polytheists and unbelievers. Likewise, Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] will tread the footsteps of his grandfather Prophet Mohammad [s] in dealing even with the unbelievers in a gentle and lenient way, let alone the Muslims.

The second narration: Based on a number of various sources, many early and late scholars²² such as

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22. The expressions *mutaqaddim* (early or past) and *muta'akhir* (later or more modern) refer to scholars who lived during certain time periods. Generally, the scholars who preceded Allamma Al-Hilli are classified as the early or past scholars, while the scholars that followed Al-Hilli are considered as the later or more modern scholars. This distinction is made primarily because the views and sciences of the early scholars differ in many ways with the scientific methods and reasoning of the later scholars. Therefore, significant credibility is given to a view or rule that both the early and late scholars agree upon and endorse.

Al-Sad uq, Al-Khazaz, Al-Qommi, Al-Tabarsi, Al-Irbali, including other scholars, have narrated:

Ibn Abbas reports that the Prophet [s] said, “The ninth of them (of the descendants of Imam Al-Hussain) from my family and the guided one from my nation is the one who resembles me most in his character, speech, and actions.”²³ Based on this saying from the Prophet [s], we understand that since Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] resembles the Prophet [s] in his *actions* more than anyone else, he will revoke the tainted and corrupted version of Islam and restore the original religion of his grandfather Prophet Mohammad [s] just as the Prophet abolished the pillars of polytheism and iniquity. The Prophet [s] did so gently and kindheartedly; likewise, Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] will emulate the Prophet [s].

Al-Shaykh Al-Tabarsi²⁴ has a commentary on this

23. Behar Al-Anwar, by Al-Majlisi, vol. 52, pg. 379, narration 187.

24. He is also known as the guardian of Islam Abu Ali Al-Fathl Ibn Al-Hasan Ibn Al-Fathl (died 548 A.H.). He was a great scholar in religion, a prominent commentator on the Qur'an, and a notable linguist. He was amongst the most outstanding scholars of the sixth century A.H. His son Al-Hassan is the author of Makarim Al-Akhlaq and his grandson Ali is the author of Mishkat Al-Anwar.

narration in which he says, “Some say [Imam Al-Mahdi] will judge between the people in the same manner Prophet David did, not asking for any proof (or any sort of evidence or testimony substantiating the claim of either side in a case). They have also made purported similar claims. Regarding their claim that Imam Al-Mahdi will rule like David, not requesting any evidence for a case, it is neither established nor agreed upon.”²⁵ Al-Tabarsi, who is considered one of the most prominent experts and scholars of *hadeeth* (tradition), does not accept the validity of such narrations that attribute violence to Imam Al-Mahdi’s [atf] approach and paint an aggressive picture of him.

The third narration: The book of *Behar Al-Anwar*, citing this narration from the book of *Al-Kafi*, states, “Al-Barqi narrates from his father, who narrates from Mohammad Ibn Yahya Al-Khazaz, from Hamad Ibn Othman, from Imam Al-Sadiq, who says, ‘When our Qaem emerges, he will dress the garment of Ali, peace be upon him, and pursue the path of Ali, peace be upon him.’”²⁶

25. A’lam Al-Wara, vol. 2, pg 310. A more detailed discussion will address these narrations towards the end of the book.

26. Al-Kafi, by Al-Kulayni, vol.1, pg. 411, *hadeeth* 3. Also

The chain of transmitters of this *hadeeth* is authentic because all of its narrators are reliable. In addition, the content of this *hadeeth* is consistent with the course and objective of the fourteen infallibles. Thus, this narration is correct and authentic, unlike the false narrations that were discussed in the previous section. Furthermore, the implication of this *hadeeth* is that there is a great joy and love in the hearts of all types of people, young or old, for the reappearance of Imam Al-Mahdi [atf]. What corroborates this state of the people is a saying from Prophet Mohammad [s] that both Shias and Sunnis accept, which says, “We give you the good news of Al-Mahdi, a man from Quraysh, whose government will gladden the inhabitants of the skies (i.e. angels) and the dwellers of the earth.”

The Prophet [s] also said, “I give you the good news of Al-Mahdi who will be sent to the people, and as a result, the inhabitants of the skies and earth will become joyful.” In another narration, the Prophet [s] says, “[Imam Al-Mahdi] is a man from my nation who is loved by the people of the earth and the inhabitants

Behar Al-Anwar, by Al-Majlisi, vol. 40, pg 336, *hadeeth* 18.

of the sky.”²⁷ It is very clear that the people of the earth love him because he will deal with them gently and compassionately.

Reconciling the Authentic Narrations with the Fabricated Ones

When there are conflicting narrations, it is possible to resolve the contradiction by following the procedure that the pure Imams have laid out. The general rule regarding conflicting narrations is that in order for a contradiction to be even considered or acknowledged between two narrations, both narrations must be authentic. However, if one of the narrations, for example, is not authentic because one of the transmitters is not reliable, it will be disregarded and no contradiction will take place. In this case, the authentic narration will only be considered and accepted. The authenticity of both narrations is a condition for us to even consider that there is a

27. Sources: Sharh Al-Akhbar, by the judge Al-Noman Al-Maghribi, vol. 3, pg 362. Al-Ghayba, by Al-Tusi, pg 178, *hadeeth* 136. Musnad Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, vol.3, pg 37. Bayan Al-Shafi'i, chapter 10, pg 505.

contradiction between them.

As discussed previously, it is established that Mohammad Ibn Ali Al-Kufi, who fabricated numerous narrations portraying a dark and violent picture of Imam Al-Mahdi [atf], is not reliable at all. On the other hand, transmitters such as Ali Ibn Ibrahim and Mohammad Ibn Muslim are trustworthy and considered reliable by the Imams. It is illogical and unsound according to Islamic law to equate between the two and conclude that there is a contradiction between their narrations. Therefore, before even further analyzing the two narrations, the unreliable and thus problematic chain of transmitters of the first narration (the one by Al-Kufi) poses a problem in comparing the two narrations and attempting to resolve them.

Furthermore, how can a narration be accepted when one of its transmitters, such as Mohammad Ibn Ali Al-Kufi, portrays Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] as a despotic murderer who kills excessively and consequently instigates chaos and disorder in his government? Scholars of Islamic law argue that the adherence to religious rulings becomes no longer mandatory when a state of chaos or disorder sets in. Is it thus conceivable at all to think that Imam Al-Mahdi [atf], who is the most knowledgeable about Islamic rulings and laws, including the ruling that withdraws the obligation of

religious commands when there is chaos, will create chaos and havoc? A liar and impostor such as Al-Kufi is not even entitled to pose a contradiction to the authentic narrations of the great scholars of tradition.

However, for the sake of argument, if we assume that both narrations are authentic and all of their transmitters are reliable, the next step is to determine which narration enjoys more accuracy and preponderance. This is achieved by comparing the narrations to the holy Qur'an in order to determine which narrations are in accordance to it. When all of the narrations discussed previously are evaluated and laid next to the Qur'an, the narrations that liken Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] to his grandfathers Prophet Mohammad [s] and Imam Ali [s] emerge more accurate and true. In describing the way Prophet Mohammad [s] dealt with his people, the Qur'an says, "Thus it is due to mercy of Allah that you dealt with them gently, and had you been rough, hard-hearted, they would have certainly dispersed from around you (3:159)." The fabricated narrations that portray Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] as a harsh ruler deliberately contradict this verse that speaks of kindness and gentleness.

Even further assuming that both narrations are consistent with the Holy Qur'an, the next step is to examine all the books of tradition. Once we become

familiar with all the traditions, the next step is to determine which of the two narrations is substantiated by and is more consistent with the books of tradition. If after completing all these steps we learn that both narrations are equivalent and neither one is outweighed by the other, the final step is to relinquish both narrations. The two contradicting narrations are disregarded because there is a law that states, “If they (two narrations) contradict each other, both are dropped.” (Therefore, since both narrations will be dropped, no judgment can be made about the approach of Imam Al-Maḥdī [atf]). However, this is done only if both narrations make it to the last step. But since the falsity of the fabricated narrations has been established, the authentic narrations remain to assert the justice of Imam Al-Mahdi’s [atf] government.

Imam Al-Mahdi’s Leadership is Consistent with the Prophet’s Leadership

Not only is Imam Al-Mahdi’s [atf] leadership akin to the Prophet’s [s] leadership, but the narrations of both Shias and Sunnis agree that Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] also resembles the Prophet [s] in his personal traits and characteristics. Historians report that the Prophet [s] had such an attractive and charismatic appearance that

even his enemies would be dazzled once they glanced at him. This wonder and amazement that they experienced upon simply looking at the Prophet [s] caused them to forget the animosity they harbored against him. Similarly, since Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] resembles the Prophet [s] in his character and personal traits, the same tranquil effect will envelop his enemies once they look at him.

Besides historical records and the plethora of narrations that describe the Prophet [s], the holy Qur'an contains many verses that illustrate the incredible mannerism of the Prophet [s]. In addition to the verse mentioned previously, which spoke of his gentleness and kindness, another verse states, "Certainly a messenger has come to you from among yourselves; it grieves him that you should fall into distress; he is full of concern for you, to the believers (he is) compassionate, merciful" (9:128). The Prophet's [s] love and compassion was so encompassing and expansive to the extent that some of his enemies took advantage of his kindness and used it as a weapon against him. The Qur'an says, "And there are some of them who mistreat the Prophet and say: He is one who believes every thing that he hears; say: A hearer of good for you (who) believes in Allah and has faith in the believers and a mercy for those of you who

believe” (9:61).

In interpreting this verse, Al-Qummi reports that when one of the hypocrites ridiculed the Prophet [s], the angel Gabriel descended upon the Prophet [s]. Gabriel asked him to call for the hypocrite and ask him to explain why he mocked him. This was the first time that the Prophet [s] had ever called for someone because he or she had ridiculed him. He called for him and requested that he explain why he had mocked him behind his back. The hypocrite immediately denied it and said, “Oh messenger of God, I never ridiculed you. What you have been told is probably a lie and a slander.” The Prophet [s] did not say anything to him, so the hypocrite thought that the Prophet [s] believed what he told him. However, it was impossible for the Prophet [s] to believe the hypocrite while God had informed him through Gabriel of what he had done behind his back. The Prophet [s] remained silent and did not argue with him so he would not be ashamed for lying. The hypocrite used this incident with the Prophet [s] as an excuse to tell the people the details of what had happened. He also told them that he was puzzled why the Prophet [s] listened to Gabriel and listened to his false reply and believed both of them. “Indeed he is a prophet who believes everything that he hears (as the verse states),” the hypocrite told the

people. After this incident, Allah [swt] revealed the abovementioned verse (Say: a hearer of good for you...) to protect the Prophet [s] and vindicate him from such accusations.

Yes, this is the outstanding way the Prophet [s] dealt with his people. Without the slightest doubt, Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] resembles his grandfather Prophet Mohammad [s], whom the Qur'an describes, "Thus it is due to mercy of Allah that you dealt with them gently..." He will indeed pursue the path of his honorable and grandfather, not deviating an inch away from it. He will treat the unbelievers with utter goodness, let alone the believing Muslims. In essence, Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] will rise to establish the pillars of justice, which is a natural and innate (related to our *fitra*) reality to the human being. Since justice is a natural reality to a human being, and Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] represents the epitome of humanity and virtue, is it thus at all possible that he will pursue a path that would cast fear in the hearts of people? It is impossible and inconceivable that he would make them wish they never had seen him or doubt that he is from the lineage of the family of the Prophet [s] due to his violent and harsh disposition.

When Imam Ali [a] was asked to implement a law, he responded so eloquently and wisely by saying, "Do

you expect me to seek victory through tyranny?”²⁸
 When Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] is the fruit of that blessed tree of Ahul Bayt, he will indeed follow into the footsteps of his great grandfathers and keenly abstain from employing violence and cruelty.

The Judicial System of Imam Al-Mahdi

There remains an important matter that has been the subject of great debate amongst scholars. This important discussion is concerned with the nature of Imam Al-Mahdi's [atf] judicial system. Some believe that he will judge between the people without requesting any witnesses, evidence, or testimony. Allah [swt] will simply inspire him or reveal to him in the form of the knowledge of the unseen, and based on this divine inspiration he will pass his judgment. Those who subscribe to this view substantiate their claim by referring to certain *ahadeeth* and historical events. Amongst these narrations are those that imply that Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] will judge between people based on his personal knowledge of all events, pursuing the method of Prophet David [p]. Here is one narration

28. Nahjul Balagha, pg 183, Speech No. 126.

that establishes this view:

Abdullah Ibn Ajlan narrates from Imam Al-Sadiq [a], “When the Qaem of the family of Mohammad will rise, he will implement the judicial system of David, not requiring any evidence. Allah will simply inspire him and he will execute his judgment.”

However, this view is challenged by two arguments. First, the rule of David [p] of not requiring any oaths²⁹ or evidence occurred only once during his rule. That incident occurred in a long story that Al-Maghriby mentions in his book “Da’emol Islam.” This story that he mentions carries a *morsal* status³⁰. There are also numerous indications that this narration is completely or at least partially forged. Therefore, such

29. In the Islamic judicial system, in certain cases an oath is required to reach a final judgment. There are intricate and complex, but very accurate and concise, laws that govern this system of oaths and evidence in general.

30. In the science of *hadeeth*, a *morsal* status means that the tradition has been narrated without presenting the chain of narrators. As discussed previously, the chain of narrators is very critical and significant in determining the authenticity and strength of a narration. Therefore, if a narration is *morsal*, scholars do not rely on it, and they generally do not accept it because its chain of narrators is unknown.

a narration cannot serve as the basis of one single Islamic law, let alone applying it to the entire judicial system of Imam Al-Mahdi [atf].

Furthermore, after this judicial incident that took place during the rule of David [p], for the rest of his life David [p] judged the people based on proofs and evidence. This, ironically, is confirmed in the beginning and end of this same *morsal* narration (In Al-Maghriby's book). It states in the beginning, "Allah, the Almighty and Glorified, commanded him: O David, Judge between them by oaths and evidence." In the end, it states, "O David, do not ask me to expedite what I have delayed, and judge between my creation by what I have commanded you."

The second argument that refutes the view that Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] will not require any evidence when he judges is that this method of judgment is contrary to the method of Prophet Mohammad [s]. The Prophet [s] always used to say, "I only judge between you by oaths and evidence."³¹ Let's assume that two

31. Al-Kafi, vol. 7, pg. 414

people quarrel over a piece of land. Even if the Prophet [s] knows which of the two has the right to the land (through the knowledge that Allah [swt] reveals to him), he will listen to the proofs and testimony of both before passing a judgment. So if the liar presents a more powerful testimony and convincing evidence, the Prophet [s] will judge in favor of the liar. However, this does not mean that since the Prophet [s] ruled in favor of the one who forged his evidence and lied, then he should not return the land to its rightful owner. He must return it; otherwise, he would be punished by Allah [swt] on the Day of Judgment. In an authentic tradition, the Prophet [s] states, "I only judge between you by evidence and oaths, and some of you are cleverer than others in presenting your evidence. Thus, whenever (due to the evidence presented) I appropriate something for a man from the right of his brother, I have indeed appropriated for him (the forger who concocted the deceiving evidence) a portion of hell."³²

Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] most resembles the messenger of Allah [swt] Prophet Mohammad [s]. His entire reappearance and uprising is based on justice and the

32. Wasa'el Al-Shia, by Al-Amili, Book of Qatha, Sec. 2, narration 1.

implementation of the *sharia* of his grandfather and the revival of his *sunnah*. It is therefore inconceivable that Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] will deviate from the path of the holy Prophet [s] and judge between people in a different manner.

Imam Al-Mahdi's Personal Way of Dealing with People

Amongst the manners that Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] will have is to be very gentle and merciful with all people, especially the poor. At the same time, he will be serious and firm with his workers and officials. One *hadeeth* states, "Al-Mahdi is very generous in giving, merciful with the poor, strict with the workers."³³ To this effect, Imam Ali [a] also states (about the government of Imam Al-Mahdi [atf]), "In the future—

33. Bisharatol Mustafa Li Shi'atil Mortadha, by Al-Tabari, pg. 318.

and you know not of the future—the ruler (Imam Al-Mahdi) who does not belong to them (to a corrupt group that has power) will hold all of its people responsible for their bad actions.”³⁴

Of course, Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] will be stricter with himself than with others. Despite the fact that the people during his rule will all be blessed with economic comfort and social and political tranquility, he will emulate his grandfather Imam Ali [a] in observing rough clothes and coarse food (such as hard bread). One *hadeeth* describes him, “By Allah his clothing is rough and his food is coarse.”³⁵

We ask the Almighty Allah [swt] to hasten the reappearance of our leader Imam Al-Mahdi [atf] and allow us to witness and live his enlightened revolution.

34. Nahjul Balagha, Speech no. 138.

35. Al-Ghayba, by Al-Nomani, pg. 233, and Behar Al-Anwar, vol. 52, pg. 354.