



**Universality of the
Mahdi's Mission**

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Preface



At this era, mankind lives in what is called the global village. Technological breakthroughs have brought the different nations closer to each other. New ventures enabled man to send space shuttles to search for signs of life on other planets. As a revolt against an authoritative Church in the Middle Ages, modern scientists opted to think only in the realm of Physics.

As a result, materialism prevailed, while spirituality receded, in man's life.. The theory of Evolution was systematically presented, displacing the ample evidence of a created man as a tiny creature in a vast universe. Because of dysfunctional man-made laws and disproportionate exploitation of nature's resources, the human race is heading towards more anarchy, bloodshed, and suffering. Overcrowded cities, reduced productivity, prevailing dependency and consumerism have crippled humanity on a global scale. Unjustifiable wars, unemployment, and inflation can spread like a powerful lightning to harm the entire world.

Islam, as a universal faith, gives mankind hope. Abjuring false Gods and returning to the One True Creator should remove all afflictions from man's life. Unlike what the Judaic faith claims that God has created and then abandoned mankind, Islam stresses that the Merciful Creator has appointed a Vicegerent who leads humanity towards guidance and felicity.

Eventually, this God's representative will implement the plan of all other God's envoys. Similar to raising Jesus to Heaven for saving him from his persecutors, Allah has destined for the Mahdi to be in (a lengthy) occultation. His presence is felt by those who believe in God. However, signs for his reappearance, which will proceed Jesus' second return, are unfolding one after the other. These two heirs of Abraham will join efforts to implement justice and fairness on this Earth after being filled with injustice and tyranny. The Mahdi will deliver his mission on a global scale just before the time ends.

After presenting a unifying theory to better understand the worlds of Seen and Unseen, the author will present a number of fulfilled prophecies - proving the Unity of the Creator and the Quran's revealers. Quotations from other God-revealed religious texts will also be attached. At turbulent times which have persisted in man's life on this planet, peoples can always preserve their unity and sanity by adhering to the appointed Imam.

Pharaoh-like rulers are destined to the abyss of history, as Saddam's end clearly shows. Not only the Mahdi is supported by Allah's angels, but also he has inherited the wisdom and experiences of all the righteous envoys that came before him. Just before the End Times, He will fulfill the Creator's promise in making the meek the ones who will inherit the Earth.

I. Introduction

Humanity has long yearned for a Saviour. Both scientific and religious texts indicate that cycles of human races lived on the planet Earth, and then went distinct. Archaeological studies takes man's existence to 500,000 years in history, whereas the religious texts puts Adam's fall on Earth some 12,000 years back, indicating to prior existence of humans here.

The Creator has given man a relatively free will to conduct his life, on different parcels of land, in various societies. Throughout human history, God sent very many envoys to guide man towards what is good for him in this life (and the Hereafter). By bringing laws to regulate man's life, the Prophets warned against breaking these laws. Religious legislations have always been harmonious with the natural (existential) laws, leading to abundance, happiness, and peace in man's life.

Many of the humanity's problems can be attributed to the dysfunction of man-made laws. Just examine the isms which were recently made so glamorous and then sharply declined. In the past century, Communism is a good case for academic interests. When a human society moves in a direction opposite to the natural course, it inevitably hits the rock of history. For being based on materialism, Capitalism will soon meet its prescribed destiny.

Balancing both the spiritual and material needs of man, Islam is expected to dominate the global arena. The Quran provides a complete code of life - it is a perfect constitution. After testing all other man-made laws, the humanity will eventually profess its need for Islam's equalitarian legislations. Central to these is the concept of Mahdism - a divine figure who will justly implement the codes of laws and help mankind to discover the Earth's abundant treasures.

Reviewing the missions of all Allah's envoys, one will find the implementation of justice is central for all of them. Many prophets fore-warned their peoples from transgression, but their efforts were to no avail. Historically, the Jews were known to be notorious in either belying or killing their prophets. According to the seal of the Prophets' foretelling, the Muslims will follow their suite towards his household.

The Mahdi¹ is one of them - from his daughter Fatimah and the 9th descendent of Hussain. Because Allah has willed to protect the Mahdi, alongside with Prophet Jesus, for the

implementation of Allah's decrees, both will have their roles in establishing God's kingdom on Earth. Throughout the course of history, many prophets reminded their peoples of the Days of Allah. Let us first examine these days in sequence.

II. The Days of Allah

"We verily sent Moses with Our revelations, saying: Bring thy people forth from darkness unto light. And remind them of the days of Allah. Lo! therein are revelations for each steadfast, thankful (heart)." Quran (14:5)

II.1 Minor Resurrection - The promised day of the Mahdi's reappearance

"Wait they for naught else than that Allah should come unto them in the shadows of the clouds with the angels? Then the case would be already judged. All cases go back to Allah (for judgment)." Quran (2:210)

Both the Quran and the authenticated Sunnah of the Prophet speak about this monumental day of Allah. The Quran cites: "And verily We have written in the Psalms, after the Torah: My righteous servants will inherit the Earth." Quran (21:105) The Prophet stated: "Even if one day remains, Allah will stretch that day until the Mahdi comes to fill the Earth with Fairness and Justice after it has been filled with Tyranny and Injustice."

In the monotheistic faith of Islam, Allah is neither bound by space nor by time. In the chapter of sincerity, Allah introduces Himself as As-Samad, i.e. the Master Creator on Whom all other creatures depend, the Being that has no inner space (to have an outer shape), ... etc. among other significant attributes. Space wise, Allah encompasses everything in the whole wide (and expanding) universe. Yet, nothing looks like Him.

Just ponder who will be coming then "in the shadows of the clouds with the angles?"

Time is absolutely irrelevant to the Creator. He is beyond it. He is not bound with it, the same way He is NOT bound with anything else - including the clouds. If He ascribes any specific days to His name, it is only to signify the importance of those days. This is an extra reminder for the human being - who tends to forget. The same can be stated about those who are affiliated with Him. The

affiliates are the elites, whom He chose.

Their rank in the sight of Allah is even above than that of the closest Arch Angel - Gabriel. With Muhammad at the focus, thanks to what he has experienced on the night of the Israa and Mi'raj, Allah has introduced these elites to one another even before their births. Similarly, He foretold the physical coming of a number of his envoys. Such assertion can be proven from the glad tidings the four angels gave the barren, old Sara.

This coincidentally occurred upon communicating the bad news of destructing the Sodom and Gomorrah of those who had committed the indescribable crime. Consequently, the 90-yr old Abraham got his second son Isaac - who subsequently fathered Israel (Jacob), as the Quran narrates.

At the dawn of history, some 12,000 years ago, Allah created Adam from dirt. Later, He made Noah a great Prophet. At other points in time, He made Abraham as a close friend, spoke to Moses, and miraculously created Jesus from Virgin Mary. Eventually, He chose the Prophet Muhammad to be His beloved one, and the seal of the Prophets. Throughout history, human beings had no say in the selection of any of the very many prophets. As the Quran states:

"Lo! Allah preferred Adam and Noah and the Family of Abraham and the Family of 'Imran above (all His) creatures." Quran (3:33)

"And when a token cometh unto them, they say: We will not believe till we are given that which Allah's messengers are given. Allah knoweth best with whom to place His message. Humiliation from Allah and heavy punishment will smite the guilty for their scheming." Quran (6:124)

The Muslims agree that every Messenger is a prophet, but not vice versa. Among the Messengers of Allah, five were with Universal missions: Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad. To Muhammad's contemporaries, who denied his Messengership, the Quran challenges:

"They who disbelieve say: Thou art no messenger (of Allah). Say: Allah, and whosoever hath knowledge of the Scripture, is sufficient witness between me and you." Quran (13:43)

Who other than Imam Ali that had the knowledge of the Book, i.e. the Quran. If the Quran was a silent book, Imam Ali was the talking one. When Allah gives such recognition to Imam Ali's testimony for the Prophet's Messengership, little consideration should be given to those who institutionalized his dismissal as the immediate Vicegerent for the Prophet?

In very many Hadiths, the Prophet identified his Twelve vicegerents - all are from Quraysh. In his life, not only he assigned Imam Ali, but also he spoke about the Imamate of Al-Hassan and Al-

Hussain, and the nine Imams from the latter's progeny. None but Imam Muhammad bin Al-Hassan Al-Askari, commonly known as the Mahdi is the awaited Saviour about whom all prophets spoke. Birth: mid Sha'ban 255 A..H., Samaraa, Iraq.

II.2 Middle Resurrection - Al-Raj'ah or the return of selected dead persons to life

"Or (bethink thee of) the like of him who, passing by a township which had fallen into utter ruin, exclaimed: How shall Allah give this township life after its death? And Allah made him die a hundred years, then brought him back to life. He said: How long hast thou tarried? (The man) said: I have tarried a day or part of a day. (He) said: Nay, but thou hast tarried for a hundred years.

Just look at thy food and drink which have not rotted! Look at thine ass! And, that We may make thee a token unto mankind, look at the bones, how We adjust them and then cover them with flesh! And when (the matter) became clear unto him, he said: I know now that Allah is Able to do all things."

Quran (2:259)

Again, the Quran speaks in many places about this resurrection and authenticates the leadership of the designated, rightful Imams. In his role, the Prophet explained the intended meanings of the Quran's verses. Take this verse as a starting example:

"And We desired to show favour unto those who were oppressed in the earth, and to make them examples and to make them the inheritors." Quran (28:5)

To his daughter Fatimah, the Prophet confided that she will be the first one who will follow his departure from this temporal world. To his companions, he stated: "Fatimah is a piece of me. Whoever pleases her, he pleases me. And, whoever displeases her, he displeases me." Ample historic evidence exist that Fatimah was martyred only 75 days after the Prophet's martyrdom. Proof: she was extremely angry at the two sheikhs. In her will, she even asked Imam Ali to deny them the participation in her funeral procession. She also asked to make her graveyard anonymous.

While allowing the two sheikhs to be buried beside the Prophet's tomb in Madinah, Aeysha denied the burial of Imam Hassan there after he was poisoned by Mu'aawiyah in 50 A.H.

Thus a bitter commotion rose between Bani Hashim and Marwan's men - who showered Imam Hassan's corpse with intense arrows. Observing the sanctity of the place and paying reverence to the burial place his grandfather, Imam Hussain put an end to that unnecessary, futile argument by burying his brother somewhere else and he quoted the Quran:

"O ye who believe! Lift not up your voices above the voice of the Prophet, nor shout when speaking to him as ye shout one to another, lest your works be rendered vain while ye perceive not." Quran (49:2)

Ten years before Imam Hassan's martyrdom, in the year 40 A.H., Imam Hussain eulogized his father: Imam Ali - the first oppressed Imam, when the Kharijite Abdul Ar-Rahman bin Muljim assassinated him in collaboration with Mu'aawiyah - Omar's appointed governor over Syria.

In the year 61 A.H., barely 50 years after the Prophet's demise, Imam Hussain himself was martyred by Mu'aawiyah's son Yazid - the drunkard, the womanizer, the tyrant. The episode of Karbala is well documented in Islam's history. With slight factual mistakes², the late (Egyptian) Shaikh Abdul Hameed Kushok spoke eloquently on the day of Ashoraa³. What need to be stressed here is that none but the appointed Twelve Imams who have suffered that much persecution. Similar to saving Jesus from the Jewish persecution, Allah ordered Imam Mahdi to go into occultation.

Imam Hussain sacrificed everything in the Path of Allah, including a newborn child. Upon testing Abraham, Allah ransomed His close friend's sacrifice with a more significant one. This magnificent ransom must have been of the same kind as the sacrifice itself. It can not be a lamb Gabriel brought down - or even a sacrificial animal a pilgrim makes upon performing Haj.

All evidences are indicative towards that the ransom might have been the master of the Martyrs - whom Allah will resurrect among others to reign during His kingdom. Some who were extreme in their cruelty and injustice will also be resurrected to be punished by their victims in this life, before tasting the humiliating chastisement in the Hereafter.

Lineage of Prophet Muhammad is connected to Abraham through Ishmael. Imam Hussain was Prophet Muhammad's grandson - the son of Imam Ali and Fatimah (a.s.). History records that the Prophet of Islam left only one daughter from his own seeds. Yet, the Quran, in its shortest chapter, prophesies that he was given abundant progeny!

It is indeed saddening to see some Muslim doctors of religion who cannot fathom this fulfilled prophecy. A recent declaration by Dr. Zakir Naik⁴ puts him in the category of the Israelite scholar - Bal'am bin Ba'aoora.. In the chapter of Jum'ah, Allah describes him as being like a donkey that carries voluminous books on its back. If both Pharaoh and Moses cannot be right, then Imam

Hussain and Yazid should not be viewed as just Imams (leaders). Hope that this stern message will reach this memorizer of the Quran before he will be resurrected with whom he loves.

II.3 Major Resurrection - The day of Reckoning

"Nay, I swear by the Day of Resurrection." Quran (75:1)

Believing in this day is one of the foundations of the Islamic faith. The Noble Quran makes very many references to it. All the prophets of Allah reminded their peoples about this monumental day. Disbelievers normally deny the day of resurrection, claiming that their existence in this temporal life is purposeless. It is only the time (age) which turns a newborn to a young and then to an elder person - who eventually perishes upon death. No spirit. No life after death. How a dead person who turns to dust and decayed bones can be brought back to life? They wonder.

In Islam, this day has many names. The Quran gives a number of characteristics to it. It comes suddenly, making the disbelievers really wonder.. A nursing mother will be bewildered from her newborn. On that day, a man will flee from his brother, wife, and sons. Every body will be regretful then. The believers would regret for not doing enough good to shield them from the horrors of that day. The disbelievers will be regretful for being caught in a surprise.

Some 4000 years ago, Abraham once asked Allah to show him how He resurrects the dead. Demonstrating His Power to His close friend, Allah told him to do a little experiment. The Quran cites the story of cutting four birds into pieces, placing their flesh onto four mountains, then summoning them back.. All the four birds flew hastily back to Abraham, by the leave of Allah.

As a prophet, Abraham was naturally a believer. Developing spiritually, he became a Messenger. The Quran lists him among the five envoys of Allah who delivered universal messages. By conducting above experiment, he wanted to elevate his certainty (about Allah's Power in resurrecting the dead). After completing Allah's trials, Abraham attained the status of an Imam.

Like Moses and Jesus, Abraham foretold the coming of Muhammad. The Prophet Muhammad, in turn, foretold about the coming of the Mahdi. This will occur just before the day of resurrection. The seal of the Prophet's certainty about the coming of Imam Mahdi was no less than that of Abraham's certainty about the Judgment day.

III. The Sun and the Moon

"He it is Who appointed the Sun a splendour and the Moon a light, and measured for her stages, that ye might know the number of the years, and the reckoning. Allah created not (all) that save in truth. He detaileth the revelations for people who have knowledge." Quran (10:5)

"And We appoint the night and the day two portents. Then We make dark the portent of the night, and We make the portent of the day sight-giving, that ye may seek bounty from your Lord, and that ye may know the computation of the years, and the reckoning; and everything have We expounded with a clear expounding." Quran (17:12)

The Universality of Islam can be established by referring to the Quran, as it speaks about heavenly bodies. Focusing on the Solar system, the Creator tells in the Quran that:

"He created the Sun and the Moon, so we learn how to enumerate the years and reckoning."

Thus, the alteration of the day and the night and the seasons of the year must all be in conformity with Allah's plan. In nature, the light that is reflected on the Moon depends on the rays of the Sun's light. Right. Mathematically, there must be a linear correlation between the Lunar and the Solar years, or: $y = mx + b$

where: y : dependent variable - Lunar (Hijri) year, x : independent variable - Solar (Gregorian) year, and, b, m : constants.

In the chapter of the Cave, Allah gives $m = 309/300 = 1.03$ (the slope).

Quran's chapter of the Elephant marked the birthday of the Prophet - which corresponded to 571 A.D (the intercept).

Knowing that the Prophet migrated from Mecca to Madinah at the age of 53, one can determine $b = - 639$. Thus:

$$y = 1.03x - 639$$

Example: put $x = 2008$ into this equation to get 1429.

Proof: The author of the Quran is none but Allah - the exalted Creator.

The Prophet Muhammad could never make such a discovery, given the fact that illiteracy was prevailing in the Arabia Peninsula at his time. In the city of Mecca, where he was born, people were either wood cutters, or shepherd, or merchants. A few were poets. But, none was expert in Physics or Astrology. It was only in the past century when man put his step on the Moon, and learned that its mean distance from the planet Earth is 384,400 Km.

It is pertinent to cite another wondrous revelation that captured the attention of a number of disbelievers and made them return to Islam. Here is the verse:

"The hour drew nigh and the moon was rent in twain." Quran (54:1)

Therefore it is important to stress that the Muslims are not Moon worshippers. Unfortunately, this is a stereotype which is very prevalent in the Western media to portray Islam with a negative brush. Islam is the true religion which the Creator has sent to the entire humanity. The Muslims' motto is: the One Creator Who has sent the One true message to the One human family.

According to some tradition⁵, Lunar and Solar eclipses in the month of Ramadhan may herald the coming of the Mahdi. Leaving aside the birth of the tailed comet Helley for other studies, the 1981 and 1982 Lunar and Solar Eclipses in the month Ramadhan have already occurred. But, their occurrence was in the reverse order of what another more authentic Hadith stipulates:

The author of '\eqdud-durar\' in section one, chapter four narrates from '\al-fatan\' of hafiz abu-abdullah na'eem-ibn-hemmad and he, from yazid-ibn-khalil asadi who said: '\I was in the presence of Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.). He mentioned two of the signs which would occur before the emergence of Mahdi and which has not yet been witnessed (right from the time of fall of Adam till now). One sign is this that there shall occur an eclipse of the Sun on 15th of Ramadhan and the Moon too shall be eclipsed at the end of Ramadhan.

A person said: '\O son of messenger of Allah! It is not as you say. Rather the Sun will be eclipsed at the end of the month of Ramadhan and the Moon will be eclipsed during the middle of the month. Imam Baqir (a.s.) said: the One who says these words is knowing better (than you) that right from the time of Adam\'s fall till today these two signs have not occurred.

The author of es'aaf-ul-raghaben\' too has narrated the same tradition.

IV. Light and Darkness

The Quran declares that we categorically have two worlds: the Seen; and, the Unseen. When light

projects on material objects, man's naked eyes can see them. It is probably for this reason that Allah breathed His spirit (or essence which can be construed as an invisible light) into the clay upon Adam's creation. Reasonably, the Prophet set a requirement for the Moon sighting: witnessing the Crescent by the naked eyes. Thus witnessing becomes a source of certainty - not the speculative computational models.

Distinguishing different kinds of light, the Quran calls the Sun as Siraj (i.e. a lamp which usually generates the light that is familiar to us). The Moon, on the other hand, is called Noor - which is a mere indication of the reflected light on its surface to the planet Earth. Remember the dependency of the Moon's light on the Sun's.

"And for the moon We have appointed mansions till she return like an old shrivelled palm-leaf.."
Quran (36:39)

In this verse, Allah says that He is the One Who has predestined the Moon's (monthly) stations, changing it from a full Moon until it looks like an old arch of a palm-tree leaf. Removing the barrier between the two worlds and demonstrating His control of everything in existence, Allah also states that He manages the affairs on Earth from the Heaven, in a day which is equivalent to 1000 years of that you count (enumerate).

Ironically, the Quran had spoken about the relativity (theory) some 1200 years before the birth of Albert Einstein. Historically, the Arabs used to use the units of time to indicate to long distances travelled. Here, if you substitute the 1000 years by the intended distance travelled by the Moon as it revolves around the Earth 12,000 times and divide that distance by 1 day converted to seconds, you get:

Speed of light = distance travelled by the Moon in 1000 years/(24x3600) = 299748 Km/s.

This speed of light was adopted in a Scientific Conference in Paris, in 1984.

Similar to the concept of minor, middle, and major resurrections, here I submit: Physics (realm of the Physical world); and, Metaphysics I, Metaphysics II to refer to two worlds in the Unseen. The Physical world, for being material in nature, is being experienced by the majority of the children of Adam. For man's ignorance about the other worlds (which are spiritual in nature), very many generations of human beings do not know what they have missed.

Seeing is believing, the adage goes. But with what eyes? True: the naked eyes only see the material objects. For investigating tiny particulate matters (or distant heavenly planets), the scientists have utilized powerful microscopes. High resolution cameras can picture even the nuclei of living and pathological cells. One is not sure where to place the lie detectors, when the

occupants of the Oval office lie with impunity.

After the recent technological breakthroughs, we started believing many things which we can not normally see by our naked eyes. Wireless communication was a dream a few decades ago. The Quran talks about Joseph's dream in seeing the Sun, the Moon, and 11 stars bowing down to him. A dream which came true a few decades later, as the Quran reports.

Other points in Metaphysics I can be derived from Joseph's chapter and other chapters in the Quran. Here, I only state the strong sense of smelling of Israel (Jacob - Joseph's father) and recovering his sight after throwing Joseph's shirt on his face.

To the materialistic Children of Israel who out of envy threw their half-brother Joseph in a deep well and caused too much anguish for their old father, Jacob said:

"I expose my distress and anguish only unto Allah, and I know from Allah that which ye know not."
Quran (12:86)

"Then, when the bearer of glad tidings came, he laid it on his face and he became a seer once more.. He said: Said I not unto you that I know from Allah that which ye know not?" Quran (12:96)

The Quran exhorts mankind to believe in the Day of Judgment. This day is equivalent to 50,000 Earthy years! Once again, Allah's words can be viewed on three levels: lower (worldly, for the majority to understand); higher (Metaphysics I, for the prophets to know); and, Superior (Metaphysics II, for the Imams to relate to).

This categorization is an oversimplification to express spiritual experiences in layman's language. In other words, a tiny object loses its gross material nature when it moves at the speed of light. Thus, we can examine the various kinds of waves, including the electromagnetic waves which constitute the rays of light. This light is visible to our eyes.

Examination of subatomic particular reactions leads to the measurement of: Alpha particles; Beta particles; and, Gamma Rays - which are invisible electromagnetic waves. Mass-energy balance leads to other emissions. Co-60 has been used for sterilization by Gamma radiation. Dentists normally use X-Ray machines for diagnoses.. Hospitals utilize Ultrasound detectors to discover the foetus's gender. Lately, with the heightened security concerns, new detectors were developed for detecting explosives from 25m distance.

Why then the majority of the human beings do not believe in the Creator Who describes Himself in such a lower, worldly vocabulary:

"Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The similitude of His light is as a niche wherein is a lamp. The lamp is in a glass. The glass is as it were a shining star. (This lamp is) kindled from a blessed tree, an olive neither of the East nor of the West, whose oil would almost glow forth (of itself) though no fire touched it. Light upon light. Allah guideth unto His light whom He will. And Allah speaketh to mankind in allegories, for Allah is Knower of all things." Quran (24:35)

In the physical world, darkness occurs when layers of material prevent the penetration of rays of light. A good example is what marine biologists experience in deep seas. When Yonus (Joanna) angrily left his town, he suddenly found himself in three layers of darkness: the night; the deep sea; and, the whale's belly.

The Quran presents another interesting case, which is indicative towards Allah as the Creator:

He created you from one being, then from that (being) He made its mate; and He hath provided for you of cattle eight kinds. He created you in the wombs of your mothers, creation after creation, in a threefold gloom. Such is Allah, your Lord. His is the Sovereignty. There is no Allah save Him. How then are ye turned away? Quran (39:6)

In the spiritual world, it is man's heart which receives the rays of guidance from Allah. Upon sinning, this heart will be covered with layers of what looks like "rusts" - which are impermeable to any spiritual enlightenment. The Quran calls the hearts of those who insistently indulge in sins, without considering repentance, as being "sealed." According to the Prophet, only constant, sincere repentance can remove such rusts.

In the first chapter of the Quran, there is an interesting analogy between the physical darkness and the spiritual one.

As discussed somewhere else⁶, the (written) Quran is the lower word of Allah - it is only a silent book. Recitation of Allah's words brings humility to the believers' hearts and makes them ready to receive the guidance. The rightful Imam is the light of Allah who guides the pious towards the straight path. For knowing the intended meanings of Allah's final revelation, the Imam's light pierces through every darkness to dispel it.

The Quran encourages every Muslim to become a Mo'min - a true believer. Then by responding to the call "Oh you who believe," the believers are perhaps moved to become pious - Mutaqeen. Only the latter group can find guidance from the Quran. Believing in the Unseen constitutes an integral part of the belief of the latter group, as the Quran declares in its very first chapter. Imam Mahdi is part of the Unseen. His path is therefore the Straight Path.

The interconnection between the Quran and the Imam is inseparable. One leads to the other.

Without being an infallible, already-guided, the Mahdi can not provide any guidance to others. His occultation is just part of the Unseen world. His presence in the hearts of the pious looks like the shining Sun which is being obscured by little clouds.

V. The Mahdi in Muslim Traditions

With the exception of a small Salafi group, both the Caliphate and Imamte schools of thought believe in the coming of the Mahdi before End times. The Hadiths from the Prophet in this respect are too numerous and authenticated enough to defy. A slight difference however exists regarding whether the Mahdi was born or he will be born in the future.

Without being able to justify/identify the twelve rightful Caliphs, the Caliphate school followers sometimes raise feeble objections concerning the Imam's long life, the purpose of his occultation, and the like. Such objections cannot withstand any critiquing in the light of the Quran and the authentic Sunnah. A number of scholars thoroughly debated this matter^{7,8,9}. I trust some speakers in this conference will address it, too.

VI. The Messiah in the Judo-Christian Texts

When Jesus started his mission, some Jews believed in him as being the Messiah. The original Old Testament must have spoken about this important prophecy. It is well known that Jesus did not come to change the Laws of Torah. Jesus' native language was Aramaic. Neither he nor any of his disciples wrote a book in this language. The New Testament was later written in Greek.

The Jews, who rejected Jesus, accused him of blasphemy. That was a sufficient accusation to justify the spilling of his blood. God in the Heaven raised him to protect him. Of course the Christians contend that he was crucified for the atonement of children of Adam's sins. Similar to the contemporary afore-mentioned stance towards the Mahdi, the Children of Israel were divided into two main groups. The Jews have long been waiting for the Messiah for their redemption. The Christians expect the (second) coming of Jesus.

In mid February 2008, I spoke at a Conference held in Qum on the contributions of (the late) Allamah Muhammad Jawad Al-Balaghi and highlighted the fact that he mastered the Hebrew and English languages to delineate a number of Islamic perspectives in the (present) Old and New Testaments - prophecies about Imam Mahdi was one of them.

Similar to the late Al-Balaghi who composed poetry on the Mahdi, millions send their daily salutation to him^{10,11}. Here, I refer the researcher to a number of short clips¹² on this subject, developed by the Turkish Muslim scholar - Harun Yahya. As a herald for a humanity that is preparing to greet its Saviour, my only hope is that this research paper will spin further interests.

VII. Concluding Remarks

1. The Book of Allah in its written form makes the universal message of Islam fairly known to the Muslims/non-Muslims who can read Arabic with understanding. Exhorting the believers to reach a higher understanding, Allah expects them to ponder at the deeper meaning of His last message to mankind. At this higher level, Muslim scholars have put excellent efforts to elucidate the deeper meanings of the Quran's verses.

Voluminous books were written for what is called Tafseer, i.e. interpretation. When it comes to the meanings intended by Allah, they are inaccessible except to the chosen Imams. Both the Quran and the practice of previous messengers naturally lead to the belief in Imamate. None but the purified can comprehend the Quran that is in the sight of Allah. Therefore, at this highest level of understanding Ta'weel becomes necessary.

2. True, neither the name of the first nor the last, nor any other Imam is being mentioned in the Quran. But, the Quran infers that Imam Ali is the one who possesses the knowledge of the Book. It also refers the Muslims to those who know the Ta'weel - i.e. the actual meanings of the revelation as intended by Allah. The Muslims contemporary to the Prophet Muhammad unanimously agreed that Ahlul Bait, i.e. the household of the Prophet as being introduced in the verses of Tatheer and Mubahalah, are the ones whom Allah entrusted with His knowledge - especially as it pertains to the implementation of justice in man's life.

It has become Mutawatar in the science of Hadith that the Prophet, not only appointed Imam Ali as a Vicegerent, but also declared the Imamate of his grandsons Hassan and Hussain, and the 9 Imams from Hussain's progeny. It was only the will of Allah on which the Prophet acted. This was very similar to giving his only daughter Fatimah in marriage to his cousin. Thus, the appointed 12th Imam (Muhammad bin Al-Hassan) was being introduced by the Prophet himself long before his birth in 255 AH.

3. Similar to the persecuted Israelite prophets, the Prophet of Islam's household have endured unimaginable suffering. The same way the mother of Moses had to put her newborn in a box (see Ark of the Covenant below) and throw him in the Nile River, Imam Mahdi's father had to hide his son from the henchmen of the ruling Caliph. But, the Imam was properly introduced to a close

circle of 40 disciples.

After the poisoning of his father in 260 AH, the Imam executed his duties through four special representatives for 69 years. Since 329 AH, the Imam has been in occultation waiting for Allah's permission to appear for the eventual implementation of justice. His mission is undoubtedly universal.

As a minor resurrection, the Imam's appearance represents Islam's revival. For the divine knowledge he inherited, he is a true partner of the Quran. Only he knows the Ta'weel of the confuted (Mutashabihat) verses. The Muhkamat verses are self explanatory for the learned.

Quoting the Quran on the resurrection of a prophet 100 years after his death, and bringing back to life the youths of the Cave after 300 years, are proofs that the Middle resurrection is not a Shi'ah invention (as some ignorant call it). Raj'ah simply means the coming of specific persons back to life - by the leave of Allah.

Some of these are pious (like the above examples) and others could be ordinary witnesses (like the dead whom Moses smite by the tail of a slaughtered cow).

The ultimate judge is always Allah. The majority of the wrongdoers will undoubtedly be sentenced on the day of reckoning. However, the Quran declares that the ones who have persistently committed heinous crimes will have two deaths and two resurrections.

Imam Mahdi will bring such to the book, especially if they were the ones who laid the foundation of persecution of Ahlul Bait and subsequently caused the tragedy of Karbala.

The Economical System of Salawat

Introduction

In the awaited time of the 12th Imam - may he return soon - a very special form of economy is predicted. On the one hand nobody will find any poor to give his Zakat to him and on the other hand he will be able to receive whatever he wants by articulating a "Salawat", greetings to the Holy Prophet of Islam and his pure family, the Ahl-ul-Bayt.

Scheich Mufid quoted a tradition [hadith] by Abu Abdillah (a.) which al-Mufaddhal ibn Umar had heard, that a time will come in which earth will show all its treasures. And man will search for somebody to give him his money or to spend his Zakat but he will not find anybody in need . Wealth will flow like water, everyone will be independent and have surplus wealth and property to the extent that nobody will be in the need of Zakat and Sadaqa thus receiving of Zakat and Sadaqa will be discarded.

The today's question regarding this prophecy is: How can we imagine such a time? Will it be a miracle, or are we able to prepare it partly? Is this form of wealth a special one for the time of Imam Mahdi (a.), while earth hides this wealth until he returns, or does this already exist in parts, but is misused? And the most important question in this regard shall be: What can we do to prepare that time, also in our economy?

Examples of specific Islamic economy

Since the existence of mankind, we never have seen a time, where the whole mankind has been provided inside a worldwide economy. There have been always lots of poor starving and dying of thirst, and on the other hand extreme rich people, who did not help the poor. This is one aspect of the story of Cain and Abel.

It is also the story of Moses and Pharaoh. The same story exists in the time of our Prophet in Mecca, when the poor have not been provided or even helped by the Sufyanis. The story remained through all the Islamic history from Umayyads over Abbasids and all the dynasties ruling in the several parts of Muslim world. In our today's world every single day about 30.000 people die in average, because they have not enough to eat or no clean water to drink.

So we have no comprehensive example, neither in history nor today, for the awaited time of the Salawat-System. But nevertheless there are some exemplary events, which can give an idea of such an economy.

In Islamic history an event about a necklace of the blessed Fatima-tu-Zahra (a.) is known very well, which she gave to a poor man. The necklace on its way gave food and clothes to a poor, freed a slave and performed several other blessed things before returning to its owner Fatima (a.). Although she had "spent" the necklace, she received it back without any further payment and the necklace on its return way fulfilled several other "payments", like freeing a slave.

Another example is known from the time of Imam Hussain (a.). A few days before the battle of Kerbela, Imam Hussain (a.) gave water to Hurr al-Riyahi and his companions. This water freed Hurr from his jails of falsehood and returned to the Imam (a.) in the hands of Sukayna, who got the water from Hurr's wife at the evening after Aschoora. Imam Hussain had left this world, but the

water he gave, came back to him.

These two examples show that the economy of truth works within other principles than our today's economy. Nevertheless it is possible, that even today's economical situation can give signs according to a future of just economy. Today's economy work with money. Any economical work without money seems to be not thinkable. To understand this aspect, at first it has to be asked, what money is?

What is money and why is interest [riba] forbidden?

Money today is any good that functions as a medium of exchange that is socially and legally accepted in payment for goods and services and in settlement of debts. Money also serves as a standard of value for measuring the relative worth of different goods and services and as a store of value. One can say that money is a form of standardised certificate of debt. Person A gives person B any good and person B hands over to person A a standardised certificate of debt for this good, which person A can use in a defined economy.

In former times money had its own value. The standardized coins have been produced out of gold or silver, so that the money itself at the same time was a good itself. But today's money is no longer the same as real value. The papers in our hands have no own value. It is only a standardised certificate of debt and has its value only if there is someone to honour this money with any goods. Nevertheless, it is used as a good itself to get interest [riba].

Interest [riba] is another part of today's world economy. If someone is ready to lend his existing standardised certificate of debts - called money - to another person, this other person has to give back the lend money one defined day. But in addition to this lend money, he has to give back an additional money, which is called interest or "Riba" as Islamic term.

As we know, interest is forbidden in Islam. To prove how wrong and defect the system of "Riba" is, on can assume, what would happen, if someone living in the time of Prophet Muhammad, more than 1400 years ago, and had invested only one single Tuman with 5% interest. The result would be that his today progeny would posses nearly 5 Quadrilliarde (4,62401 x 10²⁹) Tuman. This is a 5 with 29 zeros behind! And you can imagine that this is much more than today's existing money in Iran.

This corrupt system of "Riba" can only exist for some decades and needs afterwards a world war to start again by zero. Today we live in the era of such a crash. But this era gives us a good chance to understand, why the Salawat-System could work even without miracles. Therefore we need a short view into the recent existing government debts.

Government debts

Germany today has about 1500 milliard (American: billion) EUR debts. The leader of the Western World USA today has about 8500 milliard (American: billion) EUR debts, and Japan 7000 milliard (American: billion) EUR. If we add only the debts of these three countries (Germany, USA, Japan), the result is 17 billion (American: trillion) EUR, it is a 17 with 12 zeros behind.

This money - or let us remember: standardised certificates of debts - has been given by someone, who does not need it today and who lives from the interest [riba]. We can say that this world even today has debts of much more than 17 billion EUR (American: trillion), which nobody needs actually. If we would have a look into the situation of much more countries the result would be enormous; let us assume around 35 billion EUR.

If we divide this debts to the existing world population of 7 milliard (American: billion) every single person in this world, every child, every old, every woman and man, every one of you would have a starting capital of 5000 EUR which is the annual salary for the majority of world population. A family with 5 person could get 25.000 EUR.

This short calculation was only to show, how the already existing money or debts in this world could lead to a moderate richness of recent mankind if distributed justly. Instead, unfortunately all these debts are used to oppress the people of Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan and several other countries of the world. The problem of unfair distribution enfolds not only money, but also goods and the valuing of it. A typical example is the payment for fuel.

Injustice of world's economy

To understand which dimension of injustice the world's economy today has reached, the example of fuel is typical. Usually one can think, that oil comes from Iran and several other countries and these countries should be rich due to selling this oil to the western world. And the western world cannot earn money with oil, because they buy it. But this way of thinking is absolutely wrong in this world full of oppression.

Here the calculation for Germany can be given as an example. Germany earns much more money with the oil coming from Iran, that Iran does. The price for fuel in Germany is around 1,40 EUR per liter. But the product price is only 40 Cent. Iran gets about 10 Cent from this 40 Cent. The rest

goes to transport, refining and some other production processes. But 1 EUR of the price, Germans pay are taxes, which the German state earns.

Remember: Iran gets 10 CENT for this 1 liter while Germany gets 1 EUR, although the oil comes from Iran. Within this simple example one can imagine, how the injustice in distribution concerns several parts of economy. All these injustices will lose its relevance, if the system of money is overcome. But is an economy without money possible?

Economy without money?

As we know from prophetic words, one day will come, when people will meet all their needs by speaking out a "Salawat". Based on today's predatory capitalism, which forces its pressure into the whole world, the question may be raised, how a system without any money ever can work? The answer is very simple: The predatory capitalism itself shows, that it is possible! If one recognises,

that the USA only work with money they do not possess, if one considers, that most of money transfers in the world is virtual and has nothing to do with real existing values, it can be seen, that a system without money could be imagined. But the preconditions to realize such a system in a real existing society are not easy to fulfil. The reason for this is, that the goals of economy in a real existing capitalism is only to increase money.

Thanks God - alhamdulillah - we live in the time of the existing Islamic Republic of Iran and in the preamble of the constitution we read following words in the Chapter: "The Economy is a Means, Not an End":

"In strengthening the foundations of the economy, the fundamental consideration will be fulfilment of the material needs of man in the course of his overall growth and development. This principle contrasts with other economic systems, where the aim is concentration and accumulation of wealth and maximization of profit. In materialist schools of thought, the economy represents an end in itself, so that it comes to be a subversive and corrupting factor in the course of man's development. In Islam, the economy is a means, and all that is required of a means is that it should be an efficient factor contributing to the attainment of the ultimate goal.

From this viewpoint, the economic program of Islam consists of providing the means needed for the emergence of the various creative capacities of the human being. Accordingly, it is the duty of the Islamic government to furnish all citizens with equal and appropriate opportunities, to provide them with work, and to satisfy their essential needs, so that the course of their progress may be assured."

If one reads in addition "Article 43" about the economy of the Islamic Republic of Iran and all the other articles, it can be ascertained that the word "money" does not exist in the constitution.

To overcome the monetary system it has to be understood that the work done in an Islamic country is enough to supply all citizens. The wealth of some few people is the reason for the poverty of many others, and an Islamic way should be found to correct this asymmetrical distribution. From Islamic history we know, that Imam Ali (a.) had to defend the Islamic system during the short time of his caliphate against those who wanted privileges for themselves. If we understand that the work done by the citizen is enough to supply all citizens, and is even more than enough, then we can think about using the existing capacity of work for valuable services like educating children and developing the knowledge of adults.

A just distribution of wealth will be only possible, if wealth and power will be separated from each other. And this is in the hand of those, who take part in elections. Imam Khamenei's - hafizahuallah, may Allah protect him - way of life as an ideal, and we have to teach it also as an ideal, to prepare the country's wealth as a living example for the whole oppressed mankind.

Those who take part at elections have this responsibility to vote for those, who live humbly and who are not interested in this world's wealth. If someone lives a life of material affluence in his private boundaries, he will not be able to protect a just distribution of wealth in the country.

Preparing the return of the 12th Imam from the viewpoint of economy

If we want to prepare the return of the 12th Imam also in economical fields, we have to understand the system of Imam Mahdi (a.), and we have to treat his real representative as he would be the 12th Imam himself. The realized system of Welayet-e-Faqih in the only existing Islamic System, the hope, that this system will increase Islamic values inside the country and being a model for all other Muslims is unique since 1400 years. Never before we had a system, in which the hope of the awaited return is as high as in our time. So let us have a short look at Imam Khamenei's words about the economical system and situation.

In a news about the situation of teachers IRNA wrote:

"Economic improvement is the key to the problems of all labourers, teachers and people, said the Supreme leader adding that control of inflation, boosting national currency, preventing unnecessary expenses, administering justice and removal of discrimination can help improve people's living conditions." (30th April 2003)

And here some further words.

"Thus it has managed to prove to Muslim nations that a system based on Islamic principles is practical. Besides, in view of its daily progress in various political, cultural, scientific, social and economic fields it has attracted the attention of the educational elite, youth and the world Muslims," (21st September 2004)

"Imam Khamene'i said that campaign against economic corruption and injustice is a difficult job, but full of blessing because if people feel campaign against discrimination and injustice they will tolerate all problems and hardships."(10th September 2004)

And on 28th August 2006, exactly one year ago, Imam Khamene'i held a speech about economics. Imam Khamene'i said the government is expected to take maximum advantage of the exceptional political and economic situation to attain its goals especially the action plan in line with Article 44 of the Constitution. He has forwarded an action plan to the legislature, the executive branch and the judiciary to enforce Article 44 of the Constitution which calls for major privatization program and ceding shares of the state-run enterprises to people through the Stock Exchange.

Some of Imam Khamene'i's advice has been applied already, others will be implemented in future inshaallah. To remember Article 44:

"The economy of the Islamic Republic of Iran is to consist of three sectors: state, cooperative, and private, and is to be based on systematic and sound planning. The state sector is to include all large-scale and mother industries, foreign trade, major minerals, banking, insurance, power generation, dams and large-scale irrigation networks, radio and television, post, telegraph and telephone services, aviation, shipping, roads, railroads and the like; all these will be publicly owned and administered by the State.

The cooperative sector is to include cooperative companies and enterprises concerned with production and distribution, in urban and rural areas, in accordance with Islamic criteria. The private sector consists of those activities concerned with agriculture, animal husbandry, industry, trade, and services that supplement the economic activities of the state and cooperative sectors.

Ownership in each of these three sectors is protected by the laws of the Islamic Republic, in so far as this ownership is in conformity with the other articles of this chapter, does not go beyond the bounds of Islamic law, contributes to the economic growth and progress of the country, and does not harm society. The [precise] scope of each of these sectors, as well as the regulations and conditions governing their operation, will be specified by law."

Every step on the way to realize these ideals means a step on the way for preparing the return of the 12th Imam - may he come soon. If we treat Imam Khamene'i as the real representative of the

12th Imam, if we understand, that His Eminence is the Holiness of our time, we can accelerate the awaited return. But as long, as we do not apply his advices also in economical fields, we have to wait. And it will be in our responsibility that the waiting time increases.

Bright future

The economical system of the western world seems to be strong and insuperable. But this is only the appearance. In reality their economical system based on insures and debts has reached its limits and even western intellectuals discuss about an awaited crash. The so called "clash of cultures" and the "war against terrorism" are only measures to extend the live period of the western economical system.

But are we ready to start with an alternative? How ready is our Islamic banking system? Muslims all over the world ask for Islamic funds and Islamic accounts. Are we ready to fulfil these requirements? Have we already started with the Islamic banking system inside the country and have build branches outside to bind Muslims all over the world to the Islamic system? Will it not be an ideal implementation of the recent years motto: "National unity and Islamic solidaritiy", which Imam Khamene'i has announced. Are we not bound to fulfil the announced motto of the year also in the field of economy? And is this great work not a work of us all, and not only of the government?

And what about other fields of halal economy? Has Iran implemented a system to test all imported food according to its halal ingredients? If so, how can that system be internationalized? If not, what can we do to realize this?

Based on a halal economy, based on the Islamic alternative, which the intellectuals of the Islamic state and all Muslim thinkers all over the world have to prepare a bright future can be introduced, and accelerate the return of the 12th Imam inshaallah.

The western world has shown, how they are able to develop the whole world into a chaos of injustice with money they do not passes. Muslims should be able to bring justice into the world with own values, with own material possibilities and with the idealistically active youth. And preparing such a system will inshaallah lead to the awaited return of the 12th Imam, who will establish the Salawat-Economy. And this will lead to lots of Salawat among all believers, and all mankind will benefit from it and will love to say Salawat: Allahumma salli ala Muhammad wa aali Muhammad.