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Belief in the Return (Raj'ah) with respect to Belief in the Mahdi (may Allah hasten his return)

Question:

According to many traditions, at the end of time a number of the deceased Imams (peace be upon them) as well as others will return to this world. Is belief in the concealment of the twelfth Imam (may Allah hasten his return) and his reappearance in accordance with belief in the return (raj'ah)? In other words, does the belief in concealment and reappearance include the return and all other events that will occur before the Day of Judgment, or is it an independent belief separate from the return?

Answer:

Belief in the appearance of the Mahdi and Savior from the Ahl al-Bait and progeny of Fatimah (peace be upon her) is a widespread and collective belief of the Muslims and is not exclusive to the Shi'a. Though the Shi'a also specify his identity in terms of lineage and characteristics, the belief itself is universal, and its tidings have been given in previous religions in the Tawrat and Zabur as well. And according to the principles of the Twelver Shi'a school, without belief in it, one's faith is incomplete, and the acceptance of one's actions is dependent on accepting it. One who dies without believing in this issue or who does not recognize the twelfth Imam (may our souls be his ransom) as the Imam has died the death of ignorance according to the judgment of the prophetic tradition:

مَنْ مَاتَ وَلَمْ يَعْرِفْ إِمَامَ زَمَانِهِ مَاتَ مِيتَةَ جَاهِلِيَّةٍ.

*"Whoever dies without recognizing the Imam of his time dies the death of the Age of Ignorance."*¹

This belief, in terms of influence and importance, is at this level.

Belief in the return as well, though it is rooted in the Qur'an and traditions, is not such that the issue of concealment and reappearance not be explainable without it.

Thus, the principle of *Imamah* and the issue of the Mahdi has been discussed in books even without mention of the issue of the return.

Still, it must be mentioned that the issue of raj'ah and the return of the deceased itself is an Islamic issue and its occurrence in previous times is confirmed on the basis of numerous verses of the Qur'an. When this is the case, since it has had a parallel in the past, the possibility of its reoccurrence at the end of time cannot be denied.

When the return of the deceased has occurred in past ummah (communities), according to well-known tradition famous among the Ahl al-Sunnat, they must consider it possible in this ummah as well:

لِتَسْلُكْنَ سُبُلَ مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ حَذُوا النَعْلَ بِالنَعْلِ وَالْقَدَةَ بِالْقَدَةِ حَتَّىٰ لَوْ أَنَّ أَحَدَهُمْ
دَخَلَ حَجْرًا ضَبًّا لَدَخَلْتُمُوهُ.

“Verily you will follow the path of those before you...”²

Thus, the denial of its possibility in this ummah by non-Shias is incorrect according to the meaning of this tradition.

In the end, while overlooking the verses that mention the occurrence of raj'ah in previous ummahs, for the sake of blessings and grace we mention one verse that bears witness to its occurrence in this Nation:

وَيَوْمَ نَحْشُرُ مِنْ كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ فَوْجًا مِمَّنْ يُكَذِّبُ بِآيَاتِنَا فَهُمْ يُوزَعُونَ

“And (remember) the day when We shall gather from every community a group of those who gave the lie to Our signs, so they will meet one another.”³

This verse indicates a day when from every ummat a group of people will be gathered who gave the lie to the Divine signs, which naturally is a day other than the Day of Judgment.

ولا حول ولا قوة إلا بالله العلي العظيم

وآخر دعوانا أن الحمد لله رب العالمين

And there is no might nor power save with Allah

And our final assertion is that all praise is for Allah the Lord of the Worlds.

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1. Bihar al-Anwar, Volume 8, Page 368
 2. Bihar al-Anwar, Volume 21, Page 257
 3. Surah Naml (27), Verse 83

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