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Governments

With governmental support, tenets of religions and schools of thought could be implemented in society. Because of this, every group wants to establish a government in order to attain and implement its own objectives. Islam, which is the most superior heavenly creed, also pursues the establishment of an Islamic government and it considers the formation and preservation of the government of truth as one of the highest religious duties.

The Noble Prophet of Islam (S) exerted all his efforts in establishing an Islamic government and strove to lay its foundation in the city of Medina. After his death—despite the inspiration of the infallible Imams ('a) and the distinguished '*ulama*' to continue this Islamic government—the governments that came into being, with the exception of a very few cases, have not been divine, and till the time of the advent of Hadrat Mahdi ('a) most governments will be based on falsehood.

The *hadiths* that have been transmitted to us from the Prophet (S) and the Imams ('a), describe the governments prior to the uprising of al-Mahdi ('atfs) in general terms. We will now point out some of their characteristics.

The Despotism of Governments

One of the ills which human society will suffer before the advent of the Imam ('a) is injustice and tyranny perpetrated by governments against the people. In this regard, the Messenger of God (S) said: "The world will be filled with tyranny and injustice such that there will be fear and war in every house."¹

Hadrat ‘Ali (‘a) said: “The world will be filled with tyranny and injustice such that there will be fear and grief in every house.”²

Imam al-Baqir³ (‘a) said: “Hadrat Qa’im⁴ (‘a) will not rise up except at a time full of fear and dread.”⁵

This fear and dread will mostly stem from the rule of despotic and obstinate rulers in the world before the advent of al-Mahdi (‘a).

In this regard, Imam al-Baqir said: “The Mahdi (‘a) will rise up at a time when the helm of affairs would be in the hands of tyrants.”⁶

Ibn ‘Umar said: “(At the end of time) a noble man having wealth and children will wish for death because of the suffering and adversity he will experience from the rulers.”⁷

It is worthy of note that the followers of the Prophet (S) will suffer not only from the aggression and encroachment of alien powers but also from their own despotic and self-centered governments in such a way that the earth, notwithstanding its expanse, will become too small for them. Instead of experiencing a sense of freedom, they will feel that they are in bondage. Even now in the Muslim world many leaders in Muslim countries are not on good terms with Islam and the Muslims are alien to them.

In this context, it is thus narrated in the *hadiths*:

The Noble Messenger of Islam (S) said: “At the end of time, a great calamity—greater than which has not been heard of—will be experienced by my *ummah*⁸ in such a manner that the vastness of the earth will become narrow for them, and the earth will be filled with injustice and despotism to such an extent that the believer will not find a sanctuary in which he could seek refuge.”⁹

Some *hadiths* have emphasized the Muslims’ entanglements with self-centered leaders and give glad tidings of the advent of a universal savior after the rule of oppressive rulers. This set of *hadiths* has made mention of three types of government that will emerge after the Noble Messenger of Islam (S). These three types of government are the following: the caliphate, the emirates and kingdoms, and finally the tyrants.

The Noble Prophet (S) said: “After me the caliphate will rule; after the caliphs the emirs will come, followed by kings, and after them tyrants and oppressors will rule, then the Mahdi (‘atfs) will reappear.”¹⁰

The Composition of States

If those who administer the government are righteous and efficient individuals, the people will live in comfort and ease. However, if unworthy individuals rule, the people will naturally experience suffering and agony. It is exactly the same condition which will prevail in the period prior to the advent of Hadrat Mahdi (‘atfs). At that time, states will be formed by treacherous, transgressing and oppressive

individuals.

The Noble Prophet of Islam (S) said: “A time will come when rulers will be oppressors; commanders will be treacherous; judges will be transgressors; and ministers will be tyrants.”¹¹

The Influence of Women on Governments

Another problem that is discussed concerning governments during the end of time is the dominance and influence of women, who will either directly rule over the people or subject the rulers under their sway.

This subject has various ramifications. In this regard, Hadrat ‘Ali (‘a) said: “A time will come when corrupt and adulterous individuals will live in coquetry and bounty and the ignoble will acquire position and status while the just men will become weak.” It was asked: “When will this period come to pass?” He said: “It is at the time when women and bondswomen take charge of the affairs of the people and youngsters become rulers.”¹²

The Rule of the Young

Rulers are supposed to be well-experienced and good managers in order for the people to live in comfort and ease. If, in their stead, youngsters or feeble-minded people would take charge of affairs, one should seek refuge in God from the evil of the sedition (*fitnah*) that will arise.

In this regard, it will suffice to mention two *hadiths*:

The Noble Prophet (S) stated: “Seek refuge in God from the first seventy years and the rule of youngsters.”¹³

Sa‘id ibn Musayyib said: “A sedition (*fitnah*) will come to pass and its beginning will be the game of the young.”¹⁴

The Instability of Governments

A government with political stability is the one capable of serving the people of a country, for if it is in a state of continuous change, it would be incapable of undertaking great tasks in the country.

The governments at the end of time will be in a shambles, and sometimes a government will assume office at the beginning of the day and will be removed by sunset. In this regard, Imam as-Sadiq¹⁵ (‘a) said: “How will you be when there would be no Imam to guide; would you remain without knowledge and learning; and be fed up with each other? (It will be) the time when you would be put to a test and the good and the bad from among you will be separated from each other and the chaff shall be separated from the grain. At that time swords will be sheathed and unsheathed alternately while war will be a blaze. A government will assume office at the beginning of the day and will be deposed and removed

with bloodshed by the end of the day.”¹⁶

The Impotence of Powers in Administering Countries

Before the advent of the Imam of the Time (*'atfs*), repressive governments will be weakened and this will pave the way for the people's acceptance of the global government of Hadrat Mahdi. In this regard, Imam as-Sajjad¹⁷ (*'a*) has said concerning the noble *ayah* (verse):

﴿ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا رَأَوْا مَا يُوعَدُونَ فَسَيَعْلَمُونَ مَنْ أَضْعَفُ نَاصِرًا وَأَقَلُّ عَدَدًا ﴾

*“When they see what they are promised, they will then know who is weaker in supporters and fewer in numbers.”*¹⁸

“The promise that has been given in this verse is related to Hadrat Qa'im (*'a*), his companions, supporters, and enemies. At the time when the Imam of the Time rises up, his enemies will be the weakest of enemies and will have the least number of forces and armaments.”¹⁹

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1. Ibn Abi Shaybah, Musannif, vol. 15, p. 89; Kanz al-'Ummal, vol. 14, p. 584.
 2. Ibn Kanz al-'Ummal, vol. 14, p. 584; Ihqaq al-Haqq, vol. 13, p. 317.
 3. Imam Muhammad al-Baqir: the fifth Imam from the Holy Prophet's Progeny. He was born in 57 AH/675 CE and spent most of his life in Medina, until his martyrdom there in 114 AH/732 CE. See Baqir Sharif al-Qarashi, The Life of Imam Mohammed al-Baqir, trans. Jasim al-Rasheed (Qum: Ansariyan Publications, 1999). (Trans.)
 4. Qa'im: one of the honorific titles of Imam al-Mahdi (*'a*), which literally means “the one who rises or stands up”. (Trans.)
 5. Shajari, Amali, vol. 2, p. 156. See also Nu'mani, Ghaybah, p. 253; Tusi, Ghaybah, p. 274; A'lam al-Wara, p. 428; Mukhtasar Basa'ir ad-Darajat, p. 212; Ithbat al-Hudah, vol. 3, p. 540; Hilyah al-Abrar, vol. 3, p. 626; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 52, p. 23; Bisharah al-Islam, p. 82; 'Aqd ad-Durar, p. 64; Al-Qawl al-Mukhtasar, p. 26; Muttaqi Hindi, Burhan, p. 74; Safarini, Lawa'ih, vol. 3, p. 8.
 6. Ibn Tawus, Malahim, p. 77.
 7. 'Aqd ad-Durar, p. 333.
 8. Ummah: the entire Islamic community without territorial or ethnic distinction. (Trans.)
 9. Hakim, Mustadrak, vol. 4, p. 465; 'Aqd ad-Durar, p. 43; Ihqaq al-Haqq, vol. 19, p. 664.
 10. Al-Mu'jam al-Kabir, vol. 22, p. 375; Al-Isti'ab, vol. 1, p. 221; Firdaws al-Akhbar, vol. 5, p. 456; Kashf al-Ghumah, vol. 3, p. 264; Ithbat al-Hudah, vol. 3, p. 596.
 11. Shajri, Amali, vol. 2, p. 228.
 12. Al-Kafi, vol. 8, p. 69; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 52, p. 265.
 13. Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Musnad, vol. 2, pp. 326, 355, 448.
 14. Ibn Tawus, Malahim, p. 60.
 15. Ja'far ibn Muhammad (*'a*) entitled, as-Sadiq (The Truthful),” is the sixth Imam from the Prophet's Progeny (83–148 AH). Many Sunni and Shi'ah 'ulama and scholars attended his classes and seminars. Narrators of tradition have quoted the number of Imam as-Sadiq's students as four thousand. The socio-economic conditions of his time necessitated that great efforts be made by His Holiness in the areas of expanding authentic and original Islamic teachings and in the training and education of faithful students. For this reason the books of tradition and other books quote and cite more traditions from

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq than from any other of the infallible Imams. See Shaykh Mohammed al-Husayn al-Muzaffar, Imam Al-Sadiq, trans. Jasim al-Rasheed (Qum: Ansariyan Publications, 1998). (Trans.)

16. Kamaluddin, vol. 2, p. 348.

17. As-Sajjad: It refers to 'Ali ibn al-Husayn, the fourth Imam from the Holy Prophet's Progeny, who is likewise known as Zayn al-'Abidin (Chief of the Worshipers) (658-712 CE). The son of Imam Husayn by the daughter of Yazdgird, the last Sassanid king of Iran, he was not able to carry arms at Karbala because of illness, and thus he was saved the fate of his three brothers. For most of his life he lived in seclusion in Medina, having contact with only a few select followers. His piety—which is reflected in his prayers whose compilation is known as Sahifah as-Sajjadiyyah—is proverbial. He is buried in the Baqi' cemetery in Medina. (Trans.)

18. Surah al-Jinn 72:24. In this volume, the translation of Qur'anic passages is adapted from Sayyid 'Ali Quli Qara'i, The Qur'an with a Phrase-by-Phrase English Translation (London: Islamic College for Advanced Studies Press, 2004). (Trans.)

19. Al-Kafi, vol. 1, p. 431; Nur ath-Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p. 441; Ihqaq al-Haqq, vol. 13, p. 329; Yanabi' al-Mawaddah, p. 429; Al-Muhajjah, p. 132.

The Religious Condition of the People

In this chapter, we will examine the religious condition of the people prior to the advent of the Imam of the Time (*atfs*). It can be understood from the *hadiths* that during those days, Islam and the Qur'an will remain in name only while the Muslims will be Muslims only superficially. The mosques will no longer be centers for guiding and admonishing the people. The jurists (*fuqaha*) at that time will be the worst jurists on the face of the earth while religion will be bartered for a trivial price and paltry sum.

Islam and the Muslims

Islam means submission to the will and orders of God. Islam is the most superior and the best religion which ensures the felicity of mankind in this world and in the hereafter. However, that which is valuable is the implementation of the precepts of Islam and the Qur'an. At the end of time, everything will be the contrary. In other words, nothing will be left of Islam but its name.

The Qur'an will be present in society, but nothing of it will remain except the script written on its pages. The Muslims will be Muslims only in name and no semblance of Islam will be found in them. The Noble Prophet of Islam (S) said: "A period will come to pass for my *ummah* in which nothing will be left of Islam but its name, and there will be no trace of the Qur'an but its form and outline. The Muslims will be called Muslims in name but of all the people they will be the most alien to Islam."¹

Imam as-Sadiq (*'a*) said: "A time will soon come to pass when the people will not recognize God and will not know the meaning of monotheism at such a time the Dajjal (the Anti-Christ) will appear."²

The Mosques

The mosque is the place for the worship of God, religious preaching, and guiding and enlightening the people. During the early period of Islam, even important administrative work would be carried out in the mosques. *Jihad* would be planned there, and man would realize spiritual ascension (*mi'raj*) from the mosque.

But during the end of time, mosques will lose their importance, and instead of being centers for religious teaching, propagation and enlightenment, only their number and splendor will increase, even when they will be cut off from the believers. The Prophet of God (S) said: "During that time the mosques will be beautiful and flourishing but they will be devoid of guidance and enlightenment."³

The Jurists (fuqaha)

The scholars and the '*ulama*' of Islam are the protectors of God's religion on earth, and the guidance and enlightenment of the people lies upon their shoulders. By enduring great difficulties, they deduce religious matters from the fundamental sources of the religion and present them to the people. At the end of time, however, the situation will change, and the '*ulama*' of those days will be the worst '*ulama*'.

In this regard, the Messenger of God (S) said: "The jurists (*fuqaha*) of those days will be the worst jurists under heaven. Sedition and chaos will start from them and will also return to them."⁴ Perhaps, it alludes to court-affiliated scholars who justify the crimes of tyrant kings and self-centered rulers, giving them an Islamic twist.

It also includes those who are ready to compromise with every offender and criminal such as Wahhabi5 preachers on the payroll of kings who regard it as unlawful to struggle against America and Israel, and those who did not speak out against the crimes of Israel and justified the crimes of the Wahhabis in killing pilgrims to the House of God by citing Qur'anic verses and *hadiths*.⁶ Yes, it must be said that they are the worst *fuqaha* from whom seditions have started and to whom they will also return.

The Desertion of Religion

Another sign of the end of time is the people's desertion of religion. One day, Imam Husayn (‘a) came to the Commander of the Faithful (Imam ‘Ali) (‘a) while a group of people were sitting around him. ‘Ali (‘a) said to them: "Husayn is your chief. The Messenger of Allah has called him *sayyid* (master) and chief.

From among his progeny a man will rise up who resembles me in appearance and character. He will fill the world with justice and equity just as it had been full of injustice and oppression." It was asked: "When will this uprising occur?" He said: "Alas! It will be at the time when you would abandon religion in the same manner that a wife would take off her clothes for her husband."⁷

The Selling of Religion

If a person's life is in danger, he becomes obliged to sacrifice his property in order to save his life. If his religion is in danger, however, he must sacrifice his life in order to save his religion. At the end of time, however, religion will be sold for a miserable price, and those who were believers in the morning will become infidels by the afternoon.

In this regard, the Messenger of God (S) has said: "Woe to the Arabs for the evil that is approaching them. Seditious, like nighttime, are dark and gloomy. A man would be a believer in the morning and an infidel at sunset. A group will sell their religion for a trivial profit and a miserable amount. Anyone at that time who will cling steadfastly to his religion would be like one who will take an ember from the fire or squeeze a thorn in his hands."⁸

1. Thawab al-A'mal, p. 301; Jami' al-Akhbar, p. 129; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 52, p. 190.

2. Tafsir Furat, p. 44.

3. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 2, p. 190.

4. Thawab al-A'mal, p. 301; Jami' al-Akhbar, p. 129; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 52, p. 190.

5. Wahhabi: follower of Muhammad ibn 'Abdul-Wahhab, the founder of the Wahhabi sect. For information on Wahhabism, see Ayatullah Ja'far Subhani, Wahhabism (Tehran: Naba' Organization, 1996); <http://www.al-islam.org/wahhabism-ayatullah-jafar-subhani> [1]. (Trans.)

6. It refers to the Saudi massacre, in the 1987 Hajj, of hundreds of mostly Iranian pilgrims in Mecca at the order of America under the pretext that "The Iranians wanted to take out the Black Stone of the Ka'bah and bring it to Qum!" as parroted by the Wahhabi 'ulama' throughout the Muslim world. (Trans.)

7. Ibn Tawus, Malahim, p. 144.

8. Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Musnad, vol. 2, p. 390.

Morality before the Advent of Imam al-Mahdi ('atfs)

The weakening of the foundations of the family, of kinship and friendship; the coldness of human feelings and heartlessness are among the salient characteristics of the end of time.

The Coldness of Human Feelings

The Noble Messenger of Islam (S) thus described the state of affairs of those days from the emotional perspective: "In those days the elders will not have mercy upon subordinates and the young, while the

powerful will not have pity on the weak. At that time, God will give permission to him (al-Mahdi) to rise up and reappear.”¹

He also said: “The Day of Resurrection (*yawm al-qiyamah*) shall not take place unless the time would come when a man (out of intense poverty) would look toward his kith and kin, and swear that they are his relatives to receive help from them, but they will give nothing to him. One will seek help from his neighbor and appeal to the right of neighborliness, but his neighbor will not render him any assistance.”²

The Prophet (S) also said elsewhere: “Among the signs of the Day of Resurrection is bad treatment between neighbors and severance of the bonds of kinship.”³

Since in some *hadiths* the word “*as-sa‘ah*” (the time) has been interpreted as the advent of Imam Mahdi (*‘atfs*),⁴ I interpreted the *hadiths* on the “signs of the time” (*asharat as-sa‘ah*) as the “signs of the advent”.

Moral Corruption

It is possible for any kind of deviation and corruption to be tolerated somehow except sexual promiscuity, which is very unpleasant and intolerable for dignified and noble people. Among the vilest and most hazardous deviations with which the society prior to the advent of the Imam of the Time (*‘atfs*) will be afflicted would be family insecurity and moral turpitude.

At that time, corruption and moral laxity will spread remarkably. The animalistic acts of pseudo-humans will no longer be seen as indecent and obscene due to the extent of the corruption, and these acts will gradually appear as natural and normal. Corruption will be so widespread that it would be hard to find anyone who could or would want to prevent it.

The celebration of 2,500 years of the Iranian monarchy in 1971 during the rule of Muhammad Rida Pahlavi in which extremely obscene scenes of animalistic life had been presented under the guise of “Shiraz Arts” earned the condemnation of the Islamic society of Iran. During the time prior to the advent of Imam Mahdi (*‘a*), however, there will be no such protests and the only gesture of protest will be this: “Why were such indecent acts undertaken in the middle of the crossroads?” This is the highest form of forbidding evil that will be undertaken and such a person will be the most pious of his time.

Now, let us look at the *hadiths* in order to comprehend the profundity of the tragedy of the loss of Islamic values and the spread of corruption at that time. The Messenger of Allah (S) said: “The Day of Resurrection will not commence unless a woman would be openly taken away from her guardian in broad daylight and be molested in public in the middle of the road and no one would condemn and prevent this. The best among the people is he who will say: ‘I wish you would have gone a bit away from the middle of the road and done your work!’”⁵

He (S) also said: “I swear to the One in Whose hand is the life of Muhammad (S) that this *ummah* will

not vanish until such a time when man would ambush a woman like a wild lion and molest her. The best among the people is he who will say: 'I wish you would have hidden her behind this wall and did not do such a thing in public'."6

Elsewhere, he (S) said: "Those men, being like animals, will fight one another in the middle of the road, and then one of them will publicly molest the other one's mother, sister and daughter in the middle of the road. Thereafter, he will let others molest them, and they, one after the other, will do this lewd act. But no one will condemn this lewd act or change it. The best among them would be he who will say: 'It would have been better if you would have been far from the highway and away from the public eye'."7

The Spread of Immodest Acts

Muhammad ibn Muslim said: "I asked Imam al-Baqir (‘a): 'O son of the Messenger of Allah! When will the Qa'im from among you appear?'" The Imam said: "It will be at the time when men would resemble women and women would act like men; at the time when men would suffice themselves with men (i.e. they would do sodomy), and so would women with other women (i.e. they would engage in lesbianism)."8

Another *hadith* with the same content has been reported from Imam as-Sadiq (‘a).9 Abu Hurayrah also reported from the Prophet (S), thus: "The Day of Resurrection shall not come to pass until such time when men would vie with one another in committing indecent acts; the same would be the case with women."10

Other *hadith* with the same content has also been reported.11

The Desire for Less Children

The Prophet of Islam (S) said: "The Day of Resurrection shall not come to pass until such time when someone who has five children would wish for four while one who had four children will say: "I wish I had three!" The one having three children would wish for two, one with two children would wish for one child, and the one with a single child would thus say: "I wish I had no child!"12

He (S) said in another *hadith*: "A time will come when a man would begrudge having a smaller number of children just as you are now begrudging more children and properties; so much so that one of you will pass by the grave of his brother and wish to be in his place (that he was also dead)—just as animals will wish for a place in the meadow—and he will say: "How I wish I were in his stead!" And this statement is not on account of eagerness to meet the Lord and because of the good deeds he has done before; instead, it is due to the calamities and adversities that will befall him."13

He (S) also said elsewhere: "The Day of Resurrection shall not come to pass unless offspring would decrease in number."14 In this *hadith* the phrase, "*al-walad ghayzan*" means abortion and

contraception, but the word “*ghayzan*” in another *hadith* means worry, agony, suffering, and resentment.

In other words, by practicing abortion and contraception at that time, the people will prevent increase in the number of children. It can also mean that having a child would make one sad, anxious and furious. Perhaps, it would be due to extreme economic problems, the spread of diseases among children, the lack of facilities, and the propaganda and encouragement to have fewer children, or other factors.

The Increase in the Number of Families without Guardians

The Messenger of Allah (S) said: “One of the signs of the Day of Resurrection is the decrease in the number of men and the increase in the number of women to such an extent that there will be one guardian for every fifty women.”¹⁵

Perhaps, this condition will result from the deaths of men in the successive and protracted wars that will occur.

He (S) also said: “The Day of Resurrection shall not come to pass until such a time when thirty women will be in pursuit of one man, and each of them would request him to marry her.”¹⁶

He (S) also said in another *hadith*: “Allah will separate His Friends and chosen ones from the rest so as to make this earth devoid of the hypocrites and misguided as well as their children. A time shall come when fifty women will face a single man. One will say: “O servant of God! Take me.” The other one will say: “Give me refuge.”¹⁷

Anas narrated: The Prophet (S) said: “The Day of Resurrection shall not come to pass until such a time when (on account of the death of men and the plentitude of women) a woman would find a pair of shoes along the way and (out of remorse and disappointment) she would say: “This pair of shoes belonged to a man!” At that time, there will be one guardian for every fifty women.”¹⁸

Anas said: Wouldn't you like me to narrate a *hadith* I heard from the Prophet (S)? The Prophet (S) said: “Men will die while women will remain.”¹⁹

1. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 52, p. 380; vol. 36, p. 335.

2. Shajari, Amali, vol. 2, p. 271.

3. Akhbar Isbahan, vol. 1, p. 274; Firdaws al-Akhbar, vol.4, p. 5; Ad-Durr al-Manthur, vol. 6, p. 50; Jam' al-Jawami', vol. 1, p. 845; Kanz al-'Ummal, vol. 14, p. 240.

4. See Tafsir Qummi, vol. 2, p. 340; Kamaluddin, vol. 2, p. 465; Tafsir Safi, vol. 5, p. 99; Nur ath-Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p. 175; Ithbat al-Hudah, vol. 3, p. 553; Kashf al-Ghumah, vol. 3, p. 280; Shafi'i, Al-Bayan, p. 528; As-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah, p. 162. For information on the terms, yawm az-zuhur, yawm al-karrah and yawm al-qiyamah, see Tafsir al-Mizan, vol. 2, p. 108.

5. 'Iqd ad-Darar, p. 333; Hakim, Mustadrak, vol. 4, p. 495.

6. Al-Mu'jam al-Kabir, vol. 9, p. 119; Firdaws al-Akhbar, vol. 5, p. 91; Majma' az-Zawa'id, vol. 7, p. 217.

7. Ibn Tawus, Malahim, p. 101.

8. Kamaluddin, vol. 1, p. 331.
9. Mukhtasar Ithbat ar-Raj'ah, p. 216; Ithbat al-Hudah, vol. 3, p. 570; Mustadrak al-Wasa'il, vol. 12, p. 335.
10. Firdaws al-Akhbar, vol. 5, p. 226; Kanz al-Ummal, vol. 14, p. 249.
11. (a) Al-Kafi, vol. 8, p. 39; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 52, p. 257; Bisharah al-Islam, p. 133.
- (b) Al-Kafi, vol. 8, p. 38; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 52, p. 257.
- (c) Bisharah al-Islam, p. 76; Ilzam an-Nasib, p. 121.
- (d) Al-Kafi, vol. 8, p. 38; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 52, p. 457.
- (e) Al-Kafi, vol. 8, p. 38.
- (f) Bisharah al-Islam, pp. 36, 76, 133.
- (g) Bisharah al-Islam, p. 23; Ilzam an-Nasib, p. 181.
12. Firdaws al-Akhbar, vol. 5, p. 227.
13. Mu'jam al-Kabir, vol. 10, p. 12.
14. Ash-Shi'ah wa'r-Raj'ah, vol. 1, p. 151; Firdaws al-Akhbar, vol. 5, p. 221; Al-Mu'jam al-Kabir, vol. 10, p. 281; Bihar al-Anwar, 34, p. 241.
15. Tayalisi, Musnad, vol. 8, p. 266; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Musnad, vol. 3, p. 120; Tirmidhi, Sunan, vol. 4, p. 491; Abu Ya'li, Musnad, vol. 5, p. 283; Hilyah al-Awliya', vol. 6, p. 280; Dala'il an-Nubuwwah, vol. 6, p. 543; Ad-Durr al-Manthur, vol. 6, p. 50.
16. Firdaws al-Akhbar, vol. 5, p. 509.
17. Mufid, Amali, p. 44; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 52, p. 250.
18. 'Aqd ad-Durar, p. 232; Firdaws al-Akhbar, vol. 5, p. 225.
19. Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Musnad, vol. 3, p. 377.

Security before the Advent of Imam al-Mahdi (‘atfs)

Chaos and Insecurity

Because of the aggression of the big powers, the security of small governments and weak nations will decline, and freedom and security will be rendered meaningless. The powers dominant in the world will make life so difficult for weak nations and will intensify violating the rights of nations so much that they will not even allow people to breathe!

The Noble Prophet (S) described that period in this manner: “The *ummahs* (the followers of other creeds and schools) will take hostile action against you just like the hungry rushing to a food container.”

Someone said: “Will we be attacked because we will be a minority at that time?”

The Prophet said: “Your number at that time will be many but you will become just like paper tigers. God will remove your majesty and grandeur from the hearts of your enemies and sluggishness will dominate your hearts.” Someone asked: “O Messenger of Allah! What is the cause of this sluggishness and

weakness?” He (S) said: “Love of the world and abhorrence of death.”¹

These two undesirable traits mentioned by the Noble Messenger are enough to prevent a nation from attaining freedom and defending its values, and make them used to an ignominious life under any circumstance even to the extent of losing their religion and the principles of their school (*maktab*).

The Messenger of Allah (S) said: “The advent of al-Mahdi (*‘atfs*) will be at the time when the world would be in chaos and full of turmoil and disorder with one group rising up against another; neither would the elder be merciful toward the young nor would the powerful have pity on the weak. In such a time God will grant him permission to rise up (*qiyam*).”²

Insecurity of the Highways

The extent of the chaos, insecurity and cruelty will also include the highways. At that time, God will raise up al-Mahdi and he will capture the strongholds of misguidance from the hands of the powerful. The Promised Mahdi (*‘atfs*) will not only take control of formidable citadels, but he will also conquer hearts blinded to the recognition of the truth and spirituality, and prepare them to accept these truths.

In addressing his beloved daughter, the Messenger of Allah (S) said: “I swear to God Who has chosen me in truth! Verily, the Mahdi of this *ummah* is from the progeny of al-Hasan and al-Husayn (*‘a*). At the time when anarchy and confusion would envelop the whole world; when seditions would arise (one after the other); when highways and roads would become insecure and groups attack each other; when neither would the old have mercy on the young nor the young respect the old; at that moment God would let a person from the progeny of these two (Imams Hasan and Husayn (*‘a*)) rise up to capture (and destroy) the strongholds of misguidance and conquer hearts that have been covered by the veil of ignorance and unawareness (and have been deprived of recognizing the truths).

He will rise up at the end of time—just as I rose up at the beginning of time—and fill the world with justice and equity just as it had been full of injustice and oppression.”³

Horrendous Crimes

The crimes of oppressors and leaders throughout history have been very dreadful and horrible. The pages of history are replete with oppression, injustices and crimes perpetrated by tyrannical and bloodthirsty rulers such as Genghis Khan, Hitler and Attila⁴ against weaker nations.

Yet, the crimes that will be committed in the world prior to the advent of Imam Mahdi (*‘atfs*) are among the most horrifying crimes that can ever be imagined. The execution of very young boys on the gallows; the burning of children and dipping them into molten liquids; cutting human beings into pieces by iron saws, axes, and mills are among the painful actions that governments which regard themselves as champions of human rights will perpetrate. It is the occurrence of such barbarities that will manifest the

importance of the government of Hadrat Mahdi (*'atfs*)—based on the description of the *hadiths*—as the sanctuary of the deprived.

Imam 'Ali (*'a*) described the painful events of that period in this manner: “Verily, the Sufyani will commission a group to gather the children in a certain place. Then, he will heat the oil to be used in burning them. The children will say: ‘If our fathers were opposing you, what is our sin in that we have to be burnt?’ He will select two children with the names of Hasan and Husayn and will hang them on the gallows. Thereafter, he will proceed toward Kufah and behave the same way toward the children there, hanging two children with these same names at the door of Kufah Mosque.

From there he will go out and commit crimes again. While having a spear in his hand, he will pick up a pregnant woman and turn her over to one of his supporters and order him to molest her in the middle of the road. After the molestation, he will rend asunder her stomach and take out the fetus, and nobody would be able to change such a horrible condition.”⁵

Imam as-Sadiq (*'a*) said: “...God has completed His mercy by means of the son of the Prophet’s daughter (*'a*); the same person who has the perfection of Musa (Moses), the reverence of 'Isa (Jesus) and the patience and fortitude of Ayyub (Job). My fellows! During the period (prior to) his advent there shall be despised and abject people and their heads, just like the heads of the Turks and the people of Daylam, will be given as gifts (to despotic rulers).

They would be killed and burnt as well as terrorized, scared and intimidated. The earth would be colored with their blood while the cry and lamentation of their women would be multiplied. They are my true friends. Through them he will quell every sedition. He will eliminate commotions (and insecurities), and he will remove the chains and bonds of bondage from them. May the benediction of God be upon them as they are the guided ones!”⁶

Ibn 'Abbas said: “Sufyani and Fulani will go out and fight each other in such a manner that he (Sufyani) will rend asunder the stomachs of women and put children in large pots and burn them.”⁷

Artat said: “Sufyani will kill whoever would oppose him. By means of saws, he will cut his opponents into two and get rid of them in burning pots. These tyrannies will last six months.”⁸

Wishing for Death by Those who are Alive

The Messenger of Allah (S) said: “I swear to Him in Whose hand is my life! The world shall not end unless the time would come when on passing by the graveyard, a person will throw himself onto the grave and say: ‘I wish I were in the place of the owner of this grave!’ This is while his problem is not debt but the sufferings and pressures of the day as well as tyranny and oppression.”⁹

By using the word “man” (*rajul*) in the *hadith*, two points can be deduced. One is that the sufferings and predicaments of that period and as such, the wish for death are not confined to a particular sect, nation

or group, but everyone will undergo suffering and pain on account of the deplorable circumstances. The other point is that the word “man” indicates the extent of the pressure and difficulty of that period. This is because men usually can endure problems and inequities more than women, and the fact that men would not be able to tolerate and endure the problems and adversities of that period only shows that these predicaments would be very immense and backbreaking.

Abu Hamzah ath-Thumali narrated: Imam al-Baqir (‘a) said: “O Abu Hamzah! Hadrat Qa’im (‘atfs) will not rise up unless at the time when fear and dread would intensify, calamities and seditions would prevail (over society) and affliction and misfortune would befall the people. In addition to this, diseases would reach epidemic proportions; an intense and fatal dispute would occur among the Arabs; intense discord among the people would become rampant; religious and sectarian strife would be triggered; and the condition of the people would change to such an extent that every wisher—when he sees the brutality of the people and their violation of the rights of each other—will wish for death every day and every night.”¹⁰

Hudhayfah, the Companion of the Prophet, narrated from the Prophet (S): “Verily, a time shall come upon you when man will wish for his death although he would not be under the pressure of poverty and indigence.”¹¹

Ibn ‘Umar said: “Verily, a time will come upon the people when the believer, on account of the magnitude of afflictions and calamities on earth, would wish for his family and himself to ride on a boat and spend their lives on the sea.”¹²

The Captivity of the Muslims

Hudhayfah ibn al-Yaman said: While mentioning the problems that the Muslims will face, the Prophet (S) said: “On account of the pressures to be exerted on them, they will sell free people, and men and women will be ushered into slavery. Polytheists will hire Muslims as mercenaries and sell them in the cities, and no one will be offended by this state of affairs—neither the good nor the bad and the debauchee.

“O Hudhayfah! The suffering of that period will continue in such a manner that they will lose hope, and they will find comfort and relief in bad ideas. At that point, God will send a man from among the purified ones of my progeny and the good ones of my descendants who is just, blessed and pure without even an iota of connivance (with bad elements) and indulgence (in the bad things). Through his assistance, God will endear the religion, Qur’an, Islam, and its people and humiliate polytheism.

He will always fear God and never be arrogant about his relationship (to me). He will neither put a stone over another stone nor whip anyone unless it is just and for the execution of punishment. Through him, God will annihilate innovations and seditions, open the door of truth, close the doors of falsehood, and let the Muslim captives—from whatever region they come—return to their respective motherlands.”¹³

Sinking into the Ground

The Messenger of Allah (S) said: “Surely, a time shall come to pass on this *ummah* when the day would reach the night and they would ask one another, ‘Last night, who was swallowed by the earth?’ They would also ask one another, ‘Who is still alive from among the tribe of so-and-so?’ Or, ‘Is there anybody who is still alive from so-and-so clan?’”¹⁴

Perhaps, these words allude to the wars and killings at the end of time in which with the use of advanced weapons of mass destruction, every day more people will be killed and perhaps because of the mounting degree of sins, the earth will swallow its inhabitants.

The Increase of Sudden Death

The Noble Prophet (S) said: “Among the signs of the Day of Resurrection is paralyzing diseases and sudden death.”¹⁵ He (S) also said: “The Day of Resurrection shall not come to pass unless the “white death” occurs.” He was asked: “O Messenger of Allah! What is “white death?”” He (S) answered: “Sudden death”.¹⁶

The Commander of the Faithful (‘a) said: “Before the advent of the Qa’im (‘atfs), there will be the ‘red death’ and ‘white death’... The ‘white death’ is plague.”¹⁷

Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (‘a) said: “The Qa’im (‘atfs) will not rise up until there comes a time when intense fear becomes dominant and prior to it there would be contagious diseases of epidemic proportions.”¹⁸

Hopelessness of the People of the World to Attain Deliverance

The Messenger of Allah (S) said: “O ‘Ali! The advent of the Mahdi will be at the time when cities will be changed, and the servants of God become weakened and hopeless about the advent of the Mahdi. At that time, Mahdi the Qa’im from my progeny will appear.”¹⁹

Abu Hamzah ath-Thumali said: Imam al-Baqir (‘a) said: “The uprising and advent of the Mahdi (‘atfs) will be at a time when there will be hopelessness and disappointment in the people concerning his advent and the improvement in deeds.”²⁰

In this regard, Imam ‘Ali (‘a) said: “Verily, someone from my household will come as my successor, and his successorship will be after a period full of hardship and affliction—a period in which calamity and suffering will become intense and hopes shattered.”²¹

The Absence of Judges and Refuge

The Noble Prophet (S) said: “The calamity and affliction on this *ummah* will be such that a man would not be able to find a sanctuary where he could seek refuge from oppression.”²²

He also said: “At the end of time intense affliction from their governments will befall my *ummah* in such a manner that a believer would not find a sanctuary where to seek refuge from tyranny.”²³

In another *hadith*, he said: “Glad tidings to you of the Mahdi from the progeny of Fatimah! He will appear in the west and fill the world with justice.” It was asked: “O Messenger of Allah! When will it (his appearance) be?” He (S) said: “It will be at the time when judges would receive bribes while the people become debauchees.” It was asked: “What will be the characteristics of the Mahdi?” He (S) said: “He will be separated from his family and relatives; he will be away from his homeland and live far from home.”²⁴

Imam al-Baqir (‘a) said: “You will not see him while waiting for him except at the time when you become like a dead she-goat under the clutches of a fierce animal for which it makes no difference how she was brought. At that time there would be neither a place away from aggression where you could go nor a sanctuary where you could seek refuge.”²⁵

Wars, Killings and Seditious

It can be deduced from the *hadiths* that prior to the uprising of Hadrat al-Mahdi (‘atfs) wars and killings will engulf everywhere. Some *hadiths* talk about seditious. A number of *hadiths* report protracted wars while other *hadiths* make mention of the killing of human beings through wars and diseases such as epidemics.

The Messenger of Allah (S) said: “After me you will experience four seditious. In the first seditious, blood will be regarded lawful to be shed while killing will increase in number. In the second seditious, blood and property will be regarded as lawful (to be shed, or plundered) while killing and pillage will increase in number.

In the third seditious, the blood, property and honor of the people will be regarded as lawful (to be shed, plundered, or trampled on) and apart from killing and pillage, the honor and chastity of human beings will not be safe. In the fourth seditious—which will be so intense, that it will affect everyone²⁶ and like the state of a turbulent and agitated ship in the middle of the sea—no one will find refuge from it. The seditious will spread from Sham,²⁷ encompass Iraq, and envelop the entire Peninsula (Hijaz). The afflictions of the people will be so intense that no one would be able to complain, and wherever the state of chaos subsides, it will be blazing in another.”²⁸

In another *hadith*, he (S) said: “After me there will be seditious from which there will be no way of relief

and in which there will be wars, displacement and homelessness. After this, there will be seditions more intense than the previous ones. Sedition will not yet subside when another one will emerge so much so that no house of the Arabs shall remain that will not catch this fire (of sedition), and no Muslim will be spared from this sedition. At that time a man from my family will appear.”²⁹

He (S) also said: “After me sedition will soon emerge to the extent that if there will be calm in one direction, it (sedition) will spread in two other directions until such time that a harbinger from heaven will shout: ‘This is Hadrat Mahdi, your chief and commander!’”³⁰

These *hadiths* have made mention of a sedition that will emerge prior to the advent of Hadrat Mahdi (*‘atfs*). Other *hadiths*, however, talk about destructive wars, which we will cite below.

‘Ammar ibn Yasir said: “The message and invitation of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (household) of your Prophet at the end of time is this: Avoid any kind of dispute until such time that you would see leaders from the *Ahl al-Bayt*; it will be the time when the Turks would oppose the Byzantines and wars would increase in number on the earth.”³¹

A number of *hadiths* talk about killings and murders that will take place prior to the advent of al-Mahdi (*‘atfs*). Some of these *hadiths* mention only the killings while some others also specify the extent of the killings.

In this regard, Imam ar-Rida³² (*‘a*) said: “Before the advent of the Imam of the Time (*‘atfs*) successive and relentless killings will take place.”³³

Abu Hurayrah said: “There will be killing in Medina which will break up the Ahjar az-Zayt³⁴ district and compared to it the tragedy of Hurrah³⁵ would be just like a whip. It will be at that time—after the killing—that two *farsangs*³⁶ away from Medina, allegiance would be paid to Hadrat Mahdi (*‘atfs*).”³⁷

Abu Qabil said: “A person from Bani Hashim³⁸ will take the helm of government and will only kill the Bani ‘Umayyah³⁹ in such a manner that only a few of them will be left. Then, a person from the Bani ‘Umayyah will emerge and kill two persons in lieu of one person (killed from his side) so much so that none will be left except women.”⁴⁰

The Messenger of Allah (S) thus said: “I swear to God in Whose hand is my life! The world will not end unless the time would come when neither the killer would know for what reason he is killing, nor would the reason behind the killing of the killed be clear, and chaos will spread everywhere. At that time, both the killer and killed will go to hell.”⁴¹

The Commander of the Faithful (*‘a*) said: “Before the advent of the Qa’im (*‘atfs*), the world will face two types of death: the “red death” and the “white death”. The red death is through the sword (weapon) while the white death is through plague.”⁴²

Imam al-Baqir (*‘a*) said: “There are two stages of occultation (*ghaybah*) for the Qa’im of Muhammad’s

Progeny, the second of which is longer than the first. At that time, death and killing will engulf the people.”⁴³ Jabir said: I asked Imam al-Baqir (‘a): “At what time will this affair (uprising of the Mahdi (‘atfs)) happen?” In reply, the Imam (‘a) said: “O Jabir! How could this affair happen when the number of the slain between Hirah⁴⁴ and Kufah has not yet increased?”⁴⁵

Imam as-Sadiq (‘a) said: “Before the advent of the Qa’im (‘atfs), two types of death will surface: the “red death” and the “white death”. The number of people to be killed will be such that in every group of seven, five will die.”⁴⁶

The Commander of the Faithful (‘a) said: “Hadrat Mahdi (‘atfs) will not appear unless one-third of the people are killed; another one-third die; and the remaining one-third survive.”⁴⁷

They asked the Commander of the Faithful (‘a): “Is there any sign and symbol for the advent of Hadrat Mahdi (‘atfs)?” He (‘a) said: “Yes, horrible killing, sudden death and epidemics.”⁴⁸

And as reported in *Irshad al-Qulub*: “sudden and mass killings (*qatl adh-dhari*’).”⁴⁹

And as reported in *Madinah al-Mu’ajiz*: “vile and despicable killings (*qatl ar-radi*’).”⁵⁰

And as reported in *Hilyah al-Abrar*: “deplorable killings (*qatl al-fadi*’).”⁵¹

The meaning of the *hadith* is this:

“Yes, there are signs for the advent of Hadrat Mahdi (‘atfs) such as mass, deplorable and despicable killings; sudden and successive deaths; and epidemics.”

Muhammad ibn Muslim said: Imam as-Sadiq (‘a) said: “The Imam of the Time will not appear unless two-thirds of the people in the world would die.” It was asked: “If two-thirds of the people would be killed, how many will remain?” He answered: “Are you not satisfied (and would you not like) to be among the remaining one-third?”⁵²

Imam as-Sadiq (‘a) has said: “The affair (advent of Imam al-Mahdi (‘atfs)) shall not be realized until nine-tenth (9/10) of the people are eliminated.”⁵³

Imam ‘Ali (‘a) said: “...At that time none of the people will remain except one-third (1/3) of them.”⁵⁴

The Noble Prophet of Islam (S) said: “Out of ten thousand people nine thousand and nine hundred will be killed and none will remain alive except very few.”⁵⁵

Ibn Sirin said: “Hadrat Mahdi (‘atfs) will not appear unless out of nine persons, seven would be killed.”⁵⁶

From the foregoing set of *hadiths*, the following points can be deduced:

1. Before the advent of al-Mahdi (‘atfs), killings will take place and large numbers of the people will be killed, and those who will be left would be less than those who would be killed.

2. A number of those who will be killed will be killed in wars and another number will be killed by contagious diseases. Most probably, these contagious diseases will be engendered by those killed in war. Similarly, it is probable that this group of people would die through chemical and biological weapons that generate diseases.

3. The small number that will be left would be the Shi'ah and followers of the Imam of the Time (*'atfs*) because they are the ones who will pay allegiance to the Mahdi (*'atfs*). This fact can also be inferred from the statement of Imam as-Sadiq (*'a*) when he said: "Are you not satisfied (and would you not like) to be among the remaining one-third?"

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1. Tayalisi, Musnad, p. 133; Abu Dawud, Sunan, vol. 4, p. 111; Al-Mu'jam al-Kabir, vol. 2, p. 101.
 2. Ibid., vol. 52, p. 154.
 3. 'Aqd ad-Durar, p. 152; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 52, pp. 154, 266; Ihqaq al-Haqq, vol. 13, p. 116; Al-Arba'un Hadithan, (Abu Na'im) Dhakha'ir al-'Uqba, p. 135; Yanabi' al-Mawaddah, p. 426.
 4. It refers to Attila, called the Scourge of God (circa 406–53 CE) and king of the Huns (circa 433–53 CE), who is called Etzel by the Germans and Ethele by the Hungarians. (Trans.)
 5. 'Iqd ad-Darar, p. 94; Ash-Shi'ah wa'r-Raj'ah, vol. 1, p. 155.
 6. Kamaluddin, vol. 1, p. 311; Ibn Shahr Ashub, Manaqib, vol. 2, p. 297; A'lam al-Wara, p. 371; Ithbat al-Wasiyyah, p. 226.
 7. Ibn Hammad, Fitan, p. 83; Ibn Tawus, Malahim, p. 51.
 8. Hakim, Mustadrak, vol. 4, p. 520; Al-Hawi Li'l-Fatawa, vol. 2, p. 65; Muntakhab Kanz al-'Ummal, vol. 6, p. 31 (Marginalia of Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal); Ihqaq al-Haqq, vol. 13, p. 293.
 9. Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Musnad, vol. 2, p. 636; Muslim, Sahih Muslim, vol. 4, p. 2231; Al-Mu'jam al-Kabir, vol. 9, p. 410; Masabih as-Sunnah, vol. 2, p. 139; 'Aqd ad-Durar, p. 236.
 10. Nu'mani, Ghaybah, p. 235; Tusi, Ghaybah, p. 274; I'lam al-Wara, p. 428; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 52, p. 348; Ithbat al-Hudah, vol. 3, p. 540; Hilyah al-Abrar, vol. 2, p. 626; Bisharah al-Islam, p. 82.
 11. Ibn Abi Shaybah, Musannif, vol. 15, p. 91; Malik, Muwatta', vol. 1, p. 241; Muslim, Sahih Muslim, vol. 8, p. 182; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Musnad, vol. 2, p. 236; Bukhari, Sahih al-Bukhari, vol. 9, p. 73; Firdaws al-Akhbar, vol. 5, p. 221.
 12. 'Iqd ad-Darar, p. 334.
 13. Ibn Tawus, Malahim, p. 132.
 14. Al-Matalib al-'Aliyah, vol. 4, p. 348.
 15. Shajari, Amali, vol. 2, p. 277.
 16. Al-Fa'iq, vol. 1, p. 141.
 17. Nu'mani, Ghaybah, p. 277; Tusi, Ghaybah, p. 267; I'lam al-Wara, p. 427; Khara'ij, vol. 30, p. 1152; 'Aqd ad-Darar, p. 65; Al-Fusul al-Muhimmah, p. 301; Sirat al-Mustaqim, vol. 2, p. 249; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 52, p. 211.
 18. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 52, p. 348.
 19. Yanabi' al-Mawaddah, p. 440; Ihqaq al-Haqq, vol. 13, p. 125.
 20. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 52, p. 348.
 21. Ibn al-Munadi, Malahim, p. 64; Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah, vol. 1, p. 276; Al-Mustarshid, p. 75; Shaykh al-Mufid, Irshad, p. 128; Kanz al-'Ummal, vol. 14, p. 592; Ghayah al-Maram, p. 208; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 32, p. 9; Ihqaq al-Haqq, vol. 13, p. 314; Muntakhab Kanz al-'Ummal, vol. 6, p. 35.
 22. Shafi'i, Bayan, p. 108.
 23. 'Iqd ad-Darar, p. 43.
 24. Ihqaq al-Haqq, vol. 19, p. 679.
 25. Al-Kafi, vol. 8, p. 213; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 52, p. 246.
 26. "Affect everyone": kar va kur (deaf and blind) in the original Persian text. (Trans.)

27. Sham: up until four centuries ago, it included Syria of today, Lebanon and parts of Jordan and the Occupied Palestine. (Trans.)
28. Ibn Tawus, *Malahim*, p. 21; *Kamaluddin*, vol. 2, p. 371.
29. 'Aqd ad-Durar, p. 50.
30. *Ihqaq al-Haqq*, vol. 13, p. 295; *Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Musnad*, vol. 2, p. 371.
31. Tusi, *Ghaybah* (new edition), p. 441; *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 52, p. 212.
32. Imam Rida: 'Ali ibn Musa, eighth of the Twelve Imams, born in 148 AH/765 CE and died in 203 AH/817 CE in Tus (Mashhad). He was poisoned by the 'Abbasid caliph Ma'mun, who had superficially appointed him as his successor at first, but then grew fearful of the wide following he commanded. His shrine in Mashhad is one of the principal centers of pilgrimage and religious learning in Iran. See Baqir Sharif al-Qarashi, *The Life of Imam 'Ali bin Musa al-Rida*, trans. Jasim al-Rasheed (Qum: Ansariyan Publications, 2001); Muhammad Jawad Fadlallah, *Imam al-Rida: A Historical and Biographical Research*, trans. Yasin T. al-Jibouri, <http://www.al-islam.org/imam-ar-ridha-an-historical-and-biographical-res...> [2]; Muhammad Mahdi Shamsuddin, "Al-Imam ar-Rida ('a) and the Heir Apparency," *At-Tawhid Journal*, <http://www.al-islam.org/al-tawhid/heir.htm> [3]. (Trans.)
33. *Qurb al-Asnad*, p. 170; *Nu'mani, Ghaybah*, p. 271.
34. *Ahjar az-Zayt*: a place in the city of Medina which was the venue of *Salah al-Istisqa* (special prayer in asking for rain) during the time of the Holy Prophet (S). See *Mu'jam al-Buldan*, vol. 1, p. 109.
35. After the martyrdom of Imam al-Husayn ('a) and the people's uprising in Medina against Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah, at the order of Yazid the inhabitants of Medina were massacred and this event saw more than ten thousand people killed and this place is called *Hurrah Waqim*. See *Mu'jam al-Buldan*, vol. 2, p. 249.
36. *Farsang* (parasang): a unit of length equal to 6 kilometers. (Trans.)
37. Ibn Tawus, *Malahim*, p. 58.
38. Bani Hashim: the Meccan clan to which the Prophet and his descendants belonged. See Ja'far Subhani, *The Message*, chap. 4, "Ancestors of the Prophet," <http://www.al-islam.org/the-message-ayatullah-jafar-subhani> [4] (Trans.)
39. Bani Umaayyad is the name of dynasty of Muslim caliphs who gained control of the administration of Islamic territories in 40 AH (662 CE) after the first four caliphs and held sway until 132 AH (750 CE). The founder of this dynasty was Mu'awiyah, son of Abu Sufyan, by whom hereditary monarchy as well as aristocracy were revived in stark contrast and opposition to basic Islamic articles of faith. History is replete with innumerable instances of cruelty and oppression perpetrated in the world of Islam during the Umayyad rule, including murder, banishment and imprisonment of the followers of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (the Family of the Prophet) as epitomized by the martyrdom of Imam Husayn and his votaries in *Karbala'* by the forces of Yazid, son of Mu'awiyah. (Trans.)
40. Ibn Tawus, *Malahim*, p. 59.
41. *Firdaws al-Akhbar*, vol. 5, p. 91.
42. *Nu'mani, Ghaybah*, p. 277; *Shaykh Mufid, Irshad*, p. 359; *Shaykh at-Tusi, Ghaybah*, p. 267; *Sirat al-Mustaqim*, vol. 2, p. 249; *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 52, p. 211.
43. *Nu'mani, Ghaybah*, p. 173; *Dala'il al-Imamah*, p. 293; *Taqrib al-Ma'arif*, p. 187; *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 52, p. 156.
44. *Hirah*: a city three miles (6.6 kilometers) away from Kufah in Iraq. See *Mu'jam al-Buldan*, vol. 2, p. 328.
45. *Shaykh at-Tusi, Ghaybah* (new edition), p. 446; *Ithbat al-Hudah*, vol. 3, p. 728; *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 52, p. 209.
46. *Kamaluddin*, vol. 2, p. 665; *Al-'Adad al-Qawiyyah*, p. 66; *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 52, p. 207.
47. Ibn Tawus, *Malahim*, vol. 58; *Ihqaq al-Haqq*, vol. 13, p. 29.
48. *Husayni, Hidayah*, p. 31.
49. *Irshad al-Qulub*, p. 286.
50. *Madinah al-Mu'ajiz*, p. 133.
51. *Hilyah al-Abrar*, p. 601.
52. *Shaykh at-Tusi, Ghaybah* (new edition), p. 339; *Kamaluddin*, vol. 2, p. 655; *Ithbat al-Hudah*, vol. 3, p. 510; *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 52, p. 207; *Ilzam an-Nasib*, vol. 2, p. 136; *Ibn Hammad, Fitān*, p. 91; *Kanz al-'Ummal*, vol. 14, p. 587; *Muttaqi Hindi, Burhan*, p. 111.
53. *Ilzam an-Nasib*, vol. 2, pp. 136, 187; 'Aqd ad-Darar, pp. 54, 59, 63-65, 237; *Nu'mani, Ghaybah*, p. 274; *Bihar al-Anwar*,

vol. 52, p. 242.

54. Husayni, Hidayah, p. 31; Irshad al-Qulub, p. 286.

55. Majma' az-Zawa'id, vol. 5, p. 188.

56. Ibn Tawus, Malahim, p. 78.

The Economic Condition of the World During the Advent of Imam al-Mahdi ('atfs)

It can be deduced from the *hadiths* quoted in this chapter that as the effect of rampant corruption and decadence, the decline of love and compassion, and the eruption of wars, the world will be in a bad condition from an economic perspective so much so that heaven will also not have mercy on the people, and rainfall, which is a divine mercy, will also turn into a wrath and be destructive for them.

Yes, at the end of time, rain will be scarce or will shower at inopportune times, thus bringing destruction to agriculture. Lakes and rivers will dry up; plants will not bear fruit; and trade will decline. Poverty and starvation will become widespread to such an extent that in order to fill their empty stomachs some people will bring their daughters and wives to the market and exchange them for a meager amount of food.

Scarce and Inopportune Rainfall

The Noble Prophet of Islam (S) said: "A time would come on mankind when God will not send down rain in its appropriate time and season, and there will be no rain. He will send it down outside its time and season."¹

The Commander of the Faithful ('a) said: "...Rain will fall in summer and in warm seasons."²

In this regard, Imam as-Sadiq ('a) said: "Before the advent of Hadrat Qa'im ('atfs) there will be a year with such heavy downpours that fruits will be destroyed and dates will spoil on the trees. Thus, during that period, you will not experience doubt and skepticism."³

The Commander of the Faithful ('a) said: "...Rain will become scarce such that the ground will not let grain grow while the sky will not shower rain. At that time, the Mahdi ('atfs) will appear."⁴

'Ata' ibn Yasar said: "Among the signs of the Day of Resurrection is that rain will shower but grain will not grow."⁵

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) said: "...At the time when Hadrat Qa'im and his companions rise up, water on earth

will be unobtainable, and the believers will groan and passionately pray to God to send down water so that they can drink.”⁶

Drying up of Lakes and Rivers

The Noble Prophet (S) said: “From the effect of the drying up of the Nile River, cities in Egypt will be destroyed.”⁷

Irtat said: “At that time, the Euphrates, rivers and fountains will dry up.”⁸

It has also been reported: “The water of Lake Tabaristan will dry up; the date-palms will not bear fruit; and the Za’r Fountain in Sham will cease to flow.”⁹

Similarly, it has also been reported: “...Rivers will dry up, and inflation and famine will last for three years.”¹⁰

The Prevalence of Inflation, Starvation, Poverty, and Trade Recessions

A man asked the Prophet (S): “O Messenger of Allah! When will the Day of Resurrection be?” He (S) said: “The one asked (the Prophet himself) is as unaware as the questioner on this matter, but (the approach of) the Day of Resurrection has some signs one of which is the convergence of markets.” He asked: “What is meant by the ‘convergence of markets’?” He (S) answered: “The recession of markets and trade, and the lack of growth of plants and crops notwithstanding the rain.”¹¹

The Commander of the Faithful (‘a) said to ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Abbas: “Trade and transactions will increase, but only small profits will be earned by the people and after that extreme famine will break out.”¹²

Muhammad ibn Muslim said: I heard Imam as-Sadiq (‘a) saying: “Before the advent of Hadrat Qa’im (‘atfs), God will send signs for the believers.” I said: “May God make me your ransom! What are those signs?” He (‘a) said: “The same things that God mentioned:



﴿ وَلَنْبَلُونَكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالنَّمْرَاتِ وَبَشِيرِ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴾

*“We will surely test you with a measure of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth, lives, and fruits; and give good news to the patient.”*¹³

Then, he (‘a) said: “God will test the believers on account of the fear caused by the kings of the dynasties of so-and-so at the end of their rule; what is meant by starvation is price inflation; what is meant by the insufficiency of properties is trade recession and the inadequacy of income; what is meant by the loss of lives is widespread, sudden deaths; and what is meant by the lack of fruits is the deficiency of agricultural earnings and products. Then, glad tidings be to the steadfast for hastening the advent of al-Qa’im (‘a) at that moment.”¹⁴

As reported in *A’lam al-Wara*, “*qillah al-mu’amilat*” means market recession and lack of transactions.¹⁵

Imam as-Sadiq (‘a) said: “...At that time when the Sufyani emerges, food items will be scarce; people will experience famine; and rainfall will be scarce.”¹⁶

Ibn Mas’ud said: “At the time when there would be no more trade and roads are destroyed, al-Mahdi (‘atfs) will appear.”¹⁷

Perhaps, the bad conditions of the markets at that time would be the result of destruction of the centers of production and industry, the decrease of manpower, the diminution of purchasing power, famines, insecurity on the highways, etc.

It has been stated in *Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal*: “Before the advent of al-Mahdi (‘atfs) people will experience intense starvation for three years.”¹⁸

Abu Hurayrah said: “Woe to the Arabs for the evil approaching them! Intense starvation will break out and mothers will cry because of their children’s hunger.”¹⁹

The Bartering of Women in Exchange for Food Items

The depth of the tragedy of famine and starvation prior to the advent of Imam al-Mahdi (‘atfs) will be such that some will be forced to barter their daughters for meager quantities of food.

Abu Muhammad reported from a man from Morocco: “Al-Mahdi will not appear unless a man (due to the intensity of poverty and indigence) would bring his daughter or beautiful bondwoman and say: ‘Who will buy this girl from me for food items?’ It is under these circumstances that al-Mahdi (‘atfs) will appear.”²⁰

1. Jami’ al-Akhbar, p. 150; Mustadrak al-Wasa’il, vol. 11, p. 375.

2. Dawhah al-Anwar, p. 150; Ash-Shi’ah wa’r-Raj’ah, vol. 1, p. 151; Kanz al-‘Ummal, vol. 14, p. 241.

3. Shaykh al-Mufid, Irshad, p. 361; Shaykh at-Tusi, Ghaybah, p. 272; A’lam al-Wara, p. 428; Khara’ij, vol. 3, p. 1164; Ibn Tawus, Malahim, p. 125; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 52, p. 214.

4. Ibn Tawus, Malahim, p. 134.

5. 'Abdur-Razzaq, Musannif, vol. 3, p. 155.
6. Dala'il al-Imamah, p. 245.
7. Bisharah al-Islam, p. 28.
8. Ibn Hammad, Fitan, p. 148.
9. Bisharah al-Islam, p. 191; Ilzam an-Nasib, p. 161.
10. Bisharah al-Islam, p. 98.
11. At-Tarhib wa't-Tarhib, vol. 3, p. 442.
12. Ibn Tawus, Malahim, p. 125.
13. Surah al-Baqarah 2: 155.
14. Kamaluddin, vol. 2, p. 650; Nu'mani, Ghaybah, p. 250; Shaykh al-Mufid, Irshad, p. 361; A'lam al-Wara, p. 456; 'Ayyashi, Tafsir 'Ayyashi, vol. 1, p. 68.
15. A'lam al-Wara, p. 456.
16. Ibn Tawus, Malahim, p. 133.
17. Al-Fatawa al-Hadithiyah, p. 30; Muttaqi Hindi, Burhan, p. 142; 'Aqd ad-Darar, p. 132.
18. Ibn Majah, Sunan Ibn Majah, vol. 2, p. 1363.
19. Kanz al-'Ummal, vol. 11, p. 249.
20. Ibn Tawus, Malahim, p. 59.

The Rays of Hope

In the previous discussions, we became acquainted with some of the *hadiths* concerning the global state of affairs prior to the advent of the Imam of the Age ('*a*). Although these *hadiths* mention confusions and problems to such an extent that they might discourage people, there are other *hadiths* that point out bright aspects and rays of hope for the Shi'ah, the faithful and the committed people.

Some of these *hadiths* concern the believers of whom the earth will never be empty and who will be also present during these pressing circumstances all over the world prior to the advent of al-Mahdi ('*atfs*).

A number of *hadiths* point out the role of the '*ulama*' and Islamic scholars during the period of occultation, and present them as catalysts of change in the society in every epoch as well as the protectors of religion. Some statements of the Infallibles ('*a*) mention the special role of the city of Qum prior to the advent of the Imam of the Time ('*atfs*) while a number of *hadiths* also indicate the active role of Iranians before and after the advent of the Imam ('*atfs*).

The True Believers

Sometimes, we come across some *hadiths* in answer to those who imagine that a time will come when society will be devoid of the presence of faithful human beings. The Imam ('*a*) has dismissed this notion, mentioning the existence of believers in every epoch.

Zayd az-Zurrad said: I told Imam as-Sadiq (‘a): “I am afraid that we would not be among the faithful.” He (‘a) asked: “Why do you think so?” I answered: “It is because there is none among us who prefers his brother over the dirham and dinar. On the contrary, I observe that we prefer the dirham and dinar over our brothers in faith which the *wilayah* (guardianship) of the Commander of the Faithful (‘a) have brought us together. Imam as-Sadiq (‘a) said: “It is not as you say; you are the people of faith though your faith will not be perfected until the time when the Qa’im of Muhammad’s Progeny (‘atfs) rises up. At that time, God will perfect your wisdom and you will become perfect believers.

I swear to God in Whose hand is my life! There are people throughout the world in whose sight the entire world would not be equal to the wing of a gnat.”¹

The Role of the Shi‘ah ‘Ulama’ and Scholars

Every time the veils of darkness and ignorance cast their shadows on human society, it was the ‘*ulama*’ and religious scholars who used to perform their obligation very well of wiping away ignorance and foolishness from thinking and eliminating corruption and decadence from the people. It can be understood from the *hadiths* that the ‘*ulama*’ will also adequately play this role at the end of time.

Imam al-Hadi (‘a) said: “If there would be no ‘*ulama*’ during the period of occultation (*ghaybah*) of the Qa’im of Muhammad’s Progeny (‘a) who would guide and draw the people toward him, defend the religion through divine proofs, and save the weak Shi‘ah from the guiles of Satan and his legions as well as from the mischief of the Nasibis (the enemies of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (‘a)), no one would be left clinging to the religion of God and everyone will become apostates (*murtaddin*).

Yet, they will assume the responsibility of leading the hearts of the weak Shi‘ah to the utmost decree and keep on it just as the captain of the ship controls the rudder and control of the ship. Therefore, they are the people of the highest station in the sight of God.”²

Regarding the revival of religion in every century the Messenger of Allah (S) said: “Verily, Allah, the Exalted, will send for this *ummah* a person who will revive (*yujaddid*) the religion at the beginning of every century.”³

These two *hadiths* and others similar to them explicitly point out the role of the ‘*ulama*’ during the period of the occultation in thwarting the plots of the mischief-mongers as well as in reviving the spirit of religion.

Of course, proving this point during our time does not necessitate much proof and evidence, for the role of Hadrat Imam Khomeini (r) in exterminating the nefarious designs of the enemies, which had threatened the foundations of religion in the contemporary world, is proverbial to all.

Undoubtedly, the dignity that Islam has acquired in this age is through the blessings of the Islamic Revolution of Iran and its Founder, Hadrat Imam Khomeini (r).

The Role of the City of Qum at the End of Time

At the time when human society will move toward degeneration and decadence, a ray of hope will be made manifest and there will be a group of people who will serve as the standard-bearers of light in the heart of all this darkness. The city of Qum at the end of time will assume this pivotal role.

There are many *hadiths* that express words of appreciation for this holy city and its upright people whose existence has emanated from the pure fountain of the school of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (‘a) and who have shouldered the mission of conveying the divine message.

The Infallible Imams (‘a) have made various statements regarding Qum and its role in the cultural movement during the period of occultation (*ghaybah*) of the Imam of the Time (‘atfs). We shall mention some of them below.

Qum as the Sanctuary of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a)

It can be deduced from some *hadiths* that Qum and its inhabitants are the keys and models of Shi‘ism and *wilayah* (guardianship).

Thus, they will label as “Qummi” anyone they would like to introduce as a lover and enthusiast of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (‘a).

A group of people came to Imam as-Sadiq (‘a) and said to him: “We are among the people of Rey.”⁴ He (‘a) said: “Hail to our brothers from among the people of Qum!” They repeated several times: “We have come from Rey.” And he (‘a) also repeated his statement. Then, he (‘a) said: “God has a sanctuary which is in Mecca. There is also a sanctuary for the Messenger of Allah and it is in Medina. Kufah is the sanctuary of the Commander of the Faithful (‘a) while our (*Ahl al-Bayt*)’s sanctuary is the city of Qum and a daughter from my progeny with the name of Fatimah will soon be buried there. Anyone who would sincerely pay homage (*ziyarah*) to her, paradise would be incumbent upon him.”

The narrator said: “Imam as-Sadiq (‘a) made this statement at the time when Imam Musa al-Kazim⁵ (‘a) was not yet born.”⁶

Safwan narrated: One day I was with Abu’l-Hasan—Imam al-Kazim (‘a)—and he (‘a) talked about the people of Qum and their love and enthusiasm for Hadrat Mahdi (‘atfs). The Seventh Imam (‘a) said:

“May God have mercy on them and be pleased with them.” Then he (‘a) continued: “Heaven has eight doors one of which is for the people of Qum. From among the cities and countries, they are among our excellent and chosen Shi‘ah. God has blended our *wilayah* (guardianship) and friendship with their disposition and essence.”⁷

It can be inferred from these *hadiths* that the Infallible Imams (‘a) have regarded the city of Qum as a

base of the lovers of the *Ahl al-Bayt* ('a) and Hadrat al-Mahdi ('atfs). Perhaps, the door of heaven apportioned for the city of Qum is the door for the strugglers (*bab al-mujahidin*) or the door of the excellent ones (*bab al-akhyar*) especially when in the *hadiths* the inhabitants of Qum have also been described as excellent Shi'ah.

The City of Qum as a Proof for Others

In every epoch, God chooses some persons as proofs for others, and since they are treading the path of God, they struggle in exalting the word of Allah (*kalimatullah*).⁸ God will assist them and keep the mischief of enemies away from them. During the period of occultation (*ghaybah*) of the Imam of the Age ('atfs), Qum and its people would be the proofs for other people.

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) said: "Difficulties and problems will be kept away from Qum and its people and a time will come when Qum and its people would be the proofs for all people. This will be so during the period of occultation (*ghaybah*) of our Qa'im till his advent, and if it were not so, the earth would swallow its inhabitants.

Verily, the angels will keep difficulties away from Qum and its people, and no tyrant will ever target Qum; otherwise, God will break his back and afflict him with pain, calamity or enmity. God will let tyrants forget the name of Qum and its people just as they have forgotten God."⁹

The Center for the Diffusion of Islamic Culture

Another point worthy of note in the *hadiths* is that the city of Qum during the period of occultation (*ghaybah*) will serve as a center for the conveyance of the message of Islam to the downtrodden of the world, and its '*ulama*' and religious scholars will be a proof for the people of the world.

In this regard, Imam as-Sadiq ('a) said: "The city of Kufah will soon be void of believers, and knowledge and learning will depart from there and like a snake coiled up in a corner, it will be restricted to and emerge from a city named "Qum", which will become the center of knowledge and virtue as well as the repository of learning and perfection so much so that no (intellectually) downtrodden person—including the secluded women—would ever be left on the surface of the earth without being aware of religion. And that time will be near the time of the advent of our Qa'im.

"God will appoint Qum and its people as his (al-Mahdi's) vicegerents and if it were not so, the earth will swallow its inhabitants and no proof will remain on earth. Therefore, from the city of Qum knowledge and learning will spread to the east and west, and the proof for the people of the world will be completed such that no person will be left unaware of religion and knowledge.

At that time, Hadrat Qa'im ('atfs) will appear and through him divine wrath will descend upon the infidels. It is because God will not take vengeance from His servants unless the proofs were completed on

them.”¹⁰

It is reported in another *hadith*: “Had it not been for the people of Qum, religion would have vanished.”¹¹

The Confirmation of the Way of Thinking in Qum

It can be understood from some *hadiths* that the Infallible Imams (‘a) had approved of the method of the ‘*ulama*’ of Qum.

In this regard, Imam as-Sadiq (‘a) said: “There is an angel above Qum, who is spreading his two wings over it, and no tyrant will ever target Qum; otherwise, God would melt him like salt in water.”

Then, he (‘a) pointed to ‘Isa ibn ‘Abdullah Qummi and said: “God’s benediction be upon Qum! The Lord of the universe will fill their land with rain and send His blessings upon them while transforming their sins into good deeds. They are the people of bowing (*ruku*’), prostration (*sujud*), standing (*qiyam*), and sitting (*qu’ud*) in prayer just as they are jurists, scholars and people of comprehension (*ahl-e dark*). They are the people of insight, revelation and perspicacity in the worship of the excellent servants of God.”¹²

Similarly, in reply to a person who said, “I want to ask something from you, which has not been asked by anyone before me and will never be asked by anyone after me,” the same Imam (‘a) said: “Perhaps, you want to ask about *hashr* and *nashr*.”

He said: “By the One Who appointed Muhammad as the giver of glad tidings and as the warner, yes.”

He (‘a) said: “The *hashr* of all people is toward the Bayt al-Muqaddas (in Jerusalem) except that of a mausoleum in a mountainous land to be called “Qum” and divine teachings will be part of their features.”

While half-standing, the man asked: “O son of the Messenger of Allah! Does it pertain to the people of Qum?”

The Imam (‘a) replied: “Yes, it pertains to them and anyone who shares their conviction and words.”¹³

The Companions of Imam al-Mahdi (‘atfs)

The point worthy of note is that the *hadiths* talk about the people of Qum, the companions of the Mahdi (‘atfs) and those who will rise up to claim the right of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (‘a).

‘Affan al-Basri said: Imam as-Sadiq (‘a) said to me: “Do you know why Qum is named “Qum”?” I replied: “God, His Messenger and you know better.” He said: “It is named Qum as such because its inhabitants will rally behind the Qa’im of Muhammad’s Progeny (‘atfs) and rise up along with him (‘atfs). Along this line, they will show their perseverance and assist him (‘atfs).”¹⁴

In another *hadith*, the Sadiq (Truthful) of Muhammad’s Progeny (Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq) (‘a) said in this

regard: “The soil of Qum is holy and its inhabitants are from us and we from them. No tyrant will have any bad intention toward it; otherwise, his punishment would quickly follow (in the hereafter).

Of course, this will be the case as long as they do not betray their brothers, for if they did so, God will let the mischievous tyrants dominate them. The people of Qum, however, are the companions of our Qa’im and campaigners for our truthfulness.”

Then, the Imam raised his head toward the sky and prayed, thus: “O God! Protect them from any sedition (*fitnah*) and save them from any type of perdition.”¹⁵

Iran as the Country of the Imam of the Time (‘atfs)

A *hadith* about the city of Qum, which elucidates the role of the Iranians before and after the advent of the Promised Mahdi (‘a), was quoted. A closer examination, however, of the statements of the Infallibles (‘a) will show that they (‘a) have paid particular attention to Iran and its people, and on various occasions, they have made mention of their role in supporting religion and preparing the ground for the advent of al-Mahdi (‘atfs).

At this point, it will suffice to cite some *hadiths*, extolling the Iranians and those paving the ground for the advent.

Commendation for the Iranians

‘Abdullah ibn ‘Abbas said: The Persians were mentioned in the presence of the Prophet (S). He (S) said: “The people of Persia—the Iranians—are a group from us, the *Ahl al-Bayt*.”¹⁶

When the *Mawali* or the *A‘ajam*¹⁷ were mentioned in the presence of the Prophet (S), the Holy Messenger (S) said: “I swear to God that I have more trust in them than you.”¹⁸

‘Abdullah ibn ‘Abbas said: “At the time when they would hoist the black banners toward you, you have to give honor to the Persians because your government is with them.”¹⁹

One day Ash‘ath said to ‘Ali (‘a) in protest: “O Commander of the Faithful! Why have these *A‘ajam* who have come around you overtaken us?” He (‘a) got angry and said in reply: “Who will excuse me in facing you useless corpulent people each of whom is like a donkey wallowing in his bed, and on account of fame and pride, is turning away from the community? Are you commanding me to cast them away? I will never cast them away to become one of the ignorant.²⁰ By God Who split the seed and created the creatures! They will stand up to fight against you in order to return you to the fold of religion just as you drew the sword in bringing Islam to them.”²¹

Those Who are Paving the Ground for the Advent of Imam al-Mahdi ('atfs)

The main part of the *hadiths* regarding the events prior to the advent and the companions of Hadrat al-Mahdi ('a) is related to Iran and the Iranians, whom have been referred to in various terms such as Persians, '*ajam*/*la'ajam*, the people of Khurasan, the people of Qum, the people of Taleqan, the people of Rey, etc.

By studying the collection of these *hadiths*, we will arrive at the conclusion that prior to the advent of the Imam of the Time ('atfs), a religious system and defender of the Infallible Imams ('a) will be established in Iran, which would be acceptable to the Imam of the Time ('atfs), and that the people of Iran will have a key role in his ('atfs) uprising, which we will deal with in the section on the uprising. It would suffice here to mention some *hadiths*:

The Messenger of Allah (S) said: "A people from the east will stage an uprising and pave the ground for the uprising of Hadrat al-Mahdi ('a)."22

He (S) also said: "The black banners will come from (the people of) the east whose hearts are like pieces of iron (in firmness). Then, anyone who becomes informed of their movement will go to them and pay allegiance to them even to the extent of traveling over ice if it is necessary."23

Imam al-Baqir ('a) said: "It is as if I can see a community (*qawm*) that will stage an uprising in the east and demand rights but rights will not be given to them. They will seek again but again it will not be granted to them. In such a state of affairs, swords will be unsheathed and put on the shoulder.

At that time, the enemy will accept their demands, but they will not accept it. They will stage an uprising and will not give the right to anyone except to its owner of the affair (rightful owner).

Their killed ones are martyrs. If I knew them, I would have prepared myself for the owner of this affair."24

Imam al-Baqir ('a) said: "The companions of Hadrat Qa'im ('atfs) are three-hundred and thirteen, and they are from the progeny of '*ajam* (non-Arabs)."25

Although '*ajam* is said to be the non-Arabs, the Iranians are certainly included and keeping the other *hadiths* in view, there will be the presence of a large number of Iranians among the special forces of Hadrat al-Mahdi ('atfs).

The Messenger of Allah (S) said: "Soon after you, there will be a community (*qawm*) at whose feet the world will be gathered—they will traverse the world—and the doors of the world will be opened for them, the men and women of Persia will serve them. The earth will be rolled under their steps in such a manner that anyone of them could cover the distance from east to west within an hour. They will sell neither themselves to the world nor its inhabitants. The world is also not their delight and portion."26

The Commander of the Faithful (‘a) said: “Blessed is Taleqan! It is because God has treasures there which are neither gold nor silver. Instead, they are men of faith who have really recognized God and they will be the companions of the Mahdi (Guided One) of Muhammad’s Progeny (‘atfs) at the end of time.”²⁷

The Messenger of Allah (S) also said regarding Khurasan: “There are treasures in Khurasan but they are not gold and silver. Instead, they are men whom God and His Messenger love.”²⁸

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1. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 67, p. 351.
 2. Tafsir Imam al-‘Askari, p. 344; Ihtijaj, vol. 2, p. 260; Muniyyah al-Murid, p. 35; Mahajjah al-Bayda’, vol. 1, p. 32; Hilyah al-Abrrar, vol. 2, p. 455; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 2, p. 6; Al-‘Awalim, vol. 3, p. 295.
 3. عن النبي (ص): إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى يَبْعَثُ لِهَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ عَلَى رَأْسِ كُلِّ مِائَةِ سَنَةٍ مَنْ يَجِدُ لَهَا دِينَهَا.
 4. Rey or Shahr-e Rey (City of Rey): the old Tehran and located at the southern part of today’s Tehran. (Trans.)
 5. Imam Musa al-Kazim, son of Imam Ja‘far as-Sadiq; seventh of the Twelve Imams, and father of Hadrat Fatimah al-Ma‘sumah who was buried in Qum. He was born in Medina in 744 CE and died in prison in Baghdad in 799 CE. (Trans.)
 6. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 60, p. 217.
 7. Ibid., p. 216.
 8. “Word” in the Qur’an has been used for various meanings, among them: the promise of truth; monotheism; Islamic call. (Trans.)
 9. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 60, p. 213.
 10. Ibid.; Safinah al-Bihar, vol. 2, p. 445.
 11. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 60, p. 217.
 12. Ibid.
 13. Ibid., p. 218.
 14. Ibid., p. 218.
 15. Ibid.
 16. Dhikr Isbahan, p. 11.
 17. In linguistics, mawali and mawla have various technical implications. In volume one of Al-Ghadir, ‘Allamah Amini has reported twenty-two (22) terms, which in technical terms, in the Qur’an and in the hadith, have five (5) sets of meanings: wala’ ‘ataq, wala’ islam, wala’ halaf, wala’ qabilah and wala’ in contrast to the Arabs, and what is meant is the non-Arabs. This meaning is mostly meant by the scholars of ‘ilm ar-rijal (science of the chain of hadith transmission and transmitters). See At-Taqrīb wa’t-Taysir, vol. 2, p. 333. The secret behind this is that they equate this word with the Iranians probably on the basis that the use of the word to mean them prevails (ghalabeh-ye wajudi) or its usage (isti‘mali) referring to them is so much that some have claimed that this is what it really means.
In addition, in the writings of past and contemporary scholars, it has been interpreted as such and in imitating them, we have interpreted it accordingly though we do not insist on it.
By “Persia” (Fars) they used to mean those lands in contrast to the Roman Empire that included today’s Iran and some parts of other lands that were once parts of Iran at that time.
 18. Dhikr Isbahan, p. 12. See Al-Jami‘ as-Sahih, vol. 5, p. 382.
 19. Ramuz al-Ahadith, p. 33.
 20. In view of the fact that the market of Kufah was mostly populated by Persians speaking the Persian language (as can be understood from Mustadrak al-Wasa’il, vol. 13, p. 250, hadith 4), it becomes very clear that the mawali against whom Ash‘ath was protesting and whom the Commander of the Faithful (‘a) was defending were precisely the Iranians.
 21. Al-Gharat, vol. 24, p. 498; Safinah al-Bihar, vol. 2, p. 693; Ibn Abi’l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah, vol. 20, p. 284.
 22. Ibn Majah, Sunan Ibn Majah, vol. 2, p. 1368; Al-Mu‘jam al-Awsat, vol. 1, p. 200; Majma‘ az-Zawa’id, vol. 7, p. 318; Kashf al-Ghammah, vol. 3, p. 268; Ithbat al-Hudah, vol. 3, p. 599; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 51, p. 87.

23. 'Aqd ad-Darar, p. 129; Shafi'i, Bayan, p. 490; Yanabi' al-Mawaddah, p. 491; Kashf al-Ghammah, vol. 3, p. 263; Ithbat al-Hudah, vol. 3, p. 596; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 51, p. 84.
24. Nu'mani, Ghaybah, p. 373; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 52, p. 243; Ibn Majah, Sunan Ibn Majah, vol. 2, p. 1366; Hakim, Mustadrak, vol. 4, p. 464.
25. Nu'mani, Ghaybah, p. 315; Ithbat al-Hudah, vol. 2, p. 547; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 52, p. 369.
26. Firdaws al-Akhbar, vol. 3, p. 449.
27. Shafi'i, Bayan, p. 106; Muttaqi Hindi, Burhan, p. 150; Kanz al-'Ummal, vol. 14, p. 591; Yanabi' al-Mawaddah, p. 491; Kashf al-Ghumah, vol. 3, p. 286.
28. Kanz al-'Ummal, vol. 14, p. 591.

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