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## 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."<sup>1</sup>

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."<sup>2</sup>

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."<sup>3</sup>

Since in some *hadiths* the word "*as-sa'ah*" (the time) has been interpreted as the advent of Imam Mahdi ('atfs),<sup>4</sup> 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!'"<sup>5</sup>

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.'"<sup>6</sup>

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.'"<sup>7</sup>

## **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)."<sup>8</sup>

Another *hadith* with the same content has been reported from Imam as-Sadiq (‘a).<sup>9</sup> 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.”<sup>10</sup>

Other *hadith* with the same content has also been reported.<sup>11</sup>

## **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!”<sup>12</sup>

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.”<sup>13</sup>

He (S) also said elsewhere: “The Day of Resurrection shall not come to pass unless offspring would decrease in number.”<sup>14</sup> 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.”<sup>15</sup>

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.”<sup>16</sup>

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.”<sup>17</sup>

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.”<sup>18</sup>

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.”<sup>19</sup>

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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.

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