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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:



﴿ وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالثَّمَرَاتِ 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.

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