

## Chapter 8

### Merits of awaiting for the Mahdi's appearance

The author of *Yanabi' al-Mawadda* (page 493) narrates from Khawrizmi's *al-Manaqib* from Abu Ja'far Imam Muhammad al-Baqir from his father from his grandfather from Amir al-Mu'minin that the Messenger of Allah (S) said:

“Awaiting for the *faraj* (deliverance) is the best act of worship.”

The author of *al-Manaqib* says: That is, awaiting the *faraj* by means of the appearance of the Mahdi.

The author says: Many of our (Shi'ite) traditions corroborate the afore-mentioned tradition.

The word *intidhar* (awaiting) means the expectation of the occurrence of an affair and its realization. The reforms that result from awaiting the Mahdi's appearance, on an individual and on a social level, particularly for the Shi'a Imamiyah, are clear.

Firstly, *intidhar* itself is an important exercise for the soul, such that it is said: '*Intidhar* is severer than killing.' It is necessary to employ the mental faculties and direct the thoughts towards the direction of the awaited affair. This will, of necessity, cause two things: One that the mental faculty will increase in power, and the other that man will be able to gather and direct his thoughts to a single matter. These two affairs are amongst the most important things required by man for his subsistence and future life.

Secondly, the impact of misfortunes and calamities will ease for man, and their gravity lessened, because he knows that they will be removed and redressed. There is a vast difference between experiencing a misfortune from which man knows he will find relief, and one in which he does not know that. This is particularly so if there is a possibility that he will find relief in the near future, and the Mahdi by his emergence will fill the earth with justice and equity.

Thirdly, the necessary condition for *intidhar* is that man should love being amongst the companions and Shi'a of the Mahdi and in fact amongst his helpers. This requires that the Mahdi's Shi'a should strive to rectify his own self and make good his morals so that he can be worthy of being the Mahdi's companion

and engaging in holy war for him. Indeed, this good fortune requires such ethics, which is scarce today amongst us.

Fourthly, just as *intidhar* becomes the cause of rectification of the self and rather the cause of rectification of others, it also becomes the cause of preparation of the rudiments for the Mahdi's victory over his enemies. The essential condition for this victory is that one should acquire knowledge and insight especially so when man knows that the Mahdi's victory over his enemies would take place through ordinary channels.

These were some of the effects, which would arise from the act of *intidhar* (awaiting) – if *intidhar* is done in its true sense. In addition to that, *intidhar* reveals good and pleasing qualities, which are as follows:

Firstly, it reveals the perfection of the intellect and the soundness of understanding because a *muntadhir* (i.e. an Awaiter) believes that an Imam should exist at all times and knows that the Imam of today is the Mahdi. Thus he believes in the unseen without having seen it, and in general, he believes in the Mahdi without having seen him.

Secondly *intidhar* discloses love for the establishment of truth and justice, the implementation of divine commands and ordinances, the execution of affairs on the basis of a correct and fundamental pivot, and every human being, in fact every existent being, attaining the perfection for which he has been created.

Thirdly, it reveals the sincerity of man's love and friendship towards the Ahl al-bayt and kin of the Holy Prophet (S), because it is by Mahdi's emergence that the Government of the Ahl al-bayt will be established, the act of command and prohibition will be at their liberty and their rights will be returned to them.

Fourthly, it reveals the goodness and sincerity of his belief in Mahdi and that he will fill the earth with equity and justice and that he is the Imam of the present time.

Fifthly, it reveals man's affection towards his fellow creatures and his desire for rectifying them because the goodness and prosperity, which would arise from Mahdi's emergence, would be experienced by all the creatures.

Most of the points we have mentioned that result from awaiting the appearance of the Mahdi and the good traits which are disclosed through it, have been mentioned in the traditions from our Imams. It pleases me to mention one of the traditions, in fact a part of a tradition:

In the book *Kamal al-Din*, Shaykh Saduq has narrated from Ammar al-Sab'ani a lengthy tradition in which Abu 'Abd Allah Ja'far al-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

“Worship (*ibadah*) during the reign of a wicked government has more merit and is better than worship during the reign of a righteous government. Moreover, the reward of worship in the first case is much more than in the second”.

Ammar said: I told the Imam: “May my life be sacrificed for you. We do not desire to be amongst the Qa'im's companions at the time of the emergence of truth, while we are today under your Imamate and your obedience, better in deeds than the people in the righteous government”.

Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) replied:

“Glory be to Allah! Do you not wish that Allah, the Blessed, the Sublime, should manifest truth and justice in the lands, and improve the condition of the common people, that He should cause (people's) speech to harmonize and that He should bring together the divided hearts of people? (Do you not wish) that Allah should not be disobeyed on earth, that His divine ordinances should be established among His creatures, that truth should return to its people, so that they make it manifest until nothing of the truth is concealed out of fear of any of (His) creatures ...” .

## Refraining from fixing the time of the emergence

The author of *Yanabi' al-Mawadda* (on page 456) has narrated from the author of *Fara'id al-Simtayn* who has narrated from Ahmad ibn Ziyad who has narrated from Di'bil ibn 'Ali al-Khuza'i, a tradition wherein Di'bil approaches Imam Ridha (a.s.) and recites his *tajziyah* ode and refers in some places of his ode to the Mahdi. The Imam tells Di'bil:

“The Trusted Spirit (Jibra'il) has spoken through your tongue. Do you know who this Imam is... “ until he said: “he is who is awaited during his occultation and obeyed at the time of his emergence...[1](#) . Then he said: “Regarding the time of Mahdi's emergence, my father has narrated from his forefathers from the Messenger of Allah who said:

“His likeness is that of the Hour (the Day of Judgment);

***it will not come on you but all of a sudden (7: 187).***

The author says: In some of the traditions about occultation he (S) has said that the Mahdi will emerge like a 'brilliant star'. Yet some other traditions mention that God would set right Mahdi's affairs in one night. It appears that all these sayings refer to this fact that the Mahdi's emergence is unknown and none know of the time of his reappearance except for the One who has created him.

Verily, amongst the affairs which has greatly been emphasized in the tradition for us (i.e. the Shi'a) is the non-fixation of the time of Mahdi's emergence and leaving this matter to Almighty Allah.

Yet some traditions mention that those who ordain a time for his emergence are liars. It can be said that the philosophy of not fixing his reappearing at any time and in any year, month and on any Friday may be due to the following:

Firstly, the divine *badal* (change) in its correct meaning in which we Shi'a believe is established. Verily, the will of Allah proceeds in all the Divine decrees and He implements a reverse in the order and brings

change and alteration in His decrees. The time of the Mahdi's emergence too falls in the category of those incidents in which *bad'ah* occurs as has been clearly stipulated in the Shi'ite traditions.

As a matter of fact, if the time of the Mahdi's emergence had been fixed and the matter of *bad'ah* (too) would have played its role, then the very matter of (tradition of) emergence along with its narrator would have been subject to doubt and suspicions. Therefore the Imams (a.s.) have said: "We have not fixed the time of the Mahdi's emergence nor shall we do so in the future."

Secondly, refraining from ascertaining the time of emergence and leaving it to Divine discretion, and considering the possibility of the Mahdi emerging today or tomorrow, of necessity, creates an urge and desire in praying for his early reappearance, since his emergence may be linked to supplication (*du'ah*) and insistence in request.

Thirdly, if the period of the Mahdi's emergence is known and the people are aware of this matter even though they may belong to the select few, then he would have to emerge. All the select and common people especially those desirous of this matter, would know him and his enemies would be prepared to kill him right from the beginning of his emergence. According to what is customary, it would not be possible that on the day of his emergence, his strength would be the same as the strength of his enemies.

Fourthly, when the affairs of the people are in the Imam's hands, he would be the pivot of the millstone of the Muslims and the focal point of their social body. Undoubtedly the Imam's occultation even though for a short period will bring the movement of that society to a standstill. However if the people bring faith in his emergence and have hope in his return, especially in the near future, it would then be possible for that society to protect itself and organize its affairs with that hope in mind.

Fifthly, awaiting for emergence at any period will bring an acceleration in the movement of reformation. A person who awaits the arrival of his companion will be bound to make speed in the preliminary preparations for his arrival lest his friend arrives suddenly and he may not have fulfilled his duty.

Truly if *intidhar* (awaiting) for Mahdi's emergence is sincere, and the time of his emergence is not fixed, it will indeed be regarded as two important factors for the salvation and prosperity of a society.

I wish that the author of *Tafsir al-Manar* would take back some of his words in this regard.

## **The Mahdi's emergence at the end of time**

The author of *Is'af al-Raghibin* (on page 148) narrates from al-Hakim (from the book of *Sahih*) who narrates from the Messenger of Allah (S) as such:

"At the end of time, a severe calamity shall overtake my Ummah... Allah will send a man from my progeny" or he said: "from my Ahl al-bayt, who shall fill the earth with equity and justice".

Ibn Hajar in *al-Sawa'iq* (page 98) has narrated from Ahmad and Muslim who in turn have narrated from the Messenger of Allah (S) as saying:

“At the end of time, there will be a Caliph who will distribute wealth without any account..”.

The author of *Is'af al-Raghibin* has narrated the same tradition on page 149 of his afore-said book.

The author says: ‘Caliph’ in the above tradition refers to the Mahdi as per the context of some other traditions.

The author of *Iqd al-Durar* in chapter 2, narrates from ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Umar who said: The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

“At the end of time a man will come from my progeny whose name is the same as my name, and his agnomen the same as mine; he will fill the earth with justice just as it had been filled with tyranny”.

Also from the above source, in chapter 3, he narrates from Imam Abu ‘Umar al-Mada’ini who narrates from Abu Sa’id al-Khudri that the Messenger of Allah (S) said:

“At the end of time a youth with a handsome face and an aquiline nose shall rise from my progeny and he shall fill the earth with equity and justice just as it was previously filled with cruelty and tyranny”.

The author of *Yanabi’ al-Mawadda*, on page 430, narrates from the author of *Mishkat al-Masabih* who narrates from Muslim’s *Sahih* and Ahmad’s *Musnad*, from Jabir ibn ‘Abd Allah al-Ansari that the Messenger of Allah (S) said:

“At the end of time, there will be a Caliph who will distribute wealth without any account”.

Another tradition says: “At the time of the end of my Ummah, a Caliph will come who will distribute wealth without any reckoning”.

The author of *Yanabi’ al-Mawadda*, on page 436, narrates from the author of *Fara'id al-Simtayn* who narrates from ‘Ali ibn Hilal who narrates from his father that the Holy Prophet (S) said: “The Mahdi will come at the end of time and will fill the earth with equity and justice just as it was previously filled with cruelty and oppression.”

The author says: In most of our Shi’ite traditions as well as the traditions of our Sunni brethren the words (أخر الزمان, *akhir al-zaman*) ‘the end of time’ has been used, and the occurrence of certain important events in it, the greatest of them being the emergence of the Promised Mahdi.

However the fact is that sometimes the phrase ‘end of time’ can be taken in its literal meaning, that is to say before the Day of Judgment. Or else it may be taken to mean a part of a time in relation to an earlier or later time.

For example, we say: Muhammad ibn ‘Abd Allah (S) is the Prophet of the end of time (أخر الزمان, *akhir al-zaman*). That is, the period of his prophethood and messengership, and his Shari’ah is later than that of the

previous Prophets and Messengers. Thus in absolute terms, the Holy Prophet is the last Prophet which means that no Prophet comes after him, otherwise he will not be called the Last Prophet.

Sometimes the term 'end of time' is used to refer to the last period of the Holy Prophet's Messengership, that is, if we divide the period of his Prophethood into portions, the last portion of it would be the 'end of time'. This is what is meant in the Holy Prophet's sentence: "The Ummah in which I am placed at the beginning, and the Mahdi is the middle, and 'Isa at the end, will never be destroyed."

Now that you have understood these meanings, it should be said that such sayings as: The Mahdi will emerge at the 'end of time' or that he is the Caliph of the 'end of time,' refer to the last meaning, which means that the period of time in which the Mahdi will emerge is the last of the periods of time.

The author of *'Iqd al-Durar* (in chapter seven) narrates from Hafiz Abu 'Abd Allah in his *al-Mustadrak*, who narrates from Abu Sa'id al-Khudri that the Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"The Mahdi shall emerge with the sword at the time of the end of my Ummah. Allah shall send rain, the earth will cause its herbage to grow, and he (the Mahdi) will bestow wealth in the right manner..."

Al-Hakim says: This tradition is correct as far as its chain of transmission is concerned but Muslim and al-Bukhari have not narrated it.

## [The Mahdi's qualities on the day of his emergence](#)

The author *'Iqd al-Durar* (in chapter three) narrates from Hafiz Abu Na'im, from the book of *Sifah al-Mahdi* of Abu Umamah who said that the Messenger of Allah (S) related a tradition in which he mentioned the Mahdi and some of what would occur before and after his emergence. A person from the 'Abd al-Qays said: "O Messenger of Allah, who will be the Imam of the people on that day"?

He (S) replied: "The Mahdi from my progeny who would be then forty years of age..."

Again, the author of *'Iqd al-Durar* in the aforesaid chapter narrates from Hafiz Na'im ibn Hammad, in *al-Fitan* that Amir al-Mu'minin 'Ali (a.s.) said in a tradition about Mahdi: "The Mahdi will rise when he is between thirty to forty years of age..."

In the same chapter of the afore-said book its author narrates from Abu 'Abd Allah al-Mada'ini and Abu Bakr al-Bayhaqi that Ibn 'Abbas said: "I have hope that days and nights will not pass until Allah will appoint a youth from us, the Ahl al-bayt while trials have not befallen him and he too has not been entangled in trials. He will establish the affairs of this nation just as Allah commenced the affairs of this nation through us. It is my expectation that the affairs would end too in us".

The narrator said: I told Ibn 'Abbas: "Are your aged ones helpless in this matter so that you have hope in your youth"? He replied: "Allah does whatever He wills".

In the same chapter of the same book, its author narrates from Imam al-Husayn ibn 'Ali (a.s.) as such: "When the Mahdi will emerge, people will deny him because he will have returned to them looking like a youth. The greatest trial is that their master will come to them in a youthful state, while they think him to be an old man.." ..

In section one, chapter four of the same book, its author narrates from Hafiz Abu 'Abd Allah al-Hakim's *al-Mustadrak* from Thawbān that the Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"Three offspring of a Caliph will be killed near your treasure...". Then he mentioned a youth. He (S) said: "When you see him (i.e. the youth) swear allegiance to him because he is the Mahdi, the Caliph of Allah".

Hakim says: 'This tradition is an authentic one according to the conditions set by al-Bukhari and Muslim'.

In the seventh chapter of the same book, its author narrates from Hafiz Abu 'Abd Allah Na'im ibn Hammad, in his *al-Fitan*, who narrates from Ishaq ibn Yahya ibn Talha that Tawus said: 'Umar ibn al-Khattab bid farewell to his family and said: "What is wrong if I spend the treasures of the Ka'ba on weapons and money given in the way of Allah"?

'Ali said: "O Amir al-Mu'mineen! Refrain from such thoughts. You are not the owner of Ka'ba. The owner of Ka'ba is a youth from the Quraysh who will distribute the wealth of Ka'ba in the way of Allah at the end of time".

The author says: There is no doubt that the apparent meaning of these traditions refers, undeniably, to the emergence of the Mahdi, and evidences and contexts too exist for them. Some of the traditions mention: The one who will see the Mahdi on the day of his emergence will reckon him to be a youth of forty or his age to be between thirty and forty. However it does not mean that this is his true age.

## [Place of the Mahdi's emergence](#)

The author of *'Iqd al-Durar*, chapter two, section four, narrates from Jabir ibn Yazid al-Ju'fi a lengthy tradition from Imam Muhammad al-Baqir in which he mentioned some signs of the Mahdi's emergence and the sinking of Sufyani's army, until he said:

"Sufyani will dispatch troops to Medina and the Mahdi will flee from there to Mecca. News of the Mahdi's flight will reach Sufyani's commanders who will send an army in pursuit of him but they will fail to find him until he enters Mecca, **fearful and vigilant** (28:21) in the same way as Musa ibn 'Imran...".

The author of *Is'af al-Raghibin* (on page 150) narrates that the Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"Discord will arise at the time of a Caliph's death. A man will flee from Medina to Mecca. Some of the inhabitants of Mecca will approach him and will send him out, while he is unwilling, and will swear

allegiance to him between Rukn and Maqam. An army will be dispatched in their direction from Syria, which will sink in the plain ground (*bayd*) between Mecca and Medina.”

The author of *Yanabi' al-Mawadda* (on page 431) has narrated from the author of *Jawahir al-'Aqdayn* who has narrated from Ibn Dawud who has narrated from Imam Ahmad and Hafiz al-Bayhaqi the aforementioned tradition.

The author of *Yanabi' al-Mawadda* (on page 448) narrates from the author of *Fara'id al-Simtayn* who narrates from al-Hasan ibn al-Khalid, a tradition from 'Ali ibn Musa al-Ridha (a.s.) in which he mentions the Mahdi's occultation and that he is the fourth from his progeny, until he says:

“The Mahdi is the one about whom a caller will call out from the heavens and all the inhabitants of earth will hear the call: Be aware that the Proof of Allah has appeared in the House of Allah, so follow him as truth is in him and with him”.

## The place of the Mahdi's allegiance

The author of *Iqd al-Durar* (chapter two) narrates from Abu al-Hasan al-Milki who narrates from Hudhayfa ibn al-Yamān that the Holy Prophet (S) said:

“If only a single day remains of this world, Allah will raise a man from my progeny whose name will be the same as my name and his character will be the same as mine and his agnomen is Abu 'Abd Allah. People will swear allegiance to him between Rukn and Maqam...” .

In section two, chapter four of the afore-said book, its author narrates from Abu Dawud's *Sunan*, Tirmidhi's *Jami'*, Ahmad's *Musnad*, Ibn Majah's *Sunan*, al-Bayhaqi's *al-Ba'th wa al-Nushur*, and some others who narrate from Umm Salama that the Messenger of Allah (S) said:

“At the time of a Caliph's death discord will arise and a man from Medina will flee towards Mecca. Some of the inhabitants of Mecca will approach him and will send him out, while he is unwilling, and will swear allegiance to him between Rukn and Maqam...” .

The author says: What is mentioned immediately after this tradition indicates that person referred to is the Mahdi.

In chapter five of the afore-said book, the author narrates from Abu 'Abd Allah Na'im ibn Hammad in his *al-Fitan* who narrates from 'Abd Allah ibn Mas'ud a lengthy tradition mentioning therein Sufyani's uprising and the Mahdi's going from Medina towards Mecca and his allegiance, until he reaches to the point where he says: “The Mahdi will sit between Rukn and Maqam and will stretch out his hand. People will give allegiance to him and Allah will cast love for him into people's hearts”.

The author of *Iqd al-Durar* (in chapter seven) narrates from Na'im ibn Hammad's *al-Fitan*, who narrates from Abu Hurayra who said: “The Mahdi will be paid allegiance between Rukn and Maqam, He will not

awaken anyone who is asleep nor will he shed any blood”.

The author says: It refers to the beginning of the allegiance.

Ibn Hajar in his book *al-Sawa'iq* (page 98) has narrated from Ibn Asakir who has narrated from 'Ali (a.s.) the tradition about Mahdi fleeing from Medina towards Mecca. He said: “Some of the inhabitants of Mecca will approach Mahdi and will send him out, while he is unwilling, and will swear allegiance to him between Rukn and Maqam...”

The author of *'Iqd al-Durar* in section two and chapter four has narrated from Jabir ibn Yazid al-Ju'fi who narrated from Imam Muhammad al-Baqir about the Mahdi's flight from Medina to Mecca and says: People will swear allegiance to him between Rukn and Maqam. “O Jabir! The Mahdi is from the progeny of al-Husayn.”

## Preparation for the Mahdi's Triumph

The author of *'Iqd al-Durar* (chapter five) narrates from a group of traditionists, among them Ahmad in his *Musnad*, Ibn Majah in his *Sunan*, Al-Bayhaqi Abu 'Umar al-Mada'ini, Na'im ibn Hammad, Abu al-Qasim al-Tabarani and Abu Na'im al-Isbahani who narrate from Amir al-Mu'minin 'Ali ibn Abi Talib that the Messenger of Allah (S) said:

“The Mahdi is from us – the Ahl al-bayt. Allah will set right his affairs in one night.”

Ibn Hajar in *al-Sawa'iq* (page 98) has narrated from Ibn Majah as such:

“A group of people will rise from the East and will pave the way for the Mahdi's rule.”

The author of *'Iqd al-Durar* (in chapter five) has narrated the same tradition from Ibn Majah and al-Bayhaqi.

The author of *'Iqd al-Durar* (in chapter five) has narrated from Abu Na'im in his *Sifah al-Mahdi*, who has narrated from Thawban that the Messenger of Allah (S) said:

“When you see black flags coming from the direction of East, hasten towards them even if you have to crawl over ice because the Mahdi who is Allah's representative will be amongst them”.

The narrator said: Abu 'Abd Allah al-Hakim in his *Mustadrak* and Imam Abu 'Umar in his *Sunan* and Hafiz Na'im ibn Hammad in *al-Fitan* have narrated the contents of this tradition. Perhaps the saying: The Mahdi who is Allah's representative will be amongst them means that the preparations for the Mahdi's rule would be in their hands just as the same was mentioned in the tradition of 'Abd Allah ibn al-Harith.

In the same chapter of the afore-said book, its author narrates from Sa'id ibn al-Musayyib that the Messenger of Allah (S) said:

“Black flags of the Bani 'Abbas will rise from the East, then there will be what Allah wills. Thereafter a

group with small black flags will emerge and they will battle with a man from the progeny of Abu Sufyan and his companions and will return obedience and submission to the Mahdi”.

The author says: Some of the traditions, which speak about the appearance of black flags from the East, refer to the call of the Abbasids and the uprising of Abu Muslim al-Khurasani. Other traditions indicate the uprising of a group from the East who would invite (the people) towards the Mahdi (a.s.) and the tradition of Sa'id ibn Musayyib which was mentioned before, refers to this account. The possibility, which we mentioned previously, about the traditions (in this regard) being fabricated, refers to the first type of interpretation. So do not be heedless about them.

The author of *Yanabi' al-Mawadda* (page 448) narrates from the book *Fara'id al-Simtayn* which narrates from Hafiz Abu Na'im that Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (a.s.) said:

“Allah has placed fear in the hearts of our friends and followers. When our Q<sup>im</sup>, the Mahdi, will emerge, one person from our friends will be more courageous than a fierce lion and sharper than the point of a spear”.

The author says: Undoubtedly, a group which loses its leader also loses its will-power and aim and rather its very progress, as against a group possessing a leader with an upright will-power, earnest aim and firm power. This is because such a state eventually leaves an impression on the conduct and morale of that group. It seems that the afore-mentioned tradition too refers to this very matter and the reason why God has set fear in their hearts is to protect them.

## Events that will occur in the near future

How often this thought passes through some mind and rather how often it is pronounced though some tongue that if fear from enemies is the cause of the Mahdi's occultation then how would this fear be obviated considering that day by day various powers and arms are on the rise? How would it be possible for the Mahdi to face these powers and aims which have filled the land and sea and would tighten the sphere the day of his emergence without his having access to any of those weapons because of lack of adequate supporters and ample means?

In reply we say: It's possible that the incidents which are about to take place in this world and the probable events may actually occur which could be amongst the strongest means of Mahdi's emergence and a medium for doing away with his occultation until he emerges. In number he may become like one of the ruling powers and thereafter he would strive in strengthening and increasing his powers and weapons.

Firstly, amongst the events which are not improbable is this that the moral and spiritual reforms perfection of training and literary and material sciences in some classes of people and rather in all of them will prevail over a special class. Thus when the Mahdi emerges and proclaims his plans and announces the Islamic teachings for which he would rise and that particular class witnesses his

truthfulness, trustworthiness and resoluteness they would become submissive towards him.

They will assist him in jihad and become obedient to him and will give him the reins of the government. A large number of people would obey him and become submissive to him. The same had occurred for his great grandfather, the Holy Prophet (S) since a large number of people had brought faith in him due to his virtuous aim and objective just as the incident of al-Najashi (Negus) bears witness to this fact

Secondly: Before the Mahdi's emergence, multitudes of people will gather together and call the others towards him. They will take pledge (from them) for the victory of the day of his emergence. It is likely that the emergence of preachers in common gatherings and the distribution of those things for which Mahdi will rise, namely exercising of worldly, spiritual, social and individual reforms, are amongst the strongest means for the preparation of multitudes of people for the Mahdi's emergence.

As mentioned before, the main motive of awaiting the Mahdi's emergence is preparing and making ready the rudiments and necessities of his emergence. I can say, and it is not unlikely, that it is the Mahdi who is the one who strives behind every reformist who wishes to bring a reform. It has been mentioned previously that the Mahdi's occultation does not hinder him from undertaking such matters.

Thirdly: Break-up of the present world order and every city of the world into smaller states and every ruler of those states will possess independent powers until the Mahdi emerges. Cities and governments will have dispersed to such extent that the Mahdi too would be like one of them in power and preparedness. He will rise for that which Allah has appointed him and will strive for increasing and perfecting his own power.

Fourthly: The ruling powers will render the people completely submissive and obedient towards themselves and every society and rather every group, individual animal and vegetation will groan day and night due to such a life and state of affair. However he will become restless of the cruel and oppressive system while none would be able to see him. He will beseech and complain but only to his Lord.

Thus when the caller will call out between the heaven and the earth that Allah has obviated oppression from you, has made you successful, has set your freedom and deliverance in the Mahdi's hands and the Mahdi has emerged in Mecca, then multitudes of people will hasten towards him for the purpose of reform and their own goodness. In all probability, the meaning of the tradition which says that the Mahdi will not emerge but after the earth has become filled with cruelty and oppression is the same as what we have just said. In short, the Mahdi (a.s.) will emerge at the time when people and society will be in dire need of a reformist.

Fifthly: The world wars will put the cities out of action and weaken the physical bodies and powers. Thereafter, the Mahdi (a.s.) will emerge while from the viewpoint of number and group, he will be similar to one of those (group of) people. Then, very soon he will swiftly strive to increase and perfect his own powers in addition to those powers and tools which he would avail himself of as booty.

Sixthly: Some of the Islamic sects will accept his call on the day of his emergence and will join the forces of his companions and helpers. They will fight for the Mahdi in the battlefield and will swear allegiance to him. In all respects, they will find confidence in him. Moreover Almighty God will confirm him through the angels just as He confirmed his great grandfather i.e. the Holy Prophet (S). He will confirm him by 'Isa ibn Maryam's (a.s.) descent, the details of which we shall God-willing mention later on.

These were incidents whose occurrence cannot be denied and history too guides us to the occurrence of such incidents and bears testimony to this fact that reformists have made use of similar means. Man is not aware of what might occur tomorrow. Verily the events which took place in the 14th century A.H. and 19th century AD bears witness to the possibility of occurrence of what we have mentioned. God is All-Aware of what has occurred and what is going to take place in the future.

## The Mahdi's helpers

Ibn Hajar in *al-Sawa'iq* (on page 98) has narrated from Ibn 'Asakir that 'Ali (a.s.) has said: "When the Q<sup>u</sup>'im from the progeny of Muhammad (S) will emerge, Allah will gather together the inhabitants of the East and West. His friends will be from Kufa and the righteous men who would assist him (*abd<sup>u</sup>'l*) would be from Syria..."

The author of *'Iqd al-Durar* (section two, chapter four) has narrated from Jabir ibn Yazid Ju'fi who has narrated from Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (a.s.) a lengthy tradition where he has mentioned in it some of the signs of Mahdi's emergence: the revolt of Sufyani, the Mahdi's escape from Medina to Mecca until he says: Allah will gather together for the Mahdi 313 of his companions..."

In the same book (section one, chapter four) its author narrates from Hakim Abu 'Abd Allah (from his book *al-Mustadrak*) that Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiya said:

We were in the presence of 'Ali (A). A person asked him some questions about the Mahdi. He (a.s.) replied: "Alas"! And he repeated the word seven times and then said: "The Mahdi will emerge at the end of time when those who would call out the name of Allah would be killed.

"Thereafter Allah will gather together a group scattered like clouds, and will bring their hearts together. They will neither fear anyone nor will they flee. Their number will be equal to the number of the companions of Badr. Neither the people of the past took precedent over them nor will the people of the future comprehend them. Their number will be equal to the number of the companions who crossed the river with the Saul ...".

The narrator says: Al-Hakim has said: This tradition is an authentic tradition according to the criteria of al-Bukhari and Muslim. However they have not narrated it.

In the seventh chapter of the same book, the author narrates from Abu 'Amr 'Uthman ibn Sa'id al-Muqri in his *Sunan* who narrates from Hudhayfa ibn al-Yaman that the Messenger of Allah (S) while narrating

about the Mahdi and his emergence said:

“Righteous men (*abdul*) from Syria will hasten towards him along with their followers while noble men from Egypt too will join him. Yet other groups will proceed from the East until they reach Mecca and swear allegiance to him ...”.

The author of *Yanabi' al-Mawadda* (on page 449) has narrated from al-Kanji who in turn has narrated from Ibn al-A'sham al-Kufi that All (a.s.) said:

“Bravo! To the people of *Qaliqan* because Allah has hidden treasures amongst them which are neither gold nor silver. Rather there are people there who have recognized Allah in the true sense and they will be the Mahdi's helpers at the end of time”.

The author of *Is'af al-Raghibin* (on page 150) says: It is true that the Holy Prophet (S) said:

“Discord will arise at the time of a Caliph's death”. Thereafter he mentioned the Mahdi's emergence at Mecca, the allegiance paid to him there, the sinking of Sufyani's army at *bayd'* (the plain ground) and then said:

“When people will witness this miracle from the Mahdi, the righteous men (*abdul*) from Syria and groups of people from Iraq will approach him and swear allegiance to him”..

## [The angels will assist the Mahdi](#)

The author of *'Iqd al-Durar* (chapter five) narrates from Abu 'Amr 'Uthman ibn Sa'id al-Muqri in his *Sunan* who in turn narrates from Hudhayfa ibn al-Yaman that the Holy Prophet (S) said:

“Allegiance will be sworn to the Mahdi between Rukn and Maqam. He will proceed towards Syria with Jibra'il in front of him and Mika'il on his right...”

In section one, chapter four of the same book, its author narrates from Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (a.s.) a tradition wherein he mentions about Mahdi's emergence and his allegiance between Rukn and Maqam and then says:

“Jibra'il would be on his right and Mika'il on his left ...”

Again, in the seventh chapter of the afore-said book, the author narrates from Abu 'Amr 'Uthman ibn Sa'id al-Muqri in his *Sunan* who in turn narrates from Hudhayfa ibn al-Yaman that the Messenger of Allah (S) while mentioning the Mahdi's emergence and his allegiance between Rukn and Maqam said:

“The Mahdi's attention will be directed towards Syria while Jibra'il would be in front of him and Mika'il on his left”.

## [Descent of 'Isa ibn Maryam \(a.s.\)](#)

Al-Bukhari in his *Sahih* (vol. 2 pg. 158) narrates from Abu Hurayra, that the Messenger of Allah (S) said: “How will you be at the time when Ibn Maryam will descend down amongst you and your Imam will be

from you.”

Then the author of *‘Iqd al-Durar* (in chapter ten) has narrated the same tradition from *Sahih* of Muslim.

In chapter one of *‘Iqd al-Durar* its author narrates from Abu Na’im in *Manaqib al-Mahdi* who narrates from Abu Sa’id al-Khudri that the Messenger of Allah (S) said:

“The one behind whom ‘Isa, the son of Maryam, will pray is from my progeny.”

Also, in the same chapter of the same book, he has narrated a similar tradition from Na’im ibn Hammad in *al-Fitan* from ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Abbas.

The author says: Traditions in this regard are abundant and this saying is an authentic saying in which the renowned ones believe. The Sunni scholars too believe in this saying. The saying in some reports and books that the Mahdi will follow ‘Isa ibn Maryam, are isolated and unworthy of attention.

The author of *Is‘af al-Raghibin* (on page 159) has narrated from Shaykh Muhyi al-Din al-‘Arabi from his book *al-Futuh* as such:

‘The Almighty God will make ‘Isa ibn Maryam descend over the white minaret which is on the East of Damascus supported by two angels one on his right side and the other on his left. People at that time would be engaged in their evening prayers. When ‘Isa will descend, the Imam will offer his place to ‘Isa who in turn would go ahead and recite (the congregational) prayers with the people’.

After narrating this tradition the author of *al-Futuh* says: ‘This saying that ‘Isa will recite prayers with the people at the time of his descent, is inconsistent with the past traditions saying: The one who will recite prayers with the people is the Mahdi’. Thereafter he says: ‘The saying that people would be engaged in evening prayers at the time of Isa’s descent is inconsistent with what is mentioned in historical accounts which say that people would be engaged in morning prayers at the time of Isa’s descent.

Ibn Hajar in his *al-Sawa’iq* on page 99, says: What is apparent is this that the Mahdi’s emergence will take place before Isa’s descent; and it is said: after Isa’s descent.

Abu al-Hasan al-‘Jari says: There are abundant traditions with successive transmission from al-Mustafa (S) about the Mahdi’s emergence: that he is from the Ahl al-bayt of the Holy Prophet, that he will rule for seven years, that he will fill the earth with justice, that he will emerge along with ‘Isa (a.s.) and ‘Isa will assist him in killing Dajjal at the Gate of Ludd in Palestine, and that he will lead this nation and ‘Isa will pray behind him.

Ibn Hajar says: ‘Abu al-Hasan’s statement that the Mahdi would lead the prayers and ‘Isa would stand behind him is a matter which is substantiated by traditions just as we have mentioned before. However al-Taftazani’s statement that ‘Isa would lead the Mahdi because of the former being more superior than the latter, and so Isa is more preferable and worthy, is without any evidence.

‘This is because the Mahdi’s Imamate (leadership) for ‘Isa means that ‘Isa will descend from the heavens so that he remains as a follower of our Holy Prophet and remains governed by his Shari’ah (religious laws) and does not possess any independence for his own Shari’ah. Moreover the matter that ‘Isa will follow someone from this nation (i.e. the Mahdi) even though ‘Isa may be more superior than the Imam whom he follows, is so explicit and clear that nothing remains concealed from this matter.

Besides, we can gather together these two sayings and say: ‘Isa will first of all follow the Mahdi in order that he manifests his motive (i.e. following the Islami path) and after that Mahdi will follow ‘Isa so that he has had acted upon the essence of the principle.

Author says: Ibn Hajar’s objection and reply to al-Taftazani’s views is a matter to think about just as the same is not concealed from our respected readers.

The author of *Is’af al-Raghibin* (on page 163) says: In the book of *al-Kashf*, Suyuti has narrated in various ways that after his descent, ‘Isa would live for a period of forty years. Again Suyuti in his book *al-A’lam* says: As explicitly mentioned by the scholars ‘Isa will judge as per the Shari’ah of our Holy Prophet (S). Traditions have come down in this regard and a consensus too has been agreed upon.

The author says: Traditions in this regard are numerous and in the third chapter of this book traditions have already been mentioned on this matter and the words of al-Kanji.

## **The blessings of the Mahdi’s emergence**

The author of *Iqd al-Durar* (in chapter five) narrates from Hakim Abu ‘Abd Allah in his *al-Mustadrak* that ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Abbas said: “During the Mahdi’s time the wild and ferocious animals would live in peace and the earth would throw out its buried treasures”.

I asked: “What are the earth’s buried treasures”? He replied: “Pillars of gold and silver”.

Al-Hakim says: This is a tradition whose claim of transmission is correct but which has not been narrated by Muslim and al-Bukhari.

The author says: What is apparent is that the earth’s buried treasure refers to its mines.

In the seventh chapter of the same book, its author narrates from al-Hakim in his *al-Mustadrak* who narrates from ‘Uthman ibn Sa’id al-Muqri in his *Sunan* who narrates from Hudhayfa ibn al-Yaman that the Messenger of Allah (S) said:

“The inhabitants of the heavens and the earth, the birds, the beasts and the fishes in the sea will become rejoice at the Mahdi’s existence. During the period of Mahdi’s rule, water will be found abundantly, springs will flourish everywhere, the earth will multiply its vegetation, and treasures will be extracted from the mines...”

In the seventh chapter of the afore-said book, the author narrates from al-Hakim from his *al-Mustadrak* who narrates from Abu Sa'id al-Khudri that the Messenger of Allah (SA.W.A) said:

“A severe calamity whose severity had never been heard of before will befall my Ummah from their rulers, so much so that things will turn miserable for them and the earth will become fraught with cruelty and oppression. The believers will fail to seek any place to shelter for themselves. It will be then that Allah will raise a man from my progeny who will fill the earth with justice and equity just as it was filled with tyranny and oppression.

The residents of the heavens and earth will be pleased with the Mahdi. The earth will not store its grain but emit it out and the sky too would not store drops of its rain but would descend it down. The Mahdi would rule over the people for seven, eight or nine years. Allah would destine welfare and blessing to such extent that those living would wish the dead to become alive”.

Al-Hakim says: This is a tradition whose claim of transmission is correct but which has not been narrated by Muslim and al-Bukhari.

Again in the same chapter of the aforesaid book, its author narrates from Abu Na'im's *Manaqib al-Mahdi* and al-Tabarani's *Mu'jam* who narrate from Abu Sa'id al-Khudri that the Messenger of Allah (S) said: “During the Mahdi's era my Ummah will enjoy such bounties which they had never enjoyed before. The sky will descend rain upon them while the earth too would not hold back anything from its vegetation but that it would send it out”.

In the same chapter of the afore-said book, its author narrates from Abu Sa'id al-Khudri that the Messenger of Allah (S) said:

“The Mahdi will emerge from my Ummah. Allah will send him as the saviour of the people. My nation will live in pleasure due to the Mahdi's existence. Due to him, the animals too will live a laudable life. The earth will send out its vegetation. The Mahdi will distribute wealth in a just manner”.

In the eighth chapter of the afore-said book, its author narrates from al-Tabarani's *Mu'jam* and Na'im ibn Hammad's book *al-Fitan* who narrate from Abu Sa'id al-Khudri that the Messenger of Allah (S) said:

“During the Mahdi's era, my nation will enjoy such bounties which they had never enjoyed the like of before. The sky would descend rain upon them while the earth would not neglect anything from its vegetation but that it would expel it out. Wealth at that time would not have any value such that a man would rise and say: “O Mahdi, grant me wealth,” and he would reply: “Take...”

In the same book, he narrates from Abu Na'im al-Isbahani's *Sifah al-Mahdi* who narrates from Abu Sa'id al-Khudri that the Holy Prophet (S) said:

“One who will act upon my Sunnah (ways) will emerge. The sky will send down its bounties and the earth too would throw out its blessings. The earth will be filled with justice just as it was filled with

oppression”.

Ibn Hajar in *al-Sawa’iq* (page 97) narrates from Hakim in his *Sahih* that the Messenger of Allah (S) said in a tradition in which he mentioned the Mahdi:

“The inhabitants of the heavens and the earth love him. The sky will send down its rain and the earth will throw out its vegetation and will not keep it in store... Allah will favour the inhabitants of the earth with so much blessings and bounties that those alive would wish the dead ones to be alive”.

## The Mahdi’s actions and invitation

The author of *‘Iqd al-Durar* (chapter seven) narrates from Na’im ibn Hammad from his *al-Fitan* who narrates from Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (a.s.) who said:

‘When corruption will be rife, the Mahdi will emerge in Mecca at the time of night prayers (*‘isha*). He will have with him the Holy Prophet’s banner, his sword, his shirt and certain other signs, and light and eloquence of speech. As soon as he finishes reciting the night prayers he will call out in a loud voice: “O people! I remind you of that moment when you will be standing before your Lord, for He has perfected the proof, sent the Prophets, revealed the Books, commanded you not to associated partners with Him, to safeguard the obedience and submission of Allah and His Prophet.

“Whatever the Holy Quran brings to life, you too strive to bring to life and whatever the Holy Qur’an dooms to death, you too strive for the same. Be the companion and ministers of the Mahdi in God-wariness, because the world is near annihilation and has bid farewell. I call you to Allah and His Messenger, and to act upon His Book. Keep away the falsehood and enliven the Holy Prophet’s Sunnah (practice)”.

The Mahdi will emerge swiftly and suddenly like the autumn cloud along with three hundred and thirteen men equal to the number of the companions of Badr. At night he will be busy in worship and in the day he will be like a roaring lion. Allah will make the Mahdi victorious in the land of Hijaz, and he will set free those of the Bani Hashim who are imprisoned at that time. People with black flags will enter Kufa and will approach the Mahdi for swearing allegiance to him. The Mahdi himself will send his armies to different corners of the world for the purpose of receiving allegiance. The oppressors will be vanquished and the inhabitants of the cities will surrender to the Mahdi...’

In the same chapter of the afore-said book, its author narrates from Abu Na’im in his book *Sifah al-Mahdi* who in turn narrates from Abu Sa’id al-Khudri that the Messenger of Allah (S) said:

“Someone from my progeny will emerge who will be acting upon my Sunnah. Blessings will descend down from the sky and the earth too will throw out its bounties. The earth will be filled with justice and equity just as it was filled with tyranny and oppression”.

In the same chapter of the same book, its author narrates from ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Aa: I told Imam

Muhammad al-Baqir: "Inform me about the Q<sup>u</sup>'im".

He replied: "I am not the Q<sup>u</sup>'im and the one whom you refer to is not the Q<sup>u</sup>'im".

I asked: "How will be the Mahdi's ways and policies"? He replied: "Just like the ways of the Holy Prophet".

In the same book, he narrates from Na'im ibn Hammad who narrates from 'A'isha that the Messenger of Allah (S) said: "The Mahdi is from my progeny. He will fight as per my Sunnah just as I fought as per the revelation".

Ibn Hajar in his *al-Sawai'q* (page 98) and the author of *Yanabi' al-Mawadda* (page 433) have narrated a tradition with almost the same contents.

The author of *Is'af al-Raghibin* (page 161) says: Muhyi al-Din al-'Arabi in *Futuh al-Makkiyah* says: The Mahdi will act by virtue of Divine inspiration since the Holy Prophet's canons will be revealed to Mahdi by inspiration just as this tradition indicates:

المهدي يقفو اثري لا يخطى

"The Mahdi will follow in my tracks and he will not err".

Thus the Holy Prophet (S) has informed us that the Mahdi is the follower of the Holy Prophet (S) and not an innovator. Besides he has informed us that the Mahdi is infallible in his judgment. Thus it is known that analogy (*qiyas*) is forbidden to him in the presence of explicit injunctions which Allah has bestowed on him through inspiration. In fact, some researchers reckon analogy to be forbidden for all the divine men since the Holy Prophet (S) can be witnessed for them. When the divine men doubt in any tradition or command they refer to the Holy Prophet and he in turn directly acquaints them with the truth. The Master of the affairs is needless of following any of the Imams other than the Holy Prophet.

## The Mahdi's Virtuous Way

The author of *'Iqd al-Durar* (chapter five) narrates from Abu 'Amr Uthman ibn Sa'id al-Muqri (from his book *Sunan*) who narrates from Hudhayfa bin al-Yaman that the Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"The inhabitants of the sky and the inhabitants of the earth, the birds, the beasts and the fishes will rejoice at the Mahdi's emergence".

In the seventh chapter of the same book, its author narrates from Abu Na'im's *Sifah al-Mahdi* and Imam Ahmad's *Musnad*, from Abu Sa'id al-Khudri that the Messenger of Allah (S) said: "I give you glad tidings about Mahdi.....the inhabitants of the earth and the heavens will be pleased with him".

In the third chapter of the same book, its author narrates from Na'im ibn Hammad's book *al-Fitan* that

Jabir ibn ‘Abd Allah said: A person approached Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (a.s.) and said: “Accept these five hundred dirhams as Zakat (alms) on my wealth”.

Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (a.s.) replied: “You may give those five hundred dirhams to your Muslim neighbours and to your Muslim brethren who are in distress”.

Thereafter Imam (a.s.) said: “When the Mahdi from our Ahl al-Bayt rises, he will distribute wealth equally and will treat the people with justice”.

In the same chapter of the same book, the author narrates from Abu ‘Amr al-Muqri (from his book *Sunan*) and Hafiz Na’im ibn Hammad’s *al-Fitan*, that Ka’b al-Ahbar said: I find the Mahdi’s name in the scrolls of the Prophets. His rule is neither unjust nor oppressive”.

Ibn Hajar in his *al-Sawa’iq* (page 98) narrates from al-Ruyani, al-Tabarani and others that the Messenger of Allah (S) said:

“The Mahdi is from my offspring.... the inhabitants of the heavens and the earth and the birds in the air are pleased with his caliphate..”.

On page 99 of the same book, he has narrated from Ahmad and al-Mawardi a tradition with similar content.

## [The Mahdi’s noble moral traits](#)

The author of *‘Iqd al-Durar* (chapter three) narrates from al-Harith ibn al-Mughira al-Nadhri: I told al-Husayn ibn ‘Ali: “How should we recognize Mahdi”?

He replied: “By his calmness and dignity”.

In the same book, he narrates from Hafiz Abu Muhammad al-Husayn ibn Mas’ud in *al-Mas’abih* that Ka’b al-Ahbar said: “The Mahdi will humble himself for Allah like an eagle with its two wings.”

In the eighth chapter of the same book, he narrates from Na’im ibn Hammad’s *al-Fitan* from Tawus as such: “Amongst the signs of the Mahdi is this that he would be strict with his officials, generous with wealth and kind to the indigent”.

In section three, chapter nine of the same book; he narrates from Na’im ibn Hammad’s *al-Fitan* that Abu Ru’bah said: “The Mahdi will show kindness to the poor and will caress them”.

Again in section three, chapter nine of the same book he narrates from al-Husayn ibn ‘Ali (a.s.): “When the Mahdi emerges, there will be nothing between him and the Arabs and Quraysh except the sword. For what reason do they make haste in Mahdi’s emergence? I swear by Allah that the Mahdi will not wear but coarse and rough clothes and his food will only be bread made of barley, and death will be hidden beneath his sword”.

## Religion will be completed with the Mahdi

The author of *'Iqd al-Durar* (chapter one) narrates from a group well-versed in traditions namely Abu al-Qasim al-Tabarani, Abu Na'im al-Isbahani, Abu 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Abi Hatim and Abu 'Abd Allah Na'im ibn Hammad and others that Amir al-Mu'minin 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) said: I asked the Holy Prophet: "O Messenger of Allah! Is the Mahdi from us or from other than us"?

He replied: "No, he will be from us. Allah will complete the religion through the Mahdi just as He commenced it through us".

In the seventh chapter of the afore-said book, he narrates from the previous narrators that 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) said: I asked the Holy Prophet:

"Is the Mahdi from us, progeny of Muhammad, or from other than us"? He replied: "No, he will be from us. Allah will complete the religion through the Mahdi just as he commenced it through us".

In the same chapter of the same book, its author narrates from Hafiz Abu Bakr al-Bayhaqi who narrates from Amir al-Mu'minin 'Ali ibn 'Ali Talib (a.s.) that the Messenger of Allah (S) said: "The Mahdi is from our progeny. Religion will be completed with him just as it commenced with us".

Ibn Hajar in his *al-Sawa'iq* (page 97) has narrated from Abu al-Qasim al-Tabarani that the Messenger of Allah (S) has said: "The Mahdi is from us. Religion will be completed with him just as it commenced with us".

The author of *Is'af al-Raghibin* (page 148) narrates from al-Tabarani that the Messenger of Allah (S) said: "The Mahdi is from our progeny. Religion will be completed with him just as it commenced with us."

## The Jews and the Christians

The author of *'Iqd al-Durar* (chapter seven) narrates from Na'im ibn Hammad (from the book *al-Fitan*) that Sulayman ibn 'Isa said:

"It has come down to me that it is at the hands of the Mahdi that the Ark of the Covenant will be taken out from the Lake Tiberias. The Ark will be carried and placed in front of Bayt al-Maqdis. When the Jews will witness it, they will surrender".

In the third chapter of the same book, the author says: In some of the traditions it is stated: The reason why he is called Mahdi is because he will show the way to the books of the Torah and he will extract them from the mountains of al-Sham. He will invite the Jews towards the books and a great number of Jews will submit themselves to the books of the Torah.

The author of *'Iqd al-Durar* says: – Abu 'Amr al-Mada'ini in his *Sunan* has said: "The reason why he has been called the Mahdi is because he will direct the way to the mountains of al-Sham and extract the books of the Torah from it. He will argue with the Jews by means of Torah and a congregation of Jews

will surrender to him”.

The author *Is'af al-Raghibin* (page 153) says:

“The Mahdi will extract the Ark of the Covenant and the books of Torah from the cave of Antioch and mountain of al-Sham respectively. He will argue with the Jews by means of Torah and a large number of the Jews will surrender to him”.

The author of *Yanabi' al-Mawadda* narrates (on page 476) from the author of *Mishkat al-Masabih* who narrates from Abu Hurayra that the Messenger of Allah (S) said:

“By Allah, 'Isa ibn Maryam will descend and will judge with justice. He will destroy the cross and kill the pig. He will nullify the *jizya* (poll tax), set free the young camels and will not ride upon them. He will eradicate enmity and will destroy grudge, hatred and jealousy”.

The author says: That he will nullify the *jizya* perhaps refers to this point that all the people at that time would be following the religion of Islam, just as destruction of the cross too is a metaphoric remark in this regard. Eradication of enmity, grudge, hatred and jealousy too may mean that these will be obviated between the Jews and Christians by the blessings of 'Isa ibn Maryam's descent.

## Manifestation of the religion of Islam

The author of *'Iqd al-Durar* (chapter two) narrates from Abu al-Hasan Rib'i al-Maliki who narrates from Hudhayfa ibn al-Yaman that the Messenger of Allah (S) while speaking of the Mahdi, his agnomen and place of allegiance says:

“Allah will restore the religion by means of the Mahdi and will produce victories and triumphs for him. Then there will be none left on the face of the earth except for those who say: There is no god except Allah (*la ilaha illa'llah*)...”

The author of *Yanabi' al-Mawadda* narrates (on page 476) from Shaykh Muhyi al-Din al-'Arabi from his book *al-Futuh al-Makkiyah* (chapter 366) in a discussion on the Mahdi and his ministers:

“The Mahdi will emerge when religion would be on the decline. The one who would not accept will be killed and the one who would engage in debate with him will be defeated. He will so reveal the realities of religion that had the Holy Prophet (S) been alive, he too would have judged in the same manner. He will eradicate the (false) religions from the face of the earth. Then, except for the pure religion, no other religion would remain over the earth”.

## The Mahdi's reforms

The author of *Yanabi' al-Mawadda* narrates (on page 486) from the book *al-Manaqib* which narrates

from ‘Ali ibn Musa al-Ridha who narrates from his forefathers, from the Messenger of Allah (S) who, while mentioning the virtues of his household and his Mi’raj (ascension to heaven) said:

‘I asked: “My Lord, who are my legatees (*awṭiyya*)”? I heard a call saying: “O Muhammad, your legatees are those whose names have been written on the enclosure of My throne.”

I looked and saw twelve lights, on each light was a green cover with the name of one of my legatees written on it, the first of them being ‘Ali and the last of them the Mahdi.

I asked: “My Lord, are they the legatees after me”?

I heard a call saying: “These are My friends, chosen ones and proofs upon My creatures after you. They are your legatees. I swear by My Glory and Majesty that I will cleanse the earth from its tyranny by the hands of the last of them who is the Mahdi. I will make him conquer the East and West. I will make the winds subservient to him, and will make the clouds submissive to him. I will grant him power through some means and will help him with My troops. I will assist him through My angels until he gains power over My government and gathers the people towards My *tawhid* (monotheism). Thereafter, I will perpetuate his rule and I will make the days follow one another between my friends until the Day of Judgment”.

Again, the author of *Yanabi’ al-Mawadda* narrates (on page 486) from Abu al-Mu’ayyad Muwaffaq ibn Ahmad al-Khawrazmi with his chain of transmission from Abu Sulayman, the shepherd of the Prophet (S) who said:

I heard the Holy Prophet (S) saying: ‘The night when I was made to ascend to the heavens...’ then he (S) mentioned a part of the tradition about his ascension (*mi’raj*) and its virtues and about the virtues of his Ahl al-Bayt and his twelve legatees, and said: ‘I heard a cry: “O Muhammad! Would you like to see your legatees”?’

I said: “Yes”. I was addressed: “Look towards the right of the Throne (*arsh*)”.

As soon as I cast my glance, I saw ‘Ali, Fatimah, al-Hasan, al-Husayn, ‘Ali ibn al-Husayn, Muhammad ibn ‘Ali, Ja’far ibn Muhammad, Musa ibn Ja’far, ‘Ali ibn Musa, Muhammad ibn ‘Ali, ‘Ali ibn Muhammad, al-Hasan ibn ‘Ali and Muhammad al-Mahdi ibn al-Hasan who appeared amongst them like a brilliant star.

Later, I was addressed: “O Muhammad! They are My Proofs upon My servants. They are your legatees and the Mahdi who is the avenger of your progeny is amongst them. I swear by My Glory and Majesty that the Mahdi will take revenge from My enemies and will assist My friends”.

The author of *Iqd al-Durar* (section one, chapter four) narrates from Abu Na’im’s *Sifah al-Mahdi* from Hudhayfa ibn al-Yaman that the Messenger of Allah (S) said:

“Woe to this nation because of its oppressive rulers. How they kill the believers and create fear in them

leaving aside those who obey them. A God-fearing believer will be conciliatory to them in speech, but will flee from them in his heart. Whenever Allah wills to restore the might of Islam, He will destroy the oppressors. He is Powerful over what He wills in setting right a nation after it has gone corrupt”.

Thereafter the Holy Prophet (S) said: ‘O Hudhayfa! If there remains not more than a day from the life of this world, then Allah will prolong that day to such an extent that a man from my progeny will appear and rule. He will conduct important affairs and will manifest the religion of Islam. Allah does not break His Promise and He is quick in reckoning”.

In section three, chapter nine of the afore-said book, its author narrates that Amir al-Mu’minin ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib while mentioning the Mahdi and his reforms said:

“There is no innovation but that the Mahdi will uproot it and there is no Sunnah (practice) but that he will enliven it”.

In the seventh chapter of the same book, he narrates from a congregation of traditionists namely Abu Na’im al-Isbahani, Abu al-Qasim al-Tabarani, Abu ‘Abd al-Rahman ibn Abi Hatim, and Abu ‘Abd Allah Na’im ibn Hammad who narrate from ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib that the Messenger of Allah (S) while mentioning that the Mahdi is from the progeny of Muhammad and Allah will complete the religion through him, said:

“Through him people will be delivered from dissension, just as they found deliverance from polytheism through us. Through him, Allah will reconcile their hearts after the enmity of dissension just as He reconciled their hearts through us after enmity of unbelief”.

In section three, chapter nine of the same book, he narrates from ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Aṣa as such: I asked Imam Muhammad al-Baqir: “When Mahdi emerges what course will he take”?

He replied: “He will destroy what was before him (of the heresies), just as the Holy Prophet (S) did, and he will recommence Islam in a new and fresh manner”.

In the same section and the same chapter of the afore-said book, the author narrates from ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib:

“There is no innovation but that the Mahdi will eradicate it, and there is no Sunnah (practice) but that he will establish it...”

In the third chapter of the afore-mentioned book, he narrates from Abu Bakr al-Bayhaqi’s *al-Ba’th wa al-Nushur*, Ahmad ibn Hanbal’s *Musnad* and Abu Na’im’s *Sifah al-Mahdi*, who all narrate from Abu Sa’id al-Khudri that the Messenger of Allah (S) said:

“I give you glad tidings about the Mahdi. He will emerge amongst my nation at the time when they will be in discord and convulsion. Then, he will fill the earth with equity and justice just as it was fraught with tyranny and oppression... The Mahdi will fill the hearts of Muhammad’s nation with riches and make them free from want. His justice would embrace all of them...”

In the seventh chapter of the afore-mentioned book, he narrates from Amir al-Mu'minin 'Ali (a.s.): "The Mahdi will dispatch his chiefs to various cities for establishing justice amongst the people. The wolves and sheep shall graze together. The children will play with the snakes and scorpions without being harmed the least. Evil will vanish and goodness will remain. People will plant 1 *madd* (about 750 grams) and will harvest 700 *madd* (about 525 kilograms), as Allah, the Exalted said:

﴿ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَنْبَتَتْ سَبْعَ سَنَابِلٍ فِي كُلِّ سُنْبُلَةٍ مِائَةٌ حَبَّةٌ ﴾ وَاللَّهُ يُضَاعِفُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ

***“..as the parable of a grain growing seven ears (with) a hundred grains in every ear; and Allah multiplies for whom He pleases (2:261)***

“Adultery, wine-drinking and usury will be uprooted. People will devote themselves to worship, divine laws, religion and congregational prayers. The life of man will lengthen, properties held in trust would be returned back, trees will bear fruits, blessings will multiply, the wicked will be perish, the virtuous ones will remain and those having a grudge against the Ahl al-Bayt will cease to exist”.

In the third chapter of the afore-said book, the author narrates from Na'im ibn Hammad's *al-Fitan* from Ja'far ibn Yasir al-Shami, that during the Mahdi's era, restitution of wrongs would reach such an extent that if something belonging to someone is hidden under a person's tooth, he would remove it and give it back to its owners.

## **His conquests and the extent of his rule**

The author of *Iqad al-Durar* (chapter three) narrates from Abu al-Hasan al-Maliki who narrates from Hudhayfa ibn al-Yaman that the Messenger of Allah (S) said:

“If there remains not more than a day from the life of this world, Allah will raise a man from my progeny whose name will be the same as my name and his character will be the same as my character. Allah will revive the religion through him and will establish victories for him. None will remain on the face of the earth but those who say:

There is no god but Allah ( لا إله إلا الله ).”

In the first chapter of the afore-said book, its author narrates from Abu 'Abd Allah ibn al-Jawzi in his *Tarikh* who narrates from 'Abd Allah ibn 'Abbas that the Messenger of Allah (S) said:

“Four persons ruled over the entire earth – two of them from the believers and two from the unbelievers. The two believers were Dhu'l Qarnayn and Sulayman (a.s.) and the two disbelievers were Bakht al-Nasr and Nimrod. Soon, a man from my Ahl al-bayt will become the owner of the entire earth”.

The author of *Is'af al-Raghibin* (on page 150) says: It has come down in traditions that the Mahdi will become the owner of the east and the west.

The author of *Yanabi' al-Mawadda* narrates (on page 447) from the book *Fara'id al-Simtayn* from Sa'id ibn Jubayr who narrates from Ibn 'Abbas that the Messenger of Allah (S) said:

“There will be twelve Caliphs and successors after me who will be the Proofs of Allah upon His creatures. The first of them is 'Ali and the last of them is my son, al-Mahdi. Then the Spirit of Allah, 'Isa ibn Maryam will descend and will pray behind the Mahdi. The earth will be illumined by the light of its Lord and the Mahdi's rule will extend to the east and the west”.

On the same page of the same book, he narrates from the book *Fara'id al-Simtayn* which narrates from Abu Umamah al-Bahili that the Holy Prophet (S) said:

“The Mahdi will extract the treasures and will conquer the cities of the polytheists and infidels”.

The author of *Yanabi' al-Mawadda* narrates (on page 487) from the book *Fara'id al-Simtayn* which narrates from Sa'id ibn Jubayr who narrates from Ibn 'Abbas that the Messenger of Allah (S) said:

“If not more than a day remains from the life of this world, Allah will prolong that day until the Mahdi who is from my offspring will emerge... The earth will be illumined by the light of its Lord, and his rule will extend to the east and the west”.

## **Duration of the Mahdi's caliphate and rule**

Diverse traditions exist on the period of the Mahdi's caliphate and rule and the duration of his life especially those traditions which have come down from our Sunni brethren.

Abu Dawud has narrated that the Mahdi shall rule for a period of seven years. Al-Tirmidhi has narrated that the Mahdi shall rule for a period of five, seven or nine years. Ibn Majah too has narrated the same. Al-Hakim has narrated in *Is'af al-Raghibin* that the Mahdi shall rule for seven or nine years. However Ibn Hajar has mentioned only seven years (and not nine) for the Mahdi's rule.

It has been narrated from al-Tabarani and al-Bazzaz that the Mahdi shall live for seven, eight or a maximum nine years. It is narrated from Mawardi and Ahmad that he shall live for five, seven, eight or nine years and after him there will be no goodness left. Some of the traditions mention the Mahdi's rule to extend for twenty years just as the author of *Iqd al-Durar* has narrated from Abu Na'im and al-Tabarani. Moreover the author of *Iqd al-Durar* has narrated from Na'im ibn Hammad that the Mahdi would survive for forty years. However, traditions which mention the Mahdi's life to last for seven years are more.

Some traditions mention that he shall rule for seven years where each year would be equal to twenty years of our reckoning. That is to say, in each year, Mahdi will conduct the reformatory tasks and Islamic teachings for a period of twenty years. Some traditions mention that he would rule for ten years. The sayings of 'Ulama' (learned scholars) in this regard are diverse. Some have said: Doubt has arisen from the narrator and the proof of this view is the statement of al-Tirmidhi who says: “It is due to the

narrator's doubt.”

The author of *Is'af al-Raghibin* (page 155) says: Most of the traditions mention the Mahdi's rule to last for seven years and with regards to seven to nine years it is doubtful.

One tradition mentions his rule to last for six years. Ibn Hajar says: The matter on which traditions are in agreement with each other is this that the Mahdi will undoubtedly rule for seven years. He has also narrated from Abu al-Husayn al-ʿAjiri that abundant and authentic traditions indicate that the Mahdi will rule for seven years.

The author says: Abu al-Hasan al-ʿAjiri's saying is more apparent and well-known. In this saying, there exists a great virtue for Mahdi and it is this that within this short period, he will rise for the religions and worldly reforms just as his forefather, the Holy Prophet (S) rose for a period of eight years i.e. from the second year of Hijrah.

The author of *Is'af al-Raghibin* (page 156) says: One tradition mentions the period of the Mahdi's rule to be more than what was mentioned. Another tradition states that the Mahdi would rule for forty years. Another tradition mentions twenty-one years and yet another tradition mentions fourteen years.

Ibn Hajar al-ʿAsqalani in *ʿAl-ʿimṭ al-Mahdi al-Muntazar* says: Traditions mentioning the seven-year period of the Mahdi's rule are more in number and more well-known. Assuming the correctness of all the traditions, we can conclude from all of them as such: Traditions which mention forty years refer to the period of his rule. Traditions which mention seven, eight or nine years refer to the last degree of manifestation of his rule and power. Moreover, traditions, which mention twenty or fourteen years, refer to the average limit of the rule.

The author says: The reason for the differences in traditions may be that the reality of this matter and the duration for which the Mahdi will rule should not be known, just as the time of his emergence is concealed and unknown, in order that one's attention is drawn towards all sides and he longs for the Mahdi's victory and long stay till the maximum period of time, although the probability of the seven-year period is stronger.

<sup>1</sup>. A *ṭi'yah* ode is one which ends with the letter *ṭ*.