

Shi'a Beliefs Concerning The "Lord Of The Age"

The Shi'ites of the Ithna Asheri Ja'farite school hold the belief that the 12th Imam, whose name was the same as that of the Prophet (S), but who was known as Mahdi, was a descendant of Ali (a) and ninth in direct line from Imam Husayn (a), "Lord of Martyrs". He was born on the 15th Sha'ban, 255 A.H., from the union of Hassan ibn Ali Al-Askari (a), the 11th Imam, and Nargis Khatun.

Upon the death of his father he became Imam. By Divine Order, he went into "Minor Occultation" (*Ghaybat al-Sughra*). At that time, he was completely hidden from public view and appeared only to his deputies (*navvab*), who acted as intermediaries between the Imam and the Shi'ite community, and through whom he ruled. The "Minor Occultation" lasted until 329 A.H. when the Imam was 74 years of age and the special line of deputation had come to an end.

Thus began the second period of absence or the "Major Occultation" (*Ghaybat al-Kubra*), which began in 329 A.H. and will continue until the day God permits his re-appearance before the "End of Time".

The exact date and time of the Imam's appearance is known to no one (including the Imam) save God. However, what is known is that he will rise up at a time when the world is completely overrun with tyranny and oppression, when all that is left of Islam is a name and when all that remains of the Holy Book is but a trace or a shadow. It will be a time when the love of money, lust and gluttony will be the religions of the people. The name of Islam will be uttered and its lessons taught in renovated and richly decorated mosques; yet the hearts of the people will be asleep!

The scholars of the day will be of a perverse and iniquitous nature. The people will be burdened with oppression, famine, internal disagreements and revolutions. An air of continual fear and anxiety will be prevalent in society. Most Muslims will have strayed from the True Path, and only a limited number will have retained their faith.

However, after his appearance, the Concealed and Existing Imam will fill the troubled world with justice and reform. He will provide an abundance of everyday necessities, sharing equally among the people according to their requirements. He will spread the God's pure religion across the earth. [1](#)

1. Pages 35–45 of the book , 'Adyan va Mahdaviat'

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