

Some Objections about the Mahdi

Some of the objections raised by them are mentioned below:

(a) Longevity

They object to the Mahdi being a contemporary of so many successive generations during the past ten centuries and continuing to live until he reappears on the scene. How is it possible for him, they ask, to live such a long life without being affected by the natural laws, according to which everyone has to pass through the stages of old age and senility and eventually has to die at a time far earlier than the supposed present age of the Mahdi. Such a long life is impossible from a factual point of view.

(b) Suspension of laws

They also inquire as to why Allah is so keen to suspend natural laws for the sake of this particular person and to prolong his life so extraordinarily. Is humanity unable to produce any other competent leader? Why is it not possible that the role of filling the world with justice and equity be left to a leader who may be born on the eve of the appointed day and grow like other people?

(c) Lack of training

They also say that if it is true that the Mahdi is the name of a particular person who is the son of the eleventh Imam of the Prophet's House, who was born in 255 A.H. and whose father died in 260 A.H. and who at the time of his father's death was a child of not more than five years of age, then obviously this age was not sufficient for his having been trained religiously and intellectually by his father. They ask as to how then has he been prepared for his great role.

(d) His continued existence

They also say that even if it is presumed that the existence of the Mahdi is theoretically possible, how can they believe in his actual existence in the absence of any scientific or religious proof? According to

them, a few traditions of unknown authenticity attributed to the holy Prophet cannot be considered to be enough for such a belief.

(e) Delay in appearance

They also say that, if the leader is already prepared for the performance of his great role, then what is the necessity of waiting for hundreds of years. Could not the upheavals and the tragedies so far witnessed by the world justify his appearance on the scene?

(f) His superhuman role

With reference to the Mahdi's role they ask as to how it is possible for an individual, howsoever great he may be, to play such a decisive role in the world, when it is known that no individual by himself can make history nor can he give it an entirely new turn. It is the prevailing circumstances which produce and direct historical changes. The greatness of an individual lies only in his coming to the fore-front, in the given circumstances, and in effecting a practical change by selecting one of the multiple solutions.

(g) His modus operandi

They also ask what practical methods will be employed by that individual to bring about the colossal change and to ensure the final victory of the forces of justice over the mighty and dominating forces of oppression and injustice, which now have the most destructive weapons, scientific potentialities and political, social and military power at their disposal.

These are the questions which are frequently asked in this connection and repeated in one form or another. They are not always motivated merely by intellectual curiosity. There are psychological reasons also which stimulate them. There is a strong general feeling that there is little chance of overthrowing the present world system, which is too powerful and invincible.

This feeling produces scepticism and gives rise to queries. It leads to defeatism and an inferiority complex. One begins to shudder at the very idea of a world-wide change which may eliminate injustice and historical contradictions and usher in a new system based on justice and equity. This mental frustration impels one to doubt and reject every possibility of such a change by giving one reason or another.

We now propose to take up the above-mentioned queries, one by one, and deal with them briefly.

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