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The Awaited Mahdi And Dissensions

All Islamic groups agree on a man who appears at the end of time to fill the world with justice and equity and establish the government of righteousness over all parts of the earth as a testimony to this verse:

"Before this We wrote in the Psalms, after the message (had been given to Moses): My servants, the righteous, shall inherit the earth" (Qur'n, 21:105),

and also this verse:

"And We wished to be gracious to those who were being oppressed in the land, to make them leaders (in faith) and to make them the heirs" (Qur'in, 28:5),

and also this verse:

"They would fain extinguish All h's light with their mouths, but All h will not allow but that His light should be perfected, even though the unbelievers may detest (it). It is He who has sent His Prophet with guidance and the religion of truth to proclaim it over all religions, even though the pagans may detest (it)" (Qur'n, 9:32–33).

The Chosen One (1) clarified that this awaited man is from among his own family; he (1) said, "The world will not come to an end before the Arabs are ruled by a man from among my own family whose name is similar to mine..., etc."1

Abs Sa'sd al-Khudri is quoted as having said that the Messenger of Allsh (s) said, "The Hour shall not come till the earth is filled with oppression, suppression and animosity, then will come out of my family one who will fill it with equity and justice after being filled with oppression and transgression."2

Ab® Hurayra is quoted as having cited the Messenger of All®h (®) as saying, "If only one day remained of the life in this world, All®h, the most Exalted One, the most Great, would have prolonged it till a man from among my Ahlul Bayt ('a) rules the Daylam Mountain and Constantinople."3

Umm Salamah is quoted as having cited the Messenger of Allsh (1) saying, "Al-Mahdi is from among

my offspring, from the offspring of Fitima ('a)." The Messenger of Allih (1) said that Jesus, peace be upon him, would appear at the end of time and would pray behind al-Mahdi. Abi Hurayra quotes the Messenger of Allih (1) as saying, "How will you be if the son of Maryam (Mary) descends among you and your own Imim is your king?!"4

Al-H®fidh, in *Sharh Sah®h al-Bukh®ri*, has said, "Narratives are consecutively reported that al-Mahdi is from this nation, and that Jesus son of Mary will descend and pray behind him." The Fiqh Assembly of the Muslim World League (Rabitat al-Aalam al-Islami) issued the following *fatwa* (verdict) dated May 31, 1976 about the Awaited Mahdi: "Al-Mahdi, peace be upon him, is Muhammad ibn Abdull®h al-Hasani al-Alawi al-Fatimi al-Mahdi, the Awaited One. The time of his appearance is at the end of time, and it [appearance] is one of the signs of the Great Hour.

He shall come out from the west, and he will receive the oath of allegiance in Hijaz, in Venerable Mecca, between the Rukn and Maqam [of Ibrahim], between the Honored Ka'ba and the fixed Black Stone. He will appear when there is a great deal of corruption, when disbelief spreads and when people oppress, and he will fill the earth with justice and equity just as it was filled with injustice and oppression.

He shall rule the entire world and everyone will be his subject, once through conviction and once through war. He shall rule the earth for seven years, and Jesus, peace be upon him, will descend after him and kill the Dajj®l [anti-Christ] or descends with him and helps him kill him at the Ludd Gate on the land of Palestine. And he is the last of the twelve righteous caliphs about whom the Prophet (⑤) spoke as recorded in the Sah®h books... The belief in the appearance of al-Mahdi is obligatory, and it is one of the tenets of the followers of Sunnah and Jam®'ah and is not denied except by one who is ignorant of the Sunnah and one who brings an innovation into the creed."6

Hence, Sunnis agree with the Shi ahs that Imim al-Mahdi ('atfs) is the last of the Twelve Caliphs about whom the Messenger of Allih (i) gave the glad tidings, and both parties agree on most other points relevant to the Awaited Imim. As regarding their differences in his regard, these are:

First: Most Sunnis believe Im al-Mahdi ('atfs) will be born at the end of time, while the She ahs believe he was born in 255 A.H. (869 A.D.) to his father Im al-Hasan al-Askari ('a), the twelfth among the Im from among Ahlul Bayt ('a), but Allah Almighty veiled him from the eyes for a wisdom which He decreed, and he remains alive and will come out at the end of the time.

Second: Sunnis, as in the above–quoted *fatwa*, believe al–Mahdi ('atfs) is a descendant of al–Hasan ('a) and the name of his father is Abdull®h based on a narrative recorded by them: "... His name shall be similar to mine, and the name of his father similar to my father's," whereas Sh®'ahs believe al–Mahdi ('atfs) descends from Im®m al–Husayn ('a) and was born to his father al–Hasan al–Askari. ('a).

The latest narrative they report as follows: "... His name shall be similar to mine, and his father's name similar to my son's", a reference to the Prophet's grandson al-Hasan ('a). Some Sunni writers tried to criticize and charge the She'ahs for their belief in the birth of the Awaited Imem and in his holding the

reigns of Im mate at the age of five.

This criticism is mostly rendered to fanaticism due to their own conviction. Anything contrary to their conviction or to what they have been accustomed to or have inherited, they immediately pass their judgment on it as "invalid" without looking into the arguments of others. Our response to this is:

First: There are many Sunni scholars who believe al-Mahdi ('atfs) is Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Askari ('a), and that he is still alive [and in occultation] till All®h permits him to come out. They, thus, are in agreement with what the Im®mite Twelver Sh®'ahs say. Among these scholars are:

- 1. Muhyi ad-Dın ibn al-'Arabi in *Fut*ıhı al-Makkiyya.
- 2. Sibt ibn al-Jawzi in his book *Tadhkirat al-Khawss*.
- 3. 'Abd al-Wahhtb al-Sha'rtni in his book Aqt'id al-Aktbir.
- 4. Ibn al-Khashsh\bar{\text{lb}} in his book Tawar\bar{\text{lh}} kh Maw\bar{\text{l}} d al-'Aimma w Wafiyy\bar{\text{l}}tihim.
- 5. Muhammad al-Bukhri al-Hanafi in his book *Fasl al-Khitrb*.
- 6. Ahmad ibn Ibr@h@m al-Bal@dhuri in his book Al-Had@th al-Mutasalsil.
- 7. Ibn al-Sabbegh al-Meliki in his book *Al-Fusel al-Muhimma*.
- 8. The man of knowledge Abd al-Rahmen in his book *Mir'et al-Asrer*.
- 9. Kamı ad-Den ibn Talhah in his book Matelib al-Su'el fe Maneqib al-Rasel.
- 10. Al-Qand vi al-Hanafi in his book Yan b vi al-Mawadda.

And there are others, too.7

Second: There is no evidence from the Shar®'ah proving the opposite. The occultation of the Awaited Im®m has many similar miracles about which the Holy Qur'®n informs us. Noah, peace be upon him, remained in his people for 950 years calling them to the way of All®h:

"... and he stayed among them a thousand years less fifty" (Qur'n, 29:14).

He, of course, lived longer than that. The Fellows of the Cave remained asleep for 309 years. All®h Almighty raised Jesus, peace be on him, to Him, saved him from being killed and will send him back to this world at the end of time. Al-Khidir, too, peace be upon him, remains alive veiled from our eyes.

As regrading the tender age of al-Mahdi ('atfs) when he received the reigns of Imsmate following the death of his father, al-Hasan al-Askari ('a), the eleventh in the series of the Imsms from among Ahlul Bayt ('a), there are similar and even greater miracles than that. Allsh made Jesus son of Mary, peace be

upon him, a prophet even as he was a suckling infant in the cradle:

"But she pointed to the babe. They said, 'How can we talk to one who is a child in the cradle?!' He said, 'I am, indeed, a servant of All®h: He has given me Revelation and made me a prophet..." (Qur'®n, 19:29–30).

And All®h granted authority to Yahya (John the Baptist) while still a child: "O Yahya! Take hold of the Book firmly.' And We granted him wisdom even as a youth" (Qur'®n, 19:12).

If anyone says that these miracles were for the prophets, we say that there is no evidence from the Shar ah pointing to miracles coming to a halt after the demise of the greatest Prophet (1). Miracles are not only for prophets. The fellows of the cave were not prophets.

Even the master of devils, Iblis, All®h extended his life-span till the Hour. On the other hand, those who object to the belief in the occultation of the Awaited Im®m, their objection is rendered to their ignorance of his status and the truth about him. Al-Mahdi ('atfs) will be the Im®m of Jesus, peace be upon him, whom All®h made a prophet even while a suckling babe in the cradle.

Thus, had the Sunnis come to know and realize that All®h Almighty is the One Who chose the Twelve Im®ms from among the Ahlul Bayt ('a) to be the successors of the Prophet (®) and the custodians of Muhammad's Message, their astonishment about the care with which All®h surrounded the seal of these Im®ms–till He brings him back and completes His victory for the clear righteousness and make his creed dominate all other creeds—will surely disappear and will have no excuse.

Most Sunnis are not surprised about what they have accepted through their own avenues, or from anything with which their sect agrees; rather, they accept it and take it for granted whether it be about these miracles mentioned in the Holy Qur's n and about which nobody of course can raise any doubt, but this consideration includes what they have taken from the narratives in the Sah books of both al-Bukh ri and Muslim.

As they narrate, for example, All®h descends to the lower earth at the end of the night; He uncovers His leg; He puts His foot in Hell on the day of Judgment (we seek refuge with All®h against such beliefs), or the possibility of the Prophet (⑤) forgetting or falling under the influence of wizardry or his forgetting the text of the Qur'®n, or Moses, peace be upon him, gouging the eyes of the Angel of Death, or the im®n of Ab® Bakr weighting greater than that of the entire nation..., or the vision of 'Umar piercing through thousands of miles in what is known as the incident of Sariya which is famous among the Sunnis, or their statement that "Had there been a prophet after me, he would have been 'Umar," or their saying that the angels are shy of 'Uthm®n..., in addition to many, many such tales which most of them accept as they are and despite the existence of many faults in them. As regarding what others believe, they reject it altogether, denying it without even looking into it or researching it.

I am sure had the belief in the occultation of the Awaited Im me been incorporated in their doctrine, the

Sunnis would not have surrounded it with any doubt, nor would they have questioned it! In this regard, I recall many interesting incidents which I encountered as I talked with some brothers. One of them, while denying the legitimacy of the *mut'a* marriage, which the She as legitimate, he did not know that Islam did not ban slavery, so he was attacking it because it [slavery] did not agree with his mentality.

And when I explained to him that all the Sunnis believe in its being *har* m, he immediately expressed his agreement with them. As for the *mut'a* marriage, and although he never saw anything supporting banning it in al-Bukh ri's *Sah* h, he insisted he was not convinced of it for no reason except that all the Sunnis believe it is *har* m!

What is more funny than this, I used to tell others during my defense of the guidance which I received and the following of the Straight Path of Ahlul Bayt ('a) that the ShE'ahs believe the Prophet (⑤) forgot some verses of the Qur'n or that a Jew was able to bewitch him or the story of the encounter between Moses and the angel of death, etc., they strongly rejected all of that and ridiculed such beliefs!

And When I explained to them that these are the same beliefs because of which the Sherahs criticize the Sunnis and which are fixed in the most "authentic" Sunni books of hadeth, such as al-Bukheri's Saheh, for example, some of them used to turn to defend them and to find a justification for them, insisting on upholding them, and this is nothing but what is called a blind sectarian fanaticism.

Nothing will avail in confronting it when one comes face-to-face with the truth because closing the eye about them does not mean their non-existence. The similitude of such people is, as you know, that of the ostrich.

Contrary to what some people imagine, the Awaited Im®m ('atfs), despite the belief of all Islamic sects of his appearance at the end of time, they will differ about him when he does appear, and this will be the subject of a great test for all the Muslims, even for all those who follow heavenly creeds, for the Jews and the Christians, too, believe in the coming of a Promised Savior.

Narratives have told the Muslims that they will be tested with regard to the Dajj®l who will fight al-Mahdi ('atfs), so much so that many of them will fight on the side of this Dajj®l whom some narratives describe as the one-eyed Dajj®l.

The truth, as I see it, is further than what some Sunnis believe, that is, that on the forehead of this Dajj®l, the word "K®fir" [unbeliever] will be written. In such a case, it is highly unlikely that any Muslim will be tested in his regard so long as he can read this word which tells the truth about him. As for the claim of some of them that only a believer will be able to read that word on the Dajj®l's forehead, this, too, is rejected because the result of the test will then have been determined even before seeing that Dajj®l.

There is no sense in such a case in the dissension to which the narratives have referred. The same applies to their claim that he will be one-eyed. For this reason, I used to wonder in the past about: How

can the Muslims not swear the oath of allegiance to al-Mahdi ('atfs) when he appears, or how can they even fight him despite their waiting for his appearance and their conviction that All®h will grant him victory??!!

But I, after conducting my research in the issue of the difference between the Sunnis and the Sh®'ahs, came to know that the strong tie this man enjoys according to the beliefs of the Sh®'ahs, especially their belief that he is their Twelve Im®m. This dissension became more clear than before. When the Awaited Im®m appears according to the descriptions of the Sh®'ahs, they will swear the oath of allegiance to him at the same time when the fanatics from among the Sunnis will immediately say that this Mahdi ('atfs) is Shi'i and not the one for whom we have been waiting who undoubtedly should be Sunni!

We can feel the effects of this same dissension in our contemporary life through the criticism and the charges launched by Sunni fanatics against the Islamic revolution in Iran and against the man who exploded it. In most cases, they winked at him for no reason whatsoever except his being a Sh®'ah!

They did so without their knowledge of those behind this dissension, those who fuel it from among our own people whom the enemies of this nation have employed for this contemptible purpose. This is so despite the fact that the Messenger of All®h (⑤) had already given us glad tidings about such a blessed renaissance and those behind it in one *had®th* recorded by al-Bukh®ri in his *Sah®h* where he relies on the authority of Ab® Hurayra who has said, "We were sitting with the Prophet (⑤) when the Jum'a [Friday] S®ra [Qur'®nic Chapter] was revealed:

'... As well as (to confer all these benefits upon) others who have not already joined them' (Qur'n, 62:3).

I said, 'Who are these people, O Messenger of All®h?' He did not answer till we asked him about them three times, and Salm®n al-F®risi was present among us. The Messenger of All®h (®) put his hand on Salm®n then said, 'Had [the means to acquire] im®n (conviction) been in Venus, it would have been acquired by men [or a man] from among these [Persians].'"8

All h Almighty has also referred in His Exalted Book to these folks when he said,

"Behold! You are those invited to spend in All®h's way, but some among you are stingy. Yet any who are stingy are so at the expense of their own souls. But All®h is free of all needs, and it is you who are needy. If you turn back (from the path), He will substitute another people in your place; then they will not be like you!" (Qur'®n, 47:38).

Ab® Hurayra has said that when the Messenger of All®h (®) recited this verse, he was asked, "O Messenger of All®h! Who are these people who, if we run away [from our religious obligations], they will replace us and will not be like us?" He (®) patted Salm®n's thigh then said, "This man and his people. Had the creed been in Venus, men from among the Persians would have acquired it."9

The Messenger of All®h (®) also drew attention to the group of people that will take upon itself to create

dissension among the Muslims in our time. Ibn 'Umar has said, "The Prophet (1) once said, 'O All h! Bless our Syria! O All h! Bless our Yemen!" They asked him, "What about our Najd?!" He (1) said, 'O All h! Bless our Syria! O All h! Bless our Yemen! They again asked him, 'O Messenger of All h (1)! What about our Najd?' I believe his third statement included the following: 'It is there that shall be earthquakes and dissensions, and it is from there that the horn of Satan shall come out." 10

I could not interpret the dissension referred to in this *had* th except with Wahhabism whose inventor, Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, was born in one of the villages of Najd called 'Uyayna. This group of people hid under the cover of Tawh d which they used as a forefront to hide the vile objectives behind charging other sects, especially the one that follow Ahlul Bayt ('a), with apostasy and *shirk*.

For example, they regard pleading to All®h through the medium of the prophets and righteous servants of His as a great innovation despite the presence of what contradicts this belief in al-Bukh®ri's Sah®h and in what caliph 'Umar had done.

Anas has said, "'Umar ibn al-Khatt®b, may All®h be pleased with him, used to seek help from al-Abb®s ibn Abd al-Muttalib in praying for rain. He said, 'Lord! We used to plead to You in the name of our Prophet, so you would grant us water, and we now plead to You in the name of the uncle of our Prophet, so do let rain water descend upon us.' And they would thus get rain water."11

As for the reason why Wahhabism has so much concentrated on this issue, it is because the followers of Ahlul Bayt ('a) were known more than others to uphold and to respect the sanctity of the person of the glorious Prophet (⑤) and the infallible Im⑥ms after him because they realize their great status with All⑥h Almighty. They are the ones without whom mankind would not have been guided to the Straight Path of All⑥h, and mankind would have kept their ignorance and misguidance.

Suffices for an answer to Wahhabism and to its inventor what is recorded by al-Bukh in his Sah hat the Messenger of All has said, "Some people will come out from the east and recite the Qur'en; it will not go beyond their throats. They abandon the creed as swiftly as an arrow abandons its bow, then they shall not return to it till the arrow returns to its bow." He was asked, "What is their mark?" He said, "Their mark is *tahleeq* (shaving)," or he said "al-tasbeed" (shaving the head) 12.

The meaning of "tasbeed" is the same as has been quoted in this sacred *had* th: "Ibn Abb came and his head was *musbad*," that is, shaven 13. This has become the "trade mark" of the Wahhabis as is known from their history.

Al-Mahdi ('atfs) will come to support the downtrodden on earth against all arrogant powers; so, what do you expect from his enemies? Will they not try to use the hypocrites from among the Muslims, the sultans' preachers and the imems of misguidance to fight this new comer? Can you not see how in our own days, how the ruler of Iraq, who earned a reputation for his sins and apostasy, was able to deceive millions of Muslims who went out shouting his name when he pretended to have imem n and to rely on Alleh and announce jihem n against the unbelievers and the polytheist people till many naive people

thought this Dajj®l became the Muslims' Im®m in truth?!

This suffices to point to what the conditions of the Muslims can be once they are exposed to greater and harder events. The Chosen One (1) explained what the Muslims should do in order to guarantee their salvation from drowning in the swamp of these dissensions after his departure from this world: by upholding His Book and [at the same time] by following the Pure 'Itra from among his Ahlul Bayt ('a) as we explained in the first Chapter.

Hudhayfah ibn al-Yam®n has said, "People used to ask the Messenger of All®h (®) about goodness, and I used to ask him above evil, fearing it might involve me. I said, 'O Messenger of All®h! We used to be in j®hiliyya and in evil, then All®h brought us all this goodness. Will there be evil after this goodness?' He (®) said, 'Yes.' I said, 'And will there be after that evil goodness?'

He (1) said, 'Yes, and it will have smudge in it.' I asked him (1), 'What is its smudge?' He (1) said, 'People guide others without themselves being rightly guided. What you will know about them you will detest.' I said, 'Will there be after such goodness evil?' He (1) said, 'Yes, callers at the gates of hell; whoever responds to their call to it they hurl him into it.' I said, 'O Messenger of All1h! Describe them for us.'

He (1) said, "They are from our own folks and they speak our [Arabic] tongue.' I said, 'What do you order me to do should I live to see that?' He (1) said, 'Uphold the Muslim masses and their *im* m.' I said, 'What if they have neither masses nor an *im* m?' He (1) said, 'Then stay aloof from all these groups even if you have to bite on a tree's root till death comes to your rescue and you are in such a condition.'"14

This *had* to clearly explains to us the obligation of upholding the Muslim masses and their *im* m, and that when there is confusion about the issue, and when one cannot know the truth, the Prophetic instruction directs us to remain silent. This *had* h also makes it clear that the callers stand at the gates of hell; whoever responds to their call, they hurl him into it, that they are not from among the non–Arabs but from among the Arabs, something which stresses what the previous *ah* dth have stated regarding the innovating group of people.

The fact is that this dissension in which we pass nowadays and against falling into its nets did the Messenger of All®h (®) warn us, we are obligated to take extreme caution by selecting the path which safely helps us reach the Sunnah of the Chosen One (®), especially when there are so many paths the number of which reaches seventy–three–according to some narratives–and each one of these paths (sects) claims it is on the right track. But the Messenger of All®h (®) explained to us that only one of them will receive salvation; others will not.

All has promised to support the saved group. Says the Prophet (1), "A group from among my nation shall remain on the path of righteousness; they are not harmed by those who differ from them, till All h's command comes." A Muslim nowadays has become perplexed, feeling strange about all what takes

place around him of this great fuss, of the grand dissension, seeing himself required to take a second look at his Islamic creed and likewise at many significant events in our Islamic history, something which is considered as a testimony to what the Messenger of All®h (®) has already said: "Islam started foreign and shall return foreign just as it started..."

Undoubtedly, anyone who takes a discerning look at our Islamic history and at our status quo, contemplating upon what Ahlul Bayt ('a) had to endure, especially the Im®ms from among them, at the calamities, trials and tribulations, at the persecution to which they were exposed, and if he thinks about the reason why the truth has become lost among the Sunnis..., he will realize the meaning of Islam returning foreign.

It seems such a return has already taken place especially during the last few years. A part of the darkness which the oppressors spread on following this path, across centuries, and in testimony to what the Chosen One, the Guide (1), has already articulated thus: "We are members of a Household for whom All®h has chosen the Hereafter over the world.

My Ahlul Bayt ('a) shall face after me discrimination, hardship and exile in the land till some people rise from there—and he pointed with his hand towards the east—people who carry black flags; they will ask for what is right, but they will not be given it, so they will fight and achieve victory; they will be given whatever they want, and they will not accept it till they pass it on to a man from among my Ahlul Bayt ('a) who will fill it with justice just as it was filled with oppression. Anyone who lives to see that taking place, he must go to them even if he has to crawl on ice." 15

Lord! Do hasten his honorable ease and make us among those who march behind his flag. And the last of our supplication is: Praise be to All®h, Lord of the Worlds, and greetings and salutations upon our master, Muhammad, and his good and pure Progeny.

- 1. Al-Tirmidhi, Sahīh, Vol. 9, p. 74. Abī Dīwīd, Vol. 2, p. 7. Ahmad, Musnad, Vol. 1, p. 376.
- 2. Mustadrak al-Sah®hayn, Vol. 4, p. 557. Ahmad, Musnad, Vol. 3, p. 36.
- 3. Ibn M®jah, Sah®h, in a chapter about ijtih®d.
- 4. Muslim, Saheh, Vol. 1, p. 373 in a chapter about Jesus son of Mary descending (Der al-Sha`ab edition).
- 5. Fath al-Biri, Vol. 5, p. 362.
- 6. Mu'marat al-Mut giren bid-Den [plot of those who trade in religion], p. 29.
- 7. I took these references from the book titled Li Akoona Ma`a al-Sīdiqīn (So I May be with the Truthful) by `allīma Dr. Muhammad al-Samīwi al-Tījīni, p. 196.
- 8. Al-Bukhri, Sahrh, Vol. 6, p. 390 in the book of tafser in a chapter about "... As well as (to confer all these benefits upon) others who have not already joined them".
- 9. Refer to the books of Tafser by Ibn Kather, al-Qurtubi, al-Tabari and Al-Durr al-Manther.
- 10. Al-Bukheri, Saheh, Vol. 9, p. 166 in the book of dissensions in a chapter about a dissension from the east.
- 11. Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 66 in the book of praying for rain.
- 12. Ibid., Vol. 9, p. 489 in the book of tawhed in a chapter about the recitation by a sinner and a hypocrite.
- 13. Shaykh Imem Muhammad ibn Abe Bakr al-Rezi, Mukhter al-Siheh, p. 282 (published by Der al-Tureth al-`Arabi for publication and distribution).
- 14. Al-Bukh Tri, Sah Th, Vol. 9, p. 159 in the book of dissensions in a chapter about "What if there is no Jam Ta?"

15. Ibn Mujah, Sunan, Vol. 2, ahuduth No. 4082 and 4087. Al-Tabari, Turukh.

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