

## The Longevity Of The Imam

By now, most of the main questions concerning the subject of Mahdism have been answered. Any ambiguities that may have existed have been cleared up. However, one of the most sensitive issues that has remained untackled is that of the life span of the Imam; the apparently impossible length, of which, provides a sitting target for Islam's opponents. Quite unexpectedly, they consider it to be pure superstition, completely inconsistent with human and scientific reasoning; as if anyone could live for twelve centuries?!!

Let us first offer a reply to the group of opponents who profess to possess faith or religion yet oppose the idea of Mahdism, be they Jews, Christians or Muslims. The answer is quite simple. Apart from the fact that they believe in God and His unquestionable and unlimited Power, and in addition, the occurrence of miracles, they also accept the very long life-span attributed to some of God's prophets (e.g. Noah at 950 years, Solomon at 712 years, Abdallah Kanane (Habl) at 600 years etc.) In this light, their protests seem extremely strange and without foundation.

As for non-believers. or those who do not wish to discuss the subject in the light of religious logic, a reply is equally simple. As can be witnessed today, modern science has by no means ruled out the possibility of man achieving very long life-spans (even of a 1000 years or more) and has set no limit as to what is the longest possible period of human existence. Thus, from scientific and biological viewpoint, such an idea is far from absurd.

Evidence can be seen in the fact that at this moment elaborate research is being conducted by medical scientists all over the world to discover methods for slowing down man's natural aging process and to eradicate senility and even death itself. It is worthy to note that initial results in this field have not been totally unsuccessful.

Investigations into other fields have also been carried out; for example, where the aim has been to create special scientific and biological conditions such as freezing at intensely cold temperatures, wherein simple organisms, and maybe even intricate ones (such as man itself) can be stored for long periods of time in the state of half-life (or suspended animation) ready for eventual restoration to life in a future time.

Thus, although we cannot offer any precise formula or palpable proof concerning the unusual length of life of the Concealed Imam, from the point of view of Divine Will and Power, along with the ever widening scope of human potential and the possibilities and progressions made by nature, it appears perfectly acceptable!

Although we may not have treated the subject of Mahdism in the same way as we would have a straightforward scientific experiment or any other definite historic event, and although the reader may not consider it to be infallible proof of an incident which has not even happened yet (and will not for some considerable time in the future), it is possible that he will now have a much more enlightened view of the subject.

The reader will be more aware of the gist of the matter. Not only will the possibility and inevitability of such an event have now become more obvious, but it will also be quite clear that this belief and expectation held for the Promised Mahdi is not only Shi'ite or Islamic, but religious and universal. As a necessity, it is essential; as a victory, inevitable.

For those of us who have received this news directly from the tongues of the most reliable and irreproachable sources, from the pick of the crop of human genius, our hopes are considerably higher. Upon these glad tidings, we pin our hopes, inspirations and pride. It is with the greatest enthusiasm that we look forward to the Promised Age. This will be an age when truth and justice will prevail over falsehood and iniquity, when tyranny and impurity will be replaced with justice and righteousness, and we know that our hopes are not in vain!

وَقُلْ جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَزَهَقَ الْبَاطِلُ ۗ إِنَّ الْبَاطِلَ كَانَ زَهُوقًا

***"And say, 'Truth has arrived, and Falsehood perished; for Falsehood is bound to perish'". (17:81)***

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