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Responsibility 68: Not To Specify a Time for the Advent Part 1

The believers must not set a specific time for the return of Imam al-Mahdi (ajtf) and this responsibility can be proven from many traditions. For example, Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) has said:

يَا مُفَضَّلُ! لاَ تُوَقِّتْ فَإِنَّ مَنْ وَقَّتَ لِمَهْدِيِّنَا وَقْتاً فَقَدْ شَارَكَ اللَّهَ فِي عِلْمِهِ وَ ادَّعى أَنَّهُ أَظْهَرَهُ (اللَّهُ تَعَالى) عَلى سِرِّهِ

"O'Mufa□□al! Do not specify a time (of advent of the Imam) since anyone who specifies a time for the return of our Mahdi (ajtf) has (claimed to) become a partner with Allah in His knowledge and has declared that He (Allah, the High) has given him knowledge of His secret."1

A companion once asked Imam Muhammad b. 'Ali al-Baqir (as):

هَلْ لِهَذَا الأَمْرِ وَقْتٌ؟ فَقَالَ: كَذِبَ الْوَقَّاتُونَ، كَذِبَ الْوَقَّاتُونَ، كَذِبَ الْوَقَّاتُونَ

"Is a time set for this event (the advent of al-Mahdi)?" The Imam (peace be upon him) replied: "Those who specify a time are liars those who specify a time are liars those who specify a time are liars!"2

The meaning of not being permitted to set a time for the advent of the Imam is that the date, year, month, week or even hour of his advent must not be specified or speculated about. However, we know that the time of his advent has been alluded to in the traditions through the various signs and events which will occur. Therefore, it is not a problem to explain his return in this manner.

Abu BaSir said to Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as):

جُعِلْتُ فِدَاكَ، مَتى خُرُوجُ الْقَائِمِ؟ فَقَالَ: يَا أَبَا مُحَمَّدٍ! إِنَّا أَهْلَ بَيْتٍ لاَ نُوَقِّتُ وَ قَدْ قَالَ مُحَمَّدٌ □ كَذَبَ الْوَقَّاتُونَ! يَا أَبَا مُحَمَّدٍ إِنَّ قُدَّامَ هَذَا الأَمْرِ خَمْسَ عَلاَمَاتٍ أُوْلاَهُنَّ النِّدَاءُ فِي شَهْرِ رَمَضَانَ وَ خُرُوجُ السُّفْيَانِيِّ وَ خُرُوجُ الْخُرسَانِيِّ وَ قَتْلُ

النَّفْسِ الزَّكِيَّةِ وَ خَسْفٌ بِالْبَيْدَاءِ

“’May I be your ransom! When will al-Qa`im (ajtf) make his advent?’ The Imam replied: “O’ Aba Muhammad! Surely we the Ahlul Bayt (as) do not specify a time for his advent as (the Prophet) Muhammad (Peace be upon him and his progeny) has said: “Those who specify a time for his advent are liars!”

O’ Aba Muhammad! Indeed before this command comes to pass, there are five signs (which must occur): The first is the call (from the skies) during the month of Ramadan the coming of Sufyani the coming of Khurasani, the killing of the (one with a) ‘pure soul’ and the sinking of the ground in Bayda` (into the Earth).”3

1. Biharul Anwar, vol. 53, pg. 3, sec. 28, no. 1
2. al-Ghaybah of Shaykh Tusi, pg. 426, sec. ‘Prohibition of Setting a Time for his Advent.’
3. al-Ghaybah of Nu’mani, pg. 289, no. 6

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