# When The Time Comes

***K. Azarmi***

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# Chapter One

## The Image of God

## Universal Law

The immense caravan of creation is moving ahead by a process of evolution, and all living beings of the world, plants, animals and human beings are constantly changing from more simple forms to forms that are more complex and complete. In nature, simple elements of earth convert into precious minerals, and food materials change into live and active cells in the body of living beings. Human society as a living being experiences the same natural process of evolution and change, and in line with the rest of nature is on a course to its predestined fulfilment and perfection.

There was a time in man’s history when the human being lacked the most essential and fundamental means for survival, when he lived in forests, caves, and holes in rocks, ate the meat of wild animals and the leaves and branches of plants just to keep his body and soul together. Today, man has brought many natural factors under his control, he lives in high-rise magnificent palaces, keeps surveillance over any movement deep in oceans and far off into the milky way of space, thus revealing the amazing secrets of nature through his keen scientific curiosity, and identifying the unknown secrets of the creation. Man has reached this stage today thanks to his gradual scientific and technological progress that has led to marvellous and astonishing developments and achievements that were never even thought of by his ancestors.

Yet in spite of this material development, man’s ethical and moral advancement has to be judged a failure, a regressive movement, even, returning him to some of the darkest moments of the past. In other words, human advancement during the current century has been focused mainly on material achievement, which is widely seen as having had a detrimental effect on the moral aspects of human life.

Man’s real and actual perfection is a Multi-Dimensional phenomenon connected to the whole of man’s life. Given that man’s happiness is the result of an equilibrium between his physical and mental forces and his different inclinations, any excessive satisfaction of a particular instinct and natural demand, be it his sexual instinct, his love for fame, his search for knowledge or whatever, will prevent the healthy growth of his other instincts and will disturb the balance of the sum of his forces. In the same manner, the real perfection of human society is a process that is the sum of, and balance between, the different scientific, moral, spiritual, economic and social factors that constitute the social life of man. Any extraordinary progress in a particular area of life dominates all other aspects of life, and this disruptive imbalance would prevent the human from being happy. Indeed, such an excessive progress would function as a malignant tumour weakening and finally killing him.

Many contemporary social problems are the direct result of such imbalance between the different faculties of man. The foundation of the contemporary place of industrial civilization was largely based on the emphasis of materialistic values at the expense of spiritual values. This contradicts the natural process of society, and goes against the fundamental goal of creation. No wonder, therefore, those ever increasing social problems have placed western society on the verge of a fatal collapse. At present, society in the west is seen to have lost its meaning and to be moving towards disintegration. At the same time, small countries that have been freed from the chains of communism and are wandering without knowing the path they should take and the source they should resort to. African countries and some East Asian countries are struggling in poverty, hunger and war.

These instances are sufficient to indicate man’s vague and ambiguous situation on this planet. Undoubtedly, the solution to these problems cannot be provided by technology, as it has been proved that technology itself contributes to the problem. Pollution, for example, and its visible and evident effects are the by products of modern technology.

It is an assumption that by solving the energy crisis, we would be able to solve many problems that are now facing this planet earth. Yet we are all entitled to wonder how our social problems can be solved in this way. After all, is it possible that such crucial social problems as insecurity, crime, violence, injustice, increasing cases of divorce, conflicts between rich and poor and so many others can be resolved so simply?

It is this line of thought that attracts man towards a fundamental and comprehensive solution for all societies of the world, to a solution that would bring all such problems under its wing that would put an end to anxiety, fear, insecurity, injustice, discrimination, poverty, hunger and all the other problems of contemporary society.

Extensive and misleading propaganda implies that the solution of the world’s problems is to hand, and yet chaotic and turbulent conditions persist to threaten and endanger human life. In spite of efforts exerted by international bodies and their long and tiring conferences, the list of the problems we continue to face seems endless. Conflicts and all the associated questions of peace, disarmament, harmonious coexistence, and weapons of mass destruction, non-proliferation, and non-interference in internal affairs of countries and such like all remain to be resolved. The dangers that result from man exploiting man and the economy of colonialism, the gap between the wealthy and the poor that is widening at an alarming rate, Crime statistics in community’s world-wide all show few signs of abating. Police forces and the other crime prevention bodies are generally short-handed and their members are increasingly being exposed to serious risks and considerable dangers. The absence of moral and ethical values, arising from the shaky foundation of faith and Religious belief has led to corruption and social problems that seem to deteriorate.

These and many other complex problems raise the question about the final state of man’s society. Will these conditions continue to decline? Will such a trend lead to the final destruction and annihilation of man? Or will this trend of affairs change in favour of man’s happiness? Will peace and security prevail in the life of man? This is what some eminent thinkers have to say in regard to this question.

### Unity among Nations

Albert Einstein, the great physicist and mathematician, in his book of relativity, has expressed the view that the nations of the world of all races and colours can and should live happily under one unifying flag in peace and harmony. He further emphasizes the concept of a single, united world government by saying that the differing governments of the world will eventually destroy humanity. Throughout his life, Einstein supported a unified world government and tried to use his position to open the eyes and ears of the world on this matter. He believed that the world’s population must choose one of the two ways: either they must decide for a single world government with a single control of nuclear energy, or struggle under various governments that will eventually destroy civilization.

Celebrated British philosopher Bertrand Russell, like Einstein, supported the establishment of a single world government, and believed that without it humanity will eventually be destroyed. He argued that there are now no technical or scientific obstacles in the way of the formation of a single world-wide government and that, because destruction from warfare is now much worse than in previous centuries, we must either accept a unified government or go back to pre-civilisation or even worse; accept the annihilation of the human race. Similarly, while trying to explain that the federal type of government points to a single world government, he wrote to the effect that the federal system is a unit of a larger federal system until we arrive at a world federal government which does not exist at the moment. He believed that in order to establish a single world government, the nations’ thoughts must be prepared, and nationalistic propaganda must be outlawed from schools. He also pointed to the causes of wars as the opposing interests of various governments, and then called once more for the necessity of establishing a single world government. He wrote that for as long as a single world government is not brought into existence, there will always be forces competing for domination, while increases in population lead to the danger of hunger, and since national power is the only way of preventing hunger, therefore among hungry nations groups are formed in opposition to those who have plenty. This was the main factor behind the communists in China. These facts prove that the scientific world without a unified world government will not last.

Although Russell’s conclusion can be seen to be rash, nevertheless what can be derived from the sum of his argument is that the formation of a single, united world government is both possible and desirable.

Of course, Russell was aware of the problems that stood in the way of his ideal. He warned that the establishment of a world government would require not only much goodwill, but also some conquering. He felt that the human race has not the capacity to accept the establishment of world government by pure good will, and supposed that in the early years at least the establishment and maintenance of such a government would require some use of force.

Professor Arnold Toynbee, the English Historian, was asked to deliver a speech to a New York peace conference. In his speech, Professor Toynbee pointed to the necessity of establishing a world government in order to protect peace and to save the human race. Thus it can be seen that, like Russell and so many others, he believed that the population of the world must choose between keeping the various small and powerful governments with their various policies and laws, whether right or wrong, or try to bring about the establishment of a single world government.

Such ideas are certainly not new. In fact, a world-government of peace and justice is one of the oldest dreams of man. What is new, perhaps, is that in our own time more than any other we have the means to achieve this. And so, as expressed by the Iranian scholar Sayyid Hasan Abtahi in his book “The absence of the peace maker”, a new, true dawn has arisen and now more than ever before we must expect the appearance of the final saviour and peace-maker promised to us in so many Religious scriptures.

The latest of these scriptures, the Holy Qur’an, firmly emphasises that Allah (s.w.t.) will eventually establish the law that he finds suitable for His creatures, in accordance to their own best interests. It is a law free of all kinds of polytheism, and it will establish peace and order and safety all over the world. Under its protection, the followers of truth and righteousness will worship Allah (s.w.t.) the Creator of the universe without any fear or threat.

Prophets have devoted their time and energy in propagating their thought and teachings, but have not been successful to introduce their school throughout the world. They have been confronted by many enemies at each period of time.

The Holy Qur’an maintains that the actions of the disbelievers against the school of righteousness are but temporary and their effects short-lived. In the end the barriers will collapse, and the teachings of the Prophets will be established throughout the world, and an evolution in thought and understanding will occur. In the course of time and via the path of bitter and sweet experiences, man’s logic and understanding will improve; and under the Blessings of Allah (s.w.t.) man will understand that his own policies and system of management are not capable of meeting his heart-felt needs.

### Prophecies of the Coming Messiah

Now let us consider who and what might solve and remove all such problems. A study of the laws of nature and creation including evolution reveals that the present condition of the world cannot remain unchanged. Sooner or later the world condition would undergo changes, so that the crimes and conflicts of today will change to peace and comfort and virtue tomorrow.

Like other phenomena, societies are a topic that has always attracted the attention of researchers and sociologists, all of whom have explained their opinions within the framework of their own thoughts and mental understanding. In the lines that follow we look at the final perfection of society from the viewpoint of Islam and that of other Religious texts.

### The Noble Holy Qur’an:

Of the divine sources, the Noble Holy Qur’an speaks very plainly about the Destiny of Societies:

Allah has promised those of ye who believe (believe in Allah and promise messiah) and do virtuous deeds that He Will (in time of his rising) deputise them in the earth as He deputised those before them; and that He will establish for them their Religion the one which He has chosen for them, and that He will substitute for them after their fear, security. They will worship Me and not associate aught with Me, If any do reject faith after this, they are rebellious and corrupt*[[1]](#footnote-1)*

and, Before this We wrote in the Psalms (al-zabur) after the Message, (‘Zaker’ given to Moses) ‘My servants’ the righteous, shall inherit the earth.*[[2]](#footnote-2)*

The ‘Psalms’ *(al-Zabur)* refers to the revelations sent down to David, bliss be upon him. The message means the Torah. The Bible’s Book of Psalms (David xxv, 13) says, ‘His Progeny shall inherit the earth’ while elsewhere it tells us, ‘The meek shall inherit the earth’ (xxxvii, 11). In the New Testament Jesus (Bliss be upon him) confirms the accuracy of this latter prophecy where he tells us (in Matt, v, 3; and xxxvii. 29), ‘The Righteous shall inherit the earth’. The same promises also occur in the Pentateuch (Exod. xxxii.13).

Buddhist sources also contain such references. In the *Book of Dadang,* the Buddha is recorded as saying,

When the whole world will be filled with oppression, cruelty, injustice, sins and the hypocrisy of those who are known as pious, trustworthy and wise, nothing will be left of Religion except the name. The king and leaders will become cruel and wrongful. The subordinates will cheat and disobey and everybody will help to destroy the order in the world. Then the right hand, of ‘Mamata’[[3]](#footnote-3) will appear and conquer the east and west of the world, He will lead mankind to the right path. He will be the only one who accepts the truth.

In Islam, the belief that one day justice will be administered by the Prophet’s progeny and heirs, who will appear and raise the banner of Allah (s.w.t.) and establish the rule of Allah (s.w.t.) on the earth, is fundamental and does not belong to the Shia alone, rather all the Islamic school of thought adhere to it.

Like the other major religions of the world, Muslims believe that one day their saviour will appear and his world-wide government will wipe out oppression and sin from the face of the earth and will establish fairness and justice, freedom and honour, security and tranquillity, purity and virtue and all of humanity’s righteous aspirations. What distinguishes the Shia ideology concerning the world messiah is the wealth of information in the sources (the Noble Qur’an and the Tradition) and the formulation, by the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and the eleven Imams who succeeded him, of a clear *Mahdist* doctrine long before the birth of the Mahdi (a.t.f.s.).

The Shia have many narrations and logical reasons, based on authentic Islamic sources and historical books recognised by the majority of non-Shia Scholars, which demonstrate that the last ambassador and the promised saviour of the world and of human beings is the Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) whose father is Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.). The Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) is believed to have been born on the 15th Sha’ban, in the year 255 A.H (864 A.D). He is presently alive and absent and will remain alive until he reappears and distributes the gifts of light and justice to the human race.

### The first Glad Tiding: The Zoroastrian Book of Zand:

The Book of Zand, the Religious book of the Zoroastrian Religion, contains a discussion of the collapse of the rule of the wicked and the inheritance of the earth by peace-loving people. ‘It states that the army of evil will fight constantly against the army of god, on the earth. Often the victory is borne by the evil ones, but not to the extent that the army of God is destroyed. At the time of difficulty the God of skies sends help. The war will last nine thousand years. The victory will be with the followers of God, and evil will finally be destroyed.

The forces of evil and its followers are only powerful on the earth; they have no place or power in the heavens. After the victory of the righteous, the human race will sit upon a throne of good fortune’.

### The Second Glad Tiding: The Book of Shakmony:

In the Book of Shakmony, and it’s Messenger who is one of the greatest apostles of India and is, according to his followers, a bearer of a divine book, he points to the Religious unity that will exist in the time of the world-liberating Holy Man, and says,

The kingdom and government of the world will ultimately end up with the son of the king of the creatures of the two worlds, Keshen.[[4]](#footnote-4) His noble progeny is known as ‘Gha’em’ (meaning one who rises up). He is the one who will rule on the mountains of the East and the West, and who will ride on the cloud and command the Angels who are his servants and the humans and the jinn, who are at his command. From Sudan under the equator till the land under the North Pole, he will conquer them all up to the distant land. The Religion of the god will become one and god’s Religion will become alive. His name is Gha’em; he is pious and virtuous.

### The Third Glad Tidings: The Book of Jamaseb:

More evidence in Hindu sources can be found in the book of Jamaseb. It also states that a man will appear ‘from the land of the Arabs, from the sons of Hashim’.[[5]](#footnote-5) He is described as having a large head, large stature and strong calves. He will rise with his army from the Religion of his ancestors and face towards Iran, bringing prosperity and filling the land with justice.

### The Fourth Glad Tiding: The Book of Deed:

The Hindu book of Deed prophesises that after the destruction of the world at the end of time, a king will come who is the leader of creatures, His name is Mansoor,[[6]](#footnote-6) The world will come under his dominion and he will bring mankind to his Religion. He will know who is pious and who is corrupt. Whatever he wishes from God He will get.

### The Fifth Glad Tiding: The Book of Bask:

In the Hindu divine book of ‘Bask’, it is stated that the world will come to an end with a just king who is the leader of Angels, jinn and human beings. Right and justice are with him. Whatever is hidden in the depths of the sea, high in the mountains or in the loftiness of the skies-He will know it. None will be more noble-born than him.

### The Sixth Glad Tiding The Book of Patikel:

In the great Hindu book known as Patikel, words ascribed to Bazum, give details about the prosperous government of Mahdi, and tell us that at the end of the last days of the old world the world will become new and alive. A new owner will appear from the children of the two leaders of the world – one from the Prophet of Islam and the other from his successor, Pashan.[[7]](#footnote-7) The name of this new leader will be Rahnama, or ‘The Guide’[[8]](#footnote-8)

He will become a just king and caliph of the ‘Ram’ (God). During his rule there will be many miracles. Anyone who denies the ‘Ghaiem’ and follows his father’s Religion will be red faced before Ram. His government will last for a long time. He will live long, and the world will end with him. From the shores of the surrounding seas and the islands of Serandib and the tomb of Adam; he will conquer from the mountain of Gharv to the north of the temple of Venus, He will destroy the idol houses of Sumnatra and Gengernot[[9]](#footnote-9)

On his order the idols will talk and fall. They will be broken and thrown into the great sea. He will break any idol found within.

### The Seventh Glad Tiding: The Book of Jamasb Nameh:

Jamasb in his book famous as the *Jamasb Nameh* narrates a prophecy from Zoroaster that concerns the Prophets and the government of Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) and the return to life of some individuals. The prophesy states that the Arab Prophet is the last of the Prophets and will appear from the mountains of Mecca, riding a camel, and his people are camel riders. He eats with his servants and sits like them and no shadow is with him. From behind he will see as in front. His Religion is the highest of Religions. His book will cancel all previous books. His government will destroy the magicians, the tricksters, and the fire temples. The days of the kings of Persia will come to an end. From the son of the Prophet’s daughter, whose name is ‘Sun of the world,’ the king of time will appear. He will take the place of the Prophet of Islam by the order of God. His government will be situated in the middle of the world and will last until the end of world. After his government the world will end. The sky will be coupled, the earth will sink, the mountains will be removed, and the great Satan who is the disobedient servant of God and His enemy will be captured. Many honourable people and Prophets will come back to life as well as some of the disbelievers and the worst of mankind.

### The Eighth Glad Tiding: The Book of Dadang:

As mentioned before, the Hindu book ‘Dadang’ prophesises that at a time when oppression, cruelty and immorality are rampant amongst the people of the world, and dishonesty and corruption is rife amongst the rulers and trustees of the world, these ills will all be removed from the world by the successor of Mameta.[[10]](#footnote-10) He will rule over the east and the west. He will visit many places and destroy the corrupt, and will guide many people. That will be the time when the Turks are leaders of the Muslims. And they will accept the truth that they have not accepted from anyone.

### The Ninth Glad Tiding: The Book of Washan Jook:

In the book of Washan Jook states that at the end of time the world will be ruled by one who loves God and is a special servant of God. His name is blessed and will bring mankind back to life in accordance to the rule of *Jatan* (God). All mischief-makers and those who brought falsehoods against God and His Prophets will be resurrected and burn. He will revive the world and punish the evil. His government will last one *Kror* (about four thousand years).

### The Tenth Glad Tiding: The Book of Gaats:

The Holy book of *Gaats,* which is part of the Avesta of Zoroastrianism states that there will come a time when all the sinners will be punished. ‘When the time for punishing the sinners comes, O Mazda, thy dominion will be established by Bahman.[[11]](#footnote-11) Those who have given legitimacy to the hands of the false will be resurrected and smashed.

### The Eleventh Glad Tiding: The Book of Gaats:

Also in the Book of Gaats, under the title ‘The Dawning of the Day’, we find, ‘O Mazda, when the dawning of the day comes, the Universe will be filled with true Religion. Who are those who give relief and teach the pure knowledge? Those whom Bahman assists for conveying awareness I have chosen you.’

### The Twelfth Glad Tiding: The Book of Psalms (Zabur):

In the Book of David “Zobur”, chapter 37, we find these forty verses about the rule of God.

1 Let not the wicked upset you or emulate those who do wrong.

2. Because like grass they will be cut down and like a green plant will fade.

3. Trust in God; and do good whilst you are in the land and grow with truth.

4. Depend upon the Lord, and he will grant you your heart’s desire,

5. Deliver yourself unto him trust in him, He will pave the way.

6. He will bring out the truth like a light and the justice of your cause like the sun at noon.

7. Be patient with God wait for Him; do not be upset by those who think of forbidden thoughts.

8. Control your anger, do not get upset, strive not to out do in evil doing.

9. For evildoers will be destroyed, but those who rely on the Lord shall inherit the land.

10. A little while, and the wicked will be no more; look well, whatever you inquire of their words, and it will be invisible.

11. But the humble shall inherit the land and enjoy untold prosperity.

12. The wicked, mutter against the righteous man, and grind their teeth at the sight of him.

13. The Lord smiles, for he sees that their time is coming.

14. The wicked have drawn their swords and strung their bows to suppress the needy, and to slaughter righteous souls.

15 Their swords shall come down on their hearts and their bows shall be broken.

16 A few pious are much better than many wicked.

17 For the strong arms of the wicked shall be broken and the Lord is the refuge for the pious.

18 The Lord knows the days of the pious one’s life and his inheritance lasts forever.

19 In the time of calamity they will not be distressed and at time of famine they will be full.

20 But the wicked will perish.

21 The wicked borrows and does not give back but the righteous is a generous giver.

22 All whom the Lord has blessed shall inherit the land, but the cursed ones will be cut off.

23 It is the Lord who arranges a good man’s steps and his way is joyful.

24 Though he may fall, he will not stay weak, for the Lord grasps him by the hand.

25 I was young and became old, and have never seen the righteous and his offspring asking for bread.

26 All day he lends generously, and his progeny are blessed.

27 Turn from evil and do well and live at peace for ever.

28 For the lord love justice and will not forsake his loyal servants; the lawless are banished forever.

29 The righteous shall inherit the land and shall reside there forever.

30 The righteous man utters words of wisdom and justice is always on his lips.

31 The law of God is in his heart and his action will not be shaky.

32 The wicked are worried about the righteous man, and seek to take his life.

33 But the Lord will not leave him in their power, nor let him be condemned before his judges.

34 Seek refuge in God; keep in his path so that he will lift you by inviting you to inherit the land-when the wicked are destroyed, you shall be there to see...

38 But the rebels will be helpless and will be wiped out.

39 Deliverance for the righteous comes from the Lord and their refuge in time of trouble.

40 The Lord will help them and give them victory; He will save them as they seek shelter and rely on him.

### The Thirteenth Glad Tiding: The Book of Daniel:12

1. At that time the great Michael (Michaelian) leader who stands on behalf of the sons of your tribe, your tribe and whoever is written in the book will be saved.

2. Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth will awaken - some for eternal life, and some for eternal abhorrence.

3. The wise man shall shine like the bright youth of heaven, and those who have guided the people in the true path shall be like stars, shining forever,

4. But you, ‘O Daniel, hide the words and seal the book till the accomplishment, when the knowledge will increase.

5. Then Daniel looked and saw two others standing, one on this bank of the river and the other on the opposite bank,

6. And I said to the one clothed in linen that was above the waters of river, how long will these wonders last?

7. And I heard the man clothed in linen above the waters lifted his left and right hand to the sky, and swore to the one who lives for ever, that it shall be for one time and all time and a half it will last. When the power of the Holy people ceases to be dispersed, all these incidents will accrue.

8. I heard but I did not understand, and I said, O Master how will these incidents occur?’

9. He said ‘O Daniel, go your way, for the words are kept hidden and sealed till the end of time.

10. Many shall purify themselves and be refined, making themselves shining white, but the wicked shall continue in wickedness and none of them understand, only the wise man shall understand.’[[12]](#footnote-12)

### The Fourteenth Glad Tiding: The Book of Isaiah:

We find these ten verses about the promised Mahdi (a.t.f.s.).

1. Then a sapling shall grow from the body of Jesus, and a branch shall spring from his roots.

2. Then the spirit of God, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, a spirit of counsel and power, a spirit of knowledge and the fear, which is from the Lord, shall rest upon him.

3. And made him wise on fearing God. He shall not judge by what he sees, nor decide by what he hears.

4. He shall judge the poor with justice and defend the humble in. the land with equity, his mouth shall be a rod to strike down the ruthless, and with a sword he shall slay the wicked.

5. Round his waist he shall wear the belt of justice, and good faith shall be with in him.

6. Then the wolf shall live with the sheep, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid. The wolf and young lion shall grow up together, and a little child shall lead them.

7. The cow and the bear shall be friends, and their young shall lie down together. The lion shall eat straw like cattle.

8. The infant shall play over the hole of the Cobra. The kids will stop taking milk and stretch his hand to the viper.

9. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my Holy Mountain, and the land filled with the knowledge of the lord, as the waters fill the sea.

10. That day will happen when the root of Jesus shall stand instead of the tribe’s flag. The nations shall search for it, and its resting place shall be glorious.

### The Fifteenth Glad Tiding: The Book of Isaiah:[[13]](#footnote-13)

16. He who prays for a Blessing on himself in land prays to the real God, and he who utters an oath in the land, makes an oath to the God of truth. His problems are forgotten and hidden from sight.

17. For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth. The former shall no more be remembered, nor shall they be called to mind.

18. Be joyful of what has been established, for I create Jerusalem to be a delight, and her people a joy.

19. I will take delight in Jerusalem and rejoice in my people, no sound of cries and moaning shall ever again be heard in its boundaries.

20 There shall be no young child or old man fail to live out his life, as a boy shall live hundred years before he dies, a hundred year old sinner shall be cursed.

21. They shall reside in the houses they built, and will eat the fruits of the trees they plant,

22. They shall not build, unless for residence, nor plant except for eating, as the days of my people are like a tree, and my chosen shall enjoy the fruit of their labour.

23. They shall not pursue in vain nor give birth in anxiety for no reason, for they are a blessed generation from the lord.

24. Before they call, I answer, and while they are speaking I am affable.

25. The wolf and the lamb shall graze together, and the lion shall eat straw like cattle, and they shall not hurt or destroy in all my Holy Mountain, says the Lord.

### The Sixteenth Glad Tiding: The Book of Zephaniah:[[14]](#footnote-14)

7. And I said, perhaps you fear me, and accept the punishment, so that their dwelling is not curtailed, but whatever punishment I gave them they were up betimes and went about their corrupted deeds.

8. Therefore the Lord says, wait for me for the day that I rise to plunder, for my aim is to gather all tribes and rally the nations, to pour out on them my indignation, all the heat of my anger. The whole earth shall be consumed by the fire of my fervour.

9. From all tribes I will bring back the pure ones that they may invoke in God’s name, and pray to Him in one heart.

### The Seventeenth Glad Tiding: The Book of Matthew:

31 When the son of man comes in his glory and all the Angels with him, he will sit in state on his throne.

32. With all the nations gathered before him he will separate them, as a shepherd separates the ewes from the goats.

33. And he will place the ewes on his right hand and the goats on his left.

34. Then the king will say to those on his right hand, come O Blessed ones by my father, and inherit the kingdom that has been ready for you since the world was made.

### The Eighteenth Glad Tiding: The Revelation of John:[[15]](#footnote-15)

26*.* To him who is victorious and perseveres in doing my will to the end, I will give him power over the nations,

27. Until he rules over them with an iron rod, smashing them to bits like potters pots, as I found this from my father

28. And will give him the morning star.

29. Hear, who have ears to hear, what the spirit says to churches.

### The Nineteenth Glad Tiding: The Book of Matthew:

23. Then if anyone says to you concerning the Messiah, ‘Here, now or, there he is,’ do not believe it.

24. Impostors will come claiming to be Christians or Prophets, and they will produce great signs and wonders that if it was possible they would mislead the chosen ones.

25. Now, I have forewarned you.

26. If they tell you ‘He is in the wilderness’, do not go out, or ‘he is in solitude1 do not believe it.

27. Like lightning from the East, flashing as far as the West, the appearance of the son of man will be the same.

28. Wherever there is a corpse, the vultures will gather,

29. Soon after the distress of those days, the sun will be darkened, the moon will not give her light, the stars will fall from the sky, and the celestial powers will be shaken. So then the sign of the son of man will appear in the sky. At the time all the tribes of earth will make lamentation, and they will see the son of man descending on the clouds of heaven with great power and glory.

31 He will send out his Angels, and with a loud voice they will gather his chosen from the four winds, from the farthest bounds of heaven on every side.

32. Learn a lesson from the fig tree: when its tender shoots appear and break into leaf, you know that summer is near.

33. When you see all these things you know the end is near, but it is behind the door.

34. Indeed I tell you, until all this comes to pass, this generation will not cross.

35. Heaven and earth will pass .away, but my words will never pass away.

36. But no one knows about the day and hour, not even the Angels in heaven, only the Father.

37. As things were in Noah’s days, so will they be when the son of man appears.

38. As in the days before the flood, they ate and drank and mingled, until the day that Noah entered the ark.

39. And they did not realise until the flood came and swept them all away. That is how it will be when the son of man appears.

40. Two people who work on a farm one will be taken and the other will give over.

41. Two women grinding at the mill, one will be taken and the other will give over.

42. Then be awake, for you do not know on what hour your lord will come.

### The Twentieth Glad Tiding: The Book of Luke[[16]](#footnote-16)

5. When some people were talking about the temple and the fine stones, he said,

6. The time will come when not one stone of them will be left upon another, except to fall down.

7. They asked him, ‘O Master, when will it all come about? What will be the signs when it is near?

8. He said, ‘Take care that you are not misled for many will come claiming my name and saying, ‘I am he, the day is near1. Do not follow them.

9. And when you hear of wars and corruption, do not panic, these things are necessary to happen at first, but their end is not in time.

10 Then he told them, nation makes war upon nation, kingdom upon kingdom will resist,

11. There will be great earthquakes, and famines and plagues in many places; in the sky terrors and great portents.

12. But before all this occurs, they will set upon you, persecute you, imprison you, and you will be hauled before kings and governors for your allegiance to me.

13. This will end with your testimony.

14. Then put this in your hearts, so that you do not think of preparing proof beforehand.

15. Because I will give you power of utterance and a wisdom which no opponent will be able to resist, nor to argue.

16. You will be betrayed by your parents and brothers, your relations and friends,

17. And all will hate you for your allegiance to me.

18. But not a hair of your head shall be lost.

19. Save yourselves with patience.

20. But when you see Jerusalem encircled by armies, then you know that its destruction has come.

21. Then those who are in Judea shall escape to the mountains, those who are in the city will leave, and those who are in the plain will not enter the town.

22. Because this is the time of revenge, until what written is to be fulfilled.

23. Alas for women who are with child, or have children at the breast in those days, for there will be great distress in the land and anger will fall upon this tribe.

24. They will fall by sword’s point, they will be carried captive into all nations, and Jerusalem will trample down by all nations, until their day has run its course.

25. In the sun, moon and stars, there will be signs, on earth there will be difficulty and perplexity for nations, due to the rage of the sea and its waves.

26. And people will faint with terror and anticipation for what is coming upon a quarter of the inhabitants, for the celestial power will be shaken,

27. And then they will see the son of man coming on a cloud with great power and glory.

28. When all this begins to happen, stand upright and hold your head high, because your liberation is near.

29. And then he told them a parable: look at the fig tree or any other tree,

30. When you see it blossom you know that summer is near.

31. Thus, when you see all this happening, know that the kingdom of God is near.

32. Verily I tell you this, until all this comes to pass, nation will not cross.

33. Heaven and earth will pass away; but my words will never pass away.

34. Then watch yourselves, do not let your heart be dulled by gluttony, drunkenness, and worldly thoughts so that day comes upon you suddenly.

35. For like a trap, that day will come on all inhabitants of the earth.

36. Therefore pray at all times be awake, so you can be saved from all these that come to pass, and stand in the presence of the son of man.

### Awaiting the Virtuous of Humanity

From these references it is clear that the belief in the Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) and the expectation of his appearance has occupied the thoughts of almost all Nations. The following list provides further evidence that it is not only Muslims who await the saviour of mankind, but other wait in anticipation.

1. Brahmans, from the old ages believed that at the end of time ‘Vishnoo’ will appear riding on a white horse with fiery sword in his hand. He will kill all opponents. The entire world will be become Brahman and will live in great happiness.

2. Although it is questionable whether King Arthur and his knights of the round table ever existed, yet some inhabitants of the British Isles believe in him and for several centuries have been waiting for King Arthur, who lives in Avalan, to appear and lead the people to conquer the world, and the world will be theirs.

3. The inhabitants of Serbia were awaiting the appearance of one ‘Marco Kralivich’.

4. The Slav race believed that from the east, one will appear who will unite all Slav tribes and give them supremacy in the world.

5. The German race believed that a conqueror will arise from their own kin, at the beginning of the 19th Century.

6. The ancient Iranians believed that ‘Garzaspeh’ their historical champion is alive and asleep in Kabul and one hundred thousand Angels guard over him until the day he will awake and rise up.

7. Another ancient Iranian belief is that ‘Kei Khosrow’ after putting the country in order and making the pillars of the country firm, delivered the rule to his son. He himself retired to the mountains until he will appear one day to rid the world from its Satan.

8. The Jews believe that at the end of the world ‘Mashaie’ will appear. This is the great Mahdi, the king of kings, but they believe he is from the line of Isaac (a.s.), not from the line of Ismail (a.s.).

9. The Christians also believe that Jesus the son of Mary is the saviour of mankind and will reappear and conquer the world. It is important to note that Muslims also believe in the return of Jesus (a.s.) to this world, and this is in our discussion in a later chapter.

### The Glad Tidings in Islam:

We have shown that all the nations of the world have some expectation that a great saviour will arise, by taking power he will cut the hands of corrupt, and he will bring peace and eradicate oppression from the world. These beliefs have been best illustrated in Islamic books. Through the two great schools of thought in Islam, Sunni and Shia, we will try to write the extracts of Narrations and verses of the Noble Holy Qur’an:

This is the Book; in it is Guidance sure without doubt for those who fear Allah, who believe in the unseen and steadfast in prayer and, spend out of what we have provided for them*[[17]](#footnote-17)*

Imam Sadiq (a.s.), recognised by the Shia as the sixth Imam, in his explanation of these verses, said, ‘Those’ means our Shia and ‘the unseen’ means Allah (s.w.t.)’s proof, the Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.).

Again,

Allah has promised those of ye ‘who believe (believe in Allah and promise messiah) and do virtuous deeds that He will (in time of his rising) depute them in the earth as He deputed those before them; and that He will establish for them their Religion the one which He has chosen for them, and that He will substitute for them after their fear security. They will worship Me and not associate aught with me. If any do reject faith after this, they are rebellious and corrupt.[[18]](#footnote-18)

Both the Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) and his father the Imam al-Baqir (a.s.) have said that this noble verse was sent down in connection with the Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.), and that by his hand he shall conquer lands and place Muslims instead of the unbelievers as leaders, and that through the Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) the Muslims’ fear of the disbelievers will be changed to hope and security.

Again,

And certainly We wrote in the Psalms, after the reminder, ‘Indeed the earth, My virtuous servants shall inherit it.[[19]](#footnote-19)

And:

It is He who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the Religion of truth, to proclaim it over all Religions, though the polytheists may detest.[[20]](#footnote-20)

It is related from Imam Sadiq (a.s.) that, This verse has not yet come to pass, but will be realised by his appearance.’ (The appearance of the Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.)). He further stated that there would not be a single polytheist or unbeliever left to deny his appearance, and that no idolater would remain except that he would be killed - even if he hide under a stone, the Almighty Allah will make it talk, and the stone will bear witness against the unbeliever and say, ‘Crack me and destroy this unbeliever.’

Similarly, we have it from the Imam Ali (a.s.) who said, ‘I swear by Allah (s.w.t.) in Whose hand is my life, that there will not remain a place at the time of His appearance, morning or night, where the proclamation that ‘there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is His Messenger’ will not be heard.’

Again, the fourth and fifth Imams (a.s.) have told us that, ‘The Allah (s.w.t.) of universe will place Islam all over the world at the time of the rising of the Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.).’

And on the verse,

...those who, if we settle them in the earth, establish the prayer and pay the zakat (charity) and do good and forbid wrong; and Allah’s is the fulfilment of affairs[[21]](#footnote-21)

Imam al-Baqir (a.s.) has said that this verse was sent down concerning The Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) and his companions by whom Allah (s.w.t.) will conquer the east and west of the earth and by whose hands He will establish Islam in the world over all previous religions, so that justice will reign and there will be no trace of oppression.

Similarly:

Do they seek for other than Allah’s Religion? -while all creatures in the heavens and earth have, willing or unwilling bowed to his will, and to Him shall they all be brought back.*[[22]](#footnote-22)*

In the book Mahdi (a.t.f.s.), Zahiri Najafi narrates from Refat bin Musa who said that he heard Imam Sadiq (a.s.) say about this Holy verse that when the Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) rises up, the truth of this verse will become apparent all over the world, for there would be no land or village or country from which the sound of ‘There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger’ is not heard.

And:

And there is none of the people of the book but must believe in him before his death; and on the Day of Resurrection, he will be a witness against them.[[23]](#footnote-23)

According to this verse all the people of the book must believe in Jesus (a.s.) ‘before his death’. Although the commentators are disagreed as to the exact meaning of ‘before his death’, those who hold that Jesus (a.s.) did not die refer the pronoun ‘his’ to Jesus (a.s.). They say that Jesus (a.s.) is still living in the body and that he will appear just before the final day, after the coming of the Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.), when the world will be purified of sin and disbelief. There will be a final death before the final Resurrection, but all will believe in him before that final death.

Since the passing of Jesus (a.s.) until today this verse has not come to pass, and it is therefore clear that the verse refers to the time when the Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) will rise and Jesus (a.s.) will descend from the sky and pray behind the Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.). Then all the people of the book will believe in him. On this subject a narration from Imam Baqir (a.s.) states, ‘Indeed Jesus (a.s.) will descend from the skies before the great uprising. None will remain from the Jewish nation and other nations but that they will believe in his prophethood before his death; and Jesus (a.s.) will pray behind the Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) before his death’.

And:

Or, Who answers the distressed one when he calls upon Him and removes the evil, and He will make you successors in the earth. Is there a god with Allah? Little is it that you mind![[24]](#footnote-24)

It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (a.s.) that, When our Qa’em (Riser) arises, he will enter the Sacred Mosque (in Mecca) facing towards the Qiblah, then with a loud voice he will proclaim that, “I am the first from Adam, Abraham, Isma’il, and Muhammad then you” He will then raise his hands in prayer and call out, “Is there anyone to accept and help the distressed and remove all injustice that have happened to him? Yes, Allah (s.w.t.) placed His rulers on the earth. Is there anyone except Allah (s.w.t.) who is able to do this?’ Though people hardly remember this, a tenth verse which indicate the appearance of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) is Sura al-Fajr:

By the Dawn, By ten Nights, By the Even and the Odd, (contrasted) By the Night when it passeth away; Is there (not) in these an adjuration (or evidence) for those who understand?[[25]](#footnote-25)

Swear to the dawn when it comes, and by the darkness of the night coming to an end, refers to the appearance of the Rising Imam (a.s.), when the darkness of oppression and disbelief in Allah (s.w.t.) will be removed and justice will prevail. The Bliss of Humanity will arrive with the Imam (a.t.f.s.).

### News about Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) from the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and Imams (a.s.):

1 The traditionalist Bukhari records that Jaber b. Samareh said that he heard the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) say, ‘After me the Imams are twelve’. The Prophet then said something that he did not understand. So he inquired from his father sitting close to him, who said that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) had added, ‘And all they are from the Quraish.’

2. Tirmizy records the same report.

3. Abu Zarr Ghaffari, the Prophet’s companion, said that he heard from the Prophet of Allah (s.a.w.a.) who said, ‘Anyone who loves me, loves and my family,’ then the Prophet pointed towards Ali and Husain. And he said, ‘My brother is the best of successors and my family is the best of families. Soon Allah (s.w.t.) will send from the line of Husain one who is from us and he is the Mahdi of this Ummah.’ Abu Zarr said, ‘O Prophet of Allah (s.a.w.a.), how many Imams will be after you?’ The Prophet of Islam replied, ‘As the number of tribes of Bani-Israel (according to Jewish history Bani-Isreal were twelve tribes.)

4. Hafez Abu Na’im narrates from Abdullah b. Umar that the Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.a.) said the Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) will rise whilst a cloud is over His head, and the cloud will proclaim, ‘This is the ruler from Allah (s.w.t.), and so be his followers!’

5. Hafez Abu Na’im records from Abu Sa’id Khidry that the Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.a) said, ‘There will exist a man from my household who will practice my traditions and because of him Allah (s.w.t.) will send His blessing from the heaven and because of him He will bring out the blessings of the earth, and He will fill it with justice, after it had been filled with oppression.’

6. Another narration recorded by Hafez Abu Na’im from Abu-Sa’id Khidry has it that the Prophet of Allah (s.a.w.a.) said that ‘the Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) will come and when you hear of his coming go to Him and pay allegiance to Him for truly he is the ruler from Allah (s.w.t.).’

7. Hafez Abu Na’im from Ghaith b. Jabir and from his grandfather narrates that the Prophet of Allah (s.a.w.a.) said, ‘There will be commanders, caliphs and oppressive rulers, then a man will appear from my household who will fill the earth with justice as it had been filled with oppression.’

8. Hafez Abu Na’im records from Abu Sa’id Khidry who narrates that the Prophet of Allah (s.a.w.a.) said, ‘from us is he whom Jesus the son of Mary will pray behind’.

9. Hazifeh Marvi states that the Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.a.) proclaimed, ‘The Mahdi is amongst my children, his face is smiling and luminous like a bright star full of light.’

10. Hazifeh Marvi also narrates that the Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.a.) proclaimed, ‘The Mahdi is among my children, his blessed face and colour will be like the Arab, his body like the Bani Israel. On the right of his face is a beauty-spot as if it is a bright star. He will fill the earth with justice after it had been filled with oppression. All the inhabitants of the earth, the skies and the birds between the earth and skies will be satisfied with his rule.’

11. It is narrated from Abd al-Rahman bin Awf that the Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.a.) proclaimed that, ‘Allah (s.w.t.) will raise Mahdi amongst my children. His features are such that his front teeth have spaces between them. His forehead is wide. He will fill the earth with justice. Possessions mean nothing to Him and he gives to everyone according to their needs.’

12. It is narrated from Abdullah bin Umar who stated that he heard from the Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.a.) who proclaimed, ‘The day of resurrection will not occur until the earth is ruled by a man from my household whose name is my name. He will fill the-world with justice after it has been filled with oppression. From our line there will be the ways of seven Prophets, a way from our father Adam, a way from Noah, a way from Abraham, a way from Moses, a way from Jesus, a way from Job, and a way from Muhammad. The manner of Adam and Noah is the length of life, from Abraham is hiding his rule, and being distant from the people; from Moses fright and disappearance, from Jesus the dispute about him by the people, from Job the relief after the difficulty, and from Muhammad his rising with the sword.’

13. The sixth Imam (a.s.) said, that with Mahdi there are similarities of the Prophets. From Moses the son of Imran are similarities, from Jesus are similarities, from Joseph are similarities, from Muhammad are similarities, From Moses is waiting with fear, from Jesus is that they will say about Him what they said about Jesus, from Joseph is being behind a curtain as Allah (s.w.t.) will put a curtain between him and the people so they cannot recognise him or see him, and from Muhammad is the guidance according to his way. And Imam Mahdi is five years old at the time his father passes away and he inherits the Imamat just as Allah (s.w.t.) gave wisdom to Yahya b. Zakaria[[26]](#footnote-26) during his childhood, and just as Jesus the son of Mary was raised to high rank at a young age.

Al-Sheikh Aziz bin Muhammad Ansary, in his book about Sheikh Sa’ad al-Din Humawi, who wrote a book about Imam Mahdi, stated that before the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.a.), the title of *Wali* (successor, deputy, right-hand man) did not exist in the old religions, while the title of *Nabi* (Prophet) did exist. Those nearest to Allah (s.w.t.) who inherited the Religion were called Prophets, and in any one Religion there was not more than one who inherited. In the Religion of Adam a few Prophets were his inheritors, who invited people to his Religion, and the same in respect to Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus. When the new Religion came through Muhammad (s.a.w.a.), Allah Almighty chose twelve from the household of Muhammad and placed them as his successors. He made them close to himself and gave them the rule as the inheritors of Muhammad. The hadith of (wise men and successors of Prophets) are about these twelve, and the ultimate leader who is the last deputy and seal of them is Mahdi the owner of the time.

The Sheikh said that the Imams in the world are not more than twelve; but there are three hundred and fifty six individuals who have special connection with the metaphysical world. They are not saints or leaders and are called *abdal,* meaning ‘substitutes’ or ‘representatives’. But Imams are proven texts from the Prophet of Islam, (Imam Ali (a.s.) and his offspring) and the Mahdi, is the owner of the sword, the one ‘standing in waiting’ and that before his coming he will have two occultation’s. He further writes that the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.)’s greatness and miracles are apparent; his knowledge is immense, as is his following of truth and justice. He will rise for truth. He will call to the way of truth of Muhammad (s.a.w.a.).

The Shaikh then writes about his date of birth and said that Allah (s.w.t.) will remove all religions and only the one pure Religion will remain.

### The Minor Occultation and the Four Deputies:

Narrations and historical documents state that for the Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) there are two occultations: a minor occultation and a major occultation. The minor occultation commenced on his birth on 15th Sha’ban of the year 255 A.H (864 A.D), and lasted until the year 329 A.H, a period of almost 74 years. After the passing away of his father Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.), the succession was passed over to Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.). Four special deputies were chosen consecutively, and with the permission of the Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) they were the authority of the Shia, and people could gain the solutions to their problems during their time. Followers would deliver their question to the deputies who would bring the answer from the Imam.

### The Imam’s Appointed Deputies were:

1 Abu Umar Usmaan bin Sa’id

2. Muhammad Ibn Usmaan

3. Sheikh Abul-Qasim Husain b. Ruh Nobakhti

4. Abul-Hasan Ali bin Muhammad al-Samiri

All four deputies acted with the permission of the Imam in accordance to written decrees that bore the Imam’s signature and seal. One after the other they acted for the Imam for a period of seventy-four years. This phase came to an end when the Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.)’s fourth and final deputy,

Abul-Hasan al-Samiri received this letter:

In the Name of Almighty Allah, O Ali bin Muhammad Al-Samarri, May Allah (s.w.t.) give rewards to your brethren concerning your death; for indeed you shall die after six days. So prepare your affairs, but do not appoint anyone to take your place as our agent and deputy after your death, since the minor occultation has taken place and the major occultation has now occurred. There can be no appearance for me until Allah (s.w.t.) gives His permission. The appearance and permission of Allah (s.w.t.) will not happen for a long time, until after the hearts become hard and the earth is filled with wickedness. In the near future someone shall come to my followers claiming that he has seen me, but, beware, anyone claiming to have seen me before the rise of al-Sufyani and the voice from the sky is slanderers and liars.

Six days after receiving this announcement al-Sammari the fourth deputy indeed passed away, and so, after seventy-four years, the duties of the four deputies came to an end.

### The Major Occultation and the Duty of the Followers (Shia):

When the time of the minor occultation ended in 329 A.H and the door via the special intermediaries had been closed, the Imam issued a pronouncement concerning the ‘general deputing’ which is as follows:

When you do not know what to do, refer to the narrators of the Household of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) (Ahl al-Bait) (a.s.) who are proof to you and we are Almighty Allah’s proof over them.

As this pronouncement shows, Scholars, as the narrators and keepers of hadith and as jurists are in a general way the deputies of the Imam within human society during the period of the major occupation, and it is for them to guide people as to what is right and what is wrong.

It is also clear that no one is allowed to claim to be the Mahdi or his ‘special deputy’.

The conditions to be met by the general deputies have been described by Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) as follows:

...a scholar who keep his inner self (soul) pure, who safeguards his Religion, who does not follow his desires, who follows his Master

In a report from Imam Sadiq (a.s.) addressing his followers he said,

Look towards your wise people, who recognise our right and wrong, and know our rulings. Then be satisfied with their ruling. I appoint those upon you, and you the follower recognise these Scholars on my behalf as rulers for yourselves and accept their rulings. If you reject their authority, you have rejected our authority and the Prophet’s authority. If anyone rejects the Prophet’s authority, he is an unbeliever and departs from Islam.

So who looks high up into the sky cannot be content with less then Stars.

# Glossary

The following is a glossary of specific terms which occur in the book. All title and names are translated from Persian and Arabic sources.

***Oh-Al Bait:*** “The Members of the House of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.)” in Shia writings it includes the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), Ali, Fatima, Hasan, Husain and other Imams (a.s.) from descendants of Husain (a.s.).

***Abbasid:*** Descendant of al-Abbas, uncle of the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.a.), Abbasid seized the caliphate in 132 A.H 750 A.D

***Ansar***:(The Helpers) followers of Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) in Medina

***(a.s.):*** *Alayhis Salaam. Peace*be upon him; greeting to him

***Azan:***Thecall to prayer

***Allah:*** The Lord of the Universe and what is in them. The Supreme Divine who creates but is not created, Allah (s.w.t.), indicates the One, the Supreme, the Existent, the Creator, the Worshipped; Allah (s.w.t.) is the First without beginning and the Last without end. He is the outwardly Manifest and inwardly Hidden. There is no existent except Him and there is only Him in existence.

***Al-Hamdolillah:*** Praise be to Allah

***Ameer:*** One who commands and makes the final decisions; the source of authority in any given situation.

***Ameer al-Momineen:*** “The Commander of the faithful.” In the Shia writings the title is reserved for Ali (a.s.) exclusively’.

***Ayah:*** Verse of Holy Qur’an

***Baqiyyatullah:*** The title of the twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.) derived from the Verse in the Holy Qur’an (11:86): “What remains with Allah is better for you if you are believers”

***Circumambulation of Holy Kaaba:*** to go round Holy Kaaba as part of pilgrimage

***Dajjal:*** The ultimate embodiment of Kufr (“Kufr” to cover up reality, to deny Allah (s.w.t.), to reject His Messengers), manifesting as an individual, as a negative social and cultural phenomenon, and as an unseen force, Sometimes denoted by the term antichrist.

***Dinar:*** A gold coin weighing 4.4 grams.

***Dirham:*** A silver coin weighing 3.08 grams.

***Fiqh:*** The formal study of knowledge, especially the practice of Islam. It is the science of the application of Shari’a.

***Ghayb:*** The unseen

***Hadith:*** The written record of what the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) said or did preserved intact from source, through a reliable chain of human narrative, person to person.

***Hajj:*** The pilgrimage to Mecca, and performances of specific rituals for Allah (s.w.t.). The Hajj begins on the twelfth lunar month of the Muslim calendar. The Hajj is one of the pillars of Islam, and is purification outwardly and inwardly.

***Hijra:* (A.H)** Islamic Calendar is dating from the first Hijra (Migration) of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), from Mecca to Madina.

***Imam*:** Theone who leads the communal prayers. Religious leader

***Imamat:*** Mission of Imam; Leadership

***Izrail:*** The Angel who takes away the soul from the body at the moments of death.

***Jahiliyya:*** The time of arrogance and ignorance before the establishment of Islam.

***Jinn:*** Being who lives in a metaphysical dimension parallel to our own.

***Ka’bah:*** The House of Allah (s.w.t.) in Mecca, originally built by the Prophet Ibrahim (a.s.), and rebuilt with the help of the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.a.). The Ka’bah is the focal point which all Muslims face when doing the prayer, this does not mean that Allah (s.w.t.) lives inside the Ka’bah nor does it mean that Muslims worship The Ka’bah. The Ka’bah is symbolic as the first site that Adam (a.s.) worshipped Allah (s.w.t.).

***Khalif:*** Ruler of the community.

***Khazra: Green*** (Khazra Island)

***Madina:*** The city to which the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) made Hijra, and was the revelation of Holy Qur’an was completed. The first Muslim community was established in Madina.

***Mahdi (a.t.f.s.):*** The one who is Rightly Guided. (May Allah (s.w.t.) hasten his Reappearance)

***Muezzin:*** One who calls people to prayer.

***Muhajirun:*** (Emigrants) those who left Mecca and migrated to Medina during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.).

***Muslim:*** One who submits to the will of Allah (s.w.t.)

***Nabi:*** A Prophet, A man rightly guided by Allah (s.w.t.) and sent by Allah (s.w.t.) to guide Humanity.

***Holy Ramazan:*** *The*Month of fasting

**(s.a.w.a.):** ??? May Allah (s.w.t.) send benediction and greeting to him i.e. Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) and His Progeny (a.s.)

***Shaheed:*** A Martyr in the way of Allah (s.w.t.).

***Shari’ah:*** The Religious law

***Surah:*** Chapter of Holy Qur’an

***Ummah:*** Community

***Wajib:*** *What*is obligatory, in acts of Worship.

***Zakat:*** Annual Religious tax payable by believers on certain categories of property and wealth, intended to assist the poor and needy, merchandise; certain crops; certain live stock; and subterranean and mineral wealth. As soon as it is collected it is redistributed to those in need.

# 

# Introduction

For over a thousand years the idea of the final coming of the Messiah has in different religions of the world, provided man with unique aspirations for salvation, and a deep hope for the coming rule of Allah (s.w.t.).

Those who have been crushed and oppressed by the rulers of their time, who did not share the people’s Religious belief in the Messiah, have been persecuted in the course of history for their belief, and their stories are familiar in Christianity, Judaism and Islam.

It is believed in all three of these Religions that the suffering of the faithful and the rule of the enemies of Allah (s.w.t.) will be ended by the return of the promised Messiah in Allah (s.w.t.)’s own good time. In many quarters it has long been felt that a vacuum exists in this topic in the history of Religion, for which reason the author felt it necessary to examine and present the information in this field. It is my hope that, by keeping in view the deep feelings towards the subject felt in all the world’s religions and by maintaining a suitable sensitivity; I try to examine life of the messianic leader. It is also my hope that the reader will find this work more convincing than the usual presentation by western Scholars. The present work strives to examine the information on ‘Imam Mahdi’ (a.t.f.s.), especially with reference to the other religions of world in general and in particular to Christianity and its Prophet Jesus (a.s.) the son of Mary. In this collection of writing I try for the first time to examine the phenomenal happening in Bermuda Triangle and compare the finding to ‘Green Island’ [‘Khazra Island’] believe to be one of the possible residence of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.)] and providing evidence from historical sources that the two places are one and the same. My study sheds new light in messianism and encourages readers to meditate upon the factors of unity, rather than division among all religions.

In The Name Of Allah The Compassionate, The Merciful

‘And we wish to bestow Our Blessing upon those who were oppressed in the earth, and to make them the leaders of mankind, and to make them the inheritors.’[[27]](#footnote-27)

# Chapter Two

## Princess of Byzantium Queen of Islam

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

Allah, There is no god but He, the living, the self-subsisting, Eternal. No slumber can seize Him, nor sleep. His are all thing in the heavens and on earth. Who is there can intercede in His presence except as He permitted? He knoweth what (appearth to His creature as) before or behind them. Nor shall they compass aught of His Knowledge except as He willeth. His throne doth extend over the heavens and the earth, and He feeleth no fatigue in guarding and preserving them/or He is the most High, the Supreme (in Glory).[[28]](#footnote-28)

## The Strange Destiny of the Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.)’s Mother

Perhaps one of the most remarkable points in the life of the Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) concerns the Imam’s mother. According to the historical reports, the mother of the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.) was a Byzantium (or Roman[[29]](#footnote-29)) princess who embraced Islam and then allowed herself to be captured by an Islamic force which at the time was at war with the Byzantium (Roman) Empire. After her capture she was taken prisoner and was sold as a slave girl. She refused to be sold, but allowed herself to be purchased by an agent working for the Imam’s father, Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) on production of a letter from the Imam. Reports vary a little in the details of this account, and these have led to the whole story being dismissed as hagiography. Here we wish to consider some of the questions that the account raises.

The first of these regards the period of the Imam’s mother’s capture, by Islamic troops in a war between the two armies. Critics of the account maintain that there was no major war between the Islamic troops and Byzantine forces after 242 A.H (865 A.D), thirteen years before the Imam’s birth.

An historical survey of the period 868-870 A.D suggests that indeed there was no major battle between the Muslims and the Byzantine Empire. Nevertheless, all the evidence points to their having been continual border clashes between the two armies, and it is therefore quite possible that she was captured during one of these border clashes.

A second criticism suggest that if a lady of such standing at the Roman court was captured by the Muslims, why there is no indication in historical sources that the Roman empire demanded her release. In the pages that follow it will become clear that the Roman princess approached the scene of conflict in secret, with the result that nobody was aware of her position except Imam Askari (a.s.) and his father (Imam Hadi (a.s.) and the lady herself. Nor did the troops who captured her know her identity. They simply assumed that they were capturing ladies who normally accompany their men to battle and who attend to the wounded soldiers behind the enemy line. Thus they were not aware that a princess of the Roman Empire was among them.

The Roman emperor did not know where his granddaughter had suddenly disappeared to. Evidently they could not just hold the Islamic army responsible and ask for the return of this honourable lady, when they had no proof that she had in fact been captured.

A third objection is that the Imam’s mother appears to have had several names, which adds to the confusion.

Moreover, al-Kulayni (a.r.) wrote that the mother of the Imam was a slave girl. The Imam’s house themselves shed no light on the issue at the time, but kept the matter under a veil of secrecy, and this has added to the mystery. Their attitude is understandable considering the hostility of the Imams’ enemies and the danger to his life and especially to the life of his future son.

One of the most critical periods in history of Shia Islam is the time of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.). From the very early days of Islam the story of the promised Mahdi was widespread among Muslims. The traditions relating to the Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) had been spoken by the Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.a.) on different occasions and were later confirmed and repeated by each Imam in his time.

These traditions declared the destruction of any unjust governments at the hand of the Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) – a Descendant of Ali and Fatima (a.s.) – at the time of his Reappearance.

Thus the contemporary rulers were well aware of these traditions and were constantly in fear of the birth of such person, and so they were determined to be the first to identify the Islamic messiah, with a view to getting rid of him. For this reason the homes of family members of the Prophet and particularly of the eleventh Imam al-Askari (a.s.), were under constant surveillance by agents of the Abbasid ruler. It was probably for this reason that the Mahdi’s birth and his life is frequently compared to that of Moses (a.s.), and also because of the similar circumstances which his mother had to face.

As for the Imam’s mother having been mentioned in the sources by various names, it seems that as she was well aware of her destiny, so she took great care not to disclose her identity due to the dangers she was facing. She had to follow a plan that had been revealed to her in a dream, and hide her identity. Perhaps this was the reason for her being known by a variety of names.

Some of those names are, Maryam, Narjis, Sousan and Rayhana. It seems that when the Imam’s mother was living in Byzantine in her grandfather’s palace, she was called Maryam (Mary). Then, when she moved to the border and was captured, she used the name Narjis. When she had finally arrived in Samarra and in the Imam’s house, still she was called by a variety of names. It is recorded from Hakima Khatoon (Imam Askari (a.s.)’s aunt) that on several occasions she heard Imam Askari (a.s.) call her by the names ‘Sousan’ and ‘Narjis’. Hakima Khatoon herself sometimes called her Rayhana. These were probably measures to protect her, given that the Abbasid regime had vigilant and hostile surveillance of Imam Askari (a.s.)’s family. In order to hide the identity of Imam Mahdi’s mother it may have been felt necessary for her to be called by different names, or even disguise herself as a slave girl in Imam Askari (a.s.)’s house.

The traditional account, as given by the man who acted as the Imam al-Askari (a.s.)’s agent, is as follows,

According to my assignment, the morning of that day at dawn, I stood near the shore of the Phrates where they bring the captives, so that I could find the person I was seeking. A number of Arab youths and a group of Abbassid army representatives had also came to choose from the captives and buy slaves for themselves and their masters.

An hour later the ships carrying the captives arrived, and berthed in the harbour. Soon the noise of sellers filled the whole area and the buyers began trying to pick up a bargain. The man responsible for the sale (Nakhas) brought forward for sale a lady wearing two garments of silk. She was a noble lady and very chaste with extreme refinement. She was trying to distance herself from the customers and did not allow the seller to present her to any buyer, and with great, modesty did not allow anyone to come close to her.

Suddenly, I heard her complaining behind the thin curtain. She was saying something in Roman language which the Arabs did not understand. I also should not have understood her words, because I wasn’t familiar with that language, but because of my assignment I had been told the details regarding her and her situation beforehand. I then realised that she was the lady for whom I had been sent. She was complaining about her predicament while trying hard to cover herself.

One of the customers, who had been taken by her chaste behaviour, approached the seller and offered to buy her for 300 dinars, and claimed her modesty had made her honourable in my eyes. At that the Roman girl suddenly started talking in Arabic and said to the man, ‘Even if you appear as Solomon the son of David and have all his throne, power and majesty, I will never relish the idea of you as my owner. So do not waste your money.’ The trader, seeing himself helpless to sell the lady, said to her, ‘What can I do? I have to sell you; there is no other way for me.’

The lady replied, ‘What is the hurry? I have to choose someone with whom I feel comfortable, and whose loyalty and honesty I can trust.’

I saw that this was the crucial stage of my assignment. I went forward and stood opposite the seller and said to him, ‘I have a letter from honourable people which is written in the Roman language and in it they have explained their generosity, noble spirit and decency. Take this letter and give it to the lady to read so she becomes aware of the moral and other qualities of the writer. Then, if she wishes, and you are willing to sell her, I have power on behalf of the writer of this letter to take her to him.’

The trader accepted my offer, took the letter and gave it to the lady to find out her opinion about it. When she saw the letter and found out who the writer of the letter was, she cried with happiness. It was amazing to see her crying with such joy. She said to the seller, ‘You must give me to the owner of this letter.’ Then she swore emphatically that if she was not given to the writer of the letter she would die and he would be responsible.

At this the seller start talking to me about selling her; we haggled a bit and eventually we agreed on the price that I had been ordered by my Master. The trader took the money and gave me the lady who was very happy. Together we set off towards a house which I had rented in Baghdad.

At all time she could not settle and was constantly taking the letter out and reading it, kissing it, putting it on her eyes and chest. I doubted if she knew the owner of the letter and was surprised by her behaviour and asked her how she could kiss a letter when she did not know the writer of it? She calmly and firmly replied, ‘If you are not aware of the position of the children of the Prophet, then listen well, if you want to know the real truth.

## An Amazing Story

My name is Malika. I am the daughter of Joshua, the son of Caesar and ruler of Rome. My mother is one of the descendants of Simon’s children, who were the successor of Jesus (a.s.) and one of his closest companions. I have a strange and amazing history. Now pay attention, I will tell you the astonishing story of my life. I was thirteen when my grandfather the Caesar of Rome (Byzantine) decided to marry me to one of his nephews. On the order of the great ruler of Rome they prepared a glamorous wedding ceremony in the great hall of the palace. The great throne was decorated with all kinds of expensive jewels and was raised on forty stands. Honourable guests from government and army were invited. Three hundred priests, all of them descendants of the companions of Jesus (a.s.) and the highest Religious authorities were present. Seven hundred other descendants of Jesus (a.s.) companions were also present.

Four thousand army commanders, generals, and tribal elders in their customary clothes were also present. Then my grandfather the great Emperor of Rome entered the hall and my wedding ceremony started.

In a special ceremony they brought in the groom and sat him on the throne. The crosses were hoisted; the bishops stood up and gathered round the groom’s throne with Holy Books in their hands. They opened their Bibles to proceed with the wedding ceremony. But then, when the church leaders wanted to perform the wedding ceremony, suddenly the crosses all tumbled to the floor. The pillars of the throne broke and the throne fell violently to the floor. A frightful sound filled the atmosphere of the palace. The poor groom fell and became unconscious. All were shaking from what had happened.

The Archbishop considered this wedding and all that had happened as a bad omen. He came forward and said to my grandfather, ‘O King of Rome, please exempt us from carrying out this inauspicious wedding ceremony, which has signs of the destruction of Christianity and the kingdom. My grandfather also thought of the strange happenings as a bad Omen, and he took the event as a sign that the marriage was inauspicious. He told the bishops to arrange another ceremony just as before, to make the stands of the throne secure and to elevate the crosses. But he said that this time the brother of the groom would take his place, in the hope the bad omen and ill luck of that brother will be removed from me through the new groom.

On the order of the ruler of Rome, once again a wedding ceremony was prepared, Crosses were elevated and again the great throne with jewels was set upon forty firm stands, and the groom was placed on histhrone. Everyone got ready for ceremony. As the bishops came forward and opened their Bibles in order to carry out the marriage ceremony, suddenly the same frightening, amazing things happened again. The crosses fell, the stands of the throne collapsed, the groom fell to the ground unconscious, a strange tumult started, the frightened guests dispersed and the ceremony was cancelled. My grandfather was extremely sad, and he stood up and left, and the whole thing was abandoned.

## Dream of Destiny:

I went back to my room and slept on my bed, but that night I had a strange dream. I dreamed I was taken to another world, and my whole destiny changed. That night I dreamed I was in my grandfather’s palace, when Jesus (a.s.) and honourable Simon and a group of the other companions gathered there. In place of my grandfather’s throne with all its jewels was a shining pulpit set up as high as sky, and lights were shining from it. At this time the last Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) entered, accompanied by the groom and a group of his successors. Jesus (a.s.) greeted the Prophet of Islam and embraced him. Then the Prophet said to him, O Holy Spirit, I have come to propose the marriage of Malika, the daughter of your successor Simon, for my son. The Prophet pointed towards Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.). Jesus (a.s.) looked at Simon and said the honour has come to you join your line to the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.a.). Simon agreed to the proposal and said I accept this union.’ Then the Prophet went up the pulpit covered in light and recited the marriage ceremony.

Jesus (a.s.) and his companions and the Noble Children of the Prophet all were witnesses to this union.

Suddenly I woke up it was a strange dream, the proposal of marriage from the Holy Prophet for his son, Imam Askari (a.s.). I was terrified to explain this dream to my father and grandfather, in case they would order to kill me. Therefore I told nobody about my dream and kept it a secret, though every day my love for Imam Askari (a.s.) grew more and more.

My heart was consistently pounding on the memory of his highness and his love conquered my soul.

Days passed. I was captivated with Imam Askari (a.s.) in such a way that in consequence of his affection and separation, I could not eat or drink and totally lost my appetite. Disrelish of food and drink made me weak and I become ill. My illness intensified and made my body weak. My grandfather ordered to summon doctors for my cure, but their examinations and treatments did not work. There was not a doctor in Rome from whom my grandfather did not seek help and ask for medicine for my illness, but all their efforts were futile. I became weaker as days passed by.

When my grandfather lost hope of my recovery, he came and set beside my bed and with eyes full of affection looked at me and said, “O light of my eyes, is there any wish in your heart that I can grant in this world?”

I said, “Dear grandfather, I see all the doors of salvation closed, but if the torture of Muslim captives were to stop and if you remove the chains from their hands and feet and open the prison doors, I hope Jesus (a.s.) and Holy Mary will return my health to me.”

My grandfather accepted my request, and he ordered Muslim prisoners who were being tortured and in chains to be freed. I pretended that I had recoveredslightly and ate some food as if Jesus (a.s.) has cured me. When my grandfather realised that I have recovered he became extremely happy and ordered that all Muslim prisoners be treated well.

## The Second Dream after Fourteen Days:

Fourteen days passed. Again I had a strange dream which totally changed all my thoughts and beliefs. That night in my dream I saw the lady of the entire world Fatima (a.s.) with thousands of the nymphs of paradise, who came to visit me. Mary (a.s.) the daughter of Imran was also present. The Holy Mary (a.s.) showed me Fatima (a.s.) and said, “Her Holiness the great lady of all the worlds is your mother-in-law.”

When I heard this, I grabbed the garment of Fatima (a.s.) and threw myself to her feet, crying hard, and I complained of being away from her son, Imam Askari (a.s.) , and I complained why I had not had the honour of meeting him, why he did not come to see me.

The lady Fatima (a.s.) said to me, “For as long as you remain in your belief, my son will not meet you. If you want the Allah (s.w.t.) and Jesus (a.s.) and Holy Mary (a.s.) to become pleased with you, and if you want to meet my son, then say, ‘There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is his Messenger.’”

I said those sentences and I bore witness to the oneness of Allah (s.w.t.) and the prophetic mission of Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) the great lady Fatima (a.s.) embraced me tightly and at that time all my body and soul became purified and I truly recovered. Then she said to me now wait for the meeting with my son Imam Askari (a.s.), I will send him to you. I woke up at that moment. I said to myself, I will wait and hope I will see him soon.

## The Third Dream and Meeting of Intended:

That day ended and I was eagerly waiting to meet the Imam (a.s.). Night fell and I went to sleep, in the hope that I could see him in my dream.

Fortunately, that night I met him as the great lady Fatima (a.s.) had promised, and Imam Askari (a.s.) came to see me.

When I saw his Holiness, I complained of his separation and I said, ‘My dear, you are unkind to me, for I have wasted my life for your affection.’

The Imam said, ‘The delay in our meeting was due to your belief, but now that you have embraced Islam, I will come to you every night, till the Almighty Allah bring us together physically and in wakefulness.

I woke up and since then every night he comes to meet me. This is the amazing story of my life.’

## The Daughter of King of Rome amongst Prisoners:

When that young lady had told me her amazing story, I realised that she was the daughter of the Roman emperor and grandchild of Simon the successor of Jesus (a.s.). I realised that she is from an honourable family and a respected person with high spiritual attainments. I asked her how she had come to be among the captives. She explained;

One of the nights when I saw Imam Askari (a.s.) in my dream, he told me, “Soon your grandfather will gather an army to fight the Muslims. On such a day in this war, the Romans will be pursued by the Muslim soldiers till the borders. Join the women who help behind the battle line, and wear the clothes they wear. Among the other women you will be captured, and in this way you will be transferred from the Roman territories to Islamic territories.

When I woke up, I realised that everything was going according to what Imam Askari (a.s.) had said, and that I would soon be in Islamic territories. After a few days the war was declared, and the Roman soldiers set off to the front-line. I too dressed as a nurse went among the other women, and as the Imam ordered I started moving towards the same way as I had been told.

Within a short while the front line of the Muslim army came forward and war started. The advance guard of the Muslim army surrounded us and took us captive, and then they moved us towards Baghdad in the same boats that you saw.

But you have to know that so far nobody knows I am the grand daughter of the Roman emperor and only you know me.

When we were captured, I was given to an old man who asked my name, but because I did not wish to be known, I said my name is Narjis. This is the story of me taking part in the war and being captured.

When the princess told me of her story, I asked her with surprise, It is very strange that you come from the land of Rome, yet you speak Arabic so well; how is it that a Roman is so fluent in Arabic?!

She said, ‘My grand father paid a lot attention to my education. He always wanted me to learn about various traditions and languages and various knowledge and to accomplish different studies. He employed a lady who knew both Roman and Arabic languages to come to me every morning and afternoon and teach me the Arabic language. That lady, with great discipline, twice a day used to come and help me with learning the Arabic language. After a while I learned the language well and mastered it and I speak it better than my mother tongue.’

## A Secret Assignment:

After hearing about all these events, I realised my assignment was not a simple and ordinary task, but a very important and calculated matter. That is why when my Imam wanted to send me for this duty, he emphasised that the assignment was a secret, and a good result give me privilege and superiority over others. The story of this secret and holy assignment started for me as follows,

My house is in the city of Samara near the house of the Imam al-Hadi (a.s.). One night when I was resting I heard someone knocking. It was late and I was a bit scared and did not know who wanted me at that time of night or what could have happened. I quickly got up and went towards the door asking who it was. A voice said, ‘Open the door!’ When I opened the door cautiously, I saw Kafoor, the servant of the Imam al-Hadi (a.s.). I asked him, ‘What has happened?’

He said, ‘Put your clothes on and come to see the Imam.’ I quickly went to my room and put my clothes on and went to the Imam’s house. When I entered, he was talking to his son Hasan (a.s.) and his sister Hakima was talking to him from behind a curtain. I said my greeting and sat opposite the Imam. After replying, the Imam (a.s.) said, ‘O Bashir, you are the descendant of the Ansar and related to the family of the Prophet’s companions. You and your family have always been trusted by us. The same people that rose up to help the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) and when the Holy Prophet emigrated from Mecca to Medina they supported his Excellency. They propagated Islamic Religion and this kindness to our household has always been in your family and has passed from one generation to another, and so you are for us trusty and in our confidence.

For this reason I want to grant you an honourable position and special virtue and superiority, so that you will be distinguished amongst other followers. Now I will tell you a secret and send you on a confidential mission.

Then Imam Hadi (a.s.) wrote a letter in the Roman language, signed and stamped it with his special ring, then brought a yellow bag with two-hundred gold coins in it. He gave me the letter and the bag, and said, ‘Take these, move towards Baghdad and when you get there at dawn of such a day, go near the bridge, wait there, they will bring the captives off the boat. You will see some people who are representative of army chiefs and Iraqi youth. At this time you will notice a man called Umar bin Yazid Nakhas’ who is responsible for selling the prisoners. Watch him from a distance throughout the day until you see him presenting a lady prisoner for sale whose attributes I explain to you. She will be wearing two silk dresses. She will be trying to avoid facing other men, and to prevent anybody coming near her or seeing her face. When she tells the trader not to hurry, that she has to choose someone whose piety and honesty she can trust, you go to the man and tell him you have a letter from an honourable person in the Roman language, and in it he has introduced himself. Tell him to take the letter and give it to the lady, so she will know the spiritual and noble quality of the writer, and that if she agrees you will buy her on behalf of the writer of the letter.’

I took the bag and the letter from the Imam, and according to my assignment I moved towards Baghdad and as I explained I did my duties in this secret mission, so far I have been successful.

After a short stop in Baghdad, we left that city towards Samara. When we reached Samara, which was situated in a rather better climate on the river Tigris, we went straight to my Master’s house, the residence of Imam Hadi (a.s.). After permission to enter, his Excellency received us. I said greetings and he replied very kindly. We sat down; he turned to the princess and said, ‘How has the Almighty honoured you and shown you the true way, so that you could embrace Islam?’ She replied very politely, ‘O son of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), how can I explain something that you are aware of much better than me.’

Then the Imam (a.s.) said to her, ‘I want to welcome you by giving you a present, either 10,000 gold coins, or the glad tidings of a permanent honour. Which would you like most?’

The Roman princess who had high spirits and an excellent mind said, ‘Give me the Glad Tidings.’

Imam (a.s.) said, ‘I give you the news of a child who will conquer the east and west of the globe and who will rule the world with justice after it has been full of oppression.’

The lady asked, ‘Who is the father of this honourable child?’ The Imam said, ‘The father is the same person whom you saw in your dreams and for whom the Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.a.) asked your hand.’

The daughter of the ruler of Rome, just to be sure, asked the Imam again, do you mean Jesus (a.s.) and his successor?’

Imam Hadi (a.s.) asked her, ‘In that night who did Jesus (a.s.) and his successor marry you to?’

She said, to your son, the Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) said ‘Do you know him?’

Malika said, ‘How can I not know him? From the night that I become Muslim by the guidance of the lady of all the worlds, Fatima (a.s.), there has not been a night I have not been able to meet him.’

At this point, Imam Hadi (a.s.) called his servant, and a few minute later Kafoor came. Imam asked him to call for Imam’s sister Hakima. She came and gave the greeting. Imam answered and showed the princess to her and said, ‘My sister, this lady is the person I told you about.’ When the Imam’s sister heard these words, she recognised the emperor’s daughter and like someone who was expecting such a moment, embraced her with joy. Then the Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) turned to Hakima and said; ‘My sister, daughter of the Holy Prophet, take this young lady to your house and make her aware of all the Religious necessities as she is the wife of Imam Askari (a.s.) , and mother the Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) the rising Imam.

## The Birth of Allah (s.w.t.)’s Proof:

Lady Hakima said:

After the Martyrdom of Imam Hadi (a.s.), as always I continued going to meet the eleventh Imam. That day till sunset I stayed with the Imam, but as it was getting dark, I got up to go. I called the servant and asked him to bring my garment. When the Imam saw me setting off, he said, “Dear aunt, stay with us tonight, because a male child will be born tonight who is great in the presence of the Almighty Allah will give life through him to the dead earth.”

When I heard this news, I was surprised and asked, “Who is going to give birth to this child? I have not seen any sign of pregnancy in lady Narjis.” ‘The Imam said, “This child will be born from Narjis.” ‘I had not seen any sign of pregnancy, so again I went back to see her and looked carefully, but still I could not see any signs.

I came back to the Imam and told him that I had not seen any signs of pregnancy in lady Narjis. Imam smiled and said, “At dawn, the sign of pregnancy will appear in Narjis because she is like the mother of Moses (a.s.) who never showed any sign of pregnancy and nobody knew the existence of Moses (a.s.). The reason for this secrecy was that the Pharaoh ripped open the stomachs of pregnant women in order to find him and stop his birth. He did that to any woman bearing male children, this child is like Moses (a.s.).” ‘After hearing what the Imam said, I went back to Narjis and said to her, “Your fate is like the mother of Moses (a.s.) whose birth was hidden from the people due to fear of the Pharaoh and his criminals. And with Allah (s.w.t.)’s will, Moses (a.s.) and his mother were protected from Pharaoh’s executioners, who ripped open the stomachs of pregnant women, so she showed no sign of pregnancy. Your son is like that Prophet of Allah (s.a.w.a.), because the enemies are after him, they want to identify and annihilate him or recognise and destroy you. For this reason, as the Imam said, there is no effect of pregnancy in you. Now tell me how you feel?” ‘She replied, “My dear lady, I feel no effect of pregnancy.”

I watched her all the time until the dawn. She was lying in front of me and was sleeping without much movement.

That night, when they brought food, the lady Narjis and I broke our fast together and then we slept in the same room. It was not more than a few minutes that I slept before I woke up. It seemed my heart was filled with the news of the new born which I had heard that night. Desire to see him would not leave my thoughts and constantly occupied my soul, so I suddenly woke up and I thought about the promise that Imam Askari (a.s.) had given about the birth of Allah (s.w.t.)’s proof. Although I used to get up every night for prayers, but that night I got up early and prepared myself for prayers. I was praying when Narjis woke up, went out of the room, made the ‘wazu’ (ablution before prayer) and then came back to pray. After praying I went out to find out the time. I looked at the sky and saw that it was almost near the dawn. At this time I was becoming apprehensive about Imam’s promise about the birth of the heavenly child from Narjis, but suddenly I heard Imam saying loudly from his room, “Do not have doubt, this minute with Allah (s.w.t.)’s will the child, will be born and you will surely see him.”

When I heard the Holy Imam, I became embarrassed as to why I had doubted his promise of the birth. Then I came back to Narjis’ room. As I entered, suddenly I saw that she was extremely worried. She was running towards me. I asked her, “Do you feel anything?” ‘She replied, “Yes, dear aunt, I feel very strange.” ‘In order to calm her down, I said, “Do not worry, it is Allah (s.w.t.)’s will, do not be frightened.” And I took her inside the room.

The night was over. It was almost morning when Narjis made a groaning sound. I embraced her quickly and said the Name of Allah (s.w.t.) on you. Then I heard Imam Askari (a.s.) telling me to recite the Holy verse of Al-Qadr chapter to her. Before I began to recite the verse, I asked her how she was. She said, “All those things that the Imam said are appearing in me.” ‘I started reciting the Holy verses as the Imam ordered, but every verse which I recited was repeated by Narjis’ son from inside her. He answered all the verses and greeted me too. When I heard Narjis’ son from inside his mother reciting the Holy Qur’an before his birth, I was surprised and very frightened. At this moment Imam Askari (a.s.) told me, “Do not be surprised at Allah (s.w.t.)’s work, because Almighty Allah gave us wisdom from childhood and able us to speak in our infancy, and made us His proof on the earth.” The Imam was talking when Narjis disappeared from my sight, as if a curtain came between us. I did not see her. I was terrified and ran screaming towards the Imam to tell him that she has disappeared and ask him what we should do.

Imam calmly reassured me, saying, “Dear aunt, go back; you will soon find her back at her place.” I returned and when I entered the room after a few seconds the curtain was removed between us. I suddenly saw her but she was luminous and shining so brightly that I could not look at her. Then I noticed Narjis’ child who was shining all over and prostrating. He had put his face and forehead on the floor, his knees were on the ground, his two forefingers toward the sky and saying, “I witness that there is no god but Allah. He is unique and has no partners, and I bear witness that my great grandfather Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) is the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) and that my father is the leader of the faithful.” Then he counted the names of all the Imams, till he reached his name and said to Allah (s.w.t.), “O Allah (s.w.t.) fulfil what you have promised me, complete my mission, destroy my enemies, and through me fill the world with justice.”

I was totally captivated by the child’s prayers. The Imam Askari (a.s.) told me to hold the child in my arms and bring him to him. I went forward, holding Narjis’ son in my arms and walked towards the Imam. When the child was in the presence of his father, he said salutations to his father. Then the Imam held the child in his arms whilst some birds were flying over his head. After that the Holy Imam said, “Take this child to his mother to give him milk and bring him back again to me.” I obeyed what the Imam said.

Again I took Narjis’ son in my arms and brought the child back to his father. Again I saw some birds flying over his head. Then Imam Askari (a.s.) loudly called upon one of those birds and said, “Take this child, protect him and every forty days bring him to us.” The bird obeyed and took the child to the sky. When the bird flew and ascended the other birds followed him. ‘I could hear the Imam saying farewell to his child, saying, “I will give you to the Allah (s.w.t.), the same Allah (s.w.t.) to whom Moses was given by his mother.” ‘When Narjis saw her child was taken to the sky, she became anxious and started to cry. Imam Askari (a.s.) said to her, “Do not worry, your child will not take milk from anyone except yourself, because it is forbidden for him. Soon they will bring your child back to you and he will be returned to your arms, as Moses came back to his mother, as Allah (s.w.t.) said, “...then We returned Moses to his mother to remove her worries.”I did not know what that bird was which took the child to the sky and why they took the new-born from his mother’s arms and flew away, with surprise I asked Imam Askari (a.s.) what was that bird which took his child.

The Holy Imam (a.s.) said, “That was the ‘Holy spirit’ and not a normal bird. He is the greatest Angel and is appointed for the Imams, to try and work under their direction and educating them with knowledge and wisdom, success, firmness and strength, and helping them to achieve their mission.’”

## Memories of that Night:

One of the ladies who was present on the night when Imam Askari (a.s.)’s son was born, was the servant of Abu Ali Khizarani. Abu Ali Khizarani reported saying, I myself heard from the respected lady who said,

When Narjis’ son was born, light started shining from him that enlightened the horizon and the corners of the sky, and then white pigeons came from the sky and rubbed their feathers, head, and body on his body and face and flew away.

We were amazed by this incident and told Imam Askari (a.s.) about it. When the Imam heard our story he smiled and said, ‘Those birds were Angels that descended from the sky for a blessing from the new born, and they will help him at the time of his uprising, and they will be his companions,’

Lady Hakima, daughter of Imam Jawad (a.s.) also described the happenings of that night. She said,

At the time of his birth a light started shining in the room, then suddenly I saw the child prostrating in the direction of Mecca. I went forward and held the child in my arms. After a short while I heard the Imam Askari (a.s.) saying, “This creature in the shape of a bird is the Archangel Gabriel, and the other birds are Angels of Mercy. Dear aunt, take the child to his mother to see him and become happy in order to find out that Allah (s.w.t.)’s promise is true, although the majority of the people do not know.”

I did as the Imam (a.s.) said, and I held the auspicious new-born in my arms, and walked toward Narjis’ room. She was waiting for her son with a look full of affection and a heart full of hope. When the child was born he was very clean and neat, and on his right forearm waswritten, “The truth has come and the falsehood has perished, indeed the falsehood must perish”

All these events which occurred that night were for the sake of that child. It was an exceptional night; it was the night of the birth of a Holy spiritual, divine personality, a blessed person who was selected by Allah (s.w.t.) as the successor of His last Messenger (s.a.w.a.).

Let us look again, but more profoundly and keenly, at some of the miraculous events of that bright night, in the hope of acquiring increased insight into the high status and position of Allah (s.w.t.)’s final vicegerent:

1. His life in the invisible world progressed in such a manner that the signs of pregnancy did not appear for the mother until the very moment of his birth.

2. As a foetus in his mother’s uterus, he heard lady Hakima’s voice reciting verses of Holy Qur’an, and he repeated them and began reciting the verses so pleasantly and enchantingly that Lady Hakima heard his voice and was struck with admiration.

3. As soon as he was born, he began chanting prayers to Allah (s.w.t.), prostrating to his Creator.

4. Allah (s.w.t.)’s Angels of Mercy, some in white, some in green and some in white and green descended from heaven to earth and caressed his shining body with their wings and feathers so as to be blessed and graced by his sacred body.

5. Allah (s.w.t.)’s great Angel, the Ruh al-Qudus, and Allah (s.w.t.)’s Angel Gabriel, received him and took care of him. They took his sacred body to the skies and took him under their protection and custody.

6. He had such luminosity on his birth that it shined from Narjis’ room to the horizon and up to celestial world.

7. He was born physically clean, tender and delicate. His body after birth was completely clean. His sacred limbs and organs were free from any defect. His body was a symbol of physical perfection.

8. Some moments after his birth he began speaking. He recited verses from the Holy Qur’an in a very pleasant voice.

9. On his right arm there was the Creator’s mark reading, ‘And say, ‘The truth has come and the falsehood perished for falsehood is (by its nature) bound to perish.**[[30]](#footnote-30)**

10. He was born a believer in Allah (s.w.t.). He started praying and prostrating to Allah (s.w.t.) from the first moments after his birth. He showed his hatred and disgust of Satan to Allah (s.w.t.). He was aware of his innocent and sacred ancestors, and called their names one by one and conveyed salutations to them.

These ten Miraculous events and tens of other incidents and miracles, some of which have been given and some of which will be given in the following chapters, indicate that the night of 15th Shaban in the year 255 A.H (870 A.D) was the blessed birth night of a noble being. It was the night of light and Allah (s.w.t.)’s revelation of His Glory and Greatness, the happy and blessed birth night of the Successor to Allah (s.w.t.)’s final Messenger.

It was a marvellous night that astonished the great thinkers of the world. The new born was a Holy and immaculate above and beyond the conception of the human mind. We are unable to comprehend the depth of his being. For this reason we have to grasp an idea of his greatness through Allah (s.w.t.)’s revelations about him.

The lady Hakima continued,

Forty days passed. My brother’s son Imam Askari (a.s.) sent somebody and invited me to his house. I got up immediately, dressed and hurried to see his Excellency. When I entered his room, I suddenly saw that same sacred and beloved child standing in front of his father. His face was shining like the sun, and he was walking.

I was astonished to see such a great and rapid growth within forty days. I exclaimed, this forty days old boy looks like a two-year-old!

His Excellency smiled and said, ‘The growth of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.)’s children and the growth of children of successors to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) who are appointed as the Holy Imam (a.s.) is not like others. One month for the member of our family equals a year of life for others. We are the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.)’s family and our children speak in their mothers’ womb and recite the Holy Qur’an’s verses, pray and worship the Allah (s.w.t.). During the normal sucking period, they are guarded by Angels who descend from heaven and gather around them in the mornings and remain till the evenings and carry out their orders.’

From that night on, I continually saw Imam Askari (a.s.)’s son once every forty days, and was delighted to see him grow so marvellously.

# Chapter Three

## The Bermuda Triangle & The Green Island

Itis not a hidden fact to researchers and Religious authorities that the appearance of ‘The World Saviour’ is a hot issue, current amongst many different religions, including Christianity, Judaism and Zoroastrianism, as well as Islam, and there is much debate on the subject. Even atheists believe that a world full of oppression needs a saviour who will fight injustice and judge even-handedly. The followers of the divine religions, particularly Muslims, have written many articles and books in order to prove the existence of the world saviour. A few Scholars and devotees such as Ardabili, Sayyed Bahr al-Ulum, Ali Baghdadi and others, have even had the honour of meeting the divine saviour. Scholars have written articles on these meetings, in which they have referred to a mysterious ‘green island’ (jazirat al-khazra).

In particular, a record exists of the journey of the celebrated scholar Ali bin al-Fazel Mazanderani, who journeyed to this island, where he had the honour of entering the community of the world-saviour-in-waiting, the Mahdi (a.t.f.s.). The story of the Green Island is by its very nature mysterious, and an aspect of this mystery concerns its location, as none of the reports give exact details of this.

Recent research, however, throws interesting light on this topic. Arising from the peculiar phenomena and strange happenings of the ‘Bermuda Triangle’, many books were written and articles published in scientific papers and journals, and of course in popular papers and magazines. This led one young scholar, the Sheikh Ali Akbar Mahdipur Tabrizi, to compare the scientific findings to what is mentioned about the ‘Green Island’ in the historical sources. He put a lot of effort into writing his book, and thank Allah (s.w.t.) has produced a precious book that is a leading text on its subject. The remainder of this chapter is taken from his work. After reviewing once again the circumstances of the Imam’s birth, we present the historical accounts involving sightings of the Imam and then of the island, and thereafter we look at the sources of those accounts. We then turn to the findings in respect of what is called the ‘Bermuda Triangle’, and finally we examine how the modern findings compare to the historical accounts.

## A Blessed Night:

The moon on the fifteenth night had gathered its skirts around itself, and was preparing to leave the circle of the sky. Its halo like a tear-drop had rolled down to the edge of the sky. The morning breeze was kissing the lips of the river Tigris and the date palms both young and old wafted in the breeze.

It was as if the world wanted to obtain splendour and magnificence. The first golden ray of daylight split the dark horizon. The voice of a *muezzin[[31]](#footnote-31)* called out, and echoed all around. The gate of dawn opened, and that auspicious day began. It was to be a day totally different from other days. The sound of praise and greatness of Allah (s.w.t.) could still be heard. In a house in the city of Samara a child was born; who without delay began singing the praises of his Lord. He raised his index finger towards the sky, sneezed and said, ‘Praise and worship is only for one Allah (s.w.t.), who is the Creator of all the worlds, and blessings be upon the Prophet of Allah, Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) and his progeny. The oppressors think that the proof of Allah (a.t.f.s.) has vanished, if Allah (s.w.t.) permits the rising, all the doubts will be eliminated.’

All around were in awe of the baby, for he brought a world of magnificence with him. He was born before the sunrise and put the sun behind himself for eternity. The radiance of delight was shining from the eyes of his mother, and shafts of light shone from the eyes of his father, who said,

Praise be Allah’s, who kept me alive so that I could see my successor who is from me and has the character and visage of the Prophet of Allah (s.a.w.a.), The Allah (s.w.t.) will keep him veiled, then he will appear and fill the earth with justice just as it has been filled with injustice and oppression.

The moisture dried up in the lady Hakima’s throat. Tears of surprise and joy filled the eyes of the observers. Honour and virtue like a weighty shadow spread their wings on the head of the new-born. In his face a flicker of a smile, mixed with a sea of tears. He was still in his cot when he said to Abu Nasr, the servant, ‘Do you know me? I am the last of Imams. The Almighty will repel all calamities from my followers.’

The birth of the most amazing human being became reality on the 15th of Sha’ban, in the year 255 A.H (869 A.D). Yet it was only a few moments before he started the ‘minor occupation’, which was lasted for 74 years.

The house of the Imamat had two responsibilities with regards to the birth of world’s saviour. For his safety and protection, they had to keep his birth a secret so that none of his enemies would discover his birth. At the same time, their second responsibility was to spread the news of the birth amongst the devoted followers to the extent that even after thousands of years no one has any doubt and deny the fact of his existence.

With the help of Allah (s.w.t.) they carried out both responsibilities very well. The news of the birth was kept so secret that even the brother of Imam Askari (a.s.), on the day of the Imam’s demise, did not know that his brother had a child. Mota’ammed, the khalifa of the time, and his spies charged with discovering the details of any such birth, also knew nothing until after the Imam Askari’s (a.s.) Martyrdom. After that they stormed his house a few times, but still they could find no clues.

On the other hand, they endeavoured to inform their devoted followers all over the world about the birth. An instance of this is the letter that Imam Askari (a.s.) wrote to his representative in the town of Qum:

O Ahmad bin Ishaq, the Almighty has given us a son and we wanted you to know of this joyful news and share it with us. Keep this secret from the people and tell only the closest friends and relations and our devoted followers.

The news of the Imam’s birth was spread from follower to follower; one of the followers of Imam by name of Hamza bin Abi’l-Fath met Hasan bin Mandar and conveyed to him the good news:

Glad Tidings! Last night a child was born to the lineage of the leadership *(Imamat)* but our Master says this is a secret that must be guarded and kept hidden.

Among the devoted followers there was much joy, and even more so among the distinguished members of the family. Hasan bin Husain, a grandson of Imam Husain (a.s.) rushed to congratulate Imam Askari (a.s.) on the occasion of the birth of his child.

But the family of Imam were not over-concerned to conceal the fact to friend that they had something to rejoice, even though they were extremely careful. Imam Askari (a.s.) called his nearest companion and instructed him to buy 10,000 loaves and 10,000 lots of meat and distribute it amongst the tribe of Bani Hashim. Moreover, enough sheep were slaughtered for each family of his followers in Samara to receive a sheep. To those living outside Samara he sent live sheep for them to slaughter and eat in celebration. To one follower by the name of Ibrahim bin Idris he sent two sheep with the written instruction, ‘Slaughter these on the occasion of Imam Mahdi’s (a.t.f.s.) birth. Invite your brothers and feed them also.’

With another four sheep that he sent to a follower outside Samara he wrote, ‘On the occasion of my son’s birth, slaughter these and feed any follower whom you can find.’

When Muhammad bin Ibrahim Kufi met Imam Askari (a.s.), Imam named all those who had been sent sacrificial sheep for his son’s birth, It is possible that his intention was to be able to call them as witnesses if the need arose. And perhaps for the same reason, Imam Askari (a.s.) invited his aunt; who was the daughter of the ninth Imam and sister of the tenth Imam (Imam Hadi) (a.s.) to be present at the birth and bear witness to all occurrences. She was much respected amongst the Bani Hashim family. A midwife was also invited, for the same reason. An honourable non-Shia lady (most probably a Christian lady) was also invited to be witness for her people. By grace of Allah (s.w.t.) some of her people were later guided.

On the third day of the birth, Imam Askari (a.s.) showed the child to a group of followers, so that they could see him with their own eyes and remove any doubt that might have arisen as time went by. Then the Imam Askari (a.s.) told them,

‘This is my successor and your leader after me. He is that ‘Qaem’ (the one who will ‘rise) for whose appearance all eyes will await; he will appear and fill the world with justice and peace after it has been filled with injustice and oppression.’

## Appearances of the Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) During His Father’s Lifetime:

During the period of five years when his father was Alive hundreds of followers saw the Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.). Among them:

1. Ahmad b. Ishaq the representative of Imam Askari (a.s.) in Qum. He met Imam Askari (a.s.) and asked him, ‘Who is the Imam after you?’ Imam entered his house and brought out a child. Ibn Ishaq said, the child who was three, had a face like the moon that appears on the fourteenth night of the month (i.e. a full moon; it was a shining face).

2. Amru al-Ahwazi said that, The Imam Askari (a.s.) showed his beloved son to me and said, “He is your leader.”

3. Muhammad bin Usmaan Ameer, Muhammad bin Ayubb. Nuh and Mo’avieh bin Hakim said, ‘Forty of us followers gathered in the presence of Imam Askari (a.s.) when he showed his beloved son to us and said, ‘This is your Imam after me; he is my successor. You must listen to him and prevent discord in your Religion, otherwise you are doomed.’

Then he said, ‘You will never see him again.’ They reported that they then departed and a few days later the Imam al-Askari (a.s.) passed away.

4. Yaghud bin Manqush said, ‘I asked the Imam, “Who is the Master of all time?” He said, ‘Remove the curtain! ‘When I did so I saw a beautiful child with a large forehead, attractive eyes, well-padded hands and a mole on his right cheek; he seemed to be about eight to ten years-old. Then I saw the child enter the house. Imam Askari (a.s.) said to me, “Go and see who is in the house!” I entered the house but there was no one there.’

In these examples the Imam al-Askari (a.s.) showed the child himself. These are the names of some other individuals who met the Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) during the lifetime of his father:

5. Ibrahim bin Muhammad bin Pars Neyshaburi said, ‘When I learned that the ruler of the time was angry with me and wanted to kill me, I said goodbye to my family so as to escape as far away as possible. I then went to say goodbye to the Imam al-Askari (a.s.). A child was sitting next to the Imam whose face was like the moon when full. The child told me, “O Ibrahim, do not flee. Allah (s.w.t.) has saved you from him.’ I was totally shocked at what the child had said and asked the Imam Askari (a.s.), “Who is this noble person who can see my deepest thoughts?” He replied, “He is my soil and successor who will disappear for a long time; and when the world is filled with injustice and oppression, he will bring justice and peace.” I asked the name of this noble born. The Imam replied, “He has the same name as the Prophet of Islam and his honour-name is the same as that of the Prophet.” He then told me not to mention his name or honour-name (kunya) as it would not be allowed until his appearance, ‘O Ibrahim, what you have heard or seen must be kept secret and no one should know except the devoted.”

6. Abu Harun saw the saviour in the first few days of his birth. He said, ‘I saw the ‘Lord of the time’ and his face was like the moon of the fourteenth night.’

7. Sa’ad bin Abdullah Qumi had the fortune of seeing the ‘Lord of the time’ in the presence of his father, and saw miracles from Imam.

8. Abdullah Souri saw the ‘Lord of the time’ during his childhood in the garden of Bani Amer.

9. Aqeed, the servant of Imam Askari (a.s.), frequently saw ‘the glowing ray and has mentioned some of his attributes. On many occasions when Imam Askari (a.s.) wanted to see his son, he would tell Aqeed to enter the house and fetch him.

10. Some of the entrusted sent Kamel bin Ibrahim Madani to Imam Askari (a.s.) to ask some questions. He entered and sat by the door with a curtain hanging on it. Before he started to ask his questions, a wind blew the curtain aside, and revealed a noble child. Kamel said, ‘I saw a noble born whose face was like the moon of the 14th Night. He was about 4 years old. He called my name and said, “O Kamel; have you come to ask Allah (s.w.t.)’s Proof about this and that?” Kamel said; from his dignity and presence, all the hair on my body stood on end. I replied, ‘Yes, my lord, straight away.’ He then revealed the questions one by one and he answered them all. Then the curtain fell back to its original position and I was no longer able to see the noble child. Then Imam Askari (a.s.) with look mixed with taught asked, ‘What else are you waiting for? All your questions have been answered by the proof of Allah (s.w.t.), and he will be Allah (s.w.t.)’s proof (Hujjatullah) after me.

Apart from these close friends and disciples of the Imam al-Askari (a.s.), some of the members of the house of Leadership are also on record as having met the Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.):

11. Lady Hakima, the aunt of the Imam al-Askari (a.s.), in addition to being present at the birth, also saw the Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) every forty days after his birth. No one else had this privilege. The lady Hakima said that whenever she decided to ask him a question, he always answered it before she had the chance to put the question to him, and when some incident happened for us he would send guidance for us.’

Another group of people used to serve at the household of the Imamat and met Allah (s.w.t.)’s proof many times. One of them, Aqeed, has already been mentioned.

12. Abu Naser met the Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) many times and had stood beside his cot and talked to him. He narrated many hadith from him.

13. Abu Ghanim met Allah (s.w.t.)’s proof on many occasions, including the third night of his birth, and he described his attributes.

14. Abu Ali al-Kheyzarani had a servant whom he sent to help Imam Askari (a.s.). She was present when Imam Askari (a.s.) passed away, and his house was attacked and robbed. She then took refuge at the house of Abu Ali, and told him many stories. One of them was that the Angels used to come to the cot of the Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) and seek his blessing.

15. Mu’reyen was one who served the house of leadership. She met the Lord of the time on the day of his birth when he pointed his index finger to the sky and said, ‘Praise be to Allah (s.w.t.) the Creator of the universe and His blessings be upon the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) and his household’.

16. The last person who met the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.) whilst his father was still alive was Abu Sahl Ismail. He met the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.) during the last minutes of his father’s life. Imam Askari (a.s.) wanted to drink an infusion of hot water, but he could not manage it on his own. So he asked his son to help him. His son took the bowl and helped his father to drink the infusion. His father then told him, ‘Good news, my child, after me you are the Lord of the time and the proof of Allah (s.w.t.), and my successor. Abu Sahl said, “When the Imam al-Askari (a.s.) had finished his sentence, he passed away.”

From the above mentioned examples it becomes clear that during the five years after the birth (255-261 A.H, 869-875 A.D) Imam Askari (a.s.) used every opportunity to introduce his son and to spread the news of his birth to his faithful and devoted followers throughout the world. Moreover, when he was close to death he arranged a meeting of forty of his closest devotees then he introduced his son to them, in order to remove any trace of doubt from their minds. He also wrote many letters to his devoted followers around the large expanse of Islamic land. One of these was a letter he sent fifteen days before his death to Madyan b. Abul-Adyan. And on the last night of his life he overcame his weakness and wrote many letters which he sent to Madina, despite the fact that he could not perform his own ablutions for the daily prayer, without help from his family.

As a result of the arduous efforts of the Imam al-Askari (a.s.) and his closest disciples, at the time of his demise all the trusted Shia knew about the existence of the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.).

## The Appearance of Allah (s.w.t.)’s Proof at His Father’s Funeral:

The funeral ceremony of Imam Askari (a.s.) was both sensitive and critical with regards to the subject of the future leadership of the community. If Imam Askari (a.s.)’s son had not attended his father’s funeral, then many simple-minded people would have harboured serious doubts, firstly because the government propaganda apparatus at that time tried with all its might to prove to the people that Imam Askari (a.s.) died without an heir, and secondly because the ignorant brother of Imam Askari (a.s.), who was nick named Ja’far the liar, tried his best to introduce himself as the successor of Imam Askari (a.s.). In order to legitimise his claim, Ja’far stood by the Imam’s coffin to accept the condolences of the Shi’as as head of the household of leadership. He was making himself ready to lead the prayer for his brother when the Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) made his surprise appearance and brushed his uncle aside. This event is narrated from one of Imam Askari (a.s.)’s disciples, Abu Ayan:

The coffin of Imam Askari (a.s.) was ready. Ja’far was standing by the door. People were coming group by group to commiserate his brother’s demise, and to congratulate him as the new leader. I knew about Ja’far’s reputation and thought to myself that if the leadership of the Imamat is transferred to him, it will be destroyed. Aqeed came and told Ja’far that the coffin was ready. Ja’far entered and stood by the body of the Imam and raised his hands to call to prayer.

Suddenly it was if an invisible hand had hit the chest of the forbidden stranger (Ja’far) and the sun shone, and a dark cloud disappeared from the horizon of the house.

A child of tender years, face slightly tanned, with a full head of hair shining like the sun, with the majesty of a mountain and the hardness of a sword, appeared from a corner of the house and, with confident steps, he came toward Ja’far. He gently tugged a corner of his uncle’s cloak and said to him. Go back uncle; it is more fitting that I do the prayer on my father’s body’. Ja’far, shocked and embarrassed, turned yellow and drew himself back. Then Allah (s.w.t.)’s Proof read the prayer for his father.

Ahmad bin Abdullah Hashimi said, the pure soul made such an entrance that we all rose to our feet as a sign of respect. From his appearance, he seemed to be about ten years old.’

Of those who attended the funeral prayer of Imam Askari (a.s.) and witnessed the appearance of the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.), the Mahdi (a.t.f.s.), the names of thirty-nine have been registered in the history books.

## The Miracles of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.):

As the impeccable leaders got nearer to the time of occultation (of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) they showed more miracles so that their devotees and followers could enter the period of occultation with strong will and belief.

It is for this reason that when we compare the number of miracles performed by Imam Hadi (a.s.) (the tenth Imam) and Imam Askari (a.s.) (the eleventh Imam), to the number of miracles performed by the other Imams; we observe that the later Imams performed many more miracles than their predecessors.

And it is for the same reason that in the minor occupation the histories record many miracles performed by the Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.), and the frequency of his miracles increased towards the time of his major occultation.

The Miracles of the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.) during the minor occultation were more than is possible to count, and with the exception of Allah (s.w.t.) nobody knows the exact number.

## On the Threshold of the Major Occultation:

During the seventy-four years of the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.)’s minor occultation, the devotees could ask any question and would receive guidance from the Imam through specially appointed deputies. This has set apart the first seventy four years from the rest of the occultation, so that it has acquired the name of the ‘minor occultation’. The deputies during these seventy-four years were:

1. Usmaan bin Sa’id, one of the special disciple of Imam Hadi (a.s.) (the tenth Imam) and Imam Askari (a.s.) (the eleventh Imam).

2. Muhammad the son of Usmaan bin Sa’id, who was appointed deputy after the death of his father.

3. Husain bin Ruh Nobakhti who was appointed deputy after the death of Muhammad bin Usmaan.

4. Ali bin Muhammad Samari who succeeded Ibn Ruh and was the last of the Imam’s special deputies.

With the death of the Ali bin Muhammad the era of the appointed deputy came to an end and no one claimed himself to be the deputy of the Imam without suffering the disgrace and humiliation of being exposed as an impostor.

On the ninth day of the month of Sha’ban in the year 329 A.H, 941 A.D this sacred decree was issued in the Imam’s handwriting. He wrote,

In the Name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate

O Ali bin Muhammad Al-Samari, May Allah (s.w.t.) give rewards to your brethren concerning your death; for indeed in six day’s time you will depart from this world So prepare your affairs, and do not appoint anyone to take your place since the minor occultation has taken place and major occultation has now occurred, there can be no appearance for long time, until Allah (s.w.t.) permits me to do so, after hearts become hard and world filled with injustice. In the near future someone shall come to my followers claiming that he has seen me, but, beware; anyone claiming to have seen me before the rise of al-Sufyani and the voice from the sky is slanderers and liars.

Six days after receiving this letter, as the Imam had foreseen, Ali bin Muhammad Samari passed away and from that moment the major occultation began.

## The Major Occultation:

No vital Islamic issue has ever been more debated or had more narrations written about it than the issue of the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.). Presently more than six thousand narrations exist about the Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.). From the beginning of the minor occultation of the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.) up until the present, numerous books have been written on the subject, in which the occultation has a special importance. More than two thousand books have been written during the past eighty years dealing with the subject of the occupation. It is interesting to note that before the birth of the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.) more than ten books had been written on the topic. Some of these books are:

1. Abu Ishaq Ibrahim bin Saleh Anmati al-Kufi al-Asadi, one of (the seventh Imam) Imam Musa b. Ja’afar’s disciples, wrote a book on the subject of the occultation. Ibn-Ghuluyeh, through a third party, has quoted from the author.

2. Abul-Hasan Ali bin al-Hasan bin Muhammad Ta’le Jarmi Shateri, one of Imam Musa bin Ja’far’s companions, wrote a book called *al-ghaibat* (the occultation).

3. Abul-Hasan Ali bin Umar A’araj Kufi, one of Imam Musa bin Ja’far’s disciples, has also written a book called *al-ghaibah.*

4. Hasan bin Ali bin Abil-Hamza Batayeni, one of the Imam al-Reza’s (The eight Imam) disciples, has also written a book on the subject of the occultation.

5. Abul-Fazl Abbas bin Hashem Nasheri (died 220 A.H, 834 A.D); another disciple of Imam Reza also wrote a book called *The Occultation.*

6. Abu Muhammad Fazil bin Shazaan Azdy, another disciple of Imam Reza (a.s.) who lived a long and fruitful life, wrote one hundred and eighty books explaining and defending the line of the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.). He died in the year 260 A.H, 874 A.D.

These were just a few examples of the books written before the birth of the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.) on the subject of his occultation. But the number of books which have been written about the occultation itself is innumerable. In these books there are more than one hundred narrations about the occultation told by the impeccable leaders themselves.

In many of these books there is an emphasis on the fact that, of the two occultation’s – the minor and the major, or the shorter and the longer – the second, major occultation will be so long that only sincerely devoted believers will accept its truth, and the rest will have doubts.

Some of the books state that during the second occultation nobody will be aware of his place and presence except his servants who are appointed especially for him.

## Appearances of the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.) During the Major Occultation:

In the sacred decree issued to Ali bin Muhammad Samari at the beginning of the major occultation, the Imam ordered his fourth deputy not to designate any successor in his last will and testament. This was to prevent any false claims by impostors. It states,

... Soon someone shall come to my followers claiming that he has seen me, but beware anyone claiming to have seen me before the rise of al-Sufyani and the voice from the sky are slanderers and liars.

Despite this warning, people have come forward claiming to be the Imam’s special representative, and have unfortunately misled thousands. For this reason the sacred decree made special mention of such individuals.

Nevertheless, up to now thousands of trustworthy Religious Scholars have had the honour of meeting the Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.).

During the minor occultation they would have known it was him, but in the major occultation they often could not recognise him, though after coming away and reasoning logically they come to the conclusion that it was the Imam they had seen. For example, the late Ayatollah Bahr al-Ulum (a.r.) had the privilege of meeting the Imam, and explained that, ‘The sacred decree is for those who claim to recognise the Imam when he appears.’

The late Sheikh Tusi (a.r.) says, ‘We can never claim that the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.) is hidden from all the Shia. It is possible that the Imam appears before some of them, who are the only people to be aware of this.’

The late Seyyed Murtuza Alam al-Huda (a.r.) in his *book ??? Tanziji ul-Anbiya* writes: ‘There is nothing to prevent the Imam from appearing before some of his friends whom he knows will not harm him. This is something that no one can disprove otherwise, because it is difficult to assess the other people’s natural disposition.’

The late Seyyed bin Tawus (a.r.) quotes the sacred decree and writes; ‘Although today, the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.) has not appeared before all, yet without a doubt many have had the honour of meeting him during his major occultation, and they have seen many of his Miracles. There is no reason for some not to meet him and benefit from his words and deeds.’

The late Allama Majlisi (a.r.) wrote on the sacred decree: ‘Perhaps by ‘observation’ in the sacred decree is meant representation and quotation from him.’

The late Mirza Nuri (a.r.) at the end of Jannat al-Ma’ava designated a chapter on the proof of observation and on the interpretation of the sacred decree: ‘There remains no doubt as to the possibility of the appearance of the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.) during the time of the Major Occultation.’

These are some of the greatest Scholars who had the honour of meeting the Imam, and whose accounts have been proven to be reliable:

1. Seyyed bin Tawus (a.r.) died 664 A.H. (1266 A.D)

2. Allama Hilli (a.r.) died 726 A.H (1328 A.D)

3. Bahr al-Ulum (a.r.) died 1212 A.H (1803 A.D)

4. Sheikh Murtuza Ansari (a.r.) died 1281 A.H (1872 A.D).

Hundreds of others have also met the Holy Imam. Their names are less famous and to mention them all would be a lengthy undertaking.

If we examine the meetings with the Holy Imam during the major occultation, we can conclude that, in most cases the reason was either educational or for assistance:

Most of the meetings concerning education were for the following reasons;

1. Solving difficult problems in the field of learning, as in the case of Moqaddas Ardabili (a.r.).

2. Teaching divine knowledge in the content of the Massoureh Prayer.

3. Insistence on issues which were being neglected, like the night prayer, supererogatory prayers, the ‘Ashura and Ja’me prayer. ;

4. The guidance of individuals, as the Imam appeared frequently for suitable non-Shia to guide them in the right path.

5. To cure very ill people on whom the doctors have given up. There are many cases of this which have been recorded in history.

6. Financial assistance in the shape of money transfers, accompanied by a definite sign. Again, there have been many occurrences of this kind.

7. Assistance for the lost ones, as has happened in hundreds of incidents where, for example, an individual has lagged behind a convoy, got lost, and faced certain death in the wilderness. When from deep down he has cried, ‘O Mahdi, help me!’ the Imam has rushed to help and saved that person.

## The Personal life of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.):

Many Scholars have written a multitude of books about the life of the Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) yet a few dimensions of his life have been told, above all the details of his personal life and where he is and how he lives.

This work is a small step towards discovering a new dimension in the life of Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.). As all aspects of Imams life have not been investigated before, therefore, this book cannot answer the entire question, but it is hoped, it will open a new chapter for researchers to investigate and analyse, hopefully resulting in the purification of many books on the subject.

Some of the individuals whose meeting with the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.) is beyond doubt expectable, believe that in the Atlantic ocean there are three islands beyond the range of possible enemies, where the residence of that Imam Mahdi is situated. One of these islands is the exclusive residence of the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.). The other island is the residence of his children, while the third island is designated for agriculture and animal husbandry which provides the food for all three islands. It is said that none of the residents are allowed onto the exclusive island except a number of them; they have various responsibilities and have the honour of serving the Imam.

## The Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.)’s Children and Companions:

On analysing narrations from the impeccable Imams (a.s.) we realise that the Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) does not live alone in his residence, but there are some companions in his presence, perhaps to relieve the tension of the Imam’s seclusion.

According to Imam Sadiq (a.s.) the number of his companions is thirty.

Allama Majlesi (a.r.) said this narration indicates that at any time there are always thirty people from the very close and devoted Shia in the service of the Imam (a.s.) when one of them passes away another replaces him.’

The late Mirza Nouri (a.r.) said, ‘If the destiny of these thirty people is that they do not live a long life, as the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.), it is then necessary that every century they are changed and others replace them. In any case, every century thirty of the devoted (children or others) have the honour of being next to that honourable Imam.’

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) also said, ‘In the major occupation no one has any information regarding the residence of the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.) except the very devoted Shia. In another narration he said, except one servant who is responsible for running the daily routine of his life.’

Therefore, it is understood from narrations that the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.) is not alone during the major occultation, but is surrounded by some of his closest disciples and children.

Now, whether the Imam in his major occultation has a wife and children, no proof for accepting or denying this exists. Yet when we examine this question from the following perspectives a probable picture can be obtained for proof that the Imam has married and has children. They three perspectives are those provided by the general laws of Islam, the narrations, and the texts of specific prayers. Let us consider each of these.

## The General Laws of Islam:

The general rules of Islam require that the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.), like the other Imams and sacred leaders, must marry and form a family in order to observe the custom of the Prophet of Islam.

Mirza Nuri (a.r.) said, ‘How can he not follow the custom of his great-grandfather, when it emphasises doing the right action and it forbidden to ignore them, and the best of people to follow the tradition of the Prophet is the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.). So far no one has mentioned any instance of an Imam acting contrary to the custom of the Prophet.’

The late Nahavandi said, ‘When considering the exceptional life and occultation of the Imam and the necessity of marriage, raising children and the banning of a monastic existence, it is inevitable that the Imam has a wife and children. Given the number of his children, due to the length of his life, they must require a special place, free of the existence of other than his disciples, where they could freely mention his name. Also his children should live in peace. Therefore, do not be deceived into believing he has no children, but denounce this as a myth’.

## Narrations:

Concerning the issue as to whether the Imam has wife or not the only clue that exists is from late Kafami as told in his *Misbah.* According to this narration the wife of the Imam is a descendant of Abd al-Azi, the son of Abd al-Muttallib.

Similarly, on the topic of his children, there are narrations which clearly prove their existence:

1. Seyyed bin Tawus (a.r.) in Jamal al-Asbua wrote, ‘I found a narration with numerous documents that the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.) has many children. They are governors and rulers of seaside towns and are noble, charitable and extremely pious.’

2. The Anbari narration which will be discussed in detail.

3. The narration of Ali bin Fazl, the complete text of which will be presented in this chapter.

4. Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said, ‘For the owner of this order, there are two occultation’s, one of which is so long that some people will say he passed away, some people will say he has been killed, while others will say that he has come and gone-except a small number of followers who will be strong in their belief. No one will know of his residence, even his children-except those who are designated to serve him.’

5. Muhammad bin Mashhadi quotes from Imam Sadiq (a.s.) in Mazar that, ‘It seems as if I see the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.) descending to the Mosque of Sahla with his family and friends.’

6. The Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.a.) on the last night of his life asked for paper and ink and made a long testament which Imam Ali (a.s.) wrote down. He also made his testament regarding the Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) and his children and he ordered that the testament be given to successive Imams hand by hand at the time of each one’s passing away until reaching the Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.).

## The Prayers:

In addition many prayers have been issued by the immaculate leaders or from his holiness to be read during the time of occultation, or at a Holy time in Holy places. These prayers mention the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.), his children and his family, and send salutations and regards to them. In these prayers his children and the members of his household are clearly mentioned and referred to, proving that the Imam has both wife and children. Therefore it can be concluded from the narrations that the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.) in his major occultation is accompanied by wife and children.

Obviously, during the eleven and half centuries of his life, the Imam’s children would be numerous. For this reason, perhaps the first question that arises concerns their where about. Where do they live? Do they live away from us? Do they live away from our sight? Or do they live normally, amongst us but in such a way that we are unable to recognise them? In the final pages we use the narrations to suggest that the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.) in his major occultation does not live alone, but always some of his children and servant are at his service, apart from whom nobody has any information about his residence itself......

## The Residence of the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.):

Regarding the location of the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.), what is definite and beyond doubt is that every year he attends the annual Hajj ceremony in Mecca. The masses of people cannot see him or recognise him. During his occultation many devoted individuals search for him in the Hajj ceremonies. Many have the privilege of meeting him there, next to the Kaaba. But apart from the period of Hajj, there is no other way to pinpoint his location. All we have in the narrations are a few references to the city of Madina, to ‘The Remote Lands’ and such like. Here are the details:

In a sacred decree issued in the year 410 A.H (1018 A.D), to Sheikh Mufid, which was written in the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.)’s handwriting, the Shaikh was told, ‘Although we reside in the remote lands to be far away from oppressors, this is Allah (s.w.t.)’s will for as long as the oppressors are rulers. Nothing is hidden from us about you, and we are aware of your difficulty and your worries since the time that some of you transgressed in a way which your rightful forefather kept away from, and you breached your promise to Allah (s.w.t.) and threw it behind you as if you never knew it; but we did not leave you and did not forget you, otherwise difficulties would have faced you and your enemies would have uprooted you.’

When they asked Imam Askari (a.s.) where they could find his son if anything happened to him, he replied, ‘In Medina.’

Imam Sadiq (a.s.), when discussing the major occultation said cryptically, ‘What a nice place is Madina’.

## The Plain of Hijaz:

Ibrahim bin Mehajar was summoned by the special envoy of the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.) to attend his presence. He crossed Taif and was guided to the plain of Hijaz, which is called Awali. There he had the honour of meeting the Imam. In this meeting the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.) said to him, I have promised my father to choose a residence in the remote lands, to be safe from my enemies. This agreement has brought me to the sandy region of Awali.’[[32]](#footnote-32)

## The Razavi Mountain:

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) has mentioned the Razavi mountain and said, ‘There is every fruit tree there what a good refuge it is for someone who wants to be hidden; what a good refuge it is for the owner of ‘Holy order’ who has two occultation’s, one short and the other very long.’

## Kar’eh:

The late Majlisi, in *Tazkerah al-A’imma* quotes from Sunni sources that the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.) resides during his major occultation is in a village called Kar’eh.

## Jabulqa and Jabulsa:

The late Mirza Nuri writes, ‘The existence of many successive reports prove that in the East and the West are two towns by the name of Jabulqa and Jabulsa whose inhabitants are friends of the Imam and in his rising they will come out.’ Research on the basis and origin of these two names has been fruitless. In fact, Suhrawardi, in his *Hekmat al-lshraq* places them in ‘the eight region’! Shahrzuri postulates that Jabulsa is the manifestation and universal grandeur of Allah (s.w.t.)’s Holy Names.

In all the ancient sources, there is much emphasis on these two names. According to these sources Jabulsa is in the most western part and Jabulqa in the most eastern part of the world. The names of these two towns were used in this sense in the sermons of Imam Hasan al-Mojtaba (the second Imam, (a.s.) in the presence of Mu’awiah. He addressed Mu’awiah and said, If you search from Jabulqa to Jabulsa to find a man from the lineage of the Prophet whose grandfather is the Prophet of Islam, you will not find such a one except my brother Husain and I’

## Bait al-Hamd:

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said. ‘For the owner of the Holy order there is a house which is called Bait al-Hamd. In that house there is a lamp which is lit on the day of his birth. This light will not extinguish until the day he rises up with the sword.

## The Blessed Islands:

The detailed and famous Anbari story tells that an honoured person in an open meeting with the government minister Awan al-Din gave the following account:

In the year 522 A.H (1130 A.D) I travelled from my birth place to the land of the Berbers with a commercial caravan. From there we embarked on a sea journey and finally we reached some islands. It was the first time that the captain of the ship had made this voyage. When we asked the names of the islands, it became clear that there were five islands: Mobarikah, Zahereh, Safieh, Zulum and Anatis. The inhabitants of these islands were all Muslim and Shia. Five of the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.)’s children ruled there: Taher, Qasim, Ibrahim, Abd al-Rahman and Hashim.

He then commented on how unique and pleasant their behaviour was. He introduced himself as a Christian. When he had finished talking, the minister, Awan al-Din, persuaded the gathering to swear not to mention the story anywhere. This story has nevertheless been quoted in many sources.

## The ‘Green Island’ (Jazirat al-Khazra):

In the year 690 A.H (1292 A.D) a noble person by the name of Zayn al-Din, Ali bin Fazil Mazanderani travelled to the Atlantic Ocean, From the Berber lands he travelled three days by ship to the heart of the Atlantic Ocean until he arrived at a group of islands. There he was informed of the ‘green island’ *(jazirat al-Khazra)* where the children of the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.) live. He stayed there for forty days until eventually seven ships laden with consumer goods reached their island. The ship’s captain called him by his name and said that he had been given his details and had permission to take him to the Green Island. After sixteen days at sea they came to ‘white waters’ and the captain explained that these waters surrounding the island prevented enemy ships from reaching it. The enemy ship would sink due to the presence of the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.).

On arrival at the Island, Ali bin Fazil saw a multitude of people in the best of clothes, a well-developed town with green trees and various fruits, and many beautiful bazaars whose building were made of glistening marble.

A noble person by the name of Sayyid Shams al-Din was introduced as the fifth grandchild of the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.), and as being in charge of education and administration. He was the Imam’s special deputy on the island and received his orders directly from the Imam, though he could not see the Imam himself. Each Friday morning a letter in the Imam’s own hand would be left at a certain place. It contained orders and requests for Sayyid Shams al-Din for the week ahead.

Ali bin Fazil stayed on that island for 18 days and kept the company of Sayyid Shams al-Din. After a time he received an order to go back to his homeland. All that he learned in the company of Sayyid Shams al-Din he gathered in a book that he called *al-Wa’id al-Shamsia.*

Fazil bin Yahya Tayyebi, the famous seventh century writer, heard the story in detail from Ali bin Fazil in Hilleh on the 11th of Shawwal in the year 669 A.H (1272 A.D). He then gathered the story in a book called, *al Jazirah al-Khazra* and this book later caught the attention of Shia Scholars. The first martyr wrote the story in his own script and it was later found in the treasury of Imam Ali. Mohaghegh Korki has translated into Persian. Allama Majlesi (a.r.) has recorded it in his *Bihar al-Anwar.* Moqaddas Ardabili has published it in his *Ithbat al-Huda.* Waheed Behbahani issued *a fatwa* based on its contents. Ghazi Nuru’llah al-Shushtari urged that it is essential for every devotee to learn it. Mirza Abdullah Esfahani (Afandi) has quoted it in his *Riaz al-Ulama.* Mirza Nuri has published it in his *Janat al-Ma’ava* and in his *Najm al-Thaqeb.* Many other devoted and learned Scholars have either reproduced it word for word or have quoted from it.

Thus the Ali bin Fazil story is trustworthy and reliable. He was a pious scholar and a unique personality of his time. Similarly, the narrator of his story is Fazil bin Yahya, who is also totally trustworthy.

According to this story the children of the Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) live on a remote island. The Imam takes part in the Hajj ceremony every year, then visits his descendants rest place (shrine) in different location, after which he returns to the island, where he resides and spends most of his time.

This raises an important question, namely, if such an island exists in the Atlantic Ocean then why has it not been discovered by seafarers or by astronomical mapping of the earth’s surface, especially when we consider the vast number of aeroplanes which travel the globe everyday? How is it possible that such a large area could be concealed from the gaze of aeroplanes, spacecraft satellite cameras and ships which have reconnaissance missions all over the earth?

The definite answer to this question is that it is possible for Allah (s.w.t.), when He wishes, to cover his Eminence from the eyes of his enemies, to protect him with his wife and children and servants. As Imam Ali (a.s.) said, ‘Before the awesome power of the Divine entity, great or small, light or heavy, all are puny, insignificant.’

Many miracles have been recorded of the Prophet of Islam, especially where he was shielded from the eyes of his enemies. The Holy Qur’an states,

When you recite the Holy Qur’an We place a curtain between thee and those who believe not in the Day of Resurrection.

It is recorded in the history that on many occasions Abu Sufiyan, Nazar b. Hareth, Abu Jahl and Umm Jamil, the wife of Abu-Lahab, tried to harm the Prophet of Islam. They came close to him but could not see him. Therefore, what difference does it make to Allah (s.w.t.) if there is large place situated in an ocean or a desert, when He wishes to conceal it from the eyes of the world; should anyone pass this place all they would see would be empty land and sea. As the late Nahavandi states, after mentioning some of the Holy Prophet’s Miracles by which he was hidden from his enemies,

As the occultation and longevity of the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.) is in general a Miracle of Allah (s.w.t.), so whoever or whatever is in the service of the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.) is another hidden miracle of Allah (s.w.t.), which logic accepts, and there is no way to reject this news.

Here is one of the Holy Imam’s prayers during his occultation:

O Allah, keep me covered from the eyes of my enemies and bring me and my friends together.’

So, while on one hand it is Allah (s.w.t.)’s will that His representative be hidden from his enemies, on the other hand the Imam himself requests this, ‘and his prayers are always accepted’.

Naturally, by Allah (s.w.t.)’s will, the Holy Imam and his Household (a.s.) will be protected and hidden from the eyes of his enemies.

Some writers are unrealistically pessimistic on this subject. They say that since the planet earth has over the last centuries been explored and mapped metre by metre, people are now aware of every corner of the earth. Despite this, no one has found such a place or such an island or such city. Had such a place existed it would have been discovered by now and be the premier Islamic location, therefore such a place does not exist.

As we will discuss later in the book, documents from western scientists show that these postulations are incorrect. Scientists accept that there are still many undiscovered places on earth. Therefore, it is not appropriate for a researcher to say that something does not exist merely because it has not been discovered. After all, much of the western world thought the earth was flat until it was proven otherwise. Only a few centuries ago Christian scientists thought that the planets and the sun revolved around the earth, and it was a crime to say otherwise.

Moreover, we are today aware of such phenomena as ‘The Bermuda Triangle’. This is the name given to a large expanse of sea and islands situated in the region of Bermuda. So far no vessel has reached the middle of this area, and no plane has managed to cross it. More interesting than that is the’ white water’ that corresponds to the sayings of Ali b. Fazil more than seven centuries ago. Until now no ship has reached these waters, but has sunk without trace. No plane has flown over the area except to disappear, leaving no clues. Incidents of this type have taken many ships and planes on reconnaissance missions but nothing was found. These incidents remind us of the words quoted by Ali b. Fazil from the ship’s captain. He said, ‘When enemy ships enter these white waters, whatever their capacity, they sink because of the presence of our blessed Imam.’ This corresponds exactly to what pilots and sailors have said in their reports that have reached us.

## The Bermuda Triangle:

The Bermuda Triangle is the name given to an area in the Atlantic Ocean in which a great frequency of unexplained incidents occurs. These incidents have attracted the attention of hundreds of the world researchers, who with keen effort have tried to discover its deepest secret. However, the more they have tried, the less they have succeeded, and till now no sound and reliable theory has been produced. John Allah (s.w.t.) win, Writer of the book “This Baffling World” writes, these incidents are a mystery of our time, just as “the power of radium was to alchemists of the fifteenth century.”

Charles Berlitz whose work has attracted world-wide attention also writes, ‘For although we stand on the threshold of space, somewhat wistfully contemplating the cosmos while believing that the world, now so thoroughly explored, has no more mystery for us, it is nevertheless true that about three fifths of the world’s area, the abyssel depths of the sea, are about as clearly or even less known to us as the craters of the moon.’

## The Geographical Location:

The Bermuda triangle is situated on the western side of the Atlantic Ocean. On its eastern point is Florida. On the northern point are the islands of Antil, and on the southern point is the island of Bermuda, from which the area takes its name. At the head of triangle are situated Miami and San Juan. The term ‘Bermuda Triangle’ was first used by

Vincent Gaddis in his book *The Invisible Horizon* and since then the name has remained.

## The Bermuda Islands:

In the north-west of the Atlantic Ocean are about three hundred and sixty small islands that are known as the Bermuda Islands. The capital of these islands is called Hamilton. The Bermuda Islands are called the paradise of the Atlantic Ocean; as they are uncommonly beautiful and pleasant.

The largest of the islands is called Bermuda. Other prominent islands are the islands of St George, St David, Gooper, Somerset and Long Island. In all, the twenty main islands are inhabited by approximately sixty thousand people. Although the islands are in a tropical climate, yet the weather is very pleasant. When it is snowing in New York, Bermuda is covered in tulips. Bermudas’ main economic exports are fresh vegetables and flowers to the U.S.A, when they are out of season in America’s winter.

The islands were first found by a Spanish explorer called Juan Duermder, in 1519 A.D.

In 1609 A.D George Somers’ ship broke-up on the shores of these islands, and the islands were given by him to the British.

The island of Bermuda is situated at approximately 33 degrees north and 64 degrees west.

The port of Miami in eastern Florida is the most important American port in the area. Florida has a population of four million and is the twenty-seventh state of the U.S.A.

San Juan is the capital of Puerto Rico, and is situated to the east of the Dominican Republic. With a population of three million, Puerto Rico is one of the larger islands of the Caribbean.

One side of the triangle runs from Bermuda to Miami and is adjacent to the Gulf Stream. The other side runs from Miami to Puerto Rico and is adjacent to the warm equatorial stream. The third side of the triangle runs from Puerto Rico to Bermuda and is situated near the Sargasso Sea.

## The Sargasso Sea:

The largest area of the Bermuda Triangle is situated near the Sargasso Sea. This sea covers a large of the western Atlantic Ocean. It is characterised by the abundance of a special kind of seaweed which floats on the surface called sargassum, which separates this sea from the rest of the ocean.

Sub-aqueous mountains have formed under the sea. The highest of these mountains protrudes from the water where the Azore islands are located. Apart from the surf on the shores of the islands, the rest of the sea is calm and without current.

Thousands of years ago, the Phoenicians and Carthaginian described the sea as calm. Five hundred years before the birth of Christ, a Carthaginian mariner who sailed on this sea said, ‘No wind guided our ship.’

## The Long History:

The hidden secrets of this part of the world have a very long history, and mixed with the history of the new continent, the first strange incident on record was registered by Christopher Columbus. At the end of September 1942 A.D, on a voyage approaching the new continent, Columbus came to the western side of the Sargasso Sea, where he was surprised by the cessation of his ship’s compass.

Five centuries later, this electromagnetic interference still exists in the triangle at sea and in the air. During these five centuries, strange happenings have never ceased, and with the advent of modern communication technology, the news of these incidents has spread all over the world. At first, the news of these incidents seemed so strange and unbelievable that the reports were received with much doubt and scepticism, yet with the disappearance of so many ships and submarines that scepticism has disappeared.

As these incidents increased, the U.S. authorities began to investigate possible causes. On the 5th of December, 1945, a group of fighter planes were sent on a mission from the military base at Fort Lauderdale. These planes were flown by five pilots and nine novice pilots. All the planes disappeared.

The Martin Mariner, a heavy-duty rescue plane, was also dispatched but met the same disaster. Incidents occurring in Bermuda Triangle have entered a new dimension and any aircraft which violated airspace of the white waters has disappeared without a trace. Any rescue planes sent, have also suffered the same fate.

The American authorities reluctantly admitted the situation and invited experts from all over the world for a seminar. Hundreds of scientists with extensive facilities at their disposal were primed. Yet ever since the second part of the 19th century, the Bermuda Triangle has increasingly been discussed and debated. Many scientists and researchers have travelled to the area and have written valuable and interesting books.[[33]](#footnote-33)

One book, which has been printed more than other and caught the world’s attention, is *The Bermuda Triangle* by the American writer Charles Berlitz, This book was written in 1973 and has been translated into many languages. Many Eastern and Western scientists have also written valuable articles on the subject in scientific magazines of the world.[[34]](#footnote-34)

And of course there have been hundreds of interviews and reports from pilots and sailors documented in the world media.

Many scientific and research organisations are involved in inquiries into the possible origin of the strange phenomena of the Bermuda Triangle:

1. The National Research Organisation for Space Phenomenon.

2. The Society of Researchers into Unexplained Phenomenon.

3. The Centre for Research and Study of Complex Artistic and Scientific Issues (ISIS)

4. The Bolimod Project

5. The Magnet Project.

## Scientific Research:

The mystery surrounding the Bermuda Triangle came to the world’s attention through a series of disparate air and sea incidents. Initially, scientists had little information to work with, and their research work yielded no positive results, but only partial and incoherent theories. This led the American and Russian authorities to draw up a project by the name of ‘the Bolimod Project’ to further investigate the mystery.

According to the Bulgarian magazine, *Baraleili* in the first days of the project, a ship, the Victor Boghayev, and a research group departed from the port of Halifax Kennedy. Its destination was the Bermuda Triangle. Four Russian and five American vessels took part in this co-operation with the intention of investigating the Bermuda Triangle. The project continued for about eighteen months until the end of 1978. It was then halted without result.

Since then, scientists and researchers have produced many theories. Most researchers have seen the incidents as being caused by natural forces. Some scientists made a connection between the incidents and flying saucers which have been seen in the area, while some believe that rays from the lost city of Atlantis are to blame. Here is a breakdown of the fruits of their research. It will be seen that even after extensive research, no reliable theory that complies with the rules of physics has been found. Only a series of incomplete theories have been put forward. Some of the theories could explain a few of the incidents, but none can explain them all. These are some of the theories which have been put forward by the world’s scientists:

### 1. The Whirlpool and Air-Pocket Theory:

Some Scientists consider that whirlpools and air-pockets were the cause of the incidents. They maintain that as a result of the variable gravity and unnatural magnetic field in the area, huge typhoons and whirlpools occur. According to this theory, planes flying over the area are sucked in and then cast out beyond the atmosphere, and ships sink to the bottom of the sea.

One of the shortcomings of this theory is that there is no evidence of any ship actually sinking. Whenever a ship sinks there remains some evidence of its sinking, in the form of wreckage, however great or small. Research ships collect any items of wreckage in order to discover the place and cause of the disaster. Yet no such clues have been found in connection with the incidents of the triangle. If the whirlpool and air-pocket theory were true, some wreckage should have been found or at very least some petrol or oil on the surface of the water. Moreover, the theory does not explain why some ships are returned unharmed, or why some come back intact with only their passengers missing, with no sign of violence.

### 2. Mechanical Fault:

It has been postulated by some researchers that perhaps an undiscovered mechanical fault could be to blame. For many this is too vague, and the theory has been countered by views that with the disappearance of atomic submarines, the matter is far too important to be simply put aside after putting the blame on unexplained ‘mechanical faults’.

### 3. Human Error:

Human error in the form of inexperienced or negligent pilots and ship’s officers has also been blamed for these occurrences. Various inquiries have concluded that the pilots and navigators were not sufficiently competent to guide their vessels safely, or had made serious errors in their calculations. What this theory fails to explain is the repeated and sudden disappearances in a particular area.

### 4. Heavy Traffic:

Others claim that because this area has a heavy volume of traffic, naturally it will have a higher record of accidents. But this too is seen as weak theory, for no other area has such instances of strange and unexplainable occurrences. There is a definite difference between a sea that gives back the wreckage and one that consumes everything.

### 5. Changeable and unpredictable weather:

Some researchers believe that the climate in the Caribbean Sea is so unpredictable, a storm can suddenly and without warning break and produce an accident. The deficiencies of this theory are much the same as those given above and its weakness is accentuated by the fact that many of the disappearances took place in fine weather.

### 6. Media Sensationalism:

Another view is that the whole situation has been exaggerated and magnified by the world press. One Russian writer, Leanid Braykonski, goes so far as to consider the reports to be a fabrication of the ‘Imperialistic newspapers’. This theory has to be discounted, as the disappearance of hundreds of planes and ships is something very real.

### 7. Characteristics Unique to the Gulf Stream:

Some scientists consider that the meeting of the warm waters of the Gulf Stream and the cooler currents of the equatorial waters is to blame, despite the fact that most of the incidents occurred in the calm waters of the Sargasso Sea.

### 8. The ‘White Waters’:

Some believe a connection exists between the incidents and the mysterious ‘white water’. From our point of view, this suggestion presents a clue to the real nature of the Bermuda Triangle, and we return to it later in chapter.

### 9. The ‘Green Light’:

Researchers have discussed the strange green light, which penetrates aeroplanes within the triangle, and believe there is a connection. This too presents an important link with the historical sources, and we return to it later.

### 10. Sea Depth:

Ivan Sanderson postulates that the answer to the incidents lies in the extraordinary depth of the ocean, and that is where the ultimate conclusion will be found.

### 11. Luminous UFOs:

John Spencer and a group of other researchers believe that there is a connection between the incident and Unidentified Flying Objects seen occasionally in the vicinity. They believe that creatures from outer space are trying to access our technological progress. It is said that the traffic of these UFOs is particularly heavy in the Bermuda Triangle, as the area is their base. This is why whatever goes into this area is destroyed so that no news leaks out.

This theory seems to have the support of the American writer Charles Berlitz. Another American writer, Ivan Lee Sanderson, agrees in his book *The Hidden Secrets* that in all the fatal incidents unidentified flying objects have been observed within the vicinity, and he concludes that these luminous objects are connected to the incidents.

Were this to be true, the question would arise as to who controls these crafts. It is said that Einstein postulated that they might be controlled by a group of the human race who left the earth around 20,000 years ago. Perhaps he had some evidence to support this suggestion, but if it is possible that they are controlled by humans ‘in exile from the past’, there seems to be no clear reason why they should be from specifically twenty thousand years ago. To us, it seems perfectly possible that if they do exist, they could pertain to the ‘inheritors of the earth’, who for centuries have been behind a curtain of occultation with their Imam, waiting for the command of Allah (s.w.t.) to appear and establish the promised single world government of justice, freedom, dignity and honour.

### 12. Suspension in a Time-Warp:

Dr. Manson Valentine has observed the area for many years; he believes that the people who are missing from the victim ships and planes were thrown into another dimension of space and time, where they are alive.

### 13. Exception to the Laws of Nature:

Yet another theory is that the area exists outside the laws of nature, and cannot be explained in reference to the natural laws.

### 14. Magnetic Compass:

The area is said to be one of two points on the earth’s surface where the magnetic compass shows true north. This, apparently, is one of the area’s special features, and some scientists believe that the area’s unusual magnetic force causes disturbance in the compasses and altimeters of planes and ships, and that these in turn have led to the incidents.

The theory fails to explain why some craft vanish with all those on board, others are found without their passengers, and some survive.

### 15. The Lost Continent:

Some believe that the lost continent and civilisation of Atlantis still exists in the Atlantic Ocean and in the Bermuda Triangle in particular, and that is the cause of these incidents.

### 16. Pyramids:

Some say that there are submerged pyramid-shaped features on the ocean floor, and these might be the cause. They say that submarine radar has indicated that there is a pyramid at the bottom of the ocean. It has a height of 128m and its base is 164m and is situated at a depth of 900m from the surface of the sea, and is situated 200 miles south of the Bahamas.

### 17. Unknown Minerals:

Others have postulated that the ocean floor in the area could possibly contain undiscovered metals that affect the magnetic field and therefore cause these incidents.

### 18. Invisible Magnetic Force:

Wilbert B. Smith believes that an invisible magnetic force causes the incidents.

### 19. Supernatural Origin:

M.K. Jessop states that a supernatural power exists within the area, and this cannot be taken into account by other theories. American researchers have clearly stated that there must be some type of supernatural force in the area, its origin possibly from the earth or possibly not. They reason that this must be consuming everything it conies upon.

### 20. Changes in the Moon:

One Russian scientist has provided yet another theory, postulating that these incidents were caused by changes in the moon. This too can be no better than a partial explanation, that is too fails to explain why the moon should have such effects on this particular area.

### 21. The Atomic Ray Theory:

Some scientists believe that there is an atomic ray effect in the triangle. The ray is supposed to have the same effect as a laser. When the weather is fine the sun becomes an energy source which gives off an atomic ray. When this ray reaches the surface of the ocean a contrasting ray rises in opposition, and this destroys the craft, in effect vaporising it. But if that were so, why do some ships lose all their passengers without suffering any damage?

### 22. Infrasonic Waves:

When a cyclone or whirlwind occurs, sound waves are produced whose speed exceeds the level of sound, and when their speed reaches 330 meters per second, the speed of the sound waves exceeds the speed of the whirlwind itself. Biologists have suggested that the weaker type of these waves cause extreme fright and sea sickness, that medium speed waves cause temporary blindness, and that when they reach the speed of 7 hertz they cause death. Unfortunately, there is no scientific basis to this theory, as no controlled research has been able to support it.

### 23. Sea Swells:

Some Russian engineers believe that the cause of all the incidents is a swell which is produced as a result of the clash between the huge waves and opposing sea currents. The height of these swells can reach a few kilometres, enough to sink a ship. This theory does not explain why the vanished vessels leave no wreckage behind.

### 24. A Crack in the Earth’s Mantle:

Finally, some researchers believe that on certain occasions the ocean floor cracks and sucks in a vast amount of water, and with it whatever ships are in the area. This view is also proven to be unscientific. As put by the Russian Academy: ‘Do the researchers not realise that the slightest tremor or movement in the earth’s surface is registered by numerous seismology centres, and that it is not impossible for such events to occur at the bottom of the ocean without being registered at any of the centres. No such movements of the earth have been recorded in the area.’

It is clear that none of these theories solve the mystery of the Bermuda Triangle completely. Everyone involved in some way or other with the issues of the Bermuda Triangle agrees that something mysterious exists there. Charles Berlitz writes that whatever the answer to this amazing puzzle, it is certainly connected to the sea, and this is presently one of the most baffling phenomena facing mankind. He maintains that, until his time of writing, no plane or ship had managed to cross this area safely. For Berlitz, this phenomenon seems to be a form of caution or warning to the people that there is a mysterious and unnatural force existing there. One American Naval officer has said that we have always believed that something strange exists in the Bermuda Triangle, but so far no one has managed to discover its origin. No logical or physical reason can be found for these incidents, it is as if a ship suddenly disappears by some type of electronic camouflage.

## The White Waters:

Christopher Columbus was the first person to notice the mysterious glow of the sea within the area. He noticed that the waters at the western edge of the Sargasso were white and shining, even as he stood on the deck of his ship the Santa Maria[[35]](#footnote-35) two hours after sunset.

Today, the sparkling of these white waters is so bright that it is noticeable in outer space. Astronauts on the Apollo 12 mission noticed the white waters of the Bermuda Triangle as the last visible luminescence of the earth at dusk. It cannot be stressed enough how important the white water phenomenon is to the incidents of the Bermuda Triangle, as these white waters have been reported on many occasions.

In the last message received from the pilot of one of the doomed aeroplanes, reference was made to ‘white waters’:

‘... We are completely lost; we have entered white waters....’

No other message was received from him. The source of the luminescence is not clear as yet. Edgar Keiss believes that these white waters could have been produced by enormous generators, which could produce the necessary force to move a spaceship, and to make television and radio waves and to take telephoto images from long distances. He believes that the inhabitants of the triangle thousands of years before the disco very of laser have used the crystal as a source of energy. For ourselves, the whole matter is a mystery, but we cannot help being reminded of Ali bin Fazil and the comment by the captain of the ship that took him to the’ Green Island’:

... The white waters surround the Green Island like a wall. Whatever the strength of our enemies, when they enter these waters, they will sink, due to the presence of our Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.).

## The Green Light:

In some of the reports of the Bermuda Triangle there is mention of a ‘green light’. Like the ‘white waters’, this too provides a link with the traditional story of the ‘Green Island’.

Chuck Weekly, an American flight instructor, is one of those who have described his experience of the ‘Green Light’:

I left Nassau airport a little while after sunset. The air was fine and clear, the stars were shining. At about 9.30pm, we flew over the northern-most point of Andrews.

I was about 30-50 miles past Andrews, on a straight route towards Bikini, at a height of 8000 feet, when I noticed an unusual thing. The wings of the plane were shining, luminescent. At first I thought it was the reflection of the lights in the pilot’s cabin on the coloured plastic, on the interior of the cabin. I thought I had visual error, because the bright wings seemed greenish-blue, when in fact their real colour was white. After five minutes the intensity of the colour of the wings was so much, I could not see the dial.... The electronic gadgets in the plane were either out of order or out of my control, or working wrongly. Soon the whole plane was luminescent, the light was not reflected, and it emanated from within the plane itself. I looked out of the window at the wings and realised that the luminous situation was unusual... The blinding luminosity continued for a further five minutes and then gradually reduced. When the light disappeared, all the equipment went back to normal.......

After landing I explained my experience to other pilots. It becomes clear that this had happened many of them too, but they did not want to talk about it.

It is also worthy to note that a group of discovery planes flying over the Atlantic Ocean suffered the same fate as the other planes when they came to fly over the Bermuda Triangle. In the last message, they too mentioned a green luminosity:

‘...the plane is not in our control anymore. All the equipment is out of order; we are on the white waters.... We can see an island in the middle of the white waters, but a green light has surrounded it and we cannot film it...’

At that the connection was lost and nothing was ever heard of them again.

The same form of message has been reported from other ‘planes. Taken together, such accounts in which this green luminosity is mentioned seem to provide a clear link with the ‘Green Island’ in history. Why is it called’ the Green Island’? Is it because there is something special about its greenness? After all, nearly all the world’s islands are green and lush. So, perhaps there could be a hidden meaning to the island being termed ‘green’ *(Khazra)* it is possible that the Imam’s refuge has a green luminosity emanating from it, and this is why it is called the ‘Green Island’ *(Jazirat al-Khazra).*

Accordingly, this green luminosity strengthens the probability that perhaps the refuge of the promised messiah is situated in the Atlantic Ocean within the Bermuda Triangle, and that all these incidents are connected to the one invisible divine force. If so, then the researchers are naturally unable to detect the cause of the incidents within the Bermuda Triangle. All the incidents are connected to ‘something’ in the centre of the Bermuda Triangle which, up till the present, no plane has managed to cross-even though there are inhabited islands close-by that planes and ships are able to reach in safely. Although some incidents have occurred there too, but in these incidents those involved were rescued, and did not mysteriously disappear.

## The Limitations of Human Knowledge:

It is clear that with all the progress in science and technology, the capability of space travel and the development of the computer and so much more, still not every problem of our time have been solved, and not all the secrets of the universe have been made apparent. Human knowledge in juxtaposition to the mysteries of creation is like a droplet of water in the ocean. Despite the rapid progress of humanity and its industry, technology, culture and civilisation, mankind is unable to conquer the simplest problems of the natural world. Man, who sets himself the task of building space stations, is still unable to prevent earthquakes, hurricanes, infernos or even the simplest floods. How often is it true that when only a few centimetres of rain or a few millimetres of snow fall, the wheels of civilisation grind to a halt, and not even the advanced computers or spaceships can help one iota. How beautiful and tender is the Holy Qur’an’s saying, where it explains eloquently the weakness of the human being before Allah (s.w.t.):

O Mankind, a parable is struck, so listen to it: indeed those ye call upon besides Allah could never create a fly, if all met together for the purpose! And were a fly to take a thing from them, they could not retrieve it from it; feeble are those who petition and those whom they petition.[[36]](#footnote-36)

Civilised man with all his arrogance and pride can do nothing to a fly which has taken something from him. Could all his sophisticated machines and inventions help him to get it back? Proud man, for whom the world is too small and so he wishes to make the stars his arena, still cannot conquer the mosquito,

The Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (a.s.) was once arrested by Mansur Davanaki, the ruler of his time, and brought to his palace. As Mansur was speaking to the Imam with extreme pride and haughtiness, a mosquito bothered him to such an extent that he totally lost his composure. He turned to the wise Imam and asked him why Allah (s.w.t.) created this creature. Without delay the Imam replied, ‘So as to humiliate the oppressors.’

Mankind can never claim to have discovered all the secrets of nature, much less to have conquered them. Indeed, as the verse and the account of Imam Sadiq (a.s.) show, mankind before the creation is like a straw caught on a Mountainous wave in the ocean with no power over its destiny. So how can he know the ocean and the secrets contained within it, Even the astronomer sat in his technological observatory, with the most powerful and advanced telescope, all the information he has gathered is like a drop in the ocean, and that too ‘an ocean with undiscovered shores.’

The earth we inhabit is so minuscule when compared to the celestial bodies that it cannot be observed from other planets in the solar system without powerful telescopes, and even the range of the most powerful telescopes fall short in comparison to the size of the rest of the galaxies, let alone the nebulas which remain as yet undiscovered. Mankind is not completely familiar with the planets of his own Solar System.

The term ‘light year’ refers to a unit of distance used in astronomy equal to the distance travelled by light in one solar year (i.e. 9.4607 x 10M15). Light travels 300,000 km every second, 18,000,000 km in every minute, 1,000,080,000,000 km every hour, 25,000,920,000,000 km every day or 777,000,600,000,000 km every month.

Based on this information, the ‘light-year’ is 9,331 billion and 200 million kilometres. If it is said that a star is one light-year away from us, we understand that its distance from earth is 9331 billion and 200 million km.

Amongst all of the celestial bodies, the closest to the earth is the moon, which is our next door neighbour. Its average distance from the earth is about 3 84000 km, and for light to travel this length in time, takes one second and a third. The planet Venus, at a distance from the earth of between 252,000,000 km and 40,000,000 km, is the closest planet. The sun, with an average distance of 149,500,000 km, is of course the closest of the stars to the earth. Its rays take eight ‘light minutes’ to reach us. After the sun, the ‘closest’ of the stars to us is the star Proxima, which has a distance of four light years from us. Next are Capillaceous, nine light years away, Capricorn, fifty light years, Capelia, forty light years, and the Pleiades at a distance of one hundred and forty light years away. These are the sun’s closest neighbours.

Beyond our galaxy we can visit the neighbouring galaxy. If we could travel by the speed of light, it would take us a million years to reach it. There are many nebulas that have been discovered and counted, but the real number is innumerable and can be known only to Allah (s.w.t.). The number of stars in our galaxy is estimated at 30 billion and in distant galaxies, millions of stars exist from millions of years ago, and their light as yet has not reached us.

Despite the everyday breakthroughs in science and technology, still mankind has not been able to build a telescope, advanced enough to observe the whole area of the universe and to be able to measure it, particularly when the universe is expanding so rapidly. The Holy Qur’an states clearly on this matter,

‘We raised the sky with might, and every moment we expand it.’

The expansion of the universe as specified in the Holy Qur’an was until the beginning of the 19th century shrouded in ignorance. It was only when Abe Lometre discovered the theory of the expansion of the universe that the meaning of the noble verse became clear. Based on the opinion of the astronomers, the universe is expanding with amazing speed. They postulate that the ‘galloping’ galaxy is expanding at 60,000 km per second, or 200 million km per hour.

Man with his limited vision sits in a corner of the earth, gazes at the universe and is baffled at all the secrets of the universe which he feels he will never discover. The true man then places his forehead on the earth in submission to the Allah (s.w.t.), and his heart resounds with the sentiments expressed in this verse of the Holy Qur’an:

Indeed in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day, and the ships that sail through the sea with what benefits humankind, and in the water Creator sends down from the heaven thus enlivening with it the earth after its death and all the creatures upon the earth, and the movement of the winds and clouds which listen to the order of the Creator, these are the sign on the earth for, those who use their wisdom and intellect.[[37]](#footnote-37)

Our discussions are to point out the limitations of human knowledge and it does not mean that we totally denigrate the efforts of scientists and researchers round the world. We appreciate the efforts that are made to push forward the frontiers of knowledge and illuminate ignorance. However, we must constantly remind ourselves not to feel proud of what we know, nor dismiss what we do not know or understand, and not reject something because it does not fit the theory. This is the disease of the ignorant. Scientists realise that the more they learn, the less they know, and respectfully they bow in front of the greatness of the universe and its creator. William James says:

“I have more than fifty years unanswered questions, if only I could find someone to answer them”.

Among the important Issues for which as yet the world’s researchers have no reliable answer is the mysterious Bermuda Triangle.

## Is the ‘Green Island’ Located in the Bermuda Triangle?

As stated previously, a ‘green island’ *(jazirat khazra)* is the possible residence of the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.). The story has been narrated from the book *Bihar al- Anwar,* written by late Allama Majlesi, seven hundred years ago. Various Scholars had the privilege of visiting this island and their descriptions of the island bear a startling resemblance to the location of the Bermuda Triangle. Both are situated in the Atlantic Ocean, both are surrounded by ‘white waters’ and both cause the destruction to craft of different types, and anything else which transgresses their border.

We cannot say definitely that the Bermuda triangle and the ‘Green Island’ are one and the same, only Allah (s.w.t.) knows that. Nevertheless, here we wish to explore the similarities between what we know of the Bermuda triangle and the narration of Sheikh Zein al-Deen Mazanderani concerning his journey to Spain and then to the ‘Green Island’ as well as its characteristics. We look forward to the day when the founder of united world government, based on justice and freedom, will appear and solve all the problems of the world with his capabilities and free us from our present strife and doubt.

As explained, the Atlantic Ocean is the largest in the world after the Pacific Ocean. Its area covers 82 million square kilometres and occupies the space between the continents of America and Europe and Africa. The Atlantic Ocean is now connected to the Pacific Ocean via the Panama Canal, while the Mediterranean Sea meets the Atlantic Ocean at the Straits of Gibraltar. From the port of Dakka, capital of Senegal on the West coast of Africa, to the shores of Brazil is the shortest shipping route between the two continents of Africa and America.

Thousands of rivers pour from the shores of Europe, Africa and America into this ocean, and in the Atlantic many currents flow, of which the most important is the Gulf Stream. These currents cause the formation of thick fog which generally covers the sky of the ocean from shore to shore. It is the most popular shipping route in the world, between the ‘old world’ of Africa and Europe and the ‘new world’ of the Americas.

Many geographers and tourists past and present have explained the characteristics of the Atlantic Ocean. The famous seventh century scholar and scientist Ahmad Nowairi wrote:

The Atlantic Ocean is also known as the dark sea, because there is always thick fog covering the skies. And therefore its shape is not visible, and for this reason not enough information has been gathered on its mountain-like waves, its heavy waters and treacherous climate. Of its inhabitable areas, only the islands near land are known. Of the recognised islands...in the eastern section there are six islands on the latitude of China that are named the Scilly Isles. The inhabitants are all descendants of Ali (a.s.) who escaped the Ummayids[[38]](#footnote-38) and took refuge there. It is said that anyone who enters these islands does not wish to leave because their climate is so pleasant and its water refreshing.... Of the more developed islands in this ocean is the island of Brittany, where the people have blond hair and blue eyes. Parallel to France there are islands which are inhabited by...people who do not follow any Religion and are not the colony of any country. In this ocean there is an island whose perimeter is bigger than the other developed island. It has three developed cities. Its climate is rainy and snowy, its land green and lush. The island of England (sic) which has developed cities has high mountains and vast plains with a wintry climate; it is twelve miles off the coast of Europe.

## The Bermuda Triangle:

At the western edge of the Atlantic Ocean is that mysterious area which has for so long been a centre of world-wide interest. The incidents that have occurred in this area are almost beyond belief, and the reader could be forgiven for regarding them as fictional, as no such incidents have happened elsewhere in the world. Although known for its still waters, yet from ancient times it has been feared as a frightening and dangerous place. A few years ago in Paris, four books were published about the Bermuda Triangle which has described the area as ominous, mysterious, legendary, and full of secrets. Among the names that sailors have given to the area are the ‘sea of ghosts’, the ‘sea of the last’, the ‘ships graveyard’, the ‘Atlantic graveyard’, and the ‘sea of fear’. These names make it very clear that sailors fear the area, and for centuries have tried to avoid the area so as not to become its victims.

Nowadays it is under the name ‘the Bermuda Triangle’ that the area has gained the attention of the world and its media, and also the centres of research.[[39]](#footnote-39)

The investigations of the scientists into the incidents of the Bermuda Triangle are not limited to the mysterious ways in which ships and aeroplanes disappear, for other incidents occur which are no less puzzling. For instance, passengers who have encountered the phenomenon have found that their watches had all gone faulty, while pilots and sailors have experienced interference with their compasses, radios and other equipment.

The Bulgarian magazine Baraleili writes that in 1928, when Lindberg the lone pilot was flying near the area, he discovered that his compass and altimeter had gone awry.

Some years ago, newspapers carried the account of how a National Airline aircraft carrying 127 passengers was approaching the Miami Florida airport from the north east. Its place of landing had been designated by the airport authorities when suddenly the plane disappeared from the view of the control tower. When after ten minutes it reappeared and landed normally, the passengers were amazed at the commotion in the airport. On checking their watches the passengers found to their total bewilderment that their watches were ten minutes slower than the airport clocks. More confusingly, the pilot and crew had synchronised their watches with the airport just twenty minutes before landing. Clearly, the fact that over a hundred passengers and crew did not know where they were for ten minutes is fascinating, and adds another element to the mystery of the Bermuda Triangle.

Reported incidents in this area go back at least as far as one hundred and fifty years ago, to the case of the Marie Celeste:

## The Mysterious Case of the Marie Celeste:

In December 1872 A.D the Marie Celeste was found floating adrift with no crew on board. It was not damaged in any way. The ship had been seen earlier, crossing the Bermuda Triangle. Upon examination, the ship was seen to have no fault, and all the equipment was working properly. The drinking water tank was full. No sign of attack or struggle could be seen. No news of the ships’ captain, crew or passengers could be found. The captain’s log was open in his cabin. It contained full information up to the point where it had reached the Azore Islands (near the Bermuda Triangle).

The captain’s safe contained a lot of money, jewellery and valuable certificates, all of them untouched. There was a child’s shirt in a sewing machine, unfinished. The passengers’ food was carefully placed on the tables, all the condiments in their places. The tankers were full of water. The larders and chests were full of food. There were enough provisions for a full six months.

So, the ship was in immaculate condition. There was no sign of force or that a struggle had taken place. But where had the passenger and crew disappeared to? According to some reports, everything was in its place except two things: the ship’s log, and the ship’s sextant.[[40]](#footnote-40)

Until now, the disappearance of all those who sailed on the Maria Celeste remains a total mystery.

## The Battleship ‘Atlanta’:

In 1880 A.D the British warship Atlanta with 290 crew sailed from Bermuda. It was never seen again. Since the disappearance of this ship no clues have been found of the where about either of the ship or of its crew.

## The ‘Santa Marie’:

Another ship that disappeared with all its passengers and crew was the Portuguese-registered ‘Santa Marie’. For years there was no trace of it, and then suddenly it was discovered without any fault in the waters of the Atlantic. The passengers were found mysteriously frozen in their places. No clue has been found as to what occurred.

## The mystery of ‘Flight 19’:

One of the strangest incidents of the Bermuda Triangle is the disappearance of five TBM3 fighter ‘planes. On the fifth of December, 1945 these five American fighter planes took off from Fort Lauderdale naval base. They flew over Florida airport and headed towards the Bermuda Triangle. At three-fifteen on what was a clear afternoon, First Flight-officer, Lieutenant Charles Taylor contacted the Florida control tower:

‘This is Charles Taylor, calling control tower. This is an emergency; we have lost our course... (Everything is mixed-up...even the sea is different...we have never seen sea like this: We cannot see land; repeat, we cannot see land.’ Control tower: What is your position? Taylor: We are not sure of our position...We do not know where we are, it seems we are lost. Control Tower: Assume bearing due west. Taylor: We do not know which way is west, everything is wrong... strange... we can’t be sure of any direction... even the ocean doesn’t look as it should.

Here the connection was lost, after much effort the tower managed to re-establish the contact with flight number 19.

Flight leader: the compass is turning madly! It’s not out of order, but it is turning madly...maybe we are near an airport, but we do not know where we are!

Control tower: Use the sun. Fly due North towards the sun.

Taylor: We are over a small island....cannot see anything but that....

At this point communications with the tower were lost, although the tower could still hear the communications between the aircraft, and were witness to their helplessness and distress. One of the pilots said,’...I think we have left Florida and are heading towards Mexico...’ The Flight Leader suggested they change their route 180 degrees to try get back to Florida, but when they did so their voices got weaker and weaker until they vanished; The last sentence heard by the control tower was,’ It looks like we are… we are over white waters....we are completely lost. The entire airport authorities could do was listening hopelessly, wondering how it could possibly be that the crew had lost their sighting and were unable even to see the sun. They never found out why;

## Two Hundred and Forty Rescue Ships:

When communication was lost with Flight 19 it became clear to the authorities that something dreadful had happened. That day a large reconnaissance plane was sent to search for any traces of an accident. It was manned by experience pilot and thirteen expert crew, A few minutes into the flight the pilot contacted the airport tower, We are at a height of 1800 feet, the wind is so strong that...’. Contact was then lost. And that is how the rescue plane disappeared for ever.

The next day, 6th of December 1945, the biggest reconnaissance mission ever undertaken in aviation and maritime history was launched to search for clues as to what had happened to the missing planes. Taking part in this mission were 240 frigates, 67 planes, 4 destroyers, 18 customs launches, hundreds of helicopters and innumerable private yachts and planes. In addition, British naval forces based in the Bahamas also took part. This search, the biggest in history, found no clues as to the fate of the six aircraft and their crews. No bodies were found and nor was any wreckage discovered, with no result they had to abandon the search.

## The Refuelling Jets:

In 1962, two refuelling jets exploded over the Bermuda Triangle without any visible cause.

The Battleship Auchcraft

In the month of December 1967, in sight of the Miami Quay authorities; the battleship Auchcraft disappeared without trace. A search mission was launched but was abandoned with no result.

It is impossible to count the total number of strange incidents that have occurred in the Bermuda Triangle, but in the past thirty years, there have been over one hundred major air and sea incidents registered in the official statistics. All of them occurred between the Bermuda Triangle and Panama islands, and up to this day no clue has ever been found as to what caused them.

Not all these incidents were the same. In incidents like that of the Marie Celeste, ships were discovered intact although their passengers had mysteriously disappeared. The number of people who have vanished in this way exceeds one thousand. In other cases, it has seemed as if craft were about to disappear, and then somehow been saved.

A particularly puzzling incident of this type affected a domestic DG 8, belonging to Branif Airlines, flying from New York for Panama on December 25th, 1977, a flight that was due to take two hours. As the plane was approaching Panama, with the island of Panama in sight below, suddenly the plane shook violently, and then started to ascend. After some moments of ascension, the plane started to whirl round in circles. It was as if the plane was gripped by some invisible force. It then swooped down towards the sea. But then, just as suddenly as the plane had been gripped, normality returned and the pilots were able to retake control. The passengers had been terrified, everything seemed hopeless, and they had clutched their seats with both hands, asking each other what was happening. Some of them were slightly injured.

The passengers, comments indicated that they were not only frightened but bewildered. In the captain’s cabin all equipment had been working normally with no danger signs, and yet the plane was no longer in the captain’s control and was thrust perilously close to the surface of the sea. The plane was so close to the sea that the passengers could see the waves of the ocean from their windows. But then, just when the plane seemed doomed, the plane was saved, and at a height of only 200 meters above the surface of the sea it came back under the control of the captain.

When the captain regained control, he saw that he was in the proximity of Miami, and he landed there to evaluate the condition of the plane. However, after much investigation not even the smallest fault could be found.

## An Important Question:

This and similar incidents pose an important question for the scientist and researcher, namely, given the disparate nature of these incidents, is it possible that science will ever be able to discover their cause. If science could explain the disappearances, for example, how could it possibly explain the near misses? How can it possibly explain why documents and compasses have disappeared from the ships while all other valuables were left untouched?

Perhaps it will be possible for scientists one day to discover the cause of these incidents, but it will only be through accepting theories that once they ridiculed. They may have to accept that the area conceals a divine mystery. Of course, scientists do make mistakes and often reject theories which later are proved to be true-as they once mocked phenomena such as hypnotism and telepathy. In the words of the sacred Holy Qur’an,

‘...Of knowledge it is only a little that is communicated to you.’[[41]](#footnote-41)

Concentration upon this verse leads not to despair, but to a full recognition of our shortcomings, and a longing for more success in debate and research. This too is stressed in the Holy Qur’an, where the Messenger, as the supreme model for all of humankind, is told,

‘...but say, “O My lord, increase me in knowledge”.[[42]](#footnote-42)

## Shaikh Zain al-Din and The Green Island:

We have examined the phenomenon of the Bermuda Triangle and we have noted all the particular characteristics of the area, and we have seen how little light science has been able to shed upon the issue. Now we go back seven centuries to present in full the journey of a pious servant of Allah (s.w.t.) who had the honour of travelling to the ‘Green Island’. By comparing the media reports with the descriptions of Shaikh Zain al-Din, it will be seen how strong is the possibility that the ‘Green Island’ he visited was in fact situated in the area we now know as the Bermuda Triangle.

Sheikh Zain al-Din Ali b. Fazil al-Mazanderani, lived in the seventh Islamic century, and resided in Najaf, Iraq, neighbouring the Holy shrine of Imam Ali (a.s.) (the first Shia Imam). He travelled to Spain (then known as Andulus, after their inhabitants, the Vandals) with his teacher. From Andulus he travelled to the Berber territory (Morocco) and then took sail to an island in the Atlantic, and from there he was taken by a guide to the Green Island, after passing through ‘white waters’.

## The Source of the Account:

Shaikh Zain al-Din’s account is taken from the authoritative work of narrations the *Bihar al-Anwar,* by the highly-regarded Allama Majlisi (a.r.). Essentially the book is a huge collection of the narrations from or about the fourteen impeccable leaders of Islam, the Messenger (s.a.w.a.) and his Household (a.s.). The account of the ‘Green Island’ is given in the 52nd volume Allamah Majlisi (a.r.) writes:

I found a dissertation containing the famous account of the Green Island in the white waters, and I have intended to include it in this book because it bears the account of one who attended a meeting with his highness, the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.). As this story has not been included in other earlier books, I have placed it in a separate part and I transcribe it as I found it. After praises to Allah (s.w.t.) and Salutations to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and his Noble Household (a.s.), the scribe wrote:

I, Fazil b. Yahya Tayibi Kufi, a servant of Allah (s.w.t.) who needs His forgiveness, did, upon the 15th of Shaban in the year 699 A.H (1299A.D), in the town of the lord of the Martyrs, Imam Husain, (a.s.)[[43]](#footnote-43) hear from two upright Scholars, Shams al-Din Hilli and Jalal al-Din Hilli, that while they were in the town of Samarra, they heard a marvellous account from the noble scholar Zain al-Din Mazandarani, of how he had succeeded in visiting the ‘green island in white waters’. On hearing this exciting story about Zain al-Din being permitted to visit the Green Island, I felt a strong desire to visit Zain al-Din and hear the story from him. I beseeched Allah (s.w.t.) to make this meeting possible and easy for me. I decided to set off for Samarra but he had left there, bound for Hillah, in order to go to Najaf from there.

At the beginning of the month of Shawwal of the same year 699 A.H 1299 A.D, I waited for Zain al-Din to arrive at Hillah. When I learned of his arrival I set off to meet him. On the way, I saw a noble looking man riding on a horse, heading towards the residence of the great scholar of Hillah, Sayyid Fakhr al-Din Musavi Mazanderani. I had never seen Zain al-Din before, but it crossed my mind that the rider must be the noble sheikh himself, and I followed him to his destination. When I arrived at the house of the Sayyid, he welcomed me, and gave me the news of the arrival of Shaikh Zain al-Din. My heart was beating hard due to the joy I felt at knowing that I was to meet him. I entered the house with the noble Sayyid, where I met and kissed the blessed hands of Sheikh Zain al-Din. Sayyid Fakhr al-Din introduced me, saying, ‘He is Fazl b. Yahya, and has been very eager to meet you.’

Sheikh Zain al-Din stood up and sat me next to him. He knew my father, he asked about him and my brother. During the days when Sheikh Zain al-Din used to see my father and brother, I had been in the town of Waset, studying with the late Abu Ishaq Waseti.

I talked with Sheikh Zain al-Din for a while, and I realised that he was a true scholar of the Religious sciences, narrations and Arabic literature. Then I asked Sheikh Zain al-Din to tell me the story I had heard from Shams al-Din and Jalal al-Din Hilli.

He told the story from beginning to end in the presence of Sayyid Fakhr al-Din and a group of the Scholars of Hellah. The complete text of what I heard on the eleventh day of the month of Shawwal in the year 699. A.H, at Hillah, in the house of Sayyid Fakhr al-Din, is as follows, without any addition or subtraction:

Sheikh Zain al-Din Mazandarani said for many years I studied the Religious sciences in Damascus. I had a teacher by the name of Sheikh Abd al-Rahim Hanafi (may Allah (s.w.t.) guide him to the right path) under his supervision I studied ‘principles’ (usul)and literature. I had another teacher by the name of Andulusi Maleki, who was a knowledgeable and noble man, and an expert in the seven recitations and also grammar, logic and rhetoric. He was a pleasant man and had no enmity towards Shia. When he wanted to express the opinion of the Shia on an issue he used to say, ‘The Imamia Scholars say thus.’ His behaviour and virtues made me to remove myself from my other teacher and study all my lessons with him.

I studied with him for a lengthy period and learnt much, until he decided to leave Damascus to go to Egypt. Because of our mutual affection, he suggested I go with him, and I accepted. Some of his other students who were not locals also decided to accompany their teacher. We had a pleasant journey and at every opportunity made use of his knowledge, until we arrived at Cairo, the major city in Egypt.

The Master resided in Cairo for nine months and many Egyptian Scholars came to Cairo from other cities to gain knowledge from him. He taught at al-Azhar,[[44]](#footnote-44) and we resided there in the best of circumstances.

One day a caravan arrived from Andalus carrying a letter from the Master’s father, informing him that his father’s health was rapidly deteriorating and that he wanted to see him before his death. The letter finished, ‘Do not delay, and come to your father.’

Upon reading the letter the Master was very upset and cried. He decided to set off towards Andalus, and some of the students decided to go with the Master. I too could not bear to be separated from him, for I was very attached to him and he was very kind to me.

We set off and after a while reached the Andalusian peninsular, but as soon as we arrived I became feverish and could travel no more. The Master became very upset and with tears in his eyes, said to me, ‘Your separation from me is very difficult’.

The Master had to continue on his way. He put me under the care of the Religious leader of the area and gave him ten dirhams until my situation became clear. The Master told him, ‘If Allah (s.w.t.) makes him recover, bring him to my town.’ He made a similar pact with me and departed. The distance between the Master’s town and that area was about five days travel. I stayed three days in that area and could not move. At sunset of the third day my fever broke. I went for a walk down the small streets in the village. I saw a caravan that was returning from the mountains of the western shores, they were buying wool, oil and other household utensils. I asked about the situation of their towns. They told me that they had been near the Berber territory which is situated near the coast, near ‘the Shia islands’. When I heard the name ‘the Shia islands’ I became anxious to visit the area. They told me that there is a travelling distance of twenty-five days to their territory, in two of which there is no water or vegetation, but after that the road is good and there are many populated areas joined together. I hired an animal for three dirhams to travel across the desert area, after which I walked through the populated areas until I reached their territory. When I arrived there I was told that there was a three-day journey to reach the Shia islands; I carried on without delay until I reached the Shia islands. I arrived to the town which had four castles and tall and strong fortifications. The walls of the island were erected from the shores. I entered through the main city gate which was called the Berber gate. After strolling through the alleys of the town, I asked the location of the Mosque, and after obtaining directions I went to the Mosque. The town’s Mosque was very big and elegant, situated on the western shore overlooking the sea. I sat in a corner of the Mosque to rest. I heard the call to prayer and then the prayer for the appearance of the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.). I could not prevent myself from shedding tears of joy.

People entered the Mosque and made ablutions from a fountain in its precincts. Then a handsome man among the congregation entered the prayer niche *(mihrab)* and rows formed for the noon prayers to be conducted. The whole ceremony was conducted according to the rite of the Imams.

I was so tired that I could not stand with them to pray, so when they had finished they looked at me and criticised me for not joining them. They asked me, where are you from and what is your Religion? I said, ‘I am from Iraq and I testify to the oneness of Allah (s.w.t.) and the prophethood of Muhammad (s.a.w.a.).’

They said, this witnessing has no use for you, except that the spilling of your blood by Muslims is forbidden. Why do you not give the third testimony?’

‘What is that?’ I replied. ‘Guide me, may Allah (s.w.t.) bless you.’

The prayer leader said, The third testimony is that you testify that Imam Ali (a.s.) is the leader of the pious and his children after him are successors to the Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.a.), to whom Allah (s.w.t.) has instructed obedience and through whom He has given His instructions and whom He has placed on the earth as His proof, and given security to people due to the Blessing of the Imams (a.s.). The Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.a.) in the night of his ascension in that favoured place, with no intermediary, heard from the Creator of the world the name of the Imams one by one, as well as the necessity of their being obeyed by the people.

When I heard this I thanked Allah (s.w.t.). In my extreme happiness I forgot all the difficulties of my journey. I informed them that I believed as they do, and believed what they said. From that moment they paid particular attention to me and allocated a place in the Mosque for me. They treated me with kindness and respected me whilst I was there. The leader of the Mosque always accompanied me, and I was very happy with his companionship. One day I asked the Mosque-leader that I saw no agricultural activities around the city, and wondered how they obtained their foodstuffs. He replied, ‘From the Green Island in white waters, from the island of the children of the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.)’. I asked him, ‘How many times a year you attain your provisions?’

He said twice a year; one has come, another will arrive. I asked him, ‘When will the next one arrive?’ He replied, ‘In four months’ time.’

I was upset at this lengthy delay, and everyday I asked Allah (s.w.t.) for the day to come sooner, so that I could see the Green Island with my own eyes.

I stayed there for forty days and all that time they treated me with total respect and honour. On the afternoon of the fortieth day I felt depressed and went to the seaside for a walk. I looked towards the west, the direction from which they said the foodstuffs arrive. I saw an object moving in the distance. I asked whether there are white birds in the sea. My companions said,

‘No, why, have you seen anything?’

I replied that I had. They said, ‘Then our foodstuffs are coming. These are the ships which come to us every year from the towns of the children of the twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.).’

After a while the ships reached the shore. The people of the town said, ‘This time the ships have come earlier than usual.

At first a big ship docked then six other ships followed. From the big ship an old man, tall, handsome and elegantly dressed, disembarked. He entered the Mosque, made his ablution according to the instructions of the Imams, and read his noon and afternoon prayer. When he had finished he turned to me and greeted me and I retorted. Then he said to me, ‘What is your name? I think your name is Ali.

I said ‘Yes’. He spoke like a person who had known me for years. He then asked me, ‘What is your father’s name? I guess it is Fazil?’

I became certain that this person had been with us on the journey because of the things he knew about my family and me. I asked him, ‘How do you know me?

Were you with us on the journey from Damascus to Egypt?’

He said, ‘no.’

I said, ‘Were you with us from Egypt to Andalusia?’

He said, ‘No, I was never with you, I swear on the life of our leader the Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.)’.

I asked him, ‘How do you know my name and my father’s name?’

He said, ‘Your name and your characteristics and your late father’s name were given to me and I will take you to the Green Island.’

At this I became extremely happy and could not believe my luck. The people of the town said that every time he comes he stayed for three days, but this time he stayed for a week. He delivered the foodstuffs to those to whom he was supposed to, obtained their signature in receipt of the provisions. Then he set sail for the Green Island, taking me with him.

I travelled for sixteen days in the. Ship with that old man, whose name was Muhammad. On the sixteenth day we reached an area where the sea water was white! I gazed at the water in amazement. The old man asked me, ‘What has happened, why you are staring at the sea’, I said, ‘I see the sea water is a different colour, not the usual colour of sea water,’

He said, ‘Yes here the waters are white and there is the Green Island. These waters surround the island on all sides. Whatever side you come to the Green Island, you will face these waters. By Allah (s.w.t.)’s wisdom and the Blessing of our leader, the Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.), the enemies’ ships will sink in these waters whatever their strength.’

I drank some of the water it was sweet like the water of the Phrates. We travelled through the white waters until we reached the Green Island. May Allah (s.w.t.) give happiness to its inhabitants and keep it always flourishing.

The ship docked at the island and we disembarked and entered the town. The town was among seven strong castles with fortifications and awe-inspiring towers that reached to the sky. There were fountains and various fruits trees, and this was the most beautiful town I had ever seen. In the town there were large markets and many bath-houses. Most of the buildings were made from a transparent marble. The people of the town were tall, firm, with elegant features, were beautifully dressed, and their attractive faces were shinning in halos of beauty and dignity that would dazzle the observer.

I became joyful at seeing the town and its elegance, and my spirit soared. I rested for a while at Shaikh Muhammad’s house, and then went to the Mosque. Many people were congregated in the Mosque, among them a man sitting whose features was beyond my capacity to describe. The people were addressing him as Sayyid Shams al-Din Muhammad Alim the congregation around his Excellency the Sayyid were learning Holy Qur’an, principles of Religious jurisprudence and different sciences in Arabic. The Religious jurisprudence that the Sayyid was teaching consisted of various problems in whose solution he quoted extensively from the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.).

When I had the honour of being received in his Excellency the Sayyid’s presence, he greeted me and sat me next to himself. He asked me about the difficulties of my journey, and told me that he been informed of my circumstances and said that he had send Shaikh Muhammad to bring me to the Green Island. Then he ordered that a chamber be prepared for me in one of the corners of the Mosque so that I could rest there. Then he turned to me and said, this is your place, relax here whenever you like.’ I excused myself from his Excellency the Sayyid’s presence and went to my chamber and rested until evening.

In the evening a person who was responsible for me came and told me to stay in my chamber, that the Sayyid and some of his companions were coming to have dinner with me, I accepted this with joy. Shortly his Excellency the Sayyid arrived with same of his companions, and within a minute they had laid down the dinner-linen and food. We had our dinner with his Excellency, then after dinner we went to the Mosque for the evening and night prayers. After the prayers, his Excellency went to his house and I returned to my place. Eighteen days passed in this manner, and every day I benefited from the wisdom of the honourable Sayyid, may Allah (s.w.t.) keep him healthy.

The first Friday-prayer held by the honourable Sayyid was performed by him in two cycles *(rak’at)[[45]](#footnote-45)* I followed his lead and read my prayer with them. When he finished the prayer I said to him, ‘You performed the prayer as compulsory (wajib).[[46]](#footnote-46)

He replied, ‘Yes, because the conditions for it are in place’. I thought to myself that perhaps the twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.) was taking part in the prayers. ‘No,’ said the Sayyid, ‘But as his special deputy and according to his orders I lead the Friday prayers.’

I asked the honourable Sayyid, ‘Have you seen the Imam?’

‘No,’ was the reply, ‘But my late father used to say that he had heard the voice of the Imam, though he had not seen him in person, and that his father had seen the Imam and had also heard his voice.’

I asked, ‘How is this honour given to one but not the other?’

He said, Brother, the Almighty Allah chooses whom He wishes to bestow His honour, and all is based on the Wisdom of Allah (s.w.t.). Allah (s.w.t.) gives the honour of Prophethood and *Imamat* to some of His servants, and makes them the proofs to all, so that whoever is destroyed knows that the argument has been complete, while whosoever is guided knows that they have been guided on the right path on the basis of reason and proof. Thanks to the Blessing of Allah (s.w.t.), the earth has not been without a proof for a moment, and for every Messenger He has sent, is a special agent or representative to convey his orders.’ Then the honourable Sayyid took my hand and led me outside the town towards the gardens. There I saw many fruits-grapes, pears, pomegranates and suchlike-the like of which I had never seen before, not in Iran, Iraq, or Syria. Their beauty, sweetness and largeness were incomparable. We continued to walk in the gardens, when a tall, good-looking man, wearing a two-piece garment of white woollen cloth greeted us as he passed us by. I asked the Sayyid, ‘Who is this man, whose presence amazed me?’ He replied, ‘Do you see this high mountain?’ I said “Yes”

Set in this mountain is a beautiful place with a spring under a tree, where there is a brick dome. This man and a companion serve in the dome. Every Friday morning I go there and try to visit the Imam. I pray two cycles there, and then I find a paper in which are all the information, instructions and guidance on any incidents which occur. It also contains any ruling I must make between the Muslims. I find the order and I carry it out.’ He added, ‘It is also appropriate for you to go there and pay your respects to the Imam from there.’

I went to the top of the mountain and saw the dome as described by the honourable Sayyid. There were two servants in the dome; one of them recognised me and welcomed me, but the one who did not know me protested. The servant who had seen me with the honourable Sayyid said to the other, ‘I know him I have seen him with his Excellency Sayyid.’ At that the other also welcomed me and talked to me. Grapes and bread were brought for me. I ate and then drank from the spring, and then I made ablution and prayed two cycles. I asked the servants, ‘How is it possible to see the Imam?’

They replied, ‘It is never possible, and we do not have permission to inform anyone.’ Then I requested them to pray for me, which they did. Then I left them and came down the mountain. When I reached the town^ I went straight to the Sayyid’s house, but he was not at home. Then I went to Sheikh Muhammad who was my guide. I told him about the mountain and all that I had seen there. I also told him how one of the servants had protested at my being there.

He told me, ‘Except for the Sayyid and people like him, no one is allowed to go to this mountain and that is why the man protested at you.’ I inquired about the honourable Sayyid. He replied ‘He is one of the descendants of the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.) and between him and the Imam there are five generations.’

While I was on the island I asked the honourable Sayyid for permission to learn the necessary problems from him to convey them to the Shias, and to recite the Holy Qur’an in his presence, in order that he checks my pronunciation? He said, ‘If there is such a necessity, start from the Holy Qur’an.’

Every time I reached a verse where there were differences between the reciters, I pointed them out saying, ‘Hamza has recited like this, others have recited like that,’ or ‘A’sem has read like this, and Ibn Kathir like that.’

The honourable Sayyid said, ‘We do not know of these variations. The Holy Qur’an has been descended on seven letters. The whole Holy Qur’an was revealed to the Prophet gradually, before and after the migration. After the Farewell Hajj, the Angel Gabriel (a.s.) descended to the Prophet and said, “O Muhammad recite the Holy Qur’an, that I tell you the beginning and end of each chapter and that I tell you the circumstances in which they descended.” Then Imam Ali (a.s.), his two sons Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Imam Husain (a.s.) and Abi b. Ka’ab, Abdullah bin Mas’ud, Haziqat bin Yaman, Jaber bin ‘Abdullah Ansari, Abu Sayeed Khidry, Hasan bin Thabit and others of the chosen disciples gathered, and the Prophet of Islam recited the Holy Qur’an from beginning to end. In those verses which had differences, Gabriel intervened and Imam Ali (a.s.) wrote the correction on a sheet of skin. The entire Holy Qur’an is the transcript of Imam Ali (a.s.), and that Holy Qur’an is kept by the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.).

“All the rules and orders are contained within it. However, this Holy Qur’an which is in your hand is without any doubt the word of Allah (s.w.t.). There is no question about its authenticity and this has been issued by the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.).”

I asked many things and learned the solutions to many problems from the honourable Sayyid, whose number exceeds ninety. I collected them together in one volume and called it Fawa’id Shamsiyah; this I will present only to the devoted believers. Allah (s.w.t.) willing you will also see it.

The second Friday was the middle Friday of the month, and again I took part in the Friday prayers with the honourable Sayyid. After the prayers, the honourable Sayyid sat to offer guidance and to solve any problems of the devoted Muslims. Whilst I was listening to him, there suddenly came a noise from outside the Mosque. I asked the Sayyid the nature of that noise. He told me, ‘Every Friday at the middle of the month, our army ride on their horses and wait for the appearance of the Imam.’

I took permission to go outside and watch them, and then I went out. I saw a large crowd praising the Almighty and praying for the appearance of Allah (s.w.t.)’s proof; the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.), the Mahdi (a.t.f.s.). When I returned to the Mosque the honourable Sayyid asked me, ‘Did you see our army?’

I said “Yes”

He said “Did you count their commanders?”

I replied, “No”

He said, “Their number is 300, there are only 13 left for their number to be completed.”

I asked, “When will the appearance be?”

He replied, ‘Brother! The knowledge of that is solely with Almighty Allah and for Him only to know. Perhaps even the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.) himself is not aware of that. But there are signs for his appearance, one of them is when everyone will hear three sounds, ‘O thou devoted, the time of the appearance has arrived.’ and ‘The curse of Allah (s.w.t.) upon those who did injustice to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w..a) and his Household (a.s.)’ and, a voice from the sun say, ‘Allah (s.w.t.) has chosen the Twelfth Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.), listen to what he tells you and obey his order.’ and....I said that narrations had reached us from our teacher that the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.) stated the following concerning the occultation, ‘After my occultation if anyone claims that they have seen me deny him....’ Then I asked how it is that some of you have seen him? The honourable Sayyid said ‘This narration is true, but it is connected to the time of Bani Abbas dynasty, when the enemies of the Holy Prophet’s Household were numerous, so that the Shias had to avoid even mentioning the Blessed name of the Holy Imam. But now a long time has elapsed, the enemies have been disappointed and our territory is out of their reach. They cannot harm us due to the Blessed existence of the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.).’

The honourable Sayyid then said, ‘The Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.) will appear in an odd year between Rukn and Maqam (at the side of the ??? Kaabain Mecca).’ I said, ‘I am very keen to be at your service till that day when Allah (s.w.t.) orders the appearance.’

The honourable Sayyid told me, ‘Dear brother, an order has reached me that you should return to your country; neither of us can disobey, because you have dependants and have been away from them for quite a while, and it is not appropriate to be away from them any longer.’

I became very sad and wept, saying, is it not possible to ask a second time?’

He replied “No”

I asked him, “Do you give me permission to relate what I have seen”

He replied, ‘Yes, for calming the hearts of the devoted ones.’ He then added certain exceptions that I am to avoid mentioning.

I asked, ‘Is it possible for me to look at the face of the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.)?’

He told me, ‘No, but know that every devoted person sees him but does not recognise him.’

I pleaded with him that although being his devotee, yet I had not seen him.

He said Nay you have seen him twice, Once when you were going to Samarra for the first time. At the point where your friends were way in front of you, you were alone, until you reached a dried-up river bed. There you saw a rider on a white horse with a long arrow in his hand. The arrow had a Damascus point.[[47]](#footnote-47) You were frightened for your possessions, when he told you not to be frightened, and to hurry, because your friends were waiting for you under a tree.’

I recalled that incident and told him that such an incident had occurred. He then told me of another incident that had occurred on the way to Egypt from Damascus, when I was accompanying my Andalusian teacher. He said, ‘You became separated from the group and was frightened. There too you saw a rider on a horse, the horse had a white forehead and the rider had an arrow in his hand: The rider told you not to be frightened for there was a village on your right hand side. He told you to go there and spend the night. He told you to tell them about your beliefs and customs because that village and a few other villages south of Damascus follow the line of the Imamat. Is that right, O son of Fazil? I said, ‘Yes, it was like that; I went and spent the night there. I asked them what their Religion was. They told me that they follow the line of Imamat. They paid me a lot of respect. I inquired how they had learned the line of the Imamat. I was told that when the third khalifa Usmaan exiled the Holy Prophet’s companion the honourable Abu Zarr Ghaffari to Damascus, Muawiah the governor of Damascus then expelled him to their territory. As a result of the blessing of his presence in the area, people became familiar with the Imams. That village is one of them.’

I then asked the honourable Sayyid, ‘Does the Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) go to the Hajj of the Holy Kaaba at all?’ He said, ‘Son of Fazel, the world under the feet of the true believers is nothing but a step, but there is no comparison with one by whom the world exists by his Blessing and the Blessing of his fathers. Yes, the Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) takes part in the pilgrimage every year and visits his forefathers in Madina, Iraq, and Tus. Then he returns to our territory.’

The honourable Sayyid ordered me not to delay my return journey, and not to stop in the western territories. He said that it is written on their dirhams “There is no god but Allah, Muhammad is His Messenger, Ali is the deputy of Allah and the Imam Mahdi is His proof”

He gave me five dirhams to keep as a Blessing and Souvenir. Then he arranged for me to return by the same ship I had come in. I arrived to the first settlements of Berber. The honourable Sayyid had given me wheat and grain which I sold for 140 gold dinars, and with this money I went to Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca). Following the Sayyid’s command I did not go to Andalus. From the Berber territory I went to Trablus, and from there I accompanied a Hajj caravan to Mecca. After the pilgrim ceremonies I returned to Iraq and decided to spend the rest of my life in Najaf near the Shrine of Imam Ali (a.s.). In the Green Island, the names of only five Shia Scholars were mentioned: Sayyid Morteza (Alamal-Huda), Sheikh Tusi, Muhammad bin Yaqub Kulaini, Ibn Babawayh, and Sheikh Abul-Qasim Ja’far bin Ismail Hilli (a.r.).

That concludes the account of the pious Scholar Ali bin Fazel, may Allah (s.w.t.) prolong his grace and increase the numbers of people like him.

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To elaborate on the topic we discussed in this chapter, we have to cite the opinion of Shia Scholars.

Some have defended the existence of such place (Khazra Island) and it possible connection to that of Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.), while others have rejected it.

Although the reliability and credibility of the report has been questioned, and itself rejected as a legend, but I find the similarity between (12 century historian report of) Khazra Island and Bermuda triangle both interesting and important in our discussion.

It was for this reason that I felt it is necessary to include the story in this chapter and leave the final conclusion to readers.

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# Chapter Four

## A Brief History of Shia Islam:

In the Course of History as the time went by the concept of the Awaited Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) was accepted more and more, with gaining strength amongst Islamic Nations. With the guidance and help of Holy Imams and through ‘Hadith’ (Tradition) people began to understand, the birth, life, minor and major occultation of the promised Mahdi (a.t.f.s.).

The life of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) has to be considered in association with the life of Eleven Imams (a.s.) who came before him. It is impossible to disregard the role of these Imams as strengthening pillar of Shia Islam and concept of Messianic Saviour.

It is therefore necessary to look briefly at the life of these Holy Imams, and recognize the effort these individual put forward for the Salvation and Enlighten of Humankind on the path of Religion, in the hope to open a door way to whole picture of Mahdiism.

History tells us that the Holy Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.a.) foretold the names, characteristics, deeds, personalities, and titles of the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.) (Religious leaders) coming after him. The Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.) who was his descendants began with the name of Imam Ali (a.s.), and ended with the name of the Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.), who was the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.) and ‘the one who will rise’.

The Shia believe that, according to the specification of the Holy Prophet, the Holy Imams of the Holy Prophet’s Household are twelve in number. Shi’ism believes that the external teachings of the Holy Qur’an, which are the laws and regulations of the ‘Shari’ah’ (the Religious law); include the principles for a complete spiritual life. These laws are valid and applicable for everyone at all times, and are not to be revoked until the day of judgement. These rules and regulations must be taught through the guidance of the Household of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), whichare the Imams (a.s.).[[48]](#footnote-48)

It is therefore upheld that *Imamat* (orthe institution of leadership) is one of the fundamentals beliefs of Islam *(usul-ad-Din),* and without it man’s faith can never be complete. Imamat plays as an important role in Islamic belief as Tawhid (belief that there is only one Allah (s.w.t.)) and Numbuwwah (Prophethood). If an individual does not believe in Imamat, and supposes that it is not fundamental to Islam, he should, never the less, examine the concept of the Imamat, if only to absolve himself of responsibility in this matter. There are three reason why this should be considered seriously; firstly mankind does not receive divine commands directly from Allah (s.w.t.), concerning their Religious duties; secondly any matters must be referred to an individual who can be trusted so that; thirdly they may be sure that they may not be held responsible by Allah (s.w.t.) for having made an errors. According to this belief, the Holy Imams of the Holy Prophet’s House fulfil such requirements. Following this belief the Shia argue that just as it is necessary for Allah (s.w.t.) to send someone as Prophet, so it is also necessary that, at all times there should be an Imam to represent the Prophet. He should perform the duties of the Prophet, such as guiding the people, and directing them to the way of goodness and prosperity, in this world and the next. He must also to hold the highest position as a public authority in all aspects of people’s lives, so that he may promote justice amongst the people and eliminate enmity and oppression between them. The Imamat is therefore a continuation of the prophethood, and one must exist with the other.

It is for this reason that we may say the appointment of an individual as Imam can only be accomplished by the will of Allah (s.w.t.), through the Prophet or previous Imam. People cannot choose someone as an Imam because they have no authority or experience to do so, and should they seek to depose him, they are warned by the celebrated hadith: He, who dies without knowing the Imam of his time, dies as in the ignorance (jahiliyyah).

Therefore it can be seen from the above that it is impossible for there to be a time without an Imam appointed by Allah (s.w.t.), and that it makes no difference whether humankind denies him or not, help him or not, obey him or not, or whether he is absent from people’s sight (like the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.)), just as the Prophet was absent from people when he was in the cave and in the mountain-pass.[[49]](#footnote-49)

Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth. What His light is like is a niche, a lamp within it. The lamp is enclosed in glass. The glass, it is like a shining star. It is a light from a blessed tree, the olive, neither eastern nor western. Its oil seems to light up, even though fire not touches it. Light, upon light, Allah guides unto His light that He wills. Allah doth set forth parables for mankind, and Allah is of all things aware.[[50]](#footnote-50)

It is recorded from Jaber bin Abdullah Ansari that he said,

I entered the Mosque of Kufa and there I saw Imam Ali (a.s.) writing and smiling. I asked him,’ What has made you smile?’

He replied, ‘I am surprised by anyone who reads this verse and cannot find the truth about us.’ I then asked him which verse. Imam said,’ The verse which says, “Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth” Allah is the light; Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) is the lamp; I Ali the glass of the lamp; Hasan (a.s.) and Husain (a.s.) are the shining stars; Ali the son of Husain (a.s.) is the blessed tree; Muhammad the son of Ali [the fifth Imam, known as al-Baqir (a.s.) is the olive; Jafar the son of Muhammad (the sixth Imam, known as al-Sadiq (a.s.) is not of the east; Musa the son of Ja’far (the seventh Imam) is not of the west, Ali the son of Musa (the eighth Imam) is the one whose oil seems to well luminous; Muhammad the son of Ali (the ninth Imam) is the one whom fire has not touched; Ali the son of Muhammad (the tenth Imam) is the light upon light; Hasan the son of Ali (the eleventh Imam) is the one Allah guides unto His light whom He wills; and the Mahdi is the Aim (the one who will rise) of Muhammad’s House. Allah (s.w.t.) has brought these names for people as an example. Allah (s.w.t.) is all-wise.’

The Shia branch in Islam believes that the Imamat (Religious leadership) and the guardianship have had certain qualities and capabilities in each era. These Religious leaders would not refrain from any self-sacrifice in the course of promulgating and protecting Religion. Always preferring justice and truth to their own personal interests, and were always ready to face the problems caused by the contemporary rulers and the enemies. They would never withhold life, wealth, possessions, children, prestige, power, and themselves, but were ready to give everything they had for Religion, no matter what the conditions or the place, they would never shrink from defending Religion and enforcement of the laws of the Holy Qur’an.

With a look into the lives of each and every one of these Holy Imams, one notices the fact that these Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.) seem to have advanced and developed Islam to promulgate the Religion in accordance to a pre-designed plan. In fact, each of these Holy Imams followed the path of the previous Imam with an iron will, and handed it over to the succeeding Imam like the rings of a chain. Among the families of the human race, we have seen only these twelve personalities who in their doctrine, goal, path, position, words, and their nature were all unique, and yet they followed each other’s footsteps till they reached their final destination.

The first of the Imams was Ali (a.s.) who produced a new upheaval and revolution with his deeds and behaviour by following the Holy Qur’an and the Religion of Allah (s.w.t.) after the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.). The record of his words and writings is called Nahjul Balagah, which is acknowledged world-wide as an extremely Valuable Book.

After Ali (a.s.), the forbearance merit and patience of Imam Hasan (a.s.) became the guiding light of the Muslims.

Thereafter, the bravery, political knowledge, devotion to the Religion and the guidance of Imam Husain (a.s.) became proverbial among all the people, and the Standard of Islam.

Then the politeness, the courtesy, the prose and poetry of Imam al-Sajjad (a.s.), whose Supplications have been collected as the Sahifa Sajjadiya, ensured the healthy survival of Islam.

The fundamental researches of his son, Imam Baqir (a.s.) *(Baqir**al-Oloom,* literally ‘the Opener or revealer of Knowledge’) opened the door to the sciences.

The immense and diverse learning of Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) provided the world with over twelve thousand men of science and intellect.

This was followed by the precise analysis of Imam Musa (a.s.) the Son of Ja’far (a.s.) in his discussions with the most popular Scientists together with his promulgation of Ja’fari jurisprudence and the Sciences of Ali (a.s.).

Then there were the discussions of Imam Ali al-Reza (a.s.) with all Religious leaders whether Islamic and non-Islamic, and these provided enormous scientific assistance to the Islamic community.

Then there was a period of analysis of scientific problems and the promulgation of Ja’fari instructions and scientific knowledge, under the leadership of Imam Jawed (a.s.), the son of Ali al-Reza (a.s.).

And then the dissemination of Islamic instructions to the widespread world of Islam by the Imam Ali al-Naqi (a.s.).

Then the acceleration in the rate of growth in Religion and explanations, under the leadership of Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.), and the preservation of Shia beliefs, and the reasoning through rationalisation and logic of the Jafari Jurisprudence.

In general, one can divide the leadership period of this Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.) into three distinct eras:

The first period included the leaderships of Imam Ali (a.s.), Imam Hasan (a.s.), Imam Husain (a.s.), and Imam Sajjad (a.s.). The first three of these Imams were forced into war with the enemies of Islam, due to the existing situation at that time and their duty to the promulgation of the Islamic Religion and the observance of its principles. On this path all three of these Holy Imams were Martyred.

After the Martyrdom of Imam Ali (a.s.) the administration of the ordinances of Islam was on the wane. Things become so bad that the Prophet’s old enemies the tribe Bani Umayyad were able to take control of the Islamic government, and changed the course of Muslim affairs. Imam Hasan (a.s.) (second Imam) rose against the Umayyad leader, ‘Muawiya’ but was obliged to conclude a peace-treaty. But the Bani Umayyad broke the terms of this treaty by their harsh treatment and hostile attitude towards the Prophet’s family (a.s.) and their followers, the Shia. This lasted for about 20 years, during which period Imam Hasan (a.s.) was poisoned. Upon the death of Muawiya, the reins of government were passed to Yazid (his son) and Imam Husain (a.s.) (third Imam) gave his life rather than submit in obeisance to Yazid. It was a tragic, bloody episode, but caused the people to distinguish the oppressors from the oppressed, and to separate the good from the evil.

The fourth Imam, Husain’s Son Ali Zain al-Aabedin (a.s.), in turn, explained the factors which had motivated his father’s rebellion. By doing so, he illuminated the correct values and way of thought after the people’s reasoning had been led astray by Mariah’s distortions which had lasted for 20 years. While en-route from Karbala (where Imam Husain’s uprising took place) to Madina, Imam Zain al-Aabedin (a.s.) explained the causes of his father’s revolt step by step along his journey. Through his mourning rites and through his dignity in his oppressed condition as a prisoner, all the inhabitants of Hejaz and Iraq became aware of the truth. It was Imam Sajjad (a.s.) who, after his father’s rebellion, had the important and dangerous responsibility of preserving the legacy of his father’s blood. The social and intellectual understanding that had begun to be received among the people of Hejaz and Iraq had to be delivered without delay to all Islamic countries rapidly. The Muslims of the world had to be informed of Imam Husain (a.s.)’s journey and battle,and the reasons behind it, so that the truth could become clear. Imam Sajjad (a.s.) succeeded in making the truth clear for those who wanted to see it.

The second period began with the leadership of the fifth Imam, al-Baqir (a.s.), through the sixth and seventh Imams, al-Sadiq (a.s.) and al-Kazim (a.s.), and ends with the passing away of the eighth Imam al-Reza (a.s.). Political instability meant that they had the opportunity to disseminate the Islamic sciences and instructions.; The greatest Scholars of the Islamic world were trained during this period by Imam Baqir (a.s.) and his son Imam Sadiq (a.s.) who satisfied and renewed the thirst of the ‘followers’ of knowledge and those fascinated by learning.

The third period, less dramatic but no less important, is made up of the periods of leadership of the last of the leaders from the family of Imamat. Their lives were very important and noteworthy; in the respect that there were millions of Muslims during their time and all the Religious leaders of the nations were eager to acquire knowledge from the Prophet’s family. Yet the Abbasid Caliphs were opposed to this and made matters very difficult. So the house of Imamat had to fulfil their Religious duties with the utmost care and political discretion, so that the true Religious doctrines would not remain secret and hidden.

During the early years of third Century (A.H.), the Islamic culture mixed with the customs and cultures of the different nations of Rome, Iran, Egypt, India, and China; where the people had welcomed Islam without resistance because they saw that peace, refuge, and security were found under the protection of Islam. Since Islam had advanced and extended from the Hijaz to the Great Wall of China and from the coast of the Mediterranean to the coasts of Indonesia, there was a great need for Religious leaders. Those leaders who did exist were unfortunately relatively few and of those, many were not using the scientific sources of the Imamat.

This meant that those who sought real knowledge were forced to make long journeys in order to find the solutions for their problems. They would travel to the Hijaz and Iraq to find the Imam and ask their questions, which would be answered in accordance to the pristine teachings of their grandfather, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.). Had the Scientific and Religious problems of such people not been resolved, they would have found fault with the Religion. So when we turn the pages of the lives of the last four Imams, Imam Jawed (a.s.), Imam Ali al-Naqi (a.s.), Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) and the Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.), we notice their efforts and endeavours in finding a way to deal with these problems, and we realise that they were aware of the nature of this most important matter.

## The Nine ‘Sons’ of Husain (a.s.):

The first of the Imams after Imam Husain (a.s.) was his son Imam Ali Zain al-Aabedin, known as Imam Sajjad (a.s.). He was born in the year 38 A.H 659 A.D. He is the fourth Shia Imam. The leadership passed, by the order of Allah (s.w.t.), from son to son until reaching the ninth descendant from Imam Husain (a.s.), the twelfth successor of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), son of Imam Askari (a.s.), the present Imam, the Mahdi (a.t.f.s.).

As we have seen, sometime after the birth of the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.), in order to protect himself against the executioners of oppressor regimes and by the divine order, he disappeared and took refuge in a secret life; and thus the second prophesy about the divine ambassador came to pass

Amongst the narrations to support this is the following:

The Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.a.) said,

“Allah the Almighty has a covenant with me and with Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.) after me. They are divine proof to His creation and the twelfth of them is the Qaem (the one who will rise). He is the one by whose rising the earth will be filled with justice and equity as it had been full of oppression and crime.”

In all, one hundred and thirty-nine holy reports state that the leaders after the Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.a.) are twelve, and that nine of them are the descendants of Imam Husain (a.s.). Among them is this address of Imam Ali (a.s.) to Talha:

‘O Talha, were you not a witness when the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) asked us for a scribe to write his will so that his Nation would not go astray after him and your friend rudely said what came to his mouth that Allah’s Messenger (s.a.w.a.) was ranting and when the Prophet was angered by that and did not proceed?’

Talha replied, ‘Yes, I was a witness to the affair that day.’ Imam Ali (a.s.) told him,

‘When you all left the room the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) told me what he had wanted to write on his will and wanted the public to witness. That was because the Angel Gabriel had informed him that the Almighty knows there will be dispute among the nation (ummah) and they will be divided. The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) asked me for paper, then whatever he wanted to write he dictated to me, and he took three men as witnesses, Salman Farsi, Abu Zarr Ghaffari and Miqdad. He named the Leaders whom people should follow till the Day of Resurrection. He named me first and then my Son Hasan and after him Husain, and then nine others who are descendants of my Son Husain.’

At that Imam Ali (a.s.) turned towards Abu Zarr and Miqdad, who were present, and said to them, ‘O Abu Zarr, and you Miqdad, did such an incident occur?’ They said that they were witnesses of the Holy Prophet of Allah (s.a.w.a.) having said all those things.

Talha said, ‘I swear by Allah (s.w.t.) that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) used to say to Abu Zarr, “The earth has not borne, nor the sky covered anyone more truthful then Abu Zarr.’” Then Talha said to Ali (a.s.), ‘I myself witness that Abu Zarr and Miqdad will not witness to anything except the truth, and in my eyes you are even more truthful than those two.’

## Fatima (a.s.) (a Daughter of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) – Ahuman being in the visage of an Angel or an Angel in the appearance of human being:

Before continuing the subject of the Imams in the history of the Shia, it is appropriate to consider the place and status of the lady Fatima (a.s.). She was the Daughter of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), she was married to Imam Ali (a.s.), she was the mother of the Imams Hasan and Husain (a.s.), and thus of the sons and descendants of Imam Husain (a.s.). Her life is one of the bases of this Religion, without her social justice would not have been achieved for women, and Islam would not have been introduced completely to the world. Generally speaking, without her, right would not have been distinguished from wrong.

Women in society during the Prophet’s time were in a miserable situation, and had lost their human and social personality. To change the life path of women and the way people thought about them, a powerful spirit was needed. Women needed to regain their personality and enjoy their human rights while not forgetting their natural responsibilities, and not deviating from the path of piety, virtue and chastity.

The life of Fatima (a.s.) was a turning-point in the history of the social life of women; a period in which they lift their miserable and dark past full of injustice and oppression behind them. Instead a bright future awaited them, were they could enjoy their foil (Allah (s.w.t.)) given rights with regard to their true physical and spiritual characteristics; in dignity. Expressing their true femininity as active and valid members of human society a path which was new and honourable,

Prior to this a comprehensive revolution had commenced, a revolution which was little by little entering all aspects of human life. It started at the level of thought, which was cleansed of all deviation, idols and finally indecencies. Then the revolution entered social life and changed all relationships from a basis of injustice and exploitation, to one of equity and justice. All of this was successfully achieved by the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) during the years of his mission.

Thereafter, the time came for Islam’s revolutionary ideas about women to be recognised. It was time for a wonderful model of an ideal woman to be presented to society, to give woman personality and teach her piety and chastity; to give her respect and freedom without exploiting her. And this great and historical task was assigned to Fatima (a.s.), the Daughter of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.).

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) used two methods to train and promote human society as part of his divine duty. Firstly he would preach to the people and secondly he would present them with visual concepts. The latter was far more important than the first. In his speeches he would guide them towards goodness and a positive healthy and wholesome way of life. But he also used visual example by presenting wonderful and virtuous models, in order for the people to imitate and train their spirits.

Islam in the visage of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) had explained in foil the tasks and duties of a Muslim woman in different individual and social life aspects of life. In the person of Fatima (a.s.), he presented an excellent, symbol of virtue and chastity for Muslim women to see and train themselves and learn the Islamic way of life from her. It was in her lap that Hasan and Husain were raised and it was only such a mother, who could train a great person like Husain (a.s.), who in turn taught human beings the manner of self-sacrificing, devotion and fighting tyrants and oppressors.

The Holy Prophet loved Fatima (a.s.) very much, more than the love of a father toward his child. At that time having daughters was seen as a disgrace and brought shame to a family. The Holy Qur’an says in this respect,

When news is brought to one of them of (the birth of) a female, (child) his face darkens and he is filled with inward grief![[51]](#footnote-51)

Many men even buried their daughters alive. It was in such conditions that Fatima (a.s.) was born, and she became fully respected and esteemed. The Holy Prophet used to glorify and pay her respect as far as possible, and he called her ‘a part’ of himself. Allah (s.w.t.), too, wished to grant woman greatness and glory through Fatima (a.s.) and return to women their human rights. Through Fatima (a.s.), Allah (s.w.t.) sought to show the true spirit of Islam about woman. Until then, women had no right of life, property, inheritance or even choosing a husband, and were basically not considered human beings, but were subject to transactions like goods, and exchanged like animals.

Fatima (a.s.), however, was different. While she was growing up, slowly her virtue and chastity became famous; everywhere people talked about her spiritual qualities. People of all the families in Mecca and Madina talked about this ‘Queen of Islam’ and her well-known virtues. As Fatima (a.s.) approached the age of marriage, the nobles of the Hijaz and all Arabia wished to gain the honour of her hand. A strange struggle commenced among the leading families, a struggle in proposing marriage to her. Yet the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) didn’t agree to any of them; rather he wished to remove all incorrect customs in respect of marriage and change social values in this regard, through the marriage of his noble daughter.

Imam Ali (a.s.) wanted to marry Fatima (a.s.) very much, but his relative poverty prevented him from offering a proposal of marriage to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) daughter. Finally he made a decision and went to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), but again shyness and modesty prevented him from making his request. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) guessed the affair, and said to him, ‘Son of Abi Talib (a.s.), what do you wish and what is your request? Say whatever you wish.’ At that Ali (a.s.) made his request, saying, ‘I have come to ask for Fatima’s hand.’

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) stood up and went to Fatima (a.s.) to ask her opinion in this respect, According to Islam women have the clear right of choosing her spouse. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) himself was fully happy and satisfied at the idea of their marriage, but he didn’t answer Ali (a.s.) before asking Fatima (a.s.)’s opinion in this respect. He went to Fatima (a.s.) and asked her view. Fatima (a.s.) was silent, but her features showed that she was willing and agreeable. Thus her silence was considered as satisfaction, and the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) returned to Ali (a.s.) and agreed with his request explicitly, and asked him about the marriage portion he had in mind. Ali (a.s.) answered, I having nothing but a sword, my armour and a camel which carries water.’

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said, ‘You need the sword, so don’t sell it. The camel is also needed for works. So sell the armour as you are a brave man and don’t need armour’.

The armour was sold and the marriage costs were providedby it. The marriage ceremony was held in full simplicity and based on virtue and chastity. Fatima (a.s.) went to her husband’s house where she remained as a symbol for Muslim woman in virtue and human value.

An episode is recorded in history that demonstrates well the greatness of Fatima (a.s.)’s soul and her role as a teacher. It is narrated that on the evening that Fatima (a.s.) was going to her husband’s house, something strange happened. After the marriage ceremony was concluded in the bride’s house, it was time for Fatima (a.s.) to depart for her husband’s house, accompanied by the important ladies of the town. Fatima (a.s.) was wearing a new dress especially for the occasion, and that was the only luxury she allowed herself. She did not wear any jewellery or ornaments. The ladies of the town were wondering about the plain appearance of the Daughter of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), and they could not believe that such a young girl could be dressed so simply on the occasion of going to the house of her husband. Yet Fatima (a.s.)’s attention was caught by a short moan that could be hardly .heard out of loud noises of the crowd. It was a short and passing groan and to most of the crowd it meant nothing. But to Fatima (a.s.) it seemed the groan was saying, ‘O Fatima (a.s.), Daughter of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), now you are going to the house of your husband. People around you are full of joy and pleasure, but are you aware that at this moment a poor and miserable woman urgently needs some clothing to cover her body? You, Daughter of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), do you not like for the sake of Allah (s.w.t.) to provide some dress for a destitute person?’

That short passing groan disappeared under the exaltations of the crowd and their cheers. But it was sufficient to deeply effect the soul of Fatima (a.s.), reminding her of her heavy duty and commitment. Fatima (a.s.) stopped and the ladies of the town wondered about her sudden and unexpected halt. Fatima (a.s.) concealed herself within a circle that the ladies formed around her; she then took off her new dress and gave it to that poor women. Then she put on her old dress and went with that old dress to the house of the groom.

That is just one of the lessons given by the Daughter of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) to women in society. She was saying that the accomplishment of a woman, the virtue of a woman and the dignity and honour of a woman, do not consist of luxury and ornaments and living up to fashion and the latest style. Accomplishment of woman is in her virtue, chastity, continence and attainment, in helping the poor and healing the wounds of helpless people.

Throughout her life, Fatima (a.s.) was an active and hardworking woman. She used to grind the wheat herself for the flour needed in the house. It is said that she continued the grinding work so long, that her hands were covered with hard skin; at that time, women were considered merely as the means of gratification for men, extinguishing their fires of lust and satisfying their sexual excitement.

Fatima (a.s.) had to change this attitude; she had to show the women how they could avoid the temptations of lustful men and their carnal desires. A woman has a much higher position and rank than such things. Islam does not allow that the human position of a woman and her high personality is humbled to the level of lust and sensuality. Islam is endeavouring to protect women from any contact based on vanity and lust. The insistence in this respect goes so far that if, despite the regulations, she becomes subject to the lustful glances of men, and it is prohibited strongly.

One day a blind man entered the house of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.). Fatima (a.s.) was also there. As that man entered the house, Fatima (a.s.) covered herself and went aside. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said, ‘But this man is blind.’ Fatima (a.s.) replied, ‘It is true that he cannot see me, but I can see him.’

Such is the high attitude of chastity and the lesson that she gives to female society. She believed that the highest accomplishment of woman is too successfully in bring-up virtuous children. The Daughter of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has taught this lesson practically to other women. She herself has educated such children as Zaynab (s.a.), Hasan and Husain (a.s.), each of whom had the greatest role in leading humanity toward salvation. They totally devoted themselves to the rescue of human society from misery and calamity by facing blood and fire, by merging in the floods of events, by sacrificing themselves for right causes, for justice and for attainment.

These have been a few gleams of light from the life of the compassionate Daughter of Muhammad (s.a.w.a.), the devoted wife of Ali (a.s.), a model Mother for Hasan, Husain and Zaynab (a.s.), and a devoted teacher for the society. Here are a few of the words of this Great Lady of Islam.

1. Allah (s.w.t.) has provided justice to bring hearts closer and join them together.

2. Allah (s.w.t.) has provided patience and endurance as a means for deserving and receiving reward.

3. Allah (s.w.t.) considers kindness to parents as a shield against His anger.

4. O Allah (s.w.t.), make me humble to myself and make your dignity more evident to me**.**

## The First Imam: Ali (a.s.) – Ameer al-Momineen:

Birth: 13th Rajab, 23 B.H (600 A.D), ten years before the declaration of Prophethood.

From birth to the Prophetic Mission of the Messenger: ten years……the educational period.

From the Prophetic Mission to the Migration of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) thirteen years……the learning period.

From the emigration to passing away of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.): ten years……the devotion period.

From the passing away of the Prophet to receiving power: twenty five years……the period of mental education.

From the beginning of his rule to his Martyrdom: five years……the ruling and political affairs period.

### Position in the Imamat: The First Imam (a.s.):

All Sunni and Shia writers believe that Ali (a.s.) is one of the most knowledgeable and greatest men of Islam after the Prophet. From the age of six, he gained knowledge and skill through the teaching and guidance of Mohammed (s.a.w.a.) and was under his direct influence. There is no doubt that Ali (a.s.) took full advantage of the Prophet’s heavenly knowledge. By the unanimous opinion of the world’s philosophers and scientists who are aware of his knowledge, insights and works, Ali (a.s.) is considered one of the greatest men of knowledge and one of the world’s most comprehensive teachers.

From his words, twelve books have been compiled, the famous Nahj al-Balagah. These, together with his 13000 maxims, are shining examples of his intellectual power he encouraged the people by saying, ‘Ask me (anything) before you lose me.’

He was a Master of the art of rhetoric and a good orator. His words reveal his intelligence, wisdom and witticism, and the highest degree of eloquence. His high ideals introduce him as a personification of the truth.

Thus the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) stated, ‘I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its gate’.

And also: Ali and I are from a single tree and from the same light.’

Ali himself said, ‘The Prophet and I are two branches grown from a single root and watered from the same source’.

Ali (a.s.) was a highly valued adviser to the three caliphs Abu Bakr, Umar and Usmaan, who preceded him, they often asked him for advice on legal matters, and his opinions were accepted by them. This was to the point that Umar the second Caliph, is on record as having stated Twenty five times: ‘Were it not for Ali, Umar would have been destroyed’. Similarly, Abu Bakr and thefirst and third Caliphs, also repeatedly confessed to this Truth.

The classification and codification of grammar is attributed to Ali (a.s.). He knew the art of and expressed his ideas in attractive, styles become the best style of Arabic writing; for his style was admired by all literary men and adopted by most of them,

His sayings are so simple “that” everyone can easily understand them. As he himself said, ‘The best speech is that which is decorated with regularity and is intelligible to both learned and common people,

Sheikh Abduh[[52]](#footnote-52) in his Commentary on the Nahj al-Balagah writes:

His grace sometimes flies one to the supreme realm of the heavens with his words and at same times makes one aware of the ordinary conditions of the world. He emanates bravery and endurance in such a way that it sends shivers down the spine of the most fearless, and on the other hand, explains mercy and kindness in such a manner that the most stone hearted person is moved.

Ali Ameer al-Momineen (a.s.) had a sense of justice and his legal doctrine has been the best judicial school for the whole of mankind. The Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.a.) used to send Ali (a.s.) Forth for judicial matters.

During the time of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), when Ali (a.s.) had sat in judgement on a case and handled it well, and the news reached the Holy Prophet, he stated, ‘Thank Allah (s.w.t.) for granting our family wisdom.[[53]](#footnote-53)

In executing the Religious order, friends and foes were alike to him. He followed truth and treated everyone with the same attitude, even his enemies. He was the leader of those who were fond of their Religious duties, loved to call people to worship Allah (s.w.t.) and told them, Tear Allah (s.w.t.) who hears when you speak and knows what you think.’

He himself was a practical example of piety; as he said, ‘Truly, I do not urge you to obey Allah (s.w.t.) before having obeyed Him myself; and I do not prohibit you from disobedience to Him before having prohibited my ownself”

The last five years of Ali (a.s.)’s life was the most brilliant manifestation of humanity and exposition of justice and politics. In this period, Ali (a.s.) demonstrated to the world that it was possible to combine knowledge of Religion, Politics and Spirituality, and to use them together for the purpose of education.

It is only during Ali (a.s.)’s period of rule that the reality of Religion and the fact that Religion is inseparable from politics, and that a political state without justice and fairness cannot be stable, were established. In the year 35 (A.H.), on the eighth of the month of Zul Hajjah, people thronged to Ali (a.s.)’s house and swore allegiance to him. After five years of a just and fair government, on the nineteenth of Holy Ramazan, he was struck and injured by the sword of a deserter from his army, (Ibn al-Muljam al-Muradi). (l.a.)Three nights later he attained Martyrdom and said farewell to this earthly world forever and he flew to the Mercy of that which he worshipped.

The succession after the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has been debated among Shia and Sunni Muslims for a long time. What is known about the events that happened before and after the Prophet’s passing away, increases the importance of this matter. There are many traditions concerning the leadership (caliphate) of Ali (a.s.) recorded during Mohammed’s life, proving his leadership from Shia point of view. It is no secret that many of these traditions are approved by Sunni authorities too, and are registered in their books of traditions. However our discussion here concerns the personality of this extraordinary man and his role in shaping primary Islam, and his position before Allah (s.w.t.) and the Prophet of Islam (s.a.w..a). By looking at Ali (a.s.)’s life in brief, we realise his important situation and the respect paid to him by Islam and the Messenger.

According to what may be comprehended from historic documents, Ali (a.s.) was the first who believed in Islam after the Prophet’s wife Khadijah (a.s.). But prior to that he had been under his cousin (the Prophet’s) guardianship from the age of six, and he trained under his sublime method during this period.

His ministry began from the commencement of the people invitation to Islam and monotheism by the Prophet. That is something both Shia and Sunnite historians are agreed upon. To briefly sum up, he had been the minister, the chancellor and executive power of the Islamic government for twenty-four years, during the lifetime of the Messenger.

Because of his self-sacrifices and devotion in order to promote Islam, Ali was decorated with honour and dignity by the Prophet, which has been recorded in the history of Islam.

The Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.a.) said concerning him, “Ali is with the Holy Qur’an and the Holy Qur’an is with Ali. They will not be separated until they both come to me at the pool (in Paradise)”.[[54]](#footnote-54)

According to Tabari’s book of history, accepted by both Shiite and Sunni, the first manifest declaration about the succession of Ali (a.s.) after the Messenger, was proclaimed by the Prophet during a banquet for his tribe the Bani Hashim:

After eating dinner, the messenger turned to the children of Abd al-Muttalib and introduced Islam, the unity of Allah (s.w.t.) and his Prophetic mission to them. Then he said, ‘Any one who accept my invitation and assists me, would be my brother, my minister and the successor after me’. Among that great family no one but Ali (a.s.) answered. The Prophet made his speech three times. No one but Ali (a.s.) replied, and finally the Prophet said, ‘O Ali, you are my brother, you are my minister, you are my successor and you are my heir’.[[55]](#footnote-55)

Ali (a.s.) resisted all hardships and pressures for the sake of Islam, and fought all crises to the last grasp. He showed his support for Islam to the last moments of his life. As a soldier he was so brave that was titled lion of Allah (s.w.t.) *(al-Haidar* and *Asadullah).*

One of the most illustrious periods of Ali’s life was during the eighty-four battles that took place over the ten years period of the Prophet’s exile in Madina. The Muslims’ triumphs in all of these battles were largely indebted to Ali’s bravery, strength, heroism, sacrifice and vigour. One of these wars was the battle of Khaibar, where the enemies had seven strong castles and four thousand combatants in its army. The heavy gate of the castle was closed and no one was able to open it. The Messenger and his army were lay in siege to the castle for twenty-five days. While Ali (a.s.) was ill, the Messenger granted the flag of Islam to Abu Bakr (later to become the first caliph) and dispatched him along with his force. Under Abu Bakr’s leadership the Muslim army turned back and did not achieve victory. The following day the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) granted the flag to Umar (who was to become the second caliph) but he too failed. According to what Tabari narrates in his book, Umar returned ‘in fear’. Other commanders were bearing the flag one by one but they all returned disappointed. Finally the Messenger declared, ‘Tomorrow, I shall grant the flag to one who loves Allah (s.w.t.) and His Prophet, and Allah (s.w.t.) and His Prophet love him too; he will not return unless with victory.’[[56]](#footnote-56)

Umar said later, ‘I swear by Allah (s.w.t.), I had not desired to be appointed any day but that day.’

The following day, the Messenger granted the flag of Islam to Ali (a.s.), and commanded him, ‘Depart and do not even look back.’ Ali (a.s.) departed followed by soldiers Glorifying and Praising Allah (s.w.t.). Ali (a.s.) stopped a few step further and, without turning his face, said, ‘O Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.), how long should I fight with them?’

The Messenger replied, ‘Until they believe in the oneness of Allah (s.w.t.) and my Prophetic mission; if they do that, they are to be spared.’

Ali (a.s.) departed on the mission that all other commanders had failed to succeed. He achieved the victory for Islam as the Prophet had foreseen.[[57]](#footnote-57)

In fact, the forts main heavy gate, one of the strong fortifications of the castle, was removed by Ali (a.s.). According to what Tabari quotes in his history from Abu Rafia:

Ali (a.s.) removed the gate to use it as a shield (against the enemies), then he cast it aside. Seven persons along with me tried to lift it and turn it over but we could not do that.’

Ali’s diligence and endeavour in the battle of Khaibar and the capture of the castle was one of the most extraordinary events in the history of mankind. Numerous poets have composed laudatory poems concerning it.[[58]](#footnote-58)

Following the migration *(hijra)* of the Holy Prophet and the Muslims to Madina and the Holy Prophet’s announcement to Muslims of ‘brotherhood’ between themselves, both the Muslims of Mecca (emigrant-Al-Muhajrin) and those of Madina (assistor – *Vali-Ansar)* had each to participated in a fraternity-rite and were appointed someone as ‘brother’. Ali (a.s.), who was an obedient of Allah (s.w.t.) and an amenable follower of the Holy Prophet was chosen as the brother of the Holy Messenger in this ceremony, and was given another merit by the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.).

### The Great Event of Ghadir Khum:

Another important event which confirms the leadership of Ali (a.s.), whose occurrence is accepted by both Shiite and Sunnite Muslims, happened during the last pilgrimage of the Holy Prophet to Mecca, which is known as Hajjat al-Wida (‘the Farewell Hajj’). There are eighty-nine traditions concerning the event in Sunni sources, and forty-four traditions from Shia sources.

According to the historic texts concerning this event, the Holy Messenger departed for Madina from Mecca after finishing the pilgrimage. He was accompanied by a vast crowd of his followers. At a place three miles towards Juhfa, in the torrid mountainous zone around Mecca known as Ghadir Khum he gave the command to stop, and got off his camel immediately. Then he announced, ‘Those who are in front should return, and those behind should join us’.

Salman asked ‘O Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.), why are you stopping here?’

The Messenger replied, ‘Gabriel has descended to me and revealed an important matter for me to announce.’

The Messenger then commanded to set up a platform of rocks and camel saddles. He climbed it shortly before the noon prayer and was ready to talk.

Historians write that 120,000 people were gathered there. The crowd occupied all of that area, ready and silent to listen to the Holy Prophet, and to discover the purpose of the meeting in such hot weather.

The Holy Messenger (s.a.w.a.) began his speech near noon; it took a long time. It is written that Holy Prophet recited more than a hundred verses of the Holy Qur’an for the people, and reminded the crowd 73 times of their destiny.

He then introduced Ali (a.s.), who was standing next to him upon the raised platform. He said,

‘Do you not acknowledge that I have a greater claim on each of the believers than they have on themselves?’ They replied, ‘Yes.’

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) then took Ali’s hand and said, ‘of him whose Master (Mawla) I am, then Ali is also his Master. O Allah, be the supporter of whoever supports Ali, and the enemy of whoever opposes him.’

The first to congratulate Ali (a.s.) was Umar. He said, ‘O son of Abu Talib, from now on, morning and evening, (forever) you are the Master of every believing man and believing woman.’

Another famous tradition accepted and quoted by both Shia and Sunni is the famous narration from the Holy Prophet in which the position of Ali (a.s.) was likened to the position of the Harun (Aaron). According to this tradition the Holy Messenger left Ali (a.s.) in Madina as his deputy while he himself departed with his army towards Tabuk. Ali (a.s.) said to the Holy Prophet, ‘O Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.), I am not fond of staying here while you are departing for somewhere.’

The Messenger replied, ‘O Ali, you are to me as Harun (Aaron) was to Musa (Moses), save that there is no Prophet after me.[[59]](#footnote-59)

There are many traditions concerning Ali (a.s.), which have been declared by the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.); here we give seven of the most famous:

1. No one but a believer loves Ali and no one but a hypocrite hates Ali.

2. I am part of Ali and Ali is part of me.

3. The Truth accompanies him (Ali) wherever he goes.

4. There is no youth braver than Ali,

5. I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its gate.

6. No one but Allah (s.w.t.) and me is acquainted with Ali.

7. I am the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) and Ali is his sword.

### The ‘Saqifah-Affair’:

When the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) passed away, Ali (a.s.) and the other members of the Holy Messenger’s family started making preparations of burying the Messenger’s body. While Ali (a.s.) and the Holy Prophet’s family and a few devoted followers were thus occupied with the rites, a number of people were holding a meeting for assigning a leader. This took place at a shelter alongside the main market of Madina, under a bower called the Saqifah of the Bani Saida, and is famous as the event of the Saqifah, in this gathering, some of the ‘migrants’ *(al-muhajirin)* and some of the leading Muslims from Madina, the ‘assisters’ *(al-ansar)* took part. Overlooking the Holy Messenger’s guidance about the leadership of Ali (a.s.), they discussed and disputed the matter of leadership. At the conclusion of their discussion, finally they gave their allegiance to Abu Bakr.

Faced with an accomplished fact, the preservation of Islam as a Religion meant that Ali (a.s.) found that he had to give his allegiance too, although he did so under protest,

Ali (a.s.)’s silence meant that his presence benefited Islam and the Muslims, and strengthened them in the struggle against the two empires of Byzantine and Persia.

Ali (a.s.)’s silence lasted for twenty-five years, during which period three caliphs ruled after the Holy Messenger, for Abu Bakr were succeeded by Umar, and Umar was succeeded byUsmaan. His reign ended in the tumultuous confusion of due to the favour he showed to the old pre-Islamic forces of corruption and exploitation, and which in his assassination. At that, the people gathered in front of Ali (a.s.)’s house, to make allegiance to him as the Caliph and the commander of the faithful. Though he was reluctant but finally agreed to become the fourth ruler of the Muslims after the Holy Messenger

### Some of His Words:

Here is a selection of his sayings which reflect the loftiness of his thought and the eloquence of his speech:

1. Fear Allah (s.w.t.) who hears when you speak, and knows what you think.

2. The desires are like a mirage which deceive one who looks at it and disappoint one who hopes for it.

3. Wisdom and faith are like twin brothers neither of whom will be received by Allah (s.w.t.) without the other.

4. Ignorance for a man is more harmful than leprosy.

5. Knowledge and wisdom are like a tree which grows in the heart and bears its fruits through the tongue.

6. The world is like a poison that one takes unknowingly.

7. One who worships without knowledge is like a mill’s donkey that is wandering around without making any progress.

8. The world is like a shadow of the cloud its joy is mixed with grief and its honey with poison.

9. The world is like a snake its touch is soft while its poison is fatal.

10. Verily the world is an enemy without being provoked, an oppressor without being oppressed and a combatant without being attacked.

11. When committing sins keep in mind that all pleasures quickly depart while their consequences remain.

12. The best lesson can be taken by looking at the tombs of the dead.

13. A prudent man is the one who enlightens himself by experience and corrects his deeds by difficulties.

14. This world has an end but the other has none.

15. The world is inconstant and transient, even if it remains for you; you do not remain for it.

16. The wise man is one who can overcome his passions and does not sell his future world for his present world.

17. Today is the day of action not judgement, tomorrow comes the day of resurrection not action.

18. If you love Allah (s.w.t.), clear from your heart the love of the world.

19. The past is dead and the future is unknown; so make use of the present by your good deeds.

20. The wisest among you is the one who is most obedient of Allah (s.w.t.).

## The Second Imam: Hasan (a.s.) – Al-Mujtaba.

Name: Hasan the Son of Ali (a.s.).

Honorary Title: Mujtaba, meaning ‘the Chosen’.

Father: Ali bin Abi Talib (a.s.), the first Imam.

Mother: Fatima (a.s.) the Daughter of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.).

Date of Birth: 15th Holy Ramazan 3 A.H. (28th February, 625 A.D.)

Place of Birth: Madina.

Date of Martyrdom: 28th Safar 50 A.H (26th March 670 A.D.).

Place of Martyrdom: Madina.

Position in the Imamat: The Second Imam.

The assassination of Ali (a.s.) during the month of Holy Ramazan left the Muslims no room for doubt, hesitation or uncertainty about the suitability of Imam Hasan (a.s.) as his successor. They were aware that they could not find anyone to match Hasan b. Ali (a.s.) throughout the Islamic community.

While government and leadership in Islam is a very high and dignified position, for that very reason it is also considered a crucial and laborious responsibility. The first responsibility that makes this position critically important is the leader’s devotion to the people who live within the scope of his authority and influence. Around the personality of Imam Hasan (a.s.) a whole range of issues could be discussed. His knowledge and skill, his generosity, his nobleness of mind and of conduct, his patience and forbearance and, ultimately, his perfect human qualities, are the topics on which many lengthy works have been written. Of all these, however, perhaps the most outstanding and brilliant part of the Imam’s life, was his devotion to the people.

So it was immediately after the Martyrdom of Ali (a.s.), the people of Kufa, the city that Ali (a.s.) had made his capital, swore their allegiance to Imam Hasan (a.s.), and entrusted him to assume the power of governing the country and to administer the Muslim affairs with his efficient management. They were supported in this by the people of Madina.

However, the province of Syria (Sham) was still in the hands of Muawiah, the son of Abu Sufyan and head of the Bani Ummayya clan that had a longstanding enmity towards the Prophet and his family (a.s.). Muawiah had ruled Syria as a private kingdom since the time of his brother’s death during the reign of Umar, and had built for himself a strong and loyal army and a powerful propaganda machine. He had long planned to attract the people’s attention towards himself, and seize the khilafat power by Shamis soldier’s support, in order to dominate all over the Islamic territory. But with the presence of Ali (a.s.)’s family and their being perfect examples and models of Islamic justice made the performance of this task seem impossible. Muawiah was well aware that with the presence of Ali (a.s.), Hasan (a.s.) and Husain (a.s.) he would never be able to fulfil his desires, and it was as a result of the disorder Muawiah had created, that Ali (a.s.) was Martyred.

No sooner had Imam Hasan (a.s.) been entrusted with the reins of state, than he found himself confronted by Muawiah’s cunning policies and threatened by his armies. Imam was well aware of Muawiah’s plotting, and knew that he would finally be involved in a conflict with him. Personally he was ready, but he also knew how the commanders of his father’s army had lost their hearts and their faith in Siffin war by accepting Muawiah’s bribes, to the extent that they even made their plots against Ali (a.s.) the Commander in Chief.

And in a way, history was to repeat itself. Muawiah could not leave his lifetime ambition of ruling the entire Islamic world. The acceptance of Imam Hasan (a.s.) as khalif by the people of Iraq, with no opposition or protest from Arabia, Persia and Yemen alarmed Muawiah.

He took the first step by denouncing Imam Hasan (a.s.)’s appointment, and began preparations for war. He summoned all the commanders of his forces, and sent many of his agents and spies to arouse the people against Imam Hasan (a.s.).

When Muawiah moved with his force from Syria towards Iraq, Imam Hasan (a.s.) dispatched 12,000 troops as an advance guard to check and hold the enemy until he himself could follow with the main force. According to the historians Yaqubi and Abu Faraj, this force was put under the command of Ubaydallah b. Abbas, and Qays was an advisor to him. They had been commanders in the army of Ali (a.s.) and of Imam Hasan (a.s.) in the past.

Muawiah made a bribe to Ubaydallah of a million dirhams, if he would defect. Ubaydallah accepted the bribe and went over to Muawiah with 8000 men. The same kind of offer was made to Qays who rejected the offer. At the same time, Imam Hasan (a.s.) himself was facing serious problems, some of his troop’s last heart for fighting while some of them rebelled against him. The spies of Muawiah were well at work and without any doubt they infiltrated Imam Hasan (a.s.)’s army. Having arrived in Madain, Imam Hasan (a.s.) found that it was impossible to continue the war with Muawiah; for he could see that his army was slowly melting away Imam Hasan (a.s.) therefore decided to accept a peace agreement with Muawiah, though with great reluctance. Having received a letter from Qays, Imam Hasan (a.s.) called in the Iraqi leaders and nobles, and addressed them thus:

O people of Iraq, what should I do with your people who are with me? Here is the letter of Qays bin Sa’d informing me that even the nobles from among you have gone over to Muawiah. By Allah (s.w.t.), what shocking and abominable behaviour on your part; you were the people who forced my father to accept arbitration at Siffin; and when the arbitration to which he yielded (at your demand) took place, you turned against him. And when he called upon you to fight Muawiah, once again you showed your slackness and lassitude. After the death of my father, you yourself came to me and paid me allegiance, out of your own desire and wish. I accepted your allegiance and came out against Muawiah; only Allah (s.w.t.) knows how much I meant to do. Now you are behaving in the same manner as before. O people of Iraq, it would be enough for me from you if you would not defame me in my Religion, because now I am going to hand over this affair to Muawiah.[[60]](#footnote-60)

The statement clearly reflects that Imam Hasan (a.s.), from the very beginning, even from the time of the Siffin war, was suspicious of the unreliable character of the people of Iraq. As we can see, Imam Hasan (a.s.)’s decision to abdicate was clearly forced upon him by the circumstances, and was not of his own free will. Moreover, in spite of his abdication, Imam Hasan (a.s.) continued to be regarded as the leader of the Shia after the death of Imam Ali (a.s.).

The success of Muawiah’s stratagems and propaganda ploys, led Imam Hasan (a.s.) to realise that the conditions were not right for fighting against the exploitative forces, and that a revolution had to be developed against that dynasty. Now that the reactionaries were in command of the Islamic policy and all of Islam’s rules and justice were in their hands, Imam Hasan (a.s.) was well aware that such a revolution required specific social conditions, without which the revolution’s aims could not be achieved, and all efforts would result only in great carnage and destruction. For these reasons Imam Hasan (a.s.) sensed that his responsibility was to develop the preliminary preparations for such a revolution, without being in violation of his agreement with Muawiah. He was then able to pass this revolutionary process and the responsibility of leading it, upon his death, to his brother Imam Husain (a.s.). With this as his approach, Imam Hasan (a.s.) had firstly to protect himself, for time he was alive Muawiah could not strike at the main infrastructure of Islam. Rather he was obliged to observe the existing situation and to pretend that he complied with the rules and regulations of Islam, and with the terms of the peace treaty between him and the Imam. Secondly, by providing elucidating information, the Imam was able to make things clear for the people in such a way that he initiated the grounds of the revolution in the minds of the people-so that his brother, Imam Husain (a.s.), was able to create the great movement that culminated in the Day of Ashura.

In adopting this decision, the Imam preferred the people, the community, above himself; he devoted himself to the people’s prosperity. He had the choice between Martyrdom and the acceptance of persecution. Martyrdom was clearly not advisable at the time, as it would have been misunderstood, and so he chose the path of remaining alive and enduring all tortures, hardships, troubles, injustices, while resisting the distorting and unjust and exploitativemeasures of Muawiah. This latter approach was in fact a more burdensome and onerous task than simply to fight and die. The Imam’s flexibility was truly heroic.

After reluctantly accepting the peace treaty, Imam-Hasan (a.s.) returned to Madina. At this point of his life he entered a phase in which he was gradually sacrificed, not like a soldier who after having fought and attacked the enemy in the battlefield would finally give his life in a very short moment, but as a prisoner who dies through a prolonged period of hard labour and torture. During the final ten years of his life, the Imam devoted himself to advancing the truth as best he could, and managed to save the true spirit of the Religion in the face of all the distortions introduced by Muawiah and his bureau of propaganda. Muawiah had decided for long time to innovate an ideology as he desired, he intent on developing an ideology from the realms of Islam that in the name of Islam and serving Allah (s.w.t.), would actually best serve their own interests and prejudices. This was a trend that, with the victory of Muawiah over Imam Hasan (a.s.) would seem in retrospect to have been unstoppable. It was only Imam Hasan (a.s.) and the Household of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and their most devoted followers who stood against this trend, and Imam Hasan (a.s.)’s responsibility to attract people’s attention towards true Islam-especially on the matters which had been corrupted by Muawiah-was fully met.

After steering the tiny community of true believers through those turbulent times, Imam Hasan (a.s.) was finally Martyred by poison, through the machinations of his powerful enemy Muawiah. He passed away on the 28th Safar, 50 A.H (26th March, 670 A.D), in Madina, where he lies buried.

Here are five of the Imam’s sayings, as a guide to his Moral and Intellectual Magnitude:

1. Be friendly with people and deal with them as if you wish them to deal with you.

2. There is no poverty and misery like ignorance.

3. Arrogance spoils the faith and the devil was cursed because of arrogance. Greed and fantasies are the enemies of the human soul, and Adam (a.s.) was expelled from the Garden due to his greed.

4. Envy is the outrider and the vanguard of indecency and is the reason that Qabil (Cain) killed Habil (Abel), his brother.

5. Opportunity passes quickly and returns slowly.

## The Third Imam: Imam Husain (a.s.) – Sayyid al-Shohada

Name: Husain the Son of Ali (a.s.).

Honorary Title: *Sayyid al-Shohada* ‘Lord of the Martyrs’,

*Abu Abdullah,* ‘Father of Abdullah’ a title given by the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), Lord of the youths of Paradise.

Father: Ali b. Abi Talib (a.s.), the first Imam.

Mother: Fatima (a.s.), Daughter of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.).

Date of Birth: the third of Sha’ban 4 A.H (8th June, 626 A.D).

Place of Birth: Madina.

The Date of Martyrdom: The 10th Day of Muharram, Ashura, in the year 61 A.H (683 A.D).

Place of Martyrdom: the plain of Karbala.

Position in the Imamat: The Third Imam.

Imam Husain (a.s.) assumed the power of the Imamat after the death of his assassinated brother, Imam Hasan (a.s.). The Imam had been brought up in the Household of the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.a.), which was the Prophet school. It was in this school that Imam Ali (a.s.), the Prophet’s nephew, son-in-law, right-hand man and heir and Fatima (a.s.), the Prophet’s daughter, and his grandchildren, Hasan, Husain (a.s.) and their sister, the great Zainab (a.s.), were all educated and raised. It was this extraordinary Islamic school to which all Muslims throughout the world owe their Religious teachings. Imam Husain (a.s.) imbibed in that school all the excellent human characteristics, such as courage, bravery, knowledge, patience and generosity in this great training centre he prepared himself to serve and guide the people to and upon the path of Allah (s.w.t.).

Imam Husain (a.s.), respecting the peace treaty concluded between Muawiah arid his brother Imam Hasan (a.s.), took no countermeasures against Muawiah for as long as Muawiah was alive. But after that, and the ruling administration readied itself to be inherited by Muawiah’s evil son Yazid (l.a.), Imam Husain (a.s.) was faced with a greedy, profit ethic and an ideology that opposed virtue, and a governmental apparatus that would have exalted vice above virtue for all time. Islam would have perished. In this situation Imam Husain (a.s.) had two options; either to remain silent and live in peace and have a comfortable life or to give his life in protest against the leaders of the false ideology. Imam Husain (a.s.) chose the latter of these two courses.

The history of Islam will never record such a marky and onerous period as the era of Yazid. In this period the government of Yazid was set to completely overturn the essential spirit of Islam. It was in that period which the ultimate aim of Islam, Allah (s.w.t.)’s reign over the people, was being transformed into the regime and Religion of a corrupt and vicious individual. It was being turned from a path of salvation and social liberation and fulfilment, into a frustrating despotism that rewarded only sycophants, and tyrants. In Yazid’s day, the public property, which was to be utilised for the public vital interests, was seen as the personal wealth of the ruling interests and were simply spent to keep group of people happy and satisfy their whims. The most essential principle of Islam, social justice, was being completely destroyed and crushed, and was sure to wither and disappear. Mankind was changing its direction towards a condition of ignorance that had existed prior to Islam. All the broken idols of society were being revived again.

The only person, who perceived such a dangerous situation, was Imam Husain (a.s.), and this was one of the gifts of intuition which distinguished the truly great man from the ordinary people, so placing him in the highest positions in the society. The advantages of Imam Husain (a.s.) was not only his comprehension of the situation but his unique self-sacrifice and devotion was his greatest advantages which allowed him to perpetuate the Religion founded by his grandfather, on the one hand, and to save people from Yazid’s oppressive domination on the other. In order to achieve these goals, Imam saw that his fate involved his own Martyrdom and the Martyrdom of many of his family, and the captivity of the rest of his loved ones.

As Dr. Kermani write in his book:

The human being naturally loves life and is always concerned for it, and therefore never plans to destroy it. Husain passed mankind’s boundaries in this respect, and joined the Angels of Allah (s.w.t.).[[61]](#footnote-61)

Under the effect of the deceit and poisonous propaganda of the ruling house during that period, the society was so numbed and unconscious that it could never be woken by some simple impulse. The simple and quiet plans could not shake the Islamic community enough to rouse it.

Imam Husain (a.s.)’s outstanding personality was known to the society of the time. He was the Holy Prophet’s grandson and the Imam of the people and among the people there was none more like the Holy Prophet than him. The Muslims loved him and paid him a special respect as the grandson of Allah’s Messenger. This put him in a very special position, and, in being true to that responsibility, he absolutely refused to give Yazid his allegiance. That would have been the betrayal of his father, grandfather, mother and brother and all of their devoted followers who had striven for Islam. Imam Husain (a.s.) was devoted to the well-being of the people. He was to sow the seeds of a revolution with his own blood and the blood of his family and of those true believers who would stand with him, rather than seizing power to rule over people or having a military victory. Ultimately he and his men fought and resisted against 30,000 of Yazid’s soldiers, while he had a party of only 72 men. As he said to his brother, Muhammad al-Hanafiyah:

“I shall go to extend my reforming hands towards the followers of my grandfather.”

Imam Husain (a.s.) went out to liberate the Islamic community from its wretched condition and destruction, to save it from certain death.

Masoudi Moustofi writes in his most famous book ??? (Mmurouj-al-zahab, 346 A.H, 968 A.D):

In the Month of Rajab of 61 A.H; when Muawiah died at the age of 80, the people in Kufa wrote a letter to Imam Husain (a.s.) and complained to him of the fact that they had no strong and knowledgeable Imam. They unanimously invited him to lead them.

At the same time the Governor of Madina, intended to take the oath of allegiance from Husain (a.s.) on Yazid’s behalf. Before that could happen, the Imam moved to Mecca. Then, in answer to the people of Kufa, he sent his cousin Muslim the son of Aqil to Kufa. He then migrated to Iraq on the day of Arafah, (an important day in the Hajj ritual).

In the interim, Yazid (l.a.) had focussed his mind on consolidating the foundation of his sovereignty and government in the city of Sham after death of his father. To follow his plan, he tried to size the allegiance of four renowned and highly piouspeople from whom his dead father has also failed to do so. To get allegiance from Imam Husain (a.s.) was the most important of them, because he was the Holy Prophet’s grandson, and Son of the excellent couple (Ali and Fatima (a.s.), he was the brother of Imam Hasan (a.s.) (second Imam). He was also nominated and regarded by his followers as the third Imam of Muslims on the other hand Imam Husain (a.s.) was loved by all classes for his personal friendly behaviour, great generosity, his knowledge of Religion, his knowledge of world science, patience and courage.

Knowing the merits of Imam Husain (a.s.) and realising the social-political status of this great man. Muawiah used to avoid contact and getting involved with Imam Husain (a.s.). He used to prevent his son Yazid from involvement with the Imam. A part of Muawiah’s will and testament to his son clearly highlights this:

Husain b. Ali (a.s.) is a great, dignified and brave man. He is highly loved by all Muslims, particularly those who live in Hijaz (Arabia), who used to see for themselves the degree of the Prophet’s attention and love for him. If the people of Iraq have offered their allegiance to him and he himself has risen against you, he will surely gain victory over you. Far be it from you to fight him, because he is greatly entitled to take the office of khilafat. It will, therefore, prove useless if you would fight him. Compromise is the best solution in this case. Always be peaceful to him.’

### What Day is Ashura?

Not being influenced by his father’s strong will and ignoring the importance of his father’s fifty years of ruling experience, Yazid (l.a.) still insisted on forcing allegiance from Imam Husain (a.s.).

The Holy Imam (a.s.) knew that Yazid (l.a.) observed no principles in his authority. He was a wine-drinker, an aggressive gambler and viciously harsh. The Religion of Islam was generally forgotten and nothing remained of it but a name. Husain (a.s.) knew well that the Religion needed another revolution. Husain (a.s.) chose the most powerful tool to encounter the enemy. He decided to sacrifice himself and his family to the last gasp for the sake of Islam,

Ultimately, he actualised the plan of his whole life in a day, and with his blood made his thoughts and beliefs eternal. Wearing the clothing of submissiveness, he proved for the world that the greatest shame for a man is to surrender. He wrote his message with the ink of his blood.[[62]](#footnote-62)

When Imam Husain (a.s.) refused his allegiance to Yazid and moved from Madina to Mecca with his family, he remained there for four months. During that time Yazid assigned two hundred men to surround him while he was circumambulating the Holy Ka’bah to forcefully obtain his allegiance. Thirty men wearing swords under their pilgrim garb were ready to carry out Yazid’s order. In order to avoid blood being shed in Allah (s.w.t.)’s house and having the sanctity of the House violated, Husain avoided confrontation and left for Iraq. Before he leaves Madina for Mecca, Imam Husain (a.s.) made a testament to his brother, Muhammad al-Hanifiah:

This is the testament of Husain, son of Ali, (a.s.) made to his brother, Muhammad al-Hanifiah, who professes the Oneness of Allah (s.w.t.), the Prophecy of Muhammad al-Mustafa (s.a.w.a.), and the truth of Heaven, Hell and the Resurrection, and that all the tomb dwellers will Resurrect.

And now I leave Madina, not for a throne, a kingdom, rank or position, but to command the people to do good deeds and prohibition of bad deeds, in order to reform the Muslim community, to instigate a mental movement and to show the path of salvation. I revolt to the manifesto of my grandfather; and I will tolerate any person who opposes me until Allah (s.w.t.) judges between us. Now, by the Divine Grace, I revolt to prove the Rightfulness and Truth.’

Imam Husain (a.s.) proceeded towards Iraq, in reply to the invitation of the people there. However, in fear of Yazid’s specially-appointed envoy, Ibn Ziyad, the people of Kufa retracted their invitation, and they totally changed their stance. Many respected men and the Holy Prophet’s companions came to the Imam, among them Abd Allah b. Abbas, and warned him about the unfaithfulness of the Kufians, in the hope of preventing him from travelling to Iraq. The Holy Imam acknowledged all their warnings, but told them that he had to fulfil his destiny.

Some of the Arabs of the peninsular also gathered and tried to affect his iron will; but they also failed. It seemed that the Imam was aware of his fate and that of his family, and knew some facts that other did not know. For instance when he reached Karbala, he gave instructions to summon the people of the region and ask them the name of that area. An old man came and told them this land was called ‘Qadisiyyeh’, ‘Ninevah’, and ‘Karbala’. As soon as his Excellency heard the name *Karbala,* he dismounted. He then stated:

This is the land of Karbala where we shall rest forever; here is the place where we die as martyrs. Here is the place where our leaders shall be killed and we will be directed towards our true destiny.

Before reaching Karbala on his journey to Iraq, Imam finally arrived at the junction of Iraq where the road splits towards Kufa. Here he was stopped by a government force under Hurr al-Riahi. After the Imam’s party had given water to the soldiers and their horses, Hurr and Imam Husain (a.s.) began to talk. Hurr told Imam Husain (a.s.) that he could not go on to Kufa. Imam Husain (a.s.) said well, we are not going to Kufa; he changed his route and set off toward Karbala.[[63]](#footnote-63)

When Imam Husain (a.s.) arrived at Karbala, Hurr informed Ibn Ziyad that the Prophet’s Son had settled at Karbala. In reply, Ibn Ziyad wrote and warned Hurr that, according to the instructions received from Yazid (l.a.), he was not allowed to close his eyes, sleep or eat anything until he had arrested Imam Husain (a.s.), or made him swear allegiance to Yazid, or killed him if he refused. Hurr showed Ibn Ziyad’s letter to Imam Husain (a.s.). The Imam stated that there is no answer to this letter.

The messenger returned and informed Ibn Ziyad of the Imam’s reply. Ibn Ziyad became very angry and dispatched to Karbala almost 30,000 soldiers under the command of Umar bin Sa’d bin Abi Waqqas. This military expedition was directed against only 72 people. The army arrived at the side of the river, between the water and the Prophet’s descendants. They then denied Imam Husain (a.s.) his companions, followers and family any water.

After several days of futile negotiations, a battle finally took place between the seventy-two men of Muhammad’s descendants and their supporters, against 30,000 of Yazid’s men upon that dry and waterless land of Karbala. The battle was intensified on the ninth and tenth of Muharram. The Imam’s companions surprisingly fought against the enemy with vigour, despite their terrible thirst none of them surrendered or lost faith in the aims for which they fought, and none deserted their Holy leader.

This event of *Ashura* has been regarded as one of the most terrifying and pitiful event in the history of Islam. Historians have universally admitted that none of the world’s Religious leaders have ever dedicated their lives and the lives of their family for the sake of their Religion, to the extent of Imam Husain (a.s.). That battle resulted in the captivity of his family after the painful martyrdom of all his young men and sons one after the other, as well as in the Martyrdom of his brothers and companions and ultimately of himself, yet he never submitted to the enemy’s demands, but constantly invited the enemy to the Religion, virtue, and superior qualities of man, with a cheerful face. We unfortunately cannot deeply express the event of Ashoura as the writing of the all events is behind the capacity of this book, therefore we have no alternative but to believe the details of their Martyrdom and fight, against Yazid’s soldiers and content ourselves with what we explained in the previous pages.

The Martyrdom of Imam Husain (a.s.) and of his seventy-two followers and the captivity of his family brought about a new lease of life for Islam and the Muslims. Imam Husain (a.s.) wrote his message on the warm breeze blowing at Karbala, and the news spread throughout the world.

In order to depict the great personality and extremely high human spirit of this extraordinary man, it is necessary to mention some of his eloquent words:

1. One who has not found Thee [O Allah (s.w.t.)], what has he found? And one who has found Thee, what has he missed finding? And anyone who becomes interested in things other than Thee, with which he is content, has lost everything.

2. On the Resurrection, we shall never be safe, unless we are in fear of the Allah (s.w.t.) in this world.

3. I consider death to be a happy event, and living with the oppressor as nothing but suffering and distress.

4. Don’t be cruel to one who has no supporter except the Almighty Allah.

5. Once a man came before Imam and said, ‘I am a sinful person and cannot resist against sin, please preach to me.’ The Imam answered,’ If you can do five things, then commit as many sins as you like:

a. Refrain from eating the daily bread (as provided by Allah (s.w.t.)) and commit as many sins as you like.

b. Leave the territory of Allah (s.w.t.) and do whatever you like to do.

c. Go to a place where the Allah (s.w.t.) cannot see you and do what you want to do.

d. Whenever the Angel of death comes before you in order to take your soul, push him away, then do whatever you want to do.

e. When the owner of the hell sends you to hell, refrain from going to hell, and do what you wish.’

6. If you have not any Religion, [at least] in your world be a free and honourable man.

It is after the event of Ashura that we become acquainted with two other heroes: the fourth Holy Imam whom we shall discuss in later pages, and Zaynab (a.s.), the Sister of Imam Husain (a.s.), the Daughter of Ali (a.s.) and Fatima (a.s.) who, though not an Imam, but had as great a responsibility and role as those of the Imams.

Following the event of Ashura all that remained of Husain’s family were the fever-struck Imam Sajjad (a.s.) and a few women and children. They were taken prisoner by the government troops (Amavian) and taken to Kufa and then to Damascus as captives with the fourth Imam seriously ill, Zaynab (a.s.) had very critical and heavy responsibilities. While having to console the bereaved women and children who had lost their husbands and fathers in that horrible event, and having to tend to the life of the fourth Imam, and above all it was up to Zaynab (a.s.) to convey the message of the Martyrs’ blood to the world of Islam. This brave and noble woman was successful in bearing all these responsibilities and discharged her duties in the best possible way. Educated and raised in the school of prophethood and guardianship, Zaynab (a.s.) spoke up bravely in the streets and markets of both Kufa and Damascus, and before both Ibn Ziyad and Yazid (l.a.). Adroitly, she explained the reasons behind her brother’s uprising and through her eloquence and courage began a movement of transformation in the people’s way of thinking and their attitudes. She sowed the seeds of revolution for the destruction of the oppressive government, and attracted again the attention of the people towards the Religion of Islam and the forgotten obedience to their leaders, the Imams.

She also demonstrated that the higher Authorities of Religion, the Prophets and the Imams, had a well-managed plan, a perfect and constant programme in order to spread the Religion. Whether through being killed or being exiled imprisoned in the dark corner of a dungeon or being poisoned, throughout all such circumstances, they still manage to perform their responsibilities, not permitting the route of truth to be changed for the people.

With the Holy Prophet’s old enemies at the helm of the Islamic state, it is easy to see that had Imam Husain (a.s.) and the Holy Prophet’s descendants not sacrificed themselves for the faith, Islam would certainly not have survived, and would now be a forgotten Religion. These Imams having been familiar with the political conditions of their era with high level social possession, and understanding of their time as well as having good knowledge of the future difficulties of Islam undertook the leadership of the community.

## The Fourth Imam: Ali bin Husain (a.s.) – Zainul Abideen.

Name: Ali (a.s.)

Honorary Title: *al-Sajjad* ‘the Prostrator’, Zain al-Aabedin ‘the Ornament of Worshippers’ and al-Zaki ‘the Pure’.

Father: Imam Husain (a.s.) the third Imam.

Mother: Sahrbanu, the daughter of Yazdigerd III, the king of Persia.

Date of Birth: 5th Sha’ban, 38 A.H (5th January, 659 A.D).

Date of Martyrdom: 12th to 18th Muharram, 95 A.H (3rd to 9th September, 716 A.D). He was poisoned by the intrigue of Hisham b. Abd al-Malik.

Position in the Imamat: the fourth Holy Imam.

After the Martyrdom of Imam Husain (a.s.), the heavy responsibility of leading Muslims in that difficult situation passed to Imam Sajjad (a.s.). He was faced with two heavy tasks; firstly he had to free the people’s minds from the influence of the enemies of justice by neutralising the effects of the powerful propagandists of the corrupt regime; secondly he had to develop and cultivate the people’s virtues, revive the spirit of the Religion among the Muslims and draw their attention towards Almighty Allah. For this reason the Imam’s period of tenure was divided into distinct periods.

During the first phase, the Imam’s efforts focussed on revealing the evil nature of the ruling dynasty. Freedom of thought had to be developed throughout the Islamic community, and the people’s souls had to be liberated from the dominant influence of Yazid’s dreadful and terrifying regime. Imam Sajjad (a.s.) achieved this, and during the next phase of his life he began the task of redirecting people towards Allah (s.w.t.) and the Religious principles. The Imam worked to cultivate and refine the Muslims through writing a collection of valuable prays. They were soon assembled and set in the collection that is known as the Sahifa Sajjadiya (the Scriptures of veneration). This book is often termed ‘the Ornament of the House of Muhammad’, and is considered to be of the first degree of importance after the Holy Qur’an and the Nahj al-Balagah.

Imam began the first phases of his responsibilities just two days after Ashura, when he spoke out with passion for the people in front of the Governor’s court in Kufa, even though he was in chains and seriously weak as the effect of his illness exacerbated by the ordeal at Karbala.

In that Sermon Imam made the people realise what had really happened at Karbala and what a terrible crime the regime had committed. He repeatedly spoke out and explained the disastrous events of Karbala with the same affect at each halting place on the journey from Kufa to Damascus. Finally, at the court of Yazid, his bold and eloquent words shamed Yazid in front of people and he was obliged to treat the Imam with some courtesy and a show of respect. This allowed the Imam to arrange mourning ceremonies, so in the heartland of the corrupt forces, the truth of the height and grandeur of the Prophet’s house and the stance of Husain were made clear. Similarly, back in Madina, the Imam arranged similar mourning ceremonies over several days, thus reporting the event of Karbala to the people of Madina.

According to the historical record, the Holy Imam wept over his martyred father and kinsmen for twenty years. Whenever his eyes saw bread and water, he remembered the event and shed tears.

Imam Sajjad was a very pious man and during his prayers gave his total attention to Allah (s.w.t.), to the extent that once when the Imam was in prostration the house caught fire; the people in the house, cried out ‘Fire, O son of Allah’s Messenger’(Yabn-e-Rasulullah). But Imam did not raised up his head from the prostration until the fire was extinguished spontaneously[[64]](#footnote-64)

For this reason he was titled Zayn al-Aabedin, ‘the ornament of worshippers.’ Whenever he performed ablutions for prayer, his face became pale; when he was asked why he was feeling like that, he answered, ‘Do you know in front of whom I am standing?’

One day his son, Muhammad al-Baqir (a.s.) entered the room where his father was busy in worship. He saw that his father was completely submerged in his prayers to such an extent that his face had turned yellow, his eyes and nose were red through weeping, his feet were inflamed and his legs had calloused due to standing for long periods during his prayers. He asked his father ‘How is that you lose your control during your worship?’

His father started to weep; after a brief silence, he said, ‘My dear Son, go and read some of the accounts about the prayers of your grand father Ali b. Abi Talib.’ Imam al-Baqir claim, he handed me the book and I read it, and I discovered that my father’s worship was really quite simple in comparison to that of my grandfather.[[65]](#footnote-65)

The Sahifah Sajjadiah is a selection of the fourth Imam’s Supplications which evidently proved his expressing power which may be considered as a translucent mirror of his heavenly thoughts and one of the most sacred sources of wisdom and spirituality in Islam. While introducing Allah (s.w.t.) to man, it also introduces man to man, for a man who is unaware of his position before Allah (s.w.t.) is spiritually blind. As we have seen, it was this spiritual blindness among the Muslims that led them to open the doors to tyranny and bloodshed, and it is the overcoming of this spiritual blindness that is the great struggle of the Imamat.

After the sublime example of Husain (a.s.), the primary means of reawakening the souls was the dissemination of these loftiest supplications that were in reality the most quintessentially spiritual treatises to be read in the people’s most sincere and devoted moments. The collection of these prayers, the Sahifah Sajjadiah is known as the ‘Jewel’ and the ‘Psalms’ (Zaboor)of the House of Muhammad (s.a.w.a.). It has been translated into many different languages.

Imam Sajjad (a.s.) was poisoned and Martyred at the age of fifty-seven, in Madina, during Muharram, 95 A.H. (September, 716 A.D).

Here are some of Imam Sajjad’s short sayings:

1. Think then act for the eternal world for which you have been created, because the Allah (s.w.t.) has not created you in vain.

2. Avoid companionship with a liar, because what they say is like a mirage. They attempt to make the impossible seem possible and the possible seem impossible.

3. If the people realise what a brilliant success they may gain by knowledge and learning, they would make every effort to find it, even though through great suffering or by plunging into the deep oceans.

4. Somebody asked Imam Sajjad (a.s.), ‘O son of Allah’s Messenger’, how did you spend last night?’ The Holy Imam answered,

‘I spent the night with eight demands upon me that I had to satisfy. The Allah (s.w.t.) orders me to carry out the obligations, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) asks me to observe his ‘way’ (sunna), my wife and the members of the household require provision, the carnal desires request me to gratify my lust, the Satan tempts me into committing sins, the two vigilant Angels who watch my actions ask me to do good things, the Angel of death demands my soul, the grave requires my body and I am in the middle of all these demands.

5. Those who respect themselves (knows his / her personality) shall despise the world.

## The Fifth Imam: Muhammad bin Ali (a.s.) – Al-Baqir.

Name: Muhammad bin Ali (a.s.) Title: Baqir al-ulum, ‘the Dissector of Knowledge’.

Father: Imam-e-Sajjad (a.s.), the fourth Imam.

Mother: Fatemah, the daughter of Imam Hasan (a.s.).

Date of Birth: 3rd Safar, 57 A.H (676 A.D).

Position in the Imamat: the fifth Imam.

Imam Baqir (a.s.)’s lifetime can be divided into two periods; the first of these was the period in Madina prior to his Imamat, the second was the last twenty years of his life during which he guided the Muslims and opened up new fields of learning for them. Able to operate in relative security, he spent his life teaching the people and trying to make them aware of the realities of the Religion.

One of the Imam’s functions was to describe the events and developments that had occurred during the first century since the demise of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.). The relatively favourable situation which allowed the Imam more freedom to develop the Education of Religion was the result of struggles between the ruling house and the rival clan of the Bani ‘Abbas. Imam took the best possible advantage of the political instability by developing the Religion. The knowledge of the House of Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) that he was able to impart led to him being called *baqir-al-ulum,* ‘the dissector of knowledge’. His work was like a seed which grows from the earth and becomes a large tree. Among those who took advantage of his scientific knowledge were five-hundred prominent students who succeeded in leaving valuable writings. He expressed the mystery of the sciences and is recorded as having conveyed more than a hundred-thousand narrations which could be a convincing proof and remain as vital patterns for the Muslims.

This was extremely important, as history shows that the people were at that time faced with many fictitious narrations invented by the ruling party. The Imam used to meet the people and answer their queries and meet their scientific arguments in the mosques of Madina and Mecca.

It is reported by Hababeh that:

One day in Mecca, I saw a group of people who after pilgrimage and circumambulation of the Holy shrine, had crowded around in a place between Kaaba and Holy stone, among them there was man with a luminous face, whose presence seemed very valuable for the people as they had good opportunity to ask him different question. He gave convincing replies to each question being asked. He did not leave that place until one thousand Religious and scientific questions were answered, Having replied to all queries, Imam stood up in order to go home, but suddenly from the crowd a man who was extremely excited and felt enraptured by the Imams scientific success, enthusiastically shouted; this is the brightening and shining light who has kindled the dark part of human life and this is the sweet smell perfume breezed in the human’s soul, this is the unknown right whose value is not appreciated by the world. Some people asked who he was. He replied, he is Imam Muhammad bin Ali (a.s.) Baqir-al-ulum.

The other titles of the Imam are *Raqi’* ‘the transcender’ because he transcended knowledge to new heights, Zakir ‘The rememberer’ because he constantly bore Allah (s.w.t.) in mind, *Shakir* ‘the Thankful’, because he always thanked Allah (s.w.t.), and *Hadi* ‘the Guide’, because he guided people.

At the instigation of Hisham bin Abd al-Malik, Imam al-Baqir (a.s.) was Martyred by poison at the age of fifty-seven.

Here are some of the Holy Imam’s words:

1. A Scholar from whom the people gain knowledge is more valuable than seventy thousand worshippers.

2. The person who makes friends for the sake of Allah (s.w.t.) and makes enemies for the sake of Allah (s.w.t.), and forgives for the sake of Allah (s.w.t.), is a person whose faith has become completed.

3. Truly the Allah (s.w.t.) has given the world to both friend and enemy, but the faith is granted to the friend only.

4. The regret of an obedient person, who has shown the way of justice and honesty to other people but has himself gone a different way, shall exceed that of all others.

5. Assume the world as a halting place where you shall stay while passing through it briefly, or assume it like a wealth which you dreamed about and became happy, but when you awake you find that your hands are empty.

## The Sixth Imam: Ja’far ibn Muhammad (a.s.) – Al-Sadiq.

Name: Ja’far (a.s.)

Title: al-Sadiq ‘the Truthful’.

Father: Imam Baqir (a.s.), the fifth Imam.

Mother: Umm Muzwah

Date of birth: 17th Rabee’ al-Awwal 83 A.H. (702 A.D).

Position in the Imamat: The sixth Holy Imam

From the Martyrdom of Imam Ali (a.s.) until the Martyrdom of Imam Sajjad (a.s.), the situation was such that neither the Islamic sciences nor a rigorous school of jurisprudence had the chance to develop. During the latter part of the life of the Imam al-Baqir (a.s.) (fifth imam) however, some teaching opportunities did arise, and these allowed him to teach and elucidate on many essential topics to the Religion and the Muslim community. These relatively favourable conditions continued to exist during the Imamat of his son, the Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq (a.s.).The Imam did so well in taking advantage of these conditions, that he made an enormous contribution to the scientific advancement of the Islamic culture and civilisation, while he is also known as the founder of the school of Ja’fari jurisprudence. It was the Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) who turned Madina into a university once more, with every open space being devoted to the pursuit and exchange of knowledge.

While Imam Sadiq (a.s.) was reviving the spirit of Islam and restoring the way of the Prophet, both of which had received massive damage under the ruling dynasty, and was busy cultivating the Muslims in their love of the sciences, the Bani Ummaya dynasty established by Muawiah was preoccupied with political instability. Finally, it was during the tenure of Imam Sadiq that the Bani Ummaya lost power, to Abbasian, who quickly took control of all branches of the government, and equally quickly exterminated the Bani Ummaya everywhere they found them.[[66]](#footnote-66) The newly established Abbasid regime became aware of the Islamic cultural movement and the development of Ja’far’s teachings when Imam’s scientific influence had spread all over the Islamic nations. But Imam Ja’far (a.s.) was presented with a new problem that posed danger to the fabric of Islam as it had ever been faced. In mobilising the masses against the regime of the Bani Ummaya, in order to gain the power and legitimatize their ruling the propagandists of the Bani ‘Abbas played on the idea of Islamic Messianism. Central to this was the exalted station of the Holy Prophet’s Household (a.s.), and so the Imam was faced with the task of saving the Shia doctrines from an exaggerationism that seemed to arise from within itself, and protecting it from absorption, by holding to it basic ideal. Against this background, the Imam clarified the basic doctrine of the Imamat. The mainframe of the Imam’s doctrine was based on two points:

1. *Nass,* the designation of the Imam by the proceeding Imam. (The Imamat is a prerogative bestowed by Allah (s.w.t.) upon a chosen person, from the family of Prophet, who before his death and with the guidance of Allah (s.w.t.), transfers the Imamat to another by an explicit designation).[[67]](#footnote-67)

2. *‘Ilm,* the special knowledge of the Imam. (The Imam is a divinely-inspired possessor of a special sum of knowledge of Religion, which can only be passed on before his death to the following Imam. In this way the Imam of the time becomes the exclusively authoritative source of knowledge in Religious matters, and without his guidance no one can keep to the right path.[[68]](#footnote-68) This special knowledge includes both the exoteric or ‘outward’ *(zahir)* and the esoteric or ‘inward’ *(batin)* meanings of the Holy Qur’an).[[69]](#footnote-69)

More than twelve thousand students were educated under the theological school of Imam Ja’far (a.s.). Many became prominent Religious guides quenching the thirst for knowledge throughout the Islamic world, and many of them made a mark that remains influential to this day. A large number of the Imam’s students gained Knowledge from him in the various fields of the sciences from the first grade, up to the last level of education.

No less than four thousands of such students both taught and learned at the same time. Of these, four hundred obtained permission to write books, each of them in a specific branch of science. Among them was the famous Jabir b. al-Hayyan, who has been called the ‘father of chemistry’. Another was Seyyid Homairi, the celebrated alchemist. Another of the Imam’s pupils was Abu Hanifa, founder of the Hanafi School in Sunni Islam. Another was the founder of the Maliki School of jurisprudence, Malik b. Anas. He is believed to have studied with Imam Sadiq (a.s.) and to have been closely associated with the Imam.

About Jabir bin al-Hayyan, Georgi Zeidan writes,

Europeans have made more investigations about Jabir’s situation and the books he has written. They explicitly acknowledge that the fundamentals of the science of the new alchemy are basically founded by Jabir who gained his knowledge of analysis from Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq (a.s.).

Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq (a.s.) gave many instructions to his students among which the following branches may be mentioned, ethics, interpretation and elucidation *(tafsir)* of the Holy Qur’an, Theology *(kalam)* Medicine, the Natural Sciences of Chemistry and Physics, Astrology and of course, Gnosticism.

The important feature of Ja’far’s approach to education was that the students initially received education then were trained. From the beginning it was made clear that knowledge is for action and that they had to use their knowledge to serve the Religion, and to protect the dignity and virtue of the community.

In this the Imam led by example, for among all those thousands students there was not even one person who could criticise Imam for his ethical behaviours or could find a weak point in him.

One of the great distinctions of the Imam and the key to his success was that he taught people to recognise the proper scientific methods. It is today recognised that human science as such began when the scientists started their research through the method of observation, involving the precise study and analysis. Imam Sadiq (a.s.) has utilised this method in his scientific arguments, and even where the Imam argues about Allah (s.w.t.) and Monotheism, it is noticeable that his way of teaching is mostly focused on the study of nature and its phenomena, both objectively and subjectively.

Here are some of the Holy Imam’s words:

1. Those who have strong desires for the world and its wealth are like the silk worm which is trapped in its cocoon, the more it spins the web, the more it is deprived of freedom and free passage to the outside world.

2. Knowing Allah (s.w.t.) is a key for taming every fear, a comrade who shares every loneliness, a light for each darkness, a power in every feebleness and the treatment for each illness.

3. The days are of three types: yesterday which has passed and shall never return; today which is to be made the most of, and tomorrow which is merely a desire.

4. Should a person commit a sin surreptitiously, he shall harm only himself, but if the sin is committed openly and is not stopped, then the society would be hurt.

5. The reward of the person who endeavours to provide support for his family shall be the same reward given to a person who fights for the sake of Allah (s.w.t.).

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) was Martyred at the age of 63 on Monday, 25th Shawwal, 148 A.H 765 A.D. His martyrdom was through poisoned grapes given to him by the Governor of Madina, at the instigation of the khalifa Mansur.

## The Seventh Imam: Musa ibn Ja’far (a.s.) - Al-Kazim.

Name: Imam Musa (a.s.).

Title: al-Kazim, ‘the Suppresser of anger’

Father: Imam Sadiq (a.s.), the sixth Imam.

Mother: Hamida.

Date of Birth: 7th Safar, 128 A.H. (745 A.D).

Position in the Imamat: the Seventh Imam.

The life of Imam Musa al-Kazim (a.s.) should be divided into two periods. One was the time he was living in Madina (128-159 A.H) the second period was when he was exiled to Baghdad. This period of twenty-five years coincided with the reigns of the Abbas khalifas Mahdi and Harun, during which the Holy Imam spent most of his life in prison and suffering.

In one of Harun’s prisons in Baghdad the Imam was kept in a dungeon in which one could not tell night from day. As the Holy Imam loved to worship and serves the Allah (s.w.t.) so much, he was often found saying, ‘Allah Almighty, praise be yours since you finally granted me the solitude I always needed so as to worship you.’

Those who went to the jail to visit the Holy Imam used to learn a lesson in ethics and devotion, and would see right and truth incarnate before their eyes, while their minds and souls would be enlightened from the store of the Holy Imam’s Science, Knowledge and Mysticism.

Despite all the hardships and afflictions he suffered during Harun’s rule, the Holy Imam was always mindful of solving the people’s problems. Anyone who had a problem or who confronted a hardship or had found bitterness in the ordeals of life, and had no one to help him, would turn to Imam Musa al-Kazim (a.s.). His Holiness would mediate for him with the Almighty Allah and the people’s needs were answered. That is why the Imam is titled ‘the doorway to meeting the needs’ *(Bab al-Hawaij).*

It is true to say that the poor were of special concern for Imam Musa al-Kazim (a.s.). In the period when he was free from imprisonment, he used to help them personally, and the poor of Madina were well-aware of his kindness and generosity. Moreover, at night, the Holy Imam would carry parcels of bread and dates and clothing on his back and place them at the doorways of the poor. The people did not know who brought them, until the Imam was exiled to Baghdad and such presents ceased, and the people realised that their helper had been Imam Musa (a.s.), the Son of Imam Ja’far (a.s.) who had carried relief to the houses of the poor in the dark of the night, just like his great grandfather Imam Ali (a.s.).

As for the title al-Kazim (‘the Suppressor of anger’), the historian Ibn Athir writes that the reason seventh Holy Imam was given this title was that he always responded to evil with good. He used to respect and do good to his enemies so much that they all felt ashamed.

Harun, the fifth of the Abbasid Khalifs, used to rule over eight-hundred million people during his khilafat with forty-four different nations living in his domain. His rule reached out almost to the farthest frontiers settled by man. Yet in such an era, he had imprisoned the seventh Holy Imam.

One day, when the seventh Holy Imam entered his court, Harun bowed profusely in front of him. He sat the Holy Imam in honour next to himself and did not talk to anybody else while he was in his audience. To his son, Mamun, this seemed very strange. In the same night, Mamun went to his father and said, ‘Father, who was he whom you respected and honoured and placed him your throne, even higher than yourself?’ Harun sank deep in thought upon his son’s question. Finally he said, ‘Dear son, he is the leader and Allah (s.w.t.)’s deputy (khalifa) among the people.’ Mamun, who did not know any leader except his father said, with even more astonishment, ‘O father, Could there be another leader and Khalif other than you?’ Harun replied, this person you saw today is the most deserving of all to be the Khalif. I have gained this position by force, but Musa al-Kazim (a.s.) is the Holy Imam and true leader of the people. My dear son! I swear to Allah (s.w.t.) that he is the worthiest of all the people on earth for succeeding the Prophet’s position and the Khilafat, but there is nothing I can do, as they say, ‘the kings are barren’. But one must not acknowledge these facts if one is to rule, and even you, my son, if you opposed me in my reign, I would have you beheaded and destroyed.

As time went by the distinguished character of the seventh Imam had become intolerable for Harun. He saw everybody on their knees for the glory of his rule, but their attention was toward another direction, towards a house devoid of any glamour and splendour, a house in which lived a Holy old man named Musa al-Kazim (a.s.), who was a descendent and Heir of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.). Harun had all the power, but he knew that the hearts of the people were with the Spiritual power of the Holy Imam. Harun had often plotted the Imam’s murder, but all who were chosen to carry out the plots had at the last moment refrained from doing so. Harun finally succeeded to Martyr the Holy Imam by poisoned dates with the assistance of the Imam’s jailer, Sandi b. Shahak.

The Imam Musa al-Kazim (a.s.) was Martyred in the Month of Rajab, 183 A.H 799 A.D.

Here are some of his words:

1. Allah (s.w.t.) has two revelations for the people; evident and occult. His evident revelation is by the Holy Prophets and Holy Imams and His hidden and occult Revelation is Wisdom.

2. Understand the Allah (s.w.t.)’s Religion and get to know it, because knowledge is the key to insight, the ultimate worship and the means to traverse to highest ranks and distinguished positions in the direction of the faith and the world. The superiority of the faithful who is conscious over the unaware worshiper is like that of the sun over the stars, and the Allah (s.w.t.) does not approve of the actions of one who is unaware of his Religion.

3. The worthiest of all is one who does not view the world in terms of position and rank. Truly, your body is not worth anything less than heaven. Sell it to non-other than heaven.

4. ‘O Hisham! Jesus Christ told his closest companions, ‘Verily the small and puny sins are the devil’s guile which makes them look but trifles; they gradually pile up and enfold you in their coil.’

## The Eighth Imam: Ali ibn Musa (a.s.) - Al-Reza.

Name: Ali ibn Musa

Title: Reza, ‘the approved’ or ‘the accepted’.[[70]](#footnote-70)

Father: Imam al-Kazim (a.s.), the seventh Imam.

Mother: Najmeh.

Date of Birth: 11th Zil-Qadah, 148 A.H (765 A.D).

Position in the Imamat: eighth Imam.

Imam Reza’s Imamatbegan in Madina after the demise of his honourable father, the seventh Imam. His home was the gathering place for Scholars, jurists, clergyman and scientists. People flooded to Madina to benefit from his knowledge, moral virtues, generosity, and educative teachings.

The Holy Imam was enabled through his talents and virtues, and with favourable conditions and environment, to describe and analyse the details of the Religious and worldly sciences for the people and approve and strengthen the verses of the Holy Qur’an and narrations which had been taught and interpreted from the time of Imam Ali (a.s.) up to that of Imam Musa (a.s.).

The praiseworthy morals and virtues of his Holiness were numerous. He used to pray throughout the night and fast in the daytime, and he would take his meals sitting with the servants and slaves.

Among Imam Reza (a.s.)’s outstanding virtues was his patience and forbearance. He would view his problems from the context of the great sea of his self-restraint and forbearance, and would oft repeat the prayer of his great-grandfather, Ali (a.s.), who used to say,

‘O Thou, my beloved deity, verily if Thou place me in fire, I would call it heaven, because your assent is my paradise. So, wherever Thou take me, I know that it has been Thy desire.’

Whenever Imam Reza (a.s.) was eating, he took a bowl, filled it with the best food available and ordered it to be given away to the poor[[71]](#footnote-71) For such reason the Holy Imams always enjoyed a great popularity among the people, and were respected for their knowledge, piety, and virtuousness, and this posed a great danger for the rulers of their times.

Mafnun, who was then ruler, was a shrewd and diplomatic man. He had moved his capital to Merv. Following riots in Arabia and Yemen, some of the descendants of Imam Ali (a.s.) rebelled and a great many people followed them and revolted against Mamun; In order to pacify these rebellions, Mamun consulted his minister, Fadl bin Sahl, and decided to appoint one of Ali’s greatest descendants, famous for his knowledge and piety, as his official successor, so that the rebels would stop their rebellion. He chose Imam Reza (a.s.), for this purpose.

In adopting this stratagem, Mamun had two objectives:

First, he sought to reduce the spiritual power and influence of the Holy Imam as much as possible, and give a cover to his actions against the descendants of Imam Ali (a.s.) so as not to arouse people’s anger and hatred against the government. Second, he set up debating sessions in his court between the authorities of different religions, including Jewish, Zoroastrian and Christian Scholars, by which he sought to weaken the Imam and make him look incompetent in the face of their powers and abilities, so as to reduce the Holy Imam’s scientific standing and social popularity.

Mamun was trying to destroy Holy Imam’s scientific and social magnitude with this idea. Therefore, he allowed science and knowledge to prosper by hosting the Scholars and scientists warmly. He ordered Greek scientific books to be translated into Arabic, so that new schools would confront religions-scientific school. He used to support and encourage immensely the pioneers of these sciences and especially honoured them in public. Thus, he succeeded in creating various attractive pivots against the eighth Holy Imam. It was this wrong idea which led him to force the Holy Imam to come to Khorasan, and to compulsorily appoint him as his heir.

In the sessions which Imam took part, Mamun tried to make the highest ranking religious leaders whose capabilities were proven in all respects, debate with him. Among the invited were ‘Jasliq’ the Christian leader, ‘Raas-al-Jaloot’ the Jewish chief, ‘Hormoz’ the Zoroastrians noble, ‘Omran Saabi’ the sabaist (star worshipper} and ‘Soleiman Marvazi’ the famous master of discourse in Khorasan.

In all discussion and debate sessions, the Holy Imam came out victorious over everybody with his powers of logic, dialectics and reasoning. There was not even one question that the Imam could not answer. Although Imam Reza (a.s.) was confronted with the most difficult argumentative tasks, he debated with different schools from different nations and satisfied and convinced them all. Mamun failed in destroying Holy Imam’s Eminence. On the contrary, the Holy Imam’s victory over all Scholars was much talked about and praised in public and his popularity and influence increased day after day. Finding this intolerable, Mamun decided to destroy the Holy Imam by more physical means. He finally poisoned the Holy Imam. It is believed that Imam Reza (a.s.) was Martyred in Safar, 203 A.H (824 A.D) when he was aged fifty-five.

Here are some of the Holy Imam’s words:

1. Silence is one of the gates to wisdom; verily silence attracts affection and guides every good deed.

2. One who repents his sins is like one who has not sinned.

3. May the Prophets weapon be yours! Someone asked ‘What is the Prophets’ weapon? ‘The Imam replied, ‘Prayer’.

4. The highest wisdom is knowing oneself.

5. The quality of jealousy will stain a man’s honour, and love of the world creates problems and suffering.

The dearest and most respectful habit is to be kind and to protect the poor and to fulfil the wish of a petitioner.

Two distinguished works are attributed to the Imam al-Reza (a.s.). One is on Medicine and is entitled *Zahabia Tibbia,* and the other is on Jurisprudence entitled, *Fiqh al-Reza* (‘the Jurisprudence of al-Reza).

## The Ninth Imam: Muhammad b. Ali (a.s.) – al-Jawwad al-Taqi.

Name: Muhammad.

Title: al-Jawwad ‘the Generous’ and al-Taqi ‘the Pious’.

Father: Imam Ali al-Reza, the eighth Imam.

Mother: Kheizaran

Date of Birth: 195 A.H (810 A.D).

Position in the Imamat: the ninth Imam.

His Holiness Muhammad al-Jawwad (a.s.) was one of the most oppressed Imam. In his short life, he tolerated a lot of deprivation and hardship and he faced severe suffering, torture, threats, exile, and frustration.

It is narrated from Kalim b. Umran in ‘Mataebolsoal’ ??? who said, ‘I asked Imam Reza (a.s.) to request a son from Allah (s.w.t.). He replied, “Allah (s.w.t.) has given me a Son who is my heir. He will resemble Abu Jafar[[72]](#footnote-72) and looks a lot like Musa b. Imran”

(The Prophet Moses)[[73]](#footnote-73) Imam Jawwad (a.s.) was called ‘al-Taqi’ (‘The Pious’) because of his great piety, Ibn Jawzi and Sheikh Mufid have recorded his life to have been 25 years. During his Imamat, the Holy Imam was forced to enter discussion and debate with four schools Shafe’i, Hanafi, Maleki and Hanbali sects, which were all more or less under government patronage and gaining a lot of power and strength at the time. In these assemblies Imam Jawwad (a.s.) was finally able; to show the truth and the path of Salvation to them.

Imam Muhammad al-Jawwad (a.s.)’s period coincided with the reigns of Mamun and Mu’tasim. Mamun was aware of the ninth Holy Imam’s virtues and distinctions, and he also regretted the murder of the Imam’s father. He wanted the House of Ali (a.s.) to feel the weight of his might, so he tried to attend to the Holy Imam and favoured him. He therefore summoned al-Jawwad to come to his capital at Khorasan.

As he had done with the Imam’s father, Mamun invited the ninth Imam to take part in official debating sessions. In one of these sessions, Yahya b. Aksham, one of the great muftis or judges of Baghdad, whose fame spread over all Islamic domain asked permission from Mamun to put a question to the Holy Imam, and after permission was granted he put to the Imam his question. The Holy Imam showed that the question was so vague, that in order to clarify it, twenty other questions had to be asked. In shame, Yahya admitted that he was unable to answer any of those questions. The Holy Imam then answered those twenty questions himself, and then the original question that Yahya had put to him. Mamun acknowledged that the Imamat suited his Holiness Jawwad (a.s., and, realising that the Holy Imam could not be defeated in such debates, therefore he did not interfere with the Holy Imam until his death. In fact, in his efforts to reconcile the descendants of Ali (a.s.), Mamun obliged the Holy Imam to marry one of his daughters, and sent him with her and with a show of respect to Madina.

After the death of Mamun and the succession of Mutasim, the new khalifa again arranged debating sessions, and Imam al-Jawwad (a.s.) was again summoned to take part. Once more, delicate questions were brought up with the sole purpose of embarrassing the Holy Imam. At times, the Holy Imam refrained and excused himself from saying anything. But when pressed, he spoke out the truth and divulged all facts and presented accurate and timely analysis.

At the death of Mamun, Imam Jawwad (a.s.) was living in Madina! Upon the succession of Mutasim, Imam Jawwad (a.s.) was summoned to Baghdad where the Khalifa arranged for him to be poisoned with poisoned grapes. At the age of twenty-five, the Holy Imam was martyred through this poison.

Here are some of his words:

1. If the ignorant would keep their silence, men would have no disputes.

2. Verily be aware that you are never out of Allah (s.w.t.)’s attention and supervision; therefore, pay attention to your state of being.

3. The oppressor, the assistant in oppressing and the one who is satisfied with the oppression, all three are partners in oppression and fidelity.

4. One who operates, without awareness and knowledge would destroy more than he might amend.

5. Three deeds would ensure the faithful man of Allah (s.w.t.)’s satisfaction and benediction: moderation, gentleness and charity; and there are three tasks which would never bring regret to the doers; not hurrying, consulting with others and relying On Allah (s.w.t.) when making decisions.

## The Tenth Imam: Ali ibn Muhammad (a.s.) – al-Hadi and al-Naqi.

Name: Abul Hasan Ali ibn Muhammad (a.s.)

Titles: al-Hadi ‘the Guide’, al-Naqi ‘the Distinguished’.

Father: Imam Jawwad, the ninth Imam.

Mother: Samaneh

Date of Birth: Zi’1-Hajjah, 212 A.H (827 A.D).

Period of his life: Forty-two years.

Position in the Imamat*:* The tenth Imam.

The life of Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) coincided with the reigns of six khalifs of the Abbassid dynasty, who enjoyed themselves through drinking and sensuality. Of the six, Muttawakil was the most pitiless, cruel, and selfish. He was Arrogant and merciless, and prone to bloodshed. Once Muttawakil came to power, he forced Holy Imam to come to his capital at Samarra from Madina, as he was afraid that the people would gather around the Holy Imam and dethrone him, and so he wanted to keep the Holy Imam under close control and supervision.

Imam Hadi (a.s.) possessed an amazing power in politics, education and the latest sciences of his Era he had a wonderful power in revealing the truth behind the disagreements of the Religious leaders. The attractive leadership of Imam Hadi (a.s.) and his guidance in Madina caused the people of the suburbs and the far areas to gather around him.

The city of Samarra possessed a more advantageous position and his exile to that city allowed him a better promulgation of the Religion and teaching Jafari doctrine to the people of Iran, Iraq, India, Africa, Turkey, and Afghanistan. During the time of the Holy Imam, the Shia had acquired a strong and powerful organisation and establishment in Baghdad. Yet the Holy Imam himself tried to have less contacts and association with the people. The reason for this was that, like his father before him, he sought to prepare the people for the period of absence of the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.). The Holy Imam wanted the people to get used to this fact so that there would be no confusion during the absence of the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.), and so that they would be able to handle their own affairs through a strong organisation and not disintegrate during the occupation of the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.).

History shows us that the Holy Imam performed many Miracles and ‘Blessed’ acts above the laws of nature. An example of this was his foretelling the murder of Muttawakil by the Turks. The Holy Imam could speak the languages of his time and whomsoever he prayed for, that person’s needs were fulfilled. It is recorded Muttawakil kept several lions; in order to ensure himself against the Holy Imam’s leadership potential, he once asked the Holy Imam to enter into the lions cage. To the astonishment of all the onlookers, the lions bowed before him instead of devouring him, and the Holy Imam caressed their heads and sat amongst them for a while.

Imam Muhammad al-Naqi (a.s.) was poisoned by Zabir al-Muatez in his own house. His Martyrdom took place in the year 254 A.H 868 A.D.

Here are some of his words:

1. Jealousy destroys the rewards and ends up in torment to the jealous.

2. Allah (s.w.t.) has made the world as the place of difficulties and the afterlife as the place of rewards. The troubles in this world shall be the means for rewarding in the afterlife as the afterlife’s rewards shall be given in return for the troubles of the world.

3. Remember the day when you will be laying down in front of your family, and there will be no doctor to prevent death getting to you, and there is no friend to benefit your situation.

4. Freedom from want consists of having few desires, and being satisfied with what is sufficient,

5. Man’s honour and dignity in this life is with his wealth, while in the hereafter it is with his deeds.

6. The suffering of the restrained man is one, but the suffering of the impatient and complaining man is two.

## The Eleventh Imam: Hasan ibn Muhammad (a.s.), al-Askari.

Name: Hasan (a.s.).

Title: al-Askari, ‘the Prisoner’.

Father: Imam Hadi (a.s.): The tenth Imam.

Mother: Salil

Date of Birth: Rabee’ al-Awwal, 232 A.H (846 A.D)

Place of Birth: Madina.

Position in the Imamat*:* the eleventh Imam.

The life of Imam Askari (a.s.) and the period in which he lived were both critical in the history of the Imamat. This was because there were many traditions narrated from the Holy Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.a.) in circulation that gave the Glad Tidings that the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.) was the Mahdi who would put an end to injustice. The era was therefore characterised by a popular messianism, for it was no secret that the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.) would be the son of the eleventh Imam of the descendants of Ameer al-Momineen, Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.). Bani Abbas were very fearful of this matter because they believed in the authenticity and validity of these traditions, and were afraid that the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.) would put an end to their rule. They therefore treated this great man much as the pharaohs had treated many of the nations and tribes when they feared the coming of the Prophet Musa (a.s.) (Moses).

The ruling house of the Bani Abbas put the descendants of the Holy Prophet under direct supervision and created many difficulties for them. In these circumstances the Holy Imam was repeatedly imprisoned, was constantly under surveillance even when nominally at liberty, until he too was poisoned at an early age.

As mentioned above, Imam Askari (a.s.) put a very critical and dangerous period successfully behind him and fulfilled his responsibilities very well. He successfully hides the birth of his great son from the enemies to protect his life, and on the other hand he managed to announce the existence of the promised Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) to a selected group of Shias and close relatives. And of course, through this Imam Askari (a.s.) carried out the general responsibilities of his Imamat in the best manner in order to continue guiding and leading the Muslim community. Considering the persecution and the tortures inflicted on the Shia by the Bani Abbas, these matters were far from easy.

Imam Askari (a.s.) like his father, Imam Hadi (a.s.) hardly appeared at all in public, but handled all the affairs of the Imamat through chosen intermediaries. In this way, the Holy Imam established the routines and procedures that would need to exist during the Imamat of the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.), so that during the Holy Imam’s absence the community would continue to function relatively normally.

The role of Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) revolved around the issue that he was the father of the promised Mahdi (a.t.f.s.). With this in mind, he made the movement of the Islamic world face the instructions of Religion and explained the secret and concealed truths with them and gave the supreme instructions by using Religion and the Holy Qur’an. It was the middle of the third century when the scientific movement flourished. Great philosophers such as Asagh Kandi and Abu Nasr Farabi lived at this time, and they benefited from the good fortune of the Imam’s presence. It is said that the knowledge of that Holy Imam was so extensive that Asagh Kandi, the great Arab philosopher, burned his own book on the Holy Qur’an after discussions with the Holy Imam, in indignation at his former ignorance.

Of the six years of Imam Askari (a.s.) Imamat*,* the Holy Imam was in prison for three years, while during the other three years he was kept under close control and severe supervision. Nevertheless, he constantly met- people with an open, cheerful face, and elegant manners. He spent long periods in worship and yet was very affable. In consequence, he was respected by all, and even by many of the Abbassi ministers, who by that time were mostly Iranian.

During his time in prison, two hard-hearted slaves were assigned responsibility for him, in the hope that they would shorten his life and perhaps kill him by their rough treatment of him. The two slaves, however, were so affected by their association with the Holy Imam that they became devout worshippers and kept fasting during day. Their superior summoned the two slaves and spoke angrily with them and blamed and rebuked them, saying, ‘Shame on you, what is your opinion of this man?’

They replied, What can we justly say about a man who fasts during the day and spends the night in worshipping Allah (s.w.t.), and pays attention to nothing but Allah (s.w.t.), and when he looks upon us, our bodies tremble?!

The Holy Imam lived during the era in which Muttamid was the Abbasid ruler. It was he who persecuted and finally poisoned Imam al-Askari (a.s.). He then made every effort to have the people of the country see his body so that there would be no doubt that he had passed away by natural causes.

However, before being martyred, the Holy Imam had confided all that had been entrusted to him from the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.a.), and the preceding Holy Imams (a.s.), to his son, the Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.). The Shia, after the death of the eleventh Imam, turned to the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.), and according to the explicit expression of the Prophet and Imams, he attained this position. And now the world sits in waiting for his appearance to actualise the idea of universal justice, and to free mankind from the shadows of sin and oppression.

Here is a selection of the eleventh Imam’s words:

1. Worship is not merely excessive prayers and fasting. Rather, it is to think about Allah (s.w.t.) a lot. The worst of Allah (s.w.t.)’s creatures is one who is a hypocrite with two tongues.

2. The heart of the fool is in his mouth, and the mouth of the wise man is in his heart.

3. The best of your brothers is one who forgets your sins and remembers your good acts towards him.

4. There are two superior qualities: faith in Allah (s.w.t.) and to be useful to one’s brothers.

5. All ugliness has been placed in a house, and the key to it is lies.

6. Allah (s.w.t.) decreed fasting so that people with no needs would taste hunger and consequently be kind to the needy and poor.

7. A Blessing is not known except by the grateful, only the cognisant and learned person appreciates the Blessing.

Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) was Martyred in the Month of Rabi’ al-Awwal, 260 A.H 874 A.D, when he was twenty-eight years old.

## The Twelfth Imam: Muhammad (a.t.f.s.) – Al Mahdi.

Name: Muhammad.

Titles: al-Muntazar ‘the Awaited’, al-Hujjah ‘the Proof’, al-Qaem ‘the one who will rise’, Baqiyatallah ‘He whom Allah (s.w.t.) keeps alive’, Imam al-Zaman ‘Imam of the Age’, Sahib al-Amr ‘Master of the Command’, Sahib al-Sayf ‘Master of the Sword’, Imam al-Muntazar ‘the Awaited Imam’, Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) ‘the Guided’.[[74]](#footnote-74)

Date of Birth: 15th Sha’ban, 255 A.H (868 A.D).

Father: Imam al-Askari (a.s.), the eleventh Imam.

Mother: Narjis, grand daughter of the Roman (Byzantium) emperor.

Position in the Imamat: The Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.).

One of the reasons for the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.)’s occupation is considered to be the hostility of the Holy Imam’s enemies and the threat posed to his life from the rulers of the time. In fact, as we have seen the traditions that were in circulation about him and his rising and establishing justice meant that he was in danger before he was even born.

It is believed that during the major occultation there is no direct route of communication to the Holy Imam, but occasionally the Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) manifests himself to the pious and to people in need-as we saw in chapter three. It is widely believe by Muslim that Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) will rise while in his major occultation.

There are five definite signs mentioned in the early traditions which indicate the conditions in which the Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) will return and lead his rise:

1. The rise of al-Yamani’ a figure-head who will rise somewhere in the Middle-East

2. The rise of al-Sufyani, a figure-head who will rise in the area of Syria and Jordan.

3. The assassination of the pure soul’ *(al-nafs al-zakiyya)* in Mecca This is said to take place ‘fifteen days’ before the uprising of the Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.)

4. A loud cry will be heard from the sky, summoning people in the name of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) to give their allegiance to him.

5. The sinking of an army ‘Allah (s.w.t.)’s enemies’, into the earth while they march on Mecca.

Other signs of the prevailing conditions before and during the Imam’s rising have also been given by the Prophet and the Imams (a.s.) some of these are given here:

(a) Prior to his coming ‘The Red Death’ and ‘The White Death’ will become widespread. The ‘red death’ has been interpreted as modern warfare and the ‘white death’ as epidemics and disease.[[75]](#footnote-75)

ii. His coming will coincide with the appearance of the mysterious Dajjal*.* Dajjal has been described in the traditions as a disbeliever with only one eye that is located on his forehead and shines like a star. On his forehead is written, ‘He is a disbeliever,’ and everyone, even the illiterate, will be able to read it. There will be an abundance of food and a river of water with him at all times. He will ride a white donkey whose every step will span one mile. At his command the sky will rain and the earth will grow vegetation. The earth will be at his discretion. He will bring the dead back to life. He will cry out in a loud voice that will be heard all over the world, and he will say, I am your Almighty Allah who created you and who sustains you. Run to me! Some interpretations hold that the *Dajjal* is not so much a person but a system, perhaps at some time to be personified by someone. These interpretations suggest that television and the other forms of mass media as one of the aspect *of Dajjal[[76]](#footnote-76)*

(a) Prior to his Reappearance a black standard will be raised in Khurasan (north east of Iran). The narration states; ‘Go to it even if you have to crawl over snow,[[77]](#footnote-77)

(b) He will announce himself in Mecca while standing between the pillar of the Kaaba and the station *(maqam of Ibrahim).* He will lean on the wall of the Ka’aba and say,

(c) He will come in even year.......

# Chapter Five

## Jesus in Islam:

Perhaps one of the most frequently discussed topics in Christianity and Islam which brings these two great Religions together is that of the prophetic mission of Jesus (a.s.).

The attention which the Holy Qur’an has given to this issue shows that there is a strong connection between the teaching of the Prophet Jesus (a.s.) and the teaching of the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.a.).

The name of Jesus (a.s.) is mentioned thirty six times in the Holy Qur’an Thus clearly emphasize the important position of Jesus (a.s.). Holy Qur’an draw attention of people to what it has to say about this Prophet and try to answers some of the questions which have been disputed for the centauries about this Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.).

A close look at the life of Jesus (a.s.) from the Holy Qur’anic point of view enable us to close the “ideology” gap which exists between the two religions and maybe open up a new doorway to better understanding of this Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) Mission and Final duty.

In this chapter we pursue two aims: Firstly we seek to discern the close relationship between the Prophets who appeared before Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) and the Religion of Islam; and secondly, we seek to show the hidden unity of all religions, that will lead us to understand the oneness of Allah (s.w.t.) and of His religions. We will then be in a better position to understand how it is that upon his reappearance the Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) will be supported by the Christ (a.s.).

What I feel is of central importance is the life and personality of that heavenly man, Jesus Christ (a.s.). Certainly the virtue and the superiority of a man in comparison with other men cannot be justified unless we consider the presence of God in all aspects of his life. That is, a pious person is one who is always seeking God’s satisfaction in his deeds and actions, and this is the true measure of anyone’s worth, and not superiority in any particular field. It is by this approach that the discussions about the merits of the Christian Religion, or Christianity and Islam, and about the respective magnitude of the founders of these religions, may lead us to an understanding of this facts that may sought just reality and justice by setting forth their religions.

Here, I feel as writer to stop my waiting and cite some verses from the Holy Qur’an in connection with Jesus Christ (a.s.). It will be seen that these verses show the intricacies and subtleties of the life of this Prophet and that of his Holy mother. Then the judgements in respect to what have been mentioned in this collection shall be made and according to Holy Qur’an the high position of Jesus Christ (a.s.) in Islam shall be presented to readers and finally he’s function at time of appearance of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) shall be discussed.

## Jesus through the Eye of the Holy Qur’an:

The story of Jesus (a.s.) starts from the point at which it was resolved in the God’s knowledge that a messenger be created without a father, so that another ‘sign’ of God above the known laws of nature would become a reality. God’s miracles which are formed in any manner or condition are both surprising and exemplary. One who sees God’s powerful hand in all creation would see no difference in whatever has been created. The creation of Adam without having a father and mother and similarly the creation of Jesus (a.s.) without having a father, it is only because we cannot see God’s hand in our own creation that those acts are surprising and amazing for us.

Man We created from a quintessence (of clay);

Then we placed him as sperm in a place of rest, firmly fixed;

Then we made the sperm into a clot of congealed blood, then of that clot we made a lump, then We made out of the lump bones, and We clothed the bones with flesh, then We developed out of it another creature. So Blessed be Allah, the Best to Create![[78]](#footnote-78)

The father of Mary was Imran (a.s.), a great man amongst the tribe of Israel. Imran’s wife was infertile, and so, in all humility and purity, sought help from the Almighty Allah for granting her a child. She vowed that were a child granted by the Almighty Allah, she would dedicate him to serve in His Holy temple and be engaged in worship. The Almighty Allah granted her prayer, and soon she felt the effects of pregnancy and the movements of a child in her womb. She was overjoyed to find that Allah (s.w.t.) had granted her what she had requested. However, when she delivered, she found that her child was female usually females did not serve in the temples like males. Nevertheless, she thanked Allah (s.w.t.) for this gift and named her daughter Mary. She requested Allah (s.w.t.) for the protection of her daughter and her offspring from the temptations of the devil.

True to her vow, she gave Mary at a young age to be raised and serve in the upper part of the temple, in the hope that the Almighty Allah would adorn her soul with goodness and virtue. It seems that Mary’s father, Imran, passed away while his daughter was very young, and she needed someone to support her and undertake her education.

When Mary’s mother decided to put her under the care of the temple’s authorities, a dispute arose between the priests of the temple as to which of them should care for Mary. Finally they decided to solve the problem by casting lots. The man selected by lot was Zakaria, the son-in-law of her mother, and he provided a special chamber for the use of Holy Mary, and nobody else was allowed to enter it. He paid attention to inclining her towards the proper worship, but he soon noticed something which filled him with wonder. Every time he entered Mary’s chamber to see her, he discovered that she was supplied with sustenance which he had not seen before such food and drink which no one had seen before or experienced. He asked Mary where that sustenance came from. Mary answered that it was provided by Allah (s.w.t.) and that Almighty Allah provides sustenance to whom He likes without measure. Here are the words of the Holy Qur’an about this:

When a wife of lmran said, ‘O my lord, Indeed I vow to Thee that in my womb in dedication, so accept from me, Indeed Thou are the Hearing, the Aware.

When she was delivered, she said, Master of mine, Indeed I have delivered a female child, and Allah knew best what she brought forth, and the male is not like the female, and indeed I call her Maryam, (Mary) and indeed I commend, her and. her offspring to Thy protection from satan, the rejected.

Right graciously did her Lord accept her He made her grow in purity and beauty, To the care of Zakaria was she assigned. Whenever he entered upon her in the chamber, he found her supplied with sustenance.

He said, ‘O Maryam, whence (come’s) this to you?’

She said, ‘It is from alongside Allah, Indeed Allah provides sustenance to whom He pleases, without measure.’[[79]](#footnote-79)

The following verse concerned with the planning and casting lots so as to clarify who was to take charge of Maryam care, after a dispute had arisen in this respect:

That is among the announcements of the unseen that We inspire upon thee (O Prophet) Thou wast not with them when they threw their pens as to which of them would be charged with Maryam; Nor wast thou with them when they disputed.[[80]](#footnote-80)

These tidings are related to the dignity and high spiritual position of this woman who willingly devoted her life to the devout worship of Allah (s.w.t.). It is interesting to note that in the sacred verse the Angel is shown to bring good news to Mary, and says that Allah (s.w.t.) chose and purified her and distinguished her above the women of all nations:

And when the Angels said,

O Maryam, indeed Allah has chosen thee and purified thee, and chosen thee above the women of the worlds.

O Maryam, worship the lord devoutly and prostrate and bow with the bowers.[[81]](#footnote-81)

Without her knowing it, Mary’s states of devotion and worship prepared her for what she was not aware of: that she was to be a mother and that her son would become one of the great prophets, Jesus (a.s.) by name possessing book and Religion after Moses (a.s.).

Mary continued to strive in performing her worship in such a manner and with such purity that at the time there was no woman like her in piety and faith in Allah (s.w.t.). When she reached the state of womanhood, the signs of her virtue became so apparent in her worship that she resembled Zakaria. It was this great piety and virtue that was the basis of her being chosen by Allah (s.w.t.), and so the Angel brought her the Glad Tidings about the Allah (s.w.t.)’s bestowing a child upon her against all the known laws of nature. He was to be brought into being simply by the word “Be” and his name was to be Isa (Jesus) (a.s.), the Christ.

Allah the Most Gracious granted a high and respectful position to Jesus (a.s.) in the world. It led to him possessing eminence, loftiness and dignity in his life. At the same time, superiority was given to him and he was selected as being the most outstanding person of his age. And in the hereafter, he was to gain the ranks of the loving friends of Allah (s.w.t.).

Among his specific privileges in this world was that he began to talk in infancy; speaking boldly and clearly. The mystery of his words was based on such a quality that throughout his maturity and growth he consistently used the same words to express the same matters, and even at the peak of his powers he said the very same things he had said in infancy:

So she pointed to him, they said how can we discuss with one who is a child in the cradle?

He said, Indeed I am Allah’s servant, He has granted me the book and has put me as a Prophet.

And has put me as a Blessing wherever I am, and has recommended me to the prayer and the zakat[[82]](#footnote-82) for as long as I live,

(He hath made me to be) kind to my Mother, and not over bearing or unblest.

So peace is on me the day I was born, the day that I die, and the day I shall be raised alive.

That is Isa (Jesus) the son of Maryam (Mary), it is a statement of truth, over which they (vainly) dispute.[[83]](#footnote-83)

When the Almighty Allah sent the Angel Gabriel (a.s.) to her, Mary was continuing her life of devotion in the temple, where a special chamber had been built for her in the eastern part of the temple, and there she lived her life of piety in seclusion from the people and from all mundane affairs. She was in her chamber when the Angel Gabriel (a.s.) appeared before her. He appeared in the form of a man so that she would not become unduly disturbed by his appearance. Seeing him in her private chamber, Mary suspected that he must have an evil intention toward her; she therefore said to him that; “I seek refuge from your evil intentions to my Lord, may the Almighty Allah protect my purity and chastity from your mischievous trick, if you are pious and fearful of Allah (s.w.t.) you should not come near me”.

Gabriel (a.s.) replied that he was not a human being, as she thought. He told her that he was an Angel from Allah (s.w.t.), sent to her so as to bestow upon her a pure and pious son whose development and growth was to bring about goodness and blessings. Mary was astonished at this, and asked the Angel how she could have a child when no man had ever touched her, adding for emphasis that she was not unchaste. Gabriel (a.s.) replied that what she said was true, but Allah (s.w.t.) says that it is easy for Him to create a child without a father; and that it shall be a sign of His power, and that the child would grow to bring about Blessings for those who take advice and would be guided. Finally he told her that the creation of Jesus (a.s.) was a matter that had already been decreed. Here are the relevant verses:

And mention, in the book (the story of), Mary, when she withdrew herself from her folk (in the house) at eastern position,

And veiled herself apart from them. So We sent unto her Our spirit, who appeared before her as a distinct man.

She said, verily I seek refuge from thee to (Allah) most Gracious: (come not near) if thou dost fear Allah.

He said, I am but the Messenger (Angel) from the Lord, (to announce) to thee the gift of a pure son.

She said, ‘How can there be unto me a son while hath not touched me (any) man nor was I unchaste!?

He said, so (it will be) Thy Lord saith, (that is easy for Me) and that We will make him a sign (miracle ‘of ours’) unto the people and a Mercy from Us, it is a matter (already) decreed[[84]](#footnote-84)

And

And (remember) her who guarded her chastity:

We breathed into her from Our spirit, and We made her and her son as a sign for all peoples[[85]](#footnote-85)

In this respectful verse, there are two considerable facts which cannot be disregarded.

Here we see the confirmation by the Holy Qur’an of the purity of Mary’s chastity, which itself is a very special honour for Mary. The verse also shows that in her impregnation, no earthly medium was used, but that ‘the Spirit of God was ‘breathed’ directly into her.

The birth of Jesus Christ (a.s.) without a father is a ‘sign’, a miracle, proving the truth of his prophecy. It also ‘proves’ to us, and shows us, that the creative power of Allah (s.w.t.) is not subject to any limitations, nor to the standard procedure of cause and effect. Yet some have presumed that the creation of Jesus (a.s.) without a father proves his divinity, while others have taken it as a pretext for mocking his mother, while yet others have concluded from it, that Jesus (a.s.) simply did not exist. It is such people whom Allah (s.w.t.) addresses in this verse:

Indeed, what Isa is like before Allah is Adam, He created him of dust, thereupon he said to him, ‘Be’ and he was.[[86]](#footnote-86)

As soon as the Angel Gabriel breathed into Mary, she felt the pregnancy. No doubt, she was deeply troubled by what would be said about her as an unmarried, virgin maiden who was pregnant and about to give birth. No doubt these thoughts frightened and disturbed her. So perhaps it was fear that led her to seek solitude at a place far from the people. There, when she felt the pains of child birth, she took refuge beside the trunk of a palm tree for covering herself and leaning against. Recalling the reproachful looks of those who had approached her, she wished that she had died and been forgotten. In such moments she felt Allah (s.w.t.)’s love and kindness embrace her, and she would be protected by the grace and generosity of the Lord. From somewhere beneath the palm-tree she would hear the voice of Gabriel reassuring her. She understood that the gracious Allah was her supporter at that place. All she had to do there was to shake the branch of the palm tree and fresh, ripe dates would drop for her, so that she could eat and satisfy her hunger. She could also drink water from the stream running there to quench her thirst. Thus her heart would stop its agitation and her mind would be at peace. Meanwhile Gabriel taught her that whenever she met the people who accused her and ask her how she became with child she have to keep silent and hint with signs that she had taken a vow of silence for Allah (s.w.t.).

So eat and drink and refresh thy eye, and when thou see anybody, so say, Indeed I have vowed a fast of silence for the (Allah) most Gracious, and this day will I enter into no talk with any human being.[[87]](#footnote-87)

When Mary had completed the delivery of Jesus (a.s.), she went back to her people with her baby in her arms. This provoked wonder and inquiries, both among those who were acquainted with Mary’s piety and devotion and also among those who did not know her. It was very strange thing and her people had encountered with an unexpected situation, since Mary was known to be an unmarried girl amongst them and this sudden and unexpected happening, could have been incriminating subject. The incrimination evidence was so obvious that there could hardly remain room for any doubt.

The only thing that this honourable lady could do to resist her mental stress was to follow Gabriel’s advice and vow herself to silence. Observing her fast and directing the people’s attention towards her son, letting them talk to him as her helper. This action first increased the intensity of their anger, as they had no idea that a child in the cradle could talk. They thought that they had been mocked. But with his miraculous answers Jesus (a.s.) proved his mother was innocent. ‘The Almighty Allah enables me to speak,’ he said. I am indeed a servant of the Almighty Allah, and Allah (s.w.t.) shall soon give me the book and shall appoint me as His Messenger. He shall make me a teacher and my instruction and advice shall always guide others, He has given me revelation and blessings which shall bring about happiness and prosperity. He has enjoined on me prayer and zakat and He has ordered me to observe politeness and good behaviour in respect to my mother. Allah Almighty will never place me among those people who oppress and treat the people in a cruel and harsh manner and if I committing sin His punishment be rewarded to me. I never cease to obey and worship Him. My peace and support is from Allah the Gracious. He is my supporter and my security. My birth, my death, and my new life after death are all in Allah (s.w.t.)’s hand. Here is how Allah (s.w.t.) presents these matters in the sacred Holy Qur’an:

So she carried him, and she retired with him to a remote place.

And the pains of child birth drove her to the trunk of a palm-tree, she cried (in her anguish) O, that I had died before this! O, that I had been a thing forgotten.

So (a voice) cried to her from beneath her, ‘Grieve not! Truly thy Lord has put a stream beneath thee.

And shake towards thee the trunk of the palm-tree, ‘It will drop upon thee fresh, ripe dates.

So eat and drink and refresh thy eye

So she brought him to her people, carrying him. They said, O Mary! Truly thou have done a strange thing!

O Sister of Aaron! Thy father was not a man of evil, nor thy mother a woman unchaste!

So she pointed to him. They said, how can we discuss with one who is a child in the cradle?

He said, Indeed I am Allah’s servant, He has granted me the Book and has put me as a Prophet.

And has put me as a blessing wherever I am, and has recommended me to the prayer and the zakat for as long as I live,

(He hath made me to be) kind to my mother, and not overbearing or unblest

And Blessing be upon me on the day I was born, the day that I die; and the day I am to be raised alive.[[88]](#footnote-88)

In these verses Mary is addressed as ‘sister of Aaron’. It seems that this was because in her worshipping she was comparable to the brother of Musa (a.s.) (Moses), or she was actually the descendent of Aaron. However; some explanations maintain that among the children of Israel lived another pious man by the name of Aaron, and that Mary was related to him.

Interestingly, in these verses Jesus (a.s.) confesses to a condition of servitude to Almighty Allah, which rules out any other relationship to Him. Moreover, he confesses to his death and this too is a rejection of the Allah (s.w.t.) head of Jesus (a.s.) which has been ascribed to him,

## The Miracles of Jesus:

Before continuing this subject and mention the miracles of Jesus Christ (a.s.) from Holy Qur’an, we will have a quick look at meaning of miracle. The role of miracles in the lives of the Prophets is to assure the people of their time, the message of the Almighty Allah as given to the people by that Prophet. It is also used to convince the person of ordinary intelligence, who may not possess extraordinary abilities and powers, to help him become aware of the process of mental and spiritual refinement, and for him to be able to improve his own spiritual condition.

Providing the basis for change and transformation of the ethical and spiritual conditions is the real task of the Prophet. Miracles are only required to be used as a helping power for the people to accept the Allah (s.w.t.)’s commandments and may also be considered as a means for achieving the ultimate.

However, in the case of Jesus (a.s.), as a grown man he performed many surprising miracles, including that of raising the dead to life. Here are some of the Holy Qur’an’s verses on this topic:

And (appoint him) as a Messenger to the children of Israel (with this message) Indeed I have come to ye with a sign from your Lord, I create for ye from clay like the form of a bird, and breathe into it, and it becomes a bird, with Allah’s permission, and I heal those born blind and the leper, and I bring the dead to life, with Allah’s permission, and I inform ye of what ye eat, and of what ye store in your houses. Indeed in that is a sign for ye, If ye be believers.

And confirming the Torah that came before me, and to make lawful to you part of what was (before) forbidden to you, and I come to ye with a clear sign from your Lord, So fear Allah and obey me (So) Indeed Allah is my Lord and your Lord, So worship Him, that is a straight path.

So when Isa felt disbelief from them, he said, who will be my helpers to (the work of) Allah, said the disciples, we are the helpers (towards) Allah’s, we believe in Allah, and bear witness that we are Muslims unto him.[[89]](#footnote-89)

And elsewhere:

And Isa the son of Maryam said, ‘O Allah, our Lord, Send down upon us a spread from the sky, that it be a celebration for us for the first of us and the last of us, and a sign from Thee and provide us (with our) sustenance, and Thou art the best of Sustainers.[[90]](#footnote-90)

And:

When Allah said, O’ Isa the son of Maryam, Remember My favour upon thee and upon thy mother, when I strengthened thee with the Holy spirit, Thou spoke to humankind while in the cradle and in full maturity, and when I taught thee the book and the wisdom and the Torah and the Gospel and when thou created from clay Like the form of a bird, with My permission, and then thou breathe in to it and become a bird, with My permission, and thou healed the blind and the leper, with My permission, and when thou raised the dead (from their graves), with My permission, and when I held back from thee the children of lsrail, when thou came to them with the clear sign, (miracles) and those who disbelieved among them said, this is nothing but clear magic.[[91]](#footnote-91)

The following information may be obtained from these verses:

Jesus (a.s.) acquired knowledge directly from the Almighty Allah.

The Almighty Allah granted him whatever miracles were necessary.

The Almighty Allah taught him the contents of the Gospel and the Torah.

Jesus Christ (a.s.) was a Holy Prophet chosen by Allah (s.w.t.) unto the people of Israel. The people of Israel rejected the Prophetic Mission of Jesus (a.s.).

Jesus (a.s.) was a Holy Prophet chosen by the Allah (s.w.t.), with the sign of the Allah (s.w.t.) and the teaching of Allah (s.w.t.).

Among the miracles of Jesus (a.s.) was he made the form of a bird from clay and breathed into it, and the piece of clay flew like a real bird, with the permission of Allah (s.w.t.).

Jesus (a.s.) by the leave of Allah (s.w.t.) cured infectious diseases such as leprosy.

In respect to his raising the dead to life, there is clause in the verses. What we have to consider in respect to these miracles is the words with Allah (s.w.t.)’s permission, which is associated with all of his miracles, though some people don’t pay attention to it.

Jesus (a.s.) was aware of what the people had eaten or stored in their houses. ?

The purpose of performing all these miracles was to make the people of the time believe in his word, so that through his instructions, he could guide them towards Allah (s.w.t.) and understanding the truth.

The real Torah was authenticated by Jesus (a.s.) he legitimized for the Christians some of the matters that were forbidden in the Religion of Moses.

Jesus Christ (a.s.) bid people to obey the truth and to acquire the Divine virtues.

Jesus Christ (a.s.) announced explicitly that his Allah (s.w.t.) and the Allah (s.w.t.) of all others was one: ‘Indeed Allah is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him; that is straight path.’

## Is Jesus the son of God?

The fact that Christ is a human being is propounded in the Holy Qur’an, and the following noble verses indicate the position of Jesus Christ (a.s.) as a man:

Christ the son of Maryam was no more than a Messenger, many were the Messengers that passed away before him, and his mother was a truthful woman, they both used to eat (daily) food, see how Allah doth make His sign clear for them, then see how they turn away from the truth.[[92]](#footnote-92)

This verse helps us to recognise the true position of the Christ (a.s.). Jesus is termed repeatedly in the Noble Holy Qur’an the son of Mary and this emphasises that he was not the son of God. Then it reminds us that Jesus (a.s.) and his mother both used to eat food. It is clear that one who eats food, the food changed in his body to flesh, blood, bone and so on, and also into the excrements, while if these excrements remain in body, he will be harmed Therefore It is obvious anybody who is in this condition may not be a supernatural being but mortal, a man who is subordinate to all the rules of nature as affect the human species.

In other places the Holy Qur’an is more explicit:

And they say, The Compassionate has taken a son. Glory be His, they are (but) servants raised to honour.[[93]](#footnote-93)

And:

And they say, God hath begotten a son, Glory be His, Nay, to Him belongs all that in the heavens and on the earth, all to Him are subservient.[[94]](#footnote-94)

And:

If any of them should say, I am a god besides Him, such a one we should reward with hell that is how We reward those who do wrong.[[95]](#footnote-95)

The Holy Qur’an regards other religions with special respect and all the messengers are esteemed and mentioned with honour. With regard to Jesus (a.s.) in particular, the Holy Qur’an calls him ‘the spirit of God’, confirming his special origin. In another place it draws attention to the fact that, whatever his origin, Jesus (a.s.) was a mortal human being, and reminds us that calling him as ‘the spirit of God’ originates from the fact that his enemies claiming that he was illegitimate son, to acquit him of this unfair charge, Holy Qur’an declares that he is ‘the spirit of God’ to prove that he is pure and not the fruit of illegimate intercourse.

## Is Jesus God?

It seems that none of the Messengers and none of their true followers are more oppressed than Jesus (a.s.). He is oppressed in two ways. Firstly, his followers wrongly claim that they follow his teachings, and secondly not only do they make mistake about him but about his mother too. Such exaggeration is not seen among other nations and the followers of other Messengers.

The Holy Qur’an shows that God will question Jesus (a.s.) about this, so that those who worshipped him will not be able to reproach him for their chastisements:

And when Allah says, O Isa son of Maryam, did you say to humankind, “Take me and my mother as two gods besides Allah?”

He says, Glory be to thee, It did not befit me that I should say what I had not right to (say). Had I said it, Thou wouldst indeed have known it, Thou know what is in my mind, and know not what is in Thy mind, Indeed Thou are the Absolute Knower of the unseens.[[96]](#footnote-96)

Here Jesus (a.s.) is shown acquitting himself of this charge, and it is clear how clearly he expresses his subordination to Almighty Allah, He never instructed the people to worship him, and never claimed that he was the creator. On the contrary, he taught the people how to be humble and subordinate to Allah (s.w.t.)’s rules, and how to enter a dialogue’ with their creator. He taught them to shun all forms of vice, haughtiness and wickedness. As in final part of this subsequent verse we read,

Never said I to them ought except what Thou command me say, that ye worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord. And I was a witness over them as long as I was among them, And when Thou took me up, Thou were the Watcher over them, And Thou are of all things a witness.

If Thou dost punish them, they are Thy servants, And if Thou shouldst forgive them indeed Thou are the Mighty, the Wise[[97]](#footnote-97)

In acquitting himself of the terrible charge of having set up himself and his mother as a gods, Jesus (a.s.) resorts to the best reasoning and readily confirms his dependence upon God. He says that had he made such a claim, it would have been crystal clear to God, for God is aware of all things, which Jesus (a.s.) admits is far from true of himself. Elsewhere the Holy Qur’an proclaims,

And they say, The Compassionate has taken a son, Glory be His! Nay, they are honoured servants.[[98]](#footnote-98)

These noble verses clarify that God is fully aware of the innocence of Jesus (a.s.), and that the purpose of his being questioned is for him to proclaim his innocence in front of the people, prior to their judgement.

In pursuing this issue, it could be said that the answer of Jesus (a.s.) is the answer of all the Prophets and Messengers of God. If the followers of other Prophets have worshipped them, those Prophets would obviously have been asked the same question, and they would answer as Jesus (a.s.) did.

The answer; of Jesus (a.s.) came from the purity of heart that is shared by all the Prophets and saints; it is a pleasant breeze that conies from the depths of the souls of all their disciples and followers. Jesus (a.s.) was a committed man and as such speaks of his responsibilities towards God, His creatures. God had charged him with a great responsibility among the people. Thus the Holy Qur’an cites Jesus (a.s.) as saying:

Indeed Allah is my Lord and your Lord, so worship him. That is a right path.*[[99]](#footnote-99)*

Further verses on this matter emphasise the divinity of God and the humanity of Jesus (a.s.):

Certainly they disbelieve who say, Indeed, Allah, He is the Christ, son of Maryam!

Say, who then could control anything as against Allah if He wished to destroy the Christ, son of Maryam, and his mother, and those on the earth? And Allah’s is the dominion of the heavens and the earth and what is between them, He creates what he wishes, and Allah has power over all things.[[100]](#footnote-100)

And:

Certainly they disbelieve who say, Indeed God He is the Christ son of Maryam, The Christ said, O children of Israel! Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord. Indeed, whoever associateth other gods with Allah, Allah will forbid him the garden, and fire will be his abode, and there is not for the wrongful any succour

Certainly they disbelieve who say, Indeed God is the third of three, while there is no god except one God. If they refrain not from what they say, a painful chastisement will definitely touch the disbelievers among them.[[101]](#footnote-101)

## The Teachings of Jesus (a.s.):

### Confirmations and Glad Tidings:

Like most of the previous Prophets, Jesus (a.s.) was assigned two great duties: confirmation and Glad Tidings. As we have seen, he successfully completed the first duty of confirming the Prophets who preceded him. The second duty that of giving the Glad Tidings of the Prophet of the future and of the coming dispensation meant that he showed himself to be a link between the past and future as a solid and strong ring, Here is how the Holy Qur’an speaks of Jesus (a.s.) being a link in this chain, and of his role in giving the Glad Tidings:

And when Isa the son of Maryam, said, O children of Israel! I am Allah’s Messenger unto ye, confirming the Torah before me and a giver of Glad Tidings of a Messenger who shall come after me, His name is Ahmad. So when he came to them with the clear sign, they said, this is clear sorcery.[[102]](#footnote-102)

In this verse Jesus (a.s.) is cited summing up his mission:

(I have come to you) to attest the Torah, which was before me and to make lawful to you part of what was forbidden to you, and I come to you with a sign from your Lord, so fear Allah, and obey me.[[103]](#footnote-103)

In the same verse:

And (appoint him) A Messenger to the children of Israel: Indeed I have come to you with a sign from your Lord I create for you from clay like the form of a bird, Then I breathe in to it, and it shall become a flying bird, with Allah’s permission. And I heal the blind and the leper, and bring the dead to life, with Allah’s permission. I announce to you of what ye eat and of what ye store in your houses. Indeed in that is a sign for ye, If ye be believers[[104]](#footnote-104)

Jesus (a.s.) in the Holy Qur’an is shown to have been the link not only between the mission of Moses (a.s.) and that of Muhammad (s.a.w.a.), but, he has another great role, and that is joining the link between the era of prophethood and that of *Imamat (leadership),* in that he will reappear at the side of the Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) when the time come.

He, as the exalted successor of Musa (a.s.), is related to two ‘seals’-that is, to the last of two lines. The first of these is the seal of the Prophets, in the person of the Prophet of Islam. The second is the final Imam, the ‘seal’ of the Imam, Mahdi (a.t.f.s.), who is the deputy of the Prophet of Islam. That is why Jesus (a.s.) is to come back to the world at the end of time to struggle shoulder to shoulder with the Mahdi (a.t.f.s.), for it is the fulfilment of the Glad Tidings he conveyed. The return of Jesus (a.s.) to this world and his mission at the time of his reappearance has been propounded by the Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.a.). The prophecy was made around two-hundred and fifty years before the birth of the Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) and around six-hundred years after the prophethood of Jesus (a.s.). Muslims are unanimous about the descent of Jesus (a.s.) at the end of time, when the truth will finally be universally recognised:

And there is none of the people of the book but must believe in him before his death; and on the Day of Resurrection he will be a witness against them[[105]](#footnote-105)

There are many narration about Jesus (a.s.) descending, both from Shia and Sunni sources.

Among these narrations concerning the descent of Jesus (a.s.) is the celebrated tradition attributed to the Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.a.) who said,

What will be your condition when Jesus Christ (a.s.) Christ comes down from the heavens at the end of the world and your leader will be from yourselves?[[106]](#footnote-106)

In elucidation of the above, we have from Imam Baqir (a.s.) that,

Before the Resurrection, Jesus (a.s.) will descend to the earth and no one of the followers of Musa (a.s.) and Jesus (a.s.) will remain, unless he has embrace the Creed and Jesus (a.s.) will pray under the leadership of the Mahdi (a.t.f.s.).*[[107]](#footnote-107)*

The author of Bihar al-Anwar, Allamah Majlisi (a.r.) has recorded these words from the Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.a.):

I swear to whom my life belongs, verily the son of Mary will descend among you as a just judge and leader; he will break the cross and kill the swine and pay the dues (zakat) and he would generously distribute a fortune in such a way that no one would ask for anything.

From the verses of Holy Qur’an and the narrations we have seen about this splendid man, it is clear that, if these points are approved and accepted then the discourse between the religions will come to the end, and unity and dialogue will be indispensible. In fact there is room for a wide social and cultural effort in order to achieve the desired results of submission to Allah (s.w.t.) and to none other, which is the sum of all the worthy human goals:

Say, ‘O people of the Book, Come to common term as between us and you, that we worship none but Allah, that we associate no partner with Him, And that some of us not take others as Lord Instead of Allah And if they turn away, then say, Bear witness that we are (at least) Muslims.[[108]](#footnote-108)

Or consider:

Say ye: We believe in Allah and that sent down tous, and that sent down to Ibrahim, Ismail, Ishaq (Isaac), yaqub (Jacob) and the clans, and that brought down to Musa and Isa, and that brought to the (all) Prophets from their Lord, We differ about none of them, and we are His Muslims.[[109]](#footnote-109)

### The Last Message of Jesus (a.s.):

One can interpret from this verse and other similar verses that Muslims believe the divinely religions are not apart from each other but are linked like a chain for the guidance of mankind.

The Holy Qur’an has talked clearly about this issue in various verses and has named many Prophets before Muhammad (s.a.w.a.). In the following verse, Allah (s.w.t.) speaks by the tongue of His Prophet: Jesus (a.s.)

And remember, Jesus the son of Mary, said, “O children of Israel! I am the Messenger of Allah; (send) to you, confirming the Taurat (which came) before me, and giving Glad Tiding of Messenger to come after me, Whose name shall be Ahmad, But when he came to them with clear sign, they said, this is evident sorcery![[110]](#footnote-110)

The Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.a.) has confirmed this and said, The Prophets are brothers on one side-their Religion is one while their mothers are different. To me Jesus (a.s.) is the worthiest among them, because between me and him there is no (intervening) Prophet. He will descend among you, so recognise him-he is a stout man with wide shoulders and rosy cheeks. He will kill the swine and break the cross and institute the zakat, and will not accept any creed but Islam. His calling to his creed has only one cause and it is related exclusively to Allah (s.w.t.) of the world.

With regard to the descent of Jesus (a.s.) and Allah (s.w.t.)’s word ...’And there is none of the people of the book but must believe in him before his death....’it seems that eventually all the Christians and Jewish nations will believe in him, and in his true message of Islam. Thus the philosophy behind his ascension and long life is based on the divine will and wisdom, saving him for the fulfilment of a greater role at a sensitive time in history, when the Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) will appear. It may be that the Christians of that time will be the strongest nations of the world, and Jesus (a.s.) will be the greatest sign for the nations to come to the truth and establish a divine civilisation.

At his descent, the Christian world will become full of joy and the people will celebrate, and they will regard his emergence at the time of the Reappearance of the Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) as a gift from Allah (s.w.t.) for themselves.

Jesus (a.s.) will visit the Christian countries and God will work miracles by his hand, and he will gradually lead the Christian world to the divine rules and mores.

Among the first results of his descent will be the elimination of tension between the Christian world and the Islamic world, and according to various traditions a peace treaty will be concluded and friendly relations will be established between the two nations.

It can also be concluded that perhaps one of the reasons for Jesus (a.s.) praying behind the Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) with the Muslims is because the Christian nations will break the peace treaty and strive to mobilise a large force for war against the Mahdi (a.t.f.s.), forcing Jesus (a.s.) to declares his position explicitly by joining the Muslims in prayer led by the Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.). As a consequence of this, the movement of the Christian people in support of Jesus (a.s.) will leave a great effect on their governments, both before and after the Great War against Mahdi (a.t.f.s.).

It is clear from the narrations that, such a war will break out. It will be started against the Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) by some of the western countries that oppose him. This war is to take place in Syria. The west will taste a terrible defeat, and as a result power will transfer to Jesus (a.s.) and the Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) and the waves of their followers. Together, these waves will be pledged to overthrow the temporal powers and establish governments that declare their support for the overall government of the Mahdi (a.t.f.s.).

There are many narrations about a peace treaty and peaceful relations between the two nations on the basis of this pact. It seems that the Mahdi’s goal in concluding the treaty is to give Jesus (a.s.) the opportunity to rectify his society in natural and smooth way and to improve their political and social ideas, and to show them the deviation of western civilisation from the path of truth.

As given above, Islam and Christianity both talk of a reformer with given characteristics, both believe that he is sent by Allah (s.w.t.) as the representative of the Prophets, and both believe that it is he who will establish the rule of justice throughout the world. It has been my attention in this work to explain some of the point regarding the emergence of reformer and his rule which corresponds with Christian sources. What Islam and Christianity have declared on the subject are very important and could affect man’s destiny, in fact, the followers of all four great divine religions-Islam, Christianity, Judaism and Zoroastrianism whose numbers are more than three billion, believe in the appearance of such a reformer. It is therefore necessary that the main emphasise should be on this common view.

In view of these facts, it would be better if attention was paid to this Historic event, rather than simply ignoring it. Perhaps conditions in the world at present are such that mankind is more receptive to this issue than ever before, and has made itself ready to establish the justice of truth.

However, in opposition to this attitude towards the great reformer, Allah (s.w.t.)’s enemies have started violent propaganda and even declare explicitly that some actions should be taken to block his appearance. In particular, much publicity is given to the medieval soothsayer Nostradamus, who seems to have predicted that a man from the House of Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) will come from an Arab land to reform the world. In the commentary on such reports, the reformer is introduced as the anti-Christ, the annihilator of the world, with the inference (sometimes made explicit) that the Western nations must strive to stop his programme of reform from happening.

Concerning this propaganda the true Christians, know that the great reformer could not be enemy of Jesus (a.s.), but on the contrary he believes Jesus (a.s.) is ‘the spirit of God’ and ‘the word of God’, and that Jesus (a.s.) will descend to help him in his great task. The great reformer will come to establish justice, and it will be far beyond his means to annihilate the world.

In preparation for that day, it is necessary for world society in general and western society in particular to refer to the human power of reason and study the great upheaval with wisdom. Carefully avoiding the trap of deceivers, profiteers, snares, and discern the path of right from the false. It is obvious in any such an event the economic, political and cultural deceivers always will employ all their efforts in pushing people towards ignorance and the ever lasting darkness.

To close this chapter, we present some verses from the Bible’s New Testament concerning the great reformer at the end of time:

“I will ask the father, and he will give you another to be your advocate, who will be with you forever, The spirit of Truth’. The world cannot receive him, because the world neither sees nor knows him; but you know him, because he dwells with you and will be among you.”**[[111]](#footnote-111)**

“But when your advocate has come, who is from the father, ‘the spirit of truth’ that issues from the father, will bear witness to me. And you will also be witnesses”[[112]](#footnote-112)

“I tell you the Truth it is for your good that I am leaving you. If I do not go, your advocate will not come, whereas if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he well confute the world, and show where wrong and right and judgement lie. He will convince them of wrong, by their refusal to believe in me; he will convince them that right is on my side by showing that I go to the father when I pass from your sight; and he will convince them of divine judgement, by showing that the prince of this world stands condemned.

“There is still much I could say to you, but the burden would be too great for you now. However, when he comes who is the ‘Spirit of Truth’ he will guide you into all the Truth; for he will not speak on his own authority, but will tell only what he hears; and he will make known to you the things that are coming. He will glorify me, because he takes everything that is mine and makes it known to you. All that the father has is mine, and that is why I said ‘Everything that he makes known to you he will draw from what is mine.”[[113]](#footnote-113)

In the Book of Mathew:

“Then will appear in heaven the sign that heralds the ‘Son of man’. All the peoples of the worlds will make lamentation, and they will see the ‘son of man’ coming on the clouds of heaven with great power and glory.

And they will see the ‘son of man’ coming on the clouds of heaven with great power and glory, at a time the Angels will gather from the four winds, from the farthest bounds of heaven on every side. ... But about that day and hour no one knows; not even the Angels in heaven, not even the son; only the father Keep awake, for you do not know on what day the owner of the house is to come; at evening or night or dawn or morning, hold yourselves ready, maybe he will come at the time you least expect him.” [[114]](#footnote-114)

In the Book of Luke:

“Hold yourselves ready, then, because the ‘son of man’ will come at the time you least expect him-.”[[115]](#footnote-115)

“...There will be great earthquakes, and famines and plagues in many places; in the sky terrors and great portents....”

“....Jerusalem will be trampled down by nations until their day has run its course, portents will appear in sun, moon, and stars. The earth’s nations will stand helpless.”

“... men will faint with terror at the thought of all that is coming upon the world....”

“....And then they will see the’ son of man’ coming on cloud with great power and glory”[[116]](#footnote-116)

# Chapter Six

## A Confused World

## Waiting, A Concept Fused with the Human Soul:

It seems only appropriate to give a turn to the discourse on waiting as brought up in Religious literature. A glance at our own lives convinces us that man in effect lives in waiting. Anyone, in any age-group or social standing he may belong to, is always waiting for something to happen. When he rises in the morning he is waiting for the night, and at night he sleeps only in waiting for the daybreak. Being a young adult, man awaits adulthood, and once he marries he looks forward to becoming a parent. As such, all the moments of our lives are fraught with notions of waiting which is not ‘injected’ into life but is an integral component of it. The inseparability of waiting from life calls on us to look for a clear definition for it.

It seems that ‘waiting’ is created in man depending on three issues; first, dissatisfaction with the existing conditions; second, harbouring hope for a better future, and third, movement and endeavour. The one who, for instance, studies at high school and wishes to continue his studies at the university is either dissatisfied with his present condition, or wishes greater achievements. Dissatisfaction is not of course always a cause; rather, not being content, and wanting ‘more’ and ‘better’ is. He is not content with having a high school diploma and hopes to pursue his studies at a higher level of education. Besides, he recognises this capability in himself to do so. As such, he continues his move and endeavour and prepares the ground for his objective. This is ‘waiting’ which is constituted of these three factors.

It is a task of Religion and religiosity to deepen and expand what human beings set as goal in their lives. In other words, Religion expands man’s interpretation of life and makes him realise that life is not limited to material aspects and goesfar beyond them, and is more extensive. It gives depth to man’s realisation and understanding and shifts his attention away from superficial layers of life. For example, man is always grateful and thankful in his life. But grateful and thankful to what? Religion doesn’t teach man how to think. Rather, it expands and deepens man’s understanding. The same is true of acts of worship and information. Religion functions along the same line when it comes to the issue of ‘waiting’, Men actually live with and in ‘waiting’, Religion expands the concept of ‘waiting’ which is essential to man’s life, and deepens it. That is, Religion renders more complete what man already has. We have always been in waiting ourselves; waiting for our son or daughter to get married, waiting to ‘grow and advance’ and expecting to see others grow and become learned and purified. These are examples of waiting at an individual level. But Religion expands this concept and tells man not to merely await an improvement of affairs for himself and people around him, but teaches him to expand his vision and extend his ‘waiting’ to include improvement and perfection for all.

This is expansion through Religion. But it will be deepening our vision when it teaches man not to expect material improvement only. It tells man to await the advent of absolute Truth. There are numerous narrations regarding the notion of ‘waiting’ such as, ‘Await the advent of the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.) or, The best people of each era are the ‘awaiters’The advent of the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.) is not directly hinted in such narrations because the aim is to direct our attention towards waiting for improvement in the lives of all humans and making efforts to this end.

These general terms may be adapted to any era, but the perfect, most excellent phase of it will be materialised with the Reappearance of the ‘Promised Saviour’. The emphasis is on the belief that the excellent and perfect phase of ‘waiting’ will come true with the advent of the Imam of the Age (The Mahdi) (a.t.f.s.) and the Messiah (Jesus) (a.s.). Religion, therefore, has not created ‘waiting’; rather, it has expanded and deepened it. Religion does not oppose human nature. Instead, it develops human nature and sets it on an evolutionary course. Let us now go back to the three aspects we brought up for ‘waiting’:

1. Dissatisfaction or being discontent with the present situation.

2. Harbouring hope for a desired situation

3. Moving and endeavouring to reach the desired situation.

Now if we wish to direct our lives on the basis of these motivations, in connection with the appearance of the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.), we first need insight, and secondly, belief, and thirdly, endeavour.

At first we should develop the awareness that the present situation is not pleasing or satisfying. This needs some sort of comparison, comparing one’s life with his fellowmen, and arriving at the conclusion that one’s condition is not satisfying. In other words, if one does not become aware of his shortages and problems, how can one be awaiting a change?

The second aspect, belief, is found in all religions, be it the religions of ‘people of the Book’ or other faiths. Religions believe that the world will end ‘well’. In Islam and in Shi’ism in particular, this belief concerns a certain Holy leader whose advent will change the world into the desired situation.

Others also believe that ultimately a Saviour and Messiah will come to implement justice in all its aspects, with no conservative considerations and in all stages of man’s life.

The third aspect is movement and endeavour, i.e. every person takes steps in this regard, and for the materialization of the desired situation. The first step one should take along this path is to focus on one’s self. That is, if one is awaiting a Messiah, one should embark on decent acts, and if one is awaiting the implementation of absolute justice, one should move along the course of justice and be a man of piety, purity and religiosity himself. He should be a man of ethical values and should adorn himself with moral points of strength. He should also purify himself of all features that bar one’s way to goodness. One will not be able to attain ethical values before distancing oneself from defects and vices. One should first gain piety and then acquire ethical values. As such, the first move of an awaiting person is to set out on a path leading to his own edification.

In one’s individual life and inner journey, when man becomes interested in some one he will endeavour to resemble him. If the desired person is a symbol of values like justice and truthfulness, the awaiting person too should establish in himself congruency with and likeness to that person. For example we put on dark clothes when we attend a mourning ceremony in order to create likeness in ourselves with the mourners. We put on light and gay clothing when we go to a feast or celebration so that we would be in congruity with that gathering.

Likewise, a man who awaits the implementation of absolute justice and decency should establish such values in himself. No one raises a flag of mourning in a marriage ceremony. And no one decorates a mourning place in a jovial way. The person whose heart is pinned on the Reappearance of the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.) and the Messiah must practice justice and be fair to himself.

One who harbours a desire for truth and awaits the promised Saviour should not reflect notions contrary to truth in his words and behaviour. So, a waiting person should first establish similarity between himself and his desired leader.

The second duty of an awaiting person is launching a collective movement. That is, even illiterate old women may become familiar with Religion. So what is necessary is to endeavour, both culturally and scientifically. If the first binding duty is struggle against one’s unholy desires; then the second, is a cultural and scientific struggle. Some Scholars divide ‘struggle’ into three categories of the ‘greatest’, ‘major’ and ‘minor’. The ‘greatest’ struggle is the journey to God and self-edification as was explained. The ‘major’ struggle is the cultural-scientific struggle in which man takes steps for the improvement and growth of others. The ‘minor’ struggle of physical force is a necessity and constraint for Religion.

In a Religion whose message is justice, peace, humanity and congruity, fighting is not a principle but at times, it becomes a necessity. Man may even amputate one of his own limbs because that limb may endanger other parts of the body. Therefore, the ‘minor’ struggle of fighting i.e. ‘anti-God forces’ is not a principle in Religion (neither Islam nor in Christianity) but a necessity which may arise in the society. The question needs to be studied as to who is duty-bound to perform the ‘major’ struggle? Are the Muslims or Christians to appear on the scene to disseminate the word of Religion? Who embarks on this task? of course, those who believe in and love God.

So this scientific-cultural struggle in the course of dissemination of Religion and the word of those whom we await is a duty on the shoulders of those who believe and love. So, the major struggle is then the second step in the course of the ‘journey’.

There is a narration that speaks of this struggle, ‘A group rises up from the east to prepare the ground for Imam Mahdi’s government’. This preparation is not for war and a military campaign. Rather, it is a preparatory cultural-scientific move. That is, people in that era will arrive at a belief that makes them accept the absolute truth when it comes, this culture is observed more or less in the present-day Islamic countries and it may be said that Iran is the founder and vanguard in this regard.

The same cultural movement, though in a very weak state, is observed in other countries too. For instance, in India, Sai Baba and his followers may be cited as an example. He believes in all Divine religions and invites people to equality, brotherhood and peaceful coexistence. Each year he celebrates the birthday anniversaries of the Holy Prophet of Islam, Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) and Jesus Christ (a.s.). He is said to have a 3-million strong community of followers.

## The ‘Information Explosion’:

Theorists have nicknamed the present age as the era of the ‘information explosion’, and this is an appropriate name, given the incessant flow of wave after wave of information directed at people by the modern mass media on a daily basis. Tens of millions of words referring to bits and pieces of incoherent, and, in many instances, superficial and shallow information are raining down, like a crumbling building, onto the minds and psyches of people. Radio, television and hundreds of computer networks, enthral the people’s minds in a confusing loop. Today’s man has little opportunity for thinking about the world and what is happening in his environment and beyond. Indeed, in some sort of crude simplicity man cannot comprehend, in effect, in which part of the earth he is. Where has he come from, where is he going to? What has he come to the world for? What elements are in fact planning for his life and direction beyond the alluring screens of information networks and the pages of newspapers? It can be said that the abundance of books and publications conceal man’s terrible illiteracy. Deceived by the halo of information, everybody thinks they are among the knowing and the wise.

But the greatest negligence of all is man’s negligence of his destination. He simply does not know where he is going and where he should go. The false belief of man that he is standing on his own feet of knowledge has caused him to neglect the sinister plans prepared for him by colonial and exploitative forces. In fact, the occidentals are among the most naive and simple-minded people of the planet because information bombardments and negligence-inspiring occupations have barred them from a conscientious presence in life’s arena. The ‘golden bonds ‘of the present age have shacked the simple people who have grown up in this dungeon, and they themselves aggravate the suffocating situation in this abyss. Not only have they failed to object to their chains but seem to be happy with their captivity within this dungeon. It is pitiful that the explosion of baseless information is adding to the layers of ignorance and covers the reality of events.

It is pitiful that man indeed values being in servitude and regards his imprisonment period as years of happiness and light.

The deafening sound of the info-explosion has sealed ears, and its light has blinded the eyes in such a way that there is no chance of returning and looking back to see what is remains of human reality. History appears like a distant memory with its fragments scattered around, and the future, an ambiguous picture of what man finds himself incapable of handling. He has remained, therefore, hand-tied, only waiting for another explosion to shed more light around, but this is only a deadlock which keeps the vagrants of the information age from comprehending the present.

Those residing in this domain of information flashes are run round like a helpless rabbit before a huge fire, coming out of the mouth of the information dragon, a dragon that has captured his victim in a loop with no way out.

Today’s man is a captive of this flashing loop, is not even able to recognise what or who is devouring him. He has indeed abandoned his past, present and future in order to be amongst those residing in the neighbourhood of this man-devouring dragon in order to save himself from the harms of this monster. The clandestine forces behind political and intelligence apparatuses are leaving no stone unturned to convince today’s man that he is more fortunate than any other generation of humankind in history, and that he is wiser than all his predecessors. They tell man that today he knows the number of atoms in the nucleus of uranium, or that he can analyse the colour-inducing elements in a petal, and suchlike. He is, therefore, not only the wisest but the most truthful man that has ever appeared on the face of the earth. These forces never wish for man to become alert by an implosion that, in spite of all his knowledge, he is the most ignorant amongst all generations of humanity. ‘Being’ and ‘becoming’ have lost their meaning for him. Instead his eyes, fixed on outer reality and superficiality, which have indeed denied him his inner light and insight. Today’s man, creates a ridiculous halo of credibility around himself believes that he possesses all truth and knowledge.

The information explosion has in fact distanced man from the truth behind events and hides the world’s past and history from him. It also distorts the destined future, even death, so that man forgets all the bloodshed on earth, all the daggers of hatred and rebellion, all the rooted hostilities of the killers of Abel, John, Ali (a.s.) and Husain (a.s.) and the persecutors of Jesus Christ (a.s.).

The deafening sound of this explosion stifles all other voices and draws a curtain over ears, preventing them from hearing so many moans and screams. Now, the cries and moans and all the voices of truth go unheard. Neither are the voices of Jesus (a.s.) Moses (a.s.) and Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) heard, as if there is no voice and call, nor the sound of the lashes coming down on naked bodies of victims, no moaning resulting from pain and torture, no crying of hungry children.

The sensation of information is mocking all the concrete signs of God. It seems as if the Satan has blown his horn, or that the Anti-Christ has engulfed all existence. Yes, the information explosion has altered all colours in the eyes of man. Red is not red and white is not white anymore.

Today, modern and fast means of transport take people to remote parts of the globe with none of the hardships and difficulties that went with travelling in the past. Also, modern telecommunication facilities have rendered communication easy and made man needless of many otherwise time-consuming trips.

The growth in production tools automation of factories and the construction of huge machinery have considerably decreased the need of manpower.

A machine-centred life-style, the limitation of years of activity to thirty or a maximum of forty years, and the presentation of various kinds of packaged foods and drinks are among the factors that have caused an increase in the time known as ‘leisure time’.

The modern history of man which started with the Western renaissance, It has been the history of man’s separation from three important elements of his consciousness, his history, his roots and from a clear future. That is in this historical period man has concentrated all his efforts on grasping the ‘present time’.

This turning away from a Religious and spiritual identity, and the doubt that was cast on all past understanding by western thinkers, led to a situation in which, only the corporal aspect of the empiricist intellect, and finally only the ‘principality of the ‘present time’ became the focus of man’s attention, and in this way caused him to be oblivious of his past, with all its characteristics.

Ignoring the metaphysical world and to deny the unseen world caused this two-footed hasty creature to cast doubt on the Hereafter, a doubt that took the future away from man. He then based all his perceptions on the principle of advancement and on this basis he began exploring the earth and extending his domination. Meanwhile, the mystery of death and the hereafter became for him an inescapable and dreadful destiny, and he made all kinds of endeavours to delay it.

Returning to the point about ‘leisure time’ which is a characteristic and vernacular of so-called modern man, a man who is treading a barren desert on his own, the notion raises many questions; just who were the advocates of leisure time? Which school of thought believe in the allocation of sometime as the ‘leisure time’? What is leisure and what is it for? Leisure from what? Leisure in this sense is escape; from killing? From preparing? From going? Escape! Escape From death, escape from the responsibility towards the preparation of an afterlife. Escape through Leisure! Leisure from the horrible anxiety of the Messenger of death coming down on him? Leisure from remembrance of God? From glorifying Him and testifying to His oneness? Or is it leisure from the self, from identity and the truth? Is it to be captured in the trap of oblivion? Leisure from the internal foe, the self? Or, from the external enemy, Satan? Leisure from the swift-passing youth or the early-arriving oldness that puts end to all the opportunities? Or is it leisure form teaching and learning the principles and laws that will assist the passenger to reach his destination? Leisure from solidifying the foundation for action? Leisure from acquiring the moral concepts that prepares man for gaining knowledge? Leisure from the kind of knowledge whose attainment is difficult even for men of virtue? Leisure from the burden on man’s shoulders and his commitment to take this load to the final destination?

The heralds and advocates of ‘leisure time’ must be asked whether they have condoned what was said above, or, do they assume that man is needless of these statements? What they have prescribed for man’s leisure time is a kind of game and entertainment that deceives only children and simple people. Obviously, they consider ‘leisure time’ as an existential necessity for man, and that is why they have made plans to fill in this gap, or else, they would have done otherwise. But what should be done for man to rescue himself from the distracting times of his leisure and prepare him to pass through the terrible ravines and the sharp uphill roads in his short life span? A man of leisure is an aimless creature who set down his eyes upon the Utopian city lying on the distant horizon. He is the one who is looking for ways and means that help him pass his time of ignorance. On the other hand the “modern” concept of “leisure time” is forget yourself, forgets everyone forgets everything and buries your conscience in whimsical fancies.

Meanwhile, it should not go unnoticed that the expansion of the Western-led sciences of sociology and psychology have left a considerable impression on ideologies, assumptions, questions and the categorisation of various issues. Amongst non-western nations there appeared a slavish imitation of the West and this spread confusion amongst them. This has been compounded by the fact that modern intellectuals have not escaped all the negative impacts of their Western-based studies. The weakness in Religious beliefs and the marginalisation of Religious education have been effective in strengthening these issues and their formalisation among teachers and officials of cultural-civic affairs in countries categorised as the third world. If this author is not accused of being pessimistic, I believe the acts and policies of leaders of arrogant powers and imperialistic countries have played a key role in creating the confusing cultural and civic situation of our age. When ‘world globalism’ became dominant in man’s line of thinking and the love of this world closed man’s eyes to belief in the hereafter, the only escape available to man’s ideal-seeking soul was his focus of attention towards the means and ways that keep man from failing into the anxiety that results from his rebellion and self-centrism.

Such means include a variety of entertainments and distractions such as television, satellite, video and various kinds of games and sports. These diversions cause people to become negligent of what is going on around them. It should not be ignored that one of the functions of sports in today’s world is depoliticisation, meaning that it causes people to ignore political crises and the illegal acts of super powers, due to the deafening sensation of sports events. Why so? Because political and cultural awareness has always been a great hurdle on the way of arrogant imperialist powers and their agents.

Obviously, if awareness is to be restored to the minds and hearts of the young generation, great danger will be posed to the arrogant powers. So they employ every tactic at their disposal to control and limit the politico-cultural awareness of the people. An investigation into this matter makes it clear that the issue of ‘leisure time’ and the debate on howto fill this time is, on the one hand, related to mind control dominating today’s world and captivating man in the tight orbit of world-globalism, and on the other, it relates a set of economic-political factors whose wide-spread definitions and scientification have helped the arrogant powers to sell their drinks, food stuff, clothes and to expand their political domination.

It is known to all the faithful that-adult human beings, men and women, need only about 3000 Religious injunctions to regulate their material life’s various relations and to prepare their bodies to be cleansed of impurities and edified Religiously, and to keep themselves from failing into the pitfalls of forbidden and undesirable activities.

Should the learning of these directives be delayed until one reaches 60 or 70 years of age? It would be like sending an ordinary untrained man on to the canvas against a powerful professional wrestler. Would he stand any chance? No’ wrestler has ever been able to learn wrestling techniques and to execute them at the time of encountering the opponent. We are pitted against our evil-inducing self, an opportunist and demonic opponent who wish to see man debased and negligent. We also have to face evil opponents and death which is marching against us, sooner or later, to take man to the resurrection day’s tribunal.

Yet the ignorant man is so engrossed in worldly affairs that he forgets to prepare himself for the battle with such a formidable opponent. It should be noted that to subdue man to Religious decrees is only an introduction to the edification of the divine nature of man and he can gain spiritual growth and advancement only in ethical schools. Is the contemporary situation not a token of the gross negligence of man towards himself and that of the planners of his education and training?

This is so, unless we have revised the definition of man and his role in existence from that presented in the guidelines of the infallible Holy Prophet and Imams; unless we regard man as an animal who just enjoys materialistic pleasure in his lifetime and then slips into a black hole of nothingness and oblivion at the end. The leisure pursuits and diversions will be meaningful only to such people who believe there is no destination for man. It is years that we have been talking of a crisis that has undermined the very foundation of the people’s ethics and life. Have we ever asked what the hotbed is for this crisis? Isn’t it true that this crisis is a natural product of contradictory forces? Have we ever asked what relationship exists between what is presented to man (as his ‘living’ plan) and his nature? And what have been the resources in which these social and ethical instructions originate? Don’t these prescriptions themselves involve man in a contradictory process resulting in a struggle within himself between opposing forces that ultimately rip him apart.

So, how can we talk about crisis and at the same time ourselves be a factor to further deepen the crisis? It should be noted, however, that the destructive crisis engulfing many of the nations’ material and cultural realms originates in the lack of cultural studies. It is a pity that planners, policy-makers and executives have compiled and put into effect their programs and plans without launching an in-depth study of theoretical and cultural issues and of the micro and macro impacts of their activities, and the historical origin of the issues.

## The Rising Sun in the West:

Since ancient times, the belief in the advent of a saviour at the end of time has been a basic sentiment in human thought. Our ancestors constantly reminded each other of this event, and even now there are many signs from what is left of previous civilization, that lead us to this notion.

In principle, ‘futurism’, (belief in a better future and in awaiting a saviour), is a belief shared by all the major world religions of Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Christianity (in all its major schools, Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox), which claim to have a universal prophetic mission and in particular, the Religion of Islam, and it is treated as an axiomatic principle. The issue has been theologically discussed within these divine religions and biblical theology in great length. Here we present a brief overview of the documentary tidings of past civilizations and schools of thought and religions in this regard:

1. In Zoroastrianism, these following books contain many references to the advent of a saviour: Avesta, Zand, Jamasb, Datestan Dinik, and Zoroastra. In the Religion of the Zoroastrians, the promised saviours are three and called ‘Saoshinnta’. The last of these Saoshianta is the most important among them, and is referred to as the ‘victorious saoshianta’. He is the Promised One. It has been related that this Saochianta is to be identified with Brahma’s Krishna, the fifth Buddha of the Buddhists, the Moses of Judaism, the Christ of Christians and the Muslims Mahdi. It should be noted here that in any era and amongst any people, in any community, in every land and language, whenever a Prophet or a sage has spoken of the ‘promised one’, the term has been in the expressions and jargon and names familiar to that era and people, and so it seems different. However, all those descriptions, allusions and names have referred to the promised one at the end of time, which point to the person of the ‘Mahdi’. Mention of the promised saviour is also mentioned in different Hindu cults and their books. The *Mahabahrata* and *Puranas,* for instance, state: All religions believe that at the end of each historical period, man becomes more degenerated, ethically and spiritually. And as he is intrinsically on a digressive course of distancing himself from his origin, he cannot end this degenerative course by himself. As such, it will have to be an elevated spiritual personality, inspired by a Divine source, who shall appear and save the world from the darkness of ignorance, neglect, tyranny and oppression.

2. In the teachings of every Religion some facts have been referred to symbolically in complete accordance with the beliefs of other schools. For instance, in the book Turana’, a detailed discussion has been offered on the ending part of the ‘Kali Era, i.e. ‘the period preceding the advent of the tenth Avatarag of the Vishna Faith’. (The Kali Era is the ‘End of Time’ and now is the Kali period.)

3. Buddhism is also not aloof to the discussion of the issue of ‘awaiting’ a saviour. The promised one in Buddhism is the fifth Buddha.

As was said earlier, all such tidings, expectations and promised personalities are in compliance with the culture of each Religion and people. But close attention to the issue reveals that all religions speak of one and the same person with the same goal and behaviour. For instance, In Zoroastrianism the promised one is called the victorious Saoshianta in Hinduism, Avatara1, in Buddhism, the fifth Buddha; but all with the same mission.

4. In Judaism, the Religion of the followers of Moses is also awaiting a promised saviour. In Jewish literature, the Torah and other prophetic books the promised one is referred to on many occasions. In the Book Nebuet Hild (‘The Child’s Revelation’) there are many stories on the advent of the Prophet of Islam, his life history, events relating to his appointment to prophethood, the signs of the ‘End of Time’, the return and personality of Mahdi’ and even on the event of Ashura.[[117]](#footnote-117) The Jews, however, did not believe in Jesus (a.s.) and as such, their promised one has not yet appeared.

The Books of Prophets ‘Daniel’,’ Hukka’, ‘Sagnia’ and ‘Isaiah’ and also the ‘Psalms’ of David all contain notions on the promised one. The Holy Qur’an has also referred to the Psalms and its foretelling the victory of the pious over the corrupt.

In general, ‘awaiting’ has a special quality in Judaism. Its books give tidings on the advent of two great prophets, Jesus (a.s.) and Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) as well as the advent of the promised one at the ‘end of time’. Some of these tidings have proven already to be true, while some are to be materialised in the future, and as the Jewish people do not follow in either Jesus (a.s.) or Muhammad (s.a.w.a.), they should then be more sensitive and anxious to the issue of the Promised One and awaiting him. They should not condone all these notions and tidings in their books. They should be in effect more serious in ‘waiting’ and in preparation for the saviour than other people are.

In Christianity:

5. In this faith and its Religious books, there are more and clearer tidings about the’ promised one at the end of time’. One reason for this is the proximity of the Christian era to the time of the advent of the Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.). Another reason is that Christian literature has undergone a lesser degree of distortion as compared with that of Judaism, which is a far more ancient Religion. Christian Scholars too have launched extensive efforts in their confirmation or rejection of bibles. They were aware of the issue of the saviour, even though they didn’t fully accept the Gospel of Barnabas. The following Christian books all contain tidings referring to the advent of the ‘promised one at the end of time’: Matthew, Luke, Mark, Barnabas, and the Revelations of John.

## Visage of Mahdi in the West:

Numerous books have so far been written about the Mahdi and there is a wealth of writing available about the events of his era, as well as abundant narrations from the Holy Prophet and the Imams on his advent and related happenings.

Yet the spread of such narrations and non-availability of some of the original historical texts on the matter and a lack of scrutiny and complete analysis of the predicted events and their comparison with what has already happened, have prevented us from becoming fully familiar with the characteristics of the Promised One’s era. In the present book efforts have been made to study part of the Shia and Sunni histories in Islam, and that of Christianity, in order to shed light on the issue.

After the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran signs of belief in the Mahdi were observed in Muslim and even non-Muslim nations and researching and writing about him reached a climax. A joke even made rounds of the globe that the U.S. intelligence service, CIA, had prepared a file on the Mahdi incorporating every bit and piece of information on him. The file was said to lack only the Mahdi’s photograph!

Perhaps the greatest manifestation of this faith in the Mahdi was the uprising in the precincts of Mecca in 1980 led by ‘Muhammad Abdullah Quraishi’. His companions took control of the Holy shrine and his assistant ‘Johaiman’ issued a communiqué asking Muslims to pay allegiance to the Quraishi on the ground that he is the Promised Mahdi whom the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) had promised. Their occupation of the shrine and their resistance lasted several days during which the Saudi regime failed to evict them from the Holy grounds, until finally, with much help they succeeded in arresting and killing them.

Another sign has been the great campaign directly attacking the belief in Mahdi’s reappearance, in the literature and cinema films concerning the ‘prophecies’ of Nostradamus, the French astrologer and physician who lived five-hundred years ago. Of the predictions of Nostradamus, the most important concerns a grandson of the Holy Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.a.) who ‘appears in Mecca,’ ‘unifies Muslims under his banner’, ‘triumphs over the Europeans’, and ‘destroys the large cities of the new land (America)’.

Much of the literature and particularly the cinematic interpretations of it, indicative of the fear that is felt about this personality by organization and government, The Mahdi is shown as a threat to the west and to its civilisation, and perhaps the intention has been to mobilise the European and American nations against Islam and Muslims. Such a notion will be confirmed by having a glance at what has been added up to Nostradamus’s predictions. In the cause of anti-Islamic solidarity, it has even been suggested that after the defeat of Europe by the Mahdi and the destruction of giant U.S. cities, America will sign up to an alliance pact with Russia to confront the Mahdi, and they will ultimately defeat him. It is, however possible that Nostradamus might have had access to Islamic sources on the Mahdi, or he might have met some Muslim Scholars of his time. It is known that he spent part of his life in Italy and the South of France, and maybe Andalusia. (It should be noted that news on Mahdi’s advent was first broken among Muslims by the very person of the Holy Prophet, and Andalusia saw a period of Muslim occupation and Muslim Scholars travelled to and from that city in Spain)

In any case, the value of the work has been widely questioned. It has been said that the book is an anthology of predictions written in Latin in a symbolic style that can be interpreted in a variety of ways. This has allowed some extremist writers to translate the work in such a way as to fit their own purposes, while others have concentrated only on monetary gains out of the book. That is why we see in some versions of it that Mahdi has been compared with Genghis Khan or Hitler. However, Jesus (a.s.) too, in some versions, has been referred to as the ‘Christ of Muslims’ who will assist Mahdi.

## ‘Mahdi Studies’ in the West:

Here reference will be made to a number of claimants of ‘Mahdiism’ as explained by the renowned French orientalist Darmester and his account of deeds of those calming to be the Mahdi from early 13th A.H (18 A.D) century. The summary of it is as follows:

Towards the close of the 18th Century, a man named ‘Muhammad Ahmad’ rose in Sudan and claimed to be the Mahdi. A great multitude of people gathered around him. At the time, Britain and Egypt harboured exploitative intentions against the country. Calling himself ‘Mahdi’, he fought against the British and Egyptian forces and on one occasion his troops killed as many as 11,000 British soldiers. The London government led by Prime Minister Gladstone called for mediation by a great Muslim thinker and political activist, ‘Sayyid Jamal Asadabadi’, who at that time was publishing the famous daily *Urwat al- Wuthqa* in Paris. But this plan failed.

Europe was taken by a storm at the news of the self-claiming Mahdi’s consecutive victories all over Sudan. Many Europeans then grew curious to know what the principles of Mahdiism were and who was this Mahdi who had set Sudan on fire and replaced the Egyptian government, so, a group of enthusiastic people requested Professor Darmester, a major orientalist at Paris University, to give lectures at the Sorbonne on the principles of Mahdiism. He was asked to reiterate the beliefs of various Muslim nations in Mahdiism and give an account of the lives of all those who till then had laid a claim on being the Mahdi.

He accepted the proposal and expanded on the then on-going movement of the Sudanese self-claiming Mahdi, elaborating on the issue to the point that it grew into a book *Mahdiism in Islam and its Prevalence among the Sunni People.* On the page forty, chapter four, of his book the French scholar write:

There appeared two self-appointed Mahdis in recent centuries, one in Egypt in the 10th century the other in the twelfth century in Morocco. They formed dynasties whose names were etched in history. The first Mahdi founded the Fatimid dynasty which lasted 300 years and was one of the most glorious Islamic dynasties. The other established the Al-Movahiddin dynasty which ruled Spain.[[118]](#footnote-118)

And he note on page forty four:

Mahdi needed a capital, but he did not like either Tunisia or Qirvan as both cities were crammed with Arabs and he did not feel much security among them. So, he began to travel along the Tunisian coastlines and reached a peninsula that had the shape of a hand with an open palm.

After an astrologer determined an auspicious day and hour he laid the cornerstone of a city which became to be known as Mahdiah and is now under the French control. Mahdi built a strong fence around the city, with iron gates each of them weighing thousands of kilos. He also dug a pit so large at the heart of a hill that could harbour a hundred ships. After the construction of the city was complete he cried, I am no more worried about the fate of Mahdiah.

In a short while he conquered all the northern Africa up to the coastlines of the Atlantic Ocean. His third successor nicknamed ‘Moez Dinullah’ sent a Greek slave of his by the name ‘Johe’ to conquer Egypt. He did so and founded the city of Cairo which in Arabic is called Qahereh, meaning a city of power and conquest. Syria too soon saw the same fate. Even Baghdad, the seat of caliphate, was under descendants of that Iranian occultist for a while and his home replaced that of the Abbasi caliph’s in Baghdad.[[119]](#footnote-119)

And he writes on page fifty one:

After the Iranians and the Berbers, the Turks took over. Not being followers of Imam Ali (the first Shia Imam), the Turks considered themselves successors of the Baghdad rulers and followers of the Sunni school of Islam.... The Turks believed that the Mahdi would appear at the end of time and would call upon all the world’s people to embrace Islam, The Ottoman rulers are conspiring against the Mahdi as they are well aware that they themselves are not descendants of the Holy Prophet Muhammad and they have indeed usurped the caliphate and their rule is based on coercion. And so, they are constantly trying to evict Mahdi and his thought from the world and sever all relations between him and humanity”. Article 34 of the Ottoman Religious Code says,’ The Imam should be alive and he must not keep himself hidden from people, keeping them in waiting for him![[120]](#footnote-120)

On other ‘Mahdis’ he wrote: The most famous Turkish Mahdi was the one who rose in 1666 A.D. during the reign of King ‘Muhammad IV, who was about to conquer the city of Vienna. In that year, according to Jewish narrations, a saviour was expected to rise. And he did so exactly at the predicated time! He was a youth from the city of Izmir, very handsome and outstandingly eloquent with words. All his moves and gestures were as if he had been inspired. His name was ‘Ishaq Sabti-Zui’ and all Turkish tribes recognised him as the saviour. Even Jews from Germany, Amsterdam and London came to see him. People would say the government of the Israelis would be restored by him, and the divine rule would be established. The Islamic sphere too was also disturbed as Muslims believed that a ‘false Prophet’ or *Dajjal* (anti-Christ) should precede the advent of the Mahdi, and numerous Muslim Scholars identified the Jewish saviour with the *Dajjal.* Now, as people regarded this Ishaq of Izmir as the saviour of the Jewish people, so the Mahdi’s advent was expected to follow soon. At that juncture aft took place and stopped the forces from advancing towards Crete; this was taken as another sign of the end of time. Then, suddenly news spread everywhere that the Mahdi had appeared. He was a descendant of a clergy family from Kurdistan, with several thousands of Kurds comprising his followers. He was arrested and sent to the King who was at the time hunting game. The king started asking questions and the claimant Mahdi, failing to answer correctly, withdrew his claim.[[121]](#footnote-121)

## The Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) in the Words of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.):

On his last Hajj pilgrimage the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) gathered all the pilgrims who were with him, reportedly around 120,000 people, in a place called Ghadir Khum to deliver his last words and testimony to all the Muslims of the time. After praising Allah Almighty and inviting people to follow the path of his household and cling to the rope of the guardianship of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) as his successor, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said,

O people, the light of Allah Almighty was placed in me then in Ali (a.s.) and from him it was passed on to his progeny until it will be delivered to the Qa’em Al-Mahdi, (the guided upriser) who will claim the truth and will restore all the lost rights. Beware, (!) the seal of the Imams, Mahdi, the upriser, is one from our household. (2) He shall triumph over all religions. (3) He will be the avenger against oppressors. (4) He shall revenge the blood of all the pious slaves of Allah (s.w.t.). (5) He will open up and remove all borders. (6) He shall destroy all the polytheists. (7) He is a radiant river from an endless ocean. (8) He is the Helper of Allah (s.w.t.)’s Religion. (9) He knows all the scholarly and ignorant people from their appearance. (10) He is chosen and selected by Allah (s.w.t.). (11) He is the inheritor of all knowledge. (12) Whatever he says he says on Allah (s.w.t.)’s authority and he warns people on the matters of faith. (13) He is mature, complete, powerful and obeyed. (14) To him is assigned the commanding of the world of creation. (15) All Prophets and Imams before him gave the tiding of his coming. (16) He is the only remaining hujjah (Divine sign and proof) and no other Hujjah will be revealed after him and truth is but with him and there is no light except what is with him. (17) No one will triumph over him and no one can defeat him. (l8) He is the Allah (s.w.t.)-appointed leader on earth, His arbitrator among people, and His Seen and Unseen trustee.

The ‘Waiting for the Final Victory’ stipulated in narrations is meant for society to create within itself preparation for a divinely-guarded life and a government to prepare for all moral virtues and build itself up with virtues.

A good society which embraces the divine being of the Imam of the time should prepare the grounds for his coming. Waiting, therefore, means that the awaiting society should edify itself and be prepared so the Imam’s appearance can take place. There are many narrations on this topic, including this one:

Those who wish to be among the Imam’s companions should act piously and be pious’.

Waiting always takes disappointment away, keeps man mentally energetic and drives him to perform good deeds.

While on the subject I wish to mention here an articlewhich I read recently in magazine from the Iranian scholar Imam Kashani:

Recently, I travelled to the Vatican where our group held meetings and talks with about twenty of the most prominent Italian Scholars and thinkers on philosophical and polemical issues. One of the people to whom I talked was a Christian professor of theology and polemics at Florence University. I told him I was writing a book on the ‘End of Time’. In those discussions I became aware that in Italy, ‘eschatology’ is a well-known theological field of study. He said that he had been to Spain recently where, at a conference, some of the attending Scholars had asked him to write on the topic; he had agreed and was writing the book at the time we met.

He added, ‘The fact is that such a book should be able to answer questions brought up by the young generation and to solve their problems. Our present generation is now brooding over an objection and doubt which seems to them like an insurmountable mountain. And that is, God is now oblivious of human beings and He pays no attention to them anymore. If God were not denying human beings they would not be in such a miserable situation now. The amazing amount of treachery, crime and corruption results from God’s renunciation of man.’ He continued, ‘Although people believe in God, yet nihilism is rampant. Our youths believe in God and yet they end in absurdity. How can I tell them what would happen at the end of time when they think God has abandoned them?’

I responded to this issue elaborately from the Islamic point of view and a door was opened to him on the matter. I felt that after our talk he resumed the writing of his book with more vigour. But after this discussion I too noted that the short sentence, ‘He is waiting’, is not meant only to keep man away from disappointment. More than that, it also includes this concept that without being in waiting, man gradually grows ‘empty’, with no ideology, and becomes absurd and lax. So, the insistence on ‘waiting’ in Muslim narrations is meant to help man find his true self.

Despair arising from non-waiting and hope arising from waiting are both completely justified. But our discourse concerned the latter. It is the trunk of this discourse, while to avoid sins and perform good deeds and not despairing are all the branches and fruits and not its root. The root is man understands of who he is and what he is. He should realise that without waiting he may not harbour any hope. I would like to add that of course one should respect other people’s ideas and I told the Italian scholar that we Muslims hold some common ideas and beliefs with Christians because both these religions are divine faiths. We share the same idea on the origin and the final destination of man. So, we better collect the sayings of Jesus (a.s.) and Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) and proceed along with their statements. I further stated that the contents of the Holy Qur’an are all Divine Revelations and pure, Holy Prophet has not added to, or, deleted from the Revelation. Everything in that Book is Divine. We believe that Jesus (a.s.) too has had Divine Revelations, i.e. his words too have been Divine. Then I said to him, ‘You believe that Jesus (a.s.) has uttered certain words that are not Divine Revelations and that the disciples compiled the books that constitute the various versions of the Bible. Well, I say the Bibles give tidings on the advent of Jesus (a.s.). Let’s assume that St. John interprets it and says, ‘The Master will come and the resurrection will immediately follow’. Now I think these words belong to John and not to Jesus (a.s.). What about you? Are you certain that these words belong to Jesus (a.s.)?’ He said, ‘No. I doubt it’.

I said if we doubt it, we should not then take them as words of Allah (s.w.t.) and His Prophet. So, if Jesus (a.s.) has said that ??? T shall come1, we believe in his coming. He nodded, ‘Yes’.

I said, ‘The Holy Qur’an has stated this idea very clearly and as a response to today’s and tomorrow’s generations’. I then recited verse 54 of the Holy Qur’an’s Chapter Nur, ‘The Light’:

Say, Obey Allah and obey the Messenger, but if ye turn back, then on him rests that which is imposed on him and on ye rests that which imposed on you; and if ye obey him, ye are on the right way, and nothing rests on the Messenger save the clear delivery (of the Message).

I then added that it is a promise of Allah (s.w.t.) that fear will go away, wretchedness will end; human society will be a faithful society, with all the people being Allah (s.w.t.) worshipers. This is a promise given by Allah Almighty. So, the Holy Qur’an believes in the opposite of what you are saying and quoting about today’s generation. I then told him, ‘Man should not behave as those who forgot Allah (s.w.t.) and were punished by Him. Allah (s.w.t.)’s punishment was that He made them oblivious of themselves, that is, “Man forgot what he was”. I added, ‘This means that Allah (s.w.t.) strikes such men with neglect so that they think not of their true self. When does Allah (s.w.t.) make man oblivious of his godly self? He will do so when man becomes oblivious of Him. Man, when oblivious of Allah (s.w.t.), will be oblivious of his self too, and it is Allah (s.w.t.) who will make him oblivious of his godly self. Now, what is our duty among people? You as a professor of this university and we as Scholars and clergymen are duty-bound to tell people who they are, what they are and what identity they have and how they will reach their true identity. Allah Almighty has designed the world of creation and has completed it. It is men who should place themselves in the right orbit and realise what they are to do. Islam tells us what we should do now and what future awaits us. Jesus Christ (a.s.) too says the same thing, in smaller scale though. He too says, “You are human beings. Consider what your future shall be.” If we relay this to the young generation, we will save them from nihilism. If they realise and arrive at the conclusion as to what they should do, and that their future and their government in future will be godly in nature, what their duties are, and what will be the fate of the sinners; they will come to their senses and shall abandon the present state’.

What I was trying to tell him is that when man broods over life and the world and realises these issues, he appreciates that waiting for the Saviour is not a trivial statement. It is indeed the soul of all statements. This was a short account of my talk with Italian professor.

## The Value of Awaiting

Narrations quoted from the immaculate Imams depict such a lofty station for those in waiting for the Saviour that one might be surprised as to why such value should be attached to the apparently simple act of waiting. The issue will be demystified when one pays attention to the philosophy of waiting and the duties binding upon the real waiters of the Imam of the Age.

## Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) and David’s Judgement:

Imam Baqir (a.s.) says:

The ‘upriser’ will rise up. He is strict with the Arabs. His method is the sword (against sinners), and in executing Allah (s.w.t.)’s plans, he does not care for any reproacher.

The Imam of the age and his companion’s judge matters in the same way as David (a.s.); that is, with the ability to see the ‘inside’ of people and read their minds. Thus they can at once and with no mistake recognise the innocent from the sinful and by so doing they need no evidence, reason, or document. By using this Divine method, giving judgement will be a speedy matter. Every wrongdoer will be punished instantly and no oppressed one’s right will be violated.

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said:

The world will not see its end before a man from our progeny will rise who judges like David and needs no one’s reasoning to mete out justice.

Shaikh Mufid (a.r.) writes:

When the ‘Upriser’ from the Household of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) rises up, he gives decrees in the same way as David, by reading the inside motives of people with no need for witness or evidence. Allah (s.w.t.) inspires him with the right decree or judgement and he metes out justice, driven by a Divine inspiration. The Mahdi is aware of all the clandestine plots of every group and reveals them. He recognises friends from foes by just looking at them. By this Divine ability there will be no problem of the infiltration of hostile elements into the ranks of his forces as the innermost thoughts of such elements will be revealed to the Imam and his companions, and the enemies’appearances and deceptive moves will have no effects. That is why the (feigned) repentance of people will not be accepted in that era.

Will there come a day when there will be an end to the oppression, discrimination, wars, hatred, blood-sheds, exploitation, lies, hypocrisies, deceptions, and of all the corruptions that now exist among human beings?

Will man have such a future lying ahead of him? Will an avenger come to defend the rights of the oppressed against the oppressors?

Will there be a time when under divine guidance men worship Allah (s.w.t.) beside one another with their hearts brimming with Allah (s.w.t.)’s graces and with their deeds reflecting their servitude only to Allah (s.w.t.)?

Undoubtedly, responses to these questions that reflect a kind of understanding and attitude of men towards humanity’s future will have a fundamental bearing on the morale and performance of people. Those awaiting the saviour who is to pull humanity out of darkness will be filled with hope, endeavour on this path and attune themselves with a magnificent current and move along with a great and a hope-inspiring movement. The Holy Qur’an verses, historical evidences and documents, and books of the Prophets all speak of the advent of the great saviour.

Muslims, on the basis of the Islamic teachings and their belief in the saviour of the world ‘the Promised Mahdi’, are constantly awaiting for the diffusion of the rays of justice all over the globe. The belief in the advent of the Promised Mahdi to rise from among the progeny of the Holy Prophet and the children of Fatima has existed among Muslims from the beginning of the Islamic era a long time before the birth of Mahdi (a.t.f.s.). Muslims have learned about this tiding from the Holy Qur’anic verses and also from the great Prophet of Islam, that a man from the Prophet’s household will rise up to fill the world with justice. They heard the Prophet, on numerous occasions, talk about the Mahdi, the signs of his advent and the events of his era and uprising. So the coming of Mahdi is taken as a sure and definite idea, to the extent that, since the Holy Prophet’s era, many deceivers have taken advantage of this belief among the Muslims, and have claimed to be the Mahdi. And some ignorant people have flocked around these false Mahdis.

Imam Baqir (a.s.) says:

All the riches of the world will be gathered in front of the Mahdi, all that is inside and on the surface of the earth. Then the Mahdi will tell the people, ‘Come forth and take these riches! These are the things for which you severed your ties with your relatives, vexed them, shed blood and committed sins. Come and get them!’

In depicting the future, usually and deliberately, little is said on the manner in which the passing of man from ‘today’ to ‘tomorrow’, will take place, or, the way in which the present society will be transformed into tomorrow’s society. Modern theories of progress do not clarify how man is to arrive at the future they sketch for him. They kindle the desire in man’s heart by depicting a beautiful, glorious future world and by glorifying it and, since the foundation of this future world is knowledge and scientific advancements, such thinkers leave the belief in people’s hearts that in order to arrive at that future the reins of man’s fate should be left in the hands of the owners of technology. When they draw the sketches of tomorrow’s advanced world before the dazzled eyes of their readers and audiences the point is implied that the West, being foremost in science and technology, will rule the world and will make the future of it.

Therefore, today’s world is now at a significant crossroads, probably the last and most important crossroads between Western ideology and the divine ideology of Islam. Perhaps this can be reflected in a dialogue with Hans Gadamer, the 95 year-old German philosopher. When asked the question of whether Religion can offer anything to the arrogant scientific, economic and political powers of today, he replied,

I am no Prophet. But I don’t think-the future of man can be secured through the present day celebration of economic development. Technology will continue to be a threat to humanity so far as Religion and philosophy do not succeed in modifying it. Naturally, it is also unlikely that I propose for man to once again take the path recommended by Christianity.

As we know, the issue of Messiahship or Mahdiism has been propounded in some way among all nations and religions. Perhaps it is the sole belief that all nations have in common. Each of them with a special attitude and a special name, call the Messiah the saviour of the world. Nevertheless, perhaps no Religion like Islam, especially in the Holy Qur’an, has propounded so emphatically the issue of the appearance of the Mahdi.[[122]](#footnote-122)

Islam has propounded the most vivid scheme of final rectification in the world. In this scheme the saviour is introduced and his parents and the number of his companions as well as his destination are known. At the present time according to credible and documentary news, the name of that great reformer is known and we know his parents’ names, the names of his ancestors, the month and year of his birth. We also know for how many years he led an ordinary life, and we know in which year he disappeared and to whom he has connection. The single point which remains ambiguous is the time of his appearance. But even this ambiguity has a positive benefit, because believing in the emergence of a reformer at some unknown time gives encouragement and hope to the deprived and oppressed people and discourages the oppressors and terrifies them. Such benefits only arise from the belief that the saviour will come at any time. If the date of his emergence was fixed, then those generations who will precede his emergence would see themselves as being unaffected by his emergence. As a result, the deprived will remain in despair and the oppressors will insist on oppression. No need to say that a scheme with such greatness could not be limited to a special generation, but on the contrary its project should enlighten several generations. In Islam, therefore, as we have seen, all the dimensions of the world reformer have been vividly described, and only the time of his appearance is not fixed. There are some conditions for believing in the saviour of the end of the world. For any nation, these conditions are as blood in the body or spirit in the soul. One of these conditions is hope. Sometimes the oppressive agents of some countries push a weak nation towards the edge of calamity, in such a way that they lose their hope and can do nothing against oppression, because they have lost hope. People of such nations say, ‘What is the point of our resistance? We are finished, to whom can we resort? Why should we even try? No longer can we do anything!’ This is the spirit of despair, of hopelessness. The oppressive and arrogant powers wish to induct this idea to their victims, so that they say to themselves that there is no use in resisting, for no valuable result will come out of their efforts. These powers try to deprive their victims of their economic vitality and culture. Why? Because a people without hope is a people without life. In this sense they wish to reduce their victims to inactivity and keep them in a slumber. With suchpeople they can take liberties that with an alive, vibrant, hopeful nation they cannot take

Thus we see that the main effort among all the tyrant powers is to extinguish the light of hope in the hearts of the nations and to turn their attention to material affairs, especially money, which is under their control. This they do by fostering norms in which all things are evaluated by quantitative, monetary values, and the spiritual values never enter into their calculations.

The tyrant powers are trying to metamorphosis the nations through all means available and to merge them all in the cyclone of ignorance that denies and destroys the humane values. The overseers of this conscious and semi-conscious and subconscious struggle against the truth have introduced new definitions of man, the world, the origin of genesis, truth, reasoning, justice, peace, courtesy and so on, all based on the shallow but widely accepted and rewarded attitudes of secularism.

Following the logic of its own dynamic, the mass media have crossed just about all the moral frontiers. No man on the earth is free from their poison and no one immune from their disclosures. Any protest against these immoral approaches are harshly suppressed, as the encroaching powers look only for power, and for them Religion and faith have no meaning.

## The Approach of West to Christianity, Spirituality and Mahdiism:

Despite all the efforts by the secular power and its mass media to derail humanity from the path of Religion and moral value, for the sake of power and financial gain, today we face a new trend which contradicts that of denying God. In the west itself there is a renewal of interest and dedication to Religion, and this could be called a Religious renaissance. There are many signs of this renaissance in the west, which could be seen among the various sects of Christianity. But the revival of Religion is not restricted to church and prayer, for because of the ever-increasing intellectual growth in the western societies there is a harsh reaction towards the anti-Religious approach. This has led to the followers of anti-Religious groups being reduced to a weak and hesitating position. And we witness that the spiritual trends are prevailing, and even the concept of the Messiah is becoming popular.

It is as if the west is repentant of the path it has followed and is seeking to return to spiritual matters, and regards the issue of saving the world as a punishment it must bear for its own rectification, purification and awareness of Almighty Allah.

Today a look at the western Religious papers and bulletins and even the non-Religious publications attest this trend. Often we witness the western papers publishing some reports of a revelation or inspiration from the Holy lady Mary, from Jesus Christ (a.s.) and even from the great lady of Islam, Fatima. These revelations have taken place in Damascus, in Medjugri, Yugoslavia and in the Rocky Mountains area of the USA, and are fully documented. Recently an article has been published by ‘ Riehle Foundation’ in one of their Religious publications under the title of *‘Blue Letter’[[123]](#footnote-123)* The article is under heading of, ‘Why does no one wake us from the sleep of negligence?’ The reverend Keorger Kosicki in this letter has expressed interesting points which show the western transformation and its approach to spiritual issues. Keorger Kosicki says, ‘When the glorious return of the Messiah takes place many people will repent and express their regret for breaching the Divine Laws.’

He remarks in another part of his letter, God addresses His creatures constantly in various ways. Why have we blocked our ears to His words and let our hearts become hard? We should rely on Jesus (a.s.) and the divine mercy and compassion and we should prepare ourselves for his reappearance, which will occur in the near future. We should pray for Jesus (a.s.) return. Man will not face peace and prosperity without his return.’

Today some political-Religious movements are forming in the U.S.A. to save society from the cyclone of calamities. Among these movements is the ‘Moral Perfection’ Movement established by ‘Jerry Mallvel’. This movement which came into existence along with other movements tries to turn the attention of people to Christ. Jerry Mallvel writes in his practical programs, ‘There are five principle issues which ensue political effects and the American moralists should prepare themselves for them. These issues are abortion, homosexuality, public immorality, pornography in cinemas and on television, and the destruction of the family.’

Such groups believe that one of the main American symptoms which lead to anti-Religious behaviour is secular humanism. From the view of social affairs, it is because humanism blocks the freedom of the individual by entangling man in the network of bureaucratic bondage that has no end save strengthening the power of government. Arid from the view of moral affairs, it claims protection for freedoms in such a way as to promote immorality. For Jerry Mallvel, these two trends should be confronted simultaneously.

Another religious group we could mention is the ‘Faithful to Covenant of God’.[[124]](#footnote-124) They arranged a procession made of million followers, the demonstrators emphasising their attachment to Christianity. According to ‘Bill Mccarty’, the founder of this group, people should not expect the U.S.A to be saved by the politicians, but by God. They have announced that they plan to re-mould American society under the Religious pattern by the command of God.

Douglas Johnson, a member of the Centre for International and Strategic Research and the author of *‘Religion, the lost constitution in the system of Government ship’* maintains that the world will turn to Religion and says, ‘When secular governments could not meet people’s wishes and aspirations, Religious message will fill the vacant places.’

Today even politicians believe that in the processes of elections, Religion has found an outstanding place, in such a way that Religious parties such as the parties in Turkey, India and Russia have gained great victories. Today, in Russia, in spite of the fact that Religion is not regarded as a power, but it is gaining rapidly it’s importance’ and people are showing special interest in spiritual affairs.

In 1996 elections, Yeltsin faced a great problem in competition against Zuganov, the candidate of the communist party, because the former one mingled the nationalist values with the Russian Orthodox criteria.

All these indications show the growth of spirituality at the centre of materialistic world, in a way that people are looking at the material issues as a stumbling on the path towards perfection and prosperity. It is pleasing that a general call has echoed throughout the world to turn the attention of people to Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) as the saviour of the world. This great development shows that most of the people of the world believe that man could do nothing to save the world, and that a man from God is needed to eliminate war, ignorance, enmity and corruption. It is withthe appearance of such leadership that the ancient divine promise of the rule of the righteous will be realised.

## An Image of the Future and the prospect of the Ideal Society:

Looking at traditions that have been related to the Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.), it would seem that no Prophet had a more sensitive task than that of the Mahdi (a.t.f.s.), for none of them was able to establish a world government, uniting all nations under the banner of Allah (s.w.t.) and implementing the Divine Law and executing justice perfectly and successfully. The Shia Muslims believe that no one but the Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) will succeed in establishing the human society in so perfect state; and yet his achievement will in reality be the achievement of all the Prophets of the past, the fulfilment of their promises to their followers, and the realisation of their ideal for human society.

Yes, In reality his accomplishment will be the accomplishment of Adam, Seth, Noah, Abraham, David, Moses, Jesus (a.s.), Muhammad (s.a.w.a.), and all the other Prophets (a.s.). They were the ones who, through their sacrifices and perseverance, prepared this highway and to some extent, the people’s intellect to accept this call. The program was conceived by the past Prophets and the struggle was begun by them. Each one of them provided an example through their own conduct and pushed the level of the people’s comprehension of Allah (s.w.t.)’s purposes until the line reached the Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.a.). He outlined the complete program and provided the comprehensive blueprint for the transformation of the world. At the time of his death he handed his programme over to his rightful successors, the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.) of his Household (a.s.). The Holy Prophet and Imams then endeavoured on this path to implement the divine plan for humanity, and through in doing so they encountered severe opposition and needed to make great sacrifices, their love and compassion carried them onwards until they handed the torch of salvation to the Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.).

I cannot think of better way to concluding this book than with an article I recently came across in the Persian Religious and cultural magazine *Maw ‘ud.* Written by a young man, the article seems to reflect the awakening in today’s society of the bonds of feeling between people and the Messianic Imam. He writes:

They did not tell us the truth, or at least they did not tell us all the truth.

We are told when you come, you will slay all people and that rivers of blood will flow and you will make heaps of dead bodies. We were frightened of your reappearance, for we were denied of the news of an event as sweet as a birth, and were told only of the pains of labour.

We love you from our childhood-your love was instilled in our natures and we remain longing for your reappearance with all our hearts.

Your love mingles with our existence and your coming is our very natural and sweet need.

But, no one told us how the world will transform into a paradise when you reappear.

Before they tell us of your kind hand and your sympathy, they told us of your sharp sword and firm arm.

Yes, it is true that for the growth of the flower and its flourishing, the weeds must be uprooted.

Yes, it is true that for the release of the oppressed it is necessary to suppress the oppressors and to remove the roots of tyranny.

Yes, it is true that to set up justice, it is necessary to overthrow the thrones of tyrants and destroy their palaces, and these are the miracles that .can only be performed by you.

But are these entire not the steps towards the paradise that you will found? And yet that paradise was not depicted for us at all.

No, no one told us what a beautiful prospect there is at the shore for us after this sea of blood, caused by oppressors.

No one told us that when you come, the birds will celebrate in their nests, the fish of the seas will rejoice, the springs will effervesce and the fields will offer abundance.

No one told us that when you come, you will make the hearts of people full of pure worshipping and submitting, and justice will be spread throughout the world, that Allah (s.w.t.) with your help will uproot the deceivers and liars and will eliminate savagery and oppression and remove the yoke of humiliation from the people’s necks.

No one told us that when you come the inhabitants of the heavens and the earth will love you, that the sky will pour its rain and the earth will grow its plants, that the living people will wish that their ancestors were alive to witness justice and true peace, and that they could witness how Allah (s.w.t.) will offer His blessings to the people of the earth.

No, they did not tell us that when you come all nations will find a secure place in your embrace like bees returning to their queens.

And you will disseminate justice all over the world as it should be, and that you will not even wake a sleeping man, and that you will not shed a drop of blood.

No, they did not tell us that there will be outstanding prosperity and comfort such as has never been before, and that wealth will be so abundant that any needy who comes to you, will receive beyond hisimagination.

No, they did not tell us that you will set fortunes flowing and will not count the donations.

They did not tell us when you come no one will be poor, and should people look for a pauper to give their alms, they will be unable to find anyone. Whoever they offer money to; he will reply that he does not need it.

O Everlasting and Heavenly Beloved, We love you from the very beginning, before we knew your paradise and Utopia which you are going to set up; because your love is mingled with our nature and your reappearance is our most natural and our sweetest need.

**\* \* \* \* \***

If you would like to find out more about the subject we discussed in this work, or have, any other inquiry, please E-mail your request to: [kouroshl4@yahoo.com](mailto:kouroshl4@yahoo.com)

1. Surah an-Nur, ‘Light’ (24), Verse 55 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Surah al-Anbiya, ‘The Prophets’ (21), Verse 105 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. It is a reference to Muhammad (s.a.w.a.), the Prophet of Islam [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Keshen in Hindu is the name given to the Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.a.). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The tribe of the Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.a.) were the Bani Hashim, or the sons of Hashim. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. In some Islamic narration the name ‘Mansoor’ (meaning succoured) is used in reference to the Mahdi (a.t.f.s.). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Hindu name for Imam Ali (a.s.) the first Shi’a leader after the Holy prophet (s.a.w.a.). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Rahnuma ‘The Guide’ is another of the Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.)’s titles. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. These are Sanskrit names of idols that Hindus recognise as symbols or Manifestations of God. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. According to the scholar Pour-Davud in his commentary of the Book of Gaats, ‘Bahman’ represents the power, goodness and righteousness of God. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Chapter 12 [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Chapter 65 Verses 16, 25 [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Chapter 3, Verses 7-9 [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Chapter 2, Verses 26, 29 [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Chapter 21, Verses 5, 36 [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Surah al-Baqarah, The Cow (2), Verses 1-3 [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Surah al-Nur, ‘Light’ (24), Verse 55 [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Surah al-Anbiya, ‘The Prophets; (21), Verse 105, The same promise occurs in Exod. XXXII l3 [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Surah Tawba, ‘Repentance’ (9), Verse 33 [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Surah Hajj, (22), Verse 41 [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Surah Aal-e-Imran, ‘The House of Imran’ (3), Verse 83 [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Surah al-Nisa, ‘The Women’ (4), Verse 159 [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Surah Naml, ‘The Ant’ (27), Verse 62 [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Surah al-Fajr, ‘The Dawn’ (89) [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. John the Baptist [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Surah al-Qasas, ‘The Story’ (28), Verse 5 [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Surah al-Baqarah, ‘The Cow’ (2), Verse 255 [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. The Byzantium Empire continued to be known in the East as the ‘Roman’ empire until its collapse and fall. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Surah Bani Israel, ‘The Israelites’ (17), Verse 81 [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. *Moazzin:* one who calls the *Azan* or Prayer summons. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. The plain of Hijaz from Najd to Tahama [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. The Invisible Horizon by Vincent Gaddis; This Baffling World by John God win;

    Wings of Mystery by Dale Tiltler; Limbo of the Lost by John Wallace Spencer; The Unusual Phenomenon of the Bermuda Triangle by Manson Valentine; Sudden Changes in the Earth by Hog Achinclaus Brown; In Deep by Peter Benchly; The Invisible Inhabitants by Ivan Sanderson; The Sinking, Salvages, Shipwrecks by Robert Bergess; and Strange Mysteries of time and Space by Harrold Wilkins. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. They include M. K. Jessop, Alexander Katzonov, Edgar Keiss, James Torn, Lorrence David Goosh, Leslie Leacher, Frank Edwards and Wilbert B.Smith [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. On the eleventh of October 1492 [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Surah Hajj, ‘The Hajj’ (22), Verse 73 [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Surah al-Baqarah, ‘The Cow’, Verse 164 [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. See the following chapter. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. From our point of view, as the secret of this area has not yet become clear, it remains one of the portents of the miraculous workings of Allah (s.w.t). So why should we not call the area the ‘Divine Triangle’? To name this area the Divine Triangle reaffirms its unbreakable link to the Creator of the world, whose power is generating in every existing atom of the world. It would also free us from a belief in ghosts and such like. On the other hand, the name would not prevent the scientists from further research into one of the secrets of the world, as the Holy Qur’an at every point encourages us to work hard to understand the world of creation and look deeper in world of creation. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. The sextant is a piece of equipment devised on the theory of light reflection and used for measuring angles. It is mostly used on ships for navigation. It consists of a telescope through which a sighting of a heavenly body is taken with protectors for determining its angular distance above the horizon, and from this it is possible to derive the longitude and latitude location of the ship on the map. This instrument is quite portable. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Surah Bani Israel, ‘The Israelites’ (17), Verse 85 [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Surah TaaHaa, ‘Ta-Ha’ (20), Verse 114 [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Karbala in Iraq [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. The principle domain of Islamic studies outside of Iraq and Iran, it is located in Cairo, Egypt. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. A ‘cycle’ or rak’at, of the prayer consists of standing and reciting, bowing arid prostrating. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. There are slight differences as to how the prayer is to be performed, depending on whether the prayer is obligatory, in the presence of the Imam or of an appointed deputy, or is optionally desirable, in his absence and the absence of a special deputy. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. The arrow head made in Damascus at the time were famous for its quality [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. ‘Shia’ by Allamah Tabatabai [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. ‘The Faith of Shia Islam’ by Allamah M.R Muzaffar [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Sura al-Nur, ‘Light’ (24), Verse 35 [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Surah al-Nahl, ‘The Bee’ (16), Verse 58 [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. He was the principal of al-Azhar in Cairo during the late nineteenth century, A.D. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. The Judgements of Ameer al-Momineen p. 61; Ali’s Judgements, Shushtari p. 69; Manaqib, p. 501, vol. 1 [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol. 2, pp. 32, 33, 181 [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Salabi’s commentary on Qur’an, Majma al-Bayan commentary on Qur’an [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol. 2, p 11 Tabari’s History, p. 93 [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Mehr-e-Taban, p. 60 [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Ibn Abil-Hadeed (Commentary on Nahj al-Balaghah, Habib Sair, Vol. 1, p. 30. Raudat Safa. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Musnad Ahmad b. Hambal; Sahih al-Bukhari, Sahih al-Muslim, Majma’ al-Bayan [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Ibid, p.157 Tabari and Dinawari [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Dr. Muhammad Kermani “A History of the Sinless Fourteen” (Zendengineh-ye-Chahardah Maasumeh). [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Husain Emadzadeh, The Sinless Fourteen [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Fosoul al-Mahd, p. 172 [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Jannatul-kholoud and Khessal of Saduq as narrated by Ibn Abi al-Dunya from Abul Faraj Esfahani [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Shaikh Mufeed, Irshad [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. A few were able to take refuge in the Islamic territory of Spain, where they remained. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. See Origins and Early Development of Shi’a Islam by S.H.M. Ja’fri. Beirut. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. al-Kulayni, Kafi, Vol. 1, p. 208 [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Ibid, Vol. 1, p. 261 [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. Safi writes in his ‘Commentary’ that the eighth Imam was titled al-Reza because the Allah (s.w.t) and His Holy Prophet are pleased with him. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. Barqi in his *Kafi wa Mahasen.* [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. That is, the Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (a.s.). [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Mataeb al-So-ool [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. Some of the names of the last of the divine ambassadors, as mentioned in the books of other religions: Euquidemo, Landitara, Masheh, Shematil, Mahmid-al-Akher, Vaguiz, Messiho-Zeman, Khada Shenas, Son of Man.

    Mahdi is the most common name in use for the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s), as in this tradition from Imam Baqir (a.s) which relates to this name in connection with the followers of the other divine religions:

    The master of the command will be named al-Mahdi (‘the Guided’) because he will dig out the Torah and other heavenly books from a cave in Antioch. He will judge among the people of the Torah in accordance with the Torah, among the people of the Gospel in accordance with the Gospel, and people of the Psalms in accordance with the Psalms, and among the people of the Holy Qur’an in accordance with the Holy Qur’an. (No’mani, Kitab al-Ghaibahp. 237) [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. Ibn Baabywah, p. 655; Shaykhut Taaefah, al-Ghaybah [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. The idea of the antichrist or ‘anti-messiah’ reflects the reality of Dajjal, and is mentioned in several places in the Bible: the Epistle of John, Verse 7; Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come, therefore we know that it is the last hour. (John 2.18). Also: He will come in an even year. Ibid p. 341 [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. Behaar al-Anwaar, vol. 13 [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. Surah al-Momenun, ‘The Believers’ (23), Verses 12-14 [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. Surah Aal-e-Imran, ‘The House of lmran’(3), Verses 35-37 [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. Surah Aal-e-Imran, ‘The House of lmran’(3), Verse 44 [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. Surah Aal-e-Imran, ‘The House of lmran’(3), Verses 42-43 [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. Zakat: a Religious tax payable by believers on certain categories of property and wealth intended to assist the poor and needy. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. Ibid, Surah Maryam, ‘Mary’ (19), Verses 29-34 [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. Ibid, Surah Maryam, ‘Mary’ (19), Verses 16-21 [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. Ibid, Surah al-Anbiya, ‘The Prophets’ (21),Verse 91 [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. Ibid, Surah Aal-e-Imran, ‘The House of lmran’(3), Verse 59 [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. Ibid, Surah Maryam, ‘Mary’ (19), Verse 26 [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. Ibid. Surah Maryam, ‘Mary’ (19), Verses 22-33 [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. Ibid. Surah Aal-e-Imran, ‘The House of lmran’(3), Verses 49-52 [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. Ibid. Surah al-Maaedah, ‘The Spread’ (5), Verse 114 [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. Ibid. Surah al-Maaedah, ‘The Spread’ (5), Verse 110 [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. Ibid. Surah al-Maaedah, ‘The Spread’ (5), Verse 75 [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. Ibid. Surah al-Anbiya, ‘The Prophets’ (21),Verse 26 [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. Ibid. Surah al-Baqarah, ‘The Cow’, Verse 116 [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. Ibid. Surah al-Anbiya, ‘The Prophets’ (21),Verse 24 [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. Ibid. Surah al-Maaedah, ‘The Spread’ (5), Verse 116 [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. Ibid. Surah al-Maaedah, ‘The Spread’ (5), Verses 117-118 [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. Ibid. Surah al-Anbiya, ‘The Prophets’ (21),Verse 26 [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. Ibid. Surah Az-Zukhruf, ‘The Embellishments’ (43), Verse 64 [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. Ibid. Surah al-Maaedah, ‘The Spread’ (5), Verse V-17 [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
101. Ibid, Surah al-Maaedah, ‘The Spread’ (5), Verses 72-73 [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
102. Ibid. Surah al-Saff, ‘The Battle-Ranks’(61), Verse 6 [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
103. Ibid. Surah Aal-e-Imran, ‘The House of lmran’(3), Verse 50 [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
104. Ibid. Surah Aal-e-Imran, ‘The House of lmran’(3), Verse 49 [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
105. Ibid. Surah al-Nisa, ‘The Women’ (4), Verse 159 [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
106. Behaar al-Anwaar, Vol. 52, p. 384 [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
107. Behaar al-Anwaar [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
108. Ibid. Surah Aal-e-Imran, ‘The House of lmran’(3), Verse 64 (Muslim; the one who submits to the will of Allah (s.w.t)) [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
109. Ibid. Surah Al-Baqarah, ‘The Cow’ (2), Verse 136 [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
110. Ibid. Surah Al-Saff, ‘The Battle Array’ (61), Verse 6 [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
111. John 14:15 [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
112. John 14:27 [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
113. John 16:7-15 [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
114. Matthew 24:30-44 [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
115. Luke 12:40 [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
116. Luke 12:40 [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
117. The account of Ashura is given in Chapter 4 of the present work. [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
118. Page - 40 [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
119. Page - 44 [↑](#footnote-ref-119)
120. Page - 51 [↑](#footnote-ref-120)
121. Page - 52 [↑](#footnote-ref-121)
122. See especially, 21: 5, 9: 33, 61:9 [↑](#footnote-ref-122)
123. Blue letter, July 1994, pp. 2-3 [↑](#footnote-ref-123)
124. Title translated from Persian [↑](#footnote-ref-124)