



Mahdaviyat In Hadith

Author

Tebyan

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[A Glance at the Concocted Traditions](#)

[Supplement 1](#)

[The Belief in Mahdaviyat and Sunni Scholars](#)

[H.Mahdi a.s. As portrayed in Hadith-e-Qudsi](#)

[Ibn Khaldun Vis-A-Vis Traditions About Imam Mahdi \(A.S.\)](#)

[Traditions about Imam Mahdi \(a.s.\)](#)

[Imam Mahdi \(A.S.\) in Sehah-e-Sitah](#)

[Imam Mahdi \(A.S.\) is from the Holy Ahlebait \(A.S.\)](#)

[The Reappearance Of Imam Mahdi \(A.S.\) Is Inevitable](#)

[Imam Mahdi A.S. In The View Of Wahabis](#)

[Imamate and Nahjul Balagha : A perspective](#)

[Imam of light and guidance](#)

[Chain of guidance](#)

[Importance of Imamat and staus of Imam \(a.s\)](#)

[The Origin of Patience](#)

[The ideal worshipper](#)

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A Glance at the Concocted Traditions



It is an indisputable fact of Islam that a noble man of the highest caliber, from the progeny of the Holy Prophet (S.A.) and offspring of Hazrat Fatema Zahra (S.A.) will appear in the last era of the world, defunct religion, establish justice and equity and purge the world from all evils. All the sects of Islam unanimously agree that this major upheaval will be known as 'the Revolution of Mahdi.

Verily the Sunni traditionalists have adorned and embellished their books with the detailed narration of this glorious revolution. Of course there is a difference of opinion in their view point regarding his pedigree like some say that he is the immediate son and successor of Imam Hasan Askari (A.S.),

while others opine that he is from the offspring of Imam Hasan al- Mujtaba (A.S.), still others think that he is from the generation of Imam Husain (A.S.). There are a few who falter that he will belong to Abbasid lineage. Some of them believe that he was born in 255 A.H. and others are adamant that he is yet to take birth.

Some predict that he will reappear from Holy Mecca, while some forecast that he will arrive from Khurasan there are also some who assert that he will rise from 'the far west'. There are some pedantic scholars who out of their shallow and scant knowledge arbitrated that Mahdi and Hazrat Isa (A.S.) are one and the same person. Precisely speaking according to them, Mahdi is none else but Hazrat Isa (A.S.).

Such different and discordant narrations have stemmed from those contradictory traditions which are recorded in various books. It is deplorable, indeed such fabricated and concocted traditions have slowly and gradually penetrated into the books of Ahle-Sunnat traditionalists. From the historical view point it is evident that such traditions were fabricated by those imposters who claimed to be 'Mahdi' and have attracted hordes of naive followers. Some of the renowned Sunni scholars and traditionalists have admitted to the rampant fabrication of traditions in their books viz Ibn Jauzi in 'Al-Mauzoo'aat', Zahabi in 'Meezanul Etedaal', Ibn Araq in 'Al-Ahadithuz-Zaeefa wal-Mauzoo'ah'.

In this brief article, such concocted and fabricated traditions will be discussed, their authenticity scrutinized and their truth exposed. 1. Ibn Majah Qazveeni in his 'Sahih' narrates from Anas bin Malik who relates from the Holy Prophet (S.A.) that:

"Mahdi is none else but Jesus, the son of Mary."

Which purports that the Mahdi of Islam is Hazrat Isa (A.S.). None of the scholars of Ahle-Sunnat have accepted this concept (that Isa is Mahdi) because this tradition contradicts various other traditions of the Holy Prophet (S.A.) which are authentic and continuous. Particularly those traditions in which the Holy Prophet (S.A.) has said that 'He will be from my progeny and from the offspring of Fatema (S.A.)'.

The noted celebrity of Ahle-Sunnat, Imam Qurtubbi (exp. 671 A.H.) in his famous exegesis of Quran i.e. 'At-Tazkera fi Umuril Akhera' has declared that it is a weak tradition because in the reliable traditions of the Holy Prophet (S.A.) it is clearly mentioned that he will be from his own lineage, from the children of Fatema (S.A.). These traditions are much more authentic and reliable than the one in question. Hence the verdict will be based on the most authentic traditions rather than the weaker ones.

Such objections are raised by other Sunni stalwarts too. Like Ibn Qayyim in fiftieth chapter of Al-MunarfAl-Munifil-HadithAs-Sahih waz-Zaeef. And according to Baihaqi, the narrators of this tradition are unknown or unreliable. Also the sequence of tradition is not consistent but is lost from some where in between. This tradition is one of the single reports of Mohammad bin Khalid Junaidi.

Zahabi in his Meezanul-Etedaal in third volume, Pg. No. 535 has decisively stated that Mohammad bin Khalid is an unknown narrator and the traditions related by him are not acceptable. More or less similar thing is indicted by another great scholar Abul HasanAaburi in 'Manaqibush-Shafei'.

However the unreliability of narrators and incorrect contents of the traditions prove that it is a spurious tradition. But despite all such inherent weaknesses some of the Sunni scholars like Ibn Kathir and Qurtubbi have made efforts to prove it a correct tradition by whimsical interpretations and fragile justifications.

They have asserted that the Mahdi does not imply a particular person but it is used in its literal sense which means 'guided'. Thus Hazrat Isa (A.S.) is the best guided person though this meaning is not correct in itself. Those things which are pertinent to this tradition like the events and conditions of last era, commotion and distraught which will be ubiquitous refute this justification were given in order to maintain the credibility of the book i.e. Sunane-Ibn Majah because it is

claimed that all the traditions in the book are correct and authentic.

2. Ibn Asakir from the third Caliph Usman bin Affaan and he had related from the Holy Prophet (S.A.) that :

"The Mahdi is from the progeny of my uncle Abbas",

means 'Mahdi will be from Bani Abbas. In this context Hafiz Mohibuddeen Tabari in his 'Zakhaerul-Uqba' Pg. 206 has quoted on the authority of Hafiz Sahmi, who quoted from Ibn Abbas who related from Holy Prophet (S.A.) that: 'Once the Holy Prophet (S.A.) addressed him thus : "Mahdi will be from your offspring who will disseminate guidance and quell deviations. Allah the Almighty commenced His religion from me and will culminate it on your progeny."

Muhibuddeen Tabari has quoted two more traditions from Abu Huraira and from Abdus-Samad of similar contents. Besides this, Abul Faraj Isfahan! has quoted from a courtier scholar of Bani Abbas namely Qati bin Abbas in his book 'Al-Aghani'(Vol. 12, Pg. 81), a tradition ascribed to Holy Prophet (S.A.) without mentioning the chain of narrators.

All these traditions are supporting the notion that Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) will be from the lineage of Abbas, the uncle of the Holy Prophet (S.A.). In other terms he will be from Bani Abbas. But if a person is scantily aware of the traditions of the Holy Prophet (S.A.) in this regard then he can infer on his own that it is a concocted and an unscrupulously fabricated tradition. Such few traditions are starkly contradictory to those authentic and continuous traditions which abound the books of traditions. Such as :

"Mahdi will descend from my lineage from the offspring of Fatema."

It was this reason that such a great Sunni scholar like Dar Qutni has objected to the former tradition and thus commented :

"This is a weird and queer tradition related only by the slave of Bani Hashim namely Mohammad bin Walid."

As it was hinted earlier that historically these were the product of claimants to attract the laymen towards themselves and gain their sympathies. As a further step they entitled Mohammad bin Abdullah bin Ali as 'Mahdi'. They distorted the religion of Holy Prophet (S.A.) for their greed of rule for few days in this transient world. Qazi Luqman bin Mohammad has hinted towards such heinous vices of Bani Abbas in his eulogy.

"The time when gems were compared to their like. Similarly Mohammad bin Abdullah was

entitled as 'Mahdi'. This Mohammad bin Abdullah bin Ali Abbasi is a wretched transgressor. If mere similarity in names was sufficient then every man named as 'Ahmed' would have been a Prophet. Alas! every name is not like its named ones. And ignorance made them dumb and blind."

This is not the only attempt to dupe and deceive the common populace but there are numerous such instances which are cited over here. 3. Tirmizi in his 'Sahih' has quoted from 'Zaeda', he narrated from 'Aasem' and in turn he quoted from 'Zar', who narrated it from Abdullah bin Masud who related from the Holy Prophet (S.A.) that :

"If a solitary day is left from the eve of doomsday then Allah will prolong that day to such an extent that a man from my progeny will rise. Whose name will be my name and his father's name will be my father's name. He will fill the world with justice and equity as it would be filled with injustice and oppression."

The contents of this tradition are continuous and reliable according to Shia and Sunni scholars. It has been narrated in various ways. The thing which has made this narration of Tirmizi skeptical are those words which are not quoted in other authentic books. In other books the phrase of 'his father's name is the same as my father's', is not recorded they all have recorded only 'his name will be same as mine'.

This doubt holds ground when we notice the name of 'Zaeda' in the chain of narrators, which according to Sunni scholars of 'Rejal' is not reliable and adds more words in the concept of traditions. Because that chain of narrators where Zaeda's name is not there and only names of Aasem, Zar, Abdullah bin Masud are mentioned then addition of 'his father's name is same as that of my father' is not seen. But all have sufficed upto 'his name will be same as mine'.

This point requires special attention that Tirmizi whose book is enumerated among Sahih Sittah has narrated the same tradition elsewhere but has not narrated this addition (i.e. his father's name will be my father's name) over there. Similarly in the ranks of traditionalists Ahmed bin Hanbal is accorded precedence over Ibn Majah. Ahmed bin Hanbal in his 'Musnad' has recorded the same tradition at four places but even for once he has not mentioned this addition'. (Vol. 1, Pg. 377, 430, 448)

Supplement 1

The renowned scholar of Ahle-Sunnah and reliable traditionalists of fifth century Hafiz Abu Noaim Isfahan! has recorded the traditions regarding Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) from very reliable sources in his book 'Manaqibul-Mahdi'. He has narrated this tradition from 31 different channels with the exception of 'Zaeda's' narration. Not a single tradition included the added phrase. This phrase is narrated only by 'Zaeda'. (Ref. Al-Bayan Fi-Akhhbare-Sa.hibiz Zaman, at the end of first chapter Pg. 94-96).

It is undoubtedly proved that Zaeda, as his name implies has added the so-called phrase. But it is deplorable to note that Abu Daud has ignored other reliable channels of narration and has opted to choose only the narration of Zaeda. Some other scholars of Ahle-Sunnah too have benefited from this fabricated tradition.

Albeit, the author of 'Iqdu-d-Durar has quoted this tradition from Sunane-Abi-Daud but did not record this addition. On this basis it can be concluded that the versions of Sunane-Abi- Daud must have been tampered with (particularly after the seventh century) or correctors must have added the phrase on their own accord while verifying.

Apart from this the acclaimed traditionalists of Ahle-Sun-nah, who have a deep dexterity and expertise in sitting and sorting out the traditions have objected to this tradition vociferously. Some of them are Hafiz Ganji Shafei in 'Al-Bayan Fi-Akhhbare-Sahibiz Zaman', Khwaja Mohammad Parsa Hanafi (exp.866) in the footnotes of 'Faslul-Khitab' and Ibn Talha Shafei in Ghayatus-Sol. They all have unanimously regarded it as weak, unreliable, discontinuous and contradictory to correct traditions.

The reason for this tradition of Zaeda being fabricated are those authentic and continuous traditions in which the name of Hazrat Mahdi's (A.S.) father is mentioned as 'Hasan'. The below given tradition is quoted as an example.

The accredited traditionalist of Ahle-Sunnah Abu Noaim Isfahan! narrates from a veteran interpreter Ibn Khashaah who relates from Imam Ali Reza (A.S.) that:

"The Mahdi is the pious son of Hasan Askari." Such traditions are also found in 'Faraedus-Simtain' (Chap. 35, 73)

4. The Doyen of Traditionalists of Ahle-Sunnah Abu Daud, whose book is among the much respected 'Sehah-e-Sittah' narrates one tradition from Abu Ishaq who quoted Hazrat Ali (A.S.) and who related that Hazrat Mohammad (S.A.) said while looking at Imam Hasan (A.S.) :

"This son of mine is the chief - one of his descendants will bear the name of your Prophet."

Some of the great Sunni scholars like the ideological guide and Leader of Wahabis, Ibn Qayyim Jauzi in *Al-Munar-Al-Munif*, Sehudi (exp. 911), Ibn Kathir in *'Al-Fitan wal-Malahim* and Ibn Hajar in *Sawaeq* have quoted this tradition profusely in their respective books and have regarded Imam Mahdi (A.S.) from the lineage of Imam Hasan (A.S.) on the ground that since a person from his lineage will avenge this humiliation hence he had signed the truce.

But even this tradition is fabricated and distorted as the earlier ones. As can be seen from the following facts :

(a) Same tradition is quoted by the author of *'Iqdud-Dunir'* from the same chain of narrators from *Sunane Abi Daud* but instead of phrase 'he looked towards his son Hasan*' the author has indicated 'he looked towards his son Husain'. Perhaps the scribe must have written 'Hasan' instead of 'Husain'. Those who are experienced in this field will realise that this possibility does exist.

(b) There are innumerable traditions which have continuously stated that Imam Mahdi (A.S.) will be the descendant of Imam Husain(A.S.). Hence according to the science of traditions if one lone tradition is contradictory to numerous continuous (Mutawatir) traditions then this tradition will not be taken into consideration. Ibn Hajar has related from Hazrat Ali (A.S.) in his book *'As-Sawaequl-Muharreqa'* on Pg. No. 165 that :

"The world will not perish unless a man, from the progeny of my son Husain, will not rise who will fill the earth with justice as it was fraught with injustice."

Muhibuddeen-e-Tahari in *'Zakhaerul-Uqha'* on Pg. 136 has narrated from Huzaifa Yamani who related from the Holy Prophet (S.A.) that:

"If a single day remains from the age of this world then Almighty will prolong that day to such an extent that one of my sons will appear, whose name will be as mine." Hazrat Salman inquired : "From the progeny of which son"? The Holy Prophet (S.A.) placed his hand on Imam Husain (A.S.) and said :

"From the progeny of this son."

(c) If despite these two narrations we accept the tradition of Abu Daud even then the point is not against us. Because Imam Baqir (A.S.) is the first grandson of Imam Husain (A.S.) and the second grandson of Imam Hasan (A.S.). His mother was Fatema, the daughter of Imam Hasan (A.S.). Hence Imam Mahdi (A.S.) is the son of Imam Hasan (A.S.) as well as Imam Husain (A.S.). Hilali

relates that once the Holy Prophet (S.A.) consoled his daughter Hazrat Fatema (S.A.) in these words :

The two sons of this nation are your sons Hasan and Husain, who descend from me. They are the chiefs of the youth of Paradise. By Allah, their parents are superior to them. O 'Fatema ! by Allah the Mahdi of this nation will be the descendant of both of them."

(d) Keeping these facts in mind that it is a lone tradition which is contradictory to other several continuous traditions, also there may be a possibility of error in script. This becomes crystal clear that it is not an authentic tradition particularly when the historical facts are contrary to the tradition. The reason is that those who are attributed as Mahdi, among them is the grandson of Imam Hasan (A.S.), Moham-mad bin Abdullah known as 'Nafse-Zakiyya.

Bani Abbas's campaign attributed him to be Mahdi so as to earn the sympathy of masses and take undue advantage of this belief which is deep-rooted in their hearts and thus topple the reign of Bani Umayya. They publicized and promoted his name and first thing they did was that they added 'his father's name is same as that of my father (as it was hinted in the discussion on third tradition), since the name of this 'Mahdi's' father was Abdullah. Then for dispelling further doubts they falsely claimed that Mahdi is (lie descendant of Imam Hasan (A.S.), because Moham-mad bin Abdullah descended from the lineage of Imam Hasan (A.S.).

Then for consolidating their position they fabricated another tradition from the mouth of Abu Huraira that there was a stammering in the speech of Imam Mahdi (A.S.) (Ref. Maqatilut-Talebin) because Mohammad bin Ahdullah had stammering in his tongue. Finally Bani Abbas succeeded in grabbing power, by deriving undue advantage from this belief and intimidating their masses. When they got absolute control then they killed the same Mahdi and his father and again spread the news that Nafse-Zakiyyah who would be killed before the Mahdi is slain and the reappearance of Mahdi has drawn nigh.

Imam Jafar Sadiq (A.S.) had predicted about each and every event long back. (Maqatilut-Talebeen, Pg. 141-142, Al-Adabus-Sul-taniyyah Fakhri Pg. 16 has mentioned everything in detail.)The embezzlement and meddling of Bani Abbas are not limited to politics or ethics. But they have not even spared the interpretations of Quranic verses and traditions. The details of which shall be given later in another article.

But those who commit such despicable embezzlement, distort the religion of Allah, make additions in the tradition of Holy Prophet (S.A.) or ascribe false things to him and record such baseless things in their books, which misguide the simpletons and ordinary believers; are they not among those who are condemned in this verse :

"Surely those who conceal such clear evidences and guidance which we have revealed and clarified in the book for the people, they are cursed by Allah and the curse of cursors be upon them."

All the hopes are reposed in the day when Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) will reappear and reform the distortions and misguided men.

The Belief in Mahdaviyat and Sunni Scholars

In the present times, the worldwide condition of Islam is such that, despite of its being divine and veracious (truthful) religion, it is despised by many upto the extent of enmity. The reason being false propaganda and baseless misconceptions. Same is the conditions of belief in 'Mahdaviyat' in Islamic world. And inspite of it being one of the cardinal beliefs, majority of Muslims consider it as fictitious and fabricated one.

There is a group among them who either willingly or unwillingly accept this belief due to chain of narrations. But they reject those traditions which is related with the attributes and personality of Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.).

Whatsoever misunderstandings regarding the belief in 'Mahdaviyat are there, two groups of scholars are responsible for that. Firstly, if we cast a cursory glance on the history of Muslim rulers and their times we will see there were always be a group of people, who apparently by their attires and traits were scholars but in reality their beliefs and ideologies were that of an ignorant man, their behavior were sufficiently convincing of their sycophancy.

They were those who at times in order to conceal falsehood and at other times to prove the government as a divine government committed every vicious and villainous deed. Let us call them as "Imitative Scholars", (Since they always imitated the shadow of falsehood). These scholars went on a spree to propagate against the belief in Mahdaviyat in several ways.

Sometimes the traditions related to Mahdaviyat were regarded weak. Sometimes, they added such a phrase to be relevant and suited the Imposter Mahdi' and in this way, they shatter the very foundation of this belief. And following in the foot-steps of the same scholars, some recent scholars have rejected the fundamentals of this belief and considered it an absolutely un-Islamic belief, fabricated by Shias.

"The second group of those who reject this belief are those whose thinking have been influenced by materialistic outlook and they breath in the environment of materialism. Thus materialism had penetrated even into their beliefs. Consequently, either they reject transcendental and hidden aspects from their base, or they try to mould them into materialistic frame-work. Leave aside the aspect of Mahdaviyat,

they have not even spared the belief in Revelation, Prophethood and above all : Monotheism.....The only reason being that after accepting the materialistic ideas, it is impossible to believe in transcendental ideas. Since the belief in Mahdaviyat is also a belief in hidden concept and more over to believe that Hazrat Mahdi (a.s.) is a mortal like us and though he passes his life amongst us, he is far from our vision. Hence this belief for materialists is like adding insult to injury. Thus to relieve themselves from this belief they reject this idea outrightly and refuse to accept the existence of Hazrat Mahdi (a.s.). Subsequently, the refusal of first group increases the haughtiness of the second group.

There are innumerable replies to the doubts and baseless notions of both the aforementioned groups. And these doubts themselves are self-contradictory and inherently weak. But it is not possible for us to quote those replies over here. Interested readers may refer to the books compiled redundantly to refute the ideas of skeptics and disbeliever, only through those parameters which are accepted by consensus of Muslims Viz. 'Quran and Traditions.....And in this regard, we will also furnish proofs from some very reliable and trustworthy Quranic exponents.....and traditionalists..... of 'Ahle-Sunnat from their very authentic books. And for the understanding of a layman we will also produce some historical evidences from history and view points of ancient Sunni scholars. So that the truth becomes manifest and explicit and righteous may be notified from them.

1) The Interpreters of Quran : have mentioned countless ayats regarding Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) from Quran. And moreover many books have been complied by the name of "MAHDI IN QURAN". But over here we will confine our discussion to those ayats which, interpreters have related it to Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) by some source or reference.

1) Imam Abu Ishaq Thalabi who is a renown exponent of Quran writes in his exegeses in "The ayat of Quran.....Means.

indicates means the war between Quraish and Almawali in which Quraish will emerge victorious.....relates to.....which means the Rulers of Bai Abbas and is letter to Hazrat Mahdi which means!chapter...7 related from Naeem Ibne Hammad)

2) Imam Abu Ishaq Thalabi writes in the ... of 9th ayat of Surah-kahf which is particular to Ashabe

Kahf that Holy Prophet (as) said that : Mahdi (a.s.) will say Salam to Ashabe-Kahf and Ashabe-Kahf will reply to it and by the order of God will again revert to their condition, and will not rise before Quiyamat (2-Iqdud-Dorar-chapter 7).

3) Muqatil Ibn Sulaiman and his followers regarding the ayat.....opined that it is concerning the re-appearance of Hazrat Mahdi (a.s.).....Over here refers to.....(i.e. the hour of re-appearance) of H. Mahdi (a.s.)

4) The author of Nurul-Absaar, Shablanji writes in his book on page no. 188. In the book so tafsir the details of ayat (Surah Zukhruf Ayat) is mentioned as it is pertaining to H. Mahdi (a.s.) who is in the offspring of Janabe-Fatema (a.s.). Reference : As-Sawaaequl Mohreqapage. 96, Is aafur-Raghebin page. 156, Surah Zukhruf ayat-61).

5) Allama Shahabuddin who is popularly known as Malakul-Ulama Shamsuddin Ibn Umar Al-Hindi, who had compiled a tafsir by the name of 'Al-Bahrul Mawaj' writes in his tafsir on the authority of Jabir Ibn Abdullah Ansari, he quotes a tradition that : Jabir went to meet Janabe-Zahra (a.s.). He saw she is having tablets over which names of Imams were inscribed. who were from the progeny on H.Fatema (a.s.).....Then name of Zainul-Abedin who is the son of Hussain, who is father of nine Imams, then next Imam Mohammad Baqir (a.s.) and upto the ninth Imam Mohammad (after Hussain) who is Al-Hujjatullah Al-Qaem Imam Mahdi (a.s.) He will disappear, will have long life. Like among believers, Hazrat Isa, Hazrat Ilyas and H.Khizr were having longlife and among disbelievers. 'Dajjal' and Saamri' were having long-lives.

II Traditionalists.

1) Ahmed Ibn Hanbal in his 'Musnad' and Tirmizi, Abu Dawood and Ibn Maajah in their 'Sehah' record one tradition verbaton as.....Translation. "Even if a single day will remain in the tenure of this world, then Allah will raise a man from my progeny who fill this earth with justice as it will be replete with injustice and oppression". (Is aafur-Raghebin, Nurul-Absar--134, Al-Bayan fi Akhbare - Sahibuz - zaman - 85).

2. Similarly, another oft-repeated tradition has been quoted profusely, the contents of which are. "In the last days a man will appear from my progeny, whose name will be same as mine and his epithet will be similar to mine. He will fill this earth with equity and justice as it will be fraught with injustice and oppression". (Tazkertul-Khaowas, Sibit Ibn Jauzi-204)

3) Abu Saeed Khudri says that : 'I heard Prophet of Allah saying that : "After me there will be twelve Imams, among them ninth after Hussain will be "Mahdi." (Nurul-Absar-Shablanji page 255).

4) Holy Prophet (s) said : "Mahdi is from my progeny from the offspring of H.Fatema Zahra (S.A.) "

(Sunan Abi Dawood-Kitabul-Mahdi, Vol-4-page. 151) 5) Holy Prophet (s) said : "Whosoever denies the uprising of Hazrat Mahdi (a.s.) had denied each and everything revealed upon me and as a result

becomes infidel". (Faraedus-Simtain-Hamuiy).

The aforementioned traditions are authentic and explicitly regarding Hazrat Mahdi (a.s.) who will rise in the last days, who is from the progeny of Imam Hussain (a.s.) and H.Fatema (s.a.). Particularly, the last traditions shows the importance of this belief viz. 'the disbelievers in this (H.Mahdi) is like disbeliever in Quran and is an infidel. Although, this much is sufficient for.....i.e. men of understanding, but we for the sake of utmost satisfaction delve into the view points of Scholars.

III Scholars:

1) Sayed Ahmed Zaini Dahlan, the Mufti of Makka Opines on the traditions pertaining to 'Mahdi' (a.s.) that : "Such traditions are Mutawatir' (too profusely repeated), among them some are 'Sahih' (Correct), some are 'Hasan. (approved Good) and some are 'Zaif (weak)".

It is crystal clear from the statement of Mufti of Makka, that though some traditions are "weak" but still they are Mutawatir (i.e. profusely quoted). And it is well-known to the learned-men, especially those who are expert in).....Ilme - Rejaal ' (study of narrators of traditions) that if any traditions attains the merit of "Tawatur' (continuously & profusely repeated) then some weak traditions cannot effect its authenticity and we have pointed towards this fact in our various editions sufficiently.

2- In Al-Lumaat, Shaikh Abdul Haq wrote: "The traditions regarding the existence of Hazrat .Mahdi are abundant, from which is is clear that Mahdi (a.s.) will be from the progeny of Fatema Zahra (s.a.) (Footnote of Sahih Tirmizi vol. 2 page 46.)

3- Allama and Faqihatul-Harmain, Abu Abdullah Mohammad Yusuf Al-Quraishi, Al-Ganji-Shafei has devoted one entire chapter to this subject, which is fifteenth chapter of his book, the subject is "The proof for life, existence, seclusion and remaining alive of Mahdi uptil now" and in this chapter he has propounded some in controvertible proofs in support of his claim. (Al-Bayan - fi Akhbare - Sahibuzzaman - page, 102)

4- Aalimul - Allama - Shamsuddin Yusuf Al-Hanafi - Sibte ibn Jauzi that Mahdi (a.s.) is Mohammad bin Hasan bin Abi Talib (a.s.), his epithet is Abu abdullah, Abul - Qasim, he is Khalaful Hujjat, Sahebuzzaman, Qaem-al-Muntazar and last Imam (a.s.)

5- Qazi Behlul Behjat writer. "The birth of Imam Mahdi (a.s.) occurred on 15th Shabaan 255 A.H., his mother was Narjis Khatun, his father expired, when he was only 5 years old". He continues..... 'he had two occultations firstly Ghaibate-Sughra (Minor Occultation) and he will remain alive until Allah permits him to re-appear and fill with tyranny and oppression." (Tarikhe-Aale Mohammad-page, 270.).

6- Shahabuddin Ibn Hajar Al-Hanafi states that "Mahdi's age at the time of his father's demise was 5 years. He was bestowed with wisdom and erudition. He is known by the name of Al-Qaem - Al-Muntazar." (As-Sawaequl-Mohreqa page, 124)

Apart from these scholars many other jurists have also given their verdicts in favour of existence of Hazrat Mahdi (a.s.), some of them are as below :-

1) Abu Suroor Ahmed bin Ziyaa Al - Hanfi

2) Mohammad bin Mohammad Al-Maleki

3) Yahya bin Mohammad bin Al-Hanbali

Let us now analyse the viewpoints of ancient and reliable historians regarding Hazrat Mahdi (a.s.) in the historical perspective. So that his existence may be proved from all the angles and viewpoints.

IV. Historians

1- Qazi Ahmed Ibn Khallakaan writes : "Abul Qasim Mohammad bin Hasan Askari who according to the creed of Imamiyat is twelfth Imam, and is known by the name of Al-Hujjah." And Ibne Arzaq in his history (Mayafareqin) has also recorded the date of birth of Hazrat Mahdi (a.s.). (Wafayatul-Aajen-vol.3 page, 316.)

2- Abu Mohammad Abdullah bin Mohammad bin Al-Khashaab indites in his book of history; Mawalidul Aaimma wafyatuhum.' "He is the bearer of two names, 'Al-Khalaf and Mohammad' and he will reappear in the last days of era. A part of the cloud will always shadow him on his head. Wherever he may go this cloud will also accompany him while shadowing over-head. And a very eloquent voice will be heard from grand heavens that, this is Mahdi". (Al-Majalisus saniyyah vol. 5 page, 586.)

3- Historian Abdul Malik Usaami Makki while writing about H. Mahdi (a.s.) states that "Mohammad Mahdi (a.s.) son of Hasan Askari (a.s.) son of Ali Taqi (a.s.) son of.....son of Ali bin Abi Talib (May Allah be pleased with all of them). His birth took place of Friday on 15th Shabaan, 255

A.H. And this is most accurate year of birth. His mother's name was Susan or 'Narjis'.

His epithet is Abul Qasim and his agnomen are Al-Hujjah, Al-Khalafe - Saleh Al-Qaem - Al-Muntazar, Sahebuz-zaman and 'Mahdi' And among these 'Mahdi' is the most famous title". He writes further while explaining the matter in detail regarding his personality.broad and sturdy shoulders, with handsome and pleasing face, beautiful hairs and broad forehead. His father expired when he was only five year old." (Samatun-Nujum-il-awaali- vol.4 page, 138).

4- Shaikh Akbar Mohyiddin Ibn Arabi in his 'Futuhaat' writes about the uprising of Mahdi (a.s.) that "He will not reappear unless the world is filled with injustice and oppression to such an extent that a single day is left in the tenure of this world. He will be from the offspring of the Prophet(s) and progeny of Fatema (s.a.) His forefather is Imam Hussain (a.s.) and his father is Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.)".

From all the proofs mentioned above it is proved that the Belief in Mahdaviyat' is one of the branches of the tree of Islamic creed. Last Prophet Hazrat Mohammad Mustafa (s.a.w.) has explained quite many traditions in this regard, from which it is proved that Hazrat Mahdi (a.s.) is from the progeny of Fatema, son of Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) and twelfth Imam, finally Prophet(s) has also mentioned about his two occultations.

And Keeping the importance of belief in view, it is also explained that denying the belief is tantamount to accept infidelity. (Kufr.) Especially those traditions of Prophet(s) which expound the concept of occultations and longevity is for the attention of those scholars whose ideology is influenced and affected by materialism and hence they have rejected this belief outrightly.

H.Mahdi a.s. As portrayed in Hadith-e-Qudsi

Hadith-e-Qudsi are those concepts and ideas, which are although revealed to the prophets in the same manner as revelations are made but same are expressed in the words and phrases of the prophets and not of Allah. There is a difference between Hadith-e-Qudsi, Quranic verses and the traditions of Masumeen (A.S.). Often Hadith-e-Qudsi was revealed with different messages for different concepts.

In this brief disquisition, we would like to ascertain about the various dimensions of the personality of Hazrat Mahdi (A. S.) but only in the light of Hadith-e-Qudsi ;-

In the luminiscent sky of Imamat the position of Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) is like a sparkling star. Allah, the Almighty has also remembered Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) with the same agnomen. As said in Hadith-e-Qudsi "Amongst them Al-Qaem is like a sparkling star" (Kamaluddm, pg. 252).

As the Holy Quran has also confirmed that:-

"THAT BEACON WAS AS IF A SPARKLING STAR"

The position of Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) could also be understood by the fact that Allah, the Exalted, loves him and holds him dear who endears him. He has made the love of Imam (A.S.) obligatory upon the people. As it can be found in Hadith-e-Qudsi that:

"O Mohammad! Love him (Mahdi) because I love him and whosoever-loves him, I love him too. Same love is mentioned in the Holy Quran in these words :-

"SOON ALLAH SHALL BRING FORTH A PEOPLE- WHO ARE LOVED BY ALLAH AND THEY ARE LOVED BY HIM."

In this ayat Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) and his companions are referred as ' a people'. Though the whole world may perish but certainly one day Allah will bring forth such people I) Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) is the true friend of Allah, veritable representative and a guided proof on His creatures :-

"He would be My true friend and a veritable guided (representative) on My creatures."

2) There are some sentences in Hadith-e-Qudsi which point out at the pedigree of Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.). For instance, when Hazrat Musa (A.S.) inquired about the chain of guidance after him, then he was replied as:

"O Musa! Verily he (Mahdi) would be from the lineage of Ahmed (the Holy Prophet (S.A.)) and his off springs."

(Behar, Vol. 36, pg. 370)

The occultation of Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) is mentioned in Hadith-e-Qudsi in these words :- "He will undergo a prolonged occultation."

As it is known to all of us that Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) is in occultation since last one thousand one hundred and fifty three years, which is a very long period.

3) The Divine Promise would be fulfilled through Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.). It includes many important aspects of the aims of creation encompassed by the affairs of guidance. The series of guidance for men is continued through various modes and means. The messages of God were conveyed to man through various sources.

There was only one aim behind it that man may be guided so that he may achieve success and prosperity in this world and hereafter. Some of these aims were achieved by the earlier guides but it will culminate with the reappearance of Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) because the series of guidance could attain perfection only through the station of Imamat.

Whatever promises are made by Allah shall be fulfilled after the reappearance of Imam-e-Zaman (A.S.), e.g. 'the earth will be cleansed from all the evil powers', the establishment of a Divine Order, revival of defunct nations, discovering the hidden treasure troves, dissemination of Divine Knowledge's, nullifying the effects of all the cultures, the halal things will be declared permitted and the haram things will be made haram, the Almighty will aid and assist His religion and wreak vengeance on all the Satanic powers, finally the Divine Kingdom will be established.

In the times of Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.), only Allah will be worshipped and none else.

"And whoever is Qaem from amongst you, I will inhabitate My earth through him. Through him only, i will eliminate My enemies from the earth. My friends will be made his successors. "
(Amali-Saduq, pg. 505)

4) The condition of society after the reappearance:

One thing is very clear that all religious commands will be followed up during the rule of Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.). Apart from this there are also some other special characteristics of his rule which are mentioned in Hadith-e-Qudsi. Like in his rule, the whole universe will eulogize and extol him and each and everything will be engaged in praise and approbation. Only pious, upright and virtuous men will live on earth. The Divine destiny will be manifested and angels will support him.

The kingdom and ruler ship will be only of Imam Zaman (A.S.) and the truthful men will they enjoy position, no wrong or injustice will be done to them nor will they be encumbered. The earth will be replete with the bounties of Allah. The flag of justice and equity will flutter on the whole world, whose fruition would be seen in his rule.

" The treasure troves and wealth mines will be discovered by My orders. He is the proof (of God) who will fill this earth with justice and equity." (Ja waharus Saniya by Shaikh Hurre Ameli, pg. 2 79.)

These were some of the facts which were mentioned in Hadith-e-Qudsi about the excellence of Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) and it should be remembered that these are the sayings of Allah, which again prove the excellence and meritorious position of Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.). This goes a long way in enhancing our recognition of Imam (A.S.).

"O Allah! Hasten his reappearance."

Ibn Khaldun Vis-A-Vis Traditions About Imam Mahdi (A.S.)

Personality and prominence often establish or nullify an idea in the minds of the people. Their opinion, often, is of prime importance in understanding a concept. Their opinion creates an impact as compared to that of a common individual. Ibne Khaldun is an eminent scholar of reputation in the Islamic world. His views rule the hearts of a section of Muslims, thus making him popular with titles like 'Allama'.

Ibne Khaldun's views have not left the present day scholars unaffected. And so we delve to study his consideration towards the traditions concerning Imam Mahdi (as). Some scholars have subscribed to his viewpoint and consequently the common masses have been affected with it. Here, before bringing the traditions collected by Ibne Khaldun regarding Imam Mahdi (as) and his standpoint with regards to them, we present the Muqaddamah where he has mentioned those traditions.

Muqaddamah of Ibne Khaldun

Ibne Khaldun has authored a six-volumed book of history entitled "Kitabul Abar wa Deevanal Mubtada wal Khabar fi Ayyamal Arabe wal Ajam wal Barbar". This book of Ibne Khaldun did not become as popular as the Muqaddamah written on it. The popularity of Ibne Khaldun is more associated with this book. This Muqaddamah is also very popular in Europe, as well. The original Arabic book has been translated into many languages; the English and Urdu translations are easily obtainable in India. Moreover, in some universities this Muqaddamah is a part of the final examination of the Arabic course (Faazil).

It can be said that this Muqaddamah is the seventh part of Ibne Khaldun's book of history. The book was written in a short period of eight to nine months, detailing the principles of history and varied other aspects. It is the collection of all logical and narrative (from traditions) sciences. With

all this is also an independent analysis by Ibne Khaldun.

Some people consider the history book of Ibne Khaldun to be the body and the Muqaddamah, the spirit. As, it is this Muqaddamah which has brought him the actual fame.

We have taken this very Muqaddamah to be our subject and review the analysis of Ibne Khaldun. For this treatise we have referred to the Urdu translation of the Muqaddamah by Maulana Raaghib Rehmani Dehlavi and published by Aeteqaad Publishing House, Delhi. It is in 2 volumes. The 52nd part of the second volume is concerning Imam Mahdi (as) and comprises of 18 topics.

Traditions about Imam Mahdi (a.s.)

Ibne Khaldun has quoted twenty one traditions from the companions, and brings them on pages 158 to 173 in the second volume. The narrators include Hazrat Ali (a.s.), Jabir (a.r.), Ibne Masud, Umme Salma, Abu Saeed-e-Khudri, Abdullah ibne Masud, Mohammed ibne Haatayah, Ibne Abbas, Thaubaan, Abdullah ibne Harith ibne Harr, Abu Hurairah, Qurah ibne Ayaas, Ibne Umar, Talha ibne Abdullah, Mujahid, Umme Habibah, amongst others.

The narrations are from disparate chains of narrators. Ibne Khaldun himself acknowledges that Tirmizi, Abu Dawood, Baraaz, Ibne Majah, Hakim, Tabrani and Abu Yaala Masuli have brought these traditions in their books. And then he writes, "The rejectors of Mahdi doubt the chain of narrators of these traditions, as we shall see. It is an acclaimed rule that "doubt precedes justification".

On that account if a narrator is doubted - for instance if he is negligent, or he has a poor memory, or if some weakness is found in him, or his opinion is not good then this will affect the correctness of the tradition. The tradition will now no longer fit the criteria of authenticity. (Muqaddamah, 2/158)

Reminder

From the above it becomes clear that the respected Allamah rejects all traditions wherein the narrator is doubted (Muqaddamah, 2/158) directed by the principle 'doubt precedes justification'.

The doubted traditions

Ibne Khaldun brings twenty one traditions regarding Imam Mahdi (as) after the above

explanation, and casts doubt on the narrators and chains of each one of them with these words, 'Because the scholars of traditions have doubted these traditions (concerning Imam Mahdi (as)). Suhaili Abu Bakr Khaithamah has collected all the traditions about Mahdi (as). We present them here.' (Of the twenty one traditions we consider only two of them). Tradition One :

Jabir (ar) says: "The Messenger of Allah, blessings and peace be upon him (and his progeny) said, The denier of Mahdi is an infidel; and the rejector of Dajjal, a liar; and about the denier of the sun rising from the West, I think he said something similar." The narrators of this tradition are Malik ibne Anas from Mohammed ibne Munkadar from Jabir. This series is mentioned by Abu Bakr Asqaaf in his Tavaaedul Akhbaar'. Doubt: There is a lot of disorder in the chain of narrators reaching Malik ibne Anas. And even Abu Bakr Asqaaf himself is accused by the Ahle Hadith of fabricating traditions.

Tradition Two :

Ibne Masud narrates from Holy Prophet, blessings and peace be upon him (and his progeny), that even if one day remains for the end of this world, the Almighty will prolong that day such that He will send a person from me or my family, whose name will be my name and his father's name will be my father's name (Tirmizi, Abu Dawood - these are the words of the narrator of Abu Dawood). The chain of narrators is Aasim ibne Abi Najoor from the famous reciter Zareen Habeesh from Abdullah ibne Masood.

Note: Tirmizi and Abu Dawood bring this tradition with their own chain of narrators. Abu Dawood has maintained silence over this tradition. In his famous treatise Abu Dawood writes for whichever tradition I maintain silence, is self-explanatory. (Capable of acceptance as a proof).

Doubt : Imam Ahmad says that he (Aasim) is a pious man, reciter of the Holy Quran, a good and honest person. However, A'amash has a better memory. (Here he is suggesting Aasim has a poor memory). In Ajali's words, opinions about Aasim differ, that is he was considered weak (narrator).

Mohammed ibne Saeed says Aasim was honest, yet he often made mistakes. Abdur Rehman ibne Abi Khatim says, "I told my father, Aasim is called to be reliable. My father commented, 'He (Asim) is not of that calibre (of being reliable).'" Ibne Haaliyah has discredited him and has stated, Aasim is of weak memory.

Abu Hatim remarks, "According to me he is on the level of truthfulness (i.e. he is truthful), and is a good traditionalist (i.e. his traditions are acceptable), but is not a memoriser of traditions. Nesai has another opinion about him. Abu Jafar Aquili avers: Only he had poor memory. Darqutni opines, "His (Asim's) memory was weak". Yahya Al Qataan declares, "I have observed the person (the narrators) called Aasim who has poor memory. I have heard Sheba say, that Asim b. Abi

Bakhud narrated a tradition for us, although people did not have a good opinion about him."
(Muqaddamah, 2/159-160)

Note: After these doubts, Ibne Khaldun makes an attempt to answer an objection, "If someone contends that Bukhari and Muslim too have quoted from Asim, and hence Asim is reliable. The reply is, Bukhari and Muslim have not only brought his traditions, but they have brought them along with other narrators. Thus the actual narrator is someone else and this (quoting by Bukhari and Muslim) is only for further substantiation." (Muqaddamah 2/160)

Fearing, doubts will be casted on other narrators of Bukhari and Muslim, Ibne Khaldun writes (in their defence). The scholars without exception adjudge the traditions of Bukhari and Muslim to be correct. This unanimity of the scholars is ie most potent proof and the best evidence for the defence and support of the traditions.

(Muqaddamah, 2/158)

We make the following conclusions om the writings of Ibne Khaldun and the doubts he raises.

- 1) Those traditions from doubted narrators are not authentic.
- 2) Doubts have been casted on the traditions of Mahdaviyat and consequently they are unacceptable.
- 3) If the narrator on whom doubt is casted is a narrator of Bukhari and Muslim, the validity of the tradition will not be affected, since the scholars are uanimous about the correctness of Bukhari and Muslim.

It should be noted that after bringing twenty one traditions about Imam Mahdi (a.s.) and after discarding them, Ibne haldun writes: "These are all the traditions which the scholars bring about Mahdi and his re-appearance at the end of time. You have noticed that all these are doubted, and it is improbable that any has been spared." (Muqaddamah 2/173)

By calling these traditions rare Ibne haldun has not only misled the Muslims, it has actually deviated some. Now let us make it clear that neither the traditions about Mahdi are rare nor by doubting the narrators the authenticity of the traditions can be shrivelled. Because the truth is:

(1) The chains of reliable traditions are not in need of scrutiny. Thus by terming the traditions of Mahdaviyat unauthentic by doubting the narrators is against the principles of 'science of traditions'.

(2) Ibne Khaldun contradicts himself as on the one hand he brings the traditions from twenty one different narrators and on the other hand declares them rare.

(3) Ibne Khaldun has cited the traditions of Mahdaviyat from a section of prominent scholars like Tirmizi, Abu Dawood, al Baraaz, Ibne Majah, Tabarani and so on. Does this not establish that the doctrine of Mahdaviyat is a fundamental belief and Muslims are unanimous about it. Is it not for this reason that the recent scholars have quoted them?

(4) The rule, 'doubt precedes justification' is framed by the scholars of traditions, and is not based on Quran and traditions. Besides many of the traditionalists have rejected it. So why has the respected scholar Ibne Khaldun employed only this rule to declare the traditions of Mahdaviyat weak?

(5) It is incorrect to label the tradition as weak on account of a narrator with weak memory or negligence, as the traditions of Mahdaviyat are authentic on the basis of narrative language, concept and all other aspects.

(6) Ibne Khaldun has himself confessed, "It is pronounced and famous amongst the Muslims that during the end of time, a person will appear from the Ahle Bait who will consolidate the religion and spread justice..." This determines the unity of the Muslims on the doctrine of Mahdaviyat, and this itself is the best proof for the support of this belief.

The article can continue with the flow of such arguments. However, we have demonstrated the validity of this doctrine from varied aspects in the previous issues. Therefore, the claim of Ibne Khaldun of calling the traditions of Mahdaviyat weak is baseless.

Furthermore, it should be noted that Ibne Khaldun was not a traditionalist but was a historian. Thus seeking his opinion to determine the authenticity of traditions is unfitting. And a traditionalist is always preferred instead.

The famous scholar of the Ahle Sunnah, Ahmad ibne Sadeeq Shafeei, rejecting this opinion of Ibne Khaldun, wrote a book, 'Abraaz al Wahm al Maknoon min Kalaam-e-Ibne Khaldoon'. This educative book comprising of 150 pages was written in Arabic and printed in Damascus in 1437 A.H. The author very proficiently proves the traditions concerning Mahdi authentic and exposes Ibne Khaldun.

O Almighty ! Protect all Muslims from deviation.

Imam Mahdi (A.S.) in Seah-e-Sitah

The belief in Imam Mahdi (A.S.) has been a topic of debate since the very inception of Islam. Most of the Islamic scholars are so deeply drowned in the pit of prejudice that they deny the existence of Imam Mahdi (A.S.) in its entirety. They assert that it is an idea fabricated by the Shias which has no origin either in Quran or in Prophetic traditions and is an unfounded belief.

As far as Quran is concerned, time and again in several articles of Yamahdi.com we have proved the point. God-willing in this article we shall try to prove the holy existence of Imam Mahdi (A.S.) from the Prophetic traditions.

We shall also try to establish that not only this belief is not concocted by Shi'te zealots but it is such a foundation of Islam which cannot be rejected. The Holy Prophet (S.A.) and his companions were awaiting such a 'Reformer' who will establish justice and equity in the world and thus fulfill the Divine Promise of "so that it (Islam) may prevail upon all the religions" (Quran).

Why Seah-e-Sittah?

Often it happens that when Shia Scholars bring some proofs, then immediately the Sunni learned men retort by, "If you prove it from Seah-e-Sittah we will believe. We believe only in the references of Seah-e-Sittah and nothing else." How far their reply is correct or incorrect is beyond the limits of this article.

But it will not be out of place to mention that umpteen Sunni beliefs are not to be found in Seah-e-Sittah. For instance the belief in 'Ashrae Mubashshirah', these are those ten 'fortunate' companions of the Holy Prophet (S.A.) who were promised paradise in their lifetime. But, this belief Of Ahle-Sunnat is not to be found in any of the Seah. Nevertheless in order to exhaust the arguments, we will confine our references and citations from Seah Sittah alone.

Imam Mahdi (A.S.) is from the Holy Ahlebait (A.S.)

1- Hafiz Abu Abdullah Mohammad bin Yazid Al Qazvini narrates in his 'Sunane-Ihn Majah' that Hazrat Ali (A.S.) related from the Holy Prophet (S.A.) that :

"The Mahdi is from us Ahlebait, Allah shall organize his affairs within one night." (Sunane-Ibn Majah, Kitabul Fitah, Tradition No. 4085). Bukhari has quoted the same tradition ditto in his

'Tarikh' but only Allah knows who advised him against quoting the tradition in his 'Sahih'.

2- Saeed bin Musayyab relates that once we were sitting in the company of Umme Salmah (R.A.) when we mentioned about Mahdi, she replied that I have heard the Holy Prophet (S.A.) saying : "The Mahdi is from the offspring of Fatema."

3- Anas bin Malik related from the Holy Prophet (S.A.) that "We, the progeny of Abdul Muttalib viz. I, Hamza, Ali, Jafar, Hasan, Husain and Mahdi are the chiefs of inhabitants of Paradise." 4- Abu Isa Mohammad bin Sauda narrates in his Sahih-Tirmizi, that the Holy Prophet (S.A.) said :

"The world will not perish unless a man from my progeny will not rule on the land of Arabs-." (Sahih-Tirmizi, Kitabul Fitan, Chapter of The Reports on Mahdi', Tradition No. 2230.)

Abu Isa opined that the tradition is also quoted from Ali (A.S.), Abu Saeed Umme Salma and Abu Huraira. This is a correct and authentic tradition. Apart from this, classifying a separate chapter in his Sahih about Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) itself speaks volumes about the importance of the subject. There are numerous such traditions from the Holy Prophecy (S.A.) which proclaim that the Mahdi will be only from Ahlebait (A.S.) and none else. Two conclusions can be derived from such traditions.

Firstly, Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) is not an ordinary person. He is such an extraordinary and sublime person of whom the Holy Prophet (S.A.) is proud. He (S.A.) heaves a breathe of pride when he announces that Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) is from his own progeny. Secondly, these traditions exposed and unmasked all those importers and pseudo-Mahdi is who were neither related to the Holy Prophet (S.A.) nor were in any way linked to his Ahlebait (A.S.).

The Reappearance Of Imam Mahdi (A.S.) Is Inevitable

Some persons reject the existence and the reappearance of Imam-e- Zaman (A.S.) because of his concealed birth, occultation and longevity. Today when the majority of the Islamic sects are scoffing at us because we are convinced of the existence of Imam Mahdi (A.S.) then it should not be in the least surprising because the believers were always made the target of mockery. (For details refer to Holy Quran).

The Holy Prophet (S.A.) had spoken a lot about Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) and declared emphatically that

Qiyamat will never occur unless Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) does not arrive. Thus it has been quoted from the Holy Prophet (S.A.) that:

"If a single day remains from the age of this world then Allah will prolong that day to such an extent that, He will raise a man from my progeny on that particular day-." (Sunane-Abi Daud, Kitabul Mahdi, Tradition No. 4282)

There are numerous such traditions in the books of 'Sehah-e-Sittah'. Often a question arises that why always a similarity is struck between the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (A.S.) and the occurrence of Qiyamat ?

The reason is that Qiyamat is one of the promises of Allah, the Almighty, Who always fulfills His promises. Similarly, Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) is also one of the promises of Allah. Hence occasionally, he is also referred as 'Mahdi-e-Mauood' (The Promised Mahdi) whose advent is mentioned in the Holy Quran in the following words:

"O Prophet say) Then await certainly I am awaiting too." (Araf:81)

Hence if Qiyamat is an irrefutable reality then the advent of Mahdi too is an incontrovertible fact.

Secondly the belief in Mahdaviyat is one of the fundamentals of Islam and as much a basic principle as Qiyamat is. This purports that the denial of the belief in Mahdaviyat is like the abnegation of a basic fundamental of Islam, and denial of any of the fundamentals of Islam is infidelity. All the same, Khwaja Kalan Qunduzi Hanafi narrates a tradition from the Holy Prophet that :

"The one who denied the reappearance of Mahdi (A.S.) then it is as if he has disbelieved in all that which was revealed upon the (Prophet) Mohammad (S.A.)."

Is there any further proof required? The conclusion which is derived after keen perusal of logical and traditional reasoning is that any one who denies the existence or the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (A.S.) will be an infidel and not a Muslim. Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) And Justice:

Whenever the Holy Quran has mentioned about the aims of Prophets then it has mentioned about the establishment of justice as a chief objective of their mission. As it is said in the Holy Quran that:

"So that man may deal with justice."

In Sehah Sittah whenever Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) is mentioned, then along with it, his attributes also

have been described. One of these descriptions is that when he will come, he will fill the earth with justice and equity as it would be fraught with injustice and inequity.

For instance "He will fill the earth with justice and equity as it would be rife with tyranny and oppression". (Sunane-Abi Daud, Tradition Nos. 2283, 4282) It can be inferred from these traditions that the purpose of the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (A.S.) is the dissemination of justice. Secondly, when he will arrive then injustice and oppression would be rampant in the world.

The oppressors would be obeyed and the disbelievers would be disgraced. There will be only one person who will turn the tide whose name will be on the name of Holy Prophet (S.A.) and his epithet will be same as that of the Prophet (S.A.). It will be the era of the fulfillment of Divine promises such as :

"... The last era is for the pious men" (Araf:127) and "... So that if (Islam) may prevail upon all religions though the polytheists may resent." (Tauba : 33) and people will realize the truth of the following verse :

"Say (O Prophet) truth has come and falsehood vanished, Surely falsehood was bound to vanish." (Bani Israil; 80) An Emphatic Command For The Believers:

The revolution of Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) will not be an ordinary one. It will bring a sea change in the cosmic order in its wake. It is evident that for bringing about such an unparalleled revolution Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) will need a legion of companions who are determined and can endure all sorts of untold calamities in their way. Perhaps for this reason the Holy Prophet (S.A.) had laid emphasis on the believers to aid and assist Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) when he reappears. He (S.A.) put the same in the following words:-

"So if you will see him then pledge allegiance to him even if you have to crawl on an iceberg because he is the Caliph of Allah, the Mahdi." (Sunane-Ibne-Majah, Tradition No. 4084)

It can be inferred from this tradition that it has been stressed to assist Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) in all conditions, either in comfort or calamity. Alas ! the Muslims slaughtered the one whom the Holy Prophet (S.A.) regarded as his son in Karbala and denied the existence of one in whom he reposed all his hopes and expectations. Only Allah knows how this community will face Him and His Prophet (S.A.) on the day of Qiyamat.

Anyhow, all the topics discussed over here are extracted from Sehad-e-Sittah which are unchallengeable and undeniable. For, a majority of Sunni scholars agree that whoever dared to reject or question Sehad-e-Sittah has intact repudiated the Holy Prophet (S.A.) and has consequently disbelieved in Islam. Also it can be noticed that those compilers of Sahih who have

not narrated the traditions regarding Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) in their books have quoted the same in their other books.

If any of the Sehad does not contain a proper and adequate narration about him then it does not cast any serious impact on the veracity of the beliefs in Imam Mahdi (A.S.), because in other Sehad it has been related redundantly. Here it was mentioned only to apprise others that even Sehad-e-Sittah is not devoid of the traditions regarding Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.). This much should suffice to those who are skeptical of the veritability of this pristine belief.

Imam Mahdi A.S. In The View Of Wahabis

After propounding Qur'anic and traditional arguments there remains no doubt amongst any Muslim, irrespective of his being Sunni, Shia, Wahabi or Non-Wahabi, regarding the belief in Imam Mahdi (A.S.) and it is proved beyond doubt that it is a genuine Islamic belief. But since the Wahabi sect is having a very narrow-minded belief about some of the concepts of Islam hence from its very inception, it has been a butt of rebuke from the Muslim scholars. In this brief article we will analyze the viewpoint of Wahabis regarding Imam Mahdi (A.S.).

Intact the following proofs will clarify that like other Muslim scholars even Wahabi Scholars believe in Mahdaviyat and they regard this belief as the culmination of the Islamic creed.

1- The Wahabi sect is an offshoot of the Ahle-Sunnah and like other Muslims, believe in Qur'an and traditions. They also have faith in the traditions of Sehad-e-Sittah and other authentic books. Since the traditions pertaining to Imam Mahdi (A.S.) are quoted from the Holy Prophet (S.A.) and are found in abundance in the books of traditions, hence they do believe in Imam Mahdi (A.S.).

2- Ibn Taimiyyah (exp. 728 A.H.) was a Hanbali scholar of 7th- 8th century who is also known as the ideological leader of Wahabis. In his book 'Minhaajus-Sunnah' (which was a vehement assault on Shias), he considers the traditions regarding Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) as authentic and says about him in the following words :

"Those traditions by which the advent of Imam Mahdi (A.S.) is expostulated are correct which are recorded by Abu Dawood, Tirmidhi, Ahmed Hanbal, and other traditionalists. For instance, the tradition of the Holy Prophet (S.A.) related by Ibn Mas'ud that:

"Even if a single day will remain from the eve of doomsday, Allah the Almighty will prolong that day to such an extent till He raises a man from my Ahle Bait (A.S.)."

3- Shamsuddin Mohammad bin Abi Bakr, popularly known as Ibn Qayyum-e-Jauzi (exp. 751 A.H.), a noted celebrity of the Hanbali sect and an ardent follower and preacher of Ibn Taimiyah's ideas, has compiled an entire book on the topic of Imam Mahdi (A.S.). He has adorned his book with the title of 'Al-Mahdi'.

The same scholar has written another book by the name of 'Al- Munaar Al Munif Fis-Sahih Waz Zaeef' which is in fact an explanation of Ibn Jauzi's book 'Al-Mauzoo'aat'. In this book in the 15th Chapter from Pg. 326 to 344, he has quoted some traditions regarding Imam Mahdi (A.S.) along with the discussion on the authenticity of the traditions. He has concluded that traditions pertaining to Imam Mahdi (A.S.) are genuine and a part of the Islamic tradition.

In the same book, he has written, while quoting from the book of 'Abdul Husain Aberi' that: "The traditions regarding Imam Mahdi (A.S.) are plenty (Mutawatir) and abundantly prove that he will be from the progeny of the Holy Prophet (S.A.)."

4- Allama Mohammad bin Ali Shaukani (exp. 1250 A.H.) was formerly a Zaidi who later on converted to Wahabism to become its prolific preacher in Yemen. He was such a staunch believer in Mahdaviyat that he wrote one whole book on the subject by the name of 'Al-Ta'uzeeh Fi Tawateer Ma Ja'aa Fil-Mahdi wal-Dajjal wal Maseeh'. This book has been a major source of reference of most scholars. The following sentence from this book deserves attention: "Those traditions which are narrated regarding Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) are plenty. It is sufficient for him who possesses little faith and justice."

5- Shaikh Abdul Mohsin bin Ahmad Abbad, an erudite professor of the Wahabi university of Medina, has written a book by the name of 'Aqidato Ahle-Sunnat wal-Asar Fil Mahdi Al-Muntazar' in which he has debated that the belief in Mahdaviyat is not confined only to Shias but is a pure Islamic belief. The traditions regarding Mahdaviyat are continuous and believing in Hazrat Imam Mahdi (A.S.) is essential.

Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.) is from the progeny of Fatema Zahra (S.A.) and will reappear in the last era of the world. Moreover, he has enlisted the names of one twenty six companions who have quoted the traditions regarding Imam Mahdi (A.S.), thirty eight names of celebrated scholars and traditionalists who have related the traditions, of which four are compiler of the Sehaahs. Then he has mentioned the names of ten great Sunni scholars who have written books on this subject.

Shaikh Abbad has written another book as a refutation to the book of his contemporary scholar from Kuwait whose name was Shaikh Abdullah bin Zaid who made some very strident objections

on the belief. This book is called : " Ar-Raddo Ala Man Kazeba bil Ahadith As Sahiha fil Mahdi." In this article, first the vitriol objections of the Kuwaiti writer are quoted verbatim then he has them and later and later given fittings replies. Keeping these facts in mind, is there any Muslim who can doubt the veracity of this belief ? Is it possible that someone claims to be a Muslim but does not believe in this fundamental creed ?

May Allah helps us in following the right path

Imamate and Nahjul Balagha : A perspective

There is a famous tradition from the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) recorded by both - the Shias and the Ahle Sunnah traditionalists- 'One who dies without recognizing the Imam of his time, dies the death of ignorance.'

This means that even if a person accepts and conforms to all the Islamic beliefs and puts in practice all the edicts, but dies without recognizing the Imam of his time, his death will be on ignorance and apostasy. Such a person is condemned to eternal Hellfire regardless of his deeds in this world.

This is because good deeds will only benefit a person provided his beliefs are correct, as espoused by the Quran and traditions. Hence, any person, who wants to secure himself from the raging fire of hell, should necessarily possess the recognition of the Imam of his time and not simply rely on his worship and virtuous deeds.

Two Kinds Of Imams:

The Holy Quran has mentioned two types of leaders (Imams). The first type is the one who leads the people towards Hell. Allah declares in Surah Qasas: 41, 'And We made them Imams who call to the Fire, and on the Day of Resurrection they shall not be assisted.'

It means that the end of the one who accepts such an Imam will be in Hell.

The second group of Imams guides the people by Allah's command. Surah Sajdah: 24 points out 'And We made of them Imams to guide by Our command when they were patient, and they were

certain of Our communications.' 'Say: Is there any of your associates who guides to the truth? Say: Allah guides to the truth. Is He then Who guides to the truth more worthy to be followed, or he who himself does not go aright unless he is guided?

What then is the matter with you; how do you judge?' (Surah Yunus : 35)

Hazrat Ali (a.s.) has described the characteristics of both kinds of Imams in his orations. 'The reality of people is not understood by their names but by the pattern of their behavior and mannerisms. Just as clothes hide the defects of the body, external manners cloak the defects of the soul. A connection of the soul is a necessity between the Imam and the follower. If a person (i.e. Imam) is not pious in his own heart, he will not be able to guide his followers towards piety and servitude.

Hence if we desire Heaven and want to safeguard our eternal life from the chastisement of the Hellfire, then we have to search for an Imam whose inner and outer selves both are complete manifestations of divine command. Such an Imam must necessarily be adorned with piety completely, i.e. must be an infallible.

We will discuss the characteristics of the Imam of Hellfire and the Imam who guides to the truth, in the light of the sermons of Hazrat Ali (a.s.). The Imam of the Hellfire:

'...certainly, the worst man before Allah is the oppressive Imam who has gone astray and through whom others go astray. He destroys the accepted Sunnah and revives abandoned innovations. I heard the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) predict -On the Day of Judgement the oppressive Imam will be brought without anyone to support him or anyone to advance excuses on his behalf, and then he will be thrown into Hell, where he will rotate as the hand-mill rotates. Then eventually he will be confined to its hollow.'

(NahjulBalagha, Sermon 164, vol. 1, pg. 608-609, Ansariyan Publications)

An oppressor is not only the one who usurps the rights of others and persecutes others. The Quran declares, '...and whoever exceeds the limits of Allah these it is that are the unjust.'(Surah Baqarah : 229) These include those disobedient of Allah's commands, who have violated His edicts and exceeded His limits. The Quran further proclaims, 'and whoever did not judge by what Allah revealed, those are they that are the unjust.'

' (Surah Maidah : 45)

If somebody makes additions to the religion or forbids an obligation, he has violated the divine command which tantamounts to injustice. Therefore, any person who has not been appointed an

Imam by Allah and he claims this position for himself, he has transgressed the limits of Allah and has disregarded Allah's orders.

He is a tyrannical and an oppressive leader, whose end has been described above in Hazrat All's (a.s.) sermon. Indeed the Holy Quran condemns even those people as oppressors who befriend such persons - '...and whoever makes friends with them, these are the unjust.'
(Surah Mumtahanah : 9)

Imam of light and guidance

Hazrat Ali (a.s.) outlines the characteristics of the just and rightly guided Imam, 'You should know that among the creatures of Allah, the most distinguished person before Allah is the just Imam who has been guided (by Allah) and guides others. So, he stands by the recognised ways of the Prophet's (s.a.w.a.) behaviour (Sunnah) and destroys the innovations. The (Prophet's (s.a.w.a.)) ways are clear and they have signs, while innovations are also clear and they too have signs.'
(NahjulBalagha, Sermon 164, vol. 1, pg. 608, Ansariyan Publications) In another sermon, Hazrat Ali (a.s.) declares, 'Certainly the Imams are the vicegerents of Allah over His creatures and they introduce Allah to His creatures. None will enter Paradise except he who recognises them (Imams) and knows Allah, and no one will enter Hell except he who rejects them and denies Him.

(Nahjul Balagha, Sermon 152, vol. 1, pg. 554, Ansariyan Publications)

He elaborates on this further, 'O my Allah! You know that it was neither our (Ahle Bait) objective to seek power, nor to acquire anything from the treasures of the world. Rather we wanted to restore the signs of Your religion and to spread prosperity into Your cities so that the oppressed among Your creatures may be safe and Your forsaken commands could be established. O my Allah! I am the first who was inclined (towards Thee) and who heard and responded (to the call of Islam).

No one preceded me in prayer except the Prophet (s. a. w. a.).'

'You certainly know that he who is in charge of honour, life, booty, (enforcement of) legal commands and the leadership of the Muslims should not be a miser as his greed would aim at their wealth. Similarly he should not be ignorant as he would then mislead them with his ignorance, nor should he be rude as he would estrange them with his rudeness.

He should not be unjust in distributing wealth by preferring one group to another, nor should he accept bribes while taking decisions, as he would forfeit the rights of some and decree without

decisiveness, nor should he ignore the Sunnah as he would ruin the people.

(Nahjul Balagha, Sermon 131, vol. 1, pg. 496, Ansariyan Publications) By referring to these brilliant sermons, it becomes abundantly clear that the leader and Imam who possesses the following characteristics can alone guide the people towards the truth.

1. He is guided.
2. He guides others towards the true path.
3. He enlivens the Sunnah.
4. He destroys innovations.
5. His recognition is the cause of deliverance for the people.
6. His rejection is the cause of eternal chastisement.
7. He does not desire worldly power and authority.
8. He does not crave for the treasures of the world.
9. He makes manifest the signs of religion.
10. He establishes peace and tranquility in Allah's cities.
11. He provides shelter to His oppressed servants.
12. He revives the forgotten commands.
13. He is not a miser.
14. He is not ignorant.
15. His traits and mannerisms are not evil and wicked.
16. He is not a coward.
17. He is not a corrupt.
18. He does not destroy the Sunnah.

Hazrat Ali (a.s.) highlights the above points in another sermon, 'Certainly, there is no obligation on the Imam except what has been devolved on him from Allah, namely to convey warnings, to exhort and advice, to revive the Sunnah, enforce penalties on those liable and issue shares to the deserving.'

(Nahjul Balagha, Sermon 105, vol. 1, pg. 400, Ansariyan Publications) The Ahle Bait (a.s.):

If we search for the characteristics of the rightly guided Imam, we find that these traits are present only in the pure and infallible members of the Ahle Bait (a.s.).

Hazrat Ali (a.s.) exhorts, 'Look at the people of the Prophet's (s.a.w.a.) family - Ahle Bait (a.s.). Adhere to their direction. Follow their footsteps because they will never misguide you, and never throw you into destruction. If they sit down, you too must sit down, and if they rise, you also rise. Do not go ahead of them, as you will go astray and do not lag behind them, as you will be ruined.'

(NahjulBalagha, Sermon 97, vol. 1, pg. 378, Ansariyan Publications)

"Where are those people who have lied and have tormented us and have deceitfully claimed that they are 'the ones firmly rooted in knowledge' and not us? (They lie against us and covet over position) because Allah, the All-Merciful has exalted our status and has made them inferior to us. He has conferred upon us an eminence from which He prevented them from surpassing us.

He allowed us entry to the transcendental sphere of divine revelation, which He denied them. Remember that guidance could be acquired and ignorance could be dispelled through us only. Undoubtedly the Imams shall be from the Quraish, from the Bani Hashim. This divine appointment has been made for this august progeny, and none else deserves this sublime and sacred rank.'

(NahjulBalagha, Sermon 144, vol. 1, pg. 528, Ansariyan Publications)

These assertive and decisive statements make it abundantly clear that the rightful possessors of Imamate and Caliphate are the Ahle Bait (a.s.). No one else is deserving of this honour and station. Only the Ahle Bait (a.s.) can direct the people to the path of guidance and lead them to paradise. If somebody considers a person other than them as his leader, guide and Imam, he has deviated and is far from guidance.

When Hazrat Ali (a.s.) appointed Janab Mohammad ibn Abi Bakr as governor of Egypt, he (a.s.) wrote a letter to him in which he said:

'The leader towards guidance, and the leader towards destruction, the friend and the enemy of the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.), can never be alike.'

(NahjulBalagha, Letter No. 27, vol. 2, pg. 314, Ansariyan Publications)

Hazrat Ali (a.s.) has tried to awaken the consciousness of man with this powerful statement. The statement appeals to the people to open their eyes and refer to their intellects and then decide with deep reflection - Are the leaders of guidance and the path bearers to paradise equal to the guides towards the hell fire and darkness? Never! Awaken and decide for yourselves.

Chain of guidance

It is crystal clear that Imamate is the exclusive right of the Ahle Bait (a.s.) and anyone who claims

this right for himself/themselves is a liar and an oppressor. There is a well-known tradition from the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) widely narrated by all scholars and traditionalists in their books. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) prophesied,

'This nation will have twelve leaders and guides and all of them will be from the Quraish. The one who leaves them will not harm them.' (i.e. the one who has distanced himself will be among the losers, because his death will be that of ignorance).

(Musnad-e-Ahmad b. Hanbal, vol.5, pg. 312)

The tradition of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) clearly highlights that there will only be twelve Imams till the Day of Judgement and all these leaders will be from the tribe of Quraish. Within the Quraish, the Imams will be from Bani Hashim. From the traditions mentioned above we conclude that after the demise of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) till the Day of Resurrection, this nation will have twelve Imams and all of them will be from Bani Hashim.

Regarding the tradition from the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) - "I leave among you two weighty things (Saqalain), the Book of Allah and my progeny', Hazrat Ali (a.s.) was asked - Who is the progeny? He (a.s.) replied:

Hasan (a.s.), Husain (a.s.) and the nine Imams (a.s.) from the progeny of Husain (a.s.), of whom the ninth one will be the Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) and the Qaim (a.t.f.s.). Neither will they separate from the Book of Allah nor will the Book of Allah separate from them, till they meet the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) at the Pool of Kausar.'

(Kamaluddin, vol.1, pg. 240-241)

Aamir b. Kasir asked Hazrat Ali (a.s.): O Ameerul Momineen (a.s.)! You have made us aware of the guides of disbelief and the caliphs of evil, now introduce to us the guides of truth and the real guides after you.' Hazrat Ali (a.s.) informed him, 'Yes, surely it is the promise of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) to me that this religion will have twelve Imams and leaders, nine of whom will be from the progeny of Husain (a.s.). The Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) has narrated, 'When I went to the heavens for Meraj, I saw written on the pillar of the Arsh-

'There is no god except Allah, Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) is His Messenger, and I have aided him through Ali (a.s.) and I have helped him through Ali (a.s.)'

And I saw twelve Lights. I asked: O My Lord! Whose lights are these ? The reply was - These lights are of Imams from your progeny.

Then I (Ali (a.s.)) asked:

O Messenger of Allah, will you not tell me their names?'

The Holy Prophet replied, 'Yes, certainly. You are Imam and Caliph after me, you will repay my debts and fulfill my promises. After you will be your two sons, Hasan (a.s.) and Husain (a.s.), and after Husain (a.s.) will be his son Ali - Zainul Abedeen (a.s.), after Ali (a.s.) will be his son Muhammad (a.s.) whose title is Baqir. After Muhammad (a.s.) will follow his son Jafar (a.s.) whose title is Sadiq.

After Jafar (a.s.), will be his son Moosa (a.s.) whose title is Kazim. After Moosa (a.s.), will be his son Ali (a.s.) whose title is Reza. After Ali, his son Muhammad (a.s.) will succeed him and his title is Zaki. After Muhammad (a.s.) will follow his son Ali (a.s.) whose title is Naqi. After Ali (a.s.) will come his son Hasan (a.s.) whose title is Ameen and Askari. After him will be the son of Hasan (a.s.), Qaim (a.t.f.s.), whose name will be my name and who will bear maximum similarity with me. He will fill the earth with justice and equity as it would have been filled with oppression and injustice.'

There isn't just one tradition like this. We find several traditions on these lines and the number goes up to 20. For instance, Hazrat Ali (a.s.) recounts from the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) who has categorically stated that from the time of his (s.a.w.a.) death till the Day of Qiyamat there will only be twelve Imams, and then each has been mentioned by his name.

The entire arrangement was made so that people would know that Allah and His Prophet (s.a.w.a.) had already selected the Imams. It was not that anyone could be an Imam according to the wishes of the Islamic nation. It was not that an Imam who was supposed to follow his father in the chain of Imamah,

died in his father's lifetime, leaving the chain of Imamah suspended until the people appointed the deceased's son as the Imam in his place. All the above traditions, were narrated when Janabe Ismail b. Jafar Sadiq was not even born. The list of Imams (a.s.) narrated by the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and Hazrat Ali (a.s.) does not show Janabe Ismail's name. Therefore, if he was never destined to be an Imam then where does the question of usurping his Imamah arise?

Another thing that is evident is that the twelve Imams (a.s.) enumerated in the prophetic tradition mentions the first Imam as Hazrat Ali (a.s.) and the twelfth and last Imam as Hazrat Wali-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.), who is the Imam of our time and is alive on this earth today and is amongst us but we are deprived of his meeting due to our sins and disobedience.

Asbagh b. Nubata (r.a.) a very reliable companion of Hazrat Ali (a.s.) narrates, 'I presented myself before Hazrat Ali (a.s.). I saw that he was engrossed in some thought and marking with his blessed finger on the earth. I queried, 'O Ameerul Momineen (a.s.)! What is the matter, I find you today in some perplexity, making signs on the earth, do you love this earth? He (a.s.) replied:

"I swear by Allah that it is not so. I have never befriended this world, rather I was reflecting about that son, the eleventh one from my progeny. He is the Mahdi (a.t.f.s.), who will fill the earth with justice and equity as it was filled with injustice and tyranny. There is an occupation for him in which some people will be deviated while others will be guided.

(Kamaluddin, vol. 1, pg. 288-297, A'laamul Wara, pg. 400)

How clearly Hazrat Ali (a.s.) has described and illuminated the chain of guidance and Imamah. Who could be more unfortunate and wretched that despite such a clear and illumined chain of guidance and Imamah, rejects it for those deviated guides who have usurped Hazrat Ali's (a.s.) right? Those who have harassed and persecuted Janabe Zehra (s.a.), burned down her door and waged war against her husband - the rightful Imam and celebrated on his martyrdom and were the main protagonists of the incident of Karbala. Their sons killed Imam Husain (a.s.) in Karbala, they made captives the Ahle Bait (a.s.) and martyred them one after the other.

Their lives were devoid of Islamic teachings, they opposed the Quranic commands secretly and publicly, they were steeped in sins and prohibited acts and abandoned the religious obligations completely. They were prisoners of their carnal desires and neglected the hereafter and in this manner deprived themselves of guidance. Then how was it possible for them to guide others?

Guidance has only one path and that path is the way of Hazrat Ali b. Abi Talib (a.s.), finally terminating in Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) who is the Imam today. There is no other path leading to true guidance and there is no other guarantee for success and happiness in the world and the hereafter.

We end this discussion with the declaration of Hazrat Ali (a.s.) inviting everyone to leave aside prejudices and rise above personal interests, to purify the intellect and consciousness, to decide about one's own end, lest the coming of the Angel of Death finds us perplexed and uncertain. Today there is time and tomorrow could be too late. Our decision will take us either to Paradise or to Hell. Let us not spoil our hereafter for this fleeting world.

'Observe this world, which you desire, towards which you move with desire and proximity, which sometimes angers you and at other times makes you happy. It is neither your actual abode nor the station for which you were created, nor is it the place towards which you are invited.'

'Take lesson, for it is not going to remain for you, nor are you in it forever. If it has beguiled you with its charm then it has also made you fearful with its wickedness. Do not be influenced by its scare and do not seek it greedily out of its fear.'

'Advance towards that abode towards which you have been invited and turn your hearts away from this world. None of you should lament like maids on deprivation of a thing of this world. Be patient on the obedience of Allah and wish for the completion of the bounties by safeguarding that which has been commanded by our Book to be safeguarded.'

'Pay heed, if you have safeguarded your religious beliefs then loss of anything of this world will not harm you. And if you have wasted and destroyed your religion then none of the worldly things, which you have safeguarded, can bring you any benefit.'

(Nahjul Balagah, Sermon 173, vol. 1, pg. 644, Ansariyan Publications)

May Allah turn our hearts towards truth and give us the blessing of patience!

absence and must re-affirm our pledge with him.

Importance of Imamat and status of Imam (a.s)

Imamat is a matter of great merit. In fact no other issue in Islam is more significant than the subject of Imamat. Its importance lies in the fact that it's the only reliable means to reach to the true recognition of Allah. It is only through Imamat that one can obtain the true recognition of Allah and comprehend the manner of worshipping Him. If anyone adopts some means of worshipping Allah other than the one suggested by the Imams (a.s), he will never be successful in his endeavor.

The following phrases of Ziarat-e-Jameah-e-Kabirah highlight this point beautifully.

"May my parents, myself, my family and my wealth be sacrificed for you. The one who desired to reach Allah began from you. The one who has acknowledged His Unity has obtained Tauheed from you. The one who loves Allah turns towards you" (Mafatihul Jinaan)

In this same Ziarat, it is mentioned elsewhere 'The one who comes to you has received salvation and the one who forsakes you is ruined. You invite (the people) towards Allah and point towards Him.'" (Mafatihul Jinaan)

When we ponder over these phrases of Ziarat-e-Jameah, it becomes clear that only the path shown by the Able Bait (a.s.) can lead us to true recognition of Allah and His Tauheed and in this

manner He can be worshipped as He ought to be worshipped. And should it not be like this? These are the personalities who invite the people towards Allah and show the path towards Him since Allah has created man solely for His worship. Allah says in the Quran " I have not created man and the jinn except that they should worship Me.'

(Surah Zaariyat: 52)

If man wants to realize the aim of his creation, then he should worship Allah. And for Allah's genuine and acceptable worship it is necessary to tread the path shown by the Able Bait (a.s.).

In the light of the phrases of Ziarat-e-Jameah let us also cast a glance at the phrases of Dua-e-Nudbah. .This Dua is specifically for Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.). It is recommended to recite it on Idd-ul-Fitr, Idd-uz-Zoha, Idd-e-Ghadeer and every Friday in which it is found '...Where is that gate of Allah through which it is possible to reach Him? Where is the face of Allah towards whom all other 'friends (Awliya) of Allah turn? Where is the one who is the medium between the heavens and the earth ?'

The Imam (a.s) of every era is the means for reaching towards Allah. It is through the Imam alone that Allah's true recognition can be acquired and it is through him that one can learn to worship Allah and reach Him. In this era the 'Proof (Hujjat) of Allah and the Imam of the time is none other than our twelfth Imam Hazrat Hujjat b. Hasan Askari (a.t.f.s.).

Genuine recognition and Allah's worship i.e. establishing a divine link through knowledge and actions, is facilitated through the belief in Imamat. The belief in the Imamat of Imam-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.) means acknowledging the gate that helps man reach Allah's recognition. Status of Imamat:

Allah has bestowed the illustrious status of Imamat upon our Imams (a.s) not without any reason or wisdom. Allah Himself alludes to this fact in the noble Quran when He declares 'So when they were patient, We made them Imams from amongst themselves who guide the people by Our commands.'(Surah Sajdah: 24) This brief verse highlights four crucial points:

'We have made them as Imams.' This shows that the right of appointing an Imam rests exclusively with Allah and with none else. This is a matter of appointment of an Imam for the entire creation and not a matter of appointing some 'Imam' for congregational prayers in a local mosque. Among them:

Allah has appointed only a few from the nation for this crucial position. This shows that each and every person is not eligible for this rank. Allah sees the qualities and abilities and only then does He bestow this honor. They Guide the people:

They guide the people by Our commands and orders. There are two types of systems prevalent in the universe viz. (creation) and (order). The system of creation is that system wherein (the things) come into existence through the normal process of "cause and effect". For instance the sperm gradually (after passing through various stages) is converted into a man.

Or a seed after undergoing through the normal processes finally becomes a tree. On the other hand, in the system of 'Amr' - which is superior to the system of creation - things don't move through the normal process. Nor is time and space a pre-condition for the actualization of the outcome. Here only the intention of 'Be' is sufficient. As Allah says in the Quran: 'His command - when He intends anything - is only to say, "Be" and it becomes.'

(Surah Yasin: 82)

This means that the mere intention of a thing is sufficient to bring about its existence. Neither any cause or reason is essential nor are there any restrictions of time and place. These Imams (a.s) guide by virtue of (this) command of Allah. If they desire to guide someone then a simple intention on their part is enough to guide that person.

Like the way Janabe Zohair b. Qain (r.a.) was guided by Imam Husain (a.s). In a brief meeting of a just a few moments. Imam (a.s) changed Zohair b. Qain (r.a.) completely. But in order to be included in this form of guidance it is necessary that a person raises himself to such a high level that he becomes eligible to derive benefits from the winds of guidance. Idleness is from our side.

It is essential for the earth to bear such qualities that will make it profit from the pure drops of rain and will lead to the flourishing of flora and fauna. Today this guidance is present for us in the form of Hazrat Wali-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.). The only precondition is that we should derive benefit from him.

This particular phrase shows why this distinction of Imamah was granted to them. It is truly a miracle of Quran that it had explained the exalted status of Imamah in only two words. As if the entire sea has been capsuled in a pair of hands. Allah - through the phrase has defined the foundation of Imamah and through the phrase He has elucidated the responsibility of Imamah.

The Origin of Patience

Patience has various levels. In logical terminology it is a 'sum total' with different degrees and which cannot be applied universally. It is of three kinds viz. patience near sins, patience in the face of calamities and patience on one's desires. However, it is not our aim over here to get into a

detailed discussion on this topic.

The origin of patience lies in talking less, in controlling one's tongue, in refraining one's self from talking nonsense or irrational talks. It involves training oneself to talk only when it is necessary and that too in a concise manner. This is the very first stage of patience. There is a lot of emphasis on silence in books related to spiritual training. Along with the tongue it is also essential to keep one's eyes also in control. The 'Nafs' of a person employs these two faculties in a lot of futile things.

Perfect Patience:

Gradually a person should prepare himself to be patient on the bounties of this world. The heart should not be accustomed to the comforts of the world, nor should any of its pleasures build a house in it. No form of lust or greed should be allowed to enter the heart. We find in Dua-e-Nudbah. 'And when You fixed the condition that they will forsake this detestable world and its luxuries and comforts and will not attach one's self to it, then they accepted this condition.

Then when You saw that they fulfilled this demand in totality. You favoured them and made them Your proximate and You reserved for them the best of remembrances and the finest of descriptions and adulation and You descended upon them Your angels.' To remain patient on the bounties of this world is just one of the stages. There are many more stages of patience after this. The stage after the world is that of 'Barzakh'.

Another form of patience is to exercise complete restraint and mastery on our thoughts. This particular stage is more arduous than being patient upon the bounties of the world. Man can turn his face away from the luxuries of this world. But his thoughts too should be in his control. He should have such command and influence upon his 'Nafs' that no thought should be able to enter his mind without his consent. It is not a matter of few moments, hours, days and years. No doubt this is extremely difficult.

Just try to keep yourself focused on one particular point for a few moments - taking care that your attention is not distracted by any other thought - you will realize the magnitude of this task. When it is difficult to concentrate for such a small duration of time then to keep one's mind free from distractions and diversions for the whole life is that stage of patience which is far higher than being patient on calamities. Here the mind falters and becomes helpless.

Imam Husain (a.s), even when surrounded by grief and calamities says 'In the name of Allah, by the strength and support of Allah and for the sake of Allah.'

'At the time when he (a.s) was strewn with wounds and injuries and when he fell from his horse to

the ground and when he was rubbing his blood on his face at that time too he was saying In such dangerous and difficult times too no other thought could distract Imam Husain (a.s) from remembering Allah.

'Allah knows best where He places His message (Surah An'aam: 124)

After this world comes the Hereafter. Nothing from the Hereafter should attract a person. Neither the bounties of Paradise nor the chastisement of Hell nor the stages of Mahshar. Ameerul Momineen - Imam Ali ibn Talib (a.s) has expressed this most eloquently when he says Some people worship Allah for the sake of rewards. This is the worship of traders. While some worship Allah due to the fear of being punished. This is the worship of a slave. Yet others worship Allah out of gratitude for His bounties. This is the worship of free men.'

(Nahjul Balagha: trad. 237, vol. 2, Ansariyan Publications) One should have so much control on one's 'Nafs' that while worshipping Allah he should neither think about the bounties of Paradise nor about the punishments of Hell. It is extremely difficult to reach to this stage of patience. And this stage too demands a remarkable amount of restraint on the 'Nafs'.

The ideal worshipper

Allah's worship is solely for Him. Nothing can be associated with Allah in His worship. It means that the sole aim of our worship is to achieve Allah's satisfaction, neither this world nor Barzakh nor the Hereafter. It is obvious that the one who has submitted himself to Allah's love and whose excellence lies in Allah's worship, then to him nothing else matters. All other things are worthless in his eyes.

Everything is subservient and obedient to his wishes and orders. It is found in Ziarat-e-Jameah wherein it is said 'Everything is lowly and subservient to you.' Our Imam is not only for humans on this earth. He is the Imam of the entire universe. It is because of presence of Imam (a.s.) that rain descends on the earth, the heaven and the earth are secure in their respective places and our difficulties are repelled.

When a person reaches to this perfect level of worship then he becomes a symbol of divine attributes. In fact many a times those who are far removed from reality and are not well versed with the teachings of Ahle Bait (a.s.) start considering this emblem of divine characteristics as Allah Himself!

This complete worshipper - by the permission of Allah - nurtures the entire universe and provides sustenance to each and every individual and arranges for all other necessities of life so that everyone is able to reach to his goal of perfection. It is for this reason that it is mentioned for Imam-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.)

'It is due to his existence that the heavens and the earth are secure in their place and it is due to his benevolence that everyone acquires sustenance.'

No doubt that Allah is the One Who is the giver of life. However, He gives it due to the benevolence of Imam-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.), Allah is the One who provides sustenance, but it is through the blessings of Imam-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.). All the bounties that are available on this earth are due to the benevolence of Hazrat Hujj at ibne Hasan Askari (a.t.f.s.).

Now, when all the favours that we receive from Allah are through Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) then all our worship and supplications towards Allah will be worthy of acceptance if they are acceptable near Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.). Keeping in mind the endless benefits that we receive from Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) we are obliged to confess with a sense of remorse that "O Master of the time! It's been a long time since we are receiving benefits through you.

We are living our lives through your grace and acquiring Allah's bounties due to your benevolence. It is due to your venerable presence that our body and soul are being nourished. It is only because of you that Allah's kindness reaches us. Yet when we look at our actions and within ourselves, it becomes apparent to us that we have still not been able to acquire your true recognition. We have not recognized your true value nor have we been able to fulfill your rights.

We have contributed so much to your suffering that we shudder to think how Allah will take our account. At every step we have derived benefits from you but have not done anything for you. We have acquired fame and status through you but have not done anything to glorify your name. We have received our sustenance due to your grace but have not spent anything in your way. We have exploited you in all walks of our life for our personal gains but have failed to endure any form of adversity for your sake.'

'O the Yusuf of Janabe Zahra! We - like the brothers of Hazrat Yusuf (a.s.) - are ashamed of ourselves in front of you. We confess that we have oppressed and wronged you. And we seek forgiveness from you for our actions.

Patience of Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.):

In light of the latest scientific research, it has been firmly established that past events are present

in the atmosphere. However, our perception is so weak that we are unable to comprehend those occurrences. With some focused training of the soul, a person can visualise an event in the past like Day of Ashoora and see it with his eyes.

However, there are some episodes in the event of Karbala, which are very heart rending. It is beyond the capacity of ordinary humans to endure them. But the entire event of Karbala - right down to its minutest details - is witnessed by Imam-e-Zamana's (a.t.f.s.), including all those events that are unbearable for the average human being. Besides this, the dress of Imam Husain (a.s) drenched in his blood is present right in front of Imam-e-Zamana's (a.t.f.s.) eyes and fresh blood is continuously dripping from it. This will continue till the reappearance of Imam (a.t.f.s.), when he (a.t.f.s.) finally avenges the massacre of Karbala.

Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) has to witness all these calamities everyday and then be patient upon them. He actually sees the calamities with his eyes and is patient upon them while it is difficult for us to bear it even by listening to them. Indeed what must be the level of Imam's (a.t.f.s.) patience and forbearance? Apart from the tribulations of Karbala, Imam (a.t.f.s.) also witnesses the calamities that befell Janabe Zahra (s.a) and Ameerul Momineen (a.s.), then Imam Hasan (a.s) and every Imam till his lather Imam Hasan Askari (a.s).

All persecution that was meted out to his friends and lovers (i.e. Shias) are also before his eyes. He sees them, but is extremely patient and forbearing. In spite of having the authority, he has to accept Allah's command and remain in occultation and be patient. If someone reflects on all this, he will comprehend the troubled and distressed condition of Imam (a.t.f.s.).

He will also realise the significance of praying for the earliest reappearance of Imam (a.t.f.s.), preparing the ground for his reappearance, bringing the people closer to him (a.t.f.s.) and making them eager and restless for his presence. These are some of our responsibilities in the period of occultation.

It should not be that lapses and laziness on our part become the cause of increase in his (a.t.f.s.) pain and suffering. Otherwise we will lose face in front of our Imam and will be very regretful after that.

We hope that by pondering on this discussion the readers may have comprehended the significance of the phrase "One who patience" of the verse. Come let all of us present ourselves in front of Allah through Imam (a.s.) and pray to Him that He should forgive our shortcomings. And through the afflictions heaped on Janabe Zahra (s.a), let us beseech and pray for the earliest reappearance of Yusuf-e-Zahra.

