

In the Name of God

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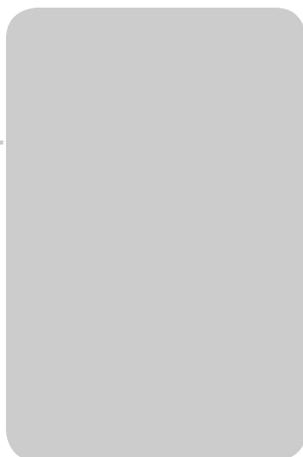
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*Peace be upon the incessant
ideal of man*



Editorial

Editorial

Now in the third millennium of history, what more than anything else attracts the attention of the people is the appearance of so many opinions, thoughts and schools, each of which, in a way or another, attempts to find solutions for people's troubles and to reply to their questions of the meaning of life.

Unlike the first decades of the 20th century when beliefs in the supernatural or metaphysical world appeared to be absurd and ridiculous, now religious or mystical healings are sought for eagerly. Today cures and remedies through religions no longer seem to be useless. People do not consider them as imagination or illusions any more. There is a popular approach to religious, mystical and spiritual authorities' responses to social illnesses. Not only have a great number of individuals turned to intellectual, spiritual and religious guidelines, but also many great thinkers have strived to solve people's present problems created by this materialistic world and to give them assistance by using religious doctrines, metaphysical reflections and prophetic teachings.

In spite of all these progresses, advances and developments made in the field of technology, science, and industries, the contemporary man lives in a period in which he is suffering a great deal from mental distress, depression, universal agitations, environmental crisis, intergovernmental challenges along with lack of relaxation and rest. He feels so worried about his future and does not know what to do. Meanwhile numerous sociologists and political philosophers have tried to foretell, guess and suggest a special model or pattern, in his own view of the future. Some of these thinkers believe that man has already climbed up the steps of progress and reached the peak of his advance; so, he does not have any other steps to proceed higher. Some others predict for man a future full of challenges, conflicts and clashes of cultures or civilizations. Still some others, who think even more positively, suggest dialogue and interaction of cultures.

On the other hand, by virtue of revelatory doctrines and prophetic glad tidings, theologians and religious authorities judge about the future quite differently. They hold that the betterment of the societies depends on the presence of a pure man, free from concupiscence and devilish carnal desires; he is a person endowed with perfect mental powers, knowing the connection between the earth and the heavens and can unite the people as well as to lead them to Allah.

The history of all religions testifies clearly the following facts: whenever a community became entangled in corruption, commonplace and rebellion, God chose from his creatures the most meritorious, honest and the fittest servants as prophets, sent them on the mission to reform human life conditions, to make their lands prosperous, and guide the people to the straight path. Histories of all societies, consisting records, whether oral or written, bear witness that no society succeeded in having the grace of happiness, unless they enjoyed the presence of messengers who showed them the truth and call them to believe in their holy teachings. Such sacred figures always engaged in guiding people and took steps toward social reforms but, on the other hand, have suffered much from disorganizations, irregularities, disobediences and even tortures. They bore lots of troubles to the end in order to give shape to communities, civilizations or cultures.

In the third millennium of history, it seems clear that the faithful

still await the coming of a savior to regulate the affairs of their societies and to save mankind from commonplace ideas, egoism, self-conceit, etc. They have never forgotten that no human society has ever prospered and flourished without benefiting from a heavenly leadership. They consider it as a certain situation, predicted by scriptures, that human beings will finally lead to a period when they will be bored with degenerated, rebellious, unrestrained, unjust and insecure, and will perceive their need to spiritualities as well as will feel the pain of their saviour's absence, a man who comes to solve contemporary world community's problems. Oh, yes, they expect the advent of such a Savior, Messiah and a divine deliverer, the one who has been promised in different religions or faiths. He will certainly be no one except the Imam of Time.

In the hope of the Day when he arrives.

Editor in Chief



*A Comparison between
Western Globalization and
Mahdist Globalization*

Abstract:

This article seeks to compare Western globalization and Mahdawi globalization by explicating the meaning and the different approaches toward the expanding issue of globalization. This article analyzes the specifications, criteria, and outcomes – especially of the global Mahdist government – and logically proves in three parts the superiority of the ideal model of Mahdist globalization for the rescue of mankind and the world. It rejects the Western or American approaches to globalization because of its material, one-sided, hegemonic, arrogant, and imperialistic nature.

Introduction

Globalization is an undeniable phenomenon in today's world. With the increasing human advancements especially in the fields of science, technology, communication, information, transportation, etc, the world is moving toward the gradual realization of this matter, more than before. In three main parts, the present writing explicates the meaning and the different approaches toward this process and believes that, at the present, the real nature of globalization is Western and in particular American, and that hegemony, arrogance, exploitation, and new imperialism are all part and parcel in this process. While one cannot overlook its positive and progressive aspects, its

negative and destructive consequences and results for humanity and the individuals of the global society are undeniable as well.

While referring to these negative outcomes, the present article contends that the phenomenon of globalization is in itself necessary and positive and that it is necessary to utilize it in the best manner and to put it at the service of humanity by amending its pitfalls and by its correct application, the same way that all divine religions especially Islam and even human reformers thought globally. In the same way, the teachings of the Quran and Islamic narrations have introduced themselves as being universal.

The plan of Imam Mahdi's government and Mahdawi globalization is in reality an ideal and final way to an Islamic world; a prescription for the cure of human society from its pains, privations, and countless distressing circumstances. By comparing Mahdawi and Western globalizations, the present article elucidates the specifications and criteria of both, especially of the Mahdawi age. By presenting necessary reasoning, it establishes the unquestionable superiority of the Mahdawi model of globalization for the rescue of humanity and the world. For this purpose, the present essay is going to answer the following questions:

What is the meaning of globalization and what understandings exist about it? What are its positive and negative results? What is the true nature of globalization today?

Did Islam and other Abrahamic religions have a universal and global mission?

What are the special attributes and criteria of the Mahdawi globalization and movement? In what criteria and characteristics lie its distinctive and advantageous aspects as compared to other models for globalization?

In brief, the hypothesis of this writing can also be presented in this way:

In spite of the positive aspects of the phenomenon of globalization, its nature is currently Western and in specific American, hegemonic and arrogant, while the Mahdawi globalization and movement is the ideal model and the ultimate way, which will by God's will, bring about the rescue of humanity and the world.

PART ONE

The Meaning of Globalization and Different Understandings about It

Discussion one – Definition of Globalization

Globalization is surely one of the most frequently used expressions in the world in the present decade, and it is a serious and prevailing phenomenon in the present and future decades. By using this expression, journalists, politicians, economic managers, university professors and others intend to show that a profound phenomenon is taking place, that the world is changing, and that a new order is appearing in the areas of world economy, politics, and culture. But the usage of this expression in many various cases, by different people, and for different purposes is so numerous that it is hard to determine the subject of discussion on globalization, its usage, and its effects on the contemporary views and politics. Thus, despite the common usage of the expression globalization, a universal and proper definition with clear and sensible dimensions has not yet been presented for this new concept, whose age is less than two decades but also subject to change.¹ Of course numerous definitions have been presented regarding this matter. For example, in a simple definition, globalization has been defined as the free circulation of capital, work force and information. Or it has been used to describe a process in which global economy and political and cultural forces speedily influence the earth and create a new global market, transnational, political, and a new global culture. organizations according to this view, the prospect of globalization is the expansion of the global capitalistic market, the downfall of nation-state, the faster circulation of merchandise, people, information, and cultural models. From another point of view, globalization means the flourishing of civil societies, the decrease of obstacles on the way of free trade and the deepening of mutual relationships, and will cause similarity and or equality between the countries and cultures of the world. In this direction, with the development of satellites, the expansion of communication and electronic systems, the increase in mass media, internet usage, television channels and their over-boundary influence, national border lines will be done away

with or will become colorless. Countries will lose their previous roles and international laws will rule instead of national regulations. During this process, geographical, cultural, and religious obligations and restrictions which have shadowed over human connections will be brought to an end. Thus, globalization can be defined as a process in which all the people of the world come together in a single global society. In a general view, this concept means the “merging” of global markets in the fields of trade, direct investment, and the movement and shifting of capital, work force, and culture, in the framework of a free market and the disseverment of national borderlines, unconditional global competition especially on the side of great powers, the development of innovative technology, the increasing growth of modernity and neology, and the globalization of production and trade; In this direction, the following is necessary: shifting from a national economy to a global economy, moving from an industrial society to an information society, decentralization, and development of a competitive space based on unification and the merging and integrating of world financial markets and the expansion of business dealings, removal of regulations and supportive laws regarding domestic and national trade.

Based on the mentioned definitions globalization can be known as the shaping of a network within which the societies previously reclusive and secluded merge together on the grounds of mutual dependence and global unity. Their relationships, whether as individuals or as a society will become very close and symmetrical and even face to face. The identities of humans will exit the domain of a single society and a stable social structure and each of their political, social, cultural, and economic identities will be affected in an international field. In brief, many of the specialists have summarized the traits of the age of globalization with phrases such as the appearance of a global electronic village, information revolution, compression of time and space, the spread of global informativeness, the termination of geography, and the cybernetic age. It is a period in which international relations are replaced by “trans-national” relationships. The global civil society will appear as the manifestation of “supra-national” relationships, in the shape of a network of organizations which know no

limits for reaching their goals and ideals.

Discussion two-Different Understandings about Globalization

There are a variety of viewpoints and perceptions regarding the issue of globalization. Some know globalization as nothing more than a passive and temporary stage in human history. On the other hand, another group interprets it as the growth of Western capitalism and renovation. A third group considers globalization a fundamental transformation in global diplomacy requiring a new style of thought in order to be understood.²

From the viewpoint of some scholars, from various perspectives, three kinds of globalization could be taken into account:

The first is true, total globalization; a complete material and spiritual process which in addition to economic development includes political and social balance along with cultural and humane perfection. The other is an incomplete and insufficient globalization which is merely economical and one-dimensional. The third is a false, disputative and hegemonic globalization which is the same as American globalization. Its essence is political and monopolistic. By regarding America as the head of global power, American globalization is solely after increasing the power of this country and the dependence of the world on America.³

But it can perhaps be said that two main viewpoints exist about the process of globalization: one is a positive look and the other a negative look. From the positive point of view, by using information technology, globalization can act as a bridge to unite the entire world and its citizens. It can do away with or decrease scientific, economic, political, social, and cultural deprivations. It is able to make likeable religious, moral, or at least humane customs prevalent in the world and can establish an optimum, positive, and complementary unity among humans. Globalization can collect the people of the world together so that like a single body, they can think about each other's welfare and reform and fight against all the intruding factors on the way of human perfection.

But based on the second point of view, although the current process of globalization has some of the mentioned benefits, unfortunately its real goal is not other than unifying and merging the world

in a shared global market, with the leadership of the capitalist world, under the rule of America. It is a market in which all the components of social life, from economy to politics and culture, are translated into the language of profiteering and arrogance and the unquestionable dominance of Western globalization and the increasing supremacy of rich countries over poor countries. Today, some thinkers conceive of globalization as a danger and potential and actual threat, aimed at “Americanizing” the world.

For this reason, some such as Wallerstein and Weltsy, with a pessimistic look, know globalization as the commercialization and exploitation-colonization of the world, because they have come to know of the hegemonic, disputative, Hobbesian-Darwinist essence of this process, a process which actually promotes global Darwinism. Hans Morgenthau’s theory of “politics of power”, Huntington’s theory or rather his strategy and doctrine of the clash of civilizations, the American Neoconservatives’ policy of crusade war, their occupation, totalitarianism, unilateralism, their militarism under the name of war against terrorism, their military and security threats and terrorism, overthrowing, occupying and dividing countries and governments are all among the effects and realization factors of Western globalization; a process which claims to bring about a unipolar and capitalist global society with a hierarchy of power and dominance. In addition to using militarism, it benefits from new methods and tools for scientific and cultural retardation and economic and technological suppression (tatmee’). It is not unreasonable that thinkers such as Poolani, Scott Gray, Hootan, and Ferkola have used phrases such as Westernization, Americanization, and at times neo-imperialism in the form of a new unipolar system and global village in place of globalization.⁴

The Western kind of globalization is an imposed project and a macro systemic social engineering plan, which is imposing Western ideology with an emphasis on neoliberalist and capitalist bases. It is after the pervasion of American lifestyle, the Westernization of humans, and the promotion of the culture of consumption and the essential nature of capital. The followers of this theory believe that globalization is a voluntary matter and is under the control of a particular group. In their belief, this will is now in the hands of the capitalist world. It

can be said that, from this point of view, globalization is a new stage of imperialism initially appearing as solidarity and recently showing itself in the form of a global phenomenon. Shawn Hailey, as one of the opposers of globalization, knows it to be an imposed project and believes that only particular areas have been globalized. In his words, during the 90's, not only did "wealth" not become globalized, rather it has become concentrated in the hands of a specific group. Although technology has become much more capable than in the past, it has not been globalized. Even economic growth, which is a base for the historic prominence of capitalism, has not gained a global aspect.⁵

Discussion three- The Dimensions and Negative Consequences of Western Globalization

As was mentioned, many believe, Western globalization is one of the most frequent theoretical and practical understandings of the term of globalization. In the belief of many, globalization itself fundamentally necessitates the Westernization of the world. It is a cover-up for the dominance of capitalism. Thus this term is mostly used as a replacement for older words and expressions such as "imperialism" and "modernism". As a substitute for "imperialism", globalization turns our attention to the dominance of most developed countries over developing countries, or the dominance of foreign companies over national and local economies. Moreover, when used as a cover-up concept, globalization can neutralize the world's fear of colonialism. In the shape of neoimperialism, this concept can hide the constant exploitation of many countries of the world by great powers and gigantic foreign companies, and can thus cover up some of the more damaging and fierce dimensions of contemporary development.

From the viewpoint of critics, the entirety of globalization will even bring about the extinction of local customs, the continual dependence of poor countries upon rich countries, the destruction of the environment, and trying to make different cultures and daily lifestyles become similar. The scope of these critics is very extensive. Among them are the Marxists, liberals, and the supporters of the multiculturalism in the world, those who refer to the threat posed to national rule, local customs, and democracy on the side of global forces; the supporters of the environment who are afraid of the destructive eco-

logical effects of unbridled globalization; and the conservatives who consider globalization a threat to national and local cultures and the sanctity of customs.⁶

Dominating over global economy and politics, Western globalization has been proceeded to annihilate religions and rival local cultures, and to show Western Culture as the superior culture, which has created an identity crisis in other governments and nations. One of the Western thinkers named Petros has illustrated globalization as a system based on cultural imperialism that is reliant on the absolute dominance of the Western economy. From his viewpoint, this kind of cultural imperialism means a constant influence and cultural dominance of the ruling class of the west over the masses, with the purpose of re-systemizing their values, behaviors, characters, and identities in order for them to correspond to the exploiting class's benefits.⁷

Two other thinkers named Laibz and Cots, who view globalization as the unquestionable dominance of the Western civilization, believe that dominance is what is packaged in Los Angeles and sent to the global village and set in the minds of innocent humans. Robertson's words intensify the same worries:

*Globalization requires pressure on societies, civilizations, and customs, from the aspect of their display on the global-cultural scene. It has the goal of considering the identity of related thoughts and representations.*⁸

It is noteworthy that the capitalistic world under the leadership of America also benefits from expert thinkers and theorists who ardently support the theory of American globalization and adhere to the school of liberal democracy. Among these thinkers is Barker, who believes that, given the spreading of American capitalist dominance, globalization is a natural corollary whose realization is to the benefit of all the people of the world. Thus, American capitalism tries to convince those who are under its dominance to adopt the American way as their ideal methods and conventions, and at this juncture, American hegemony is of course a natural matter and to the benefit of all the people of the world.⁹

Also, Francis Fukuyama, who views the end of history under the dominance of American culture and civilization and the school of

liberal democracy, with a sensible arrogance, describes her image of American globalization in this way:

A fundamental process is at work to dictate a common model of perfection to all human societies. In short, globalization is something similar to human world history in the way of acquiring liberal democracy.¹⁰

It is interesting that these vain claims are made while today we witness numerous crises in the Western world (America and Europe). Among them are spirituality crisis, legitimation crisis, identity crisis, moral crisis, economic corruption, and environmental crisis. The complications of these crises have gained a widespread appearance some of which are: the pollution of the environment, mechanicality and materialization of the Western human's life sphere, ebbing of educational systems, insignificance of life or the decrease of meaning in life, self alienation of individuals and the society, disruption and splitting of families, lack of social justice, control of political parties, limitation of public opinion and beliefs and their application, the appearance of national and racial prejudice, lack of affection and sincere relation between individuals, disrespect for the law and the appearance of social vandalism, reduction of social security and social welfare, limitless spread of sexual freedom and individual and social violence.

Evidently, such realities suggest the fact that neither the Western world nor the Western model of globalization can present new and ideal meanings to human life in the light of the material school of liberal democracy. Although today the West has tended from liberalism to neoliberalism, even the most prominent philosopher of the contemporary world, Jurgen Habermas, has interpreted this new tendency of the West as "wild liberalism"¹¹; a liberalism that has not brought about anything for the world except the increase in war, poverty, and inequality. However, for the West, it has resulted in the increase in power and wealth, and a deeper gap between poor and rich countries. It has increased Western hegemony over the world, and has provoked international insecurity, rather than global peace.

Under the shadow of Western globalization, while the powerful leaders of cartels and trusts who have at the same time taken con-

trol of the global information system, in unequal circumstances, have closed the way on the eyes of poor nations, and due to this imposed blindness and one-sided communication, put their hands in the pocket of the incapable rival, can one optimistically speak of “mutual trust” like Fukuyama?

Today, five economic giants, i.e., America, Japan, France, England, and Germany have taken control of one hundred and seventy of the two hundred great cartels and trusts in the world. Based on one of the UN reports, the financial sources and cash belonging to 358 members of the global gamblers’ oligarchy is equal to the financial sources of two and a half billion humans. From one side, the astonishing amount of power and wealth in the shape of multinational companies can easily devour political borders and national identities, and can make the intended values-one of which is neoliberalism-dominant over the world. In his various works, a thinker named Josue de Castro, has proven through quantitative and statistical analysis that the world can feed several times its current population, and the world can be in continual peace and tranquility. He has illustrated the contemporary world as such:

In our time there is a majority who don't have food and a minority who don't have sleep.' Isn't such a situation the direct result of globalization in the Western way? Of course the negative dimensions are not limited to the economic field and the welfare of "rich" countries and the poverty of poor countries, but it has been followed by the corruption of cultures, values, and moral foundations. From Horkheimer's viewpoint, globalization for the bourgeoisie is like water for fish. Thus, the bourgeoisie have no choice but to lay the foundations of the needed culture in various countries. It is in this way that the globalization of economy ends up in the globalization of culture and the downfall of values, beliefs, and parts of regional, local, and national cultures.¹²

It is clear that the consequence and dimensions of such a globalization will not result in the elimination of poverty, inequality, discrimination, war, and violence. One has to ask how such a matter can be expected. This is while today industrial and post-industrial developed countries have less than twenty percent of the world population within themselves, whereas over eighty percent of the wealth of the world is in the pockets of their cartels and trusts.

It has to be admitted that unfortunately, the prevailing Christian religion and the lords of the church in the West have not been able to have the necessary confrontation with the negative results of this kind of one-sided and imperialistic globalization. Similarly, the French philosopher, Pierre Bourdieu, has furthered this claim and has accused the Christian church of being in the same direction as this trend and benefiting from this corrupt global course. In his belief:

The Catholic church is not an enemy to capitalism. This church is willing to make a handful of the benefits of neoliberalism for itself and requests Europe to blend neoliberalism with Catholicism. This is the same 'priest-stricken' capitalism.¹³

What is even more interesting is to know that unfortunately today, many of the transgressions of America and the invasions of this country to other independent countries are in line with the teachings of "Foundationalist Christianity" and the accompaniment of the priests and church, of this sect which is also called "Christian Zionism"¹⁴. In convergence with Zionism, they believe in the reappearance of Jesus at Jerusalem and the rescue of Jews and the destruction of other religions, civilizations, and cultures which are incongruent with them, including Muslims, by the hands of this savior. In this direction, any kind of crime, suppression, and cruelty by Zionism is justified as means for preparing the grounds for the reappearance of the Christian promised savior. Thus, the strong union and convention of American statesmen with Zionism is justifiable in this way.

By explicating the different perspectives on globalization, especially the negative aspects of the Western globalization project, it can evidently be claimed that the global government of Imam al- Mahdi does not have any of the aforementioned drawbacks. In addition to possessing the positive aspects and dimensions of globalization, it is the true and balanced strategy for this comprehensive plan.

PART TWO

Globalism and Universality of Islam

Globalization, in addition to being the goal of the great human reformers, essentially has its roots in the teachings and mission of great divine religions. It can be counted as one of the main ideals of all

the prophets and great divine religions including Islam.¹⁵ Thus, this expression is not indicative of a new concept. During the age of the Mahdawi government, Imam Mahdi will realize this prophetic mission and goal of all the saints of God and the Pure Imams in the best possible way. He will complete this global plan, or else the finality of Islam will lose its meaning and significant.

The world-inclusiveness of Islam is based on the human nature, the flexibility of its teachings, and deducing facts from the Qur'an and the traditions (Ijtihad) according to requirements of time and place. It should be affirmed that Islam and its rules are concordant with human nature, which is an invariable dimension of human life. It is for this reason that Islam is a complete and comprehensive religion and can spread all over the world. From one side, many of the components of globalization are seen in the Shiite school of thought. For example, among the different schools of thought, Shiism has the most adherence to wisdom, so these components can be seen in Shiite rationality, jurisprudence, justice, Mahdiyyism, and its trans temporal and transspatial message. All of these elements are emphasized and stressed on by the Shiite school of thought.

At this point, it is good to be dealt with some of the verses and evidence which are expressive of the universality of Islam. For example, in Islamic teachings, the earth has been interpreted as a "house" and man in general has been counted as the owner of this house, regardless of his race, color, language, nationality, and class. In Quranic thought man - from any race, gender, and class - is God's representative and vicegerent on earth:

And He it is who has made you (His) vicegerent in the earth'¹⁶

This content has come in at least three other verses in 10:14,73 and 35:39. It clarifies the general mission of all humans in this home, i.e., earth. Also, divine prophets and messengers are leaders for all humans. It is their responsibility to educate and systemize the individual and group life of humans so that they can be directors of the human society in all dimensions.

The Holy Quran has said so about the mission of the first Godly prophets:

When your Lord said to the angels 'verily I am going to appoint a

*vicegerent on the earth*¹⁷

And says so in address to Prophet David:

*Oh David, verily We have appointed you a vicegerent on the earth*¹⁸

These verses are significant of the fact that a true prophet is the appointed divine representative and director who has a mission on the entire earth, and not merely in a particular region or special race. As to the Prophet of Islam, this global and comprehensive mission is brought up with more explicitness:

*Blessed is He who sent down Quran upon His servant (Muhammad) that he may be a warner to the worlds.*¹⁹

*Say: Oh people, verily I am the messenger of Allah to you all.*²⁰

*We have not sent you but as a bearer of glad tidings and a warner to the whole mankind.*²¹

These verses are indicative of the fact that like other great divine religions, the objective of Islam is to correct the entire human society in the whole broadness of the earth without attention to geographical limits and forged boundaries. It is for this reason that all religions including Islam call forth all governments beyond their borders and races, to a single religion and one government and centralization; in the same manner that in the start of the mission of Islam, the prophet wrote letters to the rulers of Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia, Yemen, Rome, etc and invited them to unity and surrender to a single management in the human society.

In order to make this fundamental principle clear, the phrases “the humans” and “the people” have been used many times in the Quran. The phrase “the people” has been used approximately 240 times in the Quran and the phrase “the humans” has been repeated about 65 times. This is a general phrase for all human individuals and in many of the cases, the publicness and generality of the addresses is very clear:

*Say: ‘Oh you people, I am only a manifest warner to you.’*²²

Or

*Verily I made you an Imam (leader) for mankind*²³

In these Quranic addresses, divine guidance and prophetic teach-

ings have been counted necessary for all humans. The differences and superstitious advantages which may cleave the unity and togetherness of the human society have been introduced as vain and futile. And in this way, the Quranic view on humans and the leaders of human society is a comprehensive and global view which does not see any limits and obstacles in the way of reaching its universal and world-inclusive goals.²⁴

In verse 143 of Surah al-Baqara, it is explicitly emphasized on the issue of globalization and has counted it as the crucial responsibility of the Islamic society. It asks them to try their best with all their might in building the nations and correcting the human societies all over the world:

And thus We have made you a justly balanced group, so that you may be witnesses over mankind and so that the messenger may be a witness over you.

And also in verse 28 of Surah al-Fath, the Quran says:

He it is who has sent down His messenger with the guidance and the true religion, so that he may make it prevail over all other religions. Allah is sufficient as a witness.

In this verse, it has been pointed out to the superiority of Islamic culture, in order to clarify its suitability to dominate over other cultures in the direction of globalizing Islam and bringing about a good life for all the inhabitants of the world. From the viewpoint of the divine verses, in such a religious life, Godly blessings will take over the world:

And if the people of the towns have believed and safeguarded themselves (against evil) We would have opened for them blessings from the heavens and from the earth.²⁵

Thus whenever faith and righteousness being bound over human obligations) outspread in the society and humans keep God's and their own limits, certainly divine blessings will envelop the earth. If the Muslims guide the people of the world to this truth, then they will administer the affairs of humanitarian globalization and will perform their aforementioned duty towards God and His creation in the best possible way.²⁶ Then Islamic culture will be globalized; the spread of awareness, knowledge, and justice will overtake the earth and all

systems of global hegemony and exploitation will fall down.

PART THREE

Mahdawi Globalization and its Features

As it was explained, Islam is a religion with global principles and ideals. From the start of its appearance, it was after bringing about a good life for all humans on the face of the earth. According to Islamic and Shiite articles of faith it is clear that Islamic globalization and a global goodly life will certainly be realized in the end of time, during the age and government of the promised Mahdi. Such globalization is incomparable and immeasurable with any of the current globalization projects, whether in its theoretical aspect or its scientific aspect, or from the aspect of its inclusiveness and comprehensiveness. Preliminary knowledge about it is only available through related sayings. For this reason, in the following paragraphs, we intend to review and cover part of the traits of the bountiful and global government of Imam Mahdi, which is overfilled with goodly life. Of course its traits are not limited to the ones mentioned. Rather these are just a recount and referral to some of its traits.

1. The Universal Governing of Islam and the Dissolution of Polytheism and Human Disputes

In Western globalization theories, which are mostly based on the school of liberal democracy and maintain relativism in morals and values, applying the principle of tolerance and excessive lenience toward all beliefs and religions is part of the essential claims. The position of government based on laicism is neutral in regard to religion and school of thought. From their point of view, supporting and advocating one school of thought means interference in individual freedoms and transposition of freedoms of belief and expression of faith. This is while secularism or worldliness and the essentiality of worldly matters are the bases of liberal democratic globalization. But in the global Mahdistic government, without any kind of flattery and blandishment, Islam will be introduced to the people of the world as the absolute, superior, and sublime religion, and will be identified and accepted by them.

To confirm this matter, several accounts will be mentioned. In the Ayashee Commentary, it has been narrated from Muhammad ibn Masood that Rafat ibn Musa said, "I heard from Imam Sadiq (PBUH) on the commentary of the verse 'to Him submits whosoever is in the heavens and in the earth, willingly or unwillingly' that he said 'When the Riser of the family of Muhammad rises, no place will remain on earth unless the goodly words of 'there is no God but Allah, Muhammad is the messenger of Allah' are said there in a loud voice there.'²⁷

Also, in an elaborate explanation about the age of Imam Mahdi's reappearance, Imam Sadiq (PBUH) says,

When our Riser rises...members of no religion remain other than they will declare Islam and become known for their faith...²⁸

It has also been narrated from Imam Sadiq (PBUH) who said,

My father Imam Baqir (PBUH) was asked about this aya, 'fight against all polytheists as they all rised to fight against you, until no mischief remains on earth and the religion is of God'. He said, 'The interpretation of this verse has not come yet. When the Riser rises, the ones who understand him will see the interpretation of this aya and at last like the end of the night, the religion of Muhammad will be illuminated into a true day and no trace of polytheism will remain on earth, as it was said.'²⁹

Imam Baqir (PBUH) has also said,

No ruin will remain on earth unless it will flourish. Nothing other than God will be worshipped; the idols and others will be put on fire and burned.³⁰

In another instance, while answering the questions of Mofazzal, Imam Sadiq (PBUH) says that verse 33 of Surah al-Tawba is applicable to the age of Imam Mahdi's global government and says,

I remind you oh Mofazzal, certainly all conflicts between nations and religions will be removed and all the religions will become one and for God, as the Exalted God says, 'Verily the religion with Allah is Islam'³¹ and also says, 'And whoever seeks any religion other than Islam (total submission to Allah) verily it shall never be accepted from him, and he shall be of the losers in the hereafter.'^{32 & 33}

2. The Absolute Rulership of Justice and Equity

No need to say that justice is the chief characteristic of the Mahdawi global government. Probably very few sayings about the age of appearance exist which do not point out to this trait and necessity, and the lost principle need of humanity. Because of the large number of sayings, only a few of them will be mentioned:

The Holy Prophet said,

If only one night remains from the life of the world, God will elongate that night so much until a man from my progeny gains government...He will fill the earth with equity and justice, after it had been filled with oppression and tyranny ...³⁴

In spreading justice, the universal Mahdawi government will act in an enveloping and nondiscrimination way, as Imam Hussain (PBUH) says in an important saying:

When the Riser rises, justice will be spread and this spreading of justice will embrace the good-doer and the sinner.³⁵

The mentioned justice will also influence the broadness of individual and social human domains. Imam Baqir's (PBUH) words are witnesses for this claim. He has said,

Be aware that just as heat and cold penetrate into their houses, his (the Riser's) justice will also find its way into their houses.³⁶

3. Establishment of All-Dimensional Security and Peace

From the accounts about the world-inclusiveness of Imam Mahdi's government, it can be understood that insecurity and fear will be eliminated from the lives of human individuals and an enclosing security will be established around the world. Imam Ali (PBUH) says so about the security of the age of reappearance and the overfilled safeness of that age, and other blessings such as justice:

Certainly, if our Riser rises, due to his sainthood and justice, the sky will rain as it should rain and the earth will let out its plants. Hatred will clear away from the hearts of the believers and peace will be made between wild beast and domestic animals; in such a way that a lady will walk from Iraq to Damascus and will not be harmed. Wherever she steps, it is all green and covered with plants. She will put her ornaments on her head and no beast will harm or scare her.³⁷

4. Welfare and Stable Economic Growth, Independence of the Public, and the Removal of Poverty

Economic gaps, unjust discrimination, and poverty which are the results of Western globalization do not exist in the Mahdawi globalization system. Not only are these gaps filled, but the human society will also reach complete independence and no poor person will be found to receive charity. A few of the narrative proofs are as stated below:

Imam Sadiq (PBUH) says,

When our Riser rises, the earth will be illuminated with the light of God and the creatures will no longer need sunlight, and darkness will disappear. During the days of the Imam's kingdom, people will have long lives...and the earth will reveal its treasures, in a way that people will see all of them on the earth. During that time, man will search for someone to give him from his own property and to provide help to his relatives or to give him alms; such a person to accept these from him will not be found and the people will become independent and needless through what God bestows upon them from His grace.³⁸

This great Imam describes this public needlessness in this way:

...And he will judge among people in the way David and Muhammad (PBUH) judged. At this time, the earth will reveal its treasures and bounties. A man from among you will not be able to find someone to give his charities to or to do well in his favor, for all the believers are needless and wealthy.³⁹

Widespread, steady economic and human development in the Mahdawi world-inclusive government is also evident in the Prophetic sayings. As the Prophet said:

Mahdi will rise among my people...and in his time people will gain welfare and blessings which they had never gained in any time before; everyone whether good-doer or bad-doer are included in them. The sky will rain its blessings on them and the earth will not hide any of its plants.⁴⁰

5. The Growth and Advancement of Science and Technology and the Prospering and Perfection of Human Intellect

Today's world, which is stepping on the path of globalization, has had an undeniable advance in regard to science and technology.

However, these developments have not caused the removal of human pains and have not brought about security, peace, equality and justice for humans. Still, billions of unknown matters exist for humans to discover, and man is unable to solve many of them. Western globalization has not been able to give the necessary aid in the removal of this impotence and inability. This is while during the age of the Mahdawi global government human knowledge will reach accomplishments beyond imagination. In an eloquent description, Imam Sadiq (PBUH) says so about part of the scientific accomplishments of that period:

Knowledge is twenty-seven letters. All the knowledge which has been presented to people through the prophets is only two letters, and until today, human have not come to know more than those two letters; but when our Riser rises, he will implement the other twenty-five letters and will spread them among people. Then he will join the other two letters and propagate all of the twenty-seven letters among the people.⁴¹

The accounts which make the situation of the age of reappearance clearly suggest that the intellect of the humans of that age will reach the highest level of perfection. As Imam Sadiq (PBUH) said:

When our Riser rises, God will touch His servants with His favor and their intellect and wisdom will increase.⁴²

In the Mahdawi global government, useful, productive, and resolving insight, learning, understanding, and correct knowledge will spread even in the houses. Circles of lessons and discussion for men and women will be established from coast to coast of the human society. As Imam Sadiq (PBUH) said:

Such a wisdom will be gifted to the Riser's people that even a woman in her house will judge according to the book of God and the way of His prophet and will not need anyone's assistance.⁴³

6. Relying on Reasoning and conviction and Obtaining Public Acceptability and Consent

The globalization of the Mahdawi age is based on logic and reasoning. The proof for this claim is Imam Hussain's (PBUH) words, which state this in a lengthy piece about the Riser:

In the end of the time and in the hard days of ignorance and unaware-

ness, God will forward a man and will assist him with His angels and will protect his companions. He will aid him with His signs and proofs and will make him dominant over the earth, until part of its people willingly and part of them reluctantly and unwillingly adhere to the religion of God. Then he will fill the earth with justice, equity, light, and reasoning. All the people of the world become humble before him; no disbeliever will remain unless he becomes a believer and no bad-doer will remain other than he is corrected...⁴⁴

This narration distinctly clarifies that although some of the ignorant and misguided people will initially reluctantly give in to Imam's government, but when they see his justice and his clear, logical, and illuminated reasoning, they become humble before his rulership and submit to it with full willingness, desire and satisfaction.

Thus the system of Mahdawi global government must be known as a system based on complete lawfulness, meaning that it possesses acceptability, rightfulness and legitimacy; a legitimacy which is not gained through deceiving public minds, or through controlling or altering public votes or by influence of vast propaganda, like some of the so-called modern Western political systems. Instead it is the product of the wholehearted satisfaction of the individuals of the human society and even other creatures in the world.

7. True Dialogue and Debate with other Religions

Based on what can be understood from narrations, in Mahdawi globalization, although Imam Mahdi decisively requires all monotheists and polytheists and followers of other religions to adhere to Islam and its rescuing teachings, but this does not mean that they are forced to abandon their beliefs and absolutely accept the religion of Islam. Rather the focus of Imam Mahdi's work-as his name shows-is the guidance of the human society; it is clear that the principle and the foundation of guidance have to be based on satisfaction. Narrations are also a proof for this issue that from the beginning of his reappearance, Imam will find the unaltered Psalms of David, the Torah, and the Bible and will debate, reason, and talk with the followers of these books according to the original transcripts. He will rule over them based on these books until they are guided to Islam and the universal Mahdawi government. In this regard, Imam Baqir (PBUH) says:

I swear to God, indeed it is as if I see the Riser leaning on the Black Stone (Hajar Al-Aswad). After that he requests his right - meaning his caliphate - from the Lord of the world. Then he says, 'Oh people, anyone who talks and debates with me about Adam, verily I am the closest of creation to Adam. Oh people! Anyone who talks and debates with me about Noah, verily I am the closest of creation to Noah. Oh people! Anyone who talks and debates with me about Abraham, verily I am the closest of creation to Abraham.

Oh people, anyone who talks and debates with me about Moses, verily I am the closest of creation to Moses. Oh people, anyone who talks and debates with me about Jesus, verily I am the closest of creation to Jesus. Oh people, anyone who talks and debates with me about Muhammad, verily I am the closest of creation to Muhammad. And oh people, anyone who talks to me about the book of God, verily I am the closest of creation to the book of God.' After these words he goes to the station of Abraham and performs two rakat of prayers there. After that he requests his right-meaning his caliphate-from the Exalted God.⁴⁵

In another account, Imam Baqir (PBUH) retells the conversational, logical, and respectful attitude of the Imam of the age with other religions in this way:

When the Riser of the Prophet's household rises, he will equally divide the properties. He will justly judge regarding his subjects. So whoever obeys him has verily obeyed God, and whoever opposes him has indeed disobeyed and opposed God. His entitlement as Mahdi is for this reason that God will show him the ways to hidden matters. He will take out the Torah and the other books of God from a small cave in Antioch. He will rule among the followers of the Torah according to the Torah, and among the followers of the Gospel according to the Gospel, and among the followers of the Psalms of David according to the Psalms of David and among the followers of the Quran according to the Quran.⁴⁶

8. Protection and Elevation of Human Dignity and Human Rights

In the globalization of the Mahdawi government, not only are human dignity and human rights the focal point, but also they will reach their highest level. The Commander of the Believers, Imam Ali (PBUH), illustrated the dignifying of the human society in the age of

reappearance in this way:

Then he will turn to Kufah, which is his resting place and quarters. No Muslim will remain enslaved other than he will purchase and free him. No debtor will remain other than he pays his debts. No violated right will remain other than he pays it, and no killed person remains other than he gives his blood money. And no killed person remains other than he pays his debts and supports his family. He manages all the affairs and regulates all the tasks until he overfills the earth with justice and equity, in the same way that it was overflowed with oppression and injustice at the time of his appearance.⁴⁷

In an expression clarifying the blessings of the age of reappearance, the honorable Prophet of Islam introduces that age as the period of honor and reverence toward his nation:

At the end of time, the savior of nations will rise among my people. God will quench coast to coast of his global government's realm with rain; the earth will grow out its plants and greenery. He will justly grant public property to people and will give importance to farming and animal husbandry. He will honor the people and give grandeur to them.⁴⁸

Observing the honor of humans and human rights is not restricted to the Imam of the time, but his companions also pay allegiance to Imam in that they will regard these issues. In a long saying describing the allegiance of 313 companions of Imam Mahdi, Imam Ali (PBUH) says:

They swear allegiance to him that they will never commit robbery or adultery, curse a Muslim, and unjustly shed anyone's blood, damage anyone's reputation, attack anyone's house or unjustly hit anyone; never store gold, silver, wheat and barley, use up an orphan's property; never testify to something they are not sure about; demolish a mosque; drink wine; never wear silk and fur; submit to gold and silver; close the way onto anyone; never make the way unsafe; always stay away from actions contradictory to chastity; never store foods made from wheat and barley; always be satisfied with less; support cleanliness and stay away from filth; command to the good; refrain others from the bad; wear rough clothes; make soil their pillow; perform their duty of jihad in the way of God; and he also pledges in his own right to go on their way; wear clothes like their clothes; ride a vehicle like their vehicle; to be as they want him to be; to be satisfied and content with less; to fill the earth, with the help of God, with justice and equity, just as it was filled with oppression and injustice; to

*worship God in the way He is worthy to be worshipped; not to select a watchman or guard for himself and ...*⁴⁹

The globalization of the Mahdawi government, while having firmness, is based on affection, sincerity, kindness, and honor toward humans without any kind of discrimination; a government in which even a sleeping person is not awakened without a reason, and with such tranquility toward the human world it becomes the refuge and haven for the human society. In describing this condition, the Prophet says:

*People will take refuge in him, in the way honeybees take refuge in their queen; he will spread justice all over the world, as it was filled with oppression, until the sincerity of the beginning of Islam's mission returns to them. No sleeping person will be awakened (without reason) and no blood will (unjustly) be shed.*⁵⁰

9. The Negation of Racism and Ethnocentricity

In the Mahdawi globalization system, ethnocentrism and racism have no place and it is piety and worthiness that will be thought up and put into practice for the improvement of material and spiritual human affairs. An example which verifies these words is that the selection of 313 main companions of Imam from various countries is based on the criteria of piety, worthiness, and experience. In an interesting research, the author of the outstanding book *Imam Mahdi from Birth to Reappearance* has pointed to the names of the cities and countries of the companions of Imam Mahdi. Based on today's geography he has introduced approximately twenty-three countries⁵¹ as the origin and residence of these followers.⁵² This shows that the Mahdawi global system does not rely on a particular race or nation; the criteria for its progress, search, and selection of its officials are Quranic and divine criteria. It is this matter that, along with other traits of the pure Mahdawi government, causes all the people of the world from various nations, sects, and political systems to be satisfied with the mentioned government. With the complete enforcement of justice, the world will witness the elimination of gaps and deprivations in the world resulting from the arrogance and avarice of powerful nations and governments. The capacities, abilities and the widespread fulfillment of the rights of all humans including the weak and powerful will be realized. In today's expression, the world will

face a rhythmic development, not a discordant one.

Another reason which proves the negation of ethnocentrism and racism in the promised global system is the amplitude of narrations which indicates that although Imam Mahdi is Arab and Quraishi, not only are Arabs and Quraish not known as the superior tribe and class in this global government, but also many of them become apostates because of the trials and hardships of the Mahdawi age, and are destroyed by the Imam in large multitudes. Not only will Imam not show consideration for their tribal similarity to himself, but also will, according to the firm divine principles behead them for their disbelief and hypocrisy, and will take it hard on them.⁵³

10.A Quasi-Federal Government and Respect to Other Nations

It seems from some of the narrations that at the same time that the global Mahdawi government and its globalization is universal, and Islamic rulings govern all over it, other nations have some freedoms in following their national traditions and cultures which are not contradictory to Islam. At the same time, they have to conform to the central global government, which is in a form similar to federalism. Imam will observe this right and respect for them. In this regard, a few narrations are reminded.

Imam Baqir (PBUH) says,

*When our Riser rises, sectional and tribal governments will be abolished.*⁵⁴

But at the same time, Imam Sadiq (PBUH) acknowledges that,

*When our Riser rises, he will send representatives to every region and will say to them, 'the government is in your control. Act to what you know best.'*⁵⁵

11.Renovation and Religious Revival according to the New Circumstances

One of the traits of the globalization process is the consideration of time and place and moving according to the new changes and responding to new matters. It was said before that Islam and especially Shiism due to its own nature and on the basis of its advancing way

of deducing religious laws, has always enjoyed this flexibility as one of its permanent parts. The Mahdawi globalization system too is not needless of this essential feature and is completely equipped with it. In the Mahdawi age, the world will be faced with the revival of a new Islam and a religious renovation. As Imam Sadiq (PBUH) says,

When the Riser rises, he will bring a new order and new laws in the same way that the Messenger of God acted in the beginning of Islam and invited people to a new order⁵⁶...that Imam will perform actions similar to the actions of the Messenger of God, and in the same way that the Prophet did away with the matters of the age of ignorance, he will do away with the matters of the time before him, and will renew the religion of Islam.⁵⁷

The same interpretation is seen in Imam Baqir's (PBUH) description, where he says,

The Riser will bring a new book, a new order, and a new law and will be strict with the Arabs.⁵⁸

In another honorable saying from this great Imam, while comparing the conduct of the Mahdawi government with the conduct of the Prophet in nullifying the laws of the age of ignorance, he says,

...Likewise is the Riser when he rises. He will nullify the laws that were in the hands of the people in the days of peace with the disbelievers, and will behave with justice among the people.⁵⁹

In this way, the Mahdawi globalization is aimed at the renewal and revival of the true Islam. This renovation is on the basis of the new circumstances. It is clear that this matter will result in the clarity of Islam and an increase in the number of the followers of this primordial religion. There will no longer be the need for exhausting scientific and theological discussions and search for understanding the real views of the holy religion. Most of the teaching methods and ways of inferring religious laws will become old and useless. In his work, the grand scholar late Ayatollah Qazvini in a general analysis described this matter in this way:

God knows how this beneficial and advancing change will be, but it seems that many of the books of jurisprudence and Hadith will be renewed; the role of many subjects of the books on principles of Islamic jurisprudence will come to an end, for Imam Mahdi will describe general rules for understanding legal matters. In their light,

scientists will become needless of discussions on principles and their rulings.

The role of books relating to the identity and reliability of Hadith transmitters Known as 'Ilm ar-Rijal, and categorization of traditions into sound and weak traditions and soon will all come to an end; because these discussions are mostly based on guess and presumption, and during the time of occultation they are in use because of the absence of an infallible Imam. But during the time of reappearance, people will acquire the definite rulings and will become needless of such books.

And also during the time of reappearance, most of exegetical works will lose credibility, for with the mental growth and profundity arising from the culture of the age of reappearance, people will give no importance to these commentaries that have risen from extremist views. Thus, the only commentaries which remain are those enjoyed the narrated accounts from the Prophet and his household.

In the same way, the various forms of the recitation of the Quran which no reason has been revealed for them will be removed, because people will learn the Quran and its correct recitation from Imam Mahdi, just as it was descended to the pure heart of Muhammad (PBUH). They will be acquainted with the interpretation, message and meaning that God had meant and will be informed of its high knowledge and secrets and wonders, which are still unknown and covered...⁶⁰

12.A Great Transformation in the Areas of Communication and Media

In the Mahdawi global government, communication and media fields will be encountered with a great fundamental change. The simplest interpretation of the narrated hadiths brings to the mind the discussion of the usage of media such as the internet and television and the communication of people with each other through these ways. But it seems that these traditions are indicative of a vast advancement in this field. This period can be compared to a period much beyond the time of the appearance of mass media. First, a few narrations in this area are reminded:

Imam Sadiq (PBUH) says,

During the time of the Riser, a believer who is in the east can see his brother who is in the west and in the same way the one who is in the west can see his believer brother in the east.⁶¹

Or in a more considerable saying he says,

When our Riser rises, God will gift a special vastness and ability to our Shias' hearing and visual system, so that there will be no mediation or courier or gap between them and Imam Mahdi.⁶²

With the presence of today's advancements in the area of communication technology, such as the television and internet, understanding the first tradition is not difficult and complicated; but given the second account, it seems that the advancements of the time of reappearance in the field of expanding communicational fields are not limited to technology and communication tools. Instead it is the believers who through their high levels of belief enjoy the divinely gifted words and their ears and eyes possess a power to over-see and over-hear beyond their place. In other words they are present in all places. In the same way that at any time they can have audiovisual meetings with each other, they can have such a contact with Imam Mahdi. They can use the full blessing of his being beyond places and times and can always be present before him in order to perpetually follow and obey him. It is evident that in the age of appearance, everything will reach its utmost perfection. The equipment of believer humans-as the noblest of creation-to such divine gifts is not far from thought. For this reason, it can be projected that with these advancements in the creation of the chosen believers, not only if the discovery of other planets in boundless spaces and the disclosing of billions of other hidden secrets in the universe possible for the humans of the age of reappearance, but it will be realized to the utmost extent under the chief leadership of Imam Mahdi. Thus countless secrets of the universe will be uncovered for them.

13. The Ideal Observance of Environmental Rights and Rights of the Living Beings

Unlike Western globalization, the Mahdawi globalization does not bring about destructive effects and outcomes for the environment and its inhabitants, the way the world today is faced with immense envi-

ronmental problems such as the depletion of the ozone layer, global warming caused by greenhouse gases, deforestation, the extinction of some species, and the industrial and chemical pollution of the environment. In a beautiful saying, the Holy Prophet describes the satisfaction of all human and non-human creatures from the global government of Imam Mahdi with this expression: "All the inhabitants of the earth and the sky are satisfied with him."⁶³ In another saying he has counted this government as the cause of the welfare and happiness of all creatures:

*The inhabitants of the sky and the people of the earth, the birds, the predators, and the fish in the sea, all are happy and joyful under his government.*⁶⁴

It is quite evident that this happiness is not realizable and attainable in the universal government of the promised Mahdi without the ideal observance of the rights of all living beings and the protection of their environment. Also in a saying from Imam Hassan (PBUH), it has been narrated that even "the predators live freely (and without causing trouble) in Imam Mahdi's government".⁶⁵ This matter is expressive of the peace and tranquility which will be brought to humanity by the universal Mahdawi government; a government which will lead the world to a direction that all the Godly signs will reach their utmost appearance. Right and wrong will be separated from each other. According to some inferences, no one will commit a sin and God will be purely worshipped, with the least interference of carnal desires and without the temptations of Satan. This will be to such an extent that the dead will also ask God to be returned to the world and to be revived in order to have the honor and to realize their wish of living in this era and aiding God's promised one.

Conclusion

In the present article, in answering the questions of the research, the definition and different understandings about globalization were explicated. It was explained that one of the main patterns for this phenomenon at the present is Western or American globalization. Then with a general analysis of the results of this process, besides recognizing its positive outcomes, the negative and destructive out-

comes of Western globalization were also described. It was proven that dominance, hegemony, arrogance, exploitation, and imperialism are hidden in the heart of this course for globalization, whether in its theory or practice. This kind of globalization is material, one-sided, artificial, non-universal, and secular because of its offensive, arrogant, and monopolistic nature. It has no goal other than integrating the world and uniting it in a shared global market under the rule of the capitalistic world, with the leadership of America; a profit-based market which translates all the components of social life, politics, and culture into the language of profiteering, arrogance, and unquestionable dominance of Western civilization, and their increasing dominance over other countries and cultures. It claims to bring about a unipolar capitalist and militaristic global society. This can be known as an imposed project and social engineering plan; on a higher level it can be known as a system that tries to impose its Western ideology, which is based on neoliberalism and capitalism, to the entire human society. Through this way, it intends to spread the American lifestyle and to westernize humans and to promote the culture of consumption and the basicity of profit and capital. It follows a goal of destroying local traditions and cultures, annihilating rival religions, destroying the environment, and making weak countries continually dependent on Western countries. It falsely tries to introduce and dictate the theoretical and practical system of liberal democracy as a common evolutionary model for all human societies, while in action, the inefficiency of this idea, whether in the sphere of thought or in the realm of action and enforcement, has been proved. The present crises which have befallen Western regimes confirm the proof for this claim.

On the other hand, in order to prove the claim of this article, it was logically pointed out to the universality of the high teachings of Islam and that the Mahdawi globalization system is worthy of presenting a world-inclusive, comprehensive, hope-giving, and dynamic model or the perfection of human society and for its rescue from the existing perditions, privations and difficult circumstances. By acknowledgement of the research's proof, Mahdawi globalization can be a positive interpreter of the current process of globalization, meaning that by using various fields of technology and other God-given gifts during

the age of reappearance, it can act as a bridge and connect all the world and its inhabitants and do away with all scientific, economic, political, social and cultural privations. It can make favorable, religious, moral and humane customs rule over the world and can create a better, positive, and complementary unity among humans. The global Mahdawi government can complete and give meaning to the finality of the Prophet's religion and the universality of his mission. It can bring together the people of the world so that, like a single body, they can think about each other's wellbeing and betterment through following the high renovated teachings of Islam. In a single front, they can fight against all the intruding factors on the way of human perfection, and against all the impurities in the world and in their life space. With the dying away of satanic temptations, humans will attain devotion and sincerity in worshipping God. It is evident that this matter is possible only under the Mahdawi global government and its special distinctions with traits which include the following:

1. The Universal Governing of Islam and the Dissolution of Polytheism and Human Disputes
2. The Absolute Rulership of Justice and Equity
3. Establishment of Multilateral Security and Peace
4. Welfare and Stable Economic Growth, Independence of the Public, and the Removal of Poverty
5. The Growth and Advancement of Science and Technology and the Prospering and Perfection of Human Intellect
6. Relying on Reasoning and conviction and Obtaining Public Acceptability and Consent
7. True Dialogue and Debate with other Religions
8. Protection and Elevation of Human Dignity and Human Rights
9. The Negation of Racism and Ethnocentricity
10. A Quasi-Federal Government and Respect to Other Nations
11. Renovation and Religious Revival according to the New Circumstances
12. A Great Transformation in the Areas of Communication and Media
13. The Ideal Observance of Environmental Rights and Rights of the Living Beings

It is clear that with these ideal traits, the Mahdawi global government will be able to actualize the Infallibles' ideal plan for globaliza-

tion and the promised goodly life of the Quran in the width of the world.

- 1- Fortunately, countless books and articles have been written on the phenomenon of globalization, even in Farsi. As an example, refer to:
-Gess Hal, Sam Web and others, *Current Globalization Trends and its Real Alternatives*, translated into Farsi by Homa Ahmadzadeh and Ahmad Joharian (Tehran: Pazhoohandeh Pub, 2002).
Sameer, -Amin, *Capitalism in the Era of Globalization*, translated into Farsi by Nasser Zarafshan (Tehran: Agah Pub, 2001).
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- 2- Ismail, Mardanee Geevi, "Theories and Approaches of Globalization", *Political-Economic Newsletter*, July and August 2001, 167-168, p 32.
- 3- Alireza, Sadra, "Pathology of Globalization with the Mahdawi Model of Globalization", *Qabasat*, 9th year, fall (2004), p 160.
- 4- Ibid, 162.
- 5- Kazim Ghareeb Abadi and others, "Globalization and Change in the Components of Foreign Policy", *Political-Economic News*, September and October (2003), 193-194, p 23-24.
- 6- Kellner, Douglas, "A Critical Theory of Globalization", translated into Farsi by Hussain Sharifreeh Rahnaneh, *Political-Economic Newsletter*, August and September 2002, 179-180, p 128-129.
- 7- Mohammad, Qaraguzloo, "Globalization", *Political-Economic Newsletter*, June and July (2002), 177-178, p 80.
- 8- Kazim Ghareeb Abadi and others, op. cit. *Political-Economic Newsletter*, October and November (2003), 193-194.
- 9- Ibid .
- 10- Ibid, p. 22.
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- 12- Ibid p. 90 & 96.
- 13- Ibid. 90.
- 14- Other titles are also used for Christian Zionism which include: the renovation of the life-given, Bible propagators, warrior Bible propagators, followers of the will of Christ or the will of God, and holy terrorism. The thoughts and views of this sect of Fundamentalist Christianity can be seen in books such as *Preparing for Great War, The Bible Warrior*, "The Warrior Bible Propagators in the Context of Atomic War", all three written by Chris Hal Sel, and two other books named *The Late Great Planet Earth* and *Faith and Prophecy for America* written by a priest named Hal Lindsey.
- 15- For more information on the discussion of Islam's relation with globalization, a limited number of books have been written. As an example, refer to: Sayyed Taha, Marqateh, *Universality of Islam and Globalization* (collection of articles) (Tehran: World Assembly for the Approximation of Islamic Schools of Thought, 2003) volume 2.
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-Magazine *Qabasat*, (fall, 2004); *Book of Criticism*, (fall, and winter (2002), 24 and 25.
- 16- Surah An'am: 165.
- 17- Surah Baqarah: 30.
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- 24- Mohammad, Hakimi, "Islamic Globalization, Western Globalization", *Book of Criticism*, fall and winter (2002), 24 and 25, p 108-112.
- 25- Surah A'raaf: 96.
- 26- Mohammad Hadi, Ma'refat, "Globalization, the Backgrounds of Globalization or Awaiting the Promised Day", *Qabasat*, fall (2004), p 59.
- 27- Allameh Mohammad Baqir, Majlesee, *The Promised Mahdi*, 13th volume of Behar Al-Anwaar, translated into Farsi by Hussain ibn Mohammad Vali Oroomiyeyee (Qom: Jamkaran Mosque Publications, 2003) 5th Edition, volume 2, p. 227 (Quoted from the *Ayashee Commentary*, volume 1, p. 183 saying 81).
- 28- Ibid 224.
- 29- Ali, Kooranee, *The Age of Reappearance*, translated into Farsi by Abbass Jalali (Tehran: Islamic Propagation Organization, 1990) p. 357 (Quoted from the *Ayashee's Commentary*, volume 2, p. 56).
- 30- Ibid 361 (Quoted from Sheikh Sadooq's *Kamal Al-Deen*, p. 331).
- 31- Surah Aal Imran: 19.
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- 33- Surah Aal Imran: 85.
- 34- Mohammad Baqir, Majlesee, *Behar Al-Anwaar* (Qom: Dar Al-Kitab Al-Islamiya, Beta) volume 51, p. 84, saying 35.
- 35- Ibid, volume 27, p. 90, Part 4, saying 24.
- 36- Ali, Sa'adat Parvar, *The Appearance of Light*, translated from the book Al-Shams Al-Mozee'a, translated into Farsi by Mohammad Javad Vazeeeri Fard (Tehran: Ehya Books, 2001) 2nd Edition, p. 199 (Quoted from *Ethbat Al-Hodat*, volume 3, p. 544, saying 529).
- 37- Majlesee, *Behar Al-Anwaar*, volume 10, p. 104.
- 38- Majlesee, *The Promised Mahdi*, volume 2, p. 222 (Quoted from Sheikh Mufeed's *Ershad*, p. 363).
- 39- Ibid 224-225.

- 40- Ibid. volume 51, p. 78.
- 41- *Behar Al-Anwaar*; volume 52, p. 336, saying 73.
- 42- Sa'adat Parvar, *The Appearance of Light*, p. 202 (Quoted from *Ethbat Al-Hodat*, volume 3, p. 495, saying 253).
- 43- *Behar Al-Anwaar*; volume 52, p. 352.
- 44- Mahmood, Sharee'at Zadeh Khorasane, *The Global Government of Imam Mahdi from the Viewpoint of the Quran and the Infallibles* (Tehran: Ansaar Al-Hussain Cultural Institute, Spring 1992) p. 278-279 (Quoted from *Tabarsi's Al-Ehtejaj*, volume 2, p. 11).
- 45- *The Promised Mahdi*, p. 228-229.
- 46- Ibid, p. 243-244.
- 47- Sayyed Mohammad Kazim, Qazvini, *Imam Mahdi from Birth to Reappearance*, translation into Farsi and research by Ali Karami and Seyed Mohammad Hussaini (Qom: Al-Hadi Publication Office, 1997) p. 671-672 (Quoted from the *Ayashee's Commentary*, volume 1 p 66; *Mo'jam Ahadith Al-Imam Al-Mahdi*, p. 22).
- 48- Ibid. 750-751 (Quoted from *Aqd Al-Dorar*; New Edition Published by Jamkaran Mosque, p. 144 part 7).
- 49- Mohammad Hussain, Raheemian, *Manifestations of Light from Ghadeer until Reappearance* (Qom: Dar Al-Thaqlain, 2000) p. 183-184 (Quoted from *Days of Deliverance*, volume 1, p. 465-466.)
- 50- Lotfollah Safee, Golpayganee, *Selected Works* (Qom: Davari Books) p. 487, part 7, saying 2.
- 51- Some of these cities and countries are:
Iraq, African Continent, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Lebanon, Armenia, France, Egypt, Turkey, Yemen, Jerusalem, Syria, Bahrain, India, Marv or Khorasan located in the former Soviet Union, Afghanistan, Jordan, Oman, Pakistan, Ethiopia, Uzbekistan, Caucasia.
- 52- See: *Imam Mahdi from Birth to Reappearance*, p. 587-600.
- 53- See: *The Promised Mahdi*, volume 2, p. 240-242.
- 54- *The Appearance of Light*, p. 202 (Quoted from *Ethbat Al-Hodat*, volume 3, p. 524, saying 409).
- 55- Ibid 203 (Quoted from *Ethbat Al-Hodat*, volume 3, p. 573, saying 712).
- 56- *The Promised Mahdi*, volume 2, p. 224 (Quoted from Sheikh Mufid's *Ershaad*, p. 364).
- 57- Ibid, p. 246.
- 58- *The Appearance of Light*, p. 199 (Quoted from *Ethbat Al-Hodat*, volume 3, p. 540, saying 502).
- 59- *The Promised Mahdi*, volume 2, p. 284 (Quoted from *Tahzib*, volume 6, p. 154, part 70, saying 1).
- 60- *Imam Mahdi from Birth to Reappearance*, p. 735-736.
- 61- Ibid. 773 (Quoted from *Behar Al-Anwaar*; volume 52, p. 391; *Mo'jam Ahadith Al-Imam Al-Mahdi*, volume 4, p. 56) and *The Promised Mahdi*, volume 2, p. 298.
- 62- Ibid (Quoted from *Kafee*, volume 8, p. 240; *Khara'ej*, volume 2, p. 840; *Mo'jam Ahadith Al-Imam Al-Mahdi*, volume 4, p. 57) and *The Promised Mahdi*, volume 2, p. 220.
- 63- *The Appearance of Light*, p. 207 (Quoted from Al-Tashreef Bel Menan, p. 146, saying 175).
- 64- *Selected Works*, p. 472, part 3, saying 3.
- 65- Sharee'at Zadeh Khorasane, *The Global Government of Imam Mahdi from the Viewpoint of the Quran and the Infallibles*, p. 279 (Quoted from *Tabarsi's Al-Ehtejaj*, volume 2, p. 11).



*Henry Corbin's
Phenomenological view of
the Mahdism Doctrine*

Abstract

Among the greatest western Islamicists is Henry Corbin, who has studied Shiite thought in general and the significance of Mahdism (*Mahdawiyyat*) in particular. In contrast to some western scholars of religion who have treated Islam and the Matter of Mahdawiyyat by making use of historical approach, he has applied a phenomenological approach to the study of fundamental components of Shiism and spiritual philosophy. In Corbin's view, one of the key elements of the spiritual philosophy of Shiite thought is the belief in Imamate, whose manifestation in our age is Mahdawiyyat. Accordingly, he has propounded considerable points about Mahdism and has written several articles on the authority and Imamate of Imam Mahdi (may God hasten his reappearance), The Khazra Island (The Green Island), the domicile of Imam Mahdi's offsprings, and other issues related to Mahdism. He maintains that Mahdism is an Islamic teaching which has the potential of becoming a theory or doctrine in the Islamic mysticism. Unlike many western religious researchers, Corbin presents a positive and empathetic view towards Mahdism and acknowledges the importance of the issue, yet under the influence of Ismaili and Shaykhi thoughts, he is not in agreement with some of the Imami beliefs.

Introduction

Henry Corbin (1903-1978) is a prominent orientalist who spent a part of his life in Iran and was taught by great Islamic scholars as well as western thinkers. He did research in the field of Iranian studies, Islamic studies, Sufism, and Islamic philosophy and organized the Department of Iranology of Franco-Iranian Institute in Tehran. After many years of endeavoring to understand Shiite thought, he translated as well as wrote some invaluable works in French in the field of Sufism, Islamic philosophy and the Kalam. His collection of works amounts to about 200 writings, some of which are unique in their kinds.¹

Corbin's studies, accomplished in collaboration with some Iranian thinkers, has yielded a collection of mystical and philosophical works called "the repository of Iranian writings", 22 volumes of which were published when Corbin was living. His works on Islamic philosophy

and Sufism reflects his intellectual preoccupation.² Unlike many orientalists who write about the Eastern and Islamic culture with little investigation, and mostly based on suspicion, Corbin's writings in this regard are all based on accurate and extended studies. The study of Corbin's various writings suggest that he is well-informed of the Islamic culture, whereas there are few orientalists who are as comprehensive and insightful as Corbin.

Nevertheless, Corbin does not regard himself as an orientalist; but as a travelling philosopher who visits everywhere and asks everybody in an attempt to find what he has lost. He says in this regard:

My upbringing was a philosophical one from the start. That's why, literally saying, I'm neither a specialist in the German language and culture nor an orientalist. I'm a traveling philosopher, going wherever I'm led. Though in this journey I visited cities like Freiburg, Tehran and Esfahan, I think these cities are symbolic places of life-long and lasting journey.

Without doubt, we can claim that Henry Corbin is among those orientalists who have untold utterances about Mahdism. When looking into this issue, he considers it in a systematic and organic way with other basic principles of Shiism. He doesn't simply look at Mahdism as a dissociated item or teaching. When dealing with Mahdism, some orientalists and even a number of Islamic scholars disregard the relation between Mahdism and other teachings and neglect its impact on the other basic components of the Sharia and religious teachings. Instead, they detach Mahdism from the breeding grounds of religious teachings and study it in a manner of dissolving, not synthetically or organically, whereas one element, sometimes in addition to its internal significance, has a unique position in the system of a thought or religion. The relation between Mahdism and religion is like the relation of the heart to the body. Not only can we analyze and study it individually, but also we can consider its function and importance with regards to the other teachings of religion. It is only through an organic analysis, even in the smallest components of religion, that the importance and significance of Mahdism becomes evident.

Mahdism is the ultimate end of the Mohammedan Sainthood (*wilayah*) and is considered as the most prominent issue in all Henry Corbin's scholarly disputes in understanding Shiite Sufism. Once you

comprehend all of Henry Corbin's intellectual components in describing Islamic mysticism and innate Shiism, you will realize that Mahdism is the most important concept in his understanding of Shiite Sufism and Philosophy. One of the most essential issues of mystic disputes, included in the arguments made by mystics about the Mohammedan Reality, is the issue of Mohammedan and Mahdawi Sainthood (the Absolute and the Conditional Sainthood), whose negation would lead to the destruction or lack of stability of all the constituents of Sufism and Mohammedan Reality. In the same way, we can say that in all the writings and intellectual endeavors of this great Orientalist, the issue of Mahdism is the main pillar. It is as if he has focused on Mahdism as the main pillar of the dispute in dealing with all the research topics, including the Ismaili sect, Muhyiddin and Sayyed Haydar Amoli's Sufism, Suhrawardi's illuminationist philosophy, the Shaykhi sect and the Twelver Shiite. By taking a look at Henry Corbin's writings in the field of Sufism and Shi'i culture, which include tens of books, it becomes evident that he regards the analysis of Sufism and Shiism to be incomplete without the issue of Mahdism. He considers the advent of the Mahdi's government as the manifestation of the essence of all Abrahamic religions. He says: "Ultimately the reappearance of the twelfth Imam (Mahdi, the absent Imam) occurring at the end of our time, will manifest all the mysteries of the Divine Sending."³

In explaining the Islamic mysticism, Corbin refers to great scholars such as `Abd al-Razzaq Kashani, a commentator of Muhyiddin's Sufism, and says: "Sainthood (wilayah) is part of prophecy". The prerequisite of reaching the prophetic Sharia is reaching the stage of wilayah and this is realized by knowing and establishing a bound with the Lord of our time, Imam Mahdi. He states the sayings of `Abd al-Razzaq Kashani regarding Sainthood, which is the pillar of the issue of the Doctrine of Mahdism, as follows:

According to `Abd al-Razzaq Kashani, Sainthood is a part of prophethood. In his opinion the prerequisite of reaching the stage of prophesy, is reaching the stage of Sainthood; since a prophet had been a Saint (Wali) before becoming a prophet. It is therefore evident that prophecy is added to sainthood; it means that prophecy is a permanent sainthood and in fact, prophethood is a temporary concept. This is the point induced from the Shiite prophetic studies.⁴

Methodology of Henry Corbin in Shiite Studies

Just like Toshihiko Izutsu, Mircea Eliade, Etienne Gilson, Rudolf Otto and Friedrich Heiler, Henry Corbin has used the method of phenomenology in the study of religion.⁵ In the methodology of their research subjects, these scholars do not look at an issue with a historical perspective. They do not investigate the issue with regard to its occurrence in a particular time and place or its historical mode. In the phenomenological studies, the most important fact is to understand a phenomenon and its possible impact on an individual, a society or a period of history. According to Annemarie Schimmel's interpretation, in the phenomenological method, the researcher tries to enter the core of a religion and to reach the innermost holy issue of any religion.⁶ With a historical look we cannot understand the basis of a thought and its manner of creation. But in a phenomenological outlook we can comprehend the basis and the manner of creation of a thought. In this method, we focus on the description, cognition and impacts of a phenomenon. In Edmund Husserl's perception, it is a kind of descriptive psychology by means of which we would be able to understand the intellectual world, the life of individuals and also the meaning of a phenomenon. In Martin Heidegger's interpretation:

In phenomenology they try to provide a situation in which a single thing would show itself so that its quality would not become veiled with obscure and insufficient concepts. When a forest reveals itself, or a desert shows a desert, we have to ask: How do that forest and that desert emerge to them, not that we would look at them or perceive them based on our pre-established concepts⁷.

In the phenomenological approach, the aim is to come to know the phenomenon by way of cognizing the mental and psychological components of individuals and comprehending their impact on the outside effects. This is possible through cognizing and inducing the intellectual reasons; on the contrary, in the historical approach which is based on the positivistic process, the investigation of the issue is done without considering the mental capacities and elements.

Henry Corbin does not look at the issue of Mahdism from the historic perspective and does not try to evaluate and investigate the historical factors of the emergence of this thought. In contrast, some of the Orientalists who preceded him such as Darmesteter⁸, Ignac

Goldziher⁹, and Van Vloten¹⁰ appeal to the historical approach.

In the historical approach, used by many Anglo-Saxon orientalists and religious scholars in the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, each phenomenon has occurred in a historical breeding grounds of events, that would make it impossible to investigate it separate from its historical conditions. That's why from the historical perspective, Mahdism is considered a fraudulent claim which is the result of political and social conditions or an individual or psychological disillusionment. Hence, people would start to believe in a divine savior who would rise up and make them feel spiritually and psychologically healed.

To make more clear, the historicist orientalists proclaim that the idea of Mahdism was made up by some of the Shiites of Kufa, like Mokhtar Thaqafi and Keisaniyyeh, or the Moslems of Sudan, such as Mohammed Ahmed Sudani (the claimant of being Mahdi), to decrease the power of the Umayyad or the colonialism power of England and the oppression dominant in Sudan. Creating and fabricating the issue of Mahdism and Messianism they wanted to rise up and unite people for a liberating revolution.

Therefore, from the historicist viewpoint, it is not possible to evaluate a religious belief and its importance according to the religious system of beliefs and its followers. As an instant, the prominent position of Mahdism in religion and the belief system has been neglected.

In the phenomenological way, instead of justifying or explaining historical events and linking the creation of a thought to historical events, the intellectual and doctrinal elements of religion are considered mainly. The researcher would therefore explain religious teachings rather than expressing his opinion. When looking at Mahdism from a phenomenological outlook, Henry Corbin would deal with how Mahdism is described from the view of religious teachings, how the Koran and traditions interpret it or what the opinion of Shiite scholars and mystics is about Mahdism. A Scholar like him would not try to reject or prove the issue. He would neither talk about the authenticity or falsity of Mahdism, nor consider it the invention of the claimants of Mahdism. In fact, unlike the historical method that was

prevalent among the Orientalists before Henry Corbin, his research method is descriptive, sympathetic and phenomenological. Instead of expressing his personal opinion and historically analyzing an issue, he tries to find about the function of a teaching such as Mahdism within the doctrinal system of Islam, particularly of the Shiite branch of Islam.

In the phenomenological method, the investigation and study of a phenomenon is even more important than searching for its authenticity and the discovery of its cause. In this method the researcher tries to identify the collection of the causes of a thought in a networked and coherent manner. In fact, the phenomenologist leaves the authenticity of a phenomenon in suspense, or in the technical term, he suspends the judgment. Instead he tries to know the phenomenon and its creators and becomes sympathetic and harmonic towards them.

Accordingly, when studying the components of the Shiite thought, Corbin does not deal with it within a concrete history and time, but studies it outside history in its general sense within a realm that is contradictory with history; in other words, he expresses its roots and foundations within a non-materialistic time and place. In fact, in the study of the divine history, the macrocosmic time gives its place to the microcosmic time. That's why with regards to a phenomenological interpretation of Mahdism, Corbin says:

In explaining the twelfth Imam, there are many allusive and archetypal lines about his birth and absence.... A historical criticism would end nowhere; because we are talking about something which we have called the divine history. Here we should act as a phenomenologist, discovering the intentions of the Shiite conscience, to observe what the Shiite conscience has showed from the start.¹¹

In the historicist view, when contrasted with the phenomenological view, if we disconnect an event, thought, school or an idea from its historical and linear connections, it would not be recognizable. We need to study an event in its historical course and in connection with the past and present; but in phenomenology, there is no need to find a logical connection with the past, present or the place of its occurrence. Although understanding the time and place can help us understand a phenomenon, we don't necessarily need the historical course prior or after it. The most noteworthy fact in phenomenol-

ogy is the principle components of the phenomenon itself, though it may not be compatible with its surrounding phenomena. Hence in a phenomenological cognition of the Shiite thought, Corbin goes beyond the historical study of the creation of Shiism and deals with the main components of the Shiite spiritual philosophy to explain its main characteristics. He believes that the key words in the Shiite phenomenology are: the esoteric interpretation, Imamate, sainthood, the religious law, the mystical path, the essential reality and Mahdism.

In his opinion the Imamology is the extension of the prophetic studies. He believes that Imam Mahdi, who is the continuance of the Imamology in our age, is the pivot of the chain of Imamate. He considers the issue of Mahdism the heart of the Shiite phenomenology. He says in this regard:

The Shiite branch of Islam is based on a kind of prophetic study that is expanded by an Imamology.... The responsibility of the prophetic philosophy is to continue and preserve the spiritual meaning, in other words, the esoteric sense of the Divine revelation. The presence of a spiritual Islam is also relevant to the preservation of this esoteric meaning; otherwise the same thing that happened to Christianity would happen to Islam and its special kinds: the transformation of the theological systems in Christianity to social ideologies. In the same way the theological Mahdism would also change into social Mahdism and would turn into a conventional issue.¹²

In the study of Mahdism and Shiism, Henry Corbin deals with the elements, parameters and the foundations of Shiite thought. In his perspective, the authenticity of these issues is taken for granted. In other words, from the phenomenological view, he does not give priority to understanding the authenticity and the correctness of this belief. But he does believe in these issues.¹³ When dealing with mystical reading in Shiism, Corbin only explains the foundations of this thought and in this respect studies all the different types of esoteric interpretation of Shiite sects, including the Ismaili views, Sufism from Muhyidin and Sayyed Haydar Amoli's perspective, the issue of sainthood and Imamate, Mahdism, the Suhrawardi's thought, the Shaykhi sect, and other issues. To him, researching these issues in the phenomenology of the esoteric Shiite thought has a prominent position. A Moslem can choose Christianity as the topic of his/her research. He

can spend many years studying the conceptual elements of Christianity to present a real description which is in accordance with the beliefs of Christians. In the same way Corbin has tried to explain the main foundations of the esoteric Shiite thought. Accordingly, in trying to understand this issue, he is faced with the noteworthy subject of Mahdism, which is the most important base. Hence, he endeavors to define it as the peak point in the thought of Shiite Gnosticism.

Therefore, in the phenomenological method of studying Islam, Corbin first tries to understand the subject; then he describes the internal components of this belief and its impact on the behavior and thoughts of Moslems and the Islamic societies. In addition to that, he tries to show the compatibility and cohesion of the thought with its internal constituents.

Based on this method Henry Corbin recognized that Mahdism forms the foundation of Shiism and Sufism. He also realized that the issue of the twelfth Imam is considered to be the most important doctrinal-mystical concerns of Shiism. He believed that one cannot accept Shiism, Sufism or the spiritual philosophy disregarding Imamate, and the sainthood of the Imams, which would ultimately lead to the Imam of our time. He considered the issue of the sainthood of the infallible Imams as the most important element of the Islamic belief, the Islamic wisdom and philosophy which results in the perpetuation and dynamism of Islam. In particular, in explaining Sufism and the Shiite spiritual philosophy, he strongly believed that all the mystical and philosophical elements of Shiism are focused on Imamate and Sainthood. In the methodical selection of all his scholarly works and in dealing with the mystics and the philosophers and even the religious sects, he pays attention to the heart of philosophy and Sufism, being the sainthood of the Imam. In Corbin's opinion, Suhrawardi was the first philosopher who believed that the Aristotelian philosophy had to be replaced by the spiritual philosophy of Islam. He also considered the presentation of a philosophical interpretation of Islam necessary. He was trying to present a new model of religious beliefs to replace Greek philosophizing. Even if he refers to the philosophers who preceded Socrates, such as Pythagoras, Parmenides, Heraclites, or the scholars of the ancient Iran, it is because he sees them as being

in favor of a philosophical and spiritual interpretation of Islam.

Corbin studied Muhyiddin, Sayyed Haydar Amoli, Sadr al-Muta'allehin, the Ismaili and Sheikhiah philosophers and finally the Twelver Shiite. The reason is that all these scholars and sects had dealt with the issues of esoteric interpretation, Imamate, the Mohammedan Reality, Sainthood (*wilayah*) and the ultimate end of the conditional Sainthood, meaning the Mahdawi Wilayah which is the preeminent part of all these issues. That is why, in studying the thoughts of these scholars and sects, he emphasizes the common aspect between Sufism and mystical philosophy, being the Mahdist Sainthood. Hence, it might be worth mentioning that many Moslem scholars consider Mahdism as a peripheral issue and a religious teaching like the other religious components; whereas in a phenomenological study and in explaining the foundational elements of Shia Islam, Corbin, who looks at the issue as an outsider, and as a non-Moslem, realizes the importance of the Mahdawi Imamate. He states that if in every era, Sufism and Shiism disregard the issue of the Sainthood and Imamate of the infallible Imams -- including Imam Mahdi in our time -- and do not consider the esoteric interpretation of the revealed religion (Sharia) and the prophetic message, they have negated the essence of Shiism and the Islamic mysticism.

Corbin's Intellectual Backgrounds

Before explaining Corbin's intellectual principles and concerns regarding the Islamic teachings, we have to mention the main backgrounds of his thought prior to his acquaintance with Islam. Before coming to Iran and inaugurating his serious and profound study on the Iranian culture and the Shiite thought, he had been inspired by the thoughts of some of the great western philosophers and scholars, which affected his understanding of Shiism. Corbin has been one of Martin Heidegger's students and has learnt many lessons from him in the fields of Metaphysics, hermeneutics, and the philosophical interpretation of history. This impact was so profound that until the end of his life Corbin never rejected Heidegger's philosophy.¹⁴ Corbin was among those who translated Heidegger's *Being and Time* for the first

time. It was through Corbin's translation that Sartre came to know Heidegger. Corbin's acquaintance with Heidegger certainly had a deep impact on the formation of his thought and his view towards the Shiite Gnosticism, just as there were other experts on Heidegger in Iran and had established some links between Heidegger and mysticism.

Among the most important philosophical events of Corbin's time had been hermeneutics, a discipline which was developed by H. G. Gadamer, Paul Ricoeur, Heidegger and other scholars. Since Corbin had studied hermeneutics, he took it into complete consideration in dealing with the Shiite mysticism. We should therefore say that in studying Shiite gnosticism and philosophy, Corbin learnt the hermeneutic phenomenological method from non-classical phenomenologists like Heidegger. Regarding the similarity between Heidegger's thought and the Islamic thought he says: "What I found with Heidegger and what I understood from Heidegger's works was the same thing I was searching in the Iranian-Islamic metaphysics and was what I actually found.¹⁵ Therefore in his meetings with Allameh Tabataba'i to understand the Shiite mystical thought, he talked with him about the esoteric interpretation of the Koran. His conversation with Allameh Tabataba'i about the biblical exegesis and spiritual interpretation of the utterance has been interesting for the others.¹⁶ Daryoush Shayegan says: "Corbin is really fond of the esoteric interpretation in Heidegger's *Being and Time*."¹⁷

In a similar way, Corbin had been inspired by the thoughts of Louis Massignon, a French orientalist who studied Islam and the Islamic mysticism for years and wrote a number of books, among which we can mention his book about Hallaj which reflects his mystical concerns. This passion in Massignon is also transferred to his student, Henry Corbin. That is why Shihabuddin Suhrawardi was the first Iranian philosopher who impressed Corbin very much. In the same way Muhyiddin Arabi was the first mystic whom Massignon paid attention to. It seems that Corbin also followed the thoughts of his professor in interpreting Muhyiddin's thoughts and in considering its approximation to the Ismaili sect's, because Massignon believed: "With a determined and irrevocable attempt, Ibn Arabi transferred

Islam's mystical theology to the eclectic monotheism of the Qarmatians or the apostates."¹⁸ ¹⁹

Etienne Henry Gilson is among the Christian scholars who used the phenomenological method in the same way Henry Corbin did. Gilson, who is a Christian and Thomistic scholar and philosopher, looks at Christianity with a phenomenological perspective. He is very much comparable with researchers like Corbin and Izutsu in Islam and Mircea Eliade in symbology and mythology in religion. It seems that in his phenomenological method regarding Islam and Shiism, Henry Corbin has acted the way Etienne Gilson²⁰ has done in Christianity and has taken him as his model.²¹

Henry Corbin's View of Islamic Philosophy and Mysticism

As mentioned before, the Shiite thought and the Islamic sects have been subject to different interpretations from the viewpoint of theology, science of tradition, jurisprudence, principles of jurisprudence, philosophy, mysticism and esotericism, which had some followers throughout history. Each of these outlooks has laid more emphasis on one aspect of religion and has dealt with one dimension of Islam more than the other aspects. What is visible in Henry Corbin's publications is that his works mainly involve understanding and interpreting Shiism and he is very much inclined towards the esoteric or Wela'yi Shiism.

In classifying the different periods of the Islamic philosophy, Corbin does not follow the common divisions and typology in the books of the history of philosophy. This is because he believes that we have to regard the history of the Islamic philosophy as the history of the 'prophetic philosophy' or the 'spiritual philosophy'. In his view, the Islamic philosophy, which is obtained from prophetic traditions and the sainthood of the Imams, has depth and characteristics that distinguish it from the history of the Greek philosophy; in other words, the components of the Islamic philosophy are derived from religious law, the mystical path and the essential reality. Hence, in the periodization of the history of Islamic philosophy, while the western historians consider the history of Islamic philosophy having ended

with Ibn ar-Rushd, Corbin holds that the Islamic philosophy and the mystical wisdom of Islam, particularly Shiism, reached its pinnacle after Ibn ar-Rushd. Thus he divides the history of the Islamic philosophy into three periods:

1. From the start of Islam, up to the demise of Ibn ar-Rushd, it is the first period of the history of the Islamic philosophy. This period starts from the first centuries of Islam and at the time when philosophy came to the Islamic lands. It continues until three centuries before the Safavids. Corbin believes that with the demise of Ibn ar-Rushd, a particular interpretation of philosophy comes to its end, but a new outlook is presented by Suhrawardi and Muhyiddin Arabi, which he considers as the formation of a kind of spiritual philosophy. But according to the Western scholars and historians of philosophy, the demise of Ibn ar-Rushd means the end of the history of the Islamic philosophy. They disregard the thoughts of Suhrawardi, Muhyiddin and the other philosophers who come after him.

2. The second period starts from three centuries before the Safavids and continues up to the time of the Safavids. Corbin believes that in this period mystical theology is formed, and also the schools of great scholars such as Ibn Arabi, Najm al-Din Kobra, Suhrawardi, Sayyed Haydar Amoli, and the bond between Shiism, Sufism and the Ismaili sect is shaped.

3. From the time of the Safavids up to the present time it is the third period. Some of the great Islamic scholars belong to this period.²²

Corbin is among those who think that the second period of the history of philosophy, according to this division, is very important and therefore in explaining Islamic mysticism and philosophy, he talks about scholars who have been influential in creating the spiritual philosophy. To deal with scholars who have been effective according to Corbin's description of Islam's phenomenology is beyond the discussion of this article.

Impact of Suhrawardi on Henry Corbin's Phenomenology

Henry Corbin was fond of Suhrawardi. In France, when he was learning ancient languages including Pahlavi and the languages of Farsi, Arabic, he chose Shihabuddin Suhrawardi as his major topic. It's possible to say that maybe Corbin's attention to the esoteric Shi-

ism and Islamic mysticism was because of his passion for Suhrawardi. From among Corbin's scholarly works in Iran we can name the correction of Suhrawardi's works collection which is considered a part of the collection of Iranian work treasuries. He was the first to compile Suhrawardi's collection of writings with the cooperation of some other Iranian scholars.

Suhrawardi is among the first philosophers who was taken into consideration by Corbin, and who constituted Corbin's intellectual foundation. Suhrawardi has paid special attention to Royal philosophy (the Ancient / Pahlavi Iran), the Platonic, Neo-Platonic philosophy and Islamic mysticism. Also in establishing a bond between these components, he formed a new model of philosophy and a new explanation of the world. They are seen in his *Illuminationist Philosophy* (or *Hikmat al-Ishraq*). All the elements that are taken into consideration by Suhrawardi are somehow related to Sufism and represent an esoteric interpretation of the world. Suhrawardi was himself under the influence of Plotinus, who had an illuminationist and intuitive thought and tried to combine the thoughts of the philosophers who preceded him. In the same way, Suhrawardi tries to bring harmony among the Greek, Iranian Scholars, prophets and mystics. A scholar, like Corbin followed in the same footsteps, since he was looking for an esoteric interpretation of the world. Suhrawardi might be the first person in the Islamic culture whose thought inspired Corbin in presenting the issue of spiritual philosophy to replace the Greek philosophy.

Suhrawardi, who was inspired by the thoughts of Plato, Plotinus, the Royal philosophy and the Islamic mysticism, believed that all the scholars, philosophers and prophets have explained one essential reality which is the same illuminationist philosophy. He maintained that real cognition was the illuminationist philosophy which from the start of the history of societies the following great figures were concerned with: Hermes, whom some claim to be the same prophet Idris (Enoch), Zoroaster, and the other prophets up to Pythagoras, Plato, Plotinus, and great Mystics such as Hallaj, Bayazid Bastami, Sahl To-stari, Abul Hassan Kharaqani and the Egyptian Zu al-nūn. They were all talking about one essential reality which is the result of mystic

intuition and the illumination of the essential reality.²³ In explaining about factual philosophers, he even names the Iranian philosophers like the Pristine kings, for instance Fereidoon and the Olympian kings like Keikhosro, and individuals like Bozorgmehr. He places them besides Greek philosophers, such as Empedokles, Pythagoras and Mystics like Abul Hassan Kharaqani and the Egyptian Zu al-nūn.²⁴ He believes that the similarities between Plato's thoughts and the beliefs of the ancient Iranians cannot be accidental. Instead, he considers these commonalities as the result of esoteric philosophy and the discovery of the essential truths of the high heaven.²⁵ Due to this fact, Suhrawardi considers himself as the heir of that Illuminationist or philosophical essential truth that was revealed to the said philosophers. This essential truth has a transcendental unity among all the societies and philosophers. He doesn't even consider scholars like Avicenna or Farabi as real philosophers; instead he believes that the real philosophers are Mystics and those who have been qualified with philosophy and Illumination. In one of his books, he talks about a dream in which he asked the writer of *Ethologia*, who was mistakenly thought to be Aristotle, whether or not the Aristotelians like Avicenna or Farabi were real proofs of a philosopher. Aristotle's answer was negative. He says that the real philosophers are Bayazid Bastami or Sahl Tostari. In fact he approves of those philosophers who are in favor of illumination and mystical intuition.²⁶ Hence, from Suhrawardi's point of view, Aristotle's philosophy has not been the beginning of the Greek philosophy; instead it has been its end.²⁷ Just like scholars such as Martin Heidegger, he pays more attention to the philosophers who preceded Aristotle, like Plato, and the philosophers before Socrates, like Pythagoras and Heraclites. He considers them closer to truth and wisdom than the others.²⁸ In fact he tries to form a kind of union between Zoroaster and Plato's philosophy.²⁹ In the introduction of *The Illuminationist Philosophy*, Suhrawardi has reminded us that one should first pursue discursive philosophy and then intuitive philosophy; but the interesting point is that in adherence to Gazali, he criticizes the Aristotelian philosophy and logic. In doing so, he wants to provide a special method in the Islamic philosophy by which Corbin has been inspired and to which is referred by his

expression 'mystical philosophy'. Suhrawardi wanted to establish the foundation of his unique philosophical method based on religious philosophy and illuminationist practice. In this regard, he believes in a kind of esoteric and inward union among all the scholars, schools and philosophers who are seeking to find the truth by way of mystic intuition. Among all the scholars who are engaged in the theoretical and practical fields, he considers those who have reached perfection in both discursive philosophy and Sufism as the uppermost and most perfect group who have reached real knowledge. He refers to them as the theologians³⁰ and considers Pythagoras and Plato from Greece and himself from the Islamic world among these philosophers.

Henry Corbin believes that Suhrawardi's views have influenced the thoughts of Nasir al-Din Tusi, Ibn Arabi and the Shiite and Iranian expositors of Ibn Arabi.³¹ In addition, Mir Damad, who has the pseudonym of Ishraq, and the Shirazi Mulla Sadra, who wrote a commentary on the *Illuminationist Philosophy* had also been affected by Suhrawardi. Also a number of the Zoroastrians from Shiraz, who with the accompaniment of the great priest Azar Kayvan, translated the Upanishads and Bhagavad-Gita from Sanskrit to Farsi, were influenced by Suhrawardi's thoughts. Corbin believes that Mohammed Ibn Abi Jumhur was the one who combined Ishraq, Ibn Arabi and Shiism, which led to a great mutation³² in the period between the 9th (the 15th century A.D.) and 10th century hegira (16th century A.D.). Due to this fact, in the later periods Ibn Abi Jumhur al-Ahsa'i impacted the Shaykhi sect and the great men of this tribe.

Figures Influencing Henry Corbin's views of Mahdism

1. Shihabuddin Suhrawardi:

Having in mind Shihabuddin Suhrawardi's unique position in the world of thoughts and the deep impact he had on the philosophers and mystic scholars following him, we can mention some of his views concerning Mahdism. His views are either directly about Mahdism, or are a philosophical outlook that has been used by others in the field of Mahdism. Due to this fact, Corbin mentions some of these views in his writings:

A. The esoteric prophecy:

Henry Corbin believed that Suhrawardi was a philosopher who was after a spiritual and esoteric interpretation of religion and philosophy. According to Corbin, Suhrawardi believed that in spiritual philosophy, mystic experience and the esoteric interpretation of the Sharia, we should have a philosopher to be the progenitor of all philosophers; in the mystical literature, it is called 'Pole of the Poles' (*Qutb al-Aqtab*):

In fact, Suhrawardi believes that the progenitor of philosophers is someone whose status in wisdom and spiritual experience has reached the same high rank.³³

According to Corbin, since this Arch-Pole has reached a high position, he is able to interpret the prophetic mission. Without his presence the universe cannot remain, even if people would not recognize him.

Once Corbin explains Suhrawardi's view about the Arch-Pole, he tries to enunciate the compatibility of this thought with the Pole of the Poles or Imam whom the Shiites believe in. He says: The issue of Imamate, which follows the domain of prophecy, is the termination of prophethood and tightly bound with sainthood. It forms the pillars of the eternal esoteric prophecy. Although the prophetic mission was terminated after the Prophet Mohammed (PBYH), but the eternal esoteric prophecy continues with the issue of Imamate (the Arch-Pole) and his Sainthood.

Corbin believes the legal Jurists of Halab had tried Suhrawardi because Suhrawardi believed in the continuance of the esoteric prophecy by means of Imamate. Suhrawardi had said God is able to send a prophet for the human beings in any time, even at the present time. According to Corbin, Suhrawardi did not mean to say that God will send a prophet after the Seal of the prophets, Mohammed Mustafa (PBUH), to bring a novel Sharia. What he actually meant was the esoteric prophecy, meaning God will send an Imam after the last prophet who has sainthood and an esoteric prophecy. He will esoterically interpret the Sharia. From Corbin's point of view, Suhrawardi's statement at least conveys his belief in the esoteric Shiism:

In Suhrawardi's trial.... although what was meant by "another

prophet”, was not a prophet who would establish a sharia, but an esoteric prophecy was meant; this theory, at least, included an indication of the esoteric Shiism in itself. Thus through his writing, which was the result of his life, and with his death, as a martyr in the path of the prophetic philosophy (wisdom), Suhrawardi experienced the calamity of “the occidental exile” to its end.³⁴

Regarding the esoteric Shiism, Corbin tries to illuminate the components of Suhrawardi’s thought that will lead to the esoteric comprehension of religion and Shiism. He says: By using the Koranic term ‘People of the Book’, Suhrawardi believed that at the head of these followers, there is a person who is called “the Guardian of the Book”. To comprehend the esoteric meaning of the Koran and to understand the difficulties in the Koran, we should refer to him. In Shiism this term (the Guardian of the Book) used by Suhrawardi, is applied to refer to the Imam and his fundamental role.³⁵ Due to this fact, Corbin comes up to the conclusion that this is why Suhrawardi has once more used the special term: Shiism, in the introduction of his prominent work “*The Illuminationist Philosophy*” after citing the role of the Arch-Pole. As a matter of fact, he does so because he considers a kind of closeness between the illuminationist and Shiite thought. In the mystical and Shiite thought, it is believed that one of the characteristics of the Imam, including Imam Mahdi (may God hasten his reappearance), is the esoteric guidance and the esoteric interpretation of the Sharia and the Prophet message.³⁶ Because of this, in Suhrawardi’s thought, the concept of Imam has been a serious issue like the subject of esoteric Shiism.

B. The archetypal world:

In adherence to Plato and the Neo-Platonic followers, Suhrawardi believed in a longitudinal order of the universe. Plato believed in the archetypal world, “world of ideas”, in addition to the material world, and Plotinus believed in the order of the One, Mind, Soul, nature and matter. In the same way, according to Suhrawardi’s special terminology that was affected by the Illuminationist literature, he too, believed that in the longitudinal order of the universe, there are the world of the Light of Lights (*Nur al-Anwar*) (God’s essence), the world of the Dominating Lights (*al-Anwar al-Qahir*) (Mind), the

world of the ministering lights (soul), the world of suspended images (*`Alam al-Mithal*) and the world of matter.

What Suhrawardi meant by the world of suspended images was not the archetypal world that Plato believed in, also called the luminous archetypal world. In fact, in addition to believing in the Platonic archetypal world (the luminous forms) and believing in one form and a general image in the archetypal world for all the trivial phenomena in the universe, he also believed in the world of suspended forms or the archetypal world that divides the perceptive world and the intellectual world, or in other words, the spiritual world and the bodily world.³⁷

Therefore, according to Suhrawardi, the Platonic archetypal world (the luminous forms) is something different from the archetypal world (the world of suspended forms) that he explains.³⁸ In addition to the supreme hierarchy of angels, he believed in a latitudinal hierarchy of angels, which was in accordance with “the world of the species’ masters” or the world of forms that Plato believed in. According to him, the Platonic forms or the world of the masters of species do not generate each other like in the longitudinal order, but rather subsist side by side.

Therefore, the world of images and archetypal forms (*`Alam al-Mithal*) that Suhrawardi talks about is between the intellectual World and the material world of the senses. According to philosophers, the active imagination can comprehend it. In his idea, the suspended forms or the archetypal world is a world that is beyond the material or physical world. It is self-existent, and has some of the characteristics of the world of matter like form, but does not have mass or dimension. In fact, the creatures of the sense-world are the embodiment of the world of images and all that exists in the world of matter is the embodiment of the archetypal world.

According to the rule of “the Higher Possibility”, the existence of the Lower Possible being before the higher possible being is impossible. Based on this, Suhrawardi believes that the superior world should be actualized prior to the inferior world. Accordingly the archetypal world should be before the material world. Every inferior world has a sense of love and receptivity towards the superior world and its

existence is dependent on that world. According to Suhrawardi, the suspended forms are spiritual jewels, which self-exist in the archetypal world. He believes that there is no limit to the peculiarities of the archetypal world and its cities are countless. Those, who live an ascetic life and come to possess the mysterious knowledge, can understand the unknown things through various ways.³⁹

In his *History of Islamic Philosophy*, Corbin explains Suhrawardi's World of suspended forms as follows:

*In this world where we can find all the richness and variety of the sense-world in a subtle state, the archetypal world becomes to possess a consistence and independence so that it becomes the entrance to the angelic realm. The analogical cities of Jabalqa, Jabalsa and Hurqalya are in such a world.*⁴⁰

Suhrawardi believed that the illuminati go to the world of Hurqalya in their valid and repeated mystic trances and see the transcendental soul (Hoorakhsh)". In the illuminati term, the transcendental soul (Hoorakhsh) means the supreme Face of God which is manifested in the most beautiful form. In this regard Suhrawardi says:

وقد يكون المخاطب يتراءى في صورة إما سماوية أو في صورة سادة من السادة العلوية و
فيشجاه الخلسات المعتبر في عالم "هور قليا" للسيد العظيم "هور خنش" الاعظم في
التجسدين المبجل الذي هو وجه الله العليا على لسان الاشراف...¹⁴

Corbin has translated the word "فيشجاه" in Suhrawardi's statement as "presence".

In Corbin's view, the archetypal world is between the intellectual world and the material world. It can be comprehended by active imagination. In this world we can once more find all the richness and variety of the sense-world in a subtle state. In fact, the archetypal world is the entrance to the angelic realm. Suhrawardi is the first philosopher who explained and established the ontology of this intermediary world, which is the border between the material world and the angelic realm. All the Islamic mystics and philosophers after Suhrawardi have returned to this subject and expanded it. In this regard Henry Corbin says:

*It seems that Suhrawardi is the first philosopher who has established the ontology of this intermediary world. All the Islamic mystics and philosophers come back to this issue and expand it.*⁴²

Therefore, the mysteries that the prophets and mystic experiences refer to, are actualized through the archetypal world which is the place of “subtle bodies”. In Corbin’s opinion, the esoteric exegesis of the Koran’s data is possible through this very world. Without this world we can only have a metaphorical allegory.⁴³

Suhrawardi’s innovative outlook towards the archetypal world, and the presence of the allegorical cities of Jabalqa, Jabalsa, and Hurqalya in this world caused some of the subsequent scholars to be influenced by him. Among these scholars we can mention Ibn Abi Jomhur who had a noticeable effect on the Shaykhi sect. In addition to that, according to this mentality about the archetypal world, the founder of the Shaykhi sect, Shaykh Ahmad Ahsa’i and others like Sayyid Kazim-i Rashti and some other great scholars in the Shaykhi sect, believed in the world of corps astral (Hurqalya). They believed that Imam Mahdi (may God hasten his reappearance) and his family live in that world. Based on this idea, they propounded a new argument called the “fourth pillar”, which states, since that honorable Imam lives in that subtle and non-corporeal world of corps astral (Hurqalya), there should be a deputy to govern the material world. This deputy should be his agent or representative.

Consequently they thought it necessary to argue about the “fourth pillar”. As a result of this thought and based on the issue of the world of corpse astral (Hurqalya), after Shaykh Ahmad Ahsa’i, and the great scholars of the Shaykhi sect, individuals like Ali Mohammed Bāb and Hussein-Ali Baha’i at first called themselves ‘The Agents of Imam Mahdi’ and gradually Imam Mahdi. They fanned thoughts and beliefs whose consequences are still entangling the Moslems.

2. The Ismaili sect:

The Ismaili sect is from among the sects which have an inner and esoteric trend of interpretation. The followers of this sect set forth esoteric interpretations for all the religious propositions and ceremonies. This sect developed in Iran in a historical period and even could hold in hand the government of Iran. As a result it had a great impact on the Iranian culture and civilization and so some of the great Is-

lamic scholars were Ismaili.

Because of the approach the Ismaili sect has towards the spiritual esoteric interpretation of religious issues _which is in fact considered as one of the Shiite esoteric trends_ Henry Corbin considers it as being very important. In interpreting the Shiite spiritual philosophy, Corbin takes all the Shiite mystical and esoteric sects and approaches into consideration. So he couldn't easily neglect the Ismaili sect. The issue of esoteric interpretation in the Ismaili thought was highly important for Henry Corbin; consequently, it drew his attention towards this sect. In an article which was about the esoteric interpretation of the Koran and Islam's spiritual philosophy, regarding the Ismaili sect he says:

Following the thought and truth of leaving the exoteric aspect to penetrate into the esoteric aspect, the guiding thought and truth of "the guiding intellect" (Imam in Shiite's view) appears, and the word "Exegesis", reminds us of the thought of exodus which is the secret of quitting metaphor and slavishly seeking the surface of the book and an exodus from the place of exile and the ending point, meaning the exoteric world, with the aim of going towards the entrance of inner aspects and a place where noble and esoteric thoughts exist. From the point of view of Ismaili mysticism, a spiritual state is born with the act of esoteric interpretation. This means that the exegesis of the book's content would not be possible without the exit and exodus of the soul. But this exegesis and esoteric interpretation is a kind of the science of balance. From this outlook, the method and alchemy of Jabir ibn Hayyan is some sort of esoteric interpretation. Its essence is the concealment of the exoteric aspect and exploring the concealed inner part."⁴⁴

Accordingly, he studied part of the Ismaili works and the writings of the scholars of this sect. In his History of Islamic Philosophy, Corbin explains the thoughts of some of the great Ismaili scholars. In addition to that Corbin has compiled a collection of letters from the Ismaili sect. He has also had correspondences with Vladimir Ivanow, one of the most prominent experts of his time on Ismaili sect. These letters were published in Farsi as well.⁴⁵ Besides that, he translated Kashf al-Mahjub --written by Abu Ya`qub Sajestani in the fourth century -- into French and has added an introduction to it. This book, is about the Ismaili sect,. Also he has translated the book Jame` al-Hik-

matin, written by Nasir Khosro Qobadiani, into French with corrections and an added introduction. We should affirm that besides the Shaykhi sect and the mystical approach of the Twelvers, the Ismaili sect has made the most contribution to Corbin's understanding of the esoteric Islam and the Shiite's mystical philosophy.

3. *Ibn Arabi:*

He is titled Muhyiddin and is from among the most distinctive mystics. He is called the father of theoretical mysticism. Hence, Henry Corbin had to give a special attention to him. We might say that after Shihabuddin Suhrawardi, Corbin paid the most attention to Muhyiddin. Corbin corrected some of the expositions written for Muhyiddin's *Fusus al-Hikam such as* Sayyed Haydar Amoli's exposition, *Jami` al-Asrar Wa Mamba` al-Anwar*. Corbin has also added footnotes and an introduction to it. It is from among the works that were translated into French and was of great importance to Corbin.⁴⁶

4. *Sayyed Haydar Amoli:*

In dividing the Shiite history, Corbin believes that Sayyed Haydar Amoli is the most important figure of the third period of the Shiite history, that's, the period which starts from the time of Khaje Nasir-al-Din Tousi (1270 A.D.) and is simultaneous with the Mongolian attack and continues to the Safavid time. This is because Sayyed Haydar Amoli tried to unite Sufism and Shiism based on his esoteric outlook and this issue was of great importance to Corbin. In this regard, Corbin says:

Expanding the Ismaili studies and the new researches about the Shiite mystic philosopher, Haydar Amoli (8th century lunar, 14th century A.D.), has caused the relations between Shiism and Sufism to be propounded in a new way.... Sufism is the greatest endeavor to internalize the Koranic revelations. It is breaking apart from the exoteric aspect of the divine law and trying to recreate the inner experience of Prophet Mohammed on his nocturnal ascent.⁴⁷

But it seems that Sayyed Haydar Amoli has been inspired by

Shihabuddin Suhrawardi with respect to the issue of uniting mysticism and Shiism and the fact that Shiism is the esoteric essence of mysticism and mysticism is the esoteric essence of Shiism. As mentioned before, Suhrawardi, who had an intuitive and illuminationist outlook, was the first person who united the inner aspect of mysticism and philosophy. Based on this fact, in numerous parts of his book, *History of Islamic Philosophy*, Corbin mentions Suhrawardi's impact on the views of the scholars after him.

Esoteric Approximation of Religion

Corbin is particularly interested in all the esoteric and philosophical religions and sects. He views Shiism (including the Ismaili and Shaykhi sects and the Twelvers), the Royal philosophy and the Zoroastrian religion from this same perspective. Because of this liking of his, he sometimes tries to somehow show the closeness and the esoteric bond among these religions and sects. He endeavours to indicate the common spirit and the mystical philosophy among them. For instance, regarding the issue of Mahdism in Shiism as well as Saoshyant in the Zoroastrian thought, he adduces a statement made by Qutbal-Din Eshkevari, one of Mir Damad's students. Eshkevari believed that the Zoroastrian Saoshyant is the same as what the Iranians call the awaited Imam. Based on this statement Corbin says: "Eshkevari's words indicate that the thought of Shiite Iran follows the thoughts in the ancient Iran, as if it is indicative of the same thing that the Iranian spirit was once accustomed to and used to believe in."⁴⁸

Corbin tries to somehow show a kind of harmony between the symbolic and mysterious words of the Zoroastrians regarding Saoshyant and what is said in the Shaykhi School that is based on the immaterial world and the world of Hurqalya. This is because the Zoroastrians propounded some mysterious and symbolic statements about the birth of Saoshyant. In the same way, those who believe in the world of Hurqalya and the archetypal world say some symbolic and mysterious statements about the unearthly and immaterial place of the domicile of Imam Mahdi (may God hasten his reappearance). Symbolic, mysterious and allusive words are among the characteristics

of thoughts which are based on esotericism and internalism. Taking the above fact into consideration, in explaining the creeds, beliefs and thoughts of religions and sects, Corbin uses the symbology of religions.

Comparative Symbology

Alongside with the concept of esoteric interpretation, Corbin is really interested in the comparative symbology among different religions. Since he has established a close relationship with the Ismaili and Sheikhiah sects and the Shiite mysticism, he tries to create a kind of compatibility and harmony among the concepts, numbers and creeds of different religions. As the mystical thought on the one hand deals with the inner depth of meaning and on the other hand deals with the esoteric interpretation of the various levels of meaning, there are numerous instances of mysteries, symbols and allusions. Also, since Corbin thinks about the closeness among all the esoteric thoughts in the history of Islamic philosophy, Sufism and Islamic sects, he tries to create harmony among them. For instance, regarding the number of the Shiite twelve Imams, he tries to indicate its mysterious importance and then accords it with the twelve zodiac constellations, or the twelve Israelite Chiefs, and the twelve springs which were cloven with the Prophet Moses' stick, or the twelve thousand years of historic periods which the Zoroastrians believe in, or adapting it with the building of a twelve sided cube of Kaaba.⁴⁹ He says:

A Shiite tradition (Hadith) describes the descent of the Mohammedan light in this world as the gradual descent of twelve veils of light meaning the twelve Imams are symbols of the twelve thousand eras in the world. The twelfth millennium is the Imam who will give rise to the Resurrection. Hence, the Shiite conscience too, has comprehended the periodization of the periods in the world according to a twelve sided image.⁵⁰

In Corbin's view, the belief in the twelve holy people in the Christian era and the twelve holy figures in the Twelvers' thought, indicate the spiritual bond between Christianity and Islam. In explaining this relation, he mentions Imam Mahdi's mother, the honorable Narjis Khatoon, who was first a Christian and a Roman princess. Her mother

was an offspring of the twelve Apostles of Prophet Jesus and Simeon, the spiritual heir of Prophet Jesus. She later converted into Islam. Therefore, Corbin considers her the linking chain between Islamic and Christian spirituality and a person who caused Christianity to be acquainted with the mysteries of Islam.⁵¹

Also, in trying to adapt the different terms, he accords the term "Paraclete" in the Bible with Imam Mahdi (may God hasten his reappearance). He says: They used to address the holy Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) with the title Paraclete, and since there is a connection between the Seal of Prophecy and the Seal of Imamate (the Imam of our time) some Shiite scholars like `Abd al-Razzaq Kashani and Sayyed Haydar Amoli, explicitly consider the twelfth Imam to be the Paraclete, whose appearance is annunciated in John's Bible. In Corbin's view, the main reason is this: With the coming of the Imam or Paraclete, the period of solely the spiritual meaning of the divine revelations will begin. Divine revelations mean the essence of religiosity which is the same as the lasting sainthood. The sovereignty of the Imam will provide the grounds for the Resurrection of all the resurrections.⁵²

Henry Corbin's Esoteric Interpretation of Islam

Corbin has an esoteric perspective towards Shiism which is based on a spiritual interpretation. We can look at Shiism from various perspectives, but for Corbin, the philosophical perspective and the esoteric spirituality of Shiism was considered important. Because of this outlook, as well as taking the twelve-Imam Shiite into account, Corbin also turned to the Ismaili and Shaykhi sects and the Royal philosophy. He even tried to state the common ideological and philosophical elements of these thoughts in an effort to create some kind of bond and harmony among them.

In Corbin's view and based on the mystical outlook, the disagreement between the Shiite and Sunnite Muslims is not just over the substitution and political leadership of Imam Ali as the first Caliph; Their disagreement is on something more radical and fundamental than the issue of political leadership. Because if we consider the issue of vice-

gerency after Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) as only a kind of political government and social leadership, then after Islam's first century, this issue should not be important for either of the two sects and there should not be any dispute over it; because that argument is no longer valid. But in the intellectual and ideological life of these two sects, this dispute has always existed. Even now the issue of Imamate, unlike the issue of vicegerency, is being discussed from the theological and ideological perspectives. In Corbin's view, the continuance of the spiritual life of Islam and the esoteric interpretation of the divine law is based on Imamate. As Shiites believe, Imam has authority and is responsible to interpret the religion. According to Suhrawardi, the Imam is the guardian of the Book (Qayyem Bi-al-Ketaab). Stressing on this, Shiites believe that if the divine proof becomes absent on the earth, the earth will swallow its inhabitants.⁵³ Or he considers the people of an era who don't know the Imam of their time to be living a polytheistic and ignorant life.⁵⁴ So Imamate in the Shiite thought is considered to be a kind of replacement for the prophet to explain and interpret religious law. Therefore, after the demise of the holy prophet (PBUH), the Imams were appointed one after the other, until the twelfth Imam (may God hasten his reappearance) whom the Shiites are waiting for his reappearance. So, Corbin believes that in the Sunnite thought, after the demise of the honorable prophet (PBUH), Islam is confined to the divine law; whereas in the Shiite thought, the prophetic Sharia continues its existence with interpretations. Therefore, he considers this point to be the main distinction between Shiism and Sunnism. On the basis of this, Corbin pays a special attention to the issue of Mahdism and considers it as the principal peak point of the Shiite thought at the time of the occultation. In fact, from the beginning of the creation, human's life started with the prophecy of "Prophet Adam" and after that there has been the prophecy of the Seal of Apostles and it is to be continued with the reappearance of the Imam of our Time (may God hasten his reappearance). Hence, according to him, the concept of awaiting means expecting the arrival of someone who will reveal the inner and esoteric meanings of religion with his arrival.

In explaining Islam's esoteric thought and Shiite's mystical phi-

losophy, Corbin believes in an undistinguishable link between the two aspects of prophetic mission and Imamate. According to him, the prophet has to deliver prophecy and the divine law. During some twenty three years he tried to explain the divine mission and the divine law. Another dimension of the prophet's personality which is also common among the Shiite twelve Imams is Imamate. Imam is a person who is capable of understanding the esoteric and divine aspect of the divine law. Imamate is the path which will take people to the essential truth. This way the three aspects: the divine law, the mystical path and the essential reality will reach their destiny. Corbin's thought in this regard is based on what the last prophet said:

الشريعة اقوالى، الطريقة اعمالى و الحقيقة احوالى؛

My words are to be considered as the Sharia and my behavior is tantamount to the mystical path (Tariqa) and my states are the essential truth.

In stating the supremacy of the position of the Imamate of the holy Prophet (PBUH) and some other Prophets, who possessed this position, this reasoning from the Koran will suffice: When Prophet Abraham successfully finished the difficult examinations, God gave him the honor of having the rank of Imamate.⁵⁵ In valuing his patience and endurance, God gifted him the position of Imamate, although at that time he was already a prophet. Hence in Chapter An`ām of the Koran, God says the following words about Prophet Abraham who had the rank of Imamate:

⁵⁶ و كذلك نرى ابراهيم ملكوت السماوات و الارض و ليكون من الموقنين

We gave Abraham, when he was an Imam, the awareness and knowledge of the divine authority and the esoteric aspect of the world and creatures.

Therefore, Prophet Abraham's position of Imamate was superior to his position of prophecy; God gave him this rank after he could pass some very difficult exams. On the Basis of this fact, Corbin considers the Imam as an angelical human. If the opposite were true and the rank of prophecy were superior to the rank of Imamate, being gifted with this rank would never be considered as a reward for him.

In fact, one of the features of Imamate that is stated in the Ko-

ran and Sufism to which Corbin too, pays special attention is that if someone reached the position of Imamate, he would have command of the angelic aspect as well as the aspect of sovereignty. He would have knowledge of the superior worlds of beings. We must say that the Koranic root of 'the ascending act of creation' (or the longitudinal order of the worlds) and 'the descending act of creation', which is discussed among mystics and philosophers, is based on this verse and the cause for the revelation of this verse is 'Prophet Abraham'. Each of the mystics and philosophers have in a way explained these worlds with labels such as the five divine existences, the ascending act of creation, the descending act of creation and so on. We can even say that it has been common for both the illuminati philosophers such as Suhrawardi and his advocates and the peripatetic philosophers, like Avicenna and his adherents to explain and depict these multiple worlds in their doctrines with their unique terms. In addition to that, in explaining these worlds, they were inspired by the advocates of the neo-Platonic thought such as Plotinum. This has been in a way that the mystics and those believing in the method of having direct experiences and intuition, have depicted these worlds by using the Koranic and philosophical literature.

From among the qualities of individuals, like the holy Prophet (PBUH) or the Shiite leaders having reached the position of Imamate, is that they have command of the angelical aspect of the material world and the esoteric aspect of the universe. One of the characteristics of knowing the angelical and esoteric aspect of this world is to be able to esoterically understand and explain many issues which the majority of people are ignorant about and do not know its cause. Imams are capable of doing such things. Because of this knowledge, they can interpret the inner layers of the world in the same way that Prophet Khadhir (PBUH) did. Prophet Khadhir (PBUH) had knowledge of the angelical aspect of the world, so he explained the inner and esoteric aspect of the things he had done when he was accompanying Prophet Moses (PBUH) (The Koran mentions three instances of those). In the same way, the Imam is completely aware of the esoteric aspect of the world. He can explain the esoteric cause of the things that happen in the world.⁵⁷ It has been mentioned in the Koran:

“Those who are Imams and know the angelical aspect of the world, are invincible in knowledge, they know the secret meaning and the essential truths of the Koran. They are capable of esoterically interpreting the Koran and the phenomena of the world.”⁵⁸

Corbin believes in the different levels of the truths of the world. In his opinion, to propound the issue of the existence of the exoteric and esoteric aspect of the world, he believes being able to interpret the inner aspect of the world requires the mystical and prophetic wisdom. In this regard he mentions a narration from Imam Sadeq (PBUH):

Allah's Book includes four levels: the expressions, the indications, the subtle points and the essential truths. The expressions (the explicit meaning of the text) belong to the common people, the indications to the special people, and the subtle points to the saints and the truths to the prophets.

Or in another narration it has been mentioned:

*The exoteric text belongs to the auditory sense, the indications to understanding, the subtleties to contemplation and the truths to the truth of Islam.*⁵⁹

Accordingly the prophet, having the rank of prophecy, presents the descended revelations and deals with the exoteric aspect of the Koran and the divine law, and having the rank of Imamate, he deals with the esoteric exegesis, the inner aspect and the truth of the Koran. After him, the Imams, who did not share the feature of presenting the descended revelations of Koran, just like the prophet (PBUH) can provide the esoteric exegesis of the prophetic divine law. Accordingly, in the first article of his book, *History of Islamic Philosophy*, in explaining the Shiite mystical philosophy, Corbin mentions the narrations indicating the oneness of light between the Prophet and the Imams. For instance the narration where the holy prophet (PBUH) says: "أنا و على من نور واحد" or "أول ما خلق الله نوري". Such narrations show the common responsibility shared between the Prophet and the Imams due to their position of Imamate, who are having authority and sainthood over humans.

In addition to the ability of providing an esoteric exegesis, another quality of the position of Imamate is the issue of sainthood (Wilayah). In fact, the one who is appointed to the rank of divine Imamate, such

as the holy Prophet and the twelve Imams, has esoteric guidance and the rank of authority. Based on this, the believers should have love, submission and obedience to their Imam.⁶⁰ In the Shiite thought, the Imam explains the inner and esoteric aspects of Shiism and the mystical path of religion. He would help the believers reach the truth of religion. Hence, Corbin believes the mystical approach which is based on the philosophical and esoteric exegesis of the inner aspect of religion would not have been possible in any thought, except the Shiite thought. It is due to the concept of Imamate and authority in the Shiite thought that Sufism has developed. According to the Sufis, their authority is derived from the one who is the master of authority, meaning the infallible Imams. Therefore, the Sufis try to show that the provenance of their gnosis and their particular authority is, from generation to generation, traced back and linked to an infallible Imam. They consider it as something necessary, because “the special sainthood” or, in Khajeh Abdullah Ansary’s term, “the lunar authority” (Wilaya Qamariah) is derived from “the general sainthood” or “the solar authority” (Wilaya Shamsiyah) which means the holy Prophet (PBUH) and after him, the twelve Imams.

Henry Corbin’s Interpretation of Mahdism

Many Orientalists do not have a comprehensive and profound view when cognizing Islam and the Islamic culture. They view each of the elements of religion to be a separable and an analytical manner. They do not provide an organic and structural analysis of the components of religion. Unlike them, Corbin is among the scholars who look at Islam in a phenomenological way. As a result, he seeks to find the most fundamental elements of Islam and analyzes these principal elements in a systematic manner. Therefore, one of the fundamental elements, which have attracted his attention, is the issue of Mahdism. He considers it as one of the most pivotal ideological elements of Sufism and the Shiite philosophy. In Corbin’s view, Mahdism means the inner and esoteric exegesis of religion, in other words, reviving the lives of humans:

The reappearance of Imam is exactly like reviving the lives of people. Also the profound meaning of the occultation and the reappearance

*of the Imam in Shiite thought is exactly the same.*⁶¹

According to Corbin, Imam is present but the people deprive themselves of seeing him and have placed themselves behind a veil. They have lost their spiritual knowledge. By making themselves incapable of seeing the Imam, the people place him behind a veil. They have lost or incapacitated their “senses of perceiving the divine manifestation” and their “heartily spiritual knowledge”, that was defined in the epistemology of the Imams.⁶²

Corbin considers the reappearance of the Imam depending on people’s gaining knowledge about him. He believes that with the coming of the Imam, the essence of all the divine teachings in all the religions would be manifested, in other words, the esoteric exegesis would prevail. Hence, this will not happen unless the essential and inner meaning of monotheism is completely comprehended⁶³:

*It is no use talking about the reappearance of the Imam when humans could not have cognized the Imam. The reappearance of the Imam is not an event that would accidentally happen one day. In fact it is something that accrues in the conscience of the Shiite believers everyday.... The future reappearance of Imam requires the metamorphosis of the humans’ hearts. This gradual appearance depends on the faith of the followers and their soul. This is where chivalrous behavior stems from. This thought includes all the Shiite ethics.*⁶⁴

There are many instances in Corbin’s writings where he mentions the pivotal role of Mahdism and Imam Mahdi (PBUH). We will mention some of these cases which existed in his thoughts.

Henry Corbin’s View of the Mahdism Doctrine

From the perspective of the Twelve-Imam Shiites, and taking theological precision into account, in Henry Corbin’s discussions regarding Mahdism, some faults do exist. But beyond this, what seems to interest the scholars who believe in the Imam of our time (PBUH) is the fact that Corbin, mentions the most fundamental elements of the Shiite thought and tries to explain them; Whereas, in the tradition of the Orientalists like Darmesteter, Goldziher, Van Vloten and the others who preceded him, there is not much consideration about the fundamental components of the Shiite thought when cognizing Is-

lam and Shiism. Actually, as a methodical Orientalist and researcher, Corbin could manifest the depth of the Shiite beliefs. He could interpret its basis which was the cause of the Shiite theoretical stability throughout history. The greatness of Corbin's work in contrast to the other Orientalists and western scholars of religion is that, within all the other theological opinions, Corbin expressly gives credit and superiority to Mahdsim.⁶⁵

In the Shiite system of thought, there are a number of ideological teachings which have a unique and fundamental position. If they are omitted, Shiism will be completely destroyed and annihilated. For instance, it would be impossible to omit the concepts of Imamate, authority and Mahdism and at the same time expect the Shiite thought to survive. In the sayings of religious leaders concerning the pillars of religion, in explaining authority, they remind us that all the pillars of religion are based on the sainthood of the Imams and that in this view the divine law takes its meaning. In fact, setting these priorities in the belief system indicates that we should not consider all the beliefs as being in the same level and equal to one another. We should not ignore giving priority to some beliefs. In the issue of Mahdism, Corbin sometimes leans toward the Shaykhi sect, sometimes considers the Ismaili or Twelve-Imam sect and at times in his path, he takes into account the mystical and illuminationist discussions of Muhyiddin and Suhrawardi. He would try to show a kind of harmony between the mystical thought and the mystical philosophy of all the Shiite and Iranian schools of thoughts. But beyond all these sects and esoteric and mystical thoughts, what seems noticeable in his works is the importance of the issue of Mahdism as a serious doctrine and theory which he has focused on. In addition to mentioning the subject of Mahdism in numerous articles, he has exclusively devoted many separate articles to this subject.

We can say, in spite of the fact that the Shiite thought and its mystical philosophy is based on the issue of Imamate and Mahdism, Corbin has been very successful in explaining this element in the Shiite thought. We can even say that before him no one had been able to show the most important element of the Shiite thought which has influence on all other components of Shiism. In the Shiite history, the

importance of Mahdism has never been concealed and has always been the focus of the attention of common and special people. But from the theoretical point of view, Corbin had been able to depict its position in the religious thought, particularly in Sufism.

The behavioral and mystic conduct existed before Muhyiddin, but he was the one who could depict speculative Sufism and composed it in a systematic way. Also logic existed before Aristotle but Aristotle was the first to compile and compose it. In the same way, taking into account Corbin's phenomenological description of Shiism and the importance of the issue of Imamate and Mahdism, one feels there is a need for someone or a course to establish the intellectual and theoretical system of Mahdism and to bring it from the theoretical periphery of Shiite thought to the focus of attention.

When we encounter the position of Mahdism in Corbin's Shiite studies, apart from his mistakes concerning Mahdism, we feel that it is possible to establish an ideological system and a religious doctrine based on the Mahdawi thought. By acquainting ourselves with Corbin's works in his phenomenological description of Shiism and the Shiite mysticism, we feel that the Mahdavi thought possesses such a great potential that we could use it as a model and rubric in a theological system and describe the root of the common people and the elite's religiosity. Unfortunately there are still some components in the Shiite thought, for instance, the Mahdism thought and the Shiite behavioral thought, such as theoretical Sufism, that seek to find a thought that would make it systematic and would construct a system out of it. Taking the high potential of the doctrine of Mahdism into account, we should expect it to find solutions for the betterment of society, humans and the cognitive-ideological foundations, but in practice we refer to some other sciences and ideologies.

Corbin had realized that the Shiite thought had its roots in the prophetic philosophy and knew that neither the exoteric aspects of religion nor the divine law could provide the essence and truth of Shiism, nor philosophy and the intellectual sciences. Being inspired by the thoughts of Suhrawardi, he believed that the Greek philosophy caused the prophetic philosophy to be driven to the periphery. In fact, although the philosophical literature tried to intellectually defend reli-

gion, it should not be ignored that it had pathological aspects as well. It caused the Koranic literature and the philosophy pertaining to the Prophet and Imam Ali not to be considered carefully and seriously. Perhaps, Islamic philosophers could have established a philosophical and cognitive system based on the prophetic tradition and the Alavi and Mahdavi Imamate. Therefore, he believes that Shiism is experiencing a kind of wait which doesn't mean waiting for a new religion, but waiting for the appearance of Imam Mahdi (may God hasten his reappearance), who intends to interpret the prophetic divine law. In this regard he says:

From the beginning, the Shiite thought provided a source for a kind of prophetic wisdom related to a prophetic religion. It is neither restricted to the exoteric aspect of rules nor to the horizon whose domain is determined by the sources and principals of the intellectual logic. The Shiite thought is experiencing a kind of wait, not a wait for a new religion, but the complete advent of the hidden bases or spiritual concepts of divine revelations. A perfect kind of this awaiting is the appearance of the absent Imam (the Imam of the time, who is absent according to the Shiite belief). Following the circle of prophecy which has been closed, a new circle of guardianship will come to existence, and ultimately the Imam will appear.⁶⁶

Consequently, he believes that the depth and essence of Shiism is not confined to the divine law and the exoteric aspect of religion, not opposite nor antagonistic, and the intellectual sciences cannot completely express the limits and depths of the Shiite inner wisdom, but in his view, the concept of Imamate and sainthood can be an indicator of this mystical Shiite philosophy.⁶⁷

Concept of Wait from Henry Corbin's viewpoint

Corbin believes that the appearance of the twelfth Imam (may God hasten his reappearance) requires some conditions. He considers the Mahdavi advent as the greatest source of support and motive for the purification of souls which is the basis of the Shiite thought. Therefore, people ought to purify themselves and follow religion. According to him, the future reappearance of Imam necessitates people to go after righteous and virtuous deeds and to obtain the potential to comprehend and accept him. In addition, he considered it as a reason

to actualize the spirit of generosity and chivalrous behavior which was developed by mystics and resulted in writing generosity letters. By doing so, mystics were trying to propagate religion and morality. They intended to provide people with moral instructions and to internalize it within different occupations and trades. They wanted to tightly integrate morality with life. So Corbin believed that in order to actualize the reappearance of the Imam of the time (may God hasten his reappearance), people should prepare themselves and transmute their hearts. This gradual appearance depends on the faith of the followers and their spirit:

The meaning of the appearance of the expected Imam is synonymous with the perfection of humanity; It reveals the essence of the live human in soul. This means the manifestation of the divine mystery which is entrusted to humans....⁶⁸

As a result it should be stated that the concept of waiting in Corbin's view has a profound and dynamic meaning. It means the spiritual readiness and purification for the appearance of Imam Mahdi. It is never equal to the false meaning of silence, enervation, and the accumulation of sins in society; in contrast, waiting means improving ourselves and the society. Corbin refers to this prophetic tradition that: "If there is only one day left to the end of the world, God will make that day so long that the Imam of the time (may God hasten his reappearance) appears." He concludes that this prophetic saying is an explicit announcement and an echo in all the periods of history and in the Shiite's conscience. He believes that by doing so, God intends to reveal the essence of all religions, not only Islam, which has a transcendental inner unity. He interpreted this as the victory of esoteric interpretation which results in the union of all humans.⁶⁹

Criticizing Henry Corbin's Opinions on Mahdism

1. The prominence of Mahdism is not hidden for us with regards to Corbin's phenomenological method, but concerning some of the issues in Mahdism, we can criticize his words. However, these criticisms do not decrease the importance of his thoughts and would not taint his knowledge of Mahdism which is considered as one of the fundamental elements of the Shiite thought.

First of all it should be noted that unlike many Orientalists who look at Islam historically and are seeking to find the events having occurred in the beginning centuries which led to the formation of Shiism, Corbin looks at Shiism in a phenomenological way and does not have a historical outlook towards Shiism. With all the advantages of this method which makes clear the essence and the fundamental elements of Shiism, some of the historical points are hidden from his view. For instance, he only paid more attention to the mystical and philosophical aspects of religion and focused on Shiism from the esoteric and philosophical aspect. He considered the esoteric and mystical aspects of Shiism as being its depth but never dealt with the historical correctness or falseness of this approach in the thoughts of sects such as the Ismaili and Shaykhi sects. Corbin's esotericism, as the basis and essence of the Shiite thought, is accepted by some scholars. It should not be ignored that Shiism can be considered from other aspects, too. For example, we can consider Shiism from the intellectual, theological, traditional and canonical dimensions, as some other parts of Shiism could have been considered by Corbin from such aspects. Corbin paid special attention to whatever that was on the path of the Shiite mystical and esoteric philosophy. Therefore, he considered only a particular group of philosophers, mystics and Shiite sects. For instance, he paid more attention to Sohrawardi and Sadr al-Muta'llihin in comparison with other Islamic philosophers such as Avicenna. Among the Shiite sects, he focuses more on the Twelvers, Ismaili and Shaykhi sects, because in these sects the matters of esoteric interpretation, esotericism and the mystic aspects are considered more than the other sects. Also he pays more attention to mystics in comparison with Islamic scholars such as theologians, narrators of traditions, legal theorists and other Shiite scholars. In fact, Corbin's view towards Shiism is not a holistic and multidimensional one. Even when analyzing the Shiite sources like the traditions and narrations of religious leaders, he focuses more on the traditions which can be interpreted esoterically, philosophically and mystically. He only mentions narrations which could be used in explaining the Shiite esoteric philosophy.

2. Sometimes it can be seen that he documents narrations which are

manipulated with respect to the reliability and certitude of the document and implication. Since in Corbin's view, the essence and truthfulness of Shiism is the same as its esoteric aspect, i.e. philosophy and spirituality, he documents whatever that is an indicator of such philosophy and spirituality. For instance, he refers to the "al-Bayan" sermon in *Mashariq al-Anwar* by Rajab al-Hafiz al-Bursi that is about Imam Ali (PBUH). This sermon is considered as one of the exaggerated and extravagant sermons about the position of Imamate. He does not consider the correctness or falseness of this Hadith, while it is not accepted historically and legally by Hadith tellers and has always been criticized by religious scholars. Only the mystic sect approves of the theme and implication of this sermon and refers to it. He talks about the character of Rajab al-Hafiz al-Bursi who is not considered reliable by Shiite scholars like Allameh Majlesi.⁷⁰ He says:

*Among Rajab Bursi's work which add up to eight books, Mashariq al-Anwar, which is the most important sermon relating to the first Imam, can be considered as an excellent preface on the Shiite philosophy.*⁷¹

Due to the fact that Corbin was fond of the mystic Shiism, he was more inclined to Shiite sects which were leaning towards esotericism, for instance, the Ismaili and Shaykhi sects and the mystical approach of the Imamites. As a result, he paid considerable attention to the thoughts of the Ismaili and Shaykhi sects when dealing with the issue of Mahdism. His major problems regarding the subject of Mahdism are about views which he adopted, in particular, from the Shaykhi sect.

3. Corbin, who was influenced by the corpse astral and Suhrawardi's world of archetypal images, considers time and place as being "among times" or "the Middle East". Based on this, he justifies the Green Island (Khazra), the White sea (which has been cited in the sayings of those who had the honor of seeing Imam Mahdi) and the dwelling of the Imam of the time (may God hasten his reappearance). Some of the great scholars of the Shaykhi sect, such as Mohammed Karim Khan Kermani (1288 solar calendar/ 1870 A.D.) and Abulqasem Khan Ibrahimi (1247 solar calendar/1869 A.D.) benefited from the subject 'the world of archetypal images' which had been propounded by Suhrawardi. They considered 'the world of archetypal images'

as being the same as the world of 'corpse astral'. In their view, 'the world of corpse astral' or 'the world of archetypal images' was the place and the world which Imam Mahdi (may God hasten his reappearance) lived in. Corbin, too, pays attention to this matter and talks about the relation among the world of archetypal images, corpse astral and the Green Island. He states the relation among these worlds. He tries to show that most of the religious events and experiences of the believers with the twelfth Imam has not occurred in the concrete and ordinary order of the world. He seeks to prove that these events have occurred in an intermediate world which is beyond the material world and is different from it. With regards to this issue, he approaches the ideas of the Shaykhi School. Because of his phenomenological method, and since he looks at the Imamate of Imam Mahdi from the perspective of explaining the Shiite spiritual history, he considers the belief in the world of archetypal images, which is beyond the material world, as the phenomenology of Imam Mahdi's absence. In his idea, the land of the heavenly realm of corpse astral is like the illuminated land in the Manichean creed:

The concept of the absent Imam has led the clerics of the Shaykhi School towards deepening the meaning and the manner of this absent presence. Once more, the world of archetypal images has a fundamental role. Seeing the Imam in the heavenly realm of corpse astral (compare it with illuminated land in the Manichean creed) and seeing him where he actually exists, in an immaterial world, somewhere beyond the senses, is possible with senses unique to this world. The Shaykhi sect has depicted a kind of phenomenology of absence. According to the rules of material history, a face like the face of the twelfth Imam would not appear and disappear; instead he is a metaphysical being. He is an indicator of the deep desires which accorded with the desires resulting from the thought of the delicate body of the Christ in an event in Christianity.⁷²

Despite the fact that many first class Twelve-Imam scholars believe that the Imam of our Time has a materialistic existence and lives in this mundane world, Corbin, who is influenced by the world of archetypal images and the corpse astral, ignores the ideas of these scholars. He tries to justify the meetings and mystical visions of those who had the honor of visiting the Imam of the Time (may God hasten his reappearance) with the world of corpse astral. Maybe the main

reason that Corbin was inclined to the world of corpse astral is that he tries to present a spiritual history from the Shiite history; a history which, according to Corbin's phenomenological dimension, is beyond time and space. It is situated in a transcendental and ethereal world and does not possess the features of the material world.

Shiite scholars such as Sheik Sadooq in the book *Kamal-al-Din wa Tamam-al-Ne'meh*, Tabarsi Noori in *Najm-al-Thaaqeb*, Mohammed Baqer Majlesi in volume thirteen of the book *Behar-al-Anvar* and many other Shiite scholars have cited the meetings, mystical visions and the biographies of humans who lived a long life, trying to prove that the meetings with Imam Mahdi take place in this material world. They wanted to prove that it is possible to meet the Imam of the time, when he is absent or the fact that Imam Mahdi lives in a material world. Unlike great Shaykhi scholars who say that visiting the Imam takes place in the world of archetypal images and the world of corpse astral, none of the scholars cited above agree to such a view. Instead, all these scholars believe that these meetings happen in this material world (a physical meeting) or in a state of mystical intuition and vision. In a sense, in their opinion these meetings take place within a human being. But unlike the Twelve-Imam scholars (twelve-Imam Shiites), Corbin leans more towards the Shaykhi outlook. It is as though he considers all the existing experiences about Imam Mahdi as belonging to another world. In this regard he says:

Of course there were simple-minded people who believed that the (absent) Imam exists like any other living human, and each of us is able to see him. Even some (writers) have seriously tried to research about the lives of long-life humans and believe in the possibility of a very long physical life for the Imam.⁷³

In fact, In Corbin's view, the Imam of our Time (may God hasten his reappearance), lives in an intermediary world or isthmus that is referred to as "the intermediary east. Hence, he excludes the Imam from the causal rules of history and this way he justifies the long life of the Imam. In explaining this subject, Dariush Shayegan says:

... The Imam who is the divine manifestation of Truth, is exempt from the causal rules of history, therefore, he is a symbol of "his" essence or mystical "individuality". In fact, history or the description of the divine life of the twelfth Imam continues its course in a parallel and

*intermediary world, which is an isthmus world. In the same way, the time of his life is also an isthmus or intermediary time. The concept of manifestation requires the existence of the world of archetypal images where the "divine" insight transforms everything to a symbol. This is referred to as the world of "intermediary east", which in the history of the divine life of the twelfth Imam, appears in the form of an emerald-color "Green Island. A white sea surrounds this Island which is itself situated in Utopia or the all-direction pole.*⁷⁴

In Corbin's opinion, the dwelling of Imam Mahdi (may God hasten his reappearance) is situated in Utopia which is mysterious and is outside the realm in which we live. It has a special space and place which is metaphysical and the majority of the people cannot go there.⁷⁵

Taking into account Corbin's view about the esoteric and mystical thought of Shiism, we realize that in his opinion, Imam is the highest and greatest manifestation and symbol of the esoteric interpretation of the prophetic divine law and the divine book. This is in such a way that the divine law will lose its dynamism and life without the presence of the infallible Imam.

4. Abd-al-Rahman Badvi believes that Henry Corbin is against intellectualism and is more inclined to theosophy.⁷⁶ It seems that Corbin's approach in this regard has numerous reasons. On the one hand, Corbin was the student of scholars such as Heidegger and other existentialistic scholars who believed in the ending of the period of metaphysics and philosophy. In other words, they were not interested in the classical arguments of philosophy. They even asked the others not to call them philosophers. Hence, instead of trying to provide an answer for the abstract questions of philosophy, they endeavored to deal with the questions of life. Henry Corbin was influenced by the thoughts of his teachers, who were "Massinon" and the scholars mentioned above. These philosophers were inclined to the thoughts of individuals like Hallaj and Suhrawardi. As a result Corbin was inclined to Suhrawardi more than any other scholar. So it is no surprise that with this mentality he came to Iran and focused on Sufism, the theosophical thought and ultimately mystical Shiism. He endeavored to comprehend these issues.

5. Since Corbin was influenced by the thoughts of Shihabuddin Suhrawardi and sects such as the Ismaili and Shaykhi sects, his views

about physical meeting and religious experiences (dream-vision, mystical intuition) with the Imam of the time (may God hasten his reappearance) can be criticized. As mentioned before, due to the fact that he was inspired and influenced by the thoughts of Suhrawardi and Shaykh Ahmad Ahsa'i, who believed in the world of corpse astral, he too, believed in that world. In his opinion, Imam Mahdi and his children live there. According to him, the Green Island and The White Sea are there, too, and the mystical intuitions and the meetings of the believers with Imam Mahdi take place in this world. He even justifies the long life of the Imam with the world of corpse astral. In Corbin's view, the world of corpse astral is a metaphysical world. It goes beyond the time and space of the material world. Time and time changes do not exist in that world. Hence, because of his adherence to the Shaykhi sect, he believes that the long life of the Imam can be justified by proving the world of corpse astral. In this regard he even criticizes the Twelve-Imam scholars and considers their thoughts as being incorrect. These scholars justify the long life of the Imam by stating the fact that some people live a long life. Despite the fact that Corbin takes the ideas of the Twelve-Imam Shiites into consideration, in this particular case he considers the thoughts of the Shaykhi sect and the principles in Suhrawardi's thoughts as being closer to the truth. The main criticism on Corbin's thoughts is regarding the world of corpse astral. Since in his phenomenological method he seeks to explain the Shiite divine history, it is very interesting for him to believe in a world in "the middle east": a world which is beyond the natural time and space.

6. Another criticism on Corbin's view regarding Mahdism is that he only views Mahdism from the point of view of Sufism and guardianship. He ignores the other dimensions of the Mahdism thought, such as the sociological, anthropological and political aspects and some other dimensions of the era of reappearance. According to Corbin, Imam Mahdi is the Seal of the conditional wilayah. He would reveal the inner essence of all religions. He only deals with this issue from the mystical view and whatever that is considered important in the mystical culture. In his writings, he does not pay much attention

to the applications and effects of the belief in Mahdism on other fields, both before and after the reappearance of the Imam.

- 1 For the bibliography of Henry Corbin's works refer to: هنرى كوربان، نظره فيلسوف فى سيره الشيخ الاحسابى و السيد الرشدى، خليل زامل، اعداد و تعليق راضى ناصر السلطان، موسسه فكر الاوحد للتحقيق و الطباعة، لبنان، ٢٠٠٢م، ص ١٥-٢٣.
- 2 To study about the biography, works, and scientific activities of Henry Corbin refer to the following books: Daryoush Shayegan, *Henry Corbin: The Horizons of Spiritual Thought in Iranian Islam*, Baqer Parham (Tehran: Agah, 1371). Shahram Paazooki, *A Remembrance of Henry Corbin* (Tehran: The Research Institute of Iran's wisdom and Philosophy, 1382), P. 67. Henry Corbin, *History of Islamic Philosophy*, Translated by Asadollah Mobashery (Tehran: Amir Kabir, 1361), pp. 9-35. Jalal Ashtiani, *On Henry Corbin's Biography and Thoughts* (Tehran: Hermes, 1379). Abdu Rahman Badavi, *The Encyclopedia of Orientalists*, Salih Tabataba'i (Tehran: Rozaneh, 1377), pp. 481-487. Mostafa Huseini Tabataba'i, *Criticisms on the Works of Orientalists* (Tehran: Chapakhsh Publications, 1375), pp. 87-98.
- 3 Henry Corbin, *History of Islamic Philosophy*, Asadollah Mobashery (Tehran: Amir Kabir publications, 1361), p. 17.
- 4 Henry Corbin, *L'Homme et Son Ange: Initiation et Chevalerie Spirituelle*, Ehsan Naraq (Nashre Nou, Tehran, 1363), P. 20.
- 5 "One of the issues being under consideration in that day was Corbin in contrasting Husserl's phenomenology with Heidegger's phenomenology, also contrasting Heidegger's beliefs with Jaspers's reflections. It was the topic of friendly talks on long nights in Gabriel Marcel's house." In *Henry Corbin: The Horizons of Spiritual Thought in Iranian Islam*, P. 29.
- 6 Annemarie Schimmel, *Explaining the Signs of God: A Phenomenological Look at Islam*, Abdurrahim Govahi (Tehran: The office of publishing Islamic culture, 1376), P. 36.
- 7 Morris Cruise, *Heidegger's Philosophy*, Mahmood Navali (Tehran: Hekmat, 1378), pp. 25-26.
- 8 Darmesteter (1849-1894). He is of the renowned Orientalists of the 19th century who has written books on Islam and Mahdism. He seeks to investigate about Mahdism based on the historical method and on the basis of historic roots and transitions. His books on Mahdism has been translated to Farsi. The title of its bibliography is: Darmesteter, *Mahdi from the outset of Islam to the 13th century*, Mohsen Jahansooz (Tehran: Adab bookstore, 1317).
- 9 Ignac Goldziher (1850-1921). He is one of the

greatest Orientalists who have talked about Mahdism in detail. The title of his book in Arabic and English are: ايگناتس گلدتسيهر، العقيدة و الشريعة فى الاسلام، Mohammed Yousof Mosa and colleagues, ١٩٥٩، الطبعه الثانيه دارالكتاب الحديثه، مصر، and, Goldziher, *lessons about Islam (sects)*, Alinaqi Monzavi (S.L., S.D.).

- 10 Gerlof Van Vloten (1866-1903). He is one of the Orientalists who have written books on Shiism and the belief in Mahdism. He tries to make the Shiite sect and the belief in Mahdism appear as the result of the Kufis' thoughts and an spurious belief created by people such as Mokhtar Thaqafi who tried to overthrow the government of that time. The title of his book in Arabic is: فان فلوتن، السياره العربيه و الشيعه و الاسرائيليات فى عهد بنى اميه، الدكتور حسن ابراهيم و محمد زكى ابراهيم، الطبعه الثانيه، مكتبه النهضة المصرى، قاهره، ١٩٦٥؛ Van Vloten, *The history of Shiism and the causes of the overthrow of Umayyad*, translated by Sayyed Morteza Hashemi Ha'ery (Tehran publications, S.L., S.D.).
- 11 Henry Corbin, *History of Islamic Philosophy*, Sayyed Javad Tabataba'i (Tehran: Kavir, 1377), p. 103.
- 12 Ibid, P.15.
- 13 In explaining about the thoughts of the esoteric Shiism, he refers us to the denotative meaning of "Alkhotbat almayan" of Rajab Bursi in *Mashariq Al-anwar*. He neither deals with the documentation or the proof of the issuance of this sermon, nor does he write about the Green Island and the White Sea or the travel to five Islands of the children of Imam Mahdi which he has translated into French. He writes books about the Shaykhi sect and propounds the issue of the body of corps astral (*Hurqalya*), the fourth pillar, the importance of sainthood and Mahdism in Shaykhi thought, but he pays no attention to the theological and ideological correctness or falsehood of the subject. For him, explaining the principal elements of the mystical thought of the esoteric Shiism is important. He suspends anything about the authenticity and correctness of these sayings. In the technical term he put them in parenthesis.
- 14 "Henry Corbin and the Shiite's transcendental philosophy" in *On Henry Corbin's biography and thoughts*, Hassan Sayyed Arab, P. 20. (But it should be noted that in a trip when Sayyed Hussein Nasr was accompanying Henry Corbin to the first conference on Shiism in Strasburg, he narrates from Henry Corbin: "One day we went to the peak of the beautiful hill which separates France and Germany. He cast his eyes on the forests on the other side of the border and said: When I was young, I passed this path and entered Germany to meet Heidegger. But after discovering about Suhrawardi and Mullah Sadra and other Iranian metaphysicians, I no longer need to travel to this

- side of the border.” (Sayyed Hussein Nasr, Henry Corbin’s festival letter).
- 15 Daryoush Shayegan, *Henry Corbin: The Horizons of Spiritual Thought in Iranian Islam*, Baqer Parham (Tehran: Agah, 1371), P. 66.
- 16 Ibid, P. 44. “Corbin said: ‘since the west has lost its sense of the esoteric interpretation, we are no longer able to understand the mysteries of the Holy Book, and we are gradually forgetting the mythological aspects of the divine dimensions of this world.’ It was for the first time that I understood the unbelievable aspects of this term which is often used by Corbin and as we already know it is still the key to the depth of his thoughts. Allameh Tabataba’i said: ‘Would it be possible to talk about these issues without understanding the secret of the spiritual interpretation. True spirituality is impossible without the esoteric interpretation.’ Two men (Henry Corbin and Allameh Tabataba’i) had complete consensus despite the difficulties with their language and expressions.... Later I realized the unlimited possibilities of this sense of the esoteric interpretation with all its resulted outcomes. I understood that Corbin’s entire life was an endeavor to blossom the art of esoteric interpretation in him, meaning reaching the superior type of the insightful thought which he had discovered some of its aspects in phenomenology. But it was the same thing which in the western intellectual process was considered as a trend which scholars such as Husserl and Heidegger had reached after a very long time.... Corbin used to say to me: “that’s what is meant by ‘the unveiling of the hidden’, meaning understanding the esoteric aspect of the realities.”
- 17 Ibid, P. 68.
- 18 Claude Addas, Ibn Arabi; *The Voyage No Return* (Tehran: Nilofar, 1382), P. 85.
- 19 Massignon’s glorious allegories about Shiism and basically the smack of his lessons triggered the passion for mystic knowledge in Corbin’s soul. It was impossible not to be effected by his words. The burning flame in his heart and his daring penetration in the hidden aspects of the mystical life in Islam, which until that time no one had discovered, his chastity, anger and distraction to the rogueries of this world were all factors that caused his young audience to be affected. In addition to that, Massignon openly accepted Iran’s fundamental contribution to the world of Islam... but believed that the Iranian world was never his desired dwelling. on the contrary, Corbin considered Iran as his home and the strange thing is that Massignon was the one who provided the opportunity for him to reside in this home. Because of Corbin’s repeated questions about the relation between Philosophy and mysticism, Massignon gave him the lithograph of Suhrawardi’s most important book, *Hikmat Al-Ishraq* and said: “Take this book. I think you may find it useful for you.” And Corbin says: “What Massignon meant was the fellowship with the young Suhrawardi that from then on never left me in my life.” (*Henry Corbin: The Horizons of Spiritual Thought in Iranian Islam*, P. 23).
- 20 To get acquainted with Gilson’s thoughts refer to: Etienne Gilson, *The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy*, translated by A. Davoodi, (Tehran: Scientific and Cultural Publications, 1366).
- 21 Concerning the relationship between Corbin and Gilson, Daryoush Shayegan says: “Corbin... passionately follows Etienne Gilson’s lessons in the religious sciences of the practical school of graduate studies from 1923-24. From these lessons he learns how to read and interpret the ancient books. Gilson’s masterful teachings stimulate such an admiration in Corbin that he decides to set it as his model in his works. Regarding the Arabic and Farsi books which he later translated, Corbin tried to use the comprehensive precision Gilson used in reading, understanding and reviving Latin books. (*Henry Corbin: The Horizons of Spiritual Thought in Iranian Islam*, P. 21).
- 22 Henry Corbin, *History of Islamic Philosophy*, Sayyed Javad Tabataba’i (Tehran: Kavir, 1377), pp. 7-8.
- 23 See Abdul Hussein Naqibzadeh, *An Introduction to Philosophy* (Tehran, 1372), P. 165-166.
- 24 Shihabuddin Suhrawardi, *The Illuminationist Philosophy*, the second collection of Suhrawardi’s works, Tehran publication, P. 157: (... الاضواء و المينويه ينابيع الخره "خره" و الراى التى اخير عنها زرادشت و وقع خلمه الملك الصديق كيخسرو المبارك اليها فشاهدها و حكماء الفرس كلهم متفقون على هذا حتى ان الماء كان عندهم له صاحب صنم من الملكوت و سموه "خرداد" و ما للاشجار سموه "مرداد" و ما للنار سموه "ارديبهشت").
- 25 Qolam Hussein Ebrahimi Dinani, *The Ray of Thought and Intuition in Suhrawardi’s Philosophy*, (Tehran: Hekmat publications, 1366), P. 438-439.
- 26 Sayyed Hussein Nasr, *Three Muslim Sages*, trans. by Ahmed Aram (Tehran: Pocket Books Corporation, 1371), P. 72, (Quoting from part 55 of theology of Suhrawardi’s *Talwihat*; The History of Islamic Philosophy, Henry Corbin, P. 295. Aristotle tells Suhrawardi in his dream: “these Bayazid Bastami and Sahl Tostari were the real Philosophers”. That is how the illuminationist Philosophy formed a bond between philosophy and mysticism and from then on they were never separated.
- 27 *Three Muslim Sages*, P. 71, (Quoted from Shihabuddin Suhrawardi’s sixth article, from the natural history section of the book: *Mutarahat*).
- 28 In explaining about the excellence, mystical experiences and the greatness of Plato’s character, Suhrawardi narrates a story about the discharge of his soul from his body and his ascent to the world of light and says: *وقد حكى الالهى افلاطون عن نفسه فقال*

- ما معناه: إني ربما خلوت بنفسي و خلعت بدني جانباً و صرت كأنى مجرد بلا بدن، عرى عن الملابس الطبيعية، برىء عن الهيولى فأكون داخلًا في ذاتي خارجًا عن سائر الأشياء فأرى في نفسي من الحسن و البهاء و السناء و الضياء و المحاسن العجيبة الانيقة ما أبقي متعجباً فأعلم أنى جزء من أجزاء العالم الأعلى الانيقة Suhrawardi's first collection, *Talwihat*, Istanbul's publication, P. 112).
- 29 *Three Muslim Sages*, P. 73.
- 30 According to Sayyed Hessein Nasr, Suhrawardi has applied the term "theologian" to illuminationist philosophers. This term has been used for a group of metaphysicians in Iran such as Mulla Sadra as Sadr al- Muta'llihin (Sayyed Hussein Nasr, *Three Muslim Sages*, P. 183).
- 31 *History of Islamic Philosophy*, P. 307.
- 32 Ibid, Pp. 307-308.
- 33 Ibid, P. 305.
- 34 Ibid.
- 35 Ibid, P. 307.
- 36 There are many verses which expressly state that one of Imam's responsibilities is to guide to God's command and prescript. In the chapter the Prophets (و جعلناهم أئمة يهدون بأمرنا) (انبيا) Verse 73: and the chapter Adoration (مسجدة) Verse 24: (و) جعلناهم أئمة يهدون بأمرنا
- 37 See Qolam Hussein Ebrahimi Dinani, *The Ray of Thought and Intuition in Suhrawardi's Philosophy*, the second edition, (Tehran: Hekmat publications, 1366), pp. 413-415; Sayyed Hussein Nasr, *Three Muslim Sages*, Pp. 84-85; Mir Abdol Hussein Naqib Zadeh, *An Introduction to Philosophy*, second edition, (Tehran: Agah, 1372), P. 167.
- 38 In the *Illuminationist Philosophy*, regarding the difference between the world of suspended forms (Suhrawardi's world of archetypal images) and the luminous world (the Platonic world of archetypal images), Suhrawardi says: "... و الصور المعلقة ليست... مثل افلاطون فإن مثل افلاطون نورية ثابتة في عالم الانوار العقلية و هذه مثل معلقة و ليس لها محل، فيجوز ان يكون لها مظهر من هذا العالم." (The illuminationist Philosophy, the lithography, P. 511)
- 39 *The Ray of Thought and Intuition in Suhrawardi's Philosophy*, pp. 417-418.
- 40 *History of Islamic philosophy*, P. 300.
- 41 *التشاعر و المطارحات*, Istanbul's publication, P. 474.
- 42 *History of Islamic Philosophy*.
- 43 Ibid.
- 44 Henry Corbin, *The Foundations of the Spiritual Art*, Compiled with the supervision of Ali Tajdini, the second edition, (Tehran: The Islamic Studies office of Art, 1376), p. 27-28.
- 45 Zabine Schmidtke, *Correspondance Corbin-Ivanow: Letters `exchangees entre Henry Corbin et Vladimir Ivanow*, translated by A. Roohbakhshan, The library of the museum and the document center of the Islamic Parliament and Iran's research center of wisdom and philosophy, (Tehran, 1382).
- 46 Haydar Ibn Ali Amoli, *Jami` al-Asrar Wa Manba`at-Anwar*, Corrected by Henry Corbin and Othman Yahya, translated by Sayyed Javad Tabatabaiee, (Tehran: Scientific and Cultural publications, 1368).
- 47 *History of Islamic Philosophy*, P. 46.
- 48 *Henry Corbin: The Horizons of Spiritual Thought in Iranian Islam*, P. 163.
- 49 Ibid, pp. 160-161.
- 50 Henry Corbin, *Iranian Philosophy and Comparative Philosophy*, P. 42.
- 51 Ibid, P. 162.
- 52 Ibid, P.108.
- 53 "و لو لا الحجة لساخت الارض باهلها"
- 54 From this tradition that says: امام لم يعرف امام "من مات و لم يعرف امام زمانه، مات ميتة جاهلية" we can infer that if someone does not know the Imam of his time, his death will be a death in the time of ignorance and accordingly his life too, will be a life in ignorance.
- 55 Regarding Prophet Abraham's reaching the rank of Imamate, in Chapter Baqarah, verse 124 Koran says: (و إذ ابتلى ابراهيم ربه بكلمات فاتمهن قال إني جاعلك للناس اماما قال و من ذريتي قال لا ينال عهدي الظالمين). These verses indicate the supremacy of Prophet Abraham's rank of Imamate to his rank of prophecy. It also proves the infallibility of the Imams. Because when Prophet Abraham asked God whether his offspring would have this rank, Allah replied, the oppressors, that means sinful people here, do not deserve this rank. So from the meaning of the verse, we can infer that the Imam should be exempt from sins and oppression.
- 56 An`am, verse 75.
- 57 Imam Sadeq (PBUH) says: May God bless our brother, Prophet Moses, if he would have been patient and could tolerate the acts of Propeht Khadhir (PBUH) -- which were based on knowing the secrets and esoteric interpretation of the world -- Prophet Khadhir (PBUH) would have provided an esoteric exegesis of seventy cases of his acts to Prophet Moses (PBUH). In addition to that, there were cases in the lives of the Imams where they could provide prognostications because of their position of Imamate, knowing the angelical aspect of the world and having the power to provide an esoteric exegesis. For instance we can mention the sayings of Imam Ali (PBUH) to Ibn Moljam about his murder or what Imam Ali said to Saad Ibn Abi Vaqas about his son, omar Saad regarding the murder of Imam Hussein (PBUH) by him. All these cases indicate their knowing the secret, esoteric and angelical aspect of the world. It proves that they are invincible in knowledge.
- 58 Regarding those who have the knowledge of esoteric exegesis, Koran in 3: 7 says: (و ما يعلم تأويله الا الله و الراسخون في العلم) According to Koran, only those who are well-grounded in knowledge and are aware of the secrets and the angelical aspect of the phenomena of the world are able to provide an esoteric exegesis. Based on this,

- Corbin believes that understanding the meanings depends on the spiritual rank. In this regard he says: "Distinguishing between the meanings has been made possible among humans through their different spiritual ranks. These different degrees are determined by their inner capacities." (*History of Islamic Philosophy*, P. 18).
- 59 *History of Islamic Philosophy*, P. 18.
- 60 In this regard Koran says: اطيعوا الله و اطيعوا الرسول (و اطيعوا الله و اطيعوا الرسول و اولى الامر منكم) "oh believers, obey Allah and the Prophet and the masters of authority (the Imams)!" The mentioned cases are considered to be as proofs of the masters of authority. The word sainthood (Wilaya) has two meanings. When this word is applied in case of Allah, the prophets and the Imams, it means authority and headship, when it is used in the case of the believers and the followers, it means an indisputable submission and obedience. This difference in meaning is showed with the vowel point (a) in at, (e) in sect, and (o) good.
- 61 *History of Islamic Philosophy*
- 62 *Ibid*, P. 105.
- 63 Corbin believes that when people reach spiritual maturity, the Imam will reappear. As a proof he narrates a statement from Saadeddin Homavi. He says: "The absent Imam won't reappear unless the secrets of monotheism are heard from the laces of his sandals. This means when the esoteric and inner meaning of monotheism is completely comprehended." (*History of Islamic Philosophy*, P. 106).
- 64 *Ibid*, P.105. The spirit of magnanimity and chivalrous behavior used to be propagated by mystics in the past, and led to the composition of magnanimity letters. Corbin somehow considers this as the cause of the propagation of religion and moral teachings, also its integration with the everyday life of people and among various professions and occupations. As a result morality intermingled with life. Hence, Corbin considers the future appearance of the Imam depending on the metamorphosis of the hearts of humans and the emergence of chivalrous behavior which depends on their faith.)
- 65 In spite of the fact that in his phenomenological method on Shiism, Corbin describes it with respect to all its different sects (Ismaili, Shaykhi and the twelve-Imam Shiism) and tires not to give his personal opinion or judgment, surprisingly sometimes we can see that he shows his preference for one thought over another and begins to compare them and provide his personal opinion. For instance, regarding the world of Hurqalya or the immaterial world, and meeting with the Imam of the time (PBUH), surprisingly he leans towards the Shaykhi view and believes that all the visits occur in an immaterial world which is the world of corpse astral. In stating this belief, he considers the twelve-Imam Shiite scholars, like Koleini, Tabarsi Noori, and Shaykh Mofid, who believe in the long life of Imam Mahdi and his physical life in this material world, as being perverted.
- 66 *History of Islamic Philosophy*, P. 42.
- 67 Henry Corbin believed that the divine law and philosophy cannot thoroughly explain about the essence and the spiritual truth of Shiism. Accordingly he believed that the subject of the Imamate and guardianship of the Imams, can explain the truth of prophetic and Shiite philosophy. He considered mysticism to be based on the Imamate and the supreme spiritual guidance of the Imam and the guardianship issued on his behalf. He thought that the mystics had the ability to carry out that responsibility. In his idea, unlike the divine law and philosophy, mysticism was able to take this responsibility. As a result, he leaned more towards the mystics and philosophers who had a mystical approach rather than peripatetic philosophers. It should be noted that accepting Corbin's words concerning the fact that the essence of religion has to be understood based on the issue of the Imamate and guardianship of the Imam, does not necessarily mean that one has to be loyal to gnosis or mysticism. Perhaps a person might not consider mysticism to carry out the role of Imamate and guardianship _unlike the claim made by mysticism itself_ but accept Corbin's words regarding the fact that the essence of Shiism is the same as the Imamate and guardianship of the leaders of religion. In fact, he has propounded the issue of Imamate and guardianship but is looking for its proof in mysticism.
- 68 *Ibid*, P. 109.
- 69 *History of Islamic Philosophy*, P. 105.
- 70 Mohammed Baqer Majlesi, *Bihar Al-Anvar* (Beirut's publication), Vol. 1, P. 10.
- 71 *History of Islamic Philosophy*, P. 139.
- 72 *Ibid*, P.105.
- 73 Mohammed Ali Amir Moezi, "A research on the typology of the narrations about meeting the absent Imam" in *On Henry Corbin's Biography and Thoughts*, P. 75. Cited from the book "En Islam Iranian, T 4, P. 328.
- 74 Daryoush Shayegan, *The Horizons of spiritual thought in Iranian Islam*, Baqer Parham, P. 156.
- 75 One of the vulnerable points of Corbin's thought regarding Mahdism, is his belief in the metaphysical life of Imam Mahdi and his existence in the world of archetypal images. In this issue he had been influenced by Suhrawardi and the great scholars in Shaykhi sect. In spite of the fact that



*Globalization
of Economics and
the Necessity for
the Doctrine of
Mahdism¹*

Abstract:

This article seeks to explain a few subjects:

- 1- the globalization of economics as a fact,
- 2- the globalization, with its doctrine of capitalistic school has not produced and will never produce welfare and happiness for the people because it is heedless of justice and equity.
- 3- we need a new doctrine for all the people of the world to appreciate and demand: the doctrine of economic justice of Mahdism.
- 4- the doctrine of Mahdist justice, explaining the criteria for justice, introduces the Islamic precepts to those who demand it as a perfect doctrine for a just and stable economic growth and considers its creeds to be sufficient and efficient in securing prosperity and welfare at both the universal and regional levels for all the people.

Introduction

The economic thought from the Islamic viewpoint about “globalization” is not only a positive perspective but also an ideal one having roots in the hearts and souls of the followers and the great saint of this school whether in the past or in the present. Economic consolidation has always been a basic idea for different nations throughout the world, attaining to which requires relying and depending on free transportations of commodities, people, capitals and information.

Causing artificial hindrances in the way of this Islamic thought will only forestall the ideal of “human unity” and the increase of public “well-being”. Nevertheless, if the “real justice” can be secured, a stable consolidation will probably be realized; but when no “justice” is exerted, in spite of many advancements in the situation, there may appear some unifications first; but after a time when the states understand that the advantageous outputs are not distributed fairly, consolidation will consequently remain futile:

Globalization of Economics and Public Welfare

Although modern Global Economics persists in the category of integration, it does not indicate an explicit position for “justice”. Economic unification is the first necessity in the Islamic thought, and it is very important to treat equally with equal partners in trades and dealings to confront those acting on the unequal bases. When developed countries increase their industrial exports, developing countries too, must increase their exportable goods, preferably with a higher rate so that the amount of increase in the former does not result in the creation of a gap in the latter between rich and poor countries. After all, until the time when all the barriers in the way are not removed, developing countries cannot have a sufficient growth in their exportation of goods to industrial countries to keep up with the world progression on the whole.

Furthermore, the ability for development in the exportation of products in developing countries is never possible without a higher potential to produce rapidly so that they can compete with other advanced industries; and unfortunately such a hasty, rapid development cannot be formalized quickly. So under such circumstances, a free global economy for developing countries has not brought about and will not bring anything but an increase in their imports and a remarkable decrease in their production capacities, which have been something as if prearranged for them.

A short review of economic growth statistics will show us the sad reality that only inequality, decline and poverty have been the allotment for developing countries. Globalization, in this way, has never been successful to make happen economic growth at all.

1- Facts about Economic Growth in the World

Supposing that economic growth were the essential instrument for the decrease of poverty, what qualifications has this growth had over the past few decades in the developing countries? Has such a growth ever been realized and have such countries enjoyed a higher rate of advancement?

As we see, the rate of growth has not gone up in most developing countries; however, it has decreased in some of them too.

In order to have a better understanding of the process of economic

growth, we will turn to the reports given for 1990's. The figure 1-2 shows only a .4 growth for the underdeveloped countries with low per capita income, which indicates the rate and scale of their poverty. Countries with an average income or food income too, have not enjoyed a higher rate in this decade. Therefore, we see that economic growth has not been able to overcome poverty. Of course, we ought not to forget that countries with a high per capita income and a growth rate of 4 to 5 per cent still have to challenge unemployment.

Table 1-2 gross domestic products (GDP) per capita

group of countries	decade 1980			decade 1990		
	Growth rate per capita GDP	Growth rate of population	Growth rate of GDP	Growth rate per capita GDP	Growth rate of population	Growth rate of GDP
with low income	2.1	2.3	4.4	.4	2.	2.4
average income to the lower	2.4	1.6	4.	2.3	1.1	3.4
Average income to the higher	1.7	1.8	2.5	2.2	1.4	3.6
With high income	2.5	.6	3.1	1.8	.6	2.4

Source: World Development Report 2000. 01, World Bank, Tables 3 and 11

Regional investigations too, show statistically that the exception of countries in Southeast Asia having the per capita growth of 6.4 and 6.1 percent during two decades, the other countries in different regions of the world have not enjoyed any desirable growths. Europe was in economic stagnation in 1990's and Central Asia too was involved in a transfer crisis shifting from a centralized to a free economic state in this decade. The condition in Latin America, the Middle East and North Africa, with a growth of almost one percent, has not been favorable either. But the poorest region, with a negative rate and the worst life conditions was the area down the Sahara in Africa.

During this decade, the whole world did not have more than 1 percent of growth per capita.

Table 2.3 can give us the most precise view of the most and the least lucky countries on the basis of growth per capita. China and Vietnam are situated at the topmost as being the luckiest in the years 1990's but Congo and Sierra Leone have been the unluckiest countries in those two decades. Of course, countries in the previous East bloc, in East Europe and Central Asia, have had a negative growth rate from 11.3 to -.4 and without any exception, they have shifted from poverty to wretchedness, that is they have become a lot weaker.

Therefore, the claim of those persons such as Daller and Crye, who say: "The age of globalization is the age of increase in development" faces several contradictions. It is true that India, China and Singapore have become more prosperous in having access to the world markets, but this is for some other reasons why they benefit from globalization.

Facts about Inequality in the World

Inequality is usually discussed inside 4 domains as follows:

- 1- inequality in the national domain
- 2- inequality among tribal, racial or regional groups
- 3- inequality inside households and families: between man and woman, between boys and girls
- 4- inequality among nations, (international inequality)

However, what we are going to talk about here is the inequality among nations. The following figure shows the distribution of incomes throughout the world. The population of the world is divided to 5 scores, sets of 20. The first score, that is first 20 percent and the richest in the world, has at its disposal 83% of the world income: whereas the fifth score, that is the poorest 20 percent possesses only 1.4 percent of the world income. Unfortunately, the wealthier those countries become, the deeper the gap becomes between them and the poor countries and thus, the worse will be the state of inequality. In 1960's, the wealthy score of the world population had about 30 times of the world wealth at its disposal, but today it has 80 times as much of the world wealth

Champagne Glass of Income Distribution²

According to a valuable research done by Francois Bourguignon and Christian Morrisson on the distribution of Incomes among the people of the world, 1820 to 1992, namely after the Industrial Revolution up to the late 20th century, it was found out that the allotment for the twenty percent poor citizens out of the world income was %4.5 in 1820, while this figure was reduced to two percent in 1992. In the same way, the allotment of the world income, increased for the wealthy citizens from %43.1 in 1820, amounted to 53.4 percent in 1992. Also, the distribution coefficient situation (Ginny Coefficient) shows an increase of .504 to .663 which indicates the worsening of inequality at the world level.

Table 2-2 Percentage of Income Allotment of the Wealthy and the Poor of the World with Ginny Coefficient from 1820 to 1992

Year	1820	1850	1870	1890	1910	1929	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990
Income the low 20 percent	45	4	3.6	3.3	2.9	2.8	2.4	2.3	2	1.9	2
Income the high 10 percent	43.1	45.6	48	50.1	51	50.1	51.4	49.8	50.9	51.4	53.4
Ginny coeff.	.504	.538	.565	.592	.614	.621	.641	.635	.654	.657	.663

The size distribution of income among world citizens: 1820-1990, Francois Bourguignon and Christian Morrisson, June 1990

Note: Ginny Coefficient is related to a statistician named Ginny with his use of Lorenz Curve. He has found an index for the numerical measurement out of the sum of income inequalities, which varies between zero and one. The more value this coefficient has, the more the rate of inequality will be in the distribution of incomes; and the less the value of this coefficient is, the more Fairly-divided will be the distribution of incomes.

The Reality of Poverty in the World

Poverty being always associated with human beings, is one of the realities constituting a part of the destiny of some people who have been obliged to fight against it in one way or another. With the exception of some periods at the beginning of Islam and the glorious Islamic civilization, (when according to traditions, there were no poor people to receive alms from the Treasure House,) they have always had problems confronting poverty as an ominous phenomenon. Even “industrialization” and long-term economic growth have not been able to eradicate poverty. Of course, economic growth, industrial revolution and the poor people’s awareness of material advancements have all caused the poor ones to discover their own poverty and try to remove it in any way possible. Emigration to larger cities or to wealthy countries is one of the results of such a discovery.

Generally, the difference between ways of life in different regions of the world was made known in the early years of the 19th century. Then the appearance of inequalities and injustices along with their consequences caused the thinkers and theorists to make hypotheses around the factors responsible for the creation of poverty. After the second World War, some authorities strove hard to find out the causes of increased poverty in the third world countries. Many strategies were planned for economic growth, right ways of distribution to satisfy the basic requirements of life and other contributions were suggested in order to improve life conditions of the poor in such regions.

Unfortunately, the best effects of such struggles were not communicated equally to all parts. Situated in the margins, lots of poor people did not receive the helps, and this resulted in the appearance of “mass poverty”. In 1980’s, in spite of all the efforts made to adjust the situation, that silent, innocent majority was forgotten so much that the World Bank called the decade “the lost decade for the poor”. On the basis of the estimation of the World Bank in 1990, there existed more than 1.3 billions of poor people in these countries. Then, in order to solve such a problem, they called the years 1990’s the decade of the “fight against poverty” or the decade of changing development: strategies from growth-based strategies to poverty-based strategies.

The report of the United Nations reveals that at the Age of globalization, in spite of all the mottoes for Millennium Development

Goals, there is no serious political intention to establish “economic justice”. In the year 2000 A.D, the members of the United Nations reached an agreement over the Millennium Development Goals. It was announced that the purpose of the program was to reduce at least 50 percent of poverty in the world by 2015. Solving problems such as hunger, disease, illiteracy, damage to the environment, prevalence of Aids virus, HIV were the standards to recognize and also to measure the realization of the goals. The UN programs proclaim that such purposes can be realized only on the condition that the poor countries try and follow up the multilateral improvements and the wealthy countries give their services to the poor countries by increasing their contributions to them and facilitating their ways of trade and commerce and generally respond to their positive improvements.

However, the fact is that the capitalistic system has no worry about eradication of poverty. Based on a report given by the UN,; “The number of those who lead their life miserably in the slums is about one billion, that is, one sixth of the whole population in the world. We believe that this number will become twice as many in 30 years from now in the future if some fundamental changes do not take place.” The United Nations Organization has warned: “it is possible that 3.5 billions of the world population (6 billions) will have to live in slums by 2050 A.D.

Today, in order to separate the poor regions from the non-poor regions, some special indicators of economic welfare called “absolute poverty lines” and “relative poverty lines” are used to depict the situation.

Relative Poverty

Sometimes we are concerned and would like to concentrate on the lowest scores (20 to 40 percent) of the world population, which are the relative poor people. To define the poor people like this gives us the opportunity to say: “The poor are always with us.”

It is often useful to have such an indicator so that we may always be prepared to help them by paying attention to them. As such poor people are helped and their living conditions improved, they may reach a higher level which is called “changed line of poverty”. As

an example, the European Union defines the poor as those people whose per capita income is lower than the 50 percent of the population. Whenever their average income increases, their line changes and they can shift to an upper position from the middle

Absolute Poverty

Ravallion and some others (1991 AD) used the term “absolute poverty” in their definition for the first time. They replaced “poverty lines” by “poverty perception” in the poorest countries, which means earning 31 dollars every month per person. Afterwards, this amount was changed to 30.42 dollars and then to one dollar a day. The world Bank then officially accepted the income of “one dollar a day” as a definition to indicate “absolute poverty” but another official definition was also brought up in the literature of living standards as “two dollars a day” to be doubled as an increase of level.

Now, by using both indicators of one and two dollars a day for the absolute poverty lines until the year 2000 AD, we will have the following statistics:

- 1- the estimation of 1200 million people living with one dollar-income a day.
- 2- over 2 billion people all over the world living with two or less dollars a day.

Table 2-3 the Rate of Absolute and Relative Poverty in Different Regions of the World

Different regions of the world	Absolute poverty percentage of the poor with less than one dollar a day (1998 AD)	Relative poverty percentage of the poor with less than 1/3 of average national consumption of 1993 (in 1998)
East Asia and the Pacific	15.3	19.6
The same area without China	11.3	24.6

Europe and Central Asia	5.1	25.6
Latin America and the Caribbeans	15.6	51.4
The Middle East and North Africa	1.9	10.8
South Asia	40.0	40.2
Africa, Lower Sahara	46.3	50.5
The whole world	24.0	32.1
The whole world without China	26.2	37.0

Table 2-3 shows the rates for absolute and relative poverty in different regions of the world. In order to know how to compare the regions with each other, we should see what standard is to be applied to poverty: Is the relative poverty line the standard or is it the absolute poverty line? With the absolute poverty criterion to be less than one dollar a day, the lower Sahara in Africa will have the highest rate of poor population; but with the relative poverty percentage (1/3 the average), on the other hand, Latin America and the Caribbeans will include the most portion of the people who consume less than one third of the national income.

According to the above-mentioned statistics, the Middle East and North Africa should emphasize the reduction of their relative poverty because their basic difficulty is lack of food and lack of sufficient sanitation.

Anyway, the statistics reveal that such a kind of globalization never leads to a stable economic growth; rather, it will give a rise to an international inequality along which poverty won't be eradicated either. The UN program for development in its report of 2003 AD about

human-condition improvement, announced: “with the present state of affairs, some African countries will not be able to overcome poverty until 2165. the advancement of Millennium Development Goals toward the realization of such procedures and its achievements in this ground is not certain at all.

Need to the Doctrine of Economic Justice

In the Islamic culture, “justice” has been indicated to be the ultimate goal of the social system. Justice is a virtue that was emphasized by Islam, and revived to acquire its utmost value. Islam was not contented with only recommending justice to be applied in the society, but also it set justice up to be the final end for the cultural, social system at all levels of local, national, regional, and universal applications. Of course, for the justice to be realized internationally, we need provisions and preparation, and we need a global leadership. The prerequisite for a global leadership is that everyone should have become disappointed and hopeless at the prevalent paradigm of capitalistic governance in the world, just as despondency with communistic system resulted in the disintegration of the East Block Super-Power. Nevertheless, the world leadership must be endowed with a magnitude which can only be realized in the Imam of Time (PBUH)

The universal preparation, however, will only be possible when the people become familiar with the just doctrines of that Great Imam. In the subject of economics, the most important doctrine to bring about economic convenience for people is justifiable growth in favor of the poor; because when economic growth is realized, inequality will be gradually reduced and the poverty eradicated. If the consumption becomes balanced and desirable, the perfect economic justice will rule over the society. This is the same ideal desired and wanted by divine saints and Islamic personalities over centuries in history in the domain of economics. It is relatively possible now for such an ideal to become realized in our country; we can give it the opportunity to appear and, thus introduce it to the world as the doctrine of Mahdism in the domain of economics. Or as a rival doctrine against the “doctrine of economic adjustment” of the “Consensus of Washington”, or against the doctrine of the “Ultra-Union of Washington”.

What are those doctrines that can confront the doctrines of Globalization of Capitalism? How can we compromise or harmonize the “stable economic growth” with a “just and fair economy”?

These are questions we ought to deal with, discuss and answer at this stage of our article. So, it is time to illustrate and explain what is meant by the Doctrine of Mahdism and the Mahdist principles of economic justice and, then, give and account for its essential components.

The Concept of Doctrine

The word “doctrine” in the Western-Christian dictionary derived from “doctrina” means: teaching, instruction, something that is taught, a principle, or the body of principles in a branch of knowledge or system of beliefs: a principle of law established through past decisions, a statement of government policy of fundamental international relations. Thus, “doctrine” indicates a collection of principles of what has been agreed upon as facts and the result of initiatives of a special political leader written in his name: like the “Doctrine of Monroe” the Doctrine of Eisenhower, which says every president can have his own doctrine.

The important point in the word “doctrine” is its political concept which the Presidents of the United States have used in the Cold War against the previous Soviet Union...

Also today, the doctrine of Bush, the President of the U.S.A, about his fight against terror and terrorism is really used as Cold War against Islam. The encyclopedia too, mentions the same meaning for the word “doctrine” and says: “Sometimes doctrine is used as a high-sounding, pompous word for a motto; it is also used in the process of complicated operations in the war. What is meant by this is the tactic in which there are some maneuvers, forces, particular armaments and so on. It is a presupposed strategy to be used for a special attack.

In the King James’ copy of the Old Testament, the word “doctrine” is used 6 times, usually for translation of the Hebrew word “leqakh” with the meaning: direction or instruction or more exactly for saying what must be understood. But in the King James’ text of the New Testament the word “doctrine” is used more than 50 times often with the

meaning: teachings, principles or instructions of Jesus Christ (PBUH) and much less for instructions of those other than this prophet. What's more, "doctrine" in its singular use concerns the teachings of Christ and in its plural use pertains to other people's instructions, which are considered wrong from the viewpoint of the Christians.

With regard to different meanings of the word "doctrine", we might emphasize its religious contents because its non-religious charges have branched off the first meanings to be used in political-social domains afterwards to indicate the leaders' political policies in their proclamation of cold war against real or imaginary enemies.

Now, if we want to discuss the doctrine of Mahdism in the Age of Absence³, we may do it in two ways: the First is that we should use it with the meaning "Islamic Fundamental thoughts and principles just like the first Christian traditions. In this way, the doctrine of Mahdism will include Islamic instructions concerning the Expected Savior and the Life in the Islamic Utopia. Then, in the broad sense, the Islamic Mahdism Instructions will contain different dimensions to be explained.

The second concept of this word might be in the meaning of the doctrine of Economic Justice of Mahdism against Poverty, which will bring about economic growth in a justifiable, constant, favorable manner. As an example, the political leadership in Iran takes up the policy of confronting Cold War created by the US (the Grand Satan), by using this doctrine. Of course, the time is very important to use the second meaning of the doctrine. The time seems to be the time when the first stage of the movement has been performed and the Iranian people have contacted the preliminary results. In this case, it is when the economic doctrine is discussed in the international relations. All the Iranians will both feel truthfulness and pride and will support the method wholeheartedly.

In addition to that, the Mahdist doctrine of economics is a commodity for which there will be lots of demand universally; and consequently, the ground will be paved for the advent of Imam Mahdi (PBUH).

In order to be influential, the doctrine of Mahdism ought to be employed in the second meaning. Therefore, it seems quite necessary

for us to discuss, in detail, different dimensions of the economic of Mahdism so that the intelligentsia and great thinkers in the position of leadership or the high agents of shiism acknowledge their operations to place its ideals in their main policy to become realized. Such an attempt causes the plannings for the realization of the idea to be taken seriously.

So, the way how the present situation will be changed and transferred to the expected desirable circumstances is the state which is called “perspective” by the modernists, which is also the principal prespective mission of the Doctrine of Mahdism.

The Doctrine of Economic Justice

The Economic Justice means the process of “decision taking” based on Islamic rules, according to which the affairs are divided into three issues: divine affairs, public affairs and private affairs. Economic justice will attain to its sufficiency in the grounds of producing justly and by protecting and developing the wealth, that is, constant economic growth: in the grounds of distributing justly, that is, distribution of wealth; and in the grounds of consuming justly as economic welfare in reducing the shortage of goods and services as the ultimate goal of the Islamic micro-economic system.

Economic justice requires individual and social discipline in the domain of economics to grant it moral principles so as to manifest itself in the economic arrangement and institutions to indicate how a person should do his business, how to make contracts and transact and trade with other people and deal with commodities or services, and above all, how to establish independent material foundations for his economic livelihood.

The Doctrine of Economic Justice of Mahdism

The doctrine of Economic justice of Mahdism is recognized with four indicators: stable economic growth, continual reduction of inequality, eradication of poverty and consumption at livelihood sufficiency.

The stable economic justice means the long-term increase in production capacity in order to augment the whole supply so that it can meet all the requirements of the population. The word “stable” has

its emphasis at a growth in which the needs of the individuals and their satisfaction along with the improvement in their quality of living are steadily met in the best way: and in the governance of the Imam of Time (PBuH), this characteristic will be actualized in the most proper manner. Abu Sa'id Khedri, quoting from the prophet of Islam (MGSBGH⁴) says:

My Followers, in Mahdi's Time, will benefit from the bounties of God in such a way that they have never enjoyed their life before. The sky will frequently rain on them and the earth will never neglect to grow its plants and vegetables for them.

The continual reduction of inequality means the decrease of economic inequalities at the extent of national, racial, tribal, familial, regional and international disparities.

The content of some traditions refers to the fact that all kinds of discriminations, transgressions and violations will come to an end in the society of Mahdi (PBuH), and justice will spread wherever exists a community of people. It is quoted from Imam Bagher (PBuH) in this regard:

In the government of the Riser of the prophet's House, equality and justice (lack of discrimination in the distribution of Treasure House wealth, fulfillment of people's rights) will be executed in the best way.

It is ascribed to Imam Ali (PBuH) to have said: "If poverty embodies in front of me in the figure of a man, I will certainly kill him." The Mahdist society will certainly be successful in putting an end to poverty; because the people's capitals will increase remarkably and the stable economic growth will appear from one side; and from the other side, all property and wealth will be divided among people justly. Every profiteer and overcharger will be prevented from his extortion of oppression. Consequently, people will promote in mental richness, in morality and knowledge and in the virtues in such a way that they will put aside greed and avarice whose vast range produces overindulgence, miserliness, hoarding, speculation and contention. In a tradition quoted from Imam Sadiq (PBuH) we read:

When our Riser reveals himself for the people, the earth will uncover all its treasures, and valuable deposits (with the Imam's prudence and with people's honest struggle) appear in such a way that ev-

eryone sees them. Then, both, the superficial and intellectual richness overwhelms every person so much that you will not find anyone needy, to even accept your gifts or your alms. All the people will become needless and do not require anything except what God has granted them as His bounties.

From the viewpoint of Islam, even if economic growth becomes lasting, even if inequality decreases and even if poverty is virtually eradicated, consumption in the economic system will not become balanced and economic justice will not be considered to have been realized. In the holy Quran, extravagance, prodigality and avarice have been reprimanded, but the behavior, conduct and deeds of the immaculate Imams have been taken as examples for the people to follow. That reprimand is a general attribution because of ignoble qualities in people of the time when economic welfare is provided for everyone. So, the unlawfulness of overindulgence, extravagance and avarice in Islamic economic Sunna (tradition) separates this kind of economics from capitalistic economics and other materialistic economic schools. In Islam, consumerism and overindulgence in enjoyment to provide only carnal desires are severely condemned. For this reason, the appropriation of one's income must be spent for the satisfaction of one's legitimate requirements; but again, one's consumption possibility must not be much different from the public standards of living. In other words, one's expenditures on the means of living should not exceed the common level of consumption in the community to be called an aristocratic, luxurious way of living.

In fact, avarice in the collection of wealth and property with love of such things. Another bad habit is overindulgence. The difference is when the person is excessive in spending money for his life expenditures and also he is excessive in the adjustment of his costs when he likes to live luxuriously and so he goes beyond a level which is not acceptable in the social life. Then the unlawfulness of one quality will be considered a reason for the unlawfulness of another quality.

Now, this is quite evident that the Islamic state of affairs is unlike the capitalistic globalization Age in which the False needs are not distinguished from the real needs of the people: Consumerism, through the global public consumption will be transmitted to the other two social classes: the average class and the poor class by with propaga-

tions and competitions.

In the Mahdist Society, practical Wisdom and intellect of men will reach their perfection as a result of virtue and Piety; and the people will attain to that special perceptiveness and discernment of the Quran.

In a tradition reported by Abu Khaled Kabuli from Imam Baqir (PBUH), we read:

When the Imam of Time (PBUH) rises, the bright rays radiated from his guidance light will envelop all the creatures of God; the people's attention will be concentrated and their morals will be perfected thanks to the presence of that honorable Imam.

The behavior of the Imam (PBUH) as a perfect man along with his sincere honest friends in individual, political, social, economic and cultural domain will cause the old institutions to become weaker and weaker and the devilish system to be improved and gradually changed; new institutions will be devised and modern structures will be initiated. Such structures will gradually produce and increase outstanding perfect men of innovation. The process of mutual influence of innovators on old and new institutions will induce, in all members of the society the Mahdist global goals in the grounds of distinction between real needs and false needs, adequacy of wealth, property and consumption to a reasonable extent to be realized.

In the age of Mahdism, everyone will fully understand the moderation of wealth. New values in the new institutions will make it possible for men how to abandon overindulgence, extravagance and accumulation of wealth. When man realizes the moderation in spending money, economical intellect will be associated with the real values of existence and then the absolute economic efficiency (having efficiency without any social cost) will be actualized.

The messenger of God (MGSBGH) says in regard with the deep consideration of the people (even the sinners and wrongdoers of the Riser's time) toward their wealth and property:

The earth will throw out its best things, things like pieces of gold and silver. Then, the convicts and criminals come forward: The Killer says, "I killed someone for such and such amount of money... the one who forgot his kin will come and admit his doing such a bad action. The thief will confess what his hand was cut for; and they all will

leave their pieces of gold they have picked up and will submit them quite intact.

Having explained the indicators of economic justice in Mahdism, we may now proceed to illustrate the duties people and government ought to do in the domain of production and establishment in order to make such indicators be realized. Here, we will set forth briefly principles for economic justice whose indicators we brought up before as the lasting economic growth, continual reduction of inequality and eradication of poverty. We hope that it will become possible in another opportunity to discuss them in detail.

First: Principles for Stable Economic Growth

The increase in production and wealth is dependent from one side, on the advancement of technology and new sciences including the science of domestic economic (the objective aspect of production), and from the other side, it is dependent upon the adaptation of such advancements to the customary, constitutional conditions related to production (the subjective aspect of production). In the objective aspect of production, Islam, not only emphasizes the “necessity for sufficiency” in acquiring all the sciences and techniques that are required in the society, but also insists that Muslims become powerful and remarkably dignified in their relationships with others, which may enable them to fulfil the function of leadership in the universal system.

In the subjective aspect of production, Islam, by encouraging people to work hard, to produce, to provide for human potential, physical and financial abilities and by exploiting such powers, has set forth some laws and rules as juridical knowledge to be observed by private sectors and by the government to determine the status of the poor in the society. These principles are as follows:

1- Duties of the Private Sector

Necessities for the stable economic growth as obligations of the private sector are:

- A- abandonment of futile actions; encouragement to generative affairs,
- B- unlawfulness of overindulgence and wastings; encourage-

ment to investments and savings,
C- unlawfulness of amassing wealth (gold and treasures), imposing taxes on luxuries,
D- forbidding idleness and futility, beggary or expressing one's need to money,
E- precepts for inheritance,
F- unlawfulness of usurious acts,
G- making use of contracts confirmed by Islam in economic dealings or activities.

2- Duties of State Sector

The duties of the State in preparation for the stable economic growth are as follows:

A- investment for development of skillful human labor,
B- supplying enough physical capitals, particularly for infra-structural matters,
C- supervision of exploitation,
D- intervention and sponsorship of the state in trades of goods (as part of the process of production),
E- reducing all kinds of economic inequalities (the effects of decreasing inequalities on growth),
F- comprehensive system for social security (the effects of security on the efficiency of labor),
G- making 'begging' hard and costly, investigating idling, announcing unlawful jobs.

3- Obligations of the Third Section

In the modern era, a third section is taking shape, which is a response to the market failures (private sectors, the first kind) and the government (state sectors the second kind). Now for this third section which is autonomous and voluntary and can also be called "the social section of economics", two cases are conceivable:

In the first case, men allot their time to one another, which comprises a vast spectrum of public services such as remedial services, instruction, education, arts, religion and agency, with their manifestations as councils, missions, foundations, charity institutions, literacy movements, etc. Here human labor is used as capital and the benefits of the poor people increase.

In the second case, men put their capitals, property or wealth at the disposal of others without having any motive to gain their own

profits; rather they devote themselves to others more or less so as to help them.

With regard to the stable economic growth, we can distinguish three duties for the third section:

- A- enjoining on working hard and endeavor and forbidding from laziness and begging,
- B- increasing the amount of production, employment and efficiency by way of development of affairs for public utility,
- C- boosting supply and demand in the market to increase investments for the growth of capitals to help the poor.

4- Duties of the Poor

The poor person is one who does not earn money enough to secure his own family and other individuals under his guardianship annually. Such a person has two duties to fulfil:

- A- persistence in doing economic jobs to earn a livelihood for sustenance,
- B- persistence in getting suitable jobs in order to increase his income.

Second- principles for decreasing Inequality

Economic equality from the viewpoint of Islam can be discussed in three parts:

- A- nondiscrimination in using opportunities and possibilities, (supporting the poor and the regions deprived of facilities), that is, equality of opportunity and justice in distribution before⁵ production
- B- equality in labor and operation (justice in the distribution of jobs on the basis of aptitude after production)⁶,
- C- social equilibrium or equality in consuming (not in income) or end state equality or equality of outcome (re-distribution, because if it causes intolerable interferences with personal freedoms, should be taken with precaution: so, it may decrease efficiency).

Anyhow, in accordance with the measures taken in the subject of “principles for stable economic growth”, the duties of four parts: private sectors, state division, third sector and the poor, will be discussed summarily at these three above-mentioned levels of distribution (equality of opportunities, equality of using aptitude, equality of End State (the last ways of life)).

a- Principles for Creation of Equal Opportunities

First- duties of private sectors

Individuals and economic corporations ought to pay attention to the following orders if there is an equality in taking opportunities

- A- Only useful profitable jobs will set up “rights”,
- B- Hoarding or storing up wealth does not set up any “rights”,
- C- the public has “right” on natural resources,
- D- there is time limitation to “private possession rights (laws for inheritance).

Second- duties for the state sector

The Quran says in the philosophy of consuming spoils:

“... Do not let the affluent society take advantage of public wealth’ ...”.
The purpose of this verse is that the spoils or the wealth belongs to God and His messenger. We should not let the wealth be only circulated among the hands of the affluent people. In other words, there must not be any class differences and the Islamic government has to prevent inequalities among individuals. In those three levels.

So, the government is obligated to decrease inequalities in those three cases. Its duties in providing equal opportunities for the peoples are:

- A- confronting discrimination, monopoly and opportunism,
- B- right-centeredness and law-abidingness,
- C- equality for the public to use public facilities at equal distribution.

Third- the duties of the third sector

In our modern age, principal functions of the third sector, unlike the private sector’s functions being based on profit-seeking; and unlike the state division (governmental sector) being based on the public benefits, are on the basis of benevolence, generosity, cooperation, well-wishing, love, affection and mutual assistance. Therefore, in providing all the equalities of opportunities for labor, operation, end state, and naturally decreasing inequalities consequently, it is expected of the third sector to help the needy and the poor people of the society in the best way possible.

On the other hand, almost all the economists have, today, accepted the defects of absolute competition in the market operations, special-

ly its malfunction on the distribution of wealth and income. For this reason, with the government's intervention, some of such defects in the market competitions may be removed; but the government's intervention in the distribution of commodities and facilities, which are secured by means of taxes, will be left with some inefficiencies. However, the existence of the "third sector" in the economy of a country will solve most of the problems and settle the difficulties by lessening the scope of the government's interventions.

In the Islamic jurisprudence, expending in the cause of Allah and doing good deeds, deficiencies are said to be removed;

Religious contracts, such as paying loans without interests, almsgiving, donation, benefaction, endowment, borrowing, testament and other necessary payments like alms for the Fasting Feast,⁸ and monetary atonements will guarantee the exercise of these benevolent relations.

Further writing to explain the effects of each of these contracts on reducing inequality in those three parts takes the times for several articles; so, we write about only the duties of the third sector here for the three levels of distribution justice. They are:

- A- expending in the cause of Allah,
- B- endowment and establishing foundations,
- C- making will and testaments on one's property,
- D- giving loans without asking for interests,
- E- lending-borrowing materials,
- F- alms- giving, granting gifts,
- G- ceding to others the surplus to one's requirements (religiously, recommended)
- E- observance of morality in transactions in the market with its effects on distinguishing prices.

Fourth- Obligations of the Poor

In order for the poor people to diminish the gap of their inequality toward the normal status in the society, they have to undertake some duties to perform at those three parts. In the case of equality of opportunities, their obligations are as follows:

- A- increasing their own exploitation
- B- desirable using of opportunities and beneficial events
- C- searching for truth, seeking and restoration of their rights
- D- seeking the assistance of God and trusting in Him

E- adding to social investments

principles for the Establishment of Equality in Operations

In establishing equality in the grounds of operational activities, Islam has indicated some duties for each of the private sector, public utility, state sector and the poor to do. We will discuss here the treatments of these sectors respectively:

first- duties of the private sector

Islamic obligations about the market, capitals, investment, and labor have been enacted in such a way that not only can they prevent inequality and differences between the laborers and the investors on one side of life, but also can cause social classes to come closer to each other on the other side. These principles are as follows:

A- Rule for Equality in Earning

While a worker works hard to manipulate or manufacture some goods out of raw materials which do not belong to a master or an employer, all the wealth earned in that process will be given to him. Material elements participating in his job do not share with him either, because they are not at the same rank with him but are the servants of his production. Therefore, they receive their wages from this worker but are not his partners.

B- the Phenomenon of Ownership Stability

If the raw materials have been possessed by another person beforehand, his ownership will be continued according to the rule of ownership stability, however much the original matter has been changed by the work done on it.

C- the Distinction of Ownership from the Value of Exchange

In Islam, ownership is taken to be distinctive from the value of exchange or conversion. Even if we accept that the tools of production have involved in the formation of the new product at the price of their depreciation, this will not lead to setting any ownership of the product for the person who has been in the possession of the tools.

D- the Second Rule for Equality of Earning

Laboring over raw materials to produce something like turning the wool into yarn or fabrics for an employer or a master, only leads to getting wages and the product such as cloth or yarn will remain in the possession of the owner of the raw materials. Neither the work done nor the instruments of production have any shares in the ownership of the new product.

E- Indicating the Amount or Kind of Wage for Sources of Production

By turning to the Islamic precepts, let us now investigate into paying wages and receiving rewards for the media or elements involved in the production when the raw materials belong to persons and not the workers or laborers to find out the quality and quantity of the rules indicated for such operations.

Having determined the kind of reward or wage for the sources of production: labor, land, tools, investment, capitals etc, we will understand the amount of income indicated by Islamic precepts for the result of possession of each of such sources and become aware of theoretical reasons for these incomes which are based on their kinds of possession.

A- labor and two methods of payment, paying wages by guarantee without having any risks, partnership in receiving some profits or some products but running a high risk and output.

B- tools of production with one method of wage (leasing).

C- commercial capitals and one method of wage (sharing in profits along with the acceptance of losses)

D- land and one method of wage (leasing)

F- the Third Rule, Equality of Earning

The income is only based on the work done (outflow of labor) over the time of a project. For this rule, there are the two concepts of affirmation and negation. In the affirmation, the rule reasons that income is authorized on the basis of the work done and in negation. It reasons that the income earned not through the work done in the project is forbidden. Other acts of the third rule are as follows:

Unlawfulness of usury as one of the applications in the negation of the third rule,

Income with its Risk, One of the applications of negation in the

Third Rule.

The Fourth Rule, Equality in Earning out of Production

In Islam, there are several limitations for the power of an owner in taking possession of his property or wealth. Also there are different theoretical references to investigate for such limitations.

Duties for the State Sector (governmental sector)

The Islamic Government provides the necessary equipment for initiation of coordination among different sectors in the economic functions in regard with the goals of the economic system of Islam. In today's world, one of the experienced scientific tools to control the power of capital over labor and decrease inequality is to set out for programming to guide the people to the right way. Of course, without having a firm, proper Islamic scientific theory based on the Islamic State and civil society, discussing the limitations of governmental intervention in economic will always lay this subject exposed to mercantilistic, liberalistic approaches of the extremists.

However, on the grounds of distribution on the basis of earning for production, the government ought to make up for the inadequacy of the market from one hand, and from the other, it should deal with the adjustment of employment, labor, commodities, capitals, investments in money and foreign exchange.

Third- the Duties of the Poor

In order for inequality in earning to decrease, the poor people have the following obligations to fulfil:

- A- hard work and more struggle,
- B- working in accordance with their innate talents,
- C- migrations to find other jobs,
- D- ability of running the risk in certain affairs,
- E- tactfulness for precise planning,
- F- principles for the establishment of ultimate equality.

Duties of Private Sector

We can emphasize the following duties to be regarded as important for the individuals and corporations to be aware of in the course of establishing balance and equality in their environment:

- A- Islamic tax payings
- B- illegality of hoarding
- C- unlawfulness of activities causing damage to other people including detrimental monopolies
- D- unlawfulness of usury
- E- the laws of inheritance

Obligations of State Sector

The obligations of the state sector in providing favorable grounds for the establishment of ultimate equality are as follows:

- A- collection of taxes,
- B- leasing natural re sources to the people (preferably to deprived people who are creative and inventive in working) privatization,
- C- bestowing credits to the poor,
- D- other means for open distribution.

Duties of the Poor

In the ground of decreasing inequality and starting social equilibrium, we can introduce “mental satisfaction” and “loftiness of nature” as the most important duty of the poor. The most magnanimous, religious, practical direction for mental independence is to look at those people who live at a lower level than we do.

3- Principles for Eradication of Poverty

Elimination of poverty is one of the goals of economic system in Islam, and we should try to realize it as much as possible. In the grounds of elimination of poverty, we will offer behavioral intellectuality to be at the head of Islamic precepts to be observed in the four sectors: private sector, state division, third sector and the poor people’s domain

First: Duties of Private Sector

The primary principle and the first rule for people’s property as in economic corporations or for those who produce something is that they have control over their wealth, and nobody has the right to confiscate their property or wealth. But in spite of this fact, two incumbent issues have been set up as exceptional: one is zakat (alms-giving) and the other is khums (one-fifth of the wealth). Zakat is for the poor

but you cannot pay it to the sayyeds (the descendants of the prophet) even if they are poor. Thus, one fifth of the well-off people's gained property is considered to be paid to the poor sayydes to improve their life conditions. The obligatory payments of the private sectors for the poor seem to be based on three things:

Zakat, khums and general contributions which are common responsibilities of all the people concerning the pressing needs of their correligionists as listed below:

- A- zakat (alms for wealth, alms for bodies, alms of Ramadan feast)
- B- Khums (1/5)
- C- Takaful (social responsibilities in common)

Second- Obligations of Governmental Sector

In Islam, it is incumbent on the Islamic government to secure and safeguard the entire livelihood of the citizens by providing for them employment, job opportunities and welfare so that everyone can enjoy a good respectable position in the society. But, if the economic conditions in the country have become so bad that the government is not capable of securing enough employment and job opportunities, or there are people unable to work or men who can't earn their livelihood, then the government is bound to provide them with the minimum amount of relative welfare as far as it can. This important duty is possible to be performed in three ways:

- A- supplying necessary cultural, legal and official grounds by encouraging the believers to help,
- B- securing the livelihood of the poor through public incomes, which is their real rights.
- C- guaranteeing the least amount of money for the poor through social security insurance.

Third- the Duties of the Third Sector

Statistics reveals that the rate of poverty in the Islamic countries is lower than other similar non-Islamic places in the surroundings, because Islamic nations always enjoy a unified system that is responsible to operate to the benefit of the common people of the communities. Family ties are much stronger and inside the families, fathers or mothers do their best to help the members when they are hard pressed in life. Moreover, a part of the incomes gained is distributed among

the poor through religious charitable institutions.

Now, in this part, we will offer the topics of subjects that fulfil a role in eradication of poverty:

A- the Role of Family in Elimination of Poverty

A- the function of marriage institutions in the elimination of poverty,

B- the effects of “observance of bonds of relation” on the elimination of poverty

C- necessity of elimination of poverty out of one’s parents or children,

D- elimination of poverty out of other kinsmen and relatives as a pious deed.

B- the Function of Charitable Institutes and Charities in the Elimination of Poverty.

A- definition of alms or charity,

B- effects and blessings of charity,

C- principles of charity,

D- how charities and alms should be spent or consumed

E- economic settlement of alms

Fourth- Duties of the Poor

As it was previously mentioned in our discussion about the duties of the poor about stable economic growth and decreasing of inequality, now we say that increasing productivity, desirable use of chances opportunities, punctuality, tactfulness, truth-seeking, endeavor in the course of restoration of rights, seeking assistance of God, trust in God, adding to social investments, work, striving more than before in terms of Inherent talents, job migrations, risk-taking in certain affairs, prudence, precise programming, and paying attention to those who lead a lower life, all the affairs that must be taken into account just like the duties of the poor to promote the stability of economic growth at a fair and just level. These affairs can also be discussed in the subject of “eradication of poverty too, but in this section we would like to emphasize the existence of a few important duties such as:

A- self-respect in the face of the rich,

B- contentment and gratitude,

C- aversion toward begging,

Principles for the Doctrine of Sufficiency in Consumption

In an Islamic society, the model of consumption ought to be institutionalized at the extent of adequacy. This is very important in terms of two reasons: one is that Islamic teachings are concerned with the unlawfulness of overindulgence, extravagance, and pretending aristocracy to which we referred before. But the other is the issue of “need to time” for developing countries; since these countries have not achieved to a self-sufficient economic growth. Therefore, if they ever want to imitate the developed countries in their consumptions, they should have necessarily passed their “technical maturity” first and then they should have experienced the process of mass production to finally reach the phase of mass consumption; while developing countries like Iran are still at the stage of economic promotion. So, they have to give more importance to savings, investment and more production than consumption, importation, and purchases which eventually result in producing more garbage and waste matters.

We should not forget the fact that one of the strategies of “globalization” is to “westernize” the third world by means of developing their economy toward mass consumption:

First among the urban educated class and then among the vast sections of the public. Of course, we do not mean to prohibit the usual customary consumptions of every era that were appropriate to the age, but we mean that depriving the laborers of their real needs or suppressing them is in itself a kind of oppression. Therefore, we ought to dispense, by and by, with our false desires that look like urgent needs.

Here now, we will present the duties of private sector, governmental sector, third sector, and the poor status in the grounds of optimization of consumption as follows:

First- Private Sector and Optimization of Consumption

The fewest duties of the private sector (economic agencies) or the market in an Islamic social-cultural system for the optimization of consumption can be displayed in the following cases:

- A- avoiding presentation of luxurious non-essential articles,
- B- only authorized propagation or advertising,
- C- not to trade unlawful goods and not to give unlawful services.

Second- Governmental Sector and Optimization of Consumption

Consumptions and expenses of every government including our Islamic government, are dependent on their being related to processes of economic development. Regardless of some challenges that development procedures of Rusto have confronted (from the viewpoint of methodology and generality) we can set up some historical issues out of such procedures so as to explain the causes for the increase in consumption and governmental expenses. For example, the government (in a traditional society) has some obligations to perform such as security, justice or production of public articles like “education” expansion of culture, advancement, and infrastructural investments.

In the second phase (transitional phase) too, we see that the government duties, are not only existing to help, but also add to the increase of investment in the fundamental investments. In the third phase (economic rise and leap), most of the government’s expenses are directed towards education and sanitation. In the Fourth phase (economic maturity), most of the expenses go toward social services; and in the last phase (mass consumption), the government’s attention is drawn to distribution because the earning inequality will reach its highest point. Therefore every government’s expenses are functions of growth phases and economic development. No one can make any comments on the rate of the state’s consumptions without considering these different procedures.

Nevertheless, what can be assessed or measured is whether the size of the government is an optimum at each of the phases, and to what degrees the government has become involved in fiscal corruption. Do the State’s economic policies in supporting the consumers or producers cause the optimization of consumption in general? Is a sufficient consumption provided for everyone?

In this part, we will offer a list of the Islamic government’s duties for the optimization of consumption.

- A- optimum measure and model of the government,
- B- minimization of monetary corruption,
- C- economization of time and economy in public property,
- D- enactment of the law: “where did you obtain it from?”
- E- enactment of taxes on lavish consumption of luxurious com-

modities

F- enactment of subsidies to support the poor

G- introducing a model of consumption worth imitation for others.

Third- the Third Sector and Optimization of Consumption

In an Islamic society, university elite, academic scholars and outstanding clergymen or saints and the noble stratum naturally undertake the leadership of the third sector. The history of fighting clergymen and theologians shows that their martyrs for the sake of virtues and freedom rose up after the Absence⁹ of the Imam.

These devotees held up the banner of freedom-loving and fought to the last. And today it must be the same in regard with the seeking freedom and independence. At this age, it is expedient that academic scholars undertake more responsibility and, with their religious commitment, take on a better role at the leadership of the third sector. Anyway, the leaders in the Islamic third sector ought to take their utmost effort in defending the optimized adequate consumption and establish some organizations to secure such important duties.

Fourth-the Poor People and Optimization of Consumption

Now, there is a point here to be paid attention to:

If the poor are not able to earn sufficient income to lead on ordinary life and settle their least necessary affairs, what should they do then? If they had no supporters and the government of third sector could not help them under any circumstances, what should they do?! Must they extend their legs toward Kibla¹⁰ and wait for Azrael¹¹ to come to them to relieve them from this prison of wordly life? Or do they have to find a solution to save their lives? There is a proverb that says: "Between pillar and post there may be rescue.

To answer such questions, we will explicitly say that our religious texts are replete with the following precepts:

First, self-preservation is necessary for everyone

Second, it is incumbent upon a person to save his life from any harm or injury but in a legitimate way and legal manner.

Third, if it is not possible for such a person to save his life in a legitimate and legal way, he may, in an emergency case, save his life by eating carrion, on the condition that the action be for virtue and

not for sensuality and also on the condition that he not eat more than his necessity.

Summing up and conclusion

This article has sought to explain the following subjects:

- 1- globalization of economics as a reality
- 2- this reality with the doctrine of capitalism has not ever brought happiness, welfare or prosperity and will never bring such things for humanity because the doctrine is heedless of justice entirely.
- 3- we need a new doctrine to help us perceive “justice” for all the people of the world, and it is only the doctrine of Mahdism
- 4- The doctrine of Mahdism, while explaining the indicators of justice, introduces Islamic ideological precepts in the grounds of stable justifiable economic growth to such kinds of justice and considers the execution of such principles at national, regional and universal standards as a guarantee for every person’s welfare, happiness and prosperity.

The economic justice of Mahdism emphasizes the stable economic growth, gradual decrease of inequality, elimination of poverty and the observance of sufficiency in consumption. The Islamic economical school relies on combined policies of growth and distribution and also on social policies based on its special institutions. The growth and distribution in this intellectual, economic school of action are not opposed to each other; because the duties and responsibilities of each sector of economy, whether of the market, or of the state, or of the society or of the poor people, are definite. Furthermore, the distributional instruments contradictory with “growth” have been considered, too. For this reason, it becomes evident that the Islamic distributional instruments are numerous and various, so as to be used each in its own distinctive domain.

The secret of “growth and efficiency” which is not contrary to “distributional justice” is in the character of Islam. The Islamic precepts have determined all duties of the four sectors:

- 1- the private sector, 2- the governmental sector, 3- the social sector, and 4- the sector of the poor, which are all accepted by Muslims. Some of these Islamic precepts, such as endowments, charitable

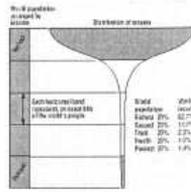
bequests, loan without interests and so on are normally practiced in Islamic societies, though they have not yet become completely compatible with the exigencies of time and are still at a distance from the real goals of Islamic thought in economic justice.

However, we see today that some of the Islamic principles observed about “growth” are just and fair, but they have not yet become quite institutionalized in Islamic communities. We firmly believe that such precepts must first be regarded as “values”, and secondly, they must be regarded as “norms” (social patterns or methods); that is, they must be regarded as stabilized values, and thirdly they must operate as “administrating, reasonable institutions; in other words, they must first become culturalized and then institutionalized. When the strategy of just growth is in accord with the needs of poor people, in which the authorities and leaders are accordant and the people agree to them, it must be formalized and designed by committed economists and great Islamic scholars and then be enacted and executed. God Willing!

1. Pertaining to Mahdi, the expected messiah of Muslim tradition and the twelfth Imam of the Shiites.
- 2.

See discussion in Gordon, D. (2004) Poverty, Death & Disease, in Hillyard, P., Pantazis, C., Tombs, S. and Gordon, D. (Eds) (2004) Beyond Criminology: Taking Harm Seriously. London, Pluto.

Eradicating Poverty in the 21st Century: When will Social Justice be done? Monday, 18th October, 2004
David Gordon Professor in Social Justice, Inaugural Lecture, University of Bristol.



3. The absence of Mahdi from the people's presence.
4. May God Send Benediction and Greetings to Him and His Household.
5. Natural resources must be utilized equally before production without any rivalry in taking the opportunity.
6. equality in working and striving to gain something without discrimination in color, race, class or sex.
7. Sūrah 59:Al-Hashr, verse 7.
8. The feast day after Ramadan is finished.
9. the Absence of Mahdi (PBUH).
10. direction to which Muslims turn in praying.
11. the angel of death.

Dr. Gholam Reza Behrooz Lak



*An Approach to the
Political Issues in the
Doctrine of Mahdism*

Abstract

Mahdism is a universal doctrine to include all the dimensions of human life. One of the domains of its studies is political investigations. This article has proceeded to identify and classify its different issues by conceptualizing the policy and the political discussions of Mahdism. With regard to the development of the studies in this and the relative unification of its approaches in research, now it seems that a different investigation must be performed to elaborate on various features of Mahdism. Those scholars interested in political studies of Mahdism are invited to go through these classifications, become acquainted with them and deliberate over all the divisions so that they can examine them more attentively.

In order for the readers to capture everything, we have made our best to introduce some of the most important issues that emphasize the related subjects as the most significant in this respect.

Therefore, we will engage first to define the concept of politics and then try to elaborate several approaches towards politics in today's world.

Introduction:

The specialized field of Mahdism is endowed with several branches of studies one of which is its social-political aspect.

In fact, Islamic studies in Mahdism are interdisciplinary, so they are mostly associated with different religious investigations and humanities. The political studies on Mahdism have indeed many things in common with other political thoughts in Islam, political science issues, and other branches of Islamic knowledge. So, before starting to enter the domain of Mahdism, it is necessary to depict an outline of its features in political subjects, so that the researchers can have

an appropriate perspective of the political aspects in Mahdism on the whole, to get a deeper insight into the arguments to enable them to follow this domain of studies later on.

Mahdism is often discussed dialectically or historically but the subject of Mahdism may be looked at from different perspectives. In the political consideration of Shi'a, with regard to the centrality of imamate doctrine, political aspects of Mahdism have special importance, because it is interrelated with the imamate Doctrine from one side, and it is connected with the realization of the global governance of Mahdi from another side, (PBuH), upon which the ideal of Islamic Utopia shall be actualized and as a result, aggression will be uprooted from the earth. Hence, the doctrine of Mahdism in Islam has very important dimensions in the Islamic knowledge and it is a worthwhile investigation to deal with it through specialized research by using findings of political sciences.

In order to start surveying political sides of Mahdism, it is necessary, at the outset, to engage in the causality of political thoughts in Mahdism and then to recognize different strategies having relationships with the application of such thoughts. These strategies are sometimes in the framework of different inclinations towards political sciences: so, we ought to proceed reviewing them to find their relations with the subject of Mahdism.

The concept of politics in the Doctrine of Mahdism

Mahdism thoughts in Islam are sometimes called “the Doctrine of Mahdism”. The different meanings of the word ‘doctrine’ are given like this in an etymological dictionary:

- 1- teaching and instruction
- 2- something that is taught
- 3- a principle of position or the body of principles in a branch of knowledge
- 4- a system of beliefs
- 5- a dogma, a church belief
- 6- a principle of law established through past decisions; a statement of fundamental government policy specially in international relations

The word ‘doctrine’ has also been defined in the encyclopedia as follows:

- 1- 'Doctrine' is used more as a collection of religious beliefs particularly those indicated by the church.
- 2- 'Doctrine' is also used about the principle of law in legal traditions and Common Law, which have been formed as the past historical decisions.
- 3- 'Doctrine' in foreign policy includes fundamental codes of law enforced concerning "foreign policy" in one country. Thus 'Doctrine' explains a wide spectrum composed of correct actions and procedures, and in this sense is always the result of initiatives of a political leader proclaimed in his name. Thus, we have: Monroe's doctrine, Eisenhower's doctrine, etc. In the United States, they commonly speak of "the President's doctrine".

Sometimes the word 'doctrine' is used as a lofty word for a 'motto' or for pointing to a process of some complicated operations in war. As a clear sample, you might hear of 'tactical doctrine' relating to planned attacks or maneuver at the battlement or special armaments pre-arranged to approach the enemy.

With regard to the application of the word 'doctrine' in religious teachings, this word has been made into the verb 'indoctrinate' and the noun 'indoctrination' in English in order to import a kind of 'instruction' like 'education' a kind of passive acquiring of opinions. (see internet source, 1). In etymology too, the word doctrine is derived from 'didache' meaning "acquiring an idea".

In the New Testaments (the Greek Test), two words are used for the word 'doctrine': 'didache' and 'didaskalia' both for the meaning of 'instruction', 'teaching', 'direction', or 'explanation'. It is said in the Bible that Jesus teaches the doctrine; (Matthew. 7:28, 22:33, MK. 1:22, 4:2, 11:18, 12:38, Luke 4:32, ect.) with regard to this view, the real doctrine belongs to God. It is quoted from his 'Holiness Jesus' as follows:

The doctrine is not mine, it belongs to God, who has sent me on this mission.

In James King's copy of Old Testaments, the word doctrine is used 6 times, usually as the translation for 'legakh' meaning 'direction' or, in the more precise meaning for "what ought to be done". This word in James King's New Testaments has been used more than 50 times, most of which are about teachings of Jesus Christ and only a few of

them are about teachings of others. The word 'doctrine' as a singular word belongs to the teachings of Christ, while in plural it concerns teachings of other people which are considered as null and void.

We should, then, emphasize the function of religious teachings of the word doctrine for its meaning in the western Christian culture. The original meaning for this word is also 'direction and guidance'. It is with this sence that 'doctrine' has been applied in non-religious life of the people in social-political fields to refer to political views or strategic perspectives of some leaders in the world.

So, if we want to talk about Mahdist Doctrine in Islamic precepts, we ought to use this phrase the same as in Christian precepts in our religious discourse. Hence, the doctrine of Mahdism shall include Islamic instructions about the Expected Savior and the way of living in the promised Islamic Utopia. Then, with regard to such a great Islamic doctrine of Mahdism, it is quite evident that different aspects of the doctrine can be extracted and explained sufficiently. One of the most important sides of Islamic Mahdism is its political-social dimension about which this writing is going to talk trying to classify its political issues in a concise form of an article.

The approach to politics in the Islamic thought will always be inclined towards superiority and eventual prosperity. Even in the Islamic thought, the concept of politics is approached more precisely than other views to eventuality. The Islamic attention to eventuality is different from that of ancient Greece. In Islam, happiness in the other world is an ultimate prosperity but it is after the wordly happiness; so, politics is a process of choosing the right and suitable life policy in the mundane life to pave the way for prosperity in the other world. In the political discussions of Mahdism. The nature of politics is the right direction based on virtuousness and piety. So in our discussions, being political in the way of life means finding the right policy and knowing how to use it.

The concept of politics

The first discussion about politics must be the explanation of its meaning and its nature. Since we want to introduce the political discussions in Mahdism and follow our discourse, we ought to give an

adequate definition of politics first so as not to have left anything unknown.

In our epistemology, the term politics is used both about the policy and the knowledge of politics. Some other sciences are the same; they mean both the phenomenon and the knowledge about it together. The term history is exactly such a thing. History sometimes means historical events themselves mentioned for the meaning number one of the word and sometimes it refers to the science about historical events in the category of other sciences referred to as the meaning number two in the dictionary.

The term “politics” is such a word too; It can mean an outside physical executed function denoting to a particular relation occurring as a policy which is chosen in social scenes; and can also mean the awareness to the nature of the knowledge of politics in its field of study. Now in our discussion, by politics it is meant the first concept which is the operation or the action chiefly used in the knowledge of Mahdism. We will speak of how a policy or a political policy is used in the Islamic society in the best way and the most desirable manner to give the most ideal result. Of course, when the occasion arises, we might refer to the first sense of the word too, as the special knowledge.

A widespread talking about politics is prevalent in major languages of the world (Arabic, Turkish, Persian, French, etc.) along with its equivalent words in Latin. We do not deem it necessary in our writing to go further into the definition of the word. We should now focus on the technical meaning of this term.

If we want to give the most inclusive definition of a political action or a policy, we ought to pay attention to the concept of power in our political studies. Perhaps the most expressive definition of the political action can be the function of power. Some people think of politics as the job that the government does in the situation some other definitions have also been presented in this regard; but in the Islamic tradition, by politics it is meant seeking to reform the people.

However, whether it is taken to be ‘power’ or ‘reformation’ of the people, politics is a kind of strategic relation in the social field; and any strategy will naturally requires the relation of power. The phe-

nomenon of power, in all definitions, is expressive of the application of 'will' and its effect, that is, some people are active in influencing but some others are passive, being influenced. With regard to different views in the scope of social interactions if an agent, whether human or non-human, affects another factor, a political action will have occurred. Of course, such an effect must be directed towards the management of the whole society.

Today, because of specialization of ideas and the separation of humanities from philosophy, some other techniques such as management and development come into politics too. However, if we consider the factor of power to be leading the whole human society, then we can claim that political action will have occurred by that time.

In the field of management too, it is possible that such an outlook be present. But the political action will always be regarded much more enormous and more general than mere management relations in a special region.

Major Approaches to Political Action

Now if we consider politics like this, there will be three approaches at least to the political actions. The first are mainly some classic approaches which regard politics as an access to supremacy for individuals in a society. In fact, the ideal purpose in such an approach is to attain superiority. In ancient Greece, excellency in life gained centrality with the philosopher Socrates. In the discussions of Plato and Aristotle too, such a view is dominant. In Christianity, the political life is like a medium for reaching the heavenly city and an opportunity for happiness. Augustine, in his heavenly city, propounds that the government must be at the service of the church. The church would be like the head and the government like the body. In Islamic precepts, the view to politics is to prepare the provisions to attain prosperity and superiority. Such discussions are quite explicit in Islamic texts and such investigations are also evident in discourses of thinkers like Farabi, and others.

The second approach to politics has changed in the modern times. This approach is not to acquire superiority but it is to acquire freedom. In fact, the final goal of politics is freedom in which superior-

ity becomes a personal affair. Then every person follows freedom in a peculiar manner that he likes most. The mental disturbance of modern thinkers such as Thomas Hobbes and John Locke (not Kant) is how to get to freedom: how do we organize life policy to provide for individuals' freedom? In the political philosophy of Kant, there is no place for happiness or superiority. He propounds only the moral welfare, but since his politics is based on dutiful, moral good deeds, he is mostly worried about doing the life duties. He does not want the ultimate goal to be superiority or happiness.

In Kant's philosophy, arrival at welfare or prosperity is not the end at all. You have to behave or treat as though you did your duties. In other words, your acts must be in accordance with dutiful morality. But in the discussion of seeking for superiority, we should do good deeds in order to achieve prosperity.

The third approach to politics is found in post-modern views. The mental worry for freedom is replaced by the apprehension for power and a way to gain power. A term used by post-moderners is "the political." So politicalization includes the usual quarrels on the scene and the same clashes in social relations of human beings in different situations. Politics, in fact, must lead to power and in this way, there is no emphasis nor any concentration over freedom of thought nor on virtuousness.

The power is present everywhere to determine the ultimate goal. The main feature of the post-modern view can be found in the negation of pre-modern and modern general views in politics and the death of theme-oriented subjects of politics. In post-modernity the power is not only considered on the surface and on the superficial layers of society but in the inner folds of human life. It will enter the man's will everywhere and holds him captive inside its trap.

Unlike the modern view to politics and power, in which man was the central for decision making so that he may use his natural law-right rights as it was required, post-modernity will not observe human rights and never regards general views for politics. Whatever is the truth for post-moderners is rivalry and quarrel over the profits. In such a view power is ruling over everything. Even in the discussions of those like Fuku, it is the power that produces knowledge needed to

it. So, here, the power even hides its own source and covers the place where it was originally generated. It is not easy to know it easily.

In the post-modernity view, human life is always entangled inside competitions and profit-seeking of the powerful. Therefore, the political must be merely a kind of struggle to adjust and modify the violence of such a power. Then here, we should make a distinction between politics and the political because the political is always the same power medium which is not modified but it is violent, while politics tries, to an extent, to adjust the unmodified violences. Then politics consists of adjustments of violent relations and turning them into non-violent relationships. It seeks to turn hostility to rivalry and arguments.

Now, what were superiority and freedom? Actually, freedom was a general discussion that modernists would set forth. In the post-modernity, power is brought up by some men but other people try to make known the centers of power so that they may emancipate man from dominance of the powerful. Of course, there is no way of escape from the centers of power eventually and out of their influence. Perhaps it will become possible to discover the infrastructures of stabilized powers, which are now hidden to us to break them. But here, we interpret freedom to be emancipation from that force. In post-modernity anyway, politics is always related to power. If we accept to have such a view, we will be like cynic or sophist philosophers, who bore such a view to politics. They would say that justice and politics are both at work to secure the profits of the rich and the powerful.

The Approach to Politics and its Concept in the Doctrine of Mahdism

The approach to politics in the Islamic thought is an approach to having an ultimate goal and superiority. In the Islamic thought, the view to the ultimate happiness is even more exact than any other philosophies in ancient Greece with such a view. Islam takes into consideration the prosperity in both this world and the other world. The Islamic politics is a process by which this wordly life must be a movement to provide the ground or paves the way for the otherwordly-life prosperity and salvation. So, in the political discussions

of Mahdism, we have such a concept out of politics. If we say that politics necessitates that there should be some people to guide others, then the nature of politics and its orientation will be shaped upon choosing strategies to attain superiority. Then, in the discussions of Mahdism such a concept must always be understood from politics.

In these discussions, either the political action itself or the knowledge to such an action will be understood. Of course, we should know that our discussion will be about the political action referred to as “eventual prosperity” but it is possible that we also talk about other political actions contrary to Mahdist policy to bring about a contrast, the same as in the political discourse of Farabi. In Farabi’s thought, Utopia is discussed to be ideal but some debates are against that organization. Similarly, in the political discussions of Mahdism, our approach will be for superiority but then, our reference is to the affairs against ultimate prosperity. So, there should be no wonder when we change the track and go out of the real course by referring to the opposite matters.

The necessity for the introduction of political discussions in Mahdism.

In order for Mahdist policy procedures in today’s circumstances to be explained and affirmed, we are going to bring up some reasons for that.

1- The doctrine of Imamate and its political requirements.

Mahdism, because of its close relation to Imamate, is a religious doctrine. Imamate has always been introduced as a main element in Shiite beliefs and Shi’a has always been distinguished by Imamate.

In today’s situation too, the recognition of the Imams and following them and their deeds must be taken as the Shiite basic Faith. A Shi’a believer is called to be a real believer when he or she acknowledges the twelve immaculate Imams including the last one, that is, the Imam of Time, who is alive, and follows then.

Mahdi (PBuH), the twelfth Imam, and expressly stated by the holy prophet of Islam, is the perfect proof of the imamate at the present time. The belief in Imamate has at all times had an elevated status and a political aspect in Islamic societies.

In the words of Shahrestani, in his book *'al-Nehal and Melal'*, 'For no subject and no belief as the verification of Imamate. have so many swords been drawn and so much blood been shed.'

It is for this reason, we ought to acknowledge the last immaculate Imam and follow him as an example; this is the evidence for the distinction of the Truth from Falsehood. At the present time, the two Shiite principles; Tawalla and Tabarra¹ require us to recognize the Imams, to be faithful to them, be friends with them and their friends, and to keep aloof from those who do not acknowledge them. This means; to distinguish the Truth from the Falshood.

2- the Function of Mahdism in Giving an Identity to our Social-Political life.

In addition to our necessity to know Imamate and its evidence, we should also know that Mahdism is constructive in giving us an exact identity. It means; we know who we are, how we should behave, how distinctive we are from others, and so on. One of the best approaches to define identity is to indicate the last and the final identity. If you ask a foreigner to introduce himself he may speak of some concepts and ideas beyond them his talk will be redundant. When we want to speak of our identity and then of our ideals, we should improvisingly hold fast to the Imam of Time, Mahdi (PBUH). This is the most ideal way of introducing ourselves if we ever want to be known as real Shias, which is the best and the final title for us to give us our identification. The word Shi'a is clarifying by itself. It means those who follow the members of the household of the prophet (peace be upon them) and the other Imams.

So, we will always be known and defined as the followers of the immaculate, chaste Imams and now by Mahdi (PBUH) the last one. We have a sincere wish (prayer) to say or recite in Arabic² the translation of which will be like this in English:

O God, introduce yourself to me; if you do not introduce to me yourself, I will not know your messenger. O God, introduce your messenger to me; if you do not introduce to me your messenger, I will not know your Argument, the twelfth Imam on the earth. O God, introduce your Argument to me; if you do not introduce to me your Argument I will be misguided out of my Faith.

In the narratives of Fariqayn (the two sects of Shiite and Sunnite) it has been quoted this: “One who dies without knowing who must be his immaculate Imam of Time, he will perish as a pagan, an unbeliever or a polytheist just like those before the advent of Islam in the Age of Ignorance.”³

In general. The Islamic identification and living requires us to believe in the Imam of Time; and, in practice, we should know who we are, whom we are associated with and how we are acquainted with our Imam of Time. Then, our self-recognition necessitates the recognition of Mahdism; because in the political situation too our identity will be known while identifying Mahdism with Imam Mahdi (PBUH). Our life distinction from other political incidents and circumstances or other tyrant governments of our time is that we will be governed by Mahdi’s ruling system and his rightful successors and our dependence upon them.

3- The Crisis of Human Ideologies in Today’s World

The third reason for the necessity of propounding political discussions of Mahdism in the present Age is that man needs to know Mahdi’s political system as the best governance of all times. He has experienced all kinds of systems, states, kingdoms and governments but he has been disillusioned. Those ideologies have presented different models for the political life of men but all of them have failed to satisfy people in this way. So, they have encountered different crises. There is an authentic tradition that says:

Before the advent of Mahdi, the Riser, (PBUH), all communities, tribes, groups and people will have had their opportunities to rule, so that they may not say afterwards that they would have set up justice everywhere and would have established another better system to make people prosperous if they had found the opportunity.

The interpretation of this tradition and its symbolic sight is that every idea, attitude, thought or system will have tried its hand at governing a society, but it will be a failure. In today’s conditions too, we are witnessing different schools of thought having come and gone. Which one of them has been successful to satisfy people? The present age is the age that is going to put an end to all schools of thought and different superstates. It is the age of decline for ruling systems. Many

thinkers are worried about what will happen. The modern world of westerners also tried to offer its best solution for governing territories but the whole modernity was faced with lots of trouble over the last centuries. Post-modernity has been criticized many times from inside its borders, and this is indicative of an inward crisis for the western modernity.

Now, the question that can be propounded here is this: What system could be the most suitable to substitute post-modernity? Some people feel pleased with Liberalism to be effective, but we all know that western modernity has not been successful at all. However, when none of ideologies, schools of thought and creeds have proved efficient but have instead declined, men are seeking to find other forms of government to be stronger and more stable. That is why, we can suggest the Islamic governance, with the doctrine of Mahdism as a Utopia at the top.

4- the Renewal of Muhammedanism and Approach of Today's World towards Islamic Life Policy and Islamic Utopia

In fact, more and more people are turning to Islam in today's circumstances to expect to enjoy an ideal society. They seek to gain the most benefit from the Islamic ideology which is the belief in Mahdism, the utopia that Mahdi (PBuH) is supposed to build for the people. If we ever want to offer the most ideal life for man, we have to explain as clearly as possible Islamization and the Mahdist Utopia.

5- the Clarification and Explanation of Today's Political Status in Comparison with the Mahdist Pattern of Utopia

One of the reasons why it is necessary to recognize and deal with political discussions of Mahdism is our necessities for today's political life. If we want to organize our political life in the best way in the Islamic world, we ought to establish a society on the basis of an ideal form which is quite possible at the present time. This ideal form and pattern will be realized in the future but we have had such an ideal system too at the early Islamic period in the past, as it is called the traditional institution of Mohammad or Ali.

However, these life systems could not be continued as the final ideal ways of living on the earth because of challenges and opposi-

tions against them all the times. But, with these difficulties arisen in the political administrations, we should have come to understand that the Mahdist Utopia will be the most ideal and the perfect political system of Islamic government.

As a matter of fact, we must found a firm basis, arrange and organize a life system today by learning from the events of the past in order to build up the best political system for our social living to be realized.

There are, of course, some individuals who have doubted the past traditions and asked; Did the prophet of Islam ever have the mission to establish a religious government? Did Ali (PBUH) accept to become an Islamic Caliph only because people had asked him to and chosen him by swearing allegiance to him or was he ordered to establish a religious government? Although one of the ways to respond to such doubts and questions would be the presentation of historical reasons and dialectic evidence to illustrate the past, the best way will be to refer such people to the future; because many of those who are in hesitation about the past do not have any doubt about the future. They admit that the expected savior will arrive to save human beings. He will be sent by God to establish the universal religious governance; so, it would be easier to discuss the future events and explain the ideal situation to such individuals at the end.

We know that the recognition of the future is essential from another side, since the future acts as a guide for today's events. If we visualize good prospects in front of us, we can better understand the present conditions. Those who cannot see the future clearly, do not know their position well. Therefore, the knowledge of the future has a strong relation with our today's life. For the organization and building up of our today's political life to actualize, we should turn to an expected future.

6- the Crisis of Justice and Proper Regard to the Savior in Today's World

One important reason to go to political discussions of Mahdism necessarily is the justice crisis at the present time. The observance of justice has gradually become a universal crisis today.

We read in our traditions that the expected savior will appear on

a day when the earth has been filled with cruelty and tyranny. What can be understood from this tradition is that there has not been so much mistreatment in the past to involve the whole world. Not all the countries were engaged in injustice because of their separation from one another in distance. Most of them were independent to decide their way of administration. Thus, if a place were encumbered by oppression, another place could be secure from injustice.

But in the conditions of today's life, we see that cruelty does not belong to only one or two places; injustice is going to become worldwide to include all countries. So the crisis of justice has engaged everywhere, it does not exclude a society in favor of another. Even those who live in the west have trouble lacking justice. Now and then, we hear of vast demonstrations against globalization of economic issues in countries, which is even more expressive in the west. This is because common westerners are more impressed by injustice than other places of the world.

By the way, we do not want to say that tyranny has now involved the whole world completely; rather, the conditions are such that the ground is going to prepare for its realization in near future. It is for this reason that we should introduce the ideal government of Mahdi (PBUH) to challenge such injustice.

7. Globalization and the Perspective of Relief

The idea of globalization itself has brought up the necessity to introduce the political discussions of Mahdism since it requires all the people to ask for an ideal society. People live in such a confused situation that they seriously need Deliverance. They ask these questions: What would that ideal government be like? What relation does it have with the expected universal society of Religions? So, it seems to be expedient to proceed to the political discussions of Mahdism more than before.

Since discussions of globalization and their relations to Mahdism are too detailed, we are going to mention some samples of them here in this article.

8. Some Deviatonal Groups for Mahdism and the Necessity to Explain its Correct Dimensions

Since a long time there have been movements or groups, to propound the subject of the Savior but now they have become more. Such societies like “Hujjatiah”, “Bahaism”, etc. have suggested their beliefs in their expected saviors. But the Hujjatiah group’s political views have influenced people’s ideas much more than others. While a sect like Bahaism has expressed only its religious beliefs, Hujjatiah, on the other hand, has introduced its view for things like “suspension of the government”, which is merely a political perspective.

However, the last reason for proposing the discussions of Mahdism to be necessary is a new challenge and contention that the West has created against Mahdism to show our doctrine in a negative manner for its western benefits. They have suggested that our Imam of Time will arrive with his sword to make a war. He will be enraged and wrathful to kill his opponents, and some other things like that, which are all incorrect conceptions. So, it is quite expedient to start explaining the Doctrine of Mahdism more explicitly here:

The Classification for Political Discussions in Mahdism

We can classify the political discussions in Mahdism in two ways: the first is to search among all political studies to locate and extract the political discussions in Mahdism. Here we should also separate the original studies from those related to other political disciplines. According to this approach, we will have the principal fields of political science, socio-politics and socio-philosophy, or interdisciplinary studies of social geography, social economics and social psychology. Then we should find the issues related to Mahdism and check them out.

However, this kind of job, though inclusive and ideal, is hardly applicable or useful for present conditions. It will be possible, perhaps, to survey all political-geographical events of Mahdism over long-time studies but it is not an easy job to deal with such issues clearly and adequately in a short-term research. Of course, there are some important political controversies even social incidents to be investigated in history, but under present circumstances, despite the hard work of our religious authorities in Mahdism, there are still many issues that must be studied in the principal fields in accordance with

their priorities. In other words, we ought to recognize them first, find out their preferences and then survey such very important things being essential in Mahdism.

The second way of studying political issues in Mahdism is to go straight to political discussions wherever they are in major political fields of religious matters instead of proceeding towards all sciences including politics. Of course, when we get an opportunity in the future after Mahdism has been sufficiently elaborated, we should have a second approach to all disciplines to survey it again. Anyway, the second method seems more appropriate to let us meet today's requirements. So, we may consider such a method of study as an applied strategy based on necessities, although it is not actually comprehensive because of its leaving out certain discussions.

Classification of Political issues in Mahdism

Before we start to classify the political discussions in Mahdism, it seems to be necessary to mention that it is possible to study them from different sides; since we might look upon them through two or more categories. As an example, "the necessity for presence of the Imam and his leadership" could be discussed in a political discourse and from the viewpoint of political philosophy of political theology. However, these will never interfere in each other's domain. Therefore, we should pay attention to the dignity and glory of a subject in its own special category.

a) Basic Ideas and generalities in political discussions in Mahdism

In this section we will examine those issues that are fundamental to form preliminary political discussions for the domain of Mahdism. Here, reliable sources and valid authorities must be investigated for the doctrine of Mahdism in addition to some subjects which may not be propounded in other political discussions of Mahdism. So, The major issues of the following section are:

- 1- categorization of political concepts in the traditions related to Islamic Mahdism,
- 2- Investigation of semiological changes in political concepts of Mahdism in the history of Islam,
- 3- Locating the references or sources for political discussions of Mahdism,

- 4- The function of reason in the political discussion of Mahdism,
- 5- The function of quotations in the political discussions of Mahdism,
- 6- The role of intuition and affairs pertaining to aptitude and taste,
- 7- The role of experience in the political discussions in Mahdism,
- 8- The semantic analysis of political concepts in the prayer of Nudba⁴
- 9- The semantic analysis of political concepts used in the prayers about Mahdism (except the prayer of Nudba),
- 10-The part of stated narration in distortion of political discussions of Mahdism in the history of islam,
- 11-Examination of approaches and actions of cruel rulers about traditions of Mahdism,
- 12-Conceptuality of being saved in Islamic belief in savior
- 13-Analysis of political concepts in the noble charters
- 14-Conceptuality of impoverishment and the governance of the impoverished in the holy Koran,
- 15-Surveying the proofs of misusings by cruel rulers and usurpers from authentic narratives,
- 16-Examining and analyzing the political concepts of Mahdism in the holy Koran,
- 17-Investigation of the effects of Mahdism traditions in political changes after the advent of islam,
- 18-The analysis of political concepts of Mahdism in the prophetic discourse,
- 19-The analysis of political concepts of Mahdism in Nahj-al-Balaqa⁵
- 20-The analysis of political concepts of Mahdism in Sahifa-al-Sajjadiyya⁶
- 21-The analysis of political concepts of Mahdism in the words of immaculate imams (PBU them) one at a time.

b) discoussins of political discourse in Mahdism

political discourse is one of the principal fields in the Islamic political knowledge. We may summarily define political discourse as follows:

political discourse is a branch of dialectic science that deals with clarification and explanation of religious doctrine and macroinstructions of political affairs in the Islamic issues which argues against

doctrines and perspectives of the rivals in defense. Some people have taken the political discourse to be derived from revelations. If so, it will also include political jurisprudence discussions too, which do not create any conflicts. However, the main concern of political discourse is three things:

- a- the exact location of positions in religious macro-instructions concerning political life,
- b- clarifying, explaining and reasoning upon such perspectives,
- c- defending such perspectives at last, against doubts and rival views.

as it is inferred from the definition of political discourse, it aims at vast perspectives in the Islamic politics, but never engages in partial issues such as rights and duties. It is the subject of political Islamic law or jurisprudence that is responsible for such a job. There are, of course, other inclinations towards extracting political views in the religion such as: political exegesis or commentary, recognition of traditions, and political mysticism. The defensive concern of political discourse in religious facts and issues is to indicate its distinction from each of those approaches. Political discourse is also different from political philosophy to which we will refer in the section for political philosophy.

Many political discussions in Mahdism seem to be brought up from the viewpoint of political discourse. In its vast perspective and in the broad sense, political discourse can be considered to have three principal fields of study: the elaboration of the main doctrine of Mahdism in Islam, the explanation of Imam's absence period with his political life, and the description of Mahdist utopia with respect to its different aspects.

Mahdism is a religious belief having very important political dimensions both with respect to Imamate and leadership in the Islamic society and the manifestation of the utopia in the Mahdist government. In this way, political discourse must present appropriate reasons in different intellectual, dialectic and experiential methods while explaining Mahdist issues as a religious doctrine so that it will be able to defend it by proofs in the face of rivals' arguments. Hence, the affirmation of the doctrine of Mahdism will be a dialectic subject.

Another principal issue here will be to declare the necessity and deliberate on the qualities and characteristics of Mahdist utopia. Still, another important matter will be the explanation of the absence of Imam Mahdi (PBUH) and the political situation of the Islamic society in this age, all of which are essential to be elaborated and argued about. Of course, the doctrine of Mahdism in Islam, like the principle of imamate and leadership in Islam, has subsidiary issues at its side too, some of which are as follows:

- b-1. fundamental political issues of Mahdism in Islam,
 - 1-Mahdism and legitimate status of Islamic system,
 - 2- humanitarian principles of Mahdism doctrine in Islam,
 - 3- existentialistic and epistemological bases of Mahdism doctrine in Islam,
 - 4- the ultimate goal of political life in Mahdism doctrine,
 - 5- conceptualization of politics in the doctrine of Mahdism,
 - 6- the concept of society and social life in the doctrine of Mahdism,
 - 7- the function and position of Mahdism in the political thought of Islam,
 - 8 – Mahdism and the relation between religion and politics in Islam,
 - 9- Mahdism and man's expectation from religion in the political-social field,
 - 10- conceptualization of savior in the political-social domain,
 - 11- Mahdism and the question of designation of the immaculate Imam,
 - 12- Mahdism and the necessity for the religious government,
 - 13- reasons for the appointment of Mahdi (PBUH) to imamate,
 - 14- political attributes and features of the savior in Islam,
 - 15- limitations of men's knowledge for choosing the savior,
 - 16- the effect and duty of people in recognition and choosing the expected savior,
 - 17- democracy and Mahdism in Islam,
 - 18- conceptualization of freedom and justice in the Islamic doctrine of Mahdism,
 - 19- Mahdism and sectarianism in the Islamic society,
 - 20- Mahdism and political system of imamate,
 - 21- Mahdism and political system of caliphate,
 - 22- Mahdism and political superiority of office,
 - 23- Mahdism and manifestation of the perfect man in the politi-

cal social leadership,

24- Mahdism and the subject of perfect man in the Islamic thought.

b-2. Mahdism and the Political Status of Shi'a in the Absence⁷ Period

some of political discourse issues of Mahdism pertain to the absence period of the immaculate Imam. Such discussions include wide and vast talks and arguments, some samples of which are as follows:

- 1- investigation of political-social factors pertaining to the absence of Mahdi (PBuH),
- 2- how the absent Imam has relations with the Islamic society,
- 3- the strategy of anticipation in the period of absence,
- 4- the function and position of special deputies in the adjustment of the political life in the Islamic society in the period of the minor absence⁸,
- 5- the political duties of the society expecting the advent of Imam Mahdi (PBuH),
- 6- the political duties of those expecting his advent (the expectants),
- 7- the guardianship of the jurisprudent (Wilayat-al-Faqih) and the method of government at the time of the Imam's absence,
- 8- the investigation of political theories of Shi's at the time of the Imam's absence,
- 9- checking and criticizing the theory of government suspension in the absence period,
- 10-political-social activities characteristic of the time of absence,
- 11-substitutes of the absent Imam at the time of his absence,
- 12-recognition of the nature of the Imam's political life in his presence and in his absence,
- 13-characteristics of absence period and its effects on the evolution of people from the viewpoint of political discourse in the Shiite belief,
- 14-the political-social philosophy of the age of absence in the divine wisdom,
- 15-the effects of prolonging of the absence period on the evolutionary changes for men,
- 16-the characteristics and the function of the savior's absence in the political thought of the Sunnites⁹
- 17-political-social bereavement of the possession grace at the

- age of absence and its substitutions in God's justice,
- 18-guardianship of the Jurisprudent and the function of the Jurists in the adjustment of people's political life at the time of absence,
- 19-the jurists' extent of powers in regulating the political life at the Time of Absence,
- 20-capacities of the leadership in realizing the ideals of the Mahdist political system,
- 21-people's function in the political system in the Absence Period,
- 22-conceptualization of usurping and cruelty in the Absence Time,
- 23-grounds and political-social factors in the Time of Absence,
- 24-extents of political liberty in the system of religious leadership,
- 25-special activities of the religious leadership in the Period of Absence
- 26-the manner of swearing allegiance to the Absent Imam,
- 27-the method and nature of allegiance in the religious system of leadership
- 28-principles and bases for the majority's vote in the political systems at the Age of Absence,

b-3. Mahdism and the Islamic Utopia

- 1- the function of religious leadership in the Mahdist system,
- 2- Mahdism and governance of the impoverished in Islam,
- 3- Mahdism and the necessity for a religious government at the end of history,
- 4- aspects of insufficiency of secularism in the Islamic Utopia,
- 5- conceptualization of governance in the Mahdist Utopia,
- 6- the need for the state and necessity for government in the Mahdist Utopia,
- 7- the prospects of politics and administration in the Mahdist Utopia,
- 8- the function of science and knowledge in the paving of the ground for the Mahdist Utopia or the ideal city,
- 9- the structure of the political system in Mahdism,
- 10- globalization and preparations for a universal government established by Mahdi (PBUH),
- 11- Mahdism and globalization,
- 12- people's influence on the Mahdist political system,
- 13- limits for political freedoms in the political system of Mah-

- dism,
- 14- the pattern for a political development in the political system of Mahdism,
 - 15- the pattern for citizenship rights in the Mahdist political system,
 - 16- the aspects of political-social justice in the Mahdist political system,
 - 17- the aspects of political-social security in the political-social system of Mahdism,
 - 18- the equipment for securing justice in the political system of Mahdism,
 - 19- instruments for the guarantee of security in the political system of Mahdism'
 - 20- measurement of the proportion between freedom and justice in the Mahdist Utopia,
 - 21- political system of Mahdism with regard to the political systems of Muhammad, Ali, and Hassan (PBU them all),
 - 22- human generousities and Mahdist justice,
 - 23- the political generosity in the Mahdist state,
 - 24- the political freedom and the Mahdist generosity,
 - 25- human generosity and the state's authority in the Mahdist system,
 - 26- the public administration and human generosity in the Mahdist state,
 - 27- Mahdism and the concept of citizenship,
 - 28- characteristics of the noble state,

c- the Discussions of Political Philosophy of Mahdism and the Saviorship.

Political philosophy is one of the ancient domains of political knowledge. Different civilizations in history have set up their own political philosophy. Islamic thinkers too, inspired by divine doctrines in the first Islamic century, learned the intellectual subjects through the Book and the traditions and then spread these pieces of knowledge. The knowledge of discourse and its analysis has been an indigenous form of knowledge in the Islamic civilization having shown Muslims' inclination towards intellectual subjects. Islam's encouraging people to acquire knowledge and to tolerate its hardships even by traveling to the remote areas of the world on those past days, for example to China, caused the Muslims to proceed to the findings of other civilizations of the neighborhood such as ancient Iran and old

Greece. By deliberating over intellectual teachings of Greek philosophers and by adopting and developing them, Muslims imported the political philosophical discourses into Islamic civilization.

Some people like Lambton believe that Islamic civilization, for the sake of prevalence of revelations and religious teachings, lacks political philosophy; so, political discourse has taken the place of political philosophy. Some others have also spoken of the decline of political philosophy in the Islamic civilization.

However we should admit that Islamic thinkers, specially the Shiite ones, have engaged in extending and spreading philosophical ideas with their intellectual approach and caused it to be continued in the Islamic traditions. Of course, there have occurred some obstacles in different periods including in the exalted method of Sadr-al-Muta'allehin¹⁰ (chief of theologians) but we should never ignore their hard-work during the history in reviving political philosophy.

Political philosophy seeks to discover and illustrate the political facts. In a way, political philosophy tries to establish certainty and settle knowledge in the place of doubt and hesitation in the political-social dominions. The political philosopher, unlike the political speaker, seeks to find out realities. He does not want only to defend religious teachings, proving them or affirming their doctrines in any way possible. Therefore, the political philosopher first searches everywhere to find the truth without worrying about proving its position without any claims. Secondly, he engages in examining political phenomena merely by means of intellectual methods.

Political philosophy arguments, because of their being intellectual, are universal and comprehensive; they do not belong to some particular people's creeds or beliefs or specific or certain geographies. However, different schools, varieties and usages have appeared within political philosophy over periods of history.

Sometimes, for the reason of their nature, religious beliefs have become prevalent in societies.

Some scholars assert that it is impossible to talk about political philosophy in such communities; or at least when propounding political philosophy; we ought not to relate it with Islam or Christianity.

Therefore, to use the terms of Islamic political philosophy or Christian political philosophy seems to be contradictory, since political philosophy indicates free reasoning while the stipulation of Islamic or Christian to it makes it dependent and leaves off its free thinking.

In response to such a problem, we ought to say: if the mere social ground for ways of conduct hinder our free intellectual reflections, we can never have any free political philosophy, because every society has its own special customary backgrounds, which, as a result, will affect its rationalization. Also, what is meant by Islamic political philosophy won't be a restricted way of contemplation: rather, it is benefiting from certain inspirational principles to assist the intellect in its sound reasoning. Thus, the stipulation "Islamic" in the phrase 'Islamic political philosophy' is merely expressive of some pre-suppositions or some special substructures for Islamic political philosophy to be laid upon. Such preliminaries always exist in any political philosophies. Thirdly, if we do not consider philosophy only as a man-made activity but regard any kind of intellectual systematic contemplation in the political domain as political philosophy, then we can find many doctrines or intellectual social-political phenomena. So, as a result, we can talk about Islamic political philosophy to be based upon religious texts.

Having offered the above reasons, now we can start to discuss the political philosophy of Mahdism, although Mahdism from one viewpoint is only an Islamic belief and from another viewpoint it is a worldwide doctrine which has been stated as the realization of an ideal society in the future for men. If we consider Mahdism to be an equivalent for saviorism¹¹, then the doctrine of being saved is present in many other schools of thought, which are all prospective in spite of their being different in details but in common for their prospects to have utopia and being saved finally from cruelty and oppression.

Anyway, Mahdism is worth studying as a macro-doctrine regarding the utopia and expecting the savior. In this way, some of the great subjects of political philosophy associated with the discussions of Mahdism are as follows:

- 1- the necessity for utopia: an ideal society for people,

- 2- the ideal city: Is it a dream or reality?,
- 3- Mahdism and infrastructures for an ideal city,
- 4- the human structure for the ideal city,
- 5- the territory of utopia: regional or universal,
- 6- factors and grounds for the realization of the ideal city,
- 7- *the function of leaders and champions in the realization of the ideal city,*
- 8- the utopia, terrestrial or celestial? Investigating the celestial factors in the realization of the utopia for man,
- 9- the features and looks of the ideal city,
- 10-the function and status of people in the utopia,
- 11-manners and methods to make freedom and justice be realized in the utopia,
- 12-the pattern for the division of power in the ideal society,
- 13-the goal and the end for the political life in the utopia,
- 14-the civil society in the political system in Mahdism,
- 15-the function and position of leaders in the ideal society,
- 16-special activities in the political structure of the ideal city,
- 17-the concept of superiority in the utopia,
- 18-opposite factors in the ideal society,
- 19-the necessity for a savior in history,
- 20-the doctrine of deliverance in the political philosophy,
- 21-the concept of salvation in the ideal city,
- 22-the quality and necessity for deliverance in the utopia,
- 23-motivational factors in history and the function of the savior,
- 24-traditions and laws of history and the quality of salvation,
- 25-the utopia and turning to the site of the impoverished,
- 26-the utopia and putting and end to quarrels for power,
- 27-saviorism, philanthropy, sympathy, rationality and divinity and sacredness,
- 28-and so on...

d- Discussions in the Political Jurisprudence in Mahdism

Political jurisprudence is the knowledge similar to political discourse taken shape and developed on the bed of Islamic civilization. "Political jurisprudence" is the result of Muslims' deliberation over their political life based on a series of God's commands and decrees, and this one is of the noblest political teachings of Muslims. Even if all other domains of knowledge have been the result of learning and acquisition that the Muslims have taken from other civilizations and

then adopted it into their own culture, the political jurisprudence is a quite indigenous Islamic knowledge. In this contemporary period, the subject of religious law is practiced in different methods. In the Islamic civilization too, jurists have made political jurisprudence productive by their great struggle in the cradle of Islamic civilization. At one time, the political jurisprudence flourished in proportion to daily requirements of the Islamic world. Over the two past centuries political jurisprudence has experienced several stagnations, but now the revival and growth of Islam again has brought about its more development at a large scale.

Political jurisprudence seeks to elaborate the political duties of Muslims in the Islamic world whether individually, collectively or socially. Farabi, in his book *al-Milla* (the nation), has introduced political jurisprudence to be equal to civil philosophy. He has put both civil philosophy and, civil jurisprudence together to be called civil science. In his opinion, jurisprudence, in its practical section by the people, includes the things that are details in the discussion of general concepts in civil science. Therefore, they are ingredients of the parts in general civil science that are put under the practical philosophy. In another definition, Amid Zanjani says in this regard: "There are some subjects in jurisprudence under the titles: Jihad (holy war), enjoining to good deeds, and forbidding from the unlawful, Hisba (asking God for spiritual reward), Imamate and Caliphate, appointing rulers and judges, etc. which are recommended directly or indirectly. Such things are called Ahkam-al-Sultaniyya (decrees of logical proofs)

In a broad view, the materials in the political jurisprudence are divided into four parts: 1-subjects relating to the generality of political system, 2-issues relating to the domestic policy, 3- issues relating to the foreign policy, 4- history of the jurists' political thoughts.

Consequently, we may also bring up the subject of political jurisprudence in discussing Mahdism. The quality of knowledge about political jurisprudence is to concentrate upon details and express practical duties and decrees. Hence, in the discussions of political jurisprudence, we ought to talk about political duties related to the political system, about rulers, about political duties of individuals, and about other social groups. Some samples of the subjects related

to political jurisprudence in Mahdism are as follows:

- 1- characteristics and attributes of the Imam in the Islamic Mahdism,
- 2- special activities and duties of the Imam in his Absence and Presence periods,
- 3- the political-social duties of the Mahdist government towards the people,
- 4- the rights and duties of the people towards Imam Mahdi (PBUH) in the period of his Absence and at time of his Presence,
- 5- the status of the individual in Mahdist government,
- 6- the method of choosing or appointing agents and personnel in, the Mahdist system
- 7- the rights and duties of groups and political societies and organizations,
- 8- the model for enjoining to doing good deeds and forbidding from unlawful acts in the Mahdist system,
- 9- rights and duties of citizens in the Mahdist system,
- 10-political-social responsibilities of the Mahdist state for securing justice in the society,
- 11-the necessity for a war (jihad) against enemies and antagonists in the period of the Imam's Presence,
- 12-the affair of holy wars (jihad) in the period of the Imam's Absence,
- 13-the religious minorities' rights in the system of Mahdism,
- 14-how the operations of the agents could be criticized in the Mahdist systems,
- 15-how necessary the control and political supervision would be in the system of Mahdism,
- 16-the function and duties of women in the system of Mahdism,
- 17-the political duties of those expecting the advent of the Imam when he is absent,
- 18-the political duties of the society expecting the advent of the Imam in his Absence time,
- 19-the bases for the jurisprudence under the guardianship of the Imam of time in his Absence,
- 20-the duties and powers of those substituting the Imam in general, in his absence' time,
- 21-principles and ceremonies of Jihad at the time of the Imam's advent,
- 22-rights of protesters in the revolution of Mahdi (PBUH),
- 23-political duties of the agent under the leadership of the

Imam,
24-justice strategies and freedom under the leadership of the Imam,
25-the extent of political freedom in the Mahdist system,
26-political duties of appointed deputies during the Imam's Minor Absence,
27-possibility and quality of protesting or opposing under, the leadership of the Imam
28-how much and how far political protesting and opposing can be, in the Mahdist system,
29-duties and responsibilities under the Imam's guardianship, for the preparation and providing of the system in Mahdism
30-how different forces can be separated or combined in the political system of Mahdism.

E- The political-social discussions in Mahdism

The subjects under political sociology in Mahdism can be one of the important domains for political studies of Mahdism. In the past, we did not have any independent empirical knowledge in the form of today's modern social sciences, but we may find some studies and investigations done in the form of pieces of advice, comments and policies of life and consider them as political writings which resulted from people's experiences to be given for prescriptions or recommendations in the past. Some empirical studies too, have been followed in the Islamic civilization. Clear samples for such writings are directions of Ibn Khaldoun in the science of construction and development, or Ibn Taqtaqi's¹² opinions and talks on the method of living. However, empirical-political studies can be traced in different approaches of sociology, psychology, economics, geography, etc.

The political sociology, as a clear empirical political science, is the result of the thinkers' deliberation over the nature of the science in the late centuries. Of course, there are some differences in the cognition of the nature of it. Some people like Morris Durjet, regard political sociology to be the same as the science of politics because in both of them politics is discussed. Some others take political sociology to be different from political science.

Hussayn Bashiriyya believes that the distinction of those two is in

the direction of exercising the authority. In the science of politics, the power is exercised by the states and through other political institutions downward to the people, but in political sociology the direction of using authority is upward. It starts in the society through social forces to be exercised upon governmental institutions. In this view, political sociology ought to be studied among social forces in the society. Of course, some late views being based on post-modernity have considered political sociology to be inclined towards the application of power in social domains among people. In this way, the mere official power is not applied apparently. It is used among the hidden layers in the field of political life of the people. In general, the strategy of political sociology can be regarded as the experiential study of power relations in the social domain.

The subjects of political sociology in Mahdism are a group of subjects dealing with studying and analyzing power relations in the Islamic society with regard to the Islamic doctrine of Mahdism. So, in the political sociology of Mahdism, we should talk about the effects of this doctrine on the changes that it has brought about to have given shape to the relations of power.

We can study the subjects of political sociology of Mahdism in its three periods of: the period when all the immaculate Imams were present, the age of Absence of Mahdi (PBUH), and the period on the threshold of his advent.

At times, some issues are discussed sociologically about the advent of Mahdi (PBUH), which should really be appropriated to political discourse, political jurisprudence, or political philosophy because experiential studies about the future are meaningless. Here we will cite samples of political sociology of Mahdism as follows:

1-E. the period of the Imams:

- 1- the political manners of the Imams and their conducts to prepare the Islamic society for the Age of Absence,
- 2- the political conditions of Islamic society on the threshold of the Imam's Absence,
- 3- agency and substitution and manners of the immaculate Imam to institutionalize the affairs for the Advent,
- 4- the effect of the doctrine of Mahdism on the political-social changes at the beginning of Islam,

- 5- the effect of power relations on the occurrence of the events due to those claimants for Mahdism at the outset of Islam,
- 6- the function of the doctrine of saviorism in the resistance of the Shiites against Umayyad and Abbasside Caliphs,
- 7- methods of immaculate Imams (PBU them) in propagation of the culture of Mahdism and preparation of society to accept it,
- 8- method of the Shiites on the threshold of the Imam's absence in confrontation with the cause of Absence
- 9- how the Shiites got impressed by the doctrine of Mahdism at the age of the Imams, the immaculate
- 10- the function of the students and companions of the Imams in the development of the Mahdist culture
- 11- methods of interaction of the people with representatives and the Imam's agent in the age of presence of Mahdi (PBUH)

2-E. the Age of Absence

- 1- the political conditions of the Islamic world on the threshold of the Age of Absence,
- 2- political situation of the Shiites at the age of Minor Absence,
- 3- how the Shiites interact with special deputies,
- 4- how the caliphs interact with special deputies,
- 5- the amount of development and influence of Mahdist culture at the age of Minor Absence,
- 6- the effects of the schools existing at the time of Mahdi (PBUH) in his minor absence,
- 7- manners of control and opposition of Abbaside rulers to Mahdist culture at the age Minor Absence,
- 8- the role of the doctrine of Mahdism in the resistance of the Shiites at the Age of Minor Absence,
- 9- the influence of Mahdism on the contemporary Islamic political life,
- 10- the strategy of awaiting (expectation),
- 11- the part of Mahdism in different Islamic movements and risings (applications of such movements can be investigated and studied: an example is the rising of Sarbedaran¹³)
- 12- Mahdism and the political feature of the expectants,
- 13- the process of political sociability of Mahdism culture at the age of Major Absence,
- 14- the role of the intelligentsia in the development and sociability of Mahdism culture in the Age of Absence,

- 15- the role of family and women in the sociability of Mahdism culture,
- 16- the part of the doctrine of saviorism and Mahdism in the delivering movements in the Islamic world,
- 17- the role of media in propagation of the culture of Mahdism in the Age of Absence,
- 18- investigation of the part that the holy places related to Mahdi (PBUH) can play in the expansion of Mahdism culture
- 19- investigating the Shiite rites in the celebration of Mahdism and its effects,
- 20- the role of internet and satellites in spreading the culture of Mahdism,
- 21- models for the propagation of Mahdism culture in non-islamic societies,
- 22- methods of propagation of Mahdism culture in Islamic societies,
- 23- aspects of confrontations and clashes of cultures with saviors in multicultural societies,
- 24- part of arts and movies in the political culture of Mahdism,
- 25- the influence of political culture of Mahdism on the pattern of political partnership of the people in the Age of Absence,
- 26- manner of confrontation with deviated political events in Mahdism,
- 27- the role of the events that claim for Mahdism at different political-social changes in Islamic societies,
- 28- factors and grounds for political-social shapings of deviated events in Mahdism,
- 29- part of colonialism in the shaping of deviated events of Mahdism in the Islamic world,

E-3 the threshold of advent and the rise of hazrat Mahdi (PBUH)

- 1- the political-social grounds for the realization of universal governance of Mahdi (PBUH),
- 2- universality and out look for devliverance,
- 3- the nature of revolution and the rising of hazrat Mahdi (PBUH),
- 4- aspects of necessity for armed rising for the realization of Utopia,
- 5- the function of tribes, communities and different nations in the revolution of Mahdi (PBUH),
- 6- opposing forces against Mahdi (PBUH),
- 7- characteristics of wars at the end of time and the strategy of rising and the jihad of Mahdi's army (PBUH),

- 8- the model of change and reconstruction in Mahdism culture,
- 9- the role of the doctrine of Mahdism in the political culture of Shiite societies,

f- issues of international relations

The domain of studies for international relations is one of the important domains in political subjects. This domain includes different studies about the connection of political units in the international domain, their foreign relationships, foreign policies of the countries, and international policies. With the changes of late decades and the weakening of nation-states in the process of globalization, the scope of international relations is gradually replaced by the global policy; while, in the past, international relations were based on the centralization of national states. Now with the enfeeblement of national units from one side and the appearance of important actors on the scene of political affairs of the world, apart from their own unique ability to decide from another side, these nation-states have become subjected to a new phenomenon called global policy.

In the discussions of Mahdism, of course, such an affairs should be examined as a problem or as a question like this:

What relation will the universal government of Mahdism have with other governments? Will some other states and nations apart from the Islamic people exist throughout the earth to let us witness the scene of other international policies? So, some important political subjects of Mahdism will be set up in relation to international dominion and global politics as follows:

- 1- the situation of the world on the threshold of the advent,
- 2- the quality of powers and the enemies of the Imam at the outset of his advent,
- 3- Mahdism and contemporary challenges of the Islamic world,
- 4- the situation of the states and nations in the age of Mahdism,
- 5- conceptualization of international politics at the Age of advent,
- 6- the war of End of Time and the function of truthful forces and falsehood forces in that,
- 7- investigation of strategic dimensions in warfare regions at

the End of Time,

8- the Age of Advent and the necessity for wars and jihad,

9- tactics of falsehood forces in confrontation with the army mahdi (PBuH),

10- the strategy of the west in confrontation with the doctrine of Mahdism in Islam,

11-The nature of making war and its armaments at the End of Time,

12-Strategies for providing global security on the threshold of Advent,

13-Strategies for providing the world security in the government of hazrat Mahdi (PBuH),

14-Terrorism and saviorism in today's world,

15-The west's goals in designing the motto of terrorism in confrontation with Islamic doctrines of the End of Time,

16-The role of Jewish-Christian forces in End of Time and provision for Armageddon (the final and conclusive battle between the forces of good and forces of evil),

17-The sedition of Jew and Zionist Christians at the End of Time,

18-Perspective of End of Time and Sufyanic¹⁴ army in Islamic traditions

19-how prospective religions and schools interact concerning the occurrence of End of Time

20-End of Time and the problem of battles among religions,

21-the effect of globalization against saviorism in today's world

f- Political-Comparative Studies in Mahdism and Saviorism

Some of the political discussions in Mahdism deal with a comparative investigation of common subjects of this doctrine in different schools and religions. Such studies are made mainly on the basis of subjects brought up on the previous materials. Thus, after the deletion of some special issues of Mahdism in Islam, many political subjects of Mahdism can be examined comparatively too. Comparative investigations are kinds of studies made in the domain of religious studies in which the researcher engages in finding aspects in common or different among religions and indicates their superiorities. For this reason, such kinds of studies do not seek, at first, to prove whether those perspectives are right or wrong, or whether they occupy a right-

ful situation. They might, of course, comment on some comparative studies and point out the preference of one doctrine over another or other ones while pondering over them to judge and assess.

It is evident that such a method will be called multi-dimensional in Mahdism because one goes beyond comparative discussions to participate in collective studying. With the expansion of the territory of comparative studies and their entering into humanitarian schools such as modernism and post-modernism, comparative subjects can be set up much more widely to contain the following:

- 1- the feature of the savior in Islam and other religions,
- 2- the view of religions to the process of Advent of Savior,
- 3- the function and effect of saviorism on interrelations of religions,
- 4- the feature of Utopia in different religions,
- 5- what the religions have done in the field of saviorism,
- 6- the view of religions to the victory of the impoverished and oppressed at the end of history,
- 7- Islamic utopia and democratic liberal system,
- 8- Criticism and examination of the theory for liberal democracy at the position of end of history,
- 9- Clashes between civilizations and the prospective views of religions,
- 10-The part and place of the people from the view of religions concerning the government at the End of Time,
- 11-The part and the position of sects and groups from the viewpoint of religions about the government at the end of time,
- 12-Saviorism and human religions,
- 13-A comparative investigation by Islamic and Jewish-Christian perspectives with regard to returning of the Christ (PBHU)
- 14-Examining the feature of Dajjal (Islamic antichrist) in Islam and in Christianity (Christian antichrist),
- 15-How is the savior's approach to Dajjal at the End of Time in Islam and in Christianity,
- 16-Special activities of the universal governance of the expected savior in different religions,
- 17-The features of the expected savior and the perfect man in different religions
- 18-Regeneration and belief in millennia in Islam and Christianity.

the epilogue

The analysis of the nature of political life under the protection of Mahdism doctrine for the Islamic society, particularly in today's conditions, is very necessary. The global transformations on the threshold of the twenty-first century and the third millennium AD, on the one side, and the growth and expansion of beliefs in saviorism and deliberation over subjects about the End of Time on this globe on the other side, have caused changes in the thoughts and opinions of the people in today's world. The inclination towards political-sociological studies in Mahdism like other studies is great. Research on the other domains of Mahdism includes detailed discussions and extensive arguments so much so that we should provide the ground for new investigations and researchers in the near future.

What we have talked about in this article may only be regarded as a humble effort to introduce some of the most important subjects present in the domain of political studies of Mahdism. It seems quite necessary, of course, to enumerate and analyze all other approaches in the field of political studies along with even, those interdisciplinary issues involved in the political situation.

We hope this important affair can be followed in the near future to make the work become completer by other ambitious scholars and great authorities for Mahdism.

1. In the Shiite beliefs tawalla means showing affection to the religious leaders and taking them as friends; also, tabarra is showing aversion towards the enemies of Islam and withdrawal from them.
2. اللهم عرفني نفسك فانك ان لم تعرفني نفسك لم اعرف رسولك، اللهم عرفني رسولك فانك ان لم تعرفني رسولك، لم اعرف حجتك، اللهم عرفني حجتك فانك ان لم تعرفني حجتك ضللت عن ديني.
3. من مات و لم يعرف امام زمانه، مات ميتة جاهليه.
4. It is the name of a prayer about the Imamate of Mahdi (PBuH).
5. meaning the manner of eloquence, a book compiled with the words of Imam ali (PBuH).
6. a compiled book by Imam sajjad (PBuH) the fourth Imam.
7. referring to the twelfth Imam, who is living but he is absent from us.
8. compared with the major absence of the imam.
9. distinctive from Shiites, the muslims of the branch of islam that adheres and acknowledges only the first 4 caliphs as the rightful successors of the prophet.
10. mulla sadra's title, he was a great Islamic philosopher.
11. the belief in a savior.
12. an Islamic historian.
13. inhabitants of a city who revolted aganit the cruel government.
14. pertaining to Abu Sufyan, father of mu'awiya, the head of Umayyad dynasty known for oppression.

Dr. Thomas Finger



*The Coming of Jesus and
God's Righteous Kingdom*

Abstract:

The writer of this article has compared the Muslims' belief in the advent of Imam Mahdi (PBUH) to the Christians' expectation of Jesus' coming back to the earth as a Messiah to establish the Kingdom of God and prevail justice everywhere.

He has continued writing that Christians believe Jesus will bring God's righteous kingdom to transform the world after so much damage done to the earth and so much oppression to the poor from the side of the cruel, powerful men on the globe. The following points are included in this article:

A- a summary of historical events at the time and after the time of Jesus Christ, his main messages and his religious thoughts quoted from Torah about the Resurrection of the dead,

B- what the prophets of God did to establish justice, how the religion of Christianity became prevalent, and how the Christians' hopes will be fulfilled,

C- a perspective to the future and the belief that Jesus' Kingdom has already come, though it is not complete yet; living in the present hope in reality and being faithful to the religious teachings and expecting the savior to arrive.

Today all nations are affected by the damage to the earth that we share through global warming, deforestation, air pollution, and contamination of water and food. We all are also affected by armed conflicts in many places, which disrupt and destroy civilized life, and by fears of catastrophic attack, especially by nations with many weapons of mass destruction.

People everywhere wonder whether the End of our world might

be at hand. Many of them fear that this End will be total destruction. But others hope for a different End: for a reign of justice and peace brought to earth by God's special Agent. In our dangerous and divided world, it is crucial that people who anticipate the coming of peace and justice share their hopes with each other.

My purpose will be to describe the Christian hope for the coming of God's Kingdom as it 1.) originated in the Torah and the prophets; 2.) was fulfilled by Jesus, and 3.) developed in two very different directions in western history, down to the present. Relationships with hopes for the Mahdi are too numerous to describe at any length. But I hope to discuss these and learn much more about them during this Seminar.

1.) The Future Kingdom of God in the Torah and the Prophets

This hope first appeared in the Torah and the prophets, which both Christians and Muslims accept. It was usually voiced when Israel's leaders were corrupt and unjust, and when wars and fears of war spread through the nations. This hope included six main features.

1.) The Righteous King.

According to the prophet Isaiah, "the spirit of the Lord" would rest on him,

the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord....
with righteousness he shall judge the poor,
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;
he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips he will slay wicked." (Isaiah 11: 2, 4; cf. 9:6-7, 32:1-2)

This king was often called the Messiah, which comes from the word for "anoint," since kings were anointed when they began their reign

2.) The Kingdom of Justice and Peace.

This King would reign over a world where all people would live together in harmony, and would treat each other justly. At that time "the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord,

as the waters cover the sea.” (Habakkuk 2:14; Isaiah 11:9) The earth would yield abundant fruits for everyone.¹

3.) *The Gathering of God’s People.*

The prophets often declared that Israel that would be conquered and taken captive into many foreign countries for their sins. Yet they added that God would eventually bring their descendants back. The hope for God’s Kingdom began to include their return, along with many natives of those foreign lands.

In the days to come....

Many peoples shall come and say, ‘Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord....

that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.’

God shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many peoples;

they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks;

nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall the learn war any more.”²

4.) *The Judgment of the Nations.*

As the previous passage indicates, the gathering of God’s people from all nations would be connected with God’s judgment on all nations. This was often portrayed as a great battle, where God would wage some kind of war against disobedient nations.³

But would the Messiah fight for God at that time? While some texts in the Hebrew Scriptures picture this, the majority do not.⁴ For example, the prophet Isaiah, whom I recently quoted, prophesied that the Messiah would slay the wicked-- but “with the breath of his lips” (Isaiah 2:4). This passage seems to be figurative. However, since the Messiah would be a king, and since kings wage war, most people who embraced the Messianic hope before Jesus came assumed that the Messiah would be a warrior king.

5.) *The Outpouring of God’s Spirit.*

God would not only gather the people and establish justice and peace, but would also become more present among them than ever before:

I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions.

Even on the male and female slaves, in those days, I will pour out my spirit.” (Joel 2:28-29)

Notice that God’s Spirit would come not simply to a few leaders, but to all people, including slaves, which implied that social inequality would be overcome.

Other prophets described this coming of God’s Spirit as a renewal of peoples’ hearts:

I will give them one heart, and put a new spirit within them; I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, so that they may follow my statutes and keep my ordinances and obey them.”

(Ezekiel 11:19-20, cf. 37:14, Jeremiah 31:31-34)

6.) The Resurrection of the Dead.

In earthly life, numerous righteous people suffer while many unrighteous people prosper. If God is just and rewards people according to their deeds, this will have to happen after death. At the End time, then, “many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.” (Daniel 12:2) At that time, God will “swallow up death forever!” (Isaiah 25:7) The “dead shall live, their corpses shall rise. O dwellers in the dust, awake and sing for joy! For your dew is a radiant dew, and the earth will give birth to those long dead.” (Isaiah 26:19)

II.) The Future Kingdom of God and Jesus

When Jesus appeared, the land of Judah had been ruled by foreign empires for centuries. Hopes for a Messiah who would liberate the Jews from the current oppressor, the Roman Empire, ran high. Several Messianic pretenders had already declared war on the Romans, but had been terribly defeated.

Jesus’ main message was: Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand!⁵ His followers believed that he was the Messiah. But then something very unexpected occurred. Jesus never called his follow-

ers and legions of angels to fight the Romans. Instead, the Romans captured Jesus and, Christians believe, they crucified him. People at that time interpreted Jesus' crucifixion as God's judgment on him-- as evidence that his Messianic claims were false, and that those who crucified him were in the right.

But several days later, other unexpected events occurred: Jesus' followers began seeing him and hearing him speak. What could these appearances mean?⁶ The way that Jesus' followers interpreted them, and several events that followed, is extremely important for understanding the Christian hope for God's Kingdom. Jesus' followers came to believe that through those later events, the Kingdom of God had already come to earth-- not yet in a complete, final way, but still in a very important sense. To explain this, let me indicate how those six features anticipated in the Torah and the prophets occurred in these events.

1.) The Resurrection of the Dead.

Jesus' followers understood his appearances to mean that the resurrection of the dead, which was expected at the End of history, had already occurred-- yet in a very unexpected fashion. They had expected that all humans would arise at the same time. Yet only one person, Jesus, had risen. The rest would not rise until he returned.

To express this, Jesus' early followers called his resurrection "the firstfruits,"⁷ and the future resurrection of everyone the full harvest. A harvest begins when the first grapes or ears of grain are ripe. Yet that harvest continues until everything ripens and is harvested. So if Jesus' resurrection is "the firstfruits," his resurrection and the final resurrection are not really two separate events. They are the beginning and end of one event: the resurrection which many generations hoped for when God's Kingdom finally came.

2.) The Righteous King.

When Jesus was crucified, it seemed that God was judging him for making false claims to be the Messiah. But when God raised Jesus from the dead, his early followers believed, this verdict was reversed. Jesus' resurrection showed that God favored him, and that he was the long awaited righteous King. However, he was a very different

kind of King than they expected. He was not a warrior, who killed his enemies, but a Messiah who taught people to love their enemies, and not to resist them violently, even if their enemies wanted to kill them.

3.) The Judgment of the Nations.

When Jesus' enemies killed him, it seemed they were in the right and had God's favor. But when Jesus was raised, this verdict also was reversed. Now those who had crucified him were guilty of killing God's Messiah. The Romans and Israel's religious leaders played the main role in this crime, and the crowds who supported this were Jewish. Western Christianity has often blamed the Jews for Jesus' death, and persecuted them horribly. But this is not the true Christian understanding of who killed Jesus.

Christians believe that all people, in all places and times, have sinned, and are under God's judgment. Although some people seem to be better than others on the surface, they all, in the deepest sense, oppose God, and are God's enemies. Christians believe that if they had been in Jerusalem in Jesus' time, they would have participated in his crucifixion in some way. If you ask a Christian, "Who killed Jesus?" the honest answer would be "I did. Although I was not actually there, I have committed the same kinds of sins as those who killed Jesus."⁸ If all people participate in Jesus' death in this way, then everyone, not only the people in Jerusalem at that time, is guilty of his death, and is judged guilty by his resurrection. This is how God's judgment of all nations, expected at history's End, was executed in Jesus' death and resurrection.

This means that Jesus' death cannot be blamed on any one race or people more than on others. It also means that Christians, who claim to be saved through Jesus' death, cannot deserve salvation more than others. People receive this salvation not because they are better than others, but only when they repent and confess that, if anything, they are worse than others. Consequently, Jesus' true Church, or those who receive the benefits of his death, cannot belong to any one, superior nation. If most Americans claim to be Christians, this does not make America closer to God than other peoples. It only makes Americans who call themselves Christians more responsible to live

as Jesus taught, and more guilty if they do not.

4.) *The Kingdom of Justice and Peace.*

Jesus was the righteous king, who promoted righteous laws and social behaviors. His teachings were designed to create a new kind of social group. In Jesus' time, rich people were valued much more highly than poor people; similarly, men were valued over women, Jews over Gentiles (non-Jews), and strict religious people over unreligious people. But Jesus' teachings "reversed" these ways of evaluating people..

Jesus sharply criticized wealth and showed special concern for the poor. Jesus valued and welcomed women, Gentiles and unreligious people in remarkable ways. He did not mean that rich and poor social classes should literally exchange places, as in some versions of Marxism. Jesus meant that wealthy people should give up their quest for and dependence on wealth, so that all people could share the riches of the earth. Similarly, he meant that women and men, Gentiles and Jews, and religious and non-religious people should not change places, but develop fruitful and just relationships with each other. In this way God's Kingdom, expected at the End of history, would become present in some real sense.

To an oppressed people, Jesus' taught an even more remarkable change of attitude. Rather than hating or fighting your enemies, he said, show them love.⁹ If a Roman soldier forces you to carry his pack for one mile, voluntarily carry it another mile (Matthew 5:41). Jesus followed his own teaching when he refused to fight the Romans, and as he died, he prayed: "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." (Luke 23:24)

5.) *The Outpouring of God's Spirit.*

Fifty days after Jesus ascended into heaven his followers were still gathering secretly, because they were afraid of his enemies. But suddenly "a sound like the rush of a violent wind... filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them." (Acts 2:2-3) In this way the outpouring of God's "spirit on all flesh... Even on the male and female slaves," which was expected at history's End, began. (Joel 2:28-

29). In this way also, God's Kingdom arrived in some real sense.

The Holy Spirit enabled Jesus' followers to shake off their fears, and gave them the strength to follow his teachings. This was that renewal of people's hearts which the prophets had also foretold.

6.) *The Gathering of God's People.*

When the Holy Spirit first filled Jesus' followers, they were also enabled to tell the good news about Jesus in many languages. On that day, Jews who lived in almost every foreign country were in Jerusalem to celebrate a festival. With them were many "proselytes:" natives of those countries who wanted to join the people of Abraham. When this crowd heard the good news in their own languages, 3,000 of them were baptized and joined Jesus' followers. This was the beginning of a distinct social group called the Church.

Although the good news was first addressed mostly to Jews and proselytes, before long it spread to many other countries where multitudes accepted it. In this way, another event anticipated at the End, the ingathering of God's people from all nations, began to occur, and would continue until Jesus returned. In its first few centuries, the Church spread far to the east of Judea as well as far to the west. From the beginning, the Christian faith aimed to bring justice, peace and harmony to all nations.

These relationships between the Torah's and the prophets' hope for God's future kingdom and the appearance of Jesus are extremely important for understanding the Christian expectation of Jesus' coming. Christians believe that in Jesus' history and the other events just mentioned, that earlier hope was already fulfilled in some significant sense, although it was not yet fulfilled in a complete sense. The final "harvest" had arrived because the "firstfruits" had already appeared. Yet it would continue until all fruits had ripened and been harvested. This tension between God's Kingdom already being present and not yet being present may sound like a contradiction. Nevertheless, it is central to the biblical understanding of Jesus' coming, for this is a two-fold coming.

III.) The Future Kingdom of God in the Western World

In my view, it is partly an accident of history that Christianity became the official state religion of many western nations. As it did, its views changed in some significant ways from the teachings of and about Jesus found in the Bible. I can trace only one change in a very general way: its expectation of the future coming of Jesus and of God's Kingdom.

1.) *The Early Christian Hope.*

Until the 4th century C.E. Christians were a small minority in the Roman Empire. Many of them came from the lower classes or from slavery. Yet the new kind of social group that Jesus talked about was visible among them. For instance, some Roman families left infants whom they didn't want out in the fields to die. Christians often gathered up these infants and raised them. When plagues struck cities, most people fled. But Christians often stayed behind to minister to the sick, and sometimes died themselves. Christians avoided occupations that involved immorality, and with very few exceptions, service in the Roman armies.¹⁰

Since Christians believed in a King whose Kingdom was already present in some real way, they refused to worship the Roman gods or the Emperor. Consequently, the Romans persecuted them often, as they had persecuted their Lord. Most Christians expected that Jesus would return to this earth, and that God would punish the Romans when he did. This is expressed most fully in the New Testament book of Revelation, usually in highly symbolic ways which are difficult to interpret.

Revelation portrays God's final destruction of those who oppose him. Jesus also returns, but it is not clear that he is directly involved in this. For example, while Jesus strikes down the nations with a two-edged sword, this sword comes from his mouth.¹¹ This recalls Isaiah's prophecy: the Messiah "shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he will slay wicked." (Isaiah 11:4) Any such sword or rod must be figurative, and refer to persuasion or preaching.

According to Revelation, Jesus' followers also "conquer" evil, but only in the way their leader had: "by the blood of the Lamb and by

the word of their testimony, for they did not cling to life even in the face of death.”¹² Early Christians opposed the Roman Empire only by faithfulness to Jesus and his teaching, and by witnessing, through their way of life, to the reality of his Kingdom

During their first 300 years, most Christians expected Jesus to return to this earth, and for the earth to be transformed into a just, peaceful, prosperous society of those from every nation, tribe, people and language. These people would live forever. But they would not “go to heaven,” or to some realm entirely different from the earth. Instead, the powers of heaven would come down to earth, and transform humans and their environment. Although the nature of this transformation would surpass human understanding, humans would continue to be social, bodily creatures.

Because God’s final Kingdom would differ so greatly from earthly societies, and because God would destroy empires like Rome at its coming, the Christian hope sharply critiqued contemporary politics and social life, even though it contained no specific earthly agenda. The Roman authorities found it dangerous, subversive, and a good reason for persecuting Christians.

2.) The Common Western Hope.

In 313 C.E. the Roman Emperor Constantine won a major battle and thought that the Christian God had given him the victory.¹³ Constantine soon stopped persecution of Christians and made Christianity the favored religion of the Empire.¹⁴ Suddenly Christians ceased being a persecuted minority mostly from the lower classes. Large masses of people, including some wealthy and powerful ones, joined them. For many of these new people, becoming Christian did not involve significant changes in their lifestyles. As time passed, fewer and fewer people who called themselves Christians followed the way of Jesus’ Kingdom: the way of sharing, peace and equality with people from other nations, races and social classes.

Most of these Roman “Christians” and their rulers were uncomfortable with the early Christian eschatology, which prophesied the Empire’s destruction and a very different society on earth. Gradually, the standard western expectation of Jesus’ coming changed in two main ways.

First, three of its main features-- the resurrection of the dead, the judgment of the nations, and Jesus' coming-- came to be understood individualistically and were relocated from the future earth to heaven. The rising of the dead into God's presence was shifted from one future historical moment to the countless moments when individuals died. Each one would encounter God when one's body ceased to function and one's soul rose up into heaven.

The final judgment was also transferred from God's single, future dealing with all nations to the multiple moments when departed souls were assigned to heaven or hell.¹⁵ Concern for the destiny of the human race was replaced by individual anxiety about entering heaven or hell. Hope for the righteous King's coming changed into awaiting Jesus as a judge, often with fear. Jesus would no longer transform the world, but would finally save, or damn, souls.

The other three features of early Christian hope-- the Kingdom of righteousness, the gathering of God's people, and the outpouring of God's Spirit-- were still interpreted socially and historically, but in a very different way. Jesus the righteous King, who had been relocated in heaven, was also assigned a new role in this history.

Around 400 C.E. the great Christian writer Augustine of Hippo acknowledged that the biblical hope included the destruction of all empires, including Rome. But, Augustine added, this was valid only as long as the Roman Empire was persecuting the Christian Church. Beginning with Constantine, however, the Roman Emperors, with very few exceptions, favored and promoted the Church.¹⁶

One biblical name for God's future Kingdom of righteousness is the "millennium," which means a period of 1,000 years. Revelation 20:4-6 pictures Jesus reigning on earth with his saints during such a period (though it may not mean a literal 1,000 years). Augustine argued that since Christian Emperors now rule society, aided by the Church, the millennium was no longer future, but had already begun. The rule of the Roman Empire and the Roman Church was in fact the reign of Jesus the righteous king through his saints during the earthly millennium. The heavenly Jesus was, in effect, disengaged from human history. Though his earthly coming was occasionally mentioned, it was postponed to the millennium's end-- far too distant

to affect the present society.

God's Kingdom of justice and peace, then, was not really future, but present in the Roman Empire, aided by the Church. The Romans prided themselves in spreading peace, justice and civilization through the world. To be sure, Roman engineering, architecture and law contributed lasting benefits to civilization. But for most conquered peoples, this came at the price of brutal warfare and oppression.

While Augustine's eschatology gained favor in the western, or Roman, Church, it and the Eastern, or Byzantine, Church drew further and further apart until they separated in 1054 C.E. This is western Christendom's eschatology, for it had little impact on the Eastern churches.

In the west, the gathering of God's people became identified with missionary work within the Roman Empire and in European lands beyond it. These efforts were distant from Eastern Church missions, except for a few countries where the two competed. As Islam arose, this western "millennial" Christianity became increasingly hostile to it, and could attack it as God's direct enemy, as in the Crusades. Western Christianity aligned itself more and more with European civilization, and often sought to defend it against other nations, and even to destroy others, instead of extending the good news of Jesus and his Kingdom of justice and peace to everyone.

Finally, God's Spirit was no longer poured out on the whole world, but mostly on the Roman Church, enabling its leaders to define doctrine, perform sacraments, and govern through Church law.

3.) From the Protestant Reformation to the Present.

During the 16th century C.E. many European political territories, from city-states to entire nations, rejected Roman Catholicism when their leaders established new Protestant Churches. The unity of western Christendom was fragmented by wars among Protestants and Catholics for at least a century. But by the 18th century the common western hope reappeared in a more secularized form. Western nations now considered themselves superior to others due to their advances in science and technology, and their "enlightened" social outlook, which promoted freedom and democracy.

"Progressive" thinkers believed that these new scientific and po-

litical procedures could bring prosperity and justice to the world very quickly and initiate, in effect, a millennium.¹⁷ This vision inspired a western “mission.” As they conquered or took control over much of the globe, westerners supposed, like the old Roman Empire, that they were bringing other countries the benefits of their advanced civilization. But for most conquered peoples, as for subjects of the Roman Empire, these came at the heavy price of brutal warfare and oppression. Some Christian missionaries, remembering the early Christian hope of Jesus’ peaceful Kingdom, opposed these evils. But too many other missionaries were guided by the common western hope instead of this Biblical vision.

In North America the common western hope reappeared much earlier than in Europe. No symbol inspired its rise to power more than “the Kingdom of God.”¹⁸ Many early settlers believed that God had called them to build that Kingdom anew on their unexplored continent. This task drew successive generations 3,000 miles from the Atlantic coast to the Pacific, almost annihilating the Native Americans in the process. Then it expanded into the Enlightenment mission of bringing science, education, and democracy to the rest of the world.

This secularized millennial mission is still rooted deeply in the American psyche. The present government invokes its symbolism very often. It leads countless Americans to consider the tremendous cost of their involvements overseas-- in human lives, environmental damage and billions of dollars-- necessary, and therefore justified, for completing this mission. Many American Christians seem to be blind to these horrible consequences, because they view this “mission” as God’s.

To nations which feel its heavy impact, however, it looks much more like the violent expansion of self-interested power and wealth. I am deeply grieved by the incalculable suffering this “mission” inflicts on Iraqis, Palestinians, Lebanese and many others. As an American, I also fear that it is making my country not safer from, but much more vulnerable to, attack-- on my children, my grandchildren, my friends, and millions of Americans who oppose it. I notice many parallels between my governments’ efforts and those of the Roman Empire to dominate the world. While I would not identify America

with any eschatological figure,¹⁹ Christian eschatology warns that nations who follow this path will overreach themselves, arouse widespread hatred, and eventually bring on their own destruction.

IV.) The Reappearance of the Early Christian Hope

Hope for the earthly coming of Jesus and his Kingdom never died in the West. It flared up often among people who felt heavily oppressed by their churches and governments, and could hardly regard them as rulers of the millennium. Many of these people, as in the early church, hailed from the lower classes.

Some of these millennial movements took up arms to further their cause. So far as I know, nearly all of them were viciously persecuted and defeated. Other movements which were not mainly religious, but political and/or nationalistic, described themselves in eschatological terms and took up arms. Some of these overthrew governments, but afterwards they often portrayed their own rule in millennial imagery.

Still other movements anticipated the full, earthly coming of God's Kingdom, which was not yet present, but like the early Christians they already lived by its teachings, such as non-violence, equality and sharing. Their lifestyle differed so greatly from European societies that it sharply critiqued them, as early Christianity had critiqued Roman society. Governments felt threatened, and often persecuted them as the Romans had persecuted early Christians, even though neither movement had a political agenda. Despite this, these groups inspired some social reforms. But can this early Christian hope offer any realistic guidance for today's world, which is torn by many conflicts and threatened with global destruction?

Consider how the Soviet empire collapsed. One would suppose that so oppressive and scientifically sophisticated a system could be toppled only by bloody wars or revolutions. Yet most communist governments capitulated with hardly a shot being fired. When enormous numbers of citizens staged protest marches, work stoppages and simply refused to co-operate, they collapsed. Other oppressive

regimes, like El Salvador's, finally succumbed to courageous but non-violent opposition of large citizen groups. Quite recently, massive demonstrations brought down the Kingdom of Nepal.

I do not think that non-violent approaches will always succeed. Yet it is obvious that war, which is far more damaging and expensive, often does not work. Still, Christians who use only peaceful means do so not simply because these might succeed, but because Jesus teaches them. In closing, let me indicate several convictions central to his approach to conflict and war..

One conviction is that revenge, or punishing an enemy for harming oneself or one's group, will never bring widespread, lasting peace. To be sure, when governments inflict punishments which are equivalent to the crimes committed,²⁰ these can promote justice and stability. But people who desire revenge often inflict far greater damage on their enemies. This enflames their enemies' desire for excessive retaliation, and initiates an escalating cycle of wrongs avenged by greater wrongs, sometimes continuing for centuries. Enemies, Jesus teaches, will not attain lasting peace until they stop seeking revenge - unless they stop returning evil for evil, even when it seems justified, and bless those who persecute them (Romans 12:14-21). For this to happen, at least three things are necessary.

First, enemies must search for creative, non-violent ways to resolve their grievances and problems. When Jesus told people oppressed by Rome to carry a soldier's pack an extra mile, he was not advising passive suffering, but creative, loving response. When people are hit on one cheek and turn the other cheek, they do something unexpected. This can unsettle aggressors and stop the cycle of violence before it starts. Jesus said, in effect: when you are wronged, and your immediate impulse is to strike back... Stop! The Kingdom of God is at hand! There must be a better way to overcome evil. Search for it!

Second, people must often accept the pain of being wronged and injured, and forgive their enemies instead. Christians believe that Jesus did this when he refused to defend himself against his killers, but prayed for them. Christians believe that this kind of response does not end in defeat, but unleashes the power that raised Jesus from the dead. This power will begin to overcome injustice and violence

already, in this life, and will finally raise everyone who has been wronged unjustly and establish God's righteous kingdom forever.²¹

Finally, forgiveness of enemies and consistent, creative non-violent behavior require the change of heart which the prophets foretold. Desire for revenge fills the heart with anger, hatred and fear. Only God, Christians believe, can empty the heart of these passions and replace them with love for enemies.

As a Christian, I believe that the God's righteous Kingdom will fill the earth, "as the waters cover the sea" (Habakkuk 2:14; Isaiah 11:9). But only when Jesus transforms our world as only God can do. I cannot conceive what his coming, or that transformation, will look like. Neither can I know when it will occur.²² In western history, people have sought to identify Jesus' coming with contemporary events, times and places countless times. All have failed, many of them disastrously. "The early Christian hope" is based on the belief that Jesus' Kingdom has already come to earth in a real, although not yet complete, sense. The only way to live in hope of its full coming is to live in its present reality, as Jesus taught, as faithfully as possible.

1. God "will send down the showers in their season; they shall be showers of blessing. The trees of the field shall yield their fruit, and the earth will yield its increase. They shall be secure on their soil, and they shall know that I am the Lord..." (Ezekiel 35:26-27; cf. Isaiah 65:17-25)
1. Isaiah 2:2-4; cf. Micah 4:1-4; Psalm 46:8-10; Zechariah 2:10-13. Notice also Isaiah 56:6-7:

"to the foreigners who join themselves to the Lord, to minister to him, to love the name of the Lord... These will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; For my house shall be a house of prayer for all peoples." (cf. Isaiah 66:18-21)
2. "Listen, a tumult on the mountains, as of a great multitude! Listen, an uproar of kingdoms, of nations gathering together! The Lord of hosts is mustering an army for battle. They come from a distant land, from the end of the heavens, the Lord and the weapons of his indignation, to destroy the whole earth, Wail, for the day of the Lord is near; it will come like destruction from the Almighty!" (Isaiah 13:4-6; cf. 34:1-4; Joel 3:9-15)
3. The Messiah wages war in Psalms 2:9-11, 21:8-12, 89:23, 110:5-6; Isaiah 9:5 and possibly 1 Samuel 2:9-10. The Messiah does not wage war in Psalms 84:9, 132:10-17; Isaiah 32:1; Jeremiah 23:5, 30:9; Lamentations 4:20; Ezekiel 17:22-23, 34:23-31, 37:22-27; Amos 9:11-12; Micah 4:8; Zechariah 3:10, 4:1-6 and 10-14, 9:9-10.
4. Matthew 4:17, Mark 1:14-15. Scholars agree that the main theme of Jesus' ministry was the Kingdom of God.
5. Jesus' followers were often surprised or frightened when these appearances began (see Matthew 28:8-10, 17; Mark 16:5, 8; Luke 24:4-5, 11, 36-41; John 20:14-16, 24-28, 21:4-7).
6. 1 Corinthians 15:20, 23. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit was also called the "firstfruits" (Romans 8:23) as were the earliest converts (Romans 16:5, 1 Corinthians 16:15, James 1:18, Revelation 14:4).
7. For an explanation of this which includes the role of social forces, see Walter Rauschenbusch, *A Theology for the Social Gospel* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1917), 247-259.
8. See N.T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), esp. 477-539; cf. 274-319, 446-474, 651-653; cf. Oscar Cullmann, *Jesus and the Revolutionaries* (New York: Harper, 1970).
9. See John Driver, *How Christians Made Peace with War* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald, 1988).
10. Revelation 1:16; 2:12, 17; 19:15, 21. Other passages which may possibly refer to Jesus destroying his enemies by force are Revelation 1:7; 2:23, 27; 6:16; 12:5; 14:10; 17:14; 19:11-21; 20:4 and 22:2.
11. Revelation 12:11. Passages in Revelation which are sometimes said to show Christians harming their enemies are 2:27, 8:4-6, 11:5-6, 19:14 and 20:4. But I find such interpretations very unconvincing.
12. His victory over Maxentius at the Milvian bridge near Rome, which gave Constantine rule over the Roman Empire's western half. On the night before the battle a promise of victory conveyed by Christian symbols appeared to him.
13. In 381 C.E. the Emperor Theodosius raised Christianity to the official and the only legal religion in the Empire.
14. Eventually a third possibility emerged: individuals who were Christians, but still committed many sins, were assigned to "Purgatory:" an experience of being cleansed or purged from their sins. Only afterwards would they finally enter heaven. This experience of purgation, however, was often pictured as fiery torment, not much better than Hell.
15. St. Augustine, *The City of God* (Middelsex, United Kingdom: Penguin, 1984) Book 20, Chapter 6:3-29.
16. "If at this juncture we can rally sufficient religious faith and moral strength to snap the bonds of evil and turn the present unparalleled economic and intellectual resources of humanity to the development of a true social life, the generations yet unborn will mark this as the great day of the Lord for which the ages waited..." (Walter Rauschenbusch, *Christianity and the Social Crisis* [New York: Harper and Row, 1964], 422).
17. H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Kingdom of God in American* (New York: Harper and Row, 1937).
18. Such as the Anti-Christ (1 John 2:18, 22, 4:3, 2 John 7), the beast with seven horns and ten heads (Revelation 13:1-8), etc.
19. The Torah's formula for this is an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth (Exodus 21:24, Leviticus 24:20, Deuteronomy 19:21).
20. In western Christianity, however, wealthy and powerful people have often told those who serve them to routinely accept wrongs, and expect a reward in heaven. Jesus did not have this kind of passive suffering, which justifies oppression, in mind. Though his way can lead to suffering, it is the way of active, creative love, which opposes oppression. Suffering is not good in itself, but only when it expresses God's forgiving, renewing love.
21. According to Jesus, even he did not know when these things will happen, but only his Father in heaven (Mark 13:22).



*Oh Mahdi! The bright
stature of Imamate*

Abstract

Longing to start a new life, we celebrate your birth day hoping to snap the chains on this joyful day and forget the cotes that have been decorated for us and take you as our master.

Oh Mahdi! The shade of gusto!

We have sorrows in our hearts and wounds on our chests and chains on our selves. Let me tell you that we are our chains; we have shut ourselves with our own hands. We are still the cruisers of the foggy alleyways and the impasses of the states, the states that have ornamented the cotes for us and banished us that are actually their brutes, from sources of humanity.

Oh Mahdi! The full-blown birth of history, Is there any hope for a new life?

Introduction

The beliefs of the Shiites are associated with Imamate. Shias have begun their journey in history with this thought and suffered a lot in this way. This is the blood drenched history of Shiism, which has dyed the claws of the dominant rulers and colored the horizons.

Today and in this generation, we have accepted Imamate but maybe despite our being Shiias, the picture of Imamate and therefore, Imam Mahdi is vague and dim for us. It is as a legacy that has to be guarded, a heritage that we have not yet known its depth and necessity, a depth that our ancestors have watered with their flowing bloods, a necessity that they have all witnessed with each and every

part of their being, to the extent that the all walls of the castles have been built upon their corps.

Maybe some would interpret the story of Imamate as a story of relations and familial, a sad story that is illustrative within its own limits, but must later on be forgotten, one that doesn't really need to be remembered and quoted over and over again.

Maybe some others have mistaken this story with the story of reigning and materialism and the deprivation of the group related to the prophet (PBUH). Some may even feel happy deep down inside that at least, once in history, elites have burnt down in history and been put aside.

But this issue, is not the matter of mercy and emotions, nor is it the story of monarchy and deprivation. It is an advanced view of the subject of leadership. A view that, believes that the leader must be the Imam of his time and the precursor of his time, he must not only be aware of it and concomitant of it. All those blood sheds were not only for the sake of family relations and compassion, or because of the exclusion of a group of beloved people and the favored ones to the royal kingdom. Maybe all of these thoughts have been stemmed from the fact that Imamate has been presented as a vague issue and that we haven't been able to show it's limits or consequences. We simply haven't taken this governmental scheme seriously therefore this very unclear scheme has let to the fact that the ones that have no familiarity with the cultural backgrounds and Shiit's gory legacy will be dazzled and say: one story and so much repetition? Or they would stay calm and relate us to the myths and accompany us with the legends and superstitions and only if they would be kind and fair enough, they would assign us as idealist.

But this is the truth that Shiism is interrelated with and has presented its governmental state under the name of Imamate. This is the kind of scheme that one can explain, but has no choice other than to accept it in it's entirety.

A scheme that based Imamate on traditions and texts for a few generations and then assigns it as a councilor matter.

A scheme that equalized Imamate and leadership, not caring whether it is from Omar's or Ali's generation, and omit requirements.

A scheme that imagined Imamate as a hereditary or royal matter.

A system that views Imamate as an unanalyzable matter and because of their commitment, believe in it with its all vagueness.

All of these schemes have not understood Imamate or understood its position and foundations. They have simply shot an arrow in the dark, leave aside all the thoughts that have categorized all those blood sheds and verves as a dream and an eastern emotion and took the familial sympathizing stories and ethnic relations as the axis of this thoughts and beliefs.

Maybe all these schemes and interpretations have rooted from the fact that we follow governments in their present basis. We simply provide our critiques on the present system. As we can clearly see, none of these are correspondent with Imamate; therefore even the most practicing Shia passes over this debate with condonation and runs away from it. Or he would stay and slake just so that he would be accepted in the public eye and before the eyes of the so called open-minded people.

If we identify the position of Imamate and feel its necessity, we will be able to feel the existence of our Imam based upon that very requirement. It is only then that we may be freed from childish excuses, and based upon that necessity and emotions, gain a love towards our Imam, not only a simple and passing love, but also a formed and aimed love. One that has changed into being a movement and the formation of the bits and pieces that this high and essential state is in need of.

I have presented an explanation for these three issues in this piece of writing:

The position of Imamate

The necessity of the presence of the Imam

The formed love

The position of Imamate

When man is mentioned in the society, history and his link with the tools of creation, the debate of leadership and governance will also be mentioned at the same time. In this view; the necessity of governance is related to the existence of different classes, while the system of the government is linked with the historical eras of these classes.

The Observation is as following: after passing the primary periods of commonality and the appearance of social classes, governments were imperatively formed. As long as these classes exist, these governments will continue to come to existence. They will suggest by the dominant governments until the time that the age of the final commonality comes and the class-less government comes into reality. In this society and this era, there is no longer any need for a government or a leader, because there remains no more exploitation and in the historical periods the sort of government depends on production and the method of production.

At the time of feudalism the dictatorial government, at the time of bourgeoisie the democratic government, and at the time of socialism the dictatorial government of labors took place and these forms of governments are interrelated to the process of production.

Therefore, when man is mentioned in the society, he needs a governor and a government concordant with this social action and producing process. He needs a state based upon the same producing relations and a leader aware of these relations and the rules dominate them. Such governor can be chosen through counseling and this council is able to know and authorize the rules according to the social situations and prepare them for being practiced. Such leader that is accommodating with the all well-known rules that are emanate from social relationships and the special situations of every nation, can claim the dominance of rules and a free democratic government and free itself from any dictatorial label.

But if this leader wanted to plan based on a different code, weather heavenly or earthly, imperatively this state will be a doctorial reign and it's rules will be a forced one. For in such frame that man in posed in the society, there is no need for any of these exportable rules. Man can come to some laws that he himself has experienced and felt according to his social situation.

In accordance to the social situations and the producing relationships of the same society, man does not need a government in his loneliness; he wants a government in his society and his social relations. But if man is posed in another relationship and is examined in a different field, the concern of the issue and the form of the debate

will completely change.

And the story, is so; that man is posed in entity and the whole worldly system, the fact is that man too has continuation and in this continuation, he is linked and attached; a link with the society and a relation with the whole system and all of creation. It is a misery for man to be studied in the society and in relation to the tools of his creation. It is this wrong and limited scheme that confines and darkens his view in the field of governance and leadership. If we put aside this limited and wrong scheme and mention man in all of creation, man, with this link and relation, is in need of a governance accompanying the order of creation, a governor aware of this order, and the codes rooted from this system and this fact. Such government and law and leader, will be democratic, humane and real.

In this view, the productive relationships or the opinion of people has no more interference. In the cream of governance, the type of codes, or the selection of rulers, for we no longer have to worry about social relations or people's opinions. We are merely talking about realities and casual and scientific relations, realities that existed before the mind or opinions or even science and are ahead of knowledge and ahead of the time that knowledge takes place and goes forward in. These facts are ahead of the time of man's awareness and the leading Imam of his time.

Only in this vast and advanced view the scheme of imamate registered and comes to life. In this view, governance is Imamate and the governor is the Imam and codes, codes according to the whole of this system. In this viewpoint the leader must be aware of all of man's relationships with creation and he must be aware of the whole scheme and besides all of this awareness, he must be free from the all appeals and attractions, so that he wouldn't pull man to a different path and lie the camel of governance at the door of his own house.

The totality of this consciousness and freedom is chastity, which is the criterion of choosing a leader. This scheme will be the Shiite governmental method and such scheme, with such advanced and vast view, will be worthy of all these blood shedding in history and all this vitality and epic and involvement in the human society.

Just in this way, we will be able to understand the Imamte of Shi-

ias, only in this state we can sense it, and only in this position that we must criticize ourselves that how could have we talked about this matter so carelessly or presented it with no tail, head or hand, just like the head-less, tail-less lion which tattooed by impatient of that lifeless tattooer, so that it would be desirable to the view and taste of the ones that want to trap people in the frame of productive relationships.

With such criterion of the selection of the leader, can we any longer say that for a few generations, Imamate is based upon the traditions and texts and later based upon council and selection?

For if a few generations of right leadership can put this duty in the hands of council, why can't these few generations of leadership design the scheme of a society with no government or no class?

Put aside the fact that this story, is not the story of augury and foretelling will a pair of blind eyes. It is the story of two and two equals four, the fact that were we pose man and where we set a plan of governance for him. The scheme of governance in relation with creation and in relation with the whole system, forever and not only for a few generations, need people that are aware of the whole creation and free from the all glitters and attractions. Chastity is the criterion for the selection of leaders and this chastity is the mixture of awareness of all of existence and freedom from all blazes.

In this step, if we nod and say you are right, but this matter will never be actualized or if we hurriedly ask so what are we going to do today and then we replied that this scheme is not practical, I will say that if I put this governmental plan aside and haven't posed man in all of creation, I must bitterly say that in the society and in this limit man needs a government taken from the voices of people and a code stemmed from the context of the relations in the society, Quran's law and Islam and traditions are enforced on this society. Because this sort of law is an imported one and related to a different domain. Now if one wants to mention Islamic rules and Islamic governments, he would just be an authoritarian. What the position of leadership depends on today, which is exactly what the Islamic government is understood through that the present government and well-known systems are posed in the link between man and his society, not the relationship between man and creation and man and statute, here we are

talking about a continuous person and a constant system. This is the reason why they can't combine with this governmental scheme and get montage.

One should either mention man in the society, if so there is no need for Islam put aside Shiism, or pose him in all of creation, if so there is no Islam with out any Shiism nor is there an Islamic scheme other than the Shii governmental scheme. Do you want to know why people like Aboutar, Mighdad and Salman fought so hard along history and did not want but an Alawi government?

Do you want to know why all this blood was shed to pave the path for this governmental scheme and why all this trouble was made in this way?

Do you want to know the hidden mystery behind all those epics, bloods, tears, verve, memories, and dialogues?

All this blood, pain, and tears were not for the monarchy for one group and the deprivation of another, it is not even because of justice and freedom. It is for this very fact: that putting chastity, knowledge and freedom aside means excluding man from creation and from the whole system, and it's scheme in the society, in a way that Islam and Quran an no longer necessary.

One group has limited Islam in individuals, while others have posed Islam in the society. All of this is happening while Islam can be understood only if he is mentioned in creation and the whole system.

In another record that I have discussed Imamate in detail, I have stated that if we bring the peaks lower, and accept poorer goals, there is no longer any need for these peaks, for all these orders and verdicts about how one should sleep, eat, have sex, or even how to and that they should face the sun, moon, or under the trees, water or thousands of other orders.

There is no longer any need for takbir, tahli, and loyalty, for these are all enforced and massive and can not coincide with democracy. These codes rooted from the social demands, social understandings, and human counseling. They have to be put aside and merely be studied as an ethnic and national tradition and be absorbed in the whole of law and therefore Islam will be a lever that has national power not

a base that one could chart government on.

What has caused deviation is this very fact that our understanding of state was not correct and advanced. The reason we want a state is, to have security and prosperity or guarding and caring, therefore many are idealist put aside those that lived when Islam first appeared and gave their own children to the claws of death through the lash of justice and would not prefer relations to regulations, for they will be seated at the very top of the program.

And such matter is not in need of Islam, nor does it need shiism. And if they ever accepted, it was just a game saying that they were bascules not bases.

When we identified the position of government and our understanding of state changed, and we were able to follow the leader in the relationship between an individual and all of creation, the only ones that have the right of leadership, are the ones that have become aware of creation through revelations. They must all pave the path for the leadership and governmental movement together.

And a very important fact is that this leader is not enforced. They just furnish him. You are the one that must find him and select him. You are the one that explores and tries so hard for providing oil for his lamp, fuel for his factories and cars. You must try for a superior need that supplies you in creation and promotes you from the level of a cow, and your society from the level of breeding. You must create the men for it and prepare it's troops.

God chose a leader for man that was posed in creation and was linked to the all of creation and furnished him in the hands of man. He gifted him with the scale of chastity – knowledge and freedom- so that in every era the ones that want to can stand up and provide it's men. And if they didn't want to they could tolerate the strokes, pains, and sorrows and remain in the level of a cow. And organize their society to the extend of a well –off breeding business.

Imamate is the scheme of the ones that haven't stay in jails and have posed man in his own position and Imam, in the precursor of the ones that want things ahead of time. Because the Imam rules based upon certain codes that human sciences have not yet discovered it and is ahead of science, time, and man's knowledge. Because the pres-

ence of such Imam is necessary, so he does exist. One must discover this Imam himself and contrive his arrival. You can not move your head and say that it cannot happen. For when you start the impossible actions from the right path, you have already done them for many years.

You can not ask: then what has happened all these centuries? For only the things that you do yourself will be done. You are asking about something that you yourself are in charge of. Because it the goal wasn't to pull you forcefully or make you tumble, but that you have to choose this Imam with your own free choice and actualize your Imam otherwise, if you didn't do anything it will be the dominant oppression or the overloading injustice that are to contrive justice. When man experienced these governments and felt their oppression, that how much he had been insulted, then he will come to the place he had to come and wait for the person that had been waiting for him for centuries.

The necessity of the presence of the Imam

The birth of such Imam is a necessary, even if the all of history revolt against it. It is a necessity even if the powers and states do not want it to be; states that are ruling in the frame of their own profits or the framework of social and productive relations, they have brought man to bondage and demoted him to the level of refinery of filth, they have entered him in a closed circuit.

The existence of such Imam is necessary, so he does exist. His existence is necessary so he is born. While all the powers and the eyes of the Abbasi caliph, or in other words the caliphs of Islam, have stayed open to destroy him. That even Moses is raised in Pharaohs very house. Or let me put it this way, the houses of the dominant Pharaohs of history were the very birthplaces of Mosseses in history; Mosseses that limited governments destroy them and guide man in his present position in creation, so that all of man's relationships are programmed and concord.

He is born and grows, he socializes with people and among them, he talks to them and hears them talk, just as Joseph would talk to his brothers and hear them talk to him and even granted their demands.

We have heard and believed the news of the birth of such Imam

and his existence from the witness of this very demand before history ever announced or witnessed it. We have believed that man is correlated to and linked with this creation while he is not aware of this relationship, therefore he needs a vocation and a leadership; a vocation that bring along with it the code to these relations and a leadership that is ahead of the people of his time at every generation and is the Imam of his time.

We celebrate the birthday of such Imam hoping to start a new life on the day of this very birthday and come out of the chains of habits, imitations, frames, limits, producing relations, reflections, and desires and come to a human freedom with our wit and logic and to choose a leader in this freedom that will be the guiding light of our path and the contention of the way ahead of us and the caretaker of our talents, our refuge and stronghold in this blank thief land.

If the birth of such Imam comes along with a celebration, it should be coincident with the celebration of our second birthday, that we can not bear this leadership but after this birthday and that we cannot follow this Imam but without an extended view and remain a Shia. Therefore they have said:

ان امرنا صعب مستعصب، لا يحتمله الا ملك مقرب او نبي مرسل او عبد مومن امتحن الله قلبه للايمان.¹

It is on this birthday that the love of such Imam sinks down into all your being and flows in your blood and in your heart. The need we have for him forms a kind or urge like a thirst, in your each cell and sets your soul on fire.

Here this is love that must be transferred, till it produces another fruit. This is passion and desire that mused be formed and change to be a movement and an action; a continuous action and steady movement, so everything is ready for people to choose and for the men to be made, for an Islamic government happens only in an Islamic society and this society is in need of men that have lived with Islam all along their lives. Ones that submitted against it's all codes, ones that haven't demoted their wishes to smaller ones, or dissolve Islam's entirety into smaller parts and take up it's face with fake beards and mustaches.

This is the power of love.

Love seemed simple at first, but ²

The formed love

Love rises from demand, but which demand?

Let me put it this way love itself is a demand, an urge, but an urge for changing and freeing ones self from this sort of dead ends, sloughing off ones self and attaching ones self to a flame that one had found higher and staying with him. For when your existence, is staying and your staying is death and stink, one will hope to save ones self from staying behind the dead ends with just staying. He must start a certain path and choose a direction. This demand is love, and love has risen from this urge.

This is the loving one that can easily sacrifice himself in order to possess supremacy. He can be destroyed for he has known the greatness of the most super one; such greatness that his all being is a fence, a wall and a tower that it's collapse leading to growing bigger and greater and staying and dislodging from the dead ends and being continued.

What we have been addicted to under the name of the love of the Imam, isn't actually love nor is it the urge to continue and move on, it is a need for having entertainment and variety.

What we have before our Imam has a great distance with this love. What we want from the Imam is not he himself or even ourselves, what we want are, houses and livings we use him as a store, spade, and pickaxe. We have sacrificed to greater ones for the smaller ones. This is why this isn't love, it's a game. Just like the playing of children that put pillows under their feet in order to get their hand on their dolls and when they do, they run away. It is commerce just like the commerce of that astute that would say that it's a shame for one to ask from people other than their Imams. Whereas it's a shame to ask for something other than the Imam himself from the Imam. We seek Imamate from the Imam and this is our love. We will use his help to find the right path and direction and thus is our appeal (tawassol). Love and appeal other than this, is oppression, wile.

Our Imam is the tool for what? For our bread, water, wife and children?

But all of these have other tools. He is the tool for accession, guidance, and movement. So appealing to him, is using him in a state that is his position and suitable for him. We must ask him for movement, direction, and guidance. He has been put for these intentions.

Appealing to the Imam isn't to use him instead of our hands, feet, spades, and pickaxes or to make him the tool for reaching our desires and the bright for reaching our expectations.

Is this really appealing?

But our love is a kind of game, a trade, idle and limited desires. It is staying for choosing a direction and departing. We want to pull things from the cherub Imam to ourselves, whereas what stays with us and stays with us is an ending, filth;

ما عندكم ينفد و ما عند الله باق.³

What is in your hands is exhaustible and what is with this is eternal. What is in the hand of God is eternal so we must pull ourselves to that path. A good trade is to gain back what we have lost and to link the exhausting things to the eternal ones. This is why our love is a game. We say that if you don't give that to us we will break off with you and go, so what they haven't given to us is more important than they themselves for us for we have put them aside for the sake of that.

Our loves, are either games or a childish love, or a vain love, a love that has not yet been formed with hardships or been pallor after staying in the furnace. It hasn't yet become complete and plenteous it hasn't produced fruits yet. We say that we want to see the Imam and that this is a love that has not yet formed or been unfolded.

An amorous is the one that is thinking about providing ease for his beloved one not himself, for his own ease is limited and ending.

So you must carry on the duties that the Imam has to do. Malik would not hold Ali and tell him: "stand, I want to look at you", instead he would go lessen Ali's sorrows and take the heavy loads off Ali's shoulders, even if he had to be miles and miles away from him and couldn't see him for years, despite their distance they were together and united whereas despite their being close, others were away from Ali.

A formed love will turn into a movement. When the vitality to see happens, it will turn into an effort. Today, if you hear that the

Imam is just one hundred miles away you might not be able to sit still and run, but when you turn into a sophisticated amorous even if you know that the Imam is within 20 miles distance you do not dare to go, fearing the fact that maybe your entity, your presence, your looks, the movement of your hands and feet are unstructured and cause the discomfort of the Imam.

It is here that your love has been multiplied, but has moved and formed and has been spent and has controlled your hands, feet, mind, though and words. It has given you the capacity to bear heavy weights instead of being a heavy weight yourself. You are created for them not against them. For they have said:

كونوا لنا زينا و لا نكونوا علينا شينا⁴

Be our embellishments, not our shame.

There is great distance between different loves and different demands. And how beautiful, how great is a love that has formed and been tangled and tied;

كزراع اخرج شطاه فاستغلظ فاستوي علي سوجه

It is this kind of farming and growth that makes the farmer happy,

يعجب الزراع

It is this sort of formed love that defeats the enemy and brings tiff in the hearts.

ليغيظ بهم الكفار⁵

Otherwise we are all tools for the breakage of the Imam. We are the barbs in his eyes and the bones stuck in his throat, but there still remain people like Malik who have their love formed and turned into a movement and there are alliterations that their love has changed and reached the level of submission. And those corpulent trees of Shiism which have made the gardeners happy and brought them to awe, for they were lighter and more gentle than the breeze. While they chose storms as their playmates and would turn the all mountain to Bees-ton.

This is the tree of love that produces fruits and creates men and provides companions.

The necessity that rises from the pose of man in creation, propounds Imamate. And this very necessity forms the thirst and the urge for the existence of the Imam inside you. And this formed thirst and transferred love, will take you to the path of the bases of that government, in that great extent and with a goal greater than freedom, justice, prosperity and evolution.

It is heard that Malik's heart that is filled with Ali's love, whom he loves more than himself, directs him to separation from Ali. Malik goes, but he is reconciled and combined with Ali despite the separation.

Happy were the ones that were together in their separation...

Poor us that are dissonant in our totality...

1. Basair-al-Darajat, Mohammad-bin- Hasan- bin-Saffar, p 26.
2. One of the poems of Hafiz.
3. Nahl, 96.
4. Amali, Sadough, Majlesi 62, p 400.
5. Fath, 29.