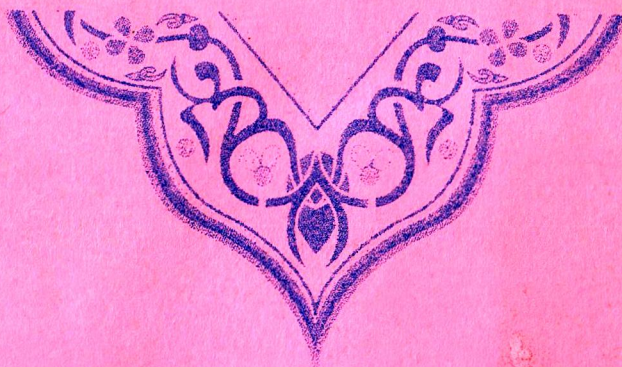




Mahdiism and Waiting

- Mahdiism and Globalization
- The Doctrine of Mahdiism and its Impact from the Standpoint of Anthropology and Sociology



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Mahdiism and Globalization

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Introduction

Globalization is the process whereby the world society becomes increasingly interdependent. It consists of various elements which affect human society in different ways; the main constituents are the political, economic and social, although, it has typically been associated with the economic domain.

Globalization entered into the realm of social consciousness during the late 1980's and due to technological advances, the last 60 years have witnessed its rapid development.

As the global community marches through time it is continually confronted with fundamental problems which cannot be tackled by nation-states alone, this has inevitably commanded fresh methods of global cooperation.

Despite this development towards connectivity, the world global system is rife with inequalities and divided up into a mélange of states that have divergent along with familiar concerns. Opponents argue that globalization has been driven by corporate and imperialistic interests and it fails to deal with the common needs of humanity in an equitable way. It is argued that a more humane system than capitalism is required.

Furthermore, despite the phenomenon of wide-scale globalization, it has failed to accompany political integration or diminish international inequalities of wealth and power; this being an indispensable ingredient underlying the stabilization of the current hegemonic system. Any counter-force that may undermine or attempt to shake this dominion is labeled as a threat, and under the guise of security every attempt is made to eradicate this counter-force.

However, as the tyrant spreads its tentacles of destruction and war over the globe, the reality is slowly being revealed and a myriad of voices of protest can be heard around the globe, which is not confined to the Islamic world alone.

At the heart of the world's variety of religions and creeds, there exists a mass expectation, a universal aspiration, a 'promised day' whereby the divine doctrines will be fulfilled and humanity will attain its goal and transcend the current hegemonic system.

It will be demonstrated that a new world government is desperately required to achieve this political consensus, which will overcome the conflicting interests of states, redistribute wealth and power, and annihilate global arrogance to establish justice. Moreover, it will be revealed that it is the Imam of the Age (may God hasten his reappearance) that will bring about this revolution and establish the ideal system of globalization that the world has been searching out for.

DEFINING GLOBALIZATION:

Concept of Global System:

Whilst globalization is open to a variety of definitions, all encompass the common thread of the concept of global "connectivity", "integration" and "interdependence". In the main, definitions are typically based on the escalating connectivity of economics and ways of life around the globe.¹

This concept of a single, social system has received most focus in the economic context, linked with the increasing interaction or integration of national economic systems via expansion of international trade, investment and capital flows. Moreover, a significant feature of globalization is its capitalistic birth, materializing at the disintegration of the socialist system and Soviet Union, presenting itself as an alternatively feasible form of economic organization.²

However, in recent times, with its rapid advancement, the phenomenon of globalization has come to be understood as more of a "unitary process, inclusive of many sub-processes".³ These sub-processes involve the elements of cross-border social, cultural,

¹ <http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Globalization>, p.1

² <http://globalisationguide.org>, p.2

³ <http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Globalization>, p.1

political, ecological and technological exchange that is progressively connecting individuals and the biosphere more firmly into one global system. Due to the extent and depth of this connectivity, our existence becomes shaped fundamentally by activities occurring far a field from the social contexts in which we conduct our own daily affairs. However, as sociologists correctly point out, it is superficial to view globalization merely as a process of the expansion of world unity, as the process of globalization is immensely 'uneven' and 'fragmented' in nature.⁴ Despite the phenomenon of large-scale globalization and this global unitary process, there exists an absence of either political consensus or equality in terms of the distribution of wealth and power across the globe. Grave injustices are rife as a consequence of these unequal structures. A subsequent critique of globalization will address these issues, in addition to paving the way for the study of a new global framework.

Elements of Globalization

As already outlined, the phenomenon of globalization is a process that encompasses several sub-processes, which impact on the global environment in a myriad of ways. The three major areas are social, economic and political. However, this can be further broken down into the following:⁵

Industrial – global production markets with greater accessibility to a variety of products for both consumers and corporations.

Financial – global financial markets with greater accessibility to external financing for corporate, national and sub national borrowers.

Economic – a global common market supported by autonomous exchange of goods and capital.

Political – a formation of one global government administering relations between nations, overseeing civil liberties and maintenance of rights emerging from social and economic

⁴ Anthony Giddens, *Sociology*, 2nd Ed. Polity Press. Cambridge. UK, 1994, p.528

⁵ <http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Globalization>, p. 1-2

globalization.

Informational – instantaneous communication exchange between different parts of the globe, encompassing geographically isolated regions.

Cultural – a change in mindset in terms of partaking in a “world culture”, whilst embracing and maximizing differences.

Social – eradication of borders and the concept of individual sovereignty, opening up global autonomy, alongside the establishment of a universal ethical code.

Legal – a global legal framework, whereby one set of rules are administered by an international tribunal system.

Ecological – solidarity in overcoming a variety of the globe's environmental dilemmas, that stretch across the boundaries of nation-states, such as misuse of natural resources, pollution control and global warming.

History of Globalization

There appears to be little consensus concerning the advent of globalization. Although failing to enter the realm of social consciousness until the late 1980's, certain historical events in human history mark its various stages of development.⁶ On the whole, it can be seen as a gradual phenomenon that is inextricably linked to expansions in human population and civilization.⁷

Early forms are associated with Silk Road activities carried out under the Mongol Empire, including the advancement of the Spanish & Portuguese Empires and European capitalism across the globe during the 16th and 17th centuries.⁸ Also during the 17th century, globalization gained currency under the establishment of the first Multinational in the Netherlands, which conceptualized globalization in the business arena. This company was a significant thrust for globalization, as it pioneered the practice of issuing shares.⁹

The 19th century marked significant trends in the steps of globalization. The advent of

⁶ <http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Globalization>, p.3

⁷ *Ibid.*, p.3

⁸ *Ibid.*, p.3

⁹ *Ibid.*, p.3

“Liberalization” branded as “The First Era of Globalization”,¹⁰ saw the vast expansion of world investment and trade between the European super-powers, their colonies, followed by the United States. However, the subsequent First World War led to the gradual demise of this era, coupled by the “anti-free trade protectionism” that headed the globe into the Great Depression in 1930.¹¹

Events spanning between the period of 1875 to 1925, such as the formation of the International Date Line, world time zones, the launch of the Gregorian calendar, and consensus on telegraphic standards roused the first real sentiments of large-scale global unity.¹²

Since the Second World War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, a new form of globalization has emerged, primarily driven by technological advances and the proliferation of capitalism, due to the activities of multinationals. Furthermore, the formation of institutions such as the World Trade Organization, which aim to standardize and regulate global trade activities, together with advances in global air travel and communications, have led to the acceleration of globalization, as never witnessed before. Moreover, the series of issues confronting the globe today, such as ecological disasters, terrorism, and global trade, has forced nation-states to discard all elements of ethnocentrism and self-centeredness and pave the way towards fostering fresh modes of cooperation aiming for the betterment of the global society.¹³

CRITIQUES OF GLOBALIZATION

Anti-Globalization Movement

From a realistic perspective the process of globalization, has fallen short of achieving its aims, especially in light of analysis of its supposed impacts as outlined in its various sub-

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p.3

¹¹ <http://globalisationguide.org>, p.3

¹² *Ibid*, p.3

¹³ <http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Globalization>, p.3

processes above,¹⁴ in comparison to how these notions of solidarity echoed in the legal, political and social spheres are found in today's global society. Moreover, the economic, industrial and financial spheres espouse principles such as freedom of exchange and autonomy, but in actual fact, these principles are being enjoyed by a minority and utilized to secure unequal power structures.

Inevitably, there exists a myriad of voices of dissent that appears to be snowballing, ranging from the 'Revolutionary' type (annihilation of capitalism)¹⁵ or the more 'Reformist' (more humane system of capitalism)¹⁶ to those of loosely defined objectives. Among the players are special interest groups with diverging objectives, such as left-wing parties, Christian organizations, peasant unionists, anarchists, environmental activists and anti-racism groups, to name a few.¹⁷

Nevertheless, regardless of the lack of unity in vision, the majority of resistance rests its dissent along the same lines; namely, the destructively corporate/capitalist-oriented nature of globalization. As a consequence, opponents document a vast array of assaults, such as global inequality and poverty, environmental degradation, denial of democratic and human rights, political discord and grave power imbalances. Moreover, a global conflagration of agencies emerges, as each is somewhat the personification of globalizations failure to address the needs of humanity in its various facets, for example, some agencies represent the environmental platform, whilst others focus more on the economic.¹⁸

A common thread amongst opponents is the view that the freedom of market forces nourishes a system of inequality, as free reign provides the rich with ammunition to continually reap the rewards, whilst keeping developing nations impoverished. Moreover,

¹⁴ i.e., the Economic, Financial, Industrial, Political, Informational, Social, Cultural, Legal & Ecological spheres of globalization.

¹⁵ <http://www.cn.wikipedia.org/wiki/Globalization>, p.6

¹⁶ *Ibid*

¹⁷ *Ibid*

¹⁸ Eg., *Greenpeace, World Wide Fund for Nature, Friends of the Earth, World Conservation Union* -- the protection of the environment. *Oxfam* -- the elimination of global poverty, suffering & injustice. *Third World Network, OneWorld* -- human rights, sustainable development, third-world perspectives. *Centre for Research on Globalization* -- opposition to free market policies.

it is argued that the system of a free-market does not address re-distribution of wealth, as it blatantly assumes that the wealth will inevitably 'trickle down' to the poor.¹⁹

Imperialism: “Americanization” or “Globalization”?

Amongst various factions of resistance it is commonly upheld that imperialistic²⁰ greed remains the driving force behind globalization. In fact, this theme forms the basis of critiques of globalization. Moreover, this theme becomes extremely paramount, as it opens up the discussion to follow by touching the heart of the issues surrounding the dominant forces of opposition in the wake of the Imam's arrival.

It is energetically asserted by opponents that the imperialist nature of globalization is the motivating cause behind the Iraq war, which is hauling a sizeable cash flow into the US pocket, as opposed to developing nations. Hence, it is argued that globalization is effectively a form of Americanization, as the United States occupies a uniquely superior position in its capacity to truly reap the benefits of globalization.²¹

In one sense, these economic rewards are secured, via the manipulation of the cultural and informational sphere of globalization, sustained by the media imperialism that the United States inflicts on the entire globe. It is via this propagation crusade that western powers, such as the US maintain a hegemonic position over world thoughts. Studies reveal that 75-80% of information received by the human mind is obtained via imagery, and the US cinema market churns out 600 – 700 movies annually.²² The reality is that such films are not devoid of specific motivations. In fact these films carry underlying themes that intend to permeate world consciousness in a sub-consciously subtle manner, thereby constructing a culture through them. To substantiate this argument just consider the reception of rival movies such as *Passion of Christ* or *Now Paradise*,²³ which sent tremors through the foundations of the hegemonic structure.

¹⁹ <http://globalisationguide.org>, p.3

²⁰ Derived from imperialism - the drive to conquer and subjugate other peoples; Hobson in Giddens p.540

²¹ <http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Globalization>, p.6

²² <http://english.irib.ir/IRAN/Leader/Illumination.htm>, p.3

²³ *Ibid*

Furthermore, critics propound that transnational corporations utilize media weaponry to create a Coca-Cola drinking, KFC and McDonald's consuming, American movie watching "uni-polar culture" to serve their own corporate interests. This becomes even more disturbing considering that out of the top two hundred transnational corporations in the world; eighty are based in the US.²⁴ That is, forty percent of the world's richest corporations are situated in one nation alone.

The cultural and informational imperialism that takes place on a global scale is phenomenal. It is uneasy to fathom that the global information order has developed so unevenly to the extent that it has been estimated that nine-tenths of all records held in databases throughout the world are accessible to the American government or other organizations of the US.²⁵ Moreover, American TV and radio networks are subsidized by the American government and in particular the Defence Department.²⁶

Lastly, a study of Americanization and its impacts must include a mention of how the US government has run amuck on a political/legal scale; an unforgettable example is the obliteration of the institution of the United Nations. In terms of attaining the envisaged globalization in these spheres, the US government has depleted all ambitions in the hope of setting up a central body to administer a global legal framework to secure world peace and justice, as it incessantly utilizes this agency to advance its own political aims.

A Failed Globalization

In conclusion, it can be seen that although the globe appears to be moving towards a single social order, as the actual process and sub-processes²⁷ of globalization take their course, divisions on almost every front, that is, the economic, the social, the political, the cultural and so forth, seem to be reaching extremities. More so, at present, the political consensus required to necessitate change in order to triumph over the diverging interests

²⁴ Giddens, p.543

²⁵ Giddens, p.558

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p.559

²⁷ i.e., the Economic, Financial, Industrial, Political, Informational, Social, Cultural, Legal & Ecological spheres of globalization.

of states remains dismal; as international tension appears to be mounting like a volcano preparing for its eruption.

Consider that the sales of just two of the world's corporations (Ford & General Motors) combined are greater than the combined GDP of sub-Saharan Africa, while the six largest Japanese trading companies are almost as big as all the nations of Latin America combined.²⁸ This blatantly exposes globalization in its despotic form; it essentially undermines nation-states, whilst fuelling corporations.

Furthermore, the UNDP Development Report 1999 points out that during the last 10 years, the gap in incomes between the 20% of the wealthiest and poorest nations has increased from 30 to 1 in 1960 to 82 to 1 in 1995.²⁹ By the late 1990's, a fifth of the world's population living in high income nations owned 86% of world GDP and 82% of world export markets.³⁰ Furthermore, futuristic scenarios estimate that at current rates of development, the gap between the wealthiest and poorest nations will have widened by a further 300 per cent by the year 2020.³¹

These stark disparities between nation-states and unequal pockets of power and wealth positioned around the globe clearly reveal that globalization is heading in the wrong direction, as its reins are held in the hands of the tyrants and power hungry who manipulate the growing connectivity of the global society for their own greedy aims. This dominant force utilizes its power to rob the globe of its economic stability, and annihilates fundamental human rights.

MAHDISM: AS IT ADDRESSES GLOBALIZATION

Mahdism & the Anti-Globalization Movement

As touched upon in the preceding discussion, a myriad of voices offering a range of alternative visions exists, and these voices of dissidents are echoing across the globe.

²⁸ <http://globalisationguide.org>, p.2

²⁹ *Ibid*

³⁰ *Ibid*, p.3

³¹ Giddens, p.534

Recently, two leading British Newspapers, 'The Guardian' and 'The Observer', included special reports on globalization, each containing articles with titles such as "Is there an alternative?".³² The "anti" has become so far-reaching that its impacts are filtering into mainstream Western media and this notion of a 'better future' appears to be gradually permeating the consciousness of the majority, however, by the same token a numerically insignificant, though powerful minority, attempts to secure the existing situation at any cost.

At this stage, it becomes crucial to point out that opponents place emphasis on the ambiguity of the media coined term "Anti-globalization", as it fails to address the fundamental focus of the resistance movement, aimed at challenging particular aspects of globalization; and not against globalization *per se*.³³ Activists themselves, for example Noam Chomsky, have downplayed this term, advocating the idea that the aim of the movement is to "globalize justice".³⁴ Although, the global justice movement is a quite familiar name, numerous activists merge under the slogan "another world is possible".³⁵ In terms of preparing for the Mahdaviai³⁶ system, the establishment and activities of the "anti-globalization" or "global justice" movement brings to light a few very significant points. Perhaps these mounting voices of resistance may mark the ignition of a psychological atmosphere that is rousing a feeling within the civilized human being of having arrived at a dead-end, which is the essential ingredient for the creation of the appropriate global climate that is necessary in order to receive the pristine message of justice.

As follows, if this mounting resistance is channeled in the proper direction, it could serve as the necessary force required in setting up a new world order. The myriad of voices of dissent, in their lack of vision of alternatives, under the auspices of Mahdi (AS), could possibly be steered towards that unity, as essentially they are all driven by the same motivations; although taking different routes; the destination is uniform. Such a force, if

³² <http://globalisationguide.org>, p.3

³³ <http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Globalization>, p.7

³⁴ *Ibid*

³⁵ *Ibid*

³⁶ *Mahdaviai* derives from *Mahdi*, Arabic for "rightly-guided one", "the restorer of religion and justice who will rule before the end of the world". *Atahdaviai* means "belief in and efforts to prepare for the Mahdi".

united, has the potential to produce phenomenal change, on the level of a revolutionary scale. In recent times, although approaches taken may be questioned, just consider that the global justice movement itself has gained so much momentum, that in an attempt to numb any protest possibility, it has steered high-level international meetings from major world cities into remote parts of the globe.

Although, one can only envision or afford certain assumptions grounded on theoretical bases, as that phase, its environment nor its circumstances are known, one can ponder over the idea that Mahdi's (AS) army may have already started its recruiting and its soldiers in training. It can be anticipated that the players are ready, the spirit kindling, as the world waits for the beckoning of legitimately charismatic, justice-entrenched direction.

On another positive note, some of the major players of the "anti" have already grasped the entire concept that lies at the heart of Mahdism. The words of Noam Chomsky encapsulate the fundamental tenet of Mahdi's globalization, that is, "the globalization of justice". This global movement, whilst devoid of any religious foundation or affiliation, and unconscious of the universally revolutionizing message of Mahdism, is driven by a potent sensitivity and sense of active humanity, as they have identified and acknowledged the stark reality of the global climate. These awakened individuals have refused to fall into the hands of desensitization, as they witness the global proliferation of brutality, corruption, oppression, suffering and injustice, leading them to present themselves on the battlefield in order to combat oppression and tyranny with justice and peace.

The Ideal Globalization

As this discussion has revealed, globalization is moving rapidly, as the ever-increasing connectivity, integration and interdependence is moving the world into one global system. Nevertheless this phenomenon, driven by erroneous motivations has deeply scarred universal principles of justice, run havoc on an ecological level, and in a sense marred the very fabric of society. Whilst emerging in various forms and on divergent levels, opposition appears to be mounting from humanity as a whole. However, there is no unity

and a small band of collectivity in action. Although a large part of the human populace seems to be in search of a new global framework, until now, no other feasible alternative has presented itself, or if it has, it has failed to accomplish such a necessary large-scale change. In fact, there is doctrinal³⁷ support which predicts that the world will reach this point whereby all ideologies and creeds, leaders and governments alike will fall short of unraveling the series of dilemma's faced by contemporary global society. A glance at the current global environment demonstrates that such claim is an existing phenomenon.

At this point of the discussion, the door lies wide open for the admission of Mahdism as an alternatively feasible system. It will thus be purported that Mahdism itself is uniquely capable of establishing the system of justice that the world is so desperately in need of. It aims at leading the entire globe into a single political system, supervised by one form of world government, stretching across the entire globe. As the Holy Prophet (pbuh) foretold, Mahdī's government will spread "over the whole of the east and west of the world".³⁸

Under this system the actual benefits of globalization will shine through as the Mahdi (AS) fulfils his role of linking the world globally and annihilating harmful aspects of globalization stemming from power and greed, as justice lies at the core of Mahdi's (AS) global government. Mahdi's system will be set up in a way that prosperity will be shared by humanity as a whole, as opposed to falling into the pockets of a powerful minority. Everything on this earth from national wealth, natural resources, knowledge, labor force, industry and so forth - all belongs to the world's people,³⁹ and the people will ultimately experience the benefits of having access to what is rightfully theirs.

In order to achieve this, the Mahdi's mission entails combating universal hegemony and striking at the nucleus of the existing tyranny, propped up by their military might and economic superiority. The victory of the Mahdi, is the victory of the 'abased' people over their oppressors. The power of the majority, who possess the real power, will retrieve that power that was stolen from them, as the global society unshackles itself from the shadow

³⁷ In the subsequent discussion it will be demonstrated that to a certain degree, the major world religions encompass this belief within their individual doctrines.

³⁸ Muhammad Baqir As-Sadr. "An Inquiry Concerning Al-Mahdi". Ansariyan Publications, Qum, p.95

³⁹ Ayatollah Ibrahim Amini, "Al-Imam Al-Mahdi: The Just Leader of Humanity". Ansariyan Publications, Qum, 1999.

of tyranny into the blazing light of justice. Such a universal victory has been confirmed by Almighty God, when he says:

Yet We desired to be gracious to those that were abused in the land, and to make them the leaders, and to make them the inheritors, and to establish them in the land.

(Qasas [28]. 5)⁴⁰

Elements of Globalization Re-defined

At this point of the discussion the impacts of Mahdism on all spheres of globalization will be examined. However, at the outset it is crucial to point out that the conceivable manner by which the universal victory of justice will be accomplished by Mahdi (AS) rests on the age and social conditions at the time of his appearance. Hence, any determination of Mahdi's itinerary or the process of transformation lies on the actual point in time of his advent. Moreover, one can only envision or afford certain assumptions grounded on theoretical bases at this stage, as knowledge of that exact age, its environment, and its circumstances are beyond comprehension.⁴¹

Science/Technology – the superpowers will fail to monopolize the arena of science and technology. Revolutionary developments in science and technology will take place beyond our intellectual capacity and unimaginable, despite the ground-breaking process that humankind has made till date. Previous scientific errors will be amended and innovative methods unheard of introduced. Another 25 parts of untapped knowledge will be at the disposal of the human populace.⁴²

Economic – the economic sphere will witness such phenomenal change that the current system will appear unrecognizable. A highly enriched and developed economy will exist, whilst genuine economic welfare will be its foundation, as methods of production and consumption will be re-framed in order to provide prosperity to the masses and annihilate

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, p.239

⁴¹ Muhammad Baqir As-Sadr, "An Inquiry Concerning Al-Mahdi". Ansariyam Publications, Qum, p.95

⁴² <http://english.irib.ir/IRAN/Leader/Illumination.htm>, p.3

global poverty.⁴³ There will be an abundance of commodities at affordable prices, equal distribution of land and standards of living so comfortable that the world's people will for the first time experience development at its peak.

Furthermore, the eradication of inequality will change the nature of business transactions whereby individuals will possess mutual trust to the extent that business deals will be settled without the exchange of economic documents.⁴⁴

Spirituality/Religion/Morality – will play a role never seen before, in fact this sphere is an additional element included in Mahdi's globalization. No longer will it be seen as undesirable or ignored. Secularization will be annihilated, along with the concept of separation of religion and state. People's beliefs will become unified, as an individual attains greater proximity to God.

Political/Legal/Social – justice will be restored through the creation of a global government, which regulates the relationships among nations and guarantees the rights arising from social and economic globalization.

The Mahdi (AS) will administer this new world order under one Islamic government, employing the most suitably qualified individuals as governors of various regions of the globe. He will arm them with directives and agendas enabling the stable, just and peaceful administration of the dominion under their authority.

A new social order based on respect for human rights will evolve, whereby lawlessness will become extinct to the point whereby women will be able to travel alone without any fear of harassment.⁴⁵ Rights between individuals will be upheld and respected, as people will treat each other with honesty, kindness and sincerity. Hence security will be the mainstay, as no individual will seek to injure another.

Environmental – via educational channels the environment and its natural resources will cease to fall victim to extravagance and misuse. In fact the natural environment will contain a new vitality, droughts will be an occurrence of the past and the land will become filled with a lush freshness and greenness, the Prophet has described that at this time: "The

⁴³ Imam Baqir says: "When our Qaim takes the commands in his hands, all the public wealth, mines and treasures on the earth will be at his disposal (for fair distribution among people)": Amini, p.238

⁴⁴ <http://english.trib.ir/IRAN/Leader/Illumination.htm>, p.3

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, p.2

sky will repeatedly rain and the earth will hide none of the things that it can grow".⁴⁶ The abundant fertility of the land will ensure a secure agricultural market yielding a hefty surplus, which will inevitably fuel economic growth.

Educational – old education systems will be refreshed. Phenomenal levels of knowledge will be attained, whereby the Quran will be at the nucleus. During the age of the Mahdi (AS) human reason will have attained excellence, and Mahdi's educational system will shape an individual's character towards sublimity.⁴⁷ Imam Sadiq says:

"Knowledge is divided into twenty-seven parts. No more than two parts has been acquired by human beings so far. When our Qaim arises he will expose the rest of the twenty five parts and distribute it among the people".⁴⁸

Mahdi's (AS) duty resembles that of the Prophet of God, in terms of his practical responsibility over the affairs of the community. His role entails overseeing every single facet of societal life, which is not confined to the spiritual world alone, but involves governing the social, political, legal and moral structure. Akin to the functions of a 'head of state', he will oversee the administration of justice, institution of penalties and decision-making.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, the mission of the Mahdi, analogous to all of the Prophets, essentially entails waking up the state of ignorance in order to transcend into a realization of self-worth, generating inner renewal, which will re-install power in the people again, leading to the institution of a new global community.

DIVERGING RECEPTIONS

The discussion now examines the various responses and reactions to the coming of the Mahdi and envisions how his system of globalization will be received, as mentioned earlier one can only afford certain assumptions grounded on theoretical bases at this stage.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, p.3

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, p.2

⁴⁸ Amini, p.328

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, p.270

Threat posed to Interest Groups (Zionists, US & Israeli Hegemony)

From an examination of the current political climate it can clearly be established that those regimes and governments that uphold racist ideologies like Zionists, along with those who fear losing control of their hegemonic position, are likely to present a formidable opposition in the wake of the establishment of Mahdi's new government. As human nature commands, it is inevitable that those who enjoy an elitist position are going to put up a fight to protect their vested interests.

Although this study reveals that signs of enlightenment can be documented, as people begin to take a conscious look at the world around them, there will always be the oppressors, who will undoubtedly be opposed to justice and will fight to maintain their position.

An analysis of the current political environment allows for the envisagement of how the Mahdi's system may be received by such groups. Preceding Mahdi's arrival, such groups have already started preparing their bases and commenced launching their missiles.

The events of September 11 provided a breeding ground for the initiation of such groups to launch intense propaganda against Muslims, namely placing Islam under the banner of war, violence and terrorism, and in recent times, they have jumped on the Mahdaviat bandwagon. The subject of the Mahdi's (AS) arrival has evolved into an enormous threat to global stability and Western imperialism, as it poses itself as a counter-force shaking the very foundations of the current hegemonic structures of power. There appears to be such a mounting of fear of this one personality changing the world, that it has sparked a panic attack, as the superpowers of the West fear losing control, despite the fact that they possess affluence, the means of mass destruction, and incredible amounts of scientific, political, and military capacity.

Western media reveals the reality and the extent this threat that the advent of Mahdi (AS) actually poses to Western imperialists. Those whose interests are at stake are heavily engrossed in documenting the steps of the Mahdaviat movement and have associated it with much negativity. Recently, an Israeli intelligence analyst whilst studying the issue of prophecies concerning the advent of the Mahdi (AS), labeled his observations as a

“dangerous Islamic messianic whirlpool”.⁵⁰

Moreover, much of the attention appears to be focused on Iran and their President, Mr Ahmadinejad. In attempt to downplay his mission the media has successfully conjured up an image of a “superstitious”⁵¹, “reckless”⁵² and in the words of President George W Bush, “odd man”.⁵³

It is a mainstay belief now that Iran’s fixation with the advent of Mahdi will activate a nuclear-armed Islamic Republic to commence military confrontations.⁵⁴ It is suspected, as one US political journalist summed up precisely, that “Iran’s president actually relishes a clash with the West in the conviction that it would rekindle the spirit of the Islamic revolution and – who knows – speed up the arrival of the Hidden Imam”.⁵⁵ It has also been claimed that “Mr Ahmadinejad is now tempting a clash with the West because he feels safe in the belief of the imminent return of the Hidden Imam”.⁵⁶ Hence, according to the West, this so-called “religious messianism” is giving the Iranian leader a “dangerous sense of divine mission.”⁵⁷

As Iran prepares for the advent of the Mahdi, the West sits back in fear, equating his arrival with nuclear warfare and in fact accusing the Iranian President of using the Mahdi’s mission as a scapegoat and a shield in order to ignite such an international military confrontation. As such, Iran has consistently been demonized as a warmongering, terrorist-breeding, menacing Islamic Republic that requires constant monitoring and surveillance.

Under the current US President George W Bush, Zionist Christians, US hegemonists and the Israeli government have formed a gratifying pact presenting themselves to the world as the savior of humankind. They have assumed the role of global watchdog, responsible for combating this “axis of evil”.

⁵⁰ http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=37782 “Warnings from Islam’s ‘messianic whirlpool’”, p.2

⁵¹ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/core/Content> - ‘Divine Mission’ driving Iran’s new leader, by Anton La Guardia, p.1

⁵² *Ibid*

⁵³ *Ibid*

⁵⁴ <http://www.crusade-media.com/news51.html> - Iran prepares people for ‘messiah miracles’, p.1

⁵⁵ Guardia, p.2

⁵⁶ *Ibid*

⁵⁷ *Ibid*

Those in power tactfully employ various strategies in order to keep the hegemonic structure intact, namely via propaganda based on fear tactics and exertion of their superiority, which is evident when applied to the current day political environment. Those in power uphold their superiority over the masses by dictating that they are statesmen and intelligent experts, hence capable of managing the people's affairs on a superior level, thereby guaranteeing the people's security and success.⁵⁸ They charismatically present themselves as the redeemer's after conjuring up such a level of fear in the masses. Such a scheme requires one fundamental ingredient and without this element they cease to exist, that is, an enemy. In the absence of an enemy, there is no oxygen to keep the fire lit. Hence, they continually ensure that if one does not exist, they create one.

Furthermore, in order to maintain their position of superiority, they methodically control the masses via the means of divide and conquer, and under the guise of national defense they accumulate a stockpile of weaponry, which in turn they use on their own people. Answerable to themselves alone, they engage in large-scale exploitation in order to serve their own needs and deepen their own pockets.⁵⁹ Moreover, they shield their activities by distorting the religious teachings of Christianity and Judaism, presenting themselves, as God's chosen agents.⁶⁰ An Archbishop of Syrian Orthodox based in Lebanon, hits the nail on the head when he states "Leaders in the West are not Christians in the true sense. They are interested only in political gains. We condemn what they have been doing with the people of Iraq and other countries".⁶¹ Furthermore, "We (Christians and Muslims) in the Middle East are living in perfect harmony, sharing the same language, culture and traditions... Whatever small problems exist, they are not caused by religious leaders but by politicians who are exploiting religion for political gains".⁶²

⁵⁸ Amini, p.241

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p.242

⁶⁰ http://english.iri.ir/IRAN/L_eader/Illumination.htm, p.9

⁶¹ <http://www.thepeninsulaqatar.com> - *Mideast Christians have harmonious relations with Muslims*:

Bishop George Saliba, p. 1

⁶² *Ibid*

Mass Expectations & Universal Creeds

A study of eschatology⁶³ will reveal that there is an innate aspiration and sense of cohesion in terms of embracing the notion of a universal savior and concept of a “promised day”. Preceding the advent of such a universal revolutionary figure, there is a common conviction that there are various stages of enlightenment that the global community has to journey through to reach its desired zenith. It is believed that a mammoth collapse into the abyss of corruption, injustice and apostacism is inevitable, before the dawning of the rise to purity. It is believed that it is at this point in time that this unifying figure will appear. This figure will be divinely fuelled, invigorating the cosmos of spirituality, pioneering a new world order of universal peace.

A study of some of the major concepts surrounding the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (AS) will demonstrate that there are many features in common with universal creeds and traditions. This can be narrowed down to the following points:

- 1- A time of life in darkness and carelessness when truth is concealed;
- 2- A finalization of this time and the advent of the Second Coming;
- 3- The Day of Judgment and the Great Day of Resurrection;
- 4- The commencement of a new cycle when humankind exists according to its celestial purpose

Although each tradition places a different title on this universal figure,⁶⁴ testimonials to this effect are espoused in the Jewish Torah, Christian Gospel, scriptures of the Zoroastrian, Hindu and Buddhists.

For Jews the Messiah is the long-awaited man “anointed of God” to offer the chosen people and the global community a resilient, just and peaceful social order in harmony

⁶³ “Part of theology and philosophy concerned with final events in history of the world, or the ultimate destiny of humanity, encompassing concepts such as Messianic Age”, cited from <http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/eschatology>, p.1

⁶⁴ Zoroastrians call him “Saoshyant” (Saviour of the world); the Jews know him as “the Messiah”, whereas Christians regard him as “the Saviour Messiah” – <http://www.aib.com/Special/Asar/Mahdi.html> - *Mahdi, in Other Religions*, p.1
“The Kalki” of Hindus, “the Maitreya” of the Buddhists - http://www.adishakti.org/prophecies/18_imam_mahdi_has_surfaced.htm - *Imam Mahdi Has Surfaced*, p.1

with the Torah and God's definitive purpose for humankind. For Christians Jesus was the Messiah (Greek: "Christ") who arrived to satisfy that hope, educate humankind with the religion of love, act as an example of God's expectation of His children, and unite them toward the kingdom to come wherein God's will would be done on earth. Traditional Christianity looks forward to the return of the Messiah with eager anticipation to complete the restoration of the world. For Muslims, the Imam Mahdi is a figure comparable to that of the Christian and the Jewish Messiah.⁶⁵ For the Buddhists a new Buddha named "Maitreya" will arise to renew the teachings of Buddhism and rediscover the path to Nirvana (heaven).⁶⁶ In Hinduism, when there is intolerable evil and chaos in the world, there is an appearance of an avatar, it is said "The Lord shall manifest Himself as the Kalki Avatar... He will establish righteousness upon the earth and the minds of the people will become as pure as crystal".⁶⁷

Moreover, while each propounds that this figure lies within their ranks⁶⁸, it is easy to identify the promised Mahdi within the ranks of most claimants. Whilst the Mahdi comprises a unique blend of East and West, through his parentage, his ancestry can be traced back to Persia, through the mother of the fourth Imam Zayn al-Abidin, from the Israelites (descendants of Ishaq) and the Hashimites (descendants of Isma'il) through prophet Ibrahim (as), and through the European terrain via his mother, a Byzantine princess.⁶⁹

This fits in well with the idea of a universal savior whose mission is not confined to any part of the globe, nor any nation or creed, "he will come to fight against all discriminatory claims of racial, creedal and national distinction."⁷⁰ He is the Mahdi of whole humanity.

His triumph will be one for all the prophets who delivered God's message on earth, not only confined to Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Muhammad (AS), but also encompassing the

⁶⁵ http://www.euro-tongil.org/swedish/islam_messias.htm - From the World Religions, Vol.1 *The Muslim Messiah*, by Dr. Young Oon Kim, p.1

⁶⁶ <http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eschatology>, p.3

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, p.4

⁶⁸ The Zoroastrians believe he is Persian; the Jews, among the Children of Israel, Christians among themselves, Muslims believe he will be among the Hashimites, the Buddhist and Hindu's believe he is among their ethnic composition and so forth.

⁶⁹ <http://www.trib.com/Special/Azar/Mahdi/html> - *Mahdi, in Other Religions*, p.1

⁷⁰ *Ibid*

124,000 prophet's that are mentioned in narrations. The Mahdi will restore all their messages and unify them into one global code. Hence, it is fundamental to point out that the function of Mahdi does not serve as the invitation of the battle of Islam against other creeds, but rather the struggle of all religions for their inner renewal. Mahdi will uniformly re-institute all the world's religions that have been forsaken and blemished, into their original truth and purity.⁷¹

Whilst all nations are awaiting his emergence, it is crucial to emphasize that an issue relates to his accurate identification.⁷² It is only within the Jaafari School of Islam that this figure becomes a living reality. Nevertheless, it is without doubt that the masses will be in awe of the exalted character of our Imam, sharing a bond with Jesus (AS), working hand in hand in order to deliver the same message. These two great men will complement each other: Imam Mahdi will be the leader, while Prophet Jesus will act as his lieutenant in the struggle against oppression in the establishment of justice in the world. He will rise as 'the Messiah' for all humankind. God willing, this link between these two great universal figures will instill greater belief and hence generate further support when the Mahdi launches his revolution.

CONCLUSIONS REACHED

Mahdism & Pro-globalization

On the whole, it can be concluded that the process of globalization, if driven by a positive force, can have phenomenal benefits in terms of establishing equality, justice, peace and security around the globe. In the absence of imperialist goals, it is under Mahdi's system that such a global environment could evolve into a living reality. Hence any strategy encapsulating the concept of an ideal world would envisage working towards this form of globalization.

Mahdism presents itself as the ideal globalization, as its core is based on the globalization

⁷¹ http://www.adishakti.org/prophesies/18_imam_mahdi_has_surfaced.htm - *Imam Mahdi Has Surfaced*, p.1

⁷² <http://www.iiib.com/Special/Azan/Mahdi.html> - *Mahdi, in Other Religions*, p.2

of justice. It is about bringing in a more humane system, representing the rights of the oppressed, whose interests are diminished under the current hegemonic forces. The contemporary structure of slavery founded upon economic subjugation, deceives the slave by creating a false notion of apparent autonomy, as they remain handcuffed by economic positioning and the governing economic system. Under the pretext of liberty this slave is led to believe that they choose what they consume, study, earn, spend and think, although this is just a façade, as this is all geared towards meeting the needs of the current hegemonic structure.

As a study of contemporary conditions reveal, the globe is rife with inequalities and divided up into a mélange of states that have divergent along with familiar concerns, and despite the phenomenon of wide-scale globalization, it has failed to accompany political integration or diminish international inequalities of wealth and power.

As a result a myriad of global voices of protest can be heard around the globe. This global movement, whilst devoid of any religious foundation or affiliation, and unconscious of the universally revolutionizing message of Mahdism, is driven by a sense of active humanity, as they have identified and acknowledged the stark reality of the global climate. As these awakened individuals have witnessed the global proliferation of brutality, corruption, oppression, suffering and injustice, they have presented themselves on the battlefield in an attempt to combat oppression and tyranny with justice and peace. Hence, the seeds for the establishment of Mahdi's global framework have already been planted.

From a more dogmatic perspective it can be seen that on another front, there exists a mass expectation at the heart of the world's variety of religions and creeds of a 'promised day' whereby the divine doctrines will be fulfilled and humanity will attain its goal and transcend the current hegemonic system.

Moreover, there exists a common element amongst all universal creeds that the global society will come to a point in time whereby injustice will be so heavily entrenched that the only inevitable outcome will be its massacre. This mammoth defeat of injustice, will ignite a sense of inspiration, love and hope in the hearts of all those abased, along with those awakened ones, paving the way for a new world order. However, whether or not the world's people are ready for such a revolution and the establishment of such a

government founded on the precept of Tawhid⁷³ is another issue. Humankind must go through a journey whereby it attains this realization of hopelessness, generating a sense of destitution for respite and thereby turning within to the innate for rescue. No materialistic or secular philosophy can equate to this inherently natural faith that imparts an internal solace and feeling of cosmic synchronicity, and absolute integrity to humankind.⁷⁴ Moreover, it is merely when humanity admits and surrenders to this God-centered universe that it will be able to embark on the road to the ideal global community.⁷⁵

Regrettably, there appears to be a lack of enlightened individuals aware of this divine message. Within the minimal ranks of those who are enlightened regarding the truth of these pristine teachings, there appears to be a lack of valor in spirit, accompanied by the necessary resources required to propagate. Nonetheless, it is expected that despite this, an individual's sense for justice and thirst for the truth will inevitable place them at this post. It can further be hypothesized that at the advent of the Mahdi's arrival, his exemplary character, amidst his truth bearing, universally revolutionary message, he will appeal to the masses, as they witness remarkably inexplicable social conditions, leaving them no other alternative but to embrace this universal call.

⁷³ Oneness of God. He is neither a colleague nor a partner. He begets not, nor is He begotten, there is none like him. Yousif N. Lalljee, "Know Your Islam", Ansarian Publications, Qom, Iran.

⁷⁴ *Ammi*, p.237

⁷⁵ *Ibid*

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**The Doctrine of Mahdiism
and its Impact
from the Standpoint of
Anthropology and Sociology**

Written by: Dr. Sayyed Razi Mousavi Gilani

Abstract:

The doctrine of Mahdiism, a religious tenet and teaching, is the core of the Shi'i culture and enjoys the potentiality to speculate about the solutions for social and individual problems in both the ages of occultation and appearance, so that on the base of this doctrine, there can be certain strategic solutions in anthropological and sociological domains. Interpretation of the religion by this doctrine is a standpoint which presents a deep comment on other features and precepts of the religion. It is, indeed, a feature of the religion by means of which other divisions are approached and interpreted. The present article attempts to reflect the function of Mahdiism in two fields of anthropology and sociology in the ages of occultation and appearance.

Introduction:

Among the religious features, including confessional doctrine, moral principles, and religious rites (commandments), one can present a structural division by virtue of their priority and importance. Each and every teaching enjoys a relative degree of priority and importance and plays an important role in the field of man's piety and perfection; thus we cannot claim that all religious teachings enjoy the same significance in understanding of religion and leading to piety. In proof of some priority in religious teachings, we can observe that a hierarchy of obligatory and fixed notions is used in religious teachings, and a specific range of reward and punishment is considered in penal and civil laws. This discrepancy, in fact, reminds the worthiness of the believers' deeds.

In view of the priority among the religious doctrine, when some teaching is ignored and the other is magnified, it hasn't done justice to religious doctrines in either case, whereas the dignity of religious teachings should be kept in terms of revealed recommendations, and the extremes should be avoided. To illustrate it, when the believers fail to observe the basic tenets of the religion as much as the religion itself has emphasized and neglect them instead, it much resembles a man who misuses his valuable

garment, or a student who concentrates on trivial questions with low marks instead of the questions with high marks.

Undoubtedly in the doctrinal system of all religions, there exists a kind of ranking among their teachings. And there it seems that from the viewpoint of structure and foundation, some religious components are relatively more important than the others. For instance, in all Abrahamic and non-Abrahamic religions, the questions of God existence, life after death, immortality, prophethood, prosperity, hope, content of life, salvation, felicity, world reformation, Soteriology, etc. have all been carefully taken into consideration so that they have been bound to give reasonable answers to their disciples essential questions.

This article first fall embarks on the very question that why the issue of Mahdiism, which enjoys a significant standing in religious sources and Islamic civilization, has been neglected in the fields of anthropology and sociology? It is, indeed, an indispensable teaching that has a determined role in the headway of the community, the philosophy of the history, and the believers' duty to attain the ideal society with elevated civilians, either in the ages of occultation or appearance. The second attempted has been focused on the interdiction of Mahdavi culture in the foundation of Muslims lives and in their theorization; while Mahdiism is of shared discourses among the Islamic sects and had the greatest contribution to the history of civilization and Islamic culture? The study of false pretenders of Mahdiism throughout the Islamic history signifies the eminence of Mahdiism among the disciples of various sects of Religion. Still, Mahdiism is not fully applied in the theorization in various humanity and social domains, and its real potentiality has been neglected.

Definition of the term 'Doctrine':

According to the researches done in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*^[1] and a major number of dictionaries, there are two meanings for the term 'Doctrine'; 'the affirmation of a truth' and 'Percept' that is synonymous to terms like 'tenet', 'teaching', and 'dogma'. Given the first meaning, the term 'Doctrine' has a philosophical concept, but in the second sense its practical aspect is more obvious.

From the standpoint of terminology, the term 'Doctrine' has got independent meanings and applications in different sciences. In politics, for instance, it connotes 'a model, design, or political principle', which is raised by a politician; for instance, 'the Doctrine of the equality of man', or 'Truman Doctrine' and 'Brezhnev Doctrine'^[1] represent 'a specific political position or policy'.

In natural sciences and humanities, the same term introduces a principle that forms the basis for a scientific theory that has not yet been proved to be true. An example of this sense is the 'doctrine of evolution', in which the term 'doctrine' does not mean some 'teaching' but a 'theory'.

In religions, the term 'doctrine' is meant the religious and theological principles that are fundamental, self-evident, and unquestioned with basic roots in theological contexts, firmly believed by their disciples, such as 'the doctrine of Buddha', 'the doctrine of Maya', and 'the doctrine of Mahdiism'.

In Christian rituals, the term 'Doctrine or Dogma' is referred to as a set of teachings that brings about salvation for its disciples.^[10] In *Catholic Encyclopedia of Religion*, the term 'Doctrine' stands for a series of teachings designed for the Catechesis or Kerygma.^[11] In Jewish rituals, it stands for the teachings, utilized mostly for the teachings of the Testament. In Islam, it is meant to be the 'verbal and ideological teachings' that are both fundamental and leading.^[12] When the term 'Doctrine' is occasionally juxtaposed with religious teachings such as 'Mahdiism' it would suggest an area of various notions, such as 'philosophy', 'the school of thought', and 'ism' as in the 'Doctrine of Mahdiism', which signifies 'the philosophy of Mahdiism' and 'the School of Mahdiism'.

Terminology of the Mahdiism Doctrine:

Some religious or philosophical concepts are pivotal, and are interpreted in a particular way as Doctrine. For instance, 'Dukkha' ("Suffering" or "sorrow") in Buddhism is so important that is called 'the Doctrine of Dukkha or the Doctrine of Buddha'; or 'Maya'

("imaginary world") is a fundamental concept in Hindu philosophy, which construes as 'the Doctrine of Maya'.^{lvii}

Mahdiism is one of the tenets, which is of high significance in Islam. It is in conformity with 'Soteriology', 'Salvation', and 'Millenarianism', presented in other religions. The notion of salvation and Mahdavi global government are the matter of concordance among the whole Islamic sects, and their authentic books of traditions, such as Sihah al-Sittah ("Six Correct Books"), refer to them under four titles: 1. Al-Mahdi's Book; 2. Al-Fitan Chapter ("The Calamities"); 3. Al-Malahem Chapter ("The Disturbances"); 4. Ashrat al-Sa'ah ("The signs of the End Times"). Although there may exist some slight differences among the Islamic sects on the conditions of Mahdiism, yet none of them feel doubt about its principals and certainty.

Moreover, the frequency of subjects on the issue of Mahdiism in the theological contexts of both the Shi'a and the Sunni branches of Islam signifies that it is one of the joint issues in the Islamic tenets, having been verified by the whole Islamic sects. Although the issue of Imamate and Caliphate is the most vulnerable matter of difference in the history of the Shi'a and Sunni, arising from their difference on the first Imam or Caliph, the Reappearance of Imam Mahdi (May God hasten his appearance) or the 'Doctrine of Mahdiism' puts an end to all their differences and brings about the unity and unanimity of all Muslims. Thus, as stated in the holy Quran, Imam Mahdi (May God hasten his appearance) manifests the return of whole matters to God^{lviii} as well as the transformation of whole nations in one nation.^{lviii}

The 'Doctrine of Mahdiism' signifies a series of teachings, based on Mahdiism, which can be used to present applied ways and theoretical approaches in different fields both before and after the age of appearance. In Muslims' mind, the 'Doctrine of Mahdiism' is an organizing feature, which has presence in theorization and mental role models.

Throughout the history, the Shi'as have always utilized the 'Doctrine of Mahdiism' for theorizing the government, the rulers' criteria, and the way to manage the society in the age of occultation. The Islamic scholars and jurisconsults, on the other side, studied the 'Doctrine of Mahdiism' as an Islamic tenet and paradigm. To study the

subjects, including government, guardianship, Caliphate, and the rulers' criteria in the age of occultation, they have always invoked the traditions on Imamate, Mahdiism, and Imam Mahdi's qualities. Unfortunately, the 'Doctrine of Mahdiism' has only been applied in this field while its impact on other fields, such as the philosophy of history, the philosophy of politics, social sciences, social management, economics, organizational behavior, social affairs and relations, enforcement of law, anthropology, and psychology has been neglected. In Islamic view, Imam Mahdi's appearance settles all these fields; however, the 'Doctrine of Mahdiism' has been already employed in political and governmental aspects.

Like a cardiac patient who shall always care about his diet, rest, exercise, journey, etc., one shall consider the 'Doctrine of Mahdiism' in all aspect of his life. Mahdiism is as the heart of the Islamic thought; thus, it shall always be in the center of all aspects of man's life.

After the Imamate of Imam Mahdi (May God hasten his appearance), the issue of Mahdiism in religious thought gains higher significance, compared with the other Islamic beliefs, and the whole official and non-official interpretations, presented by religions and creeds, give way to the Divine interpretation. This is one of the impacts of Mahdiism, which puts an end to the whole religious diversities, and thereafter, Mahdiism is the only lens, through which the whole Islamic tenets, including Monotheism, Prophethood, Resurrection, etc., are viewed. It is noteworthy to mention that one of the features of Mahdiism makes it even superior to the Prophethood; that is: completing and integrating the whole prophets' mission throughout man's history, making unity among the entire teachings of the prior religions, presenting a pure interpretation on the religious beliefs, and verifying the absolute certainty of this religious ideal.

Impacts of the Mahdiism Doctrine:

A political, scientific, and theological doctrine is deemed to present comments and applied ways on a series of issues in question so as to improve man and the society. Now central to this discussion is the question: Is the 'Doctrine of Mahdiism', as a theological and discourse premise, able to achieve this end? To answer the question, the writer

intends to study the 'Doctrine of Mahdiism' from the standpoint of anthropology and sociology in two stages, i.e., before and after the age of appearance. Thus, in this section, the impacts of the Mahdiism Doctrine are examined in four stages, as follows:

1. Anthropological standpoint:

- 1-1. The anthropological impact of the Mahdiism Doctrine before the age of appearance.
- 1-2. The anthropological impact of the Mahdiism Doctrine after the age of appearance.

2. Sociological standpoint:

- 2-1. The sociological impact of the Mahdiism Doctrine before the age of appearance.
- 2-2. The sociological impact of the Mahdiism Doctrine after the age of appearance.

1. The impact of Mahdiism Doctrine from the anthropology standpoint: The whole anthropological schools are deemed to take man's desires, interests, limits, and ultimate goals into consideration and respond to his demands, such as peace of mind, hope, content, joy, etc. Like religions, the great contemporary schools of anthropology and even psychology endeavor to respond to man's needs and mental health, and in some ways, compete with religions. To this end, the great psychologists employed various approaches. For instance, Sigmund Freud proposed the theory of subconscious sexual feelings; Alfred Adler propounded the theory of Power; and Victoria Frankel concentrated on the meaningfulness of life. In their way, Hinduism and their techniques had a major influence on their views.

The great existential philosophers also strived to respond to man's questions on life, and accordingly, proposed some ways. A number of them, including Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Albert Camus, and Franz Kafka held an atheistic view toward life so that Camus and Kafka regarded life senseless and futile in one hand, and on the other hand, Sartre considered life as the childlike joy and gaiety, and death as the end of world while negating the Day of the Last Judgment. Camus likened life to a rolling stone, rolled up and down the hill by man, day in, day out. Since life is a matter of

repetition. Camus believed, it is futile and senseless. However, he enjoined that man should endure this circumstance and avoid any withdrawal.

In his theory, Sartre presented a negative and hostile image of God and the world. He was of the opinion that God's omnipotence circumscribes man's will since he had conceived man's relationship with God as the relationship between a master and his slave, in which the existence of the master lapses the slave's free will. He then viewed each man as an isolated being, cast into an alien world but is free to choose his own destiny. These existential and atheistic philosophers endeavored to respond to the angst of man, frustrated by the Second World War, Science, and Church. Owing to their hostility to the Church, they cut their relationship with God and negated His existence. Then, they tried to cherish high hopes in man's heart through reliance on his own talent and free will, regardless of the religious premises. This mainstream is evidently perceived in the works of the philosophers, artists, and thinkers, especially after the Second World War.

On the contrary, other existentialists, including Soren Kierkegaard, Karl Jaspers, and Gabriel Marcel endeavored to respond to man's questions through metaphysical and spiritual ways. In their view, man's relationship with God is as the relationship between the lover and the beloved. They believed in man's inner faith, spiritual facets, and his ultimate goals, and to gain salvation, they enjoined divinity, faith, and the Day of Last Judgment on their followers.

Some religions, in their moral tenets and teachings, have affiliation to the anthropological schools in studying man's concerns through a humanitarian angle. For instance, Hinduism strives to respond to man's questions toward life in a positive way. Buddhism, which has affected some contemporary philosophers and psychologists, including Arthur Schopenhauer, Friedrich Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger, etc., is to set man free from his mental angst and illusion through Meditation. The success of these creeds in affecting the mentioned philosophers and psychologists was due to the common people's demand for humanitarian values.

Now, in the Islamic tenets and 'Doctrine of Mahdism', this question is posed: Are the Mahdavi teachings able to present an effective way for terminating man's

concerns? Admittedly, man's perfection is one of the greatest ideals of Abrahamic religions, and the Divine prophets are to help man blossom his potentials under the protection of Divine teachings, which consider man's honor and all aspects of his nature. In this article, we study whether Mahdavi insight can present a true response to man's internal questions?

Anthropology in Modern time:

Apropos of modern anthropology, despite the fact that the contemporary man thinks he has developed in such fields of civilization and culture, he, indeed, has not improved upon a major number of fields when compared with the Age of Ignorance, in which the girls were buried alive, and the women were despised. Today, the women and girls are also despised, and their souls are buried alive, too. As an instance, the women in the time of e-commerce are used as the means of commercial advertisement and pleasure, and although Feminism, the active movement in Modern time, pretends that it has provided the women with freedom, erudition, and equal rights as men, the women continue to be regarded as second-rate citizens.

Another element, dealt with in modern anthropology, is the significance of geographical border, language, race, history, and other conventions among nations. The influence of this element on man's mind and sentiment is so strong that if anybody die because of a natural calamity or war even in the farthest regions of one country, the other countrymen feel sympathy toward him, but they may not show the same feeling for he who dies even in the neighboring countries having close affinity with them in language, history, or culture. For instance, an Iranian may treat an Afghani or Iraqi emigrant, whose countries were once a part of Iran, as second-class citizens, but another Iranian who settles in the remotest regions of Iran as his countryman.

Here a question is posed, that is: Does 'homeland' signify the same notion presented in the religious culture and Islamic anthropology? Are we the followers of the holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his descendants), who made the ties of brotherhood between Ansar (the helpers) and Muhajerin (the migrants)? The holy Prophet, who

intended to substitute the human and religious virtues for the lingual, national, and tribal supremacy, and due to this fact, he appointed a youth as the commander-in-chief of Islam troops while there were present some elders. When asked for the cause, the holy Prophet (Peace be upon him and his descendants) replied that Usamah was the pious and true protector of the holy Qur'an.

Suppose how nice it would be if the people of the entire world or all countries treated one another as the citizens of one single country and felt sympathy for one another as the members of one family! As a case in point, it is perceived that the people of other countries after the occurrence of some natural calamities, such as earthquake or flood, feel sympathy and contribute aid for those afflicted so as to ameliorate their pains. In such cases, the sense of egoism is ignored, and the people help their fellow-creatures as far as possible.

But in today's world, due to various economic and political treaties, concluded among nations, as well as lingual, tribal, and racial differences, the peoples have split up into diverse groups and stood aloof from sympathy toward their fellow-creatures. On account of the mentioned diversities, some people fight for their own native soil, and some others conquer the other nations, plundering their economic interests and valuables. These conventions, which are considered as a part of the contemporary anthropology, have condemned a great number of people to death, poverty, disease, and slavery!

As during the Hajj rituals the whole material qualities and diversities are ignored, and the pilgrims are engaged to serve God, the Almighty, regardless of their races, colors, social status, etc.; the people after the age of appearance and the formation of Mahdavi government, which refines their souls, treat one another as the members of one single family. There will be found no poor or hungry person, and security is so widespread that even the women who are more vulnerable feel secure.

In the age of Mahdiism, no person is despised for his color, race, language, or geographical borders, what draws distinction among the people and nations in the contemporary anthropology, and the whole humankind share special affinity with one another. Like those who act in accordance with their own clear conscience at the time of a natural calamity, the peoples after the presence of a perfect man, i.e., Imam Mahdi

(May God hasten his appearance) among them replace the transient material entities, such as wealth, beauty, and social rank, with eternal spiritual qualities, such as faith, pure heart, good deeds, and piety in the society. In other words, piety is taken as the sole criterion for the distinction among people, and the transient material possessions are no longer worth considering in Mahdavi anthropology.

As a global insight, Mahdiism has an impact on anthropology. Admittedly, the Divine religions and prophets are responsible for directing man toward perfection and responding to their questions and concerns; that is the joint mission of all religions and prophets. To study this issue, we deal with two headlines, as follows:

1-1: The anthropological impact of Mahdiism Doctrine before the age of appearance: The anthropological schools both present practical solutions for man's problems and consider the human value and interests. Now, the 'Doctrine of Mahdiism' poses the question of whether belief in the issue of Mahdiism during the Major Absence period or before the age of appearance is of interest for believers, and how they shall make use of this global tenet.

Apropos of the Waiting strategy before the age of appearance, the 'Doctrine of Mahdiism' enjoys three fundamental features, as follows:

1. The cause of self-refinery
2. The cause of hope to the future
3. The cause of vivacity, rejoicing, and endeavor

Jabir narrated a hadith from the holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his descendants), in which the negation of Mahdiism is considered as atheism:

من كذب بالمهدي فقد كفر^[1]

Besides, the believers are recommended to know the Imam of their own time; otherwise,

من مات و لم يعرف امام زمانه مات ميتة جاهلية^[1]

Anyone who dies without recognizing the Imam of his own time has died the death of ignorance.

The waiting man is as a woman who tidies the house up before the guests arrive. He is to conform his soul to his Imam's. He is hopeful about the future, and never shows despair.

Before the age of appearance, the 'Doctrine of Mahdiism' brings about the self-refinery for those who fondly look for Imam Mahdi (May God hasten his appearance) and his ideal society. Unlike the Platonic Utopia, which is an abstract notion, and due to its lack of sanctity, no effort has been already made to act it out, Mahdiism is certain to occur, and the believers endeavor to achieve it as a sacred entity. Waiting for Mahdi in the age of occultation is an ethical deed, resulting in self-construction. Thus, as stated in the Islamic traditions, waiting for appearance is known as the best deed¹⁴, and the waiting man is always trying to attain the desired conditions and the ideals or objectives he has been promised. Therefore, he never idles away his lifetime.

In the believers' view, belief in Mahdiism is not merely a theory but a certain ideal. The believers are then advised to think of it as an impending event. Throughout the history, Mahdiism no doubt has been one of the major Islamic tenets, which together with the culture of 'Ashura forms the Shi'i culture. In the history, the Shi'a owes the major part of his moral, spiritual, and mystical gains to the Mahdavi and Husayni Culture, which need to be discussed separately.

Thus, from the anthropological standpoint, the 'Doctrine of Mahdiism' leads to man's consent, tranquility, hope, endurance, and as a result, the better life before the age of appearance. And for this reason some psychologists are of the opinion that the religious beliefs make the believers endure the failures and straits. Therefore, Mahdiism has this marked impact on man's soul and mind to stimulate an eternal movement and to achieve a religious ideal and vista of future life.

I-2: The anthropological impact of the 'Mahdiism Doctrine' after appearance: The believers expect to perceive a substantial change in mankind after the age of appearance and formation of Mahdavi government; here, a question is posed, that is: What features make the man, having lived before the time of appearance, distinguishable from the man living after?

It is evident that the ultimate goal of whole Divine prophets' celestial teachings and their great efforts is to direct man to the right way and settle his affairs, and this has always been the main concern of Abrahamic and non-Abrahamic religions as well as the

other schools of thought throughout man's history. In fact, in spite of the diverse views the scholars present for man's perfection, they wholly share a common view, and that is to deliver man and cling for his salvation, and owing to this fact, some concepts such as deliverance, salvation, reformation, Divine dominion, perfection, and so forth have always been fascinating for man and schools of thought.

No doubt, reforming and improving man's mind and identity is considered as the main impact and program of the formation of Mahdavi government; however, in some cases, justice, logical freedom, security, peace, and peaceful coexistence may be achieved in a society, but it does not enjoy a pleasant status as these qualities have not been actually employed in the elevation of man's soul.

According to the prior introduction, the issue of Mahdiism is one of the precepts, which clearly proclaims the humanistic goals, and due to this fact, Mahdavi government, in the Islamic belief, is counted as the ultimate manifestation of Divine religions (بقية الله); that is, the sapling, planted by Adam and watered by 124 thousand Divine prophets, bears fruit in the Mahdavi government. According to our ancestors' words, "Good for those who live in that moment. Should we lived in that time, we would assist Imam Mahdi (may God hasten his Reappearance)".^[xiii] Indeed, they were enthusiastic to live in that time as the utopia of all prophets and Imams is achieved in Mahdavi government, and thereafter, man's development is accelerated, and despite the time before the age of appearance, the peoples can develop with the least effort and cost. Therefore, it is evident that the whole religions, prophets, and Imams feel good and commemorate that promised time and government. Therefore, four major features distinguish the man before and after the formation of Mahdavi government; as follows:

- I. Man's relationship with God,
- II. Man's relationship with his self,
- III. Man's relationship with society,
- IV. Man's relationship with nature.

I. Man's relationship with God: The main feature of 'Doctrine of Mahdiism' in the age of appearance, which distinguishes it from the societies prior to it, is God-centrism and

piety. In modern time, it seems that God is really dead: as a result, people observe the ethical instructions as the social laws and etiquettes. The Divine and internal control has given way to the external control and social impact. In the religious literature, a believer avoids drinking alcohol, because he knows it a banned substance and is firm in his solemn promise with God even in solitude, and not because he may be fined while driving.

Since man's relationship with God causes tranquility, and makes him prudent, and delivers him from futility and frivolous life, the peoples' lives find meaning after the age of appearance, and the majority of people attains piety and never waste their lifetime in futility, and thus man's relationship with God becomes widespread. Nowadays, unfortunately, this tendency, arising from man's innate nature, is getting pale, and in some cases, opposes modern man's other behaviors, which are inconsistent with the noble religious objectives.

We have not to coalesce the sociological and psychological religiosity (external interpretation of religion) and the Divine religions, presented in the Scriptures, such as the holy Qur'an (internal interpretation of religion). From the standpoint of sociologists and psychologists, more than 90 percents of people are religious and allocate a part of their daily life to religious rites along with sport activities, trip, pastime, studying, etc.^[xiii] They believe in God as the Providence and resort to Him in their hardships. This is the way that most people act before the age of appearance. Their beliefs are not deep and comprehensive. A brief survey of the societies, governed in accordance with religion, shows that the people's religiosity is combined with their non-religious affairs, and this has led to the apparently contradictory attitudes.

Apropos of Mahdiyyism, the people attain the true piety after the age of appearance, and unlike the people living prior to that age, who are disobedient to the Divine decrees, avoid committing sin and corruption,^[xiv] and since man's pure relationship with Providence is the most significant feature of Mahdavi society, their religiosity is not a common matter, and the tangible and verbal relationship with God is not in consistency with corruption, and this fact affects the whole facets of man's life after the age of appearance.

II. Man's relationship with his self: After the age of appearance, man's relationship with his self is also transformed, and the purified man finds the responses of his questions in the teachings of Mahdiyyism. His tranquility, life satisfaction, and hope to the future constructs the character of the person who observes the ethical instructions and etiquettes due to his obedience to God's decrees and not the civil laws and obligations. His anxiety, agitation, and his belief in relativism give way to his firm belief in eternity and the truthfulness of religion and its teachings. Certitude -- which according to the infallible Imam, few people enjoy in the age of occultation^[xvi]-- replaces the skepticism, and unlike the age of occultation, few people suffer from the blaze of doubt after the age of appearance.

III. Man's relationship with society: The peaceful coexistence, peace of mind, immunity from oppression, etc. have always been the main social concerns of man throughout the history. But in that age, the people enjoy tranquility and are protected from the other peoples' harms as their minds are matured. The wealth is distributed among the peoples justly,^[xvii] and due to the rapid growth of piety and faith in the world, they are immune from the other peoples' oppressions.

As a result, the human societies are delivered from the entire harms, vulnerability, and lack of peaceful coexistence. Hence, it is believed that the 'Doctrine of Mahdiyyism' allows of a new interpretation of the world and man. With regard to the allegiance of Imam Mahdi's companions to him, Imam Ali (a.s) stated, "They swear an oath of allegiance not to steal, commit rape, insult another Muslims, shed the people's blood unjustly, disgrace anyone, invade one's home, etc."^[xviii]

In the age of Mahdiyyism, the people live together in unity and show benevolence toward one another in addition to the social regulations. They regard and safeguard the other people's interests as their own.

IV. Man's relationship with nature: With the growth of man's knowledge as well as his mind perfection, his enjoyment of the nature and his control over it reaches to the

maximum, and thus, the environmental crises, arising from the ignorance of man and nations in the age of occultation and leading to an ecological catastrophe nowadays, give way to the preservation of environment. After the establishment of Mahdavi government, there would be no reason for the ruin of the environment or supply of munitions, and as the laws enacted in one country oblige its inhabitants to preserve their homeland and environment, the whole peoples in the world feel so.

2. The impact of the 'Doctrine of Mahdiism' from sociology aspect:

Through studying the tradition sources concerning the age of appearance and Mahdavi government, it is deduced that the formation of the just, religious, civil, and humanitarian society is one of the main objects of the global government of Imam Mahdi (May God hasten his appearance). A part of the causes and conditions for the achievement of the humanitarian facets is based on the social conditions. Therefore, should the society not enjoy those required conditions, the human would not develop at all. Hence, we have no alternative except to reform the society. The reformation of the society means to create reformation in the whole basis, which sound significant in human communities.

Nowadays, the political philosophers believe that every government -- whether religious or non-religious -- shall be able to give security, justice, sound economic conditions, freedom, human rights, hygiene, so forth to its citizens and provide them with the conditions, necessary for their peaceful co-existence and social life. The peaceful coexistence among the people is of two types: the peaceful coexistence among the people of one country or society, and the peaceful coexistence among the people of different nations and countries. Some governments have managed to uphold the peaceful coexistence and social justice in their own countries, and flourish security, justice, hygiene, freedom, and so forth for their own citizens while the peaceful coexistence among the people of different nations and countries, and in one word the whole world, has been never reached in the history of religions. The development of one country and the attainment of the standard life in it result in the torture, plunder, and exploitation of the national resources of one or some other countries.

Even if we superficially accept the claims of some social philosophers concerning the attainment of some ideal societies, and believe that freedom, justice, human rights etc. have been achieved in one or some countries,^[xviii] we evidently see that a great number of countries still suffer from oppression and injustice. Nowadays, so-called the age of modernism, the whole people unanimously agree that oppression and hostility are raging in the international affairs, and in spite of the countries' flourish in such fields of science, technology, and economics, the number of countries below the line of poverty is increasing day by day, and their people suffer from the anxiety arising from unemployment, poverty, death, and dark future. In this route, the modern man, having been equipped to mass destruction weapons and the rapid pace of technology, feels more anxious than the traditional man.

On the other side, one cannot neglect the benefits of science and technology as well as its positive impact of man's intellectuality, and the modern man has managed to solve a great deal of his problems under the protection of technology, without which man's social life seems infeasible, yet we shall not forget its destructive effects and harms, resulting in some problems for him.

Unlike some philosophers, such as Francis Bacon, who claimed that man can dominate over the nature through the experimental sciences,^[xix] the scholars today have faced a paradox that with the rapid growth of science and rationality, why are the modernism and technology not able to offer man the global security and justice? And why is the contemporary man living in crisis?

2-1: The social impact of 'Doctrine of Mahdiyyism' before the age of appearance: In addition to the humanitarian benefits of the 'Doctrine of Mahdiyyism', some social benefits are also enumerated for it. In Islamic culture, the believers reject the view that the increase of oppression and injustice accelerate the course of appearance. On the contrary, to accelerate the course of appearance, the believers are encouraged to prepare their living environments and social status. Man's great demand for the infallible Imam and the Mahdavi government together with the spread of this thought among the mass of people are some of the ways to prepare the ground for his appearance. In fact, firm belief

in Imam Mahdi (May God hasten his appearance) necessitates spreading the believers' thoughts and views in the society and preparing the social status for this fact.

As stated in the traditions, Imam Mahdi's appearance takes its rise from Divine decree, but its acceleration is based on the real demand of the peoples for a heavenly savior. The history of religions testifies that after being absence for a while, some prophets returned to their nations after the people regretted from their deeds and greatly demanded for them. Hence, the return of Imam Mahdi (May God hasten his appearance) requires the peoples' demand. In a letter to Shaikh Mufid, Imam Mahdi (May God hasten his appearance) writes as such:

If our Shi'ites had unanimously redeemed their pledge, they would have never been deprived of visiting us, and verily, they would have been blissful if they had visited us with sincerity and insight. Their bad deeds, of which we are informed, deprive them from our visitation; the deeds which dissatisfy us.^[51]

Before the age of appearance, a number of believers activate the social impact of the 'Doctrine of Mahdiism', while in this period, the majority of people experience the other ways which they feel can bring them tranquility, peace, coexistence, justice, and freedom, but they are of no avail as none of them could make the world devoid of crisis and disturbance. After the Renaissance, man tried various dogmas, such as technology, secularism, modernism, economic policies (Socialism and Capitalism), international policies, etc. but they were all the matters of trial and errors, as the contemporary man is still suffering from injustice, oppression, excessive rationality, environmental crises, global disturbance, exploitation, relativism, instability in his faith and religious beliefs, etc. This fact certifies that the contemporary man will never manage to surmount his barriers if he ignores his divine identity; thus, man's great demand for Mahdiism and the heavenly Savior is his only palpable way to deliver himself from this condition in the modern age.

To surmount the present shortcomings of modernity and to blur the contradictions among modernism, tradition, and religion or in one word, culture, the thinkers have presented some ways. Some of them have presented 'Post-Modernism' believing that the Modernism has got some defects, as its processes have not been completed yet, while

hoping that its defects are removed if the Modernism proceeds. Some others have resorted to Pre-Modernism, while criticizing its extremist rationality, science-centrism, and their impacts. They have considered the cultural and epistemological pluralism, subcultures, relativism, etc. into account.

Considering the relation among religion, Modernism, and brave new world, a number of thinkers believe that the modern man resorts to rationality and reasoning while he shirks worship and morality to release himself from hardships, and these affairs are inconsistent with the metaphysical system of religions. In their view, the religions, promulgating faith and piety, depend on the historical and geographical frames and rely on the complicated systems of metaphysics. Owing to this fact, the traditional insights cannot satisfy the modern man, seeking for life satisfaction, joy, and hope; the one who is in search of a way to diminish his hardships. The religion that can respond to man's needs and questions in a better way absorbs more peoples. Thus, to put an end to the contemporary man's hardships, these scholars replace the spiritual insights with the traditional ones and try to make consistency between religion and modernism.^[xxv]

To achieve this end, they sometimes resort to the New-realism and the relationship between the new man and the metaphysical notions through spirituality and terrestrial morality, which account divinity as art and personal affairs and sound enjoyable and tranquil for man,^[xxvi] and sometimes follow the psychological approaches, such as Yuga and meditation; the approaches in which man is to release himself from the psychic illusions, surmount the hardships and anxiety of modernity, and find his lost identity.

To study the religion and tradition, a number of neo thinkers prefer modernity to religion and custom and recognize it officially. In their view, since making changes in the modern life and technological processes is inevitable, we have to reform the religion so as to reconcile it with modernity. They have hence studied the religion through the lens of social and humanitarian ethics, and presented the terrestrial interpretation in proportionate with the secularism for religious notions. In this view, the ultimate goals of religion are merely considered, and the traditional interpretation of religion gives way to some notions, such as humanity, spirituality, worship, and common and non-celestial piety. They are of the opinion that the traditional cognition of Christianity has a lack of

consistency with the modern life, and in some case, they contradict each other. Therefore, we necessarily have to make some changes in the traditional insights to conform religion to Modernism.^[xxvii]

On the other side, a number of traditional researchers state that the time and place are not genuine, so instead of modernity, they concentrate on the eternal realities of religion, which enjoy internal unity and are beyond times and boundaries. According to these researchers, the realities of whole religions take root from wisdom and celestial elements arising from the Omniscience, and in the event that the contemporary man is impotent in comprehending those eternal wisdom and realities, *he* is blamed as those realities are not defective, but the man's soul is terrestrial and inferior. If he manages to elevate his inferior and terrestrial soul and direct his move toward the eternal reality and wisdom, there will be no contradiction between the religion and modernism, and they will be in harmony with each other.^[xxviii]

From the Islamic standpoint, the whole Divine religions and prophets are to dedicate a good ending for mankind under the protection of reformation, correction, construction, and bright future. The construction and correction of man and the world after the age of appearance is achieved by Imam Mahdī (May God hasten his appearance) and before the age of appearance by the believers' efforts in the way of society reformation and hope toward a better life. The culture of Waiting signifies that the believers frequently think of the perfect Man, who can quell his id and consequently generate the fair society.

The 'Doctrine of Mahdīism' also purports the solution, presented in the age of occultation according to the precepts of Mahdīism and extracted from the science, reasoning, and the ancestors' experience plus the main principles of Mahdīism. The Islamic teachings never permit us to desist from the religious teachings and sincerity or ignore the religious jurisprudence so as to conform ourselves with the brave new world and Secularism. In religious thought, one has to conform the religious precepts to rationality, human affairs, technology, science, and other subjects, not at the cost of palming the religious beliefs.

To surmount the present contradictions between tradition and modernity, the theologians either deviate the religious precepts and ignore the main religious principles, or present a gross approach to celestial wisdom of religion while neglecting the fundamental element of theology and philosophy in the history of Islam, viz. Mahdiyyism and demand for the global Savior in both cases. In the event of firm belief in the culture of Mahdiyyism, a majority of the mentioned approaches are not in conformity with the Islamic tenets. In all these approaches, which aim at responding to the social questions of Modernity and its relation with religion, one fact is common; that is none of the presented responses have been extracted from the original theological sources or emerged from the noble religious tenets.

2-2: The social impact of 'Doctrine of Mahdiyyism' after the age of appearance: The study of traditions on Mahdavi government testifies that the occurrence of the essential reformation in such fields as social management, economics, social and human affairs, experimental sciences, and culture is certain after the appearance, so that the impact of Mahdavi government on these fields, so-called culture, is evidently perceived.

A part of man's innate needs is common among the whole peoples, and the religions cannot treat them with indifference. The whole people are in search of justice, peace, freedom and fond of the just rulers, social security, and peaceful coexistence. On a very small scale, when these notions are achieved in a family, the members feel at ease. Now, should the people of the entire world feel so, they would achieve the Utopian ideals; the world wherein the peoples and the rulers show benevolence toward one another, the wealth, power, and justice are distributed based on rationality and excellence, and the people firmly believe that logic reigns over the system of the universe. With regard to the Mahdavi society and the uphold of social justice, Imam Ali (Peace be upon him) stated, "He will direct desires towards (the path of) guidance while people will have turned guidance towards desires, and he will turn their views to the direction of the Quran while the people will have turned the Quran to their views".^[55]

As stated in the 'Doctrine of Mahdiyyism', after the appearance of Imam Mahdi (May God hasten his appearance), the world is so filled with justice and freedom that the

people first release themselves from the bounds of their ids and impulses, and then, this sense of freedom manifests itself in the entire world. It is predicted that the security is so widespread that a woman can safely travel from Iraq to Syria on foot, and the women become so erudite that can judge by virtue of the Divine Book and Islamic traditions. The public welfare, economic status, and social justice are so improved that the donors and Zakat payers find no poor to donate to him. People enjoy abundant wealth, and they coexist peacefully; as allusively stated in the Islamic traditions, even the wolf and lamb coexist in peace together during that age.^[xxvi]

Affection for Mahdavi society and demand for it is deeply rooted in the ideological beliefs, and the Prophet's traditions together with the theological context testify it, and it does not originate from the thinkers' mind and illusion. Although there may exist some societies in which the peaceful coexistence, human relationships, social justice, and human rights are desirably maintained, Mahdavi society enjoys an element, distinguishing it from other societies; that is, God is at the center of the righteous society, what in today societies has been sunk into oblivion.

In fact, even if a part of the features of ideal man and society might have been attained from the anthropological and sociological standpoint, yet one cannot claim that he has attained the Utopian world, and in our own age, we may introduce one single person behaving in accordance with the social norms, but we surely cannot introduce a person behaving totally in accordance with the religious norms, or a society replete with such persons.

Endnotes:

[i] Richard Comstock, *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, edited by Mircea Eliade. (New York, Macmillan Publishing Company, 1987), vol. 4, pp. 384-85.

[ii] See 'doctrine' in Mehdi Nowruzi, *The Political Terms*, sixth edition. (Tehran, Neji Publication, 1376, p. 85); also see 'Truman' in Ahmad Atiyatalah, *The Political Dictionary*, Third edition, (Egypt, Dar al-Nihzah al-Arabyyah, 1968), p. 287. The Brezhnev Doctrine, for example, warned that the Soviet Union would use military force if necessary to maintain its influence in Eastern Europe .

[iii] *Op. cit.*, vol. 4, p. 385.

[iv] M. E. William, *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, second edition, (Washington D. C., Thomson Gale, 2003), vol. 4, p. 802.

[v] W. Richard Comstock, *op. cit.*, p. 385.

[vi] See Daryoush Shaygan, *Indian Religions and the Philosophical Schools*, fifth edition, (Tehran , Amir Kabir Publication, 1383), vol. 5, p. 14.

[vii] Surah 11:123.

[viii] Surah 11:118.

[ix] Yusif b. Yahya al-Muqaddasi al-Shafi'i, *'Aqd al-Durar fi Akhbar al-Muntazar*, edited by 'Abd al-Fattah Muhammad Huluv, (Qom, Alam al-Fikr Inst., 1979), p. 157. Kamil Sulayman, *Yawn al-Khalas*, Translated by Ali Akbar Mahdi Pour, second edition, (Tehran . Afaq Publication, 1407), p. 15.

[x] Sayyed Ibn Tawus, *Great Battles and Disturbances before the Age of Imam Mahdi's Appearance*. (Beirut, Al-Vafa Publishing Company, 1403), p. 138; Muhammad b. Ya'qub Kulayni, *Usul Kafi*, (Tehran, Dar al-Kutub, 1365), vol. 1, p. 85; Kamil Sulayman, *Yawm al-Khalas*, Translated by Ali Akbar Mahdi Pour, second edition, (Tehran, Afaq Publication, 1407), p. 85.

[xi] Lotfullah Safi Golpayegani, *The Selected Hadiths*, (Tehran, Maktab al-Sadr), p. 244; Mohammad Baqir Majlesi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, (Beirut, Dar al-Ihya Publication, 1403), vol. 52, p. 123.

[xii] Muhammad b. Ibrahim No'mani, *On Occultation*, Sayyed Ahmad Fahri Zanjani, Fourth edition, (Tehran, Dar al-Kutub, 1362); Kamil Sulayman, *Yawm al-Khalas*, Translated by Ali Akbar Mahdi Pour, second edition, (Tehran, Afaq Publication, 1407), p. 425.

[xiii] Mircea Eliade, *Study of Religion*, translated by B. Khorramshahi, Second edition, (Tehran, Cultural and Scientific Publishing House, 1378), Vol. 1, p. 85.

[xiv] Surah 5:49.

[xv] Muhammad b. Ya'qub Kulayni, *Usul Kafi*, (Tehran, Dar al-Kutub, 1365), vol. 2, p. 51.

[xvi] Muhammad b. Ibrahim No'mani, *On Occultation*, Sayyed Ahmad Fahri Zanjani, Fourth edition, (Tehran, Dar al-Kutub, 1362), p. 277.

[xvii] Kamil Sulayman, *Yawm al-Khalas*, Translated by Ali Akbar Mahdi Pour, second edition, (Tehran, Afaq Publication, 1407), p. 465; Lotfullah Safi Golpayegani, *The Selected Hadiths*, (Tehran, Maktab al-Sadr), p. 469; Sayyed Ibn Tawus, *The Great Battles and disturbances before the Age of Imam Mahdi's Appearance*, (Beirut, Al-Vafa Publishing Company, 1403), p. 122.

[xviii] In his books, *The Open Society and Its Enemies* and *The Lesson of This Century*, which is indeed his interview with Giancarlo Bosetti, Karl Popper pretends that the liberal society of America is the most democratic society that has already been founded and considers it as a symbol of an ideal country.

[xix] Bertrand Russell. *The History of Western Philosophy*. Translated by Najaf Darya Bandari. (Tehran , Parvaz Publication. 1365). Vol. 2. p. 749. (Bertrand Russell believed that the basis of Francis Bacon's philosophy was entirely pragmatic: that is, man can race over the natural forces through his discoveries and scientific inventions).

[xx] Ahmad Tabarsi. *Al-Ihtejaj*. edited by Ibrahim Bahaduri and Mohammad Hadi. (Qom. Osveh Publishing Company. 1413), vol. 2. p. 602.

[xxi] Abdul Karim Soroush. et al., *Tradition and Secularism*. (Tehran . Serat Publication. 1381). pp. 267-347.

[xxii] . Don Cupitt. *The Sea of Faith* . Translated by Hasan Kamshad. (Tehran . Tarhe Naw. 1378), pp. 15-100.

[xxiii] Hans Kung. *The Catholic Church: A Short history*. Translated by Hasan Qanbari. (Qom . The Center for Religious Studies. 1384), pp. 13- 34. and 205-275.

[xxiv] Sayyed Husayn Nasr, *Knowledge and Spirituality*. Insha'llah Rahmati. (Tehran . Sohrevardi Publication. 1380). pp. 27-96. 131-215. and *Knowledge and the Sacred*. Farzad haji Mirza'ie. (Tehran . Foruzan Publication. 1380).

[xxv] Ali b. Abi Talib. *Nahj al-Balaqih*. Compiled by Sayyed Razi. Translated by Mohammad Dashti. (Qom . Mashreqain Publication. 1379), Sermon no. 138.

[xxvi] Yusif b. Yahya al-Muqaddasi al-Shafi'i. *Aqd al-Durar fi Akhbar al-Muntazar*. edited by Abd al-Fattah Muhammad Huluv. (Qom. Alam Ul-Fikr Inst., 1979), vol. 1. p. 329.

