

THE GLOBE BEFORE AND AFTER THE ADVENT OF IMAM MAHDI, PART III¹

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ABSTRACT: The ‘End of Times’ – a period studied in the eschatologies of the dominant world religions – refers to the world’s state of affairs before and after the coming of Imam Mahdi, when worldwide justice and peace will be established. The previous articles in this series presented an outline of the concept from the viewpoint of the major world religions. The Islamic perspective is also given, using the Qur’an and hadith as sources to visualize future events, and with the purpose of increasing our knowledge on the advent of Imam Mahdi to establish a positive relationship with the Imam, and preparing for his return. Topics such as the quality of the people during this time, including their intellectual condition and scientific and technological advancements were explained. This part includes the people’s cultural, moral, and religious condition during the End of Times, explaining what will arise concerning family relationships, youth, women, mosques, Islamic law, and the general representation of Islam.

¹ This series of papers is based on parts five and six of a series of lectures delivered by the author in Muharram 1428/January 2007 in London.

Cultural, moral, and religious condition

These three areas cannot be separated from each other, and therefore we will discuss them together. In the period of the end of time, there will be many disagreements and controversies as far as the area of beliefs, ideas, and concepts is concerned, as mentioned in an array of hadiths. For instance, on one occasion Prophet Muhammad said:

ابشركم بالمهدى يبعث في امتي على اختلاف من الناس و زلازل فيملا
الارض قسطا و عدلا كما ملئت جورا و ظلما، يرضى عنه ساكن السماء
و ساكن الارض

I give you the good tidings of Mahdi. He will be commissioned in my *ummah* at a time when people disagree with each other and there will be many quakes. He will fill the earth with justice just as it was filled with injustice. All the inhabitants of the heaven and earth will be pleased with him.²

The following points are worthy of note:

Point One: It seems that Imam Mahdi (aj) will not be readily accepted by all Muslims; his challenges will be similar to the ones faced by Prophet Muhammad when he wanted to call the pagans of his time to the unity of God, which was an immensely difficult and demanding task.

Point Two: There is a mention of quakes. This could mean that in that time there will be many physical earthquakes, or it could refer metaphorically to the shaking in people's thinking.

² *Bihar ul-Anwar*, Vol. 51, Page 81

Point Three: Uniquely, Imam Mahdi (aj) will be able to please the people en masse, something that the prophets, all of whom had opponents, could not do. The prophets were favoured by the people of heaven, and yet not of the entire earth. Imam Mahdi (aj) however, will be able to please all of humanity because he will improve the situation to a large extent, and because the general level of people's understanding will be conducive to his approach and stance. Therefore, two things will ensure his success:

- I. His faultless action will be met with a thorough understanding of the people. Although Prophet Muhammad also acted faultlessly, he was in the company of people who sometimes did not understand and appreciate his actions. Imam Mahdi (aj), as he leads the entire world, will behave in a way that not only the people who live on earth will be happy, but also every being on the earth and in the heavens. Perhaps this involves his care for the nature; he will be so caring for the environment that even animals and birds will be pleased with him. This is compatible with the literal sense of the hadith.
- II. The hadith describes people's disagreements with one another as quakes, and because Imam Mahdi (aj) will fill the earth with justice, the inhabitants of earth and the heavens will be pleased. It seems therefore that he will bring an end to all the disagreements. In fact, it seems that he himself will be the matter upon which all humans can agree and achieve unity. As Qur'an says:

Hold fast, all together, to God's cord, and do not be divided [into sects]. And remember God's blessing

upon you when you were enemies, then He brought your hearts together, so you became brothers with His blessing. And you were on the brink of a pit of Fire, whereat He saved you from it. Thus does God clarify His signs for you so that you may be guided. (3:103)

Fitnah

The hadiths also include much reference to the occurrence of *fitnah* – a kind of severe trial or test – at the end of time. The term is normally used when the situation is rather ambiguous, and when one finds it difficult to discern right from wrong. In such cases, even people with good character may make mistakes, because the truth is not clear and it needs special insight to be able to find out the truth involved in the subject at issue.

Hadith literature states that *fitnah* will occur in the end of time. This does not mean that the events predicted for the end of time are all going to happen at the same time. They may happen at different times, after death of Prophet Muhammad, or immediately before the advent of Imam Mahdi (aj). Imam Baqir has stated:

لا يظهر المهدي إلا على خوف شديد من الناس وزلزال وفتنة وبلاء يصيب
الناس

Mahdi will not appear except when people have great fear and they quake [i.e. they internally shake] and there is *fitnah*.³

³ *Iqd ud-Durar*, Page 64

If we observe the situation today, we see that there is much fitnah when it comes to the Muslim world. Some Muslims are killing other Muslims. Some of these people cannot be bribed or bought, and they are very committed to what they perceive to be their mission, but they are confused. They are prepared to go into mosques and kill themselves and others, and they believe that by doing this they will go to heaven. For them the truth is not clear and they are confused. This is fitnah. It is important for us to know what the real truth is. Imam Sadiq (a) says in a supplication:

اللهم أرني الحق حقا فأتبعه والباطل باطلا فأجتنبه ولا تجعله علي
متشابهاً فأتبع هواي بغير هدى منك

O God! Show me truth as the truth so I follow it, and falsehood as falsehood so I stay away from it, and let them not seem similar to me, for if this happens then I will follow my own desires.⁴

Prophet Muhammad says:

تجيء فتنة غرباء مظلمة، ثم يتبع الفتن بعضها بعضاً، حتى يخرج رجل من
أهل بيتي يقال له: المهدي، فإن أدركته فاتبعه وكن من المهتدين

A fitnah will come which is very dark and will cause everything to become dark, and you will not be able to see clearly. It will follow other fitnah until a man from my progeny will come, called Mahdi, and if you can meet him and witness that time, follow him and you will be guided.⁵

⁴ *Bihar ul-Anwar*, Vol. 86, Page 120

⁵ *Kanz ul-Ummal*, Vol. 11, Page 183

In another saying from Imam Mahdi (aj) himself, he says:

علامة ظهور امرى كثرة الهرج و المرح و الفتن

The sign of my reappearance is the great amount of anarchy, chaos, and *fitnah*.⁶

The hadith literature contains many hadiths that mention there will be much disagreement and debate that will have no end, including much *fitnah* and quaking, which will come to an end when Imam Mahdi (aj) reappears.

Carnal Desires and lusts

Another feature of the end of time is that many people will follow their own lower desires, lusts, and selfish ideas in the name of religion and guidance. People will impose their ideas on the Qur'an and introduce them as Qur'anic ideas. Imam Ali says:

يعطف الهدى على الهوى إذا عطفوا الهوى على الهدى و يعطف الرأي على القرآن إذا عطفوا القرآن على الرأي

[At the time] when people force guidance to follow their desires, Mahdi will make their desires follow guidance. When people use the Qur'an to conform to their ideas, Mahdi will make their ideas conform to the Qur'an.⁷

To remain a genuine believer at the end of time will be challenging. The hadiths both warn and give good tidings: they warn believers to be careful, and give good tidings for those who have remained

⁶ *Bihar ul-Anwar*, Vol. 51, Page 320

⁷ *Nahj ul-Balaghah*, Sermon 138

faithful. Indeed, there are important practical lessons to be taken. Prophet Muhammad says to his companions:

سيأتي قوم من بعدكم الرجل الواحد منهم له أجر خمسين منكم

There will come a group of people that every single of them will be rewarded as fifty of you.

They said:

يا رسول الله نحن كنا معك ببدر واحد وحنين و نزل فينا القرآن

But, O Messenger of God, we have been with you in the battles of Badr, Uhud, Hunayn, and the Qur'an has been revealed among us?

He said:

إنكم لو تحملوا لما حملوا لم تصبروا صبرهم

Surely, if you were required to go through what they are going to go through, you would not be strong enough.⁸

To be a faithful believer in Medina under the leadership of the Prophet (s) and surrounded by the likes of Salman, Miqdad, and Abu Dharr would have been easier than the current challenges. The end of time is full of challenges, temptations, and poisons. The Prophet was not hesitant to bluntly tell the companions of this. Nevertheless, we are to appreciate that this is a general statement and does not apply to every individual of both these times.

In another hadith, we read the following in reference to the plant *qatād*, a plant full of spikes and thorns:

⁸ *Bihar ul-Anwar*, Vol. 52, Page 130

ان لصاحب هذا الامر غيبة المتمسك فيها بدينه كالحارط لشوك القتاد
بيده ان لصاحب هذا الامر غيبة فليثق الله عبد عند غيبته و ليتمسك
بدينه

To keep your faith in the end of time is more difficult than removing the spikes and thorns of the *qatāb* plant with your soft fingers. You must be pious and ask God to help you and to keep you on the right path.⁹

Prophet Muhammad was with a group of his companions and said twice:

اللهم لقي اخواني

O God! Let me meet my brothers.

Those that were with him said: “Are we not your brothers?” He said:

لا انكم اصحابي و اخواني قوم في اخر الزمان امنوا و لم يروني لقد عرفنيهم
الله باسمائهم و اسماء ابائهم من قبل ان يخرجهم من اصلاب ابائهم و
ارحام امهاتهم، لاحدهم اشد بقية على دينه من خرط القتاد في الليلة
الظلماء او كالتايبض على جمر الغضا، اولئك مصايح الدجي ينجيهم الله
من كل فتنة غبراء مظلمة

No. You are my companions, but my brothers are a group of people in the end of time who believes in me whilst having not seen me. God has introduced me to them by their names and the names of their fathers before they were born. These people are careful and capable of protecting the religion; they are like the person who is able to remove the spikes from that

⁹ Bihar ul-Anwar, Vol. 52, Page 135

plant (*qatād*). And God will help them and save them from any fitnah that is darkening and confusing.¹⁰

Islam will become estranged

Another point that becomes clear from a few hadiths is that in the end of time Islam somehow becomes lonely or estranged (*gharib*). For example, Imam Baqir says:

إن قائمنا إذا قام دعا الناس إلى امر جديد كما دعا إليه رسول الله و إن
الإسلام بدأ غريباً و سيعود غريباً

When our Qa'im rises up he will call people to something new, like the Prophet did. Indeed Islam started *gharib* and will again become *gharib*.¹¹

This will not be a new religion, nor will it be based on a new revelation. The Islam that Imam Mahdi (aj) introduces is described as *gharib* (estranged) in the end of time. Many will observe this religion and claim that it is not the Islam they are familiar with, and not the one they have been taught about in their places of worship. Various aspects of the Islam in which Imam Mahdi (aj) will call people towards will seem strange.

Yahya ibn 'Afif narrates that his father was in Mecca with Abbas ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib and witnessed a man, a boy and a woman, whom all stood, bowed, and prostrated. When he asked who they were, the people of the Quraysh told him that these people were Muhammad, Ali, and Khadija, and that they were following a new religion that

¹⁰ *Bihar ul-Anwar*, Vol. 52, Page 123

¹¹ *Bihar ul-Anwar*, Vol. 52, Page 366

Muhammad had brought.¹² This shows that in the beginning of the Islamic movement Islam was *gharib*, lonely and not supported. After some years God asked the Prophet to invite his close relatives to Islam.

Hence, this hadith of Imam Baqir suggests that Islam will become *gharib* again. Perhaps it refers to the current situation where, despite having a population of 1.5 billion Muslims, it is the most misunderstood and misrepresented religion. Prophet Muhammad and the Ahlul Bayt are misunderstood and misrepresented. If Imam Mahdi (aj) reappears and invites people back to what the Prophet brought in the first place then it is doubtful that all Muslims will agree with this religion. Certainly some would call it a disbelief

¹² Sheikh Mufid quotes the story in *al-Irshād*, vol. 1, p. 30 as follows:

عن يحيى بن عفيف عن أبيه قال كنت جالسا مع العباس بن عبد المطلب رضي الله عنه بمكة قبل أن يظهر أمر النبي ص فجاء شاب فنظر إلى السماء حين تحلقت الشمس ثم استقبل الكعبة فقام يصلي ثم جاء غلام فقام عن يمينه ثم جاءت امرأة فقامت خلفهما فركع الشاب فركع الغلام والمرأة ثم رفع الشاب فرمعا ثم سجد الشاب فسجدا فقلت يا عباس أمر عظيم فقال العباس أمر عظيم أ تدري من هذا الشاب هذا محمد بن عبد الله ابن أخي أ تدري من هذا الغلام هذا علي بن أبي طالب ابن أخي أ تدري من هذه المرأة هذه خديجة بنت خويلد إن ابن أخي هذا حدثني أن ربه رب السموات والأرض أمره بهذا الدين الذي هو عليه ولا والله ما علي ظهر الأرض على هذا الدين غير هؤلاء الثلاثة

I was sitting with al-'Abbās b. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, may Allāh be pleased with him, in Mecca, before the affairs of the Prophet became known to the public. A man came and looked up towards the sky where the sun hovered above. He turned in the direction of the Ka'ba and stood to pray. Then a youth came and stood at his right and a woman came and stood behind them both. The man bowed, and the youth and the woman bowed. The man raised his hands and the youth and the woman raised their hands. Then he prostrated and they both prostrated. "‘Abbās!" I exclaimed, "it is a fantastic affair!" "Indeed, it is a fantastic affair," replied al-'Abbās. "Do you know who that man is? He is Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, my cousin. Do you know who that youth is? He is 'Alī b. Abī Tālib, my cousin. Do you know who that woman is? She is Khadija, daughter of Khuwaylid. This cousin of mine (i.e. Muḥammad) has told me that his Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, Who has ordered him to carry out this religion (dīn) which he is practising. No, by Allāh, there are not any on the face of the earth, who practise this religion except these three."

(*kufr*), an innovation (*bid'ah*), or polytheism (*shirk*), because they do not recognise it.

Imam Baqir then says:

فطوبى للغرباء

And good tidings to those who are gharib!¹³

From this last statement, it would be wrong for us to lament of our small numbers, or our unfavourable position. As Imam Ali says:

لا تستوحشوا في طريق الهدي لقله اياه

On the right path, do not feel lonely if your numbers are few.¹⁴

The important thing for us is to be sure that we are on the right path.

A person went to Imam Sadiq and asked him to explain the meaning of the hadith that said Islam will again become gharib. He said:

إذا قام القائم استأنف دعاء جديدا كما دعا رسول الله

When the Qa'im comes he will start a new invitation [to Islam] as the Prophet did [facing all the challenges that the Prophet faced].

The man who had asked him the question gained some understanding and narrates: "I stood up and kissed the head of

¹³ *Bihar ul-Anwar*, Vol. 52, Page 366

¹⁴ *Nahj ul-Balaghah*, Sermon 86

Imam Sadiq, saying: 'I bear witness that you are my Imam.' Imam Sadiq then prayed for him, saying: 'May God have mercy on you.'"¹⁵

Here we are not indicating the destruction or disappearance of Islam before Imam will come. Islam will certainly be there, but perhaps it would not be looked upon favourably. And most certainly, true Islam will not be readily accepted. Those that choose to follow true Islam will feel lonely and unsupported, but this will indeed be good for them, because the more difficult it will become to practice Islam the more reward it entails.¹⁶

The situation of women

Despite the immense fitnah during the end of time, with many facing challenges with regards to remaining loyal to their faith, there will be believers who are nonetheless firm in their beliefs. We find references to pious and committed women who will be amongst the close associates of Imam Mahdi (aj). On the other hand, the situation of women apart from those pious believers is concerning. Imam Ali says:

يظهر في آخر الزمان و اقتراب الساعة و هو شرّ الازمنة نسوة كاشفات
عاريات متبرجات خارجات من الدين، داخلات في الفتن، مائلات الى
الشهوات، مسرعات الى اللذات، مستحلات للمحرمات في جهنم خالداً

In the end of time and near the resurrection, the situation will be the most severe. There will be women

¹⁵ *Bihar ul-Anwar*, Vol. 52, Page 367

¹⁶ It is not difficult to adhere to one's religion, if everyone praises the adherent for following it with massive, and supports him. The real challenge and indeed achievement is for a person who, for example, is ridiculed for to praying in his workplace somewhere and be ridiculed for praying and yet while he patiently perseveres in his prayers, this is a real achievement.

who bare their private parts, they will wear all kinds of adornments and they will go out of the bounds of religion and enter into fitnah. They quickly obey their desires, and what God has declared as unlawful they consider as lawful; they will be in hell forever.¹⁷

Within Sunni hadith in *Sahih* of Muslim, we find an expression that states that women will be ‘clothed but naked’ perhaps meaning despite their clothing, it does not actually *cover* the contours of the body.¹⁸ In another hadith we read:

لا تقوم الساعة حتى تظهر ثياب تلبسها نساء كاسيات عاريات

The Day of Resurrection will not come about until [you see] some manner of dress that some women will wear, but their dress will not cover them.¹⁹

In another hadith from Imam Ali, quoting the Prophet, we see a reference to the quality of *hayā* (dignity). The Imam narrates the Prophet:

لا تقوم الساعة حتى يذهب الحياء من الصبيان و النساء

The final hour will not come until [you see] a great number of women and children lose their *haya*.²⁰

¹⁷ *Muntakhab ul-Athar*, Page 426

¹⁸ *Sahih* of Muslim, Kitāb al-Libās wa al-Zinah, Bab al-Nisā al-Kāsiyāt al-‘Āriyāt al-Mā’ilāt al-Mumilāt. The hadith is as follows:

عن أبي هريرة قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم صنفان من أهل النار لم أرهما قوم معهم سياط كأذناب البقر يضربون بها الناس ونساء كاسيات عاريات مميلات مائلات رءوسهن كأسنمة البخت المائلة لا يدخلن الجنة ولا يجدن ريحها وإن ريحها ليوجد من مسيرة كذا وكذا

¹⁹ *Yawm al-Khalās fi Zill al-Qā’im*, Page 456

²⁰ *Bihar ul-Anwar*, Vol. 63, Page 15

I deduce this to be the result of the secular material culture to which even children from a young age are subjected, and e.g. they become aware of – and involved in – sexual relations.

The Prophet asked his people:

كيف بكم إذا فسدت نساؤكم، وفسق شبابكم، ولم تأمرو بالمعروف، ولم تنه
عن المنكر

How will your situation be when your women will be corrupt and your youths do not observe the shari'a, and you keep silent [i.e. you do not promote good and forbid bad]?

It was said: 'Is this possible O Prophet of God?' The Prophet continued:

نعم وأشر من ذلك، فكيف بكم إذا أمرتم بالمنكر ونهيتم عن المعروف

Yes, and even worse will happen – you will promote bad and prohibit good.

Again they said: 'Is this possible?' The Prophet continued:

نعم، وأشر من ذلك، فكيف بكم إذا رأيتم المعروف منكراً والمنكر معروفاً

Yes, and even worse than this – you will consider goodness as evil, and evil as goodness.

Even Muslims will be affected by this absence of hayā amongst their women and young people. And the worst situation is when people possess a distorted understanding of good and bad.

This should serve as a warning of the events at the end of time, and we must take great care regarding the way we perform our duties of

promoting the good and forbidding the bad, especially with regards to our families and children.

Misrepresentation of Islam

We previously clarified that at the end of time Islam will remain, although in many cases true Islam will be confused with the many misrepresentations of Islam. Imam Ali quotes the Prophet as saying:

سَيَأْتِي عَلَى النَّاسِ زَمَانٌ لَا يَبْقَى مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ إِلَّا رِسْمُهُ وَ مِنَ الْإِسْلَامِ إِلَّا
اسْمُهُ يُسَمَّوْنَ بِهِ وَ هُمْ أَبْعَدُ النَّاسِ مِنْهُ مَسَاجِدُهُمْ عَامِرَةٌ وَ هِيَ خَرَابٌ مِنَ
الْهُدَى

A time will come when nothing will remain from the Qur'an except its letters and nothing will be left from Islam but its name. People will be called, "Muslims," but they are farthest from Islam. Their Mosques building are developed but they lack guidance.²¹

From this saying we may conclude that the practice of true Islam and application of the Qur'an will in large stop and that there will be no effect of Islam on many Muslims' business, behaviour, etc; they will be Muslims merely by their names and outward appearances, whereas a true Muslim is one who is recognised by his impeccable conduct.

²¹ *Al-Kāfi*, vol. 8, p. 308.

The youths' reaction to Imam Mahdi (aj)

From Islamic sources we find reference to faithful and pious young adults who will respond to the call of Imam Mahdi (aj) without delay. Imam Sadiq says:

بيننا شباب الشيعة على ظهور سطوحهم نياماً إذا توافوا إلى صاحبهم في ليلةٍ واحدةٍ على غير ميعاد فيُصبحون بمكة

When the Shi'a youths are sleeping on the roofs of their houses [as is the practice in the Middle East] and then Mahdi (aj) comes, he will call them and all these youths, without any pre-arranged time, will be in Mecca on the morning of the next day.²²

These young adults will be prepared and willing to unhesitatingly answer the call of Imam Mahdi (aj) and are eager to meet him. It also demonstrates a facility available to them to travel quickly to reach Mecca. The hadith specifically refers to their fast journey to Mecca which could be a hint at advancement in transportation or an extraordinary way of travelling. This is an element found in all religious movements, i.e. that youths are usually the first to respond to prophets and god causes due to their clean hearts that are not (or not yet) strongly attached to worldly elements, and because they have committed less sins. Hence, youths should remain aware of this and be ever ready to join Imam Mahdi (aj).

In brief, an examination of the hadiths about the role of youths during the time of Imam Mahdi (aj) shows that the number of older people among the helpers of Imam Mahdi (aj) is low, although

²² Bihar ul-Anwar, Vol. 52, Page 370

significantly valuable. The elders are likened to salt in food.²³ One only needs a small amount to give the rest good taste; likewise, the elders give the group its taste. Furthermore, Imam Mahdi (aj) himself will have the appearance of a young man in his thirties.²⁴

The condition of Islamic law

References are found regarding those who do not implement shari'a or Islamic law. One hadith states:

عطل الكتاب و احكامه

The Qur'an and its rulings will be suspended.²⁵

This is a state that we seem to be currently experiencing. I think we can safely say that in some aspects implementing the Shari'a has improved around three decades ago. However, the situation is still not satisfactory and more problems are arising. There are some Muslims who question some basics of the Shari'a.

Family relationships

The end of time will be a period in which social bonds, especially family relationships, will be weak and loose. For example, many young people and even children will not respect their elders:

و رايت الصغير يستحق بالكبير و رايت الجار يؤذى جاره

²³ *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 52, pp. 333 & 334. The hadith is as follows:

عَنْ أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ع قَالَ أَصْحَابُ الْمَهْدِيِّ سَبَابٌ لَا كُهُولٌ فِيهِمْ إِلَّا مِثْلُ كُحْلِ الْعَيْنِ
وَ الْمِلْحُ فِي الزَّادِ وَ أَقْلُ الزَّادِ الْمِلْحُ

²⁴ For example, Sheikh Saduq in *Kamala al-Din*, vol. 1, p. 315 quotes Imam Hasan (a) as saying:

يَطِيلُ اللهُ عَمْرَهُ فِي غَيْبَتِهِ ثُمَّ يَظْهَرُهُ بِقَدْرَتِهِ فِي صُورَةِ شَابٍ دُونَ أَرْبَعِينَ سَنَةً ذَلِكَ
لِيَعْلَمَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

²⁵ *Bihar ul-Anwar*, Vol. 52, Page 256

You will see a young one disrespect an elder, and you will see a neighbour upset another neighbour.²⁶

In a hadith from Imam Husayn we read:

لا يكون الأمر الذي تنتظرونه حتى يبرأ بعضكم من بعض و يتقل بعضكم في وجوه بعض و يشهد بعضكم على بعض بالكفر و يلعن بعضكم بعضاً

The advent you are awaiting will not happen until [a time comes when] you will detach [i.e. fight and disassociate] yourselves from one another. Some may spit in the face of others, and you will call each other *kāfir* and be a witness of that, and you will curse one another.

Someone asked: “If this is the case then does it mean there is no goodness in that time?” The Imam replied:

الخير كله في ذلك الزمان، يقوم قائمنا و يدفع ذلك كله

Indeed goodness in totality is in that time. At this time our Qa'im will come and remove all these problems.²⁷

In the same respect we have hadiths stating that many children will displease and irritate their parents, and many people will not observe ties of kinship (*silat al-rahim*), but instead will harbour hatred and enmity in their hearts whilst showing an outward fake display of love in their words.

Mosques

Hadiths make mention of mosques with tall minarets and adorned with gold and expensive adornments, and that the copies of the

²⁶ *Bihar ul-Anwar*, Vol. 52, Page 256

²⁷ *Kitab ul-Ghaybah*, Page 205

Qur'an will be beautifully decorated. The lines of prayers (*salah*) will be long and plenty, but the hearts of those that pray will not be united.²⁸ If we glance at the state of the holy sites of Mecca and Medina today we see lots of physical manifestations of unity, but unfortunately there seems to be no real sense of unity in the hearts of the people. True Islamic unity is achieved when Muslims become like parts and cells of the same body and bricks of the same building.²⁹

Usury (*riba*)

At the end of time usury will be normalised and will not be considered by many to be wrong, and people will not be rebuked for this.³⁰

Trustworthiness

Prophet Muhammad has said:

اقل ما يكون في اخر الزمان اخ يوثق به او درهم من حلال

The thing that is the rarest in the end of time is a brother [i.e. a believer or a friend] whom you can trust, or a dirham that is earned by lawful means.³¹

²⁸ *Al-Durr ul-Manthur*, Vol. 6, Page 53:

وتحلى المصاحف بالذهب، وتتسمن ذكور أمتي ويخطب على المنابر الصبيان
فعند ذلك تزخرف المساجد كما تزخرف الكنائس والبيع، وتطول المنائر وتكثر
الصفوف مع قلوب متباغضة وألسن مختلفة

²⁹ For example, in *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 58, p. 150, Prophet Muhammad (s) is quoted as saying:

مَثَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِ فِي تَوَادِهِمْ وَ تَرَاحُمِهِمْ كَمَثَلِ الْجَسَدِ إِذَا اشْتَكَى بَعْضُهُ نَدَّاعَى سَائِرَهُ
بِالسَّهْرِ وَ الْحَمَى
الْمُؤْمِنُونَ مُتَجَدِّونَ مُتَآزِرُونَ مُتَضَائِرُونَ كَأَنَّهُمْ نَفْسٌ وَاحِدَةٌ
الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ بِمَنْزِلَةِ الْبَنِيَانِ يَشُدُّ بَعْضُهُم بَعْضًا
الْمُؤْمِنُونَ بِذِي وَاحِدَةٍ عَلَى مَنْ سِوَاهُمْ

³⁰ For example, in *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il*, vol. 13, p. 333, Prophet Muhammad (s) is quoted as saying:

يَأْتِي عَلَى النَّاسِ زَمَانٌ لَا يَبْقَى أَحَدٌ إِلَّا أَكَلَ الرَّبَا فَإِنْ لَمْ يَأْكُلْهُ أَصَابَهُ مِنْ غُبَارِهِ

This hadith refers to two common problems in the end of time: 1) there will be few trustworthy people in whom one can comfortably confide in, and 2) earning halal income and being unaffected by haram transactions of others would become a challenge.

³¹ *Tuhaf ul-Uqul*, Saying 141