

The Mahdi ^{AS} in the Holy Qur'an



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scholium of the verse 54 of Surah Maida.*

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The Quran and the Traditions of Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} too show that not only the specialties of Imam Mahdi^{AS} have been mentioned but also there are indications and clues about the superiorities and ranks of his companions in them. A *Hadis* quotes Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} as saying, "I know of a community, which is in my *manzil* [stage]." His companions asked, "How can such a thing happen when you are the Seal of the Prophets^{AS} and there would be no apostle after you." The Prophet^{SLM} said, "They are not apostles. But the apostles would be jealous of them because of their proximity to Allah. All of them will have great Love for Allah."¹

Bandagi Miyan Syed Khundmir^{RZ} has quoted this *Hadis* also in his tract, *Maktub-e-Multani*.² The author of *Hadiya-e-Mahdavia* has satirically derided it and alleged that there was no such *hadis*. He has also alleged that this was a concocted *hadis*. In respect of the contents of the *hadis* too he has made baseless allegations that the Mahdavis believe that the companions of "their" Mahdi to be equal to Prophet Muhammad^{SLM}. And on the basis of this, their Mahdi becomes superior to Prophet Muhammad^{SLM}.³

May Allah protect us from the mischief of the devil! To accuse the Mahdavis of such a bad belief is like throwing mud at the sun. In fact Bandagi Miyan Syed Khundmir^{RZ} has quoted in his tract a *hadis* that has been in the books of *Hadis* of the *Ahl-e-Sunnat* for centuries. As such, the allegation of concocting the *hadis* proves false on its own. Besides, an eminent researcher like Imam Fakhruddin Razi^{RA} has repeated this *hadis* in his Commentary [*tafsir*] of Quran. Hence, all the criticism about the veracity of the *hadis* reverts basically to those great scholars of the *Ahl-e-Sunnat* who have quoted it in their books and writings. Apart from this, Bandagi Miyan Syed Khundmir^{RZ} had sent the *Maktub-e-Multani* to the 'ulama of Multan [now in Pakistan] for the propagation of the religion. Under such circumstances, using a false or concocted quotation is inconceivable.

Be that as it may, it is proved that the great scholars of the *Ahl-e-Sunnat* have often quoted the *hadis* Bandagi Miyan Syed Khundmir^{RZ} has used. As such, all the criticism leveled against the text of the *hadis* proves to be wrong, because the text of the *hadis* is the spoken word of Prophet Muhammad^{SLM}. There is another *hadis* of a similar nature, which quotes the Prophet^{SLM} as saying, "The 'ulama [scholars] of my *ummah* are like the apostles of Bani *Israil* [Children of Israel]." Here is a point to ponder --- will the scholars of the *ummah* of Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} become the apostles by virtue of this *hadis*? Or can they be treated as the apostles of the Children of Israel?

Apart from this, while judging the veracity of a *hadis*, the trustworthiness and truthfulness of the reporters is taken into consideration, it is also necessary to see if it is in conformity of the Quran or not. If the matter is looked into from this point of view, this

¹ *Tafsir-e-Kabir*, Volume 2.

² *Majmu'ah-e-Rasail*, by Hazrat Bandagi Miyan Syed Khundmir^{RZ}, Hyderabad, 1414 AH, Risala *Maktub-e-Multani*, page 11.

³ *Hadiya-e-Mahdavia*, by Abu Raja Muhammad Zaman Khan, Kanpur, 1287 AH, pages 19-20.

hadis proves to be the exegesis of the following Quranic Verse: “O ye who believe! Whoso of you becometh a renegade from his religion, [know that in his stead] Allah will bring a people whom He loveth and who love Him, humble toward believers, stern toward disbelievers, striving in the way of Allah, and fearing not the blame of any blamer. Such is the grace of Allah that He giveth unto whom He will. Allah is All-Embracing, All-Knowing.”⁴

Some of the Commentators of Quran interpreted the Arabic word, *qaum*, as Hazrat Abu Bakr^{RZ} [the first Caliph of Islam], while some others as Hazrat Umar^{RZ} [the second Caliph]. And yet others have said it refers to the Helpers^{RZ} [of Madina]. The argument is that when after the death of the Prophet^{SLM} some people began to renege, these eminent people tried to put down the rebellion. But the History of Islam tells us that the word, ‘renegade’, does not apply to them, because they were the hypocrites from the beginning. Particularly, when Makkah was conquered and all the enemies of Islam and the hypocrites had been totally defeated, some of them manifestly joined Islam to save their lives. It is these people who, after the death of Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} rose in rebellion. The organized power of the companions of the Prophet^{SLM} subdued them. The term, ‘irtidad’ [apostasy or rebellion] applies to those who had sincerely reposed faith in Islam and then reneged. But those people who had accepted Islam as a matter of expedience, but who in their hearts were still infidels can only be termed as *munafiq* [hypocrites]. In reality too they are *munafiqs*. Otherwise, how can the people who had reposed faith sincerely in Islam and had acquired the bounty of the companionship of Prophet^{SLM} during his life, and when his holy companions were still around after him, could become deprived of the luminosity and bounties of the religion during the heyday of the glory of Islam? However, some people have used the term ‘*murtid*’ and ‘*irtidad*’ for them. It is only in the outward sense.

The commentators of Quran who have interpreted the term, ‘*qaum*’, to mean the companions of the Prophet^{SLM} too cannot be correct for two reasons. One that the term *irtidad* does not at all apply to those who had rebelled. Two, that the Arabic terms, ‘*many-yar-tadda*’ [whoso becometh a renegade] and ‘*fa-sawfa ya’-yatillaahu*’ [Allah will bring a people], are giving the interpretation of the present and future tenses. If the meaning were taken to relate to the present tense, it would refer to a period when the Quranic Verse was revealed. At that time, the Prophet^{SLM} and his companions were present. Hence, the need to mention the bringing a people [*qaum*] in their presence [or place] would be an irrelevant and unnecessary issue. If it is contended that it refers to the future tense and the intended *qaum* is the companions of the Prophet^{SLM}; that too will be opposed to the existing situation, because the Quranic Verse clearly foretells a *qaum* that is to come. And the companions were the angelic [*Lahuti*] *qaum* of Prophet Muhammad^{SLM}, and they were present [when the Verse was revealed]. Then how can the implication of their being raised at a future time be applicable to them?

The sequence of words in the sentences in the Quranic Verse indicates that a Vice-regent of Allah will appear in the *ummah* of Prophet^{SLM} because *ya-tillaahu* means “Allah will bring a people.” Allah’s bringing means that the “Vice-regent of Allah will bring.” There are many instances in Quran where Allah has assumed the deed of His

⁴ Quran, S. 5: 54 MMP.

Vice-regent as His own. Allah says in Quran, “*And when thou didst throw [sand or pebbles at them] it was not thee who did, it was Allah who did it...*”⁵ and again Allah says, “*And when We read it, follow thou the reading.*”⁶

In this Quranic Verse, Allah has said that He said what Jibrail^{AS} [Gabriel] had actually said. In the Heavenly scriptures that were revealed before Quran, one finds similar instances. The prediction about the birth of some apostles and Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} too has been given as under: “Moses said before he died: The Lord came from Mount Sinai; He rose like the sun over Edom⁷ and shone on his people from Mount Paran.⁸ Ten thousand angels were with Him, a flaming fire at His right hand.”⁹ In this prediction, The Lord’s coming means the arrival of Musa^{AS}, the rising of the Lord at Edom [Sa’ir] means the manifestation of Hazrat Esa^{AS} and His shining on Mount Paran [Faran] means the coming of Prophet Muhammad^{SLM}. The mountains of the Children of Hashim [Bani Hashim] near Makkah in Saudi Arabia are called the Mount Faran. The expression ‘ten thousand angels’ are the holy people [companions] of Prophet Muhammad^{SLM}. Since the appearance of Prophets has been designated as the manifestation of the Lord, the companions of Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} have been likened to angels. And it is for this reason that Imam Mahdi^{AS} too has likened his companions to angels and the two Syeds^{RZ} are likened to Gabriel [Jibrail^{AS}] and Michael [Mikail^{AS}].¹⁰

Hence, the expression, “*fa-sawfa ya’tillaahu bi-qaumy...*” signifies the community of Imam Mahdi^{AS}. The explication and comparison can be done with the Traditions with constancy in meaning, which relate to the need for the advent of Imam Mahdi^{AS}. Hence, it would be most appropriate to accept the *qaum* of Imam Mahdi^{AS} as the one mentioned after Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} in his *ummah*. Iqbal says: “*O you that is sick of the thought of Imam Mahdi^{AS}! Do not disappoint the musk deer from Khutan.*”¹¹

It is clear from this explication that the *Hadis* of Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} as saying, “I know of a community, which is in my *manzil* [stage],” too explains the Quranic Verse quoted above, because the definition of the *qaum* is “All of them [the members of the *qaum*] will have great Love for Allah.”¹² And this is in perfect conformity with the Quranic Verse: “*Allah will bring a people whom He loveth and who love Him....*”¹³ Now the readers will realize that Bandagi Miyan Syed Khundmir^{RZ} has argued in his tract, *Maktub-e-Multani*, on the basis of a *hadis*, which is found in the books of the eminent scholars of the *Ahl-e-Sunnat* and which is in perfect conformity of the Quran. In short, it is not only the Imam Mahdi^{AS} that is promised [*mauood*], but his community too is the *mauood* of Allah and Prophet Muhammad^{SLM}. And in accordance

⁵ Quran, S. 8: 17 SAL.

⁶ Quran, S. 75: 18 MMP.

⁷ The Arabic text and its Urdu translation in the book *Tauzihat* use the name Sa’ir for the name Edom.

⁸ Faran is used in the said book for Paran.

⁹ For ‘flaming fire’ the words ‘fiery Law [of Moses]’ are used in the said book. This quotation is taken from *Good News Bible in Today’s English Version*, Bible Society of India, Bangalore, printed in Calcutta, year of publication not given, Deuteronomy 33.2, page 205.

¹⁰ *Naqliyat Miyan Abdur Rashid^{RZ}*, Urdu translation by Hazrat Abu Sayeed^{RA}, Hyderabad, 1369 AH, Parable 249, pages 157-159.

¹¹ Khutan is a district in Turkistan that is famous for the musk deer.

¹² *Tafsir-e-Kabir*, Volume 2.

¹³ Quran, S. 5: 54 MMP.

with the predictions of the Quranic Verses and the Traditions of Prophet Muhammad^{SLM}, all the specialties of Divine Love are found in the teachings of Imam Mahdi^{AS}. It is from this point of view that Imam Mahdi^{AS} gave the glad tidings of high ranks and positions to his companions who had reached the status of Divine Love, Gnosis, Unity and perishing in the nature and attributes [*sifat*] of Allah. These positions are among the positions of the apostles. But interpreting these glad tidings as giving the companions an equal status with the Prophets and making wild allegations against the Mahdavis is the handiwork of those people who are ignorant of the beliefs and parlance of the Sufi saints.

In books like *Subl-us-Sawa* and *Kohl-al-Jawahar*¹⁴, it has been clarified that in the discourse of the spiritual positions, ranks and superiority of two persons, if some similarities or relationships are found, or in the stages of the journey towards the Ultimate Truth, any particular stage is intended to be discussed, terms like *maqam*, *qaim-maqam*, *manzil*, *shan*, *bar-dil*, *bar-qalb* and similar other words are used in the parlance of the Sufi saints. For instance, it is said that a saint is equal to a Prophet or one pious elderly person is said to be of the same glory as another similar person. It only means that a bounty or manifestation that was seen in a Prophet was also seen in that pious elderly person [*buzurg*]. It is for this reason that it is said that each of the saints in the period of *Vilayat* [Sainthood] was like a Prophet in the period of Prophet-hood [*nubuwwat*].

It is for this reason that Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} has said that the scholars of his *ummah* were like the Prophets of the Children of Israel. Similarly, the glad tidings of strolls in Prophets, Prophet-hood and sainthood Imam Mahdi^{AS} has given [to his companions], are of this very nature.

¹⁴ These two books and some others were written in response to the criticism of the Mahdavia leaders, beliefs and practices in Abu Raja Zaman Khan's book *Hadiya-e-Mahdavia*.