

Alhassanain (p) Network for Islamic Heritage and Thought

The Era of Imam Mahdi; The New Global

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I. Introduction

In The Name of Allah, Most Merciful and Most Compassionate

As the collapse of the cold war, we have seen that a new world order has unfolded in the eyes of the West, however, as this world order unfolds, the West has been in a dilemma on how to define the parameters of this order.

Indeed, numerous theories and political analysis has been proposed by the so called "enlightened scholars" of the West. But the Question now arises: how does Islam and us, the global Ummah look at this world order and how do we also define our parameters today? An How do we, believers and adherents of Hazrat Baqiyatullah (May Allah hasten his return) prepare in this context?

We as members of the Global Muslim Ummah, may have to look at different angles as well as from different perspectives if we may arrive at a conclusion. This may not be conclusive for all times, it is our humble effort, so that we may be able to move forward in today's age and leave a legacy for other Muslims to come.

As one looks at the different theories expressed and espoused today, I cannot but help but remember the ideals left by those who have come before us, like Hazrat Imam Khomeini (rahmatullahi alayhi) when he wrote the then president Mikhail Gorbachev and predicted the demise of the Soviet Union, saying; that the lack of a spiritual and moral ascendancy of socialism, being materialistic in nature will ultimately lead to the collapse of the socialist world order. And as one American Scholar has said, as the current trend of Modernization proceeds, the fundamental human value from the worship of God and the virtues of Tqwa, Imaan and Ihsan are replaced by values like vice, vanity, personal interests over the others, self over others, there appears a ever and more stronger need for us Muslims to propose the need also for the West to study the high, lofty and ethical values of Islam.

In the traditions of the late Ali Shariati's Ruhshanfekr being today's enlightened individuals, we will attempt to dissect the theories of the new global world order proposed by the West and their worldview and how we must propose to interact with the world in a move to propose also our own concept of a just and humane society based on Tawheed and Adalah.

In a way, as we, the adherents of our beloved prophet Muhammad (SAWA) anxiously await his honored descendant, how do we view the global events and act towards preparation of a state of Imam Mahdi's (ATFS) return to us.

II. How the West views today's Global order

After the demise of the Soviet Union as predicted by Hazrat Imam (rahmatullahi alyh), the West has seen that the eternal archenemy of Capitalism and Democracy, i.e. Socialism as represented by the Soviet Union has collapsed; corollary to this the collapse of the Iron Curtain in Germany, the concept of collectivism and state owned enterprises as espoused by communism has eventually become a thing of the past, and even the Sleeping Giant China, has awakened from its slumber to partake in the eventual Capitalization of the world.

As there appeared a clear and present need to define a new global order, a prominent think tank from the West, Samuel Huntington in a response to this need defined a new context, civilizational fault lines... in short, where cultures clash, civilizations and nations would clash. This was the eventual definition of this paper, "clash of civilizations and the rise of a new order". However, another known Western scholar Edward Said views that the presentation of Huntington preposterous in the sense paranoic.

This is the ineventual problem of the causality of Huntingtons concepts..... from a clash of civilizations, it is surmised that such a clash occurs whenever ignorance takes place. instead of understanding what causes cultures and civilizations to clash, why not also try to look at the parallel sum of things like universal human values that are treasured in every culture and civilization.

The same can be said of looking the the paralellism of anarchistic and terrorist groups lingering in the different cultures like the Branch dravidian, Aum Shinyo or the Baader Meinhof gangs that are much alike the terroristic manifestations of al-Qaeda or other groups like the Tamil Tigers and the Sin Fein in Ireland.

And as Said says, "But we are all swimming in those waters, Westerners and Muslims and others alike. And since the waters are part of the ocean of history, trying to plow or divide them with barriers is futile. These are tense times, but it is better to think in terms of powerful and powerless communities, the secular politics of reason and ignorance, and universal principles of justice and injustice, than to wander off in search of vast abstractions that may give momentary satisfaction but little self-knowledge or informed analysis.

"The Clash of Civilizations" thesis is a gimmick like "The War of the Worlds," better for reinforcing defensive self-pride than for critical understanding of the bewildering interdependence of our time. "

What is needed for civilizations to understand each other is dialogue, pluralist persepective and an openness to the other. As the West aims also in defining order, it also aims to define states that in its opinion are threats to the stability of the new global order, unconsciously defining these states as "rogue states" at the root of this definition is "viciousness,lack of principle and propensity to engage in unilateral action (Herman, 2006).

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and protecting their citizens is seen as rogue and therefore in the eyes of the West are viewed as axis of evil.

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What pushes the West to aggressively pursue this Global World Order at the expense of other smaller sovereign states? The answer lies in the fact that Neoliberalism and Globalization also has played a significant role in the pursuance and aggressive implementation of this policy.

In the total sum of things, the world new order that the west (in the view that is pushed by the United states) proposes is the Globalization of Markets, where nations are forced to co-opt their national sovereignty in the face of tariffs and trade quotas always in the name of the Balance of Trade (BOT), however, this Balance of Trade always shifts in favor of first world countries,

Transnational Corporations (TNC) that operate their businesses internationally and exploit the cheap labor cost, cheap mineral resources in the Third world at a tremendous profit with no moral conscience of returning even a small portion of their accumulated wealth, taking it abroad.

In short this is best manifested by decreasing of government subsidies and privatization of government and owned and controlled corporations, free unrestricted trade by the lifting of tariffs and barriers (giving rise to the entry of Multinational and transnational corporations), and the non-intervention of Government in many policies to allow MNC and TNC's to operate as they wish. Neoliberalism also influences first world countries to focus on absolute gains over other nation states.

This puts minor states like for example the Philippines, Sierra Leone, Tunisia or even Egypt at a major trade disadvantage with Trade relations with the West. This normally would put out Muslim states who are currently at Economic hardships at the mercy of the West. This is coupled by Globalization which is the international economic manifestation of neoliberalism.

This in a nutshell, causes First world countries dominance over us Muslims, thereby using all available political, diplomatic tools available to them to achieve their pursuit.

What then happens if this fails to materialize or they see a potential area to extend their influence? Perhaps recent events in the Muslim world from Afghanistan, to Iraq, to Sudan are enough evidence to prove that good intentions are clearly driven by the need to fuel their capitalist economies.

We have been always been reminding our brethren to hold to the rope of Allah and to unite to strengthen the Ummah again in the face of adversity.

Now however, despite this behemoth order that the West Wishes to impose upon us, it itself is in the brink of decay as it is largely dependednt as in the words of Norman Angel another Neocon proponent, saying: "We cannot ensure the stability of the present system by the political or military preponderance of our nation or alliance by imposing its will on a rival.

(Norman Angell, *The Great Illusion*, (1909) cited from 1933 ed. (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons),p. 137.)It only goes to say that in order for their global world order to survive, Global Bullying has become legitimized in the guide of protecting a nations vested interest. Never the less, Muslim states also possess the right to protect their collective interests as part of the Global Ummah as well as humanity.

At the head of this Global Order, is the United States, being today ruled by the NeoConservatives, this ideology has its ramifications to both US domestic and Foreign policies.

III. What do we intend to do with this current context?

What appears here is a complex web of complex concepts intertwined with each other which we may call the Four microcosms of the west. The current Global World Order as seen by the west is best dissected by what we can say as the Four Microcosms of the West. these are the ideological tools that they use to look at the world and interact with it.

After seeing that a new world order has arisen, the west as a policy has adopted what we may call as a POST WAR HEGEMONY STRATEGY in dealing with the world. within this context they have underlined a four--set in which they deal with the world which is as follows:

1. They define who are and can be their allies
2. They identify potential threats and enemies and define them as rogue states

3. They apply sanctions to countries which refuse to be bullied under their new world order

1. Creation of economic sanctions by:
 1. Primary boycott of countries allied to the West of any economic transactions with the Country targetted
 2. Secondary boycotts by threatening Multinational corporations/Transnational Companies from transacting business with so-called Rogue States.

2. Application of Political Sanctions by outmaneuvering international organizations like the United Nations Security Council

3. Pressuring states allied with the West to apply pressure or expelling diplomats from rogue states.

4. They create scenarios of which they seek to manipulate the events to their own benefits

1. Political scenarios wherein they aim to create political turmoil by fermenting dissension in rogue states

2. International Diplomatic isolation by trying to either neutralize or pressure diplomats from the so-called rogue states for participating in international diplomatic and political actions by either exclusion/expulsion from membership or pressuring other states to actively support actions against these states.

By looking at this unipolar behemoth movement, we can ascertain that we can apply a new and novel approach of countering this unipolar hegemony. This we may now call a multi-polar approach.

As we all know that the New global world order as espoused in the West and articulated by the United states is that it is to globalized, consumer oriented and prone to machinations of the West who may attempt to influence smaller countries and economies through coercion and pressure .

We must understand that indeed in order to usher in a new global order of Peace, unity, development, social justice....INDEED IT IS INDEED HAZRAT MUNTAZAR must come, but how can we push over an era wherein the appearance of Imam Zaman (ATFS) would come to pass.

Indeed we know that hazrat Al-Qaim (ATFS) shall come back as our Hazrat Maasomin (AS) has narrated in their hadiths.

For such a circumstance to take place we as well must also take part in awakening the global Ummah as well as the non-Muslim world towards the accomplishment of these goals.

We as a natural result, will also apply a series of steps aimed to push for the following:

1. Creation and strengthening of a new non-aligned movement which will advocate the interests of smaller states. This may also lead the way for the strengthening of pre-existing regional forums where focus will be aimed at strengthening of local regions and states as well as political and economic cooperation among them.

2. Creation of "Centres of Dialogue and Understanding" that aims to popularize the dialogue of civilizations as a response to the Theory of "clash of civilizations". These centres of dialogues may be schools, academic organizations Non-government organizations shall be distributed regionally among strategic areas. They shall also be tasked to undertake researches and conferences in the aim of further propagating these concepts. Special focus and emphasis shall be given to East-East and East-West Dialogue of civilizations.

3. Creation of fora that aims to include other non-aligned states on a regional basis paving the way for the creation multipolar spheres of influences as well as alignments to ensure that smaller states be not coerced by the west into concessions and that these regional states interests be pursued and protected.

4. Commissioning of regional researches involving an exhaustive study on Islamic pluralism and concepts of dialogue from a localized perspective that may equip Muslim scholars and laymen with the proper knowledge, tools and methodology of dialogue and proper interaction with other cultures.

5. Open an International Research Organization for the study on how the Concept of Mahdiism can fully assist in the development of both the Global Muslim Ummah and the whole world in general.

No plan is perfect except with the Guidance of Allah, and insha Allah, with proper guidance and leadership of the warasatul al-anbiya'a. We shall be successful in the implementation of these projects.

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The Doctrine of Mahdism; Tradition and Modernity - Man's relation with Nature; An Anthropological approach, a pathway out of clash and conflict

1. "Expectation".

Islam - with its own concrete culture and reality - can no longer be disregarded. It does represent a pivotal moment. No doubt, it is a key-factor on the stage of history. The sentence "the world is a global village" is a well-known cliché. But this global village is pluralistic in a religious and cultural sense as well, and within this global village Islamic civilisation has forged its own order and dimension.

Islamic reformism was a modern movement, which came into being in the wake of European supremacy and expansion. It first emerged in the nineteenth century, and gave life to various schools of thought and religious thinking. Neo-reformism is emerging at the dawn of this present new age, the response to foreign challenges, to the integration of the Islamic order into the Western secular/economic system.

Without going into the details of another long, thorny topic, in the following discourse I purposefully leave aside both the political-strategic dimension and ensuing military-security issues on the one hand, and inter-religious dialogue on the other. In these respects there are more appropriate and authoritative forums.

Conversely, I wish to focus my attention on some realities within the Muslim world, its beneficial experience on other peoples' civilisation (with whom it has come into contact), and its own highly significant cultural heritage and legacy within the world order which is nowadays dawning: the Doctrine of Mahdism and Expectation.

Obviously, these notes are the reflection of my academic life and personal experience. Both as a Catholic and as a human being, I have spent many years in the Islamic world, sharing with my Muslim friends sorrow and grief, joyful days and merry events: mutually beneficial relationships, which have largely contributed to shaping some of my worldviews.

The Doctrine of Mahdism has always been at the core of Muslim thinkers and philosophers. In other Religions too, the ideal and doctrine of a Saviour, who will come back one day to judge and reform the situation of the world, represents a focal point, is very deep in thoughts and forges Men's life, attitudes and behaviours.

The concept of 'Expectation' is a culture. It can give reasonable answers to some essential questions. It can also provide a valuable contribution to certain strategic and anthropological domains and lead to piety, understanding, mutual friendship, hope, felicity, reformation.

Within its broader framework, the Mahdism Doctrine can have an anthropological and social impact before and after the age of appearance.

A closer look reveals that one of the major threats for political and civil society undoubtedly derives from new inequalities: the new rich and the new poor, the educated and the ignorant, the powerful and those who - although having riches - have no access to power.

The Mahdism Doctrine can provide us with the hope of a pathway out of conflict and clashes. It is a pathway that, drawing from Tradition and traditional thinking, steps towards Modernity without losing its roots. No human being is despised for his colour, race, language, social status, geographical borders.

Piety and friendship nullify distinctions such as wealth, beauty, social rank and position, and replace them with spiritual qualities. Hence, the Doctrine of Mahdism can involve society in its entirety, amalgamating it, creating new links between civil society and political society, and, through an accurate balance between technological development and the preservation of ancient traditions, it can make possible spiritual piety, social and economic justice.

This is the social impact of the Doctrine of Mahdism before the age of appearance. In this period, people have experienced different pathways, which they felt could bring them tranquillity, peace, coexistence, justice and freedom. However, they could not delete disturbances, environmental crises, global disturbance, suffering from injustice and exploitations of all kinds and various nature, bringing to relativism, instability in faith and religious beliefs, and a positive proliferation of doctrines and dogmas. This is a reality, which certifies that the contemporary Man will never manage to overcome his own barriers if he ignores his divine identity. Within this framework, and with particular regard to Modern-Contemporary times, Man's demand for Mahdism and the heavenly Saviour can provide a concrete pathway do deliver himself from this conditions. Modernism, Post-Modernism, New-Realism are at the core of present-day debates.

The relationship between Man and rationality, between the new-Man and the metaphysical notions through spirituality and worldly morality are amongst the most popular means to release himself from psychic illusions and surmount the anxieties of modernity, technology, material concerns and find Man's lost identity.

But this pathways can also induce a number of neo-thinkers to prefer the impending process of Modernity to Religion. Religion is studied through the lens of social and humanitarian ethics, pre-posing material/rational interpretation to religious notions. On the other side, a number of traditional researchers state that time and space are not genuine, they have no consistency. So, instead of modernity, they focus on the eternal realities of religion, which enjoy internal, intrinsic unity and are beyond times and all spatial boundaries.

These issues are largely discussed and heard of also in the traditional culture of the ordinary people, and lead us to re-think our own speculative parameters, traditional paradigms and models of society and power, mankind and statehood. In the eyes of this new intellectual trend, through studying traditional sources, it appears that we have not lost (or eliminated) our spirituality and spiritual values, merging all forms in the material and economic dimension of life.

Within this global, traditional insight, today the anthropological impact has a role to play.

Following the science reasoning, and the ancestors' experience, the main principles of Religion never allow us to desist from, or ignore, the religious thinking and sincerity. In religious thought, one has to conform the religious precepts of rationality, human affairs, economics and business, technology, science/sciences and learning, and other subjects, not at the cost of fencing the religious beliefs.

The peaceful coexistence and the growth of Man's knowledge are here, amongst and with us. Undoubtedly, to day we are facing a sharp confrontation between tradition and modernity. I have just very briefly mentioned some pathways to overcome this contradiction. However, any consistent pathway cannot disregard religious tenets.

This is the social impact of the Doctrine of Mahdism after the age of appearance. The study of traditions testifies the need of essential reforms in such fields as social management, economics, business, social and human affairs, experimental sciences and some specific cultural fields.

Some Man's innate needs are common to all peoples, beyond the colour of the skin, beyond race and language, social status, etc. And religions cannot treat them with indifference. However, disregarding utopian solutions, and on a reduced scale, we must admit that, notwithstanding various schools of thought in both time and space, there are some ideals which are common to all human beings.

Hence, we are facing a global, anthropological approach, a domain without geographical borders, language, race, tribe and other conventions among nations, which can allow us to speculate about solutions for social and individual problems, representing a positive pathway out of conflict, towards social justice and peaceful coexistence.

God is at the centre of the virtuous society, and only His righteous judgement and His norms can revive what has been sunk into oblivion.

This anthropological impact of the "Doctrine of Mahdism" after appearance, poses some common views, some common concepts such as deliverance, salvation, reformation, Divine dominion and perfection: a universal community, which goes beyond the narrow enclave of boundaries, race, colour and language. We are confronted with a comprehensive order where common sense, pragmatic choices, religious feeling, higher idealism and altruistic concern for humanity's well-being constantly act and interact.

Within this dimension, there are some major features, such as Man's relationship with God, Man's relationship with his self, Man's relationship with society, Man's relationship with nature.

2. Viewed through an anthropological aspect and within this dimension, Man's relationship with Nature has a fundamental role to play

Beyond the new technological and economic dimension, Man and the spiritual dimension of human existence are a critical factor that cannot be disregarded. Modernisation, progress, efficiency, growth, production do not clash with principles such as social justice and economic progress, or with Man's inherent need to transcend and reach out to the Creator.

The global trend of the resurgence of Islam, observable all over the world, does not mean either an unhappy existence or militancy, which must renounce hope of peaceful process of coexistence. It is a orderly and harmonious universe in its nature and direction, regulated by one single Law which binds all its parts in harmonious and orderly sequence.

The task of human beings is to receive, to respond to, to adapt and apply the immutable characteristics of Divine rules. The human intellect - although refined, ambitious, scientific, educated, learned - well, the human intellect has always to swim in the sea of the unknown. Nevertheless, these human activities do not conflict with development and technology; they constitute progress and result in gradual improvement, within the harmony of the cosmic order.

They must take place within pre-determined perimeters and on the basis of a fixed axis. Man religious instinct is a reflection of the organic structure of the cosmos and its interrelated components.

Nature surrounds us. Knowledge and the vision of the world and its order and perfection are translated into a Messianic philosophy of the Divine, a culture which becomes history, order and law. Rationality, historicity of scientific knowledge, nature and experience, nature and human ratio, science and ethics, science and its language, dialogue and mutual understanding, coexistence and love.

As a global insight and from this perspective, Nature and Landscapes are perceived by modern / contemporary Humanity with formal, stylistic and technical characteristics which strongly reflect the teachings of the Divine prophets and their efforts to direct Man to the right way and settle his life and affairs according to Divine laws and within Divine dominion.

Nature and Landscapes, the Environment in its entirety, pertain to the Divine dominion and its Divine Laws.

To study this issue, one must deal with the impact with a world which lives its life in close, intimate contact with nature, a world and a culture which observe nature and the cosmos and perceive them in every detail over the slow march of days and nights, the rhythmical march of the seasons and the lunar cycles.

And when human beings perceive Nature, Landscapes and the Environment as a science, they use knowledge - or the human ratio - through which Man comes nearer to God and to that infinite, spherical and perfect universe which He created, and of which Man feels himself to be an intimate harmonious part.

However, nowadays, we are confronted with a world and a humanity often at odds with nature for their very survival, or for their personal delight and satisfaction. We are confronted with a humanity whose ultimate goal is to reach the maximum control over nature and environment. We are confronted with a world which conditions, manipulates nature and its laws.

And nature takes its own revenges conditioning Man and mankind in its turn. We are confronted with an environment often perceived in its tension with uncertainty and the blind recklessness of modern-contemporary times. It is a culture which - in the struggle to know, to understand the celestial

cosmos and its rules, to grasp the secrets of the whole universe - grapples with this universe for its own life and survival in peace and at war.

Thus, this culture disregards Divine laws and order, and provokes environmental catastrophes which arise from ignorance and lead to dramatic ecological crises and environmental disasters.

Hence, the preservation of environment becomes one of the main human objectives in order to preserve homeland and environment beyond geographical boundaries and physiographic frontiers.

Superficiality has often brought to misunderstandings, which prevent us from the attainment of some ideals such as justice, freedom, human rights. This objective must go beyond and behind the present shortcomings of a modernity linked to one country and one society. This objective must be attained in a cosmic order after the age of appearance, with the growth of Man's knowledge, and within a new World and Order.

Then a bright future can spring out, without allowing us to desist from the religious teachings and principles, surmounting all contradictions between tradition and modernity.

Likewise, environmental and ecological catastrophes can give way to a scientific, religious perception of Nature, which uses knowledge emerging from religious tenets, through which Man comes nearer to God and to that infinite, spherical and perfect universe which He created, and of which Man feels himself to be intrinsic and harmonious part.

Christian Zionist Messianism: How It Views Islam and Muslims

Represented by literally hundreds of small denominations and churches today, particularly in America, evangelical Christian Zionist messianism is today a formidable force and a major actor in global politics. It exercises an enormous clout in the current Bush administration in America.

George Bush, too, himself can be characterized as an arch upholder of this ideology, and his policies in the Middle East and elsewhere clearly reflect or tally with the Christian Zionist messianic agenda. Firmly supportive of Zionism, Israel and Israeli expansionism, Christian Zionist messianism is today one of the principal fountainheads of Islamophobia on the global scene.

This paper provides a general overview of the ideology of Christian Zionist messianism, focusing, in particular, on the way Islam and Muslims are depicted as an integral part-in the role of the antagonistic 'Other-of this ideology. It shows how Christian Zionist messianic expectations generate enormously destructive imperialistic and militaristic tendencies that threaten to drown the world in an unprecedented global war, with Muslims being projected as the principal 'enemy'.

The implications of this dangerous ideology, a combination of centuries of white racism and Islamophobia, Zionist claims to supremacy and aims at global domination and the machinations of the present global capitalistic order, for Muslims,

and for the world at large, are then sought to be outlined. This it does by looking specifically at the writings and activities of one of the leading American Christian Zionist ideologues of today, John Hagee, senior pastor of the Cornerstone Church in San Antonia in Texas, in America's notorious 'Bible-belt', which is also the bastion of white racism and supremacy in America.

Introduction

Approximately a tenth of the American population is today a devoted member of the cult of Christian Zionist messianism, writes the noted scholar-activist Dan Cohn-Sherbook, himself a Jew and Profesor of Judaism at the University of Wales in a recently published book, *The Politics of Apocalypse-The History and Influence of Christian Zionism*. 'It is the fastest growing religious movement in Christianity today', he writes. Many followers of the cult are from the middle and upper-middle classes, followers of televangelists who wield enormous political and economic clout.

Christian Zionist messianists are impelled by an imperialistic vision, of Jesus' impending arrival on earth as the Messiah, when he shall, so they believe, wipe out all his enemies (all non-Christians, presumably) and establish his global dominion, with his capital at Jerusalem. Meanwhile, Christian Zionists believe that they, as allegedly God's chosen people, will be spared the horrors of the global war that shall precede Jesus' advent, and will be miraculously wafted up to heaven, where they shall watch the final destruction of the world.

Christian Zionists believe that Jesus can only return the world once the Jews colonise Palestine. This belief is based on the contentious claim that God had granted this land to the progeny of Abraham, through Isaac, that is the Jews, for eternity. This land is not restricted to the present borders of the state of Israel.

Instead, Zionists, both Jewish and Christian, believe that a vast swathe of land, stretching from the Nile to the Euphrates, today inhabited by millions of Arab Muslims and Christians, belongs rightfully to the Jews, and so must be ethnically 'cleansed' of non-Jewish presence. Hence the justification they offer for their genocidal project aimed at the Arabs.

Hence, too, their consistent backing to Israel, their generous funding of Jewish settlements in Palestine, and their enormous pressure on successive American governments to adopt rigorously pro-Israel and anti Palestinian policies.

Cohn-Sherbook traces the origins of Christian Zionism to the changing attitude of Christian groups towards the Jews following the Protestant Revolution. The early Catholic Church justified the witch-hunt of the Jews, labeling them as alleged Christ-killers. However, numerous Protestant sects, while equally vehemently anti-Jewish, believed that the Jews needed to colonise Palestine before Jesus would re-appear in the world to save it. This was, and still is, by no means a generous acceptance of the Jews.

Rather, they believed, as Christian Zionists today do, that only those Jews who accepted Jesus as the Messiah would be saved. The rest would ally themselves with the Anti-Christ and would be defeated by Jesus and his forces and, consequently, would be sent off to eternal damnation in the fires of hell.

From the seventeenth century onwards, Cohn-Sherbook shows, numerous European, and, later American, Protestant churches began evolving schemes to settle the Jews in Palestine. This was also seen as a convenient way of getting rid of the Jewish presence in Europe. They petitioned various European powers to back this scheme. By the early nineteenth century, numerous British administrators had been won round to this idea, impelled, no doubt, also by a motive to undermine the Ottoman Empire, which at that time controlled Palestine, and by a deep-rooted aversion to Islam.

Increasingly, Christian Zionists began to join hands with secular Jewish Zionists, whose plans to settling Jews in Israel had nothing to do with any messianic hopes, but, rather, arose as a response to the centuries-old persecution of Jews by European Christians. (In contrast, Cohn-Sherbook rightly notes, 'In Arab lands, Jews had flourished for centuries [...] [while] in European countries Jewry had been subject to oppression and persecution.'

Ties between secular Jewish Zionists and Christian Zionists to pursue the common project of Jewish colonization of Palestine were strengthened by the support given to Theodore Herzl (b.1860), the Hungarian Jew who is regarded as the father of modern-day Zionism.

Cohn-Sherbook traces in considerable detail the course of this close collaboration down to the present-day, describing the strong political and

financial links between Christian and Israeli/Jewish Zionists and also the enormous clout of the Zionist lobby in American political circles.

Christian Zionism, based on a virulently anti-Islamic agenda, is a major hurdle to peace not just in West Asia but globally, too. Indeed, some Christian Zionists even ardently wish (and work for) a final global war or Armageddon, in the belief that this would accelerate their hoped-for wafting up to heaven and the subsequent arrival of Jesus. Christian Zionist messianism is a call for global war.

The belief that Christianity is the sole truth, that all other faiths are 'Satanic' or 'false', that the Jews must all gather in Palestine to fulfill so-called Biblical prophecies, and that a grand global war will soon erupt leading to the massacre of hundreds of millions and heralding the 'second coming' of Jesus, who will establish his Christian kingdom extending till the four corners of the world, clearly indicate the hate-driven, global expansionist project of Christian Zionism.

In his remarkable book, *The Cross and the Crescent: The Rise of American Evangelism and the Future of Muslims*, Muhammad Arif Zakaullah brings out in considerable detail how Christian Zionist messianists have specifically framed and targeted Muslims as allegedly being in league with the Anti-Christ and against whom Jesus and the Christians must fight in a bloody war of unprecedented dimensions in the last days.

This explains, Zakaullah writes, their unstinting support to Israel and its brutal suppression of the Palestinians, and their fervent backing of America's invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan and its so-called 'war on terror'. Zakaullah quotes several leading American Christian messianic evangelists as describing Islam and Muslims in lurid colours and branding it as irredeemably 'anti-Christian'.

Not surprisingly, he writes, they have been among the most fierce backers of America's imperialist misadventures that many Muslims see as directed against them. American imperialism is thus sought to be given a suitable 'Christian' sanction, and is presented as working to usher in Jesus' triumphant return to the world. War and bloodshed on an unimaginable scale, mainly against Muslims, and not peace and reconciliation, American Christian fundamentalists seem to believe, will herald the eventual establishment of the Kingdom of God, the rule of supposedly pious Christians all over the globe.

John Hagee: Ideologue of Christian Zionist Messianic Imperialism and Advocate Of Cosmic War Against Islam and Muslims

John Hagee is today recognized the world over as one of the leading ideologues of contemporary Christian Zionist messianism. He is the founder and pastor of the Cornerstone Church, in Texas, USA, which claims some 18,000 active members. As with numerous other similar American Christian fundamentalist preachers, his church is richly endowed and media savvy. Hagee is the president of the 'Global Evangelism' media company that broadcasts his daily programmes on television and radio throughout the

USA and around the world. He is the author of numerous books on Christian Zionism, some of which have been reprinted by Christian fundamentalist publishers abroad as well.

Final Dawn Over Jerusalem is one of Hagee's major writings on Christian Zionism that well exemplifies the imperialist agenda that lies at its very core. The aim of the book is to defend the Israeli occupation of Palestine, to denounce those who seek to protest Israeli atrocities, and to advocate the cause of 'Greater Israel', all this in the name of Christianity and premised on the notion of the Jews as being allegedly God's 'Chosen People'.

Racism is integral to the Christian Zionist message, as Hagee makes amply clear. The Bible, Hagee, says, describes the Jews as 'the apple of God's eye' [Zech 2:8]. He quotes the Bible as addressing the Jews and declaring, 'For you are a holy people to the LORD your God' and 'the LORD has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples who are on the face of the earth' [Deut.14:2].

This means, so Hagee argues, that those who harm the Jews or the state of Israel or stand in the way of the design of 'Greater Israel' will 'experience the instant wrath of God'. To those who dare to challenge the oppressive Zionist state, Hagee announces, 'The man or nation that lifts a voice or hand against Israel invites the wrath of God'. Such people will, Hagee insists, be 'cursed' by God.

Hagee's notion of God thus appears to be that of a tribal Jewish deity, who functions as a willing tool in the pursuit of Jewish expansionism. The Bible was written by Jewish hands, and given that, as many liberal Christians would themselves concede, much of it is a human product, numerous Biblical verses were written in order to legitimise the interests of the community from which its writers were drawn. This would seem obvious to any discerning layman, but Biblical literalists like Hagee vehemently disagree.

For them every word of the Bible is sacrosanct and divine. Biblical literalism is pressed into the service of the Christian Zionist messianic imperialist and racist agenda. Drawing upon numerous verses of the Bible, Hagee argues, 'God watches over Israel as a protective parent hovers over an only child'. 'The nation of Israel', he makes so bold as to declare, 'was created by a sovereign act of God.

All other nations were created by an act of war or a declaration of men, but Israel was intentionally created by God so that He would have a physical place of inheritance on the earth'.

Accordingly, Hagee would have us believe that for this god, who is seen as in need of a 'physical place' for himself, non-Jews or Gentiles, are second-rate human beings or less, and so can easily be dispensed with if they are seen as coming in the way of Jewish imperialism.

The tribal Jewish version of God that Hagee presents appears entirely unjust and arbitrary, far from being impartial in the way he deals with His creation. Given the fact that the God of the Biblical literalist imagination is a Jewish deity, and not the universal God who looks upon His entire

creation impartially, he is seen as blessing Jewish conquests of territories of their enemies.

Thus, quoting the Bible, Hagee writes that God gave the land of 'Greater Israel', a vast swathe of land stretching from Egypt all the way till Iraq, to the Jews, descendants of Isaac, forever.

That being the case, Hagee suggests that people living in those territories, millions of Arabs, both Muslims and Christians, have no right to live there or else must accept to live under Jewish rule. Although Hagee does not say this explicitly, what this means is that those who refuse to accept Jewish rule must, therefore, be either killed or expelled.

The god of Hagee's imagination appears as an entirely whimsical real estate agent. 'God established Israel's national geographic boundaries', Hagee writes. 'The exact borders of Israel are detailed in Scripture just as our heavenly Father dictated them', he goes on, adding, 'The divine Surveyor drove the original stakes into Judean soil and decreed that no one should ever change these property lines. The real estate contract and lands covenants were signed in blood and stand to this very hour'.

Hence, he argues, 'Jews have the absolute right as mandated by God to the land of Israel and, more specifically, to the city of Jerusalem'. Hence, he suggests, Palestinians have no claim to their own historical land, and must make way for Jewish occupiers.

Hagee's defence of Zionist imperialism goes to ridiculous lengths. Laughable as this may sound, he argues, 'Israel has a Spy in the sky'-God Himself. God, he claims, provides Israel, the Jewish people and the state of Israel, with special protection. 'No nation in the world can match the defensive force guarding the State of Israel.

The archangel Michael has a special assignment to guard Israel'. And those who, for any reason oppose Israel, and this includes Palestinians fighting Israeli occupation and oppression, are said to incur God's wrath. 'The Lord stands watch in the darkest night with an eye trained on the nation of Israel and, more specifically, Jerusalem. Those who fight with Israel fight with Him', Hagee asserts.

So central is Israel to Hagee's tribalistic version of God that he goes to the extent of arguing that the fate of each and every person on the face of the planet depends essentially on his or her attitude to the Jews. 'Prosperity or punishment depends on how we treat Israel', he alleges, because, he claims, the Jews, as descendants of Abraham 'enjoy heavenly favour'.

To back his claim he quotes the Bible as saying that when God entered into a covenant with Abraham, He gave him an 'awesome promise', saying, 'I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you. And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed' [Gen. 12:3]. Hence, Hagee insists, the United States,

and, indeed, anyone else who wishes to please God, must consistently engage in 'compassionate support of the State of Israel', adding that, 'The quickest and most effective way to be on God's side is to stand with the State of Israel and the Jewish people in their hour of need'. By doing this, he claims, one can win God's favour, because, 'God blesses the man or nation that blesses Israel or the Jewish people'.

At no time before, Hagee firmly believes, has support for Israel and Zionist imperialism, been more crucial than today. This is because, he claims, Jesus is returning to the world soon, and Israel must be protected in order to welcome the Messiah. Hagee's image of Jesus in his 'second coming' bears no resemblance to the familiar notion of the suffering, loving Christ.

Rather, in his description Jesus appears as a fierce warrior, rallying Christians to arms and heralding the final, global war, ironically in the name of the 'Prince of Peace'. In the doomsday scenario that Hagee outlines, what he calls 'fanatical attacks' by Arabs on Israel, particularly Jerusalem, would mount. In response, Christians the world over, he says, must rally behind Israel. At this hour, he insists, 'we must let the world know that if a line has to be drawn, it will be drawn around Christians as well as Jews. We are united and indivisible'.

The city of Jerusalem, Hagee believes, is the crux of the final battle before Jesus' 'second coming'. This city, considered sacred by Jews, Muslims and Christians alike, has been ordained, so Hagee argues, by God to be 'under the exclusive control of the Jewish people' until Jesus arrives again. The final battle of Armageddon will, he writes, be centred on this city, with Arabs or Muslims seeking to wrest control of it from the Jews.

In this regard, Hagee says, Christians, for their part, must staunchly defend Israel and must refuse any peace offers, such as allowing for a shared Jerusalem or joint control of the town by Jews and Arabs. In particular, he appeals to the United States to do everything in its power to back Israel and to crush its opponents, claiming this is the only way to win God's favour. If America fails to do this, so he warns, it would be crushed by God Himself!

Quoting various verses of the Bible, Hagee describes what he sees as the unfolding of events of cosmic proportions, ushering in a global war the like of which has never been witnessed hitherto and heralding the 'second coming of Jesus'. In this global war, he says, Muslims, whom he regards as followers of a 'false' religion, would ally with the Russians to fight against Israel. This would lead to a global nuclear war, with hundreds of millions being killed.

At this point, the 'Anti-Christ' will appear, attack Jerusalem and will take over the reigns of the world, falsely claiming to usher in peace. But, this grand deception will not last long, and, instead, will only lead to even more devastating wars. At this time, Hagee says, Christians must defend, by every means possible, the Jews and Israel, and wage war against the armies of those opposed to God's 'Chosen Race', the Jews. Only then can they be saved, he insists.

After years of global war and terrible destruction, Hagee writes, Jesus will be sent by God to deliver the world. Mounted on a white horse, he will arrive at the battlefield at Armageddon. Defeating the 'Anti-Christ' and his army, he will establish his global kingdom with his capital in Jerusalem, there to 'rule and reign forever'.

Hagee's description of Jesus' future global kingdom offers little cause to cheer for non-Christians, including, ironically, even the Jews whom he so ardently defends. It would, as he himself makes clear, be nothing short of a

global Christian empire, and an antiquated one at that, with kings and queens and presidents still in place! How they would continue to be around when Jesus rules the whole world is a mystery that Hagee leaves unsolved.

Ruled by Jesus, Hagee writes, 'Jerusalem, the apple of God's eye, will become the joy of the world. The city will become the international worship center, and people from all over the world will make pilgrimages to worship in the holy temple. Kings, queens, princes and presidents shall come to the Holy City' to adore Jesus. Presumably, these all will be Christians themselves, for Hagee quotes the Bible as predicting that 'at the name of Jesus every knee should bow [...] and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father'.

In a more recent book on the same subject, titled *Jerusalem Countdown: A Prelude to War*, Hagee further elaborates on the theme of a global war against Islam and Muslims that he appeals to Christians and Jews to jointly launch, arguing that this is precisely what Jesus wants to happen before his Second Coming. Not surprisingly, and like other Christian Zionist messianic evangelists, Hagee is convinced that there can be absolutely no room for dialogue with Muslims, principally because, so he argues, Christians and Jews, on the one hand, and Muslims, on the other, do not worship the same God.

In fact, he goes so far as to claim that the God of the Jews and the Christians is the diametrical opposite of the Muslim God. Accordingly, he presents Islam in the most lurid colours. He claims that Islam aims at nothing short of exterminating all non-Muslims and establishing a one-world Islamic government. Islam, he argues, is 'a doctrine of death' which promotes 'terrorism'. He approvingly quotes George Bush as having declared that America 'is at war with Islamic fascists' and insists that 'This is a religious war' and that 'there is no room for compromise'.

Hagee writes that America, and 'Christendom' more generally, along with the Jews, are now deeply involved in the final war that will supposedly herald the return of Jesus as messiah, a war in which Christians and Jews are pitted against Muslims. All Christians (and Jews), he asserts, must participate whole-heartedly in this cosmic war because, he says, if America loses the war,

'[T]he Law of Shariah, the Islamic law, will rule America and the Western world. Christian churches and synagogues will be burned to the ground. Every Christian who refuses to denounce Jesus to accept Allah will be decapitated [...] Radical Islam does not want us to be quiet-they want us to be dead.'

Hagee, like many of his fellow Christian fundamentalists, fervently exhorts America to take the lead in bloody attacks against Muslim states that are opposed to Israeli brutalities, because he sees these as fundamentally 'anti-Christian'.

In this regard, he singles out Iran, one of the most militarily powerful Muslim countries in the world and certainly the most vocally opposed to American imperialism, for particular attack. He claims that Iran is rapidly building up a nuclear stockpile, which it intends, so he says, to use to bomb and destroy Israel and perhaps America.

Before that can happen, he insists, America must take the initiative and invade and destroy Iran, particularly targeting its nuclear facilities. This step, he argues, would actually be 'part of God's plan for the future of Israel and the entire world', in that it would drive the world to the global disaster of Armageddon, 'the countdown that will usher in the end of the world'.

This will be, so he claims, followed by the rise of the Anti-Christ, and then, finally, the Second Coming of Jesus, when all non-Christians, including Muslims, will be slain. In short, a global war against Islam and Muslims is precisely what Hagee, like many others of his ilk, want to see unleashed in the hope that their wild messianic expectations will thereby be fulfilled.

Conclusion

Based on a fundamental hatred for Islam and Muslims, a legacy of many centuries, Christian Zionist messianism has emerged as one of the most pressing and disastrous threats and challenges of our times. With the massive financial and political clout that it wields, particularly in America, it is the new face of Western imperialism, one that is inherently and fiercely opposed to people of other faiths and even to Christians who do not subscribe to its bloody doctrines.

Islam and Muslims have a special place in the ideology of Christian Zionist messianic fascism: as alleged 'enemies' of God. Based on this bizarre belief, theological sanction is sought for bloody wars against Muslims the world over.

This ideology has instigated and is being used to justify American (and Israeli) imperialist aggression in many Muslim countries today, and possibly against Iran in the near future. Clearly, Muslims need to be aware of this dangerous project and take appropriate measures. So, also, do other non-Christians, who, like Muslims, are seen as doomed to hell by Christian fundamentalists.

And so, too, do other Christians, who relate to their religious traditions in different ways and who firmly believe that the Christian Zionist messianic project represents a fundamental betrayal of the message of Jesus Christ, ironically a betrayal being so aggressively perpetrated in his name.

The Governance of Imam Mahdi (pbuh) and Contemporary Models of Governments A Comparative Analysis

The modern world we live in today is changing in many ways. One of the areas in academia that has been constantly evolving is the area of governance, beginning with the thinking of Plato and Aristotle to contemporary approaches to political theory. Humankind has been in search of a perfect system of governance that will address the needs of the peoples governed in a perfect way.

The contemporary approaches to governance primarily seek to balance the interests of those governed with those governing. The interest of those governed is the satisfaction of their basic human needs and further to that, the fulfillment of their intellectual and spiritual needs. The interests of those governing should be to serve those governed and assist them achieving what is good for them.

The question that needs to be asked here is, "Are the needs of the governed met by those who govern? And if not, then what system of governance will meet the needs of those governed?" To analyse this statement, we will InshaAllah look at contemporary models of governance, analyse their shortcomings and compare them to the ideal mode of governance of the 12th Imam (AS).

Contemporary models of governance - Democracy and Dictatorship

The most advanced model of governance since the beginning of modern political theory is democracy. A democracy is both a form of government and a political philosophy. A common feature of democracy is competitive elections. The prerequisites of competitive elections are usually freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and some degree of rule of law. Civilian control of the military is often seen as necessary to prevent military dictatorship and interference with political affairs.

"Majority rule" is a major principle of democracy, though many democratic systems do not adhere to this strictly - representative democracy is more common than direct democracy, and minority rights are often protected from what is sometimes called "the tyranny of the majority".

No universally accepted definition of 'democracy' exists, especially with regard to the elements in a society which are required for it. Many people use the term "democracy" as shorthand for liberal democracy, which may include additional elements such as political pluralism, equality before the law, the right to petition elected officials for redress of grievances, due process, civil liberties, human rights, and elements of civil society outside the government.

Another form of government that exists in the world today is dictatorship. A dictatorship is an autocratic form of government in which the government is ruled by a dictator. In contemporary usage, dictatorship refers to an autocratic form of absolute rule by leadership unrestricted by law, constitutions, or other social and political factors within the state.

For some scholars, like Joseph C.W. Chan from the University of Hong Kong, dictatorship is a form of government that has the power to govern without consent of those being governed, while totalitarianism describes a state that regulates nearly every aspect of public and private behaviour of the people. In other words, dictatorship concerns the source of the governing power (where the power comes from) and totalitarianism concerns the scope of the governing power (what the government regulates).

In this sense, dictatorship (government without people's consent) is a contrast to democracy (government whose power comes from people) and totalitarianism (government controls every aspect of people's life) corresponds to liberalism (government emphasizes individual right and liberty).

Problems with Contemporary Models of Governance

The problem with these theories and the application of these models of governance is that the practice of it is far removed from its principles and secondly, in the case of a democracy, the majority rule does not necessarily conform to what is of real benefit to society.

This means that the governed are devoid of intellectual and spiritual benefit, in most parts of the world, for humankind cannot on their own accord gravitate towards the absolute good, "the (human soul is) certainly prone to evil, unless my Lord do bestow His Mercy."

On the other hand, we have a desperate situation in the third world where those governed do not have access to basic human needs. This is evident from the United Nations Human Development Index compiled annually since 1990 .

For example, the 2006 Human Development Report studies the underlying causes and consequences of a crisis that leaves 1.2 billion people without access to safe water and 2.6 billion without access to sanitation . Such a situation in the 21st century obviously leads us to the conclusion that mankind has not shown the ability yet of governing themselves in accordance to the Divine Will.

In fact, regardless of which form of governance we analyse, we see that the interest of those governed has not been achieved. Those in positions of leadership have time and time again overstepped the boundaries of their responsibilities by only satiating their selfish desires. This would explain the countless wars, indiscriminate killing of innocent civilians, voracious exploitation of the resources of others, amassing and hoarding wealth, and oppressive control over people that the world is witnessing today.

So the question that begs an answer is what system will bring pure justice and fairness and serve the interests of those governed. The answer lies in the belief of the followers of the Ahlul Bayt (AS).

This is the belief in the appearance of a divinely appointed leader commissioned to establish the law of the Creator on earth. This is the true form of government, the complete and most perfect, as it is designed by the Creator for the created and administered by an appointee of the Creator Himself.

The ideal model of governance vs. contemporary models

Abu Na'eem has narrated from the book Sefat-ul-Mahdi from Abu Sa'eed Khudri that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: "I give you glad-tidings about Mahdi (AS). He will emerge amongst my nation at the time when they will be in discord and war with each other. Then, he (AS) will fill the earth with equity and justice just as it was fraught with tyranny and oppression. The Mahdi (AS) will fill the hearts of Muhammad's (SAW) nation with riches and make them free from want. His justice would embrace all of them.

This Hadith alludes to one important point - that the leadership of the Ummah, and mankind can only be successfully carried out by the 12th Imam (AS). The fact that the 12th Imam (AS) will fill earth with equity and justice after it has been filled with tyranny and oppression indicates to us

that the models of governance concocted by man, however 'advanced' and with whatever terminology they are called will amount to nothing but tyranny and oppression.

We do not have to go far to prove this in the current political environment. Sufficed to say, that the Security Council of the United Nations is made up of a selected few and only imposes their will regardless of how their will adversely affect other peoples. If this is not the highest form of formalized oppression, then what is?

In the seventh chapter of the book Eqdud-Durar, the author narrates from Amir-ul-Mumineen Ali (AS) that the, "Mahdi (AS) will dispatch his chiefs to various cities for establishing justice amongst the people. The wolves and sheep shall graze together. The children will play with the snakes and scorpions without being harmed the least.

Evil will vanish and goodness will remain. People will cultivate about 750 grams and will receive in return about 525 kilograms just as the same has been mentioned in the Holy Quran. Adultery, wine-drinking and usury will be uprooted. People will have a relish for worship, divine laws and faith and a desire for mixing in the society.

Life of man will lengthen, properties held in trust would be returned back, trees will bear fruits, blessings will double, the wicked will be destroyed, the virtuous ones will remain and those having grudge against the Ahlul Bayt (AS) will cease to exist."

Imam Ali (AS) has eloquently described the model and characteristics of the government of the 12th Imam (AS). Firstly 12th Imam (AS) will dispatch chiefs to establish justice under his command, and who can be a more just leader than one who is divinely appointed. The justice will be divine and as a natural consequence peace, tranquility and stability will be established.

We pray that InshaAllah we can live to experience such earthly bliss. The blessing in the crop is the direct result of the leadership of the 12th Imam (AS) - Allah's (SWT) chosen representative.

This is in stark contrast to the real or artificial food shortage that exists in the world today, and that is the cause of the rise in world food prices. If as a global community we practice and "advanced" model of governance, then why are there shortages of basic needs such as food, water and shelter for many in the world.

Another key aspect mentioned in the Hadith is the absence of evil - in the form of adultery, wine-drinking and usury - these vices which are detrimental to the soul will be abandoned as the 12th Imam (AS) will establish such a comprehensive government that people will know the harm of these practices in relation to their hereafter and as a result will despise such activities.

The governance structure of the 12th Imam (AS) will consider the subject's interests in this world and the hereafter, unlike the government's today whose primary concern is material in nature. To add to this point, governments today propagate vice.

Adultery, more commonly known as "common-law" is part of the legislation in many of the so-called "civilised" countries making it a

recognised form of vice. Promiscuity is licensed, alcohol is openly sold and usury is entrenched in the economy. Based on the Hadith of Imam Ali (AS), such governments are far removed from the true reality of divine governance and there is no way they can establish justices in its perfect form.

The famous Du'a that we recite every Friday, lamenting the absence of the 12th Imam (AS), has important elements of the government of the Imam (AS). The antithesis of the Imam's government can be derived from the statements mentioned. This means that a statement like, "Where is the awaited saviour who will set the have-nots and the depressed on their feet?" means that the have-nots and depressed are not on their feet and that they are being oppressed.

The following statements show what we want in the government of the 12th Imam (AS) that we do not have and will never have until he appears.

"Where is the The Hope who will put an end to tyranny and oppression?

Where is the preserved guaranty who shall give new life to rule of law and refined way of life?

Where is the Chosen in preference good who shall raise the spirits of the people and give currency to justice and fairplay?

Where is the hope-giving confidante who shall make full use of the "Book" and define the sphere of action?

Where is he who shall blot out dogma in the matter of religion and his (Muhammad's) children?

Where is he who shall break up meddling trouble and tampering?

Where is he who shall pull down the foundations of confusion (polytheists) and hypocrisy?

Where is he who shall stamp out corruption, vice, reaction and injustice?

Where is he who shall trim the outgrowth of despair, longing and hardships?

Where is he who shall erase the traces of unfairness and self-seeking conceit?

Where is he who shall untie the twisted knots of falsehood and disruption?

Where is he who shall separate senselessness and insolence from the people?

Where is he who shall tear up by the roots obstinacy, corruption and apostasy?

Where is he who shall love dearly the favourites of Allah and take pains to tame and train the transgressors?

Where is he who shall make people familiar with "words of wisdom"?

Where is the ultimate (Divine) source of plenty and prosperity?

Where is the "Divine aspect" the God-fearing may look up to?

Where is the link that connects the cosmic complex?

Where is the authority who shall communicate and make known the true point of view?

Where is the author of the conception of peace, fairplay and welfare?

Where is the defender of the traditions of the Prophets and their children?"

And most importantly for our hearts that burn at the tragedy of Karbala:

"Where is the investigator of the blood of the Martyrs of Karbala?"

Where is he who shall get the upper hand over the perpetrators of crime and greed?

Where is he who shall not rest until he answers the cries of help when called upon?"

Judging by these statements that we recite, we are extremely far from the ideal model of governance and that is why we are asking about the whereabouts of the Imam (AS) who will come and establish these conditions.

Governance of the 12th Imam (AS) - Governance within Religion

The key aspect of the governance of the 12th Imam (AS) that is missing in contemporary governance is that his government will be based on the true Islam, the religion that Allah (SWT) has ordained for mankind. Islam is not a religion confined to belief and worship. It is a complete system of belief, worship, ethics, politics and society. This is very different from the democracy or dictatorship of today.

The government of the 12th Imam (AS) will mark the final victory, of the forces of righteousness, peace and justice over those of evil, oppression and tyranny; of the world-wide spread of the Islamic faith; the complete and all-round establishment of high human values; the formation of a utopian and an ideal society and lastly the accomplishment of this ideal at the hands of a holy and eminent personality called the Mahdi (AS).

This final government under the Mahdi (AS) is a Qur'anic concept, which in very clear terms, predicts:

1. The final victory of Islam.

It is He who has sent His messenger with the guidance and the religion of truth to make it prevail over every other religion. However much the disbelievers may dislike it.

(Surah al-Tawbah, 9:33 and Surah As-Saff, 61:9)

2. The absolute supremacy of the good and the pious.

Indeed We have written in the Psalms after the Torah had been revealed: The righteous among My slaves shall inherit the earth. (Surah al-Anbiya. 21:105)

3. The final collapse of the oppressors and the tyrants.

We willed to show favour to those who were persecuted in the earth and to make them leaders and masters. It was also Our will to give them power in the earth and to show Pharaoh, Haman and their hosts to experience from their victims what they feared most. (Surah al-Qasas, 28:5-6)

4. A bright and happy future for humanity.

Moses told his people to seek help from Allah and exercise patience. The earth belongs to Him and He has made it the heritage of whichever of His servants He chooses. The Final Victory is for the pious. (Surah al-A'raf 7:128)

Therefore this belief of the coming of the 12th Imam (AS) is not an outcome of any wishful thinking; it is grounded in the Holy Quran. It is a result of the working of the system of nature, the evolutionary process of history, man's confidence in the future and the total rejection by him of pessimism about the destiny of mankind.

The author of Yanabi-ul-Mawadda narrates from Shaikh Mohyiddin Arabi from his book Fotouhat-Makkiyah (chapter 366) about Mahdi (AS) and his ministers and says, "The Mahdi (AS) will emerge when religion would be on the decline. The one who would not accept will be killed and the one who would engage in debate with him will be defeated.

He will so reveal the realities of religion that had the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) been alive, he too would have judged in the same manner. He will

eradicate the (false) religions from the face of the earth. Then, except for the pure religion, no other religion would remain over the earth."

This Hadith clearly indicates the religion of Islam will be revived and that the basis of the rulership will be religion. This is because the truth of Islam will be made obvious by the 12th Imam (AS) and the only way to success will be through Islam - because that is the way that Allah (SWT) has charted out for humankind.

The author of Yanabi-ul-Mawadda also narrates from the book "Manaqib" which narrate from Imam Ali-ibn-Musa Ar-Ridha who narrates from his father that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) while mentioning the virtues of his household and his Mi'raj (ascension to heaven) said: I asked: "O my lord, who are my legatees?" I heard a call saying: "O Muhammad (SAW)! Your legatees are those whose names have been written on the enclosure of my throne."

"I looked and saw twelve lights. A green cover spread over each light and the names of my legatees were written on each of them where the first of them was Ali and the last of them Mahdi (AS). I asked: "O lord, are they the legatees after me?" I heard a call saying: "After you, they are my friends, chosen ones and proofs upon my creatures. They are your legatees. I swear by my glory and majesty that I will cleanse the earth from its tyranny by the hands of the last of the one who is Mahdi (AS).

I will make him conquer the east and west. I will make the wind to conquer for him and make the clouds submissive to him. I will grant him power through some means and will help him by means of his own army. I will assist him through the angels until he gains power over my government and gathers the people towards my Tauheed (monotheism). Thereafter, I will expand his and extend the days for my friends until the day of judgement.

This Hadith indicates that the Imam (AS) will rule the entire world and that Allah (SWT) will support him in every way. Again, the notion of religion - whose basis is Tauheed, is identified as the key element on which the authority will revolve around.

The author of Eqdud-Durar narrates that Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali-ibn-Abi Talib (AS) while mentioning about Mahdi (AS) and his reforms said, "There is no heresy but that Mahdi will uproot it and there is no Sunnah (practice) but that Mahdi (AS) will enliven it."

In the same book, there is a narration from the book Fara'ed-us-Simtain, which narrates from Abu-Imamah Baheli that the Holy Prophet (SAW) said, "The Mahdi (AS) will extract the treasures and will conquer the cities of the polytheists and infidels."

It suffices to reiterate at this point that the government of the 12th Imam (AS) under the religion of Islam will, without doubt, cater to both the physical and spiritual needs of the mankind. So for example, coupled with the establishment of religion on the earth, will be the best utilization of the earth's resources. And because the government will be the government of Allah (SWT), the Barakah and blessings of the resources of the earth will multiply so much so that there will be no poor to give charity to.

Imam Muhammad ibn 'Ali al-Baqir (peace be upon both of them) said :
"When the Qa'im (AS) of the Ahlul Bayt makes his advent, he will divide (the riches) with equity and will show justice among the people. So whoever obeys him, has obeyed Allah; and whoever goes against him, has gone against Allah. Indeed al-Mahdi was named as such because he will guide to the hidden affairs."

Conclusion

The only system that will bring pure justice and fairness and serve the interests of those governed is the government of the 12th Imam (AS). He (AS) will InshaAllah establish the law of the Creator on earth. This is the true form of government, the complete and most perfect, as it is designed by the Allah (SWT) for the created and administered by an appointee of the Creator Himself.

The appearance of the Mahdi (AS) is Allah's favour for the oppressed and the weak and is a means of their coming to power and gaining the promised Divine succession in the whole world. The holy Qur'an says:

We have decided to grant favour to the suppressed ones by appointing them leaders and heirs of the earth.

The main difference between Imam Mahdi's (AS) government and the contemporary ones is that his source of the leadership is divine and therefore will undoubtedly serve the interests of the people. Whereas the purpose of contemporary models of governments are to satisfy selfish human desires, the purpose of the Imam's (AS) leadership is to gather people towards Tauheed.

In conclusion, the appearance and revolution of the Mahdi (AS) is an inspiring Islamic belief. Its culmination is perfection. The results of the Imam's (AS) leadership is that mankind will attain benefit for themselves like never seen before under any other government.

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Labor leisure choices under the Divine Economics Frame work

Labor-leisure choices have been explored by the social scientists in a conventional rigorous manner. It has been taken as a residual demand function (Labor supply models), as well as in the joint utility (consumption and leisure bundles) maximizing frameworks (e.g. varian, 1992) . Leisure choices are taken as consumption expenditure choices, where one tends to have time for consuming what she has earned from the market labor hours provided. Where as in our analysis which is based on a tradition of divine revelations by Imam Mosa Kazim (A.S), it is taken as an allocation which has both the expenditure choices as well as investment choices. It is synonyms to emerging viewpoint about educational expenditures as an investment, which are differentiated from the consumption expenditures.

As noted by Zaman (2005) that Current Economic theory is firmly set in the mold structured by Adam Smith (1776) where the objective is to look into factors which affect the wealth (and hence power, prosperity) of nations considered as a whole. This makes economic striving into a rat race, where everybody strives to get ahead but net gain to society is zero among the wealthy.

The objectives of the present study is to develop a theoretical framework following Hamdani (2003), which incorporates the faith as an overarching principle for human resource allocation decision and see its implications on different aspects of wellbeing. Secondly the paper would estimate the leisure choices using the Divine Economics framework of Hamdani (2003) and Hamdani et.al (2004) for resource allocation.

Theoretical Background

Conventional concept of human being as an economic agent is very narrow, rather abstract which has no linkage (which emphasizes the need to develop an interdisciplinary approach to human development) between why man was created, its objectives of life and time path it carries, the promised resources, what he has to do in his different stages of life (the natural cycle) and finally where would he move after that cycle on this earth.

In all religions it is proposed that the Humans are created for a divine cause and their lifecycle on earth is not merely to be the best in terms of what they eat, Wear, or which social status they enjoy etc but the supreme objective is to obey GOD and enjoy the blessings of GOD by recognizing them. As noted in Al-Quran 51:56, narrated by Zaidi (2005) that God has created Jinns and mankind only for serving God.

Further it is stated in Al-Quran 67:2 that God created death and life so that The He may test which of you is best in deeds. Also Jaffar Hussain (2004) quoted the will of Ali ibn-e-abi Talib (A.S) to his son Hussain ibn-e-Ali (A.S) in Nahejul Balagha; that remember! You are born for the life after death, and not for the world, you are created to be mortal and not for immortality, you are created to be died and not for life, and you are in such a state which has nothing as right, but it's a place which is to provide for the luggage of life after death and this state is a pass for that (life after death).

Zaidi (2005, pp 88-89) stated that God created mankind as a distinguished species, provided them guidance, and then after granting them freedom of action, put them on trial through their worldly lives. Further in Al-Quran 48:28 it is stated that the true religion (Islam) will prevail over all other religions.

That would be through Imam Mahdi (A.S) and would cover the entire world and by that time there would be love, peace, security and prosperity, which previously would be hate, tyranny and hunger. That is only possible if the core concept of human well being and happiness is understood through the divine revelations and then certain institutional and policy parameters are identified for both micro and macro prescriptions.

Economics as a behavioral science is not confined only to the study of conventional economic causes now, rather a broad range of interdisciplinary causes can lead to economic behavioral outcomes. Neoclassical economic school of thought purports rational choice, selfish behavior and utility maximizing approach for economic agents.

Empirically and theologically this might be a restrictive set of assumptions. As Zaidi(2005) notes that there is a clear separation of ethics from economics and there is an obsession of making economics a more positive science to such extremes where human considerations are devoid.

Economics as a subject is a description of Human behavior, for a particular scope, where the human is an economic agent with certain scenarios and objectives, thus using frame work such as utility, which is not based on material content, rather it is based on subjective content; the agent's behavior is thus described by establishing money metric utility functions and opportunity cost of time in money equivalent terms.

By using local non-satiation assumptions more money resources are defined to lead to more utility and thus subjective wellbeing. Where as a non-conventional approach of defining time-metric utility functions and expanding the decisions horizon from finite to infinite, i.e. including life after death period (Hamdani and Khalid, 2003), with varying weights for individuals with different levels of faith leads to such normative outcomes which develops coherence in societal joint welfare objectives and individual welfare objectives.

These objectives are time consistent, pareto optimal and welfare maximizing competitive outcomes as well. However these faith indices developments are yet purely subjective and need to develop sound and consensus based technical grounds, as pointed out by Nadeem (2002) and Siddique (2007) (see Hamdani, 2007 for further discussion).

Hence the holistic objective of a Human being would be to maximize her wellbeing through allocation of her allotted (for her life cycle) resources on a number of aspects of her life. In that the resources are transformed through a complex transformation from one real space to the other. e.g. from the available 24 hours, after taking away the compulsory time (this may also vary from person to person, depending on one's health from psychological, spiritual, religious and physical perspective), the time space would then be converted into money space for carrying out money dependent transactions.

Where τ is the positive monotonic transformation where time inputs are converted into money resources based on parameters such as human capital, social capital, technology and religious capital etc. Here the small t represents the time resources real space, and I is the nominal income space. However not all the time resources are converted in monetary resources, because human wellbeing is maximized by investing direct time inputs as well.

Similarly the income resource are then transferred in terms of consumable commodities both the durable and non-durables. As the nature of these transformed variables is different from the input/resource variables hence their space does not necessarily present the same structure as the former.

Therefore it becomes objective to explore such parameters which are not necessarily in the same metric as of the inputs. In our case, for the utility functions, a conventional method is to use the money metric utility functions to gauge the marginal increase in the utility through the increase in resources (income) and describes as the marginal impact on the utility subject to change of one unit increase in the income .

This becomes the micro- foundations to different micro and macro policy prescriptions, which identifies that the material resources are the only source of utility as it is subjectivised to the money metric resources. So the conventional theories would suggest the more (income) the better (in terms of welfare) would be the individual (whether a human unit, household, society or the country etc).

This interpretation might also lead to wrongly conclude from literature of games that a rational player would choose to maximize his payoffs regardless of the opponents welfare given they have strategic advantage. Where as in the literature of games (e.g. see Camerer Colin F. 2003, pp 56-57) results of dictator ultimatum games show tendency towards more fair allocation rather than skewed towards their own welfare maximization.

The above graph shows that among 25 pairs of players dividing \$13 through playing a dictator game which was conducted by Frey and Bohnet (1997) with displaying one-way ID and information, showed that although the offerer were allowed to take all as it was a dictator game but there were no persons who took nothing for himself and gave away all to the opponent . Although there were 12 percent of the dictators in game who took almost all of the bounty. But majority of the player were in the region where the divisions were between 31% to 60%, and the average take by the dictator was just 52%.

This result is clearly indicating that if only subjective utility maximizing economic agents with money metric criteria is taken then it would be a wrong criteria for positive analysis, and basing policy recommendations on even less than 12 % of the sample would be a statistical nightmare.

Economics of well-being

The above discussion leads us to further investigate that what are the decision criterias for individuals then. According to Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy; Well-being is most commonly used in philosophy to describe what is non-instrumentally or ultimately good for a person.

And 'Happiness' is often used, in ordinary life, to refer to a short-lived state of a person, frequently a feeling of contentment. According to the utilitarian approach maximisation of human well-being is the supreme objective of life, and adding to it the conventional theory of social contract, welfare in a pragmatic sense (both material, non-material and equitable) for the whole society and in fact for the whole human kind. Philosophically Happiness scope is more wider, encompassing a whole life. Focusing on some aspects about happiness of a person's life, or of their happy life, could give wrong results even if that person was in fact is usually pretty miserable.

In a utilitarian approach where money from the means of exchange is converted into means for an optimality object has lead to more disparities and reduction in the true well-being of the people. Rich (by virtue of money metric system) are getting richer and the poor poorer, e.g. as zaidi (2005) wrote that in 1959 the ratio of poor to rich was 30:1 in the world which in 2001 has worsened to 85:1.

Which is consistent with what was revealed in the Al-Quran, as noted in Al-Quran 4:79 that whatever good happens to mankind is from God (as the God's creation is nothing but good), and whatever evil happens is because of mankind's own efforts.

Theoretically the concept of individual and societal well-being from the Islamic perspective could be defined as stated in Al-Quran 16:90 that a pious (prosperous in a holistic manner) society would promote and establish Adl (Justice), Ihsan (Sacrifice, Pardon, Kindness with selflessness) and Iyta-idhyl-qurba (generosity and kindness with relatives) and forbids Fahsha (hidden indecent acts of sin and evil), Munkar (deliberate acts of sin and evil, committed openly) and Baghyi (exceeding one's legitimate rights, arrogance and cruelty).

So Happiness bliss point will be achieved in Mahdi era as believed by all sects in Islam. In that era the above noted prosperity parameters would be institutionally provided. Because through the learning by divine knowledge, there would be a transformation of the society in such an institution.

As noted by Hamdani (2006) that for the preparation of Imam Mahdi (AS) era of global optimality from the practical perspective is that the society has to be fully aware of the huge resources provided by God and the faith based state of the art usage of these resources, as there would be the perfection of knowledge in that optimal era.

Theory of resource allocation

Religion is practiced all across the globe with many religions and scores of believers. People tend to provide resources both in terms of self-time, earned resources for oneself as well as for the societal religious capital development.

As observed above, most of the world population have some affiliation with some religion, and almost every religion have a description of human life horizon which is extended over and above the life cycle which is conventionally given in paradigms of economics. As noted in Al-Quran 11:15-16 and 64:11 that who goes after the life on earth's well-being only (following the conventional money metric objectives) would be awarded in

this earth without any reduction in their return, but there would be nothing for them in the life after death.

Hence it would be logical to adopt the frame work adopted by Hamdani (2003) where he writes:

"Hope for an afterlife reward (divinely promised benefits in heavens) is central to consumer behavior in Islam (and in some other religions too)" And derive the new sets of demand functions for resource allocation, which has dynamic equilibrium relations, and satisfy all tests of reliability and statistical validity with parsimony. Especially for a learned preparation of welcoming Our Imam of the time (Mahdi, A.S) requires us to find such a global optima for dynamic and static resource allocation equilibrium which confers to the totality of individual optimization process of her well-being.

Leisure Demand

Leisure is the core component of a person's well-being, as he earns and spends time to enjoy this phenomenon which increases her pleasure from life. Conventionally leisure is taken to be the residual term from a utility maximizing (which is money metric) behavior of a consumer, where he determines the labor supply commitment and the left over is the time for leisure and consumption. In this case the leisure is taken as a commodity, which is bought back by paying a price (wage), hence it becomes a kind of an opportunity cost and taken as an expenditure.

This is the conventional approach, in our analysis we take it from the perspective that there is a committed leisure requirement and then over and above that is the consumer choice problem.

As every individual is in a state of dynamic optimization i.e. maximizing one's happiness at each point of time considering the time and resource constraint and a planning horizon which goes beyond the current life on earth (Hamdani 2002, 2004, 2006). He has to obey certain natural and implicit social constraints for his lively hood.

Which are defined in the divine religions. He distributes his resources in such a manner, which is based on economic rationality as per conventional school of thought where as the Divine Economics school of thought proposes various committed (necessary allocations) and optional commitments basing on a life horizon which is infinite as well as the transformed outcomes value to one's well-being.

So in a total sense it is not the Material objectivity of life which ensures happiness There are certain behaviors, which encompasses those allocations, which doesn't have a direct impact on ones material well-being.

There could be other objective functions such as time metric utility function which can be used Now taking the utilitarian approach the quest of human being would be to maximize their living standards, and well-being which are classified as economic, social, religious and personal.

As revealed by Imam Moosa Kazim (A.S); these are;

- a) Moaash (Economic Livelihood),
- b) Moasharat (Social Livelihood),
- c) Monajat (Religious Livelihood) and
- d) Zaat (Personal livelihood)

Using Faith based model of Hamdani (2003), we can re-write the same as following:

The maximization process would be to:

Choose amounts of time and money resources (which can be converted totally in time if from income it is converted in no of hours involved) for Moash (Economic livelihood; market based earning activities; which includes objects depending on the stage of life and other circumstances, investment expenditure for human capital, other physical infrastructure, social capital, children education etc),

then for moashrat (Social Livelihood: society based allocation, which are not directly related to earning in the first period and may base on social norms, rituals and practices), then for Monajat (Religious Livelihood: purely for religious aspirations), then for Zaat (personal lively hood: which include

family, his personal time for rest and other necessary doings, home production, food and other recreational consumption, etc)

Subject to:

Income (those resources which are generated un-worked, e.g. bequest, donation, saving, discount, subsidy, social capital returns, family providing support etc), and time constraint Which would give:

Over all maximum well-being rather than only metric utility or it's that utility function which includes all of the above arguments or the sum of maximised utility of moash, moashrat, monajat and zaat.

The budget constraint which is also linked with the time for moaash i.e. the total income resource could be written as $Y_i = v_{mi} \cdot t_m +$ un-worked income Where Y_i is the total available income, v_{mi} is the value of market time, usually taken as to be the wage rate, and t_m is the total time allocated to the market for earning activity.

Then the total value time constraint can be written as $VT = V_i \cdot 24 = v_{mi} \cdot t_m + v_{si} \cdot t_s + v_{ri} \cdot t_r + v_{zi} \cdot t_z$ Where V_i is the average value per unit of time for i th individual, v_{si} is the value for time spent on societal activities for i th individual, t_s is the time allocated for societal activities, v_{ri} is the value for time spent on religious activities for i th individual, t_r is the time allocated for religious activities, v_{zi} is the value for time spent on personal activities for i th individual and t_z is the time allocated for personal activities.

Now we can solve this model for committed and non-committed time allocation. However the following needs to be taken into account while following that:

As noted by Hamdani (2003) the goods produced (converted in time metric equivalent) are taken with reference to their satisfying characters towards the sub objective functions explained above.

Further all the goods could be either substitutes or complements if they are taken with reference to time.

Similarly the sub-objective functions also have the same characters of being substitutes or complements.

As the objective is of time allocation so we don't use the commodity buying constraint, and that is also built in the time constraint as the earning and from zaat the consumption is there.

Depending on ones' religiosity or the faith developed, the choice bundle can vary and each time allocation bundle will carry different value to oneself .

Conventional stock of knowledge take these allocations as mutually exclusive, where as the true and divine source of knowledge reveals to us that investing time in a prescribed, natural way would not only lead to a rational and fair allocation of these resource but also lead to a maximum potential level of ones' well-being (Imam Zain-ul-Abdin (A.S) in Iqwal-e-Chhardeh Masoomeen).

There would be a substitutability and complementarity relations in these resource allocations towards achieving the goal of maximizing the well being of individuals. These optimal choices are mostly complimentary if taken in a faith-based model (See Divine Economics Framework e.g. Hamdani 2003) and mostly substitute other wise.

One of the four parts of time allocation i.e. time for personal livelihood (zaat) development which, according to Imam Mosa Kazim (A.S), actually reinforces other set of allocations and thereby leads towards reaching a global maxima of individual happiness or satisfaction. As now the allocation of their time based normalized resources are in a dynamic and a life horizon model considering among other resource constraints; the environments he/she is present or has a tendency to develop in future, such as Human Environment (which includes Nature, type and quality of human beings around the individual in perspective of their knowledge, skills, behaviors, faith, moral values, beliefs and associations). This model is developed in order to explore the following hypothesis:

1. A more religious person would tend to develop a human environment which is futuristic; Time allocation of a more religious person would be more balanced

2. Longer Prostration reduces biological need for rest and sleep thereby sparing time for other allocations, thus have macro implication Data and methodology Divine economics Model for leisure based on Hamdani (2003), would be used. Which is described as For present analysis the Divine Economics Survey-VI; Survey of Religiosity and Rehabilitation Patterns in Earthquake Affected Areas of Pakistan & AJ&K (2006) for 764 households in Azad Kashmir and Pakistan conducted by Harvard University is used.

Estimation results Table10.4: Mean Time Allocation Earthquake Before After Moash (Economic livelihood) 7.66 7.13 Moasharat (Social Livelihood) 2.85 3.10 Voluntary Time 0.72 0.95 Monajat (Religious Livelihood) 2.04 2.18 Zaat (Personal Livelihood) 9.49 9.06 The quest of human being is to maximize their living standards; whether they are Moash (Economic Livelihood), Moasharat (Social Livelihood), Monajat (Religious Livelihood) and Zaat (Personal livelihood).

A comprehensive analysis is required in the present situation to recommend policy measures. The mean time allocated to the above time uses, by the respondents has been changed after earthquake. The time allocated to economic livelihood has been reduced, while this time has re-allocated to social livelihood, Monajat and voluntary work. The personal livelihood time has also reduced while religious livelihood time increased. Our results show that almost 31% of the respondents almost daily discuss rewards and punishment of deeds with the human environment he is living in.

Further 85.4% do it on a regular basis. Where as almost 75% discuss even the futuristic religious variables, as a rationale faith based human beings they develop moral and other behaviors. The mean time allocated to the above time uses, by the respondents has been changed after earthquake. The time allocated to economic livelihood has been reduced, while this time has re-allocated to social livelihood, Monajat and voluntary work. The personal livelihood time has also reduced while religious livelihood time increased.

Conclusion

A very small set of socio-cultural-personal and religious dimensions for appreciating the Mahdaviat principles of an ideal human life were brought into economic analysis in order to make the subject of economics more closer to real life phenomenon of present time as well as the time to come. But clearly there is an ample need for developing our understanding and presenting to the world how practical in maximizing global welfare is the Mahdaviat era.

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