

## **A Coming Together of Sunnite and Shiite Masses on Welcoming Imam Mahdi through Authentic Ahadith and Constructive Role of Media**

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### **Abstract**

The modern period has surpassed every other period in the matter of material progress and scientific explorations. The means of communication have improved so much that it leaves no doubt that we are now in that particular age about which the Prophet (SAW) said: 'Islam will enter each and every house of the world, either by honoring or humiliating its dwellers'. It will honor those who will be ready to welcome it, and it will humiliate the rest. This powerful re-appearance of Islam is in reality the coming of Imam Mahdi. The Sunnites and Shiites both strongly believe in the coming of Imam Mahdi. Now the question is whether we are ready to welcome him or not? There are apparently some differences found in the Sunnites and Shiites narrations regarding Imam Mahdi. What are those differences? Are those differences genuine or artificial? This paper will look into the primary sources of Sunnites and Shiites, collect the authentic Ahadith and sayings of the Imams (Four from Sunnite Jurisprudence and Twelve from the family of the holy Prophet), conduct ten interviews; five from the Sunnite and five from the Shiites scholars, and try to bridge the gap, if any, between the two. Some social scientists and religious scholars solemnly believe that enlightenment of the masses through the constructive role of media can be very helpful in reaching this goal. Unfortunately, the media that is never resting and never allowing respite, until now it has been successful in corrupting Muslims' identity, spreading indecency, and excelling in presenting of falsehood in the form of virtue. All these are anti Mahdawi characteristics pushing away the audience of media in particular and masses in general from welcoming Imam Mahdi. This paper will discuss how the role of media can be given a positive direction so that it may be helpful in preparing the Muslims, both Sunnites and Shiites, in coming close to each other and getting ready for welcoming the sacred coming of Imam Mahdi.

**Key Words:** Ahadith, Family of the Prophet, Imams, Jurisprudence, Mahdi, Shiites, Sunnites.

### **Introduction**

Islam has its own force and convincing power through which it keeps on spreading day by day. It is a favor of Allah upon anyone of us if he or she is given a chance to serve this religion. Allah the Almighty, while talking about those Bedouins who came from the desert and behaved in a way as if they have done a great favor to the holy Prophet by accepting Islam, says:

يَمُنُّونَ عَلَيْكَ أَنْ أَسْلَمُوا قُلْ لَا تَمُنُّوا عَلَيَّ إِسْلَامَكُم بَلِ اللَّهُ يَمُنُّ عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْ هَدَاكُمْ لِلْإِيمَانِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

"They regard as favor to you (O Muhammad) that they have embraced Islam. Say: Count not your Islam as a favor to me. Nay, but Allah has conferred a favor upon you that He has guided you to the Faith."<sup>1</sup>

It is a reality, without any slightest doubt that the future of this world belongs to Islam.

Now the question that poses itself to all of us is whether we are with the group who is ready to welcome Islam or we are with some other group. There is another reality which also has no room for doubt, because we are seeing it. It is our division into many sects and groups. The members of every sect and group think that they are the true followers of Islam. Finally there is a third reality that is also beyond any doubt. All the Muslim sects believe in that reality. It says that Imam Mahdi is going to come. It also says that the religion he will call us to is the pure form of Islam.<sup>2</sup>

Many *Ahadith* have been narrated about Imam Mahdi in the primary sources of both Sunnites and Shiites. Some of these *Ahadith* are authentic while some are weak. I will try my level best to check the authenticity of the *Ahadith* I will narrate, so that I may reach the objective for which this article is being written. The version of Imam Mahdi that Sunnites have, differs from the version of Shiites. So the objective for writing this article is to bridge the gap between the Sunnites and Shiites over the issue of Imam Mahdi.

### Sunnite Primary Sources that Mention the Coming of Imam Mahdi

First of all we must keep in mind that all the Muslims agree that in the end of time, a man from the family of the holy Prophet will come out, strengthen this religion and will be followed by all the Muslims. He will rule the world with justice and his title will be Al-Mahdi. The coming out of Dajjal and the events taking place after him like coming of Hazrat Isa (peace be upon him) and helping Al-Mahdi in killing Dajjal and praying behind Al-Mahdi are among the signs of the Day of Judgment.<sup>3</sup>

The *Ahadith* that talk about Al-Mahdi are in abundance. Many of the great scholars and *Muhadditheen* have narrated the *Ahadith* that talk about Al-Mahdi. Among these great scholars are Imam Abu Dawood, Imam Tirmidhi, Imam Ibn Majah, Imam Al-Bazzar, Imam Al-Hakim, Imam Tabarani and Imam Abu Ya'la al-Musili. All these great Imams of Hadith have narrated the *Ahadith* about Al-Mahdi on the authority of many companions of the holy Prophet (SAW), like Ali bin Abi Talib, Abdullah bin Abbas, Abdullah bin Umar, Talha, Abdullah bin Mas'ood, Abu Hurairah, Anas, Abu Sa'eed al-

<sup>1</sup> Al-Qur'an, 49:17

<sup>2</sup> Suyuti, Jalaluddin, al-Hawi lil Fatawa, Vol. 2, Faisalabad: p. 76.

<sup>3</sup> Abu Dawood Sulaiman b. Ash'ath, *Sunan Abi Dawood*, Book of Al-Mahdi.

Khudri, Umm-e-Habiba, Umm-e-Salamah, Thawban, Qurrah bin Iyas, Ali al-Hilali and Abdullah bin Harith bin Juzz. If we look at the authenticity of these *Ahadith* we may find that some of them are *Sahih*, some of them are *Hasan* while some are *Dha'eef*.<sup>4</sup>

The famous historian Ibn Khaldun has exaggerated when he claimed that all the *Ahadith* regarding Imam Al-Mahdi are *Dha'eef*. The scholars of Islam did not agree with this claim.

I will start discussing this issue step by step. I will make a point and quote the *Ahadith* that are narrated by Sunnite scholars and then second it with the *Ahadith* narrated by Shiite scholars.

## 1- Imam Mahdi's Coming is Certain and He is from the lineage of Fatima

### Sunnite Source

عن أم سلمة رضي الله عنها زوج النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قالت: سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يذكر المهدي، فقال: هو حق وهو من بني فاطمة رضي الله عنها.

Umm-e-Salama, the wife of the holy Prophet (SAW) said, I heard the holy Prophet while mentioning Al-Mahdi, said, "His coming is certain and he is from the children of Fatima".<sup>5</sup>

### Shiite Source

عن أم سلمة رضي الله عنها قالت: سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول: "المهدي حق وهو من ولد فاطمة".

Umm-e-Salama, said, I heard the holy Prophet saying: "The coming of Al-Mahdi is certain and he is from the children of Fatima".<sup>6</sup>

## 2- The Day of Judgment will not be established until Imam Mahdi rules the world

### Sunnite Source

عن عبد الله بن مسعود قال، قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: "لا تذهب الدنيا حتى يملك العرب رجل من أهل بيتي يواطئ اسمه اسمي".

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Hakim, Muhammad b. Abdullah Neshapuri, *al-Mustadrak*, Vol. 4, Hadith Number 8671, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-ilmiah, 1990, p. 600.

<sup>6</sup> Tusi, Muhammad b. al-Hasan, *al-Ghaibah*, Tehran: Maktaba Nenwa, p. 114, 115.

Abdullah bin Mas'ood narrates that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said, "The world will not come to an end until a man from my family owns the Arabs, whose name will be as my name."<sup>7</sup>

عن أبي سعيد الخدري قال، قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم، "لا تقوم الساعة حتى تملأ الأرض ظلماً وجوراً وعدواناً ثم يخرج من أهل بيتي من يملأها قسطاً وعدلاً."

Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri narrates that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said, "The Hour shall not be established until the earth is filled with wrongs, injustice and aggression, then a man from my family will come out and fill the earth with justice."<sup>8</sup>

### Shiite Source

"عن عبد الله بن مسعود قال، قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: لا تذهب الدنيا حتى يلي أمتي رجل من أهل بيتي، يقال له المهدي"

Abdullah bin Mas'ood narrates that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said, "The world will not come to an end until a man from my family rules my Ummah, whose name will be Al-Mahdi."<sup>9</sup>

عن أبي سعيد الخدري قال، قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم، "أبشروا بالمهدي، قال ثلاثاً، يخرج على حين اختلاف من الناس وزلزال شديد، يملأ الأرض قسطاً وعدلاً كما ملئت ظلماً وجوراً يملأ قلوب عباده عبادة، ويسعهم عدله."

Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri narrates that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said, "Take the good news of Al-Mahdi, (he said it thrice). He will come out at the time of some controversy among the people and a great earthquake. He will fill the earth with justice after it has been filled with wrongs and injustice. He will fill the hearts of the servants of Allah with His worship, and they will be content with his justice"<sup>10</sup>

## 3- Imam Mahdi is among the Leading Personalities of Paradise

### Sunnite Source

عن أنس بن مالك قال، سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول: "نحن ولد عبد المطلب سادة أهل الجنة، أنا وحمزة وعلي وجعفر والحسن والحسين والمهدي."

<sup>7</sup> Tirmidhi, Muhammad b. Isa, *al-Jami' al-Sahih*, Vol. 4, Hadith No. 2230, Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-Arabi, p. 505.

<sup>8</sup> Hakim, Muhammad b. Abdullah Neshapuri, *al-Mustadrak*, Vol. 4, Hadith Number 8669, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-ilmiah, 1990, p. 600.

<sup>9</sup> Tusi, Muhammad b. al-Hasan, *al-Ghaibah*, Tehran: Maktaba Nenwa, p. 113.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p. 111.

Narrated Anas bin Malik that he heard the Messenger of Allah saying, "We the children of Abd al-Muttalib are leaders of the dwellers of Paradise; I, Hamza, Ali, Ja'far, Hasan, Husain and Al-Mahdi."<sup>11</sup>

#### Shiite Source

عن سليم: قال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم في فضل أهل بيته: "ألا ونحن ولد عبد المطلب سادة أهل الجنة، أنا وعلي وجعفر وحمة والحسن والحسين وفاطمة والمهدي".

Narrated Sulaim that the Prophet (SAW) said while talking about the virtues of his family members,

"Everyone should know that we the children of Abd al-Muttalib are leaders of the dwellers of Paradise; I, Ali, Ja'far, Hamza, Hasan, Husain, Fatima and Al-Mahdi."<sup>12</sup>

#### **4- The Reign of Imam Mahdi will be Full of Justice and Economic Well-being**

#### Sunnite Source

عن أبي سعيد الخدري قال، قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم، "يخرج في آخر أمتي المهدي، يسقيه الله الغيث ويخرج الأرض نباتها ويعطي المال صحاحا وتكثر الماشية وتعظم الأمة، يعيش سبعا أو ثمانيا، يعني حججا".

Narrated Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said, "In the end part of my Ummah Al-Mahdi will come out, Allah will put the rain under his command, the earth will bring out its vegetation, he will give away the wealth equally, the cattle will be in abundance, the Ummah will become great. He will rule for seven or eight years."<sup>13</sup>

#### Shiite Source

عن أبي سعيد الخدري أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ذكر المهدي فقال، "يخرج عند كثرة اختلاف الناس وزلازل، فيملؤها عدلا وقسطا كما ملئت ظلما وجورا، يرضى به ساكن السماء وساكن الأرض، ويقسم المال قسمة صحاحا".

Narrated Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) mentioned Al-Mahdi and said, "He will come out at a time when their will be lot of disagreement among the people, and many earthquakes will be taking place. He will fill the earth with justice after

<sup>11</sup> Ibn Majah, Muhammad b. Yazid al- Qazwini, Sunan ibn Majah, Vol. 2, Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, p.1368.

<sup>12</sup> Sulaim bin Qais, Kitab Sulaim bin Qais, Beirut: Dar al-Funoon, p. 246.

<sup>13</sup> Hakim, Muhammad b. Abdullah Neshapuri, *al-Mustadrak*, Vol. 4, Hadith Number 8669, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-ilmiah, 1990, p. 60.

it would have been filled with injustices. All the dwellers of the heaven and the dwellers of the earth will be pleased with him. He will distribute the wealth equally.”<sup>14</sup>

## 5- Prophet Isa will be a follower of Imam Mahdi

### Sunnite Source

عن حذيفة قال، قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم، "يلتفت المهدي وقد نزل عيسى ابن مريم كأنما يقطر من شعره الماء فيقول المهدي، تقدم صل بالناس، فيقول عيسى، إنما أقيمت الصلاة لك، فيصلي خلف رجل من ولدي."

“Narrated Huzaifah that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said, “Mahdi will turn to Isa who, after descending will look like as if water is dropping from his hair. At this point Mahdi will ask him to come forward and lead the people in Salat. Prophet Isa would say, the Salat has been established for you. (Here Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said, “Then Isa will pray behind a man from my children.”<sup>15</sup>

### Shiite Source

عن عبد الله بن عباس قال، سمعت سلمان الفارسي وهو يقول عن الرسول صلى الله عليه وسلم، "المهدي الذي يصلي عيسى خلفه".

Narrated Abdullah bin Abbas that he has heard Salman Farisi while quoting the Messenger of Allah (SAW) that he said, “Al-Mahdi is the one behind him Prophet Isa will pray.”<sup>16</sup>

## 6- Obedience of Imam Mahdi will be Obligatory upon all

### Sunnite Source

أن أبا أمامة قال، "لينادين باسم رجل من السماء، لا ينكره ذليل، ولا يمتنع منها (منه) العزيز".

“The name of a man will be called from the heaven; no weak could deny it and no strong could reject it.”<sup>17</sup>

### Shiite Source

<sup>14</sup> Tabari, Muhammad b. Jarir, Dala'il al-Imamah, Najaf: al-Matb'ah al-Haidariyyah, p. 249.

<sup>15</sup> Suyuti, Jalal al-Din, *Al-Hawi Lil Fatawa*, Vol. 2, Faisalabad: p.81.

<sup>16</sup> Furat, al-Kufi, *Tafseer Furat al-Kufi*, Qum: Maktaba al-Dawari, p. 179.

<sup>17</sup> Ibn Abi Shaibah, Abdullah, al-Musannaf, Vol. 15, Hadith No. 19601, Bombay: al-Dar al-Salafiyyah, p. 246.

عن محمد بن مسلم الثقفي الطحان، قال، دخلت على أبي جعفر محمد بن علي الباقر وأنا أريد أن أسأله عن القائم من آل محمد، فقال لي مبتدئاً: يا محمد بن مسلم، إن في القائم من آل محمد شيها من خمسة من الرسل... وإن من علامات خروجه: .... ومناد ينادي من السماء باسمه واسم أبيه".

Narrated Muhammad bin Muslim al-Thaqafi al-Tahhan that he visited Abu Ja'far Muhammad bin Ali al-Baqir to ask him about Al-Qa'im from the family of the holy Prophet (Al-Mahdi). Before the question was asked, he replied by saying, "O Muhammad bin Muslim! The Qa'im from the family of the Prophet (Al-Mahdi) has similarities with five among the Messengers of Allah.... And among the signs of his coming.... A caller who will call from the heaven by his name and his father's name."<sup>18</sup>

## 7- Low level of Religious and Moral Condition of the Muslims at the Time of the Appearance of Al-Mahdi

### Sunnite Source

عن النعمان بن بشير قال، صحبنا النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فسمعناه يقول، "إن بين يدي الساعة فتن كأنها قطع الليل المظلم، يصح الرجل مؤمناً ويمسي كافراً ويمسي مؤمناً ويصبح كافراً، يبيع أقوام (فيها) خلاقهم بعرض من الدنيا قليل".

Narrated Nu'man bin Bashir that he accompanied the holy Prophet and heard him saying, "Certainly, before the Hour is established, there are trials like the pieces of the dark night. In these trials a believer in the morning will turn into non-believer by the evening, and a believer in the evening will turn into non-believer in the morning. In these times people will sell their values for some small gains of this world."<sup>19</sup>

### Shiite Source

عن أبي عبد الله قال، قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم، "سيأتي على أمتي زمان لا يبقى من القرآن إلا رسمه، ولا من الإسلام إلا اسمه، يسمون به وهم أبعد الناس منه، مساجدهم عامرة وهي خراب من الهدى".

Narrated Abu Abdullah that the Prophet (SAW) said, "There will come a time upon my Ummah when nothing will remain from the Qur'an except its form, and nothing will remain from Islam except its name. People will be called Muslims but they will be the furthest from it, their mosques will be full of worshippers but still empty from the guidance."<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Kamal al-Din, al-Shafi'ee, Matalib al-Su'ool fi Manaqib al-Rasool, Vol.1, Najaf: Dar al-Kutub al-Tijariyyah, p. 327.

<sup>19</sup> Abu Dawood al-Tayalisi, Musnad, Hadith No. 803, Beirut: Dar al-Ma'rifah, p. 108.

<sup>20</sup> Thawab al-A'mal wa Iqab al-A'mal, Hadith No. 4, p. 301.

The above mentioned points and the *Ahadith* related to these points are very few from the great treasure of *Ahadith* that has been narrated by both Sunnites and Shiites. Muhammad Amir al-Nasiri has quoted seven hundred and forty (740) *Ahadith* on this topic in his book.<sup>21</sup> Similarly a small book of 84 pages by Dr. Muhammad Tahir al-Qadiri contained 65 *Ahadith* on the topic of Imam Al-Mahdi.<sup>22</sup>

I have chosen those *Ahadith* that unite the Muslims. The contents of these *Ahadith* are unanimously agreed upon between the Sunnites and the Shiites. There is an eye opener verse in the Holy Qur'an that demands from us to sit with the Jews and the Christians and through peaceful dialogue invite them to come together on those values that we have common with them. That divine statement is:

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْا إِلَى كَلِمَةٍ سَوَاءٍ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ أَلَّا نَعْبُدَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَلَا نُشْرِكَ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُنَا بَعْضًا أَرْبَابًا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقُولُوا اشْهَدُوا بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ

"Say: O people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians): Come to a word that is just between us and you, that we worship none but Allah, and that we associate no partners with Him, and that none of us shall take others as lords besides Allah. Then, if they turn away, say: "Bear witness that we are Muslims." <sup>23</sup>

The question that should rise in our minds is that the Jews and the Christians are non-Muslims and still we are commanded by Allah to involve them in dialogue. We the Muslims, whether Sunnites or Shiites, can we not sit together like brothers and come to a 'Word that is just between us'

Hence I left those *Ahadith* intentionally that talk about the differences regarding the person, birth, lineage and age of Imam Mahdi. I tried to act upon the above mentioned divine verse. Moreover I think that if we just act upon those *Ahadith* that talk about the major beliefs regarding Imam Mahdi we the Sunnites and Shiites can easily come together. Because both parties commonly believe in the following beliefs regarding Imam Mahdi:

- 1- Imam Mahdi's coming is certain and he is from the lineage of Fatima .
- 2- The Day of Judgment will not be established until Imam Mahdi rules the world.
- 3- Imam Mahdi is among the leading personalities of Paradise.
- 4- The reign of Imam Mahdi will be full of justice and economic well-being.
- 5- Prophet Isa will be a follower of Imam Mahdi in prayer.
- 6- Obedience of Imam Mahdi will be obligatory upon all.

<sup>21</sup> Nasiri, Muhammad Amir, Al-Imam al-Mahdi fi al-Ahadith al-Mushtarakah baina al-Sunnah wa al-Shi'ah, Tehran: Markaz al-Tahqiqat wa al-Dirasat al-ilmiiyah, 2006, pp 11-336.

<sup>22</sup> Qadiri, Muhammad Tahir, Dr., Al-Qawl al-Mu'tabar fi Al-Imam al-Muntazar, Lahore: Minhaj al-Qur'an Publications, 2007, Pp 19-77.

<sup>23</sup> The Holy Qur'an, 3: 64.



- 7- Religious and moral condition of the Muslims at the time of the appearance of Al-Mahdi will be very bad, and by his coming this situation will improve so much that it will reach the height of piety and morality.

It was the same message that both the Sunnite and Shiite scholars that I interviewed in person, shared with me.

The Sunnite scholars I interviewed are:

- 1- Dr. Suhail Hasan, Director General, Islamic Research Institute, International Islamic University, Islamabad.
- 2- Dr. Tajuddin al-Azhari, Head Department of Hadith, Faculty of Islamic Studies (Usuluddin), International Islamic University, Islamabad.
- 3- Prof. Dr. Zafarullah Baig, Dean, Faculty of Islamic Studies (Usuluddin), International Islamic University, Islamabad.
- 4- Prof. Dr. Tahir Mansuri, Professor at Faculty of Sharia and Law, International Islamic University, Islamabad.
- 5- Prof. Dr. Tahir Hakim, Professor at Faculty of Sharia and Law, International Islamic University, Islamabad.

The Shiite scholars I interviewed are:

- 1- Allama Aftab Hussain Jawadi, Professor in Jamiah al-Kawthar, Islamabad.
- 2- Allama Saqib Akbar, Director General of al-Basirah, Islamabad.
- 3- Khawaja Shuja Abbas, Editor, Monthly *Payam*, Islamabad.
- 4- Dr. Syed Nisar Hussain Hamdani, Professor at Azad Jammu & Kashmir University, Muzaffar Abad.
- 5- Agha Murtaza Poya, Vice President of Pakistan Awami Tehreek.

I felt very much relieved, content and proud over the openness of Islam and its embracing nature when all the Sunnite and Shiite scholars shared the same feelings of unity and Islamic brotherhood.

Now the question that arises is how to acquaint the masses and spread among them these sentiments of unity, unanimity and brotherhood over the issue of believing and then coming together in welcoming the appearance of Imam Mahdi. In my humble opinion, the role of mass media starts from here. But before I talk about media I need to talk about its audience. Who are they? How are they living their lives in this so-called modern world?

### **The Mass Audience of Media in this Modern World**

The modern period has surpassed every other period in the matter of material progress and scientific explorations. But with all that, the experts in the field of Sociology, Psychology and Medicine are amazed at the alarming increase in the number of neurotics and those suffering from other nervous disorders. An atmosphere of fear and distraction pervades the whole world in which the future of humanity appears dark, particularly the architects of this new civilization find themselves ill-at-ease and bereft of all pleasure even in the super-abundance of social amenities and a life of ease and luxury. The utopia or at least the golden period that the learned men and thinkers of the nineteenth century had been contemplating on the basis of the scientific inventions and explorations, had soon become a confused dream.<sup>24</sup>

It appears that the greater the progress of the means at man's disposal, the more his restlessness and anxiety. The countries with a very high standard of living have a greater percentage of psychological affections than in other countries not so privileged.<sup>25</sup>

The machine, gigantic industrial projects, steel, iron and electricity – all were thought to be at the disposal of humanity to achieve the objective of Utopia. The drive towards industrialization and reliance on the physical, created an ideology which emphasized materialism as a way of life.<sup>26</sup>

### **An Elite Class among the Audience of Media**

There is a class element among the audience of media. The architects, dramatists, social scientists, writers, those who provide the dynamics of a modern city, are at the core of this class. Through the media their ideas are widely spread. The power of this class is based on knowledge and mass communication.

### **Negative Role of Media in Changing the Muslims' Identity**

Nothing in history has threatened Muslims like the Western media. The Western media are ever present, never resting and never allowing respite. The powerful media offensive is compounded for Muslims: they appear not to have the capacity to defend themselves. Worse; they appear unable even to comprehend the nature and objectives of the onslaught.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Dr. Mustafa Siba'l, *Some Glittering Aspects of The Islamic Civilization* (Kuwait: International Islamic Federation of Student Organizations, 1984), p xiii.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Akbar S. Ahmed, *Postmodernism and Islam: Predicament and Promise* (London: Routledge, 1992), p 6,7.

<sup>27</sup> Akbar S. Ahmed, *Postmodernism and Islam: Predicament and Promise* (London: Rutledge, 1992), p 223.

How media was successful in corrupting the pure nature of Muslims' identity could be understood from the following realities:

- 1- Media, especially Western media is like a Hindu *Banya*, (trader), who will say *Ram Ram* at your face but will kill you with his hidden knife. So it teaches the viewers in general and the Muslims in particular that no one is worthy of befriending; no one should be trusted, robbing them from the sentiments of Islamic brotherhood and feelings of sincerity toward the entire family of God.
- 2- Media left strong impression on the hearts of the Muslims that the best people in the world are the white people, then the colored ones and then the worst are the blacks. In this way it faded away the strong belief of human equality among the Muslims.
- 3- The spread of indecency, immorality, pornography and sexuality are the priority number one of the Western media. These scenes are repeated so frequently that after a while they look 'normal', while the holy Qur'an has clearly stated by saying:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُحِبُّونَ أَنْ تَشِيعَ الْفَاحِشَةُ فِي الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ

"Verily those who like to spread indecency among the believers will taste a painful torment in this world and in the Hereafter".<sup>28</sup>

- 4- Media can be truly called the agent of Satan as it performs his job; the presenting of falsehood in the form of virtue. This was actually what Satan said to Allah, when Allah gave him respite. Allah the Almighty quoted him in the Holy Qur'an in the following verse:

لَأُزَيِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَالْأَعْيُنُ أَجْمَعِينَ إِلَّا عِبَادَكَ مِنْهُمُ الْمُخْلَصِينَ

"I will indeed adorn the path of error for them (mankind) on the earth and I will mislead them all, except Your chosen servants among them."<sup>29</sup>

- 5- Media will be very keen to constantly check your level of spirituality. If by chance or mistake you come across a religious program that has elevated you spiritually, media will try successfully to undo that effect. This may require stopping the program immediately for a break and showing you a half-naked woman marketing a brand of tea, shampoo or mobile phone.

<sup>28</sup> Al-Qur'an, 24: 19.

<sup>29</sup> Al-Qur'an, 15: 39-40.

## Suggestions with Conclusion

The real challenge that the Muslims are facing is how to use this giant (Media) in a positive way. How to use it for the reception of Imam Mahdi?

In this regard following steps could be suggested:

- 1- Western media tries to spread despair among the Muslims. We need to inculcate the new hope through the concept of Imam Mahdi's coming. He is the hope for the Muslims in particular and for the whole world in general as Allama Muhammad Iqbal has rightly said:

قريب تر ہے نمود جسکی اسی کا مشتاق ہے زمانہ

“The whole world is waiting to see the one whose coming is very near”.<sup>30</sup>

- 2- Western media is promoting the culture and concept of the United Nations which is a biased organization. We need to spread the concept of *Mahdism*. Because we need a leader who will make his center the House of Allah, the holy Ka'bah. By this he will send a message to the entire human race that all people are equal before Allah, regardless of their color, nationality or origin.
- 3- Western media is promoting injustice. We need to raise our voices against injustice. Injustice done anywhere should be condemned whether it is done by a non-Muslim or by a Muslim.
- 4- We need to Islamize our Muslim media. In most of the Muslim countries it is blindly following the western media. A special television program should be started in which the Sunnite and Shiite scholars should be invited to talk on the doctrine of *Mahdism*, so that the so-called gap that is felt by the masses be bridged or at least narrowed. The same ideas could be spread on a special website that could be launched. In this regard we may learn from the efforts that already have started by some sincere people.<sup>31</sup>

Based on the above suggestions a code of conduct may be written for the Muslim media to help them build the Islamic identity, so that all the Muslims should feel that they are preparing themselves for the great welcome of our Imam. A Muslim in this sense maybe determined as the one who:

- Is deeply founded in believing in the oneness of Allah, the only true and sovereign God.

<sup>30</sup> Muhammad Iqbal, Allama, *Kulliyat-e- Iqbal*, Lahore: Shaikh Ghulam Ali and Sons, 1977, p. 421.

<sup>31</sup> Reference is made to: المرجع العالمي للتقريب بين المذاهب الإسلامية، مركز التحقيقات والدراسات العلمية – تهران.

- Is unique in calling towards Equality of Human Race.
- Gives first priority to the moral principles in his/her entire system of life and all his/her activities.
- Has deep faith in learning and seeking knowledge. He/she considers ignorance as his greatest enemy.
- Does not consider Faith a personal matter, as Allama Iqbal says:

Jalal e Padshahi ho ke Jamhoori Tamasha ho,  
Juda ho Deen siyosat se to reh jati he changezi<sup>32</sup>

"Whether it is the awe of an emperor or the play of Democracy, if the Religion is separated from the politics then it is only the cruelty that is left behind".

- Is unique in religious tolerance which has never been witnessed in any other religion.
- Has two fundamental sources of law that no other member of any civilization whatsoever has; the authentic Word of God in its original form (the Holy Qur'an) and the authentic and detailed practical demonstration of that revelation by the Prophet of God (SAW), i.e., the Sunnah.

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