

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



Asad-ul-Ulama Hazrat Abu Sayeed Syed
Mahmood Tashrifullahi ^{RH}

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scholium of the verse 17 of Surah Hud.*

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

Imam Mahdi^{AS} has recited this Quranic Verse in proof of his *Mahdiat* (Mahdi-ship): Allah says, “*Is he (to be counted equal to them) who relieth on a clear proof from his Lord, and a witness from Him reciteth it, and before it was the Book of Moses, an example and a mercy? Such believe therein, and whoso disbelieveth therein of the clans, the Fire is his appointed place. So be not thou in doubt concerning it. Lo! It is the Truth from thy Lord; but most of mankind believe not.*”¹ The Imam^{AS} said in *tafsir* (elucidation) of the Verse, “I am listening directly from Allah Most High that this Verse is in my favour. ‘The *man* in *Afaman-kaana* means you. And *Bayyi-na* means the emulation, in word, deed and condition, of the *vilayat* (sainthood) of Hazrat Muhammad Mustafa^{SLM}, which is particularly associated with his *zath* (nature, essence). *Shaa-hidum* means Quran and Torah. *Ulaaa-‘ika* refers to the emulating groups (*ummah*) of followers. *Bihii* in both places means the Imam^{AS}.’”

The Traditions of Prophet^{SLM} that conform with the Quran are of a very high grade. As such it deserves great attention that the number of traditions about the advent of Imam Mahdi^{AS} is very large. There is some controversy, however, about his signs and the place of his birth. But there is unanimity about his advent. Hence, the scholars of the yore have made it a part of the beliefs (*a’tiqadiat*) and they have accepted the constancy and frequency (*tawatur*) of the meaning of these Traditions. How can such a glorious precept being omitted in Quran be true or correct, when Allah has said about the Quran, “...*There is not a grain in the darkness (or depths) of the earth, nor anything fresh or dry (green or withered) but is (inscribed) in a Record clear (to those who can read).*”²

A large number of scholars did not focus their attention on conforming these Traditions to the Quran. One of the reasons for this lapse could be that they thought the constancy of meaning in the Traditions about the Imam Mahdi^{AS} was enough, and, in fact, that was enough. Hafiz Ibn Hajar ‘Asqalani has said, “In the Traditions of constancy, the *rijal*³ are not discussed, because they (the Traditions) are reliable and certain, even if they are reported or narrated by sinners or infidels (*kafirs*).”

Despite this, conforming these Traditions to the Quran makes it easy to find out which of the Quranic Verses they explain (*tafsir*). But in the books written by those commentators and researchers who have focused their attention on this point, we find the mention of Imam Mahdi^{AS} in their expositions of certain Quranic Verses. In fact, according to the Quranic Verse, “*Thereafter the responsibility is Ours to let its meaning be clear (to everyone),*”⁴ the discharging of this responsibility was destined for the Imam^{AS}. Hence, the intelligence of many of the scholars was deficient. Happily, Allah imparted the knowledge about these Quranic Verses, in which there are indications about the

¹ Quran, S. 11: 17 [Mohammed Marmaduke Pickthal - MMP] -*Afaman-kaana ‘alaa Bayyi-na-tim-mir-Rabbi-hii wa yat-luuhu Shaa-hidum-min-hu wa min-qab-lihii Kitaabu Muusaa’ imaa-manwwa rah-mah! ‘Ulaaa-‘ika yu’mi-nuuna bih. Wa manyyak-fur bihii minal-‘Ah-zaabi fannaaru maw-‘idhu. Falaa taku fii mir-ya-tim-minh: ‘innahul-Haqqu mir-Rabbika wa laakinna ‘ak-saran-naasi laa yuminuun!*

² Quran, S. 6: 59 [Abdullah Yusuf Ali - AYA].

³ *Rijal* means those persons who have reported or narrated the Traditions.

⁴ Quran, S. 75: 19 [Syed Abdul Latif - SAL].

Imam^{AS}, through Imam Syed Muhammad^{AS} of Jaunpur himself. We have already discussed why the word, *Mahdi*, does not occur⁵ in Quran. In short, one of the Quranic Verses, in which there is an indication about Imam Mahdi^{AS}, is explained in Parable 3. Imam Mahdi^{AS} offered this Quranic Verse⁶ in proof of his being Imam Mahdi^{AS}, by the command of Allah, and said: “I am listening directly from Allah Most High that this Verse in my favour. (Allah says) ‘The *man* in *Afaman kaana* means you. And *Bayyi-na* means the following, in word, deed and condition (*hal*) of the *vilayat* (sainthood) of Prophet Muhammad Mustafa^{SLM}, which is particularly associated with his *zath* (nature, essence). *Shaa-hidum* means Quran and Torah. *Ulaaa-‘ika* refers to the emulating groups (*ummah*) of followers. *Bihii* in both places means the Imam^{AS}.’”

The details of this abstract are that the word, *man*, in *Afaman kaana*, refers to one person, Mahdi al-Mau’ood Khalifathullah^{AS}. The following are the arguments to prove it: (1) The pronouns used in relation to this Arabic word, *man*, are singular, like *mir-Rabbi-hii*, *yat-luuhu*, *minhu* etc. But in a previous Verse in Quran, *Man-kaana yurii-dul-Hayaatad-Dunya...* (to the end of the text),⁷ the word, *man*, is general and the pronouns used in relation to it are all in plural, like *nu-waffi ‘ilay-him* ‘*a-maala-hum*, *laa-yub-kha-suun* etc. (2) *Man* has to be *Sahib-e-Bayyina* and this attribute is particular to a Vice-Regent of Allah. If one were to take *man* to mean common believers, it would become necessary to allow all the believers to have the attributes of Prophet-hood and the vice-regency of Allah in them. It is for this reason that the *ayaat* and *bayyinat* (verses and clear proof) have been used in Quran only in respect of issues, which are beyond the pale of human power, whether they are related to the issues of the Prophets or they are an argument in favour of their Prophet-hood, or they are a proof of the special Divine Power (*qudrat-e-Ilahia*). The *ayaat* and *bayyinat* have also been applied to both of these, because in both situations the application of the *ayaat* and *bayyinat* is related to the Divine Power. It is for this reason that the disavowal of the *ayaat* and *bayyinat* necessitates the disavowal of the Divine Power. Allah has said, “None but disbelievers deny the Revelations of Allah: let not their outward prosperity in the land deceive thee.”⁸ However, it appears at the first glance that the word *bayyina* has been used for the common believers (*mumins*) at one place in Quran. But, in reality, there too it has been used for the Prophet^{SLM}. Allah says, “...that he who perished (on that day) might perish by a clear proof (of His Sovereignty) and he who survived might survive by a clear proof (of His sovereignty).”⁹ This Quranic Verse relates the battle of Badr. The victory, the Prophet^{SLM} won on this battlefield, materially manifests the divine help, because the army with the Prophet^{SLM} was a small force, while the force on the other side was large fully equipped with the contemporary arms and ammunition. Secondly, the Prophet^{SLM}’s army was at a lower level, while that of the enemy was at a higher level on the battlefield. Thirdly, the Prophet’s army was stationed on a level surface of sand. From the strategic standpoint, all the three factors were very hazardous for the Prophet^{SLM}.¹⁰ Despite all this, the Prophet^{SLM} won the battle. This was

⁵ See *Glimpses*, page 18 (Introduction to the *Tauzihat*).

⁶ Quran, S. 11: 17 MMP. This Verse in English translation reads: “Is he (to be counted equal with them) who relieth on a clear proof from his Lord, and a witness from Him reciteth it, and before it was the Book of Moses, an example and a mercy? Such believe therein, and whoso disbelieveth therein of the clans, the Fire is his appointed place. So be not thou in doubt concerning it. Lo! It is the Truth from thy Lord; but most of mankind believe not.”

⁷ Quran, S. 11: 15 SAL. Its English translation reads: “To those who choose the life of the present with all its false glamour, Our way is to deal out in full measure in this very world what they deserve for their deeds, and they shall not in the least be deprived of what they merited.”

⁸ Quran, S. 40: 4 SAL

⁹ Quran, S. 8: 42 MMP The footnote in the Urdu Version means, “The opposing group was deployed on solid ground.”

¹⁰ The fourth point was that water was away from him [the Prophet^{SLM}] and closer to the other group

extraordinarily glorious. Hence, the Quran mentions this battle as a marvel (*i'jaz*). And in this Verse, Allah has given glad tidings to the group of the Prophet^{SLM} that he who was martyred in the war was martyred with clear proof (*bayyina*) and he who survived, survived by a clear proof (*bayyina*).

This is so because the Battle of Badr is a grand miracle (*mu'jiza*), which was particularly associated with the Prophet^{SLM}. Had the Prophet^{SLM} not been on the battlefield, the battle could have ended otherwise. Or, the battle would never have taken place. The Prophet^{SLM} had been informed in a dream that the enemy's forces were small and weak. He had shared this information with his companions. He also interpreted this dream to mean that the enemy would be defeated. The companions (Allah may be pleased with them all) rejoiced and willingly, devotedly and enthusiastically participated in the war. Allah says in Quran, "*When Allah showed them unto thee (O Muhammad) in thy dream, as few in number, and if He had shown them to thee as many, ye (Muslims) would have faltered and would have quarreled over the affair. But Allah saved (you). Lo! He knoweth what is in the breasts (of men).*"¹¹ And when you came face to face with the enemy, Allah made (their numbers) small in your eyes. This explication too shows that even here the word, *bayyina*, in reality refers to the *zath* of Prophet^{SLM} alone.

In short, both the words, *ayaat* and *bayyinat*, are so comprehensive that they encompass all the ordinary and special state, observations, usual deeds, habits and unusual habits of the Prophet-hood. The *imams* of the science of Traditions have interpreted all these as the proof of Prophet-hood and Vice-Regency of Allah. And in the parlance of the *mutakallimin* (Muslim theologians), the *ayaat* and *bayyinat* are called miracles. From here, the humankind becomes divided in two groups, the believers (*mumin*) and the non-believers (*kafirs*). Allah says, "*Those who reject (Truth), among the people of the Book and among the Polytheists, were not going to depart (from their ways) until there should come to them Clear Evidence...*"¹²

In his exegesis of the Quranic story of Hazrat Noah, Imam Fakhruddin Razi^{RA} writes, "For the reason of the knowledge (*ma'arifat*) of the *zath* and *sifat* (attributes) and *ma-yajb*, *ma-yamtana* and *ma-yajuz* 'ilah, one should be a *bayyinah* (clear evidence) from his Lord (*Rab*)."

The knowledge of the *zath* and *sifat* (of Allah) is not possible without the Luminosity of Sainthood (*Nur-e-Vilayat*). The Vice-Regents of Allah acquire the bounty (*Faiz*) from Allah and convey it to the creatures (*makhluk*). It is for this reason that it is an accepted matter that every Prophet first achieves Sainthood, as the moon needs to achieve the luminosity of the sun (to reflect it). Similarly, for the Prophet-hood and Vice-Regency (of Allah), the Luminosity of Sainthood is necessary. The sainthood is allegorised as sun and the Prophet-hood as the moon

The late Hazrat Syed Mahmood Sahib Maulvi Fazil has argued in his book, *Sharah-e-Maktub-e-Multani*, on this point. The following is a summary of his arguments: "The difference between the other saints and Imam Mahdi^{AS} is that ordinary saints get their sainthood through the medium of Prophets, but since the sainthood of Imam Mahdi^{AS} is the sainthood of Prophet Muhammad^{SLM}, it is associated directly with the *zath* of Allah Most High. Hence, the Quranic Verse says: "*'Alaa Bayyi-na-tim-mir-Rabbi-hii* (relieth on a clear proof from his Lord)."¹³ Hazrat Shah Qasim Mujtahid-e-Groh^{RA} writes: "*Afaman-kaana 'alaa Bayyi-na-tim-mir-Rabbi-hii* (the person

¹¹ Quran, S. 8: 43 MMP.

¹² Quran, S. 98: 1 AYA.

¹³ Quran, S. 11: 17 MMP.

who is on the Sainthood of Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} from his Lord).”¹⁴ In the exegesis of the Quranic Verse: “*Wa-laakin-ja’alnaahu Nuuran* (But we have ordained it to function as a light),” he says, “We have treated it as light, which is bright and brightens (other things), and you have seen, known and perceived everything from the same light (*nur*). And that *nur* is named from all names, owns all the attributes and is pure, without defect and unique among all things. There was no existence of anybody before it; there was none and there will be none.”¹⁵ In another tract, he writes: “As Allah is everlasting, the sainthood of Imam Mahdi^{AS} too is everlasting, because the Mahdi is the special light (*nur*) of the sainthood of Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} and the *zath* of Allah. He is always there and will remain there forever. The *naql* of Bandagi Miyan (Syed Khundmir^{RZ}) has been quoted above that the sainthood of the Prophet^{SLM} is the same as it was before. It is proved that *Vilayat* will never terminate because the *Vilayat-e-Mustafa^{SLM}* is the special light of the *zath* of Allah; it was there and will continue to be there. It is for this reason that Prophet^{SLM} has said, “I was a Prophet when Adam^{AS} was between clay and water.”¹⁶

Hazrat Jami^{RA} writes: “*Vilayat* will never terminate because it is eternal, everlasting, perpetual and permanent and its perfect manifestation is the Seal of Sainthood.”

The author of *Matla Khusus-ul-Kalam Sharah-e-Fusus-al-Hikam* writes: “*Vilayat* is an attribute of Allah. Hence, Allah has called himself ‘*Vali-al-Hameed*’ and the *vali* of *muminin*. Hence, that *vilayat* does not terminate from *azl* (sempiternity) to *abd* (eternity) and it is impossible for any Prophet to reach the Presence of Allah without *Vilayat*. And the same is the immanence (*batin*) of Prophet-hood. And this rank, by virtue of the comprehensiveness of the *Ism-e-Azam* (great name of God) is for the Seal of Prophet-hood, and in the capacity of being his witness (*shuhud*), for the Seal of Sainthood (*Vilayat*).”

In the explication of the *Hadis*, ‘I was a Prophet when Adam was between clay and water,’ Sheikh Muhaiyuddin Ibn-e-Arabi^{RA} writes: “Every Prophet other than Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} becomes a Prophet at his advent as such. In the same way, the Seal of Sainthood too was a *Vali* when Adam was between clay and water. All *valis*, other than him, became *valis* when they achieved the requirements of *Vilayat*.”¹⁷

This shows that the specialties of *Vilayat*, Hazrat Shah Qasim Mujtahid-e-Groh^{RA} has explained, are not confined to the Mahdavis alone, but they are found in the writings of the eminent scholars of the *Ahl-e-Sunnat*. Hence, the claim of the author of the *Hadiya-e-Mahdavia*, that this is particularity of the Mahdavis, is wrong. In short, whatever has been said about the particularities of *Vilayat*, is enough, because, the human capacity to talk is incapable to explain it fully. Hence, it is not necessary to delve on the subject anymore. In short *bayyina* purports to mean the *Vilayat-e-Mustafa* (Sainthood of Prophet Muhammad^{SLM}).

The commentators of Quran have interpreted the word, *bayyina*, in many ways: *al-burhan* (argument), *al-Wazih min-Allah* (obvious from Allah), *Haqiqat-e-Deen-e-Islam* (Reality of the Religion of Islam), *Dalil-e-Aql* (Rational Argument), *Yaqin* (Certainty) or *Nur-e-Vilayat* (Light of Sainthood). But in the books of Mahdavis, the word, *bayyina* has been explained (*tafsir*) as the

¹⁴ *Majma’-al-Aayaat*.

¹⁵ *Majma’-al-Aayaat*.

¹⁶ *Dalil-al-Adl-wal-Fazl*.

¹⁷ Excerpted from *Shawahid-al-Wilayat*.

emulation of the *Vilayat-e-Muhammadiyah*. This indeed is the root of all the expressions mentioned above. Besides, these commentators too accept the Imam Mahdi^{AS}'s being the *Sahib-e-Vilayat*, even though they doubt his being Mahdi al-Mau'ood^{AS}. Some of their testimonies (*shawahid*) are as under: "There is no objection in the majesty, perfection, devotion, worship and sainthood of Mir Syed Muhammad of Jaunpur."¹⁸ "Mir Syed Muhammad *Quds-Sirrahul-Aziz* (May Allah sanctify his Secrets) was among the great saints and he had claimed to be Imam Mahdi^{AS}."¹⁹ "(He) sent word to the Sheikh-al-Islam, 'This man is one of the signs among the signs of Allah, and the knowledge we have acquired over the years has no value before him.'²⁰ Take note of the words, '*a sign among the signs of Allah*', prove that the Imam^{AS} was the *Sahib-e-Bayina* and his is the *Vilayat-e-Muqaiyyada-e-Muhammadiyah* and his emulation is perfect. It is for this reason that Hazrat Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} said, "He will follow in my footsteps and will not err." Every believer (*mumin*) cannot possibly perfectly emulate the Prophet^{SLM} in word, deed and state (*qaulan, fe'lan* and *halan*). This can be done only by a person who is free from erring and who has been accorded the position (*mansab*) of the Vice-Regent of Allah (*Khalifatullah*). It is for this that Bandagi Miyan Syed Khundmir^{RZ} has said, "If we are asked, 'What does it mean when it is said that the Imam Mahdi^{AS} would be perfect in his emulation of the Prophet^{SLM}?' we would say that 'Imam Mahdi^{AS} would emulate the Prophet^{SLM} in the commandments of *Shariat*, call (to the people) towards Allah and his word and state (*hal*) in accordance with the direct revelation from Allah. All people, other than the Imam^{AS}, emulate the Prophet after hearing the Traditions (*ahadis*).'" In short, being the *Sahib-e-Bayyina* is an important essentiality of the Vice-Regency of Allah. Hence, the Arabic word, *man*, in the Quranic Verse, cited above, is essentially for the Vice-Regent of Allah.

(3) In the word, *yat-luuhu*,²¹ the pronoun, *hu*, refers to *man*. According to the authentic parables, the word, *Shaahid*, refers to Quran. Hazrat Bandagi Miyan Syed Khundmir^{RZ} and other virtuous elders of the yore too have interpreted it as Quran.

(4) The phrase, *ulaaa-ika yumi-nuuna bih*, too refers to the phrase, *Afaman*. The word, *ulaaa-ika*, refers to the omitted and implied meaning. This is explained in the book, *Naqliyat-e-Miyan Abdur Rashid*^{RZ}, as the followers (*Ummah*) who emulate. In other words, during the era of the advent of Imam Mahdi^{AS}, all those people, who are divided into sects or clans and, among them, those who are destined to Faith (*iman*), will repose faith in *man* (that is, Imam Mahdi^{AS}). And the part of the Verse, *Wa manyyak-fur bihii minal 'Ahzaabi fannaru maw-'iduh*, proves the foregoing exegesis. From among the *Ahzaab* or the sects, whoever disavows the *man* [that is, Hazrat Imam Mahdi^{AS}], his appointed place is the Fire. In this Verse, the word, *ahzaab* is the guide to find out the *musharun-ilaih* of the word, *Ulaaaa-ika*. And the *musharun-ilaih* of *Ulaaaa-ika* could also be found in the word, *qaum* (people) in the Verse, "*O ye who believe! Whoso of you becommeth a renegade from his religion, (know that in his stead) Allah will bring a people whom He loveth and who love Him....*"²²

¹⁸ *Nijat-ar-Rashid*, by Abdul Qadir Badauni.

¹⁹ *Muntakhib-at-Tawarikh*, by Abdul Qadir Badauni.

²⁰ *Nijat-ar-Rashid*, by Abdul Qadir Badauni.

²¹ In Quran, S. 11: 17 MMP. The word, *Yat-luuhu*, occurs in the Arabic text of the Quranic Verse. The transliteration of the Arabic Verse of the Quran is as follows: "*Afaman-kaana 'alaa Bayyi-na-tim-mir-Rabbi-hii wa yat-luuhu Shaahidum-mmin-hu wa min-qab-lihi Kitaabu Muusaa 'ima-manwwa rahmah? Ulaaaa-ika yu'mi-nuu-na bih. Wa manyyak-fur bihii minal 'Ahzaabi fannaru maw-'iduh. Falaa taku fii mir-yatim-minh; innahul-Haqqu mir-Rabbika wa laakinna 'aksarran-naasi laa yu'minuun !'*"

²² Quran, S. 5: 54 MMP, 57 AYA. The transliteration of the Quranic Verse is "...*Fa-sawfa yatilaahu bi-qawminy-yu-hibbu-hum wa yuhi-bunahuu...*".

Hazrat Bandagi Miyan Syed Khundmir^{RZ} says, “When Imam Mahdi^{AS} has such proof in himself and the Quran is in his favour and is giving evidence on (the truth of his word and deed) and the people, about whom Allah has said, ‘*a people whom He loveth and who love Him,*’ has affirmed and confirmed the Mahdi^{AS}, there is no need for any other evidence.”

Be that as it may, it is already proved that ‘*Ittiba’-e-Umam*’ is the *musharun ilaih* of ‘*Ulaaa-ika.*’ In short, from ‘*Ulaaa-ika yu’mi-nuu-na bih*’, the *zath* of *man* becomes a part of the *imaniyat* (faith). According to the religion of Islam, there is no person, except Imam Mahdi^{AS} and Prophet Esa^{AS}, in whom one has to repose Faith (*iman*) after Prophet Muhammad^{SLM}. This specialty too is an important facet of the *man* being the Vice-Regent of Allah.

In the phrase, “*Wa manyyak-fur bihii minal-Ah-zaabi fannaru maw-iduh*, the word, *bihii*, refers to “‘*Afaman-kaana.*” Decreeing of the disavowal of the *man* as *kufir* and making its retribution the Fire of Hell is the clear proof of the *man* being the Vice-Regent of Allah.

In the phrase, *Falaa taku fii mir-ya-tim-minh*, the word, *minh*, also refers to the phrase, “‘*Afaman-kaana.*” Some of the commentators of Quran have said that the *man* here refers to Prophet Muhammad^{SLM}. The flaw in this argument become clear here as the Prophet^{SLM} himself is addressed here and *minh* refers to ‘*Afaman-kaana.* In that case, the meaning of the Verse would be, (*O Muhammad*) *do not doubt in respect of this man (Muhammad).* The flaw in this meaning does not deserve an explanation.

Some other commentators of Quran have taken *Shaahid* to mean Quran and affirmed that *fimir-ya-tim-minh* refers to *Shaahid*, while others have said that *fannaaru maw-iduh* is referred to in *minh*. In both these situations, it becomes necessary for Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} to doubt the Quran or a part thereof, and this can never be correct. The Mahdavi *ulama* of the past have said that *minh* in *Falaa taku fii mir-ya-tim-minh* refers to ‘*Afaman-kaana*, which conforms to the exegesis of Imam Mahdi^{AS}. Now the meaning is very clear that “*O Muhammad! Do not be in doubt about the Mahdi.*” This explication (*tauzih*) shows that the *man*, about whose advent Allah has assured Prophet Muhammad^{SLM}, there is no doubt about that *man* being special. And Allah was not content about this but goes further and says, “*Innahul-Haqqu mir-Rabbika wa laakinna aksaran-naasi la yu’minuun!*”²³ In this Verse, *Ul-Haqqu mir-Rabbika* and ‘*Aksaran-naasi laa yu’minuun*’ show that *man* is not common or ordinary person but one who has the exalted position of *Khalifathullah* who is to be obeyed and to be accepted as a matter of Faith.²⁴

²³ Quran, S.11: 17 MMP. The meaning of this part of the Quranic verse according to MMP is: “*Lo! It is the Truth from thy Lord; but most of mankind believe not.*” However, Hazrat Abu Sayeed Syed Mahmood^{RA} elaborates it thus: “*It [his (the Imam’s) advent] is the Truth, but most people will not repose Faith.*”

²⁴ The Arabic term for this is “*muftariz-al-ita’at-wal-iman.*”