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Mohammad Ali Shomali

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Authors(s):

Mohammad Ali Shomali [1]

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This paper is the first part of a series of three papers on the subject, initially conceived as part of a series of lectures delivered by the author in London, at the Islamic Centre of England in Muharram 1433/November and December 2011, entitled, "Spiritual Struggle of Karbala."

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The Connection between Imam Mahdi and Imam Husayn, Part 1

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Abstract

Although there are similarities between all members of Ahlul Bayt and they are from the same light, there is a special link between Imam Husayn and Imam Mahdi. In this paper, verses from the Qur'an and hadiths of the Ahlul Bayt will be used to demonstrate this connection.

Indeed, Imam Mahdi is from the progeny of Imam Husayn who will rise on the Day of Ashura and will speak of his grandfather's oppression. Imam Husayn also spoke of Imam Mahdi avenging for him, and helping Imam Husayn is similar to helping Imam Mahdi. Moreover, one of the best deeds on the birth of Imam Mahdi is to recite Ziyarah of Imam Husayn, as renewing one's allegiance with Imam Husayn is renewing it with Imam Mahdi.

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Although there are many similarities between all members of Ahlul Bayt and they are from the same light, there is a special link and connection between Imam Husayn and Imam Mahdi. Below we will study

some of the links and then we will try to explain the reason behind this exceptional connection.

1) In Chapter Israa, we read:

Do not kill the soul that Allah has made inviolable, except with due cause, and whoever is killed wrongfully, We have certainly given his heir an authority. But let him not commit any excess in killing, The one who is the guardian of one who is killed would be helped by Allah and would be victorious. (***Quran 17:33***)

The most obvious case for this verse is Imam Husayn as approved by several hadiths that introduce Imam Husayn as the first oppressed person. There are also hadiths from Imam Rida and other Imams that say that this verse is related to Imam Husayn and Imam Mahdi. For example, Imam Baqir said:

The one who is killed is Husayn and his guardian is Imam Mahdi. And Israaf is to kill someone other than his killers. 'Truly he is helped." This world will not expire unless a man from the family of the Prophet would come. He will fill the earth with equity and justice as it has been filled with injustice and inequity. The demand of that guardian of that innocent life is establishment of justice all over the world.[1]

The blood of Imam Husayn will not receive its compensation if worldwide justice does not take place. Of course, all Imams after Imam Husayn were guardians. However, Imam Mahdi is special. He is the victorious whom will be helped by Allah.

2) More than three hundred hadiths stress on the fact that Imam Mahdi is the progeny of Imam Husayn. 180 of these are from the Prophet. Imam Husayn himself said:

There will be twelve people who are guided. The first Imam who is guided by Allah and does not need to be guided by people is Imam Ali, and the last one is the ninth generation of my progeny. He is the Imam that is will rise truthfully, and the one who gives life to earth after being dead. And Allah is going to make the right religion prevail [*over*] *all other religions even if the pagans may not like it.*[2]

Therefore, the hadith emphasizes that Imam Mahdi is progeny of Imam Husayn.

3) According to hadiths, the day of the uprising of Imam Mahdi is the day of Ashura. There is a call in Month of Ramadan and then the uprising is on the day of Ashura. Imam Sadiq said:

There would be a call for him in the night of 23 but he will be raised on the day of Ashura in which Imam Husayn was killed.[3]

4) Imam Mahdi will stand between Rukn and Maqam next to the Ka'ba clearly making reference to Karbala in the beginning of his movement:

O people of the world, I am the uprising Imam. O people of the world, I am the avenger. O people of the world, my grandfather Husayn was killed while he was thirsty. O people of the world, my grandfather

was left without dress. O people of the world, they damaged the body of my grandfather.

Also, Imam Husayn said to Imam Sajjad:

By Allah, my blood will keep boiling until Allah sends the Mahdi and kills seventy thousand of those disbelievers who are transgressors and hypocrites.[4]

When Hirawi asked Imam Rida to check a hadith from Imam Sadiq regarding Imam Mahdi killing some of the progeny of the killers of Imam Husayn, Imam Rida approved it. He then asked, 'How this can be explained with regards to the verse that says, ***'No one carries the burden of another person*** (***Qur'an 6:164***)[5]."[6] The Imam replied:[7]

Allah says the truth in all his sayings but these are those who are proud and satisfied with what their fathers did. When one is pleased with something, it is like the one who is doing it. If someone is killed in the east and another person in the west is happy with this killing, it is as if he is also involved.[8]

Regarding the above hadith, maybe the punishment is different but there is punishment and involvement. Thus, this is with the people who are happy with what has been done in Karbala. We will explain how the end of times (akhir ul-zaman) would be built around Husayn. One of the conflicting points of truth and falsehood would revolve around him.

5) There are hadiths that state the helper of Imam Husayn to be similar to helping Imam Mahdi. As mentioned by Imam Husayn during the night of Ashura

My grandfather said that, 'My son Husayn will be killed in Karbala while he is alone and thirsty and abandoned [*In that lonely time*] *whoever helps Husayn has helped me and has helped his son, al-Hujjah.'*

Thus, helping Husayn is similar to helping both the Prophet and Imam Mahdi. They have the same ideas and goals, and if you accept and try to achieve those goals, you are with them. Betraying one of them is like betraying all of them. If we wisely spread the message of Imam Husayn today, we are helping Imam Mahdi.

6) Imam Sadiq said that 4000 angels wanted to help Imam Husayn on the Day of Ashura, although the Imam did not accept. The angels went to get permission from Allah to take part without the Imam's permission, yet when they descended to the earth, the Imam was killed:

When they descended to the earth, the Imam was already killed. They have remained in Karbala. They are covered with dust and will cry for him until the resurrection. They are waiting for the coming of Imam Mahdi.

Imam Rida also said:

Four thousands angels descended to earth to help him. They found him killed. They will remain there until the coming of Imam Mahdi. Then they will help him. And their motto is **Yaa lathaaraat al-Husayn!**"[9]

Imam Sadiq also said:

The supporters of Imam Mahdi wish to be killed in the way of Allah and their motto is **'Ya lithaarat al-Husayn!"** *Whenever they move fear goes in front of them one month in advance*."[10]

7) On the night of the 15th Sha'ban, the night of the birth of Imam Mahdi, one of the best deeds is to recite Ziyarah of Imam Husayn. Sheikh Abbas al-Qummi in his Mafatih ul-Jinan, says that there are many authentic hadiths regarding the rewards for those who visit Imam Husayn in the middle of Sha'ban; it is as if the visitor shook hands with the 124,000 prophets.

Renewing one's allegiance to Imam Husayn is renewing one's allegiance to Imam Mahdi. Without having love for Imam Husayn, you are not counted as a lover of Imam Mahdi.

8) The Night of Qadr is the night of Imam Mahdi. Every year on this night ***'the spirit and the angels descend"*** **(*97:4*)** to the heart of Allah's proof – Imam Mahdi:

He sends the spirit to the one whom he is pleased with. **(*16 2*)**

This verse argues for Imamah: the Imams are the only people to whom the Allah would send the angels. In this night, Allah decides everything for the twelve months of the year and the spirit and the angels bring down the decisions to the heart of the Imam.

Moreover, on this night, one of the best deeds is to visit Imam Husayn. There is one of special recitation of ziyarat exclusively for the night of Qadr. This shows the strong the link between Imam Husayn and Imam Mahdi. And it is with this recitation that all the prophets shake hands with you as you are supporting a goal in which all the prophets strove for. Allah says,

***'We sent aforetime our messengers with Clear Signs and sent down with them the Book and the Balance* (*of right and wrong*)*, that men may stand forth in justice"* (*57 25*).**

Hundred twenty four thousand prophets worked to establish justice, and the people of the end of time, with the Imam's leadership, will achieve it. Hence, when one visits Imam Husayn and affirms his commitment to this cause, all the prophets will shake hands with him. Of course, justice begins by establishing justice within oneself.

9) In Dua al-Nudba, there is also a link starting with all the prophets, Prophet Mohammad, the Ahlul-Bayt, and then we say:

Where is Hasan? Where is Husayn? Where are the sons of Husayn? Where is he who shall

avenge the blood of the one killed in Karbala? Where is he who shall be aided against all who transgress against him or lie about him?

The one helped by Allah here refers to Imam Mahdi because Allah will help him as mentioned from the Qur'an. Again, here you can see special emphasis put on Imam Husayn in a dua about Imam Mahdi.

10) In Ziyarat Ashura we can also find the link between Imam Husayn and Imam Mahdi in one passage:

I ask Allah that He grant me the opportunity to seek your revenge with the victorious Imam from the family of Muhammad.

And also:

I ask Allah and that He grant me the ability to fight for justice and fair play with the rightly guided Imam, who surely will come and speak the truth, (and who is) from your progeny.

11) On the Day of Ashura, we are recommended to offer condolences to each other by saying:

May Allah make our reward and your reward great, for our grief for Husayn, peace be on him and may He place us and you from those who help his cause with His guardian, the guided Imam from the family of Muhammad, peace be on them. 11

Conclusion

There is very clearly a special connection between Imam Husayn and Imam Mahdi. The event of Karbala and the advent of Imam Husayn are closely connected. Mourning for Imam Husayn and preparing for Imam Mahdi are connected.

In this part, eleven reasons that clearly illustrate this connection were discussed.

In the next part, we will try to offer an analysis of this connection and see how the event of Karbala can serve the universal mission of Imam Mahdi by being be both a symbol for missing justice as well as a source of inspiration for establishing it.

1. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 44, p. 218, chapter 28, no. 7
2. The last sentence in Imam's speech is from the Qur'an

'It is He who has sent His Apostle with the guidance and the religion of truth, that He may make it prevail over all religions, though the polytheists should be averse." (9 33; 61 9)

3. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 52, p. 290, Chapter 26, no. 29
4. Ibid., vol. 45, p. 299, Chapter 45, no. 10
5. Also Qur'an 17:15, 35:18, 39:7
6. What he was trying to say was that if a person has commited murder then his progeny have nothing to do with that and why should they carry his burden. What he did not understand was the correct meaning of dhurriyyah" used in the hadith. It does not mean progeny, rather ideological approvers of someone. When we say Aale Ziyad we mean the party of Ziyad

because of the Qur'anic view.

One's progeny are those who fully follow him even if they are not his sons. And if one's son does not follow him then they are not his Dhurriyyah. This is what we understand from the story of Noah where Allah says, regarding his son, that 'Indeed He is not of your family". On the other hand, Salman was counted as the Ahl al-Bayt while he was ethnically different from them let alone the blood line. In the story of Talut when his army reached the river, he told them whoever drinks from this river more than a little is not from me.

7. One of the beauties of the school of Ahlul Bayt is that they discussed with people over matters. They wanted to equip their followers with knowledge and arguments to help them discuss with others.
8. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 45, p. 295, Chapter 45, no. 1.
9. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 44, p. 285, Chapter 34, no. 23.
10. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 52, p. 307, Chapter 26, no. 81.
11. Al-Balad al-Amin, p. 268.

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