Belief in the Mahdi in Zoroastrianism

Zoroastrianism, which was widespread in ancient Persia and which became a pagan belief in Indo-European culture, dates back some 3500 years. This religion can clearly be seen to have been altered and distorted from its original form, is very likely a corrupted form of a divine faith. Under examination, this corrupted faith has elements of belief present in and unique to the true faiths, such as faith in Allah, the angels and Doomsday and belief in the jinn and demons.

One of the issues in Zoroastrian belief is the existence of a savior who will be instrumental in people living pleasant lives in this world and who will bring the world beauty, benefits, peace and security when he appears, in other words, Hazrat Mahdi (as).

According to Zoroastrian belief, someone called the *Saoshyant* **(The Savior of the World)** [Hazrat Mahdi (as)] will appear and save the world from the influence of Ahriman, namely satan by defeating him on the intellectual plane. The person described as the Saoshyant is Hazrat Mahdi (as) and in the End Times he will save the world from satan and his influence, that is to say irreligious philosophies and ideologies. The influence of Hazrat Mahdi (as) will spread across the world, and everywhere will be full of people who believe in Allah. This belief is openly expressed in Zoroastrian texts.

One of the hadith of our Prophet (saas) says this about Hazrat Mahdi (as):

> Abu Bashir says: When I asked Imam Jaffar Sadiq (a.s) "O son of the Messenger of Allah (saas)! Who is the Qaim of your Ahl al-Bayt?" he replied: **... HAZRAT MAHDI (AS) WILL CONQUER THE WORLD, ... AT THAT TIME THE WORLD WILL BE ILLUMINATED BY THE LIGHT OF ALLAH, AND EVERYWERE IN WHICH OTHERS THAN ALLAH ARE WORSHIPED WILL BECOME PLACES WHERE ALLAH IS WORSHIPED; AND EVEN IF THE POLYTHEISTS DO NOT WISH IT, THE ONLY FAITH ON THAT DAY WILL BE THE RELIGION OF ALLAH."**
>
> (Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 51, p. 146)

Zoroastrian belief also contains descriptions similar to those provided by our Prophet (saas) regarding Hazrat Mahdi (as). It is very likely that a true prophet came to the society in question at that time and gave the community the glad tidings of the coming of Hazrat Mahdi (as).

The coming of Hazrat Mahdi (as) is described as follows in Zoroastrian texts:

> **"... THAT PERSON WHOM THEY CALL THE SAOSHYANT [HAZRAT MAHDI (AS)] AND ASTVAT ERETA [HAZRAT MAHDI (AS)].**
>
> (Fravardin Yasht, paragraphs 128-129)

> **"THEY CALL THAT PERSON [HAZRAT MAHDI (AS)] THE SAOSHYANT BECAUSE HE WILL BE USEFUL TO ALL MATERIAL ENTITIES." "THEY CALL HIM [HAZRAT MAHDI (AS)] ASTVAT-ERETA BECAUSE EVERYTHING IN THE WORLD WITH A NAME AND SOUL WILL ATTAIN A LIFE WITH NO ILL THROUGH HIS LIGHT."**
>
> (Fravardin Yasht, paragraphs 128-129)

The Fravardin Yasht, the book of Zoroastrianism, also says that with the coming of Hazrat Mahdi (as) all living things in the world will have pleasant, peaceful and happy lives. The hadith narrated from our Prophet (saas) say that Hazrat Mahdi (as) will be useful to the whole world, will bring beauty to it, and that a world hitherto filled with suffering, troubles, oppression and enmity will, with the coming of Hazrat Mahdi (as) achieve peace and beauty. Hazrat Mahdi (as) will fill a world that is riddled with injustice and unfairness with justice and fairness instead:

> Harris ibn Abu Usama and Abu Naim have related from Abu Said al-Khudri that he said the Messenger of Allah (saas) said: **AFTER THE**

WORLD IS FILLED WITH OPPRESSION AND ENMITY, ONE FROM MY AHL AL-BAYT [HAZRAT MAHDI (AS)] WILL APPEAR. HE [HAZRAT MAHDI (AS)] WILL POSSESS THE EARTH AND FILL EARTH WITH JUSTICE, JUST AS IT HAS BEEN FILLED WITH OPPRESSION AND CORRUPTION BEFORE.

Jalaluddin Suyuti, Portents of the Mahdi of the End Times, p. 10

If there were only one day left for the world, that day would be lengthened until a man from among the people of my household, was sent; just as the Earth is filled with cruelty, **HE WILL FILL THE EARTH WITH JUSTICE.**
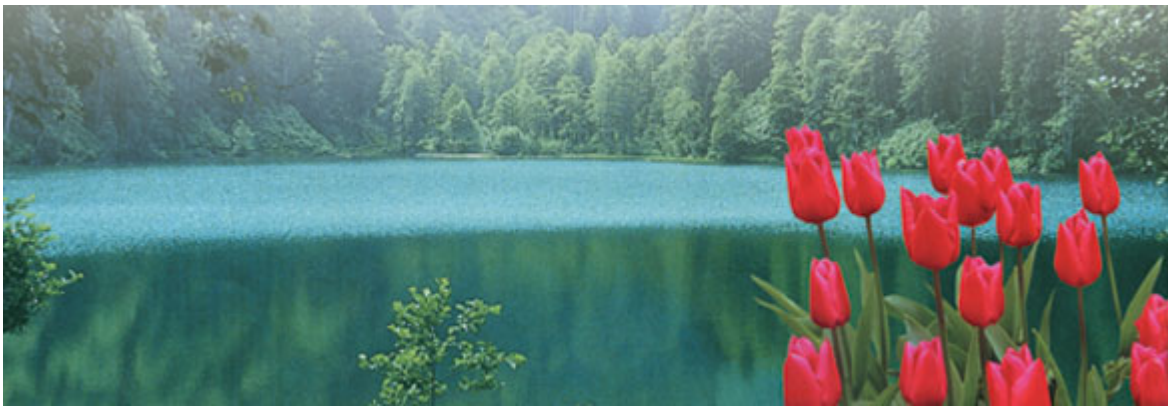
(Sunan Abu Dawud, 5/92)

In Zoroastrian belief, with the coming of Hazrat Mahdi (as) the world will be cleansed of all lies, hypocrisy, satanic falsity and cheating. Hazrat Mahdi (as) will be a most pure individual devoted to Allah with a great love and awe. In addition, Hazrat Mahdi (as) will also have heroic and courageous followers:

"... WHEN ASTVAT-ERETA [HAZRAT MAHDI (AS)] APPEARS AS ALLAH'S ENVOY HE WILL CLEANSE THE WORLD OF FALSEHOOD... HE [HAZRAT MAHDI (AS)] WILL LOOK ON THE CREATOR WITH KNOWLEDGABLE EYES... ASTVAT-ERETA'S [HAZRAT MAHDI'S (AS)] VICTORIOUS HELPERS WILL ALSO APPEAR WITH HIM..."

(Zamyad Yasht, paragraphs 89-93)

The hadith related from our Prophet (saas) report that Hazrat Mahdi (as) will also have helpers with the most elevated moral values in terms of courage, determination and sincerity:

It was related from Muhammad Ibn Hanafi that: Their numbers will be those of the people of Badr (313). **IN THE SAME WAY THAT THOSE BEFORE THEM CANNOT MATCH THEM, NEITHER CAN THOSE WHO COME AFTER.** Their number is as many as those who crossed the river with Talut.

(Al-Burhan fi Alamat al-Mahdi Akhir al-Zaman, p.57)

HE WILL DEFY THOSE AROUND BY KEEPING CONTROL OF THESE 313 PEOPLE IN HIS HAND, LIKE THE WARRIORS OF THE BATTLE OF BADR. THESE 313 ARE DEVOUT BELIEVERS BY NIGHT AND HEROES BY DAY.

(Portents of Doomsday, p. 169)

They consist of a group, including women, of 314 people. They will overcome all tyrants. Their hearts are like iron, and they are lions by day and devout believers by night. Neither those before nor after them can match them in self-sacrifice.

(Al-Burhan fi Alamat al-Mahdi Akhir al-Zaman, pp.57-68)

The belief in Hazrat Mahdi (as) in Zoroastrianism is exactly the same as that in the hadith narrated from our Prophet (saas). This is evidence that Allah sent this now completely corrupted faith by means of a prophet to Persian society in that period. It is also clear that belief in Hazrat Mahdi (as) is a true tenet contained within this faith that thrived in Mesopotamia before Islam was sent down to Arab societies by means of our Prophet (saas), in other words, 3500 years ago.