

Who are the personages of the End Times?

The century we are living in is a period of glad tidings in which the portents of the End Times reported in the hadiths of our Prophet (saas) and in the works of Islamic scholars are taking place. With the consecutive occurrence of these portents the entire Islamic world has entered a most holy state of expectation: **of the second coming of the Prophet Jesus (as), the appearance of Hazrat Mahdi (as), and of Islamic moral values prevailing on Earth.**

The End Times is a concept referring to the final period before the Day of Judgment. The features and portents of the End Times have been described in detail in the hadiths of our Prophet (saas). The information regarding the End Times also constitutes one of the main subjects in the most trustworthy and fundamental Islamic sources. Based on these sources, we may describe the main features of the End Times as follows:

The End Times consists of two separate stages. The first stage of the End Times is one of increased moral degeneration, of hunger and poverty, when conflict, anarchy and disorder cause fear and unease, and when the majority of mankind suffers from lovelessness, ruthlessness and selfishness. Following that period, this dark age will come to an end and the "Golden Age" will begin with our Lord sending the Prophet Jesus (as) back to Earth and, through Hazrat Mahdi (as), leading people to the true path. By the leave of Allah, the Golden Age will be a time when plenty, abundance, peace, security, justice and love rule the world.

Major events and historical developments will take place during the End Times. The individuals who will be the means whereby this happens are most sacred and holy people. One of these holy individuals of the End Times, the Prophet Jesus (as), was raised into the Presence of our Lord some 2000 years ago and will return to Earth at the time appointed by Allah. Information provided in hadiths and in verses of the Qur'an indicates that his second coming will take place in the End Times.

In addition, in hadiths our Prophet (saas) has imparted the glad tidings that Hazrat Mahdi (as) will appear during this time and will fill the world with peace and justice. The superior moral values and honorable intellectual struggle of Hazrat Mahdi (as) are described in detail in the hadiths. Our Prophet (saas) has told devout Muslims to follow Hazrat Mahdi (as) when he appears. The Prophet Jesus (as) and Hazrat Mahdi (as) will wage an intellectual struggle against irreligion during the End Times and, by Allah's leave, will be the means whereby the moral values of the Qur'an come to prevail on Earth.

The hadiths also report what the major negative force opposed to the Prophet Jesus (as) and Hazrat Mahdi (as) in their great struggles will be. This negative force is the **antichrist (dajjal)**. The name *dajjal*, regarded as one of the great portents of the Last Day **in reliable hadiths and fundamental Islamic texts** comes from the root *djl* and means "liar, cheat, he who confuses hearts and minds, good and bad, truth and falsehood, he who conceals a thing's true face by gilding over it, a disturber who wanders everywhere in secret corners, an evil one."

Highly detailed information has been provided in our Prophet's (saas) words on such matters as the coming of the Prophet Jesus (as) and Hazrat Mahdi (as), their physical features, when and where they will appear, the activities they will engage in, and those characteristics that distinguish them from other people and will enable them to be recognized. In the same way, the hadiths contain considerable information about the methods the antichrist will employ to oppose these holy personages, what techniques he will employ to attract people to his side, and how he can be recognized.

One of the wise aspects of our Prophet (saas) providing so much detailed information in the hadiths about the Prophet Jesus (as), Hazrat Mahdi (as) and the antichrist is to enable people to easily recognize them when they do appear. Yet although they have been awaited for some fourteen centuries and despite so much identifying information concerning them, they will still not be recognized, or will be wrongly identified, by the great majority of people. It is certain that the antichrist, who will wage an intense struggle against them, will play a major role in the failure to

recognize the Prophet Jesus (as) and Hazrat Mahdi (as). The antichrist will oppose the Prophet Jesus (as) and Hazrat Mahdi (as) in the End Times, will strive to disseminate disbelief among people, and will resort to all possible means to lead them into evil. He will introduce himself to people in different forms by way of deceptions and cheating, and it will not at once therefore be realized that he is a negative force, and, like the Prophet Jesus (as) and Hazrat Mahdi (as), he will not immediately be recognized. In this way he will influence a great many people with his lies and direct them as he sees fit. Indeed, under the indoctrination of the antichrist, the great majority of people will line up against the Prophet Jesus (as) and Hazrat Mahdi (as) and will strive against them. For that reason, in the early years of their coming, the number of those who appreciate the Prophet Jesus (as) and Hazrat Mahdi (as) and who support these holy individuals will be very small, and some of those who do believe in them will even gradually turn their backs on them.

There is no doubt that this is the most astonishing and thought-provoking situation. That is because, the Prophet Jesus (as) and Hazrat Mahdi (as) will be most auspicious and worthy people who abide solely by the approval of Allah, who strive with all sincerity for the salvation of all mankind in this world and in the Hereafter, and who will bring peace and plenty to the world. Under normal circumstances, all Muslims living at a time when the portents of the End Times are taking place one after the other and when the appearance of these holy individuals is expected should be waiting for the coming of the Prophet Jesus (as) and Hazrat Mahdi (as) with enormous joy and enthusiasm. When they appear, Muslims should also be able to see and recognize their superior moral virtues with the same enthusiasm and to recognize them from the characteristics revealed in the hadiths. Every Muslim who clearly sees the auspicious activities undertaken by the Prophet Jesus (as) and Hazrat Mahdi (as) should wish to align himself with them and to support the community of truth that acts alongside them, and all Muslims should compete with one another to support them with great enthusiasm and excitement. On the contrary, however, as stated above, even though many people witness all these developments they will still either fail to recognize the Prophet Jesus (as) and Hazrat Mahdi (as) or else, even if they do recognize them, they will avoid supporting them and standing by their side for one reason or another.

These signs in the hadiths reveal the importance of Muslims being correctly informed regarding the portents of the coming of the personages of the End Times, the characteristics that distinguish them from other people and the struggle based on falsehood that the antichrist will wage against them. It must not be forgotten that the End Times will be a period in which people have difficulty distinguishing between right and wrong and when a turning away from religious moral values will lead to great disorder and confusion. By Allah's leave, this information will protect Muslims against confusing good and evil at such a time and will enable them to realize the truth.

The aim of this section is to enable all Muslims to acquire the most accurate information about the coming of the Prophet Jesus (as) and Hazrat Mahdi (as), and about the antichrist, in the light of the verses of the Qur'an, the hadiths of our Prophet (saas) and statements by great Islamic scholars. It is also to eliminate any reasons that might prevent Muslims recognizing the Prophet Jesus (as) and Hazrat Mahdi (as) when these holy individuals appear, to expose all the fraudulent measures to which the antichrist will resort, and to prevent Muslims falling into a great error in the face of such a historic event. It is to be a means whereby all Muslims to be the ones to take their places alongside these worthy personages and give them the best possible support, by setting out all this information for their benefit.

We again need to recall that the period we are living in is one that has been awaited for some 1400 years. For that reason, all Muslims who are aware of this and who wish to enjoy the honor of standing alongside these holy personages must read the information contained in this book with the greatest care and be cautious against all misinformation and misdirection that might prevent them from following the truth. They must be aware what might prevent them from recognizing these holy individuals and embrace all means of identifying them properly.



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