

The Promised One

A BIOGRAPHY OF ALLAH'S CALIPH - IMAM MEHDI (AS)



SYED YAQOOB

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Table of Contents

Foreword	8
Preface.....	10
Publisher’s Note	13
Note on Transliteration	14
Introduction	15
Condition of Islam.....	16
What is Ma’rifa?	18
Meaning of the word Mehdi.....	20
The Traditions (Hadiths).....	20
Forecasts and their interpretations	21
Jaunpur	26
Importance of Jaunpur.....	28
Birth of Promised Mehdi ^{AS}	29
Lineage of Promised Mehdi ^{AS}	31
Shaikh Daniyal ^{RH}	31
Imam ^{AS} as a student.....	32
Imam ^{AS} as a warrior	35
Jazb (Ecstasy)	36
Hijrah (Migration)	38
Danapur	39
Kalpi	40
Chanderi	41
Mandu	42
What is a Daira?	43

Chapanear	46
Daulatabad	49
Ahmednagar	49
Bidar	50
Miyan Shaikh Momin Tawakkali ^{RZ}	50
Mohr-e-Vilayat	50
Miyan Moulana Dhiauddin Qadri ^{RZ}	50
Qazi Muntajibuddin Junery ^{RZ}	51
Gulbarga.....	52
Bijapur, Raibagh & Chitapur	53
Dabhol Bundar	54
Makkah.....	55
Deveport, Khambat.....	56
Ahmedabad.....	57
Miyan Malik Burhanuddin ^{RZ}	58
Malik Gowher ^{RZ}	59
Miyan Haji Mali ^{RZ}	59
Miyan Shah Abdul Majid ^{RZ} and his brothers	59
Miyan Moulana Yousuf ^{RZ}	59
Miyan Moulana Ahmed Shah bin Qadan ^{RZ}	59
Santej.....	64
Miyan Shah Nia'mat ^{RZ}	64
Sauda.....	65
Peeran Patan	65
Malik Mubarizul Mulk ^{RZ}	66

Malik Bakhkhan ^{RZ}	66
Miyan Syed Khundmir ^{RZ}	67
Miyan Syed Khanji Khidkiwal ^{RZ}	70
Miyan Moulana Yusuf Suhait ^{RZ} and Moulana Mohd Taj ^{RZ}	70
Miyan Moulana Abdur Rasheed ^{RZ}	71
Miyan Moulana Malikji ^{RZ} bin Khwaja Taha	71
Mullah Moinuddin and his disciples	72
Badli	75
Questions from ulama on the claim	77
Propogation of Faith	83
Rajasthan	84
Tharod	84
Jalor	84
Nagaur	86
Jaisalmer	88
Kaha	89
Thatta	93
Dariya Khan	95
Sheikh Sadruddin ^{RZ}	95
Qazi Khadan ^{RZ}	97
Journey to Khorasan	101
Kandahar	103
Dil Aram	106
Koh	106
Farah	107

Mir Dhulnun Baig ^{RZ}	108
Delegation from King Sultan Hussain	112
Arrival of the Companions from Gujarat	116
The Demise.....	120
Holy Family & Caliphs	122
The Caliphs	123
Miran Syed Mahmood Sani-e-Mahdi (RZ).....	123
Miyan Syed Khundmir Siddiq-e-Vilayat (RZ).....	125
Miyan Shah Nia'mat (RZ).....	131
Miyan Shah Nizam (RZ)	132
Miyan Shah Dilawar (RZ).....	133
The Message	135
Desire for Vision.....	138
Dhikr-e-Dwam.....	140
Tark-e-Duniya	142
Tawakkal	145
Sohbat-e-Sadiqeen	146
Uzlath	147
Other teachings.....	147
Zakath	148
Ushr.....	149
Sawieth	149
Noubath.....	150
Ijma'	150
Prayers for Mercy.....	150

Dugana-e-Lailatul Qadr	151
Community Work	151
The Government of Dairas	151
The Reform	153
The Daira and the Masjid-e-Nabuvi ^{PUH}	154
Prayers only for Allah	156
Islamic Brotherhood	156
Begging	157
Trade of Quranic Verses.....	157
The Women.....	158
Bibliography	160
Map	162

Foreword

It gives me *great* pleasure to say a few words about the book *The Promised One*, by Janab Syed Yaqoob Yadullahi. Perhaps it is the first biography of Hazrath Meeran Syed Mohammed Jaunpuri Mehdi-al-Maud (AS) to be written in English. The book stands unique among the whole corpus of Mehdavia Literature by the very virtue of its medium, which is English. Now-a-days, youth in general (and our youth is no exception to it) depend on English as the language of their study. Most of our young men and women are not at all in a position to make use of the existing biographies of Imamuna (AS), which are obviously either in Urdu or in Persian. Hence, Bhai Yaqoob's sincere effort is an answer to the utmost need of the day and an appropriate solution thereby to the problem of inaccessibility of religious literature by our youth.

I am glad that the book *The Promised One* (which is a maiden attempt) may prove to be a trend-setter for the subsequent production of Mehdavia literature in English. No doubt some material in English, in the form of articles, booklets, etc., had already been published on Mehdavism, but such a serious attempt and on such a large scale had never been done in the past. It goes without my saying that Janab Syed Yaqoob Yadullahi must have taken great pains to prepare such a compendium about the life and teachings of Hazrath Syed Mohammed Mehdi-al-Maud (PUH).

With regard to the need of Mehdi (AS), the "rightly-guided or the "God-guided, there is a schism among Muslims. A small group of Muslims outrightly rejected the very need of 'Mehdi (AS)' when several evidences are there in its assertion. Perhaps, it is due to their overreaching of religious books and their faith in them. Literally, they are unable to see obvious things, the things which are at hand due to *hubris* of knowledge in them. They are the mis-guided and are totally astray.

A majority among Muslims believe in the necessity of Mehdi (AS). As such, many Mehdīs had appeared in different countries at different times. Among the several contenders of Mehdi, many claimed either for political or other ulterior motives. Another group comprising of spiritualists, saints and Sufies contended the claim mistakenly. Actually in their spiritual evolution at one stage they feel that it is they who should claim the place of Mehdi and they did. Later on realizing the fact, they withdrew their claims and repented for it. In India, in the first half of the fifteenth century AD. at Jaunpur, Hazrath Syed Mohammed (AS) was born. He proclaimed himself to be the 'Mehdi (AS)' and indeed he is the 'Promised One'. In fact, he reiterated his claims at different places and at

different times. His third claim at Badli (in Gujrat) is technically termed as the "insistent claim. The most important and unique thing about Hazrath Syed Mohammed (AS) claim is that he stuck to it throughout his life, and proclaimed himself the promised one till his last breath. Hence, Hazrath Syed Mohammed (AS) of Jaunpur is the real and the Promised Mehdi (AS).

The Irony of one section among Muslims is that, it consider Hazrath Syed Mohammed (AS) of Jaunpur as one of the greatest saints ever existed on the face of this earth but are not ready to accept him as the 'Promised One'. In fact, this belief is in itself a self-negating one. It is because in one instance this section considers Hazrath Syed Mohammed (AS) of Jaunpur as a true saint and in the very second instance disbelieve his claim to be the promised one. This section is indeed in stark error and a mis-guided one.

The spiritual teaching of almost all the religions of the world are of pantheistic order. It teaches that God or Allah is the only and the Absolute Truth. The whole of the universe inclusive of all things is just a manifestation of that Absolute Reality. When we consider the teachings of Hazrath Syed Mohammed Mehdi-AI-Maud (AS) in the above context, it becomes obvious that Allah exists in man too. Therefore, Imamuna says 'Everyone who seeks Allah out of himself is an infidel'. It means Allah manifest in man, so that Allah becomes man's interior self and in turn, man becomes Allah's exterior self. In other words, if man is the form, then Allah is the content. There cannot be any better paradigm than the above illustration to explicate the pantheistic philosophy and the dualistic one in a single stroke.

In the end, I pray that Allah may increase our faith manifold and bless us to live a true and realistic life following the teachings of Prophet Mohammed (PUH) and Imamuna (AS). May Allah bless us all to see Him in this world with the eyes of flesh. May Allah guide all others who are astray to become true believers in Prophet Mohammed (PUH) and in Hazrath Syed Mohammed Mehdi-AI-Maud (AS) who is the 'Promised One'
- Amen.

Hyderabad

(Syed Khuda Bakash Khundmiri)

Preface

To write the biographies of great personalities - personalities who have left their indelible mark in the history and have influenced not only their own generation but also the succeeding generations - is always a mammoth task, which is to be undertaken with great responsibility and utmost care. One has, not only to choose from a vast quantity of material so that the work without being too lengthy should be comprehensive enough to present a clear image to the reader, but also to present that material in a well organised manner. Besides, when one is attempting to write the biography of a person - whose life had a completely religious purpose - one has to approach the subject in a different manner using lot of religious vocabulary. The style also has to be adjusted with this particular aspect in mind.

I did not have a comprehensive knowledge about the holy life of the Promised Mehdi (AS) and I also knew my limitations with the language. But, when I was approached by the Tanzeem-e-Mehdavia to write the biography of the Promised Mehdi (AS) in English, I could not say no to their request because, there were some stark truths before me. First of all, several biographies of the Promised Mehdi (AS) were available in Arabic, Persian and Urdu, but there was none in English - the most commonly read and understood language of the world. I was also not aware of any other person attempting this work. Moreover, English and Hindi have replaced Urdu as the main language of India. This is the reason why most of the Islamic literature is currently being translated into English. Thus there was a greater need for the younger generation of the Muslims - in general and the Mehdavis in particular to have a biography of the Promised Mehdi (AS) in English language. Keeping in view these facts, I agreed to do my best. The work was taken up some four years ago and the result is now presented.

When I started the work, I had to sort out suitable events from the vast life history of the Promised Mehdi (AS). The terminology of Mehdavis was also a problem. But with the Grace of Allah, I endeavoured to overcome all this with the help of the youngsters and guidance of elderly persons. If the readers find anything appreciable, the credit goes to them and if there is any mistake, it is due to my not taking proper care while working on the project. I request the reader to correct it and forgive me in view of my limitations.

For the life history, message and teachings of the Promised Mehdi (AS) and also for the traditions (Hadiths) and Quranic verses, I have utilised the references from the books mentioned in the bibliography. I have not given references in the body to keep the flow

and sequence in the reading. But without referring to the books like Muqadama-e-Siraj-ul-absar, Al-Mehdi al-Moud (AS) etc. it would have been a very difficult task to collect all the reference and material.

I have divided the book into five chapters including the Introduction. The chapters are titled - Jaunpur, Hijra, The Message and the Reform. The Introduction deals with the advent of Islam in India, condition of Muslims, the traditions about the Promised Mehdi (AS) and the image of the Mehdi (AS) according to the said traditions. Then I have given a brief life-sketch of Miran Syed Mohammed Jaunpuri (AS) in comparison with the traditions.

In the Second chapter, I have given details about Jaunpur, the birth-place of the Promised Mehdi (AS) and also his childhood, his youth and the active participation of the Imam (AS) in the restoration of the glory of Islam in the eastern India.

The Hijra describes the holy journey undertaken by the Promised Mehdi (AS) for about twenty-three years in very adverse conditions from Jaunpur to Farah via Deccan, Makkah, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Sindh, Baluchistan and Afghanistan. This journey is very important in view of the fact that it was undertaken purely in the path of Allah without any proper arrangements and without knowing as to what type of reception was awaiting at the next halt. The attitude of the scholars and nobles was hostile and places were strange, but the Promised Mehdi (AS) accomplished this task with the grace of Allah successfully. In this chapter, I have tried to report the important events taken place during the journey. This covers almost the entire teachings and the message of the Imam (AS). But since it is scattered, therefore to facilitate the readers, I have given the details of the message in a separate chapter.

The Fourth chapter thus gives details of the message, teaching and practices of the Imam (AS). In this chapter, I have taken all possible care to be accurate and give the correct sense of the message.

The concluding chapter pertains to the reforms the Imam (AS) carried out and its impact. This chapter is very important in view of the fact that most of the young generation, under the influence of the so called reform movements in the Muslim population, feel that we are not upto the mark. In this chapter, I have tried to give a brief comparison between the Masjid-e-Nabawi SAS and the Daira. This in itself requires a thorough work to establish the correct Islamic way in the life of an individual.

To accomplish this task, I am grateful and acknowledge the efforts put in by the youngsters of the Tanzeem-e-Mehdavia - in general - and by Mr. Syed Azmatullah, Mr. Syed Noorul Huda and Mr. Syed Mubarak Jawad in particular. Without their help, it would have been difficult for me to accomplish this task. I would be failing in my duty if I fail to make a special mention of the encouragement given to me by the elders, holy priests and scholars in general and Miyan Syed Khudabaksh Khundmiri in particular. With their blessings and guidance, I was able to make progress in this task speedily with confidence.

Hyderabad, November 1989.
Syed Yaqoob
(Roshan Yadullahi)
S/o Late Hz. Syed Najmuddin.

Publishers' Note

Tanzeem-e-Mehdavia was formed in 1976 with the main aim of spreading the holy message of Imam Syed Mohammed Jaunpuri Mehdi Maud (AS). To carry out this mission we have been publishing books, booklets, pamphlets on various topics regularly. In addition, lectures, discourses and meetings are organised at different occasions on varied topics, addressed by intellectuals and scholars. Since 1978, Noor-e-Vilayath, a monthly in Urdu is also being published.

Inspite of all these efforts it was felt that to spread this message on a wider scale, our literature being in Persian and Urdu has to be translated and published in English, besides some original work to be taken up in the same medium. This is because of the fact that English is the *lingua franca* of the world and there was hardly any literature in English, except for a few booklets projecting the faith.

To start with it was decided to have a biography of the Imam (AS) in English and this task was handed over to Mr. Syed Yaqoob, who after four years of hard work, overcoming all hurdles and limitations has translated this effort into a comprehensive book. Mr. Syed Yaqoob Roshan Yadullahi son of Hzt. Syed Najmuddin alais Allahbaksh Miyan Secunderabadi is a graduate from the famous Osmania University of Hyderabad Deccan. Presently he is working as Deputy Registrar in the Co-operative Department, Government of Andhra Pradesh. It suffices to state that Mr. Syed Yaqoob is a direct descendant of Hazrat Imam-e-Mahdi (AS) and belongs to the illustrious line of Yadullahi Saadats. His ancestors were great instructors and spiritual guides of the community. His maternal uncle Hazrat Abu Sayeed Syed Mahmood Tashrifullahi (RH) was also a reputed scholar and guide. Thus from both sides of his parents he has inherited a vast and authentic knowledge. Till now he had been writing articles in Urdu on different topics. This book is his first work in English. He has taken great care to be accurate in reporting the events of the holy life.

















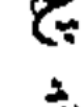




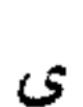



We hope this book will serve its purpose of enlightening those, who are still ignorant about the advent of the Mehdi (AS), Syed Mohammed Jaunpuri (AS). Further, it is hoped that it will, in a small measure, help to fill the void of the need for Mehdavia literature in English.

We thank all those people who have contributed their mite in this great work.

Sarwar Ali Khan
President-Tanzeem-e-Mehdavia

Note on Transliteration

In this book, I have used several Arabic terms in their transliterated form along with their English equivalents for the sake of convenience. As far as possible modern forms of the names of towns and cities are used. The following transliteration system is applied generally.

	b		d		g		p
	dh		t		r		m
	th		z		n		a
	j		gh		h		kh
	ch		s		f		
	sh		q		y		
	k		l		w		

List of Abbreviations:

- AH - After Hijra
- PBUH - Peace be Upon Him
- AS - Alaihissalam
- RZ - Raziallahuta'la Anhu / Anha
- RH - Rahmatallahia'lah

INTRODUCTION

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مَنْ يَرْتَدَّ مِنْكُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِ فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِي اللَّهَ بِقَوْمٍ يُحِبُّهُمْ وَيُحِبُّونَهُ

*O! ye who believe, who so of you turn back from His faith,
soon Allah will bring a people whom He will love and who love Him. -5:54*

The dawn of Islam in India is generally attributed to the conquest of Sindh by the young general of the Islamic forces Mohd. Bin Qasim in 644 AD. But actually it was only an introduction of Islam in India. The actual propagation of Islam was undertaken by the Sufis long after this event. The attacks on India by Mahmood Ghazni (997-1030 AD) were mostly temporary in nature and did not have any major impact on the Indians. The Muslim rule in India was established by Mohd. Ghori In 1192 AD. Large Muslim population from Central Asian Countries migrated to India. This had a major impact on the local population. This was a time when several Sufis from Bukhara, Samarkhand, Iran, Khurasan, Syria etc., had already visited India. Among them were the towering personalities of Hz. Mansoorul Hallaj (d.309/921) and Hz. Uthman-e-Haruni (d.617/1220). The first regular order of spiritual teaching (*Tareeqa*) was founded by Hz. Shaik Moin-ud-din Chishti (d. 634/1236) at Ajmer in Rajputana and the second such order was established in Multan by Hz. Shaik Baha-ud-din Zikria Multani (d. 661/1262). Many well known Sufis and saints were born in both these Silsilas. They played a very important role in spreading Islam in this country. Thus it is evident that, unlike in other countries, Islamic base in India was on mystic path (*Tareeqa*). It is also a fact that the conversions of local population here, was not total. This was mostly due to the following reasons:

1. India was conquered by Turks, Afghans and Moghuls - a very long time after the end of the Holy Khilafat of the Prophet (PUH) (*Khilafat-e-Rashida*) The conquering force was itself not so zealous in spreading Islam. They themselves were not the best example of true Muslims. Hence, their presence could have little impact on the spiritually rich Hindu India.
2. The circumstances in India were totally different from those of the other countries. The area was very large and the population lived mainly in remote villages. There were different languages spoken of which only a few were very rich in their tradition.

3. The religious background of India was equally rich. In fact, the Vedic religion was also a religion which believed in unity of God (*Wahdat*). Great souls were born in this ancient land. The religious culture in India was very flexible in nature. This helped it to remain in existence for generations, in very adverse conditions. The best example of this can be seen in Buddhism. It was founded by a son of India and very soon it became popular among the masses all over the country. However, today it stands alien in its home land. This was the consequence of accepting Buddha as one of the Avatars of Hinduism.

In view of the above factors, there was great need for a totally dedicated movement, purely based on spiritual and intellectual level to spread Islam in this country. This need was fulfilled by the monasteries of Chishti and Soharwardi Sufis. Thus the foundation of Islam in India was laid on the spiritual (*Tareeqa*) and intellectual grounds, whereas the foundation in other countries was based on only Islamic law (*Sharia*) which was introduced by the military, conquering the said countries. Each and every soldier of the Islamic forces used to exhibit an exemplary individual ethics which had a great impact on local population and induced them to accept Islam. But as in Makkah, in India also, the Sufis had to struggle hard for spreading Islam to the nook and corner of the country. In fact, after the conquest of Makkah, Islam in the Arabian Peninsula was a matter of acceptance rather than propagation. But in India it had to be propagated from place to place, at all times. Though there were mass conversions, yet there was never a total conversion. Therefore, it was necessary for the Islamic missionaries to be on the vigil, and to continue removing the hurdles and pave way for their progress.

CONDITION OF ISLAM

Since the foundation of Islam was laid by the Sufis, more stress was given to the mystic path (*Tareeqa*) and there was a series of Sufis, Aulias, and mystic-men in all parts of India. These Sufis had their given *Silsilas* (Orders) of spiritual teachings inherited by them. But according to local circumstances they had introduced many new things and accepted several innovations which were not Islamic in strict terms. The majority of the Muslim population was converted from Hindus and had retained many practices of the earlier faith, especially, the caste system and the Idol worship in a modified form. In due course the Importance of unfounded customs and unIslamic faiths, Interpretations and innovations (*bida't*), was more than the Islamic law (*Sharia*) and the Islamic faith. Thus the real Islamic faith and the Islamic spirit vanished gradually. In this way, not only the very image of Islam was distorted but its spiritual teachings were also at stake. Scholars like Basheer Ahmed Mohandis, Khalleq Ahmed Nizami, Syed Hashmi

Fareedabadi, Abdul Haq Mohadith Dehelvi and Abul Kalaam Azad have depicted a very gloomy picture of Islam and its followers, during the reign of the Sultans of Delhi. They are unanimous in their findings, that there was little left of the original form. The Mullahs of the day were under the influence of the kings, used to give unfounded interpretations to the Quranic verses and were very liberal in giving Verdicts (*Fatwah*) in favour of the kings without caring for the real position of the Islamic law. The Sufis were not interested in the Islamic law (*sharia*) either. The Mystic path (*Tareeqa*) was given more importance than any thing else. It was considered as ignorance to talk in terms of *Kufr* (Blasphemy) and *Iman* (Faith). No distinction was made between the creatures and the Creator. The kings were more interested in their own kingdom rather than in the kingdom of Allah. Allah and his Laws were used as a shield for their unauthenticated deeds and rule.

It has already been established that the foundation of Islam in India was based on the spiritual aspect of Islamic teachings, and this aspect (spiritual) was also distorted by the local influence over the ignorant Sufis. In other countries, especially in the Arabian Peninsula the *Sharia* (Islamic law) was given more importance and the mystic path (*Tareeqa*) was completely ignored. In fact there was a confrontation between these two wings. J.Spencer Trimingham in his book "The Sufi Orders in Islam" has given an account of the situation.

"Thus there was a great contrast in both these wings and there was a greater need for introducing a balance between them". The population of Muslims in India was relatively larger than the population in other countries. Thus the need to introduce this blend of balance in India was more than elsewhere. This perhaps is the only logical conclusion for the advent of the Promised Mehdi (AS) in India. But there are traditions (*Hadiths*) giving clear indications that the Promised Mehdi (AS) would appear in India, which we shall discuss in the subsequent chapters.

In view of this there was a greater need of a reformer in India than elsewhere. This need was founded on two aspects.

- (1) The original form was to be restored to Islam and its Sharia.
- (2) The spiritual and the gnostic (Ma'rifa) aspects of Islam were to be taught in the real Islamic way.

Before we try to understand the first aspect i.e. restoration of Sharia, we have to take two things into consideration - first, Islam in India had no opportunity to have the living

examples of the holy lives of the companions (*Sahaaba-e-Karam*) of the Messenger of Allah (PUH) . Secondly, the rulers of India, though Muslims, were not having the experience of a real Islamic state. The concept of the Khilafath had long died. In Islam, the real position of the ruler was that of a servant of Allah who was assigned the job of taking care of the land of Allah and its inhabitants. He was not only answerable to Allah, but also to the weakest citizen of the land. This concept was changed and the kings were termed as *Dilullah* (Shadow of Allah) and were treated as privileged beings, free to do any thing they liked; and there was none to question them. Thus there was a real need to restore the teachings of Islam in the original form as was in the times of the Prophet of Allah (PUH). The second aspect is purely gnostic (*Ma'rifa*) and spiritual. To understand this aspect we will refer to a few traditions (*Hadthhs*).

WHAT IS MA'RIFA?

Hazrath Abu Hurairah (RZ) (the eminent companion of the Prophet PUH) narrated that, "The Prophet of Allah (PUH) had given me two kinds of knowledge, of which only one I have disclosed to you. But if I reveal the other one. I am sure that you will cut my throat".

Hazrath Abdullah Ibn-e-Abbas (RZ) had also referred to such type of knowledge in a tradition by saying that he was sure that he would be stoned to death if he were to reveal the meaning of a Quranic verse which he knew.

From the above traditions it is evident that the Prophet of Allah (PUH) had revealed certain aspects of Islam to those of his companions who were capable of understanding such teachings. Now the question arises as to what those teachings were? To understand this we will quote another tradition.

"It Is narrated by Hazrath Umar (RZ) that one day we were In the company of the Prophet of Allah (PUH). A man came who was wearing white robes and his hair, were dark black. There were no signs on his person of having undertaken any journey. Nor did anybody amongst us knew him? Then he sat down in front of the Prophet (PUH) putting his knees opposite his (Prophet (PUH)) knees and placing his hands on his legs and asked "O! Mohammed (PUH), Please tell me what is Islam? The Prophet (PUH) said "You have to bear witness to the fact that there is no god but Allah and that Mohammed (PUH) is His servant (PUH) and Messenger (PUH) and you have to *Perform Prayers (Salat). Pay Zakat (Islamic Tax), Observe Fast (during the month of Ramadan) and if capable perform the Hajj (Pilgrimage to Makkah)*". The stranger then said, 'what you

said is true'. Hazrath Umer (RZ) says that what we wondered was that the man was asking a question as well as confirming the reply himself.

Then he (the stranger) asked the Prophet (PUH), "Please inform me of the 'Iman' (belief). The Prophet (PUH) said that you have to have belief in Allah, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers AS and the Doomsday (*Qayamat*). on fate for good and evil. The man said 'you have told the truth'. Then he asked to be informed about Perfection (*Ehsan*). The Prophet (PUH) said "you have to pray Allah as if you were seeing Him. But if it is not possible for you to see Him, then know that he is seeing you". The visitor said "You have told the truth". Then he went away. Hazrath Omer (RZ) says that "I stayed for long with the Prophet (PUH). The Prophet (PUH) asked him as to whether he knew the visitor. He (Omer RZ) said, "Allah and His Messenger (PUH) knew better". The Prophet of Allah (PUH) said that "he was Gabriel (AS) (Jibraial AS) and had come to teach your religion (Deen) to you.

The 'tradition' (Hadith) noted above is one of the most significant traditions and is known as a divine tradition (*Hadith-e-Qudsi*). It is clear from this tradition that the Prophet of Allah (PUH) had taught Hazrath Abu Hurairah (RZ) and others about the third aspect of Islam, which deals with perfection (*Ehsan*); and this was the 'second knowledge' referred to by Hazrath Abu Hurairah (RZ) and Hazrath Ibn-e-Abbas (RZ) in the two traditions quoted earlier. To conclude this, we will quote here the great scholar Abdul Rahman Jaami (d. 898 AD) who in his book which is a commentary on Phusus-Ul-Hikm has stated that "due to the fact that the Prophet of Allah (PUH) was deputed as the Messenger (PUH) to deliver the Islamic law (*Sharia*), he has not exhibited his Vilayah. which is the unity of all the qualities of Allah. Thus the Vilayat-e-Mohammadia (PUH), remains intact till the birth of the seal of the Vilayah (*Khatim-e-Vilaya*)".

The Sufia *Silsilas* (Orders) in India trace their origin to the IV Caliph Hazrath Ali (RZ), or to the first Caliph Hazrath Abu Bakar (RZ). Since the teachings of the *Ma'nfa* (gnosis) were not made common, they had many doubts and had to depend upon the interpretations given by the Sufis and saints who were not free from erring (*Ghair-e-Masum*).

The teachings were mostly based on the individual experiences and utterances of the great Sufis of the Silsila. The practices of Ma'rifa were not obligatory (*Fard*), but voluntary (*Mustahib*). J.Spencer Trimingham in "The Sufi Orders in Islam" says, "But these are theoretical ways none of which developed into Silsila - Tareeqa. Their teaching

was modified by their pupils in accordance with their own mystical experiences". -(p.12)
The Islamic concept of the Gnosis was vanishing due to the local influence of the Hindu saints of Bhakti Movement. These saints were equally popular among Hindus and Muslims. Thus the Muslim Sufis were also forced to follow them to retain their popularity.

Under the above Islamic background. the Khalifa of Allah Hazrath Syed Mohammed Mehdi-e-Mawood (AS) was born in 847 AH. at Jaunpur in eastern India. Before going into the detailed life history of the Promised Mehdi (AS), we will see as to what is meant by the term "The Promised Mehdi", and what is the position of this great (Promised) personality in Islam, and what are the prophecies about him.

MEANING OF THE WORD MEHDI

The word Mehdi is an Arabic word and is a passive participle of the word Huda, meaning one who shows the right path. one who introduces, or one who enlightens. These are the meanings according to the Arabic dictionaries. But according to the Islamic terminology it is the name given by the Prophet (PUH) to a person, who as per his prophecies would follow the Prophet (PUH) in his foot-steps without a flaw and Allah would bestow His Khilafat on him after making him perfect and would send him towards the mankind to propagate Islam. He would recite the Quranic verses and explain them according to the will of Allah. He would carry the name and other qualities of the Prophet of Allah (PUH) and his advent has been promised by the holy Prophet of Allah (PUH) in numerous traditions (*Hadiths*). Therefore he is called the "Promised Mehdi^{AS}".

THE TRADITIONS (HADITHS)

There are countless traditions about the advent of the Promised Mehdi (AS). These traditions are indicative of his name, place of birth, period and so on and so forth. Since traditions were collected a long period after the demise of the Prophet of Allah (PUH), several fake traditions had also crept in. Thus the traditions have been categorized as genuine, weak and fake. Therefore there are several contradictions among these traditions. Thus practically it is impossible to find all the signs indicated in the traditions, in one person. This is mostly due to the fact that several traditions were coined after the end of the period of *Khilafat-e-Rashida*. But most of the true traditions are unanimous about the name, the name of his father and his pedigree etc. After carefully studying all the true traditions, the great Sunni scholars of the early period have come to the

conclusion that, the name of the Promised Mehdi (AS) would be "*Mohammed (PUH)*", his father's name "*Abdullah*" and he would belong to *Bani Fatimah*' (The holy family) and Allah will depute him, for the glory of His religion, whenever He likes.

FORECASTS AND THEIR INTERPRETATIONS

Before discussing the traditions about the advent of 'Mehdi (AS)', it is desirable to have a look at the way in which the forecasts were made and interpreted. It is an admitted fact that the forecasts are not very clear, but only indicative of certain signs. This is true in respect of all the forecasts about the advent of the Prophets (AS) like Moses (AS), Jesus (AS) and Mohammed (PUH). The ambiguity in the forecasts is mainly because of the wisdom bestowed upon human beings and to test their faith and belief in Allah. Thus the forecasts are not very clear. By doing so Allah wants to sort out those few believers who were having the light of the faith to accept His Messengers (AS). In other words, the forecasts are also a testing method. The forecasts about the advent of the great Prophet Mohammed (PUH) in the ancient books are so ambiguous and confusing that inspite of seeing the Prophet (PUH) himself, his miracles and other things, a majority of Jews and Christians have refused to accept him as the Promised Messenger of Allah (PUH).

This is mainly due to their own interpretations given to the said forecasts. They say that they cannot see in him the signs of several forecasts about Him. It would not have been difficult for Allah to indicate the correct name, father's name, the time and place of birth of his Prophets (AS) like Moses (AS), Jesus (AS) and Mohammed (PUH). Had it been done so, there would not have been any controversies about them and there would not have been so many sects and so many holy wars among the followers of the said Prophets (AS). To understand the forecasts there is a great necessity of two things - first, the proper interpretation with a very clear mind, and second the 'light of the faith'. Without these two things one cannot attain the right path. The persons who admit the Prophets (AS) and the Khalifas of Allah (AS) without indulging into the discussions of the rightness of the forecasts are called by the holy Quran as 'Uminuna bil Ghaib' i.e. who believe in unseen. Therefore there is no need for any discussion about the forecasts in respect of the advent of the Promised Mehdi (AS), for those who are in this category of believers. However for the general interest we will discuss a few traditions (*Hadiths*).

1) The first tradition to quote is from Hakim, who says that Umm-e-Salmah (RZ) narrates that she had heard the Prophet of Allah (PUH) saying that the Mehdi (AS) would belong to Bani Fatima (RZ) (Holy Family). This is reported by Abu Da'ud also.

2) It is narrated by Hazrath U'mar (RZ) that from the progeny of Imam Hussain (RZ), a person would appear from the east. Even if mountains stand in his way he would destroy them and carve his way. Hafiz AbuI Qasim, Hafiz Abu Nayeem Asfahani and Hafiz Abdullah Nayeem Bin Hamed have narrated this tradition in their books.

3) Abdullah (RZ) Bin Alharith Bin Alzubedi narrates that the Prophet of Allah (PUH) said that the people from the East would rise to support Mehdi (AS) i.e., for his prevalence.

4) Hazrath Khadifa (RZ) a had narrated that the Prophet of Allah (PUH) has stated that even if one day is left for the end of this world (doomsday) Allah would prolong that day so that a person who carries my name, characteristics and the family name (*Kuniat*), of Abu Abdullah would born, in between Rukn and Muqaam people would make covenant (*Ba'ith*) with him. Allah would restore the pristine purity of His religion. He would also have victories to his credit. On the earth he would not meet the people who do not recite '*La-ilaha Illallah*' (there is no god but Allah). Sulaiman (RZ) enquired of the Prophet (PUH) as to which son of the Prophet (PUH) this person would belong, the Prophet (PUH) said he would belong to this son of mine, and the Prophet (PUH) touched Imam Hussain (RZ).

5) It is narrated by Hazrath Umar (RZ) that the Prophet of Allah (PUH) said that the Doomsday would not dawn till a person from my progeny appears. He would carry my name and his family name (*Kuniat*) would be Abu Qasim.

6) It is narrated by Abi Vayal (RZ) that Hazrath Ali (RZ) looked at Hussain (RZ) and said "this son of mine is a Syed, thus the Prophet of Allah (PUH) had named him so". The person who carries the name of your Prophet (PUH) would be born to him at a time when the people would be negligent of the religion (*deen*). He would aim at revealing the truth (*Haq*). The heavens would be happy on his advent. He would have bright forehead, sharp nose, broad shoulders and slender thighs. On his right thigh there would be a mole. There would be a gap in his teeth . He would fill the earth with peace and justice as it would have been filled with tyranny.

7) Abu Sayeed Khudri (RZ) narrates that the Prophet of Allah (PUH) stated that Mehdi (AS) belongs to me, he would have bright forehead and straight nose and would fill the earth with peace and justice as it was filled with injustice and tyranny. He would be the master for seven years.

8) It is narrated by Abu Da'ud (RZ) that Razeen Abdullah (RZ) had reported that the Prophet (PUH) said that even if one day was left for the end of this world, Allah would prolong that day, so that a person from my family (*Ahl-e-Bait*) would be deputed, whose name would be my name and whose father's name would be my father's name.

9) Thouban (RZ) narrates that the Prophet of Allah (PUH) stated that 'at your treasure (*Khilafat*) three persons would quarrel, all of them would be sons of the Khalifa. But none of them would succeed in acquiring it. Afterwards black flags would appear and they would kill you so that no other race would have been killed in that manner. After that the Khalifa of Allah AS, Mehdi (AS), would appear. When you hear about him go to him, make covenant (*Ba'ith*) with him, even if you had to go crawling over the snow.'

10) There is a narration from Ibn U'mar (RZ) which has been reported by Ibn-Shiba (RZ) that the Prophet of Allah (PUH) stated that the Mehdi (AS) would appear in a manner that an angel would be announcing over his head that "this is the Caliph of Allah (AS), Mehdi (AS)".

11) Ibn Asakar (RZ) has narrated that the Prophet of Allah (PUH) said "How my *Umma* (adherents) would be ruined, when I am at the beginning and *Isa* (Jesus AS) the son of *Mariam* (Mary AS) is at the end and Mehdi (AS) who is from my progeny (*Ahl-e-Bait*) is in the middle". (there are several traditions of like contents and meaning which are reported by Hakim, Abu Na'im, Imam Jafar, Yahya Bin Abdullah and others).

12) Hafiz Abu Nayeem Aslahani (RZ) narrated through Ali Bin Hazili (RZ) that the Prophet of Allah (PUH) addressed Fatima (RZ) thus: "By Allah, who has deputed me with the truth (*Haq*), from these two i.e., Hussain RZ (Hasan RZ, Hussain RZ), Mehdi (AS), my adherent would be born, in the later period. In the later period he would establish the religion (*Deen*) as I have done in the early period".

13) It is narrated by Abu Sayeed Khudari (RZ) that they had doubts that after the Prophet (PUH) there may be losses (Hadath to the faith). Thus they enquired the Prophet (PUH) about it. He stated that the Mehdi (AS) would appear from his adherents and would live for 5,7 or 9. They enquired as to what those were. Said (He) that those were the years. And then (he added) "a man would come and ask, O!Mehdi (AS) give me, give me, he (the Mehdi AS) would give with both his hands unto the spread out cloth, to the extent that he (the person) could carry. This tradition is excellence (*Ahsan*).

In the light of the above traditions and interpretations, the personality of the Promised Mehdi (AS) would be as under: The Promised Mehdi (AS) would be a Caliph of Allah AS (*Khaleefathulla*) and to make covenant (Ba'ith) with him is obligatory (*Fard*), he would belong to Bani Fatima RZ (*Ahl-e-Bait*) and would be in the line of Hazrath Imam Hussain RZ, his name would be Mohammed (PUH) and his family name (Kunait) would be Abul Qasim, his father's name would be Abdullah, and he would appear in India (East). He would protect the Muslims from destruction and would restore the religion to its original position; he would appear in between the period of the Prophet of Allah Mohammed (PUH) and *Isa* (Jesus AS) (who would descend from the heavens close to the doomsday), he would appear at a time when the religion would have been generally neglected; he would hate the people who do not remember Allah; he would distribute the wealth with both hands. People would make covenant with him in between Rukn and *Muqaam* (places in Makkah). He would be at a place where to reach him, one has to pass crawling over snow; he would fill the earth with peace and justice. He would bear the characteristic of the Prophet Mohammed (PUH) and would be free from erring.

Now we will give a very brief life sketch of the Promised Mehdi Hazrath Syed Mohammed Jaunpuri (AS), to enable the readers to compare his holy life with the above traditions and the gist of the said traditions: The Promised Mehdi (AS), was born in 847 AH. at Jaunpur in eastern India. His name was Syed Mohammed (PUH), his family name (*Kuniat*) was Abul Qasim, his father's name was Syed Abdullah^{RH} and his mother's name was Bibi Amina^{RH} and he belonged to the holy family (*Ahl-e-Bait*) through Imam Moosa Kazim^{RH} in the line of Imam Hussain (RZ). He was admitted as a great Scholar at the age of 12 and was given the title of '*Asad ul Ulema*' (the lion among scholars), by all the scholars of Jaunpur. He started preaching at an early age. He was also recognised as '*Syed-ul-Aulia*' and even his opponents admit that in those days there was none to surpass him in the adherence of *Sunnah* (the path of the Prophet PUH). He fought seven wars along with Sultan Hussain Sharqi and won them all. He was unconscious for about 12 years after the victory over the king of Gaur, Rai Dalpath. He started on migration (*Hijra*) and Hajj pilgrimage at the age of 40 in 887 AH. Enroute he preached and gave sermons, explaining the Quranic verses, explaining the real meaning and sense (Muradullah). Several scholars, Sufis, saints and kings, owing to evident signs recognised him as the Promised Mehdi (AS). But he did not take any cognisance of it and advised them to await for the appropriate time. At Makkah in 901 AH in between Rukn and Muqaam, he proclaimed that he is the Promised Mehdi (AS) and Khalifa of Allah (AS)

and to accept him as such is a must. Several people, including two of his followers (*Ashaab*), took covenant (*Ba'ith*) on his hand at that place.

Then he returned to India and started preaching. His explanation of the Quranic verses had been immensely appreciated by the later scholars like Badauni, Abul Kalam Azad, Hafiz Mahmood Shirani, Ibaadullah Akhtar etc. Thousands of people, including Saints, Sufis, priests, scholars, nobles, kings and commoners accepted him as the Promised Mehdi (AS) and left all their luxuries, comforts, status and worldly belongings to undergo the hardships of Hijra and hunger, for the sake of his holy company.

In 903 AH, at Ahmedabad and again in 905 AH at Badli he proclaimed that the acceptance of his person as the Promised Mehdi (AS) is obligatory (*Fard*) on one and all and anyone who refuses to accept him as such, becomes a non-believer (*Kafir*). He wrote letters to the kings of his time stating that as per the command of Allah, he is announcing in his full senses, that he is the Promised Mehdi (AS) and Khalifa of Allah (AS). Whose advent had been foretold by the Prophet of Allah (PUH) and his acceptance, as such, was obligatory on all, Now it was the duty of the kings and scholars, to investigate into his claim in the light of the *hadiths* (traditions) and the Quran and if found correct, then accept him as such and help him in spreading the truth (*Haq*). But, if they found him on the wrong path, it was also their duty to convince him in the light of the Quran and Hadith, and if they found him adamant then kill him to eliminate the dispute. Several kings investigated his claim through the Ulema and tested him through their might, and after satisfying themselves accepted him as the Promised Mehdi (AS). But there was none who was able to disprove him, not to think of killing him. He passed away from this world in 910 AH. at Farah, in Afghanistan. Thus in accordance with the Hadith, Imam (AS) lived for 9, 7 and 5 years after the first, second and the third proclamation.

During his migration, several times he was offered with great wealth by the nobles and kings which he distributed then and there. Especially Sultan Ghyasuddin Khilji, the king of Mandu presented scores of cart full of gold and jewellery, which was also distributed by the Promised Mehdi (AS), and the receivers were feeling it difficult to carry. Besides this, he always distributed the wealth of Vision (*Deedar*) among the people and undoubtedly, this is the greatest wealth one can ever aspire for.

The above description is very brief in nature and it is given purely with a view to help the readers to verify the personality of the Promised Mehdi (AS) in comparison with the Hadiths.

JAUNPUR

إِنَّمَا قَوْلُنَا لِشَيْءٍ إِذَا أَرَدْنَاهُ أَنْ نَقُولَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ

For to anything, which we have willed - we but say the word Kun' (Be) and it is - 16:40

The town of Jaunpur is situated in the eastern India with the following boundaries. In the east - Allahabad; in the west - Gazipur; in the north - Azamgar; and in the south - Banaras. It is situated at 25 1/2 longitude and 83 latitude on the banks of river Gomti. The legend says that in the olden days Karrar Ber was an outlaw who was killed by Ramchander, the king of Ayodhya and his body was thrown near the river Gomti. Later the local residents constructed a temple and installed his idol there. This temple was popular among the surrounding Hindus.

Sultan Feroz Shah Tughlaq once happened to camp in the vicinity of the river Gomti. There the open space attracted the attention of the Sultan. He decided to build a model town there. It is also said that his late uncle Mohammed Tughlaq (Juna Khan) advised him in a dream to name it after him. Thus the town was established in 772 AH and was named as Jaunpur after the great learned king of the dynasty, Mohammed Bin Tughlaq (Juna Khan). Sultan Feroz Shah Tughlaq selected the gems of all the trades and learning's from Delhi and asked them to shift to Jaunpur with attractive scholarships and pensions. Thus the foundation of the city was laid with the selected persons of all the trades and learning's.

The climate was excellent and the inhabitants were the selected intellectuals of all fields. Thus the town flourished and several scholars and many great persons were born there.

Sultan Naseeruddin Mahmood Shah Tughlaq, the last Sultan of the Tughlaq Dynasty, ascended the throne of Delhi in 796 AH. He deputed his Prime Minister Malik Sarwar as the Governor of this province. He was given the title of Sultan-ul-Sharq. The new Governor, enroute to Jaunpur, conquered many places including Kannauj and expanded the area of the province upto Bihar. He declared sovereignty in 801 AH and adopted the title of Ata Bak e Azam and issued his own coins. His adopted son Mubarak Khan conquered the province of Bangla, thus the territory of the Sultan-ul-Sharq extended to Gaur,

Kannauj Bihar and Bengal. Sultan Malik Sarwar Ata Bak e Azam died in 802 AH. His adopted son ascended the newly established throne, with the title of Sultan Shamsuddin Mubarak Shah. In his period, the new kingdom was consolidated to some extent. But he died in 804 AH. Then his brother Ibrahim Shah became the king and ruled for forty years. During his reign the kingdom flourished and great scholars from all over the world migrated to Jaunpur. The fame of this new born town, then a city, reached all the four corners of the then Muslim world. Specially in the field of Islamic learning it surpassed Delhi and Shiraz. During this period the Muslim world was passing through a chaotic state round the globe. Thus the scholars, Sufis and others were facing troubles. In search of peace and tranquility they migrated to Jaunpur which was the only secured state of the day. Scores of books on Islamic teachings, logic, philosophy and literature were written here and were received with great enthusiasm all over the world. Ibrahim Shah died in 844 AH. His son Mahmood Shah who ascended the throne also died after a short time. Then his son Mohammed Khan acquired the throne, but he fled from the battle against Bahalol Lodhi, the king of Delhi and was finally dethroned by his mother. In his place Sultan Hussain Sharqi became the ruler of Jaunpur. By that time the kingdom had lost most of its territory and the Sultan had to spend most of his time in the battle field in an attempt to restore the past glory of his state. Perhaps this was the time when the kingdom became a subject to the Raja of Gaur, Rai Dalpath.

The history of Bangla and of the Sharqi Sultans is full of several missing links, disputed dates and contradictory statements. Thus the great historian Abul Qasim Farishta in the second volume of his book 'Tareeq-e-Farishta' says, "it is evident that the history books are blank about the details of the events pertaining to the eastern kingdoms. Therefore I have made the book of my teacher Mullah Ahmed Tative '*Tareeq-e-Alafi*' the basis for my work, avoiding the other narrations. If any thing is found contradicting in this Chapter then I must be excused and should not be held responsible for it. Because, I have tried my best, with the limited resources of a human being and had presented whatever my limited knowledge could afford".

Owing to this discrepancy and confusion in history, some Scholars say that there is no king by the name Rai Dalpath with whom Sultan Hussaln Sharql

had fought and won over with the active help of the Promised Mehdi (AS). In this regard, It Is fit to point-out that Farishta and other historians have mentioned about a small landlord Raja Kans, who revolted against the Muslim king of Gaur, Sultan Shamsuddin and declared himself king. The Irony Is that while some say that Raja Kans was not a Muslim himself but respected the Muslims, some other historians say that he was dead against the Muslims and had tried to eliminate them.

It Is more probable that the king of Gaur, Rai Dalpath was a descendent of Raja Kans. Raja Kans was in favour of Muslims and had strengthened his kingdom with their help. But his successor Rai Dalpath was against the Muslims and had tried to eliminate them. Owing to the quick succession of Rai Dalpath, Inadequate information and lack of interest of the historians with the history of those parts, they have treated them (Raja Kans & Rai Daipath) as one and the same. This theory would solve many problems of the Sharqia and Bangla History. Whatever may be the case It is an admitted fact that the Promised Mehdi (AS) had participated in the war against Rai Dalpath, the king of Gaur. This fact is established by the oldest writings of both the Mehdavi and non-Mehdavi authors and above all by the presence of Shah Dilawar (RZ), the fifth Caliph of the Promised Mehdi (AS), who was the nephew of Rai Dalpath.

Had there been any dispute about the name he could have corrected it. Thus, the writings of Mehdavia sources are more dependable compared to other sources.

IMPORTANCE OF JAUNPUR

No historian of medieval India had failed to mention the glory of Jaunpur with special reference to its eminence in the field of Islamic studies.

It is appropriate to give a few quotations supporting the above statements:

1) *Narender Nath Laa* in his book 'Promotion of learning's in India during Mohammedan Rule' writes "During Ibrahim's reign (1402-1440 AD) the court of Jaunpur far outshone that of Delhi and was the resort of all the learned men of the east".

2) *F.A. Keay* in his book 'Indian education in Ancient and later Times' writes that "the place in India which was most famous in its days as a Mohammedan place of learning was Jaunpur. It was comparable to Shiraz in Persia and was called the Shiraz of India".

3) In the *Imperial Gazetteer of India Volume IV*, published from Oxford in 1908 AD, it is written that Jaunpur remained the seat of Governor till the reorganisation of the empire by Akbar, who raised Allahabad to the position of a provincial capital. From that time Jaunpur declined in political importance though retained some of its former reputation as a centre of Mohammedan learning, which had gained for it the title '*Shiraz of India*'.

The importance of Jaunpur as a centre for Islamic studies can be well assessed from the fact that it was called a University (*Dar-ul-Uloom*) by the author of *Tabqaat-e-Akbari*. Farlshta has named it as the second Delhi. When Humayun reached Iran during his exile, the king of Iran, Shah Tahmasap Shah first enquired about Jaunpur and its scholars and felt envied on learning about the progress of Jaunpur on Islamic studies, against the decline of Shiraz. Shahjahan the fifth Moghal emperor called it the Shiraz of his empire.

According to Mehdavia sources it was a place of scholars, Sufis and saints. There were more than 1700 eminent scholars, leading a royal life. There was a unique combination of the Sufism with Scholarship in the saints like Shaik Daniyal Chishti. The scholars of the city were popular among the Arab and non-Arab Muslims alike. The books written here were used as books for reference, teaching and research and were included In the syllabi of the Universities. Thus it was a place, regarded and respected as a place of scholars, Sufis, Aulias, literature and books all over the world.

BIRTH OF THE PROMISED MEHDI (AS)

A branch of the descendants of Imam Moosa Kazim RH migrated to India from Samarkhand and Bukhara and settled at Jaunpur. In the previous pages It has been indicated clearly that the scholars from all over the Muslim world were migrating to Jaunpur. Evidently, this family was one among them. Hazrath Syed Othman RH who is the first among the migrants, had two sons - one Syed Jalal, who had three Sons and two daughters. and second Syed Abdullah, had two sons the elder was Syed Ahmed and the younger was our Imam Hazrath Syed Mohammed Mehdi-e-Mawood (AS). This family of Sadaat was the follower of the Sufi Silsila of the Chistia Order. Thus, the family was one of the very important families of Jaunpur. They were having the dignity of progeny, Sufia order mastery in Islamic learning, political Influence and of course wealth. The

importance of this family can be well assessed from the fact that the father of our Imam (AS), was bestowed with the title of Syed Khan by the Sharqia Kings. This title depicts a unique combination of his progeny and affluence. The mother of Imam (AS), Bibi Amlna RH, also belonged to an important family of Jaunpur. Her brother Syed Ali Khiyamul Mulk was a renowned scholar and Sufi of his time. The Imam Hazrath Syed Mohammed Jaunpuri Khalifathullah Mahdi Al-Mawood Alaihis Salam, was born to Hazrath Syed Abdullah RH and Bibi Amina RH on monday, the 14th Jamadi-ul Awal 847 AH, and according to the Gregorian calendar the 9th September, 1443 AD. Mehdavia and Non-Mehdavia historians are unanimous about his pedigree as a descendant of the holy family. The lineage is given hereunder.

Several miracles are attributed to the birth of the Imam (AS), but we avoid them and narrate only two facts:

- 1) When the baby was born, he was hiding his genitals with his tiny hands and his body was elegant.
- 2) There was a mysterious, heavenly voice, announcing the Quranic verse:

وَقُلْ جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَزَهَقَ الْبَاطِلُ إِنَّ الْبَاطِلَ كَانَ زَهُوقًا

And say truth has arrived and falsehood perished; For falsehood is (by its nature) bound to perish". – S17:81.

The Idols In the temples of the city fell down. These were the similar signs or indications noticed at the birth of the Prophet Mohammed (PUH) also. Thus the Sufi scholar Shaik Danial (RH) was curious to know if there were any new births in the city. He enquired from several persons. The next morning, Syed Ahmed the elder brother of the Imam (AS) who was studying In the school of the Shaik (RH), reported that he was blessed with a baby brother. The Shaik (RH) lost no time in reaching the blessed family. He enquired the details of the event and was greatly moved. He was informed that the new born is named after the Prophet of Allah (PUH), Mohammed (PUH). The Shaik (RH) enquired about the family name (*Kuniat*), if any, and was informed that the baby Is called Abdul Qasim after the name of one of the important persons of the pedigree.

Contd..

LINEAGE OF THE PROMISED MEHDI (AS)

Abdullah	Abdul Mutalib	Abu Talib
Hazrat Mohammed Rasoolullah ^{PUH}		
Bibi Fatima ^{RZ}		Hazrat Ali ^{RZ}
	Hazrat Imam Hussain ^{RZ}	Hazrat Imam Hasan ^{RZ}
	Hazrat Zainulabeddin ^{RZ}	
	Hazrat Mohd. Baqer ^{RH}	
	Hazrat Jafar Sadiq ^{RH}	
	Hazrat Moosa Kadhim ^{RH}	
	Hazrat Ismail ^{RH}	
	Hazrat Ni'amathullah ^{RH}	
	Hazrat Jalaluddin ^{RH}	
	Hazrat Yahiya Yousuf ^{RH}	
	Hazrat Abdullah ^{RH}	
	Hazrat Qasim ^{RH}	
	Hazrat Moosa ^{RH}	
	Hazrat Khider ^{RH}	
	Hazrat Uthman ^{RH}	
	Hazrat Syed Abdullah ^{RH}	
	Hazrat Syed Mohammed Mehdi-e-Mawood ^{AS}	

CHILDHOOD

As a baby, he seldom used to cry. The voice was very attractive and had an unique impact, making the listener to forget everything about the world and the worldly affairs for the moment. As a boy, he was dignified, calm, composed, well behaved, intelligent and religious. He used to take little food, slept less than an average child and seldom spoke. He never participated in the games along with the other children and was never known to have spoken a lie.

SHAIK DANIAL (RH)

In the previous lines we have mentioned about Shaik Danial (RH) as a Sufi scholar. He was a priest and Sufi of the Chishtia order and a teacher of almost all the scholars of the city. He Was able to teach the mystic path (*Tareeqa*) with confidence and authority, and

had guided many to attain spiritual progress. His Silsila is as under: Shaik Danial - Syed Raj Aamed - Shah Shaik Hussaanuddin Manikpuri - Shaik Nuruddin Qutibe Alam - Shaik Akhi Sirajuddin - Nizamuddin Aulia Mahboob-e-Ilahi.

He was also blessed with the pride of teaching the Promised Mehdi (AS), the elements of Islam at his school.

IMAM (AS) AS A STUDENT

When the Imam (AS) attained the school age of four years, four months and four days, a ceremony was held and Shaik Danial (RH) recited the Quranic verses marking the beginning of the education. From that time the Imam (AS) used to attend his Madrasa along with his elder brother Syed Ahmed. At the school, the Shaik (RH) used to pay much regard and respect to the Imam. He never allowed the child to sit with other students and made him to sit with himself. This looked strange to the other students. Even his elder brother was somewhat envious at this treatment. Noticing this, one day when a new visitor left the school, the Shaik (RH) enquired of Syed Ahmed the identity of the visitor. The boy replied that he was a stranger to him. Then the Shaik (RH) enquired of the Imam (AS), the same thing. The child disclosed the Identity of the visitor as Khaja Khizer (AS). Thus the Shaik (RH) explained the reason for his respect. Since that day the elder brother also started respecting his younger brother.

During the lectures, the Shaik (RH) used to address only to the Imam (AS). Whatever was taught to him he used to grasp it quickly, and was able to explain the entire book after going through the first chapter. Thus he completed the studies in a very short time. Imam (AS) memorised the entire Quran at the age of seven and by the time he was twelve years old, he had mastered all the courses taught at the school. There upon as per the prevalent custom, all the scholars of the city were invited to a congregation. They tested the boy in all the courses and were immensely satisfied. At the congregation Imam (AS) was unanimously conferred the title of 'Asad-ul-Ulema' (a lion among the scholars). Thus at the age of twelve he left the school and started preaching. He gained unprecedented popularity at a very young age.

During the same time something very important happened to the boy. Shaik Danial (RH) took the Imam (AS) to an isolated mosque in the forest near the river Gomti at the invitation of Khaja Khizar (AS) [Khaja Khizer (AS) is a Prophet of Allah (AS), who had been bestowed with life till the doomsday]. His brother also followed. This mosque was called the Khokri Masjid. There, Khaja Khizar (AS) appeared and took the Imam (AS)

inside the mosque and explained to him that he (Khizar AS) had been ordained by the Prophet (PUH) to handover certain things to the Imam (AS) which were deposited with him as a trust of the Prophet (PUH). Then he handed over a box and a dried date and told him that as per the will of Allah, Syed Mohammed (AS) had been selected as his Caliph (AS) and was ordained to invite the people to His vision. Khaja Khizar (AS) also taught him the method of *Dhikr-e-Khafi* (rememberance within), as had been taught to him by the Prophet (PUH). The box contained the article of faith for *Ma'rifa* (Gnosis). The dried date was the *Paskhurda* (*offal*) of the Prophet (PUH), specially given for the Imam (AS). Perhaps the chest of Khaja (AS) was symbolised as the box which contained the knowledge of Gnosis, entrusted to him by the Prophet (PUH).

This incident is almost similar to that of the Prophet (PUH) which occurred to him at the age of four in the desert. It also confined the Prophet's (PUH) tradition -It is narrated by Hazrat Ali (RZ) that the Prophet of Allah (PUH) said that the Mehdi (AS) would belong to us (Holy family). Allah would create (In him the) ability overnight.

Though the Imam (AS) attended school from the age of four and acquired mastery in the Islamic teachings at the age of twelve, yet the knowledge of Ehsan and *Ma'rifa* (Gnosis) which pertains to the Vilayat-e-Mohammedia (PUH) was revealed to him by Khaja Khizar (AS) in only one sitting at Khokri Masjid. Thus the knowledge referred to in the above tradition is in respect to *Ma'rifa*, for the propagation of which the Promised Mehdi (AS) was specially deputed by Allah.

Then the Imam (AS) started preaching. At a very young age he commanded unprecedented popularity and thousands of people from Jaunpur and surrounding places gathered around him. He was a very practical person. He put to practice the theory he taught during his deliberations. Sultan Hussain Sharqi also became one of his staunch followers. It is reported by non-Mehdavi sources that thousands of non-Muslims willingly embraced Islam at his hand.

At the age of nineteen in the year 866 AH (1461 AD) he was married to Bibi Allahdadi (RZ), his first cousin, and had a very harmonious married life for about twenty three years. They had two sons and two daughters. The elder son Hazrath Syed Mahmood (RZ). became the first Caliph after him in the year 910 AH (1506 AD).

The features of the Imam (AS) resembled with those of the Prophet (PUH). The brief description of the features of both the personalities is as under:

1) The Prophet (PUH) was neither tall nor short.	1) Had a moderate height.
2) Had bright colour.	2) Had a bright face.
3) Had a thick beard.	3) The beard was thick.
4) The head was big.	4) Had a big head.
5) The forehead was broad.	5) Had broad forehead.
6) The eyebrows were joint	6) Eyebrows were joining together.
7) Eyes were dark black.	7) Eyes were dark black.
8) Had a high nose.	8) Had a high nose.
9) Eyelids were long.	9) Had long eyelids.
10) His neck was like a doll, bright as silver	10) Moderate neck, bright like moon.
11) The holy face was round.	11) The face was bright like full moon.
12) The shoulders were broad	12) The shoulders were broad.
13) Had a broad chest.	13) The chest was broad.
14) The bones of the arms were big and stronger.	14) Had long arms.
15) Had long fingers.	15) The fingers were long.
16) The limbs were soft and moderate	16) The limbs were soft and moderate.
17) There was a thin line of hair from chest to navel.	17) There was a thin line of hair from chest to navel.

The above extracts are from the books like Tirmidhi, Mishkwat etc. and the books on the Promised Mehdi (AS) like Maulud Shareef, Shawahidul Vilayat etc. The former books are in Arabic, written after about the two hundred years of the Prophet (PUH). The latter books are in Persian written within a hundred years of the Promised Mehdi (AS) yet the resemblance between the two personalities is so much that the features of one can conveniently be replaced with that of the other.

The traditions about the resemblance of the Promised Mehdi (AS) in features and character with the Prophet (PUH) have already been mentioned in the first chapter. Thus, the Promised Mehdi (AS) perfectly fulfilled this aspect as well. The Promised Mehdi (AS) himself said that he the Prophet Mohammed (PUH) and the Prophet Ibrahim (AS) were so much identical that it would be difficult to distinguish one from another.

THE IMAM (AS) AS A WARRIOR:

The Mehdavia and non-Mehdavi sources indicate that in all Imamuna (AS) participated in seven battles. However the details of such battles, except for one, are not available. Khaja Ibadullah Akhtar, the author of Mushaheer-e-Islam (a non-Mehdavi) had stated that the Imam (AS) had participated in seven wars. The most important of those, was the war against the king of Gaur - Rai Dalpath. The author had further stated that the Imam (AS) had also written letters to the rulers of the surrounding kingdoms inviting them to Islam; and the answer of Raja Gaur, was the same, as given to the Prophet (PUH) by Khusro, to a similar letter. During a deliberation, the Promised Mehdi (AS) bitterly criticised Sultan for his submission to a non believer king. The Sultan expressed his military weakness. The Imam replied that if the Sultan was having full faith in Allah. then the military weakness would be immaterial and the victory would be for Islam.

The Mehdavia sources say that at this, the Sultan revolted and stopped sending tribute and in retaliation, the Raja attacked Jaunpur. According to non-Mehdavi sources, the Sultan marched to Gaur with 30000 soldiers and attacked. The Raja was an able administrator and a seasoned warrior. He never expected that the Sultan would revolt in such circumstances or attack him with such a small army. But listening to the Islamic teachings and the flaming oratory of the Imam (AS), he was preparing for the worst. When he heard about the revolt and attack by the Sultan he marched with an army of 70000 strong. well trained and well equipped soldiers. After seeing the Sultan's army. the Raja was confident of crushing them and of eliminating the Muslims atleast from the east. The Imam (AS) on his part not only blessed the Sultan, but also joined the *Jihad* (holy war) with his 1500 devotees. This group was called the Bairagis. Though untrained in warfare they had the strongest will to sacrifice everything for the Imam (AS). When the battle started the Imam (AS) was in a corner, mounted on his horse, deep in meditation. Initially both the armies fought ferociously, but owing to the fact that Raja's army was far out numbering the Sultan's army there were severe set backs. Soon the Sultan realised that they could not withstand the battle any more. The Sultan sent a word to the Imam (AS) requesting him to retreat. The Imam (AS) refused. His face was set. He advanced with his 1500 men and attacked the enemy with full force. This fresh attack was bitter and helped the Sultan's army to rearrange their ranks. Seeing the new zeal in the baffle, the Raja advanced an elephant. The Imam (AS) shot an arrow, which struck the forehead of the elephant and the elephant turned back towards the fort, crushing the Raja's camp. To restore the confidence and to arrange the ranks afresh, the Raja dismounted from his elephant and mounted a horse. But to his dismay found the Imam (AS) in front of him.

He attacked the Imam (AS), the Imam (AS) ducked and saved himself, but the horse was wounded. This might have dislocated the balance of the Raja to some extent. Taking full advantage of it, the Imam (AS) struck a blow on his head, the sword landed on the head splitting the Raja into two and rested at the navel. Khaja Ibadullah Akhtar says that after seeing the Imam (AS), Rai Dalpath had a mesmerising effect and was unable to move his hand. He was sitting like a statue on his horse, and looked as if possessed by some unseen power. This statement of a non-Mehdavi research scholar contains the evidence of the extra ordinary impressive personality of the Imam (AS). It also confirms the incident at Farah, which occurred to Mir Dhunun, the Governor (this may be seen at the relevant place). Thus, the Raja was killed at the hands of the Imam (AS).

In the battles of the medieval period the king or the commander used to be the 'head and brain' of his army and his presence played a vital role. Thus there was confusion within the rank of the military when the Raja was killed. In the ensuing melee, Sultan retrieved the lost ground and the strong army of 70000 was defeated by a comparatively ill equipped smaller force of 30,000. Thus a lost battle was won by the Sultan due to the timely help of the Imam (AS).

When the Raja was killed, the Imam (AS) happened to look at the exposed heart of the Raja. The holy eyes could see something very strange. There on the heart of the Raja, the image of the deity of which he was a devotee, was engraved. This sight had an electrifying effect on the receptive heart of the Imam (AS). He imagined that if the false deity, prayed with devotion would have such an effect, what would be the Impact of the devotion to the Almighty. He was so much moved that he became ecstatic. The Sultan, found him in an unconscious condition. Immediately the Imam (AS) was moved to Jaunpur along with a strong security force. The victory over Rai Dalpath was announced in the name of the Imam (AS). It had its own effect on the surrounding kingdoms and helped in propagating Islam in the east. The non-Mehdavi sources say that the victory was very much important for the east. Many non-Muslims including the family members of Rai Dalpath embraced Islam. They have quoted the name of Shah Dilawar (RZ) as one among them. Sultan Hussain Sharqi also gained the lost glory and power, thereby he could face Bahlol Lodhi with a strong force of One lakh soldiers, elephants and cannons.

JAZB (ECSTASY)

There are several *rivayaats* (narrations) giving the details of *Jazb* (Ecstasy) period. It is reported that for seven long years the Imam (AS) did not take any solid food. But despite

his deep involvement in the spiritual experiences, he used to wake up at the time of Salat (prayer), five times a day. Thus during the twelve years period of the ecstasy he never missed a Salat. After seven years, whenever he used to wake-up for prayers, his wife used to insist on taking some food. Thus during the remaining period of five years he consumed only twelve sers (14.4 Kgs) of solid food. During this period an incident is reported. Once when he woke-up for *Isha* (night prayer) he asked for some water to drink. But went back into ecstasy before the water could be brought. His wife stood whole night with the water pot in her hands. When he woke-up for the morning prayer, she was standing like that only. He enquired about it. On learning that she had stood the whole night, in the hope that her husband might wake-up in any part of the night to drink water, he was greatly moved and prayed for her. During the short Intervals of consciousness, at times, he used to tell about his spiritual experiences, *Uluhiat* (divinity) and *Tajalli* (manifestation) of Allah and the *Yeganagi* (oneness) with the Absolute Existence (*Al wujud ul mutlaq*) experienced by him. Khaja Ibadullah Akhtar says that one cannot assess as to what spiritual experiences the Imam (AS) had and how high he ascended and how he went into the divine world (*Aalam-e-Lahut*). and how he descended to the material world (*Aalam-e-Nasoot*) and as to what spiritual stages (*madarij-e-suluk*) he passed during this period. This condition of the Imam (AS) was similar to the condition of the Prophet of Allah (PUH), before and immediately after having the first Revelation in the Hira Cave.

The war with the Raja of Gaur was fought sometime in 873 AH. and the Imam (AS) was in the state of ecstasy for about 12 years. But during the last 5 years of this period he used to deliver sermons to his followers occasionally.

When the Sultan came to know about the full recovery of the Imam (AS), he sent the Qazi (Jurist) of the city along with a document endowing seven villages to the Imam (AS), The Imam (AS) declined and tore it. He also returned the remaining cash which was given to the Imam (AS) for the preparations of the war.

Afterwards the king himself appeared and pleaded for the acceptance of the kingdom if so desired. The Imam (AS) declined this offer as well. He indicated his intention of going on Hajj pilgrimage. The king was anxious to accompany. But the Imam (AS) advised him to stay in the interest of the State and the people.

HIJRAH

وَمَنْ يُهَاجِرْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ يَجِدْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَاغِمًا كَثِيرًا وَسِعَةً وَمَنْ يَخْرُجْ مِنْ بَيْتِهِ
مُهَاجِرًا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ يُدْرِكْهُ الْمَوْتُ فَقَدْ وَقَعَ أَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا
رَحِيمًا

He who forsakes his home in the cause of Allah, on this Earth he will find many spacious and wide refuges; If he dies as a refugee for the sake of Allah and His Apostle (PUH) his reward becomes due and sure with Allah. - S4:100

The basis of the Islamic teachings is the love (*Ishq*) of Allah. Thus any other attachment is negative. The most important attachments are: the love for kith and kin, the love for home and the love for land. These can be termed as natural attachments. But the basic nature of the man is the desire to go back to his Creator. Thus when this desire is at stake, the man is expected to forego all other attachments and the love for other things is to be sacrificed, for the basic love. This habit (*Sunnah*) had been exhibited by the great souls and Prophets (PUH). Hazrath Ibrahim (AS), Hazrath Nooh (AS) (Noah AS), Hazrath Yousuf (AS) (Joseph AS), Hazrath Moosa (AS) (Moses AS), Hazrath Isa (AS) (Jesus AS) and even the last Prophet Hazrath Mohammed (PUH) had also migrated from their homelands in the path of Allah.

Thus the Imam (AS), Hazrath Miran Syed Mohammed Mehdi-e-Maud (AS) had also followed the path of the Prophets (PUH). He left Jaunpur In Jamadi-Awal of 887 AH, for *Hajj* (pilgrimage to Makkah), never to return to his native place. He started for Hajj with his family. Some of his followers were also permitted to join him. They are:

- 1) Miyan Syed Salamullah (RZ) S/o Syed Jalal (first cousin) of the Imam (AS) and the brother of Bibi Allahdadi (RZ).
- 2) Miyan Syed Kaleemullah (RZ)do.....
- 3) Miyan Syed Abu Bakar (RZ) (son-in-law of the Imam AS).
- 4) Miyan Shah Dilawar (RZ), adopted son of the Imam (AS) and nephew of Rai Dalpath.
- 5) Miyan Syed Ali Mohammed Jaunpur (RZ)- Qazi (Jurist) of Jaunpur city.
- 6) Miyan Syed Ghani (RZ)
- 7) Miyan Hameed F'aheem (RZ)
- 8) Miyan Abdul Qadar (RZ)
- 9) Miyan Chalak (RZ)

- 10) Miyan Bahlol (RZ)
- 11) Miyan Jamaluddin (RZ)
- 12) Miyan Lad (RZ) (pesh Imam of a mosque in Jaunpur).
- 13) Miyan Mohammed Haji (RZ)
- 14) Miyan Shaik Bheek (RZ)
- 15) Miyan Taher (RZ)
- 16) Mlyan Bheek (RZ)
- 17) Mlyan Qutbuddin (RZ)

Apart from the above 17 persons, their families were also with the Imam (AS). When this small group started, there were no arrangements for the journey. The Imam's (AS) dependence on Allah (*Tawakkal*) was such that he refused to have any arrangements. Had he hinted for any comforts during the journey, there was no doubt that the arrangements would have been more elaborate than the journey of a king. Since the journey was started as per the Allah's command, It was left on Allah to take care of the caravan.

1. DANAPUR

From Jaunpur the Imam (AS) camped at Danapur. Here, his wife Bibi Allahdadi (RZ), had a divine word (*Kashf*) that her husband had been ordained as the Promised Mehdi (AS) and that his acceptance as such was obligatory. The Bibi (RZ) revealed her *Kashf* to the Imam (AS) who confirmed the same and added that he was also having similar directions since long, but the right time had not yet arrived. Therefore it was a must for her to keep it to herself. Thus the first to admit him as the Promised Mehdi (AS) was his wife, Bibi Allahdadi (RZ).

This discussion was overheard by their eldest son Miran Syed Mahmood (RZ) who had such a divine effect of it that he went into ecstasy. The Imam (AS) brought him inside and taught him the method of recitation within oneself '*La-ilaha Illallah*' (*Dhikr-e-Khafi*). At the same time the adapted son of the Imam (AS), Miyan Shah Dilawar (RZ), nephew of the king of Gaur, Rai Dalpath, also had the similar effect and accepted the Imam (AS) as the Promised Mehdi (AS). After this the Imam (AS) had taught him the Dhikr, he also became ecstatic and was unable to move. Thus he was left in the mosque of Miyan Duraj, who took care of the Shah (RZ) for about seven years. All those years he did not walk, because of *Jazb*. When the Imam (AS) returned to India, after performing the Hajj. the Shah (RZ) had the fragrance of the Imam (AS) and started on foot. Since for seven long years he had not used his legs and thus the nerves were tense and muscles inactive. But the Shah (RZ)

started walking swiftly, blood oozed from his legs. He did not care for anything and joined the Imam (AS) at Ahmedabad in Gujarat around 903 AH.

Thus these were the three persons who were the pioneers to accept the Imam (AS) as the Promised Mehdi (AS). Here it is appropriate to point out that in the first instance only three persons had accepted the Prophet of Allah (PUH). They were (1) Bibi Khatija-tul-Kubra (RZ) (2) Hazrath Ali (RZ) and (3) Hazrath Zaid (RZ) (the freed slave and the adopted son of the Prophet PUH).

2. KALPI

From Danapur the Imam (AS) proceeded to Kalpi. He stayed for few days in a desert. During this time, Miyan Bheek (RZ) went to nearby village, (probably to Kalpi itself) for some purchases. There was a big crowd which was mourning. Miyan Bheek (RZ) enquired about it. He was told that a noble had expired, and was also shown the dead body. He said that he (the noble) was not dead. Suddenly the noble came to life. This wonder work (*Karamat*) had such an impact that the residents believed Miyan Bheek (RZ) to be their god or an Avatar. This was a great troubling factor for him. Somehow he escaped from the spot and reached the Imam (AS). The villagers were following him. The Imam (AS) enquired about the reason and with great effort could convince that their belief about Miyan Bheek (RZ) was wrong and persuaded the people to go back to their place. He reprimanded Miyan Bheek (RZ) for such irresponsible behaviour. He informed that Allah had endowed that capacity to *Isa* (AS) (the Jesus AS) the son of *Mariam* (AS) (Mary AS) and no one else was supposed to indulge in it. This event had a great impact on the Imam (AS). He thought that recurrence of such wonder works may lead to *Shirk* (infidelity) which is the greatest sin a Muslim can indulge in. Thus he determined to eliminate such quality from his followers. He underwent a continued fast for three days (*soum wisal*) and prayed Allah to eliminate the quality of wonder work from his followers. Since then the Mehdavia saints avoid showing wonder work under any circumstances and such events are looked down upon even by the commoners in the Mehdavia fold. Thus the Imam (AS) had accomplished one of his objectives by eliminating the possibilities of *Shirk* (infidelity) and established the pristine 'Unity of Allah'.

Here another incident occurred. An unknown elderly person appeared and stated that he had the mystical revelation that the Promised Mehdi (AS) had appeared at Jaunpur. He smelled the fragrance which led him to the Imam (AS). This elderly man was a real lover of truth like Awes Kharni (RZ).

The Imam (AS) then arrived at Kalpi and stayed for few weeks. Here the daughter of a noble or raja was suffering from a mental disease. It was believed that she was possessed by an evil spirit. She was kept in isolation along with a servant maid. When her father heard about the Imam (AS), he approached him with a request to cure his daughter. The Imam (AS) gave him the offal of pan (*Paskhurda*). The Raja though a Hindu, had no hesitation to accept it with full regard. When it was given to his daughter, she consumed it and gained full consciousness. But after recovery there was a great change in her. She started hating the idol worship etc. Thus after consulting his relatives the Raja offered this young girl to the Imam (AS). The Imam (AS) named her as Bibi Bhikia (RZ) and sent her to his wife. Due to great pursuance from Bibi Allahdadi (RZ), the Imam (AS) married her.

3. CHANDERI

From Kalpi the Imam (AS) proceeded to Chanderi. This was a well populated town in the kingdom of Malwa. Here, there were 18 Sufi families. They all were indulging in un-Islamic deeds. They never had the time to offer prayers nor had any thing to teach their followers. Their time was spent in enjoying the dances and drinks. They had made all forbidden things, permissible to themselves. Thus when the Imam (AS) reached the town and started his sermons, the ordinary people were attracted to him very much. They had never heard such sermons. The explanation of the Quranic verses had opened their eyes. Thus, all the 18 Sufis felt uneasy about the presence of the Imam (AS). They deputed a group of gangsters to expel the Imam (AS) from the town. Before they could say anything, the Imam (AS) said that the order of Allah had reached him to leave that place. They insisted on him to show more haste and said that otherwise there would be loss to him. The Imam (AS) said that time would show as to who would be the loser. He left the place and camped at a distance of a kilometer for the night. Two of his followers were left in the town for collecting the clothes from the washerman.

At about midnight, there was a hue and cry from the town side. Many houses were burning. It looked as if the entire town was set ablaze. In the morning the two followers of the Imam (AS) came back. They reported that during the drinking party (perhaps to celebrate the departure of the Imam AS), the Sufis had a quarrel with the nobles. One of the nobles was killed. The Sufis out of fear hid themselves in their houses. The nobles attacked their houses and set them ablaze, captured the women folk and killed most of the Sufis. The commoners were of the view that this was the punishment imposed upon the Sufis by Allah for misbehaving with Syed-Ul-Aulia (AS) . When he heard this view, the Imam (AS) said that there could be no harm from the Godly people (*Bandagan-e-*

Khuda) to any one. This was the result of their own deeds and disobedience to the law of the Prophet (PUH) (*Sharia*). Thus Imam (AS) did not take any advantage from this event to create his fear in the hearts of the mischief mongers. He had simply narrated the fact that any one who indulges in such activities, disregarding the Islamic law, would be punished accordingly. Thus instead of using this incident as a source to create the fear about himself the Imam (AS) had used it to create the fear of Allah. This type of psychological treatment can be observed throughout the holy life of the Imam (AS).

4. MANDU

Some biographers say that from Chanderi the Imam (AS) went to Chapanear, the then capital of Gujarat and then to Mandu. But some others say that he first went to Mandu, the then capital of Malwa and then to Chapanear. Since the Imam (AS) was passing through the territory of Malwa it is probable that he went to Mandu first and then to Chapanear.

Mandu was a well established town and the capital of the Khilji rulers of Malwa. Sultan Naseeruddin son of Ghiasuddin, after killing his brother Allauddin and his mother Khursheed had occupied the throne by imprisoning his father. But in view of the fact that Ghiasuddin, the father was popular among the nobles, he was allowed to have all the authority over the personal treasury. When the Imam (AS) reached Malwa, as usual his fame had reached even before him. The people were anxious to see and hear him. The fame of the Imam (AS) gradually reached the dethroned king also. He was a pious king, well versed with the Islamic law and teachings. He had great scholars in his court. The king sent his personal aides to the Imam (AS), expressing apologies for his inability to see him. He requested to depute two of the companions of the Imam (AS) for his satisfaction. The Imam (AS) considered his request and deputed Miyan Syed Salamullah (RZ) and Miyan Syed Abu Bakar (RZ).

When the holy deputies reached the king they were given red carpet reception. The king arranged another throne beside his own. He ordered for a curtain before him. This was done because of the fact that he was enchained and was unable to stand to receive them. Thus after they sat down on the arranged throne, the curtain was removed. The king expressed his inability to stand, and paid due respect to the holy deputies. He then enquired about the Imam (AS) and his teachings. After knowing the details of his character and Godliness, he was greatly moved and in their presence accepted the

Imamuna (AS) as the Promised Mehdi (AS). The king sent a request to the Imam (AS) for granting three desires.(i) He wanted his end as a staunch follower and believer of the Imam (AS). (ii) The life of a poor (*Mazloom*) and (iii) A death of martyr (*Shaheed*)

The king also sent several cart loads of gold and jewellery as humble presentation to the Imam (AS). Some say that the treasure was comprising of sixty sacks (*Khantaar*). Some others say that from the fort where the king was in detention, to the camp (*Daira*)* of the Imam (AS) the carts were standing in an unbroken row. Thus the wealth offered to the Imam (AS) was in unimaginably large quantity.

The Imam (AS) after seeing the king's letter, said three times, that all the three desires were granted by Allah. Thus the king lived a poor (*Mazloom*). and became a martyr (he was assassinated by his son afterwards) and of course he remained a staunch believer till his death.

The Imam (AS) distributed all the wealth among the residents of the town. However, one sack was kept aside, for his companions (RZ) and also for the death anniversary of the Prophet (PUH). He distributed the wealth personally. He was putting the gold coins and other ornaments with both the hands into the cloth spread by the recipients. Thus thousands of people gathered and many poor people became rich overnight. When the distribution was over, one beggar asked for his share, because according to him, he was the only one who has not received anything. Only a chaplet (*Tazbeeh*) made of pearls (*murwarid*) was left. It is said that it costed a crore of gold coins of those days. The Imamuna (AS) lifted it with a stick and dropped it into the bowl (*Kashkal*) of the Fakir. When it was told that it was a very precious rosary (*Tazbeeh*) the Imam (AS) quoted a Quranic verse:

قُلْ مَتَّعُ الدُّنْيَا قَلِيلٌ

meaning that: the wealth of this world is scanty and insignificant. -S4:77

He also stated that this wealth was for those who were hungry for it. But it was immaterial for those who are longing only for the Almighty.

The sack kept for the companions (RZ) of the Imam (AS) contained the silver coins. The Imam (AS) permitted for half of the sack to be distributed equally among his followers and half to be kept for death anniversary of the Prophet (PUH).

After the distribution was over, the Imam (AS) got up for ablution (*wadu*) and prayer. Thousands of people joined the prayer but the Imam (AS) could notice that a considerable number of his companions (RZ) were missing. After the prayer he enquired about them and was informed that they had gone to the town for purchases. The Imam (AS) said that when a small portion of the wealth had prevented them from the group prayer (*Jamaat*), what would have happened, had all that wealth been distributed among them. At Mandu only Miyan Allahdad Hameed (RZ), the Vazir of the king, renounced the world and joined the group of the Mahajereens. He was a renowned scholar of Islamic law and a great poet in Persian. He had the ability to write unprecedented verses. He used all his talents in composing verses in the praise of the Imam (AS).

It is well known that many of the Persian, Arabic, Urdu and Sindhi alphabets do not contain any dots. The number of such alphabets is 14 in Persian, rest of the seventeen alphabets are dotted. Thus with only the undotted alphabets a limited number of words are constructed. Most of the words i.e, nouns, pronouns, verbs, adverbs are constructed with the combination of both the category of alphabets. Thus it is very difficult to construct even a single sentence with the words containing only the undotted alphabets. One example of such sentence is the *Kalima La-ilaha Ilallah Mohammadur Rasulallah SAS* (this is an Arabic sentence). Miyan Allahdad Hameed (RZ) had composed in Persian an entire book of verses (*Divan*) with the words containing only the undotted alphabets. From this, one can assess the ability of the poet and his command over the words and language. This *Divan* was completed in 911 AH, and was published from Hyderabad in 1319 AH. Perhaps this is the first such book. Miyan Allahdad Hameed (RZ) is also the person who gave the well known Mehdavia litany (*Tazbeeh*) which is loudly recited (once) by all the persons joining the group prayer of night, before retiring to their rooms or houses for Dhikr-e-Khafi. This litany has become a symbol slogan of the Mehdavis, just like the Adhan for all the Muslims.

At Mandu only, Imamuna (AS) lost his infant son Miyan Ajmal (RZ). On the 2nd of Rabi-ul-awwal the group was preparing food for the anniversary of the Prophet (PUH) in which thousands of poor were to be fed. The eldest son Miran Syed Mahmood (RZ) was supervising the cooking. The infant slipped from his hands and fell into the fire and expired on the spot. This was reported to the Imam (AS). When he saw the grief of the eldest son, he said we are not meant for mourning. It was the will of Allah and to mourn on It amounted to disregard of His will. Thus the Imam (AS) consoled his son and others and preached total submission to Allah.

The stay at Mandu was thus marked with several significant events such as

- 1) The king of Mandu Ghasiuddin Khilji (RZ) became a follower of the Imam (AS).
- 2) Miyan Allahdad Hameed (RZ) a renowned scholar and poet joined him.
- 3) The Imam (AS) distributed the wealth-gold, silver and jewellery among the people and none was deprived of this charity. He distributed the wealth with both his hands. Thus even today the Mehdavi *Murshids* (leaders) distribute the benediction *iTabarruk - Nariza* with both their hands.
- 4) The Imam (AS) practically exhibited that the wealth of this world is scanty.
- 5) He gave away the most precious rosary to a beggar, because wealth meant nothing to him and it was of no use to him since he was against using any such symbols for recitation or remembrance of Allah. Thus even today the Mehdavis do not use any chaplet or rosary.
- 6) The absence from the group prayer and from the company of the Imam (AS) for worldly affair was also pointed out and deplored. Thus the importance of the fard salat and the company of the pious was emphasised and the evil of the wealth was brought to light.
- 7) The accidental death of his infant son was considered as an act of Allah, thus the element of sorrow on such occasions was eliminated.

Daira: In Sufi orders there were *Khankhas*, *Halqas* and *Dairas*. The khankha was the biggest and generally constructed at the tomb of a saint and was administered by the head Sufi. The kings and the nobles used to give jagirs and cash for their maintenance. The commoners also used to contribute their mite. The halqa was smaller group and only the durvesh and faqirs used to join the halqa for recitation of litany (*Dhikr*). Daira was a still smaller group of durvesh of higher status; who used to pray and practice the Sufi systems jointly. Thus, the *khankha*, *halqa* or *daira* of Sufis were only the religious organisations with known sources of incomes. There stayed only the durvesh, faqirs and travellers who lived a bachelors life (*tajarrud*). Thus they never developed as town or a locality. Of course, around a khankha a town may come up but it was never governed by the ruler of Khankha. J.Spencer Trimingham in his book "The Sufi orders in Islam" has given the details of the growth of khankhas, but he has not mentioned anything about the Mehdavis and their Dairas in India and abroad. The Daira of the Mehdavis is not like the khankha of the Sufi. The Daira is a locality, where all those who choose to dedicate themselves in the path of Allah used to live together with their families. The head of the Daira used to govern it and guide them to attain their goal. He used to nominate one of

the members to supervise the *Bait-ul-mal* (stores) and whatever was received in the name of Allah was equitably distributed among the inmates. Thus the Mehdavia Daira is totally different from that of the Sufi.

5. CHAPANEAR (CHAMPANEAR)

From Mandu the Imam (AS) proceeded to Chapanear. It was the capital of Gujarat in those days. The king was Mahmood Begarah (Be means two, garh means fort). Before conquering Chapanear, he was at Ahmedabad, but after the conquest of Chapanear which was considered to be a very strong fort, he moved his capital there and acquired the title of Begarah. He was considered to be the strongest king. His power and influence was considered to be more than that of the rulers of Delhi. In those days Delhi was ruled by Lodhi kings. They were engaged in wars with eastern kingdoms especially the ruler of Jaunpur, Sultan Hussain Sharqi. Thus, there was no immediate threat to his kingdom. It was flourishing and had a very advanced culture. There were big mosques and buildings at the foothills of the fort. The fort was on a hill and was called as Pavagarh and is very difficult to climb on. Even today the Jama masjid and other buildings are very good spots for sight seeing. The buildings are preserved as archives by the Archeological Department of India. About three kilometers north of this town, the tomb of Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ) (the second Caliph of the Imam AS) is situated. The Imam (AS) camped at the Jama Masjid. His fame had already reached Chapanear. Hence there were unusual crowds at the mosque. Scores of people joined the prayers regularly. The mosque is still intact and can accommodate more than ten thousand people inside. There was a very big ground in front of it. In spite of all this, during the stay of the Imam (AS), no space was available for the late comers. Gradually the news of the Imam's (AS) arrival reached the king. He wanted to go personally to pay respect to the Imam (AS). But the courtiers and the scholars prevented him. They advised him to depute four persons to have reliable information about the Imam (AS). Thus, two scholars and two nobles were deputed for this mission. The nobles were Islam Khan and Farhad-ul-Mulk. When they reached the mosque, the Imam (AS) was speaking about the Quran. The public were so much engrossed in the audition that they did not pay any attention to the royal deputies. Somehow they managed to sit in the crowd. The deliberations were so much impressive that the two nobles at once joined the fold of the Imam (AS). But the Ulema who were proud and were afraid of the dimension being given to the Islamic thought by the Imam (AS), were not ready to accept for their worldly ends. They reported to the king that no

doubt, Syed Mohammed (AS) was a great saint (Vali) but the king should not see him for two reasons. One was that the king would not be given due respect and it would have an adverse impact on the common people, and the fear of the king would be eliminated. This would be against the prevalent circumstances. The second reason was that the Imam (AS) was teaching against the worldly affairs and there is a great possibility that after hearing his convincing oratory the king might be tempted to renounce the world. In that eventuality the kingdom would be left at the mercy of the nobles. Thus the king, inspite of the strong desire to meet the Imam (AS) could not do so. But he became one of the disciples of the Imam (AS). This has been reported even by the non-Mehdavia sources. Two of his sisters Raje Sone and Raje Muradi also accepted him as the Mahdi-e-Mawood (AS).

The fourth Caliph RZ of the Imam (AS), Miyan Shah Nizam (RZ) was also staying at Chapanear. He was the ruler of Jais. Despite being young, he was a very successful ruler; but at the same time he was more attached to the religion. Thus he decided to give up his kingdom, but his courtiers advised him to wait for sometime so that his younger brother might take over the reins of the kingdom under his control. He took the advice and after settling all the disputes and establishing his younger brother firmly, he abdicated in his favour and proceeded for Hajj. He was in search of a person who could guide him in the esotericism (*Marifa*). But even after seeing several renowned Sufis in India, Persia, Khurasan, Baghdad and Arabia, he was not satisfied with any one. At Madina-e-Munawara, the Sheik-Ul-Islam advised him to be in search and wait for sometime. He was of the opinion that the time for advent of the Promised Mehdi (AS) was fast approaching. His desire for attaining nearness to Allah could be satisfied by the Promised Mehdi (AS) alone. Miyan Shah Nizam (RZ) then returned to India and was staying at Ek-Minar Mosque of Saleem Khan at Chapanear. Though he had already memorised the Quran and acquired knowledge of the Islamic law and other Islamic teachings yet to keep himself engaged he was making further studies. Miyan Shah Nizam (RZ) was a descendant of Shaik Fareed Gunj Shakar (RH), a renowned saint in the progeny of Hazrath Umar-e-Farooq (RZ), the second Caliph RZ of the Prophet (PUH). His pedigree is as under: Shaik Fareed Ganj Shakar - Shaik Ruknuddin - Shaik Nizamuddin - Sultan Darani - Shah Khudavand - Shah Nizamuddin (RZ).

Saleem Khan had seen the Imam (AS) as one of the deputies of the king and had joined his fold. Afterwards he reported the fact to Shah Nizam (RZ). Miyan Shah Nizam (RZ) lost no time to reach the Imam (AS). When he reached there, the Imam (AS) himself came

out of the mosque and received Shah Nizam (RZ). They had a deliberation in poetic language, which could be best appreciated by the persons who could get to its depth. The Shah (RZ) immediately became a staunch follower of the Imam (AS). The Imam (AS) taught him the method of *Dhikr-e-Khafi*, which had an ecstatic effect on the Shah (RZ). He was almost in ecstasy during the entire stay of the Imam (AS) at Chapanear. The Imam (AS) referring to Shah (RZ) said that he had brought every thing required for a light (lamp), it was the Imam (AS) who lighted it. He indicated the high spiritual status of the Shah (RZ). The Shah (RZ) never parted company with the Imam (AS), till the Imam (AS) left this world in 910 AH.

At Chapanear, the first wife of the Imam (AS), Bibi Alhadadi (RZ) passed away after a short illness. She was buried at the slopes of the Dongri Hills. At this place an important incident is narrated. After she had passed away and before the burial someone informed the Imam (AS) about the presence of a gold coin in her clothes. The Imam (AS) ordered for branding her body with it. This was in accordance with similar orders issued by the Prophet (PUH) in respect of one or two of the *Ashaab-e-Sufah* (the companions RZ of the Prophet PUH) who stayed in the mosque and entirely depended on Allah (*Mutawakkil*). This was also to explain the Quranic verse by putting it to practice.

The Quran says: '*On the day of their punishment, when their sides and their backs be branded with (it will be said to them). This is what you had treasured for yourself taste then your treasure.*' -

يَوْمَ يُحْمَىٰ عَلَيْهَا فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ فَتُكْوَىٰ بِهَا جِبَاهُهُمْ وَجُنُوبُهُمْ وَظُهُورُهُمْ هَٰذَا مَا كُنَزْتُمْ لِأَنفُسِكُمْ فَذُوقُوا مَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْنِزُونَ (S9:34)

When Miyan Salamullah (RZ) came to know about the instructions, he came running and stated on oath that the gold coin belonged to Bibi Fatima (RZ), the daughter of the deceased. The Imam (AS) replied that he knew about it, but he was bound to give such instructions in obedience to the sunna of the Prophet (PUH). On the evidence of Miyan Salamullah (RZ) the Imam (AS) withdrew his instructions. By doing so the Imam (AS) proved that the Promised Mehdi (AS) is meant for making the people dependent on Allah, but not to distribute the wealth of the material world, which was considered by the Prophet (PUH) as an evil for his adherents. It is narrated that the Prophet of Allah (PUH) said that there was one evil (*Fitna*) for the adherents of every Prophet (AS) and for

his adherents, this evil was the wealth. Thus it is a misconception that the Promised Mehdi (AS) will distribute the evil among the adherents of the Prophet (PUH).

The Imam (AS) prevented Miyan Salamullah (RZ) from keeping any signs of the grave of his wife saying that she has already been elevated.

6. DAULATABAD

From Chapanear the Imam (AS) proceeded to Daulatabad via Burhanpur and Khandesh. He halted for a night at Burhanpur.

Daulatabad was the capital of India for sometime during the reign of Mohammed Bin Tughlaq. For long, it was a place for Muslim saints and thousands of saints lay resting there. The Imam (AS) visited most of the graves, and offered fatiha. Especially he visited the tomb of Miyan Syed Mohammed Arif Momin (RH). Stayed at the grave for a while and later offered salat in the adjoining room. It is reported that the well of the Dargah had saltish water. The Imam (AS) dropped some of his offal (Paskurda) and the water became sweet. Still this well is in existence near the tomb. The Imam (AS) said that there were several saints resting there, who preferred to remain unknown.

7. AHMEDNAGAR

From Daulatabad the Imam (AS) proceeded to Ahmednagar. It was the capital of the Nizam Shahi kings. This kingdom was an off-shoot of the Bahmani kingdom of Bidar. At that time the king was Ahmed Nizam Shah Behri. He was a learned king and had great respect for the saints. He was issueless. When he heard about the greatness of the Imam (AS) he came to pay his regards. In his heart he was having a desire to be blessed with a son. When the king came, the Imam (AS) was busy explaining the Quranic verses. During the explanations the Imam (AS) indirectly told about the desire of the king and that it would be fulfilled shortly. Afterwards he gave the offal of pan to the king. The king was happy that his unspoken desire was heard and is likely to be fulfilled. Afterwards he was blessed with a son who was named Shah Burhan. The king became the staunch follower of the Imam (AS). His son also accepted the Mehdavia faith on the hands of the third Caliph of the Imam (AS), Miyan Shah Nia'mat (RZ). Thus the Mehdavia faith gained popularity in the area. After a short stay the Imam (AS) proceeded to Bidar.

8. BIDAR

It was the capital of Behmani kings. At the time of arrival of the Imam (AS) it was the capital of Buridshahi kings. Shah Qasim Burid was the ruler in those days. The town had many elegant buildings and was surrounded by a strong wall. This wall had several entrances in the shape of big doors. These doors were closed during the nights. This was the practice in almost all the important towns in the medieval India. The king Qasim Burid had a dream that a very big lion has entered the town from one of the doors and has passed out from the other one. He was worried about the meaning of such a dream. He placed it before the learned and wise men of the town but none of them could give any reasonable explanation. There was a great Sufi saint Miyan Shaik Momin Tawakkali (RZ). He interpreted it by saying that a great saint (*khutubal Aqtab*) equivalent to the *Sher-e-Khuda* (the lion of Allah, Hazrath Ali RZ) may come to the city through one door and pass out through the other. This interpretation satisfied the king. Then onwards the king, nobles, Ulema and commoners were waiting for his appearance. Shortly after this, the Imam (AS) entered the city through the same gate which was seen in the dream by the king. He resided in the city for one and a half year and departed from the gate which was seen in the dream by the king. Thus the dream of the king came true. Owing to this and also owing to the unprecedented explanation of the Quranic verses and the high characteristics of the Imam (AS), the king, most of the nobles, Ulema, saints and commoners became his disciples. The prominent among them are:

Miyan Shaik Momin Tawakkali (RZ): As stated earlier he was a very respected Sufi of his time. He was so much attached to the Imam (AS) that during his stay at Bidar he used to serve the Imam (AS) personally for ablution and used to drink the water dropped from the wash. He had the pride of witnessing the seal of Vilayat (*Mohr~e~Vilayat*)* on the back of the Imam (AS). He had also copied it. It is said that this copy is still in the possession of his successors. He used to tell his followers that the Imam (AS) was the Promised Mehdi (AS) and whenever he proclaims as such it was their duty to search him and accept him.

When the Imam was leaving Bidar. Miyan Momin (RZ) wanted to accompany but considering his old age the Imam (AS) asked him to stay at Bidar only. He also said that If he were to follow the Imam (AS) in his teachings he will be with the Imam (AS) always, irrespective of his physical presence. But if he were not to follow him in his teachings he was not to be with him even In his company. Thus the Imam (AS) explained the importance of putting his teaching into practice.

Khaja Alauddin Bidari (RZ): He was the jurist of the city and was in search of a priest to guide him in the spiritual matters. In spite of his best efforts, he was not able to find one. One of the elderly Sufis told him that he would get such a priest at Makkah. Meanwhile the Imam (AS) came to Bidar. Khaja Alauddin (RZ) used to attend the sermons of the Imam (AS) punctually. but did not join his circle, When the Imam (AS) was leaving Bidar all the Ulema. Nobles, saints and commoners came to bid farewell to him. But the Khaja (RZ) was late due to the fact that he was held up washing his clothes. No sooner the Imam (AS) saw him he read out a couplet in Deccani to him which meant 'clear your heart even if you could not wash your clothes. Because the salvation (*Najaat*) depends on the purity of the heart but not on the whiteness of the clothes. Do not sleep fearlessly so that you may not repent on the day of judgement'.

This had a tremendous effect on the Qazi and he joined the group of the Imam (AS) for Hajj. Ultimately, at Makkah, when the Imam (AS) proclaimed himself to be the Promised Mehdi (AS) the Qazi RZ was one among the others to say '*Aaman'na-wa-Saddaq'na*' (it is true. I accept it).

Miyan Moulana Dhiauddin Qadri (RZ): He was a renowned Sufi scholar of his day with many disciples. He joined the fold of Imam (AS) during his stay at Bidar. When the Imam (AS) left Bidar, he also renounced the worldly belongings and his priesthood and joined the holy group. After a short travel his disciples came and begged of the Imam (AS) to leave their priest because their livelihood was depended on him. He was not inclined to go. But the Imam (AS) permitted him. At Bidar, his followers kept him enchained in a room under strict guard. But after a few days he managed to escape and again joined the Imam (AS). Again his disciples came begging for his return but the Imam (AS) refused this time. His love of Allah and for the Imam (AS) was so much that the Imam (AS) called him an *Aashiq-e-Allah*. (lover of Allah).

Qazi Muntajibuddin Junery (RZ) : He was the doctor of the Islamic jurisprudence and a master of all the Islamic teachings. He was *Qazi* (Jurist) of Juner, a town near Bidar. He joined the Imam (AS) at Bidar and never left his company. He was one among the few companions of the Imam (AS) who wrote a book in support of the claim of the Imam (AS) of being the Promised Mehdi (AS). His book is in Arabic with the title of '*Makhzan-ul-Dalayal*' * (The mine of proofs).

We have quoted only a few prominent personalities who have accepted the Imam (AS) as the Promised Mehdi (AS). There are several others who have not been mentioned. At the time of departure from Bidar there were 360 companions RZ.

Mohr-e-Vilayat: This was a natural growth of flesh on the back of the Imam (AS). It has certain Arabic script, which could be read easily. It is reported that a similar seal (growth of flesh) was found on the back of the Prophet (PUH), which was called the seal of Nabuwa (PUH) (*Mohr-e-Nabuwa PUH*).

Makhzan-ul-Dalayal: It is translated in Persian and Urdu: The Urdu version has been printed and published by *Jamiat-e-Mehdavia Daira, Zamistanpur, Musheerabad, Hyderabad*

9. GULBURGA

From Bidar the Imam (AS) proceeded to Gulburga. It is said that in a dream the *Sajjada* (priest of the Dargah) of Hz. Syed Mohammed Al Hussaini Gesuderaz RH (a popular saint in the Chishtia order) was informed about the arrival of the Imam (AS). He along with other prominent persons received the Imam (AS) and lodged him in the Khankha. When the Imam (AS) approached the shrine, the doors were locked but the lock opened by itself and the Imam (AS) entered the Darga and the doors closed automatically. After a long stay inside, he came out and started to move to the other place. The *Sajjada* insisted him to stay for a longer duration but the Imam (AS) replied that he had already taken permission from his father (Hz. Gesuderaz RH). It is also reported that since Hz. Gesuderaz RH had, once during his lifetime proclaimed himself to be the Promised Mehdi (AS) and repented for such a claim, therefore during the visit of the Imam (AS) his spirit apologised to the Imam (AS) for this error.

From this shrine, the Imam (AS) went to the Darga of the Hz. Shaik Slrajuddin (RH) and offered fatiha. In the adjoining room he went to retreat (*Aa'tikaf*) for a week. Then proceeded to Bijapur via Badiapur.

10, 11, & 12. BIJAPUR, RAIBAGH & CHITAPUR

At Bijapur Imam (AS) stayed in the mosque, which had only one minaret. Then proceeded to Raibagh and from there to Chitapur. At Chitapur, he stayed at the suburban village of Nagai. Here he went into retreat (*Uzlat*) for some days. Still the room and the well, which became a sweet water well, with the blessings of the offal (*Paskhurda*) of the Imam (AS), are in existence and attract visitors from all over the Muslim world.

13. DABHOL BUNDAR (Port Dabhol)

From Chitapur via Konkan the Imam (AS) reached Dabhol port. Enroute a gang of thieves met the holy group, but could do no harm. At Dabhol Port the Imam (AS) boarded the ship for Hajj along with his 360 companions RZ. It may be recalled that when the Imam (AS) started from Jaunpur in 887 AH, there were only seventeen followers. But during a period of 3-4 years there were 360 persons who refused to part his company under any circumstances. They belonged to different places, spoke different languages. had different cultures and had different faiths (Maliki, Hambali, Hanafi and Shaafi etc); they came from different economic classes and also had different mental calibre. There were kings, nobles, scholars, saints, sons, jurists, soldiers and commoners. They had only one thing in common i.e. the love of Allah. They were attached to the magnetic personality of the Imam (AS). It is really unimaginable that the personality and teachings of the Imam (AS) had such an impact on the different shades of the human race. They had left all their belongings and attachments only for the sake of the company of the Imam (AS). They underwent hunger, humiliation, hardships and persecution for no personal material gain but only for Allah. There were many others, hundreds and thousands of people who could have joined the company of the Imam (AS) but could not do so for the reasons beyond their control. This itself is a great miracle and enough proof of the truth of the Imam (AS) and his teachings. This fact had been admitted in different ways by the non-Mehdavi writers as well. But they have tried to justify it through different illogical interpretations. It is not a new thing for the Apostles of Allah (PUH). The truthfulness, trustworthiness and high character of the Prophet (PUH) was unconditionally admitted by all the Meccans. When it came to his religion they unanimously opined it as false and the trick of a magician. They ought to have thought that a person never known to have spoken a lie would utter a lie in the name of Allah. Likewise all the non-Mehdavi scholars and historians had unanimously admitted that the Imam (AS) was pious, honest, scholarly, courageous and a perfect adherent of Sunna. They also admit that he was the greatest saint of his time. Above all this, his

teachings were treated as 'above reproach'. But when the question about his claim of being the Promised Mehdi (AS) was raised, they tried to interpret it with so many illogical arguments. They never thought that a saint of his calibre would never lie in the name of Allah, would be free from erring in his Kashf (Divine word) and if at all committed any error, never would have insisted on his mistake and instead would have corrected himself and repented for such an erroneous interpretation of his Kashf. (There are several examples of such erroneous interpretations by great saints about the claim of the Mehdaviat). It is evident that this idea never occurred to them or they never paid due consideration to it. This leads to the conclusion that only Allah can guide, and none else.

At the port, the Imam (AS) noticed an atmosphere of confusion among the co-pilgrims who were running here and there for bringing their provisions and making arrangements for the accommodation on the ship. They were so much engaged in this activity that they totally forgot the very purpose of their voyage. The Imam (AS) observing the chaos, read a *Rubai* (a poem with four lines) in Persian which means: "*Where are you O! Hajis, the beloved (Lord) is here only. Come here, come yourself if you are in search of Him, if not then come not* . Thus, the Imam (AS) invited them to the vision of Allah and at the same time reminded them the purpose of their voyage.

However, the Imam (AS) started his voyage with 360 companions RZ without any proper preparations. He announced that since they all were dependent on Allah (Mutawakkal), there was no need to keep anything for tomorrow. Thus they undertook the journey with nothing to eat or drink. There were no hopes of any aid from any source because the journey was by sea. But it is reported that an unidentified boat approached the ship in the mid-sea and enquired about the Godly people. The co-pilgrims pointed out to the group of the Imam (AS). The leader of the strangers presented food, drinking water, firewood, salt and what not to the Imam (AS) saying that Allah had sent it to him. The Imam (AS) accepted the presents and told his companions RZ to use it for the journey. The food was enough for the whole voyage. It is also reported that a bitter storm caught the ship. The companions^{RZ} pleaded with the Imam (AS) to do something about it otherwise the ship might sink. The Imam (AS) said that he has no say in the happenings from Allah. However, when the panic mounted he slowly went to the railing and saw towards the sea, the storm ceased immediately and the ship started sailing on its regular route. The ship halted for three days at 'Aden' and reached Yelmalam where the Imam (AS) wore the pilgrim clothes (*Ahram*)*. They reached Jiddah and disembarked from the ship. From Jeddah they had to travel to Makkah by land. When the Imam (AS) started for

Makkah several Arabs joined the group, saying that after the Prophet Mohammed (PUH), they had seen the only perfect man in the Imam (AS).

Ahram: This is an unstitched cloth wrapped around the body keeping the right shoulder naked. The real pilgrimage of Hajj starts soon after wearing this cloth. The Hajis must enter Makkah in this costume only.

14. MAKKAH

After reaching Makkah the Imam (AS) went to Kaaba and started *Tawaf* (circles around the Kaaba). After completing the formalities of Hajj, standing between *Rukn* and *Muqam*, before thousands of pilgrims, the Imam (AS) proclaimed loudly that he is the Promised Mehdi (AS) and whoever follows him is the (real) believer (Momin). All the companions and several Arab pilgrims said '*Aamanna Saddaqlna*' (it is true and we admit). Two of the companions Miyan Shah Nizam (RZ) and Qazi Alauddin Bidari (RZ) and an Arab came forward and made covenant (*Ba'ith*). Others were also coming forward, but the Imam (AS) started his sermon on the Quranic verses. His explanation was such that the pilgrims had never heard such secrets of the Quran. After the sermon the Imam (AS) went to his abode. The pilgrims and several Arabs discussed and deliberated about the great claim of the Imam (AS), but no one could muster enough courage to discuss it with the Imam (AS). After this the Imam (AS) stayed in Makkah for seven or nine months preaching and delivering his sermons. During this period the group faced many hardships. There was nothing to eat. His cousin brother Miyan Salamullah (RZ) informed the Imam (AS) about the position and enquired of his permission for obtaining something from the Governor of Makkah. The Imam (AS) prohibited him saying that *sawaal* (Begging) is prohibited in Islam. If at all anything is to be asked, it is to be asked from Allah. But not from anyone else. Many among the group became anemic and were finding it difficult even to perform prayers. Their condition was similar to that of *Ashab-e-Sufa* of the Prophet of Allah (PUH) at Medina. One day Miyan Salamullah (RZ) happened to meet the Governor of Makkah. During the discussion he asked the Governor as to whether there was anything for Allah with him and If so it should be given to the dependents of Allah (*Mutawakkal*). The Governor got the point and presented 1800 gold coins in the name of Allah.

Miyan Salamullah (RZ) presented it to the Imam (AS) saying that Allah has sent it. The Imam (AS) asked as to whether Allah has sent it or you have begged from the Governor. However, since due to hunger several companions were on the verge of dying, he kept silent. Since the companions, due to weakness, were not able to consume solid food, Miyan Salamullah (RZ) prepared liquid food from grains (*aash*) and distributed it among the group. When it was brought to the Imam he refused saying that he was not feeling restless (*mudtar*).

The Imam (AS) started preparations for his journey to Medina for the visit (*Ziarat*) to the shrine of the Prophet of Allah (PUH). He also paid some advance for the camel carts. The preparations for departure were in full swing when the Imam (AS) was advised by the holy soul (*ruh*) of the Prophet (PUH) that he need not go to *Taiba* (Madina), instead he should return to India since his presence there was more necessary. The Prophet (PUH) had also said that when they had met in the spiritual form there was no need of going to his shrine. The Imam (AS) took back the advance from cart men and used it for his return journey fare. Some critics have objected to it saying that by doing so the Imam (AS) has disregarded the tradition (*Hadith*) of the Prophet (PUH) about visiting his grave. But they have neglected the fact that the Imam (AS) was directed by the Prophet (PUH) himself to do so. The second aspect of it is that the visit to the grave of the Prophet (PUH) is not obligatory (*fard*) on Muslims. It is voluntary (*mustahab*). It is not a tenet of Hajj. The visit of the Imam (AS) would have made it a compulsory act for all the believers, since he being the Khalifa of Allah (AS) is to be followed in his actions like the Prophet (PUH). The critics could not understand this delicacy.

Thus the Imam (AS) went to Jeddah and boarded the ship for Devport. During the voyage the group faced hunger, but Allah miraculously arranged for their survival. There was again a big cyclone and the ship was about to be drowned. But when the Imam (AS) came on the deck the storm subsided. The Imam (AS) stated that since there was little food left on the ship, the storm was from Allah to speed up the journey. The journey was completed within half the period of the regular sailing.

17 & 18. DEVEPORT, KHAMBAT

After disembarking from the ship the Imam (AS) started his sermons, benefiting thousands of people who joined his circle. It is reported that one day a drunkard appeared before the Imam (AS) with an intention to give up drinking, if the Imam (AS) prohibits him to do so personally. But the Imam (AS) never addressed him.

Of course, he explained the Quranic verses about the evils of liquor. But the drunkard was adamant about his desire to hear specific prohibitions. The Imam (AS) refused to talk to him saying, that when the drunkard had not obeyed the command of Allah where was the assurance that he would obey him. But the Imam (AS) adopted psychological methods and ultimately the drunkard developed hatred for the liquor and stopped drinking.

Then the Imam (AS) proceeded to Ahmedabad via Khambat. At Khambat several Bohras joined his clan.

19. AHMEDABAD

In those days Ahmedabad was one of the biggest cities of India, even today It is a very big industrial city. Prior to the conquest of Pawagarh. Ahmedabad was the capital of Gujarat. In those days it was surpassing Delhi in respect of population, trade and wealth and was considered to be a strong centre for Muslims in India. There were more than 370 localities, and the town was surrounded by a strong protecting wall. After seeing the affluence of the town the Imam (AS) made a comment that it was the heaven for donkeys (the fools who believe in material progress only). The Imam (AS) entered the city through the Jamalpur Darwaza and stayed in the nearby mosque of Taj Khan Salar. This mosque is still in a very good condition and several people pray everyday. It is evident that most of its open space is consumed by the growing population but the building, water tank etc. are in use. The stone pillars of this mosque are having fine sculpture in Indian Style. There was an attached lodge (*Saraya*) and a *Madrassa* (school). This school was constructed by one of the military chief Haibeth Khan. After his death he was buried in the yard of the mosque, thus gradually people forgot the name of Taj Khan Salar and now the mosque is known as the mosque of Haibeth Khan. The Imam (AS) stayed there for one and half year.

The Imam (AS) used to deliver his sermons regularly everyday. At the time of his sermons thousands of people used to gather. The big mosque and its yard were not sufficient to accommodate them. The people used to climb the walls, roofs, and nearby trees to see and hear the Imam (AS). It was the speciality of his speech that the persons nearby and faraway used to listen and understand him equally. The deliberations used to be so impressive that the listeners felt that the Quran is being revealed afresh. They used to compare their lives in the light of the sermons and reach to the conclusion that

there was not much difference in their way of life and blasphemy and paganism. Most of the non-Mehdavia sources such as Badauni in *Muntaqabut Taureeq*, Share Ali Quane in *Tohfatul Kiram*, Mohammed Ma'sum Nizami in *Tareeq-e-Sindh*. Nizamuddin Ahmed Bakshi in *Tabqat-e-Akbari*, Abdul Baqui Nehavandi in *Masar-e-Rahimi*. Khaja Ibadullah Akhtar In *Mushaheer-e-Islam*, Hafeez Mahmood Shirani in his *Miqalat* (thesis), Dr.Athar Abbas Razvi in *Medieval India*. Abul Kalam Azad in *Tadkira* and Dr.Qamruddin have directly or indirectly admitted the extraordinary impact of the deliberations and sermons of the Imam (AS) (The details can be seen in *Mukhadam-e-Sirajul Absar*). The acknowledgement of the non-Mehdavia sources are at the same time more impressive and elaborate than the description of Mehdavia sources, especially Badauni, Ather Abbas Razvi, Khaja Ibadulla Akhter, Abdul Kalam Azad and Qamruddin have paid great tributes to the person, character, adherence of Sunna and great impact of the sermons of the Imam (AS). Thus, It Is proved beyond doubt that not only the personality, practices and the knowledge but also the faith and Vilaya of the Imam (AS) was unquestionable.

At Ahmedabad, also the godly teachings had the required effect and thousands of people corrected themselves and became his followers. It is practically impossible to narrate even a small impact of the Holy teachings on the common man, scholars, nobles etc. The fact is that the entire journey of the Imam (AS) had only two aspects i.e. to restore the Sharla and to invite the people to Vision. The people who accepted him as the Promised Mehdi (AS) and joined his circle could attain both the objectives. But those who did not accept him as the Promised Mehdi (AS) were also benefited. They were forced to give up the innovations (*Bida't*) and follow the religion and Sharia properly. The main reason for the deterioration of Muslims throughout the world was the wealth. We have referred the Hadith of the Prophet (PUH) that the wealth was an evil for his followers. Thus, the Promised Mehdi (AS) tried to bring a change in the approach of the Muslims towards the wealth and spirituality by inviting them to the path of Allah and His Vision. Thus, due to the great mission of the Promised Mehdi (AS) the Islam was reviewed and revived, and the Muslim in general realised and followed the path of Allah.

At Ahmedabad, thousands of people joined his circle but we shall report a few prominent names.

Miyan Malik Burhanuddin (RZ): He was a noble of Sultan Mahmood Begra and was a high Mansabdar. Once along with thousands of people he was listening the sermon of the Imam (AS). At that time the Imam (AS) was explaining the Quranic verse:

لَنْ تَنَالُوا الْبِرَّ حَتَّى تُنْفِقُوا مِمَّا تُحِبُّونَ

Ye will not attain unto piety until ye spend of that which ye love. (S3:92)

The Imam (AS) explained that in this verse '*Birra*' means Allah and unless one sacrifices his dearest thing for Allah, one cannot attain Him. The Malik (RZ) was very much moved and presented his sword and horse to the Imam (AS), The Imam (AS) smilingly enquired of the Malik (RZ) as to why these two things were dear to him. The Malik (RZ) said that because of the fact that they were helpful in protecting his life. The Imam (AS) said that in that case the dearest thing was the life and not the sword or the horse. Hence Allah wants him to present his life. He added that Allah is in no need of horses or the swords nor the Imam (AS) had come to collect them. This psychological treatment produced the desired result and the Malik (RZ) immediately renounced the world and joined the holy group. He became one of the eminent companions of the Imam (AS). He was elevated to such an honour that the second daughter of the Imam (AS) Bibi Fatima (RZ) was first married to him.

Malik Gowher (RZ): He was an able administrator and had served on important positions in the courts of Malwa and Gujarat. Ultimately he left the job and proceeded to Makkah for Hajj. After Performing pilgrimage he came back to Gujarat. When he heard about the Imam (AS), he developed a desire to see him. After seeing the Imam (AS) he immediately joined his followers and became one of the twelve blessed companions (RZ).

Miyan Haji Mali (RZ): He was the son of a gardener (Mali). His father had died at a young age and he was left under the protection of his uncle. He was not interested in his hereditary profession and was always found in meditation. This was something very strange for a poor working family. The uncle was unable to divert his attention towards the worldly affairs. Once the boy happened to see a women burning alive happily along with the dead body of her husband (Sati). The young one had a unique impact of this event. He thought if the love of a women towards her husband was so much strong then what would be the effect of the love for the Creator. Since then he was in search of Allah and became a staunch lover of Allah. He contacted several priests, saints and rishis, but in vain. Once he heard that at Makkah, Kaba was the house of Allah. He thought that when there was a house, the owner of that house would also be available there. Thus, he started for his journey to Makkah. On the way he met an elderly person who enquired about his journey. The young lover explained that he was going to Makkah to see Allah. The elderly man laughed at him and explained that in such circumstances it was not

fruitful to go to Makkah. Then he taught him the Kalima and Prayer (*Salat*) and told him to do as he was doing. He advised that by repeating this system of prayer he can attain his objective. But the boy did not allow him to go. He insisted that now that he had been converted to Islam and had become an outcast, he would not leave the old man without fulfillment of his desire. The elderly man was greatly moved by the strong will of the boy. He then advised him to go to Ahmedabad and see the Promised Mehdi (AS) who alone could accomplish his desire. The boy left him and proceeded to Ahmedabad. When he reached the mosque of Taj Khan Salar, the Imam (AS) came forward and invited him by the name of Miyan Haji Mali (RZ). After seeing the Imam (AS), the boy had an intoxicating effect. The Imam (AS) taught him the recitation of '*La-ilaha Illallah*'. Then the boy went into ecstasy. He was in that condition for three days experiencing the exceptional joy of the Vision of Allah. On the fourth day, he passed away. It is reported that the flowers offered at his grave were fresh for forty days. The Imam (AS) said that this would lead to worshipping of his grave by the ignorant. He ordered to remove the flowers and level the grave. From this Incident it is evident that the Imam (AS) had more higher objective of the unity of Allah and eliminated the slightest possibility which may lead to Shirk. This objective was attained even at the destruction of the last signs of his beloved follower.

Miyan Shah Abdul Majeed (RZ) and his brothers (RZ): Hz. Shah Sadullah Gansavi was a renowned Sufi of his days. He was a descendent of Hazrath Sheik Fareed Shakergunj (RH) a great saint of Chishtia order. Due to Godly qualities most of the nobles used to come to his Khankhah and became his disciples (Murid). He had three sons viz (1) Miyan Shah Abdul Majeed (RZ) (2) Miyan Shah Ameen Mohd. (RZ) (3) Miyan Shah Abu Mohd. (RZ). They had come from Delhi and settled at Ahmedabad.

Their Khankhah was very popular and was always full of people who came there to pay their respect. When the Imam (AS) arrived at Ahmedabad, the three brothers consulted among themselves about him. They were of the view that the time was ripe for the advent of Promised Mehdi (AS) and most of the predictions about the Promised Mehdi (AS) were apparently present. The character of the claimant of this dignity were also similar to that of the Prophet of Allah (PUH). But they were not able to make their minds and to decide any thing about him. In the meanwhile, the worldly ulemas started a campaign against the Imam (AS). They managed to forge an order in the name of the king for the Imam (AS) to leave Ahmedabad. The Imam (AS) was also ready to proceed further for the accomplishment of his mission. The Imam (AS) left Ahmedabad. When the three brothers

came to know about the departure of the Imam (AS), they could not withhold themselves and left Ahmedabad immediately and reached him while he was in journey. Thus, the three brothers joined the holy group of Muhajireens. They abandoned their Khankhah, the followers (rich and poor), lands and properties, renounced the worldly desires and remained with the Imam (AS) thereafter and were included among the twelve blessed followers.

Miyan Moulana Yousuf (RZ): He was yet another renowned saintly scholar of Ahmedabad (a learned Sufi). When he heard about the Imam (AS) and his character, he lost no time in seeing the Imam (AS). He also left everything and joined the group of Godly men and ultimately attained the position of one of the twelve blessed companions. His dependence on Allah was greatly exhibited during the journey of Khorasan.

Miyan Moulana Ahmed Shah Bin Qadan (RZ): He was also a renowned Sufi of Ahmedabad. His silsilah (order) was very popular among the nobles and commoners and was having the patronage of the king also. When the Imam (AS) came to Ahmedabad, even without knowing about him, the Shah felt himself exhausted spiritually and was feeling that he needs guidance. Then he came to know of the arrival of the Imam (AS) and paid a visit to him. After due clarifications he joined the holy group by renouncing the worldly belongings. But he was not able to bear with the hardships of the journey in the company of the Imam (AS). Thus, made lame excuses. The Imam (AS) called him a hypocrite (*Munafiq*). But after the Imam (AS), when Miyan Shah Nizam (RZ) came back to Gujarat he joined his Daira and repented. His repentance was so great that he used to weep for days together and ultimately lost his eyesight.

We have given the glimpses of a few highly renowned Sufis, saints and nobles who joined the Imam (AS) at Ahmedabad. There were thousands of commoners, scholars, saints and nobles about whom we have not mentioned. His popularity was growing day by day. It appeared that the entire city would be converted to his side in a very short time. This had adversely affected the fame and incomes of so called Sufis and scholars. Therefore they were in search of an excuse to let him down. They were feeling that if the Imam (AS) is allowed to speak openly the truth, then the innocent people who were their prey would not follow their innovations (*bida't*) and would desert them. Thus their 'profession' would be destroyed. The worldly scholars (*Ulema-e-Su*) were conspiring among themselves to take some step against the Imam (AS). After seeing the strict adherence of the Sunna and the Book by the Imam (AS) and his followers, and his personal character and his popularity they were not in a position to do anything against him. These facts

have been reported in detail by scholars like Khaja Ibadullah Akhter, Moulana Abul Kalaam Azad etc. While the situation was such at Ahmedabad, the Imam (AS) proclaimed in the mosque of Taj Khan Salar in the presence of thousands of people that "Allah has ordained me as the Promised Mehdi (AS) and directs me to proclaim as such". This proclamation was made in 903 AH; after this proclamation the Imam (AS) lived for seven years. Thus the so called scholars got a point to accuse him. They sat together and according to their view sorted out a few pertinent questions to be asked to the Imam (AS). One of the questions was about the claim of the Imam (AS), they were to ask the Imam (AS) as to whether he is making such proclamation as per Allah's will or it was his own idea. Perhaps due to eagerness, anger or jealousy they failed to analyse the proclamation of the Imam (AS) properly.

Had they seen it properly they would have got their reply themselves. However when they came to the mosque, the Imam (AS) was explaining the Quran. After seeing the worldly scholars he recited a Quranic verse:

قُلْ لَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ عِنْدِي خَزَائِنُ اللَّهِ وَلَا أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبِ وَلَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ إِنِّي مَلَكٌ

“(O! Moharnmad PUH) tell them that I did not say to you that I am in possession of the treasures of Allah nor do I claim to be an omniscient nor I claim to be an angel. I simply follow whatever is revealed to me by Allah”. (S6:50)

This answered the unasked question of the Ulema and its explanation was so impressive that the so called Ulema forgot to put any question to the Imam (AS). They were so much absorbed in the Holy sermon that they almost forgot their own existence. At the end of the congregation they were not able to trace their ways back to their homes. But this impact was absolved by the passage of time and the enmity to the Imam (AS) and love for the worldly belongings caught them once again. They announced in the town that the Imam (AS) was a magician and it was harmful for young and old, rich and poor, learned and ignorant, to see and hear him. By this way they attempted to prevent the people from going to the Imam (AS), which failed utterly. This attempt of the worldly Ulema was similar to the allegation against the Prophet of Allah (PUH) by the pagans of Makkah. Despite all their efforts the Imam's (AS) popularity kept growing. As a result most of the Khankhas were closed down. The so called Sufis met once again and resolved to trap the Imam (AS) by asking an ambiguous and controversial question. They asked the Imam (AS) as to what he would say about a woman, who while her husband was alive, marries another man without a divorce from the first husband. The Imam (AS) replied that it was

strange, that such learned people were asking such a silly question. Since, according to Islamic law if it was proved that the husband was impotent then the women was free to marry another person, there was no need for divorce (since the marriage had not taken effect).

He also added that for worldly affairs people pay so much importance but for the world to come no such precaution is taken. A person joins a priest in the hope of fulfillment of his spiritual aspirations of vision of Allah. But afterwards he comes to know that the priest is incompetent. If he severs his connection with that priest, he is criticised. Thus it was evident that the worldly affairs were more important than the spiritual matters. Was it the real Islam ? The so called Ulema were not in a position to face such a pertinent question because they themselves were guilty of such activities.

After the unsuccessful attempt, the Ulema decided that It was not in their interest to argue with the Imam (AS). They realised that despite of all their enmity, they were so much impressed by the Imam (AS), thereby they could assess the impact of the Imam (AS) on the unbiased people. This had further worried them.

They decided to issue a *Fatwa* (Decree) stating that the Imam (AS) was claiming that it was possible to have *Deedar* (Vision of Allah) in this world and according to Sharia it was impossible and amounted to blasphemy (*Kufr*). They drafted the fatwa concluding that due to this claim the Imam (AS) had to be executed. They sent it to Moulana Mohammad Tajuddin. who was the master of the Islamic Law and almost all the scholars of Ahmedabad were his pupils. They requested him to correct the Fatwa and give his assent. The Moulana called all the Ulema and scolded them saying ~were you given the knowledge only to issue such decree against the Syed (AS)". This has been reported even by the non-Mehadavi authors such as author of *Mirat-e-Sikanderi*. Thus this attempt of the so called Ulema also failed. Ultimately they arrived at the only conclusion, to misuse the authority of the State. But this was also not an easy affair, because they know that Sultan and most of his relatives were also having high regard for the Imam (AS) and had become his disciples. Thus they were afraid to approach the king. They concocted an order with the help of some of the officials at Ahmedabad directing the Imam (AS) to leave the city immediately. The orders were presented to the Imam (AS) by A'itemed Khan, a noble of Sultan. When the orders were presented, the Imam (AS) asked the noble the cause of such an order. He replied that the Ulema have lodged a complaint that the Imam (AS) was pronouncing the truth (Haqaeq) openly which was harmful to commoners and the state. The Imam (AS) said that "I am a perfect follower of the Prophet

(PUH) and whatever I am saying is nothing but Sharia, the truth (*Haqaeq*) cannot be pronounced (openly) nor the people can understand them. If they do, they would be burnt". He also said that *Hijrath* and expulsion (Ikhraj) were accepted by even the Prophet (PUH) himself. Thus he decided to follow the Prophet (PUH) in this aspect as well. Then he proceeded to Patan.

20. SANTEJ

The Imam (AS) started his journey for Patan and enroute he camped at Santej. Here the third Caliph of the Imam (AS) Miyan Shah Ni'amat (RZ) joined his fold.

Miyan Shah Nia'mat (RZ): He was the only son of a noble of Gujarat Miyan Malik Bade. Owing to undue love and affection of the parents he had turned up into a spoilt child. As his father died at a young age there was none to attend to his education and training. Therefore It was presumed that he was unfit to succeed the Jagir of his father. Miyan Nia'mat (RZ) was very much annoyed at such a decision of the king. He along with a few of his friends, became outlaws and started robberies in and around Ahmedabad. He was very strong and a well trained warrior, but was very short tempered and used to get annoyed at the smallest provocation. Thus one day he killed the son of a negro noble Abdulah, who being highly influential, directly approached the Sultan for justice. The king ordered the arrest of Miyan Shah Nia'mat (RZ), and deputed a contingent of 500 soldiers for this purpose. But this was not an easy task. After great efforts they came to know that he was at Santej. When the Shah (RZ) and his companions saw the royal force approaching, they fled away and the army followed them. In a forest Miyan Shah Nia'mat (RZ) heard the *Adhan* (call for the prayer). He was very much attracted to this call and decided to perform the mid-day prayer there only. His companions were against such a decision. But the Shah (RZ) dismounted the horse and started preparations for the prayers. His companions fled away fearing the royal force. When the royal contingent arrived there, they saw a man praying. They could not recognise him and thought him to be a pious man performing the prayers. They continued their chase guided by the foot prints of the horses. After the prayers the Shah (RZ) enquired from a passer by as to who was telling Adhan in that forest. He was told that the group of the Promised Mehdi (AS) was camping nearby. Miyan Nia'mat (RZ) had already heard about the Imam (AS), and therefore decided to see him immediately. When he reached the Daira, the Imam (AS) was explaining the Quranic Verses. The explanation was so much convincing and inspiring that Miyan Nia'mat (RZ) felt guilty and started weeping. He went to the Imam (AS) and confessed before him all his sins, and told that he, out of attachment and love to

the worldly belongings, had committed countless crimes. He was of the view that in the world there was no match to him in this field. The Imam (AS) consoled him saying that even then he (RZ) was Nia'mat (a blessing), and that the all Merciful may forgive him, if he repented whole-heartedly. But for the crimes committed by him against the co-creatures, he had to seek pardon from them alone. Unless they are satisfied, Allah would not forgive. Then the Shah (RZ) took permission of the Imam (AS) and first went to the house of the negro noble Abdullah. On seeing the Shah (RZ), he was very much astonished. He could clearly notice the revolutionary change in his personality. The Shah (RZ) presented his sword to the negro and asked him to take Qisas (revenge) of his son. This was the least expected of the Shah (RZ). The negro asked the reason for such a change in his personality. The Shah (RZ) told him about the Imam (AS). The negro whole heartedly forgave him and proceeded to the Daira to join the Imam (AS). In this way, Miyan Nia'mat (RZ) approached each and every victim, and returned whatever he had grabbed from them. Most of them after noticing the humbleness and great change in him, forgave him. Thus after settling all the claims, Miyan Nia'mat (RZ) joined the Imam (AS) at Patan and rose to the status of his third Caliph. Most of the non-Mehdavi historians and authors have referred to this event when they say that *people with bleeding swords came to the Imam (AS) and rose to the position of saint hood.*

21. SAUDA

From Santej the Imam (AS) camped at a village called Sauda. As usual, the Imam (AS) delivered his sermons on the Quran and many people joined him. A young boy who happened to listen to one of the sermons was so much moved that he refused to return to his house. Knowing this the mother was very much annoyed and accused the Imam (AS) of stealing the boys and selling them as slaves in the towns. When her husband came home she was weeping and her only demand was to get back her son. The husband went to the Daira in a very angry mood. But after listening to the sermon, he also joined the fold of the Imam (AS). He sent a word to his wife, that after seeing the Imam (AS) it was not possible to leave the holy company, if she was willing to join him she may come otherwise she will be at her liberty.

22. PEERAN PATAN

Thus traveling the Imam (AS) reached the outskirts of the town Patan. The Imam (AS) commented that there was 'a scent of love' (*Bu-e-Ishq*) in the town. When he reached the town he said that it was 'the mine of love' (*Kaan-e-Ishq*). The Imam (AS) stayed at the Inn

of Qadi Qadan, near the tank of Sarvar Khan. There was a pious saint a *Majzoob* (one who is lost in divine meditation), Shah Ruknuddin (RZ). He was informed of the Imam's (AS) arrival through a divine word (*Kashf*). The saint desired to host the Imam (AS). Thus, through his men he sent bread and bananas. The Imam (AS) permitted for the distribution of one bread and two bananas to each of his followers. This was done without counting either the followers or the provisions. The bread and fruits proved exactly sufficient for the entire group. On the first Friday of his stay, the Imam (AS) proceeded to Jama Masjid for prayers. The abode of Shah Ruknuddin (RZ) was on the way. He was always in ecstasy and was not conscious of his dress. But on that day, well in advance of the arrival of the Imam (AS) he regained full consciousness and demanded for the dress. He said that the protector of the Sharia of the Prophet (PUH) was coming and hence he could not remain in a condition contrary to the Sharia. When the Imam (AS) was passing through the house of the Shah (RZ), the Shah (RZ) came out and paid respect to the Imam (AS). This event was a living proof of the Hadith that "the Mehdi (AS) would insist on the adherence of the Sunnah".

Patan was an important and ancient town and a centre of religious activity in Gujarat. Most of the scholars and nobles of the Gujarat court were residing there. The most important family was that of Bariwals. This was a family of nobles which has settled down at Patan, after migrating from Bari, a town near Agra. They were the descendants of Hazrath Abu Bakr Siddiq (RZ), the first Caliph (RZ) of the Prophet (PUH). The head of the family was Malik Yaqub Bariwal. Most of the family members accepted the Imam (AS) as Mahdi-e-Mawood AS (The Promised Mehdi AS). Among the other prominent people who joined him were:

Malik Mubarizul Mulk (RZ): Malik Yaqub (RH), the governor of Patan, had eight sons. By the time the Imam (AS) reached Patan all his sons had died except Malik Naseeruddin (RZ), who succeeded his father with the title of Mubariz-ul-Mulk. Most of the surrounding villages were the Jagir of the Bariwals. Thus, practically Patan and its surroundings were under the control of this family. They all had accepted the Imam (AS) and were staunch followers. Malik Mubariz-ul-Mulk had also become a follower, but retained his office of the Governor instead of joining the Daira. Therefore most of the family members were not happy with him.

Malik Bakhkhan (RZ): He was the grandson of Malik Yaqub (RH) by his last son Malik Ahmed (RH). He happened to be the first person of the Bariwals to accept the Imam (AS) and was also responsible for introducing his nephew Miyan Syed Khundmlr (RZ) to the

Imam (AS). When the Malik (RZ) told the Imam (AS) of his intention to introduce his nephew to the Imam (AS), the Imam (AS) said that as per the will of Allah he had come to Patan only for Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ). The Malik (RZ) was one of the important nobles of Gujarat. But after joining the Imam (AS) he renounced everything and joined the holy group of Muhajireen. He was so much attached to the Imam (AS) that, when his son sent him a new foot wear, he decided to present it to the Imam (AS) and to request him to give the worn out foot wear, so that he could make a cap out of it, and use it as a bless. With this intention, he joined the late night prayer (*Isha*). After the prayer, as per the Mehdavia practice all were standing to say farewell (Salaam). The Imam (AS) pointed out to his old pair of footwear and addressed to the Malik (RZ) saying that it was meant for feet only. As the Malik (RZ) had not revealed his intention, he was dumb-founded. Ultimately, he told the Imam (AS) of his intentions. The Imam (AS) enquired, whether he knew about the material of the old footwear, the Malik (RZ) was silent. Then the Imam (AS) himself explained that the upper was made of goat skin and the sole of the calf hide and enquired of the Malik (RZ). as to whether after being in his company for such a long period he had learnt only that the Promised Mehdi (AS) would bestow salvation only through the bless of goat and calf leather? He added that even if out of affection he gives his own skin to the Malik (RZ), Allah was capable of removing it from Malik (RZ) and also throwing him (the Malik RZ) into the Hell If his deeds were not good and if he fails to abide by what is taught in between Asar and MaghrIb prayers.

This explanation about the salvation is very important, keeping in view the superstitious conditions of the Muslims in those days. The so called Sufis, scholars and fakirs were claiming the capacity to arrange salvation through some or the other things given to the followers as bless. But when it was intended by a staunch follower, to use the footwear as bless, the Imam (AS) not only clarified the real Islamic position in such matters, but also scientifically explained the proper usage of the articles. Thus he condemned the superstitious approach to Islam which was in vogue.

This incident also reveals the fact that the Imam (AS) was leading a very simple life using worn out footwear and patched clothes. It also indicates that regularly in between Asar and MaghrIb prayers the Imam (AS) used to teach the real Islamic faith and practices while explaining the Quranic verses.

Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ): He was the son of Hazrath Moosa (RH), a descendant of Imam Moosa KazIm (RH). The lineages of the Imam (AS) and of Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ), join at Miyan Syed Nia'matullah (RH). Thus the Imam (AS) and Miyan Syed

Khundmir (RZ) were of the same progeny. On maternal side he was the son of the granddaughter of Malik Yakub Bariwal (RH). The Governor of Patan Malik Naseeruddin Mabarizul Mulk (RZ), was his mother's uncle. His father Miyan Syed Moosa (RH) was the commander of 5000 cavalry and died in a battle field. After his father the post was offered to Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ). But he refused to accept it. So it was given to his younger brother Miyan Syed Ataullah (RZ). From the very young age he was much conscious of religion and always adopted the righteous path.

Even elderly people used to pay him regard for his piousness. He was always in search of a true priest to guide him to attain his objective of communion with Allah. Seeing his strong desire, Malik Bakhkhan (RZ) took him to several priests, considered to be very pious. But, infact all of them were more Interested in material world than the spiritual uplift. They had devised several methods to fool the Innocent. Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ), owing to his knowledge and insight, noticed the tricks and refused to be a disciple of any of them. One was asking him to make covenant (Ba'ith) with a grave, while the other wanted to consult the Governor before taking him as his disciple. The third one was interested in restoration of the jaglr to him. All such things were either against the Sunna or Sharla or were based on worldly desires. Thus, Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ), inspite of his search was not able to find one priest who could lead him to attain his objective. The outcome of this search is a clear proof that in those days religion had lost Its importance and was used only as a means to attain the worldly comforts by fooling the people or to gain political power. This situation had been depicted impressively by Abul Kalam Azad in his 'Tadkirah'.

In the meanwhile Malik Bakhkhan (RZ) met the Imam (AS) and after obtaining his permission went to Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ) and told him about the Imam (AS) and his claim of being the Promised Mehdi (AS). Miyan (RZ) lost no time in going to the Imam (AS). It is reported that he took two gold coins as a present. When they both reached the saraya (Inn) the Imam (AS) came out to receive them. No sooner the eyes of the Imam (AS) and Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ) met, the true lover of the truth (*Haq*) had an electrifying effect, lost consciousness and went into ecstasy. The Imam (AS) called him as Siddiq and stepped forward to hold him, and embraced him. Imam (AS) said, "Syed Khundmir (RZ) had come with full requirements of a light and was lighted with the light of *Vilayat-e-Mohammedia PUH*". Imam (AS) also told that "He (AS) and Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ) were from the same progeny". In the same condition, Miyan Syed

Khundmir (RZ) performed the Asar prayer and after the prayer, the Imam (AS) started his regular sermon explaining the Quranic verses.

On this occasion, he explained the Holy verse:

اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ مِثْلُ نُورِ كَمِشْكَوَاتٍ فِيهَا مِصْبَاحٌ الْمِصْبَاحُ فِي زُجَاجَةٍ
الزُّجَاجَةُ كَأَنَّهَا كَوْكَبٌ دُرِّيٌّ يُوقَدُ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ مُبْرَكَةٍ زَيْتُونَةٍ لَا شَرْقِيَّةٍ وَلَا غَرْبِيَّةٍ يَكَادُ
زَيْتُهَا يُضِيءُ وَلَوْ لَمْ تَمْسَسْهُ نَارٌ نُورٌ عَلَى نُورٍ يَهْدِي اللَّهُ لِنُورِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ
الْأَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

God is the light of heavens and earth. The parable of His light is as if there were a Niche and within it a Lamp. The Lamp enclosed in a glass. The glass a bright star lit from a blessed tree; An olive; Neither of the east nor of the west whose oil is well - nigh Luminous. Though fire scarce touch It. Light upon light God does guide whom he will (Like) to His Light and does set parables for men and God knows all things. - 24:35

This had a still more intoxicating effect upon the Miyan Siddiq (RZ). He performed the Maghrib prayer also in the same condition. After Isha, he was sent to his house. For a week he was in this condition. Then the Imam (AS) enquired Miyan (RZ) about his experience of the first day. Miyan Siddiq (RZ) narrated that at the first sight he had the vision of Allah. The Imam (AS) said that It was true, and that one who gets complete self-annihilation can alone visualise Allah. Miyan Siddiq (RZ) also stated that during the Asar prayer, he felt that Allah was asking him to present something in His way. He (Miyan Khundmir RZ) said that everything with him belongs to Allah. The Almighty pointed at his head and Miyan (RZ) said that he is prepared to present not only one but even a hundred heads if provided with. He immediately felt that he was praying without the head on his body. However, he felt that the head was restored at the end of the prayer. At Maghrib prayer, he submitted as to whether his presentation was rejected. Allah informed him that the head was given back as a trust and would be taken back at the appropriate time. The Imam (AS) informed that it was the indication of the events to come.

The details reported by Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ) are about the spiritual experiences and divine stages he passed through, during his first meeting with the Imam (AS). Everyone having such capacity, who happened to see the Imam (AS), had a definite spiritual experience. But the stages and experiences were different basing on the capacity

of the individual. In respect of the Miyan Siddiq (RZ), inspite of the fact that he was an youth of eighteen years, it can be well assessed that he was having the highest spiritual capacity at the time of meeting the Imam (AS). We have narrated these experiences in brief, because of their relevance to the subsequent events.

Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ) was bestowed with the title of the Siddiq-e-Vilayath (RZ). He was also the second Caliph (RZ) and son in law of the Imam (AS). He became martyr in lieu of the Promised Mehdi (AS). Therefore, he is also called the '*Badal-e-Zaat-e-Mehdi AS*' (substitute to the person of the Mehdi AS).

After the acceptance by the two important personalities, i.e., Malik Bakhan (RZ) (a nobleman) and Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ) (a pious youth) the entire family of Bariwals joined the Imam (AS). Some of the eminent among them are 1. *Malik Alahdad (RZ)* 2. *Malik Hammad (RZ) sons of Malik Ahmed (RZ) bin Yaqub* 3. *Malik Hasan (RZ)* 4. *Malik Abdul Lateef (RZ)* 5. *Malik Fakruddin (RZ)* 6. *Malik Sharfuddin (RZ) sons of Malik Mohd. bin Yaqub* 7. *Malik Uth'man (RZ) bin Malik Esa* 8. *Maiik Ma'ruf (RZ)* 9. *Malik Sharfuddin (RZ)*.

Syed Khanji Khidkiwal (RZ): He was a descendant of Hazrath Syed Mohammed Gesudaraz (RH) of Gulbarga. He was the fifth head in the lineage of Gesudaraz (RH). Since some of the nobles of Patan belonged to the silsila of Gesudaraz (RH), this family had settled at Patan near the locality of Bariwals. The locality of the Bariwals was surrounded by a strong protecting wall. They had a bypass (*Khidki* i.e., a small door) for the women folk for transiting to the houses of Saadat and vice versa. Therefore they were called as Khidkiwal. Miyan Syed Khanji (RZ) was the head of this family. He after listening to the sermons of the Imam (AS), accepted him as the Promised Mehdi (AS). He joined the Daira of Hazrath Syed Khundmir (RZ), the second Khalifah (RZ) of the Imam (AS), and was one of the hundred martyrs with him.

Miyan Moulana Yousuf Suhait & Moulana Mohd. Taj (RZ): The two brothers were important scholars of Patan. The non-Mehdavi sources such as *Mirat-e-Sikandari* have reported that they were very popular for their piety and adherence of Sunna. They were also great scholars of Islamic jurisprudence and were considered as the masters of all the scholars of the town. They had long discussions on the proclamation of the Imam (AS). The discussions lasted for several days. Miyan Yousuf Suhait (RZ) had a vague idea that his father had jotted down the date of the birth of the Promised Mehdi (AS) as notified by a Godly old man (*Majzoob*). But he was not able to trace It. The Imam (AS) noticing his anxiety informed him that the said paper was available in a certain book at such and such

page. Miyan Yousuf (RZ) Immediately rushed to his house and found the paper written by his father, some fifty years ago. He brought It to the Imam (AS) and enquired about his date of birth. The Imam (AS) told him to consult his son-In-law Miyan Abu Bakr (RZ), who informed him that the Imam (AS) was born on Monday, the 14th of Jamadi-ul-Awaal 847 A.H. Miyan Yousuf (RZ) tallied it with his paper and found it to be correct. He also requested the Imam (AS) to show him the seal of the Vilaya on his back. The Imam (AS) enquired as to whether he was not yet satisfied. Miyan Yousuf (RZ) replied that he wanted to get more satisfaction and also to have the honour of witnessing such an important sign. The Imam (AS) took him Inside lifted his shirt and showed him the seal. Thus he acquired the honour of being the second witness of the sign, the first being Miyan Momin Tawakkali (RZ) of Bidar. After such satisfaction, Miyan Yousuf (RZ) and his brother Miyan Mohammed Taj (RZ) became staunch followers of the Imam (AS). Their zeal was such that Miyan Yousuf (RZ) wanted to launch a vigorous campaign to propagate the teachings of the Imam (AS) all over, and to indulge into arguments with the *Ulema* (scholars) who opposed the claim of the Imam (AS). But the Imam (AS) prevented him by saying that, for him there was no need to do all that. What he was supposed to do was to perform the recital as advised, It was for Allah to popularise and to protect the true religion. With the help of the Almighty the Mehdi (AS) would attend to any objection against the true faith. Thus the Imam (AS) was more Interested in the spiritual progress of his followers than indulging in arguments with the opponents.

Miyan Moulana Abdur Rasheed (RZ): He was a descendant of Hz. Ali (RZ) through his son Hanafia (RZ). Thus he was called the Ulvi Syed. He was one of the most learned scholars of Patan. He also joined the fold after listening to the sermon of the Imam (AS). His son Miyan Mustafa Gujrati (RH) was zealous propagator of Mehdavia and had many discussions on this Issue with the Ulema in the court of Emperor Akbar at Agra. Miyan Abdur Rasheed (RH) had collected the narrations (*Naqaliyat*) of the Promised Mehdi (AS). The book is called '*Naqliyat-e-Miyan Abdur Rasheed (RH)*'. [This book had been translated in Urdu and had been published with the Commentaries of Miyan Syed Mahmood Tashreefullahi (RH) in 1369 AH (1949 A.D) from Hyderabad]

Miyan Moulana Malikji (RZ) Bin Khawja Taha: He was a renowned scholar and poet. After becoming a disciple of the Imam (AS), he became a pupil of Miyan Allahdad Hameed (RZ). He had the pen name of Mehri. He has left several works in prose and poetry. He is credited with two *diwans* (collections of poems). He is a vastly quoted poet in the Mehdavia community.

Apart from the above, several nobles and scholars, Sufis and commoners joined the Mehdavia fold at Patan. At Patan only the Imam (AS) performed his third marriage in 903 AH with Bibi Malkan (RZ), the daughter of Miyan Lad Shah (RZ). This marriage was necessitated by the fact that his first wife Bibi Allahdadi (RZ) had expired at Chapanear. and the second wife Bibi Bhikta (RZ), who was a new convert had also passed away.

At Patan, Miran Syed Mahmood (RZ), the eldest son of the Imam (AS), sought permission to take up some job and earn livelihood. Till then he was constantly in the company of the Imam (AS). He proposed to take up the job in accordance with the Quranic teachings, Sunna of the Prophet (PUH) and the teachings of the Imam (AS). On enquiry the Imam (AS) told him that one who had large worldly comforts and left them in the path of Allah is definitely superior in stages to one who had nothing to part with. Thus Miran Syed Mahmood (RZ) intended to do some Kasab (any work done to earn livelihood). From Patan he went to Chapanear, the then capital of Gujarat. He was received by Mallk Uthman Bariwal (RZ). The Malik (RZ) arranged for the stay of the son of the Imam (AS), at his garden, and personally reported this fact to the king. The king deputed two of his nobles viz 'Itemad-ul-Mulk and Admath-ul-mulk to receive Miran Syed Mahmood (RZ). He was offered the commandership of 4000 cavalry. Bergaon and Sanchur, two populated and well cultivated villages were given as his jagir.

Bibi Khubkalan (RZ), a bond maid given to the Imam (AS) by Miyan Lad Shah (RZ), was a beautiful girl of high character. The Imam (AS) freed her and married her to his eldest son Miran Syed Mahmood (RZ). By doing so the Imam (AS) removed the barriers of caste system, wealth and dowry which had crept into the Islamic society. Even the slaves and bond maids were given equal status. Bibi Khubkalan (RZ) was a loving wife. The separation of her husband even for his official duties was unbearable to her. Every time her husband went out she used to enquire the time of his return. After the lapse of the given time she used to become restless till his return. Once on an invitation of Maulana Abdul Wahed, Miran Syed Mahmood (RZ) went for dinner, the host requested him to stay for the night. Hence he was held up there. The wife was so much shocked that she passed away during that night itself. This was a great shock for Miran (RZ). For a long time he did not remarry. Afterwards he married Bibi Kad Banu (RZ), the daughter of Malik Uthman Bariwal (RZ). Though a daughter of a noble, she was very much obedient and was prepared to serve even as a maid servant to the son of the Imam (AS).

Mullah Moinuddin and his disciples: At Patan there was a famous scholar by name Mullah Moinuddln, who was very popular for his ability to teach different subjects of

Islamic studies. He had many capable students who after completion of their courses had attained respectable positions as scholars. When Mullah Moinuddin heard about the popularity of the Imam (AS), he became jealous. At the same time he could not muster enough courage to appear personally for a discussion. But adopted an indirect method to belittle the Imam (AS). He used to depute a group of his ex-students with pertinent questions to be asked to the Imam (AS) during his congregations. The Imam (AS) used to clarify all the doubts even without being asked, thus virtually they were not in a position to put any question to the Imam (AS). This was something very strange to them and they concluded that the Imam (AS) was right in his claim. They advised the Mullah that since the Imam (AS) was highly learned and Godly man, it was desirable to meet him personally and get a first hand knowledge. The Mullah said that whatever they had concluded after seeing the Imam (AS), he had come to know even without seeing him. But he refused to meet him on one or the other plea. Once when the Imam (AS) was proceeding to Jama Masjid for Friday prayer, someone pointed out a house saying that it was the house of Mullah Moinuddin. The Imam (AS) decided to see him personally. Therefore he sent a word to the Mullah. The Mullah was not inclined to meet the Imam (AS). Hence he mounted on a broken wall and told his men to inform the Imam (AS) that he has mounted for his Jagir. The Imam (AS) smiled and said that the Mullah had mounted on such an object which cannot take him anywhere. Thus saying the Imam (AS) went his way. it is reported in a book of narration (*Naqaliyat*) that the Imam (AS) had come from Badli to the house of the Mullah at Patan to invite him for the discussions to sort out the doubts, if any. This does not appear to be true on the following grounds.

a) The Imam (AS) in his whole life had never visited the houses of any scholars or kings for any purpose - least to invite them for any religious arguments.

b) The Imam (AS) had never went back to a place which he has already left. The Imam (AS) left Patan and went to Badli around 902 AH never to return back.

c) There were orders from the king expelling the Imam (AS) from Patan and it cannot be expected that the Imam (AS) had taken the matter so lightly to go back to Patan only to invite a Mullah for religious arguments.

d) The Imam's (AS) visits to Patan would have been used by the worldly scholars to brand the Imam (AS) as an 'outlaw' and take stem action against him. In that event Mullah Moinuddin Patan would have exaggerated the matter to defame the Imam (AS), instead of avoiding to see him.

Thus it is evident that this event had taken place only during the stay of the Imam (AS) at Patan. The Mullah was making several excuses to avoid seeing the Imam (AS) and was also preventing others from doing so. He used to say that if he went to the Imam (AS), he would be forced to accept him as the Promised Mehdi (AS) and thus most of the scholars who were his old students would also join him. This may lead to the acceptance of the Imam (AS) by one and all - commoners, nobles and the king. Thus as per the teachings of the Imam (AS) all would have to renounce the world and this may result in destruction of the Muslim state of Gujarat. When this argument was reported to the Imam (AS) he (AS) smiled and said that "the Mullah should have taken care of his own Nafs (desires). Allah would take care of the Muslims and their State". In fact the Imam (AS) never preached of renouncing the world by one and all. Most of the kings and nobles who had accepted him as the Promised Mehdi (AS) were doing their respective jobs. But some who had strong spiritual urge and were desirous of the company of the Imam (AS) had voluntarily left their positions and joined the Imam (AS). The son of the Imam (AS) himself was permitted to join the court of Gujarat. Thus the doubts of the Mullah were baseless. Especially so was the case about the Muslim kingdom, because the Imam (AS) himself had participated in seven wars to restore the glory of the Islam and the Muslim States. However, the Mullah was feeling ashamed of his act of not seeing the Imam (AS) even when he himself had visited his house. So, to satisfy his conscience and regain confidence in the eyes of commoners, he sent an invitation to the Imam (AS) through his son for dinner. The Imam (AS) rejected the invitation saying that as the Mullah has rejected the invitation of Allah how could he accept his invitation for dinner. This was very much annoying to the Mullah but he could not do anything.

There was a dispute over the explanation of a Quranic verse by the Imam (AS). Because the Imam (AS) had made the quality of worldly desires, as explained in the Quran, common to one and all whereas the commentaries on the Quran made it particular with the non-believers only. This was something which was removing viles from the faces of the worldly Mullahs and branding them with the category of non-believers. Thus all the worldly Mullahs joined together and sent a delegation to Chapanear for expelling the Imam (AS) from Patan. Perhaps, once again they succeeded in concocting an order in the name of the king. This was handed over to Malik Mubarakul-Mulk, the Governor of Patan. He (the Governor) and the famous Bariwal nobles of Patan had already joined the Mehdavia fold. Therefore most of the family members including the wife of the Malik and Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ) pressed him for not presenting this order to the Imam (AS). But as a Governor he felt that it was his duty to do so. He was also informed that

the Imam (AS) had already decided to leave Patan. But he went to the Imam (AS) with the orders. Over this Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ) was so much annoyed that he didn't see Malik for the rest of his life. However, when the Governor appeared before the Imam (AS), even before his presenting the orders, the Imam (AS) said that it seems the king's orders were received by the Malik now. But the orders of his king (Allah) had already been received and he was preparing for his departure. The Imam (AS) added that his stay and departure were purely based on the orders of the Almighty. He also commented that he was at loss to understand, as to what the scholars would gain by such orders. In fact, if they felt that he (The Imam (AS)) was on the wrong side, it was their duty to prevent him from going away from that place and investigate into his claim. If found wrong then kill him. The expulsion orders would not be helpful in any way because he (the Imam (AS)) would go on propagating his belief wherever he goes. This was such a pertinent question that no one had any answer to it. It was evident that the Mullahs were only interested in protecting their vested interests than the true faith. The Imam (AS) proceeded to Badli. On an occasion the Imam (AS) said that he had come to Patan mainly for Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ).

23. BADLI

This was a big village at the outskirts of Patan, at a distance of about seven miles. Here the Imam (AS) decided to stay for a longer time and stopped offering *Salat-e-Khasar*. (Condensed prayer during journey) and started offering regular prayers. He continued his sermons explaining the Quranic verses. After fifteen days of stay, one day the Imam (AS) was delivering his sermons. There was a large gathering of nobles, Sufis and commoners. The Imam (AS) was sitting under a tree and suddenly the colour of his face changed. This was so glaring that everyone present there noticed it. His facial expressions were similar to that of the Prophet of Allah (PUH) at the time of receiving the divine word (*Wahi*). The Imam (AS) got up and thus addressed the congregation.

"O! people listen to me. Since post several years I am being directly instructed by Allah that I had been ordained Mehdi-e-Mawood and the seal of the *Vilayeth-e-Mohammedia SAS (Khatim-e-Vilayeth-e-Mohammadla SAS)*. Of course, I know it was not a misguidance from Shaitan. But I thought that Allah wanted to test me. Thus, I avoided to declare it till the Hajj pilgrimage. Then the orders were emphatic and thus I declared it, standing in between Rukn and Maqaam. Again at Ahmedabad, as per the command of Allah, I proclaimed as the Promised Mehdi (AS) and that who had faith in me is a believer (*Momin*). I avoided to declare the proclamation emphatically due to

the fact that till then the Muslim community was one on the basis of the Kalma 'La-ilaha Illallah', but after this proclamation there would be differences and most of the Muslims would fall in the category of non-believers. But In view of the reprimanding orders, I proclaim myself as the Promised Mehdi (AS). At this time of proclamation I am in frill consciousness. I am fed by Allah, the food which is pure I am not having any disease nor any need or desires. Under this condition, as per the command of Allah, I proclaim-that Allah had made me his Khallfa and the Promised Mehdi (AS). I am that person who had been promised, he who confides in me is a believer (Momln) and he who declined me as the Promised Mehdi (AS) is a non-believer (Kafir). I bring two witnesses for this proclamation. They are the Book (Quran) and my adherence to the Prophet (PUH)."

All those present responded by saying '*Aamanna wa Saddaqna*' (It is true and we accept). The first among them was Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ). Thus he was called Siddique-e-Vilayath (RZ). This proclamation was made in 905 AH and at that time the Imam (AS) was 58 years old. This proclamation is known as *Dava-e-Moukada* (pre-emptory proclamation). [Such instructions were also issued to the Prophet of Allah (PUH). The Quranic verse, O! Mohammed (PUH) convey this (the divine words) given to you to the people. If not (it would be considered that) you had not done your (duty) inviting people (to Allah) properly. - 5:67]

After this proclamation, the Mahdavis became a separate community and thus the opponents were not followed in the prayers. From Badli the Imam (AS) wrote letters to the kings and noted scholars proclaiming himself as the Promised Mehdi (AS) and inviting them to follow him. The text of one such letter as reported in several biographies is given here under

"In the name of Allah, the Beneficent and Merciful"

Oh! People understand the truth that I, Mohammed son of Abdullah bear The name of *Rasulallah* SAS (The Prophet PUH). Allah has ordained me at the conclusion of the Vilayeth-e-Mohammadia SAS and made me his Khalifa on the followers of the *Nabi* (The messenger of Allah PUH) I am That person whose advent had been prophesied preceding the doomsday. I am the same person about whom all the Prophets AS had predicted and merited in the Holy Books. I am the same (person) who had been bestowed with the Khilafat of Allah and as per the command of Allah and Prophet (PUH), invitng people to the Vision (to visualise Allah).

At The time of my proclamation I am not Intoxicated and I am in full consciousness and do not need to be awoken. I am fed. by Allah. the food which is pure. I am neither for the land nor for the wealth. I am not for crown or power to rule. I consider them as scum. I am for renunciation of the world. The reason for this proclamation is that Allah had made it a must on me.

Obedience to me is obligatory. As per Allah's wish I convey this message to all beings that I am Allah's Khalifa (*Khalifatullah AS*). He who obeys me. obeys Allah. He who disobeys me, disobeys Him. Have faith in me to get salvation. obey me and if not, Allah would inflict stringent punishment. Beware of the punishment of the day when the mountains would fly like pebbles. Do not part this world unguarded. Opt for good deeds and do not let them be wasted. If in your opinion I am lying and concocting lies in the name of Allah - do investigate my deeds and do so hastily. If you avoid to do so you would be proved false. For you have the competence to do so. If (according to you) you allow me to (continue) to lie, you only would be conniving in the sin. I take oath in the name of Allah - the sole witness, that I am the protector of the followers of Mohammed (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and a reformer to them. Thus live not In illusion, compare with the Quran and scrutinize my utterances, my deeds and my activities; and if they conform to the Book (Quran) then follow me. If not, execute me. This is the only path (left) for your salvation. Thus fear the Almighty and move humbly towards Him. This message Is for one who listens with devotion".

(translated from the version of Qual-al-Mahmood)

After sending these letters, the Imam (AS) stayed in Badli for four months awaiting response. A group of so called Ulema under the leadership of Mullah Moinuddin of Patan prepared a list of questions and came to Badli for discussion. The questions and their replies as given by the Imam (AS) are as under:

Q. Whether the proclamation of being the Promised Mehdi (AS) was made by the Imam (AS) as per his own view or as per the knowledge given to him by Allah ?

A. This humble servant of Allah was not making this proclamation as per his own opinion but as per the orders of Allah, which were received by him everyday directly, directing him to proclaim that he was the Promised Mehdi (AS) and the Concluder (*Khatim*) of the Vilayeth-e-Mohammedia^{SAS}.

Q. As per the Hadlth, the name of the father of the Promised Mehdi (AS) would be Abdullah. whereas your father's name is Syed Khan. How is it?

A (*Smilingly*) You better ask Allah as to why he had made the son of Syed Khan, the Promised Mehdi (AS)? (The name and the title of the father of the Promised Mehdi (AS) were very popular among the Muslims in India. Thus it is evident that the question was asked with ill intentions despite knowing fully that his father's name was Syed Abdullah and title was Syed Khan. Thus the Imam (AS) also answered them in the similar way). The Imam (AS) added that it is wrong to say that the father of the Prophet (AS) was Abdullah (here the Imam (AS) has pointed out towards the meaning of the word Abdullah i.e., an obedient servant of Allah), the father of the Prophet (AS) was a pagan and hence how can he be Abdullah? It might be a mistake of the writer (writing error) that he wrote Mohammed (PUH) Bin Abdullah. In fact it should be Mohammed Abdullah (PUH) i.e., Mohammed (PUH) an obedient servant of Allah - The Mehdi (AS) is also Abdullah.

Q. As per Ahadith all the creation of Allah would follow the Mehdi (AS) and no one would deny, but it Is not so In his case, why? (This concept is misguiding and against the Quran and traditions)

A. All right. But before answering your question I would like to ask one question. Whether the believers would accept the Mehdi (AS), or non-believers. (The delegation answered that Momins (believers) would accept him and the Imam (AS) answered that). The eternal believers (Momin-e-Azali) had accepted him and would be accepting him.

Q. Quran says: (*You desire nothing but Allah desire*)

In view of this Quranic verse, whatever is desired by man is as per the desire of Allah. Thus all the desires of men should have been accomplished. But it is not so? Why?

A. Whoever knows a little about Islamic law (*Ilm-e-Sharia*) would not put such a question. The sense of this Quranic verse is that as the utterances and deeds of the people (*Bandagan-e-Khuda*) are governed by the will of Allah (faith), similarly, the desires are also governed under this law.

Q. You give supremacy to Vilaya over Nabuwa? Why?

A. Whether I do this or the Prophet (PUH) has done this by saying that the Vilaya is superior to Nabuwat. (The delegation argued that this tradition means that the *Vilayath* (Sainthood) of a particular messenger is superior to his *Nabuwa* (messengership). The Imam (AS) replied that as to when did he say that his Vilaya was superior to the Messenger or any ordinary Vali is superior to an ordinary Messenger. First they should try to understand as to what is meant by Nabuwa and Vilaya.

Q. You say that the faith (*Iman*) increases and decreases. Where as Imam Abu Hanifa (RH) says that faith never increases or decreases, it is constant. Why this discrepancy?

A. This servant of Allah did not say anything from his own view Allah says,

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَجِلَّتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِذَا تُلِيَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُهُ زَادَتْهُمْ
إِيمَانًا (8:2)

(When the holy verses are recited to them their faith Increases). But whatever is told by Abu Hanifa (RH) is about his own faith. When the faith attains perfection It would neither increase nor decrease.

Q. In spite of your claim of following the Prophet (PUH) perfectly, why do you prohibit *Kasab* (earning for livelihood) and prevent people from reading (study) of books?

A. I, being the servant of Allah and a perfect follower of Prophet (PUH) how can I prohibit a thing, which was permitted by the Prophet (PUH)? The effort for earning is permitted and the desire to learn is obligatory. But for whom? The scholars said It was for believers. The Imam (AS) said first be a Momin then indulge in earning or try for learning or do whatever you like. Quran says there are persons to whom trade or other activities (for earning livelihood) would not prevent from remembering Allah. The point is that I, (The servant of Allah) as per the orders of Allah and in accordance with the Quran made the remembrance (*Dhikrullah*) while standing, sitting or lying an obligatory act. And anything which comes into the way of fulfillment of this obligation is prohibited. Let it be the effort for livelihood or learning. When remissness (*Ghaflat*) from remembrance of Allah is prohibited, then the reasons for such unmindfulness are also prohibited - be It the effort for earning livelihood or learning. Of course, when the *Iman* (faith) enters into the heart, which means the remembrance of Allah, then there is no harm. When Allah

tills the chest of anyone with the (real) Islam then he becomes the light of Allah (*Nur-e-Khuda*). For *Momin* (true believer) effort for earning livelihood is permitted but there are conditions for It, which are laid down in the Holy Book. It is essential to keep them in view, otherwise this permission would lapse.

Q. You say that Vision of Allah (*Deedar-e-Khuda*) with naked eyes is possible in this world. What is the proof for this?

A. I, the servant of Allah say that or Allah himself told it? See the Quran, it says

وَمَنْ كَانَ فِي هَذِهِ أَعْمَىٰ فَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ أَعْمَىٰ وَأَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا (17:72)

[One who is blind (from vision of Allah) in this world would be blind in the world to come].

Scholar: The commentators have interpreted this verse as special for non-Muslims. and that for the believers the vision would be given in the next world.

The Imam (AS): Allah had used the word 'Man kana' unconditionally and thus this servant of Allah cannot make it conditional and Sunni scholars are also having the belief that after complete self-annihilation, the vision of Allah is possible in this world. It Is necessary to see their statements deeply with an open mind.

Q. Usually you explain The Quranic verses which are reprimanding and which create fear of Allah than the verses which contain the mercy and beneficence of Allah. By doing so the people would be disappointed.

A. The Hadlth is that "the friend would tell you by creating fear and the foe would tell by making you laugh".

Q. You are not bound under any school (of the four schools of faith) how can we argue with you? In reply to most of our questions you are using Quranic verses whereas we do not have such knowledge of The Quran (wonderful objection!). We are the followers of Imam Abu Hanifa (RH) that is all.

A. Of course, I, (the servant of Allah) am not bound to any (of the four) schools. My religion (faith) is the Book of Allah and the following of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The ignorant people talk much of the religion but know not its

meaning. It means the (system in) action, but not the words. Thus the religion of *Imam-e-Azam (RH)* means his actions and his ways but not his utterances like the Sunna of Rasulallah (PUH) means the way of the Prophet (PUH) but not his words. If one verbally bounds himself to Imam-e-Azam (RH), but not follow him in his actions then what is the use of such bondage?

Q. You are branding good Muslims as *kafirs* (non-Muslims) and asking them to be *momin*, why?

A. I do not call any one kafir of my own will, but whomsoever Allah brands as kafir I also repeat the same. I had been deputed by Allah solely for conveying the Holy word to the people and call them to prayer (*Ibadat*) and gnosis (*Ma'rifa*) and also to prohibit them from Innovations (*Bida't*) and wrong deeds. Thus I convey exactly what had been revealed by Allah. Allah himself called the *Momins* (Believers) to become *Momins*.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا آمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَالْكِتَابِ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ وَالْكِتَابِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ
مِنْ قَبْلُ

(O! believers have faith in Allah and his Messenger and in the Quran and the Books revealed prior to the Quran). S 4:136

Q. We are afraid, If on your advice we accept you as the Promised Mehdi (AS), and in fact you were not so, then what would be our fate? What would be our answer to Allah (for such mistake)?

A. Do you think, I don't have any fear of Allah. That even without being the Promised Mehdi (AS), I would proclaim it in the name of Allah. Allah has reprimanded such persons as

فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا أَوْ كَذَّبَ بِآيَاتِهِ إِنَّهُ لَا يُفْلِحُ الْمَجْرِمُونَ

(One who concocted lie in the name of Allah or negated His verses is the biggest oppressor. Of course, Allah would not forget such oppressors and liars).

While it is so with me, for you there is nothing and you cannot take shelter under such false pretext because Quran says:

وَإِنْ يَكُ صَادِقًا يُصِيبْكُمْ بَعْضُ الَّذِي يَعِدُكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي مَنْ هُوَ مُسْرِفٌ كَذَّابٌ

(If one who invites in the name of Allah, even he is a liar he would be responsible (personally) for his own lies, but if he is true then whatever punishments he is pronouncing, you would have to undergo). (S40:28)

Q. Your followers have no manners. They have left their original priest and joined you without their permission?

A. This act is not against the manners. But this is perfectly in accordance with the *sharia* (Islamic law). Tell me If a woman marries a man and afterwards comes to know that he is not useful (impotent) then whether that marriage would remain or the women has right to separate herself and remarry.

Scholars: Under such circumstances there would be separation (without any formal notification since The condition for marriage could not be fulfilled).

The Imam (AS): It is a sorrowful state of affairs that so much importance is given to contacts in respect of worldly affairs. But if someone is applying the same in respect of the spiritual matters, he is termed as manner less. The people had joined a particular priest with an understanding that he would lead them to the fulfillment of their spiritual desire of communion with Allah. But when they found him to be incompetent to fulfill their aim they had separated and joined the one whom they felt was competent.

These were the questions charted out by the scholars of Gujarat after searching the books and discussions for several days. The Imam (AS) ended the debate by saying that it was sorrowful to note that the people were not doing the investigation properly and deeply. Specially it was a must for the, king to investigate his claim and accept It or execute him to eliminate the evil. This is a clear proof that the Imam (AS) was not satisfied with the sub-standard questions put by the scholars. He was expecting better and probing questions from them. However. the Ulema were cowed down before the Imam (AS) and several of them joined him after this dialogue. But those who were not bestowed with the 'light of faith' and were devoid of the Insight, went away with heavy heart.

PROPAGATION OF THE FAITH

After this pre-emptory (*Moukada*) proclamation, several delegations from far and near places came to the Imam (AS), and after clarification of doubts, accepted the Imam (AS) as the Promised Mehdi (AS). The delegations were from all shades of the Muslim community. They were coming in groups and after accepting the Imam (AS) returning to their respective places carrying the wealth of true faith with them. The new faith became so popular that it was accepted with equal enthusiasm by rich and poor, commoner and soldier, ignorant and intellectuals, labourers and artisans etc. This was not only the verbal acceptance of the Imam (AS) as the Promised Mehdi (AS), but in fact their entire personality, attitude towards the life and world at large had changed. They became very staunch in faith, strict in the adherence of Sunna and following of the Holy Book. But at the same time they became very kind hearted and merciful towards not only other human beings but also towards other creations. The innovations were shunned and all the un-islamic activities ceased immediately. The faith in the unity of Allah (*Wahdat*) was perfected and the dependence on Him (*Tawakkul*) of the Mehdavis was exemplary. They were not only strict in the adherence of Quranic orders and Sunna by themselves, but they could not tolerate even to see an un-islamic activity going on. They used to request humbly to the performers of such acts to desist from it. The real Islamic position in such matters was also explained to them. If, even after this the performer refused to give up, then they used to stop it by force. In doing so they did not care for even the rulers, Sufis or scholars. Thus a time came, whenever a non-believer in Mehdi (AS) came across a pious and Godly person he was branded as a Mahdavi even without investigating his faith. This explains the real sense of the tradition (*Hadith*) of the Prophet (PUH) 'that the Mehdi (AS) would fill the earth with peace and justice as would have been filled with injustice and tyranny'. This popularity and widespread acceptance of the Imam (AS) was intolerably painful to all the worldly scholars in Gujarat who were hit directly. Their attempts to defeat the Imam (AS) in religious arguments (*manazera*) failed and they had no means to remove the Imam (AS) from the scene. Thus, they decided to misuse the state's power against him. They once again managed to forge an order from the king, Sultan Begra for expulsion of the Imam (AS). In the meanwhile, on the command of Allah, the Imam (AS) decided to proceed further for the accomplishment of his mission. The Imam was mounting on his horse when the orders were served to him. He said that as per the command of Allah he was already proceeding further. But the fact which remains is that the king and the scholars were answerable to Allah in two aspects. Firstly they should have investigated his claim, and after considering the grounds and the arguments.

should have accepted him, if found correct. Secondly, if, as per their version, he was on the wrong path they should have arrested him and put him in the prison for a year or two to try to rectify him. If he remained adamant they should have executed him. But now they are answerable to Allah for not doing either of the two and on the day of Judgement their faces would be dark.

RAJASTHAN: From Badli the Imam (AS) was intending to proceed to Khurasan via Delhi. But at the command of Allah he decided to go to Khurasan via Rajasthan and Sind.

24. THAROD

Enroute Imam (AS) camped at Tharod where a branch of Multani race was residing. By the impressive exposition of the Quranic verses by the Imam (AS), the public in general were benefited and many of the scholars, nobles and commoners became his followers.

25. JALOR

From Tharod, the Imam (AS) preceeded to Jalor. Zabdatulmulk Uthman Khan Lohani was the ruler of this place. He was also the Commander in chief of the Begra Kings of Gujarat. He was informed in the dream by a Holy looking person that he would get the treasure of faith and that he would also establish a dynasty which may remain in his pedigree for a very very long time. Shortly after this dream he attained a success in a campaign for Sultan Begra. Some historians say it was the conquest of the Fort of Aasir in the south. The Sultan granted hum the title of Zubdatul Mulk and gave him the province of Jalor with 393 villages and the fort of Sangar and the towns of Sanchur and Bhimmal. This became an independent kingdom afterwards during the Lodhi's rule. During the Moghal rule it was a subordinate province. After sometime it was called as Palanpur state because the capital of the state was shifted to Palanpur. During the British period, also it remained intact and was ruled by the descendent of Zubdatul Mulk Uthman Khan, the founder. After the Independence in 1947, It was merged in the Indian union and now it is in Rajasthan and Gujarat states. Perhaps this was the oldest princely state that merged in the Indian Union.

When the Imam (AS) reached Jalor, his fame spread to the nook and corner of the state like a wild fire. The king Zubdatul Mulk came to see the Imam (AS) and realized that he was the godly man for whom he had waited so long. After due enquiries about the

proclamation of the Imam (AS), he became his follower and sought Allah's forgiveness for his minor and major sins and also promised not to commit any such sins. After his conversion to Mehdavia faith, he announced that it was mandatory to the subjects to accept the Imam (AS) as the Promised Mehdi (AS). He also announced that if anyone had any doubt about the claim of the Imam (AS), he may enquire into it and discuss the matter with the Imam (AS), and only after due satisfaction accept him as the Promised Mehdi (AS). This proclamation had such an impact that all of his Muslim subjects accepted the Imam (AS) as the Promised Mehdi (AS). Some of the Sufis and *Ulema* (scholars) came in a delegation and discussed the issue and after satisfaction they accepted him as the Promised Mehdi (AS). It is reported by the biographers that about 900 Sufis, scholars and Mullahs accepted the Imam (AS). The number of the commoners who accepted the Imam (AS) could not be estimated by any body. In short all the Muslim population and most of the non-Muslims joined Imam (AS) after seeing his face. The state's religion of Palanpur remained Mehdevia till its merger with the Indian union. Even today almost all the Muslim population belongs to this faith.

The Imam's (AS) stay at Jalor was for about four months. During this period many miracles are reported, but we avoid all of them and narrate one incident.

Once Miyan Shah Nizam (RZ), the fourth Caliph (RZ) of the Imam (AS) was pouring water to Imam (AS) for ablution (*Wadu*). An idea struck him that the Hadith says that during the times of the Promised Mehdi (AS) the dried and the dead trees would become green. The Shah (RZ) was still thinking about it when the Imam (AS) looked at him and buried the stick which was used as toothbrush into the ground. Immediately it became a green plant. The Imam (AS) removed it and told the Shah (RZ) that it was the trick of the sorcerers or the magicians. The tradition (*Hadith*) was correct, but the scholars had failed to catch the true sense of the Hadith. The real meaning of the said tradition were that the Mehdi (AS) would put a new life in the dead hearts of the believers. Thus after performing the miracle the Imam (AS) reduced its importance by saying that it was not the real sense of the Hadith. He also explained the real position in a manner that no one could forget. It may be noted that the speciality of the Imam (AS) was that he used the most advanced psychological methods to convey his message, similar was the practice of the Prophet of Allah (PUH).

26. NAGAUR

From Jalor the Imam (AS) proceeded to Nagaur. Some of the biographers say that he went to Nagaur via Jaisalmer. But most of the authors are of the opinion that he went to Nagaur first, and then to Jaisalmer which appears to be more correct. At that time the town was ruled by Miyan Malikji (RZ). He was a good scholar and a fanatic Muslim. When he heard about the proclamation of the Imam (AS), he became very emotional and arranged a group of scholars to debate with the Imam (AS) about his claim, On the very first sight the Imam (AS) addressed him as the prince of *Lahut* (heavens). He forgot everything and became his disciple. He was so much attached to the Imam (AS) that he relinquished his kingdom and joined the holy company. Some biographers say that he was the prince of Kashmir and had lost his kingdom to his brother and came to Gujarat for help, to regain his state. This might be true. And the Sultan might have made him the Governor of Nagaur. However, he attained such spiritual stages, in the company of the Imam (AS), that he became one of the twelve blessed companions.

At Nagaur only the Imam (AS) gave an elaborate explanation to the Quranic verses:

فَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا وَأُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ وَأُوذُوا فِي سَبِيلِي وَقَاتَلُوا وَقُتِلُوا لَأُكَفِّرَنَّ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ وَلَأُدْخِلَنَّهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ ثَوَابًا مِمَّنْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ حُسْنُ الثَّوَابِ

(Those who have left their homes, or been driven out there from or suffered harm in My cause, or fought, Or been slain. Verily, I will blot out from them their inequities; and admit them into gardens with rivers flowing beneath. A Reward from the presence of God and His presence is the best of rewards). (S 3:195)

The Imam (AS) explained that in these verses the four qualities of the true believers are mentioned; i.e.

- (1) Would be forced to leave their houses in the path of Allah (*Hijra*).
- (2) Would be expelled from their native places (*Akhriju*).
- (3) Would be persecuted (*Eiza*).
- (4) Would kill and would be killed (*Qatilu-Wa-Qutulu*).

Imam (AS) explained that in accordance with the following of the Prophet of Allah (PUH), he and his group had already faced the first three qualities. The fourth one would

not occur to him (the Imam AS), but it would definitely occur to his followers and companions (RZ). The person who would represent the Imam (AS) in this fourth quality would be the most blessed one among all who were present.

After hearing this, every companion (RZ) was curious to attain that status. At Farah, Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ) enquired about this through Miyan Nia'mat (RZ). The Imam (AS) replied that the person who is putting this question would represent him in this quality. Thus, Miyan Nia'mat (RZ) thought that he would be blessed with this honour: but Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ) was not satisfied. Thus, he enquired about it a second time through someone else. The Imam (AS) asked as to who was putting that question, and was told that Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ) was the one who was anxious to know about this. The Imam (AS) called him and told that previously also he was the one who asked this question; and the fact is that he was the one who was selected by Allah for the accomplishment of this (Fourth) quality on behalf of the Promised Mehdi (AS). Thus he would have to sacrifice his life in lieu of the Promised Mehdi (AS). He should be very careful since it was not an ordinary sacrifice. The war would be of two days; on the first day no power on the earth would be able to defeat him - but on the second day he would become a martyr, and his head would be cut off; the skin would be removed - at that time even his kith and kin would turn against him. He would be buried at three different places - that it was a forecast about his own truth (Imam's AS). Then, the Imam (AS) tied his sword on Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ). Thus it became clear on that occasion that, the fourth quality of the *Momin* (the believer) would occur to Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ), the second Caliph (RZ), in lieu of the Imam (AS).

By making this forecast as a condition of his truth at Nagaur itself, the Imam (AS) had placed a great challenge to all the non-believers. The Imam (AS) made it very clear that he would not be killed or could not be killed by any of his numerous adversaries. This also confirms a forecast in a tradition about the Mehdi (AS), that the Promised Mehdi (AS) would not be killed by a sword, burnt in fire or drowned in water. It is a fact that no human being could tell or forecast anything about his death; but the Imam (AS) was talking on behalf of Allah. Thus to provide an opportunity to all the non-believers to accept the Promised Mehdi (AS) as His Khalifa (AS), Allah had provided information beforehand. Keeping in view the quantum of opposition; uncertainty of the behaviour of independent and irresponsible rulers of different places; and his journey into, strange places without any military protection - specially, his inclination to go over to Khurasan (now in Afghanistan) which was considered to be very difficult place for any such claim

- it would have been heavy odds for such a prediction. But as per the knowledge given to him by Allah, and due to the fact that his claim was correct, the Imam (AS) could make this prediction without any hesitation.

This proved to be true 20 years after the demise of the Imam (AS); Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ) was forced into a battle against the huge military force of Sultan Mudaffer of Gujarat at Khambel. This will be discussed at the appropriate place. However, this claim of the Imam (AS) was a challenge to the worldly scholars and the kings of the time. The future events would enlighten that despite bitter opposition and several attempts to exterminate the Imam (AS) by kings, Mullahs, and the so-called religious Scholars, no harm could be done to his person.

27. JAISALMER

Some of the biographers have reported that from Nagaur, the Imam (AS) proceeded to Ajmer; offered his Fatlha at the shrine of Khaja Moinuddin Chlshti (RH), the founder of the first Sufia order in India, and then proceeded to Jaisalmer. Some other say that he directly proceeded to Jaisalmer from Nagaur.

Jaisalmer was the capital of Rajasthan in those days and was governed by a staunch Rajput king.

At this place one of the bulls belonging to the group was ailing and was about to die. The companions (RZ) reported the fact to the Imam (AS); and also informed him that this being a Hindu Kingdom, the slaughter of cow or bull is prohibited. The Imam (AS) told that they were bound by the orders of Allah that no animal which is *Halal* (permitted to eat) should be allowed to die to become *Murdar* (prohibited thing). Thus, the bull was slaughtered. The local residents reported this fact to the Raja. The Raja was very furious; and personally came to the camp of the Imam (AS) with full preparation to inflict the punishment on those who had violated the law of the land. When he saw the Imam (AS) he lost his anger and was so much affected that he could not sit on the horseback any more, and dismounted immediately. The Imam (AS) recited a Quranic verse, and explained it in such a way that the Raja was spellbound. After this, the Raja addressed the companions. "The creator of the cow had killed it - to whom shall we complain now". He was also of the opinion that the leader was a great 'Avtar' and they should respect him. Many miracles are reported here. Avoiding all, we report that the Raja, his queen, the Vazlr and several others accepted Islam at the hands of the Imam (AS). The Raja in

the name of Allah, presented great wealth and also sent his cousin to serve the Imam (AS) as a servant maid. The Imam (AS) married her and she was called the *Umm-ul-Musaddaqin* Bibi Bhanamati (RZ). Miyan Syed Ali (RZ), who was later buried alive at Ahmedabad fort during the times of Shah Mudaffer, was her son.

The Imam (AS) as per the will of Allah was preparing for his journey to Sindh, the king knowing about this came to him and pleaded for his stay. But the Imam (AS) said that as per Allah's will he has to proceed. Then, the newly converted king said that on the border there was much unrest, and the thieves and dacoits were very active. He offered to provide a band of soldiers to accompany the Imam (AS). But the Imam (AS) declined this offer saying that only Allah was his protector, and proceeded to Sindh.

28. KAHA

From Jaisalmer the Imam (AS) crossed Rajasthan and entered the Sindh province. The route was very tough. The Imam (AS) and his companions (RZ) waded the way with great difficulties. It was only with the providence and unseen help that they could cross the vast desert where food and water were scarce for miles. The route adopted by the Imam (AS) was a discarded one. But before the Imam's (AS) journey, there were heavy rains and hence sufficient water was available for the holy group. Before taking up this route, the experienced companions (RZ) informed about the hardship which will be faced on the way to the Imam (AS) and advised him to adopt the new route which was safer. The Imam (AS) told them that he had been deputed by Allah to restore the old path which had been abandoned by easy going men who had carved many new ways. This was a symbolic expression that the Imam (AS) was to restore the original Islamic path, which had become difficult and the easy going Muslims had left it and invented new ways in the form of many innovations (*Bida't*). Of course, the Journey was very tough - they had to cross deserts, forests, high mountains and rivers. They had no resting place, whenever and wherever the night fell they lay down to rest, and in the morning they again started on their Journey. They had to consume the leaves of the trees and drink impure water. But in spite of all these difficulties they continued their journey, and no one left the company of the Imam (AS). Many miracles have been reported during this journey. Ultimately, they reached Kaha. Some of the biographers are of the opinion that they first went to Thatta, the capital of Sindh and then to Kaha. But many more are of the view that they first went to Kaha and then to Thatta.

Originally, this place was known as Kaha, but the Muslim rulers had renamed it as Nasarpur. In those days it was ruled by Ashraf Khan Panipati. When the group reached there, the companions (RZ) left their cattle in the open for grazing. The cultivators of the place went to Ashraf Khan with a complaint that the fakirs were grazing their cattle in the fields, causing damage to the standing crops. The Khan was very angry and argued with the Imam (AS) that, being a Mehdi (AS), It was expected of him that he would help the poor instead of causing damage to them.

The Imam (AS) asked him to investigate and verify the fields personally before making any such allegations. When he went to the fields, to his surprise, no damaged was caused, and he saw that all the cattle's were standing in the fields as though their mouths were tied with some unforeseen power. This was an enough proof for the open minded ruler to know that the Imam (AS) was right in his claim. He immediately came to the Imam (AS) and apologized for his misunderstanding and also became his follower. After this many of the nobles and scholars of the town joined the fold. Some of them also joined the Daira by renouncing all the worldly attachments.

At Kaha, the companions (RZ) of the Imam (AS) had to undergo the hardship of hunger. It is reported that 84 of the companions (RZ) passed away due to starvation, but no one made any complaint or thought of leaving the company of the Imam (AS). But three persons i.e., two men and one women viz Miyan Budhe, Qazi Khan and Shakker Khatoon left the company of the Imam (AS) without permission. The Imam (AS) called them as hypocrites. However, afterwards they repented a lot for this and joined the Daira of Miyan Shah-e-Ni'amat (RZ). During this journey, in all there were 2200 men and women following the Imam (AS), of these 900 were with families and the rest bachelors. Some others say that there were 900 persons of which 360 with families. Whatever might be the figure, but the fact is that, there were no deserters-except the above three reported during the hardest times. This shows that the following of the Imam (AS) was not for worldly gains, but to undergo hardships for the ultimate gains.

At Kaha also, the Imam (AS) permitted some of the companions (RZ) to go to Gujarat, who had left their families there. Important among them were Miyan Shah-e-Ni'amat (RZ), Miyan Moulana Abdul Majeed (RZ), Miyan Yousuf (RZ) and Miyan Sheikh Mohd Kabeer (RZ). He also permitted Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ) to go over to Gujarat and come back. Miyan (RZ) was not inclined to go, since he was afraid of his relatives, like Mudafar-ul-Mulk the governor of Patan, who may force him to stay there only. Further

he was a bachelor then. Apparently, there was no need for him to go there. But the Imam (AS) insisted for his departure.

One day, two of the elderly ladies requested the Imam (AS) to give them a reliable male company to go over to Gujarat and come back with their children who were anxious to join the Imam (AS). The Imam (AS) pointed to Miyan Nizam Ghalib (RZ). But he was not willing to leave the company of the Imam (AS). He had to agree on the insistence of the Imam (AS). This journey was a boon for Miyan Ghalib (RZ) because at Patan, the *Qazi* and the *Khateeb* (two officials of the religious hierarchy) were impressed with the Mehdavia faith, after having a discussion with Miyan Ghalib (RZ), they renounced their positions and came to Kaha with him and became staunch followers of the Imam (AS).

At Kaha only, on 27th night of Ramadan, the Imam (AS) came out of his room and informed that Allah had revealed to him that this was the *Lailatul Qadr*, the most blessed night - the night on which the Quran was first revealed. As per Islamic traditions, it was treated equivalent to thousand nights and was very important but according to traditions, it was not made known. The Muslims were advised to search it in the odd nights of the last ten nights of *Ramadan*. Thus, even today Muslims, in general, pray extensively during the 21st, 23rd, 25th, 27th and 29th night of *Ramadan*.

Out of benevolence Allah had made it known to the Promised Mehdi (AS); and even to this day they offer special prayers on the 27th night of Ramadan. The Imam (AS) asked his companions (RZ) to offer thanksgiving prayers of 2 Rakats as an obligatory Salat (*Fard*) *Dugana-e-Lailatul Qadr*.

Thus he performed a group prayer along with his companions (RZ) men, women and children. After this salat, he loudly prayed for the guidance of Allah for righteous path. Even today all the Mehdavis perform the *Salat* of *Lailatul Qadr* as an obligatory *Salat* (*Fard Namaz*) on 27th night of Ramadan and after the Salat the following prayers are recited loudly, most of which is derived from the Holy Quran.

0! Our protector (Rub), keep us submissive while alive and also submissive at death and on the day of judgement keep us in the category of submissives with Thy grace - 0! Merciful, 0! Greatest Merciful.

O! Our saviour (Rub), show us the world as scanty and show us Thy greatness in a big form and bestow us with the strength for Thy obedience and keep us firm on Thy path; Thy love; Thy worship; and Thy desire. O! Greatest merciful of all the mercifuls.

O! Our Allah, show us the truth as truth (Haq) and give us strength to follow it and show us the false (Batil) as false and give us strength to avoid it. O! Greatest merciful of all the mercifuls.

O! Allah, forgive us for our mistakes, O! Allah don't put more burden on us like on our predecessors.

O! God do not thrust a burden on us which we cannot bear and forgive us, and oversee (our mistakes) and be merciful on us. You are our Master and Lord. Thy alone help us for our prevalence over the non believers.

O! God undoubtedly we heard thy call for obedience and belief on thou, so therefore we obeyed and had belief on thou.

O! Allah forgive our sins and reduce our evils and give us a death with good deeds.

O! God bestow us with Thy mercy promised to Thy Apostles; and; don't disgrace us on the day of judgment. Of course Thou won't go back on Thy promise.

O! Allah give us goodness in this world and give us goodness hereafter and save us from the fire of the Hell.

O! Allah don't change our hearts after you have showed us the right path and bestow us Thy mercy and bless. Of course Thou is the best bestower and Thou is the best bestower and Thou is the best bestower.

Since then it became a special and significant feature of the Mehdavis to perform obligatory (*Fard*) Salat on the 27th night of Ramadan.

Afterwards, in many Muslim countries the *Shab-e-Qadr* prayers are performed on 27th night of Ramadan. Thus the Muslims in general have also fallen in line with the Mehdavia faith about this important night.

At Kaha, the Imam (AS) married Bibi Bwan (RZ) who belonged to the pedigree of Hazrath Khaja Moinuddln Chishti (RH).

From Kaha Miyan Syed Salamullah (RZ) wrote a letter to Miran Syed Mahmood (RZ), the eldest son of the Imam (AS). The contents were that he should come back as the Imam (AS) was revealing the great secrets of the Quran and also guiding his followers to the spiritual heights. But the Imam (AS) after seeing the letter asked Miyan Salamullah (RZ) not to send it, but to write to him to be comfortable - since wherever Miran Mahmood (RZ) might stay he was always with the Imam (AS).

29. THATTA

From Kaha the Imam (AS) proceeded to Thatta, the capital of Sindh. At that time, Jam Nizamuddin (Jam Nanda) was the ruler. He was the eleventh king of the Suma dynasty, which originally belonged to the Iranian race. This was considered to be a prosperous and progressive dynasty. But Jam Nanda was a proud man. When he came to know about the Imam (AS) and his claim, he could not keep quiet. He tried to kill the Imam (AS). But failed in his attempts; and ultimately his son who succeeded him lost the crown to Dariya Khan who was the Commander in Chief. Thus, owing to the unrealistic opposition with the Imam (AS), the kingdom was lost. The stay of the Imam (AS) at Thatta is also marked with many important events, and also full of oppositions and favours. Several nobles, scholars and Sufis accepted him as the Promised Mehdi (AS). We will narrate about a few of the personalities. Before this, it is desirable to give a brief account of the discussions the Imam (AS) had with the Scholars of Sindh.

Jam Nanda deputed a delegation of Scholars to argue with the Imam (AS) about his claim. They were selected from the masters of logic, Islamic law and Tariqa. The delegation came to the Daira and had detailed discussion about the claim of the Promised Mehdi (AS). But they could not make any headway. Thus, ultimately they blamed the Imam (AS) of making the claim about the vision of Allah in this world itself, whereas according to them it was not possible. The Imam (AS) gave many convincing reasons for his stand to satisfy them logically, and ultimately quoted the Quranic verse:

وَمَنْ كَانَ فِي هَذِهِ أَعْمَىٰ فَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ أَعْمَىٰ وَأَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا

One who is blind in this world would also be blind hereafter S 17:72.

This proved to be the last straw to them. They could not challenge this Quranic verse. However, they asked as to whether it was only a verbal claim or the Imam (AS) could produce any witness to this effect (They were sure that no witness could be produced

because they were confident that the companions would not give a false witness under any circumstances).

The Imam (AS) asked Miyan Shah-e-Nizam (RZ) and Miyan Shah-e-Dilawar (RZ), his fourth and fifth Khalifas (RZ), as to whether they bear witness to this. They said that with the grace of Allah and the blessings of the Imam (AS) they could bear witness to it. Thus the Imam (AS) told the scholars that since he had produced the logical reply, Quranic evidence and two witnesses, as required by the Islamic law, now it was for them to accept or reject his claim. The delegation was now dumb founded. They left the congregation and after discussions among themselves reported to the king that the claim of Syed Mohammed (AS) was not true and that he was spreading un-Islamic ways against the Sunna. For such occasions only it is said that

(No one can give guidance but Allah)

Dariya Khan: Then the king called his Commander in Chief Dariya Khan and asked him to expel the Imam (AS) and his group out of his territory; and in the event of refusal, exterminate them. The commander came with a huge force. Near the Daira he told his soldiers to stay and went into the Daira with a few men to ask the Imam (AS) to leave the place. But when he saw the Imam (AS) he lost control of himself and came down off the horseback and begged apology. He also became the follower of the Imam (AS). After this he went back with his military. This was something unexpected of him. The king was forced to think of some other methods. His slave Dilshad who was an enemy of Dariya Khan advised the king to avail the services of the *Qazi* (Chief Judge). The king deputed the *Qazi* to see that the Imam (AS) and his group are expelled from Sindh.

Qazi: The *Qazi* came to the Imam (AS) and pronounced the expulsion orders. The Imam (AS) said that he was not bound by such orders of the king, and that he was bound only to the orders of Allah and whenever such orders were received he would leave the place. He added that he was not for the wealth or the land. The *Qazi* said that when the king of the land had ordered for expulsion it was binding on one and all to obey. Further it was in accordance with the Islamic law to obey the ruler. The Imam (AS) said, of course, it was and enquired from *Qazi*, whether the king was scrupulously following the tenets of Islam. Further, can the king be termed as *Wulul-e-Amar* (the leader of the Muslims). The *Qazi* replied that it was not so; nevertheless, he was the owner of Sindh and as a owner of the land he was competent to pass such an order. The Imam (AS) asked the *Qazi* to show him a piece of land which was not possessed by any king - the territory of Gujarat

was owned by the king of Gujarat, Sindh by the king of Sindh and so on and so forth. The Imam (AS) asked as to whether there was any piece of land belonging to Allah where His people can live and remember Him? The Qazi was annoyed, and asked the Imam (AS) as to whether he was willing to snatch away the ownership rights? The Imam (AS) replied that it was not his intention nor he was after the land or wealth. He asked the reasons for such an allegation, and insisted on Qazi to cite any event where he (the Imam AS) had snatched the land or kingship of anyone. This was something which the Qazi could not answer. He knew perfectly well that there were ample opportunities for the Imam (AS) to become a king or acquire large wealth and land to have all the worldly comforts. But he had left everything and had marched thousands of miles just to convey the message of Allah. Thus the Qazi left without accomplishing the orders of the king.

Sheikh Sadruddin: Then the king called his priest Sheikh Sadruddin who was the master of Islamic teachings and a renowned saint. The king requested him to argue with the Imam (AS) and see that he leaves the place. The Sheikh was also willing to ascertain the truth. Thus he went to his house and after consulting the books, he made out certain points for discussion with the Promised Mehdi (AS). When he reached the Daira he saw that the Imam (AS) was in the costume of a warrior and thought that a man in the attire of a soldier cannot be the Promised Mehdi (AS), because according to his ideas and the image created by himself, the Promised Mehdi (AS) would be in the dress of a Fakir or a scholar but not a soldier. Thus, he thought that it was a waste of time to indulge in any arguments with him. He therefore returned. But enroute he was listening a mysterious sound from the trees and stones of *Hada Mehdi AS* (he is the Promised Mehdi AS). After walking for a while he was forced to reconsider, and decided to see the Imam (AS) and discuss with him. When he came to the Daira again, the Imam (AS), after offering the Salat of Asar was delivering his usual sermon. The Sheikh sat down and listened to the lecture with full concentration. In his mind he concluded that he had never heard such intricacy, and many of his age-old doubts were solved. He also noticed that during the sermon only, most of his questions were answered. But he was not prepared to accept the Imam (AS) as the Promised Mehdi (AS). After the Maghrib Salat, he had a discussion with the Imam (AS). Even then the Sheikh was reluctant. The Imam (AS) then asked, "as to what was preventing you from accepting my person as the Promised Mehdi (AS). I have not introduced any new religion. I am propagating what had been told in the Quran and following the path of the Prophet (PUH). I follow all the five tenets of faith, perform Salat five times a day, observe fast during Ramadan and restrict myself to only four wives as per the Islamic law. One had to appreciate the great followers of the Prophet of Allah

(PUH) who accepted him inspite of the fact that he brought a new religion canceling the old books; who had also changed the old Qibla (the object of reverence for the Muslims), from *Battul Muqaddas* (Jerusalem) to *Kaaba* (Makkah); who has restricted his adherents to four women only and allowed himself more than four - despite all these difficulties and doubts they (the followers of the Prophet PUH) had accepted him (the Prophet of Allah PUH) as the Promised Messenger of Allah (PUH). But in my own case there were no such hindrances."

After this the Sheikh said that he was convinced about the greatness and the sainthood of the Imam (AS). But had one doubt. If he accepts the Imam (AS) as the Promised Mehdi (AS) and if it were not to be true what would be his fate? The Imam (AS) told him that he (the Sheikh) was having so much fear of God that he was hesitant to accept him (the Imam AS) as the Promised Mehdi (AS) for such a simple reason. But whether the Sheikh was of the opinion that he (the Imam AS) was not having even that much fear of God to tell lies in His name? Then the Imam (AS) recited the Quranic verse:

فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا أَوْ كَذَّبَ بِآيَاتِهِ إِنَّهُ لَا يُفْلِحُ الْمَجْرُمُونَ

(Who can lie more cruel than one who creates lies in the name of Allah S 10: 17).

Now logically the Sheikh was fully convinced but still he was hesitant in his heart of hearts. Therefore he asked for a time of six months to live in the company of the Imam (AS) and after getting fully satisfied he would accept the Imam (AS). The Imam (AS) permitted him and also taught him the *Dhikr-e-Khafi* (remembrance of Allah within) and advised him to eliminate for the time being the claim of the Imam (AS) about Mehdaviat from his mind and practice and pray as he was advised. The Sheikh with an open mind took this advice and with an intention to undergo a continued fast for three days (*soum-e-visal*), retreated to the room allotted to him. Within three days the truth was revealed to him and he came out of the room and in front of the companions announced that now he was fully convinced and accepted the Imam (AS) as the Promised Mehdi (AS) and renounced the worldly desires and joined the group of Muhajireens. He never parted the company of the Imam (AS) in his lifetime.

The details of the acceptance of Miyan Sheikh Sadruddin (RZ) are narrated as an example for the readers to know about the methods adopted by great saints and scholars to accept the Imam (AS) as the Promised Mehdi (AS). They had taken all possible precautions and had satisfied fully before accepting him as the Promised Mehdi (AS). There were several

scholars who had done the same in their own way. To narrate about all of them requires a separate book.

When the news of the conversion of Miyan Sheikh Sadruddin (RZ) reached the town it had a mixed effect. Most of the scholars were of the view that since a saint and scholar like Miyan Sadruddin (RZ) had accepted Syed Mohammed Jaunpuri (AS) as the Promised Mehdi (AS), there cannot be any doubt about the truth of the claim. But the king and others who were opposed to the Imam (AS) were furious about it.

Qazi Khadan: He was a great scholar of the Islamic teachings. He had memorised the Quran and was a master in recitation of Quran In different *Quirats* (methods of reciting the Quran). He was also a master in Islamic jurisprudence (Sharia) and the mystic path (*Tareeqa*). He was the Chief Judge of the state of Sindh (*Qazi-ul-Qazat*). He belonged to Bhekar, a place in Sindh. He was also a renowned poet and Is considered to be the first Sindhi poet who introduced the advanced topics of *Tasawwuf* (Gnosis) in the Sindhi poetry. In fact he was the scholar who has elevated the Sindhi language from the position of a dialect, to the position of a literary language. Up till then it was having only folk songs. Qazi Khadan has given it a script also. Prior to him occasionally it was written in Marwari script. But Qazi Khadan has used Persian script and introduced, new alphabets to facilitate the phonetic expression of words having Indian origin. Therefore he is considered to be the father of Sindhi script. Research about his work and contribution is still on to determine the exact position of Qazi Khadan In Sindhi literature. It Is rightly said that had Qazl Khadan not born, it would have taken 100 years more for Sindhi to produce a poet like Shah Abdul Lateef Bhetai. Qazl Khadan had toured vastly and had been to almost all the Islamic countries including Makkah. He is the maternal grandfather of Miyan Meer Bala Peer (RH) of Lahore, whose shrine is regarded as popular as that of Khaja Gareeb Nawaz (RH) in Ajmer. Miyan Meer (RZ) was also the saint who had laid down the foundation of the Golden Temple, which is the highest spiritual place for Sikhs.

Qazi Khadan came to the Imam (AS) in the garb of a Marwari having tilak and *Janeau* (thread wore by Brahmins). This was to test the Imam (AS). The Imam (AS) looking at him, said "AsSalamo-alikum, come here Qazi Khadan. What type of attire you are wearing?" The Qazi said that he had seen people coming to the Imam (AS) in Islamic dress and going back as non believers, but he had come in the dress of a non believer and joined him as a staunch believer. There is a narration that the Imam (AS) asked the Qazi the place of which he was the jurist. The Qazi replied that he was the jurist of the Sindh. The Imam (AS) asked who owned this country (Sindh). The Qazi replied

that it belonged to Jam Nanda -the king. The Imam (AS) asked as to whom this king belonged. The Qazi said that the king was a creation of God and hence belonged to Him. The Imam (AS) asked as to whom Allah belongs. The Qazi was not able to answer this. He admitted that his knowledge exhausted at this point. The Imam (AS) informed the Qazi that Allah belonged to one who attains Him. Thus the Imam (AS) explained that instead of trying to obtain the worldly things it was always desirable to attain God, the Creator and owner of everything in the Universe.

Qazi Khadan (RZ) had played an important role in the downfall of Nanda dynasty and establishing the Mehdavia rule there.

Thus many of the important personalities of Sindh joined the Imam (AS). This was resulting in widespread acceptance by the commoners. The king was worried over the situation and ultimately decided to attack the Dalra himself. He ordered for preparations and the military was given full equipment and was ready to march under the command of the king. The Imam (AS), when heard about the impending attack, ordered for preparations. His followers also mended the available weapons. The Imam (AS) ordered for erecting a fence with thorny bushes around the Daira. This was in accordance with the following of the Prophet (PUH) at the time of attack on Taiba (Madina) by a huge military of pagans of Makkah. The Prophet (PUH) had dug a trench around the town for protection. Seeing these preparations one of the companions Miyan Malik Gowher (RZ), who was not satisfied, approached the Imam (AS) with a proposal to arrange a strong military of 12000 fighting force and required equipment, horses etc. The Imam (AS) enquired about the funds for such a huge military. The Malik replied that he was in the possession of alchemy (*Ki'mia*) powder which can turn the base metal into gold and it would be sufficient for such a huge military. The Imam (AS) asked as to what would be done if it were exhausted. Miyan Malik replied that he knew the method of preparing the powder, and thus they can put forth a bitter resistance for a long period. He also produced the box containing the 'magic powder'. The Imam (AS) was annoyed and told the Malik that he was hiding an idol with him while in Daira. They were dependents on Allah and any such reservation or dependence would mean adulteration in the unity of Allah (Wahdat). The Imam (AS) ordered for the expulsion of Miyan Malik from the Daira. He was lying outside the boundary for three days weeping and repenting for his sin. After three days Miyan Nia'mat (RZ) recommended his case to the Imam (AS) saying that he had shed all the worldly desires and wanted to live in the company of the Imam (AS) as a true believer. The Imam (AS) permitted him to return to Daira. Out of joy he went to

the well and threw all the powder into it, had a bath and offered thanks giving prayers and henceforth lived as a staunch believer. Miyan Salamullah (RZ) had taken a little powder and tested it on a metal pot which turned into pure gold. When reported to the Imam (AS), he permitted for the distribution of that much gold among his followers and reprimanded Miyan Salamullah (RZ) from recurrence of such experiments.

This incident is a living proof of the highest dependence of the Imam (AS) on Allah. On the one hand a cruel king was determined to attack and destroy him and his followers and on the other hand he was offered with sufficient funds to organise a very strong army to face the challenge. The Imam (AS) choose to depend upon Allah instead of availing the unethical source of funds for acquiring the military. He also availed this crucial occasion for teaching his followers to depend upon the Almighty, even at the most critical times. An ordinary human being would have availed the services of Miyan Malik Gowher (RZ) for acquiring enough gold to establish a very strong army to face the evil intentions of the king. This could have been interpreted as a timely help from Allah to save His believers, but the Imam (AS) was not an ordinary man. He was the apostle of Allah (AS) and had exhibited the perfect dependence on Him. Apart from this refusal the Imam (AS) did not make any efforts to contact the Commander in Chief Dariya Khan for any help. Had he made the slightest indication, the commander would have joined his camp with half of the total military of Sindh. But, the Imam (AS) not only restrained from approaching him, but made his own arrangements to face the mighty army with his small group of half starved and ill equipped followers. This is also an indication of his courage and belief, in his truthfulness and sincerity to the cause.

The king marched with the army and surrounded the Daira. But before actual attack he was once again explained the consequences. He was told by Dariya Khan and others that even if the king was successful in exterminating the holy group the chances of which are not very bright he would be treated as a cruel king, who harassed and killed the greatest of the saints and the biggest reformer to the Muslims. He would be answerable not only to Allah, but would he looked down by the Muslim world. In case he gets defeated by the small group of the Fakirs, then, not only would he lose his kingdom but also would be responsible for letting down the fame of Jam dynasty which was considered to be a great family. This advice was well taken by the king and he returned to the palace without any battle. He would have assessed that more than half of his soliders were the followers of the Imam (AS) and the rest would also not be very happy over the action against the

Godly people. Thus he might have decided to withdraw. But he did not give up his plans against the holy group.

After this unsuccessful military action the king ordered for a total boycott of the Imam (AS) and his followers (RZ). He ordered all the traders not to sell anything to them. These orders were similar to the orders of the pagans of Makkah against the Prophet of Allah (PUH) and his followers (RZ). The people were prohibited from having any contacts with them. For sometime, the holy group was facing difficulties. Ultimately, the Imam (AS) instructed his followers to get the provisions from any shop forcefully and pay the cost and, in case the shop owners refused to take the cost, then send it to the *Qazi* (judge) with a list and the name of the shop. Thus the followers were able to get the provisions required for their maintenance.

After the stay of one year at Thatta, the Imam (AS), as per the command of Allah, decided to proceed to Khurasan. This news spread like a wild fire. The king was happy that his problems were going to be solved. He, in consultation with his slave, decided to drown the holy group in the river Atak. Thus, he ordered that no sailor should lend their boats to them. He also sent a word to the Imam (AS) that the royal ships would take them to the other side of the river. This offer was accepted. The plan was that in the middle of the river the sailors would desert the ships after making holes in them, so that the unguarded ships may drown with the holy group. The Commander in Chief Dariya Khan wanted to follow them till they reach safely to Kandahar. But the Imam (AS) said that Allah was his guide and there was no need for any protection.

The river Atak is a very wide river and can be considered as a part of the Ocean. Due to the fast flow this plan would have been very successful. The sailors deserted the ships as per the plan. When this was reported to the Imam (AS) by his worried companions, the Imam (AS) himself came out of his cabin and directed the proper sail and supervised the searching and sealing operation of the holes. Thus under the guidance of the Imam (AS), the unskilled companions could take the damaged ships safely to the other shore.

The events at Thatta had many far reaching implications. Till then the Imam (AS) had never decided to fight back. Mostly the orders were issued for expulsion, only after the Imam (AS) had decided to leave the particular place or had already started his further journey. Thus there was no conflict. But at Thatta the Imam (AS) received the expulsion orders earlier to the command of Allah Therefore, he refused to obey the king's orders and Was ready to face the consequences. The Imam (AS) had paid the highest regards to

Allah's orders than anything else. There were great possibilities of an attack and a battle; obviously, the fakirs were no match to the mighty power of the ruler of Sindh. But this position could not force the Imam (AS) to take a decision to quit.

This event is also a clear proof of the extraordinary courage of the Imam (AS). There was the highest danger to his person, mission and the group. But he refused to obey the king. This becomes more important in the light of the declaration of the Imam (AS) at Jaisalmer that he would not be killed in a battlefield. This should have made him more cautious and careful about his behaviour with the kings. But the confidence of the Imam (AS) was such that he shed the advices of being tactful and stood firmly on his decision. This one incident should have been enough proof for one and all.

JOURNEY TO KHURASAN

When the Imam (AS) landed on the other bank of the river Atak, there stood in front of him mountains, vast desert and forest. The journey from this place to Kandahar proved to be the toughest journey of the life of the Imam (AS). It is a fact that the Imam (AS) had toured extensively and no other preacher or Apostle of Allah (AS) can beat him in this aspect. Even great warriors might have not made such a long march. There is no comparison to the journey of the Imam (AS) to that of the historians or the kings. The historians were received warmly by the rulers and were provided with all the facilities during their stay and for further journey. But the Imam was making his journey in a different atmosphere. His companions (RZ) were more than 2200 in number. They included persons of all races; belonging to different strata's of the society, some very rich and some very poor: some were scholars and some were ignorant. There were women and children, young and old, sick and healthy persons. The only thing common among them was their zeal to attain nearness to Allah. There was no certainty of food, shelter or protection during the journey. There was no certainty of the reception awaiting them at the next halt. There was no information as to when and where this march would end. In the past, at several occasions the kings, the nobles, the scholars and the public have accepted the Imam (AS) as the Promised Mehdi (AS) and offered to extend all possible help and assistance for the propagation of the faith. But at such places the Imam (AS) had not stayed for long. His longest stay of one and half years was at Chapanear, Bidar, Ahmedabad and Patan. At these places he had met with bitter opposition, but at the places where he was accepted and received whole heartedly, he did not stay long. There was no certainty of the duration of stay at a particular place. At times they had to leave the place at short notice. There was no consideration of the weather or climate for the

journey. They walked and walked in unknown directions day and night. Whenever the camp was lifted, all the belongings were left there only. There were occasions where the companions, engaged in cooking food (may be after several days), left their stoves burning and joined the caravan when the journey was started at short notice. On one such occasion Miyan Nizam (RZ) had left his infant daughter lying in a *jhooli* (cloth swing-temporarily hanged to a tree). Since journey of the Imam (AS) was bound of the command of Allah, there was no time to have any arrangements beforehand.

The journey to Khurasan was the climax of the entire tour of the Imam (AS). The Imam (AS), as usual adopted an abandoned route. The terrain was tough and there was no shelter or water for miles together. At times they had to pass through thick forest or hilly track. Added to all this there was no food or provisions. The human habitats were absent. There were no villages or towns enroute to arrange for the supplies. Thus the holy group was facing enormous difficulties. During the journey at a camp when the Imam (AS) was inspecting the group, at one place Miyan Yousuf Soheth (RZ) an eminent companion - was found sitting in rags, plucking out a thorn from his foot. In place of a turban he was having a rope around his holy head. He had a rag of cloth which could hardly cover his vital abdominal part. His feet were swollen with sours, body weak and the stomach swelling due to malnutrition (as they were on forest vegetation for days).

On seeing the Imam (AS), Miyan Yousuf (RZ) was very happy and enquired from the Imam (AS) about the toughest times for the group of the Imam (AS), as foretold in the holy Hadith of the Prophet (PUH). The Imam (AS) was immensely moved, and informed Miyan Yousuf (RZ) that they were passing through that period as foretold in the Hadith of the Prophet (PUH). But owing to his greatness he was not feeling it.

While passing through a hilly track, the Imam (AS) climbed a hillock to inspect the caravan. What he saw was miserable. Thousands of Godly men were walking barefooted, ill dressed and hungry. There were children, women and old people. They had no means to carry their belongings except their own heads. The caravan included among others several kings, nobles, scholars, priests and rich men. They could have had a very comfortable life at their homeland. But for their conviction to the path of Allah, there was no other charm or charisma which forced them to undergo such unprecedented hardships. Despite all these difficulties, none of them looked unhappy or found grudging their fate, or crying for food or water. This sight moved the Imam (AS) immensely, tears rolled on his Holy cheeks and he prayed to Allah thus:

"Oh! God, Omniscient and Omnipresent thou know that I did not hold any dearest thing of these people nor I can give them any riches than thy love. Know then why they are undergoing such hardships. Excepting Thy love and desire to visualise thou, they had no other desire. Bless them with thy mercy".

Then the Imam (AS) was informed by Allah that all the companions (RZ) in that journey, irrespective of age or sex, were blessed; this happy news was announced by the Imam (AS) to one and all.

This had a tremendous effect on the companions (RZ) - further boosting up their morale and courage. In Baluchistan there is a hillock known as *Koh-e-Murad*. The Zikri Mehdavis of Baluchistan believe that it is the same hill on which the Imam (AS) climbed and prayed for his followers. This hillock is considered to be the holiest place for them. The situation of the Imam (AS) and his group was synonymous with that of the Prophet (PUH) and his followers at Badr. The Prophet (PUH) had also prayed to Allah for the protection of the small group of the believers for the glory of His name. The Prophet (PUH) had also informed the followers of the blessings of Allah, for those who stood firm in their conviction to Islam.

Many miracles have been reported during this ordained journey. But as stated earlier we avoid all such events because they are not required for establishing the greatness of the Imam (AS). Thus purely with the help of Allah, the Imam (AS) and his companions (RZ) could pass this dangerous terrain. The Holy group reached Kandahar. This was the first populated place after Thatta, as reported by the biographers. This journey covered about 960 kms.

30. KANDAHAR

The present Afghanistan was part of the Persian empire and after Nadir Shah Durrani it became a separate identity. When the Imam (AS) reached Kandahar, it was under the rule of Mirza Shah Hussain. The Governor of this place was Shah Baig Arghawan. He was a young general. It is reported by Farishta and other Historians that he was a scholar and a learned noble, but as a Governor he was very tough and it was also reported that he indulged in many evils such as drinking etc.

When the Imam (AS) reached Kandahar, one of his companions indirectly hinted to be tactful and polite in the pronouncement of his claim and condemnation of the evils. This

he thought, was necessary in view of the fact that the place was unknown, the language was strange and the people were tough. But the Imam (AS) simply told him that he was not bound by anybody's advice except Allah. When the news of the claim of the Imam (AS) spread, there was a turmoil in the town. The scholars were of the view that such a claim would not suit a leader of the Fakirs. Thus they approached the Governor with a request to curb it. The young Governor felt it improper to go over personally to enquire into the claim of the Imam (AS). Instead, he asked the scholars to arrange a discourse after the Friday prayers at Juma Masjid. As usual the Imam (AS) was preparing to go to the Juma Masjid for the Friday prayers and to address the congregation of the Muslims assembled for the prayers. But the scholars with the help of the military authorities deputed a band of soldiers to bring the Imam (AS) to the mosque in whatever condition they found him. When the band of soldiers reached the Daira the Imam (AS) and his followers were preparing for the prayers. The band leader demanded immediate departure and was very harsh. They even pulled the Imam (AS) by his belt. Someone pointed out that the Imam (AS) was barefooted and ran to get his shoes. The Imam (AS) said that he can go barefooted any number of miles in the path of Allah. Somehow the shoes were given to him and the companions (RZ) were also following. The soldiers prevented them saying that the orders were to bring the Imam (AS) but not his entire group. But the companions (RZ) refused to part. They were even hit with the sticks and were ready to engage in a battle. But the Imam (AS) prevented them saying that it would be against the will of Allah. Thus they desisted from any battle. However, they followed the Imam (AS). When they reached the mosque the Imam (AS) went to the first row and sat down silently. This also annoyed the scholars. They felt that a poor Fakir was not competent to occupy a place in the first row which was reserved for nobles and scholars. This is an indication of the deterioration in the morals in those days. The Governor came fully intoxicated and was also carrying a few bottles of wine to be used after the prayers. Someone indicated the condition to the Imam (AS) and advised him to be polite in his behaviour. But as usual the Imam (AS) ignored the advice saying that even the intoxication of worldly wealth and power could vanish in his presence, then where were the chances for the intoxication of dirty water. After the formalities of *Qutba* (Sermon) the Governor sat in front of the Imam (AS) for inquiry. Immediately all the scholars started talking, scolding and even abusing the Imam (AS). To make Imam's (AS) speech inaudible and ineffective, they created lot of noise. The Governor noticed this ploy of the scholars and realised that the main object was to prevent the Syed (AS) from explaining his stand. Thus he scolded the scholars and directed them to keep quiet and to listen as to what the Imam (AS) says about his claim. He told them that after listening to him, the

matter can be decided and the required punishment imposed. The noise subsided immediately. Then the Imam (AS) started reciting the Quranic verses appropriate for the occasion. The verses were indicative of the Promised Mehdi (AS) and also reprementive of the non-believers and for those who prevented the Apostles of Allah (AS) from delivering the message. The qualities of such persons were indicated by branding them as blind and deaf towards the truth.

One among the verses recited by the Imam (AS) at that occasion was

أَفَمَنْ كَانَ عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّهِ وَيَتْلُوهُ شَاهِدٌ مِّنْهُ وَمِن قَبْلِهِ كِتَابُ مُوسَىٰ إِمَامًا وَرَحْمَةً

Is he 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? S 11:17

The Imam (AS) declared that in the verse the word 'Shaidaun' is meant for his person and explaining this he has given a detailed account of the reasons for his being the Promised Mehdi (AS). He put forth irrefutable arguments and proofs for such claims. This unprecedented explanation of the Quranic verses was so much effective that even before the completion of the discourse, the Governor not only became sober but also bowed before the Imam (AS) for forgiveness and mercy. The Imam (AS) motioned him to be silent and made gesture of having excused him. He continued the deliberation till the completion of one full section (*Ruku*). The congregation was in spellbound silence and the scholars who were making all type of sounds earlier were dumb founded, at the unparalleled explanation of the Quran by a person who they thought not competent even to occupy the front row of the prayer congregation.

After the completion of the explanation of the Quran the young Governor bowed before the Imam (AS) and pleaded his innocence and ignorance about the position and status of the Imam (AS) and prayed to be excused for the misbehaviour. The Imam (AS) not only excused him but also prayed for him.. After this the Governor enquired from the scholars as to whether the advent of the Promised Mehdi (AS) was a must according to Islamic faith. The scholars replied in affirmative. Then he asked the basis for such faith. The scholars replied that it was founded on the traditions (*Hadith*) of the Prophet (PUH) which were in such a large number that they were treated as continued or confirmed news . But there were differences in the signs (*Alamath*). The Governor then announced that since the advent of the Promised Mehdi (AS) was founded beyond any doubt

through a chain of Ahadith, the person to be the Mehdi (AS) would be no other than the reverend Syed Mohammed (AS) who was bestowed with the Prophetic qualities.

The acceptance of the Governor had a very desired effect on the public in general and the scholars and nobles In particular. Several of them joined the fold then and there. The Governor accompanied the Imam (AS) to the Daira and was taught the method of *Dhikr-e-Khafi*. While going back to the town he requested to be permitted to host the group. The Imam (AS) permitted him. Thus the best food and fruit, dry and fresh, were presented for three days regularly. On the fourth day the Imam (AS) refused to accept the food saying that It would be against the precedent laid down by the Prophet (PUH).

At Kandahar the Imam (AS) stayed for a fortnight. During this period everyday thousands of people thronged to join him. Scholars like Miyan Haji Mohd. (RZ), Miyan Abdullah (RZ), Miyan Abdul Hashim (RZ), Miyan Kabeer Khan (RZ), Miyan Abdul Qadir (RZ), Miyan Shareef Mohammed (RZ), Miyan Kamaal Khan (RZ), Miyan Chalak Khan (RZ), Miyan Mohammed Kasani (RZ), Miyan Ashraf Hansvi (RZ), Miyan Danish Khurasani (RZ), were among the prominent persons who had not only joined the fold, but also shed all the worldly desires and joined the Dalra to be called the companions and the Muhajireens of the Promised Mehdi.

After the stay for a fortnight at Kandahar, the Imam (AS) decided to proceed. The Governor pleaded for further stay. But the Imam (AS) told him that his stay or departure from any place were governed by the command of Allah and no one else. The Governor followed the Imam (AS) for about 10 kms and after due permission he parted the company along wth the soldiers and with the blessings of the Imam (AS).

31. DIL ARAM

Enroute to Farah the Imam (AS) camped at this beautiful spot.

32. KOH

From Dil Aram, the Imam (AS) proceeded to Koh, a small town and stayed there for a short while. It was also a beautiful town with natural sceneries. Here as usual several of the nobles and scholars joined him. Then he proceeded to Farah. During the journey from Kandahar to Farah no significant event has been reported by the biographers. Of course,

the deliberations were very regular and under no circumstances the Imam (AS) missed the routine of explaining the Quran everyday.

33. FARAH

It was a border town of Khurasan, now in Afghanistan. Hurrat was the capital of Khurasan. The journey from Kandahar to Farah was about 300 kms. In those days it was governed by the Governor Mir Dhunun Baig. He was a staunch Muslim and a strong administrator.

The Imam (AS) stayed on the outskirts of the town in the *Sarai* (Inn) of Haji Sikander. As usual the Imam (AS) started delivering his sermons every evening regularly. During the sermons, he not only explained the Quranic verses, but also explained the details and intricacies of his mission and his claim of being the Promised Mehdi (AS). In no time, the news reached the Qazi (the Chief Judge) of the town. He was very much annoyed to hear such a 'horrible' claim from the mouth of a Fakir. He ordered the *Kotwal* (police commissioner) to arrest the entire group by disarming them. With a large contingent the police chief proceeded to the Daira. As a first step, he demanded the weapons of all the group. Many of the followers of the Imam (AS) were against surrendering the arms. They thought that after the surrender the police may do anything, even kill them. Thus they were of the view that they should fight back and perish rather than meekly surrendering to all sorts of high handedness. They thought that this would be the Holy encounter as indicated in the Quran. But the Imam (AS) prevented them from any such thing. He said that he will act not on the human advices but on the command of Allah. He himself surrendered his sword first. Thus, the entire group willingly handed over the weapons. The police Chief after disarming them all, confiscated all their belongings, which were of course negligible. They also insulted the holy men but the Imam (AS) exhibited the greatest resentment against any desire to retaliate. The features of resentment against anger, lust for wealth and power is visibly exhibited in the entire life span of the Imam (AS). There were times when the greatest of the human being might have succumbed to any of the above temptations. But since the Imam (AS) was guided by Allah he was free from such things. After confiscating the belongings the police chief thought it not necessary to arrest them. Since they were now unarmed and hence could do no harm to anyone; it was also not possible for them to run away during the night.

It is reported that on that night the military chief of Farah had a terrifying dream. He felt that the Prophet of Allah (PUH) was reprimanding him against the misbehavior and

tyranny meted to "his son". The commander Sarwar Khan woke up in the early hours with a severe stomach pain. He called the police chief and enquired about the events of the previous day. The kotwal reported that on the instructions of the Qazi he had confiscated the weapons of a large group of the Fakirs from India. The military Chief was very much annoyed and went to the Daira himself to apologise for the misbehavior. The Imam (AS) told him that nothing was against the Allah's wishes. Then the military chief asked for the list of the articles confiscated by the police. The Imam (AS) said that their real asset was the love of Allah and that could not be taken away by anyone. Hence there was no loss to their belongings. This reply had the desired effect. The fourth Khalifa (Shah-e-Nizam RZ) recommended to the Imam (AS) to consider about the stomach pain of the commander and to give his offal (*Paskhurda*). The Imam (AS) gave him some water and immediately the pain subsided. After this the commander enquired about the claim of the Imam (AS) and willingly joined his fold. He also arranged for the return of all the confiscated articles including the weapons.

Mir Dhunun Baig (RZ): As reported earlier he was the Governor of Farah. The commander in Chief Sarwar Khan reported the details about the Imam (AS) and also informed that he himself had accepted the holy message. The Governor commented that it was not so simple a matter to be accepted that easily. Then he decided to test the Imam (AS) and if the Imam (AS) fails in his test, exterminate him. With this view he made elaborate arrangements and went to the Daira with a big pomp and show. He even arranged the executioners and erected wooden poles around the Daira. When the facts were reported to the Imam (AS), he told his group not to worry for such things.

When the Governor arrived, the Imam (AS) was delivering his sermon on the Quranic verses. Thousands of people from Farah, apart from the companions were listening to the holy lecture with such a devotion and absorption that the arrival of the Governor went unnoticed and no respects were paid to him nor any panic aroused. This was a very strange event for the Governor. In his vanity he proceeded towards the Imam (AS) disturbing the rows of the congregation. The Imam (AS) looked at him and told him to sit down wherever space was available. Not knowing where his ego vanished he sat down there itself in between the Fakirs. In fact he with all his show of strength could not even impress the people of Farah who were attending to the sermon. On the other hand he lost his vanity in a moment at the sight of the Imam (AS) and obeyed him meekly . The Imam (AS) recited the Quranic verse:

اللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا يُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَوْلِيَاؤُهُمُ
الطَّاغُوتُ يُخْرِجُونَهُم...

*Allah is the Protecting Guardian of those who believe. He bringeth them out of darkness into
light. S2:257*

and explained that Allah was the friend of the believers and would guide them to the light from darkness of ignorance; and the friend of non believers was the *Shaitan* (Satan) who guides them only to further darkness. Those were the persons who would go to the Hell. The Imam (AS) further explained that his invitation was towards the light which would lead to the vision of Allah; whereas, the opposition of the so called Mullahs to this, was the sign of the friendship of Shaitan which would lead only to the darkness, i.e., the rejection of the manifestation or vision of Allah in this world and here after. The Imam (AS) explained this verse further by citing another Quranic verse "(Oh! Mohammed PUH) tell them I and my follower (the Mehdi AS) invite towards Allah and his vision".

قُلْ هَذِهِ سَبِيلِي أَدْعُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ عَلَىٰ بَصِيرَةٍ أَنَا وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَنِي وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ
الْمُشْرِكِينَ

*Say: This is my Way: I call on Allah with sure knowledge. I and whosoever followeth me - Glory
be to Allah! - and I am not of the idolaters - S12:108*

He further said that at another occasion Allah had said that

اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

"Allah is the light of this earth and the skies". S24:35

Thus by inviting towards light they (the Prophet PUH and the Promised Mehdi AS) invite to the vision of Allah. Where as, the so called Priests, Scholars and Mullahs invite to darkness by rejecting the possibilities of the vision of Allah in this world and thus one who follows them would land Into the Hell as Allah has said:

وَمَنْ كَانَ فِي هَذِهِ أَعْمَىٰ فَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ أَعْمَىٰ وَأَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا

"One who is blind in this world would also be blind in the next world and he is a misled person".

S 17:72

After the explanation, the Imam (AS) called the Governor and permitted him to ask any question, If he so desires. The Governor was not In a good condition. He was so much

impressed by the towering personality of the Imam (AS) that he was trembling to stand before him. With effort, he controlled himself and said that if the claim of the Mahdaviyat was literally meant as a reformer then it was all right. But If it were to be the Promised Mehdi (AS) as defined in Islamic terminology, then he looks forward for miracles. The Imam (AS) said that his job was to convey the true sense of the Quran and It was for Allah to guide anyone to choose the right path. The Governor said that as per the tradition (Hadith) of the Prophet (PUH) the sword would not have any effect on the Promised Mehdi (AS). The Imam (AS) gave him his own sword and permitted to try. The Mir lifted the sword with full force to attack and kill the Imam (AS). But he could not do so, his hand lost the movement and refused to respond to the command of the brain. The Mir tried this three times and all the three times he failed to force his hand to attack the Holy personality. It looked as if his hand had lost all the senses. A similar incident had been reported in the previous pages about the inability of Rai Dalpat to attack the Imam (AS) in the battle of Gaur. We have also quoted from Khaja Ibadullah Akhter (author of Mashahier-e-Islam) a non-Mehdavi source about this. This proves the effect of the personality of the Imam (AS) on one and all equally and also confirms the tradition of the Holy Prophet (PUH). This in the eyes of the Mir, was a sufficient proof to accept the Imam (AS) as the Promised Mehdi (AS). Mullah Noorullah Kuzagar who was accompanying the Mir for discussions was not able to control himself and loudly pronounced that "by Allah he alone is the Promised Mehdi (AS)". This prompted the Mir and all others to join him by announcing their acceptance. Then the Imam (AS) addressed the Mir saying that the natural elements have been allotted a particular quality and they would exhibit it without any consideration. For instance, the water would drown, the fire would burn and the sword would cut, whomsoever It may be. The real sense of the Hadith of the Prophet (PUH) was that no one would be able to over power the Promised Mehdi (AS). But not that the Promised Mehdi (AS) would dislocate the functioning of the elements. This scientific clarification of the Hadith at a time when everyone was willing to accept its meaning in verbal sense was not possible from an ordinary person. Only an Apostle of Allah (AS) would, even in such circumstances, try to deliver the true message of Allah. By doing so the Imam (AS) also removed all the superstitions from the minds of the *Umma* (Muslims). He taught and proved that Islam was not the religion of superstitions or wonder work but it was a religion based on the mental and spiritual faculties of human beings to lead them to the Ultimate Truth.

After this, the Governor and his scholars became the followers of the Imam (AS). The Governor became emotional and announced that he was a friend (*Ansar*) of the Promised

Mehdi (AS) and would use his sword for the protection and spread of the faith. At this point also the Promised Mehdi (AS) exhibited his greatest dependence on Allah by saying that the Protector (*Naser*) of the Promised Mehdi (AS) and his faith was Allah alone. If at all the Mir was anxious to use his sword, it must be used against his own self (*Nafs*-by self denial) which was the root cause for indulgence in the worldly affairs and which misleads very often. Thus even at the greatest moment of his success the Imam (AS) exhibited an unmatching confidence in Allah, and taught to his followers to fight against their own desires which are the root cause for all the evils in this world. Then he retired to his room. The Mir (RZ) returned to his palace and arranged for hosting the Imam (AS) and his group on a grand scale. As usual the Imam (AS) accepted it for three days and refused on the fourth day.

After the acceptance of the Governor, the public-in general and the scholars in particular from far and near places visited in groups and after due satisfaction joined the faith. Over the period of one year all the scholars, nobles and commoners had accepted the Imam (AS) as the Promised Mehdi (AS) and a true Islamic state was in offing. All the people not only repented for the past misdeeds but also followed the Islam in its true spirit. Thus there was a renaissance of Islam and Islamic law which changed the basic attitude of the Muslims towards the world and worldly affairs. They realised that they were not the servants of the wealth but they were the servants of Allah.

The capital of Khurasan was Hurrat. It was an ancient city founded by Alexander. The king of Khurasan in those days was Mirza Sultan Hussaln. He was a learned and a scholarly king. He was also a strict follower of Sunna and a pious man. At that time he was an aged person and was not keeping good health. He was very found of scholars and masters in Islamic teaching. He used to invite learned people from far off places. The result was that there were about twelve thousand scholars in Hurrat at that time. He himself was the author of several books and a renowned poet with '*Hussaini*' as his pen name.

The Governor of Farah sent him a detailed report narrating about the Imam (AS). He gave details of the progeny, personality, qualities and knowledge of the Imam (AS). He also reported that after due investigations he and his Ulema have accepted him as the Promised Mehdi (AS). The scholars of the town had watched him for about a year and could find no flaw in his actions and utterances. They found him to be a perfect follower of the Quran and Sunna. The Governor also advised the king to accept him and extend his support for the restore of the pristine glory of Islam.

on receipt of this detailed report, the king called a meeting of the great scholars of the town and placed the report before them. He also indicated that the claim of Syed Mohammed (AS) of being the Promised Mehdi (AS) appears to be true since the scholars of Farah had tested him for one year. The learned men opined that though the report of the Governor and the conclusion of the scholars of Farah can be relied upon-yet it was desirable to be more cautious, since the issue involves the basic faith of Islam. it was decided to depute a group of selected scholars to investigate and check the claimant of such a big position personally and report. In the light of their report, a suitable decision can be taken. Thus the king entrusted this issue to Mullah Ahmed Saifuddin Bin Yahiya bin Mohammed bin Saaduddin, who was considered to be the master of all the scholars in Hurrat. The great scholar took this responsibility seriously and verified the books, about the Faith, Hadith and Ma'rifa. He also arranged mock discussions for and against the claim of Syed Mohammed Jaunpuri (AS). In every such sitting the claim appeared to be true. Ultimately, a delegation of four scholars was chosen. They included Miyan Mullah Ali Faiyadh, Miyan Mullah Mohammed Sherwani, Mullah Darwesh Mohammed Itti and Mullah Maqdoom. They requested for a time of two months for preparations. They also studied the available books at their libraries, at the Royal library and also gathered books from outside. After deep consideration and verification of the books they prepared four basic questions. They decided to have a full scale discussion with the Syed (AS) at Farah, and if, they find him competent, then only they will put forth the four vital Questions. This plan of action was appreciated in general. While sending them off, the king arranged for a royal pomp and allowed them a contingent of 400 soldiers. He made Mullah Ali Faiyadh the leader of the group and authorised him to lead the discussion. If he finds the Syed (AS) to be a liar, then exterminate him immediately to avoid any confusion in the Islamic faith. This was a job entrusted to the Mullah, which could not be accomplished by the mighty king of Sind and various Sultans in India, Arabia and elsewhere.

DELEGATION FROM KING SULTAN HUSSAIN

When the royal delegation reached Farah, the residents got scared. They feared that if the Imam (AS) could not satisfy them then they would try to kill him which may lead to a civil war. They placed this doubt before the Imam (AS). He simply told them to be calm since they had accepted him as the Promised Mehdi (AS) on the will of Allah. There was no reason for them to fear the ordinary human beings. But they should fear Allah and should remember Him always. This holy advice was more than satisfactory for them.

After resting for a couple of days. the delegation went to the Daira along with the Governor Mir Dhunoon (RZ) and scholars of Farah for discussions. At that time the Imam (AS) was explaining the Quranic verses:

وَلَقَدْ ذَرَأْنَا لِجَهَنَّمَ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنسِ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ بِهَا

"We created several men and Jinn for the Hell. They have hearts but do not understand, have eyes but do not see, have ears but listen not, they are like beasts, rather worst". S7:179

The explanation was so much elaborate and impressive that the Mullas of Hurrat concluded that there was no need to indulge in any discussion. At the end of the sermon, the Imam (AS) called the group and asked them to sit near him. As decided, the leader Mullah Ali Faiyadh had to talk and the three others were to keep quiet during the deliberations. But despite the clear instructions one member Mullah Darwesh was so much impressed that he could not keep quiet. He said to the Imam (AS) that whatever they have learnt so far was scanty before the vast knowledge of the Imam (AS). In fact, they feel that they were students of elementary classes and could get some knowledge in the company of the Imam (AS).

Mullah Ali Faiyadh submitted that he and his friends were deputed by the king with four vital questions to be asked to the Imam (AS). and that after the sermon there seems to be no room for any question. But to fulfill the command of the king he would like to put forth the said questions, if permitted. The Imam (AS) permitted him.

Q. As to what was the basis for the claim of being the Promised Mehdi (AS)?

A. The Imam (AS) replied that the basis for his claim was the command of Allah, that he was ordained as the Promised Mehdi (AS) and that he should proclaim as such. This simple reply was full of explanations to several subsidiary questions. Had the Imam (AS) quoted any Hadith or Quranic verse, an endless argument about the correctness, applicability and interpretation would have crept in. But by making a simple statement of the fact the Imam (AS) closed the doors for all the uncalled for arguments.

Q. Of the four Islamic schools of faith which does the Imam (AS) adhere to?

A. The Imam (AS) replied that he was not bound to any of the four schools. He was bound to the Book (*the Quran*) and the following of the Prophet (PUH).

In this question, the Ulema tried to trap the Imam (AS) by making him to commit to them about his adherence to any one of the four faiths common in Sunnis. This indirectly meant to conclude that the Imam (AS) was not an apostle or deputy of Allah. But an ordinary member of the Sunni community who follows the interpretation and methods prescribed by a scholar. One who is deputed by Allah would not follow an ordinary scholar. Thus by replying in negative and explaining that he was the follower of the Quran and adherent of the Prophet (PUH) the Imam (AS) had cleared their lingering doubt.

Q. As to which book on the commentary of the Quran was adopted by the Imam (AS) for his sermons?

A. The Imam (AS) replied that he does not follow or read any commentary before delivering any sermon. He simply repeats whatever was taught to him by Allah directly.

This was yet another attempt to check the bonafides of the Imam (AS). If he were the Promised Mehdi (AS) he would not rely on the commentary of an ordinary scholar. Thus by clearly saying that he follows no book of commentary, the Imam (AS) had cleared his position beyond any doubt.

Q. What was the proof for the claim of the Imam (AS) about the Vision of Allah in this world?

A. The Imam (AS) in reply recited a few of the Quranic verses:

i) Say (Oh! Mohammed^{SAS}) I call towards Allah for vision and my follower would do the same.

قُلْ هَذِهِ سَبِيلِي أَدْعُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ عَلَىٰ بَصِيرَةٍ - S12:108

ii) One who desires to Visualise Allah shall do good deeds and should not join any one with Allah in the obedience.

فَمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوا لِقَاءَ رَبِّهِ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ أَحَدًا.

S18:110

iii) One who was blind in this world would be blind hereafter.

وَمَنْ كَانَ فِي هَذِهِ أَعْمَىٰ فَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ أَعْمَىٰ وَأَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا - S17:72

While reciting the verses the Imam (AS) explained them and put forth so many valid points that it was not possible to reject them. Then the Imam (AS) asked the group as to whether all the great scholars of the Sunni faith were against the Vision of Allah in this world. The Ulema replied that there were a few Ulema who were termed as a group of researchers who were having the faith of the vision of Allah in this world. Then the Imam (AS) said that he has brought the faith of such scholars. Then the Imam (AS) asked the group as to the number of witnesses required by a Qazi to accept a fact. Mullah Ali Faiyadh replied that as per Shariah the Qazi needs two witnesses. Then the Imam (AS) said verify from the two Prophets (AS) i.e. Prophet Ibrahim (AS) and Prophet Mohammed (PUH) who were with him on the right and left sides. He also said that if the group was in need of a live witness then Miyan Shah Nizam (RZ) and Miyan Shah Dilawer (RZ) would bear witness. Both of them stood up and became witness to the fact of having visualised Allah. The leader of the group said that there was no need of any witness beyond the witness of the Imam (AS) himself. Then all the Mullahs collectively accepted the Imam (AS) as the Promised Mehdi (AS) and were his guests for three days.

There are differences in the reports about the duration of the stay of the group. Some say that the group stayed in the company of the Imam (AS) forever and sent a message to the king about their findings. Some other biographers report that the leader stayed in the company of the Imam (AS) and sent a message through the other three. It is reasonable to believe that the Imam (AS) permitted all of them to go back to Hurrat because their return would serve as a mission from the Imam (AS) for his message. The leader of the group narrated before the king in the court their observations about the claim, personality, characteristics and knowledge of the Imam (AS) and his group and their adherence of Sunna.

The king and other scholars asked several questions and ultimately they were also satisfied. The king Sultan Hussein Mirza (RZ) announced that basing on the valuable witness of the four of the greatest scholars of his court; he had accepted Miran Syed Mohammed Jaunpuri (AS) as the Promised Mehdi (AS). The *Shaik-ul-Islam* (chief royal scholar) also joined him. Afterwards several scholars and courtiers also joined. This resulted in general acceptance of a large number of commoners.

After a few days the group of four scholars, who have first visited Farah, requested the king to permit them to go back to enjoy the benefits of the company of the Promised Mehdi (AS) at Farah. The king not only permitted them to go back but also sent a letter and some valuable presents to the Imam (AS). When they left Hurrat scores of new

converts, joined them. This was due to the effective accomplishment of the mission by Mullah Ali Faiyadh.

The Sultan could not resist the desire to see the Imam (AS). Even at the advanced age, ill health and against the advice of his physicians he left Hurrat for Farah. He caught fever enroute and despite the advice of his companions not to proceed further, he continued his journey. At last after three camps and about 75 miles of journey he passed away.

This incident was miraculously known to the Imam (AS). Immediately he ordered for a '*funeral prayer In absentia*' at Farah. After a few days the report of the demise of the Sultan (RZ) reached Farah. The date and the time of the 'prayer in absentia' was found to be correct. This type of prayer was arranged by the Prophet of Allah (PUH) at the demise of Najjashi. the king of *Habsha* (Ethiopia), under similar conditions.

The Imam (AS) had reached Farah in 907 AH and did not proceeded further. At first he stayed in the *Sarai* (Inn) of Haji Malik Sikander in the suburb of Farah. Subsequently, he shifted inside the town and established the Daira there. The total period of the stay of the Imam (AS) at Farah was 2 years and five months. This is the longest stay at any place since the Imam (AS) left Jaunpur In 887 AH. We would now narrate a few Important events at Farah.

ARRIVAL OF THE COMPANIONS FROM GUJARAT

The letter written by Miyan Salamullah (RZ) from Naseerpur reached Miran Syed Mahmood (RZ), the eldest son of the Imam (AS), who was holding an important position In the court of Sultan Mahmood Begda of Gujarat. After seeing the letter, the spark of love and attachment to the Imam (AS) and the adherence to the religion In the heart of Miran Syed Mahmood (RZ) became aflame. He lost all interest In the court and was not In a position to enjoy anything. One night he had a dream that the Prophet of Allah (PUH) and the Imam (AS) were advising him to proceed to Farah. He immediately decided to proceed. But he had to settle certain accounts. He advised his wife Bibi Kadbanu (RZ) to go back to her parents. She insisted on accompanying him to Farah. Miran Syed Mahmood (RZ) agreed. To make the ensuing journey possible, they sold out all the ornaments and other valuables and settled all the due-by accounts. Thus they proceed on a difficult and arduous journey to Farah without adequate preparations. Besides, Bibi Kadbanu (RZ) was pregnant and needed rest, adequate food and medical care. But they left everything to Allah and started their journey. Due to lack of food they could not

proceed beyond Radhanpur. At Radhanpur Miyan Shah-e-Nia'mat (RZ) and Miyan Shah Khundmir (RZ) also arrived with large numbers of valuable presents for the Imam (AS) on behalf of the sisters of the king of Gujarat. They both joined Miran Syed Mahmood (RZ) and made him their leader for the journey. This was in accordance with the Islamic principles that whenever the Muslims are undertaking a journey they have to select a leader among themselves. Miran Syed Mahmood (RZ) requested Miyan Shah-e-Nia'mat (RZ) to lend him some cash from the presents he was carrying, Miyan Shah-e-Nia'mat (RZ) refused on the plea that it was as a trust with him and hence he was not in a position to lend anything. When Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ) learnt about it he personally visited and presented all the cash and valuable which he was carrying, to the son of the Imam (AS) saying that it was a trust with him and now he had handed over the same to the owner. Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ) took every precaution and made arrangements well in advance for the comfortable journey and halts of the holy couple.

Thus traveling the group reached Farah. The Imam (AS) had come to know about the return of his son (RZ), companions (RZ) and followers well in advance through Miyan Sheikh Mohammed Kabir (RZ). The Imam (AS) felt very glad and was in a very happy mood. When questioned about his pleasure, he uttered in Urdu that his son was returning to the path of Allah and several most important personalities of the faith are also following him. When the holy group reached the Daira the Imam (AS) received them personally.

When the newcomers settled down, the Imam (AS) started preaching the faith deeper and deeper. It was a general impression that till then he was very simple in his expression and generally used to adopt simple methods which could be easily grasped by one and all. But after the arrival of the group from Gujarat, his style totally changed and was more deeper not only in expression but also in explanation. Someone asked about this noticeable change. The Imam (AS) replied that since men with better judgement and wisdom-besides having a clear perception of the faith had arrived, he had to explain the Quran for their benefit.

The Imam (AS) lived for six months after the return of the companions from Gujarat. It is reported that during this period the Imam (AS) used to spend the day time with his son Miyan Syed Mahmood (RZ) in his room preaching him. The night time was spent with Miyan Syed Khundmir. Thus the Imam (AS) had perfected both of them in all the aspects of the religion, faith, practice and exposition of the Holy Book. This was done because the Imam (AS) was aware that he will soon depart from this world. And these two youngsters

were to shoulder the greater responsibilities in near future. He announced that the two youngsters were "*own brothers to each others*".

The Imam (AS) used to visit the Jama Masjid of Ri'ch, a hamlet of Farah, every Friday for Prayers. At the age of 63 while on his way to perform the Friday Prayers. at a place near the river he stopped for a while. This was an indication of his attraction to this calm and peaceful place. At the mosque he offered the usual Juma Prayer and then concluded the Juma prayer with the "*Vitar*" (the last prayer in Isha comprising of three rakats). This was an enough indication for the scholars to know that the Imam (AS) was not likely to attend the next Friday. Mullah Ali Faiyad pronounced his doubt referring to a tradition (*Hadith*) about the Holy Prophet (PUH) that he had also offered '*Vitar*' with the last Friday Prayer of his life. Mullah Gui Mohammed and others who were still in doubt about the claim of the Iman (AS), came to the conclusion that further delay in a decision would be harmful. Thus they approached the Imam (AS) and after due satisfaction took *Ba'ith* (covenant).

It is reported by the biographers that the Imam (AS) returned back to Farah with severe fever, he also vomitted once. On Saturday, he delivered a sermon on the Holy verses:

الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتْمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيْتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا

Today thy faith is completed and perfected for thou. Islam is chosen with blessing of Allah S 5:3

The Imam (AS) made an impressive speech and ultimately, he told that like everyone he will also die. His teachings were based on the command of Allah and had to be followed by one and all. He had accomplished his mission of conveying the Will of Allah. Now It was their duly to put his teachings to practice. Those who fail to practice them would be the real losers. This sermon was so much impressive that most of the companions present could not control their tears. The Imam (AS) further explained that after him there would be greater responsibility on his companions of not only the pronouncement of the truth but also to put it to practice. Therefore he is leaving them at the mercy of the Almighty for protection and guidance. To console the gathering, he stated that for him the death was only a change of place. He also suggested to the congregation to check his body in the coffin after lowering it into the grave; if they found it in the coffin, then conclude that he was a liar, and if the body disappears then follow his teachings strictly. This was a very strange forecast. Anybody may foretell events about his life or even about his death, but the Imam (AS) was not only pronouncing the event after his death, but also basing

the truth of his claim on the accomplishment of his forecast immediately after his death. This talk about the dead body, grave, coffin etc. anguished the companions further. Miyan Nia'mat (RZ) started weeping loudly. There upon the Imam (AS) consoled him by saying that it was not the time of grief. He told that the real time of grief would be when his teachings would be forgotten, when the world and worldly people attract them, when the enmity with the wealthy people would be reduced and when their *Nafs* (self desire) would be full of enjoyment of the worldly things. To put in a nutshell if the urge to have Vision of Allah, which is the basis of his teachings would be lost, then they had to realise that he (the Imam AS) had really left them and then they were to really grieve. He added that with the grace of Allah the Mehdi (AS) and the Mehdavis will exist till the day of Judgement. After this the congregation dispersed. The Imam (AS) called his two young caliphs, Miran Syed Mahmood (RZ) and Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ) separately and told them about their responsibilities and duties towards the group of Muhajireens, followers and the religion. He announced that his companions (RZ) were like a lot of cooking coal in an oven. Some are fully lighted, some are partly lighted and others are just heated and ready to catch the fire. Those who were imperfect and were in the early stages could get perfection In the company of Miran Syed Mahmood (RZ). About Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ) he announced that he would represent the Imam (AS) in respect to the fourth quality of the Momin as pronounced in the Quran "*Qatilu-wa-Qatulu*". This occurred twenty years after the demise of the Imam (AS). He also announced that Miran Syed Mahmood (RZ) and Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ) may not commit any fault in following him. But there actions if not found in conformity with his own deeds, need not be taken as a precedent. The only logical precedents are his own deeds, the Sunna and the Holy Quran. He also stressed that any narration (Riwayath) quoted from him shall be first checked with the Quran and the Hadith; and if found in conformity then it is true, and if not, then the reporter may have committed a mistake In narrating It.

It is reported that even at the high fever the Imam (AS) was taking care for the adherence of the path of the Prophet (PUH) meticulously. At that time he was staying with Bibi Bwan (RZ). When the turn of Bibi Malkan (RZ) came, he asked his followers to take him to her house. The companions (RZ) pointed out that in high fever and weakness it is not advisable to change the place and also, that in the room of Bibi Malkan (RZ) there is only a mat which will not be comfortable for him. The Imam (AS) insisted for his shifting, saying that he cannot break the practice of the Prophet (PUH) by depriving one of his wife of her turn to be in his company. Then the Imam (AS) was shifted. He was lying on a mat, resting his head on the thigh of Miyan Amin Mohammed (RZ).

THE DEMISE

On the 19th of Ziquada 910 AH (23 April 1505 AD) on Monday the Imam (AS) called Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ) and rested his head on his thigh and delivered a sermon on the Quranic verse:

قُلْ هَذِهِ سَبِيلِي أَدْعُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ عَلَىٰ بَصِيرَةٍ أَنَا وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَنِي ۖ وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ ۖ وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

Well (O! Mohammed PUH) this is my path I and my follower invite unto Allah for His Vision Of course, with the Grace of Allah we are not the blasphemers.

And also told that one who visualises Allah in any shape or form is a Blasphemer.

Then he said he was feeling comfortable and advised his followers to be silent. Then he covered his body and head with a bed sheet. After sometime Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ) placed his hand on the chest and noticed that the Imam (AS) had left them. He informed Miran Syed Mahmood (RZ) about this fact and advised him to control himself as well as to advice the companions (RZ) suitably to bow before the will of the Almighty. Then the holy body was carried to the mosque for the funeral bath. This duty was performed by Miyan Shah-e-Ni'amat (RZ). It Is reported that a dispute arose about the place of burial. The people of Farah were demanding to rest the holy body In their area and the people of Ri'ch were insisting on taking to their place. Miran Syed Mahmood (RZ) and Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ) advised both the groups not to quarrel. They further said that the place of rest for the holy body would be decided according to the wishes of the Imam (AS). After the Mid-Day prayer (*Zuhr*), the funeral prayers for the Holy body were performed at the old Idgah of Farah. Then the holy body was carried towards Ri'ch. At the place where the Imam (AS) had stayed for a while on his way to Ri'ch, to perform his last Friday prayer, there was a beautiful garden. At that spot they felt that the body has become heavier and it was not possible to carry It further. This was taken as an indication for the last resting place of the holy body. Miran Syed Mahmood (RZ) inquired about the owner of the place to purchase it for the burial. Miyan Suleiman (RZ), the owner of the garden who was also following the procession, announced that it was a pleasure for him to get such a great honour and desired to endow the place free of cost for the holy purpose. Miran Syed Mahmood (RZ) said that he was in a position to pay the cost and paid the price after consulting with a few local persons. Since the place was In between

Farah and Ri'ch, both the groups were happy and the holy body was laid to rest there. When the body was lowered into the grave and Miran Syed Mahmood (RZ) was still inside the grave, Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ) reminded him of the forecast made by the Imam (AS) about the holy body. Then Miran Syed Mahmood (RZ) searched for the body in the coffin and to the surprise of the gathering found nothing inside. When he came out, Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ) noticed that there was a noticeable change in his person and his resemblance to the Imam (AS) became more apparent. Therefore he called him Sani-e-Mehdi RZ (Mehdi II): and till this date Miran Syed Mahmood (RZ) is known as Sani-e-Mahdi (RZ). The renowned poet Miyan Allahadad Hameed (RZ) wrote several elegies (*marsiyah*). which are very popular even today. After the demise of the Imam (AS), Miran Syed Mahmood (RZ) stayed at Farah along with the Holy group for about one year and then shifted to Gujarat with the group. Some of the prominent scholars like Moulana Ali Fayadh (RZ), Moulana Derwesh Hurrati (RZ), Moulana Haji Parehi (RZ) remained at Khurasan and Moulana Abdul Ghani (RZ) went to Kandahar. It is reported that after a few days of the departure of the Holy group king Ismail Shah conquered the place. He was very harsh towards the holy people and their cemeteries, It is reported that he had destroyed several holy graves. When he was proceeding to destroy the Holy grave of the Imam (AS), there was a great wind and all his soldiers lost their way. Then he decided, not to disturb the grave. Some of his nobles became very attached to the place. Ismail Shah ordered for the construction of a big tomb, a pond and a Khankha. But this was taken up by Shah Qasim Iraqi who became the ruler of Farah. Later it was completed by his brother Sheik Birji (RH) who happened to be a follower of the Imam (AS) through Miyan Mohammed Pushtiv (RH) who was the Khalifa of Miyan Zikria (RZ). The tomb is still intact and is treated as a monument and is in the protection of the Archives of Afghanistan.

Contd..

HOLY FAMILY & CALIPHS (RZ)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ

O ye who believe! Be careful of your duty to Allah, and be with the truthful. - S9:119

The Imam (AS) had five wives and two servant maids to whom he married later. But never during his life did he have more than four wives at a time. His first wife was Bibi Alahdadi (RZ). who was the first cousin, through his uncle Miyan Syed Jalaluddin (RH). She got married to the Imam (AS) in 866 AH. at Jaunpur. She had two sons and two daughters - Miran Syed Mahmood Sani-e-Mehdi (RZ) and Miyan Syed Ajmal (RZ), Blbi Khunza Gowher (RZ) and Bibi Fatima (RZ). The first daughter was married to Miyan Syed Abu Baker (RZ). The second daughter Bibi Fatima (RZ) was first married to Miyan Mallk Burhanuddin (RZ) and after his demise to Miyan Syed Khundmir Siddique-e-Vilayath (RZ).

The second wife Bibi Bhikia (RZ), was the daughter of a small Raja. The Imam (AS) happened to stay at that place enroute to Chanderl. She was suffering with some severe mental disease and was considered to be possessed by the evil spirits; and all the treatments were ineffective. When the Raja came to know about the stay of the Imam (AS) he came to the Imam (AS) for his blessings. The Imam (AS) gave the offal (paskhurda) of paan which cured her. The Raja, being a Hindu, considered her an outcaste because she has eaten the offal of a Muslim and sent her to the Imam (AS). The Imam (AS) named her as Bhikia (RZ) and sent her to his wife. The Imam (AS) married her on the advice of his first wife. She did not bear any children. Imam's (AS) third wife Bibi Malkan (RZ) was the daughter of the renounced companion Miyan Ladshah Patni (RZ). She had one son Miyan Syed Hamid (RZ) and a daughter Bibi Hidayethullah (RZ), who was an infant at the time of the Imam's (AS) demise. Later on this daughter was married to Moulana Abul Fatah (RZ) who was a great scholar and a Khalifa of Miyan Shah-e-Nizam (RZ). He was a descendent of Hz. Abu Bakar (RZ). The fourth wife Bibi Bwan (RZ) was from the progeny of the great saint Khaja Moinuddin Chishti (RH). She had a son Miyan Syed Ibrahim (RZ).

His fifth wife Bibi Bhanumati (RZ) was the cousin of the Raja of Jaisalmer. She had a son named Miyan Syed Ali (RZ). He was buried alive at the fort of Ahmedabad by the nobles of Begra Kingdom.

THE CALIPHS (RZ)

After the demise of the Promised Mehdi (AS), the holy group of companions (RZ) and the Muhajireens (RZ) collectively approached Miran Syed Mahmood Sani-e-Mehdi (RZ) for guidance. It is narrated that within one week of the demise of the Imam (AS), Sani-e-Mehdi (RZ) and the Siddiq-e-Vilayat (RZ) had an identical dream (which is a very rare event) in which the Imam (AS) advised the Siddiq (RZ) to go back to Gujarat. Thus in consultation with Miran Syed Mahmood (RZ), Miyan Shah-e-Khundmir (RZ) returned to Gujarat. Miran Syed Mahmood (RZ) stayed at Farah for a year and then on the indication of the Imam (AS) in a dream he also returned to Gujarat with all the companions (RZ). But a few important persons like Maulana Ali Fayadh (RZ), Moulana Durwesh Hurrati (RZ), Moulana Haii Farahi (RZ), Moulana Haji Zahed (RZ) etc. remained at Khurasan. It is also reported that Moulana Abdul Ghani (RZ) went to Kandahar. Almost all the non Mehdavia authors have admitted that the faith spread immensely due to the personalities, character and efforts of the holy companions (RZ) of the Imam (AS). Now we give below a brief account of the lives of a few important personalities.

Miran Syed Mahmood Sani-e-Mehdi^{RZ}:

Miran Syed Mahmood Sani-e-Mehdi (RZ) was the eldest son of the Imam (AS). He had also succeeded the Imam (AS) after his demise and was called Sani-e-Mehdi (RZ). He was born in 869 AH at Jaunpur and had followed the Imam (AS) in the entire journey excepting for a short interval during which he undertook to earn his livelihood in accordance with the Islamic way. The details of his acceptance of the Imam (AS) as the Promised Mehdi (AS) and his marriages are discussed in the chapter Hijra. Now we will try to give the details of his contribution in spreading the faith.

The Imam (AS) left the world in 910 AH and the Sani-e-Mehdi (RZ) returned to Gujarat around 911 AH and settled at Bhilot. When the Siddiq-e-Vilayat (RZ), Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ) heard about his return he lost no time to join him. But the Sani-e-Mehdi (RZ) insisted upon his return to his Daira. He said that for the events to come it is necessary for the Siddiq (RZ) to be away from him. Miran Syed Mahmood Sani-e-Mehdi (RZ) also advised most of the prominent companions (RZ) to form separate Dairas with their followers. Important among them were Miyan Shah-e-Nizam (RZ) and Miyan Shah-e-Nla'mat (RZ). He was also insisting upon Shah-e-Dilawar (RZ) to form separate Daira but he preferred not to leave the company of Sani-e-Mehdi (RZ). Thus within a short period several centres of the propagation of faith sprang up all over Gujarat. However

care was taken to establish these Dairas within a reasonable distance to have quick contact. Due to this, Gujarat became the centre for the Mehdavis all over the world and still it is so.

Miran Syed Mahmood (RZ) used to deliver his sermons in the morning after the Fajr Salat and in the evenings. He used to ask the companions (RZ) to watch his actions and to inform him if he were to deviate from the path of the Promised Mehdi (RZ). Due to his holy personality, character, adherence to the path of the Prophet (PUH) and the Imam (RZ) and the impressive exposition of the Quranic verses there was a turmoil all over Gujarat and thousands of people joined the fold. Thus in a short period the faith spread rapidly.

It is reported that there were 950 persons with Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ) and about 450 with Miyan Malikji (RZ) like number of devotees were with Shah Abdul Majeed (RZ), Malik Burhanuddin (RZ), Miyan Abu Bakar (RZ), Miyan Allahdad Hameed (RZ), Miyan Yousuf (RZ), Miyan Sheikh Kabeer (RZ) etc. There were thousands of followers with Miran Syed Mahmood (RZ). The figures reported above are of the persons who have renounced the world and joined the Daira and have devoted themselves for the attainment of the higher objective of the vision of Allah. The Sani-e-Mehdi (RZ) was watching the performance of these centres and whenever he felt necessary he called back the head of the Daira to remain in his company for some more time. Thus he has taken all possible care to give perfect training to all inmates of the Daira and capable persons were advised to form separate Dairas.

This popularity of the Sani-e-Mehdi (RZ) had effected the business of the so called scholars and Sufis. Thus they made a representation to the King against him, and therefore he was arrested and imprisoned in 919 AH at Ahmedabad. When the news spread Miyan Shah-e-Nia'mat (RZ), Miyan Shah-e-Nizam (RZ) and others rushed to protect him. He prevented them. Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ) also rushed to the prison and informed the Sani-e-Mahdi (RZ) that he intended to break and open the prison to get him released. But he was advised not to do any such thing. It is evident that Miran Syed Mahmood (RZ) has taken this stand in accordance with the Quranic teachings that the Muslims are brothers and there should not be any killings among them. It is also evident that the king and other nobles were well aware that if there was to be a war the Mehdavis would have succeeded in dethroning the king and there would be a heavy loss of life on both sides. It is also evident that most of the Mehdavis were brave warriors and would have sacrificed their lives for the protection of the son and the Khalifa (RZ) of the Imam

(AS). But Miran Syed Mahmood (RZ) had a greater object of teaching the real Islamic path to all the Muslims in general and Mehdavis in particular. He had to erase the impression that Muslims light among themselves for one or the other reason. This message which was given in a practical way, would have taught the opponents a lesson. But they were not the persons to be guided by the Quran or any logic. Ultimately he was released from the prison after about three months. It is reported that he was tied with heavy chains and was not able to move. His legs and his ankles were injured. After his release he died of the wounds in 920 AH. and was laid to rest at Bhilot.

Miyan Syed Khundmir Siddiq-e-Vilayat^{RZ}:

As reported earlier he was the son of Miyan Syed Musa (RH) and through the mother, he was related to the Governor of Patan. His lineage and the lineage of the Imam meet at Hz. Imam Moosa Kazim (RH). His early life and the incident of his acceptance of the Imam (AS) has already been discussed earlier. Now we will discuss his contribution and his role in the establishment and the progress of the faith.

It is narrated that after the demise of Miran Syed Mahmood Sani-e-Mehdi (RZ), there was a congregation (*Ijma'*) of all the important companions (RZ) of the Imam (AS). The topic for discussion was about the proof of the truth of the Imam (AS) through the Holy book. Several companions (RZ) recited several verses and said that they will prove the truth of the Imam (AS) by explaining the said verses. At his turn, Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ) said that with the grace of Allah and the blessings of the Prophet (PUH) and the Imam (AS) he would give the proof of the Imam (AS) from the Quran right from its first alphabet '*Alif*' to its last alphabet '*Seen*', seeing this stability of faith and vigour in his personality the congregation accepted him as the leader. It is reported that more than three lakh people accepted the faith on his hands. Nobles like Miyan Sharfuddin (RZ) were his followers. Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ) was the person on whom the Promised Mehdi (AS) had rested the responsibility of accomplishment of the fourth quality of a momin in lieu of the Imam (AS) as specified in the holy verses. It had already been informed that the Imam (AS) has warned him about the persecution and the troubles he had to face.

The life of the Siddiq (RZ) after the demise of the Sani-e-Mehdi (RZ) is full of hectic activities and endless efforts to protect the faith and the followers. The historians say that he was forced to move his Daira from one place to another twenty times over a period of five years.

Ultimately Miyan (RZ) established Daira at Khambel in the Jagir of a noble Miyan Amir Malik Pyare (RZ) and was there for a period of live years. The political situation in Gujarat underwent a great change after the death of Mahmood Begra. His successor, an inexperienced young man, Mudaffer Shah was not able to resist the pressure from the worldly scholars like Mulla Syed Kabir. Mulla Hameed and Mulla Anaruddin, and a fatwa was issued branding the Mehdavis worst than the robbers and directing the Muslims in general to kill the Mehdavis or at least to brand their faces with iron claw resembling the claw of a crow. Due to this, there was great unrest all over Gujarat, particularly in Ahmedabad. in the meanwhile two young brothers belonging to the community of dyers (*rangrez*) were murdered for declaring their faith openly. When this news reached the Siddiq (RZ) he sent a letter to the scholars asking a fatwa from them about the persons who believed in killing of Muslims without any legal (*Sharia*) reason.

All the scholars unanimously issued the Fatwa, that such a person himself is liable to be murdered. After receiving this fatwa which was a proof of the innocence of the Mehdavis, he deputed a group of four followers headed by Miyan Malik Gowher Shah Fouladi (RZ). Miyan Sultan Shah (RZ), Miyan Chand Shah Jalori (RZ) and Miyan Alam Shah (RZ). Their task was to kill Mulla Hameed who was the root cause for the persecution of Mehdavis and was responsible for the killing of the two young boys. They accomplished this task at Sarkej near the tomb of Maqdam Sheikh Ahmed Khattu. To take revenge of this murder a band of soldiers was deputed. When they went to Khambel the Dalra was vacant as the Siddiq (RZ) has gone to Bholawara with his followers. The military while returning burned the Daira and the mosque. When the Siddiq (RZ) heard about it he returned to Khambel and reconstructed the Daira. The murder of Mulla Hameed had created a great havoc among the worldly scholars who were responsible for issuing the fatwa for persecution and killing of the Mehdavis. Four months after this event the Miyan Siddiq-Vilayat (RZ) deputed a group of five persons with Mahmood Shah - Ahmedabadi as a guide to acquaint them with the city to kill Mulla Anaruddin. After the efforts and search of about four months the group could succeed in accomplishing the task and returned to Khambel. This created a great havoc in the city. Then Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ) wrote a detailed letter to Mulla Syed Kabeer which he sent through Malik Allahdad (RZ). He also enclosed a copy of the fatwa issued and signed by the Mulla. The contents of the letter were that when the Promised Mehdi (AS) had invited the people towards Allah, the scholars became his enemies. The Promised Mehdi (AS) took the stand that there was no reason for enmity since the teachings of Quran are very clear about the disputes in faith and in the light of such teachings it was necessary for the scholars and

the king to convince him, if he was wrong and if he refused to give up the wrong path, then they were free to kill him. But it was observed that no one had convinced him with valid arguments but at the same time misused the state's power to harass him. Since last 25 years this was the stand of the Promised Mehdi (AS) and his followers but the scholars have taken all together a different route. Instead of trying to convince or get convinced, they have put all their efforts to harass the peace loving followers. They were publicly condemned as innovators, forced to leave their places, arrested and put in prisons without trial and all kinds of punishments were inflicted upon them. There was none to do justice. The Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ) also pointed out that the houses of Mehdavis were burnt, their mosques were destroyed and their children were killed for the simple reason that they follow Islam in its true sense. The Promised Mehdi (AS) and the Mehdavis were not for the wealth or power. In fact they renounced everything for Allah and there was no danger to the Government. Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ) also informed the Mulla that it was high time to stop all such unlawful activities against the Mehdavis. This letter was delivered to the Mulla at Chapanear. He received Miyan Malik Allahdad (RZ) with respect and tried to console him.

After this all the worldly scholars joined together and made a representation to Mudaffer Shah and told him that Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ) is gaining popularity among the nobles and warriors of Gujarat and is boldly spreading his belief. Thus it is highly dangerous for the state and the king, and he is likely to wage a war against the king soon. They also advised him to suppress this rising power before it becomes impossible.

Had the king been an experienced person he would have realised that being a perfect follower of the Mehdi (AS), Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ) would not have indulged in state's politics, so long as he was allowed to perform his prayers without disturbance. But Mudaffer Shah being an inexperienced and unwise king ordered for expulsion of Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ). For accomplishment of this task he deputed his Commander in Chief Ain-ul-Mulk. Being fully aware of the strength of the Mehdavis, elaborate arrangements were made. It is estimated that a military of more than 24,000 well trained and well equipped warriors was selected and placed under the command of Ain-ul-Mulk and there were 18 elephants accompanying the military.

Ain-ul-Mulk camped at Kadi and sent a letter through Qazi Sheh Taj directing Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ) to leave the boundary of the State of Gujarat. Miyan (RZ) informed the Qazi that the Mehdavis have not done any illegal or unlawful act or any harassment to anybody. They were the peace loving, law abiding and God fearing people and since

last 25 years they were submitting themselves to all sorts of high handedness and persecution. In the light of Quranic orders they have to protect themselves. This right of self protection *was* not exercised unilaterally but a fatwa was taken from all the scholars who were opposed to the Mehdavis and they have acted on that fatwa only. Thus there was no reason for any orders expelling them from Gujarat. This logic was so strong that even the Qazi was moved and had to leave the place without accomplishment of the task.

After this Ain-ul-Mulk marched towards Khambel and camped at Khariyal. This information was brought to Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ) by his son Miyan Syed Jalal (RZ). Miyan (RZ) started arrangements for the battle. As an exercise for selection of warriors the inmates of the Daira were divided into two groups and were ordered to play the game of Kabaddi. The two teams were headed by the two sons of Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ). The team of Miyan Syed Jalaluddin (RZ) was defeated by the team of Miyan Syed Shahabuddin (RZ). This was taken as an indication of the events of war in which Miyan Syed Jalaluddin (RZ) had to become a martyr. The military attacked on the 12th of Shawwal 930 AH. It was divided into seven sections according to the tradition of war in those days. Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ) was having 100 inmates in his Daira of which 40 were left for the protection of the women and the Daira and 60 accompanied him to the battle field. This was rather too small a force for any type of war. But the zeal and the confidence of Mehdavi Fakirs was so strong that for two hours they fought a fierce battle and defeated the huge army. In the melee the military killed its own soldiers by firing cannons and ultimately the entire army got scattered and ran away. The fakirs chased the fleeing soldiers for about two Kilometers. Many of them escaped the sword of the fakirs by seeking pardon in the name of the Promised Mehdi (AS). In booty they were permitted to take only the weapons but nothing else. This was done because of the fact that the war was fought by the Mehdavis for Allah and not for the booty.

The reader might be worried as to why only 60 persons have participated in this war. The main reason for this was that most of the Mehdavis who were scattered all over Gujarat were not aware of this attack which was made very swiftly by the king. Further there was a dispute among the prominent companions of the Imam (AS) about the retaliation by Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ). Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ) himself was not in favour of taking any help from the nobles who were holding important positions in Gujarat. This was done for two reasons, one - he was not fighting a war against the Muslims to defeat them or to capture the state of Gujarat. It was purely a defensive war for self protection, and for any military having strength of more than 24,000 it would have been an act of

shame to attack a handful of 100 fakirs who were half starved and ill equipped. But Ain-ul-Mulk could not catch this point and attacked them with full force.

The second reason being that Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ) was confident of his victory on the first day of the war against any force in view of the prediction of the Imam (AS). He thought that any victory with the assistance of any of the nobles would be treated as the victory of that noble against the king and the prediction of the Imam (AS) would have not been recognised fully.

He might have also thought that any involvement of other Mehdavis in the war would lead to a total civil war in the state of Gujarat which may lead to involvement of Mehdavis outside Gujarat, in India and elsewhere which may result into an endless battle between the two sections of the Muslims.

Thus the war was fought with only hundred people, 40 of whom were protecting the Daira and were killed by the fleeing military by shooting arrows. They were not supposed to go beyond a particular limit of the Daira as ordered by the Miyan Siddiq (RZ). They preferred to die within that limit than to go beyond the limit for their survival.

Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ) was injured seriously while returning from the battle field, an arrow struck into his eye. It is reported that the arrow could not be removed from the eye and it was cut down and the wound was bandaged. In this condition he offered the mid-day prayers (*Zohar*). In the meantime Malik Sharfuddin, the jagirdar of Sudrasen arrived with 80 horsemen and some equipment. But to his disappointment, he saw that the fakirs have defeated the huge military of Gujarat. Arrangement were made for the burial of the Forty Martyrs (RZ) in one grave and their grave is still the spot of reverence for the Mehdavis all over the world. After the treatment of the wounded and the food arrangement of the Daira, Malik Sharfuddin requested Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ) to come over to Sudrasan with him where proper care of the wounded and rest to the tired people can be given. So, on the night of 12th itself the entire Daira moved to Sudrasan.

The commander of the royal forces Ain-ul-Mulk was very much annoyed and feeling shameful for meeting with a crushing defeat at the hands of ill equipped Fakirs (RZ). He gathered his military once again and delivered a lecture reminding them of their bravery and superiority in number and arms, and told them that since most of the Fakirs (RZ) are injured and tired it is very appropriate time to attack them and take revenge. Thus very swiftly the military marched and reached Sudrasan on 14th of Shawwal 930 AH. Thus

swift arrangements were made to protect the Daira. For this Miyan Malik Allahdad (RZ) was deputed with Miyan Malik Peer Mohammed (RZ), Miyan Syed Hussain (RZ), Miyan Malik Ahmed Ishaque (RZ) etc. Actually Miyan Malik Allahdad (RZ) wanted to participate in the war but had to accept the command of the leader. He was told by the Miyan Siddiq (RZ) that after this war a greater role was to be played by the Malik (RZ) in training his sons and spreading the faith. Then he proceeded to the battle field and delivered a lecture to the attacking army. He said that they have not taken away the state or any property from them nor they are after the kingship or any pomp or show. They were only desirous of Allah and His Mercy. Thus he was unable to understand as to why the scholars and the king were against them. But the leaders of the military told, that they were inducing one and all for renunciation of the world and most of the nobles are joining their fold. In this way they were cutting the roots of the stability of the state. Thus they are liable for capital punishment. Repeatedly Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ) tried to convince them but the war was started by the military without paying any attention to the persuasion of Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ).

In this (days) war Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ) was defeated and became martyr with his sixty followers (RZ). Thus the total Mehdavis killed during both the wars were one hundred. The military cut off the heads of seven martyrs including Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ). They were Syed Jalal (RZ) son of Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ), Syed Ataullah (RZ) brother of Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ), Syed Sharif (RZ), Malik Hameed (RZ), Malik Sharfuddin (RZ), Malik Miyanji Bayani (RZ). Due to the fact that most of the commanders of the military were related to several Mehdavis they prevented Ain-ul-Mulk from any high handedness with the children and others in the Daira. They took the heads of the above said seven persons to present to king Mudaffer at Chapanear. During both the wars, several miracles are reported and several miracles occurred even with the dead bodies. We avoid all those but report only one. With the heads, the military left for Chapanear, the dead bodies were buried along with the seven headless bodies at Sudrasan, of which forty-three bodies were buried in one common grave. It is narrated that Ain-ul-Mulk camped at Patan. At this place a miracle took place at the time of Asar prayers, the bodiless heads performed Salat in the leadership of the head of Bandagi Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ). This was very much astonishing and horrifying to one and all. Ain-ul-Mulk decided to get rid of these extraordinary heads. He was convinced that any such miracle in the court of Shah Mudaffer would be ruinous for him. Therefore in consultation with several persons he ordered for removal of the skin from all the heads, buried the bones at Patan and stuffed the skin and presented them to Mudaffer.

Ultimately, the skin was buried at Chapanear. Thus the predictions of the Imam (AS) about the Miyan Siddiq-e-Vilayat (RZ) were proved correct after thirty years of the demise of the Imam (AS). Even today Mehdavis from all over the world visit these three shrines to pay their respects to the person who accomplished the greatest responsibility of representing the Imam (AS) in fulfillment of the fourth quality of a Momin. The Mehdavis called Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ) not only with the title of Siddiq-e-Vilayat (RZ) but also with the title of *Badl-e-Dhat* (substitute for the person of the Imam AS). Several scholars and poets have written detailed accounts of the events of these wars in Persian, Brij, Dakhni, Hindi and Urdu. These works are considered as great contribution to the literature of the said languages. This war had a great impact on both sides. The Mehdavis, specially the important companions of the Imam (AS) who were opposed to the battle could realise that Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ) was on the right path specially- Miyan Shah Nia'mat (RZ), Miyan Shah Nizam (RZ), Miyan Shah Dilawar (RZ) and others repented very much for their decision against Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ) and they all expressed their sorrow and grief to Miyan Malik Allahdad (RZ) who was given the charge of the Daira of Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ). The unity among the Mehdavis had a good effect on the non-Mehdavis. Besides this the government of Gujarat never had peace after the war against Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ). Civil wars started in the royal family leading to quick succession of the rulers. It is also reported that some of the rulers and governors were looking for the support of Miyan Malik Allahdad (RZ) for their survival. Ultimately the kingdom was lost to the Moguls. First Humayun conquered Gujarat defeating Bahadur Shah. When Humayun was busy with Sher Shah, Bahadur Shah recaptured his state but could not hold it for long. Thus there was no major effort against Mehdavis in Gujarat after the wars of Khambel and Sudrasan.

Miyan Shah Nia'mat^{RZ}

Miyan Shah Nia'mat (RZ) was the third among the twelve blessed companions (RZ) whom the Imam (AS) had praised and blessed. He was the son of Malik Bade (RH) in the pedigree of Hz Abu Bakar Siddiq (RZ). His acceptance of Imam (AS) as the Promised Mehdi (AS), renunciation of the world, repentance on his past etc. had already been dealt with in the previous chapter. After the matrydom of Miyan Syed Khundmir (RZ) all the Mahdavi Dairas looked at Miyan Nia'mat (RZ) for guidance. He established his Dairas at several places in Gujarat, then in the south. He was received with great respect in the princely state of Ahmednagar. His last Daira was at Lohgarh near Mahagaon, to the east of Pune in Maharashtra.

The Imam (AS) called him as Mikhras-e-Biddat (a scissor for innovations). He was very pious, bold and God fearing companion (RZ) of the Imam (AS). He has taken all steps to spread the faith among the masses. It is narrated that once some labourers approached him for work. He engaged them for Dhikr on payment. When questioned about it he said that he wanted to give an opportunity to the working class to join the Daira and within a week they will change themselves and join the Daira or leave the place. Likewise one of the nobles expressed his desire to join the Daira, but also informed that due to the royal brought-up since childhood he would not be able to bear the hardships (consume ordinary food, undergo fasting or walk long distances with other inmates). Miyan Nia'mat (RZ) informed him that he need not worry about such matters which would be looked into by him personally. After the noble joined the Daira, Miyan Nia'mat (RZ) used to take all possible care to provide royal food even by borrowing money while the other inmates were starving or had inadequate food. The noble was feeling this position gravely in his heart of hearts. Once when the Daira was being moved to another place, a *palki* was arranged for him and the great devotees were carrying the *palki* with the noble in it. He could not bear this, jumped out of the *palki*, and requested Miyan Nia'mat (RZ) to allow him to walk along with others. Since then he became a staunch follower and had no complaints about anything.

Thus, Miyan Shah Nia'mat (RZ) has taken all possible care to provide equal opportunity to poor and rich for experiment and also in attaining the spiritual heights. He used all the psychological methods to change the attitude of the persons towards the wealth and worldly belongings. During his time the faith was accepted and spread greatly In south and west India, specially in Maharashtra.

At the age of 61 years, while he was praying with his group of 21 followers he was martyred by Kasfdar Khati, a caretaker of the royal family.

Shah Nizam (RZ)

As reported earlier he was the ruler of a princely State, Jais in eastern India and belonged to a priestly family and was a descendent of the great saint Hz. Sheikh Fareed Gunj Shaker (RH). He was in the lineage of Hz. Umer-e-Faruq (RZ), the second khalifa (RZ) of the Prophet of Allah (PUH). He was born in 873 AHI, left the state of Jais at young age abdicating the throne in favour of his younger brother and went to Makkah for Hajj and was in search of a priest to guide him. Ultimately met the Imam (AS) at Chapanear and never left his company. Miyan Shah Nizam (RZ) was not only a close companion of the

Imam (AS) but had the honour of immense trust of the Imam (AS) in his piety and character. When the Ulema demanded witness of the vision of Allah, as a result of the teachings of the Imam (AS), the Imam (AS) invited Miyan Nizam (RZ) to testify his experience. This is the greatest honour any companion (RZ) of the Imam (AS) would aspire for. He was very calm in his behaviour and had pleasant manners and a good personality. He never indulged in unnecessary arguments and used to spent all his time in remembrance of Allah.

In his Daira he took great care to follow the path of the Imam (AS) meticulously. The late corners to the prayers were reprimanded and reminded of the practice of the Imam (AS) that he used to stop his food whenever he listened to the call for prayers (*Adhan*) and it was also the practice of the Imam (AS) that after the Adhan he used to do no other work than preparing for prayers and performance of the prayers. Miyan Shah Nizam (RZ) used to remind his followers of this practice, and insisted upon them for following it. It is reported that his dependence on Allah was so great that he never accepted the presentation even in the name of Allah from the same person for more than two times, If the presentations were made for the third time he used to refuse it saying that it amounts to fixed income (*Ta'iunn*) which is prohibited for those who are dependent on Allah. Thus he set high examples for the future generations. He established Dairas at Ahmedabad, Badli, Patan, Chapanear, Ahmednagar, Devisena. He died at Anondra a village of Kadi near Ahmedabad at the age of 68 years in 940 AHI. He has his independent Daira for about 30 years from the times of Sani-e-Mehdi (RZ). He also played a vital role in spreading the faith in Gujarat and Maharashtra. His son Miyan Abdur Rehman (RZ) had the honour of writing the first biography of the Imam (AS), Moulud-e-Hazrat Imam Mehdi-e-Mawood (AS).

Shah Dilawar (RZ)

Shah Dilawar (RZ) was the nephew of Rai Dalpat. and the adopted son of the Imam (AS) after the war of the Gaur. The details of his acceptance of Islam on the hands of the Imam (AS) has been reported in the first and second chapters. In the company of the Imam (AS) he attained the highest spiritual stages. He was a very close companion (RZ) of the Imam (AS) and had the pride of being one among the seventeen persons who have migrated with the Imam (AS) in 887 AH. He also had the pride of being the second youth to accept the Imam (AS) as the Promised Mehdi (AS), first being the Sani-e-Mehdi (RZ). His attachment to the Imam (AS) and his family was so great that inspite of persuasion from Miyan Syed Mahmood (RZ) he did not leave his company. The Imam (AS) used to advise

his followers to approach Miyan Shah Dilawar (RZ) for guidance in respect of any problem, if the Imam (AS) was not readily available. Even after the demise of Sani-e-Mehdi (RZ), he used to advice the companions (RZ) in several matters and played an important role in the settlement of marriages of the daughters and sons of the Imam (AS).

After the demise of the Imam (AS) some of the companions who were not in the company of the Imam (AS) for a longer period opined that for Juma and Idd prayers Mehdavis can follow the non Mehdavi Imams. This was the beginning of a dispute which would have had far reaching effects on the whole Mehdavia community, and ultimately would have led in 'eliminating the prohibition of Imamat' of non Mehdavis in the prayers. To discuss this issue Miyan Shah Dilawar (RZ) called an *Ijma'* of all the companions (RZ) and after discussions it was concluded that the Imam (AS) had never followed any person in the prayers who have disputed his claim of being the Promised Mehdi (AS) after the third proclamation at Badli in 905 AH. In the said *Ijma'* It was unanimously agreed (consensus) that no Mehdavi shall follow a non Mehdavi in any type of prayers. To this effect a '*Mehzar* (document) was prepared which is popularly known in the Mehdavia community as '*Mehzar-e-Shah Dilawar*'.

He also had the pride of standing witness to the vision of Allah. Though he himself was not a big scholar but had the privilege of having several scholars as his disciples. Miyan Abdul Malik Sajawandi (RH) the greatest scholar of his time accepted the faith at the hands of Miyan Shah Dilawar (RZ). Miyan Abdul Malik (RH) was the author of *Siraj-ul Absar* (in Arabic), a book in reply to the scholars of Makkah who had objected about the Imam's (AS) claim of being the Promised Mehdi (AS). This book is very popular among the Mehdavis and several translations and commentaries have been written on it.

He played a vital role in spreading the faith in Berar and Maharashtra. His last Daira was at Borkhera, where he passed away in 945 AH, on the 2nd of Ziqada.

For the benefit of the readers we have given the brief life sketches of the five Caliphs (RZ) only. There were several hundreds of personalities who deserve special mention which God permit would be dealt with in a separate book.

THE MESSAGE

الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتَمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيْتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا

Today Thy faith is completed and perfected for Now Islam is chosen with bless (of Allah). - 5:3

While going through the introduction and the previous chapters dealing with the life history of the Imam (AS), the readers might have formed a general opinion about the personality, teaching and the impact of his message. However, it was felt necessary to have a separate chapter on the message and teachings. This was felt necessary because of the fact that some of the biased authors have misinterpreted his message and teaching, giving an impression to the innocent readers that the Imam (AS) was responsible for several innovations in Islam. This impression is baseless in view of the fact that the Imam (AS) has announced that he has been deputed to remove the innovations (*Bida't*), habits (*Adat*) and the customs (*Rasm*) which are not Islamic.

The readers are well aware that the unbiased non Mehdavi sources are unanimous about the unprecedented following of the Prophet (PUH) by the Imam (AS) and the strict adherence to Sunna by his companions (RZ). Thus to believe that a person of his stature would have innovated something new in the religion is itself an "innovation".

The main reason for the biased authors for such conclusions is the introduction of some obligations (*Farayad*) by the Imam (AS) such as *Dhikr-e-Kaseer*, *Talab-e-Deedar-e-Khuda*, *Tark-e-Duniya* etc. They are of the opinion that the obligations introduced by the Imam (AS) are new to the religion and thus fall under the category of innovations. They also feel that the obligations in Islam are only five: i.e. *Kalema*, *Salat*, *Saum*, *Zakath* and *Hajj*. They feel that anything beyond this is an innovation.

This concept is wrong on several grounds. Firstly, the meaning of innovation was not taken into full consideration before arriving at such a conclusion. Innovation is such a thing which was not in practice or does not find a place in the four sources of faith i.e. the Book (Quran), *Hadith* (Holy traditions), *Ijma'* (consensus) and *Qias* (opinion). Anything not supported by the above four sources is called an innovation. It may be recalled that the Imam (AS) had categorically stated that his religion was the Book and the following of the Prophet (PUH). Thus anything uttered and practiced by the Imam (AS) should be strictly within the framework of the Holy book and the practices of the Prophet (PUH). And these two main sources cannot be termed as innovations.

Secondly, the biased authors seem to have not taken pains to study the message in depth or to get clarifications from competent persons about their doubts.

The terminology used by the Mehdavis such as Tark-e-Duniya might have misled them to conclude that it was also something like the renunciation of the world prevalent among the other religions, like Christianity or Hinduism.

Thirdly, they have completely neglected the spiritual aspects of the Islamic teachings. They appear to have closed their eyes and ears to the numerous verses of the Holy script (Quran) and the Hadith (Holy traditions) which formulate the path of the Tareeqa. The Sufi orders in Islam are founded on these sources only. For details the readers may refer to the book. The Sufi orders in Islam written by J. Spencer Trimingham. Each silsila of the Tareeqa in Islam had its own teachings and practices derived and formulated by its founder, but none of them was capable to call itself an order formulated by one who was free from errors (*Masum-un-al'Kata*). The different styles adapted by different Khankhas are the valid proof that there existed a vast background for mysticism. But those who object to the teachings of the Imam (AS) seems to be ignorant of all such practices by the great sufis or did not recognise the existence of spirituality In Islam. In a nutshell the Imam (AS) has given final verdict with authority and competence for the path of Ma'rifa. He said that "the nearest path for Ma'rifa was within the Sunna of the Prophet (PUH)". Thus anything against the Sunna was rejected with equal force in the path of Ma'rifa as well. The teachings of the Imam (AS) are based on the verdict of Allah and hence obligatory. To understand this position one has to accept the claim of the Imam (AS) as the Promised Mehdi (AS) first. Instead of going into the details of the objections raised by the biased scholars we decided to narrate the teachings of the Imam (AS) and to scrutinize them with reference to the Book and the Sunna.

The basic concept of Islam right from Adam (AS) upto the Promised Mehdi (AS) is common and one i.e. The unity of Allah (Wahdat). To achieve this object all the messengers have preached in the manner befitting to their period and people. This is best illustrated In a narration from the Imam (AS). It is narrated that someone asked the Imam (AS) to convey the message of the Quran in a single sentence. The Imam (AS) replied that he can convey the message of not only the Quran but all the Holy scriptures in a single sentence i.e. "*La-Ilaha illallah*". Thus it is evident that the whole religious teachings are revolving around the axis of *La-ilaha illallah*. The stages of attainment of this were different during the periods of different messengers. For some it was their zenith to know it, for some to recognize it. For others to feel it and finally to visualise it. To achieve this

final purpose there was need for a two fold effort i.e. (1) To purify the lives of the individuals and make them to walk on the right path which is called *Sharia*. (2) It was necessary to purify the souls and to provide insight. This was called *Ma'rifa*. Both these teachings i.e. *Sharia* and *Ma'rifa* have been fully revealed in the Holy Book. There are clear indications of this in the Holy Quran itself. Since it was necessary to set right the lives of the individuals and prepare them to attain the higher spiritual aspect of *Ma'rifa*, initially only the *Sharia* was made obligatory and the path of *Ma'rifa* was taught only to a few selected ones. Perhaps this was the reason for the glaring differences in the practices of *Tareeqa* by the different *Sufia* orders. As per the Quran and several of the traditions of the Prophet (PUH) the teaching pertaining to the *Ma'rifa* were to be taught by the Promised Mehdi (AS). The Quranic verse:

ثُمَّ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا بَيَانَهُ

Nay more, it is for Us to explain it (and make it clear). - S75:19

interpreted as an indication of the explanation of the Quran to be revealed through the Promised Mehdi (AS). There are detailed discussions on these topics in the books like *Koh-lul-Jawahar*, *Muqaddam-e-Siraj-ul-Absar* etc. Those who are interested in deeper study may refer to these books. In short there were two kinds of teachings, one to make the life of an individual perfect and to give him basic faith and correct path; the other was very specialised subject of attainment of "*La-ilaha Illallah*" through the spiritual progress. This is also indicated in the tradition which pertains to the perfection (*Ahsan*). It is very clear that perfection in any field cannot be attained without specialised teaching and complete devotion. For this purpose several practices were introduced in the Quran and the Holy traditions. These were sorted out and put to practice by *Sufia* orders. On the command of Allah, the Imam (AS) introduced and propagated the path of *Ma'rifa* as revealed in the Quran and practiced by the Prophet (PUH). Thus it is evident that nothing new was introduced by the Imam (AS). The basic faith of the Muslims is that the Quranic commands and the prohibitions (*Amar-O-Nahi*) are all obligatory. Thus the teachings derived from Quran would also be obligatory. With this background we now go into the details of the teachings of the Imam (AS). As stated earlier the basis for all his teachings was Quran and the Hadith. Thus with each of the obligation ordered by the Promised Mehdi (AS) we shall quote few relevant verses of the Holy script as well.

THE OBLIGATIONS - Faraid

DESIRE FOR VISION (Talab-e-Deedar)

The very purpose of the creation of the intellectual beings is the desire of the Creator to get recognition. The Holy tradition 'Kunzu Kunza' (I was a hidden treasure and I loved that I be known), is a clear indication of this. Thus, the human race can accomplish the purpose of its creation by attaining to this object properly. The proper recognition of the Creator is not only to know Him or to have communion with Him but also to see him. And this is the only purpose of the teaching of all the Prophets (PUH) and Holy scriptures. Thus in the last scripture, Allah says:

فَمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوا لِقَاءَ رَبِّهِ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ أَحَدًا

(One who is desirous of visualizing Allah should do righteous deeds and should not indulge in infidelity (Shirk)) S18:110

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ لَا يَرْجُونَ لِقَاءَنَا وَرَضُوا بِالْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَاطْمَأَنَّنُوا بِهَا وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ
ءَايَاتِنَا غَافِلُونَ (٧) أُولَٰئِكَ مَأْوَاهُمُ النَّارُ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ

Those who rest not their hope on their visualising Us but are pleased and satisfied with the life of the present and those who heed not our signs. Their abode is the fire because of the (evil) they earned (S 10: 7-8)

قُلْ هَذِهِ سَبِيلِي أَدْعُو إِلَى اللَّهِ عَلَىٰ بَصِيرَةٍ أَنَا وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَنِي ۖ وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ
الْمُشْرِكِينَ

(Tell (O! Mohammed PUH) this is my path. I and my follower invite unto Allah for His vision with His grace we are not the infidels. (S 12: 108)

From the first verse it is evident that the desire to visualise Allah is the basic purpose of one's existence and to attain this, one has to do righteous deeds and should not indulge into infidelity (Shirk) with the Creator. So all the righteous deeds such as charity, prayers, holy wars etc. are to be regulated only for one purpose i.e. His vision. The second condition is a basic condition for all the believers i.e. non indulgence in infidelity and to establish the unity of Allah. This is a very complex and delicate stage. Commonly it is understood that to believe that Allah is the Creator and He alone is to be worshipped is

enough. But for the path of Ma'rifa the infidelity carries a wider sense, since the Ma'rifa is the path of love therefore attachment in any shape to anything except Allah shall lead to infidelity (Shirk). Thus the purpose of one's existence is to attain the highest unity of Allah, to be able to visualise Him.

In the second verse Allah has described those who will find their place of abode in the hell. The traits are (i) not desirous of His vision (ii) happy and contented with the worldly life, (iii) unmindful of the clear signs of Allah and (iv) not performing good deeds. Thus the first sign of the ill-fated ones as described by Allah is the lack of desire for His vision which leads to other evil deeds such as carelessness etc. Obviously, their place will be the Hell. Therefore it is a must for all the believers to have desire for His vision.

The third verse is a clear indication of the spiritual blindness of one who happens to be blind in this materialistic world i.e. during the life span, one has to attain the goal of the Vision of Allah to be able to visualise Him in the world to come. The fourth verse indicates the effect of the Holy mission (i.e. the Deputies of Allah). According to the Holy Verse the Prophet (PUH) is directed to make it clear that his path is for the Vision of Allah and his mission is to invite the mankind towards Allah for His Vision. The verse also indicates that the follower of the Prophet (PUH) i.e. the Promised Mehdi (AS) would also carry out that mission.

Thus from the above three verses we came to know the very purpose of creating the intellectual beings-the human race, the qualities of the Godly people and the qualities and fate of those who do not strive for His Vision. We also came to know about the purpose of the Divine Missions.

Thus all the activities of the Holy Mission and the human race are to be for attaining the sole object of His Vision. Therefore as per the indications in the fourth verse the very object of the advent of the Holy Prophet (PUH) I and the Promised Mehdi (AS) is to guide the humanity to His Vision.

In view of this position the only obligatory thing for the humanity should be the desire for the Vision of Allah. In view of the Quranic verses several great Sunni scholars and Sufis have opined that it is possible to visualise Allah. Among them there are two groups, one believes that it is not possible to have His Vision in this material world but the believers who have done good deeds may have the Vision in the heavens. The other

group is of the view that it is possible to have His Vision in this material world itself. [The views or the arguments of the Sunni Sufis and Scholars on this are not within the scope of this book. For details readers may refer to the commentaries such as *Tafseer-e-Kabeer*, *Baizavi* etc. They may also refer to Syed Mohammed Ali Hussaini Gesudaraz on Sufism written by Syed Shah Khusro Hussaini]

On the command of Allah the Promised Mehdi (AS) ordained that "Desire for Vision" (*Talab-e-Deedar*) is obligatory on each individual, male or female. He said that a true believer is one who visualises Allah with his eyes. inner eyes or in dream and the one who doesn't possess this quality but has a true desire to attain it was also a believer. The Imam (AS) also explained that to attain this purpose one must have true love of Allah and shall always be remembering Him, should not indulge in other worldly things, either with friends or foes. In this regard the Imam (AS) has explained the Quranic verse:

فَمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوا لِقَاءَ رَبِّهِ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ أَحَدًا

"Thus one who is desirous to visualise Allah should do righteous deeds and should not indulge in infidelity" (S18:110)

Saying that the righteous deeds is to renounce the lust for the material world. By doing so one will have nothing but the true love of Allah which will result in constant remembrance and recitation of His name. This will lead to fana (self annihilation) resulting in attaining the capacity to visualise Him.

This way one will attain the capacity to fulfill the purpose of his creation. For attaining this capacity several other obligations are to be fulfilled such as:

DHIKR-E-DWAM

In the Quran Allah says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ ذِكْرًا كَثِيرًا

"O! believers remember Allah remember abundantly" (S33:41)

From the preceding chapter it can be well ascertained that the very purpose of the human life is to attain Allah. which can be fulfilled by complete involvement and love only. Thus the Promised Mehdi (AS) announced that Islam is a religion of love (*Ishq*) of Allah.

Obviously, one who is in love with anyone will always remember the person or object with which he is in love. The remembrance will be more if the love is deeper and the lover will forget everything other than the loved one. In other words he would be deeply involved with his beloved and in his utterances, behaviour and actions, consciously or unconsciously he will exhibit his love. Keeping this position in view we can assess the importance of the edict of the Imam (AS) about the Remembrance (*Dhikr*) as an obligation for the believers. On the command of Allah the Imam (AS) has made the Remembrance (*Dhikr*) an obligatory deed (*fard*). Every true Muslim has to remember Allah always during his life span. This is also confirmed by the Quranic verse:

فَإِذَا قَضَيْتُمُ الصَّلَاةَ فَادْكُرُوا اللَّهَ قِيَمًا وَقَعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِكُمْ

(When you have performed the Salat remember Allah always- sitting, standing or lying)

From this verse it is clear that one has to remember Allah always in whatever conditions he might be. A man leads his life in three postures i.e. sitting, standing or lying. Quran says that he has to remember Allah in all these postures. All the activity of the human being are fulfilled in these three postures and therefore as per Quranic orders the human beings have to remember Allah while performing any activity such as business, eating, fighting or doing anything. Anytime spent without His remembrance is a loss. Any person spending more time in remembrance of anything other than Allah is unguarded or unmindful. The Promised Mehdi (AS) taught the Umma to remember Allah even while sleeping. He said that one has to remember Allah by reciting "La-ilaha Illallah" through his breath. When practiced properly one can remember sub consciously through a rhythmic combination of breath, mind and heart. At another place Quran says:

وَأَذْكُر رَبَّكَ فِي نَفْسِكَ تَضَرُّعًا وَخِيفَةً وَدُونَ الْجَهْرِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالْآصَالِ
وَلَا تَكُن مِّنَ الْغَافِلِينَ

(Remember Allah in your heart of hearts with fear and humbleness do not be unmindful). S7:205

These verses clearly explain the method of remembering and reciting the name of Allah. The basic quality of a believer is also described, he will remember Allah within his heart and would not be an unmindful person. The method of recitation of "La-ilaha Illallah" taught by the Imam (AS), perfectly synchronises with this verse. The Prophet Mohammed (PUH) had also stressed the importance of the recitation (*Dhikr*) in several of his traditions.

We quote here only one of the several traditions to bring home the point.

"Abi Darda narrates that the Prophet (PUH) said, shall I not inform you of the best deed which is purer in the eyes of your Lord and which elevates your status more than the charity of gold and silver and is even better than facing the enemy cutting each other's throat in a fierce battle (*Jihad*) killing each other. (We) said yes. (He) said the remembrance (Dhikr) of Allah . This tradition is reported by several sources.

This tradition also makes it clear that of all the deeds the remembrance or recitation is the best deed. Even better than charity or fighting in the path of Allah (*Jihad*). Recitation elevates the status of the man before Allah thereby he can reach to the zenith of spiritual evolution. Ways and method of recitation are many and the best among them is the litany of "*La-ilaha Illallah*" within (*Dhikr-e-Khafi*)

Several of the noted commentators of the Holy Quran have interpreted the verses relating to Dhikr as obligatory (Fard) on the part of every individual.

In view of the above it is very clear that the Promised Mehdi (AS) had said nothing new about *Dhikr-e-Khafi* or had not added a new obligation in Islam. But had confirmed what all had been told in Quran and Hadith; and as per the command of Allah he had taught the Umma to perform this obligation properly or in a correct manner to attain the maximum benefit.

TARK-E-DUNIYA (Renunciation of the world)

Generally in the religious terminology the word *Duniya* (world) is used as the opposite to the word *Aakhirat* (hereafter). It is also considered that Duniya is the cause for the losses in the life to come. Therefore in several religions the renunciation of the world is strongly advocated and practiced. The major religions which advocate the renunciation of the world as a must for attaining spiritual heights are Jainism, Buddhism, Hinduism and the Christianity. Thus the general opinion formed about the renunciation of the world is that one has to leave everything belonging to this world, curb natural needs and to sever all connections with the human beings. Therefore in the said religions those who relinquish the world would not indulge in any worldly affairs including marriage or reproduction.

This concept is basically contradicting the nature and hence cannot be an order from the Creator (Allah). Reproduction is a natural urge for fulfillment of one's individuality and continuity of human race. Thus to preach the stoppage of reproduction amounts to preaching the destruction of the human race from this planet. The orders of Allah would be for one and all. There cannot be any discrimination between a man and a man for the implementation of such orders. Therefore It is also not correct to believe that the renunciation is obligatory for a selected few. As said earlier the very purpose of creating an intellectual being is to get recognition. Then it is a must for the human race as a whole to try and attain Allah but not for a selected few.

Islam is a religion which confirms nature and helps in fulfillment of the activities of the nature. Anything against the nature is rejected. Therefore Islam cannot preach and had not preached the renunciation of the world in the, same manner as was. taught by other religions.

To understand the true meaning of the term Tark-e-Dunlya as used In Islam, we will have to first define the term Duniya (world). There is a tradition that somebody enquired from the Prophet (PUH) "O! Prophet (PUH) what is the world. The Prophet (PUH) said it is your *Nafs* (Desires). The moment you annihilate It, there is no Dunlya (World) for you". Thus it is clear that any deed or act done for the fulfillment of the worldly desires (*Nafs*) is a worldly act and therefore prohibited.

There are several verses in the Holy book condemning the world and the worldly desires and prohibiting indulgence there in.

فَأَمَّا مَنْ طَغَىٰ وَءَاثَرَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا فَإِنَّ الْجَحِيمَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَىٰ

(Thus one who disobeys and adopts the worldly life, indeed the Hell is his abode).(S79:37-39)

The above Quranic verse defines the qualities of the person who will be thrown into the Hell. It is that, he would be adopting to the worldly life in disobedience of Allah. This Indicates that adoption of worldly life amounts to disobedience of Allah. Several of the commentators have interpreted the above verse qualifying it with the non believers only. Thus it cannot be expected of a believer indulging in

There is another Quranic verse:

مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا وَزِينَتَهَا نُوفِّ إِلَيْهِمْ أَعْمَالَهُمْ فِيهَا وَهُمْ فِيهَا لَا يُبْخَسُونَ

(١٥) أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَيْسَ لَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ إِلَّا النَّارُ وَحَبِطَ مَا صَنَعُوا فِيهَا وَبِطُلٌ مَّا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

(Those who desire for the worldly life and its prosperity we fulfill their deeds towards them and they are not the losers in this world. For there is nothing but fire in the world to come. Whatever (good) deeds they have done are destroyed by them and their deeds are waste.) -(S 11:15-16)

Several commentators have concluded that this Quranic verse is meant only for the non believers. But commentators like Imam (AS) Fakhmuddin Radi have generalised it for believers and non believers alike. To analyse It more clearly in another Quranic verse Allah commanded the Prophet (PUH) to inform that if they are desirous of the worldly life and comforts he will provide the same and free them.

Thus even the wives of the Prophet (PUH) were not exempted from the warning about the worldly desires. Therefore It Is not proper to specialize it (lust for worldly desires) only with the non-Muslims. This applies equally to the believers also If they develop the qualities explained above.

In view of the above Quranic verses and several traditions most of the Sufis used to practice the renunciation of the world. But they were not guided with the authentic version of this practice. Therefore their ways were touching the boundries of non-Islamic style. Some of them were practicing celibacy which is against the Islamic teachings. The Promised Mehdi (AS) taught it in a pure Islamic way and made it obligatory on the believers on the command of Allah. Anything which stands in the path of Allah is to be abandoned. Therefore all the deeds of a believer should be strictly for and in the path of Allah. The Promised Mehdi (AS) taught the renunciation of the desire and negation of this material world. Thus the true believer is one who leads a normal life with his wife and children and acquires the necessities, but all his deeds are in the path of Allah. If he eats he eats to acquire enough strength to perform proper prayer or to use his energies for propagating the name of Allah. If he marries, he marries to acquire the peace of mind for devotion and also for the continuity of his race which will not only repeat the name of Allah alone but also propagate it. Thus whatever he does is for Allah alone. Hence the importance is about the attitude but not of action. To explain it clearly we refer to a tradition of the Prophet (PUH). The Prophet (PUH) said, on the doomsday some tribes (Groups) with the (Good) deeds equivalent to mountains would come. But they would be condemned to the hell. (His companions) said O ! Prophet of Allah (PUH) had they

offered prayers regularly, (Prophet) said yes. They use to pray regularly. Observe fast and used to be awake in the nights for prayers. But they were crazy after the (material) world. Thus one has to surrender his desires, deeds, life and everything to the will of Allah. This is to be expressed with full consciousness and devotion not only by words but also by deeds. The Promised Mehdi (AS) himself has set a great example regarding the renunciation of the world. In fact the lives of the Prophet (PUH) and his Holy companions (RZ) were the only examples of this. Once the Prophet (PUH) said the world is scum and one who desires it is (like) a dog. Thus the world and worldly desires are to be renounced.

This obligatory deed is a boon for those who are desirous of communion with Allah, which is the very purpose of the creation of the human beings.

TAWAKKAL (Reliance on Allah)

This is yet another higher law of Islam, which has been made obligatory by the Promised Mehdi (AS). In simple terms it means dependence on Allah and implies that one who is ambitious in his religious practices and faith should wholly depend on Allah for his needs - small or big. It also implies that one has to rely on Allah even for his spiritual progress i.e. one cannot attain higher spiritual stages even after undergoing several hardships without the will of Allah. There are several indications in the Holy book about the importance of Tawakkal.

فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ

(And trust upon Allah ~if you are the true faithful). -3:159

According to this verse those who are having trust in Allah are described as the true believers of Allah. This implies that one who depends on one's ownself is not a true believer. It may be noted that Allah has not prohibited or negated the effort but has stressed upon the attitude. One who is a true believer will have complete reliance on Allah, irrespective of the efforts. The efforts or labour are secondary things. The primary aspect is that whatever is due or so to say whatever Allah wishes can only be achieved. Thus to boast about one's achievements is to declare something against Allah. There is yet another Quranic verse.

وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَتَوَكَّلُوا إِن كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ

(Thus when you determine (for anything) then rely upon Allah Indeed Allah befriends those who rely on Him S5:23).

In this verse Allah has categorically announced that He likes the ones who depend on Him. It implies that Allah dislikes the persons who do not depend on Him. It is obvious that a master will never like a servant who feels independent. In respect of Allah this examples is not enough because Allah is not only the master but also the creator. There are several traditions of the Holy Prophet (PUH) in which he has described the importance of Tawakkal. In one of them the Prophet (PUH) has described the qualities of the Faithful. They are five (1) They fear Allah. (2) Their Faith increases when they read the Holy script. (3) They have full trust in Allah (*Tawakkal*) (4) They pray Allah regularly (salat) (5) They spend (wealth) in the path of Allah.

The Prophet (PUH) described the persons having the said proprieties as true believers and informed that they will attain higher spiritual stages and salvation. One of the five qualities is Tawakkal, which helps in salvation and relieves one from anxiety, worries and unhealthy competition for food and worldly positions. Thereby one can achieve higher spiritual stages.

In the presence of such clear orders if someone feels that dependence on Allah Is not obligatory then nobody can help.

SOHBATH-E-SADIQEN (Company of the ascetics)

It is yet another obligatory deed ordered by the Promised Mehdi (AS). It is very simple that one who is desirous of attaining any higher object, would try to be with the masters of the trade. The attainment of the objective of the Vision of Allah is the highest aspiration of any human being. Therefore for such aspirant it is a must to have company of the persons who can guide him to his goal Quran says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ

O true believers fear Allah and be with the ascetics S 9:119

While explaining the above, several of the commentators have concluded that company of the ascetic is an obligation on every Muslim. This obligation, if complied properly, will

not only help to achieve the ultimate goal but also help in solving several day to day problems in social life. Though a simple thing but it carries a great value. The English proverb - a man is known by the company he keeps- can be a good explanation for this.

UZLATH (Retreat)

Even before the attainment of Prophethood the Holy Prophet (PUH) used to retreat to the cave of Hira. Detailed discussions have been made about the benefits of retreat which helps in self analysis and meditation. Quran says:

وَأذْكُرْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ وَتَبَتَّلْ إِلَيْهِ تَبْتِيلاً

"And remember Allah and Isolate (yourself) from the others" S73:8

Commentators have explained this verse at length and have concluded that the believers have to disconnect themselves with everything pertaining to this world In search of Allah. In retreat one can have an opportunity not only to realise one self but also realise the purpose of ones creation. This realisation would lead him to attain Allah. Thus it is one of the important obligation prescribed by the Promised Mehdi (AS) for attainment of the higher objective.

OTHER TEACHINGS

USHR (Tithe)

Allah says in the Quran:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَنْفِقُوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ وَمِمَّا أَخْرَجْنَا لَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ ط وَلَا تَيَمَّمُوا الْخَبِيثَ مِنْهُ تُنْفِقُونَ وَلَسْتُمْ بِآخِذِيهِ إِلَّا أَنْ تُغْمِضُوا فِيهِ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ حَمِيدٌ

(O! ye who believe, give off the good things which ye have (honourably) earned, and of that which we bring forth from the earth for you). - S2:267

In the early stages Islam was considered to be the religion of the poor, for the poor and by the poor. The elite of the Makkah, specially the Quresh, considered it as an insult to be in touch with Muslims. The first converts were mostly the slaves and the downtrodden. During his entire life, the Prophet (PUH) was considered to be the saviour of the said classes. In Medina also the poverty persisted. After the conquest of Makkah

and other places the Muslims got possession of wealth and property. But the patronage of the poor continued. The importance of Islamic principles was more than the wealth and property. Though the Muslims acquired large quantum of wealth during the reign of the third caliph (RZ), yet the importance of wealth increased in the later days. There were several eminent companions (RZ) of the Prophet (PUH) who bitterly criticised Hz. Mauviyah (RZ) on this issue. Prominent among them was Hz. Abu Zar Gaffari (RZ). After the incident of Karbala the Muslim empire underwent a great change in the concept and the caliphate became hereditary like monarchy or kingship. The *Bait-ul-mal* was converted into the personal treasure of the ruler. The obvious result of these changes was that all the evils of kingship crept in and the distinction of Islam as a saviour of the downtrodden was over shadowed. Occasionally, rulers like Hz. Omer Bin Abdul Aziz tried to revive the original form.

Therefore the present day economic structure of Islam is largely different from the basic economic structure which existed during the early period. The nomenclature of the Islamic taxes remained the same, but there were many changes in their implementation and concepts. Most of the rulers changed the tax system according to their convenience. At times they increased the taxes to acquire more wealth for their luxuries. At times they reduced the taxes, just to please a particular section among their subjects. There are examples that *Jazia*, which is a tax for the protection of non-believers was levied and collected even from the newly converted Muslims. Sometimes it was completely waived off just to please the large number of non-Muslims in a particular region. Likewise liberties were taken with *Zakath* also. After the conquest of Baghdad by Mongols the collection of *Zakath* was not undertaken by the state, thereby the Muslim population took it upon themselves to pay *Zakath* voluntarily to the poor, philanthropic organisations or social institutions.

There were two types of taxes for the Muslims. They were zakath and ushr.

Zakath (Poor Tax)

It was a kind of property tax or wealth tax which was to be paid at the end of every year on the accumulated property or wealth. Not only the properties such as cash, gold, houses (excluding the residential house) were taxed, but this tax was also levied on goods in trade including the livestock. Generally, the rate was 1/40 or 2 1/2%. This was used for specific purposes mostly for the upliftment of the poor.

Ushr (Teith)

It was a kind of Income tax mostly on the Income derived by tilling the soil. Some have termed it as an agricultural tax. But it is not true. This tax was levied even on the goods brought to Medina for trade.

All the four schools of Islamic jurisprudence are unanimous on the compulsory levy of this tax. But they differ on the kind of income or the produce on which the tax is to be levied.

Ushr means 1/10th so obviously, this tax is levied @1/10th i.e. 10% of the income or produce. This tax was also abolished. or dropped and forgotten. The state of affairs was such that when the Imam (AS) introduced this tax there was a hue and cry among the Muslims in general and most of the critics have termed it as an innovation or interference in the *Sharia*. Some of the modern writers have even compared it with the Dasanth prevalent In the sikh community. Such writings by Muslims scholars are enough proof that this tax was completely forgotten by Muslims. In recent days the Government of Pakistan introduced a law reviving this tax on agricultural produce.

While establishing the Daira the Imam (AS) introduced Ushr and other practices which were completely forgotten by the Muslims. On the command of Allah he made the Ushr obligatory on all the individuals and on all types of income. The Ushr was paid into the Daira. The daira had its own Bait-ul-mal which used to be in the custody of one of the inmates. This was basically used for the propagation of the religion and was considered to be the right of those who have renounced the world and were concentrating on attainment of Allah's vision and were dependent on Allah.

SAWIETH (Equitable distribution)

The Prophet of Allah (PUH) had foretold about the Mehdi (AS) that, he would distribute the wealth equitably. As can be seen In the previous pages. the Imam (AS) used to distribute whatever he received in the name of Allah equitably among all the inmates of the Daira. Thus practically all the inmates were equal in the financial and social status .and the only object of distinction or honour was the piety (*Taqwa*) which according to Quran is the source for honour in this world and hereafter.

NOUBATH (Turn for recitation)

The Promised Mehdi (AS) has taken all possible care to guide the believers in the attainment of vision Allah. For this the recitation of *La-ilaha Illallah* within (*Dhikr-e-Khafi*) was made an obligation (*Fard*) and to practice this round the clock, the Imam (AS) allotted turns to groups of his companions (RZ). Specially the nights, were divided into three parts from Isha to Fajr prayers. During one section while one group recite and the other two groups used to take rest. After the allotted time was over the group would awake the next group for recitation. Likewise all the three groups prayed the whole night. Since the number of inmates was very high the litany (*Tasbeeh*) as introduced by Miyan Allahdad Hameed (RZ), was recited loudly to wake the next group.

IJMA' (Council)

As reported earlier one of the sources of faith in Islam Is Ijma' (Consensus). This was not put to full practice because there was never a consensus of all the scholars of Islam on any disputed faith. The Promised Mehdi (AS) revived this practice for the general problems of the Daira. Especially when the Daira was shifted and established at a new place all the inmates were invited for discussion (for location etc.) and distribution of work among them. The absentees from this were reprimanded. This practice was continued after the Imam (AS) for a general consensus about the important issues in faith and practice of Islam and its laws by the companions (RZ). It is still in practice by the Mehddavis and without any valid reason nobody absents from the Ijma'.

PRAYERS FOR MERCY

It is a common practice in the Muslims that after every obligatory (*Fard*) prayer they pray God for blessings and mercy by raising both their hands. This practice is not founded on any true tradition or practice of the Prophet (PUH). During the times of the Imam (AS) this practice was stopped and the practice of prayers for mercy and strength in one's faith was introduced. After the performance of two Rakat of *Salat -Tehtal Vadu* (After each ablution). This prayer for bless is to be made in a special *Sijdah* (bowing so as to touch the ground with the forehead in adoration). This is followed strictly by the Mehddavis. Thus the Imam (AS) revived the proper practice of offering non-obligatory *Salat* (prayer) and begging for mercy for one self.

DUGANA-E-LAILATUL QADR (Obligatory prayers of the Blessed night)

As reported earlier the *Lailatul Qadr* is the most blessed night for the Muslims and the Quran was first revealed for this earth on this holy night. Since this night was not made known to the Muslims and they were advised by the Prophet (PUH) to search it in the odd nights of the last ten nights of the Ramadan. This night was revealed with the blessing of Allah to the Promised Mehdi (AS). To offer thanks and to avail the blessing of this holy night, the Imam (AS) on the command of Allah made offering of two Rakat of Salat, obligatory on this night which is performed in group and the whole night is spent in the recitation of *La ilaha illallah* by all the Mehdavis irrespective of age and sex. Elaborate arrangements are made and full efforts are put in to make full use of this holy night and no time is wasted without the remembrance of Allah.

COMMUNITY WORK

Since the inmates of the Daira were residing in one place they had several common problems. These problems were sorted out during the Ijma' and work allotted to each individual. The Daira was protected with a fence and rooms and houses were made of mud and thatched roofs. A place for prayer was allotted and the inmates were entrusted with the works like the care taking of *Bait-ul-maal*, distribution of *Sawieth*, watch and ward of the Daira and arranging for water and fuel. On occasions of *Behr-e-aam* (general distribution of benediction (Faiz) elaborate arrangements for fuel and water were made a day earlier of the death anniversaries of holy ones. To have sufficient water and fuel all the adult male members used to attend to this work in a group. This practice is still followed as a token on such occasions by the Mehdavis and also to avail the benediction of the holy soul. All the unIslamic ceremonies, like sandal etc., at such occasions, prevalent at holy shrines were stopped.

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE DAIRAS

In short the entire social and economic structure of the Muslim community was distorted and the people were not aware of their duties and responsibilities towards Allah. The rulers and the ruled were treated as separate classes and the Islamic concept of governing was forgotten. Islam teaches no particular form of government but the basic concept is that the government is for Allah and the Governor is only there to implement the laws of

Allah, and to protect the inhabitants. This concept was nowhere in sight of either the ruler or the ruled.

The Imam (AS) was fully aware of this situation and it was one of the purposes of his advent to re-establish Islam in its pristine purity. To set right the affairs it was necessary to change the concept of the ruled and the ruler. All the governments of the day were un-Islamic. Therefore there was a need for an organisation which could implement the Islamic laws without foreign interference. The reformers earlier to the Imam (AS) have tried to dislodge the government and establish an Islamic Government to implement the Islamic law. There were two shortcomings in their efforts, namely. the character of the individual was not taken as the basic patron for any change in the society. It was taken for granted that if the government is changed or purified the individual will also be changed or purified. The process should have been the other way. Even though these attempts were made by honest persons with good intentions but they met with utter failure. The second shortcoming was that they failed to assess the power of the kings who were supported by the worldly scholars, who interpreted the Quranic verses to suit the rulers.

The Imam (AS) being a vice-sergeant of Allah could well assess the situation and administer the proper cure. He established Dairas which were self sufficient tiny Islamic states, where the Islamic laws i.e. civil, criminal, economic and spiritual could be implemented without coming into conflict with the existing government. He laid more stress on the purification of the individual as a basic unit of the society. He stressed about the need for the purification of the soul, purification of thought and the purification of the body. The aim that was set before an individual was the highest - that of attaining Allah. The Imam (AS) taught the believers to derive inspiration from the Holy book and the traditions for attainment of this aim. He also emphasised on the change of approach and concepts. Even performing salat or recitation of Holy book for worldly gains was prohibited. Due to these teachings the individuals went through a tremendous change. Firstly they lost the love and attachment of the worldly possessions. Secondly, they lost the fear of the rulers who were un-Islamic. They also stopped respecting the ulemas who were misusing the Islamic principles for petty gains. This resulted in the formation of a class of individuals who were pious, fearing Allah and bold enough to prevent any evil in the society. The Dairas were the places where the individuals voluntarily confessed their sins and underwent punishments as per Islamic laws. The Imam (AS) also wrote letters to the kings, not only inviting them to accept him as the Promised Mehdi (AS), but

also reminding them of their duties towards Allah as an individual and as a ruler. He had discussions with the emissaries of the kings on this issue and informed them that their kings were not the true Islamic rulers to be obliged. Thereby the obedience was directed towards Allah and the rulers who were obedient to Allah.

THE REFORM

قُلْ إِنِّي هَدَانِي رَبِّي إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ دِينًا قَيْمًا مِّلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

Say, verify my Lord has guided me to a way that is straight, a religion of right. - S6: 161

So, far we have gone through the details of the holy life. message and impact in general. The advent of the Promised Mehdi (AS) had many fold effect on the Muslim community. A few important aspects will be discussed in the following lines.

There were several disputes about the interpretation of the Holy Book and its verses. This has led to formation of several sects and sub-sects in the Muslim community. Added to this confusion about the Book, the traditions collected were not fool proof and several fake traditions have crept in inspite of great care taken by the collectors of the traditions. Thus the fake traditions were helping a lot in strengthlng the divisions and sub divisions. It was also a common practice to reject some of the Quranic verses as cancelled (*Mansuq*) on one or the other plea. This practice was increasing with the passing time and there were times when about 500 verses of the Quran were rejected as cancelled and some scholars like Shah Waliullah has accepted only 5 of the verses as cancelled. There was no authority for treating the Quranic verses as cancelled. The commentators according to their own capacities and understanding had taken liberty to treat the verses as cancelled. This is so important an issue that it should have been settled during the life of the Prophet (PUH) himself or at least during the period of, the holy *khilafat*, when the Quran was collected and written down in the present form. Hence any cancellation by the commentators of subsequent periods is not valid.

With this it is also established that it was not an issue in the early times. This goes to prove that the later scholars have innovated even with the holy verses. The very importance and continuity of any book would be lost if some of its portions are cancelled. The fun of all this was that the commentators have taken the Quranic verses to prove the

other Quranic verses as cancelled. This confusion was due to the fact that some of the Quranic verses are more descriptive about some issue than the other verses on the same issue. The example of this can be seen in the prohibitory orders on liquor. For details the readers may refer to the books like *Koh-lul-Jawahur* and *Muqaddam-e-Siraj-ul Absar*. The Promised Mehdi (AS) was deputed by Allah for restoring the pristine purity of the religion.

His responsibility is to explain Quran according to the will of Allah. Thus the greatest miracle of the Imam (AS) was the explanation of the Holy Book which was recognised by one and all. During his explanation he has established that no verse of the Quran is cancelled or contradictory to other. He has also established that there were no repetitions or explanatory sentences etc. in the Holy Book. Thus, first time in the history of Islam it was authentically proved that the Book is a regular, continued Book without cancellations. Apart from this the Imam (AS) had removed all the doubts about the traditions by saying that any traditions (*Hadith*) or narration (*Naqal*) contrary to his actions, actions of the Prophet (PUH) and the Holy Book was not true. This standard prescribed for the narrations is also helpful in sorting out the differences in the *Umma* (community).

In respect of the social aspect he has established Dairas which have been discussed. Here we would like to tell the readers that he was not only against indulgence in earning at the cost of remembrance of Allah but also he practically exhibited and insisted upon his followers that hoarding (*Zaqira*) is prohibited and that a real Muslim would depend on Allah rather than relying upon the stocks of hoarded articles. The Daira was an example of socio-economic life to be led in accordance with the Holy Book and the Prophet (PUH).

As can be seen from the life, the Imam (AS) was very practical in his belief and utterances. He put to practice whatever he taught to his followers. The Imam (AS) insisted upon action rather than on simple faith or belief without action. Thus he reformed the individual.

THE DAIRA AND THE MASJID-E-NABUVI (PUH)

As reported earlier one of the main object of the advent of the Promised Mehdi (AS) was to restore the pristine purity of Islam. To attain this goal, it was necessary to reform the society as well as the individual. This task was not only time consuming but also needed scientific approach as well as a model for the guidance of the followers. As can be seen

from the preceding chapters, the whole life of the Promised Mehdi (AS) was itself a perfect model and thus provided perfect guidance also. He exhibited the exemplary combination of social, moral and religious perfection. His followers, under his personal supervision, were guided to attain the goal of perfection. The Imam (AS) presented the model of the Holy life of the Prophet (PUH), by his perfect adherence of the Prophet (PUH) and this example was taken as a guideline by the followers. To explain this we can compare the life in a Daira to that of the life of the Prophet (PUH) and his companions in the *Masjid-e-Nabawi (PUH)*. There was total voluntary submission to the will of Allah at both the places. There were *Ashab-e-Sufa* with the Prophet (PUH) and the *Muhajireens* with the Imam (AS) in the Daira, both were wholly dependent on Allah. There was a government without a police or law enforcing authority in both the places. There are several instances where, at both the places, people have come forward voluntarily to submit themselves for punishments for the sins committed and also to deposit the Zakath and other taxes without any machinery for such collections. In fact in the times of the Prophet (PUH), there was no specific machinery for collection of Zakath and other taxes. The payment was almost voluntary and nobody deceived in calculation.

The displeasure of the leader was considered as the highest punishment at both the places, and people were ready to forego anything to get the pleasure of the leader. A comparative study of the *Masjid-e-Nabawi (PUH)* and a Mehdavia Daira will require a separate work. However, it can be concluded from the examples mentioned above that at both the places the individual was taken as an object of reform of the society. This resulted in a model society which was called a society of Angels by writers like Abul Kalam Azad. Obviously, for the society of Angels there was no need to have any type of enforcement machinery in the shape of police force, tax collectors or administrators. This was a society which used to administer itself through the guidance of the conscience of each individual under the supervision of the Apostles of Allah AS (The Prophet PUH and the Imam AS). With this small introduction we will fly to see the reform and the impact over the individual and the society as a whole.

The success of a reformer is judged from two aspects- a) The impact of the reform to its coverage in terms of the number of individuals and the area affected; b) The duration of the impact on the persons affected.

In respect of the Imam (AS) we can say that not only he had covered the largest area but had left an indelible mark wherever he went. It is generally admitted that wherever the Imam (AS) went, his message, teachings and personality had a great impact on one and

all irrespective of age, sex, mental calibre or social status. Scores of thousands of people accepted him as the Promised Mehdi (AS) and joined his fold. But there might be equal number of people who might have not accepted him as the Promised Mehdi (AS), but had accepted him as the greatest of the saints and under his influence had stopped several practices which were un-Islamic innovations (Bida't) which crept in the Muslim society over a long period. It is also admitted even by the non-Mehdavia sources that under his influence his bitter critics have also stopped several un-Islamic practices and had adopted the right path.

The person who admitted him as the Promised Mehdi (AS) had attained a respectable position regarding their adherence to the *Sunna* and following of the Quran, even in the eyes of their enemies. Abul Kalam Azad had stated that, piety and adherence to the Islamic law had become a symbol of the Mehdavis and even if a non-Mehdavi was found stressing importance on the Quran and the Sunna, was branded as a Mehdavi. From this statement of a non-Mehdavi one can assess the great impact of the Imam (AS) on one and all. Now we will take up a few important aspects and will try to see the impact of the Imam (AS) in respect of such matters.

a) Prayers only for Allah: The first and the foremost object of Islam is to make an individual recognise Allah as an object of prayer and also as a source of inspiration to lead his life. On several occasions Quran has said that the individual has to depend on Allah alone. It is also said in the Quran, that Allah is the authority which can bestow respect, wealth or spiritual heights. But in Muslim society of those days, the Muslims were looking upto the kings, nobles and the priests. This misconception was totally eliminated by the Promised Mehdi (AS) and the individual actions, faith and the blessings of Allah were taken as the source for such attainment. The respect of an individual was diverted towards his piety but not towards his wealth or official position. This concept though in a weaker position is still boldly expressed by the Mehdavis all over the world even today.

b) Islamic Brotherhood: As per the teachings of the Prophet (PUH) and the direction of the Quran, one Muslim is brother of another Muslim. And the wealth, women and the life, is protected by one another. But immediately after the demise of the Prophet (PUH) there were differences among the followers and this resulted in great wars among the Muslims, which are still continuing. It is a fact that Muslims are killed in far larger number by the Muslims themselves than by all the non Muslims put together. But it is a fact that the Mehdavis had never entered into a civil war or a war among themselves for

the past 500 years. The main reason for this is the elimination of a large state and the force to rule such a state. This element will lead to accumulation of wealth and concentration of power in one hand. Instead, the Imam (AS) introduced Dairas which were self governing autonomous and self dependent (dependent on Allah) states. It is also a fact that the Mehdavis have not indulged themselves in killings of any person who had recited the Kalima "*La-ilaha Illallah Mohammad-ur-Rasulallah SAS*". Whatever wars they had fought were only the defensive wars which were thrust upon them. No historian can cite an example where the Mehdavis have taken up arms for offence rather than defense.

c) Begging: Begging is also one of the prohibited acts in Islam. There are several traditions strictly prohibiting begging. There are several Quranic verses directing the Muslims to part their wealth in the path of Allah. but there is none directing them to beg from the wealthy. This being the position one cannot imagine as to how and when the begging was taken up as a profession by the Muslims. There are instances where the Prophet of Allah (PUH) had reprimanded people from begging. But today almost 1/5th of the Muslim population is depending directly or indirectly on this profession. There are people seen begging in the name of Allah, in the name of the Prophet (PUH), in the name of holy khalifas and even in the name of high priests. But there is none who begs in the name of the Promised Mehdi (AS) or his holy companions (RZ). This is even more important in view of the fact that a considerably large section of the community is not taking up any profession but depending wholly upon Allah (*Tawakkal*) for their survival. The Promised Mehdi (AS) had termed begging (*sawaal*) for any kind of help from anyone excepting Allah as *Haraam* (unlawful). Therefore inspite of all the socio economic problems a Mehdavi will never beg. If anybody takes to begging, then he is not considered to be a Mehdavi.

d) Trade of Quranic verses: Quran prohibits Muslims from indulging in trade of its verses, and religion was never supposed to be a profession for Muslims. The most pious man was asked to lead the prayers. The Prophet (PUH) used to lead the prayers himself and in his absence his first Khalifa, Hz. Abu Bakar (RZ) used to lead. In fact one of his qualification for being the Khalifa after the Prophet (PUH), was put forth that he was asked' to lead the prayers even during the lifetime of the Prophet (PUH). Likewise recitation of Quran, burying of the dead, calling for the prayers or even recitation of Nikah etc. were not taken up as profession. They were attended to by the Muslims according to their ability and availability. These functions were never institutionalised or used for earning livelihood. But in the subsequent years, all these were converted into

regular professions and people were trained to take up a particular wing of these professions. Even people are available to recite Quran on payment. The element of godliness and voluntary feature was forgotten. Thus there were people who recited Quran, prayed Allah, or performed any of the religious acts for money. Everything was done for money or remuneration mostly from the kings, but seldom for Allah. This aspect was so deeply rooted in the Muslim society that when the Promised Mehdi (AS) said one has to pray Allah for Allah, it looked as if he had said something new and he was termed as an innovator by the worldly scholars. The Mehdavis inspite of the fact that many of them depend on Allah without taking up any profession for their livelihood, have not taken up the religious acts and obligations as a profession. They recite Quran for Allah and teach it for Allah only. They call for prayers for Allah, they lead the prayers for Allah, they bury the dead bodies for Allah, even there is no remuneration for the recitation of Nikah. And whatever is given-is given in the name of Allah. There is no pride for the giver, no shame for the acceptor. There are several examples where anything offered even in the name of Allah was refused on the ground that the Daira was not in need of it and the person was advised to give it to those who were in need.

e) The Women: Islam is the first religion of the world which has given the women their appropriate place in the society. Thus, prostitution is strictly prohibited, and was totally eliminated during the early period of Islam. But again this vice had taken roots in the Muslim society under the patronage of kings, in the guise of cultural progress. In due course it became a symbol of the Muslim culture, and had gained so much importance that even the kings and nobles used to send their children to the kothas (red light areas) to teach them manners. Dancing dominated not only the courts of the kings and nobles but also the private gatherings of the worldly scholars and even at the tombs of great saints. This also led to several innovations (*Bida't*), at such places. Thus, the women was once again reduced to the status of an article to be sold in the open market. The Imam (AS) not only stopped all such un-Islamic activities but also groomed his followers in a way that they were totally free from any kind of trade of the women. Thus, the women were given their appropriate place in the society once again.

In view of the above description of the Mehdavis and their practices it can be seen that even today, after a lapse of about five hundred years, there are several pure Islamic practices followed by the Mehdavis. This is more important in view of the facts that the Mehdavis were under persecution right through this period, spent most of their lives in jungles as nomads, had little education and faced adverse economic conditions. Beside

this, during all this period, no reform movement was taken up and the Dairas were scattered all over, with little contact between them. Under these circumstances, any other race would have developed as a criminal race or vanished. But with the grace of Allah the Mehdavis even today are God-fearing, law-abiding and pious community. This indicates the deepest impact of the Promised Mehdi (AS) on the lives of his followers. In the Quran Allah says about this community:

يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مَنْ يَرْتَدَّ مِنْكُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِ فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِي اللَّهَ بِقَوْمٍ يُحِبُّهُمْ وَيُحِبُّونَهُ
أَذِلَّةٍ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَعِزَّةٍ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ يُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا يَخَافُونَ لَوْمَةَ
لَأَيْمٍ دَأَلِكُ فَضَّلُ اللَّهُ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

O! ye who believe, who so of you turn back from his faith, Soon Allah will bring a people whom he will love, And who love Him, humble towards believers, stem towards disbelievers. Striving in the way of Allah, and fearing not the blame of blamers. Such is the grace of Allah which He will bestow on whom He pleases. And Allah is all Embracing, All knowing. – S5:54



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HIJRAT ROUTE MAP OF HAZRAT IMAMUNA MEHDI-E-MAWOOD (AS)

