

The claim that Hazrat Mahdi (as) is a collective personality will prevent him being recognized

The appearance of Hazrat Mahdi (as), whom our Prophet (saas) said will be sent in the End Times and described as a holy individual who will eliminate fitnah on Earth and bring to it peace, justice, plenty, security, happiness and well-being, is an auspicious event the Islamic community has been awaiting for hundreds of years. The fact that a great many of the events revealed as portents of the coming of Hazrat Mahdi (as) are taking place one after the other is a clear sign that these glad tidings are about to be made a reality. The Qur'an contains various metaphorical glad tidings about the coming of Hazrat Mahdi (as), who is described in detail in terms of his name, qualities and activities in many hadiths of the Prophet (saas).

Statements by Bediuzzaman Said Nursi follow the same lines as the signs in the Qur'an and the hadiths of our Prophet (saas). However, the concept of the **"collective personality"** employed by Bediuzzaman in his works has led to the same misunderstanding with regard to Hazrat Mahdi (as) as it has with regard to the Prophet Jesus (as). It can be seen from accounts and from statements by great Islamic scholars that Hazrat Mahdi (as) will not be a collective personality, but rather a holy individual who has been described in great detail, right down to his physical features, character and good manners, and line of descent. Of course, however, Hazrat Mahdi (as) will have a collective personality, just like all the messengers who have gone before him. Indeed, it is revealed in accounts that this collective personality will enfold the whole world.

This means that Hazrat Mahdi (as) will be at the head of his followers, in other words of his collective personality. Indeed, there are several analyses in Bediuzzaman's writings that make this transparently clear. The quotations from Bediuzzaman below are perfectly clear and distinct as to leave no room for doubt that Hazrat Mahdi (as) is an individual, not a collective personality. Terms such as **"that person"** and **"that individual,"** used by Bediuzzaman in reference to Hazrat Mahdi (as), perfectly clarifies the misunderstanding regarding the concept of the collective personality:

Moreover, they imagined the mighty works pertaining to the collective identity or community which those individuals represent to be in their persons and expounded them in that way, so that they ascribed a form to them whereby when those EXTRAORDINARY INDIVIDUALS [the Prophet Jesus (as) and Hazrat Mahdi (as)] appear, everyone will recognize them. (Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, *The Words / Twenty-Fourth Word, Eighth Principle*)

In this passage Bediuzzaman uses the expression **"extraordinary individuals"** to refer to Hazrat Mahdi (as) and the Prophet Jesus (as), thus making it clear that both are real individuals rather than collective personalities.

... THAT GREAT PERSONAGE of the End Times will be from the Ahl al-Bayt [descended from the Prophet (saas)]. (Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, *Emirdag Addendum, pp. 247-250; Rays, p. 442*)

In the words **"that great personage of the End Times,"** Bediuzzaman reiterates that Hazrat Mahdi (as) is an individual who will appear in the End Times. The fact he states that Hazrat Mahdi (as) will be descended from the Prophet (saas) clearly reveals that Bediuzzaman is not referring to Hazrat Mahdi (as) as a collective personality because it is out of question for a collective personality to be descended from another human being.

... And I told them: "I cannot be sure I am a sayyid [descendant of the Prophet (saas)]. The generations are unknown at this time. But THAT GREAT PERSONAGE of the End Times will be one from the Ahl al-Bayt [the family of the Prophet (saas)]. (Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, *Emirdag Addendum, p. 267*)

In this passage, Bediuzzaman again refers to **"that great personage of the End Times,"** thus

clearly revealing that Hazrat Mahdi (as) is an individual, not a collective personality.

In saying that **Hazrat Mahdi (as) will be descended from the line of the Prophet (saas)**, Bediuzzaman again clarifies the issue. As explained above, in order for him to be descended from the Prophet (saas), Hazrat Mahdi (as) has to be a human being, which is what Bediuzzaman makes crystal clear in this extract.

Since His custom has proceeded in this way, certainly, at the time of the greatest corruption at the end of time, He will send a mujtahid, a mujaddid [reviver], and a judge, and ruler, and a Mahdi, and a guide to the true path, and a Qutb al-Azam [a great saint to whom Muslims adhere], and A RADIANT INDIVIDUAL, and THAT PERSON will be from the Family of the Prophet (saas). (Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, Letters / Twenty-Ninth Letter - Seventh Section, p. 515)

... mujtahid (a scholar who derives legal rulings)
... mujaddid (reviver)
... judge
... Mahdi
... guide to the true path
... Qutb al-Azam
... a radiant individual

As can be seen from their meanings, the qualities cited by Bediuzzaman can only belong to a human being.

In addition, Bediuzzaman Said Nursi refers to Hazrat Mahdi (as) as **"a radiant individual."** If Bediuzzaman had wished to emphasize that Hazrat Mahdi (as) was a collective personality he would have referred to him as a **"radiant collective personality,"** not as a **"radiant individual."**

Furthermore, the above use of the word **"a"** before the word **"individual"** again clarifies the issue. The word **"individual"** is also used in the sense of a single person. Bediuzzaman uses the words **"an individual"** here, not "two" or "individuals." Therefore, all the descriptions of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi clearly prove he is not referring to Hazrat Mahdi (as) as a collective personality.

As can be seen from all these statements by Bediuzzaman, like all the messengers sent over the course of history, Hazrat Mahdi (as) will come as an individual. He will also have a collective personality, however. A Mahdi movement will emerge from his preaching, intellectual struggle and activities. But Hazrat Mahdi (as) will personally be in charge of matters. Indeed, it is essential that Hazrat Mahdi (as) will be personally sent as an individual in order for these things to take place. Therefore, Hazrat Mahdi's (as) collective personality will be the ones who follow him. And he will be at the head of this collective personality as the leader. However, although the explanations regarding this matter in the hadiths of our Prophet (saas) and in statements by Islamic scholars are perfectly clear, the claim that Hazrat Mahdi (as) will be a collective personality rather than an individual may prevent people making a correct analysis of the subject. Belief that Hazrat Mahdi (as) will come as a collective personality may prevent people awaiting the coming of this holy individual, trying to recognize and locate him, and thus identifying him. (Allah knows the truth.)



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