

When Efforts Fail: Betrayal of the Elites in the History of Waiting for Imam Mahdi

From Aimlessness to the Delay of the Advent of Imam Mahdi (Peace Be upon Him): Analyzing the Role of Elites on the Path to the Noble Rule of the Righteous

One of the fundamental questions within the atmosphere of awaiting the advent of Imam Mahdi (Peace be upon him) is why, despite centuries having passed since the occultation, the conditions for the realization of the Infallible Imam's governance have still not been met. If the advent of the promised divine Savior is meant to bring about the complete fulfillment of the purpose of human creation and the establishment of justice on earth, then its delay is not merely a historical or temporal issue; rather, it indicates that a serious obstacle has emerged on the path of human society towards that destination. From this perspective, discussing the "betrayal of the elites" is not a subjective emotional or political judgment, but an attempt to understand one of the main factors behind this historical barrier.

To grasp the significance of this issue, we must first consider the purpose of human creation. In the monotheistic worldview, human beings were created to attain nearness to God, and this path can only be fully realized within the framework of divine guidance and under the guardianship (*wilayah*) of an Infallible Imam. Implementing such comprehensive guidance at the societal level requires a governance that can lead human beings in all dimensions of life toward this goal; this is what religious texts refer to as the Noble Rule of the

Righteous (*Dawlat al-Karimah*). Therefore, the delay in establishing this governance means a delay in providing the social groundwork for humanity's complete movement toward the purpose of creation.

Here, the role of the "elites" becomes crucial. Elites are those who, due to their scholarly, social, or managerial positions can shape society's thoughts and behavior. They are expected to organize the society's movement toward divine goals and to utilize historical capacities on the path to establishing the rule of truth. If this capacity is employed correctly, it can prepare the ground for society to draw closer to the era of the advent. However, if this same force is directed elsewhere or deviates from its true course, the result will be nothing but the wasting of society's historical potential.

From this standpoint, one can understand why the term "betrayal of the elites" is used. Betrayal here does not merely mean committing an individual error; it means failing to be faithful to the mission entrusted to the elites. The issue is not that the advent has been delayed; the issue is that human life, in the absence of a present and governing Imam, deviates from its true course. In this view, the betrayal of the elites does not help history move forward; instead, it stops it and keeps things stuck for a long time. That is why examining this phenomenon is not just an analysis of social behavior; it is a rereading of a crisis in knowing the human being that determines our destiny.

This article seeks to analyze the concept of the betrayal of the elites in relation to the purpose of creation, the position of the Imam of the Time, the bond with the Ahl al-Bayt (Peace be upon them), and the social responsibility of the era of awaiting Imam Mahdi (Peace be upon him); this analysis demonstrates how lack of direction in social action can lead to the delay in the fulfillment of the divine promise.

The Relationship between the Purpose of Creation and the Betrayal of the Elites

In previous lessons, we stated that the purpose of human creation is becoming like God Almighty. This similarity means the existential movement of the human being along a path where divine attributes manifest in their lives. However, achieving this goal is only possible if the human being is placed on the correct path whose pinnacle is reflected in the Quranic phrase “You alone do we worship, and You alone do we ask for help” [1]. Servitude to and reliance upon God define the framework for human movement on this path.

In this perspective, human movement is always accompanied by difficulties and obstacles. Satanic forces among the jinn and humankind are present on this path, and the human being must, in confronting them, arrive at the truth of “There is no power nor strength except by Allah” [2] and “There is no effective agent in existence except Allah” [3]. This belief ultimately leads to the “testimony of the self” (*shahadat al-nafs*); that is, the heartfelt testimony that true power in the world belongs only to God.

But when an individual or society deviates from the correct path, difficulties multiply and the destination becomes unreachable. In such a situation, efforts may be abundant but fail to yield the desired outcome. It is at this juncture that the concept of the betrayal of the elites becomes meaningful because if those who hold positions of intellectual or managerial guidance in society divert the direction of society’s movement from the true path, effectively obstruct the realization of the purpose of creation at the social level.

The Position of the Imam of the Time in Evaluating the Betrayal of the Elites

To achieve the purpose of creation, human life must be regulated according to the instructions of a knowledgeable and infallible guide, so that we and future generations remain protected from harm. If such regulation does not occur, even apparently religious activities may stray from the main path.

Within this framework, the betrayal of the elites occurs when those holding social positions make decisions and take actions without regard to this criterion. When the direction of scientific, managerial, or cultural activities is separated from the axis of obedience to the Imam of the Time—the infallible expert of our era—efforts, however extensive, will lack true direction. Such aimlessness can lead to deep social harm.

The bond between human beings and the Ahl al-Bayt (Peace be upon them) is not merely an emotional or historical connection; it is an existential and guiding relationship. Therefore, severing this bond means cutting off the most important guiding relationship in human life.

In this respect, the betrayal of the elites is not merely the abandonment of an administrative or social duty; it can also manifest as a practical severance of the bond with the teachings of the Ahl al-Bayt (Peace be upon them). When decisions, plans, and social orientations distance themselves from the guidance of the Ahl al-Bayt (Peace be upon them), society gradually deviates from its divine path. In this state, even if religious appearances are maintained, the true direction of movement changes. This situation is not only a political issue but also an ontological one because the governance of the Infallible Imam signifies the full manifestation of divine guidance in the social order.

Those who have caused this situation have been subjected to a divine curse. In the Ziyarat Ashura, the curse is directed at two groups: the murderers of the Ahl

al-Bayt (Peace be upon them) and those who destroyed their rights and status [4]. If those holding social positions do not move on the path toward the realization of the governance of truth, they practically play a role in perpetuating a situation that God, in the *Ziyarat Ashura*, calls the “greatest calamity.” This indicates that betrayal here is not merely an individual error; it can have historical and civilizational consequences.

Signs of the Betrayal of the Elites in the Social Arena

The first sign is the lack of direction in efforts. Many efforts may be undertaken in various fields, but if these efforts are not connected to the goal of the advent of Imam Mahdi (Peace be upon him) and the establishment of the rule of truth, they will lack the main direction.

The second sign is neglecting to prepare for meeting the Imam of the Age. According to Imam Khomeini, all officials and the general public must prepare themselves for such a meeting and presence. If a manager assumes his position without such attention, this situation constitutes a form of betrayal [5].

The third sign is deviation from the grand goals of the Islamic Revolution of Iran. Serving the people and awaiting the advent (*al-Faraj*) are not two separate matters. Service without awaiting and awaiting without service both constitute a form of deviation. When the elites of society limit their attention solely to material issues and ignore the greater goal—the realization of global Islamic governance—society distances itself from its true path.

Historical Consequences of the Betrayal of the Elites

One of the most significant consequences of the betrayal of the elites is a prolonged delay in the advent of Imam Mahdi (Peace be upon him). The 1170-year delay in the Savior's advent is a result of the undirected efforts of scholars and elites. The direction of a society's elite activities can have a direct impact on the historical process of fulfilling the divine promise.

Another consequence is the continuation of the calamity of the Imam's absence from governance. When society fails to prepare the grounds for the establishment of the rule of truth, this situation persists, and its effects manifest in various social dimensions. Furthermore, our enemies are constantly plotting and have plans in various cities to advance their objectives. If the elites of society lack a clear direction, the ability to effectively counter such plans diminishes.

The betrayal of the elites ends when the direction of social activities is set toward the establishment of the Noble Rule of the Righteous. This orientation must manifest in various spheres of individual and social life—from scientific planning to social management and political decisions.

Under such conditions, awaiting the advent will no longer be merely a mental state or supplication, but also, it will transform into a practical program for organizing life. If a society's activities are aimed at the purpose of the coming of Imam Mahdi (Peace be upon him), that community will gradually achieve what was divinely promised.

The concept of the betrayal of the elites means deviation from the path of divine guidance at the social level—a deviation that manifests as aimless activities, neglect of the centrality of the Imam of the Age, and distancing from the goals of the Noble Rule of the Righteous. This betrayal is considered not merely an

individual error, but an effective factor in delaying the fulfillment of the divine promise.

The responsibility of a society's elites is not merely to carry out extensive activities; more importantly, it is to determine the correct direction for these activities. When scientific, managerial, and social efforts are connected to the axis of the Imam of the Age and the establishment of the rule of truth, the movement of society gains meaning. Otherwise, even abundant efforts may stray from the main destination.

Therefore, the main issue in analyzing the betrayal of the elites is not a lack of effort, but the absence of a divine direction in these efforts—a direction that must be formed in connection with the Ahl al-Bayt (Peace be upon them), preparedness for the advent of the Imam of the Time, and striving for the realization of the Noble Rule of the Righteous.

From the Betrayal of the Elites to Individual Responsibility

If the purpose of human creation is to attain nearness to God, and if the realization of this path on a social scale requires the rule of the Infallible Imam, then the issue of the delay in the formation of this governance is no longer a marginal or merely historical matter. From this perspective, any factor that diverts society's movement from this destination is, in truth, standing against the realization of the purpose of human creation. This clarifies why the discussion of the betrayal of the elites gains importance beyond mere social or political critique.

In every society, the elites are the possessors of the power to direct. They can converge the scattered efforts of society onto a single path and steer historical

capacities toward a grand destination. However, if this same force is employed in a direction other than alignment with divine guardianship (*wilayah*), the result will be nothing but the waste of historical opportunities. In this case, society may strive for years, achieve progress, and even attain great accomplishments, but because this movement is not within its proper orbit, it cannot bring humanity to the destination for which it was created.

This is where the issue of direction becomes crucial. History has shown that sometimes the deviation from the path begins not from overt enemies, but from the very point that should be the source of guidance. When the elites of society distance themselves from the axis of the Ahl al-Bayt (Peace be upon them) or organize their efforts in another direction, the greatest loss does not only return to them; it also leads the society that trusted them astray from the main path. For this reason, the betrayal of the elites is not just an individual slip; it can become a factor in prolonging a calamity in which all humanity shares: deprivation from the governance of the Infallible Imam.

Nevertheless, the issue is not limited to criticizing the elites. The deeper question is to what extent each individual has been able to align the path of their own efforts with the true direction of the universe. If the most important question on the Day of Judgment is, "How did you live in relation to the Imam of your time?" then all human activities—from education and work to social and political decisions—must find meaning in the light of this question.

Perhaps the greatest danger is that a person strives for years, only to realize in the end that these efforts were expended on a path other than the true destination. Understanding this truth invites us to serious reflection: Is our life orbiting the same purpose for which the universe was created, or have we,

unwittingly, become part of that same historical aimlessness that has lengthened the path to that great promise?

The answer to this question is not merely a theoretical contemplation; it is the starting point for re-evaluating our relationship with the path of the history of waiting for the advent of Imam Mahdi (Peace be upon him). Perhaps the first step on this path is to ask ourselves, before criticizing others: In which direction are our efforts moving, and what is our role in bringing closer or pushing away that divine promise?

References

[1]. *Iyyāka naʿbudu wa iyyāka nastaʿīn* (Quran, 1:5)

[2]. *lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā billāh*

[3]. *lā muʾaththira fī al-wujūdi illā Allāh*

[4]. "May Allah curse the people who slew you. May Allah curse those who paved the way for them to do so. And who made possible for them to fight against you."

[5]. "Our officials should be aware that our revolution is not confined to Iran. The revolution of the people of Iran is the starting point of the grand revolution of the Muslim world under the stewardship of promised Mahdi (may our souls be his ransom). May God would grant to all Muslims and people of the world and let his reappearance take place at the present age. If economic and mundane issues would make the officials deviate from their mandated duty, serious danger and dreadful treachery would ensue. The government of the Islamic Republic should try its best to administer the people in the best possible manner. This does not mean deviating from the sublime objectives of the revolution; that is, establishment of the global Islamic government." (*Sahifeh-ye Imam*, vol. 21, pp. 327-8)