

Imam Al-Mahdi - “A sun hidden behind the clouds”

or

Imam Al-Mahdi – The Last Luminous Pearl of the household of the Holy Prophet

Characters:

Imam - Zohra Kassam

Narrator - Fatema Rehmani

Deputy 1 - Zayn Visram

Deputy 2 - Fatema Kanji

Deputy 3 - Zayn Visram

Deputy 4 - Fatema Kanji

Scene 1 - Man 1 (Mohammed) Sabiha Kassam

Man 2 (Ahmad)- Farzana

Man 3 (Hajiz) -

Scene 2 - Man 4 (Ja'far) - Mehtab

Man 5 (Hassan) - Sabiha Kassam

Scene 3 - Man 6 (Abdu Sahal) - Farzana

Man 7 (Ja'far) - Mehtab

Man 8 (Ali) - Aliya

Seyyid Rashti - Sarah Walji

Narrator:

On this morning of the 15h Sha'ban 255 A.H., at the time of Fajr , in the city of Samaraa, the world **has been** illuminated with a powerful ray of light, into a human form, which **has now become** the source of existence for the universe. Finally, the Divine promise **is** fulfilled and Imam al-Mahdi (a.s) **is** born in spite of the efforts of those who **deny** him. Due to the severe restrictions imposed by the reigning Abbaside Caliph, Al-Mutamad, and in order to safeguard himself for achieving the objectives decreed by Allah, Imam Mahdi (a.s) **is** forced to conceal himself from the eyes of the people.

When Imam Hassan Al-Askari (a.s) **is** martyred on the 8th Rabi-ul-Awwal 260 A.H., the office of Divine Leadership (Imamat) **is** transferred to the Last Luminous Pearl of the Household of the Holy Prophet, Imam al-Mahdi (a.s), who **is now** five years old.

Although His Eminence **does** not appear amongst the people, some persons in whom he **has** trust and confidence **are** allowed to visit him and convey the problems and religious queries of the Shi'ites; and they **communicate** to the people, guidance and commands of the Divine Luminous Light.

Amongst the companions of Imam-e-Zaman, four **are going to become** his most famous and confidential representatives who **will act** as mediators between the concealed Imam and the people, known as the 'Nawwab al-Arb'ah' (the four deputies). They **shall have** the honour of acquiring this elevated status and all of them **will hail** from and **reside** in Baghdad.

EPISODE 1 - Ghaybat-e-Sughra

Scene 1 - The first deputy : Uthman Bin Saeed

Narrator:

Hazrat Uthman Bin Saeed is the first special deputy of Imam Mahdi (a.s) in Ghaybat-e-Sughra. He is first appointed to the post of deputyship by our 10th Imam, and then retained to the same post by our 11th Imam who has said about him “This man is reliable, upright and a trustworthy person. He was dependable for the previous Imam and is dependable and reliable even for me in my lifetime and even after my death. Whatever he conveys to you is from our side and everything he gives to you is from us”. As a result, Uthman bin Saeed is now assisting our Imam to look after his affairs.

He has taken up the profession of butter seller (Sammaan) to disguise his more critical duties and responsibilities of deputyship from the masses in general and the tyrant kings of Bani Abbas in particular. In this way, he is able to protect his own life and the lives of the Shias from the persecution of the Abbasid rulers. He has a very ingenious way of operating. He collects all the money and trusts from the Shias for our Imam. Out of fear of the Bani Abbas, he hides all the money and trusts in butter sacks so as to escape the scrutiny of the common masses. In this way, he can safely courier everything to our Imam.

It is important to note that all the cities where the shias inhabit have deputies. These agents accumulate money by the way of Khums, Zakaat or any other means from the Shias on behalf of our Imam. They then collectively transmit all this wealth to Hazrat Uthman, who in turn submit it to our Imam himself.

In this scene, we shall witness the presence of three agents of our Imam, having travelled from different cities for the purpose of handing over to Uthman the wealth entrusted to them for our Imam.

{Uthman is sitting on stage.}

{Muhammad from Madina enters, hugs Uthman}

Muhammad Salaamun Alaykum Ya Uthman, O representative of our Imam

Uthman: Wa alaykum salaam, ya Muhammad
Kayfa Haluka ? How was your journey from Medina ?

Muhammad: Alhumdulillah

Uthman: How are our Shia in Medina ?

Muhammad: O Uthman! As you know, we all live in fear, but we have complete faith in the Almighty. ??? (Find situation in Medina)
Ya Uthman, this is the amaanat of our Imam that I have brought from Medina.

{Muhammad hands over a bag with some money to Uthman}

{Ahmad bin Ishaq from Qum, enters, hugs Uthman}

Ahmad: Salaamun Alaykum Uthman..

Uthman: Wa alaykum salaam, ya Ahmad.

Ahmad: Ya Uthman, this is what I have brought from Qum by the command of the Imam.

{Ahmad hands over a sack full of cotton/wool to Uthman}

Uthman: Thank you. Ya Ahmad, what is the situation of the people in Qum nowadays?

Ahmad: ??? (find situation in Qum)

{Hajiz from Baghdad itself, enters, hugs Uthman}

Uthman: Salaamun Alaykum ya Hajiz How are you?

Hajiz: Wa alaykum Salaam ya Uthman. By the grace of the Almighty, I have reached you safely, alhumdulillah.
I have brought some goods belonging to our Imam to you.

{Hajiz hands over a bag to Uthman and is ready to leave}

Uthman: O Hajiz, you have been entrusted with something else too. Why have you not delivered it?

Hajiz: There is nothing else left.

Uthman: What happened to the two pieces of cloth that were handed to you by the cotton seller?

Hajiz: By God, you are right. But I have forgotten about them, and now I do not know where they are.

Uthman: ok, go to the cotton seller to whom you delivered two bundles of cotton. Open the bundle on which there was some printing, and you will find that entrusted material in it. Dear Hajiz, it is your amanat from the people and it is your responsibility to bring the TOTALITY of the goods entrusted to you.

{all 3 men and Uthman are now sitted. Uthman addresses himself to all of them}

Uthman: O my noble associates, when you return to your cities, explain to our shias the meaning behind this minor Ghaybat of our respected Imam Al-Mahdi (atfs). After the demise of our 11th Imam, Imam al-Hujjat is the last proof of Allah on this earth and the management of the affairs of our shias is entirely in his hands. And the way of benefiting totally from him in his ghaybat is like the benefiting from the sun when it disappears from eyes behind the clouds. He is present within us even though he cannot be individually recognised and seen.

Ahmad: We shall surely do justice of the efforts of our Imam.

{The three men are ready to leave}

Uthman: (hugs Muhammad) Ya Muhammad, have a safe journey back to Medina, and convey my salaams to the Holy Prophet, the Lady of Light, and to all the ai'maahs of Jannat-ul-baqi

(hugs Ahmad) O Ahmad, do not forget to pay my homage to my Lady Fatema Ma'sooma when you return to Qum.

(hugs Hajiz) Take care O Hajiz. Do not forget to return to the cotton seller...

{All three men leave}

Narrator:

Upon returning to Baghdad, hajiz **does** what he was told to do, and **brings** the remaining of the goods back to uthman. After five years of serving the Imam, time has now come when Uthman bin Saeed is ready to leave this world. He calls his son Muhammad and hands the responsibility of deputyship to him.

{Muhammad enters}

Uthman: My dear son Muhammad, the time for my departure from this earth is near. Take this...
{hands letter to his son}.

It is a letter from the Imam where he has assigned you your duties. I was ordered to convey this message and I have done my duty.

{Muhammad opens the letter and sits by his father's side}

Imam: O Muhammad, May God protect your father as he has been our trustworthy person. After his demise, you will be his successor and my representative. You will be the medium and channel between the Shias and myself. Refer to me in your problems and rely on me in your affairs. May Allah be pleased with your actions.

Scene 2 - The second deputy : Muhammad Bin Uthman

Narrator:

Muhammad bin Uthman **continues** in his father's footsteps and also **disguises** himself as a butter seller. He **manages** to keep the Imam's existence secret from the Abbasid rulers until the early years of the reign of al Mutadid. The rulers **have** then started searching hard for the Imam and **have** killed countless mu'mineen with even the slightest resemblance to him. Spies **are** set up to probe the khums network, **therefore** the Imam **has** issued an order for the Shias neither to take his name nor to show any mas'ala of khums to anyone unless they **are** absolutely sure of the person they **are** talking to.

In this scene, we shall witness one of the numerous miraculous acts completed by Muhammad Bin Uthman through the order of Imam Al-Hujjat. He requests Ja'far bin Matil, one of his associates in Baghdad, to help him fulfil his duty to the Imam.

{Muhammad on stage}

{Ja'far enters and both hug}

Muhammad: Salaamun alaykum Ja'far.

Ja'far: Wa alaykum salaam

Muhammad: Ya Ja'far ! I have a request for you. Go to Wasit and take with you these pieces of cloth and this bag of money. When you reach Wasit, hand the bag and cloth to the first person you will meet.

Ja'far: I will leave for Wasit right away!

Muhammad: May you be in the protection of Allah

(Narrator: Ja'far goes to Wasit and meets with Hassan)

Ja'far: Salaamun Alaykum

Hassan: Wa alaykum salaam.

Ja'far: I am Ja'far bin Ahmad and I have come from Baghdad by the order of Muhammad bin Uthman.

{Both hug}

Ja'far: Muhammad has requested me to hand these pieces of cloth and this bag with money to the first person I meet when I reach Wasit.

{Hands him both the bag and cloth}

Hassan: (raises his hand) Alhumdulillah ! O Ja'far, a man by the name of Amiri has just died. I have just left the house to get a shroud for him.

{Opens the goods sent by Muhammad and looks in astonishment}

Look at this Ja'far! Alhamdulillah! Muhammad has sent everything I needed to prepare for Amiri's burial. I needed some money and a shroud. The money in this bag is exactly the amount that is needed to cover all the expenses related to the funeral. This bag has everything I need for the funeral.

(raises his hands) Oh Allah! May Your blessings be on our Master, The Imam (a.s), the guide, the guided, the one established in authority by Your Command.

O Ja'far, come with me. Let us proceed with the funeral.

{Both leave the scene}

Narrator:

Muhammad served the Imam for forty years. Before his demise, he follows the Imam's command regarding the next deputyship and designates Hussein Bin Rawh as the next special representative.

Only to put if time allows → (A man by the name of Ja'far bin Madaini relates that he used to take the goods that belonged to the Imam to Muhammad bin Uthman. However, one day, whilst he went to give four hundred dinars to him, Muhammad bin Uthman asked him to go and deposit the money with a man by the name of Hussayn bin Rawh. Surprised, Ja'far asked him the reason why he did not accept it himself. Muhammad bin Uthman said: "Take it to Hussayn. You should know that I have appointed him as my successor". Ja'far went on to ask if he had done so under the instructions of the Imam. He replied: "Yes". Hence, Ja'far took the money to Hussayn and from this time on, he always deposited the Imam's share with him.)

Scene 3 - The third deputy : Hussayn Bin Rawh

Narrator:

Hussayn Bin Rawh **is** the third deputy of our Imam, and **is** also known as Abul Qasim. He **is** respected by everyone and **is** acknowledged as the most learned and wise leader of his time. His sociable nature **has helped him win** respect even from the Ahlul Sunnah. He **completely manages** to keep his activities secret from the Khalifas, whilst maintaining good relations with them.

Abul Qassim **is** appointed as a representative after Muhammad bin Uthman for two basic reasons:

- (1) This position **is** only granted to those who **are** completely sincere
- (2) To remove the doubt in some people's minds that only those who **have** blood relations or proximity with Muhammad Bin Uthman **stand** the chance of gaining successorship.

Among the companions and close associates of Muhammad bin Uthman, there **are** a number of people, such as Ja'far bin Matil, who **hold** much higher position in merits than Hussayn bin Rawh. In fact, many thought that the deputyship would be given to Ja'far Matil. However, contrary to the generally held expectation, it **is** Hussein who became the next deputy. Everyone at that point **submits** to Muhammad bin Uthman's decision, including Ja'far.

In the next scene, a man by the name of Abdu Sahl Nawbakhti questions Ja'far on his thoughts on the newly appointed deputyship.

{Ja'far and Abdu Sahl on stage}

Abdu Sahl: Ja'far, Can I ask you something? How did Hussein get appointed to the position of deputyship, when you were more qualified to assume it?

Ja'far: O Abdu SAhl! Our Imam knows best about whom to appoint. I myself know that I am always in debate with the opponents of Shiaism. If I were the deputy, maybe at the time of heated debate, in order to prove my point, I would have revealed the Imam's whereabouts. But Hussayn is not like me. Even if our Imam was hiding behind him or under his garments, he would allow himself to be scissored into pieces but would never expose our Imam to the enemies.

Abdu Sahl: Glory to be Allah, surely we should not question the choice of our Imam!

{Both leave the scene}

Narrator:

After this incident, there **has been** no doubt on the appointment of Hussayn as the successor after Muhammad bin Uthman. People **are pleased** and **have been following** the advice of this special representative.

Let's see the following incident which describes how Hussayn **stands** for the Imam and **manages** the affairs and requests of the Shias

{Ali bin Babawayh (Sheikh Saduq's father) enters sitting on one side of the room. Hussayn bin Rawh sitting on the other side, with a partition in the middle}

Ali: (takes a paper and pen, writing and thinking aloud at the same time)

"I am writing to you O my Master, may His mercy and blessings be on you, seeking a favour from you. I have complained to you for what has happened to me seeking solutions firstly from Allah and then from you for a matter that has obsessed me. I am helpless in combating the problem and for that I have resorted in seeking help from Allah and from you, knowing the status you have with Allah. I am confident that you will help me get the solutions to my problems swiftly and that you will intercede on my behalf.

I am helpless and moreover I am sinful; so help O my master and present this problem to Allah and I pray to Him that He will solve this quickly and grant me victory and success in finding the solution to my problems.

O my Imam, I write this to you with tears of distress. I place my hopes on your words that you are not heedless of our life affairs and do not forget remembering us. But the words also make me ashamed for my deeds are not worthy of being placed before you. O my Imam, you have said that you seek us for Allah's sake, but we should seek you for our own benefits. You are the only one I can turn to. O you the last luminous light of the household of the holy prophet, I turn to you, and ask you to pray for me, so that Allah blesses me with a son; a son which will serve this religion after I depart from this world.

So I pray to Allah for great salvation and near victory with calmness from all fears. For Allah is most high and does what he wants. Allah is sufficient for me from the beginning and in my hopes. Whatever Allah wishes, there is no strength nor any power except in Allah the high, the great."

{Gets up}

I must go and give this letter to Husayn bin Rawh.

{Ali walks to Husayn Bin Rawh on the other side of the stage}

"O Husayn bin Rawh, Salamun Alaykum.

Hussayn: Alaikum Salam

Ali: This is my note and wishes to the Master of the Era, our 12th Imam (a.s.), so please hand it over to him for you are indeed trustworthy".

Hussayn: O Ali ! I will surely fulfil your request and pray to the Almighty to grant you your wishes.

{Ali leaves and Hussayn stands up and goes to the middle of the stage. He holds the letter given by Ali. A voice is then heard}

Imam: O Hussein, inform Ali that I have prayed for Him, and that in the near future, Allah will favour him with a son.

Narrator:

This very year, Ali is granted a son by the name Sheikh Saduq. After that, several other sons have been born. But it is Sheikh Saduq who always prides himself on having been born through the special prayer of the Imam. In fact, whenever Sheikh Saduq is seen in the learning sessions with prominent teachers, studying extremely well, people say: "it is not surprising that you are studying so well. After all you were born through the prayer of the Imam Mahdi!"

The letter that Seikh Saduq's father had written when he asked the Imam to pray for him is known as "Ariza". It is written with a lot of love and care. In this letter, mu'mineens present their salutations and praises to the Imam and also write their problems, worries and hajaats. Even though our Imam is hidden from our sight just as when the sun hides behind the clouds, we take benefit of his existence by writing this Ariza in the name of Hussayn Bin Rawh, before placing it in lakes, rivers or oceans.

Hussayn has served the Imam faithfully for about twenty one years and he appoints Ali Bin Muhammad Seymouri as the next deputy of the Imam before leaving this world in Sha'ban 326 A.H.

Scene 4 – The fourth deputy : Ali Bin Muhammad Seymouri

Narrator:

Muhammad Seymouri is the fourth deputy of the hidden Imam. He is also known as Abul Hassan. For three years, he holds this special post of deputyship. However, unlike the previous deputies, he is not able to perform any major task due his shortened time in duty. One of his extraordinary achievements is the prediction of the demise of a member of the Shia community. One day, Ali bin Muhammad Seymouri, without any indication, says: “May God have mercy on Ali bin Babawayh Qummi !!”. Those who were present there made note of the date of this pronouncement. Later, the news came that Ali bin Babawayh died on the very same day.

When Ali’s death was approaching, he is asked about his immediate successor. In this regard, a ‘Tawqee’, which is a signed letter written by Mahdi (a.s) himself, is given out as a reply:

{Ali Bin Seymouri is on stage, holding the letter}

Imam:

“In the Name of God, The Beneficient, The Merciful.

O Ali Ibn-e-Muhammad Seymouri!

May Allah increase the reward of your brothers on account of the difficulties born by you. You will die within six days. So prepare yourself for the inevitable. Do not appoint anyone as your successor because your demise will mark the end of the minor occultation and the beginning of the major occultation. I will not emerge but after a long time when the hearts of the people will become hardened and the world will become full of injustice, tyranny and oppression.

But as for the problems which will arise in the future, tell your Shias that they should refer to the narrators of our traditions (Mujtahids) for their verdicts as I am Allah’s proof to them. Whatever is narrated by the learned scholars upon whom you are having trust should never be doubted.

However, it will not be for too long that some men will claim to have seen me. Anyone who makes such a claim before the coming out of Sufyeni and the sound from heaven announcing my reappearance, is a liar and an imposter. There is no might nor strength except that of Allah, the Al-Mighty, the High.”

Narrator:

Ali bin Muhammad Seymouri leaves this world exactly as predicted by the Imam in Sh’aban 329 A.H, which marks the end of Ghaybat-e-Sughra.

EPISODE 2 - Ghaybat-e-Kubra

The period of the minor occultation started from the time of Imam Hassan Askari (a.s)'s death in 264 A.H. and continued till the end of the special deputyship in 329 A.H., which lasted for about seventy years. After this, our Imam went back into occultation, which has lasted up until now and will do so until his reappearance. During Ghaybat-e-Kubra, we have duties and responsibilities. We cannot just sit back, relax and await the reappearance of our Imam. But what are these duties? How do we know what our duties are? After all we have never met our Imam. One way is to understand the messages that have been given to a number of people who have been lucky enough to have met our Imam. There are many traditions, all of which have a message for us.

We have chosen a renowned tradition known as the Hadith of Seyyid Rashti. This hadith has been reported to us by Sheikh Abbas Qummi. It has been cited from Saleh Taqi Seyyid Hashim Musavi who was a merchant residing in Risht. He was well known as a pious person extremely particular about strict observance of the rules of religion. He performed all prayers and Ziarah and also paid all the dues ordered in religion. In the year 1280 A.H. he went to Tabriz on his way to Makkah and was a guest at the house of Haji Safarali, a merchant in Tabriz. There he met a traveller who was going to Tarabuzan with goods and so decided to join him. At the first station 3 more men joined them. Together they reached a place called Raznatur-Rum. They were warned that the journey from here to Tarabuzan was going to be a dangerous one! They all agreed that they would leave early, stay close together and try to reach their destination as quickly as possible.

Half a mile into their journey, it became pitch dark, followed by a strong wind and a heavy storm. All the travelers covered their heads and increased their pace. Seyyed Rashti also tried to gallop faster and to keep up with the rest, but to no avail. The distance between Sayyed Rashti and the rest of the travelers kept growing, and the weather became foggier until Sayyed Rashti could not see the rest of the travelers at all. He decided to stop. Let us see what happens...

SR: {getting off his horse and sitting on the ground – out of breathe, a little scared and not being able to see properly}

This storm is severe! I can hardly see anything! Maybe, I will just wait here, for a while, until sunrise and then I will make my way back to Raznatur-rum and start my journey again, InshAllah! Maybe I will be able to find a few guides who could guide me and maybe even protect me.. [looking up and raising his hands] InshAllah!!

{Just as he is settling down, SR sees a garden opposite and a gardener appears! SR stands up in amazement! The gardener walks towards him}

IZ: Salam Alaikum

SR: {still shocked to see someone here and also the luminous face}
Alaikum Salam

IZ: Who are you? Tell me, why are you here?

SR: We were on our way to Tarabuzan. In this storm, my companions in our caravan have managed to proceed far ahead of me and I have been separated from them. I am totally ignorant of the way ahead.

IZ: Why don't you recite Tahajjud?

SR: Namaz-e-Shab?

IZ: Yes Tahajjud. Recite tahajjud so you may find your way.

{IZ leaves the stage (or if we can have a black curtain type thing for IZ to stand behind) and SR engages in Tahajjud immediately. After a little while, IZ comes back. SR is sitting}

IZ: Why are you still here? Why have you not gone yet?

SR: {looking down}
I still have not discovered the way. I do not know in which direction to go.

IZ: Recite Ziyarat-e-Jaamiaah...Try to recite Ziyarat-e-Jaamiaah [then leaves stage]

SR: {still sitting and talking to himself}
But.. but.. I don't know ziyarat-e-Jaamiaah by heart...how will I recite it ?
{stands up and starts reciting Ziyarat-e-Jaamiaah with a look of surprise on his face}

{Recite only a couple of lines on cd and fade out the ziyarat and SR just moves his lips. Just as he finishes, IZ comes back on the stage}

IZ: Are you still here? Have you still not gone?

{SR sits on the floor, crying. IZ puts hand on shoulder}

IZ: Why are you weeping?

SR: I still have not found the way.. Will I ever reach my destination?

IZ: Recite Zaiyarat-e-Ashura [*leaves the stage*]

{SR recites Ziyarat-e-Ashura - fadeout just like Ziyarat-e-Jamiaah}

IZ: Have you still not gone?

SR: {Still in tears}
It is ok. I will just wait here till sunrise. It is ok. I will just go back and hopefully I'll find some travelers and start again.

IZ: It is ok. Come follow me... come with me.

{In the book it is narrated that the when SR holds the reigns of the horse to lead him, the horse refuses to move but when Imam a.s. holds the regins, the horse follows our Imam straight away – It will be difficult to portray though??!!??}

{As they are walking, IZ give some advice}

IZ: Why don't you recite Tahajjud? Nafila, Nafila, Nafila!
Why don't you recite Ziyarat-e- Ashura? Ashura, Ashura, Ashura!
Why don't you recite Ziyarat-e-Jamiaah? Jaamiaah, Jaamiaah, Jaamiaah!

{SR looks at him admiring the noor from his face.. and just as they are walking...}

IZ: {pointing}
Look! Your caravan has just reached the river bank and they are all descending to do wudhoo for morning prayers.

{IZ helps SR to mount his horse. IZ leaves the stage whilst SR is still looking towards the caravan}

SR: Shukran...

[when he looks down, IZ was gone.. He looks around] .. Where is he? Where is he gone? And why was he speaking in Farsi? This is a Turkish area.. [Confused, he rides off the stage..] Alhamdulillah! Shukranlillah!

Narrator:

We have no doubt that such actions kindness and rescuing the helpless in dangerous predicaments can only be the generosity of our Imam, Imam zamana (a.s). The recommendations made to Sayed Rashti are not just recommendations to him, but to all of us! For example, when our first Imam gave the recommendation of Du'a Kumayl to Kumayl ibne Ziyad, it was a message to all of us, and Alhamdulillah, we all recite the du'a on a regular basis. We also need to implement messages of our Imam into our daily lives. This particular message contains recommendations of Tahajjud, Ziyarat-e-Jaamiah and Ziyarat-e-Ashura. And these recommendations are completely authentic, straight from the source. Let us make an extra effort, let us try and recite these ziyarahs, and tahajjud on regular basis. Unfortunately, we only recite these extremely rarely, sometimes just once a year or even less. Let us pray to Allah to give us the tawfeeq to obey our Imam in every way possible and to make us part of his army when he reappears.