

The Appearance of *al-Dajjāl* and the Descent of Masīḥ Īsā: An Analytical Study of *Mushkilah Aḥadīth*

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Abstract: The appearance of *al-Dajjāl* and the descent of Masīḥ Īsā is an integral part of the Islamic belief system according to the Last Day. Many debates have arisen around this topic generating arguments and counter arguments among the scholars of Islam. Naturally, there are two parties holding their opinions and providing scholarly evidences to support the stand. This study focuses on the *Mushkilah Aḥadīth* on the appearance of appearance of *al-Dajjāl* and the descent of Masīḥ Īsā, analysing the standpoints of both proponents and opponents. It attempts to critically reveal the strength and weakness of each submission. And the researcher reaches into conclusion based on the analytical study of *Mushkilah Aḥadīth*.

Key words: Appearance of *al-Dajjāl*, Descent of Masīḥ, *Mushkillah Aḥadith*, *ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Authenticity.

Introduction

The appearance of *Masīḥ ad- Dajjal* and the descent of Masīḥ Īsā are considered among the major indications of the Last Hour. Masīḥ al - Dajjal is the impostor, who is supposed to precede the real Masīḥ Īsā before the End of Times, leading the people astray by imitating some strange deeds and by entering Jerusalem, after which he will be slayed by Masīḥ Īsā. A number of authentic *aḥadīth* of the Prophet (PBUH) attests to this. However, Muslim scholars differ in their opinions as to the reality of the text of such *ahadith*. While some denied the authenticity of these *ahadith*, claiming that there is no expressive statement in the Qūr’ān to justify the issue, others uphold the reality of

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the matter as contained in the authentic *ahadith* and the interpretation of the relevant verses of the Qūr'ān.

The study sheds lights on the reality of this matter through the exploration and analysis of different opinions of both the classical and contemporary scholars of *ḥadīth* and *Mufāssirs* (commentators of the Qūr'ān).

The Genesis of the Controversy

The controversy over the descent of Prophet Īsā as a sign of the Last Hour was triggered in the mid-20th century, by the fatwa of international *ulamā'* issued by Sheikh al-Azhar Mahmūd Shaltut, which stated that Prophet Īsā is already dead and will never descend at the End of Times. This contradicts the commonly held belief of the Muslims that Prophet Īsā was neither killed nor crucified, but was saved and raised to heaven by Allah, and his descent will be one of the major signs of the Last Hour. This is contained in the following noble verses:

They said (in boast) "We killed Christ Jesus the son of Mary the Apostle of Allah"; but they killed him not nor crucified him but so it was made to appear to them and those who differ therein are full of doubts with no (certain) knowledge but only conjecture to follow for of a surety they killed him not.. Nay Allah raised him up unto Himself; and Allah is exalted in Power Wise (4:157-158)

Both parties differ in their interpretations of the Qur'anic verses on the death of Prophet Īsā as follow:

Behold! Allah said: "O Jesus! I will take thee and raise thee to myself (3:55)

I was a witness over them whilst I dwelt amongst them; when Thou didst take me up thou was the Watcher over them and Thou art a Witness to all things. (5: 117)

The bone of contention revolves around the interpretation of *tawaffa* in 3: 55. The antagonists of the descent of Prophet Īsā render *tawaffa* as "death". They argue that the common Qur'anic usage of *tawaffa* is death as in *Qul yatawaffakum malakul maut Say:*

"The Angel of Death put in charge of you will (duly) take your souls" (32:11)

Innallaži tawaffahumul malâikah (When angels take the souls of those who die in sin against their souls, 4: 97), *waminkum man yutawaffâ* (some of you are called to die, 22:5), *hattâ yatawaffahunnal mawt* (until death do claim them, 4: 15), and other noble verses of similar nature. Therefore, they conclude that Prophet is already dead.

Furthermore, the expression *bal rafa'ahullahu ilaihi* (Nay Allah raised him up unto Himself, 4: 158) is explained thus: "The verb *rafaahu* (lit. "he raised him" or "elevated him") has always whenever the act of *raf* ("elevating") of a human being is attributed to God, the meaning of "honouring" of "exalting". Nowhere in the Qur'an is there any warrant for the popular belief that God has "taken up" Jesus bodily, in his lifetime, in to heaven. The expression "God exalted him unto Himself" in the above verse denotes the elevation of Jesus to the realm of God's special grace (Asad, 2003). For instance: *Warafanahu makanan aliyyan* (And we raised him to a lofty station, 19: 57). This is used with regard to Prophet Idris.

For the upholders of the descent of Prophet *Īsā*, the word *tawaffa* in 3: 55 and 5: 117 is not to be rendered as "death". It has to be understood in light of the expression *bal rafa'ahullahu ilaihi* (Nay Allah raised him up unto Himself, 4: 158) and the authentic *ahādīth* that confirmed the descent of Prophet *Īsā*.

Qūr'ānic point of view

The foremost issue posed by the antagonists is that there are no indications in the noble Qūr'ān to support the appearance of *al-Dajjāl* (Anti-Christ) and the descent of *Masih Īsā*. The proponents provide the following answer: Beside the fact that great *Mufasssirun* have indicated a number of verses in the Qūr'ān on this issue, the authentic *ḥadīth* of the Prophet (PBUH) is equally "*wahy*" (revelation from Allah) as stated in the noble verse: "Nor does he speak from (his own) inclination. It is not but a revelation revealed." As a result, his authentic *ḥadīth* is enough an evidence to justify the appearance of *al-Dajjāl* and

the descent of Masīh ʿĪsā as two of major indications of the Last Hour as contained in many authentic *aḥādīth*, such as the following:

Hudhaifa b. Usaid al-Ghifari reported:

Allah's Messenger (PBUH) came to us all of a sudden as we were (busy in a discussion). He said: What do you discuss about? They (the Companions) said. We are discussing about the Last Hour. Thereupon he said: It will not come until you see ten signs before and (in this connection) he made a mention of the smoke, *Dajjal*, the beast, the rising of the sun from the west, the descent of Jesus son of Mary (Allah be pleased with him), the Gog and Magog, and land-slides in three places, one in the east, one in the west and one in Arabia at the end of which fire would burn forth from the Yemen, and would drive people to the place of their assembly (ṣaḥīḥ al-mūslīm#2901).¹

In the above ḥadīth, related by Imam Muslim, appearance of *al-Dajjāl* and descent of Masīh ʿĪsā were mentioned by the Prophet (PBUH) among the ten signs of the Last Hour. However, the following ḥadīth, also related by Imam Muslim, made mention of another great event that will take place and at which point Masīh ʿĪsā will descend, thus:

Abu Huraira reported Allah's Messenger (PBUH) as saying:

The Last Hour would not come until the Romans would land at al-A'maq or in Dabiq. An army consisting of the best (soldiers) of the people of the earth at that time will come from Medina (to counteract them). When they will arrange themselves in ranks, the Romans would say: Do not stand between us and those (Muslims) who took prisoners from amongst us. Let us fight with them; and the Muslims would say: Nay, by Allah, we would never get aside from you and from our brethren that you may fight them. They will then fight and a third (part) of the army would run away, whom Allah will never forgive. A third (part of the army) which would be constituted of excellent martyrs in Allah's eye, would be killed and the third who would never be put to trial would win and they would be conquerors of Constantinople. Moreover, as they would be busy in distributing the spoils of war (amongst themselves) after hanging their swords by the olive trees, the Satan would cry:

¹ Book of tribulations and Portents of the hour, chapter: The signs which will appear before the hour.

The Dajjal has taken your place among your family. They would then come out, but it would be of no avail. And when they would come to Syria, he would come out while they would be still preparing themselves for battle drawing up the ranks. Certainly, the time of prayer shall come and then Jesus (PBUH) son of Mary would descend and would lead them. When the enemy of Allah would see him, it would (dīṣāppear) just as the salt dissolves itself in water and if he (Jesus) were not to confront them at all, even then it would dissolve completely, but Allah would kill them by his hand and he would show them their blood on his lance (the lance of Jesus Christ) (ṣaḥīḥ al-mūslīm#2897).

Great *Mufāssirs* (commentators of the Qūr’ān) have confirmed the reality of the descent of Masih Īsā from their interpretations. Bayḍāwī interprets Qūr’ān 4:159 thus “And there is none from the People of the Scripture, but that he will surely believe in Īsā before his (Īsā’s) death”. He stated that his descent is one of the sign of the Last Hour. In accordance with the tradition, he will descend to the holy land, slays *al-Dajjāl*, attends the dawn prayer, and observes the prayer behind the Imam, according to Sharī’ah of Muhammad, then slays the swine, destroys the cross, destroys the churches and oratories, and kills the Christians, except those who believe in him. He concludes that all Jews and Christians will believe in him, after that Īsā will die and Muslims will bury him (Bayḍāwī, 2,241).

According to al-Ṭabarī interpretation, “All People of the Scripture will believe in him (Īsā) before his (Īsā’s) death”. Īsā will kill *al-Dajjāl* and all communities will become one – Islam, *Ḥanīf*, the religion of Ibrahim. (Al-Ṭabarī, 3,186) relates his interpretation to Ibn Abass as reported by Saīd b. Jubayr by two routes, Abu Malik as reported by Ḥusayn by three routes, al-Ḥassan al-Baṣr by five routes, Qatādah as reported by Saīd (b. a. ‘Aruba) and Ma’mar, and Ibn Zayd by one route (Robinson, 1991, P.79). In support of this interpretation, al-Ṭabarī cites the following hadith:

Abu Hurayrah (Allah is pleased with him) reports that the holy prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:

"All the prophets of Allah are like sons of the same father whose mothers are different. I am nearest unto Jesus Christ.

There is no prophet between me and him. Remember, he will certainly descend and you should recognise him as soon as you see him, for he will be of a medium stature, his colour will be red and white. The hair of his head will be straight and it will appear as if water is about to flow therefrom, although there will be no moisture in it. He will be clad in two grey sheets of cloth. Having descended (from the heavens), he will demolish the crucifix, slay the pig, abolish the jizya and the other religions will vanish giving place to Islam alone. Allah will destroy false messiahs during his reign and peace and comfort will prevail upon earth so that camels will graze with lions, tigers with oxen and wolves with goats. Children will play with snakes without causing the slightest injury to each. He (Jesus) will continue under the conditions so long as Allah wills and ultimately he will die, when Muslims will offer the funeral prayers and bury him."

Ibn Kathīr agrees with the interpretation of al-Ṭabarī. In his analysis, he stated that the verse reflects the sequence of thought, which began with the reference to the claim of the People of Scripture that they killed Masīḥ ibn Maryam; moreover, the descent of Masīḥ Īsā is attested to by *Mutawatir ahadith* of the Prophet (PBUH). All the People of the Scripture will believe in him at that time. Ibn Kathīr cites a collection of *ahadith* of the Prophet (PBUH) on the descent of Masīḥ Īsā. Majorly, the following ḥadith:

Narrated Abu Huraira:

Allah's Messenger (PBUH) said, "By Him in Whose Hands my soul is, surely (Jesus,) the son of Mary will soon descend amongst you and will judge mankind justly (as a Just Ruler); he will break the Cross and kill the pigs and there will be no Jizya (i.e. taxation taken from non-Muslims). Money will be in abundance so that nobody will accept it, and a single prostration to Allah (in prayer) will be better than the whole world and whatever is in it." Abu Huraira added "If you wish, you can recite (this verse of the Holy Book): -- 'And there is none Of the people of the Scriptures (Jews and Christians) But must believe in him (i.e Jesus as an Apostle of Allah and a human being) Before

his death. And on the Day of Judgment He will be a witness against them." (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī#3448)¹

Narrated Abu Huraira: Allah's Messenger PBUH said: 'How will you be when the son of Mary (i.e. Jesus) descends amongst you and your imam is among you'.

Dajjāl and descent of Masīḥ Īsā in *Aḥadīth*

There are a number of authentic *aḥadith* of the Prophet (PBUH) on the appearance of *al-Dajjāl* and the descent of *Masīḥ Īsā*. Many of these *aḥadith* are contained in the sound collections of *ḥadith* (*siḥaḥ sittah*), such as *Al-Bukhārī* and *Muslim*. However, some issues are raised against the authenticity of these *aḥadith* by the antagonists. These include lack of evidence from the *Qūr'ān*, inconsistency between the *aḥadith* of the Prophet (PBUH) on his dream in which *al-Dajjāl* was performing *tawaf* and his *aḥadith* restricting *al-Dajjāl* from entering *Makkah* and *Madinah*, the Prophet (PBUH) made mention of appearance of thirty *ad-Dajjāls* in some of his *ahadith*, the claim that it is not a tradition of Allah to establish an impostor on earth and strengthening him with supernatural powers, the like of which He has not given to His Prophets and then punish the believers who believe in him, and the claim that all *aḥadith* of the Prophet (PBUH) on the subject matter are either weak or fabricated.

The dream of the Prophet (PBUH)

Another issue posed by the antagonists is that the *aḥadith* of the Prophet (PBUH) on his dream in which he saw *al-Dajjāl* performing *tawaf* is in contradiction with his *ahadith* barring *al-Dajjāl* from entering *Makkah* and *Madinah*. In addition to that, the *ḥadith* stating that the city of *Madinah* will have seven gates as at that time. They then asked the question "where are the gates?" The following are some *aḥadith* in this regard:

Narrated Abu Bakra: The Prophet (PBUH) said, "The terror caused by *Al-Masih Al-Dajjāl* will not enter *Medina* and at that time,

¹ The advent (descent) of *īsā*, Son of *Maryam*.

Medina will have seven gates and there will be two angels at each gate (guarding them) (ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī#7125).

Narrated `Abdullah bin `Umar:

Allah's Messenger (PBUH) said. "While I was sleeping, I saw myself (in a dream) performing *Tawaf* around the Ka`ba. Behold, I saw a reddish-white man with lank hair, and water was dropping from his head. I asked, "who is this?' They replied, 'The son of Mary.' Then I turned my face to see another man with a huge body, red complexion and curly hair and blind in one eye. His eye looked like a protruding out grape. They said (to me), He is *Al-Dajjāl*." The Prophet (PBUH) added, "The man he resembled most is Ibn Qatan, a man from the tribe of Khuza`a." (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī#7128)

Narrated Salim from his father:

No, By Allah, the Prophet (PBUH) did not tell that Jesus was of red complexion but said, "While I was asleep circumambulating the Ka`ba (in my dream), suddenly I saw a man of brown complexion and lank hair walking between two men, and water was dropping from his head. I asked, 'Who is this?' The people said, 'He is the son of Mary.' Then I looked behind and I saw a red-complexioned, fat, curly-haired man, blind in the right eye which looked like a bulging out grape. I asked, 'Who is this?' They replied, 'He is *Al-Dajjāl*.' The one, who resembled to him among the people, was Ibn Qatar." (Az-Zuhri said, "He (i.e. Ibn Qatan) was a man from the tribe Khuza`a, who died in the pre-Islamic period.")

The scholars of hadith have provided explanation on this issue. The dreams of the Prophets are always true. However, the *tawaf* of *al-Dajjāl* will be prior to the appearance of his (*al-Dajjāl*) evils. Therefore, he will only be restricted from entering Makkah and Madinah after the appearance of his evils. As for the seven gates of the city of Madinah, this refers to the major entrances of Madinah. In addition, the fact that Madinah will have seven gates at that particular time cannot be denied.

The Appearance Thirty *al-Dajjāls*

Another issue raised by the antagonists is that if *al-Dajjāl* is real, why Prophet (PBUH) refers to thirty *al-Dajjāls* in other *ahadith*. For instance, the following *ahadith*:

Abu Huraira reported Allah's Messenger (PBUH) as saying:

The Last Hour would not come until *Dajjālūn* and liars have appeared nearly thirty in number, and each one of them would claim that he is a messenger of Allah (ṣaḥīḥ al-muslīm#157).

Jābir b. Samura reported:

I heard Allah's Messenger (PBUH) as saying: Before the Last Hour, there would be many liars, and there is an addition in the hadith transmitted on the authority of Abu Aḥwas of these words:" I said to him: Did you hear it from Allah's Messenger (PBUH)? He said: Yes (ṣaḥīḥ al-muslīm#2923).

The answer provided for this question is that, reference to thirty *ad-Dajjāls* in these *ahadith* is not in any way contradictory to the appearance of the major *al-Dajjāl* that will appear at the Last Hour. The Prophet (PBUH) gave a particular description of him thus:

Narrated Anas:

The Prophet (PBUH) said, "No prophet was sent but that he warned his followers against the one-eyed liar (*Al-Dajjāl*). Beware! He is blind in one eye, and your Lord is not so, and there will be written between his (*Al-Dajjāl*'s) eyes (the word) *Kafir* (i.e., disbeliever)." (This Hadith is also quoted by Abu Huraira and Ibn`Abbas) (ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī#7131).

Narrated `Abdullah ibn Umar:

The Prophet (PBUH) mentioned the *Masih Al-Dajjāl* in front of the people saying, Allah is not one-eyed while *Masih Al-Dajjāl* is blind in the right eye and his eye looks like a bulging out grape. While sleeping near the Ka`ba last night, I saw in my dream a man of brown colour, the best one can see amongst brown colour and his hair was long that it fell between his shoulders. His hair was lank and water was dribbling from his head and he was placing his hands on the shoulders of two

men, while circumambulating the Ka`ba. I asked, 'Who is this?' They replied, 'This is Jesus, son of Mary.' Behind him I saw a man who had very curly hair and was blind in the right eye, resembling Ibn Qatan (i.e. an infidel) in appearance. He was placing his hands on the shoulders of a person while performing Tawaf around the Ka`ba. I asked, 'Who is this?' They replied, 'The Masih, al-Dajjāl" (ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī#7125).

The Authenticity of *Aḥadith* on *Dajjāl*

The antagonists claim that all *aḥadith* on the appearance of *al-Dajjāl* and descent of Masīḥ Īsā are either weak or fabricated. In response, there was consensus of Muslim scholars on the *Mutawātir* (multiple-attested) status of *aḥadith* of the Prophet (PBUH) on the descent of Īsā (a.s.). Great *Mufāssir*, such as Imam al-Ṭabarī, Imam Alūsī and Ibn Kathīr have stated in their *tafsirs*, when clarifying the verses indicating towards Īsā's descent, that the *aḥadīth* on this subject have reached *tawātur* and the *Ummah* has unanimously agreed upon this. Ibn Kathir confirmed that the *aḥadith* on Īsā's descent are *Mutawatir aḥadith* from the Prophet (PBUH) according to the transmission of Abu Hurayrah, Ibn Masūd, 'Uthman b. abi al-'As, Abu Umama (al-Bahili), al-Nawwas b. Sim'an (al-Ansari), 'Abdullah b. 'Amr b. al-'As, Majma' b. Jariya, Abu Shurayha and Hudhayfa b. Usaid, may Allah be pleased with them.

Many scholars have collected a number of authentic *aḥadith* in their books including Imam Tuwayjari, Imam Suyūfī has mentioned, Allamah Shawqanī, Allamah Kawthari, Allamah Muhammad Anwar Shah Kashmiri, and Sheikh Abdul Fattah Abu Guddah, referring to Prophet Īsā's descent (Seth, 2003, P.114)

***Mushkilah* ḥadīth**

The scholars of hadith are yet to agree on a particular set of criteria for identifying Problematic (*Mushkilah*) ḥadith. However, they are in agreement on the following features for ḥadith to be considered Problematic (*Mushkilah*);

1. The ḥadīth in question must have genuine *Isnad* (chain of transmitters)
2. The ḥadīth must be authentic
3. The *matn* (text of ḥadīth) contains information contrary to a text of the Qūr'ān.
4. The *matn* (text of ḥadīth) is contrary to another authentic ḥadīth of similar status.
5. The ḥadīth is not consistent with human reasoning or social reality.

Simply put, Problematic (Mushkilah) ḥadīth is authentic ḥadīth of the Prophet (PBUH) which contradicts Qūr'ānic statement, other authentic ḥadīth of similar status or social reality. Weak ḥadīth are not considered problematic.

The Supernatural Power of *al-Dajjāl*

The antagonists claim that it is not in the tradition of Allah to establish an impostor on earth and then equips him with supernatural power, the kind of which he has not given to his Prophets and then punish the believers who believe in him. A number of ḥadīth of the Prophet (PBUH) stated that *al-Dajjāl* will perform some strange actions thus:

It was narrated that Hudhaifah said:

The Messenger of Allah said: 'I know what the *Dajjal* will have with him. He will have two flowing rivers, one that appears to the eye to be clear water, and one that appears to the eye to be flaming fire. If anyone sees that, let him go to the river which he thinks is fire and close his eyes, then lower his head and drink from it, for it is cool water. The *Dajjal* has one blind eye, with a layer of thick skin over it, and between his eyes is written "disbeliever," which every believer will read, whether he is literate or illiterate' (ṣaḥīḥ al-muṣlīm#7367).

Abu Saīd al-Khudrī reported that Allah's Messenger (PBUH) one day gave a detailed account of the *Dajjal* and in that it was also included:

He would come but would not be allowed to enter the mountain passes to Medina. So he will alight at some of the barren tracts near Medina, and a person who would be the best of men or one from amongst the best of men would say to him: I bear testimony to the fact that you are *Dajjal* about whom Allah's Messenger (PBUH) had informed us. The *Dajjal* would say: What is your opinion if I kill this (person), then I bring him back to life; even then will you harbour doubt in this matter? They would say: No. He would then kill (the man) and then bring him back to life. When he would bring that person to life, he would say: By Allah, I had no better proof of the fact (that you are a *Dajjal*) than at the present time (that you are actually so). The *Dajjal* would then make an attempt to kill him (again) but he would not be able to do that. Abu Ishaq reported that it was said: That person would be Khadir (Allah be pleased with him) (ṣaḥīḥ al-muslīm#2838).

In their response, the proponents answer argue that the case of *al-Dajjāl* is not in contradiction to Allah's tradition to endow the impostor some supernatural powers to test the Īmān of His servants after which Allah will cease the impostor and expose the falsity of his power as He will do to *al-Dajjāl*. For instance, Allah will expose the falsity of *al-Dajjāl* power when he would try to kill the man a second time and not able to do so, as contained in the hadith cited above.

The issues raised; an analysis

The first significant allegation of the opponents is that there are no indications in the Qūr'ān to support the appearance of *al-Dajjāl* (Anti-Christ) and the descent of Masīḥ Īsā.

This issue could have been a genuine and strong one if the Qūr'ān is the only source of guidance and authority in Islam. The fact that the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (PBUH) also forms a part of guidance and authority in Islam has rendered this argument a very weak one. "And whatever the Messenger has given you – take; and whatever he has forbidden you – refrain from" (59:7)

The answer provided by the proponents that the authentic hadith of the Prophet (PBUH) is equally "*wahy*" (revelation from Allah) as contained in the noble verse: "Nor does he speak from (his

own) inclination. It is not but a revelation revealed” is therefore a very strong one. However, concerning the interpretations of the relevant verse of the Qūr’ān on the issue, the *Mufāssirs* differ over the meaning of this verse.

The second problem raised by the opponents is that if al-Dajjāl is real how come Prophet PBUH refers to thirty al-Dajjāl s in other aḥādīth is very weak in the sense that the Prophet PBUH clarified that each of these thirty al-Dajjāl s would claim prophethood, while the principal al-Dajjāl will claim to be Allah. For this reason the response of the proponents that the reference to thirty al-Dajjāl s in these ahadith is not in any way contradictory to the appearance of the major al-Dajjal that will appear at the Last Hour is acceptable. The Prophet PBUH gave a particular description of him is therefore very strong.

Thirdly, the antagonists say that it is not in the tradition of Allah to establish an impostor on earth and then equips him with supernatural power, the kind of which he has not given to his Prophets and then punish the believers who believe in him is also strong because, Allah always gives his Prophets powers that are superior than those of impostors. However, the response of the proponents that this is not in contradiction to Allah’s tradition to endow the impostor with some supernatural powers to test the Īmān of His servants after which Allah will cease the impostor and expose the falsity of his power as He will do to *ad-Dajjāl*, is stronger on the ground that the supernatural power exercises by *ad-Dajjāl* will become weak and ineffective in the face of a true believer, as contain in the *ahadith*.

Another claim of the antagonists that all *ahadith* on the appearance of *al-Dajjāl* and descent of Masih Īsā are either weak or fabricated is very weak on the ground that there has been the consensus of Muslim scholars on the *mutawātir* status of the *ahadith*. Therefore, the response of the proponents is very strong and tenable.

The antegonists also affirm that the *aḥādīth* of the Prophet (PBUH) on his dream in which he saw *al-Dajjāl* performing *tawaf* contradicts other *aḥādīth* barring *al-Dajjāl* from entering Makkah and

Madinah. In addition to that, the ḥadīth stating that the city of Madinah will have seven gates as at that time. They then asked the question “where are the gates?”

The first part of this issue is a very strong one. It shows a problematic nature of these *aḥadīth*. This is because the dreams of the Prophets are always true. If the Prophet (PBUH) saw *ad- Dajjāl* performing *tawāf* in his dream, then that may be considered contradictory to his saying that *ad – Dajjāl* will be prohibited from entering Makkah and Madinah. However, the response of the proponents that the *tawaf* of *al-Dajjāl* will be prior to the appearance of his (*ad – Dajjāl*) evils has resolved the contradiction. Therefore, he will only be restricted from entering Makkah and Madinah after the appearance of his evils. This response is a very strong one and has resolved the problem associated with the *aḥadīth*.

As for the second part of the issue, the seven gates of Madinah. This is a very weak argument on the ground that there is continuous development in every facet of human endeavour, more importantly, with continuous sensitivity to issue of security; no one can say precisely what future will holds (border protection). For this reason, the response of the proponents that this refers to the major entrances of Madinah is tenable. Also, the fact that Madinah will have seven gates at that particular time cannot be denied is very strong.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the fact that the belief in the appearance of *Masih al-Dajjāl* and the descent of *Masīḥ ʿĪsā* at the Last Hour is closely connected to one of the six articles of faith in Islam, belief in the Last Day, has made this a point of special concern for the Muslim scholars. An ample of evidence exists in the Prophetic traditions. These traditions have been graded *Mutawatir* (multiple-attested) *aḥadīth*. Furthermore, indications to this in the *Qūrʿān* have also been provided by great *Mufasssirs* (commentators). However, authentic *aḥadīth* of the Prophet (PBUH) is enough as evidence, since it is regarded as *wahy* (revelation).

However, the Muslim scholars are of different opinions concerning the authenticity of the text of these *ahadith*. Thereby, the scholars are grouped into two classes of proponents and antagonists, based on their stand on this issue.

The analysis of the various opinions of both parties revealed that the opinions of the proponents are very strong and tenable.

In the light of the above, it is mandatory for Muslims to believe in the appearance of *Masih ad-Dajjāl* and the descent of *Masih Īsā* as part of major signs of the Last Hour. And also to believe in whatever the Prophet (PBUH) predicted to happen in the future, as this equally form a part of *ilm al-ghayb* (knowledge of unseen) without which the *Īmān* of Muslim is deficient.

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