



WORLDVIEW MADE PRACTICAL Volume 20 Number 44 November 26, 2025

Is the Long Awaited Mahdi Already Here?

By Tal Davis

Abdullah Hashem Qa'im Al-Muhammad (AKA: Abdullah Hashem Aba al-Sadiq) or just Abdullah Hashem is an Indiana born and educated son of an Egyptian Sunni Muslim father and an American Christian mother. He is 42 years old, and for the past decade or so has been the leader of a new religious movement called The Amhadi Religion of Peace and Light (AROPL). In 2022 he published a book titled *The Goal of the Wise*, which he claimed is a divinely inspired revelation that he is the long-expected Mahdi of the Shiite Twelvers sect of Islam. Since then, he has written two other volumes titled *The Mahdi's Manifesto* (2024) and *The Divine Jurisprudence* (2025).

Hashem's religion is a confusing mash-mash of Shiite Islam mixed with other bizarre ideas, including reincarnation. He argues that religious leaders (Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Muhammad, etc.) of the past were valid for their day but incomplete. Today all of the religions of the world are wrong and that God has sent him as the Mahdi to teach the correct beliefs in these final days.

Hashem's primary methods for spreading his self-serving message, that he is the Islamic Mahdi (or Messiah - more about that later), are seminars he conducts around the country in what appear to be hotel conference rooms or lecture halls before what seem to be large crowds of followers and inquirers. They are all presented in perfect American English using high tech power point projectors and music. These are all then posted on the AROPL website and YouTube for wide exposure. He has also been interviewed on television programs in various countries to defend his claims.

If there is one thing that can be said for Hashem, it is that he is a slick dude. His lectures are extremely polished, and to a naive person seeking something to believe in they might be quite inviting. He is typical of charismatic cult leaders who draw unwitting seekers with spiritually provocative language, and with quotes from Islamic texts that probably no one is familiar with. It is telling them he has not stayed in one place very long, moving from place to place. The exact number of his followers is unknown.

So what can we make of Abdulla Hashem? In this column, we have written before about the expectations Shiite Muslims have concerning the coming Mahdi, especially in view of the current conflicts in the Middle East, and especially Iran. In a previous article we made the case that Iran would never sur-

render in a war because its Islamic leaders are convinced that the Mahdi will intervene to guarantee their victory and lead the armies of Islam to worldwide dominance. More about that later.

Let's review a bit about the Shiite beliefs about the coming of the Mahdi. These facts may show why Abdullah Hashem simply doesn't qualify. To understand it all we have to look at ancient Islamic history.

The religion of Islam was founded by Muhammad in the seventh century A.D. in Arabia (now Saudi Arabia). After his death, disagreements arose concerning who would be his successor as Caliph (leader) of the movement. Muhammad had not designated a replacement before his death in AD 632. Most Muslims followed Muhammad's cousin, Abu Bakr, as the first post-Muhammad Caliph. Bakr died in AD 634 and was followed as Caliph by Umar (634-644). During Umar's reign, Islam spread by the war throughout the Near East into Syria, Egypt, and west across North Africa. Umar forced all Christians and Jews to leave Arabia, but was killed in AD 644 by a rebellious Christian.

The third Caliph was Muhammad's son-in-law Uthma. He died in AD 656. He was succeeded by another son-in-law named Ali ibn Abi Talib, the husband of Muhammad's daughter Fatima by his first wife Khadija. In AD 661, Ali also was murdered by some of his own soldiers. He was followed as Caliph by Mu'awiya, but not all Muslims were on board with his claims to leadership.

Thus, the Sunni/Shiite split began during this time in history. Muslims who favored Mu'awiya and the continued Caliphate became known as Sunnis (Traditionalists). They believe that Islam's leaders were to be selected by a consensus of the Muslim faithful. As Islam spread, however, the political unity of an overarching Caliphate dissipated. Today, no world Caliphate exists, and Islamic authority is widely defused among many teachers and countries. Only the basic Islamic religious dogmas continue to unite all Muslims.

Followers of the murdered Ali maintained that all true supreme leaders of Islam, which they termed "Imams," had to be direct descendants of Muhammad through the line of his first wife, Khadija, and their daughter, Fatima. Thus, Ali was regarded as their first legitimate Islamic Imam. As a result, they became known as the "Shia" or "Party" of Ali. The three Caliphs who preceded him were all regarded as illegitimate.

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According to Shiite history, the second true Imam was Ali's oldest son, and Muhammad's grandson, Hasan. Hasan was a weak leader and only ruled for seven months before being forced out in AD 662. He died in AD 669 when he was poisoned by his wife in Medina.

Hasan was followed in by his younger brother, Husayn. He, however, was beheaded with his family in the Battle of Karbala in AD 680 while trying to reunite all Muslims under his leadership. Shiites regard Husayn as a great martyr for their faith, and each year commemorate his death with processions of men whipping themselves in reenactment of his suffering.

Ali, Hasan and Husayn, according to Shiite doctrine, were followed by nine other Imams. This line of succession is the primary factor dividing Sunni and Shiite Muslims. Sunnis, on the other hand, still see the leadership of Islam as based on a consensus of world Muslims, and not having special divine inspiration. Shiites believe their twelve Imams all had special divine authority.

Here is a list of the Twelve Imams of Shiite Islam along with the dates of their births and deaths.

1. Ali ibn Abu Talib (600-661)
2. Hasan ibn (son of) Ali (624-669)
3. Husayn ibn Ali (626-680)
4. Ali ibn Husayn (658-712)
5. Muhammad ibn Ali (677-732)
6. Ja'far ibn Muhammad (702-765)
7. Musa ibn Ja'far (744-799)
8. Ali ibn Musa (765-817)
9. Muhammad ibn Ali (810-835)
10. Ali ibn Muhammad (827-868)
11. Hasan ibn Ali (846-874)
12. Muhammad ibn al-Hasan (868-?)

The key to understanding current Shiite beliefs focuses on the fate of the last of the twelve Imams. In AD 874, the young Muhammad ibn al-Hasan suddenly disappeared. He had no living offspring from the line of Muhammad. Here is where the religion gets really strange, and where Abdullah Hashem has much to explain.

After his disappearance, "Twelver" Shiites claimed that al-Hasan was still alive and went into hiding. This is what they call his "Occultation" (hiddenness). They believe he is still alive, and in the last days will return to the world stage as the "Mahdi" or "The Guided One." They believe this divinely endowed al-Hasan will lead the armies of Islam to final victory over the forces of Satan. All countries, religions, or armies not embracing their form of Islam will be destroyed in an apocalyptic war.

The leaders of modern Iran, the Mullahs who have ruled since the 1979 revolution, are fanatical adherents of Twelver Shiite theology. They are absolutely convinced

that it is true. They believe *these* are the "last days" which will involve a great war in which the Mahdi will come to guarantee them total victory. We have to wonder, however, if the Shiite people of Iran, even its most zealous religious leaders, are now experiencing a certain level of spiritual crisis. The devastating attacks by Israel and the United States in June of 2025 on their military installations and underground nuclear weapons facilities must be leaving them wondering why the Mahdi didn't show up to save them. Maybe he was too busy giving lectures in America.

In any case, this Twelver doctrine presents a particular problem for Abdullah Hashem. As we indicated, he was born in 1983 in the United States to an American mother and Egyptian father. So how did that happen if he was hidden away since AD 874? And why did he not go to Iran to defend the Shiite Muslims who were under attack by the infidel Israelis and Americans? Probably because if he had it would have exposed his fraud.

So what do we make of all this? It is clear that Hashem and his movement have the marks of a modern cult. Let's review some of them to see how that is true.

Cults Usually Claim to Be Led by a Divinely Inspired Leader or Leaders.

They believe their leaders are capable of receiving direct revelation from God or have a special, inspired understanding of truth. Hashem fits this pattern perfectly. He has suddenly appeared on the public stage claiming to be the Mahdi, "The Guided One," a divine messenger sent by God in the last days. He accentuates this claim by his charismatic persona and glib speech which impresses naive listeners.

Cults Usually Claim to Possess a New and Inspired Written Scripture That Supplements or Supersedes the Authority of the Bible.

Hashem has written several books that he claims are new divinely inspired texts or interpretations of Islamic books such as the Qur'an and the Hadith. They include: *The Goal of the Wise* (2022); *The Mahdi's Manifesto* (2024); and *The Divine Jurisprudence* (2025). His website has a whole line of other books and magazines for sale. It also includes other blessed trinkets and stones to purchase.

Cults Usually Claim to Be the Only True (Or the Most True) Religion in the World.

Full salvation is said to be found only by membership in the movement. Hashem, in his lectures, does not explicitly condemn other religions. Nonetheless, he makes it clear that his is the fullest and newest revelation that God has given since Hasan ibn Ali (846-874). He contends that all peo-

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ples, especially Muslims, should embrace him as the Mahdi, and implies that not to do so will have serious consequences.

Based on this analysis we can only conclude that Abdullah Hashem Qa'im Al-Muhammad is another in a long line of false prophets, teachers, and messiahs who Jesus and the Bible warns about in numerous places. Christians should warn believers and nonbelievers alike to reject his teachings.

"Be on your guard against false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravaging wolves." Matthew 7:15 CSB

"For false messiahs and false prophets will arise and will perform signs and wonders to lead astray, if possible, the elect." Mark 13:22 CSB

Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see if they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 1 John 4:1 CSB

1 There were indeed false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, and will bring swift destruction on themselves. 2 Many will follow their depraved ways, and the way of truth will be maligned because of them. 3 They will exploit you in their greed with made-up stories. Their condemnation, pronounced long ago, is not idle, and their destruction does not sleep. 2 Peter 2:1-3 CSB

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