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# The Concept of a Just Sacred Guide (mahdi) In Shi'a Islam

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A universal notion among all myths, religions, political utopias and alike is the concept of a redeemer—a savior who will appear or re-appear at some future era to establish justice in the globe. The belief in the future is, in fact, a most dynamic spirit of presence--transforming life as a vibrant state of expectation and reception of this divinely originated force on earth. I am pleased to offer the dear reader this collection consisting of writings which clarify the Shi'a concept of "redeemer/savior." It is well known that the Shi'a tradition identifies the redeemer as the twelfth Imam Mahdi, who went into two periods of occultation and will return in the future. As to be expected, the Shi'a Muslims-- some three hundred million believers-- are distinguished by at least four unique blessings. First they claim--as attested by their name--that they are the party (Shi'a) of members of the house of Prophet and, thus, their views depict the authentic message of Islam. Secondly, they are not merely a religious sect, but a civilization, a culture with a rich heritage of art, mysticism, poetry, mathematics, science, technology and medicine. Third, as attested in the Western media, they occupy the most politically dynamic, volatile, and strategic part of the globe. Finally, demographically and technologically, the Shi'a are gradually advancing and seek to become a major player in global politics. For these reasons, the Shi'a's essential vision of salvation is of global importance to investigators of politics, culture and spirituality.

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