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A Doctrinal Geopolitical Analysis: The Role of Apocalyptic Beliefs in the Confrontation between Zionism and Mahdism

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Abstract

Contemporary conflicts in the Middle East are deeply influenced by religious beliefs and apocalyptic ideologies. Among these, the confrontation between Zionism and Mahdism stands out prominently. The present study, adopting a doctrinal geopolitical approach, analyzes the ideological confrontation between Zionism and Mahdism. Zionism, through the reinterpretation and secularization of sacred concepts such as the Promised Land, the chosen people, and salvation, has transformed them into an exclusive political project. This project not only legitimizes expansionist, discriminatory, and ethnocentric policies of the Zionist regime but also regards Muslims, particularly Palestinians, as eternal adversaries and obstacles to the fulfillment of divine promises. Such exclusivist tendencies have contributed to violence, injustice, and ethnic cleansing, leading to complex and seemingly intractable conflicts. In contrast, Mahdism in Shi'a Islam, emphasizing active expectation, absolute justice, and global governance, offers a universal, human-centered, and justice-oriented

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vision for liberating humanity from oppression and corruption. Mahdism rejects discrimination and exclusivism; instead, it promotes peace, solidarity, and lasting justice for all people, defining its opposition not by race or religion but by injustice and tyranny. Through qualitative content analysis and the use of religious sources, this study shows that within this fundamental confrontation, the final triumph belongs to the ideology of Mahdism. In this context, the present research provides a new framework for understanding doctrinal geopolitics by highlighting the destructive aspects attributed to Zionism and the salvific dimension attributed to Mahdism.

Keywords: Doctrinal Geopolitics, Zionism, Mahdism, Apocalypse, Global Justice, Global Governance.

Introduction

The contemporary world is the stage for conflicts whose roots cannot be reduced solely to material factors such as economics, militarism, or geopolitical positions. In many instances, religious beliefs and apocalyptic ideologies play a decisive role in shaping these conflicts. Among them, the confrontation between the ideology of Zionism and the doctrine of Mahdism represents a clear example of a phenomenon whose depth lies not merely in political borders but in the realm of belief.

This study aims to analyze the doctrinal geopolitics of these two movements by examining the role of their apocalyptic beliefs in current confrontations. Contrary to common analyses that view the Middle Eastern conflict solely as a struggle over resources or power, this article argues that the confrontation is fundamentally a clash between two opposing interpretations of salvation, justice, and the future of humanity.

Zionism, through a secular and earthly interpretation of Jewish sacred texts, transforms divine promises into a political project for possessing the land and establishing an exclusive nation-state. In this view, concepts like the Promised Land, world restoration (Tikkun Olam), and the chosen people become tools to justify expansionist policies, discrimination, and the exclusion of others. This ideology defines its adversary based on ethnic and religious identity, viewing Muslims, particularly Palestinians, as the main obstacle to the fulfillment of the "Divine Promise."

In contrast, the doctrine of Mahdism in Shi'a Islam presents a completely different approach, framing the apocalypse as a universal and liberating ideal for all humanity. This ideology is built upon concepts such as "Active Expectation," "Absolute Justice," and "Global Governance." Within this framework, the ultimate goal is not the domination of one group over another but the establishment of peace, justice, and solidarity among all nations. Its primary adversary is not a particular race or religion but injustice and corruption in any form.

This fundamental difference in underlying principles demonstrates why Mahdism is regarded as an anti-exclusivist and liberating movement, whereas Zionism has been driven toward extreme nationalism and discrimination. This article, using the method of qualitative content analysis and relying on authoritative religious and academic sources, examines this doctrinal confrontation in detail. In the following sections, the theoretical foundations and conceptual framework of the study, including the definition of doctrinal geopolitics and the key apocalyptic concepts within both ideologies, are first explained. Then, through an analysis of "Distortion Versus Truth," it will be shown how Zionism has allegedly misused sacred texts, while Mahdism is

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presented as being grounded in truth and global justice. Subsequently, the confrontation over "Identity and Ideals," as well as the "Concept of the Enemy," will be examined in detail in order to clarify the dimensions of this intellectual divergence. Ultimately, the study concludes that final victory belongs to the ideal founded upon justice and the liberation of all human beings; as such an ideal is inherently aligned with the divine will for the realization of peace and justice in the world.

1. Literature Review

Several works have been published on the subject of doctrinal geopolitics and the confrontation between Zionism and Mahdism, each approaching the topic from a particular perspective. However, no study has addressed the subject with the same perspective adopted in the present article. These works can be categorized as follows:

- 1) The article "The Role of the Doctrine of Mahdism in the Foreign Policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran" by Hossein Ali Jabbari, published in the *Maw'ud* journal (2019 AD/1398 SH). This article analyzes the position of Mahdavi teachings in Iran's foreign policy and examines the role of religion and Mahdavi beliefs in shaping the country's foreign policy guidelines and major diplomatic principles. Drawing on the Qur'an, the Iranian Constitution, and statements of the Supreme Leader, the article presents the doctrine of Mahdism as a fundamental criterion in Iran's foreign policy, emphasizing rejection of domination, support for the oppressed, and resistance.

- 2) The article "Analysis and Reexamination of the Types of Zionism Based on the Thought of the Eschatological Promised One," which critiques and analyzes different forms of Zionism in light of apocalyptic teachings. The study explains the ideological and geopolitical contradictions of religious Zionism and how it employs apocalyptic concepts.
- 3) The article "The Geopolitical Capacities of Shi'ism in the End Times," which adopts a strategic approach to analyze Shi'i apocalyptic beliefs within the framework of political geography, demonstrating how these beliefs may influence power dynamics and international relations.
- 4) The book "Geopolitical Environmental Studies of the Islamic World (with Emphasis on Geoculture)" by Dr. Hadi A'zami and Asghar Abbasi, which examines the sources of power and the geopolitical characteristics of the Islamic world, with particular attention to Mahdavi teachings and Shi'i political culture.
- 5) The book "The Enemies of Mahdism: Why and How?" by Mohammad Mahdi Hamedy, which investigates the reasons for the opposition of Judaism and Zionism to the doctrine of Mahdism in Islam and provides a deeper understanding of ideological and doctrinal conflicts.

This research adopts a comprehensive and interdisciplinary approach and differs significantly from previous works. Its primary focus is the profound role of apocalyptic and ideological beliefs within the two currents of Zionism and Mahdavi thought. Unlike many earlier studies that primarily concentrated on political analysis or limited aspects of foreign policy (for example, the role of Mahdism in Iranian policy), this research systematically examines the fundamental contradictions between the two doctrinal approaches. By

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analyzing the reinterpretation of key concepts such as the "Promised Land," the "Chosen People," and "Salvation" within Zionism, and by contrasting them with the three doctrinal components of Mahdism, "Active Expectation," "Absolute Justice," and "Global Governance," the study provides a detailed and critical analysis of the ideological foundations of these two movements, a dimension that has been less explored in previous research.

Furthermore, the treatment of the concept of the "Enemy" in this research offers a distinct and more precise perspective compared to other studies. While Zionism is described as defining the enemy based on ethnic and religious identity, Mahdism defines the enemy as injustice and corruption in any form and emphasizes a universal struggle against injustice. This aspect illustrates the analytical depth of the research, which extends beyond earlier studies that focused primarily on political and geopolitical analysis.

From a citation perspective, this research draws upon a wide range of religious and philosophical sources, including the Qur'an, hadith traditions, and Jewish sacred texts, alongside valid academic and scholarly works. In terms of the breadth of its references, it is therefore distinguishable from many previous studies that may have relied on a more limited range of religious and doctrinal sources. Ultimately, the study's emphasis on doctrinal geopolitical confrontation as a clash between two fundamentally opposing projects for the future of humanity, namely ethnic domination and extreme nationalism on the one hand, and global justice and the liberation of humanity from oppression on the other, represents a different and deeper paradigm for analyzing

contemporary international relations, one that has been less extensively explored in other research.

2. Definitions

To facilitate a clearer understanding of the issues and fundamental components of this research, precise and scholarly definitions of the key concepts are presented below. These definitions form the basis of the study's theoretical and analytical framework.

2.1. Doctrinal Geopolitics

This concept is defined as a relatively new approach in international relations studies that examines the influence of beliefs, ideologies, and religious myths in shaping foreign policy, regional conflicts, and the global balance of power. Unlike classical geopolitical approaches that focus on material factors such as military or economic capabilities, doctrinal geopolitics analyzes systems of meaning and religious worldviews, as well as the particular mental and spatial maps created by religious beliefs that influence the political and strategic decisions of governments and non-state actors (Razavi and Saeidi, 2020 AD/1399 SH: 45; Karimi, 2021 AD/1400 SH: 78).

2.2. Zionism

Zionism is described as a political-nationalist ideology formed on the basis of particular interpretations of Jewish sacred texts, in which concepts such as the Promised Land, the chosen people, and salvation are reinterpreted and employed as instruments for legitimizing expansionist and exclusivist policies. According to this description, the ideology defines enemies in ethnic and religious terms and asserts an exclusive Jewish right to the land of Palestine, seeking the establishment and expansion of a Jewish nation-state,

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which has led to discrimination and geopolitical tensions (Samadi, 2016 AD/1395 SH: 120; Goldberg, 2021: 35).

2.3. Mahdism

In Shi'i Islam, Mahdism refers to a set of eschatological beliefs emphasizing a universal, liberating, and justice-oriented ideal for all humanity. Key concepts within Mahdavi include: "Active expectation (continuous efforts to reform society and prepare it for the appearance of the savior), absolute justice (a system based on comprehensive justice and the elimination of oppression and corruption), and global governance (the establishment of a comprehensive political order that ensures peace and equality for all people regardless of race or nationality)." Within this framework, the enemy is defined not by race or religion but by injustice and corruption, thereby providing a foundation for a liberating socio-political ideal (Motahhari, 2007 AD/1386 SH: 20-25; Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 2011 AD/1390 SH: 60; Javadi Amoli, 2010 AD/1389 SH: 115).

2.4. Active Expectation

It is a concept within the doctrine of Mahdism that goes beyond mere belief in the coming of a savior. It signifies the social and ethical responsibility of followers to struggle against oppression and corruption and to create the conditions necessary for the savior's emergence. Active expectation emphasizes continuous effort toward individual and social reform and preparedness for the establishment of global justice (Bojnordi, 2018 AD/1397 SH: 80).

2.5. Absolute Justice

It is the ultimate objective in Mahdism, referring to the elimination of all forms of oppression, discrimination, poverty, and exploitation, and the establishment of global justice for all human beings. Absolute justice is considered a universal and impartial principle and, unlike ethnic or racial forms of justice, constitutes the core ideal of Mahdism (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 2011 AD/1390 SH: 100).

2.6. Global Governance

In Mahdavi thought, this refers to the establishment of a comprehensive political and social system in which justice; peace, security, and human dignity are guaranteed for all people regardless of race, religion, or nationality. This form of governance is presented as the opposite of the nationalist and exclusivist perspective attributed to Zionism and is described as symbolizing the triumph of truth over falsehood (Majlisī, 1982 AD/1403 SH: 55).

2.7. Enemy (in Doctrinal Geopolitics)

Within Zionism, the concept of the enemy is described as largely based on ethnic and religious identity, viewing Muslims, and particularly Palestinians, as obstacles to the fulfillment of divine promises and as enduring adversaries. In contrast, within Mahdavi thought, the primary enemy is defined as oppression, corruption, and tyranny, and struggle against them is regarded as a moral and religious duty rather than hostility toward a particular racial or religious identity (Palmer, 2016: 90; Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 2011 AD/1390 SH: 150).

2.8. Restoration of the World (Tikkun Olam)

It is a term in Jewish theology referring to the repair, reform, or restoration of the world. In its traditional ethical interpretation, it signifies human efforts to improve society, eliminate social injustice, and bring the world closer to

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spiritual perfection through righteous actions and adherence to divine commandments. However, according to the perspective presented in this research, this concept has been reinterpreted within Zionist ideology and reduced from its ethical dimension to a political-material project, suggesting that the restoration of the world can be achieved through military power, territorial control, settlement expansion, and changes to geographical and demographic structures in favor of the Zionist state (Cohen, 2015 AD/2015 SH: 115).

3. Theoretical Foundations and Conceptual Framework

This section, as the theoretical basis of the article, explains the key concepts. First, the concept of doctrinal geopolitics is introduced, a perspective that analyzes religious beliefs as a determining factor in international relations and regional conflicts. This conceptual framework takes our understanding of the existing confrontation beyond purely material analyses and emphasizes the role of ideas and beliefs in shaping foreign policies and conflicts. Then, the apocalyptic concepts in the two ideologies of Zionism and Mahdism are examined. In Zionism, concepts such as the "Promised Land," the "Chosen People," and "Salvation" are analyzed, and it is shown how these beliefs have led to political and exclusivist interpretations. In contrast, within Mahdavi thought, the concepts of "Active Expectation," "Absolute Justice," and "Global Governance" are explained so that the fundamental difference between these two approaches, in terms of universality and liberating

orientation, becomes clear. These discussions provide the necessary tools for analyzing the doctrinal confrontation between these two schools of thought.

3.1. Doctrinal Geopolitics

In the field of international relations studies, traditional analyses have largely focused on the material dimensions of power, such as economic capability, military superiority, and geographical position. However, contemporary developments, particularly the increasing role of non-state actors and religious movements in global conflicts, have highlighted the need for new theoretical frameworks. In this context, the concept of doctrinal geopolitics has emerged as a novel and interdisciplinary approach that analyzes the fundamental impact of religious beliefs and religious ideologies on power dynamics in the international arena (Razavi and Saeidi, 2020 AD/1399 SH: 231).

This approach removes religion from a merely marginal, cultural position and studies it as a primary driver and determining factor in the formation of foreign policies, regional conflicts, and the global configuration of power. Unlike classical approaches, which mainly deal with rational and calculable national interests, doctrinal geopolitics argues that, in order to fully understand the behavior of states and actors, one must pay attention to the symbolic and mythic systems that shape their worldview.

Within this framework, religious ideas, myths, and beliefs produce specific mental and spatial maps that influence political and strategic decision-making. For example, apocalyptic concepts or beliefs related to the "Promised Land" can serve as a basis for justifying expansionist policies and altering geopolitical borders (Smith, 2018: 98).

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This approach shows how apocalyptic, soteriological, and identity-forming beliefs penetrate not only the thinking of political elites but also the broader population, and function as a state's strategic culture. Consequently, to fully understand conflicts such as those in the Middle East, one cannot be content merely with an analysis of economic factors or military balances of power; rather, it is also necessary to consider their doctrinal and ideological dimensions. This means that the roots of many conflicts must be sought in the fundamental contradictions between belief systems and their interpretations of the world (Razi, 2019 AD/1398 SH: 45).

Ultimately, doctrinal geopolitics provides an analytical tool through which the complex interaction between the realms of religion and politics in the contemporary world can be examined more deeply. It shows how beliefs first draw mental borders and, subsequently, real borders (Karimi, 2021 AD/1400 SH: 167).

3.2. Key Apocalyptic Concepts in Zionism: A Political and Exclusivist Interpretation

Zionism, as a political ideology, has shrewdly utilized Jewish apocalyptic and theological concepts to justify its goals and actions. This approach, in effect, represents a form of secularization of religious beliefs, in which deeply spiritual concepts are transformed into political and nationalist instruments. Three key concepts, "Promised Land," "Chosen People," and "Redemption," constitute the core of this ideological reinterpretation.

The "Promised Land" (Eretz Israel), one of the most fundamental concepts in Jewish theology, originates in the Old Testament and the divine promise to

Abraham that a land would be granted to his descendants. In traditional Jewish interpretation, this promise is conditional upon adherence to divine commandments and possesses spiritual and moral dimensions. However, within Zionist ideology, the concept was interpreted in literal and territorial terms, transforming a spiritual promise into what is framed as an absolute right to occupy and physically possess the land of Palestine. This interpretation has functioned as a principal foundation for the settlement movement and Israel's expansionist policies, providing justification for the displacement and expulsion of Palestinians (Samadi, 2016 AD/1395 SH: 112). Such an exclusive view of the land deprives other inhabitants of their rights to life and ownership, leading to an unending territorial conflict (Barnes, 2017: 45).

The second concept, "Chosen People" (*Am Segulah*), has also undergone reinterpretation. The belief that the Jewish people were chosen by God to fulfill a moral and spiritual mission in the world, in certain extreme Zionist interpretations, has been transformed into a notion of racial superiority and an exclusive right to live in the "Promised Land." This perspective not only serves to justify discrimination against Palestinians and other non-Jewish groups in the region, but also contributes to the construction of an exclusivist nationalist identity that views itself as superior to others. This outlook has fueled the establishment of an apartheid system in the occupied territories and discriminatory policies within Israel (Skocpol, 2012: 87). Consequently, the spiritual mission of Judaism is reframed as a political project for power and domination (Friedman, 2020: 195).

The third concept, "Redemption" (*Geulah*), is perhaps the most significantly transformed. In Jewish theology, redemption is a spiritual process achieved

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through repentance and return to God. In Zionist ideology, however, this concept is reduced to a political and nationalist project. In this framework, redemption no longer signifies individual or moral salvation, but rather the establishment of the State of Israel, the return of all Jews worldwide to this land, and the realization of divine promises through political and military power. This earthly redemption sets as its ultimate objective regional dominance and the rebuilding of the Third Temple, an aim that would entail the destruction of Islamic holy sites. This perspective transforms the conflict from a political dispute into an apocalyptic sacred battle with no resolution other than the total victory of one side (Akhoundi, 2020 AD/1399 SH: 201). The reduction of redemption from a spiritual to a political matter constitutes one of the most dangerous dimensions of Zionism's belief-based geopolitics, carrying significant potential for violence and extremism (Cohen, 2015: 110).

3.3. Key Apocalyptic Concepts in Mahdism: A Universal and Emancipatory Approach

Mahdism, as one of the foundational doctrines of Shi'a thought, encompasses a set of apocalyptic concepts that offer a fundamentally different interpretation of the world's future. In contrast to exclusivist ideologies, Mahdism emphasizes universality and the liberation of all humanity. This approach is embodied in three key concepts: "Active Awaiting," "Absolute Justice," and "Global Government."

The first concept is "Active Awaiting." This concept goes beyond a passive belief in the coming of a savior; it constitutes a social and moral responsibility for Shi'a Muslims. Active waiting means continuous effort to combat

oppression and corruption and to prepare the ground for the savior's appearance (Motahhari, 2007 AD/1386 SH: 55). This preparation includes moral, intellectual, and political development so that society may reach a level of maturity capable of accepting a global leader. Within this view, Shi'a Muslims see themselves as responsible for removing obstacles to justice through individual and social reform and for joining liberation movements' worldwide (Bojnourdi, 2018 AD/1397 SH: 120). Unlike passive approaches, this concept motivates its followers not to remain silent in the face of injustice, but to act as active agents of global transformation.

The second concept is "Absolute Justice," defined as the ultimate goal of the Mahdavi movement. This justice entails the eradication of all forms of oppression, poverty, inequality, and exploitation, not for a particular group, but for all humanity (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 2011 AD/1390 SH: 321). Unlike racist ideologies that seek justice exclusively for their own people or nation, Mahdavi justice is universal and impartial. This concept instills the understanding that the true enemy is not a specific race or religion, but injustice in all its forms. This emancipatory perspective positions Mahdism as a powerful alternative to capitalist and imperialist systems built upon exploitation and inequality (Jawadi Amoli, 2010 AD/1389 SH: 250).

The third concept is "Global Government." This ideal stands in direct contrast to Zionist thinking, which seeks to establish an ethnic and limited state within a specific territory. Mahdavi thought, by contrast, believes in the formation of a comprehensive and global government in which justice and peace are established for all human beings, regardless of race, religion, or nationality (Majlisī, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 51, 104). Such a government would not only transcend geographical borders but would also lead to human unity and

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peaceful coexistence. Within this system, human rights and dignity are respected for all, and concepts such as a "Chosen People" or ethnic superiority would be entirely meaningless. The Mahdavi government symbolizes the ultimate triumph of truth over falsehood and light over darkness, opening new horizons of global solidarity and peace for humanity (Qummī, 1999 AD/1420 AH: 21).

This justice-centered approach presents a genuine interpretation of the reconstruction of the world. Whereas Zionism seeks the rebuilding of the world through forced geographical transformation and the elimination of others, Mahdism views the reconstruction of the world in the restoration of the human spirit, the establishment of social justice, and the eradication of the roots of corruption and oppression. The global Mahdavi government represents the true manifestation of *Tikkun olam*, a world moving toward perfection and peace without violence and war.

Ultimately, an analysis of the theoretical foundations of belief-based geopolitics shows that although both Zionism and Mahdavi thought employ apocalyptic concepts, their interpretations lead to two entirely different and conflicting paths. These two ideologies begin from a shared theological source, the promise of salvation and redemption, but ultimately lead to two very different geopolitical projects. Zionism, by reducing spiritual concepts to political instruments, transforms the apocalypse into a nationalist and exclusivist project. Within this framework, the "Promised Land" becomes an absolute claim of ownership over a geographical territory, the "Chosen People" becomes a justification for ethnic superiority, and "Redemption" is

reduced to a political–military achievement. These interpretations provide the theoretical basis for expansionist policies, discrimination, and violence against others, thereby fueling conflicts with ethnic and religious dimensions. In contrast, Mahdavi thought is grounded in universal and emancipatory interpretations. "Active Waiting" becomes the duty to struggle against oppression, "Absolute Justice" becomes the aspiration to establish equity for all humanity, and "Global Government" is understood as the realization of unity and peaceful coexistence among human beings. This fundamental difference in concepts transforms the geopolitical confrontation between these two ideologies from a simple conflict over resources into a profound ideological struggle over the core notions of identity, justice, and the future of humanity. In the following sections of the article, this confrontation will be analyzed within practical and geopolitical domains.

3.4. Analysis of the Ideological Confrontation: From Distortion to Truth

This section examines the religious and ideological roots of the confrontation between Zionism and Mahdavi thought. This confrontation goes beyond a geopolitical struggle over resources or power; in essence, it is a contest over apocalyptic interpretations and projects of liberation. On one side, Zionism, through an exclusivist and earthly outlook, has distorted divine concepts to justify expansionist policies and the establishment of a particular nation-state. On the other side, Mahdavi thought, with its universal and emancipatory ideals, seeks to establish justice for all humanity.

This article demonstrates how these two ideologies define enmity, identity, and redemption in fundamentally opposing ways, and how these contradictions contribute to geopolitical tensions (Esmailzadeh, 2017 AD/1396 SH: 90). Through a close examination of sacred texts and the

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analysis of their differing interpretations, this section argues that the present confrontation does not originate from the essence of religions themselves, but rather from political and distorted interpretations of them. Such an analysis leads to a deeper understanding of the belief-based geopolitical dimensions of this conflict and explains why, within the framework of apocalyptic beliefs; this confrontation has evolved into a fundamental ideological struggle (Farid, 2019 AD/1398 SH: 115).

3.5. Zionism: A Distorted Interpretation of Sacred Texts

The following section provides a critical and scholarly analysis of Zionist distortions of sacred texts. This ideology, through deliberate reinterpretation of theological concepts, removes them from their spiritual and ethical context and transforms them into tools for justifying its political and territorial projects. By carefully examining key verses of the Torah, it will be shown how Zionism, by reducing divine promise to an absolute and earthly right of occupation, and by reinterpreting the concepts of the "Chosen People" and "Redemption," has created a doctrinal foundation for expansionist policies and the exclusion of others. This analysis reveals the nature of Zionism not as a purely religious movement but as a political and exclusivist one.

3.5.1. Analysis of the Distortion of the Torah: Transforming Divine Promise into Absolute Territorial Right

In order to justify its political and expansionist projects, Zionism has adopted a particular and selective interpretation of Jewish sacred texts, especially the Torah. This approach effectively removes divine promises from their spiritual and ethical framework and converts them into instruments for gaining power

and legitimizing the occupation of land. Such reinterpretation forms one of the core foundations of the belief-based geopolitics of Zionism.

One of the key concepts that has been reinterpreted is the "Promise of the Land." In the Book of Genesis, God promises Abraham: "To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates." (Genesis 15:18) In traditional Jewish interpretation, however, this promise is conditional upon adherence to the divine covenant and obedience to religious law. Sacred texts explicitly state that God expelled the Children of Israel from the land because of disobedience and corruption (Leviticus 26:33). This demonstrates that possession of the land is not an absolute or permanent right, but rather a conditional and ethical relationship between humanity and God. Zionism, however, by ignoring this condition and reducing the promise to an absolute right, has turned it into a justification for occupation (Bernstein, 2019: 115). This interpretation creates the basis for dispossessing the original inhabitants and granting legitimacy to violence.

Furthermore, Zionism has used the concept of the "Chosen People" to justify its policies. In the Book of Exodus, God declares: "Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples." (Exodus 19:5) In this verse, chosenness is defined as a moral and spiritual responsibility to convey God's message to the world, not as a racial or ethnic superiority. However, Zionist ideology has transformed this concept into an exclusive and ethnic right, turning it into a justification for discriminatory and exclusivist policies (Goldberg, 2021: 78). This reinterpretation has contributed to the formation of a nationalist identity that perceives itself as superior to others and therefore legitimizes apartheid-like policies toward Palestinians.

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Finally, the concept of "Return to Zion" has also been reinterpreted. In sacred texts, return is primarily a spiritual and ethical matter achieved through repentance and a return to the divine path. The prophet Isaiah explicitly states: "A remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, to the Mighty God." (Isaiah 10:21) This return signifies an inner spiritual transformation that precedes divine redemption. Zionism, however, by secularizing this concept, has turned return into a political project of migration and state-building (Smith, 2015: 140). In this interpretation, redemption is reduced from a spiritual and eschatological reality to a political–military achievement whose ultimate goal is control over territory rather than spiritual salvation for all humanity. Such reinterpretation transforms the struggle from a fight against injustice into an ethnic and religious conflict in which the only perceived resolution is the victory of one side.

3.5.2. Reducing Redemption: From a Spiritual Concept to a Political and Exclusivist Project

One of the most fundamental distortions within Zionist ideology is the reduction of the profound and universal concept of redemption into a political and exclusivist project. In traditional Jewish theology, redemption signifies liberation from sin, a return to God, and the establishment of spiritual justice and peace in the world. This process is not merely a political event but a moral and spiritual transformation achieved through repentance and adherence to divine commandments. However, Zionism separates this spiritual concept from its roots and transforms it into a worldly and nationalist objective. This distortion can be analyzed in three key dimensions:

1) Secularization of Redemption

In Zionist thought, redemption shifts from a divine and spiritual phenomenon to a social–political project. Instead of seeking redemption through the salvation of the soul and connection with God, it is viewed as the establishment of the State of Israel, the return of all Jews to that land, and the acquisition of political and military power. This approach reduces redemption to a human achievement obtained through human effort and power rather than divine grace and will. Such a perspective essentially sidelines the role of God in the process of redemption and transforms it into a nationalist movement that reaches its goals through worldly means (Cohen, 2015: 110).

2) Ethnic Exclusivism of Redemption

While many Jewish sacred texts emphasize redemption for all of humanity at the end of times, Zionism defines this concept exclusively for the Jewish people. In Zionist thought, redemption is not the liberation of all humans but simply the rescue of one nation from dispersion and exile. This ethnic exclusivism creates the ideological basis for justifying discriminatory policies and the exclusion of others. Within this framework, other peoples, especially Palestinians, are seen as obstacles to the realization of ethnic redemption and therefore must be removed or overcome. This perspective transforms the nature of redemption from a universal, emancipatory promise for all humanity into a domination-oriented project for a specific group (Bernstein, 2019: 115).

3) Transforming Redemption into a Tool of Legitimation

Zionism employs the concept of redemption as a powerful tool for legitimizing its policies. By arguing that returning to the Promised Land and establishing the State of Israel are essential and unavoidable components of the redemption process, any opposition to such policies is framed not merely

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as political disagreement but as resistance to divine will and the process of redemption itself. This perspective grants the State of Israel a sacred aura and justifies its actions as a "Holy duty." Consequently, Israel's expansionist policies and even its wars are interpreted, within belief-based geopolitical thinking, as steps toward fulfilling sacred redemption (Akhundi, 2020 AD/1399 SH: 201).

This reductionist approach not only empties redemption of its original meaning but also fuels extremism and religious violence.

3.5.3. Reconstructing the World: From Moral Reform to Geopolitical Transformation Projects

In addition to the three concepts of the Promised Land, the Chosen People, and Redemption, a fourth and highly significant concept plays a central and strategic role in the belief-based geopolitics of Zionism: "The idea of reconstructing the world, known in Hebrew as *Tikkun Olam*. A critical analysis of this concept shows how Zionism has appropriated an authentic religious belief to justify its projects at regional and global levels."

In the Jewish tradition and in Kabbalistic texts, *Tikkun Olam* refers to the repair, restoration, and improvement of the world. Within the religious framework of Judaism, this concept carries profound spiritual and ethical meaning and expresses the responsibility of righteous individuals to cooperate with God in correcting the imperfections of the world, establishing social justice, reducing human suffering, and bringing creation closer to its ideal perfection. In this traditional interpretation, repairing the world is a path toward spiritual elevation and service to humanity, and it bears no relation to

violence, power-seeking, or the alteration of geographical borders (Scholem, 1941; Idel, 1988).

However, Zionist ideology, through a secular, materialistic, and instrumental approach, has removed this sacred concept from its ethical and spiritual foundations and significantly distorted it. In the belief-based geopolitics of Zionism, repairing the world no longer refers to spiritual purification or service to humanity. Instead, it is interpreted as the physical and material reconstruction of the land of Israel and the transformation of the region's geographic and demographic structures in favor of the Zionist regime (Kimmerling, 1983; Pappé, 2006).

Within this distorted perspective, the world can only be "repaired" when Jews return to the Promised Land, establish sovereignty over it, and reshape its political and demographic structures according to their objectives. This interpretation provides a theoretical foundation for expansionist policies and demographic engineering (population displacement) (Shlaim, 2000; Said, 1978). Accordingly, military operations, large-scale settlement construction in occupied territories, confiscation of Palestinian lands, and the expulsion of indigenous inhabitants are not framed as violations of human rights or acts of aggression but rather as the fulfillment of a divine command to repair the world.

Zionism argues that the presence of Palestinians and the existing geographic structures constitute obstacles to the realization of *Tikkun Olam*, thereby justifying organized violence and ethnic cleansing (Pappé, 2006; Masalha, 1992). Within this ideological framework, the demolition of Palestinian homes and the construction of Jewish settlements in their place are portrayed as a form of restoration and rebuilding. This striking paradox reveals the depth

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of distortion within the ideology: The destruction of a person's home is labeled as the "Repair of the World."

This conceptual distortion also has dangerous geopolitical implications. In Zionist thought, the concept of reconstructing the world is not confined to the geographic borders of occupied Palestine; its scope extends to the entire Middle East and even to global political dynamics. Relying on this perspective, the Zionist regime frames its interventions in regional countries, proxy conflicts, and efforts to reshape political regimes as part of a broader project aimed at reconstructing regional order. According to this view, global peace and security, understood as achievable only under Israeli dominance, require the transformation of the region's political and cultural structures, a transformation that allegedly necessitates military power and war (Chomsky, 1983; Mearsheimer & Walt, 2007).

In contrast, this Zionist interpretation stands in clear opposition to the concept of reform and reconstruction in Mahdavi thought. In Mahdism, the reconstruction of the world is contingent upon resistance to oppression and the establishment of justice, not the creation of new forms of oppression. Yet within Zionist ideology, the reconstruction of the world is pursued through the oppression of other nations and the deprivation of their rights.

By transforming *Tikkun Olam* from an ethical and spiritual concept into a political-military project, Zionism has equipped itself with a powerful ideological instrument through which any opposition to its racial or expansionist policies can be portrayed not as political resistance but as an obstacle to the divine will to repair the world. This framing elevates the

conflict to a level of ideological absolutism and violence that makes rational and diplomatic solutions increasingly difficult (Sachedina, 2001; Aghaie, 2004).

Ultimately, the concept of reconstructing the world in Zionist ideology represents a clear example of the secularization and politicization of sacred concepts. A notion that should serve human dignity and justice has been transformed into a tool for justifying occupation, apartheid, and demographic transformation. This distortion constitutes one of the hidden yet highly influential dimensions of Zionism's belief-based geopolitics, advancing projects of power and racial domination under the cover of sacred terminology. It stands in fundamental opposition to the emancipatory and justice-centered ideals of Mahdism, in which the reconstruction of the world is realized without oppression and through the establishment of absolute justice.

In the end, by reducing redemption from a spiritual reality to a political and exclusivist project, Zionism has not only betrayed the ethical foundations of Jewish sacred texts but has also contributed to the emergence of one of the most complex and enduring geopolitical conflicts in the modern world. This reductionism stands in direct contrast to the concept of redemption in Mahdavi thought, which envisions a global movement of liberation for all humanity.

3.6. Mahdism: A Universal and Emancipatory Truth

The following section examines Mahdism as a universal and emancipatory reality that, in contrast to Zionism, pursues humanitarian ideals. This doctrine is not founded upon ethnic exclusivism but rather upon concepts such as "Active Waiting" and "Absolute Justice." The ultimate goal of Mahdism is the

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establishment of a global government based on justice for all human beings, regardless of race or religion. This perspective places it in direct opposition to the exclusivist and discriminatory outlook associated with Zionist thought. The analysis demonstrates how Mahdism responds to humanity's global need for peace and solidarity.

3.6.1. Reliance on Divine Sources: The Manifestation of Justice and Global Salvation in Mahdism

The idea of Mahdism, unlike exclusivist and ethnically oriented approaches, is rooted in Islamic sacred texts that emphasize justice, salvation, and universal redemption. The Qur'an and Islamic traditions present a clear image of a liberating future in which justice and peace will prevail for all humanity. These sources portray Mahdism not as an ethnic project but as a divine movement aimed at ending oppression and tyranny throughout the world.

One of the most central Qur'anic verses referring to the Mahdavi ideal is verse 5 of Surah *al-Qaṣaṣ*:

"We desire to show favor to those who were oppressed in the land, and to make them leaders and inheritors." (al-Qaṣaṣ: 5)

This verse clearly indicates that the divine will intends for the oppressed and marginalized to become the inheritors of the earth and its leaders. Islamic commentators interpret this verse as a divine promise of the ultimate victory of truth over falsehood and the establishment of a righteous government (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 2011 AD/1390 SH: 16, 16). Importantly, this promise is not addressed to a specific nation or ethnic group but to all those who have

suffered oppression, revealing the universal and non-ethnic nature of Mahdism.

Additionally, verse 33 of Surah *al-Tawbah* emphasizes the final triumph of the true religion over all other religions and ideologies:

"It is He who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth to make it prevail over all religion, even though the polytheists may dislike it." (al-Tawbah: 33)

This verse presents the ultimate goal of prophetic missions as the full establishment of the true religion throughout the world. Numerous Islamic traditions associate the realization of this promise with the era of the appearance of Imam Mahdi (AJ) (Kulaynī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 1, 432). In that era, justice and truth will dominate the world and no oppression will remain. This understanding elevates Mahdism from a merely internal or sectarian aspiration to a global and civilizational project that leads to the liberation of all humanity.

Islamic traditions further confirm and elaborate upon this vision. In a well-known narration from the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), it is reported:

"If there were only one day left in the life of this world, God would prolong that day until a man from my family is raised who will fill the earth with justice and equity just as it had been filled with oppression and tyranny." (Ibn Hanbal, 2000 AD/1421 AH: 5, 364)

This narration clearly indicates that the central mission of Imam Mahdi is the establishment of global justice, and this justice is not limited to Muslims but encompasses all human beings. In Shi'i thought, Mahdavi justice represents an absolute form of justice that eradicates all forms of oppression, poverty, and inequality (Majlisī, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 52, 330).

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Moreover, Islamic teachings identify the primary enemy not as a race or ethnic group but as oppression, corruption, and injustice. Imam Ali (AS), in *Nahj al-Balāgha*, considers oppression among the gravest sins. In Sermon 127, he explicitly speaks of the ugliness of injustice and describes it as one of the greatest sins and causes of the downfall of nations. In that sermon he states:

"Oppression leads to a disastrous end, and the oppressor is vile and base."

This statement powerfully describes the destructive consequences of injustice. Similarly, in Sermon 15, Imam Ali warns those who pursue oppression, stating:

"The oppressor wrongs himself and transgresses against others."

These statements highlight the central place of combating injustice within Islamic and Mahdavi teachings. This struggle is not directed against a particular race or ethnic group but against the very phenomenon of oppression and tyranny itself. Consequently, within Mahdavi thought, the struggle against injustice is presented as a divine duty, aimed at establishing a just society for all humanity.

This perspective stands in fundamental contrast to ideologies that define enemies based on ethnic identity and justify the superiority of one nation over others. Mahdism, therefore, represents an emancipatory ideology grounded in divine and Qur'anic teachings, seeking to liberate all people from oppression and to establish universal justice. In doing so, it opens new horizons for human solidarity and peace in opposition to exclusivist and racially based worldviews.

3.6.2. Universality and Human Identity: The Fundamental Opposition of Mahdism to the Exclusivist Approach of Zionism

The ideal of Mahdism is not an ethnic or nationalist project; rather, it is a divine plan for the salvation and liberation of all human beings regardless of race, religion or nationality. This universal characteristic places Mahdism in fundamental opposition to the exclusivist and racially oriented approach associated with Zionism. While Zionism emphasizes the identity of a "Chosen Nation" and its exclusive right to possess the land, Mahdism insists on a shared human identity and the ideal of justice for all. This universality is clearly reflected in early Islamic sources, particularly the Qur'an and Islamic traditions.

The well-known verse 28 of Surah Saba emphasizes the universal mission of the Prophet of Islam (PBUH):

"And We have not sent you except as a bringer of good news and a warner to all mankind." (al-Saba': 28)

This verse demonstrates that the message of Islam is a global message for all human beings. In this same framework, the doctrine of Mahdism, which continues the prophetic mission, seeks to realize this universal message on a broader scale. Its ultimate objective is the establishment of justice and equity throughout the entire earth, not merely within a particular geographical region (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 2011 AD/1390 SH: 17, 349). From this perspective, Mahdism moves beyond a sectarian movement and becomes a universal human ideal. Islamic traditions also affirm this reality. In a narration from Imam *Bāqir* (AS) it is reported:

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"When our Qa'im rises, there will remain no place on earth except that the call "There is no god but Allah" will be proclaimed there." (Majlisi, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 52, 330)

This narration indicates that the Mahdavi government will be a global religious government devoted to guiding all human beings toward truth and salvation. This does not mean the forced abolition of other religions; rather, it implies the creation of conditions in which the truth can be recognized and peace established on the basis of faith and moral values. This approach stands in contrast to the ideology of Zionism, which deprives others of their rights and denies their identities (Bojnordi, 2018 AD/1397 SH: 120).

Furthermore, the Mahdavi ideal emphasizes a shared and unified human identity instead of ethnic and racial identities. In the Holy Qur'an, God states: "O! Mankind, indeed We created you from a male and a female and made you into peoples and tribes so that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of God is the most righteous of you." (al-Hujurat: 13)

This verse clearly establishes that the criterion of superiority is piety and moral virtue, not race or tribe. On this basis, the doctrine of Mahdism envisions a just global society in which racial and ethnic discrimination disappear, and the only standard of excellence becomes moral and spiritual virtue (Motahhari, 2007AD/1386 SH: 110). This perspective directly contrasts with Zionist teachings that emphasize the superiority of a chosen nation and use it to justify discriminatory policies.

Ultimately, the doctrine of Mahdism is not merely a spiritual aspiration but also a liberatory socio-political project for all humanity (Javadi Amoli, 2009 AD/1389 SH: 250). This approach fosters solidarity among nations and different religions and, instead of creating geographical and cultural boundaries, seeks unity and peaceful coexistence. These characteristics transform Mahdism into a powerful alternative to exclusivist ideologies that are built upon fear, hostility, and ethnic divisions (Qummī, 1989 AD/1420 AH: 21).

3.7. Conflict over Identity and Ideals

This section analyzes the main roots of the geopolitical–ideological conflict over identity and ideals between Zionism and Mahdism. These two ideologies stand in fundamental opposition to one another. Zionism emphasizes an exclusive and ethnic identity and defines its ideal in terms of domination and the acquisition of earthly power, whereas Mahdism is founded upon a shared human identity and the ideal of liberation and global justice for all humanity.

3.7.1. Exclusive Identity in Zionism: Justifying Expansionist Policies and the Elimination of Others

One of the most fundamental concepts that the ideology of Zionism employs to justify its policies is the idea of the "Chosen People." This concept, which has roots in Jewish sacred texts, originally referred to a moral and spiritual responsibility. However, Zionism has transformed it into an exclusive and racial identity. This reinterpretation has created the ideological groundwork for expansionist policies and the exclusion of others, particularly the Palestinians.

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In the Torah, the concept of "Chosenness" refers to a divine mission in whom God calls upon the people of Israel to serve as a model of justice and faith for other nations. In the Book of Exodus it is stated:

"Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My treasured possession among all peoples." (Exodus 19:5)

This verse clearly shows that chosenness is a conditional privilege, dependent upon adherence to the divine covenant rather than an inherent superiority. However, Zionism, by ignoring this condition, has transformed it into an absolute and hereditary right (Goldberg, 2021: 78). This reinterpretation allows its adherents to regard themselves as superior to others and, consequently, to justify the denial of rights, discrimination, and even ethnic cleansing.

This exclusive identity has directly led to Israel's expansionist policies in three key dimensions:

- 1) **Legitimizing occupation and settlement expansion:** The belief that Jews are the "Chosen People" reinforces the idea that they are the sole legitimate owners of the "Promised Land." From this perspective, the presence of Palestinians in that land is considered illegitimate and temporary. This view functions as an ideological justification for settlement movements and policies of land confiscation from Palestinians. Within this framework, opposition to occupation is interpreted not merely as a political dispute but as opposition to the divine will (Bernstein, 2019: 115).

- 2) Justifying discriminatory laws: The exclusive identity of the "Chosen People" is also reflected in Israel's domestic legislation. The "Nation-State Law" passed in 2018 defines Israel as the "National state of the Jewish people" and reserves the right of self-determination exclusively for Jews. This law effectively reduces non-Jewish citizens, especially Palestinians, to second-class citizens and denies their claims to political and social equality (Fishman, 2019: 201). Such systematic discrimination is the direct outcome of a racialized interpretation of the concept of the "Chosen People," which disregards the dignity and rights of others (Karimi, 2021 AD/1400 SH: 167).
- 3) Enemy construction and the dehumanization of others: The ideology of the "Chosen People" has also contributed to the dehumanization of Palestinians and other non-Jewish groups. Under the belief that only Jews possess a special status before God, others are perceived as the "Other" or even as enemies of the divine. This perspective provides justification for the use of severe violence and extraordinary military measures against Palestinians, since they are viewed not as human beings with equal rights but as obstacles to the realization of a divine promise (Palmer, 2016: 95). This faith-based enemy construction transforms the nature of the conflict from a dispute over rights into a sacred and existential struggle.

This closed, ethnic identity has in practice obstructed the realization of humanity's ideal of rebuilding the world, because in the Zionist view the world is reformable only when one race dominates others, whereas true reconstruction requires liberation from the constraints of racism. Ultimately, by turning a spiritual and conditional concept into an exclusive, racial identity,

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Zionism has not only betrayed its own sacred texts but has also provided a dangerous ideological foundation for expansionist policies and the elimination of others. This outlook stands in fundamental contrast to the Mahdavi ideal, which emphasizes a shared human identity and justice for all humanity.

3.7.2. Global Identity in Mahdism: A Liberatory, Anti-Exclusivist Movement

In direct opposition to Zionism's exclusivist mindset, the doctrine of Mahdism offers a global and liberatory identity that fundamentally rejects all forms of racism and identity-based monopolization. This approach is not merely a spiritual aspiration; it is also a socio-political project aimed at the liberation of all human beings, regardless of race, nationality, or religion. Mahdism defines identity not on the basis of bloodline or ethnic belonging, but on the basis of shared human and ethical values.

This universalism is stated explicitly and repeatedly in the earliest Islamic sources, especially the Qur'an and the hadith literature. The Qur'an clearly stresses the unity of humankind's origin:

"O! Mankind, indeed We created you from a male and a female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of God is the most righteous of you." (al-Ḥujurāt: 13)

This verse dismantles any foundation for racial or ethnic superiority and regards piety and moral virtue as the only criterion of merit. In line with this Qur'anic teaching, Mahdism seeks to establish a global society in which ethnic and tribal divisions fade, and shared humanity becomes the basis of

social relations. In this way, Mahdism's global identity stands opposed to the Zionist approach that centers on the notion of a "Chosen People."

Islamic narrations further reinforce this universal outlook. In the narration from Imam *Ṣādiq* (AS), it is reported:

"Indeed, the Qa'im will establish justice in every land, just as there is no justice in any land [today]." (Qummī, 1999 AD/1420 AH: 2, 476)

This hadith explicitly states that the justice of Imam Mahdi (AJ) will be comprehensive and will encompass all parts of the earth, not merely one region or a single group. Such justice means the eradication of oppression and corruption in every form, and this goal is incompatible with the kind of identity-based exclusivism found in Zionism. Mahdavi justice is a liberating justice for the oppressed and the wronged across the world, not a tool for the domination of one group over another (Majlisī, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 52, 330). Moreover, Mahdism defines its ideal in terms of establishing a global government that transcends geographic borders and national divisions. This government does not seek merely to expand a particular ideology; rather, it aims to secure peace, safety, and justice for all people. This concept stands in contrast to the Zionist ideal, which pursues a limited nation-state in a specific territory and views its survival in terms of exclusivity and separation from others. The Mahdavi global government seeks unity and solidarity among nations and condemns racism and ethnic prejudice. In this framework, the primary enemy is corruption and tyranny, not any particular race or religion (Motahhari, 2007 AD/1386 SH: 110).

This analysis shows that Mahdism is not only an apocalyptic movement, but also a socio-political solution to global problems whose roots lie in exclusivist identities (Javadi Amoli, 2010 AD/1389 SH: 250). Consequently, Mahdavi

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thought is presented as a response to humanity's need to escape the crises produced by extreme identity politics and to build a future grounded in peace and justice.

Below is a neutral, direct translation of your text into English, without adding any commentary or political evaluation:

3.8. Conflict in the Concept of the Enemy

The present section analyzes the fundamental contrast between Zionism and Mahdism in the concept of the "Enemy." These two ideologies define the enemy in completely different ways, and this difference forms the root of their geopolitical conflicts. In Zionist thought, the "Enemy" is primarily defined on the basis of ethnic and religious identity, and Muslims are viewed as obstacles to the fulfillment of the divine promise. In contrast, Mahdavi thought considers the enemy not to be any particular race or religion, but oppression, corruption, and tyranny. This analysis explains why one ideology pursues an ethnic conflict while the other seeks to fight injustice.

3.8.1. Enemy Construction in Zionism: Muslims as Obstacles to the Fulfillment of the Divine Promise

One of the most dangerous dimensions of Zionism's ideological geopolitics is the deliberate and ideological construction of an enemy. Extremist Zionist interpretations, through distortions of sacred texts, portray Muslims as the main obstacle to the realization of the "Divine Promise," and therefore as eternal enemies. This enemy-making has paved the way for violent and unconventional policies in the region, transforming the conflict from a political dispute into a sacred and existential battle.

This enemy-centered perspective stems from the distortion of two key Zionist concepts: "The Promised Land" and "Redemption." Zionism regards the "Promised Land" not as a spiritual and conditional promise but as an absolute, earthly right for Jews. From this viewpoint, the presence of Muslims, especially Palestinians, in this land is perceived as a physical and human barrier to the fulfillment of this promise. This logic sees Palestinians not as human beings with equal rights but as "Occupiers" or "Usurpers" who must be removed from the Promised Land (Goldberg, 2021: 78). This approach leads to the dehumanization of Muslims and provides justification for ethnic cleansing, illegal settlement activities, and the use of violence. Within this ideological framework, every Palestinian living in Palestine is inherently considered an obstacle to achieving Zionism's claimed promise, making enemy-making a doctrinal principle.

Additionally, in extremist apocalyptic interpretations, Muslims are also viewed as obstructing the process of redemption. In this perspective, "Redemption" becomes a political project for establishing a Jewish state and rebuilding the Third Temple in Jerusalem. Since the al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock are believed by Zionist groups to be built over the ruins of the First and Second Temples, the presence of Muslims and their holy sites in this area is considered a religious obstacle to the fulfillment of this constructed vision of redemption. Some extremist Zionist groups have thus turned this "Obstacle" into an apocalyptic enemy that must be confronted to prepare the ground for the appearance of the redeemer (Cohen, 2015: 110).

This perspective elevates tensions beyond the political level and transforms them into an unsolvable religious conflict in which compromise becomes

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impossible, because compromise is interpreted as abandoning Zionism's claimed divine promise (Smith, 2018: 98).

This enemy construction appears not only in political and religious discourse but also within the texts cited by these groups. Some extremist interpretations of the Hebrew Bible emphasize verses referring to the destruction of Israel's enemies and misapply them to Muslims. For instance, certain interpretations of verses referring to "Infidel Peoples" are inaccurately used to justify violence against Muslims, even though these verses belong to a specific historical context and do not possess a universal or racial meaning (Palmer, 2016: 95). This historical and theological distortion allows extremist groups to present their violence as religiously sanctioned.

Therefore, enemy-making within Zionism is rooted in extremist and politicized interpretations of sacred texts. This perspective views Muslims as obstacles to the fulfillment of the "Divine Promise," which results in a permanent conflict with ethnic and religious dimensions.

3.8.1. Enemy Construction in Mahdism: Fighting Oppression and Corruption, Not Any Race or Religion

In contrast to exclusivist ideologies that define the Zionist enemy based on ethnic or religious identity, the doctrine of Mahdism identifies the primary enemy not as any particular race or religion, but as oppression and corruption in all their forms. This perspective transforms struggle from an ethnic conflict into a moral and ideological effort to establish global justice. This viewpoint grants Mahdism a universal and liberatory character that fundamentally opposes Zionist patterns of enemy-making.

The foundation of this perspective lies in early Islamic sources, especially the Qur'an and *Nahj al-Balāgha*. The Qur'an explicitly emphasizes fighting injustice and identifies oppressors as the enemies of God. In multiple verses, oppression is described as a reprehensible and destructive act. God says:

"And those who have wronged are going to know to what [kind of] return they will be returned." (al-Shu'arā': 227)

This verse indicates that the final outcome of oppressors is destruction—regardless of the nation or religion to which they belong. This understanding directs the Mahdavi mission toward reforming the world by eliminating corruption and injustice, not destroying any particular group (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 2011 AD/1390 SH: 15, 336).

Islamic narrations elaborate on this concept as well. In a hadith from Imam Ṣādiq (AS), it is reported:

"Indeed, the Qa'im will establish justice in every land, just as there is no justice in any land [today]." (Qummī, 1999 AD/1420 AH: 2, 476)

This narration explicitly states that the primary aim of Imam Mahdi's (AJ) mission is to establish justice across all of the earth. This justice entails the eradication of all manifestations of corruption, including poverty, discrimination, and inequality. Therefore, the "Enemy" in this framework is any institution, system, or individual that resists justice and engages in oppression and corruption (Majlisī, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 52, 330).

This perspective makes Mahdism a powerful alternative to oppressive and exploitative systems, both modern and traditional. *Nahj al-Balāgha*, as one of the most important Shi'i sources, also emphasizes this fundamental principle; Imam Ali (AS) states in several sermons that oppression is the root of all evil. In one instance, he says:

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"Oppression is a pasture whose end is ruin, and its nature is base."

This statement shows that oppression is a destructive and ruinous phenomenon, and fighting it is a divine obligation. In Mahdavi thought, this struggle reaches its peak: Imam Mahdi (AJ), as the perfect manifestation of divine justice, will eliminate all forms of oppression (Motahhari, 2007 AD/1386 SH: 110).

This approach directly contradicts the enemy-making framework within Zionism. While Zionism views Muslims and Palestinians as ethnic and religious obstacles to the fulfillment of its claimed promise, Mahdism defines the enemy based on unjust behavior and oppressive actions. This means that even if a particular ethnic or religious group, including followers of Imam Mahdi (AJ), turns toward oppression and corruption; they would be considered enemies within this conceptual framework (Javadi Amoli, 2010 AD/1389 SH: 250).

Consequently, enmity in Mahdism is ideological, not ethnic or racial. This feature grants Mahdism a liberatory essence aimed at creating a global society grounded in justice and free from discrimination.

Conclusion

Through analyzing the theoretical foundations and conceptual framework, this article demonstrates that the confrontation between Zionism and Mahdavi thought goes beyond a merely political or geographical conflict. In reality, this confrontation represents a fundamental contradiction within ideological geopolitics, rooted in two completely different interpretations of apocalyptic

and salvational concepts. On one side, Zionism adopts an exclusivist and earthly outlook that distorts divine concepts; on the other side, Mahdavi thought, with a universal and liberatory approach, pursues an ideal intended for all humanity.

The analysis of distortions of the Torah showed how Zionism, by reducing the "Divine Promise" to an absolute and earthly right, has provided the ideological legitimacy necessary for expansionist and occupation-based policies. This distortion has enabled the reduction of the concept of "Redemption" from a spiritual reality into a political-military project. Within this framework, redemption is no longer a moral liberation for all human beings, but rather an ethnic achievement aimed at establishing a state and exercising domination over a particular territory. Such an exclusivist outlook not only contradicts the spirit of divine teachings but also fuels conflicts in which compromise appears impossible.

In contrast, Mahdavi thought offers a completely different vision of the end times and redemption. Reference to divine sources demonstrates that Mahdism, based on Qur'anic verses and Islamic narrations, emphasizes justice and universal salvation. This doctrine places its ideal in the establishment of justice for all humanity and the creation of a global government. Within this approach, human identity takes precedence over ethnic and racial identities, and the only criterion of superiority is piety and moral virtue. This universalism places Mahdism in direct opposition to the ideology of Zionism, which emphasizes the exclusive identity of a "Chosen People" and uses it to justify discrimination and the exclusion of others.

This fundamental difference in theoretical foundations also becomes evident in the concept of the "Enemy." In extremist interpretations of Zionism,

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Muslims are portrayed as obstacles to the fulfillment of the "Divine Promise," and this ethnic enemy-construction provides the groundwork for violence and inhumane policies. In Mahdavi thought, however, the primary enemy is oppression and corruption, not any particular race or religion. The struggle is therefore an ideological battle against injustice, whose ultimate aim is the creation of a just society for all human beings.

Ultimately, it can be concluded that the geopolitical confrontation between Zionism and Mahdavi thought represents a clash between two completely opposing projects for the future of humanity. Zionism seeks exclusive domination over a specific territory, whereas Mahdism calls for the global liberation of humanity from oppression. According to Islamic teachings and the principles of divine justice, the final victory in this confrontation belongs to Mahdavi thought. This victory does not mean the domination of one group over another; rather, it signifies the ultimate triumph of truth over distortion, justice over oppression, and universal human identity over ethnic exclusivism. It represents the fulfillment of the divine promise that the oppressed will inherit the earth and that lasting peace will be established for all humanity.

In conclusion, the geopolitical confrontation between Zionism and Mahdavi thought can be understood as a clash between two opposing interpretations of humanity's destiny: one interpretation in which the reconstruction of the world proceeds through violence and occupation (Zionism), and another in which the rebuilding of the world is realized through absolute justice and the liberation of the oppressed (Mahdism). The final victory belongs to the vision

that rebuilds the world not through the destruction of homes, but through the cultivation of souls and the establishment of social justice.

Diagram: Geopolitical Analysis of the Ideological Confrontation between Zionism and Mahdism

No.	Axis of Comparison	Zionism	Mahdism
1	Nature of the Ideology	A political-nationalist ideology based on the distortion of Jewish sacred texts	A Shi'i religious doctrine with a universal, justice-oriented, and liberatory vision
2	Key Apocalyptic Concepts	<p>1. Promised Land: Absolute right to occupy and possess the land of Palestine.</p> <p>2. Chosen People: Racial superiority and exclusive Jewish entitlement.</p> <p>3. Redemption: A political-military project</p>	<p>1. Active Waiting: Social responsibility to struggle against oppression and corruption.</p> <p>2. Absolute Justice: Elimination of oppression and establishment of global justice.</p>

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		to establish a Jewish state.	3. Global Government: A comprehensive system of peace and justice for all humanity.
3	Definition of the Enemy	1. Enemy defined on the basis of ethnic and religious identity. 2. Muslims and Palestinians viewed as obstacles to the fulfillment of the "Divine Promise" (permanent enemy).	Enemy defined as oppression, corruption, and tyranny; struggle against injustice regardless of race or religion.
4	Identity and Ideal	Exclusive Jewish ethnic identity; the ideal of domination over a specific territory and preservation of ethnic superiority	Universal human identity; the ideal of liberation and justice for all human beings
5	Approach to Redemption	Secularized and politicized; redemption understood as the formation of a	Spiritual and ethical; redemption understood as the realization of

		nation-state and the reconstruction of the Third Temple	justice and peace for humanity
6	Basis of Legitimacy	Distortion and reduction of sacred texts to justify political exclusivism	Reliance on the Qur'an and Islamic narrations; realization of the divine promise of justice and salvation
7	Geopolitical Consequences	Expansionism, racial discrimination, ethnic cleansing, and persistent conflicts	Movement toward a just global order, peaceful coexistence, and global peace

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