

Preface : According to the shi'ite version of Islam, the 12th descendant of prophet Mohammad went into hiding when he was a child, some 1300 years ago. Shi'ites believe he will reappear again when the world has become full of oppression and tyranny. He will choose 313 disciples and lead an insurrection which will replace tyranny on earth with the most just government ever seen. They refer to him as 'Imam ZamAn' - the Lord of All Ages.

The following play was recently printed in an internal university magazine called 'Mowj' - the Wave. The Ayatollahs were outraged, upstaging each other by weeping louder and asking for the two youngsters responsible for writing the play to be executed because of the 'insult to Islam'. The following is an exact translation of this short play. Judge for yourselves what the play is really about.

Abbas finishes his prayers and goes over to the mosque. He kneels on the ground .

Abbas (with a begging voice) : Oh God, Oh God! Please hurry the coming of Imam Zaman. Oh God, let me see his radiant face. Oh God, let me be one of his disciples. Oh God ! please answer my prayers tonight and let me pass my university entrance exams. Oh God! You know I only wish to be useful in Imam Zaman's government of justice on earth. That is the reason why I am alive.

Abbas stands up, wipes his face and his tears. He then kisses the prayer stone and packs up his prayer mat.

Street- Night Time

Abbas is walking quickly in the street. His face conveys the message that he is late. Suddenly a hand touches his back.

Voice of a young man.

Abbas (without turning round) : If you have come to Tehran from the provinces and you have been mugged and have no money and can't find your way, let me tell you I haven't got money to burn either. Go and work to earn money.

- No Abbas... It is not me who can't find his way. I have come to show you the way.

Abbas turns towards the voice with trepidation. It is a man with a long white dress, standing in front of him.

Abbas : How do you know my name?.

- Not only I know your name, I know all the secrets of your life. The ones you have confessed and the ones you haven't. Abbas!, I am your Imam Zaman.

Abbas : You are kidding!

The man shakes his head from side to side. Abbas pauses and then throws himself onto the man's feet. He starts to stroke the man's leg like a dog and says :

- My Lord!, My Lord!, My Lord!....Where have you been?. My Lord!....I am your lowly servant, ...My Lord I wish to die for you.

The man helps Abbas to get back on his feet.

- Do not weep Abbas!. Today is not the day to weep. Abbas... you know why I have come to you?.

Abbas (sobbing) : My Lord you are the one who knows all.

- I have come to gather 313 disciples. I am asking you if you wish to be my disciple.

Abbas : My Lord, how can I not wish so?. I am alive because of your love...If I could I would have wished to be all of the 313 disciples myself.

- You shall shave your head on Friday. At eight O'clock in the morning you will go to the Revolution Avenue. When I arise, you shall be recruiting followers for the final uprising.

Abbas : Friday ??

- What is wrong?. ...Is it too late?

Abbas : umm... err... We have the university entrance exam on Friday at eight. Let's postpone it to Saturday.

- No, it can not be. It is God's will for it to be on Friday.

Abbas (begs a please gesture with his face)

- No, it can't be!

Abbas : Look, I am not asking to postpone it for after the exam results. I said Saturday. One thousand and three hundred and fifty four years and fifty five days you have been hiding, why can't you wait one more day for me??.

- I said it can not be!. The world has become filled with oppression and tyranny.

Abbas : What a turn up?...Dear Lord.. If you want to carry out the insurrection tomorrow, I know what will happen...you see we have had a revolution before..I will miss the exams, your insurrection will take one to two years, then there will be a cultural revolution*, universities will be closed for two to three years, when they are opened again instead of 1.5million to 2 million participants there will be seven to eight million people taking the exams - that is if we don't count the African/Asian imported Islamic students. I would have forgotten my studies by then...I may as well kiss university goodbye.

- But you always prayed for me to appear asap. You prayed to be one of my disciples.

Abbas : And I still do my Lord.....but If I become a member of your government tomorrow, I will be a minister without expertise and education. Where as we need expert disciples.... You were in hiding when our revolution happened in Iran. Same things happened here. Take my father, I don't mean to be rude, but he got suckered to become a revolutionary and served time in prison, so he missed higher education.

Then, after the revolution, he got a high profile position in the government because of his revolutionary activities. Pardon the expression, but he really screwed things up. Then they replaced him with one of these experts. My Lord, this so called expert struck at the very root of Islam!. I am concerned that a similar situation may happen again.

- The Almighty has decided. If you refuse to become a martyr.....

Abbas : What?.. You are getting worse than these Ayatollahs. They promised us** so much and look what happened, you have only just resurrected and already have decided I should be a martyr....Lord! don't talk to me like this, because I love you I say nothing back to you, but if you talk like this to others they will land a punch right on your chin and tell you that they have wife and children.

- Do you not love martyrdom?.

Abbas : Me? I die for martyrdom!, I love martyrdom... I wish I could be a martyr one hundred times over. But I am not just me. I have responsibilities. You know better than me, Plato says 'Everyone has a missing half who is made to marry him'. If I become a martyr, my 'missing half' will become someone else's wife, because they weren't supposed to wed each other, they will have arguments with each other, their kids will be brought up badly, because of my sacrifice all their offsprings will turn out wrong...

- That is enough, I understand, I have to go.

Abbas : That is just one side of it, obviously the other fellow should have married another woman and by doing so

The man moves away from Abbas in the other direction. Abbas grabs the man's hand and shouts : Where are you going?. You think I am going to let you make me miss my exams?..

Abbas puts his hand in his pocket and draws a knife.

The stage goes dark.

The lights are turned on and off.

Prayer Group - Late Evening

Every one is seated and holding the Koran to their heads. Abbas is also holding the Koran and chanting. Abbas punches his feet more vigorously than others and chants louder.

Abbas is weeping loudly.

Footnotes :

*Cultural Revolution : Shortly after the Islamic revolution in Iran, the Ayatollahs closed down the universities for two years under the conception of 'cultural revolution'. All students and university lecturers who were deemed to be un-Islamic were expelled or sacked.

**Promises of Ayatollahs : On the very day Khomeini returned to Iran after exile, he made a speech in Tehran's main cemetery. In this speech, Khomeini promised free telephone, heating, electricity and bus services.