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Chapter 8: The Wilsyah: The Spiritual and Temporal Authority of the Imms

If we focus on the term <code>wiliyah</code> [primacy, guide, lordship] and words related to spiritual authority and temporal power, as Ayitulish Mutahhari did in a formidable and authoritative synthesis, we note that this terminological repertoire has a very precise meaning in Shillite thought which is related to the idea of a unified government. <code>1 Wili</code>, <code>waliyah</code>, <code>wiliyah</code>, <code>wali</code>, <code>mawli</code>, are nominal forms of the verbal substantive of the trilateral root <code>walla</code> (<code>waw-lam-alif maksurah</code>) which has the primary meaning of "being close," from which is derived "to be at the front of," from which is derived the meanings of "government" and "governor" in the temporal and political sense of the words and "leader" and "chosen" in the spiritual sense. The same root gives place to a series of words which denote power and authority, that is, being close to the center [<code>wasat</code>] of sovereignty. And the Arabic word <code>wasat</code> [center] gives a gamut of terms which indicate "mediation" or "intercession" [<code>tawassut</code>].

Other unfamiliar terms derived from the same trilateral root waw-lam-ya are wal and mawl. Wal means "friend," "intimate," "close," and with the respect to the Imams "holiness" and by extension spiritual "closeness" to the divine center. The passive participle mawl means, among other things, "one who deserves a clientele," and more frequently "boss," "lord," "protector," "tutor," "master," "owner" and so forth. In Shalism, mawl ne [our lord / our master] is used to address the Prophet and the Imams and, in Safism, it is used to refer to the great spiritual masters like Rama or Ibn al-'Araba.

We have listed the various forms and verbal nouns because with the auxiliary one can better understand everything which is implied by the idea of Immate or Caliphate and how it is conceived in Shilite thought in relation to spiritual authority and temporal power. In the time of the Prophet, the title *mawl* [master] had the connotation of spiritual authority and universal temporal power. The basis of any Caliphate or true government is the transcendence of its foundation, the very basis of its sovereignty, authority, and legitimacy.

However, with the downfall of effective power in the succession of the Caliphate, starting with Ab Bakr,

the title *khal* fah also suffered from the same process of depreciation. After the four *khulaf* al-r shid n [rightly-guided Caliphs], the Caliphate ceased to have the connotation of sovereignty and, in fact, to admit the sense of effective authority. This can be seen clearly with Mu'swiyyah, the founder of the Ummayad dynasty, who considered himself the "first king [malik]" of Islsm.3

He is responsible for losing the effective [spiritual] authority of the Caliphate and diminishing the meaning of many titles which, in the early days, were exclusive Caliphal prerogatives. This includes the very term *khal* which, upon entering the common language, became so diluted that any governor of Islsm could claim to be the Caliph of his own dominion.

Among some Sunn® commentators and misinformed Orientalists, there are those who believe that when 'Al® became the Fourth Caliph, according to the temporal and political precedence more than the spiritual, he was implicitly accepting the authority and the method of election of the previous Caliphs in that they accomplished similar political and social functions as governors and elders of the Isl®mic community.4From a Sh®'ite perspective, it is clear that 'Al® never accepted the Caliphate in the sense that the three Caliphs who preceded him did.

On the contrary, as Imm—in the Shmite sense of spiritual and political regency as well as ta' m, the esoteric faculty of perfectly interpreting the intertexual mysteries of the Qur'm and the shar and his successors always insisted upon.

As he explains explicitly in his letters and sermons, 'Al® accepted the function of Caliph–in the Sunn® sense of governor and legal administrator–to avoid schism while preserving the function of *wil®yah* for himself. As Nasr says, this is how 'Al® can simultaneously be seeing as Caliph and Im®m, by both Sunnis and Sh®'ites, in accord with the different perspectives on the issue (see Nasr's preface to Tab®tab®'®'s Sh®'ite Isl®m 10–12).

The *wil* yah inherently implies certain legal and political faculties. The Im m, as we have said, exercises the spiritual magistrate and the esoteric guidance of the *wil* yah. He also performs the function of administrator of the *shar* h, fully interpreting its legal code and legitimately dispensing justice through his role as perfect monarch, by the fact that he embodies spiritual authority and temporal power.

The monarch [from the Greek *monos*, "the sole one" and *arjé*, "rule," "principle"] is the "supreme sovereign," unique and universal," and not merely a "king" [*malik*] since a king only administers the temporal functions of government while the monarch is the one who rules according to the monarchy of divine right, established from above, by the mandate of God and not by human choice.

As Lord Acton, a British historian of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries said, "Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely." As human history has shown us, human lust for power can become exacerbated by its very existence. It can make man dream of limitless power, causing him to rebel against his plight, his powerless limited being. Justice and peace are then viewed as

unacceptable unless they can help increase and maintain power and wealth.

They are soon placed on the backburner due to innate egocentrism and worldly ambitions. This is why the Gospel refers to heads of nations as tyrants who rule like absolute sovereigns while the powerful ones oppress them with their power (Matthew 20:25; Mark 10: 42). In a divine monarchy, based on balance, harmony, justice and peace, quite the opposite is true.

On the basis of the above, it can now be understood why in Sh®ism, the sovereign authority of Im®m al-Mahd® has an eminently regulating and restorative function which is proper and non-transferable. In other words, he is worthy, by divine design, of the "central" position he occupies.

As an "intercessor" between heaven and earth, he is beyond the distinction between the spiritual and worldly realms of existence. The very nature of "intercessor" in the true sense of the word is quintessential to the Seal of the Cycle of Initiation. It is for this reason that he is referred to as the "center" [wasat].5

The "center" in question is the fixed point around which the world rotates. It is designated symbolically by all religious traditions as the "pole" [qutb] and is generally represented by a "wheel." The most obvious sense of this symbol is the absolute dominion over the worldly order. This is why Im®m al–Mahd® receives the majestic titles of sehib al–zam®n [Lord of the Age], al–ark®n [The Pillars], al–q®im [The Restorer], al–muntazar [The Awaited One], al–hujjah [The Proof] as well as al–qutb or the Spiritual Pole of the Age.

The title of sshib al-zamsn, in its most sublime sense, applies exclusively to the Mahds. He is granted this title in virtue of his role as the primordial universal legislator who formulates the most appropriate laws in accordance with the conditions during our cycle of existence. He directs the movement of our cycle without participating in it in a visible fashion. He maintains himself simultaneously present and hidden in the world, the same as in Aristotle's notion of the "unmoving motor."

In light of these considerations, it is understood why Im al-Mahd has the fundamental attributes of "Justice" and "Peace." He shares these attributes with *çakravarti*, [from the Sanskrit: "he who makes the wheel turn"], the "Universal Monarch" of the Hindu and Buddhist traditions; with *wang*, the "Pontiff King" of Taoism and with *melki-tsedeq*, the "King of Justice and Peace" of the Jewish tradition.6

The Invisible Imem's attributes of justice and peace are veiled forms of his spiritual functions which, by an effort of cosmic unity, are identified with earthly equilibrium and harmony. In light of these concepts, we can affirm that the She'ite concept of *wileyah*, the spiritual and temporal authority of the Imem, is the Islemic equivalent of all of these traditional notions from both East and West, including the Hellenist and Hellenist–Christian concept of the *panbasileus* or "Absolute King," who was the lord of a unique and universal empire.

Im®m al-Mahd® is particularly revered for his role as Executor of Prophetic Knowledge or First Intellect.

At the same time, he is the Archetype of Man, the Visible and the Invisible, the First and the Last, the Alpha and the Omega. As Henry Corbin perceived from the development of Sh®ite Prophetology, this human form in its pre-eternal glory is called Original Adam [¶dam al-haq¶q¶], the Perfect Man [ins¶n k¶mil], the Supreme Spirit and Scribe, the Absolute Caliph, and the Pole of the Poles [qutb al-aqt¶b].7 Im¶m al-Mahd¶ is also the Eternal Muhammadan Reality [haq¶qah muhammadiyyah], the Light of His Glory, His Sanctifying Virtue, His Primordial Logos or Divine Word and his Perfect Epiphany.

In light of the above, we can say that in the beginning of Isl®m, Sh®ism, like S®fism, was a latent and nameless reality profoundly rooted in the esoteric dimension of the Qur'®nic revelation.8 In the Isl®mic world, the function of Sh®ism, like that of S®fism, is similar to the human heart in the sense that the heart is the vital center of the human body as well as being, in reality, the intellectual "center" of a reality that transcends any formal determination.9

This "central" role of She ism at the heart of the Islemic world has always, and continues to be, hidden from outside observers, who insist upon its non-Islemic origin. They insist on this theory because She ite doctrine does not appear in the first centuries, particularly during the life of the Prophet, with all of the metaphysical development that would manifest itself later on 10

From a historical perspective, Shelism surfaced immediately after the death of the Prophet and can be defined as "Ale's Islem" or the "Islem of *Ahlul Bayt*." The emergence of Shelism was not merely the consequence of a political conflict related to the succession of the Prophet, although this certainly helped to precipitate the events. What is important, above all, is the "central" role that Shelism played in the Islemic world after the demise of the founder of Islem. 11

As a continuation and a doctrinal complement to the *nubuwwah*, it was imperative for the *wil* yah to manifest itself in the world upon the completion of the prophetic mission. Since *wil* yah implies the same possibility of prolonging the spiritual leadership and the esoteric guidance of the Prophet, it cannot be superimposed on the *nubuwwah* as long as the Prophet was alive. 12

In other words, Shelite Islem, which was supposed to serve as a support for the *wileyah*, the spiritual and esoteric dimension of the *nubuwwah* must manifest itself upon the death of the Prophet. This moment, both cosmologically and metaphysically, signals the start of the *wileyah*, the beginning of its temporal and exoteric manifestation. It is at that point when the *wileyah* [guardianship] ceases to be a latent, nameless reality, and transforms itself into a manifest and named reality.

Due to its cosmological and metaphysical nature, the historical apparition of Shelism was meant to coincide with the Cycle of *willyah*, the start of 'Ale ibn Abe Telib's earthly mission. The esoteric function of the first Imem, hidden until the moment of the Prophet's death, was meant to manifest itself in a partial opening of the Muhammadan *willyah* and the seal of the universal *willyah*. We can thus fully appreciate the importance of the designation [nass] of 'Ale as successor [khalefah] and executor [wase] of the Prophet.13

'All, the first link in the spiritual chain of the Immate and the *rukn* or pillar of Islmic Gnosticism, represents the complementary dimension of the Prophethood; his path, Shillism, is a dimension of the depth found at the core of the Qurlinic message.

- 1. Author's Note: Concerning the various implicit meanings of the technical term willyah and other related terms derived from the trilateral Arabic root W–L–Y, see M. Mutahhar® Wala'ha wa Wil®yat ha (Qum 1976). There is an English version by Yayha Cooper, Wil®yah: The Station of the Master (Tehran 1982), 21–48. Concerning the levels of wil®yah, see D. Martin "The Return to 'The One' in the Philosophy of Najm al–Din al–Kubra" in P. Morewedge (ed.) 216–222.
- 2. Editor's Note: Jal®l al-D®n al-R®m®, author of the Masnavi was a famous S®f® poet and founder of the whirling dervishes. He is the most widely read poet in the United States.
- 3. Editor's Note: As a result of "the usurpation of rule by Mu'swiyyah from 'Als... caused the system of rule to lose its Islsmic character entirely and to be replaced by a monarchical regime" (Khumayns Islsm and Revolution 200).
- 4. Editor's Note: As Ja'fariyan explains,

[W]hen 'Abd al-Rahm®n ibn 'Awf laid down the condition that he would deliver the office of the Caliphate to the candidate who would follow the practice [s®rah] of the Shaykhayn [i.e. Ab® Bakr and 'Umar] ... Im®m 'Al® insisted that he would base his policy only on the Qur'®n, the s®rah of the Prophet and his own judgments [ijtih®d].

5. Editor's Note: The existence of divinely determined intercession for believers is unquestionably Qur'snic: Who is there can intercede in His presence except as He permitteth? (2:255)

Verily your Lord is All h, who created the heavens and the earth in six days, and is firmly established on the throne [of authority], regulating and governing all things. No intercessor [can plead with Him] except after His leave [hath been obtained]. (10:3)

None shall have the power of intercession, but such a one as has received permission [or promise] from [All®h] Most Gracious (19:87)

On that Day shall no intercession avail except for those for whom permission has been granted by [All®h] Most Gracious and whose word is acceptable to Him. (20:109)

He knows what is before them, and what is behind them, and they offer no intercession except for those who are acceptable, and they stand in awe and reverence of His [Glory].(21:28)

No intercession can avail in His Presence, except for those for whom He has granted permission. (34:23)

Say: To All helongs exclusively [the right to grant] intercession. (39:44)

How many-so-ever be the angels in the heavens, their intercession will avail nothing except after All®h has given leave for whom He pleases and that he is acceptable to Him. (53:26)

Intercession, however, is not available to unbelievers, as is clearly stated in the Qur'en (6:51; 2:123; 2:254; 6:70; 6:94; 7:53; 10:18; 19:87; 26:100; 30:30; 32:4; 36:23; 39:43; 40:18; 43:86; 74:48). Intercession is not available to those who are guilty of kufr or shirk. Almighty Alleh addresses the polytheists, warning them that their partners will be unable to intercede with them on the Day of Judgment.

According to Shaykh Sadig:

The right to intercession belongs to the prophets [anbiyy®] and awliyy®. And among the believers [muˈmin®n] also there are some who can intercede on behalf of people equal in number to the tribes of Rab®ah and Mudar. Even the least of the believers will be liable to intercede on behalf of 30,000. (122)

It is narrated in Sadeq's Riselatu al-i'tiqedet, Fakhrudden b. Ahmad al-Najafe's Majma' al- bahrayn and Hasan b. Yesuf b. 'Ale Ibnu'l Mutahar al-Hille's al-Bebu al-hede 'ashar, that the Prophet said: "May Alleh not grant my intercession to him who does not believe in my (power of) intercession."

All of the various orthodox manifestations of Isl®m believe in the intercession of the Prophet and the awliy®. See Kabb®n®'s Encyclopedia of Isl®mic Doctrines:http://www.sunnah [1]. org/ibadaat/ twsl.html.

The belief in intercession does not mean that there is an intermediary between human beings and God. It is merely an extra means of attaining His mercy.

6. Editor's Note: The Hidden Im®m is also the Philosopher King of the Greeks.

- 7. Author's Note: In general, Corbin deals with this theme in his diverse works dedicated to some of the internal or esoteric currents of She'ism, although with slight variations. See "La filosofia islámica desde sus orígenes hasta la muerte de Averroes" in collaboration with S.H. Nasr and O. Iahia, in B. Parain, Del mundo romano al Islem medieval: Historia de la filosofía (Mexico 1972), III, 253–259; 265–266; Terre céleste et corps de résurrection: De l'Iran Mazdéen à l'Iran she'ite (Correa 1960); 106–107; 112–115; Temples et contemplation: Essais sur l'Islem iranien (Paris 1980), 75–76; 192–193; 220; 244–249; and Shaykh al-Mufed's Kiteb al-irshed.
- 8. Editor's Note: The mystical dimension of the Holy Qur'en and teachings of the Prophet were present from the very beginning, even though they were not labeled tasawwuf, Sefism or 'irfen. To borrow Sausurrian terms, the signified exists before the signifier. Imem 'Ale was criticized by some Companions of the Prophet for speaking of things which had never been spoken before by the Prophet. The Imem responded with a reference to the Qur'en that "Prophets speak to the people in the language of the people."

It was the obligation of the Prophet to teach the fundamentals of faith and the outer dimensions of the religion. It was the obligation of the Imems to expound upon in their inner dimensions. As the Messenger of Alleh said: "There is among you a person who will fight for the interpretation of the Qur'en just as I fought for its revelation." He then indicated that it was 'Ale (Ahmad, Hekim, Bayhage, Abe Nu'aym, Muttage).

It is unfortunate that Sayed 'All Reza, the English translator of Nahj al-ballghah, would engage in the wholesale takfir of the Sefe, claiming that "According to She'ah 'ulame' all these sects are on the wrong path and out of the fold of Islem" (422), an intolerant attitude which tarnishes his otherwise informative commentary.

It is equally regrettable that a scholar of the caliber of Ay®tull®h al-Uzm® Shaykh Fazel Lankar®n® would reject mysticism ruling that "S®fism, in the eyes of Sh®ism, in general, [as well as] Isl®mically, has no religious basis, and there is no sign of it in the teachings of the Prophet" (http://www.lankarani.net/ [2] English/faq/en.htm). This was the very attitude addressed by Im®m Khumayn® in Isl®m and Revolution where he laments that:

We find some scholars...denying the validity of mysticism and thus depriving themselves of a form of knowledge. It is regrettable... Those who wear cloaks and turbans and denounce the mystics as unbelievers do not understand what they are saying; if they did, they would not denounce them" (423–424).

Merely because the words selfe and 'erif are not found in the Islemic texts of the first century Hijrah does not signify that mysticism and Gnosis did not exist. They did in fact exist under the general umbrella of 'ilm [knowledge]. As official institutionalized Islem became increasingly legalistic and focused on the exoteric foundations of the faith, the adherents of its mystical and esoteric dimension needed to distinguish themselves by calling their science 'irfen and by designating themselves as Selfis (Awene 169).

All prophets were mystics as were their faithful followers. The first paragons of Selism were the asheb al-selfah, the Companions of the Ledge, about whom Serah 18:28 was revealed (170). They included such distinguished companions as Salmen, Abe Dharr and 'Ammer al-Yesir (170). The early Selism were called zuhhad or ascetics, many of whom were associated with Shelite Imems (170). Among the companions of 'Ale were found spiritual figures and ascetics like Kumayl and Maytham al-Tammer (170).

In his Essay on the Origins of the Technical Language of Islemic Mysticism, Massignon shows that Islemic mystics or rehenivyah have existed since the dawn of Islem. Islemic mysticism is clearly based on the practice of the Prophet, the Imems and their Companions and is directly derived from the Qurlen and the Sunnah, both of which are oceans of mystical manifestations. As Awene observes:

The had the literature in She ism and the anthologies of the had the hadeths handed down from the Imems are the veritable mines of Islemic gnosis. The Use al-kefe of Kulayne and the other compendia of She's hadeth are real treasures of 'irfen... Moreover, the She's prayers and litanies found in al-Sahefah al-sajadiyyah of the fourth Imem...is the best exposition and representation of Islemic gnosis. Some She's prayers, like Du's Sha'beniyyah, Du's 'Arafah, and Du's Kumayl highlight the highest themes of Islemic gnosis.

She's prayer books are replete with ritual formulae for acts of supererogation [nawsfil] also much emphasized in Sefism and sometimes with identical formulations. The ritual invocation of the Beautiful Divine Names is the focus of emphasis in both She's mand Sefism. For example, Du's Jawshan kaber, found in She's prayer books contains one thousand divine names and is recited by pious She's on many occasions and a least once a week.

Some identical formulae based directly and indirectly on the verses of the Qur's n are reiterated in both. The Shs canonical books of had the are filled with themes which can be made the object of meditation and contemplation and which can find their true explanation in real 'irfs. (174)

As Ay tull h Muhammad Tag Misb h Yazd explains,

The points which can be found among the narrations attributed to the Noble Prophet and Pure Imems, may Alleh bless all of them, and in their supplications and intimate devotions related to the above topics ['irfen, Sefism, hikmah] are uncountable.

A religion without mysticism would not be a religion. As Ay®tull®h Misb®h Yazd® explains, gnosis is not only a part of Isl®m, but the kernel and spirit of it which comes from the Qur'®n and prophetic Sunnah, just as the other parts of Isl®m. It would be a dry carcass and an empty shell.

As Awan explains, "esoterism in each religion, which constitutes its core and kernel, is an integral part of that religion without which it cannot be a religion to start with;" "esoterism is the sine qua non of every religion, without which the religion would lose its vertical dimension and would be reduced to a horizontal and mundane level" (172). Sefism is not an extraneous accretion super added to Islem ... it is its esoteric or inward aspect [betin] as distinguished from the exoteric or external aspect [zehir]" (171–72). It is safe to say that "Sefism is totally based upon the Holy Qur'en, the sunnah of the Prophet, and the Household ['itrah]" (172).

Besides Ayıtullishs Muhammad Taqı al-Behjat, 'Izz al-Dın Husaynı Zanjanı, Sayyid Mırzı 'Alı Tabıtaba'ı, Jawıdı Amuli, Lutfullish al-Sıfı al-Gulpaygını, Mırzı Muhammad 'Alı Shahabadı, Muhammad Husayn al-Burujerdı, Abı al-Qısim al-Khu'ı, Muhammad Sıdiq al-Sadr, among many others, the mystical dimensions of Islim have also been fully appreciated by Ayıtullishs Khumaynı, Tabıtaba'ı and Mutahharı who left us their interiorized insights in Light Within Me which is also available in an excellent Spanish translation titled Luz interior.

'Alleman Tabetaba's was a specialist in exegesis, mysticism and philosophy while Ayetulleh Mutahhars was an expert in both Eastern and Western thought. Imem Khumayns has also left us his Forty Hadeth: An Exposition of Ethical and Mystical Traditions, which has been partly translated into English, as well as a beautiful body of mystical poetry. The greatness of Imem Khumayns was that, like the Prophet, he established equilibrium between the exoteric and the esoteric, between the worldly and the spiritual, and between religion and politics. He was able to function on various levels. Scholars like Khumayns, who are jurists, exegetes, mystics, philosophers, sociologists and poets, are few and hard to find. As Murata observes, "[o]ne of the most unfortunate signs of the contemporary malaise of the Islsmic world is that the intellectual authorities have all but disappeared from the scene, while the jurists have a free hand to say what they want" (3).

- 9. Editor's Note: For the Arabs, Aztecs and Incas, the heart is the center of human intellect and spirituality. For them, reasoning is related to feelings and emotions. In the Western world, the intellect resides in the mind
- 10. Editor's Note: The Imems inherited and enriched Islem. As Fyzee observes, "it is not possible to dismiss contemptuously the possibility of the personal religious tradition of the Prophet, at least in some important matters, being carefully handed down to the Imems of the House of the Prophet, the people who undoubtedly had the best opportunity of knowing the true interpretation of many a principle of Islem" (4).

As Nasr explains, "The sayings of the Imems are in many ways not only a continuation but also a kind of commentary and elucidation of the prophetic hadeth, often with the aim of bringing out the esoteric teachings of Islem" (A Shelite Anthology 7). As Algar observes, "the Imems inherited from the Prophet a certain body of teaching concerning the interpretation of the Qur'en, which they enriched as they transmitted it" (Khumayne Islemic Revolution 427 note 7).

11. Editor's Note: Isl®m teaches that God sent 124,000 prophets since the time of Adam. Every tribe and nation received a prophet. The fundamental teachings of these prophets were the same: belief in One God, belief in the prophets and messengers of God, belief in the Day of Judgment, belief in the Hereafter, promote the good and forbid the wrong. Isl®m accepts all past prophets, including Adam, Abraham, Moses and Jesus. In Isl®mic thought, Judaism was the one true religion, followed by Christianity and finally followed by Isl®m.

In essence, Isl®m embraces all revealed religions, all of which taught isl®m or "submission" to God's will. When the author says that Muhammad was the founder of the Isl®mic religion, he expresses a limited truth. In the universal order of things,

all revealed religions were "Islem" and the Islemic religion is merely its final and complete manifestation.

- 12. Editor's Note: It is related in al-Kefe that Imem al-Sediq was asked whether there could be two Imems [at one time] to which he responded: "No, except in the case of one [of them] being silent" (Kulayne 35: hadeth 447)
- 13. Editor's Note: The appointment of 'Al as Im was co-dependent on the appointment of Muhammad as Messenger and an intrinsic aspect of the divine message. After receiving the revelation, the Prophet gathered the Ban 'Abd al-Muttelib in order to make the following solemn pledge: "Whoever helps me in this matter will be my brother, my testamentary trustee [was], my helper [wazer], my heir and my successor after me." 'Al stood before the gathering and he said: "O Messenger of Alláh, I will help you." Then the Prophet said: "Sit down, you are my brother, my trustee, my helper, my inheritor, and successor after me" (Sadeq, Mufed, Kulayn).

This event is recorded in Guillaume's rendition of Serat Rasel Alleh by Ibn Isheq, the oldest extant biography on the life of the Prophet, where we read that the Messenger of Alleh laid his hand on the back of 'Ale 's neck and said: "This is my brother, my executor, and my successor among you. Hearken to him and obey him" [Inna hadhe akhe wa wasiyye wa khalefate fekum, fasma' e lahu wa ate'ehu]. It is also recorded by Ibn Jarer, Ibn Abe Hetim, Ibn Marduwayh, Abe Nu'aym, Imem Bayhaqe, Tha'labe and Tabare (Mesawe 152).

It appears in Ibn 'Asīkir, Sīyītī, 'Alī'uddīn al-Shīfi'ī, al-Hasakīnī, al-Muttaqī al-Hindī; Abī al-Fida, and Haykal. It is related in somewhat different words by Ibn 'Athīr, Imīm Abī Ja'far al-Iskīfī Mu'tazalī, Halabī, Tahīwī, al-Maqdasī, Sa'īd ibn Mansīr, Ahmad, Nasījī, Hīkim, Dhahabī and many others (Mīsawī 152-54). It is also recorded by many orientalists including T. Carlyle, E. Gibbon, J. Davenport and W. Irving. This event is conveniently suppressed from some Sunnī biographies of the Prophet.

While the second line of the Prophet appeared in the first Arabic edition of Hasan Haykal's Life of Muhammad, it has been deleted in the second editions and those which have followed. Apparently, the author was pressured by al-Azhar to remove the reference. For more on Haykal's censorship, see Chapter 2 of Rizvi's She'ism: Imemate and Wileyah. There are a multitude of other traditions in which the Messenger of Alleh explicitly appoints 'Ale as his heir and successor.

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