

Chapter Four

His birth, Its circumstances, Its history, His mother and her names, his miracles during the lifetime of his father, and those who saw him before occultaion

Comprised of Three Sections

Section One

Proof of his birth, its circumstances, its history, some information about his mother, and her names, peace be on them both

Comprised of 426 traditions

786. Kitāb Faḥḥ b. Shādhān¹: Narrated to us Muḥammad b. `Alī b. Ḥamza b. al-Ḥusayn b. `Ubaid-Allah b. al-`Abbās b. `Alī b. Abū Ḥālib, Allah's blessings be on him, who said:

(Imam) Abū Muḥammad, peace be on him, said, "Indeed, the Guardian appointed by Allah (walī Allah), His Proof upon His servants, and my successor after me, has been born circumcised [from birth], at the dawn of Sha`bān 15, 255 AH. The first who washed (ghusl) him was Riḥwān—the caretaker of Paradise—while a group of archangels accompanied him. [They washed him] with the water of Kauthar and Salsabīl.

Then, my aunt, Ḥakīma bt. Muḥammad b. `Alī al-Riḥwī, peace be on them washed him." Muḥammad b. `Alī b. Ḥamza, may Allah be satisfied with him, enquired about his mother. He replied, "His mother is Malīka who is sometimes called Sāsān and sometimes Rayḥāna. Her other names are Ḥaiqal, and Narjis."

787. Kamāl al-dīn²: Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. al-Walīd, may Allah be satisfied with him, from Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā al-`Aḥḥār, from Abū `Abd-Allah al-Ḥusayn b. Rizq-Allah, from Mūsā b.

Muḥammad b. al-Qasim b. Ḥamzat b. Mūsā b. Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī b. Abū Ḥālib, peace be on them, from Ḥakima, daughter of (Imam) Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. Mūsā b. Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī b. Abū Ḥālib, peace be on them, who said:

(Imam) Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī, peace be on him, called for me and said, “O Aunt! Break your fast this evening with us because it is the evening of the 15th of Shaʿbān and Allah, Blessed and Exalted be He, will reveal His proof (ʿujja) tonight and he will be His proof on earth.” I asked, “Who is his mother?” He replied, “Narjis.” I exclaimed, “May Allah sacrifice me for you! But there is no sign [of pregnancy] in her!” He replied, “It will [occur] like I am informing you.”

[So] I went [to their house], said hello and sat down. [Narjis] came to take off my shoes and said to me, “How are you my master [and the master of my family]?” I replied, “No! You are my master and the master of my family.” She denied what I said and replied, “O aunt! What are you saying?” I said to her, “O my daughter! Surely, Allah, the Exalted, will soon grant you in this very night a son (who will be) a master in this world and the hereafter.” On hearing this, she expressed shyness. When I finished my ʿIshāʾ prayers, I broke my fast, went to bed and slept. In the depth of the night, I got up for the night prayers.

When I finished my night prayers, I saw Narjis fast asleep while there were no signs [of pregnancy] in her. I sat and performed the rituals/suplications (taʿqibāt) recommended after the prayers and then lied down. Then I got up again fearfully and she was still asleep. Then, she got up, prayed and went to sleep.

I went out to check if it was dawn yet [i.e. whether the time of prayers had arrived or not]. At the first break of dawn (al-fajr al-awwal), she was still fast asleep. At this juncture, I became slightly skeptical. Immediately, [Imam] Abū Muḥammad [al-ʿAskarī], peace be on him, cried out from where he was, “O Aunt! Don’t be in such a rush! Indeed the affair is near!” I sat down and began reciting the suras of Sajda and Yūsuf. While I was busy [reciting them], she woke up startled. I leapt towards her and said, “I seek Allah’s protection for you! Do you feel anything?” She replied, “Yes, O Aunt!” I said to her, “Be calm and hold your heart. This is what I had told you.”

Then suddenly I felt a weakness in myself and she felt a weakness in herself. I came to with the sound of my master [the Mahdī] and removed the cloth from over him. He was in a state of prostration and was touching the earth with the places [which touch the ground during] prostration. I embraced him and he was absolutely clean and immaculate. (Imam) Abū Muḥammad, peace be on him, called out to me, “O Aunt! Bring my son to me,” and I did. He placed his hands beneath his lower-back and back and put his feet on his chest. Then, he put his tongue in his mouth and caressed his eyes, ears, and joints.

He then said, “Speak, O my son!” He replied, “I testify that there is no god but Allah, He is One and has no partner. I testify that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah, Allah’s blessings be on him and his family.” He then sent blessings on Amīr al-Muʾminīn and the Imams, peace be on them, until he

reached his father. He then stopped and didn't continue.

(Imam) Abū Muḥammad, peace be on him, called out, "O Aunt! Take him to his mother so that he greets her and then bring him back to me." I took him to her and he greeted her, then, I took him back [to his father] and put him on the ground. He said, "O Aunt! Come back to us on the seventh day."

In the morning, I went to greet (Imam) Abū Muḥammad, peace be on him. When I removed the curtain to see my master, I did not find him there. I said, "May I be sacrificed for you! What happened to my master?" He replied, "We have entrusted him to whom the mother of Moses entrusted her son, peace be on him."

On the seventh day, I went [to them], greeted them, and sat down. He said, "Bring me my son." I brought my master, peace be on him, while he was wrapped in a cloth. He did [with his son] what he had done earlier. Then, he put his tongue in his mouth as if he was feeding him milk or honey. He then said, "Speak, O my son!" He declared, "I testify that there is no god but Allah," and he saluted and blessed Muḥammad, `Alī, Amr al-Mu'minīn, and the infallible Imams, Allah's blessings be on them all, and he paused [after] his father's name. Then he recited,

"In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. And We intend to oblige those who have been rendered weak on earth and make them Imams and make them the inheritors. And to grant them power in the land, and show the Pharaoh and Haman and their armies what they feared." [3](#)

Mūsā (the narrator of this tradition), says, "I asked `Uqba, the servant, about this and he replied, 'ʿakāma has said the truth.'"

788. Kamāl al-dīn⁴: Narrated to us Muḥammad b. `Alī Mājilawayh and Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Yaʿyā al-ʿAḥḥār, may Allah be satisfied with them, from Muḥammad b. Yaʿyā al-ʿAḥḥār, from al-ʿusayn b. `Alī al-Nāsībī, from Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. `Abd-Allah b. Mūsā b. Jaʿfar, peace be on them, from al-Sayyūrī, from Nāṣim and Māriya who both said:

When the Master of the Time came out of his mother's womb, he bent on his knees, raised both index fingers towards the sky, then sneezed and said, "All Praise is for Allah, the Lord of the worlds. Blessings of Allah be on Muḥammad and his family. The oppressors thought that Allah's Proof has been destroyed. Had we been permitted to speak, all doubts would have been dispelled.

789. Kamāl al-dīn⁵: Muḥammad b. `Alī Mājilawayh, Muḥammad b. Mūsā b. al-Mutawakkil, and Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Yaʿyā al-ʿAḥḥār, may Allah be satisfied with them, narrated to us from Muḥammad b. Yaʿyā al-ʿAḥḥār, from Isḥāq b. Riyā al-Baḥrī, from Abū Jaʿfar al-ʿAmrī who said:

When the Master, peace be on him, was born, (Imam) Abū Muḥammad, peace be on him, said, "Send someone to Abū `Amr." Someone was sent to him and when he came, [the Imam] said to him, "Buy ten thousand pounds (raḥl⁶) of bread and ten thousand pounds of meat and distribute it—I think he said

among the Banu-Harithim—and slaughter such and such number of sheep as his `aqqā7.”

790. Kamāl al-dīn8: Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. `Iḥḥm, may Allah be satisfied with him, from Muḥammad b. Ya`qūb al-Kulainī, from `Alī b. Muḥammad who said: “The Master was born on Sha`bān 15, 255 AH.”

791. Al-Ghayba by Faḥl b. Shādhān9: Aḥmad b. Isḥāq b. `Abd-Allah al-Ash`arī, from (Imam) Abū Muḥammad b. `Alī al-`Askarī, peace be on him, who said:

All praise is for the One who did not take me from this world until He showed me the successor after me, who is the most similar of people to the Messenger of Allah in creation and morals. Allah, Blessed and Exalted be He, will protect him in his occultation. Then, He will reveal him, and he will fill the earth with fairness and justice just as it will be filled with injustice and unfairness.

792. Kamāl al-dīn10: Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. `Iḥḥm, may Allah be satisfied with him, narrated to us from Muḥammad b. Ya`qūb al-Kulainī, from `Allān al-Rīzī who said: “Some of our companions informed me that when the spouse of (Imam) Abū Muḥammad, peace be on him, became pregnant, he said to her, ‘You will soon give birth to a boy; his name will be Muḥammad and he is the Qa’im after me.’”

793. Kamāl al-dīn11: Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm b. Isḥāq al-ḥaliqīnī, may Allah be satisfied with him, narrated to us from al-ḥasan b. `Alī b. Zakariyyā at Madīnat al-Sāḥm, from Abū `Abd-Allah Muḥammad b. Khalīlīn, from his father, from his father, from his grandfather, from Ghiyāth b. Usaīd who said:

I witnessed Muḥammad b. `Uthmān al-`Amrī, may Allah sanctify his soul, say, “When the successor, al-Mahdī, was born, a light radiated from his head to the outskirts of the sky. Then, he went down in prostration for his Lord, Exalted be His remembrance, then he raised his head while he was saying, ‘Allah testifies that there is no god but He and so do the angels and the possessors of knowledge who stand with justice. There is no god but He, the Invincible, the Wise. Verily, the religion [approved] by Allah is Islam.’12” [Muḥammad b. `Uthmān] said, “His birth occurred on a Friday.”

794. Kamāl al-dīn13: Narrated to us `Alī b. `Abd-Allah al-Warrāq, from Sa`d b. `Abd-Allah, from Mūsā b. Ja`far b. Wahb al-Baghdādī that a signed letter (tauqī`) came from (Imam) Abū Muḥammad, peace be on him, that read: “They thought that by killing me, they would destroy this generation; indeed Allah, Mighty and Majestic be He, has refuted their saying and all praise is for Allah.”

795. Tārīkh al-A`imma14: From amongst the reasons that have been narrated from (Imam) al-ḥasan b. `Alī al-`Askarī, peace be on him, at the time of the birth of M-U-ḥ-A-M-M-A-D b. al-ḥasan, is what has been narrated from him numerous times: “The oppressors thought they would kill me to eliminate this generation; how did they find the power of the All-Powerful?” And he named him the Hoped (al-Mu`ammal).

796. Kamāl al-dīn¹⁵: Narrated to us Muḥammad b. Miṣṣā al-Mutawakkil, may Allah be satisfied with him, from `Abd-Allah b. Ja`far al-`imyarī, from Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-`Alawī, from Abū Ghānim, the servant, who said:

A boy was born to (Imam) Abū Muḥammad, peace be on him, and he named him Muḥammad. On the third day, he showed him to his companions, saying, “He is your master after me and my successor upon you. He is the Qa’im who will be desperately awaited. When the earth becomes filled with injustice and unfairness, he will emerge and will fill it with fairness and justice.”

797. Kamāl al-dīn¹⁶: Narrated to us Muḥammad b. `Alī Mājilawayh, may Allah be satisfied with him, from Muḥammad b. Ya‘yā al-`Aḥḥār, from Abū `Alī al-Khayzarī, from a slave girl whom he had gifted to (Imam) Abū Muḥammad, peace be on him, who had fled from Ja`far al-Kadhhib (the liar) when he had attacked the house and Abū `Alī (the narrator) had married her. Abū `Alī says:

She informed me that she had been present when the master was born and the name of the master’s mother is Ḥaqīl and Abū Muḥammad had informed her about the events that would befall his family. She had asked him to pray to Allah, Mighty and Majestic be He, that He takes her life before him. She died while Abū Muḥammad, peace be on him, was still alive. There is a tablet on her grave which says, “This is the grave of the mother of Muḥammad.”

I also heard this slave-maid mention that when the master, peace be on him, was born, she saw a light radiate from him towards the outskirts of the sky. She also saw white birds descend from the sky, caress his head, face, and, body with their wings and then soar again. When they had informed Abū Muḥammad, peace be on him, about what they had witnessed, he had laughed and replied, “These were angels who had come to gain blessings from this newborn and they will be his helpers when he emerges.”

798. Kamāl al-dīn¹⁷: Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. Aḥmad b. al-Walīd, may Allah be satisfied with him, from Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Karkhī, from `Abd-Allah b. al-`Abbās al-`Alawī, from Abū l-Faḥl al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥusayn al-`Alawī, who said: “I went to (Imam) Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan b. `Alī, peace be on him, at Sāmarrā’ and congratulated him on the birth of his son, the Qa’im.”

799. Kamāl al-dīn¹⁸: Muḥammad b. Miṣṣā b. al-Mutawakkil, may Allah be satisfied with him, narrated to us from `Abd-Allah b. Ja`far al-`imyarī, from Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Kāfī that “(Imam) Abū Muḥammad, peace be on him, sent meat from a slaughtered sheep to some people whom he named for me and said, ‘This is from the `aḥḥāqa¹⁹ for my son Muḥammad, [Allah’s blessings and salutations be on him].’”

800. Kamāl al-dīn²⁰: Muḥammad b. `Alī Mājilawayh, may Allah be satisfied with him, from Muḥammad b. Ya‘yā al-`Aḥḥār, from al-Ḥusayn b. `Alī al-Nāsībī, from al-Ḥasan b. al-Mundhir, from Ḥamzat b. Abū l-Fatī who said:

He came to me one day and said, “I have good news! A son was born to Abū Muḥammad, peace be on him, yesterday and he has ordered that this news be kept a secret. He also ordered that three hundred sheep be slaughtered as his aqṣa.” I asked him, “What’s his name?” He replied, “His name is Muḥammad and his epithet is Ja`far.”

801. Kamāl al-dīn²¹: Abū I-`Abbās Aḥmad b. al-ḥusayn b. `Abd-Allah b. Mihrān al-ḥabīb al-Azdī al-`Arṣī at Marv, from Aḥmad b. al-ḥasan b. Isḥāq al-Qummī who said:

When the righteous successor, peace be on him, was born, my grandfather Aḥmad b. Isḥāq received a letter from (Imam) Abū Muḥammad al-ḥasan b. `Alī, peace be on him, in his own handwriting—the [same handwriting with] which he had written all his other signed letters. It had been written in it, “A son of ours has been born. Let this fact be hidden with you and unknown to the general masses. For surely, we have not revealed this information about him to anyone except the closest of relatives because of their nearness and those who have accepted his Guardianship (wilāya). We wished to inform you so that Allah may make you joyful through him like He has made us rejoice through him. Wa al-salām.”

802. Kamāl al-dīn²²: Abū ḥabīb al-Mu`affar b. Ja`far b. al-Mu`affar b. Ja`far b. Muḥammad b. `Abd-Allah b. Muḥammad b. `Umar b. `Alī b. Abū ḥabīb, peace be on him, from Ja`far b. Muḥammad b. Mas`ūd, from Abū I-Naḥr Muḥammad b. Mas`ūd, from ḥdam b. Muḥammad al-Balkhī, from `Alī b. al-ḥasan [al-ḥusayn] al-Daqqīq, from Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad al-`Alawī, from Nasīm the female servant of (Imam) Abū Muḥammad, peace be on him, who said:

I went to see the master of this affair, peace be on him, one night after his birth and sneezed in front of him. He said to me, “May Allah have mercy on you.” I became joyous at this remark. Then, he said to me, “Shall I give you good news about sneezing?” I replied in the affirmative. He said, “It delays death for three days.”

803. Kamāl al-dīn²³: Through the same chain of narrators (i.e. the chain mentioned in the eighth tradition of this chapter) from Muḥammad b. `Uthmān al-`Amrī, who said: “The master was born circumcised. I heard ḥakīma say, ‘Parturition blood was not seen in his mother and this is the custom of the mothers of all the Imams, peace be on them.’”

804. Ghaybat al-Shaykh²⁴: Aḥmad b. `Alī al-Rṣī, from Muḥammad b. `Alī, from `Abd-Allah b. Muḥammad b. Khṣīn al-Dihqīn, from Abū Sulaimān Dīwānī b. Ghassān al-Baḥrīnī who said:

I read out for Abū Sahl Ism`īl b. `Alī al-Naubakhtī the birth of (Imam) Muḥammad b. al-ḥasan b. `Alī b. Muḥammad b. `Alī al-Rīḥī b. Mūsā b. Ja`far al-ḥadīqī b. Muḥammad al-Bḥqīrī b. `Alī b. al-ḥusayn b. `Alī b. Abū ḥabīb, Allah’s blessings be on them all: “He was born in Sāmarrā’ in 256 AH. His mother was called ḥaqīl and his epithet is Abū I-Qāsim—the same epithet as that of the Holy Prophet, Allah’s blessings be on him and his family—who had said, ‘His name will be my name and his epithet will be my epithet. His title is Mahdī and he is the Proof, the Awaited, and the Master of the Time.’”

Ism'ā'il b. `Alī said, "I visited Imam Abū Muḥammad al-`Askarī, peace be on him, during his illness in which he passed away. I was with him when he said to his servant `Aqīd—who was a black Nubian slave who had earlier served Imam `Alī b. Muḥammad and had brought up Imam al-ḥasan al-`Askarī, peace be on him—, "O `Aqīd! Boil some mastic gum for me in water." He boiled it for him and then `Aqīl—the mother of the successor Imam, peace be on him—brought it for him. As he held the bowl in his hands and intended to drink, his hand started trembling and the bowl hit the teeth of Imam al-ḥasan. So, he put it down from his hands and said to `Aqīd, "Go inside the house. You will see a child in prostration. Bring him to me."

Ism'ā'il b. `Alī said, `Aqīd said, "I entered [the house] to search for [the child], and lo! I saw a child in prostration. He had raised his index fingers towards the sky. I greeted him, due to which he shortened his prayers. I said, 'My master has ordered you to come to him.' At that very moment, his mother `Aqīl²⁵ entered, held his hand, and took him to his father (Imam) al-ḥasan, peace be on him."

Abū Sahl continued, "When the child stood before his father, he greeted him and his color was like a pearl, his hair had short curls in them, and he had fissures between his teeth. When (Imam) al-ḥasan, peace be on him, saw him, he started crying and said, 'O master of his Ahl al-Bait! Give me water to drink because I am going to my Lord.' The child took the bowl of boiled mastic gum in his hand.

He moved his lips and the child helped him drink. When he finished drinking, he said, 'Prepare me for prayers.' A scarf was spread in his room. The child helped him perform ablution, step by step and wiped (masa'a) his head and feet.

Then, Abū Muḥammad, peace be on him, said to him, 'Receive good news, O my son! You are the Master of the Time, you are the Mahdī, you are Allah's Proof upon His earth, you are my son and my heir, and I am your father. You are Muḥammad b. al-ḥasan b. `Alī b. Muḥammad b. `Alī b. Mūsā b. Ja`far b. Muḥammad b. `Alī b. al-ḥusayn b. `Alī b. Abū Ḥālib. The Messenger of Allah, Allah's blessings be on him and his family, is your ancestor and you are the last of the immaculate Imams.

The Messenger of Allah, Allah's blessings be on him and his family, has given glad-tidings about you and has named and mentioned your epithet in the [glad-tidings]. My father has taken a covenant from me on behalf of your pure forefathers. The blessings of Allah, our Lord be on the Ahl al-Bait. He is the Praiseworthy, the Majestic.' Imam al-ḥasan b. `Alī passed away at that moment; may Allah's blessings be on them all."

805. Ithbāt al-waḥīyya²⁶: Al-ḥimyarī, from Aḥmad b. Isḥāq who said:

I went to see (Imam) Abū Muḥammad, peace be on him, who asked me, "O Aḥmad! How were you feeling when the people were in doubt and skepticism?" I answered, "O my master! When the letter reached us with the news of our master and his birth, no man, woman, or child who had attained understanding remained from us except that he spoke the truth." He continued, "Don't you know that the earth will not become empty of Allah's Proof?"

Then, (Imam) Abū Muḥammad ordered that his mother perform the Hajj in the year 259 AH and informed her about what will happen to him in the year 260 AH. Then, he called for the Master of the Time (ʿAbd al-Zamān) and willed to him. He handed over the Great Name (al-Ismaʿīlīyah), the inheritances, and the weapon to him. (Imam) Abū Muḥammad's mother and the master set off for Mecca and Ahmad b. Muḥammad b. Muḥahhar Abū `Alī was in charge of fulfilling their needs. When they had gone some distance on the way to Mecca, some Bedouin tribes met them and informed them of the intense fear and scarcity of water. Consequently, most of the people returned except those who were in the [Holy] Region; they went ahead and were safe.”

806. Al-Ghayba by Faḥr al-B. Shādhān²⁷: Muḥammad b. `Abd al-Jabbār who said:

I said to my master (Imam) al-Ḥasan b. `Alī (al-`Askarī), peace be on him, “O son of Allah's Messenger! May Allah sacrifice me for you! I would like to know who is the Imam and Proof of Allah upon His servants after you?” He, peace be on him, replied, “The Imam and the Proof of Allah after me is my son whose name and epithet is the same as that of the Messenger of Allah, Allah's blessings be on him and his family. He is the last of Allah's proofs and the last of His caliphs.”

I asked, “From whom will he be born?” He replied, “From the daughter of the son of the Caesar, the Emperor of Rome. Know that he will soon be born and will be concealed from the people in a long occultation. Then, he will appear and will kill the Antichrist (al-Dajjāl) and will fill the earth with fairness and justice just as it will be filled with injustice and unfairness. No one is allowed to say his name or epithet before his reappearance, Allah's blessings be on him.”²⁸

807. Kamāl al-dīn²⁹: Muḥammad b. `Alī b. Ḥatīm al-Naufalī, from Abū I-`Abbās Ahmad b. `Isḥāq al-Washshī al-Baghdādī, from Ahmad b. Ḥatīr al-Qummī, from Abū I-Ḥusayn Muḥammad b. Baḥr al-Shāhīnī who said:

I entered Karbala in 286 AH and visited the grave of the lonely [grandson] of the Messenger of Allah, Allah's blessings be on him and his family. Then, I left for Baghdad with the intention of visiting the graves of the Quraish [meaning the place where Imams Kāzīm and Jaʿfar, peace be on them, were buried] at a time when it was blazing hot and hot winds were blowing.

On my way—when I reached the shrine of al-Kāzīm, peace be on him—I inhaled the fresh air of his grave that was filled with mercy and surrounded with the gardens of forgiveness. I threw myself on it with tears flowing down unceasingly and non-stop sighs and moaning. My tears had concealed the vision of my eyes. When the flow of tears ceased and I stopped crying, I opened my eyes and saw an old man with a bent back and hunched shoulders who had callus on his forehead and palms.

He was saying to another person accompanying him at the grave, “O my nephew! Indeed, your uncle has been honored on account of the deep unseens (ghawāmiḡ al-ghuyūb) and privileged knowledge granted to him by the two masters. Such [knowledge] has not been given to anyone except Salmān.

Your uncles time is nearly up and his life is coming to an end but he has not found anyone from amongst the followers of wilāya [i.e. the Shias] to whom he could pass on his secrets.” I thought to myself, “Trouble and hardships have always afflicted you because you have always been in pursuit of knowledge.

Now your ears are being pounded by words from this old man that indicate immense knowledge [and you can seek knowledge from him without any affliction].” So I said, “O Shaykh! Who are these two masters?” He replied, “The Two stars concealed by soil in the land of Sāmarrā’.” I said, “I swear by the mastership and the revered position of these two masters of Imamate and inheritance, that I desire their knowledge and seek what they have left behind. I will try with utmost faith to conceal their secrets.”

He said, “If you are true in your speech, then come forth with what you have from what has been narrated from them.” When he examined the books and read through the narrations he said, “You speak the truth. I am Bishr b. Sulaimān al-Nakhhās and a descendant of Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī. I am one of the servants of (Imams) Abū I-ḥasan and Abū Muḥammad (al-`Askarī) and their neighbor in Sāmarrā’.”

I said, “Please honor your brother by narrating some of the things that you have witnessed from them.” He said, “Our master Abū I-ḥasan `Alī b. Muḥammad al-`Askarī, peace be on him, granted me deep knowledge about the [trade] of slaves and consequently, I never bought or sold any except with his permission.

Because of this, I kept away from ambiguous cases until my knowledge about it was complete. Thus, I excelled in differentiating between the permissible (ḥalāl) and the prohibited (ḥarām). One night, I was in my house at Sāmarrā’ and a part of the night had passed, when someone knocked on the door. I quickly ran [to the door] and saw Kufayr, the servant, who had come as a messenger of our master, Abū I-ḥasan `Alī b. Muḥammad, peace be on him, to invite me to [his house].

I put on my clothes and went to him. When I entered, I saw him speaking with his son Abū Muḥammad and his sister Ḥakīma from behind the curtain. When I sat down, he said, ‘O Bishr! Verily, you are from the descendants of the Anṣārī. You possess [i.e. you have accepted our] guardianship (wilāya) and you inherit it one generation after another.

You are the reliable [people] for us Ahl al-Bait. Verily, I am going to increase your excellence and honor such that you will overtake the best of the Shias concerning [our] guardianship through a secret which I will tell you; and I will send you to purchase a slave-girl.’ Then, he wrote a letter in Roman handwriting and language and imprinted its seal with his ring. He brought out a yellow purse which contained two hundred and twenty dinars and said, ‘Take this and go to Baghdad.

Stand on the passageway of the Euphrates on so and so day after sunrise. When the boats of the captives are beside you and the slave-maids emerge from them, they will be encircled by groups of buyers representing the Abbasid leaders and by small groups of Iraqi youths. When you see this, keep a watch on a slave-trader by the name of `Umar b. Yazīd al-Nakhhās [30](#) all day long from a distance.

[He will] bring forth a slave-girl possessing such and such characteristics who is wearing two clothes made of pure silk and does not allow anyone to unveil or touch her.

Whoever attempts to see her will have to do so from behind a thin veil. The slave-trader will strike her and she will cry out and say something in Roman. Know that she is saying, "Woe for the ripping of my veil!" One of the buyers will say, "Give her to me for three hundred dinars because her chastity has increased my desire for her."

She will say to him in Arabic, "Even if you appear in the dress of Solomon and sit on the throne of his kingdom, I will never be inclined towards you. Do not waste your money on me." The slave-trader will plead, "What is the solution? I have no choice but to sell you." The slave-girl will say "Why are you rushing? It is necessary that I select a buyer whose trustworthiness and religiousness appeases my heart."

After this, go to `Umar b. Yazīd al-Nakhkhīs and say to him, "I have a sealed letter with me written in the Roman language and handwriting of a noble man. He has described in it his munificence, loyalty, nobility, and generosity. Hand it over to her so that she may consider the moral qualities of its author. If she is inclined towards him and is satisfied with him, then I am his representative to purchase her from you.""

Bishr b. Sulaimān al-Nakhkhīs continued, "I did everything as defined to me by my master (Imam) Abū I-ḥasan, peace be on him, regarding the matter of the slave-girl. When she saw the letter, she started crying uncontrollably and said to `Umar b. Yazīd al-Nakhkhīs, 'Sell me to the writer of this letter.' She then swore a solemn oath that if she was not sold to the writer of the letter, she would kill herself. Then, I started bargaining about her price until the amount reached the exact number of dinars given to me by my master, peace be on him, in the yellow purse.

He took the money from me and handed over the slave-girl who was very joyous and cheerful. I took her to the room I was staying in, in Baghdad. She was restless until she took out the letter of her master, peace be on him, from her pocket and started kissing it and placing it on her cheeks. She covered her eyes with it and rubbed it on her body.

I asked her out of amazement, 'You are kissing a letter while you don't even know its author?' She said, 'O weak and helpless regarding the stature of the descendants of the Prophets! Listen to me carefully and pay attention with your heart! I am Malīka, the daughter of Yashīr b. Caesar, the Emperor of Rome. My mother was from the descendants of the disciples (of Jesus) and related to his heir Simon (Sham`ān). I will inform you of the strangest of things. My grandfather Caesar intended to marry me to his nephew when I was only thirteen years old.

So, he gathered in his palace three hundred men from the descendants of the disciples (al-ḥawāriyyīn), priests (al-qissīsīn), and monks (al-ruhbān) along with seven hundred important people. Moreover, four thousand others from the commanders of the armed forces, military leaders, and tribal chiefs had

also been invited.

He had placed a throne studded with precious stones on top of forty pillars in the guest room. When his nephew stood on top of it and was encircled with crosses and the bishops came forward with honor and the Bibles were opened, the crosses fell to the ground and the pillars crumbled and collapsed on the floor. The one who had mounted the throne fell down unconscious.

When the bishops saw this, the color of their faces changed and their shoulders started trembling. The archbishop said to my grandfather, “O Emperor! Please excuse us from this [task due to which] bad omens have become manifest because these are the signs of the demise of Christianity and the imperial religion.” My grandfather too considered it as a bad omen. He ordered the bishops, “Put up the pillars and raise the crosses.

Bring the brother of this unlucky ill-omened [prince] to be married to this girl [instead], so that he might convert his bad-omen to welfare.” When everything was prepared, the same thing happened again. The congregation broke up and my grandfather became very sad and went inside the palace and the curtains were brought down. That night, I dreamt that Jesus, Simon (Sham`n), and some of the disciples had gathered in my grandfather’s palace.

A pulpit was erected—which scraped the sky with elevation—in the royal palace in the same place where my grandfather had installed his throne. Soon after, Muḥammad, Allah's blessings be on him and his family, joined them accompanied by a young man and some of his descendants. Jesus came forward and embraced him.

Then [the Holy Prophet, Allah's blessings be on him and his family] said, “O Spirit of Allah! I have come here to ask your heir Simon, for the hand of her daughter Malḳa, in marriage for my son here.” He then pointed to Abū Muḥammad, the author of this letter. Jesus looked at Simon and said, “Great honor has come to you, bond with the messenger of Allah, Allah's blessings be on him and his family.” He responded, “I accept.” Then, Muḥammad, Allah's blessings be on him and his family, ascended the pulpit, delivered a sermon, and married me

[to Abū Muḥammad] while Jesus, the descendants of Muḥammad, Allah's blessings be on him and his family, and the disciples were witnessing this marriage. When I woke up from sleep, I feared narrating this dream to my father and grandfather lest they kill me. So I kept it a secret in my heart and did not reveal it to anyone.

The love for Abū Muḥammad had filled my heart to such an extent that I could not eat or drink anything. As a result, I became very weak; my body became frail and I became severely ill. No Roman city remained except that its doctors had been summoned by my grandfather to come and treat me. When despair overtook him, he said, “O apple of my eye! Is there anything you desire so that I can fulfill it in this world?”

I replied, “O grandfather! I see all the doors of relief locked on me. If punishment is removed from the Muslim captives in your prison, there are chains removed, and you oblige them by releasing them, I hope that Christ and his mother may grant me health and cure me.” When my grandfather did as I requested, I started putting on a little weight and ate a little food, which delighted my grandfather and he again honored the Muslim prisoners and showed munificence towards them.

After four nights, I dreamt that the Master of the Women [i.e. Fatima, peace be on her] had come to see me accompanied with Mary daughter of `Imrān and a thousand Heavenly maids. Mary said to me, “This is the Master of All Women, the mother of your husband, Abū Muḥammad, peace be on him.” On hearing this, I held her, started crying and complained to her that Abū Muḥammad was not coming to see me. The Master of all Women, peace be on her, replied, “My son Abū Muḥammad will not visit you whilst you associate others with Allah and are a Christian. My sister, Mary, too testifies before Allah, the Exalted, that she dislikes your religion.

If you desire the satisfaction of Allah, Mighty and Majestic be He, the satisfaction of Christ and Maryam, and desire that Abū Muḥammad visits you, then say, ‘I testify that there is no God but Allah and I testify that Muḥammad—who is my father—is the Messenger of Allah.’ When I uttered these words, the Master of All Women hugged me to her chest and assured me by saying, “Now wait for Abū Muḥammad to visit you because I will send him to you.”

I woke up and cried out, “Oh, how much I desire to see Abū Muḥammad!” The following night, Abū Muḥammad, peace be on him, came in my dream. I exclaimed, “O my beloved! You left me after you made my heart a prisoner of your love!” He replied, “Nothing kept me away from you except your polytheism. Since you accepted Islam, I will visit you every night until Allah brings us together evidently [i.e. while awake].” Until now, his visits to me have not ceased.”

Al-Bishr continued, “I asked her, ‘How did you become a prisoner?’ She replied, ‘One night, Abū Muḥammad informed me that my grandfather would dispatch on so and so day, an army to fight against the Muslims and he will join them himself. [He told me] to join them disguised as a servant with the slave-maids who will accompany them and to take such and such path and I did accordingly.

The Muslim informers spotted us and thus, my situation is as you are seeing and witnessing. No one has found out that I am a Roman princess until now except you, and that too because I have informed you. An old man—in whose share I was given—asked me name and I hid my [real] name and said, “Narjis.” He said, “That is a name given to the slave-maids.””

Bishr continued, “I said, ‘Amazing! You are a Roman but are fluent in Arabic?’ She replied, ‘My grandfather loved me immensely. He desired to teach me lofty etiquette and hence he appointed a woman who was an interpreter to come to me. She would come in the morning and in the evening and would teach me Arabic. As a result, I learnt Arabic and became fluent in it.’”

Bishr said, “When I brought her to Sāmarrā’ and came to my master Abū Iḥāsān al-`Askarī, peace be

on him, he asked her, ‘How did Allah, the Almighty, show you the might of Islam, the humiliation of Christianity, and the excellence of the Ahl al-Bait of Muḥammad, Allah's blessings be on him and his family?’ She replied, ‘O son of Allah’s Messenger! How can I describe for you what you know better than me?’ He said, ‘I intend to dignify you. Which do you prefer: Ten thousand dirhams or good news for you about eternal honor?’ She replied, ‘I desire good news.’

He, peace be on him, said, ‘I give you glad-tidings about a son who will rule the East and the West of the world and will fill the earth with fairness and justice just as it will be filled with unfairness and injustice.’ She asked, ‘From Who?’ He, peace be on him, replied, ‘From the one whom the Messenger of Allah, Allah's blessings be on him and his family, asked your hand in marriage for, in such and such night, in such and such city, and in such and such Roman year?’ She replied, ‘[You mean] from Jesus and his successor.’

He said, ‘To whom did Jesus and his successor marry you to?’ She replied, ‘To your son, Abū Muḥammad.’ He said, ‘Can you recognize him?’ She responded, ‘Ever since I became a Muslim through his mother, the master of all women, he has been coming to me in my dreams every night.’

Then (Imam) Abū al-Ḥasan said, ‘O Kāfir! Summon to me my sister Ḥakīma.’ When she came, he, peace be on him, said to her, ‘This is her.’ On hearing this, she hugged her for a long time and was very overjoyed. Our master advised her, ‘O daughter of the Messenger of Allah, Allah's blessings be on him and his family! Take her to your house and teach her the obligatory acts and the customs [of Islam]; for, she is the wife of Abū Muḥammad and the mother of the Q’im, peace be on them.’”

The following traditions—directly and indirectly—show the above concept: 1–309, 543–545, 547, 549–558, 560–571, 574, 575, 580, 581, 589, 590, 608, 612, 614, 808–862, 864, 866–870, 873, 878, and 881–899 .

These are in addition to the fact that the mutawattir and correct traditions that confine the Caliphs to the twelve Imams—our masters, peace be on them—and also the authentic and reliable traditions which state that the earth can never be empty of a Divine Proof, can only be true if our master, the Master of the Time, has been born.

1. Kifāyat al-muhtad (al-Arba`ūn), p. 116, no. 30; Kashf al-Ḥaqq (al-Arba`ūn), p. 24, no. 2, which mentions Ḥaqīqah instead of Ḥaiqal and Ḥamzat b. al-Ḥasan instead of Ḥamzat b. al-Ḥusayn. In the rijāl books, al-Ḥasan has been recorded; Ithbāt al-hudūd, vol. 3, chap. 32, p. 570, no. 683.

I say: Al-Najmī, may Allah have mercy on him, writes in al-Najm al-thaqib: “The reason for the differences in the names of his revered mother becomes clear in this tradition: she was called by all of these five names.”

Faḥr b. Shādhān died after the birth of the Mahdī, peace be on him, and before the martyrdom of his father Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan al-`Askarī, peace be on him (i.e. between 255 and 260 AH). Al-Najmī says: “He was reliable (thiqa) and one of our jurists (fuqahā), and dialectical theologian (mutakallim). He enjoyed great reverence and majesty in the [Shia] sect. He is so reputable that it is not possible for us to describe him.” Al-Kashf has mentioned that he has written more than 150 books and even goes to mention the names of some of them. This demonstrates his proficiency in Islamic sciences and in what the people of the sects differ about, specially, the sciences of belief (‘aqāda), monotheism

(tauḥīd), Imamate, duties (farāʾiḍ), and etc. Al-Ḥāḍirī has included him in his Rijāl amongst the companions of (Imam) al-Ḥādī on one occasion and (Imam) al-ʿAskarī on another—peace be on them. He writes: “Al-Faḥr b. Shādhān was a jurist, dialectical theologian (mutakallim), and had a majestic stature. He has written many books and treatises . . . From amongst his books are Kitāb al-malāʾim, Kitāb al-Qḥīm, and Kitāb al-imāma.

Regarding Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. Ḥamzat b. al-Ḥasan b. ʿUbad-Allah b. al-ʿAbbās b. ʿAlī b. Abī Ḥabīb, peace be on him, al-Najāshī writes, “Abī ʿAbd-Allah was reliable (thiqa), a fountain of traditions, and had correct beliefs. He has narrated traditions from (Imams) Abī I-Ḥasan and Abī Muḥammad, peace be on them, and he also had correspondences with them. The mother of the Owner of the Affair (Ḥabīb al-amr) stayed in his house after the death of (Imam) al-Ḥasan, peace be on him.

Imam Mahdī's birth, peace be on him, took place on the night of Shaʿbān 15, 255 AH, as is mentioned in this noble and authentic tradition. Al-Mufīd writes in al-Irshād, “The Imam after Abī Muḥammad, peace be on him, was his son whose name was the same as that of the Messenger of Allah, Allah's blessings be on him and his family, and so was his epithet. His father did not leave behind a child other than him—evident or hidden. He was occult and concealed just as we mentioned earlier. His birth took place in the night of Shaʿbān 15, 255 AH. His mother was called Narjis. He was five years old when his father died. At this tender age, Allah bestowed him with wisdom just as He granted it to John (Yaḥyā) when he was a child. He, the Exalted, made him an Imam in his apparent childhood just as He made Jesus a prophet when he was in the cradle. Narrations about him preceded him in the Islamic nation [which were narrated] from the Prophet of Guidance, peace be on him. The same were narrated from Amr al-Muʾminīn ʿAlī b. Abī Ḥabīb, peace be on him. All the succeeding Imams gave news about him—one after the other—until [the time] of his father, (Imam) Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī, peace be on him. His revered father mentioned him in the presence of his reliable companions and special followers. The news of his occultation existed before his advent in this world and the prophecies about his government were abundant even before his occultation. Amongst the Imams of guidance, he is the possessor of the sword, peace be on them. He is the one who will rise with the truth and the one awaited [to establish] the government of [true] faith. Before his emergence, he will have two occultations. One will be longer than the other as has been mentioned in these traditions. The shorter one was from the time of his birth to the termination of ambassadorship between him and his Shias and the absence of emissaries because of death. The longer one was immediately after the first one and it will end when he rises with the sword . . .”

Al-Kulainī writes in al-Kḥf: “He, peace be on him, was born on Shaʿbān 15, 255 AH.” This has also been narrated by al-Karajukī in Kanz al-fawāʾid and al-Shahīd in al-Durūs. Al-Ḥāḍirī writes in Miḥab al-mutahajjid, “In this night was born the Successor [al-Ḥujja], the Master of the Affair, peace be on him. It is recommended to recite the following supplication in this night, ‘O Allah! For the sake of this night and the one who was born in it . . .’” Shaykh al-Bahārī says in Tauḥīd al-maḥḥid, “In it—meaning the 15th day of Shaʿbān—Imam Abī I-Qḥsim Muḥammad al-Mahdī, the Master of the Era, was born at Sāmarrāʾ in 255 AH.” Al-Ḥabrisī records in ʿIlm al-warāʾ, “He was born in Sāmarrāʾ in the night of Shaʿbān 15, 255 AH.” Al-Ḥāḍirī, in both of his Miḥabs, Sayyid b. Ḥawḥ in Iqbāl al-aʿmāl, all the compilers of supplication books—according to Bīr al-anwār—and al-Mufīd in Masʿūd al-Shaʿa, have declared that he was born on the 15th of Shaʿbān.

A group of celebrated Sunni scholars have also declared this fact. For example, Ibn Ḥabbāgh al-Mḥlikī writes in Fuḥḥ al-muhimma, “Abī I-Qḥsim Muḥammad al-Ḥujjat b. al-Ḥasan was born in Sāmarrāʾ in the night of Shaʿbān 15, 255 AH . . . his mother was called ‘Narjis, the best of the maids.’ Some have said she had another name.” Ibn Khalkīn writes in Wafiyāt al-aʿyān, “His birth took place on Friday, Shaʿbān 15, 255 AH. When his father—whom we mentioned earlier—died, he was five years old. His mother was called Khamḥ. She was also known as Narjis.” The author of Rauḥ al-ḥafī writes, “Imam Mahdī—whose name and epithet was the same as that of the Messenger [of Allah]—was born in Sāmarrāʾ in the night of Shaʿbān 15, 255 AH. He was five years old when his father passed away. Allah granted him wisdom in this small age just as He did to John (Yaḥyā) when he was a child and made him an Imam in childhood just as He made Jesus a prophet.” These facts have also been declared by al-Sayyid Muḥammad Khḥja Pīrsī—the author of Rauḥ al-aḥḥab—and others.

There is no harm in mentioning the statements of reputable Sunni scholars concerning his birth and mentioning their names. Indeed, most of them agree with us that he is currently alive and that he will continue to live until Allah, the Exalted, gives him permission to reappear:

Al-Shaykh, ibn ʿAjar al-Haytham al-Makkī al-Shāfiʿī (d. 974 AH) whom after speaking about Imam Abū Muḥammad al-ʿAskarī, peace be on him, in al-ʿawāʾiq, writes: “He did not leave behind a successor except his son Abū I-Qāsim Muḥammad al-ʿujja—whose age at the time of his father’s death was five—and Allah bestowed him with wisdom [at such a young age].”

The author of Rauḍat al-ʿAbbāb—which was originally written in Persian—the famous traditionist, Sayyid Jamāl al-dīn ʿAlī Allah b. Sayyid Ghiyāth al-dīn Faḥr Allah b. Sayyid ʿAbd al-Raḥmān. It has been narrated that al-Qāsim ʿusayn al-Diyārbakrī has considered this book as reliable in the beginning of his work Tārīkh al-khamīs. According to Kashf al-ʿunḥān, it was written on the request of the vizier Mir ʿAlī Shāh after consulting his teacher and his cousin Sayyid ʿAlī al-dīn ʿAbd-Allah. It consists of three chapters in it. He passed away in the year one thousand AH as has been mentioned in this book. According to Kashf al-astar and al-Najm al-thaqib (in Persian), he says: “Most of the traditionists believe that the twelfth Imam—Muḥammad b. al-ʿasan, peace be on him—was born on Shaʿbān 15, 255 AH at Sāmarrā . . . He was his mother’s only child and her name was ʿaiqal, Sāsān, Narjis, or ʿakma. The respected and honorable Imam’s name and epithet are the same as that of the Best of the Creations [i.e. the Holy Prophet]. His titles are Mahdī al-Muntaʿar, al-Khalaf al-ʿalī, and ʿabbāb al-Zamān. At the time of his revered father’s death, his age was five as per authentic reports. Other reports mention he was merely two years old. Allah, the Granter of bounties, granted him wisdom in childhood just as He gave John son of Zechariah (Yaʿqūb b. Zakariyyā), peace be on them. He attained the lofty position of Imamate while still a child . . . [He then mentions his desire that the Mahdī’s occultation comes to an end and says,] May Allah bless the poet who said:

Come O guiding Imam
For, awaiting has passed the limits of sorrow

Remove the veil from your shining face
The visage that is brilliant like the Sun

Come out from your place of hiding
And manifest the effects of benevolence and loyalty”

ʿAlī b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. ʿAbd-Allah al-Malik al-Makkī, known as ibn ʿabbāgh, born in 734 AH and died in 855 AH—according to al-ʿauʾ al-ʿimī by Shams al-dīn Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Miḥrī, a disciple of ibn ʿAjar. In his book, al-Fuḥḥ al-muhimma fī maʾrifat aḥwāl al-Aʿimma, he has spoken about his birth and its date. He has also stated that his mother was Narjis, the best of the maids, as we earlier mentioned. Moreover, he has talked about his lineage, the names of his forefathers, their conditions, sayings, and miracles and that he is the twelfth Imam. He has also recorded some traditions in this regard.

Shaykh Shams al-dīn Abū I-Muʿaffar Yūsuf b. Qazwaghī b. ʿAbd-Allah, the grandson of Shaykh Jamāl al-dīn Abū I-Faraj b. al-Jauzī (d. 654 AH), the author of al-Tārīkh al-kabīr about which ibn Khalīk has written, “I saw it and it was 40 volumes with his hand-writing and it was titled Mirʿat al-zamān.” The author of Tadhkira al-khawāḥ says, “He is Muḥammad b. al-ʿasan b. ʿAlī b. Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Riḥābī b. Mūsā b. Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. al-ʿusayn b. ʿAlī b. Abū ʿabbāb, peace be on them, and his epithets are Abū ʿAbd-Allah and Abū I-Qāsim. He is the Successor (al-Khalaf), the Divine Proof (al-ʿujja), Master of the Time (ʿabbāb al-Zamān), the Riser (al-Qāʾim), the awaited (al-Muntaʿar), al-Taqī, and the last Imam (ʿakhr al-Aʿimma). ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. Maḥmūd b. al-Bazzāz informed us from ibn ʿUmar who said that the Messenger of Allah, Allah’s blessings be on him and his family, said, ‘A person from my descendants will emerge in the end of times. His name will be like my name and his epithet will be like my epithet. He will fill the earth with justice just as it will be filled with injustice; he is the Mahdī.’ This is a famous tradition. Abū Dāwūd and al-Zuhrī have recorded similar to it from ʿAlī. It says, ‘If only one day remains from the world, Allah will certainly send from my Ahl al-Bait one who will fill the earth with justice.’ He has been mentioned in numerous traditions and it said that he has two names: Muḥammad and Abū I-Qāsim. His mother was a female slave and she was called ʿaiqal. Al-Suddī writes, ‘The Mahdī and Jesus will meet. When it is the time of the prayers, the Mahdī will say to Jesus, “Go ahead.” Jesus will reply, “You are more worthy of leading the prayers.” Then, Jesus will pray behind him as a follower (maʾmūm) . . .”

Nūr al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Aḥmad b. Qiwām al-dīn al-Ḍaḥṭī al-Jamī al-ʿanāfi, the poet, mystic (ʿarif), and author

of Sharḥ al-kifāya. According to Kashf al-astar, he has mentioned in his book Shawḥid al-nubuwwa that al-ʿujjat b. al-ʿasan is the twelfth Imam. He then discusses the strange conditions of his birth and some of his miracles and that he is the one who will fill the earth with justice and fairness. Then, he mentions ʿakḥma’s narration concerning his birth and also other narrations which state that when he was born, he immediately knelt on his knees, raised his index finger towards the sky, sneezed, and then said, “All praise is for Allah, the Lord of the Worlds.” He has also recorded the narration about the person who came to (Imam) Abū Muḥammad (al-ʿAskarī), peace be on him, and enquired about his successor. He went inside his house and came out with a three year old child in his arms who was [shining] like the full moon. [The Imam] then told the enquirer, “O so and so! If you were not high esteemed before Allah, I would not have shown you this boy. His name is the name of the Messenger of Allah, Allah’s blessings be on him and his family, and his epithet is his epithet. He is the one who will fill the earth with justice and fairness just as it will be filled with injustice and unfairness.” He has recorded yet another tradition about a man who came to (Imam) Abū Muḥammad, peace be on him, while there was a curtain in the room. He asked the Imam about the Master of the Affair after him. The Imam told him to raise the curtain . . . He has also mentioned the tradition about the person who was sent by al-Muṭaʿid . . .

Shaykh al-ʿafī Abū ʿAbd-Allah Muḥammad b. Yūsuf b. Muḥammad al-Kanjī (d. 658 AH)—the author of al-Bayʿn fī akhbār ʿaḥbīb al-Zamʿn and Kifāyat al-ʿalib fī manḥiqb Amr al-Muʿminīn ʿAlī b. Abī ḥlib. In the eighth chapter—from the chapters which he has added to the Faḥḥil chapters of Kifāyat al-ʿalib—after mentioning the Imams from the descendants of Amr al-Muʿminīn, peace be on him, he writes, “He (meaning Imam ʿAlī al-Ḥidī, peace be on him) was succeeded by his son Abū Muḥammad al-ʿasan who was born in Medina in the month of Rabīʿ al-ʿakhir, 232 AH and passed away on Friday Rabīʿ al-Awwal 8, 260 AH, at the age of twenty eight. He was buried in his house in Sāmarrʿ in the same room that his father was buried. He was succeeded by his son who is the awaited Imam, Allah’s blessings be on him. We will end the book with a separate section about him.”

He writes in al-Bayʿn fī akhbār ʿaḥbīb al-Zamʿn, “The twenty fifth chapter: the proofs about the possibility of the Mahdī’s survival—peace be on him—since his occultation until now and that there is nothing impossible about it because [others like] Jesus, Ilyās, and al-Khiḥr from amongst the friends of Allah, the Exalted, and al-Dajjāl and Iblīs, the cursed enemies of Allah, have survived . . . (to the end of his long statement in this chapter).”

Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. al-ʿusayn b. ʿAlī b. ʿAbd-Allah b. Mūsā al-Bayhaqī al-Khusraujardī al-Nāsībī, the Shāfiʿī jurist (d. 458 AH). The author of Wafiyat al-ayyūn writes about him: “The famous and great memorizer, unique in his era, outstanding amongst his companions in sciences, and amongst the greatest companions of al-ʿakīm . . . in this world, he was satisfied with little.” Imam al-ʿaramain says about him, “There is no follower of al-Shāfiʿī but that they are indebted to Imam al-Shāfiʿī except Aḥmad al-Bayhaqī, for he has obliged al-Shāfiʿī.”

According to Kashf al-astar, al-Bayhaqī writes in Shuʿab al-ʿimn—which is enumerated amongst his writings according to b. Khalīq—“The people have differed about the Mahdī. Some have stopped at it and have left the matter to its knower. They believe that he is one of the descendants of Fāḥima, the daughter of the Messenger of Allah, Allah’s blessings be on him and his family. Allah will create him whenever He wills and will send him to help His religion. Another group believes that the promised Mahdī was born on Friday, Shaʿbān 15, 255 AH, and he is the Imam titled the Divine Proof (al-ʿujja), the Riser (al-Qāʿim), and the Awaited (al-Muntaḥar), Muḥammad b. al-ʿasan al-ʿAskarī. He entered the cellar (sardīb) at Sāmarrʿ and is alive and concealed from the eyes of the people. He awaits his emergence and he will soon reappear and fill the earth with justice and fairness just as it will be filled with injustice and unfairness. There is no improbability in his longevity and the prolongation of his life just like Jesus, son of Mary, and al-Khiḥr, peace be on them. The Shias—specially the Imāmiyya—have such a belief and a group of ahl al-kashf also agree with them.”

By ahl al-kashf, he does not mean—as some scholars have suggested—al-Shaykh Muḥyī al-dīn, al-Shaʿrīnī and al-Shaykh ʿasan al-ʿIrāqī, whom God willing, we will discuss later; because, al-Bayhaqī preceded them by many years. For instance, al-Bayhaqī expired in 458 AH whilst Shaykh Muḥyī al-dīn died in 638 AH as has been claimed by al-ʿIrāqī in the beginning of the first chapter of al-Yawḥqī. Likewise, al-Shaʿrīnī lived many centuries after al-Bayhaqī. He finished writing al-Yawḥqī in 955 AH. Al-ʿIrāqī and al-Khawwānī were contemporaries of al-Shaʿrīnī. Therefore, from what al-Bayhaqī has said, it is clear that he too is inclined towards this view about the Mahdī. In fact, he believes in it, otherwise he would have rejected it.

Shaykh Kamāl al-dīn Abū Sūlim Muḥammad b. ʿalī al-Shāfiʿī al-Qurashī al-Nāsībī (b. 582 AH), the author of al-

ʿIqd al-farīd. It has been written about him in ʿAbaqāt al-Shaʿfiyya, “He had profound knowledge about religion and excelled in it. He heard traditions at Naysabūr from al-Muʾayyid al-ḥafṣī and Zainab al-Shaʿriyya and narrated (traditions) at Aleppo and Damascus. Al-ʿaffī al-Dimyḥī and Majd al-dīn b. al-ʿAdām have narrated from him. He was from the chiefs of the people and became a minister in Damascus for two days, but then deserted everything including his clothes, slaves, and etc. due to asceticism. Ibn ʿalāʾa passed away on Rajab 7, 652 AH.

According to Yanʿab al-mawadda, p. 410, ibn ʿalāʾa has written in his book al-Durr al-munawwam, “Allah, Blessed and Exalted be He, has a caliph who will emerge in the end of times whilst the earth will be filled with injustice and unfairness. He will fill it with justice and fairness . . . this is Imam al-Mahdī who will rise with the command of Allah and do away with all the religions, then, nothing will remain except the pure religion [of Allah] . . .”

In Maʿālib al-suʿfī manʿiqib al-Rasūl, which is a book in which he has mentioned the names of the twelve Imams, peace be on them, and discussed their lives. He writes, “The Eleventh chapter: Abū Muḥammad al-ḥasan b. ʿAlī, the Pure (al-Khaliḥ), born in 231 AH. As for his paternal and maternal lineage, his father was Abū I-ḥasan ʿAlī al-Mutawakkil b. Muḥammad al-Qānī b. ʿAlī al-Riḥī—whom we have already discussed earlier. His mother was called Sāsān. His name was al-ḥasan, his epithet was Abū Muḥammad, and his title was the Pure (al-Khaliḥ). His virtues: know that the highest virtue and greatest merit for which Allah, Mighty and Majestic be He, chose for him, made him exclusive in it, and rendered it a permanent attribute—the novelty of which cannot be worn out with the passage of time nor will the tongues forget to recite and repeat—is that the Mahdī from the generation of Muḥammad has been created from him, is his son that is attributed to him, and is a part of his existence which has been separated from him. God willing, we will discuss his virtues and the details of his life in the following chapter.

“The Twelfth chapter: Abū I-Qāsim Muḥammad b. al-ḥasan al-Khaliḥ b. ʿAlī al-Mutawakkil b. Muḥammad al-Qānī b. ʿAlī al-Riḥī b. Mūsā al-Kāshim b. Jaʿfar al-ḥadiq b. Muḥammad al-Baqir b. ʿAlī Zayn al-ʿabidin b. al-ḥusayn al-Zakī b. ʿAlī al-Murtaḥamīn al-Muʾminīn b. Abū ʿAlī, the Guided (al-Mahdī), the Divine Proof (al-ḥujja), the Righteous Successor (al-Khalaf al-Khaliḥ), the Awaited One (al-Muntaḥar), peace be on them and Allah’s Mercy and His blessings. “He [then writes a poem] and praises him greatly and mentions the date of his birth, his paternal and maternal lineage, and some of the traditions about the Mahdī which he narrates from Abū Dāwūd, al-Tirmidhī, al-Baghawī, Muslim, al-Bukhārī, and al-Thaʿlabī. He then mentions some questions about him and answers them.”

Al-ʿaffī Abū Muḥammad Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm b. Hāshim al-ḥafṣī al-Baladhurī, a resident of ḥafṣ. It has been narrated in Kashf al-astar from al-Samʿānī: “He was a memorizer, very understanding, and knowledgeable about the traditions . . . He was unique in his era in memorizing and preaching. He was great in socializing and was beneficial to most people. He mostly stayed in Naysabūr where he had two congregations every week with the two teachers of the city, Abū ḥasan al-Muḥamīd and Abū Naṣr al-ʿAbdī. Abū ʿAlī al-ʿaffī and our teachers used to attend his gatherings and were joyous of him mentioning the traditions in public. I never saw them taunting him about the chains of narrators or names or traditions [that he mentioned]. He wrote [narrations] at Mecca from the Imam of the Ahl al-Bait, Abū Muḥammad al-ḥasan b. ʿAlī b. Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. Mūsā al-Riḥī, peace be on them.

Abū I-Walīd—the jurist—writes, “Abū Muḥammad al-Baladhurī learned (samiʿa) the Book of Jihād from Muḥammad b. Isḥāq, while his mother was ill in ḥafṣ . . . al-ʿakīm writes, ‘He was martyred in ḥafṣ in 339 AH and he was the learned scholar of his era.’” Shah Walīd-Allah al-Dihlawī—the father of ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz famous as Shah ʿAlī— and the author of Tuḥfat al-lhān ʿAshariyya fī l-raddi ʿAlī l-Imāmiyya, who has been described by his son like this: “The last of the mystics, the destroyer of the opposers, the chief of the muʿaddithīn, the authority of the dialectical theologians, the proof of Allah upon the worlds . . .” He writes in al-Nuzha, “My father has written in al-Musalsalāt—which is well known for its evident merits saying, ‘ibn ʿAqla verbally gave me permission to narrate everything that he had permission to narrate. I found in his series of narrators (musalsalāt) a tradition whose narrators all possessed great attributes. He, may Allah have mercy on him, had written, ‘The unrivaled of his era, Shaykh ḥasan b. ʿAlī al-ʿAjāmī informed me from the memorizer of his time, Jamaal al-dīn al-Bḥilī, from the trusted person of his time, Muḥammad al-ʿijīzī, the preacher, from the Sufi of his time, Shaykh ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Shaʿrīnī, from the mujtahid of his era, Jalāl (al-dīn) al-Suyūṭī, from the memorizer of his era, Abū Nuʿaim Riḥwān al-ʿAqabī, from the reciter of his time, al-Shams Muḥammad b. al-Jazarī, from Imam Jamāl al-dīn Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Jamālī, the ascetic of his era, from Imam Muḥammad b. Masʿūd, the traditionist of the Persian lands in his era, from our shaykh, Ismāʿīl b. Muḥaffar al-Shīrazī, the learned one of his time, from ʿAbd al-Salām

b. Abū I-Rabʿ al-Anafī, the traditionist of his time, from Abū Bakr ʿAbd-Allah b. Muḥammad b. Shabbār al-Qalnisī, the shaykh of his era, from ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, from Muḥammad al-Damī, the Imam of his era, from Sulaymīn b. Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. Sulaymīn, the exceptional of his era, from Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Hāshim al-Balḥurī, the memorizer of his time, from M-U-ʿ-A-M-M-A-D the son of al-ʿasan b. ʿAlī the concealed, the Imam of his time, from al-ʿasan b. ʿAlī, from his father, from his grandfather ʿAlī b. Mūsā al-Riḥābī, peace be on them, from Mūsā al-Kāfīm, from Jaʿfar al-ḥadiq, from Muḥammad al-Bḥārī b. ʿAlī, from ʿAlī b. al-ʿusayn Zayn al-ʿabīdīn al-Sajjīd, from al-ʿusayn, the chief of the martyrs, from ʿAlī b. Abū ḥabīb, the chief of the successors, peace be on them, who said, “The Chief of the Prophets, Muḥammad b. ʿAbd-Allah, Allah’s blessings be on him and his family, informed me from Gabriel, the Chief of the Angels, from Allah, the Exalted, the chief of all chiefs, Who said, ‘Verily, I am Allah and there is no god but Me. Whoever confesses to My Oneness, enters My Fort, and whoever enters My Fort, is safe from My punishment.’”” Al-Shams b. al-Jazarī says, “This tradition has come from a blessed chain of narrators and the responsibility of its authenticity lies on al-Balḥurī. The aforementioned Shāh Walī-Allah writes in his treatise al-Nawādir min ʿadab al-awḥāl wa l-awḥāl, ‘The narration of M-U-ʿ-A-M-M-A-D b. al-ʿasan from his noble forefathers, whom the Shias believe to be the Mahdī: I have found in the Musalsalāt of al-Shaykh b. ʿAqla al-Makkī, from al-ʿasan al-ʿAjāmī, from Abū ḥabīb al-ʿAjāmī who was the most capable of his time regarding the chain of narrators. He says, “Informed us the unique of his era, al-Shaykh ʿasan b. ʿAlī al-ʿAjāmī . . . (to the end of what we already mentioned),” with slight differences in some of the titles and arrangements of names.”

It has been mentioned in al-Burḥān al-wujūd ḥabīb al-Zamīn, after mentioning what we quoted from Kashf al-astar: “It has been written in Shaykh ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Jabrī al-Anafī’s ʿAjīb al-ʿathar (Egypt: 1301 AH) in the margins of ibn al-Athar’s al-Kāmil, about the incidence of the month of Dhū l-ḥijja in the year 1215 AH: ‘As for those who died in this year, worth mentioning is the virtuous and righteous Imam, the highly learned Shaykh, ʿAbd al-ʿAlīm b. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Uthmān al-Malikī al-Azharī al-ʿararī, who attended the lessons of al-Shaykh ʿAlī al-ʿaʿdī in both topics of narrating (riwāya) and dirāya and learned (samīʿa) from the ʿaʿdīs, al-Muwattaʿ, al-Shamʿīl, al-Jamī al-ḥaghī, and the Musalsalāt of ibn ʿAqla. He has also narrated from al-Malwī, al-Jauharī, and al-Balḥurī . . . Whenever Allah was mentioned, he cried excessively; tears came to his eyes quickly, and he was very God-fearing. Al-Suyūṭī writes in Risālat al-tadrīb, ‘The author of Sharḥ al-nukhba mentions that a musalsal tradition leads to certainty.’ Based on these facts, the statement of ibn al-Jazarī ‘The responsibility of its authenticity lies on al-Balḥurī’ is unfounded and baseless. This is in addition to what he heard from al-Samʿānī in favor of al-Balḥurī, specially his saying, ‘I never saw them taunting him . . .’” Muʿaddith al-Nūrī has also mentioned this tradition in al-Najm al-thaqib.

Al-Qāṣi Faḥl b. Rabbān—the commentator of al-Tirmidhī’s al-Shamʿīl and the author of the book, Ibtihāj nahj al-bḥāl fī radd kitāb kashf al-ʿaqq wa nahj al-ʿidq wa l-ʿawḥāl, which is a refutation of Ayatullah ʿAllama al-ḥillī’s Kashf al-ʿaqq wa nahj al-ʿidq wa l-ʿawḥāl. The former was refuted by the great martyr al-Qāṣi Nūr Allah b. Sharīf al-Marʿashī al-ʿusaynī—may Allah cover him with His Mercy—through his famous book Iḥqāq al-ʿaqq wa izhāq al-bḥāl. The book of Faḥl b. Rabbān was also refuted by a contemporary scholar in his book Dalʿīl al-ʿidq.

Al-Qāṣi Faḥl b. Rabbān, under the fifth issue of the third section in the explanation of al-ḥillī’s view (the second concept: Concerning his wife and children . . .) writes the following, “I say: What he has been narrated about the merits of Fāṭima—Allah’s blessings be upon her father, upon her, and upon all the family of Muḥammad and His salutations—is undeniable. For, denying the ocean’s mercy, the richness of the earth, the light of the sun, the manifestations of all lights, the generosity of the clouds, and the prostration of the angels, is a denial that will lead to nothing but increased mockery of the denier. [The same holds true for those] who refute a group who are on the right path, the keepers of the mine of Prophethood, and the protectors of the etiquette of chivalry, blessings and salutations of Allah be upon them all. How beautiful is the poem that I have composed about them:

Salutation upon al-Muḥafaf al-Mujtabī

Salutation upon al-Sayyid al-Murṭaḥ

Salutation upon our lady Fāṭima

Whom Allah has chosen as the Best of all women

Salutation upon the one whose breath is musk

Upon ʿAsan the brilliant, the satisfied

Salutation upon the God-fearing ʿUsayn
The martyr with his body at Karbala

Salutation upon the chief of the worshippers
ʿAlī b. al-ʿUsayn the chosen one

Salutation upon al-Bḥqir the guided
Salutation upon al-ʿḤadiq the followed

Salutation upon al-Kaʿim the tested
Content in nature, the Imam of the pious

Salutation upon the Eighth, the trusted
Upon al-Riḍā the chief of the pure ones

Salutation upon the pious, the God-fearer
Muḥammad the pure, the hoped one

Salutation upon the fragrant, al-Naqī
Upon the noble, the guide of the people

Salutation upon the Sayyid, al-ʿAskarī
The Imam who will mobilized the army of the pure ones

Salutation upon the Qaʿim, the Awaited
Abū I-Qāsim, the saint, the light of guidance

He will rise like the sun in darkness
He will save with his un-sheathed sword

You will see the earth filled with his justice
As it will be filled with the injustice of transgressors

Salutation be upon him and his forefathers
And his helpers as long as the skies exist”

The famous scholar, Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd-Allah b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Khashshab (d. 567 AH); According to Kashf al-astar, al-Najm al-thaqib, and Aʿyān al-Shaʿa, he has narrated in his book Tarikh mawḥid al-Aʿimma wa wafayatihim: “Through his chain of narrators from Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. Naḥr b. ʿAbd Allah b. al-Fatḥ al-Darrī al-Naharawānī, from ʿAdaqt b. Mūsā, from his father, from al-Riḍā, peace be on him, who said, ‘The righteous successor is from the descendants of Abū Muḥammad al-ʿAsan b. ʿAlī and he is the Master of the Time and the Mahdī.’

“Al-Jarrī b. Sufyān narrated to us, from Abū I-Qāsim Ḥāshir b. Ḥarīr b. Mūsā al-ʿAlawī, from his father Ḥarīr, from his father Mūsā, from his master Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad, peace be on him, who said, “The Righteous Successor (al-Khalaf al-Ḥāqīq) is from my descendants and he is the Mahdī. His name is M-U-ʿ-A-M-M-A-D and his epithet is Abū I-Qāsim. He will emerge in the end of times. His mother will be called ʿaiqal . . .”

I say: His book Mawḥid al-Aʿimma has been published and is available.

Al-Shaykh Muḥyī al-dīn Abū ʿAbd Allah Muḥammad b. ʿAlī, known as ibn al-ʿArabī al-Ḥāqīmī al-ʿAndalusī (d. 638 AH)—according to what has been mentioned in Kashf al-ḥunūn. He was buried in Ḥalīyiyā in Syria and his grave is famous and a place of visitation. Shaykh ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Shaʿrānī has narrated from him in the sixty fifth chapter of al-Yawḥiqāt wa l-jawāhir ([Egypt: al-Maʿbaʿatu l-Azhariyyat al-Miḥriyya, 1307 AH], vol. 2, p. 145). He writes: “This is what al-Shaykh Muḥyī al-dīn has said in the 366th chapter of al-Futūḥ, ‘Know that the emergence of the Mahdī, peace be on him, is inevitable but he will not emerge until the earth is full of injustice and unfairness and he will fill it with fairness and

justice. If there remains from the world none but one day, Allah, the Exalted, will prolong that day until that caliph rules. He is from the progeny of the Messenger of Allah, Allah's blessings be on him and his family, and from the descendants of Fāṭima, may Allah have mercy on her. His ancestor is al-Ḥusayn b. `Alī b. Abī Ṭālib and his father is al-Ḥasan al-`Askarī, the son of Imam `Alī al-Naqī, the son of Muḥammad al-Taqī, the son of Imam `Alī al-Riḍā, the son of Imam Mūsā al-Kāḍim, the son of Imam Ja`far al-Ṣādiq, the son of Imam Muḥammad al-Baqir, the son of Imam Zayn al-`Abidin, the son of Imam al-Ḥusayn b. `Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, may Allah be satisfied with him. His name will be the same as that of the Messenger of Allah, Allah's blessings be on him and his family. The Muslims will pledge allegiance to him between the Rukn and the Maqām [in Mecca]. He will be like the Messenger of Allah, Allah's blessings be on him and his family, in creation and he will be slightly lower than the Messenger of Allah in morality because no one can be equal to him in this attribute. Allah, the Exalted, says, "And surely you are on a great morality" (Quran 68:4). He will have a wide forehead and an aquiline nose. The most fortunate of the people with respect to him will be the residents of Kūfa. He will distribute wealth equally and be just towards the citizens. A man will come to him and ask [for wealth] in a time that there is wealth before him. He will fill the man's cloth with so much wealth that he will not be able to carry it . . ." He then mentions his attributes, characteristics, and deeds. The learned teacher Shaykh Muḥammad al-Ḥubbīn has recorded the exact same words from al-Futūḥī in his book *Isṭiḥṣāṭ al-rughhibīn* (Egypt: al-Maṭba'atu al-Maymaniyya, 1312 AH), chap. 2, p. 142).

I could not find this exact statement in what I observed in other copies [of al-Futūḥī] like the copy published in Egypt by Dīr al-Kutub al-`Arabiyya. Its wording differs with what is found in al-Yawḥī. I feel that those who distort the words from their places have altered the book and erased the Imam's noble lineage. Such distortions and alterations are commonplace in the books published in Egypt. By Allah, indeed, this is a great crime inflicted against knowledge, religion, the Islamic nation, and those who seek the truth. It seems that they consider it obligatory upon themselves to make such changes and distortions whenever they find in a book the virtues and merits of the Ahl al-Bait of the Prophet and his heirs and what doesn't conform to their whims and desires. May Allah grant refuge to us and them from prejudice and obstinacy!

The following is part of a poem by Shaykh Muḥyī al-dīn in al-Futūḥī, chap. 366:

He is the Chief, the Mahdī from the progeny of Aḥmad

He is the Indian sword when he destroys

He is the sun that dispels sorrows and darkness

He is like the monsoon rain that pours heavily when he bestows

Regarding the Mahdī and his ministers, some lines of poetry have also been narrated from him in Yanḥīb al-mawadda, p. 467, citing his book *Unaqḥ al-maghrib*

Al-Shaykh Sa`d al-dīn Muḥammad b. al-Mu`ayyid b. Abī l-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad b. Ḥammawayh, known as Shaykh Sa`d al-dīn al-Ḥimawī. He has written a book exclusively about the Master of the Time (Ḥayib al-Zamān), which is in accordance with the beliefs of the Shias as has been narrated from `Abd al-Raḥmān al-Jīmī in Mir'at al-asrār from the author of al-Maqḥad al-aqḥḥ. He has also narrated from the author of al-`Aqīd al-Nasafiyya that the mentioned Sa`d al-dīn had declared the Imamate of the Mahdī and that he is the Master of the Time (Ḥayib al-Zamān), peace be on him, the last of the twelve heirs, and that there are no more than these twelve Imams. Allah, the Exalted, has made them His representatives in the religion of Muḥammad, and the Messenger of Allah was referring to them when he said, "The scholars are the inheritors of the prophets" and "The scholars of my nation are like the Israelite prophets."

The author of Yanḥīb al-mawadda writes on p. 474: "It has been written in the book of Shaykh `Azīz b. Muḥammad al-Nasafī, may Allah have mercy on him, "The Shaykh of the Shaykhs, Sa`d al-dīn al-Ḥimawī, says that 'prior to our Prophet Muḥammad, Allah's blessings be on him, the word 'guardian' (walī) was not used in previous religions but the word 'prophet' (nabī) was used. All those who were close to Allah and were the inheritors of the bringers of [new] religions were called 'prophets.' In every religion, there was not more than one bringer of religion. Therefore, in the religion of Adam, peace be on him, there were some prophets who were his inheritors. They invited the people towards his religion and his sharia. The same was the case in the religions of Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, peace be on them. With the advent of the new religion and sharia of Muḥammad, Allah's blessings be on him and his family, Allah, the Exalted, chose twelve people from his Ahl al-Bait and appointed them as his inheritors. He made them close to Himself and singled them out for his guardianship (wilāya). He appointed them as the representatives of Muḥammad, Allah's blessings be on him and his family, and his inheritors. The traditions, 'The scholars are the inheritors of the prophets,' and 'The scholars of my nation

are like the Israelite prophets,' was said by him in their favor. The last successor—which is the last and twelfth representative—is the seal of the successors. His name is Mahdī, the Master of the Time. Shaykh says that there are no more than twelve successors in the world; but those 356 hidden people are not called successors (auliya'), rather, they are called substitutes (al-Abdī).”

I say: This can be found in al-Nasafī's al-Insān al-kāmil ([Tehran], p. 319), with minor variations.

Abū-Mawhib al-Shaykh `Abd al-Wahhāb b. Aḥmad b. `Alī al-Sha`rānī (d. 973 AH [according to one place in Kashf al-ḡunūn; in another place 960 AH has been mentioned]) says in al-Yawḡiqat wa l-jawāhir, ([Egypt: al-Maḡba`atu al-Azhariyyat al-Miḡriyya], vol. 2, p. 145): “The 65th chapter: All the ‘conditions of the Hour’ (ashrāt al-s`a) which have been mentioned in the traditions, will inevitably occur before the Hour is established. Things like the emergence of the Mahdī . . . and he is from the descendants of Imam ḡasan al-`Askarī, and his birth, peace be on him, took place on the night of Sha`bān 15, 255 AH, and he will remain until he unites with Jesus, son of Mary, peace be on him. Today—i.e. the year 958 AH—his age is 706 years. Shaykh ḡasan al-`Irāqī who is buried at Egypt has informed me like this from Imam al-Mahdī when he met him. This has also been endorsed by our Shaykh, my master, `Alī al-Khawwānī, may Allah have mercy on them both.”

Al-Shaykh ḡasan al-`Irāqī (the aforementioned). He has mentioned the ḡujja and his meeting with him as has been narrated by al-Sha`rānī in Lawḡiqat al-anwār fī ḡabaqāt al-akhyār ([Egypt: 1305 AH], vol. 2, p. 140). After narrating the journey of ḡasan al-`Irāqī he has narrated from this book: “I asked the Mahdī about his age. He replied, ‘O my son! Today my age is 620 years.’ . . .” Al-Sha`rānī writes, “I mentioned this to my master `Alī al-Khawwānī and he agreed with him about the age of the Mahdī, may Allah have mercy on him.”

The aforementioned Shaykh `Alī al-Khawwānī. He was called al-Khawwānī because he made crafts using palm-leaves.

Al-Sha`rānī has greatly praised him in Lawḡiqat al-anwār (vol. 2, pp. 151–170).

ḡusayn b. Mu`īn al-dīn al-Maybudī. In his commentary on Imam `Alī's Dīwān, peace be on him, under the poem which starts with the following line:

O my sons! When the Turks mobilize their armies then await

the rule of a Mahdī, who will rise and be just

He writes on p. 371, “I hope that the Almighty Lord illuminates my eyes by the precious kohl of the dust of his feet. May the sun of his great reality shine on the door and roof of our personalities. Indeed, this is not difficult for Allah.” On p. 123, he has declared his birth and its date.

Al-ḡaffī Muḡammad b. Muḡammad Maḡmūd al-Bukhārī, known as Khajja Pārsī who is one of the celebrated ḡanafī scholars and one of the great Naqshbandī teachers. According to Kashf al-ḡunūn, he passed away in 822 AH. He writes in his book Faḡl al-khiḡāb: “The son of Abū Muḡammad al-ḡasan al-`Askarī, M-U-ḡ-A-M-M-A-D, was known to his father's close companions and the trusted ones of his family. (He then mentions the narrative of al-ḡakḡma and the incident of al-Mu`taḡid and some of the signs of his reappearance, then he says,) Traditions in this regard are more than can be enumerated. The virtues of the Mahdī, the Master of the Time, who is hidden from the eyes and is present in every era, are numerous. There are many narrations that talk about his reappearance, the resplendence of his light, him renewing the sharia of Muḡammad, fighting in the way of Allah as it should be fought, cleaning all of earth from all impurities, his era is the era of the pious, his companions are free from skepticism and doubt, free from defects, they follow his guidance and his path, they receive the truth through him, through him caliphate and Imamate will end, he is the Imam since his father passed away until the Day of Judgment, and Jesus, peace be on him, will pray behind him and will confirm his claim and will call the people towards his religion which is the one brought by the Prophet, Allah's blessings be on him and his family.” Al-Nūrī has narrated this from him in Kashf al-astīr. His statements about the birth of the Mahdī, his occultation, and concealment have also been narrated from him in Yanḡīb al-mawadda (p. 451).

Al-ḡaffī Abū l-Fatḡ Muḡammad b. Abū l-Fawḡris. In his al-Arba`īn—a copy of its manuscript is available in the ḡstīne Quds library (Mashhad, Iran)—he has narrated the following tradition: “He who loves to meet Allah, Mighty and Majestic be He, while He is facing him, then he should accept the guardianship of `Alī to the last of the twelve.” At the end of his statement—according to what is recorded in this book—he says, “I was inclined towards their excellence and merits (meaning the Ahl al-Bait) after I moved along with the sects and understood them. The truth became clear for me and I recognized it. The path became obvious so I tread it with clear witnesses and authentic and evident traditions. I was

informed of them by reliable, pious, and religious people. I have conveyed them just as they were narrated to me.”

Abū l-Majd `Abd al-`Aqq al-Dihlawī al-Bukhārī who authored many books. It has been narrated that his books were in excess of one hundred volumes. He passed away in 1052 AH. According to Kashf al-astar, he has written in his treatise about the Imams and their virtues, peace be on them, “The son of Abū Muḥammad al-`Asan al-`Askarī [is called] M-U-`A-M-M-A-D who was known to his special and trusted companions.” Thereafter, he mentions the story of his birth in Persian.

According to Yanḥub` al-mawadda (p. 472) and the sixth session of Majlis al-mu`minīn, Al-Shaykh Aḥmad al-Jīmī al-Nīmiqī has composed the following poem (in Persian):

Because of `Aidar’s love, every moment, I feel serenity in my heart
After `Aidar, al-`Asan is our Imam and guide

Like a dog, I am lying in his court
The dust on al-`Usayn’s shoe is the kohl of my eyes

The Worshipper is my crown and al-Baqir the light of my eyes
Al-Ja`far’s religion is the truth and al-Muṣṣī’s religion should be followed

O Servants! Hear the characteristics of the King of Khurāsān
A speck of his grave’s dust cures the ill and needy

O Muslims! Al-Taḳī is the leader of the faithful
You love al-Naqī and everyone else should too

Al-`Askarī is the light of the eyes of all men and creatures
Where can anyone find a commander like the Mahdī

The Poets compose for the hope of acquiring gold and silver
Aḥmad al-Jīmī is the special servant of the King of the Guardians
Al-Shaykh Farīd al-dīn Muḥammad al-`Aḥḥār al-Nīsābūrī, who—according to Majlis al-mu`minīn—was killed in 627 or 589 AH. According to Yanḥub` al-mawadda (p. 473), he composed the following poem in his book Muḥir al-`ifṭ:
In the world, Muṣṭafī is the seal of the Prophets
Murtaḥī is obviously the seal of the successors

All of `Aidar’s children are successors
They are all one light, as the Lord has said

After mentioning the names of the Imams he continues:
There are hundreds of thousands of saints on earth
Who are definitely asking Allah for the Mahdī

O Lord! Bring the Mahdī out of occultation
So that the world of justice becomes manifest

Mahdī the guider, is the crown of the pious
The best of the creations and the tower of the saints

O seal of the successors of this era!
You are hidden from everything, O spirit of our lives!

O both manifest and hidden!
Your servant, al-`Aḥḥār, has come to praise you

Jalī al-dīn Muḥammad al-Balkhī al-Rīmī, the famous mystic, better known as al-Maulawī (d. 672). According to Yanḥub` al-mawadda (p. 473), he has composed in his large Dīwān—which is arranged in alphabetical order—the

following poem:

O lord of the men, `Alī, the joyous salute you

O lion of the men, `Alī, the men salute you

. . . (to where he says)

Tell the killer of the infidels, tell religion and the religious

Tell ʿAidār, the continuous attacker, that the joyous salute him

Tell the Durj of the two jewels, tell the constellation of the two stars

Tell Shabbar and Shabʿr that the joyous salute them

Tell the ornament of religion, the worshipper, tell the light of religion, al-Bʿqir

Tell Jaʿfar al-ʿadīq that the joyous salute them

Tell Mūsā al-Kāʿim, tell the one from al-ʿīs

Tell al-Taqī, the riser, that the joyous salute them

Tell the prince of religion, al-Hādī, tell the guided one, al-ʿAskarī,

Tell the successor, al-Mahdī, that the joyous salute them

Shaykh ʿAlī al-dīn al-ʿafādī (d. 764 AH), who knew the secrets of the alphabet. According to Yanʿabʿ al-mawadda, he has said in his book *Sharḥ al-dʿīra*, “The promised Mahdī is the twelfth Imam from the Imams; the first of whom is our master `Alī and the last of them who is the Mahdī, may Allah be satisfied with all of them.”

Al-Maulawī `Alī Akbar b. Asad-Allah al-Muʿdī, who is one of the more recent Indian scholars. According to *Kashf al-astʿr* (p. 80) and *Istiqḥ al-afḥm* (p. 98), in his book *al-Mukʿshifāt*—which he wrote in the margins of `Abd al-Raḥmān al-Jamī’s *Nafaḥāt al-uns*—he has explicitly stated in the forty-fifth chapter, the Imamate and infallibility of al-ʿujjāt b. al-ʿasan al-ʿAskarī and his forefathers to Amʿr al-Muʿminīn `Alī. He states that the Mahdī was the pole (quḥb) [of the mystics] after his father al-ʿasan al-ʿAskarī, peace be on them, who too was a quḥb after his father—proceeding in this manner to Imam `Alī b. Abī ḥlib. Moreover, he was concealed from the eyes of the ordinary people as well as the elite except for the very, very special ones. He then speaks about the infallibility of the twelve Imams.

Shaykh `Abd al-Raḥmān the author of *Mirʿāt al-asrʿr*, who was one of the greatest ḥfī shaykhs. Shḥ Walī-Allah al-Hindī al-Dihlawī—the father of Shḥ `Abd al-ʿAzīz, the author of *Tuḥfat al-lthnī `Ashariyya*—has narrated from him. According to al-Najm al-thʿqib and *Kashf al-astʿr*, he has written the following in *Mirʿāt al-asrʿr*: “The Sun of religion and governance, the guide of the entire nation, the successor of Aḥmad, and the true Imam, Abī l-Qḥsim Muḥammad b. ʿasan al-Mahdī, may Allah be satisfied with him, is the twelfth Imam from the Imams of the Ahl al-Bait. His mother was a female slave and was called Narjis. His birth took place on the night of Friday, Shaʿbān 15, 255 AH . . . His name and epithet is like that of the Messenger [of Allah]. His titles are: Mahdī, ʿujja, Qʿim, Muntaʿar, ḥḥib al-Zamīn, and Khḥtam lthnī `Ashar. He was five when his father Imam ʿasan al-ʿAskarī passed away and he was appointed as an Imam [at this young age], just as Allah, the Exalted, granted wisdom to John (Yaʿyū), son of Zachariah, in childhood, and gave high stature to Jesus while he was an infant. He became an Imam at a young age and his miracles are more than can be mentioned here. (He then mentions what the aforementioned Shaykh Muḥyī al-dīn al-ʿArabī has said, then continues,) Our master `Abd al-Raḥmān Jamī was a well-experienced ḥfī who followed the Shʿfī sect. He has written about the birth and occultation of Imam Muḥammad b. ʿasan al-ʿAskarī, peace be on him, in great detail in his book *Shawḥid al-nubuwwa*. He has extensively narrated from the Imams of the Ahl al-Bait and the authors of biographies. The author of *Maqḥadi aqḥ* writes, ‘Shaykh Saʿd al-dīn al-ʿimawī—the successor of Najm al-dīn—has written a book about Imam Mahdī and has spoken about a lot of related subjects to such an extent that no other creation can write [such a book]. When he reappears, absolute guardianship will become manifest and the differences between sects, unfairness, and evil will be completely uprooted—like it has been mentioned in prophetic traditions about his characteristics. These traditions state that the Mahdī will reappear in the end of times and will cleanse every corner of the earth from injustice and unfairness. Then, only one religion will remain. If the Antichrist (al-Dajjī), the evil-doer, can be alive and hidden, Jesus, peace be on him, can be born and concealed from the people, then it is no surprise if the son of the Holy Prophet, Allah’s blessings be on him and his

family, Imam Muḥammad Maḥdī b. Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī, peace be on him, is too covered from the eyes of the masses, and like Jesus and the Antichrist, will reappear on Allah's Command. It is not strange that some great scholars have denied some concepts related to Mahdawiyya. It is wrong to deny these facts out of sheer prejudice.

Some of al-Shaʿrānī's teachers; According to Yanʿabī al-mawadda (p. 470): "Shaykh ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Shaʿrānī has written in his book al-Anwār al-qudsiyya, 'Some of our teachers have acknowledged that "We pledged allegiance to Imam al-Maḥdī in Damascus and stayed with him for seven days." Shaykh ʿAbd al-Laṭīf al-Ḥalabī said to me in the year 1273 AH, "My father, Shaykh Ibrāhīm, may Allah have mercy on him, said 'I heard from some Egyptian ṣūfī saints that they pledged allegiance to Imam Maḥdī.'"

The lord of the scholars, al-Qāṣim Shihāb al-dīn b. Shams al-dīn al-Daulatī b. d. 849 AH), the author of Manḥiqib al-sūdūt and the Tafsīr al-Bahr al-mawwaj—both in Persian—and al-Manḥiqib al-mausūm bi hidʿiyat al-suʿād. According to al-Najm al-thaqib and Kashf al-astar, in the latter, he has clearly declared the Imamate of the twelve Imams and their names. He has narrated the Tradition of the Tablet (ʿadath lau) and has said about al-ʿUjjat b. al-Ḥasan, peace be on him, "He is in occultation and has a long life like Jesus, Ilyās, and al-Khiṣr from amongst the believers and al-Dajjāl and al-Samirī from amongst the infidels."

I say: Refer to al-Hidʿiya, the second manifestation from the thirteenth guidance.

Shaykh Sulaimān b. Shaykh Ibrāhīm, known as Khāja Kalān al-ʿUsaynī al-Balkhī al-Qundūzī (d. 1294 AH), the author of Yanʿabī al-mawadda. He has mentioned in a number of places of this book, Imam Maḥdī's life, his miracles, his birth date, his lineage, and some of the traditions that are related to him. After mentioning the views about the date of his birth, he writes on page 452, "The news regarded obvious and verified by reliable scholars, is that the Qa'im, peace be on him, was born on Friday night, Shaʿbān 15, 255 AH in Sīmarī . . ."

Shaykh ʿImrī b. ʿImrī al-Baḥrī, the composer of al-Qaḍādat al-Tiyya or Dhāt al-anwār, comprised of twelve [sections called] lights, concerning knowledge, judgment, secrets, and etiquette. According to Kashf al-astar, he has written in the ninth light—which is about the recognition of the Master of the Time and his reappearance—a poem which starts with the following line:

O Imam of guidance! Until when will you be occult

Oblige us O father by paying attention to us

Al-Qāṣim Jawād al-Sabbāḥī, who was a Christian and converted to Islam and wrote al-Barḥan al-Sabbāḥīyya fī l-radd ʿalā l-Naḥḍī in refutation of the Christians. According to al-Najm al-thaqib and Kashf al-astar—after mentioning the differences between the Muslims about the Maḥdī—he writes: "The view of the Imamiyya [i.e. Shias] is closer [to the truth] as it is more in conformity with the divine texts (al-naḥḍī)."

Shaykh Abū l-Maʿḍī ʿAdr al-dīn al-Qanawī, the author of Tafsīr al-Fitiya, Miftāḥ al-ghayb, and etc. Kashf al-astar has reported that he has composed a poem which starts like this: "He will rise by Allah's order . . ." He has also said to his students in his will, "Sell what books I have in my library on the topics of medicine, wisdom, and philosophy and give its money in charity to the needy. Keep the Tafsīr, Hadith, and Sufism books in the library. Recite the word of oneness, 'There is no god but Allah' seventy thousand times in the first night [of my death] with utmost attention of the heart and convey my salām to the Maḥdī, peace be on him."

The great learned scholar ʿAbd Allah b. Muḥammad al-Maḥdī has clearly talked about him in his book al-Riyā al-ḥira fī faḍl al-Bait al-Nabī wa ʿitratih al-ḥira. According to Kashf al-astar, he has named the Imams one after the other, and he says: "The eleventh is his son, al-Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī, may Allah be satisfied with him. The twelfth is his son, Muḥammad al-Qa'im al-Maḥdī, may Allah be satisfied with him. Divine texts are available about him in the Islamic nation which date back to the Prophet Muḥammad, Allah's blessings be on him [and his family], his ancestor ʿAlī b. Abū Ḥabīb, may Allah approve of him, and from his other noble, high statured forefathers. He is the Possessor of the Sword, the Riser, and the Awaited one, as has been mentioned in authentic traditions. Before his emergence, he will have two occultations . . ."

The author of Kashf al-astar writes, "The manuscript which I used was very old and belonged to the author himself. In his own hand-writing he had written on the cover, 'al-Riyā al-ḥira fī faḍl al-Bait al-Nabī wa ʿitratih al-ḥira, written by the needy toward Allah, ʿAbd-Allah b. Muḥammad al-Maḥdī al-Madanī, follower of the Shīfī religion, the Ashʿarī belief, and the Naqshbandī path. May Allah benefit us from their blessings, Amen."

Shaykh al-Islam Abū l-Maʿḍī Muḥammad Sirāj al-dīn al-Rifī al-Makhzūmī, the honorable Sharḥ. According to Kashf

al-astar, he has mentioned in his book *al-akhbar fi nasab al-sadat al-Fatimiyya al-akhyar*, under the biography of *Abi Iqbal al-Hadi*, peace be on him: “Imam `Ali al-Hadi, the son of Imam Muhammad al-Jawad, peace be on them. His titles are: al-Naqib, al-`ilim, al-Faqih, al-Amir, al-Dalil, al-`Askar, and al-Najib. He was born in Medina in 212 AH and was martyred with poison during the reign of al-Mu`tazz al-`Abbas on Monday, Rajab 3, 254 AH. He had five children: Imam Hasan al-`Askar, al-`Usayn, Muhammad, Ja`far, and `Isha. Al-`asan al-`Askar was succeeded by the Companion of the Cellar, al-`Ujja, the Awaited One, the Guardian assigned by Allah, Imam al-Mahdi, peace be on him. Mir Khond, the famous historian, Muhammad b. Khwand Shih b. Mahmud (d. 903 AH [according to Kashf al-`un])]. He has mentioned his birth, life, and miracles in the third volume of *Tarikh rauat al-`af*.

Nar b. `Ali al-Jaham al-Nar, one of the great and reliable Sunni scholars. According to al-Najm al-thaqib, he has talked about his birth, his mother’s name, and his janitors name. He is the same Nar about whom the First Martyr (al-Shahid al-Awwal) has said, “He stated in the presence of al-Mutawakkil that the Prophet, Allah’s blessings be on him and his family, held (Imam) al-`asan and al-`usayn’s hands and declared, ‘Whoever loves me, these two, and their mother, will be with me in my rank in Paradise.’ On hearing this, al-Mutawakkil ordered that he be whipped one thousand times. Abi Ja`far `Abd al-Wahid said, ‘He is a Sunni!’ and so he was pardoned.”

Shaykh al-Islam, the great traditionist, Ibrahim b. Muhammad b. al-Mu`ayyid al-Juwaini al-Khurasani (d. 730 AH). In his book *Farid al-simain* (published in two large volumes), he has mentioned his birth in a number of places and has recorded traditions which speak about him and about the twelve Imams, peace be on them.

Al-Qasbi al-Mu`aqqiq Buhli Bahjat Afandi, the author of *al-Muhakama fi tarikh Muhammad* in Turkish which was translated into Persian. It has been published several times due to demand from the readers. It is truly an excellent book which has investigated important incidents in history and removed the numerous veils placed on historical events by prejudiced writers and historians. In this book, he has explicitly talked about the Imamate of the twelve Imams, some of their merits and conditions, the birth of the twelfth Imam—and that he was born on Sha`ban 15, 255 AH—the name of his mother was Narjis, that he had two occultations: the minor and major, that he is alive and will appear when Allah, the Exalted, permits him to do so, and he will fill the earth with fairness and justice. He also writes, “His [eventual] appearance is agreed upon by all Muslims, and hence, there is no need to prove it.” He then praises him with great words and mentions some of his attributes and signs.

Shaykh Shams al-din Muhammad b. Yusuf al-Zarandi who according to Izzam al-nadib, has written in his book *Miraj al-wuqof ila ma`rifat fa`lat al-Rasul*: “The twelfth Imam is the possessor of famous miracles whose stature is because of his great knowledge and him following the truth and the traditions of the Prophet. He will rise with the truth and will invite the people to the right path. He is Imam Abi Iqbal al-Qasim Muhammad b. al-`asan.” He then mentions his birth date.

Shams al-din al-Tabrizi—the teacher of Maulawi Jalal al-din al-Rumi. *Kashf al-astar* has cited Yan`ab al-mawadda as stating that he has acknowledged the birth of the Mahdi.

The famous historian, ibn Khalik in *Wafiyat al-a`yan*. We already mentioned what he has said in the section about his birth and its history.

Ibn al-Azraq, the famous historian in *Tarikh mayyafiriq* (according to what has been narrated by ibn Khalik in *Wafiyat al-a`yan*).

Mauli `Ali al-Qasbi whom according to Izzam al-nadib and *Kashf al-astar*, has mentioned in his book *al-Mirqat fi sharh al-mishkat*, the names of the twelve Imams and pointed to some of their virtues and miracles.

The great Sufi saint for whom `Abd al-Rahman al-`af’s book *Mir`at al-asrar* was written about (as reported in *Kashf al-astar*).

The famous historian ibn al-Wardi. According to Nar al-abir (chap. 2, p. 153), he has written in his *Tarikh*, “Muhammad b. al-`asan, the purified one, was born in 255 AH.”

Al-Sayyid Mu`min b. Hasan al-Shablanji, the author of *Nar al-abir*. He writes in chapter 2, page 152: “The section concerning the virtues of Muhammad b. Hasan al-Khali b. `Ali al-Hadi b. Muhammad al-Jawad b. `Ali al-Rid b. Musa al-Kasim b. Ja`far al-`adiq b. Muhammad al-Baqir b. `Ali Zain al-`bidin b. al-`usayn b. `Ali b. Abi Talib, may Allah be satisfied with them. His mother was a female slave and her name was Narjis. Others have said *Naqib* and *Sasan*. His epithet is *Abi Iqbal al-Qasim* and the Shias have given him the titles of *al-`Ujja* (the Divine Proof), *al-Mahdi* (the Guided), *al-Qasim* (the Riser), *al-Muntazar* (the Awaited), and *al-nadib al-`am* (the Master of the Time). The most famous of these

is al-Mahdī.”

Shaykh al-Nassībī Abū l-Fauz Muḥammad Amīn al-Baghdādī al-Suwaydī, the author of Sabʿīk al-dhahab fī maʿrifat qabḥil al-ʿArab. He has mentioned the names of the twelve Imams and some of their merits and virtues. He mentions Imam Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī in chap. 6, p. 77. He writes on p. 78, “Muḥammad al-Mahdī whose age was five when his father passed away. He had an average figure, pleasant visage and hair, an aquiline nose, and a wide forehead.”

Shaykh al-Islam Ibrāhīm b. Saʿd al-dīn which has already been mentioned.

Chief of the Imams, ʿIyāʾ al-dīn Muwaffaq b. Aḥmad al-Khāṣṣ al-Malikī al-Kh̄wrazmī, who was the most eloquent of the speakers of Kh̄wrazm (according to Kashf al-astar). He has recorded traditions in al-Manṣūqib that clearly establish this point.

Al-Maulā ʿUsayn b. ʿAlī al-Kāshifī—the author of Jawāhir al-tafsīr—who according to Kashf al-ʿunwān died in 906 AH. It has been mentioned in Kashf al-astar that some of the knowledgeable have attributed this belief to him and Kashf al-astar has narrated some of his views that show his inclination towards it.

Al-Sayyid ʿAlī b. Shihāb al-Hamdānī has openly stated this in the tenth chapter of his book al-mawadda fī l-qurbān.

Al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Ḥubbānī al-Miṣrī (d. 1206 AH), as is apparent in some of his words in Isʿaf al-r̄ghibān.

The Abbasid caliph, al-Nuʿmān Li-dīn Allah Aḥmad b. al-Mustaʿīf Bi-Nur Allah. According to Kashf al-astar and Ilzām al-nuʿmān he ordered that the building of the noble cellar (sardāb) be reconstructed and a wooden window be placed in the room on top of it. It was inscribed on the window: “In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. ‘Say, “I do not ask you for any reward for it except the love of the close ones,” and whoever does a good deed, We will increase it for him in goodness. Surely, Allah is Forgiving and Grateful’ (Quran, 42:23). This was ordered to us by our master—the leader whose obedience is obligatory on all the creatures—Abū l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad al-Nuʿmān Li-dīn Allah, the commander of the faithful, the caliph of the Lord of the Worlds, whose kindness has covered the lands and his mercy and grace is prevalent in the countries. May Allah establish his affairs with continuation of success and facilitation, decorate them with help and support, make for his eternal days a limit . . . And Allah suffices for us and He is the best of those relied upon. Allah’s blessings be upon our master, the seal of the Prophets, and upon his pure family and progeny.”

Inside the room, it was also inscribed on wood and hung on the walls: “In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

Muḥammad the Messenger of Allah, Amīr al-Muʾminīn ʿAlī Walī Allah, Fātima, al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī, al-ʿUsayn b. ʿAlī, ʿAlī b. al-ʿUsayn, Muḥammad b. ʿAlī, Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad, Mūsā b. Jaʿfar, ʿAlī b. Mūsā, Muḥammad b. ʿAlī, ʿAlī b.

Muḥammad, al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī, the Riser with the truth, peace be on them. This is the work of ʿAlī b. Muḥammad who loves the family of Muḥammad, may Allah have mercy on him.”

The author of Kashf al-astar also says: If al-Nuʿmān did not believe that the cellar (sardāb) was related to the Mahdī and was the place of his birth, occultation, or miracles (and not the place of his residence during his major occultation as has been attributed to the Shias by some ignorant people, which has absolutely no basis in their books, old or new), he would not have ordered for it to be renovated or decorated. If the beliefs of the scholars of his time were contrary to this and they had rejected the Mahdī’s birth, it would have been very difficult or almost impossible for the caliph to undertake such a project. Inevitably, if there was a consensus amongst the scholars [of his time] that the Mahdī had not been born, it would be have been fairly impossible for al-Nuʿmān to do what he had done. The reason we mentioned al-Nuʿmān in this category is because of the advantages he had like his merits, science, and being enumerated amongst the traditionists. Ibn Sukayna, ibn al-Akḥḥār, ibn al-Najjār, and ibn al-Damghānī have all narrated from him.

I say: These inscriptions still exist in the noble cellar. We have seen and read them many times. Refer to the book Dalāʾil Sūmarrīʾ by Yūnus al-Shaykh Ibrāhīm al-Sūmarrīʾ, pp. 33–36 and you will find all of these in it. According to the book Nasmat al-saʿār bi dhikr man tashayyaʾa wa shaʿar, vol. 1, p. 253, it appears that al-Nuʿmān considered himself the representative of the Mahdī, peace be on him. This has also been reported from al-Dhahabī.

The author of the book Shadharat al-dhahab, Abū l-Falāḥ ʿAbd al-ʿayy b. al-ʿImād al-ʿanbalī (d. 1089 AH), has declared the birth of the Mahdī in the second section of his book, pp. 141 & 150.

Shaykh ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. Aḥmad al-Basḥāmī, who according to Yanʿabī al-mawadda (p. 401), has said in Durrat al-maʿrif, “The Mahdī is the most knowledgeable and forbearing of the people. He has a mole on his right cheek and he is from the descendants of al-ʿUsayn.” According to Yanʿabī al-mawadda, he has composed some poetry about him [these can be found in the original Arabic edition of the current book—Ed.].

Shaykh `Abd al-Karīm al-Yamānī, the author of Yanābī` al-mawadda writes on p. 466, “The majestic Shaykh, `Abd al-Karīm al-Yamānī, writes and confers his knowledge upon us . . .” He then mentions some lines of poetry composed by him about the Mahdī.

Al-Sayyid al-Nasīm whom Kashf al-astar has quoted citing Yanābī` al-mawadda.

Imdād al-dīn al-ʿanāfi: According to Kashf al-astar, some of the distinguished scholars have attributed this belief to him. The respected scholar `Abd-Allah b. Muḥammad al-Maḥḥirī in al-Riyāḥ al-ḥira fī faḥlī Bait al-Nabī wa `itratih al-ḥira. He begins this book by including all of Imam Jalāl al-dīn al-Suyūṭī’s treatise called Iyyī` al-mayyit bi-faḥlī al-Bait `alayhim al-salām, which is comprised of sixty traditions. He has extended these traditions to 151 and he writes in the last one, “From the seed of al-ʿusayn b. `Alī will be the Mahdī who will be sent in the end of times. . . The first Imam is `Alī b. Abī ḥlib, peace be on him . . . (he names each one of the Imams until he says) The eleventh Imam is his son, al-ʿasan al-`Askarī, and the twelfth is his son Muḥammad al-Qāʾim al-Mahdī. Divine texts concerning him have preceded him in the Islamic nation from the Prophet Muḥammad, Allah’s blessings be on him and his family, his ancestor `Alī b. Abī ḥlib, and from his other noble and high statured forefathers. He is the Possessor of the Sword, the Riser, the Awaited.”

The virtuous scholar, Rashīd al-dīn al-Dihlawī al-Hindī. According to the book al-Imām al-thānī `ashar, he has recorded in his book Iḥfāṭ al-maqāl, what Khajā Pārsī has said in Faḥlī al-khīṭ and has agreed with him. Shāh Walī Allah al-Dihlawī, the father of the author of al-Tuḥfa fī kitāb al-nuzha, and many others who have narrated the tradition about the Musalsalāt which we mentioned under al-Balādhurī (refer to no. 9).

Shaykh Aḥmad al-Farīqī al-Naqshbandī, known as the ‘Restorer of the Second Millennium’ (al-mujaddid fī l-alf al-thānī) as has been recorded in al-`Abqarī al-ʿisnī citing al-Makṭūb (vol. 3, letter 123).

Abī l-Walīd Muḥammad b. Shāḥna al-ʿanāfi. In his history book known as Rauḥat al-manḥūr fī akhbār al-awḥīl wa l-awḥīr, which has been published in the margins of Murāj al-dhahab ([Egypt: al-Maḥba`atu al-Azhariyya al-Miṣriyya, 1303 AH], vol. 1, p. 294). He writes: “This al-ʿasan (meaning al-ʿasan al-`Askarī, peace be on him) was granted a son, the Awaited One, the twelfth amongst them; he is called the Mahdī, the Qāʾim, the ʿujja, and Muḥammad. He was born in 255 AH.”

Shaykh Khālid al-Naqshbandī (d. 1242 AH)—the author of Farīd al-fawāʾid and Risālat al-rūbīta. He has a compilation of poems which have been published in Istanbul. He has mentioned the twelve Imams in a poem in which he praises the eighth Imam, `Alī b. Mūsā al-Riḍī, peace be on him. In one part of this poem (which is in Persian) he mentions the Mahdī and his forefathers.

Sayyid Bāqir b. Sayyid `Uthmān Bukhārī, the author of Jawāhir al-aulyāʾ, published in 1396 AH. He has expressed this meaning on pp. 31, 32, 307, 378, 471, 541, 544, and 556.

Jamāl al-dīn Khajā Aḥmad Haqqānī. Refer to Jawāhir al-aulyāʾ, p. 478.

Sayyid Widiyat b. Sayyid `Uthmān Bukhārī. Jawāhir al-aulyāʾ (p. 544) has narrated from him a supplication in Persian which comprises of the names of the twelve Imams to our Master, al-Mahdī, peace be on them.

Shaykh `Abd-Allah b. Muḥammad b. `Emir al-Shabrīwī al-Shāfiʿī, the Dean of al-Azhar University, in his book al-Itḥāf bi-ḥubb al-ashraf, has clearly declared the Imamate of the twelve Imams, peace be on them, and the birth of our Master, al-Mahdī, the twelfth Imam, peace be on him. He has also mentioned some of their merits and positions.

2. Kamāl al-dīn, vol. 2, chap. 42, p. 424, no. 1; Ghaybat al-Shaykh, pp. 234–237, no. 204, similar to it through his chain of narrators from Abī `Abd-Allah al-Muḥaḥharī, from Ḥakīma, which says: “My nephew, (Imam) Abī Muḥammad, peace be on him, called for me in Sha`bān 15, 255 AH . . .” no. 205–207 mention the same story with some variations; Yanābī` al-mawadda, chap. 79, pp. 449–451, no. 1. He has narrated this tradition through many different chains; Iḥbāt al-wāḥiyā, pp. 218–220; l-Imām al-warī, chap. 1, sect. 2; Biḥār al-anwār, vol. 51, chap. 1, no. 3.

3. Quran 28:5–6.

4. Kamāl al-dīn, vol. 2, chap. 42, p. 430, no. 5; Ghaybat al-Shaykh, p. 147; Iḥbāt al-wāḥiyā, p. 221, concerning his birth: “From a group, from Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā, from al-ʿusayn b. `Alī al-Nasībī, from Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad, from Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Sayyirī . . .,” similar to it, with the difference that after saying “Allah’s blessings be on him and his family,” he continued, “a humble servant for Allah, who was neither disobedient nor arrogant.” ; al-Kharīj wa l-jarīj, vol. 1, p. 457, no. 2; Iḥbāt al-hudūt, vol. 3, chap. 33, p. 668, no. 34–35; Kashf al-ghumma, vol. 2, pp. 498–499, under “The

Miracles of [Ibn al-Zamʿan](#)”; [Biṣṣir al-anwār](#), vol. 51, chap. 1, p. 4, no. 1; [ʿilyat al-abrār](#), vol. 2, chap. 10, p. 544; [al-Wasʿīl](#), vol. 8, chap. 59, p. 461, no. 1, which only mentions the last section of the tradition; [Muntakhab al-anwār al-muḥḥa](#), p. 160 (short version); [lʿilm al-warā](#), part 4, sect. 2, chap. 1.

[5.](#) [Kamāl al-dʿn](#), vol. 2, chap. 42, pp. 430–431, no. 6; [Biṣṣir al-anwār](#), vol. 51, chap. 1, p. 5, no. 9; [Ithbāt al-hudʿt](#), vol. 3, sect. 5, chap. 32, p. 483, no. 195.

[6.](#) A unit of weight—Ed.

[7.](#) `Aqʿqa is a sheep which is slaughtered on the occasion of the birth of a child—Ed.

[8.](#) [Kamāl al-dʿn](#), vol. 2, p. 430, no. 4; [Ithbāt al-hudʿt](#), vol. 6, chap. 32, sect. 5, p. 430, no. 194.

[9.](#) [Kifʿyat al-muḥḥa](#) (al-ʿArba`ʿn), p. 111, no. 29; [Kifʿyat al-athar](#), chap. 39, pp. 290–291, no. 4; [Kamāl al-dʿn](#), vol. 2, chap. 38, pp. 408–409, no. 7, which says: “Narrated to us al-Muʿaffar b. Jaʿfar b. al-Muʿaffar al-ʿAlawī al-Samarqandī, may Allah be satisfied with him, from Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad b. Masʿūd al-ʿAyyūshī, from his father, from Aḥmad b. `Alī b. Kulthūm, from `Alī b. Aḥmad al-Raḥḥī, from Aḥmad b. Isḥāq b. Saʿd, from Abū Muḥammad al-ʿasan b. `Alī al-ʿAskarī, peace be on them, who said, ‘All praise is . . .’”

[10.](#) [Kamāl al-dʿn](#), vol. 2, chap. 38, p. 408, no. 4; [Kifʿyat al-athar](#), chap. 39, pp. 489–490, no. 2; [Ithbāt al-hudʿt](#), vol. 3, chap. 32, sect. 5, p. 481, no. 185; [Biṣṣir al-anwār](#), vol. 51, chap. 9, p. 161, no. 13.

[11.](#) [Kamāl al-dʿn](#), vol. 2, chap. 42, p. 433, no. 13; [Ithbāt al-hudʿt](#), vol. 3, chap. 33, p. 669, no. 37.

[12.](#) Quran, 3:18.

[13.](#) [Kamāl al-dʿn](#), vol. 2, p. 38, no. 3; [Biṣṣir al-anwār](#), vol. 51, chap. 9, pp. 160–161, no. 8; [Ithbāt al-hudʿt](#), vol. 3, chap. 32, p. 481, no. 184.

[14.](#) [Tārīkh al-ʿimma](#), chap. “The Son of al-ʿasan b. `Alī al-ʿAskarī,” p. 14; [Ghaybat al-Shaykh](#), p. 223, no. 686, and p. 231, no. 197; [Ithbāt al-hudʿt](#), vol. 3, chap. 31, sect. 10, p. 430, no. 116.

I say: The book [Tārīkh al-ʿimma](#) or [Tārīkh al-Rasūl](#) or [Tawārīkh al-ʿimma](#) or [al-Mawḥid](#), is a short and concise book about the birth dates of the Messenger of Allah, [Fāḥimāt al-Zahrī](#), and the twelve Imams, Allah’s blessings be on them all. It has been written by [ibn Abū I-Thalj al-Baghdādī](#) (325 AH). His complete name is [Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. `Abd-Allah b. Ismāʿīl](#), known as [ibn Abū I-Thalj](#). [Ibn Nadīm](#) writes in [al-Fihrist](#), “He was a Shia who was inclined towards Sunnism but he was inclined more towards Shi`ism. He has narrated many traditions from Sunnis and has authored books on different topics. He was very religious, learned, and extremely pious.” His biography can be found in other biography books.

As for the aforementioned book, some believe that this is the work of [Naḥr b. `Alī al-Jahḥamī](#), because at its beginning, [ibn Abū Thalj](#) has narrated the birth dates of the Prophet, Allah’s blessings be on him and his family, the Master of the Women ([Fāḥima](#)), and the Imams up to [al-Riḥī](#), peace be on them, through his chain of narrators from [al-Naḥr](#), from (Imam) [al-Riḥī](#), peace be on him. Therefore, they have thought that the entire book was narrated from [al-Naḥr](#). The falsity of this idea becomes apparent by referring to the book itself. Moreover, [Naḥr b. `Alī](#) died during the reign of the caliph [al-Musta`ʿn](#) in 250 or 251 AH. If [Naḥr](#) had written this book about the birth dates of the Imams, peace be on them, up to our Master [al-Mahdī](#), Allah’s blessings be on him, as has been stated by [Sayyid b. ʿawḥ](#) in [Muhaj al-da`awāt](#), p. 276 where he says: “[Naḥr b. `Alī al-Jahḥamī](#) who is a reliable scholar from the opponents (al-mukhalifīn), has mentioned . . . in the book [Mawḥid al-ʿimma](#), ‘From the reasons is what has been narrated from [al-ʿasan b. `Alī al-ʿAskarī](#) when [Muḥammad b. al-ʿasan](#) was born, ‘The oppressors think . . . he named him the Hoped (al-Mu`ammal).’” Thus we must inevitably accept that he passed away after the birth of the [Mahdī](#) in 255 AH. The following story has been narrated about him: [Al-Musta`ʿn](#) asked for him to make him a judge. So he said to the Emir of Basra, “I will go back [home] so that I may ask Allah, the Exalted, for the best decision (astakhīru Allah).” He returned to his house, performed two units (rak`a) of prayers and said, “O Allah! If being with you is better for me, then take me to yourself [i.e. take my life].” He then went to sleep. When they came to wake him up, he was dead. This narration is incorrect and the person who sought him was not [al-Musta`ʿn](#). Rather, it was either [al-Muḥḥa](#) or [al-Mu`tamid](#). It is probable that [al-Naḥr](#)’s book only consisted of the births and deaths of the Imams up to Imam [Riḥī](#), peace be on him, and that [Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Faryḥbī](#)—the narrator from [Naḥr](#) and the one from whom [ibn Abū Thalj](#) has narrated through [`Utbat b. Saʿd b. Kināna](#)—has completed his book up to our Master, [al-Qa`im](#), may my father and mother be sacrificed for him.

Even with all the probabilities, attributing the book to [ibn Abū Thalj](#) will not be incorrect, because either, he has narrated it

from al-Faryḥbī who has narrated a part of it from al-Naḥr and completed the rest of it himself or he has compiled what he has narrated from al-Naḥr and al-Faryḥbī and integrated them into this book.

Anyway, the book which has been called Mawḍiʿ al-A'imma or Tarkh al-A'imma or etc., is this book which Abū I-Mufaḍḍal al-Shaibānī and others have narrated from ibn Abū Thalj. Hence, attributing the book to him is justified and so is relying upon him and regarding his book as reliable, especially when considering the fact that it has been narrated from someone like ibn Abū Thalj and Allah knows the best.

15. Kamāl al-dīn, vol. 2, chap. 42, p. 431, no. 8; Yanḥbī al-mawadda, chap. 82, p. 460; Ghaybat al-Shaykh, p. 100; Ithbāt al-hudūt, vol. 3, chap. 32, sect. 5, pp. 483–484, no. 196.

16. Kamāl al-dīn, vol. 2, chap. 42, p. 431, no. 7; Biḥār al-anwār, vol. 51, chap. 1, p. 5, no. 10; Tabḥīrat al-walī, pp. 45–46, no. 12.

I say: Her death before the death of Imam Abū Muḥammad, peace be on him, which has been mentioned in this tradition, contradicts other traditions like no. 804. We will discuss this issue under that tradition.

17. Kamāl al-dīn, vol. 2, chap. 43, p. 434, no. 1; Ghaybat al-Shaykh, pp. 229–230, no. 195; Biḥār al-anwār, vol. 51, chap. 1, p. 17, no. 24; Ithbāt al-hudūt, chap. 32, p. 506, no. 312.

18. Kamāl al-dīn, vol. 2, chap. 42, p. 432, no. 10; Ithbāt al-hudūt, vol. 3, chap. 32, p. 484, sect. 5, no. 198; Biḥār al-anwār, vol. 51, chap. 5, p. 15, no. 17.

19. `Aqḍa is a sheep which is slaughtered on the seventh day after an infant is born—Ed.

20. Kamāl al-dīn (Published by al-Islāmiyya), vol. 2, chap. 45, p. 106, no. 11; Kamāl al-dīn (Published by Maktabat al-ʿadāq), vol. 2, chap. 42, p. 432, no. 11, in this version, his saying “And he ordered that three hundred sheep be slaughtered for his `aqḍa,” is missing; Biḥār al-anwār, vol. 51, chap. 5, p. 15, no. 18; Ithbāt al-hudūt, vol. 3, chap. 32, p. 484, no. 199, in which the following section is missing: “And he ordered that . . .”

I say: Perhaps his saying, “his epithet is Ja`far” in this tradition and in the fifth tradition from the 30th chapter of Kamāl al-dīn (vol. 1, p. 318): “his epithet is derived from his (paternal) uncle,” refers to his uncle and the uncle of his forefathers, Ja`far al-ḥayyī, the martyr. This was done to enliven his name and to honor his majestic position. It does not refer to his uncle, Ja`far b. `Alī b. Muḥammad. In the tradition narrated from `Aqḍ, the servant (narrated in Kamāl al-dīn, vol. 2, chap. 43, p. 474, no. 25), it has been mentioned: “he was given the epithet Abū I-Qasim, others have said Abū I-Ja`far.”

21. Kamāl al-dīn, vol. 2, chap. 42, pp. 433–434, no. 16; Biḥār al-anwār, vol. 51, chap. 5, p. 16, no. 21; Ithbāt al-hudūt, vol. 3, chap. 32, sect. 5, p. 484, no. 202.

22. Kamāl al-dīn (Published by Maktabat al-ʿadāq), vol. 2, chap. 43, p. 441, no. 11; Kamāl al-dīn (Published by al-Islāmiyya) vol. 2, chap. 47, pp. 114–115, no. 12.

It is worth mentioning that the variations and differences in the numbers of the chapters and traditions in the two versions of Kamāl al-dīn are insignificant except that in one version the researcher has in some places merged two chapters as one and has done the same to some of the traditions (or has thought they were really one) and in the other version the researcher has done the opposite. References from both copies have been mentioned to prevent errors.

As for ‘Nasīm’, it is clear in this tradition as well as what has been narrated in Kamāl al-dīn, vol. 2, chap. 42, p. 430, no. 5 (Maktabat al-ʿadāq) and vol. 2, chap. 45, p. 104, no. 5 (al-Islāmiyya) that she is a woman. But in Ghaybat al-Shaykh (chap. “His Birth, Peace be on Him,” p. 139), Muḥammad b. Ya`qūb reports directly from Nasīm and states that he is a male-servant. I believe that ‘Nasīm’ refers to a female servant because she and Mḥriya—another woman—have both narrated in another tradition (no. 788) what we mentioned that when he was born, he knelt down and prayed . . . (to the end of the tradition). Obviously, only women-servants were permitted to witness his birth. This fact is not refuted by the argument that these women do not explicitly state that they have actually witnessed the moment of his birth. Perhaps, both have testified to what was clearly known to them through the testimony of other women. Surely, this is against the literal meaning of the tradition; so ponder on it.

In Ghaybat al-Shaykh, “ten nights after his birth” has been recorded instead of “one night after his birth.”

Al-Kharāj, vol. 2, p. 692, which says: “From Ibrāhīm al-Karkhī, from Nasīm the servant of Abū Muḥammad . . . I went to see him ten days after his birth . . .”

Ithbāt al-waḥīyya, p. 198: “From `Allān, from Nasīm the slave of Abū Muḥammad . . . one night after his birth . . .”

I say: Such differences in the traditions do not weaken the essential substance of the tradition which all the narrators and

sources are unanimous about. Such differences occur because only the main concepts of some of them have been narrated and a word-by-word recount has not been used. Those who have good understanding of traditions are aware of such differences. Therefore, they take the common and definite parts from them—which are agreed upon by all the tradition, or those in which the narrators are more reliable and trustworthy, or those that are preferable according to the intellectual preferences mentioned in *dirʿya* books. A tradition cannot be rejected merely on account of it having minor differences with another.

Biʿr al-anwār, vol. 52, chap. 18, p. 30, no. 24; Kashf al-ghumma, vol. 2, p. 500; Muntakhab al-anwār al-muʿa, p. 160; al-Wasʿil, vol. 8, chap. 59, p. 461, no. 1; ʿilyat al-abr, vol. 2, chap. 10, p. 544

23. Kamāl al-dʿn, vol. 2, chap. 42, p. 433, no. 14; lthbt al-hudʿt, vol. 3, chap. 32, p. 484, no. 201; Biʿr al-anwār, vol. 51, chap. 1, p. 16, no. 20.

24. Ghaybat al-Shaykh, pp. 271–273, no. 237; Biʿr al-anwār, vol. 52, chap. 18, pp. 16–17, no. 14; Tabʿirat al-wal, pp. 164 & 166, no. 69; lthbt al-hudʿt, vol. 3, chap. 31, p. 415, no. 55 (short version). He has recorded its beginning and its end in chap. 32, p. 509, no. 325.

I say: This tradition proves that Abū Sahl al-Naubakhtī believed that his birth occurred in the year 256 AH. The tradition narrated from Abū Hurrīn is also like this (see Kamāl al-dʿn, vol. 2, chap. 42, p. 432, no. 9).

25. The traditions differ concerning the fate of the Imam’s mother, peace be on him. Some state that she died after Imam Abū Muḥammad al-ʿAskarī in the house of Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. ʿamzat b. al-ʿasan b. ʿUbaid-Allah b. al-Abbās b. Amr al-Muʿminīn ʿAlī b. Abū ʿlib, peace be on him—who has been described as a reliable person and as a source in traditions, who was true in his beliefs and had written a book—while other traditions mention that she asked Imam Abū Muḥammad, peace be on him, to pray for her death before his. The Imam obliged and his prayers were accepted. In others (like the current tradition), it has been said that she was present when the Imam, peace be on him, passed away. Yet, other traditions say that she migrated to the Holy city of Mecca during the lifetime of Imam al-ʿAskarī, peace be on him, along with her son al-ʿujja, peace be on him, on the instructions of Imam Abū Muḥammad, peace be on him. Most of these traditions indicate that she lived after the death of the Imam, peace be on him, which is more probable and more preferable. The proof for this fact lies in her grave which is behind the grave of Imam Abū Muḥammad, peace be on him.

Nevertheless, such differences will not impact our purpose because our reliance in this book is based on traditions that are mutawʿtir or non-singular, not on singular narrations (al-ʿid). The traditions support each other in what we have agreed on. It is worth mentioning that such secondary differences also exist in the biographies of the Prophets, other Imams, and historical figures. The details of such important incidents—regardless of their essential subjects—cannot be the cause of skepticism in the existence of those people, their obvious conditions, and famous historical incidents related to them. This is in addition to the fact that the conditions prevalent during the lifetime of Imam ʿasan al-ʿAskarī, peace be on him, and after his death demanded that he, peace be on him, concealed such secondary issues.

26. lthbt al-waʿiyya, pp. 194–195; ʿuyūn al-muʿjizāt, p. 138, similar to it from Aḥmad b. Maʿqala with the difference that it does not mention the migration of the Master of Time along with Imam Abū Muḥammad’s mother to Mecca. Its wording is: “Thereafter, he handed over the Great Name (al-ism al-ʿam), the inheritances, and the weapon to the Qʿim, the Master, peace be on him; and the mother of Imam Abū Muḥammad left for Mecca.”

I say: The aforementioned Aḥmad b. Maʿqala in ʿuyūn al-muʿjizāt is probably Aḥmad b. ʿAbd-Allah b. ʿs b. Maʿqalat b. Saʿd al-Ashʿarī al-Qummī, who has been attributed to his more famous grandfather, as can be inferred from many chains of narrators in the traditions. It is also possible that he is one of the cousins of Aḥmad b. Isḥāq b. ʿAbd-Allah b. Saʿd b. Mʿlik b. al-ʿawa al-Ashʿarī Abū ʿAlī al-Qummī, who has narrated from Imams ʿAlī al-Naqī and Abū l-ʿasan. He was very close to (Imam) Abū Muḥammad, peace be on him, and had also seen the Master of Time, peace be on him. Al-Najshī writes about Aḥmad b. Abd-Allah: “He was a reliable person and has narrated a book from Imam ʿAlī al-Naqī, peace be on him.” According to this, he was contemporary with his cousin Aḥmad b. Isḥāq, and had been alive during the life of (Imam) Abū Muḥammad, peace be on him, and was still alive after 260 AH.

The probability of Aḥmad b. ʿAbd-Allah and Aḥmad b. Isḥāq being the same person, is baseless except for the fact that they were both descendants of Saʿd and Aḥmad b. Isḥāq’s grandfather had the same name as Aḥmad b. ʿAbd-Allah’s father. It is also probable that ʿIsḥāq has been dropped from the lineage of Aḥmad b. ʿAbd-Allah and ʿs b. Maʿqala has been dropped from the lineage of Aḥmad b. Isḥāq. If so, the lineage would be as follows: Aḥmad b. Isḥāq b. ʿAbd-

Allah b. `Ad b. Ma`qalat b. Sa`d b. Malik b. al-A`wa al-Ash`ar. Although this probability is weak, but perhaps some evidence can be found by referring to the biographies of all the men of this family, just as it is also likely that A`mad b. Is`aq is the nephew of A`mad b. `Abd-Allah.

With all this said, considering them as two different people is still closer to the truth. Yes, the likelihood of A`mad b. Ma`qala being A`mad b. `Abd-Allah b. `Ad b. Ma`qala is also high.

Ithb`at al-hud`at, vol. 3, chap. 32, sect. 56, p. 579, no. 750, which is a shortened version narrated from al-Mas`ud.

27. Kif`yat al-muhtad` (al-Arba`n), p. 104, no. 28; al-Arba`n known as Kashf al-`aqq, p. 8, no. 1 and pp. 136–137, no. 22; Ithb`at al-hud`at, vol. 3, chap. 32, sect. 44, p. 569, no. 680.

28. Al-Muf`d, may Allah be satisfied with him, writes in al-Fu` al-`ashara f` l-ghayba, p. 9: “The fact that (Imam) al-`asan (al-`Askar`s) son has been born has been established in the most emphatic manner by which the lineage of the people are proved. For, lineage is established by the testimony of a mid-wife, other women who are usually present during birth, and those who assist them in it. Also, the acknowledgement of the father will suffice and if required the testimony of two men from the Muslims upon the confession of the man that the child is his. Indeed, information from a group of religious people, scholars, pious, ascetic, and highly knowledgeable people has been narrated from Imam al-`asan b. `Al` who acknowledged the birth of the Mahd`, peace be on him, informed them of his existence, and gave them news about his Imamate after him. Some saw his child (in his house), others saw an adolescent or a young man. After his father, he ordered his Shia`s about what they should or shouldn`t do and answered their questions . . . I have mentioned the names of a group of people who I have already described their conditions, who were trusted by (Imam) al-`asan b. `Al`, peace be on him. They were very close to him and were known for serving him and fulfilling (his orders). I have also proved what they have narrated from him about the existence of his son, them seeing him after his father (passed away), and them hearing the divine news about his Imamate. These can be found in my books specially the two famous ones known as al-Irsh`d f` ma`rifat `ujaj-Allah `al` l-`ib`d and al-`im`ma wa l-ghayba. Because of what I have mentioned in those books, there is no need to prove them here again.”

29. Kam` al-d`n, vol. 2, chap. 41, pp. 417–423, no. 1; Ghaybat al-Shaykh, pp. 208–214, no. 178; Bi`r al-anw`r, vol. 51, chap. 1, pp. 6–10, no. 12, citing Ghaybat al-Shaykh and pp. 10–11, no. 13, citing Kam` al-d`n; Ithb`at al-hud`at, vol. 3, chap. 29, sect. 2, pp. 363–365, no. 17 and chap. 31, sect. 1, pp. 408–409, no. 37 (short version).

30. Al-Nakhkh`s means slave-trader—Ed.

Section Two

His miracles during the lifetime of his father, peace be on them both

Comprised of ten traditions

808. Ghaybat al-Shaykh¹: Ja`far b. Mu`ammad b. Malik, from Mu`ammad b. Ja`far b. `Abd-Allah, from Ab` Nu`aim Mu`ammad b. A`mad al-An`r` who said:

A group of Mufawwi`a and Muqassira² sent K`mil b. Ibr`h`m al-Madan` to (Imam) Ab` Mu`ammad, peace be on him. K`mil said, “I thought to myself that ‘I will ask him [if it is true] that no one will enter Paradise except those who know what I know and say what I say.’ When I went to my master (Imam) Ab` Mu`ammad, I saw him wearing a soft white dress. I thought, ‘Allah’s friend and His Proof wears soft dresses while he orders us to be charitable to the brothers and restrains us from wearing such dresses.’ He said smilingly, ‘O K`mil!’ Then he pulled up his sleeve and lo! He was wearing a rough black woolen

dress [under the white one]. Then he said, ‘This is for Allah and that is for you.’ I greeted him and sat down before a doorway which was covered with a curtain.

A strong breeze came and uncovered one side of the doorway. [There,] I saw young boy that looked like he was a part of the moon and barely four years old or thereabout. [The boy] said to me, ‘O Kamil b. Ibrahim!’ I shivered at this address and was inspired to reply, ‘Yes, O my master!’ He said, ‘You have come to Allah’s friend, His Proof, and His Gateway to ask him [if it is true] that no one will enter Paradise except those who know what you know and say what you say?’ I replied, ‘Yes, by Allah!’ He continued, ‘If this is the case, then many few will enter it. By Allah! A group called al-*aqdiyya* will enter it.’

I asked, ‘O my master! Who are they?’ He replied, ‘A group who on account of their love for `Alī, testify to his rights, but do not know his rights and his excellences.’ He, Allah’s blessings be on him, was silent for a while and then continued, ‘You have also come to ask about the Mufawwiḥa. They have lied. Rather, our hearts are the containers of Allah’s Will. When He wills [to do something] then so do we. Allah says,

“And you don’t will anything except what Allah wills” (Quran Surah Takwir 81:29).’

Then, the curtain went back to where it was and I couldn’t raise it. (Imam) Abū Muḥammad looked at me with a smile and said, ‘O Kamil! Why are you still sitting here now that the Proof after me has informed you of what you desired?’ I got up and left and didn’t see him again.”

Abū Na`īm said, “I met Kamil and asked him about this tradition, and he narrated it for me.”

Al-Shaykh (al-ḥafṣī) says, “Aḥmad b. `Alī al-Rāzī has narrated this tradition from Muḥammad b. `Alī, from `Alī b. `Abd-Allah b. `Ḥidh al-Rāzī, from al-ḥasan b. Wajīd al-Naḥḥābī who said, “I heard Abū Nu`aim Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Anḥarī . . . (and he mentions the same things).”

809. Kamāl al-dīn: Narrated to us Muḥammad b. `Alī b. Muḥammad b. ḥatīm al-Naufalī—known as al-Kirmānī—from Abū I-`Abbās Aḥmad b. `ḥṣī al-Washshī al-Baghdādī, from Aḥmad b. ḥir al-Qummī, from Muḥammad b. Baḥr b. Sahl al-Shaibānī, from Aḥmad b. Masrūr, from Sa`d b. `Abd-Allah al-Qummī who said:

I was very fond of collecting books comprised of subtle and complex sciences. I tried hard to uncover the realities in them that seemed correct to me and I memorized their ambiguous and obscure sections. I kept to myself the problematic and deviant [concepts] that I found in them. I firmly believed in the Shi) religion and I kept away from peace and security by quarreling and arguing [with the opponents] and having enmity against them and saying bad things to them.

I would expose the shortcomings of the opponents and I would mention the faults of their Imams and I used to uncover [the defects] of their leaders. This continued until I was afflicted with an enemy who would put forward very strong arguments, showed the greatest enmity, argued the most, asked the most

outrageous questions, and was the most steadfast in falsehood.

One day when I was arguing with him, he said, “O Sa`d! Woe on you and your companions! You heretics insult the Muhajjir^۴ and the An^۴ by slanderous remarks. You deny the guardianship and Imamate of [Ab^۴ Bakr and `Umar] which was authorized by the Messenger of Allah. This truthful [i.e. Ab^۴ Bakr] is superior to all the companions due to his precedence in belief.

Don't you know that the Messenger of Allah took [Ab^۴ Bakr] along with himself to the cave because he knew that he would be the Caliph after him and that he would be the leader in interpreting [the Quran] and that the reins of the umma would be in his hands? He would be relied on to mend the differences, compensate the defeats, close the cracks [in the nation], establish the laws, and dispatch the armies to conquer the lands of the polytheists.

Just as [the Prophet] worried for his own prophethood he also worried for [Ab^۴ Bakr's] caliphate. A fugitive who is fleeing from evil and goes into hiding does not intend to ask someone else for help. Thus, when the Messenger [of Allah] went to the cave—while he did not expect anyone to help him—it is clear that his intention was to take Ab^۴ Bakr to the cave like we explained. On the other hand, he ordered `Al^۴ to sleep in his bed, because he did not care much about him and did not bother about him and because he knew that even if `Al^۴ was killed, there would be others who could replace him.”

(Sa`d continued), I answered a number of his questions but he refuted all of them. He then said, “O Sa`d! I have another argument that will cripple you heretics. You believe that the Truthful [i.e. Ab^۴ Bakr], who was pure from doubt and skepticism, and F^۴r^۴q [i.e. `Umar], who was the protector of Islam, were both hypocrites. You cite the incident of the Night of `Aqaba⁴ to prove your point. Alright, tell me, did Ab^۴ Bakr and `Umar accept Islam willingly or out of coercion?” I talked my way out of this question because I feared being tied down by it.

If I said that they had willingly accepted Islam, then he would say that hypocrisy can only occur and grow in the heart, only when the winds of subjugation and defeat start blowing [i.e. someone becomes a hypocrite if they are forced to accept Islam], and when extreme and burdensome difficulties force someone to utter what he does not believe in his heart.

As Allah, the Exalted, says,

“But when they saw Our might, they said, ‘We believe in Allah alone and we deny what we used to associate with Him.’ But their faith had no benefit for them once they had seen Our might.”⁵

And if I had said that they believed out of coercion, then he would have answered that there were no swords there to frighten them into [accepting Islam].

I managed to wriggle out of this situation but I was swelling with rage and my heart was crumbling with grief. I had written in a scroll more than forty such difficult questions—for which I could find no answer to.

I intended to ask these questions from Aḥmad b. Isḥāq—the most learned person of our city—who was also one of the companions of Imam Abū Muḥammad, peace be on him. He had left on a journey to visit our master at Ṣamarrā and I went after him.

After I caught up with him and we greeted each other he asked me, “You have come to meet me [here!]. Is everything ok?” I replied, “The love of seeing you and the habit of asking questions [have caused me to come here].” He answered, “Then we both have the same problem. The urge to meet our master Abū Muḥammad, peace be on him, has displaced me. I intend to ask him some problematic questions about interpretations (ta’wīl) and some difficulties about revelations (tanzīl). So, don’t miss the blessed opportunity of being a companion [in this journey]. [If you come], you will stand on the shores of a sea whose marvels will not end and its wonders will not finish. That [sea] is our Imam.”

We reached Ṣamarrā’ and were soon at the door of our masters [residence]. We sought permission to enter, which was granted. Aḥmad b. Isḥāq was carrying a leather sack on his shoulder which he had hidden under a ḥabarian cloak. It contained 160 purses filled with dirhams and dinars. Every bag had its owners seal on it. I can only compare our masters face—whose light had covered us— with the full moon.

A child was sitting on his right lap, who resembled [the planet] Jupiter in creation and features. His front hair was exactly parted from the middle and curled to the sides just like a line with two curves on each side. In front of our master, there was a golden pomegranate, which was shining with its amazing shape and rare precious stones studded in it. One of the chiefs of Basra had gifted it to him.

He had a pen in his hand and whenever he wanted to write something on a white paper, the child would hold his fingers [and prevent him]. Our master would roll the pomegranate in front of him to keep the child busy with it so that he could write what he wanted. We saluted him and he replied with utmost kindness and beckoned us to seat.

When he finished writing, Aḥmad brought out the leather sack from under his cloak and placed it in front of him. (Imam) al-Ḥadī looked at the child and said, “O My Son! Break the seals of the gifts of your followers and friends.” The child responded, “O my master! Is it permissible that I extend a pure hand towards impure gifts and unclean wealth whose ḥarām and ḥalāl are mixed together?” Then, my master said, “O ibn Isḥāq! Bring out what is in the leather sack so that he may separate the ḥalāl from the ḥarām.” When ibn Isḥāq removed the first purse, the child remarked, “This belongs to so and so who lives in such and such district of Qum.

It contains sixty-two dinars. Forty-five of those are from the money of a small room which its owner inherited from his father and sold. Fourteen dinars are from the money of nine clothes and three are from the rental money of shops.” Our master said, “My son! You have spoken the truth. Now, tell this man which ones are ḥarām and which ones are ḥalāl.” The child continued, “Find the dinar which was minted in [the city of] Riyy. Its date is so and so and the inscriptions on one side have been partly

erased.

Also the gold piece from [the city of] Qum which weighs a quarter of a dinar. They are Qarim because their owner had given 1.25 mans⁶ of wool to his neighbor to weave for him. A thief stole the wool from the weaver and the weaver informed their owner but the owner didn't believe the weaver and instead, took 1.5 mans of softer wool from him and made a cloth out of them and sold it. This dinar and the piece of gold were paid for it." When the purse was opened, there was a letter in it which had the name of the person who was described and the number of dinars written on it—exactly as mentioned by the child. The aforementioned dinar and piece of gold were also in it.

Ibn Is'haq removed another purse. The child said, "This belongs to so and so person who lives in such and such place of Qum. It has fifty dinars and it is not permissible for us to touch them." [Ibn Is'haq] said, "Why not?!" He replied, "Because it is from the revenue of wheat belonging to a landlord who has cheated on the peasant [who has planted them]."

When they were dividing the shares, he filled the containers completely for himself but left some of it empty when separating [the wheat] for the peasant." Our master remarked, "My Son, you have spoken the truth." Then, he said, "O Ahmad b. Is'haq! Take back all these purses and return them to their owners or will that they be returned to them because we do not need them. Give us the cloth from the old woman." Ahmad b. Is'haq said, "I left that cloth behind in my bag and I had completely forgotten about it."

When Ahmad b. Is'haq went to fetch the cloth, our master Abū Mu'ammad looked at me and said, "O Sa'd! Why have you come here?" I replied, "Ahmad b. Is'haq had encouraged me to meet [you], our master." He said, "What about those questions that you wanted to ask him?" I replied, "Their status hasn't changed yet."

He remarked, "Ask them from the apple of my eye" and pointed towards the child. The child said, "Ask whatever you want." I said, "O my master and the son of my master! It has been narrated to us from you [i.e. your forefathers] that the Messenger of Allah, Allah's blessings be on him and his family, had given Am'r al-Mu'minin, peace be on him, the right to divorce his [i.e. the Prophet's] wives.

Therefore, on the day of the Battle of Jamal, he sent a messenger to 'isha and said to her, 'You have caused riots amongst the Muslims by your mischievous acts. You have brought your children [i.e. the Muslims] to the ponds of death by your ignorance. If you retreat I will leave you alone but if you don't, I will divorce you.' How can this be whilst the death of the Messenger of Allah, Allah's blessings be on him and his family, had already caused his women's divorce [from him]?"

He questioned, "What is the meaning of divorce?" I replied, "Clearing the path [to remarry]." He said, "If the Messenger of Allah's death, Allah's blessings be on him and his family, was their divorce and the path was cleared for his wives, then why weren't they allowed to remarry?" I said, "Because Allah, Blessed and Exalted be He, had prohibited them from marrying anybody else." He said, "Why should it

be so whilst [the Prophet's] death had cleared their path [for remarriage]?"

I said, "O Master! Explain for me the meaning of the divorce that the Messenger of Allah, Allah's blessings be on him and his family, had transferred its right to Amr al-Mu'minin, peace be on him." He replied, "Allah, Holy be His Name, raised the status of the Prophet's wives, Allah's blessings be on him and his family, and designated them as the mothers [of the believers]. The Messenger of Allah, Allah's blessings be on him and his family, said to `Al, 'O Ab I-`asan! They will have this honor as long as they obey Allah. After my death, if any of them disobeys Allah by rebelling against you, then divorce her and strip her of the honor of being a mother of the believers."

I said, "Please inform me about the 'evident indecency' (fa'ishatun mubayyina) that if a woman commits during the period of her `idda, the husband has the right to expel her from his house?" He replied, "Evident indecency' refers to lesbianism, not adultery."

For, if a woman commits adultery and is punished for it [in accordance with Islamic law], then any man who desires to marry her should not refrain from doing so on the grounds that she has been punished. But if a woman commits lesbianism, her punishment is stoning to death. Being stoned to death is absolute disgrace and whosoever Allah has ordered to be stoned, He has truly disgraced him/her. And whoever Allah has disgraced, He has distanced him/her and whoever Allah has distanced, no one has the right to go near him/her."

I said, "Please inform me about what Allah ordered His Prophet Moses, peace be on him, (when He said), 'So, remove your shoes [for] you are in the holy valley of `uw.'⁸ The scholars of both sects believe that [his shoes] were made from the skin of a dead animal⁹." He replied, "Whoever believes this has slandered Moses and has thought him to be ignorant regarding his own prophethood. [If it is as they say], then it was either permissible for Moses to pray in those shoes or it wasn't."

If it was permissible, then he would also have been allowed to wear them in that valley. Even if that valley was holy and pure, it couldn't have been holier and purer than the prayers. [On the other hand], if prayers were not allowed in those shoes, then it can be concluded that Moses was not aware about what is permissible and what is prohibited; and that he did not know what things are permissible to wear in prayers and what things are prohibited. Having this opinion [about Moses] is equal to disbelief (kufr)."

I pleaded, "O my master! Please inform me about its interpretation!" He said, "Moses invoked his Lord in the holy valley and said, 'O Master! My love is purely for You and I have cleansed my heart of all other [affections].' He [said this whilst he] loved his family very much. Then, Allah, the Exalted, said to him, 'Remove your shoes,' meaning, 'Remove the love of your family from your heart if your love is exclusively for Me and the love of others is washed from your heart.'"

I said, "O Son of Allah's Messenger! What is the interpretation of 'Kf-H-Y-`Ayn-d'¹⁰?" He said, "These letters refer to the unseen news (anb' al-ghayb) which Allah informed His servant, Zachariah. He then narrated them to Muhammad, Allah's blessings be on him and his family. This is the story:

Once, Zachariah asked Allah, his Lord, to teach him the names of the five [holy people]. So Gabriel descended and taught them to him.

Whenever Zachariah uttered the names of Muḥammad, `Alī, Fāṭima, and `Asan, his worries would disappear, but when he mentioned the name of al-Ḥusayn, he would choke on tears and would nearly perish. One day, he enquired, ‘O Lord! Why is it that when I mention [the first] four, I become calm, but when I mention al-Ḥusayn, my tears flow and I sob.’ So Allah, the Exalted, told him his story and said, “Kāf-Hā-Yā-`Ayn-Ḥād.” Kāf refers to Karbala, Hā refers to ḥāḍik al-`itra (the perishing of the progeny), Yā refers to Yazīd, the one who oppressed al-Ḥusayn, peace be on him, `Ayn refers to `Atashuh (his thirst), Ḥād refers to Ḥabruh (his patience).’

When Zachariah heard this, he did not emerge from his prayer-place for three days and did not allow anyone to meet him. He kept crying and wailing and would say, ‘O Lord! Will You make the best of your creatures mourn his son? O Lord! Will you inflict on him such hardships? O Lord! Will you make `Alī and Fāṭima wear the robe of this tragedy? O Lord! Will you allow such a great catastrophe to befall them?’

Afterwards he would say, ‘O Allah! Grant me a son who will be the apple of my eye when I grow old and make him my inheritor and my heir. Make him for me what al-Ḥusayn [was to his grandfather]. Make me extremely attached to him and then afflict me with his grief just as You will afflict your beloved Muḥammad with the sorrow of his son.’ Thus, Allah granted him John and afflicted him with his sorrow. John was born in the sixth month of pregnancy as was the case for al-Ḥusayn, peace be on him. [John’s] story is very long.”

I asked, “Why were the people not given the right to select their own Imam?” He replied, “A righteous [Imam] or a corrupt one?” I answered, “Righteous.” He asked, “Is it possible that a corrupt leader is selected [by the people instead of a righteous one] since no one really knows if another person is really righteous in his heart or corrupt?” I answered, “Yes, it is.” He continued, “This is the reason. I will use another argument that will be acceptable to your intellect.

Consider the Messengers who Allah, the Exalted, chose and sent down for them [divine] texts and assisted by revelation and infallibility. Those who were prominent amongst their people and had the ability to make a better choice than them. [Prophets] like Moses and Jesus, peace be on them. Is it possible—even with their high intellects and great knowledge—that they [wrongly] choose a hypocrite who they think is a true believer?” I said, “No.”

He continued, “But Moses who was the one with whom Allah spoke (Kalām Allah), who had high intellect and great knowledge, and who revelations descended upon, selected seventy learned people and military commanders from his people for the appointment [he had with] his Lord—in whose faith and sincerity he had no doubts.

But nevertheless, he had selected the hypocrites. Allah, the Almighty says, ‘And Moses chose from his people, seventy men for Our appointment¹¹—to where He says—we will never believe in you until we

evidently see our Lord.’¹² We observe that even someone who Allah has selected as a Prophet, selects the corrupt instead of the righteous whilst he thinks that he [has selected] the righteous and not the corrupt.

Thus, the right of choosing [an Imam] only belongs to the One who knows what is concealed in the chests, resides in the thoughts, and is aware of the secrets. Therefore, once we see that a Prophet selects corrupt people whilst he intends to select righteous ones, then the selection made by the Muhajirīn and Anṣār has no value.

Then our master said, “O Sa`d! When your enemy said, ‘The Messenger of Allah, Allah's blessings be on him and his family, took along the chosen one from this nation with him to the cave because he knew that he would be the caliph after him, the leader in interpreting [the Quran], the holder of the reins of the nation, the one who would be relied on to mend the differences, compensate the defeats, close the cracks [in the nation], establish the laws, and dispatch the armies to conquer the lands of the polytheists; and Just as [the Prophet] was worried about [his] prophethood he was also worried for [Abū Bakr's] caliphate.

A fugitive who is fleeing from evil and goes into hiding does not intend to ask someone else for help. On the other hand, he ordered `Alī to sleep in his bed because he did not care much about him and did not bother about him and because he knew that even if `Alī was killed, there would be others who could replace him,’ you should have refuted him by saying, ‘Didn’t the Messenger of Allah, Allah's blessings be on him and his family, say that the caliphate will last for thirty years after me?’

And according to your beliefs, these [thirty years] are equal to the years of the caliphate of the four Rightly-Guided caliphs (i.e. Abū Bakr, `Umar, `Uthmān, and `Alī, peace be on him).’ Then he wouldn’t have had any choice but to agree. Then you would have told him, ‘What’s your opinion about this: Just as the Messenger of Allah knew that after him Abū Bakr would be the caliph, he also knew that the caliphs after him would be `Umar, `Uthmān, and then `Alī?’ Again, he would have had no choice but to agree.

Then you would have told him, ‘Thus, it should have been obligatory for the Messenger of Allah, Allah's blessings be on him and his family, to take all of them with him to the cave and worry about all of them just as he worried for Abū Bakr. He shouldn’t have reduced their stature by leaving them back and only taking Abū Bakr with him.’

“When your enemy asked you about the Truthful [i.e. Abū Bakr] and Fāriq [i.e. `Umar] and whether they had accepted Islam willingly or through coercion, why didn’t you give the answer, ‘They accepted Islam because of greed.’ These two used to sit with the Jews and [the Jews] used to inform them about the things written in the Torah and the other ancient Divine Scriptures. They had told them the story of Muḥammad and his fate—Allah's blessings be on him and his family.

The Jews had mentioned that Muḥammad would dominate the Arabs just like Nebuchadnezzar (Bukht

al-Naḥr) who had overpowered the Israelites. He would undoubtedly gain victory over the Arabs just like Nebuchadnezzar who gained victory over the Israelites. The only difference is that [Nebuchadnezzar] was a liar in his claim that he was a Prophet.

Consequently, [Abū Bakr and `Umar] both came to the Holy Prophet and assisted him regarding the testimony of “there is no God but Allah” and pledged allegiance with him while they had the greed that when his government was established, he would appoint them as the governor of a province.

When they lost hope [in attaining this goal]—they and a few other hypocrites like them—covered their faces and went up the mountain pass (al-`aqaba) to kill him. But Allah, the Exalted, repelled their foul actions and they retreated with rage without achieving any of their goals. `Ala and Zubayr also pledged allegiance to `Alī while they too had greed in becoming governors. But once their hopes diminished, they broke their allegiance and rebelled against him. Therefore, Allah, the Exalted, knocked them down the same way that He had knocked down other allegiance-breakers like them.”

At this point, our master, al-Ḥasan b. `Alī al-Ḥadī stood up along with the child to perform the prayers. I left and went in search of Aḥmad b. Isḥāq. He came to me crying. I asked him, “What has delayed you and what has made you cry?” He replied, “I have lost the cloth that my master had asked for.” I said to him, “It is not your fault. Go and tell our master.” So he hurriedly went inside and emerged after a while smiling and invoking blessings on Muḥammad and his family. I asked him, “What happened?” He replied, “The cloth was spread under our master’s feet and he was praying on it.”

We thanked Allah, the Exalted, for this event. We visited our master for a number of days but did not see his son. When the time arrived to bid farewell, I and Aḥmad b. Isḥāq went to him accompanied by two elderly men from our city. Aḥmad b. Isḥāq stood in front of him and said, “O Son of Allah’s Messenger! The time to bid you farewell has come and this has saddened us to no end. We ask Allah, the Exalted, to send His blessings upon al-Muḥafaf, your grandfather; al-Murtaḥḥ, your father; the Master of all Women, your mother; the Masters of the youths of Paradise, your uncle and your father; and the immaculate Imams after them, who are your fathers.

We [also ask Allah] to send his blessings on you and your son. We hope that Allah elevates your status and disgraces your enemy and does not make this our last meeting with you.” When he said these words our master became saddened to such an extent that he started crying and tears rolled from his eyes. He said, “O son of Isḥāq! Do not over-distress yourself by your invocations because you are going to meet Allah in this very journey.” On hearing this, Aḥmad b. Isḥāq fainted. When he regained consciousness, he pleaded, “I ask you by Allah and by the sanctity of your ancestors that you give me a worn out dress [worn by you] so that I use it as a burial-shroud.

Our master put his hand under the carpet and brought out thirteen dirhams and said, “Take these and don’t spend more than this amount for yourself. What you have asked for will not be neglected. Allah, Blessed and Exalted be He, does not waste the rewards of the good doers.”

After we left our master, we were approximately three kilometers short of ʿUluwʿn when Aʿmad b. Isʿāq caught such a high fever that he lost all hope of life. On reaching ʿUluwʿn, we stopped at an inn and Aʿmad b. Isʿāq summoned one of his fellow townsmen who dwelled there. He then said, “Go and leave me alone tonight.” Thus, we all left him and went to our sleeping quarters.

When the night passed and it was near dawn, I started worrying. I opened my eyes and I saw Kʿfir, our master Abū Muḥammad’s servant, saying, “May Allah grant you goodness for this mourning and recompense your calamity through his beloved [successor]. We have finished bathing and shrouding your companion.

Get up and bury him. He was one of the most honorable in the eyes of your master.” He then disappeared from before us. Wailing and crying, we reached his body, paid tribute to him, and buried him. May Allah have mercy on him.”

810. Faḥl b. Shādhʿn’s al-Ghayba¹³: Narrated to us Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. Fʿris al-Nʿsʿbʿrʿ:

When the governor, ʿAmr b. ʿAuf—who was a very staunch enemy of the Ahl al-Bait and was fond of killing their followers—decided to kill me, I was informed about it and I was extremely frightened. I bid farewell to my family and friends and went to Abū Muḥammad’s house, peace be on him, to bid him goodbye as well because I intended to flee [the city]. When I went to him, I saw a boy sitting next to him whose face was shining like the full moon. I was amazed by his light and brightness and nearly forgot my fears and fleeing.

He said to me, “O Ibrāhīm! Don’t flee. Surely, Allah, Blessed and Exalted be He, will soon relieve you of his evil.” This statement increased my astonishment about him. I said to (Imam) Abū Muḥammad, peace be on him, “O Master! May Allah sacrifice me for you! Who is this child who informed me about what is in my heart?” He replied, “He is my son and my successor after me. He is the one who will have a long occultation and will reappear after the earth has been filled with injustice and unfairness.

Then, he will fill it with justice and fairness.” I asked him about his name. He said, “His name and epithet is the same as that of the Messenger of Allah, Allah’s blessings be on him and his family. No one is allowed to say his name or his epithet until Allah reveals his government and authority. O Ibrāhīm! Hide whatever you have seen and heard from us today—except from those who are worthy [of being informed].”

I invoked blessings on both of them and their forefathers and emerged while I was awaiting for Allah’s Grace to come to my assistance and was confident about what I heard from the Master, peace be on him. Later, my uncle ʿAlī b. Fʿris gave me the good news that al-Muʿtamid had sent his brother Abū Aʿmad to kill ʿAmr b. ʿAuf and Abū Aʿmad had got hold of him on that day and had chopped him into pieces. And all Praise is for Allah the Lord of the worlds.

The traditions with the following numbers also show the above concept: 787, 788, 793, 797, 802, 804,

and 814.

1. Ghaybat al-Shaykh, pp. 246–248, no. 216; Dal‘il al-im‘ama, pp. 273–274, through his chain of narrators from Ab‘ Na‘em; al-Khar‘ij, vol. 1, pp. 458–459, no. 4; Ithb‘t al-wa‘iyya (Mansh‘ur‘t al-Ra‘‘‘ publications), p. 222, from Ja‘far b. Mu‘ammad b. M‘alik; Bi‘‘‘r al-anw‘r, vol. 25, pp. 336–337, no. 16, and vol. 52, chap. 18, pp. 50–51, no. 35. The first section of this tradition is in in vol. 50, chap. 3, p. 253, no. 7, and vol. 67, chap. 51, p. 117, no. 5, and vol. 76, chap. 109, p. 302, no. 12; Tab‘irat al-wal‘, pp. 59–61, no. 26; Kashf al-ghumma, vol. 2, p. 499; Ithb‘t al-hud‘t, vol. 3, chap. 31, p. 415, no. 54, and chap. 32, p. 508, no. 320, and chap. 33, p. 683, no. 91; Yan‘b‘‘ al-mawadda, chap. 82, p. 461, which says: “From K‘mil b. Ibr‘h‘m al-Madan‘ who said, ‘I went to Imam Ab‘ Mu‘ammad al-‘asan al-‘Askar‘ and there was a curtain hanging on the doorway. The wind moved one side of the curtain and I saw a boy who was like the moon. (Imam) Ab‘ Mu‘ammad said, “O K‘mil! This [is the] Divine Proof after me. He will inform you about what you [had come to] ask.””

2. These are two non-Shia sects—Ed.

3. Kam‘ al-d‘n, vol. 2, chap. 43, pp. 454–465, no. 21; Dal‘il al-im‘ama, chap. “Those who saw him during the lifetime of his father,” pp. 274–281, no. 2, which says: “From Ab‘ I-Q‘sim ‘Abd al-B‘q‘ b. Yazd‘d b. ‘Abd-Allah al-Bazz‘z, from Ab‘ Mu‘ammad ‘Abd-Allah b. Mu‘ammad al-Tha‘‘lib‘ on Friday Rajab 1, 370 AH, from Ab‘ ‘Al‘ A‘mad b. Mu‘ammad b. Ya‘y‘ al-‘A‘‘‘r, from Sa‘d b. ‘Abd-Allah b. Ab‘ Khalaf al-Qumm‘ (to where he says), ‘We visited our master for some days but did not see the boy, peace be on him.’”; al-Khar‘ij, vol. 1, pp. 481–484, no. 22 (short version); Tab‘irat al-wal‘, pp. 93–108, no. 48; al-‘itij‘, vol. 2, pp. 461–467; Bi‘‘‘r al-anw‘r, vol. 52, chap. 19, pp. 78–89, no. 1; ‘ilyat al-abr‘r, vol. 2, pp. 557–568, al-Manhaj, chap. 15, no. 3; Ithb‘t al-hud‘t, vol. 1, chap. 7, p. 380, no. 106, and vol. 7, chap. 33, p. 347, no. 121 & 122 (short version); Ilz‘m al-n‘‘ib, vol. 1, pp. 342–351; Miky‘ al-mak‘rim, vol. 1, chap. 2, pp. 16–24, no. 14.

Some of our contemporary scholars have considered this tradition’s chain of narrators as weak and others have regarded its contents as unreliable. They have even deemed it as fabricated! Since we have already spoken too much in refutation of these claims and have explained the truth and investigated this tradition and its like in an exclusive treatise called al-Nuq‘d al-lat‘fa, we will refrain from further discussing it for the sake of conciseness. God willing, we will mention the entire treatise in the third volume of this book.

Muntakhab al-anw‘r al-mu‘‘‘a, pp. 145–175; Ta‘w‘l al-‘y‘t al-‘‘hira, pp. 292–294, which is a short version, under the first verse from the sura of Maryam; Yan‘b‘‘ al-mawadda, chap. 81, p. 459; al-Th‘qib f‘ l-man‘qib, chap. 15, sect. 2, pp. 585–589, no. 534/1.

4. After the Battle of Tab‘k the hypocrites planned to kill the Prophet—while he was crossing a mountain-pass—but failed. This is referred to as the ‘incident of the Night of ‘Aqaba’—Ed.

5. Quran 40:84–85.

6. A unit of mass—Ed.

7. ‘idda is the period of time after a woman’s husband dies or is divorced from her and during that period her meeting and speaking with non-ma‘rams must be extremely limited—Ed.

8. Quran 20:12.

9. Meaning an animal that had died naturally or was not slaughtered in accordance with Islamic law—Ed.

10. Quran 19:1.

11. Quran 7:155.

12. Quran 2:55.

13. Kif‘yat al-muhtad‘ (al-‘Arba‘‘n), p. 122, under no. 32; Kashf al-‘‘‘q (al-‘Arba‘‘n), p. 32, no. 7.

Section Three

Those who saw him while his father was still alive, peace be on them both

Comprised of twenty traditions

811. Kamāl al-dīn¹: Narrated to us Muḥammad b. `Alī Mājilawayh, may Allah be satisfied with him, from Muḥammad b. Yaʿyā al-`Aḥḥār, from Ja`far b. Muḥammad b. Mālik al-Fazrī, from Mu`wiyat b. ʿAkam, Muḥammad b. Ayyūb b. Nāḥ, and Muḥammad b. `Uthmān al-`Amrī, may Allah be satisfied with him, whom all said:

We were forty people in Abū Muḥammad al-ʿasan b. `Alī's house, peace be on him, when he showed us [his son] and said, "This is your Imam after me and my caliph upon you. Obey him and do not scatter after me regarding your religion otherwise you will perish. Know that you will not see him after this day." After we left, barely a few days had gone by when Abū Muḥammad, peace be on him, passed away.

812. Al-ʿas's Ghayba²: From (Hibat-Allah b. Muḥammad, from a person that Ahmad b. `Alī b. Nāḥ Abū I-`Abbās al-Sairī has narrated) and Ja`far b. Muḥammad b. Mālik al-Fazrī al-Bazzāz, from a group of Shias which include: `Alī b. Bilāl, Ahmad b. Hilāl, Muḥammad b. Mu`wiyat b. ʿAkam, and al-ʿasan b. Ayyūb b. Nāḥ (who narrated a long tradition) and all said:

We were forty people who had gathered around Abū Muḥammad al-ʿasan b. `Alī, peace be on him, and were asking him about the Proof after him. `Uthmān b. Sa`d al-`Amrī stood up and pleaded, "O Son of Allah's Messenger! I intend to ask you about an affair which you have more knowledge about than me." He replied, "Sit down, O `Uthmān!" Then, enraged, he stood up to go out and ordered, "No one shall leave." None of us left until some time had passed.

He then called `Uthmān—who stood up on his feet—and said, "Shall I inform you about the reason you came here?" They replied, "Yes, O Son of Allah's Messenger." He said, "You have come to ask me about the Divine Proof after me." They replied in the affirmative. Suddenly a boy [appeared] who was like a part of the moon and of all the people, he resembled Imam Abū Muḥammad the most.

He said, "This is your Imam after me and my caliph upon you. Obey him and don't scatter after me lest you perish in your religion. Beware! You will not see him after this day until he completes his age. Accept from `Uthmān what he will say, obey his orders, and accept his saying, because he is the successor of your Imam and the affair is in his hands . . ."

813. Kamāl al-dīn³: `Alī b. al-ʿasan b. al-Faraj al-Mu`adhhdhin, may Allah be satisfied with him, narrated to us from Muḥammad b. al-ʿasan al-Karkhī, from Abū Ḥarīrī—who is a man from our companions—who said: "I saw the Master of the Time and his face was shining like the full moon . . . (to

the end of the tradition)”

814. Kam⁴ al-d⁴n4: Ab⁴ lib al-Mu⁴affar b. Ja`far b. al-Mu⁴affar al-`Alaw⁴ al-Samarqand⁴, may Allah be satisfied with him, from Ja`far b. Mu⁴ammad b. Mas`⁴d, from his father Mu⁴ammad b. Mas`⁴d al-`Ayy⁴sh⁴, from ⁴dam b. Mu⁴ammad al-Balkh⁴, from `Al⁴ b. al-⁴asan [al-⁴usayn] b. H⁴r⁴n al-Daqq⁴q, from Ja`far b. Mu⁴ammad b. `Abd-Allah b. al-Q⁴sim b. Ibr⁴h⁴m b. al-Ashtar, from Ya`q⁴b b. Manq⁴sh [Manf⁴s], who said:

I went to see Ab⁴ Mu⁴ammad al-⁴asan b. `Al⁴, peace be on him, while he was sitting on a bench in the house. On his right was a room with a drawn curtain. I asked him, “O my master! Who is the master of this affair?” He replied, “Raise the curtain.” When I raised the curtain, a boy emerged who was about five hand-spans tall and about ten or eight years old.

He had a wide forehead, white face, glittering eyes, and small hands and he had bent his knees. There was a mole on his right cheek and he had a forelock. He went and sat on Ab⁴ Mu⁴ammad’s thigh, peace be on him, who said to me, “This is your Master.” He then leapt up and [the Imam] said to him, “Go inside until the appointed time.” He entered the room while I was [still] looking at him. [The Imam, peace be on him] said, “O Ya`q⁴b! See who is inside the room.” I went inside the room but found no one there!

815. Al-K⁴f⁴5: `Al⁴ b. Mu⁴ammad, from Ja`far b. Mu⁴ammad al-K⁴f⁴, from Ja`far b. Mu⁴ammad al-Makf⁴f, from `Amr al-Ahw⁴z⁴ who said: “Ab⁴ Mu⁴ammad, peace be on him, showed me his son and said, ‘This is your master after me.’”

816. Al-K⁴f⁴6: `Al⁴ b. Mu⁴ammad, from al-⁴usayn and Mu⁴ammad—the sons of `Al⁴ b. Ibr⁴h⁴m—from Mu⁴ammad b. `Al⁴ b. `Abd-al-Ra⁴m⁴n al-`Abd⁴, a slave of Qays, from ⁴au’ b. `Al⁴ al-`lj⁴, from a Persian man who he named, who said:

I went to S⁴marr⁴’ and stayed beside the door of Imam Ab⁴ Mu⁴ammad’s house and he called me inside. I entered and greeted him and he asked, “What has brought you [here]?” I replied, “The desire to serve you.” He ordered me to be the doorkeeper. So I stayed in the house along with the servants and also [had the duty of] buying their needs from the market and when there were men in the house I would enter without permission.

One day, I went to him while he was in the men’s quarters and I heard some movement in the room. He suddenly called out to me, “Stay in your place and don’t move.” I didn’t dare to enter or go out. A slave-maid came out and with her was a covered thing. He then called out to me and said, “Come in,” and I went in. He called out to the slave-maid and she returned to him. He then said to her, “Uncover what you have with you.”

She removed the veil [which was covering] a white handsome boy. He uncovered his stomach and there was hair from his chest to his navel but it was green, not black. He said, “This is your master.” He then

ordered her [to take him away] and she took him away. After this, I did not see him until Abū Muḥammad passed away.

817. Al-Kaḥf 7: `Alī b. Muḥammad, from Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl b. Mūsā b. Jaʿfar—who was a very old man from the descendants of the Messenger of Allah, Allah's blessings be on him and his family, in Iraq—who said: “I saw him between the two mosques, while he, peace be on him, was a young boy.”

818. Al-Kaḥf 8: Muḥammad b. Yaʿyā, from al-ʿUsayn b. Rizq-Allah Abū `Abd-Allah, from Mūsā b. Muḥammad b. al-Qasim b. ʿAmzat b. Mūsā b. Jaʿfar, from ʿAqama—(Imam) Muḥammad b. `Alī's daughter and the aunt of [the Mahdī's] father—who said she had seen him in the night of his birth and also after that.

819. Al-Kaḥf 9: Muḥammad b. Yaʿyā, from al-ʿAsan b. `Alī al-Nasībī, from Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. `Abd-Allah b. Mūsā b. Jaʿfar, from Abū Naṣr ʿArf—the servant—[who said] he had seen him, peace be on him.

820. Al-Kaḥf 10: `Alī b. Muḥammad from Fatma—the slave of al-Rizq [al-Zurqī]—who said: “I heard Abū `Alī b. Muḥammad mention that he had seen him and had described his height.”

The traditions with the following numbers also prove the above concept: 786–788, 796–797, 802, 804, and 808–810.

1. Kamāl al-dīn, vol. 2, chap. 43, p. 435, no. 2; Yanāb` al-mawadda, chap. 82, p. 460, to where he says, “we left”; Biḥār al-anwār, vol. 52, chap. 18, pp. 25–26, no. 19, which says, “Abū Muḥammad al-ʿAsan b. `Alī, peace be on him, showed us his son”; l'ilm al-warā, fourth rukn, part 2, chap. 2, sect. 3; Tabʿirat al-walā, pp. 48–49, no. 16.

2. Ghaybat al-Shaykh, p. 357, no. 319; Biḥār al-anwār, vol. 51, chap. 16, pp. 346–347, no. 1; Tabʿirat al-walā, pp. 183–185, no. 76; l'itḥāt al-hudūd, vol. 3, chap. 31, pp. 415–416, no. 56, which is its beginning, and chap. 32, p. 511, no. 337, which is its end.

3. Kamāl al-dīn, vol. 2, chap. 43, p. 434, no. 1; Biḥār al-anwār, vol. 52, chap. 18, p. 25, no. 18; l'ilm al-warā, fourth rukn, part 2, chap. 1, sect. 3.

4. Kamāl al-dīn, vol. 2, chap. 43, pp. 436–437, no. 5; Yanāb` al-mawadda, chap. 82, p. 461, similar to it from Ya`qūb; Biḥār al-anwār, vol. 52, chap. 18, p. 25, no. 17; l'ilm al-warā, fourth rukn, part 2, chap. 2, sect. 2.

5. Al-Kaḥf, vol. 1, p. 328, no. 3, and vol. 1, p. 332, no. 12; l'ilm al-warā, fourth rukn, part 2, chap. 2, sect. 3; al-Irshād, p. 349; Ghaybat al-Shaykh, p. 234, no. 203; Yanāb` al-mawadda, chap. 82, p. 461; Biḥār al-anwār, vol. 52, chap. 18, p. 60, no. 48; Tabʿirat al-walā, pp. 50–51, no. 19, and p. 275, no. 111.

6. Al-Kaḥf, vol. 1, p. 329, no. 6, and a shortened version on p. 332, no. 14, and a longer one on pp. 514–515, no. 2; Kamāl al-dīn, vol. 2, chap. 43, pp. 435–436, no. 4; Ghaybat al-Shaykh, pp. 233–234, no. 202; Yanāb` al-mawadda, chap. 82, p. 461 (short version); Tabʿirat al-walā, pp. 51–52, no. 20, and pp. 276–277, no. 115; Biḥār al-anwār, vol. 52, chap. 18, pp. 26–27, no. 21; Taqrīb al-ma`rif, pp. 184–185.

7. Al-Kaḥf, vol. 1, p. 330, no. 2; al-Irshād, chap. “Dhikr man raʿ al-Imam,” p. 350, with the difference that he said, “I saw the son of al-ʿAsan b. `Alī b. Muḥammad, peace be on him, between the two mosques while he was a boy”; Yanāb` al-mawadda, chap. 82, p. 461; Ghaybat al-Shaykh, p. 268, no. 230; Biḥār al-anwār, vol. 52, chap. 18, p. 13, no. 8; Kashf al-ghumma, vol. 2, p. 449; l'ilm al-warā, fourth rukn, part 2, chap. 1, sect. 2; Tabʿirat al-walā, p. 55, no. 22; al-ʿIrq al-mustaqim, vol. 2, chap. 11, sect. 4, p. 240.

I say: Perhaps the two mosques in the tradition refers to the two mosques of Mecca and Medina.

8. Al-Kaḥf, vol. 1, pp. 330–331, no. 3. His saying, “The aunt of his father” refers to the paternal aunt of Imam Abū

Muḥammad—al-Ḥujja’s father—peace be on him; al-Irshād, chap. “Dhikr man ra’i l-Imam,” p. 376, with the difference that he said: “. . . and she is the paternal aunt of al-Ḥasan who had seen the Qi’im . . .” and it mentions “al-Ḥasan b. Rizq-Allah.”

[9.](#) Al-Kāfi, vol. 1, p. 332, no. 13; al-Irshād, chap. “Dhikr man ra’i l-Imam al-Thani `Ashar,” p. 351; Biḥār al-anwār, vol. 52, chap. 18, pp. 60–61, no. 49; al-Ḥirāq al-mustaqim, vol. 2, chap. 11, sect. 4, p. 241.

[10.](#) Al-Kāfi, vol. 1, p. 331, no. 5; al-Irshād, chap. “Dhikr man ra’i l-Imam al-Thani `Ashar,” p. 350; Yanābi` al-mawadda, chap. 82, p. 461, which says, “From my father, `Alī b. Muḥahhar, who said, ‘I saw the son of Abī Muḥammad and he was very majestic’”; Tabḥīrat al-walī fī man ra’i l-Qi’im al-Mahdī, p. 55, no. 23, and p. 273, no. 103; Biḥār al-anwār, vol. 52, chap. 18, p. 14, no. 11; Ghaybat al-Shaykh, p. 269, no. 233; Kashf al-ghumma, vol. 2, p. 450; al-Ḥirāq al-mustaqim, vol. 2, chap. 11, sect. 4, p. 240.

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