

Section Thirty-One

The traditions that indicate he will live a very long life

Comprised of 363 traditions

641. Kamāl al-dīn¹: Narrated to us Muḥammad b. `Alī b. Bashshar al-Qazwīnī, from Abū I-Faraj al-Muḥaffar b. Aḥmad, from Muḥammad b. Ja`far al-Kāfī, from Muḥammad b. Ismā`īl al-Barmakī, from al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. Ḥalīq al-Bazzāz, from (Imam) al-Ḥasan b. `Alī al-`Askarī, peace be on him, who said:

My son is the one who will rise after me. He is the one in whom the customs of the Prophets will occur by his long-life and occultation. [This will continue] until the people's hearts harden due to the prolonged duration. Then, no one will remain steadfast in believing in him except he who Allah, Mighty and Majestic be He, has written faith in his heart and assisted with a Holy Spirit from Himself.²

642. Kamāl al-dīn³: `Alī b. Aḥmad al-Daqqāq and Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Shaibānī, from Muḥammad b. Abū `Abd-Allah al-Kāfī, from Mūsā b. `Imrān al-Nakha`ī, from his uncle al-Ḥusayn b. Yazīd al-Naufalī, from Ḥamzat b. Ḥumrān, from his father Ḥumrān b. A`yun, from Sa`d b. Jubair who said: "I heard the Master of the Worshippers, `Alī b. al-Ḥusayn, peace be on him, say, 'In the Qi'im there is a resemblance to Noah and that is long-life.'"

643. Ghaybat al-Nu`mān⁴: `Abd al-Wāhid b. `Abd-Allah b. Yūnus, from Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Rab`ī al-Zuhrī, from Aḥmad b. `Alī al-Ḥimyarī, from al-Ḥasan b. Ayyūb, from `Abd al-Karīm b. `Amr, from Muḥammad b. al-Fuḥayl, from Ḥammād b. `Abd al-Karīm al-Jallīb who said: "The Qi'im was mentioned in the presence of (Imam) Abū `Abd-Allah, peace be on him, and he said, 'When he appears, people will say [astonishingly], 'How is this possible while his bones had decomposed years ago!'"

644. Al-Kharīj⁵: From Imam al-Ḥasan al-`Askarī, peace be on him, who said [the following] to Aḥmad b. Isḥāq who had come to ask him about his successor. When [the Imam] saw him, he himself began to

answer before being asked:

His example is like that of Khiṣr and his example is like that of Dhī l-Qarnain. Khiṣr drank from the elixir of life and he will live and not die until the trumpet is blown (nufikha fī l-ḥayāt). He is present during the [Hajj] season every year. He stands in `Arafa and says Amen to the prayers of the believers. Through him, Allah will dispel the loneliness of our Qa'im during his occultation and he will accompany [the Mahdi] during his solitude. He will continue to live in the world despite being concealed from the eyes.

I say: His similarity to Dhī l-Qarnain is about him reaching the East and the West and possibly other aspects like occultation and longevity.

The following traditions also prove the above point: 497, 498, 535–539, 547, 549, 551–557, 559, 561, 562, 564, 574, 575, 580, 589, 599, 600, 602–605, 607–610, 612, 613, 618, 619, 623–626, 632, 645–650, 669, and 686. We can add to these all the traditions mentioned in chapters one and two—on account of the traditions that mention that surely the earth will not become empty of a Divine Proof and an Imam, and on account of definite rational arguments mentioned in dialectical books—because all of these indicate that the Imams and the Divine Proofs after the Messenger of Allah, Allah's blessings be on him and his family, are limited to twelve. The first is `Alī the last is the Mahdī and the ninth from the progeny of al-ḥusayn is the Qa'im and he is the son of Imam al-ḥasan al-`Askari, peace be on them all. Thus, the total number of such traditions will be 363 because all of these traditions indicate he has survived and has been alive from his birth until now. And Allah has the power to do what He pleases and He is the Wise, the Knowledgeable.

1. Kamāl al-dīn, vol. 2, chap. 46, p. 524, no. 4; Biḥār al-anwār, vol.51, chap. 13, p. 224, no. 11.

2. Some Sunnis have considered his longevity as improbable to the extent that they have even condemned the Shia belief about his survival. As you are aware, in scientific matters and religious subjects, improbability has no value after proofs have been established, and definite arguments based on intellect and narration have been demonstrated. This [belief] is a kind of uncertainty about Allah's Power. It is based on our habit of opposing what we are used to and not on logic. Every day and night—in fact every hour and second—we agree to and witness thousands of normal phenomena and occurrences in the world of creation, even in the small creatures and the things that cannot be seen except with a microscope, that are more amazing and greater than the longevity of a man who has safe limbs and strength, who knows the rules of keeping himself healthy and well, and acts upon them. His longevity is not as strange as his creation, formation, and transfer from the realm of the loin (ʿalim al-aḥḥad) to the realm of the womb and then to this world. Using this reasoning in His Holy book, Allah refutes those who deny and view the hereafter as improbable. He, the Exalted, says, "O people! If you have doubts about resurrection, then surely We have created you from soil then from sperm . . ." (Quran 22:5). He also says, "Did not man see that We have created him from a sperm . . ." (Quran 36:77). In yet another place, He says, "And they say, 'When we become bones and powder . . .'" (Quran 17:49). This is in addition to the longevity of some of the Prophets like al-Khiṣr, Noah, Jesus, and etc., peace be on them all. How can the belief about the Mahdī's longevity be a sign of ignorance whilst the Holy Quran has stated the possibility of similar occurrences: "Had he [i.e. Jonas] not been from the glorifying ones, he would have certainly remained in [the whale's] stomach until the Day they are raised" (Quran 37:143–144). Regarding the Prophet Noah, peace be on him, the Holy Quran says, "So, he stayed amongst his people for a thousand years save fifty" (Quran 29:14). Regarding Jesus, it says, "And there will not remain even one of the followers of the Book (ahl al-kitāb) except that they will most certainly believe in him before his death" (Quran 4:159). It also informs us about Satan and that he has been given time until the appointed hour—a fact that is neither denied by any of the Muslims nor considered improbable. Muslim has recorded in his Ṣaḥīḥ, vol. 2, chap. "Ibn ʿayyūd," al-Tirmidhī in his

Sunan, vol. 2, and Abū Dāwūd in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, chap. “The narration of Ibn ‘Uyayn,” have recorded numerous traditions about Ibn ‘Uyayn and Ibn ‘Uyayn and that the Holy Prophet, Allah’s blessings be on him and his family, considered it probable that he was al-Dajjīl who will emerge in the end of times. Ibn Māja has recorded in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* (part 2) in the chapters on fitnas, under the fitna of al-Dajjīl and the emergence of ‘Īsā, Abū Dāwūd has mentioned in vol. 2 of his Sunan from the book al-Maḥīm in the chapter on the narration of al-Jassāsa, Muslim in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* in the chapter on the Appearance of al-Dajjīl and his staying on earth from the narration of Tamīm al-Dārī—which clearly and explicitly mentions that al-Dajjīl was alive during the time of the Prophet, Allah’s blessings be upon him and his family, and that he will reappear in the end of times. If belief in the longevity of someone is a sign of ignorance, then why are none of the aforementioned scholars attributed with ignorance, whilst they have narrated many traditions in their books and *Ṣaḥīḥs* about the longevity of al-Dajjīl? How can someone be regarded as ignorant because he believes in the Mahdī’s longevity whilst the Holy Prophet, Allah’s blessings be on him and his family, has considered this permissible for al-Dajjīl, the enemy of Allah?!

To sum it up, once it is shown there have lived people who have had long lives, there remains no reason for being amazed and surprised, let alone considering it improbable or believing it to be impossible for others to have long lives too. Sayyid b. ‘Uwāys, may Allah have mercy on him, writes in sect. 79 of his book *Kashf al-Ma‘ajja* the story of his debate with some Sunnis: “If a person comes and says, ‘I can walk on water in Baghdad,’ people will gather to witness him thinking that perhaps he may be able to carry it off. If he does so successfully, they will indeed be surprised at his feat. Now, if a second man comes before they have dispersed and also claims to walk on water, their amazement will certainly be less than the first one. The second one too pulls it off successfully. When some of those present disperse, their amazement will surely have been reduced. If a third person comes and makes the same claim, only a few people will wait to see him perform the feat. If he does it successfully, the amazement will definitely diminish. Finally, if a fourth person comes and makes the same claim, no one will wait to see him walk on water and [no one] will be amazed at his feat. The same applies to the Mahdī, peace be on him, because you [Sunnis] narrate that [the Prophet] Idrīs is alive and present in the sky from his era until now. You have also narrated that Khīr has been alive from the time of Moses, peace be on him, or even before him until now. You also believe that Jesus is alive and in the sky and will return to earth along with the Mahdī. These are three human beings who have lived long lives and no one is amazed at their longevity. Then, why can’t there be a person from the descendants of Muḥammad b. ‘Abd-Allah, Allah’s blessings be on him and his family, who follows their example as a sign of Allah, Mighty and Majestic be He, in his nation with his longevity? Indeed, you have mentioned and narrated that he will fill the earth with fairness and justice just as it will be filled with unfairness and injustice. If you ponder, you will verify that your acknowledgement and testimony that he will fill the earth’s east, west, far, and near with justice and fairness, is more amazing than his long survival and a greater honor conferred by Allah, Mighty be His Majesty, on His friends. You have also testified that the great Prophet, Jesus, son of Mary, peace be on him, will perform prayers behind him, will accompany him, and will help him in his wars and battles. This is an even greater position than the long-life you are considering improbable.”

Al-‘Allāma Sibḥī b. al-Jauzī writes in *Tadhkirat al-khawṣ*, p. 377: “Most Shias believe that the Successor, the Proof (al-khalaf al-‘ujjā), is present, alive, and being given sustenance. They put forward arguments to show he is alive, some of which are: There are many people whose lives have been elongated like al-Khīr and Ilyās and no one knows their age. Every year, they meet and . . . It has been mentioned in the Torah that Dhī I-Qarnain lived for three thousand years but the Muslims believe that it was one thousand and five hundred years. The [Shias] also narrate from Muḥammad b. Isḥāq the names of a large number of people who have been granted long lives. They have given a detailed presentation about the probability of him surviving since his occultation until now and that there is nothing extraordinary about his long-life.”

Al-‘Allāma al-Kanjī al-Shāfi‘ī argues about his longevity through the long-lives of Jesus, Khīr, and Ilyās and also the survival of al-Dajjīl and Iblīs. For the longevity of al-Dajjīl, he has mentioned the lengthy tradition Muslim has recorded in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* about al-Jassāsa as a reason of al-Dajjīl’s longevity (al-Bayḥī, p. 25).

The Old Testament contains the names of quite a few people who had long-lives and has mentioned their stories in the Book of Genesis, as per the Hebrew, Caledonian, and Greek translation into Arabic (Beirut: 1870):

Chap. 5, Verse 5: “Adam lived for a total of 930 years and died.”

Verse 11: “Enosh lived for a total of 905 years and died.”

Verse 14: “Kenan lived for a total of 910 years and died.”

Verse 17: "Mahalalel lived for a total of 895 years and died."

Verse 20: "Jared lived for a total of 962 years and died."

Verse 23: "Enoch lived for 365 years."

Verse 27: "Methuselah lived for 969 years and died."

Verse 31: "Lamech lived for 777 years and died."

Chap. 9, Verse 29: "Noah lived for 950 years and died."

Chap. 11, Verses 10–17: "These are Shem's descendants; when Shem was 100, Arpachshad was born to him, two years after the flood and, after Arpachshad's birth Shem lived five hundred years, getting sons and daughters. Arpachshad got Shelah at thirty-five and lived 403 years after Shelah's birth, getting sons and daughters. At thirty, Shelah got Eber and he lived 403 years after Eber's birth, getting sons and daughters. Eber at thirty-four got Peleg and lived 403 years after Peleg's birth, getting sons and daughters.

In this chapter, more people with long lives have been discussed other than those that we have mentioned. Here, for the sake of conciseness, we will only mention some of their names: Peleg, Reu, Serug, Nahor, and Terah.

In chap. Twenty-five, Verse 7, it has been mentioned that Abraham lived 175 years and in Verse 17, it is recorded that Ishmael lived for 137 years. These are some of the names that have been recorded in the Old Testament from those who have had long lives. This is proof for the Jews and the Christians.

Al-Karajuk writes in Kanz al-faw'id in the chapter called "Al-Burhān `alā `umr al-imām al-Zamān": "The people of all religions are unanimous on the possibility of longevity." After mentioning some names from the Old Testament, he says: "Islamic [books] too, contain similar contents. A single Muslim scholar cannot be found who opposes this or believes in its falsity. Rather, they have consensus on the possibility of longevity like what we mentioned." He has also recorded similar things from the books of the Zoroastrians, Hindus, Buddhists, and etc. Whoever desires to study more about those who had long lives must refer to the following books: Bi`ān al-anwār, al-Mu`ammir by Abū `atīm al-Sajistānī, Kamāl al-dīn, Kanz al-faw'id in the treatise called "Al-Burhān `alā `umr al-imām al-Zamān." In this treatise, he has mentioned a group of those who had long lives and has thoroughly discussed the many reasons that prove longevity.

This is in addition to what has been proved in biology, anatomy, and pharmacology about the possibility of longevity when the laws of health and hygiene are observed with utmost care. The reason for a human's death is not because he has lived eighty, ninety, or whatever years. Rather, death is caused by the factors that prevent the continuation of life . . . Further explanation on this topic can be found in our book al-Immat wa l-mahdawiyyat.

[3.](#) Kamāl al-dīn, vol. 1, chap. 31, p. 322, no. 5; Bi`ān al-anwār, vol. 51, chap. 13, p. 217, no. 5; al-Kharāj wa l-jarāj, vol. 2, p. 965; Ithbāt al-hudūt, vol. 6, chap. 32, p. 399, no. 25.

[4.](#) Ghaybat al-Nu`mān, chap. 10, p. 155, no. 14; Bi`ān al-anwār, vol. 51, chap. 13, p. 225, under the 13th tradition with a slight variation; Ithbāt al-hudūt, vol. 7, chap. 32, sect. 27, pp. 66–67, no. 467.

[5.](#) Al-Kharāj wa l-jarāj, vol. 3, p. 1174; Kamāl al-dīn, vol. 2, chap. 38, p. 390, no. 4. He has narrated it from Imam al-Riḍā, peace be on him, with differences in the narrator(s) and slight variations in the wording; Bi`ān al-anwār, vol. 52, chap. 23, p. 152, no. 3. He has also narrated it from Imam al-Riḍā, peace be on him, in vol. 13, chap. 10, p. 299, no. 17; Muntakhab al-anwār al-muḥḥaḍḍa, p. 40, from Imam al-ḡasan al-`Askarī, peace be on him.

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