

Section Three

His ambassadors (sufar³) and deputies (nuww³) during the Minor Occultation

Comprised of twenty-seven traditions¹

863. Ghaybat al-Shaykh²: A group from Ab³ Mu³ammad H³ar³n b. M³is³ informed me from Ab³ `Al³ Mu³ammad b. Hamm³m al-Isk³af³, from `Abd-Allah b. Ja`far al-`imyar³, from A³mad b. Is³q b. Sa`d al-Qumm³ who said:

One day I went to see Imam Ab³ I-`asan `Al³ b. Mu³ammad, Allah’s blessings be on him. I said, “My Master! Sometimes I am present and at other times I am absent. It is not always feasible for me to contact you even when I am present; So, whose word should we accept and whose command should we obey?” He replied, “This is Ab³ `Amr, the reliable, the trustworthy. Whatever he says to you, he is narrating from me and whatever he is conveying to you, he is conveying from me.”

After (Imam) Ab³ I-`asan passed away—one day—I went to his son Ab³ Mu³ammad al-`asan al-`Askar³, peace be on him, and repeated what I had said to his father. He replied, “This is Ab³ `Amr, the reliable, the trustworthy. He was deemed reliable by the one who passed [away] and I deem him trustworthy during my life and death. Whatever he says to you, he is narrating from me and whatever he conveys to you, he is conveying from me.”

Ab³ Mu³ammad H³ar³n narrates from Ab³ `Al³, from Ab³ I-`Abbas al-`imyar³ that “We used to mention this saying and describe the majestic position of Ab³ `Amr.”

864. Ghaybat al-Shaykh³: A group from Ab³ Mu³ammad H³ar³n informed us from Mu³ammad b. Hamm³m, from `Abd-Allah b. Ja`far who said:

After (Imam) Ab³ Mu³ammad, peace be on him, passed away, we went to perform Hajj one year. I went to A³mad b. Is³q at Baghdad and saw Ab³ `Amr with him. I said, “Verily, we regard this Shaykh—and I pointed to A³mad b. Is³q—as reliable and approved. He has narrated such and such things to us about you,” and I repeated what was mentioned earlier regarding the excellence of Ab³ `Amr and his position.

I continued, “Now, you are someone whose word and truthfulness cannot be doubted. So I ask you for the sake of Allah and the two Imams who endorsed your reliability, have you seen the son of Abū Muḥammad who is the Master of the Time?” He cried and said, “[I will tell you] if you promise not to disclose this to anybody while I am alive.” I agreed and he said, “Indeed, I have seen him, peace be on him, and his neck is like this—indicating that it is nice shaped and perfect.” I enquired, “What is his name?” He replied, “You have been forbidden [from asking] this.”

865. Ghaybat al-Shaykh⁴: Aḥmad b. `Alī b. Nū`ayn Abū I-`Abbās al-Sairī, from Abū Naḥr `Abd-Allah b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad known as ibn Barniyyat al-Katib, from some of the noble Shia traditionists, from Abū Muḥammad al-`Abbās b. Aḥmad al-ḥāḥigh, from al-ḥusayn b. Aḥmad al-Khaḥb, from Muḥammad b. Ismā`īl and `Alī b. `Abd-Allah al-ḥasaniyyīn who both said:

We went to see (Imam) Abū Muḥammad al-ḥasan, peace be on him, at Sāmarrā` and with him were a group of his friends and followers. After some time, Badr, his servant, entered and said, “My Master! There is a group of disheveled and dust-covered people at the door.” He said to them, “These are our Shias from Yemen.” (The narration is long and it continues until the Imam says to Badr,) “Go and call `Uthmān b. Sa`d al-`Amrī.” `Uthmān entered after a short time and our Master Abū Muḥammad, peace be on him, said to him, “O `Uthmān! Be steadfast because you are the representative and the reliable trustee upon Allah’s wealth. Take from these Yemenis what they have brought of their wealth . . .”

(The tradition continues to where they said), we all said together, “O our Master! By Allah, `Uthmān is one of your best Shias and you have increased our knowledge regarding his position in serving you. He is your representative and your trustee upon the wealth of Allah, the Exalted.” He replied, “Yes. Testify before me that `Uthmān b. Sa`d al-`Amrī is my representative and his son, Muḥammad, is the representative of my son, your Mahdī.”

866. Ghaybat al-Shaykh⁵: From him (meaning Aḥmad b. `Alī b. Nū`ayn), from Abū Naḥr Hibat-Allah b. Aḥmad al-Katib, the son of the daughter of Abū Ja`far al-`Amrī—may Allah sanctify his soul and satisfy him—from his teachers that

When (Imam) al-ḥasan b. `Alī died, `Uthmān b. Sa`d—may Allah sanctify his soul and satisfy him—came for his ritual bath and took care of his shrouding, embalment, and preparing his grave. Apparently, he was appointed for all these things which cannot be denied or disputed except at the cost of denying the reality of things in all their apparentness.

The signed letters (tauqīḥ) of the Master of the Affair which comprised of orders and prohibitions and also answers, were delivered through `Uthmān b. Sa`d and his son Abū Ja`far Muḥammad b. `Uthmān, to his Shias and the special companions of his father (Imam) Abū Muḥammad, peace be on him.

[The letters] were written with the same handwriting as the ones which were delivered during the lifetime

of [Imam] al-ḥasan, peace be on him. The Shias never doubted their credibility until `Uthmān b. Sa`d—may Allah have mercy on him and be satisfied with him—died and his son Abū Ja`far gave him the ritual bath and became his successor and all the affairs were referred to him. The Shias were unanimous in his credibility, reliability, and trustworthiness due to what had been said about his trustworthiness and credibility during the lifetime of (Imam) al-ḥasan, peace be on him, and after his death, in the lifetime of his father `Uthmān, may Allah have mercy on him.

867. Al-Kāfī 6: Muḥammad b. `Abd-Allah and Muḥammad b. Ya`yā both of them, from `Abd-Allah b. Ja`far al-ḥimyarī who said:

I and shaykh Abū `Amr, may Allah have mercy on him, were together with Aḥmad b. Isḥāq. Aḥmad b. Isḥāq indicated to me that I ask him about the heir. I said, “O Abū `Amr! I want to ask you about something. Although I have no doubt about it, nevertheless, I desire to question you about it. Surely, it is my belief and my religion that the earth cannot remain empty of a (divine) proof except forty days before the Day of Judgment.

When that happens, the (divine) proof will be taken away and the door of repentance will be closed. Then, becoming faithful will no longer benefit one who had not believed earlier or hadn't earned goodness in his faith.

They will be the worst from the creations of Allah, Mighty and Majestic be He, and they are the ones whom the Day of Judgment will be established upon. I intend to increase my certitude like Abraham who asked his Lord, Mighty and Majestic be He, to show him how He raises the dead. The answer was, ‘Do you not believe?’ and he replied, ‘I do but I am asking for the contentment of my heart.’ Abū `Alī Aḥmad b. Isḥāq informed me that he had asked Imam Abū Ḥasan, peace be on him, ‘With whom must I deal with or from whom must I take and whose words should I accept?’ He had replied, ‘Al-`Amrī is my trustee.

Whatever he conveys to you from me, he has [really] conveyed it from me and whatever he says to you, he has said it on my behalf. Listen to him and obey [him], because surely, he is reliable and trustworthy.’ Abū `Alī also informed me that he had asked (Imam) Abū Muḥammad a similar question and he had replied, ‘Al-`Amrī and his son are both reliable.

Whatever they convey to you from me, they have [really] conveyed it from me and whatever they say to you, they have said it on my behalf. Listen to both of them and obey them because they are both reliable and trustworthy.’ This is what two Imams have said about you.” [On hearing this], Abū `Amr prostrated and cried.

Then, he said, “Ask your need.” I enquired, “Have you seen the successor of (Imam) Abū Muḥammad, peace be on him?” He replied, “Yes, by Allah. His neck is like,” and he indicated with his hands. I said, “Now, one [question] remains.” He said, “Come forth with it.” I replied, “His name?” He said, “It is prohibited for you to ask about it and I am not saying this from myself because I cannot make anything

permissible or prohibited. This instruction is from him, peace be on him.

The King is under the impression that (Imam) Abū Muḥammad has died and has not left behind a successor. As a result, his inheritance has been divided and those who did not have a right to it have taken it. He has a family who move freely and no one has the courage to harm them. When the name is mentioned, the search [for him] begins. So, fear Allah and refrain from this.”

Al-Kulainī, may Allah have mercy on him, says, “A shaykh from our companions—whose name I have forgotten—narrated to me that Abū `Amr was asked the same question while Ahmad b. Isḥāq was with him and he gave a similar reply.”

868. Kamāl al-dīn: `Abd-Allah b. Ja`far al-ḥimyarī says:

Al-shaykh Abū Ja`far Muḥammad b. `Uthmān al-`Amrī received a letter of condolence [for the death] of his father, may Allah be satisfied with them. In one part of the letter was written, “Surely, we are from Allah and to Him we will return. We submit to His commands and are satisfied with His decree. Your father lived a blissful life and died with praise. May Allah have mercy on him and unite him with his masters and friends, peace be on them. He always strived to implement their command and worked hard to do the things that would draw him closer to Allah, Mighty and Majestic be He, and to [his masters]. May Allah brighten his face and overlook his faults.”

It was written in another part, “May Allah multiply your reward and offer you the best of condolences. You are in mourning and so are we. You have become lonely by his separation and so have we. Allah will make him happy in the place where he has returned to. From amongst his good fortune was that Allah, Mighty and Majestic be He, has granted him a son like you to succeed him and take his place by His orders and to ask [Allah] to have mercy on him. [Imam Mahdī continued,] All praise is for Allah, for, the souls have become pure by your position and whatever Allah, Mighty and Majestic be He, has granted you and near you. May Allah help you, strengthen you, support you, and grant you success. Allah is your Guardian, Protector, Caretaker, and He suffices you and is your Helper.”

869. Ghaybat al-Shaykh⁸: A group informed me from Ḥarīr b. Mūsā, from Muḥammad b. Hammām, from `Abd-Allah b. Ja`far al-ḥimyarī that “When Abū `Amr, may Allah be satisfied with him, passed away, letters came to us—with the same handwriting that we used when corresponding with him—concerning the appointment of Abū Ja`far, may Allah be satisfied with him, as his successor.”

870. Ghaybat al-Shaykh⁹: (Through the same chain of narrators) from Muḥammad b. Hammām, from Muḥammad b. Ḥammawayh b. `Abd al-`Azīz al-Rāzī in the year 280 AH, from Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm b. Mahziyār al-Ahwāzī that he received [a letter] after Abū `Amr’s death that said:

The son—may Allah protect him—was always considered reliable by us during the lifetime of his father, may Allah be satisfied with and satisfy him and brighten his face. He is like his father and has his position. He ordered his son by our command and acted accordingly; May Allah guard him. Obey him

and tell others about our attitude towards him.

871. Kamḥal al-dḥn¹⁰: Abḥ Ja`far Muḥammad b. `Alḥ al-Aswad, may Allah be satisfied with him, narrated to us that Abḥ Ja`far al-`Amrḥ dug a grave for himself and leveled it with teakwood. I asked him about it and he replied, “For people, there are causes.” I asked him again and he replied, “I have been ordered to gather my affairs.” He died two months after this incident; May Allah be satisfied with him.

872. Kamḥal al-dḥn¹¹: Muḥammad b. `Alḥ b. Mattḥ, from his uncle Ja`far b. Muḥammad b. Mattḥ who said:

Abḥ Ja`far Muḥammad b. `Uthmḥn al-Sammḥn—known as al-`Amrḥ, may Allah be satisfied with him—summoned me and gave me some small clothes with signs [on them] and a purse filled with dirhams.

He said, “It is necessary that you travel alone to Wḥsiḥ right now and hand these over to the first person who comes to you when you dismount on the beach of Wḥsiḥ.” This made me extremely sorrowful and I said to myself, “A person like me is being sent for a mission like this and made to carry such an insignificant thing.” Anyhow, I went to Wḥsiḥ and dismounted and asked the first person who met me about al-ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. Qaḥḥt al-ḥaidalḥnḥ, the person in charge of endowments (wakḥl al-waqf) at Wḥsiḥ. He said, “That’s me. Who are you?” I replied, “I am Ja`far b. Muḥammad b. Mattḥ.”

He recognized me with my name and greeted me. I greeted him too and we embraced each other. I said to him, “Abḥ Ja`far al-`Amrḥ has conveyed his greetings to you and handed me these clothes and this purse to give to you.” He replied, “All Praise is for Allah; Muḥammad b. `Abd-Allah al-ḥḥirḥ [al-`ḥmirḥ] has died and I had come to prepare his shroud.” He opened the parcel and in it were the necessary things for shrouding. The purse contained camphor and the wage of the bier-carriers and the grave-digger. We participated in his funeral procession and I returned.

873. Ghaybat al-Shaykh¹²: Al-ḥusayn b. Ibrḥḥm, from Abḥ Nḥḥ, from Abḥ Naḥr Hibat-Allah b. Muḥammad, from his (maternal) uncle Abḥ Ibrḥḥm Ja`far b. Aḥmad al-Naubakhtḥ, from his father Aḥmad b. Ibrḥḥm, his uncle Abḥ Ja`far `Abd-Allah b. Ibrḥḥm, and a group of his family members—i.e. the tribe of Naubakht, that

When the condition of Abḥ Ja`far al-`Amrḥ worsened, he gathered a group of influential Shiites including Abḥ `Alḥ b. Hammḥm, Abḥ `Abd-Allah b. Muḥammad al-Kḥtib, Abḥ `Abd-Allah al-Bḥqaḥḥnḥ, Abḥ Sahl Ismḥḥl b. `Alḥ al-Naubakhtḥ, Abḥ `Abd-Allah b. al-Wajnḥ, and other influential figures and elders. They all came to Abḥ Ja`far, may Allah be satisfied with him, and asked him, “If (the inevitable—meaning death) happens, who will be your successor?”

He replied, “He—meaning Abḥ l-Qḥsim al-ḥusayn b. Rauḥ b. Abḥ Baḥr al-Naubakhtḥ—will take my place. He is the ambassador between you and ḥḥḥib al-Amr, peace be on him. He is the representative

and the reliable and trustworthy. Refer to him in your affairs and seek help from him in important issues. I have been ordered [to convey] this and indeed, I conveyed.”

874. Ghaybat al-Shaykh [13](#): A theologian (mutakallim) known as Turk al-Harawī asked [ʿUṣayn b. Rauḥ], “How many daughters did the Messenger of Allah have?” He replied, “Four.” He said, “Who amongst them was the most superior?” He replied, “Fatima, peace be on her.” He said, “How did she become the most superior while she was the youngest of them and had accompanied the Messenger of Allah, Allah's blessings be on him and his family, less than them?” He replied, “Due to two characteristics with which Allah had distinguished her and given to her as an advantage, honor, and reverence: First, she inherited from the Messenger of Allah, Allah's blessings be on him and his family, whilst none of his other children inherited from him.

Second, Allah the Exalted, preserved the generation of the Messenger of Allah, Allah's blessings be on him and his family, through her and not through his other children. He did not distinguish her with these [characteristics] except due to the excellence of the purity He had known of her intention.” Al-Harawī replied [in astonishment], “I have never seen anyone speak and reply in this context better and more concise than him.”

875. Ghaybat al-Shaykh [14](#): A group informed me from Abū `Abd-Allah al-ʿUṣayn b. `Alī b. al-ʿUṣayn b. Mūsā b. Bābawayh, from a group of his townsmen who lived in Baghdad—in the year in which the Qarāmiya attacked the hajjis and it was the year of the falling stars—that “My father, may Allah be satisfied with him, wrote to al-Shaykh Abū I-Qāsim al-ʿUṣayn b. Rauḥ, may Allah be satisfied with him, to seek permission to perform Hajj.

He received the reply, ‘Don’t go this year.’ He wrote again asking, ‘It is an obligatory vow (nadhṛ). Is it permissible for me not to go?’ The response was, ‘If you have no choice [because it is obligatory], then go with the last caravan.’ He joined the last caravan and was saved whilst those who had gone in the earlier caravans were killed.”

876. Kamāl al-dīn [15](#): From Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm b. Isḥāq al-ʿIliqānī, may Allah be satisfied with him, who said:

I was with Shaykh Abū I-Qāsim al-ʿUṣayn b. Rauḥ, may Allah sanctify his soul, with a group—amongst whom was `Alī b. `Ḥsā al-Qaḥṣrī. A man stood up and said to [al-ʿUṣayn b. Rauḥ], “I want to ask you something.” He replied, “Ask whatever comes to your mind.” He asked, “Inform me about al-ʿUṣayn b. `Alī, peace be on him; was he a guardian [appointed] by Allah?” He replied in the affirmative.

The man said, “Was his killer an enemy of Allah?” He replied in the affirmative. The man said, “Is it permissible that Allah, Mighty and Majestic be He, allows His enemy to dominate His friend?” Abū I-Qāsim al-ʿUṣayn b. Rauḥ—may Allah sanctify his soul—replied, “Understand what I am telling you. Know that Allah, Mighty and Majestic be He, does not address the people [in a way that] the eyes can witness nor does He converse with speech. Rather, He—Majestic is His Majesty—sent to them

messengers from their species and their kind, who were humans like them.

Had He sent to them Messengers from other than their kind and their forms, they would have certainly fled from [the messengers] and would have not accepted [their claims']. When they came to them while they were from their species who ate food and walked in the markets, the people said to them, 'You are mortals like us. We will not accept [what you claim] until you perform for us a thing which we cannot do.

Only then will we know that you are the chosen ones instead of us because [you can perform] what we are incapable of.' So, Allah, Mighty and Majestic be He, gave them miracles which the people were incapable of performing. Some of them brought the storm—after warning and cautioning—and drowned all those who oppressed and rebelled.

From them was he who was thrown in the fire which became cold and safe for him. From them was he who brought forth a she-camel from solid stone and made milk to flow from its udders. From them was the one for whom the sea was split and springs flowed for him from a stone and a dry cane was turned into a snake for him that devoured their lies.

From them was the one who cured the blind and the leper, gave life to the dead with the permission of Allah, and informed them of what they ate and stored in their houses. From them was the one for whom the moon was split and with whom the animals like the camel, the wolf, and etc. spoke. When they performed such [miracles] and the people were helpless from performing the like of such deeds, Allah, Mighty and Majestic be He, ordained by His grace upon His servants and His wisdom, that He make His Prophets, peace be on them—with all their powers and miracles—at times victorious and at other times defeated; at times triumphant and at other times suppressed.

Had Allah, Mighty and Majestic be He, made them victorious and triumphant on all occasions and had not afflicted them nor tested them [by these defeats], certainly the people would have taken them as Gods instead of Allah, Mighty and Majestic be He, and their excellent patience during calamities, misfortunes, and tests would have remained unknown [to the people]. But He, Mighty and Majestic be He, made them in these situations like [ordinary people], so that they would be patient and forbearing during ordeals and calamities, grateful in times of safety and domination over the enemies, and humble in all conditions and not proud and arrogant.

Thus, the people would know that they, peace be on them, have a Lord Who is their creator and planner and [as a result, the people] would worship Him and obey His Messengers. Hence, the proof of Allah would be established against those who exceed the limits concerning them and view them as deities, or disobey, oppose, defy, and refute what the Messengers and Prophets, peace be on them, have brought. 'So that he who perishes, perishes by clear proof, and he who lives, lives by clear proof.'¹⁶

(Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm b. Isḥāq, may Allah be satisfied with him, says), The next day, I returned to Shaykh Abū I-Qāsim b. Rauḥ, may Allah sanctify his soul, and was saying to myself, "Did he make up what he said to us yesterday?" He initiated [the conversation] and said, "O Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm! It is

more preferable for me to fall from the sky, and then have a bird snatch me or the wind carry me away to a barren land, than to say my own opinion or something from myself in the religion of Allah, Mighty and Majestic be He. Rather, [what I said] was from the [true] source and was heard from the [Ujja](#), blessings and salutations of Allah be on him.”

877. Ghaybat al-Shaykh [17](#): A group informed us from [Abu Abd-Allah al-usayn b. Al b. Babawayh al-Qumm](#), from a group of people from Qum—whom [Al b. Babawayh](#) was amongst—from another group of people from Qum, amongst whom were [Imrān al-affar](#), his relative [Alawiyat al-affar](#), and [al-usayn b. Ahmad b. Al b. Ahmad b. Idris](#), may Allah have mercy on them all, who all narrated:

We were in Baghdad in the year that [Abu Al b. al-usayn b. Mūs b. Babawayh](#) died. [Abu I-āsan Al b. Muammad al-Samur](#), may his soul be sanctified, continuously asked us [who were] close to him about [Al b. al-usayn](#), may Allah have mercy on him, and we always answered, “A letter has reached us about his wellbeing.”

The day when [[Al b. al-usayn](#)] died, he asked us about him and we gave him the same answer but he said, “May Allah reward you concerning [Al b. al-usayn](#). He has just died.” We recorded the hour, date, and month of [his death] and after about seventeen or eighteen days, news reached us that he had died at the exact time mentioned by shaykh [Abu I-āsan](#), may his soul be sanctified.

878. [Kamil al-dīn 18](#): From [Abu Muammad al-āsan b. Ahmad al-Mukattib](#), who said:

I was in Baghdad in the year that shaykh [Al b. Muammad al-Samur](#), may Allah sanctify his soul, died. I went to him a few days prior to his death. He brought a letter for the people which I made a copy from that read, “In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. O [Al b. Muammad al-Samur](#)! May Allah increase the reward of your brothers concerning you! You will die within six days, so, wrap up your affairs and don’t appoint anyone as your successor after your death because the second occultation has commenced.

There will be no reappearance except after Allah’s permission, Mighty and Majestic be He, and this will happen after a long time has passed and the hearts will have become hard, and the earth will have been filled with injustice. Some of my followers will claim to have met me. Beware! Whoever claims to have met me before the emergence of the [Sufyan](#) and the [heavenly] cry ([al-aiā](#)) is a lying slanderer. There is no power and strength except through Allah, the Exalted and the Great.”

We copied this letter and left him. On the sixth day, we returned to him while he was on his death bed. Someone asked him, “Who is your successor?” He replied, “For Allah is an affair which he will take to its extent.” Saying this, he passed away; may Allah be satisfied with him. These were the last words [anyone] heard from him.

879. Ghaybat al-Shaykh [19](#): [Muammad b. Muammad b. al-Nu`mān](#) and [al-usayn b. Ubaid-Allah](#) informed me from [Abu Abd-Allah Ahmad b. Muammad al-afwān](#), who said:

Al-Shaykh Abū I-Qāsim, may Allah be satisfied with him, willed to Abū I-ʿāsan al-ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Samurī, may Allah be satisfied with him. Thus, he took his place and performed Abū I-Qāsim's duties. When he was about to die, the Shias gathered around him and asked him about the representative after him and his successor. He had said nothing about it and had mentioned that he was not ordered to will to anyone after himself about this matter.

880. Rijāl al-Kashf²⁰: Jaʿfar b. Maʿrūf al-Kashfī who said, “Abū ʿAbd-Allah al-Balkhī wrote to me and narrated from al-ʿusayn b. Rauḥ al-Qummī that Aḥmad b. Isḥāq wrote to [the Mahdī, peace be on him] to seek permission for Hajj. Permission was granted and a cloth was sent to him. Aḥmad b. Isḥāq said, ‘He has informed me about my death.’ He died at ʿulwān after returning from Hajj.”

The traditions with the following numbers also show the above concept: 789, 793, 811, 812, 821, 822, 825, 849, and 861.

1. Know that during the minor occultation, his representatives (wukalāʾ) and his deputies (nuwwāb) were a number of people who were known for their reliability, trustworthiness, and truthfulness. This can be verified by referring to credible books. His letters (tauqūʿāt) and orders were transmitted through them. They demonstrated extraordinary acts and told of the unseen—by the assistance of their master, peace be on him. I will make this short by only speaking about the four most famous ones whose trustworthiness, justice, elevated position, and high status is agreed upon by all the Shias:

Al-Shaykh Abū ʿAmr ʿUthmān b. Saʿd al-ʿAmrī, may Allah the Exalted be satisfied with him: He was appointed by Imams Abū I-ʿāsan al-ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-ʿAskarī and Abū Muḥammad al-ʿāsan b. ʿAlī al-ʿAskarī, peace be on them. He was from the Banū-ʿAsad tribe and was known as al-ʿAskarī and also al-Sammān (meaning the oil trader) because he traded cooking oil as a cover-up for his activities. The two aforementioned Imams have spoken about him as well as our master ʿAbī al-Zamʿān, Allah's blessings be on him. Al-ʿIṣṣāfī has mentioned him in his Rijāl book amongst the companions of Imam al-Hādī, peace be on him. He writes, “Uthmān b. Saʿd al-ʿAmrī, whose epithet is Abū ʿAmr al-Sammān and who is also known as al-Zayyāt. He served him when he was merely eleven years old and was famous for his inclination towards him.” Al-ʿIṣṣāfī also mentions him as a companion of (Imam) Abū Muḥammad al-ʿāsan al-ʿAskarī, peace be on him. He says, “Highly honored, reliable, and his representative.” Yet again, he writes: “Muḥammad b. Uthmān b. Saʿd al-ʿAmrī whose epithet was Abū Jaʿfar and his father's epithet was Abū ʿAmr; both of them were the representatives of ʿAbī al-Zamʿān, peace be on him, and enjoyed a great position amongst the Shias.” The author of Tanqīḥ al-maqāl writes, “He was more majestic and famous than can be mentioned.”

Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. Uthmān b. Saʿd al-ʿAmrī: When his father—Abū ʿAmr—died, he replaced him by [Imam] Abū Muḥammad's order as well as the order of his own father which was commanded by the Qā'im, peace be on him. Al-ʿIṣṣāfī has narrated in al-Ghayba from Abū I-ʿAbbās from Hibat-Allah b. Muḥammad, from his teachers, that the Shias are unanimous in his justice, reliability, and trustworthiness because of the statements regarding his justice and the order to refer to him during the lifetime of (Imam) al-ʿāsan (al-ʿAskarī), peace be on him, and after his death while his father was alive. He writes, “Numerous arguments [in support of Shia] have been narrated from him and the miracles of the Imam have been manifested at his hands . . .”

The author of Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl writes, “His majesty, high position, and status is so famous amongst the Imāmiyya that there is no need to mention it . . .” He had written some books using what he had directly heard from (Imam) Abū Muḥammad al-ʿāsan and from the Master, peace be on them, and what he had heard from his father, Uthmān b. Saʿd, from (Imams) Abū Muḥammad and al-ʿāsan al-Hādī, peace be on them. Al-ʿIṣṣāfī writes in al-Ghayba, “Abū Naʿr Hibat-Allah says, ‘I saw in the writings of Abū Gholib al-Zurʿī—may Allah have mercy on him and forgive him—that Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. Uthmān al-ʿAmrī died in the end of (the month) Jumād al-Aulā, 305 AH. Abū Naʿr Hibat-Allah b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad has mentioned that Abū Jaʿfar al-ʿAmrī, may Allah be satisfied with him, died in the year 304 AH. He was in charge of these affairs for almost fifty years. The people took their wealth to him and he would give them signed

letters which had the same handwriting as those which they received during the lifetime of (Imam) al-ḩasan (al-`Askar), peace be on him. [The letters] were about the difficulties [encountered] in religious and worldly matters and replies to questions they had asked him and comprised of amazing answers. May Allah be satisfied with him and satisfy him.”

Al-Shaykh Abḩ al-Qḩsim al-ḩusayn b. Rauḩ b. Abḩ Baḩr al-Naubakht, may Allah have mercy on him: He attained the position of special deputyship after Muḩammad b. Uthmḩn, may Allah have mercy on them. He succeeded Muḩammad b. `Uthmḩn by the orders of the Imam which were transmitted by Muḩammad b. `Uthmḩn. He was viewed by both Shias and Sunnis as one of the wisest of the people and enjoyed a great position and elevated status amongst the latter too. Muḩammad b. Uthmḩn had about ten close confidants; Abḩ I-Qḩsim b. Rauḩ was amongst them but the others were closer to Muḩammad b. Uthmḩn than him. Amongst these, Ja`far b. Aḩmad b. Mattḩl was so close to him and spent so much time in his house that the Shias had no doubt that if something happened to al-ḩusayn b. Rauḩ, he would surely inherit his position. When the Imam appointed Abḩ I-Qḩsim, no one denied and they all submitted [to this order] including Ja`far b. Aḩmad b. Mattḩl who showed the same attitude towards him which he had showed towards Abḩ Ja`far al-`Amr. He continued this manner until he passed away. Shaykh Abḩ I-Qḩsim died in the month of Sha`bḩn, 326 AH. The duration of his ambassadorship was twenty-one or twenty-two years. May Allah be satisfied with him

Al-Shaykh Abḩ I-ḩasan `Alḩ b. Muḩammad al-Samurḩ: He succeeded Shaykh Abḩ I-Qḩsim by his order and he was the last representative. With his death, the major occultation commenced and the affair was delegated to the jurists and those who possessed the traditions and sciences of the Ahl al-Bait, peace be on them. During the major occultation, the people must refer to them. This is a fact which has been established by numerous traditions—some of which have already been mentioned. Abḩ I-ḩasan `Alḩ b. Muḩammad al-Samurḩ passed away in 329 AH; may Allah have mercy on him.

[2.](#) Ghaybat al-Shaykh, chap. “ḩarafun min akhbḩr al-sufarḩ,” pp. 354–355, no. 315; Biḩḩr al-anwḩr, vol. 51, chap. 16, pp. 344–345.

[3.](#) Ghaybat al-Shaykh, chap. “ḩarafun min akhbḩr al-sufarḩ,” p. 355, no. 315; Biḩḩr al-anwḩr, vol. 51, chap. 16, pp. 345.

[4.](#) Ghaybat al-Shaykh, chap. “ḩarafun min akhbḩr al-sufarḩ,” pp. 355–356, no. 317; Biḩḩr al-anwḩr, vol. 51, chap. 16, pp. 345.

[5.](#) Ghaybat al-Shaykh, chap. “ḩarafun min akhbḩr al-sufarḩ,” pp. 355–356, no. 318. He says on page 320 that Abḩ Naḩr Hibat-Allah b. Muḩammad said, “Uthmḩn’s grave is on the western side of Baghdad at the beginning of Mayadḩn Street in the place known as the gate of Jibilla in the right section of the mosque of al-Darb. The grave is located in Qibla side of the mosque itself—may Allah have mercy on him. Muḩammad b. al-ḩasan—the author of this book—says, ‘I saw his grave in the aforementioned place. A wall was built on its side and the prayer-niche was built on its other side. There was a door on one side which opened into the place of the grave in a dark narrow room. We used to visit it publicly during my stay in Baghdad from the year 408 to after 430 AH. Then, the chief, Abḩ Manḩḩr Muḩammad b. Faraj, broke down the wall, raised the grave to ground level and built a box on top of it which was beneath the roof. Whoever wanted to visit his grave would go there and do so. The neighbors of the area sought blessings by visiting it and used to say, “He was a righteous man” or “He was the son of (Imam) ḩusayn’s nurse,” while they were ignorant of the reality and it is still the same today which is the year 447 AH.”; Biḩḩr al-anwḩr, vol. 51, chap. 16 p. 346.

[6.](#) Al-Kḩfḩ, chap. “The names of those who have seen him,” pp. 329–330; Ghaybat al-Shaykh, chap. “ḩarafun min akhbḩr al-sufarḩ,” pp. 359–361, no. 317, and chap. “Wilḩdat ḩḩḩib al-`Amr `alayhi al-salḩm,” pp. 243–244, no. 209; Biḩḩr al-anwḩr, vol. 51, chap. 16, pp. 347–348.

[7.](#) Kamḩl al-dḩn, vol. 2, chap. 45, p. 510, no. 41; Ghaybat al-Shaykh, chap. “ḩarafun min akhbḩr al-sufarḩ,” p. 361, no. 323, through his chain of narrators from `Abd-Allah b. Ja`far; al-Kharḩij wa I-jarḩ`iḩ, vol. 3, p. 1112, no. 28; Biḩḩr al-anwḩr, vol. 51, chap. 16, pp. 348–349; al-Ittijj, vol. 2, pp. 300–301.

[8.](#) Ghaybat al-Shaykh, chap. “ḩarafun min akhbḩr al-sufarḩ,” p. 362, no. 324; Biḩḩr al-anwḩr, vol. 51, chap. 16, p. 349, no. 2.

[9.](#) Ghaybat al-Shaykh, chap. “ḩarafun min akhbḩr al-sufarḩ,” p. 362, no. 325; Biḩḩr al-anwḩr, vol. 51, chap. 16, p. 349, no. 2.

[10.](#) Kamḩl al-dḩn, vol. 2, chap. 45, p. 502, no. 29; Ghaybat al-Shaykh, chap. “ḩarafun min akhbḩr al-sufarḩ,” pp.

- 365–366, no. 333, from ibn Bawayh, from a group; al-Kharʿij wa l-jarʿiyya, vol. 3, p. 1120, no. 36; Biḥār al-anwār, vol. 51, chap. 16, pp. 351–352, under the fourth tradition; Ithbāt al-hudūd, vol. 3, chap. 33, p. 677, no. 74; lʿilm al-warā, p. 422.
- [11.](#) Kamāl al-dīn, vol. 2, chap. 45, p. 504, no. 35; al-Kharʿij wa l-jarʿiyya, p. 1119, no. 35; Ithbāt al-hudūd, vol. 7, chap. 33, pp. 314–315, no. 79; Biḥār al-anwār, vol. 51, chap. 15, pp. 336–337, no. 63.
- [12.](#) Ghaybat al-Shaykh, chap. “ʿarāfun min akhbār al-sufarʿ,” pp. 371–372, no. 342; Biḥār al-anwār, chap. 16, p. 355, no. 6.
- [13.](#) Ghaybat al-Shaykh, chap. “ʿarāfun min akhbār al-sufarʿ,” p. 388, no. 353; Biḥār al-anwār, vol. 43, chap. 2, p. 37, under no. 40. He has recorded Buzl al-Harawī; al-Manʿiqib, vol. 3, chap. “Virtues of Fāʿimat al-Zahrā, peace be on her,” pp. 323–324, which also mentions Buzl al-Hirawī. This is probably a scribal error. According to the traditionists, al-Fāʿiz ʿabdī, the correct name is Badī b. Aḥmad al-Harawī.
- [14.](#) Ghaybat al-Shaykh, p. 322, no. 270; Biḥār al-anwār, vol. 51, chap. 51, p. 293, no. 1; Ithbāt al-hudūd, vol. 3, chap. 33, p. 692, no. 110.
- [15.](#) Kamāl al-dīn, vol. 2, chap. 45, pp. 507–509, no. 37; Ghaybat al-Shaykh, pp. 321–322, no. 269, and pp. 324–326, no. 273; Biḥār al-anwār, vol. 44, chap. 33, pp. 273–274, no. 1; lʿilm al-sharʿiyya, vol. 1, chap. 177, pp. 241–243, no. 1; al-ʿItijāj (Beirut), vol. 2, pp. 285–288 and pp. 471–473.
- [16.](#) Quran 8:42.
- [17.](#) Ghaybat al-Shaykh, pp. 395–396, no. 366. In some copies, the word companion instead of close has been used; Kamāl al-dīn, vol. 2, chap. 45, p. 503, no. 32; Rijāl al-Najshūr, p. 262, no. 684; Faraj al-mahmūm, p. 130; lʿilm al-warā, chap. 3, sect. 2, pp. 422–423; Ithbāt al-hudūd, vol. 3, sect. 12, chap. 33, p. 693, no. 113, which has recorded Harthamat b. al-ʿAlawiyya; Biḥār al-anwār, vol. 51, chap. 16, p. 361, no. 8; al-Kharʿij wa l-jarʿiyya, vol. 3, p. 1128, no. 45, which is a shorter account.
- [18.](#) Kamāl al-dīn, vol. 2, chap. 45, p. 516, no. 44; Ghaybat al-Shaykh, p. 395, no. 365; lʿilm al-warā, fourth rukn, part 2, chap. 3, sect. 2, which says: soon my followers will come; al-Kharʿij wa l-jarʿiyya (Muʿassisat al-Imām al-Mahdī), vol. 3, p. 1128, no. 6; Biḥār al-anwār, vol. 51, chap. 16, pp. 360–361, no. 7; Jannat al-maʿwā (printed with the 53rd volume of Biḥār al-anwār), p. 318.
- I say: In some copies of Kamāl al-dīn and other books, it has been written, “the complete (al-tamma) occultation has commenced.” The original printed copy of Ghaybat al-Shaykh mentions, “[people] will come to some of my followers.” Al-Kharʿij and Jannat al-maʿwā have recorded “and from amongst my followers some will claim,” and other books have narrated “and amongst my followers.” It might be said that this letter apparently contradicts numerous, consecutive, and definite reports that cannot be enumerated due to their abundance and are an indication that the Imam was seen and some people had the privilege of being in his presence. It also contradicts the unanimous belief of the Shias—including the belief of al-ʿaḍq, the narrator of this story—about a large group of people who have met him. The scholars have mentioned a few reasons to resolve this contradiction or to reply to this question. Six of these answers have been mentioned in Jannat al-maʿwā. One of them is what a few scholars have stated and has also been stated by al-Majlisī in Biḥār al-anwār: The context of the tradition indicates that what is meant by seeing him, is a seeing accompanied by the claim of representation and ambassadorship and the conveying of news from him to the Shias—as was the prevalent practice during the minor occultation. This probability is highly likely. Another justification is that this tradition is a single and weak narration that neither its narrator—al-ʿaḍq—nor our other Shia companions have acted upon. Hence, the many incidents which certainty is obtained from are not contradicted. Rather, some of them comprise of miracles and extraordinary deeds that could not have been performed by anyone but him.
- Ithbāt al-hudūd, vol. 3, sect. 3, chap. 33, p. 693, no. 112 (short version); al-ʿItijāj (Beirut), vol. 2, p. 478.
- [19.](#) Ghaybat al-Shaykh, p. 394, no. 363; Biḥār al-anwār, vol. 51, chap. 16, p. 360; lʿilm al-warā, chap. 3, sect. 1, p. 417.
- [20.](#) Rijāl al-Kashf (Jamīʿat al-Mashhad), p. 557, no. 1052; Ithbāt al-hudūd, vol. 7, sect. 12, chap. 33, p. 363, no. 148; Muʿjam rijāl al-ʿaḍq, vol. 2, p. 49, no. 433; Biḥār al-anwār, vol. 51, chap. 15, p. 306, no. 21.

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