

## Section Twenty–Seven

The traditions that indicate he will have two occultations and one will be shorter than the other

Comprised of ten traditions

599. [Al-Kafī 1](#): Muḥammad b. Yaʿyā, from Muḥammad b. al-ʿusayn, from ibn Maʿbūb, from Isḥāq b. ʿAmmār, from (Imam) Abū ʿAbd-Allah, peace be on him, who said: “The Qʿim will have two occultations: one of them will be short and the other long. In the first occultation, no one will know his whereabouts except his special followers (khawṣatu shʿatih). As for the other, no one will know his whereabouts except his special servants (khawṣatu mawḥ).”

600. [Yanʿab al-mawadda 2](#): Citing al-Maʿajja fī mʿ nazala fī l-Qʿim al-ʿujja, concerning the saying of Allah, the Exalted, “And he made it a firm word in his future generations so that they may return” (Quran 43:28). From Thabit al-Thumali, from Imam ʿAlī b. al-ʿusayn, from his father, from his grandfather Amr al-Muʿminin ʿAlī b. Abū Ḥabīb, may Allah be satisfied with him, who said:

This verse was revealed about us. Allah has put Imamate in the generation of al-ʿusayn until the Day of Judgment. Our Qʿim will definitely have two occultations: one of them will be longer than the other and no one will remain steadfast in his Imamate except those who have strong certitude and correct recognition.

601. [Ghaybat al-Nuʿmān 3](#): Narrated to us Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Saʿd, from ʿAlī b. al-ʿasan, from ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Abū Najrān, from ʿAlī b. Mahziyār, from Ḥammād b. ʿIsḥāq, from Ibrāhīm b. ʿUmar al-Yamānī who said: “I heard (Imam) Abū Jaʿfar, peace be on him, say, ‘The master of this affair will surely have two occultations.’ I also heard him say, ‘The Qʿim will not rise while having anybody’s allegiance on his neck [i.e. The Qʿim will rise while he will not have pledged allegiance to anyone].”

602. [Ghaybat al-Nuʿmān 4](#): Informed us Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Saʿd, from al-Qasim b. Muḥammad b. al-ʿasan b. Ḥazim, from his book, from ʿUbais b. Hishām, from ʿAbd-Allah b. Jabala, from Ibrāhīm b. al-Mustanʿir, from al-Mufaḥḥal b. ʿUmar al-Juʿfī, from (Imam) Abū ʿAbd-Allah al-ʿadīq, peace be

on him, who said:

The master of this affair will surely have two occultations: one of them will be prolonged to such an extent that some of them will say, “He has died,” some will say, “He has been killed,” and some of them will say, “He has gone.” No one from his companions [i.e. followers] will remain [steadfast] in his affair except for very few. No one will know his whereabouts from his friends or anybody else except a servant who looks after his affairs.

603. Ghaybat al-Nu`m<sup>5</sup>: A`mad b. Mu`ammad b. Sa`d b. `Uqda, from Mu`ammad b. al-Mufa`al b. Ibr`him b. Qays and Sa`d [Sa`d] b. Is`q b. Sa`d and A`mad b. al-`usayn [al-`asan] b. `Abd al-Malik and Mu`ammad b. A`mad b. al-`asan al-Qa`aw<sup>6</sup>, all of them from al-`asan b. Ma`b, from Ibr`him [b. Ziyad] al-Kh<sup>7</sup>, from Ab` Ba`r who said:

I said to (Imam) Ab` `Abd-Allah, peace be on him, that (Imam) Ab` Ja`far, peace be on him, used to say, “The Q`im from the family of Mu`ammad will have two occultations and one of them will be longer than the other.” He said, “Yes, and this will not occur until the family of so and so clash with each other, war rages (ta`q al-`alqa), the Sufy<sup>8</sup> appears, calamities intensify, death and killings engulf the people, and they seek refuge in the Sanctum of Allah (aram All<sup>9</sup>) and the Sanctum of His Messenger (aram ras<sup>10</sup>), Allah’s blessings be on him and his family.”

604. Ghaybat al-Nu`m<sup>6</sup>: `Abd al-W<sup>11</sup> b. `Abd-Allah, from A`mad b. Mu`ammad b. Rab<sup>12</sup>, from A`mad b. `Al<sup>13</sup> al-`imyar<sup>14</sup>, from al-`asan b. Ayy<sup>15</sup>, from `Abd al-Kar<sup>16</sup> b. `Amr, from al-`Al<sup>17</sup> b. Raz<sup>18</sup>, from Mu`ammad b. Muslim al-Thaqaf<sup>19</sup>, from (Imam) al-B<sup>20</sup>qir Ab` Ja`far, peace be upon him, who said: “The Q`im will have two occultations. In one of them, [some will say] ‘he has perished’ and [others will say,] ‘No one knows where he is.’”

605. Al-K<sup>7</sup>: Mu`ammad b. Ya`y<sup>21</sup> and A`mad b. Idr<sup>22</sup>, from al-`asan b. `Al<sup>23</sup> al-K<sup>24</sup>, from `Al<sup>25</sup> b. `ass<sup>26</sup>, from `Abd al-Ra<sup>27</sup>m b. Kath<sup>28</sup>, from al-Mufa`al b. `Umar who said:

I heard (Imam) Ab` `Abd-Allah, peace be on him, say, “The master of this affair will have two occultations: in one of them, he will return to his family. As for the other, [some will say] ‘he has perished’ and [others will say,] ‘No one knows where he is.’” I asked, “What should we do when this happens?” He replied, “When somebody claims [to be him], ask him about matters that only someone like him can answer.”

606. Al-K<sup>8</sup>: Al-`usayn b. Mu`ammad, from Ja`far b. Mu`ammad from al-Q<sup>29</sup>sim b. Ism<sup>30</sup> al-Anb<sup>31</sup>, from Ya`y<sup>32</sup> b. al-Muthann<sup>33</sup>, from `Abd-Allah b. Bukair, from `Ubaid b. Zur<sup>34</sup>ra, from Ab` `Abd-Allah, peace be on him, who said: “The Q`im will have two occultations. In one of them, he will be present during the Hajj season; he will see the people but they will not be able see him.”

607. `Iqd al-durar<sup>9</sup>: From (Imam) Ab` `Abd-Allah al-`usayn b. `Al<sup>35</sup>, peace be on him, who said: “The master of this affair—meaning the Mahd<sup>36</sup>, peace be on him—will have two occultations. One of them will

become so elongated that some will say, 'he has died,' others will say, 'he has been killed,' and others will say, 'he has gone.' No one will be aware of his whereabouts, not his friends nor anybody else, except the servants who look after his affairs.”

The following tradition also proves the above concept: 254.

1. Al-Kāfī, vol. 1, chap. “Fī l-ghayba,” p. 340, no. 19; Mirʿat al-ʿuqūl, vol. 4, p. 52, no. 19; Ghaybat al-Nuʿmān, chap. 10, p. 170, no. 2, with a slight difference. Al-Nuʿmān has also recorded this tradition on p. 170, no. 1: “From ibn ʿUqda, from ʿAlī b. al-ʿāsan al-Taimulī, from ʿUmar b. Uthmān, from al-ʿāsan b. Maʿbūb, from Isḥāq b. ʿAmmār al-ʿairafī, from (Imam) Abū ʿAbd-Allah, peace be on him, who said, ‘The Qaʿim will have two occultations: one will be long and the other short. In the first occultation, his special followers (khawāṣṣu shayṭih) will know his whereabouts. As for the other, no one will know his whereabouts except his special servants.’” In this tradition, the long occultation has been mentioned before the shorter one which should have been first. This does not affect our goal and intention for mentioning this tradition.

2. Yanʿabʿ al-mawadda, chap. 71, p. 427; al-Maʿajja fī mʿ nazala fī l-Qaʿim al-ʿujja, p. 200, under verse 43:28.

3. Ghaybat al-Nuʿmān, p. 171, no. 3.

4. Ghaybat al-Nuʿmān, pp. 171–172, no. 5.

5. Ghaybat al-Nuʿmān, pp. 172–173, no. 7; Dalʿil al-imāma, sect. “Maʿrifat mʿ warada min al-akhbār fī wujūb al-ghayba,” p. 293, to his saying: “He said, ‘Yes.’”

6. Ghaybat al-Nuʿmān, p. 173, no. 8.

7. Al-Kāfī, vol. 1, chap. 138, p. 340, no. 12; Ghaybat al-Nuʿmān, chap. 10, pp. 175–176, no. 9, which says: “He will return in one of them” and “Then ask him about those great matters that only someone like him can answer”; Mirʿat al-ʿuqūl, vol. 4, p. 54, no. 20.

I say: When he speaks about him returning in one of the occultations to his family, he might mean that his whereabouts will still be known to his special (followers) and that they will be in touch with him—may my father and mother be sacrificed for him—either through correspondence or the privilege of directly meeting him or through representatives and ambassadors between him and his followers. Al-Majlisī, may Allah have mercy on him, says: “‘He will return to his family,’ means the dependents of his father or to his representatives and ambassadors. ‘Only someone like him can answer,’ means that only someone like the Qaʿim, peace be on him, can answer such questions that are known to no one except an Imam; things like informing all the people about the unseen and questions about difficult issues and the sciences that only they have knowledge about. If he answers these correctly—and his answers are in accordance with what has reached you from their forefathers, peace be on them—then know that he is the Imam; and this [questioning] must be specifically performed by the knowledgeable scholars.”

8. Al-Kāfī, vol. 1, chap. 138, p. 339, no. 12; Ghaybat al-Nuʿmān, chap. 10, pp. 175–176, no. 16; Mirʿat al-ʿuqūl, vol. 4, p. 47, no. 12.

9. ʿIqd al-durar, chap. 5, p. 134; al-Burhān fī ʿalimīyat Mahdī khir al-zamān, chap. 12, pp. 171–172, no. 4; Bishrat al-Islām, chap. 4, p. 81, no. 4.

The esteemed Shaykh, ibn Abū Zaynab al-Kātib al-Nuʿmānī, writes: “The traditions which mention that the Qaʿim, peace be on him, will have two occultations are regarded by us as true and authentic, Praise be to Allah. Allah has made clear what the Imams, peace be on them, had said and has shown the proof of their truthfulness in these traditions. The first occultation, is the occultation in which there were ambassadors in it—whom connected the Imam and the people. The ambassadors were appointed from amongst apparent and prominent personalities. Difficult sciences, abstruse talks of wisdom, and the answer to all the hard and problematic questions which were asked were delivered by them. This was the short occultation; whose time has expired and its period has come to an end. The second occultation is the one in which the ambassadors and emissaries were removed because of an affair desired by Allah, the Exalted, and the strategy which He had implemented amongst His creation, so that those who claim (to follow) this affair will be sifted, examined, tested, separated, and purified—just as Allah, Mighty and Majestic be He, says, ‘Allah will not leave the believers in the state which you are in until He distinguishes the evil from the good; nor will Allah inform you of the unseen . . .’ (Quran 3:179). Indeed, this time has certainly come and may Allah make us steadfast in the truth and make us one of those who will not pass

through the sieve of fitnas. This is the meaning of the saying that 'he will have two occultations.' At the end, we ask Allah to hasten the relief (faraj) of His friends and appoint us amongst the best of those who obey him, and the purest of those who follow him, and from the best of those who He deems fit for and has selected to help His friend and Caliph. Surely, He is the Master of kindness, the Munificent, the Benefactor" (Ghaybat al-Nu`mān, pp. 173–174).

In l'Ilm al-war, sect. 1 of the 3rd chap., 2nd part of the 4th pillar, it has been mentioned that "the traditions of occultation precede the era of al-ujja, peace be on him, and even the era of his father and grandfather, and that Shia traditionalists have immortalized them in their Principles (U books) compiled during the time of the two masters, al-Bqir and al-diq, peace be on them, and traced (their chains) from the Holy Prophet and the Imams, peace be on them, one after the other, and this is why the belief in the Imamate of the Master of the Time is correct; because he possesses these attributes and an occultation that has been mentioned amongst his attributes and no one can refute this." He then says: "Amongst the reliable Shia traditionists and authors is al-asan b. Maabb al-Zarrd who wrote the book al-Mashkha more than a hundred years before the period of occultation—which amongst the Shia U books is more famous than the book of al-Muzan and its kind. He has recorded in it some of what we have mentioned about the occultation. All these occurred just as they had been foretold and everything that they had guaranteed occurred without any variation. From these, is what he narrated from Ibrhm al-Khriq, from Ab Ba, from (Imam) Ab `Abd-Allah . . . (he then mentions the fifth tradition in this chapter and says,) see how the two occultations have occurred for the Master of the Affair, peace be on him, exactly like how the aforementioned narrations from his forefathers and ancestors had guaranteed" (Ghaybat al-Nu`mān, pp. 173–174).

Al-Mufd writes in al-Fu al-`ashara: "The traditions narrated from the late Imams of the family of Muammad, peace be upon them, complement each other in concluding that the awaited Q'im must definitely have two occultations and one of them will be longer than the other. In the shorter occultation, some special people will have news about him and in the longer occultation, no one from the public will know of his abode except for a few of his reliable companions who will have the privilege of being at his service and who will only serve him and no one else. Such traditions have existed in the writings of the Shia Im authors before the birth of Ab Muammad (al-`Askar), his father, and his grandfather, peace be on them. Their truth became apparent with the advent of the representatives and ambassadors—whom we already named, may Allah have mercy on them—and the truthfulness of the narrators also became clear with the start of the major occultation. This was indeed a magnificent sign about the truthfulness of the Shia Im belief."

I say: The fact that these traditions were recorded in al-Kff during the minor occultation, and the minor occultation ending and the beginning of the second occultation after it, is also evidence of their authenticity. For `Al b. Muammad al-Samur, may Allah be satisfied with him—who was the last ambassador—passed away in the month of Sha`b, 329 AH, while al-Kulain died in 328 AH. According to another report, al-Kulain died in 329 AH, the same year in which the fourth ambassador died; who had died in the middle of Sha`b, 329AH. Others believe that even if al-Kulain died in the year 329 AH, it was before the death of al-Samur. The fact that he has recorded these traditions in al-Kff during the minor occultation is by itself proof of their authenticity and correctness.

You should know that the occultation of our master Imam al-Mahd—may my father and mother be sacrificed for him—has also been mentioned in the poems of Shia poets like al-imyar (d. 173 AH), who said in his poem (see al-Ghadr, vol. 2, p. 247) addressed to our master al-diq, peace be on him,  
We have been informed about the successor of Muammad  
And what has been said is not a lie

That the master of this affair will be not be found and will become unseen  
Hidden, like he who is fearful and waiting

Then the wealth of the lost one will be distributed as if

...

He will live for some time then will rise  
Like the rising of a Star in the horizon

I hold my Lord as a Witness that your saying is a proof

Upon all the creatures, obedient and sinners

That the Master of the Affair and the Qa'im  
Is the one whom my soul flies to with delight

For him is an occultation which is inevitable  
And Allah sends salutations upon this concealed person

He will stay thus for a while and then appear  
And fill with justice the East and the West

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