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Special specifications of Imam al-Mahdi (as)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the previous part, I provided extensive traditions from the six authentic Sunni collections concerning the fact that Imam al-Mahdi (as) who is different than Jesus (the messiah) WILL come and he is the descendant of the Prophet (S) and his daughter Fatimah (sa). The traditions further illuminated the fact that Jesus (who was a great Prophet) will pray behind al-Mahdi (who is a divinely appointed Imam).

Also I gave some of the Fatwa of Sunni scholars which state that the belief in "the Mahdi of the House of the Prophet" is one of the Islamic tenets for "Ahlussunnah wal Jama'a", and any one who denies it is either ignorant or an innovator.

In this part however, I would like to talk about some special attributes of Imam al-Mahdi which are not acknowledged by most Sunnis.

Imam Al-Mahdi's Identification

The Shi'a believe that Imam al-Mahdi is the only son of Imam Hasan al-Askari (the 11th Imam) who was born on the 15th of Sha'ban 255/869 in Samarra, Iraq. He became the divinely appointed Imam when his father was martyred in 260/874. Imam al-Mahdi went into occultation (disappearance; leaving among people while he is not identified) at the same time. He will re-appear when Allah wills. More specifically:

- His title is "al-Mahdi" which means "The Guided One."
- His name is Muhammad Ibn al-Hasan (as).
- His lineage, traced back to Imam 'Ali (as), is: Muhammad Ibn al-Hasan Ibn 'Ali Ibn Muhammad Ibn 'Ali Ibn Musa Ibn Ja'far Ibn Muhammad Ibn 'Ali Ibn al-Husayn Ibn 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib (as).

On the other hand, most Sunnis are not so sure that he has been born yet! They believe he will be born some time before his mission. The name of Imam al-Mahdi is Muhammad (which is the same as what the Shi'a believe). There is, however, one Sunni report which adds that the name of the father of Imam al-Mahdi is Abdullah. Now let us see what is the argument of each side:

Q1) Some Sunnis question the Shi'a that how a five year old boy can become the Imam of mankind?

First, we must question whether or not in the history of religion, the phenomenon of young leaders has a parallel. Undoubtedly, there is. The Qur'an strikes a number of examples which are worthy of mentioning:

We have the example of Jesus (as) who became prophet and spoke to people when he was a baby in the cradle:

"But she pointed to the baby. They said: 'How can we talk to one who is a child in the cradle?' He said: 'I am indeed a servant of Allah. He has given me Scripture and assigned me a prophet, and He has made me blessed wherever I be, and has enjoined on me Prayer and Zakat as long as I live.'"**(Qur'an 19:29-31)**

فَأَشَارَتْ إِلَيْهِ قَالُوا كَيْفَ نُكَلِّمُ مَنْ كَانَ فِي الْمَهْدِ صَبِيًّا ﴿٢٩﴾ قَالَ إِنِّي عَبْدُ اللَّهِ آتَانِيَ الْكِتَابَ وَجَعَلَنِي نَبِيًّا ﴿٣٠﴾
﴿٣١﴾ وَجَعَلَنِي مُبَارَكًا أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُ وَأَوْصَانِي بِالصَّلَاةِ وَالزَّكَاةِ مَا دُمْتُ حَيًّا ﴿٣١﴾

Thus Jesus (as) became prophet and received revelation and Book while he was less than two years old!

Furthermore, in few verses before, Qur'an mentions the case of Prophet Yahya (John), to whom Allah (SWT) said:

"O Yahya! Take hold of the Book with might,' And We gave him the appointment (of prophethood) in his childhood."**(Qur'an 19: 12)**

﴿١٢﴾ يَا يَحْيَى خُذِ الْكِتَابَ بِقُوَّةٍ وَآتَيْنَاهُ الْحُكْمَ صَبِيًّا

So if a two-year old boy can become a prophet and receives revelation and Scripture, then why cannot a five-year old boy become an Imam?

The third example is Prophet Solomon (Sulayman) who was appointed by Allah the heir of his father, David (Dawud), and became the king of his community while he had not reached the age of puberty.

Have you ever heard of prodigies? They are kids between the ages of four to 18 that exhibit signs of exceptional skills that are usually found in highly qualified adults only. Here are some examples from the modern history:

John Stuart Mill (1806–73), a 19th-century English philosopher and economist, advocated utilitarian reforms in his many writings and as member of Parliament. A child prodigy, Mill had mastered Greek by the age of 7 and studied economics at the age of 13. His works express his social thought with great clarity and thoroughness. (The Bettmann Archive).

The French thinker, mathematician, and scientist Blaise Pascal (1623–62) has been credited not only with imaginative and subtle work in geometry and other branches of mathematics, but with profoundly influencing later generations of theologians and philosophers. A prodigy in mathematics, Pascal had mastered Euclid's Elements by the age of 12. Pascal invented and sold the first calculating machine (1645).

Wolfgang was the greatest musical child prodigy who ever lived. He began composing minuets at the age of 5 and symphonies at 9.

Beethoven's own talent was such that at the age of 12 he was already an assistant to the organist Christian Gottlob Neefe, with whom he studied.

Sarah Caldwell, born Maryville, Mo., Mar. 6, 1924, is a conductor and producer. A child prodigy in both mathematics and music, before reaching the age of ten.

While not exhaustive, the list serves the purpose of demonstrating that this phenomenon occurs naturally among normal human beings from all walks of life. Therefore, scientifically speaking, it is quite possible that a child demonstrates abilities that adults can not. Also religiously speaking anything Allah desires will happen no matter how strange. Indeed Allah (SWT) asserts unequivocally in Qur'an that if He wanted something, all He has to do is to say to it is: "Be! and it will be!".

Q2) Every human is mortal. Then, how can Imam al-Mahdi (as) live so long?

Yes, every one but Allah is mortal, and in fact, Imam al-Mahdi will pass away too. But the difference is the length of life in this world. The holy Qur'an and the prophetic traditions inform us that some people have had/have long life in this world. Thus the possibility of the occurrence of such phenomena is confirmed by the religion of Islam.

Are you aware that according to the Qur'an (see 29: 14), Prophet Noah has just been prophet for 950 years? His age should have been even more than that because we should add his age before prophethood to the above number.

Do you agree that Prophet Jesus (as) is still alive? He is, in fact, 1995 years old by now. Of course, he is

not living on the earth. He is rather in the heavens, and according to the Muslim's belief, he will come back to the earth, and will pray behind Imam al-Mahdi (as).

Do you agree that al-Khidr (as) is still alive? Qur'an mentions the story of his meeting with Prophet Moses (as). He existed before the time of the Prophet Moses (as), and as such, al-Khidr (as) is now more than 3000 years old! He lives right here on the earth, but we can not recognize him (fairly similar to the case of Imam al-Mahdi). He serves Allah (SWT) as one of His agents.

The Hanafi scholar, Sibti Ibn al-Jawzi, in his book "Tathkirat al-Khawass al-Ummah", pp 325-328 gives the names of 22 people believed by Muslims to have lived various ages from 3,000 down to 300 years! No doubt! Allah has the ability to give a very long life to His servants, but He also has assigned a death time for everyone (including the above mentioned individuals) which can be very soon or very late.

Moreover, scientifically speaking, there are no objections whatsoever to the extended life span assertion. A group of scientists conducted a series of experiments at the Rockefeller Institute in New York in 1912 on certain "parts" of plants, animals, and humans. These scientists included Dr. Alex Carl, Dr. Jack Lope, and Dr. Warren Lewis and his wife, among others. Among the experiments conducted was one that directly treated the nerves, muscles, hearts, skin, and kidneys of human beings.

These organs were not connected to a human body; they were independent organs that were perhaps donated for the experiment. It was concluded by the scientists that these "parts or organs" can continue to live almost indefinitely as long as they are nourished properly, and as long as they are shielded from external negative interactions like microbes and other obstacles that might inhibit the growth of these organs; furthermore, the assertion was made that the cells would continue to grow normally under the above conditions, and that the growth is directly related to the nourishment provided.

Again, aging had no effect on these organs, and they grew every year without any signs of deterioration. The scientists concluded that these organs will continue to grow as long as the patience of the scientists themselves is not exhausted, causing them to abandon the nourishment process.

Q3) Where is Imam al-Mahdi (as) now?

Imam al-Mahdi disappeared in 260/874 when he became Imam. The last time that he was seen, was in the cellar of his father's house in Samarra, Iraq. That is why it is rumored regarding Shi'a that they believe al-Mahdi is in the cave!!!

Some Sunni historians ignorantly attributed that Shi'a believe al-Mahdi is hiding in the cellar. Shi'a do NOT believe that Imam al-Mahdi is in the Cave or Cellar! He was just seen there for the last time. He can be anywhere Allah wishes. However one thing is clear is that he lives on the earth among people while people do not perceive.

If that cellar has become famous as "Cellar of Occultation" (Sardab al-Ghaybah), it is because it was

made so by the non-Shi'i sources. There is NO mention of such name by the Shi'a scholars. Imam al-Mahdi (as) may sometimes live in one place and travels around the world, just the same as the common belief of Muslims about al-Khidr (as). (For more details see Kashf al-Ghummah, by Abul Hasan 'Ali Ibn Musa al-Irbili, v3, p283; Kashf al-Astar, by Mirza Husayn al-Noori, pp 210-216).

Second, with regards to the occultation of al-Mahdi (as), the Qur'an does NOT rule out such an occurrence at all. Again, the examples of Jesus (as) and al-Khidr (as), who are both in occultation, are worthy of mentioning.

Q4) Why did Imam al-Mahdi (as) disappear?

The above question shares the same answer with the following two questions:

Q4.b. Why does not Imam al-Mahdi (as) appear now?

Q4.c. When will he (as) come?

There are MANY reasons behind it. The most important reason of it will be disclosed when Imam al-Mahdi (as) will appear. However, I mention few reasons that I know.

1. A very easy answer would be: This is Allah's Will. His Will is based on His infinite wisdom. The appearance of Imam al-Mahdi solely depends on the decision of Allah. He knows best how to act. The question might be as naive as asking: Why some people are black and some are white? Why some are beautiful while others are not? This is Allah's decree.

2. A better answer (which also answers why some are beautiful and others are not, etc.) would be: IT IS A TEST. Allah could send all people to paradise directly. But He didn't, because He wanted to TEST us. (The test of Allah is actually a test that proves the facts for ourselves as witness, otherwise Allah has the foreknowledge of everything).

Only those who are obedient to Allah deserve paradise. Now, Allah is testing us that how we react in the sinful environment. If somebody preserve himself in today's world has much more reward than if he does that at the time when Imam al-Mahdi appears, because at that time the environment will be absolutely healthy and it will be much easier to preserve oneself.

This was just one aspect, however. Remember that ONLY Imam al-Mahdi will have an opportunity to conquer the whole world. Even our Prophet (S) could not do that. So the difficult test was for all era and was not just for us.

3. Imam al-Mahdi (as) will come as soon as people become ready for him. People throughout the history were NEVER ready. They killed prophets, and Imams one after the other. However Allah continued to send prophets till He finally sent Prophet Muhammad who brought the last message at the time when the evolution of the mind of human being reached its maturity, and thus Allah provided them with the

most complete and final religion. After that there was no need to send a new message.

Thus He sent Guides (Imams) who preserved and explained the message during the time of tribulation, for people. They also did that, and we are proud that we have had Imams like Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (as) who explained all aspects of Jurisprudence, etc. He had a golden opportunity of teaching during the clashes between the Umayyad and the Abbasids. During that short period when the tyrants of both sides were busy with each other, the Imam was teaching Jurisprudence and theology in classes with as much as 5000 students. (No need to mention that Abu Hanifa was one of his students). Now the time is for action. But unfortunately the majority of people were/are reluctant to follow the right path, and instead, they opposed and killed the Imams of Ahlul-Bayt, and treated them in the same way that their ancestors treated the prophets. (Even Prophet Muhammad said: "No Prophet was ever annoyed as much as me").

The situation will continue till such time when people realize that they need a divinely appointed Imam who rule over them since they can't solve their problems by themselves. When this happens universally, and when people become frustrated and disappointed from any type of "ism"(way of life, ideology), and when all raise their hands for help, then people are then ready for him. They will not kill him like they did with the others, nor do they treat him unjustly. They will rather accept him.

Of course, this will not happen till people of the world undergo much heavier afflictions, world-wide wars, mass destructions by satanic powers (such as Dajjal and Sufyani) which are not difficult to foresee in a near future.

4. Imam al-Mahdi will come when all types of ideologies are tested and they fail. At that time people will understand that they do not have any more solution and they will accept the solution of Imam al-Mahdi easily. For instance, look at communism which came to practice in Russia 100 years ago. People of the world at that time thought that this would be the best way of life which guarantees the prosperity of mankind.

But to their surprise, it crashed recently from within itself showing that this solution is failed in practice. Now some people think that Capitalism may solve their problems completely. This system is also about to crash, because the whole system is based on interest (Riba). The situation has reached to the point that people of the USA have the heaviest debt in the world. The studies even show that People here will never be able to pay their debt in full. And this was just from economy point of view.

People also suffer from other type of corruption, lust, and lack of spiritualities, etc. Such system is subject to crash sooner or later, one way or another. And when all type of ways of life showed their deficiency IN PRACTICE, people will, then, honor the truth.

5. Imam al-Mahdi (as) will come when he has 313 top virtuous helpers become available. Imam al-Mahdi can not govern the world with no helper, minister, etc. The communities should generate these top individuals. In fact, none of our other 11 Imams had such number of high rank followers. Let me give you two examples:

Before his demise, Prophet Muhammad (S) instructed Imam 'Ali (as) that if the number of his followers loyal to him (after the demise of the Prophet) exceeds 40 men, he should use force to restore his right and take the power, otherwise he should keep silent since the only remaining pious people would be killed without being able to help Islam. Unfortunately, the number of people who remained loyal to Imam 'Ali (as) did not reach to this amount, at that crucial moment. Another example:

Sahl Ibn al-Hasan al-Khurasani who was one of the followers of Ahlul-Bayt in Khurasan (a province in Iran) came to Medina to meet Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (as). Sahl al-Khurasani said: "O son of the Messenger of Allah! You are of the Imams of Ahlul-Bayt. What prevents you from getting your right (i.e., the rule) while you find more than one hundred thousand Shi'a who are ready to fight for you?"

The Imam (as) asked him to sit down, and then ordered to turn on the oven that was in the house. After the oven became very hot and turned red, the Imam (as) said: "O Khurasani step into the oven and sit in it." The Khurasani said: "My master, O son of the Messenger of Allah! Do not punish me by fire and make it easy for me." At this time, Harun al-Makki (ra) entered the room, and after the greetings exchanged, the Imam (as) told him to put down his shoes and to sit down inside the oven. He did so and the Imam (as) started talking to Sahl about Khurasan as if nothing has happened.

After some time, the Imam (as) said: "O Khurasani stand up and look inside the oven." Sahl looked into the oven and saw Harun sitting cross-legged inside the fire. Then Imam al-Sadiq (as) asked Harun to come out of oven and he came out healthy with no burn or injury. At this time, the Imam (as) asked Sahl: "How many individuals do you know in Khurasan like this man?" Sahl replied: "By Allah, not even one." The Imam (as) confirmed his saying and said, "We do not rise at this time when we do not even have five helpers (like him). We know better about the proper time." (al-Bihar, v47, p123, Hadith #172; also in Manaqib by Ibn Shahr Ashub)

The traditions state that Imam al-Mahdi needs 313 followers which are not only sincere and faithful, but also possess supreme knowledge and wisdom. Imam al-Mahdi should also have another 40,000 faithful followers who will fill the secondary positions. These people will not fall out of sky! It is up to us to educate our communities which could help to bring up such people, by first starting from our family, and friends, then school, then city, and then country to the extent our ability. We should however start from ourselves to avoid sin and to acquire more knowledge and wisdom and become more obedient to Allah.

Q5) The Shi'a state that the mother of Imam Mahdi (as) was a bondwoman. Isn't it shameful that he (as) should be born to a slave-girl?

The answer would be in the form of the following questions: Wasn't Hagar (as), the Prophet Abraham's wife, a bondwoman? Did she not bear Isma'il (Ishmael) (as), whom the Prophet Muhammad (S) is a direct descendant of? If it is acceptable for the Prophet Muhammad (S), the Seal of Prophethood, to be a descendant of Isma'il (as) who was born to a bondwoman, then why should that be shameful for Imam al-Mahdi (as)?

The Imam al-Mahdi's mother was Narjis and was a roman captive who was bought by Imam al-Askari (as) and then was married to him. She actually saw the Lady Fatimah (sa) in dream who told her to travel near the border where the Muslim army were fighting, and to become captive, and to be sold to the agent of Imam al-Askari who would be waiting for the arrival of the captives to the city.

I need to mention that the birth of al-Mahdi (as) was an event surrounded with secrecy, because the Abbasid authorities knew that the Mahdi who is to bring about a revolution is going to be the son of the eleventh Imam of Ahlul-Bayt, and were awaiting his coming to capture him for execution. Owing to that, Imam Hasan al-Askari (as), the Mahdi's father, could not behave conspicuously by revealing who the mother of the Mahdi (as) was. Notwithstanding, what has created the confusion among the critics of the Shi'a is the fact that Imam al-Askari (as) did not refer to her with one name.

A variety of names were used in an effort to fool the authorities, and to prevent them from recognizing who she was. That was part and parcel of the plan to protect the Mahdi (as). Had the father (as) been slightly negligent in protecting his son, it is clear that al-Mahdi (as) would not have survived. The story of birth of Imam al-Mahdi is like that of the Moses. All the women in the house of Imam al-Askari were being regularly inspected by female specialists of the Abbasid to find out if anyone has become pregnant.

In fact, the word "al-Askari" became the title of the father of Imam al-Mahdi, because he was forced to live inside an army base so that his house could be under full control of the authorities. Similar to Moses's mother, the Mahdi's mother did not have any sign of pregnancy to the last hours. But no doubt that what Allah wishes will certainly take place.

Given these adverse conditions and hardships, the birth of the Imam (as) was kept in utmost secrecy, that even the followers of Imam al-Askari (as), did not know of the time of the birth of al-Mahdi (as). Only very few close associates were notified. The obvious contention was that the birth of Imam al-Mahdi (as) constituted a direct threat to the continuance of the corrupt government to rule. This situation is best understood when we refer back to the first few years of Islam when the Prophet (S) preached the religion in utmost secrecy among a few loyal followers. The Prophet (S) feared for the lives of these believers and, as such, he forbade them from revealing any information that might jeopardize the entire mission.

Q6) Who was the father of Imam al-Mahdi (as)?

The Shi'a along with some Sunni scholars believe that his father was Imam Hasan al-Askari (d. 260/874). Below I have included the name of 31 Sunni scholars who confirm this fact. The overwhelming majority of prophetic traditions about Imam al-Mahdi (some of which I mentioned in the previous part) state that the name of Imam al-Mahdi is the same as the name of the Prophet (i.e., Muhammad).

However there exists a single Sunni report that has an additional phrase concerning that "his father's

name is also similar to that of the Prophet's father (i.e., Abdullah).”This extra phrase does NOT exist in all other reports transmitted by the Shi'a and the Sunni traditionists who narrated the Hadith. Moreover, the extra phrase in some Shi'i traditions is in the form of: "his nickname is the same as the Prophet's nickname (i.e., Abul Qasim)”which is correct. In fact, Sunnis narrated that:

The Messenger of Allah said to 'Ali: "An issue will be born to you whom I have gifted him with my name and my nickname."

Sunni references:

- Sahih al-Tirmidhi, v5, p137
- Sunan Abu Dawud, v4, p292
- al-Mustadrak, by al-Hakim, v4, p278 who said it is authentic based on the criteria of the two Shaikhs (i.e., al-Bukhari and Muslim)
- Ma'arifat Ulum al-Hadith, by al-Hakim, p189
- Musnad Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, v1, p95
- Fadha'il al-Sahaba, by Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, v2, p676, Tradition #1155
- al-Tabaqat, by Ibn Sa'd, v5, p91

The single report which has the additional phrase (that his father's name is the same as that of the Prophet's father) has been probably fabricated by Abdullah Ibn al-Hasan (Muthanna -- the second) Ibn (Imam) al-Hasan (as). Abdullah (d. 145/762) had a son named Muhammad who called him "Nafs al-Zakiyyah" and the Mahdi. (See Ibn Taqtuqa, al-Fikr fi al-Adab al-Sultaniyyah, pp 165-166). Abdullah used all his power and wealth to support the revolt of his son. Abdullah concealed his son several times during the Umayyad period when there was still no danger for him. When he was asked why he did this, he said: "What an idea, their time has not come yet." (Murooj al-Dhahab, by al-Mas'udi, v6, pp 107-108). In the first letter that Muhammad wrote to the Abbasid Caliph, al-Mansoor, he wrote: "From Muhammad Ibn Abdillah, the Mahdi, ..." (Tabari, v3, p29, Ibn Kathir V10, p85, Ibn Khaldun, v4, p4).

Muhammad Ibn Abdillah started his claims at the end of the rule of the Umayyad caliphs. Muhammad became powerful and tried to gain the support of the last Umayyad Caliph who was Marwan Ibn Muhammad (132/750), but the Caliph did not pay attention to him:

Abul Abbas al-Falasti said to Marwan: "Muhammad Ibn Abdillah is striving to gain the power for he is claiming to be al-Mahdi". Marwan replied: "What does he have to do with me? (the Mahdi) is not him, nor any of his father's descendants. He will be the son of a slave woman."

Sunni Reference:

- Maqatil al-Talibeen, by Abul Faraj al-Isbahani, Pub. in Saudi Arabia, pp 247,258

When Marwan said that al-Mahdi (as) is not one of his father's descendants, he meant the descendants of Imam al-Hasan (as), for al-Mahdi (as) is the descendant of Imam al-Husayn (as) and is son of a slave woman (umm walad). Even Marwan was aware of these traditions because of which he did not pay attention to Muhammad Ibn Abdillah. This shows that the true versions of traditions from the Prophet were wide-spread at that time.

There is also a possibility that the fabrication of that extra phrase was done the Abbasid Caliph, Abdullah al-Mansoor, who called his son the Mahdi:

Muslim Ibn Qutaybah said: "Mansoor called me and said: Muhammad Ibn Abdillah rebelled and he called himself the Mahdi. By Allah he is not. I will tell you something else which I have told no one before, and will tell no one after you. By Allah my son is not the Mahdi either,... but I did so to make a good future for him."

Sunni Reference:

- Maqatil al-Talibeen, by Abul Faraj al-Isbahani, Pub. in Saudi Arabia, pp 246-247

Also the Caliph al-Mansoor fabricated the following "tradition":

Ibn Abbas (allegedly) said: "These four are from us Ahlul-Bayt: al-Saffah, al-Mundhir, al-Mansoor, and al-Mahdi." (Recorded by al-Hakim).

It is clear that by fabricating the above reports, al-Mansoor was sorting the chain of Abbasid Caliphs and included his name and the name of his son, Mahdi, among Ahlul-Bayt! Ibn Abbas (ra) never uttered such words, and he himself is not among Ahlul-Bayt, let alone those Abbasid tyrants.

From all above it can be seen that the fabrication of the report which includes that extra phrase, could be reconciled on Muhammad Ibn Abdillah and/or the Abbasid Caliph, al-Mahdi. This is not the place to examine the Hadith critically, but merely to point out the historical background of it.

As I mentioned, some Sunni scholars rejected that single report. The following are the name of some Sunni scholars who wrote that Imam al-Mahdi has already been born, and is the only son of Imam Hasan al-Askari (as), and he is alive and in occultation, and will re-appear to establish the government of Justice. With this, they are in agreement with the Shi'a. Their names are:

1. Kamal al-Din Ibn Talha, in his book "Matalib al-Su'aal Fi Manaqib Aal al-Rasool"
2. Sulayman Ibn Ibrahim al-Qundoozi, al-Hanafi (known as Khawajah Kalan), in his book "Yanabi' al-Mawaddah" who has also established from important Sunni sources that love for Ahlul-Bayt is the only right path and the Islamic Way of Life.

3. Abu Abdullah Muhammad Ibn Yusuf Ganji, al-Shafi'i, (d. 658 AH), the author of "Al-Bayan fi Akhbar Sahib al-Zaman" and "Kifayah al-Talib".
4. Shaikh Nooruddin 'Ali Ibn Muhammad Ibn Sabbagh, al-Maliki, from Mecca, in his book "al-Fusool al-Muhimmah", pp 310,319.
5. Ahmad Ibn Ibrahim Ibn Hashim al-Baladhuri is one of the great scholars and traditionists who also asserts the Imamatus and occultation of the twelfth Imam in his book called "al-Hadith al-Mutasalsil"
6. Ibn Arabi (Muhyiddin Muhammad Ibn 'Ali Ibn Muhammad al-Arabi), al-Hanbali, in his book "Al-Futuh al-Makkiyah" (Chapter 366) discusses a detailed account of the birth of al-Mahdi, son of al-Askari (as), and of his re-appearance before the day of resurrection.
7. Ibn Khashab (Abu Muhammad Abdullah Ibn Ahmad Ibn Ahmad Ibn Khashab), has given a detailed account of the twelfth Imam in his biographical book called "Tawarikh Mawaleed al-A'imma wa Wafiyatihim"
8. Shaikh Abdullah Sha'rani (d. 905 AH), the celebrated Sufi, in his work "Yaqaqeeet", Chapter 66, deals with the birth and the occultation of the twelfth Imam. Also He extensively talks about Imam al-Mahdi (as) in his other book "Aqa'id al-Akbar".
9. Shaikh Hasan Iraqi who accepts the twelfth Imam, praises Sha'rani as a pious and a learned ascetic, and narrates the story of Sha'rani's meeting with the twelfth Imam.
10. Sayyid 'Ali, known as Khawas, the teacher of Sha'rani, also a believer of the twelfth Imam, confirms what Shaikh Hasan asserted about the meeting of Sha'rani with the twelfth Imam.
11. Nooruddin Abdul Rahman Ibn Ahmad, known as Mulla Jami, in his book Shawahid al-Nubuwwah (The Evidence of Prophethood of Muhammad) gives an account of the birth of the twelfth Imam and his statement is in complete agreement with the Shi'a records.
12. Muhammad Ibn Mahmood al-Bukhari, al-Hanafi, known as Khawaja Parsa in his book "Fasl al-Khitab" gives the account of the birth, occultation, and re-appearance of the twelfth Imam.
13. Shaikh Abdul Haq Dehlawi, in his book "Jazb e Qulub", narrates the statements of Hakima, the daughter of the ninth Imam who was asked by the eleventh Imam, Imam al-Askari, to stay with Narjis, mother of the last Imam during the night at the end of which she gave birth to her son.
14. Sayyid Jamaluddin Husayni Muhaddith who is the author of the celebrated book "Rawdhat al-Ahbab". According to Dayar Bakri, Mulla 'Ali Qari, Abdul Haqq Dehlawi, "Rawdhat al-Ahbab" is one of the reliable sources of reference. The author mentions the twelfth Imam in the most reverential terms. He states:

The auspicious birth of the pearl of the Vicegerency and the precious form of the mine of guidance took

place on the 15th of Sha'ban in the year of 225 AH at Samarra. He has described the Imam in the following words:

- al-Mahdi al-Muntadhar (the expected Mahdi)
- al-Khalaf al-Salih (the righteous successor)
- Sahib al-Zaman (the master of the time)

15.al-Arif Abdul Rahman Sufi, in his works "Mir'at al-Asrar"(The Mirror of Mysteries) gives a detailed account of the birth, and the occultation of the twelfth Imam.

16.'Ali Akbar, son of Asadullah Maududi, in his book Mukashifaat (Visions), which is a commentary on "Nafahat al-Uns"by Abdurrahman Jami, asserts the existence of the Mahdi as being the pole of guidance after his father Imam Hasan al-Askari, who was also the pole of guidance and Imam.

17.Malik al-Ulama Dulatabadi who is a well known scholar, in his work "Hidayat al-Saada"has confirmed the Imam and the occultation of al-Mahdi.

18.Nasr Ibn 'Ali Jahzami Nasri, one of the most reliable reporters of traditions whom Khateeb al-Baghdadi has praised him in his works on history, and Yusuf Ganji al-Shafi'i, in his book Manaqib has introduced Nasr as one of the masters of al-Bukhari and Muslim. Nasr asserts the existence of:

Qa'im Aale Muhammad (The 'Support' among the family of Muhammad), the one among the Imams of the House of the Prophet (S) whose duty is to establish Islam throughout the world.

19.Mulla 'Ali Qari, one of the greatest traditionists, in his famous book, "Mirqat", talks about Imam al-Mahdi after mentioning the celebrated statement of the Holy Prophet (S) that after him there would be twelve successors (Caliphs). Mulla 'Ali states whether they are in power or not makes no difference as they are the rightful Imams.

20.Kazi Jawad Sibti was a Christian but later became a Muslim. He wrote "Baraheen Sibtiyya"(Proofs forwarded by Sibti), which is a refutation of the Christian writers. He narrates the Prophecy from Ashaya (Joshua) concerning the coming of a man from the chosen branch of the chosen lineage of Adam who would be the seat of the spirit. In other words, he will be filled with the spirit of wisdom, sympathy, justice and knowledge and he will be God fearing. God will bestow on him a sound and glorying reason and make him firm.

His judgment would be based on hearing an external evidence, but he will have a guided insight about everything and judge people according to what they really are in their hearts. He further states that his method of judgment is peculiar to him and has not been adopted by any prophet or Vice-regent of God. The Muslims are unanimous that the Mahdi of this description shall be descendant of Fatimah, daughter of the holy Prophet (S). Particularly the view of the Shi'a seems to be real interpretation of this real

prophecy.

21. Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, al-Hanafī, (Shams al-Dīn Abul Mudhaffar Yusuf), the author of "Tathkirat al-Khawās", pp 325–328 gives the names of 22 people believed by Muslims to have lived various ages from 3,000 down to 300 years! He also writes about the twelfth Imam as follows

- He (al-Mahdī) is Muhammad Ibn al-Ḥasan Ibn ‘Alī Ibn Muhammad Ibn ‘Alī Ibn Musa al-Riḍha
- His title is Abu Abdillāh and Abul Qasim
- He is the last successor of the Prophet (S)
- He is the Last Imam of the House
- He is the authoritative proof of God (al-Hujjah)
- He is the master of time (Sahib al-Zaman)
- and he is the expected one (al-Muntadhar)

22. Abu Bakr Ahmad Ibn Ḥasan al-Bayhaqī, the famous Shafī‘ī jurist, has confirmed the birth of the son of al-Askari and his being as the expected Mahdī.

23. Shaikh Sadruddīn, known as Hamavī, who has written a book about the Last Imam of the House of the Prophet (S). He quotes a tradition of the Holy Prophet (S) as follows

Prophet (S) said: "The learned one among my followers are in the rank of the Prophets from among the Children of Israel", also referring to the twelve Naqeeb (chiefs) of the Children of Israel (see Qur’ān 5: 12). But the last Walī, who is the last of the successors of the Prophet (S) and who is the Twelfth Walī in the chain of Awliāa, is al-Mahdī, "Sahib al-Zaman", his appellation and title should not be used for any one else.

24. Shaikh Ahmad Jami, (as quoted by Qundoozī, author of "Yanabi al-Mawaddah", and Qadhi Noorullah author of "Majalis al-Mu’mineen") has composed the following poem:

My heart is fine and bright with the love of Haydar

Next to Haydar, al-Ḥasan is our Guide and Leader.

The dust beneath the Shoes of al-Husayn

is the eyeliner (surmah) for my eyes.

al-Abideen, the ornament of all devotees

is like a crown on my head.

al-Baqir is the light of both my eyes.

The religion of Ja'far is true and the path of Musa is right.

*O, loyal, ones: listen to me praising the King of Kings (al-Ridha)
who is buried in Khurasan.*

A particle from the dust of his tomb is the cure of all pains

Leader of men of faith is al-Taqi, O dear Muslims

*If you love al-Naqi in preference to all other people,
you have done the thing which is proper and right.*

al-Askari is the light of the eyes of both Adam and the world.

Where can be found, in the world,

such a chief in command like al-Mahdi?

25. Shaikh Amir Ibn Basri has composed an eulogy called Qasidah Tayya. The composition contains theosophical lore, maxims, mystical points, and matter of etiquette. Here are some lines quoted:

O' Imam al-Mahdi! How long will You be hidden?

Oblige us, O' our father, with your return!

We feel sad the waiting time is prolonged.

For the sake of Thy Lord, bless us with your audience.

O the pole of being! Hasten, O our beloved!

Return, so that we may enjoy the sight.

Surely, it is a great a pleasure

for a lover to meet his beloved after a long absence.

26. Husayn Ibn Hamdan al-Husayni, in his book "al-Hidaya" mentions the twelfth Imam, the master of time, as the son of the eleventh Imam Hasan al-Askari.

27. The well known biographer, Ibn Khallakan in his book "Wafayat al-A'ayan", has given a brief account

of the birth of the Imam.

28. Ibn al-Azraq, as quoted by Ibn Khallakan, asserts the existence of the twelfth Imam.

29. Ibn al-Wardi the historian, in his work asserts the birth of the son of al-Askari in 255 AH.

30. Sayyid Mu'min Shablanji in his work "Noor al-Absar" gives the genealogy of Imam Muhammad al-Mahdi (as), the twelfth Imam.

After these and many more, those who deny his birth and his present life have no proof against those who have accepted this fact, while they still recognize the correctness of traditions about Imam al-Mahdi. The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"He who dies not knowing the Imam of his era, has died the death of al-Jahiliyya (Days of Ignorance; the era before Islam)."

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