

Sunni Documentation on Imam al-Mahdi (as)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

For the Sunni brothers, there are six major collections of traditions based on the Sunni standards for verifying the authenticity of a tradition. These six books are: Sahih al-Bukhari, Sahih Muslim, Sahih al-Tirmidhi, Sunan Ibn Majah, Sunan Abu Dawud, and Sahih al-Nisa'i. I just quote few traditions from these six books to prove that a knowledgeable Sunni brother/sister can NOT deny that:

- al-Mahdi (as) will come in the last days to make a universal Government,
- al-Mahdi (as) is from the Ahlul-Bayt of the Prophet (S),
- al-Mahdi (as) is from the progeny of Fatimah (sa), the daughter of the Prophet (S),
- al-Mahdi (as) is different than Prophet Jesus (the Messiah),
- Prophet Jesus (as) will come as one of the followers of Imam al-Mahdi and will pray behind him in congregational prayer.

Another undeniable fact is that many leading Sunni scholars have written books after books exclusively about Imam al-Mahdi (as) which I included some of their names at the end of this article.

Moreover, Insha Allah in the next article, I will give a list of Sunni scholars who believe that Imam al-Mahdi (as) is son of Imam Hasan al-Askari (as), and is alive and went into occultation. In that article will also discuss the special specifications of Imam al-Mahdi which are the points of disagreement between the Shi'a and the Sunni.

The following are only some of the traditions about Imam al-Mahdi which Sunnis admit to their authenticity and existence:

The Prophet (S) said: "Even if the entire duration of the world's existence has already been exhausted

and only one day is left (before the day of judgment), Allah will expand that day to such a length of time, as to accommodate the kingdom of a person from my Ahlul-Bayt who will be called by my name. He will fill out the earth with peace and justice as it will have been full of injustice and tyranny (by then)."

Sunni References:

- Sahih al-Tirmidhi, v2, p86, v9, pp 74–75
- Sunan Abu Dawud, v2, p7
- Musnad Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, v1, pp 84,376; V3, p63
- al-Mustadrak ala al-Sahihayn, by al-Hakim, v4, p557
- Jami' al-Saghir, by al-Suyuti, pp 2,160
- al-Urful Wardi, by al-Suyuti, p2
- al-Majma', by al-Tabarani, p217
- Tahdhib al-Tahdhib, by Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, v9, p144
- Fat'h al-Bari fi Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari, by Ibn Hajar Asqalani, v7, p305
- al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah, by Ibn Hajar al-Haythami, Ch. 11, section 1, p249
- al-Tathkirah, by al-Qurtubi, p617
- al-Hawi, by al-Suyuti, v2, pp 165–166
- Sharh al-Mawahib al-Ladunniyyah, by al-Zurqani, v5, p348
- Fat'h al-Mugheeth, by al-Sakhawi, v3, p41
- Kanz al-Ummal, v7 P186
- Iqd al-Durar Fi Akhbar al-Mahdi al-Muntadhar, v12, Ch. 1,
- al-Bayan fi Akhbar Sahib al-Zaman, By Ganji al-Shafi'i, Ch. 12
- al-Fusool al-Muhimmah, by Ibn Sabbagh al-Maliki, Ch. 12
- Arjahul Matalib, by Ubaidallah Hindi al-Hanafi, p380
- Muqaddimah, by Ibn Khaldoon, p266
- and also in the works of Ibn Habban, Abu Nua'ym, Ibn Asakir, etc.

Also:

The Prophet (S) said: "al-Mahdi is one of us, the members of the household (Ahlul-Bayt)."

Sunni reference: Sunan Ibn Majah, v2, Tradition #4085

It is evident from the above traditions that Imam al-Mahdi (as) is from the Ahlul-Bayt of Prophet Muhammad, so he can not be Jesus (the Messiah; al-Maseeh). Thus, al-Mahdi and Messiah are two different personalities but they come at the same time, al-Mahdi as Imam and Jesus as his follower. The following tradition clearly mentions that Imam al-Mahdi is one of descendants of the daughter of Prophet Muhammad (S):

The Prophet (S) said: The Mahdi will be of my family, of the descendants of Fatimah (the Prophet's daughter).

أَلْمَهْدِيُّ مِنْ عَتَرَتِي مِنْ وَلَدِ فَاطِمَةَ

Sunni references:

- Sunan Abu Dawud, English version, Ch. 36, Tradition #4271 (narrated by Umm Salama, the wife of the Prophet)
- Sunan Ibn Majah, v2, Tradition #4086
- al-Nisa'i and al-Bayhaqi, and others as quoted in:
- al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah, by Ibn Hajar al-Haythami, Ch. 11, section 1, p249

Also:

The Prophet (S) said: "We the children of Abd al-Muttalib are the Masters of the inhabitants of the heaven: Myself, Hamza (ra), 'Ali (as), Ja'far Ibn Abi Talib (ra), al-Hasan (as), al-Husayn (as), and al-Mahdi (as)."

Sunni references:

- Sunan Ibn Majah, v2, Tradition #4087
- al-Mustadrak, by al-Hakim, on the authority of Anas Ibn Malik
- al-Daylami
- al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah, by Ibn Hajar al-Haythami, Ch. 11, section 1, p245

The Prophet (S) said: "The Mahdi will appear in my Ummah. He will appear for a minimum of 7 or a maximum of 9 years; at that time, my Ummah will experience a bountiful favor like never before. It shall have a great abundance of food, of which it need not save anything, and the wealth at that time is in great quantities, such that if a man asks the Mahdi to give him some, and the Mahdi (as) will say: Here! Take!"

Sunni reference: Sunan Ibn Majah, v2, Tradition #5083

Remark: According to Shi'i sources, the Government of Peace and equality that Imam al-Mahdi will establish will last hundreds of years with no rival, and then the day of Judgment will commence. What is mentioned in the above tradition as 7 or 9 years is the length of time that Imam al-Mahdi (as) will fight to conquer the world when he starts his mission.

The Prophet (S) said: "We (I and my family) are members of a household that Allah (SWT) has chosen for them the life of the Hereafter over the life of this world; and the members of my household (Ahlul-Bayt) shall suffer a great affliction and they shall be forcefully expelled from their homes after my death; then there will come people from the East carrying black flags, and they will ask for some good to be given to them, but they shall be refused service; as such, they will wage war and emerge victorious, and will be offered that which they desired in the first place, but they will refuse to accept it till they pass it to a man from my family (Ahlul-Bayt) appears to fill the Earth with justice as it has been filled with corruption. So whoever reaches that (time) ought to come to them even if crawling on the ice/snow since among them is the Vice-regent of Allah (Khalifatullah) al-Mahdi."

Sunni references:

- Sunan Ibn Majah, v2, Tradition #4082,
- The History Tabari
- al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah, by Ibn Hajar, Ch. 11, section 1, pp 250–251

Also:

The Messenger of Allah said: "The world will not perish until a man among the Arabs appears whose name matches my name."

Sunni reference: Sahih al-Tirmidhi, v9, p74

In Sahih Muslim, in the Chapter of al-Fitan, there are some interesting traditions on what will happen in the last days of the world. I would like to quote two of them here:

Abu Nadra reported: We were with the company of Jabir Ibn Abdillah... Jabir Ibn Abdillah kept quite for a while and then reported Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) having said: "There would be a

Caliph in the last (period) of my Ummah who would freely give handfuls of wealth to the people without counting it." I said to Abu Nadra and Abu al-Ala: Do you mean Umar Ibn Abd al-Aziz? They said: NO, (he would be Imam Mahdi).

Sunni references:

- Sahih Muslim, English version, v4, chapter MCCV, p1508, Tradition #6961
- Sahih Muslim, Arabic version, Kitab al-Fitan, v4, p2234, Tradition #67

(NOTE: What are inside the parentheses in the above tradition are NOT my comments. They are the words of the translator of Sahih Muslim (Abdul Hamid Siddiqui).)

Similarly, we read in Sahih Muslim:

Abu Sa'id and Jabir Ibn Abdullah reported that Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) said: "There would be in the last (phase) of the time a Caliph who would distribute wealth but would not count."

Sunni references:

- Sahih Muslim, English version, v4, chapter MCCV, p1508, Tradition #6964
- Sahih Muslim, Arabic version, Kitab al-Fitan, v4, p2235, Tradition #69

It is also narrated:

In the end of the time, my Ummah will undergo very hard affliction like never before, so that man can not find any way out. Then Allah will appear a person from my progeny, that is my Ahlul-Bayt, who will fill the earth with justice as it was filled with injustice. The inhabitants of the earth and the inhabitants of the heaven love him. The sky will bring down its water everywhere and the earth will bring all what it can offer and will become green all over.

Sunni references:

- al-Sahih fi al-Hadith, by al-Hakim, as quoted in:
- al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah, by Ibn Hajar al-Haythami, Ch. 11, section 1, p250

Ibn Majah in his Sunan quotes Muhammad Ibn Hanafiyyah and Imam 'Ali saying that the Holy Prophet (S) said:

"al-Mahdi is from our Ahlul-Bayt, no doubt Allah will enforce his appearance within a night (i.e., his coming is very unpredictable and is very sudden)."

Sunni references:

- Sunan Ibn Majah, v2, p269
- Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, as quoted in:
- al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah, by Ibn Hajar al-Haythami, Ch. 11, section 1, p250

Moreover, it is narrated that:

‘Ali Ibn Abi Talib (as) said: "When the ‘Support’ of the family of Muhammad (al-Qa'im Aale Muhammad) rises Allah will unite the people of east and the people of west."

Sunni references:

- Ibn Asakir, as quoted in:
- al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah, by Ibn Hajar al-Haythami, Ch. 11, section 1, p252

Ibn Hajar wrote that:

Muqatil Ibn Sulayman and those who followed him among the (Sunni) commentators of Qur'an said that the verse: "And he shall be a Sign for (the coming of) the Hour"(Qur'an 43:61) was revealed about al-Mahdi.

Sunni reference: al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah, by Ibn Hajar, Ch. 11, section 1, p247

Also Ahmad Ibn Hanbal recorded:

The Prophet (S) said: "Allah will bring out from concealment al-Mahdi from my Family and just before the Day of Judgment; even if only one day were to remain in the life of the world, and he will spread on this earth justice and equity and will eradicate tyranny and oppression."

Sunni references:

- Musnad Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, v1, p99
- A close version has also been narrated in Sunan Abu Dawud, English version, Ch. 36, Tradition #4270 narrated from ‘Ali Ibn Abi Talib (as).

It is narrated in Sahih Muslim that:

Jabir Ibn Abdillah al-Ansari (ra) said: I heard the Messenger of Allah saying: "A group of my Ummah will fight for the truth until near the day of judgment when Jesus, the son of Marry, will descend, and the leader of them will ask him to lead the prayer, but Jesus declines, saying: "No, Verily, among you Allah has made leaders for others and He has bestowed his bounty upon them."

Sunni reference:

- Sahih Muslim, Arabic, part 2, p193
- Musnad Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, v3, pp 45,384
- al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah, by Ibn Hajar al-Haythami, Ch. 11, section 1, p251
- Nuzool Isa Ibn Maryam Akhir al-Zaman, by Jalaluddin al-Suyuti, p57
- Musnad, by Abu Ya'ala which provides another version of the tradition with more clear words on the authority of Jabir that the Messenger of Allah said: "A group among my Ummah will continue to fight for the truth until Jesus, the son of Marry, will descend, and the Imam of them will ask him to lead the prayer, but Jesus replies: "You have more right to it, and verily Allah has honored some of you over others in this Ummah."
- Sahih Ibn Habban, whose tradition reads: "their leader al-Mahdi" and the rest of tradition is the same.
- Ibn Abu Shaybah, another Sunni traditionist, and the mentor of al-Bukhari and Muslim, has reported several traditions about Imam al-Mahdi (as). He has also reported that the Imam of the Muslims who will lead Prophet Jesus in prayer is Imam al-Mahdi himself.

Jalaluddin al-Suyuti mentioned that: "I have heard some of the deniers of (truth) deny what has been conveyed about Jesus that when he descends will pray the Fajr prayer behind al-Mahdi. They say, Jesus has higher status than to pray behind a non-Prophet.

This is a bizarre opinion since the issue of prayer of Jesus behind al-Mahdi has been proven strongly via numerous authentic traditions from the Messenger of Allah, who is the most truthful." And then al-Suyuti goes on narrating some of the traditions in this regard. (See Nuzool Isa Ibn Maryam Akhir al-Zaman, by Jalaluddin al-Suyuti, p56).

Also al-Hafidh Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani mentioned that:

"The Mahdi is of this Ummah, and that Jesus (S) will come down and pray behind him."

Sunni reference: Fat'h al-Bari, by Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, v5, p362

This is also mentioned by another Sunni scholar, Ibn Hajar al-Haythami, who wrote:

"The Ahlul-Bayt are like the stars through whom we are guided in the right direction, and if the stars are taken away (or hidden) we would come face to face with the signs of the Almighty as promised (i.e., the Day of Resurrection). This will happen when the Mahdi will come, as mentioned in the traditions, and the Prophet Jesus will say his prayers behind him, the Dajjal will be slain, and then the signs of the Almighty will appear one after another."

Sunni reference: al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah, by Ibn Hajar, Ch. 11, section 1, p234

Also Ibn Hajar quoted Abu al-Husayn al-Ajiri saying:

The traditions of al-Mustafa (S) on the rising of al-Mahdi has been transmitted via numerous authorities and is more than the level of (being sufficient for) Mutawatir, describing that he is of his Ahlul-Bayt, and will fill the earth with justice, and that Jesus (as) will come at the same time and he will assist Jesus for killing al-Dajjal in the land of Palestine, and that he will lead this nation and Jesus will pray behind him.

Sunni reference:

- Abu al-Husayn al-Ajiri as quoted in al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah, by Ibn Hajar, Ch. 11, section 1, p254

So if al-Mahdi and Jesus are to be the same person as some ignorants claim, then how can one pray behind himself?! Moreover this shows that Imam al-Mahdi and Jesus (the Messiah) will come at the same time so that they could pray the morning prayer together in Jerusalem.

In fact, the equivalent word of "Messiah" in Arabic is "al-Maseeh" which means "Wiped Clean; Purified". This word has been used in Qur'an as the title of Prophet Jesus (as). As such, the "Messiah" is the Prophet Jesus (as) and not the Imam al-Mahdi (as).

However, the word "Messiah" in English has another meaning, that is "savior". As a result, there have been some English translators who used the word "Messiah" for Imam al-Mahdi (as) with the meaning of "Savior" which does NOT have anything to do with Arabic word "al-Maseeh".

I should point out that, there exists a fabricated tradition which is mainly used by Ahmadis and Qadianis to prove that al-Mahdi and Jesus are the same. The tradition states: "And no Mahdi except Jesus."

This tradition has been rated by al-Hakim as unknown and strange and he said there are discrepancy in its chain of authorities. al-Bayhaqi said Muhammad Ibn Khalid said this tradition is single (Mufrad). al-Nisa'i has mentioned that this tradition is unfamiliar and is denied, and that the memorizers of traditions confirm that the traditions which state that al-Mahdi is the descendants of Fatimah are authentic and reliable. (See al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah, Ch. 11, section 1, p252 for details).

Prophet Jesus is not the Imam of Muslims, and when he comes back, he will be the follower of the Imam of Muslims who is known as Imam al-Mahdi (as).

In Sahih al-Bukhari, it is narrated that:

The Prophet (S) said: "What would be your situation if the Son of Mary (i.e. Jesus) descends upon you and your Imam is among you?"

Sunni reference:

● Sahih al-Bukhari, Arabic-English, v4, Tradition #658

NOTE: The above is my own translation. The Saudi-paid translator of Sahih al-Bukhari (Muhammad Muhsin Khan) has shown pure dishonesty in translating the above tradition. His translation of the last portion of the tradition does not bear any similarity what so ever with the Arabic text of the tradition which is as follows:

كيف أنتم إذا نزل ابنُ مريم فيكم وإمامكم منكم؟

Now let us look at the false translation of Mr. Muhammad Muhsin Khan:

Sahih Bukhari Hadith: 4.658

Narrated Abu Huraira:

Allah's Apostle said "How will you be when the son of Mary (i.e. Jesus) descends amongst you and he will judge people by the Law of the Qur'an and not by the law of Gospel.

Mr. Muhsin Khan has trimmed the last part of the tradition which states that the Imam of Muslims (i.e., Imam al-Mahdi) is among Muslims when the son of Mary descends. Instead, the translator has added another sentence which does not exist in the Arabic text. I should mention that this is not the only place that he has altered the text, and there are much more examples in this regard which proves his bias and his dishonesty.

Al-Hafidh Muhammad Ibn 'Ali al-Shawkani (d. 1250/1834) wrote in a book called "al-Tawdhih fi twawatur ma jaa'a fil muntadar wad-djial wal masih" (the explanation about the frequent reports concerning the Awaited one, the Dajjal, and the messiah) in which he wrote about Imam al-Mahdi (as) that: "The traditions about al-Mahdi have been related by numerous authorities and are therefore reliable beyond doubt or confusion, because in jurisprudence the qualification of Mutawatir is valid even for (traditions) with less than this number of narrations.

There are also many sayings of the companions (of the Prophet) which explicitly mention the Mahdi, which have the status of narrations from the Prophet since there is no question of establishing such saying through Ijtihad (one's opinion and research)". The author gives the same opinion in his other book "al-Fat'h al-Rabbani". (In this connection see also Mawsu'atil Imam al-Mahdi, v1, pp 391-392, 413-414, 434, and also Tuhfatul Ahwadhi, v6, p485).

The author of the book, "Ghayah al-Ma'amool," mentioned that: "It is a famous narration among the Scholars of the past and the present that there has to appear a man from the family of the Prophet (S) named al-Mahdi. In addition, the traditions about the Mahdi have been narrated by the most renowned companions of the Prophet (S), as well as by the most renowned scholars such as Abu Dawud, al-

Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah, al-Tabarani, Abu Ya'ala, al-Bazzar, Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, and al-Hakim (May Allah be pleased with them all); furthermore, those who claim that the traditions narrated with regard to the appearance of the Mahdi are weak, are themselves in error."

Al-Saban in his book, "Is'af al-Raghibeen," mentioned that: "The news about the appearance of the Mahdi are traceable back to the Prophet (S), and that he is one of the members of the family of the Prophet (S); and that he will fill the Earth with justice."

Al-Suwaydi in his book, "Saba'iq al-Dhahab," reported that: "The scholars have a consensus that the Mahdi (as) will appear at the end of time and fill the Earth with justice; and the traditions supporting his appearance are indeed numerous."

al-Hafidh Abul-Hasan Muhammad Ibn al-Husayn al-Sijistani al-Aburi al-Shafi'i (d. 363/974) said: "The traditions were related by numerous authorities and were spread far and wide by many narrators, from al-Mustafa (S) concerning al-Mahdi who is from the household (of the Prophet) and who will fill the world with justice.."

This statement was accepted by the subsequent scholars as testified by Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani (See Tahdhib al-Tahdhib, v9, p144; Fat'h al-Bari, v7, p305), al-Qurtubi (al-Tathkirah, p617), al-Suyuti (al-Hawi, v2, pp 165-166), al-Muttaqi al-Hindi (al-Burhan fi Alamat Mahdi Akhir al-Zaman, pp 175-176), Ibn Hajar al-Haythami (al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah, Ch. 11, section 1, p249), al-Zurqani (Sharh al-Mawahib al-Ladunniyyah, v5, p348), al-Sakhawi (Fat'h al-Mugheeth, v3, p41), etc.

The best formulation of the belief of all Muslims about al-Mahdi (as) has been given by a person who himself did not believe in his coming and who denied the validity of the traditions concerning this matter. He was Ibn Khaldoon (d. 808/1406), a famous historian, in whose book, "al-Muqaddamah," wrote:

"Let it be known that it is a narrated event by ALL Muslims in EVERY era that at the end of time a man from the family of the Prophet (S) will, without fail, make his appearance and will strengthen Islam and spread justice; Muslims will follow him and he will gain domination over the Muslim realm. He will be called al-Mahdi." (An Introduction to History, by Ibn Khaldoon, English version, London, 1967 Edition, pp 257-258)

The above quote proves that even Ibn Khaldoon was in the opinion that the belief in Imam al-Mahdi was not a characteristic of a special sect of Islam, but was a common belief to ALL Muslims.

Sunni scholars openly criticized those elements (like Ibn Khaldoon) who tried to cast doubt the traditions about al-Mahdi (as), and have strongly asserted that the belief in Mahdi is well-established for ALL Muslims. See for instance: "Awnul Ma'bud" (which is the commentary of Sunan Abu Dawud), by al-Azimabadi, v11, pp 361-362, Tuhfatul Ahwadh (which is the commentary of Sahih al-Tirmidhi), by al-Mubarakfuri, v6, p484, al-Tajul Jami' lil Usul, by Shaikh Mansoor 'Ali Nasif, v5, p341.

Shaikh Ahmad Muhammad Shakir (d. 1377/1958), one of the greatest contemporary scholar of Hadith and Tafsir, whose major work was his commentary on Musnad Ahmad Ibn Hanbal (for a biography of Ahmad Shakir, see al-Aalam, v1, p253; Mu'jam al-Mu'allifeen, v13, p368) wrote in his commentary: "Belief in al-Mahdi is not particular to the Shi'a because it is from the narration of many companions of the Prophet in such way that NO one can cast doubt the truth (of this belief)." After this, he proceeds to a strong refutation of Ibn Khaldoon's weakening the traditions regarding al-Mahdi. (see Musnad Ahmad Ibn Hanbal with commentary of Ahmad Muhammad Shakir, Pub. by Dar al-Ma'arif, Egypt, v5, pp 196–198, v14, p288).

Al-Sayid Sabiq, the Mufti for the "Muslim Brotherhood," in his book, "al- 'Aqa'id al-Islamiyyah," that: "The idea about the Mahdi is indeed valid, and is one of the Islamic tenets that one must believe in." Mr. Sabiq also narrated a variety of traditions relating to the appearance of al-Mahdi (as) in the above book.

The recent Fatwa in this issue was given in Mecca by "The Muslim World League" (Rabitatul 'Alamil Islami) on Oct. 11, 1976 (23 Shawwal 1396). This Fatwa states that more than twenty companions narrated traditions concerning al-Mahdi, and gives a list of those scholars of Hadith who have transmitted these narrations, and those who have written books on al-Mahdi. The Fatwa states:

"The memorizers (Huffadh) and scholars of Hadith have verified that there are authentic (Sahih) and acceptable (Hasan) reports among the traditions related to al-Mahdi. The majority of these traditions are related through numerous authorities (Mutawatir). There is no doubt that the status of those reports are Sahih and Mutawatir. (They have also verified) that the belief in Mahdi is obligatory, and that it is one of the beliefs of AhlulSunnah wal Jama'a. Only those ignorant of the Sunnah and innovators in doctrine deny it.

For the transcription and reproduction of this Fatwa, see, among others, the Introduction of al-Ganji al-Shafi'i, in the book named "al-Bayan," Beirut, 1399/1979, pp 76–79 and in Appendix.

Two Shafi'i scholars, Ganji in his book "al-Bayan", and Shablanji in his book "Noor al-Absar", on the verse 48:28 of Qur'an: "He is the One who sent his Messenger (Muhammad) with the guidance and the true religion that in order to prevail over all the religions" narrated from Sa'id Ibn Jubair that "this promise to Prophet Muhammad will be fulfilled by al-Mahdi who is in the progeny of Fatimah (sa)."

Even Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728/1328), who is acclaimed by the Wahhabis, wrote in his book "Minhaj al-Sunnah" (v4, pp 211–212) that the traditions concerning the Mahdi are certainly reliable, and his student, al-Dhahabi, conformed with him in his summary of his teacher's book. (See Mukhtasar Minhaj al-Sunnah, pp 533–534).

Among the Shi'a scholars, I would like to mention the masterpiece of Lutfullah al-Safi al-Golpaygani, who compiled an encyclopedia named "Muntakhab al-Athar". In this book, there is a comprehensive narration of the traditions regarding to the appearance of Imam al-Mahdi (as) and the description of the world before and after his appearance. He has used over 60 Sunni sources, including their six major

book of Hadith; and over 90 Shi'ite sources to illuminate the fact that al-Mahdi is not a fabricated event.

As far as we have been able to discover, at least 35 prominent Sunni scholars have written 46 of books exclusively about Imam al-Mahdi (as), the leader of our time. Here are some of the name of some of these books:

- (1) "Kitab al-Mahdi,"by Abu Dawud.
- (2)"Alamat al-Mahdi,"by Jalaluddin al-Suyuti.
- (3)"al-Qawl al-Mukhtasar fi Alamat al-Mahdi al-Muntadhar,"by Ibn Hajar.
- (4)"Al-Bayan fi Akhbar Sahib al-Zaman,"by Allamah Abu Abdillah Ibn Muhammad Yusuf al-Ganji al-Shafi'i.
- (5)"Iqd al-Durar fi Akbar al-Imam al-Muntadhar,"by Shaikh Jamaluddin Yusuf al-Damishqi.
- (6)"Mahdi Aale Rasool,"by 'Ali Ibn Sultan Muhammad al-Harawi al-Hanafi.
- (7)"Manaqib al-Mahdi,"by al-Hafidh Abu Nu'aym al-Isbahani.
- (8)"Al-Burhan fi Alamat al-Mahdi Akhir al-Zaman,"by al-Muttaqi al-Hindi.
- (9)"Arba'in Hadith fi al-Mahdi,"by Abdul Ala al-Hamadani.
- (10)"Akhbar al-Mahdi,"by al-Hafidh Abu Nu'aym.

In conclusion, the belief in the coming Mahdi (as) who is a person other than Jesus (as), is an undeniable fact for the Sunnis. As we discussed above, the Sunni scholars affirm that belief in "Mahdi of the House of the Prophet" is one of the Islamic tenets for "Ahlussunnah wal Jama'a". In the next part, however, we will discuss the points of differences between the Shi'a and most Sunnis on the issue of Imam al-Mahdi.

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