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Preface by the Verifier

About the Author

His Name

His full name is Abu[1] Abdullah Muhammad bin Ibraheem bin Ja'far al-Katib al-Nu'mani al-Baghdadi. He is known as Ibn Abu Zaynab.[2]

His Offspring

An-Najashi said: "The vizier Abul Qassim al-Husayn bin Ali bin al-Husayn bin Ali bin Muhammad bin Yousuf al-Maghribi was the son of his (the author's) daughter Fatima."

Praising Him

An-Najashi said about him: "He is a sheikh (teacher) from among our companions. He is great in position, noble in rank, loyal in faith and he has narrated many traditions."

Al-Mahoozi said: "He is praiseworthy, lofty and one of the sheikhs, who give permission (who evidence others' knowledge or works)."

Kahhala said: "He is an interpreter, a good speaker and a good theologist."

His Travels

He traveled to Shiraz in 313 AH. Then he traveled to Baghdad. After that he traveled to Sham[3] and taught in Tabariya in Jordan then he entered Damascus. At the end of his age he traveled to Halab (in Syria), in which he narrated his book *al-Ghayba* (the Sacred Disappearance).[4]

His Teachers (Sheikhs)

- Abul Abbas Ahmad bin Sa'eed bin Oqda al-Kufi, in Baghdad 327AH.
- Abu Sulayman Ahmad bin Nasr bin Hawtha al-Bahili.
- Abu Ali Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Ya'qoob bin Ammar al-Kufi, in Baghdad 327AH.
- Abul Qassim al-Husayn bin Muhammad al-Bawari.
- Salama bin Muhammad bin Isma'eel al-Arzaniy in Baghdad.
- Abul Harith Abdullah bin Abdul Melik bin Sahl at-Tabarani, in Tabariya.
- Abdul Aziz bin Abdullah bin Younus al-Mossiliy.
- Abdul Wahid bin Abdullah bin Younus al-Mossiliy.
- Ali bin Ahmad al-Bandaneeji.
- Ali bin al-Husayn al-Mass'oodi, apparently in Qum.
- Muhammad bin al-Husayn bin Muhammad bin Jumhoor al-Ammiy.
- Muhammad bin Abdullah bin Ja'far al-Himyari.
- Muhammad bin Abdullah bin al-Mo'ammar at-Tabarani, in Tabariya 333AH.
- Muhammad bin Uthman bin Allan ad-Duhni al-Baghdadi, in Damascus.
- Abu Ali Muhammad bin Hammam bin Suhayl bin Bayzan al-Katib al-Iskafi, in Baghdad 327AH.
- Muhammad bin Ya'qoob bin Iss'haq al-Kulayni, from whom he took the most of his knowledge and for whom he worked as clerk.
- Abul Qassim Musa bin Muhammad al-Ash'ari al-Qummi-the son of Sa'd bin Abdullah's daughter-in Shiraz 313Ah.

His Students

An-Najashi said: "I have seen Abul Husayn Muhammad bin Ali ash-Shuja'iy the clerk learning the book *al-Ghayba* written by Muhammad bin Ibraheem an-Nu'mani in Mashhadul Ateeqa. He recommended his son Abu Abdullah al-Husayn to give me this book and the rest of his books. The copy of the book, which he read, is now with me."

His Works

At-Tassalli; about the punishment of Allah that afflicted those, who participated in killing Imam Husayn (as), in this life.

At-Tafseer; one tradition narrated from Imam Ali (as), in which he has classified the Qur'an into sixty kinds and has given each kind a certain example.

- *Jami'ul Akhbar*.

- *Ar-Radd ala* (answering) *al-Isma'eeliyya*.[5]

- *Al-Ghayba* (this book).

- *Al-Fara'idh*.[6]

- *Nathrul La'ali'*; about the Hadith.

His Death

He died in Damascus about 360Ah/971AD.

About the Book

It is a valuable work, whose author has limited it to the expected Imam al-Mahdi (may Allah hasten his coming.) The author begins the book with some prophetic traditions confirming the imamate of al-Mahdi (aj).

Then he mentions the traditions showing that Allah doesn't leave the world without a "Hujjah". After that he mentions traditions talking about the disappearance of Imam al-Mahdi, his aspects, biography, rule, charismata and virtues and he mentions the signs that precede the appearance of Imam al-Mahdi (aj) besides other subjects concerning him.

Sheikh al-Mufeed, after mentioning the traditions that confirm the imamate of al-Mahdi, says: "The traditions on that are numerous. The scholars of Hadith have written them down and classified them in their books. Among those, who have mentioned them with full details and explanation, is Abu Abdullah Muhammad bin Ibraheem an-Nu'mani in his book *al-Ghayba...*"[7]

The author has finished the book in Thil-Hijja 342AH.

Sheikh Agha Buzurg at-Tehrani in his book "ath-Tharee'a" says: "It appears, according to some references, that the book was called or known as *Mala' al-Ayba fee Tool al-Ghayba*."[8]

What Has Been Said About The Book

Al-Hurr al-Aamily said: “It is good and sufficient.”

Al-Mahoozi said: “It has many benefits and unheard traditions.”

Some Of Its Editions

Tehran, 1318AH.

Tabriz, 1382AH., as-Sabiri Library.

Beirut, 1403AH., al-A’lami Publications.

Tehran, 1396Ah., verified by Ali Akbar al-Ghifari, as-Sadooq Library.

The Editions On Which Verification Depended

The edition of Beirut, 1403Ah. It has many mistakes.

The edition of Tehran, 1397AH., verified by Ali Akbar al-Ghifari (may Allah reward him with good). We depended on this edition so much that it was compared with some handwritten copies as the verifier himself mentioned.

The handwritten copies are the following:

a. The complete handwritten copy kept in the Melik Library in Tehran no.3617. It has been written in 226 pages. Each page is 10x15 cm. with 61 lines. It has been written by Muhammad Mo’min al-Gulbaygani. He has finished writing it on 21 Ramadan 1077AH.

Another copy with no.2671 kept in the Melik Library in Tehran too. It lacks a page in the beginning, a page in the middle and a page in the end. It is a very precious old copy. It has been written in 312 pages. Each page is 14x21 cm. with 15 lines. It seemed that it had been written before the tenth century of hijra or about it.

b. A printed copy compared with the copy kept in Imam Redha Library in Mashhad having the number 187 and had been written in 577AH.

Some chapters of the book have been compared with the copy kept in the library of Tehran University having the number 578. It is a precious copy in 57 pages. Each page is 10x25 cm. with 32 lines. It has annotations, which means that it has been compared with other copies. It has the handwriting of Mirza Husayn an-Noori- the author of Mustadrak al-Wassa’il-that he has written it for himself in 1298AH.

The Method Of Verification

We compared the two printed copies with each other and we found as possible as we could that there was a perfectly fabricated text. We referred to the important differences between the handwritten or the printed copies. As for our other action, it was as the following:

1. Correcting the Qur'anic verses according to the Holy Qur'an.

2. Referring the prophetic traditions to the reliable books of Hadith.

3. Checking the names of the narrators according to the books of Rijal[9] and mentioning biographies of some of them when necessary.

4. Explaining some of vague linguistic expressions.

Finally we thank Allah that He has made us succeed in verifying this book and we pray Him to assist us in verifying much more of the traditions of Ahlul Bayt (as).[10]

Faris Hassoon Kareem
Holy Qum 1-11-1421AH.
On the anniversary of the birth of the daughter of Ahlul Bayt Fatima al-Ma'ssooma (sa)

1. Abu: means the father of, bin or ibn: means the son of, bint: means the daughter of.
2. In some books it is mentioned as Ibn Zaynab. Refer to Rijal an-Najashi, Rijal ibn Dawood, Majma'ul Rijal, Manhajul Maqal, Jami'ul Ruwat, Muntahal Maqal, Kashful Hujub wel Astar, Mustadrakul Wassa'il, A'yan ash-Shia, ath-Tharee'a, Tanqeehul Maqal, Hadiyyatul Aarifeen, Qamoos ar-Rijal and Mu'jam Rijalul Hadith.
3. Nowadays Damascus. But then, Sham encompassed the present Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine.
4. The disappearance of Imam al-Mahdi; in Islamic eschatology, Imam al-Mahdi (aj) is the expected deliverer who will fill the Earth with justice and equity, restore true religion, and usher in a short golden age lasting some years before the end of the world.
5. Ath-Tharee'a, vol.10 p.183.
6. Ibid. vol.16 p.147.
7. Al-Irshad, vol.2 p.350.
8. vol.16 p.79 and vol.22 p.183. So was mentioned by Prof. Abdul Jabbar ar-Rifa'iy in his Mo'jam vol.9 p.217,261.
9. The science of "Rijal: men" means to prove that the narrators of a certain tradition are reliable or not.
10. Ahlul Bayt means the Prophet's progeny (as).

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