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Section One

Proof of his birth, its circumstances, its history, some information about his mother, and her names, peace be on them both

Comprised of 426 traditions

786. Kit□b Fa□l b. Sh□dh□n1: Narrated to us Mu□ammad b. `Al□ b. □amza b. al-□usayn b. `Ubaid-Allah b. al-`Abb□s b. `Al□ b. Ab□ □□lib, Allah's blessings be on him, who said:

(Imam) Ab□ Mu□ammad, peace be on him, said, "Indeed, the Guardian appointed by Allah (wal□ Allah), His Proof upon His servants, and my successor after me, has been born circumcised [from birth], at the dawn of Sha`b□n 15, 255 AH. The first who washed (ghusl) him was Ri□w□n—the caretaker of Paradise—while a group of archangels accompanied him. [They washed him] with the water of Kauthar and Salsab□l.

Then, my aunt, □ak□ma bt. Mu□ammad b. `Al□ al-Ri□□, peace be on them washed him." Mu□ammad b. `Al□ b. □amza, may Allah be satisfied with him, enquired about his mother. He replied, "His mother is Mal□ka who is sometimes called S□san and sometimes Ray□□na. Her other names are □aiqal, and Narjis."

787. Kam□l al-d□n2: Mu□ammad b. al-□asan b. al-Wal□d, may Allah be satisfied with him, from Mu□ammad b. Ya□y□ al-`A□□□r, from Ab□ `Abd-Allah al-□usayn b. Rizq-Allah, from M□s□ b. Mu□ammad b. al-Q□sim b. □amzat b. M□s□ b. Ja`far b. Mu□ammad b. `Al□ b. al-□usayn b. `Al□ b. Ab□ □□lib, peace be on them, from □ak□ma, daughter of (Imam) Mu□ammad b. `Al□ b. M□s□ b. Ja`far b. Mu□ammad b. `Al□ b. al-□usayn b. `Al□ b. Ab□ □□lib, peace be on them, who said:

(Imam) Ab□ Mu□ammad al-□asan b. `Al□, peace be on him, called for me and said, "O Aunt! Break your fast this evening with us because it is the evening of the 15th of Sha`b□n and Allah, Blessed and Exalted be He, will reveal His proof (□ujja) tonight and he will be His proof on earth." I asked, "Who is his mother?" He replied, "Narjis." I exclaimed, "May Allah sacrifice me for you! But there is no sign [of pregnancy] in her!" He replied, "It will [occur] like I am informing you."

[So] I went [to their house], said hello and sat down. [Narjis] came to take off my shoes and said to me, “How are you my master [and the master of my family]?” I replied, “No! You are my master and the master of my family.” She denied what I said and replied, “O aunt! What are you saying?” I said to her, “O my daughter! Surely, Allah, the Exalted, will soon grant you in this very night a son (who will be) a master in this world and the hereafter.” On hearing this, she expressed shyness. When I finished my `Ish’ prayers, I broke my fast, went to bed and slept. In the depth of the night, I got up for the night prayers.

When I finished my night prayers, I saw Narjis fast asleep while there were no signs [of pregnancy] in her. I sat and performed the rituals/supplications (ta`qbt) recommended after the prayers and then lied down. Then I got up again fearfully and she was still asleep. Then, she got up, prayed and went to sleep.

I went out to check if it was dawn yet [i.e. whether the time of prayers had arrived or not]. At the first break of dawn (al-fajr al-awwal), she was still fast asleep. At this juncture, I became slightly skeptical. Immediately, [Imam] Abu Muhammad [al-`Askari], peace be on him, cried out from where he was, “O Aunt! Don’t be in such a rush! Indeed the affair is near!” I sat down and began reciting the suras of Sajda and Yasin. While I was busy [reciting them], she woke up startled. I leapt towards her and said, “I seek Allah’s protection for you! Do you feel anything?” She replied, “Yes, O Aunt!” I said to her, “Be calm and hold your heart. This is what I had told you.”

Then suddenly I felt a weakness in myself and she felt a weakness in herself. I came to with the sound of my master [the Mahdi] and removed the cloth from over him. He was in a state of prostration and was touching the earth with the places [which touch the ground during] prostration. I embraced him and he was absolutely clean and immaculate. (Imam) Abu Muhammad, peace be on him, called out to me, “O Aunt! Bring my son to me,” and I did. He placed his hands beneath his lower-back and back and put his feet on his chest. Then, he put his tongue in his mouth and caressed his eyes, ears, and joints.

He then said, “Speak, O my son!” He replied, “I testify that there is no god but Allah, He is One and has no partner. I testify that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, Allah's blessings be on him and his family.” He then sent blessings on Amir al-Mu’minin and the Imams, peace be on them, until he reached his father. He then stopped and didn’t continue.

(Imam) Abu Muhammad, peace be on him, called out, “O Aunt! Take him to his mother so that he greets her and then bring him back to me.” I took him to her and he greeted her, then, I took him back [to his father] and put him on the ground. He said, “O Aunt! Come back to us on the seventh day.”

In the morning, I went to greet (Imam) Abu Muhammad, peace be on him. When I removed the curtain to see my master, I did not find him there. I said, “May I be sacrificed for you! What happened to my master?” He replied, “We have entrusted him to whom the mother of Moses entrusted her son, peace be on him.”

On the seventh day, I went [to them], greeted them, and sat down. He said, “Bring me my son.” I brought my master, peace be on him, while he was wrapped in a cloth. He did [with his son] what he had done earlier. Then, he put his tongue in his mouth as if he was feeding him milk or honey. He then said, “Speak, O my son!” He declared, “I testify that there is no god but Allah,” and he saluted and blessed Mu□ammad, `Al□, Am□r al-Mu’min□n, and the infallible Imams, Allah’s blessings be on them all, and he paused [after] his father’s name. Then he recited,

“In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. And We intend to oblige those who have been rendered weak on earth and make them Imams and make them the inheritors. And to grant them power in the land, and show the Pharaoh and Haman and their armies what they feared.” 3

M□s□ (the narrator of this tradition), says, “I asked `Uqba, the servant, about this and he replied, ‘□ak□ma has said the truth.’”

788. Kam□l al-d□n4: Narrated to us Mu□ammad b. `Al□ M□j□lawayh and A□mad b. Mu□ammad b. Ya□y□ al-`A□□□r, may Allah be satisfied with them, from Mu□ammad b. Ya□y□ al-`A□□□r, from al-□usayn b. `Al□ al-N□s□b□r□, from Ibr□h□m b. Mu□ammad b. `Abd-Allah b. M□s□ b. Ja`far, peace be on them, from al-Sayy□r□, from Nas□m and M□riya who both said:

When the Master of the Time came out of his mother’s womb, he bent on his knees, raised both index fingers towards the sky, then sneezed and said, “All Praise is for Allah, the Lord of the worlds. Blessings of Allah be on Mu□ammad and his family. The oppressors thought that Allah’s Proof has been destroyed. Had we been permitted to speak, all doubts would have been dispelled.

789. Kam□l al-d□n5: Mu□ammad b. `Al□ M□j□lawayh, Mu□ammad b. M□s□ b. al-Mutawakkil, and A□mad b. Mu□ammad b. Ya□y□ al-`A□□□r, may Allah be satisfied with them, narrated to us from Mu□ammad b. Ya□y□ al-`A□□□r, from Is□□q b. Riy□□ al-Ba□r□, from Ab□ Ja`far al-`Amr□ who said:

When the Master, peace be on him, was born, (Imam) Ab□ Mu□ammad, peace be on him, said, “Send someone to Ab□ `Amr.” Someone was sent to him and when he came, [the Imam] said to him, “Buy ten thousand pounds (ra□l6) of bread and ten thousand pounds of meat and distribute it—I think he said among the Ban□-H□shim—and slaughter such and such number of sheep as his `aq□qa7.”

790. Kam□l al-d□n8: Mu□ammad b. Mu□ammad b. `I□□m, may Allah be satisfied with him, from Mu□ammad b. Ya`q□b al-Kulain□, from `Al□ b. Mu□ammad who said: “The Master was born on Sha`b□n 15, 255 AH.”

791. Al-Ghayba by Fa□l b. Sh□dh□n9: A□mad b. Is□□q b. `Abd-Allah al-Ash`ar□, from (Imam) Ab□ Mu□ammad b. `Al□ al-`Askar□, peace be on him, who said:

All praise is for the One who did not take me from this world until He showed me the successor after me, who is the most similar of people to the Messenger of Allah in creation and morals. Allah, Blessed and

Exalted be He, will protect him in his occultation. Then, He will reveal him, and he will fill the earth with fairness and justice just as it will be filled with injustice and unfairness.

792. Kam□l al-d□n10: Mu□ammad b. Mu□ammad b. `I□□m, may Allah be satisfied with him, narrated to us from Mu□ammad b. Ya`q□b al-Kulain□, from `All□n al-R□z□ who said: “Some of our companions informed me that when the spouse of (Imam) Ab□ Mu□ammad, peace be on him, became pregnant, he said to her, ‘You will soon give birth to a boy; his name will be Mu□ammad and he is the Q□’im after me.’”

793. Kam□l al-d□n11: Mu□ammad b. Ibr□h□m b. Is□□q al-□□liq□n□, may Allah be satisfied with him, narrated to us from al-□asan b. `Al□ b. Zakariyy□ at Mad□nat al-Sal□m, from Ab□ `Abd-Allah Mu□ammad b. Khal□l□n, from his father, from his father, from his grandfather, from Ghiy□th b. Usaid who said:

I witnessed Mu□ammad b. `Uthm□n al-`Amr□, may Allah sanctify his soul, say, “When the successor, al-Mahd□, was born, a light radiated from his head to the outskirts of the sky. Then, he went down in prostration for his Lord, Exalted be His remembrance, then he raised his head while he was saying, ‘Allah testifies that there is no god but He and so do the angels and the possessors of knowledge who stand with justice. There is no god but He, the Invincible, the Wise. Verily, the religion [approved] by Allah is Islam.’12” [Mu□ammad b. `Uthm□n] said, “His birth occurred on a Friday.”

794. Kam□l al-d□n13: Narrated to us `Al□ b. `Abd-Allah al-Warr□q, from Sa`d b. `Abd-Allah, from M□s□ b. Ja`far b. Wahb al-Baghd□d□ that a signed letter (tauq□`) came from (Imam) Ab□ Mu□ammad, peace be on him, that read: “They thought that by killing me, they would destroy this generation; indeed Allah, Mighty and Majestic be He, has refuted their saying and all praise is for Allah.”

795. T□r□kh al-A’imma14: From amongst the reasons that have been narrated from (Imam) al-□asan b. `Al□ al-`Askar□, peace be on him, at the time of the birth of M-U-□-A-M-M-A-D b. al-□asan, is what has been narrated from him numerous times: “The oppressors thought they would kill me to eliminate this generation; how did they find the power of the All-Powerful?” And he named him the Hoped (al-Mu’ammal).

796. Kam□l al-d□n15: Narrated to us Mu□ammad b. M□s□ al-Mutawakkil, may Allah be satisfied with him, from `Abd-Allah b. Ja`far al-□imyar□, from Mu□ammad b. A□mad al-`Alaw□, from Ab□ Gh□nim, the servant, who said:

A boy was born to (Imam) Ab□ Mu□ammad, peace be on him, and he named him Mu□ammad. On the third day, he showed him to his companions, saying, “He is your master after me and my successor upon you. He is the Q□’im who will be desperately awaited. When the earth becomes filled with injustice and unfairness, he will emerge and will fill it with fairness and justice.”

797. Kam□l al-d□n16: Narrated to us Mu□ammad b. `Al□ M□j□lawayh, may Allah be satisfied with him,

from Mu□ammad b. Ya□y□ al-`A□□□r, from Ab□ `Al□ al-Khayzar□n□, from a slave girl whom he had gifted to (Imam) Ab□ Mu□ammad, peace be on him, who had fled from Ja`far al-Kadhdh□b (the liar) when he had attacked the house and Ab□ `Al□ (the narrator) had married her. Ab□ `Al□ says:

She informed me that she had been present when the master was born and the name of the master's mother is □aq□l and Ab□ Mu□ammad had informed her about the events that would befall his family. She had asked him to pray to Allah, Mighty and Majestic be He, that He takes her life before him. She died while Ab□ Mu□ammad, peace be on him, was still alive. There is a tablet on her grave which says, "This is the grave of the mother of Mu□ammad."

I also heard this slave-maid mention that when the master, peace be on him, was born, she saw a light radiate from him towards the outskirts of the sky. She also saw white birds descend from the sky, caress his head, face, and, body with their wings and then soar again. When they had informed Ab□ Mu□ammad, peace be on him, about what they had witnessed, he had laughed and replied, "These were angels who had come to gain blessings from this newborn and they will be his helpers when he emerges."

798. Kam□l al-d□n17: Mu□ammad b. al-□asan b. A□mad b. al-Wal□d, may Allah be satisfied with him, from Mu□ammad b. al-□asan al-Karkh□, from `Abd-Allah b. al-`Abb□s al-`Alaw□, from Ab□ l-Fa□l al-□asan b. al-□usayn al-`Alaw□, who said: "I went to (Imam) Ab□ Mu□ammad al-□asan b. `Al□, peace be on him, at S□marr□' and congratulated him on the birth of his son, the Q□'im."

799. Kam□l al-d□n18: Mu□ammad b. M□s□ b. al-Mutawakkil, may Allah be satisfied with him, narrated to us from `Abd-Allah b. Ja`far al-□imyar□, from Mu□ammad b. Ibr□h□m al-K□f□ that "(Imam) Ab□ Mu□ammad, peace be on him, sent meat from a slaughtered sheep to some people whom he named for me and said, 'This is from the `aq□qa19 for my son Mu□ammad, [Allah's blessings and salutations be on him].'"

800. Kam□l al-d□n20: Mu□ammad b. `Al□ M□j□lawayh, may Allah be satisfied with him, from Mu□ammad b. Ya□y□ al-`A□□□r, from al-□usayn b. `Al□ al-N□s□b□r□, from al-□asan b. al-Mundhir, from □amzat b. Ab□ l-Fat□ who said:

He came to me one day and said, "I have good news! A son was born to Ab□ Mu□ammad, peace be on him, yesterday and he has ordered that this news be kept a secret. He also ordered that three hundred sheep be slaughtered as his aq□qa." I asked him, "What's his name?" He replied, "His name is Mu□ammad and his epithet is Ja`far."

801. Kam□l al-d□n21: Ab□ l-`Abb□s A□mad b. al-□usayn b. `Abd-Allah b. Mihr□n al-□b□ al-Azd□ al-`Ar□z□ at Marv, from A□mad b. al-□asan b. Is□□q al-Qumm□ who said:

When the righteous successor, peace be on him, was born, my grandfather A□mad b. Is□□q received a letter from (Imam) Ab□ Mu□ammad al-□asan b. `Al□, peace be on him, in his own handwriting—the

[same handwriting with] which he had written all his other signed letters. It had been written in it, “A son of ours has been born. Let this fact be hidden with you and unknown to the general masses. For surely, we have not revealed this information about him to anyone except the closest of relatives because of their nearness and those who have accepted his Guardianship (wil□ya). We wished to inform you so that Allah may make you joyful through him like He has made us rejoice through him. Wa al-sal□m.”

802. Kam□l al-d□n22: Ab□ □□lib al-Mu□affar b. Ja`far b. al-Mu□affar b. Ja`far b. Mu□ammad b. `Abd-Allah b. Mu□ammad b. `Umar b. `Al□ b. Ab□ □□lib, peace be on him, from Ja`far b. Mu□ammad b. Mas`□d, from Ab□ l-Na□r Mu□ammad b. Mas`□d, from □dam b. Mu□ammad al-Balkh□, from `Al□ b. al-□asan [al-□usayn] al-Daqq□q, from Ibr□h□m b. Mu□ammad al-`Alaw□, from Nas□m the female servant of (Imam) Ab□ Mu□ammad, peace be on him, who said:

I went to see the master of this affair, peace be on him, one night after his birth and sneezed in front of him. He said to me, “May Allah have mercy on you.” I became joyous at this remark. Then, he said to me, “Shall I give you good news about sneezing?” I replied in the affirmative. He said, “It delays death for three days.”

803. Kam□l al-d□n23: Through the same chain of narrators (i.e. the chain mentioned in the eighth tradition of this chapter) from Mu□ammad b. `Uthm□n al-`Amr□, who said: “The master was born circumcised. I heard □ak□ma say, ‘Parturition blood was not seen in his mother and this is the custom of the mothers of all the Imams, peace be on them.’”

804. Ghaybat al-Shaykh24: A□mad b. `Al□ al-R□z□, from Mu□ammad b. `Al□, from `Abd-Allah b. Mu□ammad b. Kh□q□n al-Dihq□n, from Ab□ Sulaim□n D□w□d b. Ghass□n al-Ba□r□n□ who said:

I read out for Ab□ Sahl Ism□’□l b. `Al□ al-Naubakht□ the birth of (Imam) Mu□ammad b. al-□asan b. `Al□ b. Mu□ammad b. `Al□ al-Ri□□ b. M□s□ b. Ja`far al-□□diq b. Mu□ammad al-B□qir b. `Al□ b. al-□usayn b. `Al□ b. Ab□ □□lib, Allah’s blessings be on them all: “He was born in S□marr□’ in 256 AH. His mother was called □aq□l and his epithet is Ab□ l-Q□sim—the same epithet as that of the Holy Prophet, Allah's blessings be on him and his family—who had said, ‘His name will be my name and his epithet will be my epithet. His title is Mahd□ and he is the Proof, the Awaited, and the Master of the Time.’”

Ism□’□l b. `Al□ said, “I visited Imam Ab□ Mu□ammad al-`Askar□, peace be on him, during his illness in which he passed away. I was with him when he said to his servant `Aq□d—who was a black Nubian slave who had earlier served Imam `Al□ b. Mu□ammad and had brought up Imam al-□asan al-`Askar□, peace be on him—, “O `Aq□d! Boil some mastic gum for me in water.” He boiled it for him and then □aq□l—the mother of the successor Imam, peace be on him—brought it for him. As he held the bowl in his hands and intended to drink, his hand started trembling and the bowl hit the teeth of Imam al-□asan. So, he put it down from his hands and said to `Aq□d, “Go inside the house. You will see a child in prostration. Bring him to me.”

Ism□’□l b. `Al□ said, `Aq□d said, “I entered [the house] to search for [the child], and lo! I saw a child in

prostration. He had raised his index fingers towards the sky. I greeted him, due to which he shortened his prayers. I said, ‘My master has ordered you to come to him.’ At that very moment, his mother ḥaqīl25 entered, held his hand, and took him to his father (Imam) al-ḥasan, peace be on him.”

Abū Sahl continued, “When the child stood before his father, he greeted him and his color was like a pearl, his hair had short curls in them, and he had fissures between his teeth. When (Imam) al-ḥasan, peace be on him, saw him, he started crying and said, ‘O master of his Ahl al-Bait! Give me water to drink because I am going to my Lord.’ The child took the bowl of boiled mastic gum in his hand.

He moved his lips and the child helped him drink. When he finished drinking, he said, ‘Prepare me for prayers.’ A scarf was spread in his room. The child helped him perform ablution, step by step and wiped (masaḥa) his head and feet.

Then, Abū Muḥammad, peace be on him, said to him, ‘Receive good news, O my son! You are the Master of the Time, you are the Mahdī, you are Allah’s Proof upon His earth, you are my son and my heir, and I am your father. You are Muḥammad b. al-ḥasan b. `Alī b. Muḥammad b. `Alī b. Mūsā b. Ja`far b. Muḥammad b. `Alī b. al-ḥusayn b. `Alī b. Abū ṭālib. The Messenger of Allah, Allah's blessings be on him and his family, is your ancestor and you are the last of the immaculate Imams.

The Messenger of Allah, Allah's blessings be on him and his family, has given glad-tidings about you and has named and mentioned your epithet in the [glad-tidings]. My father has taken a covenant from me on behalf of your pure forefathers. The blessings of Allah, our Lord be on the Ahl al-Bait. He is the Praiseworthy, the Majestic.’ Imam al-ḥasan b. `Alī passed away at that moment; may Allah’s blessings be on them all.”

805. Ithbāt al-waṣiyya26: Al-ḥimyarī, from Aḥmad b. Isḥāq who said:

I went to see (Imam) Abū Muḥammad, peace be on him, who asked me, “O Aḥmad! How were you feeling when the people were in doubt and skepticism?” I answered, “O my master! When the letter reached us with the news of our master and his birth, no man, woman, or child who had attained understanding remained from us except that he spoke the truth.” He continued, “Don’t you know that the earth will not become empty of Allah’s Proof?”

Then, (Imam) Abū Muḥammad ordered that his mother perform the Hajj in the year 259 AH and informed her about what will happen to him in the year 260 AH. Then, he called for the Master of the Time (ṣāḥib al-Zamān) and willed to him. He handed over the Great Name (al-Ism al-A`ẓam), the inheritances, and the weapon to him. (Imam) Abū Muḥammad’s mother and the master set off for Mecca and Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Muṭahhar Abū `Alī was in charge of fulfilling their needs. When they had gone some distance on the way to Mecca, some Bedouin tribes met them and informed them of the intense fear and scarcity of water. Consequently, most of the people returned except those who were in the [Holy] Region; they went ahead and were safe.”

806. Al-Ghayba by Fa□l b. Sh□dh□n27: Mu□ammad b. `Abd al-Jabb□r who said:

I said to my master (Imam) al-□asan b. `Al□ (al-`Askar□), peace be on him, “O son of Allah’s Messenger! May Allah sacrifice me for you! I would like to know who is the Imam and Proof of Allah upon His servants after you?” He, peace be on him, replied, “The Imam and the Proof of Allah after me is my son whose name and epithet is the same as that of the Messenger of Allah, Allah's blessings be on him and his family. He is the last of Allah’s proofs and the last of His caliphs.”

I asked, “From whom will he be born?” He replied, “From the daughter of the son of the Caesar, the Emperor of Rome. Know that he will soon be born and will be concealed from the people in a long occultation. Then, he will appear and will kill the Antichrist (al-Dajj□l) and will fill the earth with fairness and justice just as it will be filled with injustice and unfairness. No one is allowed to say his name or epithet before his reappearance, Allah’s blessings be on him.”28

807. Kam□l al-d□n29: Mu□ammad b. `Al□ b. □□tim al-Naufal□, from Ab□ l-`Abb□s A□mad b. `□s□ al-Washsh□ al-Baghd□d□, from A□mad b. □□hir al-Qumm□, from Ab□ l-□usayn Mu□ammad b. Ba□r al-Shaib□n□ who said:

I entered Karbala in 286 AH and visited the grave of the lonely [grandson] of the Messenger of Allah, Allah's blessings be on him and his family. Then, I left for Baghdad with the intention of visiting the graves of the Quraish [meaning the place where Imams K□□im and Jav□d, peace be on them, were buried] at a time when it was blazing hot and hot winds were blowing.

On my way—when I reached the shrine of al-K□□im, peace be on him—I inhaled the fresh air of his grave that was filled with mercy and surrounded with the gardens of forgiveness. I threw myself on it with tears flowing down unceasingly and non-stop sighs and moaning. My tears had concealed the vision of my eyes. When the flow of tears ceased and I stopped crying, I opened my eyes and saw an old man with a bent back and hunched shoulders who had callus on his forehead and palms.

He was saying to another person accompanying him at the grave, “O my nephew! Indeed, your uncle has been honored on account of the deep unseens (ghaw□mi□ al-ghuy□b) and privileged knowledge granted to him by the two masters. Such [knowledge] has not been given to anyone except Salm□n.

Your uncles time is nearly up and his life is coming to an end but he has not found anyone from amongst the followers of wil□ya [i.e. the Shias] to whom he could pass on his secrets.” I thought to myself, “Trouble and hardships have always afflicted you because you have always been in pursuit of knowledge.

Now your ears are being pounded by words from this old man that indicate immense knowledge [and you can seek knowledge from him without any affliction].” So I said, “O Shaykh! Who are these two masters?” He replied, “The Two stars concealed by soil in the land of S□marr□’.” I said, “I swear by the mastership and the revered position of these two masters of Imamate and inheritance, that I desire their

knowledge and seek what they have left behind. I will try with utmost faith to conceal their secrets."

He said, "If you are true in your speech, then come forth with what you have from what has been narrated from them." When he examined the books and read through the narrations he said, "You speak the truth. I am Bishr b. Sulaim□n al-Nakhkh□s and a descendant of Ab□ Ayy□b al-An□□r□. I am one of the servants of (Imams) Ab□ l-□asan and Ab□ Mu□ammad (al-`Askar□) and their neighbor in S□marr□."

I said, "Please honor your brother by narrating some of the things that you have witnessed from them." He said, "Our master Ab□ l-□asan `Al□ b. Mu□ammad al-`Askar□, peace be on him, granted me deep knowledge about the [trade] of slaves and consequently, I never bought or sold any except with his permission.

Because of this, I kept away from ambiguous cases until my knowledge about it was complete. Thus, I excelled in differentiating between the permissible (□al□l) and the prohibited (□ar□m). One night, I was in my house at S□marr□' and a part of the night had passed, when someone knocked on the door. I quickly ran [to the door] and saw K□f□r, the servant, who had come as a messenger of our master, Ab□ l-□asan `Al□ b. Mu□ammad, peace be on him, to invite me to [his house].

I put on my clothes and went to him. When I entered, I saw him speaking with his son Ab□ Mu□ammad and his sister □ak□ma from behind the curtain. When I sat down, he said, 'O Bishr! Verily, you are from the descendants of the An□□r. You possess [i.e. you have accepted our] guardianship (wil□ya) and you inherit it one generation after another.

You are the reliable [people] for us Ahl al-Bait. Verily, I am going to increase your excellence and honor such that you will overtake the best of the Shias concerning [our] guardianship through a secret which I will tell you; and I will send you to purchase a slave-girl.' Then, he wrote a letter in Roman handwriting and language and imprinted its seal with his ring. He brought out a yellow purse which contained two hundred and twenty dinars and said, 'Take this and go to Baghdad.

Stand on the passageway of the Euphrates on so and so day after sunrise. When the boats of the captives are beside you and the slave-maids emerge from them, they will be encircled by groups of buyers representing the Abbasid leaders and by small groups of Iraqi youths. When you see this, keep a watch on a slave-trader by the name of `Umar b. Yaz□d al-Nakhkh□s 30 all day long from a distance. [He will] bring forth a slave-girl possessing such and such characteristics who is wearing two clothes made of pure silk and does not allow anyone to unveil or touch her.

Whoever attempts to see her will have to do so from behind a thin veil. The slave-trader will strike her and she will cry out and say something in Roman. Know that she is saying, "Woe for the ripping of my veil!" One of the buyers will say, "Give her to me for three hundred dinars because her chastity has increased my desire for her."

She will say to him in Arabic, "Even if you appear in the dress of Solomon and sit on the throne of his

kingdom, I will never be inclined towards you. Do not waste your money on me." The slave-trader will plead, "What is the solution? I have no choice but to sell you." The slave-girl will say "Why are you rushing? It is necessary that I select a buyer whose trustworthiness and religiousness appeases my heart."

After this, go to `Umar b. Yazīd al-Nakhkhīs and say to him, "I have a sealed letter with me written in the Roman language and handwriting of a noble man. He has described in it his munificence, loyalty, nobility, and generosity. Hand it over to her so that she may consider the moral qualities of its author. If she is inclined towards him and is satisfied with him, then I am his representative to purchase her from you.""

Bishr b. Sulaimīn al-Nakhkhīs continued, "I did everything as defined to me by my master (Imam) Abī l-īasan, peace be on him, regarding the matter of the slave-girl. When she saw the letter, she started crying uncontrollably and said to `Umar b. Yazīd al-Nakhkhīs, 'Sell me to the writer of this letter.' She then swore a solemn oath that if she was not sold to the writer of the letter, she would kill herself. Then, I started bargaining about her price until the amount reached the exact number of dinars given to me by my master, peace be on him, in the yellow purse.

He took the money from me and handed over the slave-girl who was very joyous and cheerful. I took her to the room I was staying in, in Baghdad. She was restless until she took out the letter of her master, peace be on him, from her pocket and started kissing it and placing it on her cheeks. She covered her eyes with it and rubbed it on her body.

I asked her out of amazement, 'You are kissing a letter while you don't even know its author?' She said, 'O weak and helpless regarding the stature of the descendants of the Prophets! Listen to me carefully and pay attention with your heart! I am Malīka, the daughter of Yashī`ī b. Caesar, the Emperor of Rome. My mother was from the descendants of the disciples (of Jesus) and related to his heir Simon (Sham`īn). I will inform you of the strangest of things. My grandfather Caesar intended to marry me to his nephew when I was only thirteen years old.

So, he gathered in his palace three hundred men from the descendants of the disciples (al-īawīriyīn), priests (al-qissīsīn), and monks (al-ruhbīn) along with seven hundred important people. Moreover, four thousand others from the commanders of the armed forces, military leaders, and tribal chiefs had also been invited.

He had placed a throne studded with precious stones on top of forty pillars in the guest room. When his nephew stood on top of it and was encircled with crosses and the bishops came forward with honor and the Bibles were opened, the crosses fell to the ground and the pillars crumbled and collapsed on the floor. The one who had mounted the throne fell down unconscious.

When the bishops saw this, the color of their faces changed and their shoulders started trembling. The archbishop said to my grandfather, "O Emperor! Please excuse us from this [task due to which] bad

omens have become manifest because these are the signs of the demise of Christianity and the imperial religion." My grandfather too considered it as a bad omen. He ordered the bishops, "Put up the pillars and raise the crosses.

Bring the brother of this unlucky ill-omened [prince] to be married to this girl [instead], so that he might convert his bad-omen to welfare." When everything was prepared, the same thing happened again. The congregation broke up and my grandfather became very sad and went inside the palace and the curtains were brought down. That night, I dreamt that Jesus, Simon (Sham`ūn), and some of the disciples had gathered in my grandfather's palace.

A pulpit was erected—which scraped the sky with elevation—in the royal palace in the same place where my grandfather had installed his throne. Soon after, Muḥammad, Allah's blessings be on him and his family, joined them accompanied by a young man and some of his descendants. Jesus came forward and embraced him.

Then [the Holy Prophet, Allah's blessings be on him and his family] said, "O Spirit of Allah! I have come here to ask your heir Simon, for the hand of her daughter Malīka, in marriage for my son here." He then pointed to Abū Muḥammad, the author of this letter. Jesus looked at Simon and said, "Great honor has come to you, bond with the messenger of Allah, Allah's blessings be on him and his family." He responded, "I accept." Then, Muḥammad, Allah's blessings be on him and his family, ascended the pulpit, delivered a sermon, and married me

[to Abū Muḥammad] while Jesus, the descendants of Muḥammad, Allah's blessings be on him and his family, and the disciples were witnessing this marriage. When I woke up from sleep, I feared narrating this dream to my father and grandfather lest they kill me. So I kept it a secret in my heart and did not reveal it to anyone.

The love for Abū Muḥammad had filled my heart to such an extent that I could not eat or drink anything. As a result, I became very weak; my body became frail and I became severely ill. No Roman city remained except that its doctors had been summoned by my grandfather to come and treat me. When despair overtook him, he said, "O apple of my eye! Is there anything you desire so that I can fulfill it in this world?"

I replied, "O grandfather! I see all the doors of relief locked on me. If punishment is removed from the Muslim captives in your prison, there are chains removed, and you oblige them by releasing them, I hope that Christ and his mother may grant me health and cure me." When my grandfather did as I requested, I started putting on a little weight and ate a little food, which delighted my grandfather and he again honored the Muslim prisoners and showed munificence towards them.

After four nights, I dreamt that the Master of the Women [i.e. Fatima, peace be on her] had come to see me accompanied with Mary daughter of `Imrūn and a thousand Heavenly maids. Mary said to me, "This is the Master of All Women, the mother of your husband, Abū Muḥammad, peace be on him." On

hearing this, I held her, started crying and complained to her that Abū Muḥammad was not coming to see me. The Master of all Women, peace be on her, replied, “My son Abū Muḥammad will not visit you whilst you associate others with Allah and are a Christian. My sister, Mary, too testifies before Allah, the Exalted, that she dislikes your religion.

If you desire the satisfaction of Allah, Mighty and Majestic be He, the satisfaction of Christ and Maryam, and desire that Abū Muḥammad visits you, then say, ‘I testify that there is no God but Allah and I testify that Muḥammad—who is my father—is the Messenger of Allah.’ When I uttered these words, the Master of All Women hugged me to her chest and assured me by saying, “Now wait for Abū Muḥammad to visit you because I will send him to you.”

I woke up and cried out, “Oh, how much I desire to see Abū Muḥammad!” The following night, Abū Muḥammad, peace be on him, came in my dream. I exclaimed, “O my beloved! You left me after you made my heart a prisoner of your love!” He replied, “Nothing kept me away from you except your polytheism. Since you accepted Islam, I will visit you every night until Allah brings us together evidently [i.e. while awake].” Until now, his visits to me have not ceased.’”

Al-Bishr continued, “I asked her, ‘How did you become a prisoner?’ She replied, ‘One night, Abū Muḥammad informed me that my grandfather would dispatch on so and so day, an army to fight against the Muslims and he will join them himself. [He told me] to join them disguised as a servant with the slave-maids who will accompany them and to take such and such path and I did accordingly.

The Muslim informers spotted us and thus, my situation is as you are seeing and witnessing. No one has found out that I am a Roman princess until now except you, and that too because I have informed you. An old man—in whose share I was given—asked me name and I hid my [real] name and said, “Narjis.” He said, “That is a name given to the slave-maids.”’”

Bishr continued, “I said, ‘Amazing! You are a Roman but are fluent in Arabic?’ She replied, ‘My grandfather loved me immensely. He desired to teach me lofty etiquette and hence he appointed a woman who was an interpreter to come to me. She would come in the morning and in the evening and would teach me Arabic. As a result, I learnt Arabic and became fluent in it.’”

Bishr said, “When I brought her to Sāmarrā’ and came to my master Abū l-Ḥasan al-`Askarī, peace be on him, he asked her, ‘How did Allah, the Almighty, show you the might of Islam, the humiliation of Christianity, and the excellence of the Ahl al-Bait of Muḥammad, Allah's blessings be on him and his family?’ She replied, ‘O son of Allah’s Messenger! How can I describe for you what you know better than me?’ He said, ‘I intend to dignify you. Which do you prefer: Ten thousand dirhams or good news for you about eternal honor?’ She replied, ‘I desire good news.’

He, peace be on him, said, ‘I give you glad-tidings about a son who will rule the East and the West of the world and will fill the earth with fairness and justice just as it will be filled with unfairness and injustice.’ She asked, ‘From Who?’ He, peace be on him, replied, ‘From the one whom the Messenger of

Allah, Allah's blessings be on him and his family, asked your hand in marriage for, in such and such night, in such and such city, and in such and such Roman year?' She replied, '[You mean] from Jesus and his successor.'

He said, 'To whom did Jesus and his successor marry you to?' She replied, 'To your son, Ab□ Mu□ammad.' He said, 'Can you recognize him?' She responded, 'Ever since I became a Muslim through his mother, the master of all women, he has been coming to me in my dreams every night.'

Then (Imam) Ab□ l-□asan said, 'O K□f□r! Summon to me my sister □ak□ma.' When she came, he, peace be on him, said to her, 'This is her.' On hearing this, she hugged her for a long time and was very overjoyed. Our master advised her, 'O daughter of the Messenger of Allah, Allah's blessings be on him and his family! Take her to your house and teach her the obligatory acts and the customs [of Islam]; for, she is the wife of Ab□ Mu□ammad and the mother of the Q□'im, peace be on them.'"

The following traditions—directly and indirectly—show the above concept: 1–309, 543–545, 547, 549–558, 560–571, 574, 575, 580, 581, 589, 590, 608, 612, 614, 808–862, 864, 866–870, 873, 878, and 881–899 .

These are in addition to the fact that the mutaw□tir and correct traditions that confine the Caliphs to the twelve Imams—our masters, peace be on them—and also the authentic and reliable traditions which state that the earth can never be empty of a Divine Proof, can only be true if our master, the Master of the Time, has been born.

1. Kif□yat al-muhtad□ (al-Arba`□n), p. 116, no. 30; Kashf al-□aqq (al-Arba`□n), p. 24, no. 2, which mentions □aq□l instead of □aiqal and □amzat b. al-□asan instead of □amzat b. al-□usayn. In the rij□l books, al-□asan has been recorded; Ithb□t al-hud□t, vol. 3, chap. 32, p. 570, no. 683.
I say: Al-N□r□, may Allah have mercy on him, writes in al-Najm al-th□qib: "The reason for the differences in the names of his revered mother becomes clear in this tradition: she was called by all of these five names."
Fa□l b. Sh□dh□n died after the birth of the Mahd□, peace be on him, and before the martyrdom of his father Ab□ Mu□ammad al-□asan al-`Askar□, peace be on him (i.e. between 255 and 260 AH). Al-Naj□sh□ says: "He was reliable (thiqa) and one of our jurists (fuqah□), and dialectical theologian (mutakallim). He enjoyed great reverence and majesty in the [Shia] sect. He is so reputable that it is not possible for us to describe him." Al-Kash□ has mentioned that he has written more than 150 books and even goes to mention the names of some of them. This demonstrates his proficiency in Islamic sciences and in what the people of the sects differ about, specially, the sciences of belief (`aq□da), monotheism (tau□□d), Imamate, duties (far□'i□), and etc. Al-□□s□ has included him in his Rij□l amongst the companions of (Imam) al-H□d□ on one occasion and (Imam) al-`Askar□ on another—peace be on them. He writes: "Al-Fa□l b. Sh□dh□n was a jurist, dialectical theologian (mutakallim), and had a majestic stature. He has written many books and treatises . . . From amongst his books are Kit□b al-mal□□im, Kit□b al-Q□'im, and Kit□b al-im□ma.
Regarding Mu□ammad b. `Al□ b. □amzat b. al-□asan b. `Ubaid-Allah b. al-`Abb□s b. `Al□ b. Ab□ □□lib, peace be on him, al-Naj□sh□ writes, "Ab□ `Abd-Allah was reliable (thiqa), a fountain of traditions, and had correct beliefs. He has narrated traditions from (Imams) Ab□ l-□asan and Ab□ Mu□ammad, peace be on them, and he also had correspondences with them. The mother of the Owner of the Affair (□□□ib al-amr) stayed in his house after the death of (Imam) al-□asan, peace be on him.
Imam Mahd□'s birth, peace be on him, took place on the night of Sha`b□n 15, 255 AH, as is mentioned in this noble and authentic tradition. Al-Muf□d writes in al-Irsh□d, "The Imam after Ab□ Mu□ammad, peace be on him, was his son whose

name was the same as that of the Messenger of Allah, Allah's blessings be on him and his family, and so was his epithet. His father did not leave behind a child other than him—evident or hidden. He was occult and concealed just as we mentioned earlier. His birth took place in the night of Sha`b□n 15, 255 AH. His mother was called Narjis. He was five years old when his father died. At this tender age, Allah bestowed him with wisdom just as He granted it to John (Ya□y□) when he was a child. He, the Exalted, made him an Imam in his apparent childhood just as He made Jesus a prophet when he was in the cradle. Narrations about him preceded him in the Islamic nation [which were narrated] from the Prophet of Guidance, peace be on him. The same were narrated from Am□r al-Mu'min□n `Al□ b. Ab□ □□lib, peace be on him. All the succeeding Imams gave news about him—one after the other—until [the time] of his father, (Imam) □asan al-`Askar□, peace be on him. His revered father mentioned him in the presence of his reliable companions and special followers. The news of his occultation existed before his advent in this world and the prophecies about his government were abundant even before his occultation. Amongst the Imams of guidance, he is the possessor of the sword, peace be on them. He is the one who will rise with the truth and the one awaited [to establish] the government of [true] faith. Before his emergence, he will have two occultations. One will be longer than the other as has been mentioned in these traditions. The shorter one was from the time of his birth to the termination of ambassadorship between him and his Shias and the absence of emissaries because of death. The longer one was immediately after the first one and it will end when he rises with the sword . . ."

Al-Kulain□ writes in al-K□f□: "He, peace be on him, was born on Sha`b□n 15, 255 AH." This has also been narrated by al-Kar□juk□ in Kanz al-faw□'id and al-Shah□d in al-Dur□s. Al-□□s□ writes in Mi□b□□ al-mutahajjid, "In this night was born the Successor [al-□ujja], the Master of the Affair, peace be on him. It is recommended to recite the following supplication in this night, 'O Allah! For the sake of this night and the one who was born in it . . .'" Shaykh al-Bah□'□ says in Tau□□□ al-maq□□id, "In it—meaning the 15th day of Sha`b□n—Imam Ab□ l-Q□sim Mu□ammad al-Mahd□, the Master of the Era, was born at S□marr□' in 255 AH." Al-□abris□ records in I`l□m al-war□, "He was born in S□marr□' in the night of Sha`b□n 15, 255 AH." Al-□□s□, in both of his Mi□b□□s, Sayyid b. □□w□s in Iqb□l al-a`m□l, all the compilers of supplication books—according to Bi□□r al-anw□r—and al-Muf□d in Mas□r al-Sh□`a, have declared that he was born on the 15th of Sha`b□n.

A group of celebrated Sunni scholars have also declared this fact. For example, ibn □abb□gh al-M□lik□ writes in Fu□□l al-muhimma, "Ab□ l-Q□sim Mu□ammad al-□ujjat b. al-□asan was born in S□marr□ in the night of Sha`b□n 15, 255 AH . . . his mother was called 'Narjis, the best of the maids.' Some have said she had another name." Ibn Khalk□n writes in Wafiyy□t al-a`y□n, "His birth took place on Friday, Sha`b□n 15, 255 AH. When his father—whom we mentioned earlier—died, he was five years old. His mother was called Kham□. She was also known as Narjis." The author of Rau□at al-□af□ writes, "Imam Mahd□—whose name and epithet was the same as that of the Messenger [of Allah]—was born in S□marr□ in the night of Sha`b□n 15, 255 AH. He was five years old when his father passed away. Allah granted him wisdom in this small age just as He did to John (Ya□y□) when he was a child and made him an Imam in childhood just as He made Jesus a prophet." These facts have also been declared by al-Sayyid Mu□ammad Kh□ja P□rs□—the author of Rau□at al-a□b□b—and others.

There is no harm in mentioning the statements of reputable Sunni scholars concerning his birth and mentioning their names. Indeed, most of them agree with us that he is currently alive and that he will continue to live until Allah, the Exalted, gives him permission to reappear:

Al-Shaykh, ibn □ajar al-Haytham□ al-Makk□ al-Sh□fi`□ (d. 974 AH) whom after speaking about Imam Ab□ Mu□ammad al-`Askar□, peace be on him, in al-□aw□'iq, writes: "He did not leave behind a successor except his son Ab□ l-Q□sim Mu□ammad al-□ujja—whose age at the time of his father's death was five—and Allah bestowed him with wisdom [at such a young age]."

The author of Rau□at al-a□b□b—which was originally written in Persian—the famous traditionist, Sayyid Jam□l al-d□n `A□□ Allah b. Sayyid Ghiy□th al-d□n Fa□l Allah b. Sayyid `Abd al-Ra□m□n. It has been narrated that al-Q□□□ □usayn al-Diy□rbakr□ has considered this book as reliable in the beginning of his work T□r□kh al-kham□s. According to Kashf al-□un□n, it was written on the request of the vizier Mir `Al□ Sh□r after consulting his teacher and his cousin Sayyid A□□l al-d□n `Abd-Allah. It consists of three chapters in it. He passed away in the year one thousand AH as has been mentioned in this book. According to Kashf al-ast□r and al-Najm al-th□qib (in Persian), he says: "Most of the traditionists believe that the twelfth Imam—Mu□ammad b. al-□asan, peace be on him—was born on Sha`b□n 15, 255 AH at S□marr□ . . . He was

his mother's only child and her name was ▯aiqal, S▯san, Narjis, or ▯ak▯ma. The respected and honorable Imam's name and epithet are the same as that of the Best of the Creations [i.e. the Holy Prophet]. His titles are Mahd▯ al-Munta▯ar, al-Khalaf al-▯▯li▯, and ▯▯▯ib al-Zam▯n. At the time of his revered father's death, his age was five as per authentic reports. Other reports mention he was merely two years old. Allah, the Granter of bounties, granted him wisdom in childhood just as He gave John son of Zechariah (Ya▯y▯ b. Zakariyy▯), peace be on them. He attained the lofty position of Imamate while still a child . . . [He them mentions his desire that the Mahd▯'s occultation comes to an end and says,] May Allah bless the poet who said:

Come O guiding Imam
For, awaiting has passed the limits of sorrow

Remove the veil from your shinning face
The visage that is brilliant like the Sun

Come out from your place of hiding
And manifest the effects of benevolence and loyalty"

`Al▯ b. Mu▯ammad b. A▯mad b. `Abd-Allah al-M▯lik▯ al-Makk▯, known as ibn ▯abb▯gh, born in 734 AH and died in 855 AH—according to al-▯au' al-l▯mi` by Shams al-d▯n Mu▯ammad b. `Abd al-Ra▯m▯n al-Mi▯r▯, a disciple of ibn ▯ajar. In his book, al-Fu▯▯l al-muhimma f▯ ma`rifat a▯w▯l al-A'imma, he has spoken about his birth and its date. He has also stated that his mother was Narjis, the best of the maids, as we earlier mentioned. Moreover, he has talked about his lineage, the names of his forefathers, their conditions, sayings, and miracles and that he is the twelfth Imam. He has also recorded some traditions in this regard.

Shaykh Shams al-d▯n Ab▯ l-Mu▯affar Y▯suf b. Qaz▯waghl▯ b. `Abd-Allah, the grandson of Shaykh Jam▯l al-d▯n Ab▯ l-Faraj b. al-Jauz▯ (d. 654 AH), the author of al-T▯r▯kh al-kab▯r about which ibn Khalik▯n has written, "I saw it and it was 40 volumes with his hand-writing and it was titled Mir`▯t al-zam▯n." The author of Tadhkira al-khaw▯▯ says, "He is Mu▯ammad b. al-▯asan b. `Al▯ b. Mu▯ammad b. `Al▯ al-Ri▯▯ b. M▯s▯ b. Ja`far b. Mu▯ammad b. `Al▯ b. al-▯usayn b. `Al▯ b. Ab▯ ▯▯lib, peace be on them, and his epithets are Ab▯ `Abd-Allah and Ab▯ l-Q▯sim. He is the Successor (al-Khalaf), the Divine Proof (al-▯ujja), Master of the Time (▯▯▯ib al-Zam▯n), the Riser (al-Q▯'im), the awaited (al-Munta▯ar), al-T▯l▯, and the last Imam (▯khir al-A'imma). `Abd al-`Az▯z b. Ma▯m▯d b. al-Bazz▯z informed us from ibn `Umar who said that the Messenger of Allah, Allah's blessings be on him and his family, said, 'A person from my descendants will emerge in the end of times. His name will be like my name and his epithet will be like my epithet. He will fill the earth with justice just as it will be filled with injustice; he is the Mahd▯.' This is a famous tradition. Ab▯ D▯w▯d and al-Zuhr▯ have recorded similar to it from `Al▯. It says, 'If only one day remains from the world, Allah will certainly send from my Ahl al-Bait one who will fill the earth with justice.' He has been mentioned in numerous traditions and it said that he has two names: Mu▯ammad and Ab▯ l-Q▯sim. His mother was a female slave and she was called ▯aiqal. Al-Sudd▯ writes, 'The Mahd▯ and Jesus will meet. When it is the time of the prayers, the Mahd▯ will say to Jesus, "Go ahead." Jesus will reply, "You are more worthy of leading the prayers." Then, Jesus will pray behind him as a follower (ma'm▯m) . . .'"

N▯r al-Din `Abd al-Ra▯m▯n b. A▯mad b. Qiw▯m al-d▯n al-Dasht▯ al-J▯m▯ al-▯anaf▯, the poet, mystic (`▯rif), and author of Shar▯ al-kif▯ya. According to Kashf al-ast▯r, he has mentioned in his book Shaw▯hid al-nubuwwa that al-▯ujjat b. al-▯asan is the twelfth Imam. He then discusses the strange conditions of his birth and some of his miracles and that he is the one who will fill the earth with justice and fairness. Then, he mentions ▯ak▯ma's narration concerning his birth and also other narrations which state that when he was born, he immediately knelt on his knees, raised his index finger towards the sky, sneezed, and then said, "All praise is for Allah, the Lord of the Worlds." He has also recorded the narration about the person who came to (Imam) Ab▯ Mu▯ammad (al-`Askar▯), peace be on him, and enquired about his successor. He went inside his house and came out with a three year old child in his arms who was [shining] like the full moon. [The Imam] then told the enquirer, "O so and so! If you were not high esteemed before Allah, I would not have shown you this boy. His name is the name of the Messenger of Allah, Allah's blessings be on him and his family, and his epithet is his epithet. He is the one who will fill the earth with justice and fairness just as it will be filled with injustice and unfairness." He has recorded yet another tradition about a man who came to (Imam) Ab▯ Mu▯ammad, peace be on him, while there was a curtain in the

room. He asked the Imam about the Master of the Affair after him. The Imam told him to raise the curtain . . . He has also mentioned the tradition about the person who was sent by al-Mu`ta□id . . .

Shaykh al-□□fi□ Ab□ `Abd-Allah Mu□ammad b. Y□suf b. Mu□ammad al-Kanj□ (d. 658 AH)—the author of al-Bay□n f□ akhb□r □□□ib al-Zam□n and Kif□yat al-□□lib f□ man□qib Am□r al-Mu'min□n `Al□ b. Ab□ □□lib. In the eighth chapter—from the chapters which he has added to the Fa□□'il chapters of Kif□yat al-□□lib—after mentioning the Imams from the descendants of Am□r al-Mu'min□n, peace be on him, he writes, "He (meaning Imam `Al□ al-H□d□, peace be on him) was succeeded by his son Ab□ Mu□ammad al-□asan who was born in Medina in the month of Rab□` al-□khir, 232 AH and passed away on Friday Rab□` al-Awwal 8, 260 AH, at the age of twenty eight. He was buried in his house in S□marr□' in the same room that his father was buried. He was succeeded by his son who is the awaited Imam, Allah's blessings be on him. We will end the book with a separate section about him."

He writes in al-Bay□n f□ akhb□r □□□ib al-Zam□n, "The twenty fifth chapter: the proofs about the possibility of the Mahd□'s survival—peace be on him—since his occultation until now and that there is nothing impossible about it because [others like] Jesus, Ily□s, and al-Khi□r from amongst the friends of Allah, the Exalted, and al-Dajj□l and Ibl□s, the cursed enemies of Allah, have survived . . . (to the end of his long statement in this chapter)."

Ab□ Bakr A□mad b. al-□usayn b. `Al□ b. `Abd-Allah b. M□s□ al-Bayhaq□ al-Khusraujard□ al-N□s□b□r□, the Sh□fi`□ jurist (d. 458 AH). The author of Wafiyy□t al-a`y□n writes about him: "The famous and great memorizer, unique in his era, outstanding amongst his companions in sciences, and amongst the greatest companions of al-□□kim . . . in this world, he was satisfied with little." Imam al-□aramain says about him, "There is no follower of al-Sh□fi`□ but that they are indebted to Imam al-Sh□fi`□ except A□mad al-Bayhaq□, for he has obliged al-Sh□fi`□."

According to Kashf al-ast□r, al-Bayhaq□ writes in Shu`ab al-□m□n—which is enumerated amongst his writings according to b. Khalik□n—"The people have differed about the Mahd□. Some have stopped at it and have left the matter to its knower. They believe that he is one of the descendants of F□□ima, the daughter of the Messenger of Allah, Allah's blessings be on him and his family. Allah will create him whenever He wills and will send him to help His religion. Another group believes that the promised Mahd□ was born on Friday, Sha`b□n 15, 255 AH, and he is the Imam titled the Divine Proof (al-□ujja), the Riser (al-Q□'im), and the Awaited (al-Munta□ar), Mu□ammad b. al-□asan al-`Askar□. He entered the cellar (sard□b) at S□marr□ and is alive and concealed from the eyes of the people. He awaits his emergence and he will soon reappear and fill the earth with justice and fairness just as it will be filled with injustice and unfairness. There is no improbability in his longevity and the prolongation of his life just like Jesus, son of Mary, and al-Khi□r, peace be on them. The Shias—specially the Im□miyya—have such a belief and a group of ahl al-kashf also agree with them."

By ahl al-kashf, he does not mean—as some scholars have suggested—al-Shaykh Mu□y□ al-d□n, al-Sha`r□n□ and al-Shaykh □asan al-`Ir□q□, whom God willing, we will discuss later; because, al-Bayhaq□ preceded them by many years. For instance, al-Bayhaq□ expired in 458 AH whilst Shaykh Mu□y□ al-d□n died in 638 AH as has been claimed by al-`Ir□q□ in the beginning of the first chapter of al-Yaw□q□t. Likewise, al-Sha`r□n□ lived many centuries after al-Bayhaq□. He finished writing al-Yaw□q□t in 955 AH. Al-`Ir□q□ and al-Khaww□□ were contemporaries of al-Sha`r□n□. Therefore, from what al-Bayhaq□ has said, it is clear that he too is inclined towards this view about the Mahd□. In fact, he believes in it, otherwise he would have rejected it.

Shaykh Kam□l al-d□n Ab□ S□lim Mu□ammad b. □al□a al-Sh□fi`□ al-Qurash□ al-Na□□b□ (b. 582 AH), the author of al-`Iqd al-far□d. It has been written about him in □abaq□t al-Sh□fi`iyya, "He had profound knowledge about religion and excelled in it. He heard traditions at N□s□b□r from al-Mu'ayyid al-□□s□ and Zainab al-Sha`riyya and narrated (traditions) at Aleppo and Damascus. Al-□□fi□ al-Dimy□□□ and Majd al-d□n b. al-`Ad□m have narrated from him. He was from the chiefs of the people and became a minister in Damascus for two days, but then deserted everything including his clothes, slaves, and etc. due to asceticism. Ibn □al□a passed away on Rajab 7, 652 AH.

According to Yan□b□` al-mawadda, p. 410, ibn □al□a has written in his book al-Durr al-muna□□am, "Allah, Blessed and Exalted be He, has a caliph who will emerge in the end of times whilst the earth will be filled with injustice and unfairness. He will fill it with justice and fairness . . . this is Imam al-Mahd□ who will rise with the command of Allah and do away with all the religions, then, nothing will remain except the pure religion [of Allah] . . ."

In Ma□□lib al-su'□l f□ man□qib □l al-Ras□l, which is a book in which he has mentioned the names of the twelve Imams, peace be on them, and discussed their lives. He writes, "The Eleventh chapter: Ab□ Mu□ammad al-□asan b. `Al□, the Pure

(al-Kh□li□), born in 231 AH. As for his paternal and maternal lineage, his father was Ab□ l-□asan `Al□ al-Mutawakkil b. Mu□ammad al-Q□ni` b. `Al□ al-Ri□□—whom we have already discussed earlier. His mother was called S□san. His name was al-□asan, his epithet was Ab□ Mu□ammad, and his title was the Pure (al-Kh□li□). His virtues: know that the highest virtue and greatest merit for which Allah, Mighty and Majestic be He, chose for him, made him exclusive in it, and rendered it a permanent attribute—the novelty of which cannot be worn out with the passage of time nor will the tongues forget to recite and repeat—is that the Mahd□ from the generation of Mu□ammad has been created from him, is his son that is attributed to him, and is a part of his existence which has been separated from him. God willing, we will discuss his virtues and the details of his life in the following chapter.

"The Twelfth chapter: Ab□ l-Q□sim Mu□ammad b. al-□asan al-Kh□li□ b. `Al□ al-Mutawakkil b. Mu□ammad al-Q□ni` b. `Al□ al-Ri□□ b. M□s□ al-K□□im b. Ja`far al-□□diq b. Mu□ammad al-B□qir b. `Al□ Zain al-`□bid□n b. al-□usayn al-Zak□ b. `Al□ al-Murta□□ Am□r al-Mu'min□n b. Ab□ □□lib, the Guided (al-Mahd□), the Divine Proof (al-□ujja), the Righteous Successor (al-Khalaf al-□□li□), the Awaited One (al-Munta□ar), peace be on them and Allah's Mercy and His blessings.

"He [then writes a poem] and praises him greatly and mentions the date of his birth, his paternal and maternal lineage, and some of the traditions about the Mahd□ which he narrates from Ab□ D□w□d, al-Tirmidh□, al-Baghaw□, Muslim, al-Bukh□r□, and al-Tha`lab□. He then mentions some questions about him and answers them."

Al-□□fi□ Ab□ Mu□ammad A□mad b. Ibr□h□m b. H□shim al-□□s□ al-Bal□dhur□, a resident of □□s. It has been narrated in Kashf al-ast□r from al-Sam`□n□: "He was a memorizer, very understanding, and knowledgeable about the traditions . . . He was unique in his era in memorizing and preaching. He was great in socializing and was beneficial to most people. He mostly stayed in N□s□b□r where he had two congregations every week with the two teachers of the city, Ab□l □asan al-Mu□m□ and Ab□ Na□r al-`Abd□. Ab□ `Al□ al-□□fi□ and our teachers used to attend his gatherings and were joyous of him mentioning the traditions in public. I never saw them taunting him about the chains of narrators or names or traditions [that he mentioned]. He wrote [narrations] at Mecca from the Imam of the Ahl al-Bait, Ab□ Mu□ammad al-□asan b. `Al□ b. Mu□ammad b. `Al□ b. M□s□ al-Ri□□, peace be on them.

Ab□ l-Wal□d—the jurist—writes, "Ab□ Mu□ammad al-Bal□dhur□ learned (sami`a) the Book of Jih□d from Mu□ammad b. Is□□q, while his mother was ill in □□s . . . al-□□kim writes, 'He was martyred in □□hir□n in 339 AH and he was the learned scholar of his era.'" Shah Wal□-Allah al-Dihlaw□—the father of `Abd al-`Az□z famous as Shah □□□ib—and the author of Tu□fat al-Ithn□ `Ashariyya f□ l-raddi `Al□ l-Im□miyya, who has been described by his son like this: "The last of the mystics, the destroyer of the opposers, the chief of the mu□addith□n, the authority of the dialectical theologians, the proof of Allah upon the worlds . . ." He writes in al-Nuzha, "My father has written in al-Musalsal□t—which is well known for its evident merits saying, 'ibn `Aqla verbally gave me permission to narrate everything that he had permission to narrate. I found in his series of narrators (musalsal□t) a tradition whose narrators all possessed great attributes. He, may Allah have mercy on him, had written, 'The unrivaled of his era, Shaykh □asan b. `Al□ al-`Ajam□ informed me from the memorizer of his time, Jamaal al-d□n al-B□hil□, from the trusted person of his time, Mu□ammad al-□ij□z□, the preacher, from the Sufi of his time, Shaykh `Abd al-Wahh□b al-Sha`r□n□, from the mujtahid of his era, Jal□l (al-d□n) al-Suy□□□, from the memorizer of his era, Ab□ Nu`aim Ri□w□n al-`Aqab□, from the reciter of his time, al-Shams Mu□ammad b. al-Jazar□, from Imam Jam□l al-d□n Mu□ammad b. Mu□ammad al-Jam□l, the ascetic of his era, from Imam Mu□ammad b. Mas`□d, the traditionist of the Persian lands in his era, from our shaykh, Ism□`□l b. Mu□affar al-Sh□raz□, the learned one of his time, from `Abd al-Sal□m b. Ab□ l-Rab□` al-□anaf□, the traditionist of his time, from Ab□ Bakr `Abd-Allah b. Mu□ammad b. Sh□b□r al-Qal□nis□, the shaykh of his era, from `Abd al-`Az□z, from Mu□ammad al-□dam□, the Imam of his era, from Sulaim□n b. Ibr□h□m b. Mu□ammad b. Sulaim□n, the exceptional of his era, from A□mad b. Mu□ammad b. H□shim al-Bal□dhur□, the memorizer of his time, from M-U-□-A-M-M-A-D the son of al-□asan b. `Al□ the concealed, the Imam of his time, from al-□asan b. `Al□, from his father, from his grandfather `Al□ b. M□s□ al-Ri□□, peace be on them, from M□s□ al-K□□im, from Ja`far al-□□diq, from Mu□ammad al-B□qir b. `Al□, from `Al□ b. al-□usayn Zain al-`□bid□n al-Sajj□d, from al-□usayn, the chief of the martyrs, from `Al□ b. Ab□ □□lib, the chief of the successors, peace be on them, who said, "The Chief of the Prophets, Mu□ammad b. `Abd-Allah, Allah's blessings be on him and his family, informed me from Gabriel, the Chief of the Angels, from Allah, the Exalted, the chief of all chiefs, Who said, 'Verily, I am Allah and there is no god but Me. Whoever confesses to My Oneness, enters My Fort, and whoever enters My Fort, is safe from My punishment.'"" Al-Shams b. al-Jazar□ says, "This tradition has come from a blessed chain of narrators and the responsibility of its authenticity lies on al-Bal□dhur□.

The aforementioned Sh□h Wal□-Allah writes in his treatise al-Naw□dir min □ad□th sayyid al-aw□'il wa l-aw□khir, 'The narration of M-U-□-A-M-M-A-D b. al-□asan from his noble forefathers, whom the Shias believe to be the Mahd□: I have found in the Musalsal□t of al-Shaykh b. `Aqla al-Makk□, from al-□asan al-`Ajam□, from Ab□ □□hir who was the most capable of his time regarding the chain of narrators. He says, "Informed us the unique of his era, al-Shaykh □asan b. `Al□ al-`Ajam□ . . . (to the end of what we already mentioned),"' with slight differences in some of the titles and arrangements of names."

It has been mentioned in al-Burh□n `al□ wuj□d □□□ib al-Zam□n, after mentioning what we quoted from Kashf al-ast□r: "It has been written in Shaykh `Abd al-Ra□m□n al-Jabrat□ al-□anaf□'s `Aj□'ib al-□th□r (Egypt: 1301 AH) in the margins of ibn al-Ath□r's al-K□mil, about the incidence of the month of Dh□ l-□ijja in the year 1215 AH: 'As for those who died in this year, worth mentioning is the virtuous and righteous Imam, the highly learned Shaykh, `Abd al-`Al□m b. Mu□ammad b. Mu□ammad b. Uthm□n al-M□lik□ al-Azhar□ al-□ar□r, who attended the lessons of al-Shaykh `Al□ al-□a`□d□ in both topics of narrating (riw□ya) and dir□ya and learned (sami`a) from the □a□□□s, al-Muwatta', al-Sham□'il, al-J□mi` al-□agh□r, and the Musalsal□t of ibn `Aqla. He has also narrated from al-Malw□, al-Jauhar□, and al-Bal□d□ . . . Whenever Allah was mentioned, he cried excessively; tears came to his eyes quickly, and he was very God-fearing. Al-Suy□□□ writes in Ris□lat al-tadr□b, 'The author of Shar□ al-nukhba mentions that a musalsal tradition leads to certainty.' Based on these facts, the statement of ibn al-Jazar□ 'The responsibility of its authenticity lies on al-Bal□dhur□' is unfounded and baseless. This is in addition to what he heard from al-Sam`□n□ in favor of al-Bal□dhur□, specially his saying, 'I never saw them taunting him . . .'" Mu□addith al-N□r□ has also mentioned this tradition in al-Najm al-th□qib.

Al-Q□□□ Fa□l b. R□zbah□n—the commentator of al-Tirmidh□'s al-Sham□'il and the author of the book, Ib□□l nahj al-b□□il f□ radd kit□b kashf al-□aqq wa nahj al-□idq wa l-□aw□b, which is a refutation of Ayatullah `All□ma al-□ill□'s Kashf al-□aqq wa nahj al-□idq wa l-□aw□b. The former was refuted by the great martyr al-Q□□□ N□r Allah b. Shar□f al-Mar`ash□ al-□usayn□—may Allah cover him with His Mercy—through his famous book I□q□q al-□aqq wa izh□q al-b□□il. The book of Fa□l b. R□zbah□n was also refuted by a contemporary scholar in his book Dal□'il al-□idq.

Al-Q□□□ Fa□l b. R□zbah□n, under the fifth issue of the third section in the explanation of al-□ill□'s view (the second concept: Concerning his wife and children . . .) writes the following, "I say: What he has been narrated about the merits of F□□ima—Allah's blessings be upon her father, upon her, and upon all the family of Mu□ammad and His salutations—is undeniable. For, denying the ocean's mercy, the richness of the earth, the light of the sun, the manifestations of all lights, the generosity of the clouds, and the prostration of the angels, is a denial that will lead to nothing but increased mockery of the denier. [The same holds true for those] who refute a group who are on the right path, the keepers of the mine of Prophethood, and the protectors of the etiquette of chivalry, blessings and salutations of Allah be upon them all. How beautiful is the poem that I have composed about them:

Salutation upon al-Mu□□af□ al-Mujtab□
Salutation upon al-Sayyid al-Murta□□

Salutation upon our lady F□□ima
Whom Allah has chosen as the Best of all women

Salutation upon the one whose breath is musk
Upon □asan the brilliant, the satisfied

Salutation upon the God-fearing □usayn
The martyr with his body at Karbala

Salutation upon the chief of the worshippers
`Al□ b. al-□usayn the chosen one

Salutation upon al-B□qir the guided
Salutation upon al-□□diq the followed

Salutation upon al-K□□im the tested

Content in nature, the Imam of the pious

Salutation upon the Eighth, the trusted
Upon al-Ri□□ the chief of the pure ones

Salutation upon the pious, the God-fearer
Mu□ammad the pure, the hoped one

Salutation upon the fragrant, al-Naq□
Upon the noble, the guide of the people

Salutation upon the Sayyid, al-`Askar□
The Imam who will mobilized the army of the pure ones

Salutation upon the Q□'im, the Awaited
Ab□ l-Q□sim, the saint, the light of guidance

He will rise like the sun in darkness
He will save with his un-sheathed sword

You will see the earth filled with his justice
As it will be filled with the injustice of transgressors

Salutation be upon him and his forefathers
And his helpers as long as the skies exist"

The famous scholar, Ab□ Mu□ammad `Abd-Allah b. A□mad b. Mu□ammad al-Khashsh□b (d. 567 AH); According to Kashf al-ast□r, al-Najm al-th□qib, and A`y□n al-Sh□`a, he has narrated in his book T□r□kh maw□l□d al-A'imma wa wafay□tihim: "Through his chain of narrators from Ab□ Bakr A□mad b. Na□r b. `Abd Allah b. al-Fat□ al-Darr□` al-Naharaw□n□, from □adaqat b. M□s□, from his father, from al-Ri□□, peace be on him, who said, 'The righteous successor is from the descendants of Ab□ Mu□ammad al-□asan b. `Al□ and he is the Master of the Time and the Mahd□.'

"'Al-Jarr□□ b. Sufy□n narrated to us, from Ab□ l-Q□sim □□hir b. H□r□n b. M□s□ al-`Alaw□, from his father H□r□n, from his father M□s□, from his master Ja`far b. Mu□ammad, peace be on him, who said, "The Righteous Successor (al-Khalaf al-□□li□) is from my descendants and he is the Mahd□. His name is M-U-□-A-M-M-A-D and his epithet is Ab□ l-Q□sim. He will emerge in the end of times. His mother will be called □aiqal . . .""

I say: His book Maw□l□d al-A'imma has been published and is available.

Al-Shaykh Mu□y□ al-d□n Ab□ `Abd Allah Mu□ammad b. `Al□, known as ibn al-`Arab□ al-□□tim□ al-□□'□ al-Andulus□ (d. 638 AH)—according to what has been mentioned in Kashf al-□un□n. He was buried in □□li□iyya in Syria and his grave is famous and a place of visitation. Shaykh `Abd al-Wahh□b al-Sha`r□n□ has narrated from him in the sixty fifth chapter of al-Yaw□q□t wa l-jaw□hir ([Egypt: al-Ma□ba`atu l-Azhariyyat al-Mi□riyya, 1307 AH], vol. 2, p. 145). He writes: "This is what al-Shaykh Mu□y□ al-d□n has said in the 366th chapter of al-Fut□□□t, 'Know that the emergence of the Mahd□, peace be on him, is inevitable but he will not emerge until the earth is full of injustice and unfairness and he will fill it with fairness and justice. If there remains from the world none but one day, Allah, the Exalted, will prolong that day until that caliph rules. He is from the progeny of the Messenger of Allah, Allah's blessings be on him and his family, and from the descendants of F□□ima, may Allah have mercy on her. His ancestor is al-□usayn b. `Al□ b. Ab□ □□lib and his father is al-□asan al-`Askar□, the son of Imam `Al□ al-Naq□, the son of Mu□ammad al-Taq□, the son of Imam `Al□ al-Ri□□, the son of Imam M□s□ al-K□□im, the son of Imam Ja`far al-□□diq, the son of Imam Mu□ammad al-B□qir, the son of Imam Zain al-`□bid□n, the son of Imam al-□usayn b. `Al□ b. Ab□ □□lib, may Allah be satisfied with him. His name will be the same as that of the Messenger of Allah, Allah's blessings be on him and his family. The Muslims will pledge allegiance to him between the Rukn and the Maq□m [in Mecca]. He will be like the Messenger of Allah, Allah's blessings be on him and his family, in creation and he will be slightly lower than the Messenger of Allah in morality because no one can be equal to him in this attribute. Allah, the Exalted, says, "And surely you are on a great morality" (Quran 68:4). He will have a wide forehead and

an aquiline nose. The most fortunate of the people with respect to him will be the residents of K□fa. He will distribute wealth equally and be just towards the citizens. A man will come to him and ask [for wealth] in a time that there is wealth before him. He will fill the man's cloth with so much wealth that he will not be able to carry it . . .'" He then mentions his attributes, characteristics, and deeds. The learned teacher Shaykh Mu□ammad al-□ubb□n has recorded the exact same words from al-Fut□□□t in his book Is`□f al-r□ghib□n ([Egypt: al-Ma□ba'atu al-Maymaniyya, 1312 AH], chap. 2, p. 142).

I could not find this exact statement in what I observed in other copies [of al-Fut□□□t] like the copy published in Egypt by D□r al-Kutub al-`Arabiyya. Its wording differs with what is found in al-Yaw□q□t. I feel that those who distort the words from their places have altered the book and erased the Imam's noble lineage. Such distortions and alterations are commonplace in the books published in Egypt. By Allah, indeed, this is a great crime inflicted against knowledge, religion, the Islamic nation, and those who seek the truth. It seems that they consider it obligatory upon themselves to make such changes and distortions whenever they find in a book the virtues and merits of the Ahl al-Bait of the Prophet and his heirs and what doesn't conform to their whims and desires. May Allah grant refuge to us and them from prejudice and obstinacy!

The following is part of a poem by Shaykh Mu□y□ al-d□n in al-Fut□□□t, chap. 366:

He is the Chief, the Mahd□ from the progeny of A□mad
He is the Indian sword when he destroys

He is the sun that dispels sorrows and darkness
He is like the monsoon rain that pours heavily when he bestows

Regarding the Mahd□ and his ministers, some lines of poetry have also been narrated from him in Yan□b□` al-mawadda, p. 467, citing his book `Unaq□ al-maghrib

Al-Shaykh Sa`d al-d□n Mu□ammad b. al-Mu'ayyid b. Ab□ l-□usayn b. Mu□ammad b. □ammawayh, known as Shaykh Sa`d al-d□n al-□imaw□. He has written a book exclusively about the Master of the Time (□□□ib al-Zam□n), which is in accordance with the beliefs of the Shias as has been narrated from `Abd al-Ra□m□n al-J□m□ in Mir'□t al-asr□r from the author of al-Maq□ad al-aq□□. He has also narrated from the author of al-`Aq□'id al-Nasafiyya that the mentioned Sa`d al-d□n had declared the Imamate of the Mahd□ and that he is the Master of the Time (□□□ib al-Zam□n), peace be on him, the last of the twelve heirs, and that there are no more than these twelve Imams. Allah, the Exalted, has made them His representatives in the religion of Mu□ammad, and the Messenger of Allah was referring to them when he said, "The scholars are the inheritors of the prophets" and "The scholars of my nation are like the Israelite prophets."

The author of Yan□b□` al-mawadda writes on p. 474: "It has been written in the book of Shaykh `Az□z b. Mu□ammad al-Nasaf□, may Allah have mercy on him, "The Shaykh of the Shaykhs, Sa`d al-d□n al-□imaw□, says that 'prior to our Prophet Mu□ammad, Allah's blessings be on him, the word 'guardian' (wal□) was not used in previous religions but the word 'prophet' (nab□) was used. All those who were close to Allah and were the inheritors of the bringers of [new] religions were called 'prophets.' In every religion, there was not more than one bringer of religion. Therefore, in the religion of Adam, peace be on him, there were some prophets who were his inheritors. They invited the people towards his religion and his sharia. The same was the case in the religions of Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, peace be on them. With the advent of the new religion and sharia of Mu□ammad, Allah's blessings be on him and his family, Allah, the Exalted, chose twelve people from his Ahl al-Bait and appointed them as his inheritors. He made them close to Himself and singled them out for his guardianship (wil□ya). He appointed them as the representatives of Mu□ammad, Allah's blessings be on him and his family, and his inheritors. The traditions, 'The scholars are the inheritors of the prophets,' and 'The scholars of my nation are like the Israelite prophets,' was said by him in their favor. The last successor—which is the last and twelfth representative—is the seal of the successors. His name is Mahd□, the Master of the Time. Shaykh says that there are no more than twelve successors in the world; but those 356 hidden people are not called successors (auliya'), rather, they are called substitutes (al-Abd□l).'"

I say: This can be found in al-Nasaf□'s al-Ins□n al-k□mil ([Tehran], p. 319), with minor variations.

Ab□l-Maw□hib al-Shaykh `Abd al-Wahh□b b. A□mad b. `Al□ al-Sha`r□n□ (d. 973 AH [according to one place in Kashf al-□un□n; in another place 960 AH has been mentioned]) says in al-Yaw□q□t wa l-jaw□hir, ([Egypt: al-Ma□ba`atu al-Azhariyyat al-Mi□riyya], vol. 2, p. 145): "The 65th chapter: All the 'conditions of the Hour' (ashr□t al-s□`a) which have been mentioned in the traditions, will inevitably occur before the Hour is established. Things like the emergence of the Mahd□ . . . and he is from the descendants of Imam □asan al-`Askar□, and his birth, peace be on him, took place on the night of

Sha`b□n 15, 255 AH, and he will remain until he unites with Jesus, son of Mary, peace be on him. Today—i.e. the year 958 AH—his age is 706 years. Shaykh □asan al-`Ir□q□ who is buried at Egypt has informed me like this from Imam al-Mahd□ when he met him. This has also been endorsed by our Shaykh, my master, `Al□ al-Khaww□□, may Allah have mercy on them both."

Al-Shaykh □asan al-`Ir□q□ (the aforementioned). He has mentioned the □ujja and his meeting with him as has been narrated by al-Sha`r□n□ in Law□qi□ al-anw□r f□ □abaq□t al-akhy□r ([Egypt: 1305 AH], vol. 2, p. 140). After narrating the journey of □asan al-`Ir□q□ he has narrated from this book: "I asked the Mahd□ about his age. He replied, 'O my son! Today my age is 620 years.' . . ." Al-Sha`r□n□ writes, "I mentioned this to my master `Al□ al-Khaww□□ and he agreed with him about the age of the Mahd□, may Allah have mercy on him.'"

The aforementioned Shaykh `Al□ al-Khaww□□. He was called al-Khaww□□ because he made crafts using palm-leaves. Al-Sha`r□n□ has greatly praised him in Law□qi□ al-anw□r (vol. 2, pp. 151–170).

□usayn b. Mu`□n al-d□n al-Maybud□. In his commentary on Imam `Al□'s D□w□n, peace be on him, under the poem which starts with the following line:

O my sons! When the Turks mobilize their armies then await
the rule of a Mahd□, who will rise and be just

He writes on p. 371, "I hope that the Almighty Lord illuminates my eyes by the precious kohl of the dust of his feet. May the sun of his great reality shine on the door and roof of our personalities. Indeed, this is not difficult for Allah." On p. 123, he has declared his birth and its date.

Al-□□fi□ Mu□ammad b. Mu□ammad Ma□m□d al-Bukh□r□, known as Kh□ja P□rs□ who is one of the celebrated □anaf□ scholars and one of the great Naqshband□ teachers. According to Kashf al-□un□n, he passed away in 822 AH. He writes in his book Fa□l al-khi□□b: "The son of Ab□ Mu□ammad al-□asan al-`Askar□, M-U-□-A-M-M-A-D, was known to his father's close companions and the trusted ones of his family. (He then mentions the narrative of al-□ak□ma and the incident of al-Mu`ta□id and some of the signs of his reappearance, then he says,) Traditions in this regard are more than can be enumerated. The virtues of the Mahd□, the Master of the Time, who is hidden from the eyes and is present in every era, are numerous. There are many narrations that talk about his reappearance, the resplendence of his light, him renewing the sharia of Mu□ammad, fighting in the way of Allah as it should be fought, cleaning all of earth from all impurities, his era is the era of the pious, his companions are free from skepticism and doubt, free from defects, they follow his guidance and his path, they receive the truth through him, through him caliphate and Imamate will end, he is the Imam since his father passed away until the Day of Judgment, and Jesus, peace be on him, will pray behind him and will confirm his claim and will call the people towards his religion which is the one brought by the Prophet, Allah's blessings be on him and his family." Al-N□r□ has narrated this from him in Kashf al-ast□r. His statements about the birth of the Mahd□, his occultation, and concealment have also been narrated from him in Yan□b□` al-mawadda (p. 451).

Al-□□fi□ Ab□ l-Fat□ Mu□ammad b. Ab□ l-Faw□ris. In his al-Arba`□n—a copy of its manuscript is available in the □st□ne Quds library (Mashhad, Iran)—he has narrated the following tradition: "He who loves to meet Allah, Mighty and Majestic be He, while He is facing him, then he should accept the guardianship of `Al□ to the last of the twelve." At the end of his statement—according to what is recorded in this book—he says, "I was inclined towards their excellence and merits (meaning the Ahl al-Bait) after I moved along with the sects and understood them. The truth became clear for me and I recognized it. The path became obvious so I tread it with clear witnesses and authentic and evident traditions. I was informed of them by reliable, pious, and religious people. I have conveyed them just as they were narrated to me."

Ab□ l-Majd `Abd al-□aqq al-Dihlaw□ al-Bukh□r□ who authored many books. It has been narrated that his books were in excess of one hundred volumes. He passed away in 1052 AH. According to Kashf al-ast□r, he has written in his treatise about the Imams and their virtues, peace be on them, "The son of Ab□ Mu□ammad al-□asan al-`Askar□ [is called] M-U-□-A-M-M-A-D who was known to his special and trusted companions." Thereafter, he mentions the story of his birth in Persian.

According to Yan□b□` al-mawadda (p. 472) and the sixth session of Maj□lis al-mu'min□n, Al-Shaykh A□mad al-J□m□ al-N□miq□ has composed the following poem (in Persian):

Because of □aidar's love, every moment, I feel serenity in my heart
After □aidar, al-□asan is our Imam and guide

Like a dog, I am lying in his court
The dust on al-usayn's shoe is the kohl of my eyes

The Worshipper is my crown and al-Bqir the light of my eyes
Al-Ja`far's religion is the truth and al-Ms's religion should be followed

O Servants! Hear the characteristics of the King of Khurssn
A speck of his grave's dust cures the ill and needy

O Muslims! Al-Taq is the leader of the faithful
You love al-Naq and everyone else should too

Al-`Askar is the light of the eyes of all men and creatures
Where can anyone find a commander like the Mahd

The Poets compose for the hope of acquiring gold and silver
Amad al-Jm is the special servant of the King of the Guardians
Al-Shaykh Fard al-dn Muammad al-`Arr al-Nsbr, who—according to Majlis al-mu'minn—was killed in 627 or 589 AH. According to Yanb` al-mawadda (p. 473), he composed the following poem in his book Muhir al-ift:
In the world, Muaf is the seal of the Prophets
Murta is obviously the seal of the successors

All of aidar's children are successors
They are all one light, as the Lord has said

After mentioning the names of the Imams he continues:
There are hundreds of thousands of saints on earth
Who are definitely asking Allah for the Mahd

O Lord! Bring the Mahd out of occultation
So that the world of justice becomes manifest

Mahd the guider, is the crown of the pious
The best of the creations and the tower of the saints

O seal of the successors of this era!
You are hidden from everything, O spirit of our lives!

O both manifest and hidden!
Your servant, al-`Ar, has come to praise you
Jal al-dn Muammad al-Balkh al-Rm, the famous mystic, better known as al-Maulaw (d. 672). According to Yanb` al-mawadda (p. 473), he has composed in his large Dwn—which is arranged in alphabetical order—the following poem:
O lord of the men, `Al, the joyous salute you
O lion of the men, `Al, the men salute you
. . . (to where he says)

Tell the killer of the infidels, tell religion and the religious
Tell aidar, the continuous attacker, that the joyous salute him

Tell the Durj of the two jewels, tell the constellation of the two stars
Tell Shabbar and Shabr that the joyous salute them

Tell the ornament of religion, the worshipper, tell the light of religion, al-B□qir
Tell Ja`far al-□□diq that the joyous salute them

Tell M□s□ al-K□□im, tell the one from al-□□s
Tell al-Taq□, the riser, that the joyous salute them

Tell the prince of religion, al-H□d□, tell the guided one, al-`Askar□,
Tell the successor, al-Mahd□, that the joyous salute them
Shaykh □al□□ al-d□n al-□afad□ (d. 764 AH), who knew the secrets of the alphabet. According to Yan□b□` al-mawadda, he has said in his book Shar□ al-d□'ira, "The promised Mahd□ is the twelfth Imam from the Imams; the first of whom is our master `Al□ and the last of them who is the Mahd□, may Allah be satisfied with all of them."
Al-Maulaw□ `Al□ Akbar b. Asad-Allah al-Mu'□d□, who is one of the more recent Indian scholars. According to Kashf al-ast□r (p. 80) and Istiq□□ al-af□□m (p. 98), in his book al-Muk□shif□t—which he wrote in the margins of `Abd al-Ra□m□n al-J□m□'s Nafa□□t al-uns—he has explicitly stated in the forty-fifth chapter, the Imamate and infallibility of al-□ujjat b. al-□asan al-`Askar□ and his forefathers to Am□r al-Mu'min□n `Al□. He states that the Mahd□ was the pole (qu□b) [of the mystics] after his father al-□asan al-`Askar□, peace be on them, who too was a qu□b after his father—proceeding in this manner to Imam `Al□ b. Ab□ □□lib. Moreover, he was concealed from the eyes of the ordinary people as well as the elite except for the very, very special ones. He then speaks about the infallibility of the twelve Imams.
Shaykh `Abd al-Ra□m□n the author of Mir`□t al-asr□r, who was one of the greatest □□f□ shaykhs. Sh□h Wal□-Allah al-Hind□ al-Dihlaw□—the father of Sh□h `Abd al-`Az□z, the author of Tu□fat al-Ithn□ `Ashariyya—has narrated from him. According to al-Najm al-th□qib and Kashf al-ast□r, he has written the following in Mir`□t al-asr□r: "The Sun of religion and governance, the guide of the entire nation, the successor of A□mad, and the true Imam, Ab□ l-Q□sim Mu□ammad b. □asan al-Mahd□, may Allah be satisfied with him, is the twelfth Imam from the Imams of the Ahl al-Bait. His mother was a female slave and was called Narjis. His birth took place on the night of Friday, Sha`b□n 15, 255 AH . . . His name and epithet is like that of the Messenger [of Allah]. His titles are: Mahd□, □ujja, Q□'im, Munta□ar, □□□ib al-Zam□n, and Kh□tam Ithn□ `Ashar. He was five when his father Imam □asan al-`Askar□ passed away and he was appointed as an Imam [at this young age], just as Allah, the Exalted, granted wisdom to John (Ya□y□), son of Zachariah, in childhood, and gave high stature to Jesus while he was an infant. He became an Imam at a young age and his miracles are more than can be mentioned here. (He then mentions what the aforementioned Shaykh Mu□y□ al-d□n al-`Arab□ has said, then continues,) Our master `Abd al-Ra□m□n J□m□ was a well-experienced □□f□ who followed the Sh□fi`□ sect. He has written about the birth and occultation of Imam Mu□ammad b. □asan al-`Askar□, peace be on him, in great detail in his book Shaw□hid al-nubuwwa. He has extensively narrated from the Imams of the Ahl al-Bait and the authors of biographies. The author of Maq□adi aq□□ writes, 'Shaykh Sa`d al-d□n al-□imaw□—the successor of Najm al-d□n—has written a book about Imam Mahd□ and has spoken about a lot of related subjects to such an extent that no other creation can write [such a book]. When he reappears, absolute guardianship will become manifest and the differences between sects, unfairness, and evil will be completely uprooted—like it has been mentioned in prophetic traditions about his characteristics. These traditions state that the Mahd□ will reappear in the end of times and will cleanse every corner of the earth from injustice and unfairness. Then, only one religion will remain. If the Antichrist (al-Dajj□l), the evil-doer, can be alive and hidden, Jesus, peace be on him, can be born and concealed from the people, then it is no surprise if the son of the Holy Prophet, Allah's blessings be on him and his family, Imam Mu□ammad Mahd□ b. □asan al-`Askar□, peace be on him, is too covered from the eyes of the masses, and like Jesus and the Antichrist, will reappear on Allah's Command. It is not strange that some great scholars have denied some concepts related to Mahdawiyya. It is wrong to deny these facts out of sheer prejudice.
Some of al-Sha`r□n□'s teachers; According to Yan□b□` al-mawadda (p. 470): "Shaykh `Abd al-Wahh□b al-Sha`r□n□ has written in his book al-Anw□r al-qudsiyya, 'Some of our teachers have acknowledged that "We pledged allegiance to Imam al-Mahd□ in Damascus and stayed with him for seven days." Shaykh `Abd al-La□□f al-□alab□ said to me in the year 1273 AH, "My father, Shaykh Ibr□h□m, may Allah have mercy on him, said 'I heard from some Egyptian □□f□ saints that they pledged allegiance to Imam Mahd□.'"""
The lord of the scholars, al-Q□□□ Shih□b al-d□n b. Shams al-d□n al-Daulat□b□d□ (d. 849 AH), the author of Man□qib al-s□d□t and the Tafs□r al-Bahr al-maww□j—both in Persian—and al-Man□qib al-maus□m bi hid□yat al-su`ad□. According

to al-Najm al-th□qib and Kashf al-ast□r, in the latter, he has clearly declared the Imamate of the twelve Imams and their names. He has narrated the Tradition of the Tablet (□ad□th lau□) and has said about al-□ujjat b. al-□asan, peace be on him, "He is in occultation and has a long life like Jesus, Ily□s, and al-Khi□r from amongst the believers and al-Dajj□l and al-S□mir□ from amongst the infidels."

I say: Refer to al-Hid□ya, the second manifestation from the thirteenth guidance.

Shaykh Sulaim□n b. Shaykh Ibr□h□m, known as Kh□ja Kal□n al-□usayn□ al-Balkh□ al-Qund□z□ (d. 1294 AH), the author of Yan□b□` al-mawadda. He has mentioned in a number of places of this book, Imam Mahd□'s life, his miracles, his birth date, his lineage, and some of the traditions that are related to him. After mentioning the views about the date of his birth, he writes on page 452, "The news regarded obvious and verified by reliable scholars, is that the Q□'im, peace be on him, was born on Friday night, Sha`b□n 15, 255 AH in S□marr□ . . ."

Shaykh `□mir b. `□mir al-Ba□r□, the composer of al-Qa□□dat al-T□'iyya or Dh□t al-anw□r, comprised of twelve [sections called] lights, concerning knowledge, judgment, secrets, and etiquette. According to Kashf al-ast□r, he has written in the ninth light—which is about the recognition of the Master of the Time and his reappearance—a poem which starts with the following line:

O Imam of guidance! Until when will you be occult

Oblige us O father by paying attention to us

Al-Q□□□ Jaw□d al-S□b□□□, who was a Christian and converted to Islam and wrote al-Bar□h□n al-S□b□□iyya f□ l-radd `al□ l-Na□□r□ in refutation of the Christians. According to al-Najm al-th□qib and Kashf al-ast□r—after mentioning the differences between the Muslims about the Mahd□—he writes: "The view of the Im□miyya [i.e. Shias] is closer [to the truth] as it is more in conformity with the divine texts (al-na□□)."

Shaykh Ab□ l-Ma`□l□ □adr al-d□n al-Q□naw□, the author of Tafs□r al-F□ti□a, Mift□□ al-ghayb, and etc. Kashf al-ast□r has reported that he has composed a poem which starts like this: "He will rise by Allah's order . . ." He has also said to his students in his will, "Sell what books I have in my library on the topics of medicine, wisdom, and philosophy and give its money in charity to the needy. Keep the Tafs□r, Hadith, and Sufism books in the library. Recite the word of oneness, 'There is no god but Allah' seventy thousand times in the first night [of my death] with utmost attention of the heart and convey my sal□m to the Mahd□, peace be on him."

The great learned scholar `Abd Allah b. Mu□ammad al-Ma□□r□ has clearly talked about him in his book al-Riy□□ al-□□hira f□ fa□l □l Bait al-Nab□ wa `itratih al-□□hira. According to Kashf al-ast□r, he has named the Imams one after the other, and he says: "The eleventh is his son, al-□asan al-`Askar□, may Allah be satisfied with him. The twelfth is his son, Mu□ammad al-Q□'im al-Mahd□, may Allah be satisfied with him. Divine texts are available about him in the Islamic nation which date back to the Prophet Mu□ammad, Allah's blessings be on him [and his family], his ancestor `Al□ b. Ab□ □□lib, may Allah approve of him, and from his other noble, high statured forefathers. He is the Possessor of the Sword, the Riser, and the Awaited one, as has been mentioned in authentic traditions. Before his emergence, he will have two occultations . . ."

The author of Kashf al-ast□r writes, "The manuscript which I used was very old and belonged to the author himself. In his own hand-writing he had written on the cover, 'al-Riy□□ al-□□hira f□ fa□l □l Bait al-Nab□ wa `itratih al-□□hira, written by the needy toward Allah, `Abd-Allah b. Mu□ammad al- Ma□□r□ al-Madan□, follower of the Sh□fi`□ religion, the Ash`ar□ belief, and the Naqshband□ path. May Allah benefit us from their blessings, Amen.'"

Shaykh al-Islam Ab□ l-Ma`□l□ Mu□ammad Sir□j al-d□n al-Rif□`□ al-Makhz□m□, the honorable Shar□f. According to Kashf al-ast□r, he has mentioned in his book □i□□□ al-akhb□r f□ nasab al-s□dat al-F□timiyya al-akhy□r, under the biography of Ab□ l-□asan al-H□d□, peace be on him: "Imam `Al□ al-H□d□, the son of Imam Mu□ammad al-Jaw□d, peace be on them. His titles are: al-Naq□, al-`□lim, al-Faq□h, al-Am□r, al-Dal□l, al-`Askar□, and al-Naj□b. He was born in Medina in 212 AH and was martyred with poison during the reign of al-Mu`tazz al-`Abb□s□ on Monday, Rajab 3, 254 AH. He had five children: Imam □asan al-`Askar□, al-□usayn, Mu□ammad, Ja`far, and `□'isha. Al-□asan al-`Askar□ was succeeded by the Companion of the Cellar, al-□ujja, the Awaited One, the Guardian assigned by Allah, Imam al-Mahd□, peace be on him.

M□r Kh□nd, the famous historian, Mu□ammad b. Kh□wand Sh□h b. Ma□m□d (d. 903 AH [according to Kashf al-□un□n]). He has mentioned his birth, life, and miracles in the third volume of T□r□kh rau□at al-□af□.

Na□r b. `Al□ al-Jah□am□ al-Na□r□, one of the great and reliable Sunni scholars. According to al-Najm al-th□qib, he has talked about his birth, his mother's name, and his janitors name. He is the same Na□r about whom the First Martyr (al-

Shah□d al-Awwal) has said, “He stated in the presence of al-Mutawakkil that the Prophet, Allah's blessings be on him and his family, held (Imam) al-□asan and al-□usayn’s hands and declared, ‘Whoever loves me, these two, and their mother, will be with me in my rank in Paradise.’ On hearing this, al-Mutawakkil ordered that he be whipped one thousand times. Ab□ Ja`far `Abd al-W□□id said, ‘He is a Sunn□!’ and so he was pardoned.”

Shaykh al-Islam, the great traditionist, Ibr□h□m b. Mu□ammad b. al-Mu’ayyid al-Juwain□ al-Khur□s□n□ (d. 730 AH). In his book Far□’id al-sim□ain (published in two large volumes), he has mentioned his birth in a number of places and has recorded traditions which speak about him and about the twelve Imams, peace be on them.

Al-Q□□□ al-Mu□aqqiq Buhl□l Bahjat Afand□, the author of al-Muh□kama f□ t□r□kh □l Mu□ammad in Turkish which was translated into Persian. It has been published several times due to demand from the readers. It is truly an excellent book which has investigated important incidents in history and removed the numerous veils placed on historical events by prejudiced writers and historians. In this book, he has explicitly talked about the Imamate of the twelve Imams, some of their merits and conditions, the birth of the twelfth Imam—and that he was born on Sha`b□n 15, 255 AH—the name of his mother was Narjis, that he had two occultations: the minor and major, that he is alive and will appear when Allah, the Exalted, permits him to do so, and he will fill the earth with fairness and justice. He also writes, “His [eventual] appearance is agreed upon by all Muslims, and hence, there is no need to prove it.” He then praises him with great words and mentions some of his attributes and signs.

Shaykh Shams al-d□n Mu□ammad b. Yusuf al-Zarand□ who according to Ilz□m al-n□□ib, has written in his book Mi`r□j al-wu□□l il□ ma`rifat fa□□lat □l al-Ras□l: “The twelfth Imam is the possessor of famous miracles whose stature is because of his great knowledge and him following the truth and the traditions of the Prophet. He will rise with the truth and will invite the people to the right path. He is Imam Ab□ l-Q□sim Mu□ammad b. al-□asan.” He then mentions his birth date.

Shams al-d□n al-Tabr□z□—the teacher of Maulaw□ Jal□l al-d□n al-R□m□. Kashf al-ast□r has cited Yan□b□` al-mawadda as stating that he has acknowledged the birth of the Mahd□.

The famous historian, ibn Khalik□n in Wafiyy□t al-a`y□n. We already mentioned what he has said in the section about his birth and its history.

Ibn al-Azraq, the famous historian in T□r□kh mayy□f□riq□n (according to what has been narrated by ibn Khalik□n in Wafiyy□t al-a`y□n).

Maul□ `Al□ al-Q□r□ whom according to Ilz□m al-n□□ib and Kashf al-ast□r, has mentioned in his book al-Mirq□t f□ shar□ al- mishk□t, the names of the twelve Imams and pointed to some of their virtues and miracles.

The great □□f□ saint for whom `Abd al-Ra□m□n al-□□f□’s book Mir`□t al-asr□r was written about (as reported in Kashf al-ast□r).

The famous historian ibn al-Ward□. According to N□r al-ab□□r (chap. 2, p. 153), he has written in his T□r□kh, “Mu□ammad b. al-□asan, the purified one, was born in 255 AH.”

Al-Sayyid Mu’min b. □asan al-Shablanj□, the author of N□r al-ab□□r. He writes in chapter 2, page 152: “The section concerning the virtues of Mu□ammad b. □asan al-Kh□li□ b. `Al□ al-H□d□ b. Mu□ammad al-Jaw□d b. `Al□ al-Ri□□ b. M□s□ al-K□□im b. Ja`far al-□□diq b. Mu□ammad al-B□qir b. `Al□ Zain al-`□bid□n b. al-□usayn b. `Al□ b. Ab□ □□lib, may Allah be satisfied with them. His mother was a female slave and her name was Narjis. Others have said □aq□l and S□san. His epithet is Ab□ l-Q□sim and the Shias have given him the titles of al-□ujja (the Divine Proof), al-Mahd□ (the Guided), al-Q□’im (the Riser), al-Munta□ar (the Awaited), and □□□ib al-□am□n (the Master of the Time). The most famous of these is al-Mahd□.”

Shaykh al-Nass□ba Ab□ l-Fauz Mu□ammad Am□n al-Baghd□d□ al-Suwayd□, the author of Sab□’ik al-dhahab f□ ma`rifat qab□’il al-`Arab. He has mentioned the names of the twelve Imams and some of their merits and virtues. He mentions Imam □asan al-`Askar□ in chap. 6, p. 77. He writes on p. 78, “Mu□ammad al-Mahd□ whose age was five when his father passed away. He had an average figure, pleasant visage and hair, an aquiline nose, and a wide forehead.”

Shaykh al-Islam Ibr□h□m b. Sa`d al-d□n which has already been mentioned.

Chief of the Imams, □iy□’ al-d□n Muwaffaq b. A□mad al-Kha□□b al-M□lik□ al-Kh□wrazm□, who was the most eloquent of the speakers of Kh□wrazm (according to Kashf al-ast□r). He has recorded traditions in al-Man□qib that clearly establish this point.

Al-Maul□ □usayn b. `Al□ al-K□shif□—the author of Jaw□hir al-tafs□r—who according to Kashf al-□un□n died in 906 AH. It

has been mentioned in Kashf al-astar that some of the knowledgeable have attributed this belief to him and Kashf al-astar has narrated some of his views that show his inclination towards it.

Al-Sayyid `Ali b. Shihab al-Hamdani has openly stated this in the tenth chapter of his book al-mawadda fi l-qurba.

Al-Shaykh Muhammad al-Ubbani al-Miri (d. 1206 AH), as is apparent in some of his words in Is`af al-raghibin.

The Abbasid caliph, al-Nasir Li-din Allah Ahmad b. al-Mustasi' Bi-Nasr Allah. According to Kashf al-astar and Ilzam al-nasib he ordered that the building of the noble cellar (sardab) be reconstructed and a wooden window be placed in the room on top of it. It was inscribed on the window: "In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. 'Say, "I do not ask you for any reward for it except the love of the close ones," and whoever does a good deed, We will increase it for him in goodness. Surely, Allah is Forgiving and Grateful' (Quran, 42:23). This was ordered to us by our master—the leader whose obedience is obligatory on all the creatures—Abi l-`Abbas Ahmad al-Nasir Li-din Allah, the commander of the faithful, the caliph of the Lord of the Worlds, whose kindness has covered the lands and his mercy and grace is prevalent in the countries. May Allah establish his affairs with continuation of success and facilitation, decorate them with help and support, make for his eternal days a limit . . . And Allah suffices for us and He is the best of those relied upon. Allah's blessings be upon our master, the seal of the Prophets, and upon his pure family and progeny."

Inside the room, it was also inscribed on wood and hung on the walls: "In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. Muhammad the Messenger of Allah, Amir al-Mu'minin `Ali Wali Allah, Fatima, al-hasan b. `Ali, al-husayn b. `Ali, `Ali b. al-husayn, Muhammad b. `Ali, Ja`far b. Muhammad, Musa b. Ja`far, `Ali b. Musa, Muhammad b. `Ali, `Ali b. Muhammad, al-hasan b. `Ali, the Riser with the truth, peace be on them. This is the work of `Ali b. Muhammad who loves the family of Muhammad, may Allah have mercy on him."

The author of Kashf al-astar also says: If al-Nasir did not believe that the cellar (sardab) was related to the Mahdi and was the place of his birth, occultation, or miracles (and not the place of his residence during his major occultation as has been attributed to the Shias by some ignorant people, which has absolutely no basis in their books, old or new), he would not have ordered for it to be renovated or decorated. If the beliefs of the scholars of his time were contrary to this and they had rejected the Mahdi's birth, it would have been very difficult or almost impossible for the caliph to undertake such a project. Inevitably, if there was a consensus amongst the scholars [of his time] that the Mahdi had not been born, it would be have been fairly impossible for al-Nasir to do what he had done. The reason we mentioned al-Nasir in this category is because of the advantages he had like his merits, science, and being enumerated amongst the traditionists. Ibn Sukayna, ibn al-Akhsar, ibn al-Najjar, and ibn al-Dimghani have all narrated from him.

I say: These inscriptions still exist in the noble cellar. We have seen and read them many times. Refer to the book Dali Simarri' by Yunus al-Shaykh Ibrahim al-Simarri', pp. 33–36 and you will find all of these in it. According to the book Nasmat al-sahar bi dhikr man tashayya`a wa sha`ar, vol. 1, p. 253, it appears that al-Nasir considered himself the representative of the Mahdi, peace be on him. This has also been reported from al-Dhahabi.

The author of the book Shadharat al-dhahab, Abi l-Fala `Abd al-hayy b. al-`Imad al-hanbali (d. 1089 AH), has declared the birth of the Mahdi in the second section of his book, pp. 141 & 150.

Shaykh `Abd al-Rahman Muhammad b. `Ali b. Ahmad al-Basami, who according to Yanabi` al-mawadda (p. 401), has said in Durrat al-ma`arif, "The Mahdi is the most knowledgeable and forbearing of the people. He has a mole on his right cheek and he is from the descendants of al-husayn." According to Yanabi` al-mawadda, he has composed some poetry about him [these can be found in the original Arabic edition of the current book—Ed.].

Shaykh `Abd al-Karim al-Yamani, the author of Yanabi` al-mawadda writes on p. 466, "The majestic Shaykh, `Abd al-Karim al-Yamani, writes and confers his knowledge upon us . . ." He then mentions some lines of poetry composed by him about the Mahdi.

Al-Sayyid al-Nasimi whom Kashf al-astar has quoted citing Yanabi` al-mawadda.

`Imad al-din al-hanafi: According to Kashf al-astar, some of the distinguished scholars have attributed this belief to him.

The respected scholar `Abd-Allah b. Muhammad al-Mamari in al-Riyaz al-zahira fi fazl Ahl Bait al-Nabi wa `itratih al-tahira. He begins this book by including all of Imam Jalal al-din al-Suyuti's treatise called Iqa' al-mayyit bi-fada'il Ahl al-Bait `alayhim al-salam, which is comprised of sixty traditions. He has extended these traditions to 151 and he writes in the last one, "From the seed of al-husayn b. `Ali will be the Mahdi who will be sent in the end of times. . . The first Imam is `Ali b. Abi talib, peace be on him . . . (he names each one of the Imams until he says) The eleventh Imam is his son,

al-□asan al-`Askar□, and the twelfth is his son Mu□ammad al-Q□'im al-Mahd□. Divine texts concerning him have preceded him in the Islamic nation from the Prophet Mu□ammad, Allah's blessings be on him and his family, his ancestor `Al□ b. Ab□ □□lib, and from his other noble and high statured forefathers. He is the Possessor of the Sword, the Riser, the Awaited."

The virtuous scholar, Rash□d al-d□n al-Dihlaw□ al-Hind□. According to the book al-Im□m al-th□n□ `ashar, he has recorded in his book □□□□ la□□fat al-maq□l, what Kh□ja P□rs□ has said in Fa□l al-khi□□b and has agreed with him.

Sh□h Wal□ Allah al-Dihlaw□, the father of the author of al-Tu□fa f□ kit□b al-nuzha, and many others who have narrated the tradition about the Musalsal□t which we mentioned under al-Bal□dhur□ (refer to no. 9).

Shaykh A□mad al-F□r□q□ al-Naqshband□, known as the 'Restorer of the Second Millennium' (al-mujaddid f□ l-alf al-th□n□) as has been recorded in al-`Abqar□ al-□is□n citing al-Mak□t□b (vol. 3, letter 123).

Ab□ l-Wal□d Mu□ammad b. Sha□na al-□anaf□. In his history book known as Rau□at al-man□□ir f□ akhb□r al-aw□'il wa l-aw□khir, which has been published in the margins of Mur□j al-dhahab ([Egypt: al-Ma□ba`atu al-Azhariyya al-Mi□riyya, 1303 AH], vol. 1, p. 294). He writes: "This al-□asan (meaning al-□asan al-`Askar□, peace be on him) was granted a son, the Awaited One, the twelfth amongst them; he is called the Mahd□, the Q□'im, the □ujja, and Mu□ammad. He was born in 255 AH."

Shaykh Kh□lid al-Naqshband□ (d. 1242 AH)—the author of Far□'id al-faw□'id and Ris□lat al-r□bita. He has a compilation of poems which have been published in Istanbul. He has mentioned the twelve Imams in a poem in which he praises the eighth Imam, `Al□ b. M□s□ al-Ri□□, peace be on him. In one part of this poem (which is in Persian) he mentions the Mahd□ and his forefathers.

Sayyid B□qir b. Sayyid `Uthm□n Bukh□r□, the author of Jaw□hir al-auliy□', published in 1396 AH. He has expressed this meaning on pp. 31, 32, 307, 378, 471, 541, 544, and 556.

Jam□l al-d□n Kh□ja A□mad Haqq□n□. Refer to Jaw□hir al-auliy□', p. 478.

Sayyid Wid□yat b. Sayyid `Uthm□n Bukh□r□. Jaw□hir al-auliy□ (p. 544) has narrated from him a supplication in Persian which comprises of the names of the twelve Imams to our Master, al-Mahd□, peace be on them.

Shaykh `Abd-Allah b. Mu□ammad b. `□mir al-Shabr□w□ al-Sh□fi`□, the Dean of al-Azhar University, in his book al-It□□f bi-□ubb al-ashr□f, has clearly declared the Imamate of the twelve Imams, peace be on them, and the birth of our Master, al-Mahd□, the twelfth Imam, peace be on him. He has also mentioned some of their merits and positions.

2. Kam□l al-d□n, vol. 2, chap. 42, p. 424, no. 1; Ghaybat al-Shaykh, pp. 234–237, no. 204, similar to it through his chain of narrators from Ab□ `Abd-Allah al-Mu□ahhar□, from □ak□ma, which says: "My nephew, (Imam) Ab□ Mu□ammad, peace be on him, called for me in Sha`b□n 15, 255 AH . . ." no. 205–207 mention the same story with some variations; Yan□b□` al-mawadda, chap. 79, pp. 449–451, no. 1. He has narrated this tradition through many different chains; Ithb□t al-wa□iyya, pp. 218–220; I`l□m al-war□, chap. 1, sect. 2; Bi□□r al-anw□r, vol. 51, chap. 1, no. 3.

3. Quran 28:5–6.

4. Kam□l al-d□n, vol. 2, chap. 42, p. 430, no. 5; Ghaybat al-Shaykh, p. 147; Ithb□t al-wa□iyya, p. 221, concerning his birth: "From a group, from Mu□ammad b. Ya□y□, from al-□usayn b. `Al□ al-N□s□b□r□, from Ibr□h□m b. Mu□ammad, from A□mad b. Mu□ammad al-Sayy□r□ . . . ," similar to it, with the difference that after saying "Allah's blessings be on him and his family," he continued, "a humble servant for Allah, who was neither disobedient nor arrogant." ; al-Khar□'ij wa l-jar□'i□, vol. 1, p. 457, no. 2; Ithb□t al-hud□t, vol. 3, chap. 33, p. 668, no. 34–35; Kashf al-ghumma, vol. 2, pp. 498–499, under "The Miracles of □□□ib al-Zam□n"; Bi□□r al-anw□r, vol. 51, chap. 1, p. 4, no. 1; □ilyat al-abr□r, vol. 2, chap. 10, p. 544; al-Was□'il, vol. 8, chap. 59, p. 461, no. 1, which only mentions the last section of the tradition; Muntakhab al-anw□r al-mu□□'a, p. 160 (short version); I`l□m al-war□, part 4, sect. 2, chap. 1.

5. Kam□l al-d□n, vol. 2, chap. 42, pp. 430–431, no. 6; Bi□□r al-anw□r, vol. 51, chap. 1, p. 5, no. 9; Ithb□t al-hud□t, vol. 3, sect. 5, chap. 32, p. 483, no. 195.

6. A unit of weight—Ed.

7. `Aq□qa is a sheep which is slaughtered on the occasion of the birth of a child—Ed.

8. Kam□l al-d□n, vol. 2, p. 430, no. 4; Ithb□t al-hud□t, vol. 6, chap. 32, sect. 5, p. 430, no. 194.

9. Kif□yat al-muhtad□ (al-Arba`□n), p. 111, no. 29; Kif□yat al-athar, chap. 39, pp. 290–291, no. 4; Kam□l al-d□n, vol. 2, chap. 38, pp. 408–409, no. 7, which says: "Narrated to us al-Mu□affar b. Ja`far b. al-Mu□affar al-`Alaw□ al-Samarqand□,

may Allah be satisfied with him, from Ja`far b. Mu□ammad b. Mas`□d al-`Ayy□sh□, from his father, from A□mad b. `Al□ b. Kulth□m, from `Al□ b. A□mad al-R□z□, from A□mad b. Is□□q b. Sa`d, from Ab□ Mu□ammad al-□asan b. `Al□ al-`Askar□, peace be on them, who said, 'All praise is . . .'"

10. Kam□l al-d□n, vol. 2, chap. 38, p. 408, no. 4; Kif□yat al-athar, chap. 39, pp. 489–490, no. 2; Ithb□t al-hud□t, vol. 3, chap. 32, sect. 5, p. 481, no. 185; Bi□□r al-anw□r, vol. 51, chap. 9, p. 161, no. 13.

11. Kam□l al-d□n, vol. 2, chap. 42, p. 433, no. 13; Ithb□t al-hud□t, vol. 3, chap. 33, p. 669, no. 37.

12. Quran, 3:18.

13. Kam□l al-d□n, vol. 2, p. 38, no. 3; Bi□□r al-anw□r, vol. 51, chap. 9, pp. 160–161, no. 8; Ithb□t al-hud□t, vol. 3, chap. 32, p. 481, no. 184.

14. T□r□kh al-A'imma, chap. "The Son of al-□asan b. `Al□ al-`Askar□," p. 14; Ghaybat al-Shaykh, p. 223, no. 686, and p. 231, no. 197; Ithb□t al-hud□t, vol. 3, chap. 31, sect. 10, p. 430, no. 116.

I say: The book T□r□kh al-A'imma or T□r□kh □l al-Ras□l or Taw□r□kh al-A'imma or al-Maw□l□d, is a short and concise book about the birth dates of the Messenger of Allah, F□□imat al-Zahr□, and the twelve Imams, Allah's blessings be on them all. It has been written by ibn Ab□ l-Thalj al-Baghd□d□ (325 AH). His complete name is Ab□ Bakr Mu□ammad b. A□mad b. Mu□ammad b. `Abd-Allah b. Ism□`□l, known as ibn Ab□ l-Thalj. Ibn Nad□m writes in al-Fihrist, "He was a Shia who was inclined towards Sunnism but he was inclined more towards Shi`ism. He has narrated many traditions from Sunnis and has authored books on different topics. He was very religious, learned, and extremely pious." His biography can be found in other biography books.

As for the aforementioned book, some believe that this is the work of Na□r b. `Al□ al-Jah□am□, because at its beginning, ibn Ab□ Thalj has narrated the birth dates of the Prophet, Allah's blessings be on him and his family, the Master of the Women (F□□ima), and the Imams up to al-Ri□□, peace be on them, through his chain of narrators from al-Na□r, from (Imam) al-Ri□□, peace be on him. Therefore, they have thought that the entire book was narrated from al-Na□r. The falsity of this idea becomes apparent by referring to the book itself. Moreover, Na□r b. `Al□ died during the reign of the caliph al-Musta`□n in 250 or 251 AH. If Na□r had written this book about the birth dates of the Imams, peace be on them, up to our Master al-Mahd□, Allah's blessings be on him, as has been stated by Sayyid b. □□w□s in Muhaj al-da`aw□t, p. 276 where he says: "Na□r b. `Al□ al-Jah□am□ who is a reliable scholar from the opponents (al-mukhalif□n), has mentioned . . . in the book Maw□l□d al-a'imma, 'From the reasons is what has been narrated from al-□asan b. `Al□ al-`Askar□ when Mu□ammad b. al-□asan was born, "The oppressors think . . . he named him the Hoped (al-Mu`ammal)."'" Thus we must inevitably accept that he passed away after the birth of the Mahd□ in 255 AH. The following story has been narrated about him: Al-Musta'□n asked for him to make him a judge. So he said to the Emir of Basra, "I will go back [home] so that I may ask Allah, the Exalted, for the best decision (astakh□ru Allah)." He returned to his house, performed two units (rak`a) of prayers and said, "O Allah! If being with you is better for me, then take me to yourself [i.e. take my life]." He then went to sleep. When they came to wake him up, he was dead. This narration is incorrect and the person who sought him was not al-Musta`□n. Rather, it was either al-Muhtad□ or al-Mu`tamid. It is probable that al-Na□r's book only consisted of the births and deaths of the Imams up to Imam Ri□□, peace be on him, and that A□mad b. Mu□ammad al-F□ry□b□—the narrator from Na□r and the one from whom ibn Ab□ Thalj has narrated through `Utbat b. Sa`d b. Kin□na—has completed his book up to our Master, al-Q□'im, may my father and mother be sacrificed for him.

Even with all the probabilities, attributing the book to ibn Ab□ Thalj will not be incorrect, because either, he has narrated it from al-F□ry□b□ who has narrated a part of it from al-Na□r and completed the rest of it himself or he has compiled what he has narrated from al-Na□r and al-F□ry□b□ and integrated them into this book.

Anyway, the book which has been called Maw□l□d al-A'imma or T□r□kh al-A'imma or etc., is this book which Ab□ l-Mufa□□al al-Shaib□n□ and others have narrated from ibn Ab□ Thalj. Hence, attributing the book to him is justified and so is relying upon him and regarding his book as reliable, especially when considering the fact that it has been narrated from someone like ibn Ab□ Thalj and Allah knows the best.

15. Kam□l al-d□n, vol. 2, chap. 42, p. 431, no. 8; Yan□b□` al-mawadda, chap. 82, p. 460; Ghaybat al-Shaykh, p. 100; Ithb□t al-hud□t, vol. 3, chap. 32, sect. 5, pp. 483–484, no. 196.

16. Kam□l al-d□n, vol. 2, chap. 42, p. 431, no. 7; Bi□□r al-anw□r, vol. 51, chap. 1, p. 5, no. 10; Tab□irat al-wal□, pp. 45–46, no. 12.

I say: Her death before the death of Imam Ab□ Mu□ammad, peace be on him, which has been mentioned in this tradition, contradicts other traditions like no. 804. We will discuss this issue under that tradition.

17. Kam□l al-d□n, vol. 2, chap. 43, p. 434, no. 1; Ghaybat al-Shaykh, pp. 229–230, no. 195; Bi□□r al-anw□r, vol. 51, chap. 1, p. 17, no. 24; Ithb□t al-hud□t, chap. 32, p. 506, no. 312.

18. Kam□l al-d□n, vol. 2, chap. 42, p. 432, no. 10; Ithb□t al-hud□t, vol. 3, chap. 32, p. 484, sect. 5, no. 198; Bi□□r al-anw□r, vol. 51, chap. 5, p. 15, no. 17.

19. `Aq□qa is a sheep which is slaughtered on the seventh day after an infant is born—Ed.

20. Kam□l al-d□n (Published by al-Isl□miyya), vol. 2, chap. 45, p. 106, no. 11; Kam□l al-d□n (Published by Maktabat al-□ad□q), vol. 2, chap. 42, p. 432, no. 11, in this version, his saying "And he ordered that three hundred sheep be slaughtered for his `aq□qa," is missing; Bi□□r al-anw□r, vol. 51, chap. 5, p. 15, no. 18; Ithb□t al-hud□t, vol. 3, chap. 32, p. 484, no. 199, in which the following section is missing: "And he ordered that . . ."

I say: Perhaps his saying, "his epithet is Ja`far" in this tradition and in the fifth tradition from the 30th chapter of Kam□l al-d□n (vol. 1, p. 318): "his epithet is derived from his (paternal) uncle," refers to his uncle and the uncle of his forefathers, Ja`far al-□ayy□r, the martyr. This was done to enliven his name and to honor his majestic position. It does not refer to his uncle, Ja`far b. `Al□ b. Mu□ammad. In the tradition narrated from `Aq□d, the servant (narrated in Kam□l al-d□n, vol. 2, chap. 43, p. 474, no. 25), it has been mentioned: "he was given the epithet Ab□ l-Q□sim, others have said Ab□ l-Ja`far."

21. Kam□l al-d□n, vol. 2, chap. 42, pp. 433–434, no. 16; Bi□□r al-anw□r, vol. 51, chap. 5, p. 16, no. 21; Ithb□t al-hud□t, vol. 3, chap. 32, sect. 5, p 484, no. 202.

22. Kam□l al-d□n (Published by Maktabat al-□ad□q), vol. 2, chap. 43, p. 441, no. 11; Kam□l al-d□n (Published by al-Isl□miyya) vol. 2, chap. 47, pp. 114–115, no. 12.

It is worth mentioning that the variations and differences in the numbers of the chapters and traditions in the two versions of Kam□l al-d□n are insignificant except that in one version the researcher has in some places merged two chapters as one and has done the same to some of the traditions (or has thought they were really one) and in the other version the researcher has done the opposite. References from both copies have been mentioned to prevent errors.

As for 'Nas□m', it is clear in this tradition as well as what has been narrated in Kam□l al-d□n, vol. 2, chap. 42, p. 430, no. 5 (Maktabat al-□ad□q) and vol. 2, chap. 45, p. 104, no. 5 (al-Isl□miyya) that she is a woman. But in Ghaybat al-Shaykh (chap. "His Birth, Peace be on Him," p. 139), Mu□ammad b. Ya`q□b reports directly from Nas□m and states that he is a male-servant. I believe that 'Nas□m' refers to a female servant because she and M□riya—another woman—have both narrated in another tradition (no. 788) what we mentioned that when he was born, he knelt down and prayed . . . (to the end of the tradition). Obviously, only women-servants were permitted to witness his birth. This fact is not refuted by the argument that these women do not explicitly state that they have actually witnessed the moment of his birth. Perhaps, both have testified to what was clearly known to them through the testimony of other women. Surely, this is against the literal meaning of the tradition; so ponder on it.

In Ghaybat al-Shaykh, "ten nights after his birth" has been recorded instead of "one night after his birth."

Al-Khar□'ij, vol. 2, p. 692, which says: "From Ibr□h□m al-Karkh□, from Nas□m the servant of Ab□ Mu□ammad . . . I went to see him ten days after his birth . . ."

Ithb□t al-wa□iyya, p. 198: "From `All□n, from Nas□m the slave of Ab□ Mu□ammad . . . one night after his birth . . ."

I say: Such differences in the traditions do not weaken the essential substance of the tradition which all the narrators and sources are unanimous about. Such differences occur because only the main concepts of some of them have been narrated and a word-by-word recount has not been used. Those who have good understanding of traditions are aware of such differences. Therefore, they take the common and definite parts from them—which are agreed upon by all the tradition, or those in which the narrators are more reliable and trustworthy, or those that are preferable according to the intellectual preferences mentioned in dir□ya books. A tradition cannot be rejected merely on account of it having minor differences with another.

Bi□□r al-anw□r, vol. 52, chap. 18, p. 30, no. 24; Kashf al-ghumma, vol. 2, p. 500; Muntakhab al-anw□r al-mu□□'a, p. 160; al-Was□'il, vol. 8, chap. 59, p. 461, no. 1; □ilyat al-abr□r, vol. 2, chap. 10, p. 544

23. Kam□l al-d□n, vol. 2, chap. 42, p. 433, no. 14; Ithb□t al-hud□t, vol. 3, chap. 32, p. 484, no. 201; Bi□□r al-anw□r, vol. 51, chap. 1, p. 16, no. 20.

24. Ghaybat al-Shaykh, pp. 271–273, no. 237; Bi□□r al-anw□r, vol. 52, chap. 18, pp. 16–17, no. 14; Tab□irat al-wal□, pp. 164 & 166, no. 69; Ithb□t al-hud□t, vol. 3, chap. 31, p. 415, no. 55 (short version). He has recorded its beginning and its end in chap. 32, p. 509, no. 325.

I say: This tradition proves that Ab□ Sahl al-Naubakht□ believed that his birth occurred in the year 256 AH. The tradition narrated from Ab□ H□r□n is also like this (see Kam□l al-d□n, vol. 2, chap. 42, p. 432, no. 9).

25. The traditions differ concerning the fate of the Imam's mother, peace be on him. Some state that she died after Imam Ab□ Mu□ammad al-`Askar□ in the house of Mu□ammad b. `Al□ b. □amzat b. al-□asan b. `Ubaid-Allah b. al-Abb□s b. Am□r al-Mu'min□n `Al□ b. Ab□ □□lib, peace be on him—who has been described as a reliable person and as a source in traditions, who was true in his beliefs and had written a book—while other traditions mention that she asked Imam Ab□ Mu□ammad, peace be on him, to pray for her death before his. The Imam obliged and his prayers were accepted. In others (like the current tradition), it has been said that she was present when the Imam, peace be on him, passed away. Yet, other traditions say that she migrated to the Holy city of Mecca during the lifetime of Imam al-`Askar□, peace be on him, along with her son al-□ujja, peace be on him, on the instructions of Imam Ab□ Mu□ammad, peace be on him. Most of these traditions indicate that she lived after the death of the Imam, peace be on him, which is more probable and more preferable. The proof for this fact lies in her grave which is behind the grave of Imam Ab□ Mu□ammad, peace be on him.

Nevertheless, such differences will not impact our purpose because our reliance in this book is based on traditions that are mutaw□tir or non-singular, not on singular narrations (al-□□□d). The traditions support each other in what we have agreed on. It is worth mentioning that such secondary differences also exist in the biographies of the Prophets, other Imams, and historical figures. The details of such important incidents—regardless of their essential subjects—cannot be the cause of skepticism in the existence of those people, their obvious conditions, and famous historical incidents related to them. This is in addition to the fact that the conditions prevalent during the lifetime of Imam □asan al-`Askar□, peace be on him, and after his death demanded that he, peace be on him, concealed such secondary issues.

26. Ithb□t al-wa□iyya, pp. 194–195; `Uy□n al-mu`jiz□t, p. 138, similar to it from A□mad b. Ma□qala with the difference that it does not mention the migration of the Master of Time along with Imam Ab□ Mu□ammad's mother to Mecca. Its wording is: "Thereafter, he handed over the Great Name (al-Ism al-A`□am), the inheritances, and the weapon to the Q□'im, the Master, peace be on him; and the mother of Imam Ab□ Mu□ammad left for Mecca."

I say: The aforementioned A□mad b. Ma□qala in `Uy□n al-mu`jiz□t is probably A□mad b. `Abd-Allah b. `□s□ b. Ma□qalat b. Sa`d al-Ash`ar□ al-Qumm□, who has been attributed to his more famous grandfather, as can be inferred from many chains of narrators in the traditions. It is also possible that he is one of the cousins of A□mad b. Is□□q b. `Abd-Allah b. Sa`d b. M□lik b. al-A□wa□ al-Ash`ar□ Ab□ `Al□ al-Qumm□, who has narrated from Imams `Al□ al-Naq□ and Ab□ l-□asan. He was very close to (Imam) Ab□ Mu□ammad, peace be on him, and had also seen the Master of Time, peace be on him. Al-Naj□sh□ writes about A□mad b. Abd-Allah: "He was a reliable person and has narrated a book from Imam `Al□ al-Naq□, peace be on him." According to this, he was contemporary with his cousin A□mad b. Is□□q, and had been alive during the life of (Imam) Ab□ Mu□ammad, peace be on him, and was still alive after 260 AH.

The probability of A□mad b. `Abd-Allah and A□mad b. Is□□q being the same person, is baseless except for the fact that they were both descendants of Sa`d and A□mad b. Is□□q's grandfather had the same name as A□mad b. `Abd-Allah's father. It is also probable that 'Is□□q' has been dropped from the lineage of A□mad b. `Abd-Allah and '`□s□ b. Ma□qala' has been dropped from the lineage of A□mad b. Is□□q. If so, the lineage would be as follows: A□mad b. Is□□q b. `Abd-Allah b. `□s□ b. Ma□qalat b. Sa`d b. M□lik b. al-A□wa□ al-Ash`ar□. Although this probability is weak, but perhaps some evidence can be found by referring to the biographies of all the men of this family, just as it is also likely that A□mad b. Is□□q is the nephew of A□mad b. `Abd-Allah.

With all this said, considering them as two different people is still closer to the truth. Yes, the likelihood of A□mad b. Ma□qala being A□mad b. `Abd-Allah b. `□s□ b. Ma□qala is also high.

Ithb□t al-hud□t, vol. 3, chap. 32, sect. 56, p. 579, no. 750, which is a shortened version narrated from al-Mas`□d□.

27. Kif□yat al-muhtad□ (al-Arba`□n), p. 104, no. 28; al-Arba`□n known as Kashf al-□aqq, p. 8, no. 1 and pp. 136–137, no. 22; Ithb□t al-hud□t, vol. 3, chap. 32, sect. 44, p. 569, no. 680.

28. Al-Muf□d, may Allah be satisfied with him, writes in al-Fu□□l al-`ashara f□ l-ghayba, p. 9: "The fact that (Imam) al-□asan (al-`Askar□'s) son has been born has been established in the most emphatic manner by which the lineage of the

people are proved. For, lineage is established by the testimony of a mid-wife, other women who are usually present during birth, and those who assist them in it. Also, the acknowledgement of the father will suffice and if required the testimony of two men from the Muslims upon the confession of the man that the child is his. Indeed, information from a group of religious people, scholars, pious, ascetic, and highly knowledgeable people has been narrated from Imam al-asan b. `Al who acknowledged the birth of the Mahd, peace be on him, informed them of his existence, and gave them news about his Imamate after him. Some saw his child (in his house), others saw an adolescent or a young man. After his father, he ordered his Shia's about what they should or shouldn't do and answered their questions . . . I have mentioned the names of a group of people who I have already described their conditions, who were trusted by (Imam) al-asan b. `Al, peace be on him. They were very close to him and were known for serving him and fulfilling (his orders). I have also proved what they have narrated from him about the existence of his son, them seeing him after his father (passed away), and them hearing the divine news about his Imamate. These can be found in my books specially the two famous ones known as al-Irshd f ma`rifat ujaj-Allah `al l-`ibd and al- f l-imma wa l-ghayba. Because of what I have mentioned in those books, there is no need to prove them here again."

29. Kaml al-dn, vol. 2, chap. 41, pp. 417–423, no. 1; Ghaybat al-Shaykh, pp. 208–214, no. 178; Bir al-anwr, vol. 51, chap. 1, pp. 6–10, no. 12, citing Ghaybat al-Shaykh and pp. 10–11, no. 13, citing Kaml al-dn; Ithbt al-hudt, vol. 3, chap. 29, sect. 2, pp. 363–365, no. 17 and chap. 31, sect. 1, pp. 408–409, no. 37 (short version).

30. Al-Nakhkhs means slave-trader—Ed.

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