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# The Shrine of Lady Fatima Masuma (A)

## 3.1 - A brief history

After the burial of Lady Fatima Masuma (A), Mūsī ibn Khazraj placed a ceiling made of wicker over the grave, which remained unchanged until Zaynab, daughter of Imam al-Taqī (A), came to Qum and had a dome built on the grave.[1] The dome was built of bricks and mortar. This event occurred in the middle of the third Islamic century.

After the passing of some time, two other domes were built near the first dome and it was under the third dome that Zaynab, daughter of Imam al-Taqī (A) was herself buried.
These three domes remained till the year 457 A.H, when the vizier of Tughrul the Great, Mīr Abī al-Fadl al-`īrīqī, at the urging of the great scholar, Shaykh Tūsī (d.460 A.H) built one high dome in place of the three domes.

## 3.2 - During the reign of the Safavids

From the time of the replacement of the three domes by one, until the time of the reign of the Safavids,[2] the condition of the shrine of Lady Fatima Masuma (A) remained somewhat the same. At this time there was no chamber above the grave, nor any porches or courtyards.

In the year 925 A.H Shīh Ismī`īl I built a gold porch on the North side and laid the foundation of what is now called the old courtyard. After him, Shah Tahmīsb I, built a burial chamber, with glazed tiles, around the holy grave. He also built a porch on the South side of the grave (in the old courtyard).
In the year 1077 A.H Shīh Safīy built a courtyard for women, in the south of the threshold of the grave, which is now the area surrounding the enclosed area of the Mosque of Tabītabī'ī. This courtyard is the burial place for Shīh `Abbīs and Shīh Sulaymīn and Shīh Sultīn Husain.
In the time of the reign of Shīh `Abbīs, the burial chamber was covered with white steel and the present chamber contains some of the same steel with sheets of silver added to it.

## 3.3 – During the reign of the Qajars

After the reign of the Safavids, further repairs to the shrine of Lady Fatima Masuma (A) did not take place until the time of the reign of the Qajars in Iran.3

In the year 1218 A.H Fath Ali Shah Qajar made a dome of gold using 12000 gold-covered bricks. In the year 1236 A.H, the mosque known as *Masjid-e Bala Sar* [the mosque at the head of the holy body of Lady Fatima Masuma (A)], was built.

In the year 1276 A.H, the porch of Shah Ismaʿil Safavi was decorated with gold and in the year 1275 A.H the steel burial chamber of Shah ʿAbbas was remade using silver.
Towards the end of the 13th century A.H, the foundation for a new, bigger courtyard was laid, and the building was completed during the reign of Nasir al-Din Shah, in the year 1303 A.H.4

## 3.4 – After the victory of the Islamic Revolution

During the course of its history, a lot of elegant and beautiful decorative work, using different materials and scripts has been added to the shrine of Lady Fatima Masuma (A), which we are unable to go into in this book.

After the victory of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, the leader, Grand Ayatollah Khomeini, authorised a number of important changes to the layout and organisation of the holy shrine. More facilities for pilgrims were introduced. The Masjid-e Aʿzam, built by the Grand Ayatollah Burujadi, was annexed to the holy shrine. The shrine was enlarged and currently this expansion project is continuing. Other changes were also been made, but again the details lie outside the scope of this book.

## 3.5 – The construction of the burial chamber to the present time

In the year 605 A.H, Amir Ahmad ibn Ismaʿil commissioned the leading glass tile-maker and engraver of the time, Muhammad ibn Abi Tahir Kashikar Qumi, to decorate the tomb of Lady Fatima Masuma (A). The work was completed in 8 years.

In the year 950 A.H, Shah Tahmasb Safavi, erected a burial chamber made of bricks and decorated with tiles of seven colours, around the tomb. The chamber had a screen through which pilgrims could see the tomb and put in donations and petitions into the chamber.

After some years, by the order of Shah ʿAbbas, a steel grill was placed in front of the bricked burial chamber.
In the year 1230 A.H, Fath Ali Shah Qajar, covered this steel grill with silver. This remained in place until it showed signs of deterioration and in the year 1280 A.H, a new chamber, using silver from the old one, as well as additional silver from the treasury, was erected, entirely replacing the old one.

**The Old Burial Chamber (Darغh) of Lady Fatima Masuma (A)**

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This new chamber remained for a long time over the tomb of Lady Fatima Masuma (A), being repaired as needed, until the year 1368 A.H. Then, by the order of the Custodian of the time, a newer burial chamber, with a different shape was erected in place of the former one.
After over 40 years, due to the increase in the numbers of visitors to the holy shrine, and natural deterioration, the grills of the burial chamber became corroded.

Additionally, the wooden interior of the chamber, which had been in place for over a hundred years, had become badly damaged. More importantly, the constant washing of the chamber with rose water had given it a red tinge, and cracks were found in its foundations. The considerable damage to the chamber necessitated a replacement.

The custodian of the shrine, Ayatollah Mas`غdغ, made the decision in the year 1415 A.H to replace the burial chamber. For this purpose, the leading expert in the field, غghغ Husain Parwaresh Isfغhغnغ was commissioned to design a new chamber. He died before he could finish the work and it was completed by غghغ Muhammad Husain `Abbغspغr Isfغhغnغ.

**The New Burial Chamber (Darغh) of Lady Fatima Masuma (A)**

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In this last and latest version of the burial chamber several changes have been made:
● the poems and verses that were inscribed on the upper part of the old chamber were collected and inscribed in gold lettering to go at the top of the new chamber.

● the section between the top of the chamber and the area accessible to the pilgrims, which was formerly made of silver, was replaced with gold.

● The upper chambers and grills which contained over 5000 spheres and tubes were all replaced and made thicker and sturdier. For this section alone, over 200 kilograms of pure silver was used.

● The old wooden foundations, which are not visible, were also replaced with better and more hardwearing wood.

The chamber itself is 4 meters high, 5.25 meters long and 4.73 meters wide. Although outwardly the latest chamber does not seem much different from the former one, it has been made much stronger, sturdier and durable. The total cost of these renovations to the chamber was approximately 3 billion

Rials (nearly £250,000).

The project took 5 years to complete. However, by the swift work of the builders who worked three shifts round the clock, the installation of the new chamber was completed in just one month, thereby not unduly inconveniencing the pilgrims.
The new burial chamber was re-opened to the public on the day of Ghad□r 1422 A.H, by Grand Ayatollah Muhammad Taq□ Bahjat.

## 3.6 - The holy shrine at the present time

The total area of the grounds of the shrine is over 13,000 square meters, which includes the burial chamber (*dar□h*), the porches, the halls, the three courtyards and the two earlier mosques (Tab□tab□'□ and B□l□ Sar).

More recently, a new mosque (*Masjid-e A`□am*), which was built by the great Marja', Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Husain Bur□jird□, was annexed to the Haram. Its dimensions alone exceed 25,000 square meters. His tomb is situated at the entrance of the mosque that he built.
In this mosque, in the mornings, the leading scholars of today give classes to advanced students. The mosque is also used for all the congregational prayers.
Between Masjid-e A`□am and the darih of Lady Fatima Masuma (A) is situated the mosque known as Masjid-e B□l□ Sar. Within this mosque are buried several great scholars of the past, including:
- Grand Ayatollah Shaykh `Abd al-Kar□m H□'ir□.
- Grand Ayatollah Shaykh Muhammad Ali Ar□k□,
- Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Muhammad Rid□ Gulpayg□n□
- Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Sadr al-D□n Sadr
- Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Muhammad Taq□ Kh□ns□r□.
- Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Muhammad Hasan Shir□z□
- All□mah Sayyid Muhammad Husain Tab□tab□`□
- Shah□d Shaykh Murtad□ Mutahhar□

**The Graves of Some Grand Ayatollahs in Masjid B□l□ Sar, in the Shrine of Lady Fatima Masuma (A) in the Shrine of Lady Fatima Masuma (A) in the Shrine of Lady Fatima Masuma (A)**

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## 3.7 – The golden dome

In 1218 A.H, Fath Ali Sh□h Q□j□r commissioned the original golden dome of Lady Fatima Masuma (A), using 12000 gold–covered bricks. The dome remained unchanged for over 200 years.
In the year 1421 A.H, plans were made to change it. The event took place as follows:
Ayatollah Mas'udi, the custodian of the holy shrine, narrates:
"One day I went near the dome to study its condition closely. I found that some of the gold had come off and the bricks under it were worn away.
Specialists were called for their opinion on the matter and, after some discussion, they advised that the dome in its present state was not repairable. It needed to be completely covered with copper first, before gold could be placed over it.
It was calculated that the gold that would be recovered from the present dome would be about 20 kilograms, but the restoration would require 10 tonnes of copper and 200 kilograms of 24 carat gold, the cost of which would be about 30 billion Rials (approximately 3 million pounds)
In a special meeting the matter of the cost was brought forth for discussion and I said: "I cannot undertake the responsibility for procuring this cost and furthermore my age does not allow me to take on this great task."

The discussion took place in a private meeting with only those present in the meeting having knowledge of it.
Some days later, I went to Ayatollah al–`U□m□, Muhammad Taq□ Bahjat to discuss the matter of the reconstruction of the dome. I had not previously informed him of the reason for my visit.
To my great surprise, after greeting me and asking me about my health, he himself said: 'Why is the dome of Lady Masuma (A) not being fixed, the dome is very worn, start the work, God will send the money needed for this work and He will also grant you a long life.'

I was indeed surprised because the matter of the reconstruction, the problem of the cost involved and my own reservations, were not public knowledge. It was a matter which no one other than those present in the initial meeting knew of.
I answered: 'The cost of this work is very high and at the present time we do not have the necessary funds."

After a few days, Ayatollah Behjat contacted me and said, "Start the work, God will send the money for it. Meanwhile, inform the Leader of Iran, Ayatollah Kh□mene'□."
I went to the office of the Leader and explained the matter to him. He said, "I agree with whatever Ayatollah Behjat recommends."

After the approval of the Leader, I decided to proceed with the reconstruction of the dome. Ayatollah Bahjat gave me 100 million Rials. and an amount of gold to start the work." 5

**The Old Golden Dome of the Shrine of Lady Fatima Masuma (A)**

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This work commenced at the beginning of the Iranian New Year two years ago and is presently continuing apace. It is aimed to complete the task in the year 1426 A.H, (2005 C.E), *Insh Allah*. Continuous progress reports are published in the monthly newspaper of the Haram, *Pay m-e st n*. The importance of maintaining and looking after the holy shrines is underlined by the following tradition, where the Holy Prophet (S) said to Imam Ali (A):

يا عَليُّ مَنْ عَمَّرَ قُبورَكُمْ وَتَعاهَدَها، فَكَانّما اَعَانَ سُلَيْمانَ ابْنَ داوُدَ عَلى بِناءِ بَيْتِ الْمُقَدَّس

**"O Ali, whoever maintains, repairs and reconstructs your tombs, and is constantly engaged in this task, it is as if he has helped Sulaym n ibn D w d (A) build the Bayt al-Muqaddas."**6

## 3.8 – Inscriptions within the shrine

On the walls of the buildings within the shrine are inscriptions of poems, traditions and verses from the Qur'an in different scripts and using different materials. These decorate the walls, porticos and minarets. A small sample of some of these inscriptions is given below so as to familiarise the reader with the shrine and its markings.

## 3.9 – Inscriptions within the dome

On the inside of the dome, and within the burial chamber that was fixed in place in the year 1240 A.H, there are inscribed poems in *Nasta`l q* script, by Fath 'Ali Kh n Sab . Both poems are in praise of Lady Fatima Masuma (A) and the Ahl al-Bayt (A).

In the inside of the dome, a gold balcony has been constructed using glazed multicoloured tiles. On a background of cobalt blue, in the *Thulth* script, the following tradition has been inscribed in Arabic: (this tradition has been reported by both Shi`a and Sunni scholars)

روى الزّمخشري في تفسيره الموسوم بالكشّاف والثّعلبي في تفسيره الموسوم بكشف البيان، عن رسول الله (ص) قال: ألا ومن مات على حبّ آل محمّد مات شهيداً، ألا ومن مات على حبّ آل محمّد مات مغفوراً، ألا ومن مات على حبّ آل محمّد مات مؤمناً متكمّلاً، ألا ومن مات على حبّ محمّد وآل محمّد بشّره ملك الموت ونكير ومنكر بالجنّة، ألا من مات على حبّ محمّد وآل محمّد زفّ الى الجنّة، ألا من مات على حبّ محمّد وآل محمّد فتح الله له فى قبره بابين الى الجنّة، ألا ومن مات على حبّ محمّد وآل محمّد جعل الله قبره مزار ملائكة الرّحمة، ألا ومن مات على بغض محمّد وآل محمّد جاء يوم القيامة مكتوب بين عينيه آيس من رحمة الله، ألا ومن مات على بغض آل محمّد مات كافراً، ألا ومن مات على بغض آل محمّد لم يشمّ رائحة الجنّة.

The translation of the text is as follows:

**Zamakhshar□ in his *al-Kashsh□f* and Tha`lab□ in his *Kashf al-Bay□n* [two great Sunni scholars] have both narrated from the Messenger of Allah, who said:**

**"Be aware that whoever dies having love for the family of Muhammad dies a martyr.**

**Be aware that whoever dies having love for the family of Muhammad dies forgiven.**

**Be aware that whoever dies having love for the family of Muhammad dies with faith and perfection.**

**Be aware that whoever dies having love for Muhammad and the family of Muhammad, the angel of death and the two angels, Nak□r and Munkar will give him good tidings of Heaven.**

**Be aware that whoever dies having love for Muhammad and the family of Muhammad, will be raised to Heaven.**

**Be aware that whoever dies having love for Muhammad and the family of Muhammad, Allah will open two doors leading into Heaven in his grave.**

**Be aware that whoever dies having love for Muhammad and the family of Muhammad, Allah will make his grave a place of pilgrimage for the angels of Mercy.**

**Be aware that whoever dies having enmity for Muhammad and the family of Muhammad, on the Day of Judgement, in between his two eyes will be written, "He has no hope of receiving the mercy of Allah."**

**Be aware that whoever dies having enmity for the family of Muhammad, dies an unbeliever (*K□fir*).**

**Be aware that whoever dies having enmity for the family of Muhammad will not even smell the fragrance of Heaven."**

Then under it, has been written:

اَللّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى الْمُصْطَفى مُحَمَّدٍ، والمرتضى عليّ، والبتول فاطمة، والسّبطين الحسن والحسين، وزين العابدين علي، والباقر محمّد، والصّادق جعفر، والكاظم موسى، والرّضا علي، والتّقي محمّد، والنّقي علي، والزكيّ الحسن، والحجّة القائم المهدي صاحب الزّمان، ائمَة الهُدى ومصابيح الدّجى، بهم أتولّى، ومن أعدائهم اتبرّءُ

Which translates as:

**"O Allah! Send Your blessings on al-Mustaf□ Muhammad, on al-Murtad□ Ali, on al-Bat□l Fatima, on the two grandsons [of the Prophet], Hasan and Husain, on Zayn al-`□bid□n Ali, on al-B□qir Muhammad, on al-S□diq Ja`far, on al-K□zim M□s□, on al-Rid□ Ali, on al-Taq□ Muhammad, on al-Naq□ Ali, on al-Zak□ Hasan and on al-Hujjat al-Q□'im Mahdi, Master of the Time. These are the Imams of guidance and the lights in the darkness; I accept their guardianship and maintain enmity with their enemies."**

## 3.10 – Inscriptions on the tomb

The tomb is built up with bricks, which are decorated with different coloured glass tiles, and on them are inscribed:

- The Verse al-Kursī (2:255), written in *Naskh* script
- Various verses, written in *Naskh* script, in gold lettering
- Various verses, written in *Kūfī* script
- The Chapter al-Mulk, written in *Naskh* script, in gold lettering
- Other verses from the Qur'an.

Under the inscriptions, it is written in *Naskh* script: "Written and inscribed by Muhammad ibn Abū Tāhir ibn Abū al-Husain."

**The Tomb of Lady Fatima Masuma (A)**

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On the glass tiles around the grave from above to below are engraved:

- The Chapter *Yāsīn*,
- The Chapter *al-Rahmān*,
- The Chapter *al-Mulk*,
- The Chapter *Hal Atā*
- The Chapter *al-Qadr*

and also several traditions from the Prophet (S), which are reproduced below:7

### Tradition 1

قالَ النَّبِي (ص): مَنْ كَفَّ لِسانَهُ عَنْ اَعْراضِ النّاسِ، اَقالَهُ اللهُ عَثْرَتَهُ يَوْمَ الْقيامَةِ

**"Whoever guards his tongue from dishonouring the people, on the Day of Judgement, God will forgive his lapses."**

### Tradition 2

مَنْ فَرَّقَ بَيْنَ وَالِدَةٍ وَوَلَدِها، فَرَّقَ اللهُ بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ الْجَنَّةِ

**“Whoever causes a separation between a mother and her child, God will cause a separation between him and Heaven.”**

### Tradition 3

حُسْنُ السّؤالِ نِصْفُ الْعِلْمِ

**“A good question is half of learning.”**

### Tradition 4

اللهُ تَعالى عَوْنُ الْعَبْدِ ما دامَ الْعَبْدُ في عَوْنِ اَخيهُ

**“God, Most High, helps His servant so long as the servant helps his brother.”**

## 3.11 – Miracles that have occurred at the holy shrine

Numerous miracles have taken place at the shrine of Lady Fatima Masuma (A) over the centuries. Pilgrims come here for the blessing of the noble lady and are not disappointed. Miraculous events are scrupulously recorded in a special office within the shrine and details of some of them are regularly published in issues of the shrine’s monthly newspaper, the *Pay□m–e □st□n*.

There are so many miracles which have occurred at this holy site, that it would not be possible to mention them all. Perhaps the only non–Ma`sum whose shrine is the site for similar occurrences is Hadzrat `Abb□s (A) in Karbal□ and Lady Zaynab (A) in Damascus. Here, a few brief examples are mentioned:

### 1. Cure of a Serious Illness

A man by the name of M□rz□ Asadull□h, who was a guard at the shrine of Lady Fatima Masuma (A), developed gangrene in one foot. It had become so bad that the doctors advised amputation of the foot to halt the progress of the disease.

The night before the scheduled amputation, M□rz□ Asadull□h decided to go to the shrine of Lady Fatima Masuma (A) and pray for a miracle. He prayed earnestly in the shrine late into the night, until the shrine

was shut. He remained inside weeping and beseeching the noble lady for assistance.
Next day early morning, while it was still dark, the guards who had come to reopen the doors of the Shrine heard him shouting, “Open the door, the Lady has been kind to me, through her intercession I have been cured.”

They opened the doors and found M□rz□ Asadull□h standing there, completely cured. He gave the following account of the events leading up to his cure, which have been recorded in his words:
“A noble lady approached me and asked: ‘What is it that you want?’ I replied, ‘Cure me of this illness in my foot; ask Allah for my cure or my death!’

Then that noble Lady rubbed the corner of her scarf on my foot a few times and said: ‘Allah has cured you’. Immediately, I felt better and the constant pain in my foot disappeared. I asked her who she was, and she replied: ‘How do you not recognize me, while you are one of the guards of my shrine? I am Fatima, daughter of M□s□ ibn Ja`far.’”8

## 2. Seeking guidance from Lady Fatima Masuma (A) by Mull□ Sadr□

Sadr al-D□n Muhamad ibn Ibr□h□m Sh□r□z□, well known as Mull□ Sadr□ or Sadr al-Muta’allih□n, was a great scholar of philosophy during the time of the Safavids. After the death of his father, Mull□ Sadr□ moved to a village called “Kahak” (near Qum), where he spent a lot of his time in deep thought and contemplation.

Mull□ Sadr□ would continuously go to Makka for pilgrimage and it was on his return from the seventh of these journeys that he died in Basra, in the year 1050 A.H.
His works include: *Al-Hikmat al-Muta‘□l□yat f□ al-Asf□r al-‘Aql□yah al-Arbi‘at* (The Transcendent Wisdom Concerning the Four Intellectual Journeys), *Kit□b al-Mash□‘ir* (The Book of Metaphysical Penetrations) and *Al-Hikmat al-‘Arsh□yat* (The Wisdom of the Throne).

Whenever Mull□ Sadr□ encountered any scholarly problems he would travel to Qum and pay homage to Lady Fatima Masuma (A) and through her guidance, he would be able to solve these problems.9

The late Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Shah□b al-D□n Mar`ash□ Najaf□ has said, “Whenever Mull□ Sadr□ faced a philosophical problem or something which he had difficulty in understanding, he would come to the shrine of Lady Fatima Masuma (A) and ask for her assistance. With her help, he would invariably find the answers which he was searching for.” 10

## 3. The resolution of the difficulties of Ayatollah Najaf□ by Lady Fatima Masuma (A)

The late Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Shah□b al-D□n Mar`ash□ Najaf□ narrates, “When I was young, I faced some difficult times, the most difficult of which was when I wanted to get my daughter married and did not have the money or possessions for her trousseau.

With sadness in my heart I went to the shrine of Lady Fatima Masuma (A) and with tears in my eyes, I asked reproachfully, 'Oh my Lady and Mistress, why do you not care about my life? How can I get my daughter married with these empty hands?'

After pleading in this manner, I returned home. I dozed off and in my dream I heard someone knocking at my door. I opened it, there stood a person who said: 'The lady is seeking you.' I quickly went to the shrine.

When I entered the courtyard, I saw a number of ladies cleaning the golden porch. I asked them why they were cleaning so thoroughly, they replied that the lady was coming soon. After a little time, Lady Fatima Masuma (A) appeared. Her appearance and manner, was just like my grandmother, Lady Fatima Zahra (A), whom I had previously seen in my dreams three times.
I went closer to my aunt, Lady Fatima Masuma (A) and kissed her hand. She said to me: 'Oh Shah□b! When have we not thought of you, that you now expect harshness from us and are complaining. You have been under our eyes since the time you have arrived in Qum and we have been granting you your desires.'

When I woke from my sleep. I understood that I had been impolite in my approach to Lady Fatima Masuma (A) and so I immediately went to her shrine to apologize and ask for her forgiveness. Soon after that, my problems were solved and my life became easier.[11]

This is a mention of only a few of the miracles as there is not enough space in this book to mention more. However, probably, the greatest of all the miracles of this noble lady is her influence on this city of Qum which has become what it is, due to her presence, guidance, inspiration and blessing.

**The Site of Miracles – The Holy Shrine of Lady Fatima Masuma (A)**

1. Bih□r al-Anw□r, vol. 60, p. 219.
2. The family of the Safavids reigned in Iran for 230 years, from 905AH until 1135AH. The rulers were: Sh□h Ism□`□l I, Sh□h Tahmasb I, Sh□h Ism□`□l II, Sh□h `Abb□s I, Sh□h □af□y, Sh□h `Abb□s II, Sh□h Sulaym□n, Sh□h Sult□n Husain, Sh□h Tahm□sb II, Sh□h Ism□`□l III and Sh□h `Abb□s III.
3. The reign of the Q□j□rs in Iran was from 1200 A.H until 1339 A.H. The rulers were: □q□ Muhammad Kh□n, Fath Ali Sh□h, Muhammad Sh□h, N□sir al- D□n Sh□h, Muzaffar al-D□n Sh□h, Muhammad Ali Sh□h and Ahmad Sh□h.
4. Ganj□ne-ye Ath□r-e Qum, p. 10.
5. Cited from the monthly newspaper of the holy shrine in Qum, Pay□m-e □st□n, 23/09/1379 Hejr□ Shams□, p. 4.
6. Bih□r al-Anw□r, vol. 100, p. 121.
7. Cited from, Hadrat-e Ma`s□ma – F□tima-ye Duvvum, pp. 227 & 228.
8. Anw□r al-Masha`sha`□n, vol. 1, p. 216.
9. Shaykh `Abb□s Qumm□ , Faw□'id al-Radaw□yah, p. 379.
10. Ghanj□ne-ye D□nishmand□n, vol. 1, p. 39.
11. `Al□ Raf□`□, Shah□b-e Shar□`at (Biography of Ayatollah Mar`ash□ Najaf□), p. 288.

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