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Existence of the Master of the Age

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Shias and Imam Mahdi

I was so occupied after Muharram that I could not continue the series on this subject. However, this article has manifested itself at its place of appearance after an occultation of three months. Perhaps, the topic of discussion necessitated that there should be a practical example of occultation before the discussion of the one who is in occultation. Also the number of these months, that is 'three', is not less amusing. We have to pass three nights in the reign of darkness before the appearance of the new moon...

Even the Holy Prophet (S) had to pass three years in Sheb-e-Abi Talib, in occultation. Also three Prophets viz. Khizr (as), Ilyas (as), and Isa (as) are in occultation and the fourth person to be in occultation is the Qaem of the Progeny of Muhammad (S). Thousands of proofs of his existence are present but some eyes yet deny the brightness of this sun and the Rizwan editor is one of them. After discharging his obligations towards Muawiyah, he has denied the existence of the 'Imam of the Time' in the following words:

It is narrated in *Usul al–Kafi:* "If the number of Shias come to three hundred and thirteen, Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) will reappear." 1

Did you understand anything? The book of Shias is opposing themselves. It says that if at anytime and anywhere the number of true Shias comes to three hundred and thirteen, Imam Mahdi will reappear. But the Imam is not ready to leave the cave. It proves that all these Shias seen everywhere in large numbers are not true believers but enemies of Ahlul Bayt. If at anytime the number of Shias had come to three hundred and thirteen, the Imam would have surely reappeared. Since the Imam has not reappeared the conclusion is clear.

There can be only two possibilities, which though not mentioned by the Rizwan editor are as follows:

- A) Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) is not present that he would reappear.
- B) Or the Shias are in fact, not real Shias.

Proof of existence of the Imam of Age

First tradition

The first tradition of this discussion is widely related one, both with regard to its text as well as subject. It is believed to be correct by both the sects of Islam. Apart from other Imams, Imam Muslim has also quoted it in *Sahih Muslim*. It proves the necessity of the existence of the Master of the Age (a.t.f.s.) by the rule of logic. The tradition is that the Holy Prophet (S) said,

"Whosoever dies without recognizing the Imam of his time, dies the death of ignorance (i.e. he dies an infidel)."

The importance of this tradition shall become clearer when you come to know that when the second caliph's son, Abdullah bin Umar learnt in Medina at night that Abdul Malik has become the caliph, he immediately got up and went to the door of his tyrant governor, Hajjaj and sought his permission to enter. When Hajjaj asked the reason, he conveyed to him that he had come to pay allegiance for Abdul Malik.

Hajjaj sent the message that he was not free and told him to come the next day. Abdullah bin Umar became much perturbed and said, "If I die tonight, I would die without paying allegiance to the Imam of the time. And according to the saying of the Prophet (S), one who dies without recognizing the Imam of his time dies the death of ignorance. Hence you anyhow take allegiance from me now." Hajjaj called him inside and said, "I am very busy and my hands are not free. You can pay allegiance at my feet." Thus, the poor man had to pay allegiance of Abdul Malik at the feet of Hajjaj, after which he returned happily.2

It is surprising that the same Abdullah bin Umar did not pay allegiance to Amirul Momineen Ali (as) during his apparent caliphate. He sat comfortably at his house and remained without an Imam for full four and a half years. Did he not fear dying the death of ignorance then?

In any case, this tradition, which is a complete guideline for the matter of caliphate, clearly proves that the existence of an Imam is necessary in every age, whose recognition is incumbent upon all the creatures.

However, those, whose caliphs were appointed by followers and whose caliphate was annihilated by a single stroke of the pen of Mustafa Kamal Pasha should not only see their own consequences in the light of this tradition, but also know that a caliphate, which could be destroyed before the Day of Judgment, cannot be a Divine caliphate. The destruction of a system of caliphate is itself a complete proof that both the leader and followers of this system were astray from the beginning till the end, they

were in misguidance and deviated from the right path.

"...that is a manifest loss."3

Now justifications are offered to erase their shame and it is said that 'the Imam of the time' implies the Holy Quran. Don't these 'interpreters' think that the Holy Prophet (S) did not merely use the word 'Imam' but said 'Imam of the time'? It means, one should recognize the 'Imam of his time', which clearly implies an Imam who changes with different times, an Imam succeeded by another. Did the Quran change or would change with the changing times? Or one Quran shall succeed another?

Second tradition

A tradition, accepted as authentic by all sects of Islam and found in *Sahih Bukhari* and other books of traditions through various chains is as follows:

"There will be twelve Imams after me who all would be from Quraish."

Complete chapters are devoted in books of traditions for traditions on this topic. This tradition is also a complete code of law which we could apply to every system of caliphate to judge its correctness or invalidity. The clear aim of this tradition is that any series of caliphate which is not from Quraish (e.g. Turkish empire) or which is within Quraish but has less than twelve Imams is not a Divine series.

Since it is impossible that Allah wrongly declared the number of Prophet's caliphs as twelve while they are less than that, or that He later changed His decision, or the Prophet (S) predicted it without getting a divine revelation. If none of these possibilities exist why the number of caliphs declared by the Prophet seems to be incorrect? Indeed we have to agree that a caliphate founded on Ijma (consensus), Istikhlaf (nomination), Shura (consultative committee), and force after the passing away of the Prophet (S), none of whose series had twelve caliphs, cannot be a cherished and chosen system of the Prophet (S).

I challenge the majority of Muslims to prove any of their caliphates ('Rightly Guided'4 caliphate, Bani Abbas caliphate, Spanish caliphate, Turkish caliphate and Egyptian empire etc.) valid and in accordance with the above tradition of the Messenger of Allah (S) but fulfilling the condition that all the twelve caliphs should be in a continuous serial order and they should be in power from the time of the passing away of the Prophet till the Day of Judgment without any break, so that no period should be without an Imam as mentioned in the captioned tradition.

"But if you do (it) not and never shall you do (it), then be on your guard against the fire of which men and stones are the fuel..."5

However, Shias can proudly present their series of caliphs (Imams) according to the criteria of this tradition that their number be exactly twelve. As the time of eleven caliphs has passed, the twelfth one is naturally present on the earth. It is not that the Messenger of Allah (S) has stated only the number of

caliphs and left their names and other details unknown. If the Prophet (S) had been silent on the issue there would surely have been a possibility of suppositions.

Nevertheless, he declared their number, tribe, names, as well as other family information. By this he meant to imply that this prediction was not accidental and that rather it was a detailed declaration of preplanned Divine caliphate in which any kind of fraud will not succeed. Please study the following tradition for further details:

Third tradition

Allamah Syed Jamaluddin Muhaddith, a renowned Ahlul Sunnat scholar has quoted a tradition from Jabir bin Abdullah Ansari in one his famous works, *Rauzatul Ahbab* that when Allah revealed this verse on His Prophet (S):

"O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Apostle and those in authority from among you; then if you quarrel about anything, refer it to Allah and the Apostle, if you believe in Allah and the last day; this is better and very good in the end."6

I asked the Prophet (S), "O Messenger of Allah (S)! We know Allah and His Messenger but who are 'those in authority' whose obedience is joined with your obedience by Allah?" The Prophet (S) replied, "They are the caliphs after me. First of them is Ali Ibn Abi Talib (as) followed by Hasan, then Husain then Ali bin Husain then Muhammad bin Ali (as), who is referred by the title of Baqir in the Torah? O Jabir! Very soon you will reach his tenure and (when you do) convey my salutations to him. He shall be succeeded, by Ja'far as–Sadiq, Musa bin Ja'far, Ali bin Musa, Muhammad bin Ali, Ali bin Muhammad, Hasan bin Ali and Muhammad bin Hasan bin Ali (as), who shall be the Proof of Allah on the earth and a remnant of Allah among men. Allah would grant him victory of the east and west. He shall be hidden from his Shias and friends such that none would remain faithful to his Imamate except the ones whose hearts Allah has already tested for faith."

Jabir asked, "O Messenger of Allah (S)! How would his partisans (Shias) benefit from him while he is in occultation?"

The Messenger of Allah (S) replied, "Yes! By Allah, Who has sent me as a Prophet, Shias would be enlightened by his light during his occultation as people benefit from the sun even if it is behind the clouds."

This blessed tradition narrated by a great Ahlul Sunnat scholar from Jabir bin Abdullah Ansari, a great companion of the Prophet, has elucidated the two previous traditions. It has clarified who exactly those twelve caliphs are, that the earth can never remain devoid of and whose recognition is obligatory on every Muslim. It has also declared that the twelfth among them shall be hidden from the people. His occultation will be prolonged to the extent that except the ones whose hearts Allah has tested for belief; none would have faith on him. (So it is not surprising for the Rizwan editor to ridicule this belief.)

Believers shall benefit by his presence as we profit by a sun hidden behind clouds.

The Messenger of Allah (S) has not only informed about the occultation but also about the reappearance. I would like to present some correct traditions from authoritative tradition compendiums of Ahlul Sunnat for the kind attention the Rizwan editor in which the Prophet gave glad tidings of the existence and reappearance of the Imam of the time (a.t.f.s.). Actually, all such traditions are among the widely related ones (mutawatir) hence there is no need to present more proof about them because Shias and Sunnis, are unanimous that Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) is from the progeny of Fatima (s.a.) and he would reappear some time before the Day of Judgment. But the poor editor of Rizwan is unaware of his religion and makes such silly objections that expose the level of his religious knowledge.

Fourth tradition

Imam Abu Dawood in his *Sunan* and Imam Tirmidhi in *Sahih Tirmidhi* have narrated from Abu Saeed Khudri:

The Messenger of Allah (S) said, "Mahdi (as) is from me. He shall have a bright forehead and a high nose. He shall fill the earth with justice as it would have been filled with oppression and injustice and he would rule for seven years."

Fifth tradition

Imam Abu Dawood has narrated from Imam Ali (as) in his Sunan:

The Messenger of Allah (S) said, "Even if a single day remains before the end of the world, Allah would send a person from my Ahlul Bayt who would fill the earth with justice as it would be filled with injustice and oppression."

Sixth tradition

Imam Abu Dawood has narrated this tradition from the mother of faithful, Umme Salma that:

The Messenger of Allah (S) said, "The Mahdi would be from my progeny i.e. from the lineage of Fatima (s.a.)."

Seventh tradition

Imam Bukhari in *Sahih Bukhari*, Imam Muslim in *Sahih Muslim* and Qazi Ibn Masud Baghavi in his *Sharhus Sunnah* have narrated from Abu Huraira that:

The Messenger of Allah (S) said, "What would be your condition when Isa bin Maryam (as) descends among you and your Imam shall be from among you?"

Eighth tradition

Imam Tirmidhi in *Sahih Tirmidhi* and Imam Abu Dawood in *Sunan* have narrated from Abdullah Ibn Masud that:

The Messenger of Allah (S) said, "The world shall not end till a person from my Ahlul Bayt becomes the ruler of Arabs, whose name shall be same as mine."

Ninth tradition

These same two Ahlul Sunnat Imams have quoted this tradition in their authentic compendiums (Sahihs):

The Messenger of Allah (S) said, "A person from my Ahlul Bayt will be the ruler whose name would be same as mine."

Tenth tradition

Imam Abu Ishaq Thalabi has narrated this tradition from Anas bin Malik in his commentary that:

The Messenger of Allah (S) said, "We, the sons of Abdul Muttalib are Chiefs of Paradise which include me, Hamzah, Ja'far, Ali, Hasan, Husain and Mahdi (as)."

Thus ten are completed.

These proofs have clarified that the Messenger of Allah (S) has explained the matter of caliphate after him explicitly. In this explanation he has especially emphasized on the prolonged occultation of the Twelfth Imam and his reappearance. If the Rizwan editor does not care about the saying of Prophet (S), I can present some testimonies of scholars of his religion, so that it becomes evident that the Twelfth Imam is alive and hidden from the view of creatures and would reappear some time before the Day of Judgment. This fact is not only associated with some Shias but many scholars and writers of Ahlul Sunnat also have faith in it. For example:

Allamah Abdul Wahhab Sherani

He was a great Ahlul Sunnat scholar, whom Shah Waliullaah Dehlavi, an excellent scholar has included among the heirs of the Messenger of Allah (S). He writes in one of his works, *Lawaqihul Anwar fee Tabaqaatil Akhbar:*

Shaykh Hasan Iraqi is among them. His age was about a hundred and thirty years. Once I visited him along with Abul Abbas Harshi. He said, "I will narrate such an incident that you would learn about my condition from my youth till this time." We requested him to tell us about it.

He said, "At that time, I was a youth with a clean-shaven face. I used to weave cloaks in Syria and was extravagant over myself (i.e. I did not refrain from sins). Once I entered the Jame Masjid of Bani Umayyah and saw a preacher speaking about Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) and his reappearance. The love of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) developed in my heart. I began to implore Allah that He makes me to meet him. I prayed like this for about a year.

One day I was in Jame Masjid after the Evening Prayer (Maghrib) when a stately gentleman wearing his turban in a non-Arab manner and wearing a camel-fur robe approached me. He tapped my shoulders and asked,

'Why do you want to meet me?'

'Who are you?' I inquired.

'I am Mahdi,' he replied.

I kissed his hands and requested him to come with me to my house and he accepted my offer. He lived with me for seven days and taught me various supplications. He advised me to fast alternate days and pray five hundred units of prayers every night. He asked me not to lie down for sleep unless it completely overpowers me. He was about to leave and said, 'O Hasan! Do not go to anyone after me. Whatever you have got from me is enough for you. People have less than this. Hence do not unnecessarily take other people's favors.' I promised him to do as commanded and tried to come out of the house to bid farewell to him. He stopped me at the door and said, "Go back from here." I remained steadfast on what he had taught me...8

I inquired from him (Imam Mahdi) about his age and he replied, 'My son! At present, I am six hundred years old'."

Shaykh Hasan Iraqi says that this incident occurred a hundred years ago (i.e. now it is seven hundred and twenty years). Allamah Abdul Wahhab Sherani says that when he discussed this issue with Ali al-Khawas, the latter agreed with Shaykh Hasan Iraqi regarding the age of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.).

This incident not only proves the belief of Allamah Abdul Wahhab Sherani but also of Shaykh Hasan Iraqi and Ali al–Khawas regarding Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) one of whom had the honor of hosting the Imam of the Age (a.t.f.s.) and gaining knowledge from him for a week. Allamah Abdul Wahhab Sherani has mentioned about the signs of nearness of the Day of Judgment in one of his famous works, *Al–Yuwaaqeetu wal Jawaahir* in *Al–Mub–hathul Khamis wa Sutoon*. He says that the first of those signs is reappearance of the Imam of the time (a.t.f.s.). After discussing about other signs when religion shall gain supremacy he writes:

At that very time, one should await the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.). That Imam is the son of Imam Hasan Askari (as). He was born on the 15th of Shaban 255 A.H. He is alive to be united with Isa

Maulana Ali Akbar Maududi

He was one of the great Ahlul Sunnat scholars and he has written marginal notes titled *Mukashifat* on the above book of *Nafhaat*. In this book, under the account of Ali bin Sahl Isfahani he says:

"They have said that avoiding mistakes in religious laws is only restricted to the prophets but the Shaykh have differed with them in this matter due to the tradition regarding Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.)...Then it is mentioned in the forty-fifth chapter that Shaykh Abul Hasan Shazli has said that there are fifteen signs of a Qutb 10. For example, it is supported by infallibility, mercy, caliphate and deputation and the bearers of Divine Throne are his helpers. The truth of the Divine nature and qualities are disclosed to him etc." Due to this saying (that there is infallibility in the Qutb), their religion is proved correct that they believe that some people other than prophets can be infallible...Because to accept the presence of Imam Mahdi implies that he is a Qutb after his holy father, Imam Hasan Askari (as) till the series reach back to Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib. This shows that the dependence of this rank on their holy personalities is correct (Imam Ali (as) being a Qutb till the Promised Mahdi. Not before Ali (as)). Thus, whosoever is a Qutb today will be manifested on this rank of deputation of Mahdi because Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) will be hidden from common and special ones. Although he is not hidden from very special ones...Hence it became necessary that all those twelve Imams be infallible. Understand this meaning."

This excerpt clarifies that Maulana Ali Akbar considered Imam Mahdi a Qutb of the time after Imam Hasan Askari and believed in his infallibility and also used to say that he is hidden from the common and special people. However, very special personalities can meet him.

Mulla Jami

He is that renowned Ahlul Sunnat scholar to introduce whom is like showing a lamp to the sun. He is regarded as an authority on physical and metaphysical sciences. He has written in one of his famous works, *Shawahidun Nubuwwah* that Imam Mahdi (as) is the 12th Imam and presented a detailed chapter about him. In it he has mentioned all the miraculous and strange incidents connected with him. His concealed birth, his going into prostration soon after birth and his reciting the verses:

"In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. And We desired to bestow a favor upon those who were deemed weak in the land, and to make them the lmams, and to make them the heirs..."11

Also his being born circumcised and with the umbilical cord detached. As were the words on him:

"And say: The truth has come and the falsehood has vanished; surely falsehood is a vanishing (thing)." 12

When he sneezed, he immediately said: Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds. The author has mentioned all these incidents in detail. After that he writes:

The narrator says that he came to Imam Hasan Askari (as) and said: O son of Allah's Messenger (S), who is the Imam and Caliph after you? The Imam went inside and brought a young boy aloft his shoulders. The boy was handsome and bright-faced like a full moon and his age was around three years. The Imam said: O so and so, if you were not having an elevated status in the view of Allah, I would never have shown you this child. His name is same as that of the Messenger's and his patronymic is same as that of the Messenger's. He the one who would fill the earth with justice and equity just as it would be fraught with injustice and oppression.

In the same book is the report of another narrator who says that the Imam showed his son saying: This is your master. After that the Imam of the Last Age came down from the blessed lap of Imam Hasan Askari (as).

Imam Hasan Askari (as) told him: O Son, be concealed for a stipulated period. Thus he went inside the house as I watched him. After that Imam Hasan Askari (as) told me: Arise, go in and see who is there. So I entered the house but did not find anyone there.

Can there be a clearer explanation about the belief in the occultation of the Imam of the Age?

Khwaja Muhammad Parsa

An opportunity to have audience with him was considered a matter of great honor by the Sadat, the Shaykhs and scholars, as mentioned in the book *Nafhaatul Uns.* He writes in *Faslul Khitab:*

When Abu Abdullah Ja'far, the son of Imam Ali Naqi (as), thinking that his brother Imam Hasan Askari (as) was not survived by a son he claimed that his brother had granted the Imamate to him. Thus he became famous by the nickname of 'Liar' (Kadhdhab)...The son of Imam Hasan Askari (as) Muhammad (as) and some special companions were and are aware of this fact.

After that he has narrated the arrival of Lady Hakima in the house of Imam Hasan Askari (as) on the eve of 15th Shaban, 255 A.H., Imam (as) asking her to stay the night and the birth of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) near dawn. Then he says:

Lady Hakima narrates, "When I came to Imam Hasan Askari (as) I saw a newborn child in saffron clothes before him. His face had such brightness and glow that his love developed in my heart. So I asked Imam Hasan Askari (as), 'O my master! If you have any information regarding this blessed child, tell me about it also.' Imam (as) replied, 'Yes, O aunt! He is the same Awaited Imam whose glad tidings were given to us.'" Lady Hakima narrates, "Thus I bowed down in prostration of Allah to thank for him. Then I used to visit Imam Hasan Askari (as) regularly. One day I did not see the boy there and I asked Imam Hasan Askari (as), 'O Master! What did you do to our Master and the Awaited one?' Imam replied,

"" "We have entrusted him to the protection of Whom Prophet Musa (as) was given by his mother."

This passage has clarified that even Khwaja Muhammad Parsa believed in the existence of the Imam of the time (a.t.f.s.). He believed in his occultation and supported the opinion that the occultation shall end when the Almighty desires, for the fulfillment of the glad tidings of the Prophet (S) he would reappear just as Prophet Musa (as) was again returned to his mother.

Khwaja Muhammad Parsa writes in the margin of this book about the signs of the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.):

"There are so many traditions regarding it that we cannot enumerate them. Imam Mahdi, Master of the Age (r.a.) (Who is hidden and present in every age) has many merits. Traditions regarding his reappearance and rising of his light support each other. He would revive the Law of Muhammad (S) and fight the Holy war in the way of Allah as it should be fought. He would cleanse the earth of God from one end to the other from impurities and evils. His time will be the time of pious and his companions will be free of doubts and purified of sins. They would follow his guidance and path. They will receive the recognition of the Imam of the time from Allah. Caliphate and Imamate shall end on him and he is the Imam from the time of the passing away of his father till the Day of Judgment."

Sibte Ibn Jawzi

He was one of the great Ahlul Sunnat Imams. He writes in one of his famous works, *Tadhkirat Khwaasul Ummatu fee marefatil Aimmah* regarding the Master of the Age (as) that:

"He is Muhammad, son of Imam Hasan Askari (as). His patronymics are Abu Abdillah and Abul Qasim. He is the same Khalaful Hujjah<u>13</u>, Master of the Age, Qaem<u>14</u>, Awaited One, Remaining one and Imam of last age."

Can there be more explanation for the Imam of the time being alive and present?

Abu Abdillah Muhammad bin Yusuf bin Muhammad Ganji Shafei

Kifayatut Talib is one of his famous works. He has written another book *AI-Bayan* devoted to the subject of the Master of the Age (as). He has explained the Imamate, existence, long life of Imam (as) in the following way:

"One of the proofs of Imam (as) being alive due to occultation is that it is not impossible for him to remain alive. After all, friends of God, like Isa bin Maryam, Khizr and Ilyas are alive and enemies of God such as the one-eyed Dajjal and Iblis are alive. Quran proves their being alive and traditions too, hence what is the problem if Allah keeps Imam Mahdi (as) alive?"

Shaykh Nuruddin bin As-Sabbagh Al-Maliki

This famous Ahlul Sunnat scholar has devoted a section of his book *Al-Fusoolul Muhimma* for the account of the Master of the Age whose title is as follows:

The twelfth section of this book describes Abul Qasim Muhammad, the son of Imam Hasan Askari (as), the Divine Proof, the Remaining Divine Proof and the Twelfth Imam. It provides information regarding his date of birth, proofs of his Imamate, accounts of occultation, period of his rule, his lineage, agnomen, title etc.

Some selected sentences of this section are quoted below:

"The son of Imam Hasan Askari, Abul Qasim Muhammad Hujjat was born in Samarrah on the eve of the 15th of Shaban, 255 A.H....This is a brief description from those texts, which prove the Twelfth Imam and are narrated from trustworthy Imams. There are many narrations regarding this and traditions are very famous. We have omitted them all to keep the discussion brief. Narrators have collected and quoted all these traditions in their books and have paid special attention towards their compilation...Some tradition scholars have said that Mahdi is the same Qaem and Awaited one and narrations about his reappearance support each other.

Traditions regarding the brightness of his light are unanimous. Very soon the darkness of the night and day will disappear with his reappearance. Darknesses will be illuminated with his view in the same way as night is illuminated on the arrival of morning. Very soon he will come out of the veil of occultation. He will make the hearts overjoyed."

Shah Waliullah Dehlavi

Ahlul Sunnat people call him "the last of the gnostics", "chief of the tradition scholars", "the basis of scholastic theologians" and "proof of Allah on the worlds." He has supported the existence and Imamate of the Imam of the time (as) in his work *Fazl Mubeen*, knowingly or unknowingly. Thus narrating a tradition he writes as follows:

"I say that Ibn Aqlah has permitted me face to face to relate all those things whose narration was lawful for him. I have seen a continuous tradition in his series of traditions each of whose narrators has lofty qualities. The tradition is that Ibn Aqlah said: Fareed-e-Zamana, Shaykh Hasan bin Ali Ajeemi informed me that he was informed by Hafiz Asr, Jamaluddin Babuli by Mustand-e-Waqt, Muhammad Hijazi Waiz by Sufi Dauran, Shaykh Abdul Wahhab Sherani by Mujtahid Asr, Jalal Suyuti by Zahid-e-Asr, Imam Jamaluddin bin Muhammad bin Muhammad Al-Jamal by Imam Muhammad bin Masud who was a narrator of Fars of his time by Aalim-e-Dahar, Shaykh Ismail bin Muzaffar Shirazi by Muhaddith Dauran, Abdus Salaam bin Abdur Rabi Hanafi by Shaykh Waqt, Abu Bakr Abdullah bin Muhammad Shaboor Qalansi by Imam-e-Waqt, Abdul Aziz bin Muhammad Aumi by Nadirah-e-Asr, Sulaiman bin Ibrahim bin Muhammad bin Sulaiman that Ahmad bin Hashim Balazari who was a Hafiz 15 of his time said: The

Imam of the time, Muhammad bin Al-Hasan bin Ali (who is hidden) told me that he was informed by his father who was informed by his father who was informed by Imam Muhammad Taqi by Imam Ali bin Musa Al-Reza by Imam Musa Kazim by Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq by Imam Muhammad Baqir by Imam Zainul Abideen Ali bin Husain Sajjad by Imam Husain Sayyadush Shohada by his father Sayyidul Awliya Ali bin Abi Talib by Chief of the Prophets Muhammad bin Abdullah (S) by Chief of Angels Jibraeel by Allah, the Almighty: I am Allah. There is no God except Me. One who testifies My Oneness has entered my fort. One who enters My fort is secure from My chastisement."

This chain of narrators proves that not only Shah Waliullah Dehlavi but sixteen other Ahlul Sunnat scholars also possessed a unique lofty quality. They all believed in Imam Mahdi (as), his lineage, occultation and his being the Imam of the time. Otherwise they would not have quoted a tradition in which they had doubted the date of birth and life of one of its narrators.

Shaykh Abdul Haq Dehlavi

The majesty of his personality is proof itself in the Sunni world. He writes in his journal, *Manaqib* Ahwaal-e-Aimmah-e-Athaar:

"Muhammad is the son of Abu Muhammad Hasan Askari; the reliable people of his family and his special companions know it. It is narrated that Hakima Khatun, the daughter of Imam Muhammad Taqi (as) and paternal aunt of Imam Hasan Askari (as) desired it and used to supplicate and pray that a son be born to Imam Hasan Askari (as) and that she could see him with her own eyes. Imam Hasan Askari (as) had selected a slave–girl named Narjis Khatun for himself. Hakima Khatun visited Imam Hasan Askari (as) on the eve of the 15th of Shaban, 255 A.H. and blessed him. Imam Hasan Askari (as) requested, "O aunt! Please stay at our place tonight there is an important work at hand." She stayed the night upon the Imam's request. Narjis Khatun began to feel uneasy as morning approached. Lady Hakima came near Narjis Khatun and saw that a blessed newborn infant who was already circumcised and bathed ritually etc. She brought the child to Imam Hasan Askari (as).

He took the child and passed his hand of affection on his back and eyes and put his tongue in his mouth. He recited Azan16 in the right and Iqamah17 in the left ear and said, "O aunt! Now take him to his mother." So Lady Hakima handed over the child to his mother. Lady Hakima Khatun says, "After that when I came to Imam Hasan Askari (as) I saw the child with him dressed in saffron clothes. There was such a light and honor on his face that my heart was filled with his love. I said, 'O my master! Do you have any information regarding this fortunate newborn child that you can narrate to me?' Imam Hasan Askari (as) said, 'O aunt! This newborn one is our 'Awaited one' whose glad tidings were given to us.' I bowed down for prostration of thanks to Allah for the child. Then I used to visit Imam Hasan Askari (as) frequently. One day I came to him but did not find the child. I asked, 'O master! What happened to our chief and Awaited one? He replied, 'We have handed him over to One Whom Musa was handed over by his mother."

It is narrated from Imam Reza (as) that he was asked, "What shall be the name of your Qaem?" He replied, "We are commanded not to mention his name before his birth."

What can be a more emphatic acceptance of the existence of His Eminence, Hujjat (as)?

... while they do not perceive... 18

Muhaddith Jamaluddin

He is included among the pillars of tradition science. His books are regarded with great respect. He expresses his belief in one of his renowned works, *Rauzatul Ahbab* as follows:

In the discussion of the Twelfth Imam Muhammad bin Hasan: The birth of this Gem of guardianship (Wilayat) and treasure of the mine of guidance, according to most narrators is on 15th Shaban, 255 A.H. in Samarrah. While others say that his birth took place on 23rd Ramadan, 258 A.H. The mother of this exalted pearl was a slave–girl named Saqeel, Susan or Narjis. She was also named Hakima. That honorable Imam has the name and agnomen of the Holy Prophet (S).

His titles are 'Mahdi, the Awaited one', 'Khalaf-e-Salih' and 'Master of the Age'. According to the first narration (which is almost authentic), he was five years old during the lifetime of his holy father. He was two years old according to another narration. Allah granted wisdom to this bud of the garden of prophethood in his childhood as He had done to Yahya and Zakaria (as). He made him reach the great heights of Imamate in his young age. The Master of the Age i.e. Mahdi disappeared from the eyes of the people in a cellar in Samarrah during the reign of Caliph Mutamid in 265 A.H. or 266 A.H. (due to difference of narrations).

Apart from this, the Muhaddith has quoted very long passages about awaiting for the reappearance. He has also quoted some poetic verses regarding nostalgia for his reappearance, which prove the excellence of his belief. I ignore these writings to keep the discussion brief.

Allamah Muhiuddin bin Arabi

Now I am going to present the testimony of that Ahlul Sunnat scholar whose saying, 'Husain was killed with the sword of his grandfather because Yazid was already given allegiance and Husain rebelled against the 'True Imam', is famous even today. It is obvious that when such a scholar emphasizes so strongly that Imam Mahdi (as) is already born, he is away from the sight of people, will reappear shortly before the Day of Judgment, he is an infallible and has excellent qualities; what can be better proof that 'the truth is exalted and it is not made exalted'.

Accordingly, the Allamah has described all these qualities of the Imam of the time (a.t.f.s.) in one of his popular works *Al–Futuhat Makiyyah*. 19 He has used many pages for it. I ignore all those issues, which include accounts of his reappearance, the benefits of his justly guided reign, his victories, his personal

excellences, his reinforcements through revelation, renaissance of religion, his infallibility etc. Some selected sentences about his name, lineage, birth and occultation are mentioned below, as it is the actual topic of our discussion:

Know that the advent of Mahdi is necessary but he will not reappear till the world is not filled with injustice and oppression. Then he shall reappear and fill the earth with justice. Even if a single day of this world remains, God will prolong it so much that this caliph becomes the ruler. He is from the progeny of the Holy Prophet (S) and the descendants of Fatima (r.a.). Imam Husain bin Ali bin Abi Talib (as) is his grandfather and his holy father is Imam Hasan Askari Ibn Imam Ali Naqi (as)...

After that he mentions his lineage, which reaches upto Amirul Momineen (as).

His name is same as that of the Holy Prophet (S)...And know that all Muslims (whether Shia or Sunni) will be happy at the reappearance of Imam Mahdi...His time has already come and it is casting a shadow on you. He had appeared in the fourth age, which was after three ages (i.e. time of the Holy Prophet (S) and his companions, second age of the followers of the companions and third one of the followers of the followers). There was a little gap after these three ages and some new incidents happened, some new thoughts and desires began to spread, there was despotism and bloodshed. Thus, he disappeared till the appointed time of his reappearance does not arrive.

Kamaluddin bin Talha Shafei

He was one of the leading lights among the Ahlul Sunnat scholars. His statement in every field of jurisprudence, traditions and laws is considered authentic. One of his works *Matalibus Suool fi Manaqib aale Rasool* is very famous. He has reserved its twelfth chapter for the account of the Imam of the time (as). He has explained all the issues very explicitly and nullified the objections of the rivals in such a way that if the Rizwan editor had the ability to understand, I would have advised him to read that chapter but the problem is that the book is in Arabic. I quote some sentences of this book about the name, lineage, birth, occultation etc. of Imam Hujjat according to the need:

"Twelfth chapter: About Abul Qasim Muhammad Hujjat bin Hasan Khalis (Askari) bin Ali Mutawakkil bin Muhammad (Taqi) Qane' bin Ali Al-Reza (as)...

...he was born on 23rd Ramadan 258 A.H.

His lineage from his father and mother (is mentioned). His holy father is Imam Hasan Askari (as) (Whose series of lineage reaches to Amirul Momineen). We have already discussed it in detail. His mother was a slave-girl, Saqeel, while she was also called Hakima. Some other names are also found but his name is only Muhammad, agnomen Abul Qasim and titles are Hujjat, Khalaf-e-Salih and Muntazar.

Then he has narrated the traditions of the Prophet (S) regarding Imam Hujjat and replied to the doubts of opponents. He has proved that when all the qualities mentioned in the traditions of the Prophet are

present in him, it is obligatory to believe that only he is the Promised Mahdi and only he would reappear when God commands. He has spent many pages for this discussion and writes further:

But as for his age, he was in the state of fear during the time of Caliph Mutamid Alallaah and disappeared...God's power is very vast and His wisdom and favors over men are exalted and common. Even great scholars will not find a way to understand the secrets of His powers. Their researching eyes would return tired and fruitless. The wary tongues would have to recite the verse: 'And you are not given knowledge except a little'. It is not strange that God grants a long life to some of his pious servants or increases the life span to a fixed time. God has increased the life span of a large community in His creation – of His righteous friends as well as enemies. His righteous ones include Isa (as), Khizr (as) and other prophets whose life–span was increased so much that their ages became nearly a thousand years. For example, Prophet Nuh (as) etc. His enemies include Iblis and Dajjal. Also the community of Aad, which had people, aged a thousand years. We also have the example of Luqman.

The purpose of all these examples is to describe the vastness of the power of God. He can grant a long-life to His creatures. What can be a hindrance if the life of Imam Khalaf-e-Salih (as) is prolonged till now? He will reappear and act according to the orders of God. When the discussions has reached here and the pen has moved till this place, I praise Allah, the Lord of the Worlds and end this book here. Since it is the only sentence, which is regarded as the last supplication of the people of Paradise and which has the Divine pleasure.

Now when I have quoted the last lines of *Matalibus Suool* I think that it is a good coincidence that the number of testimonies has also reached twelve. It seems suitable for the proofs of existence of occultation of the Twelfth Imam that we do not go beyond this number. Hence I end the discussion here.

I advise the Rizwan editor that even if he does not respect the traditions of the Prophet (S) he should at least have a look at the testimonies of the scholars of his religion, which include high profile narrators, holy scholars, and learned mystics. They include Allamah Abdul Wahhab Sherani, Shaykh Hasan Iraqi, Ali Al-Khawas, Maulana Ali Akbar Maududi, Mulla Jami, Khwaja Muhammad Parsa, Sibte Ibn Jawzi, Abu Abdillah Muhammad bin Yusuf Shafei, Shaykh Nuruddin bin Sabbagh Maliki, Shah Waliullaah Dehlavi, Ibn Uqala, Muhaddith Shaykh Hasan bin Ali Ajeemi, Hafiz bin Jamaluddin Babuli, Muhammad Hijazi Waiz, Allamah Jalaluddin Suyuti, Hafiz Abu Naeem Aaqbi, Allamah Shams Ibn Jazari, Imam Jamaluddin Muhammad bin Muhammad Jamal, Imam Muhaddith bin Masud, Shaykh Ismail bin Muzzafar Shirazi, Muhaddith Abdus Salaam bin Abir Rabi Hanafi, Shaykh Abu Bakr Abdullah bin Muhammad, Imam Abdul Aziz, Nadirah Misr Sulaiman bin Ibrahim, Allamah Hafiz Ahmad bin Balazari, Shaykh Abdul Haq Dehlavi, Muhaddith Jamaluddin, Allamah Muhiuddin bin Arabi and Allamah Kamaluddin bin Talha Shafei.

He should also, like the above scholars, accept the belief in existence and occultation of the Imam of the time (a.t.f.s.) and keep away from the wrong belief and save himself from the death of ignorance. However, if he also wants to live in doubts like some of his leaders and close the eyes from all these

testimonies I will keep quiet after saying:

"And nothing devolves on us but a clear deliverance (of the message)."20

The astonishing fact is that Mr. Editor has faith in the existence of Shaitan and Dajjal but shies away from believing in the Promised Mahdi.

"If in the daylight they cannot see with their eyes.

What is the fault of the Sun in it?"21

Now I end the discussion on this couplet:

"The papers are exhausted but the writing is not complete

Even a hundred notebooks would not suffice for us."22

Three hundred and thirteen Shias

Now that it is proved that the Promised Mahdi really exists, surely the Rizwan editor would immediately say:

"It proves that all these Shias seen everywhere in large numbers are not true believers but enemies of Ahlul Bayt. If at any time the number of Shias had come to three hundred and thirteen, the Imam would have surely reappeared."

Regarding this, it is sufficient to mention just two or three points:

Firstly, this is not a saying of an Imam but an opinion of Shareh, which you tried to show that it is a saying of the infallible. Obviously this responsibility can come on us only when it is so (that there should be 313 Shias) then we should present this saying of Imam or Prophet (S): 'If it is not so, there is nothing'.

Secondly, the sense of this saying proved much more elevated for your understanding. How did you take the meaning of this saying that when the number of Shias will *increase* to three hundred and thirteen, the Imam will reappear? Let me explain it to you, hopefully you may understand.

- a) It is admitted that the Imam of the time will reappear only when the world shall be full of injustice and oppression. This fact is as clear as daylight from the viewpoint of traditions. Also, we have discussed the above sayings of your scholars that Imam (a.t.f.s.) will not reappear till the world becomes full of injustice and oppression and is fraught with sins.
- b) It is also known that the community of the Shias of Ali (as) is treading the Right Path (Siratul Mustaqeem). They consider God as Just and Divine justice a principle of faith. Hence Shias (and

Mutazilas) are called 'Adliyah' in the technical sense. There is a rival sect of Ahlul Sunnat, Ashaira, which denies that God is Just. Today all Ahlul Sunnat strongly support this belief (It is a whole issue of scholastic theology – Ilm–e–Kalam – of Ahlul Sunnat, which Rizwan editor might have never heard of. However, he should study his religious books). Shias of Ali (as) consider God as Just and have a complete belief on the verse: "God is never unjust to His servants". Obviously, they too live with justice and keep aloof from sins. That is the reason they expect their prayer–leader also to be just.

Nevertheless, when Ahlul Sunnat do not expect even God to be Just, what would the 'Scholars of Mosque' be worth considering that there be a condition of justice for them? Hence they have adopted the concocted tradition: "Pray behind every good and evil person". As a result, the strategies of people like the Rizwan editor who is 'half a scholar, and a danger to religion' are working well, among the Ahlul Sunnat. Their bare sustenance reaches them through this, while there is no such possibility among the Shias.

c) After understanding these two issues just ponder over this fact that as the community of justice—loving people will grow, injustice in the world will be proportionately reduced. On the other hand, as this community goes on shrinking, injustice will go on increasing in this world. In other words, greater the number of Shias in the world, the more the earth will lack in being filled with injustice. As the number of Shias reduce, sins and injustice of this world will increase because the followers of the Right Path will decrease and followers of polytheism, injustice, oppression and tyranny will increase. Till the time that the number of Shias reduce till it becomes three hundred and thirteen, at that time the Lord of the Worlds would command the Imam of the time, "Now, this world has become full of injustice. The number of people taking My name have become very meager. Hence you should reappear." So, he would reappear and fill the earth with justice as it would have been filled with injustice. O Allah! Hasten his reappearance and ease his advent.

The editor of Rizwan and his companions have tried to revive the period of Bani Umayyah and Bani Abbas in Pakistan and other so-called Islamic nations. If they succeed in their efforts and if the life spans of Shias living there is reduced and the practice of Farooq23 gains hold, it is not unlikely that this condition of 'Excess of injustice' gets fulfilled and Imam reappears. At that time these poor Ahlul Sunnat who follow the practice of Imam Abu Hanifah, Imam Shafei, Imam Malik and Imam Hanbal and regard their conjectures and analogy a source of salvation, would be involved in calamities the most because their own Allamah Arabi has clarified that:

"So nothing shall remain in his time except the pure religion, which would be pure of conjectures and analogy. Most of his commands shall be against the religion of the scholars. So the scholars would be unhappy with him because of their belief that God will not create any jurist after their Imams."24

Obviously people who consider their Imams better than the Imam of the time (a.t.f.s.) are happy in the misunderstanding that the door of jurisprudence is closed after their four Imams and there is none except Hanafis, Shafeis, Malikis and Hanbalis. This has also become clear that analogies and

conjectures of those religions are opposed to the 'Pure religion', that is why the Pure religion shall be manifested. Naturally, scholars of those schools would be unhappy at the manifestation of the 'Pure religion'. *Futuhat–e–Makkiyyah* also explains the condition of those people (which include a Hanafi scholar like the Rizwan editor) after the manifestation of 'Pure religion' that they would become liable for execution.

That is why, probably, the Rizwan editor could not bear to hear that Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) is present. He wants to keep this thought away from his mind as much as possible so that the fear of death does not put him into vexation.

However, I sincerely advise the editor to repent his vexatious belief even now. He should adopt the right belief and await the Imam of the Age with a peaceful heart so that Allah bestows him happiness in this world as well as the hereafter.

- 1. Kitabul Hujjah, Pg. 35
- 2. Sharh Nahjul Balagha, Ibn Abil Hadid Vol. 3, Pg. 362, Egypt
- 3. Surah Hajj 22:11
- 4. Arabic = Khilafatur Raashideen
- 5. Surah Baqarah 2:24
- 6. Surah Nisa 4:59
- 7. Old Testament
- 8. There are some more incidents which we have ignored as they are not relevant to the discussion. (Author)
- 9. The scribe has erroneously written 706 while it should be 703 and the work of Sherani is seventy years older than this book. Readers please note this. (Author)
- 10. Sufi term for the chief leader
- 11. Surah Qasas 28:5
- 12. Surah Bani Israel 17:81
- 13. The succeeding divine proof
- 14. One who shall rise up
- 15. One who has memorized the Quran
- 16. The call for Prayer
- 17. Shorter call for Prayer
- 18. Surah Anam 6:26
- 19. Chapter 366
- 20. Surah Yasin 36:17
- 21. Persian Couplet
- 22. Persian Couplet
- 23. Umar
- 24. Futuhat-e-Makkiyyah

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